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NATION-BUILDING

**THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC
PARTIES OF CENTRAL ASIA:
DECLARATIONS, SPECIFICS,
AND PROJECTS**

Bahodyr ERGASHEV

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When writing about his mainly positive attitude toward the Industrial Revolution in England and French Utopian Socialism, Ahmad Donish (1827-1897), an outstanding Central Asian diplomat, never suspected that this would make him the region's first social-democratic agitator. Later, socialist ideas "in bad Turkish translations" (as Donish's pupils and followers asserted) were actively promoted in the Central Asian khanates. One can say that this ideology and the social-political movement of the Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khiva workers who readily embraced it are over 100 years old.¹

¹ Many of the local parties agree with this (see, for example: "Za novy Kazakhstan! Predvybornaia programma OSDPK," 18 July, 2007, available at [www.osdp.kz]); as well as bits and pieces from an interview by R. Zoiirov, leader of the Tajik Social-Democrats, quoted below).

How has the movement changed over the last 100 years? How should we treat the rich social-democratic history in light of the collapse of the Soviet Union and "developed socialism?" How are the social-democratic parties of Central Asia developing in the context of the world financial crisis? What are their prospects? What can be said about their leaders (P. Zoiirov, Zh. Tuiakbai, G. Kaliev, and others)?

It is not my intention to answer all these questions; I shall concentrate on the key issues using the largest and influential social-democratic organizations as an example. I have in mind the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (leader—L. Guliamov, 310,000 members); the National Social-Democratic Party of Kazakhstan (NSDPK) (Zh. Tuiakbai, 140,000 members); the Social-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (SDPU)

Adolat (I. Saifnazarov, 90,000 members); the Kazakhstan Social-Democratic Party Auyl (G. Kaliev, 61,000 members); the Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT) (R. Zoiirov, 5,000 members); the Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK, A. Atambaev, 5,000 members), and some others.²

There is a fairly limited number of works by prominent Central Asian authors dealing with the subject under discussion. I relied mainly on those that looked at the local social-democrats during the most difficult periods of the region's recent history: 1990, 1993, and 1998. The latter, which coincided with the Asian economic crisis, deserves special attention in connection with the latest developments. The *Central Asia and the Caucasus* journal has carried articles on the multi-party system, political parties, and the social-democratic movement by R. Abdullo, I. Ba-

girov, M. Bekker, Kh. Hajji-zade, I. Ismagambetov, I. Kar-sakov, G. Kerian, V. Kurganskaia, A. Kur-dov, E. Mamytova, M. Mashanov, P. Mullojanov, R. Musabekov, S. Olimova, M. Sabit, A. Tuleg-
lov, B. Fakhritdinov, R. Yalchin, and others.

It is not easy to identify common features among the fundamental issues (such as organizational, personnel, legal, material, financial, agitation, and propaganda) of the region's social-democratic organizations. They are distorted by local conditions and the authorities' fairly strong pressure on the political parties; the social-political and socio-economic models are different; the same applies to the leaders' political tactics. Still, there are obviously common, "core" strategic positions shared by all the parties enumerated above: social justice, past socialist traditions, common centuries-old Muslim values, more or less similar electorates, respect for state regulation, respect for the achievements and the authority of social democracy of Northern Europe and, finally, a constructive attitude toward the world financial crisis and the measures designed to neutralize the damage.

² The Socialist Party of Kazakhstan, the Orleu Public Movement of Kazakhstan, the Agrarian Labor Party of Kyrgyzstan, and certain others deserve special historical study.

Social Justice as a Common Core

It should be said that the Central Asian leaders were not alone when they armed themselves with the social justice slogan as an element of the social-democratic ideology of today. They are in the good company of the present and former heads of state: H. Mubarak (Egypt), T. Basescu (Romania), D. Türk (Slovakia), V. Zatlers (Latvia); G. Pyrvanov (Bulgaria), R. von Weizsäcker (Germany), and others. Zbigniew Brzezinski has described social justice as a factor for restoring American domination.³ Grigory Yavlinskiy writes about it as a "road map for reform"⁴ while the British Guardian stated: "Liberalism without social justice is not a political program in the democratic age ... nor ... is social justice without liberalism."⁵ The same newspaper wrote: "The particular form of society created by 20th-century communist parties will never be replicated. But there are lessons to be learned from its successes as well as its failures."⁶

Social justice as a party principle is fairly popular among the political public structures of Kazakhstan; it is one of the slogans of the People's Democratic Nur Otan Party and the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. *The very term "justice," which is written as "adolat" in practically all the local languag-*

³ See: *O Estado de São Paulo*, 4 April, 2007.

⁴ G. Yavlinsky, "The Road Map for Reform," *The Moscow Times*, 17 June, 2005.

⁵ M. Kettle, "Socialism is Dead," *The Guardian*, 27 October, 2004.

⁶ S. Milne, "Communism May Be Dead, but Clearly not Dead Enough," *The Guardian*, 17 February, 2006.

es, appeared or appears in the name of the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, the Social-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, and the Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan. This shows that the term is popular among the political elites and ordinary people.

The position of the Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan deserves special mention. Its leader R. Zoiirov admitted that since the 20th century much has changed in the world social-democratic movement. He added that his party identified its three main slogans—Wisdom, Justice, Development—on the basis of the social-democratic ideology. The party's leader, who is well-known for his political weight on the country's domestic scene and his authority with the international organizations stationed in Dushanbe, warned: "If Tajik society does not gain more political and economic wisdom, justice will never win. Its development will be possible only when society becomes wise and just."⁷ These and other statements of Tajik politicians are obviously suggested by the centuries-old central Asian philosophy (al-Farabi, Ibn Sino, Alisher Navoi) which frequently referred to wisdom, justice and humanism.

What are the specifics of *social justice as interpreted in Uzbekistan* and how is it translated into the program and practical activities of the Adolat SDPU?⁸ It is commonly believed in Uzbekistan that a democratic state should proceed, first, from the fullest possible account of popular mentality; second, from the nation's high spirituality and acute sense of social justice; and third, from the nation's striving toward education and enlightenment. To a great extent, the nation owes this to the traditions of enlightenment in the Muslim East, so-called enlightened Islam. In Uzbekistan *mahalla* plays the central role in the system of social democratization and realization of the key social principles, of which social justice is the main one. These factors largely prompted Uzbek society to dismiss the idea of "vouchers" promoted in Russia in the 1990s as another hypostasis of false egalitarianism of socialism,⁹ while the system of centralized distribution was described as "false interpretation of social justice."

The principle of *social state* is closely related to the idea of social justice. Corresponding provisions can be found in the constitutions of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia. Today the social state is interpreted as a constitutional legal status that presupposes constitutional guarantees of economic and social rights and freedoms. This means that the state has shouldered the task of maintaining the standard of living and satisfaction of its citizens' material and spiritual demands to the extent it is able. Today, the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, and three Kazakhstan's parties—the National Social-Democratic Party, the ?dilet Democratic Party, and the Real Ak Zhol Democratic Party—are treating the "social state" as one of their priorities. The Tajik social-democrats likewise are not alien to the rhetoric about the relations between the law-governed state and civil society.¹⁰ Meanwhile, a specifically social-democratic approach to what the state is in contemporary society and to social society betrays its weakness when compared to the official interpretations of the "democratic law-governed state" (Uzbekistan); "the professional state that retains only its absolutely necessary functions" (Kazakhstan), etc. It seems that so far the idea of the social state in Central Asia remains an imported ideological product typical of later European constitutions

⁷ R. Zoiirov, "Sotsial-demokraticeskaja partiia—novaia partiia dlia srednikh sloev Tajikistana," 6 February, 2003, available at [www.varorud.org] (see also: R. Zoiirov, "I am not seeking high posts, I want to lead people," 10 June, 2008, available at [www.ozodi.org], in Uzbek).

⁸ It should be said that the Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan affirms commitment "to the ideals of democracy and social justice"; Art 14 says "the state shall function on the principles of social justice and legality." The Uzbek rulers were convinced from the very beginning that social justice was a dominant idea and declared that they intended to tie together effective economic development and social guarantees and social justice. They posed as the social guarantor of stability, social security, and social justice.

⁹ See: I.A. Karimov, "Uzbekistan po puti uglubleniia ekonomicheskikh reform. 1995," available at [www.press-service.uz].

¹⁰ See: R. Zoiirov, "Sotsial-demokraticeskaja partiia—novaia partiia dlia srednikh sloev Tajikistana."

and industrial societies, the meaning of which is still vague while the references to it are nothing more than an indication of “etatist” positions.

The calls of local social democracy to put an end to *corruption* are connected with the social justice principle as the social state’s slogan. The anti-corruption struggle is obviously seen as a “legal” component of social justice and a social state. The Social-Democrats of Kazakhstan (NSDPK) are one of the best examples of the above: they call on the state to do away with “systemic corruption” in the tax and customs structures and demand that the administration methods should be improved and the “shadow economy” suppressed. The party describes the “non-transparent and unfair distribution of money earned by the export of oil, gas, copper, and chromium” as a challenge to national security. The NSDPK program says in part: “Subsurface resources belong to the entire nation but they are used to enrich a handful of corrupt top bureaucrats and oligarchs.”¹¹ According to the expert community, the words “discrediting,” “people,” and “raw material resources” are most frequently used in the party’s program documents.¹² Outside experts find it hard to understand the motives of Zh. Tuiakbai, leader of the Social-Democrats of Kazakhstan: indeed, is he guided by his own ideas of social development or a very natural urge for political power? His slogans sound adequate for many post-Soviet countries.

It seems that social justice has not exhausted its ideological potential in social democracy.¹³ The world financial crisis has added urgency to the principle of social justice and its slogans of *equality between men and women*, the rights of the autochthonous peoples and migrants, *employment and social security*. This means that social democracy in Central Asia, and elsewhere, can use them in its everyday activities.

Socialism, “Democratic Socialism,” Or Socialist International? “Against the Privatization of Profits and Socialization of Losses”

Today the Communist Party of Kazakhstan led by S. Abdildin (55,000 members), the Communist People’s Party of Kazakhstan led by V. Kosarev (90,000 members) and the Communist parties of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are still devoted to the *scientific socialism* of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. To a certain extent (and contrary to their intentions) they promoted the social-democratic ideas in their countries. President of Kazakhstan Nazarbaev himself deemed it necessary to point out that “we have left behind the period of indiscriminate criticism of the socialist idea. The time has come to analyze

¹¹ “Za novy Kazakhstan! Predvybornaia programma OSDPK.”

¹² S. Konovalov, “Predvybornye platformy partiy: opyt primeneniia metodiki diskursnogo analiza,” 6 November, 2007, available at [www.kisi.kz.]

¹³ In 2007 the ILO, in which the social-democrats are fairly influential, adopted a Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. In 2007 the World Day of Social Justice (20 February) was officially established. In his address on the occasion of the first Day of Social Justice (20 February, 2009), U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said: “For the United Nations, the pursuit of social justice for all is at the core of our global mission to promote development and human dignity. Tragically, social justice still remains an elusive dream for an appallingly large portion of humanity. Extreme poverty, hunger, discrimination and denial of human rights continue to scar our moral landscape” (*Message of U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on the Occasion of the World Day of Social Justice*, 20 February, 2009, available at [www.un.org]).

what people gained from socialism in its Soviet variant and what should be resolutely rejected.”¹⁴ The leaders of Kazakhstan have never rejected the historical chance of identifying the acceptable and unacceptable variants of socialism as a global idea.

The Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, in turn, when holding forth about socialism, pointed out in its 1994 program that “practically all positive and rational elements of the socialist model were discarded while the developed capitalist countries are using its positive elements creatively and successfully.” The program describes the social-democratic idea as an organic blend of *socialist values shared by mankind* and the “democratic means used to secure these aims with the help of market economic mechanisms.” It described the party’s main principles as “the principles of *democratic socialism* and introduction of political, economic, and social democracy into all social spheres.”¹⁵

The Tajik Social-Democrats have their own ideas of socialism. In Tajikistan the Communist Party in its basically unchanged form could have opposed, much more successfully than others, the social-democratic “revisionism” but it took it much more time to adjust to the new realities than the Communist parties in other countries. SDPT leader R. Zoirov has pointed out that each of the parties “is moving toward social justice in its own way. The Socialists seek popular support in general while we pin our hopes on individuals.” Why? Because, says Zoirov, “social justice should be first established in relation to each individual.” This means that the Tajik Social-Democrats associate their ideas of social justice, social equality, and the social state with *individual freedom*.

Let me remind you that early in the 1990s most of the Central Asian leaders rejected “the orthodox ideas of capitalism and socialism.”¹⁶ In Uzbekistan, where the “cotton affair” and other criminal cases deprived the Communist Party of much of its authority, there is no place for a communist party able to promote “red” social-democratic ideas in independent Uzbekistan. More than that: the “developed socialism” of the Soviet era is still associated in the republic with “the plundering of natural and mineral raw materials in an extensive way that incurred great material and other losses,”¹⁷ “nepotism and clan relations,”¹⁸ “the use of force and pressure, lies and hypocrisy,”¹⁹ and the “Aral tragedy.” Should this be taken to mean that socialism is outright rejected? Obviously not. Disillusionment with “developed socialism” has nothing to do with socialism in general. “Socialism and the socialist principles have many advantages when it comes to social guarantees—no one can deny this,” said President Karimov.²⁰ Political leaders of practically all the Central Asian countries approve of the “idea to bring together the ideas of socialism and an efficient market economy demonstrated by the Chinese model of the socialist market economy.”²¹ This is another point in favor of socialism.

Do the Central Asian Social-Democrats stand a chance of being heard in the Socialist International? Is the government prepared to help them? According to numerous experts Socialist International membership is the only way to carry weight with the European Union in the region. So far the political establishment is not ready to share its foreign policy monopoly and use the instruments of

¹⁴ N.A. Nazarbaev, *Strategiia nezavisimosti*, Atamura, Almaty, 2003, p. 88.

¹⁵ *Program of the Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan*, endorsed by the 2nd Congress on 24 September, 1994, available at [www.kenesh.org].

¹⁶ I.A. Karimov, “Vystuplenie na 48-i sessii Generalnoi Assamblei OON,” 28 September, 1993, available at [www.press-service.uz].

¹⁷ I.A. Karimov, “Uzbekistan na poroge XXI veka: ugrozy bezopasnosti, usloviia i garantii progressa,” 1997, available at [www.press-service.us].

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ I.A. Karimov, “Ideologiya—eto ob’edinyayushchiiy flag natsii, obshchestva, gosudarstva. Otveti na voprosy glavnogo redaktora gazety *Tafakkur*, No. 2, 1992,” available at [www.press-service.uz].

²⁰ I.A. Karimov, “My ubezhdeny v pravilnosti izbrannogo puti,” 1995, available at [www.press-service.uz].

²¹ I.A. Karimov, “Uzbekistan—sobstvennaia model perekhoda na rynochnye otnoshenia,” 1995, available at [www.press-service.uz].

civil society to achieve diplomatic aims. What is more the parties and their leaders, who are quite successful at home, are not prepared to sacrifice their ambitions on the international arena for the sake of national interests. Recently, in the context of the world financial crisis, the Socialist International has formulated higher demands on the social-democratic movement. It repeated its definition of capitalism as “an economic model which has been operating for the last three decades with no moral compass”²² for the Central Asian countries still living in the “early capitalist” epoch. They are still moving toward the widely operating market economy.

Experience of the Social-Democratic Parties of Asian Countries with a Predominantly Muslim Population

The experience gained by some of the Asian Social-Democratic member parties of the Socialist International can clarify the prospects for Central Asia. Here I shall refer to the Democratic Action Party of Malaysia, the National Democratic Party of Egypt, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the Socialist Union of Popular Forces of Morocco, the Democratic Constitutional Rally of Tunisia, and the Mauritius Labor Party. All of them, with the exception of the Egyptian, Pakistani, and Mauritius parties, have socialism, or rather *democratic socialism*, as their aim.

The six parties share the idea of *social justice* as one of their fundamental principles. The Malaysian Democrats and Mauritius Laborites also speak about economic justice. All of them except the PPP accept human rights and freedoms as a priority; the PPP is the only one among them that has the “interests of the peasants” as its central program issue. The Egyptian National-Democrats concentrate on a “stronger position for the private sector” and “greater involvement of young people and women in public life.” The Moroccan Socialists insist on “*using scientific and technical achievements* as a means of achieving sustainable economic, social, and cultural development.”

The Mauritius Laborites and Egyptian National-Democrats call on the trade unions to play a more important role; the former and the Malaysian Democrats are interested in environmental protection. The PPP alone speaks of its dedication to “Islamic religious values,” the Tunisian Constitutional Democrats are the only party calling for “de-colonization of the Tunisian economy,” “partial collectivization,” etc. Even before the world financial crisis the Moroccan Socialists insisted that “the vulnerability of the country’s national economy” should be overcome. The Central Asian Social Democrats might be interested in the slogans of the Malaysian Democrats calling for *social order* as the key element of free individual development; *employment as a norm*, value, and dignity of man. They oppose *unjust wars and weapon production* and insist on *equal access for all to the national and global cultural heritage*.

The above confirms that Central Asian social democracy is following a common road; it has done much and should accomplish even more. The experience of similar parties working in the Asian countries with a predominantly Muslim population confirms that they should pay even more attention to the traditions and novelties introduced by similar structures.

²² “Socialist International Leaders Address Global Financial Crisis in Meeting at United Nations 26 September, 2008. Statement on the Global Financial Crisis, 26 September, 2008,” available at [www.socialistinternational.org].

Who Votes for the Central Asian Social-Democrats?

The experience of the social-democratic parties enumerated above is very important for dealing with the greatest challenge: the social-democratic electorate. The six member parties of the Socialist International are supported by the *workers and national minorities* (which have probably lost faith in private property and have no access to it).²³ The Moroccan Socialists count on the *democratic-minded intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie* among those who vote for them. All the parties rely on *trade union members*. It is hard to agree with those who say that the youth and women can be described as the electorate in its classical form (the dominant orthodox religious ideology deprives women of independent access to private property).

The Adolat Social-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan describes “the middle social strata the political and social will of whom the party strives to express” as its social basis. The Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan likewise announces that it relies “on the middle strata with huge material and spiritual potential” and that “so far the soil for the middle strata is inadequate and its share in Tajik society is negligible.” Its leader R. Zoirov admits that the party relies on those who live in the capital and younger (under 35) people.²⁴

The middle strata can be described as a dynamic, promising, and expanding electorate. They are interested in strengthening the independence of their countries because they profited from it more than the other social groups. This is especially true of the middle strata in young states. Property owners who are gradually growing rich are normally defined as the middle class; meanwhile the ranks of this class could swell with people working in the public sector (teachers and medics) if their wages continue growing. This means that this definition is as vague as that of the social state. Experience has taught us that the social-democrats can rely mostly on workers engaged at all types of enterprises, including JVs and small businesses.

Will the social-democratic parties acquire stable electorates and how can this be done? The parliamentary factions should gain more influence as the most important instrument for winning people over to their side. Party groups in the legislative structures of the provinces, regions, and at the grass-roots level should demonstrate greater and much more rational involvement to attract the party electorate. These groups serve the cornerstone of the political parties; they represent them in the region and are largely responsible for the parties’ efficiency and their appeal to potential voters. An efficient system of public control of executive and administrative structures is another important instrument in the policy of parties and their electoral strategy.

The Year 2009: Unexpected Transformation of the Principles of State Regulation and Its Impact on the Social-Democrats

From the very beginning the Auyl Social-Democratic Party of Kazakhstan spoke about “*justified market reforms*” as if anticipating the impact of a global crisis on the local economies. It went as

²³ The Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan speaks of the obvious support of the national minorities (see: *Program of the Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan*, endorsed by the 2nd Congress on 24 September, 1994).

²⁴ See: R. Zoirov, “Sotsial-demokraticheskaia partiia—novaia partiia dlia srednikh sloev Tajikistana.”

far as stating that “the state should be more involved in economic regulation.”²⁵ The Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan described “state regulation of market relations” in its program as the most important principle of its economic policies.²⁶

State regulation as understood in Uzbekistan can be divided into two periods: the present and the previous related to the transit economy of 1991-2000. In 2001 the government liberalized monetary regulation and improved its policies in the sphere of customs and tariff regulation; in 2002 it announced that state regulation would be continued in telecommunication and data transfer networks and in the transit of special cargoes and military contingents across the country; in 2003 the same applied to radio frequencies and the notary office; a system of obligatory certification of imported goods was introduced as well as norms and standards adjusted to the demands of the World Customs Organization. On 1 October, 2002 state regulation of the means earmarked for wages was annulled at all enterprises and organizations irrespective of the form of ownership. On the whole, the president of Uzbekistan pointed out that “state regulation was used where the country’s long-term interests needed them and was dictated by the urgent need to find a way out of the extreme situations. It was completely justified.”²⁷ The Adolat Social-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan described limited state interference in the economic structures, trimming state control, and de-monopolization of production as its program aims.

We can hardly expect the social-democrats to busy themselves with economic issues, including instituting or restoring state regulation, in crisis conditions. Leader of the Tajik Social-Democrats is very skeptical about the chances for this: “It is thought that we should first improve the economic and social situation and then develop democracy. This is wrong. It should be the other way around: we should first establish democracy as the beginning of everything.”²⁸ Tajikistan, which is integrated into the world division of labor to a much lesser extent than its neighbors, will suffer less from the world crisis; however its “meandering” progress disproves the usual opinions.²⁹

In connection with state regulation and state support, the local social-democrats are paying much attention to the *countryside*. The Social-Democrats of Kazakhstan entitled one of the sections of their program “Real Support to the Countryside and the People Who Live There!”³⁰ The fact that 2009 was declared the Year of the Development and Improvement of the Countryside and a corresponding state program was adopted added weight to the activities of the Adolat Social-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan.

The position of the Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, which correlated with the issues of state regulation and state monopoly on *water* described as a “resource on par with oil and gas,” as well as the construction of the Kambaratinskaia Hydropower Station deserve special mention. It cannot be adequately interpreted either by the governments or by the social-democratic parties of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan on the lower reaches of the rivers. One feels that the Kazakh Social-Democrats were quite right when they pointed out: “Relations with the Central Asian and other CIS countries should be dominated by pragmatic national interests and democratic values as their important element.”³¹

²⁵ “Kazakhstanskaia sotsial-demokraticheskaia partiia ‘Auyl,’” 20 February, 2009, available at [www.akorda.ks].

²⁶ See: *Program of the Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan*, endorsed by the 2nd Congress on 24 September, 1994.

²⁷ I.A. Karimov, “Obespechit postupatelnoe i ustoiчивoe razvitie strany—vazhneishaia nasha zadacha,” report at the Gala Meeting devoted to the 16th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, available at [www.press-service.uz].

²⁸ R. Zoirov, “Sotsial-demokraticheskaia partiia—novaia partiia dlia srednikh sloev Tajikistana.”

²⁹ See: E. Rakhmon, “Vystuplenie na rasshirennoe zasedanii Pravitelstva RT, posviashchennoe obsuzhdeniiu itogov sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo razvitiia strany v 2008 godu i opredeleniiu zadach na 2009 god (Dushanbe, 16 January, 2009),” available at [www.president.tj].

³⁰ “Za novy Kazakhstan! Predvybornaia programma OSDPK.”

³¹ *Ibidem*.

The World Financial Crisis: Will the Central Asian Social-Democrats Become Parties of Power?

It is interesting to note that fifteen years ago one of the Central Asian leaders spoke about possible crises in the emerging market economy.³² In the summer of 2008 Uzbekistan started drawing an integral Anti-Crisis Program for 2009-2012.³³ This confirms that starting in late 2008 the Adolat Social-Democratic Party has been fortifying its ranks; the leaders are looking for new program issues while its leader D. Tashmukhamedova was elected speaker of the parliament's lower chamber and the party joined the Democratic Bloc, the ruling parliamentary faction.

In an effort to tie the anti-crisis efforts to one of the parties, the president of Kazakhstan formulated four, social-democratic by nature, tasks for the ruling Nur Otan People's Democratic Party:³⁴ dealing with the socioeconomic problems and control over spending the anti-crisis money; more attention to social security; working toward consolidation and unity of the Kazakhstan society; and overcoming the crisis and readying for a breakthrough.³⁵ Earlier, the president of Kazakhstan admitted that "a society in which a small group of rich people is far removed from a large group of poor people will never survive and will never flourish."³⁶

The 15-year old program of the Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan looks fairly attractive in the crisis: *continued crediting of small businesses, low interest rate on credits, continued state-supported projects of developing entrepreneurship, free economic zones, greater responsibility for unjustified inspections and auditing of businesses by law-enforcers and fiscal structures.*

The Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan presents itself as a "constructive opposition party" and announces that, like all other parties, "it will fight for power." R. Zoiirov pointed out that its task was "to develop the people's political will translated into election results." He "*rejected the use of the 'ruling party' term as unacceptable from the legal point of view.*" If the "ruling party" continues imposing its ideology as the state one, says R. Zoiirov, this will amount to a "crime."³⁷

The Socialist International leaders, as well as leaders of the Central Asian states and local social-democratic parties, speak about the need to increase support to *small and medium-sized companies* in the form of crediting programs.³⁸ This means that capitalism is not totally rejected but is being transformed into employment largely based on small business. This fully applies to a more precise definition of the social-democratic electorate.

³² See: I.A. Karimov, "Uzbekistan po puti uglubleniia ekonomicheskikh reform."

³³ It concentrated on accelerated modernization, technical and technological retooling of enterprises, wide introduction of flexible technologies; support for exporter enterprises to maintain their competitiveness in the foreign markets; improving competitiveness of enterprises through a rigid economy, lowering production costs and hence the cost of products; cutting down on energy consumption by introducing an efficient energy-saving system; support of Uzbek producers by stimulating domestic demand.

³⁴ On the influence of the social-democratic and socialist ideas on the political establishment of Kazakhstan see: T. Ismagambetov, "Razvitie kazakhskogo isteblishmenta v kontse XIX-seredine XX vekov," *Tsentralnaia Azia*, No. 5 (11), 1997, p. 7.

³⁵ See: N.A. Nazarbaev, "Zakliuchitelnoe vystuplenie na rasshirennoe zasedanii Biuro Politsoвета partii," available at [www.akorda.kz]; "Glava gosudarstva, Predsedatel NDP 'Nur Otan' Nursultan Nazarbaev provel rasshirennoe zasedanie Biuro Politsoвета partii, posviashchennoe 10-letnemu iubileiu sozdaniia partii," available at [www.akorda.kz].

³⁶ N.A. Nazarbaev, *Strategiia nezavisimosti*, p. 14.

³⁷ R. Zoiirov, "Sotsial-demokraticheskaia partiia—novaia partiia dlia srednikh sloev Tajikistana."

³⁸ See: F.-W. Steinmeir, "Evropeiskiy Pakt budushchego za trud (European Pact for the Future of Employment). Pakt antikrizisnykh mer v ramkakh Evropeiskogo Souiza," 21 January, 2009, available at [www.politoraz.ru]; H. Hail, "4 stolpa, na kotorykh osnovyvaetsia sotsial-demokraticheskaia ekonomicheskaiia politika," 25 January, 2009, available at [www.politoraz.ru].

On 9 January, 2009, when speaking at the “New World. New Capitalism” Conference in Paris, Laborite Tony Blair described the world crisis as “unprecedented,” “the most tricky intellectual challenge,” and “an era of very low predictability.” He also added: “The traditional welfare systems are not properly equipped to deal with the scale and nature of the tsunami affecting us.” “I would invest,” continued the former leader of the UK ruling party (a member of Socialist International), “in renewable energy, science, technology, education, and innovation.”³⁹

The Main Traditional Postulates of Contemporary Social Democracy as Untapped Regional Possibilities at a Time of Crisis

It seems that the Central Asian public has not yet grasped the meaning of ideological *pluralism*, one of the core postulates of contemporary social democracy. What academics and experts call the low culture of discussion or, more broadly, of political culture will remain a striking feature of the Central Asian political parties (social-democratic parties being no exception) for a long time to come. The “peaceful coexistence” of ideas is possible within the context of the peaceful coexistence of all property types, in the presence of well-rooted private property in a prospering country. Only a clash of opinions, ideas, and convictions pushes the social-democrats forward.

The principle of *honest trade* (which rules out the dominance of speculative markets) is another, still untapped, possibility.⁴⁰ Social democracy stands a better chance of gaining popularity during the primary accumulation of capital when national property is unevenly distributed and attempts to fix the results are the most brazen. On the other hand, today the social-democrats are lobbying the idea of guaranteed free world trade and alleviation of protectionism.⁴¹

It is equally important to clearly grasp the meaning of *social partnership* as interpreted by the Central Asian social-democrats. In its traditional sense this is a triangle created by the state, the businessman, and the worker, not “cooperation of civil society with the state machine.” When seen through the prism of centuries-old British democracy (the way in which branches of foreign organizations working in Central Asia regard local realities) the distorted nature of the Central Asian interpretation of the term becomes even more obvious.

Cooperation with *trade unions* is another potential resource of local social democracy. So far the fairly amorphous nature of trade unions makes wide-scale cooperation impossible. Trade unions did not find a place for themselves in the transition economy and have not yet identified their niche in the market economy. In any case, they remain a powerful reserve of the Central Asian social-democratic parties.

Finally, the social-democratic postulates of *removing restrictions on immigration and of peaceful coexistence of cultures and civilizations* are fairly important. The leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan regard them as important.⁴² The Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan sees its aim as transforming the country from an exporter into an importer of labor resources.

³⁹ [<http://tonyblairoffice.org/2009/01/speech-by-tony-blair-at-the-ne.html>].

⁴⁰ See: “Socialist International Leaders Address Global Financial Crisis in Meeting at United Nations 26 September, 2008. Statement on the Global Financial Crisis, 26 September, 2008.”

⁴¹ See: F.-W. Steinmeir, op. cit.

⁴² See: R. Zoirov, “Sotsial-demokraticheskaja partija—novaia partija dlja srednikh sloev Tajikistana;” idem, “Ia—optimist, kak i vse chleny SDPT,” 31 December, 2007, available at [www.press-uz.info].

The latest documents of the Socialist International speak very eloquently of the “collapse of neo-liberal policies, which presents two specific challenges that need to be overcome. Firstly, the responses to the crisis should not repeat the same ill-founded concepts of the past, and secondly, their collapse will not necessarily lead to a strengthening of progressive policy, but could see the emergence of an extremist far right policy caused by fear and marginalization.”⁴³ These two challenges are in fact two central threats for the Central Asian Social-Democracy.

⁴³ “Socialist International Leaders Address Global Financial Crisis in Meeting at United Nations 26 September, 2008. Statement on the Global Financial Crisis, 26 September, 2008.”

THE MODERNIZATION OF SOCIETY AND TRANSFER OF POWER IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

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Introduction

Power and its transfer is a key issue in Islam and is related to the traditional and basic values of national and religious identity, as well as to reform and democracy in contemporary Muslim societies.

The transfer to new democratic methods and forms of rule in traditional societies, as most Muslim countries still are, is usually a slow and arduous process. In such societies, the people’s traditional mindset and mentality, particularly among those who lead a settled way of life, transform at a slower pace than in Western countries. But there is no doubt that in the globalizing world this process is gaining momentum and becoming an irreversible political phenomenon.

At present, several new trends are emerging that determine the degree to which the region is being drawn into globalization. But, regardless of the level of these transformation processes, the influence of the spiritual component, which largely relates to the people’s religious views, remains the same. Islam extensively shapes the culture, customs, traditions, lifestyle, and, most important, the centuries-long practice of self-government among the region’s residents. Today its significance is growing and this is having an impact on the forms and other aspects of the democratization process, as well as on the establishment and expansion of civil society institutions. This is being promoted, among other things, by the in-

crease in nongovernmental noncommercial organizations, including religious charity associations. Not only is the cultural-historical mindset changing, but a new type of political thinking is also forming under the influence of the Islamic customs and morals passed down from generation to generation, which is making it possible to create the foundations of a civil society.

The ways in which power is being transferred at present in Muslim countries, including in the Middle East, usually become a set pattern and can be improvised by the elites, including in

the Central Asian states. The aim is to make a smooth transfer to more contemporary forms of government while retaining the traditional foundations and succession of power. So it seems expedient to examine this question using the example of the Middle Eastern Arab states since their sociopolitical relations are the closest to those currently practiced in Central Asia.¹

¹ See: I.L. Fadeeva, *Kontseptsii vlasti na Blizhnem Vostoke. Srednevekovie i novoe vremia*, 2nd ed., RAS Oriental Literature, Moscow, 2001, p. 40.

On the Nature of Power in the Golden Age² of Islam

During his lifetime, the Prophet Muhammad acted as an intermediary between Allah and the ummah, which lived according to the text passed down by the Prophet containing the ultimate Revelation (since Muslims consider Muhammad the “seal of the prophets”). The Prophet was not only a preacher, he also organized the ummah’s way of life. The Quran and Sunnah contain both strictly religious instructions and principles regarding the sociopolitical structure of society. This is why Islamic ideologists have always emphasized the inseparability of spiritual and secular rule. The theocratic nature of the rule of the Prophet and his first successors still serves as the ideal for building society on Islamic principles.³

After the Prophet’s death, the link between Allah and Muslim society was broken in the minds of the Muslims, which gave rise to the problem of power succession. During the bitter struggle for power,⁴ which was accompanied by a dispute over interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah, the sides formed different value systems. The Sunnites, the supporters of the first three caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman) maintained that the caliph should be chosen through election, believing that the ummah’s opinion reigned supreme. The Shi’ites, the supporters of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the nephew and son-in-law of the Prophet, proceeded from the conviction that the Prophet bequeathed Abi Talib with the exclusive right to supreme power, that is, they promulgated a different (at that time second) paradigm of power succession that ensued directly from Allah’s Messenger. This idea formed the basis for the conception of the imamate. The Shi’ites rejected the principle of electing the imam as the head of Muslim society and state and were in favor of supreme power being passed down by inheritance through members of the Alid family. Based on the divine nature of the imamate, the Shi’ites believe the legitimate imam—“God’s governor on earth,” “the gates,” through which it is possible to come closer to Him, the inheritor of the Prophet’s knowledge—to be the supreme authority in religious and secular affairs.”⁵ The third group,

² Muslims understand the Golden Age of Islam as the time the Prophet Muhammad was active and the theocratic formation of the first Muslim state under the four righteous caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali) (622-661).

³ Admittedly, the rule of his first four successors is also often related to this same age.

⁴ See: I.L. Fadeeva, op. cit., p. 46.

⁵ Ash-Shakhrastani and Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Karim, *Kniga o religiiakh i sektakh*, Transl. from the Arabic, introduction and comments by S.M. Prozorov, Nauka Publishers (Main Editorial Board of Oriental Literature), Moscow, 1984, pp. 220-221.

the Kharijites, proceeded from the principle “obedience to God is more important than obedience to people,” that is, it was based on the basic value of “faith in Allah.” The Kharijites played a significant role in drawing up dogma on the theory of the caliphate. In terms of supreme power, they were opposed both to the Sunnites with their principle of provisional election of the caliph and to the Shi‘ites with their ideas about the inheritance and sacral nature of the imamate.⁶

Throughout the entire subsequent history of state formations, which were based in their ideological structures on political, legal, and other Islamic values, the choice of forms of power and the mechanisms of its transfer were concentrated on these three political-ideological concepts.⁷

Political Processes in Present-Day Arab Muslim Countries

At present, two forms of power function in Muslim countries: monarchies (Morocco, Jordan, the Persian Gulf countries) and republics (Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Lebanon, and others), which are all authoritative to one degree or another.

Researchers note that as early as the beginning of the 20th century most of the region’s states “were essentially traditional societies with a rudimentary political system in which feudal-class, dynastical, caste, clan, and sometimes ancestral political forms and relations based on a special hierarchy of social origin, religion, and tradition predominated.”⁸ The Middle Eastern states are distinguished by a low level of differentiation of political institutions and their functions, as well as by their interrelations with and integration into non-political social structures—religion, culture, rituals, traditional morals, and low level of individual political interest and activity.

In countries with a monarchial structure, the main link in the political structure is the monarch and the ruling family, the members of which hold the most important posts in the government and the state apparatus. Only the ruling family assisted by the religious authorities decides who will inherit power.

In republics the head of state—the president or a revolutionary council headed by a chairman—is the backbone of the political structure. Here the ruling parties and public organizations are integrated with the state, particularly in single-party regimes. In such countries as Tunisia and Egypt, democratic elements—pluralism and a parliament—have long remained only external attributes that conceal the authoritative nature of the political system.

The political systems in the Arab countries have several common characteristics born by their historical development. As transitional systems, they were built on a synthesis of traditional and modern institutions and regulations. In addition, due to their socioeconomic backwardness, some of these countries only had a perfunctory understanding of contemporary democratic institutions. The underdeveloped social foundation was compensated for by authoritarianism, centralization, and personification of state power. Charismatic leaders and traditions of the sacral nature of power play a signifi-

⁶ See: S.M. Prozorov, “Al-Khavarij,” in: *Islam: Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1991, p. 260; D. Barrett, G. Kurian, and T. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia. A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, in 2 vols., 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, 719 pp.

⁷ See: D. Oganesian, “Tsennostnaia sistema islama: nachalo puti,” *Otechestvennye zapiski*, No. 1 (16), 2004, available at [<http://www.religare.ru/article8821.htm>]

⁸ L.N. Gerasina, “Osobennosti politicheskogo razvitiia gosudarstv aziatskogo mira v kontekste globalistskoi sotsiologii politiki,” Kharkov, 2001, available at [http://www.sociology.kharkov.ua/docs/chten_01/gerasina.doc].

cant role in them.⁹ For example, legitimization of the power of the ruling dynasties of Jordan and Morocco, the seyids (*sādat*), is built on the principle of the sacral. Several of the Egyptian rulers, beginning with Muhammad Ali (1805-1849) and his grandson, hediv Isma'il (1863-1883), were charismatic.

But many states of the contemporary Muslim world are trying to meet democratic ideals and political power mechanisms. They are beginning to implement the pluralistic model: the state has limited control over independent social groups, citizens are becoming more active and participating in politics according to their own will, the state's leaders are closer to society, material interests and moral values are becoming differentiated, which is shown in the secularization of politics and separation of religion from the state.

All the same, this is a slow and arduous process with frequent revival of or re-adaptation to the former religious values due to the retention of the Islamic traditions and Shari'a rules that have shaped public consciousness for many centuries. When fighting for their independence and reinforcing it, the Arab leaders acquired great powers. Whereby these powers were not limited to the functions of presidents, prime ministers, political and military leaders but also included the role of "fathers of the nation" and heads of the national-liberation movements. The authoritarianism¹⁰ of most of the Arab leaders who came to power on the crest of independence is largely explained by the specific historical circumstances and the people's psychological willingness to accept a strong authoritative power. So essentially all the Middle Eastern states, while differing in forms of rule, are characterized by a strong (charismatic) supreme power that society perceives as an entirely legitimate form of national-state existence.

Power Transfer and Social Modernization

The last decade has seen frequent changes in the ruling elites and the ascension to power of a young generation of leaders in the Middle East. Since the beginning of the gradual democratic transformations these changes have been occurring at an accelerated pace both under the influence of external "recommendations" and by indirect or direct external interference into the domestic affairs of the Arab countries. The power transfer mechanisms in these countries have acquired even greater significance with respect to determining the fundamental vectors of their future development.

Many researchers and politicians are now realizing that the mentality and religious traditions of the Middle Eastern nations are not conducive to the power transfer practice customary in the West that relies on universal elections and an organized opposition. In the Arab countries this is leading to a weakening of centralized power and often to a split in the army or ruling party (which continue to be a symbol of national sovereignty in the Arab countries), and consequently to possible destabilization of the political expanse.

In this respect, power in the Arab world is still largely changing hands by means of traditional mechanisms. However this process is often accompanied by domestic crises. One of the main problems here is the contradiction between "the inviolability of the state foundations," on the one hand, and the internal evolution of society and the ruling regimes, on the other, which is leading to re-examination and reform of the former political structures and ideology.

⁹ See: L.W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, 414 pp.

¹⁰ Some Western authors call this style of rule a "dictatorship" (see: D.A. Rustow, *Middle Eastern Political Systems*, The City University of New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971, pp. 72-73).

The Arab leaders are generally much older than the leaders of other countries of the world (President of Egypt Hosni Mubarak, President of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh, and President of Lebanon Muammar Qaddafi). When he ran for president in 2005, Hosni Mubarak began actively and successfully developing the image of “president-reformer” who, after ruling for 24 years, decided at the age of 77 to continue the radical reforms in the country. His present-day and energetic style began to form along this new image and under the slogan of “Mubarak-2005: Leadership and Transition to the Future.” However, at the first stage, more intensive movement toward reform and liberalization of public life is inevitably accompanied by an increase in domestic instability due to the cautious and frequently also “archaic” approach of the Arab leaders to changes in principles of political succession that form the foundation of the traditional political culture.

Traditionally, power in the Arab countries has been based on the right of an influential family or group of people rallying around a strong individual. Before the revolution of 1952, people from Muhammad Ali’s dynasty who came to power in 1805-1806 ruled in Egypt.¹¹

In Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy, power is controlled by the al-Saud clan which originates from one of the largest Arab tribes of Anazah. The Saudite clan and its branches became the dominating tribe. Kindred ties play a key role in the country’s state structure. This predetermined the mechanism of inherited power transfer in the Arab countries or ascension to power by means of coups.¹²

The reforms of the 1970s-1980s essentially removed the threat of new military coups and designated a long period of stable power in the Arab countries. But the lack of deep-cutting reforms meant that authoritarianism among the ruling elite remained firmly in place, performing the function of maintaining political stability.

Attention should also be paid to the experience of other Arab leaders in resolving power succession issues in the conditions of the geopolitical changes in the Middle East and in the world as a whole, particularly after the beginning of the war on Iraq in 2003 and initiation by the American administration of the “transformation strategy” in the region.

The state governance policy carried out in Syria by President Bashar al-Asad is of particular interest. Researchers note that “the political institutions in the Syrian Arab Republic are deeply embedded in the social structure. The state has a monopoly on all the legal means for maintaining domestic stability and order.”¹³ The opposition forces reject violence as a way to bring about political change and are willing to hold a dialog with the government to support its program of a gradual transition to democracy. The president’s reform plans are supported by most of Syrian society.

In recent years the Syrian leadership itself has been talking about the need for democratic reform, particularly in light of the extremely unfavorable foreign factors encountered by the political leadership of the Syrian Arab Republic headed by Asad. After he came to power in July 2000, Bashar al-Asad was able to build a sufficiently strong political power system. However, both the Syrian ruling circles and the international community primarily regard Asad as the successor of his father, Hafiz al-Asad, who created a strong authoritative state. Bashar al-Asad even has many of his father’s advisors in his closest entourage. So he has to prove that he is strong and capable enough to govern the state, which he has been successfully doing so far. Bashar al-Asad has succeeded in bringing young blood into the political elite and expanding the support base within the ruling party, the state appara-

¹¹ See: D.A. Rustow, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-49.

¹² Researchers point out that there were around 30 military coups in the Arab countries between 1952 and 1986. Approximately at the same time (1951-1991), 14 Arab leaders (Abdullah bin Hussein in Jordan, Muhammad Boudiaf in Algeria, etc.) became victims of the struggle for succession to power (see: V.M. Akhmedov, “Blizhniy Vostok: problema smeny vlasti i osushchestvleniia reform. Siriiskiy opyt,” Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, Moscow, 16 January, 2005, available at [http://www.iimes.ru/rus/frame_stat.html]).

¹³ *Ibidem*.

tus, and the security structures. He was also able to fill the work of such previously formal structures as the parliament, public organizations, and trade unions with real content under his democratic reform strategy.

Bashar al-Asad (like president of the Arab Republic of Egypt Hosni Mubarak) upholds the conception of “succession for the sake of reforms,” which implies carrying out gradual political and economic reforms within the framework of the former system. This makes it possible to maintain a balance of forces in the influential ruling elite and avoid social upheavals. This is also promoted by the respect most of the Syrian population still feels for Hafiz al-Asad’s Arab nationalism and the long period of political stability of the regime he created.

But this idea of “succession for the sake of reforms” is no longer entirely inviolable. Opposition forces are beginning to appear which are finding the closed nature of power and lack of access to the government’s resources a hindrance to their political strivings and ambitions.

One of the main threats to the traditional Middle Eastern elites is the Islamist opposition. For example, due to the popularity of the Muslim Brothers among Egypt’s young voters, it will be difficult for the local authorities to justify nominating Hosni Mubarak’s 43-year-old son, Gamal Mubarak, as the next Egyptian president by claiming there is no other strong alternative. The rise in influence of the Muslim Brothers has become a direct threat to Gamal Mubarak’s political ambitions, since defeat of most of his associates from the young guard of the National Democratic Party at the elections made the reform wing of the ruling party see the need to create a new political party that is not associated with Mubarak Jr.

The Democratic or Islamic Alternative

Another driving political force that has become actively involved in the struggle for power in the Muslim countries on the wave of the democratic processes in the last twenty-five years is the so-called parallel Islamic sector.

As some Arab researchers note, “Islamism, buoyed by the religious renaissance, has deeply penetrated everyday life and is having an impact on standards of behavior. It has developed into a special system of symbols and signs of Islamic identity, which is reflected in the everyday lifestyle, choice of clothing, performance of rituals, marital traditions, and definition of the role of women in the family, as well as in commerce, education, and upbringing.”¹⁴ In particular, *hijab* and *nikab* have become popular as the national dress code of Arab women, thus showing the personal freedom of citizens. In public transport, marketplaces, and recreation sites popular music has been replaced by the broadcasting of prayers and sermons; the owners of residential buildings who set up prayer rooms in the basements of these buildings equipped with microphones have been exempted from some property taxes.

Trade unions and public organizations in which Islamists predominate have become a kind of forum where Islamist and anti-Western propaganda is spread.¹⁵ The Muslim Brothers,¹⁶ a popular organization in the Middle East, and other Islamist groups are actively engaged in improving the so-

¹⁴ See: *The State of Religion in Egypt Report*, ed. by Abdel-Fattah Nabil and Rashwan Diaa, Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo, 1995-1997, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵ See: C.R. Wickham, “From the Periphery to the Center. The Islamic Trend in Egypt’s Professional Associations,” in: *Mobilizing Islam. Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 176-183.

¹⁶ Founded in 1928 by school teacher Hassan al-Banna in Ismailia (Egypt).

cial conditions, particularly in public health, education, and charity. They have taken patronage over schools, hospitals, professional training centers, and other institutions and drawn up and introduced curriculums that include study of the Quran, the training of specialists, etc. into the social system. Members of Islamist organizations have become increasingly involved in capitalistic production—plants and factories, investment companies, agricultural enterprises.¹⁷

Egypt is the most noteworthy country in this respect. For example, active establishment of the so-called parallel Islamic sector began here in the last quarter of the 20th century. The institutions that have emerged in the country belonging to this sector can be divided into three categories:

- 1) private mosques;
- 2) Islamic public organizations—charity, cultural, and enlightenment societies, schools, medical institutions, and so on; and
- 3) Islamic commercial enterprises—banks, investment companies, production enterprises, publishing houses, and so on.

One of the most vivid trends in Egypt's institutional development in the 1970s-1980s was the unprecedented increase in the number of private mosques. In contrast to state mosques (*hukumiya*), which are managed by government funds and where the imams are appointed by the authorities, private (*ahliya*) mosques are self-organized institutions created using money from private donations and staffed by imams who are elected by members of the local community. According to some data, the number of private mosques in Egypt rose from 20,000 in 1970 to more than 46,000 in 1981. In 1991, there were 91,000 mosques in the country, including 45,000 private and 10,000 *zaviya*.

In December 1992, the Egyptian journal *Ahir sa'a* counted 60,000 private mosques in the country. Other data place the number even higher. In particular, according to the data of one law-enforcement organization, in 1993 there were 170,000 mosques functioning in Egypt, only 30,000 of which were controlled by the state.¹⁸

At the initial stage, the new private mosques were mainly financed by voluntary donations from private individuals collected by means of *zakat*, as well as by financial assistance from governmental and private funds in the Persian Gulf countries. The spread of private mosques was encouraged by legislation stipulating that any building that housed a mosque was considered a religious facility and exempt from taxes. This greatly encouraged construction companies and investors to build new "mosques," which in fact were often small prayer rooms (*saviya*) located on the first floor or in the basement of new buildings.

In addition, the parallel Islamic sector included thousands of semi-independent **religious non-commercial organizations—jami'at**. The increase in their number can be seen as part of the wide spread in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Egypt during Hosni Mubarak's time.¹⁹ But these associations cannot justifiably be called NGOs since in Egypt institutions of the nongovernmental sector are state-controlled.

According to laws No. 32 of 1964 and No. 64 of 2002, all the private and civil associations in the country are regulated by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The law states that they should all obtain a license at the ministry for carrying out activity in the country. In addition, if necessary, the ministry has the right to interfere in the NGOs' activity. In particular, the state can appoint members of the

¹⁷ See: D.J. Sullivan and A.-K. Sana, *Islam in Contemporary Egypt. Civil Society vs. the State*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1999, p. 22.

¹⁸ See: *The Middle East Watch. Third World Traveler*, available at [http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Middle_East/Middle_EastWatch.html].

¹⁹ See: M.K. Al Sayyid, "A Civil Society in Egypt," in: *Civil Society in the Middle East?*, ed. by A.R. Norton, Vol. 1, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995, 300 pp.

organization's board, demand written reports on their work, and control their financial sources and technical refurbishing based on the need to "maintain general order and the proper behavior" of entities of the nongovernmental sector. But religious noncommercial organizations, which we are talking about here, are not always and far from ubiquitously under state control.

Some researchers note that the total number of nongovernmental (private) noncommercial organizations (NNO) in Egypt at the beginning of the 1990s amounted to between 14,000 and 15,000, although according to some data there were 30,000 of them.²⁰ Sarah Ben-Néfissa claims that their numbers reached 11,360, 27.6% of which were Islamic. According to the researcher, in 1990 there were more than 3,000 Islamic NNOs in Egypt.²¹ But as early as 1994, Saad Eddin Ibrahim²² claimed that Egypt boasted 8,000 such organizations.

