



**Geopolitical interests of
China in Central Asia**

GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS OF CHINA IN CENTRAL ASIA INTERESES GEOPOLÍTICOS DE CHINA EN ASIA CENTRAL

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify China's geopolitical interests in Central Asia and to analyze its political and economic cooperation with the region. During the research, the main principles underlying the Chinese foreign policy were revealed and analyzed. The provisions of the work can be used to further study of this problem, as well as in the teaching of disciplines related to international relations. At the same time, problem-chronological and historical-comparative methods were applied. First of all, China's priority interests in Central Asia were reviewed and analyzed. Further, the spheres of multilateral cooperation implemented through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) were noted. Priority directions of China's foreign policy discourse were also disclosed. Particular attention was paid to the questions of Uyghur separatism and its influence on China's relations with the CAR countries. The points of contact of economic interests were identified through the Chinese initiative project "One belt, one way". In addition, the importance of energy security in the Central Asian region is emphasized. At the end of the paper, conclusions were drawn based on an analysis of current integration processes in the region.

KEYWORDS : International relations, politics, history, China, Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Silk Road Economic Zone, "One Belt, One Way".

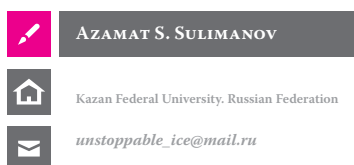
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RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio es identificar los intereses geopolíticos de China en Asia Central y analizar su cooperación política y económica con la región. Durante la investigación, se revelaron y analizaron los principios fundamentales de la política exterior china. Las disposiciones del trabajo se pueden utilizar para estudiar más a fondo este problema, así como en la enseñanza de disciplinas relacionadas con las relaciones internacionales. Al mismo tiempo, se aplicaron los métodos cronológico-problema e histórico-comparativo. En primer lugar, se revisaron y analizaron los intereses prioritarios de China en Asia Central. Además, se señalaron los ámbitos de cooperación multilateral implementados a través de la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghai (SCO). Las direcciones prioritarias del discurso de la política exterior de China también fueron reveladas. Se prestó especial atención a las cuestiones del separatismo uigur y su influencia en las relaciones de China con los países de la República Centroafricana. Los puntos de contacto de los intereses económicos se identificaron a través del proyecto de la iniciativa china "One belt, one way". Además, se destaca la importancia de la seguridad energética en la región de Asia Central. Al final del documento, se extrajeron conclusiones basadas en un análisis de los procesos de integración actuales en la región.

PALABRAS CLAVE: relaciones internacionales, política, historia, China, Asia Central, Kazajstán, Kirguistán, Tayikistán, Turkmenistán, Uzbekistán, Organización de Cooperación de Shanghai, Zona Económica de la Ruta de la Seda, "One Belt, One Way".

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INTRODUCTION

After the fall of the Soviet Association, China attempted to fabricate and reinforce relations with the Focal Asian states. At first, the primary bearing of its political and conciliatory exercises was the settlement of questioned outskirts. Afterward, it started to mirror the developing want of the PRC to secure its financial advantages and guarantee security in the area. This decided the developing of monetary relations, as well as the development of political, conciliatory and social ties. Every one of the five nations in the locale have consented to key arrangements with China; recurrence of visits by Chinese authorities has expanded. Confucius establishments offering dialect courses and social projects are currently present in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan [1]. The system college of the Shanghai Participation Association (SCO) was propelled in 2010 as another stage for collaboration in the field of training and work force trade.

METHODS

The research has used the problem-chronological and historical-comparative methods that allowed authors to operate with chronologically verified and reliably stated facts for revealing the motives of the main actors and driving forces in the region. Such a method as the study of a process has made it possible to emphasize the key directions of international political processes in Central Asia.

RESULTS

Since China has set up discretionary relations with the Focal Asian states in 1992, the volume of its exchange with the locale has expanded commonly [2]. The gas pipeline from Turkmenistan, the Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline from Kazakhstan, huge interests in vitality, transport and interchanges in Uzbekistan, the development of new streets and passages in Tajikistan, and the extension of car interfaces amongst Kyrgyzstan and Chi-

na have made numerous connection focuses. One of the highlights was the arrangement of advances to Focal Asian nations with low intrigue. In June, 2012 President Hu Jintao reported that Beijing will give advances of \$ 10 billion to the part conditions of the SCO [3]. Focal Asia likewise speaks to a developing business sector for Chinese products. In 2017, China's exchange with the conditions of the area added up to just about 30 billion US dollars.

