

# Central Asia and China: Main Aspects and Directions of Interaction in Modern Realities

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**Abstract.** The article attempts to determine the significance for China of intensifying its relations with the countries of the Central Asian region, primarily those bordering it – with Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. For the countries of Central Asia, cooperation with China is essential for their development. The author comes to the conclusion that the priorities of China's policy in Central Asia are the support of stability, security, as well as the access on a mutually beneficial basis to Central Asian energy resources and the further development of economic ties. In the sphere of economic cooperation, the investment activity of China in the region is considered. The cultural and humanitarian aspect of cooperation between the countries of Central Asia and China is also highlighted: this is the cooperation of regions, educational institutions, the media, art groups, interaction in the field of science, technology, medicine, tourism, etc.

**Keywords:** People's Republic of China, Central Asia, Russian Federation, international relations, regional security, economic cooperation, investment activity, cultural and humanitarian relations

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## Introduction

The material presented in the article and its analysis suggest that since gaining independence, the countries of Central Asia have been developing cooperation with a number of countries near and far abroad, but among them the People's Republic of China occupies a special place. This country is today one of the leading partners for the countries of the region, which is explained both by its role on the world stage as one of the leading powers, and by the fact that it is the only country in the world with which relations with the peoples of modern Central Asia cover a huge time historical period. For the first time, we comprehensively consider the main directions of relations between the countries of Central Asia and China, which have developed recently in terms of the interests of each of the countries.

Since the first years of gaining independence, the main direction of the foreign policy of the Central Asian states has been the development of dynamic mutually beneficial cooperation with a number of foreign countries. Among them, China has become a unique foreign policy partner. This is explained by several factors.

1. It is one of the leading world powers that has made a significant leap in its development in a short period of time. If in 1992 the share of China in the world total GDP was only 1.71%, and in the list of developed economies of the world the country occupied the 10th place, then already in 2018 the share of China in the global GDP was 15.86% (in nominal terms), and China became the second largest economy in the world after the United States, pushing Japan to third place and ahead of it by 10%.

2. China is the only non-CIS state with which three of the five countries in the region – Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan – share a common border of about 3,300 kilometers. This factor plays a decisive role in the processes of strengthening relations in all spheres: diplomatic, political, socio-economic, cultural, etc.

3. China is the only country whose relations with the peoples of modern Central Asia cover a vast period of the historical past. In various historical sources, starting from the era of antiquity, one can find many examples that testify to the extensive contacts with China of the peoples living in the Central Asian region.

All this actualizes the topic of the study, substantiates the importance and necessity of expanding cooperation between the countries of Central Asia and China. In this regard, the purpose of our study is to analyze the main directions of the relationship of the countries under consideration in order to determine among them the most optimal and mutually beneficial for all cooperation partners.

## Materials and Methods

The material of the study was statistical data characterizing the dynamics of economic cooperation between the countries of Central Asia and China over thirty years of diplomatic relations, articles by Russian and Chinese experts that characterize these countries, as well as the level and direction of their relationship.

Based on a systematic analysis of the identified data, the cooperation of the states under consideration was characterized. The historical-comparative method made it possible to reflect the degree of participation and direction of individual states of the region in relations with China. With the help of the historical-genetic method, the main stages and dynamics of the relationships of the peoples living in the territory of Central Asia and China in various historical eras were analyzed.

## Results

Relations between the peoples of the Central Asian region have a long history. So, the most ancient Central Asian people, about which the first mentions were found in Chinese historical sources, dating back to the end of the third century BC, are the Kyrgyz. These sources say that the state of the Kyrgyz “Possession Gegun” as an independent ethnoterritorial formation, arose at the end of the 1st millennium BC (12:133).

In the 2nd century BC, on a vast territory stretching from present-day South-Eastern Kazakhstan and Northern Kyrgyzstan up to the adjoining Tien Shan parts of East Turkestan, the state of the Usuns arose<sup>1</sup>. With this state, assessing its military power and the strong power of the rulers, China enters into allied relations.

