

Название публикации:

Transboundary rivers in Central Asia: Cooperation and conflicts among countries

Авторы:

Zhiltsov, S.S.a, Zonn, I.S.b,c, Grishin, O.E.d, Egorov, V.G.e, Ruban, M.S.c

- a) Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russian Federation
- b) Engineering Research Production Center for Water Management, Land Reclamation and Ecology “Soyuzvodproject”, Moscow, Russian Federation
- c) S.Yu. Witte Moscow University, Moscow, Russian Federation
- d) Peoples’ Friendship University of Russian, Moscow, Russian Federation
- e) G.V. Plekhanov Russian Economic University, Moscow, Russian Federation

Наименование журнала:

Handbook of Environmental Chemistry

Volume 85, 2018, Pages 61-80

Аннотация:

Nowadays many scientists and specialists say that in the twenty-first century, not hydrocarbons but water will be the key issue for economic development, well-being, and quality of life. This fully applies to the Central Asian countries where historically the problems of water resources have been in the focus of attention as the main factors determining stability in all sectors of the economy. This is connected with their geographical location and specific natural conditions. The Central Asian states locate in a region with severe climate featuring very high temperatures, uneven spatial distribution of water resources, and their insufficiency as no mechanism for addressing water issues is available. By the early twenty-first century, all water supply reserves in the region have been practically exhausted. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the river basins in this region are transboundary and their watersheds do not coincide with the existing state borders. In addition, the economies of the Central Asian countries depend enormously on the use of transboundary water resources adding complexity to the water relations among these states which may be fraught with ethnic and social conflicts. The problem is aggravated by differing hydropower priorities of the countries located in the upper reaches of rivers, such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that control more than 80% of all freshwater supplies, and agricultural needs of the downstream countries – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. In other words, some of the countries need electricity, while others water for irrigated farming. This problem remains in the focus of attention due to a number of factors typical of the Central Asian region: the apparent political stability of local elites tested periodically by civil confrontations, “smoldering” military conflict in adjacent Afghanistan, high population growth rates, and the presence of ecological disaster zones – drying up of the Aral Sea, desertification, etc. In addition, water management in the Central Asian countries is being adapted to the new economic conditions. There are also the imbalance between the number of the population and the amount of available resources required to meet their vital needs (food, water, etc.), acceleration of climate change processes leading to the growing number of extreme weather conditions such as floods and droughts, and contamination of water sources resulting in deteriorated sanitary conditions. Fair and sustainable management of shared water resources requires legal regulation, the institutions that are capable to ensure the holistic approach to this

problem, and effective methods for solving it. Regardless of the surviving problems, the international experience has shown that in case of joint management of transboundary river basins, the interstate water conflicts usually tend to give way to cooperation. Depending on the emerging political situation, water problems can be a factor of rapprochement or disintegration of the Central Asian states. © Springer International Publishing AG 2018.

Ключевые слова:

Central Asia, Conflicts, Cooperation, Hydropower, Irrigation, Security, Transboundary rivers