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Military-Political Cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States

The military-political aspect of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the U.S. is one of the important fields of interaction between the states. During the first years of independence the interests of the U.S. were around the Soviet nuclear weapons located on the Kazakhstani territory. Cooperation in the military-political field develops also on the structural level through NATO. After the events of September 11 the US proclaimed a war against terrorism. The struggle against terrorism became one of the major challenges of the US foreign policy. Therefore due to its geopolitical and strategic location the role of Kazakhstan increased. In this article will be made an attempt to trace the dynamics of Kazakhstani-U.S. relations in the military-political direction.

Key words: military-technical cooperation, struggle against terrorism, geopolitical location, NATO.

Б.Ж. Сомжүрек, З.А. Какенова
**Қазақстан мен АҚШ арасындағы
әскери-саяси ынтымақтастық**

Қазақстан Республикасы мен АҚШ арасындағы өзара ынтымақтастықтың маңызды бағыты екі ел арасындағы саяси-әскери қарым-қатынастар боп табылады. Тәуелсіздік алғаннан кейін АҚШ-тың Қазақстандағы мүдделері Кеңес одағынан қалған, Қазақстан территориясындағы ядролық қарумен байланысты болды. Саяси-әскери бағыттағы ынтымақтастық НАТО шеңберінде құрылымдық деңгейде де дамыды. 11 қыркүйек оқиғаларынан кейін АҚШ терроризмге соғыс жариялайды. Осы орайда Қазақстанның оның геосаяси және стратегиялық орналасуына байланысты рөлі артты. Бұл мақалада саяси-әскери бағыттағы қазақстандық-американдық қатынастардың динамикасын зерттеу әрекеті жасалады.

Түйін сөздер: әскери-техникалық ынтымақтастық, терроризммен күрес, геосаяси орналасу, НАТО.

Б.Ж. Сомжурек, З.А. Какенова
**Военно-политическое сотрудничество
между Казахстаном и США**

Военно-политический аспект сотрудничества между Республикой Казахстан и США является одной из важных сфер взаимодействия между государствами. В первые годы независимости интересы США были представлены вокруг советского ядерного оружия, которое находилось на территории Казахстана. Сотрудничество в военно-политической области развивается и на структурном уровне, в рамках НАТО. После событий 11 сентября США объявили войну терроризму. Борьба с терроризмом стала одной из основных задач внешней политики США. В силу своего геополитического и стратегического расположения роль Казахстана в этот период возросла. В этой статье будет сделана попытка проследить за динамикой казахстанско-американских отношений в военно-политическом направлении.

Ключевые слова: военно-техническое сотрудничество, борьба против терроризма, геополитическое расположение, НАТО.

Introduction

Kazakhstan faced a number of problems after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The geopolitical situation of Kazakhstan and neighborhood with great powers like Russia and China mainly affected on the policymaking and the security issues of a newly independent state.

The United States of America has one of the important places in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. Kazakhstan and the United States of America entered into diplomatic relations in December, 1991. Since that time two countries have developed their partnership dynamically in the basic spheres of intergovernmental relations. For more than 20 years, the U.S. managed to gain a foothold in Kazakhstan as a major investor in the oil and gas industry and as a national strategic partner. The United States has a direct impact on the geopolitics of Central Asia. This factor was of importance in formulation of Kazakhstani foreign policy in relation to the U.S.

One of the important aspects of bilateral relations is a military-political cooperation. The military sphere of Kazakhstan and the United States relations is characterized by a deep level of interaction. An example of this can serve high-level visits, according to the results of which were adopted number of documents such as the «Charter on Democratic Partnership between the United States of America and the Republic of Kazakhstan» (February, 1994). This document stated the intention of two countries to build their relations on the principles of a dynamic, equitable and democratic partnership. The document also stressed that Kazakhstan has a strategic location on the crossroads of Asia and Europe, allowing the country to make a significant contribution to peace and security in the region [1].

The basis of cooperation of Kazakhstan and the United States in military and defense field forms a «Memorandum of Mutual Understanding and Cooperation in the field of Defense and Military Relations between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United States Department of Defense» February 14, 1994.

