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**PRODUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION CORPS IN THE XINJIANG
UYGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION OF CHINA AND ITS ROLE IN
CHINA'S FOREIGN AND INTERNAL POLICY**

Abstract. The article examines the deployment of a militarized production and construction corps in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China, which currently comprise up to 2.6 million ethnic Chinese, in the context of the national security of Kazakhstan and other sovereign states of Central Asia. Analysis of available data showed that the objectives of production and construction corps are not limited by domestic tasks only, since the Chinese concept of “moving to the West” (Xi Jin) also means “increasing activity” to the west of China, which is encompassing Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet states of Central Asia. The production and construction corps serves as a powerful tool that China has for influencing neighboring countries and achieving political goals. The system, historical-genetic or retrospective reconstruction method, historical-comparative and comparative-typological methods were used in the research. Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China and, in general, China are one of the main and promising areas of development of the foreign policy of Kazakhstan and the states of Central Asia. Cooperation is beneficial for all its participants, but everyone must respect their own interests, in particular the interests of state security.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, Central Asia, XUAR of China, Production and Construction Building Corps, multi-vectoral policy, national security, economic development.

Introduction. The study examines the principles of the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan within the framework of the project “Multi-vector foreign policy and security of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Central Asia” which is based on cooperation in various fields, interests and safety of Kazakhstan. The research is also focusing on intensification of the struggle for leadership by the world powers, emergence and intensification of threats and the changes posed by the modern world. Current reality presents certain risks for the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) and the Central Asia (CA) which are challenged by the threat of losing its sovereignty and stability. The relevance of the timely identification of real threats and exploration of the ways to solve them is due to the important strategic position of the region. In this regard, of particular interest is the policy of China in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of the PRC (XUAR of the PRC), which shares common regional historical, ethnic, cultural and religious traditions with the Central Asian countries, and also raises questions about the risks to the security of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. For China XUAR is the region which connects Western China with the outside world [1, p. 195]. The Chinese concept of “moving to the West” (Xi Jin) means: in domestic politics, the development of the western regions of the PRC itself, i.e. primarily Xinjiang; and outside the country – “increasing activity” to the west of China, the area which covers Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet states of Central Asia. Here China acts as a truly global power, using the advantages of its economy for the purposes of its own development and accumulation of forces [2, p. 5-6]. Such a target, given the favorable conditions for its implementation (as noted by Chinese experts), at the same time, can not but alarm the Central Asian states.

The article examines the deployment of the militarized production and construction corps in the XUAR of China, which today includes up to 2.6 million “employees”, mostly ethnic Chinese. At the same time, the number of Corps tends to increase. Currently, it constitutes the seventh part of the total XUAR population. Considering the dramatic changes in the ethnic composition of the population of the autonomous republic, where the Han Chinese already became the predominant ethnic group already in the 1990s, according to Chinese data [3, Table. 2], Turkic people of the region do not have much of a chance to preserve their indigenous Turkic ethnic identity[4]. Another issue regarding China’s deployment of production and construction corps in XUAR, an area geographically adjacent to Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics, is related to national security of Central Asian countries. What goals does the PRC pursue by supporting the presence of such a serious paramilitary structure in the autonomous region and what does it actually represent?

Methods. The system, historical-genetic or retrospective reconstruction method, historical-comparative and comparative-typological methods were used in the research. A systematic analysis of the political strategy in relation to the countries of Central Asia revealed the role of the XUAR in the PRC’s foreign policy. In assessing the processes which currently take place in Xinjiang, the author applied the theory of modernization. The use of the historical-genetic method allowed to examine the historical aspects of the issue, identify the causal relationships of the events taking place in the XUAR and draw conclusions about the subsequent development of the region. The study builds on the works devoted to theoretical and methodological understanding of the concepts of national and international security, including Chinese domestic and international politics. Among them, the work of B. Buzan and O. Waever [5], M.T. Fravel [6], A. Kostyukhina [7], K.L. Syroezhkina [8], M. Titarenko [9].

Results. To understand the essence of the issue we need to refer to our historical past. China began to advance to the West, towards Central Asia in the period of antiquity, when the Chinese Han dynasty entered into power (206 BC - 220 AD). The process of expansion has historically developed with varying success, intensifying during periods of strong centralized power, and fading away in the era of interregnum. Conquering new lands, China first of all tried to gain a foothold on them, that is, “mark” them as their property. To this end, in the occupied territory, the Chinese built fortresses and placed garrisons of military settlers. In addition to protecting their area, military settlers had to provide for themselves, as well as Chinese troops and officials sent to foreign countries with everything they need, above all food [10, p. 171]. To this end, they were engaged in tillage, cultivation of domestic living creatures, craft. The benefits of such paramilitary units were diverse: first, each new fortress became an outpost in moving westward, demonstrating to the outside world a new frontier of the empire; secondly, it was a supporting base, a springboard for further advancement; thirdly, it defended the economic interests of China, exercising control over the trade routes; fourthly, it contributed to the control and interaction of the Han people with the population of neighboring possessions; fifthly, it allowed to ease social tensions in the country, to get rid of declassified elements, since exiled criminals served in such garrisons. This list can be continued, but the Chinese goal of establishing of paramilitary units in the conquered territories is already clear.

