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NATO-Kazakhstan cooperation within the Partnership for Peace programme: lessons and perspectives of further development

This article focuses on relationship between NATO and Kazakhstan. This article examines the Alliance's partnership policy in Central Asia and aims to clarify to what extent NATO's new partnership policy can affect its relations with these countries. This article reviews lessons learned after 20 years of cooperation between NATO and Kazakhstan within the PfP programme and discusses the role of NATO's PfP program in shaping Central Asian security architecture. The author determines that learning the lessons and best practices of PfP Programme after 20 years will allow to prepare practical recommendations for government agencies of Central Asian countries on enhancing cooperation with NATO within the framework of the PfP Programme in order to strengthen security and cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic and Central Asian region.

Key words: NATO; NATO's partnership policy; Central Asia; Kazakhstan; PfP.

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«Бейбітшілік жолындағы әріптестік» бағдарламасы аясындағы НАТО және Қазақстан әріптестігі: сабақтары мен ынтымақтастықты дамытудың жаңа жиектері

Мақала НАТО және Қазақстан арасындағы ынтымақтастық мәселелеріне арналған. Мақалада НАТО-ның Орталық Азиядағы әріптестік саясаты қарастырылған, сондай-ақ Одақ алдында қойылған міндеттерді шешу мақсатында ынтымақтастық тетіктерін едәуір икемді пайдалану үшін тиімді жағдайдың туындауына себептесетін жаңа әріптестік бағдарламасына талдау жасалған. Бейбітшілік жолындағы әріптестік бағдарламасы аясындағы НАТО және Қазақстан 20 жылдық ықпалдастығының сабақтары сарапталды. Бейбітшілік жолындағы әріптестік бағдарламасының Орталық Азиялық қауіпсіздік құрылымының қалыптасуындағы рөлі қарастырылды, Орталық Азия аймағының қауіпсіздігін қамтамасыз ету жөніндегі НАТО мен Қазақстан әріптестігінің жаңа жиектерін айқындауға талпыныс жасалды.

Түйін сөздер: НАТО, НАТО-ның әріптестік саясаты, Орталық Азия, Қазақстан, «Бейбітшілік жолындағы әріптестік» бағдарламасы.

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Сотрудничество Казахстана и НАТО в рамках программы «Партнерство ради мира»: уроки и перспективы сотрудничества

Статья посвящена вопросам сотрудничества НАТО и Казахстана. В статье рассмотрена политика партнерства НАТО в Центральной Азии, а также проанализирована новая партнерская политика Североатлантического союза, которая способствует созданию выгодных условий для более гибкого использования альянсом инструментов сотрудничества в интересах решения стоящих перед НАТО задач. В статье проведен анализ уроков 20-летнего сотрудничества НАТО и Казахстана в рамках ПРМ; рассмотрена роль программы ПРМ НАТО в формировании центральноазиатской архитектуры безопасности; намечены перспективы сотрудничества НАТО и Казахстана по обеспечению безопасности центральноазиатского региона.

Ключевые слова: НАТО, партнерская политика НАТО, Центральная Азия, Казахстан, ПРМ.

Introduction

In 2014, NATO countries and partners mark the 20th anniversary of the Partnership for Peace which has transformed Euro-Atlantic security and NATO itself by erasing dividing lines, inspiring reforms and building peace and security through consultation and cooperation based on common democratic values. It is known that the strengthening the security in the Euro-Atlantic area can be achieved only through a wide network of partner relationship with countries and organizations on a truly global scale. A focused effort to reform NATO's partnerships policy was launched at Lisbon to make dialogue and cooperation more inclusive, flexible and strategically oriented.

NATO's New Strategic Concept emphasizes the necessity of maintaining cooperation with countries and organizations beyond the borders so as to ensure the security of NATO members, as well as identifies «cooperative security» as one of NATO's three essential core tasks. Seeking to implement NATO's New Strategic Concept, the Allies adopted a new partnership policy in Berlin in April 2011, aimed at facilitating «more efficient and flexible» partnership arrangements with a growing and increasingly diverse assortment of partners [1].

NATO countries also restated their goal of achieving cooperative security through partnership during NATO's Summit in Wales. At the Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government presented initiatives to build on and maintain the frequency of exchanges between partners and Allies, to preserve the benefits of the experience gained in working together during the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan. More specifically, they reassured to enhance support to partners' efforts in developing their capacity to operate more closely with NATO countries [2].

In the current security environment, the NATO countries share key security challenges with their partners in Central Asia. The threats posed by terrorism, religious extremism, ethnic conflicts, organized crime, the proliferation of weapons and drug-trafficking defy borders and can only be addressed through coordinated international actions. As Anders Fogh Rasmussen noted, «A strong NATO with strong partnerships is «essential» to preserve an international rule-based order that promotes freedom, democracy and the rule of law» [3].

