

# **MODERN CENTRAL ASIA:**

**RESILIENCE & CAPACITY BUILDING**

**MODERN  
CENTRAL ASIA:**  
RESILIENCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

**COLLECTIVE MONOGRAPH**

*Edited by:*

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WORLD ECONOMICS& DIPLOMACY  
CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS&  
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The laboratory is a profile research / advisory unit of the University of World Economics& Diplomacy (UWED), acting on the basis of Uzbekistan, the recommendations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan and in accordance to UWED Scientific Council decisions.

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*"...we will pay special attention to cementing the centuries-old friendship, good-neighbourly relations, strategic partnership and mutual trust with Central Asian states. This is the priority of our foreign policy. The difficult conditions of the pandemic have once again demonstrated how much we need each other and are interconnected."\**

**Shavkat Mirziyoyev,  
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

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\*President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's Address to the Oliy Majlis, December 29, 2020.  
(Official web-site of the President of Uzbekistan. URL: <https://president.uz/en/lists/view/4057>)

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## **PREFACE**

The current study, presented to the readers is a bold attempt by University of World Economy & Diplomacy (UWED) researchers, in close cooperation with leading and prominent foreign experts, to shape a proper understanding of the regional features of modern international relations as a special object of political science.

For the majority of modern experts, the issue of creating a general theory of international relations remains the most relevant. The main obstacle here should be recognized as the diversity and sometimes inconsistency of existing theoretical concepts of international relations. At the same time, none of them can be recognized as dominant in modern academic thought, and their importance in science is unequal. The most complete model from the methodological point of view is the model of the international system.

The group of international researchers has paid considerable attention to the processes of modernization and globalization through prism of regional priorities. This is especially true when we observe in the context of growing interest in the Central Asia and changing political situation and renewed cooperation in regional and international scale. The authors share their scholarly views on a plethora of issues concerning Central Asia's transformation of power, a new level of regional cooperation and meetings to tackle urgent issues mutually, including the impact of globalization, migration and the global pandemic as a common agenda.

The authors have also analyzed a variety of scientific and practical aspects of the formation of innovative technologies in the field of social management in the region; specific mechanisms for conducting public expertise of state-significant projects. This research is addressed to a wide range of readers and will give young researchers a good ground and possibility to understand main trends in Central Asia and would also be recommended as part of academic courses and research projects studying the national and cooperative potential of Central Asia.

The administration of University of World Economy & Diplomacy is grateful to the international team of the GCRF COMPASS project who were responsible for this research and for their academic effort and organization of a strong and well-thought scholarly publication.

**Dr. Komiljon Kh. Karimov,**  
*Rector of UWED,*

**Prof. Dr. Sherzod M. Abdullaev,**  
*Head of International Politics I & Economic Studies Centre, UWED*

# **PART I**

## **CAPACITY BUILDING IN MAKING**





## ON MODERN DISCOURSE IN REGIONAL STUDIES

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*The study of the formation of the Greater Eurasian Geostrategic Regions, such as Central Asia and Middle East in the modern era, is a multifaceted and undoubtedly complex issue. In this vast space, from Egypt to Iran, from Turkey to Yemen, there is a variety of countries, a regional scale closely interwoven by a whole range of cultural, ethnic, social, territorial and linguistic aspects of development, which is reflected in the modern discourse in the scientific milieu of orientalists.*

*In recent decades, Central Asia and Middle East have attracted increased attention. The history of the community formation in these lands became the subject of greater study, supported by new archival materials which has certainly contributed to a new reading of the processes of colonial and post-colonial periods of their development.*

**KEYWORDS:** Eurasia, Central Asia, Russia, Middle East, Arab World, Islam, Ottoman Empire, Post-colonial East, Nationalism, Nation-State, International Relations, Geopolitics, Regional Security.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Different parts of Eurasia have always developed in an inseparable unity of cultural, geographical, historical, social and many other aspects. It was this proximity that defined its cohesive, unique role as a civilizational entity. Perhaps

that is why the problems of development of the Middle East, the Arab world, Islam and Central Asia held a special place in the scientific discourse of modern schools of oriental studies and became an entire field in the academic milieu.

The traditions of orientalism as a field of science in these territories of Greater Eurasia have a long and centuries-old history, dating back to the time of the **Abbasid Caliphate** when the first diplomatic ties were established to link different parts of it with Arab cultures and marked a special milestone in world orientalism. Famous orientalist **Ignaty Krachkovsky's** [1] in-depth study of the foundations of Islam and his brilliant translation of the **Holy Qur'an**, sacred to Muslims, was of paramount importance. His works such as “Arabic Culture in Spain” and “Introduction to Ethiopian Philology” [2], a systematic study of classical samples of Arabic literature, in particular, his “Historical Novel in Modern Arabic Literature” [3], “History of the Study of Arabic Literature” or “History of the Study of the Orient in Europe and Russia” by the famous turkologist **Vasily Bartold** [4] are a few bright examples. These and other fundamental studies gave rise to a pleiad of Russian scholars who left their mark on international oriental studies. The renowned masters such as **Mikhail Salye**, who dedicated his entire life to studying the foundations of Islam within the walls of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, and Prof. **Betsy Shidfar (Schuster)** [5], author of the translation of the **Holy Qur'an** recognized by rigorous theologians of the University of Al-Azhar, Prof. **Isaac Filschinskiy** who contributed with his renowned works on the basics of the Arab literature and Sufism - “Essays on Arabic and Muslim culture of 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries” [6], “The history of Arabic literature in the 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries”, “History of the Arabs and the Caliphate between 750-1517”, “The Caliphate under the Umayyad Dynasty” [7] and many others.

In addition to the above-mentioned works, there are also many others, including the collective monograph called “The Middle East: Politics and Identity” [8] prepared under the editorship of professor **Irina Zvyagelskaya**, an

outstanding Russian scholar of oriental studies, Head of the Center for Middle East Studies of the National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS). This study has already gained wide recognition among international scholars in many countries as a valuable source of scientific information and analysis of political processes in this most important, and at the same time, extremely controversial and complex region of world politics. The solid group of authors including such orientalists as Professor **Vitaly Naumkin**, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Dr. *Irina Semenenko*, corresponding member of the RAS, leading scientist of the IMEMO, Prof. **Gregory Kosach**, leading scholar at the Moscow State University, Dr. **Vasily Kuznetsov**, Head of the Centre for Arabic and Islamic Studies of the Institute of Oriental Studies of RAS, renowned Turkologist, Dr. **Viktor Nadein-Raevskiy** and many others. The scientific problem of the study was determined by a complex of national identity factors that determine the domestic and foreign policy behavior of the countries and peoples of the Middle East in the highly turbulent processes of modern global development.

### **CURRENT NARRATIVE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The scientific narrative of the authors of the monograph is based on in-depth knowledge and expert assessments of cultural-civilizational and other specifics of adjacent, and at the same time relatively autonomous societies of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran and others in the prism of historical, confessional, social traditions and contradictions in the formation of the Middle East as a special geo-social region of world politics.

A civilizational understanding of the unique heritage of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, and their identity component has always been of great importance in the study of the causes of the separation of peoples and ethnicities on the one hand, and at the same time consolidating bonds on fundamental issues of political development of the entire Middle East as a relatively established region, on the other [9].

One of the many different and at the same time exceptionally significant aspects of the problem of politicization in the region referred by scholars is the task of national consolidation. Here, the authors appeal to nationalism as the basis of statehood in the Arab East, and mainly to the Saudi interpretation of the phenomenon. In particular, they point to a certain dichotomy of the phenomenon where, on the one hand, Saudi society is politically and state-formed and, on the other hand, there is no unified and consolidated nation which can be explained by weak social ties, their fragmentation and the consequent lack of a sustainable political identity. The multi-ethnic and confessional sectorality of society played its part in this process, meaning the significant presence of integrative potential of **Shiites, Ismailis and Zaydis** [10], which had a parallel effect on some decline in the popularity of the policy of state **Wahhabism** [11]. Attempts to level out such contradictions in Saudi society are associated with the King **Salman bin Abdul Aziz's** assumption to power, and primarily with strengthening of the position of Crown Prince **Mohammed bin Salman** who is referred to in Western sources through the acronym as MBS. He is constructing a national vision for the political identity of the Saudi state in his own way expressed in his reliance on young technocrats, patriotism, the rule of law, the equality of the different **"Madhabs"** ("Way of Act") within **Al-Fiqh** of Islam, and the gradual achievement of gender equality. Analyzing the peculiarities of the development of the current political system in Saudi Arabia, emphasis is placed on unconventional steps taken by MBS in strengthening his own authority in the country, passing into open confrontation with his closest relatives, placing the power structures of the Kingdom under his personal control, in terms of foreign policy - a complex combination of diplomatic game with Russia, the US, China, aggression against the southern neighbor - Yemen, attempts to weaken the influence of Iran in the region, as well as introducing a new order of relations with traditional partners, most notably Qatar, which almost led to the collapse of the Gulf Cooperation Council by the end of 2017, and finally, the closed

negotiations with Israeli Prime Minister **Bibi Netanyahu** and **Yossi Cohen**, director of national intelligence and special tasks of the Mossad, following the signing of the so-called "**Abraham Accords**" brokered by the US to normalize relations between Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain at the end of 2020 [12].

Another significant component of political identity is recognized, according to scholars, by the priorities of certain ethnic political parties representing the interests of particular groups, especially the Jewish population of Israel [13]. A striking example of this is the ultra-Orthodox **SHAS** party, which is favoured by **Sephardic** Jews, mainly from Arab countries, and which in recent years has strengthened its popularity with the Israeli electorate taking a firm third place in the Knesset after **Avoda** and **Likud** [14]. The peculiarity of such a party, composed of ultra-Orthodox **Charedim** Jews, who thoroughly and literally interpret and observe the Torah while adhering to the foundations of religious **Zionism**, its political stance is often erratic, and sometimes even loyal to the dominant mainstream on matters of principle in foreign policy. Another sub-ethnic category which is included by researches is the so-called "Russians" or parties popular among those from the post-Soviet space. These usually include the "**Esroel ba-Aliya**" party (Israel on the Rise), led by well-known Israeli politician **Nathan Sharansky**, and the "**Esroel Beitanu**" (Our Home Israel) with its leader **Avigdor Lieberman** [15], who previously held key positions in the Israeli political establishment. For the most part, such parties represent large, repatriate ethnic groups that hold particular and usually tough positions in negotiations with the Palestinians on the status of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and settlement building in the West Bank, which have an undeniable influence on the nature and atmosphere of the overall political climate on key segments of the Arab-Israeli controversy [16].

## **NATIONAL IDENTITY DILEMMA**

In general, in recent decades the so-called Greater Middle East has been attracting increased interest of a range of schools of Oriental Studies. The history of the formation of the region's communities has become the subject of more in-depth study supported by new archival materials which certainly contributes to a new understanding of the Ottoman, colonial and post-colonial periods of their development as clearly demonstrated by a whole series of such fundamental studies edited by prominent Russian and Western orientalist scholars.

They, in turn, are supplemented by studies of related fields which are also connected with the transformation of social systems of states such as the institution of **Ulemas** ranging from **Mujtahids** to mullahs and even to the pinnacle of the hierarchy - the **Shaikh ul-Islam**, intellectuals, the role of youth during the Ottomanid period, successor states, educational missions in the Middle East which were especially popular at the rise of the ideas of Arab nationalism by **Jamaliddin Al-Afghani** and **Muhammad Abdo** in the early 20th century.

Take, for example, the same sphere of education in the region's communities where ideological emphases prevailed to varying degrees. It was reflected in the policies of states that had traditionally dominated the region for a relatively long period: The Ottoman state and, since the early twentieth century, the metropolitan states mainly Britain and France, in the form of mandated territories or protectorates, and later independent states. It took on a different character and combined elements of the same **Kemalism**, Muslim nationalism of the period of the so-called modernization of national socio-political systems.

According to prominent scholars, understanding the specifics of historical changes that took place in the Middle East during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire contributes to a better understanding of the nature of the current processes in the region. It is known that modern history of the Middle East (17th-19th centuries) has long been written as history of irreversible decline of the

Ottoman Empire, "...called at the instigation by Emperor **Nicholai I** of Russia as "*Sick Man of Europe*" (the expression dates back to 1853 to the period of the Crimean War, but was used to refer to the Ottoman Empire throughout the 19th century) [17]. To halt this decline, condemned by the Turkish elites themselves, the Ottoman authorities undertook an extensive reform known as the "**Tanzimat**" (1839-1876), which, however, according to many scholars, failed to achieve its purpose and inevitably, at the end of the First World War, unwittingly contributed to the collapse of the Empire. Furthermore, the Arab provinces of the Empire were subjected to a certain amount of pressure from outside: Turkish and Arab societies and cultures remained divided, with the former overwhelming the latter for the most part. Around the end of the Middle Ages, Arab culture sank into a prolonged decline which was only increased and intensified by the Ottoman rule. The other non-Turkic peoples of the empire also shared this fate. Having fallen into what scholars refer to as a "long sleep" since the sixteenth century (perhaps even earlier), they experienced a period of awakening or revival as **Nahda** only towards the end of the nineteenth century giving rise to an era of Arab nationalism and to the activation of the social movement of the early twentieth century.

Another dominant feature, which experts point out, is the uniqueness of the situation in the region, particularly in Iraq by the mid-2000s and the current crisis in Syria. Many academics give different assessments of the situation in these countries and one of the most notable and sensitive ones seems to be the problem of confessional differences in the communities of the region. Against this backdrop, there have been attempts to reinterpret religious institutions and traditions as well as intensified forms of political mobilization in the Middle East, often accompanied by armed violence. Such studies shed light on a certain dichotomy in scholarly discourse: the first aspect is related to conflicts on confessional grounds as an extension of the schism in Islam dating back to the

7th century, while the second is related to the nature of exogenous factors, mainly to foreign military intervention.

According to many scholars, a paradigm shift is now taking place in this strategically important zone of the globe: the modern nation state, emerging from World War II with the withdrawal of the colonial and “proxy” powers. The borders of most such states have lost some of their relevance. “Armed insurgent groups - e.g. Islamic State, **Hezbollah** and **Hashd al-Shaabi** across these borders without much obstruction making them purely formal. Moreover, the active migration of populations seeking refuge in neighbouring territories has questioned the socio-political nature of the states themselves” [18]. The crisis that has shaken the Middle East in recent years has called into question the viability of the nation state in that region; not only are we witnessing the weakness of its institutional framework in Iraq, Syria, Libya or Yemen, more often than not the challenge of redrawing borders comes to the surface with an adequate impact on changing the foundations of the political order at the regional level. Turkish, Syrian, Iraqi, Lebanese and Yemeni borders are contested more often. For example, the Syrian-Lebanese border ceased to exist in 1976 when the Syrian army intervened in the Lebanese civil war to crush the alliance of Palestinian factions with the Lebanese national movement and to protect the Falangist camp.

A similar thread runs through another fundamental study of recent years by prominent Russian scientists V.G. Baranovsky and V.V. Naumkin, in which they give an even more detailed picture pointing out that “...the states that emerged in place of dependent territories that never possessed their own statehood. Their boundaries were determined by the metropolises at the beginning of the colonial period, usually arbitrarily, without regard to geographical and demographic realities. Such states include Iraq, Syria and Libya. Kuwait was part of the Wilayat Basra under the Ottoman Empire (which later gave Saddam Hussein the reason to consider it part of Iraq), but then found itself under British



protectorate and did not gain its independence until 1961. For example, in the case of Libya, which was formerly under Italian rule, there was a question of dividing the country into three separate provinces. Britain tried to push for recognition of an independent Cyrenaica at the UN, while France wanted **Fezzan**, agreeing to put Cyrenaica and Tripolitania under British rule.”[19].

It should be noted that back in 2013, it was “...Lebanese Hezbollah who crossed the same border to intervene in the Syrian conflict on the side of Bashar al-Assad's forces. Since then, the Lebanese militia has controlled the territory on the Syrian side of that border and has been actively engaged in fighting in Qusayr, Damascus and Aleppo. The border between Syria and Turkey has remained transparent. In addition, the Kurdish guerrilla group KLP managed to control vast areas on both sides of the Turkish-Syrian and Turkish-Iraqi borders and Turkey launched another war against it in the cross-border area as well as on Syrian territory known as "**Operation “Euphrates Shield”**". [20]. When the Islamic State managed to gain control of the territories on both sides of the Syrian-Iraqi border, it managed to eliminate the historic **Sykes-Picot** line. All the emerging political forces “...have a rather contradictory view of the meaning of the existing borders, and hence of the political layout at the regional level.” [21].

## CONCLUSION

Due to the major focus of the leading schools of oriental studies the depth of the crisis in the Middle East could be measured not only by the collapse of state power, but also by the emerging alternative forces: while geographical sites with local or tribal identities fuel a large number of armed groups, new confessional ideologies are creating new regional alliances between actors in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere that reject the concept of the nation state.

All this redefines the prevailing narrative in academic circles around the problem of the inheritance of old and the emergence of new political traditions in the Greater Middle East. Therefore, a comprehensive and integrated study of

local communities, dominant forms and patterns of behavior, specifics of beliefs and confessional differences in the context of global uncertainty and fragmentation of entire regional communities will long remain in the focus of entire schools of Orientalism in many countries of the world.

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## 2

# **BIOREGIONAL THINKING AS A GUIDE TO BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR CENTRAL ASIA\***

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*Central Asia is historically united by many factors, including biogeography, the melting pot of the Silk Road legacy, the Soviet yoke and the continuing environmental and social disasters it caused, and the potential to act in unity to create a region forged by Sustainable Development to play a leading role in a changing world. There are significant opportunities but they depend on addressing significant challenges. And the way that these challenges are addressed will open or close various doors to the future.*

**KEYWORDS:** Central Asia, bio-geography, environmental challenges, Aral Seadisaster, climate change

Central Asia is historically united by many factors, including biogeography, the melting pot of the Silk Road legacy, the Soviet yoke and the continuing environmental and social disasters it caused, and the potential to act in unity to create a region forged by Sustainable Development to play a leading role in a changing world. There are significant opportunities but they depend on addressing significant challenges. And the way that these challenges are addressed will open or close various doors to the future. One cannot create a sustainable future without addressing the legacy that you have inherited. Of preeminent concern is water. The region is united by its shared dependence on the Amudarya and Syrdarya, by the common disaster of the Aral Sea, spreading

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desertification, challenges to food security and issues of internal and cross-boundary contamination. To build the future that we want, we must address our common realities.

In this presentation, I will offer a clear framework for addressing the negative legacy and environmental challenges faced by the region that open doors to a sustainable future, with an emphasis on the Aral Region and water, food security and contamination and a focus on bioregionalism, strong sustainability and creating positive interdependencies. These are issues that cannot be addressed by any nation in the region alone. Resilient models of cooperation must be built that allow for mutual action and result in mutual benefit. An additional key element is making innovative learning opportunities available to our young people. These elements are essential to a strong economy, healthy lives and regional security.

It is a pleasure to be back in Uzbekistan and in the magnificent city of Samarkand at a moment made possible by a new openness to create a common Central Asian future. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

I have been many times in Samarkand and always visit Registan Square. There my eyes are invariably drawn to the madrassa on the right and specifically to the twin tile murals that embrace its edifice. Depicted is a rising sun smiling upon a tiger stalking a deer. I know this may not be the traditional interpretation, but for me the symbolism is clear: a healthy environment bathed in the light and power of the sun and a profound respect for nature and its gifts. The future of the region depends upon it.

A reframing is required—a shift of focus. Imagine a typical map showing Central Asia. The boundaries of the five states are prominent. Now we refocus, the states blur, and the outline of the Aral Sea basin becomes dominant, from the headwaters of the two great rivers Amu and Syr to the final destination of the waters, from mountain to sea. This reframing serves to refocus on the common identity and future of the region and away from any divergence of national interest. The bioregion unites what the nation-state can easily sunder.

We are all aware of the current Bonn Climate Negotiations. The vanishing of the Aral Sea over half a century offers perhaps the best “dry run” or rehearsal for a mega scale climate disaster that we have seen to date. And everyone here knows that the results are beyond catastrophic. Illustrated is a system of accelerating change where a tipping point passes that prevents any hope of return. The result was the desiccation of the sea and the death of all connected living systems, a tragedy that is being replicated at this moment at numerous places around the globe. The Aral Disaster may not be reversible, but the message is clear for these other sites—turn back before it is too late.

Now we know beyond doubt that Global Climate Change is a human-caused phenomenon. But it is not the primary cause of the Aral Sea Disaster. That Disaster goes beyond human cause. It was a designed event, a desired outcome, a willed death, a premeditated murder. The perpetrator was the Soviet Union. The cause, a vision that dramatically contradicts the mural of nature in balance on the Registan.

Stalin is quoted as saying “Any drop of water flowing down the Syrdarya or Amudarya that reaches the Aral Sea is a wasted drop of water.” With a similar assessment, Soviet scientists and planners wrote the Aral off. They followed the edict of the Virgin Lands Initiative, “We cannot wait for favors from nature—our goal is to take them from it.” Under Khrushchev, Central Asia was deemed a Virgin Land, needing a purpose, a way to serve the nation. It was determined that the best service was to become the primary cotton producing region for the USSR. Central Asia’s semi-arid steppe was reshaped as a cotton belt, fed by irrigation and using labor from a new farmers transplanted to the region. The limited rainfall in the region was not seen as an impediment. Through modern alchemy, irrigation waters could be taken from the two mighty rivers and turned into white gold. In effect, the Syr and Amu rivers would be diverted away from the Aral Sea to fill the water tables of Uzbekistan’s agricultural heartland.

My knowledge of the resulting disaster stems from an epic journey I mounted in summer 2011 with a team of Americans matched with colleagues

from Samarkand Architectural and Engineering Institute and funded by the Trust for Mutual Understanding, a foundation that funds environmental collaborations between Americans and citizens of FSU states.

The purpose of the trip was to find the missing Aral Sea. Importantly, had we just flown to Karakalpakstan to see its remnants; we would never have done so. Instead, we had decided to rent a bus and driver, and to head west, stopping at every major University along the way to hold consultations or conferences with Uzbek colleagues. What we discovered is that rather than traveling far to find the Aral Sea disaster, that the Aral Sea disaster had come a long way to meet us.

Not far from Tashkent at the beginning of the trip, we stopped to lunch with local professors along the banks of the Syrdarya. The lunch was wonderful, but there was something noticeably absent—the river! As we stood on a boat dock that formerly jutted into the river, we could barely see water far in the distance. The Syrdarya had obviously shrunk dramatically in a relatively short period of time.

In Samarkand we shared a helpful issue-framing conference with colleagues before the bus headed west to Bukhara. Along the way, we saw farmers toiling in cotton fields, people on animal pulled carts, frequent irrigation ditches crossing the road and on occasion a strange view of white snow-covered fields in the considerable summer heat of the region. At lunch and a tour in Bukhara with two local Professors, we had explained to us in great detail what we were seeing. We first learned about the irrigation, waterlogging, salinization dynamic that was evident in the Bukhara region but ubiquitous in the region as well. In short, the Amudarya and Syrdarya had been transferred from an endpoint in the Aral Sea to an end point dispersed across the upper water tables of the Uzbek heartland. As massive amounts of water on the order of 70% escaped from irrigation systems, the water filled up the ground bringing the water table to the surface, serving as a transport for salts and minerals previously caught up in the deeper soils abutting the bedrock. The snow covered fields we had seen were actually

covered by crystalized salts. Farmers had to literally wash the salts off the field in order to plant their crops, relocating the salt through the stream into the next field. We learned two other important lessons as well.

We also learned that briny ponds and lakes had sprung up across a wide area where the water table spilled out onto the surface at a sufficient scale. Some birds from the Aral Sea had successfully relocated to these new bodies of water.

Back on the road we paused in deserts that appeared to be spreading and adjoining. A short dust storm illustrated how particulate matter was spread across the landscape and posed a health hazard.

But that was not the end of it. In the ancient city of Khiva in Khorozem, where I found air quality to be poor, we had a conference in the Ma'mun Academy that was further eye opening. John Lamers, then of Urgench University presented concrete data demonstrating how far soil fertility had declined due to salinization. It became clear that continued farming of the kind practiced would kill the soils altogether if continued.

Back on the road, near the border of Karakalpakstan, we crossed more dessert, encountering a nomadic family living in yurt visible at a distance from the highway. Sitting cross-legged and sipping tea in the comfortable structure, we learned that even the nomadic life was challenged, with little pasture and suitable surface water to maintain herds. It was not clear how much longer this way of life could be sustained in the Aral Region.

In Karakalpakstan, we spent time along the Amu Darya. Here I took a picture of a colleague while I was standing on a platform at a fish restaurant that historically was just above water level.

After a visit to Nukus, we travelled north to Moynak, the former Aral Sea port, fish products center and tourism destination. Here we witnessed a destitute city bordering a huge barren cavity where the sea once had been. We climbed down onto the sea bed itself and posed for photographs standing on abandoned rusting old fishing vessels, which had been lined up along the bottom.



Now the Aralkum, the Aral desert, the “sands” of the unanchored landscape blow freely and far. Heavily constituted of salts and contaminated with pesticides, these blowing winds create toxic air pollution for humans and other life forms, contaminate additional farmlands and water bodies and the salts are implicated in intensifying the effects of global warming by speeding up the melting of the glaciers high up above the headwaters to the east and south. In our session, it was reported that salt has been found in women’s breast milk. One suspects the pesticides are there as well.

And that was it. The Aral Sea was not in its original basin. Instead its waters had been diverted across the lands between the rivers and soaked into the water table or evaporated into the dry atmosphere. Waterlogging, salinization, pesticide runoff, blowing winds of spreading deserts, emergent brine ponds. The transformation of a massive region in little more than half a century illustrates the power and rapidity of climate change. The journey and its implications are discussed in depth in a volume I edited shortly afterwards [1].

But, even as it is an important dry run for how climate change occurs, the Aral disaster was not caused by global climate change. It illustrates a second cause of climate change that is more regional and local. Together, the two forms have put the squeeze on nature, both pushing in coincident and mutually-reinforcing directions.

On one side, changes to stratospheric gas balance, albedo and other factors have produced a global phenomenon that changes the conditions affecting every place on earth.

On the other side, the replication of local and regional practices carried out in parallel by people across the globe creates another front in climate change.

Neither force is natural. The first was under our control when we could have limited greenhouse gasses to less than 350 ppm. By modifying combustion of fossil fuels. The second even more clearly represents human will and even design, as we saw with the Aral disaster, and was initially firmly under our

control. In both instances, we have now entered positive feedback loops, or gone past tipping points—points of no return.

There are four important take away points here.

1. The Aral Sea disaster is human caused and even deliberate.

2. The disaster is not confined to the formal sea bed but rather envelops the region, uniting the entire Bioregion.

3. The disaster is not just about the desiccation of the Aral Sea, but about a complex of factors including salinization, desertification, wind erosion and polluted air and water.

4. The Aral Disaster was not caused by Global Climate Change, per se. Rather it is the result of human misbehaviour on a massive scale. It is a regional climate disaster that is being replicated worldwide.

5. Thus, we can see Climate Change as a phenomenon that is being driven simultaneously from the atmospheric and biogeochemical realm of earth dynamics and by behaviour at the regional human scale. Both global and regional climate pressures are of human origin. In this sense, Climate Change is a top down and a grassroots phenomenon. The effects of the two dynamics are interactive and probably multiplicative. Said another way, the Aral Sea was in no way a natural phenomenon or an “Act of God.” Rather it was caused by a human mind-set that saw nature as malleable to human whim, the Aral Sea and its fish as expendable to the desire for cotton. It is not clear that the mind-set has really changed yet, even of the landscape has.

## **WHAT TO DO NOW**

I frequently cite the organizational theorist Peter Drucker in my work. Drucker once wrote, “The greatest danger in a time of turbulence is not the turbulence, it is to act with yesterday’s logic.”

The first response to the Aral Sea disaster is to recognize the need for a new logic. For example, old logic suggested that to fix the problem, we needed a source of water that might refill the empty seabed. Extensive discussion and even planning work surrounded capturing Russian rivers that flow north to the

Arctic Sea and diverting them instead to the Aral Basin. Of course, this would wreak havoc throughout the areas robbed of these diverted waters and on the Arctic Region which has emerged as one of the globe's most stressed regions because of Global Climate Change.

Alternatively, I continually hear about the virtues of diverting the Volga River to fix the Aral. This action would doom the already troubled Caspian Sea, leading to a disaster of much larger scale than the Aral Disaster.

Solving one problem by causing even greater adverse consequences can hardly be considered a real solution. Frankly, the adverse impacts and entropy caused by both ideas would exceed the benefits. Even were the Aral saved, an outcome that would not be guaranteed, much worse destruction would occur.

Of course, giving up either of these water sources might have been possible under the banner of the Soviet Union, but to expect Russia to do so is naive.

However, abandoning such "solutions" requires an admission that some seem unwilling to make. There is no feasible way to bring back the lost Aral Sea. Forget it.

It is important not to view the Aral disaster as a concluded historical event but as a chronic continuing event. Disasters never end, they just move on to their next phase. Thus, the Aral disaster is a continuing crisis.

Thus, allowing the continuation of the blowing toxic winds coming off the Aralkum and the spreading of this dead landscape with its erratic and uninhabitable climate conditions is intolerable. Neither is a continuation of the irrigation/waterlogging/salinization/pesticide dynamic that has diminished soil fertility and contaminated drinking water across the nation. So doing nothing is also not an option. Action is required.

Abandoning yesterday's logic, what is the new logic needed to guide effective response? I have already suggested that the region needs to be understood and thought of as a "bioregion" rather than as compilation of the national interests of five independent states (six if Afghanistan is also considered).

As new initiatives are planned, such as the upcoming convent for the Syrdarya and Amudarya, there is an opportunity to enact this shift of frame.

The bioregion is defined by the two rivers that contribute the bulk of the water to Central Asia as they flow from their headwaters to their endpoint, once the Aral Sea. In the view of Michael (Mickey) Glantz, one of the most astute long term students of the region, the conception of “From the Mountain to the Sea” is applicable here (as everywhere) as an organizing concept for action needed to integrate and protect bioregions and maintain their health. I co-ran a workshop on bioregionalism with Mickey at Rio+20 in 2012, a conference where some Central Asia states also brought forth elements for bioregional action (a glacier keeper concept and a green economy plan).

The major approach to addressing the Aral disaster, write large, is the application of a field called permaculture, which essentially uses nature and natural principles to heal nature. The goal is to re-establish healthy nature where it is most likely to succeed. I like the idea of an ecosystem by ecosystem approach to the disaster because, rather than throwing a large scale solution at a large scale problem, a mismatching of scale is more appropriate. In other words, I believe the Aral disaster needs to be addressed at a small to intermediate scale but simultaneously in many places. Small scale approaches can afford to fail, while we learn from those failures. And when success occurs, we can build on what works. And when enough small-scale ecosystems are established, these patches of nature can be infilled to create large living systems. And, it may be that nature is already experimenting in the Aralkum, with some plants able to establish themselves successfully in the harsh conditions. By looking for such natural experiments and then building upon them, nature becomes a lead partner in the process of restoration.

These are step, that, with capacity building, can be undertaken by local populations that have suffered from a dearth of work and meaning since the Aral Sea disappeared. By empowering people and giving them the task of clean-up, and compensating fairly, a new cottage industry is created. Elsewhere in the FSB

and in the U.S., contaminated sites have opened up opportunities for workers to do clean-up activities. The same can happen here.

The goal here is to restore living systems in place of dead desert, stabilizing soils and lessening wind erosion, with its attendant pollution. Reduction of salt in emergent lakes, phytoremediation of pesticide residues and salts from soils, and other effects can be employed to bring the desert back to life. The Aral Sea is not restored, but living systems, perhaps eventually able to foster clean water supplies and attenuate micro climates, will be created. This system can be used beyond the Aral Sea bed per se, addressing salinization and desertification throughout the region.

Already experiments done under the United Nations have seen tree planting in the Aral Region done by local residents to act as windbreaks. Steps are also being taken by the Uzbek Government in conjunction with the UN to introduce a better diversity of food crops requiring less water and pesticide application than demanded by a cotton monocrop. Similarly, efforts have been introduced to use of drip irrigation and other water saving techniques that can help reverse the transfer of river water into the water table, stopping new salinization events. As an effort is made to clean up existing legacy of problems, it is necessary not to create new problems in doing so. These efforts complement the suggestions made here. Only, it is time to unleash activities at a scale commensurate with the problem and to assure that they are staffed and funded to succeed.

As such activities occur in the Aral and agricultural regions, parallel efforts are needed upstream to protect glaciers and forests and in Turkmenistan to decrease evaporation from large-scale surface storage of water.

Years ago, the Club of Rome sought to understand why its path breaking study called Limits to Growth had met with such resistance Limits was arguably the first major research effort pointing toward the need to fashion a sustainable future from among alternatives. In a subsequent study, the Club of Rome reasoned that the kind of learning engaged in by society limits or opens up its

potential for meeting changed conditions effectively. While most education, they found, simply maintains the culture as is, what they termed “Innovative learning” instead prepared people to anticipate change and participate in directing it. What is required to meet challenges such as the Aral Sea disaster is a generation of generalists well prepared to think innovatively. The deep understanding of Central Asia as a bioregion is a foundational step.

There is an additional need to consider how the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals will be achieved in a region where ecological footprints are growing and bio-capacity diminishing. How can food systems be made secure in a water impaired region? How can dependence on fossil fuels be avoided by growing the renewable energy sector and curtailing dependence on gasoline and natural gas? How can housing be developed so as to protect and maintain community? And the bazaars protected to maintain local food production and economies? How can industrial pollution be curtailed in order to protect human and ecosystem health?

In this regard, I recommend that the Central Asian nations jointly undertake a special Environmental Impact Assessment designed to examine the limits and abilities of key living systems and the potential for sustainable growth and change. This sustainability assessment would examine the threat to habitability within the region and the potential for feasible mitigations. Done properly, it would further serve as a Sustainability Plan offering a decision-making blueprint for future innovative management of the entire system.

I close my eyes and clearly see the sun rising over a tiger chasing a deer. Living nature must be restored and sustained using renewable sources of powers if the bioregion that defines Central Asia is to be resuscitated. This end is within your collective grasp. Hold out your hands together and get to work.

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# 3

## **THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY CHALLENGE IN PAKISTANI TRIBAL AREAS\***

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*It has always been a difficult task to analyse the characteristics and dynamics of the Taliban insurgency with a view to explore some effective countering responses. Since its inception in 2002 - when in the aftermath of the U.S.-led war on terror in Afghanistan remnant militants infiltrated into the tribal areas of Pakistan – to the latest counter-insurgency military operation launched by Pakistan in summer 2014, the Taliban insurgent movement has gone through many curves and completed its first life-cycle.*

*The Pakistani security forces have learnt a lot during their efforts to countering the Taliban insurgency and have gradually improved their responses, which have included both political initiatives and military operations.*

**KEYWORDS:** FATA, insurgency, Afghanistan, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, TTP, splinter group, ETIM

## **INTRODUCTION**

In its tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, Pakistan has been fighting one of the most complex insurgencies of modern times. The Taliban insurgency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has had multiple dimensions, ranging from tribal to religious, and local to regional and global. While internally it is a major factor in terrorist attacks in Pakistan, on external front it is linked to the insurgency in Afghanistan and also global terrorist groups. Certainly, the Pakistani Taliban militants have local ambitions as well as global agendas.

The insurgency has been weakening enough, and its infrastructure has been relocated into Afghanistan from where it is trying to show effectiveness through terrorist activities inside Pakistan. The presence of Al-Qaeda, Islamic State and strengthening movement of Afghan Taliban can help sustain a low level insurgency in tribal areas.

This chapter explores challenges posed by the Taliban insurgency in Pakistani tribal areas mainly highlighting the infrastructure of insurgent groups; factor that have been aiding the insurgency during its different phases; a review



of the state responses to counter the insurgency; and new challenges compounding the counter-insurgency challenge.

## **I. THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF INSURGENCY IN FATA**

Before looking into dynamics of insurgency in FATA, it would be helpful to have an over view of local and international militant groups who have been based and operating from there. The recent military operations however have uprooted most of these groups, which had established an extensive militant infrastructure in FATA and triggered the insurgency. Apart from successive military operations, U.S.-operated drones and internal differences and infighting have also contributed in weakening of these militant groups. While most have relocated to Afghanistan, some have moved to other agencies of FATA and also to parts of other provinces of Pakistan. But many of these groups still pose a potent threat to Pakistan and are capable to instigate low-level insurgency in FATA.

### **I.1 MAJOR PAKISTANI GROUPS**

Below is given a brief description of current status of top militant groups operating in FATA.

#### **I.1.1 TEHREEK-E-TALIBAN PAKISTAN**

Formed in 2007 by late Baitullah Mehsud in FATA's South Waziristan Agency, the group is currently scattered across Pakistani-Afghan border, mainly due to the ongoing military operations in parts of FATA. Maulana Fazlullah, who was earlier head of TTP's Swat chapter, is the current head of the TTP and is reportedly sheltered in Afghanistan. Sheikh Khalid Haqqani, a native of Swat, is his deputy. While Fazlullah had moved to Afghanistan after the launch of an extensive military operation in his home town in Swat, Pakistan, other main leaders of the group relocated across the border to Afghan side after Pakistan army launched operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan in 2014. Apart from its leaders' movement to Afghanistan, the group is significantly weakened in Pakistan. Still, pockets of TTP militants and their affiliates are present in FATA, districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) lying adjacent to FATA agencies, Karachi

and Balochistan. That is why the group still claims terrorist attacks, though occasionally, in these and other areas that it carries out either independently or with the support of its affiliated groups.

Until 2014, the TTP had an extensive and lethal militant network of numerous militant outfits and commanders in FATA and KP- who either operated under the TTP umbrella or served as support structures - but that network and infrastructure does not exist anymore. However, as cited earlier, some isolated pockets of TTP militants still exist in parts of FATA and KP; TTP support structures are present in different parts of KP and Punjab provinces. In Karachi, different TTP splinters had been operational, which also have been weakened and reduced to few small cells of few individuals due to ongoing Rangers-led operation there. Similarly, TTP militants are also in hiding in parts of Balochistan, mainly in suburbs of Quetta and other Pashtun dominated areas, particularly along the Afghan border and close to FATA such as in Zhob.

In brief, TTP's main infrastructure has been dismantled, weakened or shifted to Afghanistan. Apart from military operations, there were some other reasons that weakened the TTP. The internal leadership crisis in the TTP had been damaging its structure as a glued entity even before the launch of military operations in FATA. TTP chief Hakeemullah Mehsud had developed differences with another key TTP leader Waliur Rehman and the crisis widened after the death of Mehsud in a drone attack in late 2013. Further differences emerged among Mehsud and non-Mehsud segments of TTP over the appointment of Fazlullah, a non-Mehsud, as leader of the TTP. A major faction of the TTP led by Khan Said Sajna announced its separation from TTP in May 2014. Mohmand chapter head of TTP Omar Khorasani formed his own group JamaatulAhrar in August 2014. Secondly, the inspiration of the Islamic State (IS) group also contributed towards erosion of the TTP structure and strength. Many TTP commanders who were already annoyed with the main leadership, preferred to defect and support the IS. Key TTP leaders who left the TTP for IS included [1]: Sheikh Maqbool who served as the group's spokesman as "Shahidullah Shahid";

Hafiz Quran Dolat, the TTP's chief in Orakzai Agency; GulZaman, TT's chief in Kurram Agency; Mufti Hassan, TTP's chief in Khyber Agency; and Khalid Mansoor, the TTP chief in Hangu [2].

The TTP subscribes to Deobandi-Sunni school of thought. It has anti-Pakistan, anti-West and also sectarian agendas. The group wants to enforce Islamic laws in Pakistan and eradicate all 'un-Islamic activities and practices'. TTP also has an objective of fighting all those whom it considers 'enemies' of Islam and Muslims. That is why it also has fought against Afghan and foreign forces in Afghanistan.

Owing to its networked ties with numerous groups, the TTP has over the years diversified its operational tactics, ranging from guerrilla-style operations to suicide attacks and targeted killings. Although the group's operational strength has significantly been damaged, still it poses a major threat to Pakistan's security. During 2015, the TTP carried out 212 small and major terrorist attacks - about 34% of the total terrorist attacks that took place in Pakistan - mainly in FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Karachi. These attacks claimed 384 lives, 36% of total terrorism related fatalities recorded across Pakistan during the year [3]. The group will continue to create trouble in Pakistan's areas bordering on Afghanistan, as well as in other parts of the country through its small pockets and allied groups. The group can also try to carry out some major attacks in Pakistan in future, but it cannot reclaim the geographical and ideological losses it has already incurred.

### **1.1.2 TTP SPLINTER GROUPS**

The TTP has in recent years faced several splinters, owing to succession crisis or on whether or not to negotiate with the government of Pakistan. Some such splinters are local TTP groups, based in parts of tribal agencies.

One prominent splinter group is JamaatulAhrar (JA). Originally based in Mohmand Agency, JA is now said to be operating from bordering Kunar and Nangarhar provinces of Afghanistan. Abdul Wali aka Omar Khalid Khorasani is the founder of the organization. He became deputy head of the group with

Maulana QasimKhorasani the group's head or emir. The group split from the TTP, mainly due to its founder-commander's differences with the TTP's main leadership.

The group has similar ideology and objectives as espoused by TTP and most other Taliban groups. In addition, however, the group is more hardliner in sectarian terms and has perpetrated some major attacks against Shias and also Christian community.

Since its establishment in 2014, the JA group which has carried out some of the most lethal terrorist attacks in Pakistan including the suicide blast in a park in Lahore (Punjab) on Christian community in March 2016 that killed at least 74 people; the group also claimed the responsibility for the attack on lawyers in Quetta in August 2016 that claimed over 70 lives, mostly lawyers. Starting from the Wagah border attack in November 2014, JamaatulAhrar has indeed carried out as many as seven lethal suicide blasts in Punjab alone, which claimed 192 lives and wounded 493 others. In 2015, the group carried out 28 terrorist attacks including 21 in FATA, five in Punjab and two in KP [4].

The TTP South Waziristan splinter faction is led by Khan Said alias Sajna [5] and mainly comprises Mehsud militants; which is why it is also called Mehsud Taliban. The group has been operating independently after leaving the TTP in May 2015, mainly in South Waziristan and also Karachi. In recent months, the group has been carrying out attacks inside South Waziristan against tribal elders, peace volunteers and security forces. Another faction of Mehsud Taliban in South Waziristan is led by Shahryar Mehsud, who claims to be the successor of TTP former head HakeemullahMehsud. DaudMehsud, a former policeman in Karachi, heads the group in Karachi [6]. Sajna and Shahryar groups in Karachi have been significantly weakened in Karachi due to ongoing security operations there, and also their infighting.

### **1.1.3 LOCAL TALIBAN GROUPS**

These are the groups that are loosely connected with the TTP or formed with similar objectives. Most of them subscribe to Deobandi school of thought.

The ongoing military operations in FATA and strong law enforcement surveillance in KP have weakened these local Taliban groups' operational capability. These are small Taliban-like groups in KP and to some extent in FATA which are led by local leaders and are often named after their leaders like Anwar Gundapur group in D.I. Khan, Sial group in Charsadda, and Tariq Afridi group in Darra Adam Khel. They not have some well-defined structure. Strength of such groups is usually in few dozen members.

Most of these groups have been operating in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mainly in Charsadda, Lakki Marwat, Mardan, Hangu, Swabi, Bannu, and Nowshera and in periphery of Peshawar. Non-TTP Taliban groups in North and South Waziristan are also sometimes called 'local Taliban', such as Mullah Nazir and Qari Gul Bahadur groups [7]. Non-TTP Taliban groups have largely remained focused on Afghanistan and were rarely found involved in terrorist attacks inside Pakistan. However, the ongoing military operation in FATA has acted against all Taliban groups including these non-TTP Taliban groups. Many criminal elements are also using this tag of local Taliban, but most of these groups are small and their operations limited only to their respective vicinities.

### **LASHKAR-E-ISLAM**

Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) is an anti-state militant organization that has been operating from Khyber Agency since 2004. Initially, LI was formed by Haji Namdar and Mufti Munir Shakir to counter a Barelvi sect' group Ansarul Islam in Khyber Agency led by PirSaifur Rehman [8, p.51]. In recent past, the security forces carried out a number of military operations in the agency mainly targeting the LI terrorist organization. With recent operations Khyber 1 and Khyber 2, the organization faced numerous losses and many of their bases were dismantled by military in Bara and Tirah remote areas of the agency. The organization after long and fierce fighting with the security forces personnel opted to join hands with TTP, once the worst rival. The leadership of LI is currently fugitive and is reportedly in hiding in Afghanistan [9]. Its fighters are still carrying out terrorist activities targeting civilians and government functionaries in the agency as well

neighboring Hayatabad area of Peshawar though with reduced intensity and frequency. Pakistani security forces have launched Khyber 3 to eliminate the remaining pockets of militants in Tirah Valley, mainly areas bordering on Afghanistan. The group wants to enforce Islamic laws in Khyber Agency and eradicate so-called un-Islamic practices including drugs and crimes. The group undertakes to counter sectarian influence of rival groups Ansarul Islam and Tawheedul Islam.

## **1.2 FOREIGN ISLAMIST TERRORIST GROUPS**

### **1.2.1 AL-QAEDA**

Al-Qaeda has been significantly weakened in Pakistan due to continuous anti-Al-Qaeda operations and arrests of Al-Qaeda members and operatives by Pakistani security forces and killings in drone strikes. Secondly, the emergence of the IS and its inspiration among the Pakistani militants also reduced the appeal of Al-Qaeda. Thirdly, due to above mentioned factors and may be internal reasons, Al-Qaeda has shifted its focus to Yemen and Syria in recent years. Therefore, Al-Qaeda's capacity to strike in Pakistan or support local allies has significantly been hampered. In September 2014, Al-Qaeda opened a new franchise for subcontinent, known as Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). The chapter vows to establish caliphate in what it calls Khorasan, which also includes India. AQIS is led by one Sheikh Asim Umar, who has written books on apocalyptic topics like the coming of messiah (savior), world war 3, anti-Christ, etc. Asim Umar is a Pakistani national from urban town of Karachi; others say he hailed from India. He earlier worked with Pakistan's Kashmir-focused jihadist like Harkatul Jihad Islami (HuJI) and its splinters. At present Karachi and parts of Punjab appear to be the last resorts of AQIS as frequent reports appear in media about killing or arrests of Al-Qaeda operatives from there.

### **1.2.2 AFGHAN TALIBAN**

One of the important networks, at least operationally, of Afghan Taliban is Haqqani network that is operating in bordering region between Afghanistan and

Pakistan. The Haqqani network is currently headed by Sirajuddin Haqqani\* who is accused of targeting U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. The Haqqanis have carried out some of the deadliest attacks in Afghanistan, including the April 2016 attack on Afghan intelligence building. Afghanistan blames Pakistani security agencies for supporting the Haqqanis. Previously, the organization was said to be in hidings in North Waziristan Agency; however, the military operation Zarb-e-Azb uprooted them from there and their current location is unknown. Largely it is said that they have shifted to Afghanistan and are taking refuge mostly in south-eastern provinces of Afghanistan, though others argue they might have moved to other tribal agencies of FATA. The organization does not carry out attacks inside Pakistan, but for attacks in Afghanistan, it has developed good relation with members of Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) besides the TTP.

### **I.2.3 ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ & SYRIA**

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, also known as Islamic State, has been inspiring militant groups in Pakistan since later 2014, mainly in FATA, Punjab and Karachi. Some former Taliban commanders have switched sides, by declaring allegiance to the IS and most of them are currently in Afghanistan. Yet, there are reports that IS has some presence in Kurram Agency which has historically remained a Sunni-Shia sectarian flashpoint. When it comes to Punjab, IS has been able to draw recruits from among the existing groups, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and JamaatudDaawa (JuD). In 2015, chief of LeJ was killed in an encounter after reports emerged that he might have joined the IS. Likewise, two cells of IS busted in Punjab were said to be operated by JuD men. In Karachi, too, existing radicalized youth had joined the IS including former associates and members of Jundullah and Jamaat-e-Islami [10]. It is pertinent to mention that the IS in Pakistan is drawing recruits from existing stockpiles of militant groups, rather than foreign fighters per se.

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\*Siraj is also one of the deputies of new Afghan Taliban emir Haibatullah Akhundzada; previously he was chosen as a deputy to Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, the Taliban head who was killed in a drone strike in Pakistan's Balochistan province.

## **1.2.4 EAST TURKESTAN ISLAMIC MOVEMENT**

East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is an anti-China group founded by militant Uighur Islamists in Xinjiang province, western province of China. Mufti Abu Zar Al-Beruni is the main leader of the group. After the operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan, most ETIM militants have moved to Afghanistan either independently or along with the TTP.

## **2. FACTORS AIDING THE INSURGENCY**

Multiple factors have contributed to the emergence and expansion of the insurgency in FATA. The most significant among these include: the warrior culture of local tribesmen; the proliferation of a “culture of jihad” after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979; the establishment of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan following the Soviet withdrawal in the 1990s and its cascading effect in FATA; the post-9/11 “war on terror” and concentration of Pakistani and transnational militant networks in FATA; and the political, structural and administrative vacuums in FATA. The insurgency can be divided into three major phases based on its changing characteristics and evolving state responses.

### **2.1 TRIGGERS OF INSURGENCY PRE-2009**

The period between 2002 and 2007 was the formative phase of the insurgency in FATA, which by the year 2009 had developed into a complete insurgent movement across the tribal areas. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a conglomeration of anti-Pakistan Taliban groups was formed during this period, in 2007 to be precise.

Apart from that, over 60 local Taliban groups emerged in the region between 2002 and 2010, which also included small Taliban groups in the settled districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, such as Karak, LakkiMarwat, Bannu, Kohat, Peshawar, Mardan, Dera Ismail Khan, Nowshera and Dir [8]. Initially, around 40 Taliban groups were part of the TTP alliance\*, and the number continued to rise

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\* The TTP has been essentially an alliance of Taliban groups operating in different areas of FATA and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which came together under the TTP umbrella in 2007 largely on account of efforts by Baitullah Mehsud, a militant leader in Waziristan region of FATA.



in subsequent years. Similarly, as many as 14 Taliban groups were part of another Taliban alliance, known as the Waziri alliance, which was led by Maulvi Nazir and Commander Gul Bahadur\*.

Many of these groups already had networks in the tribal areas, and as the Pakistani Taliban movement emerged, members of many of these groups joined its ranks. The splintering of so-called jihadist groups, some of whom had been under state patronage and control and part of the country's foreign policy adventures, created one of the most underestimated challenges for the Pakistani state after the incidents of 9/11. Many splintering members of these groups joined anti-Pakistan militant groups including the Pakistan Taliban after Islamabad joined the international alliance aimed at fighting the militants based in Afghanistan and the Pak-Afghan border areas. Al-Qaeda operatives and the Afghan Taliban also came to FATA to escape U.S. attacks in Afghanistan in late-2001, which further complicated matters. Militant groups quickly began to project themselves as saviours of the Muslim *ummah*, or nation based on common religion, i.e. Islam, against the Western 'occupation' of Afghanistan and built support for a new phase of jihad. Neither the government of Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan nor the U.S. realized at that time that their strategies would spur militancy in the region, instead of defeating it.

