

able to join political rivalry in the future. With the outward external stability of the modern situation in Turkmenistan, the clan system is fraught with a constant danger of internal strife. In this case the previously reliable clan structure of power may give in, and power struggle in the upper echelon of power may cause destabilization of the situation in the country.

On the other hand, the Turkmen elite will not gain much due to changes in society; on the contrary, it may lose power and sources of personal wealth. It can be expected that clan relations taking shape on the regional-ethnic principle and on the basis of personal loyalty to one's patron will further dominate in the political life of the country.

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The author notes that 2017 has become one of the most dynamic stages in the history of independent Uzbekistan for all the years of post-Soviet development. Therefore, new trends in the relations of Uzbekistan with its closest neighbors deserve special attention. Uzbekistan is the only country in the region that has borders with all the republics of post-Soviet Central Asia.

Analyzing the relations of Uzbekistan with neighboring countries, the author notes a breakthrough in the Uzbek – Kyrgyz relations, which were previously characterized by tensions due to long-term border disputes.

The stalled relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also managed to get off the ground. These relations have become unfriendly, mainly due to disputes over the water and energy problem. For geographical reasons, Uzbekistan is on the first “line of defense” in this water conflict because of possible threats to the water potential of Uzbekistan created by the Rogun hydropower plant being built by Tajikistan. In November 2017, the commission on delimitation and demarcation of the border between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan resumed its work, which was interrupted in 2012.

Positive trends in relations between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 2017 were also consolidated. In March 2017 the President of Uzbekistan signed a number of important documents, including the Joint Declaration on further deepening the strategic partnership and strengthening good neighborliness between the countries, during his official visit to Astana. So, contacts with Turkmenistan on issues of mutual interest were continued.

As for Russia, the following areas have retained their priority: trade and economic, military and political, cultural and humanitarian. The interaction plan aimed at strengthening stability in the Central Asian region was jointly formed by the defense ministries of the two countries. As for the CSTO, the position of Uzbekistan remained unchanged – the issue of the resumption of the republic’s participation in the CSTO was not on the agenda.

Uzbekistan has become more active in various foreign policy areas, taking part in various formats of various projects on the regionalization of the post-Soviet space (the Chinese transport and logistics initiative “One Belt – One Road”; The American program “C5+1” – a new format of interaction between the U.S. and the five post-Soviet countries of Central Asia in a dialogue on foreign policy problems and security challenges; The free trade zone of the CIS and the EAEU).

Also, a certain “reset” of Uzbek-Turkish relations took place in 2017 mainly within the framework of intensification of trade and economic contacts and cooperation in the military sphere. A protocol on inter-state cooperation in the field of military

education was signed, which provided for the dispatch of Uzbek military personnel to Turkey for training. At the same time, the possible propaganda of the ideology of “moderate Islamism,” which is now popular in Turkey, but rejected by Uzbekistan, may become an obstacle to the development of full-fledged relations between the two countries, which consistently defend the secular nature of their political system. In addition, there are many Uzbek oppositionists, religious leaders and businessmen in Turkey who have fled from persecution in their homeland and which also creates some discomfort in Uzbek-Turkish relations.

Uzbekistan expected the provision of military and technical assistance from the United States, and so contacts between the two countries became noticeably more active in 2017. As for relations between Uzbekistan and Germany, as well as some other EU countries, the economy remains a priority.

The author also notes the activation of Uzbekistan in the Afghan direction. Afghanistan was perceived solely as a threat in Uzbekistan before because it was home to radical Islamists, such as the “Islamic movement of Uzbekistan,” who aimed to overthrow the armed government of the Republic and change its secular political system to a religious one. Now Afghanistan is declared a resource for new opportunities, although the Islamist threat has remained and gained new shape, “enriched” by the ideology and practice of the “Khorasan Emirate” based in the Northern regions of Afghanistan, which is nothing more than a branch of the “Islamic state” banned in the Russian Federation. But the conjuncture considerations seem to have prevailed in Uzbekistan.

The author concludes that the authorities of the republic act in accordance with the guidelines stipulated by various American strategies (“Greater Central Asia,” “New Silk Road,” etc.), which are aiming post-Soviet Central Asia to deepen economic and political cooperation with Afghanistan instead of Russia and its integration projects (EAEU).

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