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IN THIS ISSUE:

CIVIL SOCIETY

Malkhaz Matsaberidze. THE ROSE REVOLUTION AND THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS 7

Sukhrobjon Ismoilov. UZBEKISTAN: NEW VOTING TECHNIQUES IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF THE 2004 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION15

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

Viacheslav Belokrenitskiy. THE MUSLIM EAST IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY: CURRENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND PROSPECTS22

Teimuraz Panjikidze. CHRISTIANITY IN GEORGIAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS: THEN AND NOW32

PARTY DEVELOPMENT

Mira Karybaeva.	DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTIPARTY SYSTEM IN CENTRAL ASIA	41
Valerian Dolidze.	POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA	49
Ekaterine Gakhokidze.	GEORGIA: POLITICAL PARTIES BEFORE AND AFTER THE ROSE REVOLUTION	60
Valentina Kurganskaia.	THE PARTY SYSTEM IN KAZAKHSTAN AND THE ETHNIC ISSUE	67
Vladimir Babak.	KAZAKHSTAN: HOW ITS MULTIPARTY SYSTEM CAME INTO BEING	78
Parviz Mullojanov.	PARTY BUILDING IN TAJIKISTAN	88

REGIONAL POLITICS

Rustam Mirzaev.	TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATIONS AND GEOPOLITICS IN THE GREAT SILK ROAD REGION	97
Farkhod Tolipov.	CENTRAL ASIA AS A SPACE, POLITY, PEOPLES, AND FATE	105
Bakhtier Rashidov.	RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA: A SHIFT TO POSITIVE FOREIGN POLICIES	112
Boris Parakhonskiy.	COUNTRIES OF THE BLACK SEA REGION AND EUROPEAN SECURITY	120
Shoislam Akmalov.	THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION AND REGIONAL SECURITY PROBLEMS	127

ETHNIC RELATIONS AND
POPULATION MIGRATION

Mamuka Komakhia.	YEZIDI KURDS IN GEORGIA: ETHNIC SELF-AWARENESS AND CONSOLIDATION	133
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- Sergey Markedonov.** ETHNOPOLITICAL PROCESSES
IN THE ROSTOV REGION, THE KRASNODAR AND
STAVROPOL TERRITORIES:
PROBLEMS, CONTRADICTIONS, AND PROSPECTS 139
-

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Special Feature section in the next issue will discuss:

Central Asia and the Caucasus

- Religion in the Sociopolitical Context
- The Democratic Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and their Impact on Central Asian and Caucasian Politics
- Border Delimitation and Separatism

CIVIL SOCIETY

**THE ROSE REVOLUTION AND
THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS**

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The Rose Revolution of November 2003 in Georgia repeated itself almost to the word in Ukraine, thus giving most of the expert community the firm conviction that little by little similar events would transform the rest of the post-Soviet expanse.

**Elections of 2003
in the Southern Caucasus**

In 2003, all the South Caucasian countries lived through election campaigns: on 5 March, the Armenians elected their president; on 25 May, they went to the polls to elect a new parliament; on 15 October, Azerbaijan received a new president; and on 2 November, Georgia made an attempt to elect a parliament, which developed into the Rose Revolution. It should be said here that even before these dates it was absolutely clear that the results would determine the future of these states.

International observers failed to reach a unanimous opinion about the presidential elections in Armenia. Their opinions ranged from “by rejecting the opportunity to carry out fair and objective elections Armenia lost its chance to move closer toward democracy,” offered by Special Representative of the U.S. State Department Richard Baucher, to “it was a democratic and legitimate campaign,” offered by the CIS observers. Defense Minister of Armenia Serzh Sarkissian, who headed the election team of President Robert Kocharian, offered his own explanation: “The CIS observers know Armenia and the Armenian mentality

well. Those who have never lived in our country cannot adequately explain local developments. Western observers came from countries with their own particular idea of democracy.” This is not acceptable for the simple reason that “a particular idea of democracy” is genuine democracy, while in the post-Soviet expanse, democracy is merely imitated.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe agreed that the parliamentary elections in Armenia were better organized than the presidential, yet they fell short of the main international standards. The CIS observers praised them as “free and democratic,” to borrow the phrase from Iury Iarov who headed the CIS group. They pointed to petty violations which did not interfere with the freedom of the voting procedure.

The Georgian leaders still at the helm at that time could draw several conclusions from the Armenian experience: the elections could be arranged and won in the old way; the CIS observers were prepared to accept any results; and the West, while being critical, was equally prepared to accept them. We can say that the “Armenian lessons” were further confirmed by the events in Azerbaijan.

Georgia went to the polls on 2 November; by that time the balance of power was clear. The sides were closely following the Azerbaijanian developments, while their leaders were saying in unison: “This should not happen in our country.” It turned out, however, that the authorities and the opposition had different things in mind. While President Eduard Shevardnadze not only approved of what the newly elected President of Azerbaijan, Ilkham Aliev, did after he had been elected, he also added that he was prepared to do the same for the sake of normal completion of the election procedure: “It is not my intention to scare anyone, but I want everybody to know that I shall not retreat—I want normal elections.” He made this comment on the Baku events at a traditional briefing session. The response was a stormy one: the opposition objected to falsifications and the use of force; it expected the elections results to be falsified. The Georgian leaders accused their political opponents of wishing to destabilize the situation under the pretext of possible falsifications. One of the Georgian newspapers wrote after the elections in Azerbaijan: “Isa Gambar and his Musavatists very much resemble our Mikhail Saakashvili and his Nationals. It was before the elections that they promised to use force—after the elections they promise mass unrest.”¹

Some of the opposition members, especially those who belonged to the National Movement, declared that they would resort to mass protests if the election results were falsified. The authorities did not hesitate to tag them as “agents of foreign countries out to undermine the Baku-Ceyhan project.” These people deserved to be isolated from society, while the West was expected to stay away for the sake of the oil pipeline project: it was commonly believed that the West preferred “stability” to “democracy.” The opposition, however, warned that the Baku variant would fail in Tbilisi: the official powers were not strong enough to launch repressions. It seems that the Baku events did a disservice to the government bloc guided by President Shevardnadze, which was readying itself for the elections.

Georgia attached a lot of importance to what the West thought. Observers from the “genuinely” democratic countries were expected to offer their unbiased and weighty opinion if the election results were falsified. This explains disillusionment with the verdict returned by some of the Western observers, who pointed to “individual violations” registered during the elections of 15 October, 2003 in Azerbaijan, and the doubts about the institution of foreign observers. On 18 October, one of the Georgian newspapers carried an article entitled “Infamous Assessment of the Infamous Elections,” which put the feelings of the democratic opposition in a nutshell² (even though the title could not be applied to all observers).

The Georgian media plunged into a discussion of “why Shevardnadze was not allowed to do what Aliev could accomplish” and why the West proved to be stricter with Tbilisi than with Baku. It was written that, compared with Azerbaijan, Georgia was much better suited for democratic elections.

¹ *Sakartvelos respublika*, 18 October, 2003.

² See: *24 saati*, 18 October, 2003.

The Phenomenon of the Post-Soviet Election Campaigns

The “velvet revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine demonstrated that power could be changed peacefully across the CIS through democratic elections. Before that, this prospect looked dim: the ruling circles were reluctant to cede power and were prepared to go at all lengths to achieve “the desired results.” Such elections created two major problems: a domestic one (the extent to which the opposition was prepared to accept another victory of power scored in this way) and a foreign one (the extent to which the international response to the violations detected in the course of the election campaign might prove critical and dangerous to the regime). The rulers of the post-Soviet countries have become past masters of “decorative elections,” yet the authoritarian regimes trying to pass themselves for democracies run into great difficulties when trying to falsify election results (in fact, this is what creates a “decorative democracy”). Imitation deprives the democratic principles and institutions of their real meaning, while declared democracy inevitably increases the number of those who object to the discrepancy between what is said and what is done. Elections throw light on these practices: to remain in power, the rulers have to falsify the will of millions of voters. Popular repugnance of a regime that relies on falsifications is fanned by social and economic problems and poverty and strengthened by the commonly shared opinion that life will not become better while the present leaders remain in power.

In an effort to grasp the phenomenon of the “velvet revolutions,” it would be wrong to concentrate on falsifications as the main cause of the mass protests: falsifications trigger mass unrest, but do not cause it. Social discontent which has reached its limits is the cause. People want to get rid of “bad rulers” as the main source of their troubles, while the “bad rulers” falsify elections to retain their power. The “velvet revolution” is a social riot, not a movement in defense of election rights. Numerous factors (political culture, the course taken by the government and the opposition, etc.) either keep unrest within peaceful limits (as in Georgia and Ukraine), or let violence develop (as in Kyrgyzstan).

In Georgia, for example, the election results were repeatedly falsified in 1992, 1995, and 1999. The nation, which still hoped for a better future with the old power (as in 1995) or was too pessimistic and apathetic (as in 1999), did not riot. The events of 1991-1992, which removed President Gamsakhurdia, taught the people to be afraid of destabilization. The coup was followed by “years of chaos and lawlessness” (1992-1994), as President Shevardnadze put it, which crippled the country. The president and his entourage never tired of praising the stability achieved under Shevardnadze and never tired of warning against the destabilization which might follow if the regime was challenged. In 2003, the nation did want to remove Shevardnadze, despite the threat of destabilization.

The Rose Revolution in Georgia

The year 2003 brought political tension: the corrupt clan system which had taken shape during President Shevardnadze’s twelve years in power found itself in a deep social, economic, and political crisis. The president himself was fond of saying that unless corruption was defeated no democracy could be established in the Georgian state, the very existence of which might be endangered. Anticorruption commissions and programs were set up with the help of the West and NGOs, yet in the absence of political will no struggle against corruption could be waged in earnest.

Western friends, and American friends especially, insistently advised Shevardnadze to carry out democratic elections and retire to let “politicians of the new generation” take his place. This was a chance to overcome the crisis and let the country revive. The president turned a deaf ear to these suggestions. Former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who came to Georgia to help President Shevardnadze form a Central Election Commission acceptable to the opposition and able to guarantee fair elections, likewise failed to convince his old friend. It turned out that the president and his cronies opted for a different course. Little by little all the forces that wanted the regime to survive closed their ranks around the president. By burying the Baker plan, they fanned serious suspicions that this time, too, the nation would be deprived of democratic elections. This meant that the West would no longer support the regime, yet the clans in power were also prepared to face this.

The system’s continued existence promised more falsifications of the election results and pro-Russian orientation, a country with its own problems of democratic development. The course for democratic principles and values meant that the present corrupt clan system should be removed and the country should turn to the West. On the eve of the elections, nothing suggested that the country had a chance to revive and carry out democratic elections. There was no agreement in the opposition ranks, while the government continued to steer the country into the dead end of a “failed state.”

The returns of the elections of 2 November caused disillusionment and buried the hopes for a better future. If accepted, they would mean that the people who grew fat on the country’s distress would preserve their seats in the parliament and that the outcome of the 2005 presidential elections would be sealed. They meant that Shevardnadze would either name his successor or that his power would be extended in some way or other.

It is hard to say what Russia promised Shevardnadze before the elections and during the mounting protest wave after them; we do not know why Shevardnadze went to Batumi and why Aslan Abashidze went to Erevan, Baku, and Moscow. We do know that this was in vain: Shevardnadze had to renounce power. Then Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, who made an emergency trip to Tbilisi, played a certain role in this. All the relevant facts are either well known to all interested in these events or can easily be found, so I will not go into the details of the Rose Revolution, but will limit myself to a discussion of various opinions about it.

Three Opinions about the Rose Revolution

Today in Georgia there is no agreement about the events of November 2003; they are still treated as a political issue. The people who came to power speak about a revolution that opened a road toward a better future for all. The official version says that it was triggered by falsifications, which exhausted the nation’s patience. Guided by the opposition, people took to the streets and forced President Shevardnadze to resign. David Zurabishvili, who represents the government bloc, pointed out: “Mikhail Saakashvili planned no revolutions; he did not want to remove Shevardnadze immediately after the elections. What he planned was to use the parliament to put pressure on the regime.”³

The opposition is mostly inclined to describe the Rose Revolution as an anti-Shevardnadze plot in which external forces were also involved. This means that it was not a revolution, but a coup d’état. Some of the opposition members go even further: they are convinced that the president himself was also involved: it was with his consent and his active participation that power was transferred to the Saakashvili-Zhvania-Burjanadze team. According to Irina Sarishvili, one of the leaders of the old government bloc, Shevardnadze and Saakashvili acted together according to a plot written outside the country and funded

³ *Kvira*, 30 October-6 November, 2004.

by George Soros. The skillful transfer of power from Shevardnadze to his pupil Saakashvili puzzled even his teammates.⁴ She said further: "It was not the United States alone that worked on the plot. Several other superpowers, Russia included, also contributed to it." We are tempted to ask: why did all of them pool forces to realize the plot? The answer is, "None of them wanted national power and national values to survive in Georgia." Can we really describe the Shevardnadze regime as one of "national values?" This is another question.

The three approaches to the Rose Revolution are nothing more than interpretations of facts; they leave too many questions unanswered. Reality is much more complicated and cannot fit into any of the above variants. Today, those in power prefer to forget the secret negotiations and agreements with some of members of the old regime in November 2003 and the money they received from George Soros to fund the Kmara youth organization then in opposition. Those who prefer to look at the revolution as a coup are freely holding forth about this. On the one hand, they cannot explain why tens of thousands of people fed up with Shevardnadze and his regime poured into the streets. It is even harder to explain why the former president selected a hazardous method with unpredictable results for transferring his power to the revolutionary triumvirate. There were much simpler ways to do this.

The "Velvet Revolutions" and Geopolitics

The question about the correlation between the internal and external factors in the Rose Revolution (and in "velvet revolutions" in general) is not limited to Georgia. According to certain experts, external forces may use election techniques to replace undesirable political structures with those better suited to their purpose. Elections and election techniques have become geopolitical instruments.⁵

External forces are out to actively influence elections in the post-Soviet countries, which may bring considerable geopolitical changes. Russia and the United States are seen as the two main players. Some people regard the "velvet revolutions" as the result of American intrigues designed to bring pro-Western politicians to power. We all know, however, that to prevent Viktor Iushchenko's victory, the Russian Federation actively interfered in the Ukrainian elections.

We agree that external forces can influence elections to a great extent. Russia and the West were actively involved in the Ukrainian election developments. External forces, however, cannot ensure the victory of a "velvet revolution" if the country is not ready for it.

The Carpathian Declaration signed jointly by Viktor Iushchenko and Mikhail Saakashvili on 5 January, 2005 denies that it was external interference that brought victory to the "velvet revolutions" in their countries: "No techniques or external interference can artificially start a peaceful and democratic revolution. The revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia required no political technologies or external interference."⁶ The presidents have pointed out that the Rose and the Orange revolutions were historically inevitable; they started a new wave of European liberation which would bring the final victory of freedom and democracy to the European continent. These revolutions continue the process that started in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. We can say that the "velvet revolutions" constitute a method used by forces armed with liberal values to change the undemocratic regimes in Eastern Europe.

⁴ See: *Akhali taoba*, 20 October, 2004.

⁵ See: S.P. Rastorguev, *Vybory vo vlast kak forma informatsionnoy ekspansii*, Moscow, 1999, pp. 17-24; G. Pocheptsov, *Informatsia i dezinformatsia*, Kiev, 2001, pp. 208-216.

⁶ *Khvalindeli dge*, 6 January, 2005.

Why the Rose Revolution was Possible in Georgia

Those who tend to overestimate the role of external forces should ask themselves: Why did they succeed in Georgia and fail in its neighbors—Armenia and Azerbaijan? To better understand the “velvet revolutions,” we need a better understanding of the domestic situation in Georgia. Under Shevardnadze, our country acquired a political system many called either “defective” or “hybrid.” Indeed, it was a strange blend of democratic elements and the post-communist clan system. In Georgia, the clan system and the opposition were equally short of resources. The clan system could develop because civil society and democratic forces proved too weak. The clan system, too, demonstrated its weakness:

- the Shevardnadze regime had no considerable resources (such as oil or gas) to keep the clans afloat and cushion mounting discontent;
- the corrupt clan system had no ideology able to lure the masses;
- President Shevardnadze lost the West’s support, which refused to accept the corrupt clan system and insisted on its destruction as a condition for its continued support. The West insisted on a real anti-corruption struggle.

In fact, Heydar Aliev and Eduard Shevardnadze pursued similar domestic and foreign policies. Russia’s pressure forced them to seek Western support; they succeeded thanks to the Caspian power projects. Their pro-Western course, however, did not mean that they embraced Western values and principles at home. Their democratic statements were mainly sheer formality; in fact, they relied on the communist nomenklatura.

Georgia and Azerbaijan acquired states based on clans and corruption. In the latter, however, the system relied on resources controlled by the ruling class and corresponding political culture. In Georgia, civil society was more developed; the democratic principles and values which the regime formally recognized struck root; there were more or less independent media. This was why the fate of their political legacy proved different.

Why the “Velvet Revolution” was Impossible in Armenia

The Georgian Rose Revolution appeals to certain circles in other countries, in particular in Armenia where the opposition, which lost the 2003 elections, was not too weak to abandon any plans of revenge. The Karabakh factor still dominates the political process in Armenia: the country has fallen victim to the “Karabakh victory,” which affected, among other things, its domestic developments. The authorities block all opposition actions under the pretext that confrontation may prove catastrophic—the opposition has to accept falsifications of the election results, corruption, and other faults of the powers that be. A “velvet revolution,” however, can smoothly change society and avoid upheavals.

The Carnation Revolution in Armenia did not take place. Official Erevan and independent analysts agreed that the situation in Armenia differed greatly from that in Georgia. In the first place, its regime is much stronger; and it wields much more power than Shevardnadze did. In Georgia, the army and police remained neutral, which predetermined the course of events. In Armenia, the army and police sided with President Kocharian.

Official Tbilisi remained neutral to the Armenians events. Non-interference in the domestic affairs of neighbors and acceptance of the results of the developments there were the only reasonable position preferred by the South Caucasian leaders. The Georgian media were involved in an active discussion of the possible impact of the stormy Armenian events on Georgia, while experts agreed that Georgia would gain nothing if the Armenian crisis developed. Georgia needed a stable and predictable neighbor. There was a lot of talk about flows of refugees who might seek shelter with the Armenians of Javakheti. Some people said that the Javakheti Armenians preferred to side with the authorities, both in Georgia where they lived and in Armenia, therefore they supported President Kocharian rather than the opposition. (Official Erevan at all times curbed the separatist sentiments in Javakheti.) Some Russian politicians might have liked to fan separatist sentiments, but this went against the interests of Armenia, which depended to a great extent on the communication lines that crossed Georgia before reaching Armenia, to say nothing of the two countries' traditional cultural and historical ties.

The wave of pro-Western sentiments that arose in Tbilisi in the wake of the Rose Revolution meant that Moscow's positions in the region had weakened. This meant that Erevan too might turn to the West. Today, both the authorities and the opposition are pro-Russian, even though in the 1990s then President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrossian made an attempt to turn to the West.

The Rose Revolution and Georgia's GUUAM Partners

Under Shevardnadze, Georgia entered into special relations with Ukraine and Azerbaijan; it was these three states that formed the core of one of the post-Soviet structures—GUUAM, the other "U" and "M" in which stood for Uzbekistan and Moldova. From the very beginning, Moscow treated it with suspicion as a structure limiting its influence across the post-Soviet expanse.

The Rose Revolution endangered, to a certain extent, Georgia's relations with Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Ilkham Aliev, who inherited power from his father and who dealt harshly with the opposition, was not expected to welcome the Rose Revolution, which might set an example for his domestic opposition. Despite this, the two leaders promptly established good relations, which started with a trip by the Georgian delegation to Baku to pay last respects to Heydar Aliev. Later the president of Georgia paid an official visit to Baku where the two presidents discussed their countries' future. Saakashvili repeatedly emphasized that Ilkham Aliev was the only president with whom he used the informal "you" (thou).

It was much harder to forge close ties with Kiev. Then President Kuchma described the opposition members who took the parliament building by storm as "a band of criminals." It was at that time that the close ties between Saakashvili and Viktor Iushchenko, one of the opposition leaders, became widely known. Saakashvili sided with the opposition which won the "Orange Revolution." The Georgian president was criticized on all sides for the "Che Guevara syndrome" and export of revolution. His friendly ties with the opposition might have damaged the official relations between the two countries: the Kuchma regime looked strong enough to allow its pro-Western opponents to win.

Mikhail Saakashvili started another scandal by making public information supplied by the Intelligence Department of Georgia about head of Ajaria Aslan Abashidze hiring fighters in Ukraine. The Foreign Ministry of Ukraine denied this. Saakashvili was forced to admit that he did not mean to say that the authorities were involved. This quenched the scandal but did nothing to restore the former warmth.

Later, Mikhail Saakashvili's visit to Ukraine improved the climate: the presidents buried their old grudges and started talking about strategic partnership. Leonid Kuchma said that the newly elected pres-

ident of Ukraine, no matter who he would be, would continue to look at Georgia as a key partner. As the Ukrainian opposition gained strength, Tbilisi grew more and more open about its sympathies toward the "Orange Revolution." In one of his interviews Mikhail Saakashvili said: "I knew that events would take this course long before it all started. I know this country well. I never agreed with those who tried to convince me that there could be no parallels between Ukraine and Georgia. I have always said at all official events that democracy cannot be stopped."⁷

The revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia created a new reality in the post-Soviet expanse. The Orange Revolution speeded up changes in Moldova; and GUUAM acquired new prospects. Significant geopolitical changes may follow.

New Prospects

In 2003, Georgia was the only South Caucasian country which could follow the road of a "velvet revolution." The Orange Revolution in Ukraine and later events across the CIS, however, created new opinions about the possibility of "velvet revolutions" in Erevan and Baku. The media have been writing more frequently about a possible "velvet revolution" in Armenia and its legal foundations. They point out that the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2003 were falsified. On 17 March, for example, the Noyan Tapan agency carried information that Russian oligarch Boris Berezovskiy, living in exile in Britain, was preparing a "velvet revolution" in Armenia. According to Uwe Halbach of Science and Politics Foundation (Germany), the absence of an Armenian Saakashvili capable of rallying the nation to carry out a peaceful regime change is Armenian's only problem.

President of Azerbaijan Ilkham Aliev will have to hold the parliamentary elections scheduled for the fall of 2005 in the context of the "velvet revolutions" across the CIS expanse; probably he will be forced to beat off another riot. According to the media, the local opposition is closing its ranks, as happened in Georgia and Ukraine.⁸ Forced to answer a stream of accusations about falsifying the future election results, official Baku will find itself in a quandary. The question also arises of whether the opposition is strong enough to win. Furthermore, the West will have to make a hard choice between familiar stability and unfamiliar democracy.

When talking about the prospects of "velvet revolutions" in Armenia and Azerbaijan, we should keep in mind their foreign policy orientations. These prospects are unlikely to be realized in Armenia if no pro-Western forces appear on its political scene. Today, both the authorities and the opposition are looking at Russia. I have already written that in the 1990s, then President Ter-Petrosian made an attempt to change the course.

Several factors might make Armenia's pro-Western orientation stronger: Georgia's pro-Western course; and the prospect of withdrawal of the Russian bases from Georgia, which will weaken Moscow's influence in the Southern Caucasus. This will at least prompt Erevan to somewhat readjust its foreign policy course. Final settlement of the Karabakh conflict will strengthen pro-Western orientation. The continued frozen confrontation in Karabakh, or its partial defrosting, will prevent any velvet regime changes in Armenia and Azerbaijan; this can be used as an "anti-revolutionary technique." Settlement with Western help, which will create no victors and no losers, would promote democracy in both countries. The Goble plan of exchange of territories between the two countries might end the conflict.

The velvet prospects of these countries will largely depend on how Georgia manages. If it deals successfully with all its problems, destroys the clan system, and curbs corruption, Erevan and Baku will be tempted. On the other hand, failure in Georgia will make velvet coups much less attractive.

⁷ *Kviris palitra*, 3-9 January, 2005.

⁸ See: *Kommersant*, 18 March, 2005.

So far, criticism of the new Georgian leaders is gradually mounting. It comes from the camp that was against the revolution from the very beginning and from those who stood together with Saakashvili. State administration is one of the sources of this criticism: people want the leaders to shed their revolutionary euphoria and start ruling the country in a normal way. Paata Zakareishvili wrote: "Unfortunately, this has not happened yet. Georgia does not yet have a government which would look after the country rather than its own success."⁹ David Usupashvili, one of the leaders of the Republican Party, seems to agree with this: "Our new leaders do not understand how they should behave and in what way state administration differs from an election campaign."¹⁰ There is no longer the "wide anti-Shevardnadze consensus" of the time of the Rose Revolution; the deposed leader is engaged in memoir writing in his residence. Those who moved against him had very different ideas about the post-Shevardnadze future; popular discontent will increase if new power fails to justify the hopes pinned on it. The new rulers should be tuned to the changing sentiments of the public. Here is what Stephen Sestanovich, professor of Columbia University, has to say on this score: "The main challenge for Georgia for today is to preserve the consolidation that made the Rose Revolution happen. The government should take the right direction and should achieve the concrete results the people need. The people must come to believe that the government works."¹¹

Whatever the case, the new Georgian leaders should adequately assess the situation in the country to achieve significant success.

⁹ *Rezonans*, 14 February, 2005.

¹⁰ *Rezonans*, 15 February, 2005.

¹¹ *24 saati*, 15 February, 2005.

UZBEKISTAN: NEW VOTING TECHNIQUES IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF THE 2004 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

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

This article is devoted to an analysis of the parliamentary election held on 26 December, 2004 in Uzbekistan. The election campaign

officially began on 20 September. This time, in contrast to the campaigns of 1994 and 1999 when the people did not have a direct say in the country's de-

cision-making process, the political parties used new voting techniques and citizens elected candidates to a bicameral representative power body for the first time. This means that from now on Uzbekistan, which is an authoritarian state, will have a parliamentary house formed from representatives of the people and operating on a permanent and professional basis. What is more, the Uzbekistan government made a point of demonstrating that this election was held democratically and that it rendered broad assistance and support to the candidates running for deputy. At a Central Election Commission press conference held on 22 October, 2004, it was announced that five of the registered political parties were allowed to run for seats in parliament.¹ And on 1 December, the CEC an-

¹ A CEC press release named the following parties as those allowed to participate in the parliamentary election on 26 December, 2004: the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the National-Democratic Party Fidokorlar (Patriots), the Liberal-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the Social-Democratic Party Adolat (Justice), and the Democratic Party of Uzbekistan Milliy tiklanish (National Renaissance). This is a complete list of the political parties officially registered in the country: pursuant to Art 21 of the Law on Elections to the Parliament, only after state registration with the Ministry of Justice may a party

nounced that 74 candidates from the Social-Democratic Party Adolat, 61 from the Democratic Party Milliy tiklanish, 119 from the Liberal-Democratic Party, 89 from the National-Democratic Party Fidokorlar, 118 from the People's Democratic Party, and 56 candidates from independent citizen initiative groups were officially registered to run in the upcoming election.²

The government allocated a total of 3.3 billion sums (approximately 3.5 million dollars) to support the election campaign. As a result, according to a CEC press release the very next day after the election, 27 December, 12,197,000 (85.1%) of the 14,323,000 citizens registered to vote showed up at the polls. One hundred and twenty voting districts were formed in the country, and approximately 18,000 local observers and a large number of international observers invited by the republic's government were present at the election.

submit an application to the CEC requesting permission to participate in the elections.

² See: S. Ejkov, "Elections without Choice." The article was published on the website of the Uzbek nongovernmental noncommercial group, Committee for Freedom of Speech and Expression [www.freeuz.org], 2 December, 2004.

New Voting Techniques

Since all the political parties participating in the parliamentary elections were created by the government and essentially promote and support the policy of Uzbek President Islam Karimov, their platforms have never differed from each other and have never essentially touched on the socioeconomic problems inflicting society for so many years. But during the last campaign, these parties came forward with a variety of different and stimulating platforms, and they also made use of new voting techniques. Admittedly, in many cases, these techniques were initiated by the government, and in others sanctioned by it.

Here are a few aspects of the political platforms made public by the party leaders at their conventions. For example, approximately six weeks before the election, on 7 November, at the national convention of Uzbekistan's oldest party, the People's Democratic Party, its leader, A. Rustamov, said for the first time that this was a leftist structure aimed at creating a constructive opposition to the current government. He placed top priority on reducing public transport and municipal service costs, ensuring rural areas a continuous supply of natural gas and drinking water, and providing each family with the minimum consumer basket. The main items on the political agenda of the National-Democratic Party Fidokorlar, adopted at its national convention on 7 November, were laws On the Police and On Criminal Investigation Activity, economic guarantees to the employees of state-supported organizations and representatives of small and medium businesses and protecting them from excessive auditing, and youth unemployment problems.

The political platform of the Social-Democratic Party Adolat, which it ratified and made public at its conference, also proved revolutionary for Uzbekistan. Its goals included the following: adopting a Law on the Civil Service, establishing public control over the activity of the security services, searching for ways to integrate the country into the European Union, providing guarantees against law violations by public prosecutors, and protecting the interests of the Uzbek intelligentsia. And here the question arises: is this not the constructive opposition we have all been waiting for?

What is more, the mass media provided greater coverage of this election than ever before. CEC Press Secretary Sherzod Kudratkhojaev noted that during the 1994 parliamentary election, the Central Election Commission did not have its own press center, while in 1999 the election campaign was covered by 490 newspapers, 138 journals, 22 websites, and 26 television stations. During the most recent campaign, the CEC set up its own press center, and the election campaign was covered by 597 newspapers, 145 journals, 93 websites, and 43 television stations.³ They informed the electorate about the political party conventions, acquainted the voters with the debates of the party leaders, and so on. But after the multiple "cuts" and censorship by employees of the presidential administration, all these hot debates and other information reached the readers, viewers, and listeners in the form of boring deliberations on politics and the economy.

What is more, most of the political parties organized concerts of well-known Uzbek pop stars for the rural population, which was busy with the cotton harvest at the time. Some district branches of these political structures arranged charity dinners for children's and old people's homes, which was something out of the ordinary and not practiced before. And on the eve of the elections, several international conferences were held under the auspices of the government, at which such questions as voting techniques, election legislation, world experience in this sphere, and others topics were discussed with the participation of foreign experts and the republic's party leaders.

Reaction of the Political Opposition, Mass Media, and International Community

The December parliamentary election was held without the participation of the Uzbek opposition, since the Ministry of Justice refused to register the three main political parties representing it. During a press conference on 22 October, CEC Chairman Buritosh Mustafaev announced that five registered parties were allowed to run for deputy mandates, although some of them had committed certain violations, or to be more precise, about 6 percent of the names on the party lists submitted were fraudulent or had been incorrectly registered. Uzbekistan legislation permits up to 10 percent in technical flaws of this kind on party membership lists.⁴ But the parties the Ministry of Justice refused to register had supposedly committed an even higher percentage of violations, although their precise number was not made public.⁵ In July 2004, the Birlik Party succeeded in lodging a complaint with the country's Supreme Court, accusing the Ministry of Justice of a prejudiced attitude toward party registration. But the court ruled that in this specific case the Ministry had acted in keeping with the law and did not violate

³ See: Speech by Sh. Kudratkhojaev at the international conference on Voting Techniques and the Mass Media: Legal and Ethical Aspects. Tashkent: Uzbekistan Publishers, 7-8 October, 2004.

⁴ See: A. Shekhar, "Press Conference of B. Mustafaev, Chairman of the Central Election Commission" [www.centrasia.ru], 22 October, 2004.

⁵ The main opposition parties are: Birlik (Unity), Erk (Liberty), and Ozod dehqonlar (Free Farmers). Birlik was created at the end of the 1980s, Erk, at the beginning of the 1990s, and Ozod dehqonlar, at the beginning of the 1990s, then ceased its activity for a while, resuming it in 2004.

the rights of the Birlik members. The limited election observation mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) sent a request to the Ministry of Justice asking to take a look at copies of the registration documents of the opposition structures, but the Ministry denied this request.⁶

This prompted the opposition to call the upcoming parliamentary elections another farce of the Uzbek government aimed at creating its image as a supporter of “controllable democracy.” It also announced its boycott of the election, calling on the country’s citizens and international community to do so as well.⁷

In addition to candidates for deputy being nominated by political parties, Uzbekistan legislation also envisages their nomination by so-called “citizen initiative groups,” but each group must have at least 300 members. The opposition saw this alternative as their last chance to nominate their candidates for the parliamentary election. But many candidates nominated from these groups in different regions of the country reported on violations of their rights by the local election commissions, which did their utmost to deny registration of these candidates for deputy mandates. Pressure on opposition candidates by the local authorities became common occurrences.⁸ As a result, the Birlik Party was the only opposition group to try this approach and nominate five of its representatives, but the CEC did not register a single one of them.⁹

Between November and election day, the opposition groups, along with human rights organizations, staged several acts of protests, mainly in the republic’s capital, calling for a boycott of the elections.¹⁰ And several days before 26 December, Birlik published a statement calling on the population to come to the polls and vote against all the candidates. The party leaders explained that this tactic, first, would help to declare the election null and void, and second, to call for a new one, this time with the participation of the democratic opposition. But the government responded to this by organizing corresponding counter-measures. For example, on 27 November, secretary of the opposition party, Ozod dehqonlar, Nigora Khidoiatova was detained by the police on her way to the protest site and released only after a Human Rights Watch representative intervened.¹¹ Reports from local human rights groups also mentioned incidences of pressure and even harassment of the participants in these protest acts, tearing down and destroying their posters and placards, and so on.

Representatives of Uzbek opposition groups surveyed before this article was written evaluated the new voting techniques used by the five Uzbek political parties as “nametag and sham.” They were all convinced that the new voting techniques did not make any difference and did not demonstrate the formation of a constructive opposition within the political parties of Uzbekistan, since all these parties were created by President Karimov and support his policies.

Incidentally, speaking at one of the international conferences on this election (Samarkand, 4 November), a representative of the Uzbek Ministry of Justice said that the opposition in Uzbekistan should exist only between political parties, and not oppose ... the government.

As already mentioned, the election campaign was covered by a huge number of the republic’s mass media. But due to the sorry state of freedom of speech in the country, their activity could make little difference. It appears to be more a matter of the government imposing this task on many of the

⁶ “The Election Process in Uzbekistan Requires Major Improvements.” Statement of the OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission in the republic, 27 December, 2004, OBSC Center, Tashkent.

⁷ See: press releases of Birlik, Ozod dehqonlar, and Erk, published 15 October, 22 October, and 6 November, respectively, on the site of an independent Internet publication www.centrasia.ru.

⁸ See: Statement of Davra Kengashi (Uzbek Opposition Coalition) to the General Prosecutor and CEC Chairman on violations of the rights of candidates from initiative groups [www.centrasia.ru], 25 October, 2004.

⁹ Interview with Mrs. Vasila Inoiatova, Secretary of the Birlik Central Administration, 29 December, 2004.

¹⁰ See: “Uzbek Protest Demands Return of Former U.K. Envoy,” *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, 9 December, 2004; “Uzbek Protest Urges OSCE not to Send Observers to Elections,” *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, 27 November, 2004; “Opposition Groups Call on U.S. to Impose Sanctions on the Uzbek Government,” *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, 2 December, 2004.

¹¹ See: *No to OSCE Observers during the Parliamentary Election in Uzbekistan. Picket in Tashkent* [www.centrasia.ru], 27 November, 2004.

mass media rather than their own free choice. The international community also expressed its concern about the situation that developed in the country during the election campaign. For example, on 18 October, 2004, Human Rights Watch asked the current OSCE chairman not to send a parliamentary election observation mission to Uzbekistan, since the voting would not be held in keeping with political pluralism.

The OSCE decided to send a limited observation mission.¹² (The OSCE/ODIHR group consisted of 21 international observers, who organized limited election monitoring.¹³) Despite some improvements in the election legislation since the 1999 election, such as the 30 percent quota for women deputies nominated by political parties, new financial regulations to support the political parties, and others, the mission concluded that the election fell significantly short of the OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. "Regrettably, the authorities' efforts to implement the election legislation provisions failed to ensure a pluralistic, competitive, and transparent election," said Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj, head of the OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission.¹⁴ According to Vladimir Rushailo, head of the Commonwealth of Independent States observation mission, 78 observers from CIS countries monitored the parliamentary election in Uzbekistan.¹⁵ In their preliminary statements, they noted that the voting was fair, legitimate, free, and without major violations of the election legislation.¹⁶

Here it is worth mentioning the reaction of the republic's authorities to international groups engaged in observing the Uzbek election, the Uzbek opposition, and the latest events in Georgia and Ukraine, that is, the Rose Revolution and Orange Revolution organized by the opposition of these countries.

On 26 October, 2004, a conference on the International Standards of Democratic Elections and Legislation of Uzbekistan was held with the participation of foreign and domestic experts at the Tashkent State Law Institute. At this conference, several high-ranking Uzbek officials verbally attacked acting head of the OSCE Center in Tashkent, Mr. Per Normark, because he dared to voice some of the country's shortcomings, such as the absence of political pluralism, the authorities' refusal to register political opposition groups, and the restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, which could adversely affect the results of the parliamentary election.

In an interview with RIA Novosti on 27 December, 2004, President Islam Karimov said: "...the conclusion of the OSCE mission on the parliamentary election in Uzbekistan cannot be a dominating viewpoint on this issue, since the OSCE is only one of the respected and leading organizations in Europe."¹⁷ He went on to say that there were also many observers from Asian countries at the election, and accused the OSCE of "attempting to artificially create an opposition in Uzbekistan." In his opinion, groups calling themselves the opposition have already discredited themselves in society and are rejected by it. In particular, the president accused the Birlik Popular Political Opposition Party of maintaining close ties with the Taliban movement and other extremist Islamic organizations, and even of taking part in the organization of the Tashkent bombings in February 1999. Commenting on the refusal to register the Ozod dehqonlar Party, the head of state said: "...a party incapable of uniting even 50 members

¹² The OSCE has a three-level approach to election observation: full observation, limited observation, and no observation, used depending on the situation in the country. If this organization decides not to send a full observation mission, this sends an important message: a full observation mission is only appropriate for countries where systemic conditions for holding fair elections have been created. According to Human Rights Watch, under the current conditions in Uzbekistan, elections cannot be fair, nor can they meet the requirements of even a limited observation mission of the OSCE.

¹³ See: "OSCE/ODIHR Sends its Limited Election Observation Mission to Uzbekistan," Kyrgyz Independent Information Agency, Aki Press, 3 December, 2004.

¹⁴ See: "The Election Process in Uzbekistan Requires Major Improvements."

¹⁵ See: "Over 70 Observers to Monitor Parliamentary Election in Uzbekistan," *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 30 December, 2004.

¹⁶ See: *Uzbekistan: Preliminary Conclusions of the CIS Observation Mission* [www.centrasia.ru], 27 December, 2004.

¹⁷ "If There is no Opposition, It should not be Artificially Created, Says the Uzbek President." Information of the Russian agency RIA Novosti. Reprinted by the independent Uzbek Internet publication TRIBUNE-uz on the website [www.tribune.uz.info], 27 December, 2004.

and whose leader is a woman by the name of Khidoiatova, who barely speaks Uzbek, cannot be registered.” The president also mentioned that the leaders of Georgia and Ukraine are primarily to blame for the situations that arouse in these countries, since they “... failed to ensure general consensus and understanding among their peoples.”

C o n c l u s i o n

The new voting techniques used by the political parties at the last parliamentary election and the government’s efforts to describe the election campaign as a broad-band public event in no way mean that the political climate in the country has significantly improved. These innovations are rather superficial changes permitted and promoted by the Uzbek authorities than systemic transformations. This becomes obvious if we recall the opinion quoted above of the Ministry of Justice representative, who said that official opposition in Uzbekistan can exist only between political parties and not pose a challenge to the country’s government. The December election in Uzbekistan cannot be called democratic and fair. If we look at the voting results, the Liberal-Democratic Party and People’s Democratic Party gained the majority in the parliament’s Legislative Assembly, since they nominated the largest number of candidates to run in the election (119 and 118, respectively).

Taking into account the authoritative nature of the government and the increasing trend toward a return to the old traditions of the Soviet legislature, it can be presumed that the new parliament will become another decorative attribute of the current Uzbek regime and not a representative body of the people engaged in adopting laws in the public’s interest, maintaining control over the executive power branch, and making the government accountable for its mistakes.

Admittedly, there are other opinions. For example, independent Uzbek journalist Sergey Ejkov claims that the new parliament is capable of becoming a real democratic legislative structure and of ultimately bringing the country to democracy. His main arguments are as follows. Despite the outward similarity of the election platforms of the political parties which openly support the policy of President Islam Karimov, in reality they are more radical in their thinking and when they get into parliament, they will put up a more active and competitive fight to implement their platforms. The leaders of these parties are not openly showing their displeasure with the government, since they are waiting until they get into parliament. This is all happening with the tacit approval of the head of state, since he understands that he will not be in power for long. Based on his arguments, Mr. Ejkov concludes that in the near future, the efforts of the new parliament could create greater opportunities for turning Uzbekistan into a democracy, while retaining its specific oriental traits.¹⁸ I might agree with Mr. Ejkov were it not for the fact that all the political parties registered in the republic are created by the government and do not truly represent the interests of the electorate.

In his interview on 27 December mentioned above, President Karimov said that the groups calling themselves the democratic opposition have been rejected by the people of Uzbekistan. Despite the low popularity of this opposition, I do not think we can say it has been “rejected by the people.” In light of the aggravated socioeconomic crisis and the government’s growing incompetence, the population’s sympathy for the democratic opposition will rise.

In the same interview, the president noted that the opposition must be sought among the youth. And indeed, taking into consideration the relatively competitive education system that has been preserved since Soviet times, the younger generation has real potential for forming a constructive opposition to the government, and being recognized by the country’s leadership at that. To further develop this potential, the Uzbek youth should take more active part in the projects and activities aimed at training future leaders. But since the first years of Uzbekistan’s independence, the government has been striv-

¹⁸ See: S. Ejkov, “A Bomb for the President.” Article published on the website of the Uzbek nongovernmental noncommercial group, Committee for Freedom of Speech and Expression [www.freeuz.org], 15 December, 2004.

ing to keep young people under strict control, in particular by means of the pro-government youth organization, Kamolot.

So based on the aforesaid, I conclude that the legislative chamber of the new parliament elected on 26 December, 2004 will be under the complete control of the executive power branch in Uzbekistan.

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

**THE MUSLIM EAST
IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY:
CURRENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND
PROSPECTS**

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Religion and various aspects of its development are still the most urgent issues of our day. This is especially true of Islam, which is frequently regarded as an obstacle on the road to progress. It is commonly accepted that the religion itself, which concentrates on the afterworld, is mainly indifferent to the ideals of earthly existence and social processes. It is not religion itself but the related culture, primarily political culture, customs, and ideas which give rise to these concerns. In this sense, we can compare these two very different concepts as Islam and development.

When discussing Islam we are not referring to religion itself, but rather to the society related to it, and not so much Islamic society in the profound and omniscient meaning of the word, but Islamized, or Muslim society. For the purpose of our comparison let us take politically shaped communities as

an example, the majority of which are internationally recognized states. They are described as Muslim either because Muslims comprise the majority of their populations, who acquired the faith themselves or inherited it from their ancestors, or because their titular nations consist of Muslims in the sense described above and claim control over the state's entire territory or its largest part by force of tradition.

What is meant by development? There are three sides to it. The first side is economic, or the production and consumption of commodities and services; improving and widening their range; eliminating hunger and destitution; and bringing down the level of chronic unemployment and poverty. The second, the political side, lies in ensuring security and conditions for the civilized and peaceful life of the people in the absence of conflicts, manifestations of separatism, and stable alienation from pow-

er which disrupt the fabric of social life. The third is the sociocultural side, associated with conditions conducive to wider literacy and broader access to education and information sources and technologies, as well as to means of health protection, hygiene, and sanitation.

No one doubts Muslim society's ability to efficiently develop in all three spheres, thus promoting regional and world progress. At the same time, the Muslim states are currently lagging behind the non-Muslim countries in terms of the above and certain other criteria. Moreover, the stumbling blocks of world development are directly and indirectly connected with the area of Islam and the negative processes unfolding in it. I have in mind local and global terrorism, domestic and

interstate conflicts, corruption and nepotism common in the Muslim countries, inefficient bureaucracy, social passivity of women, the closed nature of society and its basic cells, authoritarianism and abuse of power.

It is not my intention to explain the causes of the above, or the very phenomenon of "Muslim exclusiveness." Both are obviously the product of a set of factors: historical (or vertical in the scale of time) and situational (or horizontal) depending on the current situation and the external environment. While leaving the vast range of problems outside the scope of the present article, let us concentrate on the specific features of the Islamic world as represented by the Muslim East, a key and endemic Islamic region.

Configuration

The academic community has been using the term "Muslim East" for a long time now, yet the classical works by academician Vassili Bartold, for example, treat it as synonymous to the Muslim world that, in this sense, was opposed to the West, or the Christian world.¹ Today, any discussion of the Islamic factor in the context of international affairs and geopolitics should impart the term with a different meaning. Indeed, Islam has left the limits of its initial area where a Big Bang of sorts took place over 1,400 years ago; it covers a much wider territory.

In the first place, the recent (in historical terms) Muslim migration and, to a great extent, proselytism brought Islam to the West (Western Europe and the United States). Today we can talk about the Muslim West—a term that covers those European regions to which it came much earlier, during the Ottoman expansion. We can also talk about the Muslim North (by which I mean the Volga Area and the trans-Ural regions of Russia) and the Muslim regions of Northwest China.² There is also the Muslim Southeast, of which Indonesia, a Muslim country with one of the world's largest populations, is part. It borders on the Muslim area of South Asia (where Bangladesh is the only Muslim state). Finally, the Muslim South is easily identified; demographically it consists of the rapidly growing Muslim states of Africa (Nigeria being the largest among them). The Arab Maghreb countries are also part of the Muslim South. The fact that they belong to the south of Europe, with which they cooperate as one of the sides of the Mediterranean, is their most important political feature.

Having identified the Muslim West, North, Southeast, and South, we can describe the Muslim East as an area consisting of a wide stretch of states extending from the northeast to the southwest, from the center of Eurasia to the east of Africa and from Kazakhstan in the north to Sudan in the south. In the terms of mathematical economics, the area can be presented as a graph connecting Kazakhstan with Kyrgyzstan, the latter with Uzbekistan, and further with Tajikistan. Then the graph goes to Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. From Turkey it goes to Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; from the latter it goes to Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and further to Iraq. From the latter it goes to Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Sudan. To complete the graph we should connect Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan and Sudan with Saudi Arabia.³

¹ See: V. Bartold, *Islam i kul'tura musul'manstva*, Moscow, 1992, pp. 131-133.

² See: D.B. Malysheva uses this term. See, for example, her article "Islamskiy faktor v politike razvivaiushchikhsia stran i Rossii," in: *Meniaiushchisya mir i Rossia*, Moscow, 2004, p. 73.

³ See: G. Avondo Bodino, *Economic Applications of the Theory of Graphs*, Gordon and Breach, New York, 1962.

In this way the Muslim East includes 23 states which are very different in terms of their territorial and population size, economic development level, and material wealth. They also differ in culture, despite the fact that the Muslims comprise the majority in all of them. No matter how closed the region might look to us with its lines of internal connections (the number of which is much larger than those outlined above), it remains an open structure. This means that it has inter-civilizational border zones. In the north it borders on the Russian civilization, which is especially obvious in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; in the east it is adjacent to the Indian civilization (expressed in the combined culture of Pakistan). In the south it borders on the African civilization across Sudan (itself divided into the Arabian North and the African South). In the west, Turkey is the border country, whereby it is disjunctive with part of it belonging to Europe, having historically close ties with the European civilization, and claiming EU membership.

