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GEOPOLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF THE USA AND PRC IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract. The article discusses the implementation of the US foreign policy, proceeding from the fundamental values declared by the state, features of the process of “promoting democracy” at the present stage, and new risks (real and potential) for regional security. The article provides forecasts of further actions that could be taken by the PRC in Central Asia. Additionally, authors provide scenarios of future events in the region based on the analysis and a possible US reaction to those events.

This article is an attempt to analyze the economic interests of China and the United States in Central Asian countries. Today, when there has not been an active geopolitical struggle in the region, it is advisable to consider the economic interests of the world powers in the Central Asian region and to determine how much those interests contradict or complement each other.

Keywords: *Central Asia, USA, China, Regional Security, Geopolitics, Energy.*

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АҚШ МЕН ҚХР-ДЫҢ ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯДАҒЫ ГЕОПОЛИТИКАЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ МҮДДЕЛЕРІ

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Андатпа. Мақалада АҚШ-тың олар жариялаған іргелі құндылықтарға негізделген сыртқы саясатын іске асыру барысы, қазіргі кезеңдегі «демократияны ілгерілету» процестерінің ерекшеліктері және аймақтық қауіпсіздікке жаңа тәуекелдер (нақты және әлеуетті) қарастырылады. Сондай-ақ ҚХР-ның Орталық Азиядағы одан әрі іс-әрекеттерінің болжамдары келтіріліп, аймақтағы болашақ оқиғалардың даму нұсқалары АҚШ-тың оларға ықтимал реакциясымен бірге талданады.

Бұл мақала Қытай мен АҚШ-тың Орталық Азия мемлекеттеріндегі экономикалық мүдделерін талдау әрекеті болып табылады. Бүгінгі таңда аймақтағы геосаяси күресте белгілі бір тыныштық орнаған кезде осында шоғырланған әлемдік державалардың экономикалық мүдделерін қарастырып, олардың қаншалықты бір-біріне қайшы келетінін немесе бірін-бірі толықтыратынын анықтаған жөн.

Түйін сөздер: Орталық Азия, АҚШ, Қытай, аймақтық қауіпсіздік, геосаясат, энергетика.

ГЕОПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ И ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЕ ИНТЕРЕСЫ США И КНР В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются реализация внешней политики США, исходящей из декларируемых ими фундаментальных ценностей, особенности процессов «продвижения демократии» на современном этапе и новые риски (реальные и потенциальные) региональной безопасности. Даются также прогнозы дальнейших действий КНР в ЦА. Варианты развития грядущих событий в регионе анализируются в увязке с возможной реакцией на них США.

Данная статья — попытка проанализировать экономические интересы КНР и США в государствах Центральной Азии. Сегодня, когда в геополитической борьбе в регионе наступило определенное затишье, целесообразно рассмотреть сконцентрированные здесь экономические интересы мировых держав и определить, насколько они противоречат друг другу или дополняют друг друга.

Ключевые слова: Центральная Азия, США, Китай, региональная безопасность, геополитика, энергетика.

Introduction

Central Asia is seen as a new geopolitical space, the boundaries of which are capable of expanding or contracting as a result of the action of geopolitical force fields. The force field is determined by the format of the space that a particular state or group of states seeks to control. This study analyzes the process of formation and transformation of the US and Chinese power fields in the Central Asian region as an integral part of the global geopolitical space.

Geopolitical transformations are taking place especially intensively on the Eurasian continent, which confirms the conclusion of H. Mackinder that Eurasia is not just a continent, but an axial space in world geopolitics. At the center of change in this region of the world are the newly independent states formed on the former territory of the Soviet Union. Its collapse allowed the major powers of the world to start looking for opportunities to increase their influence in Eurasia.

