

to protect national security of their member countries. The economy of Kyrgyzstan is at the level of the weakest developing countries and the government of Kyrgyzstan needs to develop cooperation with partners in the Eurasian integration to place the country at an adequate level.

In the conditions of numerous global challenges and threats cooperation at the world and regional levels becomes more than vital. The author considers that only jointly Kyrgyzstan, Russia, China and the U.S. will be able to combat effectively and decisively terrorism and extremism. In the world there is an erosion of traditional balance of forces - there are new centers of influence and new forces and Kyrgyzstan has to build its foreign policy taking into account its national interests to take a rightful place in international relations, correctly choosing partners for fight against modern challenges and threats – about 11700 p.ch.

Author of the abstract – Elena Dmitrieva

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Saodat Olimova,
PhD(Philosophy), Director,
“Shark” Research Center, Dushanbe
Muzaffar Olimov,
D.Sc.(History), Professor,
National University of Tajikistan

This article analyses the reasons for worsening relations between Central Asian states. The authors examine the traditional

national-territorial conflicts in this region, as well as the new ones that have emerged in the post-Soviet period.

During the past 25 years Central Asia including five previously friendly Soviet republics, has turned into a disintegrated region in which independent states were unable to establish good-neighborly relations between themselves, despite their participation in similar organizations (CIS, CSTO, SCO, etc.).

One of the reasons for such disintegration is border conflicts. A source of the territorial claims of these states to one another is national-territorial division of these republics in the years of Soviet power according to the border lines of living of different nationalities. However, it was not possible to be guided by this principle in the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural area of Central Asia, and this was why each republic has enclaves and irredentists breeding inter-ethnic rivalry.

Having become sovereign states, the formal borders between these five republics of Central Asia should have been turned into their real borders. It was only Turkmenistan and partly Kazakhstan that have delimited their land borders. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have not solved the border problem between themselves until now.. The most acute border conflicts occur to this day in the Ferghana Valley divided between three states – Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The authors of the article examine border problems on the example of the Ferghana stretch of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border. During the past five years there have been more than eighty incidents in the border zone between these two countries. Certain problems could be solved through negotiations (for instance, “the War of Banners,” in February 2016), however, a multitude of unresolved problems has remained, which may trigger off border conflicts at any time.

Such conflicts demonstrate the difficulties of the post-Soviet national construction in Central Asia. At present citizens of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan regard one and the same territory “the land of Tajiks,” “the land of Uzbeks,” and “the land of Kyrgyzs”. The sides base themselves on different sources and

are not going to make concessions to one another, which turns the delimitation of borders practically unrealistic.

In January – July 2016, with support of the UN development program, an investigation of border conflicts and prospects of their settlement took place in the region.

The authors note that the rapid demographic growth continues to remain the main reason for conflicts in the border districts of the Ferghana Valley. For example, the population of Vorukh, one of the Tajik border mountain villages increased 20-fold during the 20th century, and in the quarter of a century of Tajikistan's independence – four-fold.

Territorial ideas of the local population about lands belonging to these or other villages formed back in the 18th – mid-19th century, when legal grounds began to appear which sealed the rights to land of communities and individual persons. A sum total of these documents is the foundation for the right to one or another plot of land recognized by local Tajiks or Uzbeks, irrespective of official borders. As to the rights to land by the formerly nomad Kyrgyz population, as long as Kyrgyzs were engaged in traditional nomad cattle breeding and whose legal ground was the distribution of territories between their tribal groups, and also between them and the settled Tajik population, there were no reasons for inter-ethnic conflicts between them. On the contrary, differences in the methods of economic activity caused the need for exchange of goods of one's own make and, consequently, friendly contacts.

In the early 20th century the Kyrgyz population was not big. Due to the nomadic way of life the borders of Kyrgyz settlement changed considerably. In the 1930s the Soviet authorities began to implement a policy of transferring the nomads to a settled way of life.

Taking into account the fact that in Batken district, due to a shortage of water, there are few convenient places for settling Kyrgyzs, part of the latter moved to the Isfar River valley, lands which were traditionally recognized by Tajiks as their own. The population grew rapidly due to natural surplus, which also caused

tension in the zone. Thus, the processes in Isfar and Batken districts led to growing tension in inter-ethnic relations, and the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. and the formation of national states became fatal for this part of the Ferghana Valley.

Further on, the authors examine the border situation at the present time. Apart from the old problems – overpopulation, acute shortage of land, water disputes – new ones have emerged, which were the consequences of the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. and sovereignty. They also include unemployment, which was caused by the structural reorganization of the labor market largely due to a drastic curtailment of industrial production. The population has returned to agriculture, which has sharply increased the need for land and water.

