

## **US ROLE IN SETTLING ETHNIC TERRITORIAL AND ECOLOGICAL CONFLICTS IN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES**

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### **Abstract**

The independence process of the Central Asian Republics, which has developed within the framework of the discussion, has led to the emergence of new debates during the integration of these countries into the international system. Depending on the reason for developing ecological ethnic conflicts and differences of opinion in the form of experienced application of liberal economic policies to increase its influence in the region and in this context the US on Breaking the Soviet power and overall breaking the Slavic effect up has led to the acceleration of the policy. The study, which aims to add a new perspective to the literature by analyzing the regional dynamics of the USA in terms of dependent and independent variables, after the Cold War Trying to be included in the region within the framework of the new American security doctrine, the process of facing the ethnic and environmental problems inherited by the Soviet Russia process and the policies developed for this will be examined.

**Keywords:** US, Central Asia, Territorial Conflicts, Ethnic Conflicts, Ecological Conflicts.

### **ABD’NİN ORTA ASYA’DAKİ ETNİK, BÖLGESEL VE EKOLOJİK ATIřMALARDAKİ ROLÜ**

### **Öz**

Birçok yeni çerçevesinde gelişen Orta Asya Cumhuriyetlerinin bağımsızlık süreci, bu ülkelerin uluslararası sisteme entegrasyonu sürecinde yeni tartışmaların ortaya çıkmasına yol açmıştır. Ekolojik sebeplere bağılı olarak gelişen etnik çatışmalar ve liberal ekonomi politikalarının uygulanış biçiminde yaşanan fikir ayrılıkları ABD’nin bölgede etkinliğini arttırmasına ve bu bağlamda Sovyetsizleştirme ve genel olarak Slavsızlaştırma politikalarını hızlandırmasına yol açmıştır. Bağımlı ve bağımsız değişkenler özelinde ABD’nin bölgesel dinamiklerini analiz ederek literatüre yeni bir perspektif katmayı amaçlayan çalışma, Soğuk Savaş sonrasında yeni Amerikan güvenlik doktrini çerçevesinde bölgeye dahil olmaya çalışan ABD’nin Sovyet Rusya sürecinden miras kalan bölgesel etnik ve çevresel sorunlar ile yüz yüze kalması süreci ile buna yönelik geliřtirdiđi politikalar irdelenmeye alıřılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Orta Asya, Bölgesel Çatışmalar, Etnik Çatışmalar, Ekolojik Çatışmalar.

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## Introduction

US policy in Central Asia was one of the main factors influencing the formation of the geopolitical situation around and within this region. The evolution of the American approach to determining the role and place of the Central Asian states in the US foreign policy strategy, as well as the means and forms of interaction with them, reflected the importance of this group of countries in the international arena.

The emergence of interest in the Central Asian region in the political and administrative circles of the US of America was due to several factors. The US has become the only superpower and, in a qualitatively new form, has led post-bipolar international relations. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Washington had to change its foreign policy priorities aimed at bipolar confrontation radically.<sup>1</sup> The threat of military intervention faded into the background, and the American politician could concentrate not on the strict policy of military intervention, but the introduction of liberal democratic values in the newly independent states formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This was a good time for a soft American invasion of the post-Soviet republics, which, without a center that supervised and supervised all processes, took place in these states, urgently required external assistance. That is precisely why in the early 1990s, the cooperation of the US with the Central Asian countries was beneficial for all participants in this process.

The US could partially oust Russia from the countries of the region and replace its geopolitical role, while Central Asian states received monetary and institutional assistance. The only condition put forward by the Central Asian states on the part of the US was their nominal admission to the democratic camp and the official proclamation of the relevant values.

In this context, the first chapter was tried to go down to the basis of ethnic conflicts in the Central Asian geography. The "settled and nomadic region" culture existing in Central Asia was shaped by Stalin's policies. Therefore, he questioned the reflections of the border formation strategies that emerged at the end of the Cold War. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Abashin, Sergei. "The Transformation of Ethnic Identity in Central Asia: A Case Study of the Uzbeks and Tajiks", *Russian Regional Perspectives Journal*, C 1, No: 2. 2003, pp. 32-35.

second part, a holistic approach has been studied with three environmental problems. It plans to address the solution strategies that the USA is trying to apply to the disputes between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Finally, in addition to ethnic and ecological problems, the water and energy problem that we encounter is discussed. In this context, the article will examine the policy of the USA towards the region and the strategies it has applied to solve the existing problems.