The American scientist and politician Henry Kissinger, developing the ideas of Nicholas Spykman, believes that the US political strategy is to unite the disparate coastal zones into a single whole, which will allow the Atlanticists to gain complete control over Eurasia, primarily over the post-Soviet space [1]. According to Z. Brzezinski, the United States cannot allow the emergence in Eurasia of such a state or a coalition of states with the participation of Russia, China and Iran, which could limit or weaken American influence in this region, in connection with which it is called the "Eurasian Balkans". He clearly defines American tasks in the region of the "Eurasian Balkans": *The issue of whether America can prevent the emergence of a dominant and antagonistic*

power in Eurasia determines America's ability to exercise global primacy.

Research methods

Research methods was a system of scientific principles, among which we single out the principle of an objective approach to the study of foreign policy and foreign economic problems. To analyze interests, a systematic method was used, which allows us to consider the political, economic and military-strategic interests of the United States, China in Central Asia as an integral, complex organizational mechanism consisting of elements that are in constant interaction and/or confrontation with each other [2]. The need to compare coinciding and antagonistic interests in order to find optimal ways of interaction between the United States and China in relations with the countries of the region is carried out on the basis of a functional method. This method was applied in the analysis of economic and political ties, the level of military and military-technical contacts, the characteristics of the confrontation, as well as the level of military and military-political contacts, the characteristics of the confrontation, as well as the conditions for the formation of a new balance of power in Central Asia.

Discussion

The United States is approaching the definition of its economic interests in the Central Asian republics linking these interests with the European regional strategy and with its economic goals in individual countries in the region. One of the foundations of this US policy is to eliminate the isolation of the Central Asian states from world markets which includes the activation of international eco-

economic ties between these states and Europe [3]. The strategic goal of the United States is to weaken OPEC's positions in the world energy markets, which should be facilitated by additional independent offers of energy carriers from the countries of the region on the world market.

By assisting the Central Asian republics in expanding their transport infrastructure, the United States is solving its economic and military-strategic tasks. Such objects include the construction of transport communications between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

Various state and non-state funds actively analyze the countries of the region, train their personnel and act as advisers and provide consulting services to support American and European businesses in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan [4]. Currently, the United States has bilateral investment agreements only with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Large investments by American corporations in the economy of the republics of the region are concentrated mainly in the Kazakhstani fuel and energy complex, where almost all projects have small amounts of American capital, in other areas of the economy it is not active [5]. Washington does not want to get involved in the complex and financially costly problems of the region, primarily water and energy, preferring to watch from the outside the efforts of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia.

On the whole, the United States is the main lobbying center for the idea of creating new energy routes bypassing the Russian Federation. The White House is also active in creating various projects and schemes that provide alternative Russian outlets for Central Asian energy carriers to world markets [6]. At

the same time, Washington is trying to keep the countries of the region from transiting through Iran. The United States is promoting the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline project, which is an alternative to the Russian Caspian route [7]. Thus, in September 2007, US State Department representative D. Sullivan managed to disrupt the meeting in Ashgabat of the presidents of Russia, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan on the construction of the Caspian gas pipeline.

The problem of Iran also has a serious impact on the US economic and political strategy in the region, largely limiting Washington's capabilities in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan (especially), where US interests are concentrated on assisting in the operations of US and NATO troops in Afghanistan [1].

US policy in post-Soviet Central Asia was characterized by constant change.

It can be divided into four periods:

- in the first half of the 1990's priority was given to relations with Russia, Central Asia was perceived as the "backyard" of the Russian Federation. This period coincided with the presidencies of George W. Bush Sr. and the first presidency of W. Clinton;

- in the second half of the 1990's there was an intensification of US policy in the post-Soviet space, strategic rivalry with Russia grew, but the strategic priority of the Russian Federation in Central Asia was only partially contested, the concept of the "backyard" was preserved [8]. This period coincided with the second presidential term of W. Clinton;

- after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the US strategy in the region became quite aggressive. The entry into Afghanistan caused an intensification of politics in post-Soviet Central Asia as well [9].

