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**"CENTRAL ASIA, RUSSIA AND THE WORLD:
GEOPOLITICS, GEO-ECONOMICS, SECURITY"
(BOOK REVIEW)**

The monograph under review is written by a doctor of economic sciences, professor Shavkat Arifkhanov, who worked for many years in the Institute for Strategic and Interregional Studies and is well known for his publications not only in Uzbekistan but also far beyond its borders. This book is the result of many years of intensive work and an organic continuation of his scientific research, published in numerous books and articles after the collapse of the USSR and the formation of the independence of the Central Asian republics.

The monograph is based on the previous (2018) edition of the book “Central Asia: Present and Future...”, which aroused considerable reader interest and was highly appreciated by the country's leadership, as well as foreign experts and colleagues from Uzbekistan. Being a direct continuation of it, it embodies a new stage in the analytical activity and creative work of the author. This edition of the book - "Central Asia, Russia, and the World: Geopolitics, Geoeconomics, Security" (expanded both in structure and content) is a serious scientific and analytical monograph, based on the result of many years of fruitful research of the author's problems of Central Asian states and cooperation with Russia and other countries.

Undoubtedly, it is important to comprehend better the initiatives of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, and the development strategies of New Uzbekistan, as well as understand ways of their implementation in the direction of strengthening relations with neighboring Central Asian countries and strategic partnerships with Russia and other states, giving stability to interconnectedness with all regions and economies of the world, active cooperation with regional and international financial, economic organizations. It is especially important in the modern world now on “the period of the «historical

rift», when one era comes to an end and another begins – thus far unpredictable and unknown”¹.

The monograph examines the geopolitical and geo-economic situations that are developing in the world and the strategy for combating transnational threats - international terrorism, religious extremism, and drug trafficking from a new perspective. It proposes ways to solve the main problems of regional integration in Central Asia and create a more stable security environment, including its economic, social, environmental, cultural, and humanitarian components.

The book consists of an introduction, four organically interconnected chapters, uniting 20 sections, and a conclusion. The first chapter is devoted to the analysis of the geopolitical balance of power in the modern world. It deals with such topical issues as the new geopolitical situation and Central Asia; interests of world power centers (Russia, USA, China, European Union, Japan) in the region; India and neighboring Muslim countries - Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan; diversity of geopolitics and geo-economics of the states of Central Asia, on the basis of which an assessment of global systems and integration trends are given.

The second chapter "Integration as a factor of security and stability" analyzes the key problems of integration in the context of ensuring security and stability in the region; the experience of integration of the countries of the European Union and its applicability to Central Asia; integration processes within the region and the role of Russia; conceptual foundations for creating a regional market, development of a system of transport and communication corridors.

The third chapter "The main tasks of ensuring regional security" contains a study of such topical and acute issues as the fight against terrorism - a strategic task; Islam and manifestations of religious extremism; the drug situation in the region with an emphasis on the socio-economic aspect; economic security of the states of Central Asia; as well as social aspects of security and stability in the region.

The fourth chapter "Central Asia, Russia, and the world: from national interests to the creation of a new security system" reveals the possibilities and

¹ Shavkat Mirziyoev. "The SCO Samarkand Summit: Dialogue and Cooperation in an Interconnected World" <https://kun.uz/en/news/2022/09/12/president-samarkand-summit-can-become-the-platform-that-unites-states-with-different-foreign-policy-priorities> September 12, 2022

prospects for economic interaction between the countries of Central Asia, the facets of their cooperation and strategic partnership with Russia, the main contours of the national security strategy (a view from Uzbekistan from the position regional interests), factors of regionalization in ensuring security, as well as the formation of a new security architecture.

The book reveals the interdependence and complementarity of the countries of Central Asia, which allows us to see the future of their integration and the strategic nature of cooperation and partnership both among themselves and with Russia and other leading powers.

This edition greatly enhances the analysis of issues related to the geopolitical and geo-economic interests of both Russia and the United States, China, the countries of the European Union, and Japan in the Central Asian region; the positions and mechanisms of cooperation between India and neighboring Muslim countries - Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan in relation to the countries of the region are also considered.

With regard to the formation of a new security architecture, readers' attention is drawn to the fact that many points are still controversial and underdeveloped. It should be recognized that the existing models of the world order demonstrate their inefficiency, approaches, and methods for overcoming global and regional threats do not correspond to modern realities and require improvement. This also manifested itself in difficult moments of a common threat to all mankind in connection with the COVID-19 coronavirus infection pandemic.

At the same time, the author notes that the modern processes of globalization and regionalization on the planet are developing in the conditions of increasing turbulence of the world order, characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability, in which the problems of ensuring security and stability go beyond national states and acquire global significance. In addition, the intersection of the opposing interests of world and regional powers in the Central Asian region and around it can create threats and challenges to its stability and security. Internal contradictions in the region between the Central Asian countries themselves with many socio-economic issues regarding water, energy, environment, border, and other problems also complicate the situation.

Under these conditions, the processes of economic and humanitarian

integration in the context of ensuring the stability of Central Asia and the qualitatively new nature of cooperation and strategic partnership between the countries of the region with Russia and other leading powers are of great importance. At the same time, it is proposed to identify the main principles that the states of Central Asia will adhere to, based on their interests in the further development of international relations, namely: with *Afghanistan* as a neighboring country that, when peace is established, can significantly contribute to strengthening regional security, increasing foreign economic relations, especially exports, and facilitation of "transit to the seaports of Pakistan and Iran with access to the Indian Ocean; with *China*, given the export of its goods and the growing demand for hydrocarbons; with *Japan* in the framework of political dialogue and support for economic reforms; with the *United States and the West as a whole* in connection with the need to attract investment and advanced technologies.

With regard to Central Asia, much will depend, first of all, on the joint efforts of the countries located here themselves and on how effective the consultative meetings in the format of heads of state will be, how the lines of their foreign ministries, national security councils, strategic and local tasks will be substantiated and coordinated. The level of trust between countries and the continuity of the decisions taken are extremely important here.

The prospects for economic interaction between the countries of Central Asia, according to the author, are, first of all, stable growth rates, a market approach with the role of the state in simplifying the tax system and providing a competitive environment for enterprises, companies, and private firms, including areas of joint development of border territories, the construction of the "economic belt of the silk road", the development of international tourism and infrastructure.

It should be emphasized that the author does not claim to provide complete and comprehensive coverage of all existing issues. He expresses personal views that do not contradict the national interests of countries, although they may not coincide with the point of view of individual politicians and experts. Nevertheless, conclusions and suggestions on certain events and problems will be very interesting and useful for thoughtful and attentive readers, and policy-makers involved.

This monograph by Professor Shavkat Arifkhanov is written in a good language and style, accessible both for political scientists, economists, teachers, graduate students and students of higher educational institutions, employees of the diplomatic corps, experts and specialists of relevant institutions and organizations and for the general reader. In general, it is intended for everyone who is interested in issues of international relations, geo-economics, geopolitics, and the formation of a new security architecture. And I am sincerely glad that I was a member of the editorial board of this timely and very interesting book.

The book “Central Asia, Russia, and the World: Geopolitics, Geo-economics, Security” published (so far in a small circulation) will allow the general public to better appreciate the qualitative and positive transformations taking place in New Uzbekistan, the strengthening of its new role in the region and the world, inspiring confidence in the success of today's reforms and providing a basis for an optimistic look into the future.

To the future that the author sees - with a reasonable policy and with the faith of the people in the historical process of creating the foundation of the third Renaissance of our country, as well as all of Central Asia - united, strong and prosperous.

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