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JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA

Current research aims to provide basic information and analysis about Japan's foreign policy towards Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) from the 90s of the XX century (after the declaration of the independence of Central Asian countries) till the present.¹ The study focuses on Japan's image, interests and strategy in Central Asia, bilateral and multilateral cooperation, influence of the other countries concerned.

The image of Japan in Central Asia

The image of Japan in Central Asia is mainly positive. In contrast of Japan's relations with East Asian countries, there are no negative emotions, related with history and historical issues in Japanese-Central Asian interaction. On the contrary, according to the reserchers' opinion, people in Central Asia have positive memories of the Japanese prisoners of war, sent in the region by the government of USSR during the WWII, where they

¹ This research is inspired by and dedicate to Beyshen Dairbekov from the Kyrgyz Republic.

participated in the construction of various infrastructure projects. Also there is a feeling of sympathy among the people in Central Asia to Japan because of its historical role as the first and the only victim of nuclear bombing. Later the change of Japan's image after WWII evokes transformation of the feeling of sympathy into admiration of its old history, specific culture and its world technological and economic leadership not only in Central Asia, but in many other regions, as well.² In addition, the positive image of Japan in Central Asia follows from its specific diplomacy in the region. Japan uses non-military, but economic and cultural means that give an impression of an open diplomacy in the region without any hidden aims. Japan also sticks to the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs and does not criticize the process of democratization or internal political issues in the region, as for example, US does. Besides, Japan's conception of democratization of the region does not coincide completely with the one of the West. Japan supports the so called "democracy through progress" - the promotion of socio-economic progress will lead to the region's internal transformation. The origin of the reforms should be from inside, not imposed from outside. Furthermore, Japan's policy of preserving the historical and the cultural inheritance and the environment of Central Asia is positively appreciated among the people of Central Asia.³

Japan's interests in Central Asia

There are various opinions and even contradictions if Japan has its own interests in Central Asia. Most of the researchers agree that due to its

² *Dadabaev, Timur*. The Evolution of Japanese Diplomacy towards Central Asia since the Collapse of the Soviet Union. – In: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2011: Yearbook on the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*, Vol. 17, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012, p. 441; *Dobrinskaya Olga*. Japan's Soft Power in Central Asia www.japanstudies.ru. Japan conducted a special poll about its own image in four Central Asian countries – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan between February and March 2015. 300 people at the age of 18 or above in each country participated in the poll. 85% of them answered that they feel Japan as a friend and 78% answered that they feel Japan close to themselves. The participants (14%) think that Japan is reliable country (Russia (75%), PRC and South Korea (3%). 23% of the participants believe that Russia is their countries' most important partner. 35% of them believe that this is PRC and 23% of them think that this is Japan. 75% of them think that it will be beneficial for their countries to deepen their relations with Japan and have positive attitude towards the dialogue Central Asia+Japan. Concretely about Japan 72% of the participants answered that Japan is economic and technological leader, 35% answered that Japan is a country with old traditions and culture. 40% of the participants believe that their countries and Japan need to cooperate in the field of science and technology, 25% in the field of culture and 21% voted for economic partnership. 90% of them have positive attitude to the investment of Japanese companies in their countries. - *Opinion Poll: Image of Japan in the Central Asia Region (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan)*, April, 2015, Public Diplomacy Strategy Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan.

³ *Dobrinskaya*, Japan's Soft Power...

geographical remoteness Japan's interests in Central Asia are focused basically on the economic (energy cooperation), the humanitarian (socio-economic and educational development) and partly in the political (democratization of the region) fields.⁴ Some of the researchers give an opinion that Japan has no concrete and clear geostrategic interests in the region and that its interests are to the great extent limited (even its economic interests). Nevertheless, they notice activization of Japan's foreign policy towards Central Asia during the last decade.⁵ Dadabaev, for example, admits the importance of Central Asia for Japan, but believes that Japan lacks concrete aims, political will and dynamism to realize its diplomacy in the region. He also draws attention to the absence of enough efficiency of Japanese aid to the region in some cases.⁶ According to Len Japan has more general aims to Central Asia in comparison with Russia and PRC because of its geographical remoteness. Due to the geographical proximity to Central Asia, Russia and PRC have similar problems like political separatism, religious fundamentalism and drug traffic, while Japan strives to make the region more open for the international community. According to Nurgaliev and Shaymergenov the specifics of Japan's foreign policy in Central Asia are geographical and cultural remoteness, lack of Japan's military power, rare knowledge of Japanese language in Central Asia, lack of direct common interests in the security field. These specifics make hard for Japan to increase its influence in the region, compared to

⁴ *Dadabaev, Timur. Models of Cooperation in Central Asia and Japan's Central Asian Engagements: Factors, Determinants and Trends. – In: Japan's Silk Road Diplomacy. Paving the Road Ahead. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Silk Road Studies Programe. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. Washington, Stockholm, 2008, p. 130-131; Mangi, Lutfullah. The Political and Economical Strategy of Japan towards Central Asia. Visiting Research Fellow at the Social Research Center, American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic from July 15, 2011 to August 8, 2011, p. 1. <https://src.auca.kg>.*

⁵ *Томохико, Уяма. Политика Японии в отношении Казахстана: Есть ли "стратегия"? – В: Стратегические перспективы: ведущие державы, Казахстан и центральноазиатский узел. Лондон, 2003, с. 197-224; Dadabaev, The Evolution of Japanese Diplomacy..., p. 442; Khoshimov, Valijon. Foreign policy of Japan and Central Asia. Jiiia visiting research fellow, The Japan Institute of Foreign Affairs. www2.jiia.or.jp; Nurgaliev, Marat., Timur Shaymergenov. Japanese diplomacy makes new headway in Central Asia: Its problems, expectations and prospects. – In: *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No 6 (48), 2007, p. 126.*

⁶ *Dadabaev, Models of Cooperation..., p. 139. In the case of Japan's aid in the education sphere, for example, Dadabaev poses a question if the young people in Central Asia, studying Japanese language and culture can find a job and realize their professional potential. In the agriculture sphere Dadabaev notes that Japan provides modern equipment, but its use is more complicated in comparison with the soviet one and often local people find it difficult to use. Dadabaev, Models of Cooperation..., p. 135.*

Russia and PRC.⁷ However, according to Len Japan's strategy in the region does not aim to decrease the Sino-Russian influence, but to the contrary, Japanese aid to Central Asia is beneficial for Russia and PRC, as well.⁸

The fact that Japan achieves limited results in Central Asia and that its strategy is influenced by other external factors does not mean that Japan lacks its own interests in the region. Current research defends the opinion that Japan has its own interests and strategy to Central Asia and that the region is of great importance for Japan. Geographical remoteness, for sure, exert influence on Japan's interests in the region. For example, Japan's priorities in East or South East Asia are more serious than these in Central Asia. However, the importance of East Asia for Japan does not belittle the significance of Central Asia. On the contrary, there is direct connection between Japan's interests in Central Asia and Japan's policy towards Russia, PRC and Eurasia as a whole.

The location of Central Asia in Eurasia, as a connection between Asia and Europe predetermines the importance of the region for Japan.⁹ One of the main conditions for the progressive development of Japan, and because of that, major fundament of its foreign policy, is the establishment of peaceful, stable and economically beneficial environment, surrounding the country. Therefore, Central Asia is significant for the security and the economic development of Japan. Intertwining various interests of the superpowers, further makes Central Asia region of priority for Japan. Central Asia could connect Japan with Europe and Asia. Moreover, the countries in the region have close relations with Russia and PRC, which are of vital significance for Japan's security and economic development. Thus, Japan's efforts in Central Asia could lead to the improvement of its relations with Russia and PRC. Japan also could cooperate with Russia for the development of Eurasia and Central Asia, as a part of it.¹⁰ With a view to Japanese-Russian cooperation in Eurasia, Japan's strategy towards

⁷ Nurgaliev, Marat., Timur Shaymergenov, p. 130.

⁸ Len, Christopher. Understanding Japan's Central Asian Engagement. – In: *Japan's Silk Road Diplomacy. Paving the Road Ahead*. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Silk Road Studies Programme. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. Washington, Stockholm, 2008, p. 44-46.

⁹ Khoshimov, Foreign policy of Japan....,

¹⁰ Millar, Jonatan. Japan, the Central Asia and the US Rebalance to Asia-Pacific. – In: *Pacific Forum SCIC*, No 86. Honolulu, Hawaii (Dec. 20, 2012).

Central Asia could and should be examined in a broader context, as a part of Japan's strategy towards Eurasia.

Likewise, Central Asia is important for Japan, considering of Japan's ambition to play more active role in the global international relations. For example, Japan highly appreciates Central Asian countries' support for its permanent membership in the UN Security Council. The absence of any political and ideological contradictions or mutual negative images between Japan and the countries in Central Asia is another positive prerequisite for the development of beneficial partnership in order to resolve regional issues and to cooperate in the framework of the international community. In terms of Japan cooperation with Central Asian states in fight against terrorism, religious extremism, drug traffic, preservation of the environment are key aspects of the mutual regional and international partnership. The political and the economic advance of the region is crucial for Japan, in order to implement the potential of joint cooperation in various fields. Therefore, the maintenance of stable democratic societies in the region is a priority for Japan and a part of Japan's strategy towards Central Asia. Japan has interest of increasing its political influence in the region, but does not use political or military means for this purpose. However, economic, cultural and humanitarian means of Japan's diplomacy create favourable circumstances for building a mutual trust and long-lasting partnership.¹¹ Besides, Japan will not take the risk to worsen its relations with Russia and PRC, which would probably react with strong opposition to the possible increasing Japanese political influence or unlikely military cooperation. Although according to the researchers Japan is not a part of the so called "great game in Central Asia", Japan has interest to prevent the deepening of Sino-Russian penetration in Central Asia or at least to avoid isolation of the region from an open cooperation.¹² Therefore, Central Asia as a secure and stable region, but open for cooperation is a main priority for Japan.

