

Amitav Acharya: The issue of regional identity is becoming increasingly relevant for the states of Central Asia



This assessment was shared by the distinguished scholar Amitav Acharya in his address to the participants of the 8th Central Asian Expert Forum, held on August 14-15 in Tashkent.

Amitav Acharya is a professor at American University in Washington, a leading researcher in international relations and regionalism. Among his seminal works, widely recognized in the academic community and ranked among the most cited scholarly publications, are “Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia” and “The Once and Future World Order”. He is the founder of the Asian Political and International Studies Association and formerly served as president of the International Studies Association of the United States.

The scholar noted: “We are moving toward a world in which elements of global order will be designed and managed by different actors – civilizations, regions, and states – rather than by a single dominant power. This is the multiplex world order – diverse, multi-layered, and multi-actor”, he emphasized.

In his view, “unlike the multipolar model, where the leading role is played exclusively by great powers, the multiplex world order envisions an enhanced role for small states and developing regions”.

The scholar particularly emphasized that “global governance in the system of international relations will not disappear, but will become more diverse: it will increasingly involve regional organizations and groups of states”.

“Such a world order will be characterized by cultural, political, and economic diversity. Not all countries will follow the same path – for example, democracy or authoritarianism”, the researcher asserted.

In this context, he stated that “globalization will take a new form: it will no longer be dominated by the West and, on the contrary, will be increasingly shaped by the East – by China, India, and other Asian countries”.

Thus, according to Mr. Acharya, the multiplex world order opens up new opportunities for regions. It becomes less centralized, enabling regional actors to take an active part in shaping the global architecture.

Developing his idea further, the researcher noted that “everything will depend on the autonomy of regions – their ability to organize themselves independently, build cooperation, and manage contradictions”.

“The success of regions will be determined by the extent to which they can ensure internal cohesion, avoid internal conflicts, and maintain autonomy from the influence of external powers”, the political scientist asserted.

In this context, Mr. Acharya placed particular emphasis on the strong foundations for robust regionalism in Central Asia.

“The issue of regional identity is of particular relevance for the countries of the region”, the scholar stated. According to him, “it is not something inherently given – it cannot be defined solely by geographical proximity, cultural or linguistic similarities, or ethnic ties. That alone is not sufficient. Political and social will are also required to construct a region as a coherent, meaningful, and purposeful actor within the system of international relations”.

“And here, regional cooperation and regional institutions – what we call regionalism – play an important role”, Mr. Acharya concluded.

The CAEF was organized by the ISRS in partnership with the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy

for Central Asia, as well as the EU, OSCE, and Konrad Adenauer Foundation offices. The forum was attended by representatives of strategic institutions, research centers, and academic circles of the region's states. For the first time, the CAEF expert dialogue also welcomed leading experts from the EU, ASEAN, the Nordic Council, as well as researchers from Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Azerbaijan, and other countries.

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