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ON CERTAIN INTERESTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE CASPIAN REGION

Abstract. This article examines current trends in the development of the Caspian region. The primary focus is placed on the role of the Republic of Kazakhstan as one of the key actors actively involved in regional integration and ensuring the region's environmental security. The authors analyze the degree of involvement of various states in the political and economic processes of the region and present a classification of national interests based on concentric «zones» of geopolitical influence. The article emphasizes the importance of strengthening mechanisms for collective decision-making, environmental monitoring, and coordination of economic projects.

Keywords: *Caspian region, environmental security, sustainable development, international cooperation.*

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ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫ МЕН РЕСЕЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯСЫНЫҢ КАСПИЙ АЙМАҒЫНДАҒЫ КЕЙБІР МҮДДЕЛЕРІ ТУРАЛЫ

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада Каспий аймағының дамуындағы қазіргі үрдістер қарастырылады. Негізгі назар Қазақстан Республикасының өңірлік интеграцияға белсенді қатысушы және Каспий аймағының экологиялық қауіпсіздігін қамтамасыз етудегі негізгі акторлардың бірі ретіндегі рөліне аударылған. Авторлар әртүрлі мемлекеттердің аймақтың саяси және экономикалық үдерістеріне тартылу дәрежесін талдап, геосаяси ықпал ету «белдеулері» бойынша ұлттық мүдделердің жіктемесін ұсынады. Мақалада ұжымдық шешім қабылдау механизмдерін, экологиялық мониторингті және экономикалық жобаларды үйлестіруді күшейтудің маңыздылығы атап өтіледі.

Түйін сөздер: Каспий аймағы, экологиялық қауіпсіздік, тұрақты даму, халықаралық ынтымақтастық.

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О НЕКОТОРЫХ ИНТЕРЕСАХ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАЗАХСТАН И РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ В КАСПИЙСКОМ РЕГИОНЕ

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются современные тенденции развития Каспийского региона. Основное внимание уделяется роли Республики Казахстан как одного из ключевых акторов, который активно участвует в региональной интеграции и обеспечении экологической безопасности региона. Авторами анализируется степень вовлеченности различных государств в политику и экономику региона, представлена классификация интересов вовлечённых стран по «поясам» геополитического влияния. Подчёркивается важность укрепления механизмов коллективного принятия решений, экологического мониторинга и координации экономических проектов.

Ключевые слова: Каспийский регион, экологическая безопасность, устойчивое развитие, международное сотрудничество.

INTRODUCTION

In recent scientific publications on the Caspian region, many new questions have emerged regarding its future development, possible scenarios, and the

factors that shape the nature of relations among the Caspian littoral states. Five countries are located along the Caspian coastline:

- in the northwest and west — Russia (Astrakhan Region, Dagestan, and Kalmykia; coastline length: 695 km);
- in the east and northeast — Kazakhstan (2,320 km);
- in the southeast — Turkmenistan (1,200 km);
- in the southwest — Azerbaijan (955 km);
- in the south — Iran (724 km) (TASS 2019).

In August 2021, three years had passed since the signing of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea. The adoption of this document at the Fifth Summit of the Heads of the Caspian Littoral States brought greater clarity to the development of the Caspian region and opened up new opportunities for cooperation, particularly in the economic sphere. The Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea was signed by the presidents of the littoral states. Regarding economic activity on the seabed, it was agreed that «the delimitation of the seabed and subsoil of the Caspian Sea into sectors shall be carried out by agreement between neighboring and opposite states, taking into account generally recognized principles and norms of international law, in order to realize their sovereign rights to the use of subsoil resources and other lawful economic activities related to the exploration of the seabed and subsoil» (Zhil'tsov et al. 2018).

The degree of involvement of various states in the economy and politics of the Caspian region can be divided into several «zones». The first zone includes the five littoral states: Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. The second «zone» includes countries through which oil and gas pipelines and other communications pass or may pass. These countries include Georgia, Turkey, and Bulgaria. Their influence lies in the policies they implement regarding the transit of energy resources, which affects the feasibility of their extraction in the region. The third «zone» includes countries that are somehow connected to the region, use its resources, or have other types of interests. These include Ukraine, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Armenia, Uzbekistan, and others. There is also a fourth «zone» of countries whose influence extends to the global level. These include the United States, which has both economic and political-strategic interests in the region, as well as the European Union and China, whose interests were previously limited to the economic sphere but have now expanded due to the need to strengthen their positions in strategically important regions of the world. Recently, India and Pakistan have become more active due to their interest in redirecting energy supplies to their direction and diversifying them (Burtsev 2018).

The Republic of Kazakhstan's participation in the implementation of international standards is reflected in the ratification of international treaties, agreements, and conventions in the field of natural resource management and environmental protection.

