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Kazakhstan as a Center of Gravity in Central Asia in the Clash between the USA and China

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Abstract. For centuries, Central Asia has been a crossroads of Eurasia, or "the intersection of East and West," making it an "interesting" region. It was the confluence point of four civilizations, which were controlled and controlled by the peoples of Central Asia.

Today, Central Asia has become an arena of competition and rivalry between the great powers (regional and non-regional), which affects the relations between them, as well as the strength of the balance, thus influencing the "international structure.

"Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Central Asia has been undergoing a new stage of geopolitical transformation. Some experts say that Central Asia is returning to the Great Game of the nineteenth century - only with new players".

The main external players – Russia, the U.S., the EU, and China - have declared their support for peace, stability, and regional cooperation in Central Asia - declarations that are, of course, welcome in the region. But there is also some friction between them.

All Central Asian countries identify Russia as a major foreign policy priority and recognize its interests in Central Asia. The Russian Federation, for its part, also claims the importance of developing relations with the countries of the region.

However, due to several objective and subjective factors, relations between Russia and the Central Asian republics face some difficulties. Nevertheless, relations between Central Asia and Russia, despite some differences in their positions and assessments, are quite pragmatic and encompass political, economic, military, educational, and cultural cooperation.

Keywords: regional and non-regional, civilizations, geopolitical interests, Russia, EU, China, Central Asia.

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Introduction

Today, the trajectory of Central Asia's development has changed. The region is at the key node of the transformation of the geopolitical structure, and this transformation trend weakens the influence of Western countries on the trend of its development.

The continuing influence of Russia and China, which is Central Asia's best choice for trade partners and loans, is gradually becoming Central Asia's main economic, political, and security partners, with their unique status [1].

Central Asia is becoming increasingly "less hospitable" to the influence of the United States. This, in addition to a host of systemic problems, has resulted from two important regional developments:

- The first is the peace settlement in Afghanistan and the expected gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Kabul.

- The second, the growing economic and political influence of China.

This, in turn, gave Central Asian powers a better alternative to American influence. China's involvement further empowered the region politically and met its economic needs.

The second reason challenges Washington's influence in the region; it brings the U.S. to the forefront in containing China's growing influence and turns Central Asia into a strategic forward base against Beijing. Given Washington's growing concern about China's influence, Secretary of State M. Pompeo visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in February 2020.

Pompeo visited the region, five years after Secretary of State of the period D. Kerry stressed "the need for greater regional coordination and accelerated progress, to advance stability and prosperity in the region" [2].

Despite Pompeo's commitment (namely his recent engagement with the region, in terms of investments, economic development, and humanitarian aid, amounting to about \$6.8 million, to combat COVID-19), the United States has been unable to provide long-term services to the region.

Deteriorating economic conditions, in the states of the region, during COVID-19, require long-term international economic support, which the United States is unable to provide, and even if it does provide support, it is unlikely to compete with the major economic opportunities offered by China in its ambitious BRI, which is likely to receive comprehensive regional support in Central Asia after COVID.

The departure of the United States from the region is likely to increase radicalism, human rights violations by authoritarian regimes, and political instability in light of the region's problems with corruption and poor governance. This, in turn, could provide China with many opportunities to increase its influence in the region.

For China, the trade war with the United States requires access to the European market, through its \$4 trillion BRI, the backbone of which, the SREB, runs through Central Asia.

In particular, Kazakhstan is known as the "Buck of the Belt," whose exports to China (worth \$6.8 billion) and status as a middle-income country make it a vital player for China's position in the region.

"The Central Asian republics, with their considerable energy and human potential," according to Y. Lynn, "face both 'challenge and opportunity' because 'the Eurasian economic space is an active part of the new stage of global integration [3].

"Central Asia," in Guo Suetan's understanding, "is the region where the influence of geopolitics and competition among the great powers has been most prominent compared to any other part of the world.

Indeed, according to this author, "ethnic and religious conflicts, energy competition, strategic positioning of different actors, and political turmoil in the region have become a recurring feature in the regional context of Central Asia" [4].

