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POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASING SECURITY CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN CICA MEMBER STATES

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Abstract. Nowadays, achieving real progress in addressing global and regional security problems without confidence-building and cooperation measures is a practically impossible task. In this regard, an effective security architecture in Asia can only show its effectiveness if all stakeholders work together. This article looks in detail at CICA's activities in each region and examines how interconnectivity between CICA members can be strengthened. In order to further institutionalize and transform CICA into a full-fledged organization, the article also provides a number of ideas and proposals that would give it new impetus and relevance in the international arena.

Keywords: *CICA, Regional Security, Cooperation, Institutionalization.*

АӨСШК МҮШЕ МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕР АРАСЫНДАҒЫ ҚАУІПСІЗДІК БАЙЛАНЫСЫН АРТТЫРУДЫҒЫ ӘЛЕУЕТТІ МҮМКІНДІКТЕРІ

Алишер Абдрешев

Андатпа. Заманауи жағдайларда сенім шаралары мен ынтымақтастықсыз жаһандық және аймақтық қауіпсіздік проблемаларын шешуде нақты прогреске қол жеткізу іс жүзінде мүмкін емес міндет болып табылады. Осыған байланысты Азиядағы қауіпсіздіктің тиімді архитектурасы барлық мүдделі тараптардың бірлескен күш-жігерімен ғана өзінің тиімділігін көрсете алады. Мақалада АӨСШК-нің әрбір жеке аймақтағы қызметі егжей-тегжейлі қарастырылған, сондай-ақ Форум мүшелері арасындағы өзара байланысты нығайту мүмкіндіктері талданған. Сондай-ақ, АӨСШК-

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ті одан әрі институттандыру және толыққанды ұйымға айналдыру мақсатында оған халықаралық аренада жаңа серпін мен өзектілік беретін бірқатар идеялар мен ұсыныстар ұсынылды.

Түйін сөздер: АӨСШК, аймақтық қауіпсіздік, ынтымақтастық, институттандыру.

ПОТЕНЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ УВЕЛИЧЕНИЯ ВЗАИМОСВЯЗАННОСТИ МЕЖДУ ГОСУДАРСТВАМИ-ЧЛЕНАМИ СВМДА В СФЕРЕ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ

Алишер Абдрешев

Аннотация. В современных условиях достижение реального прогресса в решении глобальных и региональных проблем безопасности без мер доверия и сотрудничества является практически неосуществимой задачей. В этой связи, эффективная архитектура безопасности в Азии может показать свою эффективность только лишь при совместных усилиях всех заинтересованных сторон. В статье подробно рассматривается деятельность СВМДА в каждом отдельном регионе, а также анализируются возможности укрепления взаимосвязанности между членами Форума. Также, с целью дальнейшей институализации и трансформации СВМДА в полноценную организацию, приводится ряд идей и предложений, которые придадут ей новый импульс и востребованность на международной арене.

Ключевые слова: СВМДА, региональная безопасность, сотрудничество, институционализация.

Introduction

The current state of international relations and world politics is characterized by the growth of old and the emergence of new, non-traditional challenges and threats to security. Strategic rivalry between world and regional powers, aggravation of the military and political situation in Afghanistan and the Middle East, growth of threats of information, cyber and bioterrorism, drug trafficking, transnational crime, etc. are threats negatively affecting the military and political situation in the CICA area.

In addition, the current trend in political cooperation is such that bilateral cooperation often prevails on certain issues. This fact is largely due to the

unwillingness of most countries to interact institutionally, within the framework of existing organizations. This, in turn, significantly devalues the role of international and regional organizations and reduces their political weight on the world stage.

In this context, an important issue for CICA in the current context is the future "political survivability" and the possible prospect of transformation into a full-fledged organization capable of uniting the politically diverse Asian countries [1].

The Republic of Kazakhstan, during its chairmanship, should demonstrate a strategic role in defining CICA priorities, through institutional transformation, enhancing regional security measures,

and assisting in capacity building. To achieve these goals, Kazakhstan should not only cooperate more closely with the core CICA members, but also strengthen its interaction with world powers in building a regional security architecture.

Research methods

The article uses general scientific research methods. In particular, methods of political analysis, such as content analysis, the method of expert evaluation, analysis of statistical data and documents.