Also of great importance for China is the transit potential of the region. It is no coincidence that the Chairman of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, on September 16, 2013 announced in Central Asia, during his speech in Astana, the creation of the "Silk Road Economic belt", which is a land part of the global strategy "One belt, one way". He described this initiative as a new form of cooperation between China, Central Asia and Russia, and also identified five components: political alignment, the construction of a common road network, the strengthening of trade links, currency flows, and people's contacts [4, p.1-2]. Today, a significant network of roads and railways, air routes, and pipelines connect China and Central Asia [5].

For the countries of the region, the presence of China offers many opportunities for pursuing a "multi-vector policy" through which local governments feel less dependent on Russia and on Western states.

Security and stability in Central Asia are very important for China not only to protect its own interests in the region, but also because of the almost inevitable aggravation of the situation in its northwestern region, in Xinjiang, if security and stability would weaken or absent. In this regard, China has become an active player in the region along with Russia and the United States.

Multilateral cooperation between China and Central Asia is carried out mainly through the SCO. The Shanghai mutual cooperation and non-interference spirit united Russia and China together with four of the five countries of the region in 2001. The SCO members have established coordination in the field of military cooperation, the exchange of intelligence information and the fight against terrorism. The "Regional Antiterrorist Structure" (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organi-

zation (SCO) headquartered in Tashkent, has established itself as an effective institution for combating terrorism and extremism. In June 2017, the SCO expanded: during those expansion two important countries of Asia, India and Pakistan became its members. Thus, the SCO has become one of the largest regional associations in the world [6].

While China's monetary nearness in Focal Asia keeps on extending, key inquiries remain with respect to its center advantages in the area in the present and later on. To comprehend them, it is critical to examine the essential standards basic the PRC's remote strategy.

Chinese authorities stress that outside arrangement activities in Focal Asia, and also in different districts of the world, depend on five rules that reflect China as a creating nation which isn't a piece of a military coalition like NATO. The accentuation is on the way that China never tries to authority and wouldn't force its will on different nations. China tells its littler neighbors from Focal Asia that its fast financial advancement and the fortifying of military abilities won't represent a risk. The Chinese political talk regularly underscores the distinction between China's methodologies as a dependable extraordinary power that regards the sway of different nations, from Western nations that endeavor to meddle in the interior undertakings of different states.

China's elective world model underlines multipolarity and equivalent treatment of all nations "paying little mind to whether they are enormous or little, solid or frail, rich or poor" [7]. Every national government has the privilege to legitimately manage issues identified with residential political, monetary or parties, including inner clashes. This view on the direct of worldwide relations is because of China's own history and its affectability to issues, for example, Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang.

China's situation on most issues on the planet lies in the way that they should be settled through common understanding, genuine exchange and quiet arrangements and to counter impedance from outside. In this way, the fundamental thought of the "Five Standards" in its cutting edge translation is sway:

any state has no privilege to meddle in the interior issues of another state.

Nonetheless, as indicated by Chinese analysts, "standards ought to be comprehended with regards to the real world" [8]. Actually the harmony between the assurance of China's interests abroad and keeping up a proceeded with promise to the standards of state power and non-impedance, is winding up progressively flimsy [9].

Notwithstanding the expanded nearness in the district over the previous decade, Focal Asia isn't among the principle needs of China's financial and political premiums. Generally, China's exercises have centered around more crucial territories of enthusiasm, specifically relations with the Assembled States, Sino-Japanese relations, relations with Taiwan, strains on the Korean promontory, and relations with India.

Suspicious that China has ulterior intentions in Focal Asia and does a geopolitical procedure went for definite control and mastery in the locale are intemperate and overstated. China has neither the limit nor the aim to wind up a hegemon in the locale. It is claimed that China's procedure towards Focal Asia "might be an impression of China's bigger system towards the outside world, which incorporates enthusiasm for regular assets and expanded exchange" [10]. Nonetheless, the nonappearance of a specific procedure does not imply that China's strategy in Focal Asia isn't reasonable, or that it needs geopolitical meaning. There are various commonsense issues and interests in the relations amongst China and Focal Asia.

Following three many years of high development, China needs to guarantee maintainable wellsprings of vitality supply from different nations. The nations of Focal Asia, particularly those with vast hydrocarbon saves, have turned into a need for China to contribute, given their land vicinity and the open door they offer to guarantee mainland vitality supplies, subsequently lessening reliance on ocean courses.

