

# Conditions and Prospects of the Civilizations Dialogue in the Modern World: Symbiosis of Cultures

(based on the History of the Central Asian Countries and their Interaction with Russia)

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the possibilities of dialogue of civilizations in a global, trans-border cultural space. The concept of civilization as a network of broad communications is new and promising, which removes the attachment of civilizational communities to a territory or state and turns civilizations into open, inclusive, cultural and communication entities. In the context of the extensive and unique historical experience of intercivilizational ties and relations, the Central Asian region can be classified as one of the most successful and longest-lasting “civilizations of encounters.” The communicative significance of this experience as a long and successful symbiosis of different cultures and religions and the role of dialogue with Russia in this heritage, in its preservation and revival are considered. Dialogue with Russia is a network of historical and modern relations and interactions between our countries. The article was prepared on the basis of a report made by the author at the Dushanbe session “Civilizational dialogue between Russia and the countries of Central Asia” of the VIII international conference “Russia and the world: dialogues - 2024. Forces of attraction.”

**Keywords:** dialogue of civilizations, cultural communications, symbiosis of cultures, civilization of Central Asia, cultural and civilizational interaction between Russia and Central Asian countries

**For citation:** Sledzevsky I.V. Conditions and Prospects of the Civilizations Dialogue in the Modern World: Symbiosis of Cultures (based on the History of the Central Asian Countries and their Interaction with Russia). *Russia & World: Scientific Dialogue*. 2024, 2(12): 126-135, [doi.org/10.53658/RW2024-4-2\(12\)-126-135](https://doi.org/10.53658/RW2024-4-2(12)-126-135)

## Introduction

Modern globalization not only strengthens world intercultural ties, but also exacerbates on a large scale the contradictions, tensions and conflicts in the world system of intercultural, intercivilizational interactions. A new and problematic character to these interactions is given, on the one hand, by the rapid network convergence within the framework of the global culture of the cultures of the West, East and Africa, and on the other hand, by the desire of cultures of different - ethnic, national, civilizational levels to preserve their identity, their cultural heritage and traditions in the new conditions of a world without borders. The purpose of this article is to analyze the possibilities of a dialogue of civilizations in the conditions of the development of a global, transboundary cultural space from the point of view of the concept of civilization as a network of broad interactions and communications.

## Materials and Methods

The main, most widespread scientific and theoretical approaches and concepts of civilization (Huntington, Yakovenko, Mishuchkov, Ionov, etc. [3, 5, 7, 8]) were subjected to scientific comprehension and critical analysis. The high epistemological potential of the communicative-network approach is noted, in which civilization is considered as an open system of internal and external stable communications, information exchange. The research methods were the dialectical method, the method of analysis, synthesis, generalization, the concrete historical method, and a comparative analysis of the historical experience of symbiosis of different cultures.

## Results

The apologetics of the unstoppable spread of Western civilization was noticeably undermined by the concept of growing conflicts between the civilizations of the West and the East and their impending clash by the American political scientist S. Huntington. Since the end of the 20th century, the concept of the “dialogue of civilizations” has become an alternative to this destructive vision of the world’s future. It has transferred the understanding of dialogue as an oral or written exchange of thoughts between people to the vast space of cultural and civilizational connections and relationships between countries, peoples, and states. The positive international significance of the concept has been recognized: the need for dialogue for each civilization and for humanity as a whole [8: 96]. However, the framework for the correct scientific use of the concept remains debatable. The dialogue of

civilizations is understood both as an intersubjective form of intercivilizational interactions and relations – the exchange of information, values, products between public institutions and social formations of different civilizations, and as interpersonal communication of bearers of different civilizational identities, influencing the development of the subjectivity of the participants in the civilizational dialogue, and as an internal dialogue of a bicultural personality – a bearer of not one, but several civilizational identities [5:219]. It is noted that “the desire for dialogue in itself and even the proclamation of certain dialogical principles do not yet ensure the effectiveness or the very presence of dialogue, which requires a subtle balance of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, in particular, a specific combination of macrohistorical and microhistorical approaches” [3:25].