After the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan's main focus was set on capturing Al-Qaeda militants, and it strategically overlooked addressing the domestic sources of militancy<sup>†</sup>. The government's weak threat assessment of the emerging Taliban militancy and its implications for internal security failed it in evolving some effective counter responses. The government's successive talks and peace deals with the Taliban militants to achieve security also gave the latter a major opportunity to strengthen their networks in FATA.

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\*Maulvi Nazir was killed in a drone strike in January 2013 in Wana (South Waziristan). His group was largely focused on Afghanistan and also fought against Central Asian militants in Waziristan. Gul Bahadur has reportedly moved into Afghanistan after the launch of military operation Zarb-e-Azb.

<sup>†</sup> Between January 2002 and May 2006, Pakistan arrested more than 1,000 Al-Qaeda suspects and handed most of them over to the U.S.

Apart from threatening Pakistan's internal security, Pakistani militants' connections offered them increasing international scope. As a result, the Pakistani Taliban facilitated Al-Qaeda's global operations, and demonstrated their capabilities to launch attacks in the West. The unsuccessful bombing attempt in New York's Time Square was just one example. However, this incident was not the first time that the TTP or its constituent organizations were found involved in an act of international terrorism. A report by Pak Institute for Peace Studies in 2010 noted that "the 7/7 bombings in London in 2005, one of the most devastating terrorist attacks since 9/11, were planned in Bajaur Agency in the FATA, as acknowledged by a top TTP spokesman, Maulvi Umer" [11]. Similarly, the foiled terrorist attacks in Barcelona, Spain in January 2008 were also traced back to the al-Qaeda-TTP nexus in the FATA [12].

### **2.1.1 THE POLITICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE VACUUM IN FATA**

To better understand the growth of the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan's tribal areas, it is important to look into societal structures in FATA and failures of the FATA governance system. The longstanding legal, administrative, and economic neglect of the FATA proved a major compounding factor as far as militancy is concerned. A study in 2009 noted that one in five people living in the FATA attributed religious extremism in the region to poor and flawed governance [13]. The Taliban exploited this poor structure of governance in FATA and weakened it further to create spaces for their consolidation and maximizing public support. For that purpose, they increased attacks against the tribal administrative system, including mainly the political agents—federal civil bureaucrats—and tribal elders and *maliks*, and virtually eroded the state authority [8, p.120]. As local tribesmen's trust shattered in state's authority and capacity to protect them, they started to believe that the government cannot safeguard its institutions and is just surrendering to the militants. Eventually, the political agents and tribal elders were unable to maintain any significant resistance

to the Taliban authority, initially in North and South Waziristan and then in other agencies of FATA. Once they were able to create spaces to operate and promote their ideology, Taliban militants started offering parallel security and justice systems to the tribal people by establishing their own courts in almost all parts of FATA and in some areas in the settled districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The lack of an effective legal system in the FATA also aggravated people's frustration with the state's inability to administer justice. Although many saw the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) - a legal system based on British civil and criminal laws and adapted to include Pathan tribal code, *Pakhtunwali*, and customary laws (*riwaj*) like the trial procedure of the *Jirga* (tribal elders' councils)- as having clauses that violated the fundamental rights of the people, there were also reservations against abolishing or amending it. It was mainly due to absence of an alternative. In April 2008, members of the National Assembly and the Senate from the FATA declared in an informal statement that if abolished, the FCR "would be replaced by *Shariah*" [14]. Although this code attempted to take into account pre-existing forms of administration and justice, in modern times the FCR is widely known to obfuscate justice by retaining harsh British-era penalties such as the power to blockade hostile or unfriendly tribes (section 21); demolition and restriction of construction of hamlet, village or town on frontier (section 31); and the removal of persons from their places of residence (section 36)\*.

FATA's geography has also contributed to the challenge of governance as there are areas that have remained simply 'ungoverned', because these areas are perceived as inhospitable in terms of terrain. Difficult mountainous terrains in FATA pose significant challenges to transport, communication, the delivery of goods and services, and the provision of security. "Along with the geo-strategic interest of creating a buffer along the Afghan border, these logistical difficulties have contributed to the state's historical policy of indirect rule (in FATA) [15,

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\* For more on the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), see Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's 2005 report titled "FCR: a bad law nobody can defend," available at: <http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/pdf/ff/23.pdf>.

p.13]. This can be further understood by the fact that while the Pakistan military had last year announced successful completion of military operations 1 and 2 in Khyber Agency, it has recently re-started military operation (Khyber-3) in the agency's mountainous region along Afghanistan where reportedly fleeing militants have taken refuge.

## **2.2 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF INSURGENCY (2009-2014)**

While this paper has focused on the Taliban insurgency in FATA and its spillover effect into neighboring KP province, the insurgency has offered a complex challenge for the Pakistani state with dire implications for the country's internal security.

Though this challenge started to develop after 2001, it was compounded after two main developments that took place in 2007, i.e. the establishment of the TTP and the Red Mosque siege in Islamabad. By 2009, just in two years after its establishment, the TTP and its allies had not only consolidated their position in FATA but also marched towards KP province, virtually taking hold of Swat in the Malakand.

As far as spillover effect of the Taliban insurgency is concerned, in years following 2007, Al-Qaeda, the TTP, and militant groups in Punjab, Karachi, and elsewhere also continued the process of developing operational nexuses and hitting Pakistan hard with terrorist attacks. Splinter groups of banned militant, or jihadist organizations or emerging groups were found involved in the wave of terror in mainland Pakistan. These groups, tagged as the 'Punjabi Taliban', were the product of a narrative of destruction fostered within the country over the past decades. Their agendas revolved around Islamization and sectarianism. Their operational capabilities were enhanced by Al-Qaeda providing them training and logistics, and by the Pakistani Taliban offering safe sanctuaries in FATA.

Although the military operations in Swat and South Waziristan in 2009 stopped Taliban militants' march towards Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and beyond, the latter continued carrying out attacks across the country with or without support from allied groups including Punjabi Taliban. The main factor for that was an

ambiguity in responding to the escalating menace of terror on the policy and strategic levels while maintaining national and regional interests intact. “Largely that confusion entailed a distinction between good and bad Taliban” [16]. It was in that context that some Pakistani Taliban groups such as those led by Gul Bahadur and Maulvi Nazir - who were largely focused on Afghanistan and did not hit Pakistan like the TTP – were considered ‘good Taliban’. Similarly, Pakistan showed inaction against Afghan Taliban including Haqqanis, many of whom had been living on its soil. The ‘anti-Pakistan’ Taliban militants, mainly linked to TTP, took full advantage of this confusion in propagating their ideologies and getting recruits.

PIPS’ annual security review of Pakistan for 2010 noted that although the country witnessed an overall decrease in the number of violent incidents during the year-the first time that had happened since 2007-the progress on the security front and sustainable peace had not been achieved in KP and FATA due to a less than impressive performance of a weak political administration beset by chronic challenges of poor governance and failure to ensure effective political participation for the people [17]. While military operations were going on in FATA’s South Waziristan, Bajaur and Orakzai tribal agencies, in 2010, the number of terrorist attacks by militants also went up there by 28 percent in that year [18].

Similarly, in 2011, the highest number of terrorist attacks for any one region of Pakistan was reported from FATA. In subsequent years, the Taliban insurgency in FATA came across some harsh challenges mainly in terms of increasing internal rifts and infighting, leadership crisis, failure of the peace process with the government and eventually the Pakistani state’s and society’s consensual resolve to show zero tolerance to terrorism.

The death of its chief Hakeemullah Mehsud in November 2013 in a drone attack was a major blow for the TTP, which triggered differences in the group’s ranks, mainly among Mehsud and non-Mehsud segments of TTP over the

appointment of Mullah Fazlullah as Hakeemullah's successor. The insurgency faced major damage in 2013 but that did not halt its terrorist onslaught.

The incumbent government after coming into power after May 2013 elections focused is on peace talks with the Taliban. The All Parties Conference (APC) held in Islamabad on September 9, 2013-the prime minister chaired the conference and the army and intelligence chiefs and leaders of all major political parties attended-called upon the federal government to "initiate dialogue with all stakeholders," and authorized it "to take all necessary steps, including development of an appropriate mechanism and identification of interlocutors" [19] (*Dawn*, 2013). However the Taliban militants' continuing attacks, including on security forces, made the peace process irrelevant and ineffective.

Apart from terrorist onslaught, Taliban insurgency also remained engaged in searching and propagating new ideological strengths, which also contributed in the emergence of TTP splinters who were more brutal than the parent group including some who looked towards the IS. One of these splinters, formed in late 2014, was

Jamaat ul Ahrar, which claimed instantly after its breaking away from the TTP, that the TTP now belonged to them suggesting that they had substituted the older organisational and operational formations with new ones [20]. JamaatulAhrar has been an outcome of internal transformation the Taliban insurgency had been going through since long. This transformation did not happen in isolation but was part of transformations almost all terrorist and insurgent movements have passed through during the last one decade. For instance, much has been written about how "Kashmir-based militant groups and sectarian groups in Pakistan came under Al-Qaeda's ideological influence, which transformed major segments of these groups." "There were almost similar reasons behind the confrontation between the Taliban commanders Abdullah Mehsud and Baitullah Mehsud in 2004" [20]. Parallel to speeding up terrorist operation in Afghanistan - a viewpoint held by Abdullah - Baitullah also stressed

upon establishing the rule of Shariah in whatever tribal areas inside Pakistan were under Taliban control.

Later, mainly in 2008-09, differences between Hakimullah Mehsud and Waliur Rehman Mehsud<sup>9</sup> were primary of operational nature, but Waliur Rehman was not happy with the increasing sectarian tendencies in the TTP. “When ideological transformations occurred across Pakistani militant groups within the broader concept of an Islamic state, it gradually ‘purified’ their objectives and evolved different trends among them” [20].

### **2.3 POST ZARB-E-AZB SITUATION**

The frequency of terrorist attacks started to show signs of a visible decline in FATA, KP and elsewhere in the country only after the Pakistan army launched operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan and Khyber-I in Khyber Agency in 2014.

Before the launch of Zarb-e-Azb, the PML-N government had been advocating for talks with the militants. The TTP announced a conditional ceasefire on March 2, 2014 [21], in exchange for release of prisoners captured by the government [22], but backed out of the ceasefire on April 17 [23]. The Karachi airport attack on June 8 that year ended all prospects for peace talks and the political and military leadership decided to launch the military operation against the terrorists.

The government also came up with the National Action Plan (NAP) against terrorism early 2015, which reflected on the resolve of the nation against terrorism. The terrorist attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar in December 2014, which killed over 100 students, urged the government to evolve and implement NAP to assist already ongoing military operations.

As a result, there has been relative improvement in the country’s security situation since start of the year 2015 with the number of terrorist attacks gradually on decline. Still, the militants have been successful in carrying out some major attacks in 2015 and 2016 including sectarian-related, although with less frequency.

Military operations in North Waziristan and Khyber agencies and also in Karachi and parts of Balochistan have significantly damaged militant's networks and infrastructure. Secondly, since the attack on army public school in Peshawar in December 2014, federal and provincial governments have been more vigilant and have increased surveillance against the militants. Thirdly, as cited earlier, government evolved and announced NAP against terrorism, which is, though being implemented partly, exerting huge pressure on extremist and militant groups in the country.

However, some splinter groups of the TTP have recently started to strengthen their position in parts of FATA. For instance, Sajna Group, also known as Mehsud Taliban, has become active in South Waziristan and its militants are frequently targeting pro-government tribal elders or maliks, besides launching sporadic attacks on security forces. Similarly, JamaatulAhrar has increased its activities not only in its home-base Mohmand agency and bordering Bajaur agency, but has also carried out some lethal attacks in mainland Pakistan including Punjab.

Although the Taliban insurgency has now significantly been weakened in recent years, it has already left strong and long-term impact on the social fabric of Pakistani tribal society. The social structure within the FATA has already been uprooted, upsetting the equilibrium of Pashtun tribal society. The shift in the traditional structure of power, from the political administration to the army and from the *maliks*, or tribal elders, to the militants, and a new status for clerics as arbitrators between the tribe and the state are some of the effects of insurgency which will need concerted efforts to subside. The central, and thus the most difficult task for the state in the post-Taliban insurgency scenario will be to overhaul and rehabilitate tribal society, as well as restructure the administrative, political, and economic systems in the areas where the Taliban are still able to provide an alternative system to the people.

### **2.3.1 BORDER INSECURITY**



Military operations in FATA have largely certainly resulted in a relative improvement in internal security, but these operations have pushed many of the Pakistani Taliban groups and their Central Asian allies such as East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) to other side of Pakistani-Afghan border thus increasing the risk of border insecurity, or the threat of cross-border terrorism inside Pakistan [24].

Therefore, an insecure Pakistani-Afghan border continues to add insecurity in FATA because Pakistani Taliban militants not only cross over to Afghanistan to escape military operations but also cross back into Pakistan to attack security forces and civilians.

Pakistan's concerns about insecurity at the Pakistani-Afghan border have heightened in recent years, mainly after the investigations revealed that the APS attack was launched by Pakistani Taliban militants hiding in Afghanistan. Due to this growing border insecurity, Pakistan has been trying different options to secure the border including the construction of gate at the Torkham border-one of the two main border crossings between the two countries that lies in Khyber Agency; the other being at Chaman in Balochistan. Nonetheless, Afghanistan has reacted angrily to that believing that the construction of a gate violates the previous agreements between the two countries. Nonetheless, Pakistan asserts that the gate, known as Bab-e-Pakistan (The Pakistani Door) was constructed on Pakistani territory to check illegal crossborder movements.

### **3. THE STATE RESPONSES**

The Pakistani state has applied multiple approaches to address the issue. During the formative phase of the insurgency (2002-2009), the state tried soft, carrot and stick and different political solutions but when the militant movement converted into largescale insurgency, the state was left with little options except to apply full force to crush the insurgency. Here is a brief review of the state responses of both hard and soft types.

#### **3.1 RESOLUTION THROUGH TRADITIONAL MECHANISMS**

When the Afghan Taliban rule collapsed in Kabul and Al-Qaeda was dislodged from Afghanistan after the U.S. invasion in October 2001, Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives snuck across the border and into Pakistan's tribal areas. Initially concentrated in the South Waziristan tribal region, they expanded their already-present support base that existed due to connections going back to the 1980s and ethnic linkages among the local tribes on an ideological basis and by marrying into local families [25]. There was a wave of sympathy for the Taliban among the local population as they were seen as having been ousted by an invading power. Using this support, between 2002 and 2004, these Afghan groups organized scattered militants, developed a nexus with local tribesmen, and waged extensive guerrilla operations against coalition forces in Afghanistan until Pakistani forces began concerted operations against them in February 2004.

Pakistan tried to resolve the conflict in the tribal areas through the use of traditional mechanisms such as holding of *jirgas* and the formation of tribal *lashkars* (private militias) against the militants. This turned out to be a major policy error that later intensified the conflict. The primary focus of the establishment was to isolate al-Qaeda from the Taliban, but telling them apart proved to be a tricky affair, as the Taliban and al-Qaeda both faced challenges to their survival. Here a common purpose united both groups, at least momentarily.

The issue that led to the initial tension between the tribes and the state was the presence of foreign militants in the region. The first *jirga* in South Waziristan was held in August 2002 and the first armed *lashkar* to expel foreign militants was raised in October the same year [26]. But the tribes made these attempts in a half-hearted manner, with the goal of protecting their financial and political interests. They were generally inclined towards the militants and perceived them as holy warriors, fighting against the infidel forces in Afghanistan. When all else failed to achieve the desired results, the government imposed economic sanctions on the tribes. The Pakistani militants responded to the sanctions by expanding their operations to settled areas of KP. They launched several attacks in Peshawar and Bannu districts in 2003 and 2004.

The government also tried other strategies to resolve the issue, and at one point in 2004 it was even willing to allow foreign militants to remain in the area if they agreed to register with the authorities. When the militants intensified their activities in the tribal areas, it became clear that military operations against them had not yielded the desired results. Therefore, from this point onwards the political administration and Pakistan Army searched for possibilities of rapprochement, and struck several deals with militants. The tribes agreed to reconciliatory measures as the government's economic sanctions had started to bite [8, p.66]. In one agreement reached between the tribal chiefs and Pakistan Army on March 27, 2004, it was established that the houses and property of any person giving refuge to a foreigner (Afghans were not included in the category of foreigners) would be destroyed. In addition, the Pakistan Army and the political administration of the tribal areas settled all issues with tribal militants by paying them huge amounts of money [27].

However, *jirgas*, *lashkars*, economic sanctions, plans to register foreign militants, pay them money, use force, or even peace deals, failed to resolve the matter. The writ of the state was challenged as the FATA political administrations failed to curtail militants' access to resources and their mobility. Their resentment against the state -due to its military operations—encouraged FATA-based militants to band together and subsequently call for direct attacks against the Pakistani Army.

Until 2004, the main focus of the Pakistani Taliban was set on protecting foreign militants, recruiting and training for the war in Afghanistan, and securing their position against security operations. What transformed them into a major player in the FATA was a tactical change in their operations: they began kidnapping security and state officials from 2004. Although suicide attacks on security forces started in 2006 and played a role in demoralizing them, the kidnapping strategy elevated the Taliban to a position where they compelled the state to negotiate on their terms, and they began to bargain for the release of arrested militants as well [8, p.169].

The Wana military operation ended after a peace deal, Shakai agreement, was reached between Nek Muhammad, the Taliban leader, and the government in 2004. The Shakai agreement was not honoured by either side, which resulted in another military operation in South Waziristan in April 2004. It was the first time that the militants waged a massive campaign against the army in South Waziristan and got local clerics to issue *fatwas* declaring Pakistan to be *DarulHarb*(literally, a territory of war) - a land where Muslims could not live with personal security or religious freedom [8, p.66].

Economic sanctions against tribes further fuelled anti-state sentiment and paved the way for militants to develop parallel systems in areas they held sway. BaitullahMehsud, who united the tribal Taliban groups under the banner of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007, and was killed in a US drone strike in South Waziristan in August 2009, had first shaped the contours of his own system in the tribal areas when he reached an agreement with the government on February 22, 2005 in South Waziristan. He had been successful in securing a guarantee from the government that he would be allowed to enforce Shariah in the area in exchange for not sending his militants to Afghanistan. Not only did he not keep his end of the deal, the pact also helped the Taliban consolidate their grip on the area. Other militant groups followed in Baitullah's footsteps.

### **3.2 MILITARY OPERATIONS**

Since 2002, when Pakistan army launched its first anti-terrorism operation in FATA's North Waziristan Agency, FATA has seen over dozen major military operations including Wana and Shakai operations in Waziristan in 2004-05 and Operation Sherdil (Lion Heart) in Bajaur in 2008. However, the Operation Rah-e-Rast in Swat 2009 was the beginning of a new approach as state tolerance against the militants had reached at zero level and a full operational framework against the militants started evolving in the country. Later Operation Bia Darghalam in Khyber Agency, and Operation Rah-e-Nijat in South Waziristan in 2009 (Rah-e-Nijat continued in 2010 also) further reduced chances of any political solution with the militants. Operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan

in 2014, which still continues, and Operations Khyber 1 & 2 in Khyber Agency (currently third phase of the operation Khyber 3 is ongoing) were the manifestation of this resolve. Pakistan Army is currently engaged in uprooting the last stronghold of militants in Shawal valley of North Waziristan and Tirah Valley of Khyber Agency; parts of these regions extend to Afghan border.

These military operations have positively changed Pakistan's security landscape. Statistically, the frequency of terrorist attacks has gradually declined since the launch of the military operation in North Waziristan on June 15, 2014 [28]. The operation Zarb-e-Azab has considerably damaged the destructive edge of terrorist groups, mainly the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It has achieved its targets in North Waziristan to a significant extent.

### **3.3 NATIONAL ACTION PLAN**

In early 2015, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced the country's counterterrorism plan National Action Plan (NAP). As cited earlier, the NAP itself was announced in the wake of the Taliban attack on army public school in Peshawar in December 2014. Subsequently, many actions taken across the country are plugged under the NAP, even though they might have been decided much earlier. A review of NAP by PIPS in 2015 noted [29]:

“Critics point out that the country's National Action Plan is too much militarycentric, squeezing the space of the civilians. Others however believe that while military campaign against terrorists remains at the heart of NAP, government has failed to take some effective steps to reduce appeal of religious extremism and violent ideologies that feed terrorism.”

The emerging threats to Pakistan's security including from Pakistani-Afghan border, require a reassessment and change in approach. There is also a need to speed up the implementation of NAP. The government acknowledges that the implementation of NAP is faltering and there has been widespread public dissatisfaction with the ineffective implementation of the plan.

NAP's 20 points have a wide scope. The challenges standing in the way of implementing these points are mainly institutional, including lack of capacity of

related institutions and departments and also the lack of coordination among civil and military intelligence agencies. Also, lack of political will is a factor. The political leadership has yet to take complete ownership of the country's war on terrorism. The state's failure to make the National Counter-Terrorism Authority fully functional is one example of how civilian institutions have remained ineffective in becoming part of a larger internal security policy, which is still strategically guided by the army [28].

### **3.3.1 FATA REFORMS**

Most analysts agree that there is an urgent need to speed up the FATA reforms process. A review of progress made on NAP points in 2015 said, "in recent months, militants have started efforts to re-establish themselves in parts of FATA, mainly in those agencies where there is less military presence or pressure including Bajaur, South Waziristan and Kurram. A review of militants' growth in FATA in past suggests that they took advantage of existing vacuum in political and administrative structures and further weakened them by attacking the tribal elders, who have a key role in political administration. They could do so again in future, particularly when military pressure will be eased, if FATA's political and administrative structures are not mainstreamed or reformed." [29].

Luckily, the FATA Reforms Committee has recently completed its empirical work and proposed recommendations for reforms in FATA with the purpose to prepare it for a five-year transition period for merger into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. 13The committee members prepared these suggestions after paying visits to all FATA agencies and interacting with tribal elders, tribesmen, and government officials. Besides the proposed transitional measures to finally merge FATA in the KP province, some other key recommendations ask for setting the end of 2016 as the target date for the return of temporarily displaced persons and the completion of reconstruction before the end of 2017; the setting up of a high-level special committee comprising experts and officials under the KP governor to prepare before the end of 2016, a ten-year development plan for FATA; holding of party-based local bodies' elections in FATA after the completion of

rehabilitation phase; and renaming of the Frontier Crimes Regulation as Fata Regulation Act, 2016, omitting all sections relating to collective responsibility [30]:

## **4. THE EMERGING TRENDS & CHALLENGES**

### **4.1 EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR THE PAKISTANI TALIBAN**

Not only did the Pakistani Taliban have a well-defined ideological base, but the geo-strategic milieu also worked in their favour. While they did not enjoy moral or political support from neighbouring states, they have had strong connections with nonstate actors in those territories, which allowed them to thrive despite the opposition from the Pakistani state.

Coupled with the Pakistani state's belief that "the conflict in Afghanistan is upsetting the regional power balance in the favour of its adversaries, and that the war is entertaining covert wars of international and regional spy agencies and players, it has distracted the counter insurgency focus" [31].

The Pakistani Taliban also had dynamic leaders mainly including Nek Muhammad, Abdullah Mehsud, Baitullah Mehsud, and Hakeemullah Mehsud, who emerged as a 'charismatic strategist.' Hakeemullah quickly realized the benefit in associating himself with global terrorism rings, and used it as a means to enhance his own, and his outfit's stature (Rana, 2012). For instance, his appearance in 2009 in a video with a Jordanian suicide bomber (who later killed several CIA agents in the Afghan province of Khost) put his name on the list of high-value militant targets for the US; for this the Taliban endorsed his stature as a worthy successor to Baitullah. Similarly, TTP fingerprints on the failed Time Square bombing attempt by Pakistani born Faisal Shehzad in May 2010 elevated the TTP's stature as a group that could directly threaten the U.S. homeland.

At present, most of the Pakistani Taliban leaders are believed to be hiding in Afghanistan from where carry out attacks sporadic cross-border attacks inside

Pakistan. Some in Pakistan believe that Afghanistan is showing a similar sort of inaction against Pakistani Taliban that the former had been showing against Haqqani Taliban sheltered in Pakistani tribal areas. The cross-border incursions into and from Pakistan are not only affecting Pakistani-Afghan relations - both countries blame each other from cross-border terrorism - but also increasing insecurity at the border in absence of their efforts to evolve some border coordination mechanism.

#### **4.2 THE AFGHAN TALIBAN PUZZLE**

Pakistan supports an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political reconciliation, or talks with the Afghan Taliban. But it believes that it cannot use military force against the Taliban and at the same time try to convince them to engage in talks with the Afghan government [24]. This stance of Pakistan is described by some as a continuity of its traditional 'strategic depth' doctrine. However, others assert that for Pakistan the Taliban are among the Afghan political stakeholders and making them hostile would not only undermine its interests in Afghanistan but also add to Pakistan's internal insecurity [24].

However, Pakistan is no more in a state of denial about the Afghan Taliban's presence on its soil. Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz said in Washington on March 1, 2016 that Pakistan has some influence over the Afghan Taliban, for their leadership is in Pakistan, which it can use to bring them to the negotiation table but it cannot negotiate or offer them something on behalf of the Afghan government [32]. A Reuters report in March this year said that in a secret meeting held with Pakistani officials, the Afghan Taliban had rejected pressure to participate in Afghan peace process [33]. Later, the Supreme Council of Akhtar Mansoor-led Afghan Taliban decided against joining the peace talks anticipated for March 2016 [24].

#### **4.3 THE ISLAMIC STATE THREAT**

The so-called Khorasan chapter of IS also appears to be on the retreat in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, its affiliates and supporters have suffered heavy military losses at the hands of the Afghan Taliban, and in drone attacks and



operations by the Afghan security forces. Similarly, in Pakistan, extensive surveillance and intelligence-based operations have helped law enforcers bust many terrorist cells established by individuals who were either affiliated with or inspired by IS (Rana, 2016b).

Importantly, the group is losing its appeal and credibility among most militant groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan because of its extremely narrow sectarian views. Even the Deobandi militant groups—who largely control the militant discourse and infrastructure in the region—find it hard to reconcile with IS's criteria of 'righteousness' [34].

Many are surprised at what they see as an early and fast deterioration of the group. Others, however, interpret it as a process of reconstruction which is transforming the group from a local Islamist militant movement to a global terrorist group. As a terrorist group, IS will pose a bigger threat to global security as compared to Al-Qaeda, due to abundant human resources and the strong logistical support base it enjoys, especially in the West, from where the group has taken thousands of youths into its fold [34].

Bruce Hoffman, a renowned expert on terrorism, was quoted in a recent international publication as saying that even if IS dispatches only 10 pc of foreign fighters to their native lands, we would see the foundation of a potentially highly effective terrorist cell and support network. Another expert, Andrew Watkins, believes that although IS has set up a unit dedicated to international attack plotting, the threat which can come from IS affiliates, loosely organised supporters, or those inspired online, would be more challenging as such cells may not be fully under the control of the IS central command [34].

There is another aspect of this IS transformation. Al-Qaeda affiliates in different regions can take a weakening IS as an opportunity to attract its disillusioned members and engage them in terrorist operations. That would mean that it could also provide a lifeline to weakening terrorist movements, in a similar way when in 2014 Al Qaeda chapters and allies were not satisfied with the central leadership and felt attracted towards IS [34].

It can also be seen in another context. An ideologically inspired movement can divide into factions representing different tendencies and shades, but at a stage, these factions start complementing each other. This is not a new story in the South Asian context, where militant movements are in a constant state of evolution [34]. The Muslim countries cannot take this as 'someone else's problem' as their youths are engaged with IS, which can at any time trigger a wave of violence in their native countries. Turkey, Tunisia and other North African Muslim nations have already started to suffer at the hands of IS-inspired militants. This should be taken as a serious warning by Muslim countries that already have an active militant infrastructure [34].

The situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan is yet more complex. IS has challenged the theological framework of the Deobandi brand of Islam in the region and also questioned the ideological basis of the Taliban movement. The group tagged the Taliban movement as a nationalist one, which it believes does not qualify as a 'caliphate' movement [34].

In the beginning, IS had received an overwhelming response from militant groups in the region but could not sustain it because of its obsession with 'correcting' the religious practices of these groups and converting them to Salafism. IS distributed many religious decrees against Deobandi Islam, but a publication titled *Risalatulfil Deoband* (A Book for Deoband) created real resentment against IS [34].

The Taliban commanders, who were feeling attracted to the newly emerged movement, started reconsidering their decisions. The Central Asian groups, descendants of Hizb-i-Islami and Salafi Taliban from Kunar and Nuristan regions of Afghanistan, were already inclined towards Salafi tendencies and took over the leadership of IS in some parts of Afghanistan. But these groups, mainly the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, faced hard resistance from the Afghan Taliban [34].

This has stopped the IS advance for a while, but the group has already transformed the militant character of the region. The young Taliban commanders

feel more attracted to establishing an Islamic 'caliphate' and their belief that they can take over Afghanistan is becoming firmer.

Obviously, this transformation will have a negative impact on the reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The central Taliban leadership and senior commanders, who see an advantage in the political process, will face resistance from this young lot.

As far as Pakistani Taliban groups are concerned, IS had provided them ideological and political support when they were facing internal challenges and military operations by Pakistani security forces. JamaatulAhrar, which showed an inclination towards the Middle Eastern group and modified its organisational and operational framework along IS lines, has emerged as a new threat to Pakistan's security. The group has claimed responsibility for most of the terrorist attacks in Pakistan over the past few months. The group had never formally joined the IS. At present, it has developed a nexus with Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, which is another beneficiary of a weakening IS in the region [34].

That does not mean that the days of IS are numbered in the world and in our region. The group can review its strategies to regain its lost attraction. At the same time, the group still remains an inspiration for militants as well as religious segments of society with Salafi inclinations, small but highly motivated Islamist groups, and politically charged youth in cyberspace.

The IS threat has particularly emerged after the launch of Zarb-e-Azb operation; the self-styled Islamic State was not in sight when the operation was launched. Al- Qaeda was in transformational mode and was working on a change in strategy at the time. Just after the launch of Zarb-e-Azb, Al-Qaeda announced the establishment of its chapter in the Indian subcontinent; it was later found involved in some major terrorist attacks in the country. The Islamic State is attracting small urban-based groups and self-radicalised youth. These IS-inspired groups are gradually coming into a position of launching terrorist attacks [35].

Recently, Special Investigation Unit of FIA has revealed that at least 18 Pakistani citizens have recently travelled to Syria and Iraq either to join the

Islamic State group or anti-IS forces/groups there. Interior Ministry has subsequently placed names of those individuals including 3 women on the exit control list [36]. This is not the first time that the news of Pakistanis travelling to Syria and Iraq have emerged. Few months back, small cells of IS-inspired individuals were busted in various cities that were reportedly also recruiting people for Syria and Iraq besides planning attacks inside Pakistan.

A media report claimed on the basis of the estimates made by Pakistan's intelligence agencies that about 650 Pakistanis were fighting in the conflict zones of Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Central Asian states along with different foreign organizations. Intelligence agencies have so far identified 132 of them and expressed the fear that their return after being defeated by international forces might add to sectarian strife in Pakistan [37]. In particular, members of some sectarian outfits have traveled to join IS in Syria and Iraq, who could escalate sectarian terrorist attacks after they return back to Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Gen John W. Nicholson, who commands the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, has said that almost 70 per cent of the fighters of the militant Islamic State group in Afghanistan are Pakistani Taliban who joined IS after having been forced out of their country. "In the case of Islamic State Khorasan province, the majority of the members are from the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)," said the general while briefing Washington-based journalists at the Pentagon during last week of July 2016. Many of these terrorists were forced out of Pakistan by the Zarb-e-Azb military operation, he added [38].

## **CONCLUSION**

Pakistan's first security policy, National Internal Security Policy (NISP (2014/18)), was announced by the federal government in February 2014 that also entailed elements of counterinsurgency. The policy draft offered three major elements: dialogue with all stakeholders; isolating terrorists from their support bases; and enhancing deterrence through capacity-building to enable the security apparatus to neutralize threats to internal security. The NISP framework employed both soft and hard approaches. The soft approaches entailed research

and understanding, and winning of hearts and minds. The hard component consisted of a composite deterrence plan. The National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was supposed to implement the policy [39].

Although the outgoing coalition government led by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) (2008-2013) had not announced a national internal security policy, it developed approaches to address the critical security challenges. The PPP-led government's approach was based on countering terrorism and it did not try to institutionalize the responses to threats. Former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani announced the formulation of a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy based on political engagement and economic development, backed by a credible military element. One of the main aspects of the PPP government's approach was the ownership of the war against terrorism. The government had declared the war on terror as its own war in an effort to influence the public opinion against the militants. That approach significantly contributed in the effectiveness of the Swat military operation (2009) when political parties and the nation stood by the military in its fight against militants.

Under NISP, the PML-N government tried to hold dialogue with the Taliban militants that did not materialize mainly due to the latter's unwillingness to stop terrorist attacks and partly due to lack of agreement among political and military elites on the issue. The December 2014 Taliban attack on Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar changed the whole scenario. While Pakistan army had already started military operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan, the APS attack, which killed over 100 students, led the government to come up with a new and comprehensive counterinsurgency approach in the name of National Action Plan (NAP).

It is largely due to military operations in FATA and elsewhere, and NAP that there has been relative improvement in the country's security situation, mainly since the start of the year 2015. Though the number of terrorist attacks is gradually on decline, yet the militants have been successful in carrying out some major attacks in 2015 and 2016 including sectarian-related, although with less

frequency. There are also issues in the implementation of NAP which critics say is too military-centric. Many believe that without building the capacity of civilian institutions and improving coordination among different security and law enforcement agencies, an effective implementation on NAP points is not possible.

Also, the government yet appears to put its primary and foremost focus on antistate militant groups mainly the Taliban and sectarian militant groups such as Lashkare-Jhangvi to stem the tide of violence. How would it deal with the Pakistani militant groups, who are not involved in anti-state activities including those focused on so-called 'jihad' in Kashmir and Afghanistan, and also Afghan Taliban, is still a big question mark. That implies the current focus is on reducing the terrorist attacks inside Pakistan, while other aspects of counter insurgency such as across-the-board dismantling of militant groups, counter- and de-radicalization, and reintegration of militants are out of question for the moment.

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# **CENTRAL ASIA: BETWEEN GLOBALIZATION & REGIONALIZATION**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*The Central Asian countries tried to integrate into the world system not as a single region, but each on its own. At the same time, individual states aimed at different niches in the world system. Turkmenistan placed its bets on the energy sector both strategically and tactically. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan initially focused on raw materials, hoping then to move into the industrial sphere. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan strategically relied on the water and energy sector, but in the short and medium term they tried to make money on transit and transport projects. It is important that in the selected niches, all the Central Asian countries wanted to be important players not on a regional, but on a global scale.*

**KEYWORDS:** Central Asia, globalization, regionalization, regional cooperation

To the outside world, the Central Asian region has always looked like a cultural-historical, partly political and economic entity. However, in the region itself, two trends coexisted – on the one hand, rapprochement and cooperation, and on the other, rivalry between the countries of the region.

Within the Soviet Union, the interdependencies between the republics arose both naturally due to the development of the economy and social ties, and were imposed on the republics artificially for ideological or political reasons, sometimes out of ignorance. At the end of the Soviet Union, many dependencies seemed unfair and the desire to eliminate them was becoming part of the strengthening national consciousness. This formed the conditions of

super-actions in a modality that can be called "regional egoism".It was manifested in the desire to either get rid of regional interdependencies or transform them in their favor, that is, to make neighbors dependent on themselves in order to get unilateral benefits.The Central Asian countries got involved in the game of "bypassing the neighbor" which meant sections of roads and railways, pipelines and power lines were built bypassing parts of the neighbor's territory (sometimes even at the expense of increasing the length and cost of transportation). In many cases, this was not possible and then the use of common infrastructure gave rise to many disputes and mutual claims which led to the deterioration of political relations [1].

This regional egoism was also fueled by the desire to connect as quickly as possible to the trend of globalization that was gaining strength by the end of the 20th century. The remaining scientific and technical base of the Soviet Union, the skilled labor force and the natural resources located in the region-all this gave hope for a decent life. At the same time, it seemed possible for them to realize their potential through cooperation primarily with advanced and rich countries of the world. However, the impediment to integration into the world system was the location of the region in the depths of the Eurasian continent and the infrastructure connection almost exclusively with Russia, which was in deep economic crisis. This created in all the countries of Central Asia a strong desire to diversify transport infrastructure in all geographical directions and this desire became part of the strategic culture almost part of what is sometimes called the "foreign policy DNA" of the elites of the Central Asian states.

At the same time as this desire to reach out to the outside world, there were also talks about closer regional cooperation, both in the format of only the Central Asian states, and in broader formats. The corresponding regional associations were created. However, for a long time, the direction of regional cooperation was more declarative, and in practical terms, regional selfishness and the desire to expand ties with the outside world prevailed, if not to the

detriment and at the expense of cooperation with neighbors, then at least in a more priority order.

The Central Asian countries tried to integrate into the world system not as a single region, but each on its own. At the same time, individual states aimed at different niches in the world system. Turkmenistan placed its bets on the energy sector both strategically and tactically. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan initially focused on raw materials, hoping then to move into the industrial sphere. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan strategically relied on the water and energy sector, but in the short and medium term they tried to make money on transit and transport projects. It is important that in the selected niches, all the Central Asian countries wanted to be important players not on a regional, but on a global scale.

However, in practice, the Central Asian states found themselves on the world stage in about the same position as many other developing states, they had to compete with many dozens of developing countries for the attention, interest and favor of both the governments of world leaders and multinational companies. Ultimately, this meant having to play by someone else's rules, even if there was little opportunity to influence.

Gradually, it was realized that regional selfishness and the degradation of regional cooperation did not facilitate, but made it more difficult to connect with the outside world, join globalization and participate effectively in it. In addition, in the context of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009, globalization had seriously stumbled. For the first time in a long time, the world's leading economic leaders have become a source of serious problems rather than a source of growth and development, and they have taken protectionist and restrictive measures. The slowdown in the global economy forced developing countries to pay more attention to regional cooperation mechanisms. In the post-Soviet space, the idea that if the world economy ceases to be a source of growth, at least on the desired scale, then regional

cooperation and regional economic integration can become such a source of growth. Indeed, back in the early 2000s, something paradoxical happened from the point of view of the dominant views at that time. At the beginning of economic growth in Russia and Kazakhstan in 1999 (with the beginning of a cycle of high energy prices), their trade began to grow faster not with the outside world, but with post-Soviet countries-primarily Ukraine and Belarus. This was primarily business to business trade. As soon as the funds appeared, they began to spread through the previous chains of economic ties. There were ideas that such trade and cooperation can be not only a consequence of growth tied to external factors, but also support such growth and increase its volumes. This means that it is necessary to seriously, and not declaratively, create a Customs Union and even a Single Economic Space, that is, to develop economic cooperation in an integration manner. Against the background of the financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009, there were reasons to believe that regional integration can not only strengthen local growth based on external factors, but even become the main source of growth against the background of a slowing global economy. Hence the idea was that the modality of globalization was changing. Previously, it was seen as a direct, as if horizontal, interaction of different actors, the ideal of which would be a “flat world” as described by the well-known liberal author Thomas Friedman [2]. But there were ideas that the new modality of globalization was that its main participants would be large regional integration associations, and many dozens of states would connect to globalization through them. It was on the basis of these ideas and with direct references to them that Vladimir Putin and N. Nazarbayev presented the idea of the Eurasian Economic Union ten years ago. Understanding the genesis of these ideas should leave no doubt that the Eurasian Economic Union was not conceived either as an isolationist bloc, or, to paraphrase a well-known expression, as a “new geopolitical prison”, that is, as a cover for some political and geopolitical projects.

In Central Asia, there is an interest in both regional and global vision of their region. The Central Asian states are not interested in being trapped in the depths of Eurasia, far from the main trade routes. But they don't need complete openness either. In absolute numbers, the entire region is exceptionally small in the scale of the global economic system. With the complete removal of barriers, states risk losing their economic sovereignty, becoming a space exclusively for land transit and some major infrastructure and energy projects that will create rents, primarily at the disposal of the elites.

To maintain long-term social stability, the region needs broad economic development with reindustrialization to create jobs. Objectively, both globalization and regionalization can contribute to this. The main thing is to determine a safe balance.

In practice, this means finding a balance between Russian, Chinese and American initiatives for Central Asia.

Representatives of different schools call the changes taking place in the world in the information and scientific-technological sphere in different ways: the third industrial revolution (Jeremy Rifkin), the new technological way of life (Sergey Glazyev), or simply the “new reality”. But everyone means the same thing. Breakthrough technologies are replacing traditional production methods. Extrapolation of the processes is already underway into the future leads scientists and entrepreneurs to believe that many sectors of the economy will be seriously transformed in the near future; the methods and geography of production, the distribution of added value among the participants of production processes will change. As a result, the balance between developed and developing countries will change significantly.

Production is expected to become: less energy-intensive – less oil and gas will be needed, less material-intensive-the demand for industrial metals will fall, less labor-intensive-the use of cheap labor will decrease. Altogether, this can

seriously move forward the trend, which is already partly observed now – the return of production from developing countries to developed ones. The role of those who are in industrial and raw material niches will decrease, and those who occupy a scientific and technical niche will increase.

The question of how exactly new technologies will change international politics and the world order remains open. The model of the world economy in recent decades has been based on global value chains (GCVS), where parts of the production of final products were distributed around the world, and developing countries attracted them to their territories, which stimulated economic globalization. In the “new reality”, at least in the early stages, globalization is not so necessary. Production is concentrated in those countries and regions where there are highly qualified personnel, and they are systematically reproduced in developed countries (education, applied and theoretical scientific schools, the manufacturing sector). “Evolutionary spirals” will form, where progress or demand in one segment spurs efforts and development in another. Only a few states have such a system of “evolutionary spiral, and only they are able to claim the creation of new technological zones, which, especially at first, have a regional scale [3].

Regionalization in the "new reality" will also be promoted by the purchasing power and capacity of sales markets. Since only developed countries can create and maintain the technological and educational base for the “new reality”, they will also provide markets, since their residents have an appropriate level of purchasing power. As Boston Consulting Group points out, “one of the consequences of these processes will be that global production will increasingly become regional. Since low-cost manufacturing centers exist in all regions of the world, more goods consumed in Asia, Europe, and the Americas will be made near home.” The process of returning previously exported industries and technologies to developed countries has already begun.

Meanwhile, in the developed high-tech centers in the process of regionalization, the concentration of primarily high-tech and expensive production can be observed. However, experts point out that as technologies become cheaper, the production of cheap consumer products will also be concentrated in these centers, given to robotic lines which will lead to a reduction in the cost of final products. If both segments- expensive high-tech and mass-produced cheap goods are produced in developed technology centers, developing countries will experience a crushing blow.

In this regard, a rather bleak prospect looms before the states that are late to distribute the dividends from globalization. They will gradually be cut off from intellectual resources, investments, capital and technologies. This, in turn, will reduce their chances of creating their own technological zones, increase the threat of internal instability and outflow of personnel due to the lack of the necessary number of jobs.

In such circumstances, finding a balance between globalization and regionalization in Central Asia will not be easy, on the one hand, but on the other, it is absolutely necessary: without regional sources of growth, developing economies will not be able to maintain the growth rates they need.

In this case, there will be many theoretical and practical difficulties. For example, in the context of the trend of globalization, being at the junction of regions looked like an advantage. Everyone dreamed of becoming "bridges" between North and South, East and West. In the process of regionalization, the "border state" proved to be a serious challenge. The Ukrainian crisis of 2013, when the local elite split over the choice of the direction of in-depth cooperation – with Russia or the EU – is a frightening illustration. There are other examples of unsuccessful attempts to get involved in big geopolitical games in the post-Soviet space as with Saakashvili in Georgia and K. Bakiyev in Kyrgyzstan. For Central Asia, the question of how much to involve Afghanistan

in regional cooperation remains open, and its practical resolution will largely depend on the stability of this country [4].

The responsible elites of the Central Asian countries have yet to find optimal strategic solutions, taking into account the conflict between global and regional trends that have emerged in the past decade. The experience of 2020, the challenges of the pandemic, once again showed how complex the theoretical and practical challenges of our time are.

There are certainly global, and in this sense, common, challenges in the world. But there are no universal answers. We are entering a new historical state – a world that is materially connected, and in this sense global, but ideologically different, non-universal [5]. Global structures are not effective enough, but national governments, especially small and medium-sized states, cannot do everything by themselves. This only increases the interest in regional cooperation.

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# 5

## CONNECTIVITY & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT\*

**Dr. Anita Sengupta**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*Connectivity can be simply taken to imply global-spatial proximity in the sense of the shrinking of distances through the dramatic reduction of time taken to cross them. At another level of analysis connectivity shades into the idea of spatial proximity via the idea of “stretching” of social relations across distance. The creation of globalized spaces also inevitably implies the creation of a degree of cultural “compression”. The resulting de-territorialisation is then taken to fundamentally transform the relationship between the places that one inhabits and cultural practices, experiences and identities.*

**KEYWORDS:** connectivity, regional development, mobility technologies, regional integration, Central Asia

An abiding feature of the modern world is its complex connectivity. This is perhaps best exemplified by the networks of interconnections and interdependences that characterize every aspect of modern social life. It is this connectivity that pervades all accounts of globalization. Connectivity can be simply taken to imply global-spatial proximity in the sense of the shrinking of distances through the dramatic reduction of time taken to cross them. At another level of analysis connectivity shades into the idea of spatial proximity via the idea of “stretching” of social relations across distance. The creation of globalized spaces also inevitably implies the creation of a degree of cultural “compression”. The resulting de-territorialisation is then taken to fundamentally transform the relationship between the places that one inhabits and cultural practices, experiences and identities. Logistics is integral to both the material and cultural aspects of connectivity and the dynamics generated by contesting logistic visions is likely to create competing networks that will reconfigure the way in

which the world is imaged. In fact, it could also fundamentally transform the way in which 'areas' or 'regions' have traditionally been conceptualized. When the world was analyzed in the categories of bipolar interaction the presence of regional or sub regional subsystems was subordinate to the logic of a global division into two worlds. This exclusivity is today challenged by logistic visions reflecting contemporary geopolitics which is likely to recreate the context within which regions and 'regional' organizations are perceived which in its turn would impact upon 'regional' development.

### **NEW REGIONAL IMAGINATIONS & CONNECTIVITY**

Once the setting for the historic Silk Road and host to a multiplicity of mobilities, Asia re-emerged as a useful case study for exploring the complex relationship between pursuing economic development through trans-state linkages and promoting political agendas through securitization. In the post-Soviet context connectivity assumed central importance as did the development of inter and intraregional trade networks. New routes and in the process new partners were sought for creating opportunities for a rethinking of traditional ways of conceptualizing partnerships within the Eurasian space. The renewed focus on Eurasia's connectivity infrastructure has its roots in the far older stories of travels from those of Marco Polo to the Mongol empire and the fabled Silk Road. Subsequent engineering advances and infrastructure has made possible what was only imagined in previous generations. Over a century ago global navigation and trade was reshaped by the construction of the Suez and Panama Canals. Today, the dream of Ottoman Sultans to connect European with Asian part of Istanbul became possible in 2013 with the construction of the Marmara tunnel. In modern times efforts to shape infrastructure across Eurasia have been underway for more than a century in Russian railway systems. Similarly, the Asian Highway and Trans Asia Railways initiative have been in place for nearly half a century. The popularly named New Silk Road initiatives refer to a variety of visions for formalizing transit flows across the Eurasian space and provide the justification for such approaches. The term Silk Road has been used by a variety

of intra and extra regional players for the expansion of mobilities which require states to act as ‘bridgeheads of connection and development’ [1]. For international organizations like the United Nations, Asian Development Bank, Organization for Security and Co Operation in Europe and states promoting specific vectors of connectivity (China/Turkey/Russia/US) impeding threatening or ‘illegal’ mobilities and promoting mobilities that augmented their economic positions and reoriented foreign and economic policies of Eurasian states towards them became the perceived goal of many of the Silk Road projects.

Constructing mobility technologies is an inherently political act involving financial, regulatory and technical relations that bring together the interest of actors at various levels of interest. The various ‘New Silk Road’ Initiatives provided opportunities for exploring the multifaceted impact of trans-state corridors of human/resource and ideational transit and were contingent on the assumed acquiescence of the participating states to varied modes of overland traversal in the interest of collective gain. Within the metaphorical frame of the New Silk Roads there were a number of strategies. The New Silk Road strategies planned by the United States and the European Union were premised on prospects for overland connection between China, India, the Middle East, Europe and Russia resulting in revenue for the Central Asian states and particularly sustainable development of Afghanistan after US withdrawal [2]. From the US perspective a South Asia-Central Asia transit corridor had been foreshadowed by the Northern and Southern Distribution Networks for provision of supplies for Afghanistan’s military operations and included a number of infrastructural projects to facilitate the transport of resources.

The perspective was officially presented in 22 September 2011 in a speech by the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

For centuries the nations of South and Central Asia were connected to each other and the rest of the continent by a sprawling trading network called the Silk Road. Afghanistan’s bustling markets sat at the heart of this network. Afghan merchants traded their goods from the courts of the Pharaohs to the

Great Wall of China. As we look to the future of this region, let's make this precedent as inspiration for a long term vision for Afghanistan and its neighbours. Let us set our sights on a New Silk Road — a web of economic and transit connections that will bind together a region too long torn apart by conflict and division [3].

The Chinese alternative vector of trade and transit, though in place ever since the independence of the Central Asian states, was articulated in terms of a consolidated 'Silk Road' during President Xi's multistate tour of the states. The explicit use of the term was presaged by years of intense economic engagement where trade grew from \$527 million in 1992 to \$40 billion in 2012 [4]. Since this trade required infrastructural development it also offered a vector of mobility. This infrastructure took the form of rail lines, roads, airports and pipelines, one of the most significant of which are Kazakhstan-China pipeline, which is China's first direct import pipeline and the gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to China via Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In contrast Russia lacks an official 'Silk Road' strategy though a number of other initiatives and most recently the Eurasian Economic Union has been an attempt at creating a common economic space.

### **REGIONAL COOPERATION & CONNECTIVITY**

The geopolitical function of what is termed as Central Eurasia has thus been reinterpreted keeping in mind requirements of regional cooperation and connectivity. One such reinterpretation examines it in terms of establishment of systemic ties between segments of the countries of Central Europe, the Central Caucasus and Central Asia. Arguing along these lines Eldar M Ismailov, Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies of the Caucasus, Baku, Azerbaijan, notes the necessity of arriving at an understanding of the historical and geopolitical developments specific to the Eurasian continent where he underlines the importance of Central Europe as the missing element that would allow the completion of the pivot area [5]. Given the importance of what is today one of the most significant functioning lines, the BTC (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) and its orientation towards Europe, this is not surprising. Ismailov begins with the

argument that the geopolitical situation of the 21st century has revived the conceptions formulated by Mackinder and Spykman. He then stresses what Mackinder had observed about the functional unity of Eastern Europe and the Heartland. He carries this argument forward to show how in every stage of the Heartland's development Eastern Europe has remained a spatial element of its structure. Ismailov traces the evolution of the 'pivot area' from the Hun Empire, through the Turkic and Khazarkhaganates, the Arabian Caliphate, the empire of the Seljuks and Mongols, Timur's Empire, the Ottoman and Safavid Empires and the Russian and Soviet takeover of the region and shows in detail how at different times the Pivot expanded or contracted within the Empires which for several centuries replaced each other in its expanses. He argues that as a rule each of them left behind stable administrative-territorial units within which the historical evolution of the Pivot area unfolded. He argues that in the 21st century the function of the pivot area can be described as ensuring sustainable land contacts along the parallels (West-East) and the meridians (North-South).

