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CENTRAL ASIA  
AND  
THE CAUCASUS

Journal of Social and Political Studies

1 (55)  
2009

*CA&CC Press*<sup>®</sup>  
SWEDEN

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## FOUNDED AND PUBLISHED BY

INSTITUTE  
FOR CENTRAL ASIAN AND  
CAUCASIAN STUDIES

Registration number: 620720-0459  
State Administration for  
Patents and Registration of Sweden

INSTITUTE OF  
STRATEGIC STUDIES OF  
THE CAUCASUS

Registration number: M-770  
Ministry of Justice of  
Azerbaijan Republic

## PUBLISHING HOUSE

CA&CC Press®. SWEDEN

Registration number: 556699-5964

Journal registration number: 23 614  
State Administration for Patents and Registration of Sweden

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SWEDEN

WEB ADDRESS:  
<http://www.ca-c.org>

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**CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS**  
**Journal of Social and Political Studies**  
**No. 1(55), 2009**

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**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

*The Special Feature section in the next issue will discuss:*

- Security Issues in Central Eurasia
- Russia, the U.S., and the EU: Their Policy in Central Eurasia
- CIS, EurAsEC, GUAM, and BSECO Regional Organizations:  
Their Role in the Integration Processes in Central Eurasia

# THE "FIVE-DAY WAR" AND PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE CAUCASUS

## IT DOES NOT TAKE A PROPHET: WAR AND PEACE IN THE CAUCASUS

Lasha TCHANTOURIDZE

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**W**as the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, which resulted into a dismemberment of Georgia, predictable and avoidable? Supporters and ideological allies of the current Georgian government have insisted that those who criticize the alertness and behavior of the Saakashvili administration are looking at this issue with the full benefits of hindsight. To be fair, political scientists are much better at predicting the past than the future, and if we follow this logic, the future conflicts between the two neighbors in the Caucasus should be as "unpredictable" and "unexpected" as this one.

The international system behaves very much like a stochastic system, but it does exhibit certain regularities and carries certain conti-

nunity when it comes to behavior of its actors. Despite weaknesses and problems unleashed by the era of globalization, nation-states remain the main actors of the international system. Survival continues to be the main value for these actors, and the system guides the nation-states or those who act on their behalf to do their utmost to preserve this value for themselves, and stay as actors in the system. States compete, jostle, combine, and sometimes even collide in order to accumulate enough power and capabilities to provide for their survival. States collide and fight not because they have different values in the international system, but as carriers of the same set of values they come to different understandings and perspectives of how to defend these values

based on their individual geopolitical circumstances. Therefore, states may develop different, and often competing interests around the same issue, which occasionally throws them into violent conflicts.

Just prior to the extraordinary presidential election in Georgia on 5 January, 2008, a Georgian language daily *Resonansi (The Resonance)* printed my op-ed piece titled “The Issue of Division of Abkhazia, and Theories of the Ruling Party,” in which, among other things I warned that “If Saakashvili manages to stay in power, and the ruling party will do everything to keep its leader in the presidential seat, the most logical solution for the Abkhaz issue would be its division with Russia. It would be more beneficial for Georgia to keep the status of the autonomous republic undecided than to settle it by dividing [the province with Russia], as with a gradual weakening of Russia, Georgia should be able to recover the lost territories. However, in the event of its legal division with Russia, it would be almost impossible to recover the lost territory.”

Further I anticipated the province of Abkhazia to be divided by force between Russia and Georgia, and this to happen sometime before the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics: “...The Russians will try their best to act before Georgia does, and introduce troops to Abkhazia citing a prevention of aggression by Georgia. A provocation of sorts would be enough [for them] to argue that Geor-

gia is planning aggression, and intends to thwart the [Sochi] Olympic Games. After the deployment of the [Russian] troops [to Abkhazia], it would take decades to dislodge them from that territory.”

Saakashvili did win the elections in January 2008, supported in large by a shameful behavior of the OSCE delegation in the country.<sup>1</sup> In June 2008, he did propose secretly to Moscow to divide Abkhazia;<sup>2</sup> however, as the August events demonstrated, the Russians decided not to divide, but to keep the whole pie for themselves. The August escalation around Tskhinvali served as the pretext, but Abkhazia and its geopolitical setting is the biggest prize for the Russians, with which they will not easily part.

<sup>1</sup> OSCE German diplomat Dieter Boden proclaimed the presidential election process to be fair and democratic based long before the official results were released, and the opposition parties had their chance to complain about irregularities. With less than 3% of votes counted, Saakashvili was declared winner by the organizers of “independent” exit-polls, who subsequently received senior government positions (for more on this, see: L. Tchantouridze, “On the Results of the Special Presidential Elections in Georgia,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (49), 2008).

<sup>2</sup> On 27 June, 2008, the Russian daily *Kommersant* reported on the Georgian proposal to Russia regarding the division of Abkhazia. At that time, both Russian and Georgian sides strongly denied that such a proposal was made. However, in his televised address on 24 August, 2008, President Saakashvili acknowledged that he had written a letter to the Russian leadership proposing exactly that.

## Some Important Distinctions

Analysis of international politics is best done at three levels: systemic, the state, and individual.<sup>3</sup> The individual level deals with the make-up and character of top decision-makers, the state level has to do with the composition and nature of the state, and the systemic level looks at the structure of international relations, which basically boils down to the distribution of power among the states.<sup>4</sup> Systemic level of analysis is the most important and decisive; however, the two other levels should not be ignored, especially when it comes to a complicated region like the Caucasus.

In terms of the Georgia-Russia war of August 2008, some clarifications should be made, as understandably such events often provoke emotional tensions, and blame games. A fundamental distinction should be made between the states and their interests, and the interests of the regimes that

<sup>3</sup> First proposed by Kenneth Waltz in *Man, the State, and War*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1954.

<sup>4</sup> See: K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1979.



govern them. The ruling group often has parochial interests that do not correspond with the interests of the states they represent. In fact, the international system is shaped by the interactions among the ruling groups, most of them representing the nation-states and few others acting on behalf of important non-state actors, such as terror organizations, and state-like entities. Such interactions influence strategies of individual states as they seek survival, and accumulation of power.<sup>5</sup>

The standings of a country, and the position of its ruling class could be affected differently by an outcome of a military conflict. The aftermath of the August war seems to suggest that gains and losses have not been symmetric for Georgia and Russia, on the one hand, and their respective ruling groups, on the other. As no war could be fought in isolation from the greater international system, the outside powers involved in the Caucasus will undoubtedly take notes and adjust their strategies toward both Tbilisi and Moscow. The latter seems to be more immune to significant outside pressures in the region, at least in the short term.

Russia has not lost its great power status with the end of the Cold War. All that rhetoric about the United States remaining the world's only superpower, and even becoming an hyperpower of sorts, has been nothing but rhetoric. For all practical purposes, the Russian Federation and the United States have maintained a parity in nuclear armaments, and the Russian conventional armed forces, although somewhat outdated and rusty, cannot be dismissed as irrelevant for the status of great power either. The United States does have a technological edge when it comes to certain conventional equipment and capabilities; however, it is not clear at all how such an edge would translate into a whole new power status for the country. If a missile does its job, it does not make a huge difference whether it is smart or dumb. A technological edge is always a matter of a perspective, and one never knows its relevance unless tested in an actual battle.

Further, Russia remains a conglomerate of many nations—in essence, it is still an empire, despite its nicer name and an image of the republic. It houses many nations under rather authoritarian legal and political system, and borders many other nations with similar authoritarian past and present. As a great power, Russia emerged not very long ago in history—only after its autocrats opened the “windows” into the Baltic, and especially Black Seas in the 18th century, Russia became an European power to be reckoned with. Subsequently, its great power status has been closely tied, among other things, with its ability to freely access these two seas.

Another important feature, which makes Russia unique among the world's great powers, is its self-sufficiency in the matters of national defense. No other great power, including the United States, manufactures and produces everything needed for national defense domestically. Russia's ability to operate the sole autarkic defense infrastructure in the world is closely coupled with its vast crude oil reserves. However, the oil reserves may well be vast, but even with world's current diminished appetite for oil, the Russian reserves are not expected to last beyond mid 21st century.

Therefore, both the access to the Black Sea, and as much supply of crude as possible serve Russia's national interests, and seem to be in line with its long-term objectives as a great power. Moscow tackled both issues with the war in Georgia: it has increased its Black Sea coastline by annexing Abkhazia, and acquired a former submarine base in Ochamchira. The Putin administration also intended, but could not accomplish, closing down the Georgian route for oil (and future natural gas) exports from the Caspian basin; however, they remain militarily well-positioned to re-occupy Georgia within days, and if needed, they could meet this goal within days.

Legitimate or not, the Russian interests in the Caucasus could have been defended and furthered by other means than war, and dismemberment of Russia's smaller neighbor could have been avoided. The Russian government has chosen violent means to further its interests in the Caucasus because of

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<sup>5</sup> States seek military and economic power, as well as intellectual know-how, legitimacy, prestige, etc. in order to better position themselves in the international system, and ultimately, create better chances for their own survival.

permissive causes internationally, and the parochial interests of the Kremlin. Among the permissive causes of the August war should be mentioned the weakened and leaderless West, and European dependency on Russian oil and gas. The Russian leadership, on the other hand, needs benefits gained from a small victorious war, as they have successfully resorted to such means in the past in Chechnia and Daghestan. In order to stay in power indefinitely they will wage similar military campaigns in the future in the Caucasus and elsewhere.

## Georgia and Saakashvili after the August War

Georgia is a small country, and in terms of military strength, it is much inferior to Russia. However, it has been a minor military power for most of the last two thousand years, during which it faced a variety of empires and invaders: the Roman, the pagan Persian, the Muslim Arab, the Mongol, the Turk Seljuk, the Byzantine, the Muslim Persian, the Ottoman Turk, pre and post-revolutionary Russia, and now the Russian Federation. Georgia has persisted, fought, and eventually evicted the invading great powers from its part of the Caucasus—it could not have survived as a nation otherwise. The Russians are relative newcomers to the Caucasus, they have been there for about two hundred years. In comparison, the Arabs ruled Tbilisi for 300 years between the 8th and the 11th centuries, but after exhausting all its military options, they left in the end.

In order to beat more powerful enemies, Georgia historically had to make alliances with the enemies of its enemies, and such alliances almost always transcended religious boundaries. The circumstances are no different today, as Georgia is trying to enter NATO and get military assistance from the United States, as it is not able to counter alone its much more powerful rival, Russia. With the Russians being unwilling to make any concessions to Georgia in order to gain what it needs peacefully, Tbilisi has not other choice but to try and attract as much Western support as possible.

In the end, Georgians may indeed recover the provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia through military means, but they were neither ready nor equipped for the August war. It was not in the country's interest to wage a war against Russia at that juncture; however, Georgia's ruling class probably did expect certain gains. It is very likely that in June 2008 they did find an understanding with Russia on the division of Abkhazia, and in August Tbilisi miscalculated Moscow's true intentions, and lost the war and its two secessionist provinces as a result.

The Saakashvili administration would have benefited from a short war with Russia, had they managed to recover at least parts of the territory under separatist control. Even after the lost campaign their position seems to be solid by gaining moral and monetary support from the West. By controlling more than US 4.5 billion aid package collected by the donors,<sup>6</sup> the ruling group under Saakashvili remains the most influential body in the country.

Georgia itself has been weakened dramatically by the August war, and it is more vulnerable to Russian attacks than ever before since gaining independence in 1991. Its defense forces have been heavily damaged, and their morale shattered. The navy, the biggest concern for the Russians has been wiped out due to neglect and ignorance of the Georgian leadership. To make things even worse, after the war the Georgian navy has been put under the control of the Ministry of Interior.

In the long run, the strategic significance of the Caucasus, and specifically Georgia, as well as the issues with which this significance has been associated, are not likely to disappear. Oil and gas

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<sup>6</sup> Data is available at "Georgia Donors' Conference—22 October 2008," European Commission: External Relations, available at [[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/georgia/conference/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/georgia/conference/index_en.htm)].

will remain a crucial strategic resource for Russia, as well as other great powers, and Moscow will keep looking at the Black Sea as its own. At the same time, Georgia will try to recover the lost provinces, especially after Saakashvili, as the Abkhaz and South Ossetian issues are not going to vanish from Georgian politics, and strategic planning.

### *C o n c l u s i o n :* **Russia's Success and Its Future Options**

Russia's successes after the August war with Georgia are undeniable. Moscow's influence in the Caucasus has not been this strong since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It has increased its Black Sea possessions, and has positioned itself to fully control the access to the oil and gas rich Caspian Basin. Russia drew a red line for NATO's enlargement in the East. Weaknesses of the Western allies have been espoused, including double divisions among the Europeans, as well as between the "old Europe" and the United States. Washington was made to look frightened and confused, despite unambiguous accusations by Moscow of being a direct participant of war and an ally of Georgia.<sup>7</sup> The OSCE, once again, failed to anticipate anything, and it looked rather foolish and inadequate. The reputation of this organization was tarnished by the bizarre behavior of its senior military officer in Georgia.<sup>8</sup> Turkey has been silenced as Ankara seems to be more concerned with keeping non-littoral navies out of the Black Sea than with Russian expansionism. After West's pitiful display in August, Russia's options remain wide open in the Caucasus, as well as in Ukraine, which has been actively subverted by the Putin people for years. Other post-Soviet states have been sent a strong message, both those inside and outside NATO.

On the other hand, Russia has some serious structural weaknesses. Moscow's international behavior represents a classic example of its ruling class's desire for an insular empire. Historically, all empires have been unstable, precisely because no empire could exist without large doses of insularity and autarkic policies. In the age of globalization, keeping imperial desires alive will cost Moscow a lot more than ever before. Russia has no need to enter military alliances in order to provide for its defenses, yet, but this advantage will fade as its crude oil reserves start to diminish. Russia's imperial ambitions also will be checked from within, as desires for sovereignty, independence or various kinds of grievances are more likely to intensify with the increase of Moscow's authoritarian grip over the country. Anti-Moscow movements and processes within Russia will be boosted if the subsidies to its poor and potentially secessionist republics diminish, as they will have to if the imperial projects outside the Russian borders are to be funded.

However, Russia's structural weaknesses and its eventual demise as an imperial entity are still years off; meanwhile it has some options open in the Caucasus and around the Black Sea. In the short term, the Putin troupe may try to get rid of Saakashvili altogether, especially if they decide

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<sup>7</sup> During and after the August war, Prime Minister Putin, President Medvedev, and General Nogovitsyn accused the U.S. of instigating the war, supplying the Georgian armed forces with instructors, of having American mercenaries fighting against the Russian troops, re-arming the Georgian forces, and being a direct participant of conflict by airlifting the Georgian troops from Iraq back to Georgia.

<sup>8</sup> Ryan Grist, a former British captain, who was in charge on the ground when the fighting erupted between Russia and Georgia, initially squarely blamed Georgia, and his version of events was subsequently picked up by many Western government officials and representatives of the mass media. Eventually it was discovered that during the invasion, Grist disobeyed orders, argued with his boss, went AWOL to meet Russian and South Ossetian officials, after which he was fired by the OSCE (see: M. Champion, "British Monitor Complicates Georgian Blame Game," *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 December, 2008).

that nothing else could be gained from his erratic ways. To his successor Moscow will likely propose an anti-Western pact: sign a conditional deal to form a confederation with the “independent” Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and legally forfeit these territories if Tbilisi ever turns to the West. To keep the Black Sea firmly in its grip, Moscow will continue to try to detach Crimea from Ukraine, and as this peninsula cannot be sustained without supply lines from the mainland Ukraine, Russia’s secret services will concentrate on spending much money in Kiev, and eastern Ukraine may well become the next target of Russia’s military planners. Most importantly, Russia has drawn a “do not cross” line for the United States and whatever is left from its European allies—now it is Washington’s move, and Moscow will undoubtedly take cues from what is voiced during the first weeks of the new U.S. administration.

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## THE RUSSO-GEORGIAN FIVE-DAY WAR: THE PRICE TO BE PAID AND ITS UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

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*I cannot forecast to you the action of  
Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery  
inside an enigma.*

Winston Churchill

### Background to the Conflict

The dissolution of empires is frequently violent, and the breakup of the Soviet Union was no exception. The collapse of the U.S.S.R. was marked by ethnically-based violence, especially in the Southern Caucasus. Since its independence, Georgia has been the most vocally independent-minded country in the former Soviet Union. As Georgia’s ambitions to draw close to Europe and the transatlantic community became clearer, its relations with Russia deteriorated.

After the Rose Revolution relations between Georgia and Russia remain problematic due to Russia’s continuing political, economic and military support to separatist governments in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In recent years, Moscow granted the majority of Abkhaz and South Ossetians Russian citizenship and moved to establish close economic and bureaucratic ties with the two separatist repub-

lics, effectively enacting a creeping annexation of both territories. Use of Russian citizenship to create a “protected” population residing in a neighboring state to undermine its sovereignty is a slippery slope that is now leading to a redrawing of the former Soviet borders.

Russia’s recent attack on Georgia followed several years of provocative acts engineered in Moscow to destabilize Georgia. In the summer of 2006, tension increased between Tbilisi and Moscow. The Georgian government conducted a police operation to eliminate organized criminal groups operating in the Upper Kodori Valley region of Abkhazia, which restored the rule of law and the government’s authority over this portion of its sovereign territory. Georgia later arrested several Russian military intelligence officers it accused of conducting bombings in Gori. Moscow responded with a vengeance, closing Russia’s only road crossing with Georgia, suspending air and mail links, imposing embargoes against exports of Georgian wine, mineral water, and agricultural goods, and even rounding up people living in Russia (including school children) with ethnic Georgian names and deporting them.<sup>1</sup> At least two Georgians died during the deportation process.<sup>2</sup>

Russia’s provocations escalated in 2007. In March 2007, what is widely believed to be Russian attack helicopters launched an aerial assault, combined with artillery fire, on the Georgian Government’s administrative offices in Abkhazia’s Upper Kodori Valley. In August, Russian fighter jets violated Georgian airspace, then unsuccessfully launched a missile on a Georgian radar station. In September, a Russian lieutenant colonel and major who were in command of an Abkhaz unit were killed in a clash on the Abkhaz administrative border. Other small skirmishes erupted periodically throughout the fall.

This past year, although Moscow lifted some of the economic and transport embargoes, it further intensified the political pressure by taking a number of steps toward establishing administrative relations with both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In March 2008, Russia announced its unilateral withdrawal from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) sanctions on Abkhazia, thus removing the CIS prohibition on providing direct economic and military assistance. Then in April, following the NATO summit in Bucharest where NATO leaders declared that Georgia would one day be a member of the alliance, then President Putin issued instructions calling for closer official ties between Russian ministries and their counterparts in both of the disputed regions.

## Preparation for an Invasion

There were worrying indicators of the approaching conflict, especially after the buildup of Russian troops above their usual “peacekeeping” levels, multiple violations of Georgian airspace by Russian warplanes, Russia’s downing of Georgian unmanned surveillance drones, and a large-scale Russian military exercise close to the border that rehearsed a scenario similar to its Georgia invasion. Those exercises are just one link in a chain of incidents suggesting that Russia’s military action in Georgia was planned months in advance, awaiting only an appropriate pretext to act. Russia was clearly adding to tension in order to provoke a Georgian response.

Russia also increased military pressure as Russian officials and military personnel were seconded to serve in South Ossetia’s de-facto government in the positions of “prime minister,” “defense

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<sup>1</sup> See: “Georgia Files Case against Russia,” *BBC news*, 26 March, 2007, available at [<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6497459.stm>].

<sup>2</sup> See: “Georgian Dies in Moscow Pending Court Ruling on Deportation Case,” *Civil Georgia*, 4 December, 2006, available at [<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=14232&search=deportation>].

minister,” and “security minister.” On 20 April, Russian pressure took a more ominous turn when a Russian fighter jet shot down an unarmed Georgian unmanned aerial vehicle over Georgian airspace in Abkhazia. Russia also increased its military presence in Abkhazia without consulting with the Government of Georgia. In late April, Russia sent highly-trained airborne combat troops with howitzers to Abkhazia, ostensibly as part of its peacekeeping force. Then in May, Russia dispatched construction troops to Abkhazia to repair a railroad link within the conflict zone.

Meanwhile, Georgia was trying to develop a new road map for conflict resolution and was calling for the establishment of an international police presence in both regions, backed by the robust inclusion of the international community. Georgia stated that once such a force is in place, the government is ready to back its mandate by signing a comprehensive non-use of force pledge. However, Russia downplayed these Georgian openings and resisted intensified discussions, in one case even failing to show up for a mid-June meeting in Berlin sponsored by German government and that President Medvedev promised Russia would attend.

At the same time, Russia launched a large-scale military exercise, “Kavkaz-2008,” in 11 regions in the vicinity of the Georgian border. Approximately 8,000 army servicemen participated in the training, which engaged paratroopers, the Pskov Airborne division, and the Black Sea Fleet. 700 combat vehicles and 20 aircraft were activated and underwent readiness inspections. The Russian authorities referred to the exercise as a pre-planned counter-terrorism operation, but stated also that it aimed to prepare the troops for involvement in special peacekeeping operations due to the latest developments in the region.<sup>3</sup> On 7 August, while the Georgian government was trying to negotiate with the Ossetian side they received foreign intelligence reports about the movement of Russian troops toward the Roki tunnel, connecting North Ossetia with the South Ossetian conflict zone. Russian troops began open occupation of Georgia claiming that their aim was to protect Russian citizens and a war started. It should be noted that, according to some reports, Russian information sources began talking as early as 3 August about a war in South Ossetia and this information was spread even before war activities took place.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that Russia’s political and military leadership executed a pre-planned operation to forcibly and quickly change the status quo in Georgia.

## Russia’s Political Objectives in Georgia and Misuse of the Kosovo Case

The objectives of the Russian invasion in Georgia are far-reaching and included:

- (1) “A *cou*” to depose President Saakashvili and change the political regime in Georgia by installing a more pro-Russian leadership in Tbilisi;
- (2) Georgia’s renunciation of its ambition to join NATO and sending a strong message to other Russian “satellites” that should they insist on NATO membership it may end up in war or dismemberment;
- (3) infliction of the maximum damage on Georgia by destroying Georgia’s economy and infrastructure;

<sup>3</sup> See: S. Cornel, J. Popjanevski, N. Nillson, *Russia’s War in Georgia: Causes and Implications for Georgia and World*, 2008, p. 11, available at [<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/silkroadpapers/0808Georgia-PP.pdf>].

<sup>4</sup> See: A. Illarionov, *Russia Prepared War with Georgia*, Speech at Cato Institute Summer School, Ukraine, available at [[http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=8209&Itemid=65](http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=8209&Itemid=65)].

- (4) recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's sovereignty in order to legalize Russia's permanent military presence in Georgia, and
- (5) monopolization of the Caspian's energy supplies.

It is no secret that Russia is uncomfortable with Georgia's democratic nature and the West's close ties with a country in its "legitimate sphere of influence." So by controlling Georgia (in the event Russia achieves the above-mentioned aims), Russia will actually be able to cut off Central Asia and the Caspian's resources. This means that Russia would be able to isolate and cut off Azerbaijan and the Central Asian countries and significantly strengthen its energy monopoly over Europe with all the ensuing results. So it is all about a major shift in energy policy and a major shift in geopolitics based on this energy policy and Russia's energy monopoly.

In addition to that, during the Georgian invasion Moscow had two motives, the lesser of which was a tit-for-tat with respect to Kosovo. If Kosovo could be declared independent under Western sponsorship, then South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the two breakaway regions of Georgia, could be declared independent under Russian sponsorship. Any objections from the United States and Europe would simply confirm their hypocrisy. This was important for internal Russian political reasons, but the second motive was far more important.<sup>5</sup>

By citing the Kosovo precedent, Russia has tied itself in contradictory knots, as a recent commentary in the *Economist* magazine pointed out: "Russia itself is being incoherent by continuing to insist that Kosovo's independence from Serbia is still illegal."<sup>6</sup> Another even more audacious objective is that Moscow is trying to obtain a reversal of the Kosovo decision by displaying the absurdity of such micro-states that could endlessly disintegrate into smaller entities and by generating unease and displeasure among both its allies and competitors.<sup>7</sup>

It is noteworthy that while misusing the Kosovo case Russia fails to even mention the remarkable international effort that was at the heart of Kosovo's long road to independence. Unlike Kosovo, the Russians invaded Georgia in a fever of war enthusiasm; have refused to pull out and rejected attempts to internationalize the dispute; and have now recognized the enclaves' independence less than three weeks after the war began. In defense of its campaign in South Ossetia, Russia cites Western actions in Kosovo and Iraq. That is neat rhetoric from the Kremlin, but as justification for its assault on Georgia it is plainly cynical. Russia's claim to be "keeping the peace" in South Ossetia is belied by its army's penetration into undisputed Georgian territory and by credible allegations that it is facilitating atrocities by the Ossetian militia.

Moreover, the Russian government has not recognized Kosovo's independence. It has not recognized it even after it recognized Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence. Perhaps another of the biggest differences between Kosovo and South Ossetia as Olga Oliker, policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, stated was: "The Kosovo campaign was, fundamentally, about Kosovo, the conflict between Georgia and Russia is not about South Ossetia. It is just the pretext Russia has used to demonstrate its power to its neighbors and to the world."<sup>8</sup> In general, it is obvious that the Russian government has a double standard policy toward Georgia.

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<sup>5</sup> See: T. Friedman, "The Russo-Georgian War and the Balance of Power," *Stratfor Analysis*, 12 August, 2008, available at [[http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/russo\\_georgian\\_war\\_and\\_balance\\_power](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/russo_georgian_war_and_balance_power)].

<sup>6</sup> "South Ossetia is not Kosovo," *The Economist*, 28 August, 2008, available at [[http://www.economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=12009678](http://www.economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12009678)].

<sup>7</sup> See: S. Zurabishvili, "Moscow's Possible Motives in Recognizing Abkhazia, South Ossetia," *RFL*, 24 September, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> O. Oliker, "Kosovo and South Ossetia More Different than Similar," Rand commentary, available at [<http://www.rand.org/commentary/2008/08/25/RFERL.html>].

## War Damage to Georgia

The five-day clash between Russian and Georgian forces in August inflicted serious damage on Georgia's economy both in casualties and in terms of worsening the prospects for development and investment. The material damage has initially been estimated at some 1 billion dollars or about 8 percent of forecast 2008 GDP. The damage was mainly confined to military targets—bases, military airfields, anti-aircraft systems. There was no great damage to civilian targets, including industrial or agricultural assets, with the factory producing military aircraft in Tbilisi being a rare exception. Major communications routes have remained mostly intact. The only exception here was the blowing up by Russian soldiers of a railway bridge 40 kilometers east of Tbilisi on 16 August after the ceasefire. This disrupted rail communication between the eastern and western parts of the country, causing problems not only for Georgia, but also for Azerbaijan and Armenia, for which this railway is an important route. Oil and gas transport from Azerbaijan by rail and pipeline was stopped for fear of damage by military activity. The situation was further aggravated by the appearance of tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the need to provide them with supplies.

Along with the various human atrocities, such as the bombing and cleansing of civilian areas, the invaders looted and destroyed numerous historical sites, some of which were profoundly revered by the Georgians as sacred cornerstones of their national identity. This is especially true of the region around South Ossetia that served as a kind of cradle of early Georgian culture. The Georgian Ministry of Culture lists some 500 monuments and archeological sites now mostly under Russian occupation and out of sight.<sup>9</sup>

But probably the most painful loss for Georgia was the damage to its reputation as a safe venue for investment and a secure corridor for fuel transportation. As early as May, Standard and Poor's lowered its outlook for the sovereign credit rating of the government of Georgia from "positive" to "stable," explaining it by the deterioration in relations with Russia and the reinforcement of Russian forces in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. During the August war, the agency expressed concern that investors may become even more cautious in making investment decisions in Georgia.<sup>10</sup> In particular, the future of the EU's Nabucco gas pipeline project for supplying EU member states with gas from Azerbaijan and Central Asia may have been endangered.

Understanding this and addressing some other problems in post-war Georgia, the international response was quick. The United States has led international aid efforts by committing \$1.06 billion. The European Commission has already pledged €500 million and has asked the member states to contribute an equal amount. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will make \$750 million available to Georgia's Central Bank in the form of a Stand-By Arrangement. Even the Asian Development Bank, which is heavily influenced by China, contributed \$40 million. A series of NATO, EU, and other diplomatic meetings was underway.<sup>11</sup> All these efforts and assistance have given Georgia visibility and helped restore investor confidence.

As for Georgia's security, after the Russian aggression NATO launched the new NATO-Georgia Commission aimed at helping Georgia rebuild following Russia's August 2008 invasion and pre-

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<sup>9</sup> See: "What the Russians Left in Their Wake in Georgia," *The Wall Street Journal*, 24 September, 2008, available at [<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122220864672268787.html#articleTabs=article>].

<sup>10</sup> See: "Georgia: War Costs Includes Not Just Physical Damage," *Oxford Analytica*, 10 September, 2008, available at [<http://www.oxan.com/display.aspx?StoryDate=20080910&ProductCode=CISDB&StoryNumber=2&StoryType=DB>].

<sup>11</sup> See: D. Philips, "Post Conflict Georgia," *Policy Paper*, September 2008, available at [<http://www.acus.org/publication/post-conflict-georgia>].



pare for future NATO membership. Similar to a body established in 1997 to oversee NATO relations with Ukraine, the commission will support Georgia as it pursues its future path toward NATO membership pledged at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Rumania. It will also help Georgia assess the damage from the Russian incursion and restore essential services to communities in the conflict zone.

## Russia's Losses after the War

The Kremlin's brutal response, which included occupying large parts of Georgian territory outside South Ossetia and Abkhazia and then rapidly recognizing the independence of the separatist regions, has left Russia diplomatically isolated. Russia is suffering politically and economically in the aftermath of its military intervention into Georgia even though it may have won short-term gains; Moscow is now more isolated and less trusted than it was a year ago. Dozens of nations and international organizations, including its partners in both the G8 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, have spoken out against Moscow's attempts to forcibly redraw Europe's boundaries. So far, only one country, Nicaragua, has followed the Kremlin in recognizing Georgia's breakaway regions, which as U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated "is hardly a diplomatic triumph."<sup>12</sup>

Moscow's undisguised desire to try and chip off pieces of territory from neighboring states inevitably provoked a growth in mistrust toward Russia among those post-Soviet countries where separatist manifestations exist or are possible. It is fascinating in this respect to see the contrast in the days of Moscow's military victory between the silence of Russia's allies in the ex-Soviet space and the confrontational attitude of its opponents.

The invasion of Georgia has further deepened the complexity of diplomatic relations between the United States and Russia, a relationship whose future will likely see a mix of competition, conflict, and cooperation. Moreover, the Russia described by President Dmitry Medvedev during his 2008 election campaign — a Russia that aspires to become fully integrated into the international system and its institutions and seeks to use its newfound energy wealth to diversify its economy, rebuild infrastructure, open its political system to the rule of law, and confront a host of societal challenges — finds itself at risk. Russia's financial markets have lost nearly a third of their value — hundreds of billions of dollars in market capitalization. Investors have pulled an estimated \$20 billion out of the country. Meanwhile, the ruble has depreciated by nearly 10 percent, forcing the Russian Central Bank to spend billions to stop the slide.<sup>13</sup>

Another big loss for Russia is that it has also failed to stop Georgia's and Ukraine's integration into NATO. The result of the alliance's emergency meeting on 19 August gave little encouragement to Georgia's aspirations; but it is quite probable that in seeking an effective response to Moscow's Georgia challenge, NATO member states may agree to push for another round of enlargement of the alliance.<sup>14</sup> In fact it is likely that Moscow has mobilized international forces that will be difficult to contain. Russia's actions have cemented an alliance among the Baltic states, Poland, and Ukraine that is likely to develop further. This alliance will form a powerful force for action within the EU and NATO.

<sup>12</sup> "Medvedev Promises Georgia Enclaves Protection," *The New York Times*, 17 September, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> See: "Rubliu pozvoleny kursovyve slabosti," *Kommersant*, Russia's daily online, 8 September, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> See: I. Krastev, "Russia and the Georgia War: The Great-Power Trap," 31 August, 2008, available at [<http://www.opendemocracy.net>].

And in Western Europe and North America the war has helped many people to make up their minds about the nature of the regime in the Kremlin.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the most important part of the resolution adopted by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) on 2 October (PACE was the first international parliamentary body to openly talk about this topic.—*K.K.*) acknowledged instances of ethnic cleansing in the occupied territories of Georgia. The parliamentarians expressed concern about the “credible reports of acts of ethnic cleansing committed in ethnic Georgian villages in South Ossetia and the ‘buffer zone’ by irregular militia and gangs which the Russian troops failed to stop,” reads the report.<sup>16</sup> The Assembly also called on Russia to withdraw its recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and to give EU and OSCE monitors access to both territories. It said that these, as well as full implementation of the EU-brokered ceasefire agreement, were the “minimum conditions” for a meaningful dialog.

The Russian leaders have now realized that their country has come out of the war far more damaged than Georgia did. That is because it was outfought on the battlefield on which most modern wars are now decided, in the media. In traditional military terms, Russia won that war easily, rolling over the Georgian army and seizing territory. However, Russia’s defeat in the information war has cost it considerably. Its global strategic position has been undermined, its adversaries are more firmly united, its friends are not quite so friendly, and its economy has suffered. Russia’s military victory in the war in Georgia may thus ultimately inflict more damage on Russia’s strategic interests in the region than Russia’s political defeat in the brief era of the Color Revolutions.

## Consequences of the War

Russia’s invasion and wish to reestablish a 19th-century-style sphere of influence (in the former Soviet Union), using force if necessary, proved that Moscow had failed to accomplish its political objectives in the Southern Caucasus without recourse to the ultimate instrument of power, war. The war, moreover, destroyed much of what remained of Western illusions about Russia.<sup>17</sup>

Moscow’s pretext that it was “intervening” in Georgia to protect Russian “citizens” and “peacekeepers” in South Ossetia was simply false. It was soon revealed that the real goal of Russia’s military operation was to eliminate Georgia’s democratically elected government and to redraw Georgia’s borders. Moreover, in the midst of its attack in South Ossetia, Russia launched a concurrent military assault, in cooperation with Abkhazian separatist forces, on Georgian positions in the Upper Kodori Valley. By so doing, Russia violated every existing international agreement relating to Abkhazia, including the 1994 Moscow Agreement, as well as the letter and spirit of the documents and discussions associated with the U.N. Friends process, including numerous U.N. Security Council resolutions.

In practice and in strictly geopolitical terms, Russia’s recognition of the two territories may not change much in Georgia. Russia already had almost full control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia and dealt openly with its self-proclaimed presidents. Moscow’s recognition of Abkhazia’s and South

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<sup>15</sup> See: S.E. Cornell, “War in Georgia, Jitters All Around,” *Current History*, Vol. 107, No. 711, October 2008, p. 314.

<sup>16</sup> PACE Calls for Independent International Investigation into the War between Georgia and Russia, available at [<http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Press/StopPressView.asp?ID=2085>].

<sup>17</sup> See: S.E. Cornell, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

Ossetia's independence did nothing to resolve the task of defining the status of these territories, in fact it postponed it. Few countries will follow Russia's recognition.

However, what actually changed after 8 August is the real *world order*. After the August crisis Russia's emergence as an imperial power that is trying to revert to the Cold War tactics of intimidating its neighbors is an undeniable fact. This is especially true after Russian President Medvedev set forth the five principles of Russia's foreign policy, including its readiness to abide by international law and the claim of special interests in specific areas around the globe. Russia's claims of a "privileged" sphere of influence within the boundaries of the former Soviet Union, along with the declaration of the right to intervene on behalf of Russian citizens outside its borders, have drawn expressions of confusion, dismay, and outright rejection in international society. Many experts believe that this move by Russia may lead to new *world disorder*.

After Russia's aggression there are a few important and far-reaching results that must be taken into account by the international community. The first thing at stake after the conflict is the fundamental principle of the inviolability of borders. This is a fundamental principle of European and world security that is directly related to the Helsinki Final Act which clearly states that there should be no change of borders in Europe by use of force and that any change of borders may only be accomplished through negotiations.

So the forceful change of borders the world witnessed during the large-scale military invasion of Georgia, followed by recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence, is a real threat to international security. And recognition of these states' independence, which is clearly a change of borders based on the fact of occupation and invasion, is an obvious infringement of this principle. If today we all allow this precedent to take place and if Georgia's borders can be changed by the use of force, which has obviously happened, the question urgently arises of how this concept will develop in the future and who might be the next victim? Because if something like it is allowed once, it is like opening Pandora's Box and no one knows where it will stop.

Another fundamental issue at stake here is human rights. What happened in South Ossetia showed and confirmed instances of ethnic cleansing and large-scale violence against Georgian villages and the Georgian population in South Ossetia. That was partly conducted by Russian military forces; mostly it was done by paramilitaries, irregulars, and so-called militias acting in cooperation with the Russians. And the fact that it was not conducted physically by regular Russian troops does not remove the responsibility from Russia because, according to international law, the force that temporarily occupies part of another country's territory is responsible for protecting law and order and protecting the lives and human rights of the people on the territory it occupies. In addition to us, a number of international organizations confirming and providing evidence of the gross violation of human rights also have thousands of eyewitnesses talking about the ethnic cleansing conducted in the Georgian villages of South Ossetia.

Russia's actions in Georgia also contradict a series of U.N. Security Council resolutions which explicitly recognize Georgia's territorial integrity, including UNSCR 1080, which was passed as recently as April 2008 with Russia's consent.<sup>18</sup> The Kremlin's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia may also have unpredictable consequences for Russia's Northern Caucasus. Russia has bolstered separatism in Georgia but crushed it brutally in Chechnia. Chechnia may be too exhausted to fight another war with Russia at present, but in ten years' time the question of Chechnia's independence will arise again. In the future, after Russia's possible destabilization, Georgia may retaliate by recognizing any potential Russian separatist republic, which might be an invitation to "Balkanize" Russia.

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<sup>18</sup> See: U.N. Security Council Resolution 1808 (2008), available at [[http://www.unomig.org/data/file/973/080415\\_SC\\_resolution\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unomig.org/data/file/973/080415_SC_resolution_eng.pdf)].

It is very clear that Russia has not achieved its objectives. Georgia's juvenile democracy is standing. It is thriving. It is receiving extraordinary international support. Russia's invasion of the country resulted in the absolute alienation of the Georgian population from Russia and, according to sober judgments, it will require enormous efforts from the next few generations to repair this damage. Moreover, after the Russian invasion Georgia was forced to leave the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which was the last post-Soviet structure it was associated with. Thus, by forcing Georgia out of the CIS, Russia lost its legal levers and influence over Georgia exacerbated by suspending the diplomatic links between the two countries.

Sovereignty is the key concept underlying the existing international system, bringing with it the legal and political rights to decide all matters within the boundaries of a state and to be free from external interference in domestic affairs. Inherent in this definition are freedom from the use of force and respect for territorial integrity. This concept has been at the heart of the evolving international system since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. However, Moscow's recognition of Georgia's separatist entities as independent is surely a challenge to the Westphalian principles and may be a prelude to their incorporation, sooner or later, into the Russian Federation, which in turn might set a very dangerous precedent in today's international system.

### *C o n c l u s i o n*

Russia's leaders have made an unforgivable mistake that could lead to further escalation of tension in the Caucasus and the world in general. The "independence" of Abkhazia and South Ossetia will not be recognized by anyone other than Russia and, possibly, two or three marginal dictatorial regimes. Thus, the Abkhaz and South Ossetian people are doomed to many years of miserable life without a real international legal status. After many years of isolation, they will probably have to return to negotiations about reunifying with Georgia, as happened with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which was not recognized by anyone other than Turkey.

Moreover, this conflict has set a very hazardous precedent for the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation itself, which could foment its disintegration in the near future. By recognizing the independence of its "own citizens" (as Russia claims) in the two Georgian enclaves, Russia, for the first time in its imperial history, is setting a precedent by granting independence to its passport holders. As world history shows such events never go unnoticed and one does not need to be fortune-teller to claim that this precedent may lead to the "Balkanization" of Russia's multiethnic regions starting with Tatarstan and ending with the Northern Caucasus. Henceforth it will be a difficult dilemma for any government in Russia to convince its own citizens that Tatarstan or other republics like Ingushetia cannot be allowed to become independent states.

Russia's rulers have shown their real face, shown that they themselves do not in fact respect international law, including their own obligations (in particular, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1808 of 15 April, 2008, in which Russia once again confirmed its recognition of Georgia's territorial integrity), using criticism of the war in Iraq or the West's recognition of Kosovo only as a pretext for carrying out anti-Western foreign policy. As a result of its actions, Russia's leadership has lost the moral basis for criticizing the actions of other nations that have violated international law. By justifying its assault on Georgia in August, Russia has attempted to echo NATO's military campaign to halt the systematic ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Albanians with its own campaign based on charges of the atrocities committed by Georgian forces — charges now shown to be without foundation.

After the military aggression against Georgia the international community is witnessing a sharp deterioration in Russia's international position. As a result Russia has finally lost the image of "peace-keeper" and facilitator and will probably never be allowed to act in this position. As Joseph Nye of

Harvard's Kennedy School of Government said, "by humiliating the Georgians, they (the Russians) raised widespread fears and were unable to generate diplomatic backing."<sup>19</sup> This military operation has imposed a serious price on Russia in terms of its standing in the world.

A further worrisome implication of this war is that after its military adventure in Georgia the Russian leadership wants to convince the world that it defeated not only Georgia but also the U.S. and the West in general. It is using U.S. policy as a threat to justify its deeds in Georgia, as was the case during the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and Hungary during the Cold War. Russia must decide how it wants to define its future relations with the international community. Russia's attempts to cite Kosovo as a precedent for its military actions in Georgia are both misleading and unsupported by even a cursory examination of the facts.

Any attempt by Russia to install a pro-Russian government in Tbilisi is futile. Russia's leadership should understand that there has been a generational and mental change in Georgian society over the last 15 years. The Soviet stereotype of Georgians mostly generated by popular Soviet movies like "Mimino" is not valid in present Georgia. Unlike other former Soviet republics Georgian society not dominated by a "Soviet nomenklatura" who might have the tendency to be pro-Russian. On the contrary, this layer of Georgian society had been marginalized a long time ago and they have no role and future in Georgia's political life.

Georgia's present-day elite consists of educated Western people who saw nothing good in Russia's policy toward Georgia and thus regards Russia as adversary number one and Russian imperialism as a direct threat to Georgia's national security. Most of them grew up with anti-Russian sentiments and perceive the Russo-Georgian confrontation in ideological terms, i.e. authoritarian and imperial Russia vs. pro-western and democratic Georgia. The present Georgian political spectrum is dominated by this tendency. In these circumstances the Kremlin's hope for a "regime change," by installing a leader in Georgia who is more amenable to Moscow, is counterproductive. No one in Georgia will support Georgia's geopolitical reorientation toward Russia, since it is perceived as betrayal of the country's vital national interests. Unlike other post-Soviet republics where Russia enjoys great support from the former "nomenklatura" the Kremlin cannot win the minds and souls of the Georgians and so cannot win an "ideological battle" in Georgia.

Meanwhile the international community should realize that this war was not about South Ossetia, Abkhazia, or Georgia. It runs far wider and deeper than the immediate issues surrounding Georgia's territorial integrity and political autonomy. The Georgian crisis is in fact a dramatic new manifestation of the longer-term trends underlying the erosion of democracy in the post-communist region. It should also be noted that for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has demonstrated that it is able and willing to use force outside its borders in order to defend its national interests. This leaves neighboring countries faced with the question of how to ensure their own security. In the case of Georgia this is still a pending question.

The next fundamental thing at stake as the result of the Russian invasion is the concept of security itself because the biggest lesson Europe learned during and before World War II was that security is an indivisible concept. The only way to guarantee security is to guarantee the security of every state, including small states. And the concept of spheres of influence, buffer zones, and buffer states only generates instability and only encourages aggressor countries to act further.

So by introducing this concept of spheres of influence and buffer zones (today we are witnessing numerous discussions in Russia about the buffer zones in and around Georgia and about the buffer zones between Russia and NATO), Russia is suggesting that one of the roles Georgia might play is that of a buffer zone between Russia and NATO. By introducing this concept of influence, spheres of

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<sup>19</sup> Russia's Use of Kosovo Analogy for Georgia False. The United States Mission to the European Union, available at [<http://useu.usmission.gov/Article.asp?ID=02C7FBF6-0AA9-471B-9126-17F13B15B>].

influence, and buffer zones, Russia is actually challenging the very basics of European security, i.e. that security is indivisible and that security is not and cannot be based on the concept of areas of influence and buffer zones. So this is actually a major setback for the European security concept, which takes this concept back to the beginning of 20th century. It is also posing a major challenge for the Europeans with respect to how to deal with this approach.

It is a challenge—it is a challenge not only for Georgia as an immediate victim of what happened, it is also a challenge for the international community because if the international community fails to make a proper response Georgia will merely be the first step in this journey and some other countries may follow. So the question is where will such things end if they are not handled in the proper way? And it seems that unless this situation is handled properly, it will not end. And the price to be paid tomorrow will be much higher than price being paid today.

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## THE AUGUST CRISIS IN THE CAUCASUS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

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Until the summer of 2008 the situation in the Caucasus was determined by the balance of power and parity between the main actors—America and Russia; there were other actors as well—the European Union, Turkey, and Iran. It was Georgia that wanted to defrost the situation in order to change the format of the peacekeeping operation and join NATO. Control over the breakaway regions and the status of the region's leader were its final aims.

The United States and the EU (NATO) would not have objected to a change in the balance of powers: not satisfied by a situation in which they had to trim their ambitions to suit the interests of others, they believed that the level of their presence in the region was inadequate. The conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia served as defrosting instruments: for a long time the situation around them was teetering on the brink of war. In pursuance of their short-term interests the outside players were deliberately shortening the road to NATO for Georgia.

Until 7-8 August, 2008 Georgia's chances of being included in MAP (the Membership Action Plan) were determined by the Bucharest summit, which postponed the final decision until December 2008; it also promised that both aspirants—Georgia and Ukraine—would eventually be admitted. The

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*The article was written in November 2008.*

Atlantic Alliance, however, was divided over the issue: unlike the United States and New Europe, Old Europe took into account Russia's position and the Caucasian realities, which are far removed from NATO standards.

Georgia's attack on South Ossetia pushed the situation beyond the point of no return: irrespective of what Russia could or should have done no status quo could be restored and the exacerbated problems could not be settled.

For more than 15 years Russia has been strictly observing the principle of Georgia's territorial integrity and fulfilling its peacekeeping functions under the 1992 Dagomys Agreement on the Principles of the Settlement of the Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict, one of the factors of regional peace and security.

It set up Joint Peace Keeping Forces (JPKF) in the conflict zone and created a Joint Control Commission (JCC) for the sake of the conflict's peaceful settlement strictly within the law. Based on the principle of the territorial integrity of states the document referred to the U.N. Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. Kosovo's independence, recognized by many Western states and described as a unique decision inapplicable to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, did not shatter Russia's determination to respect Georgia's territorial integrity.

In an uphill effort to bring the sides' positions closer together Russia lost about 120 peacekeepers from among the CIS peacekeeping forces in the zone of the Abkhazian-Georgian conflict and sustained considerable material losses. CIS peacekeepers fell victim to those who in an effort to defrost the conflict and resume hostilities staged terrorist attacks on the territories of the break-away republics. Someone supplied them with weapons and let them across the border and back: this can be described as encouragement (or, in legal terms, complicity) by the Georgian official structures.