But despite all the differences in the interpretation of the concept of civilizational dialogue, its content is connected with the fact that civilizational communities (systems) exist separately or in isolation from each other with their own special ideological principles, spiritual and moral values and ideals. The criteria of integrity and unity of civilizations prevail over the criteria of their interconnection, communicative relations, oriented not towards building institutions, structures, systems, but towards a stable exchange of information and the creation of networks of intersubjective relations. This image also has its own normative and value standard: a model of a culturally homogeneous society, typical for Western society of the Modern era, in which what exists as a cultural and political unity of a plurality of individual citizens, not cultures, becomes understandable, correct and meaningful, and has the quality of an indisputable beginning and moral and legal absoluteness for all citizens. Meanwhile, the realities of modern globalization, undermining or erasing from public consciousness the deep connection between place and community - “the local without borders” (in a multitude of local identifications), “the global without place” (in many places at once), blur the basic principle of the theory of civilization: civilization as a spatio-temporal continuum of culture and history of the “big society”. Against the background of constant trans-border interactions of people, expanding thanks to the development of the global communications and information infrastructure, it is increasingly difficult to imagine civilization exclusively as the embodiment of a single spiritual principle, a common worldview, tied to a certain territory or vast state. Today it is already difficult not to notice that the civilizational formations that formed in the past, for example, the medieval European, Byzantine, Islamic civilizations, were never isolated to such an extent that they could be considered independent of each other. In this context, the concept of civilization as a network of broad, supra-local connections and relations, which overcome space and are preserved for a long time even in the event of the disintegration and disappearance of the ideological and symbolic core of the civilizational system, first formulated in the works of French historians of the Annales school and some American researchers (R. Maxwell, D. Wilkinson), acquires a new and promising meaning - cognitive and scientific-practical - acquires [2:108-109].

The communicative-network approach to the nature of civilizations embedded in this concept - civilization as not only a special and fundamentally unified system of socio-cultural regulation, but also an open system of internal and external sustainable

communications, information exchange, expands the meaning and significance of the concept of dialogue of civilizations. These are no longer simple acts, processes of successful communication of representatives of individual original cultural-civilizational worlds, but a more or less stable and long-term system of intercultural communications.

But the communicative profile of civilization-networks expresses only the general principle and potential of organizing, consolidating civilizational dialogue. In order for dialogue to acquire the meaning of a special and extended in time and space mechanism for drawing together huge and diverse conglomerates of the population into a stable system of intercultural connections and relations, mixing and mutual cultural adaptation of the participants in the dialogue are necessary. At least a minimal but constant presence of this condition is expressed by the term “symbiosis of cultures” – the interaction of cultures, socio-cultural formations, that are heterogeneous in their origin and characteristics, as a result of which native and borrowed elements of cultures interact without losing their autonomy and independence in the general network of intercultural connections and relationships.

The civilizational potential of a long-term symbiosis of different cultures is demonstrated by the history of the Mediterranean. The influence of various cultures was absorbed by almost all the ancient civilizations of this region: Sumerian, Egyptian, Phoenician. Undoubtedly, the Roman Empire gave civilizational integrity to the development of the ancient cultures of the region. However, even after its collapse, a stable and significant network of interaction between the countries and peoples of the Mediterranean basin was preserved, creating an organic civilizational fusion of Greco-Roman and Eastern traditions, Asian and European mutual influences - a special Mediterranean civilization [4:281-292]. The tradition of symbiosis of Mediterranean cultures was continued in the Middle Ages by Byzantium in the east of Europe and Muslim Spain (al-Andalus) in the south and west of the European continent.

### Experience of “symbiosis” of cultures in Central Asia

Understanding the development of civilization, the civilizational community of different cultures and peoples as a stable and long-term network of cultural and historical connections and relations is also relevant for the comparative historical study of the countries of Central Asia, explaining the prospects for their development as a regional socio-cultural system that goes far beyond the division of the region’s territory by nationality. The significant cultural heterogeneity of the population of Central Asia determines significant differences in the classification of the levels and foundations of its civilizational unity. In some interpretations, Central Asia is considered as an integral and unified regional civilization - “Turkic-Iranian”, “Turanian”, etc., in others - the status of individual civilizations is assigned to the main ethnic, nation-forming communities of the region: Uzbek, Turkmen, Tajik. But Central Asia can also be presented as a characteristic, exemplary example of a network-type civilization with enormous historical experience, living and developing traditions of symbiosis of world civilizations [6]. Situated between the cultural areas of Western and Eastern Asia, the countries of Central Asia have for many

centuries actively adopted the best achievements of the cultures of these regions, including forms of religion, aesthetic universals, and architectural examples. The civilizational uniqueness of the region cannot be imagined without the spatial-network axis of regional cultural-historical interactions – the Great Silk Road, which passed through the territory of Central Asia, connecting China and Europe and playing an important role as an integrator and transformer of the cultures of the East and West. The deep historical foundations are also obvious – the roots of the symbiosis of the cultures of the peoples of Central Asia: a strong connection under the control of centralized political and military power of the cultures of nomads and sedentary farmers.