The most important role in the development of relations between China and the peoples of Central Asia was undoubtedly played by the Great Silk Road, on which cities and entire civilizations arose and flourished. This trade route was a grandiose trade route connecting East and West. It was he who became an important factor that contributed to the development of trade relations in the region, and the peoples of Central Asia first learned about various types of crafts, about sericulture. As S. Pogodin and Zhou Jun figuratively remark:

the network of routes of the Great Silk Road served as an artery through which there was an exchange of religious teachings, works of art, science, languages and technological achievements. Many elements of civilization turned out to be participants in the exchange within the Great Silk Road, along with commercial goods that merchants carried from country to country (2).

The high level of agriculture and other elements of Chinese civilization accelerated the development of productive forces, the formation of various forms of statehood among local peoples<sup>2</sup>.

In the Middle Ages, the Kyrgyz established direct diplomatic relations with the Chinese Tang Empire. The Tang Shu (History of the Tang Dynasty) states that diplomatic relations between the Kyrgyz and China received a new impetus in the early Middle Ages. Thus, in 648, a Kyrgyz embassy was sent to China (1:354–355). Later, in 650–683, two embassies were sent (9:241).

The history of relations between the peoples of Central Asia and China in the era of modern and recent times is divided into two large periods, each of which is about a hundred years old. This is the second half of the 18th - the first half of the 19th centuries (first period) and the second half of the 19th century until 1991 (second period) (4).

As the researchers note, if the first period is characterized by a relatively independent

<sup>1</sup> Chorotegin Tynchtykbek. The ancient state of the Usuns in Tengir-Too. Available from: [http://kghistory.akipress.org/unews/un\\_post:1558](http://kghistory.akipress.org/unews/un_post:1558).

<sup>2</sup> Central Asia in International Relations: History and Modernity. Available from: [artiklktz.com/artikle/5106](http://artiklktz.com/artikle/5106)

foreign policy of the peoples of the region towards China, then the second, Soviet stage, is characterized by a complete lack of independence in domestic and foreign policy (3:25). During the Soviet Union, relations between the union republics and the PRC developed only in line with the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

Truly equal cooperation with the PRC on the basis of independently developed foreign policy priorities began to be developed by the Central Asian states only after gaining independence in 1991. China was among the first countries to recognize the independence of the Central Asian countries. He established diplomatic relations with all five states of the region in the first week of January 1992.

Describing the foreign policy of modern China, experts note that it consistently follows a pragmatic political course based on the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, the development of beneficial economic cooperation and the improvement of its image on the world stage. In its international policy, China is fighting terrorism, extremism and separatism, seeking to ensure that the whole world accepts the concept of «One China»<sup>3</sup>.

The expert I.E.Denisov characterizes China's foreign policy in a peculiar but precise way:

Today we see not only "China saying no", but also "China saying yes", a country not only challenging some of the principles of the existing world order, but also striving to adapt to international rules and making efforts to become part of world system, of course, taking into account their growing interests (2).

The Chinese authorities understand that the successful modernization of the economy and the development of other areas of public life require a long-term peaceful and stable international and regional environment, the maintenance and preservation of which is the basis of the policy of good neighborly relations. According to researcher D. Pashkin, China identifies 4 main aspects in the development of relations with the countries of Central Asia (7).

1. Chinese analysts understand the strategic importance of the Central Asian region and believe that in the future it will also have a significant impact on the development of world events. In economic terms, Central Asia and its surrounding regions will play an increasingly important role, especially as suppliers of energy resources.

2. Central Asia is China's bridge between East and West. China is very interested in ties with Europe, and in order to establish them, China needs to develop transport infrastructure. In this regard, political and economic cooperation is very important for both China and the Central Asian countries.

3. For China, ties with Central Asia are important in connection with the stability and development of Xinjiang. It is from this part of China, namely this region of China and the three countries of Central Asia that have common borders. According to politicians from Beijing, this is precisely why contacts with the countries of the region should be expanded in accordance with the principles of equality and mutual benefit.

