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Conflicts in the World Risk Threat in Central Asia

Alim T. MYLKAI DAROV¹, Roza Zh. KELINBAEVA, Laura B. KENESPAEVA

Abstract

The article discusses the geopolitical situation in the vicinity of Central Asia and considers the viewpoints of Russia as the first power in this area, as well as the perspectives of China, Islamic world and western countries.

Nowadays, Middle East is considered as a primary threat for Central Asia. Middle East jeopardizes not only Central Asia, but the whole world in general; they are the countries in flames of warfare like Syria, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine and Yemen. Furthermore, the conflicts in these region and countries earn the image of a continuous scene, their starting point and complete termination are still difficult to predict.

Before now, it was natural to witness the countries as conflicting parties, but nowadays the governments have to oppose the extremist religious movements, criminal groups and terrorist organizations. So, the conflicts turn from interstate phenomenon into the affairs within one country. Nowadays, those internal conflicts easily transform into international problem, because tight interrelationship in the era of globalization can convey their influence fast and with no hindrance.

As Central Asia and Middle East enclosed regions the menace of it is approaching day by day, especially the Afghanistan groups strengthening power are becoming a genuine concern.

Being located between nuclear superpowers as the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, observing attention of the USA and Western European countries to Central Asian rich natural resources and the sanction of Western countries on Russia make this conflict among the large countries even worse.

Our world is passing through unstable conditions. World economics and politics are facing a harsh situation, economic crisis and political conflicts are deteriorating from day to day. This article overlooks the unstable regions with such situations and the problem of emergence of conflicting hearths in these countries.

In the beginning of XX century an English political scientist Helford Mackinder predicted the current ambiance of Central Asia, that it could turn into a conflicting geopolitical region by his saying "One who governs Central Asia, will govern Eurasia, and One who governs Eurasia will govern the whole world.

Key words: conflict, geopolitics, globalization, extremist, terrorist groups, collision, religious movements, criminal groups, state boundary, drug dealing.

INTRODUCTION

The world condition is being unstable today. Economic and political conditions are under difficult circumstances, economic crisis and political conflicts are escalating. Thereby, the labile regions and their internal collisions have transformed to an unwelcomed matter.

Conflict hearths in the world cover all the continents. These conflicting zones are:

-Western European;

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-Eastern European;

-Middle Eastern;

-Asian;

-African;

-American.

There are a lot of conflict hearths in the regions mentioned above. Consequently, an interstate phenomenon of oppositions alters to the affairs within a country. It is happening in tightly located, highly urbanized and slowly developing countries. Therewith, the conflicts are prolonging, and it seems hard determining its origin and cessation. Subsequently, the outcome of these events is not clear. In comparison with regular wars between countries the present conflicts have unpredictable course, it is uncertain to determine the winner.

Furthermore, the participants of inner wars have propensity to change. Formerly, the contradicting parties were countries, but today the opposition occurs between governments and extremist religious movements, criminal groups, terrorist organizations. Thus, these conflicts have varied from interstate phenomenon to domestic wars. Nowadays, those conflicts within one country grow into international level, since tight relationship in the period of globalization contributes to deliver their messages quickly and without any obstacles (Zh.M. Medeubaeva, 2006).

Central Asia is located in the middle of these intricate regions. Central Asia is a georegion that emerged after the collapse of Soviet Union in territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. This region comprises Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The area of Central Asia is more than 4mln square kilometres, and its population is over 60mln people.

From the prospective of security Central Asia is one of the most important regions in the world. Besides connecting Europe and China with Islamic world, in terms of geostrategic location Central Asia is situated at the crossroads of regional security systems.

Moreover, being located in the centre of influential powerful countries such as Russia, China, Europe, India, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey increases its geopolitical significance. Primarily, Central Asia related geopolitical projects and geo-economical interests of large authoritative countries such as Russia, the USA and China should be taken into a special consideration.

Central Asia has a special feature in its political-social life; it is considered as a part of Islamic world and also distinguished by the conjunction of Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and other civilizations. This region performs the part of a connecting bridge between eastern and western countries.

