

CENTRAL ASIA IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Anri Sharapov

PhD, Interim Associate Professor of University of World Economics and
Diplomacy (UWED)

A B S T R A C T	KEY WORDS
<p>At present, we are participants and observers of the formation of a new world order, where the position of Asian states is being strengthened in the world political and economic arena. This is primarily due to the continent of Eurasia. As a result of the ongoing reforms, China has become the economic locomotive of the world. In the foreign policy of this state, the Central Asian region plays an important economic and geopolitical role. Since for the development of the economy, China needs natural resources available on the territory of the states of Central Asia. On the other hand, there are also interests of such leading actors of the world as the USA, the Russian Federation. Despite the fact that China has established relations with the region since ancient times, at present, Beijing has formed specific relations with each state of Central Asia. In this respect, Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative is of great importance.</p>	<p>Eurasia, Central Asia, People's Republic of China, Geopolitics, USA, Russian Federation, «one belt one way», regional integration.</p>

Introduction

In modern geopolitical conditions, the importance of the Eurasian continent is increasing. This is primarily due to the rise of the People's Republic of China, as a result of the ongoing reforms, the author of which was such a charismatic personality as Deng Xiaoping. The rapid development of the PRC directly affects both the world order and the relations of the PRC with neighboring states and regions. In this sense, the Central Asian region is no exception. What is Eurasia from a geographical and geopolitical point of view and what is the place of the PRC in the Eurasian continent, this is something that will always have to be borne in mind.

Eurasia is the largest landmass in terms of area. The area of Eurasia is 54.8 million km². This is 36.7% of the total land area. The continent of Eurasia includes two parts of the world - Europe and Asia. Part of the world is a historical concept. It is believed that the name Europe comes from the Phoenician west (west, which meant the side where the Sun sets), respectively, Asia - from the word sunrise, that is, the side of the horizon where the Sun rises [1]. It should also be noted that Eurasia is washed by four oceans: the Atlantic from the west, the Arctic from the north, the Pacific from the east and the Indian from the south. Eurasia is the birthplace of the most ancient civilizations.

Methodology

Eurasia is gradually turning into a supercontinent, which, despite close ties with Russia, will be led by China, Kent Calder believes. The main thing is that it does not become too profitable for him. But at the same time, America will not be suppressed by him, and there are a number of reasons for this [2]. Here it is necessary to take into account that, be that as it may, until now and in the near future, the West represented by the United States will remain the world center of technological development. This is primarily due to the influence of science, education, fundamental research in social practice and in the politics of Western countries.

As K. Calder notes, until now the American continent was considered a supercontinent. Since the Trans-American Railroad connected the two coasts of America in 1869, this country has become "the power of two oceans - the Atlantic and the Pacific." Moreover, after the Panama Canal was opened in 1914, America turned into a real superpower.

Today, similar processes are taking place in Eurasia, connecting this continent together. Born on the basis of the historical "Silk Road", the modern Chinese idea of "One Belt, One Road" is the implementation of the concept of "Super-Eurasia" [2].

As a response to the initiative of the PRC, one can note the idea of creating a Blue Dot network, led by Washington. The US, Australia and Japan announced the Blue Dot network during the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok on November 4, 2019. The initiative is consistent with the G20 Principles for Investment in Quality Infrastructure, especially in terms of governance, environmental standards and transparency. The United States "is committed to a transparent, competitive, market-driven system that benefits all participants," Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said in October 2019. This is different from a system based on a state-controlled economic model, where deals are made in exchange for bribes and without regard to the needs of local communities [3].

This initiative is most likely aimed, firstly, to strengthen the positions of the initiating countries in the process of geopolitical rivalry with China; secondly, as a financial instrument of Washington. Naturally, many Eurasian scientists were engaged in the study of Eurasia. This is an indisputable fact. But in modern conditions, as already mentioned above, we are seeing that the continent is becoming an arena for a clash of interests of the world's leading actors. In this regard, a whole research field is revealed, both for representatives of the academic community and for empiricists. According to K. Calder, there are three important turning points in the development of the Eurasian idea.

First. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, a huge "empty" region formed to the west of China. And immediately began the Chinese penetration into the central regions of Eurasia, into its very heart. Bearing in mind its enormous energy needs, China sought to use the Eurasian space as a link to the Middle East. This began to somewhat resemble the "great imperialist competition" for Eurasia that unfolded here in the 19th century. Only this time the absolute superiority turned out to be China. Thus, the previous balance of power on the continent has changed.

Second. This is a financial and banking crisis in the West, which began with the collapse of the mortgage lending bank Lehman Brothers. Then China seriously rushed to the West. At a tremendous pace, he was building infrastructure in his western provinces - Sichuan, Gansu and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Third is the crisis in Ukraine. In connection with the Western sanctions adopted against Russia for its invasion of Crimea, relations between the West and Moscow have become very complicated. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been hastily re-examining their ties with Russia and at

the same time strengthening relations with China. As a result, the 16+1 format was born, in which 16 European countries acted on the one hand and China on the other.

And at present, this confrontation has reached a completely different qualitative level, where the fate of the world order that is in force to this day is already being decided.

Until then, Asia and Europe were connected only by the Trans-Siberian Railway, passing through Russia. China has begun to expand the railway network in Eurasia. Including for these purposes, it created a number of international financial institutions, for example, the AIIB bank, specially designed to finance large infrastructure projects. Thus, China is trying to bring Europe closer to itself [5].

As for China's relations with the countries of Central Asia, it should be noted that they have rather ancient roots. Nevertheless, the Central Asian countries face an urgent question of a historical, civilizational and geopolitical nature - do we know China?

Leading Sinologist, Doctor of History A.Khodzhaev notes that China has maintained close ties with Central Asia since ancient times. Through it, the achievements of science and art of other nations, Buddhism and Islam, penetrated into this country, which had a great influence on Chinese culture. Moreover, the spread of Islam led to the emergence in China of a new ethnic group, called the Dungans (Huizu), whose formation was influenced by immigrants from modern Uzbekistan and neighboring republics. Chinese goods went to Central Asia and on to South Asia, the Middle East and Europe. At the same time, Chinese culture was spreading [4].

In the future, the development of relations was influenced by several reasons. The first is the issue of borders between the two empires. There are enough agreements on this issue in bilateral relations. An example is the following historical fact. In 1882-1884, in accordance with the provisions of the St. Petersburg Treaty, the borders of the possessions of the two empires in Central Asia were demarcated, 5 protocols and 2 descriptions of the border were signed. In particular, the New Margilan protocol of 1884 was devoted to determining the border line between the Ferghana Valley and Kashgaria. In the process of demarcation of the border line, the interests of local peoples were not taken into account. According to Russian researchers, in determining the boundaries between the Fergana Valley and Kashgaria, deviations from the original border of the Kokand Khanate in favor of China were allowed, and the issues of the Eastern Pamirs were not resolved. An agreement on delimitation in the Pamirs was reached in 1894. In accordance with it, the border line between the two empires ran from the Uzbek Pass along the Sarykol Range to the junction of the territories of Russia, Afghanistan and China. However, the course of preparation of the agreement was very complex and controversial. The Qing Empire claimed the entire Eastern Pamirs.

The second is the influence of internal political processes in Russia and China on the resolution of issues regarding borders. Treaties of 1911 and 1915 were concluded between the two empires on border issues, and at this the process of territorial demarcation between the Russian and Qing empires was completed, since over the next decade both of them were overthrown by revolutionary movements [4].

Results and Discussion

In the Soviet period, border issues still remained an important component in bilateral relations and were of a conflictogenic nature. Thus, the issues of border settlement that arose in the 19th century became a kind of legacy of the past for the newly independent countries of Central Asia. This issue is relevant from the point of view of studying Chinese political and strategic culture, as it allows a deeper study of the behavior of the Chinese as neighbors of Central Asia.