There are three fundamental reasons explaining "the importance of Central Asia for the great powers. First, the area has significant energy resources in both oil and gas. In this regard, Z. Akbar states that "regional and trans-regional states are well aware of the importance of Central Asia's energy potential.

The region is about to become "a major global energy supplier," particularly "in the oil and gas sector" [5]. The second reason for the importance of the region for the big powers is that their neighbors, namely China, Russia, America, and Europe, are trying to increase their influence in the region.

In recent years, the region has attracted the attention of foreign investors because of the presence of large oil and gas reserves in three states: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. However, their authoritarian regimes and high levels of corruption, underdeveloped financial and banking systems, insecure property rights, and many other institutional problems, of course, damage the investment climate in the region [6].

Not only does the EU openly ignore competition, but the relevant documents, ignore the suppression of EU influence in Central Asia. The 2019 U.S. Strategy for Central Asia proclaims that the United States is "leading" the World Bank, the IMF, the World Bank, and even the Asian Development Bank in providing \$50 billion in aid to Central Asia [7].

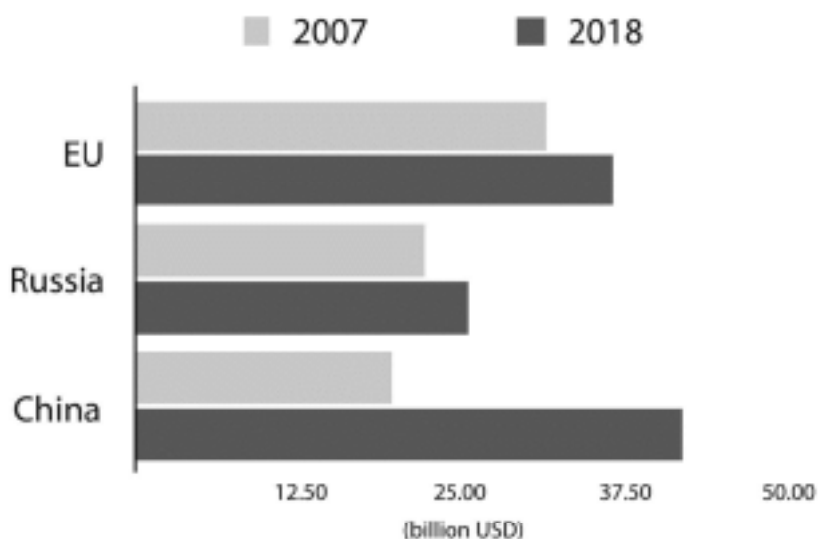
While all participants can compete for the debatable title of leading influencer in expanding financial aid to the region, the trade statistics should be simpler. One is that "European trade and investment... has made the EU a major economic player in Central Asia, ahead of Russia and China" [8].

The same report does not reflect changes in comparative trade. Non-EU sources demonstrate that even at its best, the EU faces growing trade competition from Russia in Central Asia, and China exceeds the EU's total regional trade (Figure 1).

This situation is acknowledged in jest, such as Burian's joke that in Central Asia "China comes with an offer no one can refuse, and the EU comes with an offer no one can understand" [9].

The EU has not openly acknowledged that Chinese initiatives in Central Asia have overshadowed it. The EU strategy of 2007 envisaged a transport corridor between the EU and Central Asia - nothing has materialized.

Figure 1. Total European Union (EU), Russian, and Chinese trade turnover compared, 2007 and 2018. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Total-European-Union-EU-Russian-and-Chinese-trade-turnover-compared-2007-and-2018_fig1_353956624



While the European Parliament 2020 report on EU-Asia connectivity welcomes cooperation on the Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor, it notes the EU's "systemic rivalry with China," calls for the EU to play a much more important role, and deplores China's regional infrastructure [10].

All Central Asian states pursue a so-called "multi-vector" foreign policy, which balances relations with the key great powers (Russia, China, and the "collective West"), as well as with the countries of the Middle East and South Asia [11].

