

REGIONAL SECURITY

METHODS OF ENSURING NATIONAL SECURITY OF CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES UNDER NEW GEOPOLITICAL CONDITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Vital interests of the Shanghai Five are concentrated in the post-Soviet countries, including Central Asia. The article substantiates the need to work out an SCO foreign policy strategy in regard to the post-Soviet space, which is based on national interests.

A conclusion is made that national interests and a specific strategy in regard to the post-Soviet space need to be recorded in the SCO doctrinal documents. National interests of the Central Asian countries are

based on permanent, rather than immediate, applied or institutional goals.

The article also examines certain problems and peculiarities of religious extremism, and religious terrorism as its extreme form. Special attention is heeded to the formulation of characteristic features of a partnership as a special and independent format of international relations. In conclusion, the author points to the manifestation of global tendencies in regard to state sovereignty and security as the research aim.

KEYWORDS: state, security, Central Asia, drug trafficking, destabilization processes, national interests, struggle, independent states, energy resources, threat.

Introduction

One of the key security maintenance centers in the post-Soviet space is the Central Asian region, one that is extremely heterogeneous in the political, social and economic regard, which largely complicates the process of ensuring its regional stability. The interweaving of interests and the struggle for influence in Central Asia set off the interests of many countries against each other, give rise to the competition between the leading states that have geopolitical and geo-economic interests in the region. It is precisely the struggle for energy resources and control over the region's communications that may create the premises for the transformation of Central Eurasia into one of the crisis areas of world politics in the coming years and make the military threats posed to the national security of new states, along with existing non-traditional threats.¹

Following the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. and the formation of new independent states, changes have occurred, as the result of which the Central Asian region began playing a key role in the Eurasian geopolitical system. Currently, Central Asia is considered a place of collision of geopolitical interests of such superpowers as Russia, the U.S., and China.² The resolution of regional security issues, which affects the countries' political and economic development, is also of interest to the so-called Central Asian Great Game. The general idea is that Central Asia is a buffer for all the negative processes occurring in the Middle East. The Central Asian countries are currently capable of generating threats and challenges in Eurasia that may have long-standing consequences. The processes and events of the early 1990s that followed the war which broke out in Tajikistan, serve as an example.

¹ See: A.N. Makhmadov, *Bezopasnost i nekotorye interesy Tadzhikistana. Materialy respublikanskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii*, Irfon, Dushanbe, 2009, p. 23.

² See: S. Ryazantsev, R. Manshin, Z. Vazirov, M. Karimov, "China's Influence on the Social and Economic Development of the Central Asian States: Methods and Consequences," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, 2018, pp. 18-25.

The Development of Collective Security Mechanisms in Central Asia

With the goal of ensuring military security in the post-Soviet space, in 2002, the Collective Security Treaty Organization was established based on the Collective Security Treaty (CST) signed on 15 May, 1992. This military and political union comprises the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Armenia. This organization does not only ensure the military security of the CIS countries, its functions also include combatting terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal migration, transnational organized crime, the collective reaction to emergencies, humanitarian catastrophes, a wide range of threats in the information sphere and the fight with cybercrime.³ Despite the results attained by this organization, even greater efforts are required to ensure security in the region. Counteracting negative events in the sphere of ensuring security and stability in the region is impeded by economic and political challenges in Russia and Central Asia.

From the point of view of security in Central Asia, the most significant threat is posed by factors like the specifics of the sociopolitical structure with a complicated system of inter-clan relations, the peculiarities of Central Asian states' socioeconomic development, the discord among elites on various issues. The economic crisis that broke out in the Central Asian states immediately after they had acquired independence, provoked and aggravated the situation in regard to the deterioration of regional stability and security situation. The complicated socioeconomic situation in the Central Asian countries is gradually improving, but it is still not sufficiently stable, and is characterized by the poverty of the population and the economy's underdevelopment.⁴

The threats that destabilize the region are, first and foremost, religious extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking. These threats have been recently posing a direct danger to the socioeconomic and political systems of the Central Asian states, and destabilizing the situation in the entire region. These negative tendencies have manifested themselves in futile attempts to overthrow state authorities in Uzbekistan (Andizhan, 2005) and Tajikistan (2015).