### **1. Ethno-territorial Conflicts in Central Asia and US Participation**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newly independent states faced the problem of the absence of universally recognized borders between the Central Asian republics, which were created quite artificially as a result of the national-state demarcation of the 1920s. in USSR. The complexity of this situation was exacerbated by the scarcity of land and water resources.<sup>2</sup> All this led to conflicts on socio-economic grounds.

Exploring the problem of the origins of ethno-territorial conflicts, the state borders of the Central Asian republics are incorrectly defined. They were compiled by Soviet cartographers in such a way that the republics were easy to control, and they could not in any way oppose Moscow.<sup>3</sup> As a result, many Kyrgyz settlements ended up on the territory of Uzbekistan, Uzbek, in turn, on the territory of Tajikistan and Tajik in Kyrgyzstan; there were enclaves, semi-enclaves, and exclaves. The borders of Central Asian states were arbitrarily determined by Soviet cartographers in the 1920s -1930s when the corresponding USSR. Boundaries were drawn mainly following the ethnic principle; they also "reflected the Kremlin's interest in maintaining internal differences and, therefore, greater subordination of the southern region of the Russian Empire." The nationalists of Central Asia in 1991 expressed a proposal to unite the different peoples who inhabited the states of the region, most of which still did not have specific national motives and aspirations for independence, into a single political whole. But this idea was rejected, five independent republics were created within the existing

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<sup>2</sup> Mirzohid Rahimov, "From Soviet Republics to Independent Countries: Challenges of Transition in Central Asia", **The Greater Middle East in Global Politics**, Brill Publication, 2007, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> Matteo Fumagalli, "Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia: The Cases of Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan", **Europe-Asia Studies**, C.59, No: 4, 2007, p. 569.

borders.<sup>4</sup> The result of this decision none of the five states of Central Asia was entirely ready for independence, as well as for the development of prospective regional cooperation.

The reasons for the existing interethnic contradictions and conflicts in a region of Central Asia were the historical contradictions that existed since Soviet times. First, the administrative-territorial division of Central Asia, which changed the ethnopolitical map of the region. For example, some territories and cities did not fall into the composition of one or another republic, although ethnic groups considered them historically their own. Also, Central Asian states did not get the opportunity to form a single geopolitical space, and their borders were not determined based on the interests of the nations of the region, but of the interests of an extra-regional and no longer existing state, which is dominant.<sup>5</sup> Despite the general agreement in principle with the old administrative borders, the negotiations on their approval directly reflected how a government determined its national interests, which were often very controversial. Due to disputes over an area of thousands of square kilometers, border issues markedly increased tensions between countries, but at the same time, served as the basis for more comprehensive regional cooperation in the field of economics, security, and ethnic relations. However, it should be noted that the inter-republican borders within the USSR were delimited. Still, after 1991, the relevant documents, for the most part, were considered by the governments of the newly independent states only as temporarily valid until they were confirmed or revised at the appropriate interstate bilateral level.<sup>6</sup>

At the bilateral level, two main types of problems appeared: The first one is mainly administrative-technical, which required the work of conciliation expert commissions on delimitation; Secondly, primarily political, related to the presence of open or latent territorial claims against each other. The largest number of territorial disputes occurred between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, which, in addition to the above

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<sup>4</sup> Steven Sabol, "The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: The 1924 National Delimitation", *Central Asian Survey*, C. 14, No: 2, 2005, pp. 227-228.

<sup>5</sup> Fumagalli, *op. cit.*, p. 571.

<sup>6</sup> Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, New York, II. Bsm. Tauris, 2000, pp. 76-78.

factors, were united by belonging to the Ferghana Valley.<sup>7</sup> It was overpopulated, a high level of Islamization of the population, and many unresolved socio-economic problems. That is why, after the collapse of the USSR, relations between these three countries were distinguished by a high level of conflict potential. Subsequently, the Ferghana Valley, as an integral territorial-geographical entity and economic cluster, began to lose its former qualities and significance in Central Asia. The stage of the disintegration of the group and the subordination of its ethnic parts to the policy of each of the three new Central Asian states neighboring each other began.<sup>8</sup> This was accompanied by an increase in ethnic disunity, contradictions, and conflicts of various orders in the Ferghana Valley.

