

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THREATS IN CENTRAL ASIA**Onuchko Tatyana**tashayur@mail.ru2nd year Master, major "Regional Studies"

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In Central Asian region exist a few threats and challenges. The problems of national and regional security became object of study for Kazakh, Russian [1] and foreign scientific thought. Security issues are central to such organizations operating in the former Soviet Union, such as the CIS, CSTO and SCO. It seems that the division of "areas of responsibility" between the CSTO, CIS and SCO promotes more effective solution to security issues in Central Asia [2]. The researchers conclude that in CIS there are three safety protection projects for Central Asia: a unified air defense system, peacekeeping activities and anti-terrorist center of CIS.

The works of Russian and Central Asian scholars - "Security Challenges in Central Asia" [3] have common research methodology selected by authors: a systematic approach that allows creating a comprehensive view of the current geopolitical situation in the region, as well as historical and comparative analysis for comparison of interests involved in regional policy, where the author of this work also relied on this type of analysis.

The articles and monographs of foreign researchers consider diverse aspects. Among the analytical works on the security of the region, the work of foreign experts, such as S. Akiner [4] R. Dannroyter [5] M.B.Olkotg [6] should be highlighted.

Consider all these problems on each level. The author decided to implement the most developed and efficient methodology for the analysis of the regional dimension of international politics - theory of regional security complexes (TRSC), set out by Englishman, Barry Buzan, and Dane, Ole Waever, in their book "Regions and Powers: structure of international security" [7].

When working with the source it was helpful that TRSC widely uses constructivist as well as realist approaches. The constructivist component of TRSC is that it relies on the theory of *securitization* that is on the analysis of the socio-political processes by which given problems receive the status of safety issues. The intense geopolitical component, emphasis on territoriality of major international actors (states) and the polarity of the distribution of power between them bring it together with realism.

Relying on the ideas outlined above, the author by solving the tasks, came to some conclusions. At first, since getting independence in 1990s Central Asian states practiced different approaches to nation- and state-building, however, by mid-2000s all countries (except for Kyrgyzstan) consolidated into authoritarian regimes with various degrees of political openness and maturity of market economy. Still, some countries proved to be more stable, while others failed to develop efficient institutions. The weakness of the state authorities in these republics negatively affects the regional security in Central Asia.

Second, the parallel processes of nation building and state-building led to the ethnocratic character of states. All CA republics have populations, which originate from various ethnic groups and their peaceful interaction inside the countries is a key to both state and regional security. Although officially states guarantee access to power to all ethnic groups, in reality the government is dominated by leading ethnos. Obviously, this process varies across states; however even Kazakhstan, which attempts to develop civic identity over ethno-national one, faces the conflict of interests with conflict potential. This issue became evident during 2010 events in Osh when power conflict was transformed into violence between Kyrgyz and Uzbek population of the region.

The third domestic factor contributing to regional security is disunity of elites and regionalism/tribalism. The political power in Central Asian republics largely relies on clan relations

and ties, rather than political values and identity. The presence of different clans in politics of all Central Asian countries and their constant rivalry for power affects the domestic stability of the states, and thus challenges regional security. The issue of successor adds up another point of concern to the continuing rivalry between elites in Central Asia.

Thus, social unrest in one of the Central Asian republics might spark region-wide instability and thus ability of state to prevent such unrest through providing higher living standards becomes crucial for regional security.

The regional level of security threats includes issue of legal status of Caspian Sea, terrorist activities, territorial disputes among states of the region complemented by ethnic controversies, tensions over water and energy resources, problems of drug trafficking and inefficiency of regional organizations.

The issue over the Caspian sea did not bring open confrontation among bordering countries, its existence affects the usage of its resources, including oil and gas as well as construction of oil and gas pipelines in the region and thus endangers security of states and region as a whole.

