

УДК 930.22(4/9)

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Kazakhstan and India: perspectives in cooperation

Diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and India were established on February 23, 1992. In May, 1992 the Embassy of Republic of India in Almaty was open, and in November, 1993 the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Delhi is opened. The Indian economy - one of most dynamically developing on a planet. In the early nineties in foreign policy strategy of India was a new direction – Central Asia. India attaches great value to development of the relations with Central Asia; initiative so-called “A new Silk way of the Indian foreign policy”, directed on further strengthening of cooperation with the Central Asian region.

The important instrument of development and deepening of bilateral cooperation in various spheres is the Intergovernmental Kazakhstan-Indian Joint commission on trade and economic, scientific and technical, industrial and cultural cooperation. Kazakhstan and India will intend to deepen cooperation in the oil and gas sphere. Kazakhstan is open for building of the Indian investments in priority sectors of economy – small and medium business, health care, agriculture, building of objects of Astana.

Key words: Kazakhstan, India, geopolitics, strategic partnership, gas and oil, road map.

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Қазақстан және Үндістан: Ынтымақтастық болашағы

23 ақпанда 1992 ж. Қазақстан мен Үндістан арасында дипломатиялық қатынастар тағайындалды. 1992 ж. мамырында Үндістанның елшілігі Алматыда ашылды, ал 1993 жылдың қарашасында Қазақстан Республикасының елшілігі Делиде ашылды. Үндістан экономикасының динамикалық дамуы болып жатыр. 1990 жылдарыда Үндістанның бас басымдығы Орталық Азия болды. Үндістан Орталық Азиямен қарым-қатынастар даму үшін үлкен мағынаны білдіреді, содан соң “Үндістанның сыртқы саясатының жаңа Жібек жолы” деген бастама айғақтады; Орталық Азиямен ынтымақтастығын нығайту үшін.

Бас дамуы құралы және екі жақты ынтымақтастығын тереңдету үшін әр салада қазақ-үнді үкіметаралық комиссия болады; сол комиссия сауда-экономикалық, ғылыми-техникалық, өнеркәсіпті және мәдени ынтымақтастыққа құралған. Қазақстан мен Үндістан мұнай және газ салада ынтымақтастықты тереңдетеді. Қазақстан белгілі секторларға үнді инвестицияны ұлғайтуға дайын – шағын және орта бизнес, денсаулық сақтау, ауыл шаруашылық, Астана объектілерінің құрылысы.

Түйін сөздер: Қазақстан, Үндістан, геосаясат, стратегиялық ынтымақтастық, мұнай және газ, жол картасы.

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Казахстан и Индия: перспективы сотрудничества

Дипломатические отношения между Казахстаном и Индией были установлены 23 февраля 1992 г. В мае 1992 г. было открыто Посольство Республики Индия в Алматы, а в ноябре 1993 г. открыто Посольство Республики Казахстан в Дели. Индийская экономика – одна из самых динамично развивающихся на планете. В начале 1990-х годов во внешнеполитической стратегии Индии появилось новое направление – Центральная Азия. Индия придаёт большое значение развитию отношений с Центральной Азией, о чём свидетельствует инициатива так называемого «Нового Шелкового пути индийской внешней политики», направленная на дальнейшее укрепление сотрудничества с центральноазиатским регионом.

Важным инструментом развития и углубления двустороннего сотрудничества в различных сферах является Межправительственная казахстанско-индийская Совместная комиссия по торгово-экономическому, научно-техническому, промышленному и культурному сотрудничеству. Казахстан и Индия намерены углублять сотрудничество и в нефтегазовой сфере. Казахстан открыт для наращивания индийских инвестиций в приоритетных секторах экономики – малом и среднем бизнесе, здравоохранении, сельском хозяйстве, строительстве объектов Астаны.

Ключевые слова: Казахстан, Индия, геополитика, стратегическое партнерство, нефть и газ, дорожная карта.

The introduce. Eurasian vector of Kazakhstan's foreign policy is relevant for India, as it allows solving a number of geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-cultural challenges.

From geopolitics, it is strengthening Indian's position in the competition with China for influence in Central Asia and Eurasia as a whole. Today, researchers state the gap between the significant potential for the creation of Indo-Central Asian and Indo-Eurasian alliance and of the weakness of its presence in the region, which Delhi demonstrates by the end of the first decade of the XXI-st century.

