Shared Past And Future Of The Central Asian States

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Abstract: The article analyzes new trends in the integration processes of Central Asian states at the present stage, reveals the initiatives of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to pursue an open and constructive policy towards neighbors, and resolves Central Asian problems based on the search for reasonable compromises. The article makes a historical excursion into the Central Asian cultural and historical phenomenon, the role of the Great Silk Road, migration processes in antiquity, the Middle Ages, during the colonization of the Russian Empire, the Soviet period, emphasizes the repressive practice of the Stalinist regime of the period of 30-40s of the XX century, the period of the Second World War II, which contributed to the formation of the modern multi-ethnic structure of Central Asian states. At the same time, the article shows the current state policy to strengthen interethnic stability and tolerant relations between different nationalities living in these states. The article presents potential risk and threat factors for the region, namely: an excess of labor resources, lack of land and water resources, providing the required number of jobs and as well.

Index terms: constructive politics, cultural and historical phenomenon, interethnic relations, the Central Asian region, labor resources, multi-ethnic structure.

1. INTRODUCTION

At the new stage of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan over the past 3-4 years, a number of official documents have been adopted relating to the problem of interethnic relations both within the country and in foreign policy. This, for example, is a historical program document “Strategy of action in five priority areas of the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021.”, “On measures to further improve interethnic relations and friendly relations with foreign countries,” a speech by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the 72nd session UN General Assembly and many others. The above and a number of other documents prompt scientists involved in the problem of interethnic relations to analyze the past and present, to look into the future of the Central Asian region. The relevance of the topic of a scientific article is also enhanced because, due to objective and subjective reasons, until recently there were obstacles in the integration processes of the states of the region. This study is one of a series of articles by a historian dedicated to the historical roots of the peoples of the region, their present, as well as common problems of the future. The topic of interethnic relations and tolerance is interdisciplinary and is addressed by scientists from social and humanitarian fields. Most of all to date, philosophers, this topic is the object of study. However, historians, psychologists, sociologists carefully study, doctoral and candidate dissertations are protected. The author of the article in the historical aspect has written more than 200 works on the problem of interethnic relations and tolerance in Uzbekistan and the region. For example, in the monograph “Tolerance as an Integrating Factor in Multinational Uzbekistan” [1], [46] in book I on pages 10-21, the historical predetermination of the tolerance of the population of the indigenous nationalities of Uzbekistan and other regions of Central Asia is revealed, the main factors of the formation of ethnic and religious tolerance of indigenous peoples are shown region. The same author published a textbook, which also paid attention to the general history of interethnic relations of the peoples of the region [2], [18]. A number of books published in Uzbekistan are written in a historical and demographic vein [3], [45]. The collective monograph of the above three authors also addresses regional issues [4], [16]. Great interest are the materials of the international conference “Tolerance as an Instrument for the Development of Mutual Confidence Building Measures” [5], [34] which presents the reports of scientists from Central Asian states. Interesting articles were published by our colleagues from Kazakhstan regarding interethnic relations [6], [76] Chronological scope of the study. They cover the period of independent development of Uzbekistan and other states of the Central Asian region (1991-2019), emphasis is placed on Uzbekistan for 2016-2019, covering the period of leadership of the state by the new President Sh. Mirziyoyev. The practical significance of the study:

- The results of scientific research are reflected in the curriculum of the 1st block of social and humanitarian disciplines of higher educational institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- The subject “Interethnic relations and tolerance” is taught at the historical faculties of Uzbekistan's universities, first-year undergraduates in the specialty 5A120301-History of Uzbekistan, which reveals the historical roots of tolerance of representatives of local nationalities of the Central Asian region and also the history of interethnic relations up to the present;
- there are special programs in the media in seven languages of the peoples of Central Asia; - the role of friendship, integration between Central Asian states is promoted in the special channel “History of Uzbekistan” created.