The country has ratified a significant number of conventions related to the protection of key components of the biosphere—water, air, the ozone layer, biodiversity—while also working to harmonize national legislation with international standards. Kazakhstan's work on joining international environmental conventions and agreements began in 1993 with its accession to the World Meteorological Organization's Convention, and today the republic is a party to more than 30 international conventions and their protocols.

The goal of these international agreements is to ensure public participation in decision-making processes related to environmental protection and to expand the accessibility of environmental information. One of the most important issues today is the protection of the Caspian Sea environment, including the conservation, preservation, restoration, and sustainable and rational use of its biological resources (Safinov, Kulmamirova, and Illeritskii 2020). The Republic of Kazakhstan is located along the coastline that stretches across the northern, northeastern, and eastern parts of the Caspian Sea, with a total length of 2,320 kilometers.

In 2018, the Republic of Kazakhstan signed, at the interstate level, the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in the Transboundary Context to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Caspian Sea Marine Environment. In the same year, an expert mission of the UNECE took place in Astana to prepare the third review of Kazakhstan's environmental performance (EPR).

Kazakhstan is currently actively involved in the integration processes within the Caspian region. «Kazakhstan is capable of influencing the resolution of pressing issues related to economic integration in the region, primarily because, first, it relies on the strategy of Eurasian integration; second, it participates in all regional alliances interested in the sustainability of the Caspian economic system—CIS, the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), as well as the SCO and the CSTO; and third, it can act as an intermediary between the EU, Central Asian countries, China, and other countries in the region» (Azattyq.org 2018). It should be noted that in November 2016, the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation was adopted, which redefined the priorities of the country's foreign policy course. The document places

significant emphasis on the regional component, including the Caspian region. Thus, the concept states that «Russia's approaches to cooperation with its partners in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions will be built with a view to maintaining adherence to the goals and principles of the Charter of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, as well as taking into account the need to strengthen the cooperation mechanism among the five Caspian states based on decisions collectively made by them» (President of the Russian Federation 2016).

A favorable political and diplomatic space has been created in the Caspian region thanks to the activities of the littoral states. There has emerged a particular need for specific projects that take into account the interests and needs of each littoral state. Therefore, this topic is highly relevant, requiring discussion of existing and potential problems, and exploring possible solutions.

Kazakh political scientist Eduard Poletayev, in one of his speeches, expressed the opinion that thanks to the signing of the so-called Caspian Constitution, a clearer geopolitical situation has now emerged around the sea.

«Real «Caspianism» is taking shape under the well-known motto: «The Caspian is the sea of friendship.» The Caspian region is acquiring the status of a specific geopolitical space. Of course, as a marker, it has not yet become as solidified as, for example, the South Caucasus or Central Asia. However, the fact remains. For several years now, there have been preconditions for integration initiatives among the Caspian states. The holding of Caspian forums is evidence of this» he said (Sputnik Kazakhstan 2021). A favorable political and diplomatic space has already been created in the Caspian region thanks to the activities of the heads of state. Now, specific projects are needed, which should be initiated by the regional governments, TNCs, and other corporations. The activation of economic and cultural agents' activities is important. Undoubtedly, each Caspian country has its own interests, which do not always align. However, all actors recognize the importance of discussing issues and seeking solutions.

The Republic of Kazakhstan's participation in the implementation of international standards is reflected in the ratification of international treaties, agreements, and conventions in the fields of natural resource management and environmental protection. The country actively promotes initiatives to preserve the Caspian Sea ecosystem, including programs for monitoring water quality, biodiversity, and reducing pollution levels. Special attention is given to preventing oil spills, as Kazakhstan, with its extensive coastline

and significant offshore hydrocarbon extraction potential, is objectively interested in the sustainable development of the marine space.

At the same time, Kazakhstan plays an important role in the region's energy transit architecture. The implementation of projects such as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route and participation in the «One Belt, One Road» initiative strengthen the country's role as a key connecting link between Europe and Asia. Thus, Kazakhstan not only develops its extraction and processing infrastructure but also strives to integrate it into international logistics chains, taking into account environmental requirements and principles of sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

The Caspian region continues to be a space where various vectors of interest intersect — from purely economic to military-strategic. Despite the 2018 Convention being signed, unresolved issues remain, such as the final delimitation of the seabed, regulation of military presence, and coordination of environmental protection efforts. In these circumstances, the key challenge remains the need to build a coordinated policy that considers the interests of all littoral states, ensuring a balance between resource usage and the preservation of the natural environment.

Thus, the development of the Caspian region in the post-convention period has acquired a more structured and institutionalized character. The littoral states, particularly Kazakhstan, are demonstrating a desire for cooperation aimed at sustainable resource management, safe resource extraction, and the expansion of infrastructure links. However, the successful implementation of these goals requires continuous political dialogue, a scientifically grounded approach to environmental issues, and the establishment of interaction mechanisms with countries in the second, third, and fourth «zones» of interest. The future of the region will largely depend on the ability of states to balance national interests with the collective responsibility for preserving the unique ecosystem of the Caspian Sea.

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