<sup>3</sup> Pal Duney. China's influence in Central Asia. Available from: <https://perconcordiam.com/ru/влияние-китая-в-центральной-азии/>

4. China has been connected with the peoples of Central Asia since ancient times, the time of the Great Silk Road. Today, the Great Silk Road can again become the foundation for enhancing cooperation between China and the countries of the region.

Assessing the role and importance of ties with China, one must also keep in mind the fact that a number of leading world powers, as expert Pal Dunei rightly notes,

reduced their commitments to the countries of this region or actually put Central Asia at a lower position in the list of their strategic priorities<sup>4</sup>.

In this situation, China remains the best partner for the Central Asian states.

It should be noted that China's relations with countries directly bordering it are developing most actively. These are primarily Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. For example, the People's Republic of China and Kyrgyzstan are neighboring states that share a long joint border of 1,071.8 km. As political scientist Nur Omarov notes, historically and geographically, the territory of Kyrgyzstan and the western part of the PRC are part of a single political and cultural region, represented by kindred peoples who have similar faiths and related languages. This proximity undoubtedly contributes to the development of political and trade-economic relations (4).

The importance of China's relations with the bordering Central Asian states is also determined by the need to ensure regional security and stability, as a result of which the interaction of countries is effectively developing at the bilateral and multilateral levels – within the framework of the United Nations, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Of particular note is the cooperation of countries within the framework of the SCO. From an organization that was originally created to resolve purely border issues, including the demilitarization of the border between China, Russia and the three Central Asian countries that have a common border with the PRC, an organization was created whose goal is not only to resolve border issues, but also to develop economic, political and cultural ties, coordination of efforts in the fight against terrorism. Assessing the activities of the SCO at the present stage, the President of the Russian-Chinese Analytical Center Sergey Sanakoev notes:

The creation of this organization was greeted with skepticism - they said that the organization was not viable, that it would not take place. But 20 years have passed, and we see a completely different result. There is a striking all-round development of the SCO: at the level of interaction between the heads of member states, governments, ministries and departments. During this period, the organization has grown. Initially, in addition to Russia and China, this included Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Now India and Pakistan have joined them, while Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, Mongolia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia and others remain

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4 Ibid.

observers and dialogue partners. In fact, today the SCO is a weighty influential organization that has covered more than half of the world's population<sup>5</sup>.

In order to counter the “three evil forces”, drug smuggling, illegal immigration and cross-border crime, a Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure was created, meetings of the heads of security agencies, defense ministers and prosecutors general of the SCO member states are held regularly.

Using Chinese funds, a border outpost for Tajik soldiers was built several years ago near Tajikistan's borders with Afghanistan and China. In 2016, the governments of Tajikistan and China agreed to build seven border outposts and training centers along the Tajik-Afghan border, and a number of training centers and command posts were built. In addition, China today manufactures and exports military equipment to the countries of Central Asia, as well as providing military technology assistance (11).

Recently, the Chinese partners have also been striving to bring the SCO to a high level of economic cooperation. In this regard, the agenda of the SCO has expanded: issues of economic infrastructures, issues of tariffs, and trade promotion are being addressed. Expert Sergei Sanakoev notes good economic indicators among the achievements of the SCO:

The trade turnover between the members of the association has grown almost 100 times, reaching \$6.6 trillion. It can also be said that, in aggregate, the gross domestic product of the member countries of the organization has grown 13 times during this time. This is a colossal trading volume and excellent dynamics<sup>6</sup>.

The expert's opinion is not unfounded. Indeed, in the first two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, China pursued a cautious policy in the region aimed at resolving security issues, resolving border disputes and developing trade ties. However, since 2010, the role of China in Central Asia has been seriously transformed due to the fact that the rapid growth of the economy at the beginning of the 21st century increased China's needs for resources, markets for goods, and expanded the possibilities of its economic cooperation with the countries of Central Asia.