At the same time, the Muslim East is the true historical, cultural, political, and economic center of the Islamic world. In historical terms, this is the place where Islam was born; the area where the Arab-Muslim, Iranian-Muslim, and Turkic-Muslim statehoods appeared. In cultural terms, this is the zone of the Arabic tongue, the sacred language of religion and literature that also used Persian as the second "Islamic" tongue. In political terms, this is the place where the main Muslim organizations (the Arab League and the OIC), as well as regional groups (the Gulf Cooperation Council and the ECO), have their headquarters. Recently, the Muslim media (the Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya TV companies, the *Khaleej Times* newspaper, and others) moved their offices there. Finally, in economic terms, this is the place where the Islamic Development Bank and other Islamic financial organizations are found and the zone of the world's largest hydrocarbon reserves. The ellipse that includes the Gulf and the Caspian areas contains, according to the assessments of the mid-1990s, up to 70 percent of the world's oil reserves and over 40 percent of natural gas; the Gulf zone dominates with 65 and 31 percent, respectively.⁴

Finally, demographically this is the largest Muslim area. According to the World Bank, in 2002, 572 million lived in the region's 23 states; Muslims comprised an absolute majority there, while the total Muslim population in the world was assessed at 1.2 billion.⁵ From this it follows that over half of the world's Muslim population lives in the East, which is much more than in any of the other four areas.

Practically all large international conflicts are associated with the region: the Middle Eastern, Palestinian-Israeli, and Cashmere (between Pakistan and India). The troublesome zone of the Northern Caucasus borders on this region, while Afghanistan and Iraq are found in its center. The situation in the latter two is far from normal; Sudan, another state of the same region, is torn apart by internal armed strife.

The Muslim East is the epicenter of Islamic radicalism, otherwise known as Islamism, which challenges the West and the entire world community, the ideology of globalism and modernization. It was in the mid-1990s that Zbigniew Brzezinski called the region that roughly coincided with the Muslim East the Eurasian Balkans. As distinct from the Balkans of the late 19th-early 20th century, today the religious factor, rather than a national awakening or the struggle against the dynastic and polyethnic empires for national liberation, plays the main destabilizing role. Religion unites all radical political forces against the new type of hegemony and worldwide expansion for which, they say, the West headed by the United States is responsible. The anti-globalist ideology is varied, yet its Islamist variant is one of the most radical and most effective.⁶

The world of Islam is structurally very complicated; the situation in the region and outside it is closely connected with this. Iran is the main geopolitical center of the Muslim East, first, because of its central geographic location. It is connected with the northern belt (the Caucasian-Central Asian), with

⁴ See: G. Kemp, R. Harkavy, *Strategic Geography and the Changing Middle East*, Washington, 1997, pp. 111-112.

⁵ See: D.B. Barrett, T.M. Johnson, *Annual Table of World Religions, 1900-2025* [<http://www.wnrf.org/cms/statuswr.shtml>].

⁶ On the Eurasian Balkans, see: Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York, 1997. Chapter 5. For more details about Islamic fundamentalism and Islamist populism see his new book: *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, Basic Books, New York, 2004.

the middle belt (Turkey in the west and Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east), and with the southern belt of states (Iraq and the Gulf countries). Second, Iran is an oil-rich country and one of the largest oil producers in the region (about 200 million tonnes in 2001). Third, Iran is the center of Shi'ism, the most radical of the Islamic trends concerned with the inner life of the Islamic world. According to Alexander Dugin, the Shi'a discern "sacral meaning not so much in the wars against the unfaithful... as in the conflict inside the Islamic umma... It is precisely this war that the Shi'a world finds paradigmatic."⁷

To a certain extent the sharp inner regional confrontations and conflicts between Islamic states are caused by the fact that Iran is the center of Shi'ism in the East. For example, 89 percent of the Iranian Muslims are Shi'a Imamis; Iran spreads Imamism to Afghanistan with its 10 to 15 percent of Imamis among the total Muslim population, as well as to Pakistan (20 percent), Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, Iraq (60-65 percent), Lebanon and Palestine. This is a belt of instability and disturbances, instigated to a great extent by the Iranian revolution of 1978-1979 that brought Shi'a theologians to power.⁸

It seems that contradictions inside Islam, along with the changes in the socio-historical environment outside, are responsible for the rise in Islamic radicalism and conservative revolutionary passions which served as the ideological basis for international terrorism sometimes described as anti-systemic. It was Iran that played the leading role in the process. This role is still manifested by its "principled" confrontation with the United States and the role it plays in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the region's (and probably the world's) most important conflict.

This explains, to a great extent, the place of Iraq, Iran's neighbor and an old antagonist, on the international agenda. Under Saddam Hussein, the Shi'a, who comprised the majority in the country's population, were treated as a religious minority. It seems that the oil factor along with the Iranian factor are behind America's aggressive policy in the Gulf area. Unless it subjugated Iraq, the U.S. would never have been able to sort out the Iranian problem, or the problem of Arab-Israeli relations for that matter. Iran has assumed the role of fighter against the infidels, which is historically alien to it. It is not yet clear how far it is prepared to go.

Demographic Prospects and Economic Dynamics

Its population size explains the role of the Muslim East. According to information supplied by the national statistical structures and published by the World Bank in its recent publications, by the early 21st century nearly 10 percent of the world's total population lived there (see Table 1); the figure for 1980 was 7.6 percent. In absolute figures, the population of the 23 regional countries increased from about 340 to 570 million in 22 years. This trend will continue: by 2015, growth will exceed 10 percent and bring the number of people to 720 million.

The central belt of the Muslim world stretching from Turkey to Pakistan has the largest population. The absolute figures of population growth are impressive: from 180 million in 1980 to 300-325 million in 2002-2004. The approximate growth in Turkey was from 45 to 70 million; in Iran, from 40 to 65; in Afghanistan (despite the war and migration), from 16 to nearly 30 million; and in Pakistan, from 80 to 145-150 million. By the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, their combined population size will be nearly 400 million. While in Turkey and Iran the population will grow at a moderate pace, in Afghanistan and Pakistan the process will be much more intensive. This is supported by the current assessments of the fertility coefficient (the number of births per woman between 15 and 45). While in Afghanistan the coefficient is very high, in Pakistan it is inflated. In ten years' time, the total population of

⁷ A.G. Dugin, *Filosofia politiki*, Moscow, 2004, p. 361.

⁸ About the revolution and its repercussions, see: *Iranskaia revoliutsia 1978-1979. Prichiny i uroki*, ed. by A.Z. Arabajan, Moscow, 1989.

Table 1

Demographic Growth in the Muslim East

Countries	Population in 1980,* million	Population in 2002,** million	Population in 2004,*** million*	Fertility coefficient*** in 2003*	Population in 2015,* million
Kazakhstan	14.9	15.0	15.1	1.9	15.2
Kyrgyzstan	3.6	5.0	5.1	2.7	5.8
Uzbekistan	16.0	25.0	26.4	3.0	30.2
Tajikistan	4.0	6.0	7.0	4.1	7.2
Turkmenistan	2.9	5.0	4.9	3.5	5.8
Azerbaijan	6.2	8.0	7.9	2.4	9.3
Turkey	44.5	70.0	68.9	2.0	77.8
Iran	39.1	66.0	69.0	1.9	82.1
Afghanistan	16.0	28.0	28.5	6.7	39.5
Pakistan	82.7	145.0	159.2	4.3	192.9
Oman	1.1	3.0	2.9	5.9	3.3
Yemen	8.5	19.0	29.0	6.8	26.5
Saudi Arabia	9.4	22.0	25.8	4.1	32.1
UAE	1.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.8
Qatar	—	0.7	0.8	3.0	1.2
Bahrain	—	0.6	0.7	2.7	1.2
Kuwait	1.4	2.0	2.3	3.0	2.9
Iraq	13.0	24.0	25.4	4.4	31.3
Syria	8.7	17.0	18.0	3.6	21.9
Lebanon	3.0	4.0	3.8	2.0	5.2
Jordan	2.2	5.0	5.6	2.9	6.8
Egypt	40.9	66.0	76.0	3.0	80.0
Sudan	18.7	33.0	39.1	5.0	40.0
World as a whole	4,430.1	6,199	6,379	2.6	7,084.3
Region, in % of the world	338.3 7.6	572.3	623.9 9.8		722.0 10.2

Sources: * 2001 World Development Indicators, The World Bank, Washington, pp. 44-46;
 ** The Little Green Data Book 2004, The World Bank, Washington, 2004;
 *** CIA World Factbook [http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/countrycode.html].

these two countries (which geographically form a single zone between Central Asia and the Arabian Sea) may reach 240 million. This is fraught with serious problems which will impede economic and social development in this part of the Muslim East.

The number of people living to the west of Afghanistan and Pakistan will grow at a more moderate pace. Due to its younger population, Iran will outstrip Turkey: the fertility coefficients of both countries are almost identical and low (twice as low as that of Pakistan, for example) yet, more likely than not, demographic growth will continue there.

In the past 20-25 years, the population of the northern belt (the Caucasus and Central Asia) has been increasing at a fairly slow pace: from about 50 to 65 million; the annual growth rates there are somewhat lower than the world's average (their share has dropped from 1.1 to 1 percent). It seems that this trend will go on. The fertility coefficients are very high in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and compare with those of Pakistan. Uzbekistan, the largest of the local countries in terms of population size, demonstrates an inflated fertility coefficient. By 2015, the combined population of the six local countries may reach the figure of nearly 75 million.

Between 1980 and 2002 the countries of the southern belt greatly increased their populations in absolute and relative figures: from 110 to 200 million and from 2.4 to 3.2 percent (Table 1). According to the *CIA World Factbook*, the population size of 13 countries of this belt was even larger (232 million, or 3.5 percent) by the beginning of the 21st century. It is forecasted that in 2015 the share will remain the same, while the absolute number will be close to 260 million.

We should bear in mind not only the differences in the two rows of figures (they are considerable for some of the countries, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in particular), but also the fact that non-citizens are also included in the population size. They are especially numerous in the countries rich in petrodollars: Saudi Arabia (5.6 million in 2004), Kuwait (1.3 million), and other Gulf countries. Arabs, mainly from Egypt, predominate among the non-citizens living in Kuwait; and the number of South Asians from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka is very large in the UAE, Oman, and Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan has the largest population in the Muslim East. While in 1980 the difference between its population size and the number of people living in Turkey, Iran, and Egypt was 30-40 million, by 2015, under normal conditions, the gap will be 110-115 million. These countries are still second, third and fourth in terms of population size. In the future, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Yemen, the poorest and least fortunate states of the region, which the U.N. describes as the most underdeveloped ones, will join this group.

When talking about population growth we should bear in mind the two sides of the process—the birth (and the fertility coefficient as the best possible index) and mortality rates (average post-retirement life expectancy calculated according to the mortality rate by age). Significantly, in recent decades post-retirement life expectancy (also described as the average life span) sharply increased. In nearly all the states of the region, with the exception of Afghanistan and Iraq, it exceeded 60 years, while in the mid-20th century it was 35-45 years. Noticeable progress in medicine and health protection in the Muslim East has greatly increased the share of middle-aged and elderly people, thus confronting the state with the problem of the growing number of dependants.

The region's economic level is twice as low as the world's per capita income. The GDP calculated by the purchasing power parity was 4.8 percent in 2002; the share of the total population is over 9 percent. In the near future, this correlation will hardly change.

The gap calculated by incomes based on the official exchange rates is even wider. The states of the northern belt (with the exception of Kazakhstan) and Pakistan, Yemen, and Sudan belong to the low-income group (under \$735). Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria belong to the average low-income group (up to \$2,935). The group of countries with average-high incomes (up to \$9,076) includes Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Lebanon; Kuwait and Bahrain belong to the group of countries with high incomes. There is no information about the UAE (which is close to the latter category), or about Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The nominal per capita incomes in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan are assessed as being lower than in Yemen and Sudan.

Table 2

**Economic and Social Development Indices in the Countries of the Muslim East
(estimates for 2002-2003)**

Countries	GDP calculated by PPP, billion dollars*	Per capita income according to PPP, dollars*	Per capita income according to the exchange rate, dollars**	Number of people living below the poverty level (in percent)*	Number of unemployed (in percent)*	Correlated net national savings (in percent of GDP for 2002)**
Kazakhstan	105.5	6,300	1,520	26	8.8	18.3
Kyrgyzstan	7.8	1,600	290	50	7.2	-10.5
Uzbekistan	44.0	1,700	310	—	0.5	-46.6
Tajikistan	6.8	1,000	180	60	40	-4.8
Turkmenistan	27.9	5,800	—	34	—	-32.1
Azerbaijan	26.7	3,400	710	49	1.1	-35.3
Turkey	458.7	6,700	2,490	18	10.5	9.8
Iran	478.2	7,000	1,720	40	15.7	0.1
Afghanistan	20.0	700	—	23	—	—
Pakistan	318.0	2,100	420	35	7.7	13.4
Oman	36.7	13,100	7,830	—	11.4	—
Yemen	15.0	800	490	16	3	—
Saudi Arabia	287.8	11,800	8,530	—	—	-17.9
UAE	57.7	23,200	—	—	—	—
Qatar 1	17.5	21,500	—	—	—	—
Bahrain	11.3	16,900	10,500	—	—	—
Kuwait	41.6	19,000	16,340	—	2.1	-27.3
Iraq	37.9	1,500	—	—	—	—
Syria	58.0	3,300	1,130	20	20	-13.6
Lebanon	17.8	4,800	3,990	28	18	-6.8
Jordan	23.6	4,300	1,760	30	—	18.2
Egypt	295.2	4,000	1,470	16,7	9.9	2.7
Sudan	71.0	1,900	370	—	—	4.8
Total	2,464.2	—	—	—	—	—
World as a whole	51,480.0	8,208	5,120	—	—	8.8

Sources: * CIA World Factbook; ** The Little Green Data Book 2004.

The economic and social development indices (see Table 2) show that many of the region's countries (primarily the oil producers) have a low coefficient of net savings. Here I have in mind a new indicator—corrected savings minus amortization and uncompensated, from the point of view of society, consumption of natural resources, as well as ecological damage; the funds spent on education are included in net savings. In Iran and the Arab oil producers the savings calculated by this pattern are close to zero or even below zero.

It should be added that most countries of the Muslim East have large defense budgets (from 3 to 5 percent of the GNP, or even up to 10 percent and more). Dual wastefulness—at the stage of using natural resources and at the stage of using the means and capacities for non-production purposes—is fraught with numerous problems for the countries with a young population structure and a widening gap between the rich and the poor. The Gini coefficient, which measures statistically the unevenness in income distribution, has come close or even exceeds the critical level of 0.4 in the many of the region's countries for which there is relevant information (0 corresponds to the absence of such unevenness; 1 means complete unevenness).

Sociocultural Changes and Democracy

There are certain positive trends in nearly all the countries of the Muslim East (see Table 3); this is particularly true of the level of female literacy. In the past 12 years, the female literacy index increased from 50 to 69 percent in Saudi Arabia; from 38 to 65 percent in Oman; from 66 to 79 percent in Turkey; from 54 to 70 percent in Iran; and from 48 to 74 percent in Syria. These changes completely correspond to the sums spent on education: in 2002, Saudi Arabia spent 7.2 percent of the GNP on education; Jordan, 5.6 percent, and Kuwait, 5.0 percent.

It seems that female literacy is a good indicator of the countries' sociocultural state and the degree to which their populations are exposed to contemporary trends. Due to the protracted national crisis, the level of female literacy remains extremely low in Afghanistan (there are no exact figures for this country); it is also low in Pakistan (29 or, according to different sources, 31 percent); in Yemen, 29 percent; in Egypt, 44 percent; and in Sudan, 49 percent. In fact, there has also been some progress in these countries: an increase of about 10 percent in the past 12 years. The absolute growth rate in these countries is less spectacular. It seems that the situation regarding female education has deteriorated across the post-Soviet expanse. For example, the available figures show that in certain new Central Asian states the share of girls attending primary schools has dropped to 84-92 percent.⁹

Yet there is one more positive circumstance: availability of the latest means of communication and information, primarily the Internet. During 2002 alone, the number of Internet users in some of the countries of the Muslim East increased 2- to 3-fold (4-fold in Egypt). There are 5.1 million Internet users in Turkey, 3.2 million in Iran; 1.9 million in Egypt; 1.5 million in Pakistan; 1.3 million in Saudi Arabia; nearly 0.5 million in Lebanon; and 0.3 million in Jordan.

The Internet is an individual, rather than family, information and communication means. Its revolutionary effect is comparable to cable TV, yet the Internet is free from the limitations of the latter. As far as we know, none of the Muslim Eastern states bans access to the Internet, as distinct from China where such a ban exists.

In terms of the freedom of speech index, nearly all the region's states are found at the bottom of the list. Lebanon and, quite unexpectedly, Tajikistan and Afghanistan (according to the latest assessments) are higher than the rest. Turkey occupies a relatively high place, while Jordan and Egypt are lower than one might have expected.

⁹ See: *The Little Green Data Book 2004*, pp. 120, 126.

Table 3

**Sociocultural Development
Indicators**

Country	Female literacy (in percent)		Number of Internet users (per 1,000)		The freedom of speech index (number by decreasing index, 167 states)**
	1990*	2002*	2001*	2002*	
Kazakhstan	98	99	9	16	131
Kyrgyzstan	—	—	30	30	107
Uzbekistan	98	99	8	11	142
Tajikistan	97	99	1	1	95
Turkmenistan	—	—	2	—	164
Azerbaijan	—	—	3	37	136
Turkey	66	79	60	73	114
Iran	54	70	16	48	158
Afghanistan	—	—	—	—	97
Pakistan	20	29	4	10	150
Oman	38	65	46	66	—
Yemen	13	29	—	—	135
Saudi Arabia	50	69	46	62	159
UAE	71	81	315	337	137
Qatar	76	82	66	115	105
Bahrain	75	84	203	247	143
Kuwait	73	81	88	106	103
Iraq	—	—	1	1	148
Syria	48	74	4	13	155
Lebanon	—	—	78	117	87
Jordan	72	86	45	58	121
Egypt	34	44	9	28	129
Sudan	32	49	2	3	132
World as a whole	63	71	106	131	

Sources: * *The Little Green Data Book 2004*; ** The countries' rating by the freedom of speech index [<http://www.rating.rbc.ru>].

In terms of the corruption perception index, practically all states of the Muslim East are found at the bottom of the corresponding list. Special polls among businessmen reveal the extent to which bureaucrats are prone to take bribes. This index can hardly be identified exactly, therefore the results of international investigations cannot be taken for absolute. They should not be underestimated either: to some extent they reflect the specifics of state discipline, public morals, and the state of affairs in the economy. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and Iran demonstrated the best indices among their neighbors in the Muslim East; Pakistan and the Central Asian countries, the worst.

The situation regarding freedom of speech and corruption demonstrates, in an indirect way, that the civil society culture in these countries is comparatively low. At the same time, elements of a new political culture can be clearly discerned. The "third wave" of democratization that started, according to Huntington, in the mid-1970s is gradually enveloping (with a time lag of 20 to 30 years) the Muslim East. This refers not only to the change of the form of government.

Constitutionally these countries represent a variety of regimes: there are four absolute monarchies (Saudi Arabia is one of them); three are constitutional monarchies, six are presidential republics in which the president wields real complete executive power; eight are republics of a mixed (presidential-parliamentary) type, while Turkey and Lebanon are parliamentary republics.

Parliamentarism is not widespread in the region, yet there is an obvious trend toward it. In the past five years, 15 countries elected their parliaments (including the three constitutional monarchies—Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan—and four post-Soviet republics). In 2005, parliamentary elections will take place in six countries, including Iraq. Few of the local political systems can be described as competitive multiparty ones, yet nearly all of them have extra-parliamentary centers of power and influence (represented by the court, president, army, clergy, and party-bureaucratic nomenklatura).

Federalism is weakly developed in all the region's political and administrative systems; unitary structures predominate despite the fact that many of the local states are polyethnic. Apart from the UAE, which is a federation of absolute monarchies, Pakistan is the only unitary-federative state; only Azerbaijan and Tajikistan have federative elements in the form of Nakhichevan and Gorny Badakhshan.

It should be said that in the past 15 years, two states—Lebanon and Tajikistan—managed to overcome the state of a civil fratricidal war independently, even though with some external support. When semi (or pre-) democratic order is established in Afghanistan and Iraq (the latter may become a unitary-federative state with the Kurdish autonomy) Turkmenistan will become the only regional state without civil (free from total state control) sociopolitical structures. It should be said that they are highly varied and highly specific. Specificity is often ascribed to the Muslim state, while it is Muslim society that is specific. Its specific features belong to two levels: historical (connected with the traditional democracy of the caste, clan, tribe, and neighbor communities) and structural (created by elements selected from the world's democratic arsenal).

It is recognized that civil societies may display specific features in the global, regional, and country contexts.¹⁰ It is believed that no society will voluntarily abandon its cultural and cultural-political traditions; normally it is recognized that all societies should share some comparable political features. The main demands are made on the state, on the way it communicates with its population and individual citizens. Meanwhile, this can hardly be resolved in an unambiguous way. Independence is the universal trait of an individual within any culture, therefore the main difference, the most important for progress, is the difference between the "state of freedom" and the "state of fear," that is, between the degree of freedom of an individual and his fear of power. In the East, where the individual does not stand opposed to a collective (be it a small community or the state) but voluntarily or unconsciously blends with it, the antithesis of "the state-the individual" is replaced with the "state-collective of individuals or non-individuals" formula. The latter deprives the Muslim East's determinism to follow the general democratic development path of its rigidity.

¹⁰ See, in particular: J. Keane, *Global Civil Society?* Cambridge, 2003.

It seems, however, that the prevalence of collective psychology and passivity toward the state belongs to passing (albeit slowly) historical circumstances. It will weaken as the share of the socially active middle class grows. It is composed of fairly educated, well-off, and socially and economically independent people. The Muslim countries will probably acquire their own idea about individualism and civil society and their own specific structure of its basic cells. We should not expect the state and society to blindly copy alien patterns, but nor will they reject the experience of democratic development accumulated elsewhere in the world.

CHRISTIANITY IN GEORGIAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS: THEN AND NOW

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Georgia and Russia: this is the order in which the issue should be discussed in conformity with the age of their statehoods and Christian Churches; Russia and Georgia: this is the order in which they should be discussed in conformity with the territories and might of these two Christian Orthodox states. They have accumulated over 200 years of experience in joint statehood. They joined their fates at the time when Christian Orthodoxy was their only ideology.

Religion was not the only factor that brought Russia and Georgia together—yet it was the magnet that pulled Georgia. Christianity was more than a faith in Georgia: it was its philosophy, its way of life, and its shield. It was Christianity that defended the state for many centuries against the inroads of numerous enemies who came to impose their religions on us. At all times, Christianity reminded the Georgians that they should preserve their tongue, their national character, and their specific features in order to remain Georgians. We have survived thanks to our Christian faith.

The above sounds bombastic, yet it is absolutely true, even though I deliberately suppressed certain facts... At one time, great Georgian writer Iliia Chavchavadze wrote: “For us Christianity is more than living according to Christ: it means our Motherland, Georgia; it means that we are Georgians. Today, the whole of the Transcaucasus makes no distinction between Georgians and Christianity—they are one and the same thing. Instead of saying that someone became a Christian, they say, he became a Georgian. Our clergy knew only too well that the Fatherland and nationality, united by faith and conjoined with it, are an invincible weapon and shield in the face of the enemy. All sermons were designed to uplift the meaning of Fatherland and nationality to the height of faith so that all people might serve these three intertwined, sacred, and great objects with the utmost dedication.”¹

¹ I. Chavchavadze, *Works*, Tbilisi, 1984, p. 608 (in Georgian).

All of a sudden, however, Christian ideology, this mighty battle-tested weapon which helped the Georgians remain loyal to their faith and not succumb to the Turks and Mongols, lost its power. This happened when the Georgians' interests clashed with the same religion, with another Christian Orthodox people who initially, it seemed, wanted to help them. I have in mind our relations with Christian Orthodox Russia, that is, the "common faith" factor.

Indeed, Georgia and Russia shared the same faith and the same Christian values. At that time, Christians of the same confession sought closer contacts in their opposition to the Muslim countries. Obviously "rapprochement" based on shared faith was tempting and ideologically justified, especially if one of the countries was surrounded by followers of different religions.

The term "common faith" was not limited to Russia alone. It was also applied to Byzantium, with which Georgia maintained active contacts. In 1453, Constantinople fell and Byzantium disappeared, leaving Russia the only country of the same faith and real might to which Georgia might turn for help in times of trial. Religion was not the main factor, yet it certainly played an important role.

Academician N. Berdzenishvili said that the Georgians saw "a new Byzantium in Christian Russia. They expected this force to help them overcome the Muslim aggressors (Iran and Turkey) and restore their country's old glory."² Russia, which claimed the title of the Third Rome, treated Christianity as a handy instrument and ideological screen which did little to conceal its state interests.

Russian-Georgian relations began in the 10th-11th centuries as unconnected episodes in which religion played a fairly important role. Prof. Tsintsadze, who is well known for his studies, had the following to say: "In the 11th century, Georgia inevitably found itself in Christian Russia's zone of attention. At that time, Christians of the same typicon were bound to establish close contacts, to say nothing of other circumstances."³

The marriage between Kievan Prince Iziaslav Mstislavovich and the daughter of a Georgian czar

(either Czar Demetre or David the Builder, the name is not important for the purposes of this article) is one of the facts confirming the ties between Russia (or rather Kievan Rus) and Georgia. Common faith was one of the most important factors behind this marriage.

The religious factor became especially important in the 12th century when Russian prince Iury Bogoliubskiy was chosen as husband for Georgian Queen Tamar. This fact was not very important for the relations between the two countries since the prince had been expelled from his Russian domain. This marriage illustrates the role of religion in matchmaking. Georgian historian Basil Ezosmodzgvani (a court priest) wrote that despite a wide choice of bridegrooms Iury Bogoliubskiy was selected. "When the meeting of the clergy was almost over, all the spasalars and eristavs of the kingdom entered the hall to inform the fathers of the Church that collective efforts were needed to bring a bridegroom to the royal palace for Tamara. They all gathered in front of the queen and all agreed that a man should be sent to the Russian kingdom because the Russian tribes were also Orthodox Christians. This was badly done because they dispatched a man unworthy of this mission and because they knew nothing of the man they invited."⁴

A contemporary historian wrote that faith was the decisive factor; some historians believe, however, that a common faith was not the only and decisive factor: the nobles' struggle against the centralized state and court squabbles were also important. Still, a common faith was one of the most important arguments. Academician N. Berdzenishvili wrote: "The Russian prince's Christian Orthodox faith was a weighty argument in his favor. There were probably other potential bridegrooms; they were also discussed, but they lacked the necessary virtue—the Christian Orthodox faith. The story should be presented in such a way that the supporters of the Russian prince inflated the argument, the practical importance of which in this case was not that great, since the husband of the queen of Georgia should, *io ipso*, be an Orthodox Christian. So the Russian prince would have triumphed over all other candidates *ceteris*

² N. Berdzenishvili, *Voprosy istorii Gruzii*, Vol. IV, Tbilisi, 1950, p. 110.

³ I. Tsintsadze, *Razyskaniia po istorii rossiysko-gruzinskikh vzaimootnosheniy X-XI vv.*, Tbilisi, 1956, p. 59.

⁴ B. Ezosmodzgvani, *Kartlis tskhovreba* (The Life of Kartli), Tbilisi, 1959, p. 16.

paribas. This decision displeased Basil Ezosmodzgvani, who reproached those who made it of attaching too much importance to Christian Orthodoxy: ‘this was badly done.’⁵

While the Mongol rule continued, contacts were not intensive—at least our information about them is meager. Since both states reported to the Golden Horde, their envoys probably met at the khan’s court. The peoples that shared the same faith obviously wanted to know more about each other, even though after 1223 all mention of Georgia disappeared from the Russian sources. This does not mean that the countries knew nothing about each other. Plano Carpini, an envoy of Pope Innocent IV, described a crowd of czars and princes who gathered in Karakorum at the court of the great khan of the Mongols: “Outside the fence were Russian Prince Iaroslav of Suzdal, numerous Chinese and Solangan princes, as well as two Georgian crown princes, and an ambassador of the Caliph of Baldah, himself a former sultan. I also counted over a dozen other Saracen sultans.”⁶

The subjugated peoples exerted every effort to regain their freedom; Plano Carpini wrote that the Georgians were planning an uprising.⁷ These plans were obviously approved of by peoples of the same faith who also lived under the Mongolian yoke. They probably shared their secret plans.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 sent the Christian world into a moral decline; Georgia suffered more than the others. Indeed, it was a heavy political and cultural blow to Czar Georgi who lost a valuable son-in-law in the person of Cesar Constantine. The country lost the main, and the shortest, route connecting it with the West and found itself within a hostile circle of Muslim nations.

The Christian world responded to the situation around Byzantium with a call for a crusade against Turkey. Pope Pius II went as far as elaborating an extensive plan according to which the Christian world should unite to liberate Constantinople; Georgia had an important role to play. The Pope sent Ludovic of Bologna to Georgia to discuss

⁵ N. Berdenishvili, I. Tsintsadze, “Izyskania po istorii rossisko-gruzinskikh otnosheniy,” in: *Materialy k istorii Gruzii i Kavkaza*, Collection 29, Tbilisi, 1951, p. 313.

⁶ P. Carpini, “Istoria mongolov, kotorykh my nazываем tatarami,” Transl. into Georgian by G. Kiknadze, in: *Materialy k istorii Gruzii i Kavkaza*, Tbilisi, 1942, Part II, p. 56.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

an anti-Turkic coalition. Georgia, which deeply felt the tragedy, willingly joined the anti-Ottoman alliance. At that time, the czar and local princes were engaged in endless and bloody internecine strife. According to M. Tamarashvili’s work *Istoria katolichestva sredi gruzin* (History of Catholicism among the Georgians), the czar and princes made peace in view of a possible war against Turkey and its inevitable consequences. Their treaty said: “We, all Christian princes, have entered into a union and closed our ranks, and we vow to fight the Turks with all our skill and force; especially those who captured Constantinople because they are the worst enemies of the Christians.”⁸

Academician I. Javakhishvili wrote in this connection: “At first it was the Western church leaders who were resolved to fight the Ottoman Turks, and they tried to persuade the Georgians to join them. Very soon the Georgians embraced the idea as their own; they started dreaming avidly about victory. It was their turn to persuade the Western rulers.”⁹

The Georgians failed to create an anti-Turkic alliance; disappointed, they also failed to preserve peace in their own country; the old strife was rekindled. The situation was grave. Georgia, which had fallen apart into several kingdoms and principdoms, was growing weaker because of internal strife. Surrounded by Muslim neighbors, it needed allies. Academician Berdenishvili wrote: “A Christian ally would have become a factor of immense moral importance for Georgia in its hard struggle.”¹⁰

There were no such allies in sight, yet gradually Russia began to develop into a potential ally of the same faith. By that time, the Grand Prince of Muscovy had accumulated more power. In 1472, Ivan III married the niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Sophia Paleologus. The Pope facilitated the marriage in the hope of enlisting Russia as an anti-Muslim ally. Russia itself was seeking to replace Byzantium after the fall of Constantinople. This marriage consolidated its claims and allowed it to proclaim itself the Third Rome and even to borrow the double-headed eagle, the Byzantine symbol, as its coat of arms.

⁸ M. Tamarashvili, *Istoria katolichestva sredi gruzin*, Tbilisi, 1902, p. 596 (see also: I. Javakhishvili, *Istoria gruzinskogo naroda*, Vol. IV, Tbilisi, 1965, p. 67).

⁹ I. Javakhishvili, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹⁰ N. Berdenishvili, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

Ivan IV continued the policy of Ivan III: he wanted the Russian czars to be crowned by the Patriarch of Constantinople. He sent Archbishop of Suzdal to Constantinople to ask the patriarch to recognize him as the czar of Muscovy and heir to the Byzantium throne. The patriarch did even more: he not only confirmed the title, but also issued instructions to mention the name of the Russian czar during all church services in the same way this had been done in honor of the emperor of Byzantium,¹¹ which was very important for the peoples subjugated by the Ottoman Empire. Russian historian N. Keptarev had the following to say on this score: "Since that time, all peoples of the Christian Orthodox East have been looking at the Moscow czars as their representatives and the head of Christian Orthodoxy and as their only and natural hope; it was on them that the peoples conquered by Turkey pinned their hopes of restoring their lost freedom and independence."¹²

Some historians doubted that the Moscow Princedom could fulfill the functions of already fallen Byzantium and the Third Rome. "The Moscow theory (of Moscow as the Third Rome) was cunningly used to extol the czar. The book of royal genealogies acquired an entry about Augustus as an ancestor who proved the kinship between the House of Riurik and the House of Julius. Later, more grounds for close ties between Russia's royal and imperial power were looked for and found."¹³

Indeed, at that time, Russia was too weak to defend Christianity or to pursue an active policy against the Ottoman Empire, even though it wanted to do this. It was fighting for international prestige with varied means. We should bear in mind that two Muslim countries—Iran and the Ottoman Empire—were fighting for domination over the Transcaucasus, including the Georgian kingdoms and princedoms. Russia also wanted its share of influence in the Caucasus. I have already written that as distinct from Iran and the Ottoman Empire, it was

a Christian Orthodox country which shared this faith with Georgia. At that time, Russia was still unable to actively advance its interests in the Transcaucasus: in the 16th-17th centuries it was busy strengthening its northern and western borders. Russian diplomats, however, looked further than this and regarded Russia's relations with Georgia in perspective. They were lavish with promises, and sometimes even gave the Georgian czars and princes small gifts.

Did the Georgian politicians naively believe that Russia would extend disinterested help because of their shared faith? Would they seek this alliance if they knew that their statehood would be ruined?

At certain times the Georgian kingdoms abandoned their orientation toward Russia, thus encouraging the Catholic missionaries patronized in the 17th-18th centuries by some of the Georgian czars. In the 17th century, in particular, Catholicos Domenti agreed to recognize the Pope's superiority. On the whole, the Georgian historians compared religious relations to a barometer clearly indicating which of the religions predominated at any given moment. For example, domination of Christian Orthodoxy spoke of Russia's influence; Catholicism, of Europe's; and Muslim, of Iran's or Turkey's. Religious meanderings followed the changing balance of forces. Finally, the balance tipped in favor of Russia. Academician Javakhishvili was convinced that the Georgian kingdoms and princedoms had lost their statehoods not only because of czarist Russia's perfidy, but also because of the political naiveté of the leaders of Kartli-Kakhetia: they were too trustful because of their shared religion.

On 18 January, 1801 the Kartli-Kakhetian kingdom was made a gubernia of Russia. This sealed the future of the Georgian Church. It should be added here that the Treaty of Georgievsk of 1783 between Russia and Kartli-Kakhetia established that administration of the Georgian Church and its relations with Russia's Holy Synod should be set forth in a special document. The fathers of the Georgian Church insisted that the document should rule out the czar's interference in the affairs of the Church, therefore, if and when the problem was resolved in political terms, issues of faith and relations between the churches should be addressed. Over time, however, the Russian authorities began ignoring the document and gradually placed the Georgian Church under the Holy Synod's authority. In 1811,

¹¹ See: N. Derzhavin, *Plemnyye i kul'turnye svyazi bolgarskogo i russkogo naroda*, Moscow, 1944, p. 82 (see also: K.S. Liluashvili, *Natsional'no-osvoboditel'naia bor'ba bolgarskogo naroda protiv Fanariotskogo iga v Rossii*, Tbilisi, 1978, p. 2).

¹² N. Keptarev, *Kharakter otnoshenia k pravoslavnomu Vostoku v XVI-XVII stoletiiakh*, Sergiev Posad, 1914, p. 27 (see also: K.S. Liluashvili, *op. cit.*, p. 12).

¹³ Bishop Kirion, *Kul'turnaia rol Iverii v istorii Rusi*, Tiflis, 1910, p. 65.

Catholicos Anthony II was called to St. Petersburg: this was the first sign that the Georgian Church would lose its independence. The Exarchate was set up with the first exarch Varlam (in the world Eristavi) at its head. This power-greedy man was courting the Synod. His role in setting up the Exarchate earned him the hatred of all generations of the Georgian clergy. Varlam was the only Georgian among the 15 exarches appointed after him (all of them were Russians).

The rules of the Russian Church were gradually imposed on the Georgian Church; many temples started serving in a language unknown to the Georgians; the Georgian Church became part of the Russian Church. The clergy was deprived of a large share of its landed possessions, which became public property. In exchange, the Holy Synod gave money to the Exarchate. The sums were much smaller than the incomes the Georgian Church received from its former possessions: the Georgian clerics considered this act sheer robbery and were openly discontent with their worsened economic situation. In addition, more often than not the appointed exarches were ignorant and narrow-minded chauvinists. The Russian authorities were obviously trying to use the Christian Orthodox Church to colonize and Russify the local people, to the great indignation of the latter. The exarches and their aids tried to exclude the Georgian tongue from school curricula; they did their best to divide the Georgians into separate ethnic groups. With this aim in view, they announced that the Megrels and Svans were not Georgians. In 1886, Exarch Paul publicly damned the Georgian nation, thus raising a wave of protest among the Georgians and earning a diamond cross as a token of imperial gratitude.

It should be said that the use of Russian in the Georgian churches deprived the services of their emotional impact; the faith weakened and a certain coolness could be detected among the laity.

Late in the 19th century the clergy raised its voice to express indignation at the lowered authority of the Church and religion (deprived of its lands, the Church relied on the flock for its continued well-being); indifference to God was explained by the lost independence and required that the Church's autocephaly be restored. It was at this time that certain publications insisted that the Russian authorities had violated the eighth rule of the III Ecumenical Council and the thirty-ninth rule of the VI Ecumenical Council by appointing

the exarches of Georgia without consulting the Eastern Patriarch.

We can agree with the argument that the Russian language and an alien people at the helm did weaken the ties between the clergy and the nation and reduced the impact of religion on the laity, a large part of which moved away from the Church. The Georgian clergy preferred to ignore the other reasons for the people's increasing indifference to religion. They never mentioned the high church taxes, which the nation could not afford (among other things the peasants demanded that the taxes be abolished). This explains why during the revolutionary years of 1905-1907, the Georgians also moved against the Church. Unfortunately, at that time, the Church, which served Russian autocracy and was one of its pillars, fought against dissidents and cooperated with the police (the Russian church also did this). This obviously did not add to its popularity. (This went on until 1917 when the Provisional Government finally gave the Georgian clergy back its autocephaly.)

It stands to reason that, by joining a country with a common faith, the nation should have enjoyed, if not a privileged, then at least an equal position with the peoples of other faiths. But because of this common faith the Georgians were subjected to oppression to a much greater extent than other nations: they lost both their national independence and the centuries-old autocephaly of their Church.

The report submitted by above-mentioned great Georgian writer Iliia Chavchavadze to the Russian authorities in Georgia clearly gave vent to the bitter fruits of putting too much trust in Christian Orthodox closeness and shared faith: "In Russia, all non-Russian peoples are independent when it comes to administering their churches. The Armenians, Muslims, Jews, etc. are free in their religious affairs; they have religious schools of their own, in which children are taught in their native tongues and where much attention is paid to studying everything that is relevant to them. And their own clerics are directing these schools independently. Strange enough, only the Christian Orthodox Georgians are deprived of this attribute as though they are being punished for being Orthodox Christians.

"Lack of rights applied only to the Orthodox Georgians could be interpreted as non-Russian Orthodox Christians not being welcome in Christian Orthodox Russia. This can be explained by a mis-

understanding that has been damaging the cause of Christian Orthodoxy for a long time.

“I am convinced that preservation of this absurd situation can only be described as a state and religious mistake.

“I draw your attention to a request for restoring the centuries-old autocephaly of the Georgian Church. I do hope that by doing this we can perform our civil duty and that Your Majesty will support our request.”¹⁴

Czarist Russia had no intention of restoring autocephaly: it treated Christian Orthodoxy and the Christian Orthodox Church as an instrument of colonial suppression and subjugation, as a means of Russifying the local people in order to gain complete control over its recently acquired possessions. Later, Russian clergymen did not bother to conceal the obvious. Archbishop Sergius authored an amazingly frank work entitled *Gruzinskaia avtokefalia i ee restavratsia* (Georgian Autocephaly and Its Restoration), in which he wrote: “It was decided that a small country with an independent and ancient culture be Russified, while its Christian Orthodox Church, the guardian of Georgian spirituality, was destined to become part of the Russian Orthodox Church. The methods selected for the purpose matched the times: uncivil administration, violence, arbitrariness of the bureaucrats and satraps of czarist Russia, permissiveness and interference in the affairs of the church hierarchs.”¹⁵

Bishop David summed up the misfortunes caused by the loss of autocephaly and introduction of the Exarchate in his study called *Ob avtokefalii*

¹⁴ I. Chavchavadze, op. cit., p. 678.

¹⁵ K.S. Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts, Georgian Academy of Sciences, Record Group 47, Inventory 1, File 242, Sheet 5. Archbishop Sergius, *Gruzinskaia avtokefalia i ee restavratsia*, Perm, 1962, p. 5.

tserkvi Iverii (On the Autocephaly of the Iberian Church) published in 1912 in Russian. He wrote, in particular:

“1. The exarches do not concern themselves with meeting the Georgians’ spiritual needs; 2. They do not know the Georgian language and so are unable to establish close contacts with the believers; 3. They do not respect the Georgians’ national feelings and their culture; 4. They do nothing to develop lofty feelings among the Georgian clergy; 5. They suppress the Georgian clergy; deny them promotion to high posts, and pay them less than their Russian colleagues; 6. They interfere with the literary-theological efforts of the Georgian clergy and with the plans to set up a Georgian church publication; 7. They promote disunity among the Georgians by trying to set the Megreles against other Georgians; for this purpose they introduced church services in the Megrelian language; 8. They are trying to Russify the Georgian Church; 9. They insist that the Georgian clergy should strictly follow the rules and are obviously permissive when it comes to the Russian priests; 10. They do not pay enough attention to working with the flock; 11. They try to set Georgian priests against each other; 12. They belittle the Georgians’ national specific features or, at least, ignore them; they are doing their best to uproot everything that might breed national feelings in the Georgians; 13. The Russian exarches are obviously unable to love their flock, to share its joys and sorrows, or to be proud of everything that breeds pride in the Georgians and to appreciate everything that is dear to the Georgians; 14. The Exarches do not love the Georgians or Georgia.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Bishop David, *Ob avtokefalii tserkvi Iverii*, Tiflis, 1912, p. 36.

Restoration of Autocephaly

All the injustices came to an end when the dream of all Georgians was finally realized: the Georgian Christian Orthodox Church regained its independence at a Church assembly held in Mtskheta on 12 March, 1917. Two weeks later, on 27 March, the Provisional Government of Russia endorsed the decision; the restored independence was limited to one nation—the Georgians—rather than to a certain territory.

This was the first and most difficult step, followed by others which consolidated the position of the Georgian Church as an autocephalous structure. In September 1917, the congress of the Georgian Orthodox Church elected Kirion Sadzaglishvili, one of the staunchest fighters for autocephaly, as the Catholicos-Patriarch (the enthronement ceremony took place on 1 October). The congress is often called historic, even though the much-suffering Orthodox Church of Georgia had to travel a difficult road to its independence and sacrificed a lot for its sake.

The Russian Orthodox Church, and primarily Patriarch Tikhon, advised the Georgian hierarchs to apologize to the Holy Synod for this mistake in order not to find itself outside the One Holy Apostolic Church. In his reply, Catholicos-Patriarch Leonid of Georgia pointed out that at no time had the Georgian Christian Orthodox Church expressed its desire to join the Russian Church or to be dominated by it. On the contrary, he wrote, it wanted to remain independent. The Holy Synod respected this desire during the first years after Georgia joined Russia and never interfered in its internal affairs. The Catholicos-Patriarch further wrote that the Russian secular authorities deprived the Georgian Church of its autocephaly by an act of violence. After that, wrote Leonid, all attempts by the Georgian hierarchs and the nation to restore independence were cut short by secular power.¹⁷

In 1905, the request to restore autocephaly was also sent to the Synod, which refused to support it.

As soon as Nicholas II was deposed, the Provisional Government started functioning, and the autocephaly of the Georgian Church was restored without asking for the central government's permission. The Georgian hierarchs sent a delegation to Moscow to inform the Synod about this historic decision. Archbishop Sergius of Finland spoke in the name of the Synod. He stated: "The Russian church consciousness never rejected the idea of restoring the old order of the Georgian Church. This could not be done, yet the church figures should not be blamed. This dream can be fulfilled under the new conditions. There are minor problems, but they can be overcome and corrected at the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, at which the two churches should meet."¹⁸ Regrettably, the Georgian Church was not invited. In his message Catholicos-Patriarch Leonid referred to the benevolent words pronounced by Archbishop Sergius, who said: "Let our two peoples, who share one religion and are true to the behests of both churches, live in peace and fulfill their predestination for the sake of our salvation and to the glory of God."¹⁹

By that time, having recognized the restored autocephaly of the Georgian Orthodox Church, the Union of the Russian Clergy and Laity formed in Tbilisi demanded that a Russian exarchate be set up in the Transcaucasus to allow the parishes wishing to remain under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church join it. A corresponding text was published on 14 June, 1917 together with the temporary rules of administering these parishes; a certain Theophylactus was appointed bishop in Tbilisi. The Georgian hierarchs resolutely protested against the withdrawal of the non-Georgian parishes from the jurisdiction of the Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia; Theophylactus was deported, while newly appointed Metropolitan Cyril was not allowed into the country.

This ruptured the devotional contacts between the Russian and Georgian churches; the alienation continued for 25 years and ended in 1943 when, during World War II, Patriarch Sergius was enthroned. Holy and Most Blessed Kalistrate, the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, congratulated him on his enthronization and expressed the hope that in the future the two churches—the Russian and Georgian—would live in peace and mutual understanding. By way of response, Patriarch Sergius promptly sent Archbishop Anthony of Stavropol and Piatigorsk to Georgia as his representative. The long expected reconciliation became a fact: on 31 October Catholicos-Patriarch Kalistrate together with Georgian hierarchs and other members of the clergy among whom was Archbishop Anthony served a festal liturgy in the oldest cathedral of Tbilisi.

The Holy Synod headed by Patriarch Sergius heard Archbishop Anthony's report and ruled to regard the devotional and eucharistic contacts between the two fraternal churches restored. As distinct from

¹⁷ See: *Poslanie Sviatetshego Leonida, Katolikosa-Patriarkha vseia Gruzii k Sviatetshemu Tikhonu, Patriarkhu Moskovskomu i vseia Rossii*, Tiflis, 1920, p. 40.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

the previous period, the Georgian Church was asked to look after the Russian parishes, while all autocephalous churches were informed of the Georgian Church's restored autocephaly.

Here it is appropriate to recall relatively recent history. On 26 May, 1918 Georgia announced that it had restored its independence lost in 1801. Between that day and 25 February, 1921 (when the Red Army, ignited with communist ideas, invaded the country), Georgia and its Christian Orthodox Church enjoyed a short reprieve.

The government headed by Mensheviks remained true to its ideas about religion and the church, on the one hand, but was well aware of their role in Georgian history and spiritual life, on the other; the Mensheviks knew that the Church could help the recently revived country to stand more firmly on its feet. The government, in turn, did its best to help the Church restore its former prestige and strength. The Georgian Orthodox clergy greeted the Mensheviks with enthusiasm: the Church was convinced that the recently acquired independence answered the nation's centuries-old dreams, which had finally come true through the enormous efforts of many generations. At the same time, the clerics were afraid of a new wave of Russian expansion, the export of revolution, and the Bolsheviks, whose ideology left no space for the church and religion, believing them to be remnants of the past that should be uprooted. No wonder, Catholicos-Patriarch Kirion wrote at the time: "Today, the perfidious nature of Russia's policies in the past and present is no secret. In the past, it was autocracy that destroyed us; today, it is the 'Socialist-Bolsheviks,' who wish to put out our eyes by threatening to close Batumi, our only window to Europe." This was written in anticipation of a catastrophe; the Catholicos-Patriarch repeated in despair: "The Georgian sky has darkened."²⁰ The Georgian clergy called on the nation to strengthen the popular militia to save the Motherland.