Over the past 20 years, due to Partnership for Peace programme the cooperation between Central Asia and NATO has been adapted according to the

country's ambitions, needs and abilities, and jointly implemented with the partner government. A vivid illustration of such a beneficial cooperation is NATO-Kazakhstan partnership. As one of the first PfP signatories and NATO's reliable partner Kazakhstan's cooperation with NATO extends to many areas including, inter alia, fight against terrorism, regional security, contribution to international security, in particular Kazakhstan's support to NATO/ISAF nations in bringing stability to Afghanistan and etc.

Why Central Asian States Matters to NATO

NATO and its Central Asian Partners share a large number of common interests and face a number of common threats. The gravest new challenges are represented by terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and failed states – especially when all three of these are mixed. Add to that the threat of violent religious extremism, ethnic strife and drug trafficking, and it is clear that we are talking about threats that know no borders. We can only address these through concerted international cooperation. And Central Asia remains a crucial part of these efforts.

Since 11th September 2001 Afghanistan, has been at the very heart of NATO's security agenda and subsequently since NATO took command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in August 2003, delivering security and stability there has been the Alliance's top priority.

Due to the possibility of instability spreading to their own countries, and the grave problems posed by the trafficking in Afghan narcotics through their respective territories, onward to Russia and NATO territory, it is also in the interest of Central Asian countries to see the situation in Afghanistan stabilized.

Central Asian nations have provided support to the NATO-led ISAF operation in Afghanistan. This support has included over-flight rights and the leasing of military bases to individual Allies. Additionally, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (along with Belarus, Russia and Ukraine) have provided rail and/or road networks through which non-lethal supplies can be transported to and from Afghanistan. This Northern Line of Communication also offers opportunities for Central Asian partners to transform these transport networks into long-term commercial arteries connecting Afghanistan and the Central Asian states among themselves, as well as connecting the region to Europe.

NATO's decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan again revealed an acute awareness of the strategic importance of Central Asian states whose security and stability are closely linked to wider Euro-Atlantic security. The Chicago Summit reiterated that operational partnership is fundamental to the Alliance, and that NATO will continue to work with partners until and beyond 2014 in building an enduring partnership with Afghanistan. The Chicago Summit Declaration devoted a particular paragraph to the regional dimension recognizing «that security and stability in the 'Heart of Asia» is interlinked across the region» [4].

At the Wales Summit of 2014, NATO countries and partners restated their intent to conduct a non-combat train, advice, and assist mission in Afghanistan beyond 2014. The Summit was important for several steps to reaffirm the open door principle, as well as to enhance partnership through launching new initiatives, including the Partnership Interoperability Initiative in which Kazakhstan has also been invited to participate.

Last but not least, another important issue that affects both Central Asia and the NATO Allies is that of energy security. NATO Strategic Concept of 1999 has been the first compromise document that openly referred to the «disruption of the flow of vital resources» as a threat to regional security. Although from now on NATO will always make reference to energy within its scope and priorities. At the Chicago Summit, the leaders of the NATO member nations repeated that «a stable and reliable energy supply, diversification of routes, suppliers, and energy resources, and the interconnectivity of energy networks, remain of critical importance» [4]. While engaging with energy security, NATO has more and more intensively looked east, to the South Caucasus, across the Caspian, and into Central Asia. In particular, Caspian and Central Asian countries, being a bridge across Europe, Russia, the Middle East and the former Soviet republics, got the attention of the Alliance, which saw in the resource-rich Basin an interesting alternative to the supplies coming from Middle East and Russia. Therefore it would be wrong not to mention that promoting energy security in the region is in the interest of both energy-importing and energy-exporting countries.

Kazakhstan – NATO: Tools for Building and Sustaining Partnership

Today, NATO attracted by Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy and its consistent foreign policy that

has been concentrating on active involvement in the NATO's regional initiatives. NATO leaders refer to the Republic of Kazakhstan as the most active partner in Central Asia which has the most advanced program of cooperation. Kazakhstan, in turn, actively participates in the international arena in the framework of multilateral security mechanisms, seeks to spread valuable European experience to Asia, which is a significant step forward the creation of multilateral security structures. European direction is one of the most important in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. The prospect and the need to develop relations with the NATO for Kazakhstan are determined by the role and place of the NATO in the European and world politics.

Kazakhstan started cooperating with NATO in 1994 when it joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme and has since been reinforcing its relations with NATO through a number of partnership tools. The essence of PfP is the individual cooperation package tailored to each Partner's needs. All Partners develop a yearly list of activities under their Individual Partnership Programme (IPP) with NATO. The several thousand activities on offer touch on virtually every field of NATO activity, including defence-related work, defence reform, defence policy and planning, civil-military relations, education and training, military-to-military cooperation and exercises, civil emergency planning and disaster-preparedness, and cooperation on science and environmental issues.

Partners whose cooperation with NATO is more advanced participate in the Planning and Review Process (PARP), in which some of their security forces undergo defence review procedures similar to those of NATO Allies themselves, in order to prepare them to participate in international peacekeeping operations. Kazakhstan has integrated into this process.

More advanced still is the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), in which a Partner and NATO jointly agree on a detailed programme of security sector reform. Kazakhstan is the first Central Asian country to have agreed an IPAP with the Alliance in early 2006, and has been making substantial progress in defence reform and interoperability since then.

