

## ҚАУІПСІЗДІКТІҢ ӨЗЕКТІ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ

ACTUAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO SECURITY

АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ

### KAZAKHSTAN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE REGIONAL FORUM OF SECURITY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN ASIAN NATIONS

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**Abstract.** The article highlights current issues of Kazakhstan's participation in the Regional Security Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The key areas of the Forum's activities at each stage of its functioning are considered. The main attention is paid to the peculiarities of the approaches of the member countries of the Association to the solution of regional security issues and the interaction of countries within the framework of the ARF.

**Key words:** ASEAN, ARF, security, regional forum, APR, regional cooperation, summit.

**Аннотация.** В статье освещаются актуальные вопросы участия Казахстана в Региональном Форуме безопасности Ассоциации стран Юго-Восточной Азии. Рассматриваются ключевые направления деятельности Форума на каждом этапе его функционирования. Основное внимание уделено особенностям подходов стран-участниц Ассоциации к решению вопросов региональной безопасности и взаимодействиям стран в рамках АРФ.

**Ключевые слова:** АСЕАН, АРФ, безопасность, региональный форум, АТР, региональное сотрудничество, саммит.

**Андатпа.** Мақалада Оңтүстік-Шығыс Азия елдері ассоциациясының Өңірлік қауіпсіздік форумына Қазақстанның қатысуы бойынша өзекті мәселелер қарастырылады. Форумның жұмыс істеуінің әрбір кезеңіндегі оның қызметінің негізгі бағыттары қаралады. Басты назар ЖТЖ шеңберінде өңірлік қауіпсіздік пен өзара іс-қимыл мәселелерін шешудегі Ассоциацияға мүше елдер тәсілдемесінің ерекшеліктеріне аударылған.

**Түйінді сөздер:** АСЕАН, АРФ, қауіпсіздік, аймақтық форумы, Азия-Тынық мұхит өңірі, өңірлік ынтымақтастық, саммит.

**JEL:** F5, F51, F55

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This article is devoted to the study of the activities of the Republic of Kazakhstan on accession to the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (hereinafter - the RFA, Forum), and also reveals the characteristics of the RFA in the field of politics and security in the region.

In the 21st century, the role of Asia, and wider than the Asia-Pacific region (APR), is growing and

acquiring extremely high relevance in the light of current trends in world political and economic processes. To date, we are witnessing a radical geopolitical shift in the epicenter of the interests of the leading powers towards Asia, a number of foreign policy concepts and strategies are becoming more relevant to the Asian vector of development. Rebalancing the interests of the world's leading powers in the direction of Asia and

the Asian institutions of cooperation clearly indicates the emergence of a new center of interstate and inter-organizational relations in the world - the Asian Pacific Region. According to the Head of our state N.A. Nazarbayev, "the keys to solving many problems of global security, including ensuring the stability of the European continent, are now hidden in Asia" [1, p.296], which focuses researchers' attention on studying the specifics of Asian modernization processes, approaches to ensuring security, efficiency of multilateral institutions.

Due to the high dynamics of the integration processes around the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN has become a basic structure of multilateral regional cooperation and plays a key role in the mechanisms of interaction in the Asian Pacific region. The ASEAN RFA, established in 1994, is a key informal mechanism for multilateral political dialogue.

RFA ASEAN is the only association in the Asian Pacific Region, which activities are aimed at discussing and resolving security issues. The study of the activities of the ARF allows us to disclose the process of establishing on a regular basis a multilateral dialogue in the field of politics and security in the region.

In 1994, the first meeting of the RFA was held in the capital of Thailand, Bangkok, with the participation of dialogue partners and observers - the foreign ministers of 6 ASEAN countries (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines), 3 observers in ASEAN (Vietnam, Laos, Papua New Guinea), 7 dialogue partners (Australia, EU, Canada, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, USA and Japan) and 2 advisory partners (PRC and Russia). To date, the number of members of the RFA is 27 countries.

The main objectives of the RFA are to strengthen constructive dialogue and develop policy and security advisory on issues of common interest and concern, as well as contribute to strengthening confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy in the Asian Pacific Region [178].

The negotiation process of the RFA has its own peculiarities. Over the years, this Forum is a mechanism through which the countries of the region compare and coordinate their positions, develop common approaches to solving security problems, develop concrete measures of confidence and the implementation of preventive diplomacy.

Thus, the RFA contributes significantly to the reduction of conflicts and has a stabilizing effect on complex processes in the region, not through the adoption of binding decisions, but through discussion and maintenance of a permanent negotiation process, contacts at the official level, rapprochement of positions and confidence

building. This became possible only thanks to the principles underlying the creation of the RFA. These features made the Forum a working mechanism, which acts positively on the situation in the the Asian Pacific Region.