Political scientist D. Satpayev (2018) (Kazakhstan) defined the essence of the "multi-vector" foreign policy as follows: "Kazakhstan is interested in not following the fairway of any major geopolitical player; we do not need Russia, or any other state, as a 'Big Brother'."

Everything would be so, but it turns out differently: the one who makes "big money", and calls themselves "big brother", and tries to impose their game in the region. A "multi-vector" foreign policy can also be seen as a balancing policy typical of Central Asia.

The balancing theory was developed by the classics of realism and neorealism. The case of Central Asia is closest to studies of balancing small and medium-sized states in contact with more powerful players.

Kazakhstan is a central region of Central Asia:

- relatively strong (from a regional point of view), but an extractive economy, focused on the export of natural resources to China and the EU;
- open door policy about interaction with all possible partners in world affairs, open door policy about foreign investments;
- initiation of a large number of integration projects, active participation in multilateral structures;
- active cooperation with Russia in its integration projects;

- active political and economic cooperation with China;
- interaction with Western powers, partially offsetting the influence of Russia and China.

Kazakhstan's experience is a theoretical conundrum. Kazakhstan is a minor power - a state with moderate regional influence and moderate international recognition - that has negotiated with its great neighbors without becoming a client state.

Kazakhstan borders China, with which it has good trade and diplomatic relations, but is not dominated by China. Kazakhstan pursues a multi-vector foreign policy, a term used to describe "a policy that develops foreign relations through a structure based on a pragmatic, non-ideological basis.

Explaining the goals of this strategy, N. Nazarbayev stated that "a multi-vector foreign policy means developing friendly and predictable relations with all states that play a significant role in world affairs and are of practical interest to the country [12].

Alexander Kuli argues that "Kazakhstan, along with other Central Asian states, has used the competition between Russia, China and the United States to its advantage, pitting the great powers against each other and thereby extracting additional benefits, assistance and better treaty terms".

Kazakhstan has used multi-vectorism to manage its complex geopolitics. Arguments about balancing and support inadequately explain Kazakhstan's foreign policy strategy, which includes some aspects of both balancing and support for three different great powers (China, Russia, US) and sometimes interacts with the EU on economic issues.

Kazakhstan attracts investors with its vast natural resources and relatively favorable investment climate. Kazakhstan goes against the regional trend. Its relationship with Washington has never focused on Afghanistan or democracy-building, but mostly on economic factors.

U.S. companies are leading producers in Kazakhstan's oil industry, which accounts for up to 44 percent of the country's budget. In 2019, they accounted for about 30 percent of the total oil produced in Kazakhstan, compared to about 17 percent produced by China's CNPC, Sinopec, and CITIC, and 3 percent by Russia's Lukoil.

Kazakhstan's trade turnover with the United States (almost \$2 billion in 2020) cannot be compared to its trade with China (\$21.4 billion) or Russia (\$19 billion). But it is still three times the amount of trade with the United States that all other Central Asian states combined (about \$0.6 billion) [14].

From the beginning, Washington has viewed Kazakhstan as its priority partner in Central Asia. As the confrontation between China and the U.S. escalates, it is becoming harder and harder for Kazakhstan to maintain a balance.

Nevertheless, there is no choice but to remain on friendly terms with everyone while maintaining a certain distance from them all. There is no way for the great powers to force Kazakhstan to demonstrate absolute loyalty to any of them.

In 2019, Kazakhstan was given the unique title of "permanent comprehensive strategic partner," ostensibly putting it next to such countries as Russia and Pakistan, which also have their unique designation in Chinese diplomacy.

Most investors come to Kazakhstan because of its mineral wealth, and China is no exception. Petrochemicals account for the bulk of its investment, and in 2018, fuels, metals, and minerals accounted for 84.27% of Kazakhstan's exports to China [15].

In 2017, it was announced that 51 (later increased to 55) projects worth \$27-28 billion were being implemented as part of Kazakh-Chinese industrial cooperation. 15 projects worth \$3.9 billion have been completed, and of the total value, 50% are in petrochemicals and 22% in mining and metallurgy.

This combination does not mean a sharp departure from traditional cooperation in the extractive industries, but there are interesting points, including a \$1.1 billion car assembly plant and a \$22 million camel and mare milk processing plant.