## **2. Border Disputes and Environmental Struggles in the Region**

Starting cooperation with the countries of the Central Asian region, the US hoped that relations between these states would be stable, good-neighborly, and disputes within the region would be resolved exclusively in the spirit of civilized partnership and mutual understanding. In the early and mid-1990s the border issue has not been raised directly. In the political rhetoric of the countries of the region, the maintenance of the status quo and the desire to avoid interstate conflicts over borders were paramount. The situation changed in 1999 in connection with the Batken events. The armed invasion of gangs into Uzbekistan from Tajikistan through Kyrgyzstan clearly indicated the danger of transparent borders for the national security of Central Asian states. After the events of 1999, "sleeping" border issues became important for relations between the countries of the region. At the same time Batken conflicts of 1999 and 2000 became a catalyst for the activation of the border issue.<sup>9</sup>

The aggravation of the border issue should also be considered in connection with the failure of the integration process of the states of the region. By 1999, it became apparent that disintegration factors (primarily interstate competition in the political

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<sup>7</sup> Nick Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan–Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999–2000", C.23, No: 6, *Political Geography*, 2009, pp. 732-734.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 737.

<sup>9</sup> Rainer Hermann, *Conflict Constellations in Central Asia—Challenges for OSCE*, 2001, pp. 58-60.

and economic spheres) dominate the integration ones.<sup>10</sup> Bilateral economic and political relations were better established with parties outside the region than inside. The virtually transparent administrative borders leftover from the Soviet period gained essential political and geographical significance. At the same time, it became apparent that disintegration factors. Tera in the region was more significant than anticipated. The US has offered governments some recommendations for a prosperous and peaceful resolution to conflicts. It was proposed to stop unilateral demarcations of borders because, in their opinion, all demarcations should have been transparent with the participation of the official commission and consultations with the local population. It was proposed to simplify the visa regime and border crossing procedure, open consulates in the respective border cities or visa centers at border crossings, improve the work of border guards, and take joint measures to combat corruption.<sup>11</sup> According to the US, Uzbekistan should have opened a cartographic archive in Tashkent, which should have been used as a starting point for resolving the territorial conflict of the former republics of the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup> Besides, the countries of the region should attract Russia to use this process archives in Moscow.

Before the end of the period under study, land borders were completely delimited only by Turkmenistan, which signed the corresponding agreements with Uzbekistan in September 2000, and Kazakhstan in July 2001. Kazakhstan also settled the main problems related to the delimitation of borders, resolving most of its disputes with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia. At the same time, the problems of delimitation of borders between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan remained unresolved. There were 58 disputed sections on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and out of 1375 km of borders, only 993 were delimited. Tensions between the three Central Asian republics intensified ethno-territorial conflicts, additional reasons for which were population growth, and a difficult socio-economic situation.<sup>13</sup> In addition,

<sup>10</sup> Philip, Schlesinger. "Changing Spaces of Political Communication: The Case of the European Union." **Political Communication** C. 16, No: 3, 1999, pp. 263-279.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>12</sup> Jeff Sahadeo. **Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923**. Indiana University Press, 2007 pp. 65-67.

<sup>13</sup> Suiuntai. Zhaimagambetov, "The Protracted Border and Territorial Disputes Between Kyrgyzstan and Its Neighbors", **Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth Report**, C. 1, No: 1, 2015, p. 23.

under such conditions, the process itself was conflicted genic new national states with their state ideology, part of which were territorial claims to neighbors.

In addition to territorial conflicts, ethnic contradictions posed a significant threat to stability in the region. In almost all states of the Central Asian region, independence was perceived by most of the indigenous population, first, as the sovereignty of the titular nation and the creation of priorities for it in all spheres of life.<sup>14</sup> This often posed a threat to interethnic stability, exacerbated interethnic relations, and therefore, ethnic conflicts often arose. It is also important to consider the conflict to the genic factor of ethno-social memory. The historical memory of the people had a significant impact on the nature of the latest international relations. Ethnic and social conflicts often reflected contradictions between different social groups in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.<sup>15</sup>

Another factor of tension in the region was the problem of water scarcity. After gaining independence, the Central Asian states repeatedly contradicted water sources. For all countries in the region whose economy is dominated by the agricultural sector, water resources were of great importance. At the same time, difficulties arose in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with oil and gas, because there were no such reserves on their territory as in Turkmenistan.<sup>16</sup> But these countries possessed abundant water resources enough to provide for their own needs and the needs of neighbors.

The role of the US in ensuring security in the region in the early 1990s was incomparable with the role of Russia, which at that time solved the most serious problems that arose in Tajikistan and ensured the protection of the external borders of the region. However, the US sought to expand their participation in resolving local conflicts.<sup>17</sup> In August 1993, a special US coordinator for the settlement of conflicts in the US was appointed, which became, and a special department was created in the

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<sup>14</sup> Pınar Akçalı, "III. Nation-State Building in Central Asia: A lost Case?" **Perspectives on Global Development and Technology** C.2, No:3, 2003, pp. 409-411.

