It is well known that language is one of the main internal determinants of a person’s self-consciousness. The perception is conditioned precisely by language, which sets the vision and perception of the world. Hence it is not surprising that one of the areas of active confrontation between the West and Russia in recent decades has been the infringement of the Russian language in many post-Soviet republics, especially in the Baltic states, Ukraine, and the states of Central Asia.

And such tactics in an open fight against Russia and Russian influence are not even concealed by the West anymore. The “revelations” of a foreign agent of influence among USCENTCOM-sponsored and -funded media outlets such as “Caravanserai” actively used by the US in ideological propaganda, information warfare, and confrontation with Russia in Central Asian countries may serve as a vivid example of this. So, in one of its “revelations”, this “mouthpiece” began to promote the need for a rapid transition of the region to the Latin alphabet, without hiding the fact that the Latin alphabet is used in Washington plans primarily as a tool to drive a cultural wedge between Russia and the republics of Central Asia. From the point of view of the Pentagon and CIA-funded publication, such a step continues the policy of squeezing the Russian language from its historical habitat in Eurasia and compressing the
However, in recent decades, due to Washington’s apparent problems in capturing the minds and sentiments of Central Asians, the United States has decided to involve Turkey more actively in such a “language intervention.” It is a member of the countries of the NATO community, and as such it is obliged to conduct a policy beneficial to the United States. But Turkey also seeks to do so because of its aspirations to develop and consolidate strong military-political and economic relations with the Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan. As one of the ways of such offensive against Russia in the region, Washington considers more active involvement of Ankara in severing Russia’s ties with the countries of the region through the Council of Turkic-speaking States, established by Turkey. At the same time, Washington expects that the transition to the Latin alphabet will bring the desirable effect. It partially has already affected the whole population of the region, both the everyday life and “high spheres” - education, science, state, and corporate governance, and the effect of “Latinization” will be felt for decades, if not for centuries. And this effect, as some examples in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan show, will be negative for Russia. The main targets of Washington’s interest are Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Russia’s allies in the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEU), and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The reform of their alphabets should complete the “Latinization” of the entire region, after which only Iranian-speaking Tajikistan will continue to use the Cyrillic alphabet.

And so, on August 1, Uzbekistan officially switched to the Latin alphabet and got rid of the Cyrillic alphabet. This process of “Latinization” has significantly accelerated in Uzbekistan this summer. Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov tried to explain his move by saying, “The country should celebrate its 30th anniversary of independence in August with a new alphabet.” From August 1, all official documents, media materials, advertisements, announcements, and working papers must be in Latin script only.

At the same time, it should be recalled that the introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet in all Central Asian republics actively took place after the October Revolution in the USSR. The use of the Cyrillic alphabet made it possible to develop a standard information policy, solve illiteracy, and have a common cultural space.

But as soon as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, with the active participation of the United States, Turkey held a conference in Istanbul, where candidates from the Turkic-speaking territories in the CIS were forced to adopt a new, Turkish version of the alphabet in the Latin alphabet. Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan returned to the Latin script, and Turkmenistan followed the same path. There has been much talk in Kyrgyzstan about introducing the Latin alphabet for the last few years, although the authorities have not taken any active steps in this direction. Nevertheless, the process is also underway, and it still has the same orchestrator - Turkey - as in the early 1990s.

It is no secret that for the last ten years, Turkey has been increasingly aggressively encroaching on the territory previously undividedly ruled, first by the Russian Empire and then by the USSR. The main driver of this expansion has been Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, positioning himself as the leader of the Turkic-speaking world. He pursues an aggressive foreign policy in those regions where he has the tools to do so. Consequently, cultural and linguistic proximity with Central Asian and Caucasian states, primarily Azerbaijan, is actively used to build up its influence in the region. Both Ankara and Washington believe that the transition to the Latin alphabet will not only mean a kind of standard alphabet or common script with the leading countries of the world, especially Turkey but will also allow the region to move more actively out of Russia’s sphere of influence.

The creation of a common language space is only part of the actions of the Turkish leadership. The countries are increasingly getting closer, creating joint organizations, including, in particular, the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, Organization of the Eurasian Law Enforcement Agencies with Military Status (this organization includes non-Turkic Mongolia), Turkic Academy, the International Organization of Turkic Culture, TURKSOY, there are active attempts to create an “Army of Turan” under the auspices of Ankara.

In 2021, the Turkic-speaking alliance has already shown itself to the world militarily by defeating the Karabakh militia in a short time and putting Armenia on the brink of a military-political collapse.

But keep in mind that Central Asians need Russian not only to read Pushkin and Dostoevsky in the original. It is the language of international communication, the language of economy, the language of science.

Both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have a tremendous, expensive job to do, to translate millions of documents and
works of literature, and teach millions of people to use the new letters. The generational gap is already beginning to widen and will continue to widen. And this will be just one of the many changes caused by US and Turkish policies in the region.

Central Asia lies between Russia, Iran, and China, three countries that the US National Security Strategy considers America’s primary adversaries. To gradually take control of the region, the United States needs to wrest Central Asian states from Russia’s sphere of influence, not only in politics and economics but also in culture. Conversion of countries of Cyrillic tradition to Latin alphabet is a transfer of national writing from the sphere of one civilization to the sphere of another. The translation is artificial, voluntaristic, and dramatically disconnects the peoples of Central Asia from their cultural and historical roots. And Ankara, unfortunately, seeks to become an active promoter of this policy, despite its attempts to maintain its excellent relations with Russia in recent years. And it is mistaken when it counts on the impunity of such actions on the part of Moscow.

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