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**Implementation Mechanisms of the USA External Policy Direction on**

**the Post-Soviet Space**

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**REGULATORY REFERENCES**

This doctoral dissertation (PhD) uses references to the following standards:

Democracy Promotion Programs Funded by The US Government - «Brown Report». Report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and The House Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. Congress// Federation of American Scientists, 1994.

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Democracy Promotion Programs Funded by The US Government – “Brown Report”. Report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and The House Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Congress// Federation of American.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ANZUS | – Security Treaty of Australia, New Zealand, United States |
| BRI | – Belt and Road Initiative |
| CAR | – the Central Asian region |
| CENTCOM | – the US Central Command |
| C5+1 format | – US - Central Asia joint Project |
| CICA | – Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia |
| CIS | – the Commonwealth of Independent States |
| CSTO | – The Collective Security Treaty Organization |
| EAEU | – Eurasian Economic Union |
| GDP | – Gross Domestic Product |
| Gazprom | – The company carries out wholesale and retail sales of petroleum products produced by refineries of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Omsk Oil Refinery |
| HPP | – Hydro Power Plant |
| ISAF | – International Security Assistance Force, multinational military mission in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. |
| NATO | – North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NCW | – Network-Centric Warfare |
| NOVATEK | – the largest independent producer of natural gas in Russia |
| NSA | – National Security Agency |
| NSC | – National Security Council |
| NSS | – National Security System |
| OECD | – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PPD | – Presidential Policy Directive |
| R&D | – Research and Development |
| Rosneft | – the leader of the Russian oil industry and one of the largest mining companies in the world. |
| SCO | – Shanghai Cooperation Organization |
| TNCs | – Transnational corporations |
| Transnet | – a Russian state – controlled oil pipeline company. Operator of oil trunk pipelines and oil product pipelines. |
| the USSR | – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| USAID | – US Agency for International Development |
| the USAID | – US Agency for International Development (subordinate to the State Department) |

# INTRODUCTION

**The relevance of the study** is determined by the change in the balance of power in the international arena after the end of the Cold War and the increase in the number of participants due to the emergence of new states in the post-Soviet space, on the one hand, and the US activity in the new field for activity, on the other; as well as revealing the real interests of the United States in the territory of the post-Soviet countries.

This includes geopolitical interests and, in particular, the US external policy in the post-Soviet countries, in particular, the origins, goals, objectives, methods and priorities of the US foreign policy in relation to the post-Soviet space. A special place is devoted to the methods of implementing the foreign policy of the United States with an emphasis on Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia.

American geopolitics is characterized by its global nature and influence in all regions of the world. The influence of the external policy of the United States has several levels, covering political, military, strategic, economic and ideological aspects. International events of recent decades such as the events of September 11, 2001, the deployment of the US-led NATO coalition forces in Afghanistan, have drawn more attention to Central Asia. All above-said, first of all, are closely connected with the peculiarity of the geopolitical and geostrategic location of the region near the sources of instability.

The expansion of political influence in the post-Soviet space - strategically occupying a favorable territorial location with access to Europe and Asia, - has shaped the US policy in relation to the geopolitical request. In addition, convenient transport, sea routes, resources in the bowels of the earth, developed agriculture and existing industry are only a small part of energy and economic interests.

Positioning the United States as a political hegemony and a world superpower with its own interests and aspirations in the CIS countries, identifying the implementation of political mechanisms through democratic values in the legal sphere, educational grants, the entry of international organizations with their own doctrines, organizing the creation of funds, media actions in the field of information policy - as tools for the implementation of "soft policy" - are relevant, where an objective vision and consideration of interests will reveal the area for interstate cooperation of all actors.

These factors bring to the fore the need to analyze, comprehend and generalize the results: the interests and mechanisms for implementing the US policy to expand influence on the region and the further policy development scenario, taking into account the build-up of confrontation with Russia over the past 20 years and affects directly to Kazakhstan as a nearest neighboring state. In addition, Kazakhstan is part of the Central Asian region which has also become a focus of the US attention for a number of reasons in the energy and geopolitical sphere, where consolidation and integration come to the first place for subsequent cooperation with the rest of the Central Asian states.

The formation of the US external policy, taking into account trends and patterns, an analysis of all the processes of formation, mechanisms for their implementation, will make it possible to draw up options for the development of the situation in the post-Soviet countries.

From the geopolitics point of view, the security system of the post-Soviet countries is a rather complex structure. Various international political and economic interests are intersected in this structure. At the same time, the post-Soviet states participate in several regional organizations in which the leading role belongs to influential geopolitical actors. And the issues of economic development and the formation of foreign policy relations in this region are under the direct influence of the geopolitical factor. Given that international political players are extremely interested in controlling the natural resources of the countries of this region.

As for Central Asia, as a significant component of the countries of the post-Soviet space, it is currently involved in the so-called "energy game". If China provides energy policy in this region as part of its energy security, then Russia is interested in strengthening the security of its southern borders and supporting the work of the Russian companies in the region. As for the US, economic policy in the region is closely linked to energy issues. Despite Washington's desire to ensure the business of American companies in the region, the United States pays special attention to the transportation of energy resources. It is the intersection of such interests in energy resources that has drawn the Central Asian region into the sphere of rivalry between external actors.

Moreover, Central Asia as a region attracts the attention of the international community not only with raw materials but also with its location in the heart of the Eurasian continent. This location allows to realize fully the possibilities of new transcontinental transport corridors in the North-Southern and West-Eastern directions. The use of the region's favorable geographical position for the realization of its geopolitical goals and the development of infrastructure are one of the main topics of US foreign policy towards the region. In response to the situation in Afghanistan, the United States has initiated projects such as "Greater Central Asia" and “New Silk Road” aimed at the Central Asian region.

One of the priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the development of partnerships with the United States. Currently, the Central Asian region does not have a priority in the US foreign policy strategy, at the same time, the American presence in it is determined by the overall US strategic objectives in Eurasia and continues to grow steadily, affecting a wide range of economic and political interests which are reflected in the new foreign policy US strategies. This is evidenced by the US National Security Strategy updated in 2017, the new US Strategy in Central Asia for 2019-2025 published in February 2020, as well as the intensification of contacts between representatives of the administration and the leadership of the Central Asian countries.

The pragmatic approach has become the main factor of the US administration in building policy in various regions of the world and also spread to the Central Asian states. It is no coincidence that the amount of funding allocated to this region is determined by Washington, taking into account its interaction with each individual state of Central Asia (CA), as well as depending on the tasks set, the solution of which should be ensured through joint interaction. The US financial support is focused on priority areas of the American policy, namely, ensuring security and stability in the region through achieving economic stability and deepening regional integration; on the effective protection of borders and the fight against transnational crime. At the same time, thinking of the emerging trend of forming various kinds of alliances (agreements) on a bilateral basis, Washington is building its policy with individual states of this region, including the characteristics of each of them.

The concept of Kazakhstan's foreign policy provides that the country will continue to strengthen strategic cooperation with the United States in order to develop political, trade, economic, investment, energy, scientific, technical and humanitarian partnerships, as well as solving important international problems. In fact, for instance, in the event of growing tension in relations between Russia and the United States, Kazakhstan can be assigned for the role of a partner which could become an intermediary for rapprochement. Kazakhstan as a party that could help to prevent a situation of limited cooperation, as it was observed in the case of Syria. In this case, the US can get a supporter in the negotiations which has a cultural, historical and linguistic commonality with Russia.

To study the interests of the largest and most influential political and economic player in relation to the post-Soviet region, an analysis was made of the main phases in the evolution of the foreign policy direction of the United States in the Central Asian region, as well as the causal relationships related to this issue.

**The subject of the research** is ways of implementation of the external policy directions of the United States of America in the post-Soviet space. The US policy in the region is analyzed in the context of the evolution of relations with the CIS countries, and the place and role of Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet space are determined, taking into account the interests’ direction of the United States.

**The object of the research** is shown in the changes and transformations of the tools for implementing the foreign policy direction of the United States of America in the post-Soviet space.

The study's **objective** is to examine the mechanisms behind the US activity within the borders of the former Soviet Union. There will be special consideration for the US relations with Kazakhstan and Russia.

**Research tasks are the following:**

1. To examine the decision-making processes involved in carrying out US external policy directions.

2. To examine the development of the US external policy toward the post-Soviet arena using the following periodization:

– right after the USSR broke up and in the 1990s;

– following the US military’s deployment to Afghanistan in 2001 and the CIS's involvement in the fight against terrorism;

– following the US troops’ withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 and the fortification of Russia's position;

3. To investigate how the US diplomacy employs a mix of “hard” and “soft” power strategies.

4. To assess how well the US’s information diplomacy mechanisms are working.

5. To compare the geopolitical approaches and economic instruments of the United States in relation to the countries of Central Asia.

6. To identify the means of the US influence on the transformation of the countries of Central Asia

The chronological framework covers the period from 1991, that is, from the period of the collapse of the Soviet Union, to 2020. This period covers 30 years, which makes it possible to draw a symbolic line in US policy, to analyze the implementation tools in the post-Soviet countries.

**Research methods.** The methodology of the research work was chosen in accordance with the object and subject of the study, as well as in accordance with the main objective and tasks. The study used the wide spectrum methods of modern political science and historical science devoted to the study of international relations and foreign policy.

Such methods as institutional analysis, structural-functional method, historical and comparative-historical methods, the method of expert assessments were fulfilled. Furthermore, when examining the state’s approaches to foreign policy, it is methodologically flawed to exclusively emphasize these strategies, as domestic policy methods are intricately connected to and often exert an impact on both the tactics and substance of foreign policy. The systems approach considers politics as a holistic, complexly organized, self-regulating mechanism that is in continuous interaction with the environment through the “input” (perceiving the demands of citizens, their support or disapproval) and the “output” (taken political decisions and actions) of the system.

The comparative-historical approach allows to form a dynamic picture of politics, considering it as a specific type of social activity, as a process of making political decisions and mobilizing resources for their implementation; as regulation of activities, accounting and control over the implementation of goals, analysis of the results obtained and setting new goals and objectives. The activity approach serves as a methodological basis for the theory of political decisions. It was viewed from the angle, where politics acts as a process of preparation, adoption and implementation of political decisions. The use of the activity approach is also associated with the interpretation of politics as a specific form of social management.

In addition, the study is used for the methods such as the method of unity of the historical and logical, ascent from the abstract to the concrete.

The methodological basis of the study is the principle of objectivity and historicism. The principle of historicism allows us to consider the evolution of the US foreign policy direction towards the countries of the post-Soviet space. The principle of objectivity made it possible to analyze the role of the countries of the post-Soviet space in the US external policy directions:

– the method of logical comparison made it possible to form the concept of the essence of the US foreign policy direction towards the region;

– the comparative method made it possible to compare and determine the positions of the US economic policy direction in relation to each country in the region under consideration;

– the systematic approach method made it possible to study the mechanism of the formation of the policy of state bodies and departments responsible for the US foreign policy in relation to the post-Soviet countries.

– the geopolitical approach, which aims to govern the possible political space, was the primary method used in the study's theory of international relations.

**Historiography.** This research of the US foreign policy direction’s realization in the post-Soviet area is based on scientific research and sources. Different local and foreign researchers have been studying political processes in Central Asia.

Among Kazakh researchers who deal with the problems of the US external policy, it is possible to single out such as Laumulin M.T. [1], Kukeyeva F.T. [2], Chernykh I.A., Korsakov I.B. [3] and many others. The major focus of their works is focused on the analysis of Washington's foreign policy in Central Asia and Kazakhstan, namely, interests in security, democratization and economic cooperation.

The historical aspects of the development of the region and the characteristics of the dynamics of political regimes in the countries of Central Asia are considered in the collective monograph as “Central Asia. New Challenges'', published under the editorship of B.A. Akayeva, A.V. Korotayeva, L.M. Issayeva and A.R. Shishkin [4].

Among the Russian researchers the most essential ones for the research were V.L. Belokrenitsky [5], A.D. Bogaturova [6], S.Z. Zhiznina [7], C.B. Zhukov [8], A.B. Kortunova [9], H.A. Kossolapova [10], S.I. Luneva [11], A.B. Malashenko [12], P.M. Mukimdzhanova [13], V.D. Pissarev [14], O.B. Reznikova [15], A.I. Utkin [16], Yu.E. Fedorov [17].

The authors conducted a systematic analysis of foreign policy processes in the region. Strategies in the field of delimitation of the Caspian Sea, including the position of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Moreover, Russian scholars pay special attention to the strengthening efforts of the USA to counterbalance Russia’s position in the post-soviet space.

It must be noted the dissertation works by G.S. Minasyan [18], S.A. Tsaturyan [19], M.A. Bochanova [20], A.A. Davydova [21].

A number of studies from abroad are devoted to the analysis of the politicization and radicalization of religion in Central Asia. They include monographs by American authors such as R. Burnell [22], T. Carothers [23], A. Cooley [24], F. Starr and many others.

These scientific works can be periodized according to the nature of the policy under the Administration of a particular US President (B. Clinton, G. Bush Jr., B. Obama and D. Trump), and also classified according to which American policy in the post-Soviet space is a projection of several interrelated directions of the country's foreign and security policy directions and pursues at least two strategic imperatives.

In general, the United States considers its own military presence in Europe, with its continuation in the post-Soviet space as a system-forming element of the global American strategy designed to contain potential threats. An important component of this policy is the formation of an interconnected system of political socialization and ideological orientations of the elites and societies of the post-Soviet states, similar models of their political thinking and practical positions, especially with regard to key issues of world politics for the United States.

Analyzing the works of these authors, one can obtain the following relationship for the periodization of the US external policy:

1. Under B. Clinton where emphasis was placed on building a unipolar world.
2. Under Gr. Bush when the main issue was the physical military presence in Asia. This is predominantly a “hard power” policy combined with “information diplomacy”.
3. In both terms of B. Obama began to dominate typical tools of “soft power” in the US external policy directions towards the post-Soviet space:
   1. in organizational and financial support for non-governmental foundations and “pro-democratic organizations” from state structures has increased;
   2. the quota for student, academic and professional exchanges for citizens of the post-soviet republics has increased;
   3. there is a practice of appointing people to the highest embassy positions with extensive experience in conducting “non-violent regime changes”;
   4. a special place began to be occupied by programs for the creation of fiber-optic systems for high-speed internet and the subsequent training of groups of civil organizations to work with social media - a new tool for potential protest organization.

4. During the administration of D. Trump, the continuity of the “democracy promotion” policy was preserved. At the same time, the goals of this policy began to be commensurate with the possible benefits and costs for American interests in the field of security and business development.

Thus, the political processes taking place in the countries of Central Asia are the object of research by domestic and foreign authors.

The study used a wide range of sources.

*The first* *group were* addressed to various centers for the implementation of the US foreign policy strategy, such as The United States Agency for International Development, Department of State and USAID [25].

T*he second* *group* must include reports and texts of discussions presented in public bodies such as The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. Congress, White House Archives. The following documents were used as Freedom for Russia and Emerging Euroasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 Freedom for Russia and Emerging Euroasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992, Newsletters on US Bilateral Relations, Press Releases from the Office of the White House Press Secretary [26].

*The* *third group* consists of the US strategic documents. Among them are such as:

– the United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025: Advancing Sovereignty and Economic Prosperity. The Department of State [27];

– the United States Agency for International Development. National Security Strategy of the United States of America. The White House, December, 2018 [28];

– the United States and Kazakhstan: An Enhanced Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century. 2018 [29].

*The fourth group* covers official messages on the websites of the US embassies, Central Asian countries and Russia. The data used was provided by the US Embassy in Tajikistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan. The US Embassy in Kazakhstan is actively working to promote its interests, which is reflected on the pages of the website [www.kz.usebassy.gov](http://www.kz.usebassy.gov).

*The* *fifth group* includes the personal works of participants in the foreign policy events. Among the sources of the Central Asian countries are the memoirs and essays of politicians and eyewitnesses such as: N.A. Nazarbayev [30, 31], K.-Zh.K. Tokayev [32-34], Ye. Idrissov [35].

*The scientific novelty*of the research work lies in its following main aspects:

– an attempt was made to systematize the US external policy instruments based on periodization and the development of the geopolitical environment;

– based on the “regionalization” of the post-Soviet space, a combination of different strategic directions in US foreign policy was determined;

– the use of tactical means of foreign policy was periodized with a gradual preference for “soft power” and “information” (and more recently, "digital") diplomacy.

**Provisions for defense:**

1. The United States employs “soft” power methods in conjunction with traditional tools of foreign policy, notably public diplomacy and information support for its foreign policy objectives.

2. The core principles of the U.S. external policy within its Central Asian strategy exhibit characteristics of transformation and evolution. This entails the adaptation of forms and mechanisms for executing U.S. foreign policy as a response to evolving global political conditions, combining elements of soft power and information diplomacy.

3. U.S. diplomatic strategies encompass a mix of “soft” and “hard” power within the geopolitical landscape, with a growing emphasis on “digital diplomacy”. Political communications in the United States now take into consideration the interplay between media exposure and support or opposition to military interventions, fostering intercultural exploration of the relationship between information and communication technologies (ICT).

4. The United States' geopolitical strategy in Eurasia is geared towards upholding its presence in Central Asia and safeguarding its expanding economic interests. Initially rooted in geopolitical and military interests, the United States now views the developing post-Soviet countries of Central Asia, abundant in energy and mineral resources, as an integral facet of its global strategy in its dealings with Kazakhstan regarding security and military cooperation, the United States pursues specific objectives and adheres to distinct guidelines for their execution. The U.S. effectively addresses its interests by leveraging “soft power” to impart liberal, democratic values to Kazakhstan, thereby influencing its stance on Western positions. In doing so, the U.S. seeks to gain a partner in negotiations that shares cultural, historical, and linguistic ties with Russia.

5. The mechanisms employed to enact the U.S. external policy directions in the Central Asian region adhere to traditional diplomatic methods, such as summit meetings, negotiation processes, and the signing of international treaties. However, the subject matter of diplomatic meetings has evolved. While post-Soviet disarmament was a primary concern following the Soviet Union's dissolution, the agenda in 2010 shifted toward the creation of interstate dialogue in the C5+1 format. United States uses the methods of "soft power" along with the traditional instruments of foreign policy, in particular, public diplomacy, information support for foreign policy.

**Theoretical and practical significance of the research.** The basic concepts and results of the research can be used by students, doctoral students and faculty of the specialties: political science, regional studies and international relations.

The results of the research work may be useful to the competent authorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and other government agencies when conducting research on the foreign policy of the United States of America, as well as for predicting the regional foreign policy of the United States.

**Approbation of the research results.** The main provisions, practical results and conclusions of the dissertation are reflected and have been tested in published scientific articles:

1. Geopolitical Interests of the United States of America in the Central Asian Republics // Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics, Volume X, Spring, 1(39): 28 – 35. DOI: 10.14505/jarle. v10.1(39).04.
2. Color Revolutions after the Collapse of the USSR // The Vestnik of Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abay Kunanbayev. Series: Historical and Social and Political Sciences, 2020, No. 2. pp.159-165.
3. Integration Processes in the Countries of the Former USSR on the Example of the EAEU // The Bulletin of the Eurasian National University named after L.N. Gumilyov. Series: Political science. Regional Studies Oriental Studies. Turkology ISSN 2616-6887 №1, 2020.
4. Effectiveness of Sanctions as an Instrument of Influence // The Bulletin of Abay Kazakh National Pedagogical University. Series: Historical and Social and Political Sciences, 2020, No. 4.
5. Geopolitical Rivalry between the US and Russia in the post -Soviet Space // The Bulletin of Semey State University named after Shakarim, Series N 492-2020.
6. Security Issues in the CIS countries (on the example of the Collective Security Treaty), UDC 378 LBC 74.58 C 30 // Science and Education in The Modern World: Challenges of the XXI Century: Proceedings of the V International Scientific-Practical. conf. (Sociological Sciences)/comp.: Ye. Yeshim, Ye. Abiyev - Nur-Sultan, 2019 - 27 p.
7. The Formation and Implementation of United States Foreign Policy // In The Modern World, The Series of International Scientific Conference of Students and Young scientists – “Ǵylym Jáne Bilim – 2020”, pp. 78-85.
8. Media and External of the USA politics // Global Challenges – Scientific Solutions. Proceedings - Varna: Eurasian Center of Innovative Development “DARA”, 2020. - 316 p.
9. The US Policy in the Field of Security and Military Cooperation with Kazakhstan // Collection of materials of the ІV International Scientific and Practical conference “Science and Practice: Implementation to Modern Society” (6-8 May 2020). United Kingdom, Manchester: Peal Press Ltd., 2020. 460 p. - S. 59-63.)
10. Methods of Implementation of the U.S. policy to ensure the sustainable development in the post-Soviet States // Journal Rivista Di Studi Sulla Sostenibilita, 2022 Issue 2021/2 Language English Pages 13 P. 127-139 File size 100 KB, DOI 10.3280/RISS2021-002010.

On the topic of the dissertation, 4 articles were published in publications recommended by the Ministries of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the publication of the main results of scientific activity and two following articles in the international edition indexed in the Scopus database: one articles as Geopolitical Interests of the United States of America in the Central Asian republics in the international edition of the Journal of Advanced Research in law and Economics , and the second article as Methods of Implementation of the US Policy in the post-Soviet States in Journal Rivista Di Studi Sulla Sostenibilita.

**The structure and scope of the dissertation**. The research consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of references and an appendix.

The first chapter deals with the evolution of US external policy towards the post-Soviet space, including: the formation and development of the US geopolitical and economic interests; interstate cooperation of the USA with the CIS countries.

After the collapse of the USSR, the United States has a special interest in foreign policy in the post-Soviet space, preventing Russia's influence on individual countries of the former USSR, preventing integration processes, and creating regional communities.

The second period is the events after September 11, 2001, which were actually a strong blow to the US national prestige. Attempts to pursue an active policy of "hard power" (sending troops into Afghanistan and Iraq) revealed their cost, the physical presence of the United States in these countries led not to strengthening, but to weakening their positions, and contributed to a turn in Russia's foreign policy. At the same time, the United States is pursuing an indirect policy, a middle ground between “hard” and “soft” power, expressed first in “color revolutions”, and after their failures (the very next political cycle, if we count the frequency of elections, led to the loss of all positions in Georgia, the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan) - a gradual transition to combined means in foreign policy.

Since 2014, after the establishment of Russian control over Crimea, the transition to the expanded use of “soft power” begins, in combination with sanctions and information wars

The second chapter analyzes the mechanisms for implementing the US external policy including:

* information activity as an instrument of political influence;
* political processes taking place on the territory of the post-Soviet countries and their relationship with the subsequent implementation of the US policy.

The classification of the US external policy directions means is as follows:

* politics of “soft power” and public diplomacy.
* information diplomacy.
* sanctions as a manifestation of “hard power” in the geopolitical approach.

At the same time, a number of the US external policy tools cannot be attributed only to “soft” or only to “hard” power. The classification of sanctions as hard power looks very arbitrary, since they did not lead to changes in foreign policy in the direction desired by the United States. At the same time, it should be noted that in relation to information diplomacy and its extreme manifestation - information wars - the countries of the former USSR are inferior to the United States, having no worse opportunities in relation to this means of foreign policy but the reasons for not using these opportunities are not considered in the study.

The third chapter examines the Central Asian region (CAR) in the context of the US strategic directions including the US interests in Kazakhstan.

In particular, the following areas are being explored:

* geopolitical approaches and economic instruments;
* a combination of various means of the US external policy directions in relation to the impact on the countries of Central Asia.

**Structure of the Thesis.** The structure is based on the purpose and objectives set out in the research, and consist of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion and list of references.

# 1 EVOLUTION OF THE US EXTERNAL POLICY TOWARDS THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

## 1.1 Decision Making in the process of implementing the US external policy

The role and place of the United States of America in modern international relations and world politics is the subject of serious disputes within the country and abroad. The range of opinions is very wide - from the vision of our planet in the form of a “new American empire” to ideas about the United States as one of the great powers with very limited capabilities. For a more objective assessment of this highly ideological issue, it is necessary to determine:

1. What real resources and instruments of international influence does the United States have.

2. What is the strategy for their use.

3. How this strategy is being implemented in the main regions of the world.

In terms of the totality of the components of national power (economic, scientific, technical, financial, military, natural-geographic, etc.), the United States is the leading center of power in world politics.

At the heart of the dynamism of the American economy is the country's global scientific and technological leadership. It consistently accounts for about half of the expenditures and scientific personnel of the G8; it holds the lead in the global transfer of high technology and the export of related products, the number of patents and inventions. The US produces 55% of the world's aerospace products, 34% of computer equipment, and 25% of telecommunications equipment. The American economic model also has other advantages that make it the most adapted to the conditions of global competition. According to the World Economic Forum, the United States ranks first in terms of market openness, investment climate, availability of risk capital, computerization, educational level and effectiveness of labor force incentives [1, p. 23].

The USA is the main trading power of the Earth. They are also the main exporter and at the same time a net importer of capital. The preservation of the leading positions of the United States in the world economy is facilitated by the international role of the dollar, which remains the main reserve and settlement instrument in the world monetary and financial system. In addition, the United States is the base for the activities of many TNCs and banks that have a significant impact on the global economy.

Most of all, the separation of the United States from its closest allies and competitors is tangible in the military-strategic sense. With the exception of nuclear forces (where Russia still retains a potential comparable to the US), they have become the world's only military superpower. The United States accounts for 80% of R&D costs in this area of all leading military powers and about half of world arms exports.

Especially large is the qualitative gap between America and other countries in the possibilities of conducting combat operations throughout the planet. In the global military presence, the United States has no competitors: its 12 aircraft carrier groups patrol key sea lanes, more than a quarter of a million military personnel are stationed at more than 700 military bases that encircle the globe on four continents, the areas of responsibility of six regional commands cover the entire land surface and sea space of the Earth.

An important geopolitical advantage of the United States remains its geographical position. A vast continental territory (in terms of its size, the United States is second only to Russia and China), rich natural resources, a favorable climate, a high degree of economic self-sufficiency, a “friendly” environment by weaker and often dependent on America states, remoteness from the main centers of world conflicts, free access to the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean - these factors not only strengthen the country's security, but also enable it to play the role of an "island balancer " in relation to Eurasia and other global centers of power, and reduce the conflict potential of its relations with the great powers.

A comparative historical analysis of the balance of power between the main major powers of the world in terms of aggregate "hard power" (i.e. power) shows a significant gap between the United States not only from modern competitors, but also from their predecessors in the role of world hegemon, starting with the formation of the Westphalian system international relations (primarily from Great Britain in the second half of the 19th century).

However, the matter is not limited to "hard power". The United States radiates a powerful civilizational impact around the world, called the political scientist J. Nye "soft power". This has not only serious economic, but also strategic importance, because a world that is increasingly talking, having fun and communicating in an American way is closer and less hostile to the United States.

In projecting influence on the outside world, the United States relies not only on its national resources, but also on positions in leading international organizations and groups, on allied and friendly states that serve as a kind of multiplier of American power. They occupy a central position in the system of military-political alliances that unite the majority of the developed world (NATO, the inter-American security system, ANZUS).

Thus, the United States has a complete set of resources in all the primary fields of world competition. It is this multidimensionality of American dominance that gives them a decisive advantage over other great powers, providing the foundation for America's unique political influence as the leader of the Western community.

The US external policy was developed in fierce discussions between supporters of two concepts - internationalism and isolationism. Internationalists believe that America's active intervention is justified, firstly, for the sake of freedom and democracy throughout the world, and secondly, for the sake of protecting American political and economic interests in various regions.

A national interest is one of the fundamental conditions for acquiring national and cultural identity by people in addition, “it expresses in a concentrated form those goals and ways to achieve them, which assign one or another political status to national movements both within the state and in the international arena. For the United States, its own benefit has always been at the forefront, therefore the formation of the concept of unilateralism was the logical outcome of actions in external policy.

The importance of contacts with other countries is determined by the following criteria: access to key resources, historical interests and own rear. The United States should strive to expand the zone of market democracy through, above all, transitional states. Based on national interests, the goals of the “grand strategy” of the United States are formed - strengthening security and ensuring the economic prosperity of the country, as well as promoting democracy in the world. The latter is seen as consistent not only with the US principles but also with the US interests because (as noted in the latest edition of National Security Strategy for the New Century) “democratic regimes are more willing to cooperate with each other to counter common threats, they encourage free trade and sustainable economic development”. Such regimes are less likely to start wars and violate the rights of their citizens. Therefore, the worldwide trend of moving towards the market is also advancing American interests.

The process of forming external policy directions should be considered as a complex one. Its main elements are the development and adoption of foreign policy decisions, the nature of which is influenced by many factors: the country's geographical location, military power, economic influence, historical and cultural traditions, the type of social structure, political system, individual characteristics of political leaders, etc. For leading countries, it is required to have effective mechanisms for preparation, execution, decision-making within the framework of strategic issues of international activity [4, p. 15].

In 1990, the American journalist C. Krauthammer proposed a temporary (for 30-40 years) unipolar world model headed by the US superpower, and subsequently suggested that “the unipolar moment has become a unipolar era” [4, p. 17]. The only pole in the “new world order” was, of course, the United States. Thus, it seemed that the dominance of the “unipolar” was established in the world, including the superpower of the United States and its allies [4, p. 27]. By the way, A. Straus considered acceptable within the framework of the global “unipolar” a certain “multipolar balance of influences” which by no means implied real multipolarity [4, p. 28].

To resolve issues of the US external policy directions, there are well-established mechanisms for the development, adoption and approval of documents regulating the activities of both the US President and various organizations. So, for example, “this process finds its theoretical explanation of the bureaucratic decision-making model, as well as the five- phase model of the dynamics of this process” [36].

At present, a number of directions and schools have developed in science that deal with the problem of making a foreign policy decision and finding ways to optimize this process. These schools and trends overlap to a large extent.

There are five main theoretical directions:

* rational choice;
* systemic;
* institutional;
* interactionist;
* psychological.

Within the framework of the institutional direction, the problems associated with the organization of the process of making a foreign policy decision are analyzed. Important for understanding how the foreign policy of a particular state will be built is the identification of standard operating procedures. This applies primarily to the rules for passing and making foreign policy decisions.

The main direction focuses on the process of interaction between the parties. The focus here is on issues such as the impact of one participant's decision on the behavior of the other.

Systematic studies emphasizes those decisions made by political leaders and it must be considered in the general context of international relations and world politics. At the same time, not only the decision itself should be analyzed but also its place in a wider system of relations of all participants in the world political system.

In this regard, it is possible to characterize the mechanism on the basis of which such decisions are made in the most developed countries by collegiality, as well as the involvement of foreign policy actors, reliance on deep analytical developments, expertise of non-governmental and government research centers. The United States of America has similar instruments. The relationship between the subjects of political decision-making in the United States is determined to a greater extent by historically established procedural practices than by the US Constitution. These procedural practices are of a precedent nature and over time are fixed both as rules enshrined in the charter of the US Congress and in the form of unwritten but recognized by all rights of certain subjects of the decision-making process (the right of the President to legislative initiative) [37].

Thus, it is the established system of rules and procedural practices that determines the process of making political decisions. These practices do not depend on the political situation and thus serve as a guarantee of the stability of the US political system. Organizationally, this process is a well-established set of procedures. Problematic situations in the course of decision-making do not lead to a crisis in the relationship between the legislature and the executive. All problems are resolved within the established procedures. The Security Adviser is appointed by the President from among the most authoritative experts in this field. He has direct access to the President to report on any of these matters and to present his own views on the most appropriate solution. Members of the National Security Council should not be guided by personal emotions in solving problems that affect the interests of the country.

In addition, the general rule, which they strictly observe, is to maintain confidentiality when discussing these issues. The representatives of Congress are not included in the NSC. In general, the legislative branch of government in the United States is not directly involved in the mechanism for the development, adoption and implementation of foreign policy decisions. However, Congress influences dramatically this indirect process:

* through budgetary policy;
* organization of various hearings “by way of supervision” with the participation of representatives of the executive branch;
* requests to these authorities;
* ratification of international agreements and treaties;
* consultations with the president, secretary of state, secretary of defense, national security adviser to the president;
* approval of appointments to the positions of ambassadors and other high-ranking officials of the foreign policy department etc [38].

Launched in 1996 by the US military, the transition to network wars and the creation of Network-Centric Warfare (NCW), meant the integration of sensor networks (Sensor Grids), C&C Grids and precision targeting to increase the speed of command transmission, representing an original military maneuver. This measure contributed to the further implementation of effective high-tech attacks to win future cyber wars. In a hostile environment, the threat of cyber warfare is constantly increasing.

On July 12, 2018, the Russian Avtomatika Concern and the Citadel company announced the creation of the Kryptonit joint venture which was engaged in military developments in such areas of information technology as quantum computing, cryptography, blockchain technology, Big Data, cybersecurity and machine learning. Financial investments in this company should amount to more than 4 billion rubles. The initiators of this project plan that the main task of the J.V. Kryptonit was aimed to attract investments for the commercialization of innovative solutions and information technologies to significantly strengthen the defense industry of the Russian Federation.

The issue of computer security strategy formation in the 1980s and 1990s is considered by Fred Kaplan who analyzes the history of the work of computer scientists (Computer Scientists) NSA (National security Agency), the Pentagon and the White House, which initiated modern cyber warfare (Employ Cyber wars). He described in detail little-known pages of recent history from the 1991 Gulf War to the conflicts in Haiti, Serbia, Syria, the former Soviet republics, Iraq and Iran.

Everywhere cybersecurity has played a decisive role, as Fred Kaplan shows, top-secret cyber units (Beyond-Top-Secret Cyber Units), military intelligence units, specialists in conducting “information warfare” (Information Warfare) the officers, politicians and scientists who developed this new form of warfare are responsible to varying degrees for its consequences [39].

Previous acute conflicts between nation-states had military power, financial leverage, diplomatic pressure as resources for confrontation in order to reformat the current world order. Adam Segal as a cybersecurity expert (Cybersecurity Expert) gives his professional vision of an opaque global conflict (Opaque Global conflict). It shows that the US government, Russia and China are fighting in cyberspace (Cyberattacks and massive Cyber Espionage Operations) for influence in a developed information society. The bonus for the winner is the control and management of the Internet [40].

Ben Buchanan in his research book “The Cybersecurity Dilemma” relies on documents released by Edward Snowden, and also uses research on real cyber operations (Cyber Operations) in the modern world. It also analyzes hard data on a hot topic from influential politicians. All of this evidence suggests that invading other nations' networks has a strategic defensive value.

