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ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОСТЬ НА ПОСТСОВЕТСКОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ

STATEHOOD IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

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Statehood in the post-Soviet space

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The specificity of acquisition of state independence in the Central Asian Republics

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Abstract. The author of the article shows how difficult and specific was the path of independence of Central Asian states. After the collapse of the USSR, the independent states of the region, which had never solved domestic political issues on their own, faced many different problems. History has shown who gained independence and by what means. From both theoretical and practical points of view, all the new five states were not ready to become independent. The most bitter and bloody path was taken by Tajikistan, which was dragged into civil war for five years. Each state in the Central Asian region, which has similar traditions and culture to its neighbors, followed its own unique path of development. At the same time, all states of the Central Asian region have faced identical internal political problems: the threat of Islamic radicalism, socio-economic and intra-confessional problems, and problems of extremism, terrorism and separatism. The problem of Islamic radicalism has become particularly acute in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Along with internal political and internal economic problems, the newly independent states have also faced foreign policy problems, namely border settlement and water and energy regulation. At present, the region is emphasizing the establishment of close cooperation between the newly independent states.

Keywords: Central Asian region, issues of self-preservation, security issues, domestic and foreign policy

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Государственность на постсоветском пространстве

Научная статья

Специфика обретения государственной независимости центральноазиатскими республиками

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Аннотация. Автор статьи показывает, насколько нелегким и специфичным оказался путь становления независимости центральноазиатских государств. После распада СССР обретшие независимость государства региона, которые никогда самостоятельно не решали внутривнутриполитические вопросы, столкнулись с множеством различных проблем. История показала, кому и каким путем досталась государственная независимость. И с теоретической и с практической точек зрения все новые пять государств не были готовы стать самостоятельными. Самый горький и кровавый путь достался Таджикистану, который на долгие пять лет был втянут в гражданскую войну. Каждое государство Центрально-Азиатского региона, имеющее схожие с соседними государствами традиции и культуру, пошло по своему уникальному пути развития. При этом все государства Центрально-Азиатского региона столкнулись с идентичными внутривнутриполитическими проблемами: с угрозой исламского радикализма, социально-экономическими, внутривнутриконфессиональными проблемами, проблемами экстремизма, терроризма, сепаратизма. Особую остроту проблема исламского радикализма приобрела в Таджикистане, Узбекистане и Киргизстане. Наряду с внутривнутриполитическими и внутривнутриэкономическими перед новыми независимыми государствами встали и внешнеполитические проблемы, а именно вопросы пограничного урегулирования, водно-энергетического регулирования. В настоящее время в регионе сделан акцент на установление тесного взаимодействия между новыми независимыми государствами.

Ключевые слова: регион Центральной Азии, вопросы самосохранения, проблемы безопасности, внутренняя и внешняя политика

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For most of the 20th century, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were republics of the Soviet Union. Moscow controlled their political and economic development for decades, which did not give them a chance of self-government. When the Iron Curtain fell, the five countries were ill-prepared for a smooth transition from the old communist regime to democracy.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, Central Asia was indeed considered one of the most underdeveloped, backward parts of Asia. These are traditional societies where there is no meaningful civil society that will put pressure on those in power to carry out reforms, and also, of course, the leadership has an obligation to use all means at their disposal to suppress any political pluralism or any dissent [1, c. 212].

Most people in the region do not consider themselves citizens of a single nation, but identify themselves with their families, clans, tribes, localities, or religions, and many Central Asian institutions date back to a feudal past.

These societies are largely based on kinship lines, and this social organization is very different from the more individualistic Western society. These social differences play into how institutions work, how government works, and how corruption is perceived. Business-based opposition has more potential in Kazakhstan. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are more pluralistic than Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Kyrgyzstan went through “color revolutions”. Many researchers have

suggested that this was not a revolution, but a change of elites. But at least there has been a change of government in Kyrgyzstan, which is not seen in most other Central Asian countries.

Slow economic progress and a growing gap between the wealthy elites and the vast majority of the poor are fueling unrest in the region. Poverty, combined with a lack of institutionalized means of dissent, creates fertile ground for radical Islam [2].

The Central Asian region has been disappointing in terms of democracy building. In fact, the situation seems to be getting worse every year. Initially, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan seemed to be making steady progress in developing democratic or quasi-democratic politics, but over the past two years' regimes in each country have become more authoritarian. From the very beginning Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan had strong rulers. Hopes of achieving a political opening in the first case were largely dashed after the February 1999 bombings in Tashkent.