The inevitable was not avoided: the 11th Red Army burst into Georgia and deprived it of its independence. Later the events unfolded according to the scenario common to the Soviet Union. Decree No. 21 On Separation of the Church from the State and School from the Church of 15 April, 1921, modeled after a similar Russian decree of 20 January, 1918, was one of the most eloquent documents of the time.

Relations between the Russian and Georgian Orthodox Churches in Our Time

The seventy years of Soviet power deprived the Church of all its rights and brought it to the brink of destruction. Its formal independence did not save it either from communist ideological oppression, or from the Russian Orthodox Church, without whose permission it could not act independently in any sphere, least of all in international relations.

Before the revolution, the Georgian Church had nearly 3,000 churches and monasteries and 5,000 clerics; in the 1960s-1970s, it was left with 45 churches and about 100 elderly priests working in them. The Soviet Union's disintegration and rejection of the Soviet atheist ideology showed the way out of the atheist impasse. Under the guidance of Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II, faith was restored and the nation turned back to the Church. The number of priests increased, old churches and monasteries were restored, and new temples and monasteries built; more religious schools and religious publications appeared.

The current relations between the Georgian and Russian Churches can be described as inconsistent and contradictory. Russia is a huge Christian Orthodox country by which the world shapes its ideas about Christian Orthodoxy. When both countries belonged to one state, the Russian Church inevitably affected the ideology, mentality, and way of life of the Georgian clergy. Many of them were educated in Russian religious schools, where they used Russian textbooks written by Russian theologians and Russian trans-

²⁰ Central Historical Archives of Georgia, Record group 1459, Inventory 1, File 188, pp. 16-17 Central Historical Archives of the Georgian S.S.R.

lations of foreign works. Since the Russian Orthodox Church had to obey the official authorities, which never hesitated to use it in their own interests, it went without saying that Russia's security services also had certain influence among the clergy. This influence can still be felt today: there is a group of clerics in the Georgian Church who oppose those who look toward the West. The picture becomes even clearer if we take into account the fact that some Orthodox Christians belong to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (Boston).

Today, there is a lot of talk in Russia about Freemasonry as a great threat to the world, Russia, and its Christian Orthodox faith. This information has reached Georgia: it is predicted that it, as another Christian Orthodox country, will perish at the hands of Masons. We all know, however, that Russia presents the only threat to Georgia and its territorial integrity. Regrettably, the Russian Federation does not want stability in Georgia and is exploiting the conflicts and difficulties it created itself when Georgian statehood was taking shape and Georgia was busy restoring its territorial integrity. Worst of all, Moscow is actively exploiting the Russian Orthodox Church to preserve its influence in the Caucasus and thus pursue its great-power designs. The Russian clerics are actively interfering in the affairs of the regions of another country, particularly in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in an effort to spread their influence and jurisdiction to these parts of Georgia. The church is as aggressive as the state and is trying to camouflage its true intention with religious motives. The Georgian Church is openly protesting against this far from Christian conduct.

Here is a specific example. In July-August 2004, during the events in the Tskhinvali Region, Chairman of the West European Diocese of the Georgian Church Reverend Abraham declared: "Immediately after the beginning of the conflict in the Tskhinvali Region, the ROC took certain steps to widen the gap between the Georgians and the Ossets. Russian clerics were used for this purpose too. To camouflage these aims, the ROC refused to accept the Tskhinvali Region under its jurisdiction, yet the separatists received support when they wanted to establish contacts with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, which did not hesitate to accept them under its jurisdiction. Today, when unification of the two churches looks inevitable, the Tskhinvali Region might find itself under the jurisdiction of Alexy II. If this happens the Georgian Patriarchate may sever eucharistic contacts with the ROC. In the context of the current relations between the two countries, this would be an appropriate measure. The Georgian Orthodox Church, a highly responsible structure, should interfere in the conflict. We do hope that this time at least the Russian side will recall that Georgia is protected by the Mother of God and that it should be treated accordingly."²¹

We all regret that Russia has not abandoned the "big brother" syndrome, its double standards, prejudice, colonial policies, etc. The myth of two Russias does not hold water: its politicians of all hues prefer to use force against Georgia. This explains why there is no progress in our bilateral relations. Because of these aggressive designs, Georgia has to move away from a country with which we share a common religion, culture, and a prolonged period of coexistence in one state. To save itself, Georgia is seeking new roads and new methods. It is impossible to force the Georgian nation to abandon its resolution to liberate itself from Russia's imperial intentions, restore its territorial integrity, and gain real independence.

This raises several questions: will Russia acquire the political strength to soberly assess the current processes and channel them accordingly? Will Russia realize that the double standards according to which Abkhazian and Osset separatism is good while Chechen separatism is bad are leading nowhere? The current policies are obviously overshadowing the religious dimension, Christian Orthodoxy, in our relations with Russia. Russia is exploiting religion to put pressure on Georgia. Was Nikolai Berdiaev right when he wrote: "Russia is living to the detriment of itself and to spite other nations"?²²

Still, Georgia hopes to improve its relations with Russia in the secular and spiritual spheres.

²¹ *Gza*, No. 35 (220), 26 August-1 September, 2004, p. 5.

²² N. Berdiaev, *Sud'ba Rossii. Opyt po psikhologii voyny i natsional'nosti*, Moscow, 1992, p. 49.

PARTY DEVELOPMENT

**DEVELOPMENT OF
A MULTIPARTY SYSTEM
IN CENTRAL ASIA****Mira KARYBAEVA**

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Appraising the development of political parties, which are an effective tool for spreading democracy, as well as expressing the interests of various social groups, in the post-Soviet Central Asian countries is a rather difficult task. This is because each country in the region has its own special legislative and practical traits in this sphere. Nevertheless, some common trends in party development have already appeared.

The absence of a single information source also hinders this analysis. For example, when preparing this article, the author had to rely on the Internet and information obtained from local experts and representatives of several international organizations working in the region. What is more, due to the specifics of the legislative base, it is not possible to find out the size of party membership in every county. (The tables present information on the officially registered parties, as well as information on parties functioning as of the beginning of 2005, but still not registered.)

The Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan Party headed by oppositionist Galimzhan Zhakianov submitted its registration documents (with 80,000 signatures) and was registered in May 2004. Then on 11 December of the same year, its congress called on society to engage in civilian insubordination campaigns against "the current anti-popular authorities," for which the public prosecutor's office accused the party of breaking the laws on national security. After this, the court made a decision to abolish this organization. The opposition declared that the authorities were guided by political motives in this respect. Nevertheless, on 18 January, 2005, the court confirmed its previous decision. We will note that there are three more parties in the country, but they are still not registered: the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, Abyroi (Honor and Conscience) and a second communist party, the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK).

Table 1

Political Parties of Kazakhstan

No.	Name	Membership ¹	Leader
1	Republican Party Otan (Homeland)	135,000	Amangeldy Ermegiaev ²
2	Republican Party Asar (All Together)	177,000	Dariga Nazarbaeva
3	Civilian Party	160,000	Azat Peruashev
4	Democratic Party Ak zhol (Clear Path)	147,000	Cochairman system ³
5	Patriot Party of Kazakhstan	132,000	Gani Kasymov
6	Social-Democratic Party Auyl	125,000	Gani Kaliev
7	Agrarian Party	102,000	Romin Madinov
8	Rukhaniat (Spirituality)	75,000	Altynshash Djaganova
9	Communist Party of Kazakhstan	70,000	Serikbolsyn Abdildin

Sources: Kazakhstan Representative Agency of IRI—International Republican Institute; Internet resources.

Table 2

Political Parties of Tajikistan

No.	Name	Membership	Leader
1	People's Democratic Party	95,000	Emomali Rakhmonov
2	Communist Party	No data	Shodi Shabdolov
3	Democratic Party	No data	Makhmadruzi Iskandarov
4	Social-Democratic Party	No data	Rakhmatillo Zoirov
5	Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan	20,000	Said Abdullo Nuri
6	Socialist Party	No data	Mirkhusein Nazriev

Sources: Zerkalo Sociological Research Center; Internet resources.

¹ According to the Law on Political Parties in effect in the country, which was adopted in July 2002, a party must have no less than 50,000 members to register.

² Despite the fact that A. Ermegiaev is mentioned in its registration documents, the party's leader is considered Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev.

³ Bolat Abilov, Alikhan Baymenov, Oraz Djandosov, Altynbek Sarsenbaev, and Liudmila Zhulanova.

The Tarrakiet Party has been trying to submit its registration documents in Tajikistan for the third year now, but to no avail. What is more, there may be a change in the number of these political organizations due to a split which is beginning to show in the Socialist Party.

Today, all six parties have been registered and have presented lists to the country's Central Commission on Elections and Referendums.

Table 3

Political Parties of Uzbekistan

No.	Name	Membership ⁴	Leader
1	Social-Democratic Party Adolat (Justice)	40,000	Turgunpulat Daminov
2	Democratic Party Milliy tiklanish (National Renaissance)	30,000	Ibrakhim Gafurov
3	National-Democratic Party Fidokorlar (Self-Sacrificers)	30,000	Akhtam Tursunov
4	People's Democratic Party	575,000	Asliddin Rustamov
5	Liberal-Democratic Party	40,000	Kabilzhan Iusupov

Sources: Political Parties and Democracy Project of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Uzbekistan; Internet resources.

A few more political organizations function in Uzbekistan, but they are not registered: Democratic Party Erk (formal leader Mukhammad Salikh, but there is a trend toward its split into three factions headed by Atanazar Arifov, Murat Samat, and Oigul Mamatova); former national movement Birlik, now a political party (leader—Vasila Inoiatova); Party of Agrarians and Businessmen of Uzbekistan (Marat Zakhidov); and Party of Free Peasants of Uzbekistan (Ozod dehqonlar partiiasy), leader Nigora Khidoiatova. On 9 May, 2004 in Tashkent, they announced the creation of a single bloc of opposition forces. But later, Ozod dehqonlar, Erk, and Birlik decided to boycott the parliamentary elections (which were held on 26 December, 2004), since their candidates were not registered.

By the way, 489 candidates for deputy nominated by political parties and initiative electorate groups participated in the elections. One hundred and twenty deputies of the republic's legislative house of the Oliy Majlis were elected in a total of 62 electoral districts, during two rounds of voting (the second was held on 9 January, 2005). The seats in the lower house of parliament are distributed among five parties and independent candidates of initiative citizen groups. In so doing, the Liberal-Democratic Party leads with 21 deputies (34.2%) and the People's Democratic Party with 18 (23.3%). Enjoying immense popularity at the 1999 elections, the National-Democratic Party Fidokorlar obtained 18 seats, the Democratic Party Milliy tiklanish, 11, and the Social-Democratic Party Adolat, 10. Independent candidates who made it into parliament obtained 14% of the seats.

At the elections held in 2000 to the Kyrgyzstan Legislative Assembly, 15 seats were set aside for parties. Fifteen parties participated in the struggle for deputy mandates (according to the proportional system), five of them joined into two election blocs, whereby five parties and one election bloc gathered

⁴ The data are very approximate since these parties do not have a procedure for registering membership.

Table 4

Political Parties of Kyrgyzstan⁵

No.	Name	Membership ⁶	Leader
1	Progressive Democratic Party Erkin Kyrgyzstan (Erk) ⁷	12,000	Bektur Asanov
2	National Revival Party (Asaba)	No data	Azimbek Beknazarov
3	Kyrgyzstan Party of Communists	20,000	Absamat Masaliev
4	Republican People's Party	2,500	Djumabek Tentiev
5	Agrarian Party	1,000	Esengul Aliev
6	Unity Party of Kyrgyzstan	30,000	Amangeldy Muraliev
7	Democratic Women's Party of Kyrgyzstan	5,000	Tokon Shailieva
8	Political Party of War Veterans in Afghanistan and Participants in Other Local Conflicts	No data	Akbokon Tashtanbekov
9	New Kyrgyzstan	13,000	Nur uulu Dosbol
10	Social-Democratic Party	5,000	Almazbek Atambaev
11	Party of the People (Impoverished)	No data	Melis Eshimkanov
12	Party for Protecting the Interests of Industry and Agricultural Workers and Low-Income Families of Kyrgyzstan	No data	Akbaraly Aitiev
13	Agrarian-Labor Party	No data	
14	Party of Economic Revival	No data	Valery Khon
15	Party of Bishkek Residents	No data	Bolot Otunbaev
16	Party of National Unity and Accord	No data	Azamzhan Akbarov
17	Republican Party	2,000	Giiiaz Tokombaev
18	Socialist Party Ata-Meken (Homeland)	2,000	Omurbek Tekebaev

⁵ While carrying out the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Political Parties and Democracy Project in Kyrgyzstan in 2002-2004, only about twenty of the forty registered parties could be found and invited to the corresponding undertakings. It is most difficult to obtain information about the membership, etc. of "lost" parties.

⁶ According to the law in effect On Political Parties of Kyrgyzstan, a party need only have ten people to register. Strict registration of members is not stipulated. Data on party membership is presented according to the results of an interview with their leaders held in 2003 within the framework of the Political Research Foundation Project of the Future.

⁷ Fifteen parties were singled out which participated in the parliamentary elections in 2000.

Table 4 (continued)

No.	Name	Membership	Leader
19	Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan Party (DMK)	1,500	Edilbek Sarybaev
20	My Country Party of Action	4,500	Djoomart Otorbaev
21	Ar-Namys Party (Virtue)	12,000	Felix Kulov
22	Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan	8,000	Klara Azhibekova
23	Sociopolitical Peasant (Farmers) Party	No data	Esengul Isakov
24	Republican Party Adilet	66,058	Marat Sultanov
25	Kairan el Party (Unhappy People)	5,000	Dooronbek Sadyrbaev
26	Pensioners Party	No data	Tursunbek Dauletgeldiev
27	Erkindik Party (Freedom)	No data	Adylbek Kasymaliev
28	Kyrgyzstan zhashtar partiiasy (Kyrgyzstan Youth Party)	No data	Aidarali Bakiev
29	Ecological Party of Greens, Archa	No data	Cazykbai Turdaliev
30	Elmuras Party	No data	Toktokan Borombaeva
31	Voice of the People Party	200	Bolotbek Maripov
32	Businessmen's Party	No data	Akmataliev
33	Accord	No data	Shatkul Kadabaeva
34	Future of Kyrgyzstan	No data	Balbak Tulebaev
35	Kyrgyzstan Party of the Regions, Elet	4,000	Tashpolot Baltabaev
36	Builders' Party	No data	Abysh Nurgaziev
37	Party of Justice and Progress	No data	Muratbek Imanaliev
38	Party of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, Elnuru	No data	
39	Alga, Kyrgyzstan! Party (created from a merge among four parties)	No data	Bolotbek Begaliev
40	Party of Democratic Development	No data	Mambetzhunus Abylov

Sources: Ministry of Justice of Kyrgyzstan; Data from the *Present-Day State of Political Parties in Kyrgyzstan* study; Political Research Foundation Project of the Future.

more than 5% of the votes and obtained seats in the Legislative Assembly. Thanks to the existence of party lists during the last elections, the country's parliament was replenished by several strong and vibrant deputies. What is more, of the six women who became members of the Legislative Assembly, three obtained seats according to the party lists. But after the referendum (2003), these party seats in parliament were abolished.

The election of deputies to the local keneshes (grass roots level) held on 10 October, 2004, identified new criteria for analysis. This was because the political parties had an opportunity to participate in the formation of district election commissions and nominate their own candidates. The following parties were the most active in nominating their representatives to the election commissions: Alga, Kyrgyzstan! (47%), Adilet (28%), My Country (11%), New Force (former Democratic Women's Party of Kyrgyzstan—10%), Elet, and the Communist Party—5% each.⁸ And on the whole, out of the 6,737 people elected as deputies to the local keneshes, 3,003 (44.57%) were nominated by political parties. Adilet—1,386 deputies (46.15%), Alga, Kyrgyzstan!—1,231 (40.9%), New Force—202 (6.7%), Elet—111 (3.6%), and My Country—51 (1.6%) were the most active. As for the Communist Party, Ar-Namys, Ata-Meken, the Party of Justice and Progress, Future of Kyrgyzstan Party, and Accord Party, each obtained less than 1% of the deputy seats.⁹

The forecasts of experts were confirmed during the nomination of candidates to the new one-house parliament of Kyrgyzstan (the elections were held on 27 February, 2005)—most candidates were registered as self-nominees. According to the data of 7 February, only 43 of the 425 candidates registered were nominated from political parties. In so doing, the largest number of candidates were representatives of the parties of power: Alga, Kyrgyzstan!—15, Adilet—11, three candidates were nominated from the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan (CPK), and two each from the Kyrgyzstan Party of Communists (KPC), Accord, and the Social-Democratic Party; one candidate each from My Country, New Kyrgyzstan, Ar-Namys, the Party of Economic Revival, and New Force.¹⁰ It should be noted that this list differs significantly from the preliminary lists of candidates for deputy to the Zhogorku Kenesh nominated by the political parties and published in the government newspaper.¹¹

So an analysis of the situation regarding development of the multiparty system in the region is complicated by the fact that the illusion of a multiparty system is created. However, real plurality means the possibility of these structures having legitimate ways to participate in a competitive struggle for political ideas. So it can be said that a pluralistic system has still not developed. The leaders of the political parties also mention this.¹²

In Central Asia, there is frequently a hypertrophied opinion that parties only form to engage in a power struggle. But when taking a closer look at these processes, we should note that parties are primarily a vital tool of the political competition of ideas and exist in order to find the most effective ways for the country to develop (and not to put into practice the ideas offered by the powers-that-be), that is, to improve the quality of the country's administration. In the final analysis, real improvement of the life of the ordinary people, and not of politicians, depends on the quality of political parties' work.

The pro-governmental or, to be more precise, the pro-presidential parties are the strongest in the region's countries. For example, according to the IRI, in Kazakhstan, Otan, Asar, the Civilian Party, Auyl, the Agrarian Party, and Rukhaniat (6 of the 9 registered) can be considered such parties. This is an authentic evaluation. In Tajikistan, the country's president, Emomali Rakhmonov, heads the largest party (People's Democratic). Today, there are 63 deputies in the Majlisi namoiandagon (one of the parliamentary houses), 42 of them are members of the PDPT, eight are from the Communist Party faction, and two are representatives of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan, the formation of pro-government party blocs always becomes more dynamic before elections (now

⁸ See: *Demokrat*, 19 October, 2004.

⁹ According to the data of the department of organizational and legal support of the Kyrgyzstan Central Election Commission.

¹⁰ According to the data of the AKI-Press Information Agency [<http://vybory.akipress.org>].

¹¹ See: *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 6 January, 2005 [<http://www.shailoo.kg>].

¹² See, for example: *Varorud*, No. 42 (78), 22 October, 2003.

these are Alga, Kyrgyzstan! and Adilet), as a result of which most deputies loyal to the government get into parliament.

It is obvious that within the current legislative and political framework, real competition of corresponding ideas is impossible, so it is difficult to expect the parties of the region's countries to be active in magnifying the political interests of society, creating a competent majority in the parliaments (on the basis of a civilized competitive struggle), or having an influence on the decision-making process in other branches of power.

Another tool in favor of the fact that political parties in Central Asia are sooner playing a "decorative" role at present is that, in reality, legislative and institutional conditions have not yet been formed for their real involvement in governance and for their influence on the decision-making process. And we are not talking about the executive bodies, where advancement up the career ladder is not related to an official's party affiliation. And advancement into the representative power bodies is not made easier for politicians who ballot from political parties. For example, in Kazakhstan only ten deputies to the Majilis (out of 77) are elected according to party lists, and there are no seats for parties in the Senate at all. In Tajikistan, according to the country's legislation, 41 deputies of the Majlisi namoiandagon are elected according to one-mandate districts, and only 22 according to party lists.

The principle noted above for nominating candidates for deputy to the new one-house parliament of Kyrgyzstan also shows that affiliation to a party (particularly an opposition one) does not facilitate a candidate's political advancement, on the contrary, it (affiliation) becomes an obstacle. The matter not only concerns the use of the notorious administrative resource against candidates from opposition structures, but also the lack of funds for holding expensive party congresses and conferences, which is necessary for the promotion of candidates. Under these conditions, the party leaders have to abandon the idea of holding congresses and go the route of candidate self-nomination.

The existence and development of a multiparty system is also theoretically viewed as a tool for overcoming localistic and regionalistic principles of forming the political elite. Unfortunately, from this point of view, parties in Central Asia have still not become an effective tool for magnifying the political interests of various social groups and shifting the accent (in political recruiting) from the place of origin, that is, in keeping with the community principle, to professional qualities and political ideas. The opinion of Chairman of the Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan Rakhmatillo Zoirov is interesting from this viewpoint.¹³ He noted that a trend is beginning toward different parties predominating in different regions of the country. For example, the PDPT and CPT predominate in the Kulob group of regions, while the Social-Democratic Party has the largest number of supporters in the Sogd Region and Gorny Badakhshan. Similar trends are also manifested in Kyrgyzstan. For example, most supporters of the Ata-Meken Party are representatives of the Zhalalabad Region.

Such localistic motives do not allow political parties to develop properly. Of course, time and certain objective conditions are needed to overcome these problems. For the moment though, it is difficult for strong parties with a liberal-democratic ideology to develop where there are no traditions for the existence of private property and a middle class. As a result, parties are obviously suffering from a shortage of staff, similar charters, programs, and slogans, and financial problems, which all result in a low level of political activity. These difficulties can sometimes be explained not only by the fact that democracy is still young in the region, but also by the meager set of values on which the programs of these organizations are based. They have not established systematic interaction with the grass roots structures in the regions, and work to form a democratic culture within the parties has essentially not been organized.

It is obvious that under these circumstances a support system of political parties should be created. This system can appear only if there is a coordinated strategy among the governments, international organizations and a civil society in each of the region's countries. What is more, a system for monitoring the development of legislation and real practice should be organized in this sphere, and special studies of the situation conducted, both in each Central Asian state and in the comparative respect. Special attention

¹³ See: *Varorud*, No. 42 (78), 22 October, 2003.

should be focused on expert examination of legislation and lobbying of changes capable of involving parties more in real political life, as well as on the creation of a government financing system of political parties. The new draft Law on Political Parties, which is being discussed today in Kyrgyzstan, is attempting to create a basis for this system. In so doing, the state is giving parties the leading role in the functioning of the political system.

Party systems are reacting sensitively to the tiniest factor capable of expanding the possibilities for their development. For example, a norm has been introduced into the Kyrgyzstan Code on Elections, which envisages proportional participation of the representatives of political parties and of nominees from electorate assemblies and public organizations in the work of election commissions of different levels. As a result of this, the number of members of these commissions, who were representatives of political parties at the elections of deputies to local self-administration bodies held on 10 October, 2004, sharply increased compared with the elections of heads of local self-administration held in December 2001 (see Table 5).¹⁴

Table 5

Regional Commissions (Bishkek and Osh)		District Commissions		Local Election Commissions	
Total	from political parties	Total	from political parties	Total	from political parties
<i>Elections of deputies of village, settlement, and city keneshes (10 October, 2004)</i>					
83 (100%)	23 (27.7%)	493 (100%)	135 (27.58%)	17,553 (100%)	2,450 (13.96%)
<i>Elections of the heads of local self-administration of villages, settlements, and towns of regional significance (16 December, 2001)</i>					
67 (100%)	4 (5.97%)	460 (100%)	16 (3.47%)	15,192 (100%)	127 (0.83%)

In the case of Uzbekistan, Art 22 of the Law on Elections (adopted in August 2003) envisages that when candidates are nominated from political parties to elections of all levels, no less than 30% of their number should comprise women. This is obviously a kickback to the Soviet system of political quotas, nevertheless, a certain result is obvious: in the country's current parliament, women comprise 18% of the Legislative Assembly and 15% of the Senate. (In the parliament of the previous convocation, they only comprised 8%.)

Taking into account the actual problems of political party development in the region, information-educational programs should be created, and projects should be initiated which will help to raise the role of the parties in democratizing society and the state on the basis of training and consultations for party leaders, party members, and parliamentary deputies. There is also an urgent need to hold discussions on several topics. We will note the following: the legislative foundations of a democratic party system, analysis of the practice of foreign countries, party programs, local organizations, party financing, party participation in elections, political parties and human rights, development of special work strategies with young people, women, other social groups, and so on. It is worth noting that today not one party in the region's countries has any youth or women's factions, just as there are no specific programs for working with different social groups. What is more, seminars should be organized for the regional representatives

¹⁴ Data of electoral statistics of the Kyrgyzstan Central Election Commission.

of political parties, an open discussion created on the problems of the development of political parties, and public discussion expanded for discussing their role in developing democracy. These are necessary conditions for enhancing the multiparty system in the region's countries.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA

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The peaceful coup of 23 November, 2003, otherwise known as the Rose Revolution, proved fatal for nearly all of Georgia's political parties: only one of them—the United National Movement—gained weight at the expense of the others. Some of them were wiped away, while others were too shocked to recover promptly. This slowed down the country's movement toward consolidated democracy, the road to which lies through strengthening several political parties. Despite the freedom of speech and political activity it enjoyed, the country failed to change the government by holding objective and fair elections.

Georgia was not alone in the so-called gray zone: there are other states with no clear dictatorial or democratic biases.¹ The Rose Revolution itself is a product of half-baked democracy and the arrested transition process. It was precisely freedom of speech and political activity, the façade of democracy, that played the key role in the revolution. It is

still too early to tell whether, since the Rose Revolution, Georgia has emerged from the gray zone, as the revolution considerably weakened not only the political parties and their political rivalry, but also the first shoots of civil society. The most active representatives of strong (according to Georgian standards) NGOs joined the new cabinet, thus laying bare their political nature. The United National Movement grew stronger, while other parties grew weaker. It was not administrative pressure that was responsible for this: politics followed its natural course due to the parties' inability to catch the mood of the masses and adjust to it. The parties' influence on the public is rather weak—public opinions are spontaneous—it is not the parties leading the masses, it is the masses leading them. The parties are unable to shape electoral behavior, therefore to survive they must readjust their behavior to suit public sentiments. The Rose Revolution amply confirmed this. Mikhail Saakashvili grasped the popular sentiments and shaped his political strategy to match popular discontent and radicalism. This brought him victory.

¹ See: Th. Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2003, p. 10.

Political Parties and the Political System

The trend toward restricting freedom of the media, which became obvious after the Rose Revolution (although the process has just begun), may interfere with the development of political parties and

political rivalry. The above does not apply to the judicial system: under continued political control the frightened judges cannot do their work properly. Uldis Kinis, Senior Legal Expert of the EU Rule of Law Mission to Georgia, engaged in monitoring judiciary power in our country, pointed out that the problem of judicial independence has still not been resolved and that its dependence is screened by its formal independence. When Mr. Kinis asked judges whether they were independent, they all answered that they enjoyed a high degree of freedom. When asked whether they would be bold enough to pass a fair sentence on those branded guilty by the authorities, none of the interviewed said they would dare to oppose. According to Uldis Kinis, their main problem was fear.²

Political dependence of the judiciary interferes to a great extent with the development of political parties and political rivalry. Economic problems can be expected to force the government to try and change the political system in order to prevent snowballing “counter-revolutionary” forces, something that may happen if economic and social policy turns out to be ineffective. In this case, shock among the opposition parties will continue.

The Parties and the Façade of Democracy

Along with freedom of the press, a democratic constitution, and regular elections, political parties and the political struggle form the democratic façade. This breeds the illusion that the government can be replaced through democratic elections. In actual fact, however, democratic institutions cannot ensure a change of government in a democratic way: these institutions just camouflage the way real power is distributed. This slows down the process of strengthening political parties and other democratic institutions and of changing the government through freely expressed popular will. In these circumstances, real power relies on the greater role of the executive branch in state administration, which, in turn, gives more power to the bureaucrats. While the judiciary remains under political pressure, this power is free to extend its authority. This creates conditions for the president’s omnipotence and his complete control over the state bureaucratic mechanism. His power, however, cannot be strong if he has no political party at his side able to control the parliament. Under the Georgian constitution, the parliament’s rights are enough to stem the process of broadening presidential powers, therefore political influence of the head of state largely depends on the parliament’s political composition: it determines the degree to which the president can control the legislature. To ensure cooperation between the executive and legislative branches of power and prevent any sharp conflicts between them, the parliament needs a strong and close-knit political majority. Former president Eduard Shevardnadze was well aware of this: speaking at a congress of his party, the Citizens’ Union of Georgia (CUG), he pointed out that even if the president could rule the country without a political party, he would be a “lame” president.

To weed out small and weak parties and tighten presidential control over the parliament, the election barrier for the parties was raised from 5 to 7 percent. Eduard Shevardnadze, who was brought to power by a coup, tried to add legitimacy to his power and consolidate his position by encouraging political parties to run for parliament. He had no fear of them: the parties were more like political clubs with loose organizational structures, small memberships and no real influence. During the 1993 parliamentary elections, compensation lists had to be used to increase the number of parties in the parliament.

Things began to backslide after President Shevardnadze strengthened his position and acquired a party of his own: the weak parties were efficiently elbowed out of parliament in order to weaken the opposition and increase the influence of the CUG. It was the only party that managed to surmount the 7 percent barrier. Administrative resources allowed the government to control the parliament’s political structure; they were used to strengthen the presidential party and help it at the parlamenta-

² See: *24 saati*, 28 September, 2004.

ry elections, because real power of the head of state depended on the legislative assembly. In this way, the Citizens' Union of Georgia became, in fact, part of the executive branch that executed the president's will.

Sources of the Multiparty System Today

The multiparty system today is rooted in the republic's Soviet past and the dissident movement. It was in 1981 that a dissident and prominent political figure of Georgia, Georgy Chanturia, set up a clandestine National Democratic Party (NDP).³ In 1983, it began disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Zestafoni, and Sukhumi. The same year, the party's founder was arrested for anti-Soviet activities (he was set free in 1986).⁴ His party played an important role during the struggle for independence and remained prominent in sovereign Georgia. When its leader died, the party lost some of its importance, yet remained afloat until the Rose Revolution seemingly buried it. (It reached the peak of its influence during the first half of the 1990s.)

The Republican Party (founded in the latter half of the 1970s by the brothers Berdzenishvili) was also rooted in the Soviet past. As distinct from the NDP, this party came into the limelight as the junior partner of the United National Movement in the Rose Revolution.

Under Soviet power, the opposition parties were nothing more than scattered underground groups of like-minded persons. Their influence was negligible. Glasnost and perestroika helped society organize itself to express and protect its interests irrespective of the state and communist control. The legal opposition was the product of a strong dissident movement, the widely supported independence movement, collapse of the idea of "real socialism" and a more liberal regime. In 1987, dissidents and the leaders of the national movement set up the first of the legal opposition groups—the Ilia Chavchavadze Society. Its goal was independence and society of the Western type.⁵ The entire party development process was strongly influenced by the party and political traditions that survived in Georgia. Some of the parties announced themselves successors of the parties of the early 20th century. The NDP members, for example, restored the party founded in 1917. It was first restored as a clandestine organization and legalized in 1987. It was on its initiative that, in November 1988, a rally openly demanded Georgia's independence for the first time.⁶ The Social-Democratic Party regarded itself as successor of the ruling party of the first period of Georgia's independence (1918-1921). The 1990 congress held in Tbilisi restored the Union of Georgian Traditionalists set up in 1942 in emigration by several Georgian public figures (I. Bagrationi, S. Kedia, G. Robakidze, Z. Avalishvili, M. Tsereteli, and others). The Traditionalists appeared after a split in the Conservative-Monarchist Party founded in 1990.⁷

In 1992, the second stage of party development began in Georgia. Eduard Shevardnadze's return to the republic stirred up the old Soviet nomenklatura, which had lost much of its influence under first president of independent Georgia and former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia. The communist nomenklatura began frantically restoring its political clout and strengthening its political alliance with the state and economic bureaucracy in the hope of controlling privatization and elbowing out those who had deposed Gamsakhurdia and brought Shevardnadze to power.

In 1993, the former nomenklatura set up the Union of Reformers; this was done on the initiative and under the leadership of B. Gulua, a prominent communist functionary of the past, who sat in parliament in 1993. He obviously expressed the interests of the bureaucracy and the businessmen connected with it

³ See: *Politicheskie partii Gruzii*. A handbook compiled by V. Keshelava, Tbilisi, 2003, p. 74.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ See: *Fakti, azri, komentari*, 10 July, 1995.

⁶ See: *Politicheskie partii Gruzii*, p. 75.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

and stated, in particular, that privatization might give control over public property (and political power along with it) to criminal groups and clans.⁸ The statement made by the Union's initiative group gives a clear idea about its aims: "Those businessmen, business managers, new entrepreneurs, farmers, academics, financiers, and professional civil servants who so far have been in the shadow of others should come to the fore and get involved in building the new state."⁹ The list of the Union's founders provided a clear idea of its social basis: out of 54 people, the majority filled top posts in the civil service hierarchy and public, economic, and private structures, such as the first deputy minister and deputy minister of industry, head of the Taxation Department of Tbilisi, and others.

In 1993, the public organizations Movement of Tbilisi Dwellers, Unity and Welfare, and the Green Movement united into the Citizens' Union of Georgia. Later, the Union of Agrarian Scientists and the Union of Industrialists and Producers joined the newly founded party. Its constituent congress elected Zurab Zhvania its General Secretary. (At the first stage, no efforts were spared to conceal Eduard Shevardnadze's active involvement in the process he himself had initiated.) With the help of the CUG, President Shevardnadze brought together the former Soviet bureaucracy and his numerous supporters, as well as disoriented political structures. In this way, he freed himself from his political obligations to those who had brought him to power and who wanted to exploit his prestige as the president for their own ends. The CUG consolidated his personal power. The very word "*mokalake*" (citizens) in the party's name indicated that it intended to push ethnic, class, and confessional distinctions aside in order to rally all citizens around the president. Then CUG General Secretary Zurab Zhvania, one of the leaders of the Rose Revolution, said in 1995 that undoubtedly the Citizens' Union of Georgia provided absolutely real support for the head of state.¹⁰

From the very beginning, the CUG brought together people of different generations and different political convictions. The former nomenklatura and the green leaders together were consolidating Shevardnadze's presidential powers and filled top posts in the party. I have already mentioned that Zurab Zhvania, originally a green leader, became the party's general secretary. (In fact, membership in the CUG provided the green leaders with a political future: economic collapse and destitution of the majority of Georgia's population cost the Green Party its popular support.) The former green leaders improved the Union's image as the party oriented toward Western values and played down the presence of the former Soviet bureaucracy in it. It was the authority and administrative resources of President Shevardnadze that kept together the variegated interests, values, and political biases. As an appendage to power, the Citizens' Union of Georgia served as a political basis of the rule of the bureaucracy. Its local representatives (the *gamgebeli*, or district administrators), appointed and removed by the president, headed the local CUG cells, the rank-and-file members of which had no say at all.

As the Shevardnadze cabinet's inability to cope with economic and social problems and corruption became evident, the CUG went into decline because of inner party squabbles. As a result of the conflict between Parliament Vice-Speaker Vakhtang Rcheulishvili and the green leaders, the former left the Citizens' Union of Georgia; in 1998 he founded and registered the Socialist Party. He did this in recognition of the electorate's obvious shift to the left. In response, the second CUG congress held in 1995 passed a decision on joining the Socialist International.¹¹ Unwilling to let the communists strengthen their position on its left flank, the CUG had to maneuver to detach some of the communist electorate. Vakhtang Rcheulishvili, still a CUG member, said at that time: "We should use the positive sides of socialism to prevent the orthodox communists from exploiting them."¹²

When the Union and the president lost the nation's confidence, the former greens, together with the Union's former general secretary and former speaker of the parliament Zurab Zhvania, left the Union. In 2002, they set up the United Democrats Party, which took part in the Rose Revolution as an ally of the United National Movement. It was then that Mikhail Saakashvili, the future leader and moving force of

⁸ See: *Sakartvelos respublika*, 17 August, 1993.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ See: Interview with Z. Zhvania, *The Georgian Times*, 26 January, 1995.

¹¹ See: *Mokalake*, 2 June, 1995.

¹² *Kavkasioni*, 11 July, 1995.

the Rose Revolution, went over to the opposition. His political biography is also related to the Citizens' Union of Georgia. In October 1995, he obtained a parliamentary seat as a CUG member (the Union controlled the election results). In the same year, he was elected Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Constitutional and Legal Issues and Rule of Law. In August 1998, he was elected head of the CUG parliamentary faction, the Citizens' Union. As public discontent with President Shevardnadze mounted, Saakashvili distanced himself from the CUG and became an active critic of the government. He effectively used his post of minister of justice (to which he had been appointed in October 2000): his scandalous exposures of corruption among top civil servants made him widely popular. In 2000, he was elected to parliament for the second time. The former minister skillfully exploited the political context to set up a new party and head it. In October 2001, Mikhail Saakashvili and his supporters founded the National Movement for the Salvation of Georgia (since 2002 it has been called the United National Movement). Its first congress held on 13 September, 2002 attended by 2,000 elected Mikhail Saakashvili the party leader.¹³

The nation's leftward shift created conditions for more left-centrist parties. In 1998, the Socialist Party and the Labor Party were registered. The latter was founded by parliamentary deputy Shalva Natelashvili, who went over to the opposition because, as he alleged, Mikhail Saakashvili was elected as chairman of the committee formerly headed by Natelashvili. At the first stage, he set up the Labor faction in the parliament and then knocked together party cells across the country. The Labor Party itself traces its history back to 1995 when a little known party called State and Legal Unification of Georgia appeared, subsequently renamed the Labor Party in 1998. It described its program priorities as the fight against "wild capitalism," the "dictatorship of transnational companies," and the "oligarchic and clan control over the economy." It favored state control over the country's economy, as well as state monopoly on export, import, and transit of oil and oil products, etc. Its members are convinced that the state should preserve its controlling interest in mining, they insist on complete land tax exemption for peasants and farmers, and support the idea of the country's foreign policy neutrality.¹⁴

The Labor Party and the United National Movement are courting the same social groups: peasants, small and petty businessmen, and people with low incomes. The Rose Revolution sent the Labor Party into a decline: within a short period it lost a large part of its membership and supporters and failed to prevent some of its members (who preferred the radicalism and unconstitutional methods of the National Movement to Natelashvili's parliamentary methods) from taking part in the revolution. At the rallies of the United National Movement, these people tore up their Labor membership cards in public.

Political Parties of the Business Community

Development of the market economy has considerably altered the social and economic context of political processes in Georgia. The economic factors of electoral preferences have come to the fore. Being fully aware of their economic interests, businessmen shape their political preferences accordingly since political decisions affect business activities in a very tangible way by increasing or decreasing profits. The business community tries to politically organize itself in order to directly control the political decision-making process. Its economic weakness, however, and criminal past do not allow it to put economic pressure on the government. This prompts another way out: independent political organizations of the business community. To achieve this, businessmen have to rally the people around their business interests. The Industry Will Save Georgia Party appeared because of the discrepancy between weak industry and the integration process into the world economy now underway. This party claims protection of the domestic market and creation of privileged conditions for Georgian industry, which is regarded as the

¹³ See: *Politicheskie partii Gruzii*, p. 58.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

cornerstone of the country's future revival, as its main aims. The party has called on society to "Save Our Industry and Industry Will Save Georgia."¹⁵ It objects to borrowing from the IMF and World Bank because, it says, they impose crippling terms on the country. The party leader, Georgy Topadze, stated: "Georgia has been caught in the neocolonialist trap." The party born in 1999 overcame the 7 percent barrier during the 1999 elections and created its own parliamentary faction.

In 2001, another party appeared on the Georgian political scene—Akhali Memarjvneebi (The New Right)—which described itself as a right-centrist party.¹⁶ Based on the "new faction," "new movement," and "new conservatives," it was set up by two young businessmen and parliamentary deputies Levan Gachechiladze, a big wine manufacturer, and David Gamkrelidze, who works in insurance. The party is oriented toward the West and NATO and (as distinct from the industrialists) indulges itself in anti-Russian statements; it is campaigning for the liberalization of the economy and a state ruled by law.¹⁷

“Nationals” and Democrats Locked in a Struggle for the Party

In the wake of the Rose Revolution, the United Democrats and the United National Movement merged (the former functioned as an independent structure for only two years, from 2002 to 2004). The process was much more painful than their leaders could have imagined. Before the congress that took place in November 2004, some of the local cells of merging parties were locked in a struggle for control over the party organizational structures, which in places developed into open conflicts. For example, on 10 June, 2004, information appeared about a conflict between the old and new "nationals" of the Ozurgeti organization. It split into two camps, each accusing the other of usurping the party structures. There were two offices in Ozurgeti, each of which claimed the name of the National Movement, even though one of them was occupied by former democrats, while the other belonged to the old members of the United National Movement.¹⁸ In the Bolnisi District, unification took an even more dramatic turn: the conflict developed into popular disturbances when voters, party members, and their relatives, divided into "democrats" and "nationals," poured into the street to "sort things out." Neither the party leaders, nor the presidential representative in Kvemo Kartli, Soso Mazmishvili, were able to defuse the conflict.¹⁹

The confrontation spread to the Kakheti Region where conflicts between "democrats" and "nationals" had begun even before the merge was announced. Even though the United National Movement won the elections, the Democrats tried to usurp power at the local level. The response of the "nationals" was dramatic; in Kiziki they went as far as a hunger strike.²⁰ In the Gurjaani District, the democrats and the "nationals" failed to come to an agreement about the district head. At first the "nationals" wanted to appoint one of their own representatives; later some of the members moved to the democrats' camp. To defuse tension, President Saakashvili, the leader of the United National Movement, dispatched his representative to Gurjaani. Before he reached the district, there was a scuffle between the two groups in the administrative building. This brought David Kirkitadze, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Defense and Security, to the region, who laid the blame on I. Kardanakhishvili, chairman of the local cell of the United National Movement. Later, even though a secret meeting appointed Saakashvili (the president's namesake) as the new leader of the local party organization, the former chairman preserved real power

¹⁵ *Industry Will Save Georgia. The Key Program Principles and Charter*, Tbilisi, 1999, p. 13 (in Georgian).

¹⁶ See: *The New Right Political Association. Charter*, p. 1 (in Georgian).

¹⁷ See: *Politicheskie partii Gruzii*, p. 94.

¹⁸ See: *Akhali Taoba*, 14 June, 2004.

¹⁹ See: *Akhali versia*, 19-21 November, 2004.

²⁰ See: *24 saati*, 15 November, 2004.

and continued functioning as before. The “nationals,” however, retreated out of respect for President Saakashvili, as they insisted.²¹

In Gurjaani, confrontation was rekindled as the merge began. At a district conference convened to discuss the merge of the local organizations, the “nationals” lost their patience and beat I. Kardanakhishvili, who supported the merge. The “nationals” were worried by the fact that the democrats, who had lost the local elections, were still seeking control over the local united organization and the district. They were convinced that the merge could undermine their influence and boost the rating of the defeated party. One of the local “nationals,” Z. Kvirikashvili, pointed out: “The elections have shown that the leader of the democrats failed to get enough votes in his native village. It looks as if we are rescuing a party that was thrown onto the refuse heap of history and boosting its rating. Nothing good will come of it.”²² Some of the members of the United National Movement preferred to keep silent and refrained from sharp comments until the congress scheduled for 22 November, 2004. They too were convinced that the merge would deprive the party’s district national organization of any meaning. Its local office remained closed for over a month, while Saakashvili, its member, said: “Our continued party membership is senseless, therefore the party leaders should react before the situation spins out of control.”²³

At the conference of the United National Movement in Telavi, the district *gamgebeli* announced that the “nationals” and the democrats should unite to form a single party. This caused a veritable storm in the audience; there were shouts and ultimatums, yet fighting was avoided. The response in other districts was more or less the same.²⁴ One of the old members of the United National Movement and chairman of a parliamentary committee, G. Kheviashvili, did not attempt to conceal the fact that “somebody tried” to leave the old and active members outside the movement.²⁵

The confrontation and conflicts that accompanied the merge can be explained by the two parties’ different social bases and different program priorities. As distinct from the United Democrats Party, which had no following in the countryside, the United National Movement enjoyed the support of the workers and peasants. It resolutely objected to Shevardnadze’s rule and was more clearly guided by Georgian values. The “nationals” and democrats were the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks of the Rose Revolution. The United National Movement clearly stated its aim as “deposing Shevardnadze’s nomenklatura government” through political mobilization of the nation. This was done during the Rose Revolution.

This was not all: the “nationals” promised that when they came to power all top officials would be deprived of illegally gained property and would be brought to trial; small and middle-sized businesses were promised tax amnesty, and peasants and farmers, land tax exemption. The temperamental political leaders promised to restore the country’s territorial integrity and planned to take “resolute measures” “in the shortest time possible” to return the breakaway territories to Georgia’s jurisdiction. The party program paid particular attention to strengthening the economic basis of the Georgian Orthodox Church; it promised to return the lands and buildings the Bolsheviks had taken away from it, which have remained in public property since then. The program also spoke about saving Georgian culture, reviving the country’s intellectual potential and educational system, switching paperwork in state offices to the Georgian language, paying for teaching the Georgian tongue across the country, etc. The sections dealing with the Georgian Church and Georgian culture betrayed the philosophical closeness between the movement’s leaders and the supporters of deposed president Gamsakhurdia.

As distinct from the “nationals,” the United Democrats professed more moderate ideas. They did not want to depose Shevardnadze and confiscate illegally gained property, they did not promise to restore the country’s territorial integrity “in the shortest time possible,” which obviously excluded “resolute measures.” Their program documents found in the *Politicheskii partii Gruzii* (Political Parties of Georgia) handbook do not mention the word “Georgian.”

²¹ See: *Ibidem*.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ See: *Akhali versia*, 19-21 November, 2004.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

Active opposition staged by the old “nationals” did not prevent the movements’ merge with the United Democrats. As could be expected, the congress of the United National Movement held on 22 November, 2004 went smoothly. This betrayed the weakness of inner party democracy: the party leaders were seeking unity among the members not so much through freedom of expression of the local structures and rank-and-file members, as by applying the administrative resources the leaders controlled as the heads of state and government. On the eve of the congress one of the active “nationals” told journalists that district heads (*gamgebeli*) and governors (the president’s representatives in regions) would prevent troublemakers from attending the congress.²⁶

Organizational Structures of Political Parties

They would best be analyzed as actors on the political stage and as “political bodies.” In the former case, we are interested in how the parties fight for power and what they do to retain it; and in the latter, we are interested in the way power is distributed inside the parties; how they are organized; how its membership functions; and how it is connected with the organization, its viability, inner party democracy, etc.

The organizational structures of the political parties of Georgia are described in their charters, which are normally adopted at the congresses empowered to amend them. Formally, their structures are democratic, yet this merely hides the real distribution of power inside the parties. More likely than not the leaders and relatively small groups of trusted people wield power. The leader’s domination is explained by the fact that it is the leader who sets up the party, not vice versa. As a rule, the parties depend for their success on the leader’s rating. It is for the leader to present his party to the nation, to describe its positions on all key issues. The leader attracts the media and creates an interest in his party and its image. All the parties which remained active after the Rose Revolution were set up by their leaders: Mikhail Saakashvili founded the United National Movement; Shalva Natelashvili founded the Labor Party; David Gamkrelidze and Levan Gachechiladze, the New Right; Georgy Topadze, Industry Will Save Georgia; and Akaki Asatiani, the Union of Georgian Traditionalists. The parties eclipsed by the Rose Revolution also owed their existence to political leaders: Vakhtang Rcheulishvili set up the Socialist Party; Zurab Zhvania, the United Democrats; Georgy Chanturia, the National Democratic Party; Eduard Shevardnadze, the Citizens’ Union of Georgian; and Aslan Abashidze, the Union of Revival of Georgia. In Georgia, the party leaders do not change—this might trigger a split.

Out of the 11 leaders of the 10 parties enumerated above, five were members of parliament when they set up their parties; two—Shevardnadze and Abashidze—were top state figures. As such, they were well known in the country and had administrative resources at their disposal. These five parties appeared due to the active efforts of parliamentary deputies after 1995. This shows that the legislators are increasing their impact on the party-forming process. A seat in the parliament gives a politician enough resources to form a party and become its leader. Daily discussions of key issues of national importance and systematic involvement in political activities attract the media; the deputies are well informed about the functioning of the state mechanism and about domestic and foreign policies. They obviously know more than common people about the corridors of power, etc. Deputy immunity protects them against encroachments from the executive power and police. A deputy has much more opportunity of receiving material support from the business community. All this increases the parliament’s role in the party system development process.

