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## DEVELOPMENTAL PROSPECTS OF INTEGRATION PROCESSES BETWEEN TURKIC STATES

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### ABSTRACT

In this study, the socio-cultural and economic relations of the Turkic republics gained independence after the collapse of the socialist system is discussed. Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as Bashkortostan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Tatarstan, Tuva, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Crimea and Gagauzia which have an autonomous structure are included in this study. At the end of the study, it is pointed out the constituent elements of the problems in the relationship of Turkic republics at the present time.

**Keywords:** Turkic Republics, Integration, Civilization.

## TÜRK CUMHURİYETLER ARASINDA ENTEGRASYON SÜRECİNİN GELİMLERİ

### ÖZET

Bu makalede, sosyalist sistemin çökmesinden sonra, bağımsızlığını kazanan Türk cumhuriyetlerinin sosyo-kültürel ve ekonomik ilişkileri ele alınmıştır. Türkiye, Azerbaycan, Kırgızistan, Türkmenistan, Kazakistan ve Özbekistan'ın yanı sıra özerk bir yapıya sahip olan Başkurdistan, Kabardino-Balkar, Karay-Çerkez, Tataristan, Tuva, İncan Uyğur Özerk Bölgesi, Kırım ve Gagavuzya bu çalışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonunda, günümüzde Türk cumhuriyetlerinin ilişkilerinde problem teşkil eden unsurlara dikkat çekilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk Cumhuriyetleri, Entegrasyon, Medeniyet.

The formation of a new world order, which became inevitable after the collapse of the socialist system as well as the global financial and economic crises, leads to the transformation of a unipolar configuration of international relations into a multipolar one. An internationalization of the economy vigorously pursued by the Western powers at the beginning of XX century has created powerful preconditions for the emergence of its new quality – the globalization. However, these strengthening economic ties have not been able to bring humanity together, but only led to certain interaction between the previously mutually isolated civilizations. The world has become more interconnected and interdependent, but in no way uniform. At that, the formational differences have given way to the civilizational specificities.

In this regard, the questions emerge-what are the possible options for setup of the new geopolitical space, the characteristics and the nature of emerging structures, and how global trends in general impact the regional processes? What is the role acted by civilizational factor within the transformation of the global world? What are the probable scenarios of global and regional changes

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in the future? The creation of an integration union of the Turkic states seems to be among such the geopolitical scenarios.

There are six countries in the world, where the main role is acted by Turkic ethnic groups. These are Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Moreover, the Turkic range also covers regions, autonomies and national republics that enter into the jurisdiction of some ethnically varying states. In this regard, one is talking about the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, the Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia, the Republic of Tataristan, the Republic of Tuva and others (within Russia), Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (in China), the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (in Ukraine), Gagauzia (in Moldova).

The development of the “Turkic integration” evidences that, in addition to the main “stakeholders” (USA, China, Russia), on the Central Asian arena the other political “actors” as well increasingly make themselves known. Here, along with “Turkic integrationists”, Iran is actively working with its “Persian speaking alliance” and India is loudly announcing its presence by signing a strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan.

Hence, the emergence within the post-Soviet area of the new sovereign Central Asian republics has been perceived in Turkey, the biggest Turkic state, as a generation of favorable conditions for the beginning of Turkic integration. The Central Asian direction immediately became one of the priorities of Turkish foreign policy. As the base for the formation of the maximum possible conflict-free complex of interests, there is the common Turkic historical heritage, ethno-cultural, religious and linguistic unity of the Turkic states. It is a very civilizational closeness of integrating states that provides the foundation and the sustainability of the projected association.