<sup>15</sup> Sahadeo **op. cit.**, p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, "Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan", **Council on Foreign Relations**, 1994, C.1, No:2, pp. 32-34.

<sup>17</sup> Foroughi Payam, "Tajikistan: Nationalism, Ethnicity, Conflict, and Socio-Economic Disparities-- Sources and Solutions." **Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs**, C.22, No: 1 (2002): pp. 39-41.

State Department. Of course, the basis for participating in the resolution of conflicts that arose between the states of Central Asia was the economic interests of the US, which were formed mainly under the influence of too optimistic estimates of the size of oil and gas reserves in Central Asia and the Caspian region. Another reason for the US interest in suppressing the conflict potential of the Central Asian states was that political instability in the region could negatively affect the situation in neighboring countries that were US allies, for example, in Turkey. Besides, active cooperation with these countries was aimed at assisting the US in countering the activities of international terrorist groups, as well as curbing their desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction and establish bases in the region.<sup>18</sup> Also, participation in conflict resolution was another means of interaction aimed at developing democracy and human rights in the area.

Thus, the ethno-territorial conflicts that occurred in the Central Asian states during the first decade of independence significantly increased the level of mutual distrust in the region and caused the deepening of regional instability. However, this situation turned out to be beneficial to the American political, which sought to consolidate its influence in the region, and, therefore, assumed the role of mediator in establishing relations.<sup>19</sup> By the way, US participation in this matter cannot be called productive or effective, because the influence of Russia, which remained in the first years after the Central Asian states gained independence, did not allow the US to directly intervene in affairs.<sup>20</sup> All in all, these countries, instead proposing the design of their sphere of influence, the main segment of which was mediation in resolving ethno-territorial conflicts in the region.

### **3. Water-energy Problems of Central Asian Countries and US Participation in Their Solution**

Central Asia has always been a region suffering from water scarcity. Five states are located on the territory of Central Asia (the Aral Sea basin): Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>19</sup> Saadia Touval, "The Superpowers as Mediators." *Mediation in International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1992, pp. 232-248.

<sup>20</sup> Payam, *op. cit.*, p. 44.



Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, whose water resources are estimated at 170 km. In the region, there are rivers: Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Zerafshan, Murghab, Pyanj, Vakhsh, Chu, Irtysh, Ili, and others, as well as lakes: Aral Sea, Balkhash, Issyk-Kul, and others.<sup>21</sup> The main ice reserves are in the mountains of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, and the sources of the main Central Asian rivers are also there. Most of the water resources were used to irrigate the lands of all the republics of the region, and this led to the creation of interdependence between states on this issue.

At all times, the region's water resources were considered the basis of the economy and the development of social processes. Central Asian countries are united by the water reserves of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, as well as by a network of hydraulic structures, including dams, canals, and reservoirs.<sup>22</sup> The already complicated relations between the Central Asian states were complicated by the water issue and the problem of electricity supply. Often, hydraulic structures on the river belonged to one country, while others irrigated the land. Border issues (and land, including) were intertwined with the water issue. These problems were superimposed on the day-to-day problems of delimiting borders between states since the former administrative borders between the former Soviet republics have become the state borders of the newly independent states.<sup>23</sup> The emergence of independence exacerbated the problem of land distribution and water resources between individual regions and countries.

Another key factor of conflict to generate was the differentiation of the statuses of ethnic groups, which was associated with the relationship between ethnic groups and features of governance systems and state power. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and, as a result, changes in the management of natural resources of Central Asian states, competition for access to water began to increase, adding tension to the already difficult political situation in the region. With independence, the distribution of water resources acquired new realities for the newly independent states, which were characterized by the following factors: the possibility of a water shortage in any of the

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<sup>21</sup> Everett J. Peachey, "The Aral Sea Basin Crisis and Sustainable Water Resource Management in Central Asia." *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, C: 1, No: 15, 2014, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Annina Sorg, et al. "Coping With Changing Water Resources: The Case of the Syr Darya River Basin in Central Asia", *Environmental Science & Policy* C. 43 No: 1, 2014 pp. 68-69.

<sup>23</sup> Peachey, *op. cit*, p. 11.