The main reason why democracies have not developed in Central Asia is that the leaders of the region do not want it. They portray their population as unprepared for democracy, politically immature and capable of succumbing to extreme ideologies. In addition, the leaders of this region claim that the people respect strong rulers and love them [3, c. 14].

Most importantly, they argue that the region is too volatile to allow the risk of population empowerment. The latter explanation has become more popular given the apparently deteriorating security situation in and around the region. All leaders in the region argue that security concerns are of paramount importance and that the first task facing the state is to maintain stability and public order. Decisions about economic reform and building political institutions are regularly subjected to the litmus test of whether political initiatives can help the government keep the peace [4].

However, those in power invariably believe that their continuation in office is inseparable from the cause of stability. This is partly because they see themselves as the best fit to rule, but in many cases it's also because they don't want to lose the benefits of power. The latter allowed each of these people to enrich themselves, their families and their close friends. The abuse with which this occurred varied from country to country, but the pattern is regional. This, of course, exposes governments to the potential risk of their populations, especially if living conditions deteriorate. Alternative elites, denied any opportunity to share economic and political power, can take advantage of popular discontent. Thus, the behavior of leaders can have a powerful influence on the nature of security threats in the region.

The level of readiness for democratic institution-building and the level of public participation in dealing with civil society issues varied significantly in different countries. Unfortunately, many of the supporting structures needed to build a democracy are disappearing in these countries every year, including the dedicated elite and institutions needed to sustain a pluralistic or democratic society. The implications of this decision are still unclear, but they will be tested as each of the current leaders inevitably retires from the political scene. Each country's response to this challenge is likely to be quite different [5, c. 168].

All five CAR countries are becoming more and more unique. Much of this is due to the various choices regarding political, economic and social reforms. Decisions to limit democratization have reduced the number of political stakeholders in each of these societies. There is also an implicit link between political and economic reform. Economic reform also creates new political stakeholders, and the structure of economic restructuring has changed significantly. Decisions are also being made to empower traditional institutions and local governments. Thus, the potential consequences of current failures in democratic institution building vary from country to country. In general, what happens inside the country is more important than events outside it. However, important interdependen-

cies also exist across the region, and disruptions in one state can create new risks in neighboring countries.

Tajikistan. In many ways, Tajikistan has made the most progress in building a civil society, in large part because the only way out of the crisis created by the civil war was to form a coalition government. The civil war itself was partly the result of the desire of certain elite groups (including around the incumbent President Emomali Rahmon) to avoid power-sharing arrangements, especially with the Islamists. The government in Dushanbe also exercises very little control over the country's Pamir population (who live in the Badakhshan region). Tajikistan also has the most criminalized economy in the region, creating clans within the state [6, c. 32].

Uzbekistan. Events in Uzbekistan will influence events in neighboring states. Ironically, events in the neighboring state played a disproportionate role in influencing the building of political institutions in Uzbekistan. The civil war in Tajikistan dealt a serious blow to efforts to build democracy in Uzbekistan. In the last years of Gorbachev's rule, there were many signs of political ferment in Uzbekistan, and the regime felt pressure from both secular nationalists and religious activists. Uzbekistan (and especially the Fergana Valley) was the center of the Islamic revival for the entire region. There were two major political factions, Erk and Birlik, each of which was a nascent political party. In addition, there were many divisions among the top ranks of the communist party elite, with most factions reflecting regional divisions [7].

In this respect, the political map of Uzbekistan was very similar to that of Tajikistan, although the economic, political and social structure of the Uzbeks was more complex than that of the Tajiks. Most importantly, however, the quality of leadership shown by Islam Karimov, who was already President of Uzbekistan at the time of independence, far surpassed that of his counterpart in Tajikistan (Kakhar Makhkamov), who resigned in September 1991, after massive political protests crippled the political life in the capital. Political unrest in Uzbekistan has never reached such feverish heights. At the same time, the government launched a targeted campaign against secular and religious political activists starting in 1992-1993.

In many ways, Uzbekistan has had the most sophisticated state-building model in the region, although it is far from clear whether it will be able to meet the challenges that the state faces. Karimov tried to institutionalize a system that has a strong man at the top who chooses regional rulers but then allows a certain range of autonomous action and reinforces traditional institutions. This model is designed to create a wide range of stakeholders in the regime, especially at the local level. Key to the model was Karimov's support for maintaining a strong social network that was meant to stimulate mass political allegiance. Local institutions (mahallas) have a greater responsibility for overseeing social security payments, making these local officials important stakeholders [8].

