

# CENTRAL ASIAN DECISION MAKING IN FOREIGN POLICY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OF THE US AND RUSSIA

Botir B. Ochilov,  
Fellow at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy,  
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

[B.ochilov@list.ru](mailto:B.ochilov@list.ru)

ORCID ID [orcid.org/0000-0001-5897-1051](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5897-1051)



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In considering the role of Central Asia in the process of making foreign policy decisions in the US and Russia through methods of comparative historical analysis, it is important to identify several historically important

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**Botir Ochilov**

stages. This would allow more systematically focusing on the key positions and specific approaches of each of the extra regional powers and forming perception of the results that Washington and Moscow have achieved.

**Key words:** Central Asia, the USA, foreign policy, Russia, terrorism

The Central Asian states in the processes of making their own foreign policy decisions were affected by several key factors reflected by the US and Russia. The relationship between the US and Russia during the period experienced several rather controversial stages - from attempts to develop cooperation and collaboration to a virtually open confrontation. The process of self-identification of these powers in the system of international relations that continued in the 1990s and 2000s played an important role.

Second, there is no doubt that Washington and Moscow regarded the Central Asian states in the context of their foreign policy strategies. Their policy towards Central Asia as a region and with respect to its specific state were built on the basis of a broader agenda that included many global issues.

Third, political, economic, military dynamics of events in the region influenced the behavior of Central Asian states. For instance, events such as the strengthening of the Taliban in Afghanistan and growing threats of religious extremism and international terrorism in neighboring countries had special significance<sup>1</sup>. Further example more relevant for the United States is the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent deployment by Washington anti-terrorist campaign to Afghanistan. As a result, Afghanistan has become one of the key fields of confrontation with the global terrorism.

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, awareness of the challenges and threats that these phenomena have engendered for Russia, and not only in the Caucasus, has made a significant contribution to the revision of Moscow's attitude towards the region.

Fourth, it should be taken into account the internal political dynamics in the US and Russia, including electoral cycles in the United States and the process of changing political and economic elite in Russian Federation. The studies revealed that proponents of different approaches to international relations have been established in Washington as well as in Moscow, who had determined changes in the relationship between the US and Russia, as well as their approach toward Central Asia.

Fifth, position of the Central Asian countries changed in solving international problems, including methods of interaction with other states on security and economic development. In particular, all Central Asian states underwent through the process of formation of national institutions, the evolution of systems of national interests and mechanisms for their advancement in the context of increasing openness to the world.

In order to analyze Moscow's approaches to Central Asia, briefly analyzing the period before the collapse of the USSR would be appropriate, since the views and attitudes prevailing at that time in the Kremlin largely gave the orientation for further evolution of Russia's approaches to relations with the Central Asian countries in the early 1990s.

The last years of the existence of the USSR one could witness a deep systemic crisis - political, economic and social. One of the results of this crisis was the attempt of the leadership in Moscow to look for opportunities of restructuring Soviet economy and management system. All the republics of the union were closely interrelated and were part of a single system of state planning. The Central Asian states, like other Soviet republics, were subsidized from the central budget.

For instance, analyst Kazantsev, referring to the materials of the State Statistics Committee of the USSR, notes that in 1989 Russia's economic subsidies to other republics was about 53.5 billion US dollars, of which 48% were directed towards Central Asia<sup>2</sup>. The reliability of these figures, as well as the deep reasons for subsidizing the budgets of the union republics can be disputed<sup>3</sup>, but there are far more important issues. The need to subsidize the budgets of the Central Asian republics in the face of growing social, economic and political problems was perceived as an undue burden that prevented the restoration of Russia as a key subject of the union.

Kazantsev points out that by 1991 almost all main political forces, not only "democrats", were in favor of Russia's withdrawal from Central Asia. The leftists believed that Russia needed to make a clear European choice, and Central Asia was pulling it back, being "bastion" of backwardness and the power of the communist nomenclature. On the other hand,, the rightists (for instance, "Polozkovtsy" in the Communist Party of Russia or other predecessors of the later "national patriotic" or "red-brown" forces) increasingly deviated from international ideas and inclined to Russian nationalism in various forms. Specifically, they did not express any serious interest in maintaining the union of Russia in alliance with Muslim, non-Slavic, and even subsidized republics. It seems that such sentiments partly became the basis for the signing of the Belavezha Accords <sup>4</sup> between Russia,

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<sup>2</sup> Казанцев А. Большая игра с неизвестными правилами: мировая политика и Центральная Азия. – М.: Фонд «Наследие Евразии», 2008.

