World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences
Vol:7, No:3, 2013

Regional Security Issue: Central Asian Countries and NATO Cooperation (On the Example of Kazakhstan)

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Open Science Index, Humanities and Social Sciences Vol:7, No:3, 2013 publications.waset.org/14201/pdf

***Abstract*—**Kazakhstan attaches the great importance to cooperation with European countries within the framework of multilateral security organizations such as NATO. Cooperation of Kazakhstan with the NATO is a prominent aspect of strengthening of regional security of republic. It covers a wide spectrum of areas, such as reform of sector of defense and security, military operative compatibility of armed forces of NATO member-countries and Kazakhstan, civil emergency planning and scientific cooperation. The cooperation between Kazakhstan and NATO is based on the mutual interests of neighboring republics in the region so that the existing forms of cooperation between Kazakhstan and NATO will not be negatively perceived both in Asia as well as among CIS countries. Kazakhstan tailors its participation in the PfP programme through an annual Individual Partnership Programme, selecting those activities that will help achieve the goals it has set in the IPAP. Level of cooperation within the limits of PfP essentially differs on each republic. Cooperation with Kazakhstan progressed most of all since has been signed IPAP from the NATO

***Keywords*—**Central Asia, Kazakhstan, NATO cooperation, regional security.

I. Introduction

INTEREST of leading countries in Central Asia and its problems have recently heightened due to increased threats and risks relating to environment, terrorism, drug trafficking and religious extremism. Kazakhstan like other Central Asian states should explore processes which are occurring within the transatlantic partnership, whereas due to this relations of regional countries with the NATO and the U.S. can be forecasted. As global players in the international arena, the NATO and the United States are drawing all countries into the orbit of its relationship - regardless of their geographic location.

If to speak about Kazakhstan, during the years of independence, Kazakhstan has become a full member of the international community and its initiatives have almost always received widespread support and exercised in practice. At the same time Kazakhstan has sought to establish and strengthen relationships with the leading countries of the world, participate in international political, military and economic organizations for the needs of its economic development.

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Kazakhstan attracts NATO by its multi dimensional policy. Our country actively participates in the international arena in the framework of multilateral security mechanisms, seeks to spread valuable European experience to Asia, which is a significant step forward the creation of multilateral security structures.

European direction is one of the most important in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. The prospect and the need to develop relations with the NATO for Kazakhstan are determined by the role and place of the NATO in the European and world politics.

II. Interaction In The Military Sphere

The basic direction of joint work with the Alliance is an interaction in the military sphere is carried out on the basis of the Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAP), and also within the frameworks of Planning and Analysis Process programs (PAPP) and the Concept of operative potential (COP). Our country is one of the first Central Asian states which has joined the NATO program «Planning and review Process» (PARP).

It is necessary to notice that mutual relations between Kazakhstan and the NATO develop rather intensively. In particular, the Agreement on security between of RK and NATO was signed in October 1996 and has come into force only in July 2005. This document is directed on fixing of mutual obligations of the parties on protection of the sensitive information exchanged at interaction within the framework of the program «Partnership for Peace».

On higher level of relations development of the parties which is left in January 2006 in the format of «NATO+Kazakhstan» having confirming Individual Partnership Action Plans "Partnership" (IPAP). The plan is directed on strengthening of regional and international security, deepening of process of transformation of Military Force of RK, increase of operative compatibility, cooperation in the field of fight against terrorism, civil emergency planning, science and ecology.

IPAP harmonizes and coordinates all aspects of existing interaction on Kazakhstan-NATO's line. It is necessary to mark that Kazakhstan is one of the first Central Asian countries went out on such level of cooperation with the NATO.

NATO helps to realize democratic process and institutional reforms with Kazakhstan which is stated in IPAP's document. In particular in defense and security sector of the NATO each

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member countries have considerable experience and skills which Kazakhstan can use. So, the Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons underlined: «we want to offer the comprehensive assistances in armed forces reforming and working out of the new military doctrine that could answer is better modern threats and challenges» [1].