In any case, China's strategy in Focal Asia goes past basically looking for assets. As expressed in the White Paper on Serene Improvement, "the need heading of China's tact is the making of a tranquil and stable global

condition for its advancement” [11]. Advancing monetary advancement, China looks to settle the Focal Asian states which are critical for the security of its northwestern locales.

There is a basic connection between China’s strategy in Focal Asia and the Uyghur issue [12]. China needs the locale to be created and settled, as its insecurity can undermine endeavors to create, “conciliate” and all the more nearly associate Xinjiang with whatever is left of China. China likewise needs the nations of the locale, which are homes to the biggest Uighur diasporas, partake all the more effectively in the battle against Uyghur dissent. [13] Conceivable security courses of action in Kyrgyzstan, which have a typical fringe with the length of 1000 km with China, and in the Fergana Valley situated in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, make the danger of pulverizing exchange, vitality supplies and, at last, dangers to China’s inside steadiness, particularly in Xinjiang. This was plainly exhibited by the conflicts of 2010 amongst Kyrgyz and Uzbeks who “specifically backed off the fare of Xinjiang to Kyrgyzstan, and additionally to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan” [14]. At present, China’s “One-Belt, One-Way” strategy unites the solution of both tasks in Central Asia. It develops economic cooperation with the region, provides large-scale investments, increases turnover, and creates a modern infrastructure. So, for example, the joint Chinese-Kazakhstan “dry port”, Khorgos, became one of its most significant infrastructure facilities, which allowed the turnover volume to increase on this stretch of the border by eight times. Therefore, the magazine *Forbes* even included it among the five most important objects of the Belt and the Way itself by the end of 2017, stressing that “Khorgos is not just a new city, or a new high-tech zone, or a duty-free zone, or just a distant ground port, but also a complete bi-national agglomeration of development. And only a few years ago there were only sand dunes, lavender fields and snow-capped mountains [15]. This provides economic recovery, security and stability both in Central Asia and in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

DISCUSSION

China’s foreign policy in Central Asia, the geopolitical transformation of the region, security challenges, the dynamics of bilateral and multilateral relations predetermine the increased interest of researchers in studying

the problems of this study. Famous Central Asian experts, such as S. Safaev [16], B. Sharifov [17], A. Khodzhaev [18], V.V. Paramonov [19], L. Syroezhkin [20] presented their vision of various aspects of PRC’s policy in Central Asia. For example, in the work “On the Central Asian Policy of the People’s Republic of China”, the Uzbek researcher A. Khodjaev identifies a number of factors that had a very diverse impact on the interests of the PRC in the course of Central Asian policy formation [18].

Russian experts analyze in their work quite a wide range of issues related to China’s participation in political and economic processes in Central Asia. Among them one can distinguish the works of such researchers as S.V. Zhukov, O.B. Reznikova [21]. A. D. Voskresenskiy [22], S.G. Luzyanin [22, 23].

The work of foreign researchers helped to supplement the idea on the role of the Central Asian region countries in Chinese politics. Among the works of researchers from the U.S., the work by M.B. Olcott seems interesting to us, “The Second Chance of Central Asia” [24] which describes developments in the region after 11 September, 2001, including the strengthening of China’s presence. Of Chinese authors, Zhao Huashen is actively developing the issues of PRC’s presence in Central Asia [25]. Separate aspects of PRC’s presence in the region are analyzed by Rumer E., Trenin D. and Zhao Huasheng in the study “Central Asia: A View from Washington, Moscow and Beijing” [24], where scientists from the three countries find out what the prospects for each player of the “New Great Game”.


CONCLUSIONS

The policy of the PRC in Central Asia is conditioned by its economic interests, especially the desire to ensure energy security and use of the transit potential of the region. At the same time, it is aimed at maintaining stability and security in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. All this caused not only the intensification of ties with the region, but also involvement in the “New Great Game” in Central Asia, where the influence and interests of Russia, the United States and the People’s Republic of China collide. As China’s economic participation in Central Asia continues to expand, its influence in the region is steadily increasing, without prejudice to Rus-

sia's interests. There is no doubt that it benefits both China and the countries of Central Asia, for which trade with China and Chinese investments are the catalyst for economic growth. Summing up, it can be stated that China and the countries of Central Asia have established serious bilateral relations, which are a prerequisite for economic reforms and attracting foreign investments. At the same time, it is extremely important that bilateral and multilateral agreements be actively implemented in coordination with Russia and with Russian support. The close cooperation between China and Central Asia in general is important not only for mutual economic

development, but also for international relations and economic integration of Eurasia as a whole.

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