The system, however, depends on the state maintaining a certain threshold of economic productivity. While Uzbekistan's official GDP data suggests that the country has not experienced the same kind of economic downturn as many of its neighboring states, the facts say otherwise.

By supporting economic reforms, the government fueled elite discontent in favor of meeting perceived mass demand. They also made it difficult for an alternative political elite to achieve economic power, which added to their frustration.

Secular nationalists suffered from the restrictions that were placed on the development of independent civic and political institutions. Islamic opposition groups were forced to go underground or flee the country. Uzbekistan has a long and rich tradition of religious debate between Islamic radicals, modernists and traditionalists, which is now being stifled by the regime. The nature of religious opposition is such that anti-regime groups have been able to better position themselves than their secular counterparts. The number of Muslim followers of

fundamentalist ideologies has increased over the past few years as the first wave of revivalists prepared their successors, allowing the number of devout believers to expand geographically. It should not be assumed that all Islamic activists are potential terrorists, they are, but there is now a serious Islamic threat in Uzbekistan that did not exist before. Part of it is the neighborhood; Islamic activists were able to receive formal training to support underground organizations in Pakistan and Afghanistan. They also found new ways to self-finance through foreign aid and take initiatives from the drug trade [9, c. 21].

This does not mean that there will be a religious revolution in Uzbekistan or that it must suppress religious opposition. In fact, quite the opposite. One of the main victims of the dispersal of Uzbekistan by unauthorized political groups is that there is still no natural agreement between the secular and religious traditions of the country. Theoretically, they can exist in relatively convenient and close proximity, but in practice the government's efforts to regulate religious life make relations between them more tense.

As a result, religious themes are much more likely to be used as a way to mobilize opposition to the regime among the population than they might otherwise be. It is not beyond the possibility that secular and religious opponents could make common cause with the weakened position of the former, increasing the likelihood that the latter would dominate.

Kyrgyzstan. The situation in Uzbekistan had a clear impact on developments in neighboring Kyrgyzstan. Southern Kyrgyzstan is very permeable, along the borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The risks associated with this permeability were clearly demonstrated during the Batken hostage crisis in the summer and fall of 1999, when a group of Uzbek militants held Kyrgyz and Japanese hostages in a remote mountainous region for several months [10—12].

These actions came at a time when the government of Kyrgyzstan was in the process of backtracking on its commitment to democratic principles and provided them with additional justification. The real motives for the Kyrgyz government's actions are indeed more complex. Like most of its neighbors, there was a nascent democratic movement in Kyrgyzstan at the time of independence, which was further supported by the putsch supporters within the Communist Party as it served their purpose in undermining the role of the leader of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, Absamat Masaliev. After he came to power (by a vote of the Supreme Soviet in October 1990), Akayev became the leader of these groups, and even more in demand after the failed August 1991 coup.

Akaev, who was probably the most astute Western observer in the region, understood that advancing the cause of democracy in the country would work for both the national and his personal interests. This strategy worked for the first few years. Kyrgyzstan was considered a model in the region, a state committed to democratization and economic reform. This has led to much more than the average per capita foreign aid to the country and has attracted some foreign investment that might not have entered the country otherwise.

In the Kyrgyz context, the policy of political and economic reforms has significantly increased the number of stakeholders in the regime. Economic adjustment policies in Kyrgyzstan have had a positive impact, helping to stimulate some new business activity. The most promising reforms are in agriculture, as they create the possibility that the poorest part of the population will become economically self-sufficient.

Kazakhstan. Initially, until about 1995, the government of Kazakhstan pursued a policy of encouraging the development of pluralistic institutions, or at least did not actively attempt to limit their development [13].

Since then, the government has been on the defensive in the political arena, although it has significantly expanded the scale of independent economic activity. The executive power was strengthened, the legislative power was reduced, and the judiciary served the interests of the current regime. The Kazakh media is

also becoming less free. Economic reform has been episodic but largely linear, and it is now much easier for foreigners to do business in Kazakhstan than anywhere else in the region. This does not mean that the investment is safe or that the playing field is high. And here the presidential family is becoming more and more influential, as are those who are close to the "court". Currency is freely traded, property is relatively sacred, and the diversity of the economy is such that independent economic entities are beginning to develop throughout the country. Regional economies are also beginning to develop. So far, neither regions nor independent political entities have much political influence. They are also still too cautious to actively seek him out, but they are likely to be a force to be reckoned with as power begins to shift away from President Nazarbayev [13].

