

Railway Network in Central Asia and Regional Cooperation

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Abstract: This article focuses on cooperation in the field of railways and transport in Central Asian countries, the formation of a legal framework for these relations, and the formation of a system for organizing and managing the process

Keywords: Central Asia, railways, "Soviet heritage," market economy, Kurgan-tepa - Kulob, Tashguzar-Kumkurgan, "Shar-Ust-Kamenogorsk"

INTRODUCTION

In the early years of independence, a number of problems arose in the possession of independent railway lines by Central Asian states. The main reason for this was the existence of railways that operated interconnectedly in the period before the collapse of the Soviet system. First of all, one of the main tasks was the construction of railways that would serve to connect all regions with the center. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, starting in 1993, work began on the construction of main railway lines to achieve railway independence by connecting the aforementioned territories with the center. In the early years of independence, a number of railway lines were built in our country. In 1993, the Nukus-Kumshungul railway was completed (O'zMA), in 1994, the Kumshungul-Chimboy and the 74-kilometer-long Nukus-Sultan-Uvaistog (Sultan-Uzidag) railway were completed, and in 1996, the Tuyamöyin-Turtkul railway was completed with a length of 60 kilometers, in 1995-2001, the Uchkuduk II-Sultan-Uvaistog railway was completed with a total length of 342 kilometers (Avaz, S. 2000), in 1995-2009, the Tashguzar-Kumkurgan railway was completed, between 1994 and 2001; a steel track with a total length of almost 700 kilometers was laid from Navoi to Nukus (O'zMA). After the launch of this railway, large volumes of necessary products were delivered to the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the Khorezm region. This railway reduced the distance by 450 kilometers and the travel time by 6-7 hours. After that, 19 million US dollars will be saved for the country's budget to travel to western regions ("O'zbekiston temir yo'llari AJ).

Since 1991, sovereign Kazakh railways have existed outside the country's borders, encompassing road sections that are administratively subordinate to neighboring, fraternal states. Kazakhstan's main meridional mainline railways connected the country's raw material base with the Russian Federation. At the

same time, the country's intra-provincial railway connections were weak. These aspects created certain problems in the full functioning of the transport of the young and new state, in particular, railways. First and foremost, reforms were initiated aimed at connecting remote areas of the country with industrial centers through railway tracks. From 1991 to 1995, railway lines such as "Aksu-Degelen," "Khromtau-Altyntsarín," "Shar-Ust-Kamenogorsk," "Uzen-Border with Turkmenistan," "Zhetigen-Korgas," "Zhezkazgan-Beynov," "Arkalik-Shubarkul" were built, which reduced the distance between the internal territories of Kazakhstan and partially reduced the dependence of the railway on the border states.

In March 1995, an agreement was signed between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and China on the implementation of mutual transit traffic through the territories of the contracting states. Unfortunately, the agreements stipulated in the treaty were not finalized, which led to additional consultations on the implementation of the agreement signed between the delegates of these countries in 1997 and 1998. However, the official opening of transit transportation was launched much later, on 15 May 2004, after urgent consultations with the authorities of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan (www.centrasia.ru).

On August 17, 1994, by Decree No. 403 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Tajik Railway Organization was established on the basis of the Dushanbe branch of the Central Asian Railway and the Leninobod zone of the Fergana branch. One of the important construction projects of the railway complex of the independent Republic of Tajikistan was the construction of the Kurgantepa-Kulyab railway line (People's newspaper). The Kurgantepa-Kulob railway line, consisting of the stations Sangtoda - Dangara -

Parkhar - Vose - Kulob, consisted of 149 kilometers, and the construction of the project began in March 1991. But due to the collapse of the Union, it was suspended. On September 21, 1993, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted Resolution No. 494 "On Measures to Accelerate the Construction of the Kurgantepa-Kulyab Railway Line." On September 7, 1998, the opening ceremony of the first line of the 54-kilometer Kurgantepa - Kulyab railway (Nazriev, D. and Sattarov, I. 1996), ending with the Yangi Sargason station in the Dangara region, took place. President Emomali Rahmon, who participated in the opening ceremony of the railway section, noted: "This road is the shortest international route in Asia and Europe, and, first of all, it will be a gateway connecting our country with China, Pakistan, India and other Asian countries, and major international ports (Rahmon, E. 1998)"