Today, we can say with full confidence that for the countries of the Central Asian region, the People's Republic of China is one of the leading partners.

China is the largest investor and creditor of the Central Asian countries. China's cumulative direct investment in Central Asia is \$14.7 billion in 2018, according to the PRC Ministry of Commerce. China is investing heavily in Central Asia as part of its “One Belt – One Road” Initiative<sup>7</sup>.

5 Uzbekistan as a Central Force in the SCO: What Challenges Await This Union. Available from: <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20210615/uzbekistan-kak-tsentralnaya-sila-v-shos-kakie-ispytaniya-jdut-etot-soyuz-19252104.html>

6 Ibid.

7 “One belt – one way” – to Open the Way for Mutual Gain. Available from: <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cerus/rus/zgxw/t1846717.htm>.

The One Belt, One Road Initiative, announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, is a large-scale initiative to expand China's economic ties with Central Asia, Russia, and Central and Eastern Europe. Today, the One Belt One Road can be described as a flexible mechanism with a strong focus on projects that promote development in the infrastructure construction, energy and transport sectors.

As of December 23, 2021, 138 countries and 31 international organizations have already signed 203 cooperation documents with China under this project<sup>8</sup>. As the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Russian Federation Zhang Hanhui noted:

Without a doubt, the Belt and Road Initiative has become the world's largest platform for business cooperation and the most popular emerging international public product to date<sup>9</sup>.

According to the American Enterprise Institute (data as of 2021), over seven years, the countries of Central Asia have received more than \$21 billion of investments under the "One Belt – One Road" initiative (out of \$56 billion in total), mainly for the development of infrastructure and energy. Investments from China have been especially important for the economies of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, where their total amount is now almost 20% of GDP<sup>10</sup>.

A number of strategically significant cooperation projects have been implemented, such as the China-Central Asia gas pipeline, the China-Kazakhstan oil pipeline, the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan highway, the China-Tajikistan highway. A series of joint projects was launched in the fields of agriculture, water management, electricity, textiles, engineering and manufacturing industries<sup>11</sup>.

In general, over 30 years, the volume of Chinese investments in Central Asia, starting almost from zero, has reached \$40 billion. China has become one of the largest trade and investment partners of the Central Asian countries<sup>12</sup>.

In recent years, China's investment activity in Uzbekistan has been especially high, related to industry, transport, telecommunications, pharmacology, agriculture and water management. Chinese companies are participating in the creation of joint high-tech industrial parks in Uzbekistan. Chinese investments in the economy of Uzbekistan reached \$9 billion by the end of 2021.

The leading country in terms of attracting Chinese investment to Central Asia is Kazakhstan. According to the Monitoring of Chinese Investments in the World, the total volume of Chinese investments and contracts in Kazakhstan under the Belt and Road

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 How will China's Trade Relations With Central Asian Countries Develop? Available from: [https://forbes.kz//finances/markets/kak\\_budut\\_razvivatsya\\_torgovye\\_otnosheniya\\_kitaya\\_sostranami\\_tsentralnoy\\_azii/](https://forbes.kz//finances/markets/kak_budut_razvivatsya_torgovye_otnosheniya_kitaya_sostranami_tsentralnoy_azii/)

11 China and Central Asia: Post-Soviet Rise. Available from: [http://kz.chineseembassy.org/rus/sxxx/sqdt/202112/t20211231\\_10478095.htm](http://kz.chineseembassy.org/rus/sxxx/sqdt/202112/t20211231_10478095.htm)

12 Ibid.



Initiative (from 2013 to 2020) amounted to \$18.69 billion. More than half of this amount, \$9.53 billion, went to the energy sector, \$3.81 billion to the transport sector, \$2.65 billion to the chemical industry and \$1.91 billion to metallurgy<sup>13</sup>.