Central Asian republics, which was perceived as a direct threat to national interests and security; optimization of the operation of river systems, the operation of which was simultaneously claimed by two sectors of the economy (irrigation and energy), which, if they belong to different states, turned out to be a complicated task.<sup>24</sup>

The problematic feature of the hydrographic network of Central Asia was the uneven distribution of its water bodies. The main contradictions were that the interests of the countries consuming the water resources did not coincide: some countries wanted to use water in the irrigation mode, while others in the energy model, and therefore conflict situations arose. It should be noted that in the irrigation mode, water resources must be spent in the summer, and in the energy mode of operation, the main consumption of water is in winter.<sup>25</sup> Also, since the territories of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were located mainly land. For agriculture, then these countries, being in the lower reaches, were interested in using water resources in the irrigation regime.<sup>26</sup> Also, the sphere of interests of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - countries located high in the mountains and having limited oil and gas reserves, included the use of water resources in the energy regime.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, contradictions arose due to the operating regime of the Toktogul reservoir, the largest in Central Asia. Since Kyrgyzstan in winter felt a significant need for electricity, it was forced to drain the water, as a result of which the Ferghana Valley was flooded. By the way, in summer, on the contrary, droughts occurred because less water was discharged.<sup>28</sup>

Agriculture has traditionally been the main backbone of the regional economy. On the territory of the Central Asian states, mainly crops were grown that required a large amount of water, such as cotton and rice. Another problem of field irrigation was the obsolescence of drainage pipes, which, when rusted, caused significant water losses. It was also necessary to consider the unpredictability of climatic conditions in the

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-17.

<sup>25</sup> Sarah O'Hara, "Central Asia's Water Resources: Contemporary and Future Management Issues" *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, C:16, No: 3, 2000 pp. 423-424.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 426.

<sup>27</sup> Murodbek Laldjebaev, "The Water-Energy Puzzle in Central Asia: the Tajikistan Perspective." *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, C:26, No: 1, 2010 pp. 23-24.

<sup>28</sup> Mukhtar, Kasymov, Major Problems of Water Management and Maintenance of on-farm Irrigation Systems in Central Kyrgyzstan: A Case Study from Kara-Suu Village, Naryn Oblast, PhD Thesis, 2015 pp. 41-43.

region and the years of drought, which significantly increased the need for water.<sup>29</sup> Among the Central Asian states, Kyrgyzstan could control the time and volume of water flow downstream, while Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan depended on its receipt for their irrigation needs.<sup>30</sup> Therefore If we back in Soviet times, we can see that Toktogul reservoir in Kyrgyzstan was used to fill irrigation water and maintain a balance of water supply during dry and wet seasons in Uzbekistan and southern Kazakhstan.

In Central Asia, not only regional states had territorial interests and desires to redistribute spheres of influence in the region, but also world leaders, primarily Russia and the US. The scarcity of water resources and the inability of the governments of Central Asian states to agree on cross-border cooperation in the field of water use has become very significant reasons for the geopolitical struggle, which, with the receipt of independence by the countries of the region, was sharply manifested in Tajikistan's attempts to build the Rogun hydropower station and the desire - Uzbekistan's Uyuni prevent this process.<sup>31</sup>

The problems of the distribution of the flow of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers between the republics of Central Asia were quite acute in Soviet times. This often-caused conflicts and caused the inefficient use of water resources. With the collapse of the USSR, negative trends in this area deepened significantly. The main hydro-technical facilities for regulating wastewater constructed in the Soviet era were located on the territory of the so-called water-supplying countries:<sup>32</sup> Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The main consumers of water - Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan - were in lowlands and took water mainly in the summer, for land reclamation needs.

In Soviet times, the supply of the upper republics with energy carriers (gas and coal) was established, the suppliers of which were the flat republics. This made it possible to compensate for losses from idle hydropower capacities in winter. With independence, the centralization of the water management system disappeared, which

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<sup>29</sup> Sorg et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 75-77.

<sup>30</sup> Beatrice, Mosello. "Water in Central Asia: A Prospect of Conflict or Cooperation?" *Journal of Public & International Affairs*, C.1, No: 19, 2008, p. 27.

<sup>31</sup> Mosello, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>32</sup> O'Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

began to cause constant tension between the two groups of countries. In order to generate electricity, supplying countries were interested in year-round water passage from reservoirs, and consumer countries would like water accumulated to be used in the summer, during the growing season of crops.<sup>33</sup> Another important problem of the region was the drying out and almost complete disappearance of the Aral Sea. The Aral Sea crisis is one of the largest environmental disasters that has affected the lives of nearly 35 million people who lived in the basin of this reservoir.<sup>34</sup>

The problem of the drying out of the Aral Sea was perhaps the largest environmental disaster in Central Asia, which directly affected Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and indirectly Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Aral Sea was the fourth-largest inland lake in the world. In the 1990s, its level fell by almost 15 meters, and the surface area was reduced by half and salinity by three times. As a result, the ecosystem was destroyed, industrial fishing was put to an end, and the health of people in the region deteriorated significantly. In March 1993, five presidents of Central Asian countries met in Kazakhstan. As a result of which the Interstate Council on the problems of the Aral Sea was created, and agreements were reached on the deduction of 1% of GDP to solve this problem.<sup>35</sup>

