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THE ROLE AND PLACE OF CENTRAL ASIA IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

This article considers Turkey's foreign policy in Central Asia from 1991-2000. The formation of new independent states after the collapse of the USSR and the recognition of their independence by Turkey was the starting point for establishing diplomatic relations with the countries of Central Asia. In particular, this work analyzes the peculiarities of geopolitical and trade-economic cooperation of Turkey with Russia, the USA, China, as well as Iran, India and Turkey with countries of Central Asia. Also considered is how Turkey used historical and cultural contacts to strengthen its influence in Central Asia.

The Justice and Development Party's rise to power in 2002, based largely on a foundation of Western values, radically changed Turkey's foreign policy. Based on the book Strategic Depth by Turkish Foreign Minister A. Davutoglu, the internal and external political factors of the country altered the previous policy of "soft power" and, as a result, strengthened its influence in Central Asia.

Key words: Turkey, international relations, Central Asia, regional power, foreign policy, trade and economic cooperation

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Түркияның сыртқы саяси бағытындағы Орталық Азияның орны мен рөлі

Мақалада 1991-2000-шы жылдар аралығындағы Түркияның Орталық Азия елдеріне қатысты жүргізген сыртқы саяси бағыты қарастырылады. КСРО ыдырағаннан кейін жаңа тәуелсіз мемлекеттердің қалыптасуы мен олардың тәуелсіздігінің Түркия тарапынан танылуы Орталық Азия елдерімен дипломатиялық қарым-қатынас орнатуының бастапқы қадамы болды. Соның ішінде 1991 ж. кейінгі кезеңдегі әлемнің алпауыт елдері – Ресей Федерациясы, АҚШ, Қытай, сондай-ақ Иран, Үндістан және Түркия сынды мемлекеттердің Орталық Азия елдерімен геосаяси және сауда-экономикалық ынтымақтастықтың жүргізілу ерекшеліктері талданады. Сондай-ақ, Түркияның Орталық Азияға өзінің ықпалын күшейтуде ең алдымен тарихи-мәдени байланыстарды ұтымды пайдалануы қарастырылған.

2002 ж. билікке батыстық құндылықтарды негізге алған Әділет және даму партиясының билікке келуі Түркияның сыртқы саяси бағытына күрделі өзгерістер енгізді. Әсіресе, Түркияның сыртқы істер министрі А.Дауытоғлының «Стратегиялық тереңдік» еңбегіне негізделі отырып, мемлекеттің ішкі және сыртқы саяси факторлар «жұмсақ күш» саясатын трансформациялап, соның нәтижесінде геосаяси мүдде аймағына кіретін Орталық Азиядағы ықпалы күшейтілді.

Түйін сөздер: Түркия, халықаралық қатынастар, Орталық Азия, аймақтық күш, сыртқы саяси бағдар, сауда-экономикалық ынтымақтастық

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Роль и место Центральной Азии во внешнеполитическом курсе Турции

В статье рассматривается внешнеполитический курс Турции в Центральной Азии в 1991–2000 годах. Становление новых независимых государств после распада СССР и признание их независимости Турцией стало отправной точкой для установления дипломатических отношений со странами Центральной Азии. В том числе анализируются особенности геополитического и торгово-экономического сотрудничества Российской Федерации, США, Китая, а также Ирана, Индии и Турции со странами Центральной Азии после 1991 г. Также, рассматривается использование Турцией исторических и культурных контактов для усиления своего влияния в Центральной Азии.

Приход к власти Партии справедливости и развития в 2002 г., основанной на западных ценностях, кардинально изменил внешнюю политику Турции. На основе книги «Стратегическая глубина» министра иностранных дел Турции А.Давутоглу внутренние и внешние политические факторы страны в определенной степени изменили политику «мягкой силы» и, как следствие, усилили ее влияние в Центральной Азии, которая является частью геополитического интереса.