2. METHODS

During the research, special methods of historical science were used, as well as general scientific methods and universal methods. The main emphasis is on the retrospective method, analysis and synthesis, a systematic approach, comparative analysis, the principle of historicism, objectivity, non-linearity. Restoration of friendly relations with neighboring countries of the Central Asian Region is one of the most important accomplishments of Uzbekistan at the new stage of development. A breakthrough was achieved in resolving many issues which, in the recent years, formed obstacles to rapprochement of these countries in their endeavors to achieve common goals of further development and welfare for the nations of the region. Trade, investment, transport and communication, cooperation, production, as well as cultural and
humanitarian ties, cross-border and interregional cooperation, interaction in the field of security and joint counteraction to modern challenges and threats have intensified and are now expanding. Sh. Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, has outlined clearly and undoubtedly the country’s main foreign policy priority: pursuing an open and result-oriented policy with regard to the closest neighbors, solving any Central Asian problems on the basis of equality, consideration of mutual interests and search for reasonable compromises. All these efforts should be aimed at turning Central Asia into a region of stability, security and prosperity. Achieving these goals, as well as ensuring the sustainable and dynamic development of entire our region largely depends on the extent of cohesion and harmony in which the Central Asian states’ interaction will be built. In this regard, the partnership of our fraternal countries is important factor to strengthen regional stability and develop cooperation throughout Central Asia. This relates not only to political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, but also to cooperation in the field of combat against the main Central Asia’s cross-border threats - terrorism, religious extremism, organized crime, and drug trafficking. Nowadays, it is clear that the Central Asia is no longer in the periphery of global politics. The year by year, our region draws even more attention of the world community and plays a key role in the international relations. This is also due to the growing activity of the countries of the region and their involvement in the discussion and solution of the most important regional and global political issues. Within a relatively short period, the tremendous shifts in the Central Asian states’ interaction took place that is widely known from official sources, analytic works, and the media. It is gratifying to note that the speech of Sh. Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, at the 72nd session of the UN Central Assembly in September 2017, as well as the Samarkand International Conference “Central Asia: Shared Past and Common Future. Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity” in November of the same year, as well as further activities represents a holistic program aimed at strengthening friendship and cooperation among the nations of Central Asia. It is well known that integration processes in Central Asia have deep historical roots. In the current situation, integration is necessary, since the Central Asian states have common interests in the formation of a single economic space, ensuring civil peace and interethnic harmony, maintaining territorial integrity, the rule of law, neutralizing the causes and conditions conducive to the social and interethnic conflicts and separatism. Moreover, there are transnational threats, prevention of which requires joint action. The most dangerous of these threats are the growth of extremism and terrorism, the spread of drugs and weapons, the restriction of access to the world market, to the scientific and technical products and the latest technologies. Taking into account that Central Asian states are connected with the common borders, shared river basins, previously united energy systems, network of roads and railways, as well as traditional domestic market, there is no alternative to integration. In addition to the problems existing in various spheres of life of the states and the entire region, the issue of harmonization of interethnic relations becomes a hot topic in Central Asia. Throughout the centuries-old history, in the Central Asian region as a whole and in Uzbekistan in particular, multi-ethnicity has been a fundamental feature which served as a basic source for formation and development of the nations inhabiting the territory. The economic unity of the region with its established specific economic structure, the primordial proximity of many aspects of the traditional way of life, the ethno political proximity of the nations, manifested in close contacts and mutual socio-political and spiritual-cultural influences, have formed a cultural and civilization space unique in its integrity and distinctness, open to any diverse and fruitful influences of other cultures. The history of Uzbekistan, as well as the history of other Central Asian states, cannot be correctly understood if not perceived in the broad context of the history of Central Asia as a whole and in close connection with the historical environment of neighboring countries.