The peer review method was used in the study of foreign research papers on the formation and development of CICA since its inception, which helped to form a view of foreign experts on the role of CICA in today's world.

Content analysis has been widely used to analyse the current status of relations between the different CICA member states. This method identified the most problematic issues as well as prospects for strengthening cooperation.

The method of analysis of statistical data and documents was used in determining the current level of economic cooperation between CICA member states, data on the current distribution of water resources in CA, the state of ethnic composition of the population in CA enclaves, etc. was also demonstrated.

CICA and South-East Asia

Security models in Southeast Asia. In Southeast Asia to date, experts identify three security-related models (see Table 1).

Table 1. Security models in South-East Asia



The first model is represented by the ASEAN Security Forum. Over the past five years, the Forum has initiated more than a dozen international conferences and meetings to discuss regional security issues. There have been several general declarations in favor of deepening openness, stability and confidence in the security sphere. However, to date the project has not been very effective or influential. To a large extent, the forum has been consultative in nature, making recommendations, but not capable of taking concrete decisions and being accountable for them.

The second model is based on Russian and Chinese political initiatives to preserve security and stability in the region. It is partly implemented through the interaction of the two powers in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), joint statements, the Anti-Terrorist Centre and the organization's military exercises.

The third model is the system of bilateral military-political alliances formed during the Cold War with Japan, South Korea, Australia and others. It is partly based on the national interests of the US and its allies. At the same time, they are gradually shifting from a purely bilateral relationship to a triangular relationship and a security quartet proper [2] (see Figure 1), which is an example of club diplomacy (some experts talk of a certain analogy with BRICS) or the so-called mini-lateral

format, which is implemented through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad).

The first and second models are quite transparent, open and not oriented towards the development of politico-military alliances. As a rule, these are either dialogue forms and security meetings or comprehensive organizations (like the SCO) that are not military alliances or blocs. The third model, on the contrary, is focused on politico-military partnerships aimed at protecting the interests of the United States and its allies in the East Asian region [3].

The last decade in Southeast Asia has given the traditional historical and cultural phenomenon of migration a negative and criminal dimension. Illegal inter-regional labour migration has increased tenfold, cases of human trafficking are in the thousands, and the number of refugees has increased. This is particularly true of the least developed countries of South-East Asia.

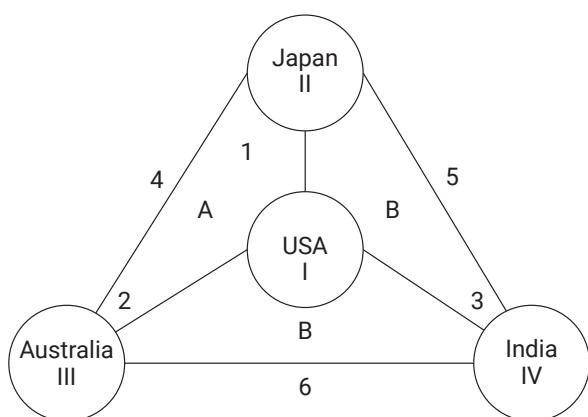
of life, inflation, unemployment, budget deficit, foreign exchange reserves, share of shadow economy, level of corruption, etc. In East Asia, there are groups of states with high (Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Brunei), medium (Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia) and low (PRC, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, DPRK) per capita income. However, when GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP) is used as the criterion, the picture changes significantly. From outsiders, China immediately rises to first place in the region and to second place in the world after the USA (\$20.9 trillion), overtaking Japan (\$5.3 trillion).

The environmental challenge in East Asia has become large-scale and systemic, with the aftermath of the 2010 tsunami in Thailand and Indonesia and the earthquake in Japan, which led to man-made disasters. In fact, these disasters have presented a number of countries (especially Japan) with a survival challenge, which has required substantial material and human resources to deal with.

Geopolitical (regional) confrontations to a large extent add to the vulnerability of the East Asian security system. The Sino-American tensions are at the heart of this case, which is certainly a deterrent in the context of CICA strengthening and potential interaction with the Quad.