<sup>3</sup> In the Soviet period, the center exported resources and goods from the Union republics at prices whose fairness is doubtful. In turn, the incomes received were compensated through subsidies from the central budget of the USSR.

<sup>4</sup> The Belavezha Accords or Belavezha agreements are an unofficial name for the "Agreement on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States", signed on December 8, 1991 by the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine as the founding members of the Union, signatories to the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR (1922).

Belarus and Ukraine, which meant the cessation of the existence of the USSR as a subject of international law.

In the years immediately following the collapse of the USSR (1991-1994), Russia's strategy towards the Central Asia was formulated in the same spirit, the essence of which was to distance itself from this region and its problems. In turn, the relocation of the relationship to market lines, according to the Russian leaders, was to confirm Russia's role as a natural center of attraction for the former Soviet republics. Apparently, Russia was convinced that the one-sided transport infrastructure and hypertrophied economies make the Central Asian countries to seek assistance from Moscow.

By the desire of Boris Yeltsin to accentuate his equality with Bill Clinton at least formally, to belong to the circle of the privileged allies of the US "chosen club", had shown the flexibility with regard to important issues of Russian diplomacy. This was surprise for the United States Secretary of State W. Christopher<sup>5</sup>. Subsequently, Albright also successfully used the tactics of the game in the "unequal syndrome", unable patience; tact and exaggerated attention to Moscow's view facilitate the obtaining of concessions to Russia, even after the "soft" A.Kozyrev was replaced by "tough" Primakov, and then "semi-rigid" Ivanov<sup>6</sup>.

The collapse of the Soviet Union for Washington was an occasion to talk about the final and unconditional victory in the "Cold War" and the opening of great opportunities for new world order. Although the United States recognized the independence of the post-Soviet republics of Central Asia

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<sup>5</sup> W. Christopher was appointed B. Clinton as US Secretary of State on January 20, 1993 and held this post until early 1997. Madeleine Albright replaced him in this position and worked until January 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Клименков Н. Уоррен Кристофер и Мадлен Олбрайт: две российские политики администрации Клинтона // Вестник СамГУ. 2010. № 3 (77). С. 92-95.

since 1992 the region was considered as a backyard of Moscow until the mid-1990s. Russia's attempt to get out of the region and lack of strategy on that had placed the Central Asian states in difficult socio-economic and political situation. Erupted civil war in Tajikistan in 1992, and emergence of radical Islamist groups in Fergana Valley significantly aggravated political and military situation in the region. The greatest threats came from Afghanistan, where, after the departure of Soviet troops, the confrontation between intra-Afghan groups continued and where later armed groups of radical Islamists from Central Asia were driven out.

The analysis shows that the potential conflicts that existed during the times of the USSR emerged with new force not only in Central Asia. The relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, between Georgia and South Ossetia as well as Abkhazia have become aggravated in the Caucasus, in Moldova they have appeared on the territory of Transnistria. Since 1991, four large peacekeeping operations in the zones of conflicts in three states have been conducted in the CIS: in Moldova on the territory of Transnistria (1992), in Georgia on the territory of South Ossetia (1992), and Abkhazia (1994), in Tajikistan (1993). In Abkhazia the UN peacekeeping mission under the auspices of the CIS was carried out, while in Transnistria and South Ossetia there were operations based on interstate agreements with representatives of conflicting parties<sup>7</sup>.

In fact, the plans of the Russian leadership to relieve from burden of the former Soviet republics have not been realized. So, in the first half of the 1990s' (and in some cases even longer periods), Russian border guards

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<sup>7</sup> Богатуров А., Аверков В. История международных отношений. 1945-2008: Учеб. пособие для студентов вузов. - М.: Аспект Пресс, 2010. – 520 с.

continued to protect the CIS external borders or to assist national border structures. Moreover, by the mid-1990s the Kremlin realized that the complete withdrawal from the post-Soviet countries does not cover the strategic interests of Russia.