Ключевые слова: Турция, международные отношения, Центральная Азия, региональные силы, внешнеполитический курс, торгово-экономическое сотрудничество

Introduction

On the territory of modern Central Asia, over the centuries, a single geopolitical space and a cultural community shaped the historical destinies of the peoples across the region. Currently, Central Asia includes a significant concentration of geostrategic interests among the world's leading powers, with a geopolitical regionalization determined by the territories of five independent states. Within the independent states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan live more than 60 million people, with sharp differences in their size, population size, economic potential, the reserve of natural resources and in the social, environmental and management spheres.

Methodological and theoretical basis

Writing this article, the authors were guided by general methodological principles. The method of the system approach, the general historical methods of cognition, such as the principle of historicism, objectivity, the method of analysis and synthesis, etcetera. One of the classic trends of studying foreign policy is political realism, developed in the late 1940s. Central to the theory of political realism are «the notion of interest defined in terms of power,» and related concepts of balance of power, geopolitical strategy, etc.

Features of the Central Asian region

Officially, the name Central Asia was adopted in January 1993 at a general meeting of the heads of states and governments in the city of Tashkent, when it was proposed to name further Central Asia and Kazakhstan as Central Asia. As many are familiar, the term «Central Asia» was created by Europeans in the nineteenth century, which was adopted in the Soviet era by the term «Central Asia,» which included Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. Then, as the conclusion of UNESCO, the term «Central Asia» had a more extensive interpretation and included Iran, Pakistan, Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as Mongolia and Northwest China (Xinjiang) (Asia and Africa today, 1994).

Experts attribute the following to the peculiarities of the Central Asian region:

The geographic region is extremely disadvantageous: it is «locked» inside the Eurasian continent and has no access to the oceans.

The natural resources, capitals, etc., of the Central Asian states are only partially sovereign, and there are a number of unresolved differences between all the states of the region – from disputed territories, the distribution of water and mineral resources, the ways of laying transport routes, electric power and oil and gas mains.

Other factors complicating bilateral and multilateral relations in Central Asia include: the

weakness and lack of independence of the political and economic structures of states, the criminalization of their economies, drug trafficking, ethnic and religious strife.

The main challenges facing the states of the region are not a military-political, but an economic response; without attracting external resources, Central Asian countries are doomed to further degradation and permanent instability. However, even if they are united in regional structures, the Central Asian states solve their social, economic and political problems, usually outside the region, which creates a favorable environment for establishing external governance here, as well as for the rapid transformation of the «problem countries» of Central Asia from the relatively modernized societies, as they promised to become during the time of their membership in the USSR, to the periphery of the developed world.

In the «problem states» of Central Asia, the social base for supporting the ruling elites is limited, poverty and beggary are progressing while enriching the clans in power; local regimes retain almost universally repressive and authoritarian character.

Central Asia is not well prepared for the effective development of external resources for the sake of sustainable national development; due to the corruption of the majority of ruling elites, their frequent merging with criminal structures, the efficiency of the resources received from outside remains at an extremely low level.

The catastrophic and rapid decline in the standard of living of ordinary citizens in «problem countries», importing energy resources, constantly throws out large contingents of the local population into illegal business, which is mainly connected with drugs, pushes the population towards labor migration (Naumkin, Kuznetsov, Bartenev, 2013: 20-21).

During its independent existence, Central Asia has become the object of serious attention on the part of foreign and regional researchers. In his famous work «The Grand Chessboard» Z. Brzezinski analyzes the geopolitical situation of the current decade in the world, and especially on the Eurasian continent.

The chapter «The Eurasian Balkans» describes the internal and external factors of instability of nine states, including all the Central Asian states. Of the five independent states of Central Asia, which he calls «Central Asia» in his work, Z. Brzezinski assigned the most important role to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. «Kazakhstan is the shield and Uzbekistan is the soul for the region's diverse

national awakenings. Kazakhstan's geographic size and location shelter the others from direct Russian physical pressure, since Kazakhstan alone borders on Russia.» At the same time, according to the author's view, «in fact, Uzbekistan is the prime candidate for regional leader in Central Asia» (Brzezinski, 2005: 156).