Challenges posed by illegal drug trafficking remain some of the most difficult and most important issues in ensuring security not only of Central Asian countries, but of the entire global community. This negative point has a serious impact on the socioeconomic development of the Central Asian region. The situation is associated with the geographic proximity of the Central Asian region to Afghanistan—the major drug manufacturing and distribution center. This country has become the largest drug production center in Eurasia due to the political events of the recent years. Shadow economy of drug trafficking creates major impediments to the development of Afghanistan's national economy in general, and also inhibits the development and maintenance of security in Central Asia.

The aim of the illicit drug trafficking organizers is to extract a profit at any cost, with the masterminds using any means and methods of engaging people in transporting and using illicit drugs. This leads to destructive processes and political and socioeconomic instability in the Central Asian region. This phenomenon has a negative impact on the socioeconomic and demographic development and poses a serious security threat to the Central Asian region. In this context, the issue of security system formation on different levels—not only national or regional, but also global—emerges on the agenda.

³ See: R. Abdulatipov, *Paradoksy suvereniteta*, Slavianskii dialog, Moscow, 1995, 224 pp.

⁴ See: R.M. Masov, *Tadzhiki: istoriia natsionalnoi tragedii*, Irfon, Dushanbe, 2008, 535 pp.

Central Asian countries are facing an urgent goal of creating an organization that would be able to ensure stability in the region, systemically develop and implement measures to maintain national and regional security. A similar attempt was made in 1996, when, as the result of negotiations, the heads of five states—the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Tajikistan—created the Shanghai Five. On 26 April, 1996, they signed an Agreement on Strengthening Confidence in the Military Field in the Border Area. This document allowed the states to begin the coordinated process of preserving stability and assisted in the development of friendly relations between them. Another Agreement, signed in 1997, became the foundation for the modern concept of security, developed by the members of the Shanghai Five. The key principles of the organization are mutual trust, mutually rewarding cooperation, equality and cooperation. The countries of the Shanghai Five that have a common border have also assumed the obligations to take measures to prevent dangerous military activities, strengthen the contacts between military units, border security forces, and not to conduct military maneuvers aimed at each other. Annual president-level meetings of the member countries were conducted, held in Moscow, Beijing, Tashkent, and Dushanbe. The main goals of the Shanghai Five were joint operations against international terrorism, organized crime, drug and weapon trafficking.⁵

Originally, the growing rapport and coordination of activities of the Shanghai Five countries were fueled by the security threat to their border areas posed by Afghanistan—the main source of instability in the Central Asian region. A need gradually arose to expand cooperation. Uzbekistan joined the organization in 2000, and the Shanghai Five transformed into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The incorporation of Uzbekistan was an important step in maintaining regional security, since the country has an important geostrategic position, bordering China. In this manner, the Five became a Six, establishing a legal basis for the modern security system in Central Asia.

Issues of regional security are of an external as well as a domestic nature. In the contemporary context, national security depends not only on the armed forces, but on a whole range of other factors—economic might, competitive industries, level of educational system, people’s prosperity, their attitudes, etc. Among the sources of real security threats for most, if not all countries are: terrorism, proliferation of mass destruction weapons, inter-ethnic and inter-confessional conflicts, environmental degradation, slowing down or a halt of economic growth. Four decades ago, various epidemics and drug trafficking, regardless of the extent of damage they inflicted, could be considered non-political and, thus, not subject to power resolution methods.⁶ Today, the situation has changed and one of the main issues is the creation of an integrated regional security system. The question of this system’s formation emerges along with that of the extent to which it reflects the modern geopolitical system and how it reacts to global processes. It really does pose a certain difficulty, considering the divergence of states’ interests in the region’s political and economic evolution.

“The SCO is advocating for a new security concept, adheres to principles of general security, non-involvement in alliances, non-confrontation, non-directedness against other countries...”⁷

Despite the existence of various inter-regional organizations in Central Asia, only SCO may become the guarantor of regional security in the future.

“Today’s world is already difficult to imagine without SCO,” stated the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon in an interview to the Xinhua agency. He emphasized that through joint efforts on the part of all member countries, SCO is strengthening its position as a guar-

⁵ See: A.N. Makhmadov, *Politicheskoe povedenie: sotsialnye faktory i formy proiavleniia*, DDMT, Dushanbe, 2008, 27 pp.