Japan's interests in the economic and the cultural fields are not less important than those in the security and the political sphere. Most of the researchers focus on Japanese interest for energy cooperation. Interests in energy cooperation, however, can be examined in a broader perspective – as an economic cooperation. Due to its lack of raw resources, key priority

¹¹ *Dadabaev*, *Models of Cooperation ...*, p. 133.

¹² *Mangi*, *The Political and Economical Strategy of Japan...*, p. 1; *Len*, *Understanding Japan's...*, p. 44-46.

for Japan is exploitation of and trade with raw materials.¹³ In Central Asia Japan has interest mainly in resources like oil, gas, uranium (needed for the development of nuclear energy), hydrocarbon (needed for the development of high-technological products) and rare metals. Central Asia has great potential in the near future to become a serious and stable market for the Japanese trade products, as well.¹⁴ The energy cooperation is of significant importance for Japan, which would lead to the decrease of country's dependence on oil imports from the Middle East and rare metals from the PRC¹⁵. This is a key priority even more, if it is taken into account the unstable political situation or the regular political crises between Japan and PRC. Japan is also interested in building and developing a renewable energy sources in cooperation with Central Asian countries.¹⁶

In order to materialize the great potential of Japanese-Central Asian economic relations, there are several conditions needed like the stable political development, the maintenance of security and economic growth, the improvement of the living standard, the increase of the purchasing capacity, the regional integration, the cooperation between Central Asian states and neighbouring countries and the international community. Therefore, these aspects of cooperation became a key priorities for Japan's policy in the region. In addition, the building of a wide modern infrastructure network, supposed to connect Central Asian countries themselves, and also

¹³ For example, important project is the development of oil in Kashagan, Kazakhstan. Japanese company INPEX holds 33% share in this project since 2001. *Shimao, Kuniko*. Japan's Energy Strategy towards West and Central Asia under Contemporary Globalization. – In: *Japan's Silk Road Diplomacy. Paving the Road Ahead*. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Silk Road Studies Programme. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. Washington, Stockholm, 2008, p. 167. Japanese companies participated in energy projects mainly in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. *Shimao*, p. 171.

¹⁴ From the Japanese point of view Central Asia has great economic potential (around 50 millions people, resources, young and educated population). *Tetsuya, Hirose*. Japan's Diplomacy in Central Asia: The Perspective of a Working-Level Policy Maker. – In *Japan's Silk Road Diplomacy. Paving the Road Ahead*. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Silk Road Studies Programme. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. Washington, Stockholm, 2008, p. 180.

¹⁵ Japan is one of the greatest importers of rare metals and PRC – one of the greatest exporters in the world. According to *Mangi* Japan has been searching for a new rare metals resource, in order to compensate imports from PRC since Sino-Japanese relations became worse (resulted in the imposition of embargo in 2010 for the export of rare metals for Japan). According to *Mangi* if Japan cooperates with Central Asian countries in building a pipeline through Central Asia to Siberia, it will avoid PRC, Pakistan and Iran. South Korea also can participate in this kind of project. *Mangi*, p. 5; *Sadykova, R.* Japan's policy towards the Countries of Central Asia. – In: *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, International Journal of Social, Education, Economics and Management Engineering* Vol:7, No:8, 2013, p. 975; *Masaki, Hisane*. Japan Joins the Energy Race in Central Asia. – In: *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*. www.japanfocus.org.

¹⁶ *Millar*, Op. cit..

to connect the region with the external world and consequently to expand regional trade relations is of main interest of Japan. According to Nurgaliev and Shaymergerov there is even opportunity for Central Asia to replace Russian Far East and to become an raw sources alternative for Japan.¹⁷ On that account Japan has interests in energy cooperation, in balancing Sino-Russian influence, in supporting the US policy (fight against terrorism, support for the democracy and human rights). According to aforementioned authors Japan is worried because of the growing security cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and because of the leading participation of Russian and Chinese companies in energy sector in Central Asia.¹⁸ However, these could be considered as a stimulating factors for activization of Japan's policy in the region.

In the cultural field the main priorities of Japan in Central Asia are related with the establishment of long-lasting friendly ties and the spreading of the Japanese language and culture in the region. The cultural diplomacy is one of the key fundamentals of the Japanese foreign policy, which often goes before the foundation of stable political and economic relations. Considering that, the Japanese government makes efforts to promote mutual acquaintance, to support cultural, technological, educational and tourist exchange, to familiarize people in Central Asia with the Japanese history, culture and language. An important aspect is also creating a stable friendly interpersonal ties to assist realization of Japan's policy in Central Asia. Eventually it could be concluded that Japan has its own interests in Central Asia in various fields like politics, security, economics and culture. The process of formulating a Japanese strategy towards the region and its transformation through the last decades demonstrate clearly the importance of Central Asia for Japan's foreign policy.

Japan's strategy towards Central Asia

According to Len Japan's policy towards Central Asia can be separated in three main periods: initional stage (1992-1997), "Silk Road diplomacy" as a part of Eurasian diplomacy of Japanese Prime Minister

¹⁷ Nurgaliev, Marat., Timur Shaymergenov, p. 126.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 127-130.

Ryutaro Hashimoto (1997-2004) and the dialogue Central Asia+Japan (2004 till today).¹⁹

Japan's strategy towards Central Asia could be placed in forementioned chronological framework indeed. The possibility of dividing it into different stages signifies that Japan's strategy actually has changed and developed in time. The beginning of the Japan's policy to the region was marked by several official acts: the recognition of the new independent states in 1991, the official visit of the Japanese Foreign Minister - Michio Watanabe in 1993 and the opening of the first embassies of Japan in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in 1993. At this initial stage it is hard to speak about clearly formulated strategy. Japan adopted two main approaches to the region – perception of the new independent states as a part of the larger Eurasian space and individual approach to each country separately.²⁰ Japan concentrated its strategy at several basic points – promoting of a political dialogue and economic cooperation²¹, cultural exchange²² and providing a financial and technological aid through the Official Development Assistance (ODA), in order to help the process of transition to democracy and market economy²³, as well as to support the incorporation of the region in the international community.²⁴

Even at this initial stage it can be noticed the different approach of Japan, compared with the other countries. Despite that Japan and the Western countries seemed to share common values and purposes for the democratization of Central Asia, Japan had different view about the process of democratization – the so called Japanese (East Asian) model of reforming as an alternative to the Western shock model. Japanese

¹⁹ Len, p. 33; *Tetsuya, Hirose*. Central Asia and Japan – Japan's Silk Road Diplomacy. Presentation paper for the "International Conference on Central Asia and North Cyprus Relations", 2008 in TRNC. <http://dausam.emu.edu.tr/publication/abstract/ICCANC.17.pdf>. Most of the reaserchers agree with this chronology.

²⁰ *Dadabaev*, The Evolution of Japanese Diplomacy..., p. 442.

²¹ Bilateral Japanese-Central Asian economic commettees had been established in 1993. Representatives of Japanese companies and representatives of the Central Asian governments were the members of the commettees. *Tetsuya*, Japan's Diplomacy in Central Asia..., p. 182.

²² Through the Japan Foundation. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

²³ Japan begun to grant financial support in 1993, when the new independent countries were included in the list of the developing countries. Besides, after the acceptance of the Central Asian countries in European bank for reconstruction and development Japan assisted their acceptance in Asian bank for development too in purpose to take loans from the both banks. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

“democracy through progress” promotes slow and gradual reforms, taking into account of the cultural and the historical characteristics of the region and focuses on efforts in reforming the region itself from inside, as a consequence of economic and human resources development.²⁵ According to Tetsuya an important element of Japan’s strategy to Central Asia is an equal attitude to each country, instead of concentrating efforts in the countries – oil producers (the approach of the Western countries).²⁶ Japanese diplomats believed that long-lasting strategy for building a mutual trust is more significant for Japan than just acquiring raw materials. Also they believed that independent Central Asia, free from an external control is the highest priority for Japan’s national interests in the region.²⁷ Japan’s significant interest in the region can be examined in the Diplomatic Bluebook, including information about the internal political processes in Central Asian countries, their relationship with Russia, PRC, US and the other countries concerned in the region, as well as Japanese attitude to all these processes and developments in Central Asia.²⁸

For the first time serious efforts to formulate clear strategy towards Central Asia made the Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in 1997, when he presents his idea for a new Eurasian diplomacy, including

²⁵ Tetsuya, *Japan’s Diplomacy in Central Asia...*, p. 183; Uyama, Tomohiko. *Japan’s Diplomacy towards Central Asia in the Context of Japan’s Asian Diplomacy and Japan-U.S. Relations.* – In: *Japan’s Silk Road Diplomacy. Paving the Road Ahead.* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Silk Road Studies Programme. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. Washington, Stockholm, 2008, p. 108-109.

²⁶ Tetsuya, *Japan’s Diplomacy in Central Asia...*, p. 182.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 183; Kawato, Akio. *What is Japan up to in Central Asia?* – In: *Japan’s Silk Road Diplomacy. Paving the Road Ahead.* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Silk Road Studies Programme. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. Washington, Stockholm, 2008, p. 29.