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Civilizations, being the supreme criteria of identity in the scale of the whole humanity, acquire a special role in times of great historical transitions, which include the modern era as well. An aggravation of the crisis phenomena in almost all the major areas of social life requires recourse to the fundamental characteristics and mechanisms of development, the analysis of which would help in identification of the causes and ways out to overcome the emerged problems. The functional significance of universal, subject to the general laws, social structures lies in ensuring of a higher degree of stability comparing to dissimilar ones. However, the flip side of universalization is the destruction of national cultural identity, which makes even more difficult the search for responses to the new, non-traditional challenges. An evolution of both the nature and the human civilization suggests that it is the very diversity which acts as a backbone direction and a guarantee of the advanced motion.

Civilization, being based on the socio-cultural traditions and historical experience, helps to enable the underlying mechanisms of development, to maintain the integrity within the transformational conditions, not allowing changes to exert a corrupting influence.

Will the Turkic peoples be able to exploit the potential of integration on the basis of civilizational community? Indeed, despite the historical and cultural affinity of the Turkic peoples, during the last two centuries they were part of different, often mutually hostile or isolated empires, within which there had been often pursued a policy of “divide and rule” that has resulted in civilizational separation among the Turkic peoples.

One should also note that in the scientific literature, the term “Turkic civilization” has appeared relatively recently. The researchers are debating about the appropriateness of interpretation of the Turkic world as an independent civilization.



Kazakh philosopher S. Sh. Ayazbekova on the assumption of the widely accepted theory of civilization has reconsidered the civilization parameters in relation to the Turkic world. An analysis of the latter among the indications of civilization such as the unity of territory and commonality of living conditions, the statehood, linguistic affinity, the presence of religion and writing, the developed system of economic relations, the unity or similarity of economic and political system, culture and mentality allowed her to conclude that the Turkic world had created its own inimitable civilization, which fundamentally differs from other civilizations<sup>1</sup>.

Because of its long-term and fundamental nature, the civilizational unity can be perceived as an object of integration of the Turkic community. Thus, Yu. G. Barsegov draws attention to the fact that the doctrine of Turkism is designed for the long-term period and should be implemented gradually, moving to the closer forms of all-Turkic political association, although, in author's opinion, given the nationalism of the individual Turkic peoples of the CIS, the Turks do not pose a task of combining them into a single state, meaning rather to establish a union of Turkic speaking states<sup>2</sup>.

Charles W. Hostler defines "Turkism" as "a movement seeking the political and cultural unity of all Turkic speaking peoples"<sup>3</sup>. Jacob Landau gives the similar definition of "Turkism", considering it as a "movement, which aims to create association or union – on the cultural, psychological (or both) basics – of the peoples of Turkic origin"<sup>4</sup>.

These characteristics emphasize the paramount importance of the very factor of cultural, psychological and communicative propinquity of the Turkic peoples. In these terms, one can refer to the main purpose of Turkism in the XXI century, which implies the establishment of a common cultural and information space encompassing the entire Turkic world, i.e., the deepening of civilizational community of the Turkic peoples.

The urgency of solving the issue of Turkic cooperation is undermined by a number of factors necessary for the pursuance of viability of integration union and predetermining the commonality of interests. First of all, the factors and prerequisites for Turkic integration include the following:

-The need for joint efforts to preserve and promote cultural and spiritual potential of the Turkic World,

-The requirement to consolidate the potentials of the Turkic regions under the conditions of regionalization of the entire world,

-The necessity of the centralized assertion of interests of subjects of the Turkic world located in the center of Eurasia at the intersection of the interests of the most powerful global players,

-The solidarity in geo-economic interests due to, in particular, landlocked location of the majority of Turkic countries and their relevant isolation from the sea, seclusion to each other and the need for joint sea outlet and additional transport routes.

The beginning of integration processes was marked by creation in 1991 of the World Assembly of Turkic peoples – an organization dedicated to "re-creation, development and

<sup>1</sup> S. Sh. Ayazbekova, "Tyurkskaya Civilizaciya" V Sisteme Civilizacionnyx Klassifikatorov // Almanax "Via evrasia" 2012, 1. Istochnik: <http://www.viaevrasia.com/ru>.

