

SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL ASIA COUNTRIES IN THE NEW ECONOMIC REALITY: APPROACHES AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the problems of finding balanced solutions in order to minimize risks for the partner countries of the Central Asian space in the conditions of growing external geopolitical turbulence. At the same time, the features of the new economic reality are revealed, namely: trends in global transformations, sanctions policies, a decrease in the degree of priority cooperation, an increase in the general economic crisis, etc. To ensure the security and stabilization of the national economies of the Central Asian countries, it is especially important to strengthen multilateral cooperation and interaction, especially in terms of industrial cooperation and integration, the resumption of ties in the fields of trade, science, transport and logistics, education and culture. In accordance with this, the necessity of solving systemic problems of a regional nature and scale with the coordination of efforts of all countries of the Central Asian region is justified.

Key words: Systemic Problems, Cooperation, New Kazakhstan, Central Asian Region, Changing World, Geopolitical Turbulence.

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Жаңа экономикалық болмыстағы Орталық Азия елдерінің жүйелі проблемалары: шешу тәсілдері мен жолдары

Аңдатпа. Мақалада сыртқы геосаяси турбуленттіліктің өсуі жағдайында Орталық Азия кеңістігінің әріптес елдері үшін тәуекелдерді барынша азайту мақсатында сараланған шешімдерді іздестіру проблемалары қойылған. Бұл ретте жаңа экономикалық болмыстың ерекшеліктері анықталды, атап айтқанда: жаһандық трансформация үрдістері, санкциялық саясат, басым ынтымақтастық дәрежесінің төмендеуі, жалпы экономикалық дағдарыстың өсуі және т. б. Орталық Азия елдерінің ұлттық экономикаларының қауіпсіздігін қамтамасыз ету және оларды тұрақтандыру үшін көпжақты ынтымақтастық пен өзара іс-қимылды, әсіресе өнеркәсіптік кооперация мен интеграция, сауда, ғылым, Көлік және логистика, білім беру және мәдениет салаларындағы байланыстарды жаңғырту тұрғысынан нығайту аса маңызды. Осыған сәйкес Орталық Азия өңірінің барлық елдерінің күш-жігерін үйлестіре отырып, өңірлік сипаттағы және ауқымдағы жүйелі проблемаларды шешу қажеттігі негізделген.

Түйін сөздер: жүйелі проблемалар, ынтымақтастық, жаңа Қазақстан, Орталық Азия өңірі, өзгеріп жатқан әлем, геосаяси турбуленттілік.

Системные проблемы стран Центральной Азии в новой экономической реальности: подходы и пути решения

Аннотация. В статье поставлены проблемы поиска взвешенных решений с целью минимизации рисков для стран-партнеров центрально-азиатского пространства в условиях роста внешней геополитической турбулентности. При этом выявлены особенности новой экономической реальности, а именно: тенденции глобальных трансформаций, санкционные политики, понижение степени приоритетного сотрудничества, нарастание всеобщего экономического кризиса и т.д. Для обеспечения безопасности и стабилизации национальных экономик стран Центральной Азии особенно важно укрепление многостороннего сотрудничества и взаимодействия, особенно в части промышленной кооперации и интеграции, возобновления связей в сферах торговли, науки, транспорта и логистики, образования и культуры. В соответствии с этим обоснована необходимость решения системных проблем регионального характера и масштаба при координации усилий всех стран центрально-азиатского региона.

Ключевые слова: системные проблемы, сотрудничество, новый Казахстан, центрально-азиатский регион, меняющийся мир, геополитическая турбулентность.

Introduction

Modern realities in a changing world and geopolitical challenges and transformations dictate the need to develop a balanced course of state reforms and solve the tasks of the new order based on the existing areas of cooperation between Kazakhstan and Central Asia countries (CA). At the same time, it is legitimate to include the study of the main vectors of interaction and cooperation: a) trends and features of the functioning of the world economic system in conditions of geopolitical tension; b) opportunities for integration and cooperation, taking into account the realities of the economic, geopolitical and civilizational formats of the development of partner countries; c) prerequisites for the economic development of the countries of the Central Asian region; d) weakening of the security factors of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries, taking into account global storms, etc.

