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GEOPOLITICAL VIEW OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION: UZBEKISTAN'S GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION IN THE REGION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP

Abstract: This article analyzes the geopolitical situation in Central Asia, as well as the geopolitical situation and strategic relations of Uzbekistan in the heart of the region.

Key words: regional, inter-state relations, partnership relations, non-interference in internal affairs, neighborhood relations, equality, strategy.

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Introduction

Central Asia, which is located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, is of particular importance among the regional, economic, social, historical, cultural and other aspects of the world. In this region, which includes Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, the competing interests of the leading global powers intersect. The region has enormous energy and mineral resources, cultural and civilization and, most importantly, human potential and labor resources. At the same time, there is the threat of international terrorism, extremism and drug business, which is located near a major source of instability. This requires the countries of the region to work together in unity and integrity. Considering these circumstances, Central Asia has been showing positive growth rates recently. Regional cooperation in all areas is strengthening. The most pressing problems in the region – security, state borders, and

water use – are systematically addressed. The adoption of the UN General Assembly's resolution on Central Asia is a clear indication of the international community's recognition of the unification of the countries of the region and their joint efforts in addressing common problems, security, and sustainable development [10].

The territories of Central Asia from ancient times have attracted the attention of neighboring countries. History proves that Darius I, the ruler of Iran in the pre-Christian era, Alexander's Macedonian aggression against conquering Central Asia. In recent years, the Kushan invasion of Central Asia, the invasion of the Turkic kaganate in East Turkestan, the conquest of Central Asia by the Arab Caliphate in the VII-VIII centuries, the invasion of a large Mongol empire led by Genghis Khan in the early 13th century, and by the end of the 19th century. The struggle

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between Tsarist Russia and Great Britain shows the enormous geopolitical importance of the country.

So, with what attractive features does Central Asia attract the attention of many forces? First, the geographical location of the region is located in a strategically favorable region, at the crossroads of the historic "Silk Road" and the trade route between India and northern countries – Russia and Europe. Secondly, Central Asia, with its rich natural resources, has attracted the attention of many rulers since ancient times and is well within the geopolitical interests of the major powers of the time. This, in turn, has prompted the major powers to join Central Asia in the geopolitical interests and encouraged them to take active action in the region. The area is in the heart of the mainland because according to Nicolas Spekmen's geopolitical views, anyone who controls Eurasia will decide the fate of the world. Such approaches have, of course, always been of interest to the country.

Currently, all Central Asian countries support systemic dialogue, the interests of all parties and the development of mutually beneficial cooperation on the basis of reasonable compromise [7]. In this regard, especially in the heart of the region is Uzbekistan.

The Republic of Uzbekistan is a dynamically developing independent state. Its microgeographic role is favorable because of its borders with all countries in the region. Consequently, the territorial features of Uzbekistan and its geographical location play an important role in the selection and implementation of domestic and foreign policies. The country today serves as a link between neighboring states. All of this will help integrate the republic into the world economy, attract foreign investment, and make the country a regional center for mutually beneficial cooperation, the transit of goods and capital [3]. It has pursued a foreign policy with its four nuclear powers: Russia, the People's Republic of China, India, and Pakistan, which does not pursue a foreign policy based on compromise or close military cooperation. Due to the fact that the Republic of Uzbekistan as a sovereign state pursues a policy of mutually beneficial neighborly, political, economic and social co-operation with each country in the world, a stable situation has emerged in our country and Uzbekistan is steadily developing along its chosen path. In particular, the President of the country, Mirziyoev, held 18 interstate visits in 2018 and reached an agreement on 1,080 projects worth \$ 52 billion [5].

It is worth noting that in today's socio-political situation in the world, this state of stability can at any moment become unstable under the influence of internal and external factors. The long-standing war in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the south of Central Asia, the deployment of NATO forces in this country, and the activation of extremist and international terrorist organizations (al-Qaeda, the Taliban, ISIS) destabilize the military-political

situation in the region. is possible. The war in Afghanistan has devastated the country's underdeveloped economy. This war is currently the main obstacle for Central Asian countries to access new ports in the "warm seas" and thus to integrate into the global economic relations [11].