The basic priorities IPAP are:

- cooperation in regional and international security sphere;
- defense and military questions, fight against international terrorism;
- strengthening of political dialog and consultations between NATO and Kazakhstan with the purpose of democratic reforms;
- cooperation of prevention of emergency situations and sciences.

III. Defense and Security Sector Reform

Conducting democratic reforms of defense sector in this region is still important to NATO because these forces are responsible for ensuring safety of the government. Any democratization process in Central Asian states should be accompanied by reform of security mechanisms that seek to establish system of democratic accountability in national security sphere rather than a situation where security forces serve only to maintain the existing regime.

NATO is supportive of the democratic and institutional reform process underway in Kazakhstan, which is outlined in its IPAP. Specifically in the area of defense and security sector reform, NATO and individual Allies have considerable expertise that Kazakhstan can draw upon.

In consultation with the Allies, Kazakhstan continues to lay the conceptual framework for defense and security sector reform and in advancing key reform projects within the Ministry of Defense. Kazakhstan's subscription to the objectives of the Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building initiative (PAP-DIB) is reinforcing these efforts. The programme aids in creating effective judicial oversight and appropriate command arrangements for Defense and security sector institutions.

Kazakhstan's participation in the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) since 2002 has helped develop the ability of its forces to work with NATO. Kazakhstan seeks to attain interoperability between elements of its armed forces and those of NATO Allies. The current emphasis is on its Air-Mobile Forces. Joint work continues on the further development of a peacekeeping battalion to work alongside NATO Allies.

IV. Consultation Mechanisms

Consulting to NATO member states, Kazakhstan continues working out of conceptual frameworks of security and defense sector reforming and advancement of the basic projects of reforms in the Ministry of Defence. The program helps to create the system of effective judicial supervision and proper mechanisms of management for different bodies in defense and security sphere. Kazakhstan has accepted the objectives of the Partnership Plan action on building of defense institutes, became good help in this work.

Within the frameworks of Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) Kazakhstan regularly carries out consultations with NATO and the partner –countries which forms the general political basis of partner relations. The decision of North Atlantic council on carrying out of the next Forum of security of the NATO/SEAP in June, 2009 in Astana - an informal meeting at Ministers level of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan (for the first time in CIS region) was the result of contribution of our country in maintenance the regional and global security and the big authority of the Head of RK N.A.Nazarbayev on the international affairs.

The representatives from over 50 countries took part in this forum.one of the major guestion which has been discussed at this forum Situation in Afghanistan. It's imporrtant to notice that the representatives of NATO agree with position of Kazakhstan about impossibility to solve a problem of this country in the military way.

V. Cooperation in Security

Kazakhstan has allocated an airborne assault battalion as a peacekeeping battalion for potential deployment in NATO-led peace support operations, under UN Security Council mandates. Elements of the Peacekeeping battalion have joined NATO Allies in a number of live exercises. In the framework of PARP, one of the major projects is the expansion of this force into a brigade structure (KAZBRIG), giving Kazakhstan the capability to sustain a battalion size contribution through rotation. Kazakhstan completed an agreement with NATO allowing the transportation of non-lethal ISAF cargo to Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan plays an active role in both hosting and participating in PfP training and exercises. In consultation with the Allies, Kazakhstan is working to establish a PfP regional training centre, and continues to work with Allies and regional partners in military and language training techniques.

In turn, NATO is also interested in "further strengthening the dialogue with Central Asian states on regional security issues, including the Caspian Sea basin. This practical cooperation will contribute to the efforts of the international community to manage the energy security issue especially it concerns the protection of energy infrastructure, which is a great concern for Alliance allies and NATO partners" [2].

The Allies and Kazakhstan are cooperating on a major project to develop the Kazakh navy in the Caspian Sea. Work on the creation of broad naval strategic documents continues, alongside preparations for Kazakh naval personnel to be fully trained to NATO standards and NATO tactical procedures.