During numerous and prolonged talks the Russian side invariably insisted on the obvious: to achieve a settlement the sides should remove all doubts about the sincerity of their intentions. Tbilisi, in turn, invariably came up with vague statements when asked by Russian diplomats whether Georgia was after the territory or the territory along with its population. It ignored Moscow's invitation to sign an agreement on the non-use of force, which could have played a positive role or could have removed at least some of the sides' phobias, thus making the talks much more constructive. The Georgian leaders thought and planned differently: in August 2008 they finally settled on the use of force.

Back in 2004 the South Ossetian conflict was much closer to a settlement than any of the post-Soviet conflicts. On 20 May, 2004 the Georgians, however, halted the positive developments by moving the police, internal security troops, and later the army into the conflict zone outlined by international agreements and controlled by JPKF. One-sided actions designed to build up Georgia's military presence in the conflict zone flagrantly violated the 1992 Agreement on the Principles of the Settlement of the Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict and the 1996 Memorandum on Measures to Ensure Security and Reinforce Mutual Confidence between the Parties to the Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict. This added tension to the already tense situation, caused deaths, and could have developed into what we saw in August 2008 but for the peacekeeping efforts of Russia and the United States. The peace process, however, rolled back.

In disregard of the relevant international agreements, U.N. resolutions, and its own obligations Georgia behaved more or less similarly in relation to Abkhazia. On 25-27 July, 2006 it moved its troops into the upper part of the Kodori Gorge, which Resolution 1716 of 13 October, 2006 and others of the U.N. Security Council described as a flagrant violation of the Moscow 1994 Agreement on Ceasefire and Separation of Forces.

In 2008, when Georgia used military force, the United States, while refraining from direct involvement, moved to Tbilisi's side in the information war.

The statements issued by the Georgian leaders suggest that it was the West (or, at least, the United States) that provoked the clash. On 25 November former Georgian Ambassador to Russia Erosi Kitsmarishvili appeared before a temporary parliamentary commission set up to investigate the August events to testify that President Saakashvili had wanted this war; several officials insisted that the United States and President George W. Bush had personally supported the attack on Abkhazia. The former Georgian ambassador said that it was Georgia that had started the war.<sup>1</sup> On 13 August President Saakashvili announced that he held the West, which “had failed to see through Russia’s intentions to occupy Georgia,” “partly responsible” for the outcome.<sup>2</sup> The next day he was even more explicit: “The United States insisted that it was nothing but a game on Russia’s part and that if it crossed the line it would have committed a big mistake. The West underestimated Russia on this point. I think that America should organize resistance of Western countries. They have many levers they can use to stop Russia. America’s prestige in the region is at stake. The United States is gradually losing its post-Cold War authority. This is a tragedy.”<sup>3</sup>

President Saakashvili was obviously pushing Washington to much more resolute actions against Russia. There is another aspect: the centerpiece of his address completely refuted the repeated assertions of American officials that the military operation against South Ossetia came as a complete surprise and that they had done everything in their power to prevent it.

Significantly, the Georgian attack began on the day when, 13 years earlier, Croatia had successfully completed its Operation Storm to retake Serbian Krajina.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried, who appeared on 9 September, 2008 before the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, testified: “On the night of 7 August... the Georgians told us that South Ossetians had fired on Georgian villages from behind the positions of the Russian peacekeepers. The Georgians also told us that Russian troops and heavy military equipment were entering the Roki Tunnel border crossing with Russia. “We warned the Georgians many times in the previous days and weeks against using force. On 7 August we warned them repeatedly not to take such a step.”<sup>4</sup> The American diplomat obviously preferred the Georgian version that Russia had stirred up the crisis by moving its forces into South Ossetia. An analysis of the Georgian media, however, reveals a different story.<sup>5</sup>

On 7 and 8 August there was no mention about Russian troops in South Ossetia; the media was merely holding forth about the need “to restore constitutional order” in South Ossetia. Nothing was said about Russians who needed to be pushed back. The arrival of Russian troops in South Ossetia came as a complete surprise for the Georgians. It was only at about 04:00 p.m. on 8 August that the Security Council of Georgia announced that “it would declare war on Russia if information about Russian tanks in South Ossetia is confirmed.” Dana Rohrabacher, member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight, who in his statement referred to American intelligence, refuted the Georgian version of the Caucasian development.<sup>6</sup> On 11 September Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman, who appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee, confirmed Congressman Rohrabacher’s words.

The Georgians insisted that in the small hours of 8 August they had moved in to rebuff the Russian troops pressing into South Ossetia. In fact, the hostilities began much earlier:<sup>7</sup> in the after-

<sup>1</sup> [<http://vz.ru/politics/2008/11/25/232587.html>]; *Kommersant*, No. 216 (4033), 27 November, 2008; *Izvestia*, No. 222, 27 November, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1041170.html>], 13 August, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> [[www.regnum.ru/news/1041323.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/1041323.html)], 14 August, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> [<http://www.state.dov/p/eur/rls/rm/109345.html>].

<sup>5</sup> See, for, example: *Svobodnaia Gruzia*, Nos. 67-68, 9 August, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> [<http://www.rian.ru/world/20080909/151121908.html>].

<sup>7</sup> See: K. Dzugaev, “Ocherk i razmyshlenia po goriachim sledam nedavney voyny,” *Kavkazskiy ekspert*, No. 4 (12), 2008, pp. 9-12; “Khronika piatidnevnoy voyny v Gruzii v avguste 2008 g.,” *Kavkazskiy ekspert*, No. 4 (12), 2008, pp. 51-59.



noon of 1 August one man was killed and one wounded when an Ossetian checkpoint was fired upon. In the small hours of 2 August heavy artillery opened fire on Tskhinval: six were killed, 13 wounded. Evacuation of children began. On 5-6 August Georgian troops stormed, without much success, the Priss Heights on the eastern fringes of Tskhinval; on 7 August fighting broke out for the heights in the villages of Nuli and Mugut (the Znauri district to the west of Tskhinval). On the same day, shortly before midnight, Georgians opened artillery fire on Tskhinval supported, some time later, by 27 Grad missile launchers and Georgian aviation. Early in the morning of 8 August Georgians (approximately 12 thousand) burst into the city's southern part. By midday, with half of the city already captured, the Georgian units began to run out of steam. Those who tried to enter the Ossetian capital in the north using the Georgian enclaves of Tamarasheni and Kekhvi as footholds failed. There was fighting on the southwestern fringes of the city in the village of Tbet. It was only by 05.00-06.00 p.m. that the Russian forward detachments reached Tskhinval. At night heavy artillery shelled the city to help the troops storm Tskhinval on the morning of 9 August. By the morning of 10 August the main forces of the 58th Army and the 76th Pskov Airborne Division of the Russian Federation drove the Georgians away.

The Georgian military operation in South Ossetia was obviously planned well in advance with several factors taken into account: the Georgians counted on a surprise attack and a potential blitzkrieg. Tskhinval and several nearest villages of the Tskhinval, Znauri and Leningori (with the center in Tsinagar) districts should have been seized in a couple of days; because of the Beijing Olympics that began on the same day it was expected that the Russian leaders would need time to move the 58th Army into Tskhinval. At first everything went as expected: on 8 August the Russian peacekeepers remained passive—they could only defend themselves. The South Ossetian forces were disorganized while their combat readiness left much to be desired; nearly the entire South Ossetian government was at a loss.

Had Georgia's expectations been realized the movement of Russian troops into the breakaway republic on 9 or 10 August and their advance to Java would have been useless. The loss of Tskhinval would have doomed South Ossetia: it is unlikely the city could have been stormed again, this time by the Russian troops. In this situation jubilant Tbilisi could have altered the format of the peacekeeping operation and negotiated other changes. The fate of Abkhazia would have been sealed. By the same token it would have acquired MAP and moved nearer to NATO membership.

This never happened thanks to Russia's fairly prompt and timely response. The Georgian side still had a chance of realizing its minimum demand—internationalization of the present format of the peacekeeping operation. In this case, too, South Ossetian independence would have been doomed. To move in the desired direction it was necessary to remove the Russian troops from South Ossetia and, at some time in future, from Abkhazia.

On 12 August France brokered the Medvedev-Sarkozy Plan: its six points ruled out the use of force; hostilities should be halted; the population should receive free access to humanitarian aid; the Georgian troops should return to the barracks while the armed forces of Russia should be withdrawn to the line preceding the hostilities. The Russian peacekeepers should take additional security measures before international security mechanisms were set in place. In the earlier version Point 6 spoke of the need to begin international consultations about the future status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and the measures required to ensure their security. Later the Georgian side insisted that this point be corrected at the beginning of the international discussions on the security of these two states. This turned out to be an important amendment.

It should be added that the loosely worded document permitted numerous interpretations: "the line preceding the hostilities" stirred up disagreements: Russia's opponents wanted to push them back to Russian territory. Russia, in turn, stuck to the letter of the document and treated the Russian peacekeepers as armed forces that should remain in the Zugdidi District of Georgia in the number deter-

mined for the peacekeeping contingent. It was equally unclear what sort of “additional security measures” were meant.

In an interview to Reuters a French official who had taken part in the negotiations on 12 August and who preferred to remain anonymous said that France had refused to budge under Russia’s pressure.<sup>8</sup> France, however, retreated under Georgia’s insistence. President Saakashvili rejected Point 6 on international discussions of the future status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. He treated it as an ultimatum that he was ordered to sign or lose his post. The offending point was changed—Russia accepted the changes.

The Western capitals took this as a sign that the Russian Federation was beating a retreat: they tried to force Russia to accept the replacement of OSCE observers with EU peacekeeping forces to be stationed, among other things, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

According to Minister for Reintegration of Georgia T. Yakobashvili, the initial plan of the French foreign minister contained 4 points; later two other points were added on Moscow’s insistence.<sup>9</sup> The Georgian minister assured that Georgia had refused to sign the plan without detailed explanations about the second phrase of Point 5 (“Russian peacekeeping forces accept additional security arrangements before making international motions”). The French president supplied “a clarifying letter” which said that the measures should be strictly temporary and limited, on the whole, to the conflict zone, which was not “all of South Ossetia.” The Russian peacekeepers were not allowed to organize checkpoints—they were expected to limit themselves to patrolling and to keep away from the settlements (this could hardly be done), the town of Gori, and the central highway. The “additional security measures” were limited to the “Tskhinval zone” and did not cover Abkhazia.

Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried admitted at the hearings at the Senate Armed Services Committee that it was America that had insisted on written clarifications: “The Georgians had questions about the ceasefire agreement, so we worked with the French who issued a clarifying letter addressing some of Georgia’s concerns.”<sup>10</sup> The barely signed agreement was interpreted and reinterpreted, an inevitable result of its vague and highly ambiguous wording.

In its report “Russia vs. Georgia: The Fallout,” the International Crisis Group stated: “Western nations must eschew the worst of the Cold War mentality... The ceasefire signed on 15-16 August must be respected, and Russian troops must return promptly to the positions they held on 7 August, honoring the spirit of a loosely worded agreement.”<sup>11</sup> Georgian political scientist Malkhaz Matsaberidze agreed with this assessment of the document: “Russia interprets the points as it sees fit; the agreement between the European Union and Russia drawn in haste abounds in vague points.”<sup>12</sup>

Sergey Lavrov pointed out that the document signed by President Saakashvili differed from the document signed earlier by President Medvedev: it lacked the introduction that said that the presidents of France and Russia supported the principles enumerated below and called on the sides to sign the document. This version bears the signatures of the presidents of Russia, France, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. The president of Georgia signed the document that did not bear the signatures of Sergey Bagapsh and Eduard Kokoyty. This means that the agreement acquired a “double,” probably through the services of Condoleezza Rice engaged in shuttle diplomacy.

The same anonymous French official confirmed that France had to shoulder the main burden of the talks since the United States was outside the playing field; the U.N. was divided, while OSCE was too weak. From the very beginning the French Foreign Ministry expected that a U.N. resolution would ease the progress (on 13 August French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said “we

<sup>8</sup> [<http://ru.reuters.com/article/topNews/idRUANT33355020080813>].

<sup>9</sup> [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1042523.html>], 16 August, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> [<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/109345htm>].

<sup>11</sup> [<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5636&1=1>].

<sup>12</sup> [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1053361.html>], 10 September, 2008.

will have to go through the U.N.”), but this road was blocked. There was another eloquent detail: the Medvedev-Sarkozy Plan envisaged OSCE observers in Georgia; a lively discussion of the possibility of sending EU peacekeeping forces there buried the original plan and altered the settlement format beyond recognition.

On 13 August Minister of State for Overseas Development of Ireland Peter Power summed up the meeting of the EU foreign ministers by saying that the European Union was prepared to interfere, including its presence on the spot to support the U.N. and OSCE.<sup>13</sup> In its settlement efforts the European Union proceeded from the principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence. It aspired to create an “international mechanism” of conflict settlement to internationalize the peacekeeping process. Georgia appreciated this approach: Foreign Minister of Georgia Ekaterina Tkeshelashvili stressed these two points in the EU documents.<sup>14</sup> Speaker of the Georgian parliament David Bakradze described the initiative to set up an international peacekeeping contingent as revolutionary and said that if realized in the near future it would cause “serious changes in conflict settlement.”<sup>15</sup> To complete the picture let me say that Peter Semneby, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza attended the sitting.

On 14 August, the day before Condoleezza Rice arrived in Tbilisi, David Bakradze told journalists that the move to the next stage (conflict settlement and internationalization) would start as soon as the ceasefire agreement was signed and the Russian troops removed.<sup>16</sup> This means that Georgia expected that troop withdrawal and the arrival of peacekeepers would be two separate stages. This was far removed from the Medvedev-Sarkozy Plan; upon her arrival in Georgia the U.S. Secretary of State supported the Georgian position.<sup>17</sup> She demanded an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of the Russian troops from Georgian territory even before the international discussion of the peacekeeping operation had been completed. The peacekeeping forces should be international and neutral while the European Union should play one of the main roles in the process.

In fact, the time gap between troop withdrawal and moving in the peacekeeping forces was the watershed between the American and West European settlement conceptions. Old Europe did not want the gap; it never insisted on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Abkhazia and South Ossetia—this demand was limited to the Georgia’s “core.”

The Avignon meeting of the EU foreign ministers held on 5 September decided that a group of 200 civilian observers should be knocked together in 10 days to be dispatched to the buffer zones on the Abkhazian and South Ossetian borders. Nothing was said about sending observers into these territories. America’s showed its displeasure following the Europeans’ decision to carry out international investigation to find out who had started the hostilities in South Ossetia—a small yet eloquent fact.

It was not the only one: EU leaders made several statements that betrayed their irritation with America’s diktat. According to French Foreign Minister Kouchner, the European Union and the U.S. had certain common interests and shared values despite their different approaches to many issues. According to the European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Union wanted to be the United States’ equal partner. Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner commented on the statement of U.S. Vice-President Cheney that the U.S. would allocate \$1 billion to Georgia with: “Wonderful, but what difference will it make? We are also giving a lot of money for rehabilitation. This is not a competition.” It is difficult not to

<sup>13</sup> [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1041585.html>], 14 August, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1041209.html>], 13 August, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/newstext/news/id/1227283.html>], 15 August, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> [<http://www.forum.msk.ru/material/news/516647.html>], 16 August, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> [<http://www.newsru.com/world/15aug2008/podpis.html>].

notice the irritation in this statement.<sup>18</sup> Having joined the settlement process as one of its active sides the European Union acquired more self-respect and gained a lot of political weight internationally.

On 8 September the presidents of Russia and France agreed on three additional points to their earlier plan:

- (1) the Russian troops should be withdrawn from the Poti-Senaki line within seven days; at least 200 observers should be brought into the zones adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia before 1 October, and within 10 days after this the Russian troops should be withdrawn;
- (2) the observer U.N. and OSCE missions should be preserved in the conflict zones while no less than 200 EU observers should be promptly moved into the zones adjacent to Abkhazia and South Ossetia;
- (3) international discussions on ways to ensure stability and security in the region, on refugee and IDP issues, as well as on all other questions placed on the agenda by the sides' mutual agreement should begin in Geneva on 15 October.

According to President Sarkozy, the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was to be discussed at the international level; he was supported by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer who said that Europe should never forget that Abkhazia and South Ossetia were parts of Georgia and added that talks had been held and peacekeeping mandates issued, which meant that the future of the regions should be discussed at the international level.

In the small hours of 9 September Mikhail Saakashvili signed the document and pointed out that "the Russian military will be replaced with international forces." The Georgian parliament was dead set against Abkhazia and South Ossetia participating as entities of international law in the talks in Geneva on 15 October. *Rezonansi*, a Georgian newspaper, wrote that the Kremlin had retreated on certain issues while the roadmap Moscow had drawn up on the eve of the French president's visit had failed. The newspaper remained convinced that it was France and its president rather than the U.S. and President George W. Bush who prevented Moscow from pushing Georgia's statehood to a complete collapse: Russia retreated to avoid the anti-Russian consolidation of Europe.<sup>19</sup>

It looked as if the new agreement had completely clarified the problem and removed all questions related to the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, however this proved to be an illusion. The United States moved to the fore to revive the discussion and to undermine the Sarkozy-Medvedev plan.<sup>20</sup>

On 10 September the U.S. Department of State Spokesman Sean McCormack said at a briefing that Washington was "deeply concerned" with Russia's latest statements which meant that Russian troops would remain in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He argued that the Russian forces should be withdrawn to the positions predating 7 August and insisted that their deployment in Abkhazia and South Ossetia contradicted the ceasefire agreement. He added that by blocking humanitarian aid Russia violated another point of the same agreement.<sup>21</sup> American Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group Matthew Bryza said on 13 September that if Moscow believed that the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia had been resolved, it was wrong: they had just started.<sup>22</sup> On 16 September he argued that Russia

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<sup>18</sup> [<http://www.globalaffairs.ru/articles/10266.html>; <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1051465.html>], 6 September, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1053361.html>], 10 September, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> [<http://www.rian.ru/analytics/20080916/151324250.html>].

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1053456.html>, 11 September, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> [[http://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2008/09/13/n\\_1269851.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2008/09/13/n_1269851.shtml); <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1054589.html>], 13 September, 2008.

had essentially ignored the desire of President Sarkozy, the EU, and the U.N. to defuse the Russian-Georgian tension.

In an interview to *The Financial Times* he gave in Tbilisi on 15 September before the meeting of the NATO Council NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer demonstrated his displeasure with the results of the French brokerage; he claimed that President Sarkozy had retreated too far.<sup>23</sup> The recent three points, said the Secretary General, violated the previous six and made it impossible to restore the status quo. He was convinced that the signed agreement was unacceptable. The NATO Secretary General insisted that the Alliance resolutely objected to Russia's military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, while Russia's decision to deploy its military contingents there was "hardly acceptable." He said that now it was extremely important for the Alliance to demand that Russia denounce its recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, otherwise the Russia-NATO Council could not be rapidly revived. On 15 August in Brussels Foreign Minister of Lithuania Petras Vaitiekūnas summed up the meeting of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council by saying that he was satisfied that the EU position on Georgia's territorial integrity remained clear and unambiguous and that the observer mission would cover all of Georgia's territory, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>24</sup>

Tbilisi also got down to changing the new points; Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia Giga Bokeria declared that under the new agreement the Russian troops would be withdrawn within a month from the entire territory of Georgia with the exception of the conflict regions after which Georgia, together with the EU, would replace the occupation forces still present in the conflict zones with real peacekeeping forces. This would launch a true peacekeeping process, said the deputy foreign minister.<sup>25</sup> He said that OSCE observers would be placed in the conflict zones as well as elsewhere.

On 16 September, when talking to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Mikhail Saakashvili insisted on unconditional fulfillment of the ceasefire agreement and, among other things, on restoration of the status quo of 7 August: "Five hundred Russian military may remain stationed in Abkhazia and South Ossetia; all refugees should be returned to their homes; Georgia should regain control over the territories it controlled before the conflict." This meant that President Saakashvili had reconciled himself to a small Russian contingent in the "conflict regions" but wanted the Kodori Gorge and the Georgian enclaves in South Ossetia back. This meant that the revision of the 8 September agreements began as soon as they had been signed by the United States, NATO, and Georgia.

Further developments clarified the positions and aims:

1. The Russian Federation was prepared with pull out its forces from Georgian territory proper and let EU observers move in. It was not prepared, however, to accept a compromise under which it would be forced to replace its armed forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia with EU observers (not to mention peacekeepers).
2. The European Union (France in particular and Old Europe in general) can accept in principle an intermediate version according to which the Russian troops leave the territory of Georgia proper and remain in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This version limits the presence of EU observers to Georgian territory. This is a temporary alternative; later the European Union plans to defeat Russia in the diplomatic game and remove the Russian troops from the entire territory of the former Georgian S.S.R. So far talks on the future status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been removed from the agenda.

<sup>23</sup> [[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/uk/newsid\\_7615000/7615934.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/uk/newsid_7615000/7615934.stm)].

<sup>24</sup> [<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,3650702,00.html>].

<sup>25</sup> [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1053855.html>], 11 September, 2008.

The European Union sees the possibility of another temporary alternative: to convince Russia, in exchange for certain concessions, to remove its troops from the areas Georgia lost in August 2008 (the upper part of the Kodori Gorge, the Georgian enclaves to the north of Tskhinval. and the western part of the Akhagori District). EU observers will take the Russians' place, however the areas will be returned to Georgian jurisdiction to be later militarized. This will weaken already weak Abkhazia and South Ossetia even more. The Europeans have not moved very far in this direction—they, and the Americans for that matter, have no real instruments for putting pressure on Russia.

3. The United States, NATO leaders, the UK, and the Euro-Atlantic forces in Europe want no compromises or intermediate or temporary alternatives. They want to see the Russian troops removed from the territory of Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia and replaced with EU peacekeepers rather than observers; the future status of both republics should be settled according to the principle of Georgia's territorial integrity and without Russia. This is what the Georgian leaders want.

During August and September of 2008, the NATO leaders repeatedly confirmed their solidarity with the United States, which wanted to see Georgia integrated into the Alliance through MAP. The fact that Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia did not affect the Alliance's position. With America's insistence the Alliance actively promoted and is promoting the project of rehabilitation and modernization of Georgia's armed forces. In mid-September NATO somewhat changed its position; its promises of NATO membership for Georgia became much vaguer than before.

While in Tbilisi on 15-16 September, 2008 Jaap de Hoop Scheffer announced that NATO was not indifferent to Georgia's ambitions and would help it in every way possible. He deemed it necessary to add: "Georgia will never become a NATO member directly without MAP."<sup>26</sup> He went on to say: "We are an institution based on values and when the country meets the membership criteria we won't turn its down. It is hard to say when this will happen. It will be the outcome of the country's development culminated in a political decision. Next December, foreign ministers will make an assessment regarding Georgia's inclusion in MAP.

"I truly believe that with the current level of Georgian involvement in the negotiation process on conflict areas, progress and success will be achieved." On the whole, however, the NATO Secretary General remained uncommitted.<sup>27</sup> When speaking to a student audience at Tbilisi State University he said: "While all 26 NATO allies agree that Georgia will one day be a member of the Alliance, there are different views on how fast Georgia should be admitted into our Membership Action Plan."<sup>28</sup> Jaap de Hoop Scheffer assured the students that if the reforms were carried out as they should be and if the country worked with international organizations, if it continued its settlement efforts and, correspondingly, ensured security inside and outside the country, Georgia would have the opportunity to be included in MAP. The final decision belonged to all the NATO members, concluded the NATO Secretary General.<sup>29</sup> The numerous and barely realizable conditions of Georgia's MAP create the impression that the December NATO summit will pass a negative decision.

On 18 September, at Senate hearings, Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns pointed out that neither Ukraine nor Georgia were ready to join NATO, however they

<sup>26</sup> [[http://www.ng.ru/cis/2008-09-17/8\\_nato.html](http://www.ng.ru/cis/2008-09-17/8_nato.html)].

<sup>27</sup> [[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/international/newsid\\_7616000/7616572.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/international/newsid_7616000/7616572.stm)]; [<http://www.vremya.ru/2008/170/4/212706.html>].

<sup>28</sup> [[http://www.newsgd.com/news/world1/content/2008-09/17/content\\_4602330.htm](http://www.newsgd.com/news/world1/content/2008-09/17/content_4602330.htm)].

<sup>29</sup> [[http://www.newsgeorgia.ru/official\\_statement/20080916/150986100.html](http://www.newsgeorgia.ru/official_statement/20080916/150986100.html)].

should be incorporated into MAP.<sup>30</sup> This program, said he, was neither an invitation nor a promise of NATO membership. The American diplomat admitted that some of the U.S. European partners, Germany and France in particular, doubted that Kiev and Tbilisi were ready for MAP. He added that nobody could predict the results of the December meeting of the NATO foreign ministers.

From the very beginning of the conflict the United States remained the main patron of Tbilisi, which flatly denounced everything that Russia was doing and turned down all suggested compromises, and Georgia's main lobbyist in NATO. The arrival of the new administration in the White House will do nothing more than moderate the aggressive rhetoric and actions. There is, however, something that cannot be ignored: nothing changed in Washington's rhetoric and actions when Moscow recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. America refused to pile new threats on the old ones.

More than that: Russia's failure to promptly recognize the two republics' independence could have invited more American pressure. In the next few months Washington will probably defuse its anti-Russian rhetoric: it has enough problems at home and abroad. In fact, on 22 August U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Beyrle deemed it necessary to say that the Georgian conflict would not irrevocably undermine economic relations between the two countries and Russia's chances of WTO membership. He added that in December the NATO Council would be guided, among other things, by Russia's willingness to honor its promises to withdraw from Georgia. On the other hand, Georgia's prospects of becoming incorporated in MAP will be greatly affected by its willingness to fulfill its obligations. The ambassador added that Russia had had the right to repel the Georgian attack on the Russian peacekeepers, something from which Washington had tried in vain to dissuade Georgia. He said further: "Although the decision should take into account the right to national self-determination, the fact to proceed from is that Georgia's territorial integrity has been recognized by international law."<sup>31</sup> It seems that the American establishment is at least divided over the issue.

New Europe is not united in its attitude toward Georgia and the August-September 2008 crisis, or towards the prospects of Georgia's NATO membership. There is an anti-Russian core that recently tried to set up a stable coalition—Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria, unwilling to pose as active fighters against "Russia's imperialism," from time to time find a common language with the core. They support the Euro-Atlantic position on Georgia for their own considerations but without outside pressure. Slovakia and Serbia prefer to keep away from the anti-Russian campaign and remain neutral.

Public opinion in the New European countries is also divided; there is no concerted anti-Russian position (with the exception of the Baltic republics and probably Poland). On 15 August, for example, President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus demonstrated a lot of independence when he said that he resolutely condemned the Georgian attack on South Ossetia, the killing of peaceful people in the region, and Russia's mass intervention. He said further that the Kosovo precedence allowed Russia to justify its intervention: the problem went beyond the "good Georgia—bad Russia" formula. The Czech president pointed out that he did not share the opinions of his Polish, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian colleagues.<sup>32</sup>

On 13 August Premier of Slovakia Robert Fico pointed out: "It was Georgia that provoked the Caucasian conflict." "I would not paint the picture in black and white as is being done today. Someone provoked the conflict and we know who it was. Then came the response and it was a strong one."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> [<http://www.rosbalt.ru/2008/09/18/524758.html>].

<sup>31</sup> [[http://www.kommersant.com/p1014311/Beyrle\\_Georgia](http://www.kommersant.com/p1014311/Beyrle_Georgia)].

<sup>32</sup> [<http://www.newsru.com/world/15aug2008/klaus.html>].

<sup>33</sup> [<http://www.newsru.com/world/14aug2008/slovakia.html>].

It seems that the forces that wanted Russia to pull out of Georgian territory had in mind NATO membership for Georgia through the intermediate MAP stage. Independent Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia's military presence are the main factors that keep Georgia away from NATO.

The NATO leaders, however, had to take into account the position of France, Italy, Belgium, and some other countries that pointed to the obvious problems making Georgia's NATO membership impossible. After the August-September crisis they multiplied: Georgia no longer controls Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and it lost control over the Kodori Gorge and the Georgian enclaves in South Ossetia and the eastern part of the Leningori District. Russia and Nicaragua have already recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; over time it will be recognized by others. There are Russian military bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The settlement talks were halted and are unlikely to be resumed; Georgia's military potential has been destroyed. This is absolutely clear for at least some of the European political elite.

For some time at least Azerbaijan's Euro-Atlantic enthusiasm was dampened by Russia's response to Georgia's military adventure and the impotence demonstrated by the West, particularly the United States. The statements of the Azeri leaders, the first of them by President Ilham Aliyev, came as late as 21 August and were restrained, even though they proceeded from the principle of territorial integrity. The leaders of Azerbaijan did not want to become another Georgia: they turned a deaf ear to the chorus of anti-Russian European politicians and experts who warned against Russia's attacks on Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

In the wake of U.S. Vice-President Dick Cheney's visit to Azerbaijan the Azeri leaders voiced their doubts about the protecting qualities of the Euro-Atlantic umbrella. Wafa Guluzade, never a Russia lover, wrote that Azerbaijan should not draw positive conclusions from the visit.<sup>34</sup> The Americans, said he, pragmatists first and foremost, might trade Azerbaijan for Russia's support in Afghanistan and Iran. The Europeans, drawn apart by inner contradictions, frequently fail to come up with clear statements. Even if the American vice-president had offered Azerbaijan security guarantees, wrote the Azeri political analyst, they should have been dismissed as useless. What was important was the fact that Russia recognized the Azerbaijan Republic's territorial integrity and never retreated from this position.

Baku gained nothing from the August crisis, however its moderate policy saved it from losses. The August crisis, on the other hand, demonstrated that Armenia, which depended on Georgia for transit and was incapable of conducting an independent policy in the region, was highly vulnerable. The ambiguous, to say the least, position of official Yerevan during the August crisis (the president of Armenia, who is regarded as a Russian ally, expressed his condolences to the Georgian nation and hastened to visit Tbilisi) widened the gap between the political elites of Russia and Armenia.

Significantly, the Turkish leaders remained reserved probably because NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia would inevitably bring American bases to the Black Sea, tip the balance of forces in the region, and deprive Turkey of its status of the strongest naval Black Sea power. By acting wisely in August 2008 Ankara was able with relative ease to considerably strengthen its position in the region. In mid-August Recep Erdoğan visited Moscow, Baku, and Tbilisi not merely to find out what was going on but also to present his new initiative—The Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform.

Based on OSCE principles, the new security system was to include five countries (Turkey, Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia). Significantly, Iran, a no less Caucasian country than Turkey, was pointedly left out. Russia showed its interest and Georgia demonstrated its willingness to enter into a dialogue with Turkey about the regional security system. Azerbaijan also responded positively but was fairly reserved. Turkey's aim was obvious: it wanted to limit America's and the EU's direct influ-

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<sup>34</sup> [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1050472.html>], 4 September, 2008.



ence in the Caucasus; all problems should be resolved locally without outside players. On 18 August in his interview to *The Guardian* President of Turkey Abdullah Gül said: “The conflict in Georgia showed that the United States could no longer shape global politics on its own and should share its power with other countries... A new world order should emerge.”<sup>35</sup>

Washington’s response was guarded; Deputy Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Matthew Bryza pointed out: “Ankara did not inform Washington about the issue and we were really surprised at the actions of our partner.”<sup>36</sup> This means that Turkey is determined to use the Caucasian crisis to fortify its position in the region and its status of a regional power center.

The Russian Federation should pursue a consistent and steady course; it should cut short all attempts at “elaborating” the agreements of 12 August and 8 September by replacing the Russian troops in Abkhazia and South Ossetia with EU peacekeepers. According to the Medvedev-Sarkozy agreement, Russian troops cannot be deployed in the upper part of the Kodori Gorge, the Georgian enclaves to the north of Tskhinval, or the eastern part of the Leningori District (but they can remain in the Zugdidi District of Georgia). Abkhazian and South Ossetian armed forces, however, may be stationed in these areas; there is no need to bring EU observers or peacekeepers there. This is not envisaged either by the Medvedev-Sarkozy plan or by any other international agreements. The Russian Federation does not regard the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as recognized independent countries and entities of international law to be a negotiable issue.

In view of the Caucasian context Russia should support the Turkish initiative to set up a regional organization, the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (which should also include Iran), designed to trim the influence of outside actors, the U.S. and the EU in particular. The relations within the Russia-Turkey-Iran triangle should be strengthened: in fact the balance of forces and interests inside it might guarantee stability in the Caucasus.

<sup>35</sup> [<http://www.david-morrison.org.uk/turkey-restricts-access.htm>]

<sup>36</sup> [[http://www.gab-bn.com/IMG/pdf/Re7-From\\_The\\_Balkan\\_Pact\\_To\\_The\\_Caucasus\\_Stability\\_Pact.pdf](http://www.gab-bn.com/IMG/pdf/Re7-From_The_Balkan_Pact_To_The_Caucasus_Stability_Pact.pdf)].

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GEORGIAN-SOUTH OSSETIAN CONFLICT FOR TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

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In the 20th century, the world reconciled itself to the Soviet Union’s influence in the Caucasus and the Central Asian Region. The West, particularly the U.S., wanted to be a major if not the main actor in this power game after the collapse of the Soviet system. Its first goal, cer-

tainly, was to gain control over the wealthy oil and natural gas reserves of the Caucasian and Central Asian nations, but its next goal was no less significant: diverting oil around Russia and preventing Moscow from reasserting its control over the Caucasus and Central Asia. Georgia was preferred as the primary pro-Western state for secure transportation of the huge oil and gas prosperity of the neighboring regions. So when the main Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline for transporting oil through Georgia was completed in 2005, it was hailed as the most important success U.S. strategy had scored over Russia and helped to diversify its energy deliveries, given the instability of the Middle East.

Now energy experts declare that the hostilities between Russia and Georgia could intimidate America's plans to gain access to more of Central Asia's energy resources. At the other end of the continent are China and India whose desire for energy will keep the struggle for supplies going, as well as increase pressure to hike oil and gas prices. Georgia and the Caucasus, under the observant eyes of Russia, whose imperial desires are not loathe to resorting to military methods, no longer appear to be the safe passage for oil and gas as was formerly believed. Western states and multinationals, as well as the Central Asian and Caspian governments, may now be more unwilling to build new pipelines or move large volumes of energy resources along this corridor. One thing is certain: Russia headed by a leader who sees his country's future path to global power through the monopolization of energy resources and pipelines and who has demonstrated his inclination to use armed force to tame dissidents to that end will be the main actor in determining the region's energy future. This issue threatens to dash the hopes of the U.S. and its Western allies of reducing their dependence on oil supplies from the Middle East and shifting them to the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The most recent Russian attack on Georgia has left American policy, intended to drive a wedge between Russia and the old Soviet Central Asian countries, in a quandary. The success achieved by the BTC pipeline could not be repeat-

ed in order to move oil out of Kazakhstan via a non-Russia route. A large portion of oil from the rich Tengiz fields<sup>1</sup> passes through the northern Caspian to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk. This new pipeline is called the Caspian Pipeline Consortium. It had optional routes in the planning phase, but the Russian threat consolidated the present route.

Georgia is very important for the EU in terms of energy security. It is the only country where pipelines transporting natural gas and oil from the Caspian area that do not cross Russian territory can be laid. In other words, in the event it can protect its territorial integrity, Georgia is the only state that alleviates the West's heavy dependence on Russia. However, it is aware that it will now be very difficult to keep the South Ossetians' desire for independence under control, especially after Kosovo's independence, which was promoted and willingly allowed by the Europeans. South Ossetia might well become Georgia's Chechnia. The recent escalation of military conflicts has put the probability of a sustainable resolution off even more.

The only probable way out of this political crisis is to freeze the process as soon as possible. This is an absolute requirement before Moscow arms every Abkhazian and Ossetian and the two states become an open field for international hostility. This is why the Western bloc had a serious talk with Russia about its intentions concerning NATO's enlargement. The U.S. must stop its aggressive policy of installing new defense missile systems in Eastern Europe. Georgian President Saakashvili must desist from talking as though he is already a NATO member. Moscow must accept the status-quo and the territorial integrity of Georgia. The Russians should recognize that any territorial change in the map of the Caucasus may result in disturbance throughout the whole region. The separatist region of South Ossetia in Georgia is encouraging, with Russian air force attacking military targets inside Georgia, separatists in Georgia's another breakaway region

<sup>1</sup> Chevron is the biggest investor in this venture.

to launch attacks against Georgian military installations; the Southern Caucasus seems to be on the brink of a major military conflict between Georgia and Russia and its allies. This conflict appears to be the logical consequence of the increasing hostility on all sides over the past four years. With both conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia unsettled but silent since the early 1990s, it was not until current Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili came to power in 2004 that things began to warm up. To be sure, Georgia has the right to have its sovereignty and territorial integrity appreciated and the independence plan for South Ossetia put forward by Saakashvili in 2005 was generous by any international standards, but fell, of course, short of South Ossetia's demands for independence.<sup>2</sup>

The genealogy of this conflict, however, reaches back much further in history. The Ossetians were always considered to be one of the few Caucasus peoples loyal to Russia—the czar, the Soviet Union, and post-Soviet Russia. They live on both sides of the recent border between Russia and Georgia. Those who ended up in independent Georgia in 1991, saw their language, identity, and traditions endangered by the virulently nationalist Georgian state. Backed by Russia, they launched an insurgent campaign aimed at achieving rapid secession from Georgia.

So the most possible outcome in the near future, but almost certainly not after more bloodletting and civilian suffering, is an internationally brokered ceasefire and withdrawal of both

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<sup>2</sup> See: G. Simon, "Farbenrevolutionen—zur Demokratie?: Ukraine, Georgien, Kirgistan; Rückblick nach drei Jahren," *Europäische Rundschau: Vierteljahrszeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 36 (2), 2008, S. 65-71.

sides to the former status quo. This, of course, is only a short-term solution and not one that will be very permanent since low-level conflicts are likely to continue as they have over the past few years.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Georgia, Russia, and the Ossetians will not be able to find a permanent solution themselves. They have tried for many years, with different degrees of success, and failed, so there is a clear need for international negotiation.

With the OSCE likely to be paralyzed between the pro- and anti-Russian camps, and the U.S. heading into an all-important presidential election, the EU, which has an exacting interest in the region and has made a long-term commitment to it by incorporating it into the European Neighborhood Policy<sup>4</sup> and appointing a special representative, might be the best-placed player to assist in this confrontation and may well establish its worth as an aspiring global conflict manager in the Southern Caucasus. This does not mean that the EU could do this alone, but it needs to show the way in managing this crisis, liaising intimately with all the other players, and using its increasing weight and strategic interests in the region to stop another war in the Caucasus. The more the Europeans and Americans try to make inroads into Russia's backyard, the tougher and more hostile Russia will become. While actual combat in Georgia is over, the real battle is just beginning. And this war has far-reaching consequences for Turkey.

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<sup>3</sup> See: X. Kurowska, "More than a Balkan Crisis Manager: The EUJUST Themis in Georgia," in: *European Security and Defence Policy*, ed. by M. Merlingen, London, 2008, S. 97-110.

<sup>4</sup> See: W. Schneider-Deters, *Die Europäische Union, Russland und Eurasien: die Rückkehr der Geopolitik*, BWV, Berliner Wiss.-Verl., Berlin, 2008. 656 S.

## Georgia's Resolve to Join NATO

Georgia, whose membership in NATO was prohibited by Russia at a NATO summit in Bucharest in April 2008 because of its regional problems with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, is looking

to resolve its problems by relying on its own methods to become integrated into the world. The Georgian administration, which is ready to maintain close ties with the EU and become a NATO member as soon as possible, seeks to decrease Russian influence by regularly raising tension in the region.<sup>5</sup>

Saakashvili, who wants to make his small Caucasus nation a member of NATO, has placed top priority on regaining control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, another problematic region on the Black Sea. At stake are Russia's already nervous relations with the U.S. as well as Saakashvili's hopes of leading his country into the NATO alliance within the next year.

Georgia's president, Mikhail Saakashvili, has made joining NATO and the EU one of his top priorities. But there is disagreement among NATO members on whether to consider Georgian membership. For example, Germany favored avoiding an argument with Russia. At the summit in Bucharest in April 2008, NATO members declined to set an agenda for including Georgia. The Russian government claimed that in order to prevent NATO's enlargement in the Caucasus, Russia had to prevent Georgia from resolving its ethnoterritorial issues. The Georgian president's conclusion, of course, was the opposite: Georgia would be able to join NATO only if it could control South Ossetia as well as Abkhazia.

Turkey is the only NATO country bordering on Georgia. Any possible membership extended to Georgia, which Saakashvili so fervently yet unrealistically demands, will put Turkey right in the middle of a possible military disagreement with Russia. In the event of a war, controlling the straits under Turkey's influence will be key. *As the recent case of U.S. ships crossing the Turkish straits under the Montreux Agreement showed, Turkey will be hard-pressed to maintain a position of balance between NATO and Moscow.*

After Kosovo's declaration of independence Putin stated he was already making plans for revenge. Ukraine's NATO membership and the missile shield in Poland would be permanently enhanced in the area. Russia sees this as proof of the deception that NATO still exists while its competitor, the Warsaw Pact, has long disintegrated and, what is more, it is trying to extend its borders deep into formerly Russia-controlled areas. However, Russia, which has 11 time zones from east to west, a total area 22 times larger than Turkey's, large energy resources, a rich cultural legacy, and a strong national identity, requires its voice to be heard in international affairs. It sometimes wants to play the Kosovo card, sometimes the energy card, sometimes the Abkhazia card, and sometimes the Ossetia card in order to get this voice heard. While it is cautiously avoiding any abrasive policy with the West, Moscow has sided with countries seeking multipolarity, such as China and Iran, within the support of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), objected to Ukraine's and Georgia's membership in NATO, developed miracle weapons systems that would cancel the U.S. defense systems, and reintroduced flights over the Antarctic regions in order to challenge the current order.

The U.S. has utilized NATO as a security alliance to enlarge its pressure beyond the Euro-Atlantic region. NATO has effectively completed its enlargement to the East European and Baltic states. The recent Ukrainian and Georgian governments have articulated their desire to join NATO. That gives the U.S. the opportunity to extend its authority. Of course Russia obstinately opposed the further expansion of NATO. Russia regards Ukraine and Georgia as part of its own security parameters and NATO as a lever of American influence.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See: S. Genç, "Could South Ossetia Become Kosovo?" *Today's Zaman*, 10 August, 2008, available at [www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=149814&bolum=109].

<sup>6</sup> See: M. Seliger, "Georgien, Russland und der Fünf-Tage-Krieg: Fragen & Antworten," *Loyal: Magazin für Sicherheitspolitik*, No. 9, 2008, S. 6-7.

## Turkey and the Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict

Turkey has close strategic, historical, economic, and ethnic links with all parties in the conflict. For that reason, Turkey has to take all of these into consideration. The conflict is a disaster for civilian populations, who now find their lives literally in ruins, and is also demoralizing for Georgia's neighbors. Russia has accused Ukraine of being party to genocide by supporting Georgia's army and included Turkey in these accusations for signing a modest defense agreement. Turkey has tried to follow a soft method—encouraging a more independent Georgia as part of an energy and transportation corridor outside Moscow's control. At the same time, Russia is one of the most important trading partner and, historically, Turkey is careful about pulling the Kremlin tiger by the tail. Ankara may add its voice to the U.S. and EU efforts to impose an Olympic truce, but Russia has not yet shown any eagerness to listen.<sup>7</sup>

Turkey is one of the most receptive countries worried about the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. What can and could Turkey do for Georgian-South Ossetian conflict? Among Turkey's foreign policy priorities are the European Union, Cyprus, and the Middle East. Turkey should include the Caucasus among those priorities because Turkey shares a border with the Caucasus and because it is the only country in the world that shares a common bond with all the peoples of the Caucasus. As a result, the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency's (TİKA) influence in the region should be increased in order to implement economic, educational, and cultural projects in the region. Turkish civil society organizations that want to be active in the region should also boldly step forward.

Turkey has made it clear that it does not support separatist movements because of the similar problems that Azerbaijan and itself have been facing. For this reason, it supports the territorial integrity of states with separatist problems. However, it also has refrained from moves that will harm its sensitive relations with Russia.

Turkey may assume a role of arbitration in this conflict as it has in Middle Eastern conflicts because Russia's participation and the voluntary support of the Caucasian peoples will make the conditions harder for Georgia. Georgia asked for Turkey's support when Russia became involved in the war and started bombing peaceful areas outside the war zone.<sup>8</sup> The situation is sensitive for Turkey. Ankara receives more than 30% of its natural gas from Russia, so Turkey should assume the role of mediator to ensure that the issue is discussed in U.N. circles and that peace is maintained. And, of course, Turkey should consider the humanitarian view of the conflict and supply support aid for the people in the conflict zone.

There are several aspects to the Georgian-South Ossetian war. Turkey cannot regard it as a simple Georgian-South Ossetian-Russian war. Russia is in the middle of the conflict. Turkey supports Georgia because of their strategic ties. In addition, Turkey favors Georgia's territorial integrity in principle because Azerbaijan is immersed in a similar problem in Karabakh. On the other hand, the northern Caucasian peoples in Turkey support South Ossetia. There is a sizeable Cau-

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<sup>7</sup> See: M.K. Kaya, S.E. Cornell, "Turkey and the Georgian War: A Bungled Stability Initiative," *Turkey Analyst*, Vol. 1, No. 12, 29 August, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> See: S. Oğan, "Gürcistan-Güney Osetya savaşında cephe genişlerken, Gürcistan kaybediyor," (...As Georgia Loses), *Zaman*, 11 August, 2008.

casian diaspora in Turkey that generally supports South Ossetia. Moreover, Turkey has deepened its strategic relations with Russia. In this case, Turkey cannot be expected to take sides with either party.<sup>9</sup>

Turkish public opinion is obviously on Georgia's side. There is a considerable ethnic Georgian population. Russian bombs have fallen on either side of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Turkish trade and tourism are being damaged more and more as the conflict goes on. Another reason for Turkey's anxiety is that Georgia is a transit country for Turkey. The country hosts important pipelines and transportation corridors. The BTC pipeline, the Shah Deniz-Erzurum gas pipeline, and the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku (KTB) railway project are all factors that multiply Turkey's concerns. It is well known that Turkey equips Georgian military, provides technological support for the Georgian army, and even repaired a military airport in that country. In general, Turkey extends military support to Georgia. The Russian press has emphasized that Turkey is at the top of the list of countries giving support to Georgia.<sup>10</sup>

## Turkey's Suggestion of a "Caucasian Alliance"

Turkey is looking for a pact that is mainly concentrated on security, stability, and expansion with the participation of the Southern Caucasus, the Russian Federation, and Western countries. The key areas of concern in this pact will be the reorganization of the Caucasian republics' economies, ensuring development and cooperation, boosting economic cooperation with the world, fostering free trade, supporting the private sector, ensuring environmental protection, putting to use existing and future energy and transportation lines extending from the east to the west, adapting the administrative structure, ensuring administrative transparency, tackling immigrant issues and ensuring their integration, as well as similar issues.<sup>11</sup>

Turkey has not taken any important steps during this conflict, apart from taking humanitarian precautions. It has adopted a passive policy. It did not move toward an active policy until 11 and 12 August when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President Abdullah Gül made public statements.<sup>12</sup>

Turkey launched an active foreign policy plan with the statements made by Prime Minister Erdoğan on 11 August and President Gül on 12 August. Since Sarkozy was representing the EU as the term president, and not France, Erdoğan was the first prime minister to visit Tbilisi since the conflict in Georgia began. Turkey's official attendance in Tbilisi was the right foreign policy move. Erdoğan's delegation included Foreign Minister Ali Babacan and Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister Ahmet Davudoğlu, signaling that Turkey will take care of the Caucasus as one of its foreign policy priorities.