In this regard, the March 2018 Tashkent Conference on Afghanistan was held. The Tashkent Declaration, adopted at the end of the conference, reflecting the unanimous position of all its participants, was a unique program for peace in Afghanistan. It was only after this conference that international efforts to initiate the negotiation process with the participation of all political forces in Afghanistan, including the Taliban. As a result of peace in Afghanistan, a "painful spot" will be eliminated not only in Uzbekistan and Central Asia but in the world. It is not only a terrorist and extremist "function" but also a source of drug trafficking.

This will create favorable conditions for the construction of roads and railways, pipelines that transport natural resources, and the development of regional and trans-regional trade through a discussion of common security and stability. As a result, Uzbekistan will also have access to the ocean along the Termez-Herat-Karachi route.

On September 10, 2012, the leadership of Uzbekistan adopted the Concept of Foreign Policy Activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which reflects the main aspects of the country's foreign policy. Including:

1. Uzbekistan reserves the right to participate in unions and international organizations provided that it does not contradict national interests in the country.
2. Uzbekistan does not participate in various military units and has the right to withdraw from the organization if it is militarized.
3. The Republic of Uzbekistan shall not occupy any military bases or facilities on its territory.
4. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall not take part in military operations abroad [2].

Uzbekistan focuses on further improving the economic and social situation by maintaining regional integrity, strengthening neighborly ties and intensifying international relations. In the last three years, high turnover with neighboring countries has been achieved. For the first time, inter-regional and cross-border cooperation has been established, and relations at all levels have intensified. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the words of the President of the country Sh. Mirziyoev: "In 2017, we and our neighbors have solved many sensitive issues such as sharing water resources, establishing borders, opening checkpoints, rebuilding and expanding transport". In particular, the delimitation of the exclave, enclave and other problematic border areas between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, with Tajikistan, is being positively resolved.

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Trade and economic relations have also become more active. The trade turnover of Uzbekistan with Central Asian countries almost doubled. All countries in the region are benefiting from the growing rates of cooperation. Thus, according to 2018, Kazakhstan has the largest share in foreign trade with neighboring countries, with Turkmenistan slightly lower (Figure 1). We can say that foreign trade with Afghanistan increased by 135.2% compared to 2015 [15].

Increasing regional cooperation is an objective, sustainable and irreversible trend. At the same time, Uzbekistan is strengthening its macroeconomic position and geopolitical position. As a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, it has great potential for the development of trade and economic relations, implementation of joint projects in various fields, implementation of transport and

communications and transit potential, strengthening security, and expanding cultural and humanitarian exchanges. In addition, the presidency of the next CIS summit in 2020 will further strengthen the geopolitical situation in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan has been a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization since 2001. Through this cooperation on peace and neighborly relations, joint fight against terrorism and extremism, economic and security issues, many problems have been solved and the country has become a part of the geopolitical identity of the continent. In particular, the upcoming summit of the SCO in Samarkand in 2022 will also address the issues that need to be addressed, as well as the opportunity to attract a new world view, to showcase a favorable tourist and investment climate, and so on.