There are today a number of connectivity projects that reflect this geopolitical thinking. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization will soon be joined by two South Asian states, China is set to invest \$46 billion in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor linking Kashgar to Gwadar and India will invest \$500 million in Iran's Chabahar port. Other regional connectivity projects include the Five Nations Railway Corridor (linking China to Iran via Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) and regional energy integration projects including CASA 1000 [6] electricity transmission project, TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan, Pakistan-India) natural gas pipeline and TUTAP (Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan) electricity transmission lines. Initiatives for integrating the South and Central Asian markets include the common Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM) which include projects like CASA 1000, TAPI, TUTAP [7]. Chinese led infrastructural projects include (a) Moscow-Kazan high speed railway (b) Khorgos-Aktau (Caspianport) railway (c) Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline(between Turkmenistan and chine (d) Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline,

line D (extending the gas pipeline with agreements with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) (e) China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway (f) Khorgos Gateway (development of a dry port on the China Kazakh border) [8].

While this re-imaging presents various possibilities the overlapping of states, (no longer contained within clear bipolar divisions) in multilateral 'regional' organizations is another case in point. In fact, institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) which includes 57 non-contiguous Asian and European states including China and India may become a new 'region' in terms of significance. Some of these institutions have been created to support logistic visions and the AIIB itself is a recent example. This Chinese initiative supports China's logistic vision of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) with the aim to bring South Asian economies closer to China, Central Asia and West Asia. Chinese economy had been growing rapidly for a long time, the important shift in growth pattern occurring at the time of the global economic crisis [9]. China's response to this changing growth dynamic was partly external and partly internal. This period of excess capacity at home was the moment when China launched expensive new initiatives like the AIIB, the BRICS Bank and the One Belt One Road Initiative in order to strengthen infrastructure both on the westward land route from China through Central Asia and on the southerly maritime routes from China through Southeast Asia and on to South Asia, Africa and Europe. Compared to the post War Marshall Plan, as an initiative OBOR is projected as an instrument to create a continuous land and maritime zone where countries will pursue convergent economic policies, underpinned by physical infrastructure and supported by trade and financial flows. The inclusion of people to people links is recognition that soft power will play an important role in creating congenial political environment for sustaining the initiative. The OBOR policy document further states that the initiative is designed to uphold 'open world economy and the spirit of open regionalism', an obvious counter to the more exclusive US led mega economic blocks in the making the Trans-Pacific

Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP).

Deeper economic integration within Asia is embedded in the larger framework of China's attempt to build rail, road and port infrastructures across Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan, thereby dramatically shortening cargo transport time between Asia and Europe/the Middle East and Africa. Another important motivation is the development of the relatively underdeveloped southern and western Chinese provinces. OBOR has a transcontinental (Silk Road Economic Belt) and maritime (Maritime Silk Route) component. Much of the transcontinental route passes through areas of traditional Russian influence and regions where Russia is attempting to recreate a common economic zone in the form of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

It is therefore significant that there is a proposed amalgamation of China's Silk Road Economic Belt and the EEU and setting up of a dialogue mechanism which is likely to create a synergy that would cover connectivity, trade, energy and raw material production in the region. There are in addition two significant energy projects linking the two states, "The power of Siberia" pipeline and the Altai gas pipeline. During the Putin-Xi summit that took place in Moscow on May 8, 2015, the leaders of Russia and China signed a joint declaration "on co-operation in coordinating the development of the Eurasian Economic Union with the Silk Road Economic Belt. The declared goal was to build a common economic space in Eurasia, including a free Trade Agreement between the EEU and China. While the positive implications of the connection is clear there remains the issue of implementing the merger of an institutionalized body like the EEU with what is essentially still an idea in the making. There is also the fact that since their interests overlap in Central Asia, multilateral formats would have to be developed for discussions. Also mechanisms would have to be developed to implement joint projects on EEU states, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. The institutional framework developed for the EEU free movement of funds, goods, services, and labour) would mean that implementation of these

rules in the territories of the non EEU states that are within the purview of the SREB will be problematic. However, despite problems this is a synergy that India would have to take note of as it moves towards a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union. Though the SREB has been generally well received implementation could be problematic. India in particular is concerned about the maritime element of the route that moves through the Indian Ocean though it also presents possibilities of cooperation in corridors like Iran. While the strategic implications of OBOR has been viewed with concern it remains a fact that OBOR is underpinned by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) and the proposed Shanghai Cooperation Financing Institution and all of these include or will shortly include India.

## **CONCLUSION**

Regional connectivity is regarded as the level and effectiveness of regional networks to facilitate flows of goods, services, people and knowledge. This extends the traditional focus of public policies beyond either physical or non-physical parameters to encompass both dimensions. Enhanced connectivity will play an influential role in shaping regional integration through development in Asia. The contribution of “hard”, or physical, infrastructure networks to economic and social development however depends on “soft” infrastructure, including the policy, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks in which they are located. Trade and transport connectivity within the region will continue to be important, particularly as countries look towards regional markets to counterbalance the slowdown in the global economy. At the same time, new drivers of growth are expected to shape future patterns of economic and social development in the region, and with them, other types of regional networks will become increasingly important. Given that the effectiveness of each network is increasingly dependent on the connectivity of other networks, it is clear that any analysis of regional development would have to take note of various networks of connectivity.



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# 6

## **RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES\***

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## **ABSRTACT:**

*Russia is rapidly developing its foreign affairs and economic interactions in Asia for several recent years. By the end of 2000s Russia has chosen the Eurasian vector of development. The Eurasian Economic Union has been started with establishment of the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2010. Later, another central Asian country has joined the EEU - Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan now decides the question of membership in the Union. In May of 2015th Russia has agreed with China on conjugation of China's Silk Road Economic Belt and the Eurasian Economic Union. The started expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which unites 4 of the 5 countries of the region, in the long terms should transform it into key player in Asia.*

**KEYWORDS:** Russia, Central Asia, EEU, economic cooperation

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The economic issues are important for all three associations, as the economic is a priority for the world politics in general today. In this article we will analyze the trade and economic cooperation of Russian and Central Asia countries. It is necessary for understanding of possibilities of strengthening of Russia's economic positions in the region and facilitation of the formation of stable social and economic situation in these countries and thus enhance of Russia's foreign politics influence in all these areas.

**Trade.** Given its overall tendency to decrease after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia's trade with Central Asia was characterized by wild fluctuations during the 2009-2015 crisis. In 2014, Russia's overall trade turnover with the Central Asian countries totaled about 29 billion dollars, and in 2015, 21 billion dollars.

Since 2012, Russia's positive trade balance for the region has increased steadily due to the dropping number of Central Asian imports (Kazakhstan is the exception) (see table 1). The principal reason is the imports structure of the Central Asian countries. Russia buys natural and agricultural raw materials from them, and also chemical products. Certain types of products and equipment are sold to Russia only by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Since 2010, Gazprom drastically reduced gas acquisition in the region: in 2008, the total volume was 66.1 billion cubic meters [1], and in 2014 it was only 29.52 billion cubic meters, 10.98 billion cubic meters of them purchased in Turkmenistan, 7.38 billion cubic meters in Uzbekistan, and 10.95 billion cubic meters in Kazakhstan [2]. Since 2016, Russia has stopped buying gas from Ashgabat completely. These purchases were the largest in that particular price segment. They will most likely continue to drop, since volumes contracted to China increased to 65 billion cubic meters, and no new large fields became operational in the region [3].

Energy resource trade with Kazakhstan is growing, and it is bilateral, since Kazakhstan re-exports Russian oil to China (this is one of the ways of overcoming competition between Russia and China in the oil and gas industry in the region). Moreover, both countries have mutual shares in processing their neighbor's fossil fuels in their own territory. At the same time, Russia sells oil products and fuel, oil, and lubricants (FOL) at preferential prices, which is equivalent to economic aid, and this is Russia's largest export item to those countries.

**Table 3. Russia's Foreign Trade with Central Asian Countries, millions of dollars**

Countries	2008	2010	2012	2015
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	exports	imports	balance	exports	imports	balance	exports	imports	balance	exports	imports	balance
Kazakhstan	13,301	6,371	6,930	20,690	4,449	6,241	5,483	9,409	5,483	10,45	4,657	5,794
Kyrgyzstan	1,311	492	819	975	393	582	1,438	196	1,438	1,269	71	1,198
Tajikistan	796	210	584	673	214	459	679	68	611	747	51	696
Turkmenistan	809	100	709	718	148	570	1,211	184	1,027	902	73	829
Uzbekistan	2,067	1,298	769	1,664	1,514	150	2,325	1,391	934	2,161	587	1,573
Region's total	18,282	8,471	9,811	14,720	6,718	8,002	20,741	11,248	9,493	15,530	5,439	10,090

Source: Calculated by E.M. Kuzmina based on "Bilateral Trade between Russian Federation and China." URL: [http://www.trademap.org/countrymap/Bilateral\\_TS.aspx](http://www.trademap.org/countrymap/Bilateral_TS.aspx)

Russia exports mostly finished products to this region: foods, and various types of equipment, including transportation equipment. In the early 2000s, Central Asia used up to 27% of equipment, including transportation and high-tech, imported from Russia. However, in 2005-2015, this share dropped significantly due to some Russian goods being non-competitive because of poorly developed exports support mechanisms in Russia.

Since 2009, the Russian government has been improving the rules for providing state guarantees for exports of Russian industrial products [4]. The Russian Agency for Export Credit and Investment Insurance has already provided support for exporting tractors, mining equipment, and other machinery, paper, oil products and FOL products to Central Asia [5]. In 2014, JSC Roseximbank was transferred to the Agency in order to expand its activities [6]. At the same year, the Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund was established to promote the modernization of Kyrgyzstan's economy. Therefore, Russia makes significant efforts to overcome some fundamental reasons underlying the decreasing exports of its industrial products into the region. However, in the very near future, the economic crisis in Russia and in the post-Soviet space will make it very difficult to overcome the negative trends.

**Investments.** Between 2009 and 2014, Russian investments into the region were gradually growing. Table 2 gives the data of Central Bank of Russia and the data of the Monitoring of Mutual Investments in the CIS (MMI in the CIS) of the Eurasian Development Bank for 2015. The monitoring also takes into account the data from Russian companies investing into the Central Asian economies. One could presume that under the economic crisis, certain investment projects will be frozen. This is borne out by the folding down of Russian-Kyrgyz hydropower projects.

**Table 4. Russia's accumulated investments in the Central Asian countries in 2009-2014, billions of dollars**

Country	Central bank of Russia's data			Data from MMI in the CIS		
	2009	2013	2014	2009	2013	2014
Kazakhstan	1,7	2,8	2,6	9,7	8,7	9,1
Kyrgyzstan	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,7	0,6	0,6
Tajikistan	0,2	0,6	0,4	0,9	1,0	1,0
Turkmenistan	0,3	0,0	0,001	0,0	0,0	0,0
Uzbekistan	0,8	0,3	0,4	2,9	4,0	3,8

Source: *Mutual Investment Monitoring in the CIS countries. 2015. EDB. Report no 32. P. 21*; Central Bank of Russia. *Foreign Sector Statistics*. URL: <http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?PrId=svs>

The level of accumulated Russian investments in the economic of the Central Asian countries on July 1, 2016 reached approximately \$ 17.4 billion.: in Kazakhstan - more than 6.7 billion; in Kyrgyzstan - more than \$ 62,290,000.; in Tajikistan – more than \$ 1.6 billion.; Turkmenistan - more than \$ 173 million.; Uzbekistan -. more than \$ 5.9 billion. At the same time, 47% of investments gone to the energy industry, 22% - in non-ferrous metallurgy, 15% - telecommunications. From the 6600 Russian and joint ventures in the countries of Central Asia 5520 accounts for Kazakhstan, 944 for Uzbekistan.

However, there are significant hidden investments of Russia in the region. From 2008 to October 2015, it has helped the countries of Central Asia in the amount of \$ 5.6 billion in repayable financial assistance included: more than \$ 3.5 billion on a bilateral basis; more than \$ 570 million through the UN.; more than

\$ 1.3 billion. through the World Bank and other organizations (OSCE, etc.), as well as the EEU, including part of implemented in Central Asia Russia's contribution to the EEU AntiCrisis Fund in the amount of more than \$ 592.3 million. During this period, about \$ 352 million is allocated for the training of military and civilian personnel for the countries of Central Asia in Russian universities.

The Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund is working since 2015. By 13/02/2017, the fund issued preferential loans has been granted for the 665 projects already. The total volume of disbursed loans equals to 202.048 million dollars. So, the fund has invested in the reconstruction of the international airport "Manas" airport and "Tamchy" in Issyk-Kul. At the end of 2016 the equipment for production of sugar "Koshoy" and "Kaindy Kant" has been purchased, which allowed to start a project of sugar production restore. The large program for agriculture sector is ongoing.

**Fuel & Energy Complex (FEC).** The largest volume of Russian investments went into producing energy resources in Central Asia. In 1995-2014, LUKOIL invested over 7 billion dollars into 7 production projects in Kazakhstan, which is 10% of the country's overall production [7]. Since 2005, RN-Exploration, a subsidiary of Rosneft, jointly with KazMunayGaz, develops Kurmangazy, a border oil field on the o Caspian shelf. So far, surveys turned up no signs of hydrocarbons [8]. Gazprom invested over 1 billion dollars into Kazakhstan's FEC [9]. Since 2004, LUKOIL's amount of accumulated investments into Uzbekistan's economy totaled about 2.5 billion dollars [10]. Since 2006, Gazprom invested over 400 million dollars into Uzbekistan's FEC [11]. The company owns JSC Kyrgyzgaz and is engaged in prospective surveys and modernization of the country's gas distribution system. In 2015-2017, Gazprom intends to invest 758 million dollars [12]. Given the very low profitability of investments into the Kyrgyz gas sector, these investments may be viewed as a type of economic aid. Since May 2003,

Gazprom spent 170 million dollars on prospective surveys of the oil fields of Sarykamysh and Western Shaambary in Tajikistan [13].

**Pipelines.** Kazakhstan's oil is transported across Russia via the Atyrau-Samara pipeline (no less than 15 million tons a year), the Makhachkala - Tikhoretsk - Novorossiysk pipeline (no less than 2.5 million tons a year) [14], and the Tengiz - Novorossiysk Caspian Pipeline Consortium [15] with the capacity of 35 million tons [16]. In 2014, the pipelines pumped 225 million tons of oil and gas. Soviet-built pipelines Central Asia-Center (from Turkmenistan) and Bukhara- Ural (from Uzbekistan) needed to be drastically modernized. Gazprom, jointly with Uzbek and Kazakh pipeline companies, expanded the capacity and improved reliability of these pipelines. Given Russia's decreased purchases of gas in the region, these partially modernized pipelines are sufficient to cover Gazprom's needs.

**Mining.** In 2014, the largest accumulated investments in Kazakhstan's nonferrous industry belonged to Atomenergoprom (1.7 billion dollars) and Polymetall (0.76 billion dollars) [17]. In 2013, JSC Atomredmetzoloto acquired the control stock in the joint Russian-Canadian company Uranium One, the largest developer of Kazakhstan's uranium deposits [18]. Russian Platinum Company paid 100 million dollars to acquire the right to develop the Dzherui gold deposit and to conduct a prospective survey of the Dzher- Uisite in Kyrgyzstan [19].

**Oil and gas processing.** Russia and Kazakhstan have long-standing ties in this area going back to Soviet times. The power supply of Omsk Oblast is largely tied to coal from Kazakhstan's Ekibastuz, and Omsk Oblast imports 2 million tons of oil alone. Some oil-processing products then go to the Gazpromneft-Kazakhstan joint venture, which has a network of oil depots and gas stations in the country. Its share of Kazakhstan's market is about 3% of the overall volume of oil product consumption [20]. The oil supplied by Rosneft (about 5 million tons) powers the Pavlodar petrochemical plant and the Shymkent oil refinery (2 million tons) [21]. LUKOIL supplies oil to Pavlodar oil refinery, Gazprom Neft



supplies oil to Pavlodar and Shymkent oil refineries, and Surgutneftegaz supplies oil to Pavlodar oil refinery. Combined, these four companies account for 77% of Russian supplies [22]. Given that there are no customs duties imposed on Russian oil and oil products coming into Kazakhstan, we can talk about cooperation of mutual economic profitability.

The same system applies to the gas sector. Russian Orenburg gas refinery processes gas from Kazakhstan's field of Karachaganak. KazRosGaz, a joint venture created specifically for this purpose, sends the gas that has been processed in Orenburg to Kazakhstan's domestic market.

In 2015, an oil refinery financed by Russian investors was built and put into operation in the Kyrgyz city of Tashkomur [23].

***Machinery manufacturing.*** Russia's cooperation in this sector is particularly active with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Russia contributes to Kazakhstan's space sector by building the Baiterek rocket and space complex [24] and maintaining Baikonur Cosmodrome, which costs 5 billion rubles a year on average [25].

In addition, Russia annually contributes 1.16 billion rubles to the municipal budget of the city of Baikonur. This step may be viewed both as an investment into supporting Kazakhstan's space infrastructure, and as economic aid [26]. Khrunichev State Research and Production Space Center developed and created the KazSat space communication system to help develop Kazakhstan's television broadcasting system and fixed satellite service [27]. Three KazSat satellites have already been placed into orbit. By 2012, 30 stations of the GLONASS project had been built in Kazakhstan, covering the entire country [28].

In the second half of the 2010s, JSC Yak Alakon, a joint Kazakhstani-Russian venture, plans to offer on the global aviation market two models of a light, multipurpose Yak-58 aircraft [29]. The aircraft is to be manufactured in Kazakhstan.

KAMAZ jointly with Kazakh enterprises (JSC Tynys) assembles NefAZ buses. KamAZ Engineering Joint Venture was created in Kazakhstan; it

manufactures buses and towed vehicles, and also bus body shells. In 2012, Asia Avto Kazakhstan joint venture was created to start full-cycle automobile manufacturing (up to 120 thousand vehicles a year). The total volume of investments in the project is about 400 million dollars [30]. GAZ Group and SemAZ Kazakhstan automobile manufacturer opened a plant in Semey for contract assembly of Ural vehicles; it is intended to manufacture about 400 vehicles [31].

Kazakhstan is one of Rostselmash's (Rostov-on-Don) largest foreign partners. The share of harvesters manufactured by Rostselmash accounts for 42% of grain harvesters in Kazakhstan [32]. Kazakhstan has an assembly line manufacturing Vector and Acros harvesters. In 2013, Petropavlovsk started manufacturing agricultural equipment [33] for the countries of the Customs Union and Central Asia. The investments totaled about 30 million dollars [34].

The engineering and industrial group Tractor Plants Concern built several plants in Petropavlovsk for manufacturing modernized harvesters. They also plan to manufacture wheel-type tractors and specialized public works vehicles.

Ship-builders from Astrakhan Oblast carried out several commissions from Kazakhstan's and international oil companies (Agip) working on Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea shelf. They built the Sunkar drilling rig, ice guards for floating drilling rigs, accommodation units for oil industry workers, flat top barges, and pipe racks. In 2012, the Marine Shipyard 2 supplied a Kolonok-class refrigerator and transportation vessel and floating station for Kazakhstan's shipping [35]. Astrakhan shipbuilding manufacturing union built over 15 vessels for maritime shipping for Kazakhstan's OMS Shipping LLP [36]. KrasnoyeSormovo plant in Nizhny Novgorod built three oil tankers for Kazmortrasnflot. The contract was worth a total of 66,45 million dollars [37]. Kazmortransflot owns three more tankers: Astana, Almaty, and Aktau, built by the Vyborg shipbuilding yard [38].

Ural Turbine Plant modernized the steam turbines at the Petropavlovsk CHPP-2 and Pavlodar CHPP-3. Approximate cost of the equipment is about 120

million dollars. Four steam turbines built at that plant have already been shipped to Ust- Kamenogorsk CHPP [39].

In Uzbekistan, a group of ZUMK Group companies is implementing a series of projects in chemical, coal, and mining industries; their total cost is about 180 million dollars [40]. The Electroshield Samara Group and Samara Cable Company reequip and modernize the production facilities at Uzelectroapparat-Electroshield and Andizhan Cable joint ventures and have already contributed 3.5 million dollars of direct foreign investments [41].

**Electric power.** Inter RAO UES invested 1.26 billion dollars in Tajikistan's economy [42]. JSC Sangtudin Hydropower Plant I, a joint Russian-Tajik venture, has built and is now using a hydropower plant on the river Vakhsh. The share of Russian companies in the registered capital of the Sangtudin Hydropower Plant I [43] is 75% minus one share [44]. Inter RAO UES also owns 50% of stock of Ekibastuz Hydropower Plant-2 [45] in Kazakhstan's Pavlodar Oblast. In 2009, the company built and put into operation a 500 kW power line Zhitikara-Ulke; it is 486 kilometers in length and it links the Aktyubinsk power system, which has a power deficit, with the power system of North Kazakhstan, which has excess power [46].

In 2012, Russia and Kyrgyzstan formed a parity venture Upper Naryn Hydropower Plants LLC [47] to build four hydropower plants on the river Naryn. The project's cost was estimated at 24 billion rubles (727 million dollars at the exchange rate as of November 2013) [48]. In 2015, Russia failed to provide complete financing for the construction of the hydropower plant and did not determine the sources for the financing for 2016. As a result, the planned launch of the first unit of Naryn Hydropower Plant I in 2016 was derailed [49], and it forced Kyrgyzstan's parliament to denounce the agreement with RusHydro LLC in January 2016 to build another hydropower plant in Kyrgyzstan, namely, Kambaratin Hydropower Plant I [50].

In 2012, the Russian company Power Machines modernized Charvak Hydropower Plant in Uzbekistan's Tashkent Oblast, with the total financing of 56.5 million dollars [51].

**Labor migration & migrants' remittances.** The key economic factor in developing relations with Central Asia states is its large migration flows into Russia. The Federal Migration Service has the following data: as of December 4, 2015, in Russia there were about 1.9 million citizens of Uzbekistan, about 0.7 million citizens of Kazakhstan, about 0.5 million citizens of Kyrgyzstan, about 0.9 million citizens of Tajikistan, and about 0.03 million citizens of Turkmenistan.

Prior to 2015, labor migrants' remittances Russia grew annually (see Table 3). It should be noted that the data in the table do not take into account the amounts in cash that migrants send to their native countries via non-banking means, for instance, via Islamic banking, or hawala.

As Table 3 shows, in 2015, the amount of remittances decreased more than twofold. However, we should remember that the amounts are calculated in dollars.

**Table 5. Labor migrants' remittances from Russia, millions of dollars**

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Kazakhstan	n/a	221	290	298	377	577	318
Kyrgyzstan	0,9	1,250	1,386	1,682	2,113	2,062	1,083
Tajikistan	1,7	2,191	2,705	3,125	3,927	3,584	1,278
Turkmenistan	-*	24	22	27	35	31	16
Uzbekistan	2,5	3,834	4,692	6,241	7,878	5,653	2,370

\*No data.

Source: Central Bank of Russia. External sector statistics. Individuals' transfers from Russia to the CIS countries.

URL: <http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?prtid=svs&ch=itm14138#CheckedItem>;

Transborder wire transfers of individuals (residents and non residents).

URL: <http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/Default.aspx?Prtid=tg>

All the national currencies in the region, and the Russian ruble, in 2015 dropped significantly compared to the American dollar. Therefore, amounts in national currencies are comparable to the figures from previous years.

Migrants' wire transfers are a significant part of national GDPs; historically, they accounted for up to 50% of Tajikistan's GDP and to 33% of Kyrgyzstan's GDP. At the same time, they are a source of additional investments into economy, they determine the population's level of consumption, decrease poverty and unemployment, and mitigate the problems that lead to the growth of religious extremism in the region. That is why the decreasing labor force exports into Russia and decreasing wire transfers, seen during the 2014-2015 economic crises, are dangerous in light of the deteriorating socioeconomic situation and the growing number of extremism adepts in Central Asian countries.

Thus, speaking of economic cooperation between Russia and Central Asia Countries, we frequently talk about politics of liaison and coordination of Russia's largest companies - Gazprom, Rosneft, LUKOIL, Russian Space Agency, TENEX, KAMAZ and others in the region. Bilateral cooperation has been implemented more successfully recent years. At the same time, Russia's interests in some of the Central Asian countries quite differ in subject areas, alternativeness and institutional conditions, as well as development prospects. Considering the situation in the economy of each of the Central Asia Countries we need to develop detailed cooperation programs with each of them. For instance, in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan it is necessary to use not only the republics' resource potential, but also their industrial potential and possible cooperation in innovation sector.

But Russia is also interested in the development of multilateral cooperation in the region within the frameworks of existing organizations (SCO, EEU). Meanwhile a coherent coordinated policy of the country for the entire region has not established yet. The existing potential of Russia's cooperation with the countries of the region today, trade, economic, industrial areas can only be

realized if there is an official state strategy and a specific action plan for Central Asian countries. The core of Russia's strategic line in Central Asia was the justification of the priorities of the integration, both in terms of individual countries in the region and in multilateral cooperation projects on specific areas of cooperation. Today we can only talk about the initial phase of the development of a multilateral strategy within the EEU.

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# 7

## **MODERN POLICY OF DECENTRALIZATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN UZBEKISTAN**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*Uzbekistan has been actively implementing the decentralization reform for the recent several years. These changes have mainly covered strengthening of financial stability and empowerment of local administrations with partly transfer of decision-making duties. However, despite these positive changes there are a number of challenges in the effective and efficient adoption of decentralization. Shortcomings of the legislation on local governance, concentration of power within hands of local authorities, lack of accountability and absence of the unified approach in appointment*

*system of local administrations can be indicated among the current challenges of decentralization reform in Uzbekistan.*

**KEYWORDS:** Uzbekistan, reform, decentralization, legislation, governance, local authorities

Since the first days of independence, Uzbekistan has paid attention to the issue of gradual decentralization of the public administration system. Especially after 2016, this direction was identified as one of the priorities in the strategy of actions for the development of the republic approved in 2017. The importance of the phased decentralization of public administration was identified among the approved main directions and tasks of the administrative reform of public administration [1].

## **CAUTIOUS DECENTRALIZATION**

The reforms carried out in the period from 2016 to 2020 in this direction demonstrate that Uzbekistan is still trying to carefully implement administrative and fiscal decentralization, while maintaining the status quo on the issue of political decentralization. The following decisions should be noted, which were aimed at strengthening local government agencies:

1. Strengthening the financial independence of the regions, supporting the growth of the revenue base of local budgets, and increasing the powers of local authorities to formulate priority expenditures at the level of oblasts, cities, and regions.

At the first stage, the country's leadership decided to conduct an experiment with the local budgets of the city of Tashkent and its districts. Thus, on June 7, 2017, Presidential Decree No. UP-5075 "On measures to expand the powers of local government bodies in the formation of local budgets" and

Resolution No. PP-3042 “On expanding the powers of local government bodies and increasing their responsibility for the formation of revenues of local budgets” [2].

According to the above legal acts, a number of receipts as a flat tax on certain types of entrepreneurial activity, property tax and land tax from individuals and legal entities, a single tax payment for micro firms and small enterprises to the revenues of regional budgets. As well as tax for the use of water resources, tax on the consumption of gasoline, diesel fuel and gas, as well as other fees were redistributed in full or in part in favour of the city budget of Tashkent and local budgets of its districts [3].

Already at the end of 2018, it was decided to extend this practice to other regions of the republic. It was decided, in addition to the above types of taxes and fees, to the regional budgets to transfer part of the most important receipts in the form of taxes on personal income and value added tax, as well as fully receipts from the excise tax on alcoholic beverages, beer, retail sales of gasoline, diesel fuel and gas [4].

However, unfortunately, the increase in the volume of revenues of local budgets is not always associated with a parallel increase in the level of accountability of local authorities and the introduction of a transparent system for their spending. In many cases, additional revenues are used only to strengthen the material and technical base of local khokimiyats (local administrations), and not to develop social infrastructure.

2. Transfer of decision-making powers from central government bodies to local authorities and increasing their responsibility for the socio-economic development of regions, cities, and districts.

At the end of 2018, local authorities were also transferred from the republican budget to local funding for a number of state-funded organizations. For example, financial departments / sectors of khokimiyats, departments of

justice, territorial plant quarantine inspectorates, information and library centres, territorial departments of state financial control and treasury, museums and theatres of regional significance, as well as departments / sectors of the off-budget Pension Fund [5]. Along with this, in order to activate the independent activity of local kengashs of people's deputies, it was decided to form separate secretariats that will provide organizational, technical and other services for the activities of local deputies [6].

Moreover, starting in 2018, military-administrative sectors have been formed in each region of the republic under the leadership of the khokims of the regions. The innovations were justified by the need to ensure a sufficient level of interaction between military districts and local government bodies, as well as to attract local budget resources to develop the infrastructure of military camps and training grounds, to strengthen the material and technical base of military units, institutions and subunits [7].

At the same time, it is important to distinguish between the functions of central and local authorities in this direction. According to the concept of decentralization, the central government usually retains control over such strategic sectors as the military and can only transfer financing and regulation of the activities of mainly territorial police institutions to local authorities.

In this context, it should also be mentioned that since August 2017, the activities of the sectors have been established – a new system for the integrated socio-economic development of regions [8]. In accordance with this and in order to increase the responsibility of local leaders for the incremental progress of the regions, the territories of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regions, districts, cities are divided into four sectors for integrated socio-economic development under the leadership of the khokims of regions and districts (cities), heads of regional prosecution bodies, internal affairs, tax service. The heads of the sectors were instructed to systematically study the situation in the families of their regions and solve the identified problems at the place.

The issue of the timely and effective execution by the heads of the regional prosecutor's office, internal affairs, and tax service of their direct official duties in parallel with the occupation of socio-economic issues and the balance of the distribution of powers at the local level requires a separate study.

During the period of a pandemic and the introduction of quarantine measures, the country's leadership has repeatedly noted the responsibility of local authorities for the stability of the epidemiological situation in the responsible territories [9]. Moreover, local authorities were given the authority to independently tighten or weaken quarantine measures in their territories in agreement with the health authorities [10]. It was also proposed to make decisions on the resumption of traditional educational activities by schools in September 2020 for local kengashes of people's deputies based on the epidemiological situation in each district or city [11].

## **CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING DECENTRALIZATION MEASURES**

Despite the measures taken to increase the responsibility and importance of local authorities, there are a number of systemic problems on the path of the decentralization policy in Uzbekistan:

1. While there have been some changes in the legislation, the fundamental legal act regulating the activities of local authorities, the Law on State Power in Localities, is still being implemented in the outdated version, approved in 1993 [12].

Back in May 2019, it was reported about the development of this legislative act in a new edition [13], but so far it has not been adopted. According to this project, it was proposed to expand the powers of khokims on the ground, including in their list the coordination of the activities of territorial law enforcement agencies in matters of ensuring the observance of public order, the safety of citizens, the protection of their rights, freedoms and health, the

prevention of offenses, compliance with the passport and visa regime, the social rehabilitation of persons who committed offenses of law [14].

Obviously, it is necessary to adopt this normative legal act in a new edition in accordance with modern realities and within the framework of a cardinal transformation of the public administration system in accordance with the launched administrative reform. Along with this, the approval of the Strategy for the consistent decentralization of public administration with the indication of specific terms for each stage of the transfer of powers from central bodies to local authorities, increasing the independence of local authorities, their financial support, high responsibility, and transparent accountability.

2. In recent years, the powers of local authorities, especially khokims and khokimiyats, have significantly expanded. Currently, according to the legislation, they perform about 300 tasks and functions, while 175 of them are not included in the main competence of khokims and duplicate the functions of other departments [15].

Decentralization in the country is developing according to the type of deconcentration, when the powers transferred from the centre are consolidated in the hands of the local khokim. Effective decentralization requires greater involvement of non-governmental organizations in the work of local authorities. The transfer of certain functions and the involvement of NGOs to address pressing socio-economic issues in the field of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, youth, supporting vulnerable groups of the population, as well as education could relieve local executive structures. It would also help to improve the targeting of government support and the role of civil society in resolving significant local issues.

Decentralization in the country is developing according to the type of deconcentration, when the powers transferred from the centre are consolidated in the hands of the local khokim.

However, in the context of a low level of accountability of local authorities and the possession of extremely broad powers, several cases were recorded demonstrating the facts of corruption, the flourishing of localism and conflicts of interest. Thus, the ex-khokim of the Samarkand region T. Dzhuraev was accused of receiving large bribes, abuse of office and was sentenced to 13 years of prison [16]. In December 2020, the facts of winning large state tenders in Andijan, Jizzakh and Khorezm regions by companies controlled by the relatives of the responsible leaders of the khokimiyats of these regions became known to the public [17].

Maintaining the practice of simultaneously leading the khokims of the representative and executive power in the respective territory, coupled with a low level of their accountability to the local population and the kengash of people's deputies, non-transparency of the procedure for allocating land plots, decision-making, personnel appointments, public procurement and tenders for construction work, provision of services increases corruption risks. This can cause serious damage to the achievement of national interests in the socio-economic well-being of the country.

In this regard, the procedure for training and appointing leadership personnel in local authorities needs to be revised. There is a need for the adoption of comprehensive legislation on the civil service, the introduction of a system of stage-by-stage training of civil servants and their appointment to top responsible posts on the basis of meritocracy.

The fulfilment by the heads of territorial authorities and law enforcement structures of their direct responsibilities, enshrined in legislative acts, can increase the efficiency of their activities, as well as strictly observe the system of checks and balances with a special role of the judiciary as arbitrators in resolving disputes between central and regional issues at the level of each as a separate territory.

3. The concept of decentralization implies a gradual decrease in the role of the central government. However, in recent years, there has been a tendency towards an increase in the number of central administrative structures and their staff headcount. Compared to 2016, the number of ministries was increased from 14 to 22 units, state committees from 8 to 10, agencies from 6 to 7, committees from 2 to 4, inspections from 7 to 8. In this vein, currently, khokims of the regions, cities and districts can have up to eight assistants on various issues [18] compared to three to six assistants at the beginning of 2016 [19].

An excessive increase in the staff of both central and territorial government bodies can lead to excessive bureaucratization of issues, concentration of powers, complication of the decision-making procedure and a tangible increase in the costs of maintaining administrative structures. Given the low potential of local authorities, the growth of their number cannot turn into a qualitative leap in the efficiency of management and in the socio-economic development of territories.

Unfortunately, despite the increase in powers and a tangible improvement in financing the activities of local authorities, the number of regions requiring the allocation of transfers from the republican budget to cover their expenditure items has grown from 7 in 2018 [20] to 11 in 2021 [21]. The country's leadership also announced in December 2020 a decision to optimize the number of employees in the public administration system to an average of 15 percent [22].

4. A unified approach to the appointment of the management and employees of the territorial subdivisions of the central authorities, as well as to the financing of their activities on the ground, has not been formed.

In this vein, the heads of health departments, main financial departments, pre-school education departments are appointed and dismissed by agreement with local khokims, heads of public education departments and territorial



divisions of the treasury are appointed and dismissed without agreement with local government bodies.

Prosecutors of regions, heads of regional departments of justice and departments of internal affairs are appointed and dismissed by their immediate heads from central departments.

At the same time, the heads of the departments of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the regions and the State tax departments of the regions are appointed and dismissed by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The appointment of heads of socio-economic departments by decision of local kengashs, and heads of law enforcement agencies by central authorities could help increase the role of local deputies, as well as create a unified system for the formation of heads of local bodies.

Along with this, funding of the activities of the main financial departments of khokimiyats, territorial departments of state financial control, departments of the treasury by regions, departments of justice of regions in 2018 were transferred from the republican budget to local budgets [23].

In these conditions, the process of purposeful, constant, and impartial monitoring of the formation of income and the distribution of income of local budgets by the above-mentioned financial bodies may be disrupted. Also, the implementation of effective control over compliance with the requirements of the legislation, legality in law enforcement practice and rule-making activities of state bodies at the local level is violated due to their dependence on local leaders.

This system in its current form can work effectively only in the context of increasing the accountability of local authorities and increasing the transparency of their daily activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

In general, it should be noted that the decentralization of public administration is often perceived only as a simple strengthening of the powers of local authorities. In fact, effective decentralization is possible with thoughtful allocation, rather than division of overall responsibility between central and local governments.

Effective decentralization implies the creation of a new model of relationship between the central government and local authorities, based on closer cooperation and a strategic role of central government. At the same time, many cases in Uzbekistan demonstrate that the expanded financial independence of local authorities at the current stage of development and, considering the existing gaps in the legislation, is detrimental to ensuring financial discipline and financial stability of the regions.

The key factors for the success of decentralization reforms are the combination of these transformations with a holistic modernization of the government system, the creation of the necessary regulatory and legal framework, the development of an adequate capacity of local authorities and a tangible increase in their real accountability in decision-making and budget allocation.

It goes without saying that tackling these issues takes time, long-term commitment, and political will from central governments to implement decentralization reforms. In this case, as the practices of many countries of the world show, decentralization can bring such positive results as improving the quality and efficiency of the provision of public services at the local level, accelerated socio-economic development of territories, as well as active participation of local residents in decision-making by the authorities.

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## **PART II**

# **TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES IN CENTRAL ASIA**

# 8

## UZBEKISTAN SEEKS NEW STIMULI FOR THE GROWTH OF ITS ECONOMY IN THE EAEU SPACE

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### ABSTRACT:

*Creating a new economic basis requires significant financial and technological resources, and external markets are one of them. With this in mind, the expansion of foreign trade and economic relations has been given the highest priority by the Government of Uzbekistan. The focus is not only on new markets which the government is seeking to open up for Uzbek businesses, but also on the so-called 'traditional markets' including those of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries*

**KEYWORDS:** Uzbekistan, EAEU, trade, economy, cooperation.

Since 2016, Uzbekistan has been implementing fundamental economic reforms as part of "openness policy", the core of which is the philosophy of economisation and economic pragmatism in foreign policy. The reforms aim not only to expand production capacity, but also to create conditions for a transition to a qualitatively new type of economy based on Industry 4.0 technologies and

knowledge. The most important outcome of the reforms should be an increase in the living standards of the population and their purchase power.

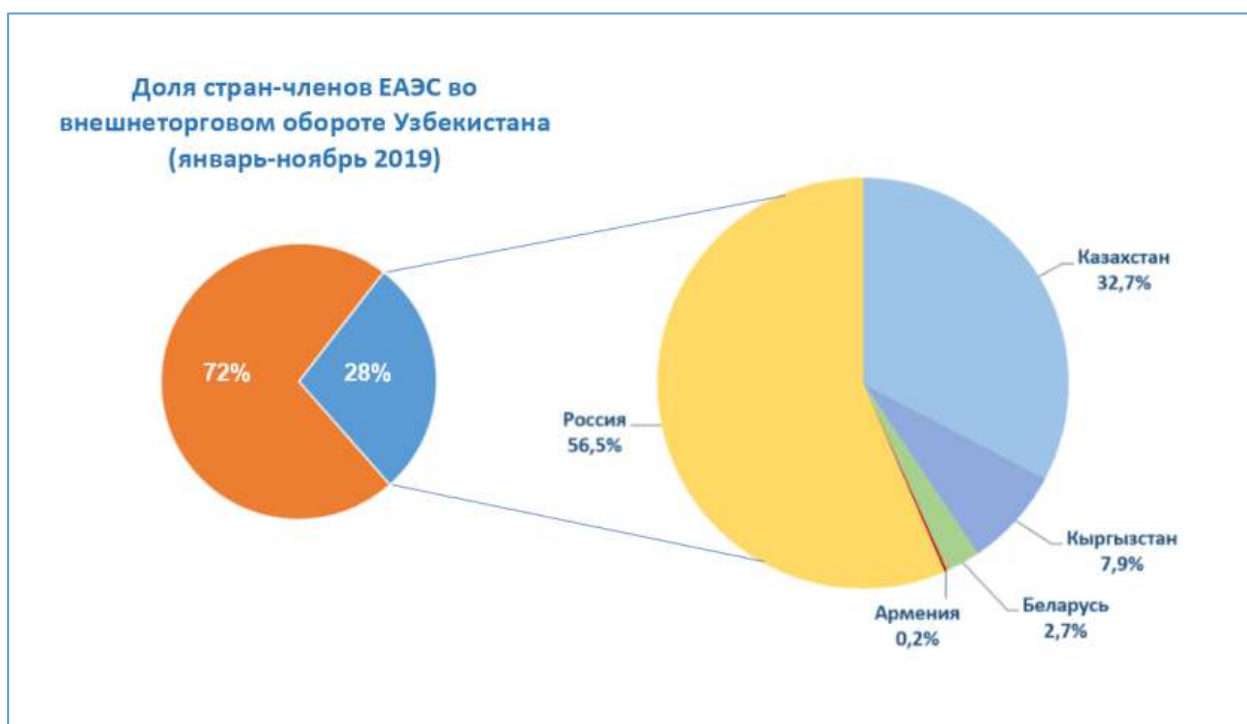
Creating a new economic basis requires significant financial and technological resources, and external markets are one of them. With this in mind, the expansion of foreign trade and economic relations has been given the highest priority by the Government of Uzbekistan. The focus is not only on new markets which the government is seeking to open up for Uzbek businesses, but also on the so-called 'traditional markets' including those of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries. The EAEU market can also be called a 'natural market' for Uzbekistan because of both its geographical proximity and historical reasons.

## **FINDING NEW MODELS OF COOPERATION WITH THE EAEU**

The combined market volume of the EAEU member states in terms of GDP is almost US \$2 trillion with 180 million consumers. Of the Eurasian five, the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan have the largest shares in Uzbekistan's trade turnover - 16.9% and 8.9% respectively.

Uzbekistan's trade turnover with Belarus and Kyrgyzstan is growing rapidly. In 2018, Uzbek-Belarusian trade turnover grew by 130% to \$419.9 million [1]. In turn, trade turnover with Kyrgyzstan has soared in recent years thanks to the fact that the countries have successfully resolved earlier disputes in bilateral relations. In 2018, trade reached 481 million dollars, of which 348.2 million came from Uzbek exports [2]. According to the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade (MIFT) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, bilateral trade exceeded the \$818 million mark in 2019. Thus, between 2016 and 2019, trade turnover between the two countries had increased almost fivefold [3].

Overall, Uzbekistan's trade turnover with EAEU member states increased by 52% between 2016 and 2018, reaching \$10 billion, which accounted for about 28% of the country's foreign trade turnover.



The number of joint ventures is growing rapidly. While in 2018 the number of JVs with Russian capital in Uzbekistan stood at 901, the number had risen to 1,042 by the end of 2019.

A similar situation was observed with the growth in the number of JVs involving Kazakh capital - there was a year-on-year increase from 272 to 510, as well as Belarusian capital - 39 against 27 a year earlier.

The EAEU occupies a crucial place in Uzbekistan's transport strategy, since the share of its member countries in the total volume of Uzbekistan's export, import and transit freight traffic by railways makes up 67%, 71% and 78%, respectively.

The EAEU plays a serious role in mitigating demographic pressure on the Uzbek economy, as the country's natural population growth has already reached 700,000 people per year [4]. Currently, 2.3 million Uzbek citizens are working in EAEU countries. About 2 million people are temporarily working in the Russian Federation and 300,000 in Kazakhstan. In the first nine months of 2019, remittances from the EAEU states totaled about USD 4 billion or 84% of all remittances coming into the country.



It should be noted that the EAEU economy, despite a number of difficulties caused both by some internal disputes and the impact of difficult processes in the global economy, demonstrates a number of positive trends that can give an additional impetus to the growth of various economic parameters of the union's member states.

These include, of course, the EAEU's ongoing strategy of expanding the number of countries with which free trade agreements are being concluded. In 2015, an agreement was signed with Vietnam, increasing trade turnover from \$4.3 billion to \$6.7 billion by 2018.

A similar agreement was signed in October 2019 with Singapore, whose trade turnover with the EAEU now stands at \$4.4 billion. A free trade zone is expected to be established with Iran and agreements have been signed with Serbia, India and Egypt. In addition, the EAEU has set a course to interface with the global Chinese infrastructure project - "One Belt, One Road".

A promising trend is the increased efforts of some EAEU countries, primarily Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, to develop knowledge-intensive innovative industries and services based on the developments of their own research centres and companies. The Russian Federation seeks to strengthen its leading position in nuclear energy, space, and various areas of basic science. Belarus has been making notable progress in information technology. Minsk ranks 13th among the top 20 countries in IT-outsourcing and high-tech services in the Global Services 100 rating, and 48th in the UN IT-rating.

For its part, Kazakhstan ranked 35th out of 63 in the World Digital Competitiveness ranking in 2019, relying heavily on Almaty Tech Garden infrastructure [5].

All of this is in Uzbekistan's long-term interest, based on plans to increase foreign trade and attract new technologies and knowledge to develop its own innovation, scientific and manufacturing base. Some of the projects with Russia,

for example, are already underway. These include the implementation of an intergovernmental agreement on the construction of a Generation 3+ nuclear power plant by Rosatom in Uzbekistan which will be equipped with VVER-1200-type reactors. The project is being implemented in conjunction with training in cooperation with the Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute. An agreement has been reached with Belarus to open a joint department of the Tashkent University of Information Technologies and the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics in Tashkent, which will train specialists in IT sphere [6].

Given the importance of the EAEU for the Uzbek economy and the positive trends in its development, Uzbekistan is currently considering new models for taking its cooperation with the Eurasian Five countries to a qualitatively and quantitatively higher level.

There is an active discussion in the country's expert, public and media space about the prospects of cooperation with the EAEU in new formats, including membership in the organisation which could remove a number of barriers to the freer movement of Uzbek capital, goods, cargo and labour.

It is expected that the establishment of new models of cooperation should lead to a further increase in the competitiveness of Uzbek products, an additional inflow of capital from the EAEU, as well as allow solving a number of challenges facing Uzbekistan in its development.

First and foremost, it will increase energy sustainability of the country since EAEU countries such as Russia and Kazakhstan have significant hydrocarbon reserves and are major producers and exporters of them. In addition, access to the EAEU common electricity market, which is currently being formed and whose establishment agreement was signed by the member states in May 2019, will enable Uzbek industrialists to buy cheap electricity, which will have a positive

impact on the profitability of their production and the competitiveness of their products [7].

Close cooperation with the EAEU will allow Uzbekistan to increase its attractiveness to investors from far abroad. Although the Uzbek market has 34 million consumers, foreign producers and, above all, leading multinational companies, still needs larger markets.

Therefore, it is often a prerequisite for them to open large production facilities in Uzbekistan if the country gains better access to global markets, including the EAEU market.

Liberalization of economic relations with the EAEU could allow Uzbekistan to significantly improve both legal protection of Uzbek labour migrants and social conditions of their stay and work, as well as increase their incomes. Currently, Uzbek migrant workers have to spend considerable money to obtain a patent to work in Russia which costs 460-530 euros (30-35 thousand rubles) and monthly mandatory payments of 45-120 euros (3-8 thousand rubles). In contrast, migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan can work without a patent due to the fact that their country is a member of the EAEU.

### **THE EAEU FACTOR AS PART OF UZBEKISTAN'S AMBITIOUS STRATEGY TO INTEGRATE INTO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY**

Finding new models of relations with the EAEU is also interesting for Uzbekistan in terms of increasing the efficiency of its trade and economic ties with non-CIS markets, including the European Union. The lion's share of Uzbek-European export-import freight traffic today is carried out through the territory of the EAEU countries and, if Uzbekistan is integrated into the common transport space of the Eurasian Union, then a noticeable reduction in the cost of freight transportation services can be expected. This can be seen in the examples of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan.

Integration of Armenia into the transport space has reduced the cost of cargo transportation services by road and rail routes by 18% and 21% respectively. For Kyrgyzstan, the cost of transporting cargo by air has become 17% cheaper [8].

As far as Uzbekistan is concerned, a direct consequence of lower transport costs may be an increase in the competitiveness of Uzbek goods in the EU market and a corresponding increase in trade transactions with European companies, as well as an increase in the attractiveness of export-oriented segments of the Uzbek agricultural and industrial production market for investors from EU countries. Transport is particularly important given that Uzbekistan is negotiating with the EU to obtain unilateral tariff preferences under the General System of Preferences Plus (GSP+), which will allow more than 6,200 goods to be imported duty-free.

Freer movement of goods, cargo, capital and labour between Uzbekistan and the EEU could also act as an incentive for more European companies with subsidiaries in the EEU to enter the Uzbek market. This would allow them to take advantage of the growing economic opportunities of the Uzbek economy by occupying the niches that are opening up in the production, services and consumption segments.

Uzbekistan's economy has been gaining momentum in recent years, posting GDP growth of 5.5% in 2019, adding 0.4% compared to 2018. Meanwhile, during 2019, the economic growth rate exceeded earlier forecasts, including by reputable international institutions, leading them to revise their GDP growth estimates upwards. The World Bank adjusted its forecast twice - in April from 5.1% to 5.3% [9], and in October from 5.3% to 5.5%. World Bank experts cited the opening up of new sources of export growth as a result of ongoing reforms that remove production bottlenecks and reduce constraints as reasons for revising their previous forecasts [10]. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also revised

up their forecasts [11], [12], GDP growth pushed up GDP per capita by an immediate 13.6 per cent from \$1,533 to \$1,741 in 2018.

The key drivers of economic growth in 2019, according to Uzbek data, were industrial production, construction and services. Industry grew by 6.4% against an earlier forecast of 5.2%, construction by 11.8% against a forecast of 8.4% and services by 6.1%. The EBRD also singled out industry and construction as the drivers [13].

The agricultural sector continues to grow. Financial receipts from sold agricultural products have increased by 12% to \$2.3 billion [14]. Of course, the coronavirus pandemic has put a brake on GDP growth, but Uzbekistan is likely to return to its previous rate of economic growth in the coming years as the world emerges from the COVID-19 crisis.

In describing the economic situation in the pre-crisis year of 2019, the Ministry of Economy and Industry of Uzbekistan highlights the fact that sustainable economic growth was ensured by a balance between aggregate supply from industries and domestic demand, supported by high rates of investment (growth of 28.6%) and real income of the population (10%) [15].

In addition, an important role in accelerating economic growth has been played by general improvements in the business environment, as was noted in the World Bank's "Doing Business 2020" rating, where Uzbekistan, with a score of 69.9 out of 100, took the 69th place among 190 states, moving up by 7 positions. The Bank ranked Uzbekistan among the 20 countries that have made the most progress in improving the business climate [16].

In the pre-pandemic period, work continued to further create favourable conditions for the development of new sources of economic growth, financial inflows and job creation.

Tourism sector stands out with growth stimulated by visa liberalization with 86 countries and the creation of conditions to attract private investment and

credit for the construction of tourism and transport infrastructure. An additional incentive is the introduction of subsidy mechanisms for companies investing in hotel construction, which will be extended to air carriers and travel agencies organising charter flights with tourists to Uzbekistan in 2020.