²⁸ *Diplomatic Blue book* for 1992, Section 4. The Former Soviet Union. 4. Situations in the Former Soviet Union (except Russia) 4-3. Central Asian Region.

²⁸ *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 1996, Regional Developments, The New Independent States; *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 1998, Chapter III. Regional Developments, E. Russia and The New Independent States, 2. The New Independent States; *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2000, Chapter 1. General Overview, B. Major events in 1999, 5. Abduction of Japanese nationals in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan; *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2001, Chapter I. General Overview, D. Japan’s Main Bilateral Relations, 4. Japan-Russia relations, e) Japan-OSCE Conference on Comprehensive Security in Central Asia; *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2002, Chapter III. Principal Regional Conditions, E. The Russian Federation and the New Independent States, (e) The New Independent States (NIS); *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2003, Chapter 1. Overview: The International Situation and Japanese Diplomacy in 2002, E. The Russian Federation and the New Independent States, (h) The Situation in the NIS Countries and Japanese Diplomacy; *Diplomatic Blue book* for 2004, Chapter 2. Regional diplomacy, E. The Russian Federation, Central Asia and the Caucasus, 2. Central Asia and the Caucasus; *Diplomatic Blue Book for 2005*, Chapter 2. Regional diplomacy, E. The Russian Federation, Central Asia and the Caucasus, 2. Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Russia, PRC and Central Asia.²⁹ According to Hashimoto's point of view the peace and the prosperity of Eurasia are of great importance for Japan and Japan as an Asian country should play a leading role in the Eurasian affairs. Japan need to improve its relations with Eurasian countries, in order to support their political and economic stability and their incorporation in the international community.³⁰ This approach was a part of the so called *multilayered approach* of Japan towards Russia, which was supposed to improve Japanese-Russian relations.³¹ Moreover, at that time Japan strived for cooperation not only with Russia, but with PRC in Central Asia, as well.³² As a consequence of the new Eurasian diplomacy in the summer of 1997 the so called "Obuchi mission" (at the head with the member of the Diet - Keizo Obuchi) was sent in Russia and Central Asia. The "Obuchi mission" travelled to Russia, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (June 28-July 9, 1997) to discuss Japanese-Russian relations and ways for cooperation between Japan and Central Asian states.³³ Hashimoto's initiative developed into a Silk Road Action Plan, formulated by the Ministry of foreign affairs, the Ministry of trade and industry and the Ministry of finances of Japan, published in 1998. It determined three basic points – intensifying the political dialogue, providing a support through development of the economy and natural resources and assistance for ensuring the democracy and the stability in Central Asia.³⁴

²⁹ Reseachers often make direct connection between the activization of Japan's diplomacy in Central Asia and the establishment of the Shanghai Five in 1996 (Shanghai Cooperation Organization after 2001) and the foundation of a contact group SCO-Afganistan. The result is forming of a regional organization without Japan and US.

³⁰ *Len*, p. 31.

³¹ *Yuasa, Takeshi*. Central Asia in the Context of Japanese-Russian Relations. – In: *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Volume 8, No 2 (2010). Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Sil Road Studies Program, p. 122.

³² At that time it was considered that PRC could be involved for regional cooperation in Central Asia. Therefore, for example, in 1992 joint Sino-Japanese gas exploration begun. "Mitsubishi" together with China national oil corporation and Chinese company "Exxon's Esso" started exploration of the opportunity to build 7 thousand of km. pipeline from Turkmenistan via Kazakhstan to Western China. Japan's national oil corporation also declared in 1993 its intention to explore the opportunity for gas and oil supply from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. There were an idea for building a gas and oil pipelines from Central Asia via China to Japan. *Len*, p. 34-35, 37.

³³ Obuchi's report recommended granting an economic aid to Central Asia, training a future specialists on Central Asia, establishing of an embassies of Japan in Central Asia and visiting the region from Japanese officials at the highest level (which happened in 2006). Japan's aid for Central Asia increased from 2,57 mill. doll. in 1993 to 24,227 mill. doll., showing the growing interest of Japan in the region. *Yuasa, Takeshi*. Japan's Multilateral Approach towards Central Asia. – In: *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, No 16, 2007, p. 69-70; 75.

³⁴ *Dadabaev*, The Evolution of Japanese Diplomacy..., p. 444-445.

The hostage crisis in Kyrgyz Republic in 1999³⁵ and the terrorist attack against US in 2001 urged Japan to give a new meaning to the security cooperation and anti-terroristic measures in Central Asia. The acts of terrorism lead Japan to add a new important element in its strategy towards Central Asia – the security cooperation in the whole region, but also the peace, the stability and the security of Afganistan as a key factor for the peace, stability and security of Central Asia. This attitude towards Afganistan, connecting Central Asia with South Asia and Indian ocean is still a question of a present interest of Japan. Japan has granted a serious amounts of financial and technical aid for reconstruction of Afganistan and the process of its stabilization is an important shere of partnership between Japan and Central Asian countries.³⁶

In 2004 it begun a new era for Japan's strategy to Central Asia. The joint dialogue Central Asia+Japan had been established. This new initiative was supposed to deepen Japan's relations with Central Asian countries not only bilaterally, but also multilaterally.³⁷ Japan declared its strive to political dialogue, interregional cooperation, promotion of business, intellectual dialogue, cultural and human exchange.³⁸ In 2006 the Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, in order to create favorable conditions for the development of the bilateral and multilateral partnership through the Dialogue.

At the end of the same year the Japanese Prime Minister Shindzo Abe in his speech talked about a new strategy, aiming at building of an "Arc

³⁵ In 1999 Islamic antigovernment group, acting in Uzbekistan, took hostages, including Japanese geologists, working for Japan International Cooperation Agency. *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2000, Chapter 1. General Overview, B. Major events in 1999, 5. Abduction of Japanese nationals in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

³⁶ Afganistan was invited as a guest on the Second dialogue Central Asia+Japan in June 2006. Japan also granted special aid for Afganistan's neighbouring countries – Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Japan is one of the main donors for Afganistan. Between 2001 and 2009 it granted 1,79 bill. doll. for humanitarian aid, supporting the democratization process, reforms in the security field and the reconstruction of the country. 130 Japanese volunteers had worked in Afganistan till 2009. Besides, Japan supported the initiatives of the Organization for security and cooperation in Europe, in order to strenghten the custom and border control in Central Asia and Afganistan. Japan also granted large amount of financial aid to Afganistan for the development of the infrastructure, the agriculture and the human resources development sectors. *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2001, Chapter I. General Overview, D. Japan's Main Bilateral Relations, 4. Japan-Russia relations, e) Japan-OSCE Conference on Comprehensive Security in Central Asia. *Tetsuya, Japan's Diplomacy...*, p. 196; *Yuasa. Central Asia...*, p. 133.

³⁷ *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2005, Chapter 2. Regional diplomacy, E. The Russian Federation, Central Asia and the Caucasus, 2. Central Asia and the Caucasus.

³⁸ *Len*, p. 42-43.

of freedom and prosperity” in Eurasia, including Central Asia. This strategy was supposed to concentrate on values like democracy, freedom, human rights, justice and free market. Except for the Abe’s speech, at that time the Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso described Central Asia as a “corridor of peace and stability”.³⁹ In 2009 Aso again spoke about “Eurasian crossroad”, bearing in mind the construction of a transport infrastructure (roads, railroads, sea ports), which should unite Eurasia between the Pacific ocean and Europe.⁴⁰

Japan’s foreign policy in Central Asia could be characterized as the perfect example for using the so called soft power, including non-military means, in order to protect its national interests, focusing on socio-economic and humanitarian issues, using financial assistance for their development, non-interference.⁴¹ This policy has been implemented through the ODA with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)⁴² and the Japanese Centers in Central Asia.⁴³ However, Japan’s ODA policy did not stay constant and change in ODA strategy and directions could be noticed. Initially ODA was focused on the process of building a free markets, transforming into the vision of “Central Asia as one unit”. Subsequently it changed to “assistance, based on different levels of economic development” in each of Central Asian countries, or the so called “differentiated approach”.⁴⁴ Japanese observers believe that there is different economic development in Central Asian countries because of their

³⁹ *Speech* by Mr. Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Japan National Press Club "Central Asia as a Corridor of Peace and Stability", June 1, 2006.

⁴⁰ Yuasa, *Central Asia...*, p. 125.

⁴¹ *Sadykova, Raikhan*. Japan’s policy towards the Countries of Central Asia. – In: *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, International Journal of Social, Education, Economics and Management Engineering* Vol:7, No:8, 2013, p. 977; *Sadykova, Raikhan*. Topical issues of Japan’s strategy in Central Asia: view from Kazakhstan. – In: *Life Science Journal*, 2014: 11 (1), pp. 247-255.

⁴² Japan International Cooperation Agency.

⁴³ The first centers for humanitarian and technical assistance were opened in Russia and Kyrgyz Republic. Considering the cultural exchange and human resources development the Japanese Centers, opened in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in 2000 and in Kyrgyz Republic in 2003, are of significant importance. *Tetsuya*, *Japan’s Diplomacy...*, p. 179.