Particular attention is paid to the work with the mass media by the executive authorities related to the formation of foreign policy. It is assumed that foreign policy can be effective only if there is support from the country's public opinion, which is strongly influenced by the media. Based on this, the executive authorities are establishing a regular process of holding briefings for the media. This process involves not only state or representative bodies, but also groups specially created on the occasion, such as the Advisory and Analytical Group on the International Situation (Overseas advisory panel).

Funding for the US foreign policy is placed in the Function 150 section of the federal budget (Function 150 Account). Funding for international policy is allocated to programs through four departments:

1. Department of State.

2. Ministry of Finance.

3. Defense Security Cooperation Agency or Ministry of Defense.

4. Independent agencies and institutions (Agency for International Development and International Trade, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, Peace Corps, Peace Institute, etc.) and a number of funds, such as the Asian Fund and the Inter-American Fund.

The functions of the National Security Council (hereinafter referred to as the NSC), one of the key bodies for the implementation of US foreign policy, under the leadership of the President of America, are to develop and implement foreign economic policy, coordinate the positions of various departments, and coordinate their international activities [2, p. 8].

The NSC consists of the Secretary of State, the President, the head of the Pentagon, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Director of the CIA. At the head of the NSS apparatus is the presidential adviser on security. According to the orders of the President, interdepartmental groups (commissions) are formed by the adviser, which operate on a temporary or permanent basis, are engaged in the development of agreed decisions regarding the main issues related to national security and foreign policy of the state.

The creation of the NSC was carried out on the basis of the law “On National Security” which was adopted in 1947. In accordance with this normative act, a unified Ministry of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was created. The main function of the NSC, according to the law, was to “provide recommendations to the President on the integration of military, foreign and domestic policies relating to national security, which is aimed at more effective cooperation between the military department, other agencies and ministries in matters of national security” [4, p. 11].

The role played by the National Security Council has undergone a significant evolution in terms of the decision-making procedure in terms of foreign policy. At the first stages, it was customary to consider the SNB system as extremely inefficient, which was due to its cumbersomeness, inflexibility, and inability to demonstrate a quick response to negative trends in international relations [7, p. 73].

1970s are marked by a significant strengthening of the role of the national security assistant, as well as the NSC apparatus carrying out foreign policy activities, that is, the period during which the positions of assistants belonged to such recognized experts as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger. They approved a function for the NSS apparatus and assistants to formulate their position within the framework of the foreign policy problems under consideration [8, р. 3-28].

Along with this, the main recommendations on the distribution of functions of the NSC and the State Department were developed. The National Security Adviser was entrusted with the functions of mediating between the subjects making foreign policy decisions. At the same time, the possibility of his contact with the media, as well as representatives of other countries was minimized [9, р. 4-56].

Speaking of the State Department, its duties included overseeing the day-to-day diplomatic activities, interacting with public opinion, which allowed it to form a favorable image around the US foreign policy.

The contours of the NSC system became modern throughout the entire period of the presidency of George W. Bush (1989-1993). The Bush administration did not make significant changes to the national security system. During the first months of his own presidency, George W. Bush paid almost no attention to the formal meetings of the NSC.

The US interest in the post-Soviet space can be traced back to 1992, when the US Congress passed the “Law on Freedom for Russia and the Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Support for Free Markets” [41], the main task of which was declared to be to assist countries in the CIS space in the “transition to democracy and market economy”. Within the framework of the law $ 2 billion was allocated annually for the development of democracy in the region.

Taking into account the intensification of Washington's policy in this direction, in April 1993, a new post of Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for Post-Soviet Countries, Ambassador-at-Large which was taken by S. Talbott, was introduced in the State Department.

It can be noted that in the mid-1990s fully formed in the US political establishment was the understanding of the "division of labor" between major foreign policy departments. The National Security Adviser ceded the leading role in the process of shaping the foreign policy course to the Secretary of State. Thanks to this circumstance, the assistant to the president gets the opportunity to fully concentrate on the functions of a link between the bodies that are involved in the process of making appropriate foreign policy decisions.

Along with this, the functions of this adviser are equated with the functions of a consultant to the president in terms of major US external policy issues. The NSS is one of the government agencies involved in making foreign policy decisions that facilitate the performance of presidential functions in the external policy sphere.

The President of the United States holds in his hands an apparatus that guarantees the awareness of the White House on certain issues relating to national security. In addition, as a result of the presence of the NSS system, the President is freed from careful control of the American external policy course, dealing with the resolution of strategically important, most pressing problems.

At the same time, the State Department is entrusted with responsibility for the daily foreign policy process. Owing to this system of relations between the State Department and the National Security Council, duplication of functions of foreign affairs departments is excluded, and the effectiveness of decisions that are made increases.

Along with this, the main advantage of the mechanism on the basis of which foreign policy decisions are made in the United States lies in the special role of Congress in shaping Washington's foreign policy. The US legislature belongs to the main subjects of the US political process which affects the actions carried out by the presidential administration. He has the right to create new, adjust or cancel existing military and external policy programs, and reform the organizational structure of federal departments and ministries in the field of foreign policy. The significance of the Congress in this mechanism is reinforced by its power in the field of distribution of funds. American congressmen have the right to deprive the President of material resources that are required for carrying out relevant external policy actions.

As a result of this provision of Congress, the American political elite sets itself the task of measuring and coordinating their ideas regarding the foreign policy of the state and the interests of other groups of the population. This situation makes the behavior of the administration in the international arena dependent on the interests of the main social groups of the state, strengthens the conciliatory nature of the mechanism on the basis of which the US external policy strategy is developed.

If about the shortcomings of the mechanism for making the US external policy decisions, they act as the reverse side of its merits. The reasons for the decline in the quality of decisions made are the involvement of many actors in the mechanism, the high degree of dependence on the specifics of the relationship between the main foreign policy departments, and the need to find a compromise within these structures.

First, thanks to the developed multi-actor system of relations within external policy structures and between them, the possibility of free demonstration of interests by different political groups opens up.

Secondly, through this mechanism which is complex, the risk associated with the loss of efficiency in emergency situations increases, the procedure for making decisions in a normal daily mode is complicated.

Thirdly, as a result of the strong dependence of the foreign policy process on the domestic political situation, the procedure for making rational decisions is complicated. Thus, throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the adoption of foreign policy decisions by the White House was based on domestic political consequences and the interests of the current administration [14, р. 375-384].

There is a direct relationship between foreign policy issues and political preferences, goals and actions of certain figures that influence the decision-making procedure. The president is also forced to bring his own vision of the foreign policy course into line with his possibilities in the domestic political field. For example, President Bill Clinton focused on the problems of NATO expansion, sanctions against Cuba, the process of reconciliation in Northern Ireland which was caused by his expectations to win the support of the voters of the respective ethnic groups.

During the presidency of George W. Bush, American dominance in the world was aggravated, which caused rejection even from individual Western states and, moreover, from many non-Western actors. "Proposed by the only superpower, in essence, was the maintenance of America's unrivaled dominance for the foreseeable future" [14, p. 377]. There was an awareness that a combination of powerful actors is still capable, if necessary, of balancing the superiority of the United States, so this superpower is forced to use predominantly “soft power” and achieve voluntary agreement with its geopolitics of many other actors [18, с. 11].

“The ability of the superpowers to ensure the stability of their alliances and control over spheres of influence, as well as to build up economic and military power, thereby creating power counterbalances to each other, decisively affects the stability of the world political system” [16, p. 8]. The confrontation of the superpowers threatens the world with catastrophic consequences due to the potential possibility of a full-scale war between them. In addition, there is a danger of the growth of hotbeds of local conflicts in the “periphery”. Even during the Cold War, there were powerful centers in the world (China, India, France) pursuing relatively independent geopolitics, however, of course, taking into account the positions of the two world poles.

A stable world order which can only be achieved through the creation of a balanced multipolarity, looks highly controversial. Geopolitical orders of different types can replace each other on the world stage. The current relative weakening of the US positions in the world and, on the contrary, the strengthening of China, as well as Russia and a number of other non-Western centers, are presented as an offensive of multipolarity.

The modern world order as a whole is characterized by the greatest influence of the West led by the United States. The West also includes a number of rather powerful centers (Germany, France, Great Britain, Canada, Australia) and other Western countries. The EU can be thought of as an association of countries in the European Region.

Now, proposals have been updated to form a “concert of powers” on a global scale in which “great powers should perform the function of maintaining peace, sharing responsibility for peace, stability and security of the entire world system, and not just their own territory and neighboring states” [17, p. 87]. The proposed "concert", in essence, means the formation of an informal institution for a polycentric world order - in the format of ten to seventeen states. The initiation of the "Concert of Powers" project is primarily due to the need to create a sustainable security system in the world. And such a system can be effective only if there is effective interaction between all world centers in the field of security. For the effective activity of the "concert" it is necessary to agree between the main actors on key basic issues. However, a number of leading actors, on the contrary, have a divergence of their geopolitical interests in the world. First of all, we are talking about the growing contradictions between the US and China, as well as the geopolitical confrontation between the West and the Russian Federation.

Firstly, in the short term, the “hybrid” world order will continue to dominate, and for the “collective” West, “soft” unipolarity seems to be the most desirable. The leading role in the world order is necessary for the West, first of all, to ensure its security. Threats to it come from "revisionist" powers, “rogue” states and international terrorism. NATO, apparently, will retain its significance as the most powerful military-political association in the world. In addition, the further (albeit insignificant) expansion of the Alliance and the strengthening of its positions in Europe are ahead. The United States, as the most powerful power, is destined to continue to function as a pole in the world order.

Thirdly, the world continues to actively develop regionalization, the formation and strengthening of regional centers. They expand their spheres of influence, establish informal control over neighboring contractors, organize integration groups, and rush outside their “parent” regions in order to secure their interests, primarily economic ones. The most powerful centers are capable of becoming regional poles. Some of them have ambitious intentions to influence the world order in order to realize their geopolitical and geo-economic interests. In rare cases, a regional pole is even able to form an informal neo-imperial system in the region under its auspices.

Fourthly, the potential for the formation of new poles is a challenge for the geopolitical and geo-economic interests of the United States, along with other leading Western states using their "soft" and "hard" power, are often able to counteract the formation of new poles.

Thus, the United States has great resources in all areas of world competition. The multidimensionality of American dominance gives them a decisive advantage over other states, forming the foundation of this country's unique political influence as the leader of the Western community.

## 1.2 The US external policy in the 1990s after the collapse of the USSR

The collapse of the USSR, the worldwide globalization of interests, the spread of international terrorism, extremism, non-traditional threats, various forms of diseases and viruses, the deterioration of the economy and other pressing problems have turned post -Soviet territory into a new region where the security problem has become especially serious. For this reason, consideration of the issue of the policy of the West, in particular the US external policy directions towards the countries of the former USSR, is relevant today; for the United States this region has not only a huge political and geostrategic interest. With influence in this region, the USA can control its longtime political competitors like China, Iran and Russia. In addition, due to the activation of terrorist organizations, the West and the United States can use this region to deploy military bases and to fight these organizations. The United States is interested in the fact that such regional powers as Pakistan, India, Turkey and Arab countries cannot enter and influence this region.

It should be noted that the US interests in the former Soviet republics mainly began to manifest themselves after 1991 when these republics gained their independence. The beginning of the process showing the US and Western interest in these countries was when NATO members adopted the Partnership for Peace program. The first political interests of the United States in this region were reduced only to reducing the influence of Russia in this region. Of course, there were also interests of stability and peace in this region. After the entry of NATO forces led by the US into Afghanistan and Iraq, the US position in the region became more visible.

The Clinton administration (1993-1997, 1997-2001) saw the development of democratic institutions and civil society as a key priority in the post-Soviet space [42]. More than 70,000 citizens from the former Soviet republics have visited the United States as part of cultural and educational programs. Such programs, according to the State Department, should have contributed to the formation of a more democratic, Western-oriented thinking. The emphasis was placed primarily on young people [43].

Russian historic dominance in Eurasia, the rise of the Soviet Union to a superpower after World War II, and its political, economic, and military rivalry with the United States have long made it one of the main targets of Washington's actions abroad. But the onset of the Cold War and the expansion of Soviet power which itself is a product of Russian own strategic imperatives to protect its center from invasion, gave rise to the US strategy known as containment.

Policy advocated by American diplomat George F. Kennan and made public in 1947 in a then anonymous article in Foreign Affairs magazine was essentially about blocking and countering the Soviet Union and its allies *“whenever and wherever they posed the risk of gaining influence”.* It extended to every corner of the globe and served as the main US strategy towards the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991.

Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States continued to apply the idea of containment to the newly formed Russian Federation. Although Russia no longer adhered to communist ideology and did not create global problems for the United States, it still had significant demographic, economic and military resources. These, along with its location, allowed Russia to once again become a regional power. Partly to try to prevent its resurgence, the US supported the expansion of NATO and the European Union (EU) in the former Eastern Alliance in the 1990s and early 2000s, despite Russia's weakness.

The US strategy towards the new states of the former Soviet Union was based on promoting market democracies in the region and especially on promoting the sovereignty of neighboring states around Russia. None of them has ever been sovereign within their new borders. Several conflicts broke out in Georgia, Moldova, and the territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan intensified. The new Russian government used various military, intelligence and hybrid means to intervene in these conflicts in 1992-1993. Notable during these years was the laid-back external policy approach on the part of the Bush administration not to undermine Yeltsin's liberal government.

It has led the Clinton administration to push hard for Russia to honor its withdrawal agreements and “open the door” for NATO expansion to former Warsaw Pact members in the first place, and to become more committed to promoting the sovereignty of new states.

After the collapse of the USSR and the proclamation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Russia became the legal successor of the Soviet Union and asserted the status of a great nuclear power. Gradually, two directions in foreign policy were formed:

1. Relations with neighboring countries - former Soviet republics.
2. Development of relations with foreign countries - the leading countries of the West, primarily with the United States.

Over several years of Russia's independent existence, its foreign policy has overcome the path from romanticism and pro-Atlantic illusions of the first years to awareness of its national interests and pragmatism.

The beginning of the 1990s was a transitional, difficult stage in Russian foreign policy. It took time to develop new guidelines and understand the new situation in which Russia found itself. The first attempts were made to determine the directions and priorities of Russian foreign policy. The absolute change of environment from hostile to favorable gave rise to euphoria and numerous illusions. The leaders of Russia started talking not only about partnership but also about friendship with the countries of the West, which were now perceived as natural allies. This was largely facilitated by economic cooperation: world funds and banks declared their determination to help the new Russia. But in foreign policy circles it was widely believed that Russia no longer needed its former ideological allies and old ties with many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Middle Eastern and African niches of Russian foreign policy have significantly weakened in comparison with the activity shown by the USSR. Relations with Cuba, North Korea, Laos, Vietnam, Iraq and other traditional allies of the former USSR were frozen and hardly developed [43].

At the same time, great difficulties and contradictions were revealed in the conduct of a pro-Western policy. First of all, an acute internal crisis arose, which seriously affected international affairs. Market reforms turned out to be painful, social tension increased in Russian society, polarization of social forces and deep disappointment of various segments of the population. There was also growing disillusionment in the West, in its sincerity and desire to help the Russian reforms. Western countries were strengthening ties with the former republics of the Soviet Union, and there was a feeling that Russia would again fall into isolation. Nationalist sentiments grew in the country. Supporters of Russia's "special path" revived, advocating a special messianic role for Russia, while preserving its originality and opposing its traditions to "bourgeois values". The irritation of Russian politicians was fueled by events in Eastern and Central Europe: former Soviet allies sought to join NATO and the European Union, expressing suspicion and distrust of Russia.

The war in Chechnya that began in 1994 dealt a serious blow to Russia's international prestige. It came to the economic sanctions of the West. Russia had to retreat on all diplomatic fronts far abroad. Especially in the West. Under the powerful pressure of the United States and other NATO countries in Yugoslavia, this manifested itself more than clearly. Since the mid-1990s, in relations with the United States, Russia began to pursue an active foreign policy from the position of a great power in a new geopolitical situation, strengthening Russia's position in the G8, an active foreign policy in all directions, “in all azimuths”, etc.

Certain principles were also summed up under the named foreign policy goals - to defend the national interests of Russia, even going to disagreements with the West, but within the framework of partnership - without slipping into confrontation. The bipolar world, previously competing between the two superpower blocs, should evolve not to a unipolar world under the auspices of the United States, but to a multipolar one, where Russia will have more maneuver to protect national interests.

Russia's foreign policy activity has increased in the near abroad and in the eastern direction, which has become perceived as the most important reserve for building up the foreign economic activity of the Russian Federation. On April 26, 1996, in Shanghai, the heads of five states (Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) signed an Agreement on confidence-building measures in the military field in the border area. This is how the “Shanghai Five” was born.

An important feature of advancing their sovereignty was to reduce dependence on Russian infrastructure for access to international markets. Perhaps the most strategically important aspect of this policy was the development of new oil and gas pipelines that bypass the territory of the Russian Federation. At that moment, the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, completed in 2006, was a major implemented project in this direction.

During the 1990s, the term “Eurasian integration” practically did not exist. Almost immediately after the political collapse in Russia, bitter disputes arose about the foreign policy orientation between those who are called “Atlantists” and “Eurasians”. However, after 9/11, the focus of US policymakers shifted to Afghanistan and then to Iraq, and the term “Eurasia” began to return to the lexicon of international relations.

From 1993 to 2000 the USA government has helped many former Soviet republics build the infrastructure for “free and fair elections”. Assistance in this area has been provided primarily through USAID and its grantees [44]. Along with this, at the suggestion of the United States, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems provided technical assistance to the central election commissions. The National Democratic Institute and the International Republican University organized special courses to teach Western standards in the field of electoral processes. If in the early 1990s according to American political scientists, there was no civil society in the republics, then by 2000. Thousands of non-governmental organizations operated in them, about 15 percent of them received assistance from USAID.

The “Rose Revolution” in Georgia, the “Orange Revolution” in the Ukraine and the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan have allowed many researchers in the field of political science to form a hypothesis about a democratic wave spreading in the former Eastern Bloc in the post-Soviet space. This development combined with disenchantment with revolutionary political elites, political radicalization, and authoritarian tendencies in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, has led many observers to question the revolutionary and even democratic nature of the events in Tbilisi, Kiev, and Bishkek.

Two general approaches have dominated the interpretation of the color revolutions themselves. On the one hand, there is criticism of the US-sponsored aggressive export of Western democratic standards to the post-Soviet space. On the other hand, supporters of the events perceive them as spontaneous and genuinely democratic uprisings that contributed to the overthrow of autocratic regimes and initiated pro-democratic changes.

The new political order introduced in these post-Soviet states after the fall of the USSR, in fact, was not a direct democracy. It was a compilation based on three parallel processes leading to more or less democratic solutions that currently continue to exist in the former countries of the Eastern Bloc, these are:

1. The introduction (not always flexible) of a wide range of Western democratic institutions in place of the institutional framework of the Soviet era.

2. A reference (sometimes overly idealistic) to the political traditions of the Soviet style of governance, which helped emphasize independence from foreign influence.

3. Adaptation to the new political environment - social and psychological mechanisms and practices instilled under communist rule.

Thus, the development of new political systems was based on a combination of existing political traditions and copying Western institutional solutions with adaptation to the political practice of the communist state [8, p. 154]. In the context of the color revolutions themselves, this means that the political systems of Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan after 1991 were a combination of: an idealized memory of a sovereign past, the political practice of communist times, and the not always successful implementation of Western institutional solutions.

Thus, the post-Soviet political reality is not an absolute break with the past. This is, in fact, a new reality based on a combination of Western standards, local traditions and Soviet heritage.

In each case, there is a set of individual features inherent in each state, these are:

– the issue of territorial integrity in the case of Georgia;

– oligarchic structure of elites in Ukraine;

– historically established clan system in Kyrgyzstan [9, p. 117].

In general, every color revolution has been a case of regime change, which, contrary to expectations, was not a systemic change, but a reshuffling of political elites. In each case, the society demonstrated a radical disobedience towards the ruling post-communist regime. However, after the regime change, the new political elites adhered to the existing rules of the political game and adapted to the existing political reality, rather than changing it. It was possible because:

1. The place of citizens in the decision-making process was taken by other political actors who usurped the role of political sovereign (presidential elites in Georgia, oligarchs in Ukraine, clans in Kyrgyzstan).

2. Democratic institutions were only a façade covering post-Soviet mechanisms that facilitated the mindset of the time (the central position of presidential elites in Georgia, the paramount importance of balance between oligarchs in Ukraine and between clans in Kyrgyzstan).

3. An idealized memory of independence, mixed with the ambitions of a civil society in the context of its slow formation. In each case, after just one term of office, all the presidents of three states in question were criticized for betraying the ideals of the color revolutions.

*Interpretations of color revolutions*

Two general interpretations have most often dominated discussions of color revolutions. The first has to do with the euphoric response to civil mobilization against authoritarian regimes. From this point of view, the civil society of Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan opposed the post-communist authoritarian rulers. Another interpretation is closely related to accusations against Western countries (primarily the United States) of exporting revolutions to post-Soviet states in order to oppose the interests of the Russian Federation. From this point of view, the events were actually inspired by the West, and are basically a statement of the US-sponsored coup d'état, the purpose of which is to push back the sphere of Russian influence. Such radical differences in political narratives testify to the paramount importance of the problem for the two above-mentioned geopolitical camps in the post-Soviet space.

Both points of view have a reasonable right to exist. On the one hand, it is difficult to deny the spontaneous nature of the actions of the Georgians marching to the Parliament building in Tbilisi, or the role of the orange tent city set up in the middle of winter in the center of Kyiv, or the Kyrgyz people who seized the presidential palace in Bishkek. However, mass mobilization does not determine the democratic or civil character of subsequent events.

It is hard to ignore the fact that the revolutionary organizations were supported by institutions promoting Western standards of democracy. It is obvious that these institutions are a strategically important part of the American “soft power”. However, it is also difficult to accept the view that the Soros Foundation or USAID support were enough to mobilize a significant part of the Georgian, Ukrainian and Kyrgyz societies, as well as to overthrow the regimes. On closer examination, it seems that both approaches have a right to exist.

In each specific case of the color revolution, already complex internal factors coincided with no less complex events in the post-Soviet space. In the case of each color revolution, at least three common elements can be identified - the background for events.

First, since 1991, the post-Soviet space has experienced political competition between the US and the Russian Federation, along with the growing presence of the PRC and different levels of activity of the EU, Turkey and Iran. The Russian-American rivalry in the European part of the former Soviet Union or Chinese economic expansion in Central Asia have become a natural element of the political background for the functioning of the entire Eastern Alliance. Thus, one should not be surprised at the coincidence of the interests of these subjects and political changes in the states of the region.

Secondly, the post-Soviet space is too often seen as Russified or Westernized, European or Asian. A more balanced approach is that the post-Soviet space is a kind of “amalgam”, a unique combination of local traditions, post-Soviet heritage and Western ideas. In each state of the region, the balance between these components is somewhat different which leads to many different political systems. However, they all have common roots that distinguish them from any other political realities and make it useless to compare them with American, Asian or European standards.

Thirdly, all regimes in the post-Soviet space had to reconsider their positions in the context of the post-Cold War world. Since, their potential to solve domestic problems, in particular economic ones, depends on their compliance with the new international economic reality in the context of globalization, where one of the most valuable assets is the trust of international institutions and organizations.

As a result, most of them have tried to structure their institutions in such a way that they best reflect the expectations of the international community. However, the adopted official order did not always reflect the functioning of the new regimes or the real needs of the states they represented. This sometimes meant that democratization was perceived as less important than formal alignment with a rapidly globalizing economy. In fact, both post-Soviet countries and international institutions have often been satisfied with such façade changes that hide the complexity of the unresolved problems left behind by the former communist system.

These three elements have made the post-Soviet space complex and difficult to understand for foreigners, who were largely kept aloof during the forty years that elapsed between the end of World War II and the collapse of the USSR. To combine this fact with the dynamics of economic changes and the democratic euphoria of the 90s, it is easy to understand why, on the one hand, the rest of the world was looking for simple and accessible shortcuts to cope with the changes in the post-Soviet space, on the other hand, the political representatives of the post-Soviet states were satisfied with these labels. The direct revolutionary interpretation of events in Georgia, the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan not only legitimized the new regimes in the field of international relations, but also provided easy and useful explanations of international events, both to their opponents and supporters.

Another factor is the new ruling elites of the three republics. M. Saakashvili, V. Yushchenko and K. Bakiyev focused on reorganizing the instruments of power in accordance with their interests. Their opponents inside and outside their countries made numerous accusations of exploiting revolutionary slogans to seize power and end political competition. M. Saakashvili is officially accused of corruption, V. Yushchenko failed to fulfill any of his political promises, K. Bakiyev, after trying to monopolize political power in Kyrgyzstan, had to flee the country and take refuge in Belarus. However, the revolutionary image, not even supported by revolutionary changes, helped the new regimes to establish contacts with the international environment and increase foreign financial assistance, which proved vital to the expansion of their economies. The fact that only Georgia has been able to use it effectively is the subject of yet another discussion.

The color revolutions in Georgia, the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan revealed the hidden mechanisms of the state and oligarchic model of capitalism in the post-Soviet space. The color revolutions also showed that the ability to obtain foreign financial support is critical to political stability. The opposition politicians in Georgia represented by M. Saakashvili, the Western Ukrainian political and business elites represented by V. Yushchenko and the southern clans of Kyrgyzstan headed by K. Bakiyev fought for public assets available only to the ruling elite.

Calling the events in Georgia, the Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan revolutions was convenient as an explanation for every actor interested in advancing their own interests in the post-Soviet space, while the results were revolutionary in the name itself. The revolutionary interpretation was useful both for the Western supporters of change (to expand the zone of influence), and for the pro-Russian antagonists of the regime (as it provided a convenient explanation for their failure in the region due to Western expansion) and for the new political elites (they were the only ones who could fill the political void left by the collapse of the post-communists). However, the last element of the system, civil society, has been left without any attention. As modern history shows, the consequences, although not quick, were eventually inevitable.

The timely realization of the benefits of the internationalization of education allowed American universities to create all the necessary conditions for attracting foreign students and become world leaders in the international market of educational services (about 25% of the entire market). Indeed, at present, higher education in the United States is recognized as the best in the world. Having received it, you can count on a promising career in almost any country. According to statistics, about 80% of all scientists awarded the Nobel Prize now work at the US universities. For example, 11 Nobel laureates teach at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), and 7 at Yale University [8, p. 152]. The fact that the Americans were able to create world-class universities, including them in the system of competitive market relations almost from the very beginning, is convincingly confirmed by the data of all international rankings. According to the OECD, the number of international students entering American universities is increasing by an average of 40,000 every year.

In addition to political influence, the education of foreign students brings significant economic benefits to the United States. An important role in the attractiveness of American education is played by English which is the language of international communication. In addition, the United States has a “permitting practice” that allows foreign students who have received their education in the United States to permanently reside in the United States for one calendar year without additional entry documents and work in universities, non-profit research organizations or in the private sector. Thus, any foreign citizen who graduated from an American university can also get work experience in the United States in their specialty [4, p. 220].

An important area of American policy is the program of unilateral assistance and support in the field of education to states in various regions of the world (Middle East, Central Asia, Asia-Pacific). The Russian researcher N. Tsvetkova identifies two areas of the US educational policy. The first direction is the involvement of foreign universities in the implementation of unilateral assistance programs and, as a result, the reform of foreign universities and the strengthening of the position of the United States in the educational systems of foreign countries. For example, in 2008 the US government completed a large-scale project at 13 universities in the Asia-Pacific countries. The universities of these countries temporarily became bases for the retraining of politicians, economists, doctors, teachers, water workers, and others who participated in American development assistance programs. As a result, permanent master's programs appeared in 13 universities, new (American) teaching methods were introduced, and teachers were retrained [16, p. 63].

The second direction of the US educational policy abroad is the training of teachers and administrators of higher education through government international exchange programs. For each country, the US government determines a priority program. For example, almost 6,000 graduate students from universities were trained in Australia at the expense of the US State Department. In China, there are programs of the Agency for International Development to reform local universities. Thus, in 2009, more than 7,000 representatives of Chinese universities were involved in reforming curricula and teaching standards in accordance with the proposals of the US government [16, p. 67].

On December 4, 2014, the US Congress passed Resolution 758 which called on the President and the US Department of State to develop a multilateral coordination strategy for creating and disseminating news and information in Russian in countries with a large number of Russian speakers. In fact, a new stage of the information war has been announced, when the image of the country will be discredited not only abroad, but also within Russia in order to destabilize the situation. However, historical and international experience shows that internal information risks can be offset by administrative methods [45].

In the information war against Russia, the United States uses such a technique as “erasing historical memory”. Under the context of historical criticism, a revised historical retrospective is being introduced into the public consciousness, which is capable of splitting and reformatting society, reducing its resistance to manipulation and, ultimately, using its creative potential for the interests of the United States.

Another technique of the US information war is a situational version of events. For instance, during the conflict between South Ossetia and Georgia, the origins of the conflict were presented in the American media in a simplified form. South Ossetia has been called a breakaway Georgian region with close ties to Russia, which maintains tensions there to keep Georgia out of NATO. The desire of the republic to secede from Georgia was interpreted as a manifestation of separatism. The situation was covered in the following aspect: the primordially Georgian region, instigated by Russia, decided to secede from Georgia.

American rhetoric justified Georgia, which sent its troops into the territory of South Ossetia, with the need to restore law and order in its separatist region, and then spoke in detail about the Russian military operation. At the same time, special emphasis was placed on the fact that Georgia is a very small country, while Russia is very large. In this way, the emotional perception of Russia as an aggressor was broadcast to the objects of information impact, since it is hard to believe that Georgia, a small country, could attack big Russia.

Attributing “necessary” intentions to the opponent is one of the most common methods of information warfare. For example, the demands of Russia, the implementation of which she sought through military action. Against the backdrop of weaker (compared to the United States and Western countries) information counteraction from Russia, in the information space, at the suggestion of the United States, the “true goals” of the Russian military operation were being revised. The weakness of the Russian information propaganda, among other things, was manifested in the fact that Russian officials justified their intentions to “enforce peace” completely dryly and in official language. That allowed the United States to manipulate public opinion using the topic of “secret plans for war and the post-war reconstruction of the region” in relation to the actions of the Russian Federation.

The very term “information war” originated in the United States in the 70s last century. The West has realized the enormous potential associated with this war. Since that time, the United States and Western Europe have invested a large number of resources in the preparation and conduct of the information war. The solution of the political tasks set by the United States was facilitated by many fundamental shortcomings of the Soviet system. Right from the 70s 20th century the USSR began to yield to the West in the information war.

Another category of ways to wage an information war against Russia includes a number of measures to prevent the dissemination of information from the Russian side. These can be such measures as, for instance, the inclusion of the RT channel in the list of “foreign agents” in the United States which restricts seriously its activities in the territory of this state.

The task of information attacks is obvious to carry out a systematic, consistent, phased introduction of a negative image of the leadership of the Russian Federation, and the younger generation is primarily exposed to this impact. The task in relation to the Russians is to cause a negative attitude towards the authorities in the face of the government and the president [5, p. 38]. The youth of the countries of the former Soviet Union also fall under the influence of the information flow, this influence leads to the formation of a critical perception of the political leadership of the Russian Federation and the current political and ideological system in this country.

Western countries in the articles of analysts of major European and American newspapers are most often “strongholds of democratic values”, freedoms, human rights, etc., while modern Russia is presented as an authoritarian country that tramples on these very values, freedoms and human rights, “a police state” with a vast, inhospitable territory (whose borders cannot be defended). In addition, Russia is accused of nostalgia for its former imperial greatness which it wants to return at any cost, and so on. And all this is also actively broadcast via the Internet to the Russian-speaking space.

Another interrelated tool with the above is the displacement of the Russian language from the post-Soviet space. And this process is going very well. If at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union there were about 300 million Russian speakers in the world, then at the moment there are about 240 million people. The loss of the status of the language of international communication by the Russian language leads to a weakening of Russia's ability to use “soft power” as a tool to influence political decisions in the countries of the post-Soviet space. This is the gradual loss of interest in Russian culture, history, including the history of the Soviet Union, in a situation where it is impossible to carry out actions to counter such attempts due to the presence of a language barrier. The weakening of the Russian language positions also leads to a reduction in scientific exchange in the Russian-speaking environment of the countries of the former USSR, a weakening of the position of higher education systems, which relied on the "Soviet scientific school" since most of the scientific personnel were trained in the Soviet Union in Russian, and the change of generations of university teachers and scientific personnel leads to the loss of established scientific and educational ties due to the establishment of a language barrier.

The information war has acquired a particularly tough character since 2014, from the beginning of the coup d'état in Ukraine and the subsequent referendum in Crimea and its annexation. The second round of information activity was associated with the crash of a Malaysian Boeing over the Donbass in July of the same year. The involvement of Ukraine in the information war of the West (primarily the United States) gave the information confrontation between the two sides a tougher and more open character. The exchange of “information volleys”, the use of various methods of dehumanizing the enemy characterizes the current stage of this war. One of the bright markers of this war is the way Ukrainian nationalists call Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine with the remnants of the Soviet mentality, as well as all Russians who support the annexation of Crimea and the actions of the Russian Federation in eastern Ukraine - “quilted jackets”, “cotton wool”, “biomass”. The corresponding images and Internet memes flooded the Russian-speaking Internet space [46].

The United States condemned the actions of the Russian authorities quite harshly. The authorities of the Russian Federation were called the main aggressor and the culprit of the conflict in Ukraine. Various information occasions were used to attract attention. On the eve of the 2018 FIFA World Cup, Western countries, incl. The United States sought to reduce the attractiveness of Russia as a venue for this sporting event. So, on March 8, 2014, an appeal was made to FIFA by two American Republican senators Dan Coates and Mark Kirk, in which they demanded that Russia be deprived of the right to host the World Cup in 2018, in view of its participation in hostilities in east Ukraine. And they also asked the leadership of the football federation to deprive Russia of membership in this organization.

It should be noted that the US has good experience and practice in the art of information warfare. Suffice it to recall the wars with Iraq in 1992 and 2003, which were initially won in the information space which ensured a loyal and even positive attitude of the majority of the world community towards these two military campaigns in this country.

Thus, speaking about the nature of “soft power” in relation to the United States, first of all, the role of American educational centers that serve as points of attraction for students from different countries is assessed. Partnerships between American and foreign universities create a platform for launching economic, economic, and political projects in various countries of the world, the implementation of which contributes to the change of curricula, the introduction of new models of student education and the retraining of teaching staff. A significant number of American university graduates, who make up the state elites of other countries, form an extremely important resource of favorable attitudes towards America abroad.