Kazakhstan is China's most important partner in Central Asia, but it is also an EU partner. Kazakhstan's future depends on a healthy relationship with China, but in terms of trade, investment, and debt, China's influence is diluted by the size of Kazakhstan's economy.

While Kazakhstan's debt to China in absolute terms is the largest of the Central Asian countries, it is by far the lowest as a percentage of GDP and China's share of the debt. Central Asia has a well-founded economic dependence and political alliance with China.

Kazakhstan ranks:

- first place in the world for proven reserves (350 million tons) of chromium and provides 15% of the world's production,
- first place in the world in terms of explored reserves of lead (14.8 million tons - 82 deposits),
- first place in the world in terms of zinc reserves (87 deposits - 34 million tons), uranium (900 thousand tons, 2nd place - 54 deposits)
- fourth place in the world in terms of explored reserves of copper (40 million tons - 100 deposits).

Oil (30 billion barrels, 12th place), Gas (2.7 trillion m³, 14th place), Coal (25.6 billion tons, 10th place) ('19, BP), Gold (1000 tons, 13th place) ('19, USGS) [16].

N. Nazarbayev, the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, has ruled for 30 years since he was appointed party secretary of the Soviet Kazakh Republic in June 1989.

After leaving office, the first president, Nazarbayev, retained his influence over state affairs, maintaining his position as chairman of the National Security Council (NSC), leader of the Nur-Otan party (the ruling party), and member of the Constitutional Committee.

Kazakhstan is the ninth-largest country in the world and has about 120 ethnic groups. It is the largest resource center in Central Asia with the 17th largest oil reserves in the world.

Since gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has not only successfully strengthened its national sovereignty. It has achieved world-renowned achievements in politics, economy, and social development.

The appreciation of the international community has made Kazakhstan the most active country in Central Asia. Participating in the process of global governance, Kazakhstan has positioned itself as a "strong and important regional power.

With its increased national strength, Kazakhstan has strengthened its confidence in global governance. Multilateral relations have achieved world-renowned achievements. The strategy of global governance basically includes: firstly, providing priority direction, including Russia, China, the U.S., and Europe. The relationship between the European Union and Central Asian countries. Secondly, it is to actively develop partnerships, including India, Japan, South Asia and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Islamic countries. The third goal is to focus

on multilateral cooperation and seek development in important international mechanisms. Play an important role, including developing cooperation with the UN, the Eurasian Economic Union, the CSTO, and Shanghai. After establishing formal diplomatic relations with 139 countries, it is an official member of 73 international organizations.

Kazakhstan is located in the northern part of Central Asia, in the interior of Eurasia. The north borders Russia, the east borders China, and the southwest faces the Caspian Sea. It is an important bridge linking the Eurasian continent.

Because of its political advantages, the famous American strategist Z. Brzezinski considers it "a potential geopolitical U-turn country. Kazakhstan is rich in oil and gas resources. China, the U.S., Russia, and other major countries see Kazakhstan as a win-win option in their foreign policy.

Materials and methods

When writing a scientific article, the authors used the following methods: a systematic method that made it possible to study Kazakhstan as a center of gravity in Central Asia in the clash between the U.S. and China. The use of the comparative method made it possible to compare the interests of other world powers. The functional method was used to analyze the interests of world powers, their optimal interaction in the region. The analysis of relations in the economics, geopolitical, and diplomatic spheres was carried out.

Discussion

Kazakhstan is developing good-neighborly and friendly relations with China. Kazakhstan firmly supports Russia's actions, acting on the principle of "Russia first" in its diplomatic strategy. Compared to countries with a large territory, large population, and stronger economic growth, there is still a significant gap.

For Kazakhstan, there is still a gap between willingness and ability to participate in the process of global governance. The weak development of the political, economic, and social systems limits Kazakhstan's ability to participate in global governance, in the face of the transformation of the current order of global governance.

Although Kazakhstan actively participates in many mechanisms and platforms of global governance and actively leads in solving problems, it still faces many real dilemmas and problems in many aspects.

