

## V. ИЛМИЙ НАШР ШАРҲИ

Обзор научного издания

Book Review

### MODERN GREAT POWER INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA: COMMON AND DIFFERENT ASPECTS

Strategic interactions among three prominent international actors, China, the United States, and Russia, within the dynamic Central Asian environment are selected as a central issue for the monograph of Dr. Gulnor Djumaeva. She is known to the academic and research community as a prominent scholar and a senior research fellow at the University in Tashkent. She is the author of more than 30 scientific papers. The main focus of scientific research is global geopolitical interests and their impact on Central Asia.

In her monograph ***“Modern Geopolitical Interests of Great Powers in Central Asia: Common and Different Aspects,”*** Dr. Djumaeva investigates Central Asia, which has a rich historical legacy and has become strategically significant for China, the United States, and Russia. Dr. Djumaeva delves into their interactions, analyzing historical foundations and contemporary strategies.

The monograph explores each country's approach to the region, examining energy agreements, cultural diplomacy, military deployments, and economic interactions. These multifaceted tactics converge within Central Asia's borders, reshaping its geopolitical landscape.

In her monograph, Dr. Djumaeva examines the role of Central Asian countries within the global order of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She sheds light on these countries' adjustments by analyzing diverse sources, including official documents, expert insights, and analyses. Their actions significantly impact the regional environment, influencing power dynamics, security, and cooperation. Specialists in international relations, political science, and regional studies will find this work valuable, as it invites curious minds to explore this vital part of the world.

In the first chapter of her monograph, Dr. Djumaeva delves into the role of Central Asian countries within the 21st-century international relations system. Several vital factors highlight their significance on the global stage:

**Natural Resource Potential:** Central Asia boasts substantial oil, gas, and mineral resources. These contribute to the region's economic growth and influence global energy markets. As a result, Central Asia becomes a focal point for energy security discussions and resource extraction projects. Its strategic location at the crossroads of vital trade routes, including the New Silk Road, further enhances its economic appeal and potential for regional integration.

**Economic Attractiveness:** Central Asian countries have emerged as regions with substantial growth prospects. Factors contributing to their economic appeal include

cheap labor, abundant natural resources, stable environments, and government support through tax incentives and investment guarantees.

**Regional Security Challenges:** The security landscape in Central Asia is shaped by several factors. Political instability, characterized by weak democratic institutions, pervasive corruption, and internal conflicts, plays a significant role. Additionally, religious tensions among different sects of Islam contribute to regional instability. The process of Islamization is unfolding, intertwined with the emergence of extremist ideologies. Furthermore, drug trafficking and terrorism remain persistent threats in the region.

The first chapter also includes two subchapters: one examining the image of Central Asian countries and the other analyzing Central Asia in the context of modern geopolitical turbulence. Central Asia's rich cultural, natural, and traditional heritage contributes to its positive global image, attracting tourists and investors. Geopolitically, the region faces challenges related to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the Israel-Palestine situation. While the former can directly impact Central Asia, the latter exerts indirect influences.

Moving forward, the second chapter of the monograph explores the main instruments through which great powers realize their geopolitical interests in Central Asia.

In the first subchapter of the second chapter, Dr. Djumaeva explores the role of international organizations as a critical factor in the common interests of great powers in Central Asia. Economic profit is a primary motivator for powerful countries to engage with these organizations. Through mutual agreements and partnerships, they seek to maximize their benefits. Moreover, international organizations provide a platform for addressing shared goals. For instance, collaborative efforts in combating terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking are more effective when multiple countries participate actively.

Dr. Djumaeva's analysis also highlights critical distinctions between two significant military blocs: The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):

**CSTO:** The CSTO emphasizes regional peace and stability in Central Asia. Its primary objective is to foster cooperation among member states and collectively address security challenges specific to the region. By prioritizing regional security, the CSTO aims to enhance stability and prevent conflicts within its boundaries.

**NATO:** NATO's focus extends beyond Central Asia. It emphasizes deterrence against threats from non-member states globally. While NATO recognizes the importance of regional stability, its scope encompasses broader security dynamics worldwide. Understanding these differing priorities and strategies sheds light on the geopolitical landscape in Central Asia and the distinct roles played by CSTO and NATO.