The result of all this has been a rapid increase in the number of foreign nationals visiting Uzbekistan. While 1.3 million people visited the country in 2016, the figure for 2019 was 6.7 million. It is predicted that as the effects of the pandemic are overcome, the tourist flow could rise to 10 million people, and these forecasts alone are already stimulating the interest of domestic and foreign investors in developing new tourism projects.

The country is also laying the foundations for a start-up ecosystem, which is also set to become a driver of economic growth and attract domestic and foreign intellectual and financial resources in the near future, including the development of a culture of venture capital investment and a dedicated university environment.

Positive trends in 2019 in traditional and emerging industries and sectors are projected to serve as an impetus for growth in key macroeconomic indicators in the coming years. It is possible that the economic growth rate in the coming years could be above 6%, given that Uzbekistan imported machinery and industrial equipment intensively in 2017-2019.

As part of the strategy to create incentives for sustainable economic growth, alongside domestic liberalisation, the government is also focusing on seeking external incentives through intensified policies on participation in regional and global trade, economic and political structures, and finding models of relations with the EAEU is only part of this. Cooperation with partners has been broadened through such structures as the UN, the OSCE, the CIS, the Turkic Council and the recently established Consultative Meetings of Central Asian Leaders.

Of particular note is the move towards accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The negotiation process was launched on 23 July 2019 [17]. WTO accession should be a signal to investors that Uzbekistan is moving towards clear international rules of the game.

WTO membership is expected to increase the openness of the Uzbek economy and the level of protection of foreign investments, which are critical factors for the inclusion of the country in the long-term investment programmes of the world's largest companies and the transfer of production and technology in the framework of functioning or emerging value chains.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, talking about the process of building Uzbekistan's relations with the EAEU, it should be noted that this process is multidimensional and should be considered not only in terms of bilateral relations, but also within the logic of internal liberalization and integration of the country into global production, trade, investment and technological relations.

The search for a new model of relations with the EAEU should also be considered through the prism of trends in the global economy where trends of transition to a new type of economy based on innovative technologies and trends of formation of technological zones are developing. It is quite obvious that without the country's free access to voluminous markets, it will be difficult to talk about its high competitiveness in the struggle for new knowledge and technology.

Therefore, if Uzbekistan manages to build an effective model of cooperation with the EAEU, with parallel accession to the WTO and deepening work with partners in other political and economic structures, it will significantly strengthen its competitive position in the global economy. Accordingly, as a result, the country will be closer to achieving its 2030 goals of becoming one of the top 50

countries in the Global Innovation Index and one of the countries with incomes above the global average.

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# 9

## MODERN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN PRISM OF NATIONAL INTERESTS OF STATES

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*This article analyzes the problem of globalization, its impact on the national interests of states, highlights its positive and negative aspects. It also describes Uzbekistan's national interests and the effects of globalization directly on them.*

**KEYWORDS:** International Relations, globalization, national interests, sovereignty, national state, anti-globalism, westernization.

Modern development process in the World has marked the beginning of the most complex, comprehensive process that continues and is still being comprehended - globalization. This process is a worldwide political, economic, cultural and social integration, which ultimately aims at the formation of a unified humanity. Understanding and deep study of this phenomenon is necessary to predict the development trends of the modern world.

This process is very controversial and requires deep consideration and analysis. One of its controversial aspects is the implementation of the national interests of different countries. Today, the interests of the entire world community are becoming more and more relevant and paramount. But how does each state need to achieve its own personal goals? What will their goals even be in the new world order? I will try to answer these questions.

Main focus of the article is devoted to study the national interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It will be necessary to identify the forms of national interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the context of globalization.

#### 1. The concept and features of the national state and national interests.

The national state is a historical type of state that replaced the class state. The key feature of the national state is a single ethnic group, which includes a single common culture, language and traditions of the people who make up this state [1, p.89].

The concept of "national interest", in turn, is understood as the interests of the national state, that is, the key tasks and needs of the nation, which the nation state seeks to realize on behalf of the entire society under its control.

In many ways, it was the national interests of different countries that were the causes of wars, economic confrontations and global crises.

#### 2. Problems of studying globalization

Globalization as a phenomenon and a peculiar trend continues to this day. This is one of the problems of studying it, since it is impossible to draw any conclusions about the phenomenon that is still active. Full-fledged conclusions can be drawn sooner in the future, when this phenomenon either ceases to exist, or grows into something more.

A lot of discussions also arise on the basis of the time of the beginning of globalization. Some believe that it began from the moment of the formation of states, that this is an inevitable result of the development of society. Others say that this is a process of the past, but it began to manifest itself strongly at the end of the 20th - beginning of the 21st century. The latter, to which I belong, consider the beginning of globalization in the 90s of the 20th century after the collapse of the USSR and the establishment of a unipolar world [2, p.13-14].

However, the establishment of a unipolar world with a single superpower does not suit everyone. In this regard, a new trend has arisen - anti-globalism, which is especially popular in some former communist countries and countries of the "third" world. Many states do not put the solution of global problems as decisive (globalization is in many ways called upon to solve them), and the formation of a single humanity is alien to them, due to the desire to preserve their identity [2, p.24-25]. Thus, a reverse reaction arises: with a greater penetration of globalization, resistance to it grows as well. This adds new complexities and contradictions to the globalization process. The search for optimal relationships between the global and the national is in many ways one of the most important problems of globalization.

The most important problem of globalization is the question of standards: "by what standards should we conduct it?" There is no answer to this question, in this regard, in the modern world there is Westernization - globalization according to Western models. As the most developed (primarily economically) Western countries and Western corporations strive for large sales markets, which is why Western ideals are being established. These standards are far from ideal and are not perceived favorably by all countries. Western values such as careerism, individualism, tolerance are often extremely negatively perceived in the countries of Asia and Africa - the historical characteristics of these regions simply exclude the possibility of these standards being adopted by these countries (at least in the foreseeable future). In addition, the imposition of these standards is in many ways a way for developed countries to maintain their privileged position in the world.

Thus, globalization really plays a big role in the modern world, but its influence cannot be called completely successful.

3. Factors of globalization causing the transformation of national interests of states

Globalization was largely caused by the aggravation of global problems. It is assumed that a united world community is able to solve them. At the same time, it pulls the interests of individual countries into the background. Thus, in the context of globalization, the priority of the interests of the whole world is assumed, primarily in the solution of global problems [3, p. 103-105]. As a result, states have no choice - they are all forced to put the interests of peace in the foreground.

On the one hand, solving global problems is indeed an extremely important task, but on the other hand, many countries are forced to sacrifice their economic growth, which the state and the population want to see. We see this problem in Brazil, India, China and other countries.

Another factor is the formation of a "world oligarchy". First of all, this term is applicable to the economic sphere of society. The "world oligarchy" is the elite of various transnational corporations, which, as the borders between countries are blurred, capture more and more new markets, absorbing local national companies. Thus, it becomes more and more difficult for a single nation state to ensure the growth of the national economy, and it becomes dependent on world corporations in the economic sphere. At the same time, this increases competition in the markets of the nation state, and its economic function becomes even more important in connection with ensuring control and coordination of the interests of national and global producers. Moreover, such a situation can improve the standard of living of the ordinary population of underdeveloped states.

It is also worth highlighting such a specific factor as historical relations between different countries. Since ancient times, many peoples have been hostile to each other, and if earlier rivalry in various spheres with a hostile country was included in the national interests of each state, now all these states are forced to live in harmony and have no claims to each other. Of course, the phobia of some

peoples towards others is difficult to defeat, it takes a long time and concessions from both sides.

As a result, there is a significant limitation of the national interests of states. Because of this, many researchers talk about a serious blow to the sovereignty of states in connection with the growing influence of the "world government" and the "world oligarchy." But, in my opinion, these ideas are too radical, since state sovereignty continues to be the most important category of the state. Without it, it becomes impossible for the state to provide decent protection and security for its citizens. In the context of globalization, state sovereignty begins to play an even greater role, because now sovereign states are obliged to interact to solve common world problems [2, p.92-93, 100]. States face not only their personal interests, but also the interests of the whole world, which they are obliged to address with others, and their sovereignty is the most important condition for a constructive dialogue [4, p. 53-55].

The same applies to the economic function of the state: now states are forced to reconcile their interests with the interests of the whole world.

An important addition can be the fact that throughout history, various states had certain factors that restrain their national interests (the danger of kindling war and falling into isolation, disagreements between the interests of the state and its population, and others). Thus, a full-fledged realization of national interests by the state is impossible even in theory.

#### 4. Intermediate conclusion

On the basis of all that has been considered, the following conclusion should be drawn: the national interests of the state in the context of globalization are undergoing certain restrictions in connection with the defining interests of the world community, especially in relation to global problems. However, national interests continue to exist, only now they are acquiring a more peaceful character and are expressed in economic, social and other rivalry between

different countries, in the absence of aggression and wars. Nation states continue to maintain their sovereignty and independently solve their problems. However, many other factors will hinder the full influence and penetration of the globalization process for many years to come.

#### 5. National interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the context of globalization on modern international relations

It should be noted that one of the key tasks of Uzbekistan for the coming years is getting into the top 50 strongest economies in the world. Another, no less important, task is to get out of international isolation. Also, the Uzbek state, like any other, has common tasks, such as ensuring security inside the country and improving the well-being of the population, etc.

This leads to the conclusion that globalization has the least impact on the national interests of modern Uzbekistan, due to its partial international isolation. Uzbekistan has strong anti-globalization sentiments and sentiments against many Western values and ideals, which, of course, strongly opposes it to the Western world.

The most important interests of Uzbekistan, as the bearer of huge reserves of natural resources, is also the solution of environmental problems, which imply their solution together with other countries.

### **CONCLUSION**

Globalization, being the most important global trend, slightly modifies the implementation of the national interests of states. The peoples of different countries are drawing closer to each other to solve global problems, the world political system is becoming more complex, and Russia should be a full-fledged participant in this system.

Globalization will not be able to penetrate all spheres of states and lead to the formation of a single common state; this will only cause an increase in anti-

globalization sentiments. Only the integration of various states in order to prevent conflicts and solve global problems, without deep influence on the national interests of individual countries, will be successful and ensure the rapid development of society.

Thus, globalization will most likely lead to the integration of states, but only in certain areas of their interactions (mainly in the economic and in the processes of solving global problems). The rest of the spheres are more likely to receive less influence from this process, which will ensure the full implementation by states of their national interests.

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# 10

## EXPORT OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS OF UZBEKISTAN: THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*Uzbekistan has been actively developing textile industry for the recent several years. However, due to the pandemic production chain, export, import operations and logistics faced to many challenges. This paper analyses the influence of laws introduced by the government of Uzbekistan to support national producers during the pandemic. Figures show that measures taken by state brought positive implications on efficiency of enterprises, on the textile products' volume of foreign trade. Uzbekistan expands the range of producing goods for export while there are still high import custom duties, which lead to parallel import of textile products.*

**KEYWORDS:** textile, clothing, foreign trade, export, import, cotton, Uzbekistan, pandemic.

Uzbekistan has all the necessary resources and historical prerequisites for the development of the textile industry: labour resources, raw materials, technological base. Even though during the Soviet period, Uzbekistan was mainly a supplier of raw cotton, after the independence, country's approach to the organization of agriculture was revised. Further development of the economy obviously required the transformation and modernization of the textile industry. Gradual reforms of the industry helped to decrease unemployment rate among population and supply the consumer goods market with national production. In recent years, a set of measures to develop light industry and expand the range of manufactured finished products have been implemented. In addition to that,

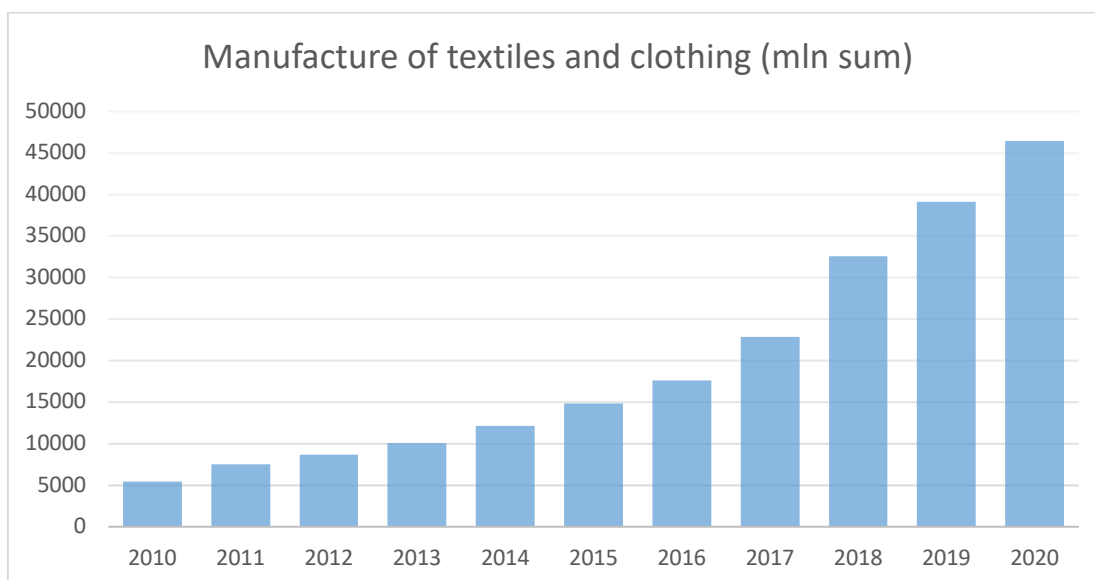
major changes are seen in the comprehensive government support for investment and export activities of enterprises in the industry.

However, the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the world market and the entire chain of transportation of raw materials. In this regard, it is important to study the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the production, export and import of textile products in 2020.

## **THE CURRENT STATE OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN UZBEKISTAN**

A significant part of the republican manufacturers of light industry products falls on the enterprises that are part of the State Joint Stock Company “Uzbekyengilsanoat”, which unites enterprises in the cotton, knitted, garment, and silk industries. The total number of operating textile enterprises today is 4886 [1].

At the end of 2020, Uzbekistan was ranked the sixth in the world in terms of cotton production [2]. According to the press service of the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan [3], in 2020, 3.082 million tons of raw cotton was harvested in Uzbekistan, a 9% increase over 2019. 1.3 million hectares of land in 136 regions, which specialize in cotton, was allocated for this agricultural crop, and the average yield in the country amounted to 29.8 canters per hectare. 2.8 million tons of the total volume fell on 97 cotton clusters, and the remaining 288 thousand tons - on 11 cotton cooperatives [4]. The unit weight of cotton fibre processing has reached the 50% of the total production volume [5].

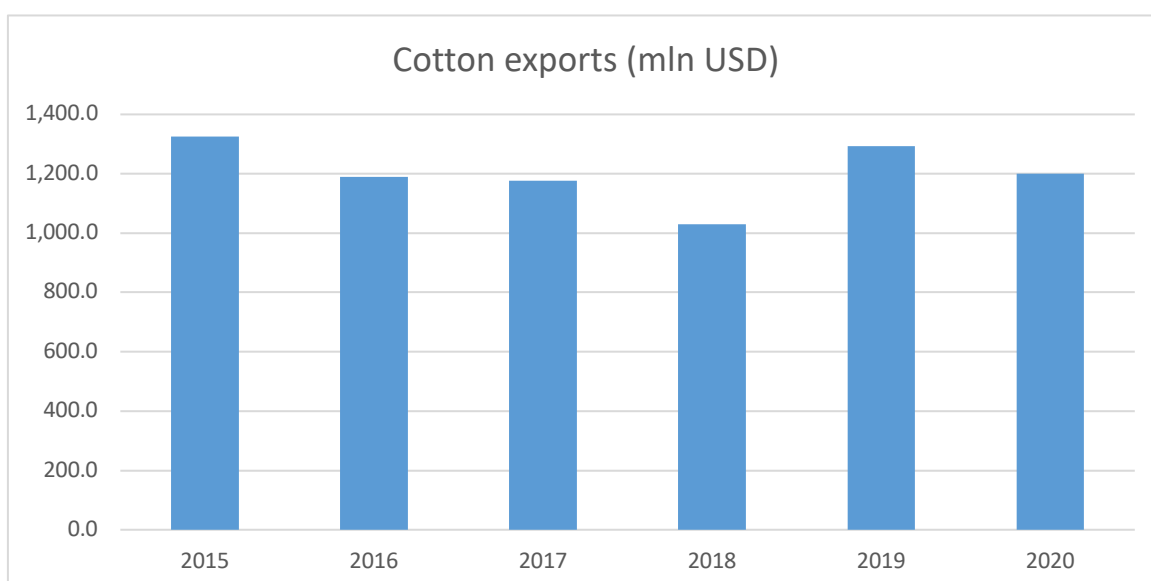


**Fig. 1 Manufacture of textiles and clothing**

*Source: Website of the State Statistics Committee*

As shown in fig. 1 the textile industry is developing at a rapid pace. Compared to 2017, the production of goods in the textile industry has almost doubled, and over the past 10 years, it grew almost 8.5 times.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE EXPORT OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS OF UZBEKISTAN**



**Fig. 2 Cotton exports (mln USD)**

*Source: Website of the State Statistics Committee*

In 2020, cotton was exported in the amount of \$1.2 billion, which is \$93.3 million less than in 2019. In turn, the downward trend in cotton export earnings means that more and more cotton is processed domestically. Several factors triggered an increase in the production of textile goods and contributed to the growth of exports of finished goods. One of these factors was the announcement of a reduction in VAT from 20% to 15% in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to further improve the tax policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan." [6]. The decrease in VAT led to a decrease in the tax burden on business, and therefore to a decrease in retail prices in the market.

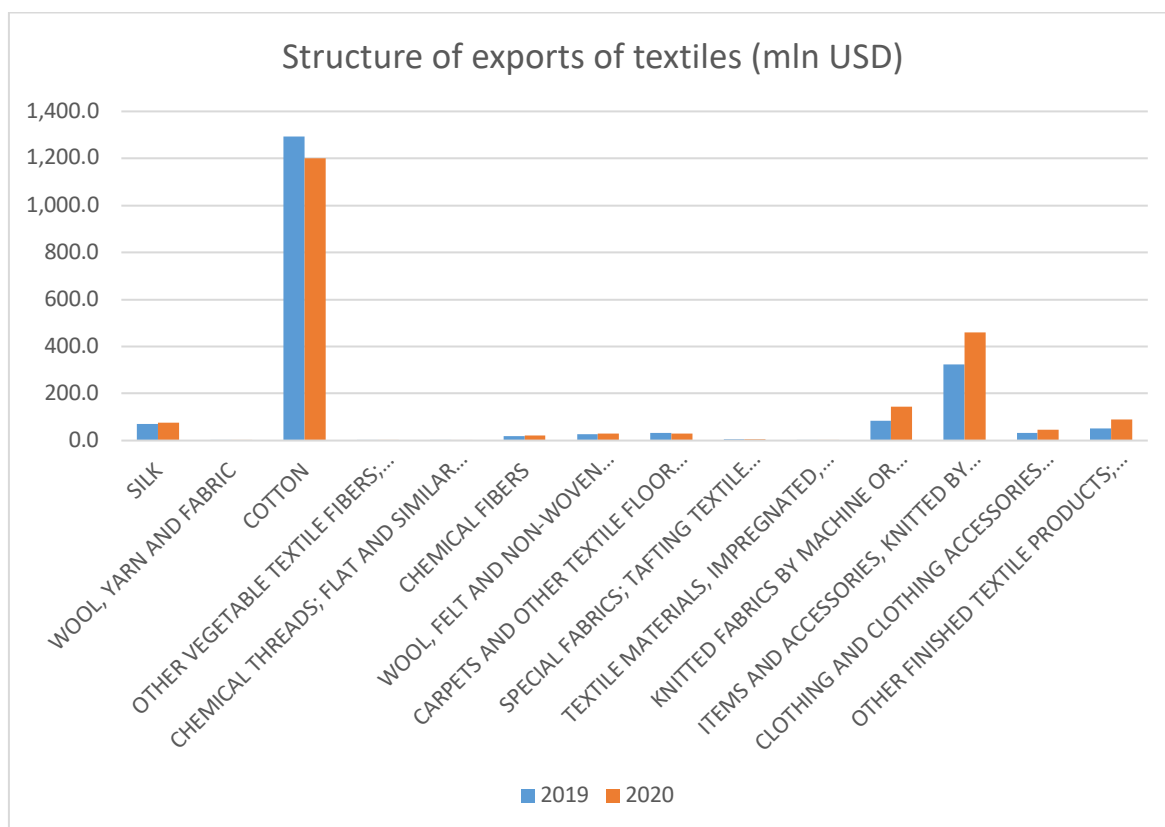
In Uzbekistan, there is a growth in the volume of exports of textile products as a result of reforms aimed at increasing the output of finished products and the formation of added value instead of the production of raw cotton.



**Fig. 3. Export of goods of the textile industry (mln USD)**

*Source: Website of the State Statistics Committee*

It is obvious from Fig. 3, which in 2020 exports of textile products amounted to \$2.11 billion, or 13.95% of the total volume of exports. Compared to 2019, this number increased by 8.44%.



**Fig. 4. Structure of exports of textiles (mln USD)**

*Source: Website of the State Statistics Committee*

It is also worth noting that in 2020 the range of exported goods (522 types of textile products) and the geography of exported countries (65 countries of the world) have expanded [7]. Garments knitted fabrics and finished textiles are gradually beginning to dominate in the export structure.

To develop the textile industry in Uzbekistan, since 2020, the long-term practice of setting the price, production plan and mandatory sale of cotton by the state have been cancelled. Uzpakhtasanoat, created at the end of October 2015 through the merger of three state structures – Uzpakhtasanoat, Uzpakhtaexport and Uzpakhtayog, was liquidated. By the decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of June 22, 2020 "On measures to organize the activities of cooperatives for the cultivation and processing of raw cotton" [8], the establishment of the Association of Cotton Textile Clusters of Uzbekistan was envisaged. In Uzbekistan, since the harvest of 2020, state regulation of prices has

been cancelled, as well as the requirement to fulfil the production plan and the mandatory sale of cotton.

In accordance with the document, with the abandonment of the practice of setting the purchase price of raw cotton, producers (farmers, cotton-textile clusters, and cooperatives) received the right to freely place zoned cotton varieties.

All these measures contributed to the formation of market pricing mechanisms in the entire chain of textile production, starting from raw cotton. Also, for the development of the textile industry, a decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to further deepen reforms and expand the export potential of the textile and garment and knitwear industry" [9] was signed, which states that:

- starting from April 1st, 2019, part of the costs associated with the payment of interest on loans allocated to enterprises in 2019 - 2021, exporting at least 80% of manufactured finished products, are covered by the State Fund for Supporting the Development of Entrepreneurial Activity under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- the exclusive requirement to provide a bank guarantee for the sale of cotton fibre through exchange trading is cancelled.

Because of all the measures taken by the government of Uzbekistan, in 2020 there is a stable growth in the production of textile goods, despite the difficulties and restrictions on cargo supplies during the coronavirus pandemic. The support of the industry had a positive effect on the activities of domestic enterprises and ensured an increase in the export of textile products.

## ANALYSIS OF IMPORTS OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS IN UZBEKISTAN



**Fig. 5. Imports of textiles (mln USD)**

*Source: Website of the State Statistics Committee*

In 2020, imports of textile goods more than quadrupled in value terms (Fig. 5). Most likely, the increase in imports happened, primarily, since in 2020 there was a sharp decline in civilian traffic, therefore, the level of parallel import of "shuttle traders" decreased. Importers were forced to bring goods by means of freight transport, which underwent customs inspection on a mandatory basis and, therefore, they were considered in the statistics. The second reason for the growth in imports of textile products is associated with a decrease in the rates of import customs duties on raw materials and materials used in the textile industry.

For example, in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On additional measures to support the population, sectors of the economy and business entities during the coronavirus pandemic" [10] dated April 3rd, 2020, zero rates of the excise tax of the customs duties were fixed until December 31st, 2020 when nonwovens, impregnated or non-impregnated, coated or uncoated, duplicated or non-duplicated materials are imported into the territory

of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In addition, in the appendix to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On urgent measures to support the textile and garment and knitwear industry" [11], there is a list of 64 items of goods which includes imported raw materials and materials exempted from customs duties until January 1st, 2022.

According to the calculations, the average tariff rate for all goods in the category of textile materials and textile products is 11.97%, which is specified in the Appendix to the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On amendments and additions to the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 29th, 2018 No. PP-3818 "On measures to further streamline foreign economic activity and improvement of the system of customs and tariff regulation of the Republic of Uzbekistan"" [12]. For comparison, according to the EAEU, the simple average tariff of the EAEU is 6.8%, for agricultural goods - 11%, for other goods - 6.1%. The average tariff of 11.97% for goods in the category of textile materials and textile products indicates enough security of the textile industry in Uzbekistan.





**Fig. 6. Structure of imports of textile products (mln USD)**

*Source: Website of the State Statistics Committee*

The sharp increase in imports of textile products is due to the increase in imports of goods such as wool, fine or coarse animal hair; horsehair yarn and fabric (25 times higher than in 2019); other vegetable textile fibres, paper yarn and fabrics of paper yarn (17 times); chemical fibres (10 times); carpets and other textile floor coverings (74 times); other ready-made textiles, sets, clothing, used textiles, and rags (109 times). The list of items of goods, imports of which increased sharply in 2020 and for which import customs duties were abolished by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On urgent measures to support the textile and garment and knitwear industry", contains only chemical fibres.

As it can be seen from the analysis of the structure of imports of textile products in 2020 (Fig. 6), compared to 2019, imports of finished products (not of raw materials) increased, which indicates that high import duties on goods established on the names of goods that were imported this year, several dozen times more than in previous years, is unable to regulate the flow of imports into the country. Ultimately, consumers lose from the high import customs duties.

2020 became an exam year for all sectors of the economy, this year was able to test the strength of the system of organizing enterprises. In turn, the pandemic indicated problems that had existed for a long time but remained in the shadows. Innovative approaches to solving problems, the possibility of organizing remote work for employees, minimal participation of the human factor in technological processes, the readiness of all resources to work without interruption in any critical situation must be considered in planning the production process.

The textile industry in 2020 showed stable growth in both the production of goods and the export of finished goods, despite the challenges of the pandemic. In achieving these results, of course, it is important to note the measures of support from the state. In the future, there is a need to study the role of each individual state support, be it the abolition of customs import duties or, on the contrary, the introduction of an export duty or subsidy.

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# **CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS - ELABORATION OF A COORDINATED POLICY**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*Over the past few years, transformational processes of the entire region have been taking place in Central Asia. States, on the basis of good-neighborliness and mutually beneficial cooperation, intensified contacts at the regional level. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan proclaimed Central Asia the main priority of the country's foreign policy. Thus, in 2017, Sh. Mirziyoyev proposed to establish the practice of holding Consultative meetings of the heads of States of Central Asia to discuss common problems and find ways to solve them. This initiative was supported by all countries of the region and in 2018 the first Consultative Meeting was held in Kazakhstan and the second in Uzbekistan in 2019.*

**KEYWORDS:** Central Asia, Consultative Meeting, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, trade, politics, security, Afghanistan, initiatives.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2017, from the rostrum of the General Assembly of the United Nations, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev proclaimed Central Asia the main priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy: "Being in the very heart of Central Asia, Uzbekistan is directly interested in the region becoming a zone of stability, sustainable development and good neighborliness. Peaceful, economically prosperous Central Asia is our most important goal and key task. Uzbekistan is strongly committed to dialogue, constructive interaction and strengthening of good-neighborliness. We are ready for reasonable compromises

with the Central Asian countries on all issues without exception” [1]. The head of state expressed the importance of consolidating efforts to solve acute problems that hinder the sustainable development of relations among the states of the region.

Consequently, Uzbekistan spoke in favor of building up and strengthening cooperation between the countries of the region, openness to dialogue and joint search for ways to solve existing problems, as well as promising areas of interaction.

It should be noted that due to the measures taken by Central Asian countries, unprecedented high results have been achieved in all spheres of interaction. Relations have reached the level of deep strategic partnership, which is filled with specific content. The political dialogue at the highest and high levels has significantly intensified, interparliamentary, interdepartmental and interregional ties have been strengthened [2]. The political will of the heads of state of the region attaches particular importance to the further development of mutually beneficial cooperation.

A striking example of combining efforts and positions of the Central Asian countries in the face of the challenges and problems of the region can be the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on “Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region [3]”, which was initiated by the President of Uzbekistan in 2017.

Also, in order to consolidate the positive trends and changes in the region and relations among states in 2017, Sh. Mirziyoyev proposed to hold regular consultative meetings of the heads of states of Central Asia [1]. This initiative was widely supported by neighboring countries.

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEETINGS OF THE HEADS OF STATES**

Thus, the first Consultative Meeting of the Heads of States of Central Asia was held in 2008 in Kazakhstan, the second in 2019 in Uzbekistan. The next meeting was postponed to 2021 due to the impossibility of holding it based on the sanitary and epidemiological situation around the world.

In general, the Consultative Meetings provided an opportunity for the heads of state to express their vision of the present and future of the region, to discuss important aspects of cooperation, including problematic issues, to speak openly about obstacles, challenges and threats in regional cooperation.

The first President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev stressed that the dialogue opened a new page in the history of Central Asia, which signaled to five countries that regional friendship will live for centuries. The start of activation of contacts at all levels has been given [4].

K.-J. Tokayev said that “Central Asia is going through a new stage in its development. Regarding the relations among the countries of the region, there is a tendency to strengthen interstate cooperation. Consequently, there is a main entity - the political will of all leaders of the region, the readiness to develop cooperation based on the principles of good neighborliness and mutual interest” [2].

In the framework of the second Consultative meeting, President of Kyrgyzstan S. Jeenbekov emphasized that Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to strengthening cooperation among the states of Central Asia: “We are interested in developing a systemic political dialogue in a five-sided format. Successful regional cooperation will allow us to achieve concrete results in solving existing problems and improve the well-being of our people. I am convinced that we have all the necessary prerequisites for stable, open and dynamic development based on friendship and good neighborliness”. Confidence was expressed about the beginning of a permanent platform organization for

reforming the existing mechanism of cooperation in Central Asia and the need to touch upon the entire range of issues of regional partnership [5].

As part of his participation in the Consultative Meeting, the Head of Tajikistan E. Rahmon expressed his readiness to use all opportunities to strengthen cooperation in this direction. He noted that the region has a huge untapped potential for expanding and deepening cooperation on a mutually beneficial basis in trade, transport, culture and ecology. As E. Rahmon stated, an open dialogue, strengthening mutual understanding and development of constructive cooperation can contribute to the achievement of common goals in the above areas [2].

President G. Berdimuhamedow noted that “in creating an atmosphere of genuine good-neighborliness and mutual understanding, maintaining a stable balance of interests, avoiding conflicts in the region, Turkmenistan sees a guarantee and the main condition for accelerated economic growth in Central Asia. An effective embodiment of such interaction is the format of regular meetings of the Central Asian states at the highest level” [2].

“Organization of the Consultative meeting once again clearly confirms the commonality of our interests, readiness for an open dialogue and the adoption of agreed decisions on the most pressing issues of regional development [6]” – highlighted in his speech, President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev:

“Each state of the region makes a worthy contribution to ensuring the stability and prosperity of Central Asia. Thanks to political will and practical steps, we are reaching a higher level of interaction. Our solidarity and active efforts have opened up wide opportunities for multifaceted regional cooperation. In a short time, together we were able to achieve real progress” [6]. The similar opinion and positions of the heads of states regarding the importance of Central Asia indicate the prevailing atmosphere of unity in the region.

At the same time, there is an opinion in the expert community that issues of regional trade, water and transport will still prevail at these meetings. Based on the speeches of the heads of state, it is possible to include in this list of issues regional security and cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

## **TRADE, ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT COOPERATION**

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev, in his speeches at the SCO Summits, UN General Assembly and other international organizations, repeatedly emphasized the importance of developing cooperation in the field of trade, investment, agriculture, transport, logistics, industry, energy, tourism, etc. Since steadily developing states are a guarantee of ensuring not only the socio-economic balance in the country, but also the well-being of the population and peoples of the five countries.

By virtue of the foreign policy course aimed at rapprochement with neighboring states in the period 2017-2019, the trade turnover of Uzbekistan with the CA countries almost doubled - from \$ 2.7 billion to \$ 5.2 billion. The share of Uzbekistan's trade with the CA countries of the total trade also increased from 10.2 to 12.7% [7].

Investment cooperation of Uzbekistan with CA countries has also grown. So, from the end of 2017 to November 2020, the number of registered enterprises with the capital of Kazakhstan increased from 281 to 896 units, Kyrgyzstan - from 57 to 175 units, and Tajikistan and Turkmenistan - 178 and 140 units, respectively. Uzbek capital also began to actively participate in the Central Asian countries, in particular, a textile factory and a joint venture for the assembly of cars were opened in Kazakhstan, and for the production of household appliances in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan [7].

**Dynamics of Uzbekistan's trade with Central Asian countries in 2017-2020 (USD million) [7].**



	2017	2018	2019	10 months Dec 2019	10 monthsFeb 2020	Share (%) in Trade turnover with CA countries at the end of 2019
Total Trade turnover with all countries, including:	26566,0	33430,0	42177,8	34316,3	30059,4	
Kazakhstan	2055,7	3022,2	3367,7	2789,7	2313,6	64,3
Kyrgyzstan	253,7	481,0	829,0	701,7	736,3	15,8
Turkmenistan	177,9	302,1	541,9	470,6	361,8	10,4
Tajikistan	237,9	389,1	497,0	398,3	394,3	9,5
Trade turnover with CA countries	2725,2	4194,4	5235,6	4360,3	3806,0	100,0
Growth rate of Trade turnover (%)	110,2	153,9	124,8		87,3	
Share of CA countries in the total trade turnover of Uzbekistan (%)	10,2	12,5	12,4	12,7	12,7	

In their official statements at the Consultative Meetings, the heads of states have repeatedly dwelt on the issue of cooperation in the field of trade.

Elbasy of Kazakhstan emphasized the need to create a “barrier-free Central Asia” by removing obstacles to the movement of goods, services and capital [4]. Thus, while ensuring a free flow of trade and facilitating various customs procedures, interaction between the business circles of the countries of the region will only develop.

The President of Kyrgyzstan S. Jeenbekov noted the low level of trade of the countries of the region. In his speech, he advocated for more active action and initiatives in the field of trade.

The Kyrgyz side stated that the countries of the region are priority partners for Kyrgyzstan in the trade and economic sphere, that Kyrgyzstan leaves its market open for goods from Central Asia. At the same time, the country also counts on free access to the markets of partner countries in order to export its products on a mutually beneficial basis:

“There are periodic bans on the export of certain types of products, bureaucracy in the registration of goods for crossing the border. Existing quotas and duties negatively affect our mutually beneficial economic relations. The need to remove all existing barriers to the free movement of people, goods, services and capital was noted. The relevant government bodies are supposed to create favorable conditions for mutual trade” [5].

“At the same time, it is obvious that there is a significant potential in this area along the region, which is still not fully used”, - said President of Tajikistan E. Rahmon. “We stand for the systematic expansion of the entire complex of economic interaction. It is important to note the importance of the development and implementation of joint investment projects, taking into account the common interests of the parties. This step will largely contribute to both real cooperation at the regional level and the acceleration of economic growth in our countries” [9]. The Tajik leader proposed to consider the possibility of creating an Investment Fund for Central Asia to finance promising regional projects, as well as the development of cooperation in the field of agriculture and in various industrial sectors [9].

President of Turkmenistan invited the heads of Central Asian states to think over the creation of a five-sided Business Council, which, according to G. Berdymukhamedov, could “take on the functions of a think tank to shape a joint strategy for the states of the region in priority areas of economic partnership” [10].

The statements of E. Rakhmon and G. Berdymukhamedov indicate the importance and urgency of developing common regional approaches to trade, attracting investment, as well as realizing the economic potential of Central Asia.

Uzbekistan’s President Sh. Mirziyoyev heavily focused on launching various joint economic projects with a greater emphasis on the region. He emphasized

the vision of embracing regional benefits when countries negotiate individually projects related to trade, energy, and tourism [8].

Against the background of improved interaction, gradual solution of problems, new opportunities for the development of multifaceted trade and economic cooperation are opening up for the countries of Central Asia.

It is noted that over the next 10 years, foreign investments may come to the region, potentially in the amount of up to \$170 billion, of which \$40-70 billion - in non-resource industries [2].

Today, all countries in the region are striving to modernize and diversify their economies, move away from the raw material component, in favor of sectors with higher added value. In this vein, exchange of experience, close cooperation, development of a joint approach to the management of economic and transport corridors, simplification of border and customs procedures, harmonization of standards are acquiring particular relevance for the Central Asian states.

## **COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF WATER USE**

In consultative meetings, all leaders will address the issue of reducing water sources against the background of increasing regional needs. Since 1/3 of water resources are formed in the mountains of Kyrgyzstan, and 2/3 in Tajikistan, S. Jeenbekov and E. Rahmon in their speeches touched upon the climatic changes taking place in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as their negative consequences for the entire region.

It was noted that Kyrgyzstan stands for equal consideration of the interests and needs of all Central Asian countries in the water and energy sector [5].

The Tajik leader proposed to establish a constant exchange of information, to take measures for the joint development and implementation of regional

programs in order to reduce the impact of anthropogenic factors on the state of glaciers [9].

The search for topical issues of water allocation, the solution of complex water and environmental problems of the region requires a mutually agreed approach. In order to attract innovative technologies, implement the principles of the “green economy”, eliminate desertification and take other comprehensive measures, the President of Uzbekistan proposed to effectively use the potential of the Trust Fund for the UN-sponsored Aral Sea region [11].

President G. Berdimukhamedov proposed to involve international organizations in the preservation and usage of regional water [8].

In recent years, regional cooperation on water and environmental issues has noticeably intensified. In August 2018, in the city of Turkmenbashi, all Central Asian countries took part for the first time since 2009 at the meeting of the Council of the Heads of the Founding States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Readiness was expressed to further improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS in order to ensure mutually beneficial cooperation on topical issues of saving the Aral Sea, water resources management [2].

The main theses of the speeches of the heads of states of Central Asia show their readiness to search for solutions to problems in the water-ecological sphere, their openness to develop new approaches in this area of cooperation.

## **COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT**

Since 2017, there has also been a positive trend in Central Asia in developing a region-wide approach to developing transport connectivity and strengthening the transit potential of states, as well as the region as a whole.

Cooperation in the transport and communications sector is expanding more and more, direct air, rail and road communications have been resumed. In

March 2017, the implementation of an important section of the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman transport corridor was launched - the Turkmenabad-Farab railway and road bridges across the Amu Darya River were opened. Based on their launch, the volume of cargo transportation has already increased by 2.5 times, an opportunity opens up for the implementation of the idea of creating an end-to-end transport and communication highway along the route “Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Caspian Sea-South Caucasus” with access to Baku-Tbilisi-Kars and the Black Sea ports of Georgia, Turkey, Romania and other states [2].

Considering the importance of the implementation of large infrastructure projects in the transport and communication sphere, linking the region with world markets, the Kyrgyz side proposed to improve cooperation in the implementation of freight and passenger traffic in the region or transit through the territories of the parties in a simplified manner [5].

To this end, Tajikistan has initiated consideration of the issue of preparation for the signing of the relevant multilateral Agreement in order to further develop a regional mechanism for transport and transit interaction [9].

Sh. Mirziyoyev proposed to speed up the creation of a regional council on transport communications [6].

Developed transport corridors, transit routes are the key to the development of not only foreign trade, but also internal spheres of life. Infrastructure, industry, business, trade and other spheres are developing. It is gratifying to note that today the countries of the region are expressing their readiness to further increase cooperation in the transport sector.

## **COOPERATION IN THE CULTURAL AND HUMANITARIAN SPHERE**

As part of the Consultative Meetings, the heads of states have repeatedly dwelt on the development of cultural and humanitarian cooperation, the formation of a single cultural, information, scientific and educational space.

N. Nazarbayev proposed to allocate 10 grants for students from each country in the region, providing the right to study in the best universities in Kazakhstan.

In conclusion, Elbasy expressed the need to expand and deepen the heritage of the Central Asian countries by establishing March 15 as the day of Central Asia [4].

In addition to this initiative, it is possible for the universities of the region to develop a joint master's program under the working title "Central Asian Studies" with training in various cities of the region in order to deepen knowledge of Central Asia and prepare future specialists in the region [12].

Kyrgyzstan spoke in favor of promoting interethnic cultural dialogue, continuing the practice of holding the Days of Culture, mutual participation in cultural festivals, exhibitions, scientific research [5].

Tajikistan advocated the development of a regional program of interuniversity and scientific exchanges, holding joint scientific and practical conferences, seminars, research and round tables on topical problems of Central Asia [9].

President Sh. Mirziyoyev put forward the idea of establishing a "Central Asian Prize" open to nationals from all the five republics that would be awarded for outstanding achievements in science, culture and art. Cultivating a strong regional identity alongside citizen's national identities is an important step in the process of enhancing regional cooperation. These initiatives along with President Sh. Mirziyoyev's suggestions for university forums and more regional sporting events are simple but effective methods of building this Central Asian identity which draw focus to the often overlooked, but nevertheless significant historical,

linguistic, religious and political heritage shared by the five nations [13]. Also, the Uzbek side proposed to hold an International tourism conference titled “Journey through Central Asia” [14].

In the statement of the head of Turkmenistan, several points were highlighted on the deepening of cultural and humanitarian ties and support for young people, which suggests that countries recognize the presence of significant human potential in the region in the person of the younger generation. This cooperation can be strengthened by cooperation between educational institutions of Central Asian countries, and on the sidelines of the Consultative Meeting, it is possible in the future to hold forums of rectors of universities in the region [12].

Central Asia is a region that has a common indivisible history of the formation of statehood, the development of crafts, culture, art, and trade relations. The very fact of the presence of family ties between the peoples of the region is an important component in the conduct of the policy of countries. The Central Asian region with deeper cultural and humanitarian ties, projects, initiatives in the field of tourism and science development in the future can form a common historical and cultural environment for the development of future processes.

## **SECURITY COOPERATION**

Agreements were reached between the countries of the region on joint counteraction to modern challenges and threats. In September 2019, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan conducted joint military exercises aimed at strengthening security in Central Asia and combating potential terrorist threats. Similar exercises were organized in 2018 [2].

Taking into account the need to ensure regional stability and security as a top priority, the head of Uzbekistan called for the creation of working mechanisms for operational interaction between law enforcement agencies and

special services of the countries of the region to fully counter modern challenges and threats [11].

“Afghanistan is an integral part of our region. It is in our common interest to help this country firmly embark on the path of peace and development. We believe that it is necessary to adhere to the key principles of a political settlement. First of all, this is a renunciation of violence, a ceasefire, a demonstration of readiness for dialogue and compromise” – Sh. Mirziyoyev emphasized [11].

S. Jeenbekov stressed that one of the most important issues today is increasing the level of mutual understanding and security at the borders. In this regard, as never before, it is necessary to continue joint work on the earliest completion of the legal registration of state borders. Despite the complexity of this work, it is necessary to move forward and seek compromises [5].

In the field of the fight against terrorism, radicalism and religious extremism, E. Rakhmon proposed to work out a mechanism for holding regular meetings of the heads of security agencies and special services of the Central Asian states [9].

Afghanistan also remains at the center of the agenda of the consultative meeting. The restive nation borders three of the five Central Asian republics and has been a cause of concern for many years, particularly in issues of security and border management. President Sh. Mirziyoyev articulated the importance of Afghanistan in a succinct manner, stating: “An integral part of our region is Afghanistan. It is in our common interest to help this country firmly embark on the path of peace and development”. He went on to advocate for a more active role for Afghanistan in regional trade and economic relations. Extending the hand of international friendship by inviting Afghanistan as observers to future consultative meetings of the heads of state and other regional summits would be



a warm gesture and help pave the way for a new chapter in Afghanistan's and indeed, Central Asia's history [13].

At the same time, it is important to take it into account that Afghanistan and provision of stability and security in this country are an integral part of the processes in Central Asia.

Based on the foregoing, it is important to note the positive tendency that exists in Central Asia, the openness and readiness of states to discuss common problems, find ways to solve them make a compromise, initiate proposals to improve the well-being of peoples and the region's image in the international arena.

Thus, experts emphasize the following trends [15]:

- Readiness of states to independently solve intraregional problems;
- strengthening multifaceted cooperation between the states of Central Asia on the basis of friendship, good neighborliness and mutual benefit meets the fundamental interests of the fraternal peoples;
- the presence of a strategic position that modern realities dictate the activation and development of political and diplomatic contacts between the states of the region through regular meetings at the highest level, as well as at the level of foreign ministers of Central Asian countries in the form of five-sided political consultations;
- Expression of intention to develop and promote jointly new initiatives and projects within the UN and other international organizations.

The above facts indicate a positive trend in regional cooperation. Against the background of the initiatives put forward in the framework of the Consultative Meetings, optimism arises about the prospects for cooperation and the possibility of developing a coordinated policy in the region.

Observers emphasize that the most favorable atmosphere has been created in Central Asia for converting a high level of trust into practical results that contribute to the advanced development of the region. It is obvious that the countries of Central Asia will continue to adhere to the course of further deepening multilateral regional cooperation in the interests of all states, monitor the formation of the most pragmatic agenda and give impetus to cooperation in the most urgent areas [2].

## **CONCLUSION**

We consider it important to regard the format of the Consultative Meetings as a prospect for deepening cooperation in the region. Despite the fact that this format is declarative in nature, does not represent any organization and does not pretend to be an integration process, the trend of openness and good-neighborliness, the development of a common policy for the development of socio-economic processes in Central Asia, has been launched.

The consultative meeting can actually be considered the only platform specifically for the countries of Central Asia, where they can discuss regional issues in a five-sided format. At the same time, these meetings are held annually, consequently the prospect of developing not only an intraregional common policy, but also an external one, is possible, coordinating their positions on topical issues of the international agenda.

Central Asia is a region that shares a common history, common culture and heritage. Having huge potential, as well as having a huge market, it can become one of the leading regions in the world.

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# TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES IN CENTRAL ASIA

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*This article examines the geopolitical processes in the Central Asian region such as security and stability in the Central Asian region, economic and environmental issues, as well as the practical participation of the Republic of Uzbekistan in solving regional problems. The role of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the region, the impact of Afghanistan on regional security and stability, as well as active and constructive relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are highlighted.*

**KEYWORDS:** geopolitical position, Central Asia, role of Uzbekistan in the region, the Afghan problem, regional security and stability.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The revival of Central Asia is undoubtedly one of the most important of the many dramatic changes that humanity has experienced. At the threshold of the 21st century, the revival of the Central Asian states as an independent subject of international relations has been met with great interest by the world community. The region, as an integral part of Eurasia, has radically changed the geopolitical situation. Central Asia, a country forgotten for hundreds of years and left out of the world's public eye, has been rediscovered by the world community. The world has high hopes for the region's participation in international economic, political and inter-civilizational relations. Initially, it became clear that Central Asia was becoming a source of threats to global stability. This was a result of the growing Taliban movement in Afghanistan. In this context, the region has received a great deal of serious attention from the international community. The

geopolitical significance of Central Asia is determined by its border with important states and regions in Eurasia. In this regard, the analysis of transformational processes in Central Asia is of great importance in the article.

Today, the countries of the region are developing active cooperation and strong ties between the two countries, which contribute to the overall economic development, security and stability in the region, and the rational solution of regional problems. Today, the Republic of Uzbekistan maintains mutual trust and constructive relations with neighboring republics.

As noted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M.Mirziyoyev, “The Central Asian region, which plays an important role in ensuring the national interests of our country, is a key priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. We remain committed to pursuing an open, friendly and pragmatic policy with our close neighbors Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan [1]. Through our good neighborly policy, our country is gaining high attention in the region and in the world community.

## **THE GEOPOLITICAL POSITION OF CENTRAL ASIA**

First of all, from a geopolitical point of view, geographical location is a factor that determines the direction and goals of actors' foreign policy. It goes without saying that geographical location is one of the most important factors determining the geostrategic importance of any state. In this sense, the Central Asian region has long been a region of strategic importance. For a long time, the region has been a region where the interests of external actors have clashed.

Central Asia's five countries — the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan — hold considerable geopolitical significance for global security. The Central Asian countries share borders with Russia, China, Iran and Afghanistan,

and are rich in natural resources, including oil, gas, uranium, coal, gold, copper, aluminum and hydroelectric power [2]. It is also important due to the availability of strategically important natural resources in the region.

The geopolitical changes taking place at the turn of the 21st century have once again confirmed that Central Asia plays an important role in the international balance of power and in the relations between civilizations. A new geostrategic environment has emerged in the region. The Central Asian region has a wide range of regional political, economic, military and environmental issues. With this in mind, maintaining internal and external balance is the only way to ensure the sustainable development of the entire Central Asian region and to prevent military conflicts.

Central Asia consists not only of the five republics of the former USSR, but also the western regions of Central Asia, Afghanistan and China, which are integral parts of the region [3].

Central Asia has long been considered strategically important because of its proximity to the great powers in Eurasia. It goes without saying that geographical location is one of the important factors determining the geostrategic potential and importance of any country.

The importance of the Central Asian region is growing and is characterized by a number of factors. These factors can be divided into two groups: The first group is the group of positive factors. The second group is included in the classification of negative factors.

The first group of positive factors includes the following:

*1. Increased relative demographic weight.*

Central Asia's population is growing exponentially. In 1990, the population of the Central Asian region was 50,122,901, currently it estimates 75,059,575 (February 23, 2021, based on the latest United Nations statistics) [4]. The demographics of

the region's population have grown significantly. Among the countries of the region, Uzbekistan is experiencing a particularly rapid population growth.

*2. Availability of natural resources of international importance.*

First of all, the energy potential of the region can have a decisive impact on the world oil and gas market. The economies of China, India and Pakistan are booming. Therefore, it can find huge energy sources in the Central Asian region. The way Central Asian countries manage their oil and gas reserves is crucial. While the energy potential of Central Asia is not sufficient to have a decisive impact on the world oil and gas market, it is considered important in terms of its significance and value [5].

*3. Large accumulation of foreign investment in the region.*

In recent years, the region has become an object of significant financial investment. Today, investment in Central Asia is significant by global standards. This indicates the growing interest of the world community in the sustainable development of the region and the successful implementation of the launched projects. The world community views Central Asia as both a growing, promising and comprehensive market, and a source of strategically important raw materials.

*4. Intersection of important transport and communication routes in the region.*

Central Asia is regaining its historical significance as a crossroads of trade routes. The transport and logistics sector, which is one of the main priorities of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, plays an important and relevant role in building constructive and mutually beneficial relations with Central Asian countries.

The region has the shortest routes connecting major international markets. The region's transport and transit potential is determined by its geostrategic location - the Great Silk Road Center, which has historically served as a bridge between East and West, North and South.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev acknowledged at the 2018 Central Asian Summit in Nursultan city that prioritizing access to major seaports and world markets through the implementation of transport and communication projects is a priority.

Central Asia has historically played an important role in world trade serving as a bridge between the North-South and West-East intercontinental transport corridors. Today, it is the cornerstone of the Central Asian transit corridor system which serves to increase the flow of goods and capital between the world's manufacturing centers in Asia and Europe [6].