Thus, in the 1990s there was a process of weakening of the military-political and economic positions of the Russian Federation in Central Asia. The exception was Tajikistan in terms of military deployment. The position of the Russian Federation undermined gradually in the cultural and ideological sphere. At the same time, the CIS countries were objectively of interest to Russia politically and economically. Central Asia also remained for Russia not only as a "soft underbelly, adjacent to the Muslim regions of the Russian Federation," but also a geopolitical field for interaction with some of the main partners in the post-Cold War period including Iran and China. Despite the desire to establish a constructive dialogue with the United States and European countries, relations with Iran and China will play a key role for Moscow in implementing the "neo-imperial idea of transforming Russia into a Eurasian power<sup>8</sup>".

As reported by Kazantsev, in connection with the issuance of President Boris Yeltsin's decree of September 14, 1995, the reintegration of the post-Soviet area around Russia was officially recognized as the most important foreign policy priority. On 5 January 1995, an agreement was signed between Russia and Belarus on the establishment of the Customs Union, to which Kazakhstan joined on 20 January 1995 and Kyrgyzstan on 26 March 1996. The paradox, as Kazantsev rightly noted, was that despite Russia's attempts to

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<sup>8</sup> См. далее: Rumer B. The Powers in Central Asia // The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Survival. Vol. 44, №3, Autumn 2002.

restore and strengthen its positions in the post-Soviet area, its positions in Central Asia continued to decline<sup>9</sup>.

One of the reasons for this paradox increased by the mid-1990s the presence in the region of the West, and especially the United States. Following the "expansion and involvement" strategy proclaimed by the Clinton administration, Washington had steadily expanded and increased contacts and interaction with the Central Asian states. Interest in the region was formed and gradually evolved under the influence of a number of factors.

At the first stage - in the very beginning of the 1990s the issue of Soviet nuclear arsenal became crucial for the United States, and Washington inclined to pursue a policy of cooperation with Moscow both in the implementation of the START -1 (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) agreements and in a broader range of tasks.

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to an aggravation of the issues of arms control. The Soviet-American START-1 that was signed in the summer of 1991 in Moscow could not enter into force without its ratification by more than one state, the USSR, and four by the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, in whose territory the nuclear weapons were located<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, Kazakhstan became one of the first Central Asian republics mentioned in the US National Security Strategy. When the Treaty

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<sup>9</sup> Казанцев А. Большая игра с неизвестными правилами: мировая политика и Центральная Азия. – М.: Фонд «Наследие Евразии», 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Богатуров А. Д., Аверков В. В. История международных отношений. 1945—2008: Учеб. пособие для студентов вузов. - М.: Аспект Пресс, 2010. – 520 с.



was finally signed and ratified, Kazakhstan received from the US guarantees of territorial integrity, including guarantees in nuclear safety<sup>11</sup>.

The negotiations within the framework of the START-1 and Memorandum on Security Assurances in Kazakhstan had a much more important for the Kazakh side in terms of the development of future relations with the United States. Therefore, in the first visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Washington in 1992 it was agreed that cooperation between the two countries in the field of defense, including assisting in the preparation and training of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan. In April 1995, during a visit to Almaty, US Defense Secretary William Perry agreed a broad program of assistance to Kazakhstan in the field of conversion of defense enterprises, which including the establishment of several joint ventures for the implementation of various conversion projects<sup>12</sup>.