<sup>9</sup> See: S. İdiz, "Türkiye'yi Batı'ya iten Rusya'dır" (Russia Pushes Turkey to the West), *Milliyet*, 11 August, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> See: Y. Poyraz, "Conflict in the Caucasus: Risk or Opportunity for Turkey?" *Today's Zaman*, 17 August, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> See: J. Senkyr, "Türkei schlägt Stabilitätspakt für den Kaukasus vor," 26 August, 2008, available at [www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\_14480-544-1-30.pdf].

<sup>12</sup> Erdoğan arrived in Moscow on 13 August and went to Tbilisi on 14 August, one day after French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

As far as the inconsistent performance and behavior of regional and extra-regional actors mentioned above are concerned, the Caucasus Alliance suggested by Turkey, boosted by an interdependence model of liberal thinking, rests on close economic relations and institutional ties and is extremely unlikely to generate any promising results in establishing permanent peace in the region. Actually, Turkey suggested a very similar plan with the same objectives in the 1990s. This met with complete rejection from the Armenian side, which claimed that it was against the national interests of both Armenia and Russia and that it was nothing but an aim to save the “old Pan-Turkish dream” of uniting all Turks from the Caucasus to Central Asia.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, the proposal Turkey is now making is something that has been discussed in international relation security studies for years, usually between liberal and realist security thinkers. Turkey’s suggestion of an “alliance” for the Caucasus takes its rational base from liberal views on security solutions that have become principal as responses to those of the state-centric realist opinion in interstate relations.

A “Caucasian Alliance” may be established along the lines of the Balkan Political Club, formed with the participation of former heads of state in the Balkans. By keeping the doors of dialog open at a high level, this may serve to put an end to the emerging conflicts. The Eurasian Cooperation Action Plan signed by and between Turkey and the Russian Federation on 6 November, 2001 may be refreshed with a vision to boost cooperation in economic, cultural, and educational issues with the Russian Federation in the Eurasian Region, as well as the Caucasus. Turkey may exert a lot of time and effort in reorganizing the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which was established in 1992 under the leadership of Turkey, in order to prevent the emergence of problems and conflicts in the region and to talk about political issues.<sup>14</sup>

The main problem haunting the search for cooperation in the Caucasus is the lack of adequate social, political and economic institutions in the Caucasian republics. It is very important to secure the territorial integrity of these republics and carry out successful democratic and economic reforms. For this reason, the support offered these countries is mainly aimed at restructuring democratic institutions, enhancing the economic structures, and fostering the development of civil society and law. The success of the Southern Caucasian countries is dependent on the development of democracy and civil society and making their economies part of the global economy, including the marketing of oil resources. Ensuring security, stability, and development in the region—including the Caucasus and Central Asia and extending from the Mediterranean to China—will help to bring Caucasian and Central Asian oil and natural gas to the international markets. It would be an advantageous and realistic move to launch a regional development program and a regional peace program with the participation of the Russian Federation and within the framework of the Caucasian Stability and Cooperation Platform.

## *C o n c l u s i o n s*

One of the most unfortunate things for Turkey has always been that its neighbors have never been able to find a stable position in the international power structure or realize real peace. For example, the war in Iraq is still going on; Syria remains excluded from the international system; and Iran

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<sup>13</sup> See: J. Senkyr, “Ein schwieriger Balanceakt, Türkische Außenpolitik im Kaukasus,” *Die politische Meinung*, November 2008, S. 37.

<sup>14</sup> See: M.K. Kaya, S.E. Cornell, op. cit.

has the dangerous potential of becoming the focus of an international clash because of its insatiable ambition to become a nuclear power. And there is no need to point out Turkey's problematic relations with another of its neighbors, Armenia.

Turkey's north-eastern neighbor Georgia, a country with which Turkey has had no problems for years vis-à-vis bilateral relations, has now become the center of a violent "power struggle" between the West and Russia. Only the consequence of this power struggle will decide whether Georgia will become a NATO member or not. And it seems that the winner of the first round of this great power struggle has been neither Tbilisi nor the West, but Russia.

After being swept to power four years ago on the back of a popular revolution called the Rose Revolution and welcomed by the West, Georgian leader Mikhail Saakashvili pledged to bring South Ossetia and Abkhazia back under Georgia's control. This has also been a requirement for Georgia in order to make the country entitled to potential NATO membership.

All the actors in the region know very well that there is much more at risk in the struggle than the future of the two small breakaway republics because it is clear that a much greater conflict than that is underway in the Caucasus today. One key is the recognition earlier this year by NATO and European Union countries of Kosovo's independence from Serbia. It is a well-known fact that Russia opposed this.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, it tried to turn the defeat to its benefit by pushing the argument that if Kosovo could be independent, so too could the Abkhazians and Ossetians. This was an important development in Russia's reaction to what it regards as balanced Western containment.

Now Turkey supports Georgia's territorial integrity. Any new small states in the region only create more problems and Turkey is extremely aware of this. But what will Turkey do if it is faced with making a choice between supporting Tbilisi and Abkhazia's struggle for independence? If Turkey acts with the Western bloc and supports Tbilisi, it will not only estrange the Abkhazians, who have a sizeable presence in Turkey, but will also be confronting Moscow. If it supports an independent state or more autonomy for the Abkhazians (and South Ossetians), it will find itself on a crash course with Europe and the U.S. In both scenarios, Turkey will be faced with a difficult situation. The only way to stop this existing conflict from turning into an all-out war is to persuade Russia to hold back and convince the Europeans to put off their Georgian plans. But it will take a huge amount of political capital and shuttle diplomacy to achieve any specific results before positions become ensconced and permanent steps are taken.

Because of its close proximity to Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkey cannot easily ignore the region. Therefore Georgia is the key country in Turkey's contact with the Caucasus and Central Asia, given Ankara's problematic relations with Armenia. Turkey's role is all the more important given Iran's position and its conflict with the West.

Together with the South Caucasian countries and the Russian Federation, Turkey should work on the Stability and Cooperation Platform in the Caucasus. In order to prevent further clashes in the region and to ease the present ones, the Caucasian Alliance project—made up of intellectuals—should be supported with the participation of Turkish intellectuals and NGOs.

The Balkan Club could also be copied in the Caucasus in order to foster an informal dialog and thus prevent conflicts. Turkey and the Russian Federation could also reconsider the "Eurasia Cooperation Action Plan," which was signed on 16 November, 2001. In addition, the activity of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, which was established on Turkey's initiative, could be stepped up to include political developments as well.

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<sup>15</sup> See: M. Klein, "Die Beziehungen der EU zum Kaukasus: neue Dynamik ohne klare Strategie," *Die Genese einer Union* der 27, 2008, S. 331-350.



Tension will remain high in the region until the Russian Federation gets what it wants. Until Georgia makes up its mind about Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it will not be able to integrate into the European-Atlantic world. This war has shown Turkey that it needs to support policies aimed at maintaining peace with regional organizations and establishing bilateral relations in the Caucasus.

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RELIGION AND SOCIETY

**NEW FORM OF  
RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM  
IN KAZAKHSTAN:  
DESTRUCTIVE SECTS AND CULTS**

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*I n t r o d u c t i o n*

The current religious situation in Kazakhstan is characterized by the emergence and strengthening of radical religious communities, an expansion in the scope of activity of non-traditional beliefs, an increase in the influence of the foreign missionary movement, and an enlargement in the social base of sectarian organizations, particularly by means of young people. All of

these changes should be qualified as the most obvious development trends in the current religious situation in Kazakhstan.

An analysis of this situation in Kazakhstan points in particular to the growing activity of a new generation of destructive sects and cults, which is arousing the greatest concern. This trend is especially dangerous since the Kazakh youth,

for whom religion is increasingly becoming a value system that regulates social behavior, the psychology of communication, and a philosophical attitude toward life, has a very vague idea about the difference between traditional religion and pseudo-religious views and outlooks.

**Main Characteristics of Destructive Sects and Cults.** Destructive sects and cults all share the fact that they are opposed to traditional religion since they are all based on an artificial world outlook that is not backed by any real religious theological substance. As a rule, destructive sects and cults are emerging during the leveling out of religious traditions as a result of the spiritual crisis in society today,<sup>1</sup> as well as due to the exploitation and commercialization of religion. The characteristics of sectarian and cult organizations are very similar, since they are all based on the same criteria: extreme heterogeneity and contradictoriness with respect to ideology and doctrine, a spirit of dissension and separatism, totalitarian teaching, and severe "criticism of traditional religions for deviating from original beliefs and practice."<sup>2</sup> Their structural organization, methods of influence, and striving for dynamic spiritual expansion among the population, particularly among the youth, are also similar.

During their development they have reexamined or greatly distorted the general system of world values of traditional religion and religious mysticism. Claiming the extra-ordinary nature of their belief, they continuously elaborate new applied methods, focusing attention on psychological and emotional aspects and often supplementing their teaching with unusual practices. Whereby this trend has become so obvious that over the past few decades essentially all of these sects and cults have undergone immense transformations and changes in appearance.

They have managed to become extremely widespread in Kazakhstan, particularly among

the Kazakh youth, due to their success in adapting to the competition in present-day society. The results of the studies we carried out based on the testimonies of former adepts show that the doctrinal principles of these cults boil down to an eclectic mixture of various occult, magic, spiritualistic, theosophical, anthroposophical, and other anti-systemic views diluted with hypnosis and other mediumistic revelations of the spirit world. Man is viewed as the bearer of secret spiritual forces. These forces supposedly help him to alienate himself from traditional religious experience and overcome it as supposedly not meeting the mystical requirements and intellectual capabilities of modern man. Quasi-religious and quasi-mystical experiences are a special feature of these trends, whereby active experiments are carried out on the human psyche, for example, brainwashing an individual or group, engaging in deep penetration into the conscience and subconscious of adepts, having an overbearing influence on the personality, preaching the possibility of developing supernatural abilities in a person with the emphasis on group practices as a means of unity, and so on.

In the ideological respect, destructive sects and cults claim to form world value systems and introduce new spiritual and moral references at the national level to replace the traditional views.

We should pay particular attention to those sects and cults that aim to create paradise on earth, strive for universal happiness, and satisfy people's momentary desires. These sects declare that paradise can be created on Earth, a paradise where everyone will be happy. Such missionaries are convinced that the country they have come to needs to be saved, for the sake of which its society must pool all of its spiritual, political, and economic forces. Preventing an environmental disaster, resolving a spiritual and social crisis in the universe, and other global problems constitute an incomplete, but representative list of the good intentions of all kinds of sectarians. No matter what country or culture they find themselves in, their main mission they believe is to help that country and its people in every possible way they can. This assistance basically boils

<sup>1</sup> See: N. Volodina, "Gosudarstvenno-pravovoi aspekt svobody sovesti i veroispovedaniia v sovremennoi Rossii," in: *Chelovek. Priroda. Obshchestvo. Aktual'nye problemy*, St. Petersburg University Publishers, St. Petersburg, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *Religiia, svoboda sovesti, gosudarstvenno-tserkovnye otmosheniia v Rossii*, Moscow, 1996, pp. 7-8.

down to providing the world with a new revelation, a new belief that will replace what the sectarians believe to be “outmoded” world religions and their religious denominations. Theological experts’ examinations and the studies carried out in this sphere show that “as a rule, this type of religious trend severely criticizes the situation that has developed in the world. This arouses distrust and even hostility among people who feel that such religious movements pose a threat to the status quo.”<sup>3</sup>

On the whole, a description of non-traditional religious views and outlooks which use a mixture of religious theology, mysticism, and occultism shows that today they all, although they emerged from the depths of the religious and mystical traditions of the Middle Ages, have turned into destructive sects and cults with very clear anti-religious doctrines and destructive consequences for mankind.

In today’s world, the activity of different types of sects is being severely criticized and condemned, since the contradictions between their doctrinal and conceptual views and religious and religious-mystical outlooks often brings them into conflict with the religious community, authorities, and society in many countries of the world.

The negative consequences of their activity today is a widely proven fact. In today’s world, the risk group associated with their activity is universal and widespread. The activity of Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, creates a mass of problems for the authorities and society wherever traditional religion is still firmly rooted.

Destructive sects and cults are of particular psychological detriment to the immature minds of young people in that they modify their customary religious orientation and undermine the system of stable ethnic and religious values in the minds of the younger generation. The matter essentially concerns activity leading to destabilization of the religious situation and consequences that are dangerous for any state and its indigenous population.

<sup>3</sup> S. Ivanenko, *O liudiakh, nikogda ne rasstaiushchikhsia s Bibliiei*, Art-Biznes-Tsentr, Moscow, 1999, p. 157.

**The Spread of Destructive Sects and Cults in Kazakhstan.** Among the destructive sectarian and cult organizations that have undergone the greatest development in Kazakhstan special mention should be made of the Family sect. This sect remains confined to rented apartments and does not make contact with the outside world without recommendations. Active contacts have been noted with foreigners, who often supervise this sect. In Kazakhstan’s major cities, colorful leaflets are openly distributed bearing religious texts and pictures of Christ embracing joyous children who are ascending to heaven.

A sect’s activity usually begins with carrying out charity campaigns in the form of concerts and making donations to various organizations, which results in the collection of documents testifying to the supposedly enlightening and charitable nature of this organization. In this way, the sect acquires positive credentials for registering its local cells.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses also feel at home in Kazakhstan. Their main distinguishing feature is that they “regularly hold regional congresses, whereby in some cases in violation of the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and contrary to the prohibitions of the local power structures. The sectarians reject all earthly governments and everything associated with them: service in the army, taking oaths of allegiance, state holidays, honoring the flag and state symbols, nor do they endorse any secular education. Whereby members of the Jehovah’s Witnesses are to pay full and sincere tribute to their leader. The most dangerous thing in the activity of the Jehovah’s Witnesses is their refusal to allow blood transfusions, since they believe that this is a violation of the Old Testament prohibition on ingesting blood.”<sup>4</sup>

In Kazakhstan the Jehovah’s Witnesses have registered more than one hundred communities and have members in almost every city. They hold a particularly strong position in the south of the

<sup>4</sup> A. Guriev, N. Nurabenov, “Sumrachnaia ten’ storozhevoi bashni,” *Megapolis*, No. 14 (379), 14 April, 2008, available at [[http://www.megapolis.kz/show\\_article.php?art\\_id=8683](http://www.megapolis.kz/show_article.php?art_id=8683)].

country. For example, they have active communities in Shymkent, Turkestan, Kentau, Lenger, Sara-Agash, Zhetysai, and other population settlements where ethnic Kazakhs and Uzbeks mainly live.<sup>5</sup> According to the numerous testimonies and newspaper reports from Kazakhstan's southern regions, the activity of the members of this sect has long become a local problem.

The Church of Scientology is particularly active in Kazakhstan. This society is officially registered in Almaty and Pavlodar, but it has also been seen in the Karaganda and Kostanai regions, as well as in Semei. There are also about a dozen of other organizations operating in the republic that are associated with the Scientologists, which, according to specialists, carry out their activity under the guise of various public associations, such as Dianetics, Narconon, and Criminon. For example, in Astana the sect's activity is carried out under the cover of various Dianetic centers which receive visitors, carry out various tests, and hold seminars, presentations, and paid psychological séances.<sup>6</sup>

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is one of the most widespread Oriental sects that are very active in Kazakhstan. The first official Krishnaites appeared here in 1989. Since then their ranks have swelled manifold, particularly with young people from the vulnerable groups of the population.

There is no information on the number of followers of the Society for Krishna Consciousness in Kazakhstan since the Krishnaites themselves usually do not publicize this data. It is only known that the "society of Krishnaites in Kazakhstan is the largest in Central Asia."<sup>7</sup> According to the statistics on the Kazakhstan government's website, the number of International Society for Krishna Consciousness organizations in

the republic has grown between 1990 and 2006 from several to fifty-five.<sup>8</sup>

The Krishnaites became publicly known at the end of 2006 when their illegal buildings were pulled down in dacha settlements in the Karasai district of the Almaty Region. This event, which prompted the international Krishna society to launch a mass information campaign against Kazakhstan using political, media, and public resources, was significant for the Kazakhstan authorities since it made clear the influence and connections the Krishnaites have all over the world. It was obvious that the strong information and propaganda support aimed at discrediting Kazakhstan in the global information space could not have been gleaned without the Kazakhstan branch of the Krishna Society's close ties not only with its head office but also with well-known world information agencies, including the governments of several foreign countries.

Krishnaism is particularly distinguished by the division of the cult doctrine into several parts, which is characteristic of totalitarian organizations. One of them is a façade designed for public opinion and potential followers. It has little in common with the true contents of the teaching and is used as bait. Another is for people who have already been "brainwashed" during the constant mantras and rituals and consequently lost their capacity for rationally assessing what is good and what is bad from a human perspective and not from the viewpoint of their "god." And still another is for people who clearly know what they are doing and why, and what objectives are being attained, for those who hold the strings of the organization's management in their hands. Krishnaites say that if Krishna chooses to deceive a person, no one can surpass Him in His deceit.<sup>9</sup>

On the whole, despite its outwardly peace-loving position, the Krishnaites sect is actually de-

<sup>5</sup> See: A. Abubakirov, "Missiia vpolnima?" *Megapolis*, No. 1 (265), 9 January, 2006, available at [http://www.megapolis.kz/show\_article.php?art\_id=1056].

<sup>6</sup> See: D. Datov, "Saietologicheskaiia indulgentsiia," *Megapolis*, No. 7 (372), 25 February, 2008, available at [http://www.megapolis.kz/show\_article.php?art\_id=8093].

<sup>7</sup> A. Grishin, "Goneniia na krishnaitov v Kazakhstane: religiozniy konflikt ili bor'ba za sobstvennost'?" 27 April, 2006, *Fergana.ru* [http://www.vlasti.net/news/10235].

<sup>8</sup> See: M. Sokolov, "V mire sekt. Kak shla "ideologicheskaiia bombardirovka" Kazakhstana," 29 May, 2008, available at *Vlasti.net* [http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4369].

<sup>9</sup> See: *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is*, Transl. by A.C. Probhupada, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, New York, 1970, p. 704 (see also [http://www.asitis.com/10/36.html]).

scribed as a totalitarian Oriental cult that promulgates anti-patriotic and anti-national views among its adepts, as well as a disdainful attitude toward anyone who is not a member of the cult. The sect has different names around the world, but everywhere its followers are called Krishnaites. Judging by everything and contrary to the numerous statements about universal love, Krishnaites only accept the caste system as the basis of interpersonal relations.

The Satanist sect and cults associated with it are the most closed organizations and operate secretly in Kazakhstan. This is one of the most destructive and dangerous sects, since it gained notorious publicity in connection with numerous instances of deaths, both among the sect's adepts and among outsiders who became victims of the derision and terrorism of sectarian Satanists.

According to unofficial data, there are five Satanic communities in Kazakhstan. But it is impossible to establish the exact size of these com-

munities. Their numbers fluctuate from several hundred to more than two thousand people. In the mid-1990s, in Saran, a small town in the Karaganda Region, Satanists even tried to obtain the status of a legal entity and to this end repeatedly and unsuccessfully submitted a registration application to the local power structures. "According to the documents submitted for registration, the total size of the Karaganda community at that time amounted to 83 people. According to some data, the Saran Church of Satan has now ceased its existence. But no one can testify to precisely how true this is. Most likely the sectarians simply went far underground."<sup>10</sup> At the same time, judging by the publications of the Kazakh mass media, the Satanists and groups associated with them are most active in the Almaty, East Kazakhstan, South Kazakhstan, and Karaganda regions.

<sup>10</sup> O. Morozova, "Sektantstvo i zakon," 16 August, 2004, *Gazeta.kz* [<http://www.gazeta.kz/art.asp?aid=48596>].

## Main Reasons for the Spread in Activity of Destructive Sects and Cults in Kazakhstan

The main reason for the increase in the influence of destructive sectarian and cult organizations in Kazakhstan is the weak regulation of society's religious life at the state level. The active external interference of foreign religious charity organizations in the country's religious sphere is also playing its part. The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Orthodox Church have repeatedly expressed their concern about this. Imams and priests often note that an insistent need has arisen for amending the RK Law on Freedom of Confession and Religious Associations and the RK Law on Making Amendments and Addenda to Some RK Legislative Acts Regarding Freedom of Confession with respect to placing restrictions on the activity of sects and non-traditional religious organizations in Kazakhstan. "In France, Germany, and Northern Europe, precise and strict legislative regulations are in effect regarding totalitarian sects. Therefore, strong anti-sectarian legislation must be adopted in Kazakhstan,"<sup>11</sup> notes press secretary of the Astana and Almaty dioceses Archpriest Alexander Ievlev. Many ordinary believers also think that Islam and Russian Orthodoxy should be given a privileged status in Kazakhstan's religious legislation.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Zh. Amerberkova, "Sekty massovogo zarazheniia," *Megapolis*, No. 50 (314), 18 December, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

In addition, state policy does not contain a clear conception of the place of religion in society and the state or with respect to the regulation of the activity of religious organizations. Since attempts to designate the state's priorities in religious policy are giving rise to heated discussions, the question of drawing up and adopting a corresponding conception remains open. For example, in 2002, the Kazakhstan authorities attempted to legislatively restrict the activity of nontraditional confessions by making amendments to the Law on Religions, but this generated a flood of admonitions from non-governmental human rights organizations and some members of the liberal community. As a result, most of the amendments were recognized by the RK Constitutional Council as unconstitutional and rejected.

Another reason for the fortification of destructive sects and cults is partly due to the growing economic and political presence of foreign countries which is, on the whole, reinforcing nontraditional religious-mystical views in Kazakhstan. A good case in point is the experience of the South Korean Sun Myung Moon sect and their advocates who have firmly occupied a certain niche in Kazakhstani spiritual life, particularly among ethnic Koreans. So it can be seen that one of the realities of contemporary geopolitics is that foreign countries can have a certain influence on the domestic situation of another state. This is an important factor promoting a gradual change in the religious situation in any country regardless of how religious the population is.

In this way, the situation that has developed in the struggle against destructive sects and cults in Kazakhstan today is unique. Whereas the activity of religious-extremist sects and organizations that position themselves as Muslim is prohibited in Kazakhstan by the law, the activity of religious missionaries in the form of various Christian and Eastern preachers who represent religious institutions and sectarian organizations and movements that are nontraditional for the republic's population is still going on legally. Whereas radicals from Hizb ut-Tahrir, Tabligi jamaat, and Eastern Turkestan have gone underground, Scientologists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, as well as various Oriental and Satanic cults are actively swelling their ranks with new adepts from among the indigenous population. The situation is such that the mass influx of foreign missionary movements from among the nontraditional religious-mystic and mystic-occult teachings and traditions into the republic is continuing.

On the whole, the current religious situation in Kazakhstan can be described as potentially dangerous. It should primarily be noted that real risk factors have appeared in Kazakhstan society that threaten to upset the traditional religious balance of interests and interconfessional consent. It is obvious that Kazakhstan has become fertile ground for destructive sects and cults, organizations and associations, and the foreign missionary movement as a whole to put down firm roots. These circumstances could overturn the world outlook of ordinary Kazakhs, upset the interconfessional balance and equilibrium in the republic, aggravate the foundation of the population's cultural-historical consolidation, and pose a serious threat to the principles of tolerance and interconfessional consent among the representatives of different confessions. It is no accident that the Kazakhstani authorities today draw particular attention to the activity of the numerous religious communities, both those that have obtained official registration and those operating secretly.

At the same time, it should be noted that the interests of the world special services and foreign governments can be seen behind the energetic efforts of foreign religious organizations, including sects and cults, to carry out widespread preaching and missionary work in Kazakhstan. The series of espionage exposures among sectarians and the representatives of nontraditional cults that flared up at the end of 2007-beginning of 2008 in Kazakhstan and in the Central Asian countries shows that the dynamic and efficient activity of the foreign sectarian movement would have been impossible from the very beginning without the consent and approval of foreign special services and governments. For example, in the Kazakhstan media information periodically appears about criminal cases being instigated and sectarians being arrested, accusations regularly appear against missionary organizations and

movements that receive financial help and organization instructions from the outside for promulgating their goals. All of this shows that large financial resources, clear organizational structuring, and a streamlined system of ideological and propaganda work among the different strata of the population have made it possible for sectarians to significantly expand their presence in Kazakhstan in a short time. Moreover, the achievements in the active functioning of the sectarian movement are partly associated with the fact that new world values are primarily being introduced into those social groups of the population that comprise the most active and influential part of society, that is, among citizens living in large cities and engaged in politics, business, and science.

In order to attain their goals, sectarians are rendering material assistance to new adepts, teaching them English, finding them jobs, helping their relatives and close family members to find work, or providing shelter for the homeless or acquaintances that have found themselves in a temporarily difficult situation. Often sectarians engage in charity. This is done in order to show the organization's good intentions toward the local population by their own example. There are a multitude of cases where young boys and girls from rural regions come to the big city and find new patrons there who give them everything they need – free housing, food, and education. Such public acts by sectarians cannot help but arouse a positive response among the broad strata of uneducated people, particularly among young people and people with a low income level. For older and younger people, participation in a sectarian movement also means additional earnings and, to a certain extent, a way of attaining self-realization.

In other words, sectarians have rather effectively established a mechanism for expanding their social base, which is shown by the fact that more and more new adepts are being drawn to destructive sects and cults. In so doing, the main emphasis is placed on training local staff, since proselytism among the local population signifies the most effective and long-term use of resources and investments. After setting everything up at the local level, foreign sectarians set their adepts on the right path and introduce commercial forms of mutual payments, which boils down to siphoning off financial and other dividends from the local communities. By being physically located beyond the country, foreign pastors avoid publicity. The main work in the provinces is usually carried out by Kazakhstani citizens, for example ethnic Koreans, Kazakhs, and Russians. So the most destructive sects and cults, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, are headed by representatives of the indigenous population.

Today Kazakh society is actively discussing the possibility of adopting a whole series of new addenda to the country's religious legislation with respect to the abovementioned issues. The country's authorities have evidently understood that sectarian teachings are not only detrimental to society, but also discredit the very idea and essence of religion. For as practice shows, the sectarians are trying to alienate people from their families, society, and the cultural and social life of their country. There are many who deny and ignore the historical traditions, everyday customs, and morals of their people and pose a threat to the physical and mental health of people. In so doing they are not only undermining the fundamental principles of the traditional religions and confessions, but are also shaking the state foundations of society.

In this respect, in May of this year the RK Majilis adopted amendments to the draft law On Making Amendments and Addenda to Some Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan Regarding Freedom of Confession and Religious Associations. These changes are aimed at placing certain restrictions on the activity of destructive sects and cults, as well as on nontraditional quasi-religious teachings and traditions in Kazakhstan. They are also called upon to toughen up the regulations with respect to foreign missionary activity.



## THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS: SPREAD OF JIHAD

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The “post-perestroika” separatist-minded elites that came to power in Chechnia in the early 1990s and aspired to achieve ideological consolidation of the Chechens made an attempt to revive some of the elements of the old traditional social system based on blood kinship. At the grass-roots level there were clans of close blood relatives (from the bottom up: *d’ozal*, *var*, *varis*) and larger social structures (*taips* and *tukhums*) that together formed the Chechen nation—*nokhchi k’am*. The great number of taips and tukhums and the fact that the Vainakhs lacked any statehood experience buried the idea. The Chechen leaders had to place their stakes on the ideology of traditional “local Islam” of the Sufi virds Kunta-hajji and Vis-hajji that belonged to the Qadiriyya Tariqah (known in Chechnia as Zikrizm).

This did not create the desired ideological cohesion for the simple fact that the Chechens are scattered throughout several dozen Sufi structures (Vird brotherhoods). This moved “integration Islam,” which rejected everything that might divide the Muslims—races, ethnic groups, taips, and other local ethnic and confessional groups—to the frontline. In the Northern Caucasus it is known as Wahhabism (Salafism).

Today, with part of the road toward restored normalcy in Chechnia successfully covered, the situation still leaves much to be desired. The defeat of the separatists in Chechnia and the spread of the Salafi ideology across the Northern Caucasus transformed “resistance” partly into “guerrilla warfare” and partly into mobile and loosely connected terrorist groups.

### The “Youth Jamaats”: Institutionalized Terror

Today the extremist religious-political organizations are functioning in the Northern Caucasus as network structures with no obligations to their soldiers and no compunction about aims and means. In the broader sense the networks are self-organizing polycentric structures oriented toward specific aims and tasks and consisting of completely autonomous or even temporary groups with absolutely transparent legitimization of power, decentralized responsibility, and horizontal (as well as vertical) contacts and communications. They are open groups of loosely connected, equal and independent members, which means that they can spread by admitting new groups (which use similar communication codes, that is, address the same tasks and/or share similar values).

They are much more mobile and much less vulnerable than the centralized organizations; they are perfectly adjusted to infiltration into power and administrative structures, corruption practices, etc., are much more resistant and regenerate easily.<sup>1</sup>

Today, and for some time in the past, the terrorist communities have been developing a network organizational form much better suited to their needs; they have moved away from the hierarchically arranged lineal forms toward network structures.

The network model ensures more secrecy and efficiency as well as financial self-sufficiency in the globalized world. The developing information technologies allow terrorist structures to promptly coordinate their actions irrespective of their scales.

This means that the centralized terrorist organizations of the past are being replaced with transnational network structures composed of numerous autonomous cells tied together by ideology which can organize terrorist acts in any corner of the world. The most dangerous (and the most widespread) is a segmented, polycentric, and ideologically integrated international terrorist network that can use organized crime and the shadow business. In short, the range of potential members is unlimited.

The conglomerate of networks, which is growing bigger by admitting all sorts of networks—terrorist, financial, and criminal (narcotics, slave trade, illegal arms trade, etc.)—is acquiring new qualities and becoming absolutely autonomous, looser than before and, therefore, less vulnerable.<sup>2</sup>

Their efficiency, as well as the efficiency of the fighter groups that belong to them, is determined by better coordination, wider organizational possibilities, and more active information exchange (online and otherwise). This makes the networks nearly perfectly suited to the so-called “swarm” wars waged according to the principle of “fighting pack.”<sup>3</sup> After delivering a blow at a previously coordinated place and time the fighters and supporting units (which arrive from different regions, republics, or even countries) disappear: they fall apart into smaller groups, immediately leave the scene of the crime, or blend with the local people.

These tactics used in low-intensity conflicts have been and remain highly efficient even when used against well-protected targets and military facilities. They are equally effective in megapolises when targeted at poorly protected civilian facilities and the ordinary people.

In the last three or four years the terrorist movement in the Northern Caucasus has been moving in this direction: by that time the first echelon of field commanders and active fighters of the illegal armed units (IAU) that stood opposed to the federal center were exterminated. The new generation of the North Caucasian radicals could no longer follow in their footsteps. It promptly organized itself into a clandestine urban network of terrorist structures found in nearly all the North Caucasian republics.

The so-called jamaats largely based on the ethnic principle and operating in the corresponding republics are the typical organizational form of the North Caucasian radicals. The elder generation of fighters was gradually replaced by young men whose jamaats came to be known in academic and journalist writings as youth jamaats.<sup>4</sup>

Today terrorist networks of youth jamaats are operating in nearly all the constituencies of the Southern Federal Okrug. In the late 1990s-early 2000s they communicated at the higher command

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<sup>1</sup> See: E.G. Soloviev, *Transformatsiia terroristicheskikh organizatsii v usloviakh globalizatsii*, Moscow, 2006, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>3</sup> I.P. Dobaev, A.G. Dugin, “Rol i mesto ‘tsvetnykh revoliutsii’ v geopoliticheskikh transformatsiakh v Kaspiisko-Chernomorskom regione,” in: *Evrasiiskii proekt: kavkazskii vector. Yuzhnorossiiskoe obozrenie*, Issue 30, Rostov-on-Don, 2005, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> The term “youth jamaats” was introduced into academic and journalistic circulation by Russian expert in Islamic and Caucasian studies A. Iarlykapov.

and even the grass-roots level; today the independent network structures communicate indirectly, mainly at the ideological level.

Organizationally young terrorists copy similar Mid-Eastern structures: the commander's undivided authority, close ranks, lavish charity, and mutual assistance inside the organization (in this respect they emulate the Islamic Resistance Movement—HAMAS).

An analysis of what has been written about the youth jamaats suggests that the network structures are highly viable, autonomous, and self-reproductive. Today the Wahhabi fighters are kept together by the latest ideological examples created abroad and "enriched" with local ideas.

Terrorism was, is, and will remain the main political weapon of those who preach religious-political extremism; radical ideologies justify terrorism and subversive activities.

In an effort to improve their tactics the youth jamaats abandoned the practice of frontal attacks; they have armed themselves with subversive and terrorist "swarm" tactics. They change bases, maneuver, and unite with similar groups if the need arises. The communication that groups and bases maintain allows them to coordinate their actions. In other words, the neo-Wahhabi groups have developed into a modern Islamist terrorist movement based on the "spider web" principle. The guerillas of the past have moved down from the mountain forests to the cities; they enlist young men without a criminal record and even students of secondary schools and higher educational establishments.

## Spread of Terror: the Consequences

The spread of terror in the Northern Caucasus earlier predicted by only a few has become a reality. The situation in the Northeastern Caucasus (Daghestan and Ingushetia) arouses special concern; it has already greatly affected the processes underway in other republics, Kabardino-Balkaria in particular.

In other words, "peace" in Chechnia did nothing to reduce the guerilla activities—the fighters merely moved to the other North Caucasian constituencies and plunged into terrorist activities.<sup>5</sup> Experts have already ascertained that the fighters are still well-coordinated and well-trained, acting secretly and synchronously; not infrequently they organized terrorist acts in several republics simultaneously. From time to time searches at terrorist bases produce detailed lists of militia and FSB officers, registration numbers of their cars and instructions for making bombs. According to the media, the fighters are as dedicated as before and usually have to be destroyed along with their bases.<sup>6</sup>

The meeting of Arab-dominated Majlis-ul-shura held in July 2005 was an important milestone in the history of the terrorist movement: Shamil Basaev was the only Chechen of its 12 members, the others were Arabs. The shura passed far-reaching decisions related to invigoration of Islamist clandestine activities in the Northern Caucasus. Amir Seifulla (Anzor Astemirov), one of the leaders of religious-political extremism in Kabardino-Balkaria (who earned notoriety in connection with the Nalchik events of 13-14 October, 2005), wrote: "In the summer of 2005 I attended a military majlis in Nalchik where amirs Abu Idris Abdullah Basaev, Khanif Iless Gorchkhanov, and Abu Muhammad Musa Mukozhev were discussing the possibility of joining the jamaats of Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria to the Caucasian Front."<sup>7</sup> It was then that the Kabarda and Karachai jamaats were instructed

<sup>5</sup> See: *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 14 May, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> See: *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> [www.kavkazcenter.com].

to heat up the situation in Adygeia and the Caucasian Mineral Waters, respectively. Soon after that, in October 2005, fighters of the Kabardino-Balkarian jamaat attacked several facilities in Nalchik, the republic's capital.

It is common knowledge that for many years now the clandestine fighter groups have been acting under slogans of radical Islamism; the trend began under President Maskhadov of the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Its next president, Abdul-Khakim Sadulaev, said in so many words that the Maskhadov-Akhmadov plan ("democratic" or "Paris" plan), according to which Chechnia should have become a secular democratic state independent of Russia, had failed.<sup>8</sup> He insisted that the jihad in the Northern Caucasus was aimed at setting up an Islamic state that would incorporate all local Muslims. President Sadulaev, however, did not remain in office long enough to realize his pet idea. He set up an intermediary structure (the so-called Caucasian Front), divided it into sectors that coincided with the North Caucasian republics, and set about readjusting ideology and the resistance strategy with the emphasis on a network of armed jamaats across the Northern Caucasus.<sup>9</sup>

In October 2007, the new president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Doku Umarov (who came after Sadulaev), declared himself "the amir of all the fighters of the Caucasus and the leader of jihad" and "the only legitimate power wherever there are mujaheddin" in an address he placed on the Internet sites of the separatists. He refused to recognize the laws of the official authorities in the Caucasus and the world over: "I reject and outlaw everything that separates the Muslims. I outlaw all ethnic and territorial-colonial zones known as the North Caucasian republics, etc.... Russia is not our only enemy; America, Britain, and Israel, all countries at war with Islam and the Muslims, are also our enemies."<sup>10</sup> In this way the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria was transformed into an administrative-territorial unit (vilayet) of the North Caucasian Emirate.

This split the ranks of the Chechen separatists; Ahmed Zakaev, emissary of the Chechen separatists based in London who headed a new Ichkerian government, was even more displeased than many: "The split was caused by Russia's special services."<sup>11</sup>

Some experts believe that Umarov, who inherited a ready-made structure (the Caucasian Front) from Sadulaev, merely called it a state (the North Caucasian Emirate). Why the stormy response from the Chechen emigration in the West? The answer is simple: "The North Caucasian Emirate is one of the priority candidates for the list of terrorist organizations while the emigrants who settled in Europe do not want to be regarded as emissaries of a terrorist organization. The most far-sighted of them have already warded off the danger of criminal persecution."<sup>12</sup>

An analysis has revealed that the fighters of the numerous terrorist jamaats of the Northern Caucasus aim mainly at law enforcers, top officials, and official Muslim clergy. This is especially clear in the case of the following terrorist groups: Sharia and Jennet (Daghestan); Iarmuk (Kabardino-Balkaria), Caliphate (Ingushetia), etc. Since 2002 these categories of people have been consistently exterminated.

This is confirmed, for example, by the numerous terrorist acts and attempts on the lives of officials of state structures in the Chechen Republic. Recently the law enforcers have registered that the armed clandestine organizations have become much more active: in 2008 groups of several dozen fighters captured settlements on two occasions, attacked army officers and law enforcers, and were engaged in armed encounters with federal armed units and local law-enforcement structures.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See: M. Iakhimchik, "Dve Chechni—utopiia ili fakt?" *Zavtra*, 18 November, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> See: *IA Caucasus Times*, 22 November, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> "Doku Umarov raspustil Ichkeriiu," *Nastoiashchee vremia*, 2 November, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> *IA Caucasus Times*, 22 November, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> See: *Kommersant*, 1 September, 2008.

Terrorist activity in Daghestan reached its peak in 2005: law enforcers were attacked 108 times (explosive devices were used in 44 attempts); 39 terrorist acts and 44 attempts on the lives of law enforcers were exposed; 123 were detained; 50 were killed while resisting arrest; and 13 planned subversive and terrorist acts were prevented.

In June 2007, speaking at a conference in Makhachkala, Minister of the Interior of the Russian Federation Rashid Nurgaliev described the situation in Daghestan as disturbing. "In the last two and a half years," said the minister, "nearly 270 terrorist acts have been committed. They killed scores of militiamen, including top officers of the republic's Ministry of the Interior, Deputy Minister of the Interior Magomed Omarov being one of them... Eighty officers of the Ministry of the Interior were killed and 47 wounded."<sup>14</sup>

The situation in the Republic of Ingushetia is more or less similar. In 2004 it suffered a violent eruption of terrorist acts: in June terrorists carried out several well-coordinated attacks on some republican targets; in September there was the tragedy in Beslan devised, planned, and executed by the so-called Ingush jamaat. Later, terrorist activity in Ingushetia gained momentum both qualitatively and quantitatively, which made it the region's "weak link."

Kabardino-Balkaria, where there is a lot of talk about the "missionaries" who come to promote the ideas of jihad among the local youth, is another hot spot. The experts list the following closed Islamic structures that preach religious extremism and stand opposed to the Spiritual Administration of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria as extremist organizations: the Republican Shura and the so-called Jamaat Iarmuk.

The Shura is a well-organized structure of "Wahhabi jamaats" with a Shari'a-based vertical arrangement. It has a so-called Sharia court and the Kabardino-Balkarian Institute of Islamic Studies not registered with the republic's Ministry of Justice. The Republican Shura described its aim as gaining power through a gradual stage-by-stage process.

The Jamaat Iarmuk is another extremist organization with an inevitably negative impact on the situation in the republic; in the past its members belonged to the Gelaev band, which has an extensive criminal terrorist record in Kabardino-Balkaria (on 13-14 October, 2005 it attacked several of the defense and security structures in Nalchik).

In February 2006 the republic's Ministry of the Interior held a round table on the problem of terrorism and extremism. It presented a socio-psychological portrait of those involved in the terrorist acts in Nalchik on 13-14 October, 2005 compiled by the law enforcers and based on information related to 166 terrorists involved: 87 percent of them were young people between the ages of 20 and 30; 13 percent were older men over 30; 20 percent of the fighters had higher education; 15 percent had secondary specialized, and 1.2 percent had incomplete secondary education. Over half of them were married; 56 fighters had figured as suspects in criminal cases (7 cases of drug trafficking and 8 involving illegal arms trade).

In 2006 and 2007 the law enforcement bodies of Kabardino-Balkaria liquidated the larger part of the Jamaat Iarmuk during the course of several special operations. The survivors are on the "Wanted" list but the leaders of the radical Islamists have not abandoned their active terrorist and propaganda efforts on Internet sites such as Kavkaz-Center, Gamagat, and others, which regularly display the so-called addresses to the Muslims that shame those who refuse "to take up arms," call for terrorist and subversive activities, and threaten to carry out more terrorist acts in the republic.

Even though the wave of terrorist activities has somewhat subsided compared to 2005 the situation in the North Caucasian region remains fairly complicated. On 4 July, 2008 the director of the FSB of Russia said at the sitting of the National Antiterrorist Committee in Rostov-on-Don that

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<sup>14</sup> *Vesti Severny Kavkaz*, 6 June, 2007.

since the beginning of 2008 seven terrorist acts had been prevented and the activities of 80 heads and prominent members of terrorist structures had been stopped; over 30 terrorist-related acts had been prevented; and 130 homemade explosive devices, about 900 kilograms of explosives, and 600 units of firearms had been confiscated. The director had to admit that the Southern Federal Okrug was and remains the epicenter of terrorist activities: it was the scene of 80 percent of terrorist acts. "Attacks on law enforcers in Chechnia, Ingushetia, and Daghestan are going on and claim civilian lives. The bandits are trying to build up tension, slow down the peace efforts and demonstrate their relevance to their foreign sponsors," said the director. He also admitted that not all the North Caucasian regions had achieved efficiency in crime prevention; the terrorists were enlisting new members mainly from among the youth, who are more susceptible to well-targeted ideological brainwashing.<sup>15</sup>

In August 2008 at the next session of the National Antiterrorist Committee in Nizhnii Novgorod the FSB director repeated that in the Northern Caucasus attacks on officials, law enforcers, servicemen and civilians were continuing. He said that in Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Chechnia planned terrorist acts had been prevented in the course of targeted operations. He also pointed out that according to information that reached the Committee the average age of the fighters was much younger than before: young people were being drawn into terrorist and extremist activities through purposeful propaganda of religious extremist ideas.<sup>16</sup>

## Terrorism and Geopolitics in the Northern Caucasus

The already far from simple situation became much worse on the eve of, during, and after the August 2008 Russian-Georgian crisis. Media reports on terrorist acts in Daghestan, Chechnia, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria have become more frequent, which means that the tension in the Northern Caucasus did not climb up on its own but under geopolitical pressure. This was directly connected with the tension in the Caucasus and was caused by the forces well-known for the skill with which they fan conflicts and local wars all over the world.

Today information about financial support of separatists from other countries appears more frequently than before. On 13 July, 2008 the Caucasus Times Information Agency informed that in 2008 no less than \$13 million had already arrived in Kabardino-Balkaria "to encourage the non-formal organizations." The situation in Ingushetia is even worse: law enforcers, officials, and Muslim clergy are attacked almost every day.

In September 2008 M. Khazbiev, head of the opposition Ingush organization The People's Parliament of Ingushetia, announced that the parliament had voted for separation from Russia and was already collecting signatures. Law enforcers are not safe in other republics—Daghestan, Chechnia, and Kabardino-Balkaria. Some political analysts believe that the fighters (who were being instructed and paid from abroad) seized the opportunity offered by the slackened attention of the local authorities and the law-enforcement structures, which were concentrating on South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Georgia.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See: *Rossiiskaia gazeta—Iug Rossii*, 4 July, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> See: *Rossiiskaia gazeta—Iug Rossii*, 25 August, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> See: M. Mankiev, "Mir posle Tskhinvala: tochka nevozvrata," *Fond strategicheskoi kul'tury*, available at [fondsk.ru/article.php?id=1658].

## The Strategy of Intensified Repulsion to Terror

In the last few years the law-enforcement structures have become much more efficient; they have mastered the situation to a certain extent when it comes to combating terrorism and religious-political extremism. Several special operations brought excellent results: in Daghestan the clandestine terrorist groups were dealt crippling blows. This happened in Makhachkala, Kaspiisk, and the Khasaviurt and Buinaksk zones. The groups of Khalilov, Makasharipov, Dibirov, Nauzov, Imurzaev, Taimaskhanov, Akhmedov, Khasbulatov, Shaikhaev, Mutashev, Melikov, and others were liquidated. World experience, however, showed that successful “hunting” of leaders of criminal or terrorist networks does not bring “victory” over network terrorism.<sup>18</sup>

This means that the use of force is no answer. The experience of other countries has shown that repression of ethno-religious extremism is useful when it comes to fighting armed units. The use of force against the radical Islamic organizations and bearers of radical ideas who offer projects of state and legal organization alternative to the Russian Federation and who shun the use of force merely extends the social basis of ethno-religious extremism.<sup>19</sup>

This is confirmed by the widespread practice of combating the radical Islamic movements: repressive measures alone will never wipe out extremism—they merely encourage it. The experience of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, which tried to suppress ethno-religious extremism in the Northern Caucasus, shows that bans on and the use of force against anti-governmental activities rooted in ethnic religiosity have done nothing to smooth out social deviations—they merely conserved them.

This means that the state should resort to other methods: information, propaganda, and explanatory efforts as well as more concerted efforts to stem money flows to terrorists.

At the same time, it would be wrong to associate the stepped-up terrorist activities with increased money flows (from inside the country and from abroad): not infrequently certain officials tend to reduce the “resistance movement” to the banal money issue in order to expose it as mercenary, unprincipled and, therefore, doomed. These people pursue at least two aims: to undermine the fighters’ popularity among the local people, particularly among the youth. This is partly justified: those who make murdering people their business and who do not spare each other in money squabbles can be nothing but repulsive.

More than that: some people tend to write off their own blunders in the struggle against the terrorist underground to lavish funding; they prefer to explain the rising wave of extremism and reproduction of the “resistance movement” among the fighters in Chechnia and in the other North Caucasian republics by the notorious economic factor and push aside all other causes.<sup>20</sup>

It is obviously important to stem the money flow, however this cannot resolve the problem of the continued existence and development of religious-political extremism; this is also true of the autonomous terrorist groups that use ideological-political doctrines as their driving force and of the mobile units that can survive on random and scant funding. In fact the terrorist underground can easily estab-

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<sup>18</sup> See: M. Kenney, “From Pablo to Osama: Counter-Terrorism Lessons from the War on Drugs,” *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 3, Autumn, 2003, pp. 187-206.

<sup>19</sup> See: I.P. Dobaev, V.I. Nemchina, *Novyi terrorizm v mire i na Iuge Rossii*, Rostov-on-Don, 2005, p. 281.

<sup>20</sup> See: Kh.T. Kurbanov, *Religiozno-politicheskiy ekstremizm na Severo-Vostochnom Kavkaze*, Rostov-on-Don, 2006, p. 117.

lish control over commercial enterprises through threats and blackmailing, levers that are especially effective in the totally corrupt environment in which embezzlement of public funds and clientele clan relations are seen as the norm. In his time Shamil Basaev insisted that he and his fighters received a lot of money from the local administration heads of the Republic of Chechnia. The situation seems to be very much the same.

The ramified terrorist network in the North Caucasian regions means that the counterterrorist operation in the Northern Caucasus has not yet been completed. Those who say differently are indulging in wishful thinking. The time has come to readjust the strategy by shifting the stress from the use of force and administrative methods to political, economic, social, cultural, educational, and other levers. Islam in Russia should modernize itself mainly by improving the quality of Islamic education in the Russian Federation.