The negative factors influencing the region include the following:

*1. International terrorism.*

In essence, international terrorism, which is an enemy of the ideas of globalism, is actively using the achievements of globalization - the Internet, telecommunications systems, the liberalization of financial relations and freedom of movement. The 1996-2001 terrorist attacks in Afghanistan pose a serious threat to the Central Asian region. The intensification of international terrorism in Central Asia is due to both internal and external factors.

*2. Religious extremism.*

Central Asia, as one of the historically important centers of the Islamic world, has become the object of ideological expansion of radical movements. The region is becoming one of the centers of Islamic extremism and attempts are being made to turn Central Asian countries away from building a secular democracy.

*3. Problems of drastic change and poverty.*

Central Asia was the most socio-economically underdeveloped region of the former Soviet Union. According to many indicators of prosperity and industrial development, the Central Asian republics were below the statistical average of the Union. The economy of the Central Asian republics was mainly specialized



in the production of raw materials. In this regard, socio-economic development remains a priority. This, in turn, requires not only the attraction of foreign investment, but also a radical change in economic and social relations, as well as people's worldview or mentality.

#### *4. Global environmental problems.*

One of the most pressing global environmental problems is the environmental movement in the Aral Sea region. A direct consequence of the desiccation of the sea was dramatic climate change, felt not only in Central Asia, but also in other regions. The Aral Sea crisis zone directly covers the territories of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as indirectly - Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. On the bare part of the Aral Sea a new salt desert with an area of 5.5 million hectares appeared. Over 90 days a year, dust storms rage over it, spreading over 100 million tons of dust and poisonous salts into the atmosphere for thousands of kilometres each year. The threatening impact of the Aral catastrophe is observed all over the world today. According to international experts, poisonous salts from the Aral region are found on the coast of Antarctica, on the glaciers of Greenland, in the forests of Norway and many other parts of the globe [7].

However, the Aral Sea catastrophe is not the only environmental problem in Central Asia. Special attention should be paid to the rational use of vital water resources in the region at all times. In recent years, there has been a fragmentation of Central Asia's unified water management system. Conflicts between countries over whether to use river water for irrigation or energy have intensified. In the context of growing water use, limited water resources are also beginning to have an impact.

#### *5. Geopolitical competition.*

Today, Central Asia is in the direct interests of world and regional leaders. In short, all of them have set themselves the task of ensuring their geopolitical

presence in the region and advancing their political, economic, military and strategic interests here.

At the end of the 19th century, a geopolitical game was played between Britain and Russia to establish its influence in Central Asia, which eventually separated the region from international life for nearly a century. Now, a new version of geopolitical competition in Central Asia has attracted more actors with different goals. First of all, the Central Asian states are participating in this process not as passive objects, but as active participants with their own interests. This increases the risk of geopolitical conflicts in the region. The greatest danger is that a new terrible and very aggressive force - Islamism, religious extremism - has emerged among those struggling to establish their influence in Central Asia.

### **THE ROLE OF UZBEKISTAN IN THE REGION**

World experience shows that no country can develop in isolation from the world community. As a result of a well-defined active foreign policy in the national interests of independent Uzbekistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan has been recognized by more than 180 countries and established diplomatic relations with more than 130 countries [8].

Today, Uzbekistan is a member of such influential international organizations as the UN, CIS and SCO. The Republic of Uzbekistan pursues an active foreign policy based on the principles established by international law. Uzbekistan's high position and importance in Central Asia is not determined by subjective assessments, but by objective factors of a strategic nature.

Firstly, according to the statistics, Uzbekistan has the largest population in the region (Uzbekistan - 33,469,203, Kazakhstan - 18,776,707, Tajikistan - 9,537,645, Kyrgyzstan - 6,524,195, Turkmenistan - 6,031,200 people [9]).

Second, Uzbekistan, unlike other Central Asian countries, does not have direct borders with any of the world's major countries or regions. From a geopolitical point of view, this is an important advantage. On the other hand,

Uzbekistan is the only country in the region that shares a common border with five countries. This is the fact that Uzbekistan is located in the heart of Central Asia [10].

Thirdly, the capitals of all state structures that once existed in Central Asia and left a significant mark on the development of statehood, science and culture are located in the territory of modern Uzbekistan. The civilizational influence of the cultures of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Kokand and Tashkent has been strong outside the country in the past.

Fourth, Uzbekistan remains a country with great potential, and its role is critical to emergence of a more prosperous, connected Central Asia. Rich in hydrocarbons and mineral resources and possessing a relatively well-educated and low-cost labor force, Uzbekistan may in time become a leading, diversified economy. Uzbekistan further has the potential to serve as a manufacturing, transport, and financial hub for Central Asia and the South Caucasus [11].

Fifth, Uzbekistan, which is geographically and politically central in Central Asia, has every opportunity to play a significant role in ensuring equality and balance of power, creating a solid foundation for cooperation in this strategically important region. This set of factors determines not only Uzbekistan's position in the region, but also its special responsibility for the situation in Central Asia.

Based on the above-mentioned demographic, geopolitical and geo-economic factors, Uzbekistan is more interested in the sustainable development of each country in the region and the whole of Central Asia. The successful development of multifaceted regional cooperation, first of all, Uzbekistan, depending on its place and position, can have the greatest impact on the integration process in Central Asia.

At the beginning of the 21st century, a new turning point in the geopolitical development of Central Asia took place, the second major in a decade. The first global turning point in the region's destiny was the formation of five independent

states and the return of Central Asia as an independent entity in international relations.

## **THE AFGHAN PROBLEM AS A THREAT TO REGIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY**

The unstable and turbulent situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRA) poses a threat to the security and stability of the Central Asian region, as well as one of the global challenges affecting the policy of the Eurasian region. The long-running armed conflict in Afghanistan, the involvement of new forces in the confrontation and new geopolitical trends in the policies of the forces of interested organizations remain.

Political developments in Afghanistan in the 1990s, the Taliban, which eventually came to power as a result of internal political (ethnic, religious) conflicts, has turned the country into a battleground for new geopolitical “games”. In other words, it created favorable conditions for foreign military intervention [12].

After the capture of Kabul on September 26, 1996, the Taliban stormed the UN mission in Kabul in violation of international law. The Taliban operated from 1994 to 2001. During his seven-year rule, Afghanistan was politically dragged into a whirlpool of economic turmoil, left in the throes of starvation and disease [13].

For most of the past decades, Uzbekistan’s priorities for Afghanistan have centered on security. On the one hand, Tashkent has sought to insulate itself from cross-border threats, while on the other it has pursued a diplomatic framework for resolving the Afghan conflict [14].

In this regard, in his speech at the 48th session of the UN General Assembly on September 28, 1993, the first President of our country Islam Karimov touched upon the problem of tension on the Tajik-Afghan border and drug trafficking, the scale and potential of the conflict. He called on the United Nations to intensify

peacekeeping operations, especially in conflict zones [15]. Recognizing the depth and severity of the crisis in Afghanistan and its impact on regional and global geopolitical relations, the Uzbek side drew the attention of the world community to this problem.

The Uzbek side held regional and international meetings and practical work to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan. The first meeting of the "6 + 2" group - the Foreign Ministers of China, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, the United States and the Russian Federation - was held on September 21, 1998 at the UN Secretariat on the initiative of the first President of our country Islam Karimov. It called on the Taliban to end the war and bloodshed, and to resume talks between the two sides. Except that The Tashkent Summit of the 6 + 2 Group on Afghanistan was held on July 19-20, 1999 with the support of the United Nations. The sides signed the Tashkent Declaration on the Basic Principles of Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict in Afghanistan. The declaration is still the only official document adopted by all domestic political forces in the country and approved by the United Nations [16]. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the countries of Central Asia, primarily the Republic of Uzbekistan, played an important role in the US-led fight against international terrorism.

As noted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M.Mirziyoyev, "Afghanistan's security is a guarantee of Uzbekistan's security, stability and development of the entire Central and South Asian region. Undoubtedly, the establishment of peace on Afghan soil will open up new opportunities and brings real benefits for all countries on the vast Eurasian continent" [17].

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan ShavkatMirziyoyev outlined his strategic vision for regional security and stability at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly in September 2017 in New York.

According to the Action Strategy for 2017-2021, the Republic of Uzbekistan is developing cooperation with neighboring countries, resolving all issues. Uzbekistan's initiatives and practical efforts serve to strengthen regional peace and stability. In particular, due to the political will of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M.Mirziyoyev and the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, active and constructive relations are being established between the two countries. At the same time, the active and open foreign policy of the Uzbek side to establish peace in Afghanistan, stabilize the economic situation and integrate Afghanistan into the economic processes in Central Asia is highly recognized and supported by the world community.

In January 2017, Tashkent hosted the first round of political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries, and the appointment of the Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan was an example of our country's attention to bilateral relations [18]. The launch of the first direct flight between Tashkent and Kabul on November 29, 2017 was a historic event.

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M.Mirziyoyev, the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani arrived in our country on December 4, 2017 with an official visit. The two leaders exchanged views on issues of regional and international significance, including the fight against terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, and strengthening security in Central Asia.

Cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the field of construction of transport and energy infrastructure is noteworthy. During the meeting, the sides exchanged views on the implementation of the project on construction of the Surkhan-Puli Khumri power transmission line by Uzbek specialists and the joint construction of the Mazar-e-Sharif-Shiberghan-Maymana-Herat railway. The Republic of Uzbekistan is developing railway, energy and construction projects in Afghanistan. A special

education center has been set up in Surkhandarya region to teach Uzbek to Afghan citizens and train specialists in the railway sector.

## **CONCLUSION**

The processes taking place in Central Asia are developing more rapidly than in other regions of the world. This situation is also observed in the internal factors of regional development. In this regard, the task of large-scale study of the problems of the region and the role and position of the countries of the region is becoming increasingly important in the current process of globalization. In this regard, the region is being actively studied by the international community. Today, it is important to systematically study the problems of security and stability in the region, as well as the economic, political and environmental situation. Cooperation between Central Asian states is a priority in solving regional problems.

Sustainable economic development is an important guarantee of regional development. It is known that the socio-economic development of the countries of the region, their integration into the world economic and economic relations can ensure the solution of regional geo-economic problems. It is important to take measures to address all important issues of regional development, from security to the rational allocation of water resources.

In addition, Central Asia is not only geographically and geopolitically interconnected, but also a cultural space with similar values. The peoples living in the region are bound by common spiritual values and a past, similar national traditions and customs, a mentality formed over the centuries. This connection is a solid and reliable foundation for regional cooperation.

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# 13

## NARRATIVE ON RENEWED CENTRAL ASIAN COOPERATION

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### ABSTRACT:

*The article aims to analyze views on transformations that are taking place in Central Asia and Uzbekistan's active role in these integrational processes. Today's shift in policy and view reflect a renewed interest in regional economic cooperation and*



*resolution of problems in consultative ways. The article mostly focuses on expert opinions and analytics of leading Russian “think tanks” and seeks to draw conclusions on what makes regional cooperation more rigorous.*

**KEYWORDS:** Central Asia, consultative meeting, expert opinion, think tanks, regional integration, economic cooperation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is undeniable that Central Asian countries are entering a new phase of regional cooperation. Uzbekistan is playing a deciding role and taking active steps to further regional economic cooperation, consultation and talk. Pressing problems that have been left unresolved for decades are being addressed in constructive ways. Thus, present state of reinvigoration of integrational processes in this region is attracting wider attention. Political scientists, experts and other newsmakers are expressing their views and expert opinions on what is happening in the region. Thus, objective evaluation of changes and outcomes of heightened political activity of Central Asia becomes an important topic of discussion today.

Numerous scientists and experts have been expressing their opinions regarding the nature of the integration, positive outcomes that have been obtained up to date, present state of cooperation and assessment of the prospect of Central Asian transformation as well as the pitfalls of these processes that need urgent attention.

The aim of the author of this paper is to compare and critically analyze what leading experts of analytical centers and discussion clubs of Russia have said about Central Asian integration processes, to draw conclusions based on the above said.

## **THE PROSPECT OF THE RENEWED COOPERATION IN CENTRAL ASIA**

Central Asia has started attracting attention once more today because of the new shape of regional cooperation. The states of the region including Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are strengthening their cooperation in economic, investment, legal, political, cultural and many other spheres within the frameworks of international and regional organizations. Special tribute should be paid to “consultative meetings” of the heads of the states of the five countries which commenced with the first one being held in Astana in 2018.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan ShavkatMirziyoyev attending the first consultative meeting of the heads of state of Central Asia in 2018, stressed the significance of such meetings and pointed out that it was a “momentous event” and that “new opportunities are being created to develop regional cooperation” and that it was meant to be a “brand new cooperation” [1]. Analyzing the speech of the head of our state in that meeting, it becomes clear that Central Asian states have achieved significant progress in regional cooperation, have shifted from formality to a more practical level of mutual action and the perspectives of joint work and the priorities that have been set for the future. Practice shows that the rate of imports and exports has significantly increased among these countries, transport and logistics problems have been addressed jointly and new routes are being introduced. Moreover, the states have agreed to ease the process of clearance in customs stations in order to allow free movement of citizens and goods, the unresolved problems related to border markings have been reached through legal settlements.

The second consultative meeting of the heads of state of Central Asian countries was held in Tashkent in 2019 and was remembered for a number of reasons. Firstly, the host country’s President Shavkat Mirziyoyev had noted that this summit provided grounds for multilateral cooperation and further expanded

the spheres of cooperation among the five states [2]. Secondly, the main focus of discussion this time was on more global topic such as climate change and the role of investment and development of infrastructure in the region to diversify energy resources [3]. Heads of the five states expressed their views and proposed their projects to deal with water problems and to combat desertification in the region. Thirdly, the pressing problem of Afghanistan also became the main focus of the consultative meeting. The highlight was the fact that the parties agreed to invite Afghanistan as an observer in future consultative meetings [4].

No doubt that all the Central Asian countries are becoming more willing to tackle regional problems mutually and are developing such measures more cooperatively.

While the third consultative meeting that was planned to be held in the autumn in Bishkek, but was postponed to 2021 due to the Coronavirus pandemic [5], there is still heightened interest in this regional action. Various experts have expressed their views on these meetings. Some of them tied it to geopolitical consequences, while others claimed that Central Asian countries need such meetings to discuss their internal issues and change their policies toward regional partners in order to strengthen the ties. Below are some of the ideas and suggestions that have been expressed by Russian political scientist and analysts in relation to consultative meetings and regional cooperation on the whole.

### **RUSSIAN EXPERTS' VIEWS ON THE NEW COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN CENTRAL ASIA**

*“Constructive tone of the summit”*

In his article [6], Arkady Dubnov, an expert on Central Asia at the Karnegi Analytical Center in Moscow, highly appreciates Uzbekistan's contribution to regional cooperation. In his opinion, the consultative meetings indicate that the relations between the states are changing constructively. At these meetings, the

author draws attention to the fact that the parties are attempting to solve the existing issues through dialogue and in an open spirit. In particular, the author highly appreciates the regional cooperation and initiative policy pursued by the president of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev with the countries of Central Asia. Of importance is the fact that Tashkent has greatly altered its relations with neighbouring Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and even brokered between them to create grounds for constructive discussions and resolution of their problems.

He also notes that the five states are making steps to reveal the regional identity and even the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has offered to create “unique touristic image” of Central Asia [7].

However, it should be noted that Dubnov stressed the need to implement the joint decisions taken at these consultations and, in general, that the integration process in Central Asia should not lead to a deterioration of relations with their strategic economic and security partner - Russia. He states that it is of significant importance to resolve internal issues as well as those related to the neighbouring Afghanistan during these summits.

Analyzing his speech, it becomes clear that the five countries of Central Asia need these talks to address their internal issues related to water resources and energy as well as to advance regional cooperation in trade, investment and tourism industry.

#### *“C5 – the subjects of IR today”*

In their analytical article published on December 3, 2019 on Russian International Affairs Council website [8], the authors Andrei Kazansev and Aygul Kajenova pointed out that the dynamics of integration in Central Asia is attracting the attention of the main geopolitical actors of the world.

They discuss both of the consultative meetings in brief by outlining the achievements and prospects for the future. In particular, they maintain that the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev initiated the reforms which targeted

at the neighbouring states as the priority of the foreign policy of the country and it ushered a new stage in cooperation among the C5 countries.

They pay special attention to the agreement of the countries on several issues which had been a hindrance in mutual cooperation, increasing the transit potential of the region targeting security issues resulting from instability in the neighbor state of Afghanistan, international terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking.

The key facts from the article are that, on the one hand, Russia has started to approach the region as an integral unity or “C5” like it was approached by other countries including the US, Japan and Korea in their cooperation with the region. On the other hand, the authors attempt to draw the analogy between Uzbekistan – Kazakhstan tandem in Central Asia and Germany – France in the European Union. This particular analogy is the result of active participation of the two states in Central Asian cooperation processes with their economic, demographic and energy potentials.

As a concluding view the authors state the fact that Central Asian countries are becoming *subjects* of international relations as they are strengthening their regional cooperation by aligning the sharp edges and discrepancies in many areas. One of the key reasons behind Russia’s interest in the region, they point out, is mainly due to concerns to maintain peace and stability in the region.

#### *“Geopolitical consequences of regional integration”*

In his commentary [9], AjdarKurtov, an expert of Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS), is skeptical about the regional integration processes among Central Asian states. According to him, the following factors may hinder the existence of this “unity”. First, since gaining independence, each country has followed its own path of development and worked closely with countries that are strategically important to them. The models of national economies chosen by some states have been successfully implemented, while others have received

various criticisms. Until recently, he maintains, unresolved and controversial issues have not been discussed in detail. In addition, there are differences between the economic potential and growth of these countries today, and as a result, Kurtov has said that the alliance formed by these countries would not be strong enough to compete with other analogues.

The second issue raised by the author of the article is the lack of direct access to the high seas in Central Asia, and as a result, there is strong likelihood of problems in the field of transport and logistics. In this sense, even if regional economic and political talks have been formed, the chances of reaching the European and American markets in the future may be underestimated.

Third, he contends that regional integration had better be initiated in cooperation with Russia or China to strengthen and make this successful, otherwise it is likely to increase the influence of other geopolitical actors in Central Asia.

Summarizing the abovementioned ideas of the author, it can be said that the cooperation among Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, formed on the basis of an agreement, should not become a separate alliance, but continue their participation within the framework of existing organizations such as CIS or SCO or with the partnership of the main geostrategic partners of the region. However, the author of the present paper refutes Kurtov's view that the countries are forming a new alliance. In fact, this cooperation is not meant to found a brand-new organization in Central Asia, but to intensify regional talk and agree on the most important priorities for all the countries. It should not be in a way that major geopolitical actors of international relations address the issues and unite them, but these countries themselves should make steps and turn to their neighbors in constructive ways.

## **CONCLUSION**

Central Asian countries are seriously involved in strengthening regional cooperation and this can be seen in regular meetings of the heads of states in consultative meetings. The governments of the five countries are taking serious steps to collaboratively deal with regional issues which have been a strain on their relations for decades. Political scientist and experts in this field have been giving different interpretations of Central Asian transformation processes. Based on the views of authors that we have briefly analyzed in this paper, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Consultative meetings have created the ground for a more constructive talk and unification of efforts for the sake of the development of the region;
- Central Asia today is not what it used to be a decade ago and each country is changing its policy toward its neighbors and is preparing for a joint regional action;
- Central Asia is developing its identity as a region attractive for investments and tourism and the five countries are intensifying their cooperation to become the subjects of their regional processes;
- Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are leading other countries in the region because of their economic demographic and investment potential;
- Russia still remains one of the strategic partners of the region and has started to consider the region as a unity in its policy rather than working with each state separately.

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# 14

## RURAL REFORMS IN CENTRAL ASIA

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### ABSTRACT:

*The larger part of nations in modern central Asia is still agricultural-based economies. In spite of patterns towards expanding non-farm incomes, the agrarian division remains the foremost imperative financial sector for diminishing destitution. There's in this*



*manner need to find ways of stimulating an agricultural transformation process to attain structural change and reach sustainable financial advancement.*

**KEYWORDS:** Silk Road initiative (BRI), post-Soviet union, agriculture, labor share, ecology, international relation, Turkey

## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid growth of East and South Asian economies has primarily created a new balance of power; nowadays China plays an important role in shift in the geopolitical balance of power between East and West. However, the importance of the One Road One Belt initiative has brought the five former post-Soviet republics to life on the edge of the post-communist world to the center of the Asian continent. Although all former Soviet republics declared their independence at the same time in 1991 and declared their withdrawal from the authoritarian communist political system, the Central Asian countries were “delayed” entrance into the democratization camp. However, this countries facing different type of difficulties almost in all part of the industry non-existent or underdeveloped institutional frameworks, lack of data, monopolistic structures, transaction costs, as well as direct political interference and corruption hinder market-oriented coordination mechanisms. It is generally known fact in Central Asia almost all countries economy is based on agriculture product. By increasing world population and climate change will effect food security and same time incise the price witch create new opportunity to the country if we can increase productivity in urban area. Climate change is increasing producers’ risk and food safety due to crop variability and increasing water scarcity. After the Soviet Union gained independence in 1991, the five governments of Central Asia chose different development paths. Agricultural diversification has many economic and environmental benefits, such as reducing water consumption, improving soil quality, and distributing income risk and it is

recognized as an important component of economic growth and development. This is an important factor for rural transformation, allowing the economy to focus agricultural products on food security, improving nutrition, and increasing employment in rural areas.

## **TRANSFORMATION PROCESS AND UNUSED ELEMENTS OF UZBEKISTAN'S ARRANGEMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA**

Uzbekistan intends to keep open all opportunities to obtain the necessary investments to modernize and develop its economy. There are many countries that want to invest in the market with high potential. This will make China a first-class strategic partner, significantly expanding its ties with Central Asian countries under the conceptual Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China sees Uzbekistan as a key partner for the success of the BRI component in Central Asia and has become Uzbekistan's largest trading partner and increasingly important lender and investor. Since 2016, the majority of incoming foreign direct investment has come from China; at the end of 2019, about 1,600 Chinese companies were registered in Uzbekistan. In January 2020, Chinese capital has invested in large-scale projects, including traditional and renewable electricity, petrochemicals, construction and textiles, digital infrastructure and telecommunications [1]. The second pillar of economic development for Tashkent is the support of international financial institutions and Western investors. Concessional loans from institutions such as the World Bank are undoubtedly attractive, and the World Bank has significantly expanded its operations since 2016 and is supporting a transformation project in Uzbekistan with multi-billion dollar loans and development assistance. In Uzbekistan, where Western technologies and know-how has always been valued, cooperation with the West is a strategic counterweight to the structural superiority of the two regional states, as well as an internationally recognized actor. It is rewarding that the commitment to economic and political opening up set out in the

Development Strategy has played a major role in the effectiveness of the gradual transformation process in the past.

### **TRANSFORMATION PROCESS IN AGRICULTURE**

The structures of farms around the world, especially in transition economies, almost are very diverse the key reason is democracy level in the country. In countries in transition, they are often dualistic in the sense that small and large farms coexist. Each type of operation faces its own challenges. The difference in the level of development of successful and underdeveloped regions has increased through the transition of formerly centrally planned economies. As a result, poverty, income disparities are growing in many places, and rural migration is taking place in many places. The declining and aging rural population is making it increasingly difficult to maintain rural infrastructure and services. Necessary to significantly increase agricultural production and it is productivity to meet the growing global demand for food. However, climate change, soil degradation, nutrient deficiencies, and growing irrigation water shortages threaten the future growth of agricultural production. The main goal of the government is to develop an understanding of the interaction between people and the environment in rural areas of countries in transition to identify ways to facilitate the sustainable use of land and water resources. This includes quantitative indicators of agricultural production capacity, the causes, and determinants of changes in land use, the impact of climate change on agriculture, as well as the relationship between agricultural production and degradation. Identifying an alternative solution to interdependencies involves solving key problems [2].

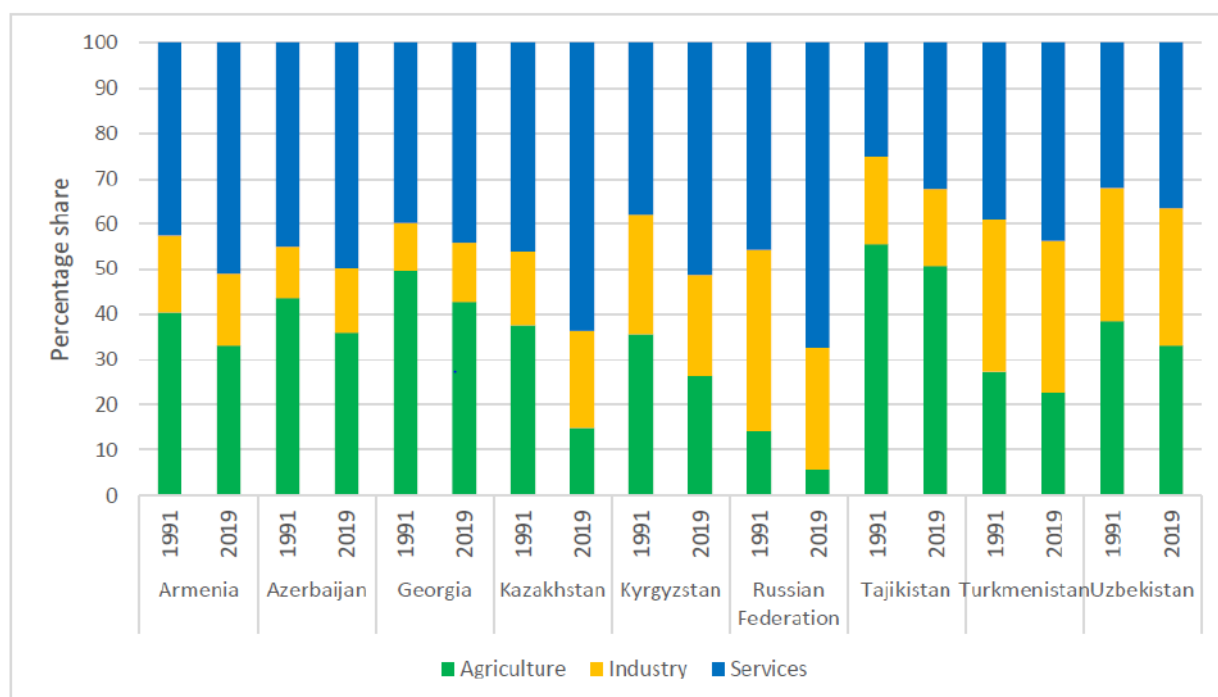
It discusses trends and development of agriculture and structural changes and their impact on sustainable development in the sub region.

In fact, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the sub region has experienced economic and political changes, and eight years later has seen positive growth. During the reform period and moving to market economy and industrializing of country effected to the share of agriculture in GDP of those

countries. However, a large part of the population still works in agriculture, especially in rural areas. In agriculture, the potential gains from intra-sectoral change should not be overlooked. Improving network efficiency and therefore profitability will save millions of people from poverty while increasing resource use efficiency. Sustainable agricultural transformation needs to be introduced across the sub region. These include the privatization of sustainable agricultural reconstruction plans, an assessment of the current structure of agricultural subsidies to attract more efficient sources of production, the use of private sector investment to modernize agriculture, and the need to combat water stress. Strengthening regional cooperation to increase water use efficiency and ensure supply can help. These efforts to support agriculture, in turn, are aimed at the efficient use of human resources from the leftovers of the Soviet-era system of agriculture in the transition period of the Central Asian states and the proper use of modern technology helps to achieve order in the process of food security and industrialization.

New structural changes in the sub region from 1991 to 2019 through general changes in employment from agriculture to industry and services, the data showed two opposite trends.

Figure 1. Employment share by sector, 1991 and 2019



### Employment share by sector 1991-2019 [3].

When Central Asia countries became independence faced declined income and budget deficit during 1991 and 2001, affected to a significant decline in productivity and per capita income, moreover high inflation rate the economy was exhausted. This period of stagnation is making it difficult for many North and Central Asian states to return to their path through transition strategies such as privatization policies, trade liberalization, and export diversification. From 2001 to 2019, sub region countries began to reverse negative trends in labor productivity and income growth, which was complicated by sector improvements and small structural changes. Over the past decade, institutional reforms based on a market economy have begun to bear fruit. At the same time, the economic growth of resource-rich countries in the sub region is associated with constraints such as high productivity but limited employment opportunities, environmentally unsustainable impacts, and changes in global resource prices much depends on the extraction of the necessary resources. Diversification of the economy and its integration into key regional and global value chains is limited [4].

Changes in the value-added of agriculture in Uzbekistan in support of the government's policy to diversify its agricultural sector and the transition to high value-added agricultural products and value chains reflect the abandonment of a single-crop economy.

In recent decades, cotton has been one of the main agricultural products for the sub region. However, cotton industry created big deal environmental outcomes has high social and environmental cost. In North and Central Asia, cotton as a monoculture without crop rotation has acquired a share of lands that have been subjected to varying degrees of desertification as a result of soil degradation. Last 35 years Aral Sea was dried up because of lake water, as well as excessive use of substances in cotton, are related with the desertification of the Aral Sea, one of the worst environmental disasters observed. Perceiving the need to all the more likely oversee and advance the business, governments have taken an assortment of strategy measures since the breakdown of the Soviet Association, prompting an in excess of 50% decrease in cotton creation. The Uzbek government has deliberately planned to cut cotton production in high-salinity and mountainous areas and replace it with other crops, including fruits, vegetables, potatoes, and cereals.

Data on changes in agricultural production between 1992 and 2018 show limited agricultural diversification in North and Central Asian countries. Strategic policies to diversify agriculture need to be carefully considered to reduce the vulnerability of the economy and encourage sustainable growth. Diversification strategies, as well as changes in the agricultural sector, should combine environmental and social challenges to make it more comprehensive sustainable [5]. Rural change depends on the degree of structural change in the economy. New jobs need to be created to accommodate the labor laid off from agricultural work. The issue of youth employment is inextricably linked with this process of structural change. At the beginning of their careers, mostly young people choose career paths outside of farming and move to cities to explore and take on new

job opportunities. Technology is the main drivers of the rural transformation process. It is through innovation and technological advancement that agricultural productivity will increase, and the labor force will be freed up for the transition to jobs in manufacturing and services. At the same time, technological advances are also disrupting jobs, resulting in uncertainty and hardship between affected families and rural communities. Communities that distance themselves from these trends can mitigate the short-term destructive forces of technological change but at the expense of lower rates of economic growth. Communities that are open to these trends but do not adopt adequate policies to support workers and families that are negatively affected are subjecting their communities to painful and long-term transitions. The latest technological revolution is approaching agriculture and it will be very detrimental. Advances in robotics and artificial intelligence have the potential to help small farms. In addition, the low data and virtual nature, connectivity, and low cost of logistics allow individuals and firms to be located almost anywhere and work efficiently. This will enable rural communities to develop sectors that account for the majority of post-farm production and service sectors. To be successful, rural areas need to be agglomerated and added to clusters to allow more efficient use of technology, expertise, and opportunities. These clusters can create ecosystems that contribute to innovation and growth today.

According to experts, the adoption of the Action Strategy is a big step for Uzbekistan, as the country has acted consistently and confidently in this regard, creating the necessary solid foundation. According to experts, the macroeconomic stability in Uzbekistan allows to effectively counteract external shocks. At present, the tasks set in the Action Strategy for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021 are being consistently implemented in our country. This policy document paved the way for our country to enter a completely new stage of development [6].

## **PRAGMATIC AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

Modern information and communication technologies have given a new impetus to the relationship between the state and society. The development of the industry contributes to the introduction of new forms of relations between the state and society, government agencies, and citizens. In this sense, the virtual reception of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan plays an important role as an indicator of the effectiveness of public authorities, a mechanism for in-depth analysis and solution of local problems. In a short period, virtual reception has become an effective tool for solving the problems of the population. This is confirmed by the statistics of appeals. That is, to date, more than one million complaints have been received from citizens; of which 94% have been considered. Thus, the principle of public accountability of government agencies and officials is being put in to practice. Citizens have become more involved in the country's reforms. This is an important factor in strengthening mutual trust between the state and the people, the stability and development of society. Most importantly, experts note that there are positive changes in the minds and worldviews of the population. In their view, this is a key factor in fulfilling the tasks facing society.

## **TOWARDS A CREATIVE ECONOMY**

The government is putting forward vital initiatives aimed at diversifying the economy, restructuring agriculture, as well as expanding foreign economic relations. It is noteworthy that in order to fully implement the set tasks, Uzbekistan is taking measures to develop a creative economy based on innovative development and accelerating economic growth. Its main idea is not only to increase exports but also to create new industries, goods, and services that will create quality jobs. Creative economics also involves the active participation of citizens in production by supporting start-ups, new business projects, and original ideas. Start-ups are being widely introduced in our country. They are especially popular among young people. For example, in March of this year, a program to support youth start-up initiatives was launched. It was



attended by more than a thousand students from various universities of Uzbekistan. The largest initiatives in this large-scale project were in the areas of e-commerce, education, communication and navigation technologies, transport and road infrastructure, medicine, and biotechnology. In order to develop liberalize the economy and society and pure government. In particular, at the initiative of the President, the Guarantee Fund for Small Business Development, the Institute of the Representative under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Protection of the Rights and Legal Interests of Entrepreneurs were established. According to international experts, the approach to economic policy in Uzbekistan is changing. This is primarily aimed at increasing the economic activity of the population and creating a favorable business environment. The focus is on attracting foreign partners and investment in the organization and expansion of high-tech and innovative production.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND FURTHER PERSPECTIVES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

One of the main trading partners of Uzbekistan is Turkey. Export and import among these two countries in 2016 were almost \$ 1.2billion. About 500 Turkish companies operate in our country. In the same year, more than 20 enterprises with the participation of investments from this country were established in our country, and representative offices of 53 companies were accredited. It was noted during bilateral relations not used opportunities for cooperation, and the visit will give a new impetus to the development of relations between the ministries and departments and business circles of the two countries [7]. The two sides agreed to continuously increase and diversify bilateral trade through the supply of high value-added Goods and the development of long-term investment cooperation. However, Uzbekistan produces different type of product in wide range, Polymer products, electrical products, and one of the top exporters of vegetables and fruits in the region and almost all kind of row material can be founded in the country which will create

great opportunity to producers in the prospect of price policy. They expressed readiness to share experiences on forestry development, effective water management, soil degradation and combating desertification. Particular attention was paid to the development of cooperation in science, education and culture. Turkey appreciates the initiatives and practical work aimed at studying the heritage of great scholars in Uzbekistan, combating ignorance and enlightenment. The Imam Bukhari International Research Center under construction in Samarkand and the Center for Islamic Civilization in Tashkent are of great importance in this regard. Relations between scientists and research centers, joint projects to study the spiritual and cultural heritage will further strengthen the friendship of our peoples.

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# THE PROBLEM OF SHAPING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN KYRGYZSTAN (SINCE 1991)

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*This article examines the political and regime changes in Kyrgyzstan since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, as well as the factors that led to the frequent change of government. In Kyrgyzstan, neither presidential nor parliamentary forms of government have paid off. Studies show that a properly chosen form of government plays an important role in the political and economic development of a state if the rule of law prevails in that state and there is no corruption and nepotism. At the same time, in the 2021 presidential election and the referendum on the transition of government from parliamentarism to the presidency, the Kyrgyz people voted in favor. This article also provides an answer to why such things happened in Kyrgyzstan and why the Kyrgyz people chose the presidency based on historical and current circumstances.*

**KEYWORDS:** Kyrgyzstan, president, parliamentarianism, constitution, form of government, political regime.

## **INTRODUCTION**

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the Central Asian states gained independence. Despite the fact that the Central Asian states have been operating under a socialist regime for almost 70 years and are members of the CIS, their political and economic development has continued in different ways.

The post-Soviet republics determined their political changes from a communist totalitarian political regime to a new political democracy, in particular, the Kyrgyz Republic took a course towards building an open

democratic society, and this path turned out to be difficult and contradictory from the point of view of political development.

Although authoritarian rule in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan has lasted for a long time, this has not been the case in Kyrgyzstan. For instance, this point of view also has been approved by Baktygulov, too [1]. He argued that over the last twenty years of independent development in Kyrgyzstan, the political process embodied the adoption of eight different constitutions of the country, developed and adopted during the period from May 1993 to June 2010. The country has the fourth president, the fifth calling of the parliament and the twenty-fourth government, which makes Kyrgyzstan very different from its neighbors in the region and the post-Soviet space. There were several reasons for this, and these will be explored below.

First of all, unlike neighborhood states, Kyrgyzstan has well-developed democratic institutions and civil society. A multiparty system has existed in Kyrgyzstan since 1991. The first non-communist party in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan was formed in 1991 under the name "Free Kyrgyzstan". At the beginning of 2017, 224 political parties were registered in the republic (for the beginning of 1994 - 8, in 1999 - 18, for comparison, in 2017, 4 political parties and 1 political movement were registered in Uzbekistan and 6 political parties in Kazakhstan). According to the results of the elections to the Jogorku Kenesh in 2015, there were 6 political parties [2, p. 16].

In addition to political parties, there are other non-governmental public organizations in Kyrgyzstan. In the early 2010s, there were (according to various sources) from 10 to 16 thousand non-governmental public organizations in the republic, but no more than 600-700 of them actually functioned. Trade unions of Kyrgyzstan are united in the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions, consisting of 20 branch committees. The number of trade union members in the post-Soviet period has declined sharply, despite the growth of the population of Kyrgyzstan. In 1990, there were 1 604 678 people in the trade unions of

Kyrgyzstan, and in 2013 - only 704 093 people. That is, over 23 years the number of trade union members has decreased by more than 2 times. The reduction in the number of trade unions is associated with a reduction in the number of enterprises and institutions due to the economic crisis, with the privatization and the transition of a part of employees to self-employment [2, p. 17-18].

In Kyrgyzstan, after gaining independence during the period of constitutional reforms, the post of President was established. The Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyz SSR of the 12th convocation adopted the law "On the establishment of the post of President of the Kyrgyz SSR and amendments and additions to the Constitution (Basic Law) of the Kyrgyz SSR" dated October 24, 1990. A. Akayev was elected the first President of Kyrgyzstan. He held this post from 1990-2005. On the basis of the Law "On the reorganization of the system of state power and administration in the Kyrgyz SSR and the introduction of amendments and additions to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz SSR" the parameters of the institution of the presidency were changed: 1) the president received the powers of both the head of state and the head of the supreme executive power of the republic; 2) he formed the composition of the Cabinet of Ministers with subsequent approval by the Supreme Council; 3) he received the right to cancel or suspend the action of government decrees, acts of ministries, state committees and departments of the Kyrgyz SSR in the event of their inconsistency with the Constitution and laws of the Kyrgyz SSR; 4) he was endowed with the right of legislative initiative [3].

The current difficult socio-economic situation in Kyrgyzstan has caused discontent among the Kyrgyz people, and this was later reflected in the political process. As a result, the form of government in Kyrgyzstan has changed several times.

After the March revolutions, K. Bakiyev was elected President of the country, who held this position in 2005–2010. According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic of October 21, 2007, the President actually usurped state

power, influencing by his actions on the formation of legislative power, the election of deputies to the Jogorku Kenesh. The executive branch was directly dependent on the President. The ruling coalition, which included the pro-presidential party and his entourage, elected the Prime Minister at the direct discretion of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The judiciary also came under pressure from the President. By the beginning of 2008, during the presidency of K. Bakiev, a super-presidential government was finally formed in Kyrgyzstan, in which informal governance structures - the so-called "family", the closest circle of the "family" - stood above the official state institutions. In October 2009, President K. Bakiev created the so-called "CADII" (Central Agency for Development, Investment and Innovation), which by the end of the year had actually turned into a "super agency", a "supra-governmental body", whose decisions were binding on all state bodies, including the Government. President K. Bakiev appointed his son M. Bakiyev as the head of the CADII, who from the end of 2009 to April 2010 was actually the second official in the state [3].

The companions of the super-presidential regime of K. Bakiev were nepotism, clannishness, corruption, the criminalization of power, the political and economic monopoly of the presidential "family", the suppression of freedom of speech and the brutal persecution of dissent and opposition. This led to the fact that the situation in the Republic was again aggravated to the extreme; the events called revolution occurred again [3]. As a result of the revolution on April 7, 2010, power passed to the Provisional Government. On May 19, 2010, by a special decree of the Provisional Government of Kyrgyzstan, R. Otunbayeva was proclaimed the President of Kyrgyzstan for a transitional period. According to the decree, the term of office of the President of Kyrgyzstan for the transitional period was established until December 31, 2011. As R. Otunbayeva noted, the strong presidential power in the country has actually not justified itself. Such a political regime, as life has shown, ultimately necessarily leads to family - clan rule, as a result of which corruption, crime and permissiveness begin to flourish

in the state [4]. Considering all these moments, in April 2010 the new Provisional Government set as its main goal the reform of the political system, the construction of a parliamentary form of government in Kyrgyzstan [5].

The constitution of June 27, 2010 provides for a parliamentary form of government. The powers of the head of state have been significantly reduced, mainly representative functions are assigned to him. In addition, the president, as head of state, ensures the coordinated functioning of the three branches of government. He acts as an arbiter who, in most cases, must remain above the situation and outside the current relationship between the government and the Jogorku Kenesh.

Although Kyrgyzstan is proclaimed a parliamentary republic, legally, the President remains in practice a plenipotentiary and strong head of state [6].

In fact, according to the form of government, Kyrgyzstan is not a parliamentary, but a mixed republic. This follows from the president's right to issue normative decrees and orders that are valid throughout the country, which is completely uncharacteristic for a parliamentary republic [7]. In addition, in states of parliamentary form of government, the President is not elected by the people, and the powers of the President are mainly of a representative nature. But according to the Basic Law in Kyrgyzstan, the President is elected by citizens by popular vote, which means that the President has a fairly wide range of powers, in contrast to the President, who is elected by the parliament [3].

The novelty was that the President is now elected for six years by citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic. One and the same person cannot be elected President twice (Article 61). On October 30, 2011, elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic were held; A. Atambayev was elected the head of state. For the first time in Kyrgyzstan, as a result of the elections, power passed to the elected President peacefully, without aggravating the social and political situation [3].

In December 2016, a referendum was held on strengthening the power of the Prime Minister and was approved by 80% of voters [8].

The following Presidential elections were held in Kyrgyzstan on 15 October 2017. Incumbent President Almazbek Atambayev was not allowed to run again because the constitution sets a single six-year term for the head of state [9]. Eleven candidates registered for the race, and from this field SooronbayJeenbekov of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan won more than 50% of the vote, avoiding a runoff [10]. Following certification of the results on 30 October [11], Jeenbekov was inaugurated as President of Kyrgyzstan on 24 November.

The elections marked the first change of president that was not the result of the death of the incumbent or a revolution, and also the first in which the results were not known beforehand. Some described the vote as Central Asia's first genuinely competitive presidential election [12].

On 24 October 2020, the Central Electoral Commission of Kyrgyzstan (BShK) announced that an early presidential election would be held on 10 January 2021. The announcement of the early election occurred after several weeks of public protests and political chaos which caused the resignation of President Sooronbay Jeenbekov. The upheaval followed accusations of election corruption occurring in the 2020 Kyrgyz parliamentary election which was held on 4 October 2020 and was subsequently annulled by the Central Electoral Commission [9].

The early presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan took place on January 10, 2021 following the political crisis in October 2020 that led to the resignation of Sooronbay Jeenbekov. On the same day, a constitutional referendum took place, which defined the form of government in the country as a presidential republic.

All candidates officially ran as independents, although some were supported by their respective political parties. SadyrJaparov won the election handily,



receiving nearly 80% of the vote. A total of 10,851 ballots returned were invalid, in addition to 196 which were retrieved from invalid portable ballot boxes. [13]

On the same day, voters cast their second ballot in a referendum on constitutional reform initiated by Japarov. In another victory for the president-elect, 84 percent of voters approved a change that would give Kyrgyzstan a presidential system of government and effectively reduce parliamentary power.

According to Omelicheva [14] critics of the parliamentary form of government in Kyrgyzstan were right in naming the symptoms, but not the sources, of woes in the country's politics. The attitudes of the Kyrgyz electorate toward leadership, authority, state institutions, and public priorities have seen minimal changes in the decade since the parliamentary form of government was introduced. She also argued that presidentialism is favored by Kyrgyz citizens because it offers a simple mechanism for holding the state leader accountable through the threat of violent removal in a system of governance rooted in patronage. To put it simply, it is easier to "punish" the sitting president by removing him from the office through revolt than to deal with the parliament. A revolt against the power-sharing system in the parliament threatens to break the patronage networks cultivated by the ruling elite that many in the population benefit from. Even if dissatisfied, some voters blame other factions for the country's problem or fear that change will give other factions more power over them.

However, I do not fully support these views of Omelicheva. Because this approach does not take into account the influence of external forces on the processes taking place in Kyrgyzstan. Especially given the fact that Kyrgyzstan is located in a geopolitically important region, Russia and China will always have economic and political interests here. From this point of view, the economic development and political stability of Kyrgyzstan will largely depend on external forces rather than the existing problems in the country. A similar situation can be observed in the rest of Central Asia.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the studies, the following can be noted that Kyrgyzstan has had six presidents since independence. If the government initially moved from a strong presidency to a parliamentary one, it is likely to move to a presidential form again after the last election and referendum. In Kyrgyzstan, deep-rooted corruption among officials and the rise of nepotism are among the factors that have led to frequent changes of government. As a result, economic growth in Kyrgyzstan is much lower than in its neighbors, and many are forced to work abroad- due to high unemployment.

Kyrgyzstan's newly elected president, Japarov, said after the inauguration that the country would change dramatically and that it would no longer be possible to live in the old way.

Today, economic and political struggles are intensifying in world politics. Therefore, this situation does not bypass the Central Asian states. And the influence of external forces on them will continue to grow. With this in mind, I believe that if the five Central Asian states improve their socio-economic and political ties and then act as a political entity, they can not only reduce external influence, but also emerge as a new geopolitical force.

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# 16

## **IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON MACROECONOMIC STABILITY: CASE UZBEKISTAN**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*In 2019, there was concern among the nations about how USA and China trade war, presidential elections in the USA and Brexit will impact on further development of World Economy. Apart from this, the forecasts of several international organizations about the economic outlook for the whole world were promising. For example, IMF*

*forecasted that global economy is going to rise by 3.4 percent in upcoming year 2020. However, the whole world has faced with health crisis COVID-19 known as coronavirus caused by SARS-Cov-2.*

**KEYWORDS:** Macroeconomics, covid-19, macroeconomic factors, GDP.

In 2019, there was concern among the nations about how USA and China trade war, presidential elections in the USA and Brexit will impact on further development of World Economy. Apart from this, the forecasts of several international organizations about the economic outlook for the whole world were promising. For example, IMF forecasted that global economy is going to rise by 3.4 percent in upcoming year 2020. However, the whole world has faced with health crisis COVID-19 known as coronavirus caused by SARS-Cov-2 because of which over 170,000 people passed away and over 2.5 million people have been confirmed with infection as of 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 2020 at the same time with drying the world economy by completely changing perspectives of the nations. Rapid spread of infection and its high contagious nature has touched the financial markets as well where stock prices have plummeted a lot within the two months period with record high daily drops. According to Randewich [17] only in one week starting from 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2020, the loss of global stock markets was equal to US\$6 trillion. The S&P 500's 10 largest companies of the US have faced combined loss that amounts US\$1.4 trillion. This enormous loss was because of investors' expectations about decline of profitability and weakening value of stocks of companies due to Covid-19. Based on International Air Transportation Association (IATA) report, if Covid-19 continues spreading in the same path, the air industry will lose more than US\$115 billion, because of imposed restrictions on air travel among the countries.

In the majority of developing and developed countries tourism industry and remittance inflows play a vital role for the development of the nation.

Horowitz [8] stated that tourism industry is going to miss more than \$200US billion because of imposed restrictions on travel opportunities by closing borders of each country for travel purposes in order to restrain outbreak of Covid-19. In addition, the remittance inflows drastically decreased over the last two months as governments ordered to close majority of factories and entities to escape further development of virus. The whole world started implementing different restrictive policies and this has led to dramatic decrease in Global supply chain. China and India for example one of the biggest manufactures and exporters of diverse range of products and raw materials, came to the decision to close their major factories and enterprises. Many countries such as France, Italy, Iran, Uzbekistan and Russia decided to implement stay-at-home nationwide strategy to reduce the spread of virus, which had already given rise in global recession (Peterson, 2020). According to IMF the first priority in this case is to protect public health needs, but with sharp decline as governments have to spend a giant amount of sums in order to keep alive all the businesses and households.

Covid-19 originated in Wuhan, China and started spreading all over the world through direct contact between people and their saliva. According to Horowitz, the situation has been getting worse day by day for economy through implementing restrictive actions such as stay at home policies, travel bans which directly related to aviation industry, prohibition of hosting various events to escape gathering people which in turn have negative impact on sport, events and entertainment industries. It should be noted that the case of covid-19 is directly related and have parallels in the development of economic events to the crises, which occurred in 2007-2008 years. In the beginning of 2020, the majority of states have thought that the virus would be localized only in China and would not impact on other nations. The same situation happened in 2007 year, as in early stages it was concluded that the problem with subprime mortgages would

have a tiny impact on the economy of the US whereas it almost destroyed the global financial system [4].

The novel pandemic brings to the weakening of demand and supply for products, which in turn has effect on price levels on both international and national markets. So, it is worth mentioning that the price level has substantially changed but according to the type of production. For example, in the short-run the prices of essential goods during and after the pandemic tends to increase due to lack of supply, whereas the other nonessential goods because of weak demand compared to supply lost their values and prices drops automatically. Therefore, because of fall of the demand for nonessential goods compare to essential goods it will lead to decrease of overall price level [2]. To stabilize the price level, it always takes time after the crisis is over, so in the long-run the price level will return to its position if all necessary actions implemented to restore the market. This hypothesis could be supported with recent evidence from Chinese economy. So the producer prices in China declined in the mid of the first quarter by 0.4 percent mainly due to low demand and delays in manufacturing goods (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2020). Whereas the consumer price index has showed a positive trend and increased by 5.2 percent compare to previous year. The overall fall in prices is depicted on international level not only in domestic markets because of trade bans and demand-supply shocks.

Due to the pandemic, the foreign exchange market responses accordingly in local and international markets. The world major currencies are suffering by losing their values against US Dollar day by day starting from January 2020. This is happening mainly because of restrictions on trade and weak flow of international transactions. This pandemic situation puts countries to condition whether the majority of production factories and even suppliers of raw materials has stopped their work in order to follow the rules of the quarantine. So if the imports of the country exceed the exports it indicates that there is a low demand for its currency and prices should decline. This is known as depreciation and

accurate implementation of this strategy leads to trade balance: the Marshall-Lerner condition. So many developing countries during the pandemic started to devalue their currencies against strongest ones. For example, Uzbekistan depreciates its currency against to US dollar and makes its goods less expensive abroad which in turn will increase a foreign demand for Uzbek goods and increase exports.

The aggregate demand and supply shocks will result in increase of unemployment level because of delays in production facilities and closure of entities all over the world. The global unemployment rate could probably increase in the range between 5.3 million and 24.7 million according to calculations based on global GDP [9]. According to Pickert [16], the loss from global income accounted for more than US\$2,550 billion, which in turn affects millions of workers and could put them close or below the poverty line. The developing countries that rely mainly on export-oriented industries will extremely suffer from losing jobs due to pandemic. As Paton [14] reports, millions of low-wage workers in Bangladesh have already been sent home without payments because factories face with \$2.8 billion order cancelations from western world.