Main body

Cooperation in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world and closed the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, where produced nearly 500 nuclear tests. In 1995, Kazakhstan acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons and received strong international warranties from the leading nuclear powers among which was the U.S. This led to the fact that Kazakhstan approved itself as a state that is free of nuclear weapons, and thus made a significant contribution in providing both regional and international security. During these years the U.S. interests in security field was the elimination of nuclear weapons inherited from the soviet period and efforts to control nuclear proliferation in Central Asia [2, 74].

The Administration of George W. Bush, recognized the achievements of Kazakhstan in this direction. American administration feared of possible incidents of leakage of radioactive material, and was aimed at preventing any unauthorized use of the materials and is interested in expanding cooperation with Kazakhstan in this area, including in the field of exchange of information. This thesis was confirmed in a joint declaration of the two countries leaders in December 2001. Presidents of two states called for a policy of accounting and physical protection of materials needed for the production of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons [3].

U.S. leaders highly appreciated the participation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, better known as «Nunn-Lugar», which was initiated by two U.S. Senators. The program was designed to support the nuclear weapons states, including Kazakhstan, in the performance of obligations under the START-1 [4, 53].

In April 2010, during the Global Nuclear Security Summit a joint statement was made by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and the U.S. President Barack Obama. In the statement were noted the close cooperation in reducing nuclear threats in Kazakhstan and around the world, as well as the decommissioning of a nuclear reactor BN-350 in Aktau. The President of Kazakhstan in his interview mentioned that the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan recognized the inalienable right of Iran to peaceful nuclear power for peaceful resolution of all issues related to its nuclear program. President Nazarbayev also spoke at the Summit with the initiative to host nuclear fuel bank in Kazakhstan. This idea was supported by the U.S. side.

In general refusal to Kazakhstan from nuclear weapons and cooperation between the U.S. and Kazakhstan in the field of nuclear non-proliferation cooperation of the states brought a new level. Joint projects have been implemented to protect the environment in the area of the Aral Sea and Semipalatinsk region [4, 94].

After the liberation of the territory of Kazakhstan from nuclear weapons U.S. interests shifted towards energy aspects of bilateral cooperation. In 1997, the U.S. announced that Central Asia is a zone of American interests, and Kazakhstan acquires the status of a «strategic partner of the U.S. in Central Asia.» At first the plan began to go out economic plans for the development of oil production and transportation (construction of oil pipelines from the Caspian Sea area) [5, 62].

Military-technical cooperation between Kazakhstan and the U.S. In 2003, Kazakhstan was one of the first countries in the former Soviet Union which signed a five-year plan with the United States on military cooperation. The plan aims to implement such tasks as combating international terrorism, the development of peace processes, improve the combat capability of air defense units of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan, the improvement of the military infrastructure of the Caspian region, the strengthening of the naval forces, the establishment of a military institute of foreign languages, etc. [6, 64]. During the implementation of the plan the U.S. provided two programs – «Foreign Military Financing» (FMF) and the «International Military Education and Training» (IMET). On the first program have been remodeled several military facilities in Kazakhstan. Under the second program the Kazakh officers and sergeants had the opportunity to be trained in the U.S. military schools. Under this program, the U.S. military schools have trained more than 220 Kazakhstani military officers who have been trained in such educational institutions in the USA as the National Defense University, Command and General Staff College, West Point Academy, etc. [7, 73]. In 2005, with the assistance of Washington was established Military Institute of Foreign Languages in Almaty, which provides for appropriate training of personnel not only for Kazakhstani officers, but also for soldiers of the region [6, 68]. According to the Ministry of Defense of Kazakhstan, at the moment more than \$ 10 million went to the programs of military training for more than 360 military officers trained in military higher education institutions in the U.S. [4, 99].

After the five years of cooperation in this field between the defense ministries of Kazakhstan and the United States was signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the second plan for 2008-2012. The most recent plan in this field between the two states was approved in 2013 and covers 2013-2017 [8, 58].