In these conditions, a special place is occupied by the issues of studying regressive processes of economic development and their consequences (destruction of the biosafety system and biorisk assessment, violation of established commodity-reproducing chains, rising prices for resources-goods-products-services, destabilization of resource-raw materials and commodity markets, weakening of security systems in general, etc.).

All this together determines the establishment of stable systemic ties in terms of comprehensive cooperation, ensuring effective political, economic and national security of countries, determining the configurations of their multi-vector policies, identifying external and internal risks and threats associated with the dynamics of geopolitical uncertainty. In other words, we are talking about the development of a new program of political, economic and social reforms of our country, which should be coupled with foreign policy initiatives and courses of partner countries in the region.

Methodology

In order to implement the security and development priorities of the countries of the Central Asian region, it is necessary to strengthen ties in the conditions of increasing competition of the countries of the region for attracting financial, investment, human and other resources; liberalization of foreign trade, development of foreign markets, etc. [1, 2, 3]. Competition between the countries of the region does not allow for effective use of its potential, as it stimulates their isolation and alienation, increasing differentiation in terms of development, as well as increased risks and security threats. In this regard, we are talking about the need to coordinate the efforts of the countries of the Central Asian region in ensuring their integration and cooperation.

In this case, in our opinion, it is necessary for the countries of the region to search for new economic models of development and security in a dynamically changing world order. At the same time, one of the possible promising directions is the development of a joint model of modernization and renewal of national economies within the framework of modern integration programs and cooperative ties.

Research results

The formation of a new formation on a regional/international scale affects almost all aspects of global economic development, taking into account the following main directions:

- stimulating the renewal and modernization of national economies;
- changing the structure of export-import policies in favor of import substitution;
- solving social problems and relieving social tension;
- improving the competitiveness of national economies;
- improvement of countries' foreign policies while ensuring national security and preventing possible threats and challenges;
- development of transport and logistics networks in the growth of regional and global trade;
- development of preventive biosafety programs and measures to counter biological threats, etc.

Taking into account the above, for the Central Asian countries, in order to ensure national security, strategic goals and objectives should take into account the priority of preserving state and national interests, the sovereignty of states and ensuring the standard of living of the population of the country. The implementation of these directions is the basis of the foreign policies of the Central Asian states and will contribute to achieving the goals of mutually beneficial cooperation and assistance in cooperation and integration. This is one of the ways to regional life support in post-crisis conditions, as well as regional alignment of

forms and models of interaction and cooperation of the participating countries.

Discussion of the results

In the conditions of a changing world, the need to assess global challenges and development trends taking into account regional and national peculiarities of their development is urgent for Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries. At the same time, in our opinion, it is legitimate to create institutions for solving joint tactical tasks and strategic areas of cooperation for the future, as well as regional-level bodies for finalizing programs (in terms of solving unforeseen problems and situations and taking emergency measures to eliminate them) and plans for cooperation and integration in interrelated industries and sectors of national economies.

It is important for the countries of the Central Asian region to overcome the overregulation on the part of the state in the modernization and industrialization of the branches of the real sector of the economy, as well as to develop opportunities and prospects for integration and cooperation for the development of business communities and their organic integration into the structure of the national economy. This, in turn, makes it necessary:

- formation of the sectoral and spatial framework of new models of national economies;
- creating a favorable business environment in the structure of the economies of the countries;
- stimulating demand and promotion of domestic goods and services in the domestic market and entering foreign markets;
- improving access to finance;
- development of human capital;
- improving the effectiveness of government programs;
- improving the regulatory framework and creating conditions for attracting foreign investment;
- overcoming the backlog of the corporate sector in the field of innovation, etc.

The implementation of these directions

provides for the use of a systematic approach to the development of a comprehensive strategy for mutually beneficial cooperation between the Central Asian countries, covering all levels and areas of development of the region-wide space.

The modern period of development of the world community is characterized by the aggravation of contradictions between the leading players, economic crises of a global nature. The growing tension of interregional and internal regional conflicts, environmental challenges, military conflicts and shocks [4,5]. All this is compounded by the deterioration of the sanitary and epidemiological situation in the world, as a result of which, according to WHO forecasts, the world expects a protracted crisis, despite all the efforts of the world community [6,7].