In this way, China gradually mastered the territory of East Turkestan and at the beginning of AD reached the borders of West Turkestan. In the 50 AD Han China dealt with its opponents by the Northern Huns in the territory of the Union State Kangyuy that had accepted the Huns. The Han authorities sent an expeditionary corps to Kangyui, which included military settlers. The corps destroyed the Huns [10, p. 184-185]. Another example is from the history of the medieval Chinese empire Tang (618–907), which successfully continued its expansion to the West in the Han period in the first half of the 8 century. The Chinese seized Tashkent, which belonged to the Turks, which forced the Turks to finally rally against the eternal enemy of the nomads and to call for help from the Arabs. In 751 the famous Talas or Atlakh battle between the army of the united Turks and Arabs and the Chinese took place, where the latter suffered a crushing defeat. [11, p. 329]. Thus, further Chinese expansion to the West was suspended. Another example is from the history of the new time. Having destroyed the Dzungar Khanate in 1758, having cut out almost all of its population and seizing Eastern Turkestan in 1759, the Ching government began to develop the territory of the newly formed Xinjiang province by deploying military settlements here. In this historic advance to the West, war settlers played an important role, providing the Chinese army with necessary food, horse-drawn transport, military contingent, etc., that was separated from the rear of the

army. And the last example from modern times when On September 13, 1955, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was established [12, p. nineteen]. In its territory, the Chinese authorities placed in advance the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (LVPS), formed on October 7, 1954 in accordance with Mao Zedong's decree on the basis of various military groups (parts of the PLA) [13, p. 18].

The main goal of the LVPS was to ensure stability in the newly conquered territory of the East Turkestan Republic (VTR). Over time, the tasks of the LVPS expanded and covered such specific functions as the economic development of the newly created Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of the PRC [14]. At first glance, the purpose of the Corps is limited to internal tasks, but if we recall that since the late 1950s Chinese authorities began to question the validity of the existing state border of the USSR and China [12] and take into account the fact that this border remained unchanged with the acquisition of sovereignty by the Central Asian republics, it becomes obvious that the foreign affairs tasks also fall within the responsibility of the corps.

For more than 50 years, both the name of the Corps and its subordination to various structures in Xinjiang, the central government and the military district of Xinjiang have changed. In 1975, the Corps was abolished, however, due to changes in the geopolitical situation associated with the introduction of troops by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and the emergence of an armed conflict near the borders of China, the strategic need for the corps again became acute. In addition, in 1980-1981 ethnic rebellion broke out in Xinjiang. After these events, the Corps was restored and continued to carry out its functions. The uniqueness of the case for the PRC affected the fact that it was managed, one might say, by trial and error [13, p. nineteen].

The CPM (SPSC) functions independently in the autonomous region, since it does not report directly to the authorities of Xinjiang and is at the same level of hierarchy with the administration of the XUAR. Already in the mid-1950 the main tasks assigned to the Corps, in addition to maintaining stability in the XUAR and protecting state borders, were the economic development of the region. The Chinese authorities have always viewed the army as the leading force in the implementation of their policies. The production and construction corps consist of headquarters, agricultural divisions, engineering and construction divisions. Agricultural divisions, in turn, are divided into regiments-state farms [13, p. 18]. Thus, the production and construction corps is a well-organized militarized structure, ready at any moment to execute orders of the Central Government of China.

The corps run most of the correctional facilities, including prisons in Xinjiang in which there are prisoners from all over China, this is another "special role" of the Corps. Prisoners have always been used by the Corps in their economic activities, being a free labor force. The first prisoners of the camps of the Tarim Basin were the Kuomintang troops, who submitted to the CCP after the "peaceful liberation of Xinjiang PLA." These former soldiers helped the population arriving in the region, to plow virgin lands, fight the onset of deserts and build new cities [13, p. 20].

In the present conditions of tightening the policy of "fighting separatism, extremism and terrorism" against the local population, China has built the network of the so-called "Re-education camps" in the autonomous region [15]. Analyzing the content of the functions entrusted to the CPM, it can be assumed that the supervision of the "re-education" of national minorities in the region, primarily Uygurs and Kazakhs, in the so-called "Labor camps" is performed by the Corps, which has expanded its scope of activities. Our assumption is supported by some open data, which show that "... the activity of the Corps, including the "labor camps" system, remains one of the disturbing factors which provoke social tension in the XUAR of the PRC" [14].

