



## Research Article

# COOPERATION BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES AND CHINA: DISTINCTIVE TRENDS

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## ABSTRACT

The article talks about the socio-political features of China's cooperation with Russia and Central Asia in the Eurasian space, its role in ensuring the security of the region, the importance and prospects of the signed agreements, and the guarantee of stability.

## KEYWORDS

Central Asia, Eurasia, SCO, Russia, Central Asia, Middle East, Former Soviet Union, Afghanistan, energy, Far East, globalization, soft power, Orientation.

## INTRODUCTION

China's growing presence in Central Asia should not harm its warm relations between Russia and the USA. The fight against terrorism, regional stability, instability in the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region are the factors affecting China's current and future position, and the SCO's activities will further strengthen the PRC-Central Asian cooperation on these issues. Within

the framework of the SCO, Russia and China undoubtedly play an important role in ensuring peace and stability in the region.

PRC's expansion into Central Asia with the help of the SCO is primarily explained by regional stability, then energy security, and finally, geopolitical relations with



the USA. A. Khojaev, a historian and sinologist from Uzbekistan, said that “China has been looking at Central Asia as a neighboring region of great importance in terms of political and economic security” [1. p.30-46]. This situation is seen in the importance of exerting political, economic and cultural influence on the countries of Central Asia. From a political point of view, two imperatives arise in this case. The first of them is to prevent US pressure on China in Central Asia, and the second is to prevent the restoration of Russia's previous leadership. The economic importance of Central Asia for the PRC is primarily explained by China's growing need for energy sources in the region [1. p46].

The following three aspects should be emphasized in the foreign policy of the PRC. First, unlike most countries in the world, China does not have a separate document in the form of the country's Foreign Policy Concept. Second, the uniqueness of China's political system. Third, the creation of a hypercentralized system in China.

### THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Apart from Russia, China will have the main influence on political processes in Central Asia in the nearest and mid-term perspective, that is, up to 3-5 years. In such a situation, Russia will “maintain military-strategic cooperation with the PRC” in the regio [2]. “For China, Central Asia is a strategic “front-back” in many areas, such as security, energy, the organization of new markets for raw materials and purchases, and the transit “corridor” [2].

In fact, in addition to hydrocarbon raw materials, China imports cotton and other products for further processing from Central Asia. Central Asia, in turn, is a large market for consumer goods, engineering and

industrial equipment, and road construction equipment. Improving economic relations has become an important component of China's policy for the development of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. After 1991, Central Asia entered a new era. This will greatly affect the development of international relations. From an economic point of view, in the future, Central Asia and the countries surrounding it will become a source of energy for the whole world [3].

In the transitional period, very conflicting processes took place simultaneously with the formation of national statehood in the Central Asian countries. The chosen ways of establishing a democratic state in the countries of the region also differed [4]. Such development factors determined the further development paths of the countries of the Central Asian region. Some important issues for the fate of the space after the former union were resolved in favor of China.

It is known that stable political, economic and cultural relations between the countries of the region create a favorable investment environment for the countries, which is of interest not only to them, but also to other distant and nearby countries. Currently, the stability of the production, investment and trade markets of the leading countries gives the other countries of the region the opportunity for long-term and stable development. The migration of production, capital, goods, labor can stimulate joint development in the region. Therefore, in various regional conflicts (there may be the participation of the leading forces), the Central Asian countries should determine their position in the region's security. A peaceful, stable regional situation is necessary for the further prosperity of all countries and the development of trade and economic relations. (Here we think that it is unacceptable to have



different opinions about the rapprochement and strategic cooperation between the PRC and Russia).

It is natural for the Central Asian Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, which are neighbors of the troubled Afghanistan, to take into account the terrorist threat posed by extremist organizations located on the territory of Afghanistan [5].

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev's speech on Afghanistan at the "Peace process, security cooperation and regional partnership" international conference held in Tashkent on March 26-27, 2018, specifically emphasized the importance of establishing peace in Afghanistan, the fight against terrorism and extremism [6].