At the second stage in the first half of the 1990s' the fears of American strategists also played a certain role in the activation of the common Western policy towards Central Asia due to the activation of Iran in the first half of the 1990s and its desire to promote the establishment of Islamic regimes in the Central Asian countries on the Iranian model. As stated in one of the studies of the Heritage Foundation, Iran perceives the Muslim Central Asian states and Azerbaijan as a potential sphere of influence in its strategic area for exporting goods and ideology<sup>13</sup>. It cannot be ruled out that the Iranian leadership considered such options, but their feasibility in practice was doubtful because of the significant differences between Iran and the countries

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<sup>11</sup> December 5, 1994 in Budapest during the OSCE summit, Presidents B. Yeltsin and B. Clinton, as well as British Prime Minister J. Major signed the Memorandum of Security Safeguards to Kazakhstan

<sup>12</sup> Иватова Л., Ордабек Е., Сабырулы Ж. Казахстан и США: на пути укрепления доверительных отношений в рамках обеспечения ядерной безопасности. <http://articlekz.com/article/8051>.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia: Building a New "Silk Road" to Economic Prosperity. The Cultural Policy Studies Project. The Heritage Foundation. July 24, 1997.

of Central Asia (with the exception of Tajikistan) in the spiritual and cultural terms.

Nevertheless, these intention of Iran along with the strengthening in Washington of the conviction of a new historical mission of the United States and the growing awareness of the new political and economic opportunities that opened the disintegration of the USSR and the precariousness of the domestic political situation in Russia, markedly stimulated the expansion of political, diplomatic, military-political, humanitarian and cultural contacts between the countries of Central Asia and the United States.

By mid-1990s the process of formulating American policy in the region involved an oil lobby which was interested in gaining access to the energy resources of Central Asian region and the Caspian Sea basin. This was manifested in intensification of activities of Western oil companies in the Caspian Sea after the signing of the "Contract of the century" with Azerbaijan, in the development of projects for laying new transport (TRACECA - the Great Silk Road) and pipeline routes (Trans-Caspian, Trans-Afghan). At the same time, cooperation between Central Asian countries and NATO was expanded within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, and then the Partnership for Peace program<sup>14</sup>.

The United States actively supported and tried to push the integration processes within Central Asia, in particular through the Central Asian Union (CAU), established in 1994 on the basis of the Treaty on the Establishment of an Economic Union and Common Economic Space, signed by Kazakhstan,

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<sup>14</sup> Богатуров А. Д., Аверков В. В. История международных отношений. 1945—2008: Учеб. пособие для студентов вузов. - М.: Аспект Пресс, 2010.

Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 1993<sup>15</sup>. The Washington headquarters initially made Uzbekistan a natural center of the region and a country that demonstrates an active desire to conduct an independent (primarily from Russia) foreign policy. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Uzbekistan did not advocate ousting Russia from Central Asia, but for changing Moscow's approaches to the region. In this regard, relations between Tashkent and Moscow have evolved both in a bilateral format and within the framework of multilateral mechanisms.

During the third stage, in the second half of the 1990s the US and Western countries actively engaged in Central Asia as well as Russia's in an attempt to regain its influence in the region, primarily in the politico-military context<sup>16</sup>. It should be noted that the long-term goals of the US and Russia in Central Asia were multidirectional, which led to an increase of competition between Washington and Moscow. It is important to understand that Moscow was not ready to invest serious resources in the development of the region because of its difficult economic situation, and Washington owing to geographical remoteness and the prevalence of more global interests on its agenda relied on the development of relations between Central Asian countries and its allies (first of all, with Western European states), as well as the use of intraregional resources for economic development and security.

Thus, the third stage, including the second half of the 1990s and partly the beginning of the 2000s could be characterized by very intense official political and diplomatic contacts of the Central Asian countries with the

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<sup>15</sup> In 1997, the CAU was "reformatted" to the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC), which in turn became the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO) in 2001. In 2005, the CACO was liquidated, and its structures entered the Eurasian Economic Community.

<sup>16</sup> In the economic field, Moscow was interested primarily in objects created during the Soviet era, and not in the implementation of new projects, and also sought to maintain control over the transport infrastructure, primarily oil and natural gas transportation routes.

United States and Russia, as well as contacts on informal lines through the business and expert community. The competitive nature of the relationship between Washington and Moscow often led to the fact that the policies of the two great powers in the Central Asian region often amounted to a "zero-sum game." It seems that Russia's efforts were aimed at preserving the economic and political status-quo through strengthening the isolation of the region's markets from the world in order to impose Russia as a geopolitical intermediary<sup>17</sup>.