Covid-19 significantly affects aggregate demand and reduces the demand for goods and services globally [6]. This sharp decline is mainly determined by fall of demand for non-essential goods, whereas the demand for essential goods increased resulting in the food stores to face with problems of empty shelves [11]. Further weakening demand in international markets is mainly due to imposed restrictions on trade and transportation facilities, travelling and tourism, stay-at-home policies, different food security issues related to Covid-19 and social distancing. According to OECD [12] report the aggregate demand in China has lowered by 4 percent taking into consideration both investment and consumption. As for aggregate supply, the biggest exporters of raw materials and other non-essential products such as China, India and Japan closed their export-



orientated factories and reduced supply of goods via global supply chain. For example, China's production has fallen by more than 14 percent in the first quarter [11]. The majority of countries, which have experienced a spread of coronavirus, are facing with supply shocks and the scientists conclude that there is a possibility of downturn in output till the end of the year.

According to IMF, the following pandemic will cause decline of global economic growth in the short-run and then economies will be quickly rebounded (Bangkok Post, 2020). Fernandes [5] states that GDP growth will decrease by 3-4 percent and growth rates will vary from country to country costing 2-2.5 percent of global GDP for one extra month of shutdown. For example, the service-orientated countries such as Greece, Portugal and Spain are going to be affected more by crisis due to losing tourism industry. To conclude, in the short-run all countries will face decreasing trend of economic growth, while in the long-run the situation will turn out to be in better path. Also, it should be noted that some countries even in the long-run would probably face with low or even negative economic growth because of Covid-19 consequences that will be different for different economies, mainly for service oriented ones [3].

In general, the government should implement fiscal and monetary policies as well as public health measures and human control measures in order to keep alive and protect economy of the nation. Nonetheless, for this peculiar pandemic situation the new method of implementing stabilization policy should be created, because Covid-19 has affected every economy differently and they all need unique policy strategy in order to get rid of this problem. So as fast policy responses the monetary policies tools such as lowering interest rates, increasing liquidity in financial system, creating easy-accessed lending opportunities for banks and businesses and moderating the loan terms should be implemented to calm the economy. But, it should be noted that monetary policy can just stimulate the economy but cannot stop the recession [2]. The majority of economists

concluded that monetary policy itself could not encourage demand because people are not buying or investing during the pandemic, so the monetary policy tools are not enough to cure upcoming recession. As for fiscal policy, the following measures should be implemented: the government stimulus packages for the industries, which have suffered from Covid-19 pandemic at most, allocate funds to support the income of individuals, prolong the tax payments and reduce tax payments for the most affected sectors and support businesses with guaranteed loans.

In case of severe economic crisis, governments mainly rely on fiscal policy measures rather than monetary policy tools. So before and during the recession, governments are advised to use expansionary fiscal policy and decrease tax rates by fuelling the economic growth, whereas implementation of contractionary policy will lead to decreasing aggregate demand. According to Hamada [7] in such economic situations, debt of the country most probably will increase due to big amount of money spend in order to stabilize the economy, but if this amount is used wisely it will prevent from paralysis of economy, institutions and everyday life.

As illustrated in Figure 1, if the depreciation gap will continue in the same way, the economy would face recession in the long-run, and then the recovery of the demand shock will be necessary. It is clear from Figure 1 that there is a risk of encompassing recession coming from Covid-19 adverse economic conditions. According to Fornaro and Wolf [6], due to pandemic the world economy will face negative supply shock because closure of factories and other manufacturing entities. So a recession caused by Covid-19 is probably imminent, the consequences of the crisis will depend on its damage to rendered supply and capital formation.

The demand and supply shocks in global economy affected the economy of Uzbekistan and several economic obstacles have appeared. So the first clear example for that is the falling gas prices (due to falling oil prices) and the

devaluation of the national currency of some countries will negatively affect the republic's export earnings, but the positive effect of oil and gas prices on the domestic market [20]. Uzbekistan which is mainly based on exporting agricultural products for neighboring countries such as Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, etc., recently suffered from low price levels because of low demand for its productions in importing countries and border restrictions imposed by the government itself [18]. Based on the own experience millions of tons of tomatoes which is projected to export to Russia was delayed and the farmers suffered from very low price and overstocking of production which lead to distribution among the nation for free. Thanks to our president who supported the farmers and implemented policies to correct supply chain and stabilized the prices (f.e. the price of 1 kg tomatoes was equal to 3000 sums, then 1kg is equal to \$3).

Firstly, the country needs to focus on improving the medical conditions and deal with wide spread of the virus through channelling funds to the healthcare sector and companies that are most-affected. On this way, Uzbekistan has already spent 10 trillion UZS from the country's budget and borrowed 2 billion USD from the IMF. These funds have been mainly directed toward compensating for the wages of doctors, building hospitals urgently as well as subsidizing the sectors that are highly influenced from the pandemic.

Additionally, country has announced tax holidays during the period of quarantine so as to avoid many business failures and support the consumption. Ministry of Finance initiated a special line of credits directed toward helping the SMEs to pay for their employees within the quarantine timeframe. Moreover, Central Bank of Uzbekistan announced a decrease in the refinancing rate by 100 basis points and increased the volume of credits to particular businesses and gave loan holidays where the borrower does not need to worry about paying their loans within the quarantine period. All of these policies are of high importance

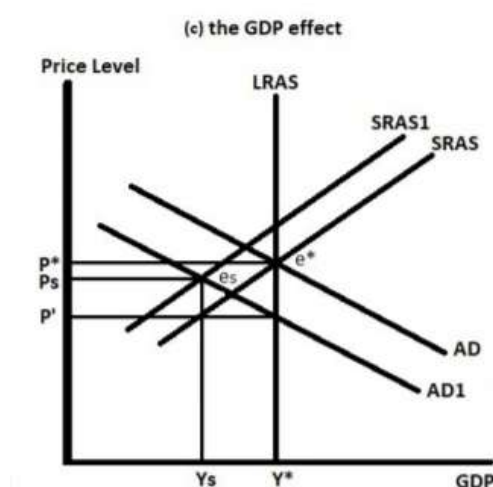
for economic well-being of people in Uzbekistan and if controlled efficiently, they will give expected outcomes.

Moreover, one of the suggestions for the government of Uzbekistan would possibly be to increase the level of growing agricultural products and production of pharmaceutical goods. The main explanation behind is that in many countries, conditions are still being left serious, where they will need provision of foods and medicine. In addition, if the country has debt to other parties it should be asked to forgive or at least to prolong the terms and conditions of different loans provided for the country.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is a high time to start implementation and creation of new, aggressive, and innovative policies to tackle such kind of problems in the long-run. The governments should start to activate their policies and strategies for upcoming future in order to be ready for such unpredictable cases. Additionally, as it is mentioned before this is a unique case for every nation in other words the change came and to rich a clear behaviour of future effects all factors mentioned above should be implemented.

### Appendix. Figure 1



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# 17

## GLOBALIZATION PROCESS IN CENTRAL ASIAN REGION

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*The article analyzes the concept of "globalization" and examines different facets of globalization depending on the context. It has been noted that the acceleration of the globalization process will exacerbate conflicts between states. The period of the late 20th - early 21st centuries, namely the position of the Central Asian region has been*

*studied. The current position of the Central Asian region, political and economic relations with the “big players”, as well as other countries of the world is partially analyzed.*

*Based on the foregoing, it was concluded that in the development and implementation of domestic and foreign policy of the state, it is necessary to take into account those negative aspects of globalization that are obvious and recognized by the majority of theorists related to the issues of this process.*

**KEYWORDS:** Central Asian region, globalization, international relations, sovereignty, political and economic globalization, integration, disintegration;

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization is a generally recognized phenomenon of world development. Its manifestations and consequences, found in all branches of human life, began to demonstrate themselves so clearly that at present discussions about the reality of this phenomenon have practically ceased.

The concept of "globalization" is ambiguous and researchers emphasize its different facets depending on the context. At the end of the 20th century political processes associated with the end of the Cold War, environmental threats that gave rise to a common perception of a single planet, an increase in economic interdependence led to the expansion of the concept of globalization in scientific and political circles, causing it to acquire not only economic, but also political, historical, geographical and cultural character. These factors influenced the rapid spread of the term itself and the ideas of globalization at the end of the 20th century. The definitions of globalization boil down to the following based on the meaning of the term:

- Liberalization, which is the process of removing restrictions, barriers between countries in order to create an “open, integrated” world economy;

- transnationalization, that is, the spread of relations bypassing state bodies and institutions, the expansion of horizontal ties that do not recognize any boundaries and do not need formalization;

- Deterritorialization, which is a consequence of transnationalization and reflects shifts in geography. The borders of states are no longer perceived as unshakable, space is shrinking, and distances are shrinking;

- Unification leading to the establishment of universal, world standards and patterns in all sectors of human life;

- Universalization, which means the spread of the same spiritual and material values in all corners of the globe.

The aforementioned facets of globalization directly or indirectly affect international relations.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the strategic importance of the new sovereign countries of Central Asia, which possess huge reserves of oil, gas, uranium, gold and other minerals, sharply increased. These republics strove to gain independence and develop political and economic contacts with other countries. In a short period of time, they established diplomatic relations with many countries of the world, became members of the UN and other international organizations, signed hundreds of interstate agreements, treaties and entered into trade and economic relations with more than 100 countries of the world. However, during the entire period of independence, relations between the republics of the Central Asian region remain rather complicated and develop inconsistently with the simultaneous operation of two opposite trends, such as integration and disintegration.

Uzbek-Kyrgyz, Uzbek-Tajik and Uzbek-Kazakh borders, where the territories are not demarcated and do not have an internationally recognized character, border disputes and conflicts have arisen several times to this day. As a result, the closest neighbors were separated by different types of models of



economic and political reforms, competition for foreign investment and leadership in the region, incompatible regional and international ambitions of state leaders, at times different positions in relation to the CIS and Russia. These contradictions are generated by the geopolitical features of Central Asia.

Thus, the rich natural resources of Central Asia found themselves in a closed transport space with limited access to world markets and a relatively poorly developed network of communications, mainly external (alternative oil and gas pipelines exist so far only at the project stage). These features also include other factors: the desire of the new states for economic independence, as well as economic and transport attachment to Russia; shortage of personnel, which was influenced by the migration of the Russian-speaking population; large water resources in mountainous areas and an acute water shortage.

These factors are largely exacerbated by serious miscalculations in economic policy, growing social discontent, mass unemployment, disputes between countries over water and land use, aggravated struggle for the redistribution of property, which has increased by the activity of terrorist organizations.

Today, a wealth of experience in transforming national economies has already been accumulated, and the time has come for the development of a new concept of economic interaction between Russia and the countries of Central Asia and active cooperation between the states of the region. Central Asia, which is the cradle of one of the world's most ancient civilizations, and it is not only a geographical and geopolitical, but also a single cultural and spiritual space, in which more than 70 million people now live.

Central Asia is one of the "youngest" regions in terms of the age composition of the population: young people make up about 60%, which is significantly higher than the world average. Central Asia is united by a common history, religion, culture and traditions, powerful intellectual potential,

interconnected communication systems, a sincere desire for cooperation, as well as responsibility for a common future. At the turn of the third millennium, with the collapse of the USSR, unprecedented opportunities and chances were opened up for world and regional powers to advance their interests. The struggle for Central Asia has become global. Its new stage began, associated with closer integration into world economic and geopolitical relations. Russia, the United States and China clashed strategically in Central Asia. Their interaction here is a rather complex rivalry.

A clear manifestation and coincidence of the interests of these states, and the insurmountable contradictions between them regarding the redistribution of spheres of influence in the post-Soviet space and the development of a common strategy in the rapidly globalizing world.

Although culturally this region is closer to the Middle East and at the dawn of its sovereignty in the early 1990s after the collapse of the USSR, the "Islamic awakening" was one of the main topics of public life here, nevertheless, as a result of almost 100 years of joint development within the unified Russian states of Central Asia gravitates more towards Russia, which historically is a natural part of the vast Eurasian space and is actively involved in the affairs of the region. Russia has many levers of influence over its partners, and it is obvious that no other force is capable of taking the place of Russia, which is now making serious efforts to restore active interaction with all states of the Central Asian region. The other major players are the United States and China.

The United States is seeking to gain control not only over the region's rich energy resources, but also to strengthen its geopolitical and military presence in Central Asia, including Afghanistan.

The US strategy, which was outlined back in 2005, is to withdraw the Central Asian states from the influence of Russia and China, and Afghanistan from the orbit of influence of Pakistan and Iran. The United States is showing particular

interest in the revival of a transport and logistics route, alternative to the Pakistani route, through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which was used during the Soviet era.

China, which has a long border with the Central Asian states, has not had direct ties with the Central Asian countries for more than 100 years, since they were not subjects of international relations, and now it demonstrates not only a growing interest in the region's raw materials and capacious markets, but also clearly strengthens the political and economic influence on them, primarily through the structures of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which includes, along with China and Russia, the four Central Asian states - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as India and Pakistan. For the first time, China is expanding its political and economic presence through huge financial injections into the economies of Central Asian countries, trying to prevent the geopolitical strengthening of the US role.

Since 2015, the PRC has become the largest foreign trade partner of a number of Central Asian countries. In the struggle for influence in Central Asia, Turkey joined the main players, ready to unite the Turkic population of Central Asia under its leadership, then the European Union, which is implementing a number of humanitarian projects in education, ecology and modernization of urban and rural infrastructure, and at the same time trying to reorient the energy flows of the region in its direction. India, Japan, the Muslim states of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan have become major players in the region, which creates new, unexpected, and at times opposing interests by affecting the sustainability of the development of the entire region. At the same time, Central Asia, being a promising investment volume region, has a decisive influence on the development of many countries and entire regions.

From time immemorial, the peoples of Central Asia have been linked to each other by thousand-year bonds of brotherhood and good neighborliness, they have always strived for unification, looking for ways to jointly position

themselves in the world and make optimal use of their resources. The social and economic foundations of a single national economic complex, laid down in the Soviet years, allowed the former republics of the USSR to enter the new post-Soviet era with minimal costs and build their future in accordance with their national priorities and traditions.

In the very recent past, there have been numerous attempts at regional integration. At one time, serious work was carried out by the Central Asian Commission of the Scientific Council of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the Council for the Study of Productive Forces and other research institutes and universities. In the comprehensive programs for the development of the region in the 1980s and 1990s, the foundations of mutually beneficial cooperation were laid.

The transformation of the role of the state as a social institution in general and as a central actor in international relations in the context of an accelerating globalizing world remains an urgent issue in the development of the problems of globalization.

Realities of the early 21st century showed the inconsistency of categorical statements about the withering away of national states as the pace of globalization increases.

According to the Russian political scientist A. D. Bogaturov, the essence of the modern world order is expressed by the term "globalization", the structural meaning of which is to implement a project to create a comprehensive, universal world order based on the formation of an economic, political, military and, if possible, ethical and legal community of the overwhelming majority the most developed countries of the world through the widest possible spread of the zones of influence of the modern West on the rest of the world.

The well-known critic of the discourse of globalization I. Wallerstein believes that "this discourse is in fact a gigantic false interpretation of modern

reality - a lie, a deception imposed on power groups and, moreover, a deception that we imposed on ourselves, often out of despair."

## **CONCLUSION**

Globalization has become a clear expression of inequality in international relations. It reflects the political transactions of governments, which are subject to both internal and external pressures, expressed, in particular, in the fact that the social sector bears heavy costs imposed by globalization.

The process of globalization leads to the complication of conditions of existence external to society as a system. Strong exogenous connections and dependencies arise that integrate individual elements of society into global network structures. Centrifugal tendencies are intensifying, which weaken and deform traditional endogenous connections and threaten the collapse of society as a system. In such conditions, the problem of the consolidation of society and the socialization of the state becomes more and more urgent.

When developing the domestic and foreign policy of this or that state, it is necessary to take into account those negative aspects of the globalization process, which are obvious in the real plane and are recognized by the majority of practitioners and theorists.

The process of globalization neutralizes the differences between the domestic and foreign policies of the state, forcing the political elite to carefully calculate the benefits and disadvantages of the country's participation in the global political and economic systems. Globalization makes increased demands on the development and implementation of the state's foreign policy so that it defends national interests in the face of the interventional impact of the globalizing world.

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# 18

## REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF UZBEKISTAN

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*This article briefly summarizes the current geo-economic and geopolitical importance of Uzbekistan in its regional location and comprehensive relations with Central Asian countries, including the economic and political role of our country, geo-economic relations with international organizations and countries. It also discusses geopolitical relations, lexical meanings of geo-economics and geopolitics, current application of these terms, the economic potential of Uzbekistan before and now, as well as the factors affecting it.*

**KEYWORDS:** Uzbekistan, Central Asia, geo-economics, geopolitics, exports, imports, foreign trade, world markets

## **INTRODUCTION**

Today, Uzbekistan is one of the developing countries in the world. To this end, it has established and continues to establish partnerships with developed countries and organizations around the world. To the question of what these bilateral agreements and partnerships give us, we could point primarily to the political dialogue, trade, business, investment, intellectual property protection, legislation and economics, democracy and human rights, the fight against illegal immigration, as well as cooperation in humanitarian matters. It is no exaggeration to say that the development of comprehensive relations will be the key to the great success of our country. At the same time, Uzbekistan's close ties with Central Asian countries and the interdependence of geo-economics and geopolitical ties between the two countries are a great foundation for the development of our country.

## **GEO-ECONOMICS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE**

Now, turning our attention to the word geo-economics and talking about its importance for our country, it is the concept of practical activities of the state that shape its economic strategy and tactics in the international arena. Geopolitical and geo-economic factors are taken into account in the development of a strategy that meets the needs of the country's development and the interests of the nation-state. A key issue in geo-economic policy is the leading role in determining the level of economic interest of the state in world markets. In general, the concept was first introduced to the scientific community in the United States, but the first studies were conducted in Japan and Germany. The purpose was to expand the status quo of the ruling circles of these countries and to substantiate their claims to world domination.

An important geo-economic factor influencing this direction in the world economy is the process of globalization. Increased interdependence between

national economies and economic integration are important factors for the development of civilization at different stages of economic development in many countries and regions at different levels of intensity. It is no exaggeration to say that the freedoms that exist in economic and political life in many countries open up the possibility of a single global economic, information, communication and cultural space.

In addition to governments, transnational corporations (TNCs) and transnational banks (TNBs) and international financial institutions also play an important role in the geo-economy. TMK and TMB, on the one hand, help to determine the advanced technologies, management, new forms of production organization, increase the pace and level of economic development of the country. On the other hand, they often exacerbate disparities in the development of these countries, as they primarily lead to the peak of development by helping to develop certain sectors and enterprises, mainly for foreign capital and foreign markets.

## **UZBEKISTAN'S GEOPOLITICAL AND GEO-ECONOMIC INTERESTS**

The formation of the development strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the beginning of the 21st century is based on its geopolitical and geo-economic interests. Strong economic integration with neighboring countries is of paramount importance in solving geo-economic problems. It is also important to further develop foreign economic and foreign trade relations with countries in Europe and Asia, and Uzbekistan's accession to the World Trade Organization as a full member. In addition, the Central Asian Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Community are important sectors of our economy.

So what do we mean by geopolitics? The term geopolitics is used to describe the specific influence of a country's location, natural resources, climate, and other geographical factors on a country's foreign policy. This concept was



first introduced in Sweden by R. Chellen. The theory of geopolitics was first developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by scientists in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. Applied to the political processes in the modern world. Scientific views on geopolitics are based on the principle of harmony between the geographical location of a state and its domestic and foreign policies. In its foreign policy, Uzbekistan, to some extent, takes into account the basic principles of geopolitics and conducts its foreign policy on this basis.

In his speeches, the First President of Uzbekistan I.A.Karimov pointed out the priorities ahead of us: “It is the most important condition to maintain humane and spiritual norms” [1]. Independent Uzbekistan has chosen a gradual transition to a market economy, rather than one that creates all sorts of disadvantages. Our independent people have had the opportunity to speak out on the world stage about their interests and take an active part in the work of international organizations. Another important result was the opportunity to study the historical heritage of the people, to restore their spiritual values. In the conditions of independence, Uzbekistan has begun to carry out political and economic reforms, first of all, the legal framework for an independent state. Independent Uzbekistan has favorable geographical and strategic opportunities for international relations and development prospects. Uzbekistan, which is geographically and politically central in Central Asia, has the potential to maintain the balance of power in the region, ensure stability, and strengthen cooperation [2].

From the first days of independence, to determine a solid foreign policy in the national interests of Uzbekistan, joining the world community, establishing political, diplomatic, economic, scientific, technical and cultural ties with foreign countries have been identified as urgent tasks. Because during the Soviet era, Uzbekistan was a country with no direct communication, no experience in foreign policy and no personnel in this field. In his book, Uzbekistan's Own Path

to Independence and Development, I.A.Karimov provides a theoretical and practical basis for an independent foreign policy. Article 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan legitimizes the rules of foreign policy of our country. These provisions are contained in the Law "On the basic principles of foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan", "On foreign investment", "On foreign investors and investment guarantees" and "Foreign Economic Relations".

In his speech at the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly (2017), President ShavkatMirziyoyev outlined the main directions of the foreign policy of Uzbekistan, which gives priority to the Central Asian region in its foreign policy.

Located in the heart of Central Asia, Uzbekistan has a direct interest in providing the region with stability, sustainable development and good neighborliness. A peaceful, economically developed Central Asia is the most important goal and the main task we are striving for [3]. Prior to independence, little research on the specifics of geopolitics in Central Asia and Uzbekistan was conducted because it was impossible. It should be noted that today there is an opportunity to make an objective assessment of the specifics of the geopolitics of Central Asia and Uzbekistan. An analysis of the subject's historiography shows that while some aspects of the problem of the specifics of Central Asian geopolitics have been partially covered in a number of scholarly articles and pamphlets, it has not been the subject of a separate scholarly study. In particular, no major research has been published that analyzes the specifics of Central Asian geopolitics. However, the specifics of the geo-economy and geopolitics of Uzbekistan are one of the most pressing issues today. An analysis of the works on this topic reveals the little-studied problems and shows the need for a new approach to their coverage. This approach is determined by the analysis of all aspects of the problem of geo-economics and geopolitics of Central Asia and Uzbekistan, as well as the study of its development.

The rapid geopolitical processes taking place around Central Asia testify to the high geopolitical significance of this region. Because the security of the region is largely determined by its geopolitical significance and geographical, economic and social factors. It is worth recalling the opinion of Z. Brzezinski that "whoever dominates in this region, will undoubtedly achieve geopolitical and economic success" [4]. However, in the last century, the geopolitical position of regions or states was largely determined by economic factors. This is primarily due to the growing consumption of energy resources in the world and a sharp increase in demand for them. Noting that the geo-economic potential of Central Asia and Uzbekistan is the main source of geopolitical interest in the region, we will focus on some of its important features from a scientific point of view.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL AND NATURAL FEATURES OF CENTRAL ASIA**

According to the rules of geopolitical theory, it is expedient to think first of the geographical dimensions of Central Asia. Indeed, the region's geographical location and performance are important factors in determining its geopolitical capabilities and natural strategic potential. The geopolitical processes that have been going on in the Eurasian region for centuries show that it is aimed at occupying its central part, both scientifically, theoretically and practically. According to some sources, this part of the world (i.e. the heart) includes Central Asia. Of course, this region is not the center of the "heart", but "some of the arteries leading to the heart" pass through this area. This can be seen in the history of Central Asia, as well as the numerous wars for power in the region and the ongoing violence.

One of the important conditions of geopolitical theory is to assess the political nature of the peoples and states in a region through a careful study of factors such as the geographical features of the region, in particular, land surface, soil composition, proximity to water bodies or mountains. This is because the principle that states and peoples are formed in an integral part of the geographical

and natural conditions of the region, as well as the characteristics of the soil, is at the heart of this science. It is worthwhile to briefly dwell on the geographical and natural features of Central Asia.

Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan consist mainly of Fergana, Zarafshan and other fertile valleys and oases. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, mountainous areas make up 3,560% of the total area of these republics (Pamirs and Tien Shan). Territorially, the region consists mainly of plains, including the Caspian and Aral Seas. The mountainous areas consist of the Pamirs and Tianshan, as well as several mountain ranges in their foothills.

Water resources are one of the most important geopolitical and geo-economics factors in the Central Asian region. Waterways consist mainly of the Amudarya and Syrdarya rivers, as well as dozens of small rivers and streams. Although there are large rivers such as the Ural and Irtysh in northwestern and northeastern Kazakhstan, they are not available for agricultural use not only in the region but also in Kazakhstan. There are hundreds of small rivers in each republic, some of which are seasonal rivers that dry up during the summer months.

The microeconomic geographical location of Uzbekistan (the position of the region in relation to neighboring countries) is characterized by its convenience. This is primarily due to the fact that it is located in the heart of the Central Asian republics and has a direct border with all countries in the region. Uzbekistan's geo-economic convenience is also reflected in the fact that it is relatively well connected with neighboring republics by all types of land transport (road, rail, pipeline). Such geopolitical advantages have historically made Uzbekistan one of the most densely populated countries in the region, rich in large cities and relatively developed economies.

In his book “Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Threats to Security, Conditions of Stability and Guarantees of Development”, the first

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan I.A.Karimov said: “Uzbekistan's territorial features, its geographical location is of great importance in the selection and implementation of our domestic and foreign policies. Today, Uzbekistan serves as a link between neighboring countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. All this makes the integration of the republic into the world economy, attracting foreign investment, making Uzbekistan a unique regional center of mutually beneficial cooperation between countries, transit of goods and capital. Such favorable economic and social opportunities of Uzbekistan in the densely populated adjacent (contact) areas (Fergana Valley, Zarafshan, Lower Amudarya, Surkhandarya region) are now home to many inter-republican regional production complexes of various specialties from joint ventures to free economic zones. The solution of the existing problems of trans-boundary rivers and roads in the Central Asian region will further facilitate the microgeographic position of the republic. In order for interstate economic and social relations to be more effective, it is necessary to connect with more distant countries of the world, in other words, macro-spaces. However, in establishing economic ties with the rest of the world, the countries on the mainland face a number of disadvantages compared to those along the coast. Uzbekistan's macroeconomic geographical location is relatively unfavorable, as it is one of the few countries in the world that has to cross the territory of at least two countries to access the nearby seas. During the years of independence, Uzbekistan's active participation in international road projects connecting Uzbekistan with the world ocean in various directions alleviates this situation.

At the same time, there are factors that negatively affect its political geography. The threat of international terrorism and religious extremism, attempts to use the territory of our republic as a drug trafficking corridor, global environmental problems, geopolitical competition between different countries, the unstable political situation in Afghanistan negatively affect Uzbekistan's

geographical location. In order to eliminate these negative situations, the leadership of the republic has carried out large-scale work. In his speeches at the UN General Assembly, the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan I.A. Karimov called on the world community to focus primarily on the problems of Afghanistan and the Aral Sea. The activities of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the "6 + 2" group to resolve the problem of Afghanistan are aimed at promoting peace and socio-economic development in the neighboring country, as a result of which UN leaders paid attention to the Aral Sea problem. Transboundary rivers between the Central Asian states, the enclave between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (with the territory of the state other than the main part of the territory of the respective state) are among the international environmental problems that have attracted the attention of various countries. segregated lands) and some border areas, as well as the unfinished delimitation (demarcation and strengthening of the border line) on the state border with Tajikistan, are important geopolitical issues that need to be addressed in the first place. The territory is under nuclear weapons it aims to become a non-aligned, non-aligned state.

## **UZBEKISTAN AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

Uzbekistan has established close cooperation with a number of countries to solve political, socio-economic problems and achieve economic development. In addition to its neighbors, it has close ties with countries such as the Russian Federation and China. At the same time, it is a regular participant in the activities of organizations such as the SCO, CIS. Uzbekistan's geo-economic potential is well known, and the region has huge reserves of raw materials. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have about 2.7 percent of the world's oil reserves and 7 percent of its gas reserves. Huge gas reserves have been discovered in Turkmenistan. In Uzbekistan Oil and gas reserves in the amount of 1 trillion US dollars have been identified. Uzbekistan is the world's fourth largest gold

producer and 7th largest producer. Uzbekistan also has large reserves of other rare metals. Kazakhstan accounts for 8% of the world's iron ore reserves.

During the years of independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has undergone profound reforms to liberalize foreign economic relations, which have led to significant positive changes in the geographical and commodity structure of foreign trade. In recent years, the share of competitive finished products in exports has been growing steadily. Today, Uzbekistan exports its products to more than 50 countries. To achieve this, the President has adopted relevant decrees and decrees. Foreign trade is the trade that one country makes with another country or countries. It consists of the export of goods from the country (export) and the import of goods into the country (import). The sum of exports and imports makes up the country's foreign trade turnover. The development of trade between the countries will provide mutual benefits. Foreign trade is the simplest and most ancient form of international economic relations. It is our country, the Republic of Uzbekistan, which has trade relations with more than 140 countries around the world. The main thing is that Uzbekistan's participation in foreign trade is reduced only by raw materials, and the structure of exports is significantly expanding. Trade relations with developed countries attract additional material and financial resources from abroad, the introduction of advanced equipment and technology in production, filling the domestic consumer market with a wide range of consumer goods, foreign services. The use of experience is important in creating additional jobs, as well as the growth of the geo-economy. What did the world market say to dwell on the concept; the world market is a system of stable commodity-money relations between countries that are interconnected by participation in the international division of labor. International trade relations have existed since ancient times, economic and political relations between countries have emerged with the emergence of nation-states, but the World Market (on the basis of which the world economy is based) began to take shape only with the transition to a large mechanized

industry and was decided by the beginning of the twentieth century. The transition to large-scale mechanized production has expanded the boundaries of the national market, and foreign trade has become a necessary condition for the development of the country's economy, from a factor that complements the domestic development of a country. If specialization allows a country to produce certain goods cheaply and with high quality, and to ensure the efficient use of resources in the production of goods, these goods will be created in large quantities and delivered to the world market. Goods that are not easy to use or produce in a country are bought on the world market. In the world market there are separate prices - world prices, the exchange is carried out in wholesale and through international exchanges. The world market consists of a set of commodity, labor, capital and currency markets. In the world market, international trade is carried out, which represents a set of foreign trade of all countries. It consists of global exports and imports, the ratio of which is called the trade balance.

Uzbekistan participates in the geo-economy of the world market by exporting raw materials, energy, non-ferrous metals and other products, imports most of the technology, chemicals and food products. When analyzing the world market on the basis of a systematic approach, the following features can be identified:

1. The formation of the world market was caused by the departure of macroeconomic entities from national borders in order to carry out effective international exchange;
2. The international movement of goods, services and factors of production is reflected in the world market;
3. The world market optimizes the use of factors of production by focusing on areas with high efficiency;



4. The world market acts as a kind of filter for products, excluding from international trade products that do not meet international quality standards and strict requirements of international competition.

But no product can participate in international trade. That is, products can be divided into two groups: commercial and non-commercial. Commercial products are competitive products that are traded in foreign markets, and conversely, non-traded products are products that are sold in the market of the country of origin and do not participate in international trade. The state of the world market, conjuncture and related prices will be in the constant focus of international trade participants. In the broadest sense, conjuncture is the actual state of the market that arises under the influence of a number of factors on a particular periodic and geographical scale. Factors influencing the situation, price level, their past, present and Exported products Imported products Export substitutes (currently sold in the domestic market and in some cases can be sold abroad Import substitutes (if necessary, foreign products that can be replaced by domestic products, Real import products, Real export products, Products, traded in the world market Complex analytical and prospective research will be conducted to determine the development trends of the world market conjuncture based on future change dynamics.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is no doubt that comprehensive cooperation between Uzbekistan and other countries of the world will yield positive results for the bright future of our country, which is building a great future. Indeed, for Uzbekistan, its geopolitical and geo-economic significance has earned it a worthy place in the world community. Our doors are opening more and more for the world, and the doors of the world are opening more and more for us.

The accession of independent Uzbekistan to the world community is a global event. The geopolitical and geo-economics situation of the country was

one of the factors determining its development. The Republic of Uzbekistan has a well-defined peace-loving foreign policy. Uzbekistan's cooperation with Central Asian states has been based on equality since the early days of independence. Uzbekistan is a leader in ensuring peace and stability in Central Asia.

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# 19

## LABOR MIGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*Migration, especially migration of people to other countries in search of employment has occurred all through history and become an important phenomenon of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the period of globalization, the new migration trends have appeared causing various effects. Labor migration is one of the key trends dominating in all regions including Central Asia. This paper focuses on labor migration to and from the five Central Asian states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. At the same time, it is really difficult to exclude Russia which is the main migration hub. There are a number of issues which need new approaches and more effective cooperation despite the increasing scale and importance of the process for the region.*

**KEYWORDS:** Labor migration, treaty, declaration, security, policy-making documents, convention, law, migrant, immigration.

## INTRODUCTION

### *History of migrations*

The whole history of humankind has been interconnected with migration. It is a process which firstly occurred about 60,000 years ago [1]. Looking back to the history, we will find out that migration is a natural process which has been known for a very long time. The current mass migration will not be understood unless providing a historical insight. One of the first ancestors – *Homo sapiens* - arose in East Africa and gradually migrated firstly across Africa, then through the world tropical zones and subsequently into American and Eurasian zones. As the *Homo sapiens* were migrating, they were also developing languages and creating tools. As they were scattered throughout the world, the distinctions between languages and customs were widening.

The human migration can be divided into three main phases. The first phase was when early settlers migrated to many parts of today's Europe, Asia and Africa. In the second phase *Homo sapiens* migrated from North Africa to the Arabian Peninsula and South Asian subcontinent. Fishing was one of the main reasons why this second phase occurred. The last phase occurred with lowering of the sea levels. The human race developed maritime skills and was able to settle places as Hawaii, Australia, Easter Island, Oceania or South-East Asian islands [2].

Another significant migration occurred in America during 1848–1855. It is known as “*California Gold Rush*”. News about huge clods of gold being mined in California widespread around the world incredibly fast. This fact attracted so many people that it became one of the largest migrations in American history. More than 300,000 people arrived in that time one of the most remote destinations in the world in pursuit of gold [3]. Even more significant migration occurred in between 1820-1980, also in America. The number of migrants escalated to 37,000,000 European citizens [4]. The Second World War was a tragedy, but the tragedy did not end with its end. One of the results was millions of the expelled or homeless. The end of the Second World War was the

beginning of huge population migrations. Most affected were Jews and Germans. Germany as the losing nation, which even caused the war, was suffering perhaps even unnecessary viciousness.

### *Brief statistics*

According to statistics below, people who lived outside their countries in 2008, were about 200 million, which means 3% of world population. Central Asian region's economies are heavily influenced by migrants even though countries represent only a fraction of the world's total migrant population. Tajikistan has the world's highest proportion of remittances to GDP. In 2007 remittances comprised 36% of its GDP, or \$1.8 billion, while Kyrgyzstan ranked fourth in the world, with 27% of GDP or \$322 million [5]. Some reports estimate that Tajikistan's remittances make up as much as 46% of its GDP. With that, neither country ranks nearly as high in terms of the volume of remittances received. India and China lead this category globally, receiving \$27 billion and \$25.7 billion respectively in 2007. Russia leads all other former Soviet states in receiving remittances, with \$4 billion received in 2007.

	Migrants (Millions)	Worldpopulation(Billions)	Migrants as percent of world population	Annualchange (Millions)
1965	75	3.3	2.3	
1975	85	4.1	2.1	1
1985	105	4.8	2.2	2
1990	154	5.3	2.9	10
1995	164	5.7	2.9	2
2000	175	6.1	2.9	2

Source: United Nations: International migration report 2002, ST/ESA/SER.A/220 (New York, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2002).

## **LABOR MIGRANTS OF CENTRAL ASIA**

Central Asian majority of labors move from south to north – from countries deprived of natural resources and with a labor surplus, in order to resource other developed or rich countries where labor is in short supply. Russia is certainly the very first migration hub for Central Asian migrants and also

Kazakhstan has become an important destination state since early 2000s. Three other CA countries – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are considered sending states [6]. Uzbekistan's emigrant population is the largest in Central Asia in absolute numbers. Over 2 million immigrants from Uzbekistan are reported to reside in Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, South Korea, the United States, and Europe. These migrants send over \$1.3 billion home in remittances annually, making up to 8% of Uzbekistan's GDP. The real number of Uzbek migrants and the actual size of remittances are believed to be considerably higher than reported by official sources. Roughly, 60% of Uzbek migrants work in Russia, making them one of the major immigrant communities there, alongside Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Kazakhs, and Azerbaijanis. Despite the fact that Russia is not a part of Central Asia, it cannot be excluded due to the fact that it remains a major center for migrants from the countries of the region. It is really difficult to argue about the migration system/sub-system in Central Asia as there are difficult points of view regarding this issue. Some of the Central Asian experts argue that Kazakhstan has become the hub in the regional migration sub-system [6].

Within their own country, Central Asian governments have been slow to develop policies to ease travel regulations for their citizens seeking work abroad. Countries like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan require exit visas and also restrict the internal movements of their citizens with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan still practicing inefficient bureaucracies at passport departments and customs control which evidently results in systematic corruption and the emergence of intermediaries between migrants and authorities. Some governments of Asia also make little effort to create jobs at home to reduce the need for labor migration.

On the other hand, some other countries have maintained Soviet-style central distribution of cottonseeds and technologies to farmers, but now require farmers to pay for the primary inputs, thus forcing farmers into debt. Kyrgyzstan's more economy that is open has allowed the emergence of small

businesses, such as the highly successful clothing businesses that employ tens of thousands of locals. However, according to the speech which was made in IOM, in late 2008 Kyrgyzstan's President Kurmanbek Bakiyev amended the tax code so as to increase the taxes imposed on small and medium businesses by tenfold. The new regulation stifled businesses and fueled unemployment, forcing people to look for jobs abroad.

Talking about migrant-sending countries, international organizations until 2005, working in Tajikistan spent most of their efforts on the humanitarian aspects of the ongoing peace-building process. After 2005, however, the focus shifted to economic development, including efforts to facilitate labor migration. The IOM, together with the EU, Norwegian government, OSCE and UNDP, has been working with the Tajik government to enhance migrants' protection abroad and to better manage the migration system. Dushanbe IOM offices claim that, this includes giving migrants comprehensive information "on everything related to the trip and work abroad, including travel, required identity documents, registration, work permits, employment agencies, travel and employment risks – such as human trafficking and health risks – health care access, bank contacts to send remittances, contacts for help in the destination country, and others" [7]. Nearly half of all Tajik migrants work in the construction sector, another third is shuttle traders, while 6% work at oil and gas exploration sites and 6% in the agricultural sector. Only 3% work in highly professional sectors, such as education and medicine [8]. Over two-thirds of migrants travel to Russia seasonally, with 25% working for six months, 53% for 7-12 months, and 22% for over a year. Only a small fraction of migrants remains in Russia for over three years [9]. Most Tajik labor migrants in Russia come from rural areas, with Sogd oblast (region) and Pamir autonomous region leading the list.

Kyrgyzstan's economy quickly became dependent on remittances as well. In 2001 remittances comprised only 1.9% of GDP, but by 2005 the proportion had increased to 13.6% [10]. Together the shadow economy and remittances

accounted for 50-60% of GDP in 2008. At the same time foreign direct investment hovered at only 3.7% during roughly the same period. The IOM Bishkek office reports that some 300,000 Kyrgyz migrants work in Russia, with 160,000 already possessing Russian passports. The remaining 140,000 migrants are vulnerable to deportation [11]. Labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan travel seasonally, returning home during winters. Other expert estimates range between 600,000 and one million Kyrgyz labor migrants traveling to Russia and Kazakhstan for work annually.

### **NEW HOME FOR LABOR MIGRANTS**

Except the European countries and Russia, Kazakhstan has also become a new home for labor migrants. Approximately, from 2000s Kazakhstan has become a new popular destination for Central Asian migrants. Over 200,000 Kyrgyz people, 50,000 Tajiks, and 250,000 Uzbeks worked in Kazakhstan in 2007. Although average monthly salaries are lower in Kazakhstan compared to Russia, the Kazakh government offers easier naturalization procedures for guest workers [12]. The local culture and language are similar, making communication simpler between local employers and Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek migrants. However, Kazakh law is far from ideal and local law-enforcement structures habitually abuse migrants' rights. Forceful deportation of migrants can be observed rather frequently. Kazakhstan is also a popular destination for Chinese, Turkish, and Indian labor migrants, and occasionally becomes a transit country for migrants from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries.

Although Kazakhstan is formal and regulations relate to professional immigrants, it is the main recipient country of labor migrants. Each year the Statistics Agency establishes a quota for professional migrants and distributes legal work permits across various economic sectors. The agency has not established a quota for such workers even though realizing that unskilled labor migrants are a significant work force. Inexperienced or unskilled labor migrants



are also in most demand in Kazakhstan, where they are simultaneously vulnerable to being deported, exploited by employers, by law-enforcement personnel.

## CONCLUSION

The process of migration started thousands of years ago with different purposes. It is still continuing today in many of its manifestations. As with the Central Asian region, labor migration is considered an important phenomenon which has been increasing over the years. Regional migration system in Central Asia can be characterized as complicated and controversial at the same time. Receiving and sending countries face several issues that need to be revised and adapted to the unfavorable and difficult conditions of reality including migrants, low salary and poor conditions as well as slow pace of legislation development combined with a really weak component of cooperation.

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## PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY POTENTIAL IN CENTRAL ASIA

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### ABSTRACT:

*This article provides information on the basics of preventive diplomacy and how to use it to prevent and reconcile conflicting situations in Central Asia. The inter-Tajik conflict of the 1990s, which resulted in the signing of a peace treaty between the two warring parties thanks to the UN, is described as an example of the effective conduct of preventive diplomacy. Also, the question of the need for a policy of preventive diplomacy in Central Asia, taking into account the problems of the XXI century, is raised: attention is drawn to the activities of the UN Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (RCPD) and its role in conflict resolution in the Central Asian region.*

**KEYWORDS:** Preventive diplomacy, Central Asia, UN, inter-Tajik conflict, RCPD, cross-border threats, environmental degradation, instability in Afghanistan, inter-clan relations, elite rivalry

### INTRODUCTION

Recently, the concept of “preventive diplomacy” and its application in practice has become increasingly necessary and successful in world politics. Conflicts have occurred, and will always occur, as well as those that are not so serious, do not carry large negative consequences, and those that relate to global, interethnic, the results of which are deplorable. Conflicts are not always

inevitable. They can and should be prevented in a timely manner. This is exactly what “preventive diplomacy” is for.

## **THE CONCEPT OF PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY AND ITS ORIGIN**

Preventive diplomacy can be considered as diplomatic actions aimed at preventing the emergence of disputes between the parties, at preventing the development of existing disputes into a conflict, as well as at reducing the spread of an existing conflict.

For the first time, the concept of preventive diplomacy became known in the political arena after the publication of the article “Agenda for Peace” by UN Secretary-General B. B. Gali in 1992. In B. Gali's article, preventive diplomacy was considered as actions aimed at preventing the escalation of differences of opinion between the parties and the escalation of existing tense relations into a conflict, as well as resolving the conflict in the event of its development.

With the aim of an effective policy of resolving international conflicts, new concepts and methods are being introduced into political use. One such concept is early conflict prevention. It should be noted that early warning of conflict situations requires a certain system. The “responsibilities” of such a system should include: continuous monitoring of the main indicators of possible conflicts; ensuring the analysis of the information received; assistance in the prevention of possible conflict situations and crises. With the right use of such a system, the concept of early warning will ensure calm and stability in a country potentially prone to conflict, since the severity and consequences of a conflict will be realized at an early stage.

The timely use of preventive diplomacy and the promotion of peace was recognized by the Security Council and the General Assembly as the most desirable and effective means of easing tensions.

Today, Central Asia is a region that has a large number of problems of domestic and foreign policy nature. In this regard, the conduct of a policy of

preventive diplomacy plays an important role in resolving a number of complex contradictions in the region [3].

### **PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY AS A WAY TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT IN TAJIKISTAN (1990s)**

From the very beginning, the inter-Tajik conflict aroused great interest in the UN. In October 1992, a group of personal representatives of the presidents of the CIS countries headed by the Vice-President of Kyrgyzstan F. Kulov went to Tajikistan. At that time, the UN Secretary-General was addressed with numerous statements about the need for an early end to the conflict in Tajikistan. As a result of these requests, the UN Secretary-General decided to send a UN Goodwill Mission to Tajikistan, headed by the Ambassador-at-Large and Director of the Department of Political Affairs of the UN Secretariat, Raymond Sommerville. Representatives of the mission visited the areas of confrontation. At the end of the mission, a report was prepared stating the urgent need for a peacekeeping operation to resolve the conflict in the country. In 1994, the UN continued to take measures to implement an end to the war, and did everything possible to convince the parties to the conflict of the need for peace negotiations. In January and February 1994, the new Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Ramiro Piris-Ballon, made two visits to Tajikistan. In Tajikistan, he held talks with opposition leaders and a senior official. Also during the talks, he outlined the positions of Russia, Iran, Pakistan and Uzbekistan on the Tajik problem. The mission of R. Piris-Ballon was carried out with positive results, as he managed to get the consent of the President of Tajikistan E. Rakhmonov for the early start of negotiations with the opposition under the auspices of the UN. These negotiations were divided into three rounds.

The first round of the inter-Tajik talks was held on April 5-19, 1994 in Moscow. During the first round of negotiations, three key issues were discussed: refugees, a ceasefire and constitutional construction in the Republic of Tajikistan.

The second round was held in June 1994. In contrast to the first round, the situation in the second round was tense: armed clashes periodically broke out between the parties to the conflict, and all this was aggravated by a significant deterioration in the economic situation in the country. During talks brokered by Special envoy of the UN Secretary General concept was developed of the agreement on cessation of fire and other hostilities, including non-military, terrorist and sabotage, assassinations, hostage-taking, blocking settlements; the prohibition of the use of the means of communication and mass media to undermine the process of national reconciliation and the proclamation of the refusal to appeal to religion and any ideology for hostile purposes. As a result of the second round of negotiations, the UN Secretary-General decided to temporarily suspend the activities of the Special Envoy. Despite this, the two warring parties still managed to agree on a ceasefire, and this agreement entered into force on October 20, 1994.

The third round of negotiations under the leadership of R. Parabalani was held in Islamabad. It was held from October 20 to November 1, 1994.

Finally, the fourth and final round of negotiations was held in Kabul from 17 to 19 May 1995. The distinctive feature of the fourth round was the meeting of the President of Tajikistan, E. Rakhmonov, with the leader of the opposition, Said Abdullo Nuri. In 1996, German diplomat Gerd Dietrich Merrem became the new Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General to Tajikistan. With his help, the negotiations on the inter-Tajik conflict were continued. But the agreements were not so successful due to the fact that the armed clashes in Tajikistan did not stop. The Afghan commander Ahmadshah Masood joined the negotiation process. On June 27, 1997, a general agreement on the establishment of peace and national accord in Tajikistan was signed in Moscow. This agreement was concluded between the delegation of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, headed by President E. Rakhmonov, and the delegation of the United Tajik Opposition,

headed by S. Nuri. The Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, G. Merrem, also signed this document [3].

However, calm in the region was not immediately apparent. A long period was necessary for the final achievement of civil peace. UN observers continued to play an important role in this process. And only since the beginning of 2000, the transition process in this country has entered a peaceful course.

## **THE ROLE OF PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY IN MODERN CENTRAL ASIA**

Central Asia is the main region in the post-Soviet space where the UN policy of preventive diplomacy is practiced. For this purpose, an international structure was established in the region — the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy (RCPD) for Central Asia (in Ashgabat).

The history of the RCPD dates back to 2004, when Turkmenistan initiated the creation of the RCPD and was followed by a series of consultations between representatives of five Central Asian States (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). The result of this initiative was universal approval and the center began its activities in December 2007.

The RCPA's mandate is to assist the Governments of the five Central Asian States in developing the capacity to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts through peaceful negotiations and to attract international support for the implementation of relevant projects.

During the preparation of the mandate of the new structure, UN experts analyzed various aspects of the political situation in Central Asia.

The analysis of the political situation of the states made it possible to identify three main groups of priority areas in the activities of the RCPD.

The first group was determined by cross-border threats, namely, terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. The second group consisted of

problems related to the deterioration of the environmental situation and the joint use of water and energy resources.

In this issue, much attention is paid to the problems of water use, which, according to UN experts, contributes to unhealthy relations between states in the Central Asian region. The water problem lies in the differences between the water exporting countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) and its importers (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), namely, the countries of the upper and lower reaches of the transboundary rivers — the Amu Darya and Syr Darya. The purpose of the RCPA was to further agree on the use of water and energy resources in 2008-2009. The UN experts offered assistance to high-ranking Central Asian diplomats in solving a number of water use issues.

The third group included such a serious problem as instability in Afghanistan, which still poses a threat to the security of Central Asia [1]. The reasons for the emergence and growth of security threats in Central Asia can be considered such factors as inter-clan relations, elite rivalry, border problems, etc.

In addition, the situation in the Central Asian region was aggravated by the economic crisis that began after the collapse of the USSR. It is noteworthy that in some countries of the region, the difficult economic situation is still observed today.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Central Asia faced a number of problems that needed to be resolved as soon as possible. As mentioned above, the countries of the Central Asian region are facing serious threats, such as terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking and organized crime. The largest world organization of the United Nations, which had in its arsenal extensive tools to respond to such threats and experience in resolving various conflicts, helped to cope with problems of this scale. It was at that time that a new international structure was created in Ashgabat — the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy (RCPD) for Central Asia [1].

On November 17, 2017, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution "The role of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia", submitted by Turkmenistan. The resolution was co-sponsored by 57 States. The resolution welcomes the efforts of the Center to strengthen dialogue among the countries of the region in resolving issues of common concern.

During the presentation of the resolution at the General Assembly meeting, it was emphasized that in the ten years since its establishment, the Center has become an excellent platform for regional dialogue on the management of shared resources, as well as for cooperation in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime, drugs and human trafficking.

The Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia is a unique structure in the UN peacekeeping activities. The initiative of its creation belongs to the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who consistently presents conceptual ideas for maintaining peace and ensuring security on a regional and global scale [3].

On December 10, 2007, the United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy was inaugurated in Ashgabat. In initiating this proposal, Governments took into account the many threats facing Central Asia, including international terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, organized crime, and environmental degradation.

The Center promotes dialogue between the governments of the Central Asian countries in finding solutions to emerging problems and addressing potential threats; maintains regular contacts with international organizations operating in the region to stimulate their peacekeeping efforts and initiatives; cooperates with other UN agencies working in the field of sustainable development and conflict prevention.



In its activities, the Center is guided by the principle of impartiality. He does not insist on applying existing solutions to problems, but tries to facilitate the development of local models adapted to the specifics of the Central Asian region [4], [5].

The RCPD outlined a number of serious tasks, the main of which was the holding of a meeting of deputy foreign ministers of Central Asian countries in Ashgabat on October 23, 2008. The draft Action Program for 2009-2011 prepared by the Center was discussed at the Ashgabat meeting.