In recent years, Uzbekistan has started implementing many economic and infrastructural projects in Afghanistan - large joint projects in the field of transport and logistics, energy and trade, as well as education. In particular, since January 2018, an educational center for Afghan citizens has been operating in the city of Termiz, the center of Surkhandarya region, where 96 students studied in 2018-2019. Due to the activation of bilateral trade and economic relations, the "Uzbekistan Trade House" was opened in Kabul [7].

It is clear to everyone that relations between the PRC and Afghanistan have a special place in the security and development of Central Asia. In February 2003, the Kabul Declaration "On Friendship and Neighborhood", "Declaration on Narcotics and Narcotics Control", "Agreement on Friendly Cooperation and Close Neighborhood between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" and "On the Implementation of Multilateral Cooperation" joint

agreements were signed [8]. In addition, in August 2008, the PRC and Afghanistan "On Close Neighborhood and Cooperation", according to the agreement "On Close Neighborhood and Cooperation", on June 8, 2012 "On Strategic Partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" PRC and Afghanistan further developed and strengthened multilateral relations. Many and bilaterally accepted such agreements are considered as a pledge of mutual trust and cooperation for the development of the parties.

The People's Republic of China is more active in Afghanistan than other countries in terms of developing natural resources and providing employment. In particular, a 3.5 billion dollar contract was signed to start the "Afghan-copper mine" [9]. The PRC Metallurgical Company is building a 400-megawatt power plant and schools, mosques, clinics, and a railway with the potential to create a total of 4,000 jobs [10].

The growing mutual cooperation between Moscow and Beijing is the basis of security, both regionally and globally. It is evident in the areas and latitudes of Central Asia and the Far East. This influence can be clearly seen in the political processes in Central Asia and its position in the international arena. "Central Asia is becoming more and more important in the construction of the foreign policy strategy of the Russian Federation in Asia called "Turn to the East" [11]

In Russian-Chinese relations, the Kovyktinsk gas condensate field development project in the Irkutsk region, which provides for the long-term supply of natural gas to China, occupies a key place [12].





The total length of the intermodal pipeline connecting Siberia and North China, launched in 2005 on the basis of China-Russia relations, is 2400 km. The total amount of investment is 1.7 billion. Created the US dollar. By 2030, coal and gas-hungry China will purchase and consume natural gas on par with the European Union [13].

According to the information distributed by “Jenmin jibao” website, “700 million will be sent to China in 25 years. tons of oil are coming in. Its price is 150 billion. equal to a dollar. For China, Russia will become the main market for oil exports [14]. China has a weak point in energy security, almost 80% of the oil that China imports is mined in the troubled regions of the Middle East and Africa (90% and more is transported by tankers from other countries) [15]. In such a situation, the People’s Republic of China, which is rapidly implementing reforms, seeks its interests from the countries of that continent.

China achieved almost oil security within the framework of the “triple” (one-third from the Middle East, two-thirds from other overseas regions) - from Russia, Central Asia, the Caspian [16]. “The raw material dependence of the post-Soviet space on the PRC is increasing[17]. Today, China is the only country that is exploiting vast forests and gray lands in the Siberian and Far Eastern regions of Russia for creative purposes [18].

It is more beneficial for the PRC to include long-term loans of Russia in the fuel energy (oil) sector. The total volume is 25 billion. dollars – “Rosneft” 15 bln. dollars and “Transneft” 10 billion. dollars, 10 billion with Brazil, 4 billion with Venezuela, 5 billion[19] with Angola. and 5 billion with Kazakhstan in Central Asia. dollar contracts are operating. Today, Russia is more connected to the PRC in the international arena due to

the situation in Ukraine. Due to the current geopolitical situation, oil and gas products of the Russian Federation intended for delivery to Western countries are being sent to Eastern countries, including the PRC.