The fourth stage: late 1990s and early 2000s was marked by a series of events that both Russia and the US pushed the interests and approaches towards Central Asia. The terrorist attacks in Tashkent in 1999 and swift victories of the Taliban in Afghanistan played an important role in transformation Moscow's approaches to the region. It became clear that the problems previously considered to be exclusively Central Asian (or even "Uzbek", if we talk about the problem of religious extremism) will not remain in the territorial limits of Central Asia and will inevitably spread to the regions of Russia.

Many experts, both in the West and in Russia linked changes of Kremlin's policy towards post-Soviet states with the arrival of Vladimir Putin. Although his coming to power and subsequent actions of the Russian leader in both domestic and foreign policy can be seen as an inquiry by some of Russian elite and the entire Russian society to change the political course of the countries.

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<sup>17</sup> Братерский М., Суздальцев А. Экономические интересы России, Китая и Запада в Средней Азии. См.: Будущее стабильности и безопасности в регионе Центральной Азии (под ред. Старчак М.). М.: МГИМО - Университет, 2009

Russia's shifting approaches was also noted in Central Asia. The pragmatism of foreign policy strategy was noticeably strengthened, which was extremely necessary for a weakened Russia. During the first years of power, Vladimir Putin held a series of negotiations with his counterparts from Central Asia, and the form, content and results of the meetings were strikingly different from the outcome of previous summits. The phase of a significant intensification of cooperation with the Central Asian countries in all spheres had begun. Revision of fundamental of the political system and economic model of Russian Federation that were established during Yeltsin period as well started at that time. In the first years of the new century, the process of searching for the national idea, the creation national ideology was noticeably intensified. A new international image of Russia will largely depend on all these processes, which will also affect the attitude of other states, primarily within the CIS framework<sup>18</sup>.

Moscow counted on the best Russian-American future when George W. Bush won the US Presidential elections in November of 2000.. However, during the transition period, George W. Bush and his team began to demonstrate open dissatisfaction with the policy of Vladimir Putin: allegedly human rights violations, especially in Chechnya, a slide into authoritarianism, the restoration of close relations with "rogue states", the activation of arms sales to Tehran and Beijing, the transfer of nuclear technology to India and Iran , finally, the beginning of attempts to "revive the empire" with increasing pressure on neighboring republics<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Центральная Азия: геэкономика, геополитика, безопасность / Редколл.: Р.М.Алимов, Ш.Р.Арифханов и др. – Ташкент: «Шарк». С. 100.

<sup>19</sup> Шенин С.Ю. Генезис политики администрации Дж.Буша-мл. в регионе Центральной Азии и Закавказья // Запад-Россия-Восток в исторической науке XXI века: Материалы Междунар. науч.-практич. конференции. Часть 2. – Саратов: изд-во Саратовского университета, 2010. –С.122-129

Such political statements of the new US administration were rightly regarded by a number of Russian experts as a result of the return to power and the strengthening of the influence of the neoconservatives. In particular, Primakov stated his observations as "after the presidential election won by democrat Clinton, the majority of neo-conservatives left the power structure, dispersing to research institutes and centers ... With George W. Bush coming to power, . American "hawks" raised their heads. A number of them occupied prominent positions in the administration of the White House and the government<sup>20</sup>.

The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 radically affected the US approach to the fight against international terrorism and the US policy in Central Asia. It is worth noting that the US position towards Afghanistan, in particular, the Taliban began to change even earlier. For instance, it became openly hostile after the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were blown up by Al Qaeda on August 7, 1998. Washington accused Taliban for providing refuge to Usama bin Laden. of taking refuge with support of the head of the Taliban movement, Mullah Omar, rejected this demand. In response, the United States struck a missile strike at the bin Laden base near Kandahar<sup>21</sup>.

Many experts in the US, Russia, and Central Asian countries believed that the beginning of a global anti-terrorist campaign, raised Central Asia to a qualitatively new level in Washington's foreign policy priorities. At least in 2001-2002 the anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan and the deployment of US and NATO bases in Central Asia prompted many to say that Washington

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<sup>20</sup> Примаков Е. Указ. Раб. – С.14.

<sup>21</sup> Казанцев А.А. Большая игра с неизвестными правилами: мировая политика и Центральная Азия. – М.: Фонд «Наследие Евразии», 2008

has not only come to the region for a long time, but will also be more responsible for assisting the Central Asian countries in their socio-economic and political development.