The project outlined the primary objectives of the RCPD, their forms and methods of their implementation. An important place in the Program of Action of the RCPD for 2009-2011 was given to the issues of establishing coordination of diverse efforts to effectively solve the problems facing the Central Asian region, primarily in the field of security. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General noted that the unstable situation in Afghanistan continues to negatively affect the situation in the region. In this regard, the importance of expanding cooperation in countering terrorist and drug threats emanating from the Afghan territory increases. M. Yenca also pointed out that the RCPD has contributed to the promotion of intraregional dialogue in order to resolve water and energy problems in Central Asia, which are an obstacle to ensuring "food security" and the development of cooperation in a number of other areas.

During the meeting held in Ashgabat, the RCPD Action Program for 2009-2011. The Deputy Foreign Ministers of the Central Asian countries gave good feedback. They also noted their readiness to cooperate closely with the Center in its implementation. In June 2009, the head of the RCPD in Central Asia, M. Yenca, made a report at a meeting of the UN Security Council on the work done by the Center. Following the discussion, it was decided the statement, which was read chaired the Security Council and permanent representative of Turkey to the UN Bakillkin: "The Security Council commends the efforts of the Regional centre for the solution of regional issues of mutual interest, through the

implementation of its mandate, in consultation and cooperation with Central Asian States and regional organizations”. In September 2009, at the 64th session of the UN General Assembly, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov stressed the need to involve the RCPD in stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan. In his report, he gave an assessment of the UN's activities in the modern world: “... We consider the decision of the United Nations in 2007 to open the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia with its headquarters in Ashgabat to be extremely significant and promising. Currently, this Center actively monitors and analyzes regional issues, takes an active part in various events on the most important issues of Central Asian development, including at the level of heads of state, and assists in developing approaches to their solution. In this context, Turkmenistan welcomes the involvement of various states, international organizations, financial and economic institutions, and the expert community in the UN's efforts to develop constructive models for the development of regional processes.” At the end of October 2009 An extended meeting of the diplomatic corps of Turkmenistan was held in the port city of Turkmenbashi on behalf of G. Berdimuhamedov. The diplomats discussed the President's proposal to create a "permanent mechanism for international communication" on the basis of the RCPD in Central Asia. The primary goal of this mechanism should be energy security. To ensure this, it is very important to create a new model of relations, taking into account the fact that “the vulnerability of the current energy supply system is largely due to the lack of development of pipeline routes and the lack of regulatory international legal mechanisms” [1].

In the first half of April 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited the Central Asian countries. At a speech in Ashgabat at the headquarters of the UN Center for Preventive Diplomacy, he said: “The UN is ready to work with the countries of Central Asia in solving problems in the management of natural, water and energy resources.” On April 2, 2010, at the meeting of the UN

Secretary-General with President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in Ashgabat, the issues of energy transit and the situation in Afghanistan were discussed [1].

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stated that “Preventive diplomacy is not an option, but a necessity, given the gravity of so many situations around the world.”

Also in his message, Ban said that the new Center, located in Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, “has great prospects” for reducing the potential threat of conflicts and other cross-border problems, such as drug trafficking,

In summing up all the above-mentioned problems that exist in Central Asia, it is worth noting once again the need for a serious attitude to the issue of interstate agreements and the norm of international law. Following these "rules" can significantly help prevent emerging conflicts.

As for the problems of water resources and the threat of terrorism and extremism, they should also be addressed together: In order to avoid negative consequences, it is necessary to form joint military anti-terrorist structures to protect strategic areas and preserve stability in the region. The current political situation in the countries of the Central Asian region is experiencing an urgent need for preventive diplomacy. The experience of preventive diplomacy shows good results in preventing conflicts in the region, preventing the escalation of disputes, conflicts and the spread of Civil War in Tajikistan in 1992-1997. for the entire Central Asian region. In addition, at the present stage, preventive diplomacy, namely the policy of the RCPD, continues to play a very important role in influencing the overall political situation in this region. At the moment, Central Asia is a region with a huge number of internal and external problems. In this regard, the policy of preventive diplomacy can be considered as a center of unification of forces aimed at resolving disputes and conflicts in the region.

## **CONCLUSION**

It should be noted once again that the problem of conflict prevention is one of the most serious problems in the modern world. Ways to prevent conflict situations are not easy. But by making an effort and developing the right strategy for action, achieving peace is quite possible. The experience of preventive diplomacy has repeatedly shown good results: countries that were once enemies, in the end preferred peace and friendship. And the opposing groups, thanks to preventive diplomacy, make compromises with each other, regardless of disputes and disagreements. Conflict situations have arisen, and will continue to arise, as long as humanity exists. But, it should be remembered that conflicts can be avoided without reaching the limit. It is for these purposes that “preventive diplomacy” exists.

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# 21

## COVID-19 & ANTICRISIS MEASURES IN CENTRAL ASIA

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*This article analyzes the growth of cases in the Central Asian states due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The spread of this virus has long since moved from the category of the most significant challenge to the sustainability of public health systems to an existential threat to the established production and supply chains of goods, the air and rail transport markets and the tourism sector, both for many multinational corporations and for millions of local companies around the world. In the fight against the growing threat almost all countries have chosen the path of isolation from the outside world, meaning the overlap national borders, ending the civil transport, as well as the suspension or material limitation of activities of large industrial enterprises.*

**KEYWORDS:** Coronavirus, COVID-19 Pandemic, Central Asia, Health Care system, Vaccine, Economic Impact, Belt and Road initiative, EAEU, CIS

## **INTRODUCTION**

Countries of the Central Asia as well as the entire international community faced the problem of the Coronavirus pandemic and its economic and social consequences. The first cases of infection were officially registered in Kazakhstan on March 13, in Uzbekistan on March 15, in Kyrgyzstan on March 18. The government of these countries, having analysed the experience of the countries that became the first victims of the COVID-19, chose the Chinese approach of fighting the pandemic, introducing strict quarantine measures after the first confirmed cases of the virus.

Tajikistan and Turkmenistan at the beginning did not admit the presence of COVID-19 occurrences across their territories. Tajikistan even began tracking cases when WHO representatives arrived in the country in May, but did not implement strict actions to minimize the transmission of the virus. Turkmenistan,

on the other hand, has been unable to register a single incident of COVID-19 or death, even though has seemed to have adopted some of the WHO recommendations. Luca Anceschi, a researcher of central Asian studies in University of Glasgow (UK), told The Diplomat that “Government advice on masks, social distancing, and pneumonia infection are telling us that Turkmenistan is acting ‘as if’ it has COVID-19 cases, but without reporting those cases.”

The pandemic, together with the deterioration of the international economic situation, leads to an increase in the crisis phenomena in the Central Asian states, which is manifested in a slowdown in the pace of economic growth, economic growth, falling production volumes and rising unemployment, weakening trade and production ties, disruptions in the supply of goods, a reduction in domestic demand, inflation and the depreciation of national currencies.

## **FIGHTING AGAINST COVID-19 IN CENTRAL ASIAN STATES**

Irrespective of the Central Asian states' reaction to the very first stage of the pandemic, their health-care services were overloaded by deficient hospital wards, protective equipment for health-care staff, ventilation systems, and supportive care medications. Hundreds of people with COVID-19 symptoms have been treated at home because of the lack of health care staff and facilities. Preparation for a new rise in cases in the area was also tough, especially due to the lack of availability of inexpensive testing. In Kazakhstan, for example, the cost of PCR testing for COVID-19 is \$42, even though the government plans to minimize it to \$20.

The country has also developed modern labs and facilities devoted to the treatment of infections and educating its medical personnel in the use of public health guidelines for the management of COVID-19. A contact-tracing policy is in operation, but on a limited scale, due to the limited resources of municipal

public health facilities and regulatory limits on the privacy of personal data on the use of emerging technology, such as smartphone devices. In comparison, attempts to digitize and remotely monitor health records have faced significant issues with the incorporation of multiple electronic databases, compromising data transparency, such as the rate of COVID-19 incidents and losses.

One more problem in Central Asia was the high incidence of many other infectious diseases including HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis and drug abuse. The redistribution of health care resources to COVID-19 has reduced the availability of care for these diseases and impaired drug dependence risk prevention services. For example, improved a provision of pre-exposure prophylaxis for Prevention strategies and access to tuberculosis and multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR) treatment have been influenced. As a result, significant declines in TB case notifications were reported beginning in April 2020 relative to the same timeframe in 2019, hitting the peak decrease in May (48%), as well as the drop in registration of patients with MDR-tuberculosis care (45%), according to Askar Yedilbayev (WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, Denmark). The treatment of chronic conditions such as cancer and behavioural risk factors such as obesity has also been overshadowed and suicide rates have risen.

In this background, there is some hope that the Central Asian community will have access to at least one COVID-19 vaccine once it has been produced. Uzbekistan, Kirghizstan and Tajikistan are entitled to access the COVAX facility. “WHO has called on all countries to join the COVAX Facility to ensure that possible COVID-19 vaccines are available equitably to all countries”, wrote the WHO spokesperson Regional Office for Europe to The Lancet Microbe. And China has agreed to send a vaccine to Uzbekistan, but the Uzbek Ministry of Health has not yet replied. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, has signed an agreement with Russia to receive shots of the candidate vaccine Sputnik V COVID-19 amid fulfilment of phase 2-3 medical studies.

## **ECONOMIC SITUATION – IMPLICATIONS OF PANDEMIC**

In all the Central Asian republics, the deterioration of the economic situation has been recorded, which is accompanied by an increase in unemployment. In Kazakhstan, after the introduction of the emergency regime, about two million people lost their jobs, which is almost a quarter of the working population of the republic [1]. As in most countries of the world, in the Central Asian republics, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) suffered heavy losses. According to Kazakh experts, the services sector and trade were the most affected by the pandemic – about half of private trade enterprises were closed. According to the data for the first decade of April, out of more than 12 thousand of the businessmen who applied to the government for help, 80% were representatives of SMEs.

On 31 March, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev made a statement about the support of SMEs. In the most affected sectors of the economy, the accrual and payment of taxes, as well as payments from the payroll fund, were canceled for them for 6 months (from April 1 to October 1). Among the sectors covered by the state support measures are the catering sector, some areas of trade, transport and consulting services, the IT sector, the hotel business, and tourism [1]. The President of Kazakhstan paid special attention to the situation of small and medium-sized farms. He gave instructions to support them by reducing the price of diesel fuel for agricultural producers by 15%. For this purpose, the state allocated 390 thousand tons of diesel fuel at a reduced price.

Kazakhstan, like other countries in the region, has been negatively affected by the weakening of ties with its main economic partners – China, Russia and the EU. As a result of the deterioration of the economic situation in China, the demand for energy resources has decreased. Meanwhile, the financial well-being of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan largely depends on the proceeds from the sale of oil and gas. A prolonged decline in their export volumes amid falling energy prices threatens these countries with serious economic losses.



Already in early March, Kazakhstan, according to the Minister of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.Nogayev, at the request of China, reduced the volume of gas that is pumped into the three branches of the pipeline passing through the territory of the republic from Turkmenistan to China by 20-25%. (Quotas for other countries were also reduced in the same proportion, which supply gas to China through this pipeline, i.e. for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.)

In Uzbekistan, the fight against the pandemic has paralyzed almost all sectors of the economy. Transport, trade, industry, education, tourism and the restaurant business have faced with the quarantine. An external factor that significantly affected the deterioration of the economic situation was the reduction in the volume of trade with China, which became the main trading partner of the republic in 2019.

For the economy of Kyrgyzstan, where most of the population is engaged in small and medium-sized businesses, the partial closure of the border with Kazakhstan for cargo transportation and individuals has become particularly painful, since it is the neighboring republic that is the main buyer of Kyrgyz oil products. The government of Kyrgyzstan estimates the losses of the Kyrgyz budget from a sharp reduction in customs and tax payments for 2020 at \$329 million. For Tajikistan, the damage to the economy is largely due to a reduction in remittances from migrants. Many of them lost their jobs due to a sharp decline in business activity in Russia. In addition, on March 18, the Russian Federation closed its borders to all foreign citizens, and it is at the beginning of spring that Tajik migrants go to Russia for seasonal work. In addition, the fall in the ruble exchange rate has a negative impact on the income of labor migrants to Tajikistan, which reduces the volume of their money transfers in dollar terms. As a result, the republic really faces the threat of a financial crisis, since up to 80% of foreign currency receipts are provided by labor migrants. According to the IMF forecasts, the economy of the Republic of Tatarstan will shrink by 2% this year, and the total budget deficit will increase to 7.7% of GDP [2]. For all

countries of the world, the pandemic has become a test of the health system. The Central Asian republics are no exception. The health systems of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which were unable to cope with the consequences of the pandemic on their own, are in the most difficult situation. As noted by political scientist A.Grozin, in Kyrgyzstan, large-scale medical reforms after the coups of 2005 and 2010, carried out on the recommendations of Western curators, during which many medical institutions were closed, led to a significant weakening of the health care system [3]. According to the Asian Development Bank, one of the main donors to the Central Asian republics, due to the serious global economic recession expected in 2020 and its own problems caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, the scale of the economic downturn in the region may be unprecedented. As the ADB experts emphasize, the disrupted global and regional links that affect supply chains, tourism, remittances and financial flows, as well as the reduction in domestic production, cannot but affect the economy of the region. In their opinion, for many Central Asian countries, the economic downturn will be deeper than during the financial crisis of 2008-2009. At the same time, according to the interim conclusion of the Asian Development Bank: “limited monetary and fiscal buffers will slow down the recovery compared to previous crises” [4].

## **THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION**

The pandemic has dealt a serious blow to the integration relations of the Central Asian countries both within the region and with their external partners. In the context of the violation of traditional trade relations in the republics, the problem of food security has become acute. In order to ensure it, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have imposed a ban on the export of a number of essential food products, such as wheat flour, pasta, sunflower oil, sugar, salt, chicken eggs, feed, vegetables and cereals.

In the context of the growing disunity of the Central Asian countries caused by objective reasons, the desire of the Uzbek leadership to be consistent in its priorities regarding the development of relations with its neighbors in the region is noteworthy. In particular, President ShavkatMirziyoyev initiated telephone talks with the heads of all states of the region, as well as Afghanistan, in order to coordinate efforts in the fight against the pandemic. In a difficult situation, Tashkent nevertheless provided humanitarian assistance to Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan, providing them with masks, protective suits, tests, food and clothing.

*The pandemic and China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative*

Located in the center of Eurasia, the Central Asian countries are an important link in the logistics supply chain between China and Europe, that is, the Silk Road being recreated by Beijing. This is a special place States in the region in the Chinese project "One Belt, One Road" initiative, which is, in fact, the integration initiative aimed at global expansion of Chinese influence. The weakening of China as a result of the pandemic and the disruption of established ties can have serious consequences for the Central Asian countries, which are more or less economically dependent on the PRC (according to some experts, Tajikistan, for example, has long been an economic domain of Beijing).

In these circumstances, the active promotion of the "Belt and Road" initiative, which provides for large-scale investments in transport infrastructure and related sectors of the economy of the countries of the region, may be called into question. In Kazakhstan, for example, the Chinese project provides for a number of economic-stimulating programs related to the implementation of the country's transit potential. Joint projects with the participation of Chinese capital in the field of logistics, trade and production were particularly widespread in the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan bordering with China. Within the framework of the Belt and Road project, a large-scale investment program is being implemented in the republic, which provides for the use of equipment and

workers from China (about 800 Chinese citizens work in the oil and gas sector of the Republic of Kazakhstan alone).

According to some experts, the inflow of capital into Chinese investment projects in Central Asia will inevitably decrease, given the difficulties in the banking sector of the Middle Kingdom, and this can significantly undermine the economies of the countries of the region. At the same time, there is a reduction in trade with China, which is due not only to measures to close borders (railway communication with PRC has been preserved), but to a large extent, also to the slowdown in the development of the Chinese economy due to the pandemic.

Experts do not exclude that in the event of prolonged economic difficulties in China, the authorities of the countries of the region will be forced to look for alternative solutions. And in this case, one of the possible consequences of the pandemic situation may be the beginning of a gradual reduction in the dependence of Central Asian countries on China and the reorientation of trade and investment in Central Asian countries to the Russian Federation and the CIS countries, as well as the activation of intraregional relations [5].

However, another scenario is also possible, in which China's rapid expansion of production (in the case of a favorable epidemiological situation) will allow it not to reduce its economic presence in Central Asia. The fact that China is able to quickly and effectively mobilize resources in the right areas is evidenced by the speed with which Beijing has managed to increase the production of medical products. As a result, today China accounts for 20% of the world's production of artificial lung ventilation devices, which are needed by seriously ill patients around the world. Beijing's willingness to supply the necessary products is becoming a new factor in strengthening the role and influence of Beijing.

#### *The EAEU in the context of the fight against coronavirus*

The pandemic and the isolation measures associated with it could not but affect the relations between Russia and the Central Asian countries within the

framework of the EAEU. Reduction of trade turnover, drop in the level of economic activity was the result of the introduction of quarantine measures. The volume of cargo flows has significantly decreased, but the EAEU countries have managed to maintain communication by rail, water routes and part of road transport. Transport logistics and cargo transportation, primarily of essential goods, became the main thing that remained of the economic ties established before the pandemic.

Since the outbreak of the epidemic and during March–April of this year, measures have been taken within the framework of the EAEU to preserve integration ties in the new reality. The work of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) has been restructured, which has become focused on mitigating the economic consequences of the coming crisis and fighting the epidemic. On March 16, the EEC decided to cancel import duties on goods imported for the prevention and prevention of coronavirus infection in the territory of the EAEU. This concerned, first of all, personal protective equipment, disinfectants, diagnostic reagents, certain types of medical equipment and materials. In the new conditions, the problem of ensuring food security and preventing the shortage of food products has come to the fore in the work of the EAEU. At the end of March, a ban was imposed on the export of essential products from the EAEU countries, and in early April, «critical import» goods (potatoes, onions, garlic, cabbage, carrots, peppers, rye, rice, buckwheat, juices and baby food products) were exempt from import duties.

On April 10, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council approved a package of measures to ensure the vital needs of the population in the EAEU countries, maintain mutual trade and create conditions for further economic growth. Urgent measures included the introduction of uniform temporary restrictions on the export of critical goods to third countries, prompt consultations at the level of Deputy prime ministers of the Union countries, as well as joint efforts to create antiviral drugs and vaccines and establish their mass production.

Special attention was paid to the preservation of the work of transport and freight transport both within the Union and in order to ensure transit [6]. It was also decided to conduct operational consultations on the coordination of the activities of the national authorized bodies in the field of health.

The EAEU member states were unanimous on the fact that in the context of the economic downturn caused by the epidemic, further deepening of integration is necessary to overcome it. This was stated during the negotiations of the heads of the EAEU states held on April 14 in the video conference mode. At the same time, according to the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan A.Mamin, it is necessary to strengthen the self-sufficiency of the EAEU countries, which primarily involves full food self-sufficiency, as well as import substitution of agricultural products and essential goods. President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, who chaired the meeting, called for the creation of a transit corridor that would connect all the EAEU states.

The issue of expanding cooperation within the framework of ensuring food security was also considered. Some EEU countries, including Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, depend on external supplies of meat, fish, sugar and other goods. More developed in agricultural terms, Russia and Belarus expressed their readiness to provide partners with the necessary products, while the Russian Federation will not restrict grain exports to the EAEU countries. Minsk proposed to create a single data bank on food stocks in the Union states and to adopt common rules for regulating foreign trade in order to provide the EAEU members with everything they need.

Following the talks, the heads of the EAEU member States adopted a statement, which said that the pandemic should not lead to a break-established cooperative ties, stop international trade, the termination of investment activity. The governments were instructed to «implement coordinated measures for the prevention and prevention of COVID-19, strengthen our economic cooperation, maintain the stability of domestic markets, including food markets, and support

the citizens of our states and businesses to overcome the negative consequences of the pandemic». To this end, it is planned to work out the issues of liberalizing road transport, gas prices and tariffs for its transportation. The Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development and the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) should become a source of financial support for companies in the EAEU space.

Despite its own economic difficulties, Moscow supports its partners in the EAEU. In addition to the transfer of medical protection and equipment to them, the Russian Federation intends to participate in lending to enterprises of the EAEU states. To this end, the Russian Export and the EDB are launching a joint credit program to finance the export of goods, works and services produced in the Russian Federation to the EAEU countries on preferential terms.

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**PART III**

**MULTILATERAL  
COOPERATION IN CENTRAL  
ASIA**



# 22

## **REVIEWING UZBEK-FRENCH COOPERATION: CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*The development of cooperation between States depends on various external (related to international relations) and internal factors: geographical location of countries, their resource potential, systems of executive and economic management, presence or absence of a center of forces, national interests of countries, etc. These factors are innumerable. However, the most difficult thing is that in the absolute sense it is impossible to measure, combine and classify all these nuances that affect the future of bilateral relations between nation-States. All classifications according to the degree of interests, the level of security, the development of globalization or civilizational factors only partially explain the potential of some country in the development of its foreign*

*policy. In this situation, one of the best methods for envisaging and finding new areas for partnership is to revise the evolution of this partnership.*

*In this article, in order to form a general picture and state, as well as predict cooperation between Uzbekistan and France, there are analyzed the main stages of the development of this cooperation using the correlation analysis method.*

**KEYWORDS:** Uzbekistan, France, bilateral relations, cooperation, correlation, statistics, quantitative analysis

## INTRODUCTION

The correlation analysis is not a pure humanitarian and social method of study. It came to the social sciences from the exact sciences and information technologies (IT). Therefore, before proceeding directly to the correlation of Uzbek-French relations, it is necessary to dwell on the essence of this method. This type of method is directly related to the correlation process, i.e. the ratio and interrelation of two or more phenomena / quantities in a system of common values [1]. The method of this type of research was used mainly in mathematical and statistical analysis. However, this method is gradually being used in the humanities, when “it is a small number of underlying factors which can more parsimoniously explain it all.”[2] With its relative simplicity, it is very useful both for testing existing hypotheses and in exploratory research, when assumptions about connections and interdependencies are just being formed. In the humanities, correlation allows you to interpret certain events by finding directions of connection or the strength of the connection between these events. That is, in simple words in the humanities, correlation research uses systemic, comparative and quantitative methods of analysis in aggregate. Many authors insist on using the correlation method only for prediction of phenomena’s future [2, p.21; 3]. However, there are very good examples of using this method of

analysis in a retrospective plan to study the relationships between the properties and qualities of a person and societies in sociological, political and psychological contexts [4].

The purpose of correlation analysis is to measure the statistical relationship between two or more variables. If the relationship between two variables is investigated, the correlation analysis will be paired; if the number of variables is more than two - plural. Within the framework of the evolution of Uzbek-French relations, as variables, we study the meetings / visits / negotiations of various high-ranking officials of both countries and find the direction of communication between different spheres and the intensity of communication between these spheres, i.e. we will find the main areas of cooperation and their relationship with each other.

## **GENERAL INDICATORS OF UZBEK-FRENCH COOPERATION**

Before directly moving on results of analysis, attention should be paid to the general shape of cooperation between Uzbekistan and France. So, France is one of the first countries to recognize the independence of the Central Asian countries. In international relations, France and Uzbekistan have close views on global issues, especially international and regional security. However, the overall 29-year history of political cooperation between the two countries shows that this cooperation is more politically based on dialogue between different government agencies of the two countries. So far, 10 political consultations have been held.

In addition, the two countries have signed more than 35 documents that form the basis of interstate relations, including 23 interstate and intergovernmental documents and 12 interdepartmental agreements [5]. Political consultations are held on an ongoing basis. The Uzbekistan-France friendship society, the Uzbekistan-France parliamentary groups in the Oliy Majlis of

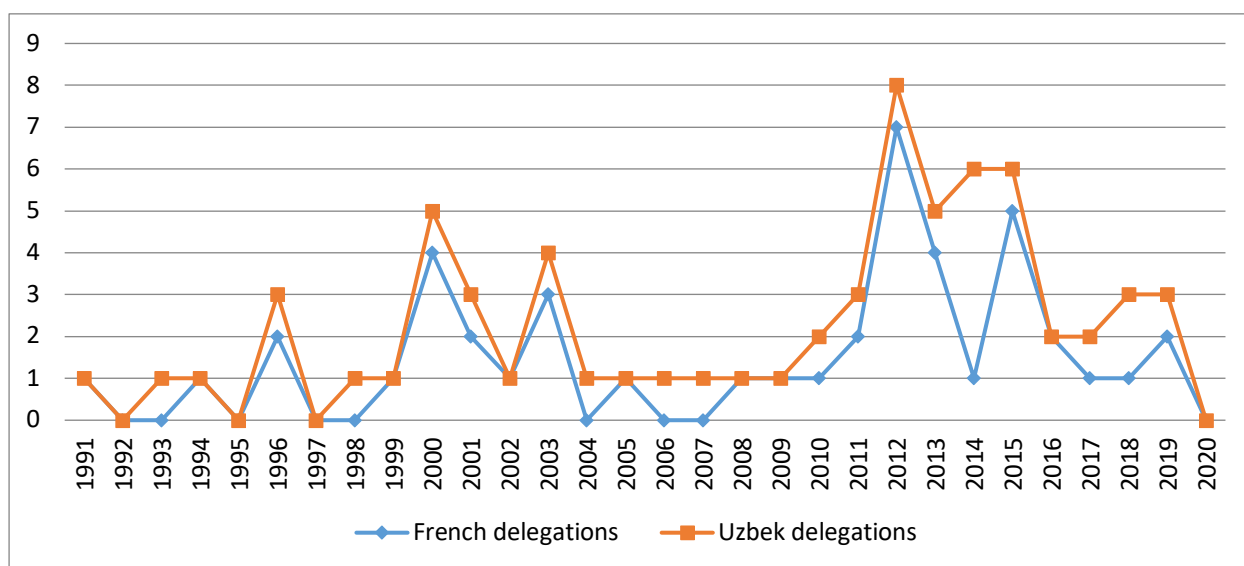
Uzbekistan, and the France-Central Asia friendship in French parliament group are functioning.

In the economic context, France is not among the top five trading partners of Uzbekistan (20th place). The trade turnover between Uzbekistan and France is 221.4 million US dollars for 2020 (2018-312.8 million US dollars, 2019-355.2 million US dollars). Number of joint ventures with full French capital: 16. However, at the end of 2019, Uzbekistan's 4th largest external debt partner (after China, Japan, Korea) - the first in Europe - \$ 345.8 million. [6]

Cultural and humanitarian spheres of cooperation have the deepest and most historical roots. France is one of the main partners of Uzbekistan in the fields of tourism, art and art management, fashion and design, architecture and consulting in this area, etc.

If we summarize the indicator of twenty-nine years of partnership, then one should also pay attention to the quantitative indexes of negotiations and visits. They can be combined into common diagram [7], [8]:

**Diagram No 1. Frequency of bilateral visits (1992-2020)**



It is seen on diagram, the time limit for our analysis is the years 1991-2020 - 29 years. As the basis for the variables, there are taken all bilateral visits from heads of state to government departments in both countries and topics, areas of their negotiations. The total number of these negotiations: 67- 43 of them from

France to Uzbekistan, 24 from Uzbekistan to France. There would be carried out general correlations for all areas of negotiations and individual correlations for every directions of cooperation. Comparison of the indicators of these correlations will help us to more accurately represent the state of the main vectors of cooperation between Uzbekistan and France, and predict the general perspectives for partnership.

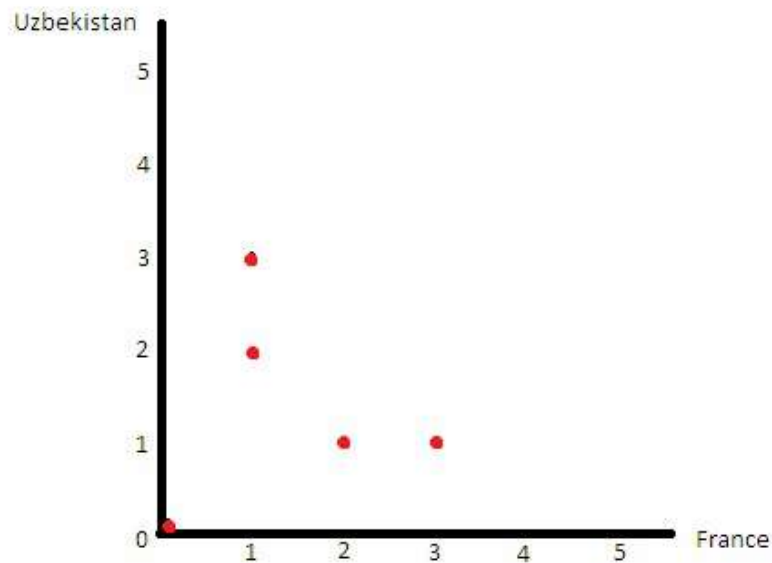
### **POINTS OF CORRELATION**

Using the available data, we turn to direct correlation of partnerships in common areas. First, the degree of correlation of bilateral negotiations between Uzbekistan and France in such areas as human rights, social services, education, ecology, and urban development should be analyzed. All these spheres can be united under the general context of social modernization.

**Table No1. Indexes of Uzbek-French negotiations on social modernization**

State	Human rights	Social service	Education	Ecology	Urban development
Uzbekistan	1	2	3	0	1
France	3	1	1	2	2

**Diagram No2. Degree of correlation of Uzbek-French cooperation on social modernization**



As we see in the table, despite rather long (29 years) period of cooperation, in the Uzbek-French relations, the discussion of issues of social modernization was not at all frequent and reusable. This fact can lead us to three main conclusions. First, the low quantitative indicators of formal negotiations on modernization issues may be the result of the fact that these issues were resolved during the very first negotiations. Or the parties are not so interested in cooperation in these areas and the meetings that have taken place have a situational nature (for solving individual situations, but not on general strategic and long-term projects). Or, thirdly, all Uzbek-French cooperation is scarce in quantitative terms.

So, in the scatter diagram there is weak but positive linear correlation, where both variables increase. This suggests that there is still a connection in setting agendas in the context of modernization between Uzbekistan and France. However, not the particularity of the negotiations in these areas and the state of the diagram to some extent confirms that the issues of modernization for both countries were ad hoc agenda of the negotiations and because of this they were reasonably well coordinated between the parties.

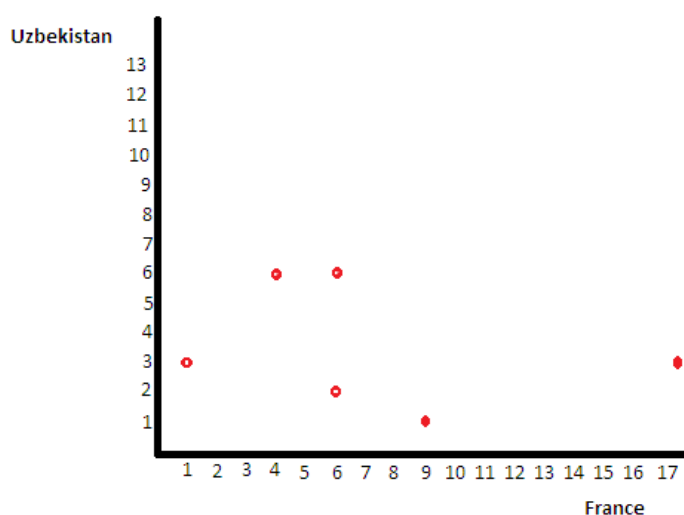
And now this is a turn of general issues of cooperation's analysis, carried out through political consultations, negotiations of heads of countries,

parliamentary cooperation, regional cooperation, issues of external political coordination and security.

**Table No2. Visits and talks on strategic issues**

State	Political consultations	Head of states' negotiations	Parliamentary cooperation	Regional cooperation	Other questions of foreign policy coordination	Security
Uzbekistan	6	3	3	1	2	6
France	4	1	17	9	6	6

**Diagram No3. Degree of correlation of Uzbek-French cooperation on strategic issues**



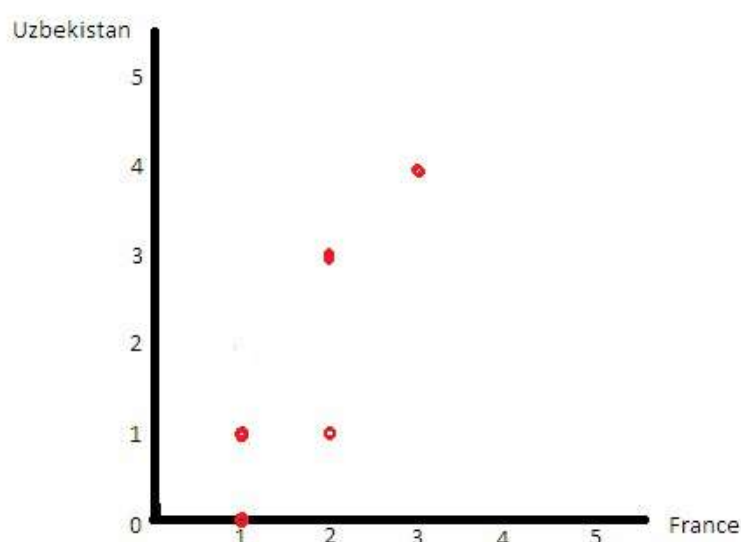
Despite some good quantitative indicators and sufficient data, the Scatter diagram shows zero correlation between the variables, i.e. goals of both countries in the context of a common strategy for the development of cooperation. However, there is a linear relationship between the indicators. In the table it can be seen that the main initiator of negotiations on general strategic issues, in addition to political consultations, is France. The most coordinated area is the security (defense, Afghan factor, regional security, drug trafficking, etc.). The most uncoordinated area, where the indicators of both sides differ greatly, is parliamentary cooperation, followed by regional cooperation. Here the main agenda maker is also France. So, this group of strategic issues is the most uncoordinated, the most differentiated by variables (countries), there is a large gap in the goals of the parties.

Now it is a turn of the correlation of negotiations on the issues of investment and trade. [9] This analysis will show us only Uzbekistan is interested in the development of investment and economic cooperation or France too.

**Table No 3. Negotiations on economic issues**

State	Trade	Investment	Finances	Industry	Business	Customs
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	4	3	0	0	1	1
<b>France</b>	3	2	1	1	2	1

**Diagram No4. Degree of correlation of Uzbek-French cooperation on economic issues**



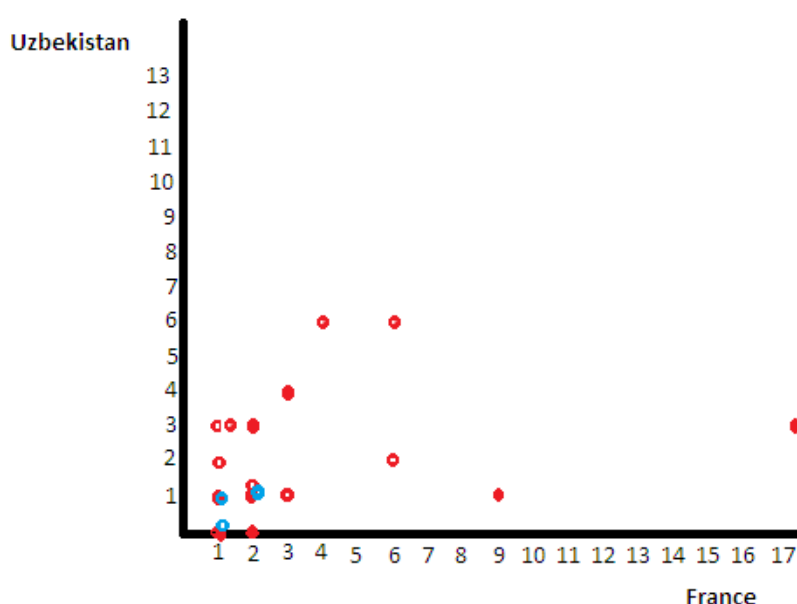
The chart shows that there is a relationship in the variables for country goals. This relationship is linear and, despite the scarcity of indicators, is quite strong. Only in this diagram can the line of best fit be drawn. The diagram breaks the stereotype that only a fairly young and developing Uzbekistan needs trade and economic partnership with developed countries, including France. As a result of the correlation, not only Uzbekistan is interested in the development of trade and economic cooperation. France's goals in this area are even more varied. As a general summary of this correlation, we can note two results. Firstly,



based on the low quantitative indicators of negotiations in economic terms, we must decide that Uzbekistan is not interested in trade and economic cooperation, then we must say that France is not interested in this either. If, on the contrary, linearity and positive scattering in the diagram are the basis for believing that Uzbekistan is interested in economic cooperation, then this means that France is also interested in this to the same extent.

In the end, there is a general correlation of the agendas of bilateral negotiations at the government level (including culture and arts<sup>\*</sup>) [10; 11]

**Diagram No5. General correlation of cooperation**



Strong positive correlation at the beginning of the scale in the middle becomes zero correlation until it is absent of interconnection at the end. Such a midway correlation means that Uzbekistan and France are in a transitional period, in a period of comprehension of cooperation. However, as we see, there are more coordinated agreed and mutually interesting areas of cooperation than areas with gaps in priorities.

## CONCLUSION

<sup>\*</sup>As the indices of cultural and humanitarian cooperation are not sufficient for a separate graph of the correlation, they are indicated by blue dots.

Correlation does not show causality between variables. But in the analysis of interstate relations, it shows how the countries were able to coordinate, agree in solving certain problems, in setting agendas and priorities, how they could find common ground, optimal areas of cooperation.

Consequently, based on the results of current quantitative research, it could be concluded that:

- discussion of issues of social modernization were not at all frequent and reusable, which may indicate either low interest of the parties or an almost complete settlement of issues of cooperation in this field. However, both parties are equally motivated and have a positive correlation in this area;
- the most uncoordinated, the most distinguishing by variables group of issues with a large gap in the goals of the parties are general issues of development of cooperation, i.e. strategic areas as parliamentary cooperation, regional cooperation, issues of external political coordination etc;
- not only Uzbekistan is interested in the development of trade and economic cooperation. France's goals in this area are even much more varied;
- In general, there are more well-coordinated, agreed, and mutually interesting areas of cooperation, than spheres with gaps in priorities;
- and relations between Uzbekistan and France in a transitional period, in a period of understanding of cooperation.

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# 23

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF UZBEKISTAN IN ENERGY SECTOR

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### ABSTRACT :

*The article is about international cooperation of the Republic of Uzbekistan in energy security. Uzbekistan is developing country and its economy, industry demands for stable energy supply. Energy sphere of Uzbekistan can be developed by applying innovative methods, which is possible by studying the experience of foreign countries. The article tells about cooperation of Uzbekistan with European countries, Great Britain, Russia, China, United Arab Emirates. Uzbekistan intends to sign agreements about cooperation with different countries and the article provides information about future projects in energy sphere. Author uses recent materials, which makes the article up-to-date. Article can be interesting both for specialists and people interested in energy sphere.*

**KEYWORDS:** energy security, energy supply, energy system, price policy, energy markets.

It is important to rely on the experience of foreign countries in order to provide energy security of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The country should learn the experience of the countries, which had advanced energy system.

For this reason, international cooperation plays a great role in energy policy of Uzbekistan. The country cooperates with foreign countries, studies their experience, applies effective methods of providing energy security.

Uzbekistan cooperates not only with the governments of the countries, but also with representatives of companies and corporations with international status. This kind of approach allows to learn the most effective methods and not to have limit in choosing partners.

From the first years of independence Uzbekistan started cooperation with Europe as an important partner. Relations with European countries is developing in bilateral format and in the frame of Agreement of Cooperation, which entered into force 1 July 1999. [1]

Uzbekistan cooperates with European Union in different spheres and the sphere of energy security is no exception. Evidence is the signing of the Memorandum about cooperation in energysphere in 2011.

The massive reconstruction is taking place in energy sphere of Uzbekistan. International consultant from Great Britain “Mott MacDonald” is assisting the country in this process. The master plan was created for the development of energy security of Uzbekistan, including the sphere of applying renewable sources of energy.

Foreign and international experts also participated actively in the development of the concept of providing the Republic of Uzbekistan with electricity between 2020 and 2030.

This kind of cooperation is continuing. The evidence can be seen in the tasks, that should be completed by the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The most important one is creating partnership with international financial organizations, companies, corporations, banks, funds, agencies.

The other important task of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Uzbekistan is creating favourable conditions, that are important for cooperation, increasing investment appeal of the energy sphere of the country. The fulfilment of the task is possible by developing public-private partnership, improving price policy, which leads to the rivalry in energy sphere.

The Ministry of Energy of the country is responsible for coordination of the realization of investment projects in energy sphere, for active involvement of private capital in the process of mining, producing, recycling energy resources.

Moreover, Uzbekistan is the participant of some international agreements in the energy sphere. The country ratified some documents with international status:

- The Energy Charter Treaty (Lisbon, 17 December 1995, ratified by OliyMajlis (The Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 22 December 1995, entered the force on 16 April 1998);
- The protocol on energy efficiency and related environmental aspects (Lisbon, 17 December 1995, ratified by Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 22 December 1995, entered the force on 16 April 1998) ;
- The statute of the International Renewable Energy Agency (Bonn, 26 January 2009, ratified on 1 June 2017.

It is important to note active participation of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the programme of Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC). The programme was created by Asian bank of development in 2001.

This programme develops the partnership of the countries in economic sphere. The participants of the programme act together on development by cooperation, which leads to quick economic development of participating countries. Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan are the members of CAREC.

The first meeting of energy ministers of the members of CAREC took place in Tashkent, on 20 September 2019. The meeting was organized by the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan in cooperation with Asian bank of development under the age is of CAREC. The meeting was a part of Central Asian Energy Investment Forum 2019.

The meeting is an evidence of activeness of Central Asian countries in energy sphere. Uzbekistan has aim of providing economic and ecological stability in energy sphere. Uzbekistan intends to cooperate with the countries of Central Asian region and actors of the international energy market for the fulfillment of important tasks.

In the meeting, which was mentioned above, representatives of Central Asian countries signed the Declaration of Energy Ministers of Members of CAREC. According to this document the countries agree to develop common strategy in energy sphere until 2030.

In addition to that, the countries take responsibility to cooperate for the achievement of the seventh aim of UN in the sphere of sustainable development. It means wider cooperation in the process of providing with available and pure energy.

It is important to point out that some Central Asian countries face problems because of lack of energy resources, in spite of the fact that CAREC members have enough quantity of such resources.

The countries of the region should increase productive potential of their energy system until 2030 in order to provide stable economic growth and satisfy growing demand for energy resources. It demands for large investments into the sphere.

Cooperation between the countries of the region and large investments allow not only to solve problems but also to provide innermarket with energy

resources, to export energy resources to China, Pakistan, India. It also opens new opportunities of exporting oil and gas through Turkey and Georgia.

Common energy strategy CAREC-2030 is going to be developed together with Asian bank of development. Main purpose of the project is creation of absolutely new, stable, modern energy markets in Central Asia until 2030.

The countries that signed the declaration also agreed to [2]:

- double the production of electricity by using solar and wind power until 2023;
- realise the reforms for creating favourable law system for investors and for increasing private sector investments;
- create in CAREC regional funding mechanisms;
- provide wider rights and opportunities to women, who are not represented in energy sector of CAREC region in a sufficient level.

Cooperation of Russia and Uzbekistan also deserves some attention. Russian companies intend to participate in mining and refining process of energy resources of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan intends to realize investment projects such as conducting geological research, finding new mines of energy resources, creating modern factories for refining the gas. Besides, there has been a discussion about prospect of oil refining.

Russian-Uzbek cooperation in gas sector is developing successfully and opening new spheres. It can be seen from the cooperation with Russian company “Gazprom” : [3]

- “Gazprom” and “Uzbekneftgaz” signed agreement about strategic cooperation in 2002. According to it, “Gazprom” participates in the projects of mining the gas in the territory of Uzbekistan on conditions of agreement about sharing product sharing (APS);

- “Gazprom” has started participating in reestablishing the mining process in the mine “Shakhpakhty” on conditions of APS since 2004 ;

- “Gazprom” and “Uzbekneftgaz” signed agreement about main principles of conducting geological research in Ustyurt region of Uzbekistan in 2006. “Gazprom International” is main operator of the project;

- A new gas mine “Djel” was opened in “Shakhpakhty” in 2009. Second well was drilled in the territory of “Djel” in 2010.

Moreover, “Gazprom” and “Uzbekneftgaz” signed agreement about cooperation in geological research and innovative engineering works. For the fulfillment of this agreement “Gazprom and Uzbekneftgaz” would study new prospective mines in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Besides, two countries intend to conduct analysis of the opportunities of organising joint works in the sphere of engineering. One of the agreements between companies of these countries mean mutual work in the sphere of personnel preparation.

There is also cooperation between Russian Federation and Uzbekistan in the sphere of nuclear energy. Government of Uzbekistan approved concept of development of nuclear energy in 2019-2029.

Fulfillment of this prospective nuclear programme means construction and launch the first nuclear power plant (NPP) in Uzbekistan until 2030. It will allow to produce 30 percent of electricity in the Republic. This project will be realised in cooperation with national company of Russian Federation “Rosatom”. The project is estimated to be about 11 billion USD.

Realisation of this kind of serious project is necessary to increase energy potential of Uzbekistan. The country is developing actively and demand for electricity is growing year by year.

Project of the first NPP plays an important role in energy system of Uzbekistan, taking into account the threats, which the country can face in the



future. Nowadays most power plants in Uzbekistan use gas, however realization of nuclear project would allow to diversify sources of energy in the Republic.

Besides, there are some other advantages of the project. For Uzbekistan it is not just a project, it is a project of national importance. As it was mentioned above, first of all it is about diversification of energy complex. In addition to that, it creates big opportunities for providing energy security.

It is also about job creation. About five and six thousand people can be employed in the process of the construction of the plant. About two thousand people will be able to work, when the station will be launched. These people are going to be well-paid workers.

One more important aspect is that Uzbekistan would not only diversify its energy sphere, but would have an opportunity to export electricity from the plant to other countries. It would be also possible to export more gas abroad, which is used in traditional power stations.

Absolutely new strategic cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Russian Federation started at the end of 2017. Then governments of two countries signed agreement about cooperation in the sphere of peaceful application of nuclear power.

This document created legal basis for bilateral cooperation in the sphere of peaceful application of nuclear power. Following prospective directions were determined: creation of national infrastructure and personnel preparation in the nuclear sphere of Uzbekistan, construction of NPP and research centres in the country, full government support. [4]

Besides, document takes into account the process of research and usage of uranium deposits in Uzbekistan, production of radio isotopes and their application in industry, medicine, agriculture, scientific researches.

Exploitation of NPP demands existence of highly qualified specialists. As it was mentioned above, Uzbekistan cooperates with Russia in the sphere of personnel preparation. Russian nuclear energy corporation “Rosatom”, Science Academy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Nuclear Energy Development Agency “Uzatom” under Chamber of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed memorandum about mutual cooperation in the education and preparation personnel for the sphere of nuclear energy in Uzbekistan. The document was signed on 19 October 2018.

Memorandum includes other directions of cooperation such as creation of study and scientific materials on nuclear energy, organization of short term training courses abroad, summer schools, conducting competitions on such subjects as physics, chemistry, mathematics among students and school pupils in the Republic of Uzbekistan. [5]

Also there is an intention to create Information centre of nuclear energy in the Republic of Uzbekistan by cooperation with Russian corporation “Rosatom”. This information centre will be available to anyone, who is interested in nuclear technologies.

Bilateral cooperation between Russia and Uzbekistan is developing not only in the sphere of nuclear energy. Russian group of companies “Renova” expressed interest in participation in tenders for the construction of solar power plants (SPP) and production of solar panels in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Besides, representatives of “Renova” provided information about their plans of construction of hi-tech SPP in Uzbekistan. Also this group of companies intends to organize joint venture for the production of solar panels and use them in future SPP.

The cooperation is also developing with China. The cooperation between two countries in energy sphere is based on the principles of equal partnership

and mutual benefit. Countries have already signed some agreements and intend to sign the others in the future.

Uzbekistan and China expressed their readiness to cooperate in developing solar energy projects, creating research laboratories in Uzbekistan by experience exchange with leading Chinese companies. Two countries discussed prospects, main issues of cooperation regarding oil and gas industry, coal production, energy security, uranium mining, renewable sources of energy.

Uzbekistan signed memorandum with Chinese companies “China CAMC Engineering Co. Ltd” and “China National Environmental Protection Group” in order to develop the sphere of using renewable sources of energy. According to this document, a special research would check the possibility of the production of electricity by burning domestic waste in Namangan region of Uzbekistan. [6]

The cooperation is developing with United Arab Emirates (UAE) as well. Investment company from UAE “Mubadala”, Ministry of Investments and International Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, public company “Thermal Power Plants” (TPP) signed agreement about cooperation. The agreement involves privatisation and development of “Talimarjan” TPP. [7]

In addition to that, Ministry of Investments and International Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed agreement about construction of wind power plant (WPP) in Navoi region of Uzbekistan for producing 400 megawatts of power. The document was signed with “Masdar” company, which is subsidiary of investment holding “Mubadala”. According to this agreement, “Masdar” would be responsible for project, construction, financing, launching WPP. About 600 million USD are going to be invested. The WPP will be launched in 2022.

## **CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that the Republic of Uzbekistan intends to cooperate with different countries in energy sphere. It should be noted that Uzbekistan cooperates not only with governments of countries, but also with international organizations, financial institutions, multinational corporations and other actors of world energy sector.

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# **ON SPECIFICS OF US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*It has not been long since Central Asian Republics became independent and started to play their role as actors in politics. However, they managed to build relationship with other countries including the US. Of course, their relationship with one of the the world's superpowers has not always been well and this has mainly been shaped because of CA's proximity to Afghanistan. This article views the US foreign policy toward the region in general with slightly more emphasis on Uzbekistan.*

**KEYWORDS:** Central Asia, Foreign policy, The USA, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Terrorism, Political influence, Russia, China, Power;

## **INTRODUCTION**

The relationship of the USA with Central Asia so far has not been so tight and strong as it is with other parts of the world such as Middle East and in the future as well it seems unlikely to change. It is mainly because the leaders of the CARs (Central Asian Republics) are careful not to tilt towards any country and do not want to have one-sided partnership with countries or blocs. Instead they try to play a multifaceted political game with the countries, whose influence to the region is immense, to maintain the status quo and balance.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY**

Prior to the 1990s this was almost unknown and unexplored region for the countries of Europe and the USA. Because it was at first sight just an insignificant region under the control of the former USSR. Although the situation did not change hugely after the collapse and disintegration of the USSR, the USA started to take its first steps towards building a relationship with newly independent republics of Central Asia. Since 1991, the policy of the US in Central Asia can be divided into 3 phases i.e. post-Cold War, post 9/11 and contemporary [1]. Such periodization of the relations between CA and the US is necessary, as it gives opportunity to understand them thoroughly.

The first stage can be marked as a period of disengaging the region from Russia and endeavors to prevent CARs from falling into the influence of Russia again. Nevertheless, there are no significant measures the US took during that time to reach its intentions.