3. RESULTS AND DUSCUSSIONS

The Central Asian cultural-historical phenomenon is an integral product of very diverse and fruitful cultural influences. In ancient times, an important part of the Great Silk Road passed through the territory of Central Asia. This enormous trade route has played a great role in the development of all mankind. Already in antiquity, it served as a mean for an intensive and complex exchange of technological and cultural achievements between regions. The manifold and distinguish nature of Central Asian culture is explained by the role the Road played in the global process of mutual influences and interchange. The historical fate of the modern titular nations of Central Asia: Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, and Karakalpaks are closely intertwined and interdependent. Multi-ethnicity is not a factor brought into Central Asia from the outside and not an artificially created ethno-demographic environment, but a result of historically long ethno social processes caused by both natural changes of various ethnic groups during their migration within the region and the development of closer relationships at the spiritual, cultural and traditional levels. Each country of the region is multinational: people of 136 nationalities live in Uzbekistan, 126 - in Kazakhstan, 100 - in Kyrgyzstan, 80 – in Tajikistan, and 60 - in Turkmenistan. The modern titular nations of Central Asia, which make up the bulk of the region’s population, have passed a historically long and very difficult path of ethnic and national consolidation, adopting diverse ethnic groups and strata. All modern nations of Central Asia represent an alloy of various ancient and relatively young ethnic groups. It is enough to recall the main ethnic migrations in the history of Central Asia in the antique era and the Middle Ages only. According to experts, in the IV millennium BC, the autochthonous population of the region spoke Dravidian languages, while in Khorezm - in Hurrian language. Then, major waves of very different ethnic migrations followed: Aryan (boundary of the II - I millennium BC), Iranian (VI century BC), Greco-Macedonian (IV century BC), Turkic (three waves: VI century, XI - XII centuries, and XVI century), Arabic (VIII century), and Mongolian (XIII century). However, the process of migration of various ethnic groups to Central Asia did not finish then (it virtually never stopped). The targeted migration policy of the Russian Empire in the colonial period, and then, of the Soviet state, made multi-
ethnic composition of the region’s population even more complicated. At the beginning of the XX century, the tsarist colonization and then, the Soviet system gave a powerful impetus to intensify the process of migration of Slavic and Russian-speaking people from the European and Central regions of the former USSR. The reason for the significant migration flow to Uzbekistan was the policy of economic development of the territory, the transformation of the Republic into an agrarian and raw material producing appendage to the Central regions of the former USSR. In the 30-40s of the XX century, the repressive practice of the Stalinist regime, when whole nations were forcibly deported to the territory of Uzbekistan, Meskhetian Turks, Crimean Tatars, Koreans, Germans and others, significantly changed the interethnic structure of the Republic’s population. Some other socio-political and economic factors supported and stimulated high growth rates of the multi-ethnicity. The labor resources from other Republics of the former USSR saturated main sectors of the economy. In the period of the World War II, the processes of increasing the density of the multi-ethnic population of Uzbekistan has significantly deepen. In total, about 1 million people were evacuated from the territories of the USSR occupied by Nazis. Subsequently, in the post-war period, the processes of economic development of the Republic gave a new impetus to the inflow of migrants of various ethnic groups to Uzbekistan from other regions of the USSR. Even a brief historical analysis of the Uzbekistan’s modern multi-ethnic structure shows the complexity, due to objective and subjective reasons, of the process of formation and development of a specific type of ethnic social community and the construction of a modern civil nation. Besides, a characteristic, historically developed feature of Uzbekistan, which cannot be ignored in ethnic politics, is the fact that a significant part of ethnic Uzbeks live outside their own national state, both in the Central Asian region and in the other countries throughout the world. They have not lost their ethnic and cultural identity, and live there as the so-called ethnic minorities. In pursuing ethnic policy in Uzbekistan, the country’s leadership assumes that the level of civilization and democracy of a society constructing the rule of law state shall be determined by the range of conditions and opportunities provided to all ethnic groups to self-develop and self-affirm themselves, to preserve their cultural and linguistic identity, and to rich their spiritual and intellectual potential in full. Nation-building in Uzbekistan is nothing but a way, on the one hand, to assert ourselves as an independent and sovereign nation and, on the other hand, to prevent local provincialism, parochialism, regional clan isolation and extreme manifestations of ethnocentrism in domestic politics, while keeping unbroken the fragile line between a natural sense of national pride and identity and a sense of national narrow-mindedness. The formation of national identity does not mean a blind adherence to all ethno-cultural traditions of the past, but careful selection and use of those ones that create new civic sacredness, deepen the processes of spiritual development of the nation and allow us, based