Also, for solving counter-terrorism problems in the Caspian region in Kazakhstan was planned

to supply equipment – helicopters, «Huey -2», military aircraft transport «C- 130», and the ship (with a displacement of up to 1000 m) for the naval forces of Kazakhstan. In addition, under the plan in Kazakhstan has delivered all-terrain vehicles «Hammer» of three types (military, medical, utility) to enhance the functionality and modernization of airmobile troops of the Republic and the peacekeeping battalion «Kazbat» [6, 64].

In 2010, the commander of U.S. Central Command, D. Petraeus visited Kazakhstan. During the meeting, he underlined the transit significance of Kazakhstan through which passed the transit of goods sent to Afghanistan. However, the parties also discussed issues of cooperation in military education programs.

Along with the exercises within the framework of NATO, Kazakhstan and the U.S. make their joint exercises of armed forces of two sides. Thus, in March 2005 on the territory of Kazakhstan was organized exercise «Balance-Zhardem-2005». The goal of such exercises is to improve the quality of interaction between the special forces of the two countries in combating the threats of international terrorism [6, 68].

In general, the main objectives of these exercises are:

- Improving the combat coordination units in the performance of tasks and interoperability;
- Improvement of field training and language training of personnel of the multinational force;
- Improving the skills of commanders and staffs in the management of the troops, the organization of interaction of divisions of Kazakhstan with the armed forces of other states [6, 68].

Kazakhstan and NATO. Kazakhstan cooperates with NATO in the framework of the program «Partnership for Peace». The framework document of this program was signed by Kazakhstan in 1994. with a view to maintain a dialogue with NATO countries on current security issues Kazakhstan involved in the Euro Atlantic Partnership Council. In addition, within the framework of the Council Kazakhstan participates in the program «Process of planning and analysis» (PAP), aimed at promoting of transformation of the armed forces of Kazakhstan in the field of planning and preparation of units to participate in peacekeeping operations, as well as the operational cooperation of the armed forces of Kazakhstan and the United States [6, 65]. Participation in this program will allow Kazakhstan to undergo adaptation to the standards of NATO forces. The program consists of three phases during which a member state has the opportunity

to participate in joint operations with NATO countries including language training, study of the principles of operation and management staffs of NATO. Also as part of the program Kazakhstan has an opportunity to interact with the armed forces of NATO for peacekeeping operations and joint exercises. The final stage of PAP provides direct training of military units of NATO partner countries to participate in joint peacekeeping operations outside the direct responsibility of the Alliance [6, 65].

Kazakhstan is the only country in a Central Asian region that has deepened its cooperation with NATO, by developing an individual plan of partnership with NATO, aiming at the development of different mechanisms of cooperation with NATO countries and assistance to the armed forces of Kazakhstan in achieving Western standards [9, 17].

For the implementation of the initiatives in the sphere of military-political cooperation two parts conduct regular meetings at the level of defense ministers and their deputies. In 2003 and 2004, high-ranking officials of the North Atlantic Alliance paid visits to Kazakhstan [6, 65].

Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) is one of the major programs in the Partnership for Peace program. IPAP for Kazakhstan was adopted in 2006 following a meeting of the Military Committee, the political leadership in the format «NATO plus Kazakhstan» chaired by Robert Simmons. The purpose of this program is a harmonization of all aspects of the interaction. As part of the program from 2006 to 2012, five meetings were held with representatives of state agencies; 5 working meeting of experts of state bodies of Kazakhstan and NATO to assess the implementation of the IPAP; 1 meeting on the mechanism of «The Clearing House», 5 high-level meeting of the North Atlantic Council and Kazakhstan in the format «NATO + Kazakhstan» [10]: The second phase of implementation of the Individual Partnership Action Plan accounts for the 2009-2012. Also, the Ministry of Defense in coordination with related government agencies of the Republic of Kazakhstan developed a third cycle of IPAP for 2012-2013 [10].

In the framework of cooperation between Kazakhstan and NATO conducted peacekeeping exercises. Thus, in the period from 2003 to 2013 took place ten exercises «Steppe Eagle» with Kazakh peacekeeping battalion Kazbat. A distinctive feature of the exercise in 2013 is that this year the Kazakh peacekeeping battalion «Kazbat» will be judged on the first level of the program «The

concept of operational capacity». The evaluation will make NATO experts and a group of experts of the Kazakhstani Armed Forces [11].