From geo-economy India could join the ranks of the powers using economic instruments to influence - the European Union, South Korea and Japan.

Indian cultural relations with Central Asia and Russia would modernize the mechanism of historical ties correspond to the XXI century demands.

In general, three states - India, Kazakhstan and Russia, could constitute successful triangle. [1]

Eurasian vector of Kazakhstan: Eurasian vector can allow Kazakhstan to increase its sovereignty and strengthen the position in international arena. Eurasian Integration is a strategic choice of Kazakhstan. With this special value, Kazakhstan is developing cooperation within the framework of the most complex and deep integration formats - the Customs Union and Common Economic area of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. These three countries have become the core of the Eurasian integration.

Eurasian vector could replace the previous strategy of unstable balance between Russia and the West in order not only to avoid the conflict with the Russian strategic interests but really to strengthen Kazakhstan sovereignty and international positions. In fact, it is the unique possibility to combine (reconcile the irreconcilable) and to develop real "multi-vector foreign policy" under in-one priority of the Russian vector.

Such a policy can be defined as a strategy of "sustainable multi-vector" or "Eurasian". Eurasianism and multi-vector from the alternative trend will turn to a complementary vector of development. The situation currently developing in Eurasia gives a quite real chance to this policy. [2]

Chinese growing influence in the region certainly troubles India. But the question is - will it lead to cooperation or conflict - is still open. Creation of strong economic ties in Eurasia is an integral part of the Chinese power rising and strengthening. All

States concerned should be considered Chinese expansion in Central Asia and Eurasia in long-term strategic planning, as it will inevitably affect both themselves and the balance of power on the Eurasian continent.

Considering that India and China are involved in the processes of Eurasian cooperation, it could be said that Kazakhstan is located in the center of the "great circle", which consists of both competing and cooperating states

India-Kazakhstan. For Kazakhstan, India is the great pragmatic interest. The dynamics of the events taking place in the South Asia region, namely the economic and political potential increase, strengthening the regional integration trends, indicates the priority of building stable and mutually beneficial relations between India and Kazakhstan. [3]

Republic of Kazakhstan holds a special place in the Indian regional policy. In 2009, President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced a "strategic partnership" promoted widely so far during his official visit to India as the chief guest of India's national holiday (Day of the Republic).

Joint Action Plan signed in 2011, started the "road map" which define bilateral cooperation in various areas till 2014.

India and Kazakhstan share the same views on the most topical global problems. Both countries develop the important investment projects in the construction of pipelines. There is also an agreement to explore the possibility of establishing direct trade and energy routes between India and Kazakhstan,

In support of this position, there are enough strong arguments:

First, the similarity the foreign policy concept priorities that makes a mutual interest more stable.

Second, political stability, high economic and scientific-technical potential of Kazakhstan and the emerging confidence level of bilateral relations.

Third, existence of significant reserves hydrocarbons and other natural resources in a favorable investment climate in Kazakhstan market.

The forth aspect is the support of Kazakhstan's initiatives by India in the international arena

Eurasian vector of Kazakhstani foreign policy is an important factor for geopolitical and geostrategic, not to mention geoeconomic and geocultural Indian activities based on competing interests in the region. [4]

Presently India demonstrates an interest in shaping and organizing the Eurasian Space on following reasons

1. India's big strategy includes so-called extended neighborhood in Asia (including Central Asia) where India is trying to balance the influence of other powers, and not allow them to overstep upon the interests of its own

Indian policymakers are working tirelessly to improve the status of the country both in the regional and global levels. Delhi is making it's best to adjust relations with its direct neighbors, to find ways of co-existence with China and Pakistan (their main competitors in the region) and to restore its position in the near abroad, in some parts of Africa, Central and South-East Asia, the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. At the same time India has developed its relations with the great powers, especially with the Russian Federation and the United States.

India's participation in the strategic alliance or unions with one or even a few neighbors is the way to increase its role and importance in the global community.