Much of Kazakhstan's future stability depends on the success of economic reforms. Growing criminalization of the economy is also a threat in Kazakhstan, although Kazakhstan is more off-limits to the risks of extremist or terrorist groups than other countries in the region. However, unrest in neighboring states could dim prospects for foreign investment in Kazakhstan and make the country's potentially diverse economy more dependent on oil and gas development, pipelines and pipeline policy. This will worry the country, as economic development is the best recipe for Kazakhstan's success and the possible development of a civil and pluralistic society.

Turkmenistan. In many ways, Turkmenistan is the opaquest of all Central Asian countries. He has an anachronistic political system. Saparmurad Niyazov adopted the name Turkmenbashi (Head of the Turkmen) in the style of Attatürk, and created a cult of personality that made him more like a space-age version of the traditional medieval khan. His seventy-five-foot-tall golden likeness sits on the Arch of Neutrality, which rotates with the sun, casting Niyazov's shadow over much of downtown Ashgabat, the country's capital. The most prominent institutions are named after Niyazov, and his photograph is displayed at almost every important intersection and on all but the most insignificant of the Turkmen currencies. The media is tightly controlled and there is no intellectual life to speak of in the country [14].

In the early years of independence, when it seemed that oil and gas wealth was just around the corner and that there would be enough income to raise the general standard of living of this small, sparsely populated nation, the features of the Turkmen political system seemed less significant, a concern to potential political and economic stakeholders. There has never been much political opposition in that country, and Niyazov's rivals from the old communist party elite were forced to leave the country. The president has been able to use foreign interest in Turkmenistan's oil and gas resources to accumulate personal wealth for his family and close friends. However, other branches of the economy (notably the cotton sector) have allowed the leading regional families (often powerful due to their tribal origins) to continue to maintain some economic influence. Niyazov tried to keep them at arm's length by periodically turning cadres close to him (including members of these families), but these influential regional families are sure to try to assert their influence in any subsequent succession struggle. However, they will not have democratic institutions to use in these efforts [15, c. 81 ; 16].

The problem of authoritarianism in Central Asia is very complex. Its economic aspect shows that the presence of national ideologies based on the artificial combination of different ideas and views, along with the general economic underdevelopment of the region, under the auspices of protecting democracy, actually led to attempts by political groups to seize power in their own hands. The goal was simple: gain access to energy production and then redistribute very high incomes. The ideological aspect is that nationalism has become practically an official ideology in Central Asia, since authoritarianism, combined with ethnic nationalism, the criminalization of power and the underdevelopment of party systems, could not lead to anything else. A characteristic feature of the political sys-

tem: the presidential form of government, combined with authoritarianism, means constant changes in legislation for one's own convenience. Authoritarian regimes almost completely blocked political life in the region and created inefficient economic models.

Independence has brought many new problems to the states of Central Asia, and also increases the number of former crises and questions. At the same time, statehood means that the leaders of these former Soviet republics have new tools to try to solve these problems, but international assistance and statehood tools are often used unwisely or not to their full potential.

The biggest danger facing any of these states is not from Islam or the imperialism of any superpower in the region, but from the need to transfer power from current politicians to new politicians and a new generation. Few leaders are willing to voluntarily leave power, and this complicates the task of political and economic reform. Added to this are the challenges of national consolidation, which are yet to be faced everywhere, especially in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan [3, c. 154].

Over the past decade, Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have been involved in negotiations to define their state borders. Strong politics, economic pressure, hidden backroom deals, nationalist sentiments, public discontent and an atmosphere of mutual distrust have characterized this process in their own way. A peaceful and transparent resolution of border issues will have a positive impact on regional security, economic cooperation, ethnic relations, and efforts to combat drug trafficking and religious extremism. But the process of resolving territorial disputes has not ended to this day, defining a new map of Central Asia [17].

Independence for the states of Central Asia has reopened a Pandora's box of border disputes. Many of the current difficulties can be attributed directly to the difficult Soviet legacy. Moscow established administrative boundaries for its Central Asian republics in the mid-1920s that followed neither natural geographic boundaries nor strict ethnic lines. Soviet planners often avoided creating more homogeneous or compact republics for fear that they would encourage separatism. In addition, given the highly centralized nature of Soviet planning, economic and transport links were designed to freely cross the borders of the republic. Goods moved mostly unhindered across these internal borders, and people would notice little more than a sign or a small police post as they moved between republics [18, c. 98].