Second phase which began with 9/11 terrorist attacks on Pentagon and the World Trade Center by terrorists from Afghanistan which forced the United States to alter its policy in Central Asia, as Afghanistan, where the terrorists trained and worked out their plan under the command of Usama bin Laden, is bordered with these countries. Therefore, the government of the US decided to intervene the region with its army and, indeed, it did intervene trying to eradicate the sanctuary of terrorists by signing bilateral contracts with neighboring states: in 2001 Uzbekistan and the USA reached an agreement on using Khanabad airbase to combat terrorism in Afghanistan and in the following year a memorandum between Kazakhstan and the USA was signed for the provision of emergency landing rights for the US air forces to Almaty airport [2]. In retrospective, the approach can be accepted as a right decision for that time, but the steps they took further toward the region causing destabilization in some parts made the states be more cautious in their relations with the US. Thus soon the aforementioned agreement of Uzbekistan and the US was broken as it was already cited in the face of political instabilities in Kyrgyzstan. Since it was

assumed that even though there was no clear evidence about US's involvement in these protests, its implicit role cannot be ruled out. This ended up with the loss of trust of these countries to the US as a reliable partner. Further exacerbation of Uzbek- US relations came with the crisis in Andijan that occurred in 2005 on 13<sup>th</sup> of May. US and Europe demanded that the incident happened in Andijan be investigated by experts, but the Uzbek government turned this demand down. That was followed by a breakup of relations between Uzbekistan and the USA. The former started to tilt towards Russia, since it began actively supporting the actions taken by Uzbek government during the incident. According to some scholars it was US foreign policy failure which led to the loss of its key ally in the region. The problem with the US's policy in Central Asia can be attributed to the one sidedness of looking at the region. It assumed that it could take everything under control in Afghanistan with its military intrusion. However, as history shows us it failed in its attempt. For the US its mission there was limiting the spread of terrorism over the region and liberalizing Afghanistan. 9/11 events made people believe that all of the people in CA were terrorists. Because the typical people in the west do not know the states of central Asia and thus whenever they hear a name of the country with suffix "-istan" they consciously or subconsciously or even unconsciously consider it as a sanctuary for terrorists.

## **RELATIONS DURING OBAMA'S PRESIDENCY**

In 2008 the administration of Bush was replaced by Obama's administration. Barack Obama together with presidency inherited the legacy of complicated situation in Afghanistan rising influence of Russia and China in Central Asia as well as probable rise of Islamic radicalism in the region. He took several steps to shift the course of actions in CA. According to the new administration democratization is impossible to be fostered in a country if there is not a right condition, thus they tried to use politico-economic approach and implementing intelligent power, something a mix of soft and hard power. However, as it

became manifest some time after, Obama's aim was to transform the whole Eurasia from the Caspian Sea to South East into its geo-economic base.

The last two years of Obama's presidency was the beginning of the third phase and was a bit different in perspective towards Central Asia. This was mainly because of the start of the partial withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan along with the civil war in Ukraine Russia's role in it. In order to take the situation at least to some extent under control the administration decided to create a C5+1 forum which included the five Central Asian republics and the US. The aim of the forum was common vision for them. "Four projects come under umbrella of C5+1: counter terrorism under the auspices of US institute of peace, facilitating private sector buildup of internal Central Asian market, promoting low emission and advanced energy solutions and analyzing environmental risks under USAID" [3]. So far these forums have not provided the results that were expected. Therefore, it could be assumed that these forums or agreements ought to be signed bilaterally instead.

## **RELATIONS DURING TRUMP'S ADMINISTRATION**

The successor of Obama became Trump's administration in 2016. Because of natural pragmatism his administration did not consider Central Asia as a pivotal area of interest. Having a motto of Making America Great Again Trump's administration showed further disinterest in the region. This attitude towards foreign affairs seems to be connected with his entrepreneur background. As it is obvious Trump had never been engaged in politics before he was elected as a president of US and thus might have underestimated the importance of foreign affairs and US's role in it. All of these factors contributed to the rise of Russian and Chinese influence in the region. Because of the fact that they are geographically adjacent to Central Asia, it requires less effort from them to strengthen their position there. These two countries are doing their best to maintain the countries of CA under their control and if possible make them even more obedient. For this they have created different structures and long term



plans. For instance, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Collective treaty organization, Commonwealth of independent republics, Eurasian economic council, and the newest one of them is China's Belt and Road initiative. Comparing the effort that was made by the USA to Russia's and China's it is far less than theirs. Even if the US took the lead in endeavors of eliminating terrorism in the area and was successful to some extent in it, it was not able to settle down in the region and play a key role in their politics. This can be explained with some facts. The first is that its helpful hands were only given sporadically rather than continually, and the second is that it did not develop these countries' economies which made them more dependent on their funds and this is not beneficial for either state. The biggest part of US funds was spent on military aid. However, providing a person is not economically secure, s/he is not interested in politics and games within it.

In order to bridge the gap and coordinate with Central Asian Republics Trump's administration worked out a new mechanism beside C5+1 called Trade and Investment Framework agreement (TIFA). In addition to this in order to build rapport with the leaders of the Central Asian countries he held meetings with them. One of them is the meeting between Trump and Uzbekistan's president ShavkatMirziyoyev in May 2018. These steps and measures taken can sound as if this country is the only contributor to the area. However, even though TIFA works and countries start to trade more actively with one another, it is not going to match with Russian and Chinese turnover in the region, but it is something [4]. The relations between the two (CA and the US), however insignificant it might sound, should be maintained and improved, since it will be a fruitful for both sides. While for the US relations are important for strategic plans, for the states they are critical for circumventing huge amount of influence at least to some extent.

As it was stated above Trump administration opted for the ways focused on improving US economy and not strengthening its role in a global arena

because he was and is a businessman and thus is not interested in just words, he was interested in numbers. What is more these numbers were supposed to be spent within the country to make it more prosperous. These facts about the Trump administration made it clear that the amount of money aided to the region would be miniscule. The same can be said about the trade between Central Asian states and the US which was insignificant. Within these states Kazakhstan is the biggest partner in trade with the US, but even its numbers (2 billion dollars) is just skimpy compared to other partners of the US from other parts of the world.

Frankly, the United States has never viewed Central Asia as a venue of interest and they were just accepted as a group of countries with the Soviet background. Prior to the disintegration of the USSR it might not even have known these countries' names. For many years after the disintegration, especially after 9/11 terrorist acts the region was seen as an area of failure states and a sanctuary for terrorism, extremism, radicalism. However, that seems to be a hyperbole.

### **IS THIS ALL BECAUSE OF RELIGION?**

What might be said about Central Asian states is that they have never had an inclination towards extremism in religion be it in their daily life or in relationship with others. Because the region even in the Middle Ages was not outstandingly religious, of course people prayed and followed religious rituals, but they did not influence a state's policy significantly. During soviet rule religion in politics hit its nadir point and it was curbed to just sporadic ceremonial functions. In addition, in the years between 1900 and 1945 a huge number of people from Russia and other member states of the USSR who were from different religious background willfully or involuntarily migrated to Central Asia. That resulted in more diluted nature of religion in the region and dwellers started to live in a more harmonious way despite following different religion. Having lived in such circumstances Central Asian people became more religiously tolerant.

Although after the collapse of the USSR Islam revived in Central Asia, and it is now almost 30 years since the Central Asian republics became independent and religion began to be learned and followed by the majority of the population of the region. Yet it is still prohibited from interfering in a state's affairs. "Any religious organization is barred from official recognition as a registered political party in all of the Central Asian countries. Even the society does not appreciate any religious party to be representative of their demands" [1], [5]. In recent years, however, the religion has started to reemerge and spread among people as never before. Thus, this might mean the reviewing the rules.

Of course, it is an undeniable fact that Al-Qaeda and Taliban were and are viewed as an extreme form of Islam; consequently, many states tried to condemn this religion to be a mother of all evil that occurred all over the world due to terrorists. However, they have nothing to do with Islam. Because many of them emerged as a result of the socio-economic dissatisfaction and this was caused by the USSR and its collapse. In addition, the operation of almost all of these groups has already been stopped. Yet, the US still has a doubtful relationship with the region.

## **NEW STEPS**

In recent years, however, in order to maintain its role in Central Asia the US has taken some measures (it has been stated above as well). For instance, "Since 2019, visits of US foreign policy officials to Central Asia have intensified. In February, Pompeo visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan [5] and attended the C5+1 Ministerial" [2]. According to Uzbekistan's foreign Ministry, the agenda of the talks included regional security, regional cooperation and the situation in Afghanistan. During his visit to Kazakhstan, Pompeo met with ethnic Kazakhs whose family members have been detained in internment camps in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China [6]. It is obvious that the states of the region do not have sufficient power to influence China in this regard; nevertheless, it can be a good idea to cooperate with the US against China's

attitude towards Uyghurs. Prior to his visit the officials of China stated that “attempts to sow discord over Chinese policies in its Xinjiang region will fail” and that the regional countries were better placed to assess the situation than Washington [7]. Chinese media declared Pompeo’s visit as “Simply wasting time trying to undermine China’s interest there” [8]. Despite these words they clearly understand Pompeo’s visit was not completely in vein and US presence in the area at least has China think before acting.

Almost at the same time with Pompeo’s visit to Central Asian countries, The State Department of US has worked out a strategy for Central Asian countries for the years between 2019 and 2025 [9]. Although it encompassed wide range of priorities such as preventing raising domestic violence and peacekeeping, the focal point of the strategy was “Reducing terroristic threats” in the region and especially in Afghanistan.

Though Central Asian countries do not consider US as their close political or economic ally, they need it in order to maintain the balance in the region. However hard the US tries, it goes without a doubt that Central Asian Republics will not act against the wishes of Russia or China, or at least it will be extremely difficult to take those steps. Because they clearly understand the volume of influence Russia and China have onto the region. An important factor that minimizes the level of US involvement in the region is geographical distance, whereas China’s increasing economic impact and Russia’s political and to some extent military influence on the regional states allows them to have more control than any other country. Even though the presence of US in Central Asia irritates these two countries, the regional states welcome its presence and strategy that it takes to approach the region.

## **VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES**

Different countries have different reasons for approaching Central Asian Republics. For Russia it is the post-soviet space, which makes it attractive for

political, economic and strategic purposes, and it does its best to maintain CA as a zone of influence as it was during the USSR period. China being one of the biggest exporters to the region endeavors to gain as much economic advantage as possible. Unfortunately, the region's underdeveloped industries could not have done much so far to free its market from Chinese products which makes the states more dependent on it. In addition to this according to the data published in UNISCI Journal hackers from China along with other states such as Estonia, Russia, Turkey exploit Central Asian cyber space for various criminal activities such as practicing denial-of-service attacks for ransom, messing up the governments' websites and interfering with commerce. The country that has not been mentioned so far in the article but has interests in the region is Turkey. Even though it has the least power to change something that is not in its interests in the region, Turkey owns some assets that others do not have. It has common religion, similar culture and traditions with CARs. These assets will certainly eliminate the amount of effort it should do to gain more leverage in CA. When it comes to the US's interests in the region it can be said that though it approaches Central Asia with the pseudonym of "democratizer" and "anti-terrorist" its long term plans can be more than that. In that if the US successfully penetrates there and further strengthens its roots that are loose yet, they might want to manipulate the regional states to curb Russian and Chinese influence in the area. Moreover, as the US is considered to be a financially solid country which means it can try to change the residents' view towards US led NATO by donating to these countries with various purposes. Because "the results of a survey conducted by Gallup showed that residents of Central Asian states share Russia's views on NATO. Particularly, more people in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and even Kazakhstan consider US led western military alliance as more of a threat than as a source of protection" [10]. Providing US succeeds in persuading CARs (Central Asian Republics) that NATO does not pose any threat and they become member states of the NATO, Russia and China will probably be left under serious pressure. But these suppositions are far from reality if not impossible,

because the anti-Americanism that people in the region internalized during Soviets coupled with the affection towards the neutrality of the states makes it difficult for the US to realize its intentions there. Thus it is essential that United States be realistic about goals that it wants to achieve in an environment where democracy is in its infancy [11]. So far in almost every effort that it made in the region United States has been largely unsuccessful and one of the biggest failures is its intervention to Afghanistan. In the beginning its aims were huge: ranging from eliminating terrorism to democratizing it (it sounds as a pipe dream!). However, throughout the intervention period the US faced big hurdles and was not able to accomplish that much. The biggest rationale behind this is US's not understanding the nature of people. Their views are completely different than that of Americans.

## **CONCLUSION**

During the period that is covered in this article the relationship between Central Asian Republics, mainly Uzbekistan and United States was unstable. Before the disintegration of the USSR there were not any ties be it political or economic between abovementioned regions. Nevertheless, after the collapse of Soviets the regional states inclined toward the West and regarded western countries as role models for their economy, development and reformation. Since there was not any country or a political bloc to support them apart from the West. In the first decade they cooperated relatively well, but this collaboration did not last long. It only did till 2005 when Uzbekistan refused to be inspected by the representatives of Human Rights because of Andijan events that took place on 13<sup>th</sup> of May and the United States was told to vacate K2 (Karshi-Khonobod air base). After these two events the relationships were frozen during the presidency of I.A.Karimov. However, when Sh.M.Mirziyoyev elected as a president of Uzbekistan, he started to reconcile good relationship with all the countries ranging from its neighbors to Europe and the US. In the end it must be said that although Central Asian Republics do not welcome US as a military all,

they do welcome it as a partner for sustaining peace in the region. In this case the states have more space to maneuver even in the presence of Russian and Chinese influence.

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# 25

## ON UZBEK-AFGHAN CULTURAL RELATIONS

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## ABSTRACT:

*Uzbekistan and Afghanistan are historically close and share common culture and tradition. This article analyzes the relationship between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan on a historical and modern basis, highlights the development of the two countries, ensuring political and economic stability. Joint efforts on strengthening cooperation in the sphere of culture and education between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan are indicated.*

**KEYWORDS:** Central Asia, culture, tradition, agreement, cooperation.

## INTRODUCTION

It is known that the peoples of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan are historically close, and there are many examples of this. In particular, the rapid development of cultural and humanitarian ties between the two peoples in recent years is the result of this work.

In his speech at the international conference "Central Asia: common history and common future, cooperation for sustainable development and progress" in Samarkand on November 11, 2017, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev stressed the importance of brotherhood and good neighborliness. He mentioned that "We are united by history, religion, common culture and traditions" [1]. As our President has said, historically our cultures have been close and interconnected.

In his speech at the Tashkent High-Level International Conference on Afghanistan on March 26-27, 2018 at the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on "Peace Process, Security Cooperation and Regional Partnership", had identified good relations with neighboring countries, strengthening cooperation, friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation as a priority. The peoples of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have lived in a single cultural and civilizational space for centuries. From time immemorial, the two sides of the Amu Darya have been inhabited by peoples who share similar languages, a common sacred religion and common spiritual values. Abu RayhanBeruni, Lutfi,



Alisher Navoi, Kamoliddin Behzod, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Boborahim Mashrab and many other great ancestors of the Central Asian Renaissance lived and worked in Afghanistan. Today, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have close political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian ties. There are millions of Uzbeks in Afghanistan. According to the Afghan constitution, Uzbek is one of the country's official languages"[2]. The President's special attention to the cultural, humanitarian and educational spheres will contribute to the further development of the work.

## **UZBEKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN: HISTORIC TIES**

It is known that the State Program for the Implementation of the Action Strategy in the Year of Dialogue with the People and Human Interests provides for the intensification of "people's diplomacy". Undoubtedly, another important factor in the formation of the "welfare belt" is the expansion of cultural and humanitarian cooperation with neighbors, the interaction of people [3]. People's diplomacy has positive and influential features as an important element of state diplomacy. People's diplomacy is "heart-to-heart diplomacy" which helps bring peoples and communities closer together. It will focus on cultural, humanitarian, educational and tourism spheres.

The history of Afghanistan is directly connected with the history of our country. The history of Afghan statehood dates back to the 12th century. Until now, the area has been a point of contention between the rulers of Turan and Iran. In particular, until the Arab Caliphate, it was sometimes ruled by Turkish khagans and sometimes by Iranian kings. Later it was considered a part of the Ghaznavid, Khorezmshah, Mongol, Timurid, Baburid kingdoms, Bukhara Emirate. The Afghan people are a free people striving for freedom. This is evident in the example of the national liberation struggle against British colonialism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During the unrest in Afghanistan, our influential poet, the late Abdulla Aripov, said: "How are you, where is the front? An Uzbek boy behind the Afghans." It should not be forgotten that there are

many spiritual ties that connect Afghanistan with Uzbekistan. The head of our state, who intends to restore historical commonalities and continue good military relations, has always been benevolent to the country and the Afghan people [4]. In this sense, historically and geopolitically, Afghanistan is an integral part of the region.

On May 25, 2017, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov introduced to the Board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ismatilla Irgashev, who was appointed Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev [5]. This is a historic event that will contribute to the more rapid development of relations between the two countries in the political, socio-economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres.

### **UZBEK-AFGHAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY**

On September 18, 2018, the Committee on International Relations and Friendship with Foreign Countries held a roundtable on “A new era in Uzbek-Afghan relations” on the occasion of the establishment of the “Uzbekistan-Afghanistan: Friendship Society. In particular, the Chairman of the Committee Rustambek Kurbanov and the Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan Ismatilla Irgashev spoke about the current situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the role of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Society in strengthening and strengthening friendly ties between the two countries.

During the roundtable, the sides discussed a number of international events aimed at easing the situation in Afghanistan, creating an atmosphere of peace and stability in the region, as well as current issues facing the newly established Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Society.

During the roundtable, Uzbekistan recently held a number of international events aimed at easing the situation in Afghanistan, creating an atmosphere of

peace and stability in the region, as well as the newly formed “Uzbekistan-Afghanistan” reflecting on the current issues facing the society.

Chairman of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Society, Rector of the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, Doctor of Philology, Professor A. Mannonov said at the conference: “Establishing the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Society was truly a historic event. Until now, there has never been a society in the history of the two countries that has helped build ties with Afghanistan.” The society that was established was directly initiated by the head of our state Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Our society has a number of tasks, in particular, to participate in the historical cooperation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan in various fields after 2017. “In 2019, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Afghan state, and we intend to hold a big scientific conference dedicated to this date.” In his speech, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Uzbekistan Said Shahobuddin Temur said: “I sincerely congratulate all the Afghan and Uzbek peoples on the establishment of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Society. The peoples of these two states drank water from the same river and lived as one family for centuries. Over the past two years, the development of friendly relations between our countries has grown significantly. This has been achieved due to the friendly policy pursued by our esteemed presidents. During the meetings, a wide range of documents aimed at developing relations were signed, and the results are visible today. The new society will take the relations between the two friendly nations to a new level”. The participants of the roundtable discussed the exchange of delegations within the framework of cultural and educational activities between the two countries, the expansion of contacts with compatriots, the organization of tours of art groups, the Uzbek-Afghan Friendship Society expressed confidence that it would make a significant contribution to the organization of culture and folk practical hours and various other exhibitions dedicated to the countries of the world [6].

One of the main tasks of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Society is to further develop cultural and humanitarian ties and preserve the ancient values of the peoples. At the same time, it should be noted that one of the most important directions today is to increase the cultural unity of peoples through people's diplomacy.

*The significance of the establishment of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Society:*

First, for the first time in the history of the two countries to date, the establishment of this society;

Second, in modern times, such cultural and humanitarian work between peoples is not only supported by the two fraternal peoples, but also provides for seminars and trainings twice a year;

Third, one of the urgent tasks today is to address the shortcomings in the field and to encourage efforts to enhance the prestige of cultural values and to further enhance the role of public diplomacy.

One of the main tasks today is to expand ties with the Afghan people by enhancing cultural and educational activities between the two countries. The promotion of cultural ties between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, the promotion of innovations in the field of folk arts and education will contribute to the development of the industry.

On December 24, 2018, the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies in cooperation with the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Society hosted an event entitled “26 years of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.”

I.Irgashev, Said Shohobuddin Temur, A.Mannonov and K.Ishankhodjaev also spoke on issues of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan in political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres. They also spoke about the historical roots, current status and prospects of cooperation based on the principles of good neighborliness and friendship. The event, dedicated to the 26th

anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, was attended by a young researcher S. Buronov, a lecturer at the Department of World Policy and International Relations of the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies. “Work in the field of anthropology, problems and their solutions” [7].

It should be noted that the establishment of an educational center for the training of Afghan citizens will lead to a further increase in education among the Uzbek and Afghan peoples, especially in the process of rebuilding the statehood of Afghan youth, effectively assists in staffing and expertise.

On March 25, 2018, a conference on cooperation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan in the cultural, humanitarian and educational spheres was held, which was attended by the Director of the Center for Training Afghan Citizens O.A. Ruziev said: “During the visit of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani to our country in December 2017, the citizens of Afghanistan under the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan an agreement was signed to establish a training center. In accordance with this agreement, our center was established in a short time. Teachers of linguistics and literature, folklore from Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi, Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbek State University of World Languages, and Termez State University are involved in teaching at the educational institution. For the convenience of students, the center organized classes for the 1st semester of the 2017-2018 academic year in Uzbek and Dari languages. The center has a 700-seat school building, student dormitories for boys and girls, a 100-seat kitchen, and sports fields. At the same time, based on the needs of the Afghan side, curricula for the center in 17 areas of higher education and 16 areas of secondary special, vocational education have been developed in a modular form” [8].

The Sharq Taronalari International Festival is another example of cultural ties. For example, in Samarkand, in the competition program of the 9th International Music Festival “Sharq Taronalari” in 2013, Afghan participants won the first place. In 2017, the 11th International Music Festival of the competition was started by the Afghan ensemble called Safar.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is no exaggeration to say that the formation of people's diplomacy is based on the principle of friendly, close military relations with Afghanistan, readiness for dialogue in resolving any issue. Proximity in the cultural, humanitarian, educational and tourism spheres is the basis for future work. As noted above, the cultural, humanitarian, spiritual, educational and other activities carried out among the peoples will bring the peoples closer to each other from the bottom of their hearts.

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# 26

## **UZBEKISTAN-TAJIKISTAN RELATIONS: PAST AND PRESENT**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*This article provides information about the period from the complicated, contradictory tense relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan beginning from the post-Soviet period to the new stage of relations. Over the centuries, Tajiks and Uzbeks, living side by side, have accumulated considerable experience in their relations. Turning to this experience, identifying all the positive things that connected these two neighboring peoples, are an urgent task for historical science, since it is also necessary for the further development of Tajik-Uzbek relations at the present stage. With a wide study of information and sources, it has identified the benevolent, friendly and bilateral relations of these two nations.*

**KEYWORDS:** Tajiks, Uzbeks, Central Asia, history, relations, culture, diplomacy, strategic partnership agreement.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are considered the two most densely populated countries of Central Asia. Both have borders with Afghanistan and are the main transit countries for the Northern Distribution Network. Both countries had been guided by authoritarian regimes that had not shown the desire to jointly discuss such pressing bilateral issues as energy, transport, border disputes and, most importantly, water resource management for decades. Relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan refer to the relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan: analysts have said that the two countries were [1] "engaged in an undeclared cold war" and had the worst bilateral relations in Central Asia several years ago. However, with the election of Shavkat Mirziyoyev as President of Uzbekistan, Uzbek-Tajik relations, as well as relations between Uzbekistan and its neighbors in Central Asia, have reached a new era of potential [2]. A Joint Statement, Border agreement and visa-free travel signed between Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Emomali Rahmon was a remarkable result. In addition to these 27 strong agreements were signed in the



field of trade, economy, investment, finance, transport, agriculture, water and energy, customs, taxes, education and science, health, tourism, culture, interregional cooperation and combating crime. In order to achieve a friendly settlement and good neighborline the two countries also faced a number of obstacles and it remains a long period of time. To answer of these questions, we need to consider the dynamics of relations between the two countries. The researchers emphasized that the causes of the geopolitical dependence between the countries should be sought in the historical period.

### **UZBEK - TAJIK RELATIONS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE**

The history of Tajik-Uzbek relations can be divided into three major periods:

The February Revolution of 1917 marked the beginning of the first period and the beginning of Soviet power, which was established in Central Asia. The main goal of this revolution in Russia was the modernization of Bukhara (the emirate of Bukhara, the center of this movement) and the Society of Central Asia. It causes enthusiasm and inspiration among the Jadid (Renovationists) that support the movement. At the same time, the ideology of the jadids influenced the ideas of the Tatar "modernists" who entered the emirate of Bukhara after entering the Russian Empire, as well as the views of the Young Turks. The propagandists were young citizens from good families who studied at educational institutions in Istanbul. The leaders of the Jadid, who sought to modernize the civilization of Central Asia, brought closer and more advanced achievements of Western society, believed in the integration of Muslim peoples of all Russia into a single state capable of resisting European powers [3].

The main problem of Tajiks and Uzbeks were reported in the local press as follows [4]: "Historically, these people (Tajiks) were Uzbeks, but under the influence of Persian civilization and literature, they spoke Tajik. We return them their original language and nationality. Tajiks had to immediately switch to Uzbek

and renounce their Tajik language because the socialist invasion of history had predetermined its fate. These slogans and appeals were accompanied by concrete actions of the authorities on the ground, and with such excesses that it caused outrage among some moderate Jadid and Tajik intellectuals united around the group of A.Mukhitdinov. As a result, Mukhitdinov and his supporters appealed to the Centre with the project of Tajikistan. However, the main role in the development and lobbying of a new project was played by young Tajik Bolsheviks Shirinsho Shotemur, Chinor Imamov and Nusratullo Makhsum. Natives of the mountainous regions of Eastern Bukhara and Pamir, they established Soviet power in the field and fought the Basmachi; and Jadids with their “bourgeois” origin and ideas about “united Muslim power” were a totally alien and hostile phenomenon for them. In the early 1920s, two political projects, Tajik and Uzbek, collided in Central Asia, and they were mutually exclusive. Indeed, the implementation of the Small Turkestan project did not give Tajiks a chance for statehood; conversely, the creation of Tajik borders within the Iranian-speaking population and Farsi (which would mean the transfer of Samarkand and Bukhara to the Tajiks) effectively put an end to the Greater Uzbekistan project from the Aral Sea to the Chinese border. The Moscow authorities involved the well-known Russian orientalists V.V. Bartold, A.A. Andreev and E. Bertels, whose conclusion contributed to the development of the Tajik project. So in 1924, the Tajik Autonomous Republic was created as part of the Uzbek SSR. Several more years of bitter confrontation passed before the residents of Khujand and its environs raised mass protests in 1929, as they were unhappy with the forcible translation of local secondary schools into Uzbek. As a result, the Khujand (Leninabad) region was transferred to Tajikistan, the population of which exceeded the million marks. This created the legal basis for the subsequent withdrawal from Uzbekistan as a separate Soviet Socialist Republic. However, Tajikistan failed to achieve the transfer of Samarkand and Bukhara, which remained part of Uzbekistan. Thus, neither the “Tajik project” nor the “Big Uzbekistan” project was fully implemented in practice.

The second period coincided with the period of restructuring and disintegration of the USSR in the subsequent decades of Soviet power. During this period, both in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the transformations of the 1920s were successfully implemented, the mutual influence of approaches to the history and culture of the region increased. For the cultural heritage of the region, there was a struggle with outstanding poets of the 18th and 19th centuries. At the same time, the parties used completely different approaches: all poets and writers living in the region of Uzbekistan, regardless of the language in which they wrote their works, were recognized as "Central Asian" or Uzbek. But the "Tajik project" was taken as a basis and always emphasized the language and ethnicity of a particular cultural or historical person. Behind the scenes, the authorities supported and protected their historians, which was once again confirmed. Thus, in the Soviet era, the struggle between "Tajik" and "Uzbek" projects continued, but in the form of informal competition in the humanitarian field, in the form of a "war of historians".

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, a bloody civil war broke out in Tajikistan. It was considered beginning of the third period of Tajik-Uzbek relations. From the beginning of the Tajik conflict, Tashkent chose a policy of unconditional support for the pro-communist Popular Front (PF) as well as the local Uzbek minority. Support from Uzbekistan played an important role in the military and organizational "survival" of the PF during the most difficult period of the civil war (from May to October 1992). Because Moscow officially declared its neutrality and non-interference in the Tajik conflict. During this period, Uzbekistan acted as an unofficial "springboard" for the implementation of the prototype of the modern "hybrid war" against the opposition coalition government of Tajikistan, which was in power [5]. Tashkent seriously believed that the new Tajik government would select a geopolitical orientation to Uzbekistan but the new Tajik government turned to Moscow for support, which was no more interested in the prospect of the Greater Uzbekistan project than

in the 1920s. With the support of the Russian Federation, the Government of Tajikistan in a fairly short time managed to isolate key commanders and leaders directly associated with Tashkent. By the end of 1993, Uzbekistan was pushed into a secondary role in the Tajik conflict, gradually losing the ability to influence its course and dynamics, as well as the political landscape within Tajikistan.

## **IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN**

The main documents that regulate bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are considered the Treaty on friendship, good neighborliness and cooperation between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, signed on 4 January 1993 in Tashkent [6], as well as the Agreement on eternal friendship between the two republics on 15 June 2000. These documents declare mutual respect for independence and state sovereignty, equality, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and mutual desire to establish partnership economic relations both at the state level and at the level of economic entities. On January 4, 1998, President Emomali Rahmon arrived in Uzbekistan on an official visit at Islam Karimov's invitation. This visit contributed to the activation of Tajik-Uzbek bilateral relations, but unfortunately, it was not able to resolve the fundamental conflicts between the authorities of the two countries. An equally significant event in the history of the two states was the first official visit of Islam Karimov to Dushanbe in June 2000.

At the end of 2001, Emomali Rahmon made a working trip to Uzbekistan [7]. At that time, the joint statement adopted at the end of the meeting outlined the main ways to constructively resolve the entire range of problems existing in Tajik-Uzbek relations. Almost a year later, on October 5, 2002, the Agreement on the state Border between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was signed [8]. Currently, work is underway to finalize the remaining 60 kilometers of disputed territories. Earlier, the first meeting of the Tajik-Uzbek Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Dushanbe. In February 2009,

another important milestone in diplomatic relations between the two countries took place: regular meetings of the intergovernmental commissions on trade and economic cooperation and the delimitation of the state border were held in the capital of Tajikistan [9]. Since 2010, meetings at the intergovernmental levels have been held on a regular basis.

## **NEW PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT OF UZBEK – TAJIK RELATIONS**

The atmosphere in relations between the two neighboring countries has changed since the new Uzbek president, ShavkatMirziyoyev came to power. Both sides decided to end the “Cold war” and lay the foundations for a strategic partnership. On August 17 in 2018, for the first time in 17 years, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon arrived in Uzbekistan on a state visit. The two leaders signed 27 bilateral documents in the field of trade, economy, finance, investment, transport, water and energy, taxes, customs, education and science. The most important of them was the Law "On ratification of the Agreement on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan" by President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on December 19. The document provides for further strengthening of good-neighborly relations and friendship, as well as raising relations between the two countries to a new level. In accordance with the agreement, the parties establish and comprehensively develop long-term and stable strategic partnership relations based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence and mutual trust.

To achieve stated goals two countries had done several projects:

In the field of Policy [10]: On April 25, the Presidents of the two countries, Emomali Rahmon and Shavkat Mirziyoyev, discussed the state and prospects of bilateral Tajik – Uzbek relations in the context of participation in the Forum of International Cooperation "One Belt, One Road" in Beijing. During the meeting, a wide range of cooperation issues, plans and prospects of relations were

discussed. On May 17, the foreign ministries of the two countries exchanged instruments of ratification in Tashkent on the formal completion of the process of concluding the Strategic Partnership Agreement. On October 8, the Speaker of the lower house of the Tajik parliament, Shukurjon Zuhurov met with the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Tashkent. The parties noted the importance of establishing close joint work at the level of committees and inter-parliamentary groups in order to implement the agreements reached at the highest level.

In Military field [11]: In early March, the lower house of the Tajik parliament ratified the agreement between Tashkent and Dushanbe on military-technical cooperation. The document, in particular, provides for joint repair, reconstruction of military equipment, exchange of military delegations and information. At the end of April, the lower house of parliament ratified the Treaty on Certain Sections of the Tajik-Uzbek state Border. This document assumes the demarcation and delimitation of more than 192 kilometers on the border of the two states. At the same time, military intelligence officers of the two countries conducted four-day joint exercises at the Fakhrabad training ground of the Tajik Defense Ministry. In August, regular Tajik-Uzbek military exercises were held in the territory of the two countries: in the north of Tajikistan and in the Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan.

In the field of Transport: Uzbekistan has simplified the rules of transit traffic through its territory for Tajik trucks: the period during which trucks must leave the country has been extended to five days instead of three days from the date of entry. Also in January, the railway companies of the two countries agreed to provide mutual discounts in 2019. On March 3, a new checkpoint called 'Babatag' became operational which connects the Tajik Hissar with the Uzbek Uzun. On April 1, Uzbek Airlines offered Tajik passengers convenient connections from the line Tashkent – Dushanbe – Tashkent. In June, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan mutually reduced the rates of insurance duties on the entry of vehicles of one

state into the territory of the other. Citizens of the two countries now pay 15-20 somoni instead of \$52 for entering the territory of the neighboring republic by car. From October a bus service was opened from the city of Kokand in Uzbekistan to the Tajik city of Shaidon in the Asht district of Sughd region.

In the field of Investment: Uzbek investors concluded agreements on investing their funds in the economy of Tajikistan. Tajik entrepreneurs began to set up their own business in Uzbekistan: in the city of Denau, Surkhandarya region, a company called SomonTuron CJSC engaged in the production of potato chips and corn flakes was established. Later, in February, the joint Tajik-Uzbek enterprise Orien-Uzagro was launched in Tajikistan and it will be engaged in the construction of a plant in Tajikistan for the production of agricultural machinery and equipment based on parts and spare parts produced in Uzbekistan. In March, the Tajik Aluminum Company, together with the Uzbek Krantas, began to produce trucks. The TALCO-KRANTAS special equipment plant intended to produce more than 100 vehicles, which will first satisfy the needs of its subsidiaries – TALCO Resource and TALCO Gold, working in the mining industry. The Tajik-Uzbek joint venture "Urg-Taj" was opened in the Free Economic Zone "Urgut" of the Samarkand region. It was assumed that this enterprise will annually produce polypropylene yarn for carpet products totaling \$2.9 million. On December 12, the Tajik company Avesto Group and the Uzbek company Artel Engineering and Management signed an investment agreement on the construction and commissioning of the joint venture Artel Avesto Electronics in Dushanbe. The company will produce household appliances: water heaters, vacuum cleaners, televisions and washing machines.

In the field of Trade: On April 3, a regular meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was held. The parties, in particular, agreed to increase trade turnover and create joint ventures for the production of light industry goods. At the end of November, the customs authorities of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed a

protocol that involves the exchange of preliminary information on goods and vehicles. According to the statistics department of Tajikistan, the volume of Tajik-Uzbek bilateral trade turnover in January-November of this year increased by almost 24% compared to the same period in 2018.

In the field of Culture and Sport: The head of the Surkhandarya region of Uzbekistan, Bahodir Pulatov, invited the chairman of the Khatlon region of Tajikistan, Kurbon Khakimzod, to celebrate Navruz together. And the champion of Tajikistan in football-Istiqlol (Dushanbe) - on the eve of the opening of the new season, invited Uzbek clubs Aktepa (Tashkent), Surkhan (Termez), Dynamo (Samarkand) to friendly games in the city of Khujand. In mid-April, People's Artist of Tajikistan Sairam Isoyeva received the award of the Creative Union of Cinema Workers of Uzbekistan for her contribution to the development of Uzbek cinema. At the end of July, the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan Friendship Society was formed in Tashkent, and the Minister of Water Resources of Uzbekistan Shavkat Khamraev was elected as its chairman. At the meeting on this occasion, the participants stressed the need to strengthen relations between the two states through public diplomacy – the organization of joint projects in the fields of culture, art, science and education. On November 11-14, Tajikistan hosted the Days of Culture of Uzbekistan. Uzbek delegation of 50 people headed by the Minister of Culture of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saifullayev paid a visit. In addition to this, Uzbekistan has provided humanitarian assistance to Tajikistan in the amount of about \$5 million [12]. According to official statistics of Tajikistan, in January-November of this year, the republic received humanitarian aid totaling about \$50 million.

## **CONCLUSION**

In recent years, there have been drastic changes in bilateral Tajik-Uzbek relations, which we can conditionally call "transitional" (from cold to warm) bilateral relations. The new history of Uzbek-Tajik relations after gaining independence includes more problematic and sharp pages than the successes in



cooperation. Uzbek-Tajik relations of all bilateral relations in the Central Asian region, until recently, were the most acute and prone to conflict. The active regional policy of the new leadership of Uzbekistan is supported by other countries in the region. This can serve to develop mutually beneficial economic relations on a long-term basis and, as a result, significantly strengthen the economy of the region. The openness of Tashkent's foreign policy increases the interest in Uzbekistan by its main geopolitical partners, which will help them fight for the final geopolitical choice of Tashkent. This struggle promises great economic benefits and political dividends to the Republic, so it is unlikely that Tashkent will eventually rely on one of the "Centers of power". The rapid warming of bilateral relations, which covers an ever-growing sphere of human activity, allows us to make assumptions about their close and long-term aspects. History, shared cultural and spiritual values, as well as centuries-old traditions of mutual respect and good-neighborliness have laid a solid foundation and basic principles of relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These principles impose equal responsibility on our countries, and Uzbekistan, for its part, is always determined to consistently develop a broad partnership based on mutual trust with its closest neighbor.

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# 27

## SPECIFICS OF EU STRATEGY FOR CENTRAL ASIA

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*This article discusses the relationship between the European Union and the Central Asian region and the principles of their implementation. Regional cooperation will be based on the EU's strategy for Central Asia. The factors that led to the development of the new strategy, significant changes in regional policy, the priorities of the strategy and the possibility of their implementation in the countries of the region will be explored. The common problems for the region and the role of the EU strategy in overcoming them will be studied. It also analyzes the need for EU experience in*

*strengthening regional integration, taking into account the different levels of development of the countries of the region.*

**KEYWORDS:** EU strategy, transformation processes, regional integration, conflict of interests.

## **FUNDAMENTALS OF COOPERATION**

The Central Asian states are developing countries in an important strategic and transit region. The downside of the region's location is that none of them have direct access to the world's oceans.

The region borders two major powers, Russia and China, and is a geopolitically conflicting region. In addition, the United States is the third largest foreign player in the Central Asian region, despite its remoteness. The fourth external participant in the region is the European Union, whose position differs significantly from the rest. Because the EU has developed a number of programs and initiatives to support the economic development and regional integration of Central Asian countries based on its experience. That is why the cooperation between the two countries has a broad and solid foundation.

The EU's cooperation with Central Asia dates back to the initial period of independence of the region. The first initiative was a large-scale cooperation program called "Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States", TACIS.

The TACIS program was designed for countries that broke away from the former Soviet Union, and in turn included countries in the Central Asian region. The program was aimed at promoting economic and political reforms in the newly independent states of the region, strengthening liberal and democratic principles, and the transition to a free market and the rule of law. The program

ran from 1991 to 2006 and involved more than a billion dollars in various projects.

In 2007, the EU adopted its first strategy for individual Central Asian countries, entitled “The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership”. It focused on cooperation in areas such as the environment and energy, as well as security, human rights and the rule of law. Undoubtedly, the bilateral dialogue between the regions has expanded since then, and the results have been reflected in practice. In particular, the annual meetings between the Ministers of the European Union and the Central Asian states and the EU-Central Asia Permanent Dialogue on Human Rights were organized. These forums have been successful enough to analyze partnerships in specific areas and find solutions to existing problems.

## **FACTORS BEHIND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW STRATEGY**

Recent political developments in Central Asia have opened up new opportunities for advancing the EU-Central Asia partnership. These changes have led to the EU’s political recognition of the region’s reform process and its support for modernization.

The new momentum of regional cooperation was reflected in the first informal summit of Central Asian leaders in Astana in March 2018, which strengthened the relevance of the EU’s experience in developing cooperative solutions to common problems. Renewed efforts to develop European-Asian relations have increased the EU’s interest in sustainable cooperation. The strengthening of relations between Central Asia and Afghanistan has set new parameters for the EU’s efforts to bring peace to the country. New initiatives by some Central Asian states to play a more active role in global and regional issues

will improve opportunities for cooperation with the European Union on common goals.

The EU's new strategy for Central Asia, adopted in 2019, is entitled "The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership". The strategy also focuses on strengthening existing areas of bilateral cooperation and establishing new ones. Many factors contributed to the development of the new strategy, including changes in its priorities.

There have been many changes in and around the region over the past period, with some issues coming to the forefront and some losing their relevance. Such changes in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres in the countries of the region, as a result of which the EU leadership has studied in detail, have taken these factors into account in the development of a new strategy.

Although the priorities of 2007 have not lost their relevance, the new strategy should take into account the latest developments in the region. After 2016, Uzbekistan's foreign policy and good neighborliness opened the door to regional cooperation, which was a major impetus for further strengthening relations with the European Union.

It should be noted that the attention and influence of Central Asian states has recently increased to help stabilize Afghanistan. The EU's global strategy for foreign policy and political security, adopted in 2016, also served as another factor in the development of a new strategy for Central Asia.

The plan to develop a new strategy began in 2017. At that time, the Council of the European Union asked the High Representative and the Commission to submit it by the end of 2019. This was followed by a series of consultations with Central Asian governments, with the new strategy adopted in May 2019 and initially presented during the annual meeting of the High Representative and the foreign ministers of the five Central Asian countries in July in Bishkek.

“Central Asia has always played an important role because of its history, culture and role in the dialogue between East and West. Today, the region is even more strategic”, said Federica Mogherini, a former EU foreign policy chief [1].

## **SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN REGIONAL POLICY**

The change in the EU's regional strategy is due to Brussels' reassessment of its capabilities in Central Asia. Perhaps the EU now realizes that it no longer wants to manage regional processes independently, and that it needs to work with leading regional actors on a number of issues to address its logistical and economic challenges.

In the new context, it is not in Europe's interest to actively interfere in the political life of Central Asia on the issue of “human rights” and to oppose the policies of Russia and China in the region. Such an action would undermine the existing regional order, which the EU could offer nothing in return. Because CSTO and SCO guarantee the security of the region, and the Eurasian Economic Union will create a favorable transit zone. The European Union must take these factors into account.

The most important changes in EU policy [2]:

1. Denial of attempts to aggressively restructure the political system of the region. Assist existing regional governments in development and security.
2. To take into account the Eurasian Economic Union, the CSTO, the SCO and China's “One Belt, One Road” initiative as regional policy actors, as they have often been overlooked in previous EU strategic documents.
3. Refusal to establish exclusive relations with the European Union in exchange for damage to projects of other countries. For example, the strategy states that the expanded partnership agreements between the European Union and the countries of the region do not contradict the Eurasian Economic Union.

The EU's old and new strategies for Central Asia have similarities in the following areas [3]:

- Human rights;
- Democracy;
- Education;
- Economic development;
- Energy and transport;
- Ecology and water management;
- Regional security;
- Intercultural communication.

The priorities of the EU's old and new strategies for Central Asia can also be analyzed as follows [4]:

<p><b>The 2007 strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong commitment to new partnerships.</li> <li>• More general and comprehensive structure.</li> <li>• Descriptive nature of the strategy.</li> <li>• General description of the tools for implementing the strategy.</li> <li>• Afghanistan is a major threat to regional security.</li> <li>• The budget is included in the strategy as planned (70% of the funds are allocated for bilateral projects, and 30% for regional cooperation).</li> </ul>	<p><b>The 2019 strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work hard to strengthen partnerships.</li> <li>• More detailed and defined structure.</li> <li>• Analytical nature of the strategy.</li> <li>• Specific initiatives in each section.</li> <li>• Take into account new security threats (cybersecurity, etc.), including ISIS.</li> <li>• More budget without details; Priority areas for funding will be further identified.</li> </ul>
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## THE MAIN GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE STRATEGY

The EU's strategy for Central Asia reflects strong forms of mutually beneficial cooperation. The main goal of the strategy is to support the partners in Central Asia, to support their reforms and tasks for development, as well as to apply the tools that are in line with the European experience and the capabilities of the countries of the region to achieve these goals.

One of the EU's main goals for the new strategy is to strengthen security in Central Asia. In addition, the union is interested in expanding trade, including cooperation with energy suppliers in the region.

The strategy emphasizes the importance of the regions for each other, the need to intensify economic and security cooperation with Central Asian countries for the further development and integration of the European Union as a single organization. According to Yuriy Qutbiddinov, an expert at the Center for Economic Research of the Republic of Uzbekistan, due to the diversity of economies in Central Asia, the EU will cooperate in three main areas [5]:

- creation of transport links, energy and digital networks, strengthening of human interaction;
- proposing partnerships between Central Asian countries and organizations;
- development of sustainable financing using various financial instruments.

He noted that the new strategy explains the importance of strengthening cooperation with the countries of the Central Asian region by the following factors [6]:

- strategic and convenient geographical location of Central Asia connecting Europe with Asia;
- the large share of Central Asian countries in energy imports to the European Union;
- market potential of the region with a population of over 70 million;
- the European Union's interest in regional security.

The EU strategy focuses on three interrelated and mutually reinforcing priorities [7]: The EU will work with Central Asian countries to share and address issues that affect their socio-economic goals and security, and to increase their ability to embrace reform and modernization. The EU promotes



democracy, human rights and the rule of law, intensifies cooperation in fulfilling Paris' climate commitments and addressing transnational environmental issues, and strengthens partnerships in the field of migration.

The EU will work with Central Asian countries to unlock their significant growth potential through the development of a competitive private sector and the development of a healthy and open investment climate. It focuses on young people and helps them develop skills, research and innovation. It will work to remove structural barriers to regional trade and investment, support the membership of other Central Asian countries in the World Trade Organization, and develop sustainable ties.

Cooperate with Central Asian countries to strengthen the European Partnership system, intensify political dialogue and open up opportunities for civil society participation. It will be a leading development partner in the region. This will strengthen social diplomacy to emphasize the benefits of the partnership for the region and its citizens.

## **IMPLEMENTATION POTENTIAL OF THE STRATEGY**

The successful implementation of the strategy depends on the response and commitment of our multilateral Central Asian partners. And there are some important and specific opportunities for inter-regional relations. If they are taken into account, this factor can further strengthen the partnership.

The first of these opportunities is the EU's open and inclusive approach to cooperation. The strategy states that the European Union is ready to join forces with Central Asian countries as well as with external actors to achieve common goals in the areas of security, interdependence, environmental sustainability and many others. Its position will allow Central Asian states to cooperate more easily with the European Union without compromising its relations with other partners.

The second aspect is the EU's ability to meet unique challenges that other partners cannot offer, and to help develop effective mechanisms for regional cooperation to strengthen integration. The European Union can share its experience as a great example of a world-recognized model of regional integration. Many of the institutional, legal, economic, and other tools put into practice by the EU can be used in the regional cooperation structures that have emerged in Central Asia. The European Union highly values the important trust of the governments of the countries of the region as a competent mediator and advisor to help overcome and manage their diversity.

The third is the EU's ability to raise regulatory issues. These include social justice, gender equality, human and civil rights, democratization and the rule of law, as well as border issues. The EU's decision on these issues can be welcomed by many non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and some political parties and movements, and youth associations. Governments may not be keen on this, but in some cases, they may be interested, especially if such cooperation is done through financial incentives and technical assistance programs.

Fourth, we need to take into account the specific nature of the European Union. It is a union of nation-states that is neither a state nor an international organization. While this aspect is not as important to the public in Central Asia, it may in fact be an important element of the EU's relations with the countries of the region today. The European Union is a nation-state structure in which national interests do not take precedence. Because other external participants put their national interests first in bilateral cooperation, the European Union is an organization united by common interests and values for the common good.

And last but not least, the Central Asian states have undergone large-scale and promising reforms, which are already yielding positive results at the regional level. Cooperation with the European Union will be especially effective in these changing times.

## **EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE IN SOLVING PROBLEMS**

It is known that the positions of the Central Asian states on different issues differ. The new EU strategy provides an in-depth analysis of these differences. Because it is very important that all countries in the region be fully involved in the implementation of the strategy. That is why the European Union seeks to deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Central Asian countries.

The fact that there are significant differences between the Central Asian states does not mean that they do not have common problems and interests. One of them is the issue of ecology, which is a common problem for all. All countries in the region have certain problems with environmental sustainability, so there is a need for international cooperation in this area. In addition, they have common security interests, the most important of which is terrorism. It should be noted that drug trafficking is a common problem, although governments in different countries pay different attention to this issue. It is in these areas that the EU can take a common regional approach.

The countries of the region, which have such common interests, have not yet reached the level of integration, but have re-focused on cooperation. This trend is reflected in the EU's strategy. However, there are still many obstacles for countries to achieve a high level of regional cooperation. However, the EU can be a key partner in overcoming existing barriers in the region. Examples of such partnerships are exchange of experience, mediation and cooperation in joint regional projects.

Among the major new threats, hybrid risk and cyberattacks are serious problems. The European Union is ready to share its knowledge and information on hybrid risk prevention, as well as cybersecurity. Brussels also plans to promote the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment as additional positive outcomes, such as anti-radicalization efforts.

The unrest in neighboring Afghanistan, which borders Central Asia, is also a long-standing and important issue for the region. Today, developing cooperation with Afghanistan is even more important. The European Commission hopes that Kabul's participation in joint programs and projects in the region will help improve the situation in Afghanistan. These include the establishment of border controls between Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

The European Union believes that Central Asian countries need new models of economic development and diversification. These include developing the private sector, improving the investment climate, reducing inequality and accelerating the transition to a green and harmless economy [1].

Brussels promises to support the accession of all Central Asian states to the World Trade Organization. Today, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have not joined the organization. The European Commission also wants to mark the goods sold in Central Asia with the country of origin, which applies not only to EU goods, but also to domestic products.

## **CONCLUSION**

The European Union seeks to deepen ties with Central Asian countries, respecting the aspirations and interests of each of its Central Asian partners and recognizing the need to differentiate between them. The EU is ready to work with third countries and international organizations to support the overall goals of the strategy. Bilateral enhanced partnership and cooperation agreements with individual Central Asian states will form the basis of cooperation with the European Union. These joint contacts will help to mobilize the EU's comprehensive policies and tools to take the EU-Central Asia partnership to the next level, as well as to develop development cooperation and assistance programs.

The European Union is keen to see Central Asia develop as a region of cooperation and communication based on rules, not through competition and

debate. The European Union is committed to investing in new opportunities and growing potential for cooperation in the region.

Regional cooperation helps Central Asian states to better manage their interdependence, address their weaknesses and common problems, unlock and increase their economic growth potential, influence in international affairs, and assert their independence and uniqueness. It should be able to survive. The definition of ways to develop voluntary forms of regional cooperation is up to the Central Asian states themselves, and the European Union only supports these processes, based on its own experience of the benefits of integration mechanisms.

EU-Central Asia Dialogue, EU-funded regional programs to promote cooperative solutions at the regional level in areas such as the environment, water, climate change and sustainable energy, education, the rule of law, sustainable connectivity, drug policy, security and prevention of radicalization, border management, and facilitation of regional trade.

At a time that is mutually beneficial and based on existing challenges, dialogue and cooperation programs with Central Asian states can be extended to neighboring countries, such as the Eastern Partnership countries, Afghanistan, and others. Central Asia and Afghanistan have become important areas for each other, given their common interests in security, stability, water use, and effective relations. Involving Afghanistan in relevant EU-Central Asia dialogue meetings and regional programs, as well as supporting more trilateral cooperation projects with Afghanistan's foreign partners in Central Asia, has become a priority.

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