

RELATIONS OF INDIA, PAKISTAN AND CHINA WITH THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES IN THE SCO

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Annotation: This state speech is about the relations of India, Pakistan and China with the Central Asian states within the SCO. The author, analyzing the relationship of these states in the sphere of economy in the economics, and in the regional security, concludes that the Central Asian countries are a «tasty morsel» for the «triangle» countries - India, Pakistan and China.

Key words: organization, relationship, interrelation, politics, balance of power, economic cooperation, regional security.

In the modern system of international relations, which is characterized by the dominance of Western values and alliances, the Eurasian bloc of states is trying to achieve a “balance of power” by expanding regional and interregional ties. Since its formation on June 15, 2001, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has frequently organized meetings between the leaders of Pakistan and India, but they have not led to concrete practical results. For the first time in fifteen years, the SCO faced such a major expansion as the accession of nuclear powers India and Pakistan (2017).

India expressed its desire to become part of the SCO back in 2005. Since then, it has participated in the organization's events as an observer, and in 2015, simultaneously with Pakistan's accession, the process of India's accession to the SCO began¹. Over its ten years as an observer, India has had varying degrees of interest in participating in the organization's work². This was expressed in the level of its representation at meetings of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States, as well as in the desire to apply for full membership in the organization. India first applied in 2010, while its “opponent” Pakistan had already declared its desire to become part of the SCO in 2006.

This move is due to the lack of opportunity to obtain real benefits from the organization's work, as well as the SCO's long preparations for its expansion in connection with China's hesitation regarding the admission of India. The number of observers to the organization has grown over the years, but their role in decision-making has been formal. As a result, India has expressed varying levels of interest in joining.

Behind India's current proactive stance lies a desire to pursue its own security and economic interests. This conclusion emerges from a study of the country's main policy directions and its interactions with other members of the organization, particularly China. According to some foreign experts, relations between countries develop in accordance with the

¹ На саммите ШОС утверждено решение о принятии в состав организации Индии и Пакистана // Официальный сайт телеканала Russia Today. – 10.09.2015. – Режим доступа: <https://russian.rt.com/article/102646#top>.

² Ушаков Ю. Банк развития БРИКС – вклад в укрепление мировой финансовой архитектуры : интервью телеканалу Russia Today // Официальный сайт RT. – 07.06.2016. – Режим доступа: <https://russian.rt.com/article/101811>

influence that the international political system has on their interaction: through the formation of an alliance, a balance of power, a balance of threats and a coincidence of interests to ensure security³.

Since its founding, the SCO has concluded large-scale agreements in the fields of economics, security, investment, energy and culture. Despite the fact that, due to the lack of coordination among the participants, the implementation of individual agreements is extremely slow and contradictory, the importance of the organization cannot be underestimated, if only because of the membership of such powers as India and China.

The geographical space that the SCO covers is of great economic importance to India and China. First of all, participation in the SCO will give a diplomatic boost to India's efforts to build contacts with Central Asia, where our country, Uzbekistan, is located. This region is rich in natural resources and minerals, but access to them is limited due to the lack of access to the ocean by the Central Asian countries. Therefore, their trade depends on third countries and the specifics of political regimes. States in close proximity to the region want to control access to natural resources. Their success depends on finding reliable transport routes. The SCO can help India achieve its energy interests. It is already looking to expand ties with Iran through the construction of the Chabahar port and associated rail network. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani signed a contract worth more than \$500 million in May 2016⁴.

In addition, one cannot ignore India's interest in implementing the CASA-1000, TAPI, IPI and other projects, which will allow it to productively cooperate with the Central Asian states in the field of economics and energy.

CASA-1000 is one of the largest energy network projects, which involves the creation of an electricity market that unites the countries of Central and South Asia. Since 2016, Electric Grids of India has been involved in consultations on this project, along with the world's largest companies and banks. In addition, CASA-1000 can become a tool for regulating relations between the states of Central and South Asia in accordance with their interests and needs.

Another project, called IPI, was supposed to be an energy corridor linking Iran, Pakistan and India. But despite preliminary agreements being signed in 2005, it never got off the ground due to disagreements over prices and tariffs. Today, the project is frozen, but India officially supports it⁵.

India demonstrated its interest in strengthening relations with Central Asian countries through N. Modi's historic visit to five countries in the region in July 2015. A number of economic agreements and initiatives were signed at that time, one of which was the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) pipeline⁶.

³ Waltz K.N. Theory of International Politics. – Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1979. – pp. 128-168.

⁴ India and Iran sign 'historic' Chabahar port deal // BBC News. – 18.08.2016. – Режим доступа: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-36356163>

⁵ Project Focus: Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline // Gulf, Oil and Gas. – 12.06.2016. – Режим доступа: <http://www.gulfoilandgas.com/webpro1/projects/3dreport.asp?id=100730>

⁶ Narayanan M.K. Putting out the West Asian fire // The Hindu. – 08.07.2016. – Режим доступа: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/prime-minister-narendra-modis-central-asia-visit/article7396013.ece> ³⁵⁶ Стратегия и план работы (на 2016–2020 гг.) по региональному сотрудничеству в энергетическом секторе стран ЦАРЭС // Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program. – 2015. – 49 с.