⁶ See: I.K. Asadulloev, *Tadzhikistan: pogranichnaia zona i ekspansiia podobiia*, Sharki ozod, Dushanbe, 2000, 87 pp.

⁷ See: S. Aslov, *Shankhaiskaia organizatsiia sotrudnichestva segodnia: vzgliad iz Dushanbe*, IMNK, Dushanbe, 2014, 140 pp.

antor of security and stability in the region, gradually transforming into a substantial factor in international politics, into a powerful, promising and responsible partner in Asia. Among the achievements of SCO development and reinforcement, the President of Tajikistan pegged the creation of a real and extensive security and stability zone along the borders of the countries in the region, the formation of a stable basis to attain the Organization's key goals, completion of the process of establishment of the permanently functioning SCO bodies. According to the head of the state, SCO is advocating for a new security concept, adheres to the general security principles, non-involvement in alliances, non-confrontation, and non-directedness against other countries.

Within the Organization's framework, its members are essentially striving for cooperation in the security sphere, rather than a military bloc. "Inter-state relations of a new type are entirely free of the Cold War mentality. This novel security concept became the basis of the Organization's establishment," stated Emomali Rakhmon.⁸

The history of SCO establishment has begun with the signing of two primary documents by the heads of the member states—the Agreement on Strengthening Confidence in the Military Field in the Border Area (26 April, 1996, Shanghai) and the Agreement on Mutual Armed Force Reduction in the Border Area (24 April, 1997, Moscow). This was the starting point for the examination of issues of maintaining regional security.

The Shanghai (1996) and the Moscow summits that followed a year later became the prototypes of the structure that would transform into a full-scale multi-profile cooperation organization six years later. Joint work on the implementation of the above-mentioned agreements served as the primary foundation of the "Shanghai spirit," which includes mutual trust, mutual rewards, equality, respect for the others' interests and opinions, mutual consultations, attainment of mutual understanding through a consensus and voluntary agreement to abide by the negotiated agreements.⁹

The July 1998 Almaty summit of the Five brought an understanding that the in-depth consultations on the issues of regional and Asian security, establishing wide-scale and long-term cooperation in all spheres, including trade, economy, energy resources, as well as joint struggle against ethnic separatism, religious extremism, international terrorism and transnational crime.

The summit of the Shanghai Five that took place on 5 July, 2000 in Dushanbe marked the beginning of the transformation of the Five into a forum for the examination of vital Central Asian issues (security, defense, law enforcement, foreign policy, economy, environmental protection, culture). On 14-15 June, 2001 a meeting of six heads of state (of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) took place in Shanghai, resulting in the announcement of the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a new regional body that declared its goals to be the strengthening of mutual trust, friendship and good-neighborliness among the member states, rewarding and efficient cooperation between them in the political, trade, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, educational, power, transportation, environmental and other spheres, support and maintenance of peace, security and stability in the region. In addition, the Convention on Combatting Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, which had laid the legal foundation for collective counteraction of the threats and challenges common to all of the region's countries, was signed at the Shanghai summit. The SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), which received the status of a permanent SCO body in 2002, was created on the basis of the Convention to improve the interaction in the struggle against terrorism, separatism, extremism, illegal drug and weapon trafficking, as well as illegal migration. The main goals and functions of the RATS are as follows:

⁸ See: "Emomali Rakhmon: ShOS pokazala vsemu miru svoiu sostoiatelnost," available at [<http://khovar.tj/rus/archive/300-emomali-rahmon-shos-pokazala-vsemu-mirusvoyu-sostoyatelnost.html>].

⁹ See: A.N. Makhmadov, *Bezopasnost i nekotorye interesy Tadzhikistana*, p. 23.

- developing propositions and recommendations on the development of cooperation in combatting terrorism, separatism and extremism for corresponding SCO structures and SCO member countries;
- assisting competent authorities of SCO member countries in fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism, in accordance with the Convention's provisions;
- gathering and analyzing the information obtained by RATS from SCO member countries in relation to issues of combatting terrorism, separatism and extremism, forming a RATS database of international terrorist, separatist and other extremist organizations, their structure, leaders and members, other persons involved in these activities, as well as their financing sources and channels;
- assisting in the preparation and conducting anti-terrorist command-and-control and tactical military exercises;
- assisting in the preparation and conducting investigative and other measures in combatting terrorism, separatism and extremism;
- establishing and maintaining work contacts with international organizations engaged in combatting terrorism, separatism and extremism.