It can be confidently asserted that the commonality of interests in the fight against international terrorism that Washington, Moscow, the capitals in Central Asia and many other countries of the world demonstrated immediately after the terrorist attacks in the United States, gave certain hopes for building a new geopolitical balance in the region that would lead to a minimization unhealthy competition between extra-regional and intra-regional players. In turn, the emerging hopes for a relatively early resolution of security problems in Afghanistan opened up new opportunities for the development of Central Asia in a number of areas - energy, transport, transit, etc.

One of the results of the revision of the US foreign policy doctrine in Central Asia in 2002 was the adoption of the "Afghanistan Freedom Support Act". It provided for the promotion of democracy and civil society not only in Afghanistan, but also in all countries of Central Asia. The updated US National Security Strategy in 2002 also confirmed the geopolitical interests of the country in the Caspian and Central Asian regions, as well as Washington's readiness to defend them<sup>22</sup>.

However, having gained access to the region to implement military operations in Afghanistan, the US administration used the situation to revive the plans for the global hegemony of the United States and to turn the hitherto theoretical attitudes into practical cases. Important role in the

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<sup>22</sup> Юлдашева Г. Стратегия США в Центральной Азии: проблемы и достижения // Центральная Азия и Кавказ. Т. 14. Вып. 2, 2011.

consolidation of the right forces in the Republican Party played R. Perl, who until his resignation in March 2003<sup>23</sup> headed the Defense Policy Council under the US Department of Defense. Under the Minister of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, this council acquired a serious influence on the development of political aspects of the US military policy<sup>24</sup>.

Primakov having observed the formation of the strategy of so-called unilateralism argued that the United States on the international scene began to act unilaterally to realize its interests and based on its understanding of the events taking place in the world, often disregarding the norms of international law and the already established international institutions Coordination of positions and activities of countries. Describing the results of the policy of unilateralism, Primakov cites the opinion of the American scientist Walt: "The inadequacy of neo-conservatism as the main principle of politics does not need proof: an experiment has been conducted and its results are evident. If the doctor had incorrect diagnoses as regularly as the neocons have misinterpreted the events of world politics, then only patients willing to die would use his services."<sup>25</sup>

In the initial implementation of the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan, the US's deep interest in gaining and maintaining access to the infrastructure of the Central Asian countries forced Washington to muffle the almost traditional criticism of human rights observance and democratic reforms in the countries of the region. Part of this was also because, for

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<sup>23</sup> Richard Pearl resigned because of a scandal that erupted in connection with his participation in lobbying the interests of large American oil business.

<sup>24</sup> Примаков Е. Указ.раб. – С.17.

<sup>25</sup> Примаков Е. Указ.раб. – С.84.



instance, steps were taken to meet the individual requests of Washington in Uzbekistan.

At the same time, in the summer of 2002 the US State Department began to change its approaches to the region, focusing on priority attention in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on the part of the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Some of the US political documents of that period indicated the need to promote the formation of independent political parties and legal opposition in Uzbekistan, the development of independent media and the support of independent journalists in all countries of Central Asia, etc<sup>26</sup>.

Since the US did not tend to maintain its military presence in Central Asia on a long-term basis, strategists from Washington tried to use the moment to solve one of the tasks proclaimed in Central Asia since the early 1990s to promote the establishment of democratic regimes. At the same time, acting within the framework of the doctrine of unilateralism, Washington attempted to "press through" its scheme of political reforms in an accelerated mode, rather than continue to support the transformation programs that were set by the Central Asian countries themselves. The actions of the US and the structures affiliated with the US administration during the so-called "tulip revolution" in Kyrgyzstan, as well as the reaction of official Washington to the events in Andijan in 2005, showed that Washington continues to view Central Asia as a geopolitical field of competition with Moscow.

In the fifth stage, from 2005 to 2008, the United States appears to have lost much of its position in Central Asia and, above all, in Uzbekistan. At

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<sup>26</sup> См. напр., архивные материалы Государственного департамента США: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/15561.htm> ; <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/15560.htm>.

certain moments, Washington's entire policy in the region was to keep access to the infrastructure of the two countries of the region - Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan - for the successful continuation of the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan, which was delayed for a longer period than originally planned.