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## REGIONAL POLITICS

**A TURKIC ALLIANCE:  
POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE  
TO TURKEY'S UNREALIZED  
EU MEMBERSHIP?**

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For many years now the Turkish political elite has been convinced that the country's EU membership would be the logical conclusion to the modernization processes launched by Kemal Atatürk. Until recently this trend was vehemently opposed only by the extreme right nationalists, who had no real popular support inside the country. The Turkish Islamists, on the other hand, have not merely moved away from their traditional opposition to Europe, they have grasped the advantages of European integration that promised to relieve them of the rigid control imposed by the military.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See: O. Roy, *Turkey Today: A European Nation?* London, 2005, p. 2.

Its firm dedication to EU membership has been keeping the ruling pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party in power for over six years. European integration remains the pivot of the country's foreign policy course. The recent decisions of France and Austria to put the Turkish question up for discussion at national referendums nearly buried Turkey's prospects for EU membership. Sooner or later the Turks will have to accept the fact that they should look for their foreign policy pivots elsewhere.

Close cultural and historical ties and common economic interests make the Turkic world a logical choice.

## Why Turkey will Never Become an EU Member

On 4 October, 2005 Turkey and the European Union began their official talks on Turkey's EU membership. Today, more than three years later the Turkish leaders are still resolved to meet all the requirements. Recently the Foreign Ministry of this country said that EU membership was a strategic aim. "We are fully determined to implement the political and economic criteria."<sup>2</sup> With each passing year, however, it is becoming increasingly clear that EU membership will remain forever outside Turkey's reach for cultural, economic and political reasons. On top of this, the recent eastward expansion of the European Union has already created numerous domestic problems for it.

On the whole Turkey is facing two groups of problems that keep it outside the EU. All candidates are expected, first, to modernize their economic, political, and legal systems to adjust them to the EU membership criteria in order to minimize the cost and risks for the European Union.<sup>3</sup> These criteria were laid down at the 1993 European Council in Copenhagen and the 1995 European Council in Essen. Some of the key EU integration criteria were also entered into the 1995 White Book of the European Commission. A country may claim EU membership only when it has attained the standards. The second group of factors is of a purely subjective nature: the civilizational, cultural, historical, and geographic specifics and the complexity of the EU domestic situation. While the first group of problems can be removed through gradual and consistent adaptation to the EU criteria, the candidate-country is powerless to do anything about the second group.

- The **first group** comprises economic and social issues: so far, Turkey's economic development level remains far below that of the EU members. The EU candidates should achieve a high level of economic development, political democracy, and social standards (income, consumption structure, living standards, and employment), otherwise they will never gain access to the European labor, goods, and services markets and will never create a sizable middle class. Adaptation to the European agricultural requirements is Turkey's most challenging task. According to experts, the European Union will have to pay €11.3 billion to adjust Turkish agriculture to the European standards, more than it was needed to integrate the agricultural sectors of the ten EU new members that joined it in 2004. In Turkey, agriculture employs 36 percent of the able-bodied population (about 8 million) while the EU agricultural sector employs 6.5 million.<sup>4</sup>

The level of democracy in Turkey presents another difficulty: it is a democratic yet authoritarian country in which the military controls the entire political system.<sup>5</sup> In recent years Turkey has amended its Constitution and legislation in the most radical way; it gave freedom to all ethnic minorities, banned capital punishment, and trimmed the powers of the military. The National Security Council, for example, lost some of its powers as a result of the amendments of 17 October, 2001 while Art 143 of the Constitution (on State Security Courts) was annulled. The European Commission ruled that, on the whole, Turkey corresponded to the Copenhagen criteria even though there was room for certain improvements.

<sup>2</sup> [<http://www.iht.com/articles/reuters/2008/11/05/eyrope/OUKW-UK-EU-ENLARGEMENT.php>].

<sup>3</sup> See: H. Arikan, *Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership?* Burlington, 2003, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> See: G. Druzenko, "Evropeiskaia integratsiia: ravnenie na Velikobritaniiu i Turtsiiu," *Zerkalo nedeli*, 16-29 July, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See: O. Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Turkey has found it hard to adapt its legislation to the European standards; the expert community believes that it will take it from 10 to 15 years to correlate Turkey's national legislation to European (described on approximately 88 thousand pages).

- The **second group** primarily comprises geographical factors: the country's vast (by European standards) territory and population strength. Turkey covers a territory of 775.3 thousand sq km, which means that it is larger than France (544 thousand sq km), Spain (505 thousand sq km), and Germany (356.3 thousand sq km). Today its population amounts to about 70 million people. This means that its territory and population are much larger than those of any of the recent EU members and are too close to those of the EU leaders. Turkey's population size puts it in second place after Germany.<sup>6</sup> The Turkish experts have recognized that the size of their country and its potentially negative impact on the European Union are two of the reasons why Brussels deems it necessary to approach the issue in a special way.<sup>7</sup>

Turkey's vast population and its relative poverty present the threat of uncontrolled labor migration. The country is the source of a considerable number of migrants while the European public is highly skeptical about their integration ability.<sup>8</sup>

Likewise, the laws of the European Union are ill-suited to Turkey's population size: the number of seats in the European Parliament depends on the population size, which means that as an EU member Turkey will acquire one of the largest factions and, therefore, a lot of political weight.

The European public has its doubts about the country's civilizational and cultural makeup. EU membership entails recognition of the system of values shared by all members and registered in the Paris Charter of 1990 and the Maastricht Agreement of 1992. In the context of unfolding globalization it has become extremely important for the states and the European community as a whole to share common values in order to be able to carry their responsibilities and address all the problems. Turkey is a country with a different mentality, different traditions, and different values. It is a Muslim country with a large number of problems rooted in its history: the Cyprus and Armenian questions as well as the far from simple relations with Greece.

The situation is even more complicated than that: the public of many EU members is dead set against Turkey's EU membership. In fact the Turkish question has already provoked a crisis inside the community. France and the Netherlands rejected the European Constitution mainly because the results of the EU expansion proved disappointing. Sociological polls in Denmark revealed that 62.8 percent of the country's population did not want to see Turkey in the EU; these sentiments are shared by the populations of France, Austria, and Cyprus. According to the latest opinion polls, 74 percent of Austrians refuse to accept Turkey as a European state; approximately the same share believes that there are too many cultural differences. A meager 5 percent of Austrians are prepared to hail Turkey as a new EU member, in France the share is 22 percent, and in Cyprus it reaches 19 percent of the respondents.<sup>9</sup>

The EU members never ignore public opinion: some of the states have already announced that the question of Turkey's EU membership will be put up for discussion at a referendum. France has already adopted a new law under which EU membership for new members will be decided by national referendums. Austria followed suit. Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel stated several times that the Turks could count on privileged partnership and nothing more. The global economic crisis made Turkey's European future even vaguer than before.

<sup>6</sup> See: *Turkey and Central and Eastern European Countries in Transition: Towards Membership of the EU*, ed. by S. Togan, V.N. Balasubramanyam, New York, 2001, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> See: H. Arikan, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> See: O. Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> See: *Die Presse*, 18 August, 2008.

## Will Turkey Turn to the East?

If the European Union persists in keeping Turkey at arm's length the Turkish establishment might revise its attitude toward EU membership. The nationalist-minded groups very much disappointed with Ankara's European integration efforts and their results have been demonstrating a lot of discontent. In May 2008 while an EU delegation visited Turkey a huge anti-integration rally was held in the country's capital. Tens of thousands of students and members of public organizations flocked to Ankara from all sides to chant "We are soldiers of Ataturk" and "The Turkish youth is for an independent secular Turkey and against its European membership." The rally called on the government to boycott the talks with the European Union that endangered Turkey's national interests.<sup>10</sup>

It can be expected that as public disappointment with the EU gradually builds the calls for integration with the Turkic world, in which Ankara is the leader, will resound much louder than today. In the future the presumed alliance of Turkic states might become a welcome alternative to EU membership. The country is strong enough economically to claim regional leadership. Since 2002 its GDP had been demonstrating steady growth and has never been below 7 percent; in 2007 it was \$400 billion, which placed Turkey among the top 20 most developed countries. It aspires to emulate the "Asian tigers" or even to leave them behind.<sup>11</sup>

Turkey is working hard to become a large regional actor; this is confirmed at the summits between the Turkish leaders and heads of Central Asian and Mid-Eastern states as well as by its increased involvement in the OIC.

In the 1990s Turkey relied mainly on emotions in Central Asia; today it demonstrates much more balanced approaches to integration and cooperation. The Turkish leaders are convinced that the Turkic republics should draw closer together in the economic and cultural spheres. They point to the European Union as an example of successful integration that started with economic issues and gradually moved to common political institutions and structures. An alliance of the Turkic-speaking states as a weighty factor in international policy is Turkey's final aim (after the stage of economic unification had been completed). The events of 2007 and 2008 showed that Turkey has already moved in this direction; its specific steps testified that Ankara drew on EU experience to build up the administrative and organizational backbone of the new structure.

To translate the idea into reality Turkey is following several routes:

- (1) a single energy basin independent of Russia that will give the Central Asian republics direct access to the European markets; Turkey will reserve the role of the main transit route for itself;
- (2) more active business communications and a single communication system for the region in order to ensure greater trade turnover and closer personal contacts among the leaders of individual countries and at the grass-root level;
- (3) cooperation in language and culture leading to a common ideology of Turkic-Islamic integration;
- (4) a gradually increasing emphasis on political integration patterned on the European Union.

Recently, Turkey has been doing much more than before to develop business relations with Eurasian countries; direct Turkish private investments in the region have topped \$8 billion; Turkish contractors are implementing over 1,700 projects in Eurasian countries totaling \$35 billion.

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<sup>10</sup> See: A. Guriev, "Situatsiia v Turtsii," April 2008, Institut Blizhnego Vostoka, 4 May, 2008, available at [<http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2008/04-05-08.htm>].

<sup>11</sup> See: V. Piskovyi, "Tretia religiiia Turtsii," *Zerkalo nedeli*, 12-18 January, 2008.

Turkey is claiming the role of the region's "power exchange": it had already monopolized the power routes from the East to the West (the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline alone moves 50 million tons of crude oil a year).<sup>12</sup> In 2007 Kazakhstan signed an agreement on joining the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline system, a great factor of Turkish energy policy in the region. Contrary to America's condemnation of Turkey's cooperation with Iran, it is continuing to pursue this avenue. Late in 2007 the two countries signed an agreement on modernizing the power lines of both countries totaling \$1 billion.<sup>13</sup> Today, Turkey moves up to 40 billion cu m of gas to Europe and 300 million tons of oil to international markets. In the near future the figures will be even higher if the gas export projects to Europe (the Interconnector, together with Italy and Greece, and Nabucco, together with Bulgaria and Rumania) will be a success.

The project of a railway linking Kars, Tbilisi, and Baku, which is expected to be completed by 2011, will supply the region with a single communication system; it will carry 1 million passengers and 6.5 million tons of goods.<sup>14</sup> This railway will connect the less developed part of Turkey with Azerbaijan and Georgia; it will make it easier to move freight and engage in organized trade with Azerbaijan; later the railway will reach Central Asia.

International Turkic kurultais can be described as the first step in the cultural and political spheres toward a "common Turkic model." The first of them was held on 21 March, 1993; devised as international congresses of public organizations of the Turkic states and communities from all over the world they were synchronized with summits of the Turkic states. This idea belonged to Turgut Özal, the eighth president of Turkey. The first summit held on 30-31 October in 1992 in Ankara was attended by the top figures of the Turkic states. The Justice and Development Party, which came to power in 2002, abandoned the idea, however in 2006 the Islamists revived the kurultais and concentrated on the Turkic trend as the key one in their foreign policy.<sup>15</sup>

The tenth kurultai (2006) was especially important. From that time on Turkey switched from declarations to practical steps. It was the first kurultai to be attended by top officials, including the prime minister of Turkey and president of Azerbaijan. Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan called on the meeting to set up a Commonwealth of Turkic-Speaking Nations to prepare "conditions for economic integration and thus make it possible to express a unified view on the global scene." He said further: "History has given us a unique opportunity for unifying the efforts of our countries with their common culture and historical roots. We'll either become a subject of global policy or remain an object." He called on the Turkic states (Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in particular) to present a common front in the energy sphere. He described the transnational energy routes (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum) as a firm foundation for joint actions of the Turkic states and communities.<sup>16</sup>

The next kurultai (the Congress of Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation of the Turkic-Speaking States and Communities) that met in Baku on 17-19 November, 2007 confirmed that regional integration had good prospects. The forum was attended by 550 representatives and guests from 30 countries: Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenia, Tajikistan, Mongolia, and others. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliiev, Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Erdoğan, and former president of Turkey Süleyman Demirel, as well as top members of state structures of the Turkic countries, opened the congress.

<sup>12</sup> See: *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> See: *Zaman*, 18 December, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> See: *Hurriyet*, 24 July, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> See: A. Guriev, "Ankara ukrepliaet tiurkskii faktor svoei vneshnei politiki," Institut Blizhnego Vostoka, 22 March, 2008, available at [<http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2008/22-03-08.htm>].

<sup>16</sup> [<http://www.rpmonitor.ru/en/en/detail.php?ID=2332>].

The forum recommended that a relevant conception for establishing the Union of Turkic-Speaking Countries should be formulated, set up a Permanent Secretariat of the Heads of Turkish-speaking States, and planned joint events dealing with problems of the Turkic people.

The congress participants agreed to create a common alphabet for all the Turkic-speaking countries in cooperation with the Academies of Sciences of the Turkic world. It was advised that a Parliamentary Assembly be set up to cover the area where Turkic people live; and it was decided to set up an Economic Union of Turkic-Speaking Countries analogous to OPEC.

The idea of a Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic-speaking Countries took root: on 21-22 February, 2008 the vice-speakers of the parliaments of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan came to Antalya in Turkey for the first meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly. The meeting signed the Protocol on setting up the Assembly; it also drafted the Charter. According to the documents the Assembly, with a rotating chairmanship of twelve months in alphabetical order, will meet at least once a year. The official languages of the member states will be accepted as the Assembly's working languages.<sup>17</sup>

The draft Charter described the following aims:

- Development of cooperation between the parliaments of the member states;
- Organizational support for summits of the Turkic-speaking countries;
- Elaboration of common political views and organization of joint events;
- Exchange of law-making experience and accommodation of national legislations;
- Joint legislation work designed to preserve the common history, art, and literature of the Turkic-speaking peoples and their heritage and values in all other spheres;
- Setting up mechanisms adequate to the formulated aims.<sup>18</sup>

Under Art 12, the Agreement was opened for signing by the legislatures of all the Turkic-speaking states and enters into force if ratified by at least three parliaments.

The document came into force on 21 November, 2008 at the Conference of the Parliament Speakers of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic-Speaking Countries in Istanbul when Chairman of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Koksal Toptan, Chairman of the Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan Ogtai Asadov, Chairman of Zhogorku Kenesh (parliament of Kyrgyzstan) Aitibai Tagaev, and Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan Mukhambet Kopeev signed it.

President of Turkey Abdullah Gül took part in the official opening ceremony together with the people enumerated above and informed the meeting that a Council of Aksakkals (Elders) would be set up.

The conference decided that the Parliamentary Assembly would receive a Secretariat; these efforts would be continued at the Baku summit scheduled for the beginning of 2009.<sup>19</sup>

The above events testify to the fact that integration of the Turkic-speaking states is going on and has been accelerated on Turkey's initiative. Ankara prefers to move gradually toward the desired aim. It should be said here that the European Union took several years to achieve its present format and that integration is a fairly painful, complex, and long process. Something has been already achieved: Turkmenistan, which the previous year had a negative attitude toward the idea of a union of Turkic states, is much better disposed. This result was achieved, in particular, by Prime Minister Erdoğan's official visit to Turkmenistan on 3-4 October, 2008. Observers believe that Uzbekistan's currently critical

<sup>17</sup> A. Guriev, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>19</sup> ANS-PRESS, 21 November, 2008.

position will probably change; Tashkent will not remain long outside Turkic integration. In the mid-term perspective an alliance of Turkic states might develop into a serious alternative to Ankara's desire for European integration.

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## THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT IN THE CONTEXT OF RETROSPECTIVE ETHNO-GEOPOLITICS

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### *I n t r o d u c t i o n*

**W**hy Karabakh? Why has this small patch of land been a bone of contention in the Caucasus for so long (since the 19th century)?

The answers, not infrequently placed in political and ethnic contexts, are numerous:

- Historical memory of the various Caucasian nationalities about alleged ethnic insults;
- Antagonistic ethnopolitical contradictions due to the absence of ethnic complementarity among the main local ethnic groups;
- The clash between two major postulates of international law: the territorial integrity of states and the right of nations to self-determination;
- Territorial claims that develop into aggression;

- The geopolitically conditioned continuous conflict caused by the neo-imperial intentions of the main players on the world political scene;
- The opposing interests of the ethnic elites and clans that started the conflict in the first place to gain their own political and economic advantages, etc.

The list is much longer than that, but the questions and answers should not be taken for abstract theorizing; an adequate description of the nature and genesis of the Karabakh conflict affects, in the most direct way, whether it can be resolved at all. Everything that politicians and academics have said so far about the conflict can be reduced to several paradigms: historical, civilizational, ethnopolitical, and geopolitical.

Since the first three have been extensively covered in the academic literature, I selected the geopolitical context of the Nagorno-Karabakh

conflict as the centerpiece of the present article. This analysis should not:

- First, be limited to the recent events and concentrate on the geopolitical collisions among the actors of current international politics;
- Second, be described in the terms of classical geopolitics (the regional context calls for internal and applied geopolitics);

- Third, ignore the ethnic (ethnopolitical) element invariably present in the seats of geopolitical tension of the so-called discontinuous belt of the Eurasian continent (to which the Caucasus belongs).

This explains why my analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict concentrates on retrospective ethnic geopolitics.

## Ethno-Geopolitics: Is it a Paradigm of the 21st Century?

It is no great exaggeration to say that in the late 20th century the triad of geopolitics, ethnopolitics, and security served as the cornerstone of the most important approaches of political science to the world political processes unfolding before our eyes. Each of the categories taken separately looks at the highly varied and wide scope of the world political process through the prism of its dominant paradigm. Early in the 21st century the gap between the fairly complicated reality of international politics still in the process of formation and its basically mono-dimensional scholarly interpretation became too wide to be further ignored. This jolted the academic and political communities into the realization that they needed new, interdisciplinary approaches. The geopolitics/security combination and the varied interpretations of these terms have been extensively studied while many other possible combinations of the concepts described above have escaped equally close academic attention.

The above explains why the present author has already substantiated the need to bring a new poly-paradigmatic category—ethnopolitical security—into academic circulation to be used in relevant research programs.<sup>1</sup> Its usefulness, however, is of a limited nature: the paradigm related to the correlation between ethnopolitical factors and processes and the degree to which the vitally important interests of the key security entities are protected is necessarily limited to the present. The paradigm reaches its potential if the development trends in the sphere of ethnopolitical security are prolonged—this can be described as the paradigm's tremendous advantage. It is obvious, at the same time, that the paradigm leaves the genesis of these processes and their relation to the historical reality of any specific ethnic, territorial, or political expanse outside the framework of study.

This suggests a combination of two categories—ethnopolitics and geopolitics. In the 19th century, Friedrich Ratzel, the founding father of classical geopolitics, offered one of his key theses in his *Political Geography*, which so far has not been comprehensively understood. He wrote that the state emerged as an organism tied to a certain strip of land while its characteristics develop from the Volk (people) and the soil.<sup>2</sup> The one-sided geopolitical approach betrayed itself in pushing aside Ratzel's characteristics of the Volk for the sake of possible connections between politics and geographical factors.

<sup>1</sup> See: K. Allakhverdiev, "Ethnopolitical Dimension of National Security and Globalization Challenges," *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 1 (5), 2007, pp. 39-53; idem, "National Development Strategy and Ethnopolitical Security in the Age of Globalization," *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 14-31.

<sup>2</sup> See: A. Dugin, "Osnovy geopolitiki," available at [<http://www.arctogaia.com/public/osnovygeo/geopol1.htm#1>].



In the 20th century geopolitics, which gained wide popularity and acceptance, created the illusion that science had finally found the master key to all the enigmas of human history. As it drew to its end the 20th century suddenly demonstrated the very limited nature of the world's already firmly established geopolitical ideas when triumphant ethnic nationalism began tearing up its laws and schemes. The new reality called for the "characteristics of the Volk" that, in turn, encouraged ethnopolitical approaches. On the other hand, it turned out that the old geopolitical approaches were still very much alive, which suggested a hybrid in the form of a new paradigm—ethno-geopolitics.

It came into circulation in the 1990s through the efforts of the Russian theoreticians of Eurasianism. According to S. Smirnov, ethno-geopolitics is the sum-total of conceptions, criteria, models, and scholarly methods that allow one or several ethnic entities to join the structure of world civilization in the best possible way (within the limits of selected criteria) to address their political tasks.<sup>3</sup> The author, however, failed to disclose which concepts, models, and methods help ethnic groups to blend into world civilization. The Russian academic community is discussing all sorts of interpretations of ethno-geopolitics in the context of statehood,<sup>4</sup> security,<sup>5</sup> etc. Russian academics have reached the classification stage. R. Amburtsev, for example, offers the following categories: *the proto-ethno-geopolitical paradigm* (N. Katkov's justification of "imperial ideology," D. Milyutin's strategic ideas, L. Tikhomirov's ideas about the state, P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskiy's conception of the most powerful territorial domains); *the ethno-geospatial paradigm* (works by L. Mechnikov and development of the conception of geographic determinism, historical works by S. Soloviev, and V. Lamanskiy and the conception of the three worlds of the Asian-European continent); and *the ethno-geopolitical paradigm* (N. Danilevskiy's ideology of pan-Slavism, K. Leontiev's infatuation with Byzantine legacy, P. Savitskiy's Eurasianism, and L. Gumilev's conception of ethnogenesis).<sup>6</sup> In the West this paradigm remains practically unclaimed.

I am convinced that we have just reached the stage when the content of ethno-geopolitics can be more or less fully comprehended. On the whole, it deals with the subject range created by the ethnopolitical approach to the geopolitical expanse. In other words, the paradigm proceeds from the idea that the state, interpreted by geopolitics as a biological organism, does not stem directly from the geographic environment. Rather it is a result of the interaction between the ethnosocial organism and various territorial levels of the geo-expanse.

The above suggests that ethno-geopolitics as a scientific paradigm can study the historically determined ethnic forms in which the planet's geopolitical arrangement is manifested and within which the worldwide expanse becomes a subject.

## Karabakh, the Geopolitical "Center" of the Central Caucasus

Much has been written about the Caucasus and its problems; a large number of academic works deal with its geopolitical identity. The most general approach reveals two large groups of such works.

<sup>3</sup> See: S.N. Smirnov, "Kazachestvo i geopolitika," available at [<http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/pubs/books/volume/36311.htm>].

<sup>4</sup> See: P.V. Chernov, *Rossia: etnopoliticheskie osnovy gosudarstvennosti*, Vostochnaia literature Publishers of RAS, Moscow, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> See: V.A. Semenov, *Etnogeopoliticheskie aspekty bezopasnosti Rossii*, RAGS Rus, Moscow, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> See: R.A. Amburtsev, "Etnopoliticheskaia paradigma v rossiiskoy geopoliticheskoy mysli," available at [[http://politreg.pu.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=37](http://politreg.pu.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=37)].

The first deals with the Caucasus' geopolitical identity; the second poses the question of whether the Caucasus has independent geopolitics, or, in other words, is it an object or a subject of geopolitical impact? This question permits a dual answer: "The Caucasus is a single geopolitical system, the stability of which can be ensured only through political unity of all its peoples. This unity existed within the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union—today we should look for new forms of and new roads toward political integration."<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, the very idea of the Caucasian geopolitical organism demands that we should identify its key zone. Political realities and ethnopolitical preferences push those in search of the "center" across the entire region. One of the latest attempts of this sort was made by prominent Russian researcher of ethnopolitics R. Abdulatipov, who in his letter to the organizers of regional scientific conference Daghestan on Contemporary Geopolitics of Russia (25 September, 2008) wrote: "Those who rule Daghestan dominate the Caucasus."<sup>8</sup>

To clarify the issue let us turn to the works of the Institute of Strategic Studies of the Caucasus (Azerbaijan) which offer a novel approach to the geopolitical structures of Eurasia as a whole and the Caucasian region in particular:

- Central Eurasia with its three sub-regions (Central Asia, the Central Caucasus, and Central Europe) is the natural center of the Eurasian continent;
- The Central Caucasus is the key zone of Central Eurasia;
- The Central Caucasus is the key zone of the Caucasian geopolitical organism that consists of three parts—the Northern Caucasus (the Caucasian republics of the Russian Federation), the Central Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia), and the Southern Caucasus (the ilis of Turkey bordering on Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia [the Southwestern Caucasus] and the northwestern ostanis of Iran [the Southeastern Caucasus]).<sup>9</sup>

The logic of the above suggests that since the Central Caucasus is the "heartland" of the Greater Caucasus, the center of the Central Caucasus should be found in a certain area between its three component parts (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia) as three independent entities of the system of international relations. This is a fairly vast space with several core zones. I am convinced that Karabakh is one, and the most important, of the core zones. As a geo-expanse Karabakh has at least three very important features.

- First, it is the center of the Central Caucasus and is relatively isolated from the rest of it by its natural and geographic conditions.
- Second, the nature of the core offers strategic control over the region's perimeter. In more or less recent military-political history the geopolitical importance of Karabakh came to the fore during the famous march of Iranian Shah Aga Muhammad Qajar to the Caucasus in 1795-1796. Having failed, after two attempts to capture Karabakh and Shusha, its center, the shah eventually lost all his conquests (most of the Azeri lands and a large part of Georgia along with Tbilisi), which had cost a multitude of lives.
- Third, at all times the military-strategic potential of structuring the political expanse attracted regional actors wishing to capture the "central spot." This is best illustrated by the Kurek-

<sup>7</sup> L.S. Ruban, "Geopoliticheskaia situatsia na Kavkaze," IREX. *Polemika* electronic journal, Issue 8, available at [www.irex.ru/press/pub/polemika/08/rub1].

<sup>8</sup> See: *Regionalny tsentr etnopoliticheskikh issledovaniy priglashaet k uchastiiu v konferentsii "Daghestan v sovremennoy geopolitike Rossii,"* available at [http://www.riadagestan.ru/news/2008/09/11/71484/], 11 September, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> See: E. Ismailov, V. Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Essays on Geopolitical Economy*, CA&CC Press, Stockholm, 2006, p. 12; E. Ismailov, "Central Eurasia: Its Geopolitical Function in the 21st Century," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (50), 2008, pp. 7-8.

chai Peace Treaty of 1805 between the Russian Empire and the Karabakh Khanate that ushered in the period of Russia's domination over the larger part of the Central Caucasian region.

Besides the geostrategic, historical, and military-political arguments there are also sociocultural, ethnological, and political factors that I leave for other researchers to investigate. On the whole, they will undoubtedly be in line with one of the main theses of this work, namely, that Karabakh is one of the geopolitical cores of the Central Caucasus. Those who captured and held it also held the keys to the region.

One may ask with good reason: where is the ethnic component proper, without which it would be impossible to discuss the suggested ethno-geopolitical approach and the absence of which would have deprived the article of its meaning? It should be said that any idea and any doctrine can be pushed to the extremes. Ethno-geopolitics has had its share of this affliction: certain authors have driven the idea to absurdity by following the slogan "Ethno-geopolitics: Back to the Caves!"<sup>10</sup> to the letter. I regret to say that the ordinary people and even certain academics entertain the idea that the remains of pre-historic humans found all over the world belong to the ancestors of those who now live in these areas. This means that contemporary Italians inherited their features from the Grimaldians; the Germans from the Neanderthals, the French from the Cro-Magnons, and the Georgians from the Udabnopithecus. This nationalization of sorts of pre-historic people is developing into incontestable proof of the right of any given nation to a given territory.

This is the case of replacement of one science (paleoanthropology) with another (ethnology) with the good prospect of wide ethnopolitical generalizations. It seems, however, that in the context of the retrospective ethno-geopolitical approach it is much more important to find out how the geopolitical status and the parameters of any given region shape historical, political, and economic specifics and, on the whole, the destinies of the local nation.

In this way, combining the geopolitical and ethnopolitical into one paradigm allows us to retreat from the myth about the mental incompatibility of the Azeri and Armenian people and concentrate on the deep-seated geopolitical relations that dominate the Karabakh sub-region. For several centuries their ethnopolitical manifestations have been transforming Karabakh into an area of ethnic confrontation. The description of Karabakh as an ethno-geopolitical crossroads of sorts largely explains the energy and bitterness of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the first and the longest of the post-Soviet conflicts.

## Ethno-Geopolitical Aspects of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict as Seen from the 18th-Early 20th Centuries

The Armenian-Azeri conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh goes back to three main reckoning points of the past that can be described as follows:

- the late 1980s—*narrow ethnopolitical interpretation of the problem*;
- between 1918 and 1923—*broad ethnopolitical interpretation*;

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<sup>10</sup> N.Ya. Chuksin, "Etnogeopolitika: nazad, v peshchery?" available at [[http://zhurnal.lib.ru/c/chuksin\\_n\\_j/ethnoge\\_1.shtml](http://zhurnal.lib.ru/c/chuksin_n_j/ethnoge_1.shtml)].

- the Russo-Iranian war of 1826-1828 and the period immediately after it when the first large wave of Armenian migrants from Persia and the Ottoman Empire reached the Caucasus—*ethno-historical interpretation*.

The former two periods are relatively clear from the chronological and conceptual point of view while the third (ethno-historical) interpretation calls for clarification. The very limited interest in ethnic history does not promise a real outburst of scholarly publications anytime soon. So far the studies of the basic conceptions of interconnection of the people's environment and its history have not yet become systemic. It is not enough and hardly promising in the scholarly-methodological respect to simply register the fact of such an interconnection. The living space (Lebensraum) and history of any nation are formed not only by the endogenous factors of the given territory but also by the exogenous, and often, dominating influence of the neighboring territories.

This means that the history of the conflict in the Karabakh geopolitical (not ethnopolitical) core should be related to an earlier period, namely, to the 18th century when three empires (the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian) clashed for domination in the Caucasus. Russian geopolitical thought regarded the Caucasus as the only corridor-expanse through which the empire could reach its natural geopolitical limits. The appetites befitted those of a great power: "With the ice of the Arctic Ocean behind it, with the right flank abutting on the semi-closed Baltic Sea and the German and Austrian possessions, and the left flank ending at the barely navigable parts of the Pacific the Great Power had not three, as was commonly believed here, but one front. Turned to the south it stretched from the mouth of the Danube to Kamchatka. The front's center looked at the deserts of Mongolia and Eastern Turkestan which means that while *moving to the south* we should not have pressed along the entire front but moved forward in flanks, mainly the right flank, closest to the center of state power. *By advancing in this way across the Black Sea and the Caucasus to the Mediterranean and across Central Asia to the Persian Gulf* we stood a chance of reaching the greatest of the world's trade routes—the Suez."<sup>11</sup>

This means that it was not enough to conquer Russia—it had to be developed. Back in the 1780s G. Potemkin, head commander of the Russian troops in the Caucasus, was nurturing the project of so-called Greater Albania, to be realized first in Karabakh and Irevan. In 1787 the local Christian potentates (the Albanian meliks of Karabakh), together with Georgian czar Irakli II and Russian military under Colonel Burnashov, organized a crusade of sorts against Karabakh. The joint forces reached Ganja where they had to stop because of the unfolding Russian-Turkey War of 1787-1791.

It was some time later that Russia realized its geopolitical designs in the course of the Russo-Iranian War of 1804-1813 when the Azeri khanates received the first systemic blow in the form of the Kurekchai Treaty of 1805, which made Russia patron of the Karabakh Khanate. The treaty (patterned on the Treaty of Georgievsk of 1801 with Georgia) led to a chain of similar agreements with the other Azeri khanates.

It should be clearly stated that in this (and all other wars in the Caucasus, for this matter) Russia pursued its own geopolitical aims. The Kurekchai Treaty, for example, ignored all the ethnopolitical issues (related to the Christian Albanian population, to say nothing of the local Armenians). In fact, the documents (Russian documents included) contain no mention of any requests from the Armenian population. Nothing is said about Nagorno-Karabakh as a special historical and ethnographic region. This means that in the early 19th century there was neither Armenian, nor Nagorno-Karabakh, nor any other ethnopolitical questions. The only outstanding question was formulated as the "Karabakh knot," a key to sustainable political control over the Caucasus. How did this question develop into an ethnopolitical question?

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<sup>11</sup> E.A. Vandam, *Geopolitika i geostrategia*, Moscow, 2002, pp. 30-31.

The answer is found in the military-political situation as it had developed by the first quarter of the 19th century in the Caucasus. It differed radically from that of the previous century. Russia learned the lessons of its geopolitical defeat of the 1730s when it lost everything that Peter the Great had acquired in his time mainly because it lacked a reliable ethno-confessional basis. The military command of the Muslim part of the Caucasian Territory, which Russia regarded as expedient, did not guarantee that the local people would side with Russia in the event of military clashes with the traditional rivals (the Ottoman Empire and Iran). In fact the Great Game, Russia's geopolitical confrontation with the leading powers for domination in Central Asia and India, was looming in the horizon. This called for a reliable rear and a springboard that, in turn, demanded radical ethno-demographic changes in the potential confrontation zones. In other words, in the 19th century Russia's active geopolitics called for matching ethnopolitics to achieve the desirable ethno-demographic context in the key zones of the already conquered territories. The Russian Empire was actually doing very much the same throughout the 19th century everywhere: in the Caucasus (Azerbaijan, the Northern Caucasus, and Abkhazia), Malorossia, the Crimea, and Central Asia. The Russian authorities relied on the classical formula: they deported the locals and brought in compact groups of different confessions and different ethnic affiliation from the empire's inner regions and from abroad.

In the Caucasus Russia first tested the new instrument of its ethno-geopolitics in the "central point," Karabakh. The Russia administration ordered the Description of the Karabakh Province according to which 1,559 (8.4 percent) of the 18,563 families registered by the Russian administration in 1823 in Karabakh belonged to the Christian population of the melikstvos. One can surmise that by that time the Russians had already been working on improving the results. This was done in the course of the Russo-Iranian War of 1826-1828: in 1828-1830, 40 thousand Armenians from Iran and 84,600 Armenians from Turkey were moved to the Elizavetpol (Ganja) and Irevan gubernias, of which Karabakh was part.<sup>12</sup> Nicholas I's decree of 21 March, 1828, which said in part: "The Erivan and Nakhchivan khanates, which were joined to Russia, should be called the Armenian region in future in all documents,"<sup>13</sup> signified that Russia was set on changing the ethno-geopolitical map of the Caucasus and had made the first toponymic change, replete with political implications.

Those who tend to reduce the Karabakh conflict to the Armenians' intention to seize the land of their neighbors are obviously oversimplifying the situation. Such intentions do exist,<sup>14</sup> which means that the historical mythologemes (memory) of a small nation might feed national ideas, genuine or false ethnonational interests, aims, and programs. Ethnopolitical complications in the Caucasus invariably cropped up if and when the national ideas coincided with the axis of the geopolitical "beam" of one of the world centers of power.

The Armenians' future was sealed: the geopolitical expansion of Russian autocracy in the 18th and 19th centuries made them an ethnopolitical factor, a sort of informational and ideological underpinning of a new balance of forces in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, as well as in the Greater Middle East. This was probably what Nikolai Trubetskoy had in mind when he wrote that the Armenians would forever remain Russia-oriented no matter who ruled it.<sup>15</sup>

It would be wrong to think that the so-called Armenian question was a uniquely Caucasian phenomenon. For many centuries Russia moved in the main directions of its continental geopolitics under the same messianic slogan: protection of Orthodox Christians and Russians:

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<sup>12</sup> See: N.N. Shavrov, *Novaia ugroza ruskomu delu v Zakavkazie. Predstoiashchaia rasprodazha Mugani inorodtsam*, Elm Publishers, Baku, 1990, pp. 63-65 (reprint from the St. Petersburg edition of 1911).

<sup>13</sup> State Central Historical Archives of the Russian Federation, rec. gr. 880, inv. 5, f. 389, sheets 18rev.

<sup>14</sup> This is testified by the program documents of the Dashnaksutiun Party: "A united Armenia should include the Armenian lands mentioned in the Treaty of Sèvres as well as the Nakhchivan, Akhalkalaki, and Karabakh regions" (*Program of the Armenian Revolutionary Dashnaksutiun Federation*, Erevan, 1992, p. 18).

<sup>15</sup> See: N.S. Trubetskoy, "O narodakh Kavkaza," available at [[http://www.irs-az.com/archive/gen/n7/n7\\_9.htm](http://www.irs-az.com/archive/gen/n7/n7_9.htm)].

- The Kazan Khanate in the 16th century and the Bukhara, Khiva, Kokand, and other Central Asian khanates in the 19th century were conquered to liberate the Russian slaves;
- The so-called reunification of Ukraine and Russia in the 17th century and joining Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia in the late 18th century were aimed at delivering the Slavs from Polish oppression;
- The Caspian march of Peter the Great in 1722-1723, when he conquered the western Caspian coast up to Gilan in Iran, was undertaken to protect the interests and safety of Russian merchants;
- The Crimean War of 1853-1856 was waged to ensure the safety of Russian pilgrims to the Palestinian holy places;
- The Balkan War of 1877-1878 liberated the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire, etc.

This list, which illustrates the information and ideological justification of Russia's practical geopolitics, can be extended into 20th century. Here, however, I deem it necessary to concentrate on the specifics of Russia's ethno-geopolitics in the Caucasus. There were two important points.

- First, "to a certain extent the Armenian question was an international issue;"<sup>16</sup> it was never tied to short-term interests but was a permanent factor of Russia's geopolitics.
- Second, by the early 20th century the preferences of all sorts (administrative, career, territorial, financial, etc.) that the czarist authorities extended to the local Armenian population had radically changed Caucasian geohistory—within a short period of time the nation, most of whom descended from migrants, came to the fore economically and politically.

The above suggests that the period between the latter half of the 18th and early 20th centuries can be divided into two shorter periods.

- At the first stage, which can be described as *geopolitical* and was completed by the late 1820s, the Russian Empire mastered the Caucasus geopolitically. This explains why at first the Nagorno-Karabakh knot displayed no endogenous (ethnonational) factors.
- The second, *ethno-geopolitical*, stage, which began in 1828 and ended together with the end of the Russian Empire, can be described as an absolutely new stage when the Karabakh conflict betrayed itself and unfolded and when the task of becoming entrenched in the Caucasus and geopolitical expansion made it necessary to deliberately fan the so far non-existent ethnic tension. In fact, the cause and effect of the Karabakh conflict—the "explosive ethnopolitical filling" of a key zone—can be described as Russia's response to the sum-total of military-political circumstances in the Caucasus and the entire Near and Middle East.

## The Ethno-Geopolitical Aspects of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the 20th Century

The main stages of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in the 20th century are well known:

- The war for Karabakh of 1918-1920 between the newly formed states—the Ararat (Armenian) Republic and the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic—which appeared after the Russian Empire fell apart;

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<sup>16</sup> See: N.S. Trubetskoy, "O narodakh Kavkaza," available at [[http://www.irs-az.com/archive/gen/n7/n7\\_9.htm](http://www.irs-az.com/archive/gen/n7/n7_9.htm)].

- The bitter political struggle and struggle inside the Communist party over the region when Soviet power was established in the Caucasus. It ended with the formation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAR) within Azerbaijan in 1923;
- Latent competition that had been going on unabated throughout the entire life of the Soviet Union; in the late 1980s it developed into an open political and armed confrontation.

These facts are well known yet their interpretations widely vary. There are certain questions that refuse to fit into a simple scheme: in the 1920s the Bolsheviks made a historical error by refusing to settle the issue in favor of either Armenia or Azerbaijan. Let's try to sort things out.

Early in the 1920s there were two plans of state-territorial arrangements and unification of the Soviet republics: Stalin's plan under which the republics should have become parts of the R.S.F.S.R. as its autonomous units and Lenin's plan of a Union state. In December 1922 it was Lenin's plan that was realized. Historians put a full stop here and move onto the next chapter called The Soviet Union in 1922-1991, leaving several questions behind.

- *Question No. 1:* Why did Stalin and other prominent party functionaries accept, without serious discussion, conferences, etc., the plan suggested by a seriously ill leader who for some time had been isolated from the party?
- *Question No. 2:* Why did Stalin never return to his plan of administrative arrangement when his personal grip on the country was firm enough? By the 1930s the Soviet state was a union for purely formal reasons. In fact, it was a rigidly centralized and vertically arranged unitary state. Stalin was obviously aware of the danger of having 15 Union republics and scores of autonomies scattered across the country. This was a delayed action bomb.

The answer to these questions can be found in the ideological convictions of Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky, as well as of other repressed top Bolshevik functionaries who had survived and were looking ahead to the "worldwide triumph of Communism," the road to which lay through the "fire of worldwide revolution." It was hardly possible and politically incorrect to integrate these countries the revolution had removed from world capitalism into the "socialist brotherhood" by making them part of the Russian Federation. The situation called for a much more attractive ideological wrapping to make the loss of sovereignty at least formally acceptable as a result of a victorious revolution worldwide.

It seems that Stalin and his cronies easily dropped and never revived the project of the autonomies (expect to deal with domestic political problems) because the alternative was much more consistent from the point of view of Marxism and much more ethno-geopolitically universal as a formula of world restructuring. From the very beginning the Soviet project was intended as a global ethno-geopolitical one within which "unification of all countries and peoples on the class basis" as the world historical mission of communism could have been carried out. This means that the inner political rationality of ethnic state-building was sacrificed to the global ethno-geopolitical future. This is confirmed by the experience of national state-building in the 1920s-1930s in Central Asia: the territories included in the R.S.F.S.R. as autonomous republics (Kazakhstan and Kirghizia) and the Turkestan S.S.R. became Union republics: the Uzbek and Turkmen republics (1924), the Tajik republic (1929), and the Kazakh and Kirghiz republics (1936).

It should be said here that the ethno-geopolitical administration inside the country in the sphere of national state-building took extremely ugly forms. Ethnopolitical mines were scattered across the country depending on how the Center assessed the regions' reliability. Different ethnic groups received different types of autonomies: ethnic (some of the ethnic groups, the Ossets for example, were granted two autonomies), religious (Ajaria), territorial (Nakhchivan), ethno-territorial (Daghestan), and political (the autonomous unit of the Volga Germans).

This highly arbitrary national-state arrangement suggests a logical question: Why did Nagorno-Karabakh remain part of Azerbaijan in the 1920s and later and was never transferred to the Armenian S.S.R.? Everyone knows that in the Russian Empire, during Soviet power, and in the post-Soviet period the Armenian diaspora and the Armenian lobby of Russia were and remain highly influential. In 1921-1923 the Azeris represented by one person (Nariman Narimanov) were outnumbered by Armenians in the corridors of power. It seems unlikely that he could single-handedly tip the balance and persuade the top Bolshevik leaders (Stalin, Orjonikidze, Erukidze, Mirzoian, and others) to stick to the status quo. It is even less probable that the Transcaucasian Territorial Committee of ARCP(B) heeded the geographic, economic, and demographic arguments and references to historical injustice to accept a compromise that would leave Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. The answer should be sought in several ethno-geopolitical possibilities.

- *Scenario No. 1.* Nagorno-Karabakh would not become an autonomous unit but rather part of the administrative-territorial division of Azerbaijan. This alternative was rejected because it deprived the Center of its chance to the imperial resource of all times: "Divide and rule." In the case of Azerbaijan, which bordered on Muslim states (Turkey and Iran), it was especially important.
- *Scenario No. 2.* The mountainous part of Karabakh could have been transferred to Armenia, but Stalin and even the Armenian Bolsheviks in the top echelons of power (Anastas Mikoian) were well aware that Armenian control over Karabakh might produce highly negative and hard to predict results, such as an upsurge in ethno-nationalism and destabilization of the military-political situation in the region and around it.
- *Scenario No. 3.* Nagorno-Karabakh could remain within Azerbaijan as a national autonomy. The ethno-geopolitical advantages were obvious: the problem would be frozen from the ethno-political and institutional viewpoints; by the same token, both republics would be "bridled." From that time on, throughout the entire stretch of Soviet history, Azerbaijan feared that the decision might be revised while Armenia hoped that it would be revised.
- Scenario No. 3 was performed with certain modifications: on the one hand, the region, a single unit in the natural-geographic, economic, and cultural respects, was, somewhat artificially, divided into lower (valley) and upper (mountainous) parts. On the other hand, the center moved away from its original intention to grant ethnic autonomy for the sake of the ethno-territorial principle. On 7 July, 1923, when the area finally acquired its administrative status, the planned "Armenian National Region" was abandoned for the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region.<sup>17</sup>

The next 65 years demonstrated that the decree had triggered a tug of war between the two republics.<sup>18</sup> There are any number of facts that testify that in this type of political struggle the "referees" from the Center were with the Armenians:

- the Nakhchivan area was rapidly developing into an enclave when in 1921 the Transcaucasian Central Executive Committee transferred the Azeri-populated Zangezour uezd<sup>19</sup> and, some time later, in 1929, the Megri District of the Zangilan uezd of the Azerbaijan S.S.R. to Armenia;

<sup>17</sup> Decree of the Azerbaijanian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets "On Institution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region," 7 July, 1923 (see: *K istorii obrazovania Nagorno-Karabakhskoj avtonomnoy oblasti Azerbaidzhanskoy SSSR. 1918-1925. Dokumenty i materialy*, Azerneshr, Baku, 1989, pp. 152-153).

<sup>18</sup> Armenian authors, too, point to the geopolitical roots of the conflict (see: L. Chorbajian, P. Donabedian, C. Mutafian, *The Caucasian Knot. The History and Geo-politics of Nagorno-Karabakh*, Zed Press, London, New Jersey, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> See: M. Ismaylyov, E. Tokarzhhevskiy, *Pravda i domysly. Konflikt v Nagornom Karabakhe*, Baku, 1990, p. 28.



- nearly half a million Azeris who lived in compact groups in Armenia were deprived of even cultural autonomy;
- Numerous small territorial concessions to the neighbors gradually bled Azerbaijan white;<sup>20</sup>
- In 1948-1953, between 150 and 200 thousand Azeris were forced to move from Armenia to the inland regions of Azerbaijan to make Armenia a monoethnic republic.<sup>21</sup>

Nagorno-Karabakh was rapidly becoming “more Armenian,” etc.

In this way, the ethnic stratification of the Caucasus started by the Russian Empire was given a new lease of life and new instruments of political pressure under Soviet power: united ethnosocial organisms were divided into political entities; a process that can be described as ethnic registration was carried out with the aim of establishing a hierarchy of state and quasi-state structures while administrative borders remained flexible, etc. The transborder settlement pattern of ethnic groups was distorted by the network of administrative borders superimposed on it. This created a powerful conflict potential in the ethnically patchy and politically differentiated region. The resultant geostructure of the Caucasus did not emerge by chance: it was tuned to the domestic and foreign tasks of Soviet ethno-geopolitics. This is confirmed by prominent student of the Caucasus S.E. Cornell who believes that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is part of global Eurasian geopolitics.<sup>22</sup> To my mind restructuring of the Caucasian geo-expanse began in Karabakh through a process that exploited the ethnoterritorial possibilities presented by the ethnoterritorial factor and the numerous preferences employed to create a desirable ethnopolitical and geopolitical situation.

## Conclusion

The 250-year-long struggle for Karabakh (1748-1998) can be divided into several major periods each with a sum-total of geopolitical, regional, inter-state, social, and ethnic relations of its own expressed in corresponding paradigms.