RATS is currently the key structure that performs significant tasks in the prioritized directions of counteracting terrorist, separatist and extremist threats. One of the reserves of its activities is the coordination of joint reaction to situations that threaten the stability and security within SCO member states. RATS is actively developing international contacts. The Procedure for the interaction of SCO RATS with states and international intergovernmental organizations (forums) with the observer status at the SCO was adopted in 2008. The RATS Executive Committee has established work contacts with the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the U.N., Anti-Terrorist Center of the CIS, organizations like the CSTO, OSCE, ASEAN, EAG, CARICC, etc.

In recent years, documents that have established a solid foundation for the operation of the SCO RATS, have been negotiated and signed, including:

- Concept of Cooperation between SCO Member Countries in Combatting Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism;
- Program of Cooperation between SCO Member Countries in Combatting Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2010-2012;
- Agreement on Cooperation in Identifying and Blocking the Channels of Entry of the Persons Involved in Terrorist, Separatist and Extremist Activities;
- Agreement on Personnel Training for SCO Member Countries' Antiterrorist Units.

The SCO Convention against Terrorism, signed at the summit of the heads of SCO member states in Ekaterinburg on 16 June, 2009, became a landmark in the development of the regulatory framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in counteracting terrorism. This document establishes the vectors of counteracting terrorism, the forms and methods of combatting it with regard to the provisions of the Global Counterterrorist Strategy of the U.N., U.N. Specialized Conventions, and U.N. Security Council resolutions. Considering the fact that terrorist organizations are currently extensively using information technologies for their purposes, an Agreement between the Governments of SCO Member Countries on Cooperation in the Sphere of Ensuring International Information Security, where the issues of counteracting cyberterrorism are among the key, was signed. SCO RATS heeds close attention to the practical issues in the sphere of counteracting terrorism. For instance, for the purpose of organizing the international search of people involved in terrorist, extrem-

ist and separatist activities in the SCO member states, the Unified Investigation Register of Law Enforcement Agencies and Special Forces of SCO Member Countries is being formed based on the List of Persons Declared Wanted at International Level by Special Services and Law Enforcement Agencies of the SCO Member States For Committing Crimes or On the Suspicion of Committing Crimes of a Terrorist, Separatist or Extremist Character. Due to the fact that cross-border crime is an inalienable component of terrorism and extremism, the mechanism of cooperation between Ministries of Internal Affairs and Public Safety of SCO member countries in counteracting organized cross-border crime was launched within the Organization. For this purpose, the Protocol on Cooperation in Counteracting Cross-border Crime was signed at the Meeting of Ministers of Internal Affairs of SCO member countries on 18 May, 2009. In addition, decisions were made to initiate the creation of the SCO Center on Collection and Analysis of Information on the Illegal Foreign Economic Activities of Physical and Juridical Persons in the SCO-member countries, as well as develop a framework Agreement on Cooperation in Counteracting Crime. In the course of SCO summit in Tashkent (11 June, 2010) this Agreement was signed. The issues of its practical implementation are currently being worked out. One of the directions of cooperation in the anti-terror sphere were regular Defense Ministry-level contacts. In 2002, meetings of Defense Ministers were commenced, and since 2006, these meetings have become annual. In addition, defense agencies are actively cooperating in conducting joint anti-terrorist military exercises. Paramount significance is attached to continued cooperation in harnessing the drug and terrorist threats that emanate from Afghanistan, establishment of “belts of anti-drug security” and their augmentation with “zones of financial security” in order to bring to a halt the transfer of drug trade revenues to financing terrorism.

