

THE SECURITY ISSUES IN THE CENTRAL ASIA AND THE  
GEOSTRATEGIC ROLE OF KAZAKHSTAN IN THIS REGION

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the internal and external security challenges in Central Asia and the geostrategic role of Kazakhstan in this region. Living in a globalized world, this region needs the integration and regionalization of the post-Soviet states, which by combining their forces will be able to hold back and hold, as well as to combat these external and internal security that our regulators face such as drug trafficking, extremism, separatism, ecological and other social challenges.

**Key words:** *Central Asia, security, external challenge, internal challenge, integration, Kazakhstan, geostrategic, organizations.*

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the post-Soviet space was formed independent states: Tadjikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan. As other countries in the world, the Central Asia is attacked by security alerts. It has a complex geopolitical, economical, social characteristics. Its complexity lies in non-standard forms of challenges and dangers. Security challenges are conventionally divided into two types: internal challenge and external challenge. They are considered a destabilizing factor, an

imbalance factor in the economy, social inequality against the background of increasing corruption, water problems and the reduction in some areas of land suitable for agriculture, poverty. The external challenges include those threats that come from outside the country, and it consists: drug trafficking, religious extremism, terrorism, arms smuggling. Internal challenge is the opposite side to external challenge to the security.

Drug trafficking which is considered as external challenge is still one of the most important as well as one of the pressing issues in the Central Asian countries. Since the collapse of the USSR, the drug business has had a serious impact on the socio-economic development of the Central Asian region. This circumstance is connected with the geographic proximity of the region to Afghanistan. In turn, it is one of the largest centers for the production and distribution of narcotic substances. One of the negative effect economy suffers from drug trafficking: the shadow distribution of income is a serious obstacle to the creation and functioning of a competitive economic system.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, the drug business is interested in maintaining political and social instability in the region, and, consequently, is a real security threat in the broadest sense of the word.

Afghan drug trafficking, drug dealers are beneficial when religious extremism and terrorism spread in the Central Asian region. They are trying activate religious extremism and there are a number of reasons: distracting the attention of the power structures of the region; gives an opportunity to join forces with terrorist organizations in order to destabilize the situation in the region. The reality of such cooperation is even more probable during the period of political elites' change in some countries of Central Asia, which may lead to the emergence of representatives of the drug trafficking in the highest structures of state power.<sup>2</sup>

There are several terrorist activities in Central Asia: Hizb-ut-Tahrir al Islami and the militant Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and civil war in Tajikistan as the main source of terrorism in Central Asia. In Central Asia and Russian Federation, Hizb-ut-Tahrir is a terroristic and extremist organization and in Arabic this word means the Islamic Liberation War and was founded in 1953 in Palestine. Their main goal is the establishment of the Caliphate, where it will only be guided by Muslim laws and shariats. There are several ways which use terrorist in order to attract other people to their radical, extremist organizations.

-Many religious scholars assert that terrorists use religion for their own purposes, they do not correctly interpret the meaning of the text in sacred books, like the Qoran. Religion is a powerful weapon in the hands of terrorists. "Muslim Brotherhood" is the phrase of terrorists more often used, this word gives a sense of the unity and brotherhood of all Muslims.

-And the second powerful tool which use terrorist is a mass media and social media. They usually attract people who do not have education, that is, nonintellectual people through various videos in websites, social media services where Muslims are killed in battle against "non-Muslim" people and use special sounds in video in order to zombie people. People who were in prison, these people are an important puzzle in the game. It is believed that these people are very aggressive and cruel people, ready for anything to achieve their targets. People who were in prison do not know about human rights and Declaration of human rights.

-There are discrimination of women right and children right. Women are isolated from society. They do not have the right to receive education and are not allowed to work in public places. Women and men do not have equal rights as in democratic countries. The role of a woman being a wife and giving birth, and also raising children. Without the permission of the husband, they should not leave the house. Only women doctors can go out without the permission of her husband. They are not allowed to drive vehicles. Thus, terrorist is a danger phenomena.

To date, a new security challenge has emerged for the Central Asian countries, a threat of destabilization in the event of a change of power in politically fragile Central Asian states. This threat has acquired real outlines after a wave of "color revolutions" that swept across the post-Soviet space. And also the absence of elite competition typical for many post-Soviet states, as well as for Kazakhstan and Russia, remain a serious challenge on the way to creating a democratic and predictable system for changing power. In conditions when loyalty becomes more important than professionalism, corruption begins to turn into a system-forming factor. Democracy is not a panacea for the emergence of people in leading positions who are not suitable for their office, but the underestimation of the importance of developing democratic institutions is no less dangerous. And social and economical challenges lies in the social sphere. Suffice it to mention the fight against poverty, national projects in Russia, pension reforms in Kazakhstan, etc

Thus, improving the political system, ensuring political continuity, narrowing the gap between power and society are similar problems for Kazakhstan and for Russia, directly related to security.<sup>3</sup>

Ways to solve these challenges of security in the Central Asian region: integration or cooperation of the post-Soviet states.