All countries in the region are in a state of economic crisis and have a wide range of social problems. Political opposition became radical in some areas. Under these circumstances, tensions over borders are just another destabilizing issue in the complex political and security environment of the region. Solving these problems will require great perseverance, difficult compromises, intense international involvement and genuine creativity.

Recently, the focus in conflict situations in Central Asia has been on the sphere of water and energy problems, which can be explained by the specific geographical location of the region.

On the one hand, some states of the region depend on energy resources, and on the other hand, there are states that possess and import energy resources. Naturally, these conflicts can be managed, since states can determine mutual interests in negotiations. However, due to geographical conditions, a certain conflict potential will remain. This is why collaborative institutions and a climate of mutual trust are critical to preventing escalation.

At the same time, the second big topic is regional relations, primarily with Russia and China, an area for potential conflicts that naturally affect the region.

The important thing here is that China's foreign policy in Central Asia does not seem to be directed against Russia. Rather, it appears that Moscow and Beijing are cooperating to implement their policies. There is no threat of escalation in

these relations, but they still have conflict potential. And, of course, such projects as the New Silk Road affect the interests of Western powers in the region [19, c. 34].

If we consider the conflict potential in the region, then it is also necessary to take into account the development of neighboring states, namely Afghanistan and Iran. For example, in recent years, relations between Tajikistan and Iran have deteriorated sharply. And, of course, the conflict in Afghanistan affects the situation, especially in the border regions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

A feature of both domestic politics and the socio-economic development of the region, the issue of presidential succession in countries such as Kazakhstan, and ethnic heterogeneity, for example, in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, can lead to instability. While it is important to note that, in particular, ethnic heterogeneity as such is not a driving force behind conflict, the question is how political elites deal with it and whether it creates group competition for limited resources or positions of power.

Finally, the reduction of space for civil society and political participation, as well as the restriction of freedom in Tajikistan, should be seen as a highly problematic development that increases tensions between the state and society.

The development of independent states in the post-Soviet space differs significantly from the European historical experience in almost all dimensions. This creates special and unique challenges for these new states.

First, sovereign territoriality was imposed by outside agents and events. The Central Asian states were formed as a result of Stalin's administrative decree during the Stalin era. Whereas Leninist nationalism was a transitory issue, but one that needs to be taken seriously for the time being. As a result, Moscow imposed arbitrary borders on the republics and autonomous territories. In Central Asia, as elsewhere in the USSR, state borders and ethnic composition, therefore, did not match. This was part of a deliberate strategy to reduce peripheral resistance.

Second, the sovereign states of Central Asia emerged from the collapse of the Soviet system, not from strong independence movements. Unlike the Baltics, Moldavia, and the states of the Transcaucasus, the Central Asian states gained their independence through imperial collapse rather than through interaction between that collapse and pro-independence nationalist mass movements.

Third, the Central Asian states appeared on the scene as late developers. They are newly formed political units in the current global system, where sovereign territorial rule is a prerequisite for recognition and respect from other states. Moreover, they face the problems of an established bureaucracy, as well as these countries are severely lacking an effective and strong government [20, c. 373].

For all these reasons, governments in Central Asia lack positive state capacity. The ability of Central Asian governments to make demands on their societies, and their legitimacy in this regard, is weak at best. Thus, the historical trajectory of Central Asia is the virtual opposite of the European one. Imperial dominance meant that the union republics did not have to mobilize their societies for frequent conflicts. When it was necessary to confront external enemies, Moscow was the center of identification. Consequently, during conflicts, the administrative power of the imperial center grew at the expense of peripheral divisions. Moreover, the governments of the union republics were economically involved in the division of labor, which was determined by the center.

Central Asia has once again become a geopolitical chessboard. Today's superpowers, the US, Russia and China, have much at stake in Central Asia. China is tapping into the region to use massive amounts of natural gas. Russia is increasing trade with many Central Asian countries for military and strategic purposes. The United States seeks to bring democracy and stability to Central Asia so that the region does not become a cradle of terrorism [21, c. 148].

And yet, what are the primary factors and causes that play a key role in super-power rivalry? Let's start in order.