## 1.3 The U.S. external policy after the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001

## The cardinal change of the situation dates back to September 11, 2001. Frequent convenings of NSC meetings by the American president began, since the purpose of frequent consultative meetings with foreign policy senior officials of the administration was the global war on terrorism, the implementation of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the reorganization of a number of federal departments, which was directed to ensure internal security [8, р. 4-58].

For the CIS under the administration of George W. Bush, the stake was placed on cultivating the opposition and organizing “color” revolutions through the loosening of political systems [47]. In 2003, with the direct participation of the United States, the “Rose Revolution” was organized in Georgia, in 2005 - the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan. In 2002-2004 about $65 million was allocated to the Ukrainian opposition, over $70 million to Kyrgyzstan. Other former Soviet republics (Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia) were given urgent “recommendations” to hold free and democratic elections, protect the right to freedom of assembly, etc. During this period, a special commission was created in the Congress, which began to monitor the development of the democratic process in the world and prepare recommendations for the governments of different countries.

Analysts of post-communist change in Eastern Europe have often seen it as a recombination of political structures and institutions rather than the creation of a different political system from scratch as if Georgia in 2003, the Ukraine in 2004 and Kyrgyzstan in 2005 are examples of this trend. At the same time, the ideal in the form of a democratic transformation of the political regime, achieved as a result of a revolutionary breakthrough and the subsequent path of democratic consolidation, will never be achieved in reality. An analysis of the political events of all three post-Soviet states revealed a chaotic reorganization of political reality, simultaneously combining pro- and anti-democratic tendencies with a shift towards authoritarian forms, which ultimately created countless political difficulties for Georgia, the Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan.

The new political order introduced in these post-Soviet states after the fall of the USSR, in fact, was not a direct democracy. It was a compilation based on three parallel processes leading to more or less democratic solutions that currently continue to exist in the former countries of the Eastern Alliance, these are:

1. The introduction (not always flexible) of a wide range of Western democratic institutions in place of the institutional framework of the Soviet era.

2. A reference (sometimes overly idealistic) to the political traditions of the Soviet style of governance, which helped emphasize independence from foreign influence.

3. Adaptation to the new political environment - social and psychological mechanisms and practices instilled under communist rule.

Thus, the development of new political systems was based on a combination of existing political traditions and copying of Western institutional solutions with adaptation to the political practice of the communist state. In the context of the color revolutions themselves, this means that the political systems of Georgia, the Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan after 1991 were a combination of an idealized memory of a sovereign past, the political practice of communist times, and the not always successful implementation of Western institutional solutions.

Any of the “color revolutions” was not a revolution as such, but a coup, a change in the ruling group, that is, contrary to expectations, it was not a systemic change, but a rearrangement of political elites. In each case, the society demonstrated a radical disobedience towards the ruling post-communist regime. However, after the regime change, the new political elites adhered to the existing rules of the political game and adapted to the existing political reality, rather than changing it. This was possible because:

1. The place of citizens in the decision-making process was taken by other political actors who usurped the role of political sovereign (presidential elites in Georgia, oligarchs in the Ukraine, clans in Kyrgyzstan).

2. Democratic institutions were only a facade covering post-Soviet mechanisms that facilitated the mindset of the time (the central position of presidential elites in Georgia, the paramount importance of balance between oligarchs in the Ukraine and between clans in Kyrgyzstan).

3. An idealized memory of independence, mixed with the ambitions of a civil society in the context of its slow formation. In each case, after just one term of office, all the presidents of the 3 states in question were criticized for betraying the ideals of the color revolutions.

Two general interpretations have most often dominated discussions of color revolutions. The first has to do with the euphoric response to civil mobilization against authoritarian regimes. From this point of view, the civil society of Georgia, the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan opposed the post-communist authoritarian rulers.

Another interpretation is closely related to accusations against the Western countries (primarily the United States) of exporting revolutions to post-Soviet states in order to oppose the interests of the Russian Federation. From this point of view, the events were actually inspired by the West, and are basically a statement of the US-sponsored coup d’état, the purpose of which is to push back the sphere of Russian influence. Such radical differences in political narratives testify to the paramount importance of the problem for the two above-mentioned geopolitical camps in the post-Soviet space.

Both points of view have a reasonable right to exist. On the one hand, it is difficult to deny the spontaneous nature of the actions of the Georgians marching to the Parliament building in Tbilisi, or the role of the orange tent city set up in the middle of winter in the center of Kyiv, or the Kyrgyz people who seized the presidential palace in Bishkek. However, massive mobilization does not determine the democratic or civil character of subsequent events.

In each specific case of the color revolution, already complex internal factors coincided with no fewer complex events in the post-Soviet space. In the case of each color revolution, at least three common elements can be identified - the background for events.

Firstly, since 1991, the post-Soviet space has experienced political competition between the US and the Russian Federation, along with the growing presence of the PRC and different levels of activity of the EU, Turkey and Iran. Russian-American rivalry in the European part of the former Soviet Union or Chinese economic expansion in Central Asia have become a natural element of the political background for the functioning of the entire Eastern Bloc. Thus, one should not be surprised at the coincidence of the interests of these subjects and political changes in the states of the region.

Secondly, the post-Soviet space is too often seen as Russified or Westernized, European or Asian. In fact, the post-Soviet space is an amalgam, a unique combination of local traditions, post-Soviet heritage and Western ideas. In each state of the region, the balance between these components is somewhat different, which leads to many different political systems. However, they all have common roots that distinguish them from any other political realities and make it useless to compare them with American, Asian or European standards.

Thirdly, all regimes in the post-Soviet space had to reconsider their positions in the context of the post-Cold War world. Since, their potential to solve domestic problems, in particular economic ones, depends on their compliance with the new international economic reality in the context of globalization, where one of the most valuable assets is the trust of international institutions and organizations.

As a result, most of them have tried to structure their institutions in such a way that they best reflect the expectations of the international community. However, the adopted official order did not always reflect the functioning of the new regimes or the real needs of the states they represented. This sometimes meant that democratization was perceived as less important than formal alignment with a rapidly globalizing economy. In fact, both post-Soviet countries and international institutions have often been satisfied with such façade changes that hide the complexity of the unresolved problems left behind by the former communist system.

Finally, it must not to be forgotten the new ruling elites of the three republics. M. Saakashvili, V. Yushchenko, together with K. Bakiyev, focused on reorganizing the instruments of power in accordance with their interests. Their opponents inside and outside their countries made numerous accusations of exploiting revolutionary slogans to seize power and end political competition. M. Saakashvili is officially accused of corruption, V. Yushchenko failed to fulfill any of his political promises, K. Bakiyev, after trying to monopolize political power in Kyrgyzstan, had to flee the country and take refuge in Belarus.

However, a revolutionary image, not even supported by revolutionary change, helped the new regimes flawlessly establish contacts with the international environment and expand foreign financial assistance, which proved vital to the expansion of their economies. The fact that only Georgia has been able to use it effectively is the subject of yet another discussion. The color revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan revealed the hidden mechanisms of the state and oligarchic model of capitalism in the post-Soviet space.

The color revolutions also showed that the ability to obtain foreign financial support is critical to political stability. The oppositional politicians in Georgia represented by M. Saakashvili, Western Ukrainian political and business elites represented by V. Yushchenko and the southern clans of Kyrgyzstan headed by K. Bakiyev fought for public assets available only to the ruling elite.

Calling the events in Georgia, the Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan revolutions was convenient as an explanation for every actor interested in advancing their own interests in the post-Soviet space, while the results were revolutionary in the name itself. The revolutionary interpretation was useful both for the western supporters of change (to expand the zone of influence) and for the pro-Russian antagonists of the regime (as it provided a convenient explanation for their failure in the region due to western expansion), as well as for the new political elites (they were the only ones who was able to fill the political void left by the collapse of post-communist systems). However, everyone seems to have overlooked the last piece of the puzzle - civil society which is left without any attention. As modern history shows, the consequences, although not quick, were eventually inevitable.

Political changes in Georgia, the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan reveal still active geopolitical and economic processes that strongly influence the reality of the post-Soviet space, although they are rarely noticed by foreign observers. The new ruling elites developed their positions on the basis of revolutionary social mobilization. Despite the conflict with Russia, Georgia has established itself as an important Western ally in the Caucasus. Today it is one of the most business-friendly countries in the region.

The conflict between Russia and the Ukraine shows that the social inconsistency between Ukrainian politicians and Ukrainian society has led to Kyiv's inability to quickly and adequately respond to the annexation of Crimea, and now it is extremely difficult to predict when this dispute will be resolved.

The Tulip Revolution revealed the deep fragmentation of Kyrgyz society. Initially, K. Bakiyev managed to enlist the support of foreign powers, but he was unable to balance the interests of the clans and the demands of society. His reign did not survive one presidential term and ended in political chaos and ethnic clashes.

The democratic revolutions in Georgia, the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan have demonstrated the complex reality of the post-Soviet space. In the short term, this was a success for the West; for Russia, it became an excuse to legitimize the authoritarian turn.

Thus, the interpretation of events as revolutions proved to be useful for international actors involved in post-Soviet politics, as well as for new post-revolutionary regimes. However, in the long run, the consequences for the society that the politicians have abandoned may be much more important than the result of the political competition between the West and the Russian Federation. The more time passes since three-colored revolutions, the more controversial and ambiguous their results and long-term consequences seem.

The democratic image of the protests is still only being transformed into democratic change. Within a few years, democratic ideals disappeared, and the revolutionaries consolidated their forces and chose an authoritarian path. As a result, M. Saakashvili was accused by the court of abuse of power in his homeland, and in order to avoid criminal prosecution, he left Georgia. V. Yushchenko lost to V. Yanukovych and will be remembered in the Ukrainian political history as an example of a complete political failure. K. Bakiyev himself was overthrown by another uprising and was forced to flee his country.

Georgia has taken a step back in control of its own territory. The Ukrainian politics fell into disarray as the country came under attack from outside and its regime failed to come to terms with its citizens. Kyrgyzstan has experienced another series of ethnic and political violence and is an example of a chronic political, social and economic crisis. The vision of democratic color revolutions was useful in the short term. New ruling elites came to power, and the West and Russia reorganized their zones of influence. State institutions, without support, proved too weak to withstand the growing challenges in the field of economy and security. Georgia and Ukraine are facing a Russian military threat - this time stronger than ever. Kyrgyzstan fell into instability.

The geopolitics and geostrategy of the United States is in fact global in nature and includes almost all regions and every single state of the world. The geopolitics of the United States has a multifactorial and multilevel nature, affecting political, military-strategic, economic and ideological aspects. In our opinion, the US policy is not directed only in a one-sided direction, if only to dominate this region.

The other aspects of this issue are also important for the United States: stability and peace in the region, the improvement of the economy and the level of well-being of these countries, the spread of democratic principles, the problems of the rights and freedoms of man and citizens, entry into the world economy of these countries, etc. This is evidenced by various programs for the development of this region, capital investments and investments in this region, material and technical assistance to the countries of this region, the activities of various international non-governmental organizations in this region, in particular in the Republic of Tajikistan (International organizations such as Doctors Without Borders, Save Children, United Nations Development Program, OSCE, etc.).

Since the day they gained independence, all the countries of Central Asia have been under American or Western influence and pressure, and in almost all of these areas. It is known that the US policy in Central Asia is not carried out separately and individually, it collides with the policies and interests of other regional powers, such as Russia, China, the EU, Iran, Pakistan and India, and largely depends on the US relationship with these countries. In principle, the geopolitics of the United States in relation to the CA countries is one part of the general Eurasian policy of the United States, affecting, in addition to the CA states, the regions of the Caspian and the Caucasus, Afghanistan, the Middle East, South Asia and China. And in turn, the US Eurasian geostrategy is one part of the global strategy of the White House, aimed at maintaining the superiority of the United States in the global economy and financial system, strengthening the military-political dominance of Washington, expanding its geopolitical influence, influencing its competitors and rivals (Russia, China, India), control over the Islamic East, etc.

The United States outright rejected a geopolitical approach to Central Asia and instead made a long-term effort to support the establishment of democratic governance, a free market economy, and regional economic integration. Despite high-pitched rhetoric, the US policymakers viewed generally the region as a low priority, and the US involvement in achieving stability, security, prosperity, and better governance remained limited. This approach can best be described as US Policy 1.0 on Central Asia [18, с. 3-56].

During the first period which lasted from the collapse of the Soviet Union to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the US external policy focused on three priorities:

– preservation of the legacy of Soviet weapons of mass destruction;

– helping the countries of Central Asia achieve and defend their newly won sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity against a potential resurgence of Russian neo-imperialism;

– breaking the Russian monopoly on pipelines and transit routes for oil and gas in Central Asia as a means of securing the region's independence from Russia.

Washington's plans for participation in the region changed dramatically after the events of September 11 which marked the formation of a new approach: the so-called US Policy 2.0 towards the countries of Central Asia. To be sure, there has been continued interest in the long-term program of political and economic reforms of the previous decade but military and security considerations have become more important factors in US involvement in Central Asia. The logistical needs of supporting large-scale the US military operations in Afghanistan and the resulting heavy reliance on access to regional military installations took precedence over the commitment to promote political and economic reform and human rights. The United States emphasized the importance of home country security cooperation and, more broadly, America's geopolitical position in the region [18, с. 5-39].

The first two phases of America’s interactions with independent Central Asia had one common denominator: the significance of the region to the United States was largely derived from interests that were not core to Central Asia itself, but rather were functions of US policy, priorities, and US relations with countries around the world. region. As the United States reduces the size and role of the US combat forces in Afghanistan, Washington will once again need to define and prioritize its interests and relations in the region.

The use of the Central Asian countries in its Afghan policy also explains the US intention to intensify cooperation with them in the C5+1 format (US - Central Asia joint Project) is the first regional cooperation format developed during the presidency of B. Obama and has become a kind of platform for discussing regional problems. [48] This format involves bringing together the five states of Central Asia and the United States for dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest. Particular attention is paid to the fight against terrorism and countering the radicalization of the region, which, in the opinion of Washington, should meet the achievement of a common goal aimed at developing regional trade and expanding the use of renewable energy sources.

Under the Obama administration, organizational and financial support for specialized NGOs increased significantly, and the number of educational and cultural exchange programs increased [17, р. 82-94; 18, с. 3-48; 19, с. 3-39].

Barack Obama's first presidency is characterized by NSC reform. In 2008, the head of the United States received a report on the obsolescence of the model of vertical subordination of state administration [9, р. 3-45].

Due to the absence of the president's assistants for national security, his colleagues in internal security, with the powers to coordinate the activities of various institutions, its establishment was often entrusted personally to the head of the White House [9, р. 4-28].

The result of this was a significant complication of the overall process and an increase in reaction time in the event of a crisis. As a result, on February 13, 2009, the President signed Presidential Political Directive (PPD) No. 1 “On the organization of the National Security Council system”. Taking into account the agenda, it was envisaged that representatives of certain ministries, employees of the President's Office would attend the meetings of the National Security Council.

On May 26, 2009, a presidential statement was made public, which approved the connection of the apparatus of the Homeland Security Council [10, р. 360-373] and the apparatus of the National Security Council, whose functions will be to resolve “*all issues affecting the formation of the policy of the White House, related to internal, transnational, international security problems”* [11, р. 3-48].

Due to the Bush administration’s newfound enthusiasm for promoting democracy after the “color revolutions” in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan between 2003 and 2005. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization in July 2005 in Astana expressed dissatisfaction with the military presence in the region, demanding that ISAF (International Security Assistance Force); announce the planned date for the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

In April 2008, at the NATO summit in Bucharest, the United States went to great lengths to convince its allies that Ukraine and Georgia should join the MAP. By this time, Russia had regained much of its economic and military power. An economy supported by high oil prices and President Putin's consolidation of political power has given Russia the opportunity to take advantage of the West's distraction from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to resume its role as a regional power. With its invasion of Georgia in August 2008, Moscow demonstrated its readiness to intervene militarily in the internal affairs of Georgia, in fact, a candidate for the status of “major non-NATO ally”, while exposing the West's lack of commitment not only to the security of Georgia, but also to the security of other territories in Russia. periphery.

When President Barack Obama took office in 2009, he faced the question of how to respond to Russia's moves, burdened by costly wars in the Middle East and an economy weakened by the 2008 global recession. One of his administration's main foreign policy platforms was to reduce the United States military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan in order to focus attention and resources on other regions of the world, including Eurasia. The US has embarked on a "reset" policy with Russia in the hope of improving diplomatic relations, which have been damaged by the five-day war between Russia and Georgia.

At first, relations changed for the better: both countries agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals, and Washington abandoned the missile defense plans put forward by Obama's predecessor. Russia, however, continued its regional rise. In 2010, Russia created a customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan, which became the core of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Meanwhile, US support for Russian opposition groups helped spark massive anti-Kremlin protests in 2011 and 2012. By the end of his first term, Obama's reset had all but failed as Russia not only challenged the West's position in Eurasia, but became involved in other issues such as the Syrian civil war.

The US Congress acted as the second important component of the mechanism on the basis of which decisions were made at the foreign policy level. According to the American constitution, the Congress and the President act as equal branches of power, while the purpose of congressional support is to ensure the success of the ongoing foreign policy [12, р. 34-46].

The informal character inherent in the Congress in the field of foreign policy, its power is sometimes not used with varying intensity. Insignificant may be the degree of participation of the Congress in moments of relative calm on the world stage. Sometimes, for example, during the war period in the Persian Gulf or during the conflict situations in Central America in the 1980s. - legislators are often characterized by active interference in state foreign policy activities, in particular, there are significant disagreements between Congress and the president in this area [12, р. 34-46].

The military operation carried out in the Persian Gulf is the only time that the US Parliament has given permission for military operations abroad. At the same time, the “power of money” is the most reliable means of exercising the foreign policy powers of Congress.

Lobbying is another important aspect of the ability of Congress to influence the US external policy. The US legislature is the main object of efforts by intermediaries who represent the interests of certain groups of influence and are interested in protecting and promoting their own interests [13, р. 39-70].

The Committee on American-Israeli Public Relations (American Israel Public Affairs Committee), called AIPAC, is an example of a lobbying structure that has the maximum impact on US foreign policy decision making. The purpose of this AIPAC is to defend before the US public the Israeli hard line towards the Palestinians, criticism in the US of Israel's similar line towards the Hezbollah movement, as well as Iran [13, р. 39-70].

From the above description of the mechanism on which American foreign policy decision-making is based, one can note the advantages and disadvantages of the process of developing a Washington political strategy at the international level.

The list of advantages consists of a coordinating principle, which consists in the formation of decisions and their implementation. The NSS plays a leading role in this process. The basis of the activity of this body is the search for compromises that satisfy the interests of the parties involved in the process of forming foreign policy directions. As a result, the procedure for distributing the functions of the NSC and the State Department has a special role.

## 1.4 The Withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and the Strengthening of the Russian Position

In February 2014, the Euromaidan in the Ukraine marked a major turning point in global geopolitics. The United States has been the main backer of the protests. In the eyes of the West, Russia had become too powerful, and Washington's support for the uprising and the subsequent pro-Western government in Kyiv which Moscow considered illegitimate, heralded a resurgence of containment.

These events led to perhaps the most serious confrontation between Moscow and the West since the Cold War era. Moscow responded to political discontent in Kyiv by annexing Crimea and supporting a pro-Russian insurgency in the eastern Ukraine, spurring a military buildup along European borders by both Russia and the West. The United States and the European Union have imposed economic sanctions on Russia while scaling up support for Western integration efforts from Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, countries that signed association agreements with the EU in June 2014. These measures signal a gradual return by the United States to its containment of Russia policy in the later years of the Obama administration, as the United States increased its military deployment to NATO states in Eastern Europe.

In 2015, the United States revised its strategy for the countries of Greater Central Asia, which, in addition to the countries of the post-Soviet space, includes Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, as well as the countries of the Caucasus - Georgia and Azerbaijan. Recently, the United States has included Iran and Turkey in Greater Central Asia. At the same time, the strategy is aimed at weakening Russia's position and curbing China's ambitions [49].

The main guidelines of the US strategy in Central Asia are aimed at building an American-centric world order. The US interest in Central Asia is due to both geo-economic and geopolitical reasons. America is interested in the wealth of the region, or rather in energy resources, and it was also important for the United States to implement one of its TAPI projects - the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project.

Despite the renewal of the strategy, the United States fails to strengthen its influence in Central Asia, this is due to the activities of regional associations such as the SCO, the CU, the EAEU, the CSTO, the CICA. These organizations hinder the expansion of the US military and political presence in Central Asia. Evidence of this can be seen in examples such as the closure of the Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan and the withdrawal of US troops from Uzbekistan.

Realizing their geopolitical attractiveness, the Central Asian countries have a number of advantages that allow them to play on the contradictions of competing subjects, as well as give preference to different countries in order to obtain greater benefits. The Central Asian republics, using the multi-vector nature of their foreign policy, periodically change their landmarks (Russia, the USA, China) depending on the current internal and external situation.

The fundamental principles of the presence and influence of US geopolitics are:

1. The US geopolitics are aimed at developing its influence in this region, and above all by strengthening its military presence on a permanent basis.
2. The main principles of the US external policy are considered to be the sphere of security, geo-economics and democratization according to the principle of “democratic standard”.
3. The Washington's geopolitics is characterized despite its pragmatism and effectiveness, by the presence of contradictions and “double standards”, the denial of local political realities of sociocultural specifics.
4. The Russian regional policy is considered to be the main reason for keeping American expansion in Central Asia.
5. The USA will continue to build up its geopolitics and geostrategy in the countries of Central Asia, despite all the obstacles and difficulties that arise in the implementation of its policy.
6. In the next few years, the Central Asian countries, despite the policy and interests of Russia and China and other regional powers in this region, will continue their cooperation with the United States and other highly developed Western countries on various economic, political, technical and other issues.

One of the geopolitical imperatives of the United States is to prevent the emergence of regional hegemons capable of resisting them [50].

In the early post-Soviet period, the United States supported the regional states in their dual transition to democratization and market economies. This approach was based on a long-standing US policy principle, namely that the development of democracy is seen as a step towards promoting global peace and stability. And the United States has pledged to help the new post-Soviet countries.

Therefore, the USA has invested significant resources in building the capacity of post-Soviet states to replace their old Soviet identities with the creation of liberal democratic nations that would more naturally align with the West. The US efforts have primarily been supporting civil society groups, investing in infrastructure, funding exchange programs for stakeholders and students, and encouraging US companies to invest in the region.

The “struggle of integration” is intensifying in the post-Soviet space. The USA and Western Europe work mainly in the multilateral formats of NATO and the EU (the Eastern Partnership program, EaP). China operates within the 16+1 format (China-Eastern Europe summits) and under the umbrella of the Belt and Road Initiative, focusing on bilateral relations. In the course of this work, the tasks of increasing influence in the sphere of politics and security, and lobbying for profitable economic and infrastructure projects are solved in various ways. Changes in the humanitarian component are becoming more and more noticeable: systematic work with socio-political, expert-scientific and media circles, promotion of our own informational, value agenda.

The most intense competition unfolds in several areas:

* technical standards and technologies (in the field of security, management, etc.);
* trade and economic agreements (free trade zones, etc.),
* logistic corridors and control over territories (including de facto extraterritorial jurisdiction over logistics facilities, laboratories, industrial and agricultural areas);
* education (from primary to higher, as well as industry, military and religious);
* information sphere (work with opinion leaders, experts, media, launching information campaigns);
* public sector (civil society organizations and public diplomacy).

Russia's positions in the post-Soviet space have been strengthened as a result of the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). A dynamic common agenda has emerged, a platform for dialogue and constant joint work of administrative structures. Deepening and expanding integration within the EAEU is declared as one of the key priorities in the Foreign Policy Concept of Russia, adopted in 2016. It notes that the EAEU can play an important role in harmonizing integration processes in the European and Eurasian regions.

The Eurasian Economic Union is not considered separately from the macro-regional integration processes in Europe and Eurasia; integration into these processes is seen as a strategic task that creates a powerful resource for economic development. In 2018, an agreement on cooperation between the EAEU and China was signed, and the doors remain open for dialogue with the EU.

At the same time, efforts to “integrate” into macro-regional processes may be called into question if they are carried out without strengthening economic, social and cultural ties within the EAEU and the CIS, which may lead to fragmentation of the common security space. The EAEU today is an example of a format in the post-Soviet region where decisions are made by consensus. A controversial decision of the Eurasian Economic Commission can be submitted by a member of the EAEU to the level of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council where each country has the right to veto, regardless of the size and share in the Union's economy. As for the EU's Eastern Partnership, it is administered from Brussels, and the secretariat of the China-Eastern Europe (16+1) summit is located in the Chinese Foreign Ministry. An «option package» for China's partners under the Belt and Road Initiative is also being formed by Beijing.

The EAEU has achieved certain results in creating a common labor market and removing customs barriers. The share of mutual trade between the EAEU countries in total foreign trade increased from 12.3% in 2012 to 14.5% in 2017. At the same time, it remains modest compared to the EU, where this figure exceeds 60%. Within the framework of the EAEU, trade disputes related both to the impact of sanctions on the common customs space (disputes between Russia and Belarus) and internal contradictions (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) are not uncommon. The task of advancing the formation of new high-tech commercial and industrial chains has not yet been solved. There is progress in developing a collective negotiating position in relations with third countries. Trade and economic agreements have been concluded by the EAEU with Vietnam, Iran and China. Negotiations and consultations are being held with several dozen states.

In the agreements signed by the EU with Kazakhstan (2014) and Armenia (2017), issues of culture, education and civil society occupy an important place. In particular, they set the task of “convergence of educational standards” between the EU and Kazakhstan or the transition of the Armenian education system to EU standards. These stories play an even more pronounced role in the EU Eastern Partnership program, where EAEU members Armenia and Belarus participate.

The EAEU countries are striving to adapt Western practices in the humanitarian sphere, guided by pragmatic considerations. There is logic in that this movement should be supplemented by the development of humanitarian cooperation within the EAEU, if the member states are strategically set to increase the efficiency of the union. Because without the formation of a common humanitarian space, relations within the union will be vulnerable to economic problems. There has been a tendency to use a project approach aimed at interaction and support of socially active groups and joint projects with the countries of the EAEU and the CIS - not only in the field of the economy, but also in small and medium-sized businesses, interregional cooperation, academic exchanges, competitions, internships, work with the public sector and the expert community. In this case, this work can acquire a regular basis for the emergence of effective project teams, the creation of common sources of funding, both on a multilateral basis within the EAEU, and on a bilateral basis with individual countries.

Taking into account the trends in the strengthening of external players in the humanitarian sphere of the post-Soviet space with the subsequent conversion of influence in the sphere of politics and security (this is especially visible in the western part of the post-Soviet space, although it is not limited to it), the formation of common approaches in the humanitarian sphere is becoming one of the elements of ensuring influence on countries region.

In the geopolitical plans of the United States, the options for identifying Central Asia, which were developed in the West, have recently become popular. In 2005, the American political scientist F. Starr proposed to unite the countries of Central Asia with Afghanistan into one region called «Greater Central Asia». In this regard, F. Starr criticized the US government, in particular the State Department, which *“combines the five former republics of the USSR into one group with Russia, and considers Afghanistan to be part of South Asia, while the Central Command of the Ministry of Defense considers these six countries as one”* [51].

In the light of the unipolar world order promoted by the Atlanticists, the Central Asian region was of particular value for strengthening the US global leadership. In the 2000s Washington began to develop projects to expand the geopolitical space of Central Asia and to withdraw the region from the influence of Russia. It was about projects involving the provision of assistance to five post-Soviet states in solving their internal problems. The concept of «Central Asia» used simultaneously was aimed at strengthening the role of the United States in this region.

The idea of linking Afghanistan to Central Asia which subsequently became firmly entrenched in the American foreign policy concept on the Central Asian track, remained unrealized. The reasons for the failure of this idea were explained not so much by the cultural differences between Afghanistan and the states of Central Asia, but by the internal problems of these states. Combining them in one geopolitical project could further worsen their situation and become a catalyst for destructive tendencies in the region. Thus, in the US Strategy for Central Asia, adopted for 2019-2025, five independent states are considered as a geostrategic region important for American national interests, separate from Afghanistan 2 [13, р. 39-70]. The document notes that one of the key US foreign policy objectives in the region is the need to develop and strengthen cooperation between the Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

The means of realizing American interests in the region were efforts to promote the values of democracy. Such approaches used in the process of achieving global leadership and infringing on the interests of geopolitical opponents were not new. As early as the beginning of the 20th century. the English geopolitician H. Mackinder, who identified the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus with the geographical axis of history, believed that *“the union of democratic states would be the best defense against a superpower in the center of Eurasia”* [52]. Thus, through the technologies of conducting «color revolutions», the United States sought to transform political regimes throughout the post-Soviet space, thereby creating controlled states near the borders of Russia.

The use in the West of the five post-Soviet states of the English term «stan» is noticeable. In his book published in 2018, the Norwegian anthropologist E. Fatland collectively refers to the countries of Central Asia as “Sovietistan” [53]. The etymology of the word “stan” is interesting, which is translated from Persian as “country” or “land”. In the 19th century this word «stan» was an integral part of the name “Turkestan” (country of the Turks), which meant the territories located in Central Asia. The Russian political scientist Kazantsev A.A. focuses correctly on the geopolitical component of this term. noted that this name can be considered as a variation of the concept of “Greater Central Asia” which has the potential to integrate around itself the Chinese Uyghuristan (Xinjiang), as well as many Turkic-Islamic regions of Russia (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Dagestan, etc.) in case of strengthening centrifugal tendencies [40, р. 3-98].

The geopolitical landscape of Central Asia is expanding if we consider the region from the perspective of hydrocarbon wealth. In this case, the focus shifts towards the Caspian Sea, to which Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have access. Consequently, Central Asia can be considered as part of the Caspian region, which also includes Russia and the states of the Caucasus [54]. Thus, within the framework of the energy discourse, Azerbaijan can be included in the Central Asian region. In particular, the French scientist O. Roy cannot imagine a region without a sixth Muslim country, which has access to the Caspian Sea [55]. It is no coincidence that the well-known American geopolitician Z. Brzezinski emphasized the important geopolitical role of Azerbaijan, considering it a “gateway” to the wealth of the Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia [56].

The geographic location and significant hydrocarbon reserves caused the states of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) to fall into the “strategic energy ellipse” [54, p. 47-64] which after the collapse of the USSR became the center of the geopolitical struggle between the leading states of the West and Eurasia. At the present stage, Western countries and China are lobbying their trans-Asian transport and communication projects - TRACECA, SREB, etc. in order to gain expanded access to Eurasian hydrocarbons and strategic routes for their transportation.

A number of Russian scientists consider the modern concept of «Central Asia» to be the successor, but not the equivalent of Soviet Central Asia [57]. In modern usage, Central Asia can be understood not only as five post-Soviet states, including Kazakhstan, but also as parts of Northern Afghanistan and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China [57]. The well-known Russian orientalist V. Naumkin focuses on the elements *of “multi-confessionalism of the Central Asian community”* and considers Central Asia as a unique phenomenon *of “philosophical equivalence of civilizations, which protects its peoples from extinction and creates conditions for the development of an intercivilizational version of the development of the world”* [58].

Among Russian scientists, the geopolitical interpretation of the concept of «Central Asia», put forward by A. Dugin, deserves special attention [59]. In his opinion, Central Asia is located between two centers of power - Russia and Iran, and is a geopolitical rhombus. This rhombus includes the countries of the South Caucasus, Central Asia and Afghanistan. The latter is singled out by A. Dugin as *«a completely separate phenomenon due to the occupation of this territory by NATO troops»* [59]. A. Dugin considered this geopolitical space, around which the degree of rivalry is constantly rising, as a wide field for maneuver for Russia and Iran, the result of which should be the emergence of strategic models of cooperation that satisfy the interests of Moscow and Tehran. Any initiatives to create a “Greater Central Asia” or “Great Silk Road” must be neutralized by these Eurasian centers of power.

Thus, the geopolitical boundaries of Central Asia are not a fully formed phenomenon. The planned regional consolidation did not happen either. Many regional problems do not allow the countries of Central Asia to develop a unified strategy for regional development. Meanwhile, two contenders for regional leadership - Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, put forward initiatives to consolidate the region.

In November 2019, speaking at the second consultative meeting of the heads of state of Central Asia, the first president of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev, put forward the idea of making the region “barrier-free”, which would remove the existing barriers between the states of the region in the way of the movement of capital, services, goods and labor [49, с. 107-108]. For the purpose of cultural cohesion of the region, N. Nazarbayev proposed to establish a new holiday called as the Day of Central Asia [49, с. 107-108]. However, various factors hinder the processes of integration and regionalization. Among these factors are the struggle for leadership in the region, different levels of economic development, interethnic and territorial conflicts, and so on.

The political term “Central Asia” adopted by the five post-Soviet states after the dismantling of the USSR, is not equivalent to the historical and geographical concept of “Central Asia”, since the latter integrates a wider territorial space within its borders. The increased interest in the region on the part of global and regional actors causes constant attempts to change the geopolitical contours of the region outlined by the sovereign post-Soviet states after the collapse of the USSR. Over the past decades, such a trend has clearly emerged in the practical foreign policy actions of the United States in Eurasia. As a result, depending on certain fundamental considerations, the geopolitical content of the concept of “Central Asia” can narrow or expand.

Today the US is interested in partnership with a strong and integrated Central Asia. In the context of his Strategy for South Asia [60]. Washington focused on creating cross-border institutions at the junction of post-Soviet Central Asia with the South. So, he is trying to promote new, emerging opportunities for the countries of the region which is in the common interest. It is no coincidence that the future of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, according to Washington, lies in a close link with the Central Asian region, which should play a decisive role in the development of this country.

Thus, one of the main tasks of the United States in Central Asia is to unite the region and Afghanistan into one geopolitical entity and turn it into a «bridge» between Central and South Asia, which, in Washington's opinion, should contribute to the maximum development of the IRA, as well as strengthening the regional integration of the Central Asian states. To this end, the United States has developed a “New Silk Road” strategy [61], designed to ensure economic/energy cooperation between the countries of Central and South Asia under the auspices of the United States, the end result of which should be the redirection of resources from Central Asia to Afghanistan in order to help the latter in development. Washington believes that the growing economic potential and the key role of the countries of the region as a transit center for trade between the EU and China make them important partners for American business in the framework of the New Silk Road project [62].

At the same time, even today Washington's intention to contain both Russia and China may contribute to the weakening of their ties with the West, which will increase the importance of China, and Beijing and Moscow may become the main partners of the Central Asian countries in the field of politics, economics and security. This is due to the dominant influence of Beijing in the region, which will have important consequences, both economically and politically, as well as the less effective, but still remaining Russian presence here. However, China’s emergence as the leading economic and geopolitical power in Central Asia seems to be an indisputable fact, but the question of how Beijing intends to use its influence is still rhetorical.