Kazakhstan relies on abundant energy resources, a flexible diplomatic strategy, and leadership. It has built a good international image by participating in the process of global governance.

Over the last 30 years, in terms of domestic politics and political situation, the five Central Asian countries have faced a balance between traditional "authoritarianism" and Western "democratic transformation. Among them, Kazakhstan has demonstrated the country with the best balance. Kazakhstan's degree of openness to the outside world is the highest among the five countries. In particular, the intention to open up to the West is obvious.

The government of Kazakhstan defends a particular view of its identity as a Eurasian state, defending its sovereignty and defining a historical narrative in which its identity is independent of Russia.

Kazakhstan in the Commonwealth of Central Asian Republics

The countries of Central Asia vary greatly in their resource endowments. It can be divided into three types:

- The first is a resource-based economy, which is mainly related to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.
- The second is a labor export-oriented economy, which refers to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.
- The third is a diversified economy, as seen in Uzbekistan.

Figure 2 Economic growth of Kazakhstan for the summer of 2021



Among the five Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan possess oil and gas resources. At world oil and gas prices, these countries had higher rates of economic growth.

There is a strong asymmetry of power between the Central Asian states. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan produce significant amounts of oil, gas, and coal. While Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan produce net hydropower.

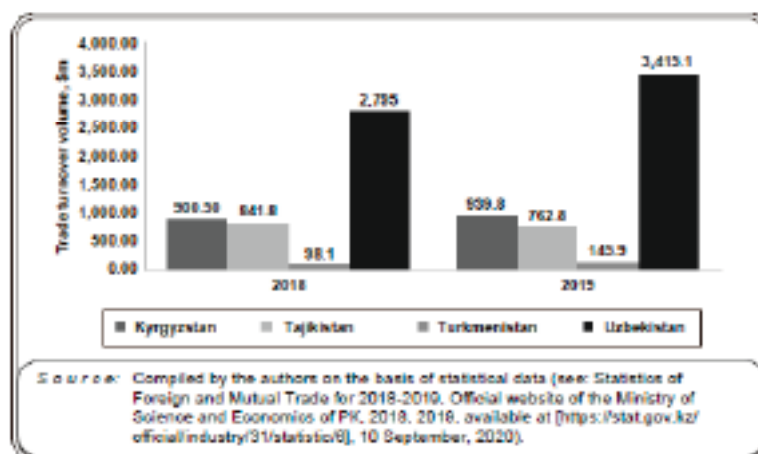
Given its geographical location, natural resources, and economic development, Nursultan (known from 1998 to 2019 as Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan) has certain ambitions to lead and coordinate national policies in the region.

To successfully achieve the goals, Kazakhstan's priority will be to work to centralize the policies of the countries of the region. The Central Asian countries are joint consumers of energy, transportation, gas, water, and irrigation networks with rich oil and gas resources.

The countries need to find ways to efficiently transport produced oil and gas to other countries by cooperating. Kazakhstan should continue its efforts to create a comprehensive regional organization to stimulate economic growth and political stability while strengthening the sovereignty of the region. To do so, however, Kazakhstan must overcome some economic and political obstacles with countries in the region.

Kazakhstan's neighbors have limited trade potential, especially Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, given their small populations (six and nine million, respectively), limited development, and small markets. Meanwhile, Turkmenistan continues its isolationist policy, and trade with Afghanistan is hampered by the well-known security situation.

Figure 3: Total trade between Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries in 2018-2019 [17].



Positive relations between Astana and Tashkent mean that trade between them is improving (reported at \$2 billion in 2017); however, this is not enough to help Kazakhstan become a global economy. The lack of limited intra-regional trade in Central Asia has been widely discussed, most recently at the February 27 forum on "Intra-regional Trade and Cooperation in Central Asia," organized by the Central Asia and Caucasus Institute in Washington, DC [16].

Priorities of the West and the East in the development of relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan

The involvement of American companies in the energy sector, especially in Kazakhstan, has improved the economic participation of the United States and further enhanced its political influence.