In the two other subchapters of the second chapter of her monograph, Dr. Djumaeva delves into two critical aspects: "Soft Power as a Tool for Realizing the Geopolitical

Interests of Great Powers” and “Modern Sanctions Policy: Features, Consequences, and Prospects of Application.”

**Economic Dominance:** Powerful nations leverage their economic prowess to establish favorable trade relations, investments, and financial partnerships within Central Asia. This enhances their influence and creates dependencies.

**Political Influence:** Great powers exert political weight through diplomatic channels, alliances, and strategic partnerships. Their involvement in regional affairs often shapes policies, governance, and decision-making processes.

**Cultural Pervasion:** Cultural exchanges, educational programs, and media dissemination allow great powers to permeate Central Asia with their cultural values, norms, and narratives. This soft power approach fosters familiarity, trust, and alignment with their interests.

**Military Presence:** Establishing military bases, conducting joint exercises, and engaging in security cooperation creates a tangible presence. Great powers strategically position themselves to safeguard their interests, project stability, and respond swiftly to emerging threats.

Dr. Djumaeva underscores the significance of sanctions as a potent tool. When applied judiciously, sanctions can influence foreign policies, sway decision-makers, and alter the trajectory of nations. Understanding the nuances of sanctions - such as their targeted application and potential consequences - allows great powers to navigate the delicate balance between coercion and cooperation.

The third chapter - Similarities and Differences in the Geopolitical Interests of the Great Powers in Central Asia and the Prospects for Their Cooperation - consists of five subchapters: “Trends in the Evolution of Geopolitical Interests of Russia, China, and the United States in Central Asia,” “Common interests and rivalry of regional powers in Central Asia (examples of India, Iran, and Turkey),” “Afghanistan as a subject of diverging interests of leading geopolitical actors,” “Interaction between great powers and Central Asian countries on issues of ensuring regional security,” and “Prospects for economic cooperation within the framework of international organizations.”

In examining Russia, China, and the United States' geopolitical interests in Central Asia, Dr. Djumaeva finds distinct approaches that shape their engagement in the region.

The United States emphasizes the promotion of democratic values and human rights. It seeks to assert its global influence and safeguard its Central Asian interests. Key strategies include supporting democratic institutions and advocating for open markets.

China, on the other hand, prioritizes economic influence. Its Belt and Road Initiative aims to enhance connectivity through infrastructure projects. Financial investments, trade partnerships, and energy cooperation are central to China's Central Asian strategy.

Russia focuses on supporting authoritarian regimes. It employs energetic diplomacy

to counter Western influence. Security cooperation, military alliances, and cultural ties are significant in Russia's Central Asian policy. These varied approaches reflect the complex interplay of historical legacies, regional dynamics, and global power competition in Central Asia.

In the subchapter titled "Common Interests and Rivalry of Regional Powers in Central Asia," Dr. Djumaeva compares the similarities and differences between India's, Iran's, and Turkey's regional interests. India, Iran, and Turkey play significant roles in shaping the geopolitical landscape of Central Asia. While they share specific objectives, their approaches diverge based on historical ties, economic priorities, and regional partnerships.

All three countries recognize the importance of security cooperation in Central Asia. They collaborate to combat drug trafficking, terrorism, and other transnational threats. Joint efforts include intelligence sharing, border security, and capacity-building to enhance regional stability.

At the same time, there are some differences in their interests in the region. For example, India seeks to strengthen trade ties with Central Asian nations. It aims to enhance economic partnerships, promote investment, and facilitate cross-border commerce. Turkey and Iran, however, prioritize infrastructure development. They focus on building new transportation routes, such as railways and pipelines, to connect Central Asia with their territories and beyond.

Iran emphasizes cooperation with countries that share similar religious and ideological values. It seeks to foster cultural and spiritual ties. Turkey and India, on the other hand, engage with more democratic and stable countries. They prioritize pragmatic alliances based on shared interests and mutual benefits.

In summary, while security concerns unite India, Iran, and Turkey in Central Asia, their economic priorities and partnership strategies diverge.