All the countries of Central Asia possess geopolitically disadvantaged positions, partially caused by lacking access to maritime communications. However, the independent geopolitical significance of the region will increase as the projects for the construction of the Trans-Asian railway line and the development of the transcontinental road corridor «Western Europe-Western China» and air traffic are established, which will allow it in the short term to become a transport bridge between the west and the east. In this context, the countries of the region are systematically working, national and international projects are being implemented, large investments are being made in the existing transport infrastructure.

In this regard, each of the states of the region are making efforts to implement projects for the construction of a communication infrastructure of internal and regional importance. For example, given the strategically important position of Kazakhstan and the integration processes of recent years, Kazakhstan has opened a distinct prospect of making logistics a fairly profitable segment of the economy. In particular, in the traditional annual message to the people of Kazakhstan on November 11, 2014, «Nurly Zhol» – the Path to the future» President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev paid special attention to the development of the transport and logistics infrastructure, was entrusted with the completion of the construction of the first dry port complex, the infrastructure of the special economic zones «Khorgos – the eastern gate», the implementation of major road projects, in particular the Western China – Western Europe, construction or lease of terminal capacities in the «dry» and sea ports of China, Iran, Russia and the EU countries (Nazarbayev, 2014).

Since the recognition of the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan by the Republic of Turkey on December 16, 1991, to 1997 an extensive juridical base was established between the two countries. 56 different bilateral treaties and agreements were signed covering numerous aspects of cooperation between countries in various fields. Turkey and Kazakhstan took an active part in the work of international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation, the OSCE, the UN and

OIC, where their positions on many issues of global and regional importance differed in their proximity, which allowed them to unite their efforts to further strengthen confidence and mutual understanding among peoples. A special role in the relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey is played by the meetings of the Heads of Turkic-speaking countries that have become traditional. Together with the leaders of other Turkic-speaking countries, they exchange views on major international problems, and develop strategies for further development of mutual cooperation. At the same time, the analysis of the implementation of treaties and agreements signed between Kazakhstan and Turkey shows that cooperation in the field of education and culture is most effective (AP RK, 7400: 108).

Political relations between the two countries are of a strategic nature, which has been repeatedly stressed by both sides. The most important factor in the development and strengthening of bilateral relations are regular meetings at the highest level. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations were held two official visits were conducted by the President of Kazakhstan to Turkey, three official visits by the presidents of Turkey to Kazakhstan, two official visits by the Chairman of the Turkish Parliament, two visits of the Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan O. Baigeldi, two official visits of the Prime Ministers of Turkey, one visit Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan (AP RK, 7400: 86).

The basis of bilateral relations remains trade and economic cooperation. The activity of the intergovernmental Kazakh-Turkish mixed commission needs to be stepped up for economic cooperation, whose functions include the creation of favorable conditions for the progressive development of bilateral trade and economic cooperation (AP RK, 7400: 87).

The activity of Turkish business circles in Kazakhstan has become noticeably more active. Thus, at the end of 1996, out of 2,200 foreign firms that were engaged in joint production in Kazakhstan, 319 were Turkish. According to the General Directorate of Foreign Trade of Turkey, more than 200 Turkish firms are developing or have launched more than 40 projects for a total of \$ 2.0 billion. In 1997, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan registered 336 proposals from 205 Turkish companies for the supply of consumer goods and food products. In terms of the volume of trade with Turkey, Kazakhstan ranks third in the CIS after Russia and Ukraine (AP RK, 7400: 88).

The transportation problem of Caspian oil occupies a special place in Kazakh-Turkish relations. This issue was raised in Turkey as a strategic objective, taking into account the ever growing problem of energy supply in the country (AP RK, 7400: 95).

From this we can see not only the comprehensive political relations between the Republic of Turkey and Kazakhstan, but also with the aggravation of problems with energy resources, countries of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, became strategic partners for the official Ankara.