<sup>2</sup> Yu.G. Barsegov, *Geopoliticheskaya*, Ugroza Rossii. – M., 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Ch.W. Hostler, *Türken und Sowjets*, Die historische Lage und die politische Bedeutung der Türkvölker in der heutigen Welt / Ch.W. Hostler – Frankfurt/Main; Berlin 1960, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> J. Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey*, A Study of Irredentism / J. Landau – London 1981, p. 51.



promotion of the Turkic way of social development”. In 1992, in Ankara there has been held the first summit of heads of the Turkic-speaking countries, which resulted in a number of agreements on so far only humanitarian and cultural cooperation. The next year, following the visit of Turgut Özal to Central Asia and Azerbaijan, the presidents of Turkic speaking countries signed a Protocol on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Turkic-speaking States. On July 12, 1993, under the agreement signed in Alma-Ata, there has been created an Organization for joint development of Turkic culture and art (TURKSOY). However, the first decade of integration efforts did not produce any practical results.

The idea of the need for rapprochement and development of cooperation between the Turkic peoples sounded again during the 8th Summit of Heads of the four Turkic speaking states (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey) held on 17 November 2006 in Antalya. The main event of the meeting was the initiative of Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev to create the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic-speaking states that, according to experts, has confirmed the interest of Kazakhstani leader in the full-fledged cooperation between the Turkic countries. At the Antalya summit, there were also reached agreements to strengthen ties in the field of energy and security. In this regard, the concluding declaration on the need to intensify economic and transport links between the Turkic countries was signed, indicating the expansion of the circle of Turkic states’ mutual interests.

On October 3, 2009, at the 9th Summit in Nakhchivan, on the initiative of the head of independent Kazakhstan there was achieved an agreement “On the Establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States”. Turkic Council was provided to have “all the necessary features of regional political association, the legal status and the certain organizational structures”. In addition to the Council itself, Kazakhstan proposed the creation of a number of pan-Turkic institutions: the Center for the Study of the Turkic World and the Turkic Academy, and within it – the Center of Turkic History and Culture, the Center for the Study of Turkic Language, Turkic library and Turkic museum. Almost all proposals of N. Nazarbayev were accepted.

In Nakhchivan, the even greater emphasis was made on the energy side of the “Turkic integration”, primarily, in the area of ensuring multi-variant energy resources transportation (i.e., the possibility of laying pipelines and other transportation routes bypassing Russia). In the adopted Nakhchivan declaration, there has been specially emphasized the strategic importance of oil and gas pipelines Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum in ensuring global energy security and sustainable economic development of countries of the region. In this regard, the heads of states noted the importance of increasing the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline capacity and emphasized the significance of connection between the port of Aktau and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. In general, undoubtedly, one must agree that these are very energy resources, which Central Asia is so rich in, that are most likely to become a key element of the “Turkic integration”.

Following the outcomes of the 10th Summit, which was held in September 2010 in Istanbul, the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States was formally established, as well as created the institutions necessary for the practical realization of the idea of Turkic integration.

It is noteworthy that since October 2011, the summits began to be held in a new format, as the summits of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (CCTS). The first Summit of the CCTS took place in Almaty. The new model of interaction became based on three main components: a joint solution of security issues, an optimization of trade and economic cooperation, including the energy sector, and finally, cultural and linguistic aspects of integration of the Turkic states, the realization of which the activity of TURKSOY is just oriented to.



The second Summit of the CCTS held on August 23, 2012 in Bishkek, was marked by a great attention to the economic cooperation of the Council member states, especially transport communications between them. Summit participants have signed a Protocol on the establishment of a railway corridor route Turkey (Kars) - Tbilisi - Baku - Caspian Sea - Kazakhstan - Kyrgyzstan - China, the Agreement on the financial rules of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and other documents.