In this context, joint work in the framework of the SCO member states Agreement on the Cooperation in Counteracting the Illegal Circulation of Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors dated 17 June, 2004, work is being conducted on establishing an efficient structure to counteract these negative events. Efforts are being made to promote the operations of the SCO-Afghanistan group, which aims to foster the mitigation of the situation in Afghanistan and around it. Assistance is being provided to the establishment of the national system of counteracting money laundering and the financing of terrorism in Afghanistan. In accordance with the Decision of the Council of Heads of SCO Member States dated 16 August, 2007, a Group of Experts on International Information Security (IIS) of SCO Member States was established and assigned the task of maintaining coordination and control over the course of the execution of the Plan of the SCO Member States on IIS up until the period of its completion.

Let us note that even with consideration to all the positive points and the existence of numerous signed documents, there is currently a range of issues that require a joint effort in resolving them, especially in promoting a full-fledged integrative process. The main issues in the context of SCO, in particular, are the absence of a unified secure space, which remains fragmented, indistinct and full of internal contradictions, and the lack of a mechanism of crisis situation monitoring, both in the member states, and in intra-organizational interactions.

Thus, considering the threats and challenges to regional security, the following conclusions and proposals on subsequent operations may be made in the SCO context:

1. Considering the lack of readiness of the regional economy to counteract the negative effects of globalization processes, a closer cooperation for the purpose of preserving the region’s sustainable and stable development is required.
2. Getting rid of the raw material orientation of the economies and diversifying them into promising industrial manufacturing, information technology and science-intensive economy sectors.
3. Paying more attention to closer interaction between the state and the mass media for the purpose of protecting the information space, which affects the creation of the state’s positive role.

4. Transforming the education sphere with regard to programs of studying advanced and science-intensive technologies.
5. Conducting a preventive policy aimed at thwarting radical and extremist manifestations.
6. Developing the transport and communications sector, which unifies all SCO member countries.
7. Holding intermediate scientific events aimed at the analysis of the situation in the SCO context within a year.¹⁰

SCO's international authority is determined not only by the potential of its member states, but also by the strategic dialog that goes on within SCO, as well as the membership of two nuclear powers—permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China. These facts pre-determine the key role played by SCO in currently maintaining collective security in both Central Asia and the entire Asia-Pacific region. Issues of security were and remain of key significance in SCO activities. In addition, SCO became the first international structure that appealed to unite efforts in counteracting terrorism, extremism and separatism in Central Asia.¹¹

Due to its geopolitical location, the Republic of Tajikistan also joined this international coalition. The main criterion for Tajikistan's actions is the protection of its own national interests, the paramount one being the preservation of independence.

Key Security Issues in the Central Asian Region

Another serious challenge to security is the growth of extremism and radicalism in the Middle East, while the competition among different terrorist and extremist organizations and groups spreads throughout the world. This creates problems and challenges for Central Asia, Tajikistan included. Islamic State is already actively destroying the existing borders and modern order in Syria, Iraq and the entire Middle East, making their far-reaching plans heard.

This should also be considered in the context of the situation in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of coalition forces and the large number of Tajikistan citizens involved in the Islamic State operations and advocating the spread of these ideas in Central Asia. At a press-conference in Dushanbe, Deputy Director of the Center for Strategic Research Saifullo Safarov remarked: "Challenges to the security of our country are varied, there are both internal and external factors. However, the most tangible threat emanates from misguided young Tajiks who are lured into extremist groups. There are currently hundreds of young citizens of our republic in Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some of our youth remained cut off from school and education during the civil war and after its end. Others are growing up away from their parents, who are forced to work outside of the republic in order to feed their families. Such conditions make it easier for the youth to turn to extremist groups."¹²

The nature of emergence and existence of illegal extremist groups can be explained by the fact that this "group" uses social rhetoric methods; in other words, they criticize the official institutes, sometimes receiving support from dissatisfied low-income population, which is not politically liter-

¹⁰ See: R. Abdulatipov, op. cit.

¹¹ See: M.N. Akmalova, *Stanovlenie i razvitie politicheskoi nezavisimosti Respubliki Tadjikistan*, Noshir, Khujand, 2010, 212 pp.