#### Regional cooperation

There are regional organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) , Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which operates in post-Soviet These associations pursue different goals, they fight against corruption, extremism, terrorism and so on. Attention is drawn to the fact that the

management bodies of organizations are also similar. It seems that the division of the "zones of responsibility" between the CSTO, the CIS and the SCO contributes to a more effective solution of security problems in Central Asia.

In the CIS there are three security projects in Central Asia: a unified air defense system, peacekeeping and the CIS Antiterrorist Center. Meanwhile, the Regional Antiterrorist Structure was also established in the SCO, and the CSTO has a common air defense system.

The Shanghai organization reflects the security strategy in Central Asia not only in Russia, but also in China. Initially, the organization had as its goal the fight against "three kinds of evil": separatism, extremism and terrorism. Gradually, these problems have lost relevance for most countries in Central Asia.

In particular, the SCO is developing a project to create an Energy Club, which should become an integral part of the security system in the space of Central Asia. The organization also makes active efforts to combat drug trafficking and drug smuggling from Afghanistan. However, the solution of such a large-scale problem is hardly possible with the efforts of one organization.

Unlike the SCO, which combines both economic and military-political functions, the CSTO is a kind of security institution, which is responsible for both traditional and new threats and challenges in Central Asia. In addition to solving border problems and preventing foreign policy threats, the CSTO solves such major problems as the fight against drug trafficking, for which the special operation "Channel" is carried out every year.

The United States, for which Central Asia is a strategically important region, is also interested in maintaining stability on its territory. The strategy of US security in Central Asia has been the deployment of NATO military forces in the Central Asian states after September 11, 2001. Although Central Asia is the center of the intersection of geopolitical interests of the US, Russia and China, these states understand the danger of destabilizing the situation in the region and, albeit separately from each other, are taking steps to address security problems in Central Asia.

Regional cooperation in Central Asia in general has very weak institutional framework and in the stage of forming. But prospects of economic and political cooperation in Central Asia, speed and scale of these processes will depend on the readiness of nations to work together in the contract regional projects, to carry out the proper reforms and introduce the forms and methods of economic regulation adopted in the world practice, as well as on the political will of the government of the member states.

### **Multilateral Cooperation**

There are also multilateral cooperation. It is well known that Russia, US and China declared their support peace and stability in Central Asia and

support regional cooperation and these declaration of course is welcomed in Central Asian countries. But, there are some contradictions between them. Russia traditionally view the Central Asia states as being within its sphere of influence and does not wish to see nether China or US become deeply involved there; China expresses understanding of Russia's strong role in the region and at the same time like Russian against US strong military presence in the region, because it considers this as endangering the safety of its own north-west region.

In the last years it is growing role of another actor – the EU organization. It is well known that since 1991 EU's the main instrument in conducting strategy in CIS has been, the “Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation” which also signed with all the republics of the former Soviet Union. The European Union initialed the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in May 1996 and with Uzbekistan in June 1996. In July 1999 the agreement became fully operational after ratification by all the 15 EU member states and European Parliament. EU Tajikistan bilateral trade relations are governed by an Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters, pending ratification of the PCA signed with Tajikistan in 2004. The PCA signed with Turkmenistan in 1998 has been ratified by the EU in 2009. All five Central Asian countries are beneficiaries of the EU's Generalised System of Preferences. These agreements do not extend any prospect for admission to the EU and simply serve to effect, on a bilateral, European interest in Central Asia.

The European Commission has developed a representation network in the Central Asia countries, constituted of EC Delegations, including Almaty, Bishkek, Dushanbe (the last two having a non-resident Head of Delegation). In addition, like in Caucasian region in Baku, the Commission has established “Europa Houses” in Tashkent, which constitute a central point of reference in the country for information about Tacis and other programmes. But, some problem in the EU, who had not yet a unified strategy toward the region and the economic and political interests of the large European states in Central Asia differ and diverge. This is both to the internal peculiarities of European politics and to the general geopolitical states situation, including the relations of the EU with the US and Russia. At the time, the events of 2000 and 2001 show that the dominant theme in the relations between Central Asia and Europe has become the problem of regional security as well as the struggle against terrorism and the drug trade. One of the reasons is that the EU countries are main consumer of Afghan illegal drug production.

At EU presidency programme 2007 Germany initiated new programme on increase political partnership with Central Asia. It was accepted new EU strategy toward Central Asia in 2007–2013 with emphasizing on increasing political and economic partnership and the strategy was welcomed by Central

Asian nations. It is also growing EU interest to Central Asia in the energy partnership, at the same time Central Asian nations also try to find alternative corridors for export of the energy resources and economic relations could be one of the important aspects of mutual cooperation in coming years.

At present the EU imported 50% energy and after several years EU dependence on the import will increase on 70%. Main provider of these energy is Russia, but after the Gas War between Russia and Ukraine, Brussels tries to decrease dependence on Russian delivery of energy and active finding alternative sources and Central Asia and Caspian region have huge potential of it. In February 2009 representative of the European Commission on energy Taradellas Espuni mentioned that the EU hope that after 2013 natural gas could be exported from Central Asia to Europe through Azerbaijan and Turkey and the EU is ready to invest trillion Euros on decrease dependence on Russian.<sup>5</sup>

The Kazakhstan Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010 will be an important event for the emerging relationship between the European Union, OSCE and Central Asia.