Congresses elect the ruling structures of the parties, yet this produces little impact on the real distribution of power in any party: it is the party leaders who keep an eye on the congress’ makeup and the

²⁶ See: *Akhali versia*, 19-21 November, 2004.

important decisions it is expected to pass. Normally this starts from the very beginning, at the constituent congress attended by only those who trust the party's founder and are prepared to follow him. This explains why the founder, who does a lot to create the party's backbone, is always elected the party leader. Once elected, he acquires control over the party's organization. This is most clearly seen in the Labor Party (its congress elects the chairman and approves his report). The elected chairman controls the elections to all ruling structures; he presents candidates who are elected by the congress to the general congress and has the right to approve those suggested by the congress. The congress elects the party's political committee from among the elected members of the general council; the political bureau is elected from among the members of the political committee. The political committee (with a membership of 25, including the chairman) plays the role of the executive structure in the Labor Party. In this way, the party remains under strict control; the same can be said about how the charter and program are observed. The chairman also heads all the leading bodies: the political committee and its bureau, as well as its general council.²⁷

It looks as if the chairman of the United National Movement has less power than his colleague in the Labor Party. The leading structures of the United National Movement are formed under the control of the party's political council of 33 members elected by the congress. The political council controls elections to the party's secretariat and approval by the congress of the presidential candidate, as well as the party lists for parliamentary and other elections. The congress is left to approve all candidates nominated by the political council. It is for the political council to choose the party's political course and pass decisions on all issues outside the congress' competence. It also controls all problems related to the party's development and enlargement (including setting up its local cells). The political council is made up of members of the secretariat, parliamentary faction, and chairmen of branch commissions. It serves as a link between the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary party structures, thus involving the deputies in party life. The party chairman heads the political council: this makes it possible for him to control the decision-making process on all key political and organizational issues. The party leader has specific executive functions, like making statements, issuing orders, instructions, etc. Together with other party functionaries of the United National Movement (the general and political, regional, and executive secretaries, and the chairman of the youth organization), he is a member of the secretariat. This structure meets once a week. There is no time limit on the powers of the party's ruling structures (the chairman included), which exempts them from control of the primary organizations and makes it impossible to call the top functionaries to account or to change the composition of the ruling structures contrary to the leader's wishes.²⁸

As distinct from the "nationals," the New Right elect their top party leaders (the chairman, two cochairmen, general secretary, members of the main committee, and the auditing commission along with its chairman) for a term of four years. The congress nominates the party's presidential candidate. At the same time, the local party structures (regional and ten district cells) enjoy vast powers when it comes to choosing candidates for all the elected posts. This is obviously a much more democratic procedure than those used by other parties. This is the congress' only privilege: the political council endorses the party lists for all other posts, as well as the list of candidates running in the single-member constituencies. The main committee, which offers the lists to the political council, controls the process of candidate selection. At first glance, the political council is a fairly representative body. A closer inspection, however, reveals that its membership is limited to the party leaders of various levels: the party chairman, members of the main committee, chairmen of regional and district organizations, parliamentary deputies, as well as elected, appointed, or approved officials of the executive structures recommended by the party (ten members being appointed by the main committee), the chairman of the youth organization, and its board members. The political council sets up commissions, passes decisions on forming blocs or coalitions with other parties and on boycotting elections or going over to the opposition, listens to the reports of regional organizations and endorses them, etc.

²⁷ See: *Politicheskie partii Gruzii*, p. 181.

²⁸ See: *Ibid.*, p. 61.

The New Right concentrated all real work and real power in the executive committee headed by the party chairman. It consists of 17 members, including the chairman, the cochairmen, and the general secretary empowered to make statements in the name of the party. It is on his suggestion that the structure of the executive committee is endorsed and the chairmen of the regional and district structures are appointed. In this way, he has control over the leaders of the local structures. It is his mission to convene special congresses and conferences, to compile party lists to be approved by the political council, and to coordinate the work of the central, regional, and district structures. The party chairman, in turn, chairs the meetings of the political council and the main committee, nominates the candidate for general secretary, and presents this nomination to the congress, etc.

The local structures form the core of the party organizations, yet they cope poorly with their function of rallying the masses around the party. Their role in promoting the party ideas among the masses is minimal: not only the primary cells, but also the leaders are obviously unwilling to pour efforts into disseminating the party ideas, explaining its position, and creating its image. The public gets its ideas about the party from bits and pieces of its leaders' pronouncements on topical issues.

The local structures of most Georgian parties are developing and working under the supervision of the central structures. The political council of the United National Movement, for example, passes decisions on setting up local organizations, which are thus allowed to show initiative in planning their activity. (The rules on local organizations, however, have to be endorsed by the political council.) In the Labor Party, the city, district, zonal, village, and precinct centers are its local structures, the heads (coordinators) of which are endorsed by the political committee (the minimal membership of the primary cells is three persons).²⁹

The New Right Party too, has regional, district, and primary structures. The district structure is set up on a decision of the main committee in towns and districts of constituencies with no less than 100 party members. The conference is its supreme body. It elects the chairman of the district organization; discusses and compiles lists for elections to the country's legislature and local self-administration bodies; and elects (for a term of two years) the bureau of the district organization. The bureau offers the main committee a candidate for the single-member constituencies at parliamentary elections to be endorsed by the political council; collects party dues; and convenes party conferences. The district organizations are headed by chairmen.³⁰ Regional structures are formed on the initiative of the main committees in regions with no less than 500 party members, while the primary cells appear on a decision of the district bureau.³¹

Party membership is the cornerstone of the party's viability and functioning, its main organizational and political resource, which forms the party's ruling structures, compiles (on the whole) party lists, and is engaged in public relations. The party's financial well-being depends on its membership: it mainly functions on membership dues. At the same time, members of various parties are unable to pay dues because of the economic problems plaguing the country. This largely undermines the parties' legal material basis and interferes with their activities. For this reason, the ties between the parties and society remain slack.

While in the early 1990s, parties were mainly small groups of like-minded people with no ramified organizational structures, since the latter half of the 1990s, they have been strengthening their structures and increasing their memberships. In 2003, for example, the United National Movement boasted a membership of 30,000; the New Right, 13,845; the Industry Will Save Georgia Party, 94,000; the Labor Party, 55,000; the Socialist Party, 70,000, and the National Democratic Party, 6,000.³² We should bear in mind, however, that the parties tend to overstate the size of their membership in order to pass for strong and influential political organizations. A comparison between the votes cast for the parties at the repeat parliamentary elections of March 2004 and the officially stated figures of party membership reveals the follow-

²⁹ See: *Politicheskie partii Gruzii*, p. 18.

³⁰ See: *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² See: *Ibidem*.

ing picture: the Socialist Party with a claimed membership of 70,000 got 7,229 votes at the elections of March 2004. This suggests that either the official figure was an inflated one or that the lists did contain 70,000 names, but most of its former members had either lost contact with the party or did not have any contact with it in the first place. In the beginning, the Socialists were busy building up membership, which more often than not was formal: the number of votes cast for the Socialists is the party's real numerical strength. Indeed, there is greater possibility of a party obtaining the vote of its own member than of any non-party voter.

The New Right claimed a membership of 13,845; and the Industry Will Save Georgia, 94,000 (their combined officially claimed membership was 107,845). They formed a bloc for the repeat elections and received 113,313 votes. In other words, their electorate is larger than their formal membership, which raises no questions. Both parties mainly represent the interests of the business community, which explains their members' loyalty and the support of non-party voters. This allowed the parties to overcome the 7 percent barrier and obtain seats in the parliament. The Labor Party (with a claimed membership of 55,000) received 89,941 votes; and the United National Movement (30,000 members) and the United Democrats (10,000 strong), which formed an election bloc, received 992,275 votes.³³

It should be noted that the parties vest their members with broad rights and impose easy duties on them, which require minimal efforts. For example, any citizen who recognizes the charter of the United National Movement, pays party dues, is not a member of any other party, and helps to promote the movement's aims can be its member. He acquires the right to elect and be elected to its ruling, executive, advisory, and auditing structures, take part in discussing the issues related to party functioning, and obtain information on anything that may interest him. He is duty bound to abide by the decisions of the party's ruling structures and disseminate information about its activities.³⁴

Like the members of the United National Movement, a member of the Labor Party has the right to elect and be elected to any of its structures, and to obtain information from the party leaders about the party and their own work. This right is very important for more active involvement of the rank-and-file members in party work and for more democratic control over the party's ruling structures, which keeps the leaders in touch with the masses. As distinct from the United National Movement, in the Labor Party this right is specified: the members have the right to obtain information precisely about the work of the ruling structures and the party leaders (the United National Movement Charter speaks about information on topics that may interest its members). The formal possibilities of the Labor Party members are much stronger, as well as their right to take part in the party congresses.

The charter of the National Democratic Party differs radically from the similar documents of other parties as far as the members' rights and duties are concerned. It is much closer to the party of professional revolutionaries of the Leninist type. The charter presupposes two types of membership: full and free. The full members are much more closely associated with the party than the free members; they are registered with one of the primary cells, pay membership dues, are involved in the political activities of the party, and have casting votes. The free members are registered with one of the primary cells on the basis of personal applications; they actively support the party (especially during election campaigns), and have deliberative votes.³⁵

The charters of many political parties presuppose close ties between their parliamentary deputies and the party organization outside the parliament. The members of the United National Movement parliamentary faction, for example, are also members of its political council, while the New Right does not limit the right of decision making to its parliamentary faction, but has extended it to all those elected or appointed to the executive structures from the party. Its political council includes the members of the parliamentary faction and those who represent the party in the executive structures.

Some parties impose a stricter code of behavior on its representatives in the legislative and executive structures. The New Right, for example, demands that the party members who occupy posts in the

³³ See: *Itogovy protokol provedennykh v marte 2004 po proporsional'noy izbiratel'noy sisteme povtornykh parlament-skikh vyborov 2 noiabria 2003 goda. Rasporyazhenie Tsentral'noy izbiratel'noy komissii*, No. 94, 2004.

³⁴ See: *Politicheskie partii Gruzii*, pp. 61-62.

³⁵ See: *Ibid.*, p. 80.

legislative and executive structures should quit them if the party goes over to the opposition.³⁶ A Labor deputy elected to a legislative structure by party lists should vacate his seat if excluded from the party, or if he leaves it on his own free will.³⁷

All Georgian political parties pay particular attention to the youth; nearly all of them have youth organizations, the heads of which are members of their respective parties' ruling structures. The leader of the youth organization of the United National Movement, for example, is a member of its secretariat.³⁸ The New Right has a youth structure of the same name (its leader and board members are also members of the party's political council).³⁹ The National Democratic Party has a structure called the Young National Democrat, which, according to the charter, is an autonomous unit responsible for the party's youth policy.⁴⁰ Its chairman is elected by the congress of the Young National Democrat organization, which has its own charter adopted on 22 November, 2002.⁴¹ The NDP worked actively with students and paid much attention to teenagers: the Young National Democrat comprises the Union of Pupils and the Graali Student Movement.⁴²

C o n c l u s i o n

The façade of democracy also covers the country's political parties, while the democratic procedures camouflage the fact that it is the party leaders and the elite who dominate the political scene. The party leaders keep the initiatives of local organizations under their strict control; the parties are set up around their leaders. In fact, they largely depend for their continued existence on the leaders' political prestige. This serves as fertile ground for raising the political elite. The parliament's role in shaping the political images of the party leaders is translated into its greater impact on the process of party development.

³⁶ See: *Politicheskie partii Gruzii*, p. 100.

³⁷ See: *Ibid.*, p. 181.

³⁸ See: *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁹ See: *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁴⁰ See: *Ibidem.*

⁴¹ See: *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴² See: *Ibidem.*

GEORGIA: POLITICAL PARTIES BEFORE AND AFTER THE ROSE REVOLUTION

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The country is heading toward democracy and busy consolidating its institutions, so it is paying particular attention to fair and legitimate elections and encouraging the appearance of strong political parties as one of the guarantors of democracy and stability. Indeed, an election is a political proce-

ture which allows a nation to ensure a peaceful transition of power and mobilize its citizens. It allows the voters and political forces to use their constitutional right to take part in the country's political life. At times, these forces fail to recognize their responsibility to the voters. As a result, an increasingly larger share of the country's population is becoming disillusioned by representative democracy and elections as its political institution. It often happens that far from creating public harmony, elections generate even wider political gaps or even sharper social conflicts. This was vividly demonstrated by the Rose Revolution, a direct response to the massive falsifications of the parliamentary elections of 2 November, 2003. The mass actions forced President Shevardnadze to resign before his term in office expired. But very soon after that the crisis was resolved and events developed in compliance with the constitution. And great efforts were made to carry out democratic elections. Yet it is too early to say that we have achieved stability in our election and political system.

It should be mentioned that, along with the parties which accumulated vast experience of political struggle in the wake of the Soviet Union's disintegration, new political structures (or rather political clubs with no clear political platforms and no particular skills for active involvement in politics) appeared in Georgia. Some of the relatively stable parties are falling apart and/or are being split. These varied and chaotic processes were created by the circumstances and our society's current needs. There can be no ideal parties—they reflect the country's political climate. In Georgia's case, we should take into account its historical, political, and economic specifics: the democratic development level, the nation's mentality, the structure of the electorate, the level of party identification, and the accompanying contradictions and trends.

Our political system is far from stable, while many political parties are only stirred to life for a short period during the election race. Parties did not actively show their faces until the 1980s-1990s, since under the communist totalitarian regime they were necessarily clandestine structures. Some of the parties were new; others were inherited (or rather restored) from the period of Georgia's independence (1918-1921). There were several public organizations (the Rustaveli Society, the Ilia Chavchavadze Society, the Helsinki Union, etc.) which declared their aims to be Georgia's restored independence and the building of a democratic state.

The Round Table-Free Georgia election bloc won the first multiparty elections on 28 October, 1990 with the overwhelming majority of 62 percent of the votes. The Communist Party of Georgia came second with 25.6 percent, while other political forces remained outside the parliament. The elections put an end to the long period of communist domination; they brought the anticommunist national-minded coalition headed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia to power. This short period can be described as the transition to a multiparty system. Political life became more active; more people came to the polls; and there were about 80 officially registered parties. The quantity, however, had nothing to do with the quality: some of the parties remained on paper, while others hardly survived the organizational period. In fact, only 4 or 5 parties remained on the scene as working structures.

At first glance, it seemed that the entire political spectrum—from right to left and from radicals to liberals—was represented, yet Georgia's political system was neither clearly structured, nor stable. It was developing haphazardly amid intense rivalry for political leadership. This, and the external factor, resulted in the collapse of power. The inefficiency of the representative bodies of power quenched public optimism during the first multiparty elections. The resulting disillusionment threatened with absenteeism. The 14 months of the bloc's rule ended in a disaster. In January 1992, the first president elected by the nation was deposed by force of arms and with the help of external forces. He was accused of trying to establish an authoritarian regime.

These were the most tragic years with no stable power and a war going on in Abkhazia. Georgia's future depended to a great extent on armed criminal groups. Still, in October 1992, Eduard Shevardnadze managed to hold parliamentary elections to legitimize his power; he gradually neutralized the privately-controlled armed groups and established elementary order. In 1995 the country adopted its Constitution. This did not mean, however, that the country acquired more or less solid democratic foundations; there was no system of political competition, while society remained polarized. Clans concentrated political and economic power in their hands; the country's political institutions—the parliament, parties, and

NGOs—were an empty shell rather than working institutions. The Citizens' Union of Georgia won the parliamentary elections of 1995 to become the parliamentary majority; and its head, Shevardnadze, was elected president of Georgia.¹

The parliamentary elections of 1999 differed greatly from the previous ones: the political forces had to cope with absolutely new tasks (in particular, they tried to use the procedures indispensable to a Western-type election campaign). All more or less large parties hired image-makers to help them cope with the task.

The crowded political market forced parties, blocs, and alliances to court the voters and "sell" them their promises, slogans, and programs; they had to work hard to acquire acceptable political images in order to favorably impress the voters and win them over to their side. This urged the broad masses to act according to the political parties' interests and created an illusion of freedom of expression.

Ten years of election experience have demonstrated that the schemes borrowed from the West need modifying. The following factors influence the election results: the country's political, economic, and social situation; its historical traditions; the level of the nation's legal and political awareness, the nation's mentality, and the level of democratic development. During elections our citizens behave differently from voters in countries with developed democracies. I am referring not only to the national features, but also to the degree of democratic development. For example, in the United States, 70 to 80 percent of the voters consistently vote either for the Republicans or for the Democrats, so the real fight is for the 20 to 30 percent of undecided voters. American elections are carried out by means of smoothly functioning party mechanisms, in which local structures play an important role. Georgia does not have political parties of the Western type; it has no real political market; there is no rivalry among the political forces; and the parties are inclined to use undemocratic methods and deviant procedures. Administrative, force, and financial resources bring victory; the electorate is hardly structuralized, while the voters' legal and democratic awareness is virtually nonexistent; and the political parties are largely undistinguishable.

A developed political market, which alone can offer the best possible conditions for society's political functioning and progress, is a *sine qua non* of democratic election campaigns. In the West, the political sphere is secularized and acquires some of the market elements at a much slower pace than in new political systems. In fact, the post-Soviet expanse lacks a real political market and free political competition (the involvement of several political parties in elections cannot be described as such). The old system was falling apart, while a new system (democratic traditions, structures, stereotypes, and the market) had not yet appeared. Subjective and objective factors were also involved. In fact, the larger (as compared with Soviet times) number of those who claimed power triggered a reverse process: no conscious choice among the vaguely different alternatives was possible.

Georgia went through the same processes as the other post-Soviet countries. The old social and class structure of the communist era fell apart leaving behind a void; and the old and new post-Soviet elite moved into the vacant niche. Together they created a capitalist system of bureaucrats and oligarchs and pushed the rest of the nation to the wayside. This was the context in which the 1999 parliamentary elections took place. The Union of Democratic Revival² around which the opposition closed its ranks was the main, and only, rival of the ruling Citizens' Union Party. Several other political structures also ran for parliament: Industry Will Save Georgia, the Labor Party, and the National-Democratic Alliance—the Third Way, consisting of the National-Democratic and the Republican parties. The nation was mostly concerned with poverty, unemployment, and corruption; and it hoped that industry would revive. The Citizens' Union, however, tried to kindle hopes for a better future by means of international projects expected to bring prosperity to each and everyone. A stable future and prosperity were identified with Eduard Shevardnadze, the party's chairman.

¹ Two other parties—the Vozrozhdenie (Revival) bloc and the National-Democratic Party—also exceeded the 7 percent barrier.

² The election bloc included the Union of Democratic Revival, the Socialist Party of Georgia, the Union of Georgian Traditionalists, the People's Party, the Chkondideli Society, and the Call of Nation Movement.

According to psychologists, the Citizens' Union used the Revival bloc to create an "enemy image" to defuse tension and rally the masses: "A dark force is trying to engulf the country to destroy everything and kindle a civil war; there will be no democracy, or any of the things we have already achieved." This strategy proved to be the right one: the Citizens' Union won by a large margin—41.75 percent of the votes against 25.18 percent cast for the Revival bloc. Industry Will Save Georgia got 7.08 percent. To everyone's amazement, the Labor Party, the winner of the local 1998 elections, did not get into parliament.³ The National-Democratic Alliance failed to explain to the nation in clear terms what it meant by the third way and offer a clear alternative. The 1999 elections were held as a center/regional opposition even though, according to unofficial information, there was a preliminary agreement between them. The Citizens' Union got even more votes than at the 1995 elections. The Revival bloc (which posed itself as a nationwide opposition structure) was a regional organization which ruled in Ajaria, where it enjoyed the same rights as the Citizens' Union across the country. The victory of the Industrialists simply made their party better known and nothing else, since they could do little in the parliament and were not involved in Georgia's political life.

The Georgian economy and government system were divided among several corrupted clans. As a result of post-Soviet democratization and privatization, the Soviet nomenklatura preserved its control over the government and privatized economic privileges. These people used elections to gain a firmer grip on power by falsifying the election results. The corrupt clan system entirely appropriated the country's resources; then it started redistributing power and money, which ended in the downfall or disintegration of large political forces. In 2001, a group of successful businessmen left the Citizens' Union; later some of them united into the New Right Party, while others (headed by Mikhail Saakashvili) set up the National Movement. On the eve of the local elections of June 2002, the president abandoned his post as chairman of the Citizens' Union, while the remaining groups started a squabble among themselves: accusations of betrayal and ignoring the party's program and principles ran free and wild. After a while, another group known as the Zhvania Team left the Citizens' Union. At the local elections, it ran together with the Christian-Conservative Party (which later became known as the United Democrats).

It should be said that the range of political forces at these elections was fairly wide, while the parties concentrated on social issues, discrediting the ruling party, and revealing its impotence. The parties called on people to be actively involved in political developments. The National Movement selected "Tbilisi without Shevardnadze" as its slogan; the Labor Party called on the nation to "Deprive the Plunderers of Power;" the Christian-Conservative Party (the Zhvania Team) urged the people to "Show Them Your Power." The Citizens' Union offered the rather weak slogan of "We Act at Your Bidding." This time the nation was not easily duped: the people knew that the ruling party had failed to fulfill its promises of 1999. The Revival bloc preferred to juxtapose its interests to the interests of other political forces with the slogan of "While Others Promise—We Act!" The bloc carried little weight in Tbilisi even though it did its best to bury the myth that called it a regional or "Batumi" party. The elections to the Tbilisi municipal structure produced the following results: the Labor Party, 25.50 percent; the National Movement, 23.75 percent; the New Right, 11.36 percent; the Christian-Conservative Party, 7.27 percent; Industry Will Save Georgia, 7.13 percent; and Revival, 6.34 percent.

The opposition gained control over the Tbilisi municipality; Mikhail Saakashvili, the National Movement leader, was elected as its chairman. The ruling Citizens' Union with 2.52 percent did not reach the 5 percent barrier. We can say now that this is when the preparations for the Rose Revolution began. The victors' promises and slogans had nothing to do with city self-administration and the municipality. The fierce struggle could be explained by the fact that the parliamentary and presidential elections were not far away and the parties were preparing themselves for the post-Shevardnadze period. Nobody doubted that the opposition would carry the day at the upcoming parliamentary elections: the Citizens' Union had been completely discredited, while the Revival bloc had lost first the Traditionalists and then the

³ Its leader, Sh. Natelashvili, insisted that his party had exceeded the 7 percent barrier; this was confirmed by international organizations.

Socialist Party. In 2003, the latter ran for parliament as part of the governmental For New Georgia bloc. The country's economy and politics were in a crisis; the shadow economy flourished as nowhere else across the post-Soviet expanse; and the share of public revenues in the GNP was the lowest among the post-Soviet states. State structures were obviously inefficient; the public no longer trusted them. The nation, which felt that changes for the better were overdue, demonstrated activity at the parliamentary elections of 2 November, 2003. The results did not match the popular mood (see Table 1).⁴

Table 1

Results of Parliamentary Elections of 2 November, 2003

	Share of Votes (%)	Number of Seats
The For New Georgia bloc	21.32	38
The Revival bloc	18.84	33
The Labor Party	12.04	20
The Saakashvili-National Movement bloc	18.08	32
The Burjanadze-Democrats Alliance	8.79	15
The New Right Party	7.35	12
The Industry Will Save Georgia Party	6.17	—

To preserve their posts and privileges for four more years, the pro-government For New Georgia bloc⁵ did not hesitate to falsify the results on a mass scale and deprived voters in great numbers of their right to vote. This triggered mass protest rallies orchestrated by Mikhail Saakashvili, leader of the National Movement. Shevardnadze had to resign. The events caused by an outburst of public negativity toward the authorities' disdain of its interests are known as the Rose Revolution. It was carried out by unconstitutional methods, but the legal frames were promptly restored. The victors wasted no time: the extraordinary presidential elections that took place on 4 January, 2004 brought victory to the revolution's leader, Saakashvili. He gathered 96 percent of the votes; at the parliamentary elections held on 28 March, 2004 his party, the National Movement, won the majority of seats (see Table 2).⁶

The Rose Revolution radically changed Georgia's political landscape: some of the parties disappeared without a trace; and those which did not get into parliament lost much of their former influence. It should be said that this was due to the revolutionary situation: the members of the pro-government For New Georgia bloc, which claimed the victory at the parliamentary elections of 2003, were more concerned with their personal safety than with anything else. The Revival bloc, the ruling party of Ajaria, shared the fate of the For New Georgia bloc: the National Movement-Democrats toppled Aslan Abashidze's authoritarian regime and evicted him from the country.

Those opposition parties that failed to support the revolution (here I have in mind the Labor Party, the New Right, the Industrialists, the National-Democratic Party, and some others) were dismissed as "enemies of the nation." This cost them popular support at the parliamentary elections. The Labor Party lost more members than the others: they joined the National Movement. The party lost the majority of its

⁴ [www.cec.gov.ge].

⁵ The bloc united the following structures: the Citizens' Union, the Socialist Party, the National-Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Christian-Democratic Union, the Party of Liberation of Abkhazia, and supporters of G. Sharadze.

⁶ [www.cec.gov.ge].

Table 2

Results of Parliamentary Elections of 28 March, 2004

	Share of Votes (%)	Number of Seats
The Labor Party	6.01	
The Right Opposition-The Industrialists, New Right bloc	7.56	15
The Revival bloc	3.86	
The National Movement-Democrats	66.24	135
National-Democratic Party-Traditionalists	2.55	

seats in Tbilisi's municipality. At the 2004 parliamentary elections, the rightists closed their ranks (the Right Opposition-the Industrialists bloc and the New Right Party). Their following in the country is small but stable: despite the Rose Revolution, the rightist forces exceeded the 7 percent barrier and gathered practically the same number of votes as before the revolution. Even though the New Right Party was born in 2001, it has managed to acquire a small but loyal electorate. Still, the National Movement-Democrats who launched the Rose Revolution monopolized the country's political expanse. They acquired the constitutional majority in the parliament and are now unilaterally engaged in parliamentary activities. The revolutionary upsurge in Georgia was caused by popular indignation against massive falsifications of the results of the 2003 parliamentary elections, yet it was rooted much deeper in the nation's accumulated discontent with life.

Any revolution breeds euphoria—no wonder the National Movement and its charismatic leader Mikhail Saakashvili, who gave people the hope of a better future, gained the nation's complete confidence in response. It should be said that the 7 percent barrier (which the EU and other international organizations suggested should be lowered to give the opposition a chance) contributed to the National Movement's spectacular victory. Otherwise the legislature might have been politically more varied. The opposition demanded that the elections be postponed to allow the public to sober up. In addition, the election campaign coincided with the export of the Rose Revolution to Ajaria. The de facto break-away republic was returned to the single political expanse, while the public became even more euphoric. We must admit that the National Movement-Democrats had no rivals; the political monopolist owed its victory to the euphoric masses, but this fact interfered with party development in Georgia. P. Chikhradze, one of the New Right leaders, said that the opposition could hardly function with its small and fairly poor supporting mechanisms under conditions in which the parliamentary majority had the entire parliamentary machine at its disposal. Meanwhile, a strong opposition helps to develop healthy democracy.

Still, during the fifteen years of its independence Georgia had acquired a multiparty system, albeit ineffective. All the elections demonstrated that this system could be more correctly called a one-party system in which the nation's majority supported one party. At the early stage, it was the Round Table, which was later replaced by the Citizens' Union and then by the National Movement-Democrats. The victors were rightly proud of the results, yet, after a while when the election promises remained unfulfilled and democratic principles ignored, they started working against the victors. As a result, power was changed in a violent and non-constitutional way. The Round Table was the first victim, falling apart after twelve months. The same fate befell the Citizens' Union, which had managed to remain afloat for ten years. The current parliamentary majority, which assumed huge responsibilities during the Rose Revolution, should never forget this, otherwise the unstable electorate with its unstable sympathies will deprive

the victors of its support. If this happens, the National Movement-Democrats bloc will face a similar threat. Let me remind you that the leaders of the ruling parties always obtained a huge share of votes: Z. Gamsakhurdia, 87 percent, and E. Shevardnadze, 79.82 percent. Mikhail Saakashvili gathered even more—96 percent. This means that at a certain turning point Georgian society identifies the chance of remedying the situation with one charismatic leader and pins its hopes of future prosperity on him. In other words, the political culture of the poorly structured electorate is still very low, while democratic institutions and political parties are still weak.

An analysis of the development of the party system in Georgia has identified certain problems which are preventing our country from acquiring political organizations of the Western type. Many of the parties claiming their loyalty to democracy still rely on their leaders, and not on the principle of collective leadership. These parties lack inner democracy: their leaders personally pass all the decisions. This breeds inner conflicts which might end in a split or even in the party's death.

This process creates more parties, on the one hand, while it interferes with their consolidating and functioning, on the other. Some of the parties are small, poorly organized, and poorly structured; they lack the necessary mechanisms, they have no stable following; and they cannot set up local branches. Certain parties do not have enough money to pay for efficient organizational efforts, either during election campaigns, or between them.

* * *

It is interesting to know what leaders of political parties think about the current political processes and the future of the weak opposition. Indeed, does it intend to pool its forces, or will its structures continue functioning separately? For example, P. Chikhradze, one of the leaders of the New Right, has pointed out: "A strong opposition is a well-known postulate of democracy. It is needed for healthy competition. When a democratic majority unilaterally passes all decisions, opposition parties find it hard to function. Today, it is our main task to demonstrate to society that there are opinions different from those supported by the majority of that type and to convince the public that a variety of opinions is needed. As for pooling all the opposition forces, I can say that continued alliance with the Industrialists is our main task. We want to unite our parties because our electorate is too weak to be divided between several parties."⁷

Here is what K. Davitashvili, one of the founders and leaders of the National Movement who left it after the Rose Revolution, along with some of his colleagues, to create the United Conservatives Party, said in particular: "The fact that one party has more seats in parliament than the constitutional majority cannot be described as a positive phenomenon. In fact, the Constitution is being adjusted to accommodate these people and their political views. The opposition should be strengthened at the expense of this majority, since its two-thirds' predominance undermines the very much-needed balance, while parliament may make wrong decisions... So we left the party and will continue defending the ideas for the sake of which we united into the National Movement. The United Conservatives is a political structure in which broad competition is allowed. If any political force wishes to cooperate with us, we will invite it to join us, because we are convinced that different opinions strengthen a party, not destroy it. We are prepared to cooperate with any political force that shares our principles."⁸

The Labor Party, which lost the parliamentary elections, is one of the most radical opposition members. Its leader, Sh. Natelashvili, pointed out: "I cannot say that the opposition is weak. We are a powerful force. This was confirmed during my recent visit to the United States. Yet the victorious party did not allow us into parliament. There are two solutions: either hold early parliamentary elections, or begin a real revolution, from which we are not prepared to retreat. And this could mean an unpleasant outcome."⁹

⁷ An interview of 12 January, 2005.

⁸ An interview of 30 December, 2004.

⁹ An interview of 13 January, 2005.

Conclusion

The above suggests that Georgia has not yet acquired a stable political system. Much has been done in the past 10 to 15 years, but it takes a lot longer to embrace democratic values. Elections cannot yet fulfill their main function: recruiting the political elite and ensuring a peaceful transition of power. Therefore, the state should help political parties develop and improve the legal base, on the one hand, and all political forces should be given equal opportunities to function, on the other. This will create healthy competition among them.

Georgia will acquire party democracy and a multiparty system when all the above difficulties are overcome. The very word "multiparty" does not mean there will be an unlimited number of parties. Even two parties can create good prospects. They should be structures of the Western type, which means that they should obey inner party democracy and protect society's real interests.

THE PARTY SYSTEM IN KAZAKHSTAN AND THE ETHNIC ISSUE

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1. Local Specifics of the Party System

The place and role of a legislature among the country's political institutions is an indicator of its progress toward democracy. Constructive processes of sociopolitical modernization potentially able to create a stable democratic system make the institutions of parliamentary democracy key and inalienable parts of such system. It is virtually unimportant which of the types of state and a corresponding model of the separation of powers exist in a country—it is much more important for the parliament to be able to represent all social groups and take part in political decision making.

This makes it signally important to develop the nation's political culture and shape it as an indispensable political actor through the system of party representation and protection of the interests of all social groups. In fact, this is the basis and the necessary condition of an advance toward a democratic, sovereign, socially responsible, and efficient state ruled by law.

Ten parties registered their candidates at the 1999 parliamentary elections: the Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPK), the Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan (APK); the Republican Political Party Otan; the People's Congress of Kazakhstan (PCK); the Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan (RPPK); the Party of Revival of Kazakhstan (PRK); the Democratic Party Azamat; the National Party Alash; the Republican Political Party of Labor (RPL); the Kazakhstan Civilian Party (KCP).

In 2002 Kazakhstan acquired a new Law on Political Parties under which any voluntary association of citizens of Kazakhstan created to express the political will of definite social groups, to protect their interests and represent them in the legislative and executive structures of state power and in local structures, and to take part in the formation of these structures is recognized as a political party. Political parties are created on the initiative of groups of citizens of Kazakhstan (with the minimum membership of 1,000); to be registered a political party should have at least 50,000 members. They should be members of its structural units (branches and offices) with no less than 700 members in each of the units functioning in all regions, large cities, and the capital. Under this law, the parties with considerable financial support and the largest following survived on the political scene. As of 1 July, 2004 there were 12 registered political parties¹ (see Table 1).

Table 1

Membership of the Political Parties²

1	Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPK)	59,890
2	Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan (APK)	52,657
3	Republican Political Party Otan	300,000
4	Kazakhstan Civilian Party (KCP)	105,336
5	Democratic Party Ak zhol	110,044
6	Political Party Rukhania	75,000
7	Patriot Party of Kazakhstan (PPK)	131,980
8	Republican Party Asar	180,000
9	Kazakhstan Social-Democratic Party Auyt	61,043
10	Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan People's Party	58,000
11	Democratic Party of Kazakhstan	No data
12	Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan	No data

These figures say that over 10 percent of the republic's adult population are members of one of the parties.³ This is explained not so much by the nation's high level of political awareness as by the new law: the necessary 50,000-strong membership was achieved by registering people as members by all, including administrative, methods. This explains why rank-and-file members can barely distinguish between programs of their own and other parties.

According to sociological polls, in the past five years the nation was mainly concentrated on the material, rather than political, circumstances: low wages, high public services rates, high consumer prices, expensive foodstuffs and medicine. All political parties, therefore, speak a lot about new jobs, new openings for local skilled personnel in foreign companies, higher wages and social protection for the most vulnerable population groups. The stable rating of the Otan Party and an upsurge of popularity of the Asar

¹ The two Communist parties and the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DCK) are opposition parties.

² Based on the following sources: "Uchastie muzhchin i zhenshchin v politicheskikh partiakh Respubliki Kazakhstan" Map (Involvement of Men and Women in Political Parties of the Republic of Kazakhstan) for October 2003 drawn by the International Ecological Association of Women of the East, speeches of the Asar and Rukhania leaders at congresses of their parties in the spring of 2004 (these parties were registered practically two months before the parliamentary elections).

³ See: A. Baymenov, "Nash narod gotov k demokratii," *Epokha*, No. 45 (67), 14 November, 2003.

Party are ascribed to such factors as real access to administrative and information resources, their real achievements, social status, and the leaders' personal authority.

All party programs offer fairly or even excessively detailed mid- and long-term programs of economic, social, state, political, cultural, etc. development; they speak of a more competitive economy, more effective system of social protection, creation of civil society and democratic changes. Some of the parties, however, fail to specify the means to be applied to realize the sociodemocratic changes probably because the party functionaries do not believe that they can cope with the task single-handedly. All parties, except the Ak zhol Party, formulate their aims in most general terms (Table 2 shows the changes occurred in the past five years in the party system).

Table 2

Party Programs

1999	2004
Lack of a solid social basis	No changes
Party programs barely reflect the will and interests of social groups	Much more attention is paid to the interests of individual social groups
Insignificant impact on public opinion	No changes
Limited memberships and few active supporters	Memberships are still limited yet the number of active supporters has grown
Weak organizational, financial (with few exception) and ideological basis	Parties have strengthened their organizational, financial, and ideological basis
Control of the elite in power over the parties; direct and indirect interference of state structures in the party development processes	No changes
Orientation toward the leaders' personal traits	No changes
Delimitation of parties and public movements not only according to the power/opposition but also to the ethnic/polyethnic principle	The registered parties are not ethnically oriented yet some of them still rely on the power/opposition principle

The weak and limited social basis is responsible for the fact that the decisions parties pass at their conferences and congresses become known to a narrow group of active members, while a small number of parliamentary seats (10) limits the parties' impact on law making.

In the very short period of independence Kazakhstan could not acquire a ramified political system weighty enough to find a worthy place in the civil society's structures. As a result, the principles and mechanisms of pluralistic democracy have so far failed to determine (and do not determine today) the ideology and practice of sociopolitical transformations.

The specifics of the sociopolitical structure create specific problems. Those of the groups that used unjust privatization to acquire initial capital and to considerably increase it later are seeking political influence and control over parties. The authorities, in turn, are trying to curb their activity and to persuade

them to agree on compromises. On 2 December, 2004, for example, the Association of Financiers made public a statement signed by the heads of the largest Kazakhstani banks, in which they expressed their support of the country's president and its course and said that the banks should not finance political parties. Those who signed the document were convinced that the state and the banks shared common interests. The financiers supported the economic growth strategy and the course for stage-by-stage political modernization. Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Eurasian Bank A. Mashkevich, Chairman of the Board of the Tsentrkredit Bank V. Lee; Chairman of the Board of Directors of Narodny Bank A. Pavlov, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kazkommertsbank N. Sukhanberdin (who had been suspected of giving money to the opposition) were among those who signed the document.

2. Public Opinion about Political Processes

The poll the Institute of Comparative Social Studies conducted in 2003 by the order of the republic's Ministry of Science and Education Institute of Philosophy and Political Studies, was designed to find out what the public thought about the country's political life as a whole and of the political institutions that appeared in the course of sociopolitical reforms (see Table 3).

Table 3

What Do You Think about Political Processes
in the Country? (in %%)

* Active involvement and a stable interest in the country's political life	13.4
* Interest in individual events and political figures	30.6
* Indifference	22.3
* Mistrust, fears, and a desire to keep away from politics	17.7
* Active rejection, disgust	2.3
* Undecided	13.7

The above shows that the nation is mainly interested in individual political figures and events. At the same time, over 40 percent of the respondents pointed out that they were either indifferent to political developments or thought negatively of them. This is based on the commonly accepted opinion that people have no real chance of participating in decision making (see Chart 1).

Any political system is a system that represents social interests. "Normal policies appear where there is a natural (and insurmountable in principle) variety of group interests realized through party-and-political representation, competition, and rivalry."⁴ The poll demonstrated that the Kazakhstani citizens do not attach special importance to the type of sociopolitical system (see Chart 2).

The poll revealed that the nation prefers a socialist state of the Soviet type rather than Western democracy. This opinion belongs to the respondents of advanced and old age (this could only be expected). Twice as many Russian respondents (27.7 percent) preferred the socialist state of the Soviet type as Kazakhs (14.8 percent). Housewives, unemployed, and old age pensioners prevail among the social groups that support the socialist choice. People between 18 and 29 (including students), as well

⁴ A.S. Panarin, *Filosofia politiki*, Novaia Shkola Publishers, Moscow, 1996, p. 21.

Chart 1

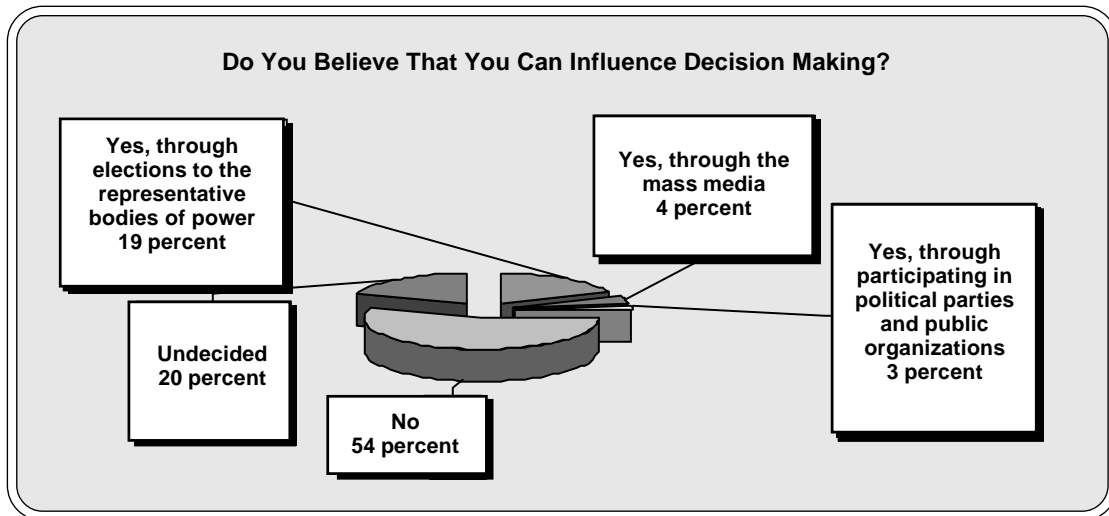
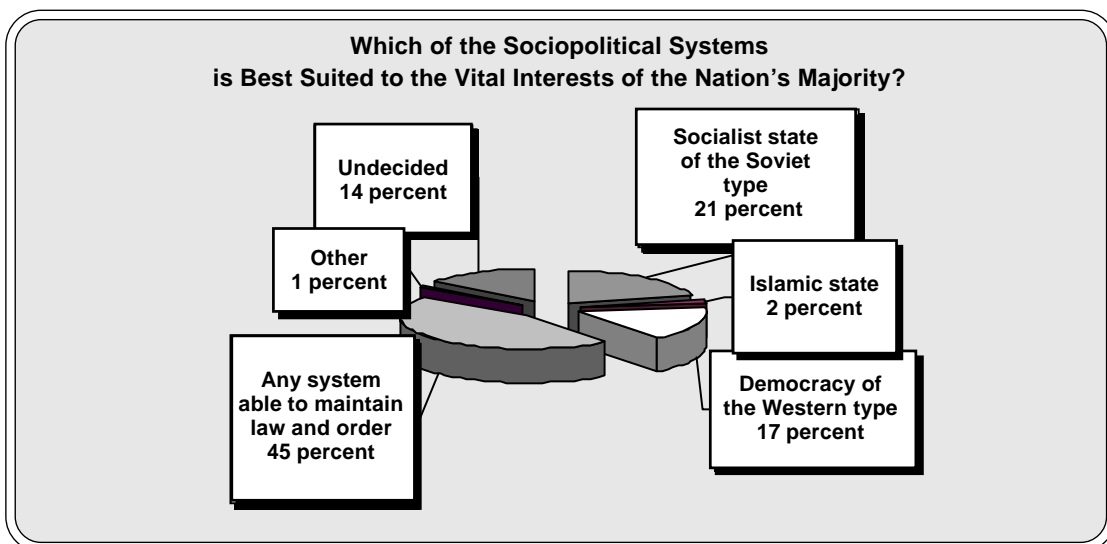


Chart 2

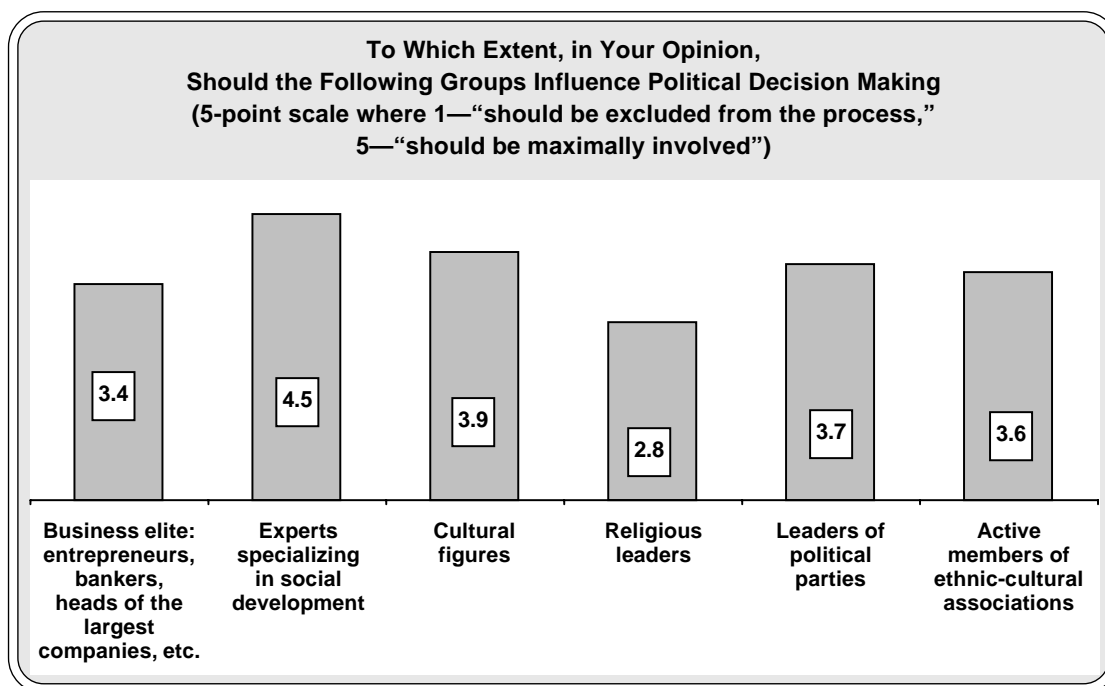


as top and middle managers and qualified specialists prefer Western democracy. The number of those who share the democratic values of the Western type is larger among those with high monthly incomes. There is an equal number of the supporters of socialist state and Western democracy among the civil servants and workers.

Nearly 50 percent can be satisfied with any system able of maintaining law and order. This raises a question of how social stability can be achieved. The answers to this and similar questions can be obtained by identifying which of the social groups are worthy of political decision making according to public consciousness (see Chart 3).

The above suggests that the majority favors the expert community; cultural figures, leaders of political parties, and active members of ethnic-cultural associations trail behind. Business elite and religious leaders are two least-welcome groups. There were members of all social groups among the respondents.

Chart 3



Despite the fairly low rating of leaders of political parties the Kazakhstani model of political and party development is coming to the fore in the current sociopolitical changes. There is hope, therefore, that in the future Kazakhstan will acquire a developed, differentiated, and balanced system of party representation of the economic and sociopolitical interests of social groups and strata.

Table 4 shows how the nation assesses the role of political parties in economic transformations. Over 50 percent of the respondents were undecided about the efficiency of parties' activity; about 20 percent admitted that parties, especially parties of different political orientations, were useful.

Table 4

**Assessment of Practical Results of Political Parties' Impact
on Democratic Processes (in %)⁵**

	Obviously Useful	Useful on the Whole	Rather Harmful	No Practical Result	Undecided
Republican Political Party Otan	10.5	23.8	2.2	16.1	47.4
Kazakhstan Civilian Party	1.4	15.9	3.9	20.4	58.4
Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan	2.0	18.9	2.3	20.4	56.4
Communist Party of Kazakhstan	3.0	15.8	4.7	19.1	57.4
Democratic Party Ak zhol	4.0	15.1	2.8	18.1	60.0
Patriot Party of Kazakhstan	1.2	11.9	3.1	21.4	62.4
Kazakhstan Social-Democratic Party AuyI	1.1	12.9	1.9	20.1	64.0

⁵ By the time of the poll other parties were not yet registered.

3. Concise Information about Parties⁶

Information about the history of some of the parties can be found in my article “The National Question in the Platforms of Political Parties and Movements in Kazakhstan,” that appeared in *Central Asia and the Caucasus* (No. 4, 2000). This article, in particular, contains information about the Republican Political Party Otan (the Homeland), the Kazakhstan Civilian Party (KCP), the Party of Revival of Kazakhstan (PRK) (renamed the Political Party Rukhaniat). In this article I’ll supply concise information about the parties that have either been reregistered or recently appeared on the political scene.