Therewith, Kazakhstan is interested in expanding and strengthening of cooperation within the NATO Security Investment Programme to improve its military infrastructure.

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VI. Regional Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism

Kazakhstan attaches a great importance to developing cooperation in the field of combating international terrorism. Establishing close relations with different international and regional security structures corresponds to the principles of multi vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan and meets the interests of strengthening its national security.

Kazakhstan offered to establish PfP Education Center in Kazakhstan for training of personnel in the field of border security and in the fight against contraband within the implementation of the Partnership Action Plan Against Terrorism (PAP-T) adopted by the EAPC at the Prague Summit in 2002. In addition, Kazakhstan is ready to support establishment and development EAPC division on information exchange and cooperation between special services of NATO Nations and Partners.

Kazakhstan contributes to the fight against terrorism through its participation in the Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism (PAP-T). This includes sharing intelligence and analysis with NATO, enhancing national counter-terrorist capabilities and improving border security. Kazakhstan, in cooperation with NATO Allies, hosted major military exercises, named «Steppe Eagle». These contributed to strengthening the interoperability of KAZBRIG with Alliance forces, and lead to the NATO certification of units with a view to possible deployment.

VII. Non Military Aspects of Cooperation

One of the priority areas of cooperation between Kazakhstan and NATO is *civil emergency planning*. Civil Emergency Planning is a national responsibility and civil assets remain under national control at all times. Nowadays Civil Emergency Planning is evolving due to the new threats. Along with other directions the CEP activities include supporting national governments in disaster management and dealing with the consequence of terrorist attacks. NATO has a great experience in disaster management.

Since 1999, new initiatives on combating terrorism have been put forward and after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, it was decided to use the CEP in dealing with the consequence of terrorist attacks. Kazakhstan is enhancing its national civil emergency and disaster-management capabilities in cooperation with NATO, and through participation in activities organized by the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC).

A. Science and Environment

Under the Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, Kazakhstan has received grant awards for over 20 cooperative projects for collaborate scientific and environmental projects. Projects include collaboration on studies into radiological risks in Central Asia, integrated water resources management and new technology exploration for seismic resistant construction.

Kazakhstan also participates in the Virtual Silk Highway project, which aims to improve internet access for academics and research communities in the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia through a satellite-based network. At present, numerous institutions in Almaty use the network. Preparations are underway to expand connectivity to a number of other cities across the country.

B. Public Information

Increasing the public awareness of NATO and the benefits of its relations with Kazakhstan is also an important area of cooperation. For instance, first Resource and Information Center on NATO in Central Asia at the Al Farabi Kazakh National University was opened in 2007. Centre hosts a number of NATO-themed events and visits from NATO representatives annually. Joint work on establishing a wider public information strategy is ongoing.

VIII. Cooperation in Afghanistan Stabilization

One of the priority of agenda questions between RK and the NATO is a situation in Afghanistan, including possible directions of joint activity.

The summit in Chicago 2012 drove a great deal of attention to the Afghan problem. There were three main issues on the agenda concerning Afghanistan: to complete the military operation in Afghanistan; to transfer the responsibility for security to Afghan national forces; and to identify the new role for the international community in stabilizing the situation in the country.

The leaders of 28 Member States and 22 ISAF coalition partners have expressed their clear and long-term commitment to continue to support the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) after 2014 when NATO led ISAF mission will be completed.

First, it should be noted that both the President of the United States Barack Obama and Heads of all 28 NATO members signing the Chicago Declaration had expressed their gratitude to the Central Asian countries for their contribution to the international efforts in Afghanistan. NATO Secretary General Rasmussen had thanked Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for the logistical assistance to NATO [3].