In the subchapter "Afghanistan as a subject of diverging interests of leading geopolitical actors," Dr. Djumaeva explored the interests and ways of cooperation of superpowers in Afghanistan. Although all three superpowers are interested in preventing the spread of terrorist threats, stabilizing the region, and promoting economic development in Afghanistan, some differences exist in their interests in Afghanistan.

China views Afghanistan as a potential partner in its ambitious Belt and Road initiative. China aims to enhance connectivity, trade, and infrastructure development by including Afghanistan in this economic program.

Both Russia and the USA have historically supported different factions in Afghanistan. In recent years, Russia has engaged with the Taliban, seeking to influence the group's actions. The USA, meanwhile, has supported the Afghan government and democratic institutions.

The USA prioritizes a legitimate, democratic government in Afghanistan. It supports elections, human rights, and governance structures. China and Russia adopt a more

pragmatic stance, focusing on stability and regional security. They maintain relations with various actors, regardless of their legitimacy.

In summary, while common interests exist, the superpowers' strategies diverge due to historical ties, regional dynamics, and varying priorities. Afghanistan remains a complex arena where geopolitical maneuvering continues to shape its future.

In the fourth subchapter of the last chapter, Dr. Djumaeva analyzes the cooperation between superpowers and Central Asian countries in providing regional security. As Dr. Djumaeva points out, all three superpowers - China, the United States, and Russia - share an interest in maintaining stability and security in the region. To enhance their collaborative efforts, Dr. Djumaeva suggests several vital measures.

Firstly, deepening cooperation through international organizations is crucial. These superpowers can more effectively address common security challenges by leveraging existing platforms such as the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or the CSTO. These forums provide a space for dialogue, coordination, and joint action.

Secondly, joint military training exercises are essential. By conducting joint drills, superpowers can enhance their interoperability and readiness to combat terrorism and extremism. Such exercises foster mutual understanding and build trust among military forces.

Thirdly, economic ties should be strengthened. Investments in infrastructure, trade, and development projects can alleviate poverty and create employment opportunities in Central Asian countries. Economic stability contributes to overall security by reducing vulnerabilities and addressing socio-economic grievances.

Lastly, improving diplomatic relations is vital. Clear communication channels, regular dialogues, and conflict prevention mechanisms can prevent misunderstandings and mitigate potential conflicts. Diplomatic efforts should build trust and promote cooperation rather than exacerbate tensions.

Dr. Djumaeva's analysis underscores the importance of deepening cooperation, enhancing military preparedness, strengthening economic ties, and fostering diplomatic relations among superpowers and Central Asian countries. These steps collectively contribute to regional security and stability.

In the final subchapter of the last chapter, Dr. Djumaeva delves into the significance of economic cooperation facilitated by international organizations. Dr. Djumaeva underscores that engagement with these organizations is crucial for Central Asian countries, enabling them to attract investments, negotiate favorable agreements, and foster regional economic development.

However, Dr. Djumaeva also highlights several pertinent challenges that Central Asian countries must address. These include:

**Absence of Sea Access:** Many Central Asian countries are landlocked, limiting their ability to engage in maritime trade. Overcoming this obstacle requires innovative solutions, such as developing efficient transportation corridors and leveraging

neighboring countries' ports.

**Resource Dependence:** Central Asian countries rely heavily on specific natural resources (such as oil, gas, or minerals). Diversifying their economies by investing in other sectors - such as agriculture, technology, or manufacturing - can mitigate vulnerability to resource price fluctuations.

**Water-Energy Imbalance:** Water scarcity and energy demand imbalances persist in the region. Collaborative efforts to manage water resources sustainably and invest in renewable energy can address this issue.

**Climate Change:** The impact of climate change affects Central Asian countries disproportionately. Adaptation strategies, disaster preparedness, and sustainable practices are essential to mitigate its effects.

To enhance resilience and reduce vulnerability in the global economy, Central Asian countries should prioritize regional economic integration. By fostering intra-regional trade, harmonizing policies, and promoting cross-border investment, they can collectively navigate global economic challenges more effectively.

To summarize, the monograph effectively explores Central Asia's complex geopolitical landscape. Its academic approach and clear language make it a valuable resource for scholars and researchers. By highlighting its strengths, I appreciate its significant contribution to understanding this critical region.

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