Considering the fact that India has so serious tensions with Pakistan and China, the absence of any major contradictions with the Kazakhstan and Russia and in the future with the Eurasian Union makes them "natural ally's states".[5]

2. India's interest in Eurasia is now obviously based on the fact that reach in natural resources Kazakhstan has oil-exploration and other energy contracts with Chinese companies. Kazakhstan was reportedly initially wary of allowing a Chinese company to take over its strategic oil assets for fear that China could control its energy resources. CNPC eventually managed to reassure the Kazakh government, and acquired the company. The deal has not only added to CNPC's existing stakes in Kazakhstan's petroleum sector, but also moved China into a better position to expand into other oil projects in the country.

In order to diversify energy flows Kazakhstan welcomes the active introduction of the Indian ONGC oil company to the Kazakh market.

Today, India is seriously connects the prospects for its own energy security with the countries of Central Asia and Eurasia and global energy security in the long term will be of greater relevance for India.

That is why India seriously correlates its own energy security perspectives with Central Asia and

Eurasia. The global energy security in the long term will be greater relevance for India. The intensive Indian energy diplomacy aims to create a new world energy structure, which is based on the so-called "pan-Asian solidarity." Its proponents believe that this structure will provide producing countries guaranteed energy markets and importing countries - guaranteed supply on the long term basis. [6]

According to the statements of Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas M.Sh.Ayara , India has the intention to participate in the exploration of Kazakh oil and gas fields as well as in the works to expand oil and gas in the well-known and long- exploited fields. India is also interested in cooperation with Kazakhstan companies to upgrade existing refineries and creating new ones. The Indian side is also interested in the development of the transport corridor "North - South" of Aktau on the Caspian Sea through Iran to the Arabian Sea. The design of this corridor requires a railway from Europe through Russia , Azerbaijan and Iran to India and South- East Asia. The possibility of connection of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian oil fields Aktau with India through a pipeline routes, possibly through Turkmenistan and Iran.

However, India's energy strategy in Central Asia remains modest compared to the Chinese, Russian and the U.S. Virtually all researchers have noted a weak presence of India in Central Asia. China successfully ahead of India in obtaining contracts for hydrocarbons production and delivery from Kazakhstan. This fact pushes India on a more active policy in this area.

Currently Indian business declared its intention to buy a stake of Conoco Phillips in "Kashagan" consortium. This issue will be considered in the national interest. [7]

3. Eurasian vector of Kazakhstan's policy allows India to get free access to the vast markets for Indian exports (including Russia).

The development of the Eurasian vector and in the future creation of the Eurasian Union will enable India to strengthen its economic presence in the region. India - at least in the absence of the land border with Kazakhstan - is in a position to determine - losing in comparison with China's economic presence in Kazakhstan and the region as a whole.

However, the growth of the Kazakh-Indian trade and strengthening bilateral political cooperation suggest that that India can play the role of a counterweight to China, thereby reducing the factor

of “China threat.” According Kazakhstan experts, India could stand in one line with the powers that use economic leverage to influence - the European Union, South Korea and Japan.

Kazakhstan is the largest Indian trading partner in Central Asia (the bilateral trade in 2011 amounted to 291.4 million dollars, and for January - December 2012 - 525 million). It is a real evidence of the great opportunities for business cooperation. It is therefore necessary to harmonize the trade dynamics with the potential of the countries. [8]

Kazakhstan and India have agreed to cooperate in the field of nano-and IT-technologies. Taking into consideration that India has a well-developed science and modern technology, it is the second (after the U.S.), a worldwide developer of computer programs, good opportunities are opened for investment projects in the fields of IT technologies, and also in pharmaceuticals and textiles.

India has always been one of the Russia's closest and most reliable friends and partners. Trade and economic cooperation between Russia and India is developing dynamically. The Federal Customs Service of Russia reported a 7,5% increase in Russian-Indian trade in 2009 from the 2008 figure to USD7.46 billion. In January-February 2010, it grew by 40%, with a 40% increase in Russian exports and in imports. [9]

According to Ajay Bisariya, the Head of the Eurasian Department of the MFA India needs to develop a number of mechanisms at the intergovernmental level that could contribute to the growth of trade between the countries. The free trade agreement or an agreement on comprehensive economic cooperation with the joint Eurasian space will change the situation for the better. In 2013, India is willing to consider the issue about joining the Custom Union. Speaking at a seminar, Ajay Bisaria described economics as the weakest link in India-Russia and India-Kazakhstan strategic ties which could be fortified with an FTA or a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

Both sides are following multi-vector policies. India has sealed or is negotiating FTAs or CECAs with several trading blocks and countries (Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan)

But hotbeds of instability- underdeveloped transport networks and rugged mountains located between the territory of the Customs Union and India, pose a challenge to establish closer trade relations between the parties.