The Agrarian Party

Its constituent congress took place on 6 January, 1999; it was registered on 16 March, 1999 and reregistered on 6 March, 2003. The party is headed by Romin Madinov, deputy of the Majilis (the lower chamber of the parliament). Its social basis is uniform: people engaged in the agricultural sector.

Its program says: “The Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan sees its main goal in contributing to the country’s progress, its advance toward developed society of freedom and social justice in which all enjoy the conditions conducive to productive labor aimed at raising the nation’s prosperity.” It describes one of its key tasks in the social and spiritual sphere as: “Maintaining conditions in which each and everyone enjoy equal opportunities” and “Bringing up young people in full accordance with the principles of respect, friendship, and neighborly relations among peoples.”

The *Agrarniy Kazakhstan* newspaper published since 2002 renders the party information support.

The Democratic Party Ak zhol

Its constituent congress took place on 16 March, 2002. The party was set up on the initiative of several members of the political council of the republican public association The Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan. B. Abilov, A. Baymenov, and O. Djandosov are its cochairmen. In November 2003 at the third congress two more people—A. Sarsenbaev and L. Zhulanova—joined them as cochairmen. The party was registered on 3 April, 2002 and reregistered on 12 December, 2002.

Its program says: “Independent, flourishing, democratic, and free Kazakhstan is our aim together with a worthy life for each of its citizens. Independence, democracy, freedom, and justice are our fundamental values.” As distinct from similar documents issued by other parties its program reveals the mechanism through which the political system of Kazakhstan can be reformed: decentralization of power, the independent media, greater role of the maslikhats, more efficient anti-corruption efforts, etc. In the sphere of spiritual and intellectual development the program suggests that “real conditions for the unhindered studies and development of the culture, languages, and traditions of the peoples of Kazakhstan should be created” and that “children and the young people should be brought up and educated in the spirit of patriotism and internationalism.” Ak zhol believes that “a single and uniform Kazakhstani society should be created. It should be based on patriotism, culture, languages, and specific features of all peoples of Kazakhstan that should be preserved and developed.” The program further says: “National unity and public accord should be preserved and strengthened; all ethnic cultural centers should

⁶ The section is based on the documents of the Central Election Commission of Kazakhstan and the republican Youth Information Service [<http://www.misk.kz>], as well as the handbook by Iu.O. Bulutkaev and A.E. Chebotarev, *Politicheskie partii Kazakhstana. 2004* (Political Parties of Kazakhstan. 2004), Almaty, 2004.

be encouraged; the state should pursue a reasonable and efficient policy designed to preserve and develop the Kazakh language and its use in all spheres of public life.”

Since the summer of 2002 the party has been publishing a weekly *Ak zhol Kazakhstan* with a circulation of 23,000; it also runs an Internet site <http://www.dpkakzhol.kz>.

The Social-Democratic Party AuyI

Early in 2000 the Peasant Social-Democratic Party AuyI convened its constituent congress; it was registered in March 2000 and reregistered on 2 April, 2003. Later it changed its name into the Kazakhstan Social-Democratic Party AuyI. Peasants and farmers are its social basis. The leader is Gani Kaliev.

Its main goals are: stronger state regulation and greater state support for the agrarian sector; protection of the interests of the agrarian workers; an active contribution to the economic and political reforms designed to make society more democratic; promotion of the contemporary forms of market relationships in all economic spheres; upgrading the living standards; introduction of social justice and maintenance of stability in the country. The program also speaks about “a stronger ethnic and confessional harmony” and about the need “to educate citizens in the spirit of patriotism and responsibility for the all-round and harmonious development of the Republic of Kazakhstan.”

Since the fall of 2003 the party has been publishing the bilingual newspaper *AuyI* with a circulation of 10,000.

The Civilian Party

Its constituent congress was held on 17 November, 1998; the party was registered on 29 December, 1998 and reregistered on 10 January, 2003. It was set up on the initiative of work collectives of industrial enterprises; Azat Peruashev is its leader. It relies on workers and technicians, as well as on a very limited student and old-age pensioner membership together with able-bodied agricultural workers, unemployed, etc.

The stronger statehood of the Republic of Kazakhstan is its goal; this presupposes “stable functioning of all public institutions under the conditions of high efficiency and civil solidarity of the Kazakhstani citizens.” It has formulated its main task as “support for the efforts to create a uniform Kazakhstani society, strengthening civil peace and ethnic harmony in the country.” The party has identified three key principles in the sphere of ethnic policies: “(1) Kazakhstan is the homeland of all people living on its territory irrespective of ethnic affiliation and language; (2) there are no “newcomers” and “guest” peoples in Kazakhstan: all its citizens enjoy equal rights and opportunities; (3) specific ethnic and cultural features of all peoples living in Kazakhstan is the country’s common wealth. Assimilation or isolation of national cultures should not be tolerated.”

The party runs its site in the Internet <http://www.civicparty.kz/egi-bin/menu.cgi>.

The Republican Political Party Otan

It is the product of the merge of several parties and movements: the Party of People’s Unity of Kazakhstan, the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, the Liberal Movement of Kazakhstan, the Kazakhstan-2030 Movement, and the Party of Justice. Later the Republican Party of Labor and the People’s Cooperative Party joined the Republican Party Otan. It was registered on 12 February, 1999 and reregistered

on 10 January, 2003. It is chaired by the republic's President Nursultan Nazarbaev who at the March 2004 congress appointed Amangeldy Ermigiaev, Zharmakhan Tuiakbay, and Alexander Pavlov his deputies.

Its program says: "Contemporary democratic society is our aim; freedom, justice, solidarity, equality, and brotherhood are our principles." It also admits that the country needs strong and constructive oppositions and election reforms. In this it differs from other party programs. In the sphere of ethnic relations the party rejects the idea of an ethnocratic state; it is convinced that ethnic harmony is a product of the priority of general human values that allow each and every ethnos to develop freely. The party supports the constitutional right of every citizen to use his native tongue; it favors a rational, well-balanced and gradual policy in the linguistic sphere and development of a single cultural community based on old and deep-rooted cultural traditions and cooperation among the ethnic groups of Kazakhstan; it supports democratization as the key to ethnic peace and harmonized ethnic interests. The party supported the laws on the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan and on the National-Cultural centers.

Two newspapers—*Strana i mir* (in Russian) and *Dala men kala* (in Kazakh)—render information support together with the *Stolitsa* magazine.

The Patriot Party

It was set up by Gani Kasymov, who was Majilis deputy in 1999-2004; today, he is the party's leader. Its constituent congress took place on 1 July, 2000; the party was registered in August 2001 and reregistered on 21 March, 2003.

Its program says: "It is party's aim to promote spiritual and cultural revival of the country together with an economic upsurge, improved welfare and increased national wealth so as to successfully address social problems (liquidation of unemployment; ensuring subsistence level for the pensioners and the disabled together with free education and medical aid)." The party supports all changes for the better, decentralization of power, elected akims of all levels, and independent judiciary power. The party has stressed that it will promote the idea of internationalism: "We are the single Kazakhstani nation" and "Kazakhstan is for the Kazakhstani." It has admitted that ethnic problems remain unresolved.

The party has its page on the website of the Central Asian Agency of Political Research: <http://www.caapr.kz/ppk>.

The Party Asar

The party was registered in December 2003; its leader Ms. Dariga Nazarbaeva is also president of Khabar, the largest media holding, and chairperson of the republic's Congress of Journalists. The party announced that it had formed a parliamentary faction of 10 formerly independent deputies. Its social basis is all social groups; the party states that half of its members are young people between 20 and 35.

The party describes itself as a centrist party that supports the development program called Kazakhstan-2030 and the reforms carried out by the country's president. Its program says: "An economically strong, democratic, and socially oriented state ruled by law and the developed civil society institutions are our aim." The program also says: "The party is always prepared to enter into constructive cooperation with any political forces, it opposes populism, extremism, and radicalism of all forms and manifestations." The party says the following about the ethnic issue: "The party believes that the republic's prosperity is possible if rooted in the nation's traditions. Interaction and interpenetration of cultures and traditions of all peoples living in the republic are its main advantage."

The party publishes two newspapers: *Asar-Kazakhstan* (in Russian) and *Asar zamany* (in Kazakh) with the circulation of 6,000.

The Political Party Rukhaniat

It is the heir to the Party of Revival of Kazakhstan that came to the political scene back in 1995. Its constituent congress was held on 5 April, 2003; its leader Ms. Altynshash Djaganova is a prominent public figure and publicist writer. She also heads the Migration and Demography Agency. Her party relies on intelligentsia and the oralmans (ethnic Kazakhs who moved to the republic).

The party resolutely supports the presidential course. Its program says: "It is our goal to help create a democratic state ruled by law, based on ethnic harmony and relying on socially oriented market economy. This can be achieved through the nation's moral and spiritual revival." As distinct from its predecessor the Rukhaniat insists on ethnic peace, equality of people of all ethnic affiliations, social consolidation in the context of the country's sustainable development. It says in its program: "The party favors equal access and equal opportunities at work for all Kazakhstanis irrespective of their ethnic affiliation. The party favors creation of conditions that would allow all ethnic groups to realize their creative potentials; that would be conducive to the revival of ethnic cultures, art, languages, customs, and ethnocultural traditions and norms. The party opposes all manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism."

It publishes the bilingual newspaper *Rukhaniat-Alemi*.

The Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DCK) People's Party

Its constituent congress took place on 21 February, 2004 after which the party was registered. Its political council is headed by Asylbek Kozhakhmetov; the party's leader, however, is imprisoned Galymzhan Zhakianov. This is an opposition party that works toward democratization of the sociopolitical sphere. It wants to limit the president's powers and extend those of the parliament; it favors reforms of the local bodies of state power, local self-administration, and the election and judiciary systems; it promotes the idea of freedom of the press and development of civil society institutions.

It was the first to raise the issue of strengthening ethnic relations in the republic of Kazakhstan based on the linguistic policy. Its political manifesto points to contradictions in the language laws and describes as intolerable the state's policy in this sphere. It is convinced that the law on the languages contradicts the constitution because it made the Kazakh language the only language of official documents. The party also criticizes the level of teaching the state tongue at schools and in universities and the intentional display of official inscriptions in the state language only. At the same time, the party believes that ignorance of the state tongue common among the top bureaucrats can no longer be tolerated; it condemns the bureaucrats who are obviously unwilling to create the conditions in which all citizens could learn the state tongue. The party, however, has not offered a set of measures to overcome these negative phenomena; its political manifesto abounds in statements and assessments and lacks constructive suggestions.

The *Respublika* and *Soz* newspapers render the party information support together with the Navigator Internet publication.

The Democratic Party

Based on the republican movement For Kazakhstan Ruled by Law, the party was set up in the spring of 2004; was registered in June 2004. Its leader is Maksut Narikbaev, former chairman of the Supreme Court and rector of the Kazakh Humanitarian Juridical University.

While insisting on its support for the Kazakhstan-2030 strategy the party favors evolutionary, harmonious and sustainable development of the country that should preserve traditions and historical experience. The party has described its highest values as Freedom. Law. Justice. Agreement. Its main tasks are: promotion of further democratization and improvement of the country's political and legal system; all-round efforts to upgrade the living standards and quality of life; developing and strengthening the nations' political and legal awareness.

The party sees its aim in preserving the republic's independence by strengthening statehood based on laws, genuine democracy, ethnic harmony, political stability, free market economy, and the rule of law.

The party publishes two newspapers—*Kozkaras* (in Kazakh) and *Za pravovoy Kazakhstan* (in Russian) with a circulation of 4,000.

The Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPK)

In 1993, at its 19th congress it declared itself to be the successor of the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan; it was registered in February 1994 and reregistered according to the new law in March 2003. Workers, pensioners, academics, university lecturers, and civil servants form its social basis. Serikbolsyn Abdildin, Majilis deputy and former Chairman of the republic's Supreme Soviet is its First Secretary.

The party disagrees with the reforms now underway in the country and is convinced that the political system is unable to heal the main social sores (poverty and social destitution, corruption, dependence on foreign capital, migration, crime, etc.). The party describes the just social system as its main aim. At the first stage it plans to wage political struggle for the revival of popular rule and to set up a powerful bloc of left-centrist forces able to form a coalition government of social and national salvation. Socioeconomic changes are planned for the second stage. Its main principles are: proletarian internationalism, equality of people of all ethnic affiliations, unity and brotherhood, respect for national dignity of all peoples of multinational Kazakhstan and all nations of the world, strengthening international brotherhood and friendship among peoples. Its address to the communists of Kazakhstan of 21 February, 2004 contained a conclusion that the conditions "for class and ethnic clashes" are being ripening in the country.

The party publishes a newspaper *Pravda Kazakhstana* with a circulation of 10,000; the party has an Internet site <http://www.compartykz.info/>.

The Communist People's Party (CPPK)

It held its constituent assembly in June 2004 (the First Constituent Assembly was held in April 2004, after which the party failed to register itself because of its name the Communist Party of the Republic of Kazakhstan). It was registered under a different name in June 2004. Its First Secretary is Vladislav Kosarev who since 1991 has been Chairman of the Kokshetau Regional Trade Union Council.

The programs of the two communist parties are very similar: social, economic, and political protection of the rights of wage workers; struggle for the power of the working people, against exploitation of man by man, for international and ethnic peace, and creation of a new social formation. It describes itself as a party of the Leninist type and favors a parliamentary republic, strong institutions of civil society, varied forms of property with the priority of public property; protection of the environment, freedom of conscience and equality of all creeds, cooperation with the communist parties of other countries.

The program speaks of two stages: at the first sociopolitical reforms should be carried out, at the second the power of the people should be established realized through the soviets, workers' self-administration, and other forms of the direct rule of people.

The Communist People's Party describes itself as a party of proletarian internationalism that does not segregate people of different nationalities, supports unity and brotherhood and respect for national dignity, languages, traditions, and history of the peoples of multinational Kazakhstan and of all peoples of the world.

It publishes a bilingual newspaper *Kommunist Kazakhstana*.

4. New Approaches to the Nationalities Policy

As compared with 1999, the parties have developed the following new elements in their nationalities policies:

- The parties cooperate with the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan and support the Law on the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan (Otan); cooperation with the national-cultural centers (Otan and Ak zhol); description of the Assembly as an artificial and sham democratic structure (CPPK).
- Rational, balanced, and gradual realization of linguistic policies (Otan, DCK); calls to carry out reasonable and efficient policy designed to preserve and develop the Kazakh language and its use in all spheres of public life (Ak zhol, DCK).
- Recognition that the ethnic problem has not yet been resolved (PPK, DCK);
- Concentration on creating equal opportunities for promotion at work (Rukhaniat);
- Statements that the conditions for “class and ethnic clashes” are gradually ripening in the country (CPK).

An analysis of the positions of political parties in relation to the state and development trends of ethnic relations in the republic has shown that they are very similar and even identical when it comes to the key issues. The pro-presidential parties for their part stress the harmonious nature of ethnic relations in the republic and the task of their preservation in full accordance with the principles of the current ethnic policies. The opposition parties prefer to dwell on the contradictory, unbalanced and conflicting nature of ethnic relations in the country and the need to change the nationalities policy.

All parties, however, limit themselves to outlining the ethnic problems and none has gone as far as suggesting specific ways and methods for their settlement. This can be explained by the objectively complicated nature of the problem and a wide variety of strategies all of which call for detailed theoretical substantiation, an analysis of domestic and foreign experience, etc. The parties are obviously reluctant to draw too much attention to this sensitive issue because of absolutely justified apprehensions that any definite position on the ethnic issue will inevitably cost them part of their followers.

KAZAKHSTAN: HOW ITS MULTIPARTY SYSTEM CAME INTO BEING

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The discussion clubs, political circles, etc. which appeared in Kazakhstan (and elsewhere across the country) during Gorbachev's perestroika laid the foundation of political parties as an indispensable attribute of any democratic society. In Kazakhstan, however, the process acquired

its specific features because of the geographic location of the entire Central Asian region, the past of its variegated population, and its ethnic composition.

Along with the general crisis that had enveloped the Soviet Union, the events of December 1986 in Alma Ata, when the youth openly moved against the Soviet practice of appointing the republic's top Communist and state leaders by the Kremlin, were an important factor which sped up the emergence of these quasi-political organizations in Kazakhstan. The rally and the use of force to suppress it echoed throughout the republic and beyond. The pernicious ecological effects of the tests at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test ground and some other military objects which have been made public also raised political awareness among the Kazakhstani.

It was on a grass-roots initiative that the first informal political organizations appeared in the republic. Under conditions of a deepening economic and social crisis and weakened control over public sentiments, the so-called dissidents, especially from among the students, became more eloquent about the state of affairs in the country and quite frank about its future. Their discussions led them further away from the official line.

In October 1988, a public organization, the Alma Ata Popular Front, was created; in December, a historical-educational club called Akikat (the Truth) was set up. In December of the same year, historical-educational groups (which were in fact branches of the All-Union Anti-Stalinist Memorial Society) appeared in Tselinograd (today Astana) and Alma Ata and became fairly popular. The Memorial was engaged in rehabilitating the victims of the Stalinist repressions, helping those who survived and the relatives of those who perished in the camps, and fighting the remnants of totalitarianism in public consciousness.

The authorities of still Soviet Kazakhstan tried to split the Memorial movement by setting up its twin structure called Adilet (Justice), formally pursuing the same aims, with branches in Karaganda, Dzhezkazgan, Chimkent, and other cities. The powers that be tried to set the Memorial members (mainly politically aware intelligentsia of European origin) and the Adilet members, who were mainly Kazakhs, against each other.

While at the first stage, the Russians and Russian speakers of Kazakhstan limited their politi-

cal activity mainly to political clubs, the young Kazakhs expressed their political convictions and dissatisfaction with the political and economic realities in more active protest forms: occupation of landed plots on a mass scale to build housing for themselves (this happened, in particular, in Alma Ata in the summer of 1990). These people united into societies Shanyrak, Daryn, and Altyn besik. Early in 1990, the still ruling Communist Party initiated youth structures under its aegis of the Kazak tili (the Kazakh Language) type; very soon more youth national-democratic organizations appeared. The largest of them outside Alma Ata was the Chimket Union of Independent Kazakh Youth.

Like in many other regions of the former Soviet Union, structures and movements officially engaged in environmental protection also appeared in Kazakhstan. The first emerged in 1987 (in Pavlodar, in particular). At that time, an alliance called Initsiativa was set up in the society of environmental protection of Alma Ata; in November a Public Committee for the Problems of Lake Balkhash and the Aral Sea came into being. In 1988, the green movement gained even more strength; Taldy-Kurgan, Djambul and Chimkent acquired ecological organizations. In June 1988, all the corresponding organizations of Alma Ata united into the so-called Green Front.¹ Most of them, with their membership of mainly Russian-speaking intelligentsia, were small. Very soon, their political ideas became obvious and made them even more attractive to the youth.

The Nevada-Semipalatinsk international anti-nuclear and ecological movement played the most important role in the public and political life of Kazakhstan and Central Asia as a whole. It was probably initiated "from above," by the leaders of the still Soviet Kazakhstan. Later, President Nursultan Nazarbaev virtually admitted this by writing: "Without my support of the demand that nuclear tests be banned, without the support of the republic's leaders, and under the conditions of the still strong power of the Center, the anti-nuclear movement would have inevitably run up against ruthless opposition."² It looks as if the republican leaders

¹ See: V.A. Ponomarev, *Obshchestvennye organizatsii v Kazakhstane i Kyrgyzstane (1987-1991)*, Glagol Publishers, Alma Ata, 1991, pp. 14-15.

² N. Nazarbaev, *Na poroge XXI veka*, Almaty, 1996, p. 170.

wanted to close down the nuclear test ground in Semipalatinsk and needed "strong support of the popular masses" to justify their intention in the Kremlin. The above-mentioned movement was set up on 28 February, 1989; it was the first officially registered public and political republican movement. It became even more popular when well-known writer and public figure Olzhas Suleimеноv became its head.

In June 1989, the participants in the December 1986 events in Alma Ata created a national-democratic movement called the Zheltoksan (December) public committee headed by Khasen Kozha-Akhmet, a dissident who took part in the December events. At the first stage, this movement formulated fairly moderate political demands (complete political and civil rehabilitation of the participants in the December protests). Later the demands became more radical.³

At the turn of the 1990s, the Social-Democratic ideas gained wide popularity in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet countries. There was even a Social-Democratic Association of the Soviet Union. In Kazakhstan, a similar structure appeared in December 1989 within the Memorial Society. On 1 March, 1990, there were over 100 registered and unregistered public organizations, most of which were political clubs. The following structures deserve special mention along with those mentioned above: the Civil Movement Sodruzhestvo, the Forum Society, the Public Human Rights Committee, the Russkaia entsiklopedia Club, the Assembly of Kazakh National Culture, the Kazakhskiy aprel Society, the Association of National Cultural Centers, an Independent Trade Union of Businessmen, Tenants and Cooperatives Birlesu (Unity), and others.⁴

On 14 March, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. annulled the notorious Art 6 of the 1977 Constitution, which envisaged the leading role of the C.P.S.U. in the Soviet Union. On 9 October, 1990, the Law on Public Associations adopted in the Soviet Union stipulated the right of parties and other public and political organizations to take part in public activities. In fact, the law legal-

ized what was already going on in reality: during the perestroika years, numerous public organizations appeared, including those which called themselves parties.

On 25 October, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh S.S.R. adopted a Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the Republic which, according to Para 5, guaranteed all public and political organizations and mass movements equal legal opportunities to take part in state and public activities.⁵ The Law on Public Associations of the Kazakh S.S.R. adopted in June 1991 established the rules of setting up such organizations and their functioning. This was another step toward creating a legal basis for the republic's multiparty system. The fact that this happened at the height of a grave political crisis in the Soviet Union and, more importantly, the content of the law reflected the dual nature of the policies pursued by the ruling elite of the Soviet republics. On the one hand, people at the helm in Kazakhstan knew that serious democratic changes were overdue (including political pluralism in one of its forms). The old political system had obviously compromised itself, while the internal opposition was stepping up its struggle against the totalitarian regime. It was necessary to "let off steam" in order to prevent this activity from spilling beyond the admissible boundaries, thus creating a serious threat to the elite. The ruling circles knew that the republic needed a favorable image abroad in the form of a quasi-democratic multiparty camouflage. It was, in fact, a political imperative. On the other hand, the people at the top were afraid of possible radical political reforms. Uncontrolled democratization might sweep away the increasingly tottering, but still standing, political system together with its residents. The elite had to opt for very moderate political reform in order to create an outwardly democratic political system, remain afloat, and preserve its control over the renovated structure. No wonder that some time later President Nazarbaev had to admit: "The fact that the party system of Kazakhstan was built 'from above' is its most specific feature."⁶ He has probably forgotten that the powers that be began building the system from above after the people had already started building it from below.

³ See: *Political Organization in Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Sources and Documents*, ed. by V. Babak, D. Vaisman, A. Wasserman, London, 2003, p. 180.

⁴ See: S. D'iachenko, L. Karmazina, S. Seydumanov, *Politicheskie partii Kazakhstana, 2000 god* (handbook), Almaty, 2000, p. 289.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁶ N. Nazarbaev, *op. cit.*

The First Political Parties

The slogan of national revival, which sounded quite natural while the Soviet Union was disintegrating, led to the appearance of democratic-national political parties and movements in all Union republics. Kazakhstan was no exception. These political parties did not limit themselves to demands to do away with the totalitarian system and build society according to democratic principles—they also insisted on privileges for the titular nations. In Kazakhstan, they demanded that the Kazakh language be made the republic's only state tongue. Some of the national political elite and those groups of Kazakh intelligentsia who considered themselves unjustly treated used the parties and movements to secure a leading political and economic position in the republic for themselves.

In 1990, the first public and political organizations appeared, which called themselves parties. In April, the Party of National Independence Alash⁷ was set up. Its membership, though not large (between 80 and 200 members in the beginning), was extremely radically-minded. They professed the synthesis of Muslim solidarity and Turkic unity, its publication, also called *Alash*, carried the slogan of "Turkism is our body, Islam is our spirit." The party expressed sentiments common to the nationalist- and radically-minded part of the titular nation; its slogans were hailed among the marginal groups, especially among young people who considered themselves pushed to the wayside. The party was especially popular in the rural areas of Southern Kazakhstan. According to certain data, by mid-1992 it had acquired 5,000 members.⁸ The party was never registered.

Late in May 1990, the Social-Democratic Party of Kazakhstan appeared in Alma Ata; it was created mainly by the Russian-speaking urban intelligentsia; by early 1991, it had 200 members, half of them living in Alma Ata, the republic's old capital, and its environs.⁹ This party was not registered either. The party patterned its ideals after socialism of the Swedish type. In 1991 it split; its radical wing founded another party—the Independent Social-Democratic Party.

In May 1990, the public organizations Adilet, Akikat, Azamat, Zheruyk, Kausar-Bulak and others held a constituent congress in Alma Ata, at which the National-Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Zheltoksan¹⁰ was founded on the basis of the public committee of the same name. In January 1991, Khasen Kozha-Akhmet became its chairman; the party declared its aim to be separation from the Soviet Union and an independent democratic state of Kazakhstan ruled by law.

On 1 July, 1990, the Civilian Movement of Kazakhstan Azat (Freedom) met in Alma Ata for its constituent conference. It described its aim as "achieving complete state sovereignty of Kazakhstan based on international norms and a new Treaty on the Commonwealth of Free and Independent Republics."¹¹ It should be said that the demand for "complete state sovereignty of Kazakhstan" was typical of all other national movements and reflected the sentiments common to a considerable part of the republican ruling elite. People directly connected with power played an important role in the new movement: Mikhail Isinaliev, former Foreign Minister of Kazakh S.S.R., was one of the co-chairmen; Communist Party functionary Marat Chormanov, who worked in the Alma Ata city committee of the republic's Communist Party, was another. This made the movement a moderate one. In September 1991, it split; one of the parts formed the Republican Party of Kazakhstan under the chairmanship of Sabetkazy Akatay, the leader of the radical wing of Azat. In May 1999, the party acquired a new name—the National Party of Kazakhstan Alash.

The national movement of the Kazakhs mounting in the republic in the late 1980s and early 1990s was accompanied by an increase in anti-Russian sentiments. Some of the nationalist-minded leaders tried to use the ethnic "trump card" to advance their own political interests under the guise

⁷ The name was selected with the aim of symbolizing continuity with the Alash party active on the territory of present Kazakhstan early in the 20th century. Following the October 1917 Revolution, it announced wide autonomy for the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz within the former Russian Empire as its aim.

⁸ See: *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 2 June, 1992.

⁹ See: V.A. Ponomarev, op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁰ See: S. D'iachenko, L. Karmazina, S. Seydumanov, op. cit., p. 290.

¹¹ *Political Organization in Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Sources and Documents*, p. 116.

of the need to consolidate the titular nation for the sake of national revival and rebirth of national culture, language, and religion. These slogans were accompanied by mass discrimination of Russians and Russian speakers.

The newly adopted laws—on languages, citizenship, and immigration—put the Kazakhs, the titular nation, in a privileged position. They, and the campaign to replace Russians and Russian speakers at the top and medium administrative levels with Kazakhs encouraged from above, triggered mass emigration of Russians and the Russian-speaking population. On the other hand, those who stayed behind (primarily Russians) began setting up political organizations of their own to protect their civil and social rights. On 29 August, 1990, Edinstvo, a public organization of the non-titular, mainly Russian, population, held a constituent conference. It was not the first of its kind in the Soviet Union: by that time similar political structures were already functioning in other republics. The conference adopted a document that said: “The main aim of the new inter-ethnic movement is to harmonize ethnic relationships, prevent violence provoked by the separatists, chauvinists, and nationalist forces, as well as protect citizens’ political and social rights.”¹²

In 1991-1992, other political organizations appeared; they tried to prevent ethnic and linguistic discrimination of the non-titular population groups: the Slavic Movement of Kazakhstan (a politicized structure set up to protect the civil and social rights, as well as the Slavs’ cultural interests); and the Russian Community, which pursued more or less the same aims as Edinstvo, later it split and the breakaway group formed a public association called the Russian Alliance.

In September 1992, a Slavic movement called Lad met in Pavlodar for its congress. It united several small cultural Slavic societies and became the largest Slavic movement in Kazakhstan during the first years of its independence. Its constituent conference took place on 27 March, 1993 in Akmola (now Astana); by the spring of 1994, it had over 8,000 members (mainly Russians and Ukrainians) and 16 regional organizations. It openly opposed the official nationalities policy.

There are a large number of Cossacks (descendants of those who came to Kazakhstan before the revolution) living in Kazakhstan. In the early 1990s, numerous spontaneous Cossack organizations of various political orientations appeared, the largest of them being the Society for Lending Help to the Semirech’e Cossacks (the Alma Ata and Taldy-Kurgan regions), the Siberian Community of the Gor’kaia Linia Cossacks (Petropavlovsk), the Verkhni Irtysh Old Believer Cossack Community (Ust Kamenogorsk), etc.¹³ All of them were acting under slogans calling for a revival of the Cossack culture and traditions, while some of them went even further: they suggested that certain regions should be separated from Kazakhstan and be united with Russia as a South Siberian Republic.

I have already mentioned that the first public and political organizations were set up according to the ethnic principle, which affected their ethnic composition and their programs. There were serious objective reasons, mainly of a historic nature, as well as subjective factors for this, mainly the desire of part of the national elite to take advantage of the situation created by the Soviet Union’s disintegration to consolidate its own power in the republic.

Large Political Parties

Kazakhstan inherited the Communist Party (which was the ruling party in the past) from the Soviet Union. After the aborted coup of August 1991 in Moscow, the Communist Party not only lost its power, but also actually split into two massive opposition leftist parties: the Socialist and Communist parties. Their memberships were approximately equal: about 47,000 were members of the former and over 48,000 of the latter.¹⁴ In their program documents, the Socialists point out that they concentrate on protecting the inter-

¹² *Partiynnaia zhizn Kazakhstana*, No. 12, 1990, p. 63.

¹³ See: *Delovaia nedelia*, 19 June, 1998.

¹⁴ See: E. Babakumarov, “K chemu prishli i k chemu idem?” *Mysl*, No. 11, 1994, pp. 48-49.

ests of the working people, irrespective of their social status, origin, nationality, or confession. The Communists described a society of freedom and social justice based on the principles of scientific socialism and the priority of human values as their aim.¹⁵

In October 1991, another large party—the People's Congress of Kazakhstan—appeared and was officially registered on 31 December. It was set up by the following public organizations: the International Anti-Nuclear Movement Nevada-Semipalatinsk, the International Public Committee Aral-Asia-Kazakhstan, the Union of Women, the Independent Trade Union Birlesu, the Kazak tili Society, the Association of Young Builders of the Republic, and several national-cultural centers. The party described its aim as “contributing to shaping a humane democratic society and an independent and unitary state ruled by law—a Republic of Kazakhstan which will consider its people, their life, freedoms, and inalienable rights its highest value.”¹⁶ (This was the first democratic party registered in the republic.) In October 1994, it announced that it was in constructive opposition to the president.

The Union of Industrialists and Businessmen of Kazakhstan was an obvious sign that the country had entered into a new, post-Soviet era. In June 1992, this new class held a forum in Alma Ata attended by President Nazarbaev, who even addressed the forum with a speech. The organization was obviously blessed “from above.” In February 1993, it acquired a new chairman in the person of Akezhan Kazhegeldin, who was later appointed prime minister.

Very soon after that President Nazarbaev blessed another political structure—the People's Unity of Kazakhstan Union. On 6 February, 1993 he spoke at its constituent conference. Its program was very close to the program documents of the People's Congress of Kazakhstan, while according to Charter, the new party should acquire a leader. The constituent conference invited President Nazarbaev to fill the post. In March 1995, the Union was transformed into a party of the same name. In January 1994, speaking at its extraordinary congress Kuanysh Sultanov, chairman of the party's political council, outlined an idea which the ruling elite found attractive and important: “There is a real opportunity to form a republican political party with a massive membership and constructive ideas. This party will probably be a presidential one...”¹⁷ This statement and the fact that President Nazarbaev attended the constituent forums of many political organizations testify that in the early 1990s the republican leaders were controlling the process of party building and channeled it accordingly. In other words, although the process began “from below” and the first public and political movements and parties appeared spontaneously at the turn of the 1990s, the top crust actively intervened in the process to start building the multiparty system from above. The ruling elite was both the customer and the chief architect.

In April 1994, the Socialist Party initiated an extra-parliamentary bloc of parties and public organizations called the Coordinating Council of Public Movements Respublika, which united over 20 parties and movements. The scattered structures of opposition closed their ranks to set up a powerful opposition movement which could rely on the parliamentary factions of the Council members.¹⁸

Two more political organizations were formed in late 1994-early 1995: the People's Cooperative Party of Kazakhstan based on the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, and the Party of Revival of Kazakhstan, which relied on agricultural workers, people engaged in cooperative structures, and the sphere of material production and services. It guided itself by the political interests of the budding middle class: medium and petty businessmen, engineers and technicians, people working in education, health, science and culture, and civil servants. The active start soon ended: by mid-1996, the Revival Party had obviously lost some of its ground.

Two more parties were formed in 1995. On 1 July, the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan held its constituent congress; in September, the second congress of the Union of Engineers of Kazakhstan reorganized the Union into the Republican Political Party of Labor.

The first parliamentary elections according to the new constitution were held in December 1995. Thirty parties and movements competed for the seats in the Majilis; the following parties divided the

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ S. D'iachenko, L. Karmazina, S. Seydumanov, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

majority of seats among themselves: the People's Unity of Kazakhstan Party got 27 seats, the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, 12 seats; and the Agrarian Union of Kazakhstan, 7 seats.

In April 1996, the public movement called Azamat (Citizen) held its constituent conference in Almaty; from the very beginning it was obviously critical of power; spoke in favor of democratic changes in the country's public life and was, therefore, in opposition to the regime of presidential power which had taken shape in the republic by that time.

In April 1997, another public organization appeared on the right flank. The Liberal Movement of Kazakhstan gained instant popularity; early in 1998, this party and 17 more political structures loyal to power set up an Advisory-Consultative Alliance called the Popular Union in Support of the Reforms; it can be best described as a round table of political organizations. On 7 January, 1998, its first meeting adopted a Memorandum on Mutual Understanding and Cooperation of Political Parties and Public Associations. Analysts believe that in this way the authorities responded to the efforts of the Azamat movement and other opposition organizations to close ranks within the Popular Front of Kazakhstan.

Later, in February 1998, the Azamat leaders held a constituent conference of the opposition Popular Front of Kazakhstan; the conference attracted several other large political structures—the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the People's Congress of Kazakhstan Party, the Azat Civilian Movement, the Lad Movement, etc. The Popular Front was intended as an opposition bloc of political organizations with similar or identical views on the republic's main problems. In March 1999, the Azamat Movement served as the basis for the Azamat Democratic Party; for some time it remained part of the Forum of Democratic Forces it left in April 2000.

It should be said that before that, on 31 May, 1996, the parliament passed a decision On Public Associations; a month later, on 2 July, it adopted a Law on Political Parties, which banned parties created on the religious basis, as well as those that "aimed at, or worked toward the use of force to change the constitutional order, violate the integrity of the Republic of Kazakhstan, undermine its security, or fan social, racial, ethnic, religious, and clan strife" (Art 5). Pursuant to this document, "political parties have no right to receive money or other property from religious associations. Political parties should not be financed by foreign legal entities or physical persons, other states, international organizations, or legal entities with foreign participation" (Art. 16).

The Year 1999: Presidential, Parliamentary and Municipal Campaigns

Elections to practically all the representative structures tested the republic's democratic nature, its political leaders, and their readiness to fulfill their numerous declarations about granting all political parties and movements equal rights in administering the country.

In the latter half of 1998-early 1999, several more political organizations appeared: in October 1998, the Party of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan was formed to be shortly united, in May 1999, with the Otan Party. In November 1998, the Kazakhstan Civilian Party, one more openly pro-presidential party, held its constituent congress. It was attended by President Nazarbaev, who agreed to become its ideological and political leader. Since the day of its creation, the party has been playing an important role in the life of the country. A month later, the republic acquired a highly oppositional Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan with former premier Kazhegeldin as its chairman. The party's political memorandum, published to mark its five years on the political scene, said: "The party was set up as an alliance of representatives of the democratic public of the Republic of Kazakhstan in response to the country's rapid retreat from its initial democratic course and concentration of political power in the hands of one man."¹⁹ Since its very

¹⁹ [<http://www.gazeta.kg/print.php?I=4042>].

first day, the party has been strictly oppositional. Early in January 1999, it was announced that an Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan would be set up. It described its aim as protection of the interests of the agrarian workers; in fact, the new party became a political instrument to be used by the country leaders in Kazakhstan's countryside.

On 10 January, 1999, pre-term (two years before term) presidential elections took place; this undermined the position of the opposition, which had no time to get ready for the election campaign. By the fall of 1998, the authorities had already tilled the soil: the corresponding articles of the country's constitution and of the Law on Elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan were amended to suit their purposes. During the election campaign, the country's leaders made purposeful use not only of the media, but also of an army of propagandists and the juridical system. It helped President Nazarbaev remove, in the crudest way, the potentially most dangerous opponent—Kazhegeldin, leader of the Republican People's Party and former premier. According to official figures, Nazarbaev received 79.78 percent of the votes; the undemocratic nature of this campaign was criticized on all sides; a statement issued by the U.S. State Department said that this election was a step back in the democratization process in Kazakhstan.²⁰

After the presidential election, the parties began preparing for the parliamentary election: the pro-presidential parties were striving for more seats in order to deprive the opposition of any real possibility of taking part in state administration. On 19 January, it was announced that the Republican Staff in Support of the Presidential Candidate N. Nazarbaev Public Association would be transformed into the Republican (Homeland) Party Otan of the social-democratic type. The chairman of the Republican Staff, former premier Sergey Tereshchenko, became the temporary chairman of Otan (the party of power from the very beginning). Several pro-presidential parties held their congresses and conferences in January and February to announce their willingness to join the Otan. Their official statements said that it was their aim to promote economic and political changes in full accordance with the reform program presented in the Address of the President to the People of Kazakhstan of 30 September, 1998. In fact, they were only seeking closer affiliation with the party of power.

On 1 March, 1999, the Otan Party held its first congress, at which the president of the republic made a speech. The congress adopted the Program and Charter and elected President Nazarbaev its chairman with membership card No. 1. Since, pursuant to the constitution, the president cannot be a party member, President Nazarbaev suspended his membership and transferred his duties as chairman to Sergey Tereshchenko. On the same day, the unifying congress passed a decision on joining several political organizations with Otan: the People's Unity of Kazakhstan Party, the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, the Liberal Movement of Kazakhstan Public Association, and the Movement "For Kazakhstan-2030." In May, the Party of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan announced its intention to join Otan.

In this way, on the eve of the parliamentary and municipal elections, the country's leaders consolidated their forces by hastily knocking together a powerful party able to win the majority in the parliament and in the municipal structures of representative power. New members were admitted on a wide scale; civil servants and students joined the party en masse. The fact that Otan was created "with the direct participation of the local executive structures, the heads of which occupied high posts in the local branches and offices of the new party,"²¹ emphasized the party's special nature. No wonder it came to be known as the "party of nomenklatura." Executive power mobilized its administrative resource (primarily the state-owned media) and the potential of two other pro-governmental parties (the Civil and the Agrarian) to help Otan.

The pro-government structures won the expected absolute majority on the party lists: 8 out of 10 in the Majilis (the lower chamber): Otan received 4 seats, the Civilian Party, 2; and the Agrarian Party, 2. The opposition represented by the communists had to be satisfied with 2 seats. In other words, legal and outwardly democratic means were used to preserve power; and the results created a parliamentary screen for future decisions and steps.

²⁰ See: *Delovaia nedelia*, No. 2, 1999.

²¹ S. D'iachenko, L. Karmazina, S. Seydumanov, op. cit., p. 84.

No lull followed the 1999 presidential and political elections: in 2000, the Peasant Social-Democratic Party Auyl and the Patriot Party of Kazakhstan held their constituent congresses. The latter paid particular attention in its program to environmental issues. In this respect, it stood apart from all the other parties, which limited themselves to paying lip-service to environmental protection (the Party of Environmental Protectors Tabigat was the only other exception). In March 2002, the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Ak zhol (Clear Path) was formed on the basis of the public political movement of the same name which had been functioning since November 1998. The intelligentsia formed its core, while its program, Development Strategy of Kazakhstan until 2030, was formulated by President Nazarbaev.

In April 2002, the Russian Party of Kazakhstan was registered; it united the numerous regional and republican Russian, Cossack, and Slavic organizations which had united into an association in the latter half of the 1990s. The party defended the rights of the Russians and Russian speakers; its program said, in particular, that the party was fighting "for recognition of the Russian people living in Kazakhstan as a state-forming nation and for recognition of the Russian language as the state language along with the Kazakh."²²

The New Law on the Parties and the Parliamentary Elections of 2004

On 15 July, 2002, the president signed a new law on political parties. The opposition and democratic intelligentsia were convinced that the number of members needed to register any political structure (50,000) was unjustifiably large. All parties were expected to have regional cells with no less than 700 members each across the country. The law demanded that, to be registered, a party should submit a personal list of its members to the Ministry of Justice. In a country with a 15 million-strong population, this meant that small political parties representing small groups with special interests could no longer take part in the republic's political life. The opposition actively protested against the clause which made it possible to liquidate a party "if it missed two successive election campaigns to the Majilis of the parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan." Experts believe that this played into the hands of large political parties. The opposition, which was convinced that the law would not contribute to the country's further democratization, called it "the Law Against Political Parties."²³

In 2002-2003, political parties were re-registered according to the law; in the past, by 1 September, 2002, there were 19 political parties in the country registered according to the old rules.

By the deadline of 20 January, 2003 established by the new law, only 11 parties had submitted their requests for re-registration to the Ministry of Justice. Seven of them passed the test: the Democratic Party Ak zhol, the Kazakhstan Civilian Party, the Republican Political Party Otan, the Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan, the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, the Patriot Party of Kazakhstan, and the Peasant Social-Democratic Party Auyl. The following parties were denied registration for different reasons: the Alash Party (the former National Party of Kazakhstan Alash), the Compatriot (the former Russian Party of Kazakhstan), the Republican Democratic Party El Dana (the former Democratic Party of Women), and the Party of Revival of Kazakhstan. Another 6 out of 19 parties never applied for registration within the law-stipulated period.²⁴

The Rukhaniat Party (Spirituality) was the first political organization formed after the law had been adopted. It was formed on the basis of the Party of Revival of Kazakhstan functioning since 1995. Its proclaimed aim was preservation of the nation's historical and cultural heritage and protection of the working intelligentsia's social and civil rights. The party is extremely loyal to the powers that be.

²² [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php4?st=1027742460>].

²³ [<http://www.gazeta.kg/print.php?I=4042>].

²⁴ [<http://www.navi.kz/articles/?artid=3125>].

In December 2003, another pro-presidential party Asar (All Together) was formed with Dariga Nazarbaeva, the president's daughter, as its leader. She announced that her party was following the course of further modernization and deeper democratic changes. The opposition is convinced, however, that the president was just raising a successor to be sure of the best possible alternative of a transfer in power.

At first glance, several pro-presidential parties in one country might look excessive and even puzzling, yet in the case of Kazakhstan this was caused by objective factors, the main one being the superficial nature of the multi-party system and the clan nature of the Kazakhstani model of power.²⁵ Azhdar Kurtov, prominent political scientist and president of the Moscow Center for the Public Law Studies, agrees with this.

In February 2004, the oppositional Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan People's Party was set up on the basis of the opposition public movement of the same name functioning since November 2001. Soon after that, it was registered. In January 2005, the Almaty court of justice banned it for its sharp criticism of power. Its leader, Galymzhan Zhakianov, who earlier served as the akim (head) of the Semipalatinsk and Pavlodar regions, was sent to prison.

The parties of power enjoy considerable advantages over the opposition structures, which are not limited to the use of administrative resource alone. These parties have more money, which is very important. Otan, the party of bureaucrats, lives on local funding, the money coming mainly from the regional akims. Since in Kazakhstan, and in many other post-Soviet countries, power and money are inseparable, the party's financial basis is firm enough. The Civilian Party gets its money from mining and metallurgical companies, and the Agrarian Party lives on the money of agrarian enterprises. The Asar Party, headed by the president's daughter, relies on the administrative resource and is supported by the republican and local administrations. The moderately oppositional Ak zhol Party, which expresses the interests of national bourgeoisie, is not poor either. The openly opposition parties, such as the Communist Party and the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan People's Party supported by the protest part of the electorate, are much poorer.²⁶

On 19 September and 3 October, 2004, two rounds of parliamentary elections took place in Kazakhstan, in which 12 registered political parties (mainly pro-presidential ones) participated. Naturally enough, they remained dominant throughout the election campaign: they nominated the largest number of candidates and won the absolute majority of seats. As a result of voting by party lists, the radical opposition was left without seats in the Majilis, the Otan Party received 7 seats out of 10, along with 35 out of 67 seats reserved for deputies elected in single-member districts. On the whole, the party received 42 out of 77 seats.

The opposition parties came forward with numerous facts of violations registered on election day and falsifications revealed during vote counting. In its statement about the results of the election campaign, the European Union pointed out that it had not corresponded to the OSCE and international standards.²⁷ This was fully confirmed by the protest action headed by Majilis speaker Zharmakhan Tuiakbay, one of the three co-chairmen of the Otan Party. Even though he headed the party's election list, he rejected his deputy mandate in the newly elected Majilis and discontinued his party membership. By way of explanation he said: "The 2004 elections went on amid continued pressure by the local executive structures on the people's consciousness and on the election commissions, which was highly varied, sometimes concealed, and sometimes quite obvious."²⁸

* * *

The process of forming a multiparty system in Kazakhstan exhibited many features typical of similar processes taking place in post-totalitarian countries during the transition period. At the same time, in Kazakhstan the process was marked by its own specific features rooted in the country's past and its na-

²⁵ [<http://www.novopol.ru/material534.html>].

²⁶ See: D. Dashkov, "V poiskakh 'zolota' partiy" [<http://respublika.kz/index.php?art=2004030507>].

²⁷ [<http://www.zhakiyanov.info/inner.php?menuid=24&show=3834>].

²⁸ [http://www.dpkakzhol.kz/2004/monitor_191004_1.htm].

tional traditions. In addition, its social composition, its polyethnic and poly-confessional nature, and the clan character of power were also responsible.

The absolute majority of parties differ from each other not so much in their programs and social makeup, as in their leaders' closeness to certain powerful groups and the latter's closeness to "supreme power." It should be said that this more or less stable system cannot be compared with the multiparty systems of the old democracies. This system can, and should, be compared with the situation that existed in the republic under Soviet power, or with the current situation in the republic's neighbors. This alone will provide an insight into the meaning and complexities of the current processes of democratization in Kazakhstan.

PARTY BUILDING IN TAJIKISTAN

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Party building in a genuinely democratic society appears to be a rather simple affair: the people elect political parties, and the one that receives the majority of votes forms the government and determines the priorities of state policy until the next election. So, ideally, political parties are voluntary organizations which form a bridge between the people and the government, thus creating an efficient system along the lines of people-party-government. In so doing, the parties that lose the election create the opposition with the confidence that the government system itself guarantees their right to engage in political activity.

Real party building looks much more complicated, particularly in countries like the CIS states where democracy is incomplete or still developing. The former Soviet republics began from the same starting point, they all rejected the totalitarian Soviet-style system dominated by one party and a single ideology. But during the past fourteen years, each country of the Commonwealth has taken certain steps toward democracy. For example, whereas Turkmenistan and Belarus have simply made cosmetic changes to the old Soviet system of gov-

ernance, in Ukraine and Georgia political parties are already capable of having a significant impact on the election results.

But none of them have yet been able to make the transition to the above-mentioned formula of people-party-government. Across the board, the formation of parties and party building have ended up in the hands of the local elites—clan, regional, business circles, criminal, family, and so on. These elites are merely using political parties as a tool to gain or retain power. And this power is all the more coveted as the fight continues for deficit resources and a share in the divvying up of property. In this situation, the people are just as alienated from politics as they were in the Soviet system. Whereby the scarcer the resources, the more intense the struggle for power.