⁴⁴ *Evaluation of Assistance for the Transition to a Market-oriented Economy In Three Central Asian Countries (Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Uzbekistan) - Summary-February 2012*, INGÉROSEC Corporation, Third Party Evaluation Report 2011, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; *ODA White Paper 2013*, Chapter 2 Specific Initiatives of Japan’s Official Development Assistance, Section 3 Assistance for Each Region, 3. Central Asia and the Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

different interpolitical development, different approach to democratization and because of the absence of natural resources in some of the countries. That is why individual approach is necessary, in order to achieve greater efficiency of the granted aid. In general the major purposes of ODA and JICA in Central Asia are reaching a balanced socio-economic development, decreasing the regional disproportions, achieving an economic growth, based on the principles of the free market trade, increasing the living standart of people, modernization of the healthcare and education systems, reconstruction of the infrastructure and telecommunications, exploitation and export of raw resources, environment preservation, natural disaster prevention, effectively exploitation of the water and energy resources, improvement of business climate and expanding of the private sector, promoting of the small and medium-sized enterprices, industry and agriculture development, improvement of the production management and production's quality, technological exchange, remote and difficult to access areas and countryside's development, tourist development.⁴⁵ At the last Foreign Ministers Meeting in the framework of the dialogue Central Asia +Japan in 2014 Japan's aid to Central Asia was calculated 3,6 bill. doll.⁴⁶

Bilateral relations

⁴⁵ Курс помощи Республике Казахстан, *Курс помощи странам: Республика Казахстан*, Май 2012 года; *Country Assistance Evaluation of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan Summary*, March 2005, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Third-Party Evaluation (FY2004); Политика страновой помощи Республике Узбекистан, Апрель 2012 г.; *Country Assistance Evaluation of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan Summary*, March 2005, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Third-Party Evaluation (FY2004); Страновая программа помощи Кыргызской Республике, Декабрь 2012 года.; *Official Development Assistance (ODA)*, ODA by Region, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Japan's ODA Data for Kyrgyz Republic., Evaluation of Assistance for the Transition to a Market-oriented Economy in Three Central Asian Countries (Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Uzbekistan) (Third Party Evaluation) (February 2012); *Политика* страновой помощи Японии Республике Таджикистан, Декабрь 2012 г; JICA; *Kyrgyz Republic*, Annual Reports, Annual Report for 2014.www.jica.go.jp.

⁴⁶ 4-ый Токийский диалог (Тема: «Дальнейшее оснащение транспортно-логистической инфраструктуры в регионе Центральной Азии») Предметы дискуссий Февраль, 2010; Интеллектуальный диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония»: 4-ый Токийский диалог 25 февраля 2010 года в зале международных заседаний Министерства иностранных дел Обзор председателя; Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония» 4-ый Токийский диалог Основной доклад вице-министра Фукуямы 25 февраля 2010 года; "Central Asia plus Japan": The Fourth Tokyo Dialogue Programme.

Japan established diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan in 1992.⁴⁷ As a result of the political dialogue on a highest level Japan-Kazakhstan relations can be characterized as a “strategic partnership”.⁴⁸ Both countries have cooperated in fields like industrial technologies, nuclear energy, mine exploitation, transport, commercial services. Japan granted aid for overcoming the consequences of nuclear tests in Semipalatinsk and gave loans to Kazakhstan for water supply, reconstruction of airports, railroads and roads, construction of bridges and highways. Bilateral trade in 2013 was over 13 billion yen (import from Kazakhstan - 62,81 billion yen (ferrow-alloy), export to Kazakhstan - 68,07 billion yen (cars, steel pipes and tubes, machinery for constructions and mining) and Japanese direct investments in Kazakhstan were 470 billion dollars.⁴⁹ Between 2009-2013 r. Japan granted through ODA to Kazakhstan 950 thousand yen in loans, 60 thousand yen in grants and 136 thousand yen in technical cooperation.⁵⁰ For 2013 Kazakhstan received Japanese aid through JICA to the value of

⁴⁷Japan's embassy opened in Almati in 1993 and later placed in Astana in 2005. Kazakhstan's embassy opened in Tokyo in 1996. Countries and Regions. Japan-Kazakhstan relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp.

⁴⁸ *Nurgaliyeva, Lyailya*. Strategic Cooperation between Japan and Kazakhstan: A New Stage in the Strengthening of the Strategic Partnership. – In: *US-China Law Review*, Vol. 12: 364, 2015, pp. 364-387. In 1994 and 1999 the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev visited Japan and signed Japan-Kazakhstan declaration for “friendship, partnership and cooperation”. In 2007 Japan and Kazakhstan signed mutual agreement for strengthening their strategic partnership for peaceful use of nuclear energy. Besides both countries signed various agreements for increasement of uranium export for Japan, nuclear reactors technologies' cooperation, nuclear power production, natural uranium exploitation. In 2008 Nazarbaev visited Japan for the third time, when agreements for trade and investments were signed. National company of Kazakhstan Kazatomprom and Sumitomo established joint venture “Summit Atom Rare Earth Company” for construction of mines and enrichment of rare metals in East Kazakhstan. *Rakhimov, Mirzokhid*. Central Asia and Japan: Bilateral and Multilateral Relations. – In: *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 5 (2014), p. 80.

⁴⁹ Countries and Regions. Japan-Kazakhstan relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp. Japanese exports to Kazakhstan increased from 185 532 thousand dollar in 2004 to 673 521 thousand dollars in 2014. Japanese imports increased from 245 927 thousand dollars to 749 922 thousand dollars. Japan External Trade Organization, Reports and Statistics, Japanese Trade and Investment Statistics.www.jetro.go.jp.

⁵⁰ *Japan's ODA Data for Kazakhstan*, Official Development Assistance, ODA by Region, Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp. Between 2002-2008 r. amounts were respectively over 400 million dollars, over 13 million dollars and over 50 million dollars. Official Development Assistance (ODA), *Japan's ODA White Paper 2003-2009*.www.mofa.go.jp. Between 1997-2001 respectevly over 348 thousand dollars, over 30 thousand dollars and over 70 thousand dollars. Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper for 2002*, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

3,280 million yen or 18,4% from the total aid for Caucasus and Central Asia.⁵¹

Japan established diplomatic relations with Uzbekistan in 1992.⁵² As a result of the bilateral dialogue and cooperation both countries signed various agreements in the political, the economic and the cultural fields.⁵³ Japan's ODA for Uzbekistan is directed to the development of the telecommunication network, the reconstruction of the factory for train and car repairments in Tashkent, the modernization of the airports in Samarkand, Bukhara, Urgench and railroad route Tashguzar-Baisun-Kumkurgan. In 2013 bilateral trade was over 20 billion yen (exports from Uzbekistan - 9,96 billion yen (gold, cotton goods) and imports from Uzbekistan - 12 billion yen (cars, rubber products).⁵⁴ Between 2009-2013 Japan granted to Uzbekistan through ODA 1,779 thousand yen in loans,

⁵¹ JICA, Kyrgyz Republic, *Annual Reports*.www.jica.go.jp. Important projects: in loans - Project for reconstruction of the Astana airport (221,22 million dollars/1998); Projects for reconstruction of the road network in Western Kazakhstan (165,39 million dollars/2000); Project for the water supply in Astana (213,61 million dollars/2001); in grants – Project for the modernization of healthcare center in Almati (13,65 million dollars/1997); Project for the providing equipement for Language Laboratory in Kazakhstan State University for World Languages (0,39 million dollars/1997); Project for the modernization of the equipment in child medical treatment center in Astana (9,95 million dollars/1999); Project for the improvement of the healthcare in Semipalatinsk (6,48 million dollars/2000). Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper* for 2002, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁵²Japan's embassy in Tashkent opened in 1993 and the embassy of Uzbekistan in Tokyo in 1996. Countries and Regions. Japan-Uzbekistan relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp.

⁵³ During the first visit of the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov in Japan (May 1994) agreements for mutual cooperation were signed. The first meetings of the Uzbekistan-Japan and Japan-Uzbekistan economic cooperation committees were hold. Parliamentary friendship league was established in Tokyo. During the visit of Karimov in Japan (July 2002) 14 documents were signed, aiming at strenghtening the political and cultural exchange, the increasement of the Japanese investments in Uzbekistan and joint declaration for friendship and strategic partnership was signed, as well. Japanese companies are interested in exploitation of the gas and the oil fields in Ustyurt, Bukhara, Kiwa, Southwest Gisar, Surkandarya, Fergana. In 1995 "Uzbekneftegaz", "Marubeni" and the French company "Technip" signed an agreement for exploitation of the Bukhara field. In 2008 both countries signed an investment agreement. In May 2010 the government of Uzbekistan, Asian bank for development and JICA signed several documents for over 1 billion dollars as a subsidy for different sectors of the Uzbekistan's economy – water supply system in the cities in Fergana Valley, gas turbine for water-electric power plant in Talimarjan, regional roads, support for the small business. Important role for the mutual acquaintance and experience exchange in the economic, the industrial and the business fields has the Japanese center for human resource development, build in 2001 in Uzbekistan. *Rakhimov*, p. 82-83.; *Khoshimov*, pp. 23-40.

⁵⁴ Countries and Regions. Japan-Uzbekistan relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp. Japan's exports to Uzbekistan increased from over 50 thousand dollars in 2004 to over 169 thousand dollars in 2014 and Japan's imports increased from 86 thousand dollars in 2004 to 100 thousand dollars in 2013. Japan External Trade Organization, *Reports and Statistics*, Japanese Trade and Investment Statistics.www.jetro.go.jp.