Although the new political set-up seems to consist of protégés of former communist dictators, the popularity of demands for liberal reforms, with free market economies, human rights, and democratic governance over authoritarianism, should not be underestimated.

The United States can promote these reforms by winning the hearts and minds of the populations of these states to impede Chinese intrusion and increase its geopolitical influence.

The United States should apply a capitalist set of incentives to increase the productivity of its political engagement with authoritarian leaders to promote democratic reforms.

This will help the United States, not only to create an American-like business environment, but also to compete with China and Russia's influence by strengthening further security and political partnership with the Republic of Kazakhstan.

U.S. companies are leading producers in Kazakhstan's oil industry, which accounts for up to 44 percent of the country's budget. In 2019, they accounted for about 30 percent of Kazakhstan's oil production, compared to about 17 percent produced by China's CNPC, Sinopec, and CITIC, and 3 percent by Russia's Lukoil.

Kazakhstan's trade turnover with the United States (almost \$2 billion in 2020) cannot be compared to its trade with China (\$21.4 billion) or Russia (\$19 billion). But it is still three times the amount of trade with the United States that all other Central Asian states combined (about \$0.6 billion) [19].

India, as an extended neighbor of the CAR, has important geostrategic and economic interests in this region. The prospects for cooperation between Kazakhstan and India in the field of energy security appear to be very important. Naturally, peace and stability in CAR and Afghanistan seem to be the most important security factors for India.

Apart from all that, the prospects of infrastructure construction and construction activities have long-term possibilities. Such involvement would be mutually beneficial. A prime example is Astana in Kazakhstan, where there is a lot of construction activity. This is a good opportunity for companies specializing in infrastructure and construction. This sector is key to the market.

In terms of economic cooperation, Kazakhstan is very important for India. Six Indian firms/companies are accredited in Kazakhstan, and nine joint ventures have been registered. Once the transport corridor is established, there will be great opportunities for oil exploration and the energy market.

In August 1999, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on the project to draw up a project plan using modern coal waste technology.

At the same time, a joint venture was set up for a feasibility study of the project, and in November 1999, a commercial venture agreement was signed with Larsen & Toubro. A memorandum of understanding and cooperation in small business development was signed in Delhi.

Results. At present, work is underway to establish small businesses in the Republic of Kazakhstan and to create an entrepreneurship development center in Astana. Attempts are being made to solve transport problems between Mumbai and Astana. Each year, 350 containers are imported and exported through the ports of India, to build a project plan using modern technology for the use of coal waste [20].

The world will have to accept China's new role in the global order and get used to China's more confident and flexible geopolitical projections to achieve its strategic goals. Even if, by and large, China is seen as a status quo power with little interest in changing the global order, geopolitical projection beyond its territory is a natural step in the development of Chinese strategic thinking.

After a long period of China's soft power, facilitated by growing trade exchanges with Asia-Pacific states, China is taking steps to develop the ability to actively defend its interests in the "near abroad," promoting deeper economic cooperation with Central Asian and European countries, called the "Beijing Consensus" and expressed mainly in the New Silk Road project.

China's growing economic weight is the only significant force that can undermine the strategic dominance of the United States. The ruling liberal order in the world would have a direct impact on China, in terms of increasing its economic interdependence, and a possible conflict would be a losing proposition for each side, so the clear goal must be to keep the peace in this relationship [21].

Economic "soft power" seems very effective for gaining influence, but the next logical step for China would be to gain the ability to control and dominate a vital space. All of this is pushing China toward a more aggressive relationship with the United States.

China's expanding presence in the region poses a serious challenge to the U.S. and its allies; a challenge in a new qualitative environment (not resolved since the end of the Cold War). To

avoid such tensions, the establishment of a common regional multilateral negotiating platform would be a solution to prevent possible conflicts in an area full of weapons.

Despite growing important economic ties with China, the Kazakh government has also repeatedly asserted its independence vis-à-vis Beijing. As of 2018, "China is Kazakhstan's second largest trading partner" and the largest source of commercial credit.