In the field of energy, first of all, cooperation in the supply of Russian oil and gas is in the interests of the PRC in terms of meeting its energy needs. The Russian Federation has opened the PRC market for the sale of oil and oil products. The risk of a decrease in the source of export income in the oil sector for the PRC has been avoided [18].

Gas pipelines have been transferred from Turkmenistan to China for the purpose of joint development of the Central Asian and Russian Far Eastern regions of the PRC during the last decades. “... the main producers of oil in the Asian part of the Asia-Pacific region: PRC 180-190 mln, per year has the capacity to produce tons of oil.” PRC 80 million per year. consumes more gas than cubic meters (2008)” [20. 65]. “Domestic sources are not enough to meet the needs of the PRC for oil and gas. The newly discovered Ordos Basin, Tarim Basin, Sichuan Basin, Bohaiwan Bay excavations in the PRC also serves this purpose [20. 67].

According to information provided by Uzbekistan, Podrono.uz, today “China owns 37% of the world’s rare earth metal reserves, 1/3 of the world’s coal reserves, there are more than 150 types of mineral deposits in its territory” [21].

China considers the “Great Silk Road” revival as one of the best ways to develop its internal regions. According to Li Xin and New Yichen, “The concept of the Great Silk Road Economic Belt is very important for the PRC. The Great Silk Road Economic Belt is a transregional economic corridor connecting China,



Central Asia, West Asia and Europe in the East-West direction” [22].

During the past period, the penetration of PRC markets into various aspects has become the “economic lifeblood” of the development of the Central Asian countries, and this has created additional opportunities for the economic development of the PRC related to the currency flow.

The PRC sees Central Asia as a factor that has an unimpeded influence on stability and security in its border region. Therefore, China opposes “tooth and nail” any force that affects the stable situation in Central Asia..

What path the Central Asian countries choose in the future is very important for the PRC. This is the main factor that can clarify the relations between Russia and the PRC in the Central Asian region. The future task of the SCO is to control the natural resources and political stability of Central Asia [23]. Within the framework of the SCO, the PRC is investing heavily in the development of infrastructure such as roads, oil and gas pipelines, and warehouse facilities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The PRC plans to implement these projects on a bilateral basis or within the framework of the SCO [24].

The PRC is actively developing its relations with countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on the basis of bilateral agreements at the SCO level [25].

As the PRC and India (as of 2016) are full member states of the SCO (the PRC as a founding state), the PRC and India joined the BRICS member states. Within the framework of the organization, the political and economic possibilities of these two countries are unlimited. According to the predictions of international

experts, the BRICS member states will become the world’s major power centers by 2050 [26] At the next SCO meeting to be held in Tashkent, Iran is expected to become a full-fledged member. The possibilities of ensuring the security of the region will increase even more.

The mutual integration activity of the Central Asian region is not strong enough. The main problem of the SCO member states is to ensure the security of Central Asia. Their only desire is to develop some mechanism that serves their interests and manages the processes in Central Asia during the crisis [27] We can consider the fact that the Central Asian heads of state’s meetings are being held as a reliable mechanism for ensuring the development and security of the region.

In the process of globalization, the penetration of Central Asia into economic integration increased. Today, new changes are taking place in international relations. Distribution of interests, division of new forces is observed. In Russia's foreign policy, the pursuit of “post-imperialist” policy in Central Asia has become more serious. The essence of the ideas put forward regarding the restoration of the Eurasian space is seen in the restoration of the policy of the recent past.

### CONCLUSION

The closeness of approaches to maintaining global peace and regional stability in the foreign policy of Uzbekistan and the PRC within the framework of the SCO undoubtedly determines the prospects of these two countries. In this context, the PRC's national policy in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is particularly important for research. In the words of Russian researcher O. Zotov, ‘currently, the withdrawal of Xinjiang from the PRC will fundamentally change the



entire situation in Central Asia.” In reality politics, no matter how drastic the means of force are, it does not produce the expected effect, it is now only a matter of judgment of time.

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