226 thousand yen in grants and 165 thousand yen in technical assistance.⁵⁵ In 2013 2,708 billion yen was granted as a technical assistance to Uzbekistan through JICA (15,2% from the total assistance for Caucasus and Central Asia).⁵⁶

Japan established diplomatic relations with the Kyrgyz Republic in 1992.⁵⁷ Both countries have intensified bilateral political dialogue and consequently the economic and the cultural cooperation have expanded.⁵⁸ Main fields of the bilateral partnership include transport infrastructure, agriculture, social and human resource, human security. Joint projects are related with the reconstruction of airports and highways, the exploitation of minerals in Talas area, the modernization of the industry. Japanese volunteers actively work in the Kyrgyz Republic for the regional development, human resource development, industry and agriculture

⁵⁵ Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper for 2002*, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp. Between 2002-2008 the amounts were respectively 224 million dollars, 80 million dollars, 70 million dollars (Official Development Assistance (ODA), *Japan's ODA White Paper 2003-2009*.www.mofa.go.jp). Between 1997-2001 respectively over 425 thousand dollars, over 75 thousand dollars and over 47 thousand dollars. *Japan's ODA Data for Uzbekistan*, Official Development Assistance, ODA by Region, Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁵⁶ JICA, Kyrgyz Republic, *Annual Reports*.www.jica.go.jp. Important projects: in loans – Project for the expansion of the telecommunication network (2) (126,92 million dollars/1999); Project for the modernization of three local airports (2) (28,71 million dollars/1999); Project for the Highschool education development (63,47 million dollars/2000); in grants – Project for the improvement of the medical equipment in mother and child healthcare hospital in the middle provinces (6,76 million dollars/1997); Project for the supply of an equipment for the exhibition of the Uzbekistan State museum of arts (0,39 million dollars/1997); Project for the supply of medical equipment in Karakalpakus (4,70 million dollars/1998); Project for an urgent financial assistance (0,06 million dollars/1998); Project for the increasement of the food production (4 million dollars/1998; 5,50 million dollars/2000); Project for the supply of an audio-visual equipment for the University of World Economics and Diplomacy at the Ministry of foreign affairs of Uzbekistan (0,40 million dollars/1998); Project for the human resource development scholarship (1,27 million dollars/1999; 2,42 million dollars/2000); Project for the modernization of the equipment in the Institute of textile and light industry in Tashkent (4,40 million dollars/2000); Project for the supply of children vaccines (2,04 million dollars/2000); Project for the improvement of the emergency medical system in Tashkent (7,93 million dollars/2001). Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper for 2002*, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁵⁷ Japan's embassy in Bishkek was opened in 2003 and the embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic opened in Tokyo in 2004. Countries and Regions. Japan-Kyrgyz Republic relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp

⁵⁸ The President of the Kyrgyz Republic Askar Akaev visited Japan in 1993, in 1998 and in 2004 and the President Kurmanbek Bakiev in 2007. During the visit of the President Almazbek Atambaev in 2013 Memorandum for cooperation between the Ministry of economics of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of economics, trade and industry of Japan, Memorandum for cooperation between the Ministry of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of education, culture, sport, science and technology of Japan were signed. *Rakhimov*, p. 81; Countries and Regions. Japan-Kyrgyz Republic relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp

development in remote mountain areas.⁵⁹ In 2013 bilateral trade was over 10 billion yen (imports from the Kyrgyz Republic - 80 million yen (aluminium etc.) and exports to the Kyrgyz Republic - 9,86 billion yen (machinery, transport equipment, cars).⁶⁰ Between 2009-2013 r. Japan granted to the Kyrgyz Republic 256 million yen in loans, 166 million yen in grants and 144 million yen in technical cooperation.⁶¹ In 2013 the Kyrgyz Republic was granted technical cooperation assistance through JICA to the value of 1,503 million yen or 8,4% from the total assistance for Caucasus and Central Asia.⁶²

Japan established diplomatic relations with Tajikistan in 1991, but bilateral cooperation during the 90s of the XX century was limited, because of the civil war in Tajikistan. In 2002 Japan opened embassy in Dushanbe and the embassy of Tajikistan in Japan was opened in 2007. JICA office also was opened in Tajikistan in 2006. Japan gave assistance to Tajikistan mainly as a grant assistance because of the serious negative effects of the civil war. Although bilateral trade is with low value, intensification can be noticed during the last decade. One of the major bilateral projects is the reconstruction of the road Kurgan Tyube-Dusti, which is expected to connect the Tajikistan with Afganistan, Pakistan and the Indian ocean and to expand Tajikistan's trade.⁶³ In 2013 bilateral trade was 240 million yen (imports from Tajikistan - 110 million yen (metals etc.) and exports to

⁵⁹ *Rakhimov*, p. 81

⁶⁰ Countries and Regions. Japan-Kyrgyz Republic relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp. Bilateral trade expanded after 2004, when Japanese exports to the Kyrgyz Republic were to the value of 3,738 million dollars and Japanese imports - 499 thousand dollars. Japan External Trade Organization, *Reports and Statistics*, Japanese Trade and Investment Statistics.www.jetro.go.jp.

⁶¹ *Japan's ODA Data* for Kyrgyz Republic, Official Development Assistance, ODA by Region, Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp. The amounts between 2002-2008 were respectively over 30 million dollars, over 27 million dollars and over 53 million dollars. Official Development Assistance (ODA), *Japan's ODA White Paper* 2003-2009.www.mofa.go.jp. Between 1997-2001 the amounts were 312 thousand dollars, over 46 thousand dollars and 41 thousand dollars. Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper* for 2002, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁶² JICA, Kyrgyz Republic, *Annual Reports*.www.jica.go.jp. Important projects: in loans – Project for the reconstruction of the road Bishkek-Osh (2) (52,50 million dollars/1998); Project for the regulation of the social sector (23,18 million dollars/1999); in grants – Project for the improvement of the emergency medical system in Bishkek (8,39 million dollars/1998); Project for the increasement of the food production (3 million dollars/1998; 3,30 million dollars/2000; 3 million dollars/2001); Project for the supply of the musical instruments and sound equipment for the State conservatory of the Kyrgyz Republic (0,47 million dollars/1998). Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper* for 2002, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁶³ *Rakhimov*, p. 81-82.

Tajikistan - 130 million yen (cras, chemicals).⁶⁴ Between 2009-2013 Japan granted to Tajikistan through ODA assistance 4, 500 million yen in loans, 600000 thousand yen in grants and 900 thousand yen in technical assistance.⁶⁵ In 2013 Japan granted to Tajikistan through JICA technical assistance to the value of 847 thousand yen or 4,7% from the total amount for Caucasus and Central Asia.⁶⁶

Japan established diplomatic relations with Turkmenistan in 1992.⁶⁷ Initially Japan's assistance to Turkmenistan was limited because of the reluctance of the President of Turkmenistan Saparmurad Niyazov to accept foreign assistance. Certain improvement of the relations was reached during the mandate of the President Kurbanguli Berdimuhamedov. In 2007 the first project of Japan's ODA was started in order to assist the modernization of the railroad infrastructure in Turkmenistan.⁶⁸ Japan's assistance to Turkmenistan aims to support socio-economic system through Japanese experience, the reconstruction and the modernization of the transport, healthcare and agriculture sectors, the promotion of small and medium-sized business.⁶⁹ Bilateral trade in 2013 was around 10 million yen (imports from Turkmenistan - 4 million yen (raw materials) and exports to Turkmenistan - 5,41 million yen (machinery, electronics).⁷⁰ Between 2009-2013 Japan granted to Turkmenistan assistance through ODA to the

⁶⁴ Countries and Regions. Japan-Tajikistan Republic relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp Japan's exports to Tajikistan increased from 451 thousand dollars in 2004 and imports increased from 8, 570 thousand dollars in 2004. Japan External Trade Organization, *Reports and Statistics*, Japanese Trade and Investment Statistics.www.jetro.go.jp.

⁶⁵ *Japan's ODA Data* for Tajikistan, Official Development Assistance, ODA by Region, Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp. Between 2002-2008 the amounts were respectively were 45 million dollars in grants and 22 million dollars in technical assistance. Official Development Assistance (ODA), *Japan's ODA White Paper* 2003-2009.www.mofa.go.jp. Between 1997-2001 the amounts were 9,84 million dollars in loans, 4,34 million dollars in grants and 5,50 million dollars in technical assistance. Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper* for 2002, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁶⁶ JICA, Kyrgyz Republic, *Annual Reports*.www.jica.go.jp; Политика странной помощи Японии Республике Таджикистан ,Декабрь 2012 г.

⁶⁷ Japan's embassy in Ashgabat was opened in 2005 and the embassy of Turkmenistan in Tokyo opened in 2013. Countries and Regions. Japan-Turkmenistan Republic relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp

⁶⁸ *Rakhimov*, p. 82.

⁶⁹ JICA, Kyrgyz Republic, *Annual Reports*, *Annual Report* for 2014.www.jica.go.jp.