To date, this bilateral model is characterized by a high degree of "mutual intransigence". Divergence between the powers is present in a number of issues, including human rights, the Taiwan issue, Tibet, economic contradictions, etc. In addition, the potential for conflict remains between the US and China in their views on international developments (on Iran, North

Figure 1. Triangular interaction



Source: <https://doi.org/10.17976/jpps/2020.03.03>

The economic factor also has a direct or indirect impact on the security system. A country's development effectiveness is related to internal indicators such as quality

Korea, UN reform, NATO expansion, etc.) [4].

On the other hand, a number of interdependencies are also increasing, especially in the financial and economic sphere. For China, the American market for technology and the sale of its goods is still important. Large US companies are also interested in Chinese markets. Lobbying systems for Chinese interests in the US and US interests in China have developed. 65% of China's foreign currency reserves still exist in dollars. In this context, the prospects for resolving the Sino-US contradictions look difficult to predict at the moment.

Traditional tensions continue to be on the agenda in Japan-China relations. Unlike Sino-US relations, they are more regional (concentrated in the South China Sea region) and more historical in nature. To date, a mechanism for mutually beneficial economic cooperation is emerging between the two countries. However, the presence of an American military base in Japan, as well as the "rising sun" country's integration trends within the quadrilateral security dialogue, are factors that negatively affect the state of bilateral dialogue [5].

The Sino-Indian "misunderstanding" is also tied to the history of relations between the two countries in the 1950s and 1960s and is complicated by the existence of border problems. Thus, the most sensitive factor is India's increased military buildup in the disputed areas. New Delhi is currently taking steps towards rapprochement with the US, Japan and Australia, which may also limit its activities within the CICA in the long term.

The situation on the Korean peninsula continues to have a negative impact on the state of affairs in South Asia, having long gone beyond the scope of a regional problem. As of today, the 'six countries' on the settlement of the North Korean nuclear problem (the US, Russia, China, Japan, the ROK and DPRK) do not see the usefulness of continuing dialogue in this format. In this regard, the issue of normalisation of the situation should be addressed through a new approach.

In general, a regional security system that encompasses all actors in the international process and benefits all states in the region is virtually non-existent. On the other hand, with the support of the US and its East Asian allies, new projects are actively taking shape that could play a more practical role in the future. For example, in addition to the common Quad structure, bilateral projects between Japan and Australia and the US and New Zealand in the field of military cooperation are actively pursued. According to experts, the activities of the new structures with active U.S. involvement are largely related to the rise of China, thus more oriented towards containing Beijing and its foreign policy.

In the current reality, it is important for CICA to continue to build its capacity in Southeast Asia and to respond actively to trends in the region. As a practical measure, closer cooperation within the CICA+ASEAN+SCO model can be seen to jointly address traditional and non-traditional challenges and threats.

However, the most significant factor that may constrain the effectiveness of CICA in the region is the growing US presence in Southeast Asia. In case of increased anti-Chinese rhetoric, this could have a

negative impact on the dialogue between member states within the forum, which should also be taken into account during Kazakhstan's current CICA chairmanship.

CICA and Central Asia

Given the current political configuration, ensuring security in the Central Asian region is of particular relevance. The CSTO is the main structure represented in the region and its activities in the field of security arena.

Despite a number of existing grievances against the organisation, often related to the need for institutional development and reform [6], the CSTO continues to play a key role, setting common standards for member states in military assistance, exercises and training in higher education institutions, etc.

Also, the role of the SCO, which combines the aforementioned areas and is an important link to stability in Central Asia, should not be overlooked. The relevance of the SCO is even greater today: it was chosen to link the two global programmes involving Central Asia - the Silk Road Economic Belt and the EAEU - in order to form a common economic space across the Eurasian continent.

Despite the many existing challenges and threats in the region, the following are of interest for the continued effectiveness of CICA where it can leverage its potential:

- terrorism and extremism;
- border issues and the problem of enclaves;
- water problems.

Terrorism and extremism. Given past experiences, the special services of Central Asian countries have begun to pay closer attention to possible destructive

forces. However, the threat of terrorism and extremism in the region remains. The security situation continues to be influenced by those who have returned to Central Asia after their involvement in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Syria.

Meanwhile, although the pandemic has blocked global flows, terrorist activities in Central Asia continue. Extremists have begun to use other channels and methods to do so.