On September 1, 1999, the second final stage of the construction of the Dangara-Alimtay-Kurbanshakhid-Kulyab section was completed. It was commissioned in honor of the celebration of the 1100th anniversary of the founding of the Samanid state and on the eve of the next anniversary of Tajikistan's independence. The total length of the Kurgan-tepa-Kulyab railway is 132 kilometers, many structures and 3 large bridges have been built (Sharifzoda, A. and Kosimi, Z. 2014).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic, like other Central Asian republics, began to put the issue of transferring railways passing through its territory to the state's account on the agenda. As a result of these measures, official Bishkek received 2,500 freight cars, 450 passenger cars and 50 locomotives in the form of railway networks within the country. On April 29, 1992, five fraternal republics in Central Asia signed a protocol on coordinated activities on railway transport (*General studies Report, 2009*). This document, signed on cooperation, provided for the regulation of transportation on the railway network and the coordination of customs tariffs on railways crossing the border.

On 5 November 1992, a government decision was made to separate the Bishkek railway station from the Almaty railway line (Protocol of the governments, 1992). It can be said that from this day, bold steps have been taken to turn the railway of the Kyrgyz Republic into a separate entity. On January 15, 1993, the decision of the government

of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 1 was adopted, which determined the development of a regulation on the state of management of the Kyrgyz railway (Kyrgyz Railway, 2004). The document developed the main legal norms on the formation of the Kyrgyz Railway Organization, its structure, and financial support.

It is known that the development of any state or region is a process related to the level of development of landscape infrastructure. In this regard, the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program was developed in 1997 at the initiative and through the efforts of the Asian Development Bank. The goal of the program was to increase financial development indices from year to year through comprehensive economic cooperation, reliable, improving trade integration in the countries of the region. In addition to the Central Asian republics, countries such as Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China, Georgia, Mongolia, and Pakistan joined the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program. The Asian Development Bank, which is the direct coordinator of the project, has developed a project to create six regional transport corridors in order to develop mutual trade relations between these countries. The project for the systematic development of transport communications in Eurasia - the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program - was approved in 1996.

In 1997, initial work within the framework of the project began, and the first regional technical assistance packages for the development of interregional trade began to be provided to the Xinjiang Uyghur province of the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. In 2000, the CAREC Secretariat was established in the Asian Development Bank (ADB). In 2002, the first conference was held in Manila with the participation of ministers from CIS countries. At this conference, the institutional structures of the organization were improved, and the activities of coordinating committees were established. The Committee for Support of the Railway Transport Sector within the organization was formed in 2004. According to the official data of the founders of the project, since 2001, more than \$21 billion of investments have been attracted to improve the regional transport, trade and energy infrastructure in the republics of Central Asia. The main transport initiative of the CAREC program is

the construction of six transport corridors designed to connect Central Asian countries with Europe, China and East Asia. transport networks remain the largest sector of activity in the 17-year history of the CAREC program, accounting for more than 80% of the total investment of \$25 billion. Other regional cooperation programs, such as the Regional Cooperation and Integration Operational Plan of ADB for 2016-2020, the CAREC 2030 Strategy, the CAREC Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy for 2020 and the CAREC Railway Strategy for 2017-2030, aim to develop the railway networks in Central and West Asia. As of 2022, 76 transport projects are being implemented within the framework of CAREC projects based on grant funds and loans from donor organizations, as well as financial assistance in the form of technical assistance, and 32 projects have been fully completed.

CONCLUSION

the development of railway networks in Central Asia has been instrumental in bolstering national sovereignty, economic resilience, and regional connectivity. These efforts underline the importance of strategic infrastructure investment in shaping the future of emerging economies and fostering global economic integration.

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