⁷⁰ Countries and Regions. Japan-Turkmenistan Republic relations (Basic Data).www.mofa.go.jp. Japanese exports were 50 928 thousand yen in 2004 and 61 030 thousand yen in 2014. Japanese imports were 199 thousand yen in 2004 and 160 thousand yen in 2014. Japan External Trade Organization, *Reports and Statistics*, Japanese Trade and Investment Statistics.www.jetro.go.jp.

value of 4,500 million yen in loans, 600 thousand yen in grants and 900 thousand yen in technical assistance.⁷¹ In 2013 Turkmenistan was granted assistance through JICA to the value of 24 million yen or 0,1% from the total amount for Caucasus and Central Asia.⁷²

Multilateral diplomacy

Japan's multilateral diplomacy towards Central Asia began in 2004, when a meeting of Japan's and Central Asian countries' Foreign Ministers took place in Astana, ending with the establishment of the joint dialogue Central Asia+Japan.⁷³ The members of the forum adopted as their main principles the respect for diversity, the competition and the open cooperation. The major aims of the dialogue, as the participants declared, are ensuring the peace, the security and the stability of Central Asia, including Afganistan, fighting against terrorism, extremism, drug traffic⁷⁴, forming a free and independent societies through the development of democracy, but taking into account of the historical and the cultural specifics of the region, socio-economic progress through the economic advance, which is supposed to improve the living standart of the people and the human

⁷¹ Official Development Assistance (ODA), *Japan's ODA White Paper 2003-2009*.www.mofa.go.jp. Between 2002-2008 the amounts were respectively 35 million dollars, 0,48 million dollars and 2,43 million dollars. Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper* for 2002, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp. Between 1997-2001 the amounts were 25, 86 million dollars, 4,26 million dollars and 3,58 million dollars. Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper* for 2002, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁷² JICA, Kyrgyz Republic, *Annual Reports*, Annual Report for 2014.www.jica.go.jp. Important projects: in loans – Project for the modernization of the railroad network (45,05 million dollars/1997); in grants – Project for the supply of sport equipment for the Olympic committee of Turkmenistan (0,45 million dollars/2001). Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper* for 2002, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp. Other major projects: in financial assistance – Project for an emergency financial assistance (0,06 million dollars/1998; 3,17 million dollars/2000); Project for an emergency in cases of natural disaster (2,40 million dollars/200; 0,43 million dollars/2001); Project for an emergency assistance for reconstruction and development (0,62 million dollars/1999); Project for an emergency support of democratization (0,11 million dollars/1999); Project for the improvement of mother and child care (1,85 million dollars/2001). Official Development Assistance, *Japan's ODA White Paper* for 2002, Part 3 Statistical Appendix Central Asia and Caucasus.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁷³ *PRESS RELEASE* "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue/Foreign Ministers Meeting - Relations between Japan and Central Asia enter a New Era -28 August 2004, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue Third Foreign Ministers' Meeting (Overview), August 7, 2010; "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue Third Foreign Ministers' Meeting Joint Press Release, August 7, 2010; Joint Statement "Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue/Foreign Ministers' Meeting Relations between Japan and Central Asia as They Enter a New Era—Astana, August 28, 2004.

security⁷⁵, energy cooperation, building a transport and telecommunication infrastructure, cooperation in the spheres like the environment preservation and the effectively use of water and energy resources, cultural and human exchange, interregional cooperation and integration, improvement of the partnership between Central Asian states and the neighbouring countries, between Central Asian countries and the international community, between Central Asian countries and Japan.⁷⁶ The political coordination in the framework of the Dialogue has been hold through the Foreign Ministers' Meeting and through the Senior Officials' Meeting, as well.⁷⁷

In addition, in the framework of the Dialogue Economic forums have been hold since 2010. The Economic forum aims at deepening Japanese-Central Asian economic relations, assisting economic reforms and progress in the region, forming a common market, attractive for foreign investments, developing the regional integration, promoting the trade and technological

⁷⁵ Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue: Action Plan, June 5, 2006, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Joint Statement "Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue/Foreign Ministers' Meeting Relations between Japan and Central Asia as They Enter a New Era—Astana, August 28, 2004; Fifth Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue; Совместное заявление 5-го совещания Министров иностранных дел Диалога "Центральная Азия + Япония" "Новое десятилетие взаимовыгодного сотрудничества между странами Центральной Азии и Японией"/ 「中央アジア諸国と日本との間の互恵的パートナーシ

ップの新たな10年」. Japan-Kyrgyz Republic Relations.www.mofa.go.jp. Приема се документ, който очертава конкретни рамки на съвместното сътрудничество. "Дорожная карта – Региональное сотрудничество в области сельского хозяйства в рамках Диалога "Центральная Азия+Япония"/ 「中央アジア+日本」対話の枠組みによる農業分野地域協力ロード

マップ ; Japan-Kyrgyz Republic Relations.www.mofa.go.jp; Совместное заявление 5-го совещания Министров иностранных дел Диалога «Центральная Азия + Япония» «Новое десятилетие взаимовыгодного сотрудничества между странами Центральной Азии и Японией» Бишкек 16 июля 2014 г.

⁷⁵ Совместное заявление 5-го совещания Министров иностранных дел Диалога "Центральная Азия + Япония" "Новое десятилетие взаимовыгодного сотрудничества между странами Центральной Азии и Японией"/ 「中央アジア諸国と日本

との間の互恵的パートナーシップの新たな10年」. Japan-Kyrgyz Republic Relations.www.mofa.go.jp.

⁷⁶ PRESS RELEASE "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue/Foreign Ministers Meeting - Relations between Japan and Central Asia enter a New Era -28 August 2004, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan; *Nurgaliev, Marat., Timur Shaymergenov*, p. 129-130.

⁷⁷ "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue/Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), March 4, 2005; The Third "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue/Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), December 14, 2007; The Sixth Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue, December 1, 2011; *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2006, Chapter 2. Regional diplomacy, E. The Russian Federation, Central Asia and the Caucasus, 2. Central Asia and the Caucasus; *Diplomatic Blue Book* for 2009, Chapter 2. Regional diplomacy, 5. Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucis.

exchange.⁷⁸ The members of the Dialogue decided their mutual fields of partnership to be the development of free market in the region, the signing of investments and trade agreements, the improvement of the investments climate. Japan has made efforts to promote the increase of the Japanese investments in the region and the bilateral Japanese-Central Asian countries business contacts. The participants have taken measures to promote the involvement of Japanese technologies in the exploitation of the water and the energy resources, to attract Japanese tourists in Central Asia, to cooperate in automobile production, medical equipment, precision instruments, chemical and oil refining industries, metallurgy, pharmaceutical and textile industries, agriculture.⁷⁹

In the framework of the Central Asia+Japan Dialogue Intellectual dialogue (Tokyo Dialogue) also has held since 2006, aiming at the promotion of the intellectual exchange. Various regional issues have been discussed, considering Japanese knowledge, experience and technologies. The main topic of the discussions were the regional integration and contacts between Central Asian states and the countries external to the region, the cooperation in the water resources and the electric power, the diversification of Central Asia's energy supply routes,⁸⁰ the environmental

⁷⁸ «Японско-Центральноазиатский экономический форум» в рамках Диалога «Центральная Азия + Япония» «К развитию экономических связей между Японией и Центральной Азией» Предметы обсуждения; «Японско-Центральноазиатский экономический форум» Вступительная речь Ютака БАННО, Парламентского заместителя министра иностранных дел 26 Июля 2011; «Японско-Центральноазиатский экономический форум» в рамках Диалога «Центральная Азия + Япония» «К развитию экономических связей между Японией и Центральной Азией» - Программа.

⁷⁹ Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония»: Японско-Центральноазиатский экономический форум «К развитию экономических связей между Японией и Центральной Азией» 26 июля 2011 г

⁸⁰ Second "Central Asia plus Japan" Intellectual Dialogue (Tokyo Dialogue), January 24, 2007.

cooperation in Central Asia,⁸¹ the future improvements of the logistics infrastructure,⁸² the regional development through the agriculture.⁸³

External factors and Japan's diplomacy in Central Asia

Central Asia is a region, where various interests of global and regional powers are intertwined. Therefore, the existence of many regional organizations and forums for cooperation in the region is not unexpected. These organizations are supposed to make easier and to deepen collaboration between Central Asian countries and to assist their partnership with the external powers. Russia, PRC, US, EU, India, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Japan, South Korea have their own interests in Central Asia and make attempts to formulate their national strategies towards the region.⁸⁴ At one hand, all these powers have common interests in the region like peace, stability and regional integration, fight against terrorism, separatism, religious extremism and drug traffic, development of the economic, energy and infrastructure sectors in Central Asia. At the other hand, competition for stronger political, economic and energy influence in

⁸¹ Диалог «Центральная Азия+Япония» Третий Токийский диалог (тема «Окружающая среда») Предметы обсуждения; Интеллектуальный диалог «Центральная Азия+Япония»: Третий Токийский диалог 20 февраля 2009 года (пятница), Зал Международных конференций, Министерство иностранных дел Японии Резюме председателя.

⁸² 4-ый Токийский диалог (Тема: «Дальнейшее оснащение транспортно-логистической инфраструктуры в регионе Центральной Азии») Предметы дискуссий Февраль, 2010; Интеллектуальный диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония»: 4-ый Токийский диалог 25 февраля 2010 года в зале международных заседаний Министерства иностранных дел Обзор председателя; Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония» 4-ый Токийский диалог Основной доклад вице-министра Фукуямы 25 февраля 2010 года; “Central Asia plus Japan”: The Fourth Tokyo Dialogue Programme, Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония» — 6-ой Токийский диалог «Региональное развитие Центральной Азии через сельское хозяйство» Итоговый отчет председателя; Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония» — 6-ой Токийский диалог Вступительное слово Парламентский Вице-министр иностранных дел Японии Хиротака ИСИХАРА; Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония» — 6-ой Токийский диалог «Региональное развитие Центральной Азии через сельское хозяйство».

⁸³ Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония» — 6-ой Токийский диалог «Региональное развитие Центральной Азии через сельское хозяйство» Итоговый отчет председателя; Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония» — 6-ой Токийский диалог Вступительное слово Парламентский Вице-министр иностранных дел Японии Хиротака ИСИХАРА; Диалог «Центральная Азия + Япония» — 6-ой Токийский диалог «Региональное развитие Центральной Азии через сельское хозяйство».