The President of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev said "New global order and new architecture are being formed today. Local and regional conflicts, international terrorism and extremism are being propagated. To prevent them all countries have to integrate their strengths. We altogether intend to achieve strategic stability and solid development. Our country leads the global movement towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We aim to participate in international affairs even more actively than before". He means that it is the basis to keep peace and safety in the region (N. Nazarbayev, 2015).

Study area: This research considers exploring the imminent threat upon the countries located in the area of Central Asia. Central Asian countries are located in the crossroads of great profits respectively to their geopolitical possibilities in continental area. Therefore, the leading countries and external political position and interest of international structures show obvious image of rivalry for security of Central Asia.

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Figure 1: Caucasus and Central Asia

It is purposefully possible to transfer the role of region from object of actions to world policy's subject. It is possible to estimate the geo-strategy dynamically performed by global leaders by their methods and potential on achieving the goal, occasionally by the shifts of their objectives and main directions.

If there was a chance for Central Asia to gain a relatively beneficial and profitable position during the next change of correlation and interest of large powers, then it could alter to a role of a more active player of geo-policy.

The geopolitical circumstance in Central Asia has significantly changed in recent 25 years. Subjects of world policy with their interest upon Central Asia are constructing rectangle of powers in this region. One side belongs to Russia, the second one is China, as the third side refers to Western countries, and the fourth one reflects the Islamic world.

Even in this case, the correlation of these countries towards the region is used to change constantly. Depending on the correlation of several factors the ability of carrying out an active policy of all concerned "power centres" and real geopolitical weight have rapidly changed. In general, we can say that regional status of conjunction of such geometric expertise geopolitical interests related to Central Asia is one of the main security issues of political positions of leading powers in the world. Current conjunction of geopolitical positions regarded as the main index of the region is distinguished by its transforming security policy into an active tool.

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Figure 2: Europe and Asia

It is important to analyze the issue of competitiveness regarding the present security in Central Asia and to classify the conditions of matching interests from the perspective of the main actors of world politics.

There are several basic reasons of their emergence. They are:

- Place and importance of regional security systems of Central Asian countries in order to provide global security;
- Emergence of possible dangers in Central Asian countries;
- Classification of convenient and active external security complexes for providing security in Central Asia
- Assuming interests related to security of main actors of Central Asia in the world policy
- Assuming rivalry ability of geopolitical influence and positions related to the security of Central Asia in interests of international structures.

Materials: Analytical works such as "a review of 10 major events with high significance for the political and economic development, stability and security of the Central Asian countries in 2016" (B.A. Auelbaev, S.K. Kushkumbayev, K.L. Syroezhkin, V.Y. Dodonov, 2015) and "Central Asia - 2020: four strategic concepts" accomplished by the Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the materials organised in accordance with the fundamental scientific research project and a monograph of the same name published in 2015 "Kazakhstan in a new geological and regional structure of changes in Central Asia" Also Kazakhstan and foreign countries

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author's article and of was used. The articles of Kazakhstani and foreign authors and statistic materials were used as well.

Methods: The main methodology of this research is domestic and foreign geographic

science. During the study comparative, mapping and systematic-structural analysing methods were applied.

RESULTS

The global geopolitical situation and geo-strategic directions of the Western countries, Russia and China are based on the direction of the economic potential of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Formation of the shape of geopolitical situation mostly determines the country's foreign policy. The principles of foreign policy of Central Asia and Kazakhstan are primarily influenced by their geographical situation. Her both neighbours are hindering the growth of Western influence in the region. Kazakhstan, the leader in the region, concerning her basic policy seeks to maintain a balance between the three powers even in the future: the first power, the United States relying on the support of EU policy in Central Asia, the other two are Russia and China. Thereby, the strategic, economic and political points of views on Central Asia were based on the following works.

- Central Asian countries except Kazakhstan lay the groundwork to a complete termination of demarcation and delimitation works.
- To step ahead for driving back religious extremism and terrorism coming from the south in cooperation with mutually created military forces;
- It was mentioned that the main and collateral ways of preventing the emergence of danger in the region were provided by blocking the organization "Golden Crescent" related with drug dealing.