At the end of the 20th century, the nature of bilateral relations began to transform. This was primarily due to several factors:

1. The countries of Central Asia became independent subjects of international relations, which allowed Beijing to start solving the most important issue - border settlement with the Central Asian countries.
2. The PRC economy needed markets and natural resources and transport and communication capabilities of Central Asia.
3. The need to ensure the security of XUAR's borders with Central Asia.

As a result, on September 8, 1992, an agreement was reached in Minsk on the formation of a commission consisting of representatives of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to negotiate the border with China. A principled approach to them was also developed based on the recognition of the results of the negotiations held by the former USSR, including the agreement on the numerical reduction of border troops. In 1992, joint Statements of the PRC with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were adopted. They note that the parties will adhere to the principles of equal dialogue and mutual concessions. In 1993, a joint Declaration of the People's Republic of China and Tajikistan was signed [4].

Thus, it can be noted that control over space, being a sphere of geopolitics, has always been relevant in relations between China and Central Asia.

Subsequently, these issues were touched upon during meetings of the delegations of the PRC and these three Central Asian states at the highest level. On April 26, 1996, in Shanghai, the President of the People's Republic of China and the Presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed the "Agreement on confidence-building in the military field in the border area", called by some Russian experts the "Non-Aggression Pact". In accordance with it, the parties undertake:

- refuse military maneuvers that threaten the other side;
- limit the scale, zones and number of military exercises;
- notify each other about important military operations in the 100-kilometer border strip;
- to strengthen friendly ties between military units in the border area and border troops;
- to inform each other in advance about the movements, exercises and other actions of their troops;
- strive to turn the areas near the border into a zone of trust and stability [4].

The past years have shown that the SCO has become a key mechanism for cooperation between the members of this organization.

SCO summit held in September 2022 in Samarkand, on the one hand, showed that the activities of the organization had already reached a qualitatively high level, and on the other hand, demonstrated the achievements of the diplomacy of Uzbekistan, the principles of which are non-alignment, openness and cooperation.

Currently, the activities of the organization pay serious attention to the energy agenda, since China is the main consumer of primary energy resources in the Asian region. More than 60% of China's energy balance is formed by coal, this is the only resource with which the country provides itself. Dependence on oil imports reached 70% in 2019; in the same year, China's total economic demand for crude oil was 420 million tons. Own natural gas production (about 140 billion m³ per year) covers up to 60% of the country's needs, while imports reach 80 billion m³ per year with a total consumption of 220 billion m³ in 2019. The main LNG suppliers are Australia, Qatar, UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia (60%). Gas is also supplied through the pipeline from Central Asia (35 billion m³ per year). For Central Asia, China is the main export market for energy resources. Explored oil reserves on the territory of Kazakhstan

are about 4 billion tons, on the territory of Uzbekistan - 1 billion tons. The subsoil of Kazakhstan contains about 1 trillion m³ of natural gas, Uzbekistan - 1.2 trillion m³. And this is not all proven reserves [6].

One of the important components in bilateral relations between China and Central Asia is the “One Belt, One Road”. It seems that this is globalization the Chinese way. In this initiative of Beijing, Central Asia is of no small importance.

Revealing the significance of the Great Silk Road, Chinese President Xi Jinping notes that China and the countries of Central Asia are close neighbors, connected by common mountains and rivers. China attaches great importance to the development of relations of friendship and cooperation with the countries of Central Asia and considers this as a priority for Chinese diplomacy [5].

Sinologist A.Khodzhaev considers this phenomenon more broadly and notes that, after the Song dynasty (960-1279), the center of the world economy moved from East to West. Now the process is reversed. By 2025, the world center of economic development will completely move from West to East. In this process, the first 10 years of XXI became the most rapidly developing period for China. With the shift of the economic comes the shift of the political. At the same time, the main burden is borne by China, which intends to ensure the free movement of goods, capital and labor [7].

