



RETHINKING US INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE NEED FOR A NEW STRATEGY

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: The current state of relations between the United States and Central Asia is discussed in this article. Central Asia has long attracted major powers as a historically advantageous geostrategic region. The United States is interested in this strategic chokepoint for its own purposes. Given its role in shaping the international system, the United States has interests in every region of the world. The United States asserts that it was among the first states to recognize the independence of Central Asian states and has helped these nations establish their independence. Although the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan has had negative effects on Central Asian states, this does not mean that U.S. interests in the region have terminated. However, the US' development of a new strategy for the Central Asian region is an essential issue. In addition, the US should use its influence in Central Asia to counter Russia's hegemony there and prevent China's enormous inflows.

AQSHNING MARKAZIY OSIYODAGI MANFAATLARINI QAYTA KO'RIB CHIQUISH: YANGI STRATEGIYA ZARURATI

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MAQOLA HAQIDA

Kalit soʻzlar: AQSH, Markaziy Osiyo, Afgʻoniston, Rossiya, Xitoy, Tolibon, strategiya, temir yoʻl loyihalari, “Bir kamar, bir yoʻl” tashabbusi, Yevroosiyo iqtisodiy ittifoqi, Kollektiv xavfsizlik shartnomasi tashkiloti.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada AQSh va Markaziy Osiyo oʻrtasidagi munosabatlarning hozirgi holati muhokama qilinadi. Markaziy Osiyo uzoq vaqtdan beri tarixiy jihatdan qulay geostrategik mintaqasi sifatida yirik davlatlarni oʻziga jalb etib kelgan. Qoʻshma Shtatlar ushbu strategik nuqtadan oʻz maqsadlari uchun manfaatdor. Xalqaro tizimni shakllantirishdagi rolini hisobga olsak, Qoʻshma Shtatlar dunyoning har bir mintaqasida manfaatlarga ega. Qoʻshma Shtatlar Markaziy Osiyo davlatlarining mustaqilligini birinchilardan boʻlib tan olgan va bu xalqlarga oʻz mustaqilligini oʻrnatishda yordam berganini taʼkidlaydi. Amerika qoʻshinlarining Afgʻonistondan olib chiqilishi Markaziy Osiyo davlatlari uchun salbiy taʼsir koʻrsatgan boʻlsa-da, bu AQShning mintaqadagi manfaatlari toʻxtadi, degani emas. Biroq, AQShning Markaziy Osiyo mintaqasi uchun yangi strategiya ishlab chiqishi muhim masala. Qolaversa, AQSh Markaziy Osiyodagi oʻz taʼsiridan Rossiyaning u yerdagi gegemonligiga qarshi turish va Xitoyning ulkan oqimining oldini olish uchun foydalanishi kerak.

**ПЕРЕОСМЫСЛЕНИЕ ИНТЕРЕСОВ США В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ:
НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ НОВОЙ СТРАТЕГИИ**

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О СТАТЬЕ

Ключевые слова: США, Центральная Азия, Афганистан, Россия, Китай, талибы, стратегия, железнодорожные проекты, инициатива «Один пояс, один путь», Евразийский экономический союз, ОДКБ.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается нынешнее состояние отношений между США и Центральной Азией. Центральная Азия давно привлекает крупные державы как исторически выгодный геостратегический регион. Соединенные Штаты заинтересованы в этом стратегическом узком месте в своих собственных целях. Учитывая их роль в формировании международной системы, Соединенные Штаты имеют интересы в каждом регионе мира. Соединенные Штаты утверждают, что они были одними из первых государств, признавших

независимость государств Центральной Азии, и помогли этим народам установить свою независимость. Хотя вывод американских войск из Афганистана оказал негативное влияние на государства Центральной Азии, это не означает, что интересам США в регионе пришел конец. Тем не менее, разработка США новой стратегии для региона Центральной Азии является важным вопросом. Кроме того, США должны использовать свое влияние в Центральной Азии, чтобы противостоять там российской гегемонии и предотвратить огромный приток капитала из Китая.