The World Bank has organized a fundraiser to help resolve the Aral Sea ecological crisis. The World Bank program consisted of the following stages: analysis, design, and pilot activities, in which some were valued at more than \$ 40 million. The USA, and the direct implementation of planned projects worth \$ 470 million. In the US, based on commitments made by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher in October 1993, the US government provided humanitarian assistance in the amount of \$ 22 million to the Aral Sea disaster zone.

Among the reasons for US interest in the problems of the Aral Sea were the following: a demonstration of friendly sentiments towards the leadership of the Central Asian

<sup>33</sup> Pomfret, Richard, "Central Asian Regional Integration and New Trade Patterns." **The Euro-Asian World**, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2000, p. 190.

<sup>34</sup> Vladimir M. Kotlyakov, "The Aral Sea Basin: A Critical Environmental Zone" **Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development**, C.33, No:1, 1991, pp. 4-5.

<sup>35</sup> Nariya Khasanova, "Revisiting Water Issues In Central Asia: Shifting From Regional Approach To National Solutions." **New Voices From Central Asia. Political, Economic, and Societal Challenges and Opportunities**, Washington: The George Washington University, 2017 pp. 37-39.

states, the development of regional cooperation between Central Asian states to prevent the emergence of hypothetical conflicts around the consumption of water resources; Encouraging the states of the region to work on overcoming the biggest environmental problems they encountered through multilateral efforts, using American assistance; focusing US strategic assistance on priority tasks.<sup>36</sup> The US Aral Sea Program was implemented through the implementation of the Environmental Policy and Technology (EPT) project. Hill International, as a subsidiary of USAID, was the first international organization to provide donor assistance and complete local water and health care delivery projects that have been launched to meet the needs of the affected populations of the three countries of the Aral Sea basin. Specific benefits from this program included: increased access to safe water through high-reliability water systems, reduction of bacterial contamination of water by improving systems for improving water quality, improving public health by introducing a health education and sanitation program in three countries and improving management policies through regional cooperation.<sup>37</sup> The listed measures are somewhat different carried out in the countries of the Aral Sea basin.

In Kazakhstan, this program was concentrated in the western part of the Kyzyl-Orda region and included improving the process of delivering water to the fields and providing equipment to ensure greater reliability of such systems, as well as equipment for monitoring water quality.<sup>38</sup> Health programs were implemented that provided for the preparation of health programs, the preparation and conduct of consultations, and sanitary and preventive measures. It was estimated that around 200 thousand people benefited from improved water systems, and 300 thousand people should have felt the benefits of public health education programs.<sup>39</sup>

The leaders of the Central Asian states continued to carry out attempts to resolve water use problems in the region. The heads of state of Central Asia during the international conference in Nukus on September 20, 1995, proclaimed the idea of equality and

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<sup>36</sup> Kotlyakov, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9-10.

<sup>38</sup> Gael Raballand, Kunth Antoine and Auty Richard, "Central Asia's Transport Cost Burden and Its Impact on Trade.", *Economic Systems*, C.29, No: 1, 2005, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Raballand et al., *op. cit.*, p. 12.

interstate cooperation on water issues. In the Nukus Declaration, the presidents of the five states of the region reaffirmed their responsibilities for cooperation at the regional level based on mutual respect, good neighborliness, and determination regarding the water and energy problem of Central Asia. Then came the Bishkek statement of the heads of state of May 6, 1996, in which, for the first time, the need was recognized to accelerate the development of a new strategy for irrigation and economical management methods in the use of water and energy resources. An important factor for overcoming the water-energy contradictions in the region was the involvement of external participants as investors, as well as importers of electricity.<sup>40</sup> In addition to ensuring the energy and water security of the countries of the region, it was necessary to consider the interests of external participants.

Thanks to such cooperation and understanding of the ordinary and distinctive features between national and foreign technical approaches, as well as ways to overcome shortcomings, was achieved. Gradually, cooperation was established with leading experts, which facilitated the joint preparation of a number of program documents, such as the "Aral Sea Basin Program No. 1" (1994), "Basic Provisions of the Aral Sea Basin Water Strategy" (1997), WARMUP (Water Resource Management Aral Sea basin 1995) and others.<sup>41</sup> The activities of Western experts, together with water management organizations in the countries of the region, allowed us to develop several new approaches based on more modern technical means, computer science, computerization, etc. At the same time, the Western style of work with the wide involvement of stakeholders has become quite widespread.<sup>42</sup> Thus, both factors contributed to a greater understanding in society of the importance of environmental requirements environmental conservation. International institutions and organizations contributed to the development of regional cooperation and acted as arbiters in the complex interstate processes of regulating the region's water and energy resources.