The Alliance is given Priority value to a question on granting for transit via Kazakhstan's territory to Afghanistan NATO's loads in supporting the operation of ISAF. Within the framework of realization the Strategy for Stabilizing Afghanistan the particular interest for NATO is rendering support to ISAF forces on so-called to "northern route», via Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

The North Atlantic alliance hopes on expansion of cooperation with Kazakhstan in restoration Afghanistan's stability. «We are appreciate a role which is plays Kazakhstan and other countries of region in supporting of our efforts in Afghanistan for an establishment there stability», - the Ex-Special representative of the secretary general of the NATO across the Central Asia and caucasus Robert Simmons.

Kazakhstan as a key country in the Northern Distribution Network provides an important logistical support to US and NATO in order to stabilize Afghanistan and renders the humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people, also taking part

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in developing the infrastructure, construction of social and economic facilities, and training of Afghan economists, engineers and other civilian experts in its own best universities.

Kazakhstan plays an important role in the economic recovery of Afghanistan. The country provides the grain and fuel to its troubled neighbor, helps to build the social and economic facilities, teaches its students in the best Kazakh universities and encourages Kabul participation in regional trade, investment and infrastructure projects.

At the NATO summit in Chicago on May 21, Kazakh Ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs Yerzhan Kazykhanov confirmed his country's commitment to support the global partnerships for Afghanistan. He highlighted the importance of regional trade and economic cooperation with Afghanistan. Kazykhanov said that Kazakhstan will continue its support of economic and humanitarian reconstruction of Afghanistan [4]. This support will continue across many mechanisms, like through the partnership of international organizations such as the UN FAO, the World Food Programme to increase its grain export to Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Kazykhanov also declared about the decision of Kazakh government to make a financial contribution to support the Afghan National Security Forces.

Generally, Chicago summit stressed the role of Kazakhstan as a responsible member of the international community who actively supports the efforts to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan.

Production and trade of illegal drugs in Afghanistan are the main problems for the international community. Foreign Ministers from the NATO-Russia Council agree to launch a pilot project on counter-narcotics training of Afghan and Central Asian personnel in December 2005 to address the threats posed by illegal drug trafficking in Afghanistan. The initiative seeks to build local capacity and to promote regional networking and cooperation by sharing the combined expertise of NATO member states with mid-level officers from Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) acts as the pilot project's executive agent [5]. Its purpose is to contribute to other international efforts aimed at fostering security in and around Afghanistan by helping address the threats posed by the trafficking in narcotics.

It should also be noted that Russia and the West has certain contradictions in regards to the Afghan-Central Asian agenda. Nevertheless the objective situation in the region suggests the need for positive interaction.

It is important to achieve the visible and tangible results in the reconstruction of the Afghan economy. Naturally the Afghan government itself is not capable to restore the country's economy without the wide support from the international community. Kazakhstan's efforts in this regard can be seen as an example of such targeted assistance.

The stabilisation in Afghanistan meets the interests of all Central Asian countries and therefore they cannot play the role of bystanders. It may be assumed that the cooperation on Afghan agenda could become the ground for a wider range of cooperation in the field of security between states in the region.

IX. Conclusion

Central Asia is also extremely important for NATO in light of the Alliance contribution to the stabilization and reconstruction process in Afghanistan.

NATO attaches great importance to its relations with our country because Kazakhstan and NATO have a common stand on and shared interests in combating terrorism, smuggling, drug trafficking, defense cooperation and on issues of civil emergency and disaster-management capabilities.

Present and future dialogue between Kazakhstan and NATO takes place within analysis and counter existing threats and challenges, including terrorism, organized crime, uncontrolled migration, drug trafficking and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

A. The Prospects of Cooperation

The major thing is NATO's multilateralism. The countries located outside of the Euro-Atlantic region usually lack the multilateral experience in defense and security.

Rather complicated situation in the region reveals that the Central Asian states should prioritize their foreign policy to create the virtually functioning security system. The key point of such system must become an international assistance for stabilization of the military-political situation in Afghanistan, which gave rise to the whole range of threats and challenges not only to the CA countries, but the entire continent.

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