By this time, Islamic NNOs occupied a central role in Egypt's social life. Some religious organizations continued working in their traditional sphere of activity, helping believers to organize *hajj*, providing needy families with charity assistance, helping to restore and equip local mosques, and so on. Other NNOs provided the population with social services in public health, education, enlightenment, and finding jobs. In some cases they remained oriented toward local needs. But many Islamic NNOs were well-equipped, rich national organizations with branches in many cities and villages. One of these well-known organizations was al-Jam'iyya ash-shar'iyya, which had branches in all 26 provinces, whereby 123 in Cairo alone.

Although information on the financial sources of the Islamic sector has not been studied in sufficient depth, some trends are obvious. Many Islamic NNOs that operate under the auspices of mosques or religious funds (waqfs) have access to charity resources that are collected and distributed beyond the state's control. Access to such sources has made it possible for Islamic NNOs to circumvent Law No. 32 which limits the "independent collection of funds." In this way, Islamic NNOs have obtained greater room for maneuver in the financial sphere than non-religious nongovernmental organizations.

Some Islamic NNOs have also obtained support from rich sponsors from the Persian Gulf countries. For example, a state-of-the-art hospital belonging to the Mustafa Mahmud Society in Cairo was built on money from a philanthropist from Saudi Arabia who has close ties with the founder of this Egyptian organization.

Islamic NNOs have also been receiving financial aid from Islamic investment companies and banks that help to collect and distribute *zakat* funds. As S. Ben-Néfissa notes, with the help of 4,500 committees, in 1991 the Nasser Bank of Social Services collected 21 million Egyptian pounds in *zakat* and distributed them among the Islamic NNOs, including children centers and medical institutions.²³

Islamic associations are also engaged in self-financing. This applies to many of the country's hospitals, which, as observers note, differ from most of the state medical institutions in their strict order and latest technical equipment. Whereby they offer the population much cheaper paid services. In some cases, the funds they accumulated went to subsidizing religious and other public activity.

²⁰ See: C.R. Wickham, "The Parallel Islamic Sector," in: *Mobilizing Islam. Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*, p. 99.

²¹ See: S. Ben-Néfissa, "NGOs, Governance and Development in the Arab World," *Management of Social Transformations-MOST. Discussion Paper*, No. 46, 2000, available at [<http://www.unesco.org/most/nefissae.htm>]; M. Rev-el, P.J. Roca, "Les ONG et la question du changement," in: J.P. Deler, Y.A. Fauré, and P.J. Roca, *ONG et développement*, Karthala, Paris, 1998, 221 pp.

²² See: "Egyptian-American Human Rights Activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim Receiving Second Trial for Receiving Unauthorized Foreign Donations and Embezzling," *High Beam Research*, 20 May, 2002, available at [<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-53105022.html>].

²³ See: S.P. Ben-Néfissa, op. cit.

The parallel Islamic sector also includes commercial enterprises engaged in the banking sphere, construction, production, and commerce. The Islamic financial sector consists of Islamic banks and companies. According to some estimates, in the mid-1980s the total assets of these institutions reached 16 billion Egyptian pounds. This sector also included large Islamic production conglomerates, such as ar-Rayyan and as-Sa'ad, which invested capital in strategic branches—the food industry and the construction of residential buildings, maintaining close ties with government circles. These companies were able to provide financial and technical support to Islamic NNOs involved in direct work with broad strata of the population.

Islamic companies are becoming more active in the production of cultural and intellectual ware. Islamic publishing houses, bookstores, and libraries began to flourish in the 1980s-1990s. Publishing houses such as ad-Dar al-Islami li-t-tawzi' wa-n-nashr, Dar as-shuruk, Dar al-wafa,' and Dar al-'itizam concentrated in Egypt's large cities published a wide range of religious literature, including commentaries to the Quran and hadith, books on religious practice and dogma, essays on the history of the Islamic movement in Egypt and abroad, speeches and essays by Islamic ideologists, works by theologians, and brochures from the sphere of *da'wa*.

Organizations that belong to the parallel Islamic sector cannot be regarded as political in the narrow sense of this word. They do not promulgate a specific political program and do not participate in the political struggle. Moreover, Egyptians engaged in this area of public life usually claim that they do not have anything to do with politics and are only concerned with enlightening Muslims regarding their rights and religious duty.

Nevertheless, in the 1980s-1990s institutions of the parallel Islamic sector were more involved in directly assisting Islamist mobilization of the population than the democratic reforms. First, they provided financial and technical support to Islamist groups with a political agenda, including Islamist student organizations (*jama'at*), the Muslim Brothers, and other underground radical religious groups. Second, they created conditions for ideological brainwashing of the population, establishing a network of independent religious-political activists, and expanding the base of Islamist organizations involved in politics.

Conclusion

So in most countries of the Arab Muslim world state-building is far from complete and renovation and modernization of the political systems is still going on.

The main distinguishing feature of power succession in the Middle East, as in other Muslim countries, is indivisibility of the government's functions, a centralized hierarchal power system, and similar stereotypes of collective thinking which are inclined to legitimize this form of state governance. So many Arab Muslim regimes are generally inclined toward authoritarianism, which is based on the striving to preserve the patriarchal principles of power and its transfer. This is expressed in increased control over political parties and patronage of public organizations.

The strong centralized power in Egypt and Tunisia, for example, essentially does not give the opposition forces much leeway to engage in political competition or gain access to the government's resources. Moreover, attempts to liberalize the political regimes in these countries by involving anti-government forces and movements in the political process usually lead to the emergence of direct risks both to the ruling elites and to public consent and unity. In Egypt, drawing the Islamist opposition into the legal political sphere has already led repeatedly to dangerous consequences, in particular to the assassination attempt on President Nasser and the murder of President Anwar El Sadat. In Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba lost power as the result of a state coup carried out by forces worried about radical Islamists coming to power.

The slowly changing mentality of most of the population and their perception of power in general is also an important factor, which is distinguished, as mentioned above, by several special features in societies with an overwhelming Muslim population. This mentality is largely associated with upholding traditions, including a deep-rooted understanding of the functions of power and its succession.

So power succession is still one of the most difficult and cornerstone problems in the Arab world since it is associated with stronger protective mechanisms aimed at ensuring the stability of the existing regimes, as well as due to the vulnerability of most of the countries to the influence of external factors—destructive transnational radical movements, the ambitions of regional forces, and the policies of the world nations. In this respect, the transfer to more up-to-date mechanisms of governance in Arab Muslim countries has been occurring for some time now at a much slower pace than in Western countries.

FORMING AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM OF SOCIOPOLITICAL STABILITY IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS

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At the current stage of Russia's development it is extremely important to create an effective mechanism of sociopolitical stability in the Southern Federal Okrug (SFO). The creation (drawing up) and continuous functioning of this mechanism is a necessary prerequisite for the sustainable economic development of the Russian South (and of all the territories that belong to it), as well as the country as a whole.

The federal government is becoming increasingly aware that new transportation projects can be only implemented in the Caspian region if military and political security both here and throughout the Northern Caucasus is ensured. In turn, the new transit systems in the Caspian are not only economically advantageous projects for Russia, but also an effective way to protect its geopolitical interests in the Caspian-Black Sea region.

Today Russia can only retain its position in the greater Caspian-Black Sea region by pooling its military and political resources and conducting an extensive regional socioeconomic policy in the

problematic territories of the SFO. Without this it will be impossible to achieve sociopolitical stability in the key regions of the Northern Caucasus, including attract sufficient investments, particularly foreign, and carry out large-scale transit projects there.¹

In addition, regional researchers are concerned that most of the population and public organizations in the SFO are absolutely loyal to the government and only a small minority is engaged in constructive opposition to the regional bureaucrats.²

The public organizations that have merged with the government are mainly engaged in justifying and legitimizing the existing social order with deliberate disregard of the current problems, such as the flagrant social injustice and corruption. Today, this state of society and public organizations in the SFO is arousing justified concern among many independent regional researchers, since social injustice and corruption will only lead to sociopolitical conflict in the future.

The current state of affairs in the SFO and its territories requires that the federal authorities and the public institutions (organizations) of the country and okrug assist in establishing a self-organized civil society capable of upholding public interests, forcing the government to reckon with them, and, in so doing, preventing the emergence of a sociopolitical conflict in the okrug.

According to member of the Russian Public Chamber M. Bazhaev, by putting a stop to the war in Chechnia, the federal center temporarily prevented the crisis and conflict in the Northern Caucasus from developing further but did not do everything to ensure that the old crises would never arise again or new ones develop.³ He believes that the reasons for the tragic events in the Northern Caucasus in the 1990s remain. They include the chronic backwardness of the national republics, the extremely low standard of living, mass unemployment, the unbalanced geographic and sectoral structure of the economy, and the unequal conditions and rates of development in different territories.

He believes that an essentially new situation in the Northern Caucasus can be created by solving these tasks that will prevent the region from backsliding into another sociopolitical crisis.⁴

According to the author of this article, the SFO as a socioeconomic system cannot be fully integrated into the single socioeconomic expanse of the Russian Federation until the above-mentioned problems are resolved.

They can be successfully overcome if the power and public structures in the okrug undergo qualitative modernization based on the experience of developed countries. These measures should primarily focus on raising the efficiency of state management in the SFO by incorporating all strata of society as fully as possible into forming the power structures and ensuring control over their activity. This task should be solved keeping in mind the specifics of local society since it differs greatly in the SFO from Russian society as a whole. There traditional institutions predominate that are characteristic of the patriarchal way of life. Today these institutions, along with public organizations, branches of political parties, and other democratic institutions, could, if properly used and if their activity remains transparent, become the foundation of a real civil society in the okrug.

The management system in all spheres of vital activity in the SFO can be modernized by minimizing such phenomena as clannishness and corruption, which are the main causes of sociopolitical instability in the okrug.

The federal center is becoming increasingly aware of the need to create a public control system over the activity of the power structures of all levels. According to M. Bazhaev, the activity of the Russian Public Chamber and of the regional public chambers and councils is aimed at creating

¹ See: IA Sotsinformbiuro, 20 July, 2005.

² See: O. Tsvetkov, "Vzaimodeistvie obshchestva i vlasti: protivorechivye otsenki i podkhody na slushaniyakh v Pitagorske," *Kavkazskiy ekspert*, No. 9, 2007.

³ See: M. Bazhaev, "Mirotvorcheskaia strategii na Severnom Kavkaze," Report at the hearings of the Russian Public Chamber *Peace, Order, and Consent in the Northern Caucasus by Strengthening Civil Society*, Essentuki, 2006.

⁴ See: *Ibidem*.

a public control and public expertise system for monitoring the decisions adopted by the state power structures.⁵

At the current stage in the development of the Russian Federation, given the parallel development of globalization and regionalization of the world economy and the existing competition for the regions' (areas') investment attractiveness, active and independent activity of the above-mentioned institutions in different vectors would be extremely beneficial for the macro region as far as the interests of most of its population are concerned. In particular, these institutions could engage in the extremely important task of monitoring the situation in the okrug and evaluating the government's actions from the perspective of the interests of all society. The federal center should assist these institutions in every way possible since success in this respect, in the interests of the entire country, is one of the necessary prerequisites for Russia's more active integration into the world processes. In our opinion, in the conditions of the SFO, this is the only solution to the problems caused by the lack of correlation between the sociopolitical system of the territories and the demands of contemporary economic development and to ensuring a high standard of living, as well as full-fledged and mutually beneficial integration of these territories into Russia's united socioeconomic system and the world economy.

Today it must be understood at the federal level that Russia's stability, security, and integrity as a whole depend to a decisive extent on sociopolitical stability in the SFO and the rate and efficiency with which the urgent issues of developing the okrug's problematic territories are resolved.

According to Russian State Duma deputy S. Markedonov, today the Russian Caucasus can in no way be described as an oasis of peace, prosperity, and stability. He believes that many of the positive changes there are superficial since they are aimed at resolving tactical and often merely transitory problems.⁶ In his opinion, the main task of the federal center's current policy in the Northern Caucasus is to ensure a "demonstration of loyalty of the local elites (manifested by providing the necessary election results, as well as by public support of all the actions of the higher authorities). This loyalty is based not so much on state as on personal loyalty (personal union) of the local leaders and representatives of the federal elite. This kind of policy does not promote real integration of the North Caucasian territories into the national expanse (legal, sociocultural, and managerial). Loyalty itself is paid for by means of political privileges."⁷

V. Avksentiev also points to the low efficiency of state management as one of the conflict-prone factors in the territories of the Northern Caucasus.⁸ In his opinion, the state is not coping with its main function—ensuring citizen security. He considers alienation of the state from society in the Northern Caucasus a much more serious problem than even an ethnic split. He thinks other reasons for the sociopolitical instability there are the prolonged economic crisis, the high level of unemployment, and the shadow economy.

State Duma deputy N. Kondratenko believes that the Caucasus could become the detonator that will destroy Russia. He associates the negative processes going on in the region with the damaging political and economic strategy of the Russian authorities.⁹ He confirms this using the following example. In his opinion, even on the right-hand bank of the Kuban, which has the best land and climatic conditions in Russia, agriculture has been unprofitable for several years "due to the economic policy carried out in Russia."

Head of the Ethnicity and Nation-Building Program of the Carnegie Moscow Center A. Malashenko sees the reason for sociopolitical instability in the Northern Caucasus in the population's total

⁵ See: M. Bazhaev, op. cit.

⁶ S. Markedonov, "Dva Kavkaza—dve politiki," *Zolotoi Lev*, No. 137, 2007.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ See: Ia. Amelina, "Plan spaseniia Severnogo Kavkaza," *IA Rosbalt*, 2 April, 2005.

⁹ See: Ia. Amelina, op. cit.

lack of confidence in the local authorities. In his opinion, the Northern Caucasian republics should not be headed by “Moscow’s puppets, but by outstanding figures that enjoy prestige” and conduct an autonomous policy. They, like the president’s authorized representative in the SFO, believes A. Malashenko, should be given greater powers. The expert from the Carnegie Moscow Center is convinced that nothing will be gained without a triangle comprised of “local, enlightened, and responsible elites—society that understands them—an authorized representative who patronizes them.”

S. Tarasov also believes that the main threat of Russia’s fragmentation comes from the Caucasus.¹⁰ In his opinion, if the federal center does not begin acting in compliance with the slogan “The Homeland is in danger!” and continues to conduct its evolutionary policy, gradual reform of the region, it is doomed to remain in the background forever. S. Tarasov gives a discouraging diagnosis of the real sociopolitical situation in the Northern Caucasus: “On the whole, even the reforms of Dmitri Kozak, the president’s authorized representative in the SFO, were too late. The local narrow elite, which has degenerated into clans, has ultimately discredited itself. It destroyed the existing subtle system of checks and balances and has become alienated from society. So the center’s reliance on it is discrediting Russian policy in this region of the country even more. Moscow is now compelled to act as “liberator from the tottering regime” here, demonstrate its desire to resolve the social and cultural problems on the basis of justice, and create equal opportunities for most of the population. Only then will success be possible.”

In the current conditions it is extremely important for Russia that the territories of the SFO achieve sustainable sociopolitical stability because of the following circumstances:

- today the Russian South has become a border territory after taking on the mission of an important regional and strategic center that represents and defends the country’s geopolitical position in the Eurasian vector of national-state interests of many countries;
- whereas during Soviet times the Russian South occupied a rather modest position among the main grain producers—Ukraine and Kazakhstan—today it has become the country’s main granary;
- after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian population’s dramatically reduced health resort resources were mainly represented by the health-improvement and balneal potential of the resorts of Caucasian Mineral Waters, the Black Sea coast, and the Azov and Caspian coasts, that is, of the Russian South;
- the SFO has the natural resources and competitive potential to offer alpine types of recreation at the world level.

Today many regional researchers are justifiably concerned about the social aspect of the situation in the SFO, which is consistently confirmed by the official statistics of recent years.

For example, according to V. Ovchinnikov, the Russian South with its rich natural climatic potential is still a subsidized territory with a high level of unemployment and low standard of living. He believes that the economic development strategy being carried out in the okrug is not helping to overcome the symptoms of marginalization in the region’s society.¹¹ In this respect, he suggests adjusting the conception and implementation of the federal development program of the Russian South.

M. Popov believes that the political and ethnoconfessional environment in the SFO makes it extremely difficult to ensure sociopolitical stability and law and order. He thinks that the unresolved socioeconomic problems there will continue to provide fertile ground for economic crime and polit-

¹⁰ See: *Rossiiskie vesti*, No. 37 (1792), 2006.

¹¹ See: V. Ovchinnikov, “Uroki i problemy realizatsii strategii razvitiia iuga Rossii,” available at [www.edu-zone.net].

ical extremism and separatism into which the broadest strata of the population will constantly be drawn.¹²

Some researchers of the sociopolitical system in the SFO think it necessary to provide the law enforcers working in the okrug with the systemized instruction they have not duly received so far from the existing educational institutions.¹³ In this respect, they believe it expedient to organize special courses in sociology, social psychology, history, ethnography, and so on at the higher educational institutions of the security structures, universities, the Academy of State Service, and the retraining and advanced training departments, which will make it possible for employees to add humanitarian subjects to their professional knowledge.

Indeed, in the SFO's conditions nurturing religious, ethnic, and social tolerance among the employees of the security structures is rather difficult and extremely urgent. And it is impossible to achieve this goal without providing law enforcers with special instruction based on tough professional screening and informational and psychological training through a continuous education system in which the humanistic idea and spiritual culture of the people living in the SFO predominate.

An equally difficult problem is forming a positive attitude in public opinion through the mass media and political and social institutions toward the law-enforcement agencies as structures capable of ensuring law and order, justice in a multi-ethnic environment, and equality of all citizens before the law regardless of their nationality, confession, or skin color.

Finding a successful solution to each of the above-mentioned tasks is very problematic at present and requires concentrating the efforts of the state structures on creating favorable conditions for training specialists capable of meeting their job requirements in a multi-ethnic environment.

The above analysis of the state and nature of the development of sociopolitical life in the SFO leads us to conclude that a mechanism must be created that will ensure sociopolitical stability in this federal okrug.

This mechanism should consist of the following:

1. A procedure that ensures that the heads of the SFO territories are elected by democratic means at general elections, enjoy high prestige among the population, are well-educated with the relevant practical work experience, and are responsible and independent.
2. Modernization of the management system in all spheres of the okrug's vital activity based on the experience of countries with developed federalism in order to minimize manifestations of clannishness, corruption, and bureaucracy.
3. A program to be implemented by the Russian government that ensures maximum legalization of economic activity in the territories of the SFO based on the experience of successful analogs in world practice. A mechanism for ensuring financial transparency of the use of funds allotted from the federal budget and maximum regional budget receipts by precisely determining and augmenting the okrug's own tax base.
4. A program to be drawn up and implemented by the Russian government for eliminating the checkpoints and police posts on federal highways and the administrative borders of the federation constituencies since they are not performing the tasks imposed on them and are hotbeds of corruption among police employees, thus having a negative effect on the sociopolitical stability in the SFO. Transportation control, including on federal highways, is to be carried out by mobile interservice teams consisting of employees of the interior ministry, FSS, tax structures, and customs service, who will carry out daily cross-checks on different routes.

¹² See: M. Popov, "Professionalnaia sotsializatsiia sotrudnikov pravookhranitelnykh organov v polietnicheskom okruzhenii," *Iuzhnorossiiskoe obozrenie*, No. 12, 2002.

¹³ See: *Ibidem*.

Removing the artificial barriers on the borders of the federation constituencies will not worsen but significantly improve the situation and greatly raise the population's confidence in the federal and regional authorities. In so doing, the number of State Road Traffic Safety Inspection employees will be reduced and inspectors will concentrate on monitoring road safety regulations with wider use of blind patrol work on highways and city streets.

5. A Russian governmental information and review center for the SFO responsible for elucidating Russian policy in the okrug. This center will help to create a cycle of TV and radio programs and publications in other mass media aimed at strengthening unity among the okrug's nationalities and raising the culture of ethnic communication, mutual tolerance among ethnic groups, cooperation, and mutual assistance among the nationalities living here.
6. Attention by the Russian government to the needs of the country's southern regions that belong to the regions with low and extremely low levels of socioeconomic development.
7. Consistent elimination by the Russian government of the barriers hindering the development of the resort and tourist business, expansion of the geographical location and diversity of tours in the territories of the SFO, and creation of a full-fledged federal sectoral structure for coordinating the functioning of the country's resort and tourist complex based on the experience of successful analogs in world practice.
8. Organization in the SFO's general educational schools, as the main institutions of socialization and personality development of the young generation, of efforts to raise the tolerance of the upcoming generation, develop positive ethnic relations, and consolidate the multinational people of the okrug around the idea of "the unity and indivisibility of democratic Russia."
9. Consistent implementation by the Russian president and government of a comprehensive and well-thought-out policy for demilitarizing the SFO in the interests of raising the okrug's investment appeal and encouraging more active integration of the okrug's territories into the national and global processes.
10. Revived mutually advantageous interstate relations with Georgia, expanded bilateral economic trade and cultural relations, and as efficient use as possible of the potential of the historically developed relations of the Russian constituencies bordering on Georgia.

When it transferred to market relations Russia became more open to active integration into the world economic system. In these circumstances, the country's South could become an advantageous platform in terms of world competition in different spheres of the economy.

So it can be concluded that today the SFO is Russia's military-strategic and geopolitical outpost, its granary, health resort, southern foreign trade center, and transport-gateway module for integrating the country via the Black and Mediterranean seas into the global system of transcontinental transportation arteries.

Consequently, ensuring sociopolitical stability in the territories of the SFO is not only a problem for the local authorities, but also a national problem since the degree to which the above-mentioned potential of these territories is used in the interests of both the local citizens and the country's population as a whole directly depends on the resolution of this problem.

REGIONAL CONFLICTS

**THE CONFLICT
IN SOUTH OSSETIA AND
THE FRONTIERS OF
STRUGGLE FOR THE GREATER CASPIAN'S
ENERGY RESOURCES**

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The oil pipeline projects overshadowed the conflict in South Ossetia from its very beginning. The TV audience was especially impressed by the picture of the Azpetrol tank cars burning somewhere in Georgia. The Caspian oil market promptly responded to the warfare: British Petroleum, the BTC operator, suspended oil pumping along this route; the same was done on the Baku-Supsa pipeline; and the Poti and Kulevi oil terminals were left idling.

Later numerous surveys and analyses stressed the economic aspects and calculated the losses sustained by Azerbaijan and the Western oil companies. It seems that the political analysts were more concerned about how much the war cost Azerbaijan and British Petroleum in lost profit and how many million tons of oil did not reach the

market than about anything else. As Azerbaijan and the BTC shareholders regained their lost profits, the issue gradually retreated into the background.

This left the geopolitical effect of the events in the shadow. From the very beginning, however, the South Ossetian conflict had obvious global implications. In his article "La Lezione di Putin alla Casa Bianca," Lucio Caracciolo wrote: "The Georgian war not merely produced a colossal regional effect; it is helping to revise the global balance which, it seems, was firmly established late last century."¹

Few of the analysts, however, tried to answer the question of whether the sides' geopoliti-

¹ L. Caracciolo, "La Lezione di Putin alla Casa Bianca," *La Repubblica*, 18 August, 2008.

cal interests can be discerned in the figures of the losses and profits of those involved in the Caspian oil business. A positive answer suggests the question: What are these interests? Seen from this angle, the causes, both obvious and concealed, of the August war and the key stimuli this inspired in the sides become much clearer.

Here I intend to reveal the nature of the geopolitical race for the energy and transportation resources of the Greater Caspian² at all stages of its post-Soviet development and concentrate on the rapidly accelerating rivalry in the 21st century with its unexpected, yet logical, post-Tskhinval finale.

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Much has been written about the Caspian basin as the energy treasure trove of the 21st century. Geopolitically, very often Caspian oil has been described in a slightly mysterious way, which led to a great overestimation of the region's energy status; deliberately or not some authors write of it as a potential alternative to the Middle East.

This can be hardly accepted; the Caspian issues not only revolve around hydrocarbons, they are more complicated and varied. The Caspian has lived through numerous and huge re-assessments: a Eurasian periphery at times of political stability and a turbulent geopolitical crossroads during great political upheavals. The transformations

² To a great extent the terms "Caspian," "Caspian basin" and "Caspian region" are conventional and synonymous. The term "the Greater Caspian" is preferred in geopolitical and energy contexts (it includes the Russian Northern Caucasus, the Southern Caucasus, and Central Asia). For the purposes of this article I prefer to use the somewhat limited term in the form of the Caspian-Black Sea and Caspian-Mediterranean meso-areas dominated by the logic of the oil transportation routes and transport corridors because I have left aside the eastern (Chinese) direction of the energy-communication policy in the Greater Caspian region. The terms "transport," "transit," and "communications" are synonymous; here they are related to energy policy or, rather, to oil and gas pipelines. Laid in parallel they form transportation corridors that transform the geostrategic landscape in different parts of the world before our very eyes.

invariably happened at times of Russia's geopolitical retreats, which bared its southern borders. V. Maksimenko has written that in the 20th century the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917-1920 and the Soviet Union's disintegration in 1991 suggested to Western geostrategists (Churchill and later Brzezinski) that the Caucasus and Central Asia were nothing more than the "soft underbelly" of Eurasia where Russia, the "pivotal continental state" (Halford Mackinder), was most vulnerable.

The size of the oil and gas reserves, vitally important for the Caspian countries, makes the Caspian basin an energy appendix to the Persian Gulf rather than its alternative. The discoveries of oil fields in Tengiz, Kashagan, and Karachaganak on the Kazakhstan shelf and the Southern Iltan gas fields (Osman and Dovletabad) in Turkmenistan made the Caspian hydrocarbons an important part of the world energy market. The hydrocarbon potential has already transformed the Caspian into an important factor of international energy policies; its realization, however, depends on control over the pipelines that bring the regional resources to the world markets.

The importance of the Caspian is not limited to its energy resources: there are also transportation and military-political aspects and their economic dimension. In the past the region's importance was limited to its border and transit functions, which dominated over all others—a very instructive lesson for us all. For many centuries the Caspian remained an important transportation service region that tied together the North and the South as well as the East and the West of the Eurasian continent. Here are several key episodes that throw the region's exceptional geopolitical value and its exclusive potential for military transportation into bolder relief.

Throughout the 19th century, the time of clashes between Russia and Britain, two expanding empires, it was control over transportation services in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus that remained the main target of their geopolitical confrontation. V. Maksimenko has written that the Trans-Caspian railway completed in 1888 was the main element of Russia's final grip on the region. This effectively limited the scope of Brit-

ish trade and blocked British expansion in the continent.³

It was transit and geopolitical factors that predetermined the entry of the Red Army and the British troops into Iran in August-September 1941; it was for the same reason that they remained there until the spring of 1946. The move was officially explained by the need to use the railway and sea routes between the Soviet Union and its allies (Britain and America) via Iran and the Gulf.⁴ The sides, however, were driven by more serious geopolitical considerations: Stalin was obviously unwilling to let the Brits move in to establish their control over the country. He kept the Soviet troops in Iran until the end of the war and had even declined Churchill's proposal to replace the Soviet contingent in Iran with British troops at the critical moments of the war with Germany. The Soviet leader was aware of the true value of the Caspian-Iranian transportation routes

³ V. Maksimenko, "Central Asia and the Caucasus: Geopolitical Entity Explained," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3, 2000, p. 63.

⁴ It was one of the routes used for a considerable part of the British and American lend-lease deliveries. Yu.G. Golub, "1941: iranskiy pokhod Krasnoy Armii. Vzgljad skvoz' gody," *Otechestvennaia istoria*, No. 3, 2004, pp. 24, 26-27.

and his British ally's true intentions in relation to the Soviet Union's southern border, the "soft underbelly" of Eurasia. This is ample evidence of Stalin's unrivalled geopolitical intuition and the excellent geopolitical training of the Soviet diplomatic service.

At the turn of the 21st century the region's present and the prospects of strategic domination in it once more depend on transportation routes, the oil and gas pipelines that bring Caspian oil to the world markets. The region's transportation and communication functions are deeply rooted in history and have determined its course at moments of crises.

Today, as in the past, the region's geopolitical resources and its weighty energy-related dimension have come to the fore to accelerate, once more, the rapidly unfolding developments.

This confirms an old truth: transportation services add meaning to geography. Karl Haushofer, one of the classics of geopolitics, said in his time that the dynamic characteristics of transportation routes incessantly reassessed the seemingly stable importance of geographical factors.⁵

⁵ K. Haushofer, *O geopolitike*, Mysl Publishers, Moscow, 2001, p. 282.

I. The Caspian and Ten Post-Communist Years: American Geopolitical Inspiration and "New" Russia's Geopolitical Disarmament

The balance of forces in Eurasia changed overnight as soon as the Soviet Union, an influential geopolitical actor, left the scene. Yeltsin's "new" Russia with its exposed fringes looked more like a wilting landscape deprived of political *raison d'être*, which brought to life numerous American geopolitical mega-projects designed to move the U.S. closer to the Caspian's riches and its geographical advantages. The changing world balance of forces brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the 1991 American-Iraqi war honed the geopolitical instincts of that part of the American establishment that showed its enthusiastic interest in the Eurasian energy resources.

This, in turn, inspired all sorts of intellectual scenarios used as the cornerstones of the West's ecstatic political ambitions and plans. *Energy Superbowl* published by the ultra-right Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom is one of the best examples of America's geopolitical inspiration. The area

between the Volga mouth and Oman is described as the “strategic energy ellipse” of the earth. The authors ascribe the energy and, therefore, geopolitical value of the Caspian to the fact the oil fields of Iran and the entire Middle East stretched beyond their limits to the Caspian region. The aggregate resources of the “strategic energy ellipse” amount to two-thirds of the explored oil reserves and over 40 percent of the world’s proven gas reserves.⁶

Here the Caspian basin and the Persian Gulf are discussed as a single energy and geopolitical region, which allowed the American strategists to treat the area as a New Middle East and offer this new geographic term to the Administration in Washington.⁷ The authors of the *Energy Superbowl* specified the key direction and implications of the new interpretation by saying that the Caspian-Persian energy ellipse and its resources were the strategic *prize* on the changing international political arena.⁸

The West, the victor in the Cold War, promptly put the Caspian basin on the list of its geopolitical mega-projects. This was done in the “geographic supra-national alienation” style (A. Panarin’s term) to emphasize the geographic and push aside the national-state factor and make the Eurasian resources look more accessible to the Cold War victors and prize-winners—the U.S. and its allies. So the Caspian studies, a new branch of geopolitics that pays little attention to the Caspian as such, is expected to create a narrative (meta-stories) of the Caspian’s subjugation to the West and its control program. This political language bears traces of setting operational objectives and principles: any political interpretation inevitably contains political motivation and initiative. This means that the Caspian studies are not so much a scientific discipline as a style of domination in the Caspian area.

America accompanied its intellectual interpretations with a mega-project related to the Caspian region as a whole. It all started in 1994 when Washington included the Caspian in the zone of its vital interests. Interpreted in geopolitical terms this can be described as fitting the Caspian oil basin into the Larger Middle East (another geopolitical metaphor formulated as a geographically supra-national unit deprived of subjectivity).

Against the background of the hierarchically arranged and rigidly motivated American interpretations and ambitions post-communist Russia’s lack of will and its lost ability to formulate mega-projects for the entire Caspian region were too obvious. The leaders of “new” Russia announced that in the absence of national interests the country would assume the role of a NATO outpost on the Asian borders. The Kremlin liberals enthusiastically embraced the Atlantic rules of the game and alien power discourse. The fragmented Russian actors—the government, the oil and gas companies, and regional leaders—were left on their own to follow the geopolitical meandering.

The Greater Caspian in the Context of the Pipeline Syndrome

Through the efforts of the heads of the Caspian coastal states and the leading oil companies the Caspian’s energy resources developed into a top-selling information and diplomatic commodity in the world political market. Excessive politicization of the Caspian’s hydrocarbon resources created a pipeline syndrome: Which routes will be used to bring the Caspian energy fuels to the world markets? and Who will control them? The Soviet Union had one oil pipeline, between Baku

⁶ *Energy Superbowl. Strategic Politics and the Persian Gulf and Caspian Basin*, Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, Washington, DC, 1997, p. 14.

⁷ V. Maksimenko, op. cit., p. 60.

⁸ *Energy Superbowl*, p. 14.

and Novorossiisk, that outlived the country. In the 1990s the newly discovered huge oil reserves in the Azeri sector of the Caspian and the gradual development of the equally rich reserves of Kazakhstan's shelf triggered the rivalry between two oil transportation routes. The one, pro-Russian, connected Tengiz in Kazakhstan with Novorossiisk on the Russian Black Sea coast (the Caspian Pipeline Consortium—CPC); the other, anti-Russian and pro-Western, was expected to connect the Azeri oil fields with Ceyhan on the Turkic Mediterranean coast; the small-capacity Baku-Supsa oil pipeline was put into operation early in 1999 as an interim project to bring Azeri oil to the Georgian Black Sea port.

In the 1990s the CPC won; construction began in 1999 and was completed in 2001, which means that Russia, which had poured a lot of effort into the project, was moving oil from Kazakhstan across its territory to its terminals on the Black Sea coast. The Baku-Ceyhan project, the core of America's Caspian policy, was pushed aside for a while.

Late in the 1990s Russia finally sent Caspian oil across its territory, which allowed it to preserve, for a while, a powerful lever of influence on the Caspian countries. This somewhat stabilized the general geopolitical situation in the Caspian.

II. From Post-Communism to Post-September: the End of Russia's Monopoly on the Transportation of Energy Fuels and Military Militarization of the Caspian

The dramatic beginning of the 21st century changed the nature of Caspian politics beyond recognition. Here are the turning points.

1. Russia received a new president, Vladimir Putin. Impressed with Washington's remarkable successes, he launched his "strategic Caspian initiative." By slowly overcoming Boris Yeltsin's heritage President Putin moved forward to reconfirm the priority of Russia's national interests. In 2000 he created the post of presidential special envoy for the Caspian in the rank of vice premier and appointed Victor Kaliuzhny to this post: a significant yet fairly unproductive gesture.
2. The events of 11 September, 2001 in the United States and the war on "international terror" with which the U.S. and its allies retaliated were the next milestone that interrupted the measured step of the Caspian intrigue and added spice to it. Despite the highly doubtful nature of the announced aim, Russia demonstrated unquestionable support of the United States. Russia's distressing lack of initiative allowed the United States to become easily entrenched in Central Asia. This satellite-like position brought nothing useful in return—it merely opened another page of disappointments and losses.
3. The previously shelved Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project, the pivot of America's Caspian policies since 1994, was implemented and became the main test for Russia in the Caspian. Late in September 2002 the BP-led international consortium launched the project with a symbolic ceremony attended by the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey, along with former U.S. Secretary of Energy Spenser Abraham. The project began in February-March 2003 to be commissioned two years later, in the spring of 2005. Its annual carrying capacity is 50 mil-

lion tons of oil a year, which were to be moved along the 1,760-km-long pipeline across Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey. The new pipeline connected the oil fields in Azerbaijan (Azeri, Chirag, and Gunashli) with Ceyhan on Turkey's Mediterranean coast. The former Secretary of Energy described the BTC project as an important part of America's oil strategy developed under U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney. The West looked at the pipeline as part of the East-West transportation corridor. According to Stephen Mann, former advisor of the U.S. president on the Caspian energy resources, this oil pipeline "would change the face of Eurasia." Significantly, the BTC companions never concealed its anti-Russian and anti-Iranian purpose and emphasized its strategic importance.

When implemented (the project was commissioned with great pomp on 25 May, 2005) the project delivered Russia's position in the Greater Caspian a heavy blow. Left outside the oil transportation route, Russia was threatened with a disruption in its contacts with the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, which were being inundated by the North Atlantic Alliance. The new agenda gave it a chance to talk about the "Asia-ization of NATO."⁹

Russia moved from the post-Soviet to the post-September era amid serious troubles and bad failures. The careers of the two special envoys for the Caspian region—American Stephen Mann and Russian Victor Kaliuzhny—threw the situation into bolder relief.

The former, an architect of America's Caspian triumph, remained one of the most prominent American experts in Eurasia in George W. Bush's Administration. Victor Kaliuzhny, who had completely failed his Caspian mission, was quietly removed to head the Russian embassy in Latvia.

His career confirms that the Russian elite did not embrace the geopolitical approach to many things, as the times demanded, and did not regard it as its duty. Russia's post-Soviet history demonstrated that the Russian political elite used its involvement in politics and civil service as a lucrative enterprise and nothing more. I shall dwell on this in detail below.

Atlantic Temptation of the Moscow Elite and Russia's Geopolitical Failure in the Caspian in the Early 21st century

The results of the post-September Russian-American rivalry in the Caspian reveal an important trend that offers a much better understanding of why Russia lost its control in the Caspian. I have in mind the sentiments prevailing in the Russian elite and part of the expert community, which I would like to describe as residual Atlanticism of the Yeltsin-Kozyrev era and domination of the geoeconomic ideas. This bred pacifist illusions when it came to assessing the future of the Caspian policy.

Many of the Russian politicians and experts of the time preferred to rely, erroneously, on geoeconomics: the pipeline policies were seen as purely economic; there was a strong tendency to overestimate the role of the profitability factor. Some of them (V. Kaliuzhny and M. Khazin) remained convinced that Russia and Kazakhstan shared the initiative in the Caspian region in view of the fairly dim BTC projects and inadequate Azeri oil reserves.¹⁰

⁹ A. Daalder, J. Goldgeider, "Globalny aliats. NATO predstoit otkazat'sia oy regional'nogo statusa," *Kommersant-Mnena*, No. 161, 31 August, 2006, p. 9; A.D. Bogaturov, "Sindrom kosy i kamnia," *NG-Dipkurier*, 10 December, 2007.

¹⁰ A. Khanbabian, "Marshrut kaspiskoy nefti mozhet byt' peresmotren," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 22 June, 2001, p. 5; D. Orlov, "Bol'shaia truba dlia diadi Sema," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 26 December, 2003, p. 10; M. Khazin, "Goluboy potok ili BTE?" *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 27 August, 2004.

The risks (the BTC was dangerously close to the zones of ethnic and regional conflicts, such as Nagorno-Karabagh and Kurdistan in Turkey, not to mention the seismic and ecological problems on the oil pipeline route) were overestimated and lulled those who should have known that such risks were common for the oil business into a false sense of security. Indeed, the main oil and gas fields—the Middle East, the Bight of Benin, and the Andes and Caribbean basins—are equally risky and brimming with conflicts.

The geoeconomic arguments gave rise to sarcastic comments about the BTC as a “new international aliment,” “costly madness,” etc.¹¹ It should be said in all justice that skeptical comments came from the West as well: “Nobody knows how much oil will come to the West in exchange for vague political promises.” Former Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Akezhan Kazhegeldin was quoted as saying: “There is the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project. This is a good project with bad mathematics.” These and other observers dismissed the project as a geopolitical fantasy and a pipeline that leads nowhere.¹²

The geoeconomic position¹³ dominated by the loss and profit logic of an accountant illustrated what the Russian elite thought about the short-term stimuli and perspectives. This did nothing to stir up its national geopolitical awareness and geopolitical planning in general. The Atlanticists remained in command while their geoeconomic ideas were used to discredit geopolitical ambitions; they reduced the innocent sounding geoeconomic considerations to absurdity. The uncomplicated yet very aggressive antithesis to geopolitics boiled down to the simple formula that the territorial expanses and imperial state-historical memory were to blame. Dmitry Oreshkin, a prominent Russian Atlanticist and one of those who would like to see the Russian territory “shrink,” interpreted the territorial ontology principle (deeply rooted in geopolitics) as a “post-imperial inferiority complex.” The Atlanticists find it hard to accept the fact that the “territories are valued more than the economy” and “the influence is much dearer than money.”¹⁴ The calls to restore the country’s geopolitical interests to their rightful place on the political agenda are dismissed as “Stalinist territorial mania” and prejudices “of the beginning of the last century.”

The Atlanticists hoped that at some time in future Russia will “find and defend its place in the asymmetrical world, preferably in the part bordering on the developed states.” Putin’s conscripts remained far too long in the grips of the old illusion inherited from perestroika; they remained indifferent to the recent past when the hopes of Yeltsin’s Russia were sacrificed to triumphal America of the 1990s. Still ignorant of the lessons of recent history, the Kremlin of the early Putin period hoped to join the “world community” on America’s “bandwagon of freedom” as part of the “counterterrorist consensus.” The Color Revolutions along Russia’s borders, the U.S. and the European Union’s vehe-

¹¹ S. Eduardov, “Zhazhda v trubakh,” available at [www.utro.ru/articles/2003/02/07/126422.shtml]; another highly typical comment: Yu. Aleksandrov, D. Orlov, “Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan: gde nef’?” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 4 October, 2002, p. 10; idem, “Neftianoy rynchag russkoy politiki,” *Izvestia*, 1 June, 2005.

¹² Washington Profile, available at [www.washprofile.org/arch0403/interviews/Kazhegeldin]

¹³ Here it is advisable to outline the essence of the Russian geoeconomic ideas stemming from Atlanticist and globalist expectations. My ideas about geo-economics are very close to those of Vadim Tsymbursky who has provided the most convincing analysis of Russian geo-economics. In the West geo-economics stemmed from geopolitics and is its inalienable part while in Russia it is perceived as its alternative. Understood in this way geo-economics is the “highest form of market investigations” and is much more important, at least in the eyes of its ideologists, than the national security idea. As a result, according to Tsymbursky, “removal of geopolitics for the sake of geo-economics is directly connected with the removal of the state as a vehicle of shared interests. V. Tsymbursky, “Russkie i geoeconomika,” *Pro et Contra*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2003, pp. 184, 185. Those who supported geoeconomics believed that benevolent globalization would create a transnational civil society in which economic interests would come to the fore amid the disappearing state borders and dying national sovereignties.

¹⁴ D. Oreshkin, “‘Zolotoy milliard’ ili ‘Zolotaia Orda’?” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 10 June, 2003, p. 11; idem, “Petushinoe slovo Kremliia,” *Moskovskie novosti*, 22-28 October, 2004, p. 8; A. Bogaturov, “Geoeconomika zakhvatila vlast’ v mire,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 25 May, 2004, p. 8.

ment criticism of Russia's "digressions from democracy," and the gas conflict with Ukraine freed Putin's Russia of the illusion that it could cooperate with the West.

A detailed analysis of the sets of Atlanticist and geoeconomic ideas is beyond the scope of this article: I intended to demonstrate that the losses in the Caspian largely stemmed from liberal pacifism, itself a product of the outdated "repentance complex" and the apologetic diplomacy of the Yeltsin era.

This brings us to a preliminary conclusion: the state's political independence (irrespective of the nature of its political system) demands that its political elite accept geopolitical thinking and education as its duty and its true calling. To quote Karl Haushofer: the geopolitical education of the elite and public opinion rooted in "dignity, honor, and strength" cannot be born anew by "submission and desertion."¹⁵

The weakness and vulnerability of Russian analysis and diplomacy stem from an underestimation of the old truth V. Maksimenko described better than others: "The geography which geopolitical thought is dealing with is not physical geography of landmass and seas; it is a *geography of world trade routes and world war paths*. History has taught us that trade routes at the world's crossroads may acquire military and strategic importance: trade routes turn into war paths."¹⁶ The BTC has fully confirmed the old truth that because of their undeniable strategic importance oil and gas pipelines can be described as a geopolitical weapon of sorts.

Decisions on future transit routes belong to politicians and generals who give guarantees to investors and oil companies. In the case under review American outposts and American military experts will appear, for strategic considerations, along the energy routes both constructed and planned. The United States has made security of the Transcaucasian export pipelines a priority in its struggle against "international terror." Much was done to set up a joint command of the South Caucasian Antiterror rapid deployment forces intended to guard the pipelines. The Western political community was very clear about the American military experts in Georgia: they were expected to guard the BTC.¹⁷

The BTC's safety obviously came first: in August 2005 the American military announced that they intended to invest \$135 million in the next six years in the Caspian Guard (two brigades set up to guard the pipeline). The project remained on paper, yet Azerbaijan signed a NATO Partnership Agreement under which the republic's naval forces and border guards would receive high tech equipment. In the fall of 2005 the United States deployed two movable radars with a range of 200-300 km in Azerbaijan. The new equipment was installed to respond, promptly and efficiently, to possible developments on the pipeline and the Azeri oil rigs.

The military build-up in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia and the "military support" of BTC can be described as a logical byproduct of America's foreign policy moves of the early 21st century: control of Iraq and Afghanistan. Carried out under the pretext of fighting international terrorism, they were spearheaded against Iran and intended to trim Russia's influence in the Caspian in the hope of tightening America's control over the above-mentioned strategic energy ellipse.

Russia responded in kind: the August 2002 wide-scale military exercises and gathering-campaign of the Caspian Flotilla were an important part of Putin's Caspian Initiative. Defense of the elements of Russia's fuel and energy complex was one of the most important training episodes. The then Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov commanded the exercises from the Astra rig of the Astrakhan Branch of LUKoil, which extracts oil and gas on the Caspian shelf.

This made Astrakhan an important transportation center in the south of Russia and a key military strategic outpost on the Caspian. From that time on it has become a geopolitical platform from which Russia can control Caspian developments.

¹⁵ K. Haushofer, op. cit., p. 244.

¹⁶ V. Maksimenko, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁷ A. Useynov, "Kommandos dlia truby," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 11 February, 2003, p. 5.

The multisided pressure on the Caspian that narrowed down the corridor of legal and economic possibilities convinced the local states that they should build up their military capacities. Militarization of the region began in earnest.

The prospect of destabilization looked very real to the Caspian leaders, who had no choice but to engage in military build-up. Some people went even further to suggest that force would be the best way to settle the disagreements over the oil fields on the Caspian shelf. The contradictions between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan and Iran over the oil fields in the southern part of the Caspian acquired new edges. The littoral states busied themselves with building navies and coastal infrastructure to protect the disputable territories. In short, the use of force was accepted as a possibility in the struggle for domination.

Late in August 2006 the Aktau area served as the scene of the Rubezh 2006 military exercises. The results were discussed at CSTO Headquarters and the Defense Ministry of Kazakhstan. At one point it was planned to set up a KASFOR naval cooperation task group patterned on the Blackseafor. The idea was quietly buried by the continued mistrust among the coastal states.

The Caspian energy and transportation problems developed into a military-political confrontation very much in line with the “trade routes turn into war paths” maxim.

III. Diversification Race in Caspian Energy Policy: from Post-September to Post-Tskhinval

Here we should turn back to the point when the rivalry between Russia and the West for the Caspian began to unfold in earnest: namely the second terms of the Russian and American presidents. The illusion that the West would be unable to deliver Russia a more or less heavy blow in the Greater Caspian survived for some time after the CPC and the Blue Stream gas pipeline were commissioned in 2001 and 2002, respectively. The pause in the implementation of the BTC project was taken as the failure of America’s last chance in the Caspian. The events of 9/11 irrevocably changed the situation: from that time on the United States and its allies implemented one energy project after another; this was accompanied by the amazingly successful color revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Another important worldwide trend—the post-September world learned to use wars for “resource accumulation”—made this possible. The influential power centers were drawn into the struggle for new hydrocarbon resources and redistribution of the old ones. In fact, access to energy resources or a pipeline route was translated into the state’s geopolitical growth.

The events that followed the BTC’s commissioning opened a new page—that of “resource accumulation”—in the history of the struggle for the Caspian’s supplies. Russian-American rivalry in the Caspian was rapidly accelerating. From that time on the “diversification race” (a term coined by German analyst Roland Hetz)¹⁸ became the hallmark of the post-September Caspian geopolitics unfolding amid the energy-connected fears, mutual mistrust, and political bluffs typical of the post-September world. The West never failed to parry each of the Russian victories.

¹⁸ R. Hetz, “Bol’shaia igra na Kaspiyskom more. V Rossii regional’naia diversifikatsia mozhnet istolkovyvatsia kak ugroza energobezopasnosti,” *NG-Energia*, 22 May, 2007.

An overview of the macro-political context of the struggle for energy resources will clarify the logic of what is going on the Caspian. Since 2006, when Russia identified itself as an “energy superpower,” energy-related subjects have been and remain the greatest irritant in the West; they have even invited an exchange of blows between the United States and Russia.

The G-8 summit held in July 2006 in St. Petersburg confirmed what was already clear: energy, energy resources, and the struggle for them had become the main instrument of political influence.

This was further confirmed by the NATO conference held in Riga on 27-28 November, 2006 at which American Senator Richard Lugar (Rep.) offered an “energy war” thesis. The American suggested that everything that threatened energy security should be treated as hostile military acts to be rebuffed with military means. In this way NATO should have been transformed into an alliance of energy consumers expected to oppose Russia, which, the Republican Senator argued, would become addicted to energy blackmail.

The “Fulton speech” Vice President Cheney delivered in Vilnius on 4 May, 2006 meant that the hopes for an alliance with the West for a common struggle against “international terror” the Kremlin had been nurturing for some time finally collapsed. In February 2007 President Putin responded with a speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy that shattered the West. The politician who delivered it was not the same man who back in September 2001 glorified the “spirit of freedom and humanism” in the Reichstag and was obviously seeking friendship with the United States and Europe. In 2007 the Russian president spoke as a leader who had learned his geopolitical lessons, shed his Atlanticist illusions, and become completely dedicated to Russia’s national interests alone.

This served as the macro-political background for the struggle for the Caspian’s energy resources and transit advantages within the global “resource accumulation” trend. The race for energy and transportation resources of the Greater Caspian was unfolding within the newly developed confrontation between Russia and the West in the form of an exchange of blows.

In the spring of 2007 Russia was ready to act. In May 2007 it signed an agreement on the Caspian pipeline under which Turkmenian and Kazakh gas was expected to be moved across Russia. The signing of this agreement crowned the unprecedented 6-day-long Central Asian trip of the Russian president, who visited Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and met their leaders. Nabi Ziiadullaev described the result as an energy alliance in the form of a single energy system with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan,¹⁹ a well-argued response to the American and EU attempts to remove the Central Asian countries from Moscow’s orbit by leaving Russia outside the main fuel transportation routes.