The issue of proliferating terrorism and extremism remains to be crucial for Central Asian security. The ongoing ISAF mission in Afghanistan as well as deterioration of domestic economic and social situation in CA republics contribute to increase in number of terrorist and fundamentalist groups in the region. Fergana valley remains to be a source of potential conflict in a region, where Islamic fundamentalists fuel social and economic problems. The other point of concern is Pamir area of Tajikistan, which is weakly controlled by central government.

The other source of potential conflict in Central Asia is water and energy resources. The countries of the region are divided into water rich and energy rich republics. During Soviet time water usage and energy systems of the region were united in one complex, however, the collapse of the SU led to nationalization of the parts of the system and water became a source of conflict. Upper stream countries Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan attempts to use it to get access to the energy resources of neighboring countries as they do not have enough resources at home, while downstream countries Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan attempt to secure their access to water supply for their agriculture. The existing plans of constructing Kambarata (Kyrgyzstan) and Rogun (Tajikistan) hydropower plants fuels fears of downstream countries to loose water supply for agriculture.

Drug trafficking has become another threat to regional security in Central Asia. The unequipped borders, inexperienced border control personnel, proliferation of criminals in early 1990s and corruption in the region as well as increased drugs production in Afghanistan made Central Asian states a transit route for drugs from Afghanistan to Russia and further to Europe, this route encompasses Kazakhstan as well. Obviously, drug trafficking leads to criminalization of the countries and might weaken state authorities, thus destabilizing the region. Thus, the failure to solve the problems by Central Asian states continues to create certain security risks at the regional level.

For Central Asian countries withdrawal of NATO troops from unstable Afghanistan is a nightmare as it is obvious that Central Asian republics are not able to protect themselves from threats originating in that country.

Along with post-2014 challenges in form of growing Islamic fundamentalism and extremism, withdrawal issue has other dimension. US and other NATO members participated in ISAF uses territory of Central Asian republics for transit of its military equipment and weapons through so called Northern Route. It covers railways of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, as well as port Aktau in Kazakhstan. Taking into consideration instability of Central Asian states, high level of corruption, integration of some authority representatives in the Southern Kazakhstan and several areas of Tajikistan with criminal structures will probably lead to the equipment plunder and destruction. Moreover, it could be used for organization and conduction of diversified activity in the eastern direction of the route, in the close proximity of Xinjiang-Uygur autonomous area in China, where strong separatists forces exist.

The second extra regional security threat is connected to growing Chinese involvement in Central Asia both economically and politically. This growing presence of China revives “New Great Game” in Central Asia, affecting stability and security of the region. States of the region is forced to seek their ways to maneuver among powers engaged in rivalry. The paradox of the situation is that all powers involved in “Great Game” is interested in stability of the region, but they also seek to maximize their own influence, and the competition for influence proportionally affects stability.

The third most important threat is Uyghur separatism in Xinjiang, China, reinforced by the US and the number of European states. Although China invests a lot into combating separatist movements in Xinjiang, its efforts might be insufficient. Moreover, this separatism might endanger territorial integrity of states; for instance Kazakhstan has large Uyghur diaspora living mainly in Almaty region adjacent to Chinese border and it might attempt to unite with Chinese Uyghur to create independent state.

Thus, we see that Central Asia has a complex of problems associated with non-regional security threats. Moreover, one of the states are not able to cope with these threats and challenges on their own.

Therefore, this article made an attempt to present the most significant threats to security, which arise at different levels - national, regional and extra-regional, and their impact on security in Central Asia.

Nonetheless, different views on regional security, its threats and challenges, as well as the tools for security provision, both within the region and among participating nations, significantly influence the effectiveness of security regime in Central Asia. In this regard, it is recommended for the Central Asian Republics to fully exploit the potential of regional security organizations such as CSTO and SCO, and, where possible, promote inter-organizational cooperation between them.

Each chapter can further become a separate subject of study and be useful for understanding and solving all issues related to minimization of threats and security challenges in Central Asia.

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