However, despite the successes and the desire of the parties to implement the project, it is accompanied by certain difficulties. Construction was supposed to begin in 2012, and it was planned to be put into operation in 2016⁷. However, security concerns in Afghanistan and disagreements among investors have delayed implementation.

The SCO's ties with India and Central Asian countries could draw attention to the TAPI project and encourage states to participate in it, as well as propose other initiatives. There is some opposition to the project in India itself, with many politicians and experts fearing that Pakistan, by participating in the project, will gain advantage over India.

China's grandiose economic program OBOR (One Belt, One Road) deserves special attention. China has invested 46 billion US dollars in the construction of another project, CPEC (China-Pakistan Transport Corridor), and has allocated additional funds⁸.

This initiative would have had less negative connotations from India if the communications did not concern the disputed territory in northwest Kashmir. Moreover, despite China's claims that the corridor will not affect third-party interests, many projects envisaged under OBOR and CPEC could intersect with India's economic and political interests and deepen the conflict situation between the countries⁹.

Similarly, Central Asian countries view the OBOR and EAEU transport and investment initiatives as having potential and the ability to transform the region into a major hub for transcontinental transport networks.

As a member state of the SCO, India will not be able to remain aloof from China's infrastructure projects. It will be an opportunity for it to develop a plan that will not only not interfere with the functioning of the organization, but can also positively impact the country's ambitions and economic advantages. Perhaps in this case, India may focus on expanding ties with Russia and Iran, in particular within the framework of the construction of the INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor) route.

By expressing interest in Eurasian projects, India and China, on the one hand, demonstrate their serious intentions in strengthening regional ties, and on the other, assert their positions as global powers influencing global processes.

In the field of security, the SCO remains committed to the fight against the "three evils": terrorism, separatism and religious extremism¹⁰. In this regard, there is much scope for cooperation between China, India and Pakistan, as they all suffer from terrorist attacks on their territories that kill thousands of innocent people. India and Pakistan are keen to stay abreast of counter-terrorism efforts in the region. India is also surrounded by countries with radical groups

⁷ Фараджи Рад Абдол Реза, Моради Г. Трубопровод ТАПИ и его влияние на региональное и международное соперничество // Центральная Азия. – 2012. – №2. – Т. 15. – С. 94-111.

⁸ China's Xi Jinping agrees \$46 bn superhighway to Pakistan // BBC News. – Режим доступа: URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32377088> (accessed 11.05.2016).

⁹ Shrivastava Abhishek. How India can benefit from joining Shanghai Cooperation Organization // Daily Politics. – 15.08.2016. – Режим доступа: <http://www.dailyo.in/politics/shanghai-corporation-organisation-foreign-policy Narendra-modi-central-asian-republics-tashkent-terrorism-security/story/1/11346.html>

¹⁰ Шанхайская конвенция о борьбе с терроризмом, сепаратизмом и экстремизмом : официальный сайт Министерства иностранных дел Российской Федерации. – Режим доступа: URL:

http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/international_safety/crime//asset_publisher/3F5lZsLVSx4R/content/id/579622

(including Afghanistan and Pakistan), so it benefits from being part of an organisation that aims to counter terrorism.

Terrorist threats are particularly high on the agenda due to the ongoing instability in Afghanistan. The international terrorist organization Islamic State, in which militants from the Taliban and Al-Qaeda play a significant role, is becoming increasingly widespread.

One aspect of the impact on China's policy is the situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and its connection with the hot "Islamic spots" of Kashmir and Afghanistan. The number of Uyghurs fighting in the ranks of the terrorist organization "Islamic State" is growing¹¹.

Beijing does not rule out the possibility that supporters of the "Independent Uyghur State" based in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province are receiving assistance from Western countries and followers of radical Islam.

There is "insecurity" between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. This is expressed in the fact that radicals in Afghanistan have weapons, and personnel and transport from Pakistan flow there. The American AfPak project is not producing the desired effect, and there is no proper dialogue and concepts for resolving the terrorist threat in the border areas.

It can be concluded that the Chinese leadership is trying to neutralize the forces of political Islam in XUAR. China's policy consists, on the one hand, of supporting Pakistan's official position aimed at eliminating terrorist groups on its territory, and on the other hand, of relying on its own strength to prevent a possible complication of the situation. This led to the signing of a direct agreement between the problematic territories of China and Pakistan, aimed at stabilizing the region.

Thus, Central Asia is part of the strategic interests of India, China and, to a lesser extent, Pakistan. Full participation of India and Pakistan in the SCO will be aimed at improving the situation in the economic and security spheres, as well as at forming the idea among the leaders of the Central Asian states of India as a reliable partner ready for dialogue and cooperation.

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¹¹ Панкратенко И. Мятажный Синьцзян. Что хотят архитекторы войны? // ИА REGNUM. – 04.02.2015. – Режим доступа: <http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1891822.html>.



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