Thus, the process associated with a large-scale regrouping of forces represented by China, Russia and the United States is currently in full swing in the CA region. At the same time, Beijing is becoming perhaps the most influential geopolitical and economic player in Central Asia, which is largely due to its geographical proximity to the region. The only thing that can somehow weaken China's active offensive against Central Asia is really functioning integration projects in Eurasia.

At the same time, Russia is showing an increasing willingness and ability to interfere in the internal affairs of its neighbors. Moreover, the long-term goal of both Moscow and Beijing to expand their influence in Central Asia, according to analysts, could lead to increased tension between the two powers and, possibly, between the states of the region. The competition between these two powers has spurred the Central Asian states into continued Western involvement in the region to contain Russia and China. All these events provide the formation of US Policy 3.0 towards Central Asia [18, с. 3-150].

At some point, a series of numerous crises in other regions of the world shifts the focus of US foreign policy and security from Central Asia. The campaign against the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, the crisis in Ukraine, the civil wars in Yemen and Libya, the implementation of the nuclear deal with Iran, and the economic and political struggle with a more aggressive China take precedence over a region that is not a source of major shocks or significant security threats the USA. Due to the reduction of the US military presence in Afghanistan, Central Asia is no longer a source of great political opportunities to advance key American interests [19, с. 3-165].

The crisis in Ukraine has brought the geopolitical situation in the post-Soviet space to the top of the international agenda. For many analysts, Russia's intervention in the Ukraine is a sign that the world is entering a so-called new cold war, a period of intense rivalry between Washington and Moscow.

In this new geopolitical global configuration, the post-Soviet space has become a key point of conflict between the Kremlin and the White House. The goal of this struggle is to achieve effective influence on the foreign and domestic policies of the post-Soviet countries. The current chaotic nature of the world order makes this issue all the more urgent, as perhaps Russia's actions in the Ukraine were driven by fear of losing power over the Kiev's foreign policy. Russia considers the region as its sphere of influence, where it has both the duty and the right to shape the policy of states in the region.

The Central Asian countries, regardless of the political interests of all the above-mentioned countries, the struggle between superpowers over dominance in this region, the interests of other regional powers, have their own personal geopolitical and geostrategic interests and problems. One way or another, despite the policy of all superpowers, including the United States, the Central Asian countries themselves are interested in having bilateral relations with the main world political players, such as the United States, China and Russia, the EU and NATO, and with regional powers, such as India and Pakistan, Iran and Arab countries, Turkey and Japan, etc. Due to the numerous economic and political problems, the countries of Central Asia are forced and obliged to cooperate not only with each other, but also with all developed economic powers. And unilateral relations only with Russia, as a longtime political friend and trustee, is not a way out of a difficult situation.

The US policy towards the Central Asian countries is of great importance to him, but it is not the only element of this US global strategy. And given the critical importance of the Central Asian countries for the US Eurasian policy and their establishment of control over Eurasia, it can be predicted that the role and importance of this region for the US will only increase in the future.

The fundamental principles of the presence and influence of the US geopolitics in the Central Asian countries are:

1. For a number of reasons, the Central Asian region is becoming increasingly important for the implementation of its US external policy geostrategy.
2. Washington's geopolitics in Central Asia is aimed at developing its influence in this region, primarily by strengthening its military presence on a permanent basis.
3. The main principles of the US policy in the Central Asian countries are the sphere of security, geo -economics and democratization according to the principle of “democratic standard”.
4. Washington's geopolitics in Central Asia is characterized, despite its pragmatism and effectiveness, by the presence of contradictions and “double standards”, the denial of local political realities of socio-cultural specifics.
5. The Russian regional policy is considered to be the main reason for keeping American expansion in Central Asia. Through the CSTO, a new security system was formed in the region, which the United States may not like, however, the Central Asian countries continue to cooperate with the United States in the field of ensuring the security of this region, and the future political alignment of the region depends on these relations.
6. The influence of China is noticeably increasing in the region which is considered an additional incentive for the United States to exercise its influence in the region.
7. Relying mainly on Russia, the Central Asian states take advantage of the US proposals for their development, attracting investment and assistance, and ensuring security. But, as practice shows, for the sake of benefits, the CA countries do not deviate from their interests and, maneuvering between strong powers, also do not intend to play on the contradictions between them.

The US geopolitics in the region is aimed not only at strengthening its influence through military presence. The very military presence of the United States in the region is not so important, military assistance is sufficient. It is also important to note that for the US, Kyrgyzstan is not considered the main political partner, there are other nuances here, the US treats all countries of the region equally.

In general, according to some authors, the US geopolitics and geostrategy in Central Asia is determined by two key issues and several less important issues. Thus, after the collapse of the USSR, the United States immediately recognized the independence of the five newly formed states of Central Asia and secured diplomatic relations with them. Later, in 1992, the US Congress passed the Freedom Support Act, whose task was to bring American legislation in line with the new geopolitical situation of the existence of 15 independent states. This act contributed to the creation of open markets, the development of democracy and the establishment of civil society, the formation of mechanisms that stimulate trade, economic cooperation and educational exchanges, and the provision of financial support for the processes of cessation of the spread of weapons and demilitarization. Through this law, the United States sought to strengthen its national security by preventing the restoration of communism, and in Central Asia - by preventing the emergence of religious extremism.

In the past few years, the US has been preoccupied with external crises (Ukraine, Syria) and internal pressures (rising populism, as evidenced by the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit vote). The impact of small-state foreign policy in the post-Soviet space is not seen as such a priority on the United States agenda, and financial support has been correspondingly lower than in the 1990s. And the United States, at least rhetorically, has declared its commitment to helping other countries democratize and develop. The EU is more open to sacrificing the promotion of values in order to achieve its own interests in relation to other states. On the other side of the Atlantic, however, the Trump presidency has signaled a move towards isolationism and perhaps a phasing out of active policies aimed at influencing the foreign relations of post-Soviet states.

The justification for US and Russian attempts to influence the foreign policy of the post-Soviet states can be viewed through two interrelated prisms.

Firstly, the region was one of the key areas for expanding the civilizational models of Russia and the United States. Whether it is liberalism (for Western powers) or an emphasis on sovereignty or conservative values, as in the case of Russia, the post-Soviet states have found themselves at the center of a clash between different civilizational models. The ideological aspects of their foreign policy reflect the hybrid international identity that these states acquired under the influence of a combination of Soviet, European, internationalist and conservative values.

Secondly, these states had to balance between the interests of the United States or Russia. Small statehood prompted the post-Soviet states to choose between the development of a multi-vector foreign policy or an almost complete orientation to one or another pole. The shift from one position to another, in the case of Ukraine and Georgia, proved to be detrimental in the short term, as it ultimately provoked aggressive actions from Russia.

While the influence of external actors is an important element in the analysis of the development of foreign policy in the post-Soviet states, most experts also point to the role of internal factors: interest groups, corruption, history and political culture. Modern researchers are faced with the task of studying the relationship between internal and external factors in the analysis of the US influence on the development of post-Soviet states.

Kazakhstan today occupies one of the important positions among the US geopolitical interests in Central Asia. Kazakhstan and the United States of America established diplomatic relations in December 1991. Since then, the two countries have been dynamically developing partnerships in the main areas of interstate relations. For over 20 years, the US has established itself in Kazakhstan as a major investor in the oil and gas industry and as a national strategic partner. In the early years of independence, Kazakhstan and the United States were interested in the nonproliferation of Kazakhstan's nuclear weapons, which the state had in its Soviet past. The removal and dismantling of these weapons and infrastructure is considered one of the great achievements of the US nuclear non-proliferation policy. America's nonproliferation cooperation with Kazakhstan remains a key element in the relationship between the two countries [63].

The conceptual foundations of “promoting democracy” laid down under previous administrations have remained relevant under the Trump Administration. On the one hand, being a Republican, the President of the United States continues the “hawkish” foreign policy of his party, characterized by assertiveness, aggressiveness and peremptory in defending the interests of national security. The activity of the United States in the post-Soviet space testifies to the continued focus of D. Trump on the spread of American dominance under the pretext of protecting freedoms and democracy. The states of the former USSR, in fact, are presented by Washington with a choice between the “free democratic world” led by the United States and the “authoritarian block” of “revisionist” powers that oppose it, seeking to bring down the “liberal world order”.

At the same time, being a businessman, D. Trump built the external policy line according to a business model, guided by the criteria of “added value”, primarily economic. In this sense, he took more pragmatic approach, believing that funding for “democracy promotion” should be justified by concrete results for US national interests and not lead to an increase in anti-American sentiment in other countries.

Nevertheless, the US embassies and USAID offices continue to consolidate American influence in the post-Soviet space by creating controlled civil society institutions, funding pro-Western NGOs, promoting pro-Western politicians to political posts, and implementing programs in the field of public administration and development [64].

The work of the Americans during the elections is indicative, the result of which is often mass riots and accusations of the current authorities in the alleged falsification of the voting results. At the same time, illegal rallies are organized by the opposition “according to the standard tactics” of holding such events and in accordance with a pre-prepared action plan.

Representatives of the United States, describing the results of elections in countries with a government that does not suit them, as a rule, hide behind the assessments of the OSCE/ODIHR, criticizing the similarity of the program documents of the political parties of the countries, the absence of independent media and truly alternative candidates in the republics. Such assessments were given by Washington following the results of the presidential elections in Kazakhstan and the parliamentary elections in Belarus in 2019.

**Chapter 1 Conclusions**

The modern world geopolitical order is of a “hybrid” nature and is in an unstable state. The United States is opposed to increasing polarity in the world. In the regions of the world, the power of individual poles is growing, seeking to influence the transformation of the world order. The existing theoretical models of the world order do not adequately reflect its state and development trends. The West, led by the United States, retains its primacy in the world.

The United States, initially involved in the implementation of its geopolitical and military interests, is currently considering the developing post-Soviet countries of Central Asia, rich in fuel and mineral resources, as an integral part of its global strategy.

Since the collapse of the USSR, Washington has been active in the post-Soviet space, promoting the principles of supporting democracy, building an efficient market economy, promoting regional cooperation and integrating Central Asian countries into the world community. The US external policy in the region has also been aimed at promoting and providing:

* economic interests of transnational oil and gas companies;
* security strategies to contain Russia and China;
* close relations with the elites of all countries in the region, who will convey the US position to the politicians who make the main decisions in Central Asia;
* the accession of unstable Afghanistan and Pakistan to politically stable Central Asia;
* connecting Central and South Asia, in order to provide landlocked countries with the opportunity to get new routes for transporting their goods;
* consistent work in the field of human rights.

The rationale for attempts to influence the United States and Russia on the foreign policy of the post-Soviet states can be defined as in such aspects as:

1. The region was one of the key areas for expanding the civilizational models of Russia and the USA. Whether it is liberalism (for Western powers) or an emphasis on sovereignty or conservative values, as in the case of Russia, the post-Soviet states have found themselves at the center of a clash between different civilizational models. The ideological aspects of their foreign policy reflect the hybrid international identity that these states acquired under the influence of a combination of Soviet, European, internationalist and conservative values.
2. These states had to balance between the interests of the United States or Russia. The shift from one position to another, in the case of Ukraine and Georgia, proved to be detrimental in the short term, as it ultimately provoked aggressive actions from Russia.

# 2 THE US DIPLOMACY: COMBINING SOFT AND HARD POWER POLICY

## 2.1 Soft Power Policy and Public Diplomacy

The theoretical and methodological foundations of the modern concept of “soft power” in world politics were developed by the scientific community at the end of the 20th - beginning of the 21st century. These were the years of the end of the Cold War, and accordingly, there was a need to rethink the place of the United States in the world in the absence of the “Soviet threat” and in the presence of new foreign policy imperatives. In addition, it became more and more obvious that the possibilities of using military force were significantly limited, and the need to increase one's influence was not fully realized. In connection with the acute global resource crisis, which showed the enormous vulnerability of the American economy, the dominance of the United States of America in the capitalist world began to gradually decline.

In modern conditions, it is possible to manage and achieve results in world politics with the help of “soft power”. In fact, the new concept was intended to replace the doctrines of “massive retaliation”, “flexible response”, “realistic deterrence”, “direct confrontation”, which assumed the achievement of US military superiority and ensuring its hegemonic aspirations through the threat of the use of force or its direct use.

The concept of “soft power” was first put forward by representatives of the American school of neoliberalism (J. Nye) in a debate with representatives of neorealism (K. Walts). The problem that arises when using the tools of “hard power” (primarily military ones) is exhaustibility. Military and economic resources at the disposal of any state is always a limited amount. Moreover, the use of these resources leads to their distraction from the “normal” socio-economic activity and, therefore, in the long run, reduces the socio-economic opportunities of the state.

The concept of “soft power” was widely used in American politics after the end of the Cold War, during the administration of W. Clinton. Then, during the administration of George W. Bush, this concept lost its significance for a while.

The geopolitical meaning and functions of «soft power» are the same as those of “hard power”: de-sovereignization of states, denationalization and appropriation of their resources. But, unlike the latter, it is designed not to force, but to induce geopolitical competitors and rivals to accept the system of values and priorities of its owner, to serve his interests. The United States sees “soft power” as an effective means of conducting a geopolitical struggle between states; they actively use it to defeat or weaken their real and potential adversaries in the international arena.

The main tools of the “hard power” strategy are related to the development of conventional weapons, the improvement of nuclear countermeasures, the formation of a missile defense system, the creation of military bases in strategically significant parts of the world, the conduct of counter-terrorism and military operations, humanitarian interventions abroad, peace enforcement operations, the introduction of economic and diplomatic sanctions for political purposes. The strategy of “hard power” is focused on forcing counterparties to certain actions through direct pressure or blackmail.

The most important characteristic of “soft power” is its relatively more noticeable independence directly from the state and government of the country that has such power. The “hard power” is much more tied to public policy. Therefore, the authorities are relatively more difficult to manipulate the first and much easier - the second. As a result, the effect of the action of “soft power” - unlike, for example, economic sanctions or military action - turns out to be more amorphous, and it is more difficult to accurately plan it.

It should also be noted that “soft power” does not replace “hard power”, but is only an alternative form of power that has its own rules, features and characteristics.

Various technologies can be used to implement “soft power” as a tool for promoting one's national interests. There are two ways of influence of “soft power” - direct and indirect. The direct influence model assumes that state leaders change the direction of their policies under the influence of the beliefs of other leaders and the attractiveness of their values and attitudes. With indirect action, soft power tools are aimed at changing public opinion and third parties, which, in turn, influence the decisions made by political leaders.

In the implementation of “soft power” various tools are used. The main tools of “soft power” include:

– public diplomacy;

– folk culture;

– culture (dialogue of cultures);

– education system and student (youth) exchanges;

– information flows;

– the ability to wage information wars;

– positioning of the country in the global hierarchy;

– political PR aimed at a foreign audience;

– global marketing;

– the language of the country and the degree of its popularity in the world;

– migration policy;

– tourism, sports and cultural exchanges;

– national diaspora.

As a result of the effective use of soft power tools, an illusion of mutual interest, trust, respect, mutual understanding may arise and, on this basis, the creation of the ability of a given state to influence political and humanitarian processes in the world and in a particular country.

According to the changes in the system of international relations and changes in the world in general - as a result of the processes of integration, globalization, as well as regionalization, the increasing role of information technologies, and in general with the transition to a post-industrial society, the policy changes, and non-coercive rigid mechanisms of influence on other countries, but such as smart and soft power.

At the moment, the existing national American brand and image of the United States in the absence of the implementation of the soft power strategy would be impossible. The entire 20th century showed that the USA found a way to make others want the same as the USA. Following the collapse of the USSR, as well as the transformation of the system of international relations, the post -Soviet space acted as one of the main regions where the previously existing sectors of influence of the Soviet Union began to be filled with US influence.

In the 90s the Russian Federation existed in a somewhat political illusory reality: it is generally believed that the Soviet former republics, due to the existence of a common past, as well as memory, will be oriented towards Russia as an “elder brother”, as well as a role model, while NATO will not expand to the east according to oral agreements. But in the USA, despite the actualization of neoliberalism, the national interest is the basis of international relations. In this case, the most important thing for the country is the achievement of personal interests, and this is an absolutely normal practice in international relations, which, unfortunately, was not realized in time in the Russian Federation.

In the regionalization of the CIS and, more broadly, the post-Soviet space, there are various political and geographical elements:

1. Eastern European component.

2. Subsystem of the Central Asian region.

3. Transcaucasian component.

In this regard, it is important to take into account that one of the most significant subjects of the CIS is Russia, which acts not only as a sovereign state - the Russian Federation, but also as a large territorial component of the Commonwealth.

The Eastern European component of the CIS is represented by three states – the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. With a certain degree of conventionality, it is possible to include here de facto unrecognized states - the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR), located on the left bank of the river. Dniester (with the exception of the city of Bender, which is located on the right bank of this river), as well as the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics that have formed in the South-East of Ukraine, which refuse to recognize the regime established in Kyiv after February 2014.

The Eastern European component is rather a kind of artificial research model, since the countries included in it cannot be considered in a single relationship: they differ significantly from each other both in socio-economic and political-cultural terms. Two Slavic republics - Ukraine and Belarus - have different models of development, different party-political systems. In Ukraine, a parliamentary republic has actually taken shape, Belarus - a semi-presidential or presidential-parliamentary republic. A parliamentary republic was also established in Moldova, but ethnically Moldovans are not related to the Slavic world, belonging to the Balkan-Romance subgroup.

The Ukraine occupies a special position in the CIS. On the one hand, it stands at the origins of the creation of the Commonwealth (the Ukrainian SSR is a signatory of the Belovezhskaya agreement in 1991); on the other hand, Kyiv initially distanced itself from all the integration processes that took place in the CIS. Ukraine has not ratified the CIS Charter and, therefore, de jure is not a member of this organization. In addition, immediately after the collapse of the USSR, the republic declared its desire to integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures - the EU and NATO. The turning points in this process were the “orange revolution” (ukr. “pomarancheva revolution”) in 2004 and the “revolution of dignity” (ukr. “Revolution of rigidness”).

The Ukraine has not sent official documents to the CIS Executive Committee on withdrawing from this organization, but, according to the Executive Committee itself, has withdrawn from a number of thematic agreements that operate within the Commonwealth. In particular, in 2015 she abandoned the agreement on sending a mission of CIS observers to the elections, the former President of the country P. Poroshenko signed a Decree on the recall of Ukraine's representatives from all the statutory bodies of the CIS, and in May 2018 he published a decree on Ukraine's withdrawal from international treaties of the CIS. At that time, the organization itself even expressed surprise at this decree, since by that time Kyiv had no one to withdraw from the CIS bodies.

The economy of Ukraine is in a state of protracted crisis. An exit from it in the near future is unlikely, given the country's huge external debt - only in April 2019 it increased by $1 billion and totaled $79.82 billion. amounted to 2.3% compared to June 2018, does not inspire hope for overcoming negative macroeconomic trends.

In the domestic policy of the new (sixth in a row) Ukrainian President V. Zelensky, who, having overcome two rounds of elections, took office after the inauguration on May 20, 2019, timid attempts are visible to change and reformat the policy of his predecessor P. Poroshenko. Until recently, the main activities of the new head of state were reduced mainly to the fight against corruption, environmental protection, and the development of tourism and recreational areas. Problems for V. Zelensky arose and will arise with the Verkhovna Rada, since the system of a parliamentary republic, established in Ukraine, very significantly limits the powers of the president, redistributing them in favor of the deputy corps.

The Republic of Belarus (RB) occupies a special place in the Eastern European component of the CIS. This country participates in all integration associations created in the Commonwealth region. The Republic of Belarus, together with the Russian Federation, is a member of the Union State of Russia and Belarus, is a member of the CSTO and the EAEU, and since 2015 has been an observer state in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The Republic of Belarus is the most consistent ally of Russia in the CIS space, despite the existing and existing certain political and economic differences. The economy of the Republic of Belarus demonstrates stable growth, the leading positions are traditionally occupied by the manufacturing industry, trade and transport activities.

The Russian Federation continues to be the main economic partner of the Republic of Belarus. Although, given some difficulties in Russian-Belarusian relations (related, in particular, to the supply of goods to Russia that fall under Russian counter-sanctions), Belarus will look for new markets for its products. It is unlikely that Europe will become such a market, most likely, Belarusian products will go to the East and South, mainly to Kazakhstan, China and Turkey.

The internal political situation of the Republic of Belarus is characterized by a high degree of stability. The country has avoided and, it seems, will avoid serious political upheavals in the future. The scenario of a change of power in the republic is unlikely in the near future, despite the fact that presidential elections are scheduled for 2020 in the country.

The foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus is also quite stable. The country participates in all activities carried out within the framework of the CIS. At the same time, Minsk has not refused to participate in the EU Eastern Partnership program and is trying to normalize its relations with the United States, from which there was even a call not to call Belarus “the last dictatorship of Europe” anymore. And yet, it is relations with the CIS countries that are declared *“one of the main foreign policy and foreign economic priorities of the Republic of Belarus”,* which looks quite natural, since this is determined by a whole set of historical, economic, political and cultural factors.

The Republic of Moldova (RM) is one of the most problematic countries of the Eastern European component and the CIS as a whole. Complicating the development of the republic is the frozen conflict in Transnistria and the problem of Gagauzia, also to some extent only postponed. As for the first knot of contradictions, they will not be resolved in the foreseeable future due to the presence of its own power structures that have long been established in the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and economic relations that are different from Moldova, which de facto take place in this unrecognized state formation.

Gagauzia, which does not claim the status of an independent state, nevertheless occupies a special place in the state-territorial structure of the Republic of Moldova. The Head of Gagauzia (bashkan) actually has the rights of a semi-independent ruler who does not intend to lose such status in the foreseeable future or share part of his powers with the official Chisinau.

The economy of the Republic of Moldova is of an agrarian nature, despite the fact that the main part of the republic's industry is located on the territory of the unrecognized PMR. A significant role in the formation of the Moldovan GDP is played by remittances of labor migrants, mainly from the Russian Federation and the countries of the European Union, with which Moldova has a visa-free regime under the associate membership agreement. In the foreseeable future, this situation will not change.

The inner policy of the country has long been characterized by extreme instability associated with the confrontation of forces advocating closer integration with Russia and supporters of rapprochement with Europe and Romania. The Republic of Moldova is one of the poorest countries in the CIS, very dependent on both Russia and Western countries, and has historically developed close ties with Romania. Recently, a delicate balance has been achieved in the Republic of Moldova between the camps that have been opposing each other for a long time. But differences on many issues of principle for the development of the republic between the first persons of the state and the forces behind them remain, and this in the future is fraught with obstacles to closer integration of the country both directly into the CIS and into structures created under the auspices of the Commonwealth.

The Central Asian component of the CIS is represented by the largest number of post-Soviet countries. Four of them - the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan are full members of the CIS, have the right to vote in its bodies, although not all of them include Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan occupies a special place as an associate member of the CIS, which, however, did not prevent it from chairing the association in 2019.

In three states - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which are exporters of energy resources in Central Asia, it is possible to maintain a certain political stability. A more complicated situation is developing in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: both countries are clearly divided along the North-South line, there are territorial disproportions, strong inter-clan contradictions, and for Tajikistan the role of a constant negative factor is played by neighboring Afghanistan and the turbulent situation in this republic of the Middle East.

Kazakhstan remains closest to Russia. Tajikistan is also of great importance for the Russian Federation, on the territory of which the largest Russian military facility abroad is located - the 201st Russian military base. Relations with Uzbekistan have also improved somewhat over the past few years, although in general the republic still shirks participation in multilateral relations, preferring bilateral ties to them. The Russian relations with Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan remain fairly even. With a high degree of probability, we can say that in the foreseeable future, the attitude of these countries towards both the CIS as a whole and the Russian Federation in particular will not change.

The states of Central Asia, being in the CIS, are trying to maneuver in a certain way between the West and Russia, although recently, due to the intensification of the confrontation between these two “poles”, such maneuvering has become increasingly difficult. At the same time , to a greater or lesser extent, all the Central Asian republics are involved in those integration processes that take place on the territory of the CIS and are somehow connected with the CIS: all five states are actually members of the Commonwealth, three of them (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and until 2012 Uzbekistan) are members of the CSTO, two countries (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) are members of the EAEU, four states (except Turkmenistan) are members of the SCO. In the near future, the states of the region will continue to pursue a multi-vector course, but the CIS and Russia will remain the main direction of their foreign policy aspirations.

The South Caucasus is represented by three states - the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia and Georgia. In addition, on its territory there are two partially recognized states - the Republic of South Ossetia and the Republic of Abkhazia, and one unrecognized state - the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. It is in the region of the South Caucasus that the struggle between two alternatives is very active - the Euro-Atlantic one (orientation towards the EU and NATO) and the Eurasian one (orientation towards the CIS, the CSTO and the EAEU).

The most consistent orientation towards Euro-Atlantic structures was and is traced in the policy of Georgia, which back in 2009 withdrew from the CIS and is not currently a member of this organization. Relations between Georgia and Russia are complicated by the conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the support of the latter by the Russian Federation and the presence of Russian troops there. It is unlikely that Georgia will join the Euro-Atlantic structures as a full member in the near future. But it is unlikely to return to the CIS either, primarily because of the inability to resolve a number of fundamental problems that make Russian-Georgian relations extremely difficult.

Eurasian integration is most clearly seen in the policy of the Republic of Armenia (RA), which is a member not only of the CIS (including Azerbaijan, with which Armenia is de facto at war), but also of the CSTO and the EAEU. After the new leadership came to power in the RA, headed by President A. Sargsyan and Prime Minister N. Pashinyan, the situation did not change dramatically. But at the same time, it should be noted that while actively developing relations with the EU and NATO, Armenia has not reconsidered and is unlikely to reconsider its attitude towards the Eurasian structures in the near future. The republic is a member of all structural divisions of the CIS and is represented at all summits of this organization (though, as a parliamentary republic at the level of the prime minister, not the president). The leadership of Armenia does not raise the issue of withdrawing from the CIS, although some opposition politicians advocate for this, and such calls at the household level sounded on the streets of Armenian cities. With a high degree of probability, it can be assumed that such a position of the RA leadership will continue in the near future.

As for Azerbaijan, it rather occupies an intermediate position between Georgia and Armenia, trying not to get too close to both Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian structures. Formally, Azerbaijan is closer to the latter, since it is both a de facto and, what is especially important, a de jure member of the CIS. But in practice, he does not take an active part in the activities of the Commonwealth, and his relations with the CIS in general and with Russia in particular are complicated by the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In addition, there is a rather paradoxical situation when Azerbaijan and Armenia are members of the same organization, which do not even have diplomatic relations, despite the fact that the entire perimeter of the border between these two states is blocked. However, at the meetings of the CIS bodies, representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia sit side by side, as they are seated in alphabetical order. Armenian-Azerbaijani relations can only be expected to become normal if there is some progress in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. But this appears to be a matter of the distant future.

A special component and, no doubt, the driving force of the CIS is Russia, which has such a status due to its special geopolitical position in the post-Soviet space and its subjectivity in world politics. Compared to other CIS states, Russia has the largest territory, the largest population, and the most powerful socio-economic and military potential. Russia has played and is playing a system-forming role in the CIS, and this role will remain the main one for it in the foreseeable future. The Russian Federation assumes responsibility for maintaining stability in the CIS region, and those Russian military facilities that are located in the Commonwealth countries (in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Belarus, as well as in the de facto states - the PMR, the Republic of South Ossetia in the Republic Abkhazia) serve this very purpose.

Russia has the most powerful economic potential in the CIS region, which allows it to remain the core economic basis of this region. A significant part of the capacities in the CIS countries operate on the basis of Russian technologies. Russian companies, including leaders in the oil and gas sector - Gazprom and Rosneft - largely determine the dynamics of economic growth in the CIS.

The social aspect of Russia's role in the region is also important: it is the main recipient of labor migrants from the Commonwealth countries, whose remittances are largely oriented to local budgets.

Currently, the CIS faces many challenges, and this is understandable, since the post-Soviet space itself is an extremely competitive arena of geopolitical and geo-economic struggle, which involves such global players as Russia, the United States, the European Union, and China. Do not remain aloof from this rivalry and such regional powers as Turkey and Iran. Some of these challenges were the result of missed opportunities for the economic reintegration of the post-Soviet space in the 1990s, the continuation of unresolved contradictions that arose in the same period or later, and some relatively recently, after the crisis in Ukraine and the reunification of Crimea with Russia in 2014, disagreements between national political elites. The sanctions war launched by the West naturally affects not only Russia, but also its CIS partners [65].

The Commonwealth of Independent States never managed to emerge as a full-fledged international political region, the institutions of regulation of which would consolidate and give a new impetus to the former close regular ties of the most diverse nature that have developed within the framework of the national economic complex of the former USSR. But the fact remains that the CIS, despite all the negative forecasts that have been expressed throughout the 28-year history of this regional intergovernmental organization, continues to exist, implementing economic, political, social, military, cultural and other programs, and despite a number of both internal contradictions and external pressure, while maintaining a certain unity and development prospects [66].

The key directions of the American soft power strategy are determined by the State Department (the “hard power” policy is also being implemented), the Agency for International Development (USAID).

“Promotion of democracy” is on the list of priorities of key US external policy institutions, primarily the State Department and the Agency for International Development (AID). The emphasis is on supporting, including financial, public associations, NGOs, political parties, ensuring the protection of human rights, the rule of law, transparency and accountability of political institutions and electoral processes, economic reforms, organization of student exchanges and internships, etc.

Within the US State Department, «democracy promotion» programs are overseen by the Under Secretary of State for Civil Security, Democracy, and Human Rights and the 1994 Office of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. They coordinate «democracy promotion» work in specific countries and regions, participate in the preparation of the annual reports of the State Department on the state of human rights in selected countries and on US support for democracy and the protection of human rights, which report on the main directions Washington's activities in this area.

For each country, USAID separately develops a “democracy promotion” strategy, assistance programs in the field of health, education, the economy and other areas. For their implementation, non-governmental organizations, social and political forces loyal to the United States and the media are actively used.

In the light of the military campaign in Syria, the escalation around Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela, the significance of the post-Soviet region for the US foreign policy interests has decreased. The US administration cut aid to Ukraine from $667 million in 2016 to $204 million in 2018, to Georgia from $81 million to $34 million, to Belarus from $7.9 million to 0. After the publication of the contents of a telephone conversation between D. Trump and President of Ukraine V. Zelensky in July 2020, the US President instructed to cut military assistance to Kiev in the amount of $250 million.

Nevertheless, the US embassies and USAID offices continue to consolidate American influence in the post-Soviet space by creating controlled civil society institutions, funding pro-Western NGOs, promoting pro-Western politicians to political posts, and implementing programs in the field of public administration and development [67].

American embassies regularly work with representatives of opposition groups, monitor the situation of human rights activists, national and ethnic minorities, and put pressure on the authorities to ensure their rights. Moreover, in a dialogue with the leadership of the republics, they resort to tools not only of “soft”, but also “hard power” (veiled blackmail, threats of sanctions and freezing of accounts).

The work during the elections is indicative which often results in accusations of the current authorities of falsifying the voting results. Representatives of the United States, describing the results of the elections, often criticize the similarity of the program documents of the political parties of the countries, the absence of independent media in the republics and truly alternative candidates. Such assessments were given by Washington following the results of the presidential elections in Kazakhstan and the parliamentary elections in Belarus in 2019.

The leading role in the development and implementation of US policy in the field of democratization is played by the State Department, which coordinates activities and reports to Congress, and the US Agency for International Development subordinate to it. It is USAID that is the key executive actor in the field.

With support from the State Department and USAID-affiliated National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the International Republican Institute, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the four-year Adaptive and Responsible Politics Ukraine program was launched in April 2016 by the Ukraine Consortium for Elections and Political Strengthening. The program pays special attention to promoting the accountability and inclusiveness of political parties, taking into account the interests of citizens, improving the conditions for political competition, and enhancing the role of civil society.

The Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine have an apparatus of American advisers who provide advisory assistance in developing strategies for responding to challenges and threats, carrying out reforms and introducing foreign standards, and organizing work with personnel.

As part of the Justice Sector Reform Program (implementation period: September 1, 2016 to February 7, 2021), the main efforts are aimed at creating an independent, accountable, transparent and effective justice system that upholds the rule of law and is empowered to fight corruption [63].

Under the auspices of USAID and the Peace Corps, from October 1, 2018, the “Small Projects Support Program” is being implemented, calculated until September 30, 2023. It is aimed at implementing sustainable development projects in various areas - in healthcare, agriculture, and small business development [65, р. 6-11].

Despite the decline in the role of the post-Soviet space in the list of American foreign policy priorities, the United States continues to influence the domestic political processes in the countries of the former USSR, using administrative and financial resources for this. At the same time, Washington does not hide its interest in keeping controlled and loyal elites in power, which will ensure the implementation of the necessary reforms and the implementation of profitable business projects, in particular, the purchase of American military products and liquefied gas. Washington's special goal is to counteract Russia in the region, strengthen Moscow's cooperation with the post-Soviet republics, separate the latter from Russia and reorient them towards the interests and values of the “collective West”.

At the same time, as American officials and “democracy promotion” experts admit, despite the efforts and financial influences expended, progress in the democratization of the post-Soviet space remains slow. The governments of the republics often act by bureaucratic methods, limiting interaction with the US representatives. Representatives of civil society in this region are few in number and do not have opportunities for broad international interaction. Measures of a «democratic nature» must be approved by governments in advance. The mass media, which are almost completely controlled by the state, and the weak distribution of the Internet, where one could turn to alternative sources of information, limit the access of ordinary citizens to the events taking place in the country and abroad.

The above confirms that this is the official level of the US soft power subject to government control. The Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs (Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs), various educational programs and support for intercultural dialogue between individuals and organizations. The Bureau is implementing the following programs:

1. Fulbright Program, which provides for the implementation of educational exchanges for students, specialists and scientists, on a competitive basis, grants are provided to talented graduate students, researchers and scientists.
2. Various educational programs providing for the implementation of international exchanges in the field of higher and secondary education.
3. Programs consisting in learning English (for example, the Access program, which provides students with the opportunity to study English on a free basis, and familiarize themselves with democratic values and American culture).
4. Scholarship programs for the CIS, Russia, the Balkan states and Eastern Europe, promoting the development of ties at the institutional level.
5. Programs consisting in the study of the United States, the purpose of which is to increase the prestige of education in the United States, the intensification of international exchanges; the programs also provide for various forums and seminars;
6. Department of Civil Exchanges.

The Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs of the US Department of State carries out many educational programs, civic exchanges, programs aimed at protecting the world's cultural heritage, financial support for American cinematographic, visual and musical arts, tours of domestic performers, participation in international exhibitions, concerts and festivals. The functions of the Bureau also include the development of exchange programs for the states of the post-Soviet space, the plans for which are based on the analytical studies conducted in the US diplomatic missions.

The leading role in the development and implementation of US policy in the field of “democratization” is played by the State Department, which coordinates activities and reports to Congress, and the US Agency for International Development subordinate to it. It is USAID that is the key executive actor in the field.

The main tasks of AMP in the post-Soviet space are:

* supporting the formation of civil society, expanding the participation of citizens and NGOs in democratic processes and political decision-making;
* ensuring effective, transparent and accountable governance at the state and local levels, decentralization of power, increasing the openness of the work of governments and parliaments, civilian oversight of their activities, and the creation of inclusive governance institutions;
* assistance in holding free and fair elections, technical assistance to central election commissions, improvement of conditions for political competition;
* reducing corruption and supporting anti-corruption institutions;
* formation of impartial independent mass media, increasing their role and professionalism, access of citizens to reliable sources of information;
* encouraging cooperation between civil society, local authorities and the private sector;
* combating human trafficking; capacity building of local NGOs, consolidation of the human rights community;
* assistance to young people in obtaining education, the formation of their political and leadership skills [68].

The role of USAID representative offices in the states of the post-Soviet space is generally identical, but has its own characteristics, taking into account the importance of the country in Washington's priority scale.

A number of initiatives are being implemented in the Ukraine in the field of reforming the management system. The most ambitious of them are the “Responsible, Accountable and Democratic Assembly” (implementation period: November 25, 2013 - June 30, 2020), “Local Self-Government Policy of Ukraine” (implementation period: December 14, 2015 - December 13, 2020), “Decentralization for better results and efficiency” (implementation period: June 8, 2016 - June 7, 2021).

In Belarus, more than $15 million has been allocated by the United States since 2011 to promote civil society and independent media, reform public administration, and support small and medium-sized businesses. civil society organizations working in this area. Since 2006, more than 600 Belarusian activists have visited the United States through USAID and have taken part in seminars on human rights, the development of democracy, and civil society [69].

In Kazakhstan through the USAID, Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan, Human rights watch”, “Freedom House” is working with representatives of the opposition and “independent” media of the nationalist and liberal-pro-Western persuasion. In the field of education, an example of mild ideological pressure is the announced romanization of the Kazakh alphabet, the transfer of secondary and higher education in the country to Western standards, the introduction of teaching natural sciences in high schools in English planned from 2021 (the so-called “principle of trilingual in education”).

The Bolashak program for training young specialists, which has been operating for about 20 years, is mainly focused on universities in the USA, Great Britain and Canada. The youth part of the country's political elite has diplomas from Western universities.

The USA also takes credit for expanding citizen and media access to litigation, which has increased the transparency of court operations and decisions. A separate area is the institutionalization of the social procurement system and the provision of funding for NGOs operating in this area [69].

In Armenia, the US focus is on ensuring effective and transparent governance, reducing corruption and improving human rights protection. The Territorial Development Fund of Armenia, with the support of the American Embassy, is implementing the project “Local Government Reform Activities” (implementation period: August 2015 - August 2020), which provides assistance to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures in the field of decentralization [70].

In Azerbaijan, specialized American structures provide assistance in expanding the participation of citizens, especially women, in political processes and local self-government, provide support to civil society organizations, journalists and independent media [70].

In Tajikistan, the priority is to support local authorities and non-governmental organizations. Under US pressure, amendments to the law «On Public Associations» were adopted. USAID participated in the creation of 155 local level organizations that work in the field of protecting the rights of citizens [70].

In Turkmenistan, work is carried out mainly on strengthening and diversifying the Turkmen economy, improving management efficiency, including through the introduction of «electronic governance», empowering young people [70].

In Uzbekistan, the US efforts are focused on the implementation of legislation aimed at expanding public participation in government, improving access to information. As a successful example, USAID cites the provision of technical assistance to Uzbeks in order to ensure transparency in government activities and public monitoring of the work of executive bodies. USAID provided training to more than 250 local government officials. Work is also underway with civil society leaders who defend the interests of women and the rights of people with disabilities [71].

It seems that in the future, regardless of the party affiliation of the new US presidents and administrations, the policy of “promoting democracy” will remain one of the main US external policy tools that allow the White House to solve a wide range of tasks that meet the US national interests.

However, Washington will be forced to take into account serious changes in the paradigm of the international perception of the American experience of “promoting democracy”: in particular, the growth of skepticism about the reference model of democracy promoted by the United States, methods for promoting democratic values and changing regimes that have turned into failed statehood (Iraq, Libya) and escalation of violence (Afghanistan, Syria). Future administrations will also have to work extra hard on the reputational costs of proving the role of the US as the «leader of the free world”.

In the post-Soviet space, the implementation of the soft power strategy in general is designed to promote a change in the orientation of the countries of the region from the Russian Federation to the United States. Carry out systematic work with the society, which gets the opportunity to participate in various scholarship and grant programs - in these programs, in fact, future leaders are identified, including political ones, and the US contribution to exchange programs - this is a contribution to the future elite, which as a result will to form the main directions of development of individual countries, moreover, for this elite, the United States will act as a natural center of gravity , as well as a development model. Mass American culture acts as the strongest means of spreading the cultural influence of the United States in the post-Soviet space.

## 2.2 The US Information Diplomacy for democracy support

The role of the media in political communications and the formation and coverage of foreign policy is a hot topic for research. Media coverage (or lack thereof) of foreign policy activities affects the state of domestic public opinion, as well as the priorities and decisions of politicians. And attention to this area of research has increased markedly over the past 25 years, and incl. because of the foreign policy of the United States, waging a “global war on terror” after the September 11 attacks.

On this basis, this study focuses on the relationship between the media and US foreign policy, with a special focus on military action, since it is this aspect that causes the greatest concern, both among researchers and the world community.

Over the years, mass communication researchers have found that the mainstream media tend to reinforce dominant sociocultural norms and values and influence key political decisions. These provisions are also true when it comes to the media in international relations and foreign policy, and especially when it comes to coverage of military operations.

In the United States, external policy directions are characterized by such features as:

* ethnocentricity (for example, the use of racial differences and stereotypes);
* elite control;
* not critical;
* episodic (i.e., when attention is focused on other countries when US government representatives visit them, or otherwise focus attention on them) [53, р. 689-707].

Assigning a central role to the media in the study of foreign policy and public opinion [40, р. 3-98]. In other words, in foreign policy, the press is much less likely to adequately fulfill its function of the “fourth estate” than in domestic politics.

One of the most important fundamental political communication theories in modern foreign policy media coverage research is Bennett 's indexing hypothesis, which states that *“media coverage of international relations, especially foreign policy crises (e.g., wars), tends to be» indexed», «based on the ranges of opinion and priorities of the elite”* [54, р. 47-64]. Bennett pays particular attention to the executive and legislative branches. In his opinion, those in the White House and the Senate are the most important actors because of their constitutionally enshrined authority in foreign policy.

The indexing relies, in part, on findings that journalism is source-driven and that the media seeks to change the framework and plans of elites, especially elected officials. Bennett argues that elites often either have a consensus on foreign policy goals and options (especially in wartime). Alternative approaches, especially those that support diplomacy, are offered by anti-war protesters, or challenge prevailing cultural and political norms (for example, speculation about the Cold War in the post-war era or counter -terrorism after 9/11) lack political and media coverage in the short term.

Baum and Greuling propose a theory of “strategic bias” describing the interaction between the media elite and the public, in which the established bias of the press towards elite conflict presents a distorted image of the foreign policy debate, focusing excessively on elite divisions (according to Baum and Greuling – “opinion indexing”) and negative news [56, р. 3-86]. This, they claim, causes the audience to filter news about foreign affairs.

The question of what role the media play in shaping public opinion about wars has been of increasing interest to researchers and political scientists over the past 20 years.

The Entman model builds on the indexing hypothesis in several ways. Firstly, it describes in more detail the frame conflict that occurs at various levels of the cascade and ultimately shapes the messaging environment that the public is exposed to in media coverage. Second, he proposes “feedback loops” at each stage of the cascade, in which this frame challenge is modified or otherwise accounted for (e.g., through rebuttal) by actors in earlier stages. For example, the congressional debate in 2009 about the closure of the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center forced the Obama White House to repeatedly change its position. Similarly, public opinion shapes media coverage and elite discourse, mainly through the observational function of opinion polling.

Other studies have shown that media coverage can matter in other ways as well, such as between media and political elite statements and public opinion. For example, favorable TV news reports from media sources have been found to have a significant impact on changing public attitudes in the United States. Entman argues that wartime episodic stories that ignore the strategic implications of war and foreign policy create «accountability gaps» [57] and prevent the US president and the political elite from taking full responsibility if foreign policy fails.

Because of these difficulties, much of the research in this area has been descriptive, using innovative data collection, analysis, and visualization tools, such as mapping the international blogosphere [58, р. 190].

Other researchers have used qualitative approaches to argue for the presence or absence of the power of new media [59]. One of the best examples of the use of innovative methods to assess the role of new and social media in international politics today is P. Howard 's cross-cultural study of the relationship between information and communication technologies (ICT) and political systems in the Islamic world. This author's study concludes not only that the spread of ICTs is associated with the transformation of dictatorships into more democratic regimes but also that the spread of digital technologies is a necessary and sufficient prerequisite for such political changes [[](https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199793471-e-025#oxfordhb-9780199793471-e-025-bibItem-84)72].

Digital diplomacy is defined as the use of digital technology tools to promote national interests within the framework of a state's diplomatic policy. Thus, digital diplomacy is seen as a set of tools for achieving foreign policy.

The purpose of digital diplomacy is to lobby the interests of the state in the framework of the foreign policy dialogue with the leaders of foreign states and the public. Thus, the goals of digital diplomacy repeat the goals of the foreign policy of the state. However, digital diplomacy is distinguished by its own system of methods and tools that are used to promote the interests of the state.

The development of digital diplomacy is developing not only through the efforts of the current government, but also through the efforts of the non-ruling party, opposition and protest movements. The totality of projects for the development of digital diplomacy in the United States can be represented by the following list:

* formation of a dialogue between state-owned companies and various groups of the population in foreign countries;
* development of a youth policy based on improving the image of the state and state structures for young people, updating state decisions in the field of youth policy;
* creation of an accessible and user-friendly information space with a relevant news agenda;
* mobilization of opposition movements with their own advertising, information agenda, campaign material.

The development of digital diplomacy in the case of the United States is characterized not only by the tools actually used, but also by the flexibility of the legislative framework, adaptable to new technologies. The US legislative framework defines the “Strategic Plan for the Development of Information Technologies in 2011-2013: Digital Diplomacy”. This document consolidates the definition of digital diplomacy and the main directions of work in the field of government-society dialogue. In 2011, a new document was proposed – “Strategy for actions in cyberspace”. The document defines the position of the US Department of State regarding Internet security and the methodology for dealing with the risks of infringement of rights on the Internet.

In 2014, the US government funded the launch of a project to visualize the presence and influence of political persons on Twitter without geographic restrictions in real time. Thus, a basis has been created for analyzing the impact of digital diplomacy in the modern world.

A striking example of building the US digital diplomacy is the presentation of a large NATO state structure of international importance on the Internet. The North Atlantic Alliance plays a crucial role in the international diplomatic relations of the United States, since the military-political bloc is the main activity of the United States as a state, and not private corporations that have a wide influence on building the socio-economic international relations of the state.

Currently, the large US government structures demonstrate one of the most developed systems of digital diplomacy. At the same time, at this stage, several promising areas for improvement in this area, characteristic of American diplomacy, can be identified:

1. Expanding the range of cooperation to achieve the goals of American government structures. To form the image of state organizations and achieve other goals, people who are not directly related to military and political activities, as well as service in state bodies, are increasingly being involved. Public figures, public opinion leaders, gossip columnists participate in PR projects of state structures and decisions.
2. Active work in the field of countering terrorism. This problem is especially relevant for the USA. Forms of cooperation are already being formed, such as the US State Department and its Digital Outreach team. A team of specially trained people present the goals and methods of the US State Department in the Middle East in the languages of the local population. Psychological work with large groups of the population softens the attitude towards American politics and reduces the risk of radical manifestations.
3. Building and improving the infrastructure for obtaining feedback from politicians from the population. Currently, politicians are trying to participate in public life by registering on social networks and thereby simplifying the dialogue with society. As feedback tools, public opinion polls, responses to letters and comments from the population, and receipt of petitions in electronic form are used. However, at present, the flow of information from interested users of electronic networks exceeds the possibilities of their processing, which shows their inefficiency. Meanwhile, in the pre-election period, politicians need a more substantial dialogue with the audience, which requires further development of platforms for receiving feedback, processing the flow of information from the population to politicians.
4. Openness to adapt new technological solutions to digital diplomacy. Technological development is ongoing which is expressed both in the emergence of new technical capabilities and in the emergence of new digital platforms that compete with each other. Also, when building international diplomacy, it is necessary to take into account the territorial specifics of information communications: the presence of local information networks, state blocking of individual sites, the level of information security. The task of digital diplomacy is to search for Internet sites that are in demand by the target audience, the appearance on which can contribute to the growth of views of the posted content. All these makes the process of building digital diplomacy non-linear, built on the implementation of a number of projects, using the principle of diversification of electronic platforms.

The US digital diplomacy shows how wide a range of methods can be used today to achieve the goals of the state. The main principles of the formation of digital diplomacy today are the flexibility of the approach to the formation of public policy, as well as focusing on the target audience of the country, whose population should receive a message from the state, government agencies or personally from senior officials.

Thus, a discovery arose: the power of some American social networks and other online tools lies in their ability to organize collective actions [73]. However, an important insight to draw from past research on political communications through traditional media is that it is important to analyze the influence of different types of media (e.g., newspapers and television) rather than treating “media” as a single variable. Similarly, researchers are increasingly aware of the importance of differentiating the effects of Twitter from those of Facebook and a channel such as satellite TV. It has been found that very often media organizations, such as, for example, Al- Jazeera, use several media platforms that can have a unique impact on the events themselves and public opinion about them.

The Arab Spring protests that swept the Arab Middle East in 2011-2012 served as a test for theories about the impact of digital media on social change and democratization. Some researchers, after the first protests, labeled them as the beginning of the “Fourth Wave of Democracy” [57], but in more recent studies, they have taken a more cautious assessment.

Some studies have shown that social networks “fueled” controversy outside the affected countries and triggered the “boomerang effect”, which can lead to international pressure on autocratic regimes [58, р. 190]. At the same time, only two regimes – in Tunisia and Egypt – fell and were replaced by younger, more democratic regimes in the US's view.

More recent studies have shown that the same social networks – Twitter, Facebook and YouTube – often become tools of disinformation and segmentation, and that most of the protesters in these countries did not use these social networks, and often did not even have access to them [59].

Interaction with the countries of the post-Soviet space is carried out through a large number of different organizations and institutions, and this interaction is built into the global mission of the United States – maintaining and creating a peaceful, prosperous, democratic and honest, as well as favorable conditions for stability and progress for the well-being of Americans, as well as the population other countries. The State Department singles out as one of the strategic goals of the external policy of the United States the protection of the main interests of the United States through the promotion of democracy, as well as human rights and the strengthening of civil society.

The US Department of State has the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, which is headed by the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Relations. Reporting to him is the Policy, Planning and Resources Division. It is this department that is responsible for long-term strategic planning and performance evaluation. Accordingly, he is also responsible for including public diplomacy in planning the overall strategy for the State Department.

The Office for Public Diplomacy and Public Relations also includes the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Relations and the Bureau for World Public Relations. The first is involved in planning, developing programs for educational, cultural and professional exchanges; the second has the Media Strategy Group which works with the media to develop methodologies for shaping global perceptions of American foreign policy and values. In turn, the Research and Analysis Group performs the expert work necessary for planning information campaigns. The Digital Strategy Group, accordingly, develops approaches for interacting with the target audience using digital platforms.

The Center for Global Engagement within the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Relations deserves special attention. It appeared in 2016 with the aim of countering foreign propaganda and disinformation. In consultation with the US government, allied governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society representatives and private experts, the Center conducts propaganda and disinformation analytics to coordinate the efforts of government departments.

It should also be taken into account that the six regional offices of the State Department which report to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, contribute to the formulation of the overall strategy. In 2012, Regional Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State for Public Diplomacy emerged who, together with the leadership of the Regional Office and the Regional Public Affairs Office, ensured that public diplomacy is on the regional agenda.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Bureau of World Public Affairs carry out, in fact, planning at the tactical level. The Center for Global Engagement is doing the same, although it is fundamentally different from the fact that it carries out planning taking into account consultations with various, including non-governmental, structures. For these units, planning is thematic. As for the regional offices, they are developing a strategy, but not global, but regional, taking into account all kinds of methodologies developed by thematic divisions.

The results of the activities of all these “subdivisions” not only reflect the already formulated US public diplomacy strategy, but also contribute to its continuous updating. The developed programs, approaches, methods and expertise are brought to the attention of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Relations, who has the right to make the necessary adjustments to the work of the Policy, Planning and Resources Division, and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs before the developed plans come into view directly to the Secretary of State, followed by the President of the United States.

The US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy plays a special role in formulating the strategy. The Commission operates under the auspices of the State Department (the Secretary of State, in particular, appoints the Executive Director of the Commission), although its members are not employees of this department. The Commission has seven members who are appointed by the President of the United States with the consent of the Senate. The president also appoints the chairman. The main task of the Commission is to evaluate the activities of the US government aimed at understanding and informing the foreign public and influencing it. Based on available evidence, it also formulates and then recommends to the president, secretary of state, and members of Congress policies and programs that aim to better serve the public diplomacy functions of the State Department, the U.S. Global Media Agency, and other government agencies. By statute, the Commission reports to Congress, the President, and the Secretary of State.

The role of the Commission in formulating a strategy for public diplomacy is determined by the cyclical nature of its relationship with the State Department and the presidential administration. The strategy is determined by the president, taking into account the opinion of the secretary of state, based on the results of planning carried out by the relevant departments of the State Department. The Commission evaluates the effectiveness of the current policy and, based on the results of the analysis, develops new methodologies and makes recommendations in its reports to the Secretary of State and the President. Periodically, the strategy is adjusted taking into account the recommendations, and then the cycle is repeated anew.

The success of American public diplomacy is largely due to the systematic approach of the US leadership to its planning, despite the lack of an established tradition of regular formulation of strategic documents on this topic in government bodies. The main role in developing a public diplomacy strategy is played by: the State Department, the Department of Defense and the US Presidential Administration - as a structure representing a single master plan, as well as the president himself, who has the final say on this issue. In the aforementioned departments, functions related to public diplomacy are not concentrated in one specialized department, but are distributed among departments. This allows, when formulating a strategy, to take into account global and regional aspects, tactical and strategic developments of the relevant departments.

An analysis of the terminology used in US strategic documents suggests that the US government uses the term “public diplomacy” as a euphemism for the term “external policy propaganda”. In these documents, planning for “public diplomacy” and “strategic communication” is equalized: they outline common priorities, a single list of performers, a mechanism for evaluating effectiveness, and so on. When describing the role of the US Department of Defense in matters of strategic communication, the documents actively use the term “information operations”.

The two main departments that carry out strategic planning in this area are the State Department and the Department of Defense. Accordingly, it is impossible to classify foreign policy propaganda solely as a tool used either in wartime or against a potential rival or adversary. In the US, propaganda is part of any foreign policy activity, whether it is directed at an ally, partner, or rival. This, in particular, is confirmed by the presence of a specialist in this field in each regional office of the State Department. Similarly, the Department of Defense's role in developing a public diplomacy strategy demonstrates the willingness of the US government to move the tool of external policy propaganda from a routine to an operational sphere at any time. Thus, propaganda is an integral part of a comprehensive strategy of the US interstate relations.

In the 20th century, the US Information Agency (USIA) acted as the most important tool of public diplomacy and propaganda, some experts note the fact that USIA ensured victory in the Cold War. Formally, in 1999, the agency was closed, while the transfer of information functions to the State Department took place. These functions are carried out by employees of foreign services: they manage cultural, information and educational programs in other countries, while the cultural attaché oversees the activities of cultural centers and libraries, language courses, organizing exhibitions, etc. Radio Liberty and Voice of America radio stations broadcast in 23 and 53 foreign languages, and at the same time, it is customary to submit information to increase supporters of the American way of life and American concepts of international development [9, р. 3-140].

The educational and cultural policy pursued by the Bureau for Cultural and Educational Affairs ensures interaction with the post-Soviet space. Especially:

* conducting work with local communities;
* conducting work with opposition and ruling forces;
* there is a practice of educational, civil and cultural exchanges, which forms a layer of loyal American citizens in the countries of the post-Soviet space, and spreads American values and ideals.

Most of the representatives of the elite of the post-Soviet space took part in interstate exchange programs, and also studied in the United States. Participants of these programs receive F-1, J-1 visas, which imply their return to their homeland: on the one hand, this prevents brain drain, and on the other hand, this is the formation of political, intellectual elites that can no longer objectively fully participate in the international arena. evaluate the actions of the USA And also perceive them through the prism of personal experience, which does not fully reflect the current realities, since exchange programs also have an ideological function, and when staying in the USA, participants can often see only what they are shown, as a result of which they form idealized ideas about the United States.

In this space, a policy is being pursued to clarify their own foreign policy, and to form a positive attitude towards it. Thus, for greater productivity, electronic resources are involved, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. A significant role in the spread of US soft power in the region is played by resource centers – departments of consulates and embassies, and representative offices of exchange educational programs. Resource centers provide an opportunity to maintain feedback with the regions and exchange information.

Thus, for example, there are 22 resource centers in Kazakhstan (“American Corners”, the embassy in Astana, the center of American Councils for International Education, the Education-USA educational center, the Kazakh American University and the Peace Corps); in Kyrgyzstan –15 resource centers (“American Corners”, the embassy, the Education-USA educational centers, offices of American councils, Peace Corps, International University).

Sponsorship organizations and philanthropic foundations also play an important role in the process of implementing the official cultural foreign policy of the United States. G.Yu. Filimonov identifies 3 areas of activity of the funds consisting of:

* + 1. Development of directions and goals of the US external policy directions, and development of tactics and strategies in the framework of achieving the set goals.
    2. The ideological substantiation of the key directions of the US external policy is the most important task carried out by the funds. Sponsorship organizations and private foundations of America, acting on a worldwide scale and acting, in this case, as one of the most effective instruments of the US foreign cultural policy, are instruments of very powerful American influence outside the States.
    3. Work with personnel – selection, training of foreign and American personnel in order to implement the US global policy.

New media and other technological innovations are prompting researchers and political scientists to rethink old paradigms in US media and foreign policy communications.

Mainstream media tend to reinforce dominant socio-cultural norms and values and influence key political decision making by the US authorities, which is also true when it comes to media in international relations and the US external policy, and especially when it comes to military coverage. actions.

In the US external policy directions, the press is much less likely to adequately fulfill its function of the “fourth estate” than in domestic politics.

One of the most important fundamental theories of political communications in modern research on US foreign policy coverage by the media is Bennett 's indexation hypothesis. An extended version of indexing is the “Cascading Network Activation Model”, which works on the principle of a waterfall. More dynamic than cascading activation is [the](https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199793471-e-025#oxfordhb-9780199793471-e-025-bibItem-147) PMP (Policy-Media-Policy) principle.

Political communications in the United States began to take into account the relationship between media exposure and support for (or opposition to) military intervention. One area of research that has received a lot of attention is the “CNN Effect” hypothesis, where certain vivid images may stimulate support for an intervention (visualization of hunger, etc.), while others, especially images of victims (the U.S. military) may do risk-averse public.

There are also so-called American “think tanks”/ “soap factories”. In addition to differences in the field of activity (from the analysis of urban problems to foreign policy issues), think tanks also differ in their political engagement: they can be divided into liberal, conservative and centrist. The liberal think tanks include the Center for Legal Affairs and Social Policy and the Carnegie Endowment, the conservative think tanks the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute, and the centrist think tanks the Brookings Institution.

The high level of influence of American “centers” on the adoption of domestic and foreign policy decisions is due to the fact that:

1. The “centers” produce a new intellectual product in the form of fresh ideas, concepts, theoretical approaches to issues of foreign and domestic policy, which can have the strongest influence on the actions of the White House abroad and at home. Thought factory employees actively use university and academic platforms, various round tables and forums to popularize their ideas, and regularly speak in the media. This is especially important given that in the United States it is believed that both domestic and foreign policy can only be effective if there is support from public opinion.
2. Employees of the “centers” act as competent specialists and experts at hearings in Congress committees and government commissions, that is, they actively participate in the development of management decisions. Thought factory specialists, who are not bound by official ranks and titles, have the opportunity to express their thoughts and proposals directly, without circumlocution, to openly discuss global and internal challenges and problems.
3. The brain centers play an important educational function. Serious discussions on the most complex issues of international and domestic political relations often unfold on the pages of publications issued by the centers, in which not only independent experts, but also statesmen and members of the US Congress participate.
4. Think tanks act as one of the sources for the formation of the US executive power, essentially acting as a kind of “forge of personnel” for the party that won the election, and a “reserve platform” for the losing political force.

In general, think tanks, despite all the existing problems, play an important role in the scientific and political life of the United States. They are successfully engaged in information and analytical support for all branches of American government, participate in the development of fundamental documents on foreign and domestic policy, and also effectively influence American public opinion. At the same time, due to a significant difference in ideological orientation, the reports and studies of think tanks in the United States often cause heated discussions, contributing to the pluralism of opinions in the expert community which, in turn, positively influences the process of making the most important political decisions.

More specific objectives in foreign policy influence are set out in strategic plans developed jointly with the State Department (Strategic Plan for 2004-2009 [74], Strategic Plan for 2010-2012, Strategic Plan for 2014-2017 [75], Strategic plan for 2018-2022 [76]). At the same time, work in this area is carried out in close coordination with the Ministries of Defense, Finance, Agriculture, Energy, Ecology, Justice, Trade and Health [77].

For each country, USAID separately develops a “democracy promotion” strategy, assistance programs in the field of health, education, the economy and other areas. For their implementation, non-governmental organizations, social and political forces loyal to the United States and the media are actively used.

Among American NGOs known for their activities in the field of «promoting democracy», a special place is occupied by the National Endowment for Democracy, the American Enterprise Institute, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Open Society Foundations [77, p. 24], the Open Society Institute – Assistance Foundation [77, p. 24], National Democratic Institute of International Relations, International Republican Institute [78], Millennium Challenge Corporation, etc.

Thus, in matters of forming public opinion in the field of international relations, international conflicts and public opinion, more and more attention is paid to new media, incl. social networks (blog platforms, Facebook and Twitter). The power of social networks and other online tools has been recognized in their ability to organize collective action.

New media and other technological innovations are prompting researchers and political scientists to rethink old paradigms in political communications regarding the media and international relations. For example, mobile satellite video technology and smartphones are enabling reporters to bypass the official US media management strategies and include a wider range of sources that can now be used effectively over the Internet.

## 2.3 Sanctions as a manifestation of “hard power” in the geopolitical approach

The geopolitical strategy of the United States in Eurasia is aimed at maintaining the American presence in Central Asia and protecting growing US economic interests:

Firstly, the political process is exacerbating relations between Russia and the countries of the region. The United States encourages states to adopt Western values and democratic ideology in order to make them part of the Western system.

Secondly, America is gradually increasing its military presence in Central Asia, expanding its influence and role in ensuring the security of the region. Provides assistance to states to reduce dependence on Russia in the field of security.

Thirdly, Washington is using its economic power in the form of bailouts and direct investment to gain control of the largest enterprises in key industries. This is especially evident in the extraction and transportation of natural resources.

After September 11, 2001, American troops entered Afghanistan, making Central Asia one of the main fronts in the war on terrorism. In particular, the US transit center in Manas (Kyrgyzstan) was used to transfer troops to and from Afghanistan. The scale of US operations at that time required huge logistical efforts, the most important element of which was the overland transport route through Central Asia [79].

Also, the United States successfully used the slogan of the antiterrorist struggle to penetrate into the region, thereby gaining some control over hydrocarbon resources and Caspian oil [80, 81].

As a result of the US efforts, the states of Central Asia are gradually moving away from Russia. America's successful penetration of Central Asia has even outstripped NATO's move to the east. Washington, in fact, anticipated the plans and goals of the North Atlantic Alliance in this region. Strategically, this means that under the onslaught of the United States, the influence of Russia and China in the region will be leveled.

The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan remains a major external security issue for Central Asian leaders and highlights the critical nature of South Asia for the region. Instability in northern Afghanistan poses a dual threat to Central Asia. It brings external conflict right to the region's doorstep and can fuel Central Asia's internal problems with extremism. The presence in Afghanistan of terrorist groups originating from Central Asia and with declared ambitions to return to their homeland is considered by the leaders of the countries of Central Asia as a direct threat to their security.

Among all five countries under consideration, Kazakhstan currently offers the best opportunity for the US to pursue its geopolitical interests. Kazakhstan has the vision, resources and institutional capacity to play a stronger leadership role and help put Central Asia on a more positive trajectory. In its foreign and domestic policy, Kazakhstan has a number of important achievements, and, unlike other states in the region, it has set an ambitious agenda for the future.

Its leader is pursuing a skillful, sophisticated diplomatic strategy that more effectively balances the country's ties to China, Russia, and the United States. US support can help Kazakhstan make progress towards a more modern, transparent and diversified economy.

Uzbekistan could rank higher in U.S. regional diplomacy if the Mirziyoyev government does prove to be less repressive and more reform-oriented. It is arguably the most important country in the region in terms of security and US involvement in Afghanistan. Although US policy is aimed at reducing America's involvement in Afghanistan but as long as the US is interested in the security of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan will remain an important partner.

Kyrgyzstan could be a useful partner if it manages to stabilize its political system, but it is unlikely to serve as a base for US involvement in the region due to its small size and lack of resources.

Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are quite problematic states. In the situation with Turkmenistan today, the US efforts are largely implemented in the fuel and energy aspect (gas transit project – the TAPI gas pipeline) of economic interests. Efforts to promote political and human rights reforms have not yet been effective in pursuing US interests.

Tajikistan, among other things, is one of the most economically weak states in Central Asia with inefficient state management, allowing abuse of outside assistance.

The United States does not yet have an effective strategy and vision capable of effectively influencing the development trajectory of these two countries. The United States is currently evaluating the prospects and opportunities for interaction with them.

The crisis in the Ukraine has brought the geopolitical situation in the post-Soviet space to the top of the international agenda. For many analysts, Russian intervention in Ukraine is a sign that the world is entering a so-called new cold war, a period of intense rivalry between Washington and Moscow. In this new geopolitical global configuration, the post-Soviet space has become a key point of conflict between the Kremlin and the White House. The goal of this struggle is to achieve effective influence on the foreign and domestic policies of the post-Soviet countries.

The West, led by the United States and, starting in the 2000s, the EU, has developed a more nuanced approach to promoting liberal values and reform through contingent benefits.

In the past few years, the US has been preoccupied with external crises (the Ukraine, Syria) and internal pressures (rising populism, as evidenced by the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit vote); the impact of small-state foreign policy in the post-Soviet space is not seen as such a priority on the United States agenda, and financial support has been correspondingly lower than in the 1990s. And the United States, at least rhetorically, has declared its commitment to helping other countries democratize and develop.

While the influence of external actors is an important element in the analysis of the development of foreign policy in the post-Soviet states, there are a number of internal factors: interest groups, corruption, history and political culture. Modern researchers are faced with the task of studying the relationship between internal and external factors in the analysis of the US influence on the development of post-Soviet states.

International sanctions are measures of coercion and economic influence applied by states or international organizations against a particular country. They are a method of influencing the government of a country by the international community or its individual supporters, but they also completely affect the interests of the population living in the country.

The main provisions that determine the procedure and obligations of participants in a foreign trade transaction are governed by various norms of international law, as well as federal laws of the Russian Federation and other regulatory legal acts in the field of international trade. In particular, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, prepared by the International Law Commission of the United Nations and signed on May 23, 1969. ratified by 114 member states, the main international legal norms concerning the conclusion, entry into force, application, termination, interpretation and observance of interstate treaties are enshrined.

Sanctions involve the use of restrictive economic measures by one or more countries against one country or group of states. They are often introduced under the auspices of the United Nations. Their main task is to force the government of the country on which the sanctions were initiated to change the direction of the political course or to force them to take certain political decisions. Often, sanctions do not bring the desired result, but rather exacerbate existing problems that should be solved, and often lead to a political crisis in relations between states.

In our time, the stable position of the state is determined, first of all, by the level of development of its economy, which, as a rule, is closely integrated into the world economy, therefore, the restriction or termination of economic relations makes sanctions a powerful tool of influence. However, a state under sanctions can begin to develop its economy at the expense of national resources by adopting appropriate development programs. Over time, the degree of negative impact of sanctions decreases as the state adapts to sanctions against it or finds ways to circumvent them.

The main types of sanctions that affected the economic situation in Russia:

1. Blocking of assets and prohibition of operations of large state-owned companies and individuals.
2. Prohibition of raising funds on global financial platforms.
3. A ban on the supply of military and dual-use products.
4. A ban on the supply of high-tech equipment for the exploration and production of natural resources, usually hydrocarbons.
5. Blocking any foreign economic and trade activities of the Republic of Crimea.
6. Prohibition to visit certain countries for certain employees and individuals.
7. Restriction of activities or exclusion of the country from some international organizations. A special, indirect or indirect type of sanctions was the fall in world prices for oil and natural gas produced, which hit the Russian economy very hard and provoked at the initial stage an uncontrolled devaluation of the ruble and a significant increase in inflation. This affected the replenishment of the country's budget and the real incomes of ordinary citizens.

The separation from the Ukraine and the subsequent entry into the Russian Federation of the territory of the Crimean Peninsula as a result of the political events that took place in early 2014 in Ukraine sharply aggravated the international legal relations that are developing between the leading states of the world. The accession of Crimea to the Russian Federation was regarded by the US and the EU as a violation of the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, as a result of which international legal economic sanctions were applied to Russia, the severity of which increased over time.

Initially, the US and the EU were limited only to sanctions related to the suspension of international cooperation in various areas, but “due to the severity of the situation”, the sanctions were expanded by introducing first personal and then sectoral sanctions, after which Russia took retaliatory measures. The process of development of mutual international legal sanctions is highly likely to continue. Let us give a brief chronological description of the measures already in force. On March 6, 2014, the US President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13660 “On blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the situation in Ukraine”.