INTRODUCTION

The Central Asian region has become an increasingly important area of interest for the United States in recent years due to its strategic location, valuable resources, and historical trade routes. Central Asia's location as a crossroads between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East makes it an important player in regional and international trade. Moreover, the region boasts significant reserves of oil, natural gas, and minerals, which are essential for global energy security. However, US interests in Central Asia have been threatened by other major powers, such as China and Russia, which have been actively pursuing their own interests in the region. These countries have established diplomatic, economic, and military ties with Central Asian countries, which have challenged the US dominance in the region. Therefore, the US needs to formulate a new strategy to protect its interests in the region and prevent the further expansion of China's and Russia's influence. Also, it is very important that the US itself conducts relations with the countries of the region at a new pace and presents itself with real economic projects. This article will analyze US interests in Central Asia and explore why a new strategy is necessary to safeguard those interests.

THE MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This research applied factor, event, and comparative political analysis methods. To assure adequacy, the opinions of scientists from the United States, Central Asia, Russia, and elsewhere were analyzed equally. The opinions of politicians and experts from major think tanks were studied in detail to cover the topic more widely. The article provides an in-depth analysis of contemporary issues and their potential solutions.

Central Asia's advantageous geostrategic location and abundant natural resources have piqued American interest. In addition, the Afghan issue demonstrates that the United States should pay more attention to Central Asia. Afghanistan is an important issue for the United States because it is a part of Greater Central Asia. The presence of the United States in Central Asia provides numerous benefits to the countries of the region. Foreign policies of the states comprising the

relevant geostrategic region are complex. Due to their lack of capacity to promote regional integration, countries with fragile economies find the presence of only one power in the region intolerable. Not only Russia's, but also China's, influence in CA has grown to such a degree that these countries, which appear to be official partners, are already on the path to covert contention.

The United States is concerned about Russia's remarkable rise in CA. Moreover, China's growing influence in the region, especially over the past decade, has prompted US to pursue a more assertive foreign policy in the region. [1] As nations compete fiercely for energy resources today, the United States is becoming increasingly interested in Central Asia as a location rich in natural resources. However, American interests in Central Asia reflect geostrategic assets, given current trends. Lacking a direct connection to the region, it has limited access to its natural resources. This indicates that the US' ambitions in the region are all geared toward enhancing its geopolitical position in Central Asia.

The Afghan factor in US interests towards Central Asia. The war in Afghanistan has played a significant role in shaping US interests in Central Asia. The US has been involved in Afghanistan since 2001, with the aim of defeating the Taliban and preventing the country from being used as a safe haven for international terrorist organizations. As a result, the US has established a significant military presence in Afghanistan, which has had implications for its relationships with neighboring Central Asian countries. [2] One of the key implications of the US involvement in Afghanistan has been the need for logistical support and supply routes for its military operations. This has led to the establishment of transportation corridors and supply networks that traverse Central Asia, making it an important transit hub for the US military. As a result, the US has been working closely with Central Asian governments to secure these supply routes and ensure that they remain open.

Additionally, the conflict in Afghanistan has created security concerns for neighboring Central Asian countries. The US has been working with these countries to enhance their capacity to prevent and respond to security threats emanating from Afghanistan, including terrorism and drug trafficking. The US has also been promoting regional cooperation among Central Asian countries with the aim of enhancing their collective ability to address these challenges. Furthermore, the eventual withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan in 2021 has led to questions about the future of US engagement in the region. The US has indicated that it will continue to support Afghanistan and its neighbors, but the nature and scope of this support remain unclear. US relationships with Central Asian countries will continue to be shaped by the security situation in Afghanistan as well as broader geopolitical trends in the region. [3] Thus, US interests in Central Asia are closely tied to its involvement in Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan has created both challenges and opportunities for the US in Central Asia, with implications for regional security, economic development, and political stability.

