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Features of the formation of integration processes of the independent states of Central Asia

This article discusses the features of the formation of the integration processes of Central Asian states. The problem of integration of new independent states on the territory of the former Soviet Union into the world community seems extremely urgent for each of them. For the short historical period that has passed since the collapse of the USSR, the new independent states of Central Asia went through a certain stage in their development and revealed some development trends in the economic, political, and cultural fields of these countries. The Central Asian states are united by a lot of historical past, cultural traditions, and religion. All countries have similar circumstances and similar problems. But despite this integration problems, at the moment, are purely technical and economic in nature.

Keywords: Central Asia, region, integration, history, unification, culture, independence.

Introduction

The problem of integration of new independent states on the territory of the former Soviet Union into the world community seems extremely urgent for each of them. Based on their sociocultural, religious traditions, level of intellectual, political culture, prevailing foundations of political power and foreign policy relations, the political elites of these states are looking for ways and methods of rapprochement with already established state associations, trying to take a decent place for their people in them. This process is complex, it is influenced both by its national and general regional characteristics of economic, political, spiritual life, and the influence of neighboring states and similar political cultures.

In the second half of the XX century, in various regions of the world, numerous methods of unions, agreements, associations of different peoples were developed and tested. A certain culture of integration, the international experience of economic and political cooperation has formed and taken root. If at first pure ideological similarity turned out to be the main criterion for unification, then already in the 80s, instead of ideology, territorial and historical closeness, as well as cultural and religious values, came to the fore. This fully applies to Central Asia, where at the initial stage of independent development of new states, intra-regional contradictions on religious, cultural grounds or as a result of historical territorial claims, the struggle for power and dominant positions in the region became actualized.

Methodology and research methods

The article used materials of theoretical and practical research by both domestic and foreign scientists. The methodological basis of the study is the principle of historicism, which involves the consideration of the problems of the Central Asian states in accordance with the specific historical conditions in which they emerged under the influence of economic, political and cultural changes. This method was chosen for the purpose of a comprehensive study of international relations and the foreign policy of Central Asian states, identifying their interdependence and interdependence with internal and external processes. The inclusion of five states in the research object is due to the active use of corporate methods.

Discussions

For the short historical period that has passed since the collapse of the USSR, the new independent states of Central Asia went through a certain stage in their development and revealed some development trends in the economic, political, and cultural fields of these countries. These factors make it possible to assert that Central Asia is beginning to form as a separate independent region. However, the new geopolitical

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reality taking shape in Central Asia has not yet taken on a clear outline, and therefore it is not known by what scenario events will develop in this region in the future. But, nevertheless, the severity, complexity and speed of the changes taking place in Central Asia require a deep and comprehensive analysis and reflection.

The Belovezha Accords were a surprise to the republics of Soviet Central Asia countries. The collapse of the Union for quite some time was not recognized by them as a *fait accompli*. Although all republics legally possessed state sovereignty at the time of signing the Belovezha Agreements, practically no republic could act as a sovereign state. This forced the new independent Central Asian countries to immediately join the Community. Economic necessity reinforced political decisions: all the republics of Central Asia were connected by close economic relations not so much with each other as with the Center, through which all foreign economic activity was carried out, as well as domestic supply of raw materials and components, and marketing of products.

The high level and viability of the economic interdependence of the former Soviet republics during the collapse of the USSR raised the question of how to transform it at the level of individual republics. Economic interdependence either could develop into a threat that could cause wars, or persist, developing and deepening within large territories. In a certain sense, the development of Central Asia as a macro-region took the second path. This was facilitated by a number of factors that reduced the conflict in Central Asia of the post-imperial period and pushed Central Asian countries towards intra-regional integration:

- common threat factor — the need to ensure security forces all the Central Asian countries to some extent to make joint efforts in this direction. The region faced a serious external threat — this is primarily the Afghan conflict. Of latent conflict situations, relations with the great neighbors — Russia and China — should be noted;

- geographical factor — despite the fact that the economies of Central Asian countries are not complementary, but competing in nature (the countries of the region enter the world market with a similar set of natural resources), nevertheless, there is an exchange of resources within the region. Moreover, the dependence of the Central Asian countries on each other's resources is noticeably increasing every year. This is connected, on the one hand, with the collapse of the all-Union economy, and on the other, with the slow and difficult entry of the Central Asian countries into the world market;

- legacy of the former Soviet national economic complex — economic interconnections, common communications, transport arteries, a common energy system, gas and oil pipelines still firmly connect the Central Asian countries;

- demographic factor — while in the Central Asian countries there is no common labor market. The institution of registration hinders this, and the immigration laws in Central Asian countries that have not yet been fully finalized. However, migration flows indicate certain trends in the formation of the labor market within the region;

- confessional factor — the spread of Sunni Islam throughout Central Asia;