A lot of joint ventures with the participation of Chinese shareholders have been created in the country. The main player is the world's third largest oil company China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), which has assets and interests in more than 30 countries around the world. In 1997, CNPC acquired a stake in the Kazakh company Aktobemunaigas and now owns 85.42% of the company's shares. In addition, CNPC is participating in the construction of two oil pipelines (one of them is Kazakhstan-China), as well as in the construction of the Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline (11:12).

Considerable investments were directed by China to the economy of Kyrgyzstan. In addition to loans and direct investment, China has provided more than \$300 million in gratuitous aid to build roads and supply drinking water to remote areas (11:20).

About 400 Chinese companies and 170 Sino-Kyrgyz joint ventures operated in Kyrgyzstan in 2019<sup>14</sup>. According to official data, the volume of Chinese investments is 33% of the total volume of direct investments in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>15</sup>

Compared to other countries, China's investment activity in Tajikistan was smaller. Thus, according to the Monitoring of Chinese Investments in the World, the only Chinese investment in Tajikistan since the announcement of the "One Belt – One Road" initiative is \$540 million invested in the metallurgical sector in 2019. However, some local sources of information believe that the total volume of Chinese investments in Tajikistan is \$2.03 billion. There are more than 300 companies with Chinese capital registered in Tajikistan. Most investments are directed to energy, textile industry, mines and quarries, agriculture and oil refining.<sup>16</sup>

Chinese projects were implemented in Central Asia even during the coronavirus pandemic. Here are just a few of them:

- State oil companies of Kazakhstan and China have established a joint venture in the south of Kazakhstan for the production of steel pipes for the transportation of oil, gas, water and oil products;
- With the support of one of the largest state-owned Chinese conglomerates, China Oil and Foodstuffs Corporation, a large flour mill was modernized in Dushanbe, capable of processing 400 tons of wheat per day;
- In April 2020, three 60-meter turbine blades intended for the 100 MW Zhanatas wind farm crossed the Kazakh border at Khorog. Zhanatas is the largest wind energy

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> The struggle for Investment and Gray Imports: Kyrgyzstan-China relations. Available from: <https://eurasia.expert/investitsii-i-seryy-import-otnosheniya-kyrgyzstana-i-kitaya/>

<sup>15</sup> 33 Percent of Direct Investments in Kyrgyzstan are Attracted from China. Available from: [https://24.kg/ekonomika/143108\\_33protsenta\\_pryamyih\\_investitsiy\\_vkyrgyzstan\\_privlekayut\\_izkitaya/](https://24.kg/ekonomika/143108_33protsenta_pryamyih_investitsiy_vkyrgyzstan_privlekayut_izkitaya/)

<sup>16</sup> Is China Moving from Economic Expansion to Military-political? Available from: <https://knews.kg/2019/08/16/kitaj-ot-ekonomicheskoy-ekspansii-v-tadzhikistane-perehodit-k-voenno-politicheskoy/>



project in Central Asia and is being developed by the State Energy Investment Corporation of China. The first phase of the project was put into operation in the summer of 2019<sup>17</sup>.

A vivid indicator of the growth of China's relations with the countries of Central Asia was the dynamics and level of trade, which over 30 years has grown from hundreds of millions of dollars to tens of billions of dollars. China today represents the largest market for the main export commodities of the Central Asian countries (oil, natural gas, uranium and non-ferrous metals). For example, China accounts for more than 2/3 of gas exports from Turkmenistan and more than half of uranium exports from Kazakhstan<sup>18</sup>.

If China's plans to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, which implies an increase in gas consumption, at least in the medium term, come true, then the volume of gas imports will continue to grow, and this will positively affect the economy of Turkmenistan and, to a lesser extent, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Since Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan do not share a common border with China, the gas is likely to flow through the territories of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which will also support the economies of these countries.

However, none of the Central Asian states is among the main importing partners of China, only Kazakhstan occupies the 39th position. China is the largest (for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) or the second largest (for Kazakhstan) importing partner for the countries of Central Asia. The situation is similar with exports - the largest regional partner-exporter of China - Kazakhstan - occupies the 36th line. At the same time, China is the largest (for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) or the second largest (for Kazakhstan) exporting partner.

Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus pandemic, trade between China and Central Asia in 2020 has significantly decreased: by 47% with Kyrgyzstan, about 20% with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>19</sup> The volume of cargo transportation between China and Kyrgyzstan decreased tenfold<sup>20</sup>. However, at an online summit dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the countries of Central Asia, the Chinese side announced its desire to increase trade, bringing it to \$70 billion by 2030, to provide the Central Asian states with \$500 million in the next 3 years in the form of gratuitous assistance for the implementation of socially significant projects and 5 thousand quotas for advanced training of specialists in a number of areas<sup>21</sup>.

During the 30 years of cooperation between the countries of Central Asia and China, special attention was also paid to the cultural and humanitarian aspect. Its mechanisms are being improved; intensive ties are maintained between the regions, educational institutions, the media and art groups. Cooperation in the field of science and technology, medicine and tourism is gaining momentum. Cooperation is

17 China in Central Asia: Humanitarian Aid and Trade. Available from: <https://russian.eurasianet.org/>

18 Dankov A. Dossier: China's Strategy in Central Asia. Available from: <https://eurasia.expert/dose-strategiya-kitaya-v-tsentralnoy-azii/>

19 China in Central Asia: Humanitarian Aid and Trade. Available from: [a:https://russian.eurasianet.org/](https://russian.eurasianet.org/)

20 Not Only in Economic Terms. China's Ambitions in Central Asia. Available from: <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/31254979.html>

21 Overview: Relations Between China and Central Asian Countries have Entered a New Era. Available from: [http://russian.news.cn/2022-01/27/c\\_1310443680.htm](http://russian.news.cn/2022-01/27/c_1310443680.htm)

developing in the areas of academic exchanges, joint scientific activities, translation of literary works, and film screenings. The popularity of China and the Chinese language in the states of Central Asia is growing. More and more representatives of the younger generation from Central Asia come to China to study or do business. Confucius Institutes and Sinology classes have opened and are fruitfully functioning in the region (there are 37 of them in Central Asia in total). Thus, in Kazakhstan, 14,000 students study at five Confucius Institutes; in Uzbekistan, the oldest Confucius Institute in the region at the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies annually admits 1,500 students. There are 4 Confucius Institutes and 21 Confucius classes in Kyrgyzstan, more than 5,000 Kyrgyz students study in China<sup>22</sup>.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Chinese language is taught in the seven largest universities of the country, in addition, there are 65 Chinese language courses<sup>23</sup>.

The Chinese Ministry of Education and the Office of the International Chinese Language Council provide grants to those who wish to receive higher education in the PRC. In 2010–2018, more than 5,000 study grants were issued to applicants from Central Asia, and the number of students from Central Asian countries receiving education in China reached almost 30,000 in 2017<sup>24</sup>. In turn, many universities in China study the official languages of the Central Asian countries.

Undoubtedly, as in any dynamically developing processes, there are many problems in the relations between the countries of Central Asia and China. Thus, the Chinese authorities are concerned about the revival of Islam in the region, which, they believe, has an impact on the population of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

As you know, Islam is the dominant religion in Xinjiang. Due to ethnic, cultural, religious factors, the inhabitants of the region are similar to the inhabitants of the countries of Central Asia, as a result of which there are conditions for the inhabitants of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China and the countries of Central Asia to establish good relations. However, according to official Beijing, the processes of Islamic revival in Central Asia can contribute to the spread of Islamic extremist ideology in Xinjiang<sup>25</sup>.