The West responded with diplomatic missions to the Caspian countries: officials of the U.S. State Department landed in the oil and gas capitals: Stephen Mann went to Ashgabad; Richard Boucher to Astana, and Matthew Bryza to Baku. The visits were timed to coincide with the G-8 summit at which Russia’s energy monopoly in Europe was severely criticized. The American diplomats came to persuade the Central Asian leaders, of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in particular, to send their energy resources to the pipelines intended to bypass Russia. A possible Trans-Caspian gas pipeline to be laid along the bottom of the Caspian Sea was discussed; and Turkmenistan was offered the tempting perspective of joining the Nabucco gas pipeline system.²⁰

On 16 August, 2007 Moscow made another move: the SCO summit decided to set up an Energy Club to coordinate energy projects in the interests of the SCO members (Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

¹⁹ N. Ziiadullaev, “Tsentral’naia Azia: konkurentsia i partnerstvo,” *NG-Dipkurier*, 2 July, 2007, p. 13.

²⁰ The Nabucco project (which some of the analysts call “futuristic;” in the past there were doubts about the BTC oil pipeline’s economic efficacy) presupposes that several pipelines from the Southern Caucasus, Central Asia, and Middle East will reach Turkey and move further on to Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Central Europe.

Several days later the United States opened a new phase of the Caspian energy transportation projects that circumvented Russia. An agreement under which Washington allocated \$1.7 million to Azerbaijan for feasibility studies of two routes was signed in Baku. The projects involved were the Trans-Caspian gas and oil pipelines along the bottom of the Caspian to move Kazakh oil to the BTC. Oil and gas were expected to reach Europe via Azerbaijan.

In the fall of 2007 the rivalry reached new heights—the West tried to snatch the initiative and resolve the problem in its favor. In late October 2007 the presidents of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan declared that they supported Nabucco. Simultaneously, America moved further to the highest point of the Russian-American race for the Caspian transportation routes. In an interview to the *Dallas Morning News* in Texas Condoleezza Rice pointed out that Russia's energy policy challenged the world.²¹ All other issues—democratic concerns, struggle against “global terror,” and the Iranian file—were pushed aside for the sake of the key objective: squeezing Russia out of the Greater Caspian. The sweeping realization of this dawned on each and everyone. Even the inveterate Atlanticists (favorably impressed with the short-lived “counterterrorist” alliance with the United States), who had looked forward to close American-Russian partnership in Central- and South-Asian energy corridors and the related military infrastructure, lost their hopes.²²

America obviously meant business. A fairly large chunk of the money set aside in the 2008 budget for the CIS countries (about \$402 million) was intended for energy transportation routes outside Russia to counter Moscow's Eurasian course.²³

In July 2008 head of Gazprom Aleksey Miller signed an agreement in Ashgabad under which Russia would pay \$225-295 per 1 c m of Turkmenian gas. In September 2008 Putin reached a similar agreement with Uzbekistan. Both documents were confirmed during President Medvedev's January 2009 visit to Uzbekistan. There was a more or less popular opinion that Moscow had delivered its rivals in Central Asia a preventive blow.

The South Ossetian Conflict as the Frontline of the Struggle for Caspian Hydrocarbons

The five-day war in South Ossetia erupted when the rivalry had reached a high point; it ended with a Russian blitzkrieg; its main aim, however, was control over the Transcaucasian oil- and gas-pipelines. The transit BTC pipeline added weight to Georgia as a transit country and increased its geopolitical value for the West.

The Americans describe the hydrocarbon routes outside Russian territory that involve Georgia and Azerbaijan as the two main countries as the “new energy corridor of the 21st century.” The United States and large oil companies selected Georgia as the main transit country, thus leaving Russia out in the cold. As Washington's important geopolitical asset Georgia was militarized: the West (mainly America and Israel)²⁴ armed and supported it to sharpen the “blade” aimed at Russia's “soft underbelly” in the strategically important energy corridor zone. This explains why the conflict in South Osse-

²¹ A. Terekhov, “Samyy bol'shoy vyzov. Condoleezza Rice raz'iasnila, pochemu vozmozhen konflikt s Rossiey,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 12 November, 2007.

²² A. Bogaturov, “Indo-sibirsky koridor v strategii kontrterrorizma,” *NG-Dipkurier*, 24 October, 2005.

²³ *Kommersant*, 20 December, 2007.

²⁴ The Report of the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI) *The Caucasian Litmus Test: Consequences and Lessons of the Russian-Georgian War in August 2008* gives details about Israel's involvement in arming Georgia on the eve of the South Ossetian war. *Novye Izvestia* offered a detailed account of the Swedish findings in an article called “Izrail'skiy sled” (Israeli Trace) of 23 September, 2008.

tia reverberated throughout the world from the very first hours of the fighting: the regional actors were overshadowed by the geopolitical interests of Russia and the United States. The “peace enforcement operation” was predated by a “war enforcement operation” in the form of rapid militarization of the Caspian and the military-transit race between Russia and the West.

This put an end to the post-September diversification race. The results of the five-day war and its impact on the region’s energy-communication future need careful analysis.

At first the expert community was convinced that the war decreased Georgia’s value as a promising transit state and that the long-term psychological repercussions might undermine the future of Nabucco; it was believed that Russia had obtained a chance to block the Georgian stretch. There was a fair share of pessimism about the projects outside Russia. The question “Did the war deliver Nabucco a deadly blow?” was frequently asked.

There is a different opinion that is rapidly gaining popularity: the West should liberate itself from Russia’s monopoly by investing in routes outside its territory. The events that followed the August war in Georgia, and the last gas war between Ukraine and Russia in particular, added weight to the idea.

In the wake of the August war the West showed much more interest in new sources of energy resources and transportation routes that would exclude Russia, and intensified its struggle for the Greater Caspian resolutely moving in the anti-Russian direction.

This and the world financial crisis will create a new geopolitical vagueness in the region. Time will show whether this will bring fundamental geopolitical changes in the Caspian meso-region.

* * *

The still suspended legal status of the Caspian and the mounting contradictions between the littoral states of the Caspian meso-area in the early 21st century (especially in the context of 9/11 and the five-day war in South Ossetia) pushed the relations among the Caspian states from “soft,” relying on diplomacy, to “tense,” relying on military force. The accelerating militarization and the pace with which the Caspian states are building up their navies increased the role of the littoral states (formerly transit and communication points) as military outposts.

The unfolding changes suggest that the excessively comforting forecasts should be revised. This primarily relates to Dmitry Trenin’s opinion that the Russian ports will inevitably lose their importance as military outposts and that the military dimension of the security agenda will lose its meaning. He repeated this in one of his latest works: “never before has the military security factor been less important than it is today.”²⁵ The obvious facts point to the contrary, which makes this and similar pronouncements sound strange to say the least.

Energy security and the military-strategic dimension are indivisible. 9/11 pushed the romantic ideas about post-communism into oblivion while energy security and the accompanying military components have move forward as irrevocable factors.

²⁵ V. Baranovskiy, review of “Dmitri V. Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2007,” *Pro et Contra*, No. 1 (40), January-February 2008, p. 101.

REGIONAL SECURITY

STRATEGIC FRICTION IN AFGHANISTAN AND GEOPOLITICAL REVERSAL IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Strategic Friction in Afghanistan

Anyone engaged in strategic analysis should bear in mind that according to the Prussian military thinker Karl von Clausewitz, “everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war.”¹ “Friction” is impossible to forecast, yet it could appear at any moment and should consequently be reckoned with.

Friction makes it much harder to execute a strategic plan and fulfill tactical tasks; it may even make the planned aims unattainable. I shall use this term in my analysis of the peacekeeping operation and rehabilitation in Afghanistan.

The world community has found itself in a quandary: the military-strategic, political, social, economic, and psychological situation in Afghanistan has reached its limit. Today the United States

¹ Quoted from: E.N. Luttwak, *Strategy. The Logic of War and Peace*, The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1987, p. 12.

is engaged in the Enduring Freedom military operation in this country while NATO is engaged in the ISAF peacekeeping operation. The former operation is spearheaded against the Taliban and other terrorist groups while the latter aspires to stabilize the military-political situation in the country; maintain security, and encourage the rehabilitation efforts in the provinces.

The operation began on 7 October, shortly after the 9/11 tragedy, and has been going on for more than seven years now. Only some of the initial aims have been attained; moreover, in the last two to three years the situation has been going from bad to worse. Friction is coming to the fore to become one of the central factors: from time to time the Talibs carry out armed assaults; the local armed units refuse to obey central power while drug production and trafficking have reached unprecedented proportions. According to certain sources, in 2006 over 4 thousand Afghans (most of them civilians) lost their lives in armed skirmishes. This is almost three times higher than the previous year. The number of suicide terrorist acts, practically unknown in Afghanistan prior to 2002, increased from 21 to 118.

In 2007 terrorists became much more active than before: every month there were about 566 terrorist acts—the figure for 2006 was 425. In 2007, 1,500 of the more than 8 thousand victims of terrorist acts were civilians. The number of foreign contingent servicemen killed in the last two years is the highest since the U.S.-led counterterrorist coalition invaded the country and pushed the Taliban out of Kabul. In 2006, 191 coalition servicemen died in action in Afghanistan; in 2007 the figure increased to 237.²

Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, admitted that the country “is sliding” into a quagmire of corruption, lawlessness, and disorder. British Ambassador to Kabul Sir Sherard Cowper-Couls deemed it necessary to say that America’s strategy was doomed.³

The following trends, which can be described as paradoxical, also belong to the friction factors:

- The attempts of the coalition and the Afghan leaders to talk to the Taliban, which is showing no inclination either to talk or to compromise;
- The rumors about the Taliban’s mounting popularity among the local people suffering from the never-ending hostilities and their alleged willingness to move to its side;
- The country’s criminalization and militarization and the warlordization phenomenon⁴;
- Serious problems with the deliveries of international humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, the greater part of which is either looted or simply stolen before it reaches its destination;
- The Taliban is taking advantage of the absence of control over the territory, the ethnic and religious fragmentation, the country’s backwardness, tribalism, the “opium-based” economy, the country’s specific neighbors and the very complicated geopolitical situation in the region as a whole, the severe climate, the difficult terrain, and violent antiforeignism;
- The somewhat weakened unity among the NATO countries about the wisdom of continuing the operation in Afghanistan. Michael Mihalka who has analyzed public opinion in the United States and Europe about their countries’ involvement in the Afghan peacekeeping operation offers interesting sociological information about the declining share of those who support the operation in practically every NATO country.⁵

² See: M. Haydari, “Afghanistano dlia pobedy nad talibami nuzhní dopsily i instruktory NATO,” *Eurasianet*, 7 April, 2008, available at [www.eurasianet.org].

³ See: *The Guardian*, 17 October, 2008.

⁴ Warlordization is a trend associated with armed mercenary units and private armies operating outside national and international jurisdiction (for more detail, see: K. Abdullaev, “Warlordy i rekonstruktsia Afghanistana,” *Afghanistan i bezopasnost’ Tsentral’noy Azii*, Collection of articles, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Ilim Publishers, Bishkek, 2004, pp. 88-101).

⁵ See: M. Mihalka, “Pashtunistan, NATO and the Global War on Terror: ‘If you don’t fight, you cannot have peace in Afghanistan,’” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2008.

These and other factors probably add to friction in the common strategy. Not infrequently they are behind the distorted rumors about the real situation in the country and the sides' intentions. The rumors and distorted ideas may develop into friction. This does not spell defeat; situations of this sort are possible in the course of strategy [implementation]. They should be correctly understood; lessons should be learned and strategy readjusted.

On the whole the operation that started smoothly in 2001 ran into a dead end. There is a more or less popular opinion that the problem has no military solution and that a new strategy (or a road map, to use the popular term) is needed to restore Afghanistan. Michael Mihalka has rightly pointed out: "There were enough troops to 'clear,' but never enough to 'hold.' What is needed is a *clear-hold-build* strategy."⁶

It seems that the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest took an important step toward new approaches to the Afghan settlement. It offered the following four new strategic elements: stronger rule of law in Afghanistan; stronger central power; restoration of the social sphere; and prompt settlement of the Afghan-Pakistani border issue.

President of Uzbekistan Karimov formulated several new initiatives at the summit. He said in particular that his country was prepared to sign an agreement with NATO on corridor and transit across its territory of non-military cargoes through the Termez-Hayraton border checkpoint, practically the only railway communication with Afghanistan. He also presented his country's position on the issues to be resolved in Afghanistan:

- First, all urgent social and economic problems including employment, a stronger vertical of power, and its authority should be treated as an absolute priority.
- Second, the traditional religious and national-cultural values and customs of the multi-national people of Afghanistan should be respected and supported; the same applies to the interests of the national minorities.

Unjustified criticism of Islam and mud-slinging should be completely ruled out; this creates an absolutely unacceptable climate and tension in Afghanistan as well as elsewhere in the Muslim world.
- Third, it is extremely important to promote gradual and stage-by-stage reform in state development and the creation of civil institutions. To be successful the reforms should be carried out in a politically stable and economically prospering Afghanistan.
- Fourth, the border issues, in Waziristan in particular, should be resolved jointly with the leaders of Pakistan to achieve stability.
- Fifth, it is advisable to revive the negotiations on peace and stability in Afghanistan within the UN-supported 6 + 2 contact group of plenipotentiaries of Afghanistan's neighbors plus the United States and Russia, which demonstrated its efficiency in 1997-2001.

The contact group has already formulated general principles and common approaches of its members to the Afghan settlement under the U.N. aegis. In July 1999 it organized the Tashkent meeting of the warring sides and adopted the Tashkent Declaration "On the Main Principles of Conflict Settlement in Afghanistan," which served as the foundation of the resolution of the U.N. Security Council that described the meeting as an important step toward a political solution to the Afghan problem.

The latest developments, said the Uzbek president, suggested that the contact group (6 + 2 prior to 2001) should be transformed into 6 + 3 to add NATO to the process.⁷

⁶ M. Mihalka, op. cit.

⁷ "Vystuplenie Prezidenta Respubliki Uzbekistan Islama Karimova na sammite NATO/SEAP," *Narodnoe slovo*, 4 April, 2008.

The April 2008 NATO summit can be described as an important contribution not only to the world community's effort to devise practical measures conducive to the country's pacification, stabilization, and restoration but also to a more profound understanding of the essence and roots of the Afghan tragedy and the driving forces behind the conflict. Indeed, to a great extent, strategic friction is explained not merely by the specifics of the hostilities but also by the way they are perceived by those who are involved in the conflict and those who are trying to settle it.

The scope of this article does not permit a detailed analysis of the entire range of friction situations that doom the conflict settlement strategy in Afghanistan. It is important, however, to point out that friction situations, when they arise, call for non-linear strategic solutions and a careful investigation of their short-, mid- and long-term repercussions. A systemic approach to the Afghan problem sheds light on its regional and global dimensions. There is no doubt that the geopolitical implications and security challenges born in Afghanistan will primarily betray themselves in Central Asia. This shows the absolutely new role Central Asia is playing in world politics.

The future of the Afghan issue depends not only on the world powers but also on the regional states; much should be done to find new exits from the Afghan impasse. One thing is clear: wide-scale international support and the peacekeepers in the country are two important factors for its new, peaceful, and democratic future.

Several other questions can be discussed in the friction context.

(A) The Anti-Narcotic Security Belt and the ISAF:

The activity of the ISAF, which is either not ready or not willing to liquidate opium production under the pretext that there are no alternative economic branches, is offset by the efforts of the Central Asian countries and Russia to check drug trafficking by setting up what is known as a "security belt" around Afghanistan. This can be compared to a hypothetical situation in which one of the sides involved in Afghanistan and the other operating outside it are guided by different agendas and different priorities.

The United States and the coalition involved in the Enduring Freedom Operation and ISAF insist that the military operation and the anti-narcotic measures are mutually exclusive because the latter will deprive a huge number of Afghans of their means of subsistence. The Central Asian countries, however, cannot wait for their neighbor to acquire an alternative economy so that they no longer have to fight drug smuggling today.

(B) What was the main initial aim of the military operation? Is there an unstated aim?

The answer to the first question is clear: the antiterrorist struggle. After more than seven years of hostilities the aim has not been achieved not only because of friction but also due to ontological and teleological confusion. Today the world community, which some time ago dismissed the Taliban as a terrorist organization and added it to the corresponding list, is beginning to make advances toward it again.

In October 2007 President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai moved forward with a sensational statement that Mullah Omar of the Taliban and leader of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan Gulbuddin Hekmatyar could count on certain portfolios in his Cabinet. Significantly, and logically, both declined the honor. Talks with the Taliban are doomed. A new state system under international patronage, on the one hand, and à la Taliban state, on the other, are hardly compatible. Such attempts merely bring to mind the world community's blunders and errors that predated the counterterrorist operation.⁸ This explains why these efforts are incompatible with the new Big Strategy.

⁸ See: F. Tolipov, "Are the Heartland and Rimland Changing in the Wake of the Operation in Afghanistan?" *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (23), 2003.

The strategic agenda should, first and foremost, include the following questions: “Should the Taliban be defeated or engaged?” “Should we defeat the Taliban or its patrons?” Pakistan can be described as another problem: on the one hand, its indignation over the American air strikes on the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, the zone of the Pushtu tribes, was understandable from the viewpoint of a sovereign state looking after its territorial integrity. On the other, Talibs find refuge in Pakistan and should be persecuted there.

Michael Mihalka has also pointed out that the former consensus in the NATO countries about the war is weakening; there are doubts about the war’s advisability. Here is what U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on 10 February, 2008 at the Munich Conference on Security Policy: “We must not—we cannot—become a two-tiered alliance of those willing to fight and those who are not. Such a development, with all its implications for collective security, would effectively destroy the alliance.”⁹

On the other hand, strange as it may seem, the longer the joint counterterrorist struggle of the world’s most powerful states in one of the world’s weakest states continues, the more popular all sorts of inventions and suspicions about their true aims in Afghanistan will become. We can ask in particular whether there is another agenda, a design beyond the counterterrorist agenda. Is there a geopolitical agenda independent of the security-related one? This calls for extended studies; I shall touch upon certain aspects below.

Geopolitical Reversal in Central Asia

What can be called a geopolitical reversal is taking place in Central Asia, not a totally unexpected development, to tell the truth. Foreign policy meandering and the prevailing short-term considerations of the Central Asian states came to the fore in January-February 2009 when the leaders of Kyrgyzstan decided to remove the U.S. Gansi base deployed at the Manas airdrome and used to support the mission in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are moving in the opposite geopolitical directions and are vacillating in an asystemic way in the security-related market. In 2005, when Uzbekistan demanded that the United States withdraw their contingents stationed at the Khanabad airdrome because the active phase of the counterterrorist operation had come to an end, Kyrgyzstan refused to follow suit and pointed out that the Afghan operation was far from complete. Today, when relations between Uzbekistan and the United States (and the West as a whole) have warmed up enough to start talking about the possible return of the American contingents to the republic, Kyrgyzstan performed a reverse maneuver as if it believed that the military phase of the operation was complete. This coincided with the United States’ call on the Central Asian countries to become much more closely involved in the Afghan developments (including cooperation in the military operation); America wants to be able to use the entire range of Central Asian infrastructure potentials (of which the Manas airdrome is part) to support its troops in Afghanistan.

American analyst Stephen Blank has also pointed to the rather logical connection between the Central Asian states’ domestic and foreign policies, on the one hand, and the Afghan version of the Great Game, on the other. Having analyzed the entire chain of political events, as well as the direct and indirect factors that pushed President Bakiev to make his decision, he revealed the Russia-inspired geopolitical intrigue in which Moscow exchanged its economic support of Bishkek for the withdrawal of the American base.

⁹ Quoted from: M. Mihalka, *op. cit.*

This led him to the conclusion that despite its talk about cooperation and its stated concern over the Afghan developments Russia is guided by its imperial designs and anti-American sentiments to a much greater extent than by all other considerations. Stephen Blank has written: "The Russian leaders are convinced that the CSTO can fill the security vacuum the American pullout will leave behind. It borders on absurdity, though, to think that the CSTO forces will protect the region's countries against the threat of Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism.

"What does the Kremlin want? Are Putin and other Russian leaders planning another march to the south in an effort to revise the past by staging 'Afghanistan-2'? This is improbable. Russia, however, is obviously seeking a leading role with controlling functions in the military developments in Afghanistan. The Kremlin wants to demonstrate its 'privileged interests' in Central Asia by moving the United States away from the region **even if this contradicts Russia's strategic interests** (emphasis mine.—*F.T.*). This grandiose delusion will merely complicate the struggle against the Taliban."¹⁰

The geopolitical context is obvious: all of a sudden, and at an ill-timed moment, the American base turned out to be small change in the geopolitical bargain between Russia and the United States and Russia and the Central Asian countries.

- Indeed, first, why should economic aid be tied to the withdrawal of the American base, which cannot be described as an alternative to economic assistance? In fact, it was a factor of security-related aid.
- Second, American economic aid to Kyrgyzstan was discussed during the visit of CENTCOM Commander General David Petraeus to Bishkek. It seems that Moscow used the "stick and carrot" policy.
- Third, by obeying Russia Kyrgyzstan moved away from Afghan settlement at a time when its involvement, and that of its Central Asian neighbors for that matter, is most needed. This has done nothing for its international image.
- Fourth, Moscow's pressure on Bishkek obviously contradicts its support of the initiative of moving cargoes for the peacekeeping operations across Russia and Central Asia put forward at the Bucharest NATO summit of 2008.

The above and the worsening military-political situation in Afghanistan suggest that the current geopolitical reversal should be interpreted as a signal rather than a final decision. The decision to push the Gansi base away from Kyrgyzstan is hardly adequate and hardly timely. This is too obvious. Moscow and Washington, having synchronized their moves, have most likely included Tashkent and Bishkek in the planned shifts in the Afghan campaign. They will probably arrive at a common language in the direct and indirect discussion about the settlement. At the same time, it seems that Moscow wants Washington to accept Russia's right to have the final say when it comes to drawing the Central Asian countries into the Afghan campaign. This amounts to denying the local countries the right of independent decision.

Significantly, the geopolitical reversal followed the inauguration of the new president of the United States who, as a candidate, talked a lot about his country's greater involvement in Afghanistan. This suggests that Russia, the Central Asian countries, and the U.S./NATO have different ideas about Afghanistan as a geopolitical entity. Seen from Central Asia, this country, the closest neighbor and an important element of the Heartland's new function, is the final aim, which means that stability, peace, and rehabilitation are self-sufficient values. As great powers Russia and the United States treat it no so much as an individual country but as a toehold from which they can spread their power and influence far and wide.

¹⁰ S. Blank, "Kyrgyzskaia saga. Kompleksnyy vzgliad na sobytia vokrug bazy 'Manas,'" *Eurasianet*, 5 February, 2009.

Indeed, an ever growing number of analysts discerns in American politics certain “beyond Afghan” designs, i.e. the geopolitical intention to encircle Iran with American friends and pro-American regimes. Central Asia is given the very logical role of a NATO base from which the Alliance will further spread its impact.¹¹ Those who attended the international conference “Afghanistan, SCO, Security and Geopolitics of Central Eurasia” in June 2008 pointed to the divergencies between what the coalition was doing in Afghanistan and the ISAF’s and OEF’s stated aims. Much was said about the U.S.’s alleged desire to set up a “sanitary cordon” around Russia and Iran, to create a foothold against China, to oppose the attempts to set up anti-Western blocs similar to the CTO, SCO, etc.¹²

Seemingly well argued, these statements tend to ignore one extremely important factor, namely the role, interests, and prospects of Central Asia itself. I prefer to agree with Russian analyst V. Plastun, who says that “the geopolitical stakes are too high because Afghanistan is the pivot of the strategically important Central Asian region.”¹³ **Today, as in the past, the great powers probably attach strategic importance to Central Asia, yet it is for the region’s countries to adjust it.** This means that the alarmist forecasts along the lines of the “conspiracy theory” should take into account the possible involvement of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, which are dead set against anti-Russian, anti-Chinese, or any other “anti” projects.

The CSTO issue should be discussed separately. In September 2008 its Secretary General Nikolai Bordiuzha made public its members’ intention to set up a new military structure in Central Asia: “The CSTO members are alarmed by the military facilities and serious structures such as the ABM systems mushrooming around them. This suggests that we should set up a new military infrastructure on the CSTO borders and restore certain Soviet elements.”¹⁴ This is an eloquent confirmation of the “geopolitical stress” in which the Central Asian countries are functioning. One cannot but be baffled by the fact that the importance of these military structures is discussed in Russia and is practically ignored in Central Asia.

In February 2009 the CSTO summit passed a decision on the Collective Rapid Deployment Forces for Central Asia.

On 17 February, 2009 Commander of the U.S. CENTCOM General Petraeus visited Uzbekistan. The sides reached an agreement on transit from Europe to Afghanistan across Uzbekistan. International observers and the media have started talking about the Americans’ possible return to the Khanabad base they left in 2005.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

There is a certain logical connection between strategic friction in Afghanistan and the geopolitical reversals in Central Asia as mutually conditioned and mutually aggravating factors.

The geopolitical reversals are undoubtedly related to the political will and interests of the people in power and have little, or nothing, to do with classical geopolitics. This suggests a term the “geopolitics of regimes,” which is manifested in two aspects: attempts by the Central Asian regimes to gain geopolitical weight and the ad hoc reversing situation caused by the local states losing their political course.

¹¹ See: T. Shaymergenov, “Problems and Prospects of NATO’s Central Asian Strategy: The Role of Kazakhstan,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (50), 2008.

¹² See: *Afghanistan, ShOS, bezopasnost’ i geopolitika Tsentral’noy Evrazii. Materialy Mezhdunar. konf.*, ed. by A. Kniyazev, Bishkek, 2008.

¹³ See: V. Plastun, “Novye tendentsii v razvitiu situatsii v tsentral’noaziatskom regione k kontsu 2004 g.,” *Afghanistan i bezopasnost’ Tsentral’noy Azii*, ed. by A. Kniyazev, Ilim, Bishkek, 2004, p. 18.

¹⁴ *Kazakhstan segodnia*, 12 September, 2008 (see also [www.centrasia.org], 12 September, 2008).

Seen through the prism of critical geopolitics, these developments can be described as logical: the Heartland function was irreversibly changed when the Soviet Union, its curator, disappeared. The Heartland could not but develop into a zone of “geopolitics of regimes” because it was no longer part of a great power and therefore a static object. Today it is a stage on which the new independent states are acting (“experimenting” is a more suitable term), pushed by the whim of history and geography into the epicenter of an emerging new world order.

This explains why there are two coexisting and rivaling macro-geopolitical paradigms—imperial and democratic—in this part of the world. The former tends to restore the Heartland to its former static status, while the latter seeks a dynamic status for it based on functional openness. The micro-geopolitical vacillations of the Central Asian countries between the two paradigms are shown in the form of the foreign policy fluctuations of their regimes.

I totally agree with Azeri scholar Eldar Ismailov who says that in the new epoch the Heartland will acquire a new function, that of ensuring sustainable land communications along the parallels (West-East) and meridians (North-South) and therefore contributing to geopolitical and economic integration of the large and relatively isolated areas of Eurasia.¹⁵ This is a totally new function, which differs radically from the one Halford Mackinder put in a nutshell in his famous pronouncement.

The above suggests four conclusions.

- (1) The spontaneously emerging friction situations in Afghanistan should not delude anyone about the coalition forces’ limited potential, something that we can observe today. The mounting skepticism might develop into another friction. Indeed, what is said about the Taliban’s onslaught, about the ever larger territories falling under its control, breeds doubts. What will happen when the Talibs capture the capital? Where will the international forces be? Will they be defeated and driven away? I think that the present level of the Talibs’ activity and what is described as success can hardly reach higher points at the current level of international presence. Asymmetric wars do not end in victory of the weaker adversary; to win it should gain mass support.
- (2) Irrespective of whether the coalition has or has no “beyond Afghan” designs, the fact that keeps it together remains: there is Afghanistan; until its problem is resolved the coalition members cannot move on to other projects and designs. So far the critics of the United States and NATO have failed to offer alternative, conceptual or practical, models of the Afghan settlement. They have limited themselves to vague suggestions that the coalition forces should cooperate with the CSTO and SCO. No matter how justified the statements are about the Americans’ “beyond Afghan” designs in Afghanistan, the feeble attempts of the CSTO and SCO supporters to fit them into the Afghan campaign and company look just as geopolitically outdated. Closer scrutiny reveals that these structures have a primordial defect: they have not yet developed into security structures in their own right (this is especially true of SCO).
- (3) The geopolitical reversal in Central Asia confirmed an old truth: it is much easier to manipulate individual countries and the elements of “regime” geopolitics than to face them as a united geopolitical entity. Their micro-geopolitics may merely add to the strategic friction in Afghanistan, which will undermine their own interests. I have no doubts that Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, as members of the international counterterrorist coalition, should act in unison when it comes to the form and degree of their involvement in the Afghan settlement. Their contribution should not only be free from old geopolitics—it should be free from commercializing their involvement. Economic aid to these countries should not depend on the degree of their involvement in the counterterrorist efforts.

¹⁵ See: E. Ismailov, “Central Eurasia: Geopolitical Function in the 21st Century,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2, 2008.

- (4) If there is a key to the Afghan problem, it should be sought in Pakistan, the Afghan policy of which has successfully driven it into a corner. Today aid to Afghanistan is inseparable from extending aid to Pakistan, as a task of secondary importance. By helping the coalition the Central Asian countries may contribute to having a positive impact on Pakistan, the territory of which is used for the transit of 84 percent of the equipment moved to the American forces deployed in Afghanistan. So far the ISI is essentially the only source of intelligence about the terrorist acts al-Qa'eda and its branches in Pakistan are carrying out throughout the world.

Barnett Rubin and Ahmed Rashid have written in their article: "Unless the decision-makers in Pakistan decide to make stabilizing the Afghan government a higher priority than countering the Indian threat, the insurgency conducted from the bases in Pakistan will continue. Pakistan's strategic goals in Afghanistan place Pakistan at odds not just with Afghanistan and India, and with the U.S. objectives in the region, but with the entire international community."¹⁶

Therefore, I am convinced that the ISAF and the counterterrorist coalition as a whole have only one option: they should move ahead keeping in mind an offensive rather than defensive strategy. The ISAF forces should be given wider powers and expand their presence. The U.N. should play a leading role in settling the country's future. It should not remain in the ISAF's and OEF's shadow but become the main manager of the entire process both at the level of the counterterrorist operation and the country's rehabilitation.

¹⁶ B. Rubin, A. Rashid, "From Great Game to Great Bargain," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2008.

RUSSIA AND THE CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES: BILATERAL SECURITY COOPERATION

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Retaining its key role in Central Asia (CA) and in the post-Soviet expanse as a whole is one of the main priorities of the Russian Federation's current policy. Carrying out this strategic task was and still is directly related to the development of security cooperation, which, in

addition to being of mutual benefit in the difficult regional and international circumstances, also has a significant political and propagandist effect.

Despite the many disintegrating factors that accompanied the sovereign emergence of each of the post-Soviet republics after the collapse of the Soviet Union, their common historical past, as well as economic, cultural, linguistic, and other traditional ties continue to prompt both the Russian Federation and Central Asia to seek cooperation in both collective and national security. Whereby preference goes to bilateral relations

since it is this format that implies more specific and practical forms of military cooperation and is more confidential, making it possible to avoid any negative overtones associated with ambitions and mutual lack of understanding that are particularly vividly manifested in the multilateral format.¹

¹ Particularly within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Russia and Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is currently Russia's key partner in the Central Asian region, with which Moscow is building alliance relations.

Military cooperation. Since the time Kazakhstan gained its independence, partnership relations characterized by regular working meetings at different levels and the drawing up of common approaches to several issues of mutual interest in security have been established between the security ministries of both states.

Carrying out joint exercises. In order to elaborate an algorithm of joint actions, exercises are held on a regular basis involving detachments and contingents of the Russian and Kazakh armies, both within the framework of the CSTO and SCO and in the bilateral format. An agreement has even been reached between the military departments of Russia and Kazakhstan on holding annual joint large-scale military maneuvers from 2009 to 2011 in each of the states in turn.

Since the beginning of 2008, two major joint undertakings have been held, in which contingents of the Russian and Kazakh military departments participated. For example, in the first ten days of July 2008 the Russian-Kazakh Vzaimodeistvie-2008 exercises were held at the training center of Kazakhstan's Armed Forces land troops in the village of Gvardeiskiy (near Almaty), in which more than 2,000 Russian and Kazakh paratroopers, more than 40 airplanes and helicopters, and more than 240 units of military hardware participated. In turn, from the end of August until 27 September, 2008, Center-2008 tactical-strategic exercises involving troops from the Volga-Ural Military Okrug were held in compliance with the training plan of the RF land troops, at certain stages of which joint actions of detachments of the Russian and Kazakh Armed Forces were elaborated, including antiterrorist measures.

Training military personnel. An important element of Russian-Kazakh military cooperation is the training of Kazakh servicemen in Russia. Moscow and Astana have agreed to carry out training of Kazakhstan's citizens according to the same programs as Russian servicemen based on contemporary military-doctrinal developments. More than 2,500 Kazakh citizens underwent training at higher educational institutions of the Russian Defense Ministry and other security structures. This amounts to approximately one third of the total number of citizens of the CIS countries who obtained military and specialized education in Russia.

Using military facilities. Kazakhstan boasts the largest military facilities of the former Soviet Union in the Near Abroad, which are still vital for ensuring Russia's defense potential. Russia is continuing to operate several large facilities in Kazakhstan on the basis of bilateral agreements:

- the 5th state firing range of the Russian Defense Ministry (the Baikonur space-launch complex) in the Kzyl-Orda Region;
- the firing ranges of the 929th Chkalov State Flight Test Center of the Russian Defense Ministry in the West Kazakhstan and Atyrau regions;
- the 20th detached test station of the 4th state multiservice firing range of the Russian Defense Ministry (the Kapustin Yar firing range, Astrakhan Region) in the West Kazakhstan Region for testing missile technology and ammunition;
- the 10th state firing range of the Russian Defense Ministry (the Sary Shagan firing range) on the territory of the Karaganda, Zhambyl, Aktiubinsk, and Kzyl-Orda regions for testing anti-missile and anti-aircraft defense systems;²
- the 5580th test base (former 11th state firing range of the Russian Defense Ministry—the Emba firing range) in the Aktiubinsk Region for combat firing practice, scientific research, and testing tactical air defense weapons;
- the detached radio-technical unit of the 3rd detached army of ballistic missile defense of the Russian Space Forces (the Balkhash-9 facility) in Priozersk on Lake Balkhash belonging to the united missile attack warning system.

What is more, a detached regiment of the Russian Transport Air Forces is stationed at the aerodrome in Kostanai for carrying out the transport support measures being executed at the abovementioned military facilities.

Military-technical cooperation. During its first years of independence, Kazakhstan did not need additional purchases of military hardware and ammunition for its national armed forces. Kazakhstan inherited essentially the entire material-technical base of the Central Asian Military Okrug (SAMO), to which the Kazakh S.S.R. belonged, from the Soviet Union. But by the end of the 1990s, the combat materiel of Kazakhstan's Armed Forces was in need of renovation. There was also the need for state-of-the-art weapons.

In February 2000, the Kazakh Kazspetseksport State Enterprise and Russia's Rosvooruzhenie Company signed a general contract that set forth the main vectors of military-technical cooperation between Moscow and Astana, and in January 2001 a corresponding bilateral commission had already been created. Russia began to supply Kazakhstan with the latest weapons, combat materiel, spare parts, and components. On 1 January, 2004, an agreement came into force on privileged conditions for selling Kazakhstan military equipment at Russia's domestic prices.

In recent years, military-technical cooperation between Moscow and Astana has become noticeably more active. In this respect, it is also characteristic that Kazakhstan's mid-term national security strategy until 2015³ envisages in particular that further renovation of the national armed forces' combat materiel will mainly be realized by purchasing exclusively Russian weapons and materiel.⁴

Military-economic and scientific-technical cooperation. Kazakhstan has immense military production potential. In particular there are several large industrial enterprises in the republic that used to belong to the Soviet military-industrial complex:

- the Granit Joint-Stock Company in Almaty that tested and serviced air defense complexes in Soviet times;

² Due to organizational-establishment measures, the 10th firing range (Sary Shagan) was included as a structural subdivision in the 4th state central multiservice firing range of the Russian Defense Ministry.

³ Adopted in February 2007 at a session of Kazakhstan's Security Council.

⁴ Repair and modernization will also be carried out at Russian enterprises.

- the Kirov Machine-Building Plant (for the manufacture of torpedo battery) in Almaty;
- the Uralskiy zavod Zenit Joint-Stock Company (for the manufacture of trawls, mine sweepers, and spare parts for torpedoes) in Uralsk;
- the ZIKSTO Joint-Stock Company (formerly the Kuibyshev machine-building plant for the manufacture of anti-ship mines) in Petropavlovsk;
- the Zavod im. Kirova Joint-Stock Company (for the manufacture of maritime communications) in Petropavlovsk.

The listed enterprises largely fell idle after the collapse of the U.S.S.R., executing only isolated orders from the Russian Defense Ministry under intergovernmental agreements. Moscow and Astana, which are interested in preserving and developing these ties, are looking at the possibility of placing new orders with these enterprises both for the needs of the Russian Armed Forces and to organize joint export to third countries. Russia and Kazakhstan have already begun drawing up specific agreements aimed at realizing this mutual interest.

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On the whole, the relatively high level of Russian-Kazakh security cooperation at the current stage is the result of the intensive and rather enhanced interaction throughout the entire range of key issues in bilateral relations. Security cooperation between the two countries will continue to thrive if the present level of confidence between Moscow and Astana is retained in the future. Kazakhstan, like other CA states actively carrying out a multi-vector approach in their foreign policy, is showing a greater interest in expanding security cooperation with the West too, particularly with the U.S. and other NATO member states. The Steppe Eagle tactical special peacekeeping exercises held in September 2008 at the Ili firing range of the Kazakhstan Armed Forces in the Almaty Region with the participation of NATO contingents is graphic confirmation of this.

Russia and Kyrgyzstan

Russia regards Kyrgyzstan as an important element of the regional security system. In turn, despite Bishkek's multi-vector approach to its choice of foreign policy orientation, relations with Moscow have always been one of the republic's top priorities.

Military cooperation. Russia played an important role in building Kyrgyzstan's national armed forces and other security structures. And although Russian-Kyrgyz military cooperation in the 1990s was mainly partnership in nature, it did not have many practical achievements to show for it. This was not entirely Russia's fault, it was also the result of inconsistent steps and Bishkek's frequent change in orientation when forming its national security system.

Military cooperation between Moscow and Bishkek reached a qualitatively new level after an armed group of militants of the so-called Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan broke into the Batken Region of Kyrgyzstan in the summer of 1990 and after Vladimir Putin and his team came to power in Russia. Contacts between the security structures of Russia and Kyrgyzstan became more regular, particularly with respect to coordinating the fight against international terrorism. It is no accident that, on the initiative of the Russian side, Bishkek was chosen as the site for setting up a regional branch of the CIS Antiterrorist Center (ATC) and headquarters of the Joint Rapid Deployment Force (JRDF) of the CSTO in Central Asia in August 2001. The opening of a Russian air force base in Kant on Kyrgyzstan's territory

in 2003, which became a component of the CSTO JRDF contingents in the region, was a propitious event in Russian-Kyrgyz military cooperation.

Carrying out joint exercises. In order to intensify interaction between the military departments of the two countries, joint training exercises are carried out on a regular basis. In particular, in order to acquire practical skills, air defense contingents of Kyrgyzstan's Armed Forces carry out joint field firing practice with Russian contingents almost every year at the Ashuluk firing range in the Astrakhan Region of Russia. In addition, in October 2006, Yug-2006 joint antiterrorist exercises were held near Osh during which special antiterrorist contingents of both countries worked out cooperation issues to the last detail while carrying out exercises to hold off the attack of a potential enemy in the form of a group of international terrorists who burst into (according to the exercise scenario) the republic's territory.

Training military personnel. More than 800 Kyrgyz specialists have undergone training at Russia's higher military institutions. Since 2000, more than 40 senior officers of Kyrgyzstan's Armed Forces have taken advanced training courses at military academies in Russia. In addition, since 2006, Kyrgyzstan's air pilots have participated in flight training camps at the Kant airbase.

Using military facilities. Russia has several major facilities in Kyrgyzstan:

- the 999th Kant airbase of the 5th army of the Russian Air Force and air defense armed forces at Kant in the Chu Region (20 km from Bishkek);
- the 954th Koi-Sary test base of antisubmarine weapons of the Russian Navy at Karakol in the Issyk Kul Region (east shore of Lake Issyk Kul);
- the 338th communication unit of the Russian Navy in Kara-Balta (Chaldovar) in the Chu Region, which ensures communication of the Main Headquarters of the Russian Navy with submarines and surface ships on military duty in the Pacific and Indian oceans;
- the 1st automatic seismic station and 17th radio-seismic laboratory of the Seismic Service of the Russian Defense Ministry in Ichke-Suu in the Issyk Kul Region and in Mailuu-Suu in the Jalal-Abad Region for monitoring nuclear weapons tests.

In the future, Russia intends to expand its military presence in Kyrgyzstan, primarily by increasing the number of personnel and amount of combat materiel at the Kant airbase. In particular there are plans to carry out additional deployment of front aviation airplanes, Su-27, MiG-29, operational trainers L-39, and Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopters.

Military-technical cooperation. Military-technical cooperation between Russia and Kyrgyzstan, like security cooperation between the two countries on the whole, is cyclic in nature. Whereas in the mid-1990s it underwent a slump, at the beginning of this century it experienced an upswing.

Between 2001 and 2005, Russia delivered a wide range of combat materiel and weapons to Kyrgyzstan totaling tens of millions of dollars. Beginning in 2005, Russia began to supply Kyrgyzstan with military equipment totaling 4.5 million dollars annually as rent compensation for use of the military facilities on its territory. In 2006, the defense ministries of both countries signed an agreement on rendering gratuitous military-technical aid to Kyrgyzstan for more than 27 million dollars.

In so doing, modernizing the air defense equipment of Kyrgyzstan's Armed Forces is one of the main vectors in the development of Russian-Kyrgyz military-technical cooperation in the near future.⁵

Military-economic and scientific-technical cooperation. On the basis of an intergovernmental agreement On Production and Scientific-Technical Cooperation of Defense Enterprises signed in

⁵ In particular, there are plans to replace the outmoded C-125 missile divisions with more up-to-date C-300 PMU-2 Favorit surface-to-air missile systems.

1994, certain pieces of military equipment are produced in Kyrgyzstan under Russian contract. Russia is most interested in the following industrial enterprises:

- the Dastan Joint-Stock Company in Bishkek, which is the only enterprise in the CIS that manufactures VA-111 Shkval underwater missiles for the Russian Navy;
- the Russian-Kyrgyz Ozero Joint Venture (Russia owns 95% of the shares) in Karakol on Lake Issyk Kul engaged in the development and testing of new types of torpedo battery;
- the Ainur Joint-Stock Company and the Bishkek stamping plant in Bishkek that manufacture cartridges for small arms;
- the Zhanar Joint-Stock Company in Bishkek, which used to manufacture on-board computer equipment for military aircraft but since 2002 has switched to putting out technical border defense equipment.

It should be noted that a whole series of weapons manufactured in Kyrgyzstan have high export potential. In this respect, Moscow and Bishkek are elaborating ways to organize joint production of military equipment for exporting to third countries. This essentially concerns the manufacture of naval weapons for ensuring Russia's fulfillment of major contracts with India and China.

Cooperation in border security. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia assumed the obligation of helping Kyrgyzstan to defend its border with China, as well as create national border troops. For this purpose, on 5 December, 1992, corresponding interstate agreements were signed on forming a Group of Border Troops (GBT) of the Russian Federation in Kyrgyzstan totaling 5,000 men. Russian border guards defended Kyrgyzstan's state border with China until 1999, after which Bishkek asked that border defense be transferred to Kyrgyz border detachments. Essentially the entire Russian GBT material-technical base was gratuitously transferred to Kyrgyzstan.

After the Russian border group was withdrawn only an Operative Group of the RF FSS Border Service was left in Kyrgyzstan. In compliance with the agreements, the Group's tasks included rendering the Kyrgyz border structures consultation assistance in resolving organizational issues related to technical support, border defense, and the training of border service specialists.

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On the whole, security cooperation between Russia and Kyrgyzstan is on the up and up. Moscow appears to be trying to expand its military presence there by means of cooperation in this vector, since the Russian leadership is concerned about the instability of the domestic political situation in the republic and the high level of influence of external forces on it. Russia has to keep in mind the multi-vector nature of Kyrgyzstan's cooperation with other countries, particularly the U.S. (keeping in mind the American base on Kyrgyz territory), as well as with other NATO member states and China.

Russia and Tajikistan

Tajikistan occupies a special place in Russia's bilateral security cooperation system with the Central Asian states. Since the time the republic acquired its independence to the present day there has been a rather large contingent of the Russian army on its territory, which has also been taking the most direct participation in ensuring Tajikistan's security and stability.

Military cooperation. Russia has been taking extremely active and efficient part in building Tajikistan's national security structures. The peak of Russian-Tajik military cooperation came at the beginning of the 1990s when the civil war began in Tajikistan (1992-1996). It was the Russian Federation that largely bore the main responsibility for maintaining the Tajik security structures at that time and ensuring the success of the peace process.

In 1993, in compliance with a decision of the Council of Heads of the CIS Member States, Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPF) were created in Tajikistan based on Russia's 201st motorized infantry division. In so doing, Russia became a kind of guarantor of the peace in Tajikistan and prevented escalation of the tension in the region as a whole, particularly keeping in mind the permanent military-political instability in neighboring Afghanistan. After dissolution of the JPF, an agreement was reached between Moscow and Dushanbe on retaining a Russian military group in Tajikistan within the 201st motorized infantry division, as well as several support units.

In addition, keeping in mind that when the Soviet united air defense system collapsed and Tajikistan was essentially deprived of the possibility of ensuring the security of its own airspace, Moscow also helped Dushanbe to create a national air defense system. The first Tajik air defense division began its combat duty as early as 2000, and since 2001 squads of national air defense forces have been regularly traveling to the Russian Ashuluk firing range in the Astrakhan Region to conduct firing exercises.

At the same time, it was precisely between 2001 and 2004 that military cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan underwent a certain slump. Due to the more active role played by the U.S. and other Western countries in the region, the Tajik leadership decided to re-examine the nature of Russia's military presence in Tajikistan. This was primarily expressed in the foot dragging at the talks on the status and conditions of Russia's 201st motorized infantry division's stay in the republic. Dushanbe also stated the need to accelerate transfer of defense of Tajikistan's state border to the Tajik border guards and withdrawal of the Russian border troops that had been defending the Tajik-Afghan and Tajik-Chinese border.

The fall of 2004 can be considered the beginning of the new stage in Russian-Tajik military cooperation, when Russian President Vladimir Putin's state visit to Dushanbe saw a breakthrough in settling the contradictions that had emerged. As a result, the Russian and Tajik leaders signed a whole series of bilateral agreements, including on the conditions of the Russian military contingent's stay on Tajik territory and on the transformation of the 201st motorized infantry division into a Russian Federation armed forces military base.

Subsequently, the contractual and legal base of Russian-Tajik military cooperation was enhanced and expanded. On 11 June, 2008 the Russian State Duma ratified an agreement with Tajikistan on joint planning of the use of troops (forces) in the interests of ensuring joint security. The Russian chiefs-of-staff believe that ratification of the agreement will help to consolidate efforts in ensuring joint defense within the military-strategic space of both countries.

Carrying out joint exercises. In order to elaborate algorithms of joint actions of the Russian and Tajik armed forces, exercises are being carried out on a regular basis at the Tajik Liaur firing range (20 km north of Dushanbe) involving contingents from the 201st Russian military base and Tajik army.

Training military personnel. More than 500 Tajik citizens have undergone training at Russia's military higher education institutions and acquired regular officer ranks. Approximately 50 senior officers finished advanced training courses at Russia's Armed Forces military academies.

Using military facilities. A large Russian military contingent is currently stationed in Tajikistan, including more than 10 military units and detachments of different types of troops:

- the 201st military base (former 201st motorized infantry division) in Dushanbe as part of the 201st motorized infantry division, the 92nd motorized infantry regiment, the 998th self-pro-

- pelled artillery regiment, the 1098th surface-to-air missile regiment, and several other detachments;
- the 191st motorized infantry regiment in Kurgan-Tiub and the 149th motorized infantry regiment in Kulob belonging to the 201st military base;
- the 670th aviation group and 303rd detached helicopter squad at the Dushanbe aerodrome for rendering air and fire support to Russian detachments and Tajik armed forces units in the event of hostilities on Tajik territory;
- the 1109th detached optical-electronic unit of the Nurek space control system (the 7680 Okno facility) near Nurek for detecting the launching of ballistic missiles and following their flight path throughout the entire range of altitudes of spacecraft movement over Eurasia.⁶

Military-technical cooperation. Tajikistan is the only country in Central Asia that received practically nothing during the divvying up of the former Soviet Army's property. In contrast to the national armed forces of other Central Asian republics created on the basis of military detachments belonging to the Central Asian Military Okrug (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and partially Tajikistan) and the Turkestan Military Okrug (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan), the Tajik armed forces were essentially created from national militia detachments. Arsenals of combat equipment, weapons, and ammunition in Tajikistan remained mainly under the control of Russia's 201st motorized infantry division.

So due to the civil war that broke out in Tajikistan, Moscow began rendering every possible military and technical assistance to the government forces. Deliveries of weapons and ammunition were regularly made from the storehouses of the 201st motorized infantry division and from Russia, and technical specialists helped to repair the combat materiel damaged during the hostilities. At the end of the civil war, the weapons and combat materiel of the Tajik Armed Forces continued to be serviced at Russian enterprises.