on the dialectics of the national and the global, to successfully integrate into the world community without losing our national identity. Only a national state is capable of pursuing a targeted policy to form a new civil identity in a multi-ethnic environment, while accelerating and stimulating this process using legal mechanisms, social and economic programs and cultural policy. At the time when the nation appreciates itself, gains confidence in itself and in its strengths, the element of spontaneity, which, at the initial stage of national self-consciousness, is inevitable and objective, can later become a factor hampering the nation’s movement towards the progress. Under certain circumstances, spontaneity can transform the national identity of a titular nation into hypertrophic forms of ethnocentrism. In a multi-ethnic state, this may bring to discrimination of the other ethnic groups’ ethno-cultural interests and growth of their ethnic identity. Therefore, the young multiethnic independent states need a well-thought principled ethnic policy able to ensure civil peace and interethenic harmony in the society, and this is the one that is carried out now in Uzbekistan. The main area of the Uzbekistan’s policy in the field of interethnic relations is the objective to preserve and cultivate the ethnic cultural identity without prejudice to the processes of integration, and to prevent the intensive processes of national construction from transformation into those purely nationalist in nature and content. The policy is based on the understanding the fact that in the conditions when a multi-ethnic structure is maintained in an independent state, and the internationalization processes in the economic, political, spiritual and cultural spheres prevail in the lives of the majority of the region’s population, any attempts of unilateral, excessive protrusion of ethno cultural specificity and identity do not have a historical perspective. It is reasoned by the need and demand of nations to mutually exchange spiritual, cultural and other values. It is also important to understand that, in reasonable proportions the national individuality cannot assimilate and finally lose its original features. On the contrary, during this fair and mutually beneficial exchange, the national individuality becomes more complete and voluminous, enriching its form and content. In this case, internationalization does not in any way infringe on the specificity and peculiarity of the national individuality, but quite the opposite, it creates more space and opportunities for successful integration into the world community. In the field of interethnic relations in Uzbekistan and in Central Asia as a whole, there are potential risk factors and threats that can destabilize the socio-political situation with unpredictable consequences for all nations of the region. The contradictory consequences of the colonial policy of the Russian Empire and the national policy pursued in the former Soviet Union create an objective ground for the emergence of conflict situations in the region. For a fairly long historical period, the national policy of the Soviet state was aimed at achieving social homogeneity in order to form in a multi-ethnic state of a single utopian community - the Soviet people. Within the framework of this policy, everything that embodied an ethno cultural identity and did not fit into the dogmas of a utopian social experiment was subjected to vigorous attacks. Many aspects of the traditional way of life, the religion of Islam, and the languages that make up the sources of ethno cultural identity and self-awareness were mostly censured by the totalitarian regime. All this left deep traumas in the collective memory of Central Asia nations. Uncertain consequences of the colonial and Soviet delimitation of the territorial-administrative borders of Central Asian states arbitrarily carried out in usual imperial traditions are a serious risk factor. One more factor of threat is the ethno-
4. CONCLUSION

The return of a large number of labor migrants from Russia can create both social and political problems in the countries of Central Asia. Such return will increase pressure on the domestic labor market in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which are not ready to accept new workers, and thus, exacerbate the unemployment situation. Labor migration provides the outflow of the most active part of the male population and significantly reduces the protest potential of society. The population of Central Asia is quite young, in average, it is aged 26 years. So, in the near future, the able-bodied part of the region’s residents aged 15 to 64 is estimated to be 65-67%, which means the continuing burden on local labor markets. Given the inability of the states of the region (within the current development model) to provide the required number of jobs, the only solution remaining is to increase the export of human resources. The large-scale migration within Central Asia and beyond, urbanization and industrialization, new processes in the religious sphere will contribute to the formation of new communities and identities. In that way, the deformation of traditional social ties and roles established in conservative societies is expected. For example, a generation of “fatherless children” is already growing in a number of Central Asian countries (in those families where fathers went to work abroad for long term). In addition, according to international organizations, the role of women in primordially oriental societies is changing significantly. Today, in the conditions of active migration of the male population, women start playing an increasingly active social role and master men’s professions, which, after a while, may lead to emancipation and appearing of the gender issue in the agenda.

REFERENCES: