



Geopolitical factors and processes in Central Asia

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ABSTRACT

In the article natural and geographical, social and economical and logistics opportunities in states of Central Asia have been considered. The research on theme concept “Central Asia: its borders, territory” have been analyzed. Natural and geographical conditions, social and economic development level, logistics opportunities of the countries located in the region have been considered. Analyses and synthesis, historical logical, comparative study, general conclusion methods have been used in the article.

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Markaziy Osiyodagi geosiyosiy omillari va jarayonlari

Kalit soʻzlar:

Oʻrta Osiyo,
Oʻrta Osiyo,
Buyuk Ipak yoʻli,
geografiya,
logistika,
milliy manfaat,
geografik muhit,
geosiyosiy omil,
demografiya.

ANNOTATSIYA

Maqolada Markaziy Osiyo davlatlarining tabiiy-geografik, ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy va logistika imkoniyatlari koʻrib chiqildi. “Markaziy Osiyo: uning chegaralari, hududi” mavzusidagi ilmiy tadqiqotda mintaqada joylashgan davlatlarning tabiiy-geografik sharoitlari, ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy rivojlanish darajasi, logistika imkoniyatlari koʻrib chiqildi. Maqolada tahlil va sintez, tarixiy mantiqiy, qiyosiy tadqiq, umumiy xulosa usullari foydalanilgan.

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Геополитические факторы и процессы в Центральной Азии

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

Центральная Азия,
Средняя Азия,
Великий шелковый путь,
география,
логистика,
национальный интерес,
географическая среда,
геополитический фактор,
демография.

В статье рассмотрены природно-географические, социально-экономические и логистические возможности государств Центральной Азии. Проанализированы исследования на тему «Центральная Азия: ее границы, территория». Рассмотрены природно-географические условия, уровень социально-экономического развития, логистические возможности стран, расположенных в регионе. В статье использованы методы анализа и синтеза, историко-логический, сравнительного исследования, общий вывод.

INTRODUCTION

Our country is located in the heart of Central Asia, in connecting region of the West and the East. After the collapse of former union, the Central Asian countries entered the field as full members of international law. Due to its huge area, fertile lands, natural resources, labor force, transport and logistics, huge unexploited domestic market, has become the object of many studies.

A large-scale cooperation of our country with the near and far neighboring countries depends on stability in the region. Ensuring security, interethnic harmony and religious tolerance in the fifth direction of the Strategy of Actions on five priority directions of development of Uzbekistan in 2017–2021, conducting a well-thought-out, mutually beneficial and practical foreign policy focused on strengthening the independence and sovereignty of our country, creating an environment of security, stability and friendly neighborhood around Uzbekistan, and strengthening the international prestige of our country [1].

As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev noted, “Uzbekistan is directly interested in transformation of this region into a region of stability, consistent development and good neighborliness. A peaceful, economically developed Central Asia is the most important goal and main task that we strive for. Uzbekistan is a firm supporter of mutual dialogue, practical cooperation and strengthening of good neighborliness. We are ready to cooperate with the countries of Central Asia on the basis of reasonable compromise on all issues without exception” [2].

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODS

Our nation has been located at the crossroads of Great Silk Road, connecting the West and the East since ancient times. Our region has gained wide attention for its nature, climate, fertile lands and mineral resources. For this reason, it has been an important research topic of social and political sciences both in distant past and today.

Ma'lumki “Markaziy Osiyo” (o'zb. *Markaziy Osiyo*, rus. *Sentralnaya Aziya*, kaz. *Ortaliq Aziya*, mong. *Töv Azi*, turkm. *Merkezi Aziya*, kirg. *Borbor Aziya*, tadj. *Osiyoi Markazū*, pers. آسیای مرکزی, urdu *وسط ایشیا*, kit. 中亚) – The term was introduced into social and political literature by the German geographer Alexander Humboldt in 1843. Central Asia usually includes the landlocked regions of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. Researcher Savitsky uses the term Turan for this region widely [3].