¹² See: K.S. Gadzhiev, *Geopolitika, Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Moscow, 1997, p. 271.

ate, as well from as the youth from the low-income social strata. According to expert evaluations, the main conflict potential in Central Asia lies in the Ferghana Valley. Various extremist and terrorist groups manifested in Andizhan in 2005, when the Islamists attempted to overthrow legal authorities and establish a Caliphate. A similar situation occurred in Tajikistan in September 2015, when the Islamists, led by the chairman of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, a legal party that acted under the mask of democracy, yet aimed to overthrow the legitimate authorities. According to the Islamists' plan, the overthrow of authorities in Central Asian regions, namely in the Ferghana Valley, would allow to create a Caliphate. The presence of a radical Islamist movement in the countries of the region—Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan—is extremely dangerous for security and stability, and its consequences are important for Eurasia and the entire community. Fortunately, the plans of radicals and extremists have failed in various regions of Central Asia. Threats and challenges associated with the radicalization of religion are moving beyond the borders of regional issues, and efforts of the entire global community, rather than merely of the Central Asian states should be funneled to their resolution.¹³

At the current stage, the manifestation of destabilizing processes that emerge as the result of the political system change is yet another threat to the security of Central Asian states. Immediately after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the newly formed states were not politically powerful.¹⁴ This problem manifested immediately. A civil war ensued in Tajikistan, waves of “colored revolutions” swept through the entire post-Soviet territory and the Central Asian region. The countries in the region faced a complex sociopolitical situation, with a multitude of internal contradictions that destabilize political systems and the situation, and negatively affect regional security. Reinforcement of the Central Asian countries' national security system requires a political modernization of the states, creation of efficient political institutions that satisfy the criteria for stable political systems, acceptance of methods of efficient nation-building and developed civil society.¹⁵

Let us note that the Central Asian states require the development of an efficient dialogue on the resolution of regional problems. Russia, as a long-standing partner throughout history, is assigned an important role of a regional stabilizer. If Russia does not fulfill its historic mission, another player will surely take its place.¹⁶ The strategic partnership between Russia and Central Asian states are established by bilateral strategic partnership agreements. Cooperation priorities have also been determined. However, the determination of priorities is not an exhaustive action; specific actions are required. Resolving socioeconomic and political issues confronted by the Central Asian countries and transforming Central Asia into a developed region require economic measures, investment policies, as well as economic, infrastructural, and employment development programs. In the context of the region's successful development, the risks of spreading terrorism and religious extremism will be lowered, stability and security of these countries will be ensured.

Conclusion

State sovereignty and maintenance of national security in the context of modern global tendencies are complex categories that are determined, on the one hand, by the multi-ethnicity and com-

¹³ See: I.K. Asadulloev, op. cit.

¹⁴ See: I. Karabulatova, S. Ryazantsev, R. Manshin, Z. Vazirov, “Chinese Migration to the Customs Union Countries and Regional Security,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 18, Issue 2, 2017, pp. 57-65.

¹⁵ See: K.S. Gadzhiev, op. cit.

¹⁶ See: S.V. Ryazantsev, I.Ia. Bogdanov, M.N. Khramova, “Prognozirovaniie migratsii v kontekste formirovaniia vneshnei migratsionnoi politiki Rossii,” *Nauchnoe obozrenie*, Series 1, *Ekonomika i pravo*, No. 1, 2017, pp. 5-12.

plexity of state structure, and, on the other hand, the continuing negative trends (economic crises, insufficiently effective political systems, etc.). Issues of state sovereignty and national security are relevant in the ever-changing contemporary world, which is subject to dynamic economic and political changes.

For the purpose of protecting national interests, the most significant requirement set forth by the sides in the course of inter-state conflicts is the creation of conditions for nations' political self-determination, i.e., their obtainment of an independent state status. However, this requirement contradicts the principle of territorial integrity and inviolability of state sovereignty, guaranteed by the U.N. We believe that this contradiction was created artificially, since these concepts do not initially contradict each other, and national self-determination does not always call for political sovereignty. In our opinion, national self-determination through the violation of the state sovereignty principle is a purely political manipulation instrument, and international organizations become the guarantor of this tool's non-application, despite the fact that their political power is currently insufficient for resolving ethnic conflicts. Under extremely complicated geopolitical conditions, where extremism and religious radicalism are spreading throughout the world, joint operations of Central Asian states within SCO and CSTO should be intensified for the purpose of resolving conflicts, combatting religious extremism, terrorism, and protection of national and cultural interests, which will have a significant effect on expanding cooperation, sustainability, peace and stability.

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