DISCUSSION

Deng Xiaoping, a public figure, who boosted the economy of China and started using the term "Asian century in 1980s". Asian continent is the world's largest market consumer and more than the half of whole populace of the Earth live in this continent. Since the population of Asian countries are over 4 billion today, it is predicted that this number of population can reach 5 billion people by 2030. "Asian Century" is tent to refer to Central Asia and Kazakhstan although their population are few (S. Rahmetuly, 2015).

The term "security" is associated with the notion of stability for Central Asia. Stability is considered as the ability to be protected from different external and negative effects. The country, region and external factors could be counted as three measures of security in Central Asia.

If we consider the Central Asian affairs as internal regional and external regional ones, now the internal regional issues would be more topical. They are:

- State boundary;
- Water deposits in trans-boundary rivers;
- Religious extremism and terrorism;
- Drug dealing;
- Migration of labour force.

Such acute problems are on the agenda. The external regional issues are:

- Collision of the interests of the world and regional powers;
- Religious extremism;
- International terrorism;

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- Drug dealing;

If to discuss each issue individually we could touch the most important problems of the present days.

State boundary: Among all Central Asian countries Kazakhstan is the only country who could solve the problem concerned with boundaries. Also, Kazakhstan has no difficult issues with neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, other countries have border disputes; it means there are still unadopted lands. For example:

Kyrgyz-Uzbek boundaries stretch along 1378 kilometres, and the problem of those split 370 kilometres is still unsolved.

Kyrgyz-Tajik borders stretch along 970.8 kilometers, and only 520 kilometers of which are legalized. Kyrgyzstan acts according to a map of 1958, but Tajikistan leans on 1924-1927 maps and documents, subsequently now they cannot come to an agreement. For example, in the village of Tashtumshyk in Batken region the Kyrgyz-Tajik houses are on two sides of the street and located as a checkerboard of black and white board. Now the issue of swapping their barns and homes suggested by Tajikistan is being negotiated.

Conflicts concerned with bound issues touch the enclaves too. There are 4 regions of Uzbekistan (Sokh, Shakimardan, Chongara, Chek-Abad), 2 regions of Tajikistan (Vorukh and Kayragach) penetrated into the territory of Kyrgyzstan as enclaves. The village Kyrgyz of Barak is in the domain of Uzbekistan (N. Bayzhigitov, 2016).

Non - fully-delimited boundaries are the most important question which threatens the integrity of the territory of countries.

It is counted that these previously mentioned issues of modern conflict zones and hot spots in the southern part of Central Asia are very dangerous and convenient for terrorist organizations in the territories of Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq.

Water deposits of trans-boundary rivers: One of the issues which could emerge the conflicts is trans-boundary rivers. There is a controversial issue in the acreages of the Syrdarya river; it is a source of life for Kyrgyzstani, Uzbekistani, Tajikistani and Kazakhstani populace. Their problem of sharing the river is very controversial. The construction of hydropower plant Kambar Ata by Kyrgyzstan without any agreements with other parties could lead to conflicts between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan.

The water resources situation of Kazakhstan is much more difficult compared to others, because all rivers with massive deposits flow in Kazakhstan are Transboundary Rivers; they are the Ile, the Irtysh, and others. 30% of the rivers flowing from abroad come from China, also China intends to excessively use river waters flowing to Kazakhstan. The Ile and the Irtysh have a great significance. Moreover, Balkhash-Alakol areas of hydroresources are connected with China. 54% of the whole capacity of inflow into Balkhash Lake belongs to China. Compared with 1980 the annual inflow expenses reduce significantly (from 17.8 to 12.7 cube km annually) and if only China increased water dams in the area for 10-15%, the lake would begin to dry out.

2,5 mln people live in floodplain of the Irtysh in the territory of Kazakhstan. There are the numerous large industrial centres and the cities like Uskemen, Semey and Pavlodar. The deposits of the Ile play the role of major water resources, which provides all population of Central Kazakhstan.