After President Vladimir Putin visited Dushanbe in the fall of 2004 military-technical cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan underwent a noticeable upswing. Between 2005 and 2006 Tajikistan was offered gratuitous military aid totaling more than 26 million dollars. In addition, in October 2007, an agreement was reached on transferring a large part of the combat materiel and ammunition of the 201st Russian military base to the Tajik Armed Forces. This process began in 2008 and is continuing at a steady pace. The equipment and ammunition transferred will total around 1 billion dollars.

Military-economic and scientific-technical cooperation. Several enterprises of the former Soviet military-industrial complex in Tajikistan are of interest to Russia. These enterprises are mainly located in the Sogd Region. They are primarily the 6th integrated mining and chemical plant (the Vostokredmet state enterprise) in Chkalovsk, at which uranium enrichment is carried out, as well as ore-mining uranium mines in the villages of Taboshar, Adrasman, and Naugarzan-Chigrik.

Cooperation in border security. Russia has been playing an active part both in creating national border structures and in defending Tajikistan's state border, for which the Group of Russian Border Troops (GRBT) was formed. Russian border guards played a perceptible role in localizing the civil conflict in Tajikistan. Largely thanks to the actions of the GRBT, the command of the United Tajik Opposition was unable to supply the regions of the Pamir area officially opposed to Dushanbe with enough weapons and ammunition from the bases on Afghan territory.

But at the beginning of 2000, on the initiative of the Tajik side, sections of the border began to be transferred to the defense of national border detachments, a process which was completed by the end of 2004. On the basis of the Agreement On Cooperation in Border Issues of 16 October, 2004

⁶ On the basis of an intergovernmental agreement, in 2006 the Nurek optical electronic unit was transferred to the Russian Federation by way of settling Tajikistan's debt to Russia.

only military advisors of the Russian FSS Border Service remain in Tajikistan, who are called upon to help create Tajik border detachments and provide consultation in organizing defense of the republic's state border.

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On the whole, in recent years Russian-Tajik security cooperation has reached a sufficiently high level precisely with respect to its benefit both to Moscow and to Dushanbe. It is of vital importance for the Russian Federation that facilities with a significant role to play in the Russian security system in Central Asia are located on Tajik territory. The Tajik leadership, in turn, which is concerned about the extremely unpredictable situation in neighboring Afghanistan, regards Russia's military presence as an important external factor of the country's stability and security. Nevertheless, Russian-Tajik security relations are not entirely bright. The Tajik leadership, which has been increasingly counting on alternative sources for obtaining military aid in recent years, primarily from the West, is showing a growing capacity for adopting decisions (as was the case, for example, in 2001-2004) that run counter to Russian-Tajik partnership relations.

Russia and Uzbekistan

The Republic of Uzbekistan occupies an extremely important place in Russia's security cooperation with the Central Asian states since along with Kazakhstan and due to the republic's geopolitical, economic, demographic, and military potential, it is objectively a key state in the region. Uzbekistan has the most combat-ready and well-equipped armed forces in the region, which also have direct combat experience in carrying out special operations in mountain conditions.

Military cooperation. In the first years of independence, military cooperation between Russia and Uzbekistan was quite active; they were partners at that time. It is no accident that it was Russia and Uzbekistan that initiated the signing of the CIS Collective Security Treaty (CST) in Tashkent in May 1992, which was the first attempt to form a security system in the post-Soviet expanse. At the beginning of the civil war in Tajikistan Moscow and Tashkent closely coordinated their actions to render military assistance to the Tajik governmental formations. Along with Russia's 201st motorized infantry division, a composite battalion of the Uzbek Armed Forces formed part of the joint peace-keeping forces for maintaining peace in Tajikistan.

But largely due to the policy of Yeltsin's administration from the middle to the end of the 1990s Uzbekistan began to actively implement a strategy aimed primarily at rapprochement with the U.S. and NATO. Correspondingly, the intensity of Russian-Uzbek bilateral military cooperation noticeably declined at that time, and cooperation itself began to be increasingly for the record, limited to inconsequential meetings and sittings. In 1999, Uzbekistan decided not to participate in the collective security system within the CST.

The events of 9/11 brought Uzbekistan and the U.S. even closer together. Uzbekistan became a key link in Central Asia in the U.S.'s antiterrorism struggle in Afghanistan, and an American military base was created in the settlement of Khanabad.

But due to the slowly growing disappointment in the efficiency of the U.S.'s policy both in Afghanistan and in the Central Asian region as a whole, Uzbekistan began to take systemic steps to restore its relations with Moscow. On 16 June, 2004 a Treaty on Strategic Partnership was signed between Russia and Uzbekistan, and in 2005 Uzbekistan reached the level of alliance relations with

Russia after enforcing them in a corresponding treaty. According to this treaty, Russia and Uzbekistan pledge each other support in the event of aggression against one of the sides. In this case, the other side, by exercising its right to collective self-defense, renders the necessary assistance, including military, and also provides support using other means at its disposal.

Carrying out joint exercises. In contrast to the armed forces of other Central Asian states, the Uzbek Armed Forces have been taking very infrequent part in joint measures with Russian detachments to organize combat interaction. The first joint tactical exercises of special detachments of the Russian and Uzbek armed forces were not held until 2005 at the Farish firing range (Djizak Region) in the Uzbek mountains, in which 200 Russian servicemen took part. Similar exercises called Combat Fraternity-2006 were held at the firing range of the North Caucasian Military Okrug (the Krasnodar Territory). In addition, at the end of 2007, the military departments of both countries reached an agreement on annual, beginning in 2008, joint training sessions of air defense and air force specialists at Russia's Ashuluk firing range (the Astrakhan Region).

Training military personnel. More than 250 Uzbek officers have taken training courses at military higher educational institutions and specialized establishments of the Russian Federation. Compared with other Central Asian countries, this small number is explained by the fact that Uzbekistan itself has an extensive network of military training institutions, including two academies (of the Armed Forces and Ministry of the Interior), and its officers have also been undergoing partial training in specific fields of education in countries of the Far Abroad.

Using military facilities. There are no military facilities in Uzbekistan that Russia could rent in the interests of its military department. However, the Treaty on Strategic Partnership envisages the possibility of creating an CSTO military airbase. In addition, according to Art 8 of this Treaty, in order to ensure security, maintain peace and stability, and repulse external aggression, Russia and Uzbekistan grant each other the right, when necessary, to use their military facilities on the basis of additional agreements.

Military-technical cooperation. Uzbekistan inherited the impressive material-technical base of the former Turkestan Military Okrug from the Soviet Union. So in the first years of the country's independence the national armed forces did not experience any particular need for combat materiel and weapons. On the basis of the Agreement on Principles of Mutual Technical and Material Support of the Armed Forces signed on 2 March, 1994, in the 1990s Russia mainly delivered only ammunition to Uzbekistan and carried out warranty repair of military hardware at Russian enterprises.⁷

When Russia and Uzbekistan reached the level of alliance relations, the range and amount of military equipment delivered significantly increased. According to the estimates of the Russian Defense Ministry, the volume of military-technical cooperation with Uzbekistan amounts to several tens of millions of dollars. The matter primarily concerns deliveries of the latest small arms, ammunition, spare parts for armored tank hardware, air defense equipment, and the repair of aerotechnics.

Military-economic and scientific-technical cooperation. On the basis of an intergovernmental agreement On Production and Scientific-Technical Cooperation of Defense Enterprises of 26 January, 1994, production relations between Russia and Uzbekistan in this sphere have been continuing, although they are cyclical in nature. At the current stage, enterprises of the Uzbek aviation industry are of the greatest interest to the Russian Federation:

- the Tashkent Chkalov Aviation Production Association, which since Soviet days has been the head enterprise in the assembly of Il-76 military transport planes and their modifications that comprise the basis of the Russian air force transport aviation fleet;⁸

⁷ But it should also be noted that Yeltsin's administration essentially sabotaged the rendering of urgent military-technical assistance to Uzbekistan (mainly deliveries of ammunition) in the summer of 1998 (the assistance was necessary because of the advance of Taliban formations toward the Uzbek-Afghan border), which noticeably complicated bilateral relations.

⁸ From the mid-1990s to 2001, the Tashkent Chkalov Aviation Production Association essentially received no orders from Russia for the assembly of new planes, although the plant did not cease servicing Il-76 airplanes (both at the head

- the Russian-Uzbek UzRosAvia Joint Venture in Chirchik (the Tashkent Region) created on the basis of intergovernmental agreements signed in March 2007 and intended for repairing and servicing military Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopters.

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On the whole, the current level of Russian-Uzbek bilateral security cooperation is quite high. Moscow is showing an interest in Uzbekistan since the republic is objectively a key link in the collective security system being formed under Russia's aegis in the region and has strong armed forces and high military-technical and military-economic potential. Uzbekistan, in turn, is vitally interested in stability in Central Asia and maintains sufficiently close and affiliate relations with Russia in the security sphere. At the same time, Uzbekistan is also willing to develop cooperation with other countries, including the U.S. and its NATO allies, as well as China. It appears that this is based on the strict understanding that, particularly due to the instability in neighboring Afghanistan, ignoring the desire of other external forces to cooperate with Tashkent will obviously not promote regional stability.

Russia and Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan traditionally occupies a special position in security cooperation issues with Russia. This is largely explained both by Moscow's mistakes and blunders in its policy in the post-Soviet expanse as a whole and in the Turkmen vector in particular and by the foreign policy Ashgabad has been following since it acquired national independence. Noteworthy in this respect is the fact that Turkmenistan is the only state in the post-Soviet expanse that is not a member of any military-political bloc.

As early as 31 July, 1992, Moscow and Ashgabad signed a basic document, the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation, on the basis of which Russia has been acting as the guarantor of Turkmenistan's security. At the same time the Treaty on Joint Measures Regarding the Creation of the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan was signed. On the basis of the agreements reached, numerous detachments of the air force and air defense of the former U.S.S.R. Armed Forces, as well as contingents of border troops in Turkmenistan, were under Russian jurisdiction. The other land military contingents of the former Turkestan Military Okrug—three motorized infantry divisions and one training center with mobilization resource for one division, as well as several other detachments—were to be completely transferred to the Turkmenistan Defense Ministry over the following ten years.

During this transition period, Russia was obligated to render military-technical assistance to the national armed forces, as well as pay the Turkmen side compensation for the right to deploy its contingents in Turkmenistan's territory, while Turkmenistan shouldered the expenses for maintaining and supporting the joint affiliation detachments. The Joint Command created in 1992 was called upon to

Tashkent enterprise and by means of plant specialists traveling directly to Russian flight detachments). Since 2003 there has been a revival in relations between the Tashkent Chkalov Aviation Production Association and the enterprises of the Russian aviation industrial complex, in particular with the Iliushin Aviation Complex, and corresponding loading of the plant with new orders. Rosoboronexport began placing orders with the Tashkent Chkalov Aviation Production Association for Il-76 airplanes for third countries. In October 2007, an agreement was reached on the assembly at the Tashkent Chkalov Aviation Production Association of a large consignment of military reconnaissance planes on the basis of Il-114 airplanes. Russia is planning to receive a total of 28 planes of this type before 2015.

coordinate the security efforts of the two states. A task force of the Russian Defense Ministry functioned in Ashgabad to participate in the work of the command between 1992 and 1994.

In addition, in 1993 Moscow and Ashgabad signed the undated Treaty on Joint Defense of Turkmenistan's State Border and Status of the Russian Border Guards in the Republic. In compliance with it, in March 1994 a Task Force of the Russian Federal Border Service was created with a total of up to 3,000 people. The personnel of the Federal Border Service Task Force rendered assistance to Turkmen border guards in defending the Turkmenistan border with Iran and Afghanistan.

Whereas the signing of these two documents initially helped Russia to retain a rather strong position in Turkmenistan, over time the situation began to rapidly change. Due to Russia's essentially pro-Western orientation and extreme underestimation of the importance of the post-Soviet expanse, in the mid-1990s the vector of Ashgabad's foreign policy tipped in favor of Turkey and the U.S. In 1994, Turkmenistan became the first Central Asian state to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program and acquire the right to partial participation in NATO's undertakings. This, along with other actions of the Turkmen and Russian leadership, had a negative effect on security cooperation between Moscow and Ashgabad.

As a result of the progressive cooling off in relations between Russia and Turkmenistan, Ashgabad withdrew from the Treaty on Joint Measures Regarding the Creation of the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan and later decided to disband the Joint Command. In 1999, the Turkmen side announced its desire to withdraw from the Treaty on Joint Defense of the State Border as well, as a result of which the Russian border guards were forced to leave Turkmenistan. By the end of the 1990s, security cooperation between Turkmenistan and Russia had essentially been curtailed.

Significant improvement in these countries' relations was first seen after Vladimir Putin's administration came to power in Russia. Expressing his extreme interest in Turkmen gas, the newly elected Russian president picked Turkmenistan as one of the places for his first trips in May 2000, whereby reviving the dialogue with the Turkmen leader on a wide range of issues, primarily the gas problem. But the main breakthrough in relations occurred at the beginning of 2003 during Saparmurat Niyazov's visit to Moscow, when the sides signed two main agreements—on long-term (for 25 years) gas export from Turkmenistan and on security cooperation. The latter envisaged in particular cooperation between Russia and Turkmenistan in the fight against international terrorism and the illicit circulation of arms and drugs, which correspondingly implied closer coordination of actions between the Russian and Turkmen security structures.

In particular, a protocol was signed at that time which set forth the basic vectors and primary tasks for stepping up military-technical cooperation. Specific tasks were defined by the Russian side for rendering assistance to the Turkmen Defense Ministry in the technical servicing, repair, and metrological support of weapons and military hardware and in creating a joint repair enterprise. The composition and functions of the Committee for Military-Technical Cooperation between the military departments of both countries were also stipulated. But the agreements reached were not implemented due to the political crisis that arose the same year between Moscow and Ashgabad regarding dual citizenship. Until Niyazov's death at the end of 2006, relations between Russia and Turkmenistan were more political and declarative in nature and limited only to deliveries of Turkmen gas to Russia.

When President Berdymukhammedov came to power in Turkmenistan at the beginning of 2007, Ashgabad showed a growing willingness to raise relations with Russia to a new level, including in security. This issue, along with the energy question, was examined as early as the spring of 2007 at the talks between presidents Berdymukhammedov and Putin, during which Moscow managed to convince Astana and Ashgabad to participate in building the Caspian gas pipeline. Since this time, Turkmenistan has been gradually restoring its security cooperation with Russia as well, primarily developing the military-technical component of cooperation.

In July 2008, on the eve of new Russian President Dmitri Medvedev's visit to Turkmenistan, the Russian defense minister visited Ashgabad for the first time in the last few years. During the talks with his Turkmen colleague Army General A. Mamedgeldyev, A. Serdiukov noted the activated cooperation between the military departments of the two countries and its ascent over the past two years to a qualitatively new level. This was evidenced in particular by the renewed training of Turkmen servicemen at the military educational institutions of the Russian Defense Ministry, which is currently being carried out on a privileged basis.

The signing of a contract in the summer of 2008 for Turkmenistan's purchase of six sets of Smerch multiple launch rocket systems from Russia also shows the intensification of Russian-Turkmen military-technical cooperation. This is the first large military-technical deal between Russia and Turkmenistan in the past ten years (the sum of the contract amounts to some 70 million dollars).

So it appears to be no coincidence that the head of the Turkmen military department visited the international Nizhny Tagil-2008 exhibition of weapons, military hardware, and ammunitions, at which time he expressed the intention of his country to purchase materiel and weaponry in Russia, as well as have the old equipment upgraded.

Russian President Dmitri Medvedev's visit in July 2008 to Ashgabad and the fact that more agreements were reached with the Turkmenistan leadership on gas projects, particularly on the volumes and directions of Turkmen gas transit until 2025, show the importance of the Turkmen vector for Moscow. This circumstance will largely determine Russia's striving to develop multifaceted cooperation with Turkmenistan, including in security, where Russia, compared with other players in the Central Asian expanse, still has significant advantages.

* * *

On the whole, it can be said with a certain amount of confidence that the development of security cooperation between Moscow and Ashgabad has recently found its second wind. Whereby it is obvious that the desire to cooperate is mainly motivated by a pragmatic approach and taking mutual account of national interests. Russia wants to establish long-term relations with Turkmenistan, including in security, which is helping to fortify Russia's energy position. In turn, Turkmenistan is striving today as never before to go beyond cooperation exclusively in the gas sphere when building its relations with its partners, including Russia, in order to diversify its economy. It seems that the extent to which Russia is able to offer Turkmenistan advantageous forms of economic cooperation in particular, by coordinating its geopolitical and energy interests with Ashgabad's interests, will largely predetermine the future of Russian-Turkmen relations, including in security.

Conclusion

By gaining a clearer understanding of Central Asia as an expanse in which it can realize its vitally important interests, Russia does not want to allow other states to become entrenched there. This is directly related to strengthening its security cooperation with the Central Asian countries, primarily in the bilateral format, which is the most effective and at the same time less costly (for example compared with developing full-fledged economic relations) policy tool.

In turn, the security threats and challenges in Central Asia posed by global, regional, and domestic problems and contradictions are shaping the CA countries' reciprocal interest in developing closer security cooperation with Russia.

- **First**, none of the Central Asian states feels completely safe being located next to one of the most unstable zones on the planet—Afghanistan. The ongoing chaos, which could at any moment spread to the neighboring states, is mainly generated by the growing resistance to Hamid Karzai's ruling pro-Western regime from anti-governmental forces in the context of the ruined economy and ubiquitous corruption and the existence of regional ethnic leaders' armed groups that are not subordinate to Kabul.
- **Second**, in conditions of the unresolved socioeconomic problems in the Central Asian countries, the influence of different religious extremist organizations, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Islamic Movement of Turkestan, and others, is continuing to steadily rise despite the measures being carried out to expose, prevent, and stop their activity.
- **Third**, the complicated issues involving borders, territories, and natural resources are also feeding the continuing contradictions and problems among the Central Asian countries and could lead to interstate conflicts in the future.

However, there has been no significant progress so far in security cooperation between the Russian Federation and Central Asia. Nor has the level of confidence inherent in strategic allies been reached. By implementing a multi-vector approach in their foreign policy, all of Moscow's Central Asian partners without exception are also showing an increased interest in greater security cooperation with the West, particularly with the U.S. and other NATO member states.

It also seems that the new trends in the development of the international situation around Russia, largely caused by the most recent events in the Caucasus, as well as the world financial-economic crisis, could make significant adjustments to the cooperation issues in security between the Russian Federation and Central Asia. Whereby these adjustments may not necessarily help to strengthen the Russian-Central Asian alliance.

ARMENIA: A DEFENSE REFORM THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

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Introduction

Armenia can be considered as the Switzerland of the Caucasus, both having a mountainous, lacustrine, and landlocked territory. Armenia's current borders have been unable to contain the marvels of its ancient civilization; of its scattered nationality; and its historical herit-

age. The solidity of its culture has clashed during centuries with an unstable surrounding environment, as the Caucasus has been an area of confluence and contrasts.¹ Historically Armenia has been a country located between empires, the Romans and the Parthians; the Arab and the Byzantine, and found itself “as a vessel of fragile earthenware, obliged to journey in company with many vessels of iron.”² Thus, Armenia has been a country between empires, but also a country linking empires; a nation between clashing cultures, but also a nation linking cultures, and people. Armenia, then, has been a launching pad for a new beginning; it will be the aim of this paper to find out if Armenia also marks a new interpretation of current policies linking development and security concerns.

The background of what makes Armenia the focus of this paper is the management of its national security strategy permeated by its foreign policy of complementarity.³ This 360 degree foreign policy bears the influence and the balance of power between the different players in the Caucasian region. This might be the reason why, in recent years, Armenia has chosen a path of defense

reforms supported by NATO but which contains the technical language of Security Sector Reform (SSR) policies.⁴ In this case, this *conceptual complementarity* does not aim at bridging a Cold War divide, but a policy divide whose reasons need investigation. The objective of this paper is to clarify why the Armenia’s defense reform has included the language of SSR policies without actually implementing these policies.

I contend that being able to “talking SSR” has become synonymous of talking the language of democracy. Armenia needs this conceptual complementarity for reassuring the West about the capacity of its democratic structures to manage the defense sector, while serving its national interests of having an army capable of facing military threats. Ultimately, this is indeed the strength of the SSR-language when it is used outside a SSR-framework: it becomes an onomatopoeic policy sound of reassurance for Western-type democratic states.

⁴ Security Sector Reform (SSR) policies aim at strengthening the governance of the security sector of the state (such as the army, police, judiciary system) so that its institutions can create a secure environment conducive to the enjoyment of development entitlements by its citizens. The conceptual substratum of these policies is the merging of development and security concerns to be addressed by a whole of government approach. In order to support the governance of the security sector, these policies use a technical language which includes expressions such as democratic control of the armed forces; rule of law; civilian oversight of the armed forces (for general information about SSR policies see: *Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform*, Department for International Development (DFID), London, 2002, available at [<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/supportingsecurity.pdf>], 2 April, 2008; *A Beginner Guide to Security Sector Reform (SSR)*, Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GNF-SSR), 2007, available at [http://www.ssrnetwork.net/documents/GFNSSR_A_Beginners_Guide_to_SSR_v2.pdf], 1 April, 2008; *Handbook on Security Sector Reform. Supporting Security and Justice*, Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD), 2007, available at [<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/25/38406485.pdf>], 1 April, 2008).

¹ See: G.J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood. Armenian Political Thinking since Independence*, Blue Crane Books, Cambridge, MA., 1999; R.G. Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat. Armenia in Modern History*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1999; S. Payaslian, *The History of Armenia. From the Origins to the Present*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007; K. Tololyan, “The Armenian Diaspora and the Karabakh Conflict since 1988,” in: H. Smith, P. Stares, *Diasporas in Conflict. Peace-Makers or Peace-Wreckers*, United Nations University, Tokyo, 2007, pp. 106-128; C. Zurcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars. Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict and Nationhood in the Caucasus*, New York University Press, New York, 2007.

² A. Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, Sansoni, Firenze, 1827 (ed. of 1981), p. 20.

³ See: *Caucasus Region. Geopolitical nexus?* ed. by A.I. Kapidze, Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York, 2007.

The Legal Framework of the Defense Reform: Another Policy of Complementarity

The independence achieved in 1991 partially solved “the Armenia question,” but raised the “Armenia security question.” National security is in fact an inherent preoccupation of all coun-

tries, whose response permeates the orientation of their domestic, foreign, and security strategy policies.⁵

According to the Armenia National Security Strategy,⁶ the complexity of the Armenia's national security is due to manifold issues, both internal and external. First of all, there is the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh: a military stalemate has been maintained since 1994, and a political solution, linked or not to a new military confrontation, is still out of sight.⁷ Adding to this is lack of diplomatic relations with Turkey; lack of energy sources which makes Armenia depending on Russia and Iran; and a need for economic partners in order to promote the national economy and raising citizens' standards of living. These are some of the issues which brought Armenia to pursue a foreign policy of complementarity: this policy is rooted in the country's decision to use its geographical and geopolitical position to get the best from the military and political vestiges of all sides of the Cold War. Armenia's national defense strategy, the subsequent defense reform and military doctrine are shaped by this panoptic view of its national security.

The search for sources about Armenia's defense reform stretches across various political, economic and military agreements that Armenia has signed with some major actors, in particular Russia, European institutions, and NATO.

Soon after having acquired political independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia started a policy of integration into various international and intergovernmental organizations, taking advantage of the opportunity to have become a member of the international community of states. Firstly there was the inclusion within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991, followed by the inclusion within the United Nations in 1992, and in the same year within the Collective Security Treaty which was named Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2002. Once Armenia's sovereignty rights and military backup were all guaranteed, the country initiated a diversification of its foreign policy stakeholders.

The road leading toward a dialog with the European Union started in 1996, when Armenia signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), followed by the adhesion in 2001 to the Council of Europe. A more prominent engagement with the institutions of the European Union was its adherence to the European Neighborhood Policy in 2006.⁸ This policy engagement was marked by the redaction of a country report⁹ and an Action Plan for reforming Armenia's institutions in order for them to achieve

⁵ See: R. Giragosian, *Toward a New Concept of Armenian National Security*, Armenian International Policy Research, 2005, available at [<http://www.aiprg.org/UserFiles/File/wp/jan2005/WP0507.pdf>], 5 July, 2008; idem, *Repositioning Armenian Security and Foreign Policy within a Region at Risk*, Armenian International Policy Research Group, 2006, available at [<http://www.aiprg.net/UserFiles/File/wp/jan2006/wp07-06.pdf>], 3 July, 2008.

⁶ See: *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia*, Ministry of Defense of Armenia, 2007, available at [<http://www.mil.am/eng/index.php?page=49>], 1 July, 2008.

⁷ See: G.J. Libaridian, op. cit.; T. de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*, New York University Press, New York, 2003; *The Caucasus: Armed and Divided. Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Humanitarian Consequences in the Caucasus*, ed. by D. Hiscock, A. Matveeva, Saferworld London, 2003; E. Mehtiyev, *Armenia-Azerbaijan Prague Process: Road Map to Peace or Stalemate for Uncertainty?* Conflict Studies Research Centre, Camberley, 2005; *Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War*, International Crisis Group, 2007, available at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/caucasus/187_nagorno_karabakh_risking_war.pdf], 5 July, 2008; *Armenia: Picking up the Pieces*, International Crisis Group, 2008, available at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/caucasus/b48_armenia_picking_up_the_pieces.pdf], 5 July, 2008.

⁸ See: *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement*, European Union and the Republic of Armenia, 1996, available at [http://www.delarm.ec.europa.eu/en/newsletter/pdf/pca_armenia.pdf], 1 July, 2008; *Working Together. The European Neighborhood Policy*, European Commission, 2007, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/information/enp_brochure_en.pdf], 1 July, 2008; *Armenia Public Sector Reform Program*, Government of the Republic of Armenia, 2007, available at [<http://www.gov.am/pwc-apsrep/html/index.html>], 3 July, 2008; A. Hovsepyan, A. Khudaverdyan, *Public Sector Reforms in Armenia 1999-2005: Achievements and Challenges*, Armenia International Policy Research Group, 2006, available at [<http://www.aiprg.net/UserFiles/File/wp/jan2006/wp03-06.pdf>], 3 July, 2008.

⁹ See: *European Neighborhood Policy Country Report Armenia*, Commission of the European Community, 2005, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/armenia_country_report_2005_en.pdf], 2 July, 2008.

European standards.¹⁰ The objectives of this plan are to strengthen national democratic structures and respect for human rights; the rule of law; reforming the judiciary; fighting corruption; enhancing poverty reduction and sustainable development. These objectives are also reiterated in the Armenia Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013; in the Country Program 2007-2010; and in the progress report of the implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy.¹¹

Since 1992, Armenia has also held a parallel dialogue with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Since 2000, OSCE has opened an office in Erevan and initiated a fruitful collaboration with Armenia in a plurality of fields, such as training of the National Assembly expert staff; police assistance programs; armed forces and legislative reform; human rights awareness; etc., without mentioning that Armenia has initiated a SSR program with the support of OSCE.¹²

These programs in the field of security have not affected the military alliance that Armenia has with Russia, also considering that Armenia does not intend, for the time being, switching its “military patron” and joining NATO. However, the Western-looking foreign policy of Armenia and the Eastern-looking expansionist policy of NATO have led to the signing of a Partnership for Peace agreement in 1994 which was followed by the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) in 2005 and other collateral agreements such as Planning and Review Process (PARP) and Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building (PAP-DIB).¹³ The IPAP contains sets of broad orientations for reforms in many institutional spheres such as political-security issues; defense; civil emergency planning; public information, etc. The aim was to set the tone for the type of state functioning institutions that Armenia had to develop in order to facilitate its institutional dialog not only with NATO but with the European Union. In fact, the type of security-management recommended by NATO is implemented and guaranteed by the type of state-democratic-management recommended by the EU. These agreements with NATO are supporting documents of the Armenia defense reform whose legal framework is constituted by the national security strategy, the military doctrine and defense legislation.¹⁴ The echo of the construction of a national legal framework for a defense reform is only

¹⁰ See: *EU/Armenia Action Plan*, European Commission and the Republic of Armenia, 2006, available at [http://www.delarm.ec.europa.eu/en/press/16_11_2006.pdf], 1 July, 2008; *European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. Armenia. Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013*, European Commission, 2006, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_csp_armenia_en.pdf], 1 July, 2008; “*Implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy in 2007*” *Progress Report*, European Commission’s Delegation to Armenia, 2008, available at [http://www.delarm.ec.europa.eu/en/press/10_04_2008.htm], 1 July, 2008.

¹¹ See: *European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. Armenia. Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013*, European Commission, 2006; *European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument Armenia National Indicative Program 2007-2010*, European Commission, 2006a, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_csp_nip_armenia_en.pdf], 3 July, 2008; *Working Together. The European Neighboring Policy*.

¹² See: *Action Plan on the Reform of the Prison System in Armenia*, Council of Europe, 2003, available at [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_affairs/Legal_cooperation/Prisons_and_alternatives/Technical_co-operation/Armenia/Armenia_4thSG_meeting%20report.pdf], 3 July, 2008; *Overview of the Office activities in 2006*, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office in Erevan, 2007, available at [http://www.osce.org/documents/oy/2007/02/23315_en.pdf], 2 July, 2008; *Overview*, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office in Erevan, 2008, available at [<http://www.osce.org/Erevan/13204.html>], 2 July, 2008.

¹³ See: *Armenia’s Commitments Under Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO*, Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2005, available at [<http://www.armenianatomission.com/index.php?cnt=3&sub=10&PHPSESSID=26fde350a06c1dd42443a3372b18da78>], 5 July, 2008; *NATO and Armenia General Information*, Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2007, available at [<http://www.armenianatomission.com/index.php?cnt=3&PHPSESSID=26fde350a06c1dd42443a3372b18da78>], 1 July, 2008.

¹⁴ See: *Parliamentarians and the Process of Defense Transformation in the Framework of Cooperation with NATO*, NATO, 2006, available at [<http://www.marshallcenter.org/site-graphic/lang-en/page-mc-index-1/xdocs/conf/conferences-current/static/xdocs/conf/2006-conferences/0602/RazuksPresentation-en.pdf>], 5 July, 2008; *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia*, Ministry of Defense of Armenia, 2007, available at [<http://www.mil.am/eng/index.php?page=49>], 1 July, 2008; *The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Armenia*, Ministry of Defense of Armenia, 2007a, available at [<http://www.mil.am/eng/index.php?page=104>], 1 July, 2008; *The Public Informing Conception of Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia*, Ministry of Defense of Armenia, 2007b, available at [<http://www.mil.am/eng/index.php?page=111>], 1 July, 2008.

heard within the Ministry of Defense. In fact, in the elaboration of other national policy papers such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) or the latest Armenian government's program for 2008-2012¹⁵ there is no mentioning of this defense reform; or how its implementation might affect, or indeed necessitate, the involvement of other ministries. This institutional separation between national defense reform and other national reforms demonstrates the *policy isolation* of this defense reform, in stark contrast with the SSR approach. However, an analysis of the language used in this defense reform shows how the wording might bridge the gap between the two. Perhaps this defense reform is another example of the Armenia's policy of complementarity: refusing to take side, or attempting to gain the best from both policy approaches.

SSR Language in Armenia's Defense Reform: Policy Perfidy Or Policy Syncretism?

Armenia is not implementing SSR policies; however it has adopted some of the language of SSR in designing its defense reform. This raises questions about the significance, the compulsion, and the reason for using this language in isolation, outside an SSR policy framework.

The Armenia's defense reform is the logical outcome of the National Security Strategy which was approved in 2007. According to this document, some of the pillars upon which the national security strategy of Armenia rests are: an efficient system of governance; the rule of law; a consolidation of democratic values; an independent and impartial judiciary; comprehensive social justice. Besides, there are those pillars which are linked to the army's capabilities *per se*, such as an adequate fighting capacity of the armed forces; and efficient law-enforcement structures.¹⁶ The list of internal threats to national security includes as examples: an ineffective judiciary system which does not guarantee the rules of law; insufficient level of democracy within state structures; polarization of wealth; lack of education. Therefore, what is said to constitute the Armenia's security question is not only a direct military threat, such as Azerbaijan, but also poverty and an inadequate guarantee of the rule of law.

The Military Doctrine provides with a more in depth look at the principles and goals of the defense reform.¹⁷ Its reading shows an anatomized analysis by the Ministry of Defense of the national security strategy in order to ensure an adequate and prompt response to the threats identified in the latter document. In the section titled "The Reforms in the Military Security System" it is stated that the objective of these reforms is to have a "modern Military Security System based on democratic fundamental principles of civil control," and capable to protect Armenia's national security. The document points out the need for the civilian control of the armed forces, and the civilianization, wherev-

¹⁵ See: *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, Republic of Armenia, 2003, available at [http://povlibrary.worldbank.org/files/Armenia_PRSP.pdf], 5 July, 2008; "*Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*" *Progress Report*, International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2006, available at [<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2006/cr06239.pdf>], 2 July, 2008; *Republic of Armenia: Sixth Review Under the Three-Year Arrangement Under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility—Staff Report*, International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2008, available at [<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr08176.pdf>], 2 July, 2008; *Government Program 2008-2012*, Republic of Armenia, 2008, available at [http://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/pdf/cragir_eng2008.pdf], 20 June, 2008.

¹⁶ See: *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia*, Ministry of Defense of Armenia, 2007.

¹⁷ See: *The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Armenia*, Ministry of Defense of Armenia, 2007a.

er possible, of the defense department. This two issues, modernization and civilian oversight of the militaries are also reiterated in the public informing conception of the MoD which frames the conceptual presentation of the defense reform to the public.¹⁸

For Armenia, defense reform was one of the items in the agenda which has shaped the dialogue with NATO. It implies modernization and restructuring of the defense sector, in order to make it more efficient in responding to new threats.¹⁹ The defense reform framework is outlined in the IPAP and in other documents called PAP-DIB.²⁰ After having submitted the IPAP agreement, “in December 2005 NATO accepted Armenia’s plan for defense reform.”²¹ In this document, Armenia stated its commitment to reform the defense ministry and it includes training; modernization of means of communication; improvement of planning; participating in NATO operations; etc. The defense *tout court* objectives of this *perestroika* of the defense sector in Armenia, is complemented by others such as the amelioration of the democratic control of its armed forces; increasing civilian participation in the designing of defense policies for which seminars were organized.²²

The government of Armenia has also included a section, titled “Democracy, Human Rights, Rule of Law and Fighting Corruption” where it lists the necessity to reform the electoral system; the judiciary oversight of the defense sector; and freedom of the press. Thus, while the modernization of the army is the key topic of this document, SSR-ism languages such as democratic control of the armed forces; rule of law; civilian oversight, are strategically located at the fore front of each section. The emphasis on the civilian control of the armed forces within a set of reforms aiming at having a more efficient army which currently has to defend a front line sounds more like a policy linguistic borrowing than a response to a military necessity. Or perhaps, the adoption of this language has become a policy imperative, as it guarantees military training and political support by states supportive of SSR policies.

¹⁸ See: *The Public Informing Conception of Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia*, Ministry of Defense of Armenia, 2007b.

¹⁹ See: G. Katsirdakis, “Defense Reform and NATO,” in: *Post-Cold War Defense Reform. Lessons Learned in Europe and the United States*, ed. by I. Gyarmati, T. Winkler, Brassey’s Inc., Washington, D.C., 2002, pp. 189-203; NATO and Armenia General Information, Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2007.

²⁰ See: S. Lunn, “Defense and Security Policy: The Role of Parliaments and the Evolution of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly,” in: *Defense and Security for the 21st Century*, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2000, Atalink, London, pp. 12-13; *NATO, EU and the Challenge of Defense and Security Sector Reform*, ed. by P. Fluri, S. Lunn, 2007, available at [http://www.dcaf.ch/about/dcaf-brussels/_index.cfm?nav1=1&nav2=4], 2 July, 2008; P. Fluri, H. Bucur-Marcu, *Partnership Action Plan for Defense Institution Building: Country Profiles and Needs Assessments for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova*, 2007, available at [<http://www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?ord279=title&q279=armenia&ing=en&id=31092&nav1=5>], 5 July, 2008.

²¹ S. Mher, “Armenia Perspective,” in: P.H. Fluri, E. Cole, *Defense Institution Building: 2005 Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building Regional Conference*, Paper presented at the Conference held in Tbilisi, 25 April, 2005, pp. 62-65, available at [<http://www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?id=19825&nav1=4>], 5 July, 2008; *12-16 June, 2006—Joint Visit to Armenia and Georgia by the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defense Capabilities and the Sub-Committee on Democratic Governance*, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2006, available at [<http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=971>], 2 July, 2008; *167 DSCFC 07 E bis—Viewing NATO from the South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia*, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2007, available at [<http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=1283>], 2 July, 2008; *NATO and Armenia General Information*, Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2007.

²² See: *Parliamentarians and the Process of Defense Transformation in the Framework of Cooperation with NATO*, NATO, 2006; *Armenia Defense Reforms I. Seminar on the Civilianization of the Ministry of Defense and Amending the Law of Defense*, European Center for Security Studies George C. Marshall, 2007, available at [http://www.marshallcenter.org/site-graphic/lang-en/page-mc-index-1/xdocs/conf/conferences-current/static/xdocs/conf/static/2007-conferences/0710/0710_Overview_eng.pdf], 1 July, 2008; *On Introducing the Civilian Element in the Ministry of Defense and Reforms of “Law of Defense”*, Ministry of Defense of Armenia, 2007c, available at [http://www.marshallcenter.org/site-graphic/lang-de/page-mc-index-1/xdocs/conf/conferences-current/static/xdocs/conf/static/2007-conferences/0710/Aghabekyan_Keynotes_eng.pdf], 5 July, 2008; “The Starlink Program: Training for Security Sector Reform in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, PFP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies,” *Quarterly Journal*, No. 7 (2), pp. 81-91, available at [<https://consortium.pims.org/filestore2/download/4005/The%20Starlink%20Program-Faltas-Hartog.pdf>], 2 July, 2008.

SSR Language Reality Check: Useful, Fashionable, But Not Prêt-à-Porter

Many people might question if Armenia is implementing a defense reform, a SSR, or a concoction of initiatives which goes untitled.²³ Sometimes, the same fact can be examined through “a looking glass,” and therefore “The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.”²⁴

The Armenia’s defense reform shows the conceptual weight and significance of the usage of the SSR language in the redaction of defense reform policies, thus outside its SSR policy framework. All defense documents analyzed have included in their texts the SSR technical language. In the IPAP NATO document, the democratic control of the armed forces is the first objective mentioned in the section titled “Defense Security and Military Issues,” despite having had a full section dedicated to it in another part of the same document. The National Security Strategy lists as the first pillar of national security an “efficient system of governance” and continues by listing: rule of law and an independent and impartial judiciary system. Without entering in a polemical debate about the role of these pillars within the Armenia national security, it does seem awkward that in a National Security Strategy, which was also part of the NATO-package of defense reform, the armed forces are mentioned as a pillar of state security only after the judiciary system. While the pole position for the role of the army in the state security assets is by no means an indication of an aggressive foreign policy, this listing in the Armenia security strategy, a country currently at war with Azerbaijan, seems bizarre; especially if compared with the opening statement of the 2006 U.S. National Security Council which says “America is at war.” Are we witnessing two extreme national strategies, one politically correct and the other outspoken?

It is not under investigation what the constitutive elements of Armenia state security are. What raises questions is that it seems that the language is not followed by its conceptual base. Armenia is not doing an SSR and the analysis of the threats to its national security does give a prominent role to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The contention is that the emphatic use of nominal syntagmas deriving from a democratic tradition and which have been adopted by SSR policies serves the purpose here to underline the non-aggressive, democratic, non-militarized nature of the foreign policy of Armenia. This language is used for reassuring political partners involved in the defense reform of the innocuous nature of this reform: its objectives of modernizing and increasing the efficiency of the armed forces must be hollowed of any aggressive attitude in foreign policy. Thus, this language which within a SSR framework indicates the state governance effort to ameliorate its control of the means of coercion, when it is used outside this framework it has the purpose to emphasize the passive and defensive tone of a defense reform, in conformity with the behavior of so-called responsible democratic states.

The reason behind the adoption of the SSR language without its policies could also be to circumvent donors funding criteria, as humanitarian budgets cannot be earmarked for funding defense reforms but democratic reforms. Therefore, if a reform of the Ministry of Defense also contains within its objectives good governance; democracy promotion; assistance for ameliorating training stand-

²³ See: *Inventory of Security Sector Reform (SSR) Efforts in Developing and Transition Countries*, Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), 2005, available at [http://www.bicc.de/ssr_gtz/pdf/ssr_complete_list.pdf], 3 July, 2008; *Security Sector Transformation in Armenia*, Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), 2005a, available at [http://www.bicc.de/ssr_gtz/pdf/armenia.pdf], 2 July, 2008; G. Avagyan, D. Hiscock, *Security Sector Reform in Armenia*, 2005, available at [http://www.saferworld.org.uk/images/pubdocs/Armenia_English.pdf], 3 July, 2008.

²⁴ L. Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, 1871, available at [<http://ftp.cs.indiana.edu/metastuff/looking/ch6.html.gz>], 1 July, 2008.

ards, etc. its funding will be more palatable to donors. However, the spread of this language cannot simply be motivated by financial reasons.

Another explanation of the usage of the SSR-ism lexicon in defense reforms is the current interpretation of the concepts of security, war, defense, and development; and their interrelations. From this it derives that a policy which addresses only one of them is considered as partial and flawed. In fact, the concepts of security and development has been linked in a conceptual nexus since the 1990s exemplified by the concept of human security; and by the latest trend called the securitization of development exemplified by view of poverty causing war. According to this trend, policies can only be effective if they address both development and security concerns. It derives that war is deprived of its most complex historical connotations and is seen as a result of lack of development. This view regards development-security nexus policies, such as SSR, of having conflict-prevention capacities. In such a climate, the defense concept alone can not gain policy attention: it needs to be softened by a language of democracy and of non-military aggression in foreign policy. Thus the SSR language is used to provide the concept of defense with a democratic orientation which complements military objectives; and above all it validates these objectives. This validity does not require to be accompanied by the implementation of SSR policies: in a world full of war theatres and distracted and busy donor states, SSR-ism lexicon is enough to reassure foreign donor states that any word in political science includes a concept which orients an action which, alone, is sufficient to reform a state. The language of SSR in the Armenia's defense reform facilitates the recognition, by the international community, of Armenia as a democratic-responsible state, thus defining and validating this positive state-identity. The conceptual complementarity contained in this defense reform is thus a policy attempt to present, publicize, and consolidate a democratic form of governance which Armenians quested for centuries.

KYRGYZSTAN'S SECURITY PROBLEMS TODAY

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Regional stability and security consist of two levels—the external security of each country at the regional level and the internal security of each of them individually. A state's external and internal security are closely interrelated concepts.

It stands to reason that ensuring internal security and stability is the primary and most important task. But the external aspect also requires attention. This article takes a look at the most important problems of ensuring Kyrgyzstan's security.

Kyrgyzstan's Economic Problems

The economic aspect occupies a central place in the academic discussions about national security. The keen attention to this problem is primarily provoked by the fact that a country's security hinges on the state of its economy.

Kyrgyzstan is a country with a low level of economic development. During the Soviet era it depended wholly on the economy of the entire country. The budget was replenished from the common union fund, a practice that could not continue after the state acquired its independence.

The young state did not have enough funds and the necessary resources to meet its own needs. The breakdown in economic ties after the collapse of the Soviet Union generated negative changes in the economy, although internal reasons, such as the hastily and thoughtlessly conducted economic policy, de-centralization and privatization of state property in particular, wreaked greater havoc in the context of the economic crisis. Trade, industrial, and transportation enterprises were sold and resold in a short period of time to private organizations. The thriftless and careless attitude led to enterprises with immense economic possibilities and potential being broken down, parceled out, and essentially destroyed. Business management and free price formation, the functioning of a new fiscal and monetary system, and the development of new foreign economic relations have met with immense difficulties. Economic crisis is a consistent and legitimate phenomenon that inevitably occurs when the old order collapses and a new one is created.

Economic crisis usually leads to a cutback in the budget, an increase in non-payments, and a drop in the standard of living.¹ The economic reforms being carried out in the country did not yield the desired results. The world economic crisis, which the post-Soviet countries are also enduring, cannot help but have an effect on the situation in Kyrgyzstan. Today, solving the republic's most important task—ongoing economic reforms—is accompanied by accumulation of the external debt, which is creating a dangerous trend that is leading to an increase in poverty.

An analysis of the socioeconomic situation in Kyrgyzstan carried out by a group of international experts shows that irrational state management is the main obstacle hindering the reforms. Economic growth cannot be achieved or the level of poverty lowered without raising the quality of state management. In addition, if management is not improved, it will not yield the preferred results or encourage foreign sponsors to render assistance.²

The inefficient activity of the republic's state management structures has led directly to an increase in criminalization of the economy and the shadow sector's greater involvement in it.

The criminal sphere is interfering in the distribution of the gross domestic product and national income and economic crimes, smuggling, and corruption are becoming more prevalent. Representatives of the criminal structures are attempting to have some influence on the executive and legislative power structures or to directly infiltrate them.

Practice shows that the following economic crimes are the most predominant: embezzlement of state property and the untargeted use of loans, non-payment of taxes, and smuggling of various types of semi-finished and finished products, to name a few.

According to preliminary estimates, the country's shadow sector currently covers approximately 30% of Kyrgyzstan's entire economy.³

¹ See: A. Akunova, "O nekotorykh predposylkakh i sostoianii ekonomicheskogo krizisa v Kyrgyzstane," *Politika i obshchestvo*, No. 1(22), 2006.

² See: T. Koichumanov, "Corruption Fighting and Preventive Measures in Kyrgyzstan: Today and Tomorrow," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (37), 2006.

³ See: *Ibidem*.

The Problem of Water Apportioning as a Threat to National and Regional Security

Kyrgyzstan's water resources are unbalanced. Irrational water use has recently led to an imbalance in this resource in Central Asia. Only up to 80% of irrigation water reaches the fields due to the underdeveloped state of the irrigation systems, on the one hand, while the former united system of water use regulation has been destroyed as a result of uncoordinated economic relations among the region's countries, on the other.

Hydraulic engineering installations in Central Asia in the Soviet period were built by collective efforts in order to boost the development of agriculture and the hydropower industry. In so doing, water was accumulated in the reservoirs during the winter months and released through the hydropower plant dams during the vegetation period to irrigate farm land, at the same time generating electricity, which went into the united energy system. So the use of water in the region in Soviet times was based on a rational and fair principle of compensation, something that cannot be said of the present.

After they gained their independence, the Central Asian states divided into two groups: one of them comprises Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where 86.4% of the region's water resources are formed, and the other includes Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Kyrgyzstan ranks fifth in the world with more than 50% of Central Asia's water supplies. Tajikistan's repositories rank eighth in the world. And this is strategic raw material and national wealth.

The states of the first group tried to develop their economy by generating cheap electricity, while those in the second group concentrated on developing agriculture and industry. This in turn presumes entirely different water supply schedules. The water shortage problem is aggravated by the fact that there is no efficient water metering system in the region.

The past two years, particularly 2008, were characterized by a low water level, as the result of which the Toktogul reservoir, which has been regulating the water supply for many years, was unable to provide for full operation of the hydraulic installations. Without oil and gas resources, Kyrgyzstan is unable to operate hydropower plants in the energy regime due to the irrigation needs of the republics downstream.

So Kyrgyzstan is paying great attention to the rational, mutually advantageous, and efficient use of hydropower resources and deems it important for the Central Asian countries to transfer to a fair, rational, and efficient mechanism in this sphere.

Throughout its sovereignty, Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy has been focused on ensuring that water does not become a cause of conflict between close neighbors in Central Asia. The Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers, which flow through the entire territory of Central Asia, are the main source of agricultural prosperity in the Aral Sea basin and have immense hydropower potential. Interstate tension, which is threatening the political and economic development of the entire region, is primarily generated by the absence or inefficiency of cooperation among the Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—in managing a joint water system.

Energy Security

Kyrgyzstan's security is made vulnerable by its almost complete dependence on energy deliveries from other countries. At present, the republic is able to provide itself with less than 5%

of its oil and gas needs, and it depends almost entirely on their export from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

As of today, 90% of the gasoline and diesel fuel consumed in Kyrgyzstan is supplied by the Russian Gazprom нефт Asia company. A total of 97% of the fuel consumption structure is formed from imported fuel at prices close to those in the world market. Whereby in the prospective development plan for the fuel and energy sector until 2025 drawn up by the Kyrgyzstan ministries and departments, the country's economy will remain dependent on imported fuel until the end of this period.⁴

At a recent meeting in Bishkek, the Russian and Kyrgyz leaders, Dmitri Medvedev and Kurmanbek Bakiev, discussed the delivery of Russian energy resources in exchange for cheap electricity for the cities of Siberia. The Russian side will also assist in the construction of new energy complexes in Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Gazprom concern will provide Kyrgyzstan with the necessary amount of natural gas from Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan, in turn, agreed to make the prepayment for deliveries of electricity from Kyrgyzstan. Deliveries of oil and fuel oil necessary for the Bishkek thermal power plant will be carried out using this prepayment. A solution was found, even if only for one year. Longer term agreements are needed for the stable functioning of the energy complex.

Environmental Threats to Security

Kyrgyzstan's natural and territorial complex belongs to the particularly vulnerable high-altitude environmental systems with powerful natural and anthropogenic influencing factors. Its subsurface contains a large amount of radioactive elements, arsenic, antimony, mercury, fluorine, thorium, cyanide, and so on. This situation is particularly threatening in that these elements imperceptibly seep into the environment and penetrate the human body over a long period of time, subsequently causing irreversible changes in the environment and in the health of hundreds of people.

Kyrgyzstan's specific natural and climatic conditions as well as the state's ill-conceived economic activity are adding to the environmental problems. Extremely unfavorable demographic changes have been noted in areas close to former and currently operating mining and metallurgical enterprises, which are expressed in an increase in radiation sicknesses and deterioration of the human gene pool.