From that date, the President of America, acting on the basis of the law “On economic powers in the event of an international emergency», granted the US administration the right to impose property and visa sanctions against individuals and legal entities that *“seized power in the Crimean region without the permission of the Ukrainian government”.*

The first sanctions imposed on Russia on March 6, 2014 were more symbolic and looked more like a hostile move by the West than a real blow to the economy.

The first decisions to impose economic sanctions against Russia were taken by the United States and the EU on March 17 and concerned the freezing or seizure of bank accounts and other assets and property of a number of officials of the Russian Federation who recognized an active role in the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to Russia. In the following months, a process of increasing offensive sanctions took place, in which three main stages can be distinguished:

1) the stage of targeted sanctions against specific individuals and legal entities whose actions allegedly threaten the territorial integrity and the Ukrainian political stability (March 17-July 15, 2014);

2) the stage of sectoral sanctions aimed not at “punishing” specific individuals and legal entities, but at causing damage to certain sectors of the Russian economy, regardless of whether enterprises in these sectors are involved in the crisis in the Ukraine or not (July 16 - September 11, 2014);

3) the phase of expansion of sectoral sanctions which began against the backdrop of positive changes in the dynamics of the conflict in the Ukraine after the conclusion of the Minsk ceasefire agreements and practical measures to normalize the situation in eastern Ukraine (as of September 12, 2014).

The subsequent extension of sanctions in April-May 2014 took place in connection with the aggravation of the situation in the east of Ukraine. The organizers of the sanctions accused Russia of actions aimed at undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine, especially in the supply of weapons to pro-Russian rebels.

In addition, a series of sanctions was linked to the crash of a Boeing 777 in the Donetsk region on July 17, 2014, which was caused by the actions of Russian-backed rebels.

The introduction of sectoral restrictions by the European Union after Washington on July 30, 2014 can be considered a turning point in the development of the situation. It is the third package of sanctions that is the first real offensive step that seriously affects the entire Russian economy.

Thus, in response to the third package of sanctions, Russia on August 6, 2015 introduced a food embargo, the content of which was a ban on the import of meat and dairy products, fish, fruits, vegetables and nuts from countries such as the EU, USA, Australia, Canada and Norway.

On September 5, 2014, the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the EU agreed on the fourth round of sanctions, but at the same time, almost immediately after the signing of the Minsk Protocol and the announcement of a truce, the US President Barack Obama and President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy announced their readiness to lift sanctions due to the stability of the situation on the Ukraine. However, the fourth package of sanctions came into effect on September 12, 2014.

The sanctions hit businesses and industries in which Russia was considered competitive:

* oil and gas industry;
* military-industrial complex;
* atomic energy;
* aviation;
* banking sector.

The structure and content of sanctions cover the following areas:

1. Financial sphere. The five largest banking organizations (including VEB, VTB, Gazprombank, Sberbank, Rosselkhozbank) were effectively deprived of the possibility of borrowing, that is, placing debt securities (with a maturity of more than 30 days) on the European market.

2. Oil and gas field. The sanctions affect the interests of such large companies as Rosneft, Gazpromneft, Transneft, NOVATEK. They are subject to financial restrictions, as well as a direct ban on the supply of equipment to these enterprises for oil production in the deep seabed and in the Arctic, including for the development of shale deposits.

3. Defense and industrial complex. A ban on the export of dual-use goods, significant restrictions on cooperation, financial sanctions against companies such as Almaz-Antey, Kalashnikov, Izhmash, Basalt, Uralvagonzavod.

4. List of individuals (total 119). Persons included in this list are prohibited from entering the EU territory. At the same time, all their assets in the EU are also “frozen”.

There are no plans to lift sanctions against Russia in the near future. Since there is a vicious circle in the EU at present, no country will break the existing system. Despite the fact that many European countries, such as Italy, Greece, Austria, Hungary, Spain, etc., suffer significant losses in their economies due to the response of Russian counter banks, they will not be able to cancel or even partially mitigate them. The West has repeatedly stated that it links the lifting of sanctions with Russia's implementation of the Minsk agreements, and until they are observed and the military conflict in Donbass does not stop, the sanctions will remain and will continue to operate.

Recent events in the economy on a global scale require the implementation of certain geopolitical interests that directly affect Russia's foreign trade policy. This is due to the fact that an important condition for targeted economic development is the country's involvement in foreign economic relations.

Economic sanctions have a significant impact on the possibility of concluding international contracts. They can have a serious impact on the international relations of economic entities under the jurisdiction of third states, as they will be required to ensure that their goods and services are not exported to the sanctioning state.

Based on the provisions on international trade relations, the Russian side concluded that:

1. The unilateral sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation by the United States and the EU, in accordance with WTO law, should be considered a violation of the law. Their cause cannot be regarded as either a force majeure event or a significant change in circumstances.
2. The only legal basis for such sanctions in terms of international trade relations can only be the rules of a free trade agreement. GATT 1994 Article XXI “iii” (a) and GATS Article XIV bis “iii” (b). These norms express an assessment, that is, in order to eliminate the possibility of one of the parties to abuse the rights by interpreting them too broadly, the need to clarify the content of these norms, to supplement their position on the impossibility of their application unilaterally. The application of these rules and their consequences should be decided solely by the dispute settlement body of the WTO.

Also, according to the Russian side, sanctions have full legitimacy if they:

* represent a measure of protection against violations of rights and interests in the form of self-defense (which is why they can quite reasonably be unilateral);
* aimed at protecting national security, as well as the rights of resident citizens, and not the rights of the citizens themselves;
* are based on the norms of the WTO legislation providing for similar protection of rights against violations by counterparties.

Individual market conditions may also play a decisive role in episodes of sanctions against the Russian Federation: shortly after the imposition of sanctions, the international oil market showed a rapid and strong fall. This was a coincidence that greatly increased the impact of the sanctions. Oil prices fell to extremely low levels, hitting a low of almost $30 in early January 2016, up from over $100 in early 2014. The fall in oil prices is attributed to a number of factors unrelated to the sanctions, including the ongoing economic downturn, which is leading to lower economic demand worldwide and the rapid growth in oil production and development in the United States which has become a net exporter of oil. In addition, OPEC decided to stick to its policy of maintaining the level of oil production. The consequences of these events led to significant budget imbalances as well as capital outflows. The Russian Central Bank had to use its reserves to support the ruble, but to no avail as it continued to depreciate.

The former Russian Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin warned that sanctions could lead to a depression in the Russian economy and a drop in GDP by 1-1.5%, which, in his opinion, “is not detrimental to the economy” [56, р. 3-205]. It should be noted that this statement was made long before the fall in oil prices. The purchasing power of citizens of the Russian Federation fell, and many goods that were previously available to Russians were no longer available, while there were practically no domestic substitutes. There was an increase in inflation and a decrease in the level of state reserves.

The sanctions had negative consequences as a result of Russia's response. Due to the EU's trade dependence on Russia, European farmers have been hit hard by Russia's ban on imports of fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, fish and other food products. According to the EU Commission, the sanctions reduced the economic growth of the EU in 2014 by 0.3% and by 0.4% in 2015. EU exports to Russia decreased by 12.1%, while Russian exports to the EU decreased by 13.5%.

Sanctions are often seen as an instrument of domestic policy. In a country imposing sanction, the leadership can demonstrate its determination and ability to act in the interests of its country and the world community. But this tool can also be used by the country targeted by sanctions as a countermeasure. The Russian leadership used this technique and conducted an internal information campaign in which the difficult economic situation in which the country is located was associated with the sanctions imposed against it, and also covered the measures of the government and the president of the country to neutralize the consequences of sanctions.

Since the sanctions, Russia has embarked on a path of replacing the EU as its key trading partner, as well as diversifying its trade by seeking closer relationships with other countries.

In the medium and long term, Russian dependence on foreign goods and services for domestic consumption and its supply of goods and services to foreign markets may change significantly. These effects will be more pronounced for Russia's traditional and geographically close trading partners (particularly the EU) than for the United States, which has a fairly small share of trade with Russia.

Another example of contradictions in terms of free trade was the claim of the Russian Federation to Belarus that some Belarusian meat and dairy products do not meet Russian standards and are therefore dangerous for consumption led to a ban on the import of these products. Russia also accused Belarus of supplying repackaged Western goods that were subject to Russian sanctions.

Kazakhstan has also excluded some Russian meat products from its market, claiming Russian producers for violating quality standards. A similar ban was imposed on certain goods entering the Russian market from Kyrgyzstan. Also, other restrictive measures were taken by other Member States in order to protect their national interests. For example, Kazakhstan has repeatedly suspended deliveries of Russian fuel and gas imports to protect its domestic market from a surplus of Russian oil products.

It should be recognized that all five EAEU member states are governed in an authoritarian style, with varying degrees of freedom and democracy. According to the Freedom Democracy Index House, EAEU member states did not produce any significant growth or improvement during the CU and EAEU periods (2010-2015).

The integration efforts undertaken over the past 5 years have not brought any positive results in terms of political reforms and democratic transformations for the EAEU member states. Moreover, since the integration process was agreed and supported by authoritarian leaders, any change of power in these countries could pose a threat to the EAEU. It should also be taken into account that the members of the EAEU are relatively new states that are building their future, facing serious problems of separation from their Soviet past.

The five member states that make up the EAEU differ significantly in terms of territory, population, and the size of their economies. The largest country, the Russian Federation, has an area 574 times larger than that of Armenia. And the Russian GDP is about 170 times greater than that of Armenia. The total GDP of the Russian Federation is about 6 times greater than the combined GDP of the other four members of the union.

The situation is similar for the population. The total population of the four member countries – Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – is about 42 million, while the population of Russia is about 144 million. Therefore, there is no balance, Russia dominates the union in almost all aspects. And other member states are concerned that, as a dominant member, Russia reaps the most benefits and can also exert pressure on others. This problem may tend to increase in case of further integration as a political union.

As discussed above, there are conflicts of interest in trade among EAEU member states, especially between the original three – Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. There is a possibility of deepening this conflict in the event of an aggravation of the crisis phenomena in the economies of countries and the global world economy.

The most vulnerable are Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, as the countries with weaker economies. These countries have practically nothing to use as a counterbalance to Russia, and they are more dependent on it. concerned about the problems of territorial, political and economic security, as well as strategic interests related to the availability of Russian oil and gas at preferential prices.

Periodic remarks by Vladimir Putin also do not have a positive impact on the independence and sovereignty of the allied states, creating tension and irritation among Russian partners. This concerns the statements of the Russian leader that “Kazakhs did not have statehood”, or Russian politicians regarding the fact that “the Central Asian republics should form the Central Asian Federal District of the Russian Federation with its capital in Almaty*”* in the absence of unambiguous comments from official Moscow contribute to the integration process [15, р. 20-25].

Researcher J. Sherr believes that while Russia formally respects the sovereignty of its former republics, it also reserves the right to determine the content of this sovereignty and the territorial integrity of these countries [16, р. 3-75].

The integration process in Eurasia is closely monitored by regional and international actors. In this aspect, since the crisis in the Ukraine, the role of Russia in the formation of such a union as the EAEU has mainly been sharply criticized.

The US and Europe noted attempts to reintegrate the post-Soviet countries into a Soviet-type Union, and warned the post-Soviet states not to join this union. Thus, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, during her visit to Dublin in December 2012 to attend the 19th OSCE meeting, sharply criticized Russian policy, making a statement that Russia is trying to “Sovietize” Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Criticism of Russia's efforts to create a Eurasian Union was based on the assertion that, in essence, attempts by Russia to restore Soviet-era control over the region.

Washington's special goal is to counteract Russia in the region, strengthen Moscow's cooperation with the post-Soviet republics, separate the latter from Russia and reorient them towards the interests and values of the “collective West”.

At the same time, as American officials and “democracy promotion” experts admit, despite the efforts and financial influences expended, progress in the democratization of the post-Soviet space remains slow. The governments of the republics often act by bureaucratic methods, limit interaction with US representatives. Representatives of civil society in this region are few in number and do not have opportunities for broad international interaction. Measures of a «democratic nature» must be approved by governments in advance. The mass media, which are almost completely controlled by the state, and the weak distribution of the Internet, where one could turn to alternative sources of information, limit the access of ordinary citizens to the events taking place in the country and abroad.

**Chapter 2 Conclusions**

1. Various technologies can be used to implement «soft power» as a tool to promote national interests. In an indirect action, the tools of «soft power» are aimed at changing public opinion and third parties, which, in turn, influence the decisions made by political leaders. The policy of «soft power» is designed not to force but to encourage geopolitical competitors and rivals to accept the system of values and priorities of its owner, to serve his interests. The United States sees «soft power» as an effective means of conducting a geopolitical struggle; they actively use it to weaken their real and potential adversaries in the international arena. The implementation by the United States of the soft power strategy in the post-Soviet space as a whole is intended to promote a change in the orientation of the states of the region from Russia to the United States. Systematic work is being carried out with society; American mass culture is the strongest means of spreading the cultural influence of the United States in the post-Soviet space.

2. Digital diplomacy is defined as the use of digital technology tools to promote national interests within the framework of a state's diplomatic policy. Thus, digital diplomacy is seen as a set of tools for the implementation of external policy.

The complex of projects for the development of digital diplomacy in the United States includes:

* formation of a dialogue between state-owned companies and various groups of the population in foreign countries;
* development of youth policy on the basis of improving the image of the state and state structures for young people, updating state decisions in the field of youth policy;
* creation of an accessible and user-friendly information space with an up-to-date agenda;
* mobilization of opposition movements with their own advertising, information agenda, campaign materials.

Digital diplomacy shows how a wide range of methods can be used today to achieve the goals of the state.

3. Washington's special goal is to counteract Russia in the region, strengthen Moscow's cooperation with the post-Soviet republics, separate the latter from Russia and reorient them towards the interests and values of the “collective West”.

In response to the events in Crimea and the eastern Ukraine, Western countries-imposed sanctions against Russia, and as a countermeasure, Russia imposed sanctions on agricultural imports from Western countries. Russia expected EAEU members to follow with similar sanctions, but this did not happen. Russia has expressed dissatisfaction with the exports of EAEU member states from other countries. The member countries of the EAEU have to assess the possible risks for national economies before taking collective action against the United States and Western countries, given that Russia is the initiator of such a discussion. After all, if, for example, the EAEU countries raise import duties, then the internal markets of the member states themselves may suffer first of all.

The adopted sanctions included freezing assets for individuals and legal entities, restrictions on financial transactions with Russian companies, restrictions on petroleum products, as well as on dual-use exports. From the spring to the summer of 2014, an increase in the sanctions pressure was followed by a number of additional measures, including the introduction of «black lists» in relation to specific persons of the Russian establishment. Thus, the sanctions affected a number of high-ranking Russian officials and politicians, banning them from entering the United States and freezing their assets and property abroad.

Sanctions demonstrate the willingness and determination of governments to act and go beyond political rhetoric. A priori, sanctions seem to be a powerful tool and generate economic costs, but the study confirmed the fact that these costs are borne by both parties. In addition, there are third parties who want to take advantage of the situation for their own economic and political interests, thereby reducing the effectiveness of sanctions. This can lead to changing trading partners and creating new alliances and thus increase costs for at least one of the parties. Given the way international trade is developing, the globalization of production, and the growing interdependence of trade relations between countries, the effectiveness of economic sanctions is reduced even more.

Despite all the weaknesses, economic sanctions are always preferable to aggressive actions. At the same time, sanctions are costly and not unilateral: the initiators of the sanctions may end up being harmed by them themselves.

# 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE US EXTERNAL POLICY IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION

## 3.1 Geopolitical approaches and economic instruments

Under the Soviet rule, the Central Asian region was the “courtyard” of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union gave Washington the key to the region's political, military, and economic doors. Today, America is working to turn Central Asia into its strategic resource base and a center from which it can influence Russia. The United States is gradually including the whole region in its global strategy.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US external policy direction in the post-Soviet space has undergone significant and sometimes contradictory transformations. And external actors played a decisive role in this process. The United States, and then the Russian Federation and the European Union, invested significant resources in shaping the domestic and foreign policies of the post-Soviet states in an effort to influence the regional order and advance their vision of international politics

In turn, the majority of states in the post-Soviet space had no choice but to develop a multi-vector foreign policy and achieve a precise balance between their own interests and the interests of more influential external players.

This context influenced not only how the post-Soviet states defined their foreign policy goals, but also the tools they developed to pursue their interests. Post-Soviet foreign policy was also shaped by the values and norms that external actors sought to promote throughout the region. It is in this context that the United States, as an external entity, has influenced the development of the foreign policy of the post-Soviet states over the past 30 years.

The USA has invested significant resources in building the capacity of the post-Soviet states to replace their old Soviet identities with the creation of liberal democratic nations that would more naturally align with the West. The US efforts have primarily been supporting civil society groups, investing in infrastructure, funding exchange programs for stakeholders and students, and encouraging US companies to invest in the region.

Studies on external actors from the West examine the ways contributed to democratization in the region or have attempted to export the rules, norms, and rules that underpin their own political systems. In this case, the empirical focus is primarily on the adoption of norms in the post-Soviet states.

These studies are aimed at analyzing the effectiveness of the efforts of the EU and the US to form the democratic processes in the post-Soviet space. Other studies have in turn focused on Russia's more or less deliberate efforts to promote autocracy in the post-Soviet space. Here the focus is on how Russia was able to gain leverage in regional states by creating various links through short-term incentives and coercion.

The tradition of foreign policy analysis has shown how a small statehood influenced the development of the foreign policy of the post-Soviet states. This branch of science sees the influence of external actors as a constant structural factor to which small states must adapt. Studies in this direction, however, failed to emphasize the dynamism of this process, how external actors sought to influence the post-Soviet space and how these efforts influenced the foreign policy of the states of the region. Which, in turn, allows us to consider the strategies and tools used by external actors to increase their influence in the region. From institutional approaches to the influence of the constructivist theory of international relations.

The importance of the CIS countries and, in particular, Central Asia (CA) for the US external policy direction is determined by the geographical proximity of the CA countries to China, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, as well as India and Pakistan. The events of September 11, 2001 and the ensuing anti-terrorist operation allowed the United States to gain a foothold in the previously closed Central Asia and deploy military bases there.

In the new millennium, the US external policy towards Central Asia is aimed at achieving several goals. Internationally, it aims to reduce the region's dependence on Russia, prevent Iran from becoming the powerful player it is in Afghanistan and the Middle East, and strengthen the role of the US partners in the region, especially India. In terms of internal transformations in the states of Central Asia, American policy is aimed mainly at the transition of these countries to liberal democracy, or at least to better governance, as well as to a market economy and regional cooperation.

The policy goals for internal transformation are formulated as follows: “We will support the creation of sane and transparent governments that are responsible for and listen to an enlightened civil society”. On a market economy, it is “promoting the development of the private sector in the domestic market of Central Asia”mainly through C5+1 and the Investment and Trade Framework Agreement (TIFA) between the United States and the countries of Central Asia. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor is working with USAID to promote religious freedom, healthcare and judicial reform, youth participation in government, strengthening independent media, and expanding access to information.

In contrast to the position taken by Russia, the United States believes that the removability of political power and the authoritarian nature of local regimes undermine social stability and/or increase the risk of violent overthrow of the regime. Such theoretical assumptions are based on the US political creed and its foreign policy tradition of promoting democracy.

The Caspian region of Central Asia and the South Caucasus is relatively stable, despite the so-called «protracted conflicts» and the slow integration of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into Georgia and the difficult situation in Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan.

In fact, there was a period in the 1990s when the United States was actively involved in the region, even creating new US government structures in the State Department to ensure the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline to transport Caspian hydrocarbons directly to Europe, bypassing the traditional routes through Russia. Although this had some benefit for the US and other international (primarily European) oil companies, it did not bring significant and direct benefits to the United States: it was simply the optimal solution from the point of view of economics and geopolitics.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the US interest in the Central Asian region. This is evidenced by both the US National Security Strategy updated in 2017 and the new US Strategy in Central Asia for 2019-2025 published in February 2020 [82] and the intensification of contacts between representatives of the administration and the leadership of the Central Asian countries. Moreover, Kazakhstan is of particular interest.

The formation of US policy in Central Asia is also connected with concern about the threat of Islamic radicalism in the region. It came to the attention of the United States in the late 1990s with the emergence of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. This threat became the basis of the US attitude towards the region after 2001, when Central Asia began to be linked to the policy on Afghanistan. Experts have widely criticized both the informational background around the risk of violence from Islam - in fact, very limited in the region, and the Afghan- centric US policy with an emphasis on security issues. Starting with the 2014 drawdown of the American contingent in Afghanistan and the birth of the Islamic State in the territory.

After the events in Syria and Iraq, the US perception of the danger of radical Islamism has changed somewhat. Now the threat is seen less in the “side effects” of Afghanistan than in the radicalization of Central Asian migrant communities abroad and the emergence of foreign fighters, including their possible return to their homeland.

In the 1990s the Partnership for Peace program with the aim of spreading the culture and standards of the alliance, as well as establishing business contacts with oil and gas companies. At the same time, the American government did not show much activity, perhaps hoping that no one, primarily Russia, busy solving its own internal problems, would interfere with them.

Cooperation with the Central Asian countries, especially in the military sphere, reached a qualitatively new stage after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the start of the US and allied anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, when a foothold was needed for combat operations.

As a result of negotiations with the leadership of the Central Asian countries, Washington achieved the possibility of using military infrastructure facilities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan when US Air Force aircraft carry out both humanitarian and combat missions in Afghanistan. For the transportation of goods to / from Afghanistan, combined transit schemes were used along the so-called. «Northern distribution and transport route», including the transport corridors Baku-Aktau, Kuryk-Saryagash-Keles and Beineu-Galaba, railway crossings on the Turkmen-Afghan border Serhetabat (Kushka)-Torugundi and Atamurat-Imamnazar - Akina. In Tajikistan, the US financed the construction of a bridge in the area of the Nizhny Pyanj crossing.

Under the administration of D. Trump, the United States stepped up military contacts, as well as military-technical assistance to the Central Asian countries, including to increase the effectiveness of their power structures. With the participation of the Pentagon, the countries of the region are reforming their national armed forces, systems of military education and personnel training at an angle of approaching NATO standards. Together with the US armed forces, conferences of heads of military intelligence and chiefs of general staff are regularly held, as well as training events to work out the coordination of interaction between the armed forces of the Central Asian states in planning and conducting anti-terrorist and anti-drug campaigns. In addition, the Pentagon is implementing biologically risky management programs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan by establishing a network of accountable research institutions in these countries.

During the seventh round of consultations in the “CA 5+USA” format, held in Tashkent on February 3, 2020, chaired by the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, it was emphasized that terrorism, illegal migration, human trafficking and drug trafficking remain the main threats in the region. In this regard, the need to intensify efforts in the field of border security, the exchange of experience in counter-terrorism, the promotion of the peace process and the political settlement of the situation in Afghanistan was emphasized [83].

The Republic of Kazakhstan is the second state in the post-Soviet space in terms of economic and political significance. The country has large reserves of unique natural resources and a convenient geographical location connecting Asia with Europe. The Republic takes an active part in integration economic projects and associations on security issues such as the EAEU, the CSTO, the SCO. Such a position and features of Kazakhstan attracts world powers to cooperate with it in order to increase its influence in the region.

Today Kazakhstan occupies one of the important positions in the US geopolitical interests in Central Asia. Kazakhstan and the United States of America entered into diplomatic relations in December 1991. Since then, the two countries have been dynamically developing partnerships in the main areas of interstate relations. For over 20 years, the US has established itself in Kazakhstan as a major investor in the oil and gas industry and as a national strategic partner.

Since the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, there have been practically no political disputes, no territorial claims. He is a member of influential international organizations: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

On the other hand, the protests in Kazakhstan in 2016 gradually took on a national dimension. Their main reason was the law on the leasing of land to foreigners. The organizer was the International Foundation for the Defense of Freedom of Speech “Adil cos”, which reviews the activities of the US and British embassies, Freedom House and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Soros' Open Society.

America's nonproliferation cooperation with Kazakhstan remains a key element in the relationship between the two countries [63]. After the republic declared its territory free of nuclear weapons and received serious international guarantees of its security from a number of nuclear states, including the United States, the United States changed its interests in the country in favor of the economic component. Kazakhstan's interest in continuing to play an active role in global nonproliferation efforts provides an opportunity for the United States to continue to cooperate with this major Central Asian economy.

1. Security and military cooperation approach

The goals of security cooperation defined by the Defense Cooperation Agency Green Paper of the US Department of Defense include “*buildin*g *defense and security relationships that advance US goals in partner countries and ensure* *US military access to peacetime and host country contingencies”* [84]. This access does not necessarily represent actual physical space in the form of a military base or activities in the form of joint military exercises. Access may come from potential future collaboration or intelligence sharing.

Military cooperation between the United States and Kazakhstan is carried out on the basis of five-year plans for military cooperation (the first was signed in 2003, and the fourth plan is currently being implemented, designed for 2018-2022) [85]. They provide for joint counteraction to international terrorism, the supply of “modern samples of military-technical equipment”, cooperation in the field of training military personnel and peacekeeping forces, primarily the Kazakh Kazbrig brigade, as well as participation in joint exercises. Since 2003, within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program, Kazakhstan has been holding joint Steppe Eagle exercises with NATO countries where up to 1.5 thousand military personnel, as well as observers and representatives of the diplomatic corps, annually take part.

The United States continues to cooperate with Kazakhstan in the framework of solving problems to ensure the security of Afghanistan. On April 19, 2018, the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan ratified the Protocol on Amendments to the 2010 Agreement on Ensuring Commercial Rail Transit of Special Cargo to Afghanistan through the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, according to which the Kazakh seaports of Aktau and Kuryk are included in the route scheme Black Sea-Georgia-Azerbaijan-Caspian Sea-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan- Afghanistan (in July 2018, the first transfer of cargo for the contingent was carried out US Armed Forces in transit through the Caspian). Thus, the volume of American military transit to Central Asia has significantly increased.

It was also possible to involve Kazakhstan in the training of Afghan personnel in civil and law enforcement specialties, and the development of the Afghan transport infrastructure [45].

Washington seeks to oust Moscow as Astana's leading partner in the defense sphere, and uses the “fight against terrorism” as a pretext for an American military presence near Russia's borders.

Despite the difficult history of relations with Uzbekistan (primarily because of the Andijan events), the United States managed to intensify military cooperation with Tashkent. During the visit of the President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirzoev to Washington in 2018, a five-year Plan of military cooperation was signed for the first time [45], thanks to which in 2019-2020 the number of joint US-Uzbek exercises has sharply increased (in January 2019 - the trainings of the special forces of Uzbekistan and the US National Guard on the territory of the Camp Shelby base (Mississippi), in September 2019 - the trainings of pilots in the Chirchik garrison , in March 2020 - the trainings as “Invincible Guard-2020” on the territory of Uzbekistan).

The training of military personnel of Uzbekistan in the USA is widely practiced [86], as well as the teaching work of American military instructors at the Academy of the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan, at the Military Institute of Information and Communication Technologies of the Ministry of Defense and at the Higher Military Aviation School (Jizzakh). Uzbekistan joined the NATO Partnership for Peace Program in July 1994, and since 1996 cooperation has been based on the annual Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programs. The Americans openly admit that they are aimed at reorienting Uzbekistan from military purchases from Russia to American systems and equipment.

The US dialogue with Kyrgyzstan, which is oriented towards strategic partners - Russia and China, is progressing more difficult. Nevertheless, work is currently underway with Bishkek on a new cooperation agreement, which involves cooperation in the military field, primarily within the framework of educational programs, joint seminars and training, during which military personnel will gain an understanding of modern types of weapons and military technologies used by the US and NATO [87]. The Kyrgyz side participates in numerous Partnership for Peace exercises. A number of Kyrgyz military units and divisions are prepared for possible involvement in NATO operations.

Under the D. Trump administration, military-technical cooperation between the United States and Tajikistan has intensified. The main efforts of the American side are directed, first of all, to work with the officers of law enforcement agencies, whose training programs are held on a regular basis. Periodically, various joint exercises are held between police and counter-terrorism units. In October 2018, Washington sent special patrol and reconnaissance vehicles to Dushanbe to repel threats from Afghanistan worth more than $8 million [88].

In February 2002, Tajikistan joined the program of the North Atlantic Alliance «Partnership for Peace». From 2009 to 2014 The Tajik side allowed NATO forces to use their airspace, railways and roads for the transit of non-military goods to Afghanistan. To date, there is an “Individual Cooperation Program”, within the framework of which there is interaction in such areas as military and law enforcement education, counterterrorism, the fight against drug trafficking, emergency response and natural disasters. The North Atlantic bloc provides support, including financial support, in the field of ammunition disposal [89].

At the beginning of 2020, negotiations were held between representatives of the US Central Command and the leadership of the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan, during which it was decided to intensify cooperation in the field of combating terrorism, ensuring border security and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is planned to launch a program for the exchange of experience in the fight against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons [90].

2. Economic cooperation approach.

Washington's active line in Central Asia is largely due to economic interests. The priority task is to ensure the transportation of Caspian energy carriers through alternative routes, i.e., bypassing Russia, routes [91]. The United States has made persistent efforts to promote the interests of American business in the region and weaken state control in the economies of the Central Asian states. The provision of economic assistance on a bilateral basis and through the channels of international financial institutions is tightly linked to the successful implementation of reforms by the leadership of the Central Asian countries.

Recently, Washington has significantly expanded its economic presence in Kazakhstan. By 2020, about 400 American companies are operating in this country [92]. The seriousness of the intentions of the Americans is evidenced by the speech of M. Pompeo on February 2, 2020 in Nur-Sultan, who openly called on the Kazakh side to develop cooperation with the United States, citing the work of the Kazakhs with the agricultural company Tyson as a successful example Foods and major oil and gas investors Chevron Corporation and ExxonMobil. There are also positive results of cooperation with such American companies as General Electric, Halliburton, Nalco Champion, Weatherford, Flowserve and others. Cooperation in the mining industry has significant potential when US direct investment has exceeded $5 billion in 2017-2019. At present, a plant for the production of steel blanks and catalysts is being built with the US support, as well as an enterprise for assembling regional aviation aircraft. The amount of these projects is 450 million dollars.

In 2019, the volume of bilateral trade amounted to $2 billion [93]. The USA is one of the key investment partners of Kazakhstan. Investment volume from 2005 to 2018 amounted to 33.7 billion dollars [94]. In the coming years, as Washington officials say, it will increase.

The practice of holding annual American-Kazakh business forums, introduced in 2017, in which official representatives of Kazakhstan, as well as employees of the US Embassy in Nur-Sultan, heads of American companies, including Coca-Cola, Gilead, HP, Microsoft and Valley irrigation. Various areas of cooperation are discussed at the events, including the development of industry and infrastructure, the aerospace industry and energy, healthcare, agriculture, and information technology.

The intensification of US-Uzbek trade and economic cooperation and the growth of investments in the economy of Uzbekistan were indicated as key topics for further cooperation between the two countries during:

* visit of President Sh. Mirziyoyev to Washington in May 2018;
* U.S. Secretary of Commerce U.S. Ross on a working trip to Tashkent in the fall of 2018;
* negotiations of the Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan with E. Ganiyev with W. Ross in 2019;
* contacts of the US between the Uzbek Ministry of Finance and the US Treasury in 2019.

As part of the American Business Week organized by the US Agency for International Development and the Ministry of Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan in 2018, 13 agreements worth $2.5 billion were signed, indicating a willingness to invest in the energy, oil and gas and agricultural sectors in the coming years 5 to 6 billion dollars. Washington also promises to organize the transfer of advanced technologies and experience of its leading companies, and official Tashkent to create favorable conditions for expanding the activities of American firms [95].

The economic interests of the USA in Turkmenistan are connected, first of all, with the energy resources of the country, which is the sixth in the world in terms of natural gas reserves. American Ambassador to Ashgabat M.S. Klimov in the summer of 2019, during his confirmation at the State Department as head of the diplomatic mission, promised to *“make every effort to promote the diversification of export markets for Turkmen gas - both through the Caspian Sea and to South Asia”. The* US President D. Trump also spoke about the search for new directions for strengthening economic cooperation in his congratulatory message to the President of Turkmenistan G. Berdimuhamedov on the occasion of the Nowruz holiday , highlighting the new opportunities for Turkmenistan to export gas to the West that have recently opened up for Turkmenistan in connection with the determination of the legal status of the Caspian Sea as part of the signing “Conventions on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea” at the Summit of the Heads of the Caspian States in Aktau in August 2018. According to the plan of the Americans, Turkmenistan could diversify its gas market through the Trans- Caspian pipeline, through which Turkmen resources will flow to Europe through Baku and Azerbaijan [96].

Recently, contacts have been maintained between the two countries on a regular basis, deliveries from the United States to Turkmenistan of agricultural machinery, civil aviation aircraft, and electrical power equipment have been arranged.

On February 11, 2020, the United States Agency for International Development launched the Turkmenistan Entrepreneurship and Business Environment Project. The goal of the project is to support Turkmen enterprises in creating new jobs, improving the professional skills of employees, increasing sales and exports in various sectors of the economy, including information and communication technologies, food processing industry and carpet weaving.

The main areas of US-Tajik cooperation are agriculture and tourism. According to US Ambassador to Tajikistan JM Pommersheim, the US Agency for International Development is currently implementing the $20 million Prosper Tajikistan [97] program aimed at providing economic support to small farmers and entrepreneurs. Within the framework of another USAID program – “Food for the Future” - assistance is provided to citizens of the country in the field of cultivating land for agricultural purposes, introducing modern technologies, equipment and crop varieties into the agro-industrial complex. The US government promotes the development of tourism through educational programs, the allocation of grants for small businesses in the field of tourism, and interacts with the Committee on Tourism of Tajikistan [98]. However, so far this country is not very attractive for American businessmen, since there are significant investment barriers and a high level of corruption [99].

Representatives of the foreign ministries also agreed on a development plan for the electricity market in Central Asia. It is assumed that the development of a single Central Asian power grid should facilitate the subsequent export of surplus electricity, reduce costs for consumers and dependence on external participants, as well as increase supplier income and energy security in Central Asia.

In order to strengthen cooperation in the trade, economic and investment spheres with Central Asian players, the Trump Administration, in addition to bilateral contacts, is actively using the “CA 5+USA” project launched by the Obama Administration (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan + USA). Although the officially declared goal of «CA 5+USA» is to strengthen regional cooperation, including in the field of economics, it attempts to *“deploy all initiatives with the participation of Central Asian countries to the south without the participation of Moscow”* [100].

During the “CA 5+USA” meeting in Tashkent on February 3, 2020, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo emphasized the importance of promoting joint projects in the economy and energy, attracting foreign capital to the region, especially in the field of information technology and science-intensive industries. M. Pompeo promised to increase investment in the countries of the region through the International Finance Corporation and the Framework Agreement on Trade and Investment [101].