By 2017, China had invested nearly \$30 billion in Kazakhstan's oil industry, as well as its mining, transportation, and agriculture sectors. Kazakhstan has strong cultural, linguistic, and historical ties with Russia, and Moscow has been a valuable strategic partner since independence. However, Kazakhstan is also interested in preventing Russia from re-establishing a "sphere of privileged interests," especially after the seizure of Crimea.

Although Kazakhstan seeks interaction with the great powers, it is not trying to build an EU-like Central Asian society. Despite growing important economic ties with China, the Kazakh government has also repeatedly asserted its independence vis-à-vis Beijing.

By 2018, Russia had invested \$12.2 billion in Kazakhstan. Lukoil invested \$7 billion in Kazakhstan. Gazprom invested more than \$1 billion in Kazakhstan (Dynin, Yurchenko, 2019). Kazakhstan is connected to Russia by an extensive network of pipelines: the Atyrau-Samara oil pipeline (15 million tons per year).

Russia has invested \$2.6 billion in Kazakhstan's mining sector. Oil and gas refining in Russia and Kazakhstan have been closely linked since Soviet times. Gazprom Neft, Rosneft, LUKOIL and Surgutneftegaz are active in Kazakhstan. President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan has led Eurasian integration.

However, Kazakhstan has always emphasized that the EAEU pursues purely economic goals. Political and, of course, geopolitical components of the organization should be minimized. Although the United States is a less important trading partner (less than 5% of Kazakhstan's imports or exports come from the United States), American energy companies are major investors in Kazakhstan's oil and gas sector. Nevertheless, despite the importance of these commercial relationships, Kazakhstan has managed to avoid some of the governance reforms that the EU and the U.S. are seeking.

Kazakhstan maintains positive relations with all of the great powers. The ability of minor states to act independently, rather than simply submit to the demands of the great powers, is particularly evident in Kazakhstan's complex balance sheet, around natural resources. Kazakhstan has been able to use the competing interests of the great powers to its advantage, seeking concessions and avoiding economic dependence on any one market.

Conclusion. Located in the center of the Eurasian continent, Kazakhstan strategically connects Southeast Asia and Western Europe. Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy implies partnerships with many states. In addition to foreign trade, investment cooperation is a critical area of international economic cooperation.

Economic modernization, which remains a priority for all major development programs for many years, is impossible without large foreign investments, but mainly aimed at the processing industry. It should be noted that for many years, Kazakhstan was the only country in Central Asia that cooperated constructively with the EU in Central Asia.

However, there are priorities – China and the United States. Unlike other countries, the largest Central Asian country is a gateway for China to Europe via the mainland. The main infrastructure

includes rail and road networks, as well as logistics centers for the transportation of goods and customs clearance. The development of Kazakhstan's transport infrastructure is also in China's direct interest, which is why Chinese investments are primarily directed to this region.

As a powerful economic power, China has huge monetary and foreign exchange reserves, investment potential, and a rapidly growing population. Kazakhstan has become the leading economic power in Central Asia and the second-largest economy in the CIS region after the Russian Federation.

In 20 years of cooperation, economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and China has undergone significant qualitative changes. Chinese investments in Kazakhstan have grown to \$19 billion over the past 20 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations. In addition, Kazakhstan is making additional profits by continuing to export Chinese goods to neighboring countries, Uzbekistan and Russia.

Kazakhstan is the 81st largest trading partner of the United States. The involvement of American companies in the energy sector, especially in Kazakhstan, has improved the economic participation of the United States and further enhanced its political influence. U.S. companies are leading producers in Kazakhstan's oil industry, which accounts for up to 44 percent of the country's budget.

In 2019, they accounted for about 30 percent of the total oil produced in Kazakhstan, compared to about 17 percent produced by China's CNPC, Sinopec, and CITIC, and 3 percent by Russia's Lukoil. Kazakhstan's trade with the United States (nearly \$2 billion in 2020) cannot be compared to its trade with China (\$21.4 billion) or Russia (\$19 billion).

Although Kazakhstan seeks to interact with the great powers, it is not trying to build an EU-like Central Asian society.

Contribution of the authors.