As a result of complex measures to adjust the work of the Corps, it has been gradually transformed into a kind of transnational corporation (TNC) [14]. The Corps is currently used not only for the development of Xinjiang, but also outside of China. Some experience of China in this direction is reported, in particular, by the media. Some reports say that in the last months of Yanukovich's presidency, Ukraine has signed large-scale agreements with a number of Chinese enterprises, and in particular with the production and construction corps of the PLA (Xinjiang militarized structure), on leasing land, developing agricultural production and building deep-sea port in the Crimea. However, the implementation of these agreements was prevented by a change of power in the peninsula [16]. Of the local population, few doubted: having received the land, the Chinese themselves would settle and cultivate it. At the same time,

the nominal “property of the state of Ukraine” would in no way prevent the messengers of the Middle Kingdom to make this southern steppe their second homeland. Who has the strength to send them home? Similar situation happened in the Russian Crimea when, in the winter of 2018, China promised to invest 600 million rubles in the construction of a complex of greenhouses for tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers, carrots, garlic, melons and berries. At the same time, it was agreed that the Chinese will grow products, observing environmental requirements and attracting locals to work. The base for the greenhouse complex was to be Nizhnegorsky district. However, China approached the implementation of these promises “in Chinese,” thereby causing a riot of the local population against the “Chinese invasion” [17].

Extensive opportunities are open to China in Central Asia. One of the main tools for the development of the Central Asian region for China is presence in the national economies of the Central Asian states through implementation of “large joint projects”. Thus, China places great hopes on the large-scale transnational project “The Economic Belt of the Silk Road (SREB)”, which is tightly linked to Central Asian states. Kazakhstan for China, as noted by many researchers, is a kind of gateway to Central Asia. In addition, Kazakhstan is a rich source of natural resources for China, a profitable market for Chinese products, which allows them to promote their goods to the entire space of the Eurasian Economic Union and further to Europe, and is also of interest due to its vast territory and attractive prospect for its development. Therefore, Kazakhstan is the leader among the trading partners of XUAR of China [20, p. 18].

An important area of cooperation between China and Kazakhstan is the establishment of joint ventures for processing of agricultural products, building materials, etc. At the same time, China intends to transfer a number of production facilities to Kazakhstan, thereby improving environmental, demographic, social and gender (use of Chinese labor in Kazakhstan) situation on its own soil [19, p. 6; 20]. This policy of China opens up prospects for the development of the Corps, which has been transformed in the conditions of market relations and sent most of the investment capital (6 out of 11) to the development of agricultural projects [13, p. 6].

However, despite the impressive results for China, the development of the Central Asian region has its own pitfalls. In the process of enhancing participation in Central Asian affairs, China faced a number of problems that forced it to change the strategy of behavior and the structure of economic cooperation.

Conclusion. Discussion. Thus, the study allows to draw certain conclusions within the framework of the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia in the context of their security:

- XUAR of the People's Republic of China and, in general, China are one of the main and promising areas of development of the foreign policy of Kazakhstan and the states of Central Asia. Cooperation is beneficial for all its participants, but everyone must respect their own interests, in particular the interests of state security. At the same time, the states of the Central Asian region should take into account that they are dealing with a global power that uses its advantages, in particular, in the field of economy. Therefore, it is necessary to know the peculiarities of the strategy of such a partner and be able to use tactics of checks and balances;

- when dealing with a global partner, the states of Central Asia should understand the advantages of the regional commonwealth and strive to promote its strengthening and development;

- The production and construction corps operates in Xinjiang – a rapid response structure aimed at the effective implementation of the policies of the central government of the PRC, where each employee is ready to replenish the ranks of the regular army without special training if necessary. At the same time, the main essence of the corps remains the preservation of effective army (militarized) formations (PLA), without causing particular anxieties and fears from local residents and outside observers [14]. The corps is a very convenient tool in the hands of the Chinese government in implementing the strategy of mastering the west, both internal and external.

Given the participation of the corps in the development of the agricultural sector outside China (because it involves leasing land), the states of the Central Asian region should pay special attention to the preservation of national interests in this area, especially since here the agriculture and related industries are (including for Kazakhstan) the most promising sectors of the economy [21]. In particular, when considering the possibilities of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries to participate in the Chinese “Belt and Road” project, one should, as noted in the same Internet source, “carefully work out the details

of the practical implementation of all the components of this project, avoiding the emergence of Corps companies in Kazakhstan” [14] and other countries in the region.