<sup>40</sup> Daene C. McKinney, "Cooperative Management of Transboundary Water Resources in Central Asia." **In The Tracks of Tamerlane: Central Asia's Path to the 21st Century.** Washington, DC, National Defense University, 2004, pp. 188-189.

<sup>41</sup> Dukhovny, Viktor Abramovich, and Vadim Sokolov. **Lessons on Cooperation Building to Manage Water Conflicts in the Aral Sea Basin.** Paris: Unesco, 2003 p. 213.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

For the US, environmental safety was not only purely internal but international in nature due to the fragile state of the global environment. American politicians did not lose the opportunity to build economic and political cooperation between the opposing states of Central Asia due to lack of water resources. US assistance to the newly independent countries that embarked on a democratic path of development consisted primarily of activities to improve public health and to provide citizens with access to environmental information.

### **Conclusion: A New Perspective on Central Asian Countries in the Framework of Globalization**

Globalization has contributed to the fact that the remoteness of the Central Asian region from the US is no longer a problem. The region's geopolitical position has contributed to its use as a transit country for drugs and as an exporter of terrorism, which directly or indirectly threatened the security of the US. That is why the US had to draw Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan into its zone of influence. To ensure their geopolitical interests in Central Asia, the US had several favorable conditions that stemmed from the principles of US foreign policy. Among them: the fight against international terrorism and drug trafficking, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the implementation of which was possible through the promotion of principles of respect for human rights and freedoms, the establishment and strengthening of democratic values.<sup>43</sup>

One of the obstacles facing the US was a feature of the traditional way of life in Central Asian society. Islam and the clan structure of society significantly influenced the political traditions of the states of the region, even though during the Soviet Union, this influence was minimized through oppression, repression, persecution, and anti-religious propaganda of the Soviet government against Islam at all levels.<sup>44</sup> In turn, the USSR offered its citizens a communist ideology. With the collapse of the bipolar system and the discrediting of the socialist system, the population of the former

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<sup>43</sup> Cornell, Svante E. "Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflict in Central Asia: the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan." **Terrorism and Political Violence**, C.17.No: 4, 2005, pp. 619-639.

<sup>44</sup> Collins Kathleen, **Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 47-49.

republics of the Soviet Union as a whole, and the Central Asian states, in particular, were left without peculiar ideals and role models, which previously filled their life with a certain meaning. That is why in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, the processes of Islamization of the population began, and as a result, the politicization of Islam. The method of politicization of religion in the states of the region was combined with the clan structure of society, which manifested itself in the fact that the leadership of the state apparatus was carried out exclusively by circles close to the families of the presidents of the republics, and there was no alternative.<sup>45</sup> However, after victory with the support of a particular clan, each of the presidents of the Central Asian states resorted to limiting clan relations, because they regressively influenced the development of newly independent states. Of course, the US was not only difficult, and sometimes even impossible, to cooperate with countries that were not only not democratic but also had a similar political and religious system.<sup>46</sup> That is why the primary task of the American politicum in the states of Central Asia was to democratize the countries of the region.

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American democratization for Central Asian states consisted mainly of creating strong and stable political parties loyal to the idea of democracy, the development of the rule of law and respect for human rights, the strengthening of the effectiveness of democratic forces, the spread of dialogue between different sectors of society and the corresponding solution of national problems. The first step that the governments of the Central Asian countries took on the path to democratization was the adoption of constitutions, each of which declared democratic forms of government for its peoples. For the US, policies to promote liberal democratic international values have become a means of expanding Another problem that the states of Central Asia faced after gaining independence was unemployment.<sup>47</sup> As a result, labor migration to Western countries, to the USA.

Due to the significant difference in wages, labor migration to the US, even illegal, was desirable for citizens of Central Asian states. Of course, the vast majority of them

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<sup>45</sup> Kathleen, *op. cit.*, p. 57-58.