Meanwhile, the effectiveness of the Forum as the most representative regional association of the the Asian Pacific Region provokes various expert assessments. The path that this Forum has taken in almost two decades can be noted as developing: the agenda is expanding, the number of working groups increased, and the volume of texts of documents issued within the Forum is increased as well. Also, the Forum has significantly succeeded in discussing such issues of regional security as non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, peacekeeping operations, combating terrorism, responding to emergencies and eliminating its consequences.

Thus, the activity of the Forum assumes three consecutive stages of development. The first is the implementation of confidence-building measures in the region, the second is preventive diplomacy and the third is the creation in the Asian Pacific Region of mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution. To date, measures have been taken to move from the first to the second stage.

The main activities of the RFA are countering terrorism and transnational crime, emergency response, non-proliferation and disarmament, and maritime security. For each of these four tracks, an intersessional meeting is held once a year under the co-chairmanship of ASEAN member countries.

However, the long-standing threats to regional security – the North Korea's nuclear program and disputes in the South China Sea - have not been resolved, despite the fact that they have been on the agenda each year.

The authority of this organization gives grounds to assert that the participation of our republic in the work of the RFA would allow Kazakhstan to take a direct part in the integration processes, as well as political, economic and cultural interaction with the countries of the whole region. The status of the RFA participant would provide Kazakhstan diplomacy with an additional platform for informal consultations with foreign ministers of Asian countries, with which we actually lack other mechanisms for bilateral dialogue (for example: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos and New Zealand). It is also important that the work of the RFA is covered by the leading world news agencies and national media, which would positively affect the international image of Kazakhstan.

It is also worth noting that in Asia this is not the only significant security structure. Attempts to establish an organization for security and

cooperation in Asia have been made several times in the past, but the feedback has not been found in the ruling circles of the countries of the continent. In the early 1990s, thanks to the initiatives of the Kazakh leadership, this idea acquired a new meaning. At the 47th session of the UN General Assembly in October 1992, the President of Kazakhstan in his speech spoke in favor of convening such an organization. It was assumed that the format of the organization would facilitate the negotiation processes on arms control, disarmament and confidence-building; creation of a mechanism for preventing conflicts, reducing the risk of their emergence and effective peaceful settlement. The Kazakhstan initiative was supported by many countries of the world and international organizations. The 2004 year was truly momentous in the history of the organization, at the ministerial meeting of the CICA member states in Almaty catalog of confidence building measures was adopted, as well as the rules of procedures of the CICA and the Regulations on the Secretariat.

It can be assumed that the further development of the CICA will be a prerequisite for the creation of a comprehensive security system in Asia.

In this context, the inclusion in the CICA process as a full participant in the ARF only would accelerate the achievement of the objectives of Kazakhstan's leadership in the CICA format.

With the entry of our republic into the Forum, there will be stable prospects for translating the idea of the Eurasian security belt OSCE-CICA-RFA into reality, as well as prospects for inter-regional cooperation in strengthening security between Central and South-East Asia.

In addition, the CICA and the RFA ASEAN have much in common. In particular, the goals and objectives of the two structures coincide. Its activities are focused on solving similar problems in such areas as combating terrorism, conflict prevention, environmental protection and interaction in the human dimension. Of particular importance for both structures is the military-political component of security, ASEAN began to function before the CICA and, accordingly, has considerable experience in implementing confidence-building measures. Of course, ASEAN's experience is taken into account in the activities of the Meeting. From the point of view of membership, these organizations are brought together by the fact that the member countries of the CICA are part of ASEAN. Therefore, there are objective prerequisites for CICA and ASEAN to interact more closely. And this, as mentioned above, will contribute to the maintenance of our country's initiatives to create sustainable prospects for translating the idea of the Eurasian security belt into reality, as well as the creation of

a new security model in the Asian space-the formation of a new Organization for Security and Development in Asia (OSDA), which will require Asian countries, on the one hand, to develop special approaches to ensure their involvement in global processes, and on the other hand, a high level of confidence building measures.

Undoubtedly, Kazakhstan's initiative to create such an organization in the Asian space as OSDA is relevant given the presence of many hidden geopolitical trends and contradictions. OSDA should become such a platform for negotiations and consultations in the field of Asian security and stability. This initiative is aimed at creating a single security space free from spheres of influence, where states are equal partners. Within the framework of the new organization, the states of Asia were offered to independently and jointly address the urgent interstate problems, primarily the resolution of existing conflicts. The novelty of the production is that it involves the rejection of spheres of influence, ensuring transparency in interstate relations, bearing in mind that the foreign policy of each participating state must be based on the principles of openness and meet collective security requirements.