Particular concern is aroused by the regions near the town of Mailuu-Suu, where there is a cluster of 23 tailing ponds totaling 1,374,000 cu m and 18 dumping sites of off-grade ores totaling 845.6 thousand cu m, by the uranium tailing ponds totaling 150,000 cu m near the village of Kaji-Sai in the Issyk-Kul Region, which is located 1.5 km from the unique lake, Issyk-Kul, and by several tailing ponds near the village of Min-Kush which are located in a flood plain. The level of radiation in the local zones of these territories fluctuates between 100 microroentgen/hr and 1,800 microroentgen/hr.⁵

Technical servicing of these enterprises came to a halt after the U.S.S.R. collapsed. The situation is also aggravated by the fact that these dumping sites and tailing ponds are located in a seismic

⁴ See: M. Omarov, "Opasnaia bezopasnost malenkogo Kyrgyzstana," *Analitika. Tsentralnaia Azia*, available at [www.easttime.ru].

⁵ See: Ch. Abdykaparov, "Ekologicheskoe vozdeistvie na okruzhaiushchuiu srediu khvostokhranilishch i otvalov uranovykh i polimetallicheskikh rud v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike," *Polisfera*, No. 3, 2000.

zone. This problem is becoming particularly urgent due to the increased seismic activity forecast for the entire Asian continent.

Another factor aggravating the situation is the fact that the soil cover of these tailing ponds and dumping sites is being gradually eroded by rain and mud slides. Mud slides destroy an enormous number of houses and buildings in the republic. Earthquakes also facilitate landslides and soil slips. As a rule, all earthquakes measuring 7 points on the Richter scale or higher are accompanied by catastrophic landslide and soil slip phenomena.

Tectonic movements today mainly lead to erosion, which subsequently causes landslides. This is a dangerous situation since it encroaches without warning and could have catastrophic consequences.

Threats to environmental safety have become more virulent because of the crisis phenomena in the state's economic sphere. This is due to the degradation in environmental protection activity, an increase in the negative environmental impact on human health, and insufficient legal support of environmental protection measures.

Migration and Ethnic Relations

Another issue that affects Kyrgyzstan's security is migration. A large number of citizens, ethnic Slavs, have already emigrated and are continuing to leave Kyrgyzstan. The main reasons for emigration are the steps being taken to raise the status of the national language and concern that this may place the Slavic minority in a less advantageous position.

According to the official statistics, as of today ethnic Russians in Kyrgyzstan account for about only 11% of its population. During the years of independence (1990-2005), the migration outflow from the republic amounted to a total of 490,600 people, 293,300 of whom (or 59.8% of the total) were Russians.⁶ It stands to reason that those citizens who left the country took a certain amount of knowledge and managerial experience with them.

As for institutional reform, the state's ethnic policy had a negative effect on the human resource potential in state management. The outflow of the Russian-speaking and other population from the regions where the titular nation lives is leading to a change in the ethnic composition of the population, particularly in the zones of social and ethnic tension, and to the gradual formation of mononational, so-called ethnically pure states and separate enclaves of closed national communities within them where the indigenous, titular nation predominates, instead of multinational states. The formation of mononational states in conditions of a change in political regimes and particularly economic systems and social management principles inevitably gives rise to instability and social conflicts, while disputes over the use of land, water, and other resources prompt their emergence. Examples of this are the Uzbek-Kyrgyz conflict in Osh, as well as the dispute between the residents of the Isfara Region of Tajikistan and the Batken Region of Kyrgyzstan. The situation could become more complicated if the religious extremist and separatist trends in the region become more virulent.

Ensuring the State's Territorial Integrity

Ensuring territorial integrity is one of the state's most important tasks. The need to define state borders arises from the desire to ensure state sovereignty, national security, and jurisdiction with re-

⁶ See: *Countries at the Crossroads 2006. Country Reports*, available at [www.freedomhouse.hu/nit.html].

spect to the country's territory and citizens, economic interests, and many other issues. The state should coordinate delimitation of the state border with neighboring countries, carry out its demarcation, create a widespread infrastructure of monitoring structures, and define and demarcate their powers.

The measures taken to delimit and set up the borders ultimately boil down to organizing the legal cross-border movement of citizens, transportation vehicles, freight, and goods, which is particularly pertinent for democratic states during liberalization of the state border crossing regime and expansion of political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian contacts with neighbors. On the whole, borders should promote cross-border movement and open up new possibilities for cooperation with neighboring countries rather than hinder this process.⁷

But today an agreement on delimitation has been reached for only half of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border, whereby the other half is more complicated and conflict-prone since it passes through population settlements or is of great economic, transportation, or other significance to both countries.

Talks with Uzbekistan have been underway since 2000. There have been significant advances in individual sections so far, but many serious problems must still be resolved in order to complete demarcation of the borders with neighbors.

The total length of the borders between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan amounts to 1,375 kilometers, 993 kilometers of which have already been coordinated at the delegation level, while the rest are at the discussion stage. The remaining 400 kilometers cover 58 separate sections. These sections still require serious negotiations to iron out the lingering discrepancies.

The unresolved border issues with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the country's south are aggravating ethnic relations. In particular, there are about 80 controversial sections in the Jalal-Abad Region. Uzbeks and Tajiks account for 20-25 percent of the population living in the regions where they are located. There are 15 controversial water and land sections in the Osh Region. This provides opportunities to artificially incite ethnic conflicts at the grassroots level, particularly in areas where national diasporas are densely concentrated.

Just a few years ago the Kyrgyz-Tajik border was semi-transparent and essentially unprotected. The question of delimitation was not raised until 1999 when militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) moved into southern Kyrgyzstan. In the summer they repeated their raids throughout Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. These inroads by the IMU compelled the states of the region to take steps to ensure more reliable protection of their borders. The Kyrgyz and Tajik authorities increased the number of customs posts and deployed additional military contingents on the border in order to prevent Islamists from entering their countries and to toughen up the fight against drugs and arms trade.

The security measures and new border regulations have also seriously complicated life for the local population: they impede trade, depriving many farmers of their main source of income. Mine laying in areas adjacent to the border has become a serious problem for peaceful citizens.⁸

Religious Extremism

Religious extremism poses a serious threat to Kyrgyzstan's security. The representatives of many extremist organizations have greatly stepped up their activity on its territory in recent years.

⁷ See: M. Omarov, *K voprosu o transgranichnom peredvizhenii cherez granitsy Kyrgyzstana*, Information Analytical Center, Institute of Strategic Analysis and Planning, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University.

⁸ See: A. Krylov, "Religion in the Social and Political Life of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (42), 2006.

During its independence the republic has become an arena for the activity of foreign missionaries of the most diverse trends. The difficult socioeconomic situation and mass impoverishment of the population have provided fertile ground for new religious teachings and made rich foreign sects and religious associations socially attractive for a large number of local residents. In contrast to other confessions, Islamic radicals are using religion primarily as a political ideology for creating an Islamic state in the region. This activity is aggravating the religious situation and posing a real threat to the country's successful development.

The activity of Islamic radicals has complicated interstate relations among the Central Asian republics and led to an increase in ethnic tension. Today experts are concerned about the practice of direct foreign donations to some mosques and Muslim communities aimed at boosting their religious activity, as well as to building new religious facilities, which is making the clergy dependent to some extent on foreign investors. This is creating conditions among the local Muslims for unprecedented propaganda of all kinds of religious views and ideas, as well as confessional elements (*madh'habs*), which are not characteristic of the followers of Islam in the republic. These trends include *Akromiyalar*, the *Wahhabis*, *Islom lashkarlari* (Warriors of Islam), and the most influential party in the religious community, *Hizb ut-Tahrir*.⁹

The State's Internal Political Stability

Internal political instability is the main threat to the internal component of Kyrgyzstan's national security at present and in the near future. Instability is caused by the absence of real political pluralism, since political stability largely depends on how the interests of different social groups are structured.

Since March 2005, Kyrgyz society has been discussing what political system and what state structure are best suited to the republic. Whereby this discussion has been going on in different forms—conferences, articles, seminars, mass meetings, and so on. The inefficiency and lack of professionalism of the current leadership have only intensified the crisis in every way so that now it threatens the state's security.

The party opposition is the main channel through which the people can express their discontent with the current regime and the most efficient way for the official authorities and society to acquaint everyone with their views. In Kyrgyzstan, institutionalized forms of political opposition, such as parties, the parliament, and blocs, are still at the embryonic stage. There are also extremely developed non-institutionalized forms of activity of the political opposition in the form of meetings, manifestations, and uprisings. People still remember the tragic example of the inefficient action of the political opposition institutions that led to the *Aksy* events of 2002.

- At this stage of development, there are three opposition camps—the For Justice public parliament and movement, the leaders of which are O. Tekebaev and A. Jekshenkulov. They believe that the main mechanism for reviving the country is political competition carried out through the legal independence of the power structures and ensuring constitutional

⁹ See: *O religioznoi obstanovke v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike i zadachakh organov vlasti po formirovaniu gosudarstvennoi politiki v religioznoi sfere* (Resolutions of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan No. 345 of 10 August, 1995; No. 20 of 17 January, 1997; No. 83 of 19 February, 1998; No. 442 of 7 July, 1998; No. 107 of 28 February, 2000; No. 510 of 22 August, 2000; and No. 155 of 5 April, 2001).

guarantees of the opposition's activity. They are also in favor of re-examining the functions and powers of the president, parliament, and power structures at the regional and provincial levels.

- The second is the People's Revolutionary Movement of Kyrgyzstan (PRMK). Its leaders, K. Beknazarov and T. Turgunaliyev, have more radical goals—overturning Bakiev's regime as the source of the crisis in the country. The revolutionary committee plans to hold a kurultai in all the regions of the republic.
- The third opposition movement, Zhany Kyrgyzstan, is ready to form a new government and take responsibility for it. For that it demands that the government resign and be made answerable for the crisis in the energy sector.

All three opposition camps have their own views on the situation in the country, as well as their own ideas and ambitions. But if we proceed from the functional approach for determining party effectiveness, we can see that the Kyrgyz parties only become active when the matter concerns the activity of the president, government, or with respect to some other major events, and even then only in the form of statements and addresses. Almost all political parties criticize the state of the economy and the people's material plight, but fail to define their own position or ways to improve the socio-economic sphere.

Possible Ways to Raise the Level of Security

1. At a meeting of the National Council on strategic development chaired by Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiev in June 2008, he noted that the economy is growing and that the real increase in the GDP in 2007 amounted to more than 8%. The income part of the state budget has significantly increased. The amount of foreign debt with respect to the GDP has dropped to a safe level and the stability of the financial and banking sectors has been retained.¹⁰

But according to the president the state should develop efficient mechanisms for retaining macroeconomic stability and ensuring sustainable development in the context of the inconsistency of the world markets. Kurmanbek Bakiev posed the government and National Bank the task of re-examining the macroeconomic foundations of development in the mid term and drawing up an action plan in view of the sharp fluctuations in the price of food and energy resources.

Specialists believe that progressive development of the economic sector can be achieved by creating as favorable an investment climate as possible by eliminating the administrative barriers for investors. Lowering taxes under the new Tax Code is an important step in this direction. But it is only the first step.

Effectively fighting corruption could greatly boost economic development. This requires drawing up and introducing effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and a system of measures for combating corruption.

2. Water is acquiring ever greater socioeconomic significance. But water quotas for each country have not been determined, which is leading to irrational use of water resources in the region.

¹⁰ [www.tazar.kg], 25 June, 2008.

In order to deflate interstate tension, which is threatening the region's political and economic prosperity, a set of measures must be carried out to create a single economic mechanism for ensuring the rational use of national resources based on mutual benefit which meets the interests of all the region's states located on both the upper and the lower reaches of the rivers. Agreements must be reached on economic mechanisms for managing the region's water resources.

3. The arrangements in effect until recently regarding the functioning and interaction of the fuel and energy and water engineering infrastructures require significant adjustment in order to adapt them to contemporary conditions or execute a return to the regime of full exchange of water and energy resources that operated during Soviet times.
4. Greater efforts must be made to attract resources from international organizations such as the UN and IAEA in order to resolve the environmental problems, a situation which is exacerbated due to lack of funds.

However, since Kyrgyzstan's tailing ponds and dumping sites threaten the region's environment along the entire length of the cross-border rivers it would be expedient to initiate bi- and multilateral agreements with neighboring countries on the joint financing of measures to carry out fortification work at these tailing ponds and dumping sites.

5. Incorporating the potential of the SCO and CSTO, of which the region's states are members, would help to efficiently resolve border problems with neighboring states. It would be expedient to expand the terms stipulated by the 1996 Shanghai and 1997 Moscow agreements on interstate borders in the region.
6. Ongoing emigration is having a debilitating effect on the state's economic development since many emigrating citizens of the non-titular nation are highly qualified workers or specialists. The policy to prevent emigration should be directed, in addition to everything else, toward creating conditions in the country that encourage cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity.
7. Preventing ethnic conflicts requires carrying out a well-thought-out and balanced policy regarding national minorities that excludes infringement of their rights at citizens of Kyrgyzstan.
8. Extremism based on ideological, especially religious, convictions and the political goals and objectives concealed by them is more complicated and dangerous. The activity of extremist organizations is formed on strong organizational and managerial techniques.

The republic's authorities and Spiritual Administration of Muslims must draw up their own alternative to the radical views of the Islamic fundamentalists by explaining to Muslims the impermissibility of using Islam for political aims in a multi-confessional society.¹¹

9. The existing political system, which is permitting the upper echelons of power to shirk their responsibility and remain unpunished, is the main source of the crisis and is promoting all the other problems and diseases in society. The people, Kyrgyzstan's ordinary citizens, have been pushed to the periphery of the political process.

This problem can only be resolved if a set of measures is adopted by the legislative and executive power structures. They should be aimed at ensuring conditions for continuing the country's democratic and safe development within the framework of the law. But this will be

¹¹ See: A. Krylov, *op. cit.*

very difficult to achieve without continuous coordination of the efforts of all the state structures.

The quality of power and the politics pursued, on which the fate of states and their people depends, is determined by the mechanisms used to guarantee their security. These mechanisms are extremely important for the advanced development of society and democratic renewal of the political system. The essence of domestic political security is assessed by the extent to which it promotes the development and prosperity of the country in the difficult conditions of democracy-building. Political security is a system of measures used to identify, prevent, and remove the threats and dangers that could destabilize the situation in the country and be detrimental to society.

The absence of real pluralism could lead to extreme ways of expressing public interests—strikes, mass disorder, or armed uprisings. “Meeting democracy”¹² is becoming characteristic of our day and age, thus feeding political tension.

Political competition, independence of the power branches, and constitutional guarantee of the opposition’s activity are the main ways to revive the country.

Political parties are the main link between the government and society. Parties should play an active role in political life at all stages of this process. They largely define its nature, direction, stability, and civilizational element, as well as the strategy and tactics of the power struggle.

When there is pluralism, the representation of different interests and alternative solutions to the problems that arise are ensured. And it goes without saying that pluralism always leads to rivalry and competition, without which democracy makes no sense. Party opposition is a necessary element of the democratic mechanism that ensures society’s political stability. In Western political science, the opposition is a permanently active institution.¹³

Without political rivalry, competitiveness, opposition, and informal organizations there can be no talk of actual democracy. The principle of checks and balances, the mechanism of a political power struggle, and the institution of opposition are all natural regulations of political life. But we should also remember that the quality of democracy is not determined by an increase in the number of parties. Kyrgyzstan must create a healthy political expanse for those parties that are indeed capable of expressing and defending the interests of broad social groups.

The government must be able to talk to the people not only in the form of the institutionalized opposition and the parliament, but also through forums, round table talks, congresses, and, of course, kurultais. For we know that non-institutionalized public opinion leads to an instable balance. The existence of political channels for releasing public energy is one of the main ways to ensure systemic consent.

¹² See: E. Karin, “Vnutripoliticheskie aspekty natsionalnoi bezopasnosti Kazakhstana,” *Tsentralnaia Aziia i Kavkaz*, No. 3 (4), 1999.

¹³ See: M. Duverger, *Political Parties. Their Organization and Activity in Modern State*, New York, 1964; R. Dahl, *Political Opposition in Western Democracies*, Yale University Press, 1966.

U.S. VS RUSSIA: ATTEMPTED COOPERATION WITH TURKMENISTAN IN THE SECURITY AND DEFENSE SPHERE

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America's Military Presence

In the wake of 9/11 Washington stepped up its activities in Turkmenistan which, together with Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, opened its air space for the U.S. and coalition humanitarian flights to Afghanistan. American experts described it as “the only one of the five Central Asian states that is not officially a member of the Enduring Freedom coalition.”¹

In 2002 the two countries signed an agreement on the use of Turkmenian air space by American military-transport aviation and the international civilian airport of Ashgabad for fuelling aircraft moving humanitarian cargoes to Afghanistan. This brings from \$8 to 12 million into the Turkmenian budget every year.

Meanwhile, the Americans initiated and actively promoted talks on the use of other airfields: one of the three military airbases not far from Nebit-Dag, Ak-Tepe, and Mary-2.² The latter was selected as the largest of the three able to receive two or more wings of strategic aviation.

This could be described as contradicting the country's neutrality yet the agreement, which never mentioned the offending term “military base,” would have allowed President Niyazov to continue saying that Turkmenistan did not have foreign military bases on its territory.

The rumors enthusiastically discussed by the Russian press about a possible American base in Mary-2 caused a bout of anger from the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan, which resolutely refuted them in its statement of 7 September, 2005 as “pure invention that has nothing in common with reality.”³

¹ See: J.K. Davis, M.J. Sweeney, *Central Asia in U.S. Strategy and Operational Planning: Where Do We Go From Here?* IFPA, Washington DC, 2004, p. 53, available at [<http://www.ifpa.org/pdf/S-R-Central-Asia-72dpi.pdf>].

² See: I. Kurbanov, “Amerikanskoe voennoe prisutstvie v Turkmenistane, 13 sentiabria 2005,” available at [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php4?st=1126591680>].

³ See: “O telefonnom razgovore ministra inostrannykh del Rossii s ministrom inostrannykh del Turkmenistana. Gundogar. Za demokratiu i prava cheloveka v Turkmenistane, 8 sentiabria 2005,” available at [<http://www.gundogar.org/>].

The American experts were convinced that “in the context of future planning, preparing for a post-Niyazov regime should be given greater thought, as access to Mary would be a high pay-off investment that would impact Persian Gulf and Central/South Asian contingency planning.”⁴

In September 2005 it became even clearer that the Americans needed the base: it was completely reconstructed by UAE construction companies and accepted by a commission of the U.S. Defense Ministry. The Arabs first completely restored the Kushka airfield. However, the talks on the Mary-2 military base reached a dead end—there was no agreement on a permanent American presence. Between 2006 and 2008 the Department of State contributed about \$1.4-1.7 million a year to Turkmenistan’s security sphere.⁵ Uzbekistan received more or less the same aid or even less while Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, when there was an American military base on their territory, received several times more.

American Contribution to Turkmenistan’s Security

In Turkmenistan the United States has limited its contribution to the country’s security to donations and training extended to all sorts of departments. There are seminars for the coastal guards stationed in Turkmenbashi: officers are taught how to search ships at sea, detain them, find secret compartments, use force, and identify drugs. There are similar training sessions for customs services and border guards. In fact, this does not cost the American taxpayers very much: in 2008 the U.S. spent \$286 thousand, less than other countries.⁶

Since 2003 the State Customs Service, the State Border Guards, the State Service of Court Expertise, and the National Center for Criminal Studies at the country’s Ministry of the Interior received several dozen cars and equipment under the EXBS program.⁷

The Altyn Asyr checkpoint (Etrek etrap, the Balkan velayat), which cost over \$2.5 million, was a result of the cooperation between the National Guard of Nevada and the Government of Turkmenistan. The U.S. and U.N. invested \$1.8 million and \$650 thousand,⁸ respectively, in a checkpoint in Imamnazar, the second on the Afghan border in accordance with the U.S. Central Command Strategy for fighting drugs in Central Asia.

The American aid is not large; 23 percent of the small sums⁹ that the country receives goes to the security sphere; the country’s economy receives even less.

⁴ See: J.K. Davis, M.J. Sweeney, op. cit.

⁵ See: site of the U.S. Department of State [<http://www.state.gov/p/sca/rls/index.htm>].

⁶ For comparison: America paid twice as much in Tajikistan and 5 times more in Kyrgyzstan (see the site of the U.S. Department of State [<http://www.state.gov/p/sca/rls/index.htm>]).

⁷ These structures received dozens of UAZ cars, night vision devices, binoculars, search sets, water carriers, GPS devices, Motorola radio equipment, luggage-checking equipment, radiation detection pagers, test sets for identifying drugs and precursors, and a gas chromatograph. In 2006 the Agreement on Cooperation in the Security and Law and Order Sphere received an Appendix under which the government of Turkmenistan would get \$450 thousand more to pay for combating drug trafficking, improving court expertise, fortifying the sea border, and providing English courses (see: *Novosti Posolstva Soedinennykh Shtatov v Turkmenistane*, available at [<http://russian.ashgabat.usembassy.gov/archive.html>]).

⁸ See: “Pomoshchnik gosudarstvennogo sekretaria SShA Daniel Sullivan naneset vizit v Turkmenistan i primet uchashtie na tseremonii otkryitiia kontrolno-propusknogo punkta ‘Imamnazar,’” *Novosti Posolstva*, OOC No. 190, 10.08.2007, available at [<http://russian.ashgabat.usembassy.gov/archive.html>].

⁹ In 2008 the sum was limited to \$7.1 million.

Russia's Political Priorities

Turkmenistan is a neutral state that cooperates extensively with other countries. As an associated CIS member it is only involved in the discussions of the struggle against narcotics and terrorism as an observer; the same applies to its cooperation with the CSTO and SCO.

The 2002 Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation and the 2003 Agreement on Military Cooperation are two fundamental documents related to the two countries' (Russia and Turkmenistan) bilateral relations. Although there are over 22 agreements and treaties with Russia on a wide range of military contacts,¹⁰ the Russian foreign policy concentrates on cooperation in the fuel and energy sphere.¹¹

Russia preferred to avoid political discussions with Turkmenistan (this happened earlier in the case of the base in Uzbekistan) and, in exchange for its tacit agreement, outstripped the United States in the energy resource race. On 10 April, 2003 the two countries not only signed an agreement on cooperation in the security sphere (that did not mention military cooperation) but also a much more important agreement on cooperation in the gas sphere that envisages steadily mounting gas export to Russia until 2028.¹² Disagreements pale into insignificance when there is an opportunity to gain advantages in the energy sphere.

There is no real military cooperation between Russia and Turkmenistan: this is confirmed by the fact that since 2000 none of the Russian military has visited Turkmenistan. During the independence years the united command was dissolved and Russian border guards pulled out of the republic. Russia is concentrating on the energy sphere while Turkmenistan needs a security agreement more than Russia. Art 4 of the Agreement mentions an exchange of operational information about terrorist plans.¹³ This exchange is limited to information coming from Russia about terrorist plans against the president of Turkmenistan and probably similar designs nurtured by pro-American bureaucrats. This means that information should be personally transferred. Significantly, reshuffles in the power-related structures of Turkmenistan invariably followed personal meetings between President Berdymukhammedov and President Putin. In April 2007, for example, after his visit to Moscow, the president harshly criticized and dismissed then Minister of the Interior Akmamed Rakhmanov. On 15 May, 2007 (three days after his meeting with the president of Russia at which the Caspian gas pipeline agreement was signed) the president of Turkmenistan removed the head of his personal security, Akmurad Rejepov, from his post.

Until recently Russia was successfully using its involvement in the gas sphere and personal contacts to avoid involvement in the military sphere despite the United States' attempts to invigorate its military cooperation with Turkmenistan. Trade turnover between Russia and Turkmenistan is rising: in 2007 it grew by 38 percent compared with 2006 and reached the figure of \$4.8 billion.¹⁴ In July, 2007 the two countries signed an Agreement on an Intergovernmental Russian-Turkmen Commission of Economic Cooperation.

¹⁰ They include the agreements on cooperation between the Main Intelligence Directorate of the RF General Staff and the Intelligence Directorate of the Defense Ministry of Turkmenistan; on training the military of Turkmenistan in Russia's educational establishments, on joint airfield and technical support to aircraft, and on military-technical cooperation. The two countries are widely cooperating in the use of military infrastructure.

¹¹ See: "Otvety ofitsialnogo predstavitelia MID Rossii A.V. Yakovenko na voprosy RIA 'Novosti' po rossiisko-turkenskimi otnosheniiam, 10 apreliia 2003," available at [www.mid.ru].

¹² See: *Soglashenie mezhdru Rossiei i Turkmenistanom o sotrudnichestve v oblasti bezopasnosti*, Moskva, Kreml, 10 apreliia 2003.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ See the site of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Turkmenistan [<http://www.turkmenistan.mid.ru/rus-tm.html>].

Cooperation with NATO

In 1994 Turkmenistan was the first among Central Asian members to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Cooperation remained on paper because President Niyazov preferred to enter into bilateral agreements on training officers for the republic's armed forces. The gas-rich republic either exchanges gas for cooperation programs or pays for them with gas-related Ukrainian and Georgian debts. In this way it has established contacts in the military-political, military, and military-technical spheres, as well as in communication and automatic control and command systems and in the maintenance and modernization of armored vehicles and other military equipment. Georgia repaid its debt of \$340 million by repairing 43 assault planes and six MI-24 and MI-8 helicopters. Ukraine, in turn, repaid its \$400 million debt with services of its military-industrial complex.¹⁵ This made Turkmenistan the most important of Ukraine's partners in the military-technical sphere. In 2003-2004 Ashgabad bought military equipment from Kiev totaling over \$280 million.

The neutral state is using its ramified connections to train officers: there are over 200 Turkmenian military trained in Turkey, 200 in Ukraine, and small groups in Russia and Pakistan. There is a newly-established Military Institute of the republic's Ministry of Defense that trains about 600 people.¹⁶

America helped Turkmenistan maintain and supply cutters within the U.S Export Control and Related Border Security Program. Since late 2003 the republic has been renting seven cutters and a destroyer from Iran. Several more cutters came from Ukraine and one from the United States. Turkmenistan buys military equipment in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Rumania, and Belarus.

Russia had no gas-related reasons to enter into military-technical cooperation with Turkmenistan. This is also prevented by the absence of donation programs and a corresponding bilateral military agreement, and the fact that the republic does not belong to the CSTO. On rare occasions the republic dealt with Russian enterprises. The Urals Optical Mechanical Plant signed an agreement with the Defense Ministry of Turkmenistan on servicing onboard electronics of the Turkmenian Air Force.¹⁷

The new president of Turkmenistan has already displayed much more interest in foreign policies than his predecessor: he paid a visit to NATO Headquarters in Brussels where the sides agreed to deepen their practical cooperation in the key spheres. The talks with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer added vigor to the dialog between Turkmenistan and the Alliance. A U.N. Regional Preventive Diplomacy Center was opened in Ashgabad.

New Interests in Turkmenistan

The Turkmenian leader's obvious desire to activate international contacts in the gas sphere inspired the leaders of the NATO countries to reach better cooperation in the security sphere under the pretext of protecting the pipelines against terrorists.¹⁸

¹⁵ See: M. Vignanskiy, "Gruziia prodala Turkmenii modernizirovanny shturmovik SU-25," *Vremia novostei*, 27 October, 2007.

¹⁶ According to KISI under the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

¹⁷ See: V. Koziulin, "Gosudarstva Tsentralnoi Azii: razvitie voozuzhennykh sil i perspektivy voenno-tekhnicheskogo sotrudnichestva s Rossiei," *Indeks bezopasnosti*, No. 3 (83), 2007.

¹⁸ From the speech of R. Simmons, NATO special representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, during his visit to Ashgabad in May 2008 (see: "V ob'ياتiakh NATO," *Voenna-promyshlennyi kurier*, No. 20, 21-27 May, 2008).

On an initiative by Robert Simmons, NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, President Berdymukhammedov attended the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008. "In the Rumanian capital Berdymukhammedov announced that he was prepared to extend his cooperation with the Alliance and offered auxiliary peacekeeping services, in particular, training camps for NATO Blue Helmets as well as storage facilities and bases for NATO forces. He also agreed to railway transportation of the Alliance's cargoes across Turkmenistan to Afghanistan. With the help of the Turkmenian railway the Alliance would be able to bypass Russia by moving its cargoes from Turkey via Georgia and Azerbaijan across the Caspian to the Turkmenian coast and further on to Kushka."¹⁹ This probably means that the president intended to demonstrate his openness and readiness to cooperate, to invite foreign investors for the new gas pipeline project Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India,²⁰ and to develop contacts with Afghanistan, its nearest neighbor.

The relations between the two countries go back into history; it is common among the Turkmen to have relatives across the border; early in 2001 the Turkmenian capital hosted an inter-Afghan dialog initiated by Turkmenistan. In May, according to *Der Spiegel*, President Berdymukhammedov instructed the customs services and border guards not to interfere with freight transit of the counter-terrorist coalition to Afghanistan.²¹

It was standard procedure for representatives of the U.S. Central Command to visit Turkmenistan²² about once a year: the Pentagon hopes to establish cooperation with Ashgabad. In June 2008 Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Vice-Admiral Kevin J. Cosgriff and Vice-Admiral William Gortney (who had been appointed to the post but not yet taken it by that time) visited Ashgabad where they met the defense minister and chairman of the State Border Guard Service of Turkmenistan. It seems that Ashgabad is still apprehensive of the regime's stability and is shying away from military cooperation with the United States.

In July 2008 Russian Minister of Defense Anatoliy Serdiukov counterbalanced American efforts with his first visit to Ashgabad on the eve of Russian president's visit. He met his Turkmenian colleague General of the Army Agageldy Mamedgeldyev. The media reported that the Russian defense minister "pointed out with satisfaction that the two ministries had stepped up their cooperation and raised it in the past two years to a qualitatively new level."²³ The Russian defense minister referred to the fact that in 2007, on Turkmenistan's instructions, the Russian scientific-research institute of special communication systems, automation, and control started working on a unified system of command and control of the national armed forces. In the latter half of 2007 Russia began deliveries of military motor vehicles under the presidential program of technical modernization of the republic's power-related structures.²⁴

The RF Minister of Defense confirmed Russia's readiness to continue cooperation in the sphere of reform and modernization of the National Armed Forces of Turkmenistan. The sides have already outlined the spheres of their bilateral communication. Anatoliy Serdiukov pointed to the training programs that had resumed for the Turkmenian military in the RF Defense Ministry's educational establishments offered free of charge as a pertinent example.²⁵ In June 2008 the two countries, for the first

¹⁹ See: "Turkmenia rasshiriaet sotrudnichestvo s NATO," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 13 May, 2008.

²⁰ He discussed this idea with President George W. Bush at the Bucharest summit.

²¹ "Der Spiegel: Turkmenia peredast NATO voenno-vozdushnuu bazu v Mary?" *Fergana.Ru*, 20 May, 2008.

²² Admiral W. Fallon, Commander of the U.S. Central Command, visited Turkmenistan in June 2007 and January 2008. Before that Commander of the U.S. Central Command General John P. Abizaid has come to the republic twice (in July 2004 and August 2005). The deputy commander visited Turkmenistan in September 2004.

²³ "Turkmenskiy voennyi muskul," *Voенно-promyshlennyi kurier*, No. 28 (244), 16-22 July, 2008.

²⁴ The Ministry of the Interior of Turkmenistan has already received about 150 new Hunter high mobility vehicles from the Ulianovsk Car Plant totaling \$1.5 million. See: V. Paramonov, O. Stolpovskiy, "Dvustoronnee sotrudnichestvo Rossii i Turkmenistana v voennoi sfere," site of the Institute of Strategic Studies and Forecasts at the KRSU, Bishkek [http://www.easttime.ru/analitic/1/2/541.html].

²⁵ "Turkmenskiy voennyi muskul," *Voенно-promyshlennyi kurier*, No. 28 (244), 16-22 July, 2008.

time in recent years, signed a contract on deliveries of six Russia-produced Smerch multiple launch rocket systems totaling \$70 million.²⁶ This was predated by the visit of Turkmenian Defense Minister Agageldy Mamedgeldyev to the Russian exhibition of armaments, military equipment, and ammunition—Nizhniy Tagil-2008. During his visit the minister declared that his country wanted to buy Russian military equipment and weapons and needed Russia's modernization services. The minister signed an agreement on servicing the already used military devices.²⁷ Russia agreed to provide the Turkmenian naval forces with long-term lease of one latest Molnia-type missile boat.

Late in August 2008 the republic organized military exercises in its western area that involved all the types of weapons and equipment the republic had at its disposal. Analysts believe that they were prompted by the five-day war in South Ossetia and were, therefore, anti-Russian.²⁸ Meanwhile, the same analysts deemed it necessary to point out that the Gvozdika and Akatsia self-propelled howitzers, Grad and Uragan multiple launch rocket systems, Skad operational-tactical missile complex, Osa anti-aircraft missile system, Shilka self-propelled anti-aircraft gun, and Luna-M tactical missile involved in the exercises belong to the weapon type of the 1960s-1980s,²⁹ which means that the Georgian and Turkmenian armies were worlds apart and that the latter had nothing with which to scare Russia.

It is worth noting that some time later, in September, local mafias or well-trained Islamic extremists fought in the streets of the republic's capital against the law-enforcement forces.³⁰ It is not known whether the president knew about these imminent actions. One thing is clear: the republic's military might did not make any impression on the illegal formations. The very fact that there was shooting in the capital speaks volumes: the power-related structures were caught napping. This casts doubt on the security of the Turkmenian-Afghan border and, as a result, on the effectiveness of American aid (several hundred thousand U.S. dollars) extended to meet the needs of the republican border guards.

To sum up the developments in the capital President Berdymukhammedov demanded that the power-related structures open a police school; it was also decided to set up a training center for drug fighters and launch republic-wide operations on its basis. The republic will receive specialized anti-terrorist units equipped with the latest weapons and trained by the best instructors. It was announced that the special services would receive more money and that twelve border posts would be equipped with latest devices and weapons.³¹ The republic cannot cope with this on its own; it will look elsewhere for equipment and training. Border issues are a traditional American concern while Russia can supply equipment and training. Certain preliminary agreements have been reached. According to the media Russia is trying to incorporate Turkmenistan into the CSTO³² or, as the author believes, into Russia's political orbit. Since 2007 the republic has been actively cooperating within the experimental project of the Russia-NATO Council for training anti-narcotic fighters in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ See: M. Berdyev, "Turkmenskiy bronepoezd," *Oasis*, No. 16 (84), August 2008.

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ RusEnergy.com refers to its own sources, which said that everything started as provocations. Armed people rode around in cars, approached police posts, and, frightening policemen and police patrols, demanded a meeting with the minister of the interior. One of the posts was fired at, a policeman was killed. On Friday some of the terrorists captured a drinking water plant in the north of Ashgabad not far from the international airport and the Karakum canal (an extensive area of Khitrovka) and took about 50 hostages. The extremists demanded that the president, the medjlis, and Khalk Maslakhaty (the higher representative structure) declare the formation of an Islamic State of Turkmenistan at the sitting of the Popular Assembly scheduled for 26 September that had been expected to adopt a new Constitution describing Turkmenistan as a secular state. See: B. Seidakhmetova, "Tanki v Ashkhabade," *Novoe pokolenie* (Kazakhstan), 19 September, 2008.

³¹ See: S. Arbenin, "Turkmenistan: V kapkane neitraliteta," *Ferghana.ru*, 24 September, 2008.

³² See: "Turkmenistan prisma trivaetsia k ODKB," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 19 December, 2008.

The above suggests that the new president's more active contacts with Russia, the West, and China and the foreign policy of equidistance inherited from his predecessor notwithstanding, cooperation with Russia in various, including military, spheres has produced practical results and will probably continue. Cooperation with the United States is progressing yet the Pentagon is not involved in weapon supplies or training programs. China, on the other hand, delivered military equipment and uniforms totaling \$3 million on a military credit base to Turkmenistan in 2008. The republican budget, however, will force the Turkmenian leaders to seek better, and cheaper, equipment on better conditions that can be found in Moscow.

Russia will not desist from trying to incorporate Turkmenistan into military structures (the CIS United Air Defense System, of which it is formal member since 1995, or the system of mutual information about the movement of MANPADs). Ashghabad has finally awoken to the threats emanating from its neighbor—Afghanistan, the main source of danger to the world. The Turkmenian leaders are resolved to preserve the authoritarian system, which needs a strong army—something that shapes Russia's interests. The country cannot modernize its armed forces on its own; it needs at least a predictable partner, if not an ally. Russia is prepared to ensure security if not of the regime then of the gas contracts (it blends its energy and security policy just as successfully as or even better than NATO). The past history of a common army as well as the extensive official and unofficial ties give Russia a good opportunity to increase its influence in Turkmenistan's military sphere.

REGIONAL POLITICS

**FROM INTERNAL TO EXTERNAL:
CHALLENGES AGAINST
U.S.'S CENTRAL ASIAN POLICY****Dr. Robert Guang TIAN***Associate Professor of Business Administration,
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(Buffalo, NY, U.S.)**Introduction*

With the 9/11 event as the baseline, America's awareness of the strategic importance of Central Asia and the latter's weight in the U.S. global strategy was greatly changed. According to Charles Manes, the 9/11 terrorist attack enabled the U.S. to "discover Central Asia."¹ This attack has straightened out the uncertainty due to confusion within the U.S. Government about the importance of the Central Asian area to the U.S. and enabled the U.S. to suddenly realize the important advantage of the five Central Asian nations in the global geopolitical pat-

tern. However, the sympathy of the Central Asian nations, Russia and China for the U.S. on the terrorist attack and the warm help from the Central Asian nations to U.S.'s Taliban attacks in Afghanistan and to the U.S. military actions against al-Qa'eda, facilitated the U.S. army in Central Asia to gain the Manas Air Base and the Karshi Khana-bad Airport (also called K2 Base). This symbolized a turning point for the U.S. to access the Central Asian area in one stroke. By stationing in Central Asia, the U.S. became a remarkably important power in Central Asia and nearby.

In terms of strategy, the U.S. is very far away from Central Asia. However, judging from the undergoing Afghanistan Action of Antiterrorism

¹ Ch. Manes, "America Discovers Central Asia," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 2, March/April 2003, pp. 120-132.

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and the U.S. military bases in Central Asia, the five Central Asian nations have actually fallen into the U.S. "New Frontier" category.² This was the first time for the U.S. to observe and influence the Central Asian situation so closely. Surprisingly, the happening of the Kyrgyz "Tulip Revolution" in March 2005 and the Uzbekistan Andijan event in May of the same year interrupted the accelerating the U.S. influence in Central Asia. Although the U.S. kept its Manas Air Base in the end, Kyrgyzstan failed to observe the Kyrgyzstan-American Goodwill Policy after the "Tulip Revolution" and it vacillated on the U.S. stationing issue, which remained a headache to the U.S.³ The development of the Andijan event further led the U.S. to realize the complexity of the Central Asian situation. After the Andijan event, the U.S. Government required the Karimov Government to allow the international commission of inquiry to stand firm on the independence, which forced the U.S. army to withdraw from the Karshi Khanaabad Airport on 21 November, 2005. The withdrawal of the U.S. army from Uzbekistan symbolized a great setback of the Central Asian policy,

² See: Maj. V. de Kytspotter, *The Very Great Game? The U.S. New Frontier in Central Asia*, A Research Paper Presented to the Geneva Centre for Security Policy 18th International Training Course, February 2004, p. 6.

³ See: J. Nichol, *Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests*, CRS Report Order Code RL30294, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Updated 26 April, 2007, pp. 34, 35.

which is regarded as a "Strategic Surprise" for the U.S. in Central Asia.⁴

In order to turn the decreasing U.S. influence around in Central Asia, the U.S. Government has been adjusting its Central Asian policy ever since the second half of 2005. The aim of this paper is to outline the profound background of the above-mentioned adjustment by means of a comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by the U.S. in Central Asia ever since 2005 and the causes of these challenges. At the same time, we will take the scholastic controversy over the priority of the U.S.'s Central Asian strategic goals after the Andijan event for example to point out the existing internal controversy over U.S.'s Central Asian strategy. As such controversy results from the above-mentioned strategic challenges against the U.S. in Central Asia and reflects a scholastically serious thinking on its Central Asian strategy, a deep study of such controversy is closely linked with a study of the strategic challenges against the U.S. in the Central Asian area. It begins with a comprehensive analysis of the internal and external challenges against the U.S. in Central Asia, and then shifts to the vision of the internal controversy over U.S. Central Asian strategy and summarizes the present situation and the future development of U.S. Central Asian strategy.

⁴ See: St.J. Blank, "Strategic Surprise? Central Asia in 2006," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 2, May 2006, pp. 109-130.

The Internal Challenges against the U.S. Central Asian Strategy

In general, the strategic setback of the U.S. in Central Asia is due to both internal and external reasons. The internal factors mainly include the numerous mistakes of the U.S. Government's Central Asian policy itself; while the external factors mainly involve the subjective attitudes or objective factors of the countries interacting with the U.S. in Central Asia. We must point out that the above internal and external factors are both causes of the U.S. strategic loss and the obstacle to the fulfillment of the U.S. strategic goal. The two are actually in conformity.

Although the U.S. Government has not yet declared that its Central Asian policy is seriously defective, academe is well aware of these deficiencies, pointing that out as one of the factual groundings for the adjustment of its Central Asian policy. Concerned scholars suggested that one of the main

reasons for the U.S. to be confronted with such incidents in the Central Asian area is the weakening of the U.S.'s strategic status as the "Strategic Surprise". These are resulting from the limitations in the U.S. Central Asian policy itself, which have become one of the challenges to be overcome so that the U.S. can achieve its goals in its Central Asian strategy. Judging from the conclusion and analysis of scholars' discussions about U.S.'s Central Asian policy, they stress the following three serious mistakes in U.S.'s Central Asian policy: the U.S. has neglected the internal coordination between government agencies when handling the Central Asian affairs, has lacked a good understanding of the Central Asian nations and the whole area in general and neglected the external coordination with other players.

Lack of Coordination between Government Agencies when Handling the Central Asian Affairs

Prior to the Andijan event in 2005, suggestions on reviewing the limitations of the Uzbekistan policy and even of the whole Central Asian policy by the U.S. had already existed. Among the problems identified were the lack of effective coordination between the U.S. government agencies is the most serious one. Someone pointed out that there was serious competition and controversy between sectors within the Government, which are the greatest obstacle to the government agencies' coordination and cooperation.⁵ On the Central Asian policy, the most remarkable competition and controversy between government sectors was between the Department of State and the Defense Department. With reference to the power struggle, Stephen J. Blank points out that the Pentagon tends to seek a greater control of the U.S. office of foreign affairs by all means, even taking a hard line in so doing. Then government officers giving each other "tit for tat" will be unable to make consistent policies. As for the Department of State, to preserve the U.S. interest, realizing democratization and democracy are taken for granted as the utmost value. What they are most concerned about in the Central Asian area is democracy but not security interests, so they don't agree on any other alternative (except democracy).⁶ The Department of Defense suggests that the U.S.'s preferred strategic consideration in Central Asia should be antiterrorism wars for regional security, while the Department of State regards promoting democracy in the Central Asian area as the priority. With such notable controversy, the two government sectors often have serious conflicts on some matters instead of cooperation or coordination on the U.S.'s Central Asian policy.

The policy controversy between the Department of Defense and the Department of State is reflected most vividly and sharply by their different attitudes to helping the Central Asian nations. On 13 April, Richard A. Boucher (former spokesman of the Department of State and currently the Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs) declared that due to "Uzbekistan's balking on democratic reform and the U.S. restriction on helping its partners," the U.S. would cancel the economic and military aid amounting to 18 million U.S. dollars to Uzbekistan. The senior officers in the Defense Department gave air to their grievances on this decision. When visiting Uzbekistan in August 2004, Richard Myers (then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staffs) declared that while Russia was trying to enhance its influence on Uzbekistan, it was "shortsighted" and "non-constructive" for the U.S. to reduce its aid to Uzbekistan.⁷

⁵ See: T. Clancy *et al.*, *Battle Ready*, G.P. Putnam's & Sons, New York, 2004, pp. 323-324.

⁶ See: St.J. Blank, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia and the Challenges to Them*, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2007, p. 19, available at [<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=758>].

⁷ See: J. Nichol, *Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests*, CRS Report Order Code IB93108, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 10 December, 2004, CRS-20.

In fact, the lack of consensus and coordination between sectors within the Government on a series of Central Asian affairs of strategic importance has greatly decreased the complementation efficiency of U.S.'s Central Asian policy and even affected the general physiognomy of the Central Asian policy. Many scholars propose that the inter-sector conflict is a structural problem of U.S.'s Central Asian policy, which has become an obstacle to making consistent and effective Central Asian policies and to giving flexible and quick response upon contingency by the U.S. After the Andijan event, the U.S. had to withdraw from Karshi Khanabad Airport, which is interpreted as a failure of the Central Asian policy due to the lack of coordination between agencies in charge of the Central Asian affairs in the U.S.⁸

Lack of a Good Understanding of the Actual Demands from the Central Asian Nations

The disputes and "short-sightedness" within the U.S. government sectors were the result of their ignorance of the exceptional cases of the Central Asian nations when making their Central Asian policy. They hardly considered the Central Asian nations' real concerns and actual needs in the latter's position. In addition, the implementation of the Central Asian policy is influenced by the domestic election cycle. To cater to criticism from domestic voters on U.S. foreign policies and the demands from powerful lobbying groups for their own interests, the Government had to sacrifice important national interests for voters' support of its foreign policies sometimes. How the Government handled the Andijan event is a good example.

After the Andijan event happened on 13 May, 2005, the media and human rights activists didn't make any in-depth investigation before blaming the Uzbekistan Karimov Government for its abuse of force on those protesting against it, which led to heavy casualties. High-ranking governmental officers also suggested that the U.S. should be tough on Uzbekistan. Under such circumstances, the U.S. Government had to impose pressure on the Karimov Government, requiring Uzbekistan to allow it to set up an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the truth of the Andijan event. The U.S. Government's standpoint on the Andijan event led to worsening the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship.

Four years have passed since the Andijan event. A second review of the U.S. Government's response to this incident is suggested. For instance, with reference to the criticism from some government and nongovernmental organizations on the Uzbekistan human rights and democracy, S. Frederick Starr, Director of the Johns Hopkins Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, used to point out: "Criticism by certain NGOs and some U.S. government agencies of Uzbekistan's record in the area of human rights, whatever their justification, will raise a caution flag in the U.S. These concerns cannot be ignored, but they must be addressed in the context of certain positive developments that have gone largely unreported."⁹ However, up until now, the domestic mainstream's opinions have placed the blame on the Uzbekistan Government for its repression of domestic democracy and its extreme ignorance of human rights regardless of the new views some independent researchers have on the standpoint of the Uzbekistan Government in this event by means of detailed and objective investigation. And after detailed

⁸ See: St.J. Blank, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia and the Challenges to Them*, pp. 18-22. It is important to note that it was the U.S. Congress that established new legislative conditions on aid to Uzbekistan (tied to human rights), which led to the curtailment of some aid.

⁹ S.F. Starr, *A "Greater Central Asia Partnership" for Afghanistan and Its Neighbors*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, Washington, D.C., 2005, p. 21.

investigation, AbduMannob Polat pointed out that the Uzbekistan Government's response to the Andijan event was actually very restrained. At that time, in order to prevent Uzbekistan from coming to serious anarchy, use of force was almost the only choice for Karimov. And the Government's over-reaction to this event was mostly due to the domestic groups' campaign and hostility to the Karimov regime.¹⁰ It is said that the U.S. Government's standpoint on the Andijan event shows its lack of enough deep understanding of Uzbekistan and even the whole Central Asian nations' national conditions and its controversy with Central Asia over priority.¹¹

On the Government's agenda of the Central Asian policy, in order to reduce the security threats in the Central Asian area, driving by all means the Central Asian nations to make necessary political and economic reforms to promote democracy and liberty is the obligatory diplomatic mission for the U.S. To the Central Asian nations, which are still at the transitional stage, the most important and most urgent task at present is to promote the national economic development and create a stable domestic environment. The two interacting sides have different understandings of the preferred development orientation for the Central Asian nations. This will lead to difficulty in the development of good relations between the U.S. and the Central Asian nations. To the people in the Central Asian nations, they seem to look forward to a change but not political reform. What they most care about is not political liberty and democracy but the improvement of their own economic conditions. According to the polls jointly taken by the World Bank, the UNDP and the Brookings Institution in the fall of 2004 on the five Central Asian nations, what the Uzbekistan people were worried about was unemployment, poverty and political unrest. From the matters the U.S. Government especially cared about, such as media liberty and political rights, the Uzbekistan people didn't expect much.¹²

Lack of External Coordination in Making and Implementing the U.S. Central Asian Policy

Central Asia is a gathering place for great power interests, which is already a consensus to both authorities and academe. In addition, Central Asian nations face many problems during this transition, such as solving the border problems, beating drug traffic, trading in human beings, eliminating organized crime, restricting the development of the Islamic extremist forces, allocating water resources rationally, leading Central Asian nations to fully melt into the global economic system and handling the sudden political unrest in Central Asia, which all demand for the interaction and coordination between the external behavior bodies devoted actively to the Central Asian affairs. However, while pursuing its own strategic interests in such a critical area, the U.S. Government seldom communicates with such countries as Russia, China and Iran on the Central Asian area affairs and its Central Asian policy.¹³ Just as an observer says "present policies and structures [of the U.S.], while fundamentally bilateral, nonetheless allow a degree of cross-border coordination and integration."¹⁴ Although the

¹⁰ See: A. Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, Jamestown Foundation, Washington, D.C., June 2007.

¹¹ See: V. Naumkin, "Uzbekistan's State-Building Fatigue," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Summer 2006, pp. 138-139.

¹² See: F. Hill, K. Jones, "Fear of Democracy or Revolution: The Reaction to Andijan," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 119.

¹³ See: S.N. Macfarlane, "The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia," *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 3, 2004, pp. 450-461; R. Weitz, "Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Summer 2006, pp. 155-167.

¹⁴ S.F. Starr, op. cit., p. 11.