<sup>46</sup> Edward Schatz, **Modern Clan Politics: The Power of "Blood" in Kazakhstan and Beyond**. University of Washington Press, Washington, 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Kathleen, *op. cit.*, p. 71.



occupied the most prestigious vacancies, such as nannies, maids, nurses in the elderly, shopkeepers, cooks, waiters and dishwashers in restaurants, maids in hotels or day work, and salary they were paid much lower than US citizens because of their illegal status.<sup>48</sup> Another component of the migration process was human trafficking. The origins of this phenomenon were in the low social status of women in Central Asian countries. The lack of work for men, and, as a result, drunkenness, led to domestic violence, which was not addressed by law enforcement agencies. Because of this, many children fled home. For them, human abuse was the norm, and therefore they were especially vulnerable to traffickers.<sup>49</sup>

As has been repeatedly noted, the main task for the US in the Central Asian region was to obtain their approval to reorient Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to the US and prevent the spread of Russian influence in the region.<sup>50</sup> Of course, it was impossible to get the favor of the government without gaining the favor of the population, and youth was the most pliable for influence and the most mobile of all walks of life. That is why, in order to form a worldview that is convenient for the US, they established several educational programs. Therefore, exchange and academic programs were introduced for schoolchildren, students, teachers, graduate students, representatives of public organizations, etc. As part of the ongoing programs, educational services were offered directly on the territory of the states of the region, as well as the organization of trips to study in the US. However, not in all the republics of the former Soviet Union, this process was equally effective. Some of them, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, warmly accepted American educational initiatives, as well as other forms of interference in the affairs of their countries, but Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, on the contrary, in every possible way forbade foreign interference in their internal affairs. But, despite certain obstacles and problems that the US faced in

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>49</sup> The "consumers" of this segment were childless American couples who, due to difficulties in the adoption process, agreed to steal. The combination of all these factors was destructive for the societies of Central Asian countries, provoking a "brain drain," weakening of the gene pool, loss of natural population growth, and labor resources. V. Schatz, *op. cit.*, p.131.

<sup>50</sup> Mankoff, Jeffrey. "The United States and Central Asia After 2014", *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2013 p. 235.

its educational policy in the territory of Central Asian countries, the US managed to achieve its main goal in this policy sector, namely, to receive favor among students, that is, a young, politically unbiased youth by providing an opportunity to get an education, including, and go to study in the US.<sup>51</sup> Under such conditions, there was no need for the forced imposition of thoughts, citizens-positions, political priorities, because the country that funded the training and showed its best during this period, a priori could not be hostile to the participants in such projects.

The sector, which, after gaining independence by the countries of Central Asia, has been in the greatest decline, is healthcare. The main problem was the lack of funds for financing medicine in a transition economy. The newly independent states could not do without foreign subsidies.<sup>52</sup>

The governments of the Central Asian states tried in every possible way to reform the health sector; however, due to their inconsistency and in the absence of economic justification, they did not in any way affect the population's health indicators. Under these conditions, the US played an important role in financing the medical sector in Central Asian countries.<sup>53</sup> During this period, several American international organizations whose activities were related to health care began their activities in the states of the region.

Moreover, the reason for the US participation in resolving this conflict was that until the Central Asian states received independence, there was a Soviet system for managing the distribution of water resources, and therefore Russia, as the successor to the USSR, had a number of territorial interests and a desire to redistribute spheres of influence in the region.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, the states of the area were also interested in the mediation of the international community, as a guarantor of security in the region, due to the inability to independently resolve the problems that arose. US involvement in this process took place through the US Agency for International

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 243-244.

<sup>52</sup> Maureen Lewis, **Who Is Paying for Health Care in Eastern Europe and Central Asia?** World Bank Publications, 2000.

<sup>53</sup> Jeffrey, *op. cit*, p. 227.

<sup>54</sup> David R. Smith, "Environmental Security and Shared Water Resources in Post-Soviet Central Asia." *Post-Soviet Geography* C.36, No: 6, 2005, p. 352.

Development.<sup>55</sup> As a result of these activities, the US managed to establish more friendly relations with the leaders of the Central Asian countries, to deepen international cooperation, thereby minimizing the threat of resolving future conflicts around water resources.

Thus, not only military intervention as a means of American diplomacy but the humanitarian policy was also an effective tool of the US. Demonstrating concern for the citizens of Central Asian states, they primarily pursued their own geopolitical and geostrategic interests. Declaring their intentions to help the newly independent states, the US, as participants in various international organizations, often shifted the fulfillment of their purposes precisely to them to the U.N. and its divisions, so their assistance often took place indirectly. The bilateral partnership of the US with each of the Central Asian states was not formed on an equal footing, and the leaders of these countries were virtually unable to direct such cooperation to their advantage because, at the time of their independence, the US was almost the only external donors for these republics.

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<sup>55</sup> **Ibid.**, s. 357-358.

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