

Delimitation of state border of independent Kazakhstan. Turkmenistan.

Relations between the two states are not overshadowed by insoluble contradictions or inveterate problems. The absence of large proven reserves of energy resources in the boundary area of the Caspian Sea makes the issue of delimitation of the sea secondary. Some friction between the two countries emerged in the late 1990s mostly on transit transportation. In the sphere of regional geopolitics interests of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are not antagonistic, and sometimes are even equal in respect of joining them anti-Uzbek installations.

In fact, there are no any interethnic problems in bilateral relations. Since 1923-1924 (bloody clashes between Kazakhs of Mangyshlak and Turkmen of Krasnovodsky districts) countries have not been facing any serious ethnic disagreement. The situation is also affected by the extreme paucity of relevant cross-border ethnic groups, and their obvious political indifference.

Since independence of two neighboring states the question of territorial or border disputes has not been arising. Both sides follow the provisions of multilateral CIS documents, establishing principle of inviolability of inter-republican borders defined in the Soviet era. Remained predominantly administrative and technical problems were passed to joint delimitation commission, established in June 1999. Its first meeting was held in Almaty in November 2000. The Treaty between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan on delimitation and the process of demarcation of the Kazakhstan-Turkmen State border was signed by the Heads of the States on July 5th, 2001 in Astana.

Negotiations on delimitation of the Kazakh-Turkmen State border were held in 2000-2001 in constructive and official way. The parties did not have suggestions on updating that line of border defined in 1972 between Kazakh SSR and Turkmen SSR.

Measures on demarcation of the joint border started in 2003. The countries started establishment of border marks on the border in 2005.

The parties completed placement of boundary pillars on the Kazakh-Turkmen border, except the area of junction of border of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Boundary line is designated on the ground by 278 boundary signs, including 134 on Kazakhstan's side and 144 on Turkmenistan's side.

Both countries do not have any plans to conduct further demarcation and engineering and technical border equipping, furthermore, Astana and Ashkhabad consider such measures to be pointless.

The only historical episode which could be a potential source of conflict on the territorial-border issue was the decision of the USSR government (1932) to give the salt fields of Kara-Bogaz-Gol gulf which were under the Kazakh jurisdiction to Turkmen Soviet Republic and to transfer the inter-republican border from southern side of the gulf to its northern part. This decision was taken on the basis plans of Turkmenistan's industrialization: in 1932 on its territory there were no any discovered reserves of natural resources and mirabilite extraction was considered as the only acceptable way to develop the industry in the republic. To date, the gulf is almost dry and represents an area of about 12 thousand square kilometers with huge deposits of salt. Nevertheless, Kazakh side never recalled this historic episode and, apparently, preparing to sign the interstate treaty on delimitation did not intend to raise this issue.

Karabekova Zh.