⁸⁴ For example, Central Asia often is characterized as “backyard” of Russia, “greater Middle East” for US and “new Far West” for China. *Kaushiki, Nishtha*. The New Great Game and India's Connect Central Asia Policy: Strategic perspectives and Challenges. – In: *Journal of International and Area Studies*, Vol. 20, No 2 (December 2013), p. 83.

the region can be noticed. This competition is often called “the great game in Central Asia”.⁸⁵

Because of their geographical proximity Russia and PRC have the most serious interests and thus, the most powerful influence in Central Asia. The common borders of Russia and PRC with some of the Central Asian countries and the presence of Russian and Uyghur minorities in Central Asia make the region to become a priority factor for the security of Russia and PRC. The interests of Moscow and Beijing are focused not only on the military-political, economic and energy cooperation, but also on the construction of a transport and pipeline infrastructure in the region to

⁸⁵ During the 90s of the XX century US and Russia did not have active policy in Central Asia. Russia during the mandate of the President Boris Elzin was concentrated on its own internal problems and cooperated closely with the West. At that time US focused mainly on the transition to democracy and free market in Central Asian countries. Initially after declaration of the independence of Central Asian countries PRC was interested in settlement of the border issues and was worried about the Uyghur minority in Central Asia. Beijing was afraid from separatism in the autonomous Xinjiang-Uyghur region. International situation changed after the terrorist attack in US (2001). This terrorist act changed the American attitude towards Central Asia and the region was perceived as an area of significant priority for the American fight against terrorism. US cooperated with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan (air space, military bases in Manas and Kanabad) for the fight against the talibans in Afganistan. US also signed a military cooperation treaty with Uzbekistan in 2005. Initially Russia and PRC supported the American policy in the region against terrorism. However, later Moscow and Beijing changed their attitude to the American military presence in Central Asia. Both powers perceived it as a threaght and believed that Washington took advantage of the situation to influence the energy sector and to maintain American military presence in the region. Gradually the American influence has decreased and the American military forces withdrew from Central Asia. Russian policy towards Central Asia intensified during the mandate of the President Vladimir Putin. Chinese policy in the region also activated. PRC has made an attempts to attract investments to Xinjiang, to increase energy cooperation and trade with Central Asian countries (specifically trade with Xinjiang and Chinese imports in Central Asia) and to build an infrastructure to connect the region with China. Besides PRC adopted a policy to fight against the “three evels” – separatism, terrorism and fundamentalism, which are key fields of cooperation in the framework of SCO, as well. Карпов, В.П. Россия и Центральная Азия: Нефтегазовое сотрудничество в постсоветском пространстве. – В: *Россия и страны Востока: Векторы взаимодействия и сотрудничества*. Материалы Международной научно-практической конференции, посвященной 125-летию со дня рождения советского дипломата и общественно-политического деятеля Республики Башкортостан Карима Абдрауфовича Хакимова, Уфа, 4 декабря 2014 г., с. 308-312; *Buszynski, Leszek*. Russia's New Role in Central Asia. – In: *Asian Survey*, Vol. 45, No 4 (July/August 2005), p. 546, 547, 551; *Allison, Roy*. Strategic Reassertion of Russia's Central Asia Policy. – In: *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 80, No 2, Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Mar., 2004), p. 281, p. 285, p. 290-291; *Freire, Maria*. Russian Policy in Central Asia: Supporting, Balancing, Coercing, or Imposing? – In: *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 33, No 2, (2009), p. 128, p. 139; *Miyamoto, Sugaku*. South Korea energy diplomacy towards Central Asia. – In: *SAIS: US-Korea Yearbook*. Washington, 2009, p. 49. *Karagyozyov, Marian*. Chinese foreign policy towards Central Asia. – Paper, presented at IEP AS 2015 (2nd International Conference on Eurasian Politics and Society), 22-23 May 2015, Konya, Turkey.

connect Asia and Europe.⁸⁶ Sino-Russian interaction in Central Asia is a bipolar. At one hand, there is a competition, but at the other hand, there is a close cooperation in order to protect Sino-Russian influence and to avoid expansion of the external influence.⁸⁷ That is why the importance of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is significant,⁸⁸ considering not only the Central Asian regional partnership, but also the balance of the Sino-Russian interests in the region. Despite the serious efforts, made by

⁸⁶ Allison, p. 290-291; Freire, p. 137; Niquet, Valerie, Nick Oates. China and Central Asia. – In: *China Perspectives*, No 67 (September-October 2006), p. 5; Sheives, Kevin. China turns West: Beijing's Contemporary Strategy towards Central Asia. – In: *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 79, No 2 (Summer 2006), p. 210; Smith, Dianne. Central Asia: A New Great Game? – In: *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 23, No 3 (Fall, 1996), p. 163; Niquet, Valerie, Nick Oates, p. 5.

⁸⁶ Янгарева, Р.Р. Влияние распространения радикального ислама на политику России и Китая в Центральной Азии. – В: *Россия и страны Востока: Векторы взаимодействия и сотрудничества*. Материалы Международной научно-практической конференции, посвященной 125-летию со дня рождения советского дипломата и общественно-политического деятеля Республики Башкортостан Карима Абдраффовича Хакимова, Уфа, 4 декабря 2014 г., с. 428-433; Sheives, p. 213; Cung, Chien-peng. The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's Changing Influence in Central Asia. – In: *The China Quarterly*, No 180 (Dec., 2004), p. 997; Niquet, Valerie, Nick Oates, p. 2-5; Smith, p. 163.

⁸⁶ Smith, p. 163.

⁸⁶ Cung, p. 1000; Sheives, p. 214-219.

⁸⁷ Wishnick, Elizabeth. Russia, China and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition and Cooperation in the Shadow of the Georgian Crisis. – In: *Strategic Studies Institute*, February 2009, pp. 27-44; Cung, p. 1007.

⁸⁷ Cung, p. 989.

⁸⁷ Cung, p. 997; Niquet, p. 6.

⁸⁸ SCO (main members - Russia, PRC, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). The main purposes of SCO are "the development of efficient regional cooperation in the political, trade, economic, cultural, educational fields and also maintaining and ensuring the peace, security and stability in the region". Министерство иностранных дел Кыргызской Республики, *Информация о Кыргызской Республике*, Внешняя политика.; Кыргызская Республика в системе международных отношений, Кыргызская Республика и интеграционные объединения, Кыргызская Республика и ШОС. www.mfa.gov.kg; Rahman, Khalid. Central Asia, Energy Security and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. – In: *Policy Perspectives*, Vol. 8, No 1 (January-June 2011), p. 74-75; Gleason, Gregory. Inter-regional cooperation in Central Asia from the CIS to the Shanghai forum. – In: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No 7 (Nov. 2001), pp. 1091-1093; Iwashita, Akihiro. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Beyond a Miscalculation on Power Games. – In: *Japan's Silk Road Diplomacy. Paving the Road Ahead*. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Silk Road Studies Programme. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. Washington, Stockholm, 2008, p. 69-85.

PRC,⁸⁹ Russia remains the strongest military-political and economic external factor in the region, maintaining bilateral cooperation and multilateral diplomacy, as well.⁹⁰

Except for Russia and PRC, interests in Central Asia have also US and EU, as well as regional powers like India, Turkey, Pakistan and Iran. All of the forementioned powers take as a priorities the peace, the security and the stability in Central Asia. From Turkey's and India's point of view important are issues like terrorism, separatism and religious extremism, because they collide with the similar problems.⁹¹ Moreover, the interests of all powers are oriented to the economic and the energy cooperation.⁹² From US's and EU's point of view significant issues in the region are also the process of democratization, the decrease of the Sino-Russian

⁸⁹ In September and October 2013 during his visits in Central and South East Asia Xi Jinping declared the new Chinese initiative called "One belt, one road" for XXI century. The main purposes of this policy are the promotion of the economic cooperation and mutual contacts between Asia, Europe and Africa, the stimulation of the integration, the opening of the potential regional market, the increase of investments, the opening of new places of work, the expansion of the human ties and the cultural exchange. The major routes for the implementation of the initiative should be from China via Central Asia and Russia to Europe, from China via Central Asia and West Asia to Persian gulf and Mediterranean, from China via South East Asia to South Asia and the Indian ocean. The sea route should connect China via South Chinese sea to the Indian ocean and the Pacific. The basic priorities of the initiative are the political coordination, the connection of the infrastructure, the pipeline and the telecommunication infrastructure cooperation, the mutually beneficial trade, the creation of favorable circumstances for investments, the free movement of capitals, the friendship between people, the tourism, the scientific-technological cooperation. The mechanisms for the implementation of these priorities are deepening the bilateral ties and cooperation in the framework of the regional organizations. Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kyrgyz Republic. ПРЕКРАСНЫЕ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ И ПРАКТИЧЕСКИЕ ДЕЙСТВИЯ ПО СОВМЕСТНОМУ СОЗДАНИЮ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО ПОЯСА ШЕЛКОВОГО ПУТИ И МОРСКОГО ШЕЛКОВОГО ПУТИ XXI ВЕКА, 2015/04/16.kg.chineeseembassy.org.

⁹⁰ PRC cooperates with Central Asian countries in the military field only in the framework of SCO. Unlike this limited partnership, Russia has a bilateral agreements for military cooperation and also is a member of the Collective security treaty organization, signed by member-countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1992. Gleason, pp. 1087-1090; Niquet, p. 8. CSTO was found as a mechanism for regional security, multilateral cooperation in military, economic, science-technological and industrial spheres, for counteraction to challenges and threats of the security, foreign policy coordination etc. Министерство иностранных дел Кыргызской Республики, *Информация о Кыргызской Республики*, Внешняя политика.; Кыргызская Республика в системе международных отношений, Кыргызская Республика и интеграционные объединения, Кыргызская Республика и СНГ, Кыргызская Республика и ОДКБ. www.mfa.gov.kg.; Russia also is a member of Central-Asian Cooperation Organization, found in 1994. Besides the initiative for economic and customs integration in the framework of Eurasian union has developed successfully. Buszynski, p.551.