U.S. policy makers stress the importance of regional economic and security cooperation sometimes, what the U.S. is concerned about in Central Asia is bilateral on the whole—ever since 2001, this tendency has become more and more obvious.¹⁵

The U.S. Government's stress on the bilateralism has greatly helped develop the relations between the U.S. and the Central Asian nations. However, with the U.S.'s lack of necessary interaction and coordination in Central Asia, the U.S. Government's policies will be subject to misunderstanding, which will objectively result in the complicity of the Central Asian situation. In fact, the nations with important and even core interests in Central Asia are mainly Russia and China. If the U.S. Government pays little attention to the effective interaction with these two nations, the U.S. will get hurt in pursuit of its own interests. It is said that as the main large nations in the world have all taken an active part in Central Asian affairs for their own interests, Central Asia has been put in a "New Great Game" whirlpool more complicated than the "Great Game" in the 19th Century.¹⁶ Of course, in view of their own interests, Russia and China are keeping sharp vigilance on the expansion of U.S. influence in this area, but it is still necessary for the U.S. Government to make some basic communication with the two nations by all means on the important issues happening in the Central Asian nations. It does not mean giving in to Russia and China or empowering them to exaggerate their own power and influence in Central Asia. Actually, for the sake of the U.S. interests, the U.S. Government must set up a kind and easy-going image in the Central Asian area to make time with the Central Asian nations and enable Russia and China to realize that the U.S. is actually not pursuing its own interests in an exclusive way.

There is still a lot of work to do toward that end. Its current Central Asian policy is dominated by bilateral relations, which is seen to be a lack of flexibility. In addition, the U.S. seldom communicates with such countries as Russia, which has become an excuse for them to attack the U.S. Government's policy with words. NATO, for example, used to blame the U.S. Government for its lack of clarity and coordination with other large nations on Central Asian policy. Up to now, NATO has deeply involved itself in Afghanistan military action and the military contacts with Central Asia. However, NATO has not done much to set up a necessary link or an effective dialog mechanism with Russia or China. Furthermore, the U.S. has never responded actively to the appeal that China and Russia are willing to enhance their cooperation with NATO. For instance, in October 2002, officers from the Chinese Government appealed to NATO to begin a bilateral dialog with China on the strategic development and security threats of Central Asia, but NATO didn't make any necessary response to this advocacy. In addition, in the past years, Russia has kept suggesting that NATO and CSTO set up a direct link on many domains related to Central Asia, such as beating terrorism and drug traffic. However, NATO tended to cooperate bilaterally with Central Asian nations and turned Russia down repeatedly. Why did the Government refuse Russia? Because it thought that the organization was controlled by Russia, so that setting up a relationship with CSTO would mean to admit the legality of the organization in the international community.¹⁷ Since the Government does not trust such large nations as Russia and Iran, it is unwilling to negotiate or communicate with them on the Central Asian affairs and its own Central Asian policy. The focus of the U.S. Government on the bilateral relationship in the Central Asian area facilitates the stability of the

¹⁵ See: S.N. Macfarlane, op. cit., p. 457.

¹⁶ See: *The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia*, ed. by L. Kleveman, Atlantic Books, London, 2004; N. Swanström, "China and Central Asia: A New Great Game or Traditional Vassal Relations?" *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 45, No. 12, November 2005, pp. 569-584; M.K. Bhadrakumar, "The Great Game on a Razor's Edge," *Asian Times Online*, 23 December, 2006.

¹⁷ See: R. Weitz, op. cit., p.164. Perhaps there is more potential for dialogue with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization than with the CSTO.

situation of the area and of the political situation of the Central Asian nations. However, to other countries, the U.S. is a potential power to damage the stability of Central Asia.¹⁸ Therefore, it is time for the Government to change this policy.

The External Challenges against U.S.'s Central Asian Policy

Under new situations, the U.S. must overcome both the inherent structural contradictions of its policy and the following main external challenges. The first challenge is the Central Asian nations' doubt and distrust of the U.S. for promoting democracy in the Central Asian area, the second one is Russia, which disagrees and will resist the U.S., and the third one is Afghanistan, which is highly expected but not capable enough to undertake the heavy task in terms of security situations and its geopolitical location. These three external challenges actually result from the mistakes of the U.S.'s Central Asian strategy, and their existence and development has become an obstacle to the success of the U.S.'s Central Asian strategy.

Central Asian Nations' Doubting about the U.S. Strategic Intentions

In advance of antiterrorism, the U.S. army stationed troops in the Central Asian area smoothly. From 2001 to 2003, the U.S. Government's main tasks in the Central Asian area were to consolidate the gained military bases and enhance its own strategic status in this area. Therefore, the U.S. Government has not interfered in the political and economic reforms of the Central Asian nations enthusiastically. In 2003, especially after issuing the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT), the Government began to show its dissatisfaction with the stagnation of the political and economic reforms in Central Asian nations. According to NSCT, the internal development of the allies or partners of the U.S. was vital to the U.S. war of antiterrorism. If these countries are already or are becoming the so-called "weak nations" or "failed states," even if the U.S. can get temporary benefit from cooperation with them, these nations, that are subject to terrorists, will bring the U.S. antiterrorism action into trouble and even threaten the U.S. national security in the long run. To make the national war of antiterrorism successful, NSCT defined the following four goals: uproot terrorism; stop giving support, help or refuge to terrorists; eliminate the potential condition for the breeding of terrorism; defend the security of the U.S. and of its citizens both at home and abroad.¹⁹ However, according to the Government's policy makers, the Central Asian nations, especially Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, tend to be changed into "failed nations" in view of the complicity and difficulties of the transition process of the Central Asian nations.²⁰ And this is a consideration for the Government in making its Central Asian policy and to developing its cooperation with these nations.

¹⁸ See: Maj. V. de Kytspotter, op. cit.

¹⁹ See: "President Bush Releases National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030214-7.html>].

²⁰ According to Graham Fuller, former Vice-chairman of the U.S. National Security Council, the so-called "Failed States" are those "suffering from breakdown in national authority and legal norm and lost of control on governments by the Central Government, resulting in increasing anarchy, law disorder and crimes" (G. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003, p. 76).

As is described in relevant documents and works by the Government and scholars, the Central Asian nations were confronted with a series of problems during transition, such as serious corruption, slow economic recovery, serious unemployment problems, sharp polarization between the rich and the poor, a prevailing shadow economy, rise of Islamic extremism, brutalities of terrorist attacks, rampancy of drug traffic, weak military force and low efficiency of governments. According to the U.S., these problems are so serious that the actually weak nations are only a step away from "failed nations."²¹ In order to help the Central Asian nations combat these internal challenges, the U.S. Government's recommendation to the Central Asian nations are implementing practical political and economic reforms with democracy and liberal economic values. In fact, the Government did not stress this problem from the beginning. Before 2003, although the Government required the Central Asian nations to begin political and economic reforms, it focused on developing friendly relations with them and driving them to support its military action in Afghanistan, paying little attention to this problem.²² However, ever since 2003, the U.S. Government had begun to impose more pressure on the political and economic reforms in Central Asian nations. Especially after the Rose Revolution happening in Georgia in November 2003, the Orange Revolution happening in Ukraine in October 2004 and the Tulip Revolution happening in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005, the U.S. Government suddenly saw a good prospect in the former Soviet area and expected a lot from the emergence of democracy in Central Asia. Just based on this judgment the U.S. Government took a hard line after the Andijan event, which worsened the relationship between the U.S. and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Government's response to the Andijan event has a lot of impacts.°Firstly, it reminded the state leaders of the Central Asian nations that the U.S. Government won't give up the promotion of democracy even in its allies, including Uzbekistan, which has signed a strategic agreement with the U.S.²³ Secondly, the U.S. Government's attitude toward the democratic problem in Central Asia and its disregard of the development of democracy in its allied nations in the Middle East and the Africa. The state leaders of the Central Asian nations have blamed the U.S. Government for its "Double Standards" for democracy.²⁴ Lastly, it has led to a misunderstanding by the state leaders of the Central Asian nations that promoting democracy would lead to a Color Revolution, resulting in a downfall or banishment of the state leaders. Based on these judgments, the state leaders of the Central Asian nations think that promoting democracy domestically is equal to political suicide. The response of Karimov (President of Uzbekistan) to the U.S. attitude after the Andijan event exemplifies how these state leaders' fear the U.S. democratic strategy and voice dissatisfaction with the U.S. attitude. In view of the experience of the Central Asian nations interacting with the U.S. in recent years and the state leaders' understanding of the impact of so many Color Revolutions, the above-mentioned influences might remain in the state leaders' cognition of the U.S. Since the Central Asian nations' misgivings about the U.S.'s intentions would not disappear quickly, it seems that the U.S. Government should enhance its communication with the governments of these nations before making its Central Asian policy, so as to improve its image in this area.

²¹ J. Nichol, *Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests*, CRS Report Order Code RL33458, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Update 12 May, 2006.

²² See: M.B. Olcott, "Taking Stock of Central Asia," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 3-17; F. Hill, "Central Asia and the Caucasus: The Impact of the War on Terrorism," in: *Nations in Transit 2003: Democratization in East-Central Europe and Eurasia*, ed. by A. Schnetzer et al., Liberty House, New York, 2003; A. Tabyshalieva, "Human Rights and Democratization in Central Asia After September 11," *Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Insights*, December 2002.

²³ See: E. Rumer, "The U.S. Interests and Role in Central Asia After K2," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. XXIX, No. 3, Summer 2006, p. 148.

²⁴ See: V. Naumkin, op. cit., pp. 138-139; F. Hill, K. Jones, op. cit., p. 122.

***Russia's Resistance against
the Increased U.S. Influence
in the Central Asian Area***

It is undeniable that Russia used to have a lasting and deep influence in Central Asia, which was somewhat weakened after the Soviet Union collapsed due to a drop in Russian strength and a shift of its democratic strategy toward the West, but the historical ties between Russia and the Central Asian nations have not disappeared with the Soviet Union. After the 9/11 attack in 2001, holding common interests with the U.S. on attacking the Afghanistan Taliban Regime, eliminating Afghanistan drug production, weakening Islamic extremism and maintaining the Central Asia's stability, the Russian Putin Government silently accepted the fact that the U.S. troops entered Central Asia. Furthermore, Russia even cooperated with Central Asian nations to support the U.S. military action in Afghanistan by providing military equipment and advisers.²⁵ Although this attitude somewhat relieved the competition between the U.S. and Russia as early as the 1990s, as time passed and the situation changed, Russia began to be dissatisfied with the increasing U.S. influence in Central Asia and reviewed the impact the U.S. military existence would have on the strategic interests of the Central Asian area.

The stationing of the U.S. army in Central Asia changed the previous friendliness of Central Asia to Russia—even Tajikistan, which had an intimate relationship with Russia, is now seeking a balance between Russia and U.S.—which somewhat depresses Russia. The emergence of the U.S. army has made Russia feel its strategic interests in Central Asia are restricted by the U.S. As discussed above, the U.S. Government cooperates with Central Asian nations with bilateralism as the core, which has also dissatisfied Russia. In addition, Russia has linked the U.S. with the Color Revolution to convince the Central Asian nations that the U.S. is playing a role in it, so as to increase their vigilance against the U.S. In order to maintain its own interest in Central Asia and the attachment of the Central Asian nations to it, Russia has taken a series of actions in the following fields in recent years to prevent the U.S. influence from spreading in the Central Asian area.

Security: At the CIS Summit in May 2001, the members agreed on the establishment of the Central Asia Quick Reaction Force (QRF) with its headquarters in Bishkek; in May 2002, the Collective Security Treaty was upgraded to be the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which stated Russia's desire that all external forces stationing troops in Central Asia must "meet Russian interest and coordinate with it."²⁶ B. On 23 October, 2003, Russia obtained the right to station troops in the Kant Air Base near Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, which was the first air base Russia obtained in Central Asia after the Soviet Union collapsed. C. In October 2004, Russia and Tajikistan signed the Credential Exchange Protocol on ratifying the Treaty on the Status and Conditions of Stay of the Russian Military Base in the territory of Tajikistan (signed on 16 April, 1999), thus reconstituting the 201st Motorized Infantry Division Russia stationed in Tajikistan into a military base formally. On 22 September, 2003, Russia and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement titled Russia and Kyrgyzstan on the Status and Terms of Stationing the Russian Airbase in Kyrgyzstan. Under the agreement, the Russian airbase Kant, including its materiel, is part of the air arm of the Collective Rapid Deployment Force in the Central Asian region. D. After the Andijan event in 2005, the Uzbekistan-Russian relationship was developed quickly. In September 2005, the two nations held the first military exercise after the Soviet Union collapsed. In November of the same year, they signed The Russia-

²⁵ See: J. Nichol, *Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests*, CRS Report Order Code RL30294, Washington, D.C., CRS-44, 46.

²⁶ R. Weitz, op. cit., pp. 157-158; St.J. Blank, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia and the Challenges to Them*, pp. 5-15.

Uzbekistan Treaty of Alliance Relations, which symbolized the establishment of a formal military alliance between the two nations.

Energy resources dimension:²⁷ A. Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan established the “Natural Gas Alliance” in 2002. On 28 February, 2003, EAEC²⁸ International Council declared the “EAEC Member States’ Energy Resources Policies and Principle”; B. In October 2004, Russia joined the CACO consisting of Uzbekistan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan,²⁹ which was originally devoted to getting rid of the Russian influence to promote the economic integration in Central Asia. Russia’s entry put the Central Asian nations’ desire to exclude Russia from the regional integration process to an end. C. In October 2005, at the EAEC St. Petersburg Summit, CACO announced its merger with EAEC, when all its members joined in EAEC. Hence the Russian influence on the Central Asian nations was further consolidated. D. After the Andijan event, the former EAEC Observer Uzbekistan joined this organization formally on 25 January, 2006. Why was this event so significant in the field of energy resources? Because as early as the organization allowed for its entry, Uzbekistan signed an agreement with Russian Gazprom on the investment of 1.2 billion U.S. dollars in the three largest natural gas fields (Urga, Kuanysh and Akchalak) on the Ustyurt Plateau in Uzbekistan to produce petroleum together, so as to imitate Russia.³⁰ In fact, this component is broader than just energy. It is economic, which includes energy but also prosperity/economic development for the nations of the region and also the South-Central Asia regional integration initiative which is referred to later in the paper.

Democracy: A. Learning from the lessons of the great loss due to its obvious support of Yanukovich during the Orange Revolution happening in Ukraine in October 2004—Russia gave priority to maintaining the stability of the Kyrgyzstan situation during the Tulip Revolution happening in March 2005. This was to prevent the new Kyrgyzstan Government from estranging it when in power; B. During the Andijan event in May 2005 Russia strongly protested against the intervention by the U.S. and EU in the internal affairs of Uzbekistan, publicly supporting the standpoint of the Karimov Government in the Andijan event and supported the Uzbekistan Government in refusing the U.S.’s suggestion regarding setting up an international fact-finding commission in the name of maintaining the Uzbekistan sovereignty. C. To go against the U.S. intention for a Color Revolution in the Central Asian area, Russia gave great support to the governments of the Central Asian nations by means of high-level visits, governmental statements and economic assistance,³¹ and tried to outline the measures that might be adopted by these organizations in times of political unrest in the Central Asian nations by means of such multilateral frameworks as CIS and CST, so as to pre-

²⁷ See: V. Paramonov, A. Stokov, “Structural Interdependence of Russia and Central Asia in the Oil and Gas Sectors,” *Conflict Studies Research Centre Central Asia Series 07/ 16E*, Defense Academy of the United Kingdom, June 2007, p. 1.

²⁸ The Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community was signed by Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in 2000. The declaration made on 28 February, 2003 rendered such a wish: the organization wish to use energy resources rationally and create a common fuel and resources complex with the joint efforts of its member states on the basis of improving the operational effectiveness of the energy resources systems in all nations, promoting the development of the facilities for the transportation of energy resources between its member states and creating good conditions to improve the export of energy resources to the international energy resources market.

²⁹ The prototype of this organization was a customs union founded by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in January 1994 and joined in by Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan afterwards. As a regional forum, this organization made some progress in its initial years in terms of the reduction of the tariffs between its members and the elimination of trade barriers. In June 1998, it was renamed as CAEC. When its member states put more and more topics for discussion in the organization, its validity went down gradually. When Karimov (President of Uzbekistan) insisted, the organization was renamed again as CACO in 2001.

³⁰ See: V. Naumkin, op. cit., pp. 135-136.

³¹ See: Liu Fenghua: “Russia in the Central Asia: Evolution of Policies,” *International Politics Quarterly*, No. 2, 2007, pp. 161-166.

vent and handle the contingencies to maintain the Russian interest in this area and the stability of the Central Asian area.³²

In a word, next to Central Asia with numerous historical links to them, Russia has many important interests in this area, which is an important reason for Russia not to leave any other external forces remolding Central Asia and the surrounding geopolitical environment in their desires. Even China, which is regarded as a “Strategic Partner” by Russia, is guarded by Russia against any spreading of its influence in Central Asia. The U.S. is powerful, yet its pursuit of such strategic goals as security, democracy and energy resources does not align with the Russian strategic consideration. Especially in the fields of democracy and energy resources, their considerations tend to be completely different. The conflict between Russia, which regards Central Asia as its strategic backyard, and the U.S., which has spread its influence there ever since 2001, is decided by the geopolitics and geographical interest reality of the Central Asian area.

According to the former U.S. ambassador to Turkmenistan, Mr. Michael Cotter, when discussing the Central Asian issues with the author, the Bush administration appeared to believe it was creating the idea of democratization, not only in Central Asia, but elsewhere. Assuming that because the U.S. won the Cold War, not only the U.S.’s economic model but also its political model would be rapidly adopted elsewhere in the world. This extraordinarily single-minded view of the world by the administration is the cause of many of the policy setbacks the U.S. has suffered over the past years. In reality, the U.S. claim that the “rose” “tulip” and the other revolution in the Central Asian region meant a significant change in politics was just a wishful thinking. All these so-called Color Revolutions have fallen far short of presaging any real change in the political structure of those countries.

Afghanistan’s Fragile Geopolitical Status

After the Afghanistan Taliban Regime was overthrown, Afghanistan began to play an important role in the U.S.’s Central Asian policy. According to the Americans concerned, the overthrow of the Taliban Regime opened a “Window of Opportunities” for Afghanistan. Located on the border of Central Asia and South Asia, it gives endless possibility for the U.S. Government to remold the geopolitical environment centering on Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan’s fragile geopolitical status is a tough problem for the U.S. Government to remold the geopolitical environments of Central Asia and surrounding areas.

Afghanistan’s fragility on security situation: Among the five Central Asian nations, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are next to Afghanistan, and there are numerous homologous nationalities from these nations in Afghanistan (about 6.2 million Tajik people and 1.5 million Uzbek people in North of Afghanistan); Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Kazakhstan, especially the former, have been an important cross-boundary route for Afghanistan’s drug traffic all along, and Islamism has gone through a quick revival ever since the independence of the Central Asian nations, so the stability of Afghanistan and the existence of the Islamic extremists in Afghanistan had remained a keen concern to the Central Asian nations. During the civil war, the Central Asian nations supported the Northern Alliance fighting against the Taliban Regime keeping the extremist Islamism ideology from penetrating into the Central Asian area. After the U.S. made a military attack titled Operation Endur-

³² See: I. Sarsembaev, “Russia: No Strategic Partnership with China in View,” *China Perspectives*, No. 64, May-June 2006, p. 33.

ing Freedom in Afghanistan in November 2001, the main reason the Central Asian nations to agree to and to provide the U.S. military action with transit flight, night refueling and base leasing was that the allied attack on the Taliban Regime met the Central Asian nations' security interest. To the Central Asian nations, destroying the Taliban Regime and al-Qa'eda and weakening the influence of the Taliban Islamic original clerical ideology helped to improve their own security environments. Cooperating with the U.S. in terms of military action helped to improve their relations with the U.S. guaranteeing more aid from the U.S. and the international organizations led by the U.S., which was the original intention of the Central Asian nations by agreeing to the U.S. military action in Afghanistan. However, the stagnation of the Afghanistan situation and the increasing rampancy of the drug traffic activities passing through the Central Asian nations put them in a more complicated situation instead of improving their external security environments.

Ever since the U.S. took military action in Afghanistan on 7 November, 2001, the U.S. and its NATO allies have destroyed the Taliban Regime but not the Taliban forces. In recent years, there have been numerous terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, which have caused heavy casualties to the U.S. and its allied forces. It is reported that by 22 May, 2007, 579 people died and 5,885 people were wounded in the military actions and violence by the U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan.³³ The revival of the Taliban and al-Qa'eda forces has further worsened Afghanistan's security conditions. It is said that Afghanistan is even more endangered than Iraq, as it is already "On the Edge of the Big Muddy."³⁴ When visiting Afghanistan in 2003, Rumsfeld (the Secretary of Defense at that time) proposed that the allied forces had come to a "Victory" stage. However, on 21 July, 2006, the British Supreme Commander stationed in Afghanistan regarded the situation as "Anarchy."³⁵ Senior officers from the U.S. Department of State also admitted, "We will meet with very dangerous and bloody enemies in Afghanistan this year."³⁶ When visiting Kyrgyzstan on 5 June, 2007, Robert Gates (the new U.S. Secretary of Defense) even admitted frankly that the "Taliban is reviving."³⁷ The worsening of the situation in Afghanistan had demanded more military forces be sent by the U.S. to Afghanistan, but the Iraq warfare was actually what the U.S. cared about most. Therefore, the U.S. and its NATO allies kept reducing the military forces in Afghanistan, which kept worsening the originally fragile security situation. In addition, although the U.S. Government and its allies had made many promises to change the Afghanistan situation, numerous terrorist attacks, the stagnation of the military actions by the allied forces and the great difficulty in reconstructing Afghanistan have not only diminished the confidence of Afghanistan people toward the U.S. and Karzai but also re-aroused a great worry from the Central Asian and South Asian nations about the spreading of the severe situation from Afghanistan to their own countries.

The far-reaching Afghanistan drug traffic problem: Maybe what is more closely linked with the security situation of the surrounding nations is the Afghanistan drug production problem. Afghanistan's drugs have kept entering into the international drug market mainly via the Central Asian nations all along. They are more susceptible to the influence of the Afghanistan drug production and traffic than the South Asian nations are. The drugs passing through Central Asian nations come from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, although mostly from Afghanistan. According to the UNODC statistics, over 21% of the morphia and heroin made in Afghanistan enter the international drug market via

³³ Casualty data as of 22 May, 2007, available at [<http://www.icasualties.org/oef/>].

³⁴ See: Th.H. Johnson, "On the Edge of the Big Muddy: The Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2, May 2007, pp. 93-129.

³⁵ See: *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³⁶ Senior State Department Official: "South and Central Asia Regional Update," Foreign Press Center Background Briefing Washington, D.C., 22 March, 2007.

³⁷ See the speech by Gates on the Bishkek Press Conference when visiting the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, available at [<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=3979>].

the Central Asian nations. With the great antidrug efforts from the frontier guards in the Central Asian nations, the Afghanistan drug traffic via the Central Asian nations began to drop in numbers in 2006³⁸ but things are still looking blue. As long as the drug prices in the international market remain so high and the security and economic conditions of Afghanistan are not improved, Afghanistan's drug production will remain hot, so that the Central Asian nations will remain a transfer point for the Afghanistan drug.

As a matter of fact, due to the increase of Afghanistan drug production and the remaining rampant of drug traffic, the security situation of the Central Asian nations is more fragile than it was before 2001. According to a deep study by Svante E. Cornell and Niklas L.P. Swanström, the Afghanistan drug traffic activities passing through the Central Asian nations are not sheer economic activities but combined with organized criminal forces, Islamic extremists, money laundering and terrorist forces. Drug trading has influenced the military, political, social and ecological securities in the Central Asian nations presenting a great challenge against them.³⁹ According to the above two researchers, drug trading influences the Central Asian nations' security situations in the following three ways: The high profit from drug trading provides the extremist and terrorist forces with great financial support; drug trading has penetrated into all walks of life in the Central Asian nations, and even many high officers in the Central Asian nations have joined in the drug trafficking, resulting in the criminalization in the Central Asian nations. At last, the overwhelming drug traffic will lead to a sharp increase in the number of the drug addicts in the Central Asian nations⁴⁰. Infectious diseases such as AIDS will spread quickly in the Central Asian nations and crimes related to drug trafficking will become serious only to quickly worsen the public health and security situation of the Central Asian nations.⁴¹ In view of the limited financial resources and national security capacity of the Central Asian nations, the challenges caused by the Afghanistan drug traffic problem will hardly be improved within a short time. Therefore, Afghanistan is still regarded by these nations as an actual source of external threats.

The innate fragility of the Afghanistan status: As is known to all, Afghanistan is located in the Asian inland. Its closed geographical environment has endowed it with important geopolitical status, but equally important is that Afghanistan has to depend on the routes in other countries for foreign trade. Under such circumstances, the conditions of its neighboring trading infrastructure, the political relations between Afghanistan and its neighboring countries and the latter's administrative systems can limit its foreign trade in many ways.⁴² In addition, as a nation with complicated topography and limited resources, Afghanistan has a lack of both money to promote its domestic infrastructure construction and energy resources to meet its domestic market demands. Then Afghanistan has to rely on external investments to promote its national economic development and import energy resources from surrounding countries to keep the running of its economic life. However, any external force involved must have its own interest. Afghanistan depends on its neighboring countries rather than the latter on it, which must lead to the fragility of Afghanistan.⁴³ Furthermore, Afghanistan's lasting political unrest has forced its neighboring countries to close some borders concerned for fear that this unrest might overwhelm their own countries. Although these countries wish for a better situation in Afghanistan,

³⁸ 2005 The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *2006 World Drug Report*, Vol. 1, June 2006.

³⁹ See: S.E. Cornell, N.L.P. Swanström, "The Eurasian Drug Trade: A Challenge to Regional Security," *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 53, No. 4, July-August 2006, pp. 10-18.

⁴⁰ According to the UNODC statistics, by 2002, drug addicts in Central Asian nations had amounted to 0.365-0.432 million people. The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, *Drugs Situation in the Regions Neighboring Afghanistan and the Response of the ODCC*, October 2002, p. 25.

⁴¹ See: S.E. Cornell, N.L.P. Swanström, op. cit., p.20.

⁴² See: A.L. Boyer, "Recreating the Silk Road; The Challenges of Overcoming Transaction Costs," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, November 2006, pp. 74-87.

⁴³ See: E. Rumer, op. cit., p. 147.

their doubts about the prospect of Afghanistan has made it impossible for them to fully open the borders to Afghanistan immediately. Without an active participation by the surrounding countries, Afghanistan's potential for the "Status as A Hub" will not be fulfilled.

The World Bank used to issue a report, which made a detailed analysis of the current trade relations between Afghanistan and its surrounding countries and expressed its doubt about the role as a hub by Afghanistan in the great trade zone covering Central and South Asia. According to this report, even if the numerous obstacles to the trade between Afghanistan and its neighboring countries are removed, under the poor infrastructure and the stagnating security situation Afghanistan will still be too weak to become a transport corridor in this area. It will remain "the weakest part" of the regional integration under discussion instead, no matter how many benefits its surrounding countries can get in the potential regional integration.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ See: M.G. Weinbaum, "Afghanistan and Its Neighbors: An Ever Dangerous Neighborhood," *Special Report 162*, United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C., June 2006, p. 8.

UKRAINE, THE TURKIC WORLD, AND CENTRAL ASIA

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From the very beginning the relations between Southern and Western Rus/Ukraine have been far from simple and can be best described as ambivalent. We all know that Rus as a political unit came into existence amid incessant clashes with nomadic Turkic tribes—Pechenegs (Becheneks), Torks (Uzes), and Polovtsians (Kumans or Kypchaks)—pressing in from the Asian steppes. The Kievan rulers were no "meek lambs" either: they destroyed the Kingdom of the Khazars, the state with Turkic ethnic roots. Prince Svyatoslav's inroad in the 960s into their lands when he captured Sarkel and plundered Itil and Semender was a weighty contribution to the Khazars' sad fate.

The *Povest' vremennyh let* Chronicle, a key work that shaped the Eastern Slavs' idea of history, offers a detailed account of the unrelenting struggle against the Polovtsians, who as time went on became actively involved in the Rurikoviches' dynastic squabbles between the "elder" and "alienated" princes. In the 1080s-1090s the Kypchak pressure on Rus reached its peak to become intolerable; Grand Duke of Kiev Vladimir Monomachus and his sons were forced to march into the steppes in 1103, 1109, 1111, and 1116.¹

¹ See: M.S. Grushevskiy, *Istoria Ukraini—Rusi*, Vol. 2, Naukova dumka Publishers, Kiev, 1991, p. 533 (in Ukrainian).

Anyone wishing to understand Ukrainian mentality should take into account that it was affected by the latent fear of the Turkic world instilled in the course of history and intensifying under pressure of the Ukrainians' prolonged experience of armed conflicts with all sorts of Turks and the fiercest of them, the Crimean Khanate, dated to a later period. The legend of Polovtsian Khan Boniaka quoted by Mikhail Dragomanov and later by Mikhail Grushevskiy was borrowed from the medieval chronicles. Appropriated by Ukrainian folklore, it was registered in the 18th century as a story about a real historical figure who lived at the turn of the 12th century and who was transformed into a mystical supernatural being or even an evil spirit.²

Hostility alternated with periods of military and political partnership, while mutual cultural impact was inevitable. In 1223, Rus and the Polovtsians led by Yuri Konchakovich and Daniil Kobiakovich fought side by side on the River Kalka to oppose the Mongolian expansion. This is one of the most frequently used, yet by far the only example of their cooperation.

It was cemented by close kinship between the Rurikoviches and the Polovtsian nobles. Over time, Eastern Slavic names—witness Vasily Polovchanin, Lavr Polovchanian, Gleb Tireevich, Yaropolk Tomzakovich, and Yuri Konchakovich and Daniil Kobiakovich already mentioned—gained popularity among the Turkic top crust.³

The Turks settled in great numbers in the Kievan and Chernigov lands, became subjects of the Rurikoviches (the Torches Princedom was considered to be their center), and gradually drew close to the local Slavs. Mikhail Grushevskiy wrote on this score that the Turkic element (described by the blanket term “Black Caps” or “Karakalpaks”) was a fairly important political factor of the time. The chronicles of the mid-12th century, for example, invariably used the formula “all Russian land and all Black Caps”⁴ while the latter in their address to Grand Duke of Kiev Yuri deemed it necessary to enumerate their special, including military, services to Rus: “We die for the Russian land and give up our lives in your honor.”⁵

A monument to the Polovtsian language that came down to us as a 14th-century manuscript (Codex Cumanicus) contains numerous borrowings from the language of the Eastern Slavs: izba, kukel, samala (smola), peč (pech), yrs (rys).⁶

Political and cultural influence cannot be a one-way road: since the time of the Khazars it has been mutual. An analysis of contemporary literary monuments of Rus such as *Povest' vremennykh let*, the Kievan and Galitsko-Volynskaia chronicles, and *The Lay of Igor's Host* contain about 1,500 identified Turkic borrowings of Pecheneg and Polovtsian origin.⁷

Oriental (Turkic) influence became even more pronounced in the epoch of the Cossacks, who played an extremely important role in Ukrainian ethnogenesis. On top of this, as a military-political structure the Ukrainian Cossacks were very much needed to protect the Ukrainian lands against the attacks of the Crimean Khanate, which became especially frequent beginning in the late 15th century. Many historians (N. Karamzin, H. Pogodin, D. Bantysh-Kamenskiy, and S. Soloviev) traced the Cossacks back to the “Black Caps;” the term “Cossack” first appeared in Codex Cumanicus.⁸

The military, administrative and everyday vocabulary of the Ukrainian Cossacks brims with Turkic borrowings, their usage confirmed by Turkish influence. The following terms used to describe

² See: Ibid., p. 83.

³ See: Ibid., p. 537.

⁴ Ibid., p. 549.

⁵ Ibid., p. 550.

⁶ See: O.M. Garkavets, “Ukrainsko-tiurkski movni kontakty,” *Entsiklopedia ukrainskoi movy*, available at [www.litopys.org.ua/ukrmova] (in Ukrainian).

⁷ See: Ibidem.

⁸ See: N. Yakovenko, *Narys istorii seredn'ovichnoy ta rann'omodernoy Ukrainy*, Kritika Publishers, Kiev, 2005, p. 177 (in Ukrainian).

the military and administrative structures, utensils, clothing, and weapons enumerated by D. Yavor-nitskiy are especially illustrative: *kosh*, *ataman*, *asaul*, *chaush*, *chaban*, *palanka*, *khорunzhiy*, *bun-chuzhnyy*, *dzhura*, *kantarzhey*, *chekmen*, *sagaydak*, *kobura*, *toroki*, *kulbaka*, *yupka*, etc.⁹ It is a well-known historical fact that there was a fairly influential pro-Turkic trend in the Ukrainian political elite represented by Hetman Petr Doroshenko (1627-1698) and later by the leaders of the Trans-Danube Sech.

On the whole, according to the *Entsiklopedia ukrainskoi movy* (Encyclopedia of the Ukrainian Language), there are about 4,000 Turkisms in Ukrainian. Half of them describe everyday objects and phenomena: *kylym* (carpet), *otara*, *tuman*, *tiutiun* (tobacco),¹⁰ etc. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Ukrainians are one of the Slavic ethnoses exposed to an exceptionally strong impact of the Oriental, particularly Turkic, culture. At the same time, partly due to the religious factor, this influence was not destined to become the center of the intellectual elite's reflections and did not irreparably damage the cultural barriers at the level of mass stereotypes.

In the new historical conditions (when Ukraine was integrated into the Russian state), ambivalence, which remained a typical feature of Ukrainian mentality, assumed a new property that changed Ukraine's relations with the Turkic world and Central Asia. As part of the Russian Empire, Malorossia (Small Russia) could be described neither as a colony nor as a metropolitan state. It was obviously a dependent segment that gradually lost the remnants of its political and legal autonomy. At the same time its religious, cultural, and historical ties to the metropolitan state supplied Ukraine with development prospects it shared with Russia and put its elite on an equal footing with the elites of the influential Great Russian provinces.

There was any number of Ukrainian nobles in the top echelons of the imperial and Soviet administrative system: Prince Alexander Bezborodko, chancellor for Catherine the Great; Field Marshal Prince Ivan Paskevich-Erivanski, who captured Erivan during the Russo-Iranian war of 1826-1828; he also took Kars and Erzurum during the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829; and Prince Victor Kochubey (Kychukbei), the first minister of the interior and chairman of the State Council and the Committee of Ministers of the Russian Empire. In Soviet times, under Khrushchev, who was closely connected with the Ukrainian administration, the republic enjoyed a semi-privileged status. Many of those who started their party careers in the republic's eastern industrial regions later became Politburo members.

Ukraine's status in the Russian Empire can be said to be close to that of Scotland in the U.K.: both demonstrated the intention to gain more autonomy and were actively involved in imperial projects. Both joined their respective empires on the strength of legal documents: the Act of Union in the case of Scotland and the Pereyaslav Treaty in the case of Ukraine. On the strength of this they can be described as special, "union," units.

In the 1870s and later, Ukrainian and Russian peasants were actively encouraged to move to Central Asia. The bulk of Ukrainian migrants came from the left bank of the Dnieper. Before 1914 about 2 million Ukrainians settled in Asia;¹¹ many of them went as far as the Amur River in the Far East (the Green Wedge in the Ukrainian tradition)¹² and the Steppe Area (southwest of Siberia and

⁹ See: D.I. Yavor-nitskiy, *Istoria Zaporoz'kikh kozakiv*, Vol. 1, Naukova dumka Publishers, Kiev, 1990, 592 pp. (in Ukrainian).

¹⁰ See: O.M. Garkavets, "Tiurkizm," *Entsiklopedia ukrainskoi movy*, available at [www.litopys.org.ua/ukrmova].

¹¹ See: "Emigratsia," *Entsiklopedia ukrainoznavstva* (Ukrainian translation), Vol. 2, Lviv, 1996, p. 631.

¹² It is interesting to note that in the 1930s Japan tried to inspire an independence movement among the Ukrainians in the Far East in the hope of setting up an independent Ukrainian state in the Ussuri Territory with the prevailing (60 percent) Ukrainian population patterned on the Manchukuo buffer protectorate. Japan spared no effort to convince the leaders of the 11 thousand-strong Ukrainian colony in Manchuria that "the Ukrainians' hopes for independence coming from the West are unreliable and that an independent Ukrainian state can be set up only in the East." The Japanese military mission

Northern Kazakhstan), known as the Grey Wedge in the Ukrainian tradition. The largest number of Ukrainians who settled in Central Asia preferred Kirghizia. By 1926 Ukrainians comprised 14 to 15 percent of the total population of Kirghizia and Kazakhstan. In Soviet times Ukrainian specialists were sent to Central Asia in great numbers to contribute to the industrial modernization efforts. Later Ukrainians went to Kazakhstan to develop virgin and unused lands.

The independence declared in 1991 supplied Ukraine's ambivalent political role with another dimension, which affected its contacts with Central Asia, the Black Sea basin, and the Caucasus. For a long time the republic was seeking a balance between NATO headed by the United States and Russia (the multi-vector policy). This approach, which can be described as meandering between stronger actors with alternating biases, survived until the Color Revolution of the late 2004.

Ukraine, in particular, tried to tap its transit potential to contain Russia and send energy resources from Central Asia and the Caucasus to Europe bypassing the Russian Federation. This was expected to decrease the post-Soviet states' transit dependence on Moscow. The 675 km-long Odessa-Brody oil pipeline built in 1996-2002 at a cost of \$500 million and intended to move Caspian oil to Gdansk on the Baltic, is one of the most illustrative examples of this policy.

As the Ukrainian stretch of the planned Eurasian "bypassing" transportation corridors that would connect the Caspian, Black, and Baltic seas, it attracted the attention of the European Union. Moving in this direction, Ukraine joined the TRACECA project intended to revive the Great Silk Road and connect the ports, highways, and railways of the European Union, Turkey, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and China. The project stirred up displeasure among Russian experts because, they argued, it would have deprived Russia of its transit role and would have undermined its interests connected with the Trans-Siberian Railway.¹³ In 1996 Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan signed an agreement on a Poti-Ilyichevsk railway ferry; in 1997 China, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan reached an agreement on the Andijan-Osh-Kashgar railway with the prospect of joining a trans-Chinese railway to Shanghai.

In 1997 Ukraine was involved in setting up the GUAM (Georgia-Ukraine-Azerbaijan-Moldova) organization. At first Washington actively supported it as an element of the energy game on the Caspian-Black Sea area intended to diversify the routes of energy transportation. It was expected to extend into Central Asia (in 1999-2005 Uzbekistan was one of its members adding another "U" to its name). "In July 2002 the presidents of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova signed an agreement on a free trade zone that required adequate infrastructure and a ferry system in the Black Sea."¹⁴ Ukraine regarded the GUUAM expanse, at least in its official declarations, as potentially the strongest link in the chain that connected Europe with the APR.

Typically enough, in its New York Memorandum GUUAM described the Europe-the Caucasus-Asia transportation corridor (TRACECA) as an absolute priority; the GUUAM Yalta summit of 6-7 June, 2001 discussed its prospects. This and other declarations were inevitably accompanied by statements about the importance of cooperation with NATO.

At the same time Kiev tried to alleviate the negative effects of the GUAM activities in its relations with Russia. Early in 2000 Ukraine was prepared to set up a GUUAM peacekeeping battalion staffed with Ukrainians, Azeris, and Georgians to be trained at the Odessa Institute of Land Forces; later the plans were quietly shelved.

disseminated leaflets among the Red Army men of Ukrainian extraction trying to capitalize on their discontent with the tragic results of collectivization (see: L.V. Kuras, *Ukrainskaia etnicheskaia gruppirovka v Harbine v 30-e gody*, available at [www.vybory.org/articles/54.html]).

¹³ See: "Evroaziatskiy transportnyy koridor (proekt TRACECA)," available at [www.in.mid.ru].

¹⁴ A. Yaz'kova, "Summit GUAM—namechennye tseli i vozmozhnosti ikh realizatsii," available at [www.inion.ru/product/eurosec/st3vp16.htm].

In 2003-2004, with Victor Yanukovich as prime minister, Ukraine, still devoted to the multi-vector policy, supported the Caspian pipeline project in which Russia was interested: "The pipeline was initiated by the never realized International Consortium for Developing Ukraine's Gas Transportation System set up on a parity basis by Gazprom of Russia and Naftogaz of Ukraine. At the first stage it was expected to increase the carrying capacity of the 'narrow' Dashava-Uzhgorod stretch; at the second a new gas pipeline was expected to reach Dashava from Novopolotsk in the Lugansk Region; and at the third stage Novopskov and Alexandrov Gay would be connected with a gas pipeline across Russia. It was planned to conclude the fourth stage with a Caspian pipeline along the Caspian coast across Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan."¹⁵

Ukraine's interest in the Caspian pipeline was partly explained by the fact that the Odessa-Brody project stirred up no interest in the West, Poland included; there were enough rivaling projects. As a result the Odessa-Brody had to function on Russian oil. Vitali Kulik, a Ukrainian analyst, has offered the following comment: "The oil terminal in Yuzhny and the Odessa-Brody oil pipeline drew Ukraine into the race with Turkey, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Russia for the Caspian oil routes to Europe."¹⁶

In its relations with Moscow Kiev was seriously limited by its dependence on Russian gas: Ukraine covered about 25 percent of needs by locally extracted gas and had to import the rest (75 percent); the republic uses about 76 billion cu m of gas every year.¹⁷ To decrease its energy-related dependence on Russia and for several other reasons Ukraine tried to buy large amounts of gas from Turkmenistan. However, in the absence of alternative transportation routes Ukraine could receive Turkmenian gas only with the permission and under control of the companies working together with Gazprom, which means that no real balance could be achieved in this way no matter how high the Ukrainian stakes in its energy-related dialog with Central Asia.

Partnership with Central Asia in the energy sphere added vigor to the dialog with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, however Kiev for a long time "remained amazingly passive when it came to realizing its highly promising potential in the Central Asian region."¹⁸

This is best illustrated by Ukraine's relations with Turkmenistan: "Until 2000 Ukraine imported the bulk of the gas it used from Russia... The vigorous pace of its relations with Turkmenia in 1992-1993, when Ukraine bought about 26 billion cu m of gas, slackened by 1994. This happened for various reasons mainly because, as was stated, Ukraine failed to pay for the gas it used... The history of their relations knows of breakthroughs: in 1995, still owing Turkmenistan \$700 million Ukraine, represented by Kuchma, signed another contract with Niyazov under which Ukraine received 20 billion cu m of gas (a quarter of its needs). ... In 2000 Turkmenistan became Ukraine's main source of gas... It sold Ukraine about 35 billion cu m for \$44... By 2004-2005 Turkmenistan was supplying Ukraine with about 44 percent of its needs; Russia added 30-33 percent. Late in 2004 relations hit the last crisis: Turkmenistan increased the price for 2005 by 32 percent. Ukraine refused to accept the new price—Turkmenistan stopped gas deliveries. Several days later Naftogaz Ukrainy and Turkmenneftegaz signed an agreement under which Turkmenistan promised to sell Ukraine 36 billion cm for \$58, which established complete idyll in their relations."¹⁹ Ukraine also signed gas agreements with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The fact that for a long time gas trade with Turkmenistan was barter-based was very important for Ukraine and taught it to regard Central Asia as an important market for the products of its food,

¹⁵ P. Orlovtshev, "Vozvrat k epokhe gazovoy mnogovektornosti," *Komentarii*, No. 48, 2008.

¹⁶ B. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, "Ukrainskie perspektivy Tsentral'noy Azii," available at [www.eurasianhome.org].

¹⁷ See: A. Beliaev, "Ukraina i gazovye otnoshenia s postniyazovskoy Turkmeniey," available at [www.centrasia.ru].

¹⁸ R. Zhanguzhin, "Pro tsentralno-aziatskiy vector zovnishn'oeconomichnoy politiki Ukraini," available at [www.politdumka.kiev.ua] (in Ukrainian).

¹⁹ A. Beliaev, op. cit.

machine-building, and metallurgical industries. Under President Kuchma Ukrainian construction companies—Ukrtransbud, Interbudmontazh, and UkrAsiaBud—worked in Turkmenistan.²⁰

The Agreement on Mutual Encouragement and Protection of Investments of 28 January, 1998, the Joint Decree of the Presidents of Ukraine and Turkmenistan on Cooperation and Financing of the Investment Projects of State Importance in Turkmenistan of 4 October, 2000, and the Agreement on Further Development of Interstate Relations of 29 April, 2002 served as the foundation of the two countries' trade and economic partnership.

The Treaty between Ukraine and the Republic of Kazakhstan on Economic Cooperation in 1999-2009 and Programs and Measures Applied to the Program of Economic Cooperation for 1999-2009 supply the basis for the Ukrainian-Kazakhstan dialog.

Relations with Uzbekistan are based on the Treaty on Friendship and Further Development of Multisided Cooperation of 19 February, 1998; the Treaty on Economic Cooperation for 1999-2008 of 7 October, 1999, and the Protocol on Amendments and Addenda to the Agreement on Free Trade between the governments of the two countries signed on 25 June, 2004 that introduced a free trade regime with no exceptions and restrictions.

The fact that Central Asia could serve as a door Ukraine could use to promote its interests in China and Southern Asia played an important part in Kiev's great interest in the region. Central Asia and its neighbors, Pakistan and Iran, turned out to be suitable markets for Ukrainian high-tech civilian and military products.

Central Asia needs energy and oil-and-gas machine-building products: turbines, pumps, and gas compressor units. Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and the UAE are the largest importers of Ukrainian products.²¹ The stable and steadily increasing demand for these machine-building sectors is ensured by the gas- and oil-pipeline projects in which Russia and the Central Asian and Transcaucasian countries are involved.

The Frunze Machine-Building Association in Sumy, for example, is building a compressor station with an annual capacity of 2 billion cu m on the Turkmenian Caspian coast and is engaged in the reconstruction of the gas-collecting system of the Odjak-Naip group of the Naip gas condensate fields.²² The history of partnership between the Ukrainian enterprise and Central Asia goes back to 1940 when it delivered "several specially designed super-powerful nitrogen-hydrogen compressors" for the Chirchik chemical combine in Uzbekistan.²³

The 1996 contract with Pakistan on the deliveries of 320 T-80 VД tanks was a breakthrough in Ukraine's cooperation in high-tech machine-building with the countries bordering on Central Asia. Later Ukraine tried to take part in designing T-2000 tanks for Pakistan.²⁴ Ukrainian cooperation with Iran in aviation materiel is progressing. Ukrainian producers of weapons and military machines are actively working in China, India, and Myanmar.²⁵ In 1997 Ukraine joined the group of the world's ten largest weapon exporters.²⁶

Under the 1996 agreement Ukraine is actively developing its military-technical cooperation with Turkmenistan: it has already supplied Kolchuga radioelectronic equipment, carried out

²⁰ See: V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

²¹ See: "Ukraina: energeticheskoe machinostroenie pereroslo krizis," available at [www.abercade.ru].

²² See: V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

²³ See: V. Lukianenko, "Uchastie OAO 'Sumscoe NPO im. M.V. Frunze' v razvitii ukraino-uzbekskikh otnosheniy," in: *Mosty druzhby. Ukraina-Uzbekistan*, Ukrainskiy isdat. konsortium, Kiev, 2007, p. 27.

²⁴ See: V. Badrak, "Strategichni partnery Ukrainy u viyskovo-tekhnichnomu spivrobitnitstvi," available at [www.niss.gov.ua] (in Ukrainian).

²⁵ See: S.P. Kanduarov, *Voprosy voenno-tekhnicheskogo sotrudnichestva Rossii so stranami Azii. Rossia v Azii: problemy vzaimodeystvia*, RISI, 2006, p. 424.

²⁶ See: V. Badrak, op. cit.

major overhaul of MiG-29 fighter planes for the Turkmenian Air Forces (to the amount of \$3 million for one plane), helped to revive air defenses, and exported patrol launches of the Kondor (Grif-T) and Kalkan types and several loads of small arms to Turkmenistan.²⁷ According to experts, the following enterprises of the Ukrainian military-industrial complex worked on Turkmenian orders: the Artem missile holding in Kiev, the Motor-Sich engine-building association in Zaporozhye, the More shipbuilding yard in Feodosia, and the Topaz radio engineering enterprise in Donetsk.

Cooperation with Uzbekistan is unfolding on a smaller scale despite the intergovernmental departmental agreements on cooperation in the military and military-technical spheres the two countries signed in 1994, 1997, and 2000. In 1997 one of the enterprises of the Defense Ministry of Ukraine overhauled and partially modernized 40 tanks for Uzbekistan.²⁸ Later, Ukraine exported small arms and ammunition as well as military launches Giurza supplied within the American EXBS program. According to the Ukrainian expert community, Motor-Sich, Topaz and Fort in Vinnitsa, which produces firearms, worked with Uzbekistan in the military-industrial sphere.

The leading Ukrainian financial-industrial groups did a lot to promote business relations with the Central Asian countries.²⁹ The Interpipe Corporation working in the pipe production and metallurgy sphere was especially active in Uzbekistan. In 2002 it supplied 22 thousand tons of pipes for the Uzbekneftegaz project Gazli-Kagan gas pipeline.³⁰ The Industrial Union of Donbass is likewise actively involved in Uzbekistan, which it supplies with pipes and drilling and geological prospecting equipment. As a shareholder of Uzneftegazstroy it was involved in gas production and transportation.

During his visit to Tashkent in June 2004 Premier Yanukovich signed the free trade agreement mentioned above and identified as priorities cooperation in the Eurasian transport corridors, agricultural machine-building (particularly export of machines produced at the Kharkov Tractor Works and cooperation with the Tashkent Tractor Works); energy machine-building, projects in non-ferrous metallurgy, and the activities of Ukrainian companies in the oil and gas market. At this time, the Uzbek expert and business communities looked at cooperation in oil and gas production, machine-building, transportation, and rehabilitation in Afghanistan as the most promising sectors of cooperation with Ukraine. The idea about an oil and gas concession to Ukraine the Uzbek leaders put forward in 2000 was especially important.