The new organization should take into account the current dynamics of the development of the Asian Pacific countries, which takes place in the context of a new regionalism that encompasses much more areas of cooperation (economic development, environmental problems in the region) and is associated with the development of not only interstate cooperation but also non-state security factors. In short, the basis for OSDA has already been formed, but what will be the actual filling of the new "construction" and its practical actions - is still unknown. But it is already possible to note the rebellion of an increasing number of states against the unipolar world, the imposition of Western models of the security system, and the desire for integration on the principle if not a mental one but a similar geographic and political coordinate system.

In 2014 in Astana, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Diplomatic Missions established its own committee.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Ye. Idrisov stressed that the "new structure will promote the growth of interaction between Kazakhstan and the ASEAN countries, and the majority of them are members of the CICA process." Thus, the establishment of the ASEAN Committee in Astana is the vehicle for initiatives to strengthen security in the Asia-Pacific region.

Therefore, it is possible to predict the further development and significant progress of the Forum, both within the framework of the development and implementation of confidence-

building measures and various forms of interaction. The existing preconditions also allow us to hope for the Conference's transition in the future to qualitatively new levels of cooperation - preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. And Kazakhstan's accession to the RFA would also create favorable prerequisites for establishing a dialog format of the RFA + CICA.

Returning directly to the issue of ASEAN activities, it should be noted that in order to intensify cooperation with the ASEAN countries, in November 2013, the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Indonesia, A.Orazbai, was accredited as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to ASEAN. Kazakhstan is interested in using the experience and mechanisms of ASEAN's work in the process of strengthening and developing regional cooperation in Central Asia. It should be noted that at the initiative of the Singaporean party, since 2005, the RFA has introduced a mechanism for a "flexible moratorium" for the admission of new members, which operation has not been terminated to this day.

So, on July 24-30, 2005 in Vientiane (Laos), the RFA's Council of Foreign Ministers raised the question of the need to introduce a moratorium on the admission of new participants to the Forum. However, this proposal was not properly supported, and as a result, East Timor was admitted to the RFA. At the 13th meeting of the RFA in July 2006 in Kuala Lumpur, Bangladesh was elected to the Forum according to the existing practice for the admission of one new participant per year in order of priority according to the date of submission of applications for membership.

In general, despite a number of applications for obtaining a partner status in ASEAN, ASEAN residents consider it inadvisable to expand the system of dialogues. There is an interim moratorium on granting the status of a partner in dialogue with the Association to other states. So far, the decision has been made to focus on improving the mechanism of "post-ministerial conferences", in particular, in the "10 + 1" format (ASEAN dialogue with each individual partner).

On December 25, 2003, the foreign ministers of the member countries of RFA received a written appeal from the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan K. Tokayev regarding Kazakhstan's intention to join the RFA. To this letter, the answer of the consent to consider the application was received from the Foreign Ministers of the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar.

In 1998, the candidacy of Kazakhstan met with objection from some ASEAN countries and, therefore, was not proposed for consideration by all participants of the RFA. Objection to the

Kazakhstan's application came from Singapore and, possibly, from the Philippines and Thailand. In this regard, it should be noted that within ASEAN, there has always been a hidden division according to two principles - the level of partnership with the US and religion. Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand are non-Muslim countries and maintain close contact with the White House. In turn, the other two key participants - Malaysia and Indonesia - are Muslim countries and have always opposed the expansion of the US military presence in the region. Thus, when in 1998 Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta lobbied Kazakhstan's bid, the three countries mentioned seemed to regard this step as an attempt to expand the membership of the RFA at the expense of Muslim countries.

Currently, Kazakhstan's bid seems to meet less resistance from Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand due to the ongoing political dialogue between Kazakhstan and the United States, the positive image of Kazakhstan in the international arena, the leading position in the Central Asian region, and the dynamic development of relations with Singapore, Manila and Bangkok. Being the initiator of the CICA and the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Kazakhstan claims for positive consideration of the application.

The issue of promoting the application of the Republic of Kazakhstan for membership in the Forum was on the work of the embassies of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the member countries of the Forum with the constant coordination of the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Malaysia.

Work on the promotion of the application of the Republic of Kazakhstan on joining the RFA continues.

To date, despite the current "flexible moratorium" principled support of Kazakhstan's candidacy in case of reaching a consensus among the participating countries of the RFA expressed Brunei, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore (ASEAN), India, China, South Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Unclear, to date, remains position of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Papua - New Guinea and East Timor, which, to a certain extent is due to the absence in these countries of diplomatic missions of Kazakhstan, as well as Bangladesh, North Korea, Canada and the EU.