Experts call the factors which can reduce to a certain extent the risks to the security of Central Asian states posed by China. These are counterbalances such as the reaction of the “big states” to Chinese advance in the western direction, in particular, relations with Russia, which considers the Central Asian states of the CIS a zone of its strategic interests; political turmoil in some states, interstate, national, confessional conflicts; the attitude of the local Central Asian elites and the population to the “expansion of China” as a kind of “neo-colonialism” and “raw material robbery”, etc. However, one should know that all the listed challenges in relation to Chinese policy are still secondary, they can only promote the collective policies of the states of Central Asia and their regional strategy. Each state in the region should be fully aware of what Chinese interests in the west are, what does the Chinese advancement to the west mean specifically for their state, for their security and, in general, for the security of the Central Asian region [2, p. 6].

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ҚХР ШҰАР АУМАҒЫНДАҒЫ ӨНДІРІСТІК-ҚҰРЫЛЫС КОРПУСЫ ЖӘНЕ ОНЫҢ ҚЫТАЙДЫҢ СЫРТҚЫ ЖӘНЕ ІШКІ САЯСАТЫНДАҒЫ РӨЛІ

Аннотация. Мақалада Қазақстанның және Орталық Азияның басқа да егеменді мемлекеттерінің ұлттық қауіпсіздігі контекстінде ҚХР ШҰАР-ның олармен шектес аумақтарына әскерлендірілген өндірістік-құрылыс корпусын (ӨҚК) орналастыру қарастырылды, оның құрамында бүгінгі күні 2,6 млн. “қызметші”, негізінен этникалық қытайлықтар бар. Зерттеу үшін қол жетімді материалдарды талдау ӨҚК -нің тағайындалуы ішкі саяси міндеттермен шектелмегенін көрсетті, өйткені “батысқа жылжу” қытайлық тұжырымдамасы (си цзинь) елден тыс ҚХР-ның батысына қарай “белсенділікті арттыру” дегенді білдіреді, оның ареалы Қазақстан мен Орталық Азияның басқа да кеңестіктен кейінгі мемлекеттерін қамтиды. Және ӨҚК қол астындағы күш қолдануға ыңғайлы, оның көмегімен Қытайға өз мақсаттарын жүзеге асыруға ыңғайлы. Жұмыста қолданылған жүйелік, тарихи-генетикалық әдісі немесе ретроспективті қайта құру, тарихи-салыстырмалы және салыстырмалы-типологиялық зерттеу әдістері. ШҰАР ҚХР, және тұтастай алғанда, Қытай бірі болып табылады негізгі және перспективалы бағыттарын дамыту Қазақстанның сыртқы саясатының Орталық Азия мемлекеттері. Ынтымақтастық үшін тиімді, оның барлық қатысушыларының, бірақ әркім ұстану және өз мүдделерін, әсіресе мемлекеттік қауіпсіздік мүддесіне.

Түйін сөздер: Қазақстан, Орталық Азия, ҚХР ШҰАР, өндірістік-құрылыс корпусы (ӨҚК), көп векторлық, Ұлттық қауіпсіздік, экономикалық игеру.

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ПРОИЗВОДСТВЕННО-СТРОИТЕЛЬНЫЙ КОРПУС НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ СУАР КНР И ЕГО РОЛЬ ВО ВНЕШНЕЙ И ВНУТРЕННЕЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ КИТАЯ

Аннотация. В статье в контексте многовекторности и безопасности внешней политики Республики Казахстан и других государств Центральной Азии рассмотрено размещение на территории сопредельного с ними Синьцзян-Уйгурского автономного района КНР, военизированного Производственно-строительного корпуса, в составе которого на сегодняшний день насчитывается до 2,6 млн. «служащих», в основном этнических китайцев. Анализ доступных для исследования материалов показал, что назначение Производственно-строительного корпуса не ограничено только внутривнутриполитическими задачами, поскольку китайская концепция «продвижения на Запад» (си цзинь) означает также «наращивание активности» западнее КНР, ареал которого охватывает Казахстан и другие постсоветские государства Центральной Азии. И Производственно-строительный корпус служит удобной для использования подручной силой, с помощью которой Китаю удобно претворять свои цели. СУАР КНР и в целом Китай являются одним из ключевых направлений внешней политики Казахстана и государств Центральной Азии. Сотрудничество выгодно для всех его участников, но каждый должен соблюсти и свои интересы, в особенности интересы

государственной безопасности. В работе были использованы системный, историко-генетический или метод ретроспективной реконструкции, историко-сравнительный и сравнительно-типологический методы.

Ключевые слова: Казахстан, Центральная Азия, СУАР КНР, Производственно-строительный корпус (ПСК), многовекторность, национальная безопасность, экономическое освоение.

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