This brings me to a more fundamental point about PfP: Partnership is about more than practical cooperation – it is also about values. By signing the PfP Framework Document, Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries committed to respect

international law, the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act, and international disarmament and arms control agreements; to respect existing borders; and to settle disputes peacefully.

In addition to bilateral cooperation, the Partnership framework for cooperation has an important multilateral dimension. This is embodied in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), which brings together the 28 Allies with 22 Partner countries in a forum for dialogue and consultation. The EAPC has also taken initiatives to promote and coordinate practical cooperation and the exchange of expertise in areas such as combating terrorism, border security, counter-narcotics, and other issues. To facilitate consultation and cooperation, all five Central Asian partners have established diplomatic representation to NATO Headquarters in Brussels. Kazakhstan is represented in the Military Partnership Division at Allied Command Operations which facilitates the countries' participation in training and exercises. Additionally, Kazakhstan also has military representatives at NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

Finally, let me highlight some key examples of NATO-Kazakhstan practical cooperation.

Key areas of cooperation

First of all, let me touch on security cooperation. As I mentioned earlier, all Central Asian Partners have provided some form of support to the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan. This support has included over-flight rights and the leasing of military facilities to individual Allies. In 2010, Kazakhstan, along with Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Belarus completed an agreement with NATO allowing the transportation of non-lethal ISAF cargo to Afghanistan by rail. At the NATO Chicago Summit, Kazakhstani former Minister for Foreign Affairs Yerzhan Kazykhanov confirmed his country's commitment to support the global partnerships for Afghanistan. As of 2012, NATO also has an agreement with Kazakhstan (as well as with several other Central Asian countries and with Russia) for the redeployment of non-lethal ISAF cargo from Afghanistan [5].

Another example of successful cooperation is the Kazakhstan's participation in the Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism (PAP-T). This includes sharing intelligence and analysis with NATO, enhancing national counter-terrorist capabilities and improving border security. Kazakhstan, in

cooperation with NATO Allies and regional partners, has hosted annual military exercises, named «Steppe Eagle». These exercises have contributed to strengthening the interoperability of KAZBAT with Alliance forces.

Let me now turn to another key area of cooperation, namely defence and security sector reform.

It is an area in which NATO and individual Allies have considerable expertise that Partners can draw on. A key objective is to promote the effective and efficient management of defence institutions, as well as civilian and democratic control of the armed forces. NATO countries want to help the militaries of all its Partners to become increasingly interoperable with NATO, in order to allow them to work as smoothly as possible with our own forces, and enhance the effectiveness of any current or future NATO operations in which they might wish to participate.

As it was noted earlier, a key instrument for helping Partners with specific and technical reforms is the PARP Process. The Kazakhtan government's efforts at achieving greater interoperability with NATO troops has led to the creation, assisted by NATO, of a KAZBRIG. (While this was not in a NATO context, it has successfully deployed alongside Polish troops in Iraq for a demining mission.) Elements of the Peacekeeping battalion have joined NATO Allies in a number of live exercises.

But in addition to security cooperation and defence reform, there is a lot more on offer, including in areas that many people would not immediately associate with NATO. While time doesn't allow me to go into detail on all of these areas, let me mention that Partnership projects range from disaster preparedness, to defence conversion, to scientific and technical co-operation. A good example is the Virtual Silk Highway, a NATO-sponsored project that has established Internet connectivity between the countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus and the rest of the world. At present, numerous institutions in Almaty use the network. Preparations are underway to expand connectivity to a number of other cities across the country.

Increasing the public awareness of NATO and the benefits of its relations with Kazakhstan is also an important area of cooperation. For instance, first Resource and Information Center on NATO in Central Asia at the Al Farabi Kazakh National University was opened in 2007. Centre conducts a number of NATO-themed events and arranges visits of NATO's representatives annually.

Conclusion

Central Asia is also extremely important for NATO in light of the Alliance contribution to the stabilization and reconstruction process in Afghanistan. NATO attaches great importance to its relations with our country because Kazakhstan and NATO have a common stand on and shared interests in combating terrorism, smuggling, drug trafficking, defense cooperation and on issues of civil emergency and disaster-management capabilities. Present and future dialogue between Kazakhstan and NATO takes place within analysis and counter existing threats and challenges, including terrorism, organized crime, uncontrolled migration, drug trafficking and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The major thing is NATO's multilateralism. The countries located outside of the Euro-Atlantic

region usually lack the multilateral experience in defense and security. Rather complicated situation in the region reveals that the Central Asian states should prioritize their foreign policy to create the virtually functioning security system. The key point of such system must become an international assistance for stabilization of the military-political situation in Afghanistan, which gave rise to the whole range of threats and challenges not only to the CA countries, but the entire continent.

This brings me to my last point about NATO's engagement with Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries: its complementarity with that of other actors in the region. While NATO and other important external players, such as Russia and China, may differ on methods, we all share the same goal: improving the security and stability of the region

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