Under these conditions, the Central Asian countries should develop joint efforts to ensure stabilization and security. We are talking about the search for a new model of interaction and cooperation between the Central Asian countries, which are united by a common history, religion, culture, intellectual potential, communication links, etc. [8]. Over the 30-year period of independence, the Central Asian countries have used various forms of cooperation and integration. The activities of international organizations in Central Asia (UN, OSCE, CSTO, SCO, and EEU) do not always meet real conditions, and international programs are characterized by low efficiency, parallelism, competition, in other words, inconsistency with the principles of smart policy [9].

The geographical location forces the Central Asian countries to seek access to seaports, which causes an imbalance in the foreign policy relations of the Central Asian countries with strategic partners. The implementation of a coordinated trade policy is complicated, according to experts, by the theory of equal-speed integration and the spaghetti bowl effect [10], therefore it is necessary to coordinate issues regarding the identification and realization of the potential

of mutual trade, taking into account the regional and international division of labor.

Integration is ineffective without the creation of a joint production infrastructure and communication network for the sustainable development of the region. To expand the interconnections of the Central Asian countries, trade and industrial clusters should be created to provide the market with the necessary goods and services [11]. A mutually beneficial development strategy takes into account the interests of countries and focuses on sustainable development through expanding trade opportunities and building trade potential. In order to realize the economic potential of cooperation between the Central Asian countries:

- identification of competitive advantages of countries in order to effectively allocate resources;
- the creation of a sustainable infrastructure to provide industry with raw materials will strengthen the resistance to fluctuations in the global energy system;
- expansion of trust-based dialogue between partner countries on cooperation and integration.

Mechanisms of institutional, instrumental and infrastructural support are necessary for the development of the integration potential of the countries of the Central Asian region. We are talking about the development of strategic programs for the development and planning of integration processes, solving financial issues of comprehensive interaction and cooperation. There are favorable prerequisites and conditions for the implementation of the priorities of security and development of the Central Asian space, in particular:

- preserved territorial-industrial relations between them within the framework of the national division of labor;
- common infrastructure of the territory (resource, transport, energy, etc.);
- common problems in the development of countries, which is important for consolidating their potential in solving them;
- traditional historical, cultural, spiritual, social, etc. ties between peoples.

The development of the Central Asian region over the past decades has been characterized by a number of disintegration processes in its space. We are talking about the destruction of the economic and economic ties of the subjects of this territory that were formed during the USSR and their reorientation to foreign markets.

The Central Asian countries have huge economic and trade potential, but the share of intraregional trade in the total turnover of countries is insignificant. In addition, national economies vary greatly in terms of production. Since 2018, intraregional trade has grown by 12%. The trade turnover of Kazakhstan with the Central Asian countries has increased 1.5 times over the past 5 years and amounted to \$ 4.6 billion. According to UNCTAD and the World Bank, today the intraregional trade turnover in Central Asia is \$6.5 billion, or only 0.04% of all world trade. The share of mutual trade of the Central Asian countries, according to experts, accounts for only 9% of the total trade turnover of the countries, which does not correspond to the potential of the economies of the Central Asian countries and the market capacity (75 million people). In addition, Kazakhstan can increase exports to Central Asian countries up to \$ 1 billion. According to the World Bank estimates, the develop-

ment of transport communications in Central Asia will ensure GDP growth of all countries by 15%. Based on the common interests of the Central Asian countries, at this stage of development it is important to focus on: enhancing mutual trade and improving its structure, expanding the range of goods supplied. All this requires systemic transformations in the economies of the countries.

The relatively small volume of mutual trade between the Central Asian countries is due to the underutilization of the existing potential in this area. The use of the economic potential of the Central Asian countries will contribute to:

- creation of infrastructure for the real sector of the economies of the participating countries;
- improving the terms of trade for the Central Asian countries;
- creation of a transport and communication system for countries;
- improvement of the investment climate, etc.

