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## FORMATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE REGIONAL SECURITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

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**Abstract:** *After the collapse of the USSR, the region of Central Asia cannot be organized into an integration space in order to establish closer trade and economic relations between its member countries, as well as in the interests of ensuring reliable regional security. Despite the common socio-historical development and ethnic proximity, the states of the region still cannot overcome the contradictions caused by territorial and border disputes, as well as the existing problems of distribution of transboundary water flows. The civil war in Afghanistan, which has been going on for more than forty years, has a negative impact on the situation in the region. In resolving the situation in the region, non-regional actors such as Russia, the United States, China, India, Pakistan, Turkey, as well as international organizations (UN, OSCE), integration associations (EU, CIS, SCO) and military blocs (NATO, CSTO) are active.*

**Key words:** *integration, regional security, security challenges, security threats, Central Asia.*

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Regional security is a key element that shapes and ensures the maintenance of international security. It is an international legal subsystem that ensures the maintenance of peace and the implementation of collective measures by members of the regional community aimed at preventing, localizing and eliminating various threats to the violation of peace, as well as its restoration both within their region and beyond. The state of regional security is significantly influenced by the alignment of centers of power across the region, as well as by the interacting or intersecting interests of the main poles of power in the emerging new world order. The interconnectedness of international and regional security determines the existence of common features of development for them, caused by globalization trends, which are combined with multiple forms of their differences, due to regional specifics. [1 p.89]

Central Asia as a separate newly formed region has been functioning for the past three decades. It was formed as a result of the withdrawal from the former Soviet state of the republics of Central Asia, which had a common prehistory of socio-historical development, ancient ethnic, linguistic and socio-economic ties. Despite their long stay within the united socialist state, the newly formed independent states had different political and economic conditions for their further progressive development. It is for this reason that attempts to create economic integration communities and effective security structures on the territory of this region, unfortunately, did not lead to positive results.

According to experts, objective conclusions about the state of the security structure of the Central Asian region can only be made if, when analyzing the current situation in the region and objectively predicting its development trends, the readiness of the emerging system to adequately respond to emerging challenges and threats is unbiasedly assessed.

The general trends in the development of the situation in the post-Soviet space continue to have a significant impact on the state of regional security in Central Asia, which is caused by the preservation of ties between the states that originated and developed even under the former Soviet Union. Thirty years ago, the fragmentation of the former USSR that took place and the differentiation of political relations between CIS members that continues to the present is a manifestation of

the implementation by states of their national interests, which sometimes come into objective contradiction with the interests of the Commonwealth. [2]

The CIS member states, as well as the countries of Central Asia, have different attitudes towards assessing the challenges and threats to national and regional security. So, if at present 11 states are members of the Commonwealth, then only six countries are members of the CSTO. In this case, a significant role is played by the territorial and spatial factor of remoteness of certain states from the hotbeds of armed conflicts, sources of challenges and threats to regional and international security.

In turn, the states of Central Asia are showing an interest in the Russian Federation taking part in the system of Central Asian regional security, provided that the national interests of the countries of the region are respected.

In accordance with the plans of the CSTO activities in 2000, it was planned to start "the practical implementation of measures to form, on the basis of agreements between the relevant states - participants of regional systems of collective security and the creation of appropriate joint management bodies" [3]. However, the implementation of these measures dragged on for more than ten years due to the economic crisis that existed at that time in the post-Soviet space and changes in the geopolitical situation in neighboring Afghanistan.

Taking into account the existence of a significant number of unresolved interstate and internal conflicts on the territory of the post-Soviet space, the CSTO member states on October 6, 2007 conclude an Agreement on peacekeeping activities. This Agreement determined that "The decision to conduct a peacekeeping operation on the territory of the Member States is made by the Collective Security Council, taking into account the national legislation of the Member States, on the basis of an official request from a Member State to conduct a peacekeeping operation on its territory or a decision of the UN Security Council to conduct a peacekeeping operations on the territory of a state that is not part of the CSTO" [4].

In the context of the escalation of tension in the northern provinces of Afghanistan, caused by the withdrawal of the American military contingent, it is important to coordinate the efforts of the CIS, the CSTO and the SCO to ensure regional security in Central Asia.

The second most significant international organization contributing to the security of the Central Asian region is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Initially, in April 1996, it was created as a multilateral mechanism for resolving border issues and strengthening security in the area of the former Soviet-Chinese border. In the concluded agreement, it was determined that the parties would not use the armed forces deployed in the border area "to attack the other Party, to conduct any military activity that threatens the other Party and disturbs peace and stability in the border area" [5].

In July 2000, the six members of the SCO identified a new urgent task - to give their interstate relations the form of a regional structure of multilateral cooperation in various fields. The issues of countering non-traditional security threats that arose as a result of changes in the geopolitical situation in the region, namely the organization of a joint fight against international terrorism, religious extremism and national separatism, began to be put forward as a priority [6]. And only in June 2001, at the summit in Shanghai, it was decided to transform it into an international organization.

With the start of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, the SCO members issued a joint statement emphasizing that "as Afghanistan's close neighbors, for a long time we were directly exposed to the terrorist and drug threat emanating from its territory long before the September 11 events and repeatedly warned the international community about the dangers of these threats. That is why the SCO member states took an active part in the antiterrorist coalition and took measures to further intensify the work of the SCO in the antiterrorist direction" [7]. The next step of this statement was the creation of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the SCO in Tashkent.