- civilizational factor — in Central Asia, the complementary coexistence of the agricultural and livestock population has always been the norm. The place of their interaction was the large city and shopping centers. The current revival of the old economic and political regions, in which traditional cultural and economic types are being restored, in a certain sense stabilizes the situation in Central Asia, mitigating the existing contradictions [1];

- national factor — in all the Central Asian countries there is a multinational population with a rather large proportion of diasporas and irredent of the titular nationalities of neighboring states. To a greater or lesser extent, organized formations occupy the places assigned to them by the historical tradition in the economy of each state, which ties the states with additional bonds;

- military factor — in all the countries of Central Asia the army is in its infancy and an independent national military elite has yet to be formed that can play its own political role. As you know, representatives of Slavic nationalities dominated the command staff in the Soviet Army, despite the fact that Central Asia and Kazakhstan sent a large number of rank-and-file staff there;

- common historical past — all modern states of Central Asia were fully or partially part of the Bukhara emirate and the Kokand khanate and then — the Russian empire [2].

The first President of Kazakhstan, N.A. Nazarbayev, spoke about the importance of regional cooperation taking place in Central Asia: «Of course, it would be best to create a Union of Central Asian states, where I include Kazakhstan and Central Asia. God ordered us to unite: 55 million people, there are no language barriers, complementary economies, we are in the same space, there are transport links, energy. This region can provide itself with food without entering foreign markets, can fully provide itself with energy, and

so on. What else does? We respect each other. The population will only benefit from this. We just need to talk more about this. Both our citizens and our neighbors. The media should talk about the proximity of our cultures, history, language, the future of our children. This integration would be economically beneficial and would work for our security as a whole» [3].

The integration processes in modern Central Asia are undergoing a crisis against the backdrop of ongoing attempts by leaders of individual states and outside regional powers to resume them and give them a new format and content. In view of this, it seems possible to judge that the region over the past years has failed to turn into a consolidated political and economic community. The main reason for this is a combination of a number of objective and subjective reasons. Among the first, it is necessary to point to the following: the initial stage of nation-state building, the presence of hidden conflicts in interstate relations, economic and technological lagging behind other states of the world. The second include the differing vision of the models and mechanisms of regional integration, the unpreparedness of the ruling elites for the creation of full-fledged supranational economic and political institutions, the search by the states of the region for powerful allies outside its borders, used by external players to strengthen their influence, which prevented its consolidation. The basis of the foreign policy development of Central Asian countries in the 90s of the last century was multisectoral diplomacy, which met the interests of small states located here. The limited financial, economic, scientific, intellectual, technological resources, the need to build a new format of relations with traditional partners within the CIS objectively contributed to the growth of their relations with the «big world». Not the least role in this process was played by the interest of the leading powers in the development of the previously closed geopolitical and geoeconomic space, which has significant human and natural resources [4].

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was initiated by the two largest republics of the region — Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, despite the fact that the first attempts were made in 1990 by the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on January 10, 1994 in Tashkent, an Agreement was signed on the creation of a Common Economic Space between these states, which determined the main areas of cooperation. On January 16, 1994, Kyrgyzstan joined him. This, according to a number of experts, was the real beginning of the Central Asian integration process. The participation of the third country led to the fact that on April 30, 1994, in Cholpon-Ata, an Agreement was signed on the creation of a Common Economic Space between Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The purpose of integration of this kind is defined in the first article of the Treaty. According to it, a single economic space is created in order to develop and implement joint programs to deepen economic integration between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan and involves the free movement of goods, services, capital, labor and provides an agreed credit and settlement, budget, customs and currency politics. Initially, this integration association was called the Central Asian Union (CAU) [5].

The next step towards the integration of the three states was the creation of the working bodies of the new integration association. In 1994, the CAU Interstate Council was established. In its structure, the main working bodies were identified in the form of the Council of Prime Ministers, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Ministers of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The permanent working body of the Interstate Council determined the Executive Committee. He was entrusted with coordination and advisory, forecasting, analytical, informational functions, as well as monitoring the implementation of decisions of the Interstate Council and its institutions. A little later, on August 5, 1994, at the meeting of the heads of state in Bishkek, the Central Asian Bank for Cooperation and Development was established with a registered capital of 9 million US dollars. On March 17, 1998, a meeting of the Council of Prime Ministers of three states — Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan — took place in Bishkek. It considered the creation of international consortia, as well as draft inter-governmental agreements on the use of water and energy resources of the Syr Darya river basin, environmental protection and rational nature management, cooperation programs in the field of population migration, health and medical science.

The meeting of the heads of government of the CAU, in which the leadership of Tajikistan took part, was held on June 26, 1998 in Bishkek, thereby legally expanding the composition of the regional grouping from the «triple» to the «quartet». Almost all issues on the agenda included the adjustment of documents related to the inclusion of a new member in the union. From this moment, the new name of the union officially entered into force — the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEU) [6].