The need for a new strategy towards Central Asia. While the US has had a significant presence in Central Asia for over two decades, there is a growing recognition that its current approach may not be sufficient to address the region's evolving challenges and opportunities. [4] As such, there is a need for a new US strategy towards Central Asia that takes into account the changing geopolitical landscape and the region's own unique characteristics. The most recent Central Asia strategy developed in 2020 no longer fulfills the requirements of the present. The United States should implement a new policy toward Central Asia immediately. Otherwise, Russia and China will continue to exert their influence in the region, preventing the United States from advancing its interests in Central Asia in the future. [5]

One of the key factors driving the need for a new strategy is the changing balance of power in the region. China's growing economic and political influence in Central Asia, as well as its Belt and Road Initiative, have the potential to reshape the region's economic and political landscape. Russia also remains a major player in the region, with longstanding historical and cultural ties to Central Asia. The US needs to develop a strategy that can effectively engage with these actors while advancing its own interests in the region.

China's Belt and Road Initiative is a major driver of its engagement in Central Asia, with the aim of expanding its economic influence and promoting connectivity across the region. China has invested heavily in infrastructure projects in Central Asia, including the construction of new transportation networks and the development of energy resources. [6] One example of this is the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project, which aims to connect China's Xinjiang province to Uzbekistan and beyond. This project will not only enhance regional connectivity but also increase China's economic influence in the region.

Russia has sought to maintain its influence in Central Asia through its security cooperation agreements, energy exports, and cultural and linguistic ties. Russia has also sought to establish its own economic presence in the region through the Eurasian Economic Union, which includes several Central Asian countries. [7] And in the sphere of security Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a regional security alliance that includes several Central Asian countries is a bright example. Russia has used the CSTO to promote its own security interests in the region, including countering terrorism and extremism.

Another factor driving the need for a new strategy is the changing security environment in Central Asia. The threat of terrorism and extremism remains high, and new challenges have emerged, such as cybersecurity threats and the rise of transnational organized crime. [8] The US needs to develop a strategy that can effectively address these challenges while building on existing cooperation with Central Asian countries.

The withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan was very worrying for the states of Central Asia. First of all, the regional countries were worried about the possibility of the existing terrorist groups in Afghanistan awakening and entering the borders of Central Asia against the background of the chaos that occurred in the country after the Taliban seized power. [9] In particular, terrorist attacks carried out by the IS group on mosques in northern Afghanistan, rockets fired into the territory of Uzbekistan [10] and increased tension on the border with Tajikistan proved that there is a real threat to security. Secondly, against the backdrop of the chaos that arose after the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, the plans of the Central Asian countries, especially Uzbekistan, to enter the South Asian trade routes through the transit of Afghanistan in recent years have been endangered. The future of the developed and expected transport corridors has been questioned. The struggle to get rid of Russia's transit, which has complicated consequences for the Central Asian countries, has been postponed again. Even taking into account the fact that Afghanistan was the focal point of the previous US strategy for the Central Asian region, it is imperative that a new strategy be developed. The reason is that the power in Afghanistan has changed, and its influence on Central Asia and relations with the countries of the region may also be different.

Based on the above, it can be said that security may be the main issue of the new US strategy in Central Asia. However, if the US wants to prevent the growing influence of Russia and China in Central Asia, it is very important to be able to offer projects that bring economic benefits to the countries of the region. In this, of course, it is essential to provide real assistance to the Central Asian countries to implement the transport corridors that provide access to the world's waters through the south.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that Central Asia is a strategically important region with significant implications for regional and global security, economic development, and political stability. The US has a strong interest in Central Asia due to its proximity to Afghanistan, its rich energy resources, and its potential as a hub for trade and commerce. However, the US faces a number of challenges in the region, including competition from other major powers such as China and Russia and regional security threats.

To address these challenges, the US needs to develop a new strategy for Central Asia that is informed by a clear understanding of the region's complexities and opportunities. Such a strategy should focus on promoting regional security and stability through cooperation with Central Asian countries, supporting economic development and political reform, and balancing its engagement with China and Russia to advance its own interests in the region.

Thus, the US needs to recognize the importance of Central Asia as a strategic region and develop a new, comprehensive strategy that can effectively address the challenges and opportunities that the region presents. By doing so, the US can help promote regional security and stability, support economic development, and advance its own interests in the region.

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