Ukraine's continued relations with Central Asia and other Asian regions confirmed that those who warned against its excessive concentration on the West were quite right. Orientation toward the Eastern markets was very much in line with President Kuchma's idea of national capitalism: he insisted on independent metallurgical and machine-building sectors based on national financial industrial groups.

In the first years of independence Ukraine displayed no interest in Central Asia, which allowed the rivals to become entrenched in the region: "The several years of inadequate attention to or even underestimation by Ukraine of the Central Asian countries, the Republic of Uzbekistan in particular, are still felt today when the Ukrainian business community is displaying a growing interest in the region. It has realized that it should return to the markets where Ukrainian products were invariably present

²⁷ See: V. Badrak, "Kolchuga dlia Saparmurata Niyazova," available at [www.vpk-news.ru].

²⁸ See: V. Badrak, "Strategichni partnery Ukrainy u viyskovo-tekhnichnomu spivrobitnitstvi."

²⁹ According to Ukrainian experts, eight of the largest financial-industrial groups with assets amounting to billions of dollars and connected mainly with Eastern Ukraine were involved in Central Asia: the Privat group of I. Kolomoyskiy; the SKM group of P. Akhmetov; the Interpipe company of V. Pinchuk; the Industrial Union of Donbass of S. Taruta; the UkrSibbank group of A. Yaroslavskiy; Ukrprominvest of P. Poroshenko; the Energo group of V. Nusenkis; and Ukrkreditbank of G. Surkis (see: I. Guzhva, "Deti gaza i stali," *Ekspert-Ukraina*, No. 1, 2004).

³⁰ See: "Korporatsia 'Interpipe' postavila v Uzbekistan 22 tys. tonn trub," available at [www.atlanta.com.ua].

and appreciated and the prices for which were considered reasonable. Today, the lost niches are filled with enterprises and companies from Russia, Germany, China, Japan, Turkey, etc.”³¹

In Central Asia Ukraine is competing against actors with much richer historical experience, interest, and potential in promoting its political, trade, economic, transport, and communication interests: Russia, America, China, the European Union, and others. On the other hand, Ukraine’s multi-vector foreign policy made cooperation with it free from political risks, which can be described as an important advantage.

During Leonid Kuchma’s presidency Ukraine’s ambivalence strongly affected its role in the Central Asian countries. Its attempts to diversify energy resources and the energy transportation routes to Europe within the Great Silk Road project perfectly suited its European partners and their long-term objectives, although this clashed with Russia’s interests. Ukraine’s presence on the Central and South Asian markets promotes the interests of its high-tech sectors, machine-building in particular. They competed with Russian colleagues while, on the whole, needing continued partnership with Russia.

The Color Revolution of late 2004 upturned the country’s foreign policy priorities and affected its position in Central Asia: the combination of European choice and idealism, on the one hand, and the realism based on multi-vector approach proclaimed by President Kuchma, on the other, were replaced with an idealistic idea of the world and foreign policy aims of the state that proceeded from “Euro-Atlantic values.” For the first time since independence the country tried to get rid of its traditional foreign policy ambivalence, which caused displeasure abroad, for the sake of a demonstratively uni-vector policy.

Ukraine tried to join the ranks of New Europe (Central and East European countries: Poland, Rumania, and the Baltic states) that looks toward Washington rather than Brussels. In the post-Soviet expanse (as a political entity it was earmarked for liquidation in expectation of Russia’s diminishing role), Ukraine, together with Georgia, identified its mission as “promotion of democracy” (“widening the sphere of freedom”) and building up a political structure of the Baltic-Black Sea-Caspian energy-transportation project. As distinct from the previous period, when an interest in energy transportation routes was very much pronounced, under President Yushchenko it became completely subordinated to Euro-Atlantic interests.

In an effort to realize their new priorities the Ukrainian leaders tried to invigorate GUAM as a political instrument that in the future might be transformed into a military instrument to defend the East-West energy transportation routes. The GUAM summit convened in Kiev in May 2006 was also attended by Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, the U.S., OSCE, and BSEC as guests.

In August 2005 the presidents of Ukraine and Georgia made public the initiative they called the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) to bring closer the heads of the Baltic, Black Sea, and Caspian states and to help settle the “defrosted” conflicts. The CDC constituent forum was attended by the founders, as well as Poland, Rumania, Moldavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovenia, and Macedonia. It seems that Yushchenko and Saakashvili hoped to involve Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkey and, on the whole, looked at this structure as an instrument to be used in Central Asia and the Black Sea-Caspian regions.

In May 2006 at the Vilnius CDC summit, U.S. Vice-President Cheney came out with his invective against Russia accusing it, among other things, of its intention to monopolize the energy transportation system. The Russian experts were concerned about several statements of the Declaration of the Forum of Non-governmental Organizations of the CDC that described the use of military force as acceptable: “The Euro-Atlantic community should achieve a common vision and

³¹ V.P. Krasnianskiy, “Ukraina-Uzbekistan, perspektivy sotrudnichestva,” in: *Mosty druzhby. Ukraina-Uzbekistan*, p. 28.

coordinate creative efforts that should include political, economic, social and, if necessary, military methods. Europe's force of attraction will probably not be enough to compensate for Russia-emanated coercion."³²

Ukraine did not limit its contribution in the struggle between the Euro-Atlantic countries and Russia and China for control over the energy resources to the CDC and GUAM. To add an edge to these efforts Ukraine attended the Energy Summits expected to set up a transit community in the Caspian-Black Sea-Baltic expanse and trace fuel-transportation routes alternative to the Russian ones. Four such summits were held: in Krakow and Vilnius in 2007 and Kiev and Baku in 2008. The 4th Summit held in Baku in November 2008 concentrated on the Nabucco gas pipeline and Odessa-Brody oil pipeline. It was the first summit to finally achieve some progress in relation to the Odessa-Brody pipeline: it discussed the possibility of filling it with Caspian oil in 2011. The Declaration was signed by Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Rumania, the United States, Turkey, Ukraine, Switzerland, Estonia, and the European Union.³³

At the same time, this and similar projects designed to overcome the country's foreign policy ambivalence ran late in 2005 into serious obstacles, the most serious of them being the absence of progress in relations with the EU.

In February 2005 the European Union reached an agreement with Ukraine on the EU-Ukraine Action Plan, which dimmed Ukraine's prospects of EU membership. In 2006 the Council of Foreign Ministers of the EU members refused to specify Ukraine's European prospects. In December 2008 Brussels, on the initiative of Sweden and Poland, offered Ukraine a vague "Eastern partnership" also oriented toward Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Belarus.

Finally, the Ukrainian leaders were confronted with the fact that Gazprom of Russia had signed contracts with Central Asian countries on the gas exported to Ukraine (in 2007 Ukraine, under a previous agreement with an intermediary structure—RosUkrEnerg—expected to receive 42 billion cu m of gas from Turkmenistan, 8.5 billion cu m from Kazakhstan, and 7 billion cu m from Uzbekistan).³⁴

Ukraine does not profit from the struggle over diversification of the fuel routes within the projects of the Baltic-Black Sea-Caspian expanse: in fact, the country pays for it in a certain sense. There are two interconnected factors: the higher prices for Central Asian energy fuels (which Gazprom sells to Ukraine deprived of direct contacts with Central Asia) and the Central Asian countries' refusal to be involved in projects that bypass Russia. The Ukrainian economy pays the bills. The Russian leaders who visited Turkmenistan in the summer of 2008 to reach an agreement on the high ("European") price for local gas pointed out that this removed the bypassing issue from the agenda.

The political and business circles of Ukraine are displeased with those who imposed new foreign and domestic policies on the republic. There are numerous reasons for the mounting criticism: deliberately fanned conflicts with Russia; lack of tangible progress in the West; unjustified "idealism" of the foreign policy course; drawing the country into the games of much stronger actors who use it as "small change;" deliberate disregard of the shifts that undermine the uni-polar world and of the fact that the Eastern players are gaining political weight while Russia has partially restored its status by supplying the EU with up to 30 percent of the oil and 50 percent of the gas of the EU total requirements;³⁵ little is being done to promote the interests of Ukrainian indus-

³² "Demokratiam sleduet prilozhit' vse usilia, chtoby Rossia i Belorussia shagali s nimi v nogu," available at [www.bdg.by/news/news.htm?85933,3].

³³ See: "V Kieve podpisana Kontseptsia Kaspiisko-Chernomorsko-Baltiyskogo energotranzitnogo prostranstva," available at [http://www.newsukraine.kiev.ua/news/110814]; "V Baku sostoiatsia Energeticheskij sammit," available at [http://mirtv.ru/content/view/46758/15].

³⁴ See: V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

³⁵ See: V. Franke, "Vzgliad rusofila," *International Politic*, No. 1, 2008, p. 55.

try in the foreign markets; political instability at home that makes predictable foreign policy impossible, etc.

This raised the hope that the country would revive its multi-vector course. In 2007 these expectations were born by the fact that the country acquired a coalition government formed by the Party of the Regions, the Socialists, and the Communist Party with Victor Yanukovich as prime minister. The optimists were encouraged by the statement he made during a visit to Turkmenistan to the effect that Ukraine would support the Caspian gas pipeline and that agreements had been reached with Russia, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan.³⁶ In 2008 there was a lot of talk about how Yulia Timoshenko might prefer a more varied foreign policy.

On the whole, the critically-minded Ukrainian experts concluded: "At all times Ukraine has been pursuing a somewhat ambitious foreign policy. From time to time political documents and program statements assured the nation that the country could become a regional leader. In the last few years, however, its European status has been damaged to a great extent. So far the hope that the EU will offer Ukraine a European future is fairly dim. GUAM's greater economic role as a perspective economic and transit alliance required painstaking efforts and investments. Domestic squabbles will deprive the country of possibilities that could be used to stabilize power. The loss of direct contracts on Central Asian gas is the greatest economic failure of recent years."³⁷

The critics are also very negative about the country's relations with Central Asia: the country's leaders are blamed for the lack of adequate attention to this important region and for stirring up political conflicts with the local leaders whose positions on energy fuel deliveries are vitally important for Ukraine. In May 2005 the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry suddenly offered Uzbekistan its mediation services within the "widening the sphere of freedom" conception at the very height of the Andijan drama.

There is a group of experts that criticizes the far from smooth relations with Turkmenistan. The problems appeared when Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov came to power: "the new Turkmen government turned out to be a 'stranger' to Kiev ... those foreigners who could settle problems with President Niyazov were removed from the inner circle. The Chinese and Russians were the first to realize this: they immediately started looking for approaches to President Berdymukhammedov... the Ukrainians, who relied too much on the old contacts, were left out in the cold."³⁸

This negatively affected the Ukrainian construction business in Turkmenistan, which invited a barrage of critical fire. In January 2009, for example, President Berdymukhammedov was displeased with Interbudmontazh, earlier he criticized Ukrtransbud.³⁹

At the same time, it should be taken into account that in recent years the relations between Ukraine and the Central Asian countries have also demonstrated progress: economic cooperation and trade with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan used the former momentum and the favorable pre-crisis situation to move ahead.

In 2007 foreign trade turnover between Ukraine and Kazakhstan increased by 64.4 percent compared to 2006 to reach \$3 billion. Ukraine sells Kazakhstan products of its metallurgical, machine-building, and food industries and buys oil, gas, furniture, printed matter, copper, and chemical products.⁴⁰ Trade turnover between Ukraine and Uzbekistan increased 1.7-fold in 2007 to reach the \$ billion level. Ukraine sells machines and equipment, metallurgical, chemical, and food prod-

³⁶ See: P. Orlovtssev, op. cit.

³⁷ S. Tolstov, "Sredneaziatskie nadezhdy Ukrainy," available at [www.ng.ru/gazeta/2008-07-14].

³⁸ V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

³⁹ See: "President Turkmenii dav prochukhan ukrainskim budkompaniam," available at [www.pravda.com.ua/news/2009/1/17/87975.htm] (in Ukrainian).

⁴⁰ See: V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

ucts, and pharmaceuticals and buys energy resources, cars, non-ferrous metals, cotton, and chemical products.⁴¹

In 2007 trade turnover between Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan increased 1.7-fold to reach over \$80 million in the first nine months of 2008.⁴² The same can be said about trade with Tajikistan.

On the whole, success in Central Asia depends on Ukraine's image of a politically stable and fairly neutral player pursuing a balanced policy and sincerely interested in active and mutually advantageous cooperation with the local countries.

⁴¹ See: *Mosty druzhby. Ukraina-Uzbekistan*, p. 11.

⁴² See: "Posol'stvo Ukrainy v Kyrgyz'kiy respublitsi. Torgovno-ekonomichne spivrobitnitstvo," available at [www.mfa.gov.ua/kirgizia].

THE TURKISH MODEL AND TURKEY'S CENTRAL ASIAN POLICIES CONDITIONED BY WESTERN STRATEGIC INTERESTS

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Turkey's Foreign Policy and Western Strategic Interests

The post-Cold War geopolitical transformations forced the Turkish leaders to revise their foreign policy and national security/defense concepts. The Turkish military-political circles moved away from the narrow ideas of strategy and foreign policy of the former federal security conception to a wider approach of alternative foreign policies. Early in the 1990s Turkey perceived the Caucasus and Central Asia as an alternative foreign policy sphere. It used its ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties with the Turkic-speaking Central Asian nations to assume a leading role and establish its influence in the region.

Turkey's geopolitical ambitions coincided with the foreign political strategies of the West, the United States in particular. This explains why in the early 1990s Ankara created a new Central Asian strategy: it did not want to miss the chance of becoming a post-Cold War regional power.

During the Cold War its NATO membership supplied Turkey with a clearly defined role on the Alliance's southern flank: it was expected to check the Soviet Union's infiltration into the

Mediterranean and the Middle East.¹ During the Cold War Turkey's foreign policy and national security conceptions perfectly fitted the military-political conception of NATO and the United States in particular. I have already mentioned that the end of the Cold War caused geopolitical transformations that created new foreign policy and security strategies for many countries. In the beginning Ankara was baffled by the vagueness of the new realities and spent some time trying to assess its future foreign and security policies and a new strategy. In the absence of the Soviet Union, Turkey's geostrategic importance, as seen from the West as whole and the U.S. in particular, became obscure.

The end of the Cold War also bred apprehensions among the Turkish political top crust about the country's security, which forced it to step up the country's involvement in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.² Indeed, the country could be deprived of its strategic importance for NATO, which made looking for a new foreign policy strategy oriented toward the newly independent Turkic-speaking Central Asian states indispensable.

A vast Ankara-led alliance of Turkic-speaking countries stretching from the Balkans to Central Asia would have hiked up Turkey's geopolitical price for the West. Turkic analyst S. Laçiner has written in this connection: "The strategy designed to set up a Turkic world of this kind was not an alternative to the European Union or the West as a whole but was rather aimed at strengthening the Western vector of Turkish policies. With the Turkic world behind it the country could have felt much stronger when dealing with the West."³ The Turkish leaders looked at Turkey's stronger political and economic influence in Central Asia as an instrument for restoring its regional and international status in particular and for developing into "an influential state."⁴ Prof. Zia Onis from Turkey has pointed out that the country's political leaders expected that the new regional role would force the West to revise its former ideas about the country's military-political importance and would strengthen its own security and economic position.⁵

The newly independent Turkic-speaking Central Asian countries could become a fairly attractive foreign policy alternative. Samuel Huntington has commented on this by saying: "Having rejected Mecca, and then being rejected by Brussels, where does Turkey look? Tashkent may be the answer. The end of the Soviet Union gives Turkey the opportunity to become the leader of a revived Turkic civilization."⁶

To ease its regional involvement and to confirm its strategic importance to the West, and the United States in particular, Turkey extended its military support to the U.S. during the first Gulf war. President Turgut Özal (1989-1993) did a lot to promote strategic cooperation between his country and the United States. Turkish assistance in the American war against Iraq in 1991 opened a new stage in Turkish-American relations.⁷ President Özal believed that with the end of the Cold War his country should become more active and show more initiative at the regional and international levels to boost its geostrategic importance for the U.S. and NATO allies.⁸

¹ See: S. Erguvenc, "Turkey's Security Perceptions," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 2, June-August 1998.

² See: I. Torbakov, "The Turkish Factor in the Geopolitics of the Post-Soviet Space," available at [<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/2002>].

³ S. Laçiner, "Orta Asya ve Türkiye," available at [<http://www.usakgundem.com/yazarlar.php?id=43&type=3>].

⁴ *Türkiye — Türk Cumhuriyetleri İlişkileri Raporu Özeti, Dünyada Küreselleşme ve Bölgesel Entegrasyonlar (AT, NAFTA, PASİFİK) Ve Türkiye (AT, EFTA, KEİ, Türk Cumhuriyetleri), Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı*, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müştesarlığı, Yayın No: DPT: 2410-ÖİK:471, Kitab 5, Ağustos 1995, S. 110-116, available at [<http://www.ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/kuresell/oik471.pdf>].

⁵ See: Z. Onis, "Turkey and Post-Soviet States: Potentials and Limits of Regional Power Influence," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 2, June 2001.

⁶ S. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, Summer 1993, p. 42.

⁷ See: O. Kodzhaman, *Yuzny Kavkaz v politike Turtsii i Rossii v postsovetitskiy period*, Moscow, 2004, p. 84.

⁸ See: Sh. Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier? Turkey's Post-Cold War Geopolitical Posture," *The International Spectator*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, January-March 1999.

Turkey looked at the closer relations with the newly independent Central Asian and Caucasian states as a step toward the desired aim. Ethnic, linguistic, and religious affinity with the Central Asian states let Turkey position itself as an important bridge between them and the West.⁹ Foreign Minister of Turkey Ismail Cem pointed out in one of his articles that in the post-Cold War period his country assumed geopolitical and strategic leadership in the center of the vast expanse stretching from Central Asia to Europe.¹⁰ According to Süleyman Demirel, who served as Turkish prime minister in 1991-1993, in the post-Cold War period Turkey gained much international weight thanks to its strategically important role as a stable NATO member in an unstable region (meaning Central Asia and the Caucasus). The end of the Soviet Union re-confirmed Turkey's status as a regional economic force.¹¹

The West, and particularly the United States, supported Turkey's active involvement in the Turkic-speaking Central Asian countries because it decreased their dependence on Russia and created the possibility of opposing the rising Iranian and Chinese influence in the region.¹² Early in the 1990s, the U.S. Defense Department and CIA, fully aware of the importance of Turkey's stronger influence in the region, favored the idea of extending American aid to it. In December 1992, the then Supreme Allied Commander Europe and former U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig pointed out that Turkey's increasing authority is good for the region's future. Turkey was expected to create a favorable investment climate there.¹³ The American intelligence and analytical community were eagerly promoting pan-Turkism as a "cultural-civilizational example"¹⁴ rather than a geopolitical system. The American foreign policy planners created a strategy of Turkish influence in the region that would have allowed the United States, in pursuit of its own interests, to indirectly control the social and political transformations in Central Asia. The West on the whole and the United States in particular were extremely interested in planting the Turkish alternative of state, social and economic development in Central Asia.

The Turkish Model or the Turkish Development Alternative

The West was actively promoting the Turkish model as an ideal alternative for Central Asia. Why was it attractive? First of all, the Turkish model included three main components: a secular state order, a democratic government, and a free market. The West promoted this far from ideal model because it wanted economic and geopolitical changes in the region.

First, according to Western politicians the "Turkish model was put forward as an ideal Muslim democracy" opposed to "its revolutionary brand in Iran." It was feared "that a power vacuum was created

⁹ See: Y. Demirağ, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türkiyenin Orta Asya Siyasetinde Gelinek Nokta ve Gelecekte Bölgeye İlişkin İzlenmesi Gereken Dış politika Stratejisi," available at [http://www.jeopolitik.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=28].

¹⁰ See: I. Cem, "Turkey: Setting Sail to the 21st Century," *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. II, September-November 1997.

¹¹ See: S. Demirel, "Newly-emerging Centre," *Turkish Review*, Vol. 6, No. 30, Winter 1992, p. 9.

¹² See: Z. Chotoev, "The Turkish Factor in the Evolution of the Central Asian Republics," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (20), 2003, p. 73.

¹³ See: *Turtsia mezhdü Evropoy i Aziey: Itogi evropeizatsii na iskhode XX veka*, ed. by N.G. Kireev, Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS, Institute of Israel and the Middle East, Moscow, 2001, p. 429.

¹⁴ See: I. Muradian, *Regional'nye problemy turetsko-amerikanskikh otnosheniy*, Erevan, 2004, p. 76.

in Central Asia, and if nothing was done, this vacuum could be filled by an anti-Western and revolutionary kind of Iranian Islam.”¹⁵ British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher looked at Turkey as an outpost against aggressive Islamic fundamentalism. It should be said that the “democratic” definition related not only to Turkey’s secular state of affairs but also to a multi-party system and “Europeanization” policy.

The Turkic-speaking newly independent states, in turn, were facing the fairly difficult task of moving away from the Soviet-type state-regulated economy to a free market, which meant that they could learn a lot from Turkey’s experience of economic reform. In the 1980s the reforms carried out thanks to Özal decreased the state’s share in it and created the basis for more reforms. The cultural and linguistic affinity made the Turkish model more attractive.¹⁶ At the early stages this attraction was increased by the Central Asian states’ desire to “cleanse” themselves of the Soviet legacy and revive national awareness.

In February 1992 in Washington President George W. Bush, when talking to Prime Minister Demirel, described Turkey as a secular and democratic state, the experience of which could be borrowed by the newly independent Central Asian states. In June 1992, Mme. Catherine Lalumiere, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, visited the Central Asian republics. During her visit, she declared that “Turkey provided a valid model of development for many a newly-independent country in Asia.”¹⁷ Early in 1992, Secretary of State James Baker, during a trip to various Central Asian capitals, recommended that the political leaders of the new republics adopt the Turkish model for their political and economic development.¹⁸ At one time, speaking at the Assembly of the Turko-American Business Council, Foreign Minister of Turkey Hikmet Çetin mentioned the Turkish model: the Turkish and American approaches to the tasks of the new period are similar; the same applies to their interests. Turkey is an island of stability in an unstable region, its stability resting on its democratic order and free economic model. Its experience and its results serve as an example for the newly independent states.¹⁹

The new Turkic-speaking countries believed that it was important for them to be included in the international political and economic system while “Turkey could successfully take on the function of opening the doors of many Western international organizations for the Central Asian states.”²⁰ In the spring of 1992, while traveling around the region, Hikmet Çetin announced that his country was prepared to represent the Turkic-speaking states in international organizations. Ankara actively supported the local countries’ membership in all sorts of international structures,²¹ thus boosting its authority among the local leaders.

The Turkic-speaking countries treated the Turkish initiatives with a lot of trust and sympathy. Their leaders repeatedly stated that they were prepared to follow the Turkish model. During his visit to Turkey, President of Uzbekistan Karimov declared that his country considered Turkey a good exam-

¹⁵ İ. Bal, “The Turkish Model and the Turkic Republics,” *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. III, No. 3, September-November 1998.

¹⁶ See: *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ See: H. Kramer, “Will Central Asia Become Turkey’s Sphere of Influence,” *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. I, No. 1, March-May 1996.

¹⁹ See: “The Full Text of Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin’s Speech at the Assembly of Turko-American Business Council, Istanbul,” *Turkish Review*, Vol. 6, No. 30, Winter 1992.

²⁰ H. Kramer, *op. cit.*

²¹ Turkish diplomacy helped these countries to join the OSCE, OIC, OECD, etc. Turkey used its diplomatic contacts to help the Turkic-speaking states to establish themselves on the international arena. The Protocol on Diplomatic Relations between Turkey and Uzbekistan said, in particular, that “if the foreign policy department of Uzbekistan asks Turkey, the Turkish embassies should represent and defend its interests in the corresponding country” (A. Khalmukhamedov, “Uzbekistansko-turetskie otnoshenia,” in: *Uzbekistan: obretenie novogo oblika*, ed. by E. Kozhokin, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1998, p. 373).

ple to be followed. President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akaev said in a speech, “Turkey is a morning star that shows the true path for other Turks.” Nursultan Nazarbaev and Saparmurad Niyazov, the president of Turkmenistan, made similar statements.²²

This warmth was heated by several considerations. Turkey’s market economy was fairly developed, which meant that Turkish investments could be expected. The prospect was obviously tempting. The Central Asian republics expected Turkey to help them establish contacts with the West and hoped that this would invite American and European investments via Turkey to their countries.²³ Strategically, Turkish influence in the region was expected to alleviate the danger of Islamic fundamentalism and detach the local countries from Russia.

At the early stages, cultural and linguistic affinity and the lavish promises of the Turkish leaders bred a lot of sympathy in the Central Asian countries. Disillusionment came some time later when it became clear that Turkey’s ambitious political and economic project did not match its real potential. The Turkish model, which Ankara continued to promote, was gradually losing its former gloss in the eyes of the Central Asian leaders.

Why did this happen? First, its secular nature proved to be vulnerable: when Islamic forces came to power in Turkey, it became clear that the Turkish model was hardly an acceptable example. In the latter half of 1996, when the Cabinet of Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare (Refah) Party came to power in Turkey, relations between Ankara and the Central Asian republics became cooler. The secular leaders of the Central Asian countries were left with the negative impression that Turkey, which had earlier offered the Central Asian republics a secular development model, was confronted with a similar problem. Prime Minister Erbakan chose Iran, Libya, and Pakistan, three Islamic countries, rather than the Central Asian republics for his first visits abroad.²⁴

The prestige of the Turkish model was shattered by the victory of the Islamists. At that time the Central Asian countries were concerned with the rising wave of Islamism that was especially obvious in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. This also came as an unpleasant surprise for the Uzbek leaders, who were on the frontline of struggle against Islamic fundamentalism.²⁵ When asked about possible Turkic-European JVs in the republic, President Karimov gave a very apt answer to a Turkish correspondent: “If I correctly interpreted your question you meant to say that Uzbekistan should build up its relations with Europe through Turkey. We can cope without intermediaries.”

Turkey’s real economic potential was grossly overestimated—it did not match Central Asia’s expectations. Turkey, in turn, realized that the Central Asian republics expected much more assistance in the security and economic spheres than it could provide. Ankara lacked the resources necessary to unite these Turkic-speaking countries under its wing.²⁶ The special commission for relations between Ankara and the Turkic-speaking countries of the Department for State Planning of Turkey presented a report (within the eighth five-year plan starting in 2000) that said: “To boost the confidence of these countries in Turkey we should fulfill what was promised and refrain from promising something that cannot be done.”²⁷

²² See: İ Bal, op. cit.

²³ See: N. Uslu, “The Russian, Caucasian and Central Asian Aspects of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post Cold War Period,” *Alternatives. Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 3&4, Fall&Winter 2003, p. 182.

²⁴ See: G. Winrow, “Turkey and Central Asia,” in: *Central Asian Security. The New International Context*, ed. by R. Allison, L. Jonson, Brookings Institution Press, London, Washington, 2001, p. 202.

²⁵ The Turkish domestic political context strongly affected the leaders of Uzbekistan who feared an “Islamic revival” in Turkey. This was regarded as one of the serious threats to Uzbekistan’s national security. In the 1990s, the Islamic Gülen movement was active in Central Asia and certain other post-Soviet states (for more detail, see: N. Kireev, “Turkey in Search of a National Strategy of Eurasian Cooperation,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (13), 2002).

²⁶ See: N. Uslu, op. cit.

²⁷ *Türkiye ile Türk Cumhuriyetleri İlişkileri ve Bölge Ülkeleri İlişkileri Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu*, Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müşterarlığı, Yayın No: DPT: 2511-ÖİK:528, Ankara, 2000, S. 32-57, available at [<http://www.ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/disekono/oik528.pdf>].

The Central Asian leaders finally realized that the Turkey's promises and economic programs did not match the country's potential. On top of this, Turkey was no longer regarded as a bridge to the West.

Later, when Russia started building up its military-political influence in Central Asia, when the United States established direct contacts with the local countries, and when other powers (Iran and China) stepped up their regional involvement, Turkey's role inevitably diminished.

Changes in Turkey's Central Asian Policies

These factors forced Ankara to revise its Central Asian approaches; it placed higher stakes on more realistic projects and abandoned its excessively ambitious plans. B. Aras, a prominent Turkish analyst, has written that there was a "shift from enthusiastic and sentimental policy attitudes to a more realistic and constructive policy line toward Central Asia." Since the late 1990s, "Turkish policy makers have been seeing this new policy line in a wider framework of following balanced relations with regional countries" rather than in being involved in the struggle for having the influence in the region.²⁸

New features and new trends in Ankara's foreign policy became especially prominent in 2002 when the Justice and Development Party (JDP) came to power. Under Prime Minister Erdoğan its foreign policy became more active and more varied at the global and regional levels. The new elite based its approaches on the country's real interests and real possibilities. Director of the Center for International Strategic Analysis in Ankara Laçiner has pointed out that the JDP's foreign policy had moved far from the previous traditional approaches. Erdoğan's government, said he, having realized that the country's history and geography could not be ignored, revised the old foreign policy course.²⁹

Ahmed Davutoğlu, the chief advisor to Prime Minister Erdoğan on foreign policy, is believed to be the architect of the country's foreign policy course. His conception suggested that to ensure its security and stability Turkey should become more actively involved in creating conditions conducive to stability and security along its borders. This means that its regional policy should be multi-vectoral and active. The country's geographic location allows it to be involved in several regions.

Turkey should increase its presence in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.³⁰

This strategy is consistently realized through the so-called military-political substructures: Turkey's relations with NATO, the EU, and the U.S. allowed Ankara to be active in the Balkans during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Kosovo crisis. In the same way, Turkey increased its influence in the Caucasus: as a NATO member it is actively involved in several cooperation programs and gained serious positions in the military-political sphere of Georgia and Azerbaijan, especially by contributing to the reform of their armed forces.

²⁸ See: B. Aras, "Turkish Policy toward Central Asia," *Policy Brief*, No. 12. April 2008, Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research.

²⁹ See: S. Laçiner, "Turkey-Middle East Relations in a New Era," *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 18 February, 2009.

³⁰ See: A. Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2008, pp. 77-96.

The country has tapped historical and civilizational resources (Islamic solidarity and Turkic unity) to increase its influence in the Middle East and Central Asia.

On the whole, while the JDP remained in power the trend toward closer cooperation with the Turkic-speaking Central Asian states was revived and new foundations were found. Prime Minister Erdoğan called on the political establishment to regain the lost positions. Today, Turkey, which has removed, at least partially, certain domestic obstacles, is applying its new conception of Turkic unity, efforts in which external factors are also important.

The far from easy relations with the United States and European Union revived the Turkic and Mid-Eastern trends as foreign policy priorities. The Turkish leaders are convinced that relations with the post-Soviet Central Asian countries, which were short of neglected under President Ahmed Necdet Sezer, should be revised and revived.

The Turkish analyst community believes that the country's mounting might will force it to revise its foreign policy course; it will concentrate on the East and, while securing its aims there, will gradually move the U.S. and the West out of the "sphere of its interests." Before that the country will have to maneuver between the interests of its strategic partners—America, Europe, and Russia. Today, Ankara is gaining independence in its foreign policy; this is best illustrated by its developing cooperation with Iran in the energy sphere in disregard of American warnings.

Today, the country is pursuing two foreign policy aims.

- First, it wants to join the European Union. Historically, geographically, and economically Turkey is a European country. It seems that it stands a good chance of succeeding when the talks that started on 3 October 2005 end. The very beginning of the talks brought the strategic aim closer. Turkey is bringing European standards of democracy, secular power, market economy, and regional cooperation to the Middle East and other Eurasian regions.

EU membership is one of the foreign policy priorities, however it is not an alternative to Turkey's strategic cooperation with the United States. It is believed in Turkey that the two vectors are mutually complementary.

- Second, wedged between Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Black Sea basin, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Central Asia Turkey needs security, stability, prosperity, friendship, and cooperation in the adjacent countries which play an important role in Turkey's foreign policy.³¹

³¹ See: "Synopsis of the Turkish Foreign Policy," available at [<http://www.mfa.gov.tr>].

THE CHINESE VECTOR IN TAJIKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

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Independent Tajikistan is seeking diverse contacts with all interested states. Under Soviet power the Central Asian republics remained in the shadow of the rest of the country, the disintegration of which finally gave them a chance to develop relations with other countries. At first, the world community remained indifferent to their existence and limited itself to general declarations. The People's Republic of China, however, became aware that the three new Central Asian states in its northwestern provinces radically changed the foreign policy context.

On 4 January, 1992 Dushanbe made one of its first foreign policy moves by signing a joint Tajik-Chinese communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries at the embassy level.

The date itself is an eloquent sign of Beijing's interest in the political processes that swept the post-Soviet expanse in the late 20th century. China was one of the first states to recognize the independence of all the Soviet republics, including Tajikistan.

In 1993 Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmonov paid his first official visit to China on an invitation from the Chinese leaders. He traveled to Nanjing, Shanghai, and Urumqi and met top Chinese officials: Chairman of the PRC Jiang Zemin and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Yang Shangkun. The talks proceeded in a friendly and businesslike atmosphere.

The sides discussed issues of mutual interest; Point 12 of the joint declaration said that relations between China and Tajikistan had good prospects. The visit produced another important decision on developing trade and economic relations on a priority basis. The sides pointed out their common position on the key issues.

The visit demonstrated that China supported the young independent state; without this support Tajikistan could hardly attain many of its foreign policy goals in Asia.

In 1996 the dialog between the two countries was given a new boost in the form of Presi-

dent Rakhmonov's second visit to China. The sides identified the cooperation spheres of greatest mutual interest: agriculture, transport, the textile industry, the production of mineral fertilizers, etc. Since 1996 the dialog has been proceeding in the multisided format of the newly established Shanghai Forum. Before that Dushanbe and Beijing cooperated within the U.N. and CICA. The Chinese have identified the stages on the road from the Shanghai Forum to the SCO.

- **The first stage (November 1989-December 1991).** The Soviet Union crumbled while the talks between it and China proceeded according to the "one on one" formula.¹
- **The second stage (November 1991-April 1997).** Bilateral talks featuring five countries—China, on the one hand, and four states (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), on the other, were held.²
- **The third stage (after April 1997).** Multisided talks among five equal countries that were members of the Shanghai Five: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. When the dialog on confidence-building measures in the military sphere and on mutual reduction of armed forces ended, the initial formula (bilateral talks with China as one of the sides and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan acting together, as the other) became "multilateral talks among five countries—five equal participants."³

In 1997 relations between China and Tajikistan became noticeably more active; the sides signed a protocol on border issues and adopted a decision on transborder trade across the Murgab District of the Gorno-Badakhshan Auton-

¹ See: Xia Yishan, "Mekhanizm 'Shankhaiskoy piatiorki' i strategicheskoe vzaimodeystvie Kitaia i Rossii," in: *Kitay v mirovoy politike*, ed. by M. Torkunov, Rosspen, Moscow, 2001, p. 337.

² Ibid., p. 338.

³ Ibid., p. 340.

omous Region. In 1997 a large and highly representative delegation of Chinese scientists visited Tajikistan.

In June and August of 1998 officials from the economic sector of the Chinese Cabinet, the Foreign Trade Ministry, and the Customs Committee of China visited Tajikistan.

Two months before his official visit to China the president of Tajikistan received a Chinese delegation headed by Vice Premier of the State Council Qian Qichen. The president of Tajikistan pointed out that the developing multisided cooperation was the result of the sides' common interests.

In August 1999 the president of Tajikistan visited China for the third time to raise mutual cooperation to a higher level. During the visit President Rakhmonov pointed out that his country hailed the historic reunification of Aomen (Macau) with China and deemed it necessary to confirm his country's position on the Taiwan problem. The sides agreed that the military-political crisis in Afghanistan should be resolved through the 6 + 2 talks suggested by the U.N. The Tajik president invited the PRC chairman to pay an official visit to Tajikistan. The invitation was accepted.

In the fall of 1999 Li Dezhu, Minister in charge of State Ethnic Affairs Commission, visited Tajikistan and pointed out that the relations between the two countries were developing successfully.

Early in July 2000 PRC President Jiang Zemin paid his first state visit to Tajikistan, which symbolized a much stronger political situation in the republic. The visit produced a joint declaration, Point 10 of which was of special interest. It registered the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of the other state under any pretext, including "supremacy of human rights over the sovereignty" and "humanitarian interference." The sides pointed out that closer cooperation would serve the interests of both nations.

The Chinese leader declared that his country would support the Tajik leaders in their efforts to strengthen sovereignty, domestic stability, and economic development. The sides deemed it

necessary to point out that they had common views on international and regional issues.

The visit of the Chinese chairman coincided with the summit of the Shanghai Forum, which was attended for the first time by the president of Uzbekistan as an observer.

In August 2000 Head of the International Department, C.C. C.P.C., Dai Bingguo came to Tajikistan. He was received by the president of Tajikistan who pointed out that he valued highly the present level and quality of Tajik-Chinese relations and looked forward to new practical realization of mutually advantageous economic cooperation, military and political cooperation, and personnel training, exchanging experience on development issues, and close cooperation in the interests of regional security.⁴

At his credential presentation ceremony the then Chinese Ambassador to Tajikistan Wu Hongbin put in a nutshell the essence of the relations between the two countries by saying: "There are no serious political problems between Tajikistan and China, yet the present level of mutually advantageous cooperation does still not meet the potential and requirement of the two neighbors."⁵

In April 2001 Liu Guchang, the PRC president's personal representative, arrived in Dushanbe to discuss the central issues related to further development of the relations between Tajikistan and China. Special measures designed to promote these relations and stir up bilateral cooperation within the inter-governmental commission followed.

Early in 2002 the president of Tajikistan received a delegation of the State Council of the PRC headed by Ismail Aymat. The sides revised the results of the first decade of their cooperation and emphasized that the border issue remained a priority; they expressed their satisfaction with the first breakthroughs in trade and economic cooperation and agreed that U.N. should play the key role in the Afghan settlement.

⁴ See: Z.Sh. Saidov, *Vneshniaia politika Respubliki Tajikistan na sovremennom etape*, Avasto, Dushanbe, 2005, p. 201.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

By May 2002, when the Tajik president paid visit to China, the regional situation had changed beyond recognition: the U.S.-led counterterrorist coalition had deployed its troops in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. China passed the developments over in silence even though it was absolutely clear that in the future the bases could be used against it. In general, the operation in Afghanistan was but the first step toward setting up the U.S. military infrastructure on China's northwestern borders. The American military contingent in the region was not large enough to threaten China, yet the bases can potentially be used to influence the developments in the PRC's regions.⁶

In the spring of 2003 President Rakhmonov arrived in Beijing for an informal meeting with former (until November 2002) PRC President Jiang Zemin. They agreed that bilateral cooperation had good prospects and that bilateral contacts should be spurred on.

In the fall of 2003 Foreign Minister of China Li Zhaoxing came to Dushanbe to discuss political and economic issues of mutual interest; the sides agreed that the SCO had developed into a strong regional structure. The political discussions were mainly geared to the legal side of closer cooperation in the anti-terrorist, anti-extremist, and anti-separatist struggle. The economic format was reduced to discussing much more constructive efforts within the functioning inter-governmental commission.

In 2003 President Rakhmonov met Premier of the State Council of the PRC Wen Jiabao at the Boao Forum for Asia held in China. The two leaders concentrated on the economic aspects of bilateral cooperation. The large-scale continental conference organized by China and attended by all the leading Asian states demonstrated Beijing's far-reaching political and economic ambitions: it offered the developing countries its development pattern. It is in Asia that the struggle between China and its main world and regional rivals (the

⁶ See: A. Kniazev, *Afganskiy krizis i bezopasnost' Tsentral'noy Azii (XIX-nachalo XXI v.)*, Donish Publishers, Dushanbe, 2004, p. 457.

U.S., Russia, India, Japan, Vietnam, Australia, etc.) is unfolding.

No important bilateral contacts took place in 2004. In July 2005 the Chinese delegation headed by Vice Premier Wu Yi signed four inter-governmental agreements in Dushanbe related to technical-economic cooperation between Huawei and Tajiktelecom and assistance in constructing the Shar-Shar tunnel.⁷

In 2006 the contacts were few and far between (in this respect the year was not very different from 2004) and limited to the SCO format. In January 2007 President Rakhmonov visited China; this event opened a new political year and was very important in many other respects. The Tajik leader needed foreign investments to revive the ailing Tajik economy—it was more probable that Chinese money and Chinese technologies (rather than West European or American) would reach the country. As distinct from all the previous visits this time the sides concentrated on economic issues; this is fully confirmed by the numerous meetings with the Chinese business community that showed an interest in the Tajik market.

At the meeting with Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Wu Bangguo the sides reconfirmed their mutual desire to develop communication.

They expressed their satisfaction with the level of their contacts, agreed that the border issue had been successfully resolved, and approved the signing of the Treaty on Good-Neighborly Relations, Friendship and Cooperation and the fact that multisided cooperation had acquired a solid legal basis. The sides commented on their shared approaches to the creation of a fair world order in the 21st century and their common contribution to the struggle against international terrorism, separatism, and extremism.⁸

The sides also discussed the humanitarian sphere: their shared opinions on cooperation in science, culture, and education and the pivotal points of bilateral cooperation.

⁷ See: *Azia-plus*, No. 30 (288), 28 July, 2005, p. 2.

⁸ See: "E. Rakhmonov v Pekine," *Narodnaia gazeta*, 24 January, 2007.

On 27 August, 2008 PRC President Hu Jintao paid his first state visit to Tajikistan to discuss the current issues of cooperation between the two countries and its future at the bilateral level and within international organizations. The sides were satisfied with the high level and impressive results of cooperation between the defense structures and the rising volume of reciprocal trade.

The summit produced several documents related to many aspects of bilateral cooperation, of which economy remained a priority.

Looking back at the history of contacts between 1992 and the present years, we cannot but notice that progress was uneven. Between 2000 and 2003 contacts were regular, followed by a short pause that ended early in 2007. The changed political situation in the Central Asian countries served as a catalyst for China's diplomatic efforts in the region. Beijing is not merely engaged in foreign political efforts, it is also offering its neighbors new approaches (much more attractive than those of other countries).

In the post-Soviet era China inevitably changed its traditional "northern" foreign policy vector. Moscow, likewise, realized that China had become a real political actor in Tajikistan and its Central Asian neighbors. Beijing's presence in the region shapes the latter's new image.

The political dialog between Dushanbe and Beijing has confirmed that both are interested in bilateral cooperation. The level and quality of the political dialog with China will largely determine the Asian vector of Tajik diplomacy in the near future.

Economic relations between the two countries rest on a firm foundation of mutual trust. From the very first days of diplomatic relations between them they have been involved in successfully developing trade and economic cooperation. It is guided by several inter-governmental protocols: on the economy and trade, on the stimulation and mutual protection of investments, on automobile transport, on cooperation in the fuel and energy sphere, etc. that serve as a firm legal basis for further trade and economic cooperation.

Encouraged by the governments of the two countries, its sphere is constantly expanding and

foreign trade turnover is rising. According to the figures of the State Customs Administration of China, the total foreign trade turnover of China with Tajikistan reached the figure of \$141.7 million in the eleven years between 1992 and 2002. During this time Tajik import from China was \$74.355 million, while Tajik export to China amounted to \$67.345. In 2002 the figures of their foreign trade turnover reached \$12.39 million (15.2 percent compared to the previous year). Tajikistan imported \$6.5 million-worth of goods from China (an increase of 22.6 percent) while Tajikistan's export to China amounted to \$5.89 million (an increase of 8 percent). During the first four months of 2003 (January-April) foreign trade turnover was \$5.72 million (an increase of 143.6 percent compared to 2002). Tajikistan imported \$3.72 million-worth of products from China (an increase of 245.8 percent) and exported \$2 million-worth of its products to China (an increase of 57 percent). In 2004 trade turnover was \$63.1 million; in 2005 it amounted to \$98.2 million; and in 2006 foreign trade turnover reached a record of \$158.9 million.⁹ In 2008 trade turnover climbed even higher to reach \$351.95 million (an increase of 162 percent compared to the previous year) between January and October.¹⁰

Tajikistan buys electric appliances, equipment, machines, textiles, communication devices, furniture, consumer goods, etc. from China. China, in turn, imports aluminum and aluminum products, hides, cocoons, lint, etc. from Tajikistan. Trade between the two countries is developing; Tajikistan started buying high tech products in China, TV equipment in particular.¹¹

In recent years trade and economic cooperation has been gaining momentum. To keep up the pace, an exhibition and trading fair of the goods exported by the Kashgar District of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region was opened in Tajikistan between 15 and 18 September, 2005.

⁹ See: *Statisticheskii ezhegodnik Respubliki Tajikistan. 2007*, p. 323.

¹⁰ See: *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie pokazateli Respubliki Tajikistan. 2008*, p. 92.

¹¹ See: Jin Yulung, "Kitai-Tajikistan: rasshirenie torgovo-ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva," *Biznes i politika*, 20 June, 2003, p. 1.

It was attended by 150 companies that exhibited 350 different products.

On the whole, 2005 brought good results: the Tojikmatlubot Supply and Trade Organization of Tajikistan and the Lokomotiv Foreign Trade House signed a \$1-billion-worth contract.

The signing ceremony chaired by Vice Chairman of the XUAR Foreign Investments Societies Liu Xihe was attended by Vice Chairman of the XUAR People's Congress Standing Committee Dalekhan Mamekhan and Vice Secretary of the People's Government of XUAR Yusup Khasym.

The sides entered an agreement on the following:

- (1) the Tochmatlubot Supply and Trade Organization of Tajikistan empowered Lokomotiv to trade as a monopolist in the Chinese market for the next 10 years;
- (2) during the entire cooperation period the Tajik side pledges to buy commodities totaling at least \$100 million (about 800 million yuan) from Lokomotiv every year and increase its purchases by 20-30 percent every year, mainly clothes, consumer goods, agricultural produce, construction materials, mechanisms, etc.;
- (3) Lokomotiv is Tajikistan's general agent of tenders and contact work in China.
- (4) the Supply and Trade Organization of Tajikistan is responsible for full investments in building of the market and processing enterprises (with joint investments) of Lokomotiv in Tajikistan as well as for the security of Chinese citizens and their property;
- (5) the sides set up their offices and set off spendings against each other.¹²

Several projects with Chinese investments are working successfully in Tajikistan; their range

¹² See: "Vneshne-torgovy dom 'Lokomotiv' Sindhania podpisal zaiavku zakaza na 1 milliard amerikanskikh dollarov," *KONTIMOST*, No. 6, 2005, p. 19.

is very impressive: telecommunications, agriculture, construction, the textile industry, etc.

A large \$269-million-worth contract on the rehabilitation of a strategically important highway Dushanbe-Ayni-Istaravshan-Hudjand-Buston-Chanak (on the border of Uzbekistan) can be described as one of the latest achievements. The road is 410 km long; \$281.2 million of the total \$296 million are being invested as the Chinese government's long-term loan. The project will be carried out by the China Road Company.

Transportation services will probably become one of the key cooperation spheres. The China Railway Engineering Corporation won the tender for building the Shar-Shar tunnel some 80 km to the southeast from Dushanbe; the tunnel will be 2.3 km long. It will shorten the Dushanbe-Kulob road by 7 km (38 minutes of driving). The project, which will cost \$40 million, will take three years and two months to be completed.

Recently a seasonal high mountain road that connects the two states (Dushanbe-Kulob-Karakorum-Kulma) through the difficult terrain of the Sarykol Mountain range was commissioned. Its importance cannot be overestimated: not only will it provide Tajikistan with the shortest access to the ports on the Indian Ocean coast, it will also increase the trade turnover between China and Tajikistan.

Bilateral cooperation greatly benefited the agro-industrial complex: for several years now the Tian Ye Company from Xinjiang has been using a new water-saving irrigation system in the Sogd Region of Turkmenistan. It saves up to 70 percent of water and 30 percent of fertilizers and increases the yield by 218 percent. Water shortages in the republic's north make the Chinese irrigation system doubly attractive—over time it will be used elsewhere.

The present breeds optimism about the future of bilateral relations, which have not yet exhausted their potential in many respects. Hydropower plays a key role in Tajikistan's national economy, which means that Chinese companies with their vast experience are more than welcome in the republic's energy market. It should be said

that many states, Russia and Iran included, are working in Tajikistan.

It is natural that the largest companies involved in hydropower projects are showing an interest in Tajikistan. Its hydropower potential in absolute figures and per sq km is colossal. The annual runoff is 65.1 cu m of water and its hydropower potential is 4.1 billion kW per 1 cu m of runoff, that is, 299.9 billion kW. In terms of the size of the republic's territory its potential is 2.1 million kW per 1 sq km.¹³

China depends for its energy security on its diplomatic skills and trade contacts with other countries, as well as on its vast cooperation with various regions and the implementation of energy transportation projects. The United States first moved into the Eurasian continent, one of the major oil producers, in 2001 to carry out the counterterrorist operation in Afghanistan and later, in 2003, to wage the war on Iraq. This, undoubtedly, challenges China's energy security. This means that today its position will depend on its ability to cooperate with other countries, in the economy, trade, and primarily energy supplies, within the WTO and SCO.¹⁴

Tajikistan is a sunny and highly productive country: every year it grows a lot of fruit and vegetables, which means that the processing of agricultural products might develop into another sphere of mutually advantageous cooperation.

Early in 2007, during his last visit to China, the president of Tajikistan met members of the Chinese business community, including the head of the Shanghai-Belkatal Company that planned to supply the Kurgan-Tiube-Kulob railway with the latest transportation service means totaling \$20 million.

Cooperation in TV and radio communication was discussed with the Huawei Company that opened its office in Tajikistan in 2005.

¹³ See: S. Verkhoturov, "Kitayskie investitsii v Tajikistane sviazany s razvitiem SUAR," *Fakty i kommentariy*, 18 May, 2006, p. 8.

¹⁴ See: O. Dolzhikova, A. Kaukenov, *Strany Azii v usloviakh globalizatsii*, ed. by L.M. Muzaparova, Institute of World Economy and Politics under the Fund of the RK First President, Almaty, 2006, p. 122.