To date, Central Asian state authorities have tried to act in a preventive manner, attempting to mitigate any risk factors as much as possible. First, the special services increasingly rely on soft measures, using civil society institutions as a channel to strengthen citizens' resistance to extremism.

Secondly, the Central Asian states are increasingly seeking international cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Counter-terrorism is always on the agenda of SCO and CSTO meetings. In addition, the Central Asian countries regularly hold roundtables and conferences to discuss regional joint actions to combat terrorism. These plans reflect the desire of the countries of the region to continue to work against violent extremism.

Last year's terrorist incidents averted in Europe show that the threat landscape is rapidly evolving and expanding. In addition, the situation is exacerbated by the current situation in Afghanistan. Due to the lack of intelligence and data on terrorist organizations, combined with the impact of the pandemic, Central Asian economies face serious challenges that could exacerbate existing threats of terrorism and extremism.

Border and enclave issues also continue to be a major focus in Central Asia. As

we know, after the collapse of the USSR, the region was left with a set of problems related to the borders between states and ethnic groups.

The most significant factor here is the problem of enclaves in the Ferghana Valley. In the Fergana basin, the borders and territories of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are intertwined. Three major enclaves stand out among them:

- Soh and Chongar. These two enclaves are currently home to 75,000 people, 99% of whom are Tajiks.

- Shakhimardan and Jangail. It is home to about 5100 inhabitants, 91 per cent Uzbek and 9 per cent Kyrgyz.

- Vorukh. It is an "enclave" of Tajikistan included in the Batken oblast of Kyrgyzstan. The enclave has a population of 50,000, 99% of the population is Tajik [7].

A new impetus is needed on this issue, both bilaterally and multilaterally, in order to resolve border issues. Despite the declared stability and security of regional organizations, no effective mechanisms have been proposed to resolve the existing contradictions. Recent events between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan demonstrate the seriousness of the problem, which could be a trigger for destabilization in the region.

The water issue in Central Asia is now a source of regular crises, affecting all countries in the region without exception. According to the UN, the world has entered an era of resource wars. The main goal of many terrorist and extremist groups is not to overthrow central governments or gain civil rights, but to establish and maintain control over resources, of which water is an important part.

Moreover, water is known to be an indispensable source that determines the sustainability of any nation's economy. In Central Asia, however, water is extremely unevenly distributed and its scarcity is becoming more acute every day. Excluding Tajikistan, the region's reserves of fresh water amount to 293 billion cubic meters per year and per capita water consumption is 6,100 cubic metres per year. Water consumption doubles every decade and this trend will continue.

The topic of water is also highly topical because water is a resource that falls into three categories: social, environmental and economic, and in the arid zones to which the region belongs, also political, because it is closely linked to national interests.

The process of establishing a unified water policy is not yet complete and the current agreements do not eliminate the problem, which creates uncertainty and hampers effective decision-making.

Currently, in the context of the changing geopolitical situation in Central Asia and the growth of risks and threats, the importance of regional organisations' involvement in these processes is increasing. In this regard, it is important to involve CICA more deeply in the current processes. Thus, against the backdrop of the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, the member states should adopt a number of comprehensive anti-terrorist measures, strengthen cooperation in the politico-military sphere, etc.

In addition, the intensification of the forum of think tanks on existing problems in the region would greatly enhance CICA's role as a deliberative body on security and bring a number of issues to a higher level.

CICA and the Middle East

The Middle East is today a highly diverse region, and as such a politically complex one. Over the past decade, a number of attempts have been made by various mediators to overcome inter-state and intra-country conflicts and to create a sustainable security architecture. Nevertheless, the region continues to be a hotbed of instability. The dividing lines have been preserved and even deepened by new contradictions and crises.

The defeat of ISIS has largely failed to solve the security problems and consequently the further stability and sustainable development of the region. Moreover, the post-Arab Spring Middle East needs a new security architecture, and regional actors will have to build it mainly on their own forces, which is a major challenge in itself.

The main challenges and threats to regional stability and development can be roughly divided into three groups: intercountry, interstate (intra-regional contradictions) and the problem of terrorism. The latter is included in a separate group due to its location outside the field of state actors [8].