Kazakhstan's cooperation with NATO is the most intensive in comparison with the other countries of Central Asia. This is evidenced by the intensity of contacts and activities within the organization. The United States through NATO try to strengthen their position in the region of Central Asia. Such approach can raise concerns of such Kazakhstan's neighbor as Russia, because these states cooperate in the framework of CSTO.

Kazakhstan and the U.S. and the struggle against terrorism. Kazakhstan condemned the 11 September terrorist attack and supported the anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan. In particular, according to the statement of the Foreign Ministry on 11 September 2001 it was noted that Kazakhstan strongly condemned the acts of terrorism and barbarism committed in the largest cities of the United States and resulted in numerous casualties, and stands ready to assist as any possible aid and assistance to the United States America and overcome the consequences of the incident, and to further joint measures to combat terrorism in all its manifestations [6, 63]. Events of 2001 gave a new impetus to the development of military-political cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States. As part of «Operation Enduring Freedom» Kazakhstan has agreed to the use of air routes and rail links with bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and has provided the U.S. aircraft the right to land in the emergency situations at the Almaty airport [12, 107]. This was enshrined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the two governments on the terms of the Almaty international airport as a substitute for the U.S. military aircraft between Kazakhstan and the United States on June 10, 2002. According to Kazakh experts, in this period, the U.S. has soured relations with allies in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia did not allow the U.S. Air Force to use its bases for combat missions in Afghanistan [5, 66].

If we talk about the factors that affect the deep cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States on this issue, we have to mention that among Central Asian states Kazakhstan had experience with the structures of NATO. The country also actively collaborated in NATO programs. This factor would allow the parties to communicate effectively in this area.

Between 2003 and 2008, the Kazakh battalion was sent to the international coalition Iraq where

Kazbat served as the detection and clearance of ammunition [11].

November 13, 2010 Kazakhstan and the United States signed an additional agreement on air transit through Kazakhstan to Afghanistan. The document extends the terms of the agreements between Kazakhstan and the United States, under which the United States began transit flights to Afghanistan through the airspace of Kazakhstan in 2001. December 3, 2010 Kazakhstan has decided to send to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) military trainers and engineers [13, 184].

Conclusion

In general, the U.S. policy in Kazakhstan should be viewed in the context of regional policy towards the region Central Asia. Central Asia, due to its geopolitical location is the platform for geopolitical rivalry of the leading powers, such as Russia, China and the United States. And if Russia and China link with the region the geographical proximity, common borders and history, the United States interests in Central Asian Republics in our view considered from the point of view of energy issues (Caspian), military and political (proximity to Afghanistan).

In the 90-s the U.S. policy in Central Asian states was aimed at preventing the domination of Russia and China in the region, preventing the transformation of Asia for deployment of extremism forces, preventing the CA of corridor for illegal drug trafficking; provisioning American companies access to energy resources, promotion the development of Central Asian states in civil

society. Nowadays, the U.S. interests in the region consists in the fact that the U.S. want to have a rapid deployment force, have the infrastructure in the region for an active policy toward Iran and its nuclear program, to project American presence in the Caspian energy resources; present in the emerging Euro-Asian transport hub [5].

In the early years of independence, Kazakhstan United States had an interest in the output of a nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan that the state had from the Soviet past. After the republic declared its territory free of nuclear weapons and received strong international guarantees of its security from a number of nuclear states including the United States, the United States shifted their interests in the country in favor of the economic component. By the end of the 90s the U.S. decided to concentrate its efforts on the development of relations with Uzbekistan as a strategic regional partner.

There is intensive cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States at the structural level in the framework of NATO. Kazakhstan is one of the most active participants in the programs, projects, and exercises in the framework of NATO. Cooperation with this organization is largely aimed at achieving effective interoperability of military sides, which found evidence in the provision of air corridor Kazakhstan for the coalition forces. Some experts believe that active cooperation with NATO is a departure from the «pro-Russian» course of Kazakhstan. But as it is known Kazakhstan in its foreign policy follows the course of «multi-vector» policy, which consists of the equal cooperation with all countries.

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