Despite the agreement with China since 1999 one side of the parties in the image of Xinjiang, Uygur Autonomous Region is building the Ulyungur channel that would get water from the Black Irtysh. The water taken from the lake and sent through pipelines would

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provide Karamay town. The water would be utilised for supplying oil industry and agricultural lands. Nowadays, 5,0 km cube water flow through Black Irtysh from China to Kazakhstan, however this number was equal to 7,8 km cube in 1989. Since the construction of the Karamay channel, Kazakhstan loses 20% of annual inflow of the river (S.N. Nugerbekov., E.U. Temirkhanov, Zh.K. Bopiyeva, S.M. Kasymov and Sh. M. Nadyrov, 2008).

All of these problems need being investigated not only for ecological security circumstances, but also in order to study the development issues of cities. In the view of the fact, the conditions of the cities in eastern and south-eastern Kazakhstan would improve in accordance with the project by 2030.

It is well-known that the previously mentioned matters are being frequently discussed not only in Central Asia, but globally as well. It wouldn't be erroneous claiming that the growth of the whole economy of a country as well as regional-industrial complex development, in the first place, depends on availability of sufficient water resources in the state. Even witnessing the course of current difficult issues inter these neighbouring countries in Central Asia regarding such matters, estimating the consequences of upcoming events is very delicate. Kazakhstan is placed on one side of the scale and Central Asian countries are on the other one. Then additionally to this, envision the weight of Russia and China. Pursuant to status quo, a leading challenge is how to maintain balance responding

everyone's interests and equally sharing the resources of cross-border rivers.

Religious extremism and terrorism: We can undoubtedly assure that international terrorism has stepped ahead to a completely new phase of its history. Analyzing the reasons of currently shaping situation due to previous and contemporary political, social, territorial, historical, ethnic, religious, racial, and a number of other interstate and internal conflict factors, it turns out to be in a political-religious direction. Thereby, the most ultimate threat is provided by the extremist aspirations of religious fundamentalists who use terror as a method of achieving their goals.

The opportunity of wide deployment of extremist and terroristic organizations actions in Central Asian countries, in the first place, was germinated by strengthening propagates of their geography. Nowadays, an active zone of international terrorism stretches on the areas from Northern Africa though Near and Middle East to South-Eastern Asia in a cape of prolonging conflicts and some Central Asian countries complement this list as well.

Everybody knows that political-social situation in Central Asia is not free from disturbance regarding the security state. However, stable state of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is doubtful. Internal and foreign affairs the countries mentioned above can deteriorate at any moment. Regions which have weak economic situation, widespread religious extremism, high danger of drug dealing, soaring level of unemployment, and the issues can worsen into conflicts anytime.

Religious extremism and terrorism can intrude in Kazakhstan, who has a stable internal political position and boosting economy. Especially, religious extremism, various preaching can possibly mislead some youth. Living standards in Kazakhstan are higher than in neighbouring countries. Government helps the needy, to some extent, ones who have poor living conditions. The unemployment problem is improving. However, there are some evidences that different radical religious movements, namely international terrorist and extremist organizations or groups are attracting citizens in our country through conducting propaganda.

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Fighting with terrorism or counterterrorism has various extents in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. An important thing is that appropriate laws and changes were adopted into legislative system. However, even adopting the law and making adequate changes in it would not precisely reduce the amount of terrorism. In order to fight back terrorism it is more important and essential to carry out the method of ideological influence to people's minds. It has an immediate connection with the ideas spread by mass media, improvement of living standards of the population and activities executed by the government.

The factors that impact to Central Asian region and its geopolitical situation directly and indirectly are affected by the military encounters that took place in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq against the USA and her allies, as well as the situations in Middle East and struggles against international terrorism.

Active movements of extremist and terroristic organizations in Middle East are topical issues today. Syria and Iraq have remained the global centre for radicalists from all around the world. As a result of complicated issues in Syria and its region, terroristic risks and threats are arising.

Inclusion of representatives from Central Asian countries to ISIS/ DAISH and other extremist groups increase level of risk of safety. Thereby, the main missions of Central Asian countries should be to form mechanisms of activities against terroristic danger. Conflicts between global and regional players who are involved in solving the problem concerning Syrian crisis are leading to complication of international political situation, it is being a new trial and menace for Central Asia (Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan, 2016).