The term “Central Asia” is widely used in geographical sources from the time of the former Soviet Union. It does not include Kazakhstan. Thus, the terms Central Asia and Kazakhstan were used as separate concepts. The division of Soviet state into a number of economic regions may have been the reason for the use of these terms [4].

As recognized by UNESCO, the Central Asian region includes Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Western China, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Punjab, Kashmir, North takes the territories of India, North Pakistan, Northeast Iran., Sometimes there is also an ethnic approach to defining the territory of Central Asia. It mainly refers to the lands inhabited by Turkic peoples, Mongolians and Tibetans.

By the 1990s, American political scientist Michael Mandelbaum began to interpret the meaning of this term in completely different way. In his opinion, Central Asia should be understood as former Soviet republics (including Kazakhstan), Western China (Xinjin-Uyghur Autonomous Region), Afghanistan, regions adjacent to India-Pakistan borders, and Mongolia. Of course, the peoples of this region have always been in economic and cultural relations in different times, sometimes within different kingdoms. It can be seen that there are a number of historical, cultural and economic grounds for such opinion. On the other hand, the purpose of such coverage of territorial expanses of Central Asia may have been interpreted in order to destroy Russia historical claim to Central Asia [5].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the eve of new millennium, the Central Asian countries gained their independence and became full-fledged subjects of international law and international relations. These countries have taken a step towards independent political development and renewal of socio-economic relations. They are trying to strengthen their position among other countries of the world based on the level of their social and economic development and potential. These countries faced the task of eliminating tragic consequences of failed historical experiment in short period of time. They faced difficult task of building a truly civil society with a free market economy, democratic, and reliable protection of human rights and freedoms.

When it comes to the solution of such tasks, the analysis of current social and political situation in these countries is important.

Central Asia territory, location, geostrategic, natural-physical opportunities are a point of importance in modern international politics. After the collapse of former union, as a full-fledged subject of international law, the countries of the region are actively participating in various integration processes in international arena. The traditional term “Kazakhstan and Central Asia” was abandoned.

Central Asia territory, location, geostrategic, natural and physical opportunities are a point of importance in modern international politics. After the collapse of former union, as a full-fledged subject of international law, the countries of region are actively participating in various integration processes in international arena. Central Asia is also important as a link connecting the regions of China, India, Russia, and the Middle East, with its population, labor force, territory, natural resources, transport logistics, advanced science and technology. Together with Afghanistan, it has an area of 4.5 million square kilometers and more than eighty million people live there.

If we analyze social and economic, geographical and physical indicators of the countries located in the region, we can witness the following scene.

Kazakhstan is a country located in the center of the Eurasian continent. Its area is equal to 2.724 million square kilometers, and it ranks 9th in terms of area in the world. Kazakhstan is extremely rich in natural resources. Gold, silver, chrome, svinets, tungsten reserves take the leading place in the world in terms of quantity. In central part of the country, there are many copper mines and rare metals. Coal reserves are located in the northern regions. The surroundings of Mangishloq region are very rich with oil and gas reserves. The climate of the country is continental. About six thousand plant species grow in vast plains, more than five hundred species of birds, about 180 wild animals, and more than a hundred species of fish live in its waters. Forests make up 5.5% of total area [6].

Uzbekistan is located in the heart of Central Asia and connects the countries of Central Asia. It is bordered by Kazakhstan in the north, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the east, Afghanistan in the south, and Turkmenistan in the west. Uzbekistan is extremely rich in natural mineral reserves. There are about a hundred types of minerals. Gold, silver, chrome, svinets, tungsten, and uranium reserves take the leading places in the world. Uzbekistan has 74% of gas condensates, 40% of natural gas reserves, and 55% of coal in Central Asia. It ranks sixth in the world in terms of uranium reserves. Most of total area is deserts. Its climate and fertile soil are extremely favorable for agriculture.