The Middle East is currently the main focus of the world's major players, as well as numerous non-state actors through which so-called hybrid wars are conducted. In this context, the solutions to these or other conflicts appear to be complex.

The prospect of establishing a local version of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf is regularly discussed by many international relations experts. However, due to the complexity and chaotic configuration of the region itself, the process of forming a

mechanism has been constantly postponed.

In this regard, CICA's role in initiating multilateral consultations would serve as an emergency channel of communication in the event of a deteriorating situation. Non-politicized areas such as the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, and maritime security could be used to build mutual trust. Cooperation on these issues would provide the necessary experience of constructive interaction. It is also important to persuade the opposing sides to stop securitizing each other and not to use the religious factor to artificially create enmity.

Existing inter-state disputes continue to be factors significantly limiting CICA's activities in the region. One illustrative case in point is the conflict between Israel and Palestine (CICA members), where in 2019 Israel objected to three points in the final declaration at the summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia in Dushanbe. At that time, it recalled, the country objected to "any unilateral decision that could lead to a change in the status quo of the holy city of Jerusalem," the declaration point on the nuclear deal with Iran was not recognized, and the country also objected to the point on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, the Central Asian, Middle Eastern and South-Eastern Asian regions have sought to actively increase integration ties through trade, finance, manufacturing and technology, which is reflected in economic dynamism and a growing ambition to be at the forefront of

the international arena. However, with this, security issues are becoming increasingly important.

Despite the large number of different dialogue platforms and regional organizations, there has not yet been identified a successful single association that would cover the entire field of Asian security in its entirety. On the contrary, similar organizations are operating successfully on other continents. Examples include the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of American States (OAS) in the Americas and the African Union (AU) in Africa.

Given this reality, CICA, which currently brings together 27 countries, can play an important role as an engine for Asian integration. The CICA has successfully completed the process of drafting basic documents, structure, working principles, and established mechanisms of interaction, such as the summit of leaders of member states and the meeting of foreign ministers.

Nevertheless, its international impact to date remains limited, whether in terms of building regional security capacity or reducing the risk of emerging challenges and threats.

Among the factors that currently complicate the transformation of CICA in the area of regional security are:

- Territorial disputes between some member states. This problem poses a threat to all Asian countries without exception, given the presence of different religious, ethnic and cultural groups in virtually every state, which, if the situation develops negatively, introduces additional tension into inter-state relations. Examples include the tensions between Pakistan and India,

Israel and Palestine, some Central Asian states, and so on;

- Problems in the field of disarmament and arms control. The lack of trust between states leads to an accumulation of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, causing a backlash. Elements of an arms race can be witnessed in some regions of Asia, which pushes its participants towards armed confrontation. The result is a vicious cycle that is disastrous for the countries directly involved in the conflict and for the region as a whole. In this context, it is disappointing that many Asian countries have not yet acceded to major international agreements on disarmament and arms control;

- Different development paths and historical stage of formation of the CICA member countries. Among them, there is a wide range of understanding and advocacy of their national interests and their own vision of solving regional and global policy problems.

However, on the other hand, it is important to recognize the inclusive role and distinction of CICA from other structures in Asia, which are based on the following key elements:

- the expansion of the sphere of common interests among states with different foreign policy concepts;

- addressing issues affecting all states in the Asian region.

These factors largely determine the core purpose of CICA today, thereby creating a fertile ground for further successful transformation.

In order to deepen interconnectivity among CICA member states as well as to establish the forum as the dominant

framework for pan-Asian security, the following tasks are proposed:

- Closer cooperation between the South, Central Asian and Middle Eastern regions to develop common countermeasures against traditional and non-traditional challenges and threats;

- The desire to regulate relations between the member states themselves. CICA comprises most of the major Asian states. The establishment of relations of peace, friendship, understanding, good neighborliness and cooperation within

the framework of this association is a prerequisite for peace and stability throughout the continent.

- Coordination of joint efforts in the CICA+SCO+ASEAN format to strengthen cooperation and mutual trust. The convening of regular meetings of Asian leaders could make an important contribution to finding effective solutions to today's pressing problems and to strengthening trust and mutual understanding among the many peoples of Asia.

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