- The *first stage* (1747-1827)—70 years of geopolitical struggle for Karabakh between the main regional actors of the time: the Russian, Ottoman, and Iranian empires. At that time, the ethnic factor in the Caucasus, and Karabakh as its part, was of secondary importance, overshadowed by geopolitical expediency.
- The *second stage* (1828-1917)—90 years of Russia’s imperial ethno-geopolitics. The Russian Empire strove to change the ethnic map of the Caucasus, to make it a toehold and a corridor to be used in the Great Game unfolding in the Eurasian expanse. The course toward forced change of the ethnic composition of the population of a given territory became state policy in the key zones of the Caucasus, of which Karabakh was one. Collapse of the Russian Empire did not stop the process. It intensified it and developed into an armed struggle (1918-1920).

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<sup>20</sup> Between 1920 and 1991 the territory of Azerbaijan shrank from the 114 thousand sq. km it had as the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic to 86.6 thousand sq. km.

<sup>21</sup> See: Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov SSSR No. 4083 ot 23 dekabria 1947 goda “O pereselenii kolkhoznikov i drugogo azerbajjanskogo naselenia iz Armianskoy SSR v Kura-Araksinskiuu nizmennost Azerbaidzhanskoy SSR,” TsCI MID AR Archives; Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov SSSR No. 754 ot 10 marta 1948 goda “O meropriatiakh po peresele-niiu kolkhoznikov i drugogo azerbaidzhanskogo naselenia iz Armianskoy SSR v Kura-Araksinskiuu nizmennost Azerbaidzhanskoy SSR,” TsCI MID AR Archives.

<sup>22</sup> See: S.E. Cornell, “Nagorno-Karabakh in Eurasian Geopolitics,” in: *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, Uppsala University, 1999, pp. 142-148.

- The *third stage* (1920-1990)—70 years of Soviet ethno-geopolitics. The Communist Party, which had the country under its thumb, used ethnopolitical processes (and ethnoterritorial disputes in particular) as an instrument of political control in all parts of the vast country. The mounting systemic stagnation, however, deprived the Soviet country of any prospects; the geopolitical component of its ethno-geopolitics was gradually losing its relevance, thus bringing to the fore the ethnopolitical sides of the numerous contradictions. By a quirk of fate, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, one of the first projects of Soviet socialist and national politics, became the first step toward the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the beginning of the end.

The death of the Soviet Union buried the hopes of those who counted on the “crawling annexation” of Azeri territory and opened the road to the use of force. Nagorno-Karabakh became de facto part of Armenia (its quasi-statehood can dupe no one) as a result of aggression.<sup>23</sup>

A retrospective analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has revealed three stages: geopolitical, ethno-geopolitical, and ethnopolitical. It should be said that the third one, which dominates today, does not exclude the possibility of all the other stages. More than that: the leading world and regional powers are deliberately fanning and exploiting ethnic conflicts (as well as ethnopolitical factors as a whole) to achieve their geopolitical aims: this will not bury ethno-geopolitics in the near future.

<sup>23</sup> In 1993 the U.N. Security Council adopted four resolutions that called for the cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of the occupying forces from the territories of the Azerbaijan Republic (see: Resolutions of the U.N. Security Council No. 822 of 22 April; No. 853 of 30 July; No. 874 of 23 September, No. 844 of 12 November).

## THE GREATER CENTRAL ASIA PROJECT: PRESENT STATE AND EVOLUTION

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The Greater Central Asia (GCA) project initiated in 2005 confirmed that the United States treated the region as a foreign policy and security priority. The project was primarily promoted by the changed balance of forces in favor of Russia and partly China, which called for an adequate strategic and geopolitical response.

At the same time, the Greater Central Asia idea can be viewed as a conceptual and ideological substantiation of what the United States is trying to accomplish in the region. This is a fresh (and logical) approach to America’s entire previous foreign policy theory and practical regional policy.

In a wider sense the project is a strategic matrix the United States is using in Central Asia, the Caspian, and Afghanistan to channel the local geopolitical, military-political, and geo-economic developments in the desired direction. In fact, this is a mechanism for organizing the geopolitical expanse akin to the Greater Middle East. It is no coincidence that theoretically both projects are mutually complementary.

America has run into serious difficulties in Central Asia, which casts doubt on the GCA's future. In 2008, after concentrating on the Caucasus

the United States pushed Central Asia to the backburner. The events in South Ossetia riveted the attention of the U.S. Administration to the Georgian problem and relations with Russia. The Americans had to maintain a far from simple dialog with their European partners, who refused to take any anti-Russian steps. America's passive Central Asian strategy, however, has preserved some of the key parameters and elements the U.S. will reproduce in the long term in its regional policies. This means that we should take a closer look at the trends and prospects of the Greater Central Asia project.

## **The GCA Project: America's Response to the Regional Geopolitical Challenges. Is it Effective?**

Contrary to the widely accepted idea about the revolutionary nature of the GCA project for U.S. policy in Central Asia, it was devised merely because the George W. Bush Administration had no alternative. So it was a somewhat forced and logical strategic step, even though the U.S. State Department had discussed the idea a year earlier.

Close scrutiny reveals that the project contains the key ideas of America's policies of the 1990s (Central Asia should be removed from the sphere of Russia's and China's control while the bulk of its energy resources should be redirected via Afghanistan in addition to across the Caspian). In their new wrapping these ideas developed into a new comprehensive and strategic approach to the region that was given the new name of Greater Central Asia after the following circumstances in 2005:

1. Combined Russian and Chinese influence in the region reached dangerous levels at which the local countries might irrevocably turn to cooperation with both of these powers at the bilateral level and within the SCO.
2. The trans-Caspian and trans-Afghanistan pipeline projects had been shelved while China and Russia were moving toward even greater influence in the production and export of the Caspian energy resources.
3. In the absence of tangible results in the Caspian region Washington finds it hard to systematize its relations with Central Asia as a separate region, outside South Asia. Afghanistan is still an unstable and falling state with no geopolitical links with any of the regions, which makes it hard to coordinate its rehabilitation.
4. The continued American military presence in Central Asia and Afghanistan should and could be justified by the safety requirements for the pipelines and infrastructure stretching to South Asia and, on the whole, by the need to establish military-political cooperation with the Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

5. The American Silk Road project, within which the Central Asia + the Caucasus project was being realized (the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline projects being parts of it), stopped short of South Asia. No regional cooperation across Afghanistan to Pakistan and India was realized. Meanwhile, Washington badly needed such cooperation in order to establish controlled geopolitical pluralism in the region. This became even more important after Turkey fell short of its role of active geopolitical player in Central Asia.

This means that the GCA project was needed for objective reasons, which the United States has so far failed to remove, and accounts for the project's relatively unimpressive results.

## Aims and Tasks

The GCA project presupposes that when implemented it will create a mega-region by integrating Central Asia (in its traditional sense, namely five states: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan), Afghanistan, and South Asia (Pakistan and India, two largest states, as well as Bangladesh, Burma, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka). In the fall of 2006 the Central Asian states were transferred from the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs of the U.S. State Department (which dealt with them as former Soviet republics) to the Bureau of South Asian Affairs.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. State Department placed the GCA project on the firm foundation of the new energy and transport corridors and infrastructure supported by much more active mutual trade. It started by realizing the Central Asian Infrastructure Integration Initiative entrusted to the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. The initiative was expected to connect Afghanistan with other countries; reconstruct the old infrastructure facilities and build new ones to connect Central and South Asia and add stability by encouraging contacts at the personal level.

This promotes, to a certain extent, the energy interests of at least Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan: they, and their Central Asian neighbors, will acquire another outlet to the world energy and trade markets. The West will gain access across the land mass to the region's resources, which can be used, among other things, for military-strategic purposes. Some of the sides involved in these projects have already signed memorandums of intent. The war in Afghanistan, however, prevents implementation of the pipeline projects even though America and Europe have recently been stirring up interest in them at the diplomatic and expert levels.

The GCA project has outlined the prospects for further stabilization in Afghanistan and the counterterrorist campaign waged by the U.S. and NATO. Potentially, Afghanistan can become a transit corridor for energy (financially the most promising income item) and other resources, which will help it to improve its financial and economic situation. The United States is inviting the international community and the states of the Caspian-Central Asian region to create conditions for Afghanistan's revival after a long period of international isolation and stagnation. This can be interpreted as an attempt to shift some of American responsibilities to other countries along with the greater part of the inevitable spending.

By encouraging India and Pakistan to play a greater role in the region the United States is out to use the opportunities thus created to oppose Russia and China (if they become too strong for American liking).

<sup>1</sup> See: A. Iazmuradov, "Greater South Asia—America's New Regional Approach to Central and South Asia: How It is Developing and What Prompted It," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (40), 2006, p. 82.

## America's Practical Initiatives within the GCA Project

1. Active development of roads in Afghanistan to create communication corridors in the country and across it to be used by the U.S. and NATO for military purposes and to firmly link Afghanistan to Pakistan and the Central Asian countries. A year earlier the WB issued an easy loan for the restoration of the Kabul-Kunduz road and the Salang tunnel. The United States, in turn, granted, with the Congress' consent, \$80 million for the restoration of the Kabul-Kandahar-Herat road to connect Afghanistan with Pakistani and Indian ports.<sup>2</sup> On 26 August, 2007 the 800-meter-long bridge across the Panj to move heavy goods from Tajikistan to Afghanistan was commissioned.<sup>3</sup>

In April 2008 at the NATO summit in Bucharest the heads of the Central Asian states were presented with the "project of a railway that will connect Europe with the Central Asian states and Afghanistan. America initiated the project and will be its main investor. The Line Communication is expected to cross East European and Central Asian states: Ukraine, Byelorussia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan."<sup>4</sup> It was announced that the railway would be used for moving non-military goods, energy resources, and other natural resources.

2. Development of Afghanistan's agriculture to create conditions conducive to covering the country's demand for agricultural products; it might even produce enough to export agricultural surpluses to Central Asia.
3. Development of vast regional power networks covering the Central Asian states, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. In this sphere the Central Asia states could act together as a single energy exporter to Afghanistan and South Asia, which badly need power supplies. In 2006 a large-scale business forum called Electricity beyond Borders was held; "in August 2008 Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement on the Central Asia-South Asia-1000 Power Lines Project and on further development of Central Asian and South Asian energy markets in Islamabad. This agreement will come into force in 2013-2014."<sup>5</sup>

"Uzbekistan intends to triple its power deliveries to neighboring Afghanistan. This decision summed up the talks between the heads of the State Joint Stock Company Uzbekenergo and Ismail Khan, Minister of Energy and Water Management of Afghanistan. Today Afghanistan imports energy from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan."<sup>6</sup>

4. Development of cooperation in the security sphere designed to help the U.S. Central Command cope with its regional tasks in Central Asia and the Middle East; creation of conditions conducive to promoting U.S. military interests in the Caspian areas bordering on Iran and Russia. The United States is seeking the support of Kazakhstan, the key regional actor, the

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<sup>2</sup> See: "Amerikanskaia politika v Afghanistane. Kakov ee kharakter?" 7 October 2003, available at [<http://www.musakov.ru/inc/ind.php?page=6&exist=1&id=202&print=1&year=2003>].

<sup>3</sup> See: "Prezidenty Tadjikistana i Afghanistana otkryli most cherez reku Panj," 26 August 2007, available at [<http://www.easttime.ru/news/1/1/298.html>].

<sup>4</sup> "Po natovskomu projektu SShA postroiat zheleznuu dorogu v Tsentralnoy Azii," 1 April 2008, available at [[http://www.ng.ru/cis/2008-04-01/7\\_nato.html](http://www.ng.ru/cis/2008-04-01/7_nato.html)].

<sup>5</sup> "Kyrgyzstan i Tadjikistan s 2014 goda budut prodavat' elektroenergii v Pakistan," 7 August 2008, available at [<http://www.ca-news.org/print/34212>].

<sup>6</sup> "Postavki elektroenergii iz Uzbekistana v Afghanistan uvelichatsia v tri raza," 4 May 2008. Source: Afghanistan.ru.

geographic location of which is strategically important for the GCA project. Predictably, America is building up political relations with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

At the Bucharest summit NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said that a decision had been made to coordinate the Alliance's and U.N.'s activities in Afghanistan and added that NATO and U.N. were resolved to build Afghanistan together.<sup>7</sup> In December 2007 the U.N. set up a U.N. Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia designed to promote cooperation between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, as well as Afghanistan, in order to address all the controversial issues and create conditions for sustainable cooperation.<sup>8</sup>

## Stumbling Blocks on the Road toward Greater Central Asia

1. In the midterm perspective security in Afghanistan and Pakistan is unlikely to be achieved while its stabilization at the civilian level looks highly doubtful in the near future. Nothing that has been done (or declared as done) to minimize drug trafficking brought any tangible results mainly because people in Afghanistan live on the revenue generated by drug production and drug trade. This means that joint projects with Afghanistan and cooperation with this country might create serious risks for the Caspian and Central Asian countries.
2. There are objective ethnic, confessional, and cultural differences between the Central Asian and South Asian nations. More than that: India and Pakistan are huge conglomerates of human resources and two of the potentially largest economies. "This means that the two regions cannot merge—South Asia might engulf Central Asia"<sup>9</sup>—this could well be the final aim of the GCA strategy.
3. The United States cannot contain the ever expanding contacts between the Central Asian states and Iran.

In 2007 the Central Asian countries and Iran supported by Russia and China invigorated their cooperation in the transportation sphere. This was further encouraged in May 2007 by the summit of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan in the city of Turkmenbashi. In March 2008 Turkmenistan started construction of its part of the Uzen-Gyzylgaya-Bereket-Etrek-Gorgan railway.

Bilateral contacts between Tajikistan and Iran and the contacts among the three Persian-speaking states (Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Iran) are continuing. On 25 March, 2008 in Dushanbe at the meeting of the three countries' foreign ministers the sides pledged to build a railway to connect Afghanistan and China via Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan; they also undertook to join forces to build a highway from China to the Iranian port of Bandar-e' Abbas and a power line of 500 kW from Dushanbe to Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup> "Five documents were signed on 26 July in

<sup>7</sup> See: "H. Karzai odobril novyiu afghanskuiu strategiiu NATO," 7 April 2008. Source: Afghanistan.ru.

<sup>8</sup> See: "Naznachen glava Regional'nogo tsentra OON po preventivnoy diplomatii v Tsentral'noy Azii," available at [<http://www.inform.kz/showarticle.php?lang=rus&id=205468#>].

<sup>9</sup> A. Iazmuradov, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>10</sup> "Afghanistan, Iran i Tadjhikistan budut stroit' zheleznuiu dorogu ot Afghanistana do Kitaia," available at [<http://www.intermost.ru/news/107665/>].

Dushanbe at the meeting of Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov, Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, and Afghan President Hamid Karzai: the Charter of the Coordination Intergovernmental Council on Transport Corridors and a Joint Statement, as well as memorandums of tripartite cooperation in the economic sphere and in fighting drugs and terrorism.”<sup>11</sup> On the whole over the last twelve months the talks on a possible alliance of the Persian-speaking states has become much more explicit.

The above could undermine the American efforts in Central Asia and around Iran.

4. So far the United States has failed to convince the Central Asian countries to express their public and unanimous support of the GCA project. On the one hand, the major geopolitical actors present in the area are competing for domination; on the other, America’s European allies do not associate their interests in the Caspian region (projects of alternative oil and gas pipelines to Europe across the Caucasus and Turkey—the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline to join Nabucco and the Odessa-Brody oil pipeline) with the Greater Central Asia project. The fact that the local states have the alternative of regional cooperation based on the EurAsEC, SCO, or on the purely Central Asian identity is even more important. Today they have to cope with a range of related problems and contradictions.

## Two Versions of the GCA Project—posed by the U.S. Department of State and Dr. Frederick Starr—Seen in Retrospect

Dr. Starr, Chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University, made public his Greater Central Asia conception in an article that appeared in Issue 4 (July-August) 2005 of *Foreign Affairs*. Later, in October 2005, U.S. State Secretary Condoleezza Rice outlined the idea during her visit to Kazakhstan. The State Department obviously liked it enough to appropriate it.

Closer scrutiny, however, reveals differences between the academic and diplomatic versions; the most important are outlined below.

Dr. Starr placed the stakes on closer cooperation between the Central Asian states and Afghanistan. He united them into a GCA region expected to maintain close ties with South Asia. He also envisaged a Greater Central Asia Partnership for Cooperation and Development (GCAP) for the local states; the U.S. ambassador in Kabul was to be given more powers in order to enable him to coordinate the forum and its activities (planning, coordination, and implementation of an array of U.S. programs).<sup>12</sup>

The project was to be active in the following spheres:

- Security (stronger cooperation with NATO);
- Priority development of transportation networks (particularly in the energy sphere);

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<sup>11</sup> “Tajikistan posetili prezidenty Irana i Afghanistana,” 27 July 2006,” available at [<http://www.cainfo.ru/article/middle-asia-news/884/>].

<sup>12</sup> See: S. Frederick Starr, “A Partnership for Central Asia,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005 (see also: [[http://www.cfr.org/publication/8937/partnership\\_for\\_central\\_asia.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/8937/partnership_for_central_asia.html)]).

- Active trade (especially in agricultural products);
- More active cooperation with the United States for the sake of stronger democracy;
- Active involvement in managing joint projects and the tasks formulated by the U.S.;
- Fighting drug trafficking;
- Development and realization of cultural and educational contacts, as well as so-called people's democracy to plant American values in the region;
- Support of the independent media.

Dr. Starr pointed out that his project was open for all countries, including Russia and China and *in the future Iran* when its domestic political situation changed and moved closer to cooperation with the world community and observation of all international agreements. This means that the author intended to build up more confidence in the relations between the West and Iran and expected to push the Iranian ruling elite toward closer cooperation with the international community.

The author insists that the war on terrorism should be advanced by building U.S.-linked security infrastructures and points out: "The GCAP should function with the same spirit of partnership. It should also be an à la carte project... The only obligatory programs should be those aimed at promoting regional and continental trade and promoting democracy."<sup>13</sup> The long-term program of transformations in the American army, structural changes, re-equipment, and novel approaches to warfare, as well as to the dislocation of American bases and military abroad, have added urgency to Washington's closer cooperation with the region's countries. Modernized American troops should be re-dislocated and/or dislocated in regions previously free from America's military presence (Central Asia, Eastern Europe, the Caspian, and the Caucasus) based on small so-called "forward operating bases" (FOBs) and "forward operating locations" (FOLs) "mostly associated with the notion of more austere, scaled down, semi-permanent bases."<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Starr, in turn, suggested "expanding the responsibility of the Department of Defense's top official in Afghanistan to include the coordination of all regionwide Defense Department activities under the GCAP; and the establishment of a senior law enforcement and counternarcotics coordinator in Kabul with interagency responsibility for programs throughout the GCAP region."<sup>15</sup>

We cannot exclude the possibility that despite the fact that Washington armed itself at the state level with a somewhat moderated version of the GCA project, the theses offered by the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and accepted by wider circles of the expert community might be borrowed later in the mid- and long-term perspective.

Meanwhile Dr. Laumulin (Kazakhstan) offered a highly interesting comment to the effect that the Andijan events threatened the future of the GCA project. There are indications that several years earlier (before the project's official presentation) the U.S. State Department had placed its stakes on pro-Western Uzbekistan as one of the projects's elements. It seemed that "initially the country was intended as an integration engine for Greater Central Asia through agreements with Pakistan, building a railway to Afghanistan in cooperation with Japan, creating a transport corridor to the Indian Ocean, and forming a free trade zone in the Ferghana Valley, in which other Central Asian countries were expected to be involved." The cooled relations between Uzbekistan and the United States made it impossible to realize the GCA project in its initial form.<sup>16</sup> The project, however, was officially pre-

<sup>13</sup> See: S. Frederick Starr, "A Partnership for Central Asia," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005 (see also: [[http://www.cfr.org/publication/8937/partnership\\_for\\_central\\_asia.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/8937/partnership_for_central_asia.html)]).

<sup>14</sup> J. Davis, M. Sweeney, "Central Asia in U.S. Strategy and Operational Planning: Where do We Go from Here?" available at [<http://www.ifra.org/pdf/s-r-central-asia-72dpi.pdf>].

<sup>15</sup> S. Frederick Starr, *op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> M. Laumulin, "U.S. Strategy and Policy in Central Asia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (46), 2007, p. 54.



sented; the U.S. Administration, which had somewhat corrected its geopolitical strategies in the region, concentrated on Kazakhstan, which received the tag of regional driving force behind the regional integration processes within the Central Asian identity.

## Japan and the GCA Project

Today new forms of geopolitical structures and methods of their realization are being created; the leaders of the Western world and their allies (Japan, Australia, Brazil, and others) are determined to join ranks on the basis of the Western development model and the idea that they should go ahead and preserve their leading position on the international arena. They are urged by the fact that the “world without the West” slogan has been more or less widely accepted. The Western states and their allies should become more aggressive when pushing forward their geopolitical projects.

It seems that the United States, in the same way as Pakistan and India, has been working hard during the past few years to draw Japan, its main strategic ally in the APR, into the regional geopolitical struggle through the Central Asia + Japan Dialog on the strength of its strategic dependence (up to 90 percent) on energy resources from the Middle East. The Americans argued that sooner or later it might have to cope with threats to its energy security similar to those with which the United States is familiar.

It can be surmised that the Dialog’s aims, tasks, format, and positioning presuppose a new configuration of geopolitical rivalry with the SCO: the Central Asian states are SCO and CSTO members while the 2006 program of partnership within the Dialog is close to that of the SCO. At the June 2006 meeting with the Central Asian representatives held in Tokyo the official representative of Japan’s Foreign Ministry pointed out: “The SCO is developing into a bloc aimed against allied relations between Japan and the United States. It does not share our values. We shall closely follow the events.” The meeting discussed how deliveries of Asian energy resources in the “southern” direction could be diversified: from Central Asia to Pakistan (Quetta) and probably to India, from where they could be moved to Japan by sea. Experts agreed that the Tokyo meeting was carried out in the “American format and therefore was positioned as realizing an American plan of partnership with the regional states alternative to the SCO.”<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, according to the statements of the Japanese representatives that their country was prepared to help Uzbekistan (and Kazakhstan) through the Dialog project, the United States intends to link Uzbekistan (indirectly) to the regional Greater South Asia (Greater Central Asia) project. Today the political context excludes a direct dialog.

## GCA’s Place in Kazakhstan’s Policies

In recent years the GCA project has run up against serious contradictions; the political and expert communities are growing increasingly critical about the project and doubt its expediency. On the whole, America’s strategy in Central Asia has lost its impact; Washington has become deeply engrossed

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<sup>17</sup> A.I. Iskandarov, “Novye integratsionnye initsiativy v Tsentral’noaziatskom regione v usloviakh sovremennoy geopolitiki,” *Kazakhstan-Spektr*, No. 2, 2007, p. 28.

in other Eurasian areas: the Middle East, the Black Sea area, Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus. The rising cost of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan depletes the country's financial resources. This explains why Central Asia has been dropped, at least temporarily, from the list of America's priorities. For some time it will remain a derivative of America's policies in the Middle East, Russia, China, and the Caucasus and their dynamics.

There is an understanding in Washington that Central Asia and Afghanistan are not yet ready to accept the GCA project. This means that in the near future Washington will work toward creating the necessary conditions and developing them before moving on to the project's midterm perspective.

This means that America will move toward the aims and tasks formulated by the GCA project little by little, even in the long-term perspective. The present lull might be unexpectedly replaced with America's activation in the region if the geopolitical and geoeconomic conditions change.

So far the Central Asian states do not regard the GCA project as an alternative to their cooperation with Russia and China. The project's force might be demonstrated through its weakness. It might be promoted within the policy of diversification of international contacts and vectors carried out by the Central Asian countries if China and Russia gain too much power (especially in view of the negative trends revealed by Russia's policies during the South Ossetian crisis).

Within the GCA project Washington is displaying a latent interest in the regional project to create an Alliance of the Central Asian States; it probably approved of it because its format corresponds to America's desire to set up a regional structure (aimed at pushing China and Russia aside) with a good integration potential which the Americans could use as their regional partner. In future this project could be regarded, at least theoretically, as the cornerstone of a new regional structure similar to that presented as the GCA project; it could be used to suppress Chinese and Russian influence in the region.

It is equally important to identify the forms and spheres of cooperation (within the GCA project) which generate minimum political and economic risks. Some of the transit (including energy) corridors could be developed in the South Asian direction if the governments of Afghanistan and the United States, the international community, and specialized (insurance and other security structures) institutions supplied at least partial guarantees of their safety. It should be taken into account that "the choice of a specific route for a pipeline depends on the coordinated interests of the following groups: the exporter countries, the oil companies that work at the fields, and the importer and transit countries."<sup>18</sup>

It is not easy to identify the cooperation priorities: development of the social infrastructure and trade with Afghanistan and the South Asian countries involves great risks, especially in the social security sphere. A ramified network of energy corridors involves greater risks in the economic security sphere, which means that the special state structures of Kazakhstan should carefully verify the facts and supply detailed analysis.

Today, when the largest world actors present in the region have officially accepted Kazakhstan as the region's leader and strategic partner with sufficient political weight, it has become extremely important to clarify its relations with the SCO and the Western security structures present in the region. Kazakhstan might promote the idea of a new mechanism of cooperation and/or dialog among the security structures (NATO, SCO, and CSTO). This has become especially important today: the world political and economic systems are no longer what they were and are still in the process of changing while the states are looking for new models, forms, and formats of international cooperation. This is happening at a pace that makes detailed comprehension impossible. Responses should be

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<sup>18</sup> N.K. Nadirov, *Tengiz—more nefiti, more problem*, NITs Gylm Publishers, Almaty, 2003, p. 164.

dynamic while thinking must be preventive. Kazakhstan's initiatives can, to a certain extent, return the geopolitical rivalry in the region to a constructive sphere for the sake of continued geopolitical balance. Indeed, sooner or later the regional security systems will have to identify the level and sphere of their cooperation.

Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship in 2010 will give it a chance to attract European (and international) attention to the region's sores (Afghanistan and security threats) in order to create new approaches to regional security. On the other hand, the official framework of cooperation with the OSCE structure provides the country with an opportunity to implement the regional development projects and the security initiatives on the border with Afghanistan.

### *C o n c l u s i o n s*

1. The U.S. academic community has a much more profound idea about the GCA project designed to expand and promote cooperation among the Central Asian, Middle Eastern, and South Asian states than the U.S. State Department. In the absence of real progress in its relations with Iran Washington is concentrating on the project's practical economic and military expediency. It intends to merge Central and South Asia into a single region.
2. The GCA project presupposes that the local countries will be incorporated into the global West-dominated economic and financial structures. The current world financial and economic crisis, however, dictates caution when it comes to incorporation into the world economy.
3. The problems that interfere with America's intention to implement the GCA project have not, and will not, remove the issue from Washington's geopolitical agenda: it is a mid- and long-term project.
4. The new American initiatives for the region (of a local and global nature) might be presented in a different context and will, in one way or another, comprise GCA elements.
5. So far cooperation within the GCA project remains passive since the United States is still preoccupied with the domestic developments in Afghanistan, the Iraqi file, the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, the world financial, economic, and political crises, the Caucasus, and adaptation of the new U.S. administration to the new foreign policy environment. Russia and China are firmly opposed to the project, which inevitably affects the local policies; the Central Asian countries are demonstrating no unanimity when it comes to cooperation and regional unity. The project designed for the long term, however, is still alive.
6. The GCA project is a geopolitical dimension of the CA + the Caucasus Project functioning within the Silk Road initiative. On the other hand, they compete with one another when it comes to the transportation of resources. On the whole, however, they are being implemented in the context of America's interests, which presupposes controlled geopolitical pluralism in the region.
7. The American regional initiatives have gone beyond the GCA project; in the future they will be realized within the already functioning bilateral agreements and projects. Military cooperation, in particular, is being realized by the U.S. Central Command and NATO. The latter's involvement in the region's socioeconomic development means that the Alliance, as a military bloc, has exceeded the limits of its competence. NATO is using security rhetoric to become involved in the region's socioeconomic and political spheres. In the absence of the GCA

- project as a real institutionalized integration structure NATO and CSTO remain, and will remain in the foreseeable future, the key Western institutionalized structures involved in the integration efforts within GCA.
8. America's new geopolitical approaches are concentrated on reorienting the region's infrastructure toward South Asia with a special emphasis on the energy corridors; they are seen as a factor of mid- and long-term success in Afghanistan and America's geopolitical breakthroughs in the Caspian. Washington intends to preserve or even fortify its position and adjust the local countries' foreign policy preferences to its interests.
  9. The GCA project is the U.S.'s systemic matrix in the region, which determines the aims, tasks, ways, and methods Washington can employ in the new conditions. Its great scope and the somewhat simplified American approach notwithstanding, the task calls for constant analysis and monitoring in the new and far from simple political and geopolitical reality.
  10. In view of the fact that, judging by the remarks dropped by leading experts, the project was first geared toward Uzbekistan as the key country and driving force behind integration of Central Asia and Afghanistan, we can expect that the sides will soon restore their strategic relations. This is Uzbekistan's only chance to regain its place among the region's leaders; its present isolation from the West undermines its political influence. America, in turn, is seeking restored relations with Uzbekistan in view of its geostrategic importance in the continued counterterrorist operation in Afghanistan. This explains why in 2007 and 2008 the sides largely revived their bilateral contacts.<sup>19</sup> Contacts in the military sphere were successfully reanimated when "Tashkent allowed the United States to share the base in Termez with the German Air Force in order to move its military to Afghanistan."<sup>20</sup> The expert community is convinced that the Americans will soon return to the Karshy-Khanabad base.
  11. Dr. Starr's conception and the official GCA project have at least two important things in common: development of transport corridors in the South Asian direction and making Afghanistan the connecting link between Central and South Asia at some time in the future.

On the whole, the GCA project is part of Washington's vaster strategic plans designed to transform the Eurasian continent (including the Caspian region, Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia) into a geoeconomic expanse controlled by the United States. Potentially this may create a "sanitary cordon" along the Russian (southern) and Chinese (northern) borders while the geopolitical field of regional rivalry could be extended to suit American interests.

On the whole, America's Central Asian policy has acquired its conceptual framework in the form of the GCA project. The recent Caucasian developments (the so-called South Ossetian conflict) greatly changed world and regional policies. The changing global political and economic systems (which

<sup>19</sup> The following recent visits testify that bilateral contacts were stirred up: Deputy Assistant of U.S. Secretary of State E. Feigenbaum visited Uzbekistan on 28 February-5 March, 2007; Deputy Coordinator at the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State J. Garvey came on 3-5 April, 2007; U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE J. Finley on 15-17 March, 2007; U.S. Department of State Assistant Coordinator in the Europe/Eurasia Bureau T. Adams on 3-4 June, 2007; Ambassador-at-Large for the Office of International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State J. Hanford on 25-29 June, 2007; Director, Strategy, Plans and Policy, U.S. Central Command Rear-Admiral J. Miller on 20-22 December, 2007; Commander of the U.S. Central Command Admiral W. Fallon on 24-25 January, 2008; Acting Deputy Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs P. Spratlen on 28 March-1 April, 2008 (see: *Uzbeksko-amerikansk-  
ie otnoshenia. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Respubliki Uzbekistan*, available at [[http://mfa.uz/rus/mej\\_sotr/  
uzbekistan\\_i\\_strani\\_mira/uzbekistan\\_strani\\_ameriki/](http://mfa.uz/rus/mej_sotr/uzbekistan_i_strani_mira/uzbekistan_strani_ameriki/)]).

<sup>20</sup> A. Dubnov, "Tashkent shagaet 'pozitivno'," 18 March 2008, available at [[http://zarubejom.ru/v-nomere/5-ballov/  
?id=11180](http://zarubejom.ru/v-nomere/5-ballov/?id=11180)].

keep the Western countries in a state of turbulence) offered the Western bloc a new role and forced it to seek the best possible means to remain afloat. This means that the West will step up its regional geopolitical involvement. The Caucasus is a case in point. I have not posed myself the task of discussing the impact of the Caucasian development on the future of America's Central Asian strategy. That subject deserves a separate article.

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## XINJIANG AND ITS ROLE IN GREATER CENTRAL ASIAN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

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### *I n t r o d u c t i o n*

The Central Asia region mainly consists of the five Central Asian republics, namely Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The region is located in the center of the Eurasian continent. It borders to the north on the Russian Federation, to the south on Iran and Afghanistan, and to the east on the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Mongolia lies in the upper portion of the PRC; while Azerbaijan, a member of the Caucasus, lies to the west of the region near Turkmenistan.

Regional economic cooperation in Greater Central Asia<sup>1</sup> started relatively late due to the all-year-round war in Afghanistan and the regional conflicts in Central Asia after its countries gained their independence. Since the 1990s the Central Asian countries have shown great interest in regional economic cooperation and established cer-

tain mechanisms. Regional cooperation started with the five Central Asian countries signing the Agreement on Economic, Scientific-Technological, and Cultural Cooperation and developed into the establishment of the Central Asia Cooperative Organization<sup>2</sup> in 2002. But generally speaking, these agreements have no substantial content and the efforts exerted in regional cooperation have resulted in few achievements.

In recent years, as the war in Afghanistan subsided and economic development in Central Asia gained momentum, Greater Central Asian regional economic cooperation became a hot topic. According to the statistics of the Asian Development Bank, there are more than 20 regional cooperative development projects and programs in Central Asia for 2005-2008. The sponsor coun-

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<sup>1</sup> The Greater Asia region includes the five Central Asian countries, Afghanistan, and Xinjiang in China.

<sup>2</sup> See: Yao Daxue, "Globalization and the Economic Integration of Central Asia," *Russian, Central Asian and East European Markets*, No. 1, 2005, pp. 22-28 (in Chinese).

tries and international organizations include ADB—Asian Development Bank, CACO—Central Asia Cooperation Organization, CAREC—Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, CARECU—Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Unit, CMERF—CAREC Members Electricity Regulators Forum, EBRD—European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, ICT—information and communications technology, IMF—International Monetary Fund, MDGs—Millennium Development Goals, MI—multilateral institution, OIF—overall institutional framework, PRC—People’s Republic of China, RBR—regional business roundtable, RCSP—regional cooperation strategy and program, RCSPU—regional cooperation strategy and program update, RETA—regional technical assistance, SCO—Shanghai Cooperation Organization, SOM—senior officials’ meeting, TA—technical assistance, TIR—Transports Internationaux Routiers, and TPCC—Trade Policy Coordinating Committee.<sup>3</sup> These cooperation mechanisms have different

targets, different scopes of activity, and hence different priority areas.

Xinjiang occupies a unique place in these regional cooperation programs and is a dynamically developing region, the economy of which is currently taking off. Although it does not strictly belong to Central Asia, as a minority autonomous region it is closely related to Central Asia and shares a total of 3,500 kilometers in common borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. Xinjiang and the Central Asian region also have cultural and religious traditions in common and have always had close economic ties. The well-known Silk Road passed through Xinjiang and Central Asia. In recent years economic development in Xinjiang has been widely recognized and this area is destined to become the future economic outpost of China’s western region and Central Asia. Since the collapse of the U.S.S.R., as well as China’s reform and opening up to the outside world, the economic and trade relations between Xinjiang and the Central Asian countries have been expanding sharply, and there is no doubt that Xinjiang’s role in greater Central Asian regional economic cooperation will become very important in the near future.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Central Asia Regional Cooperation Strategy and Program Update, 2006-2008, Development through Cooperation*, Asia Development Bank, October 2005.

## Past and Present Relations between Xinjiang and Central Asia

Xinjiang and the Central Asian countries have a long history of relations, yet substantial regional economic cooperation did not start until the foundation of the People’s Republic of China. At that time, the U.S.S.R. and China jointly promoted the economic and trade development of the region to a significant extent. Both countries had highly centralized planned economies, thus the regional economic cooperation between Central Asia was mainly in the form of Soviet aid and foreign trade between the two countries, which also promoted the economic development of Xinjiang. Cooperation in the two countries almost completely broke down in the 1960s due to the tense relations between China and the U.S.S.R. at that time, and it was not until the late 1980s that economic relations between the two sides gradually began to recover.

Currently, economic cooperation between the five Central Asian countries and Xinjiang assumes a variety of forms, including border trade, formal trade, mutual visits by government or business delegations, holding industrial, economic, and technological cooperation fairs (for instance, the total sum of import and export transactions at the ten Urumqi fairs held between 1992 and 2001

amounted to 10.87 billion USD and the total sum of foreign economic and technological cooperation transactions amounted to 3.8 billion USD, whereby the total shares of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan topped 10 million).<sup>4</sup> Joint ventures, cooperatives, and individually owned enterprises were established, and exchanges of experts, technicians, teachers, students, and so on were carried out.

The proven reserves of Mortuk oil field amount to about 500 million barrels, while according to a report by Kazakhstan residual oil reserves amount to 85 million barrels. Some Chinese state-owned oil companies have been cooperating with Kazakhstan to recover oil and tap natural gas, as well as build oil pipelines, both cooperative enterprises are enjoying a “win-win” situation. For example, Xinjiang’s Zhong-Xin Ltd. spent \$250 million to purchase a Kazakhstan private oil company located in Aktobe in July 2007.<sup>5</sup>

There has been a great upsurge in the export of various Chinese products to Central Asia in recent years. Footwear, for example, generated a total trade volume of \$9.63 hundred million in 2006, which is 8.9% more than the footwear export volume in 2005, and passed through every trading port in northwest Xinjiang to Central Asian market. Chinese footwear products have had an import share of 80% in the market of five Central Asian countries.<sup>6</sup> The level and scale of economic and technological cooperation have steadily increased, from the primary processing of products to multiple field, multiple layer, multiple form, multiple channel, and overall cooperation, including labor export, raw material processing, production of light industrial and food products, project contracting, transfer of patents and manufacturing, and large scale investments in infrastructure and production projects, etc.

Xinjiang has held the Urumqi International Trade Talks Conference 16 times to date. This kind of the conference plays a major role in international business and the economy of northwest China. Economic activity, including talks, industrial and agriculture exhibitions, and investment opportunities, have attracted many merchants from all over the place, especially businessmen from Central Asian. For example, contracts amounting to a total of \$2.82 billion were signed at the fifteenth Urumqi International Trade Talks Conference in 2006, which was 5.7% higher compared to the last one. Central Asia held first place among the contracts. Xinjiang companies made deals amounting to \$1.19 billion with Kazakhstan, to \$0.17 billion with Kyrgyzstan, and \$0.16 billion with Uzbekistan.

The autonomous government approved foreign investments from 52 companies during the first half of 2007, which was 10.64% more than in 2006; contract foreign capital amounted to \$2.37 hundred million, which constituted an increase of 152.76% compared with the previous year. It actually used \$87.02 million in foreign capital—a 68.12% increase. Afghanistan and South Africa were the main investors of capital in Xinjiang. They invested a total of \$52.12 million in foreign contract capital, which was divided among 11 projects.<sup>7</sup> According to the measures implemented by the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization, the Engel’s coefficient (proportion of income that goes into food) in urban Xinjiang dropped to 35% a few years ago, indicating that the lifestyle of residents in urban Xinjiang has reached the level of a well-to-do society.

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<sup>4</sup> See: *The Current Situation and Prospects for Economic Cooperation between Xinjiang and the Five Central Asian Countries*, available at [www.un-tips.org].

<sup>5</sup> See: Ming Tian, “Xinjiang Zhong-Xin Company Purchased Mortuk Oil Field of Kazakhstan,” *Xinjiang Daily*, 18 July, 2007, p. 1 (in Chinese).

<sup>6</sup> See: Jin Shi, “Xinjiang Becomes Export Base of Chinese Shoes and Trade Volume of \$ 9.63 Hundred Million USD,” *Chinese Management*, 9 August, 2007, p. 2 (in Chinese).

<sup>7</sup> See: Suohuai Zeng, “Contract Foreign Investment Increased \$ 2.37 Hundred Million USD in Xinjiang in the First Half of the Year of 2007,” *Xinjiang Daily*, 13 July, 2007, p. 1 (in Chinese).

## Xinjiang's Participation Advantages in Greater Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation

### *The Two Sides Greatly Compliment Each Other in the Economy*

Xinjiang is a link connecting the Central Asian countries. In order to gain access to the sea for the landlocked countries of Central Asia, both China and Pakistan sponsored a joint transportation project in 1995, gradually incorporating Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. But there are different opinions among the four countries on two questions—the number of international driver's licenses to be issued and how to coordinate international train-and-bus transportation. After nine years of consultations and negotiations, the governments of the four countries jointly signed a Transit Conveyance Agreement on 13 April, 2004. Transit haulage vehicles from every member state enjoy exemption from transit fees and tolls provided by the government in compliance with the agreement. International trade of the four transit countries officially began in May 2007. By means of this good transport service, Kyrgyzstan, for example, exported abandoned aluminum products to Pakistan, Kazakhstan exported spinning and weaving goods to Kyrgyzstan, and so on. This kind of transportation not only gives an impetus to trade but also promotes further mutual understanding and unity among the four countries.<sup>8</sup>

China and the five Central Asian countries have clearly complementary economic relations. The five Central Asian countries have abundant natural energy reserves. Kazakhstan has oil reserves of up to 26.9 billion tons of oil equivalent; Uzbekistan has 4.41 billion tons of oil equivalent, Kyrgyzstan has 590 million tons, Tajikistan has 510 million tons, and Turkmenistan has 33 billion tons. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also have high hydropower potential, with an annual power capacity reaching as high as 14 million tons and 27.30 million tons of oil equivalent. China has rich coal reserves of up to as much as 450 billion tons of oil equivalent, but only 1.72 billion tons in oil reserves. In 2003 China imported as much as 95 million tons of crude oil, yielding only to the United States. Because of the rapid development of its auto industry, China needs plenty of liquid fuels to guarantee the sustainable development of its transportation industry. According to an analysis carried out by the International Energy Agency, China will import half of its oil by 2010 and 80% by 2020.<sup>9</sup> The difference between China and the five Central Asian countries in energy resources demonstrates the huge potential of economic cooperation between the two sides.

During the planned economy, the five Central Asian countries were dependent on the U.S.S.R. in the economic chain, therefore they suffered from comprehensive economic recessions after the collapse of the Soviet Union. On the one hand, the abundant energy resources and agricultural products of the five countries lost their markets, while on the other hand, the five countries experienced severe shortages of capital and consumer goods. Kazakhstan had an energy output of 80 million tons in 1992, but this fell by half to 40.3 million tons in 2001; Tajikistan suffered a 2/3 loss in energy output—from 9.1 million tons in 1992 to 3 million in 2001. As for China, it was a net oil exporter in 1992, but since 1993 it has become a net oil importer. Obviously China demands oil and gas from Central Asia

<sup>8</sup> See: "Train-and-Bus Coordinated Transit of the Four Countries Marching Successfully," *Xinjiang Daily*, 19 September, 2007, p. 1 (in Chinese).

<sup>9</sup> See: *An Analysis of the Current Situation and Prospects for the Supply and Demand of Petroleum in China*, available at [www.petroecon.com.cn] (in Chinese).



due to its geographical proximity. And in return, the five Central Asian countries require China's home appliances and daily consumer goods, so the broken chain with the former U.S.S.R. can be re-linked to the China ring.

From the viewpoint of economic development level, China is similar to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The other three countries are the least developed countries in terms of World Bank standards, and their per capita GDP is not half or even 1/5 of China's. In terms of dynamics, almost all the five countries suffered from economic recessions after they gained their independence. Kazakhstan, as the largest economic entity, had suffered a dramatic decline in its economic aggregate from \$32.5 billion in 1990 (in terms of fixed prices of 1995, the same hereinafter) to \$25.5 billion in 2001.<sup>10</sup> China has witnessed a worldwide GDP growth rate in terms of gross volume. Judging from the gross volume and development trend, China is likely to become an exporter of capital and technologies to the Central Asian countries. The economic recovery and development in Central Asia has laid a good foundation for mutual beneficial economic and trade cooperation between Xinjiang and the Central Asian countries.

Central Asia is also a consumption market that has yet to be fully developed. The five Central Asian countries have a total area of 3.99 million square kilometers, with the smallest, Tajikistan, covering an area of 140,000 square kilometers and the largest, Kazakhstan, 2.72 million square kilometers. The total population of the five countries is equivalent to a medium-populated province in China, whereby Uzbekistan has a population of 25 million, Kazakhstan of 15.5 million, and the other three countries about 5 million each. As a commodity distribution center and ethnic market on the Eurasian continent, Xinjiang has immense potential for constantly absorbing products from the Central Asian countries.

The complementary relationship between its geographical advantages and economic strength make Central Asia's foreign economic cooperation highly dependent on China's Xinjiang. The countries strongly feel that the potential of mutual trade and economic cooperation between Xinjiang and Central Asia has been far from fully explored and hope to upgrade mutual regional economic cooperation to a higher level.

### **Good Foundation of Regional Cooperation**

Regional economic cooperation between China and the Central Asian countries has a relatively good foundation which could easily become a source of regional economic unity after further expansion and stable development. Some regional infrastructure has been constructed and some is being planned. As early as the 1960s, there were plans to build a railway network through the Asian continent: a northern passage connecting the railway network in China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Russia, and Korea; a southern passage connecting Yunnan of China, Thailand, Turkey, and the future east Asia Union railway networks; and a north and south passage connecting Russia, Central Asia, Caucasus, northern Europe, and the Persian Gulf.

Although the plan will take a long time to be completed, the framework for the Eurasian land bridge has been formed and most sections of the railways have been built and put into commercial operation. Apart from the railway networks, a blueprint for the construction of an Asian expressway network was discussed at the 2002 seminar held by the United Nations Development Program and the

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<sup>10</sup> See: Yaping Du, "An Analysis of the Prospects of the Regional Economic Cooperation between China and Central Asia," *Asia and Africa Review*, No. 4, April 2004, pp. 1-5 (in Chinese).

United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific. There are plans to build the network along the Silk Road to promote regional integration.

Also energy production infrastructure has been built in a way that creates good conditions for regional cooperation. A network of natural gas pipelines has been built in Central Asia for transporting natural gas from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to south Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Oil refineries have been built in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. In addition, a power network has been formed in Central Asia, and there is a power network, oil refineries, and a West-East gas transportation project in Xinjiang. All of these oil, gas, and power networks can be joined into a single whole within the framework of regional cooperation for achieving mutual benefits and promoting common development.

Moreover, a number of framework agreements have been signed among the Central Asian countries and between China and the Central Asian countries, which have laid the foundation for regional bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation. As members of the former Soviet Union, the five Central Asian countries have formed the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and signed the Transit Transport Framework Agreement with a view to promote transit trade. Although China is not a member of ECO, it has signed a Transit Transport Agreement with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, respectively. Actually China and the five countries have become signatories of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which involves China, Russia, and four countries in Central Asia, is actively seeking and promoting regional economic cooperation. The total area of the member countries is more than 30 million square kilometers, and the total population accounts for 1/4 of the world population. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has been playing an increasingly important role in ensuring security in Central Asia and in promoting regional economic development. Another important target of the SCO is to establish a Central Asian free trade area.

Xinjiang currently has a relatively large volume of border trade and transit transport with the Central Asian countries. Geographically speaking, the Central Asian countries have natural setbacks in developing international trade, the shortest distance from the sea (Indian Ocean) is 1,700 kilometers and it passes through such countries as Afghanistan. So far this passage to the sea has not performed any fundamental function. The main passage to the sea for the Central Asian countries lies through Xinjiang and Gansu to the port of Lianyungang in China. For example, both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan export goods through the port of Lianyungang in China. Today, Chinese goods can be seen even in the most remote places of Central Asia. Since Central Asia lies in the hinterland of the Eurasian continent, transit trade will become an important part of the economic relations between China and Central Asia after the land bridge is completed.