It is customarily believed that political parties in Tajikistan are formed according to the territorial principle, and the interparty struggle is most often seen as a standoff among the regional elites. But regionalism did not become an indispensable part of our republic's political life overnight. It is a rather complicated process that has been going on for more than one decade now.

The Cloning Process

Party building in Tajikistan can be provisionally divided into three stages. The first stage took place during the Soviet era, when the ruling Communist Party comprised a single whole with the state machine. For Tajikistan, the 1920s-1930s were a unique experience in building a contemporary party under the conditions of an Eastern society, whereby Moscow managed to keep rather effective tabs on any manifestations of regionalism and clannishness in the local party elite. But even the Tajik Communist Party of the Soviet era could not entirely avoid accusations of regionalism and parochialism. At the end of the 1940s, it was dominated by people from the north Leninabad (now Sogd) Region, that is, representatives of the Leninabad clan, although applying the term “clan” to Tajikistan is not entirely correct. To be fair, it should be noted that the “Leninabadites” (mainly people from the region’s capital of Khojent and partly from Kanibadam) did not have complete domination in the way it is usually described today. At the same time, the Leninabadites occupied most of the highest posts, while a certain tacit career “ceiling” was applied to people from other regions, which there was little chance of rising above. The power struggle went on within the one ruling party, was kept out of sight, and was limited in nature, while the groups themselves were rather amorphous, inconstant, and unstructured.

The situation began to change during the perestroika years. First, due to the abrupt reduction in subsidies from the Center and the rising resource deficit, it became increasingly evident that the property pie was soon to be divvied up. Second, it soon became obvious that the Leninabadites, whose long years of dominance was largely thanks to support from the Center, did not have such a firm foothold as people thought. What is more, the political struggle at the top gradually went beyond the boundaries of a purely inner-party standoff. It was soon understood that it was easier to challenge the domination of the Leninabadites outside the formed and ossified party structure than within it. The nomenklatura groups relied increasingly on their own regions, informal land unions, and associations in the power struggle. In this way, regionalism and parochialism gradually encompassed the whole of society, and opposition along territorial lines became unexpectedly aggravated at all levels of power and public associations, from district committees to scientific institutes and creative unions.

In this situation, one of the main forms of struggle against the former system of power distribution was to create new political associations and parties offering an alternative to the C.P.S.U., which signified an end to the single-party era in the republic and the beginning of the second stage in party building. The first opposition public structures appeared in the republic, although they did not have any experience in the political struggle or the necessary organizational skills.

The formation of alternative political associations began in 1989 when the first attempt was made in the republic to create a National Front. But this attempt was short-lived apparently because it was obviously custom-designed and ordered from above. It was essentially an attempt by the powers that be to keep the nascent opposition under wraps. But then the National Movement, Rastokhez, arose, which was much more successful. At any rate, on the eve of the first parliamentary elections at the beginning of 1990, its leaders were talking seriously about obtaining at least one third of the seats in the new legislative body. The hopes of the opposition were crushed after the February events of 1990. At that time, the republic’s capital was engulfed in its first wave violence and unrest, with the blame being placed on the leaders of Rastokhez. And the elections held under emergency conditions led to the formation of an essentially one-party parliament (the Communists received 95% of the seats in it).

Disappointment made it obvious to the opposition-minded part of society that new political structures must be created. In August 1990, a new alternative political organization appeared in the republic—the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), which was joined by many active participants of the Rastokhez movement. And as early as 27 September, the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) held its founding convention. The history of this party goes back to the mid-1970s when the first underground Islamist cells appeared in the south of the republic. At the end of perestroika, they emerged from the underground, first as a branch of the All-Union Islamic Revival Party (with its center in Moscow). In December 1990,

the Islamists managed to officially register their party as an independent political organization with the republic's Ministry of Justice.¹

But the new political parties proved to be more independent and active on paper than in practice. Most of the democrats were members of the intelligentsia, since many of them did not see any prospects for themselves within the framework of the old system. Correspondingly, the democrats suffered from the same old disease that inflicts these "intelligent" associations—alienation from the masses, while the Islamists felt a chronic need for secularly educated people (or at least those with a university diploma), perhaps due to their traditional mistrust of the intelligentsia.

Under these conditions, it was pointless to talk about serious party building. The democrats tried to form a network of their own cells in the regions, but this required years of arduous work. The Islamists, on the other hand, who had recently emerged from the underground, proved entirely incapable at this time of building a contemporary-style political party. The opposition parties were essentially hastily created public organizations with no precise structure, party discipline, or developed strategy and tactics. Such associations could only function efficiently during meetings and demonstrations when there was a chance of quickly seizing power. Their leaders were usually of a specific type, people with a great deal of charisma, but not prepared for long and tedious organizational activity.

This may be why the Tajik opposition preferred the tactic of meetings and demonstrations to developing long-term strategy aimed at cultivating their influence among the masses. As a result, the opposition parties were unable to emerge from their regional frameworks and become truly national political associations. They enjoyed support mainly from natives of the Karategin Valley and the Gorny Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAR), while throughout the rest of the republic their influence was minimal. The ruling elite did not fail to take advantage of this by creating an anti-opposition outpost in the south Kulob and north Leninabad (Sogd) regions. Representatives of the main ethnic minorities in the republic also had a very negative attitude toward the opposition.

Of course, the crisis did not boil down to just a regional confrontation. Tajik regionalism in itself is a multifaceted phenomenon caused by economic, social, and political factors. What is more, we need to keep in mind the ideological factor, since the entire range of opposition movements and groups, from the pro-Western democrats to the Islamists, put up resistance to the old communist elite.

The injudicious policy of the upper echelons led to opposition members of the most diverse, at times even incompatible convictions—supporters of the IRPT, DPT and Rastokhez movement—joining forces, and by 1991 they acted as a single force. During the civil war that flared up in 1992, the forces against the opposition created the National Front, in which people from the Kulob Region predominated.² By the beginning of 1993, the opposition formations had been defeated, and the administration and main leaders of the opposition parties had moved abroad. The National Front came to power in the republic. And although at the beginning of the civil war its representatives brandished communist slogans, they eventually distanced themselves from the Communist Party of Tajikistan (CPT) and the former elite.

Then began a period of political stagnation, which lasted for several years; all alternative opposition parties were banned, and for some time there was only one registered party in the republic, the CPT. But it was no longer part of the state machine, assuming a rather amorphous position "alongside the authorities." The country's new leadership did not see any need in reviving the Communists' previous dominating role in society. A new power elite emerged in the republic, the backbone of which was formed from natives of the Kulob Region. It was new in the fullest meaning of the word, its representatives not only had a different regional, but often a different social origin, and also differed from their predecessors in social status, education, and experience. Correspondingly, the new elite soon faced several problems, how to overcome regional boundaries, spread their influence, and reinforce their foothold not only in the regions, but also nationwide.

¹ See: P. Mullojanov, *The Islamic Clergy in Tajikistan since the end of the Soviet Union*, ed. by Stephane Dudoignon and Komatsu Hisao, Islamic Area Studies, Kegan Paul, London, 2000.

² See: D.V. Mikulskiy, *Anatomiia Grazhdanskoi voiny v Tadzhikistane*, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1977.

It gradually became understood that the best way to achieve this goal was to create a political party, that is, a new type of organization with an extensive network of cells at all levels of society, as well as with a strict hierarchy and precise strategy and tactics. In other words, the matter concerned a party of power which would perform the same functions in society as the C.P.S.U. had performed during Soviet times, however, catering to the new conditions of the transition period. The People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT) was formed to play this part, the founding convention of which was held on 10 December, 1994. But its transformation into the party of power did not begin until its fourth convention in 1998 when the country's president, Emomali Rakhmonov, was elected party chairman.

On the other hand, the Peace Treaty signed by the government and opposition in June 1997 created conditions for the opposition parties to return to the political stage. According to the provisions of this document, the authorities were obliged to remove the ban on the activity of opposition parties in the republic (primarily the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan and the Democratic Party), in light of which there were proposals to introduce corresponding amendments into the country's Constitution. But the opposition (which at that time was officially called the United Tajik Opposition—UTO) was supposed to disband its armed divisions and transfer to legal forms of political activity. In this way, implementation of the peace agreements laid the foundation for establishing democratic relations in the republic, within the framework of which political parties could fight for seats in parliament and for their candidate at presidential elections by constitutional means.

A big step forward was introducing amendments into the country's Constitution which legalized the activity of religious political parties. This legalization of an Islamist organization is unprecedented in Central Asia. It is the only instance of its kind, since usually the supporters of Islamic movements in the region's states have but one way to engage in politics—underground activity.

Under the new conditions, the advantage went to political parties with a good organizational base, professional staff, and capable of carrying out daily and tedious work. The time of amorphous public associations and movements of the 1989-1997 type had receded forever into the past.

So in 1998, the most recent and third stage of party building began in Tajikistan. It was characterized by the emergence of a new type of political organization capable of engaging in the political struggle by constitutional means under multiparty conditions.

The parties reached this stage with different political experience and opportunities. The CPT and ruling People's Democratic Party proved the most prepared to meet the challenges of the new conditions. The first was ready thanks to its organizational experience, qualified staff, and traditions accumulated over the decades of previous activity. Although it no longer enjoyed its former resources or status, it had sufficient time for adaptation. As for the PDPT, its assets included the administrative resource and the support of the authorities both at the local and federal levels.

Parties which belonged to the UTO at the time the Peace Treaty was signed were in a somewhat different position. Soon thereafter, the alliance of democrats and Islamists fell apart. The United Tajik Opposition was disbanded, and the democratic forces found themselves in a state of permanent crisis. The Rastokhez movement essentially ceased its activity, and the Democratic Party split into two wings in 1996, supporters of the so-called Tehran Platform (registered by the Ministry of Justice in 1997 as the DPT) and adherents of the Almaty Platform, which was closer to the leadership of the UTO. The two wings did not unite until the end of 1999, not long before the parliamentary elections, which prevented this party from obtaining enough votes to get into the Majlisi Oli (the country's parliament).³ And the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, which formed the backbone of the UTO, had around 2,000 members by the time of its second registration. What is more, in form and structure, it was more reminiscent of a public movement than a contemporary political party. Even in comparison to the prewar period, its base was limited to regional boundaries, and in many regions of the country it had to begin its activity essentially from scratch.

After their return to Tajikistan, the DPT and IRPT preferred their former tactic of cooperation with the government, whereby most of the problems and issues that arose were resolved on a private basis. Particularly since, according to the peace agreements, most of the leaders of the UTO had received posts

³ Data on the parties is presented according to information from radio BBC [<http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/tajikistan/>].

in the republic's power structures (within the 30% quota), or they were given the opportunity to engage in business. This gave an additional boost to peaceful settlement of the conflicts and confrontations that constantly arose during the first year after the peace treaty was signed.

What is more, warming up of the political atmosphere gave birth to a new phenomenon, the appearance and emergence into big politics of new political organizations, which by 1998 was no longer considered an unusual event. Until it acquired the status of the party of power (that is, before Emomali Rakhmonov was officially declared its chairman), the PDPT existed for several years as an independent political organization. But on the threshold of the first (after signing the peace treaty) parliamentary elections held in February 2000, an alliance of small new parties and associations appeared in the republic (most of them were still not officially registered), which assumed the role of the new opposition and the main critics of the powers that be. The most active were the Junbish movement and the Adolat va Tarakkiet Party (Justice and Development). And although the critical speeches of the new opposition leaders were quite moderate, against the background of a cautious silence from the former UTO leaders, who shied away from any confrontation with the authorities, they looked extremely radical.

Thus, by 2000, three main centers of political power had formed in the republic: first, the PDPT, that is the party of power; second, the old opposition, represented by the two former wings of the UTO—the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan and the Democratic Party; and third, the new opposition, largely consisting of recently created movements and parties. But the 2000 elections showed that the appearance of the new parties did not have much effect on the general breakdown and correlation of political forces in the country, since according to the voting results only three parties gained seats in the lower house of parliament: the PDPT, CPT, and IRPT.

Not only did representatives of the new parties, which naturally had been registered by this time, fail to exceed the 5% barrier required to get into the Majlisi Oli, the democrats failed too, which indicates the crisis which the country's democratic movement found itself in.

From Elections to Elections

The 2000 elections were largely a turning point for the country's political organizations. The voting results graphically showed that under the new conditions, the principle of party building applied at the beginning of the 1990s was no longer acceptable. We will remind you that at that time political parties were essentially formed on a regional basis and were amorphous and poorly organized structures. It became obvious that in the next few years those structures would climb to the top which managed to break free from regional constrictions and become national political organizations with equal impact and support both in the south and the north of the country.

In the four years since the elections, the political breakdown in forces has not so much changed as taken on a specific and stable form. Several of the movements and parties which made up or supported the new opposition (such as Junbish) have left the political scene after being unable to achieve official registration or find the necessary financial and other resources to continue their political activity. By the end of 2004, there were six political parties officially registered with the Ministry of Justice: the People's Democratic Party (PDPT)—the party of power; the Communist Party (CPT); the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT or IRP); the Democratic Party (DPT); the Socialist Party (SPT); and the Social-Democratic Party (SDPT).⁴

In so doing, there was essentially the same number of participants in the 2005 election race. Only the SDPT (the leader of the so-called new opposition, which was called the Adolat va Tarakkiet Party before registration) was the only new addition to the list of registered parties. But the parties differed significantly from each other in terms of quality and professionalism of party work, financial and organizational possibilities, and party building principles. For example, only three of them overcame the re-

⁴ See: *Political Parties of the Republic of Tajikistan*, OSCE, Dushanbe, 2004.

gional barriers to any significant extent and could consider themselves national, that is, they had representative offices functioning in all or most regions of the country. This primarily applies to the PDPT, the Communist Party, and the IRPT.

In terms of its possibilities, the PDPT holds essentially unrivaled first place, whereby not only due to its significant administrative resource. It has achieved impressive results in forming a suitable infrastructure. In particular, it has created an extensive network of primary organizations not only in the regions, but also in all areas of the republic; its basic cells are headed essentially everywhere by staff secretaries, that is, those working at a professional level. Among them are many former functionaries of the Communist Party who have a great deal of organizational experience and knowledge accumulated during the decades of party building. Local government institutions usually render all kinds of assistance in holding the PDPT's functions; many civil servants (admittedly not to the same extent as in Soviet times) are members of the party of power, and its literature is actively, and we can say by quota, distributed throughout every region of the republic. Of course, this party is still far from encompassing society in the way the C.P.S.U. did, but nevertheless it has been able to create the largest and most efficient political apparatus in the country. What is more, its ranks are filled with leading politicians, prominent businessmen, and the best known representatives of the intelligentsia.

As for the CPT, although it holds stable second place in terms of influence and number of supporters in society, its most urgent task in recent years has been retaining its former foothold and not attempting to conquer new expanses. Admittedly, the party has largely retained its electorate, which is ready to vote for it no matter what. But, just as in other CIS countries, it is the older generation in Tajikistan that tend to vote for the communists, and their numbers are on the steady decline. The CPT has particularly suffered in terms of cadres: for the past few years many of its prominent figures have left to join the party of power. Nevertheless, it is still one of the few national parties which has essentially retained its former structure and network of primary organizations in almost every region of the country. In so doing, the communists are still basically close (even loyal) to the authorities. Many people in the republic do not even recognize the CPT as the opposition, believing it and the party of power to be "two sides of the same coin."⁵

But the greatest progress in the area of party building has been achieved by the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, keeping in mind the path it has gone since its second registration with the Ministry of Justice (1998) to the present. Indeed, the IRPT essentially began again from scratch in 1997 with only 2,000 members, while today its ranks have swelled to 22,000. The Islamists were the first to create a network of primary organizations throughout the republic, including in the Sogd Region and the Kulob group of regions, which at one time were the main bastion of the pro-government forces. Incidentally, the party's largest branch just happened to be created in the Sogd Region (around 7,000 people). The party's achievements include the appearance of its primary organizations in Badakhshan, or to be more precise, in the local Ismaelian community, although just recently the IRPT was considered a purely Sunnite organization.

During the past few years, several qualitative changes have been noted in the party. On the one hand, the radicals who were dissatisfied with the party's conciliatory policy toward the authorities have left its ranks and more moderate citizens of the republic, who used to be put off by the party's radical image, have taken their place. And on the other hand, in addition to the old (in terms of work experience) leaders, representatives of the young generation have become influential in the party. Many of them have a good secular education and uphold moderate viewpoints. Of course, as in any other party, the IRPT is still divided into moderates and radicals. But it is worth noting that at the parliamentary election held on 27 February, 2005,⁶ representatives of the moderate wing were included on the list of its candidates for deputy in the Majlisi Oli. And what is more this list was prepared and approved by rank-and-file party members.

⁵ *Zindagi*, No. 3, 20 January, 2005, p. 14.

⁶ This article went to press before the Central Election Commission published the final results of the voting at the 2005 parliamentary election.

The efforts of its leaders to select and train qualified cadres (this work is done by a special department within the party) have helped to turn the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan into a political constitutional-type structure. These efforts have resulted in an increase in the qualifications of its leaders in the provinces in recent years. Today it is the second party in the country (after the PDPT) with the financial resources to allow it to have a network of staff secretaries and leaders in its primary organizations. There are quite a lot of successful businessmen among its supporters and activists, mainly representatives of small and medium businesses, which also increases the IRPT's opportunities compared with other opposition parties.

In contrast to the Islamists, the secular or democratic part of the opposition is still trying to struggle to its feet and dealing with indeterminateness and dissension. Not long before the 2005 elections, the chairman of the Democratic Party, Makhmadruzi Iskandarov, was arrested, which only aggravated its long-term crisis. The Socialist Party is also split into two factions. The Social-Democratic Party is a little better off, but it has still not passed the formation stage and cannot compete on equal terms with the three main parties.

The common misfortune of all the parties representing the secular opposition is the absence of a developed infrastructure and a dearth of professional cadres and financial resources. Their influence is restricted to specific regions, and the leaders of the primary and regional branches are forced to work under the same conditions as everyone else. The ideological views of the above-mentioned parties are just as indeterminate. Only the SDPT has presented a sufficiently competitive election platform. As for the SPT, its proposal to resolve the economic problems by raising taxes will hardly enhance the party's rating among the electorate.

In truth, the Tajik voters are rather weak in questions of ideology and economic policy. The main criteria for them today are still such factors as the party's ability first to ensure stability and peace in the country, and second, to fix the economy, resolve social problems, and raise the population's standard of living. In this sense, the IRPT is beyond rivalry since most of the people associate it with strengthening stability and peace in the country (which in itself has already promoted a certain economic upswing in the years since the conflict). Voters are also attracted by the CPT's platform, where special attention is focused on social issues. Despite the negative association which the Islamists nevertheless arouse among a significant percentage of the electorate, the IRPT (like the CPT) has a relatively stable number of voters willing to vote for it no matter what.

According to the data of a survey conducted in 2001 and 2004 by the Shark Information Analysis Center, during the past three years, the PDPT's rating has increased from 27.4% to 31.4%, the IRPT's from 2.9% to 8.2%, while the communists' rating has been significantly shaken, falling from 44.5% to 20.7%. But, as we have already noted, the CPT is still the second most influential party in the country.

Approximately one month before election day, most local experts said that the results of the 2005 parliamentary elections were a foregone conclusion and would most likely be an exact repetition of the results of four years ago: the PDPT would receive the majority of the votes and at least 15 of its representatives would get into parliament on the party lists; second place would go to the CPT (4-6 deputies); and the IRPT, regardless of its real potential, would obtain 2-3 mandates.⁷

Prospects

Two mutually exclusive trends are observed today in the work of the country's political structures. On the one hand, all the parties are striving to become national and spread their influence and presence to all regions. And on the other, political power in each party is concentrated to one extent or another in the hands of people from one of the country's regions. This contradiction is particularly obvious when analyzing the activity of the largest parties, which have an extensive network of branches throughout the

⁷ See: *Zindagi*, No. 3, 20 January, 2005, p. 16.

republic. At the middle and grass roots level, their activists comprise of representatives from all the regions. But in the upper echelon of these parties there is usually a disproportionately high percentage of representatives from one or several regional/subregional groups. Even parties which were initially created with supposed immunity to parochialism sooner or later find themselves within tight territorial boundaries. For example, the SDPT, which is conceived as a supraregional political organization (it is believed that its founder R. Zoirov, a native of Kazakhstan, is not infected by the Tajik regionalism virus), is currently becoming a party which relies on the northern regions, and it has little chance of gaining active support in the south. Apparently the conditions that have developed over the past decades are in themselves dictating the character and nature of party building in the republic.

The question arises of what will party building look like in Tajikistan in another few years, and to what extent will it correspond to the democratic standards of government by the people?

As for the near future in politics, political scientists are basically of the same opinion. We have already mentioned the forecasts regarding the composition and activity of the parliament elected in 2005. And the upcoming presidential election in 2006 is just as predictable. Hardly anyone doubts that if the current president, Emomali Rakhmonov, puts forward his candidacy (and this is most likely), he will have no great difficulty in being elected to another term (even without resorting to the administrative resource). Most of the country's population associates the image of the current head of state with stabilization of social life and centralization of power, which has had a favorable effect on the economy as well. What is more, there is no other personality on the political scene (at least today) who could create serious competition for the current president on a national level.

Nevertheless, the boost from the peace agreements of 1997 which stimulated the economic growth of recent years must be reinforced soon by real and large-scale reforms in the economy and the social sphere. After all, such questions as economic development, social justice, employment, and raising the standard of living are becoming of prime importance. These problems are so urgent for present-day Tajikistan that any delay in their resolution will inevitably invest them with political significance.

At present, the republic's government and the leadership of the ruling party are showing their support of democratic transformations and market reforms. In terms of their world views, the representatives of the ruling elite, who are currently shaping the country's economic policy, are sufficiently close to the Russian ideologues of the Putin reforms. They can both be characterized as pro-market statesmen, that is, they are supporters of market reforms, but condone greater participation of the state.⁸ But pro-market statesmen usually ignore the social sphere. When they are in power, the state cuts back its social obligations toward the population: benefits are cancelled, utility fees and transportation costs go up, and so on. The difference is that by canceling benefits the Russian government is transferring responsibility to the regions and their Tajik colleagues shifting the burden onto the shoulders of the labor migrants (admittedly, not all, but some social obligations). On the whole, pro-market statesmen are supporters of macroeconomic reforms, and in so doing they usually declare the need for developing small and medium businesses, but in reality this area is considered secondary.

In this way, if the current trends of the Tajik government in the economy and social sphere are retained (which is most likely), the emphasis in the next decade will be placed on implementing macroeconomic projects and gradually increasing the state's role in the economy. On the other hand, the state's social obligations toward the population will be cut back and the development of small and medium business will be pushed into the background. In the meantime, under the specific conditions of present-day Tajikistan, the macroeconomic development model (in general terms it was developed back in Soviet times) is not capable of resolving several of the most urgent and pressing problems facing society. Mega Soviet-style projects cannot provide work for even a small percentage of the population today, and cutting back on the state's social obligations under conditions of growing unemployment will lead to a drop in the standard of living and correspondingly to a rise in social tension.

⁸ See: B. Kagarlitskiy, "Kolkhoz 'Kreml'," *Novaia gazeta*, 27 January, 2005 [<http://2005.novayagazeta.ru/nomer/2005/06n/n06n-14/shtml>].

Under the macroeconomic model, basic resources are usually distributed unequally, being concentrated in the hands of the ruling elite, which will aggravate the struggle among the groups competing for access to the market levers allowing control over the distribution of national resources. In our country, this development of events will cause a new outbreak of regionalism, which will inevitably lead to an increase in social and political tension in society. Under these conditions, regionalism is becoming the main factor influencing the entire formation and development of both the ruling and opposition parties.

The political prospects for most parties will depend on resolving economic problems. If the government cannot find a way out of the economic crisis, it will have to toughen up its domestic policy in order to hold onto power, eliminating or limiting the activity of potential political rivals, primarily parties and public associations, as the most efficient mechanism of civilian mobilization. In this respect, the events in Georgia and Ukraine, where the well-organized opposition destroyed the seemingly unshakeable power system, is a good lesson for post-Soviet power regimes unwilling or incapable of undergoing democratic reforms.

In this way, legal party building will largely fall under the state's control. In terms of the extent to which it encompasses society, the party of power will become increasingly reminiscent of the C.P.S.U., and will permit only sufficiently loyal political structures to participate in the elections. Democratic mechanisms and attributes will be completely retained, but they will be used not for the general benefit of the people, but for reinforcing the powers that be. Elections will gradually assume an increasingly provisional nature, and their results will be determined not during open competition between the leading and opposition parties, but on the basis of preliminary and private agreements among them. In so doing, the political parties (like the elite groups standing over them) will be faced with the dilemma of either adopting new game rules or rejecting legal methods of political activity. Radicalization of the parties and associations squeezed out of the framework of constitutional political activity will become inevitable.

Of course, this alternative of the development of events is possible only with "successful" implementation of the currently observed trends in the economy and social sphere. But it is very likely that many negative aspects will be eliminated or adjusted during the economic reforms. By the way, it may turn out that after the 2006 election, the government's economic policy will be defined by a different team of specialists with different views and work methods. If the population's life improves during the next presidential term, and social tension in society is successfully defused, this will also have a positive effect on the country's overall democratization. Then party building may take on forms much closer to the norms and standards of real democracy.

At any rate, in the next few decades, Tajikistan's experience, like that of other CIS countries, will apparently be another confirmation of a generally known truth: development of real democracy is impossible without building a contemporary market economy.

REGIONAL POLITICS

**TRANSPORTATION
COMMUNICATIONS AND
GEOPOLITICS IN THE GREAT SILK
ROAD REGION**

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One hundred years ago when scholars were just beginning to coin the term “geopolitics,” states relied on force to protect their interests. No matter how skillful the diplomats were, the army remained the only guarantor of all treaties and agreements. A new force destined to change the world—transnational corporations—came to the fore in the latter half of the 20th century and gradually developed into a new political factor. These giants were born in the developed and rich countries, which, however, were not very strong militarily. Indeed, some of them represented Japanese and German capital (the military budgets of these countries could hardly be compared with America’s military spending). Without a single shot the transnational corporations, as welcome guests in nearly all Third World countries, accomplished what in the past could be secured solely by the use of arms: economic and political domination. It was the transnational corporations that gave birth to the globalization ideas; it is the transnational corporations that are translating them into life as being best suited to their interests.

The world economic space is becoming a reality at a fast pace, with the European Union setting an example. It took it over 50 years to move away from local agreements, under which neighbors acquired the status of most favored nations (the European Coal and Steel Community, etc.), to common governing bodies (the European parliament and its institutions). United Europe with its single currency and transparent internal boundaries is the ideal, which the larger part of mankind is aspiring to achieve and which it will achieve by all means.

The national interest idea is the key concept of geopolitics, geographic location being one of its basic factors. Indeed, the place where the nation takes shape is the most stable parameter of its existence.

What is a strategic forecast of the world’s geopolitical makeup for the 21st century? What place can Central Asia and its closest neighbors hope to acquire? The answers are not merely interesting, they are

vitality important for all of us living in Central Asia. Political scientists and futurologists predict clashes of civilizations in the 21st century.

Nikolai Danilevskiy, Russian publicist writer and sociologist, was the first to tie together historical progress and civilizations in his famous book *Rossia i Evropa* (Russia and Europe) first published in 1868.¹ He described cultural-religious communities, or cultural-historical types, rather than states and nations as the main actors on the historical scene. (Later political scientists agreed to call them “civilizations.”) Still later the theory was further developed by German philosopher Oswald Spengler, Russian philosopher Konstantin Leontiev, and prominent Eurasians Petr Savitskiy and Lev Gumilev. British historian Arnold Toynbee in his definitive multi-volume work *A Study of History*² offered even more profound treatment of the same subject. He classified civilizations and formulated a theory of their development, which he called *Challenges and Responses*.

Today, the science of geopolitics is being developed by Harvard professor Samuel Huntington, who in 1993 published his definitive work *The Clash of Civilizations*, in which he convincingly demonstrated that economics and ideology would no longer provoke conflicts in the 21st century. This role, he argued, would belong to the differences between civilizations which would thus emerge as the dominant factors of world politics.

Military-strategic theories, all of them being greatly affected by the theories of the great strategists of the past (Machiavelli, Clausewitz, and Moltke), are part of the science of geopolitics. In fact, two admirals—Englishman Philip Colomb and American Alfred Mahan—left the deepest imprint on the military-strategic theories of today. The latter published his *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*³ in 1890; the former, his *Naval Warfare*⁴ in 1891. Alfred Mahan introduced the term “coastal nation” into scholarly circulation and studied in detail how the closeness of sea (ocean) and indentation of the coast affected the history of coastal nations. It was he who pointed out that conflicts were mainly limited to the space between the 30th and 40th parallels (he called this space “the shatterbelt”). It was in this zone that the interests of a sea power which controlled the oceans and a mighty land power which dominated in the middle strip of Eurasia clashed, irrespective of the wishes of politicians. The sea power was obviously Great Britain, while the land power that opposed it was Russia. To win, the sea power had to push the land power as far inland as possible. Britain did this until confronted with a more formidable enemy, the German Empire, which threatened its interests across the world.

Karl Haushofer⁵ of Germany and Halford Mackinder⁶ of Britain made a weighty contribution to the science of geopolitics. They perceived the world in a state of permanent instability and saw it as an arena of struggle between two leading political elements—sea and land powers. Sir Halford Mackinder became famous with his geographical pivot of history theory that divided the world into three parts—the pivotal region, the inner, and the outer crescents. By the pivotal region he meant Midland Eurasia occupied mainly by Russia; the large inner crescent was formed by Germany and Austria-Hungary (the division dates back to 1904), Turkey, India, and China. The outer crescent included Britain, South Africa, Australia, the United States, Canada, and Japan. Mackinder termed the inner, or the pivotal region of Eurasia, the Heartland, the struggle for which would seal the planet’s future.

Later Nicholas Spykman, American expert in geopolitics, disagreed with Mackinder over the definition of the pivotal region. For him it was America (the United States) that held the central place in the pivot and, correspondingly, the central place in the world thanks to its domination over two oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific.⁷

¹ See: N.Ia. Danilevskiy, *Rossia i Evropa*, Glagol Publishers, St. Petersburg, 1995.

² A.J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, New York, 1972.

³ A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1805*. Abridged ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1980.

⁴ P.H. Colomb, *Naval Warfare: Its Ruling Principles and Practice Historically Treated*, 2d ed., W.H. Allen & Co., Limited, London, 1895.

⁵ See: K. Haushofer, *Bausteine zur Geopolitik*, Berlin, 1928.

⁶ See: H. Mackinder, “Geographical Pivot of History,” *Geographical Journal*, 1904.

⁷ See: N. Spykman, *America’s Strategy in World Politics*, Harcourt, Brace & Co, New York, 1942.

Geography does affect politics, but is its influence on economic and social development as tangible? The answer is “no.” A nation’s creative energy and its “growing power” exert the greatest influence. Nations with weak creative energy and growing power cannot hope to advance far. This did not escape the attention of the academic community: combined studies of external (geographic) and internal (historical and social) factors produced impressive results. The state, wrote German geographer Friedrich Ratzel, author of *Politische Geographie* published in 1897, was a living organism that combined the properties of the nation and the land on which this nation lived.⁸ Contemporary political scientists, in particular Pierre Gallois from France, author of fundamental *Geopolitique. Les voies de la puissance*⁹ has added several more elements to the classical definition of geopolitics: weapons of mass destruction that can reduce to naught the advantages or shortcomings of geographic location, which is itself a geopolitical factor along with landscapes, climate, population size, and transportation routes. In addition, the French scholar described the “massovization” of society, the phenomenon of people’s mass behavior, and also added this element to contemporary geopolitics.

The mondialist and multipolar models of world division are two of the latest geopolitical theories. Mondialism talks about the division of our planet into the dominant civilized center of the highly organized space (the West), the technological zone, which serves the “golden billion” with its raw materials (Eastern Europe, the CIS countries, the Near and Middle East, Southeast Asia minus Japan, and South America), and the destitute periphery of no use to the West (most of African countries). The multipolar model looks at the world as a totality of many poles. For its author, Saul Cohen,¹⁰ the ideal world order consists in dynamic equilibrium; objectively, economic globalization maintains such equilibrium—in fact, it is possible only under the conditions of equilibrium.

Let us concentrate here on a relatively narrow geographic area—Central Asia—and let us limit ourselves to a fairly short span of time—from the time of the Soviet Union’s disintegration and formation of new independent states in its stead to the present (when these countries, having taken several steps toward independence, can compare what they wanted with what they’ve got, and what their neighbors have acquired). There is a very significant detail: on 30 August, 2004 BBC reported that a railway between Termez, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Herat (in Afghanistan) was being built. In the future it will reach Bandar Abbas and Chāh Bahār, two Iranian Gulf ports. Afghanistan, an unstable country torn apart by internal strife, which drug dealers have turned into a huge poppy plantation, interfered with communication between its northern and southern neighbors. This instability is gradually being overcome; very soon it will become possible to lay railways and pipelines across its territory in order to bring Caspian oil and gas to Pakistan and India.

Uzbekistan has been waiting for this far too long: in many respects independence took the Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) unawares. They were not ready to accept it: like all the other Soviet republics, they were part of a huge state which they supported and obeyed. Independence primarily presupposes a wide range of contacts with the outside world. During the years of independence, Central Asia has learned how to use them.

Central Asia is a vast region of about 4 million sq. km populated by 55 million people. It is a natural bridge between Europe and East Asia, the communication along which is ensured by latitudinal railways and highways. Today, the use of them depends on the goodwill and enterprising efforts of the interested states. Its natural riches, primarily hydrocarbon resources, as well as non-ferrous and rare metals are large enough to interest China, South Korea, Japan, India, and Pakistan. This has already created a new powerful development stimulus and attracted billions of dollars in foreign investments. And that is not all: the world needs more fuel. Oil production in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan is keeping pace with this growing demand.

The Central Asian nations need stability and good-neighborly relations; they need thrifty use of water—their common natural resource—and transparent borders within a united region and sin-

⁸ See: F. Ratzel, *Politische Geographie. Einleitung*, Leipzig, 1897.

⁹ See: P.M. Gallois, *Geopolitique. Les voies de la puissance*, Paris, 1990.

¹⁰ See: S.B. Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a Divided World*, New York, 1963.

gle economic expanse. This is how the Central Asian countries describe their political priorities, which are still very distant. Today Russia, whose interests used to prevail in the region, has to compete with China, America, Japan, as well as Iran and Turkey (and the Muslim world as a whole) with uncertain results.

The tradition of the most favored nation that Russia enjoyed in the past can still be clearly seen in its relations with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan; two other states—Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan—insist on equal relations and, as a rule, succeed. The economic contacts previously limited to Russia have become more varied: China, Japan, South Korea, the United States, the EU, Turkey, and Iran are coming to the fore in the region's economic life.

All Central Asian states are CIS members and belong to the Organization of Central Asian Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization (along with Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey); they cooperate with NATO within the Partnership for Peace Program and with the EU under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Four of them (with the exception of Turkmenistan) are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) along with Russia and China. This is not merely an antiterrorist structure: it initiates interaction and cooperation on the widest range of questions (including setting up JVs in transport, energy, and mining). Construction of hydropower stations on the Naryn and Vakhsh rivers has been resumed after many years of idleness jointly with RAO EES Rossii. The energy they produce will be exported north, to Kazakhstan and Russia, and south, to Pakistan.

Active involvement in various international structures is not the latest fashion—we are concerned about our safety and a speedy and painless transfer to the market. The 9/11 events heightened the interest in Central Asia: the American military presence is an accomplished fact (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan let the United States use their first-grade air bases). Central Asia became actively involved in the rapidly changing world order. In December 2001, when commenting on Washington's policy in the region, Elizabeth Jones, Assistant Secretary of State, said at the hearings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "When the Afghan conflict is completed we shall not leave Central Asia. We want to support the Central Asian countries in their desire to reform their economies and society in the same way as they supported us in the war on terror."¹¹

Reorientation toward the market did not happen all of a sudden: different countries followed different paths. The Civil War undermined Tajikistan's economy and crippled its international prestige; Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan opted for a stage-by-stage and gradual transfer; after overcoming the trying period of "shock therapy," Kazakhstan is moving ahead at a fast pace.

The Central Asian countries established transportation links with China, Iran, Turkey, and the Georgian Black Sea ports. During the years of independence the newly established links have enlarged the region's potential, armed the local countries with export and import tools, and created prospects for international transit. Today, only Afghanistan remains outside the process. The international community has turned its attention to the Great Silk Road, which in the past crossed Central Asia to connect China and Europe. Its speedy revival connected Chinese and Kazakh railways, as well as Turkmen railways with those in Iran. The cargo traffic along the restored Great Silk Road cannot yet be compared with that which crosses Russia; to achieve this, China, the Central Asian and South Caucasian states, Iran, and Turkey must unite their railways into a single system and coordinate their transport, border, and customs laws. These routes must become attractive price- and time-wise. Herculean efforts are needed because Russia is persistently creating the most favored nation regime for European, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese shippers by modernizing the Trans-Siberian Mainline, lowering tariffs, improving cargo security, etc.

In fact, the westward transportation routes Central Asia badly needs (which go to the Black Sea and Mediterranean), the eastward routes which connect it with the ports on the Yellow and South China seas, and the southward routes which end at the ports of the Persian Gulf and the Bay of Bengal are functioning even though they are still underloaded. This positively affects the sovereignties of the Central

¹¹ *Tsentral'naiia Azia: geoeconomika, geopolitika, bezopasnost*, ed. by R.M. Alimov, Sh.R. Arifkhanov, et al., Shark Publishers, Tashkent, 2002, p. 14.

Asian states. Very soon the region will be connected with China by another railway, and Uzbekistan and China are building the Osh-Kashgar highway. Connections with the Karakorum Highway of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan offer another promising southward perspective: they link Central Asia with Pakistan, India, and the ports of the Bay of Bengal. The same links will allow India to move its goods to Europe by land.

The Central Asian pipeline network includes the gas pipelines that move Turkmen and Uzbek gas to the north along the Bukhara-Urals and Central Asia-Center lines and to the region's neighbors; there are also pipelines that move Kazakh oil from Tengiz to central Russia and Novorossiisk on the Black Sea.¹² Active cooperation between Turkmen and Uzbek gas companies and their Russian colleagues helps the Russian Federation and Gazprom to retain their foothold on the European markets (the gas extracted in Russia is not enough). Pakistan and India are showing a lot of interest in Turkmenistan's oil and gas. Very soon they will be connected by pipelines, most probably via Afghanistan. China is very interested in Kazakhstan's oil. There are plans to lay a 2,900-km pipeline with an annual throughput capacity of up to 40 million tonnes of crude oil to China in less than three years.

In this way, during the economic upsurge, the Central Asian transportation complex, which is able to offer high-quality transit services to European and Asian consignors, is developing into an important tool of the region's integration into the world economy. These stretches can be described as a trans-Asian route parallel to the Trans-Siberian Mainline, which runs 2,000 km to the north. It serves a territory of over 10,000 sq. km (the Central Asian republics, western China, northern India, northern Pakistan, and Afghanistan).

There is tough competition among the Central Asian republics for freight traffic; each is developing its own system bypassing the neighboring territories, therefore Kazakhstan's vast territory is to its obvious advantage. The Great Silk Road, however, demands cooperation, otherwise the project will remain undeveloped.

The local countries are modernizing their economies through a combination of tradition and modernity in the hope of rapidly changing the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres for the better in order to raise the standard of living and join the international community as equal members. While Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are pinning their hopes on increased oil and gas production (by 2010 Kazakhstan plans to produce 100 million tonnes of oil; Turkmenistan has set a goal of 50 million tonnes of oil and 120 billion c m of gas) in order to achieve economic progress in other branches, Uzbekistan is concentrating on the in-depth processing of cotton, vegetables, and fruit and on the motor industry. In Kyrgyzstan, economic growth (about 6 percent a year), spurred on by the rapidly developing market infrastructure, resumed in 1996; in Tajikistan, the GDP showed an increase in 1998; prior to that, the republic experienced its greatest production decline (in 1996 its level was 40 percent of the 1991 level). While in Kyrgyzstan 40 percent of population are living below the poverty level, in Tajikistan the share is much larger—60 percent. All the Central Asian countries are doing their best to create a favorable investment climate to develop the private economic sector.

Economic growth encourages integration, while healthy economies are a powerful stability factor. Today, integration obviously dominates over disintegration; cooperation and interaction are obviously profitable. Still, much remains to be done to create an efficient single economic space of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (the corresponding treaty was signed in 1994). Reality, however, is much more somber than the sides' declarations. The Central Asian leaders, however, do not doubt that the region will profit from a single economic and transport space with a common market, as well as from a common foreign policy, common customs and tax control, and a common security system.

At one time, Mackinder¹³ wrote about the region's high potential. He described it as part of the Heartland (continental Eurasia far removed from the oceans). He said in particular that this vast economic world was absolutely self-sufficient because of its irrigated land, which could grow wheat, cotton, veg-

¹² See: S.S. Zhiltsov, I.S. Zonn, A.M. Ushkov, *Geopolitika Kaspiskogo regiona*, Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia Publishers, Moscow, 2003, p. 153.

¹³ See: H. Mackinder, *op. cit.*

etables, and fruit, as well as due to its energy sources and non-ferrous and rare metals. He claimed it could develop efficiently even though it was a long way from the world oceans. Land transport (railways and pipelines) could help it maintain economic ties with neighbors and the rest of the world. His conclusion fit perfectly with the time it was drawn: "Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island (Eurasia.—*Ed.*); who rules the World-Island commands the World." At that time it was next to impossible to predict that Central Asia, or rather its five independent states, would rule itself. However, today their interests are closely related not only to the interests of their closest neighbors (Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, India, Pakistan), but also to the interests of far-away and equally influential international actors (the U.S. and the EU, Japan, and South Korea).

Some of those who predicted a clash of civilizations in the 21st century never suspected that international terrorism would emerge as a frightening, perfidious, and unpredictable force able to change the political course of the world's leading countries. On 9/11 it came to the fore as the main destabilizing element in mankind's recent history; the terrorist acts in the United States started a chain of inhuman acts of violence in Russia, Spain, Turkey, Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The world community has to put a bold face on the new threat, study its roots and breeding ground, and identify the perpetrators and the manipulators, "the puppets and the puppeteers." This will not be easy.

The war on terror is one of the most important aspects of Central Asia's geopolitical situation; cooperation among the local countries and with the world's leading powers is becoming more constructive. The military presence of the United States in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and of Russia in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan guarantees stability in the region. It will continue until the local countries acquire battle-worthy rapid deployment forces. The economic upswing has practically neutralized the threat of ethnic conflicts, yet the Islamist threat is as great as ever.

There is a mounting awareness in the United States that by encouraging economic growth in Central Asia it will consolidate political stability and will effectively oppose Islamic radicalism. The Export-Import Bank of the United States, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency are actively functioning in Central Asia, encouraging the American companies involved in improving railway and air transportation infrastructure, energy, TV communications, and laying oil and gas pipelines. The United States encourages market developments in the local economies and regional cooperation projects. Washington is especially interested in promoting democracy and a civil society; it helps democratic institutions and the media.

Cooperation with the United States is growing more varied; the problems of global and regional security, the counterterrorist struggle, cooperation in conversion of the defense industry, non-proliferation of WMD and nuclear technologies, as well as interaction within the Partnership for Peace NATO program are receiving special attention. Despite its counterterrorist vector, the White House is not ignoring its support of the countries wishing to consolidate their market economies and democratic institutions. All the Central Asian countries are finding it important to develop their relations with the United States on the basis of their common regional interests.

Russia, which occupies a huge chunk of Eurasian territory, is a bridge between the West and the East. This gives Moscow the freedom of geostrategic maneuver. The Russian Federation supports the idea of a multipolar world and looks at itself as one of its poles. It has so far failed to formulate a new, post-Soviet national idea—this will take some more time. Russia is paying particular attention to Afghanistan: it needs a stable and predictable Afghanistan, loyal to the world community, and free from secret camps training terrorists for all hot spots around the globe, primarily Chechnia; and it needs a country without vast poppy plantations and heroin-producing laboratories. This is what the Central Asian countries and the United States also want. The common interests serve as a solid basis for cooperation and joint opposition to world terrorism and international drug trafficking.

Russia has had to accept the greater involvement of the West in Central Asian economic and security issues. It seems that Russia's military presence in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan will continue for a long time, because these countries also want it. The West for its part is taking into account Moscow's interests in Central Asia.

Recently, the largest Russian companies—Gazprom, RAO EES, and others—have stepped up their presence in the region. They are re-opening Central Asia; Gazprom entered into an agreement with Turkmenistan for 20 years which will bring Ashgabad \$5 billion every year. Astana and Moscow will jointly develop some of the gas fields of Kazakhstan. Construction of the highly promising hydropower stations on the Naryn and Vakhsh rivers will resume. The number of JVs is increasing; Russia is willing to cooperate with China within the SCO, and Iran, two long-term enemies of Atlanticism. At the same time, it is cooperating with the Atlantic world more and more frequently and shares many viewpoints with NATO. There is the opinion among political scientists that if Moscow assumes the role of an accelerator of the integration processes in Central Asia, its influence and prestige will grow. If it limits itself to the role of a passive spectator, its influence and prestige will soon be exhausted.

China has set up several large research centers for Central Asian studies. By 2020 (or even earlier), the GDP of this fast developing great power with relatively moderate military spendings will outstrip the GDP of America. China has long overstepped the annual threshold of 100 million tons of steel; and it built one of the largest hydropower stations on the Yangtze River within ten years. Intensive development helps resolve the unemployment problem, the worst headache in this overpopulated country. The Chinese are ready to actively participate in developing the vast expanses of their neighbors—Russia, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan—with a population density 20- to 40-fold lower than that of China. Tens of thousands of Chinese are working in Kazakhstan; there are Chinese communities (Chinatowns, exact copies of the Chinatowns in Canada and America) in all of its large cities.

China is especially interested in the Central Asian raw material branches; it is also looking at the region as a capacious market for its cheap and fairly good-quality consumer goods. By constantly extending its foreign trade, China is using the region's transit communications to move its goods to Europe and to decrease its spending in this sphere. Beijing regards the revival of the Great Silk Road as a priority task, which may make its goods even more competitive. After acquiring access to the railways of Kazakhstan and connecting its highways with those of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, China started building the Osh-Kashgar highway to acquire the shortest possible routes to Europe and the Middle East. A parallel railway will be built some time later to reduce China's dependence on Russia's railways. Beijing hopes that the new land routes to Europe will cross reliably secure and stable territories.

China has already settled its border disputes with Russia and the Central Asian countries; there is no longer any military pressure from the north, because the new independent Central Asian states present no threat to China. It can now safely develop its eastern regions, the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region included. Beijing supports the region's republics in the security sphere through the SCO.

China does not hail America's military presence in Central Asia in the immediate proximity to its borders; in fact, it regards it as a threat. Beijing does not want Russia's restored influence there either; it is doing its best to isolate the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region from Islamic fundamentalism and the ideas of pan-Turkism. In the economic sphere, China is creating the best possible conditions for its businessmen working abroad: it is investing increasingly large sums of money in the Kazakh oil fields in the hope of uniting them with its western regions by a large pipeline. Its geopolitical interests in Central Asia are consistent, stable, and long-term. By establishing partner relations with Russia in the region, China regards them as another stability factor on its northwestern borders.

Iran promptly established political and economic ties with all new countries in the hope of influencing them by actively promoting its religious ideas. The Iranian formula of an Islamic state was not welcome in Central Asia. After realizing this, Tehran turned to purely pragmatic relationships. The local countries are completely satisfied with this course: Iran, in particular, is opening the road to the Persian Gulf as an extension of the Great Silk Road. In 1996, a Mashhad-Tedzhen-Serakhs railway was built in a very short time to connect the railways of Turkmenistan and Iran. Iran's Gulf terminals, in which the Central Asian countries are especially interested, supply Tehran with additional arguments when it comes to protecting its interests in the region. On the other hand, its continued cooperation with the local countries (especially its emerging good-neighborly relations with Turkmenistan) is helping Iran to alleviate its international isolation somewhat, on which the United States insists. By spreading its influence, Iran

is trying to undermine America's foothold in this part of the world, which was previously closed to the White House. Russia, India, and China support this Iranian stand. It was on Iran's initiative that an Economic Cooperation Organization was set up which includes all the Central Asian republics, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Pakistan, and the Cooperation Organization of the Caspian States.