The Treaty on Long-term Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation, concluded in 2007, stipulated that the SCO member states "develop long-term relations of good neighborliness, friendship and cooperation in areas of interest to the Contracting Parties, in accordance with the generally recognized principles and norms of international rights" [8].

It should be noted that, unlike the CSTO, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in addition to Russia and the four countries of Central Asia, has a geopolitical player in the person of China, which gives the SCO more authority and testifies to its significantly increased military-strategic potential. This allows the Member States of the Organization to set themselves larger goals and objectives.

So, the geopolitical position of the region and the territorial-geographical, geohistorical, geo-economic and geo-strategic components that characterize it have a significant impact on the development of the situation and the state of the regional security system. The listed qualitative characteristics can change under the influence of globalization processes and lead to a change in the scale and structure of the region. An important qualitative economic indicator of the region is its cross-border nature, which creates favorable conditions for the formation of new economic markets, the development of the territorial division of labor, the organization of conditions for trade, and the provision of free movement of capital, labor resources and goods by the countries of the region. These conditions are created through the creation of favorable international legal regimes on the joint (internal) and external state borders. These measures in order to expand foreign economic relations are gaining a steady trend and are taking the form of regionalism, which strengthens the security system.

**The analysis of the emerging system of regional security in Central Asia allows us to state the following main conclusions.**

Firstly, at present, the development of the geopolitical situation in Central Asia indicates that there is an increase in its importance as a region of key geostrategic importance in ensuring international and subregional security, as well as in the implementation within its space by extra-regional actors, such as US, China, India and Russia, their national interests. In connection with the ongoing process of appeasing the situation in Afghanistan and reintegrating it into the international community, which implies the presence of foreign military contingents in this country and on the adjacent territory, the Central Asian region is becoming an arena of military-strategic rivalry between the United States and Russia and their military coalitions. Although today in this confrontation there are no direct signs indicating a high probability of unleashing an international armed conflict in the region, nevertheless, the very presence of military contingents does not hypothetically exclude this.

Secondly, the geopolitical situation in the Central Asian region itself, as well as in other regions of the world, is characterized by the presence of unresolved interstate and intrastate contradictions. Long-standing contradictions that have accumulated over the years between the countries of Central Asia, including territorial and border disputes, unresolved water use problems, have not yet been finally resolved, there is still a danger of inspiring “color revolutions”. These circumstances testify to the presence of still objective obstacles to the establishment of comprehensive cooperation between the states of the region. The foregoing allows us to conclude that the process of searching for political, economic and military forms of cooperation between the countries of the Central Asian region, as well as the structuring (institutionalization) of existing interregional organizations with their participation will continue.

In addition, as a result of the ever-increasing impact of the consequences of globalization on all aspects of the life of the states of Central Asia, the dependence of the socio-political and socio-economic development of the countries of the region on global trends is increasing. The unresolved problems of employment of the population that exist in the states, demographic and interethnic problems under the influence of the consequences of global economic crises and pandemics can cause an increase in internal conflict, which, in turn, under the influence of various adverse factors, can aggravate their foreign policy relations.

Thirdly, the ongoing process of structuring the Central Asian region should end with the creation of a system of political and economic forms of cooperation that ensure the maintenance of sustainable regional security. Achieving this level of interaction is possible only on the basis of comprehensive cooperation and obtaining financial and economic support from international organizations and structures of a subregional nature. At the same time, participation in organizations op-

erating in the territory of the post-Soviet subregion will be most preferable for the countries of Central Asia. In this regard, in carrying out their foreign policy activities, they will be more inclined to participate in the international structures of the post-Soviet space (CIS, CSTO, EAEU) and subregional organizations (SCO, ECO), which neutralize the costs of bilateral relations and contribute to maintaining a stable situation in the region.

Fourthly, the formation of new contours of regional security will take place against the backdrop of persistent challenges and threats (international terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking, illegal migration) to security, the degree of influence of which can only be reduced as a result of an end to the civil war in Afghanistan and subject to a significant improvement socio-economic situation in the states of Central Asia.

Fifth, an assessment of the state of the military potential of the countries of Central Asia and the possibilities of their combat use allows us to say that in the event of a crisis in the region that may require a prompt military response, the states of the region cannot do without the support of the CIS and SCO contingents. An example of this is the events of the recent past, when the formations of the Taliban movement entered the north of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan was left face to face with the threat of their possible invasion of Uzbek territory through the Friendship Bridge. In addition, the Batkent events of the summer of 1999 showed that it is very difficult for one state to cope with the well-planned subversive activities of a significant number of international terrorist groups. Based on this, the countries of the region, when organizing counteraction to these challenges and threats, should give priority to collective regional measures, since, as a rule, they do not have enough national forces and means to solve this complex task.

Sixth, the experience of interaction of the Central Asian states with some international organizations on issues of ensuring regional security shows that they prefer cooperation with the CIS and the SCO. This is due to a number of circumstances, primarily the fact that they are regional organizations covering the territory of Central Asia. In addition, the activities carried out by these organizations are in harmony with the national interests of the states of the region and take into account their political, economic, military and social characteristics.

Thus, the security system of Central Asia is at the stage of formation. Its successful execution will depend on the settlement of interstate and intrastate conflicts in adjacent regions and the elimination of existing contradictions in relations between the Central Asian countries. Given the degree of existing challenges and threats to regional security, the states of the region do not have sufficient forces and resources to counter them on a national scale. This predetermines the need for their participation in the adoption and implementation of collective measures carried out by organizations such as the CIS and the SCO, whose activities are aimed at stabilizing the situation and ensuring regional and international security.

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