Xinjiang has great potential for becoming a cotton product base for the Central Asian countries, although Uzbekistan plays a greater role in cotton production since it has certain advantages over Xinjiang, e.g. lower prices, better quality, and stronger competitive export capacity.<sup>11</sup> According to official statistics, cotton cultivation areas in 2003 amounted to 1,026 thousand hectares, which in terms of expanded reproduction was 8.7% more than that of the previous year in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China and amounted to a total of 1.6 million tons of cotton. The cotton-growing area covered 1,272 thousand hectares in 2006 in Xinjiang, which is 24% more than in 2003 and constitutes 30% of China's cultivated area for this crop. The total amount of cotton was 2.18 million tons, or 40% of the full yield of the country's entire output. The average per acre yield of lint cotton in Xinjiang amounted to 114 kilograms that year, which was more than 42% of China's average per acre yield, and 1.3-fold higher than the average world per acre yield.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See: Hui Li, "Researching Countermove of Promoting Xinjiang Cotton's Competitive Capacity in International Markets," *Chinese Cotton*, No. 4, 2005, pp. 11-13 (in Chinese).

<sup>12</sup> See: *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook 2003 & 2006*, Compiled by the Bureau of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, Chinese Statistical Press, Beijing, China.

There is huge supremacy in tomato processing and planting in Xinjiang, which produced nearly 90% of the country's total fresh tomato products, while the export of tomato products amounted to 1/4 of the world's total trade volume. In 2006 more than 300 producers, purveyors, and equipment suppliers of the tomato processing industry from all over the world visited tomato-processing plants and tomato plantations in Xinjiang. Xinjiang's contribution made China the third largest country in the world in terms of volume of the tomato industry in 2006.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Social Environment for Further Development of Economic Cooperation between Xinjiang and Central Asia***

At the turn of the 21st century, economic development in the Central Asian countries entered a new stage, which generated greater demand for investments than 10 years ago. Since internal investments within the countries are far from sufficient for economic development, the shortage of investment has become a key restricting factor to further economic development and substantial growth. Therefore, all the Central Asian countries are exacting increasing efforts to attract foreign investments and improve the investment environment. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, etc. have successively published the International Investment Protection Law and signed the Agreement on the Encouragement and Mutual Protection of Investments with China. The National Support of Direct Investment Law published by Kazakhstan, the Investment Activity Law by Uzbekistan, the Foreign Investment Law by Kyrgyzstan, and the Foreign Investment Law and the Investment Law by Turkmenistan all encourage foreign investments. The countries have all formulated preferential policies aimed at attracting foreign investments.

Some countries, such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, learned from China's experience how to set up free economic area and special economic zones in which to carry out a series of preferential policies and enhance infrastructure construction in order to improve the investment environment. As for foreign direct investments (FDI), the Central Asian countries are recipient countries of FDI due to the ongoing recession and low technological level after the collapse of the U.S.S.R. So the Central Asian countries are unlikely to invest in foreign countries on a large scale for a long time to come. The situation for China is different. Although China's per capita GDP is a little over \$1,000, the country has immense comprehensive potential, and several large enterprises have already made large-scale investments in foreign countries. The gap between China and Central Asia in economic development has widened over the past odd 10 years, indicating that China is likely to become an important source of foreign investments in Central Asia.

Culture is a bridge for expanding economic cooperation between Xinjiang and the Central Asian countries. So educational exchange and technical interchange should be increasingly promoted. There is immense potential for cultural exchange between China and the Central Asian countries since Xinjiang is populated by Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other Central Asian ethnic groups. These ethnic groups share the same language and have a similar lifestyle. So there is a solid historical foundation between the countries and friendship has been deepening more than ever during the past few years.

For this reason, the colleges and universities of Xinjiang have been practicing open-door policies, whereby 2,000 new students have been recruited yearly over the past few years, who mostly

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<sup>13</sup> See: Jun He, Hongpeng Liu, "The World Tomato Industry Association Inspecting Xinjiang Tomato Industry," *Xinhua News*, 9 August, 2007, available at [<http://www.csh.gov.cn/article.asp?id=75970&tab=znews&word>].

come from Central Asian countries to learn the Chinese language and culture. In addition, more than 3,000 citizens have been studying Chinese in Kyrgyzstan, according to a report by the Chinese Embassy in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>14</sup>

## Factors Restricting Cooperation between Xinjiang and Central Asia

**Irregular market environment.** Apart from Kyrgyzstan, all the other Central Asian countries are not members of the WTO. Although these countries all claimed to have been implementing market economic principles for more than ten years, they commonly have a poor idea of a market economy and employees are reluctant to accept modern enterprise management. In particular, the people in these countries are very sensitive to national sovereign rights. Government officials and enterprise executives do not like foreign investors making money and believe that foreign entrepreneurs have come to invest in order to seize their country's property, although they also claim to welcome foreign investment.<sup>15</sup>

The governments often altered or failed to execute contracts, accusing the projects of damaging their national interests, which created obstacles for investors' business operations. In addition, the law systems in these countries are still unsophisticated and incomplete, or the laws are not observed. And some laws are not compatible with international regulations, so foreign investors often feel confused.

**The economic potential of the Central Asian countries is not strong and their market capacities are limited.** In 2003, Kazakhstan had a GDP of only \$24.25 billion and a per capita GDP \$1,991, which were the highest in the Central Asian countries, and Tajikistan had a GDP of \$1.55 billion and a per capita GDP of \$260, which were the lowest. Some of the Central Asian states are closed totalitarian countries with a very high threshold for market access.

**Policy risks.** Most of the Central Asian countries remain totalitarian after independence without effective democratic systems. More often than not their policies, including foreign economic cooperation policies, are dependent on the minds of the leaders. This was an important reason for the failure of some of the regional economic cooperation projects.

**Prospects.** All the Greater Central Asian countries experienced rapid economic growth in 2004 as a result of the dramatic growth in energy exports, high commodity prices (for gold as well, but not for cotton), increased foreign investments, improved macroeconomic management, and other factors. Growth rates were 9.4% in Kazakhstan, 7.1% in the Kyrgyz Republic, 10.6% in Tajikistan, and 7.7% in Uzbekistan.<sup>16</sup>

Against the background of China's overall rapid economic development, Xinjiang has also witnessed rapid economic development as the country's leading autonomous region, which provides strong economic potential for it to take part in regional economic cooperation with Central Asia. In 2005, Xinjiang had an economic growth rate of 10.5% and an increase in completed industrial added value of 16.5% over the previous year. Oil and natural gas production in 2005 were 24.08 million tons and 10 billion cubic meters, respectively, with a 30% and two-fold increase compared to 2000. The average increase in crude oil production amounted to 1.10 million tons.

In recent years, Xinjiang's traditional markets, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, etc., have been consolidated and new markets, such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, have been developed. Kazakhstan

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<sup>14</sup> See: Jun He, "Citizens of Central Asian Countries Like Studying in Xinjiang and 2000 Foreign Students Entering There," *People's Daily*, 6 August, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> See: Changqing Zhao, "The Advantageous and Disadvantageous Factors for Advancement toward Central Asia," *Russian, Central Asian and East European Markets*, No. 12, 2004, pp. 1-4 (in Chinese).

<sup>16</sup> Data given by the Asian Development Bank.

and Kyrgyzstan were in first place with the largest volumes on the list of Xinjiang's export destination countries and regions in 2004; and Kazakhstan was in first place, Tajikistan in fifth, and Uzbekistan in sixth on the list of Xinjiang's import source countries and regions in terms of import volume in 2004. Export to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan accounts for 71.48% of Xinjiang's total export volume in 2004; while import from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan accounts for 64.81% of Xinjiang's total import volume in 2004. In terms of the dynamically rising trend, Xinjiang's import and export with these countries have been rapidly increasing. Export to Kazakhstan increased by 40% in 2004 over the previous year, to Kyrgyzstan 1.2-fold, to Tajikistan 5.9-fold, and to Uzbekistan by 93.2%. Import from Kazakhstan increased by 18.2% in 2004 over the previous year, from Kyrgyzstan by 52.8%, and from Uzbekistan 1.3-fold. The stable and extremely rapid increase in import and export has created increasingly closer regional economic relations between Xinjiang and the Central Asian countries.

With Xinjiang's rapid economic development, Central Asia's economic recovery and Afghanistan's reconstruction, the demand and impetus for greater Central Asian regional economic cooperation have become increasingly stronger. Rapidly expanding trade also added vitality to cooperation in the region. In addition, more regional cooperation projects are to be carried out between 2006 and 2008, which will bring plenty of investments and development opportunities to the region. We have good reason to predict that Greater Central Asian regional economic cooperation will develop rapidly and steadily, and Xinjiang's role will become increasingly active and important.

### *C o n c l u s i o n   a n d   S u g g e s t i o n s*

Xinjiang enjoys many advantageous conditions in its participation in Greater Central Asian regional economic cooperation. Its role as an advancing force in the economic development of the whole region is inestimable if it is able to fully use these advantages to promote the economic integration of the region. The successful development of regional economic cooperation will significantly change the situation in which the economy of Central Asia was long dependent on the Russian economy, and the standard of living of the multitude of Muslims will improve, which shall promote the democratic advancement of Greater Central Asia, including Xinjiang, and will also have a profound long-term influence on the worldwide antiterrorist war and the future political pattern of the world.

To promote Greater Central Asia regional economic cooperation, the geographical advantage of the region, which connects the East and the West, should be fully exploited, and rapid economic development in the region, especially in China, should be fully utilized, whereby Xinjiang will play an indispensable part in regional cooperation.

A time of trade prosperity between Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China and Central Asian countries has arrived. Foreign investments are now surging into Xinjiang because the region's thriving economy stems from the local optimized industrial structure, favorable investment environment, and an influx of investment projects, which bring great profits for foreign countries, thus raising the attractiveness of the region. Although the task of accomplishing an expanded trade goal is not easy as Xinjiang and the five Central Asian countries have some economic shortcomings, both sides should exert their best efforts to achieve a "win-win" situation in friendship and the economy. China and Central Asia are both pinning their hopes on developing peaceful relations and facilitating growth to create a bright future. To expand turnover in Central Asia, Xinjiang's first task is to retain a cool head at a time when the region is being seized by export furor aimed at reaching great achievements. It is clear that adjusting some of the old or creating new policies in the regional administrative departments is a necessary and sufficient condition to develop the regional cooperation.

Xinjiang must regulate industry in the provinces and set up production and a regional commercial management system, which to a certain extent is unsuitable for international trade. A new inter-

national economic system of bilateral trade and multilateral cooperation must be established in accordance with the current trade practice throughout the world, such as multilateral technical assistance, a multilateral settlement system, multilateral tax treaty, and so on.

The necessary market rules and regulations to govern vendors in the free port and fair trade should be improved, and this kind of legal environment is very helpful for expanding turnover. Xinjiang's regional government needs to emphasize the important role of the commercial legal framework and safeguard the interests of both individual international operators and multinational corporations. Xinjiang's regional government must simplify organization and lower the administrative level when dealing with international commercial cooperation, as well as reduce the number of working days required for economic transactions, increase service items, and ensure a good attitude toward promoting economic and technical exchange between China and Central Asia.

The Xinjiang autonomous government should create favorable conditions to further international business, offer good services for foreign businessmen, improve service quality in furnishing economic information, provide long-distance transportation of goods, fiduciary loan, and so on. Further, although Xinjiang's transport capacity will improve substantially with the opening of some of the new railways, the region must continuously raise its transport capacity and energy supply in accordance with the market demand of foreign businessmen in order to create a favorable investment environment. Investments must be made in the construction and renovation of commercial ports, roads, and other infrastructure in the backcountry. A comprehensive marketing plan for trade must be drawn up.

Last but not least, the Xinjiang government should realize that environmental conditions influence regional cooperation, that environmental protection is a difficult task, and that we are pressed for time. To protect the environment against desertification and pollution, we should reinforce tree and grass planting, tighten up the management of water resource allocation, and bring rivers and lakes under constant control. Diversified financial channels should provide funds for planting trees to enhance desert restoration. Problems of overload grazing and excessive cultivation should be tackled in a comprehensive way.

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## JAPAN'S PROSPECTS IN THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

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**A**t the present stage, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is arousing great interest in the international community.

The leading actors in international relations, such as the U.S., Japan, and the European countries, are keeping a careful watch over the organization's

development. The interest of these countries is mainly related to the lack of information about the SCO's actual activity and the organization's real essence. The leaders of the SCO member states constantly assure everyone that the organization has peaceful intentions and is not going to start a confrontation with the West. Nevertheless, some steps and decisions taken by the member states within the SCO arouse suspicion and distrust among the leading global powers. Thus any significant event organized within the framework of the organization is often regarded as a challenge to the West and to the United States in particular. Japan, as one of the leading world powers and Washington's close partner on the international arena, is showing interest in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well. An increasing

number of Japanese experts and researchers have begun reflecting on SCO development issues. In particular, they want to form a clear idea of the organization and understand the cooperation possibilities that can be pursued with the SCO. Japan's current interests in Central Asia can explain the attention Japanese scientists and some politicians are paying to the SCO. It is a well-known fact that Japan has recently become more active in its cooperation with the Central Asian countries in the sphere of atomic energy. Another important factor which arouses Japan's interest in the SCO is Russia's and China's participation in this organization. In particular, Moscow and China can create obstacles for Japanese policy in Central Asia and even make use of the SCO's mechanisms to that end.

## Development of Japanese Diplomacy in Central Asia

Japan's policy toward Central Asia after the end of the Cold War passed through several stages. With the appearance of the new independent players in the region Japan began taking steps toward developing relations with the post-Soviet states. At its first stage Japan's regional policy mainly concentrated on the development of bilateral relations with the Central Asian countries. For example, in 1992 Japan established its first diplomatic contacts with Uzbekistan. Later, Japan gradually and steadily established bilateral relations with the other Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Japan's first regional strategy toward Central Asia was the so-called Eurasian diplomacy declared by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in 1997. It should be noted that the Eurasian diplomacy strategy appeared as a practical result of the Obuchi Mission conducted from 28 June to 9 July, 1997. The Obuchi Mission was Japan's first significant diplomatic initiative with respect to Central Asia. Members of the mission visited Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan and laid the foundation for long-term future cooperation.<sup>1</sup> At that time, one of Japan's most important tasks was to establish new relations with the post-Soviet countries and strengthen its own position in the region. It is important to emphasize that Japan regarded Central Asia as only one part of a broader space—the Eurasian continent, i.e., at that time Japan did not have any defined strategy toward Central Asia as a specific region. Eurasian diplomacy had broader objectives. But there can be no doubt that the Eurasian diplomacy of Prime Minister Hashimoto became a significant contribution to strengthening relations and broadening contacts between Japan and the Central Asian countries.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Y. Takeshi, "Japan's Multilateral Approach toward Central Asia," in: *Eager Eyes Fixed on Slavic Eurasia: Volume 1, Russia and Its Neighbors in Crisis*, ed. by Akihiro Iwashita, 21st Century COE Program Slavic Eurasian Studies, No. 16-1, Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, June 2007, p. 70.

In 2004 Japan began changing its previous approach toward the Central Asian region. In particular, in 2004, under the supervision of Minister of Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi, Japan developed and launched a new project called the Central Asia + Japan Dialog. As a result of the new regional project initiated by Japan relations between Tokyo and the Central Asian countries became institutional in nature. In particular, members of the Central Asia + Japan forum defined the main aims and tasks of the new structure, which included strengthening regional security and promoting economic development of the Central Asian states. The participants in the forum started an important tradition. In particular, the Central Asia + Japan Dialog members began organizing regular meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs. During these meetings the parties normally discuss current issues of regional economic and security cooperation.

For example, in June 2006 during the second foreign minister meeting of the participants in the Central Asia + Japan Dialog the parties adopted an important document which determined the primary directions of cooperation between Japan and the Central Asian countries for the midterm. This document was called the Action Plan of the Central Asia + Japan Dialog. Within the framework of the Action Plan, the forum participants came to the following key decisions:

- **Cooperation on the international arena.** Japan and the Central Asian states agreed that reform of the United Nations Organization and Security Council is needed in order to deal with the current global threats and challenges. Japan supported the idea of creating a Nuclear Weapon Free Trade Zone in Central Asia. The parties decided to continue cooperation on the international arena through such international organizations as the United Nations, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), and the Asia Cooperation Dialog (ACD).
- **Promotion of cooperation at the regional level.** Japan confirmed its readiness to support the efforts of the Central Asian states in establishing stability at the regional level. This particularly applies to the following vital spheres: countering terrorism and illicit drug trafficking; rendering anti-personnel mines harmless; reducing poverty, improving health and medical care standards at the regional level; providing support in resolving regional environmental issues; reducing and preventing natural disasters; enhancing regional water and energy potential; activating regional trade and investment processes; and providing assistance for the development of transport infrastructure in Central Asia.
- **Promotion of business.** Japan and the Central Asian states expressed their intention to set up a joint government-business working group on economic issues within the framework of the Central Asia + Japan Dialog with a view to studying cross-regional projects and other related matters. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan expressed their intention to work on a framework for promoting regular discussions with the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in each country so as to identify problems that Japanese companies operating in the countries are faced with. The Central Asian states agreed to hold business forums and round-table meetings to promote exchanges between Japanese and Central Asian companies.
- **Mutual support of the intellectual dialog.** The parties agreed that intellectual exchange is an important element that can help to promote a political dialog, coordinate positions with respect to the prospects for economic integration of Central Asia, and develop new directions for broad cooperation.
- **Development of cultural and human exchanges.** The participants in the Central Asia + Japan Dialog agreed to promote mutual cooperation in cultural exchange and education.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See: "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialog Action Plan, According to the information on the official web-site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan [<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/dialog/action0606.html>].



Moreover, during the foreign minister meeting of the Central Asia + Japan Dialog in Tokyo 2006, the participants agreed to continue cooperation in developing projects to build new routes for the export of oil, natural gas, and raw materials from Central Asia to the global markets through Afghanistan to the Indian Ocean. In this regard Japan actively supports the projects to build oil and gas pipelines from Central Asia in the southerly direction with the prospect of reaching the markets of the Southeast Asia region and Japan in the future.

On 13 December, 2007, the Central Asia + Japan Forum continued its activity by holding the third senior officials meeting (SOM) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Delegations from four Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) were represented at the deputy foreign minister level. Turkmenistan was represented by the country's ambassador to Tajikistan, which marks the interest of the new Turkmen government in the dialog. The Japanese delegation was led by Mr. Keiichi Katakami, Special Representative for Central Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Deputy Director-General of the European Affairs Bureau), and consisted of officials from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). During the meeting the parties reviewed the progress of the adopted action plan and exchanged views on further cooperation development. The participants also confirmed the importance of holding a third foreign ministers' meeting of the Central Asia + Japan Dialog and agreed to coordinate its schedule and venue.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most important events in the history of the development of Japanese diplomacy toward Central Asia was the first visit of Japanese Prime Minister D. Koizumi to the Central Asian countries. In framework of the official tour in 2006 Koizumi visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In fact, during these visits Koizumi indicated the new priorities of Japanese foreign policy in Central Asia. In particular, this visit marked the growing interest of Japanese business in developing nuclear energy in the region. During the meeting with Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev, Koizumi emphasized that the Japanese party intended to deepen relations with Kazakhstan, especially in nuclear energy cooperation—the development of uranium fields. As a result of the visit, the parties signed a Memorandum of Intent between the governments of Kazakhstan and Japan on advancing cooperation in the utilization of atomic energy.

**An analysis of Tokyo's regional initiatives at the current stage shows that Japan's main interest in Central Asia is to provide national energy security by increasing access to the region's energy resources.** For example, Japan imports oil mainly from the Middle East region. Keeping in mind the high conflict potential in this region (escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, permanent pressure from the U.S. and the Western countries on Iran due to its national nuclear problems, and destabilization of Iraq), Japan is interested in searching for new partners who will be able to guarantee uninterrupted delivery of energy resources to the country. Diversification of import routes will reduce Japan's dependence on the Arab world. In August 2006, before coming to Astana, Japanese Prime Minister D. Koizumi stated that Japan is interested in Central Asia's energy resources. In particular, Koizumi emphasized: "Regarding our energy resources strategy, it is not good when Japan is too dependent on the Middle East. But Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan possess vast resource supplies."<sup>4</sup>

After D. Koizumi resigned from his post and following several changes in Japanese leadership, Tokyo's strategy toward Central Asia in general remains unchanged.

As of today, one of Japan's key priorities in Central Asia is uranium. Thus, regarding the previous agreements between the governments of the Central Asian states and Japan on cooperation in the nuclear energy sphere, Japanese companies are gradually settling for the prospect of the region's energy

<sup>3</sup> See: The Third "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialog/Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), available at [[http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2007/12/1176649\\_840.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2007/12/1176649_840.html)].

<sup>4</sup> See: "Junichiro Koizumi ottesniaet Rossiui ot Uzbekistana," *Kommersant*, 30 August, 2006, available at [<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?fromsearch=b54f7d76-d289-4923-8931-5309959b4f2a&docsid=701051>]

markets. For example, one of the most recent achievements of modern Japanese diplomacy in Central Asia is the agreement signed with the Kazakhstani government on uranium enrichment. According to the agreement, the Kansai Electric Power Corporation and Sumitomo Trade-Investment Corporation, along with the Kazakhstani Kazatomprom Company, will enrich uranium in the territory of Kazakhstan. Japanese companies will start uranium enrichment in 2010. The agreements also include technical reconstruction and modernization of the old type of uranium production plant, which will cost about \$600-700 million. Total investments within the framework of the project are expected to reach several billion American dollars. As a result, the volume of enriched uranium in Kazakhstani territory is expected to exceed Japan's current uranium demand two-fold.<sup>5</sup>

Thus we can see that at the current stage Japan is becoming more and more involved in Central Asia's regional affairs. The main aim of Japan's current policy in Central Asia is to strengthen its own position in the regional energy market. In this regard, due to the strong position of Russia, China, and the U.S. in the regional oil and gas markets, Japan seems to be playing an active part in the sphere of uranium production and enrichment.

## The Future of Japanese Policy in Central Asia

At the present time Japan faces several problems as it strives to gain a firmer foothold in Central Asia. First of all Japan has to define its future role in Central Asia and find an answer to the crucial question of whether Japan really needs to become more deeply involved in the region, especially considering the fact that Central Asia is not an area of Japanese traditional interests. Or would it be more reasonable for Japan to develop relations with the Central Asian countries at the bilateral level and mainly in commercial spheres, such as signing promising agreements and making deals? At the same time, Japan must keep in mind that more active involvement in Central Asian affairs will require significant financial and material costs as well as immense efforts.

On the other hand, **Japan needs to develop a clear strategy and policy toward the Central Asian Region**, which will define Japan's future role in the region and Central Asia's importance for Japan. For this purpose more attention should be given to the region's problems. In this regard it would be helpful to establish government think tanks and research centers which will compile reports on current issues of political and economic development in Central Asia. Laying a research foundation will definitely contribute to achieving the outlined task. In this regard developing contacts with Central Asian research centers and think tanks would be helpful as well. It will create new possibilities for organizing mutual scientific conferences where experts from both sides will be able to exchange useful information and opinions.

It is also important to **strengthen cultural ties between Japan and the Central Asian countries**. For that matter one of the most significant problems is the lack of information about each other. For example, the common citizens of Kazakhstan do not know much about present-day Japan, its culture and moral system, and even far less about its current foreign policy priorities and contemporary diplomacy. Japan is in the same boat. The ordinary Japanese people know almost nothing about Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian countries. The existing information vacuum creates mutual misunderstanding and negatively affects the development of bilateral cooperation between Central Asia and Japan, as well as Japanese multilateral cooperation initiatives in the region.

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<sup>5</sup> See: "Iaponia nachnet obogoshchat uran v Kazakhstane," 26 December, 2007, available at [www.centrasia.ru].

For example, at the current stage Japan does not have enough representation in Kazakhstan. Bilateral relations are developing mainly on the basis of Japanese energy interests in Kazakhstan. To my mind, the development of cultural ties and exchange of important information is also very helpful. Organizing cultural events, seminars, and forums on a regular basis will create additional opportunities for the ordinary people to find out more about each other. As a result Kazakhstani society will become more interested in Japanese culture and the country's way of life. The Japanese people will gain more information about the culture and traditions of Kazakhstan. There is no doubt that such activities will contribute to the development of bilateral cooperation in education. The parties will create and launch new student exchange programs.

In general, the Central Asian states regard Japan as an attractive, economically developed country with a peaceful foreign policy. In contrast to some Western states, and especially the U.S., Japan implements a soft policy. For example, Japan supports the development of democracy in the Central Asian countries but never puts pressure on them regarding the lack of some democratic standards. In this regard Japan always tries to take into account the region's cultural and historic development specifics. This position on the part of Japan is highly appreciated by the Central Asian states. And it lays a good foundation for developing further comprehensive and mutually beneficial relations between Japan and the Central Asian states.

## Japan and the SCO: Is Cooperation Possible?

Japan's position with respect to the SCO is closely related to its interests in the Central Asian region and to bilateral relations with Russia and China. In order to successfully maintain its own policy in Central Asia Japan first needs to create constructive and confidential relations with Russia and China. Otherwise these two regional powers may counteract Japanese initiatives in Central Asia.

In this regard the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is attracting more and more attention from Japanese politicians and experts. There is no doubt that along with creating its own policy toward Central Asia, Japan also has to take into account the SCO factor, because in our day and age the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is manifesting itself as an active, powerful, and sufficiently authoritative regional structure. Moreover, along with the Central Asian states, the SCO includes Russia and China, both of which are able to have a significant impact on the development of the regional economic and political processes. Regional security and stability issues greatly depend on these two powers as well.

The foreign policy of new Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda can be called very diplomatic. For example, the new prime minister did not continue the tradition of visiting the Yasukuni shrine (which always aroused a negative reaction in some Asian countries) and declared the need to improve relations with Japan's close neighbors—Russia and China.<sup>6</sup> Keeping in mind the new approach in Japanese foreign policy Japan has the opportunity to become a more active player in Central Asia. At the same time, we cannot deny the possibility of future cooperation between Japan and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

To my mind, at present, cooperation between Japan and the SCO is mutually beneficial for Japan and the SCO member states as well. By activating its own foreign policy on the Eurasian conti-

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<sup>6</sup> See: "Yasuo Fukuda, a Moderate, is Chosen to Lead Japan," 23 September, 2007, available at [<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/09/23/asia/japan.php>].

ment Japan can strengthen its international position and prestige as a peaceful power acting in the role of mediator. For example, Japan can act as a mediator in establishing a dialog between the SCO and the West. This can be achieved if Japan acquires a supervisor status in the SCO. This would be beneficial for Japan itself, the SCO members, and the Western world as well. The SCO will rid itself of its anti-NATO labels and the Western countries, in particular the U.S., will have the opportunity to start new mutually beneficial relations with the SCO. According to Japanese expert Akihiro Ivashita: "Japan, as a trustworthy ally of the U.S., should persuade the U.S. to make a more positive commitment to the SCO and to reshape the Eurasian security situation together. As a historic gateway to Asia, Japan has an incentive to invite other western countries to back up this mission."<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, Japan has the possibility of supporting the development of relations between the SCO and other regional structures which have the same aims as the SCO, such as ensuring regional security, stimulating economic cooperation among the member states, etc. For example, at the current stage the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is highly interested in developing relations with ASEAN. The interest of the SCO members in ASEAN is related to the fact that the Asia Pacific Region is one of the global centers of economic growth today. For example, on 21 April, 2005 the secretariats of the SCO and ASEAN signed a memorandum of understanding that defines the directions of cooperation and interaction in the economy, finances, tourism, ecology, utilization of natural resources, transnational crime, etc.<sup>8</sup> In this regard in February 2008 Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Yermekbaev emphasized the following: "The member states of the SCO and ASEAN are tied by means of geographical proximity and common interests in the Asia Pacific Region. The participants of both organizations are interested in strengthening peace and stability in the 'areas of activity' and in establishing mutually beneficial cooperation in such spheres as the economy, transport, culture, and tourism. At the same time, the SCO is interested in broad and diverse forms, methods, and mechanisms of interaction within the framework of the Association. ASEAN has 40 years of working experience and it can give many positive things to such comparatively young structures as the SCO."<sup>9</sup> In this regard Japan, using its international authority and experience, can contribute to the development of comprehensive relations between the SCO and ASEAN.

Japan's participation in the SCO is very beneficial for the Central Asian states as well. Regarding the long-term interests of the organization's small members (the CA countries), Japan's participation in the SCO in fact means enlargement of the space for economic and political balancing. Compared with the positions of the two regional powers, Russia and China, Japan is a more Western state. In spite of the fact that the SCO is not a military bloc (Russia and China officially reject such claims), Moscow and Beijing are suspicious of the activities of the U.S. and NATO in Central Asia. Therefore, Russia and China are trying to use the SCO's diplomatic tools to keep back other players. Nevertheless, Kazakhstani experts do not deny the possibility of Japan acquiring observer status in the SCO if Tokyo shows an interest in cooperation.<sup>10</sup> So it is necessary to emphasize that at the current stage Japan has enough opportunities to become more actively involved in the Central Asian region and to establish cooperation with the SCO as well.

<sup>7</sup> A. Ivashita, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Japan: Moving Together to Reshape the Eurasian Community," available at [[http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2008/0128\\_asia\\_ivashita.aspx?p=1](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2008/0128_asia_ivashita.aspx?p=1)].

<sup>8</sup> See: "Ministry inostrannykh del stran ShOS podpisali riad dokumentov," 25 February, 2005, available at [<http://www.rian.ru/politics/20050225/39459836.html>]. [<http://www.rian.ru/politics/20050225/39459836.html>]

<sup>9</sup> From the interview of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Yermekbaev "on prospects of interaction between the SCO and ASEAN," 25 February, 2008, available at [[www.sectsc.org](http://www.sectsc.org)].

<sup>10</sup> See: S. Kushkumbaev, "Development of the SCO as a Regional Organization: Potential for Enlargement," 3 July, 2007, available at [[www.kisi.kz](http://www.kisi.kz)].

## Conclusion

Today the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an important and authoritative international organization. During its years of development, the SCO has evolved into a full-fledged international institution with own charter and well-formed structure. The SCO members actively cooperate to resolve current regional economic, political, and security problems. It is also necessary to point out that the SCO is an active and effective organization that builds and sustains mutual confident relations between Russia and the Central Asian states, on the one hand, and China, on the other. The organization's territorial area is really huge. At present, the common territory of the six SCO member states is more than 30 million square kilometers or almost 3/5 of the whole Eurasian continent. The population of the SCO area exceeds 1.5 billion people, which is nearly one quarter of the world's population.<sup>11</sup> Taking into account these amazing figures and the fact that giant states participate in this organization, it is not hard to understand the international community's growing interest in the SCO. As for Western political experts and politicians, they often criticize the SCO and sometimes call it an anti-Western military alliance or some kind of anti-NATO organization.

At the same time, it should be pointed out that the SCO currently has many objective problems and internal obstacles which do not permit it to become or transform into a military alliance:

- **First. There is no clear and common foreign policy course among the SCO member states.** Most Central Asian states still use a multi-vector policy or the policy of balancing between the interests of big external powers—Russia, China, and the United States. The Central Asian states always try to retain good and stable relations with the West as well as with the East, otherwise they may reach a geopolitical dead end. For example, the Central Asian states cannot afford to spoil their relations with the United States. If they do, they will become too dependent on Russia's political will or even on China's. As for other SCO members, Moscow and Beijing, the policy of these countries within the framework of the SCO strongly depends on their strategic interests in Central Asia, which sometimes run counter to each other.
- **Second. The SCO's functions have recently become broader.** Today the parties are intensively developing cooperation not only in security, but also in the economy, communications, energy, science, ecology, education, tourism, and sport. The extension of its functions sometimes leads to misunderstanding and the organization losing its true or initial tasks and aims. Thus the SCO is becoming a regional organization which duplicates the functions of other existing structures, such as the OCST in security or the EurAsEC in the economy. At the same time, the organization's military component is still insignificant.
- **Third. The character of the SCO is mainly declarative.** The organization's practical activity is not so visible. It mainly includes joint antiterrorist exercises and organizing annual summits of the SCO heads of state, which sometimes arouse disputes in the international community.
- **Fourth.** SCO has features of latent rivalry between its key members—Russia and China.

The listed problems allow us to conclude that the SCO is more likely transforming into an ordinary regional organization with ordinary routine tasks than into a military alliance. On the other hand, today **the SCO is only one part of the great geopolitical game in Central Asia—a region where the interests of the big powers periodically come into collision.**

Along with the leading players on the international arena, Japan is also very interested in the SCO and is watching over the organization's development. Mutually beneficial cooperation with this

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<sup>11</sup> Regarding the SCO official web-site information, available at [www.sectco.org].

organization can provide Japan with new opportunities for successfully realizing its own strategic interests in Central Asia. Japan's participation in the SCO may contribute to warming relations with Russia and China as well. Therefore they will not hinder Japan's initiatives in Central Asia.

As for the Central Asian states, they are all for Japan's participation in the SCO because it will provide them with new possibilities and space for diplomatic balancing between the regional powers. They will be able to step beyond the frameworks delineated by Russia's and China's strategic interests in the region.

As one of the world's most economically developed states and using its weight in the international community Japan can contribute to the creation of a constructive dialog between the SCO and leading Western countries. There is no doubt that the SCO members will appreciate this kind of mediator activity by Japan because, frankly speaking, there is no member state in the SCO that would really like to spoil relations with the West.

To reach that goal and to strengthen its position in Central Asia, Japan needs to develop a comprehensive approach toward the Central Asian region taking into account the interests of the Central Asian states, Russia, China, and the United States. In this regard it should be noted that Japan as first a peaceful power with a developed economy has enough opportunities to enhance own position in Central Asia.

At the same time, keeping in mind all the positive and negative factors, the Japanese government must choose the right way to further conduct its Central Asian strategy. Is it reasonable for Japan to activate its own multilateral initiatives in Central Asia in the future (especially taking into account the fact that it will require huge financial support and much effort)? Or would it be more effective to continue the current approach, which mainly includes concentrating on developing bilateral relations with the Central Asian states based on Japan's practical strategic interests?

## NATION-BUILDING

**DILEMMA OF  
THE GEORGIAN ELECTIONS:  
POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS OR  
A SLIDE TOWARD  
NON-LIBERAL DEMOCRACY**

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For a long time now elections in Georgia have been a source of political crises rather than a mechanism of democratic power change. In recent Georgian history, in fact during the entire period of its independence, the government in power has never been changed through elections. The only exception so far were the very first multiparty parliamentary elections of 28 October, 1990 when the national political force, The Round Table—Free Georgia, headed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia replaced the ruling Communist Party. Later President Gamsakhurdia was overthrown. For some time after the regime change the ruling party led by Eduard Shevardnadze won all the successive elections until he, in turn, was removed from power by the revolution of 2003. After that

the republic's election tradition underwent certain changes predated by the political crisis of the fall of 2007, which reached its height on 7 November when the demonstration of the opposition forces was dissipated and a state of emergency declared. The West insisted on a pre-term presidential election being held on 5 January, 2008 followed by parliamentary elections on 21 May. The elections did not replace the leadership, however they prompted those in power to bring new people into the upper echelons and carry out partial election reform. On the other hand, these elections revealed with unprecedented clarity the degree to which the republic's political system had been transformed and its trend toward non-liberal democracy.

## New Political Reality and End of Revolution

The Georgian expert community has long agreed that the revolution of 2003 “has been going on far too long.” For some time the political system continued functioning on the “revolutionary fuel;” today it has been exhausted. The country is facing new political challenges. Only elections could have defused the tension; on the other hand, they could have served as a catalyst for a new revolution, which both society and the political elite were expecting. In the years of independence Georgia acquired a political tradition: non-constitutional regime change by the forces dissatisfied with the election results. It was for this reason and in the absence of a fully developed democratic election system that would lead to a legal power change that on 7 November, 2007 the opposition insisted on the parliamentary elections being shifted from the date scheduled for the fall of 2007 to the summer 2008. Its leaders hoped that by the summer they would be prepared to overthrow the government with the help of the crowd. The opposition went even further: when the date of the presidential election was announced its leaders threatened to stir up a massive uprising if the results were falsified. Significantly, having agreed to a pre-term presidential election Mikhail Saakashvili, as the incumbent, cut down his term by six months. The election was special in many respects: for the first time in the history of independence there were several real political contenders (even though the election system itself was not liberalized). Before that both Gamsakhurdia and Shevardnadze ran against people with no real political clout, some of them could be described as comical figures. No wonder that practically all the previous presidential elections brought triumph to the ruling regime. The first president Zviad Gamsakhurdia, whose party was in the majority in the republic’s legislature, achieved a stunning victory. Eduard Shevardnadze won with less spectacular results. This political tradition was born on 26 May, 1991, the day of first presidential election in independent Georgia.

Eduard Shevardnadze, former First Secretary of the C.C. Communist Party of Georgia, never eclipsed the impressive victory of former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia even though his retinue (some of them later staged the revolution that removed Shevardnadze from power) spared no effort. At the 2004 election (the first after the Rose Revolution) Mikhail Saakashvili had no real rivals and won with 96.27 percent of the votes. Gamsakhurdia’s record became history. This was how the presidential race unfolded in Georgia:

### 26 May, 1991

Total number of voters: 3,550,371

Turnout at the polls: 2,967,744 (83.59 percent)

<b>1. Zviad Gamsakhurdia</b>	<b>—86.52 percent</b>
2. Irakly Shengelaiia	—0.85 percent
3. Jemal Mikeladze	—1.65 percent
4. Valerian Advadze	—7.59 percent
5. Tamaz Kvanchantiradze	—0.28 percent
6. Nodar Natadze	—1.17 percent

### 5 November, 1995

Total number of voters: 3,106,557

Turnout at the polls: 2,139,369 (68.90 percent)

1. Roin Liparteliani	—0.37 percent
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2. Akakii Bakradze	—1.47 percent
3. Jumber Patiashvili	—19.37 percent
4. Panteleimon Giorgadze	—0.50 percent
<b>5. Eduard Shevardnadze</b>	<b>—74.32 percent</b>
6. Kartlos Garibashvili	—0.47 percent

**9 April, 2000**

Total number of voters: 3,088,925

Turnout at the polls: 2,343,176 (76 percent)

<b>1. Eduard Shevardnadze</b>	<b>—79.8 percent</b>
2. Avtandil Djoglidze	—0.25 percent
3. Vazha Zhgenti	—0.14 percent
4. Tengiz Asanidze	—0.12 percent
5. Kartlos Garibashvili	—0.34 percent
6. Jumber Patiashvili	—16.66 percent

**4 January, 2004**

Total number of voters: 2,231,986

Turnout at the polls: 1,963,556 (87.97 percent)

1. Roin Liparteliani	—0.53 percent
2. Kartlos Garibashvili	—0.28 percent
3. Zurab Kelekhsashvili	—0.09 percent
4. Zaza Sikharulidze	—0.03 percent
5. Temur Shashiashvili	—2.47 percent
<b>6. Mikhail Saakashvili</b>	<b>—96.27 percent<sup>1</sup></b>

The 2008 election contradicted the Georgian political tradition to a certain extent. First, it was held at the same time as two referendums: one to decide the date of the next parliamentary elections (the disagreement over which stirred up political unrest) and the other on Georgia's membership in NATO. Their results combined in the most interesting way with the results of the presidential race, in which seven real contenders ran:

Total number of voters: 3,527,964

Turnout at the polls: 1,982,318 (56.18 percent)

1. Levan Gachechiladze	—25.69 percent
2. Arkady (Badri) Patarkatsishvili	—7.10 percent
3. David Gamkrelidze	—4.02 percent
4. Shalva Natelashvili	—6.49 percent

<sup>1</sup> Based on the materials of *Mtavari gazeti*, 5-6 January, 2004 (in Georgian).

5. Mikhail Saakashvili	—53.47 percent
6. Giorgi Maisashvili	—0.77 percent
7. Irina Sarishvili-Chanturia	—0.16 percent. <sup>2</sup>

This was not an easy victory: the president carried merely 53.47 percent of the votes while his main rival, who represented the united opposition, received 25.69 percent. On the one hand, the opposition lost; on the other, 53.47 percent for the ruling regime was a sort of sensation. In fact, the people in power gathered barely enough to save the regime. On the other hand, they skillfully used the results of the two referendums to defuse the political tension inside the country and strengthen their position outside it. The election returns convinced the opposition that the regime could be changed in a democratic way, through elections: its leaders abandoned the idea of a revolution in favor of parliamentary elections. The choice was supported by the fact that at the referendum the nation voted for holding parliamentary elections in the summer of 2008 (the crisis was stirred up by disagreements over the date of the parliamentary elections). This created a political paradox: the opposition won the dispute over the election date while the government won the elections.

## Georgian Elections: Geopolitical Dimension

The referendum on Georgia's NATO membership was intended as a certain geopolitical dimension of the Georgian elections; in this way the Saakashvili regime hoped to regain the West's support, which had somewhat slackened after the events of 7 November, 2007. The result (78 percent of positive votes) came as an unpleasant surprise: several years earlier a similar poll revealed a much larger share of NATO supporters. This fact confirmed that the referendum on NATO was also intended for domestic use. The geopolitical dimension, however, dominated during the parliamentary election campaign. It was addressed to those foreign (mainly American and European) observers who before the elections had sided with the Georgian government and criticized the opposition for its radicalism. For this reason it looked as though the opposition stood against the West. During the election campaign the leader of the main opposition alliance Levan Gachechiladze said at a meeting for everybody to hear: "We are not fighting the Saakashvili regime—we stand opposed to America's geopolitical interests." The government skillfully used this political blunder to accuse the opposition of pro-Russian sentiments. (The nation is very much anti-Russian which explains why accusations of a pro-Russian stand are used during election campaigns to discredit political opponents.)

The foreign policy dimension of the Georgian elections goes back to the pre-Rose Revolution times. It was in the summer of 2003 during the preparation for the parliamentary election campaign that former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker assumed the role of a moderator between the two sides. As a friend of then President Eduard Shevardnadze he convinced him to reform the election system on the very eve of the parliamentary elections, which allowed the opposition to gain a large number of seats in the Central Election Commission and, therefore, considerable political weight. This initiative became known as the Baker Formula. Later, in 2008, when speaking on TV Eduard Shevardnadze dismissed the initiative of his friend by saying: "It was the Baker Formula that was our undoing." Under this formula the political parties were equally represented in the Central Election Commission. After the revolution the election system was revised several times; this last happened in 2008.

<sup>2</sup> [www.cec.gov.ge], 2008.

## Reforms of the Election System and Lowering the Seven-Percent Barrier

As soon as the results of the 2008 presidential election became known the Central Election Commission began preparations for the parliamentary elections. It charted two-stage reform of the Georgian election system in line with the recommendations supplied by the international organizations that took into account the shortcomings of the presidential election. The recommendations were mainly technical rather than political<sup>3</sup> but some of the changes in the election law and the Constitution put an end to the polemics about the seven-percent barrier that had been going on for many years. Under Shevardnadze, in 1999 the parliamentary majority introduced amendments and addenda to the Constitution by raising the five-percent barrier for the parties running for parliament to seven percent.<sup>4</sup> The change was initiated by Zurab Zhvania, speaker of the parliament and comrade-in-arms of President Shevardnadze (later one of the leaders of the Rose Revolution). This initiative was explained by the desire of the Georgian leaders to urge parties to merge for the sake of a stable political field. Later, the international community, and the Council of Europe in particular, criticized the “seven-percent rule.” When new people (headed by Zhvania and other leaders) came to power they long refused to change the rule. On the eve of the first post-revolutionary parliamentary elections they declined the Council of Europe’s request to lower the barrier because there was not enough time to initiate the corresponding legal procedures. In truth, they simply did not want to share the legislative powers with other forces. For the next five years the “revolutionary leaders” intended to establish strict discipline in the country to create prerequisites for the republic’s effective development, a situation that might require personal decisions. President Saakashvili repeated time and again that he did not need counterrevolutionaries in the legislature. Had the recommendations of the Council of Europe been accepted the first post-revolutionary elections of 28 March, 2005 might have brought the Laborites and Union-Renaissance headed by Aslan Abashidze to the parliament. The situation in the ruling party threatened to disrupt the plan of setting up a “constitutional majority” in the parliament.

Early in 2008 the Constitution was amended<sup>5</sup> to no political avail. International organizations approved of this while the “political field” treated this step of the powers that be with caution. The lowered barrier tempted the members of the united opposition to run for parliament separately; most of the opposition parties, however, preferred to close ranks and not dissipate their forces. This time the opposition was confronted with new legal regulations and procedures introduced almost on the eve of the elections. The parties with no factions in the parliament, for example, had to gather 30 thousand signatures (instead of the 50 thousand required earlier) to run for parliament; the candidates in the majority constituencies were relieved of the task of gathering signatures (previously three thousand signatures were needed).

The Central Election Commission initiated amendments and addenda to the Election Code that the parliament adopted. Art 77, related to the procedure of filing applications/complaints about violations of the election procedure, was divided into two parts: the first described how and where applications/complaints should be filed, while the second specified the content of such applications/complaints.<sup>6</sup> The amendments and addenda took into account the miscarriages in this procedure during

<sup>3</sup> [www.OSCE.org/odihr], 2008.

<sup>4</sup> See: Constitution of Georgia of 1995, Art 50:2, amendments of 1999.

<sup>5</sup> See: Constitution of Georgia of 1995, Art 50:2, amendments of 2008.

<sup>6</sup> See: Election Code of Georgia. Art 77, amendments of 2008.

the presidential elections. The Central Election Commission of Georgia organized training sessions for all those working in the election administration (there are about 51 thousand of them in Georgia working at 3,700 polling stations).

## Manipulations with Figures and “Cemetery Votes”

The reforms did not address the main and seemingly eternal problem of the election system: falsification of the election results. In fact, public mistrust in the announced results repeatedly stirred up political crises and shook the political system. In recent years the election vocabulary acquired two new terms “carousel” and “cemetery votes.” They are interconnected and describe the system of falsification of election results dating back to the days of Eduard Shevardnadze.

The trick is to add names to the voter lists; not infrequently the names of minors (in Georgia all citizens over 18 have the right to vote) and people who have died (some of them born in 1800).

Emigrants (Georgian citizens living outside the country) are another source of falsifications.

These fictitious voters cast their votes for the official authorities in the following way: on election day activists of the ruling party travel from one polling station to another using the names of deceased people to cast “cemetery votes.”

Naturally enough, just as under Shevardnadze, the government today continues to deny that the election results are falsified in any way, with or without the “cemetery votes.” On the other hand, the government is hard pushed to explain to the opposition how the number of voters increases just a few months before the elections in a country with a steadily declining birth rate, radically changing demographic situation, and rising number of emigrants.

The government declined the accusations and insisted that it had exerted much effort to exclude the possibility of accruing “cemetery votes.” According to the Central Election Committee, the names of 25 thousand deceased persons and 30 thousand duplicate names that were registered simultaneously at two polling stations were removed from the voter lists.

There were also the so-called additional lists: about 2 million people out of the total of registered voters came to the polls to elect the president—70 thousand of them were entered on additional lists on polling day. By the parliamentary elections the “institution of additional lists” had been discarded; exit polls, however, remained to become another stumbling block in the relations between the government and the opposition.

## Eduard Shevardnadze’s Delayed-Action Bomb

Implementation of the 2 November, 2003 referendum results initiated by Shevardnadze carried even more political weight than certain procedural and legal novelties. According to the results the number of deputies was cut from 235 to 150; this should have been enacted at the next parliamentary elections. Because of the revolution the “next parliamentary elections” took place immediately after the referendum, although its results were not implemented until 2008 because of a certain political paradox and legal nonsense. The revolution annulled the results of the proportionate representation (PR) elections while the candidates elected in the majority constituencies acquired their seats in the

parliament. To be more exact, 63 out of 85 candidates<sup>7</sup> got into parliament while the others were awarded posts in the executive structures after the revolution.