Also, the situation in Afghanistan is in focus of universal organisations. Negative tendencies such as violence and terrorist attacks are occurring in country. In the case of unpleasant military-political situation concentration of power and stable functioning of government are extremely important. Terrorism in Afghanistan resulted active military movements, and it encourages the authoritative international players to accelerate actions towards the order in the country (Sh.M. Nadyrov and others, 2014).

Drug dealing and its threat: Drug dealing poses the most significant threat to the world. According to the information of UN, at the moment the number of drug addicted people reached 200 million people all around the world. Drug dealers annually earn 500 billion, poppy cultivation is profitable than wheat cultivation for 30 times. The amount of selling drugs in the world is higher than the amount of selling iron, steel and cars altogether. It is obvious that interstate conflicts, internal instability, carelessly opening the borders, social poverty and political instability impact on the propagation of drug dealing.

Production of drugs is carried out well by a South-western Asiatic organization called "Golden Crescent", laying on the corners of the triangle of South Afghanistan, North Pakistan and in East Iraq. Drug dealing from Afghanistan to European countries are implemented in 3 directions.

The first way is through Pakistani seaports, more than half of drugs are transported here. The second way is through Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, one third of drugs are transported this way. The third way is transporting drugs through Iran. It is supposed that 60-70% of drugs are transported through the second way. It is a big danger for Central Asian countries.

As it has become clear, Central Asia plays the role of a transit corridor between drug

producing countries and its consumers. This path is a path of “Golden Crescent”

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organization. According to experts opinions, Afghan drugs are displacing other drugs in many countries today. Prevalent amount of drugs within CIS countries mainly come from Afghanistan. 80% of heroin in Europe are produced in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan annually produces from 2, 8 to 4, 8 thousand tons of opium. Significant part of these billions of dollars profit passes to Central Asia. Therefore, the drug dealers want the situation in central Asia to be unstable. If we do not start blocking drug dealing business and start fighting severely with it, we would never win extremism and terrorism. Since extremism and terrorism are often implemented by drug business scenario. And there are billions of US dollars behind it. Undoubtedly, they can impact to complicate the situation in the region emitting only 1% of profit for terroristic action.

According to the idea of “Big Central Asia” proposed by professor F. Starr, the head of the Researches on Central Asia and Caucasus at the University Joan Hopkins, he offers including Afghanistan to Central Asia, furthermore including Xinjiang and even Pakistan. It is clear that this is a new format of “Big Middle East” idea. In this case, The USA intends to realize her strategic plan through “Big Central Asia”. Observing Central Asia through Afghanistan in order to keep her authority is the most advantageous way, thus not only Afghanistan, but also Middle East is a convenient buffer state. Even if the withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan ended in 2014, the US army continues staying there to maintain peace and order. Conflicts in this area would undoubtedly emerge menace in Central Asia

CONCLUSIONS

Central Asia is an unstructured security area or security dynamics, determined by internal, interregional, global and regional level of communication dynamics, the structure and mini-complex. The main danger of Central Asia is her location in the centre of the transnational threats due to the geographical proximity. For example:

- Propagation of nuclear weapons (South Asia, Near and Middle East);
- Drug producing and drug dealing (Afghanistan and Central Asia);
- Actions of international criminal groups;
- Activities of extremist and terroristic groups.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the following ways of preventing threats in the sphere of foreign policy: Strengthening the regime in the boundaries with the purposes of blocking drug dealing and actions of dangerous groups; taking advantage of the organizations such as the United Nations’ and the IAEA’s ability to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons; ensuring conductive relations with universally well-known centre of powers.

Therefore, in order to confront the trials and threats of the modern world, first of all, we should avoid the division of the society.

Due to geopolitical and natural resources Central Asia at a regional level always attracts attention of powerful countries; this attention, as experts explain, means an excessive level of risk. The increase of risk levels could be resolved only by the situation of cooperation and collaboration of all parties. Especially, it plays an important role in stable development of Kazakhstan and whole Central Asia.

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