On the other hand, according to Chinese analysts themselves, for example, an expert from the Institute of Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Zhang Ning,

although extremism poses a threat to the countries of the region, but at the same time it is also one of the factors contributing to the strengthening of cooperation and mutual trust both

22 Interview of the Chinese Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Ms. Du Deven, to the OTRK TV channel. 2019r. Available from: <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cekg//rus/ggwj/t1790706.htm>

23 Chinese in Kyrgyzstan: There is a Demand. Available from: [https://24.kg/obschestvo/49864\\_kitayskiy\\_yazyik\\_vkyrgyzystane\\_est\\_spros/](https://24.kg/obschestvo/49864_kitayskiy_yazyik_vkyrgyzystane_est_spros/)

24 Ibid.

25 Xianyun M. Analysis of the Influence of the Islamic Renaissance in the Central Asia States

on security in China's Xinjiang. Problems of the Post-Soviet Space. 2018;5(1):108-115. DOI: 10.24975/2313-8920-2018-5-1-108-115.

between the countries of Central Asia themselves, as well as between China and the republics of the region<sup>26</sup>.

The imprint on the relations between the countries is also left by various political upheavals, the change of authorities that are taking place in the Central Asian region.

In addition, China's policy in the region is influenced by the activity of another strategic partner – the Russian Federation. Due to the common historical destinies, geographical proximity, socio-cultural proximity, relations between Russia and the countries of Central Asia are actively developing in almost all areas. Russia is connected with the states of the region by a number of integration institutions, including the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union (formerly the Customs Union), and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

However, on the other hand, as even Russian experts emphasize, for example, V. Paramonov:

relations between China and the region, although deeply rooted in the past, have been developing more dynamically in the last two decades than Russian-Central Asian relations<sup>27</sup>.

Under these conditions, both China and Russia show their readiness to coordinate efforts in the region, primarily in the areas of politics and security, which is in the interests of the two countries. At the same time, China has been very active in the economic sphere in recent years.

Analyzing China's position in relations with Russia, Russian expert V. Paramonov clearly noted that:

Beijing is still trying to coordinate its policy in the region with Moscow, recognizing its special role in Central Asia, which, by the way, largely explains many of China's successes and achievements. The Russian Federation continues to support or, at least, not actively restrain the process of China's consolidation in Central Asia. First of all, this concerns those areas where China's interests do not contradict Russia's interests, and in some cases even complement them, for example, in the spheres of politics and security, in the context of countering the penetration of radical Islamism into the region, limiting the influence of the United States and NATO<sup>28</sup>.

## Discussion

When analyzing the nature of cooperation between China and the Central Asian countries, it must be taken into account that the main interests of China in Central Asia are

<sup>26</sup> Central Asia and Countering Extremism: A View from China. Available from: <https://www.caa-network.org/archives/19683>.

<sup>27</sup> Paramonov V. Russia and China in Central Asia: a Conceptual aspect. Available from: [https://www.imemo.ru/files/File/magazines/rossia\\_i\\_novay/2018\\_04/16.Paramonov.pdf](https://www.imemo.ru/files/File/magazines/rossia_i_novay/2018_04/16.Paramonov.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

to ensure security and maintain stability in the region. That is why China is ready to invest in the economies of the countries of the region.

One of the strategic partners of the Central Asian countries is also Russia, with which China seeks to avoid competition in the region. The Chinese authorities view Russia not so much as a rival, but as a partner in order to prevent the strengthening of the West's position in the region.

## Conclusion

The material of the article allows us to state that 1. the growing economic power of China turns it into a partner whose experience and activities are of particular interest, 2. the One Belt and One Road initiative implemented by China generally meets the needs of the economic development of the countries of Central Asia and provides them with effective assistance in their crisis situations, 3. China and the countries of Central Asia do not have acute conflict situations or unresolved problems, 4. traditional good neighborliness, trust and friendship between peoples cannot be excluded from our lives; cultural exchange, ties in the field of education, science, art, science, engineering and technology are important for countries.

Despite some problems that exist today in Sino-Central Asian relations, China's strategy towards the countries of Central Asia is a consistent policy of developing economic cooperation and maintaining political stability in the region through mutual cooperation. The countries of Central Asia adhere to the same principle.

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