During his talk with Cheng Yusheng, president of the China Road and Bridge Corporation, the sides discussed details of the joint Dushanbe-Chanak and Ayni-Penjikent project being implemented by the corporation.

The meetings with the banking sector were equally promising. The CITIC-Group will supply the Administration of Railways of Tajikistan with 23 diesel locomotives. It also intends to use debt capital to take part in two railway projects—Dushanbe–Kurgan-Tiube and Rumi–Nizni Panj—and in electrification of a stretch of the Kanibadam-Bekabad railway.

Exim-bank was involved in discussing the funding of joint Tajik-Chinese projects in energy, transport, and communication.

Inter-bank cooperation was discussed in detail with Vice President of the State Development Bank of China Yo Zong Min.¹⁵

Today, the world community is confronted with a different China that seeks development and wider contacts with other countries, its closest neighbors in particular. Today, the share of Chinese business in Tajikistan's economy is much higher than before. Chinese firms are successfully competing with firms from other countries and counterbalancing the growing capital of Russia and the Islamic countries. In fact, stronger contacts with China meet Tajikistan's national interests: the People's Republic of China is a reliable and predictable partner.

Tajikistan is very much concerned with its security for two reasons: first, Afghanistan, its closest neighbor, is still growing opium poppy and, second, the renaissance of Islam after seventy years of state atheism is accompanied by the aggressive proliferation of militant extremism.

Tajikistan was the first among the former Soviet republics to come to grips with the problem of terrorism and drug trafficking. During the years of civil confrontation the country was shaken by terrorist acts instigated by the domestic political context. Reconciliation did not solve the problem: the terrorist act of 1998 that killed U.N. officials in Tajikistan resounded all over the world.

¹⁵ See: "E. Rakhmonov v Pekine."

By the time the former Soviet Central Asian republics gained their independence China already had vast experience in dealing with the drug business. Its southwestern provinces border on the Golden Triangle states; drug smuggling across the Chinese border has never stopped since the late 1970s. In 1999, the Chinese law-enforcers solved 65 thousand criminal narcotic-related crimes; they confiscated 5,364 tons of heroin, 1,193 tons of opium, 16,059 tons of methamphetamine (also known as "ice"), cocaine, yaotuwang (otherwise known as ecstasy [MDMA]) hemp, etc. The total number of exposed cases and amount of confiscated drugs increased compared to 1998 by 2.4 and 33.6 percent, respectively. In 1991 there were 148 thousand registered drug addicts in China; in 1995 the figure increased to 520 thousand; and in 1999 there were 681 thousand.¹⁶

The above shows that the problem is a burning one. The Chinese nation has its own historical reasons (the notorious "opium wars") to fight the evil.

The narco-syndicates negatively affect the two countries' social and economic development; neither of them produces drugs—they are transit states. Drugs reach Europe via their territories. Tajikistan is one of the five states in which drugs are confiscated in huge amounts. In fact, all interested sides should pool their efforts; they need a common and long-term anti-drug program. The problem has no simple answers and defies prompt solutions.

From the very beginning the national Army of Tajikistan has been receiving financial support from China extended on a free basis. In the last ten years the republic received \$10 million to improve the combat-worthiness of its army.

In July 2006 the NUCTECH Company of China held a presentation of control complexes at the Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan; they are technical devices that use ion rays to identify prohibited substances (explosives, drugs, ammunition, fissionable materials, etc.) in bulky cargoes and transportation means.

¹⁶ See: "Bor'ba s narkotikami v Kitae," Press-Kantseliaria Gossoveta KNR, Beijing, June 2000, p. 1.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The two countries are actively cooperating within the SCO, which within a short period of time became one of the regional security elements.

Today its members are facing several domestic and foreign threats. Drug trafficking is one of the latter: the amounts of illegally moved narcotics cannot be identified with any degree of precision, yet we know that terrorists survive and operate on drug-related money. The aggressive propaganda of radical Islam spread far and wide mainly by citizens of the neighboring Islamic states is another equally dangerous threat.

The rapid dissemination of religious extremism in the region is largely spurred on by the world-wide consolidation of radical forces. Extremist ideas and ideologies are thriving where cultural-moral values are neglected or misrepresented. This is a serious threat to regional stability and security. Hizb ut-Tahrir was involved in setting up the Taliban in Pakistan; today it has moved to Afghanistan.¹⁷

“Access to that resource and sharing in its potential wealth represent objectives that stir national ambitions, motivate corporate interests, rekindle historical claims, revive imperial aspirations, and fuel international rivalries. The situation is made all the more volatile by the fact that the region is not only a power vacuum but is also internally unstable. Every one of its countries suffers from serious internal difficulties, all of them have frontiers that are either the object of claims by neighbors or are zones of ethnic resentment, few are nationally homogeneous, and some are already embroiled in territorial, ethnic, or religious violence.”¹⁸

The dynamics and evolution of terror across the former Soviet Union are fairly impressive. In the past a terrorist act meant assassination of a top figure or a limited explosion—today terrorists do not hesitate to launch full-scale hostilities. Terrorism has become modernized: it is equipped with the latest gadgets inaccessible to many special services.

It was in 1999 that terrorists first undertook a large-scale operation: fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan moved into Kyrgyzstan; a year later they repeated their attempt and ignited hostilities in the mountains.

It should be said that the roots of terrorist movements differ from one SCO member to another even though all of them go back to Islamism. The Eastern Turkestan movement, for example, has hoisted an Islamic banner to set up an independent Uighur state, while in Central Asia the local terrorists aspire to replace the local regimes with a theocratic state.

All terrorist groups that operated in Tajikistan have been liquidated even though the officially banned Hizb ut-Tahrir distributes anti-government leaflets.

The problem of terrorism has no state borders, which means that the SCO members should fight it together.

China, which has suffered from Uighur and Tibet separatism, has always insisted on a united front to fight international terrorist organizations of all hues.

In January 2002 the press chancellery of the PRC State Council published a “white book” in which it presented the official position on the Uighur problem. According to official information, “between 1990 and 2001 the terrorists of the Eastern Turkestan movement in China and outside it committed over 200 acts of terror and violence that killed 162 people of different nationalities, per-

¹⁷ See: K.D. Jalilov, I.R. Rakhmatov, “Afghanistan i geopoliticheskaia obstanovka v Tsentral’noy Azii,” *Materaily konferentsii “Afghanistan: vozrozhdenie i perspektivy razvitiia,”* Dushanbe, 2005, p. 16.

¹⁸ Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives,* Basic Books, New York, 1997, p. 125.

sonnel of local structures, and clerics; over 440 were wounded.” The official Chinese sources assert that the Uighur organizations have contacts in Afghanistan. In February 1998 the Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan based outside China moved several scores of its members (trained as demolition experts in Afghanistan) over to Xinjiang and the interior regions and cities of China where they set up 15 clandestine training centers. They trained 150 people from different corners of the country and used the receipts they brought from abroad to make explosives and explosive devices out of chemical materials they bought in huge amounts.¹⁹

In his book *Kriticheskoe desiatiletie* (The Critical Decade) President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev has written: “A simple analysis of the processes that were unfolding in the world late in 2001 and the first half of 2002 indicates that the level of terrorist activity is growing. The number of terrorist acts in 2002 might become even greater than in the last 10 years, starting with 1992. The figures confirm this lamentable prospect.

“In the first eight months of 2002 alone the world was shaken by 390 terrorist acts, a 10-percent increase compared to the whole of 2001. The figures of terrorist acts for the first eight months of 2002 are higher than the figures for 1992, 1994, 1996, and 1997.”²⁰

Developments confirmed the above: international terrorism has been acquiring a global nature while local terrorism looked outmoded. In Central Asia terrorism and the narcobusiness are inseparable.

In the 21st century all sorts of criminal transborder groups stepped up their activities. This made the Central Asian countries the first targets of narco-cartels and terrorist organizations. Complicated or even strained relations among the local states defy any efficient cooperation among them: they have too many unresolved border issues and no concerted position on regional security.

Until recently it was believed that security threats were limited to armed aggression. Today everything has changed: subversive information is spread through the Internet and there is information on “the ancient and unique culture” of this or that nation designed to fan nationalism. As a SCO member Tajikistan strives to liquidate the seats of international terror in Central Asia. This is not an easy task: there are too many related geopolitical and geoeconomic problems.

In the summer of 2003 an operational group of the Ministry of Defense of Tajikistan took part in the Cooperation-2003 military exercises organized under the SCO agreements on the adjacent territories of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China and the Semipalatinsk Region of Kazakhstan. The military learned to rebuff and liquidate groups of international terrorists. The very fact of military exercises that involved the defense ministries of five states showed that the SCO was gaining international and regional weight.

In August 2007 Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, hosted a regular SCO summit also attended by the presidents of Iran, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan. India and Pakistan were represented at the ministerial level. The event was also attended by deputy U.N. Secretary General.

The summit was concluded by joint antiterrorist exercises of the SCO members at the Chebarkul training ground (Cheliabinsk Region) called Peace Mission-2007. It involved 6 thousand military as well as artillery, aviation, and tanks. This very fact shows that the SCO countries take the threat of terror seriously. These exercises can be described as a response to the worsened military-political situation in Afghanistan where the Taliban has been successful. This cannot but cause concern among Afghanistan’s Central Asian neighbors as well as in Russia and China.

Central Asia will remain an important factor of the international and regional counterterrorist efforts for a long time to come. International terror is not a temporary phenomenon; it is the world community’s chronic disease with frequent aggravations. For internal and external reasons and be-

¹⁹ See: A.A. Kniyazev, op. cit.

²⁰ N.A. Nazarbaev, *Kriticheskoe desiatiletie*, Atamura, Almaty, 2003, p. 37.

cause of its geographical location Central Asia is extremely vulnerable to the threat of international terrorism, on the one hand, and may serve the outpost where the threats can be monitored and from which the anti-terrorist struggle can be launched, on the other. China regarded it as the key factor in its struggle against the separatist Eastern Turkestan Movement and as a factor designed to maintain security and stability in Northwestern China.

China can keep the situation in this region under control but it cannot resolve it. This means that it will need the Central Asian states on its side in the struggle against separatism and terrorism of the Eastern Turkestan Movement. In fact, terrorism should be uprooted in Central Asia, otherwise it will be hard, if not impossible, to stop "nationalist terrorism" in Xinjiang.²¹

The counterterrorist struggle of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has already dampened terrorist activities in the region. To uproot international terrorism in Central Asia and China, which is the SCO's final aim, all the interested sides should consolidate their efforts.

Throughout its history the SCO has been engaged in an active and constructive dialog. Nevertheless, there is an opinion that the Central Asian states are still overshadowed by China and Russia and that this contradicts their national interests. Those who say this are probably correct; at the same time this means that these states' place and role in the SCO fully correspond to their potential. Today the SCO members have no alternative to further consolidation of their organization. In the last couple of years the relations among the leaders have moved closer to strategic partnership, which breeds hopes.

Tajikistan's active involvement in the SCO speaks for itself: Dushanbe highly assesses the potential of this structure, which has posed itself the task of strengthening regional stability and encouraging economic integration.

Conclusion

In 2009 the Republic of Tajikistan and the People's Republic of China will mark the 17th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. The two sides have achieved a lot during this short period of time; they are engaged in a fruitful political dialog and economic cooperation in various fields of the two countries' national economies. Cooperation in the humanitarian sphere is progressing; the newly opened departments of the Chinese language in higher learning establishments scored an instant success with the Tajik youth. An exhibition of Tajik folk art was organized in Beijing within the framework of cultural cooperation; it familiarized the Chinese public with Tajik suzani, miniatures, national clothes, and jewelry. This event marked the 5th anniversary of the SCO and 15 years of independence for the Republic of Tajikistan.

The republic's foreign policy confirms that the Chinese vector, together with the Russian, American, Iranian, Indian, and West European, is one of the key trends in its diplomacy. The fact that bilateral relations with China are treated as a priority is explained not only by geographic proximity but also by China's pragmatic position on regional and world politics. Today Tajikistan and the other CIS countries are living through a period of economic difficulties; in this context the Chinese experience of economic reforms, which has been recognized throughout the world, could be used.

Beijing, in turn, is pursuing strategic goals: a stronger position in the priority economic branches of the Central Asian countries.

²¹ See: Zhao Huasheng, "Vzgliad Kitaia na rol' SShA po obespecheniu bezopasnosti v Tsentral'noy Azii," *Materaily Mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii "Sotrudnichestvo stran Tsentral'noy Azii i SShA po obespecheniu bezopasnosti v regione,"* Almaty, 2005, p. 42.

The level and dynamics of bilateral relations are free from fundamental contradictions as far as issues of mutual interests are concerned. The regulatory base makes it possible to raise bilateral cooperation at a higher level with the help of the still untapped potential. To achieve this it is necessary:

- (1) to strengthen the political dialog;
- (2) to make activities of the Tajik-Chinese intergovernmental commission more practical in order to make implementation of joint projects more effective;
- (3) to improve interaction between the military and law-enforcement structures with the aim of preventing threats to the two countries' national security;
- (4) to achieve closer economic cooperation within the SCO.
- (5) to find new roads leading to closer humanitarian contacts. This is suggested by accelerated globalization, which means that the two countries should achieve closer cultural, scientific, and educational contacts.

A CLOSE-UP VIEW OF INDIAN-TAJIK POLITICAL COOPERATION: THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Indian researchers cannot seem to arrive at a consensus about the prime tasks of the new relations between the newly independent republics of Central Asia, on the one hand, and the South Asian countries (particularly India and Pakistan), on the other. Some experts assert that the economic aspect prevails over the political and that India is primarily interested in economic trade cooperation with the Central Asian states and evaluates political (including ethnic, confessional, etc.) factors only on the basis of its economic interests. Other specialists, on the contrary, believe that during the 1990s India was in fact preoccupied with preventing political instability in the Central Asian region and not with economic cooperation with the Central Asian republics. Politics prevailed over economics. Only

after the political situation in Central Asia became more stable did India start considering economic cooperation with the region.¹

Whereby it is worth noting that Tajik-Indian contacts have been traditionally characterized by a clear prevalence of precisely the economic component. The migration of various groups to the Indian subcontinent over the centuries through or directly from the territory of present-day Tajikistan,² unification of the Tajik and Indian regions within the same states (the Achaemenid Empire, Alexander Makedonsky's Empire, Bactria, the Kushan Empire, the Hephthalite state, the state of the Gaznevids and Timurids, etc.), and even the rule in the South Asian Delhi Sultanate of the ethnic Tajik Gurid dynasty could not compare in terms of significance with the role of the cultural-civilizational and economic trade cooperation between both sides. Several researchers believe that this cooperation began as early as the Upper Paleolithic Age when the first economic relations arose between the bearers of the archeological cultures of South Tajikistan and North-West India.³ During the Bronze Age, the northern trade route of the cities of the Harappa Indus civilization passed through Badakhshan; and a Harappa trade colony—the site of the ancient town of Shortugai A (2200-2000 BC)—was discovered on the south banks of the Panj.⁴ Active economic contacts between the present-day territories of India-Pakistan and Tajikistan were established during the flourishing of the Kushan Empire and particularly in the late Middle Ages and recent times. This was when Tajikistan's city centers and Tajik-populated Bukhara and Samarkand were drawn into large-scale economic (not only trade but also financial and credit) contacts with India and also began playing an active intermediate role in Indian-Russian trade.⁵

In the Soviet period, India regarded the Tajik S.S.R. both as an example of the Soviet Union's economic achievements in Central Asia and as an ethnically and politically kindred Asian region. "As long as the Central Asian Republics were part of the U.S.S.R., India's relations with them were routed through Moscow but their Asian nature was noticed."⁶ This was precisely why representatives of these republics, including Tajikistan, were invited to the Inter-Asian Conference in 1947 where the future development of the Asian states as a single historical-geographical and cultural-civilizational bloc was discussed.⁷

When the Central Asian states acquired their political independence, India placed greater emphasis on the political aspect in its cooperation with Tajikistan.

¹ From a conversation with Doctor Gulshan Sachdeva of 20 October, 2006.

² With respect to this fact, Indian authors note the Indo-Iranian "kinship" of the Indian Aryans and Tajiks (see, for example: T. Firdous, "India and Central Asia. A Case Study of Indo-Tajik Relations," in: *Central Asia: Introspection*, ed. by M.A. Kaw, A.A. Bandy, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, 2006, p. 321). Incidentally, representatives of Tajikistan also pay attention to this circumstance (see: A. Juraev, "Socio-Cultural Challenges of Tajikistan in the 20th Century," in: *Thesis for the Conference on "Central Asia in Retrospect and Prospect*," Center for Central Asian Studies, Srinagar, August 2006, p. 5; U.A. Nazarov, "The Present State of Tajikistan-India Relations," in: *Thesis for the Conference on "Central Asia in Retrospect and Prospect*," p. 1).

³ G.M. Bongard-Levin, G.F. Ilyin, *Indiia v drevnosti*, Chief editorial board of Oriental literature of Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1985, p. 595.

⁴ See: B.A. Litvinskiy, "Drevnie sviazi Indii i Srednei Azii (do VII-VIII vv. n.e.)," in: *Rossii i Indiia*, ed. by N.A. Khalfin, P.M. Shastitko, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1986, p. 11; G.F. Ilyin, I.M. Diakonov, "Pervye gosudarstva v Indii. Predgorodskie kul'tury Srednei Azii i Irana," in: *Istoriia drevnego mira*, Book. 1, *Ranniaia drevnost'*, ed. by I.M. Diakonov, V.D. Neronova, I.S. Svetsitskaia, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1989, pp. 165, 172-173.

⁵ See, for example: M. Haidar, *Indo-Central Asian Relations. From Early Times to Medieval Period*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 260-261, 265; D. Kaushik, *India and Central Asia in Modern Times. A Study in Historical-Cultural Contacts from the Early Nineteenth Century*, Satvahan Publications, Delhi, 1985, pp. 24, 26-30, 35-36.

⁶ A. Deshpande, "Videnie Aziatskogo sotrudnichestva Jawaharlala Nehru—kontekstual'naia, kontseptual'naia i sinopticheskaia tochka zreniia," in: *Jawaharlal Nehru i sotrudnichestvo v Azii*, Collection of articles, ed. by A. Mishra, Indian Cultural Center, Almaty, 2006, p. 157.

⁷ See: J. Nehru, *Invitation to Inter-Asian Relations Conference*, Selected Works, Second Series, ed. by Gen. S. Gopal, in 35 volumes, Vol. 1, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 1989, p. 483.

There are many reasons for this.

- First, India, to a greater extent than other Central Asian states, associates Tajikistan both with the aggravated threats to its internal and interregional political security and with the ways to eliminate these threats. An analysis of the works of Indian authors that appeared during the 1990s shows that the Indian side followed the events in Tajikistan associated with the civil war quite closely and even with some apprehension. In so doing, India was generally on the side of the secular regimes. India clearly supported and approved of the end of the war and, most important, the way it ended. It can even be ascertained that this circumstance diffused to a certain extent the Indian side's tension and anxiety about the current and possibly unfavorable events in the future throughout the entire Central Asian Region. In addition, Indian analysts began noting that "the most strategically located country from India's security point of view is Tajikistan that shares borders with Afghanistan and China. It is also located in close proximity to PoK [Pakistan-occupied Kashmir]."⁸
- Second, India regarded Tajikistan as a state with potentially negative predominance of the Islamic component in everyday life: "in Tajikistan, Islam remains a strong factor."⁹ This factor is also generally associated with India's overall idea about ensuring security in the Central Asian Region and throughout Central and South Asia, although it deserves a separate look. In this respect, four circumstances can be mentioned to which Indian authors have paid and continue to pay special attention.

- (1) The religious undertone of the domestic conflict itself in Tajikistan.
- (2) The common Tajik-Iranian historical-ethnic and cultural-civilizational ties. India justifiably regards Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia as four of the main states fighting among themselves for dominance in the Central Asian Region, including for the opportunity to offer the republics of this region their own model of Islam. Whereby the Indian side believed that Tajikistan would most likely prefer the Iranian model.¹⁰ And although India's direct political and economic relations with Iran could be described as generally positive, it is unlikely that New Delhi will set up a model of Muslim theocracy in Tajikistan. Moreover, in the mid-1990s Indian analysts even believed that "it is most likely that Iran will play the Tajik card against Russia, if the latter does not concede to its position on sharing the Caspian resources."¹¹
- (3) Tajikistan's membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Incidentally, the Indian side was only initially worried about this. We know that India's presence as a leader in the South Asian Region is nowhere as restricted as it is in the OIC, an organization formed on a religious basis. South Asia is represented on this basis by Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Republic of Maldives. Naturally Pakistan plays the most active role among them in the OIC, striving to realize its anti-Indian objectives there. At the same time India, which is the second largest state in the world in terms of Muslim population, almost always strove itself "to establish relations with Islamic countries to en-

⁸ P. Stobdan, "Strategic Emergence of Central Asia—Implications for Indian Ocean States," *Journal of Indian Ocean Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, April 2004, p. 39.

⁹ P. Stobdan, "Central Asia and India's Security," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 28, No. 1, January-March 2004, p. 71.

¹⁰ See: M.H. Nuri, "India and Central Asia: Past, Present and Future," *Regional Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Winter 1992-1993, p. 81; M.K. Palat, "India and Central Asia," *World Focus*, Vol. 14, No. 3-4, March-April 1993, p. 40.

¹¹ P. Stobdan, "Regional Issues in Central Asia: Implications for South Asia," *South Asian Survey*, 1998, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1998, p. 253.

sure their not becoming a party to Pakistani strategies threatening India.”¹² In particular, the fact that the Resolution on Kashmir, with its tough stance regarding India, was adopted as the meeting of OIC member states in Karachi in 1993 could not help but make New Delhi nervous.

But soon after this meeting, the heads of the Central Asian states, as though justifying themselves to India, stated repeatedly that they had signed the Resolution exclusively under Pakistan’s pressure as the host party.¹³ Subsequently it was the representatives of the Central Asian states that made the greatest efforts to tone down the general anti-Indian rhetoric at meetings of the OIC members, if it arose. The membership of the Central Asian countries in this organization made India feel more comfortable, now it was convinced that Islam in these countries does not present a threat to it. Moreover, some researchers believe that although “New Delhi’s growing interest in Central Asia goes beyond off-setting Pakistan’s influence in the region... India could cultivate the opinion of the Muslim world on Kashmir by encouraging Muslim Central Asian states to present New Delhi’s case in the Organization of the Islamic Conference.”¹⁴ Moreover, it was precisely the Central Asian factor that slightly downplayed Pakistan’s position in the OIC, since it sharpened its contradictions with other leading states of the Islamic world during their struggle for influence in the Central Asian Region.

- (4) And finally, the very fact of lightweight, according to the Indian side, Islamization of Tajikistan. On the whole, India, while objectively pointing to the religious and ethnic problems in the South Asia Region as such, is watching them in a hypertrophied way in Central Asia, which is largely due to the religious situation in such states as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. “The recognition of Islam as a force to be reckoned with in the newly emerged Central Asian states ... has been giving an impetus to Islamic resurgence in the world;”¹⁵ “a fundamentalist Central Asia ... is not outside the realms of possibility,”¹⁶ and so on. In addition, India is also paying increased attention to the Islamic threat posed to the Central Asian states themselves, which the Indians are inclined to overly exaggerate. “Financial resources generated by drug trade in the region have given a certain amount of autonomy to the terrorist and fundamentalist forces.”¹⁷ The “ideological struggle between secular and extremist forces, an unremitting flow of foreign funds to the latter and the unresolved conflict in Afghanistan are the principal factors for religious extremism in Central Asia... Religious extremism and international terrorism would remain challenges to Central Asian security and stability... The local population is not capable of resisting Islamic prohibitions when imposed.”¹⁸ There are

¹² J.N. Dixit, “India’s Security Concerns and Their Impacts on Foreign Policy,” in: *Indian Foreign Policy: Agenda for the 21st Century*, ed. by L. Mansingh *et al.*, Vol. 1, Konark Publishers Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1997, p.157.

¹³ See: S.D. Muni, “India and Central Asia: Towards a Co-operative Future,” in: *Central Asia: The Great Game Replayed*, ed. by N. Joshi, New Century Publications, New Delhi, 2003, pp.118-119.

¹⁴ Sh. Akbarzadeh, “India and Pakistan’s Geostrategic Rivalry in Central Asia,” *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 12, No. 2, June 2003, p. 227.

¹⁵ K.S. Sidhu, “Islamic World and Central Asia: Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan,” in: *Central Asia: Present Challenges and Future Prospects*, ed. by V.N. Rao, M.M. Alam, Knowledge World, New Delhi, 2005, p. 175.

¹⁶ S.N. Bal, *Central Asia: A Strategy for India’s Look-North Policy*, Lancer Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2004, p. 332.

¹⁷ S.D. Muni, *op. cit.*, p. 98 (see also p. 103 for the same considerations).

¹⁸ R. Dwivedi, “Security Scenario in Central Asia: An Indian Perspective,” in: *Conceptions and Approaches to Regional Security: Experience, Problems, and Prospects of Cooperation in Central Asia. Data from the 4th Annual Almaty Conference (7 June, 2006)*, Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Research under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, 2006, pp. 147, 157-158.

several reasons for this opinion; for example, the Indians see the popularity of Islamic organizations in Central Asia in the fact that “almost 60 per cent of the population there is under the age of 25, unemployed, uneducated, and hungry and hopes that establishment of the *Caliphate* will be a miraculous solution to their woes.”¹⁹ None of the above-mentioned provisions can apply in any serious way to Turkmenistan or particularly to Kazakhstan since they reflect a situation that has primarily emerged in the Tajik-Uzbek region.

Tajikistan is perfectly well aware that most of the threats that worry India are associated precisely with Islam; so in this respect “bilateral cooperation [of India and Tajikistan] has to be very careful and well-balanced.”²⁰

- Third, Tajikistan views India mainly from the political perspective because it is closer to the Afghan-Pakistani belt.

India (as in fact most states of the world) views the Afghan problem in all its aspects as the main threat to regional and global security. And here Tajikistan is seen as the most vulnerable spot, on the one hand, and as a significant guarantee for resolving this problem, on the other. Depending on Tajikistan’s success or failure, it is faced with the choice of either disappearing as a state or extending its present boundaries to become the most powerful country in the region.²¹ Several works by Indian authors point out that there are more Tajiks in Afghanistan than in Tajikistan itself. This assertion essentially passes from one study to another and allows India, if not to entirely equate at least to closely correlate the situation in Tajikistan with the Afghan problem. In so doing, the Indian side clearly feels Tajikistan’s support both in directly helping to settle the Afghan problem and in defending India’s national interests in the region in general. “...Given the present India-Pakistan relations, access to Afghanistan is not possible for India through Pakistan. As a result, it has chosen the Central Asian route and that too through Tajikistan, the most reliable and close ally during the Taliban’s days in power. The facility provided by Tajikistan has enabled India to remain involved in the developmental process in Afghanistan.”²²

Based on the situation that has emerged in Afghanistan and its contiguous territories, India is very worried about the threats posed by illegal migration and drug trafficking,²³ as well as the spread in Tajikistan of destructive radical Islamic elements under the influence of the Afghan-Pakistani belt. Such fears are indeed justified since the Tajik-Afghan border is a convenient corridor for illegal migrants, including radical Islamists, and drug dealers to reach the other states of Central Asia;²⁴ “Tajikistan, devastated after a long and bloody civil war, had been at the receiving end of religious terrorism from Afghanistan.”²⁵ Indian experts are

¹⁹ S.N. Bal, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

²⁰ U.A. Nazarov, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

²¹ See: P. Stobdan, “Central Asia in Geo-Political Transition,” *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1998, p. 102.

²² A. Patnaik, “India-China Cooperation in Central Asia,” *Security and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 2005, p. 88.

²³ In this respect, Indian authors note that “a rapid expansion of the traditional cultivation of opium in Afghanistan and parts of Central Asia has helped to finance the growth of religious fundamentalism in the Indian states of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir and the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan as well” (D. Kaushik, “India and Central Asia: Renewing a Traditional Relationship,” *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1998, p. 241); “Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan developed important opium routes and became significant opium producers themselves... In the areas bordering with Tajikistan, drug traffickers have stored tens of thousands of tons of opium” (M.S. Roy, “India’s Interests in Central Asia,” *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 24, No. 12, March 2001, p. 2279).

²⁴ See, for example: L. Nikolaeva, “Migratsiia v Tadzshikistane: pliusy i minusy,” *Azia i Afrika segodnia*, No. 6, 2007.

²⁵ A. Patnaik, “Central Asia and Indo-Pak Relations,” *World Focus*, Vol. 22, No. 10-12, 2001, p. 56.

carrying out numerous studies about this threat and its influence on the situation in India itself, noting that “the growth of relations between the two countries is to be viewed in terms of the geo-strategic scenario existing around them in Central and South Asia.”²⁶ On the whole, India, referring to the fact that a possible spread of the Afghan problem is affecting its immediate interests, is trying to resolve it in different ways: on the basis of military-strategic cooperation with Russia in the Central Asian Region; within the framework of multilateral cooperation with the Central Asian states; and independently, by means of bilateral cooperation with Tajikistan through assistance in defending its borders. Incidentally, the Declaration on Further Expansion of Friendly Relations between the Republic of India and the Republic of Tajikistan signed in 1995 mentions the need for active cooperation between the two countries in protecting its state structures from terrorist threats.²⁷ This is also mentioned in the Indian-Tajik Agreement on Creating a Joint Working Group for Fighting International Terrorism of 2003, as well as in the Treaty on Extradition and the Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Cases.²⁸

Moreover, India is vigorously fortifying its military-political position in Tajikistan, both in cooperation with other actors in world politics and on an individual basis. In particular there was talk about it creating the “first military ‘outpost’ in Tajikistan at Farkhor, adjoining the Tajik-Afghan border.”²⁹ India also built a military hospital in Tajikistan, which was later moved to Kabul, and an air strip “to help the Northern Alliance.”³⁰

As for Pakistan, most researchers believe that the political factor is still the dominating one in the initial prerequisites for establishing contacts between the Central Asian countries and Pakistan. This implies the calls of the Pakistani side to restore the broken historical relations and addressing the ideas of the Muslim fraternity and Pakistan’s use of the religious factor to create its strategic depth in Central Asia, which has always put India on the alert. In particular, some Indian researchers have unequivocally decided that “with the appearance of five nominally Islamic neighbors in 1991, Pakistani policy-makers initially envisioned a Muslim security belt stretching from Pakistan to Turkey.”³¹ Most Pakistani authors usually recognize the predominance of the political factor in this respect and even call on their leadership to shift the emphasis from it to the economic factor, the lack of attention to which has had a negative effect both on Pakistan’s direct cooperation with the Central Asian states and on its image in the eyes of the world community as a whole. Although individual representatives of the Pakistani side have been making attempts to show their state’s interest in the Central Asian Region, primarily from the economic viewpoint, such attempts usually failed. Inclusion of the Central Asian states in the Muslim Economic Cooperation Organization³² (ECO), largely by Pakistan’s efforts, only aggravated the sit-

²⁶ T. Firdous, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

²⁷ See: A. Sengupta, “India and Central Asia,” *World Focus*, Vol. 21, No. 8, August 2000, p. 23.

²⁸ See: A. Patnaik, “India-Central Asia Relations: The Growing Prospects,” *World Focus*, Vol. 24, No. 10-12, 2003, p. 50.

²⁹ G. Sachdeva, “India’s Attitude towards China’s Growing Influence in Central Asia,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2006, p. 24 ff.

³⁰ A. Patnaik, “India-China Cooperation in Central Asia...”, p. 87 (for more detail on the Indian military-strategic activity at Farkhor during NATO’s Afghan campaign, see: R. Bedi, “India Dabbles in the New ‘Great Game,’” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, Vol. 13, No. 6, June 2002, p. 19; *idem*, “India and Central Asia,” *Frontline*, Vol. 19, No. 19, 14-27 September, 2002, p. 60).

³¹ A. Dhaka, *South Asia and Central Asia: Geopolitical Dynamics*, Mangal Deep, Jaipur, 2005, p. 152.

³² See: *Ibid.*, p. 150 (see also: P. Mann, *India’s Foreign Policy in the Post Cold War Era*, Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, 2000, p. 49; R. Khan, “Emergence of Central Asia and Its Relevance to India,” *Mainstream*, Vol. 30, No. 24, April 1992, p. 21). Incidentally, some Pakistani researchers also describe the OEC as an “economic bloc of the Muslim

uation in India's eyes, particularly at the initial stage. Pakistan's "exclusion of India from key political issues like the Tajik and Afghan conflicts, while trying to resolve them within an Islamic framework like the OIC and ECO ... posed immediate challenges to Indian policy-makers."³³

In so doing, whereas some Indian researchers have been expressing the opinion that the situation in Tajikistan will make it easier for Pakistan to worm its way into the Central Asian Region, others, on the contrary, believe that Tajikistan is not the place where Pakistan will be able to reach its goals. The Central Asian states, particularly Tajikistan, have been put on the alert by Pakistan's Afghan policy and overemphasis on the religious aspect; they are particularly concerned about Pakistan applying this approach to them in particular.³⁴

In addition to this, India has always been bothered by Pakistan's official and unofficial cooperation with the Islamic organizations of the Central Asian states. It was noted in particular that the "major fundamentalist organization, the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) of Tajikistan ... had an office in Peshawar, and Tajik recruits were given a five-year religious course at the *madrasahs* in Peshawar."³⁵

- Fourth, the predominance of the political component in Indian-Tajik relations has been related to certain problems and even failures in the attempts to expand Tajikistan's economic cooperation with the South Asian states. Diplomatic relations between India and Tajikistan were established as early as 1992 (incidentally, later than with other Central Asian states). Since then quite a number of reciprocal visits have taken place at different levels and a whole series of bilateral documents were signed that encompass a wide range of spheres of potential cooperation, including economic. But the first meeting of members of the Indian-Tajik Joint Commission on Trade was not held until the end of 2001 (whereas the agreement on creating this commission was signed back in 1995), which clearly shows that not enough has been done to establish bilateral economic contacts at the top level. The average figures showing the level of trade contacts between Tajikistan and India are the lowest in the Central Asian Region.

For more than fifteen years Indian researchers have been giving the same description of Tajikistan's economy (rich in mineral resources, can generate a large amount of electricity, its main export commodities are raw cotton, fruit, and so on) and name essentially the same spheres for potential Indian-Tajik economic cooperation (primarily sharing Indian experience in different fields).³⁶ For example, Tajikistan showed an interest in India's experience and technology for purifying and disinfecting water, ensuring the rational use of hydropower, building mini power plants, and processing natural building materials. India offered its assistance in setting up the production of semiconductors in Tajikistan using its own raw materials, and so on. The Indian side has also been showing an interest in developing Tajikistan's mineral resources (particularly participation in works at silver mines). In addition, Indian-

countries" (N. Ghufuran, "The Islam Factor in Pakistan's Relations with the Central Asian Republics," in: *Pakistan. Fifty Years of Independence*, Vol. 2, *Independence and Beyond: The Fifty Years—1947-1997*, ed. by V. Grover, R. Arora, Deep&Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1997, p. 378).

³³ P. Stobdan, "Regional Issues in Central Asia: Implications for South Asia..." p. 257.

³⁴ See: R. Khan, op. cit., p. 21.

³⁵ A. Patnaik, "India-China Cooperation in Central Asia..." p. 81.

³⁶ See, for example: M.H. Nuri, op. cit., p. 81; P.S. Yadav, "India and the Central Asian Republics," *World Focus*, Vol. 20, No. 10, October-December 1999, p. 63; M.S. Roy, op. cit., pp. 2275, 2280; A. Patnaik, "India-Central Asia Relations: The Growing Prospects..." p. 51; T. Firdous, op. cit., p. 322.

Tajik cooperation has been designated in such spheres as environmental protection, tourism, the textile, leather, and chemical industry, public health (including pharmaceuticals), civil aviation, telecommunication, science, and so on.³⁷ Tajik representatives expressed their desire to create joint ventures with the Indian side in such branches as the production of electrical engineering equipment, precision tool engineering, optics, and so on. But not all of these ideas have come to fruition.

Cooperation is primarily being accomplished in India's provision of loans and grants to Tajikistan for purchasing goods and services from India. India is also rendering Tajikistan gratuitous assistance in building small enterprises (for example, a fruit-processing plant in Dushanbe) and hotels, supplying medication, and supporting Tajik municipal structures.

Since India does not directly border on Tajikistan, it depends on Pakistan for acquiring hydropower from Tajikistan. Pakistan itself is one of the official investors showing an interest in Tajikistan's energy resources; Dushanbe has been holding talks with Pakistan on a project to finish building the Rogun Hydropower Plant. Tajikistan asked foreign investors to finance the construction of a 500-kW power transmission line from the south to the north of Tajikistan with subsequent transit to Afghanistan and on to Pakistan and Iran.³⁸ But due to the U.S.'s resistance to cooperation with Iran, as well as the protests of Pakistani society itself, it seems unlikely that this project will be implemented.

There are no projects for any of the existing or planned transport and pipeline corridors linking Central and South Asia to pass through Tajikistan.³⁹ In the southerly direction, the Central Asian-South Asian routes are to pass through Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan; Tajikistan has not been mentioned anywhere yet in this respect. (The Central Asia-China-India transport corridor project that existed in the 1990s, which was potentially to run through Tajik territory, was soon dropped from consideration due to its obvious unprofitability. The Chakhbakhar-Kabul-Kunduz-Badakhshan route, on the other hand, was viewed not so much from the economic as from the strategic perspective.)⁴⁰ So Tajikistan will be on the periphery of such routes and will depend to a certain extent on its Central Asian neighbors in terms of economic cooperation with the South Asian states.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that in those few spheres where Indian-Tajik cooperation is initiated, it is very successful.

Moreover, India is actively developing cooperation with Tajikistan in the educational sphere. In particular, Tajik students are being given full scholarships for obtaining an education in India under a program of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), while candidates from the four other Central Asian countries are not paid round-trip expenses to India. Tajik students also enjoy additional privileges in India itself. Representatives of Tajikistan are also making active use of the ITEC educational program, particularly in management, economics, and finances. In addition, in the defense sphere, along with partial modernization of Soviet military equipment (since both states have quite a lot of similar hardware of Soviet-Russian manufacture), India is holding training courses for the personnel of

³⁷ See: M.S. Roy, "Redefining India-Central Asia Relations," *World Focus*, Vol. 23, No. 6, June 2002, pp. 22-23; U.A. Nazarov, op. cit., p. 7.

³⁸ See: D. Fayzullaev, "Tajikistan. V geopoliticheskikh labirintakh," *Aziya i Afrika segodnia*, No. 8, 2007, pp. 28-30.

³⁹ For more detail on the various alternatives for laying these corridors, see: A.E. Abishev, *Kaspiy: neft' i politika*, Center of Foreign Policy and Analysis, Almaty, 2002, pp. 266-268; D.B. Malysheva, "Geopoliticheskie manevry na Kaspii," *World Economic and International Relations*, No. 5, 2006, pp. 74-75; N.K. Mohapatra, "Caspian Cauldron: Role of State and Non-State Actors," *Contemporary Central Asia*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1999, p. 50; *Middle East and Central Asia. Data-book*, ed. by Edwards Economic Research Inc. Europa Publications, London, 2004, pp. 158-159, and others.

⁴⁰ See: T. Firdous, op. cit., p. 324.

Tajikistan's land and air forces.⁴¹ Indian students are continuing to obtain an education at the Tajik State Medical University.

- Fifth, India has a keen interest in Tajikistan politically due to its own foreign policy orientation.

Tajik-Russian cooperation is particularly important to India. The Indian side is especially inspired by the overall pro-Russian mood that exists in Tajikistan since it believes that positive relations between the Central Asian countries and Russia are very conducive to India's interests. Moreover, representatives of the Indian side also talked unofficially about the possibility and even necessity of Indian-Russian political cooperation not *with involvement* of the Central Asian countries, but *over* these states. (This incidentally should in no way be seen as negative, the thing here is that India has certain reasons to fear that the Central Asian countries themselves will not be able to independently deal with some of the regional threats. So problems with ensuring security in Central Asia have always aroused concern in India: "civil strife and turbulence in Tajikistan and Afghanistan ... is having a spillover effect on the Indian state of [Jammu and] Kashmir;"⁴² "should the destabilizing pattern of local conflicts as manifested in ... some of the Central Asian states, especially Tajikistan, continue unabated, the security environment of Southern Asia ... is likely to become more explosive."⁴³) In this respect, Tajikistan can be seen as an accomplished example of this kind of Indian-Russian cooperation, primarily in the military-strategic sphere. "At present, Russia, along with Tajikistan and India, is equipping a new base at the Ayni aerodrome 25 km from Dushanbe... There are plans to deploy an aviation group of the Russian military base at Ayni, ... as well as Tajik and Indian aviation equipment. India will deploy 12 MiG-29 fighter planes and one operational trainer for training Tajik pilots."⁴⁴

Back the mid-1990s the Indian side was pleased that all the Central Asian states were worried about the spread of the Tajik syndrome; India also highly appreciated their promotion of Russia's activity aimed at eliminating the conflict in Tajikistan.⁴⁵

India also highly assesses the fact that, in contrast to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan did not permit the U.S. armed forces to use its territory,⁴⁶ nor gives too clear a

⁴¹ See: A. Patnaik, "India-China Cooperation in Central Asia...", p. 87.

⁴² D. Kaushik, "India and Central Asia: Renewing a Traditional Relationship...", p. 241.

⁴³ M.S. Roy, "India's Interests in Central Asia...", p. 2276.

⁴⁴ D. Fayzullaev, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴⁵ See: J. Bakshi, "Russia, India and the Central Asian Republics: Geo-political Convergence," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 19, No. 5, August 1996, pp. 735-736.

⁴⁶ Despite the prevalent opinion that India is a potential bearer of U.S. interests in the Central Asian Region, Indian authors themselves talk unanimously about the undesirability of the U.S.'s presence in the Central Asian states. This shows the ambiguity of India's attitude toward the idea of Greater Central Asia, which implies the political and economical unification of Central and South Asia through Afghanistan. For example, Professor A. Patnaik talks about how he is "against the idea of a Greater Central Asia à la Frederick Star-Condoleezza Rice, since this region will not realistically include (and even exclude) India, Russia, Iran, and most of China. The presence of American military bases in Central Asia, as it turned out, did not eliminate the threat of the spread of terrorism in the region; on the contrary, by intervening in Afghanistan and Iraq the U.S. helped the Taliban, which was previously mainly concentrated in Afghanistan, to move beyond its borders and spread its activity to Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Jammu, and Kashmir" (A. Patnaik, *Speech at the conference dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of India and the Republic of Kazakhstan*, 18 February, 2007). Incidentally, the U.S. may have participated in this idea, or to be more precise, the U.S. could have carried out some actions in this vector that were of benefit to India itself. For example, according to Doctor G. Sachdeva, the U.S. is eager to unify Central and South Asia under the artificial mode of integration. It is of benefit to India and a good opportunity since the U.S. could even compel Pakistan to make the peace with India. India should use the U.S.'s presence in Afghanistan to expand its contacts with Central Asia no matter how complicated this may be (from a conversation with Doctor Gulshan Sachdeva on 20 October, 2006). Admittedly, India interprets this idea in its own way, primarily insisting that the U.S.'s intervention in its realization be limited.

political preference to China. Indian researchers also note that “the closeness of India to two important frontline states for combating international terrorism — Tajikistan and Afghanistan — should prompt China to seek Indian cooperation in this respect.”⁴⁷

- Sixth, India endows Tajikistan with political importance due to its traditional closeness to the states of the South Asian subcontinent in the political-cultural respect. However, the influence of this factor should not be overestimated, as some researchers and particularly official are wont to do. The most India is capable of is dividing Central Asia in the historical perspective into settled (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan) and nomadic (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) blocs. India does not usually make a distinction among the individual states in each of these blocs and the Indian side’s provisions on “ancient traditions” of cooperation with Tajikistan could apply equally to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Incidentally, this approach (not distinguishing among individual states within the Central Asian Region), which is also true of the present, makes it possible for India to project Tajik reality to a certain extent onto the entire Central Asian Region. We talked above about transferring the Muslim factor in the Tajikistan scenario to all the Central Asian countries.

Based on the example of the civil war in Tajikistan, several Indian researchers believe that the stability and internal security of *all* the Central Asian states largely depend on external factors: on the Great Game of the world nations, on transnational phenomena—terrorism, extremism, Islamic fundamentalism, and so on. The “politically, economically and militarily weak regimes of Central Asia are prone to future instability, particularly in the event of leadership change.”⁴⁸ The “region ... is fraught with politics of identity and ethnic nationalism, topped with authoritarian regimes, making it potentially a region of conflict.”⁴⁹ As already noted, many people in India are still inclined to believe that the Central Asian countries are so weak that they are incapable of withstanding such threats independently and will either need constant political support from the outside (as in the case with Tajik-Russian cooperation), or, in its absence, can objectively expect internal instability and chaos. “The role of external players in sustaining order, especially in the strategic setting of this region, would be substantive.”⁵⁰ Whereby it is noted that “prior to 9/11, the Central Asian states, except Tajikistan, somehow had been managing their security affairs with varying degrees of success.”⁵¹

Several domestic problems and certain Tajik-Uzbek differences of opinion regarding the historical and ethno-linguistic affiliation of some territories are making people in India believe that there are serious contradictions, right down to conflicts, among all the Central Asian countries and within each of them separately, which also has a negative effect on stability in the region. “As the borders of the Central Asian Republics do not coincide with the linguistic and cultural affinities of different groups living in the respective states, there have been lingering inter-state territorial disputes.”⁵² “The unresolved conflicts between the Central Asian states tend to promote feelings of insecurity. Due to the differences on account of

⁴⁷ A. Patnaik, “India-China Cooperation in Central Asia...,” p. 93.

⁴⁸ V.N. Rao, “Introduction,” in: *Central Asia: Present Challenges and Future Prospects...*, p. 17.

⁴⁹ A.M. Chenoy, “Central Asian Republics: Geo-Strategy and Human Security,” in: *Central Asia: Introspection...*, p. 169.

⁵⁰ K. Kak, “India’s Strategic and Security Interests in Central Asia,” in: *Central Asia: Present Challenges and Future Prospects...*, p. 208.

⁵¹ P. Stobdan, “Central Asia and India’s Security...,” p. 60.

⁵² K. Warikoo, “Security Challenges in South and Central Asia,” *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, January-March 2006, p. 7.

territorial, ideological and ethnic variations, the probability of a clash continues to inspire the Central Asian states to equip themselves.”⁵³ “The Central Asian Republics ... are beset with ethnic and religious conflicts because of varying composition.”⁵⁴ “Regional and clan rivalry have been a tacit constant of Central Asian politics.”⁵⁵ “[There is] quite a complex range of challenges in Central Asia. They are— the fragile states and political instability, ... a highly complex ethnic and religious mosaic with potentials of tension and conflict.”⁵⁶ “Tajikistan provides a clear example, where clans from different regions become enemies ... in the pursuit of power.”⁵⁷

However, the partial perception of all the Central Asian states through Tajikistan also has clear positive aspects. For example, during the 1990s, Indian authors often immediately projected Tajikistan’s interest in India onto the entire Central Asian Region.⁵⁸ This helped to compensate for the temporary lack of interest from other Central Asian countries (primarily Kazakhstan) in the eyes of the Indians.

Here it should be noted that from the very beginning India became one of the priority states for Tajikistan in the Asian vector of its foreign policy, which also helped to enhance Indian-Tajik political relations⁵⁹ (something that is unfortunately lacking so far in Kazakhstan). In this respect, India was included on the list of countries envisaged in the Tajik Resolution on Measures to Create a Simplified System for Submitting Applications and Obtaining Visas for the Citizens of Some Foreign States.⁶⁰ This circumstance should interest the Kazakh side as well, which often creates difficulties for Indian citizens who want to obtain a visa to visit Kazakhstan.

India has a favorable opinion of Tajikistan’s internal development at the current stage. Since the Central Asian states obtained their independence, India has been concerned about their internal social and political stability. This particularly applies to the status of the opposition. “The country can’t stay without freedom for opposition, otherwise instability would come from inside, not outside the country as blocked oppositionists pose more challenges for the country’s stability compared to open ones. India has no intention to cooperate with a country where instability comes from the blocked opposition.”⁶¹ The Indians believe that Tajikistan is the only Central Asian state where the opposition’s status is relatively satisfactory; the other four Central Asian countries have still not achieved the necessary success in this issue.⁶²

- In conclusion it can be noted that in its cooperation with Tajikistan, India places special emphasis on its political components for the abovementioned reasons. In so doing, this emphasis on the political aspect of cooperation, which is positive in itself and generally meets the interests of both countries, also has several problems.
 - First, the economic side of cooperation is suffering, being not simply overridden by the political aspect, but also greatly complicated by it.

⁵³ K.S. Sidhu, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁵⁴ A.M. Chenoy, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

⁵⁵ A. Dhaka, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁵⁶ S. Jha, “Russia’s Policy Towards Central Asia After Soviet Disintegration,” in: *Central Asia: Introspection...*, p. 199.

⁵⁷ P. Stobdan, ‘Regional Issues in Central Asia: Implications for South Asia...’ p. 249.

⁵⁸ See: N.K. Mohapatra, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁵⁹ See: U.A. Nazarov, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁶⁰ See: *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶¹ From a conversation with Muthu Kumar, Joint Secretary, India’s Ministry of External Affairs, 19 October, 2006.

⁶² See, for example: Shams ud Din Ahmad, “Geo-Politics, Violence and Regime Change in Central Asia,” in: *Central Asia: Introspection...*, pp. 143-153.

- Second, India's pessimistic perception of the situation in Tajikistan undermines its authority on the world arena. As an analysis of the statements of Tajik representatives quoted in the works of Indian researchers shows, the latter are mainly paying attention to the difficulties and problems of the Tajik side.
- Third, this perception is partially projected onto the entire Central Asian Region, which could be negatively perceived by Tajikistan's regional neighbors.

In this respect, it appears that the Tajik side should exert certain efforts to shift the emphasis away from politics. India and Tajikistan should also continue looking for ways to step up cooperation in different spheres of the economy and in environmental protection, which seems to be just as important at the current stage as working on strictly political problems.