The new “majority deputies” belonged to the following parties:

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. The National Movement—Democrats                   | —16 seats  |
| 2. The Right Opposition—Industrialists—New           | —7 seats   |
| 3. The Alliance of Democratic Renaissance            | —6 seats   |
| 4. The Labor Party of Georgia                        | —2 seats   |
| 5. The For New Georgia bloc (headed by Shevardnadze) | —19 seats. |

The other “majority deputies” were politically neutral; after the mid-term elections 85 deputies of the local quota joined them in the parliament.

This means that after the Rose Revolution the pre-term parliamentary elections of 28 March, 2004 affected only those elected within the proportionate system; two parties overcame the seven-percent barrier.

#### The parliamentary PR elections of 28 March, 2004

According to the CEC slightly over 1,500,000 voters came to the polls

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. The Socialist Party   | —0.47 percent                     |
| 2. The Alliance of Democratic Renaissance                        | —6.02 percent                     |
| <b>3. The Right Opposition—Industrialists—New</b>                | <b>—7.62 percent (15 seats)</b>   |
| 4. The Labor Party of Georgia                                    | —5.81 percent                     |
| <b>5. The National Movement—Democrats (M. Saakashvili)</b>       | <b>—67.02 percent (135 seats)</b> |
| 6. The United Communist Party of Georgia                         | —0.04 percent                     |
| 7. The National-Democratic Party—Traditionalists                 | —2.52 percent                     |
| 8. Mdzleveli   | —0.05 percent                     |
| 9. The Party of Defense of Constitutional Rights                 | —0.00 percent                     |
| 10. The Nationalists   | —0.27 percent                     |
| 11. Samshoblo (Motherland)                                       | —0.03 percent                     |
| 12. National Renaissance   | —0.11 percent                     |
| 13. Ertoba (Unity)   | —2.41 percent                     |
| 14. The Party of Democratic Law                                  | —0.15 percent                     |
| 15. The Party of National Ideology for Georgia                   | —0.03 percent                     |
| 16. Nodar Natadze—Popular Front                                  | —0.15 percent                     |
| 17. Fairness   | — 0.01 percent                    |
| 18. Political Movement Tavisupleba (Freedom)—<br>K. Gamsakhurdia | —4.23 percent                     |
| 19. Popular Alliance of All Georgia                              | —0.03 percent. <sup>8</sup>       |

<sup>7</sup> Based on the materials of *Mtavari gazet*i of 5 April, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Based on the materials of *Mtavari gazet*i of 1 April, 2004.

In 2008, the delayed-action bomb Eduard Shevardnadze had set in his time nearly destroyed the country's very fragile political system. Under the 2003 referendum the number of deputies was cut down, which meant that the seats should have been redistributed among the deputies elected by PR and in the majority constituencies (as it previously was under the Constitution, 150 deputies out of the total of 235 were elected by party lists, while 85 were elected in the majority constituencies).<sup>9</sup>

The constitutional amendments made it much harder for the "political field" to find another way of distributing the seats among the PR and majority deputies. Eighty-five "majority" deputies are elected from the republic's 85 districts (ten of them are elected from Tbilisi even though the number of districts in the capital has been cut to seven). The republic's administrative-territorial division is rooted in the Soviet past and has so far resisted all attempts to reform it. It should be added that the presence of "majority constituencies" violates one of the democratic principles, namely, an equal distribution of votes. Georgia uses the unjustified principle—"One district—one seat." This means that the Gldan District of Tbilisi, with about 140 thousand registered voters, and the Mesti District, with merely 6 thousand voters, are represented by one deputy each.

Later the Georgian authorities used the smaller number of seats to their advantage: they divided the remaining 150 seats into two equal parts; the parliament elected in 2004, which supplied the 2008 elections with a new legal basis, gave 75 seats to the PR and the same number of seats to majority deputies.

The political importance of this decision is obvious: the parliament elected in 2008 lost some of its former powers: in the past few years the majority deputies have remained fairly passive; they completed their term essentially unknown to the nation; as a rule (with few exceptions) they tended to play into the government's hands.

As a result, at the 2008 parliamentary elections the ruling party reaped 59.18 percent of the votes.

## The Counterrevolution that Never Happened and a Parliament without Politicians

I have already written that the opposition threatened to stage a popular uprising if the election results were falsified. Twelve political entities took part in the elections: 9 parties and 3 political blocs. One of them—United Opposition—National Council—acted as the main opponent to power.

### **Over 1,850,000 voters came to the polling stations to cast their votes for**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. The National Movement (M. Saakashvili)    | —59.18 percent |
| 2. Georgian Politics                         | —0.46 percent  |
| 3. The Republican Party                      | —3.78 percent  |
| 4. The Right Alliance—Topadze—Industrialists | —0.93 percent  |
| 5. The Labor Party                           | —7.44 percent  |
| 6. The Union of Sportsmen of Georgia         | —0.19 percent  |
| 7. United Opposition—National Council        | —17.73 percent |
| 8. The Radical-Democratic Party              | —0.18 percent  |

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<sup>9</sup> See: Constitution of Georgia. Original version of 1995.

9. The Christian-Democratic Alliance	—0.89 percent
10. The Christian-Democratic Party	—8.66 percent
11. Traditionalists	—0.44 percent
12. Our Country	—0.12 percent. <sup>10</sup>

The results were not sensational but the foreign observers approved of the elections and the far from high share of votes cast for the ruling party. The result was not quite satisfactory—the ruling party gained 71 out of 75 majority seats; 2 seats went to the United Opposition and 2 to the Republican Party. But for the convincing victory of the ruling power in the majority constituencies its modest PR results could have served as a springboard for the country's democratization. This did not happen: the government skillfully used the modest PR results to restore its international image and, on the other hand, gained the constitutional majority in the parliament.

Only 4 subjects negotiated the five-percent barrier in the PR constituencies:

1. The National Movement	—48 seats
2. United Opposition—National Council	—15 seats
3. The Christian-Democratic Party	—6 seats
4. The Labor Party	—6 seats. <sup>11</sup>

It looked strange that the Christian-Democratic Party and the Labor Party acquired an equal number of seats even though they received different numbers of votes. The ruling National Movement received 119 seats out of the total 150. Several deputies elected from the opposition (10 from the United Opposition—National Council and 4 from the Labor Party) relinquished their mandates.

The ruling party gained the constitutional majority in the parliament. In Georgia people are more inclined to trust political leaders rather than parties. This created another paradox: despite his plummeting personal rating President Saakashvili remained more popular among the people than his ruling party, although the elections proved the opposite. Those who hinted that the election results had been falsified used this paradox to support their suspicions. In 2003 the Rose Revolution was ignited by the suspicions that the election results had been falsified. A mere comparison of the 2003 and 2008 figures confirms such suspicions. In 2003 the For New Georgia Bloc of Eduard Shevardnadze received a modest share of the votes; on the other hand, the For New Georgia and the Alliance for Democratic Renaissance allied with the Shevardnadze bloc could have received nearly half of the seats in the PR constituencies. With a certain number of the “majority deputies” on his side, Shevardnadze stood a good chance of retaining control over the legislature.

#### **Parliamentary elections of 2 November, 2003**

##### **Turnout according to the CEC: 1,909,215**

1. Bloc For New Georgia (407,045 votes) 21.32 percent (party of E. Shevardnadze)	—38 seats
2. Renaissance (359,769 votes) 18.84 percent (party of A. Abashidze)	—33 seats
3. National Movement (345,197 votes) 18.08 percent (party of M. Saakashvili)	—32 seats
4. The Labor Party (229,900 votes) 12.04 percent	—20 seats

<sup>10</sup> [www.cec.gov.ge], 2008.

<sup>11</sup> [www.cec.gov.ge], 2008.

5. Burdzhaniadze—Democrats (167,908 votes) 8.79 percent —15 seats  
(party of Z. Zhvania)
6. The New Right (140,259 votes), 7.35 percent —12 seats.<sup>12</sup>

The results of the parliamentary elections of 21 May, 2008 allow the ruling party to amend the Constitution as it sees fit. This is especially important in view of the fact that President Saakashvili is serving his second, and last, term. On the other hand, the post-Soviet leaders tend to extend their time in office.

The 2008 elections differed from the previous elections by the fact that it was no longer politicians but businessmen who were seeking seats in the legislature. The ruling party either entered prominent Georgian businessmen (who had supported Shevardnadze and abandoned him to side with Saakashvili, whom they supported with their money) on the party lists or nominated them in majority constituencies. Whereas in the past Georgian businessmen were used merely for shelling out money during the election campaigns, in 2008 they found themselves in the midst of the political struggle. The Georgians aptly called the newly elected parliament “a legislature without politicians.” As a result the country elected a parliament of bankers, wine makers, builders, and all sorts of businessmen. There are about 30 of them in the new parliament. This means that the ruling party that won the elections is not represented by party activists.

In Georgia part of the nation failed to grasp the meaning of the legislature and its deputies; the 2008 elections devalued the very idea of a deputy still further. Many of the future deputies ran their election campaigns with promises of repairing roads, building new houses, etc. if they got elected. Significantly, the promises came from those engaged in the construction business while Art 53:1 of the Georgian Constitution of 1995 says: “A member of parliament shall not be entitled to hold any position in public office or engage in an entrepreneurial activity.” Election campaigns of this sort (especially those run by the majority candidates) are typical of post-Soviet Georgia. Some of those who made it into parliament continued the old game of “looking after the people’s interests.” As soon as the powers of the new parliament were officially recognized the deputies pushed aside their supposedly main function—legislative activities—and plunged into enthusiastic discussions of how to rehabilitate the historical part of the Georgian capital.

## Administrative Resource and Ethnic Minorities as a Source of Votes

The opposition never limits itself to accusations of falsification of the election returns—it never loses sight of the fact that during election campaigns the government abuses its administrative resource. This (as well as many other abuses) can be traced back to the presidentship of Eduard Shevardnadze when the government started using public funds for its election campaigns. The ruling party does not merely draw from public material funds—it also employs civil servants (mainly policemen and law enforcers) in its interests. This practice is still very much alive.

It was thanks to the administrative resource (under Shevardnadze and after the revolution) that the government reaped a huge number of votes in the areas populated by ethnic minorities. It had become a tradition that the votes gathered in Azeri-populated Nizhni Kartli and Armenian-populated Samtskhe-Javakhetia greatly affected the election results. So far no one has revealed the secret of the crushing victories of Georgian power in these regions. The Georgian rulers hold forth about the ethnic minor-

<sup>12</sup> Based on the materials of *Mtavari gazeti* of 21 November, 2003.



ities' loyalty to the Georgian state and its authorities. It is suspected, however, that inadequate knowledge of the Georgian language in these regions is the source of the election triumphs.

## Election Campaign in the Media and the Specifics of Political Adverts

The nation regards political adverts as a way to manipulate public consciousness by employing secret methods rather than a legal and absolutely acceptable form of communication with the voters. To get to the heart of this matter let us discuss two types of political adverts placed in the media.

The Election Code regulates the media activities during the election campaign and looks after fair distribution of free and paid adverts in the media. The Code also distinguishes between the "qualified" and "unqualified" entities and points out that the right to an equal share of broadcasting time and similar conditions for participating in debates apply to the "qualified entities." The latter are formed by candidates of the parliamentary parties or candidates of the parties that received at least four percent of the votes at previous elections.<sup>13</sup> For this reason, during the 2008 election campaign Georgia's public television gave each of the "qualified" entities 60 free seconds per hour; the "non-qualified" entities had to be satisfied with 30 seconds per hour. During the presidential and parliamentary elections, according to official information, the ruling party spent 12-12.5 million lari on paid political events.<sup>14</sup>

It should be said that all the election campaigns—be they presidential or parliamentary—unfolded in conditions of minimum pluralism in the media. This prompted, to a certain extent, the political crisis of 7 November, 2008 that led to the state of emergency in the republic and the ban on political information. This means that the presidential election campaign essentially unfolded in the state of emergency soon lifted under Western pressure. The opposition Imedi TV Company could resume broadcasting, which had been stopped after the events of 7 November, only with European interference. For this purpose European structures dispatched prominent Polish journalist Adam Michnik to Georgia. He succeeded, however later (on the eve of parliamentary elections) the journalists of the TV channel discontinued broadcasting. This was a big loss for the opposition: for a long time the company served as the only channel through which the opposition reached out to the public. During the election campaign the opposition demanded a simplified approach to public TV channels, therefore even before the parliamentary elections the opposition, along with the government, set about reorganizing public television. On 26 February, 2008 the parliament approved a new council of trustees of public television: its nine members were elected by consensus. The new members elected a general director. On the council's initiative, public television and the political parties signed a memorandum on mutual understanding. This happened on 16 April. Under this document public television pledged to offer "balanced, objective, and impartial coverage of each candidate and to make a distinction in the news bulletins between 'election news' and 'official news'."<sup>15</sup> The TV channels pledged to cover the election campaign of the parties and candidates in their "election news" bulletins and reserve "official news" for coverage of the official activities of the state structures. Between 21 April and 20 May public television organized televised debates for the "election candidates" twice a week. Each of the candidates was given 36 minutes of free TV time to present his election program.

These efforts at liberalization were not enough: on the whole the situation with TV coverage (especially during the parliamentary elections) was lamentable. The government not only used the

<sup>13</sup> [www.OSCE.org/odihr], 2008.

<sup>14</sup> [www.civil.ge/eng\_/article.php?id=16927], 2008.

<sup>15</sup> The Memorandum between Public Television and Political Parties, 16 April, 2008.

officially permitted political adverts (presentation of programs and videotaped adverts), it also exploited, mainly with the help of the media it controlled, latent political adverts: “official news bulletins” passed the election activities of the ruling party for the everyday routine work of the state administration structures. Day after day the nation watched how members of the power structures flanked by “majority deputies” opened new playgrounds, public gardens, and construction sites. It was precisely for this reason that public television, under pressure from the opposition, had made the distinction between “election” and “official” news (in keeping with the memorandum). All the other channels, however, played into the hands of the ruling party: during the presidential election campaign they offered information against the background of the official slogan “Georgia without Poverty.” During the parliamentary campaign, the government changed it to “Business Instead of Idle Talk.” The TV companies that played on the side of the government carried out a public opinion poll to identify the most successful election slogan. It comes as no surprise that the slogan of the ruling party frequently aired on TV and consistently repeated by candidates of the ruling party (along with promises of the country’s bright future, new jobs, etc.) easily won.

To shed more light on the situation with the media in Georgia during the election campaigns let us look at some of the results of the media monitoring carried out during the presidential and parliamentary elections by the OSCE observer mission. This monitoring included quantitative and qualitative analyses of media coverage, the time allocated to each of the candidates, the amount of space, and the tone of the coverage.

It turned out that during the presidential campaign public television allocated 27 percent of political and election coverage to Mikhail Saakashvili (98 percent of the coverage was either positive or neutral), while the independent Rustavi-2 and Mze channels obviously supported Saakashvili. During the parliamentary elections public television divided its prime time equally between the main opposition bloc and the ruling party. It should be said, however, that 59 percent of the time the ruling party was described in positive terms and 39 percent of the time neutrally. In the case of the opposition positive coverage shrank to 5 percent, while 95 percent of coverage was neutral.<sup>16</sup> Other national channels, Rustavi-2 in particular, boycotted the opposition bloc in their information programs because the opposition leaders complained about their journalists. Twice a week Rustavi-2 organized debates for the political parties, as well as presentations of their election platforms.

## *C o n c l u s i o n*

Georgia’s 2008 elections were a test of democracy. The West was looking forward to finally deciding whether Georgia deserved a place among the civilized states or whether it should remain part of the post-Soviet expanse. The Georgian leaders of the Rose Revolution aspired to remove the “Soviet stigma” from the country and join the ranks of the East European states. They have done a lot to present the world with the country’s new democratic image and succeeded: President George W. Bush, who visited the country after the Rose Revolution, hailed Georgia as the “beacon of liberty for this region and the world.” Georgia, along with Ukraine and other East European countries, came to be known as “a state of new democracy.” The “beacon of liberty,” however, began gradually waning, so Georgia needed to go to the polls to prove its continued loyalty to the democratic values. Significantly, after the Rose Revolution Georgia’s political fate became closely connected with Ukraine, where a revolution followed the Georgian pattern. It seems that Georgia can learn a lot from Ukraine’s experience of resolving political crises through elections. The results of the 2008 elections show that the “Motherland of Color Revolutions” failed the test of democracy. On the other hand, the West hailed the fact that the elections took

<sup>16</sup> www.OSCE.org/odihr], 2008.

place in a stable situation. It probably feared that the events would develop along the Armenian pattern where bloodshed started as soon as the election results were announced. The West did not want this—Georgia was a very promising partner. The Georgian authorities, in turn, could not go against what the world community thought. Unlike Armenia, Georgia's clearly stated foreign policy vector forced it to demonstrate restraint in the event of crises. The NATO summit held in Bucharest early in the summer of 2008 responded with a special memorandum to Georgia's desire to join the alliance. NATO formulated its central political demand: to become a member Georgia must hold democratic elections.

The Georgian authorities have coped with this difficult political task. On the one hand, they organized outwardly democratic elections and, on the other, won them in the most convincing way. The West and the Georgian authorities were satisfied while the opposition and those who voted for it were left out in the cold. This means that the elections, which were expected to defuse the political crisis and narrow down the gap, failed to achieve this.

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## INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE PARTY SYSTEM IN KAZAKHSTAN AND RUSSIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

### *Part II*

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### Genesis and Institutionalization of the Kazakhstani and Russian “Parties of Power”

A government that has closed its ranks to form a party (the academic community has aptly tagged this “the party of power”) is another striking feature of the period under review. The party of power competes with all the other parties for the electorate's votes.<sup>1</sup> This political phenome-

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*For the beginning of the article, see: Central Asia and the Caucasus, No. 6 (54), 2008.*

<sup>1</sup> See: V.E. Fedorinov, *Politicheskie partii Rossii v usloviakh stanovleniia i razvitiia pluralizma*, author's synopsis of a doctorate thesis, Moscow, 2002, pp. 24-25.

non of Russia and Kazakhstan is a logical product of authoritarian democracy realized through the super-presidential form of government in both countries.

Since 1990 the Russian establishment has made several attempts to set up a party of power—the Democratic Russia Movement (1990); the Party of Russian Unity and Harmony—PRES (1993); the Russia's Democratic Choice Party (1994); Russia is Our Home (1995)<sup>2</sup>—each of these structures being genetically tied to its predecessor which served its basis. The Russia is Our Home Party was based on the pro-governmental movements Russia's Democratic Choice and PRES.<sup>3</sup>

Success came in December 2001 in the form of the all-Russia political party “Unity and Fatherland—United Russia,” which in 2005 acquired a new name—the All-Russia Political Party United Russia (UR) rooted in the election blocs “Unity” and “Fatherland—All Russia” which were set up for the 1999 Duma elections to support the course being steered by Acting President Vladimir Putin.

It was thanks to the nationwide popularity of President Putin, who, in turn, supported the new party at the 2003 and 2007 elections and to the much stronger position of the government in Russia (the elites consolidated around the president, who built up the vertical of power)<sup>4</sup> that United Russia won the constitutional majority in the State Duma during both elections to become the strongest political party in the Russian Federation's history. It left two other old-timers of the RF Federal Assembly (the Communist Party of the RF and the Liberal-Democratic Party) far behind.

In Kazakhstan, likewise, the phenomenon of the “party of power” goes back to the 1990s: a public-political movement, the People's Unity of Kazakhstan Alliance (PUKA), set up in 1993 from above and supported by President Nazarbaev was transformed two years later into a party of the same name. It, in turn, served one of the cornerstones of Otan, the party of power set up in 1999.<sup>5</sup>

This was the most important and system-forming restructuring of the pro-presidential forces undertaken to prevent scattering of the pro-presidential votes that might leave these disunited parties outside the 7 percent barrier. To avoid this the Republican Public Staff set up to support Nursultan Nazarbaev as presidential candidate served as the basis for the Otan Party (which also included PUKA, the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, the Liberal Movement of Kazakhstan and the For Kazakhstan-2030 Movement).<sup>6</sup>

Otan, which from the very beginning enjoyed organizational, material, personnel, intellectual, information, and other resources as well as the support of President Nazarbaev, who previously kept an equal distance from all the political forces but in 1991 joined Otan and was elected its chairman, clearly became the “party of power” with good prospects. At the 1999 elections it left all the other parliamentary parties far behind.

Later, when all the parties had to reregister under a new law, Otan institutionalized itself in real terms. Deep-cutting revision trimmed its membership (even though the Popular-Cooperative Party of Kazakhstan [PCPK] and the Republican Political Party of Labor [RPPL] joined it) and made it much more compact and much more united. The 2004 elections were its first triumph; local analysts accounted the victory to the state's sustainable development, the president's support, and the fairly effective performance of the election staff.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See: V.E. Fedorinov, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Politicheskie partii, dvizheniia i organizatsii sovremennoi Rossii na rubezhe vekov. 1999 g. Analiticheskii spravochnik*, ed. by I.N. Barygin, Izdatelstvo Mikhailova V.A., St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> See: T. Stanovaia, “Chto takoe ‘partiiia vlasti’ v Rossii?” *RIA Novosti*, 8 June, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See: Yu.O. Buluktaev, S. Diachenko, L. Karmazina, *Politicheskie partii Kazakhstana, 1998 god: Spravochnik*, Almaty, 1998, p. 34; S. Diachenko, L. Karmazina, S. Seidumanov, *Politicheskie partii Kazakhstana. God 2000: Spravochnik*, Almaty, 2000, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> See: S. Diachenko, L. Karmazina, S. Seidumanov, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> See: D.A. Ashimbaev, “Politicheskie itogi parlamentskikh vyborov,” *TsKT Reputatsiia*, 6 October, 2004.

In July-December 2006, when President Nazarbaev decided to unite the pro-presidential forces (the Asar Republican Party, on the scene since 2003, the Civil Party of Kazakhstan [CivPK], and the Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan [APK]) under the Otan aegis, presidential support developed into patronage. The extended and somewhat renovated party assumed a new name—the People’s Democratic Party Nur Otan (Nur Otan for short); with a membership of about 1 million in a country with a total population of 15 million it became the heavyweight among the parties. Strengthened by deputies elected from the CivPK and APK, the Otan parliamentary faction (just like the United Russia faction in the State Duma) gained a constitutional majority in the Majilis. The off-year elections of 2007 held in the wake of the second constitutional reform gave Nur Otan all of the seats (98) in the lower chamber.

The fact that the government in Kazakhstan and Russia set itself the task of creating a united party with a vast membership and the nation’s massive support suggests that starting in 2003-2004 both republics have been clearly moving toward a multiparty system dominated by one party (the one-and-a-half-party system) in which for many years one party remains in power and carries the elections despite democratic procedures and the presence of other parties on the political scene. President Nazarbaev did not exclude this: he referred to the political experience of Sweden, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, India, and Mexico.<sup>8</sup>

The two countries have something else in common: they switched to the proportionate system of elections to the lower chambers of their parliaments. Kazakhstan introduced this novelty as part of the constitutional reform of 2007 that changed the status and boosted the role of the political parties. Russia did the same somewhat earlier, in 2005, by readjusting the Federal Law on the Election of Deputies to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. The election laws of both countries have much more in common: the 7 percent barrier and no lower limits for turn-out; under Russia’s election law, which was amended in 2005 and 2007, the voters lost the opportunity to vote “against all” (the new rule has existed in Kazakhstan since 2005). Under the changed laws, the parties in both countries lost the right to form election blocs.<sup>9</sup>

The 2007 parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan and Russia produced similar results. The newly introduced proportionate system allowed the parties of power in both countries to triumph with stunning results: in Russia the United Russia Party left all the other contenders far behind; in Kazakhstan, Nur Otan found itself alone on the Olympus of power. The constitutional majority winning for the second time running offers a much clearer picture of the future party system with one dominant party that is taking shape simultaneously in both republics.

## Competitiveness as a Specific Feature of the Party Systems of Kazakhstan and Russia

The fact that both countries introduced elections by party lists at essentially the same time in 2007 made the year 2007 the starting point of the new (fifth) period of transformation of their party

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<sup>8</sup> See: N.A. Nazarbaev, “Vystuplenie na IX s’ezde Respublikanskoi politicheskoi partii ‘Otan’ 7 iulia 2006,” available at [www.akorda.kz], official site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

<sup>9</sup> See: “Konstitutsionny zakon ‘O vyborakh v Respublike Kazakhstan,’” available at [http://election.kz/portal/page?\_pageid=73,48269&\_dad=portal&\_schema= PORTAL]; “Federalny zakon ‘O vyborakh deputatov Gosudarstvennoi Dumy Federalnogo Sobraniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii,’” available at [http://www.cikrf.ru/law/2/zakon\_51.jsp].

systems. The one-and-half-party system has become institutionalized, however the processes exhibit certain local specifics.

The constitutional reform of 2007 in Kazakhstan was a powerful modernization factor: it activated the reliable and enduring mechanism of an open system of governance with sustainable state and public institutions, thus smoothly transferring the Republic of Kazakhstan to the presidential-parliamentary system.

The constitutional reform changed the status of the political parties and boosted their role; once more Kazakhstan outstripped Russia as far as party legislation was concerned. From that time on consultations with the party factions and approval of the majority of the deputy corps became indispensable for the president when choosing the prime minister. In fact, the prime minister represented the party that held the majority seats in the parliament while his Cabinet was to implement the program of the party that won the elections. "Under present conditions, the political system," writes Sergey Diachenko, "develops into an ideological axis of the parliament-cabinet governing tandem; the party's political might and ideological potential are projected onto the parliament's law-making activities and the cabinet's executive efficiency."<sup>10</sup> Today, when the country has switched to the party type of political production, so to speak, we have acquired a "ruling party"; the political parties of Kazakhstan play the role that belongs to this institution in developed democracies.

Russia has no similar legal regulation; to bypass it the April 2008 congress of United Russia amended its Rules in the part related to its chairman, the top party position. Two posts (Party Chairman and Chairman of the Party's Supreme Council), which until that time had belonged to Boris Gryzlov, were separated. The post of Party Chairman went to Vladimir Putin (later elected prime minister of Russia) along with the congress's decision that it could be filled by a non-party man.<sup>11</sup> This means that we can regard United Russia not merely as the party of power but also as the ruling (albeit not classical) party.

Political scientists have not yet agreed on what to think about the tactics the leaders of Kazakhstan have employed when building up the "party of power;" they likewise disagree about the party itself. Most of them describe Nur Otan as a "gloomy monster with a 'human face' and ideology of the 21st century set up to reap votes"; "a mass of people stirred up on command attached to corresponding party communication lines (branches, offices, and cells)"; an instrument for gathering votes at the presidential and parliamentary elections; a party of the nomenklatura rather than a party of voters; an element of the power system; the "fifth wheel" in the state system; an appendage of the presidential administration without claims to independence.<sup>12</sup> It needs urgent reformation. Its monopoly in the parliament puts the brakes on democratization in Kazakhstan.<sup>13</sup> The Kazakh authorities spare no effort to convince the nation that "a single ideological platform of the parliament and government is required to promote operational and qualitative law-making of the new generation."<sup>14</sup> While being fully aware of the anti-democratic nature of the current situation the authorities go out of their way to convince the public that Nur Otan's monopoly in the parliament "was what people wanted... It meant that what we had all been doing together during the years of independence was accepted." It is becom-

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<sup>10</sup> S.A. Diachenko, "Partiino-parlamentskiy fundament politicheskoi sistemy Kazakhstana: realii, vozmozhnosti i perspektivy," *Analytic*, No. 2, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> See: T. Moriakova, "Putin vozglavit Edinuiu Rossiyu," available at [<http://www.utro.ru/articles/2008/04/15/730941.shtml>].

<sup>12</sup> See: A. Vlasov, "Partiinyi butik. Modeli ot AP RK. 6 marta 2008," available at [<http://ia-centr.ru/expert/597>]; idem, "Kazakhstan 2012. Partiia vlasti 'X' protiv national-demokratov iz 'Y.' 12 marta 2008," available at [<http://ia-centr.ru/expert/633>]; A. Kuanov, "My zhdem peremen," *Liter*, August, 2008, available at [<http://www.liter.kz/site.php?lan=russian&id=151&pub=11400>]; D. Satpaev, "Partiinye metamorfozy," available at [[http://www.risk.kz/pages.php?id=12&id\\_m=12017](http://www.risk.kz/pages.php?id=12&id_m=12017)], etc.

<sup>13</sup> See: A. Sagadiev, "Vybory budut, kogda Tuiakbai na gore svismet!" available at [<http://ia-centr.ru/expert/2641>].

<sup>14</sup> See: S.A. Diachenko, op. cit.; A. Kuanov, op. cit.

ing increasingly clear that the one-party Majilis is not fully suited to the new stage of “face-lifting” in Kazakhstan.

According to many experts the situation can be improved by setting up a two-party system.<sup>15</sup> Some of the experts tend to believe that the National Social-Democratic Party (NSDP) may stand opposed to Nur Otan (that represents power) as a representative of the non-parliamentary majority (or minority). Others predict that the People’s Party of the Kazakhstans “X” (read Nur Otan) will compete with the National-Democratic Party “Y”; still others (who are probably looking at the Russian developments in the party sector) do not exclude a second “party of power.”<sup>16</sup>

As distinct from Kazakhstan’s “party of power,” which in 2006 swallowed all the other pro-presidential parties to find itself the sole opponent of the opposition, United Russia has a satellite in the form of the Just Russia Party; there is an opinion that the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia can be described as secretly pro-power.<sup>17</sup>

The assessments by Russian political analysts of United Russia do not differ greatly from what their Kazakh colleagues think about Nur Otan: it is described as an “electoral-administrative machine” without a position or freedom of action, a “palliative of the public political field; an institutionalized consensus of the political-economic and federal-regional elites”<sup>18</sup>; everyone knows that this is a pro-power party.

Outwardly, when compared with United Russia the Just Russia Party can be called the “party of power” with certain concessions: their administrative resources are incomparable while the relations between the two parties are hardly friendly. In this case, however, its inability to pursue independent political activity serves as the main criterion. Yu. Korguniuk, for example, describes it as an “artificial political body born by the Kremlin: the Motherland and the Russian Party of Pensioners, which have been doing quite well at the regional elections, would hardly want to unite; and they would be even less willing to join forces with the absolutely incomprehensible Russian Party of Life. They would also be even less enthusiastic about the latter’s leader as their head.”<sup>19</sup>

Nur Otan has no more or less strong rivals (either among the opposition or among the pro-power parties); United Russia, on the other hand, is confronted both at the federal and the regional level by real rivals. This is what makes the political systems of Kazakhstan and Russia different. There is another, and more important, factor: United Russia in the State Duma has rather influential rivals while Nur Otan has none in the Majilis.

## The Present Day in Kazakhstan’s Party Landscape

The phenomenon of a one-party parliament called for readjustment; therefore in August 2007 Chairman of the Party of Patriots of Kazakhstan G. Kasymov was appointed deputy of the Senate of the parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan by a presidential decree.

In November 2007 the Majilis set up a Public Chamber in which all interested parties could present their ideas about the country’s economic and political future and suggest corresponding mechanisms.

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<sup>15</sup> See: A. Sagadiev, op. cit.; A. Vlasov, “Kazakhstan. Eti vybory budut vechnymi... 11 iulia 2008,” available at [<http://ia-centr.ru/expert/1657>]; A. Kuanov, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> See: A. Sagadiev, op. cit.; A. Vlasov, “Kazakhstan-2012...”; idem, “Partiiny butik...”; A. Chebotarev, “V Kazakhstane vozmozhno polnoe razobshchenie oppozitsionnykh sil,” available at [<http://ia-centr.ru/expert/2542>].

<sup>17</sup> See: V. Martianov, “Mnogopartiinaia partiia vlasti,” *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, No. 3, 2007, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 17; Yu.G. Korguniuk, “Zakat vtoroi partiinnoi sistemy,” available at [<http://www.partinform.ru/colon.htm>].

<sup>19</sup> Yu.G. Korguniuk, op. cit.

It has brought together deputies of the Majilis and Senate, representatives of five political parties (Nur Otan, the Adilet Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, the Rukhaniyat Party, the Party of Patriots of Kazakhstan, and the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan), NGOs and public associations, and human rights and analytical structures. This is how public opinion is conveyed to the republic's legislature.

Nearly all the political parties in active opposition to the regime preferred to stay away from this public expert and consultative structure; they set up an informal structure of their own—Khalyk kenesi (people's parliament) under the aegis of the NSDP with representation from political parties, republican public associations, NGOs, and trade unions; politicians and public figures were also involved. So far the "shadow parliament" has found it hard to reach a consensus on the issues discussed.<sup>20</sup> This attempt to bring together all the opposition parties of Kazakhstan failed like all previous ones: the Azat Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, for example, refused to join the People's Parliament "on principle" even though earlier, in August, it submitted four bills drafted jointly with the NSDP for public consideration.

Throughout the history of the multiparty system in Kazakhstan the opposition camp has closed ranks and fallen apart so often that we can confidently say that over time the Khalyk kenesi will become a self-contained structure doomed to gradually disappear into oblivion.<sup>21</sup>

It should be said that neither one deputy elected to a parliament totally dominated by Nur Otan from any other party nor the Public Chamber can solve the problem of the mono-party parliament. The problem must be addressed however. In the absence of real political competition in the country today and in the near future President Nazarbaev suggested that "a legal mechanism should be set up to form at least a two-party parliament even if the second party remained below the 7 percent barrier."<sup>22</sup> This is more radical than the suggestion to lower the barrier to 5 percent which regularly cropped up at the discussions of possible amendments to the election law. The 5 percent barrier can hardly remedy the situation since at the previous elections the most successful opposition parties remained below it: the NSDP received 4.54 percent and the Ak Zhol Democratic Party of Kazakhstan 3.09 percent of the votes. The October elections to the Senate likewise failed to improve the situation: the presidential party refused to allow members of other parties to be elected to the upper chamber to create a sham multiparty chamber.<sup>23</sup> The presidential amendment will at least create a two-party parliament.

In the wake of the 2007 elections, which created a one-party parliament, there was no shortage of predictions of new elections. The analytical community is still persisting with these presumptions even though the one-party parliament is already one year old.<sup>24</sup> Life has shown that despite the Majilis deputies' active involvement in law-making and in the anti-corruption campaign the potential of the parliament's new powers has not been fully tapped. The past has taught us that new elections are possible if and when "Nazarbaev's amendment" becomes part of an amended election law: Nur Otan will again reign victorious at the next elections—it is strongly associated with the president while the local leaders will hardly abandon the party to its fate.

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<sup>20</sup> See: "Mnogie voprosy—slozhnye, trudnye, v nikh mnogo navorochno," *INTERFAX-KAZAKHSTAN*, 15 October, 2008, available at [<http://www.nomad.su/?a=3-200810150123>].

<sup>21</sup> See: A. Chebotarev, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> N.A. Nazarbaev, "Vystuplenie na otkrytii II sessii Parlamenta RK 2 sentiabria 2008 g.," available at [[http://www.akorda.kz/www/www\\_akorda\\_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id\\_doc=98F2D256CA617479062574B8007238F0&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15](http://www.akorda.kz/www/www_akorda_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id_doc=98F2D256CA617479062574B8007238F0&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15)].

<sup>23</sup> See: "Polny tsikl izbiratelnykh protsedur," *Ekspert Kazakhstan*, No. 37, September, 2008, available at [[http://www.expert.ru/printissues/kazakhstan/2008/37/vybory\\_v\\_senat](http://www.expert.ru/printissues/kazakhstan/2008/37/vybory_v_senat)].

<sup>24</sup> See, for example: A. Vlasov, "Kazakhstan. Eti vybory budut vechnymi..."



## Diversification on the Russian Political Field: Present Stage

I have already written that just as in Kazakhstan the pro-power party carried the day in Russia too. The results, however, are not strictly identical: three more parties (Just Russia, the Communists, and LDPR) won seats in the State Duma. The liberals (The Union of Right Forces) failed once more (they lost the 2003 elections). It is thought that their withdrawal from the political scene spells the death of the second party system born at the turn of the 1990s.<sup>25</sup> Analysts are convinced, however, that the failure of the liberals should not be taken to mean that Russia is done with liberalism. The country needs a liberal party; recent developments have demonstrated that the liberal component will survive. Early in October a new liberal party was launched by allying the Union of Right Forces, the Democratic Party, and the Civil Force Party. (The new party will be probably called The Right Cause.)<sup>26</sup> It will probably move away from indiscriminating criticism of the government practiced by its predecessor; it insists that it stands opposed to undemocratic policies but not the Russian leaders—it supports much of what is being done.<sup>27</sup> The new party will quench its former radicalism on domestic and foreign issues yet, on the whole, the new liberals will remain on the right platform.

Earlier United Russia and the Agrarian Party of Russia announced that they would unite; the APR congress had already passed a corresponding decision.<sup>28</sup> Experts believe that both parties are profiting from this.

From the very first days (the party was formed in 1993) and throughout the 1990s the APR was balancing between the left in its ranks (moving closer to the communists only to move away from them) and the official course. Those who supported the latter were gradually gaining control: in 1999 APR joined the election bloc Fatherland—All Russia; in 2000 it supported Vladimir Putin at the presidential elections. In the last two election campaigns the party ran for the State Duma independently and lost with 2.3 percent in 2007 (even though it gained the largest share of votes among the losers). In December 2007 the Agrarian Party, along with United Russia, the Civil Force, and Just Russia, nominated Dmitry Medvedev for president. Its ebbing electoral support and financial troubles forced the party to seek alliance with a large political force. The choice was limited: either Just Russia or United Russia. The latter won.

This alliance will allow United Russia to build up its influence in the regions through the APR's ramified regional network and lobbyist structures. Part of the expert community, however, doubts this: the Agrarian Party carried no weight in the rural areas. They voted either for the party of power or for the Communist Party. This alliance played into the hands of the communists who said that in future "no one would steal their votes." The Agrarian Party is probably disunited on the alliance issue: in Russia agricultural workers keep mainly to the left and nurture socialist ideas far removed from those of the party of power.

On the whole, the trend toward larger parties set up by uniting smaller ones is accelerating in Russia. It seems that 5 to 7 parties will compete for seats in the next State Duma. It should be said that

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<sup>25</sup> See: Yu.G. Korguniuk, *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> See, for example: *Ekspert Online*, 21 October, 2008, available at [<http://www.expert.ru/news/2008/10/21/pd>].

<sup>27</sup> See: V. Kholmogorova, "Kontratseptiv Kremliia," *Ekspert Online*, 3 October, 2008, available at [<http://www.expert.ru/articles/2008/10/03/kondom>].

<sup>28</sup> See: A. Rezhnikov, "Agrarii vybrali 'Edinuiu Rossiyu,'" *Vzgliad*, 10 October, 2008, available at [<http://www.vz.ru/politics/2008/10/10/217502.html>].

the parties based on one idea or set up to look after the interests of one social group (the Party of Pensioners is an apt example) are leaving the stage. They mostly move either “right” or “left”—United Russia or Just Russia. It was announced that in the near future the ecological Green Party will join Just Russia; in September Just Russia had already accepted the Party of Social Justice into its ranks. The Patriots of Russia will ally with the Russian Political Party of Peace and Unity. Experts assess this alliance as ineffective and temporary, a step toward unification with Just Russia.<sup>29</sup> This means that after a series of alliances, only two of the registered parties will stand alone—the Popular Union and Yabloko.

This is a logical process: under the Russian laws smaller parties run the risk of liquidation because of inadequate size and failure to take part in the legally required number of elections. After all, unification with the heavyweights is a question of life and death for them. Significantly, the government is involved to a certain extent in the process. A source in Just Russia, for example, told *Ekspert Online* that “the Kremlin interfered in the unification of Just Russia and the agrarians even though it would have been much more logical for an agrarian party to join a socialist party.”<sup>30</sup> Those who head the organizing committee of the unification process are quite open about the Kremlin’s interference, yet they hastened to stress, “this does not mean that the new structure will be still-born: we shall have to work otherwise the democrats will never win votes.”<sup>31</sup>

So far there are no signs that Kazakhstan’s party field is undergoing reformation. The party of power was building up strength through unification in 2006 while the opposition limited itself to setting up a People’s Parliament. At the same time, just as in Russia, the government interfered in the party-building process in Kazakhstan too. There is a well-substantiated opinion that the opposition parties Ak Zhol, NSDP, and Azat were the results of Ak Orda’s projects.<sup>32</sup>

## A New Brand for the Ruling Parties in Kazakhstan and Russia: Can They Be Reformed?

Today the Russian and Kazakhstani authorities have similar concerns: no matter how their party systems differ they should reform Nur Otan and United Russia. They need a new brand of party of power: it is not enough to be the party of the president; they must become independent forces with important social functions to fulfill. The path traveled by other countries with dominating parties has shown that any attempt to modernize the party of power from the inside inevitably sends the tension up and might even cost it its monopoly on power or, worse still, start systemic destabilization. As a rule the crisis is caused by a transfer from the status of “party of people” to more specific program formulations. The quest for new meanings, in the process of which vague ideological formulas are dropped, leads to an inner conflict: the cementing principle (ideology for all, the people’s party, etc.) disappears. The moment when a charismatic leader, the political authority of whom served as the

<sup>29</sup> See: R. Fedoseev, “Esery reshili pozelenet,” *Vzgliad*, 16 September, 2008, available at [<http://www.vz.ru/politics/2008/09/16/208617.html>]; A. Rezchikov, “Patrioty khotiat mira,” *Vzgliad*, 20 October, 2008, available at [<http://www.vz.ru/politics/2008/10/20/220923.html>].

<sup>30</sup> V. Kholmogorova, *op. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> V. Kholmogorova, “Medved na sele,” *Ekspert Online*, 12 September, 2008, available at [<http://www.expert.ru/articles/2008/09/12/ap>].

<sup>32</sup> See: A. Sagadiev, *op. cit.*; A. Vlasov, “Partiiny butik...”; “Kazakhstan: zhdai li uragana nad ostrovom stabilnosti. Partii strany nakanune vyborov glavy gosudarstva. 18 avgusta 2005,” available at [<http://www.analitika.org/article.php?story=2005081803014947>].

foundation for a cumbersome mechanism, leaves the stage is fraught with even more dangers for the reformers.<sup>33</sup>

This might happen to the dominating parties of Russia and Kazakhstan if they move toward diversification. Both parties rely on the National Leader for their political actions, a typical feature of a state with a super-presidential vertical. During the last few years the parties of power in both countries operated not so much on clear ideologies or development projects as on the personalities of their leaders. For this reason it will be hard to transform them into a real channel of contact between the government and society.

The transformations in store for Nur Otan and United Russia as well as their systemic renovation devised by their leaders are expected to strengthen the contacts between the state systems and the budding civil society. It should be said that on the eve of its OSCE chairmanship Kazakhstan is attracting the attention of the Western public and the media more than ever. This means that Nur Otan should ensure the prosperity for the country it promised in its election program and boost the country's international prestige and status. For this reason, in January 2008 President Nazarbaev, who addressed an extended sitting of the party's Political Council, pointed out that to develop its influence on domestic policy the party should work actively in the parliament, live up to its election promises, step up its involvement in the regions, and promote consolidation of society for the sake of the republic's progress. It should also contribute to developing a national ideology. He deemed it necessary to stress that ideology should be rooted in the idea of a common Kazakhstani identity. The president went on to say that the party should form personnel reserves, encourage analytical and research activities in the party, and employ the latest models of political management.<sup>34</sup>

President Nazarbaev developed these ideas at all sorts of forums, conferences, and sittings.<sup>35</sup> This means that the president pinned great hopes on the party and intended to transform it into a fully-fledged institution of civil society and tap its potential to address the social problems, corruption, etc. In short, it was expected to develop into something more than a political party.<sup>36</sup>

This explains the shifts in the party's upper echelon: in 2008 President Nazarbaev as chairman of Nur Otan twice replaced his deputies: A. Dzhakysbekov was moved to this post in January 2008 from his previous position as head of the presidential administration. In October 2008 he was replaced with D. Kaletaev (formerly deputy head of the presidential administration). The very fact that members of the first echelon of power were moved to the party testifies that the party is regarded as one of the most important mechanisms for forming public opinion and a channel for explaining the decisions made at the top to society.

In July 2008 Vladimir Putin formulated essentially similar tasks. He called on the party to become a link between the people and the government, fulfill all the promises the party had made during the presidential and parliamentary campaigns, create an effective party ideology, improve the party's

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<sup>33</sup> See: A. Vlasov, "Liubimaia igrushka postsovetskikh prezidentov. 1 ianvaria 2008," available at [<http://ia-centr.ru/expert/220>].

<sup>34</sup> See: N.A. Nazarbaev, "Vystuplenie na rasshirennom zasedanii Politsoвета NDP 'Nur Otan' 17 ianvaria 2008 g.," available at [[http://www.akorda.kz/www/www\\_akorda\\_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id\\_doc=6759A980371513CC062573D3003D12BE&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15](http://www.akorda.kz/www/www_akorda_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id_doc=6759A980371513CC062573D3003D12BE&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15)].

<sup>35</sup> See, for example: N.A. Nazarbaev, "Vystuplenie na zasedanii rasshirennoi kollegii Generalnoi prokuratury Respubliki Kazakhstan 25 ianvaria 2008 g.," available at [[http://www.akorda.kz/www/www\\_akorda\\_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id\\_doc=BF33517426D38930062573DB0050C78E&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15](http://www.akorda.kz/www/www_akorda_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id_doc=BF33517426D38930062573DB0050C78E&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15)]; idem, "Vystuplenie na vstreche so stipendiatami programmy 'Bolashak' 30 ianvaria 2008 g.," available at [[http://www.akorda.kz/www/www\\_akorda\\_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id\\_doc=85BC4DD375A91EF1062573E0003E21C9&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15](http://www.akorda.kz/www/www_akorda_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id_doc=85BC4DD375A91EF1062573E0003E21C9&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15)]; idem, "Vystuplenie na otkrytii II sessii Parlamenta RK 2 sentiabria 2008 g.," idem, "Vystuplenie na rasshirennom zasedanii Pravitelstva 13 oktjabria 2008 g.," available at [[http://www.akorda.kz/www/www\\_akorda\\_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id\\_doc=A84F842492C1401C062574E1007CCEBB&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15](http://www.akorda.kz/www/www_akorda_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id_doc=A84F842492C1401C062574E1007CCEBB&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-15)].

<sup>36</sup> See: "Ustoichivaia i gibkaia sistema," available at [<http://www.posit.kz/?lan=ru&id=100&pub=7962>].

performance in the regions, and look after the party's personnel policy.<sup>37</sup> The party should become more receptive to discussions and tap all its resources—its majority in the Duma and experts outside the party who should be invited for legal assessment of the bills. Modernization should fully correspond to the aims formulated by the Strategy-2020.

The first results are obvious and suggest certain preliminary conclusions.

In the case of Nur Otan, it should be said that most of Kazakhstan's expert community regards the re-branding idea as utopian.<sup>38</sup> It should be said that, contrary to the president's expectations expressed early in 2008, reform of Nur Otan (which was expected to democratize the republic's political system within a short period of time) has stalled. Inertia dominates; changes are hard to detect while the list of real accomplishments shows that what has been done is much less spectacular than what was expected to be achieved.

A network of public anti-corruption councils set up under the Nur Otan aegis has remained its main achievement. The party formulated its strategic aim to be turning the anti-corruption struggle into a nationwide movement. An anti-corruption forum is planned for the near future. It will be attended by the head of state and is expected to resound in all the regions to shape a nationwide negative attitude toward corruption and add an anti-corruption impetus to society.<sup>39</sup> We all know, however, that the "punitive sword" will hardly touch the bribe-takers in the upper echelons of power which means that the struggle will go on forever. This should not be taken to mean that no success will be achieved, but in order to undermine a system based on corruption different instruments and different powers are needed.