The post-Soviet deurbanization and deindustrialization have contributed to an increase of employment in agriculture and retraditionalization, which have led to a rapid growth of the number of the population in the Ferghana Valley and a sharp rise in competition and rivalry for land and water, not so much between ethnic groups as between settled land tillers (Tajiks and Uzbeks) and cattle breeders (Kyrgyzs). The most acute situation takes shape in mountainous regions where hostilities go on for pastures and water.

The authors name the market reforms as another reason for the emergence of new border conflicts. An important role is played here by the elaboration of national legislation in the sphere of agrarian relations (introduction of private ownership of land and formation of a land market in Kyrgyzstan).

Although in the Kyrgyz part of land the border problem of its shortage is not too acute, private ownership of land and rapid procedure of legal confirmation of land ownership tend to speeding up the seizure of disputed plots of land. There is no private ownership of land in the Republic of Tajikistan, this is why people rely on the state which is the only owner of land. But its government is interested in Kyrgyz road infrastructure and this is why is anxious to avert a crisis in land disputes with the neighbor.

As a result near-border settled communities of Tajiks and Uzbeks retreat under pressure of Kyrgyzs, given the indifferent position of their own authorities. One of the consequences of the differences in the agrarian legislation has been the formation of latifundium, belonging to ethnic Kyrgyzs in the near-border zone of Kyrgyzstan, on which Tajiks and Uzbeks work as agricultural laborers.

The authors of the article pay much attention to conflicts caused by the water situation. Certain districts of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have common borders established in the Soviet period and trans border water systems. The source of water for these systems is the basin of the Isfara River formed on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, and the basic principles of the use of water were agreed on in the Soviet period. After the border ceased to be formal, water disputes became more violent. Water is often used as a means of bringing pressure to bear on the opponent during the exacerbation of border conflicts. The reasons for conflicts connected with access to water are as follows: growing requirements for water caused by an increase in the number of its users and the intensification of agriculture; obsolete system of the division of water, obsolete irrigation systems with common irrigation installations; worn-out sluices and gates; bad water management based on personal contacts and agreements; weakness of the institutions managing the water systems. True, in recent years a change has been made in appointment of the main actors in water relations.

On the whole, water conflicts are closely connected with territorial conflicts. The growing Tajik population is trying to enlarge the area under gardens and tillage, tackling irrigation projects. The Kyrgyz side, fearing that Tajiks will get more water for irrigation and will plough up disputed land does not agree with it. Thus, any technical solution to the water supply problem comes across territorial contradictions and access to water as a lever of pressure in disputes.

Another problem causing conflicts is that of pasturelands. Historically, pastures have not been someone's property and their use was determined by tradition and agreements between communities. In Soviet time part of these pasturelands was redistributed in favor of Kyrgyz economies on the lease basis. The deadlines of these agreements have expired a long time ago, however, now the problem of returning the land is regarded as disputed one.

Up to 2014 all pastures were used jointly in accordance with local traditions. In the first years after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. the local authorities of the two countries signed agreements on the use of pastures. More often than not, local inhabitants, on the basis of tradition, succeeded to find a compromise and used pastures jointly. Inhabitants of Tajik villages often hired Kyrgyz shepherds who tended their cattle in summer. But in 2015 a law adopted in Kyrgyzstan came into force banning the lease of pasturelands to foreigners. Thus, citizens of Tajikistan were deprived of an opportunity to pasture on lands under the jurisdiction of Kyrgyzstan. After that Tajik cattle owners had to cut their livestock number.

Another factor of emerging conflicts is the road network. Both Tajik and Kyrgyz populated centers are connected by a single transport network built in Soviet time. Although the question of enclaves in border zones is still open right up to the completion of Tajik-Kyrgyz border delimitation, in the period of the aggravation of conflicts, both sides put up customs-border posts on roads and close them. When roads and borders are closed, prices of food products rise sharply and fragile mutual dependence of border existence is violated.

Still another cause of conflicts is the work of the border services. They violate mutual dependence of the communities of the Ferghana Valley, come out in the role of protectors of law, often aggravating or even provoking conflicts. They often use fire arms in their actions, which only worsens the situation. All this

forces the border services of the two countries to conclude an agreement on neutrality of border guards in conflicts.

Smugglers and criminals are also an influential force in creating conflicts. They buy plots of land to set up their material bases and try to seize control over water sources.

Finally, migration networks and diasporas. They unite their fellow-countrymen in common activities, which are sometimes detrimental to one of the sides in conflicts.

In conclusion, the authors write that during the past 25 years the border territories of the Ferghana Valley have turned into a dangerous zone breeding numerous conflicts and recreating old contradictions. Ethnicity, citizenship, territorial matters have been transformed and made their contribution to growing conflicts, including in them border guards, criminals, diasporas and even international organizations.

Author of the abstract – Elena Dmitrieva