During a virtual meeting on June 30, 2020 with the Foreign Ministers of the Central Asian countries, Mike Pompeo confirmed the US commitment to this format, focusing on common security interests, including peace in Afghanistan, as well as on the development of regional ties and trade. In addition, issues of ensuring regional food security against the backdrop of the COVID -19 pandemic were discussed [101].

With the US support the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan signed a declaration on regional cooperation in the field of energy reforms and the creation of a single electricity market in July 2019 [102]. Assistance in the implementation of plans in this area will take place with the participation of USAID.

3. Use of democratic values

Since the administration of B. Clinton, American state and non-state actors have been actively engaged in “promoting democratic values” in Central Asia [103]. The administration of George W. Bush, Jr., who replaced the administration of George W. Bush in 2001, continued the line on “promoting democracy” in Central Asia, which increased funding for non-governmental organizations operating in the region [104]. The result of such a policy was the activation of pro-American opposition forces in the Central Asian countries, which resulted in the “tulip revolution” in Kyrgyzstan, the rebellion in Andijan.

After a series of failed “democratization efforts,” the Obama administration began to use this direction more flexibly, using diversified channels, including through NGOs, to adjust to the task of building stable, mutually beneficial relations with local elites. Tough “democratic” rhetoric gave way to expressions of respect for the “special path of development” of the Central Asian countries. Nevertheless, “controlled” pressure on the democratic “dossier” was regularly carried out, which was expressed in reminding the countries of the region of the need to liberalize the national legislation regulating the electoral process, create free media, a multi-party-political system, indulgences in the religious direction, promote democratic processes, develop parliamentary democracy [105].

The main declared tasks within this area are the formation of political parties, free media, the formation of civil society, increasing the availability of high-quality higher education and healthcare, supporting the development of the private sector and economic reforms. To this end, the United States of America provides financial support to various non-governmental organizations and interacts with the civil sector of the country.

In order to solve “problems in the democratic area”, the potential of the US Agency for International Development is often used, whose experts propose the necessary, in their opinion, changes in the political system of the state, its territorial structure, the main directions of foreign policy and economy [106].

As part of “promoting democratic values” the Americans attach great importance to holding free and fair elections in the Central Asian republics. To monitor electoral processes and identify violations, the United States actively uses the capabilities of the OSCE and its Bureau for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, whose offices began to open in Central Asia in 1998 at the initiative of Secretary of State M. Albright [107].

The United States has traditionally actively used democratic and human rights tools in relations with the Central Asian states to achieve geopolitical goals. For these purposes, a significant number of non-governmental organizations operate in the post-Soviet republics, which are supported by the distribution of financial grants from the US government and private individuals. Work is also being done with young people educated in the United States. This makes it possible to constantly monitor the internal political situation in countries and use the collected facts of human rights violations.

With the advent of the new administration of D. Trump to the White House, there has been a revision of approaches to promoting American values in the world. The events of the “Arab Spring”, as a result of which the United States partially lost influence in the Middle East in favor of Russia and Iran, prompted President D. Trump to demand guarantees from NGOs to achieve the planned result in accordance with the allocated funding. According to the head of state, it is necessary to influence the domestic political situation in a particular country only if you are completely sure that the change of the ruling regime will allow its foreign policy to be “turned around” in accordance with the interests of the United States or will open up new opportunities for American business, and will not result in destabilization of the region. or strengthening forces even more hostile to Washington. This approach significantly complicated the continuation of the mission of American NGOs in Central Asia, since grants from the White House for work in this region were significantly reduced [108].

Thus, the first phases of America's interactions with independent Central Asia had one common denominator: the significance of the region for the United States was largely derived from interests that were not key to Central Asia itself, but rather were functions of US policy, priorities, and relations with countries. throughout the region. As the United States reduces the size and role of US combat forces in Afghanistan, Washington will once again need to define and prioritize its interests and relations in the region.

At some point, a series of numerous crises in other regions of the world shifts the focus of the US external policy and security from Central Asia. The campaign against the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, the crisis in the Ukraine, the civil wars in Yemen and Libya, the implementation of the nuclear deal with Iran, and the economic and political struggle with a more aggressive China take precedence over a region that is not a source of major shocks or significant security threats. USA. Due to the reduction of the US military presence in Afghanistan, Central Asia is no longer a source of great political opportunities to advance key American interests [109].

4. Factors of strengthening US geopolitical interests in the post-Soviet countries of the Central African Republic.

Next in more detail, it will be considered how the influence of the United States manifested itself on the independent states of Central Asia located in the southwest of the territory of the former USSR: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

From the very beginning, the basis of the US external policy directions for the region were support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries [110]. To demonstrate this basic commitment, the United States has established full diplomatic relations with all countries and in recent years has built large new embassies in the vast majority of them to support the full spectrum of political, economic, commercial, military, and people-to-people programs.

The United States has long held back its relations with the countries of the region because of their Soviet heritage, which makes their systems of social organization and government very different from those of the West, and especially because of human rights issues. Issues of human rights and democratic development, perhaps most of all, prevent the United States from building strong relations in the region. In recent years, the US administration has been more critical of the situation in these countries on these issues, and this has limited its relations in the region. In this connection, according to a number of foreign policy experts, the US commitment to its own democratic values of democracy and human rights is a key foundation of the foreign policy of the United States, but at the same time it should not be the only determining factor for strategic relations with individual countries [111].

At the moment, for the United States, the issue of foreign policy in Central Asia is being updated again. A natural question arises: what factors influenced the strengthening of America's geopolitical interests? The relevance of developing a policy of enhanced interaction with the Central Asian countries is associated, first of all, with the significant development of the region in recent decades.

When Uzbekistan became independent in 1991, America launched the process of realizing its geopolitical interests. The US was the first country to recognize Uzbekistan as a sovereign nation after the collapse of the Soviet Union. And then the country was visited by Secretary of State James Baker. And during the first decade, even as a harsh totalitarian regime took root in the country, Washington continued to make political investments in Uzbekistan's potential. And these efforts, in turn, gave the United States some success. The country's leadership developed an independent foreign policy, while Washington took on the task of integrating this state into the international community.

But by 2000, when it became clear that a functional dictatorship had taken root in Uzbekistan, Washington changed its strategy to involve the Asian country in this environment. The US has switched to a “pendulum” policy: from partnership to criticism of totalitarian methods and back to partnership and again to criticism, and so on. This strategy ended after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. There have been changes in relations between countries, the leadership of Uzbekistan has realized that Washington is a strategic partner in the war on terror, and Uzbekistan has become a key springboard for America's entry into Afghanistan [112].

It should be noted that Washington was never completely closed to the regime in Tashkent. But the strategy to promote change has been replaced by a more tactical approach that focuses on the fight against terrorism, resulting in a high level of military aid to the country. This approach left Washington vulnerable to the whims of President Karimov. In 2005, his suppression of protests in the city of Andijan under the banner of “fight against terrorism” drew international condemnation, including from the United States. During the year, the US lost an air base in the country as ties between Uzbekistan and the US deteriorated significantly.

Relations between the countries continued to remain cold, until 2009. US concerns about the reliability of military transport logistics through Pakistan forced Washington to return to cooperation with Tashkent in the fight against terrorism and the provision of military assistance. Cooperation was renewed through the opening of an alternative route for international forces in Afghanistan.

With the coming to power in 2016 of the President of Uzbekistan Mirziyoyev, significant reforms were launched aimed at developing the country and opening it to the outside world. But by the time Mirziyoyev came to power, the US was still on bad terms with Tashkent. Therefore, the President of Uzbekistan deliberately chose Washington for his first official visit to the West, which marked the beginning of a new relationship with great potential for cooperation between countries. For the first time since independence, Uzbekistan, under the leadership of its new president, is embarking on fundamental economic and other political reforms, including in the field of human rights. In addition, President Mirziyoyev is active in improving relations between Uzbekistan and its neighbors, which have been quite tense in the past [113]. And the administration of the United States is trying in every possible way to use its diplomatic opportunities to encourage this positive trend.

A number of Central Asian states suffer in various ways from internal weaknesses - poor governance, corruption, weak rule of law, lack of economic opportunities for the general population - that increase the vulnerability of the state. Predicting whether and when a weak or failed state will become a failed state is inherently difficult, and even Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the weakest states in Central Asia, have repeatedly ignored predictions of their imminent doom.

The United States established diplomatic relations with Kyrgyzstan in 1991 following Kyrgyzstan's independence. The United States supports Kyrgyzstan in developing an inclusive democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. The 2017 presidential election in Kyrgyzstan marked the first peaceful transfer of presidential power from one democratically elected president to another in post-Soviet Central Asia. Significant obstacles to the development of Kyrgyzstan include corruption, aging infrastructure, high unemployment and endemic poverty. Kyrgyzstan, however, benefits from a strong civil society and a relatively free media sector.

The US government provides humanitarian aid, military aid, and assistance to support economic and political reforms. The United States helped the Kyrgyz Republic join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 1998.

After 9/11, the US increased interest in the country by opening a transit center at Manas in December 2001. Russia and China have shown considerable concern about this fact and have proposed political proposals for closing the American base (transit center) in Kyrgyzstan.

In July 2015, the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs terminated a bilateral cooperation agreement signed by the two countries in 1993 amid protests from the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the US State Department's decision to award the 2014 Human Rights Defender's Award to Kyrgyz political prisoner Azimzhan Askarov, arrested for participating in ethnic clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010 [114]. In this connection, the United States issued warnings to the leadership of Kyrgyzstan about the consequences of canceling the provision of humanitarian and security assistance. Three months later, the US attempted to improve bilateral ties with a visit by Secretary of State John Kerry to Kyrgyzstan.

The United States did not intervene in the ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, despite concerns about the viability of the interim government after the ouster of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev and the security of the US military transit center near Bishkek.

At the moment, in addition to the risk of internal economic and possible political collapse, there is also the potential for intra -regional tensions in Kyrgyzstan over the next few years to fuel armed conflict - for example, renewed ethnic/communal violence, or conflicts with neighbors in the region over the availability of water resources. The political, economic and social situation in Kyrgyzstan undoubtedly worries the neighboring powers of Central Asia, especially in the event of destabilization. In particular, the Ferghana Valley is already replete with political, economic and social problems. The United States is well aware that any unrest and upheaval possible in Kyrgyzstan will undoubtedly affect adjacent Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and can be used by extremist forces to expand their influence in the region.

Kyrgyzstan, according to certain characteristics, is considered by experts (especially Western ones) to be the most democratic state in Central Asia. At the same time, Central Asian leaders rightly fear that the US efforts to promote democracy and human rights could spark more color revolutions.

The United States remains interested in creating a regional energy market for Central Asia that links Afghanistan, South Asia, Europe, and East Asia. To date, US efforts have focused on a plan to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India (TAPI). In December 2015, the leaders of the four countries took part in the laying ceremony of the TAPI gas pipeline in Turkmenistan. As of the end of 2018, the gas pipeline will reach Afghanistan. However, the timing of the completion of the project remains in question. Turkmenistan has proven to be a difficult partner and may not have enough gas to meet its contractual obligations. In addition, funding for the pipeline continues to be an unresolved issue, and long-term security concerns remain in Afghanistan and Pakistan [115].

The United States and Turkmenistan cannot agree on democratic and economic reforms. The United States publicly advocates industrial privatization, market liberalization, and fiscal reform, as well as legal and regulatory reform to open the economy to foreign trade and investment, as the best way to achieve prosperity, true independence, and sovereignty for this country.

The United States is pursuing a policy of assisting Tajikistan in its economic and political development as Tajikistan continues to recover from the consequences of the civil war. Recently, the vector of the US aid efforts has gradually shifted from humanitarian aid and political reconciliation to efforts to achieve democratic and economic reforms. Relations between the United States and Tajikistan, as well as with other Central Asian countries, have expanded significantly since September 11, 2001. At present, the two countries have a broad relationship, cooperating in areas such as counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, and regional growth and stability. In light of the withdrawal of Russian border troops from the Tajik-Afghan border, the U.S. government is leading an international donor effort to strengthen the territorial integrity of Tajikistan, prevent the transit of drugs and materials or technologies related to weapons of mass destruction, and maintain a stable, peaceful Tajikistan to prevent the spread of influence and activities radical groups and terrorists.

The US continues to assist Tajikistan in its economic reforms and integration into the wider global market, such as its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Tajikistan, in turn, supports the US efforts in the war on terrorism and in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan [116].

The $36 million US government-funded bridge across the Pyanj River connects Sher Khan Bandar in Afghanistan to Nizhniy Pyanj in Tajikistan and transports more than 150 trucks or 1,000 vehicles daily. The bridge expands economic and commercial opportunities on both sides of the river [117].

At the same time, the US aid was not always used for its intended purpose. For example, US border security assistance to curb drug trafficking was subsequently deemed ineffective due to the revealed facts of complicity of the Tajik government in the smuggling trade [118].

At the same time, think tanks found financial support from non-governmental sources such as the George Soros Foundation, which expressed disagreement with the Trump Administration's «disdainful» approach to the idea of «exporting democracy» and continued to provide comprehensive assistance to opposition forces and democratic social movements in the CA countries [81].

5. The USA and Kazakhstan

Within the framework of many programs, joint activities of specialists and experts on US security in the military educational institutions of Kazakhstan are carried out. Also, military education programs are being developed in a Western format and opportunities for professional education of the military of the Republic of Kazakhstan are expanding in the following ways:

* training of the US military is organized to train the military personnel of Kazakhstan;
* the sending of representatives of the armed forces of Kazakhstan for training in the United States is being organized.

In the second case, the Kazakh military, one way or another, is immersed in direct observation of the manifestation of liberal, democratic values in the US armed forces, which, to a certain extent, is a factor of influence and a manifestation of the “soft power” policy.

The United States has interests in achieving stability in the Central Asian region and having support in the face of partner countries to counter Islamic extremism. The return of foreign fighters from Central Asia to their homeland after being expelled from Syria and Iraq poses a danger not only to the governments of the region but also to US interests [119]. Having a reliable security partner in a country like Kazakhstan makes it easier for the USA to solve this problem. In addition, future United States regional operations in Afghanistan or the Middle East may also require the resumption and expansion of direct military cooperation with Kazakhstan.

At the same time, in the United States itself, there are opponents of American investments in the Kazakh armed forces, who argue that *“... millions have already been spent that did not increase regional security and did not contribute to the advancement of US goals in the region”* [120]. Due to the ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, as well as increased attention to Russian interference in the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the increase in military assistance at the present time for a peaceful and stable Kazakhstan, in their opinion, does not make much sense.

In this aspect, it should be noted that in the new Strategy of the United States in Central Asia for 2019-2025 listed among the goals and priorities:

1. To support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian states, both individually and in the region as a whole.

2. To reduce terrorist threats in Central Asia.

3. To implement joint military initiatives, such as the Steppe Eagle exercises and the State Partnership Program, which should strengthen trust, interaction and regional security in Central Asia [121].

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan spent relatively little on modernizing its armed forces, relying instead on vast amounts of leftover Soviet equipment and military weapons systems [122].

During this volatile time, limited US aid was largely lost to corruption and non-transparent funding of the Kazakh military, and no significant defense reforms were implemented in Kazakhstan at that point in time. This situation changed after the events of September 11, 2001, when NATO and US forces invaded Afghanistan, and the US faced the issue of providing military logistics. Kazakhstan allowed NATO to use its airspace, which is part of the Northern Distribution Network, vital for the US logistics [122].

By 2010, the activity of the US military in Afghanistan coincided with the growth of military assistance sent to the Central Asian countries, with a significant amount addressed to Kazakhstan. With the increase in assistance, Kazakhstan began to implement many military reforms and received the so-called Individual Partnership Plan - IPAP (IPAP - Individual partnership Action Plan) from NATO. In 2010, aid amounted to US$649 million [122].

By 2014, due to a large reduction in the US military and a decrease in security assistance, the amount was reduced to $148 million [122]. In addition, as the United States withdrew troops from the region, Russia and China began to gradually reassert their dominance. With the decrease in the need for Kazakhstan's airspace, the strategic logistical importance of the country has decreased. Today, Kazakhstan does not contribute to any US military action, and the proximity of China and Russia makes long-term deployment of troops in the country unlikely.

Moreover, critics and opponents of the US defense spending in Kazakhstan argue that the country is too politically and militarily connected to the Russian Federation to ever become an efficient and effective partner of the US [123]. Kazakhstan's military ties with Russia remain quite strong, and this situation is unlikely to change much in the near future

Russia also remains the largest supplier of military equipment, weapons and training to Kazakhstan. More than 500 Kazakh cadets and officers receive annual training at Russian military schools and academies, and Russia maintains military installations on Kazakh soil, including missile ranges and the Baikonur Cosmodrome, where space launches take place. So, in 2020, the Russian side plans to launch about 18 launch vehicles at Baikonur [124].

In addition, Kazakhstan is an integral part of the Russian air defense system and in 2016 received new C-300 systems from the Russian Federation [125].

Kazakhstan, despite a period of some cooling of relations, after Russian actions related to Ukraine, is unlikely to be able to greatly distance itself from its closest ally and military partner in the person of Russia. Kazakhstan will most likely never join NATO, preferring to keep the IPAP while remaining within Russia's sphere of influence.

On this basis, the United States in recent years has focused its security cooperation efforts on affordable and achievable measures, namely on the professionalization of the armed forces of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan remains the closest partner of the United States in Central Asia, and strives to expand this partnership, while pragmatically finding a balance in terms of the amount of funding and the goals achieved at the same time.

Thus, the US external policy towards Kazakhstan in the field of security and military cooperation pursues specific goals and has clear guidelines for its implementation. The United States uses Kazakhstan's need to expand its geopolitical environment, having contact with the US and NATO, as a kind of counterbalance to the influence of Russia and China. Kazakhstan also feels the need for military expertise that the United States can provide.

In 2016, Kazakhstan funded the training under the Decree №1004 of the US National Defense Appropriations Act. This gave the US Department of Defense the right to train and equip foreign armed groups involved in the fight against international organized crime and drug trafficking. Training was organized for 450 Kazakhstani soldiers. One program was practiced by the US Navy Special Forces, two - by the US Army Special Forces. The representatives of the Pentagon are ready to actively participate in the training of the commanders of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan, mainly based on the Atlantic ideology, which can presumably contribute to the formation of a pro-American stratum in the officer and sergeant environment. Such assistance was already provided in 2012, when 125 servicemen of the Republic of Kazakhstan were trained. The briefing was conducted for special forces in the applicant countries for assistance by the special forces of the US Army. The practice of expanding the training of local military personnel in the specialized US educational institutions could be the implementation of various geopolitical tasks and business projects. The facts of training can be traced in the annual reports of the US State Department. In parallel, the Pentagon is working in the region, promoting its weapons and engineering equipment.

During the visit of the military delegation of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan, headed by the head of the National Defense University, Major General A. Ryspayev, which took place in Washington from October 30 to November 2, 2017, military colleges were introduced. Seminars were organized for Kazakhstani officers at the US National War College, the Eisenhower School, the National Strategic Research Institute and the College of Information and Cyberspace. Similar events have been organized before. In 2016, on the basis of the cadet corps of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan named after Sh. Ualikhanov, a study was carried out on the advanced methods of training instructor sergeants. The course consisted of 200 hours of theoretical and practical classes and was intended for sergeants of training centers and higher educational institutions of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The teaching process was carried out by six highly qualified instructors from the United States together with teachers from military universities in Kazakhstan [126].

In spring of 2017, during the meeting of the delegation of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan and the United States, the development of the Demining Center and the training center was agreed upon. The training of Kazakh peacekeepers took place within the framework of international cooperation between the defense departments of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United States. As part of the joint five-year plan for cooperation between military doctors for 2017-2022, the main military medical directorate of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan was the organizer with the assistance of the Department of International Cooperation, the Department of Military Cooperation of the US Embassy and the Defense Institute of Medical Operations of the US Department of Defense.

In summer of 2017, officers of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Phoenix, Arizona got acquainted with the recruitment system for reservists of the US Armed Forces and the National Guard. At the same time, issues of selection, conscription and attachment of personnel of reservists were discussed. Perhaps Kazakhstan is considering the prospects of adapting a variant of the US Army recruiting system for its state. The attention of the military personnel of the Republic of Kazakhstan was attracted by the reserve of the first stage, which is regularly engaged in combat training. It was held in classes and camps. The citizens in this category are paid a monetary allowance. They were assigned the next military ranks. Reservists registered in the second and third queues do not undergo compulsory combat training.

Today, Washington is interested in containing radical Islamism so that Central Asia does not become a haven for radical Islamic militants, which is in line with the stated foreign policy goals of the US administration, which include emphasizing security by fighting terrorists abroad and strengthening border protection and immigration control. Therefore, when providing security assistance, the United States should be aware that a serious problem for the region is not only and not so much terrorism as the spread of Islamic extremism. At the same time, Washington is fully aware of the fact that at present the extremist threat does not pose a particular danger, since the governments of the Central Asian states are still able to cope with it. At the same time, the penetration of radical organizations into Central Asia can become a serious threat to stability and security in the region, therefore, in the opinion of Washington, assistance to the Central Asian countries can even cope with such a threat as Islamic extremism.

In 2019, the US administration restored $1.7 million in military assistance to Kazakhstan to support export controls and border security, as well as to train the armed forces [127]. Recently, the United States has largely strengthened and expanded military-political cooperation with Kazakhstan. In this context, it should be noted that the five-year plan for military-technical cooperation, signed by both parties in Washington for the period 2018-2022, plays an important role here [128]. This fundamental document was aimed at reforming the Kazakh armed forces and their training according to NATO standards, conducting joint international peacekeeping exercises «Steppe Eagle», etc., as well as the formation of special forces not so much with the aim of preparing for participation in peacekeeping operations to create greater bilateral cooperation, how much to ensure the security of the Caspian oil fields.

In order to ensure regional stability in Central Asia, the United States does not give priority to an individual regional leader, but calls for a more active role for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which boils down to strengthening border security, especially with neighboring Afghanistan, combating drug trafficking, expanding trade and promotion of economic development. To solve these problems, in the opinion of Washington strategists, it is necessary to create tools for more effective response to crises within the organization itself. Therefore, in 2019 fin. The US has provided $6.5 million in OSCE assistance which also includes support for EU policies to promote democracy and human rights in the Central Asian states.

According to Washington, Central Asian energy resources can become a factor of stability and predictability in the global economy, ensuring the diversification of markets and transit routes for energy supplies and opening up new opportunities for the region itself. Today, the United States is also interested in creating a regional energy market in Central Asia linked to Afghanistan, Europe, South and East Asia, although Washington's participation is still limited to supporting the diversification of export routes.

The US believes engagement with the states of Central Asia as an important element of its strategy in the region and policy towards Afghanistan, the goal of which is *“to create a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan”.* In the opinion of the US administration, Central Asia has a significant economic potential, which can help Afghanistan integrate into the economy of the Central Asian region.

At present, the main task of Washington in the context of the Afghan problem is to ensure and maintain a leading position in this country, to remove Russia and China from it, and also to prevent the failure of the American mission here. For its part, Kazakhstan is also interested in both stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan and maintaining partnership relations with the United States, and the country's multi-vector foreign policy course contributes to this to a large extent. Thus, according to Washington strategists, the cooperation of the United States with the Central Asian countries in general and with Kazakhstan in particular can provide the United States with more opportunities to resolve this problem and provide them with a leading position. That is why today Washington is counting on Kazakhstan as the main strategic partner in the region, playing the role of a regional balancer of influence in the region of China and Russia. In addition, the entry of this country from January 1, 2017 into the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council strengthened the confidence of the US administration that on this platform Kazakhstan will pay special attention to resolving the situation in Afghanistan, taking into account the fact that this issue has also become for the United States, and for Kazakhstan, as well as for all countries of the region, one of the key ones. For Washington, however, the Afghan issue is more than that. It has long gone beyond the counter-terrorism issue, becoming a geopolitical issue.

Today, the importance for the US policy of the countries of Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular is connected, first of all, with the settlement of the Afghan issue: ensuring the transit of goods for the American contingent through the Northern Distribution Network, modified taking into account the Russian-American confrontation, which includes Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This makes transit through Central Asia safer than through Pakistan, which is beneficial for the US. In addition, Kazakhstan itself has specific economic benefits here. Thus, it seems that the United States will continue to strive to maximize the use of the transit capabilities of the Central Asian states, thereby co-opting them into the post-conflict development of Afghanistan.

The head of the US Central Command (CENTCOM), J. Votel, in his report at a hearing in the Committee on the Armed Forces of the House of Representatives of the US Congress following a visit to Uzbekistan in February 2018, stated that, *“despite the active opposition of Russia, China and Iran, Central Asian partners support the transit of cargo for US troops in Afghanistan and are ready to cooperate with them in areas where their interests coincide”* [129].

Given the unprecedented confrontation between Russia and the West that has been observed over the past few years, it seems that the goals and objectives facing Washington in this region will increase its interest in the countries of Central Asia. This can intensify the confrontation with Russia in the region due to not only political, but also economic interests that exist here. The latter are connected, first of all, with the energy resources of Central Asia in general, as well as with Kazakhstani oil in particular.

Thus, the US external policy in Kazakhstan is a vivid example of cooperation with a non-NATO country, despite criticism regarding the inefficiency and lack of prospects for directing resources to such activities. At the same time, the Russian actions towards the Ukraine and the constant threat of Islamic extremism provide sufficient reasons for the USA to continue its activities in Central Asia. One of the most stable countries in Central Asia, to continue a long-term partnership in the field of security, remains Kazakhstan, where, together with the United States, cooperation programs are being implemented, including for the professional training of the armed forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Central Asian countries, regardless of the political interests of all the above-mentioned countries, the struggle between superpowers over dominance in this region, the interests of other regional powers, have their own personal geopolitical and geostrategic interests and problems. One way or another, despite the policy of all superpowers, including the United States, the Central Asian countries themselves are interested in having bilateral relations with the main world political players, such as the United States, China and Russia, the EU and NATO, and with regional powers, such as India and Pakistan, Iran and Arab countries, Turkey and Japan, etc. Due to numerous economic and political problems, the countries of Central Asia are forced and obliged to cooperate not only with each other, but also with all developed economic powers. Relying mainly on Russia, the Central Asian states take advantage of the US proposals for their development, attracting investment and assistance, and ensuring security. But, as practice shows, for the sake of benefits, the CA countries do not deviate from their interests and, maneuvering between strong powers, also do not intend to play on the contradictions between them. The relations of the countries of Central Asia directed with Russia, as a long-standing political friend and trustee, is not a way out of a difficult situation.

Kazakhstan pursues a multi-vector policy in the military sphere and chooses equidistance from world centers of power. The situation in Central Asia and the CIS has a direct impact on the national security of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Participation in the EAEU does not prevent Kazakhstan from maintaining relations with such important partner countries as China or the member states of the European Union. China has been and remains an important partner of Kazakhstan. The country is on the verge of further expansion of cooperation with the EU countries. At the same time, the leadership of Kazakhstan, within the framework of multilateral initiatives, adheres to close ties with both Russia and the United States, which requires special attention in the deteriorating international situation. At the same time, thanks to the integration processes in the EAEU, Kazakhstan can strengthen the eastern and southern orientation of its foreign policy. Cooperation with Turkey, Iran and India may become more relevant. Understanding the essence and nature of the processes taking place in the international environment can contribute to the development of a foreign policy that meets the objectives, which will serve to ensure the national security of the country.

In general, based on a comparison of materials from various American analysts, up to 20 measures can be identified that are applied in practice by the United States against unfriendly states. Within the framework of *“containment”:*

1) physical elimination of the leadership;

2) revolutions and coups d’état;

3) promotion of various programs for the development of democracy or

4) support of the opposition;

5) democratic change of power;

6) war or

7) special operations;

8) regional coalition;

9) proxy war;

10) diplomatic methods;

11) economic and other sanctions;

12) separation.

Within the framework of *“involvement”:*

1) promoting the economic development of the country;

2) beneficial inclusion of the country in international trade;

3) creation of non-inclusive trade blocs;

4) bringing their «agents» to power;

5) inclusion of the country in the network of international organizations and treaties;

6) tourism development;

7) educational contacts;

8) the development of cultural ties, including in the field of mass so-called popular culture.

Thus, in the USA, for applied purposes, a variety of methods of influencing the situation in foreign countries are being developed, not limited only to military, diplomatic or economic measures. Americans, depending on the strength of another state, the degree of loyalty of the population to the ruling elite, the geopolitical situation, their own capabilities at a particular time and other factors, very flexibly shuffle and apply various policy methods. For example, if it is inappropriate to use military measures, the United States can achieve its goals through diplomatic negotiations; and, on the contrary, mention the possibility of using military measures in diplomatic negotiations. It is the possibility of Washington regularly shuffling approaches and rhetoric (as well as allies) that should be taken into account when analyzing American foreign policy, and especially when forecasting it [130].

## 3.2 Combination of various means of the US external policy towards the countries of Central Asia

In policy in Central Asia, the United States should not maintain a balance of power and coordinate actions with the main world powers, but exclude the emergence of such powerful actors as the USSR, the emergence of opposition or obstacles from one state or group of states.

In 1992, Senator Alan Cranston, in his report to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, stated that Central Asia is a remote region that is not ethnically connected to the United States, so American policy in the post-Soviet space should be oriented towards Russia, which decided to follow the democratic path of development. However, the United States has recognized that Central Asia cannot be ignored because it is rich in natural resources, and if it fails to build democracy, it could pose a threat to regional stability.

Central Asia, given its geopolitical position, size, huge human and natural resources, potential conflicts, religious and ethnic specifics, immediately attracted the attention of the United States as an introductory object. In this regard, in the first years of the post-Soviet era, the main positions of American foreign policy in relation to the region and its republics are being developed, institutional foundations are being created for the implementation of long-term political and economic reforms (for instance, the creation of governmental and non-governmental organizations in various spheres of the country's life).

The US Presidents George W. Bush, and later B. Clinton did not disregard the Central Asian republics in their public speeches at reports to Congress, in official correspondence, at various conferences on problems that arose in the post-Soviet Central Asian republics, at official meetings with the leaders of the Central Asian republics.

These documents dealt with the transition of the state system to democracy, work to strengthen the international security system, increase compliance with international law and the principles of international law, the provision of humanitarian assistance by the United States to the countries of Central Asia, economic growth and the development of free market institutions, and collective international efforts to provide technical support.

In addition, the United States tried to convince the Central Asian republics that their assistance was only aimed at building a banking and tax system that should fully contribute to improving the health of citizens and the environment, as well as establishing the rule of law and nuclear safety.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the struggle of the great powers for spheres of influence in the regions is being updated. Studying the strategies of leading countries allows you to better understand how to achieve their national interests and foreign policy ambitions.

Active political strategies in Central Asia are being developed by the United States, Russia and China. In addition, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and India continue their geopolitical interests here, which also underlines the importance of foreign policy leadership in Central Asia.

The political and economic situation in the region is characterized by a number of factors. This is, first of all, the problem of cross-border security associated with the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014, the problem of interethnic conflicts, different degrees of economic development of countries and political regimes of Central Asian countries. Recently, the issue of directions for the use of energy resources, which also carry a competitive potential, has become especially acute. The great powers should take into account this specificity of the region when; they develop a successful foreign policy strategy.

In order to understand the future dynamics of Central Asia, it is necessary to analyze the evolution of the US foreign policy strategy as a key player in the region. It is important to determine the stages of American foreign policy in Central Asia, the goals and ways of its implementation.

At one time, the US Ambassador to the Republic of Uzbekistan J. Kroll identified the following US priorities in Central Asia:

* expanding cooperation with the countries of Central Asia to support the efforts of the international coalition in the fight against extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan;
* development and diversification of the energy potential of the region;
* promoting political liberalization and respect for human rights in the countries of Central Asia;
* development of a market economy and promotion of economic reforms [131].

Obviously, Washington sought to create the most comfortable conditions for its activities in Central Asia. The complexity of implementing the US strategy in the region is largely due to the clash of interests of other major powers here. It is impossible to ignore the position of Russia and China in the region where these countries have historical cultural, economic and political ties. Therefore, the issue of economic and, first of all, energy cooperation between the United States and the countries of Central Asia prompted politicians to start implementing plans to bring oil and gas resources from the Caspian basin to world markets.

The United States looks better and stronger than everyone else when it begins to enjoy its unique capabilities and advantages. These advantages include the English language, proprietary industrial and scientific technologies, business and business skills, military technology, and Washington's unparalleled ability to connect the economies of Central Asia with international financial institutions and the opportunities offered by the global marketplace.

The concept of “soft power” as opposed to traditional methods of pressure (“hard power”) is becoming popular.

Since the mid-2010s of the 21st century Central Asia has been considered to be a region with large hydrocarbon reserves and a relatively large sales market. The neighbors of the countries of the Central Asian region attach great importance to the transit potential of these territories. The growing geostrategic influence of Central Asia is forcing various countries to promote their own interests in the region. The largest “potential projections” of soft power in Central Asia are Russia (for a long time the new states of the region were part of this country), Turkey (skillfully using the Turkish identity of the population of the region), Iran (seeking to increase its weight in the world, spreading its influence to Central Asia and , primarily Tajikistan), China (an economic giant projecting its power on this region) and the United States (a country with great opportunities and ambitions in different parts of the world, including the Central Asian region).

Central Asia is a very complex, controversial and ambiguous region. This is its uniqueness, problems, risks and opportunities. At the same time, this role is interpreted somewhat peculiarly: the region endowed with it appears not as an independent political player, but as a “battlefield” or “chessboard” of the leading world powers.

All key countries of the region entered the so-called transit of power. The main characteristics of this natural process are the change of leadership and attempts at constitutional changes aimed at redistributing power within the framework of the existing balance of power in the elites. An important condition for the stability of transit is a high degree of consolidation of the political elite. The challenge of this process is a weak degree of institutionalization with a high role of informal institutions. Clans still remain an important factor in the social organization and political life of the countries of Central Asia. In the context of the specific development of political institutions, which is characteristic of all countries in the region, informal clans are the spokesman for the interests of various strata of society at the state level.

There is a gradual exit to the public forefront of new generational groups. Today, new elites have formed in the Central Asian countries that do not have a Soviet identity and ideological convictions associated with it. In each of the countries of Central Asia, more than half of the population is made up of young people under 30 years of age who have received a secondary education within the framework of the national school system and who have not been directly influenced by common “Soviet” values. All of these changes will impact the next generation of Central Asians. The “Soviet identity” is obviously disappearing here, which is most noticeable for the older generation. In turn, I. Karimov's departure from the political scene, according to experts, marks the upcoming change of the entire layer of generations of post-Soviet politicians.