Nur Otan, which has opened offices to which local people can bring their complaints and offer suggestions, is moving in the right direction; to achieve the desired results these acts should be public and produce tangible results. The experience of the Asar Republican Party of 2003-2006 has already demonstrated that in this case political techniques have a limited shelf life.

Re-branding of the Nur Otan Party as a party free from patronage of the executive branch can hardly be achieved: it kills the very idea of the party of power. This cannot be realized for the simple reason that practically all the local branches are headed by local top executives.<sup>40</sup>

United Russia has its share of similar problems even though its performance is described as more successful.<sup>41</sup> It has already passed the test by replacing President Putin's support with the support of President Medvedev. Nur Otan is still seen as the brainchild of President Nazarbaev, which means that its re-branding cannot be accomplished if it fails to distance itself from the presidential administration and demonstrate its active and independent position in relation to the Majilis and the executive structures.

Life has shown that the set of professional means available to both parties is more or less the same (networks of public reception offices, the Public Chamber, and youth organizations are a pertinent example). Today, all governmental projects and programs realized in both countries can be regarded as projects of the dominant parties: they are headed by top figures responsible for the performance of the executive branch.

At the same time, United Russia is much better equipped: the numerous projects it is involved in (Our City, Our Parents, The Country's Best Children's Coach, Olympics for the Fam-

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<sup>37</sup> See: R. Fedoseev, "Putin ozadachil 'Edinuiu Rossiu.' 4 iunija 2008 g.," available at [<http://www.vz.ru/politics/2008/6/4/174375.html>].

<sup>38</sup> See: A. Vlasov, "Kazakhstan-2012..."

<sup>39</sup> See: D.A. Kaletaev, "Borba s korruptsiei stanovitsia vazhnejshei sotsialno-politicheskoj problemoi. 15 oktjabria 2008 g.," available at [<http://www.nomad.su/?a=3-200810170324>].

<sup>40</sup> See: [<http://www.ndp-nurotan.kz/?ft=1&type=10>].

<sup>41</sup> See: Yu. Susloparov, "Reanimator-2. 'Nur Otan' na vykhode iz politicheskogo komatoza. 16 sentiabria 2008," available at [<http://www.ia-centr.ru/expert/2307>].

ily, fast-assembled physical culture complexes, etc.) have set up the trend and are helping to address important practical problems.<sup>42</sup> Analysts have pointed out that United Russia is developing inner competition and promoting a public discussion in its ranks as a substitute for the degenerate struggle between the government and the marginalized opposition. For this purpose the party set up discussion clubs—The Social-Conservative Policies Center, the 4 November Liberal-Conservative Club of Political Actions, and the State-Patriotic Club. They are engaged in informal discussions of issues suggested by the party center: the government and party conception of how Strategy-2020 should be implemented; legislative activities; anti-corruption measures; setting up an “all-Russia base of managers” within the Professional Team Project and involvement in municipal elections.<sup>43</sup>

Inner-party polemics inevitably lead to confrontation among the supporters of diametrically different approaches. United Russia rejects the possibility of a split. Indeed, there are practically no objective prerequisites for this, yet sustainable inner-party trends might send the party along the road of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Japan that dominates the political field in its country. It should be said that so far Russian political tradition has not demonstrated a penchant for the unity/competition combination.

So far, no one in Kazakhstan or Russia can predict the results of the current efforts to create new party brands. Much may change in the four years that separate us from day X of the parliamentary elections. Both countries are moving little by little into another election cycle.

### *C o n c l u s i o n*

The above suggests that the multiparty systems in both countries are developing along similar lines and that their genesis and institutionalization are mutually penetrating and unfolding in parallel. This is explained by the two countries common history of the 17th-20th centuries, as well as by the fact that they found themselves in a transition state at the turn of the 21st century. At the same time, their party systems demonstrate national and state specifics explained, in turn, by different development priorities in the political and economic spheres, national culture and mentality, and their geopolitical locations.

Today there are 14 registered parties in Russia and 10 in Kazakhstan. Taken in their entirety they represent a sustainable political institution, an inalienable feature of public life, one of the important factors of modernization of their political systems. They have found a social and political niche in the psychology and consciousness of part of Russian and Kazakhstani society. At the same time the multiparty system is still unfolding: society has not yet become completely stratified, ideological and political interests remain vague, the process of reforming the states is highly contradictory while the regimes remain authoritarian.

At first Kazakhstan trailed behind the Russian Federation as far as the dynamics of political reforms were concerned. Russia was the first to introduce proportionate elections to the State Duma. It did this in 1993, while Kazakhstan followed five years later, in 1998. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, was much more successful when it came to creating a legal basis for the multiparty system: it passed a law on parties earlier than Russia, while the constitutional reform of 2007 raised the political parties' status and role to the classical level; the Russian Federation has not done this yet.

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<sup>42</sup> See: R. Fedoseev, *op. cit.*

<sup>43</sup> See: “Rossiia poidet po iaponskomu puti. 29 iunია 2008,” available at [<http://www.vz.ru/politics/2008/6/29/182094.html>]; “Partiinyi otvet na kadrovyi vopros,” available at [<http://www.vz.ru/politics/2008/7/29/191128.html>].

Starting in 2002 the similarities in the development of the party systems of both countries (practically indiscernible in the first years of independence) became much clearer. Both countries are developing the model with a dominant party that has proven its worth in some of the actively modernizing Asian and Latin American states. This role belongs to United Russia and Nur Otan with no rivals worthy of this name on the political field and with a constitutional majority in the parliaments; they are parties of power under the law (Kazakhstan) or as part of a deliberately created construction (Russia). They are expected to develop over time into supporting structures of the party and political system and regulators of the problems and already obvious and possible contradictions in both countries.

More likely than not they will acquire an even more obvious dominant position in the future, which means that the party systems of both countries will be described as systems with a dominant party in countries with a presidential form of government. Life has shown that this form of government needs party channels to communicate its decisions to society; this can be done only if the formally viable parties develop into independent political entities in their own right and are recognized as such (alliances of citizens set up to help them realize their aims).

The party systems of Kazakhstan and Russia are not identical: while in the former there is a one-party parliament, in the latter the dominant party competes with other (not only opposition parties but also with the second party of power) parties in the State Duma. This means that the Russian Federation might move away from the system with one dominant party to the two-party system.

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## THE FORMATION AND NATURE OF POLITICAL CULTURE IN PRESENT-DAY KYRGYZSTAN

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Present-day Kyrgyzstan is going through a rather difficult period in its development. The transformations in culture, the economy, and the state-political structure have affected all aspects of Kyrgyz society's life across the board, whereby these processes are often very excruciating and accompanied by severe social upheavals. A fundamental element of the dynamics of the social transformations aimed at establishing market relations in Kyrgyzstan is the constant change in those values on which the nation's people, who have grown up in a traditional and then Soviet society, are building their world outlook. This has given rise to a legitimate interest in searching for rational explanations to the processes occurring in the country's political culture. In this article we will try to analyze the main factors influencing the formation and nature of political culture in Kyrgyzstan.

Political culture is a structure that becomes increasingly richer and more complicated. The problem of forming and advancing a different type of political culture that is better suited to the democratic trend in Kyrgyzstan's development is extremely pertinent for the Kyrgyz people. This requires its re-examination from the viewpoint of the new democratic values taking shape in the republic. It is particularly important in current conditions when globalization and democratization are drawing new and nontraditional strata of the population into political life.

Political culture is quite a stable phenomenon. It, just as culture in general, is a system that is least affected by change. Its main function is to reproduce an image and on its basis guarantee the continuity of society's political life and support of society as a systemic whole. At the same time, society cannot adapt to the changing conditions and fundamental transformations in political life and the entire social system without profound metamorphosis of political culture. So in each specific situation it is a unique synthesis of its formation, functioning, and development, whereby it can be regarded as a dynamic rather than petrified system.

Political culture undergoes the most significant changes during transition periods of revolutionary changes or reform in society and the state, when certain value and ideological shifts occur in the mass consciousness generated by an abrupt change in the customary political practices. At times of radical social change and a breakdown in the former political system, new images can be incorporated into the system of political cultures. However, this process is complicated and contradictory.

The political and cultural transformations that occurred and are occurring in sovereign Kyrgyzstan show that the political culture of Kyrgyzstan, as of all the post-Soviet states, is of a mixed, polarized, and segmented nature. It is characterized by different value references, contradictions between traditionalism and modernism, between secular and religious orientations, and between the elite and mass culture, as well as by differences between the subcultures of the urban and rural population and the electorate of the capital city and provincial towns. The political culture of the Kyrgyz people today is segmented because it is forming on the basis of several factors.

The first and most important of them is current domestic political practice, which is formed by regulatory acts and sociopolitical reality. In present-day Kyrgyzstan there are groups demanding that the country's state structure be based on tradition, that is, they insist on dividing the Kyrgyz people into the right and left wing, as has always been the case historically; another part of society is oriented toward Islamic values, while a third has its sights set on modernizing the republic on a secular basis.

The second factor is ethnic tradition. The political culture of any society, particularly one that has deep-rooted multi-century traditions, develops on the basis of continuity. American political scientist L. Pye believed that political culture provides the meaning, form, and predictability of the political process. This understanding graphically shows that "traditions of a society, the spirit of its public institutions, the passions and the collective reasoning of its citizenry, and the style and the operating codes of its leaders are not just random products of historical experience but fit together as a part of a meaningful whole and constitute an intelligible web of relations."<sup>1</sup>

For millennia Kyrgyz political culture has been patriarchal with a strong orientation toward tribal values and a charismatic leader, whereby the *azho*, *kagan* (state leaders), or *bii* and *manapy* (clan chiefs) were chosen for their merits and capabilities, their ability to defend and feed the people in the harsh conditions of nomadic life. At each historical stage, when the political structure of the states the Kyrgyz belonged to changed, tribes and clans (*uruu*) acted as the social foundation and internal regulator of clan relations. After 1293, when they lost their statehood, the Kyrgyz people had a subservient and subordinated political culture. In so doing, the clan self-identification of

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<sup>1</sup> L.W. Pye, "Introduction: Political Culture and Political Development," in: *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. by L.W. Pye, S. Verba, Princeton, 1965, p. 7.

the Kyrgyz people (we—they) remained unchanged, which was based on the preservation of internal social relations.

During the seventy-year Soviet period, representatives of all the clans lived all over present-day Kyrgyzstan. During their incorporation into the Soviet structure and culture, the political self-identification of the Kyrgyz people was associated with the U.S.S.R. In so doing, the social tribal self-identification of the Kyrgyz was mainly retained at the rural level (where most of the nation lived) and was incorporated into the Soviet administration system as individual self-identification.

In sovereign Kyrgyzstan, where there are no institutions of political self-identification of the Kyrgyz people, their functions began being carried out by institutions of tribal self-identification. This explains why traditionalism has come to the foreground in today's political culture of the Kyrgyz people.

Today the Kyrgyz themselves call all the surviving ethnic traditions "kyrgyzchylyk." This concept has come to include a set of rules based on the hypertrophied idealized national traditions and cultural values of the Kyrgyz people, including *sanzhyra* and other genealogical legends. The creative intelligentsia have attempted to recognize it as the foundation for forming public relations and rules of conduct, both in everyday life and in politics. Today in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, for example, concerts of well-known pop stars at the Sports Palace, which holds approximately three thousand people, usually begin 30 minutes to one hour later than the time indicated on the ticket; people invited to *toi* and *ashi* (feasts) arrive one or two hours late; holding regional assemblies and seminars not according to schedule is considered normal, and for Kyrgyz society all of this falls under the concept of "kyrgyzchylyk." In our opinion, it is precisely these "traditions" that inculcate a sense of irresponsibility and dependency and help to justify all kinds of political and economic mistakes. Paradoxically, the members of other nationalities and confessions of the republic are very understanding of the concept "kyrgyzchylyk."

The third factor is the Soviet experience where contemporary key political ideas and values and, ultimately, today's Kyrgyz political elite were formed. Moreover, some of the elements of Soviet culture were a converted form of traditional culture adapted to the conditions of the 20th century.

The sovereign Kyrgyz Republic was resurrected from the ruins of the Soviet state and the population accepted the new government traditionally by inheritance as a continuation of Soviet power. Confidence in Soviet power was shifted to the new government. Askar Akaev's election as president was explained by the fact that he took advantage of the Kyrgyz people's confidence in Soviet power: after all he was a member of the power structures during the Soviet period and this choice was an advance of trust. A. Masaliev's candidature was identified with the image of the CPSU, which was described as evil after the collapse of the Soviet Union, so he was defeated at the elections. On the other hand, according to N. Omarov, the activity of national-democratic associations and the clandestine conflict between the regional elites, which was personified by A. Masaliev and M. Sherimkulov (the first and second secretaries of the Central Committee of the Kirghizia Communist Party who represented the south and north of the republic, respectively), brought Askar Akaev, who seemed to be the most acceptable candidate for the post of first president at that time, to power in the fall of 1990.<sup>2</sup> As a result, this stratification of factors placed a "democrat" who supported the modernized, urbanized, and Russified elite of the northern clans at the helm.

At this time, a subordinate (dependent) political culture was inherent of the Kyrgyz people, who were largely characterized by a trusting, passive, and laid-back attitude toward the changing political system. As we know, a dependent political culture is distinguished by greater interest in the activity of the authorities. Citizens of such a culture have their own idea about the government, but they are

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<sup>2</sup> See: N. Omarov, "Evoliutsiia politicheskikh sistem Kyrgyzstana v 90-e gody XX-nachale XXI vekov: itogi i perspektivy demokraticeskogo stroitelstva," available at [www.omarov-nur.narod.ru], 2002-2003.



subservient to it even if they do not approve of its activity. In this type of political culture, citizens do not nurture the hope of being able to change anything in the government's activity through their personal efforts. They perceive the authorities as a "given" and "inevitable" fact.

An important and decisive factor is the Russian experience, which is essentially "copied" by the Kyrgyz political elite. Many regulatory acts of the post-Soviet period are an actual copy of the Russian laws.

The next factor is foreign experience and political culture, mainly Western. Modernization of the Kyrgyz political culture is a prerequisite and at the same time a consequence of the formation of political institutions. As a country still on the path toward modernization, Kyrgyzstan borrows Western cultural images of values and institutions in the political sphere as well. These images give the political culture of the Kyrgyz people its own specific qualitative uniqueness.

Today European-American "images" are being borrowed and assimilated chaotically and unsystematically, at random. Time will correct this process by sifting through and selecting precisely those elements that can take root and flourish in Kyrgyz soil.

The collapse of the Soviet system was at first accompanied in Kyrgyzstan by liberal-democratic rhetoric, and it appeared that soon a revived and sovereign Kyrgyzstan would be created that would "become a member of the family of civilized nations," quickly assimilate basic Western values and ideals, and imbibe the liberal-democratic civil culture, but this did not happen.

Today it has become obvious that the Islamic religion, which is having an increasing influence on Kyrgyz society, is also becoming one of the serious factors of the political process in Kyrgyzstan. Islam is becoming politicized due to the difficulties being encountered in the economic restructuring of Kyrgyz society, the drop in the status of social strata, and the increase in the influence of organized crime and the people's disappointment in many features of current reality. In these conditions, many are concluding that one of the solutions to this situation is to return to the ethno-confessional values that were lost in the Soviet period.

Criteria of justice are being found in Islam under the conditions of the growing social injustice and moral degradation in Kyrgyzstan, whereby the people are appealing all the more frequently to Islamic political slogans. Islam is already being regarded as a fundamental world outlook and way of life. The author agrees with researcher K. Malikov who notes that "the public conscience of the people of Central Asia is simultaneously sub-national, national, and supranational. In other words, they identify themselves depending on the circumstances as members of a certain tribe or nationality (Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Tajiks), or as Central Asians, or as Turks (apart from Tajiks), and of course as Muslims."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, a triple self-identification can be seen in Kyrgyz society—affiliation with the ethnic group, the tribe, and Islam.

Islam remains one of the most important elements of the Kyrgyz ethno-cultural identity along with affiliation with a single ethnic group, state, common historical past, and language. Kyrgyz society is characterized by identical ethnic and religious origins and so, in the public conscience of the Kyrgyz people, ethnic traditions are very often perceived as Muslim and Muslim traditions as ethnic.

This confessional-cultural identification of the Kyrgyz people has been going on since the time Islam was adopted (approximately since the beginning of the 16th century), but under Soviet power such self-identification existed unofficially, which helped to reinforce the local significance of Islam.

A very important aspect is the fact that since the country gained its independence, the opinion has been popular in Kyrgyz society among traditional Muslims that Islam should be revived as a com-

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<sup>3</sup> K. Malikov, "Problema religioznoi identifikatsii Kyrgyzstana v usloviakh globalizatsii," Specially for Tazar Internet edition, 3 September 2007, available at available at [www.omarov-nur.narod.ru], 2002-2003.

ponent of the ideological-traditional way of life and as part of the state policy and ideology, but not as a religion in the true sense of this word.

Today most of the Kyrgyz population, despite the strong influence of atheism in the past, continue to regard themselves as Muslim. Not only most of the population, but also the cultural and political Kyrgyz elite that formed during the years of Soviet power uphold Islamic traditions at the everyday level and most of its representatives regard themselves as the followers of Islam. Among practicing Muslims, the number of people with higher education has increased, including politicians, policemen, and servicemen. The number of adolescents and young people participating in the Friday prayer meetings in the mosques of Bishkek and other cities of the republic has grown.

Now a double self-identification—Kyrgyz-Muslim—has been fully reinstated and sounds just as natural as Arab-Muslim or Persian-Muslim. In the mid-1990s, 95% of the Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan regarded themselves as Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

As we know, the attitude toward Islam in the Central Asian states varies keeping in mind that two forms of economic life and two types of culture—settled and nomadic—have always lived side by side here. There is a big difference in Kyrgyzstan between the republic's south with its religious pilgrimage sites and the eastern regions of north Kyrgyzstan where strict Islamic norms only have an insignificant influence on everyday life.

An important reason for stepping up the activity of religious structures in Kyrgyzstan has been the liberal foundations of social organization enforced in the Constitution, whereby each person has the right to confess any religion or not confess a religion at all. The activity of religious structures in Kyrgyzstan is carried out on the basis of the Law on Religion of 1991 (in the version of 19 November, 1997, No.79) and the presidential decree of the Kyrgyz Republic on Measures to Realize Citizen Rights to Freedom of Conscience and Confession issued in 1996.

Mosques and Islamic schools offering general and religious education have begun opening in sovereign Kyrgyzstan. Religious literature is widely published: the Koran itself and its study guidelines. Pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca shows the growing Islamicization of Kyrgyz life, and the number of pilgrims is growing with each passing year.

The Islamicized population, individuals, and foreign states, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, have begun supporting Islam in Kyrgyzstan. In April 1993, the kazyiat of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic was registered, and on 17 September, 1993 the republic's Spiritual Administration of Muslims was established. Since then, mass resurrection and building of mosques has begun and Islamic spiritual learning institutions have opened.

As early as the beginning of 2002, 1,212 religious facilities were registered in Kyrgyzstan: 975 Islamic organizations, 918 newly built or restored mosques in Bishkek, Osh, Naryn, Talas, and others, and 29 Islamic learning institutions, newspapers, funds, centers, and associations.<sup>5</sup> Whereas in 1991 there were 39 mosques in the republic, in 1997 there were 160, in 2000, 857 and in 2001, as many as 1,395, by 2007, according to the State Commission for Religious Affairs, the number had grown to more than 2,500 and, according to the muftiats, to 3,000.<sup>6</sup>

The building and reconstruction of cultic buildings is often carried out using the people's money, although the state also makes its contribution. The doors of madrasahs, Muslim learning institutions, have been opened in Bishkek, Osh, and Karakol. The Hazreta Umar Islamic University was opened in the capital, a higher Islamic madrasah in Osh, a theological school at Osh State University, and the

<sup>4</sup> See: *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 15 July, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> See: *Dialog kultur i religii—garantiia mira i stabilnosti* (Dialogue between Cultures and Religions—a Guarantee of Peace and Stability), documents of a round table devoted to the 50th anniversary of Arabaev Kyrgyz State Pedagogical University, Bishkek, 2002, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> See: E. Kanimetov, B. Temishev, "Politizatsiia islama v Kyrgyzstane i alternativnye proekty razvitiia," *Tsentralnaia Azia i kultura mira* (Bishkek), Special edition, No. 1-2 (21-22), 2007, p. 105.

Lugman al Haqim Institute in Tokmak. Kyrgyz also study at the Bukhara madrasah and the Tashkent Islamic Institute. In 2002 alone, 284 citizens of Kyrgyzstan acquired a theological education abroad, whereby 80% of them studied in Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>7</sup>

The Muslim clergy of Kyrgyzstan has been drawing attention to itself by means of its participation in the republic's sociopolitical life: political campaigns, the national movement, and written and oral statements. In 1991, a newspaper of the republic's Muslims called *Yyman* was established; at the same time the founding congress of Muslim representatives of all the republic's nationalities—the Islamic Center—was held. Religious Muslim holy days, Kurman ait and Orozo ait, are being widely celebrated. They have been declared official holidays.

The representatives of nontraditional Islamic trends also took advantage of the Kyrgyz' striving for ethnoconfessional self-identification. In the summer of 1992 a large Wahhabi mosque and madrasah began being built in Osh using Saudi money. At the end of the year, the Wahhabis opened a new mosque in Bishkek. The imams of this mosque explained that they were forced to turn to the Wahhabis because the republic's leadership would not finance the building project.

In the north of Kyrgyzstan popularization of Islamic fundamentalism is encountering serious obstacles. This is exacerbated by the fact that other ethnic minorities live here, which makes it impossible for Islamic parties to create a movement that could cross ethnic borders. The high level of literacy, strong influence of the Slavic and now Western culture, and development of a market economy in Kyrgyzstan are preventing most Kyrgyz from participating in the fundamentalist movement.

In Kyrgyzstan, particularly in the cities of Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken, several radical Islamist groups tried to acquire official registration from the Ministry of Justice. The influence of fundamentalist ideology is noticeable in Osh and around it, where more than 1,000 mosques function according to official data. The main bearers of this ideology are the Uzbeks living there, as well as the agitators from Tajikistan who have penetrated into this region.<sup>8</sup> In 1996-1997, propaganda was carried out in the republic in favor of creating an Islamic party.

Kyrgyzstan's development over the past few decades shows that Islam is having a strong influence on the political process in society as well; its role grows in conflict situations both within society and due to the tension in relations between believing Muslims and the secular regimes.

Out of all the Central Asian republics, Kyrgyzstan provides the most fertile ground for the activity of Islamic religious missionaries. The Tabligi daawat movement, for example, the main task of which is sermonizing, is operating very actively in the republic. In addition, the banned radical political party Hizb ut-Tahrir actively functions in Kyrgyzstan, which is pursuing the political goal of creating an Islamic state. Wahhabism is also practiced, a religious-political trend that arose in Central Arabia (Nejd).

The results of a sociological poll carried out by the Institute of Strategic Analysis and Forecasting at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University in the summer of 2006 in two of the country's southern regions (Osh and Jalal-Abad), two northern regions (Chui and Issyk Kul), and the city of Bishkek graphically show the immense increase in the religious consciousness of the people of present-day Kyrgyzstan. Most (90.7%) of the respondents said that they believe in Allah (whereby 87.9% of them have higher education). A large number (35.85%) fully observe the religious laws and constantly perform Muslim rituals. More than half of the respondents (69.7%) said that they observe religious rituals, although not always, while 88.65% have the Koran at home.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See: *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www/ca-c.org/iornal/cac-1999/st.11\_malashenko].

<sup>9</sup> See: B. Moldakhmetov, "Religioznaia situatsiia v Kyrgyzstane: analiz i perspektivy razvitiia," available at [http://www.easttime.ru/analytic/3/6/120.html].

The results of the special election of the Kyrgyzstan president held on 10 July, 2005 convincingly showed the qualitative changes that have occurred in the ideological views of the republic's citizens. **Shifts toward religiosity are being seen in the political and ideological preferences of most of the electorate.** Political analysts note that the parliamentary and presidential elections held in 2005 in Kyrgyzstan showed that for the first time in the history of sovereign Kyrgyzstan the Hizb ut-Tahrir activists agitated for a Muslim candidate, who performed namaz not only in the mosque, but also at the public election agitation sites. As a result, not only was Tursunbai Bakir uulu nominated as the country's president, but he also gleaned rather serious support from the electorate.

Another no less important trend that manifested itself during the change in power in the republic was the intention of several politicians and businessmen "to occupy the free niche" by creating a political Islamic party in Kyrgyzstan and then obtain seats in the new parliament on the party lists. According to the initiators of this idea, they already have contacts with colleagues from Turkey and the UAE.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, in 2005, for the first time in Kyrgyzstan's entire history, a Kyrgyz citizen who placed the emphasis on his religiosity was registered as a presidential candidate. Also for the first time Kyrgyz citizens regarding themselves as Muslim and regularly performing namaz were extensively incorporated into the election campaign agitation. These facts convincingly indicate the growing role of religion in the state.

Political Islam is gradually taking a stronger hold in Kyrgyzstan, but this process is of a complicated and contradictory nature. On the one hand, since the first Constitution of 1993, the Kyrgyz Republic has been a secular state and religion has been separate from politics. On the other hand, during the discussion of the new version of the Constitution in the republic in April and November 2006, different drafts of the KR Constitution were offered that suggested eliminating the provision about the state being secular. However, under public pressure, the country remained a secular state in the new version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted at the national referendum on 21 October, 2007.<sup>11</sup>

Thus it is obvious that Islam is having a steady influence in Kyrgyzstan on the sociopolitical processes going on, is shaping people's value orientations, and is regulating relations among them. On the other hand, there are influential forces in the republic that are insisting on limiting the role of religion and withdrawing it from the political sphere. It is obvious that the most optimal solution to this dichotomy is a compromise between the purely secular and the Islamic trends, keeping in mind the polyethnic nature of the Kyrgyz Republic, where more than 80 different ethnic groups live.

The extent to which Islam as a religion can become a stabilizing and fortifying factor of public pacification in the republic will depend on how efficiently and perspicaciously the state establishes its relations with religion and how consistently it implements its policy.

Kyrgyz society, which is going through a period of building new social structures and mechanisms of their self-realization, is still extremely dependent on its past. One of the main features of the formation of political culture in present-day Kyrgyzstan is the contradictions between the historically developed patriarchal-subordinate type of political culture of the Kyrgyz people and the system of democratic values that still has to be validated in public consciousness.

Segmentation of political culture in present-day Kyrgyzstan is going on during transformation of the sovereign state and its transition to market relations. E.V. Pritchina notes that transformation of political culture has a certain logic and framework which are created by its qualitative uniqueness and the specific experience of the country's political development being generated, on the one hand, and

<sup>10</sup> See: "Rol religioznogo faktora v Kyrgyzstane: Osnovnye vyvody i tendentsii. Analitika," *Tazar*, 6 July, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> See: *Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic*, Bishkek, 2007.

the institutional changes going on under the influence of social development and the acquisition of new experience by the political actors, on the other. Nor can it be viewed as a unilinear process of transition from a traditional to a contemporary value system. It is contradictory and complicated in nature and leads to an enlargement and sophistication of the cultural context of politics in which the old stable layers continue to exist and have an influence on the new cultural formations, thus allowing society to develop without losing its national identity.<sup>12</sup>

An assessment of political culture of the Kyrgyz people from the perspective of classifying it as traditional or modernist also shows a combination of these elements, admittedly with the domination of traditionalistic orientations. If the following are regarded as the main indicators of modernization: private property as the foundation of personal freedom, the formation and activity of political parties as associations of free citizens with similar personal political interests and goals, and the use of information technology in all spheres of public life, including in the government, we have to admit that modernization is only just beginning in Kyrgyzstan.

G. Almond wrote that the deepest fissures in political culture force us to talk about sub-cultures. They differ from each other in terms of dissimilar basic values, views, orientations, etc.<sup>13</sup> Walter Rosenbaum notes that "a fragmented political culture is one whose population lacks broad agreement upon the way in which political life should be conducted."<sup>14</sup> The following features are characteristic of them: predomination of parochial (patriarchal) political loyalty over national; absence of legitimate and effective procedures of conflict settlement; acute mistrust of social groups in each other; and unstable and short-term governments.

On the whole, the political culture of the Kyrgyz people belongs to the subservient type with the domination of traditional orientations and an indifferent attitude toward the country's political system, which is expressed in the absence of citizen response to the actions of political institutions, the absence of interest in the central government and, on the contrary, interest in political life at the grass roots level. A unique feature of Kyrgyz political culture is also the traditionally low authority of law and order, which is associated with the low educational legal culture and lack of knowledge about the mechanisms of the government's actions. It is also associated with the personal perception of the entire power system in the state and in the defining role of individuals and not institutions and with the low level of civil society and non-acceptance by the people of public control over the government (and at times the moral justification by a large part of the population of even tyranny of the authorities).

"Simultaneous augmentation in the system of political culture of elements of modernism, traditionalism, and antiquity leads to an increase in the measure of its complication and stimulates disintegration of the super-complicated whole. This creates the possibility of a split in the political-cultural expanse by forming a fragmented political culture in society."<sup>15</sup>

Research confirms the author's hypothesis that the political transformations that occurred and are occurring in sovereign Kyrgyzstan show that the political culture of the Kyrgyz people is at the stage of modernization and is of a mixed, polarized, and segmented nature. It is characterized by different value orientations, contradictions between traditionalism and modernism and between secular and religious orientations, as well as by differences between subcultures of the urban and rural population and between the electorate of the capital city and provincial towns.

<sup>12</sup> See: E.V. Pritchina, *Politicheskaja kultura v tsiklakh rossijskoj modernizatsii*, Barnaul, 2005, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> See: *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, Little, Brown Book Group, Boston, Toronto, 1974, p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> W.Ä. Rosenbaum, *Political Culture. Basic Concepts in Political Science*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1975, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> I.I. Glebova, *Obrazy proshlogo v strukture politicheskoi kulturey Rossii*, dissertation abstract for Doctor of Political Sciences, Moscow, 2007, p. 25.

So at the current stage political culture in Kyrgyzstan is characterized by segmentation and polarity, that is, it represents an aggregate of subcultural formations that are distinguished by the attitude toward the government structure, power as a whole, the pro-government and opposition parties, as well as methods of political participation, attitude toward religion, and so on. Segmentation is defined by the effect of different, often contradictory, factors, such as the contemporary political practice of sovereign Kyrgyzstan and the traditional, Soviet, Russian, Western, and Islamic models of political culture.

The political culture of the Kyrgyz people can be classified as patriarchal and subservient with predomination of the first. At the same time, a participatory political culture is forming, which shows that the Kyrgyz people are interested in participating politically in the country's life.

As the current situation in Kyrgyzstan shows, the social heterogeneity and acute conflict potential of group outlooks have given rise to a low level of integrity of the Kyrgyz political culture and created high fragmentation of the cultural field, that is, they have predetermined the absence of that cultural form which could politically integrate a heterogeneous community.

These facts unequivocally show the split in the political culture of the Kyrgyz people, which indicates the absence of a basic value consensus in society. This is manifested in the opposing positions of "tribalists," "Islamists," "democrats," and "communists," that is, "ours" and "theirs." This all characterizes it as an internally split and polarized culture, whereby its main segments contradict each other in their basic and largely secondary reference orientations.

This split must be overcome and an intrinsic synthesis ensured between the country's civilizational-cultural uniqueness and the world political trends of social democratization.

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## CIVIL NATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS: THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

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**N**ational communities create corresponding national consciousnesses, which means that the number of nations living on Earth corresponds to the number of national consciousnesses. Every nation has national consciousness, which means that it thinks. As a thinking entity it determines the way its national features are devel-

oped in all, including spiritual, spheres. It produces thoughts, regulates their production, and distributes them. The fact that national consciousness has its own components is its specific feature; they reflect the national conditions of life, national interests, and national relations and, therefore, determine the content of national consciousness.

It serves as the core of consciousness that keeps alive the faith that one's nation is capable of independent national creativity and of historically conditioned interpretation of its national and state sovereignty. So far most of the world's nationalities have no national statehood of their own, which means that for a long time to come ethnic awareness will determine political dynamics.

Elements of alien consciousnesses invariably affect (negatively or positively) all functioning national consciousnesses. The most active among them are of universal significance. They can be described as elements related to the need to develop civil societies, the structure of which exceeds the limits of ethnic identity and is kept together by shared civil interests.

*The Idea of National Independence: The Key Concepts and Principles of Uzbekistan* (Miliy istiklol goiasi) contains no direct reference to the civil nation, however its content presupposes its development along this road<sup>1</sup> by pointing to the need to correlate the elements of consciousness shared by all mankind and national consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

To protect national consciousness against alien influence the nation develops a national idea at the ideological and theoretical levels of its consciousness to become "ideologically immune."<sup>3</sup> The post-Soviet nations know only too well how their consciousness was suppressed by information borrowed from class consciousness. It was a time when the national was described as a stumbling block on the road to the international.

Freed from the pressure of class consciousness, national consciousness will, for a long time, remain wary of all ideas found beyond the bounds of ethnic identity. The idea of a civil nation calls for subtle approaches and delicate treatment: national consciousness does not distinguish between it and the "internationalization" process: the nation loses its specific features and its specific image. The way national consciousness accepts the idea of a civil nation depends on the nation's

need to think about national reality differently than in the past while keeping in mind the nation's interests.

So far elements that belong to all mankind occupy a small place in national consciousness even though they figure prominently in the life of nations and mankind: all sorts of group consciousness rather than social consciousness with elements shared by all mankind play the leading role in society. This is confirmed by the phenomenon of ethnic resurrection that has already changed the political map of the world.

In polyethnic Uzbekistan we should answer the question: How can civil society be built in the context of national consciousness?

National consciousness should not be regarded as something that divides or as a positive or negative phenomenon on the road to civil society. The components of national consciousness and its subjects describe its role in polyethnic Uzbekistan. This multiplies the number of surmised contents of consciousness by the number of identified producer-subjects and carrier-subjects of national consciousness. The number of members of any given nationality in a state corresponds to the number of contents of national consciousness. By taking into account ethnic groups we take into account the number of models of national consciousness.

National self-identity of the individual is determined by the importance of his nation; his civil identity is determined by his attitude toward the state (in our case Uzbekistan). Our opinion poll produced the following results.<sup>4</sup> When answering the question "What are you in the first place?" over half of the polled Uzbeks answered that they were primarily citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan; 40 percent of the polled Uzbeks said that they were members of their nation; a mere 4 percent described themselves as belonging to their "smaller homeland;" and few of the respondents regarded themselves as Muslims.

<sup>1</sup> See: *The Idea of National Independence: The Key Concepts and Principles of Uzbekistan*, Uzbekiston, Tashkent, 2001, pp. 44-45 (in Uzbek).

<sup>2</sup> See: *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> A public opinion poll (460 people) was carried out to obtain empirical data on the issue and to identify the subjective opinions of the ethnic groups. Three hundred and forty Uzbeks were presented with questions in Uzbek; 120 members of other nations (Russians, Tatars, Koreans, Jews, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Armenians, and others) in Russian.

The answers suggest that national and civil consciousnesses exist in society in individual and public forms. Those respondents who treated their citizenship as a priority proceeded from public consciousness. Those who treated their nationality as a priority likewise proceeded from public consciousness but their answers related them to group national consciousness. A small share of answers related those who gave them to individual consciousness in the shape of logical inferences, world outlooks, and psychological activity. In her interview to Interfax Academician R. Ubaidullaeva, Director of the Izhtimoiy fikr (Social Opinion) Center, pointed out that according to the 2006 poll 65 percent of the polled regarded themselves primarily as citizens of Uzbekistan. They, however, were not in the majority, added the academician.

About 40 percent of the Russian speakers (Russians, Tatars, Koreans) described themselves as citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the first place. One hundred percent of Kazakhs, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Armenians, and Jews described themselves as members of their corresponding nationalities. Some of the Russian speakers did not make an issue of their belonging

to their nationalities: they are more concerned with the values of a civil nation that go beyond the bounds of ethnic identity and that presuppose the development of a community of citizens of a polyethnic state. They are looking forward to seeing Uzbekistan as a community of citizens and associate their future with it. Another part of the polled concentrated on the idea of the ethno-nation; they believed that their nation could develop independently and demonstrated national-historical creativity and its interpretation of national and state sovereignty.

Philosophy today has offered a novel approach to the assessment of the relationship between public and group consciousnesses: society develops by relying on the elements and components of public consciousness that are of perpetual value to all mankind. I have in mind, in particular, the values of a civil nation. As an inalienable part of public consciousness national consciousness cannot cope with the problem of identification of a nation other than as an ethnocultural category.

The specifics of national consciousness clearly demonstrate why a ramified conception of national independence inevitably relies on the theory of the development of ethno-nations.

## Specifics of National Consciousness

The national consciousness of any nation in its pure form is an abstraction—this is its most obvious specific feature. In real life nationalities have to deal with the specific and functioning national consciousness of specific nations.

It takes shape in the process of national practices and is finalized by the entire nation in the form of spiritual production. The real interrelations that connect all nationalities form the watershed between the functioning and abstract consciousness, the content of which depends on the elements of consciousness born by the nation at any given moment and on the elements inherited from preceding generations. The latter can remain immune to changes and survive for a long time as remnants of consciousness.

The content of national consciousness depends on the quality and level of national practices as well as on the nature of the relations between its elements and the elements borrowed from other consciousnesses. It is not always easy to identify the correlation between the borrowed elements in national consciousness.

By blending with the national consciousness elements of certain other consciousnesses (philosophical, etc.) a scholarly dimension is added to the idea of national life. At the same time national and



class consciousnesses have widely differing value orientations; under Soviet power elements of the latter predominated in society and group consciousnesses.

As a social-ethical product national consciousness preserves itself as long as the corresponding nation exists. Today, it completely corresponds to all the specific features of the community moving toward stronger national sovereignty: at this stage the elements of consciousness born by the nation predominate over the elements born by other communities.

National content remains specific because of ethnic self-awareness, which differs from the idea of “we” of all other nations. National specifics are grasped through subjective perceptions that stress some features of the national and downplay others. This is typical of all nations in the process of ethnic consolidation: “If a nation apes the Western way of life it will not merely bury its national traditions but will also lose all its influence in the world.”<sup>5</sup>

National consciousness is discrete by nature: during certain periods it remains dormant only to resurge and become resurrected during other periods. It should be said that not all nationalities demonstrate cohesion and unity even at the height of national resurgence.

Most of the nation supports the current social, political, and economic course of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Eighty-six percent believe that “during the years of independence the country became much richer economically, financially, politically, and spiritually.”<sup>6</sup> There were those among the polled who looked at the nation’s chosen road at the level of everyday life. Their “common sense” suggested that they should grasp the meaning of the chosen road but the content of their consciousness was unstable: they shared and at the same time rejected the scientific substantiations of the new development course.

The content of the consciousness of a small part of an ethnic group might differ from that of the nation.

The above deliberations of national consciousness can be correctly interpreted only if we take into account the fact that two opposite forces—introversion and extraversion—are invariably present in national life. The former means that the nation tends to protect the values that constitute its ethnic specifics and manifest themselves in the nation’s highly unique nature. National consciousness has a key role to play in this process. The latter turns the nation toward the world around it.

*The Idea of National Independence: The Key Concepts and Principles of Uzbekistan* has charted a road toward stronger creative efforts in developing Uzbekistan’s sovereignty, “preservation and strengthening of the country’s independence, territorial integrity, and inviolability of its borders.”<sup>7</sup> The document is free from superficial statements intended to impress and stir up national emotions or passions. The ideas develop according to the logic of gradual transition and changes. This has become known as the “Uzbek model” of state- and society-building.<sup>8</sup>

The mechanism of national consciousness operates in the following way: the ideas in the spheres of education, science, culture, sport, religion, etc. are aimed at changing the nation’s conditions of life. The authors of the Idea reject “cultural activities limited to the commercial sphere”<sup>9</sup>; they say that “the highly educated and selfless younger generation will create a great future for itself”<sup>10</sup> and “makhalla is, in fact, the primary school of democracy.”<sup>11</sup> The changed conditions will inevitably affect the content of national consciousness which, in turn, will call to life new interests.

<sup>5</sup> E. Norbutaeva, “Conscience or Fashion,” *Family and Society*, 26 January, 2006 (in Uzbek).

<sup>6</sup> R. Ubaidullaeva, “Uzbekistan: 15 let nezavisimosti (po rezul'tatam sotsiologicheskogo oprosa),” *Obshchestvennoe mnenie. Prava cheloveka*, No. 3 (35), 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37.

<sup>9</sup> *The Idea of National Independence: The Key Concepts and Principles of Uzbekistan*, p. 64.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

In fact, the ideological and psychological spheres of national consciousness are changing to a great extent; not all changes, however, can be described as positive: the state is developing its independence under globalization pressure which inevitably challenges, in the most serious way, the still undeveloped national consciousness.

On the other hand, national consciousness is affected by certain irrational elements—prejudices that can be described as false knowledge. This is a dangerous phenomenon because the individual who grew up in a society in which national consciousness was dominated by irrational elements and the false knowledge rooted in them would take this knowledge as the truth. A nation raised on national prejudices remains ignorant of the fact that its knowledge is false. The individual educated under Soviet power that preached that the national was but an obstacle on the road towards the “Soviet people” will hasten to impose on others the idea of abandoning the ethno-nation in favor of a civil national identity.

## The Ethno-Nation and Civil Nation

Can Uzbekistan develop an ethno-nation and civil national consciousness simultaneously? Yes, this can be done.

All citizens irrespective of their ethnic affiliations have tied their fate to the Uzbek nation, which means that we are working on the idea that Uzbekistan is our common Motherland. In the course of its realization the conceptual equipment of “nation” is being revised in the context of the civil nation rather than ethnic positions.

The Idea of National Independence suggests that agreement and friendship between the titular and other ethnic groups is one of the factors of social development. According to the last population census (carried out in 1989 and therefore obsolete), there are over 130 ethnic groups living in Uzbekistan. Does this suggest the presence of 130 national consciousnesses? One cannot accept the idea that in any CIS country there are as many as 100 or even 180 nationalities. We should rather be guided by the following: “The fact that there are various ethnic groups living here does not mean that they can be regarded as nationalities rather than scattered national groups.”<sup>12</sup> From this it follows that the presence of 130 ethnic groups does not lead to 130 national consciousnesses.

National consciousnesses are manifested where there are nations and a set of social, ethical, and spiritual relations inside the national entity, which determines, defines, and gives birth to national ideas, views, theories, and prejudices. Ethnic groups working together in the system of social, ethical and spiritual relations are the producer- and carrier-subjects of national consciousness. In Uzbekistan only two nations (the Uzbeks and Karakalpaks) demonstrate that their national consciousness is determined by the practice of national life. It was their national consciousnesses that articulate in the fullest form the idea of Uzbekistan’s independence.

In the context of its national consciousness the nation wants to preserve sovereignty and determine its future; it is next to impossible to do this without a national idea and national ideology. The creator-subjects develop the very much needed idea of national independence on the basis of the components most developed in national consciousness for the simple reason that a national idea is part and parcel of national consciousness.

The national idea can be traced back in its clearest form to Europe of the 16th-19th centuries when European nations were consolidating into nation-states. The idea that each nation should have

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<sup>12</sup> E.V. Tadevosian, “Etnonatsiia: mif i sotsialnaia realnost,” *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, No. 6, 1998.

its sovereign national state and that the rights of the nation dominate over the rights of the individual are two linchpins of any national idea. This played an important role in Europe when nations were fighting for national independence. Today the polyethnic European states are living through another historical process: state formation on the basis of civil national identity.

The newly independent states are not immune to the idea of civil national identity. The Idea of National Independence does not operate with the term "civil nation" although it recognizes its existence. The titular nation should not be pushed toward the civil nation stage: time is needed to grasp the meaning of this term in the same way as happened with the already accepted ideas of national sovereignty and the national idea.

The civil nation concept is a deeply rooted and multidimensional idea that has not yet received its clear scholarly definition. So far it is not quite clear how a nation that relies on a functioning national consciousness can address the task. It would be highly naïve to imagine that national ideology, an extremely complicated phenomenon, contains elements related to the "civil nation" concept (something that exceeds the limits of national practice). The content of national consciousness is unrelated to the use of meaningful elements related to a correct understanding of the principles of the civil nation: national consciousness treats them as alien and rooted in a different consciousness.

For these reasons when dealing with the recognition of the continuity of the spiritual heritage of nationalities, the Idea of National Independence concentrates on the identifying features of the ethno-nation. It is not hard to understand why the history of the people that created this conception underlies the national independence ideology: the authors rely on "one's own" components of national consciousness shaped by Oriental philosophy based on the ideas of *paternalism*, *collectivism*, and *the priority of public opinion*. It was these ideas that determined the content of the Idea of National Independence and they cannot be ignored or rejected in the process of formulating the national idea.

The essential elements of national psychology and national ideology in national consciousness affect the idea that the right of the nation is higher than the right of the individual. A nation that finally achieved sovereignty should overcome this for the sake of achieving equality of all nations within the state borders. This explains why those who authored the Idea borrowed certain elements of consciousness typical of all mankind in addition to national specifics.<sup>13</sup>

For example, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Kirghiz, and Turkmen, all members of the region's autochthonous population who live in Uzbekistan, are the victims of random territorial delineation of the 1920s-1930s. They remain the carrier-subjects of the national consciousness of their own nations because it contains self-identification features easily grasped and easily comprehended by these ethnic groups. Along with the Uzbeks they belong to one ethnic, cultural, and religious group while many years of living side by side with the Uzbek nation makes it easier for them to actively accept its values, traditions, way of life, and language and thus to think in the elements of the Uzbek national consciousness.

The Russians, Byelorussians, Koreans, Jews, and Ukrainians of Uzbekistan have found themselves in an alien cultural, ethnic, and religious milieu. In fact they are "scattered" across the republic's territory,<sup>14</sup> which inevitably affects their cultural contacts and ties among themselves and their nations. Those ethnic groups that live far from their nations have the *illusion of mastering* their national consciousness; if they have any ideas about it they can be described as an *abstract* national consciousness. It is wrongly believed at the everyday level that individuals living in different national milieus can play the role of carriers of the national consciousness of their nations on the strength of counting themselves as part of them.

<sup>13</sup> See: *The Idea of National Independence: The Key Concepts and Principles of Uzbekistan*, pp. 47-49.

<sup>14</sup> See: O. Ata-Mirzaev, V. Gentshke, R. Murtazaeva, *Uzbekistan mnogonatsionalnyi: istoriko-demograficheskiy aspekt*, Tashkent, 1998, p. 67.

Detached from the everyday life of their nations they cannot preserve the cause-and-effect ties between the national consciousness and life of their nations. They have a good command of the elements of ethnic consciousness (the language, traditions, ethnic cuisine, psychic makeup, etc.). They master the results achieved by the Uzbeks in generalizing their practice of ethnic relations, which means that they have mastered certain components of the Uzbek national consciousness. The polled Russian-speakers demonstrated complete satisfaction with the development level of the Uzbek national consciousness: the titular nation is capable of identifying strivings common to all mankind and appreciating the idea of civil equality.<sup>15</sup>

The objective process of living side by side creates conditions for social and political changes to transform the country into a community of citizens of any given state. The way individuals treat their civil and ethnic identity reveals the extent to which this issue has taken root in the people's minds.

In Uzbekistan its citizens generally regard themselves as equal members of society; each of them is free to determine his own ethnic identity. To achieve the aims formulated by the Idea we should simultaneously develop an ethno-nation and civil national identity.

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<sup>15</sup> See: R.N. Shigabdinov, "History and Sides of Our Friendship," in: *Uzbekistan—the Quiet Land*, ed. by A. Ochiliev, Uzbekiston, Tashkent, 2007, pp. 137-138 (in Uzbek).