Cooperation with NATO has become for Central Asia nations important task and NATO delegations of different levels repeatedly visited Central Asia republics, among them ones including the NATO Secretary General H. Solana in 1997, Lord Robertson in 2000 and 2003, Jaap De Hoop Scheffer in 2004. Central Asia leaders also participated in the different NATO summits including, celebration of the NATO 50th – year jubilee in USA 1999, the NATO summits in Prague in November 2002.

Central Asia nations acknowledge NATO as an international military organization capable of ensuring peace in different region of the planet and NATO's partnership programme to be a means of strengthening its independence and sovereignty, and stability in Central Asia.

At the Declaration of NATO's summit in Riga (Latvia) in November 2006, mention that contributing to peace and stability in Afghanistan is NATO's key priority. The problem of reconstruction and peace in Afghanistan is critical aspects for interest of US, Russia, China, the EU and also for neighboring countries including Central Asian nations. In 2008 at the summit of NATO in Bucharest Uzbek President suggested to rebuild "6 + 2" platform on Afghanistan and with adding their NATO transform it to "6 + 3". But, it is also necessary include to the meeting the EU, CSTO, SCO, India and Japan, whose economy is growing and expanding support to Afghanistan. Only in boarder cooperation and with active participation of Central Asian nations could be solving the problem in Afghanistan. Secure and economic stable Afghanistan is very important for future of Central Asia.

The EU and NATO declared that both have a clear interest in stable, prosperous and democratic states in Central Asia. Both also have a major need to cooperate with these states in terms of security (regional and global) and

energy. At the same time, NATO and the EU are facing common challenges in their relations with these states. They have to define a perspective that is appealing to governments that do not intend to join either of the organizations, but are expressing a degree of interest in limited cooperation in a number of specific areas. NATO and the EU have also been faced with the difficulty of finding a suitable balance between, on the one hand, the strategic and economic interests of their member states and, on the other, the long-term objective of promoting fundamental political reform in the states of the region. Furthermore, they have had to reconcile regional and bilateral approaches to take into account the highly divergent interests of very different states.

Also it is growing competition from other actors, notably Russia and US, Russia and China, emerging India (in Afghanistan) with whom cooperation may sometimes seem more attractive and less conditional. More specifically, with regard to the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region, it appears particularly important for the EU and NATO to have clear and transparent objectives in order to avoid misunderstandings or suspicions. The West's action in this sphere is often perceived in the states of the region as an aggressive policy, which seeks to bring about regime change. The EU and NATO should avoid listing non-negotiable demands, and rather place emphasis on a step-by-step, flexible approach, developing at the same time, if possible, a dialog both with the authorities and with independent groups and civil society. It would also be useful to re-evaluate the impact of conditionality and sanctions, and to adopt a coordinated, consistent policy.

Central Asia partnership with EU, NATO and other international organization is important for promotion the stability and security of the Central Asia nations and to assist in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. At the same time stabilization and restore economy of Afghanistan is key objectives. Presently NATO is leading ISAF, but the situation in Afghanistan very complicated.

There are many problems among different actors on Afghanistan, including NATO, EU, OSCE and other international organizations, because they different approaches and understanding of the situation.

From Central Asian perspectives for US, Russia, China, the EU and international institutions the best to have strong dialog and cooperation in Central Asia based on bilateral and multilateral relations. Central Asian nations has strong bilateral relations with these major powers and the republics is take part at the different organizations – OCS, SCO, NATO (PfP programme), where interests is different, but coordination and transparent is crucial and needed cooperation between these organizations in security, economic and transport projects.

## **Conclusion**

Cooperation of regional and international organizations, including the EU, NATO and partnership with Central Asia countries and regional organization is important for promotion the stability and security of the Central Asia nations and to assist in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. At the same time stabilization and restore economy of Afghanistan is key objectives.

Central Asia needs integration and close cooperation with developed and developing countries in order to cope and combat external and internal challenges to security. Challenges of the 21-century require a broader partnership and cooperation. Future prospects of multilateral regional and international cooperation in Central Asia will depend on correlations of national, regional and global interests. It is necessary first of all the strong dialogues between Central Asian republics itself. All Central Asian geopolitical, political, economic, cultural and security challenges are connected and solution could come together. Future regional cooperation, strong international partnership should promote more stability, economic reforms and democratization to the region and beyond.

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS OF CHINA WITH CENTRAL ASIA AT THE PRESENT STAGE

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### **Abstract**

China and Central Asia have been closely interacted in history and today that relationship has started to re-emerge. My research will analyze the development of the close cooperation which has re-emerged in the 1990s and made a stir in the today's century. Domestic and internal issues, as well as political and economic considerations are discussed in the search for an explanation for current relations and future expectations. Even though China has emerged as one of the world's most powerful states, its dependence on the