⁹¹ Kavalski, *Emilian*. The Peacock and the Bear in the Heartland: Central Asia and the Shifting Patterns of India's relations with Russia. – In: *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs*, Vol. 23, No ½ (June-December, 2010), p. 6; Kaushiki, *Nishtha*. The New Great Game and India's Connect Central Asia Policy: Strategic perspectives and Challenges. – In: *Journal of International and Area Studies*, Vol. 20, No 2 (December 2013), pp. 66-69, 90-91.

⁹² Rahman, p. 68.

influence and the alternative for Central Asian countries, other than Russia and PRC.⁹³ Nevertheless, the American influence in Central Asia has been reduced during the last decade.

At one hand, important for Turkey in the region are the language and the cultural similarities with Central Asian countries, and at the other hand, Turkey focuses on its partnership (in the economic and the cultural fields) with US and EU in the region.⁹⁴ Central Asia is a significant region for India, as well, due to its geographical proximity, but also India lacks direct routes for access to the region. Furthermore, India is a reluctant to depend on Pakistan and Afganistan for its access to Central Asia.⁹⁵ In addition India feels threaten from the Sino-Russian and the Sino-Pakistan cooperation in Central Asia.⁹⁶ Thus, in order to protect its national interests, India formulated its own strategy towards Central Asia with the accent on the political, the economic and the energy cooperation.⁹⁷

Central Asia, as a part of Eurasia, is a region of great importance for the security, the economic development and the energy security of East Asian countries, as well.⁹⁸ This is indisputable for PRC, but Japan and South Korea also have their interests and strategies towards Central Asia. South Korea is interested mainly in the development of trade, economic and cultural relations with Central Asian countries, which means an increasement of the Korean exports and technologies to the region, an energy cooperation and a popularization of the Korean culture in Central

⁹³ *MacFarlane, S. Neil*. The Unated States and the Regionalism in Central Asia. – In: *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 80, No 3, Regionalism and the Changin International Order in Central Eurasia (May 2004), p. 450; *Maynes, Cherles*. America discovers Central Asia. – In: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No 2 (March-April 2003), pp. 129-132; *Kaushiki*, p. 85.

⁹⁴ *Belokrenitsky, Vyacheslav*. Russia and Greater Central Asia. – In: *Asian Survey*, Vol. 34, No 12 (Dec., 1994) p. 1102; *Robins, Philip*. Between Sentiment and Self-Interest: Turkey's policy toward Azerbaidjan and the Central Asia States. – In: *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 47, No 4 (Autumn 1993), pp. 593-598, pp. 599-600.

⁹⁵ *Kavalski*, p. 5.

⁹⁶ *Kavalski*, p. 11-14;. *Kaushiki*, p. 90-91; *Ahmar, Moonis*. India and its role in the New Central Asia. – In: *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 45, No 3 (July 1992), p. 68-69.

⁹⁷The so called policy “North look”. *Kavalski*, p. 5; *Ahmar*, p. 61, p. 64; *Karagyofov, Marian*. Chinese foreign policy towards Central Asia. – Paper, presented at IEP AS 2015 (2nd International Conference on Eurasian Politics and Society), 22-23 May 2015, Konya, Turkey. In 2012 the first meeting of the dialogue Central Asia-India has hold. India presented its new policy towards Central Asia – “connect Central Asia” policy. *Kaushiki*, p. 83.

⁹⁸ *Swanstrom, Niklas*. Economic Cooperation and Conflict Management in Central Asia: What Role for Northeast Asian Actors? – In: *Japan's Silk Road Diplomacy. Paving the Road Ahead*. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Silk Road Studies Programe. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. Washington, Stockholm, 2008, p. 151.

Asia.⁹⁹ South Korea has held joint forums with Central Asian countries (Central Asia+South Korea) since 2007.¹⁰⁰

It is clear that intertwining so many interests in Central Asia leads Japan to take into account various external factors during the process of formulating its own strategy towards the region. Certainly there is a competition between all these external powers in Central Asia. Nevertheless, most of the Japanese priorities in Central Asia collide with the interests of the other external powers like security, peace, stability, economic, energy and infrastructure development of the region. Therefore, it is recommended for Japan to cooperate with the other countries concerned and regional organizations in Central Asia.¹⁰¹ It would assist Japan's Eurasian diplomacy, because it would lead not only to the intensification of Japanese contacts with Central Asian countries, but to the improvement of Japan's relations with PRC, Russia and South Korea. It is also recommended for Japan to make efforts to increase bilateral and regional trade, Japanese investments, energy cooperation with Central Asian countries not only bilaterally, but in the framework of the dialogue Central Asia+Japan.

Conclusion

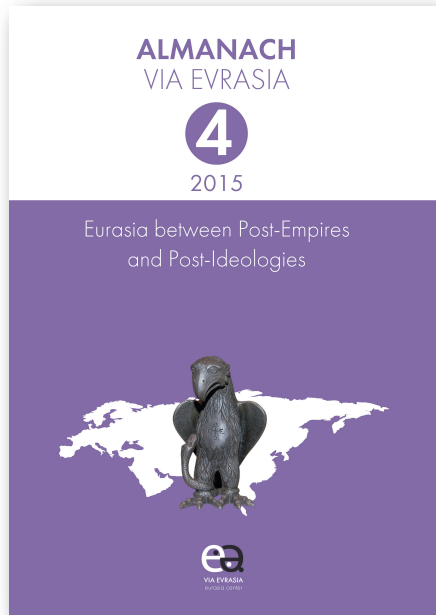
Despite of the different opinions, still some conclusions about Japan's foreign policy towards Central Asia could be made. In the first place, Japan has its own interests in Central Asia, as a part of Eurasia. Japanese interests are related with the peace, the stability and the security in the region, with the democratization and the economic development of the

⁹⁹ In 2004 the President of South Korea Roh Moo-Hyun visited Central Asia. During this visit Central Asian countries and South Korea agreed to increase their mutual trade from 1 billion dollars in 2006 to 10 billion dollars in 2015. An agreement for the increase (from 1 billion dollars in 2006 to 5 billion dollars in 2015) of business deals, related with the construction of roads, ports and buildings was signed. *Swanstrom*, Economic Cooperation and Conflict Management in Central Asia..., p. 153. In 2007 South Korea held the first forum for cooperation with Central Asian countries. In 2009 the President Lee Myun signed 20 memorandums for exploitation of gas and oil with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. *Miyamoto*, p. 46. In 2009 South Korea and Kazakhstan signed an agreement for 5 billion dollars Korean investments in energy and technological sectors of Kazakhstan's economy. Korean companies will invest 2,5 billion dollars in the construction of new power plant in South Kazakhstan, which is supposed to be ready for exploitation in 2014. The Korean electric corporation and "Samsung" will hold 65% of the shares. In 2009 South Korea and Uzbekistan signed 5 agreements for gas and oil exploitation. *Miyamoto*, pp. 48-49.

¹⁰⁰ *Swanstrom*, Economic Cooperation and Conflict Management..., p. 153.

¹⁰¹ According to the Japanese researcher Iwashita Japan can play an intermediary role between Central Asia and US. He also suggests the establishment of joint dialogue between SCO and Japan – "SCO+alpha" or in broader framework "SCO+3 (Japan, US, EU). *Iwashita*, p. 74.

region, with the maintainance of a stable and friendly relations with Central Asian countries in the political, the economic and the cultural fields. Secondly, Japan formulated its own strategy towards Central Asia. This strategy has changed and developed in time, influenced by various internal, external and economic factors. In the third place, Japan's relations with Central Asian countries have positively developed not only bilateraly, but also multilateraly. Japan and Central Asian countries established the fundaments of their mutual partnership by signing a series of agreements in various fields of cooperation and by founding joint bilateral and multilateral mechanisms for accomplishing a political dialogue, an economic and a cultural exchange. Japan's diplomatic tools in Central Asia are mainly financial, technological and humanitarian means. Japan succeeded to realize great progress in its bilateral ties with Central Asian countries, but also Japan's financial and technical aid is an important for the development of the security and the socio-economic sectors in the region. Nevertheless, there is a great potential in Japan's relations with Central Asian countries for intensifying their partnership in the security field and the political contacts, the trade-financial ties, the cultural and the tourist exchange. There are favourable conditions for the implementation of the potential like the mutual positive images, the lack of political contradictions and the presence of various spheres of mutual interest. Japan's policy in the region does not aim to include Japan in the so called "great game in Central Asia", neither aims to exclude the other countries concerned in the region. Japan could not achieve the level of influence and effectiveness of Russia or PRC in the region. Therefore, it is necessary for Japan to continue to maintain its own policy, in general independent from US, but at the same time to take into account the growing Sino-Russian influence and the deepening of integration in the framework of Eurasian Union. Moreover, it is necessary for Japan to give an equal opportunity for cooperation to each country in the region, but also to take into account the different level of the political and the socio-economic development of each country. It is recommended for Japan to cooperate with Russia and PRC, with the other external powers concerned and with the regional organizations, like SCO. This cooperation would assist the improvement of Japan's relations with Russia and PRC, the balance of the powers concerned in the region and the achievement of faster and more effective results in the strive for security, political stability and economic prosperity in Central Asia.



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