Meanwhile, it is believed that the region although remains the center of Asian integration, but has great potential regional differences. Uncontrolled military-political rivalry between the leading states may put the Republic of Kazakhstan before a choice in favor of one party or another.

In this regard, there is speculation about premature deepening of cooperation in the military-political level at this stage. Therefore the near future accession of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the ASEAN's Forum on security issues is questionable. However, the author considers it is important to continue to cooperate with the countries of Southeast Asia in the financial-economic and cultural-humanitarian sphere, both on a bilateral and multilateral basis, since the activation of economic cooperation with the countries of Southeast Asia occupies an important place in the foreign policy priorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan. A reflection of this - is the strengthening and diversification of bilateral vector interaction and cooperation. In addition, this region becomes the center of Asian integration. Due to the high dynamics of integration processes around the Association, the organization has become the basic structure of multilateral cooperation and plays a key role in the mechanisms of interaction in the Asia Pacific region.

Some experts believe that the ASEAN's Forum can not cope with the security function in the region. So, many of the goals and plans of the organization were agreed only on paper, but practical steps aimed at building an effective institutional framework to ensure security has not been taken. One reason for this issue is the lack of faith of the participants in the result of the actions taken by them and the lack of the necessary level of commitment produced by principles. Another reason - the contradiction between the powerful regional powers on key issues of cooperation, which greatly complicate the possibility of development of the organization in a given way. Among the reasons for such developments should be noted the lack of leadership in the ARF. A strong leader is an important element in the development of any organization, and in the case of the ARF's leader, ASEAN shouldered the burden of the leadership. However, its power and the political will for such a role is not actually enough, largely because of the lack of solidarity. The lack of unanimity in the ASEAN may have very negative consequences for the development of regional political integration, particularly in the framework of the ARF. And without that not very productive forum can regress in building trust. On the one hand, the ASEAN countries are interested in the development, expansion and strengthening of the ARF as a regional guarantor of security, but they are perhaps aware that it is not able to attract major regional players to productive dialogue.

The central position of ASEAN still meets the requirements of the majority of member states of the ARF, in view of the fact that if the leadership will take a great power, it is fraught with obvious

skew in the organization, it will lose the neutrality and inner balance. A possible way out could be a rotation of chairmanship of the Forum with the participation of all ARF countries, not only the ASEAN countries as it is now. In this regard, the possible accession of Kazakhstan to the ranks of ASEAN could inject "new blood" into the activities of the security institution in the Asia-Pacific region.

In general, Kazakhstan's desire to become a member of ARF can be explained due to the fact that on the basis of its operations in the future may be established workable in the international legal understanding regional security system, i.e, the new ASEAN. So far, unfortunately, we can say only the fact that, according to experts, Kazakhstan still continues to be "interested in strengthening cooperation with ASEAN, especially in the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum on security." Proof of this is, in particular, two things: the unresolved issue at the summit of the organization in 2011, the outcome of which is expected very eloquent statement Le Minh Lyuongo, ASEAN's Secretary-General voiced during a meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Indonesia A. Orazbayev about that "ASEAN Member States know Kazakhstan with huge economic potential," but on the membership of the Republic in the ARF only "expressed hope for successful cooperation in the future."

It is impossible not to note that the approaches of solving problems in the Asia-Pacific region and Central Asia, and Kazakhstan, being a part of it, cause the creation of a new structure based on the experience of Asian and post-Soviet security processes. Central Asian countries, as members of the SCO and the CICA, advocates for the development of confidence-building measures, expressed their common desire to join the ARF, which, as noted above, has a very skeptical approach on the expansion. However, the benefit of the region's entry says their contribution to the universal disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. So, Kazakhstan, gained independence, abandons nuclear warheads inherited from the Soviet army (Lisbon Protocol signed 22 on May 1992 the year). This decision is welcomed by the United States, Europe and the UN. Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was closed even earlier (1991). According to Nursultan Nazarbayev, the renunciation of nuclear weapons will provide the country a much more effective security and strengthened the position of the country in the international arena.

The foregoing factors are fully taken into consideration in Kazakhstan's foreign policy - indeed Asian nation, which has its own interests in this promising region. Located at the crossroads of transportation routes in Eurasia and having a significant economic potential, Kazakhstan can

count on a worthy place in Asia. Therefore, the strategic goal of Kazakhstan's diplomacy in the region is to strengthen the mutually beneficial relations with Asia-Pacific countries on a long term basis. Cooperation within the framework of the

ARF, certainly corresponds to the national interests of Kazakhstan, objectively strengthens its international position, contributes to the success of economic and political reforms in the country.

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