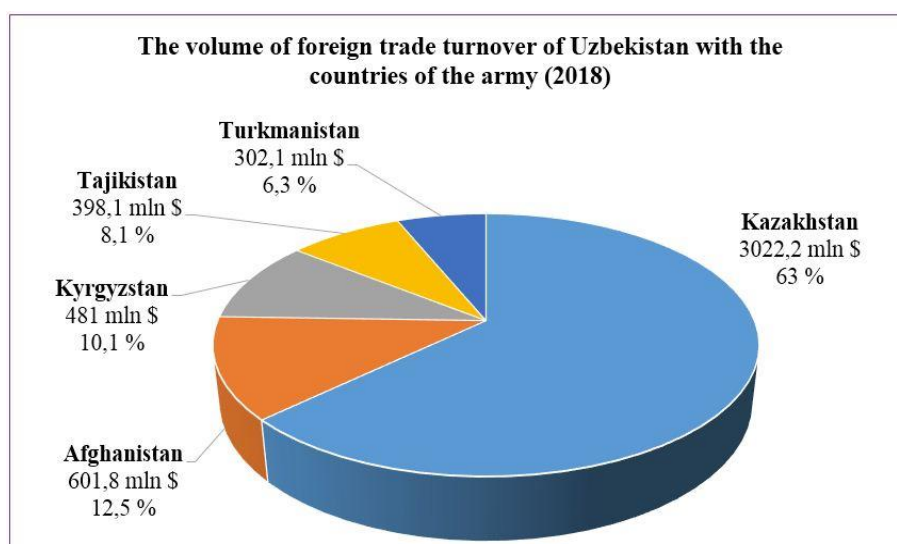


Figure 1. Foreign trade turn over of Uzbekistan with neighboring countries in 2018

It is not a secret that in many regions of the world, the activities of integration associations between countries whose culture and economic structure are closely related. In this regard, it would be appropriate to include NAFTA, EU. One such platform is the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States on the Asian continent. The organization was established on October 3, 2009, in Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan, and was initially joined by Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. In recent years, relations with these countries have been strengthened. High and high-level visits were made. The main objective of this organization is to strengthen trust and contacts between the fraternal countries, to develop cooperation in trade, economic, transport, energy, tourism, and cultural and humanitarian spheres, to coordinate efforts to ensure peace and security in the region. The Nakhichevan Agreement on the Establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States On September 14,

2019, for the first time as a full member at the seventh summit of the corporation council. In this regard, he proposed the establishment of joint technology parks, start-up innovation companies and venture funds, joint investment funds and joint construction of commercial houses in the Turkic countries [14]. Apparently, with the strengthening of interstate relations, the problems in the countries will be considered and jointly resolved.

As the Republic of Uzbekistan is home to over 130 nationalities and more than 16 religious denominations, strengthening a friendly environment among them is a priority of the country's social policy. As a proof of this, the "Strategy of action" of the first President of the country Islam Karimov "High spirituality is an invincible force", the five strategies of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021, in particular, the fifth paragraph, proposed by President Shavkat Mirziyoev. It is also a great honor and appreciation of the world community for

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the efforts of Uzbekistan in the support of the 193 countries in the resolution of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly in September 2017 on the "Education and religious tolerance" [5].

Being a nuclear-weapons-free country, and leading the way in support of neighborhood policy, Uzbekistan has diversified its exports to address the political and socio-economic problems, primarily to strengthen its geostrategic position in Central Asia and to maximize its domestic capacity, it is advisable to increase the product.

From the foregoing analysis, it is possible that Central Asian states should be able to defend their national interests as equal subjects in international relations, and to set specific foreign policy directions, so as not to lose a balance in the active and powerful states in the region. To do this:

Firstly, the path chosen by the Central Asian states in political, economic, social and legal spheres should be based on the principles of democratic, open market, humanism and respect for human rights. Although the path chosen is of a specific nature, it is important that it corresponds to the principles of an open society and democratic states.

Secondly, Central Asian countries should send young people to study at Russia, South Korea, Japan, the United States, and Europe, through various grants, and establish broad links between scholars and researchers, various universities and universities. In particular, further improvement of the system of training, advanced training and internship in leading

universities, research centers and other organizations in Uzbekistan, creating the necessary conditions for meeting the growing needs of highly qualified specialists in the social sector, public administration and economy, The El-yurt Hope Foundation The allocation of at least 20% of the total scholarship allocations for undergraduate and doctoral studies with a minimum of 4,000 seats [1] is the cornerstone of great innovation and reform.

Thirdly, it is important for Central Asian countries to resolve various regional issues through diplomatic means. The positive and warm way of resolving such relations in recent years will continue to shape the region as a more integrated and common geopolitical space.

Fourthly, it is important for the Central Asian states to realize their potential in trade, economic, transport, communications, cultural and humanitarian spheres, security and stability based on the principles of good neighborliness and mutually beneficial cooperation.

In conclusion, it should be noted that Central Asian countries, in particular, the Republic of Uzbekistan, have sufficient resources and strategic capabilities. Effective use of these opportunities will create the basis for the country's social, economic and political development to become one of the world's most important poles.

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