Rivalry with Russia (and partly with China) peaked during the "color revolutions" and Russia's war with Georgia in 2008. This period coincided with the presidency of George W. Bush;

- during the presidency of B. Obama, attempts were made to establish a dialogue with Russia and China. At the same time, the priority of the post-Soviet space, which was originally associated with European affairs, has decreased [10]. Afghan politics has gone through a drastic change from increased fighting (the start of Obama's presidency) to plans for troop withdrawals and growing awareness of the possibility of defeat.

In the future, one can predict further complication of the Afghan problems and the associated growth of US, Russian and Chinese interest in post-Soviet Central Asia. In this regard, the possibility of strengthening the contradictions of these powers in the region is growing. However, realizing that the Afghan problems pose the same threat to the West, Russia and China, the key players can agree on positive interaction. If Obama is re-elected, perhaps the chances that the Americans will look for ways to reach an agreement with other great powers will increase [2].

The United States recognizes that at the present time "forward movement is suspended" in matters of democracy; at the same time they declare their "presence" and "interaction with the governments and civil society of countries".

It is quite clear that Washington is not talking about any rejection of the traditional rhetoric about protecting human rights, strengthening the influence of civil society institutions in Central Asia and expanding religious freedoms [11]. Moreover, the Washington administration

quite often expresses concern about the situation with human rights in the entire space from the Caspian Sea to the border with China.

Additionally, the problems that constantly cause American concern are related to the spread of terrorism, prison conditions and the state of the penitentiary system as a whole. Recently, especially in the light of terrorist attacks in Europe, as well as wars in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, the United States has expressed concern about the radicalization and reproduction of crime taking place in the prisons of the Central Asian republics, which, as you know, is accompanied by many related problems [12]. These include the quality of the administration of justice, the reform of the judicial and legal and penitentiary systems, the improvement of mechanisms for amnesty, rehabilitation and resocialization of convicts, employment, etc.

Washington's intentions to build a more open society "so that people can find a constructive way out of their problems" and "are not forced to find destructive ways out for themselves" have not changed much. Nevertheless, the United States will be forced to reconsider its attitude towards the inhabitants of prisons as potential members of illegal armed groups.

The United States, for all its geopolitical might, cannot remain indifferent to the activation of other players in the region, which can be divided (given the organizational and geopolitical isolation of South and Central Asia indicated by the Americans) into "external" ones (PRC, Russia, Turkey, Iran, etc.) and "internal" (India and Pakistan).

During the years of the anti-Taliban operation in Afghanistan, the dependence of the region under consideration on large-scale eco-

economic ties with China has increased [13]. In terms of trade volume with the five Central Asian republics, China has already surpassed Russia (even despite the increased activity of the latter). As the media emphasize, Washington has “mixed” feelings about this and is showing ever more keen attention to issues related to the principles of Chinese investment and its clearly different from Western economic and legal standards, the attitude towards the local (non-Chinese) labor force, quality of projects, etc. As for the Chinese-led SCO, it continues to be a loose structure with a low level of cohesion, and its effectiveness leaves much to be desired.

Washington has many questions about the decision to create the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and more than a dozen other, less influential financial structures. Calling the investments of the key countries of this bank (in particular, the PRC) “very useful for the countries of the region”, the United States nevertheless publicly expresses concern about its internal rules, methods of making managerial decisions, the role of the Board of Directors, standards in the field of labor rights, environmental protection environment, protection of intellectual property, etc. Such fears of the United States are based on the experience of their participation in the creation and support of the standards of the largest international financial institutions that have been operating for decades.

However, given Beijing's caution with regard to propaganda actions, the emergence of “permanent concern” in Washington in connection with the creation of the AIIB can be considered unlikely.

Another scenario involves the build-up of US resources, as well as the liberalization of

the principles and vectors of activities of pro-Western financial institutions [14]. Any forms of cooperation between these institutions and the AIIB (up to the participation of key US allies in this structure), the creation of new Asian banking “clones”, the interaction of creditors, etc. are also acceptable.