Being a systemic condition for the development of network civilizations, the connection of cultures of different origin and character in a communications network does not determine the prospects for preserving these networks as a factor in overcoming local-ethnic and national-state interests and values. In the logic of their own development, networks can expand and contract, change the degree of their intensity, changing the nature and integrative potential of cultural symbiosis. European and world history are full of examples of such a connection of heterogeneous cultures, when the result was not the expansion of intercultural exchange, but the breakdown and limitation of intercultural interactions. For example, one cannot deny the important contribution to the development of Western European civilization from the end of the 8th to the end of the 11th century by the inhabitants of Scandinavia - the Vikings, who created a wide network of maritime cross-border connections thanks to the successes of their sea expeditions. Here we have the transformation of England into part of Europe, and the promotion of the acceleration of the political consolidation of medieval European states, and the long-term flourishing of Scandinavian culture. However, it is impossible to speak of the existence or formation of a special Scandinavian (Norman) civilization. The Vikings opposed Christianity and its transborder cultural and civilizational influence, while for the European public of that time, in particular for European chroniclers, the dialogue with the Normans did not have much significance due to the persistent perception of them as fierce and bloodthirsty warriors.

## Discussion

For the broad and successful development of civilizational dialogue in the macrohistorical perspective, including the preservation and expansion of network civilizations, it is necessary not only to have intensive intercultural exchange, but also to transform the interaction and mutual influence of different cultures into a sustainable socio-cultural and cultural-legal order, including the rejection of cultural and legal discrimination against individual socio-cultural and cultural-linguistic groups; awareness of the common human history and destiny of peoples and countries linked by long-term and sustainable historical ties and relations; consolidation of the human-centered symbiosis of cultures in public policy and international relations [1]. The history of the peoples and countries of Central Asia contains a vast and unique experience of such an organic and

human-dimensional cultural symbiosis. Great historical prospects for its development were opened by the symbiosis of religions rooted in the cultural heritage of the region, affirming the ideas and values of the highest spiritual-moral and metaphysical order: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism. Cultural symbiosis acquired new foundations during the Soviet period. Russification of the Soviet republics of Central Asia - the rapid spread of the Russian language did not cause hostility or discontent on the part of the majority of the indigenous population of Central Asia and in the mass consciousness of the peoples of the region was associated with a high level of education and culture, the opportunity to occupy a higher position in society without rejecting traditional values and norms of behavior [9]. Mastering the Russian language did not mean losing one's own cultural identity. The Sovietization of the region, which included the violent suppression of traditionalist Islamic movements, forced collectivization of agriculture, and blind obedience to the Center, did not, on the whole, affect the stability and tolerance of interethnic relations. A balance was established between centuries-old tradition and Soviet modernization reforms. The collapse of the Soviet Union did not cause oppression of Russian-speaking groups and did not lead to significant changes in the ethnic structure of the population.

## Conclusion

Today, maintaining and developing the dialogue between the Central Asian countries and Russia not only in the field of politics and economics, but also in the humanitarian sphere: science, art, cultural tourism, and protection of intellectual property, is of strategic importance for the successful integration of the region. Humanitarian cooperation with the CIS countries has been and remains one of the priorities of the international and regional policy of the Russian Federation, as well as ensuring the stability and security of the post-Soviet information and communication space, which is addressed in the concept of the national security strategy of the Russian Federation for 2021. One cannot fail to take into account the serious challenges to the development of a stable partnership between Russia and the post-Soviet countries of Central Asia. At the global – geopolitical and geocultural level, these challenges are caused by the intensifying competition between the leading world players for influence in the post-Soviet space and on the Eurasian continent as a whole. The historical experience of Russia's interaction with the countries of Central Asia and its extensive ties and relations with the states of the region allow Russia to successfully compete for a leading position in the region. However, taking into account the prospect of increasing competition in the region of the leading world powers and their associations: Russia, China, the United States, the European Union, it is necessary to recognize that maintaining Russia's leading position will hardly be possible without emphasizing the cultural and civilizational advantages of cooperation between the Central Asian countries and Russia. This is a common culture of international and interpersonal communication, a "civilization of meetings" that brings together and unites our peoples and states in difficult times of the breakdown of the world order.

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