A little later, in June 2000, a meeting of the Interstate Council was held in Dushanbe, at which it was possible to adopt the most important documents — the Strategy for Integration Development until 2005 and the Program of Priority Actions for the Formation of the Common Economic Space in Central Asia.

As a necessary step in the development of integration in the Central Asian space, the results of the meeting of the CAEU heads (Tashkent, December 27–28, 2001), during which it was decided to create the Central Asian Union Organization on the basis of the CAEU, should be noted. The decision to establish the Central Asian Union Organization as a new type of integration structure was finally fixed during the meeting of the presidents on February 28, 2002 in Almaty. In general, to date, several phases can be conditionally distinguished in the history of integration in Central Asia.

The first phase covered 1990–1993. At this time, against the background of gaining independence and the realization that it was impossible to develop successfully alone, the basis for the integration process was created.

The second phase covered time from 1994 to 2005. It is characterized by a sluggish integration process with extremely low results, one of the manifestations of which was the constant reformatting and changing the vectors of cooperation. This was clearly seen in the transition from the Central Asian Union (1994) to the Central Asian Economical Union (1998) and the Central Asian Union (2002). Many initiatives have become declarative in nature, which is why most of the participants did not like this integration format.

The third phase (disintegration) runs from October 2005 to the present. The Central Asian Union organization ceased to exist, becoming part of the EurAsEC. The formal pretext was the coincidence of the goals accomplished by these organizations. The actual reason was the non-viability of the Organization of the Central Asian Union. Despite the obvious failure and damping of integration impulses, the search for new forms of cooperation continues in Central Asia today [7].

Conclusions

Thus, a lot of things unite the Central Asian states: the historical past, cultural traditions, and religion. In all countries there are similar circumstances and similar problems, the continued influence of states on all aspects of society and the economy, strong traditions of authoritarianism, the absence of a tradition of national statehood, a weak national elite, and rapid and conflicting stratification of society.

Integration problems, at the moment, are purely technical and economic in nature. But none of these regional problems can be solved without the participation of the whole of Central Asia. If the most important political and economic problem is not resolved, and the problem arises, the need to harmonize the models of socio-economic development of all countries in the region. Now, when new principles of interaction are being developed, a pairing of development models, their docking, is required. It is necessary to build an equal economy. If the right strategy for regional development is developed, then the success of integration is ensured. The integration of Central Asia is necessary in the name of maintaining stability and peace in the region, ensuring national security, increasing its role in solving the problems of the CIS and on the world stage.

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Орталық Азияның тәуелсіз мемлекеттерінің интеграциялық процестерінің қалыптасу ерекшеліктері

Мақалада Орталық Азия мемлекеттерінің интеграциялық процестерінің қалыптасу ерекшеліктері қарастырылған. Бұрынғы Кеңес Одағы аумағындағы қалыптасқан жаңа тәуелсіз мемлекеттердің әлемдік қауымдастыққа кіру мәселесі олардың әрқайсысы үшін өте өзекті болып табылады. КСРО ыдырағаннан кейінгі қысқа тарихи кезеңде Орталық Азияның жаңа тәуелсіз мемлекеттері өз дамуында белгілі бір кезеңнен өтті және осы елдердің экономикалық, саяси және мәдени дамуының бағыттары айқындалды. Орталық Азия мемлекеттерін ортақ тарих, мәдениет, дәстүр және дін біріктіреді. Осы мемлекеттердегі мәселелер мен үдерістер ұқсас сипатта өтіп жатыр. Бірақ оған қарамастан интеграциялық үрдіс мәселесі қазіргі уақытта тек техникалық және экономикалық сипатта қалыптасуда.

Кілт сөздер: Орталық Азия, аймақ, интеграция, тарих, бірігу, мәдениет, тәуелсіздік.

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Особенности становления интеграционных процессов независимых государств Центральной Азии

В статье рассмотрены особенности становления интеграционных процессов Центрально-Азиатских (ЦА) государств. Проблема интеграции новых независимых государств на территории бывшего Советского Союза в мировое сообщество представляется крайне актуальной для каждого из них. За короткий исторический период времени, прошедший со времени распада СССР, новые независимые государства Центральной Азии прошли определенный этап в своем развитии, выявились некоторые тенденции развития в экономической, политической, культурной областях этих стран. Государства ЦА объединяет многое: историческое прошлое, культурные традиции, религия. Во всех странах имеются сходные обстоятельства и проблемы. Но, несмотря на это, проблемы интеграции в данный момент носят сугубо технико-экономический характер.

Ключевые слова: Центральная Азия, регион, интеграция, история, объединение, культура, независимость.

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