All this is important for the optimal, mutually acceptable use of the potential of the economy by the Central Asian countries while respecting national interests. Table 1 presents the general socio-economic characteristics of the countries of the Central Asian region:

Table 1 – Socio-economic characteristics of Central Asian countries

Indicators	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
The area of the country, thousand km ²	2725	198,5	142,1	451,2	447,4
Place in the world by area	9	86	93	53	56
Population, million people 2020	18,75	6,59	9,53	6,03	34,23
Place in the world by population	65	111	94	116	42
GDP, billion dollars, 2020	169,835	7,736	8,194	45,231 (2019)	57,107
GDP per capita (\$ PPP), 2019 r.	8680	1, 160	1,060	7,220 (2019)	1, 670
Trade volume (2019-2020)	13 %	19%	0,8%		13,1%
GNI per capita, US dollars (as of 2017)	8710	1100	1100	6670	2220
Life expectancy (2021)	73,18	71,6	71,097	68,191 (2019)	71,725 (2019)

Note. The table is compiled according to sources: Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS [Electr. resource]. Access mode: <http://www.cisstat.com> (accessed 23.08.2018); GNI per capita by country of the world.

[Electr. resource]. Access mode: <http://gtmarket.ru/ratings/rating-countries-gni/rating-countries-gni-info> (accessed August 20– 2018)<https://data.worldbank.org>; <https://economy.kz/ru>; https://www.inform.kz/ru/na-3-9-vyros-ob-em-proizvodstva-v-obrabatyvayuschey-promyshlennosti-rk-v-2020-godu_a3757979; <http://www.stat.kg/ru/opensdata/category/361/>; <https://tj.sputniknews.ru/20210127/tovarooborot-Tajikistan-2020-1032705786.html>; <https://www.aa.com.tr/ru>

As follows from Table 1, the region has a large territory and a sufficient population. Kazakhstan occupies the 9th place in terms of territory, Uzbekistan is the leader in terms of population – 34.2 million people (42nd place in the world) with an annual increase of about 700 thousand people. More than 4% of the world’s proven gas reserves, which is about 8 trillion, are located on the territory of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. m3. The volume of gas exports will increase in the future. An analysis of the GDP growth rates of Central Asian countries over 30 years shows a positive long-term trend. According to the World Bank, in the near future, economic growth in Central Asia will average 2.7%.

As can be seen from Table 2, the resource potential of the Central Asian countries is very significant. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan mainly export hydrocarbons, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan have huge hydropower potential. In terms of uranium and gas reserves, the region occupies a leading position in the world.

However, the main risks of achieving stability, security and sustainability of the region’s development can be called: a resource-based model of economies, dependent on the conjuncture in the world commodity markets; an irrational structure of economies with a predominance of primary

processing of raw materials; a high level of the shadow economy and unemployment, social problems, etc. In these conditions, it is relevant for the Central Asian countries to develop a unified development strategy for the main sectors of national economies (industrial, financial, natural resource, transport and logistics, infrastructure, etc.) with access to new optimal models of socio-economic development.

The overall security and development strategy of the Central Asian region countries determines the involvement of three main components (players) - Fig. 1:

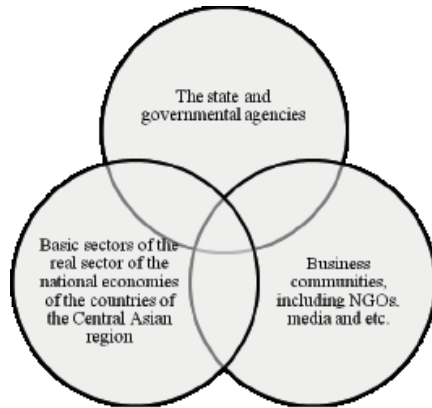


Fig. 1 – Components of the security and development strategy of the Central Asian region