At the third Summit of the CCTS held on August 16, 2013 in Gabala (the Republic of Azerbaijan), the main discussion focused on the issues of cooperation in the sphere of transport as well as customs formalities facilitation. The summit participants noted that the realization of transit potential of the CCTS member states and the improvement of transport infrastructure would open a great future. In particular, according to the President of Turkey Abdullah Gül, “the modern concept of the Silk Road is an energy, transport and logistics project that will contribute to the development of the entire region. These projects will transform the Turkic world into the center of development of the global economy”.

Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev has pointed to an inadequate extent and ineffectiveness of current trade relations between the countries: “At present, the trade turnover between the six independent Turkic speaking states is USD 1 trillion 150 billion. This figure does not reflect the potential of our countries. We must strengthen our economic ties and increase trade turnover”. He outlined a number of initiatives to further intensify the integration processes between the Turkic world countries, “Transport and communications should become the basis for the development of our economic strength... In 2020, we plan to double the transit traffic through Kazakhstan and by 2050 – to increase it 10 times. In future, it is planned to bring up the cargo traffic throughout the country’s territory to 50 million tons per year”<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, the historical ties, commonality of goals and objectives, the similarity of problems faced by the Turkic-speaking countries are among the important factors which unite the Turkic peoples. As a condition for regional integration, there is an intention to integrate all the Turkic peoples within the single space, and most importantly – the ensuring of adequate and worthy representation of interests of the Turkic peoples in the association, including through the consolidated advocacy of these interests.

However, nowadays the process of integration of the Turkic countries faces a number of challenges, among which one should point out to the following.

First, the CCTS has not been entered in by Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which means that the Turkic Council does not involve the majority of the Turkic population of Central Asia. Moreover, Turkmenistan enjoys the largest in the region and second in the world after Russia natural gas reserves, the export of which could become a locomotive for economic integration.

Second, the basic problem of the Turkic world lies in the lack of common borders. While Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan border each other, then the Caspian Sea separates them from Azerbaijan. And actually even Azerbaijan has no common border with Turkey. In a small area, Turkey borders Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, which, however, is separated from Azerbaijan’s main territory by Armenia.

Third, the members of the Turkic Council have differing economic weight. In terms of GDP, Turkey almost three times outstrips Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan taken together. Turkey, due to its economic potential, will undoubtedly play a key role within the Turkic world.

<sup>5</sup> V. Osipov, *Rasshiryaya Gorizonty Sotrudnichestva* // Kazaxstanskaya Pravda – 31 Dekabrya 2013 Goda, 347 (27621), p. 4.



Therefore, the implementation of the principle of equitable integration faces severe obstacles in the form of considerable differences in economic potentials.






Fourth, the economic inequality has political consequences as well. The degree of attractiveness of such a Turkic integration directly depends on the practical implementation of the principle of equality, i.e., the inadmissibility of the hegemony of any country despite the natural difference in impact on this process of varying potentials of separate Turkic peoples and countries.

Fifth, as a pivot for Turkic integration, there has traditionally been a humanitarian component, within which the central question lies in a common language, including written one. As a rule, the need for its introduction is justified by the references to the once existed unified cultural and historical community. However, there are certain problems with the adoption of the Latin alphabet by all Turkic states.

Sixth, despite the fact that the idea of creation of a free trade zone has been discussed repeatedly and at various levels, according to many experts, for the foreseeable future the “Turkic integration” can hardly become an analogue and what is more alternative to, say, the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Most experts estimate the probability of creation of such an association as at any rate questionable. To date, none of the Turkic states is able to assume the role of the guiding center and the locomotive of economic integration. Therefore, as one of the main goals of establishment of the Turkic Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking states, there is declared the creation of proper conditions for economic and political integration of the Turkic states.

Thus, the integration initiatives embodied in the Turkic Council indicate, on the one hand, the formation of a new civilizational paradigm of the Turkic world, but on the other – the fairly large discrepancies between the Turkic states.

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