From the Central Asian countries – Tajikistan also expects that the implementation of such projects as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan railroad, Dushanbe-Kulyab-Khorog-Kulma international road, Dushanbe-Tursunzade, Aini-Pendzhikent, and Vose Khovaling and especially the railway Vahdat-Yavan-Kurgan-Tube, will help improve the country's investment climate, reunification with international transport networks, development of the domestic market and the massive growth of international services (Address of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan ..., 2014).

At present, many social problems of national states have moved beyond the narrow national boundaries to a regional and global level and require joint and adequate responses, and this requires further deepening of the level of regional and international cooperation. Regional integration could serve as a serious means of neutralizing both traditional and unconventional threats for the countries of Central Asia. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, regional integration has become a distinctive feature of world development. Many countries of the world are currently united in regional blocks, and their strength is not comparable with the capabilities of a single country.

Thus, the priorities of foreign policy of all countries of the region include: ensuring national security, creating a political foundation for strengthening and developing independence, as well as the necessary external conditions for the national economy to be taken out of the crisis and stabilize it, and address environmental and social problems.

Central Asia in the sphere of foreign policy interests of Turkey

The states of Central Asia garner close attention by members of the world community due to their geopolitical and economic importance, natural and human resources, transit opportunities for transcontinental trade and transport. Modern Central

Asia is a field of collision among innumerable cultural, civilizational, political and economic projects.

Many of the world's largest actors such as the USA, China, EU, Russia show interest in the region. Except Turkey, regional players like India and Iran are showing interest. All this pushes Turkey to the necessity of concretizing its interests and priorities in the region.

The geopolitical position of the Central Asian states located in the geostrategically important region for West and Asia and creates an opportunity to participate equally in the pan-European governmental organizations like the OSCE or NATO, the Asian Process (OIC,), and also at the global level as an equal member of the United Nations. Central Asian countries use these opportunities for active entry into the world community and gaining a worthy place in the system of international relations.

According to Ye. Rumer, Central Asia is important to throw it to the mercy of fate. It is also important for the United States to allow Russia and China to manage their uncontrollably. They lack the resources and visions to put the region on the path toward long-term stability and security. At the same time, they have their own interests in Central Asia and there are opportunities that can become from the point of view of the U.S.A. which may be part of the solution or part of the problem. Will get their support – that's what should be an integral part of the U.S.A. strategy in Central Asia, a strategy that can make for all shareholders of this remote and troubled region, that success can be beneficial to all participants, whereas failure can equally endanger destructive consequences for all participants, and for those who are far from the heart of Eurasia (Rumer, 2008: 81).

The independent states of Central Asia have been trying for over 25 years to build their foreign policy on the basis of the multi-vector concept. Taking into account the current international realities, the main focus of the foreign policy strategy is ensuring an effective security system in Central Asia aimed at preventing unconventional challenges and threats such as international terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking, and illegal migration.

To solve these problems, governments Central Asia often find it expedient to focus on the following priorities in foreign policy directions:

- Participation in the activities of interstate associations (the Conference on Developing Confidence Building Measures in Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization);

- strategic cooperation with Russia and China;
- maintaining friendly relations with neighboring and Central Asian states;
- constructive interaction with the United States, EU countries, as well as organizations such as the OSCE and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO);
- cooperation with the states of the Islamic world;
- Establishment of partnerships with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region (APR).

It can be fully justified to note that the countries of the region are on the verge of serious trials, which they have not previously encountered. In this regard, it is necessary to note the special role of Kazakhstan. As N.A. Nazarbayev in the Address «Kazakhstan -2050»: «we must continue to realize our responsibility for regional security and contribute to the stabilization of Central Asia» (Nazarbayev NA, 2012).

Based on the above directions, the Turkish Republic began to pursue its foreign policy towards the countries of Central Asia. The activation of Turkey's «soft power» foreign policy in the countries of the Eurasian region was facilitated by its history and geographical location at the crossroads from Europe to Asia, as well as the existence of a national, religious and linguistic community of peoples living in these territories. Over the past two decades, a complex of internal and foreign policy factors has led to a significant transformation of the soft power policy in Turkey, which has strengthened its influence in countries that are in the sphere of its geopolitical interests, primarily in the Caucasus and Central Asia (Safonkina, 2014 : 145).

The change in the approach to Turkey's foreign policy was due to the coming to power in 2002 of the Justice and Development Party, a moderately conservative orientation sympathetic to many Western values. Democratic reforms have reduced the level of military influence on the country's policy and strengthened civil society in Turkey. Reforms also led to a closer involvement of new actors, such as business organizations and civil society organizations. A new approach was developed in Turkish foreign policy, based on the doctrine of strategic depth, the book of Ahmet Davutoglu (the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey – 1.05.2009-28.08.2014), (Safonkina, 2014: 145).

A key aspect of the new approach was the «policy of zero problems» with neighboring countries, involving an increase in political dialogue, economic interdependence and cultural harmony. «Zero problems policy» stimulated the strengthening of

Turkey's «soft power» policy. In addition, after the Arab unrest in North Africa and the Middle East, the Turkish state model was viewed as a source of emulation, which also strengthened Turkish influence. An important aspect of increasing the «soft power» was the active participation of Turkey in various international associations (Safonkina, 2014: 146).

The strategies, mechanisms and actions of the implementation of the «soft power» in the promotion of language, education and science, business cooperation, and development assistance worked out by Turkish diplomats and experts in the field of international relations during this short period of time proved their effectiveness, which demonstrates Turkey's positive and attractive image, formed in the public opinion of most countries. To implement the «soft power» policy, Turkey uses not only bilateral, but also multilateral cooperation. For example, with the aim of strengthening interaction with the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkey initiated the establishment of such organizations as the Council for the Cooperation of Turkic Speaking Countries (CCTS), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries (TurkPA), the Organization for Culture and Art of Turkic-speaking Countries (TÜRKSÖY).

Turkey became the first country to establish diplomatic and economic relations with all countries of Central Asia, positioning itself as a partner that «brings stability.» To develop economic, cultural, social and political ties with the countries of the region, Turkey used such institutions as the Turkish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (TIKA) and the Council for External Economic Relations (DEIK). Since 1992, Turkey has been holding summits of the heads of Turkic-speaking countries to create new opportunities for cooperation. In the countries of the region were opened cultural centers, were implemented educational programs for students, allowing for training in universities in Turkey. All the countries of Central Asia that emerged after the collapse of the USSR joined the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), established in 1985 by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Thanks to the inclusion of new members in the ECO, Turkey has had the opportunity to strengthen economic ties with the countries of Central Asia (Safonkina, 2014: 147).

The multifaceted policy of Turkey with the states of Central Asia applies not only to the strengthening of historical and cultural ties, but also to political and economic relations. In terms of education, schools and universities opened in Central Asia, as well as

allocation of grants by the Turkish government to train Kazakh students since the beginning of the 1990s through today.

One of the principles of the new direction of Ankara's foreign policy is the development of relations with neighboring regions, which implies the strengthening of Turkey's role in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Aras, 2008: 25).

In general, it should be noted that during the stay in power the policy on strengthening ties and building up new bases of cooperation with the Turkic-speaking countries of Central Asia was revived and revitalized. In other words, Erdogan called for the restoration of lost opportunities. At present, having overcome some of the internal obstacles to some extent Turkey is striving to put into practice its new concept of common Turkic unity. In this issue, external factors play a role (Ovsepyan, 2009: 7).

Today Turkey has two main goals that determine its promising foreign policy course:

- The first goal is to become an integral part of the European Union. From a historical, geographical and economic point of view, Turkey belongs to European countries. Proceeding from this, it seems quite natural that it will become a full-fledged member of the EU at the end of the negotiations started on October 3, 2005. Their very beginning was an important step towards achieving this strategic goal. Turkey brings modern countries to the countries of the Middle East and other Eurasian regions in such areas as democracy, secular power, market economy and regional cooperation. However, although integration into the EU is one of the priorities of Turkey's foreign policy, this is not an alternative to its strategic cooperation with the United States, Ankara believes that the two vectors complement each other.

- The second objective is to create conditions for security, stability, prosperity, friendship and cooperation around ourselves, at a natural crossroads between Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Black Sea, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Central Asia. All these components play a significant role in the foreign policy program of Ankara (Synopsis ..., 2018).

The nature of foreign policy depends on which group is in power, and which ones are in opposition. In any modern political community, there are two main groups of actors that differ in their attitude to integration into the global system. The first group consists of those who receive a serious benefit from integration and wish its further intensification. They can be called globalists. The second group includes

those who do not have serious benefits from integration and see in it the cause of their problems. These actors, resisting globalization, can be called antiglobalists (Bostanov, 2013: 130).

Currently, in Turkey, as in many other countries, globalist clerics are in power. They work to integrate the country into the global economy, but at the same time adhere to religious traditions. According to M. Maftaler-Bach and E.F. Keyman «Today, in Turkey, globalization is interested in» not so much the elite of the Kemalist state, not so much the old trade and city anti-clericals, as the individual entrepreneurs of the inner cities, such as Konya, who visit the mosque «(Muftuler-Baç, Keyman, 2012: 90).

The main political organization of globalist clerics is now the ruling AKP. It represents itself as the conductor of the country in the globalizing world. Calling itself not an Islamic but a reformist center-right party, the AKP achieved broad social support and global legitimacy. It tries to combine market economic liberalism with local norms and traditions. This attempt, in the opinion of the leaders of the AKP, distinguishes their party from the early Islamic formations, left-centrist and center-right parties that gravitate towards social democracy or nationalism (Muftuler-Baç, Keyman, 2012: 91).

Turkey refused not only from anti-Western, but also from anti-globalization rhetoric. The 2001 economic crisis showed that strict adherence to IMF programs and attraction of foreign investment could be a prerequisite for overcoming financial difficulties and economic recovery. The AKP offers liberal market policies designed to attract foreign investment and aimed at integrating Turkey into the global economy (Rabasa, Larabee, 2008: 47).

The nature of the foreign policy of Turkey affects the process of globalization, aimed at the formation of a global system of management and redistribution of income. Today, Turkey is almost completely integrated into this global system, which means that there are no administrative barriers to the movement of capital and money across its borders, the dominance of financial institutions, the financing of society, politics and the economy. In

its integration into the global system, Turkey has gone through two stages. The first is associated with the name of T. Ozal and a series of his neoliberal reforms of the 1980s. The second stage is related to the activities of the ruling Justice and Development Party that came to power in 2002. Turkey's foreign policy, which is an integrated element of the global system, is built in accordance with the interests of this system, it is generally aimed at increasing the benefits of integration and combating those countries, organizations and groups that oppose the system (Bostanov, 2013: 131).

Modern Turkish foreign policy is a strategy developed on the basis of the ideological principles of the AKP and the needs of the globalized world. Paying much attention to the eastern direction, and also identifying its interests in the Caucasus-Caspian and Middle Eastern regions, Turkey conducts a multifaceted policy (Svistunova, 2010).

Conclusion

Proceeding from the above, we can see the main directions and steps of the official Ankara towards the countries of Central Asia. They are:

- Establishing diplomatic and economic relations with independent countries of Central Asia, Turkey has become a partner that brings stability;
- using multilateral cooperation, creating conditions for security, prosperity, friendship with the Turkic-speaking countries;
- cooperation through international organizations, such as Turksoy, the Council for the Cooperation of Turkic Speaking Countries, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries, etc., initiated by the Republic of Turkey;
- with the accession of the Central Asian countries to the Organization for Economic Cooperation, the strengthening of economic ties,
- the activation of Turkey in Central Asia with the coming to power of the party of justice and development;
- increased policies outward in all directions, becoming a more influential force in the region.

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