Therefore, India plans to send the increased goods flow through an international transport corridor “North- South”. In May 10 it was the opening ceremony of the last Turkmen section of the line Zhanaozen - Golgan (under construction since 2007), which will shorten the distance of the international trade corridor «North -South» for 600 km.[10]

4. Strengthening the Eurasian vector prevents the Islamization of Kazakhstan and Central Asia on the whole and creation of “Islamic belt” associated to Pakistan.

Central Asia is an important security element in Indian's relationship with Pakistan, and in the stabilization of Afghanistan. Possible threats from Islamic extremist groups could also invigorate elements active in Kashmir. In regard to the balance-of-power among the great powers in the Central Asian region, India has to restructure the India-Russia partnership, remain alert to China's Central Asian penetration, forge a cooperation framework with the United States, and address its historical rivalry with Pakistan.[11]

Kazakhstan and Central Asia as an area of vital importance to India, not only on account of its geographical proximity and India's historical and cultural links with the region, but also because of the common challenge they all face from extremism and terrorism. Thus, India has a common interest with Central Asian governments in stopping the spillover of Islamic fundamentalism from Pakistan and Afghanistan into Central Asia and preventing the region from becoming a conduit for radical religious ideologies with the potential to destabilize the border regions of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, and India.

Considering the intense power play taking place between Russia, China, the U.S. and the Western countries in the strategic arena of Central Asia, India's emphasis on soft power, on its positive experience.

In spite of the factors contributing to the growth of India's importance for Kazakhstan, experts do not exclude the possibility of stagnation of geopolitical situation in the region and worse, events can develop not in favor for India.

The most negative consequence will be the establishment of Chinese economic protectorate in the region or the Islamization of Central Asia. [12]

Security are an important issue of the Indian and Central Asian authors research works, including the

problem of Islamization and as a consequence Islamic-oriented extremism.

K. Warikoo, Professor Jawaharlal Nehru University, analyses the Central Asian religious agenda through expanded regional one, considering both the region in the light of the growing threat of radical Islam. [13]

The expert studies the issue in a broader international context- the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Talibanisation of Pakistan, the policy and practice of Islamic terrorism in India, Islamic extremism in Kashmir, Islamic extremism and terrorist network in Bangladesh, the destabilizing role of Hizb -ut- Tahrir in Central Asia, the role of Muslim leaders in Tajikistan, ethnic and religious separatism in Xinjiang, etc.

The threat of Islamization comes from the fact that the Islamists are fundamentally disagree with the concept of democracy and secularism. At the same time, the rhetoric of political Islam is a response to growing economic inequality, corruption, political impotence within Muslim societies, as well as the moral bankruptcy of modern Western materialistic culture and its value system. Central Asian countries could not stay away from these processes. But the main cause of instability with Islamist overtones K. Warikoo sees the region's proximity to Afghanistan, and for this reason, Islamization is a threat for India. [14]

Indian researcher reasonably assumes India, China, Russia and its Central Asian allies should unite against a common threat. Eurasian vector of Kazakhstan will certainly contribute to this. [15]

In conclusion it should be noted that the development of the Eurasian vector of Kazakhstan's foreign policy and the future of the Eurasian Union of India can strengthen its position in Central Asia and Eurasia.

India considers the Eurasian space as its extended neighborhood and attaches high importance to its geopolitical and Strategic Environment in Central Asia and India's geo-economic interests.

India's support to the anti-terrorist and Islamist movements had made it a closer partner of Russia and the Central Asian states.

An active Chinese presence in Kazakhstan and Russia is an obvious fact, challenging the Indian policy makers and business. India, with its civilizational and cultural links to the region, combined with its approach based on soft power, can play the role of a balancer. Period when India explained its passive policy in Central Asia and Eurasia by absence of geographical boundaries comes to the end. In this context, the views of experts, as well as the policy makers and business, has changed significantly

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