The renewal of the political elite began with the involvement of maturing youth. In Kazakhstan, young managers or the so-called “managers” are gradually coming to the fore. generation educated abroad (mainly the UK, Canada, the USA, Germany, France, etc.). Representatives of this group already occupy high positions in the government and regions of the republic, they predominate in the middle and lower levels of government.

The next decade will be rich in terms of the processes of formation of new identities. Large-scale migration of the population within Central Asia and beyond, urbanization and industrialization, new processes in the religious sphere will contribute to the formation of new communities and identities. Deformation of traditional social ties and roles established in conservative societies is expected.

The challenge facing the countries of the region is how to use different formats of cooperation so that they do not share it, but create opportunities for growth. Today, part of the countries of Central Asia - Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan - are already members of the Eurasian economic integration with the participation of Russia. Tajikistan, apparently, will soon also join the EAEU. At the same time, the region is an important element in China's strategic initiative to create the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB). The issue of conjugation of two actively developing regional projects, while dividing Central Asia into two camps (not all participants in the SREB are members of the EAEU), is under negotiation.

The revision by the European Union and the United States of their regional strategies is obvious. Since 2015, the EU has been trying to strengthen its position in Central Asia, which is also interested in using the region as a land bridge for trade between East and West. As part of the C5+1 dialogue platform, Washington is trying not to look at the development of the region only through the prism of its relations with the PRC and the Russian Federation, at least it does not openly declare this. This approach does not pose the problem of choosing an external orientation for the CAR countries, which also creates more opportunities for the US to cooperate.

Today's East-West divide is significantly different from the Cold War era, when the tacitly recognized “inviolable” geopolitical spheres of influence were demarcated, and the rest of the territories were not worth the risk of direct conflict for their sake. On the basis of which it is possible to predict the period 2017-2027. will also be very different from the first twenty-six years since the end of the Cold War, during which global players have managed to avoid serious controversy - primarily because Russia and China have reluctantly accepted the leadership of the West. In addition, one of the fault lines between the West, Russia and China will probably run through Central Asia.

The mechanisms of “cultural influence” are actively used in relation to Kazakhstan by a number of Western countries, where since 1993 the Kazakh youth have been trained under various programs, mainly within the framework of the « Bolashak « program. Thanks to this, Western countries contribute to the formation of the future Kazakh elite, facilitating the task of more fully integrating Kazakhstan into the orbit of their influence. The United States is also seeking to gain a foothold in the Central Asian education market by creating a number of universities (Kazakh-American University in Alma-Ata and the American Central Asian University in Bishkek).

According to the website of the American University of Central Asia, the institution was founded in 1993 and deliberately *“educates future leaders for democratic transformation in Central Asia.”.* In addition to American universities, there are many foundations in the area. For example, only in Tajikistan are organizations such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which distributes the US grants, and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) used by the United States to work with non-governmental organizations. There is a “division of labor” between these organizations, namely, if USAID distributes grants to US NGOs and provides financial assistance, including to the Government of the Republic, then NED's activities are focused on supporting the Tajik non-governmental sector - mainly local pro-Western public associations and the media.

The United States, having the necessary material resources, pays special attention to Central Asia. The specificity of American foreign policy is manifested in the use of state and non-state tools in the implementation of «cultural influence», the purpose of which, on the one hand, is to promote American values (perceived in Washington as universal), and on the other hand, to actively interact with opposition forces in the region, which On the other hand, the ideologization of the American educational policy in Central Asia and the geographical distance from Washington, naturally, limit the influence of the United States in the region .

The USA with two organizations and a number of foundations operating in the region, has focused on spreading democratic values. An attempt to promote one's own vision of civil-political processes creates difficulties for American influence in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (where interaction is built mainly at the official level). In Kyrgyzstan, the influence of American funds is maximum, where the spectrum of political forces looks diverse compared to other countries in the region. The US is slightly weaker in the Kazakh education market. In Tajikistan, the US has focused on criticizing the current government which implies a gradual curtailment of American cultural projects.

The United States has traditionally spread “missionary” values, positioning itself as a «mentor» in the region. Although this strategy is successful in Central Europe, it is limited to Central Asia, extending its influence to the urban environment, students and some intellectuals. At the same time, it is these social groups that form public opinion, and in the context of large-scale political transformations, the United States can increase its influence in the region.

Central Asia is acquiring key geopolitical importance in the modern world for a number of reasons, in particular, the availability of energy resources and the development of transport corridors. It is expected that the countries of Central Asia will more carefully look for possible niches in the international division of labor, which will be determined by the new configuration of trade and investment mega blocks. New risks will arise for projects to develop Eurasia's infrastructural connectivity.

With the decline in the role of natural resources, as well as in the case of the formation of closed blocks, the attractiveness of such projects will be in question. The states which so far remain outside the Western-centric formats, will be even more interested both in the development of infrastructure to increase connectivity with Europe and in the creation of alternative formats of macro-regional cooperation - for instance, “One Belt - One Road”.

The United States is ambivalent about China's growing presence in the region. In 2011, Washington launched the Silk Road Initiative (prior to China's official launch in 2013 of its joint construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt “One Belt, One Road” initiative, now called the «Belt and Road Initiative»), aimed at developing transport and communication infrastructure. The C5+1 initiative on the development of transport corridors, for example, is designed to “improve the competitiveness of the countries of Central Asia by improving their transport and logistics sectors” [132].

In turn, the US external policy, as conceived by Washington strategists, should be aimed at weakening Russia's influence by strengthening ties with both the Central Asian states and Azerbaijan, which is a key country with significant energy potential.

The US attempt to tie Central Asia to Afghanistan, providing for the creation of a transport and energy infrastructure between them, did not arouse much enthusiasm. This is explained both by the financial unwillingness of the United States to support such far-reaching plans, which so far do not promise an influx of large investments into the region, and by the lack of a common desire of the participating countries for regional economic integration. However, the main reason that this initiative of Washington did not receive further development on the part of the Central Asian countries correlates with their common opinion that the true intentions of Washington in the framework of the New Silk Road initiative are explained by the support of the United States of Afghanistan, and not at all by the interests of the states of Central Asia. Asia in the field of economy and security.

There is also a certain skepticism associated with the successful implementation of this project, not only in the context of ensuring security in the region. There is an understanding that the project will inevitably be influenced by such factors as the lack of infrastructure, high customs fees, as well as the fact that the effectiveness of the New Silk Road will be determined by existing economic interests in the region. There are serious concerns that this Washington initiative may conflict with Beijing's similar Belt and Road Initiative, which has significant and proven resources behind it - it is already backed by a $46 billion fund and the opportunity to receive funding from the newly created Asian infrastructure investment bank.

From the US point of view, the main goal is to ensure the sovereignty of the states of Central Asia. The American perception of the post-Soviet space is based on the conviction of the need to protect small and new states from the imperial, colonial and aggressive Russian hegemon. This emphasis on upholding the sovereignty of the countries of Central Asia was central to American politics in the early 1990s, after which it faded into the background, giving way to issues of economic development and regional integration. However, in 2014 it again came to the fore due to the Ukrainian crisis, the annexation of Crimea by Russia and its support for the resistance movement in the Donbass. Moscow's actions have once again restored relevance to the symbolic battlefield for the sovereignty of the post-Soviet states.

The C5+1 initiative is in many ways the only platform for the five Central Asian states to communicate with the United States. It represents US support for the region's independence from Moscow and Washington's hope for greater intra-regional cooperation to distance itself from Russia. Since the watershed year of 2014, the US policy makers, military and think tanks have pointed in particular to the risk of a “Crimean aria scenario” for the northern Kazakhstan.

Also add a new aspect of the US concern, namely the influence of the Russian media on the region. The United States has taken countermeasures and funded several media products, but of these only RFE/RL's online channel Current Time deserves mention.

There are a number of problematic issues associated with the perception by the United States of Russia as a threat to the sovereignty of the countries of Central Asia. Russia is accused of supporting the authoritarianism of local regimes and encouraging them to copy Russian legislation. Moscow is also condemned for supporting the resistance of the states in the region to pressure from the West, caused by their lack of respect for human rights and ineffective governance.

In the United States, there is still a widespread belief that a transition to democracy is a realistic option for the region. At the same time, the optimism of the early 1990s and narratives about the apparent and inevitable transition from authoritarianism to Western-style parliamentary democracy have given way to diplomatic statements about the time needed to “transition” from one system to another. The diversity of actors shaping US policy contributes to a certain imbalance in the promotion of democracy - it is lobbied in Congress, the White House and the State Department, while the Department of Defense takes a rather reserved position.

Within the US Department of State, “democracy promotion” programs are overseen by the Under Secretary of State for Civil Security, Democracy, and Human Rights and the Office of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, established in 1994 [133]. They coordinate «democracy promotion» work in specific countries and regions, participate in the preparation of the annual reports of the State Department on the state of human rights in selected countries and on US support for democracy and the protection of human rights, which report on the main directions Washington's activities in this area [134].

A number of other departments of the State Department are also involved in «promoting democracy». Thus, the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Division seeks to provide other countries with support in the field of anti-corruption, law enforcement and judicial reform, strengthening the rule of law and human rights, while actively interacting with local government agencies. The Department of State's Office of Educational and Cultural Affairs oversees various exchange programs, which often have “democracy promotion” elements.

The leading role in the development and implementation of the US policy in the field of “democratization” is played by the US Agency for International Development, subordinate to the State Department [134, р. 3-80].

The main tasks of AMP are:

* strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights;
* supporting genuine, competitive political processes and elections;
* accelerating the development of a politically active civil society;
* facilitating the development of government structures accountable to the population;
* the formation of a favorable political and socio-economic climate for the United States in foreign countries [135].

The close attention of the Americans to the region is explained, first of all, by its geostrategic position near Washington's priority “AfPak”, as well as significant reserves of oil, gas, uranium and other natural resources. By building up military and economic assistance to the Central Asian countries, the tasks of combating terrorism, extremism, organized crime and drug trafficking are being solved.

An important component of American policy in this area is the cultivation of the elites of the Central Asian countries that are convenient for Washington. For these purposes, a wide arsenal of political, diplomatic, military, economic and humanitarian instruments is used, state structures and/or non-state actors are involved. The United States is assisting in carrying out domestic political and economic reforms and is actively working with young people. The United States believes that all this is being done to improve the security and living standards of the population of the Central Asian states, but in reality, it often turns into attempts to pressure and interfere in the internal affairs of independent countries.

The United States is rapidly developing economic and investment cooperation with Kazakhstan. And analyzing trade and economic relations between the US and Kazakhstan, we can say with confidence that they are successfully developing in the widest range of areas.

The United States has focused the greatest attention in Kazakhstan on the extractive industry, mainly energy resources. Thus, in 2015, 65% of all accumulated investments were invested in the energy sector. The first company to enter the Kazakh market was Chevron. In 1992, at a meeting between the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev and US President George W. Bush Sr., agreement was signed on the creation of a joint company with Chevron and Kazakhstan, Tengizchevroil, which was granted maximum benefits and the right to develop the Tengiz oil and gas field.

A little earlier, in 1996, ExxonMobil bought a 25% stake in Tengizchevroil from Kazakhstan, and from the next year, production increased 1.5 times. In 1997, having bought an 18% stake, Chevron joined the consortium Karachaganak Petroleum Operating B.V», created for the development of the third large field in Kazakhstan Karachaganak. Thus, the three largest oil-producing American companies are involved in the development of all the largest oil and gas fields in Kazakhstan.

It is necessary to emphasize the great activity of American companies in the provision of services in the oil and gas industry of Kazakhstan. Thus, the large American company Halliburton has been operating in Kazakhstan since 1991 and is a contractor for all of the above consortiums, performing service work in the oil and gas industry. In 1998, the American company Baker founded a branch in Atyrau. Hughes Services International Inc. which performs technical work at the oil fields of Kashagan, Karachaganak, Tengiz.

In 2006, the American company Nalco Champion and the Kazakh company «Rauan» created a joint venture “Rauan Nalco” which operates in the production of chemicals for the oil and gas industry. In 2009, the joint company Weatherford - CER was established by the joint efforts of the American company Weatherford International and the Kazakh company “Caspian Energy Research”. This company provides laboratory services for the oil and gas industry in Kazakhstan. In the same year, the only service center in Central Asia was opened by the American company Flowserve, the largest supplier of pumps and valves for the oil and gas industry. In 2010, the world's leading supplier of technologies for the oil and gas industry, the American “Schlumberger”, founded a branch in Kazakhstan, at the moment the branch is represented in 7 cities of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In 2011, a joint venture “KPJV” was formed, consisting of the Kazakh Institute of Oil and Gas, “KazGiproNefteTrans Engineering” and the American engineering and construction company “Fluor” which has been working with Tengizchevroil since 1997, performing engineering and construction contracts.

Despite the fact that the most US business is concentrated in the oil and gas industry, there are representatives of American business in Kazakhstan in other industries as well. In 1993, together with oil companies, the American company “Philip Morris International”, having redeemed shares from JSC “Almaty Tobacco Factory”, formed a subsidiary company “Philip Morris Kazakhstan” which invested $468 million in the Kazakh economy in 2018.

Another representative of American business “AES Corporation” is the largest electricity producer in the world, came to Kazakhstan in 1996, having bought out the Ekibastuz GRES. In 1997, AES Corporation bought the Ust-Kamenogorsk HPP and the Sogrinsk HPP with a total capacity of 1.5 megawatts, and received a 20-year concession for the Ust-Kamenogorsk HPP and the Shulbinsk HPP. In the same year, the corporation bought out the Ust-Kamenogorsk and Semipalatinsk heating networks and the repair enterprises servicing them, and in 2002 acquired the Maikuben coal mine in the Pavlodar region, closing the entire chain «Production of raw materials - Production of heat and electricity - Energy distribution». AES Corporation has invested more than $400 million in the country's heat and power industry over twenty years, being the largest producer in Kazakhstan with a 30% market share.

In 2009, in Astana, Kazakhstan, a plant for the assembly of locomotives “Lokomotiv Kurastyru zauyty”, the main supplier of parts and scientific technologies was the American giant “General Electric”. Since 2012, the plant has switched from assembly to its own production, producing up to one hundred locomotives per year. The shares of the company were bought from Kazakhstan in 2013 by the Russian company TransMashHolding (50%), and in 2017 the second 50% of the shares were acquired by General Electric. The plant supplies products to the entire EAEU, to Azerbaijan and Ukraine. In addition, “General Electric” is a leader in dust and gas cleaning in the energy sector of Kazakhstan, supplying and servicing turbines at the stations of the three largest oil and gas fields. In 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Aktobe region and the General Electric to create the first nuclear medicine center in the Republic of Kazakhstan, and in 2018 a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the construction of the Badamsha wind park.

Other major US companies in Kazakhstan are Caterpillar Inc. in the construction industry; PepsiCo”, “The Coca - Cola Company”, “Amway” in the food industry; “The Procter & Gamble Company”, “Kimberly - Clark Corporation” in the production of consumer goods; “Citibank” in banking; “Deere & Company”, “Global Beef Consultants LLC” in the agricultural industry; “Morgan, Lewis & Bockius”, “Baker McKenzie”, “White & Case LLP” in the provision of legal services.

As can be seen, American business is well represented in Kazakhstan, which cannot be said about Kazakh business in the United States. But there are such precedents. Thus, in 2007, the Kazakh company KazAtomProm, in order to gain access to the missing technologies, bought out a 10% stake for $540 million from the American company Westinghouse, a manufacturer of nuclear reactors. And in 2013, KazAtomProm opened a branch in the United States to establish closer contacts with end users of uranium.

In 2004, the United States signed a framework Trade and Investment Agreement (TIFA) with five Central Asian countries, on the basis of which the Ministerial Council on Trade and Investment was created. The Council meets annually and discusses the problems that impede the increase in trade and investment in the region. However, the matter does not progress further than an exchange of opinions.

In 2015, Kazakhstan joined the WTO, where it submitted an application back in 1996. However, in order to join, Kazakhstan had to lower tariff rates for imported products until 2019 than in the EAEU, which provided access for American products to the territory of the EAEU through Kazakhstan.

Returning to the diplomatic tools, it is worth noting that since 2012 the United States and Kazakhstan began to work within the framework of the Commission on Strategic Partnership, where trade and investment agreements are also initiated. Another platform is the American-Kazakhstan Business Forum, which has been held annually in Nur-Sultan since 2015. It is attended by the US Embassy in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the US Trade Representative, large American companies and representatives of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The practice of meetings of the President of Kazakhstan with “captains of business” during his official visit to the United States continues. Thus, in 2015, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev, at a meeting with US business circles in Washington, signed 27 commercial documents worth $7 billion.

In 2019, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.-J. Tokayev, during his official trip to the United States, met with the heads of American companies “JPMorgan Chase & Co.”, “Tyson Fresh Meats”, “Valmont Industries”, “Plug’n’Play”, “500 Startups”, “Amazon web Services”, with whom the implementation of projects through financial institutions, in the field of electronic commerce and agriculture was discussed.

Thus, the following can be assumed:

1. The US will continue to increase its influence in the countries of Central Asia, despite all the obstacles and difficulties that arise in the implementation of its policy.
2. In the next few years, the Central Asian countries, despite the policy and interests of Russia and China and other regional powers in this region, will continue their cooperation with the United States and other highly developed Western countries on various economic, political, technical and other issues.
3. Since the Central Asian countries, one way or another, are dependent on economic and technical, and maybe geopolitical assistance from the United States and other Western countries, members of NATO and the EU, it is necessary and important for them to combine all efforts and forces to strengthen their economic and political, military and energy independence within the framework of various associations and unions, such as the SCO and the CSTO. And the Central Asian states also need to: increase economic cooperation for the development of the region, develop various joint projects and programs for the development of the region's economy, free movement of peoples living in the region, strengthen the southern borders of the region (especially the borders of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), and many other problems and tasks not to be dependent on the influence and assistance of developed economic powers.

The founder of the concept of “soft power” J. Nye, Jr. identifies two components of the resource base of the ‘soft power” of the modern USA:

1) the attractiveness of American culture and lifestyle (the number of immigrants accepted, the volume of television production per issue, the number of foreign students in the United States, the number of Americans among Nobel laureates);

2) American political ideology, which has support in many foreign countries, where democratic values in the Western sense are recognized (mobility, openness and dynamism of society, personal freedom, prestigious worldwide higher education, mass culture and sports, as well as world institutions in the economic and financial sphere – the WTO and the IMF. Indeed, the United States implements a policy of “soft power” in many areas, focusing on:

‒ cooperation in the field of education, science, technology and innovation;

‒ promotion of language, culture and democracy (in its Anglo-Saxon interpretation);

‒ implementation of public and public diplomacy programs;

‒ assistance to international development, etc.

J. Nye, Jr. and his colleagues, developing the general theory of force as a combination of “hard” and “soft power”, bringing their reasonable balance into an optimal "smart force", together with R. Armitage (Deputy Secretary of State of the United States in 2001-2005) in 2008 made a report at a hearing in the Senate Committee on International Affairs of the U.S. Congress with the initiative to legalize the “smart power” approach of the United States as an official external policy tool of a new type. Having received the support of congressmen, the new model of American supremacy and global dominance in the world began to be implemented, intending to concentrate efforts on five critical areas of the US external policy directions:

1) renewal of international unions and institutions;

2) increasing the role of development tools in the US external policy;

3) development of public diplomacy;

4) economic integration;

5) emphasis on technology and innovation, especially in energy and ecology [136] Who headed the American Foreign Ministry in 2009, H. Clinton translated this concept into the language of real politics and shifted the emphasis from “soft power” to “smart power”, which, in her opinion, has become the equivalent of a competent foreign policy that does not use the same set of tools to solve various problems. The main emphasis was placed on the development of key resources of the “smart power” of new generation information technologies, network resources, blogs and especially social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others). After all, it is with the help of such tools that the United States seeks to manage social processes in foreign countries, engage in geopolitical engineering, and carry out an information war against rivals in the international arena. So, in 2009, the US Department of Defense designated cyberspace as “a new sphere for conducting military operations, along with land, sea and air”, and in 2010, a Cyber Command was created there to protect American networks and organize attacks on the communications infrastructure of states competing with the US. The new public diplomacy, the main addressee of which is youth and students, is an important tool of the "smart power" of the United States, influencing foreign audiences through radio and television programs posted on the Internet, the dissemination of freely available literature about the United States in digital format, monitoring discussions in the blog space, creating personal pages of members of the U.S. government in various social networks, sending information via mobile devices, etc.

**Chapter 3 Conclusions**

In recent years, there has been an increase in US interest in the Central Asian region (CAR). This is evidenced both by the US National Security Strategy updated in 2017 and the new US Strategy for Central Asia in 2019-2025 published in February, as well as by the intensification of contacts between representatives of the administration and the leadership of the Central Asian countries. Moreover, Kazakhstan is of particular interest.

Attracted by its key strategic position and abundant fuel resources, the US sees Central Asia as an integral part of its global strategy. The collapse of the Soviet Union *“gave Washington the key to the region's political, military, and economic doors”.* Today, America is working on the gradual inclusion of the Central African Republic in its global strategy.

In the 1990s the main efforts of the United States were concentrated in relation to Central Asian states on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the reconstruction of the infrastructure of the Soviet military-industrial complex, their involvement in the NATO Partnership for Peace program in order to spread the culture and standards of the alliance, as well as establishing business contacts with oil and gas companies. At the same time, the United States did not show much activity, hoping that no one, primarily Russia, busy solving its own internal problems, would interfere with them.

Cooperation with the Central Asian countries, especially in the military sphere, entered a qualitatively new stage after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the start of the US and allied anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, when the Westerners needed a foothold for combat operations. Thus, the formation of a new US policy in Central Asia is also connected with concern about the threat of Islamic radicalism in the region. It came to the attention of the United States in the late 1990s with the emergence of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. This threat became the basis of the US attitude towards the region after 2001, when Central Asia began to be linked to the policy on Afghanistan. After 9/11, US troops entered Central Asia, making it one of the main fronts in the war on terror.

The US geopolitical strategy in Eurasia is aimed at maintaining the American presence in Central Asia and protecting growing economic interests. The US is penetrating Central Asia in three directions.

Firstly, politically, the process exacerbates relations between Russia and the countries of the region. The United States is forcing local states to adopt Western values and democratic ideology in an effort to make them part of the Western system.

Secondly, America is gradually building up its military presence in Central Asia, expanding its influence and role in ensuring the security of the region; by providing “help” to local states to break free from dependence on Russia for security.

Thirdly, Washington is using its economic power in the form of bailouts and direct investment to gain control of the largest enterprises in key industries; it is especially active in the extraction and transportation of natural resources.

There are a number of problematic issues associated with the perception by the United States of Russia as a threat to the sovereignty of the countries of Central Asia. Russia is accused of supporting the authoritarianism of local regimes. Moscow is also condemned for supporting the resistance of the states in the region to pressure from the West, caused by their lack of respect for human rights and ineffective governance. As a result, the states of Central Asia are gradually moving away from Russia. America's successful penetration of Central Asia has eclipsed NATO's eastward drive: Washington has become much more aware of what the Alliance wanted or planned to achieve. Strategically, this means that in the future Russia will feel pressure from both sides.

An analysis of American external policy directions in the CAR shows that since the collapse of the USSR, the position and influence of the United States has steadily increased in the region. Currently, this region occupies a special place in Washington's foreign policy. Given its importance to American national interests, this trend will continue, regardless of the arrival of a Democratic or Republican administration in the White House.

In terms of internal transformations in the states of Central Asia, American policy is aimed mainly at the transition of these countries to liberal democracy, or at least to better governance, as well as to a market economy and regional cooperation.

It was Kazakhstan that became the first Central Asian state to base its foreign policy on “multi-vector” allowed it to balance between various geopolitical forces in order to maintain its national independence. This made it possible to consider Kazakhstan as the most “neutral” country in the region, a country with a high level of trust.

Kazakhstan has managed to build pragmatic relations with other Central Asian states, which has strengthened its authority in the international arena. The country's multi-vector nature contributed to the solution of foreign policy tasks by improving relations with the West - the United States and the European Union, deepening ties with regional partners (China, Turkey, Iran), as well as participating in the implementation of various integration projects under the auspices of the Russian Federation.

At the same time, one of the important aspects of bilateral relations is military-political cooperation. In 2003, Kazakhstan was one of the first countries in the former Soviet Union to sign a five-year military cooperation plan with the US. The plan is aimed at the implementation of such tasks as the fight against international terrorism, the development of peace processes, increasing the combat capability of the air defense units of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan, improving the military infrastructure of the Caspian region, strengthening the naval forces, creating a military institute of foreign languages, etc.

Through the use of the US soft power, liberal and democratic values are conveyed to Kazakhstan, for example, through the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Military Academies and the Security of Research Institutions. Either through interactions with US military personnel and civilians during an exchange, or through US military institutions. There is evidence that countries that send their military to IMET programs in the US are much more likely to advance their democratic reforms, which is the direct goal of IMET.

Also, in the event of growing tensions between Russia and the United States, Kazakhstan may be assigned the role of a partner who could become an intermediary for rapprochement. In addition, Kazakhstan can become a party that could help prevent a situation of limited cooperation, as was observed in the case of Syria. In this case, the USA can get a supporter in the negotiations who has a cultural, historical and linguistic commonality with Russia.

# CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, a number of **conclusions** were made:

1. The evolution of the US external policy directions towards the post-Soviet space with periodization.

Since the collapse of the USSR, Washington has been active in the post-Soviet space, promoting the principles of supporting democracy, building an efficient market economy, promoting regional cooperation and integrating Central Asian countries into the world community. The US policy in the region was also aimed at promoting and ensuring: the economic interests of transnational oil and gas companies; security strategies to contain Russia and China; close relations with the elites of all countries in the region, who will convey the US position to the politicians who make the main decisions in Central Asia; the accession of unstable Afghanistan and Pakistan to politically stable Central Asia.

In the 1990s, the US State Department and other political institutions, with the support of numerous American universities and think tanks, invested heavily in developing the diplomatic experience of the new post-Soviet states.

However, during the 1990s, the post-Soviet states largely failed to democratize, and in some cases (Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan) even developed authoritarian regimes. Although Washington has not always responded to the abuses of various authoritarian regimes in the region, this broad development, combined with US involvement in other parts of the world, in particular the Middle East, led to a gradual waning of US interest in the region in the early 2000s. This gap, in turn, was to be gradually filled by the EU.

The importance of the CIS countries and, in particular, Central Asia (CA) for US foreign policy is determined by the geographical proximity of the CA countries to China, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, as well as India and Pakistan. The events of September 11, 2001 and the ensuing anti-terrorist operation allowed the United States to gain a foothold in the previously closed Central Asia and deploy military bases there.

From 2014 onwards, the US has been preoccupied with external crises (the Ukraine, Syria) and internal pressures (rising populism, as evidenced by the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit vote); the impact of small-state foreign policy in the post-Soviet space is not seen as such a priority on the United States agenda, and financial support has been correspondingly lower than in the 1990s. And the United States, at least rhetorically, has declared its commitment to helping other countries democratize and develop.

The justification for the USA and Russian attempts to influence the foreign policy of the post-Soviet states can be viewed through two interrelated prisms. Firstly, the region was at various points one of the key directions for expanding the civilizational models of Russia and the United States. Whether it is liberalism (for Western powers) or an emphasis on sovereignty or conservative values, as in the case of Russia, the post-Soviet states have found themselves at the center of a clash between different civilizational models.

The ideological aspects of their external policy reflect a hybrid international identity, which, firstly, was acquired by these states under the influence of a combination of Soviet, European, internationalist and conservative values.

Secondly, these states had to balance between the interests of the United States or Russia. Small statehood prompted the post-Soviet states to choose between the development of a multi-vector foreign policy or an almost complete orientation to one or another pole. The shift from one position to another, in the case of the Ukraine and Georgia, proved to be detrimental in the short term, as it ultimately provoked aggressive actions from Russia.

1. Means of the US Diplomacy: A Combination of “Soft” and “Hard” Power Policies.

The geopolitical meaning and functions of “soft power” are the same as those of “hard power”: de-sovereignization of states, denationalization and appropriation of their resources. But, unlike the latter, it is designed not to force, but to induce geopolitical competitors and rivals to accept the system of values and priorities of its owner, to serve his interests. The United States sees “soft power” as an effective means of conducting a geopolitical struggle between states; they actively use it to defeat or weaken their real and potential adversaries in the international arena.

The main tools of the “hard power” strategy are related to the development of conventional weapons, the improvement of nuclear countermeasures, the formation of a missile defense system, the creation of military bases in strategically significant parts of the world, the conduct of counter-terrorism and military operations, humanitarian interventions abroad, peace enforcement operations, the introduction of economic and diplomatic sanctions for political purposes. The strategy of “hard power” is focused on forcing counterparties to certain actions through direct pressure or blackmail.

The most important characteristic of “soft power” is its relatively more noticeable independence directly from the state and government of the country that has such power. “Hard power” is much more tied to public policy. Therefore, the authorities are relatively more difficult to manipulate the first and much easier - the second. As a result, the effect of the action of “soft power” - unlike, for example, economic sanctions or military action - turns out to be more amorphous, and it is more difficult to accurately plan it.

As a result of the effective use of soft power tools, an illusion of mutual interest, trust, respect, mutual understanding may arise and, on this basis, the creation of the ability of a given state to influence political and humanitarian processes in the world and in a particular country.

Mainstream media tend to reinforce dominant socio-cultural norms and values and influence key political decision making by the US authorities, which is also true when it comes to media in international relations and the US external policy, and especially when it comes to military coverage actions.

Political communications in the United States began to take into account the relationship between media exposure and support for (or opposition to) military intervention. Increasing attention from politicians and researchers in the last decade, the role of new media, incl. social networks (blog platforms, Facebook and Twitter), in the formation of public opinion in the field of international relations, international conflicts and public opinion. The power of social networks and other online tools has been recognized in their ability to organize collective action.

The cross-cultural study of the relationship between information and communication technologies (ICT) and political systems in the Islamic world is the best example of the use of innovative methods to assess the role of new and social media in international politics today. The spread of digital technologies is a necessary and sufficient precondition for transforming dictatorships into more democratic regimes.

New media and other technological innovations are prompting researchers and political scientists to rethink old paradigms in political communications regarding the media and international relations. For example, mobile satellite video technology and smartphones are enabling reporters to bypass official US media management strategies and include a wider range of sources that can now be used effectively over the Internet.

In the coming years, more attention needs to be paid to studying the transition of news content to the Internet, both for new and traditional media and media. Because this process affects the overall dynamics of the media. More accessible forms of international production and distribution, including by amateurs, will increase the amount of news available to a global audience, and officials (White House representatives) and politicians in the US will have to take into account this important factor.

1. Geopolitical approaches and economic instruments of the United States in relation to the countries of Central Asia.

The US geopolitical strategy in Eurasia is aimed at maintaining the American presence in Central Asia and protecting growing the US economic interests:

Firstly, politically, the process exacerbates relations between Russia and the countries of the region. The United States is trying to persuade local states to adopt Western values and democratic ideology in order to make them part of the Western system.

Secondly, America is gradually increasing its military presence in Central Asia, expanding its influence and role in ensuring the security of the region. Provides assistance to local states to reduce dependence on Russia in the field of security.

Thirdly, Washington is using its economic power in the form of bailouts and direct investment to gain control of major enterprises in key industries. This is especially evident in the extraction and transportation of natural resources.

The United States, initially involved in the implementation of its geopolitical and military interests, is currently considering the developing post-Soviet countries of Central Asia, rich in fuel and mineral resources, as an integral part of its global strategy. As a result of the US efforts, the states of Central Asia are gradually moving away from Russia. America's successful penetration of Central Asia has even outstripped NATO's move to the east. Washington, in fact, anticipated the plans and goals of the North Atlantic Alliance in this region. Strategically, this means that under the onslaught of the United States, the influence of Russia and China in the region will be leveled.

Among all five countries under consideration, Kazakhstan currently offers the best opportunity for the USA to pursue its geopolitical interests. Kazakhstan has the vision, resources and institutional capacity to play a stronger leadership role and help put Central Asia on a more positive trajectory. In its foreign and domestic policy, Kazakhstan has a number of important achievements, with prospects for the future.

1. Means of the US Influence on the Transformation of the Countries of Central Asia.

Despite the decline in the role of the post-Soviet space in the list of American foreign policy priorities, the United States continues to influence the domestic political processes in the countries of the former USSR, using administrative and financial resources for this. At the same time, Washington does not hide its interest in keeping controlled and loyal elites in power, which will ensure the implementation of the necessary reforms and the implementation of profitable business projects, in particular, the purchase of American military products and liquefied gas. Washington's special goal is to counteract Russia in the region, strengthen Moscow’s cooperation with the post-Soviet republics, separate the latter from Russia and reorient them towards the interests and values of the “collective West”

At the same time, as American officials and “democracy promotion” experts admit, despite the efforts and financial influences expended, progress in the democratization of the post-Soviet space remains slow. The governments of the republics often act by bureaucratic methods, limiting interaction with the US representatives. Representatives of civil society in this region are few in number and do not have opportunities for broad international interaction. Measures of a “democratic nature” must be approved by governments in advance. The mass media, which are almost completely controlled by the state, and the weak distribution of the Internet, where one could turn to alternative sources of information, limit the access of ordinary citizens to the events taking place in the country and abroad.

At present, the Western press is writing a lot about a new plan for military cooperation between the USA and Kazakhstan, aimed at reforming the armed forces (AF) of this Central Asian republic, transferring them to NATO standards. Indeed, at the beginning of July 2017 in Washington, Kazakhstan and the United States signed a new five-year military cooperation plan for 2018-2022.

In fact, the Americans are trying to oust Russia as Kazakhstan’s leading partner in the defense sphere, and the fight against terrorism is used as a pretext for deploying American military infrastructure near the borders of the Russian Federation.

The United States in relation to Kazakhstan in the field of security and military cooperation pursues specific goals and has clear guidelines for its implementation. The United States uses Kazakhstan's need to expand its geopolitical environment, having contact with the US and NATO, as a kind of counterbalance to the influence of Russia and China.

The USA also understands that Kazakhstan wants to diversify its armed forces and have some degree of independence from Russia. Through cooperation in the field of professionalization, the United States effectively solves its problems, using «soft power» to convey liberal, democratic values to Kazakhstan, thus influencing its attitude towards Western positions. Also, in the event of growing tensions between Russia and the United States, Kazakhstan may be assigned the role of a partner who could become an intermediary for rapprochement. In addition, Kazakhstan can become a party that could help prevent a situation of limited cooperation, as was observed in the case of Syria. In this case, the US can get a supporter in the negotiations who has a cultural, historical and linguistic commonality with Russia.

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