Energetic resources. Central Asia has a huge reserve of natural gas. According to British Petroleum (BP), proven natural gas reserves in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are estimated at more than 700 trillion cubic feet, which can be considered the largest in the world. Turkmenistan is the sixth largest carrier of natural gas reserves in the world with over 618.1 trillion cubic feet.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are also not far behind in terms of supplies. Kazakhstan has 45.7 trillion cubic meters. feet of proven gas reserves (about 1% of the world's gas reserves). Uzbekistan is estimated to have 39.7 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves. China is the largest consumer of natural gas in Central Asia. More than half of China's natural gas imports come from Turkmenistan. This represents 51.4% of Chinese natural gas imports. China is the main trading partner for Central Asia and can become the dominant economic influence in the region. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and especially Turkmenistan are important suppliers of natural gas to China. The China-Central Asia Natural Gas Pipeline is a group of four pipelines that run through Central Asia and deliver natural gas to China. China is diversifying the origins and routes of its gas pipelines to reduce its geopolitical influence and expand its presence in Central Asia. China and Russia signed a 30-year, \$400 billion natural gas deal. This deal allows Russia to withdraw from the European energy market. China benefits from diversifying sources of natural gas imports [22, c. 99].

In December 2010, the leaders of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India signed an agreement to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to India. (TAPI Pipeline). The US strongly supports the pipeline as a way to diversify the flow of energy production in Central Asia. The US also approved the creation of a trans-Caspian gas pipeline linking natural gas in Central Asia with the European energy market. The US has said it supports the expansion and diversification of natural gas pipelines in Central Asia to meet global energy needs [21, c. 56].

Security. Central Asia is an extremely important region for the world's superpowers for national security purposes. The US wants stability and democracy in Central Asia in order to improve human rights and reduce hostility in Afghanistan and the region as a whole. US policy is to prevent radical terrorist groups from gaining control of the region. Russia seeks to increase its strategic influence in Central Asia in order to secure sources of energy and expand its sphere of influence. Over the past ten years, Russia has sought to strengthen its position in Central Asia through the use of economic and military agreements with the governments of Central Asian countries.

Democratization and human rights. Democratization is the process of transition from an authoritarian political regime to a democratic one. The countries of Central Asia have a long history of authoritarian governments. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the communist leaders of most of these countries retained their power and suppressed any form of democracy. In 2011, then-Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake said leaders in Central Asia were suspicious of democratic reform and, with few exceptions, maintained tight restrictions on political, social, religious and economic life in the countries. All CAR countries have an authoritarian regime. Although after the death of Saparmurat Niyazava and Islam Karimov, some of the cruel laws adopted by their predecessors were weakened. Tajik President Emomali Rahmon was elected in 1990. President of Tajikistan E. Rahmon remained in power, although he stated that in 2020-2021. give up power. Only in Kyrgyzstan, because of the color revolutions, the power is constantly changing [18, c. 100 ; 23].

Trade. The Central Asian republics have vast reserves of natural resources, but they could benefit greatly from increased foreign investment and additional infrastructure. Kazakhstan is the world's largest exporter of uranium. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have large deposits of gold and minerals. They are also major producers of cotton and wool. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan export significant volumes of natural gas and oil. The US has consistently promoted

free market capitalism in Central Asia to open up new markets for US companies. The US maintains bilateral investment treaties with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. US trade with Central Asia accounts for less than 1% of global US trade. In 2013, the US imported oil refining equipment, agricultural products, fabrics, dried foods, and inorganic chemicals from Central Asia. The United States has exported civil aircraft, automobiles, oil and gas equipment, poultry farming and communications equipment to Central Asia. Currently, the largest trading partners in terms of volume in Central Asia are Russia, China, Turkey and Iran. Intra-regional trade will increase significantly thanks to open markets and local trade agreements. The New Silk Road Initiative was launched by the US in 2011 as a way to help integrate and connect Afghanistan and Central Asia with Europe and East Asia. The New Silk Road Initiative promotes economic ties in four key areas: regional energy markets, trade and transport, customs and border operations, and businesses and people [21, с. 148].

And finally, Central Asia will continue to be a huge energy supplier for China and Russia. The US will continue to support the creation of new gas pipelines connecting Central Asia with South Asia and Europe.

Russia is seeking support from regional leaders to create a military and economic layer in Central Asia. China is also using its economic influence to win significant privileges in Central Asia. The US is seeking greater security stabilization in the region to promote peace and democracy. Democratic reforms continue to be a problem in Central Asia. However, in the CAR, opposition political parties and international organizations do not have much influence on changing authoritative laws and stopping government corruption. Climate change in Central Asia is a growing threat due to water scarcity. The lack of water will cause the dense coastal environment to turn into a desert. Fishing and cotton growing will deteriorate due to lack of irrigation. Trade between the countries of Central Asia is extremely low. Intra-regional trade could expand exponentially. The creation of the New Silk Road initiative should help intra-regional trade, as well as strengthen the geopolitical role of Central Asia in Eurasia.

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