Besides, Troitsky, referring to the US Department of State, stated: "The US State Department declared in April 2006 that the promotion of "Regional economic integration" along with ensuring American security interests and supporting democratic and market reforms, is becoming one of the main objectives of Washington's policy in Central Asia. "Integration" was understood as the development of "cross-border economic ties" between Central and South Asia, based on the new role of Afghanistan, the "bridge" connecting the two regions. Integration with South Asia and strengthening of sovereignty were viewed as interrelated processes ("more choices" - "more opportunities and, therefore, more independence")<sup>27</sup>.

In practical terms, the US limited itself to political support for individual regional initiatives<sup>28</sup> and continued efforts to promote liberalization in the area of regional cross-border trade. However, the implementation of these projects was, at that time (and still is) more a wish than a realistic prospect because of the unresolved issues due to the security of Afghanistan and Pakistan and the continuing contradictions between the Central Asian countries<sup>29</sup>, which Washington preferred to ignore.

Thus, during 2000-2005 US policy in Central Asia continued to be a conglomeration of clashes between the interests of various political groups,

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<sup>27</sup> Троицкий Е. Политика США в Центральной Азии: подходы второй администрации Дж. Буша (2005–2009 гг.) и Б. Обамы (2009–2010 гг.) // Сравнительный анализ внешней политики, 2011, 4. – С.65-74.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, the TAPI gas pipeline project from Turkmenistan to India, the CASA-1000 backbone transmission lines from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

<sup>29</sup> It is an issue of disagreements over the use of the Syrdarya and Amudarya watercourse for the construction of large hydroelectric power stations.

corporate and departmental interests that were changing under the influence of changes in the relationship between Washington and Moscow.

Famous American scientist, Starr together with colleagues from the Institute of Central Asia and the Caucasus at the University of J. Hopkins since the 1990's sought to form a comprehensive system of arguments to justify the long-term US political interests in the Central Asian region. In 2006 Starr voiced a new American concept in the Central Asian direction, briefly referred to as "Greater Central Asia."<sup>30</sup> The formation of Greater Central Asia, according to Starr, was to ensure the accelerated development of relations, primarily in the transport and trade and economic spheres, between Central Asia and Afghanistan with access to Pakistan and India. This, in turn, would ensure the implementation of the US strategic goals for strengthening the independence of the countries of the region from Russia and China.

Starr came to the conclusion that "the geographical delineations used by the U.S. government prevent policymakers from recognizing Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan as comprising a single region -- which has impeded the development of a coherent Central Asia policy. The State Department groups the five former Soviet states of Central Asia with Russia and considers Afghanistan part of South Asia, while the Defense Department's Central Command treats the six countries together. Such uncoordinated arrangements have reduced the United States' ability to build regional success on the national success in Afghanistan. With the exception of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement it entered into with the five former Soviet states of Central Asia,

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<sup>30</sup> Большая Центральная Азия – макрорегион, охватывающий пять стран Центральной Азии, Афганистан и государства Южной Азии.

virtually everything the United States has done in the region has been on a bilateral basis<sup>31</sup>”.

A comparative historical analysis of the five stages in the formation of the US political position vis-à-vis the Central Asian countries made it possible to establish that the American approaches to the region were dynamically changing, sometimes quite sharply, under the influence of Washington's strategic vectors, while its intention to dominate the world remained stable.

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<sup>31</sup> Старр Ф. Партнерство для Центральной Азии // Россия в глобальной политике. 2005, № 4, Июль/Август 2005.  
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2. In the Soviet period, the center exported resources and goods from the Union republics at prices whose fairness is doubtful. In turn, the incomes received were compensated through subsidies from the central budget of the USSR.
3. The Belavezha Accords or Belavezha agreements are an unofficial name for the "Agreement on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States", signed on December 8, 1991 by the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine as the founding members of the Union, signatories to the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR (1922).
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23. For instance, the TAPI gas pipeline project from Turkmenistan to India, the CASA-1000 backbone transmission lines from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

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