It is hard to disagree with one of the authors that the Central Asian republics do not trust the PRC in the field of border security, and economic relations with this power are considered as unequal. In addition, many among the Central Asian intelligentsia believe that the PRC leadership has a wrong approach to assessing the Uyghur problem, and in the near future this may cause instability on the eastern borders of the Central Asian region.

It should be noted that rivalry for partnership with China and the struggle for control over trade and transit routes to and from China has intensified among the neighboring countries in Central Asia.

Recognizing the particular vulnerability of its western borders due to their great length, weak fortifications, the unpredictability of the actions of other powers, the dubious loyalty of the indigenous Muslim population, etc., Beijing relies on maintaining stability outside the country [15].

China needs neighboring countries with peaceful, predictable and secular regimes. However, at present, the CA countries are considered by the political formation circles of the PRC as breeding grounds for Islamic radicals. Beijing is also unhappy that they express sympathy for the separatist forces in Xinjiang and consider them vulnerable to manipulation by other great powers.

If we follow the logic of the most conservative part of the Washington establishment,

then in order to counter Beijing and realize the national interests of the United States in the region under consideration, it is necessary to provide the United States with asymmetric economic advantages, sign new agreements on trade preferences (which exclude China from receiving them), and prevent China from acquiring advanced military technologies, build up the potential of US allies on the periphery of China, increase the combat capability of the US Armed Forces in Central Asia, etc. [16].

According to well-known analysts, at present the presence of the PRC in Central Asia is not a threat to American interests. Nevertheless, the expansion of Beijing's influence in Central and South Asia may have serious consequences for these interests. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that "abroad, Washington is faced with a wide range of complex security problems, and at home - with severe financial restrictions on military spending" [3].

China is currently the world's second largest consumer of energy after the United States. The PRC has not met its needs with domestic resources since 1994, and by 2015 it will import 50% of its energy consumption. For these reasons, the import of hydrocarbons lies at the center of Beijing's economic interests in the Central Asian republics, and a number of economic projects of the Celestial Empire in the region, for example, the Kazakh-Chinese Atasu-Alashankou pipeline, are aimed at solving the problems of supplying the PRC's domestic market with energy.

The second economic interest of the PRC in the region is its transformation into a market for Chinese goods, especially those produced in its western, relatively undeveloped

and poor part [17]. Today, China's trade with the Central Asian countries is only a small share of its foreign trade, but it is growing, including not only raw materials, but also engineering products, electronics and other high-tech products. Chinese investments in the countries of the region (with the exception of the energy sector) are relatively small, concentrated in the textile, mining and food industries. China is gradually addressing some of these problems by connecting its rail network to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan [18]. And at the political level, he is trying to influence the authorities of the states of the region in order to create a safer and more attractive climate for his investments.

Conclusion

The long-term economic goal of the PRC in the region is its transformation into a free market, more precisely, into a source of raw materials for the Chinese economy and a market for Chinese goods [1].

With the collapse of the Arab East (spring revolutions), the traditional corridors for delivering oil and gas from the Middle East to China, the world's largest consumer, are becoming increasingly dangerous and unstable. Under these conditions, the role and cost of safe land-based energy corridors from Central Asia and Russia to China increases sharply. The commissioning (2009) of the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan-China gas transport pipeline changed the strategic priorities of the Central Asian (CA) countries – gas exporters. Over the year and a half of the operation of the pipeline, Turkmenistan has exported more than 10 billion m³ of natural gas to China, including more than 5.7 billion cubic meters in the first five months of 2011 alone [4].

All the Central Asian republics pursue a generally balanced foreign policy; while they take into account the interests of Russia, the United States and other centers of power. The Central Asian capitals are based on the still existing common desire of Moscow and Washington to cease the activities of radical extremists and to terminate drug production and trafficking, as well as their unanimity in their approaches to solving many press-

ing issues of international security (all this in modern language is called the principle of compartmentalization, according to which allows active confrontation of states on some issues and productive cooperation on others). It seems that in the future it is this unanimity that will be able to ensure the strengthening of the regional security system, which will meet the national interests of all the states involved in Central Asia [5].

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