Turkey hoped that the new independent countries would emulate its model of state structure, thus helping it establish its political and ideological control over the region. The West looks at Ankara as a shield against Islamic fundamentalism. It was not without the influence of Europe (where millions of Turks now work on a permanent basis) that Turkey opted for the secular development pattern, which proved viable. The ethnic, linguistic, and cultural affinity between Turkey and the Central Asian republics provides good opportunities for consolidating Turkey's geopolitical interests in the region. Its hopes, however, of becoming the leader of the Turkic-speaking world failed; today it is guided by purely pragmatic considerations.

Turkey is infiltrating into the region via the light (textile and tailoring) industry with its numerous JVs, transport, and tourism. The Great Silk Road leads to Southern Europe via Turkey (the TRACECA project). Turkey and Iran, with their opposite state models, are locked in bitter rivalry in Central Asia. Since the latter half of the 20th century, Turkey has been serving as a pillar of American influence in the Near and Middle East. In 1992, Turkish TV started broadcasting in Central Asia; thousands of students from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan are studying in Turkish higher educational establishments. Ankara's technical and humanitarian aid to the Central Asian republics has already topped \$1.2 billion.

Pakistan's Central Asian policy is directly affected by its confrontation with India due to the still unresolved territorial disputes, which regularly develop into armed conflicts. Both are de facto nuclear powers. The Central Asian republics would naturally prefer to resolve this conflict peacefully so that the Indian sub-continent might finally become an area of peace and cooperation. The religious and cultural affinity between Pakistan and its Central Asian neighbors, however, did not make them natural allies in the border conflict. The Central Asian states are interested in India's resumed land traffic to Europe across Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia (today the route lies across Iran, the Caspian, and Russia).

In its contacts with Central Asia, Pakistan is paying particular attention to the transportation infrastructure, telecommunications, and JVs. In its dealings with Central Asia, Islamabad is growing increasingly aware of the need for trans-Afghan highways and a railway. They should be built as quickly as possible. To be effective, transport needs stability. As an ally of the U.S.-led counterterrorist coalition, Pakistan is exerting immense efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan, yet in Pakistan there are still camps that train fighters for Iraq and Chechnia using the funds of international terrorism. Pakistan itself was a target of their attacks. Its army is trying to uproot this evil to little avail.

India regards the Central Asian countries as natural political and economic partners and is doing its best to prevent their pro-Pakistani bias. In 1995, when the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan, Moscow, Delhi, and Tehran brought their viewpoints on the Afghan issue closer. They were against the Pakistan-sponsored Taliban. India, which preferred the Central Asian countries using Iranian rather than Pakistani ports, achieved this in 1996. In fact, its cooperation with the Central Asian states is varied; it wants these countries to be its allies in the Kashmir issue. This means that Central Asia is the place where the geopolitical interests of the great powers, as well as neighboring states (Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and India), clash.

The world's second industrial power, Japan, which exports high tech finished goods and technologies, is enlarging its presence in the region steadily, but not too obviously. It specializes in science- and labor-intensive commodities (electronics, communications and telecommunications, machine tools, and cars). It needs political and social stability in the region and fast economic development of its mining branches in the first place (Japan is the world's largest raw material importer) in order to include the republics in the global commodity circulation along the revived Great Silk Road, as well as via the newly acquired access to the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean ports. It has already extended considerable credits to Uzbekistan (\$1.6 billion), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Japan also allotted consid-

erable state credits on easy terms: between 1995 and 2001, Uzbekistan received \$312 million-worth of such aid; Kyrgyzstan, \$214 million; and Kazakhstan, \$222 million. Japan is equally interested in retooling the Trans-Siberian Mainline, which offers the shortest route to Europe. The Japanese business community is toying with the idea of building a railway across Sakhalin to the mainland. Japan would like to see Central Asia as an economically developed region, very much along the lines of the East Asian pattern. So far, the trade volume is not large; the number of JVs is equally small (as of 2003 there were only 10 of them in Uzbekistan). It is very expensive to transport Japanese goods via China to Europe, therefore Tokyo is reluctant to use the Central Asian transportation corridors.

The EU is working on its Central Asian policy, which would take account of the American, Russian, Chinese, Indian, and Japanese policies in order to avoid confrontation there. It has already entered into partnership and cooperation agreements with all the Central Asian countries. In 1999, the European Parliament passed a resolution On the EU Strategy for Developing Relations with the Independent Central Asian States, which stressed in particular that the EU was especially concerned with the development of democracy in these countries. At the same time, the EU members are fully aware that Western-style democracy cannot be imposed on Central Asia and it will take some time to create conditions conducive to democratic development. The EU is rendering practical assistance in fighting drug trafficking, overcoming the ecological crisis in the Aral Sea, and eliminating the drinking water shortage. It is interested in promoting Central Asian integration. The TRACECA project, a EU brainchild, is constantly supported by lavish investments in the local railways and highways along the Great Silk Road of antiquity.

The independence the Central Asian countries acquired in 1991 is bearing fruit; each of them is acquiring traits of its own, and its own domestic and international image. The world community is doing all it can to help them reform their economies and join the world market. The restored Great Silk Road will serve the same aim. In fact, it has become another guarantor of their sovereignty by opening up the world to them.

CENTRAL ASIA AS A SPACE, POLITY, PEOPLES, AND FATE

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

The study of contemporary Central Asia encounters problems of ontology and conceptualization. Not only current scholarly works on Central Asia, especially after 11 September 2001, but also recent post-independence studies of the re-

gion lack adequate and strong scientific approaches. The spectrum of incorrect views on Central Asia ranges from assertions about Uzbekistan's expansionism and hegemonism in the region and a prognosis of the "Balkanization" of Central Asia to re-

jection of the applicability of the regional integration concept with regard to the five countries of the region on the grounds that their cultures and political systems are too different. What is more, most locals, that is, Central Asians themselves, have been carried away by the perceptual works Western scholars have presented to them and written about them.

What is Central Asia? For Westerners it is *there*, for locals it is *here*. Is it strictly definable? People have an idea of America, an idea of Europe, an idea of Eurasia, etc. Does anyone have an idea of Central Asia? I cannot help but recall Edward Said's research. An interesting methodological warning can be found in his *Orientalism* that as both geographical and cultural entities—to say nothing of historical entities—such locales, regions, geo-

graphical sectors as “Orient” and “Occident” are man-made. “Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West.”¹

I believe this kind of contemplation can be applied to Central Asia. It is not an attempt to replace all the lies with the truth, all the myths with real history, and all the conjectures and prejudices with stringent and absolute definitions of Central Asia. It is only an attempt to make up for the insufficiently positive approach to the region from the viewpoint of the historical predisposition of its countries and peoples to integration.

¹ E. Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, New York, 1979, p. 5.

Central Asia as a Space

The 9/11 terrorist attacks gave the entire system of world order a terrible shakeup, and the world community was impelled to reconsider the very paradigm of international relations. Central Asia seems to have its own place and status in this paradigm.

The thing is that today more and more countries are expressing a strong interest in land communication between Europe and Asia, and the idea of a new Great Silk Road is becoming increasingly popular.

In the long run the role of Central Asia will increase as the creation of trans-Asian railroads, highways, and communication networks in Afghanistan open up new possibilities of reaching the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. What is more, the creation and exploitation of the TRACECA transportation corridor, which joins the railroads and highways of five Central Asian and three Caucasian countries into a single network, will increase the transit capabilities, as well as improve the investment climate of the countries concerned.²

As Ross H. Munro pointed out: “A new Silk Road of modern railroads and highways that would effectively give China a land route far to the west, ultimately to Europe and to an Iranian opening on the Persian Gulf, would have enormous strategic consequences, possibly comparable to the impact that the advent of Suez and Panama Canals once had.”³

By Central Asia we mean the five newly independent post-Soviet states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These five countries are in themselves a vast region with a territory of about 4 million sq. km. and a population of about 55 million people. The region's geopolitical role is stipulated by its intermediate location between the Heartland and Rimland, an area of permanent clashes between the world powers. In the West, the region's natural frontiers stretch along the shoreline of the Caspian sea, in the East, along the Djungar Alatau mountain systems of Tien Shan, in the South, along the Khorasan mountains and rivers of Amu Darya, Panj, and Amrek, and in the North, along the edge of the Kazakhstan steppes.

² For more detail, see: *Tsentrāl'naia Azia: geoeconomika, geopolitika, bezobasnost*, ed. by R. Alimov, Sh. Arifkhanov, S. Rizaev, and F. Tolipov, Shark, Tashkent, 2002.

³ R.H. Munro, “China, India, and Central Asia,” in: *After Empire. The Emerging Geopolitics of Central Asia*, ed. by J. Snyder, National Defense University Press, Washington, 1995, p. 130.

What is more, Central Asia is a unique region in the OSCE area. For the first time in OSCE history, it covers a region with not only a predominantly Muslim population, but also non-democratic countries in terms of their political regime. From this point of view, the question arises about the extent to which the region will comply with European values and standards of democracy and the extent to which it will retain its archaic Eastern paternalistic nature. Where is the region, in the East or in the West?

Central Asia is becoming a proving ground for testing the traditional theory of division of the world into East and West. It can be said that it is a form of new delimitation between East and West.

Central Asia as a Polity

The Central Asian states have been undergoing profound and comprehensive changes since they gained their independence. These changes largely embrace economic, social, political, military, cultural, and even ideological spheres. It is a very complicated process which can be described by the anything but simple concept of national state-building. This process goes hand-in-hand with that of proclaimed regional integration. In other words, the factor of national self-identification currently co-exists with the factor of unification.

It should be mentioned that in this part of the world certain supra-national integrative quasi-polities have always existed, such as the empires of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, the Bukhara Emirate, the Kokand and Khiva khanates, Turan, Turkistan, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union with its "Central Asia *and* Kazakhstan," and all kinds of post-Soviet formations of the Central Asian Economic Commonwealth or CIS types. **Waves of integration and disintegration come and go to create a complex geo-socio-cultural-political tectonics of regional development in which the line between the national and the regional can barely be discerned.**

These very complicated circumstances became the reason for the misperceptions and misrepresentations of Central Asia and the overall transformation processes unfolding in the region. One such misrepresentation, to my mind, is Mr. Zb. Brzezinski's theory of the "Balkanization" of Central Asia. Even a deeper analysis of such conceptions makes it impossible to accept this analogy. If any such analogy were possible, it would more likely be the "Afghanization" of Tajikistan, the most vulnerable Central Asia country to external threats from the beginning of the 1990s to 2001.⁴ However, ironically, it is not the latter scenario, but its exact opposite, which is taking place: a certain cultural and civilizational experiment is being observed nowadays in Afghanistan, which so swiftly, within just a year, jumped from medieval, brutal, and man-hating obscurantism to the status of a partner-country of the OSCE.

In this respect, Central Asia is quite a unique polity. From the very outset of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which replaced the Soviet Union, the Central Asia countries adopted the Treaties on Eternal Friendship as their first interstate documents. They acknowledged the then-existing former Soviet administrative boundaries between them as interstate borders, and declared that they do not have any territorial claims against each other.

At the same time, the Soviet legacy and general context of the processes within the CIS gave rise to one-sided Western perceptions of the newly independent states (NIS) as immanently weak and conflict-prone. Moreover, in many geopolitical research studies, Central Asia was usually regarded from the viewpoint of the well-known "zero-sum game" of external powers over the region. Perhaps the sustainability of such a conception predetermined the current expectation that the foreign policy orientations of the Central Asian states would be diversified, that this diversification would be negative in nature, and negative in a sense that it is being organized and formed on the basis of the traditional model of balance of power. Even such a phenomenon as nationalism in this part of the world was historically caused to a great extent by geopolitical processes and itself became a tool of the latter.⁵

⁴ See: F. Tolipov, «Certain Theoretical Aspects of Central Asian Geopolitics,» *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (12), 2001.

⁵ See: F. Tolipov, "Nationalism as a Geopolitical Phenomenon: the Central Asian Case," *Central Asian Survey*, No. 2, 2001.

It should be noted that the concept of balance of power, both for external powers and for the Central Asian countries themselves, was stipulated by the fact that it is the most widespread and well-known model for building international relations at a stage when the formation of independent foreign policy of any NIS is inevitably accompanied by “time-tested” forms borrowed from the outside. Such elements of *ersatz-policy* have led to negative foreign policy diversification. What is more, the Central Asian countries found themselves in a situation of double balancing, so to speak: balancing the policy of external powers, on the one hand, and their exaggerated apprehension about the necessity to create a balance among themselves on a regional scale, on the other.

Balance of power policy should be rejected as an irrelevant conception of relations between and among Central Asian states, as well as between them and external powers. Instead, the current strategic task for the region is to encourage integrationist attempts and efforts. The only alternative to the integration policy is mutual isolationism.

Countries under consideration are predisposed toward developing their own common *integration model*. This requires sorting out their ideas about what they have, do not have, and should have, in which areas they are experiencing problems, and in which they have succeeded with respect to the all-embracing integration process. In other words, it is a question of assets, conditions, problems, and possible areas of integration. Briefly:

- *The assets of Central Asian integration are:* Common origin and history; recognition and official declaration from the very beginning of independence and in different forms of the Central Asian regional commonwealth; establishment of the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Central Asia; existence of regional multilateral formats of summits and dialogue mechanisms developed at the level of the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO); creation of functional inter-state institutions/consortiums; slow but continuous institutionalization of regional integration.
- *The conditions of Central Asian integration are:* Common trans-border challenges to regional security; specific geographical location of the region; mutual economic, social, and strategic dependence; pressure of post-Cold War geopolitical realities and formation of a new world order.
- *The problems of Central Asian integration are:* Information warfare; destructive geopolitics; exaggerated understanding of national interests; autocratic political regimes and weakness of democratic institutions; lack of confidence and mutual trust; different false apprehensions of so-called Uzbek hegemonism and the alleged struggle between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for domination in Central Asia.
- *The areas of Central Asian integration are:* Common information, scientific, and socioeconomic space; a common market; rejection of the visa regime; de-mining of certain border sections; reconsideration of models of economic relations and foreign policy strategies; full implementation of Treaties on Eternal Friendship; setting up of a collective security system.

Central Asia as Peoples

Are the peoples of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan so different, even alien, that they have to discuss conflict prevention and crisis management between and among them? Certainly not; however, they have been forced to believe that they are, forced by the newly emerged geopolitical circumstances, which turned out to be the most negative outcome of independence and distorted their self-identification. These countries found themselves hostages of their own independence, which required inventing, shaping, constructing, and defending full-fledged statehood.

There is no doubt that crisis management and conflict prevention tools and mechanisms, as well as building up confidence among states and peoples have become one of the major trends of international politics in conflict-prone areas. This is acquiring even greater importance in the Central Asian countries,

since relations among them are increasingly affected by the geopolitical factor. Whereby the states' efforts to prevent conflicts will always be valued, since they demonstrate a permanent sign of their goodwill. "Ultimately, the content of confidence-building efforts may be less important than the process in instilling habits of cooperation that, over time, may result in greater understanding and increased levels of trust".⁶

From this point of view the "win-win" formula, which is an antithesis to the "zero-sum game," looks like the most valid one in the search for appropriate relationship models in Central Asia. This region is a single ecumene for all ethnic groups living in it. This is a positive factor. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the Central Asian countries and nations are interconnected and interdependent. Even their national self-identification cannot help but intermingle. The existence of a diaspora of each neighboring country and a number of enclaves in each of the countries is a reflection of this intermingling. Any search for a so-called national ideology should be complemented and, to be more exact, enriched by aspirations to create a regional ideology. In this sense nationalism and, so to say, supernationalism/regionalism co-exist and mutually complement each other.

This means that if ethnic pluralism within and cohesiveness of a particular country are of vital importance for national survival and prosperity, ethnic pluralism among and cohesiveness of countries are also vitally important for regional security and stability. The win-win strategy in this case implies that the national should never be pursued and put on the agenda at the expense of the regional, and vice versa.

On the other hand, the national self-determination process, in its traditional sense, is doomed to remain incomplete. Just as the region's division into five parts within the borders of the current republics was arbitrary and artificial, so any effort to conclude the building of nation-states based purely on an idealization of the traditional and outmoded concept of nationhood, state, and democracy will also be ineffective.

An analysis of the transformation processes taking place in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan reveals a national-regional dualism in their content, trends, and peculiarities. Therefore, the region's overall geopolitical transformation might be characterized as real revitalization and reinforcement of regionalism in Central Asia.

Unfortunately, scholars who study Central Asia very often overlook this factor. They mostly neglect the need for novel approaches to various intra-regional political issues which on the surface may typically look like national, or capable of producing ethnic tension and conflicts. The list of most "popular" issues of this kind includes, for instance, inequality among the Central Asian countries and peoples; Uzbekistan's intention to establish its own hegemony over the region; the struggle for leadership between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan; the struggle for natural resources and water; territorial disputes; ethnic tension, and etc. Independence has revealed the problem of stronger and weaker states in the region, and the problem of equal conditions and equal statuses. Those who are pessimistic about Central Asian regional unity are, deliberately or otherwise, playing up this problem. I see only one way to prevent exacerbation of this problem, namely equalizing the countries and peoples in one regional polity.

In this regard, cultural diversity among the peoples of Central Asia should not be understood as though they belong to different civilizations. They belong to the same civilization, and so political dialog develops between them within one civilization. I cannot help but recall our historians, who conclude: "We must remember that all the peoples populating Central Asia are descendants and heirs of the rich historical past of this huge center of world civilization."⁷ I would add "equal heirs."

Nevertheless, it is not so much cultural diversity that should concern us as the inappropriately constructed foreign policy diversification of the Central Asian states. Hence, we encounter a "cultural plural-

⁶ M.S. Pederson, S. Weeks, "A Survey of Confidence and Security Building Measures," in: *Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures*, ed. by Ralph A. Cossa, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 1995 (quoted from: Susan L. Clark-Sestak, "Confidence and Security Building (CSBMs) in Central Asia: Trends and Prospects," in: *Conference on Regional Stability and Security in Central Asia*, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 7-11 December, 1998).

⁷ D. Alimova, Y. Buryakov, M. Filanovich, "Ob'ektivnost v istorii—otvetstvennost za budushchee," *Uchitel Uzbekistana*, 28 July, 2003.

ism *versus* geopolitical pluralism” situation. Indeed, the concept of cultural diversity, or pluralism, serves as grounds for and the manifestation of peaceful coexistence of peoples and thereby undermines the differences and puts the stress on cohesiveness between them. Geopolitical pluralism, on the contrary, undermines cultural pluralism precisely because it puts the stress on differences and, thereby, serves destructive geopolitics.

Talking about such issues as borders, inter-state economic cooperation, and resolving the diverse problems of their relations, we usually limit our considerations to only state actors, while there are also so-called trans-border actors, who very often challenge the traditional activity of the former. They are people, families, business groups, professional nongovernmental organizations, and a number of others. Cultural and civilization differences have never been essential for them in conducting their trans-border way of life and activities in the Central Asian context.

In addition, I should remind you that all the Central Asian peoples have one feature in common: they are all composed of sub-national local communities which have their origin in ancient tribes, so that the respective nations as such can be symbolically divided into micro-communities. (Take, for instance, the Uzbeks, a nation that, by origin, is composed of more than 90 tribe-related communities.) The peoples of the region are not only divided within the region, that is externally. They are divided internally as well. And we can confidently conclude that these two forms of division actually reflect the same phenomenon, the genesis of a nation in a modern sense of the word.

But interestingly, such a division can be continued and extended from the micro- and macro-level to the mega-level. If the micro-level pertains to sub-national communities and the macro-level to the nation itself, the mega-level is associated with a super-national community. **The sub-national, national, and super-national coexist simultaneously!** And it is the same people.

Central Asia as Fate

Fate for me is not the imaginative thinking of a fatalist. By fate I mean not simply fortune or misfortune. It is not only a state of affairs. It is also the future which is being built, and should be built.

From the viewpoint of “searching for the future,” we should ask whether Central Asia be a common home for the people living in it? Will they share a common fate by creating a common market and common democracy? What is and will be the correlation between Islam and secular statehood in these countries? Will the idea of pan-Turkism shape their future destiny?

It seems that the same answer to all these questions can come from the option the Central Asian peoples have chosen, which is reflected in the principle “Central Asia first!” It means the expediency and urgency of drawing up a common regional strategy regarding the key intra-regional and inter-national developments. They must deliberately refrain from straightforward and shortsighted attempts to create a pure national model for everything—statehood, democracy, the socioeconomic system, and especially security. Any search for a national model of democracy should be replaced with the search for a democratic model of the nation. Otherwise, the isolationistic justifications of autocratic regimes will always be advanced.

Prof. S. Huntington in his brilliant book rightly notes that after the collapse of communism the view was reinforced in the West, especially in the U.S., that its ideology of democratic liberalism had triumphed globally and hence was universally valid. However, the dominant attitudes toward these Western values in non-Western cultures range from widespread skepticism to intense opposition. “What is universalism to the West is imperialism to the rest.”⁸ In our case, I guess, we are not talking about the incompatibility of Western and Eastern values, but about the unwillingness of certain dominant political forces in Central Asian countries to incorporate democracy, which by-and-large is not a Western invention.

⁸ S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Touchstone Books, New York, 1997, p. 184.

Central Asia is undemocratic not because democracy is alien; on the contrary, its countries are not democratic because they are isolated from each other. D. Mitrany was quite right when he said that social activity in the region, in the broadest sense of the word, is cut off by state frontiers and may (or may not) be combined with similar activities beyond the boundaries with the help of “uncertain and cramping political ligatures.”⁹ When social activity (which by nature can spread beyond state frontiers) is cut off at the randomly drawn borders, this is tantamount to dismemberment of national self-identification, an effort to strengthen national specificity that leads nowhere.

The “Central Asia first” principle implies that everything—security, survival, the sociopolitical structure, well-being, and values—should be, so to speak, nationally-regionally defined.

Jean Monet, one of the great founding fathers of united Europe, once wrote that there would never be peace in Europe if states were revived again on the grounds of national sovereignty, which leads to the policy of prestige and economic protectionism. The European countries are too small to secure the possible and needed degree of their peoples’ well-being. He warned that well-being and necessary social development are inconceivable without a European federation which would form their economic unity.¹⁰ The same deliberations can rightfully be applied to Central Asia.

We should recognize that the national division of Central Asia carried out in the 1920s-1930s, which placed rigid limits on the economic and social development of the republics, was erroneous.¹¹ Therefore, reunification is a timely and strategic task. It is also a way to overcome inequality, as was mentioned above.

Equalization of the countries concerned, that is, integration, not only creates a new status-quo, a club of equals, but also reduces the potential for the separatism, irredentism, mutual suspicion, mistrust, and rivalry which can be aroused by ethnic tension. Thus, integrationist political equality is a precondition and prerequisite of equality among multiethnic societies.

Fate divided the Central Asian peoples into several states. And divided, they were persuaded that they need a mediator in their newly emerging disputes, they need help, foreign security assistance, including a foreign military presence. Now they must reshape their fate. Their readiness to help themselves and prevent crises in their relations, as well as their desire to resist common security threats together and build a common regional home are prerequisites of a respectful attitude toward the Central Asian countries by external powers. Central Asian integration should not be merely good will, but should be widely and democratically discussed, nurtured, planned, constructed, and secured. It is the historical responsibility of the governments, nations, and peoples.

“The independence of each Central Asian country will be more valuable based on the principle of cooperative development; otherwise there will be greater risk of losing more and finding oneself on the periphery.”¹² Peripheral development, weakness, and division plus wrong stereotypes and misperceptions of Central Asia (what E. Said may have called “Central Asianism”) will inevitably require a certain foreign peacekeeping presence. Paraphrasing the author of *Orientalism*, we can assume that in the worst case “Central Asianism” will be successfully accommodated to the new imperialism, whereby its ruling paradigm does not contest, but even confirms, the continuing imperial design to dominate Central Asia.

C o n c l u s i o n

The new studies of the Central Asian political processes are dominated by conscious or unconscious views of the overall relations among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan,

⁹ D. Mitrany, *The Functional Theory of Politics*, London School of Economics and Political Science; Martin Robertson and Co., London, 1975, p. 118.

¹⁰ See: H. Kohl, “Die Europäische Gemeinschaft.—Bilans und Perspective,” in: *Europe—unsere Zukunft*, Herford, 1989, S. 21.

¹¹ See: *Razvitie mezhetnicheskikh otnocheniy v novykh nezavisimykh gosudarstvakh Tsentral’noy Azii*, Ilim Publishers, Bishkek, 1996, p. 201 (see also: S. Kushkumbaev, *Tsentral’naia Azia na putiah integratsii: geopolitika, etnichnost, bezopasnost*, Kazakhstan Publishers, Almaty, 2002, p. 75).

¹² S. Kushkumbaev, op. cit., p. 146.

as well as their foreign policy strategy, through the prism of the balance of power. However, we very often overlook the fact that a destructive policy regarding the balance of power is turning the region into a buffer zone between the global superpowers and causing it to lose its independence. Yet Hans Morgenthau warned: "The more intimately a local balance of power is connected with the dominant one, the less opportunity it has to operate autonomously and the more it tends to become merely a localized manifestation of the dominant balance of power."¹³ The apprehension over such a would-be perspective should impel the Central Asian states to avoid it and resist it by means of unification.

Meanwhile, new geopolitics is arising in this part of the world which implies that Central Asia must play its own role in the international system and world politics. 11 September merely accelerated this process. And scholarly works reveal again the problem of theory: we are simply observing the passage from old stereotypes and prejudices to new ones. Various widespread analytical speculations, official statements, public suspicions, and allegations about the newly established American military-political presence in Central Asia can prove this thesis.

Public opinion, knowledge, and perceptions of international relations are very often limited to such oversimplified "pro-" or "anti-" dichotomy, or to the idea that "military-economic power necessitates hegemony-prone politics," that the typical balance of power frameworks appear to be the only theory that was demanded and accepted. The adherents of this theory, and they constitute the majority, constantly repeat the phrase about Russia's domination of Central Asia, which is currently being replaced by the alleged American domination.

At the same time, the new Central Asian library is only just getting to its feet. Due to the new discovery of the region, "Central Asianism," like "Orientalism," as a system of knowledge, needs renovation. The leading idea for this renovation might be the thesis that "the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically 'different' inhabitants who can be defined on the basis of some religion, culture, or racial essence proper to that geographical space is a highly debatable idea."¹⁴

¹³ H.J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Alfred-A-Knopf, New York, 1985, p. 219.

¹⁴ E. Said, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA: A SHIFT TO POSITIVE FOREIGN POLICIES

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Evolution of Foreign Policy Ideas

Throughout the entire period of post-Soviet development, Russia has been harrowed by domestic problems: an entirely new distribution of political and economic power and the resultant reshuffling at the top; frantic efforts to bring remote regions, which imagined themselves "independent

principalities,” into line; the war in Chechnia, etc. Some of the ministries, too, thought they were free to pursue their own policies uncorrelated with the RF Foreign Ministry. The Ministry of Atomic Energy, for example, put forward the initiative of selling nuclear reactors to Iran. Politicians remained locked in a fierce struggle for and against democratic principles; some of them even wanted to restore the great-power approaches. For this reason, other states treated Russia with caution and resorted to preventive measures. On the other hand, this deprived Russia of a chance to pursue a more or less effective foreign policy.

The evolution of Russia’s foreign policy approaches within the CIS is best illustrated by the notorious paper “SNG: nachalo ili konets istorii”¹ (The CIS: the Beginning or End of History) and the recent statements by President Putin.

The paper, authored by prominent political scientists Konstantin Zatulin and Andranik Migranian and permeated with imperial arrogance, said in part: “Only active measures (up to and including destabilization of the domestic situation in the regions, where anti-Russian and anti-integration forces have become especially obvious) can stem the process of a slow (and inevitable in the context of the current policies of Russia’s leaders) drift of these states away from Russia, which will turn the CIS into a nonentity... The Russian leaders have to clearly demonstrate to all their far and near partner-rivals that Russia would sooner encourage a large-scale redivision of the entire post-Soviet expanse by tapping all possibilities and the political sentiments of the Russian diaspora than permit the appearance of numerous anti-Russian centers of power resolved to oust it from the new abroad.” With the naïve conviction that destabilization would bring Russia political dividends, the authors elaborated their theory as applied to Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Central Asia. They failed, however, to take account of the other side of the coin: political and economic isolation; unacceptable direct confrontation with the Western and Islamic worlds, an economic crisis, involvement in numerous ethnic and political conflicts along Russia’s frontiers, and stronger separatist trends inside the country.

Since the initial course chosen turned out to be unprofitable, Russia had to pursue a different strategy once more. The decline of the Yeltsin Era, which started with the financial, economic, and political crisis of 1998, ended the period of foreign policy arrogance. The time had come to revise Russia’s foreign policy; it could no longer remain indifferent to what was happening on its borders and could no longer distance itself from direct involvement. It had to take into account its economic, political, and defense interests in the neighboring countries.

Since that time, the Russian Federation has radically revised its foreign policy approaches within the CIS and concluded that Russia needed friendly and stable states for its neighbors. This changed the foreign policy principles Russia applied in Central Asia. In his book *Uzbekistan na poroge XXI veka: ugrozy bezopasnosti, uslovia i garantii progressa* (Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the 21st Century: Security Threats, Conditions, and Guarantees of Progress), President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov wrote: “It is very important to understand that the appearance of independent and fairly stable states able to serve as a regional buffer completely suits Russia’s interests; it will cost it next to nothing. A stable region with a stable economy does not challenge Russia or any other state. It opens vast economic and other perspectives. This guarantees that the region will never become the scene of a clash of civilizations; it will serve as an example of their interpenetration and mutual enrichment.”

When speaking about the foreign policy conflict that hit Ukraine in November-December 2004, President Putin described Russia’s new foreign policy strategy in the CIS: “We shall accept the choice of any nation in the post-Soviet expanse as absolutely adequate and shall cooperate with any elected leader.”² The Russian president added that his country was prepared to play a constructive role across the post-Soviet expanse and that it would limit itself to the role of an intermediary: “We are not ready, and we do not want to shoulder responsibility for the final settlement of any conflict. We do not agree with the attempts of any of the sides to shift responsibility onto Russia. We do not want to create the illusion that any decision was made under Russia’s pressure.”³

¹ “SNG: nachalo ili konets istorii,” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 March, 1997.

² RIA Novosti [http://www.rian.ru/rian/intro.cfm?trd_id=1761].

³ *Ibidem*.

Changing Priorities in Central Asia!?

The leaders of the CIS countries, who are fond of enthusiastically demonstrating their independence, run the risk of being excluded from real integration within this structure. This is demonstrated in particular by the concern with which certain states met Russia's decision adopted late in June 2003 to withdraw from several CIS treaties. They jumped to the conclusion that "Moscow has started dismantling the CIS." It turned out, however, that Russia had merely decided to leave the stillborn treaties and agreements.

At the same time, the sovereignty that certain CIS politicians and certain forces were seeking and bragging about did not bring the desired results. The resultant disunity among the CIS countries cost them economic ties, control over their borders, and their international prestige. It also showed that none of them was prepared to face the new threats and challenges.

The truth of this is gradually dawning in the Central Asian republics. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are Russia's loyal satellites, therefore, the recent foreign policy U-turn performed by Uzbekistan and the favorable agreements Russia reached in Tajikistan have given Moscow another chance to revive its influence in Central Asia. Uzbekistan signed a Treaty on Strategic Cooperation⁴ with Russia. There is a more or less widely accepted opinion that the present U-turn was caused by Tashkent's disenchantment with the West. Late in August 2003, President of Uzbekistan Karimov said at a press conference: "I regret to say that the hopes we pinned on certain influential Western countries were not justified."

The states that let NATO forces into their territories gained next to nothing: the financial support was too little to alter their economic basis. The Central Asian republics are gradually coming to the conclusion that their hope of exchanging military bases for security and economic guarantees is futile. The West is stepping up its criticism of the local leaders⁵ very much to the growing displeasure of the ruling circles. Russia, by contrast, shows much more political tolerance.

The failed hopes of winning the sympathy of the West, primarily the United States, for the sake of which some of the CIS countries moved away from Russia, has driven them into a kind of self-isolation. Little by little, they have all had to recognize an obvious fact: America will never invest in any country unless it is sure of high economic and political dividends. For example, on the eve of the counterterrorist operation in Afghanistan, the United States canceled Pakistan's foreign debt of \$1 billion: Washington badly needed Islamabad's military and political support.

Obviously, the West has its strategic interests in Central Asia, which cannot be fully realized for several reasons. First, the Russian factor is still preserved in the independent Central Asian countries due to the common information expanse; large Russian-speaking diasporas and pro-Russian elites; inertia of public thinking; cultural and economic ties with Russia, etc. Second, there is a host of urgent and override problems which demand immediate attention and do not tempt the West: the low level of social security, poverty, lack of a national idea, etc. Third, a certain amount of inertia in the local population's political thinking and its inadequately developed level coupled with tolerance and obedience. This makes it next to impossible to change the sluggish models of state administration and cultivate democracy, something

⁴ Presidents Karimov and Putin signed the treaty on 16 June, 2004, under which strategic cooperation between the two countries was designed to ensure mutual security, let them jointly oppose global threats and challenges, consolidate regional stability, and extend their cooperation in the political, economic, and humanitarian spheres. Under this treaty the sides will be cooperating in the U.N., OSCE and other multilateral intergovernmental structures. With the aim of creating a stable and efficient system of regional security in Central Asia, the sides will form bilateral consultative mechanisms involving the security councils, foreign ministries, and other related ministries and departments. The treaty also envisages military and military-technical cooperation on the basis of corresponding agreements. On the basis of special agreements, the sides may grant each other the right to use military objects on their territories to ensure security and maintain peace and stability.

⁵ "Secretary of State Colin Powell sent a powerful message to Uzbekistan this week: no more U.S. funding to the central government until progress is made on democratic reform and human rights" ("Powell: Uzbeks Need More Reforms," *The Washington Times*, 15 July, 2004).

which the people really want. Fourth, the West's experience in Afghanistan and Iraq can hardly be called successful: so far America has failed to set up democratic regimes there.

Even though the Pentagon is talking about upgrading its military presence in Central Asia, it will not station more troops there. It will upgrade the quality of military cooperation and the bases. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has pointed out that the bases in Central Asia would not "be permanent as a base would be permanent, but would be a place where the United States and the coalition countries could periodically and intermittently have access and support." Naturally enough, the West will completely ignore the socioeconomic problems of the countries that accepted "operating sites." This is what tipped the balance in favor of Moscow.

The West, however, is obviously willing to continue monitoring local developments. This is amply testified by its military and political activity in the region, which is frequented by high-ranking American and NATO officials. The recent Rubezh-2004 joint military exercises in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan within the Collective Security Treaty Organization were attended by General John Abizaid, Chief of the U.S. Central Command of the Armed Forces, who visited Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to discuss broader military and military-technical cooperation. General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. Army, visited Tashkent and Almaty with a similar mission. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage visited Kazakhstan where he said that Astana was Washington's strategic partner in the defense and security sphere and that military cooperation between the two countries would ascend to a qualitatively new level. Indeed, international contacts, including those in the sphere of military training and education, received twice as much money as they did nearly two years ago. Other Western countries are also involved: a British infantry battalion participated in the Stepnoy orel-2004 peacekeeping exercises in Kazakhstan.

During his recent visit to Kyrgyzstan, James McDougall, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, described the draft plan of military cooperation between his country and Kyrgyzstan for 2005-2010 as the best substantiated. This was confirmed by a monetary grant to be spent on Kyrgyzstan's military needs. Early in October 2004, the defense ministries of Kyrgyzstan and France signed a plan of bilateral cooperation for 2005. It envisaged French lessons for the officers and training exercises, including Alpine training for special detachments. France transferred \$60 thousand-worth of relevant equipment and service property to the Defense Ministry of Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan is gradually becoming involved in Western countries' military and military-technical cooperation projects.

At the same time, the military-political and economic contacts between Russia and the Central Asian countries have recently been revived. In the military-political sphere, cooperation has been established in the following areas:

On 6 October, 2004, the lower chamber of the parliament of Kazakhstan ratified a protocol that extended the sphere of the Agreement on the Main Principles of Military-Technical Cooperation between the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Seven more Su-27 fighter-bombers and two Mi-8 helicopters will be moved to Russia's Kant airbase in Kyrgyzstan within the CSTO. In August 2004, RF Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov said that Russia's plans to develop the base had been approved by President Putin. The parliament of Kyrgyzstan recommended that the government sell the controlling block of shares of the Dastan plant to Russia, the only enterprise in the CIS that produces BA-111 "Shkval" missiles. Very soon they will be imported.

Tajikistan is another member of the CSTO with a Russian military base on its territory. During President Putin's visit to Dushanbe on 17 October, 2004, the sides signed documents which transformed the Russian 201st motor rifle division into a Russian military base with an aviation component based at the Ayni airdrome, 20 km from the capital. It is expected to include up to 20 combat elements, including ground-attack aircraft, fighters, and Mi-24 and Mi-8 helicopters. The base is expected to become an important security element. To repay its debt to the Russian Federation, Tajikistan gave it the Okno optical-fiber complex in Nurek. It was decided that the Rubezh-2005 joint military exercises within the CSTO would take place in Tajikistan.

Today Russia is more actively cooperating with Uzbekistan than ever before; though not a CSTO member this country is involved in an active dialog with Moscow on many aspects, including military-political issues.

There is noticeable progress in the economic sphere as well:

Russia became a full-fledged member of the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC), which means that it recognizes this regional organization.

Russian businessmen have become actively involved in the Central Asian economy: the giants of Russian business (Gazprom, LUKoil, Vimm-Bil-Dan, and the Cherkizovo Meat Processing Plant, among others) are investing in Uzbekistan's economy on a large scale.

The RF government approved the draft agreement on complete repayment of the Tajikistan's state debt. It is expected that \$242 million will be repaid by means of the Nurek Communication Center, which will be transferred to Russia; \$50 million will be converted into Russia's packet of shares of the Sangtundinskaia Hydropower Station now under construction; and \$12 million will be cancelled by the central banks through offsetting. It is expected that in the next two to four years, Russian investments in Tajikistan will reach a figure close to \$2 billion.

Russian Policy in Central Asia

I have already mentioned that Russia continues to exert direct influence on some of the Central Asian countries. In Tajikistan, for example, it uses its military-political trump card supporting Emomali Rakhmonov; in Kyrgyzstan, which does not have any industrial or raw material basis to speak of, it uses an economic trump card; while in Kazakhstan, it relies on the ethnic factor represented by the large Russian diaspora.

At the same time, in the face of the obvious penetration of third countries into the region and the unfolding geopolitical struggle there, Russia must step up its activity and increase its involvement in dealing with common urgent problems. For example, by force of its special geopolitical and geographic context, Uzbekistan needs reliable geopolitical partners: a land-locked republic located in the very heart of a fairly unstable region, it is unable to pursue an independent foreign policy and foreign economic course. It should be noted that its far from simple relations with neighbors undermine the efficiency of its foreign policy efforts.

No important economic decisions can be adopted in the Central Asian republics without the direct involvement of their presidents, therefore the question of strategic partnership and economic integration with Russia belongs to the realm of politics. The regular periods of cooling off and warming in Russian-Uzbek relations are caused by their foreign policy stances rather than by the obvious need for economic cooperation.

There is a lot of talk in Russia that the ruling Central Asian regimes should be supported; this coincides with the position of the Russian leadership. Russian experts are convinced that the statehood of the Central Asian republics should be developed gradually to preserve stability in the region. They are convinced that the efforts of external forces to launch accelerated liberalization and democratization campaigns there are dangerous. When saying this, experts have in mind the Georgian events.⁶ Moscow had not yet openly recognized its foreign policy defeat when Mikhail Saakashvili came to power in Georgia. Russia is prepared to balance its foreign policy losses in the west of the CIS and the Southern Caucasus by increasing its influence in Central Asia: there is no strong opposition there, while the local countries depend on it to a greater extent than the other CIS countries. Its threatened southern borders are another

⁶ From contributions by representatives of the International Center for Strategic and Political Research (Moscow) at the International Conference "Prevention of Regional Conflicts and Promoting Stability in Central Asia and Afghanistan" (Tashkent, 22-23 November, 2004).

important factor forcing Russia to consolidate its presence in the region. Former Minister of the Interior Army General Anatoli Kulikov, who is now Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Committee for Security, had to admit: "Russia is surrounded by independent states which cannot boast domestic stability; they are open to external influences... Russia's perception of Central Asia is qualitatively different than that of the West. The RF is tied to the Central Asian states by hundreds of thousands of different threads."⁷

There is the opinion in the Russian expert community that the Central Asian states are disunited and that their foreign policy steps are not coordinated. From this it follows that Russia aspires to play an integrating role in the region and correlate its development with its interests. This explains why it pays particular attention to intergovernmental structures: the CSTO, SCO, and Central Asian Economic Community, recently renamed the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO), probably to extend its functions to the military-political sphere; and the CIS. Some Russian military experts believe that military-political cooperation within these structures should be improved to consolidate domination of the RF military standards in the CIS, something that the West finds unprofitable. It seems that the Central Asian countries, which have to oppose real threats, terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, and other types of transnational crime, are prepared to accept this cooperation.

Russia's Foreign Policy Potential in the Region

To preserve and increase its influence in Central Asia, Russia will not only develop bilateral relations with the local states, but will also cooperate with them within the CIS. It also wants to create a fully-fledged free trade zone as quickly as possible on the basis of internationally accepted principles. The fact that the CIS member states sometimes have to sacrifice their immediate national advantages for the sake of increased mutual trade is interfering with the process. It is possible that in the near future, when setting up a single economic expanse, Russia will use certain elements of state regulation and will try to fully tap the scientific and technical potential of the CIS members. (They estimate their annual demand for new industrial equipment at \$150 billion, which can be covered by supplies from other CIS members.) The RF political elite is concentrating on the integration of four countries—Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine—with the expectation that other countries will also be tempted.

Turkmenistan will be left outside the integration process (yet it will join the Eurasian Gas Consortium now being set up) along with Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. The latter two will probably join in the integration process. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, two EurAsEC members, will surely join the single economic expanse. Moldova and Armenia are still thinking about it.

The steps designed to create an efficient integration mechanism will revive interest in cooperation within the CIS and create centripetal trends. Russia, however, has not yet acquired a comprehensive and well-substantiated policy toward the CIS countries. This happened for several serious reasons:

There are strong centrifugal trends; it is practically impossible to use a uniform pattern to build relations with countries which have already traveled far away from one another. This is why RF has placed its stakes on bilateral ties.⁸

The Russian political elite has so far failed to reach an agreement on Russia's foreign policy in the CIS. Its military establishment wants to restore Russia's domination within the CIS and, in so doing, taps all legitimate means—from wider military-technical contacts to placing stakes on national security threats

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ The Foreign Ministry of Russia repeatedly declares: "We do not reject cooperation in the 12-member format, yet bilateral relations form the cornerstone of relations within the CIS through which multilateral cooperation can be developed" (RIA Novosti, 10 December, 2001 [<http://www.strana.ru/stories/01/11/27/2101/92340.html>]).

to Central Asia posed by international terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking. Other political forces suggest that Russia should get rid of the "Central Asian soft underbelly."

The active penetration of third countries and foreign capital into the CIS expanse makes it hard to predict the future of Moscow's official policies in the CIS.

There are serious domestic factors: Chechnia, relations with the RF Muslim regions, and threats to the country's national security.

Russia will probably try to address some of the most urgent Central Asian problems with the help of other influential states (China, Iran, and others).⁹ Involvement of countries tied to one another and to other neighboring CIS states by shared regional interests will probably be highly effective.

Regional security, the struggle against international terrorism, separatism and drug-related crime, and ecological issues (the urgent problem of the Aral Sea) are problems which Russia may be willing to settle with the help of other countries. The Aral problem could probably be resolved if Russia showed more interest in channeling part of the runoff of the Siberian rivers to Central Asia; and an increased supply of fresh water would help avoid "water-related conflicts" that might flare up in the future. At the same time, the RF can help the Central Asia countries resolve the problem of illegal labor migration and shadow capital; it can also help local countries join foreign markets, and develop transport and fuel transit. When realized, this will help the Central Asian countries acquire a worthy place in the international hierarchy; they can become fully involved in integration inside the CIS and will be better able to cope with their domestic problems.

On the whole, Russia has enough common interests with the Central Asian countries; it can tap that potential which requires almost no funding:

- (1) A common information space. This has not been tapped yet; in some cases, it even plays a negative role: Russia's so-called "independent media," which serve the interests of certain Russian business and political circles, carry negative publications about the situation in the Central Asian states, which does nothing to increase Russia's credibility in the region. This naturally is not conducive to Russia's state interests.
- (2) The potential of the pro-Russian part of the national elite. It should be borne in mind that this is a temporary factor: so far, most people still remember our shared Soviet past, while the new generation is looking to the West.
- (3) Technical and humanitarian aid to the Central Asian republics. For example, Uzbekistan needs to modernize its hydropower stations and other facilities built by Russian specialists and inherited from Soviet times. This will create more jobs locally and allow Russian enterprises to fully tap their production capacities, some of which are still idling. Russia's involvement in privatizing Uzbek enterprises will increase their profitability. Today, America, Japan, and other countries are more active than Russia in this sphere; this cannot but affect Russia's popularity in the region. (It should be added that the RF does extend technical and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries.)
- (4) More active cooperation with the Central Asian republics in the humanitarian and cultural spheres. This will improve mutual understanding and consolidate political and economic ties between Russia and the local countries.
- (5) Involvement of the Central Asian countries in all Russia-sponsored cultural and economic events. More frequent communication at various levels will create a background for drawing national interests closer together.
- (6) More active tapping of the still common mentality, traditions, and customs and the still large Russian and Russian-speaking diaspora.

⁹ Deputy Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Sanat Kushkumbaev has pointed out: "Since the Russian Federation has not enough economic resources to maintain its geopolitical influence in Central Asia, it has to share some of its responsibility for regional stability with Beijing" (quoted from: E. Karin, "ShOS i ee znachenie dlia Tsentral'noy Azii. Gosudarstva TsA posle 11 sentiabria" [<http://www.kub.kz/print.php?sid=6234>], 25 June, 2004).

- (7) Active political and organizational support of the preserved economic ties with the Central Asian countries.
- (8) More active involvement of the Central Asian integration structures across the CIS.
- (9) Russia's indirect influence on the Central Asian countries by extending its cooperation with neighboring states (China, Iran, Pakistan, etc.) and making use of their influence in the region. These large states are aware of their common regional problems.
- (10) Active development of Russia's military-technical cooperation with Malaysia, India, China, Vietnam, the UAE, and other states of Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Russia should create a zone of Russian armament standards there; this zone, which encloses the Central Asian republics in a semicircle, will make it much harder for the West to promote its armament standards there.
- (11) Encouragement of labor migration to Russia. Labor migrants from the southern CIS countries are prepared to do any work for moderate payment, which Russians normally reject. There is a considerable political component there: those who come to earn money tend to be loyal to the host country.

It is worth noting that the above mechanisms should be used positively, which means that the national interests of the partner-countries should be taken into account. The local elites will frown at any unilateral steps taken by Russia.

Russia is oriented toward continued cooperation with the Central Asian leaders and supports their institutions of state power. At the same time, it is trying to prevent democratization and liberalization of the local regimes along Western patterns. It argues that active liberal processes of the Western type carried out in the region with zones of instability and poor understanding of civilized democratic norms may worsen the situation and create a broad belt of instability along Russia's southern borders.

Today, Moscow no longer looks at Washington as a geopolitical rival—this is a fundamentally new foreign policy approach. This has allowed Russia to take a fresh look at the Central Asian prospects.

The recent events have convincingly demonstrated that even the United States, the world's mightiest power, cannot cope with regional security problems (for instance, in Afghanistan and Iraq) single-handedly.