Tajikistan is located in the southeast of Central Asian region. The mountainous part makes up 90% of total area of the country. The district has various natural resources. Svinets, molybdenum, tungsten, copper, gold, silver, uranium, iron ores have been discovered. There are also a lot of fossils used in industry and construction. It should be said that at the moment the country is very rich in hydropower resources. A large part of electricity produced in the country is provided by hydroelectric power plants. The climate is subtropical and changes sharply in some seasons. In the country, light industry, textile industry, food industry, building materials production are widely developed. Also, non-ferrous metals, including aluminum production, metallurgical industry were captured. Aluminum, gold, textile products are the main part of exported products. Import is 3.2 times higher than export [7].

Kyrgyzstan is located in the north-east of the Central Asian region. It is bordered by Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and China. There are deposits of various crystals, marble, shale, gold, molybdenum, and iron ores. Due to the large number of mountainous regions, hydropower resources occupy an important place. Industrial development remains extremely slow. Especially transport logistics are very backward. According to 2018 estimates, exports amounted to 1.765 billion dollars (US), while imports amounted to 4.907 billion dollars [8].

The state of Turkmenistan is located in the south-west of Central Asia. It is bordered by Iran and Afghanistan in the south, Kazakhstan in the north, and Uzbekistan in the northeast. The western borders of the country are washed by the Caspian Sea. More than eighty percent of the country territory is the Karakum desert. Mountain ranges are rare. But these deserts are extremely rich in natural resources. There are many deposits of oil, gas, gold, and sulfur in its bosom.

While industrial production makes up 34% of gross social product, the contribution of agriculture is 10%. Privatization exists only in social service sectors. Industry, transport, communications, energy still remain part of state sector. The country ranks fourth in the world in terms of export of fuel and energy products. Therefore, oil and gas processing industry is highly developed. Transport logistics is not well developed. In 2010, pipeline transport with Iran was launched [8].

There are many problems with the completion of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline. Of course, first of all, stability is important in Afghanistan. The fact that the countries of the Central Asian region have attracted the attention of leading countries of the world can be explained by the following factors:

- Central Asian countries are located in an important geostrategic part of the continent. The most important transport logistics lines pass through this area. It connects India, China, Eastern countries in general with the West;
- the area has a number of natural mineral resources. The region has a large amount of precious metal raw materials and energy resources, especially the Caspian oil and gas reserves;
- the population of the countries located in this area; national economy has a large internal market that has not been fully exploited until now;
- as a result of further improvement of production and communication networks of these countries, it is possible to have favorable opportunities in trade with neighboring countries;
- the region can absorb a large amount of investments, especially raw materials extraction and export industries;
- the leading countries will also have the opportunity to satisfy their interests by organizing production infrastructure based on efficient use of competence and labor force of the region.

CONCLUSION

The approaches of the states that have their own interests in the region to Central Asia and integration processes taking place there are based on certain principles. The principle of “geopolitical regionalism” stands out among them. This principle makes it possible to consider Central Asian region as a single geopolitical space, an area with common political and economic interests. Based on the analysis of geopolitical processes in Central Asian region, the following suggestions and conclusions can be put forward:

First, large-scale international cooperation is the best guarantee for sustainable development of Uzbekistan. Such cooperation does not allow any country to have a monopoly in the region. As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev noted, “Uzbekistan continues relations with international organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Commonwealth of Independent States at a new stage. Our cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has been restored, partnership relations with the European Investment Bank have been established. Mutual cooperation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is taking shape” [2].

Secondly, raising the relations between the countries of region based on good neighborliness to a new level and improving them will be a suitable response to external influences. It is necessary to create an opportunity for leading countries of the world to conduct activities based on mutual cooperation and beneficial cooperation in this region, not for superiority.

Thirdly, when it comes to integration of our country in the world community, first of all, active participation in the activities of international organizations is of great importance. With its participation in the work of prestigious international organizations, Uzbekistan will have the opportunity to draw attention of the world community to acute problems of ensuring security, peace and harmony in the Central Asian region.

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