The cooperation between the PRC and the Central Asian countries is dominated not only by issues of an economic and fuel and energy nature, but also the mechanisms of "soft power" are clearly manifested.

Despite the fact that in political sciences there is a point of view that J. Nye is the founding father of "soft power", there are facts in Chinese sources about the use of soft influence in the history of Chinese civilization.

The meaning of life, according to the precepts of Confucius, is to reveal the moral foundations of human nature, and this occupation gives a person not only moral satisfaction and even pure, serene joy, before which all the pleasures of a vain soul fade, but also authority and, in the end, power over the world. . This power, however, is exercised in a non-violent way and is possible only where trust and honesty reign in relations between people [8].

In the context of globalization, the Confucius Institutes are an important tool of Chinese “soft power”. According to the Hanban Annual Report, by the end of 2020, 541 Confucius Institutes and 1170 Confucius classrooms have been established in 162 countries (regions) of the world. In particular, five Confucius Institutes have already been established in Kazakhstan, four in Kyrgyzstan, two each in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan [9].

In addition, within the framework of the activities of the Confucius Institutes, Chinese holidays and festivals are held. It should be noted that the Chinese language is more in demand than Korean and Japanese. The holiday is a cultural phenomenon that is formed and developed as a result of a long historical process, which is an important part of the national culture in the life of the country [10].

Exploring the cooperation between the PRC and the Central Asian countries, it should be noted that they continue in the context of a pandemic. According to PRC Ambassador to Uzbekistan Jiang Yan, the concept of a community with a common destiny for mankind put forward by PRC President Xi Jinping is widely accepted in the international arena. Being the first to suffer from the coronavirus epidemic, China immediately informed the World Health Organization about the incident and constantly shares its experience in epidemic prevention and control with other countries. China donated

\$50 million to the WHO and provided assistance to more than 150 countries and international organizations [11].

During this period, China exported (as of May 23, 2020) 56.8 billion masks and 250 million protective clothing sets, incl. There are over 12 billion masks in the US. Large-scale emergency assistance was provided: 26 medical teams were sent to 24 countries, and training courses were organized in 45 African countries to combat the epidemic [12].

We are currently witnessing the implementation of a major transport and logistics project in Central Asia. The countries of the region agreed to coordinate efforts in promoting the multimodal transport corridor Asia - Pacific - China - Kyrgyzstan - Uzbekistan - Turkmenistan - Azerbaijan - Georgia - Turkey - Europe. This project, which should have been implemented quite a long time ago, only today has the opportunity to be implemented, which will be an additional incentive for the development of the economies of the Central Asian countries.

From the point of view of political geography, the uniqueness of the region lies in the lack of access to seaports, as a result of which the export-import operations of the countries of the region are under a geographical determinant. It seems that the wider use of the possibilities of the above railway communications will contribute to the improvement of the situation of the countries of the region.

Conclusion

As part of the conclusion, it should be noted that, in the context of the formation of a new world order, the continent of Eurasia is of key importance for the stable development of mankind. This, first of all, is possible thanks to the trusting relationship between the countries of Eurasia. On the other hand, China and its relations with the Russian Federation, the United States, and others are a major player. Important is China's cooperation with the Central Asian countries, which have reached a completely different qualitative level, covering all spheres of the national economy. Investments, technologies, equipment from China are necessary for the modernization of industry, agriculture, construction of the countries of the region.

An important place in relations is occupied by the issues of ensuring security and stability in the Central Asian region. In conditions of turbulence in world politics, security issues are paramount. Moreover, this imposes a huge responsibility on the SCO. However, the countries of the region should be aware of the importance of dynamic regional cooperation among the countries of Central Asia. This would allow the region to rise to a higher level of regional integration and diversification of technological and trade and economic ties with other innovatively developed economies of the world.

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