Table 2 - Resource and export potential of Central Asian countries

A country	Export goods*	Resource potential of the country	Hydropower resources, billion kWh/year	Oil reserves, million tons	Gas reserves, billion m ³
Kazakhstan	Oil and petroleum products, gas, uranium products, copper, ferroalloys, iron ores, wheat, flour, zinc	Oil, natural gas, uranium, ores, rare earth elements, combustible and non-metallic minerals	40,2	4000	6800
Kyrgyzstan	Inorganic chemicals, textiles, raw cotton, copper and its scrap, fruits, electric energy, beans	Gold, mercury, antimony, rare earth metals, hydro-power potential	142,5	5	6

Turkmenistan	Natural gas, petroleum bitumen, lubricating oils, cotton yarn, electric energy, sulfuric acid, wheat	Oil, nature gas, sulfur, lead, bromine, iodine, granite, gypsum, refractory clays, quartz sand, gravel, mirabilite	2	300	23000
Tajikistan	Aluminum and aluminum products, raw cotton, nuts, grapes,	Uranium, silver, gold, precious stones, coal, poly-metallic ores, antimony, rock salt, granite, marble, hydropower resources	527	2 (53**)	– (3000**)
Uzbekistan	dried fruits, vegetables and root crops, mineral and metal ores, textiles, clothing	Gold, oil, natural	15	250	5900
Total			726,7	4557	37706
A place in the world			8	11	2

*The top ten commodity exports in recent years.

****According to preliminary estimates of exploration companies; Dadabaeva Z.A., Kuzmina E.M. The processes of regionalization in Central Asia: problems and contradictions: Scientific report. – M.: Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2014. – 55 p.

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In order to achieve stability and security in the Central Asian region, a systematic dialogue and coordinated actions of the participating countries are necessary. At the same time, from the position of Kazakhstan [12,1314], it is possible to solve the following tasks:

- deepening multifaceted, mutually beneficial cooperation and mutual trust in the interests of all states and peoples of the Central Asian region;

- growth of trade between countries, improvement of its structure, expansion of the range of goods-products-services. Kazakhstan can increase export supplies to Central Asian countries up to \$1 billion, and other countries in the region also have reserves;

- creation of infrastructure in the format of a single commodity distribution network integrated into the transport corridors of Central Asia and including wholesale distribution and agro-logistics centers to coordinate the supply of goods and products to foreign markets (EAEU, CIS and other countries), as well as to provide domestic markets with domestic agricultural products;

- attracting investments in strategically important sectors of the regional economy, primarily in "anchor" investment projects in hydropower, industry, mining, agri-

culture, transport and communications;

- expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation in the development of transport communications in Central Asia. According to the World Bank estimates, the development of transport communications in Central Asia can ensure the growth of countries' GDP by 15%, etc.

Conclusions

Thus, in order to ensure and eliminate the factors hindering the integration and cooperation of the countries of the Central Asian region, it is necessary to implement an updated interstate policy providing for [15]:

- scientific substantiation of security priorities and development of mutually beneficial cooperation and integration processes;

- building smart specialization (modernization and development of new innovative growth points);

- inclusion in the development programs of the region on the basis of mechanisms for the development and implementation of interstate projects for the modernization of national ecosystems, taking into account integrated infrastructure, telecommunications, digital, etc. systems and platforms;

- implementation of a unified investment, scientific and technological, structural, infrastructural development policy of the region;

- development of interethnic institutions of innovative development of the region for the future, etc.

At the same time, the development of cooperation and integration ties and coordination institutions in all areas of the regional ecosystem in Central Asia are the basis for sustainable, stable and safe development of the economic space of the Central Asian region.

In addition, it is important that a well-thought-out, balanced course of forming the security priorities of the Central Asian space in the implementation of strategic development programs of the states of the region determines the coordination of the national interests of the main subjects of the participating countries, taking into account the assessment of factors and consequences of geopolitical tension and uncertainty in the present period and in the future. By and large, this means the need to: a) take into account the trends of global transformations and shocks, as well as their consequences; b) assessing the impact of sanctions policies on the state of national economies; c) searching for opportunities to counter the growing general economic crisis; d) developing measures against lowering the degree of priority cooperation of the participating countries, etc.

All this in general is important for solving the systemic problems of the Central Asian countries in the new economic reality of the modern world order and searching for balanced, comprehensively thought-out answers to eliminate and neutralize negative factors and consequences of global challenges and shocks.

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