Zh.B. Akimova – work with literature, collection and analysis of material, design of a scientific article.

D.M. Turtugulova, B. Seilkhan – definition of the goals and objectives of a scientific article, work using research materials and methods, generalization, and analysis of theoretical material.

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Қазақстан АҚШ пен Қытай арасындағы қарама-қайшылықта Орталық Азиядағы тартымды орталық ретінде

Аңдатпа. Ғасырлар бойы Орталық Азия Еуразияның тоғысқан жері немесе «Шығыс пен Батыстың тоғысқан жері» болып, оны «қызықты» аймаққа айналдырып келеді. Шындығында бұл – Орта Азия халықтары билеп-төстеп, билеген төрт өркениеттің тоғысқан нүктесі.

Бүгінгі таңда Орта Азия ұлы державалардың (аймақтық және аймақтық емес) бәсекелестік пен бақталастық аренасына айналды, бұл олардың арасындағы қарым-қатынасқа, сол арқылы «халықаралық құрылымдарға», сондай-ақ тепе-теңдіктің беріктігіне әсер етуде.

«Жиырма бірінші ғасырдың басынан бері Орта Азия геосаяси трансформацияның жаңа кезеңін бастан кешіруде. Кейбір сарапшылар Орта Азияның ХІХ ғасырдағы Ұлы ойынға – тек жаңа ойыншылармен оралып жатқанын айтады».

Орта Азияның барлық елдері Ресейді сыртқы саясаттағы басты басымдық ретінде анықтайды және оның Орта Азиядағы мүдделерін мойындайды. Ресей Федерациясы да өз тарапынан аймақ елдерімен қарым-қатынасты дамытудың маңыздылығын мәлімдейді.

Алайда бірқатар объективті және субъективті факторларға байланысты Ресей мен Орталық Азия республикалары арасындағы қарым-қатынастар біршама қиындықтарға тап болуда. Соған қарамастан, Орта Азия мен Ресей арасындағы қарым-қатынастар ұстанымдары мен бағалауларындағы кейбір айырмашылықтарға қарамастан, айтарлықтай прагматикалық және саяси, экономикалық, әскери, білім беру және мәдени ынтымақтастықты қамтиды.

Түйін сөздер: аймақтық және аймақтық емес, өркениеттер, геосаяси мүдделер, Ресей, ЕО, Қытай, Орта Азия.

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Казахстан как центр притяжения в Центральной Азии в противостоянии США и Китая

Аннотация. На протяжении веков Центральная Азия была перекрестком Евразии или «перекрестком Востока и Запада», что делало ее «интересным» регионом. По сути, это была точка слияния четырех цивилизаций, которыми управляли и управляют народы Средней Азии.

Сегодня Центральная Азия стала ареной конкуренции и соперничества между великими державами (региональными и нерегиональными), что влияет на отношения между ними, а также на прочность баланса, тем самым влияя на «международную структуру».

«С начала двадцать первого века Центральная Азия переживает новый этап геополитической трансформации. Некоторые эксперты говорят, что Центральная Азия возвращается к Большой игре девятнадцатого века – только с новыми игроками».

Основные внешние игроки – Россия, США, ЕС и Китай – заявили о своей поддержке мира, стабильности и регионального сотрудничества в Центральной Азии – заявления, которые, безусловно, приветствуются в регионе. Но между ними также есть некоторые трения.

Все страны Центральной Азии определяют Россию как главный внешнеполитический приоритет и признают ее интересы в Центральной Азии. Российская Федерация, со своей стороны, также заявляет о важности развития отношений со странами региона.

Однако в силу ряда объективных и субъективных факторов отношения между Россией и республиками Центральной Азии сталкиваются с некоторыми трудностями. Тем не менее, отношения между Центральной Азией и Россией, несмотря на некоторые различия в их позициях и оценках, носят достаточно прагматичный характер и охватывают политическое, экономическое, военное, образовательное и культурное сотрудничество.

Ключевые слова: региональное и вне региональное, цивилизации, геополитические интересы, Россия, ЕС, Китай, Центральная Азия.

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