C o n c l u s i o n s

Moscow has acquired a unique chance to restore its geopolitical influence in Central Asia. The regional ruling elites have realized that they need Russia as a partner. In Russia too, the political elite is gradually coming to the conclusion that cooperation with Central Asia should be more dynamic. President Putin has described cooperation within the CIS, mainly on a bilateral basis, as his country's foreign policy priority.

After joining the CACO, Russia recognized the need for Central Asian integration; it probably plans to control cooperation among the Central Asian countries and to encourage cooperation within the CACO along the lines it finds beneficial.

In the context of China's economic expansion in the region, Russia will do its best to extend its trade and economic cooperation with the local countries.

The problems within the CIS have piled up high; Russia can no longer ignore the CIS members. Today, there is a lot of talk about further integration in the political, trade and economic, cultural, scientific, technical, military spheres, as well as fighting international terrorism and religious extremism, drug trafficking, etc. It should be said that Moscow will be able to successfully develop its contacts with the Central Asian countries under two conditions: the local political elites' favorable attitude toward Russia and political, social, and economic stability in the Russian Federation itself.

COUNTRIES OF THE BLACK SEA REGION AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

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The sociopolitical development of the post-Soviet countries of the Black Sea Region is marked by a special kind of intrigue. The initiators of Gorbachev's democratization were totally unprepared for its outcome. No one could have imagined it would end in the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of newly independent states on its territory, whereby states expounding authoritarian regimes with the low political culture characteristic of many post-colonial communities. Democratic reform was not a particularly high priority for these states. It was more important to reinforce state independence, create solid power structures, acquire a cushy spot on the international arena, and so on. Based on Poland's experience during the Pilsudskiy era, on Kemalist Turkey, on Antonescu's rule in Rumania, etc., the most expedient form of government for the leaders of these countries to achieve their goals appeared to be the authoritarian regime.

But Russia, with its aim to reintegrate the former Soviet republics into something akin to the former Union, began to clearly dominate in this new semi-closed community of authoritarian post-Soviet states, formally united by the abbreviation CIS. And authoritarian rulers of weaker states usually prefer to reinforce their essentially clannish and oligarchic power by steering their countries in the same direction as their stronger neighbor than by upholding their own national interests and independence. In so doing, foreign forces capable of resisting such trends essentially condoned Moscow's striving to establish its exclusive zone of responsibility in this region, since they probably had little faith in the ability of the post-Soviet states to undergo an internal and democratically-oriented transformation and were concerned only with preventing large-scale conflicts there. Even the U.S.'s penetration into the Caucasus and Central Asia under the banner of the antiterrorist campaign has not really changed the overall picture.

But the international situation in the Black Sea Region has been undergoing rapid changes recently. First, due to NATO's enlargement to the East (at the expense of Rumania and Bulgaria), which essentially led to this region's incorporation into the sphere of the alliance's responsibility. Second, the situation in the Middle East required that the Western countries pay greater attention to the countries surrounding them. Third, but first in terms of significance, the revolutionary democratic changes in Georgia and Ukraine brought the entire imperial line of Russia's foreign policy in the region to the brink of collapse. If the new wave of transformations in this part of the continent is successfully carried out, European democracy will continue moving toward the East and the region will find itself to be a kind of bastion on the avenues of approach to the Asian system of authoritarianism.

From this angle, the tasks of organizing the Black Sea community of states take on a new look. These countries are historically and geographically linked, but due to civilizational and socioeconomic conditions they are still rather heterogeneous. As a fundamental element of domestic development in each of these countries, the European idea can help to overcome their historical isolation and form prerequisites for efficient regional consolidation. It is worth noting that the new democratic authorities in Georgia and Ukraine claim that the European factor dominates in their foreign policy, and adherence to European values are an intrinsic part of their domestic policy.

Until recently, the difficulties involved in ensuring the region's stable integration on a domestic basis appeared nigh insurmountable. Differences in these countries' paths of historical development and their expected fates, the large-scale conflicts inflicting them, the clash of interests and goals among the different states, and the influence of external geopolitical forces are all factors greatly hindering regional unification.

Under present-day conditions, when these states are dealing with economic and social modernization problems, the formation of new cooperation systems is logically justified and meets their strategic

goals. The consolidation of regional interests is conducive to forming an axis of economic integration which, in all likelihood, will also be a stimulating factor in creating a corresponding geopolitical structure. Ideally, a regional system of cooperation and stability could emerge on this basis in the form of a fundamental element in the basic structural design of European security. In this event, we could talk about regional integration in the context of a broad understanding of Europe as a priority consolidating idea. But this requires thorough and comprehensive coordination of political and economic interests among the different states.

The oft noted strategic significance (transit and resource) of this territory is associated with the possibilities of developing the Caspian's oil and natural gas deposits, as well as their transportation to the world markets, and is drawing the attention of Western countries interested in diversifying their energy policy. But until recently the largely established European vision of the Black Sea Region defined it as a periphery zone of Greater Europe. In the conceptual and practical respect, this vision gave rise to the ideology and policy of a "European neighborhood" with respect to the post-Soviet states of the region, as well as restraint toward the potential new members in the EU: Turkey, Bulgaria, and Rumania.

Nevertheless, the economic and transit problems involved in developing this area are having a perceptible impact on distributing the influence potential among the West, U.S., and Russia. A change in the geopolitical balance of power in the region is capable of generating new configurations of interstate relations in the near future, the contours of which can only be designated provisionally. And this will largely depend on the ability of the new East European democracies to go beyond the boundaries of established relations in the format of the semi-closed CIS community.

Enlargement of the EU and NATO to the East requires that the European world more precisely define its foreign policy and identify its security priorities in the regions becoming its immediate neighbors, that is, the Black Sea Region and the Middle East. The traditional policy for the East—to support democratic values in the states of post-communist Europe—also fundamentally extends to the Black Sea states. On the other hand, the just as traditional model of motivation in the *Realpolitik* format is also important for the West, which is related to the advancement of its own interests in the region's countries, regardless of the nature of their regimes.

In both systems, European policy is being forced to take a closer look at where the new challenges to international security and stability are coming from. These include international terrorism (which has already raised its head in Spain and Turkey), illegal migration (which insistently brings up questions of reinforcing the eastern borders of the European world), local conflicts (Abkhazia, Karabakh, Pridnestrovie, and Kurdistan), which now subside, now flare up again, and so on. The Europeans cannot help but also take heed of the stabilization problems in Iraq, the possible (admittedly not especially anticipated) conflicts in Ukrainian-Russian relations (along the lines of Tuzla-2003), and so on. Socioeconomic weakness and the insufficient level of the liberal and democratic reforms in neighboring countries are arousing particularly concern in the West. These factors form the breeding ground for conflict potential and promote political destabilization on a wider scale.

The situation that developed after 11 September, 2001, in particular around Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the events in Georgia, dramatically changed the geopolitical environment in the region. The role of the U.S. as an important country with immense dominance in regional processes has become more precisely designated in the region. It is of exclusive significance for the United States, not only from the viewpoint of strategic supplies of oil, natural gas, and other resources, but also as a springboard for its own further advancement toward the promising markets of Asia. The U.S. has certain regional advantages over the Russian Federation due to the high level of Washington's economic influence on the political situation in the South Caucasian countries. Nor does anyone doubt that one of the White House's long-term goals (in keeping with its strategic policy on promoting democracy) is widespread and legitimate ousting of anti-democratic forces and reducing their political, economic, and military influence.

With respect to the special features of the Russian Federation's domestic political and socioeconomic development, official Moscow is forming its own foreign policy, without using democratic rhetoric to substantiate it. Russian "pragmatism" is built on the understanding of its own national interests: ensuring the integrity of the state, upholding its dominating position and influence in its part of the world, and deterring forces capable of undermining this influence. By taking advantage the favorable foreign

political situation (high prices for energy resources and dependence of the European countries on them, partnership with the U.S. in the fight against international terrorism, and so on), Russia is striving to increase its influence on the world processes by manifesting a high level of activity in international affairs. Its main priorities in this area are forming new relations with the U.S., NATO, and the EU, combating the emerging threats and challenges, and integrating into the European and world economy. If these efforts are successful, the role of the Russian Federation will increase in European policy and its influence on regional processes will automatically grow.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that in the present-day world, it is clearly not enough for a state with high foreign policy ambitions to build its foreign policy exclusively on upholding its own national interests. In order to reinforce its influence abroad, it is important not only to put itself on show, but also to make its goals attractive to other countries. At one time, Moscow built its international influence on the ideology of world socialism and support of anti-colonial movements declaring adherence to socialism. But socialism in the Soviet interpretation (as a paradigm of international relations) failed. On the other hand, the inability of the Moscow leadership of the Gorbachev and Yeltsin eras to create an efficacious liberal and democratic model which would guarantee Russia membership in the club of developed countries of the West upholding a single value system prompted Russia to isolate itself. The Russian Federation attempted to explain this phenomenon by means of ideological ideologems, such as revitalized "Eurasianism" or "Slavic unity." But these efforts essentially boiled down to poorly concealed Russian nationalism. This ideology could only be attractive to some of the population of neighboring states, the pro-Russian forces in Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, and Kazakhstan, for example, but could not win over states entirely, since they had their own understanding of their national interests. There were only two alternatives for post-Soviet countries striving to distance themselves from Russian nationalism, either similar self-isolation within national boundaries for the purpose of preserving self-identity, or intensive incorporation into the community of European-style liberal democratic countries, which required a corresponding adjustment of the national idea.

For Moscow itself, the geopolitical paradigm, with its invariable attributions in the form of balance of power, deterrence, expansion, opposition, and so on, proved more important. In this conceptual system, Russia traditionally looks at domination in the Black Sea Region as an exclusively important factor of its national security making it possible to ensure reliable defense of the country's southern borders. In so doing, it is using traditional mechanisms of geopolitics to ensure its interests: military presence, encouraging internal conflicts, supporting political forces loyal to it, and so on. And recently, economic expansion to the countries of the region in the spirit of the ideology of a so-called "liberal empire" is acquiring special significance, which is characteristic of the post-colonial practice of international relations.

The activity of the U.S. in its contacts with Georgia and Uzbekistan revealed a possible weakening in Russia's influence in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Since Moscow's attempts to create a system of CIS collective security were not very productive, it is trying to intensify the military and antiterrorist components of the Collective Security Treaty (CST), which several countries of the Commonwealth joined, and draw up a more concise program of opposition to the new threats. At the same time, Russia is striving to take control over the energy resources and their transportation, as well as create prerequisites for establishing control over the economy of the region's countries. In so doing, it is trying to strengthen relations with the key European states in order to neutralize U.S. policy in the region. Nevertheless, while realizing its interests here, the Russian Federation is not capable of taking complete responsibility for its fate as a whole. Resolving regional problems primarily presumes creating sociopolitical and economic prerequisites for the dynamic and stable development of the countries located in this territory, and not only military and political presence and diplomatic activity. On the whole, the Russian Federation is not interested in the formation of powerful regional cooperation and security substructures which are not dependent on it.

The military action and measures undertaken by the U.S. to ensure stability in Iraq are also having a direct influence on the security of the Black Sea Region. This is due to its geographical proximity to these events, as well as to the interests of the great nations in the Middle East. Geographical proximity harbors the threat of a direct or indirect destructive impact on the economy, politics, and humanitarian sphere of neighboring countries. The lack of unanimity among the European states regarding support of the U.S.'s actions in Iraq has given rise to a certain amount of tension among them, which has also had an

effect on the foreign political orientation of the Black Sea countries at the regional level. For example, despite its close relations with Russia, which entered the bloc with the leading European states, France and Germany, against the war on Iraq, Georgia has unequivocally expressed its support of the U.S., and Ukraine even sent a large military contingent to Iraq. Rumania and Bulgaria actively joined the antiterrorist coalition, orienting themselves as before toward their Euro-Atlantic opportunities. This, however, did nothing to change their relatively defective position, which hinders their prospects of joining the EU. Although it assumed a cautious wait-and-see stance due to the Kurdish problem, Turkey was nevertheless one of the targets of the Islamic terrorists. The consequences of the deterioration in relations between Ankara and Washington, albeit indirect, were also felt by the Turkic-speaking post-Soviet countries, which, although they are Turkey's strategic partners, still supported the U.S. For example, in Azerbaijan, this support gave rise to another wave of domestic political tension.

The United States largely reinforced its foothold in Central Asia, which is traditionally in the sphere of Russia's special political and economic interests, thus creating the potential for possible tension between the two nuclear powers in the future. The Russian Federation is not at all interested in having states on its southern borders which are not orientated toward its interests, and so will look for ways to strengthen its influence. On the other hand, the U.S. apparently has not entirely realized the need to assume greater responsibility for the situation in the Black Sea Region, thus leaving several of its countries in a forced "vacuum of security." The geopolitical choice between U.S. or Russian policy is more precisely designated for these countries, which will definitely have an impact on domestic political stability due to the presence of political forces with polar orientations.

Present-day relations between Moscow and Tbilisi leave much to be desired. Russia does not like the fact that Georgia and the U.S. signed an agreement on cooperation in the military sphere. This disrupts the balance of power in the Southern Caucasus, where Tbilisi is becoming a partner and conductor of Washington's policy. The strengthening of Georgian-Turkish contacts with respect to military training programs can be added to the negative aspects. In this respect, it can be presumed that Russia's intractability regarding Abkhazia was dictated by geopolitical considerations. An analysis of the course and results of the recent presidential election in Abkhazia creates the impression that the Russian Federation essentially already considers this autonomous republic, which officially belongs to Georgia, to be its own territory. For example, it offers Abkhazians citizenship, it is retaining its military presence there, and it is manipulating the election results to suit itself, ignoring the generally accepted standards of international law.

Based on the urgent problems of regional and European security in this area, an imperative goal in it should not be Russia's interests, but a balanced consideration of the extent to which the countries of this region are dangerous (or could be) to the European world, as well as the extent to which they are capable of meeting the new challenges, and in which questions they need Europe's assistance.

Negative trends and processes are currently being manifested in this space, which are hindering its economic development and creating certain threats in the sphere of international and regional security. Its states are encountering conflict situations (Abkhazia, Nagorny Karabakh, Pridnestrovie, Chechnia, and so on), which are promoting illegal arms trade, intensifying migration flows, and cultivating crime-inducing factors and international terrorism.

The fight against the latter in the regional context is related to the formation of an environment which feeds and supports terrorist activity in any of its manifestations and has both a crime-inducing and more profound dimensions. These include the sociopolitical problems in several of the countries: economic inadequacy, pauperization of the population, and ethnic and confessional confrontation. What is more, the problems generated by the regional conflicts have not been overcome, which creates favorable ground for attempts to resolve issues by force, and consequently for asymmetrical responses in the form of terrorist acts.

So it can be said that the Caspian-Black Sea Region is a conflict-prone environment. In the west, it borders on the Balkans, where ethnic and socioeconomic problems are still rampant, and in the south, on the Middle East, where there is an explosive situation relating to the U.S.'s military operations in Iraq, and possibly in the near future in Iran. In the north, Russia is putting greater pressure on Georgia, which the Russian Federation is accusing of protecting Chechen terrorists. What is more, it should be kept in mind that the region we are looking at is surrounded by old and new nuclear countries striving to obtain nuclear weapons

and the means of their delivery. On the whole, we can say that the threatening situation of a “vacuum of security” is being preserved. In order to resolve these problems, the countries of the region should coordinate their efforts (with support of all the interested countries and international security structures).

An essentially important feature of this region’s states is also the fact that their national interests and priorities, although they do not always coincide, at least do not contradict each other. These countries themselves (regardless of their orientation toward different geopolitical projects) are intensely interested in preserving stability and security in the region, in its progressive development, and in the continuous operation of transportation communications. A broad range of opportunities is opening up for coordinating its national interests and priorities. We can most likely expect the appearance of new cooperation forms and models and the creation of alternatives of regional structures of stability and security.

At one time, Turkey initiated the creation of a regional organization called the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, which was another alternative to its striving to enter the EU. Due to the intensification of crisis phenomena in the neighboring post-socialist states, Ankara placed its hopes on its own geopolitical stance and the country’s growing economy, striving to put these advantages into effect by creating a stable structure which could become a permanent regional center of gravitation. The creation of an autonomous system of economic cooperation was supposed to strengthen Turkey’s position in the talks with the EU, on the one hand, and help to form a system of regional interests in which Ankara would have far from the last role, on the other. In this event, it would have the opportunity to move away from its place on the edge of the European Community and acquire greater geopolitical clout. Its interest in Russian gas (both via Ukraine and through the Blue Flow pipeline) and Caspian oil (the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline) is motivating Turkey to preserve the idea of forming a Black Sea cooperation system. On the whole, however, (from Turkey’s viewpoint) regional substructures are a component of a universal European integration model.

Based on Turkey’s experience, Ukraine is coming to understand that its path to European integration will be rather difficult and take quite a lot of time. But keeping in mind the inefficient experience of resolving economic and political problems within the CIS, it can be said that official Kiev is searching for parallel forms of economic cooperation. By making its foreign policy more pragmatic, as well as diversifying its foreign economic relations, Ukraine is beginning to focus its attention on economic and political advancement to the southeast as well. This primarily relates to the Black Sea-Caspian Region, which it views as part of Greater Europe.

As for Bulgaria and Rumania, after joining NATO, their next main priority in their further development is to join the EU. They are known for focusing on specific programs and striving to resolve cooperation questions in the Black Sea Region along with structures ensuring European integration processes. Reforms have been going on in both countries for more than ten years now, but neither of them have managed to resolve their difficult economic problems. The European and Euro-Atlantic priorities of Rumania and Bulgaria are much higher than their regional interests, although the leading circles of both countries understand that they are of interest to NATO and the EU precisely because they are part of the Black Sea Region. And this region is viewed as a kind of springboard for Europe’s further enlargement to the East. The active participation of both states in NATO’s antiterrorist campaigns in the East was primarily taken into account during consideration of their membership in the alliance.

Azerbaijan is most interested in delivering its energy resources to the West, which will be significantly promoted by completion of the strategic Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline. We will also note that this problem can still be resolved by transporting energy resources via the Odessa-Brody-Gdansk route. Due to strategic support from kindred Turkey, Azerbaijan has the prospect of efficiently participating in Black Sea cooperation. In questions of Black Sea security, Baku is on the same page as Ankara and inclined to make use of international organizations for finding a constructive solution to the conflict with Erevan.

Georgia is declaring itself a country with a pro-European orientation. In the face of difficult-to-resolve disputes with Russia and its internal conflict in Abkhazia, it is striving to defend its national interests by joining NATO and developing such regional cooperation systems as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and GUUAM. Since Georgia is a key link in the Caspian transportation and energy supply route to Europe, official Tbilisi is very interested in stability and security in the region. But whereas today Georgia is only a “consumer” of stability on the part of regional international structures,

in the foreseeable future (if the economic and political situation in the country stabilizes), it could become a "donor" of security.

Armenia is still a country with internal instability and an inefficient economy. What is more, it has taken on the burden of rendering military and financial-economic assistance to the self-proclaimed Nagorno Karabakh Republic. By ignoring the decision of international security institutions regarding settlement of the conflict with Baku, Erevan found itself relatively isolated from the region's countries. In this respect, these countries are not assisting Armenia's economic development, which is preventing the creation of a full-fledged cooperation and security system in the region. Although it should be noted that Erevan is interested in withdrawing from its isolation and participating intensively in regional cooperation. It appears obvious that Armenia's incorporation into the world economic system based on participation in large-scale international economic and transportation projects is an extremely necessary condition for its socioeconomic survival.

International cooperation and security organizations are showing a natural interest in the region both due to its immense economic and resource potential, and to its strategic importance for ensuring stability and security throughout the Eurasian geopolitical space. Cooperation between the South Caucasian countries and the larger, European-oriented regional states is pulling them more toward Europe, as well as promoting modernization of their political and sociopolitical systems. The South Caucasian countries are also in favor of using general peacekeeping potential under the aegis of international security structures for settling local conflicts and are ready to cooperate in resolving other security issues. In their search for ways to resolve their own problems, these countries are turning to stable, socially and economically developed Europe in the hope that its powerful potential can be actively used in their political and socioeconomic development. Such Black Sea countries as Turkey, Bulgaria, and Rumania are on the verge of joining the EU. Ukraine and Georgia are also heading in the same direction. Russia would also like to find acceptable forms of partnership relationships with the European Union and NATO. All the Black Sea countries are gradually joining the European integration process, the outcome of which could be a more consolidated Europe.

Resolution of this question depends on the extent to which Europe itself recognizes the importance of finding effective solutions to the problems of the Black Sea Region and on the role it is willing to assume in this event. It is obvious that a stable and secure region which is part of the European world and the states of which have democratic regimes and a developed socioeconomic system aimed at raising the prosperity of their own populations, will have a significant impact on raising both the geo-economic and the geopolitical status of a consolidated Europe.

The European security Strategy is aimed at democratic states achieving stability, primarily those in the close vicinity of the European Union. In correspondence with the Strategy adopted by the EU, the best means for ensuring world order are building a high-quality powerful leadership, supporting social and political reforms, resolving problems relating to corruption and abuse of power, and protecting the population's civilian rights. The harshness of the formulations regarding countries which violate international regulations draws attention to itself. The document states that such countries should recognize that they will have to "pay the price of good relations with the EU" for violating democratic regulations.

At the first stage of implementing the "neighborhood" strategy (2004-2007), the main focus will be on transborder and regional cooperation. In this respect, the following is necessary: promoting an economic and social upswing in border regions, which is the key element in strengthening stability on both sides of the border; developing activity aimed at resolving common problems in such spheres as environmental protection and fighting organized crime; ensuring the efficient operation and security of borders; and assisting contacts among people, particularly in resolving problems of visa regimes capable of creating new dividing lines along the borders of enlarged Europe.

Taking into account these circumstances, the European Union will most likely have a more favorable attitude toward local regional cooperation structures in its "near abroad." Realistically, its neighbors can count on the EU's support in carrying out their economic projects and in developing corresponding large-scale programs, that is, similar to those being implemented within the Barcelona process with respect to the Mediterranean countries.

NATO's enlargement (as opposed to the EU's enlargement) is more of a political process. The change in the international situation has stimulated the transformation of the alliance from a regional defense

structure into an organization of states engaged in resolving questions of building and maintaining a new global security system. In this way, most of the post-communist countries of the region could defend their democratic reforms and find their place in the overall structural design of European security. In turn, NATO should take a more active interest in resolving the region's problems, since this organization's new strategy envisages a broad range of activity beyond the boundaries of its traditional competence, particularly in the East. For this, the alliance supports democratic processes precisely in those countries of the region which give greater hope of the success of such reforms.

The shift in NATO's southern flank to the Black Sea Region is becoming all the more perceptible. NATO's enlargement by means of Rumania and Bulgaria, and the possible (albeit in partial) realization of Ukraine and Georgia's desire to join the alliance, along with the presence in it of "old" members (Turkey and Greece), is making the Black Sea (in almost its entirety) a zone of Euro-Atlantic responsibility. These steps toward Euro-Atlantic integration are making it possible to create conditions in which the European security organizations and regional states can efficiently cooperate in a range of issues.

Certain radical groups (Islamic or ethnic) are carrying out terrorist acts against several countries. The terrorist acts in Madrid, Istanbul, and Georgia show that such attacks are possible in any country (taking into account the Iraqi factor or to attract the attention of the mass media). Bearing in mind the active participation of the Russian Black Sea fleet marines in combat action in Chechnia, an increase in the threat of terrorist acts against the Russian Federation as a whole is possible, as well as against its naval fleet based in the Crimea (in Sevastopol). In the regional context, this fight is related in part to the formation of an environment that feeds terrorist activity in any of its manifestations and has both a crime-inducing and more profound dimensions: sociopolitical problems in several of the region's countries, economic inadequacy, poverty, ethnic confrontation, and so on.

As for the conflicts in Georgia (Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia), between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in Pridnestrovie, they are not only threatening the countries participating in them, but also the security of the region as a whole, are hindering regional cooperation and the implementation of large-scale projects, and are causing a deterioration in the overall investment climate in this area. What is more, conflicts and the low standard of living are creating a favorable environment for an increase in organized crime, the drug business, and so on.

The illegal migration aroused by these conflicts, as well as the drop in standard of living and deterioration in the environment, could give rise to new threats to regional security: they could increase ethnic tension, undermine social order, and influence both regional stability and that of neighboring European countries.

Unregulated protection of transportation energy corridors which pass close to conflict zones is posing a threat to the stable delivery of energy resources to European and other markets. Rivalry and domestic instability in the region are having a negative impact on its countries and on European states, particularly after the implementation of new oil and gas supply projects (Baku-Ceyhan, Odessa-Gdansk, and others).

The situation has been complicated to a significant extent by the absence of a precise international mechanism for guaranteeing peace and stability. We will emphasize that in the event of incursions on sovereign territory or border violations, each country of the region will remain essentially on its own to deal with the problems that arise. This is caused both by the ad hoc orientations of the world's leading countries, which often "do not notice" territorial disputes, as well as by the lack of efficient international protection mechanisms for dealing with such collisions.

This situation should be improved by creating an efficient regional security system which would include real and potential NATO and EU members, as well as countries which for certain reasons cannot (or do not want to) participate in the work of these structures.

A corresponding regional security structure could be created by reforming GUUAM. Admittedly, this organization has still not acquired the significance endowed in it by its member-states when it was created. But in the foreseeable future, GUUAM's framework (partnership of Ukraine and Georgia, taking into account the latest revolutionary events occurring in both countries) might become stronger, which will invest a certain amount of optimism in this organization's future.

What is more, the situation will be improved by forming (probably on the basis of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization) a permanent forum on regional security and cooperation issues, in

which state and other actors could establish contacts, identify and correlate each other's viewpoints on several problems, and discuss non-military security questions in political, economic, ecological, social, and cultural spheres. This forum could help to define the priority areas of cooperation of the Black Sea countries. The region's states should concentrate cooperation in spheres where European and/or other international interests are present.

The creation of an efficient regional security structure will help to overcome potential interregional demarcation lines separating it from Europe, which is acting as a guarantor of security. The main function of this structure is to coordinate efforts aimed at preventing new threats and challenges to regional security and creating efficient inter-national institutions for ensuring the development of coordinated regional policy on these urgent problems.

THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION AND REGIONAL SECURITY PROBLEMS

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Today Central Asia is one of the most unique regions of the world, since it has several institutional formations in which essentially all of its countries participate. This phenomenon appears to be spurred on not only by the dynamics of the processes occurring in these states and throughout the region as a whole, but also in the area around it.

One of the largest regional structures in Central Asia is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The sum territory of its member states covers more than 30 million sq. km of the Eurasian continent, thus ensuring them geostrategic access to Europe in the West and the Asia Pacific Region in the East. In so doing, the total number of residents of the SCO countries is close to 1.455 billion (approximately 25% of the planet's entire population).¹ The status of Russia and China as permanent members of the U.N. Security Council has significantly raised the political potential of this organization in resolving the key problems of international and regional security.

¹ See: V. Abaturov, "K Tashkentskomu sammitu Shankhaiskoi organizatsii sotrudnichestva," *Ekonomicheskoe obozrenie*, May 2004, p. 4.

An important stage in the development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was the Tashkent summit held on 16-17 June, 2004. It marked the end of the institutional formation of the SCO: in 2002, its Charter was adopted, in 2003, a permanent secretariat was instituted in Beijing, and in 2004, the Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS) was formed, the general headquarters of which is in Tashkent.

The Central Asian countries view the SCO as an effective forum for mutual dialog. The opening of RATS in Tashkent is also in keeping with the U.S.'s interests, since Washington supports any form of opposition to terrorism, and the fact that RATS is located in Tashkent indicates Uzbekistan's active participation in this sphere.²

Matthew Oresman, a research assistant at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (the U.S.), believes that "the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is on track to becoming a formal international organization, moving beyond its days as

² See: "Vremia prakticheskikh deistvii," *Narodnoe slovo*, No. 130 (3483), 24 June, 2004.

a talk shop. Still, many obstacles remain, not least of which is internal rivalry and a constant need to justify its existence in light of a U.S. presence in the region. If real resources are brought to bear and political commitments to decrease tension and increase cooperation are followed through, the SCO will survive.”³

Keeping in mind the growing interest in the SCO’s prospects among expert analytical circles, it is worth taking a look at certain aspects in the con-

³ M. Oresman, *The SCO: A New Hope or to the Graveyard of Acronyms?* *PacNet Newsletter*, No. 21, 22 May, 2003 [http://www.csis.org/pacfor/pac0321.htm].

text of the key problems in forming a regional security system in Central Asia, which we believe will have an influence on this organization’s future. In particular, the Afghan question is still of vital significance from the perspective of regional stability.

When analyzing the activity of the SCO, it is also important to keep in mind the PRC’s interests, including in the energy sphere. China, which is a key member state in this institutional structure along with Russia, is expected to play an increasingly prominent role in Central Asian policy, which, in turn, will have an influence on the future activity of the SCO as a prestigious international organization.

Some Aspects of the PRC’s Energy Security in Central Asia

It is no exaggeration to say that the SCO is an important achievement of Chinese diplomacy. Beijing links the prospect of achieving its own long-term geostrategic aspirations in Central Asia with the implementation of the so-called Shanghai project. The goal of Beijing’s foreign policy in the region is to form a security belt around the PRC as the main factor and condition for continuing the country’s socio-economic transformations. From this viewpoint, Central Asia and Afghanistan (particularly after 11 September, 2001) acquired strategic significance in China’s foreign policy. And in terms of ensuring its own energy security, in particular satisfying the intensively growing requirements for raw hydrocarbons, the region will most likely become a zone of the PRC’s vitally important interests.

But it appears that Beijing did not attach much importance to this until recently. For example, Zhao Huasheng, a well-known expert and director of the Department of Russia and Central Asia of the Shanghai Institute of International Studies, noted as early as 2003 that “the volumes of oil import into China from Central Asia have not reached strategic significance. In 2002, China imported only around 1 million tonnes of oil from Kazakhstan (by rail).”⁴ He most likely underestimated the impact of the Iraqi conflict on China’s energy security, in particular, the unprecedented increase in world oil prices. Taking into account that the PRC was in second place in the world in terms of “black gold” import, it can be maintained that the current situation on this market showed just how vulnerable China’s energy security was. The Iraqi crisis will long be a headache for Beijing, since the Middle East countries account for more than 60% of oil exports to the PRC.

Against the background of the ongoing instability in the Middle East, security in the macroregion of Central Asia and the Caspian Basin is becoming one of the most important vectors of Chinese foreign policy. This is shown by several publications by Chinese experts, in which they express their serious concern about the consequences of the Iraqi campaign and sharply criticize the U.S.’s biased policy in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq.⁵

In this way, as the price of oil increases, the problem of ensuring the PRC’s energy security is acquiring particular pertinence. Several foreign experts claim that this trend is stimulating Chinese diplo-

⁴ Zhao Huasheng, “China’s Interests and Posture in Central Asia,” in: *Documents of the Fourth International Conference on the Situation in Central Asia and the SCO*, Shanghai Institute of International Studies, Shanghai, 2004, p. 155.

⁵ See: An Huihou, “The Grave Aftermath of the Iraq War and its Revelation; Some Thoughts on Ethnic and Religious Issues in the Post-Iraq War Middle East,” *International Studies*, Vol. 5, 5 September, 2004 (Journal of China Institute of International Studies), pp. 15-44; Liu Baolai, “Trend of Middle East Situation in 2004,” *Foreign Affairs Journal*, No. 71, March 2004, pp. 49-57 (Journal of the Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs); Li Lifan, Ding Shiwu, «Geopolitical Interests of Russia, the U.S. and China in Central Asia,» *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (27), 2004, p. 142.

macy to look for alternative sources of hydrocarbons. If prices remain high, this could create serious economic challenges for China, particularly in the industrial sector, where there is a significant shortage of hydrocarbons. What is more, according to foreign experts, more than 65% of the country's enterprises are considered economically unprofitable due to their outmoded equipment, which consumes much more energy than in developed states.

Under these conditions, the hydrocarbon supplies of the Caspian Region have become a target of competition between the major centers of power. As experts of the U.S. Congress Energy and Trade Committee stress, the U.S. sees Central Asia as an alternative source of energy resources.⁶ This undoubtedly causes Washington's increasing insistence on accelerated development of the energy potential of certain countries in our region within the framework of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) project. What is more, when Kazakhstan joins this project and the export potential of this route increases to 50 million tonnes of oil a year by 2010, the oil producing capacities of these countries could create serious competition for the OPEC states.⁷

So it goes without saying that Beijing has been putting extra energy lately into building an oil pipeline from West Kazakhstan to the PRC. These efforts began in September 2004 and construction is to be completed by the end of 2005. It should be noted that Beijing announced its interest in building this route as early as 1997. In order to implement the project as quickly as possible, a joint Kazakh-Chinese company was created in July 2004. Seven hundred million dollars will be spent on building the Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline of 970 km in length and with an initial throughput capacity of 10 million tonnes.

What is more, the Chinese, at least the expert analytical circles, are paying keen attention to Central Asia's other energy resources, in particular to the gas fields of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. It is likely that the PRC will try and take specific political and diplomatic steps in the near future to carry out its intentions in this area. In this context, it should be emphasized that there is no point in the PRC resolving its energy problems (or any other important issues in Central Asia) until a certain level of security has been reached in Afghanistan. If Beijing ignores this problem, it will contradict not only the imperatives of ensuring China's energy security, but also the very essence of its foreign policy in the so-called western vector as a whole.

The PRC's consistent efforts to strengthen the SCO show that the leadership of the Celestial Kingdom is placing high priority on planning and modeling this organization's activity in Central Asia in the medium and long term. From this perspective, the SCO allows the PRC not only to be "an outside observer" of all the processes going on in the region, but also an active player capable of having a growing influence on the formation of the future regional security system in Central Asia. Beijing wants to be constantly "in the know," so that it can react promptly to any changes in the region which might prevent it from achieving its aspirations there. The PRC appears to be taking note of Russia's waning presence in Central Asia. According to Chinese experts, the Russian Federation will need a lot of time to rebuild its influence in Central Asia. For example, Li Lifan and Ding Shiwu believe that "...Russia has been unable to restore its former influence, while the road to its resurrection is a long one."⁸ In so doing, they noted that "Russia is growing weaker—it can no longer dispatch adequate forces to Central Asia."⁹

What is more, the ongoing threats to regional security from Afghanistan will have an effect on the PRC's approaches to resolving urgent problems in Central Asia, including within the SCO. Uzbek expert F. Khamraev notes, "Under the new conditions, the Chinese leaders are trying to readjust their policies in the region as a whole, and in individual countries in the short- and long-term perspective."¹⁰

⁶ See: Jo Barton (Chairman of the U.S. Congress Energy and Trade Committee), *Statement at a meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan K. Saudabaev*, Washington, 10 March, 2004.

⁷ See: R. Williamson, *Report on Wilton Park Conference 722. «The Caspian and Central Asia: Stability and Development»*, January 2004 [<http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk>].

⁸ Li Lifan, Ding Shiwu, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ F. Khamraev, "NATO-SCO: Struggle against Terrorism and/or for Domination in Central Asia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (26), 2004, p. 68.

The Afghan Vector in the SCO's Activity

Immediately after the tragic events of 11 September, 2001, the Afghan problem became the center of attention of the entire world community. More than three years have passed since then, but the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA) is still the focus of studies by several foreign experts who are trying to evaluate the situation in the ISA and around it, and analyze the prospects for the country's post-conflict restoration. It should be noted that they have reached very similar conclusions regarding the most serious problems preventing more efficient reconstruction of this state and its society.

In particular, these include, first, the continuing clash between the forces of the international anti-terrorist coalition and the Afghan national army, on the one hand, and the Taliban's armed groups and militants of international terrorist and extremist organizations, on the other. This problem in turn is linked to the inefficacious formation of the Afghan national army, as well as power structures called on to ensure security and stability in the country.

Second, the insufficient financial and economic help rendered to Afghanistan by the international community, despite the decisions adopted at the Tokyo, Bonn, and Berlin conferences with the participation of sponsor states. At the last international conference held in Berlin in the summer of 2004, a decision was adopted to render aid in the amount of 8.2 billion dollars to the ISA, 4.2 million of which should be allotted this year.

Third, the growing dimensions of the drug industry in the country, whereby it is developing the reputation of the world's largest drug supplier. According to a report by the special U.N. Commission on Drug Control, Afghanistan has set a new record in the manufacture of opium, almost 90% of which and its derivatives are currently produced in Afghanistan. In 2003, revenue from the drug business exceeded 2.3 billion dollars, which amounted to more than half of the country's official GDP. In 2004, poppy plantations and the manufacture of drugs in the country increased by 64% compared with the previous year. At present, approximately two million Afghans are employed in the drug industry.¹¹

Other problems related to the formation of a stable and steady Afghan government, for example, are also still very urgent for the experts of Central Asian countries. Their geographical proximity to Afghanistan predetermines and most likely will continue to predetermine the interdependence of the processes in the ISA and the region's states. Based on this, I would like to analyze certain aspects of settlement of the Afghan question in the context of the main areas of the SCO's activity, particularly since the summit of the heads of its states held in Tashkent became a symbolic event. On Uzbekistan's initiative, the head of the interim Afghan government and current president of the country, Khamid Karzai, took part in the summit meeting for the first time. And not long before this, Chinese analyst Pan Guang maintained that after the tragic events of 9/11, it was impossible and unrealistic to hope that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization could play any role other than offer its sympathy and assistance. In his opinion, this was because the organization did not have the necessary institutional structures at that time, and also because "no SCO member state was then under any direct terrorist attack from Afghanistan."¹²

Evaluating the current situation in the ISA, I would first like to note that despite the pessimistic forecasts of several foreign experts,¹³ current reality in this country is headed toward the formation of an Afghan state and society.¹⁴ This without doubt is one of the key achievements in settlement of the Afghan question. Today it is important to recognize that a stable vertical of state power is a main factor in Afghanistan's stabilization and development.

¹¹ See: R. Streshnev, *Narkougroza rastet. Afganskii mak iskorenit slozhnee, chem talibov* [www.redstar.ru], 27 November, 2004.

¹² Pan Guang, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Context of International Antiterrorist Campaign," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (21), 2003, p. 49.

¹³ See: D. Verkhoturov, *Demokratizatsiia Afganistana: amerikanskii voiska plus razoruzhenie vsei strany* [www.Afghanistan.ru], 16 November, 2004; R. Streshnev, op. cit.

¹⁴ See: Sh. Akmalov, "Problemy i perspektivy stanovleniia sovremennogo Afganistana," in: *Tsentral'naia Azia v XXI veke: sotrudnichestvo, partnerstvo i dialog. Materialy mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii*, 2004, pp. 198-199.

Of course, these goals cannot be achieved rapidly. But the presidential election in Afghanistan, held while armed clashes were still going on in the country, and the beginning of the formation of its government nevertheless give grounds for optimism. Of course, it is extremely naive to expect rapid and major changes in the ISA, where a bloody internecine war has been going on for more than twenty years. What is more, essentially all the problems involved in settling the Afghan problem are interrelated and interdependent, which predetermines the need for a systemic analysis and comprehensive approach to their resolution by the international community.

The SCO is one of the newest interstate associations with the growing potential for resolving important problems of regional and international security, primarily the Afghan crisis. Created before the tragic events of 9/11, this structure was viewed as a joint mechanism for deterring the threats coming from the ISA. After the beginning of the antiterrorist campaign, many experts thought that the SCO would leave the "field of action," and its resources would not be sufficient for carrying out the set tasks. In so doing, there were also diametrically contradictory evaluations of the SCO's activity in Central Asia. For example, German expert Konstantin Erlich is convinced that the joint efforts of the organization's member states could lead to practical and very tangible results. "And it is not even a matter of such world powers as China and Russia being its members. The main advantage of this organization lies in the fact that it is formed from like-minded people who are striving to resolve international problems together, primarily the fight against terrorism and religious extremism."¹⁵

According to the provisions of the SCO Charter, the main areas of the organization's activity lie in fighting the three evils in Central Asia: terrorism, extremism, and separatism. In so doing, special significance is given to cooperation in the trade and economic sphere and in the development of transportation communications. It should be noted that these areas of the SCO's activity are also important for Afghanistan, which is trying to activate an international dialog to resolve its own problems.

In our opinion, the fact that the SCO member states and Afghanistan have similar interests makes it possible to theoretically plan and model mechanisms of interaction for resolving the indicated problems. What is more, taking into account the SCO's potential, the Afghan vector should become one of the key spheres in its activity. In this respect, it must significantly step up its participation in the fight against the burgeoning drug industry. After all, it is no secret that one of the main sources for financing international terrorist and extremist organizations is illicit drug circulation.

As Uzbek expert R. Alimov noted in his report at an international conference in 2003, "the Afghan government is still not strong enough to fight the drug business. In the foreseeable future, Afghanistan will continue to be the largest supplier of opiates, which, if appropriate measures are not taken, will lead to an explosive increase in drug trafficking through Central Asia. Measures are being taken in the Central Asian countries with international support both to fight the drug business in the region, and to reduce the demand for drugs. But combating the drug business in the region will be fruitless without decisive steps to eliminate drug manufacture in Afghanistan..."¹⁶

The current situation in the ISA shows that as of today the drug business and terrorism have become the country's intrinsic problems, and Afghanistan is the world's drug-manufacturing factory. Drugs in turn have become a "convenient source of vital activity" for international terrorists and extremists. In this respect, the fight by the international community, including the SCO countries, against terrorism and extremism should be accompanied by effective steps to eradicate the growing drug business. It is highly likely that the continuing activity of the terrorist groups in Afghanistan is being supported precisely by the burgeoning manufacture of drugs in the country.

International terrorism is coalescing with the drug trafficking feeding it, which is acquiring the form of open aggression. The increasing manufacture of drugs and the most powerful channel of drug trafficking, which comes from Afghanistan, are arousing particular alarm. International drug trafficking with its wide resource network has almost the entire world in its grasp today, and the revenue of transnational crime from illicit drug trade exceeds 400 billion dollars (in the countries of the Golden Crescent alone, it

¹⁵ "Sammit v Tashkente: vstrecha edinomyshlennikov," *Narodnoe slovo*, No. 128 (3481), 22 June, 2004.

¹⁶ R. Alimov, "Problemy formirovaniia novoi sredei bezopasnosti v Tsentral'noi Azii: vzgliad iz Uzbekistana," in: *Tsentral'naia Azia v XXI veke: sotrudnichestvo, partnerstvo i dialog*, p. 34.

amounts to some 45 billion dollars). Whereas in Afghanistan, 1 kg of heroin costs \$1,000, in Bishkek it costs \$6-8,000, in Moscow the wholesale price reaches \$50,000 and retail \$100-170,000, while in Europe and the U.S., the price increases 200-fold.¹⁷

In this respect, the reasonable question arises of the SCO's role in this vector. Recently, most experts of the organization's member states, primarily the PRC, are inclined to focus their attention on fighting the three evils as a factor of security, as well as on resolving economic and transportation-communication problems. In this context, I would like to stress the need for an uncompromising fight against the drug business, which is posing a growing threat to security in Central Asia. In so doing, the SCO should, in our opinion, focus particular attention on practical measures to reduce and gradually wipe out the drug industry in Afghanistan itself. From this viewpoint, the ISA government can and should become a potential partner of the Shanghai Organization in fighting drug manufacture in order to eradicate this threat not only in Central Asia, but also on its own territory. In order to resolve these problems, more efficient use of the possibilities of RATS should be made, particularly in gathering and exchanging intelligence information on the activity of terrorist and extremist organizations, including those involved in drug trafficking.

As permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, Russia and China could make a significant contribution to the global struggle against the "plague of the 21st century." In our opinion, the membership of these states in the SCO realistically increases its potential, which is shown by the participation of representatives of this structure in several meetings of the largest international organizations. For example, they participated in the conference of the U.N. Security Council Antiterrorist Commission (New York, March 2003), the conference of dialogue partners of the OSCE (Vienna, April 2003), the fifth summit of the U.N. and Regional Organizations (New York, July 2003), and the OSCE conference on fighting terrorism and its prevention (Lisbon, September 2003).¹⁸

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On the whole, the SCO's prospects and the efficacy of its activity will depend on how specific the projects generated within the organization are, how they are implemented, and the extent to which they take into account the interests of each member state.

On the other hand, the question of closer cooperation of the SCO with other international structures involved in the regional processes in Central Asia is also acquiring special significance. It appears that recognizing its importance is extremely pertinent from the viewpoint of preventing a Cold War philosophy¹⁹ in the geopolitical processes in the region. In this context, the need to look for common interests must be kept in mind, and not only in the SCO itself. Potential areas of its cooperation with other international structures should also be sought, primarily in the fight against drug aggression.

But in order to achieve this, the SCO needs to develop its own strategy in the fight against illicit drug circulation. Practical realization of this vector (within the framework of RATS) will raise the efficiency of the fight of the organization's member states against terrorism and extremism in Central Asia. Forming a common stance, as well as approaches to combating the drug business, by all the states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization could become a potential prerequisite for attracting the attention of the entire international community, primarily the U.N., to taking more effective measures to eliminate the escalating drug threat in the region.

¹⁷ See: "Sodeistvie stabil'nosti v Tsentral'noi Azii," in: *Trudy mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii 15-19 May, 2000*, Tashkent, 2000, p. 39.

¹⁸ See: V. Abaturov, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁹ F. Tolipov, "On the Role of the Central Asian Cooperation Organization within the SCO," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (27), 2004, p. 147.

ETHNIC RELATIONS AND
POPULATION MIGRATIONYEZIDI KURDS IN GEORGIA:
ETHNIC SELF-AWARENESS AND
CONSOLIDATION

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The political developments in the Middle East during the 1990s added a global dimension to the Kurdish question, which is having an appreciable effect on the ethnic self-awareness of the Kurds living in Georgia, the absolute majority of whom are Yezidis.

Migration of Kurds
in the Southern Caucasus

The first tribes of Yezidi Kurds came to Georgia in the 18th century; in 1918, they migrated in great numbers from the Ottoman Empire, after being driven away (like the Armenians) by the religious persecution, in which the Muslim Kurds also took part.¹

Under Soviet power, most of the Kurds in Georgia moved to Tbilisi, while a smaller number of them settled in other cities (Rustavi, Batumi, and Telavi). According to the 1959 official figures, there were 16,200 Kurds in this Union republic (0.4 percent of its population); in 1970, there were 20,700, or 0.5 percent; and in 1979, 25,700, or 0.5 percent.² According to the last Soviet population census of 1989, there were 33,300 Kurds living in Georgia (0.6 percent). Today, according to the first population

¹ About the Kurdish migrations in the Southern Caucasus (Georgia included), see: D. Pirbari, "Kurdy na Iuzhnom Kavkaze," *Vostok i Kavkaz* (Tbilisi), No. 2, 2002; Pir Dima, "Ezidy na Iuzhnom Kavkaze," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 1, February 2003.

² See: V. Djaoshvili, *Population of Georgia in the 18th-20th Centuries*, Tbilisi, 1984, p. 213 (in Georgian).

census conducted by independent Georgia in 2002, there are 20,843 Kurds (19,200 of them live in Tbilisi), or 0.4 percent of its population.³

In the 1990s, emigration due mainly to social and economic hardships and mounting nationalism caused their number in the Southern Caucasus and Georgia to drop. The Kurds preferred to settle permanently in Russia and West European countries with strong diasporas. This movement is still going on today; if the Kurds continue to leave at the same rate, their number in the Southern Caucasus will drop even more.

Religion of the Yezidi Kurds in Georgia

The wave of nationalist sentiments in the post-Soviet countries and the mounting fear of being assimilated by the titular nations forced the ethnic minorities of the former Soviet republics to concentrate on saving their ethnic identities. As distinct from other ethnic minorities of Georgia, the Kurdish community demonstrated special processes promoted by the accelerating Kurdish movement in the Middle East (especially in the north of Iraq) and globalization of the Kurdish question.

I have already mentioned that most of the Kurds in Georgia (and in Armenia) are Yezidis.⁴ Today, the Yezidi Kurds are one of the rare peoples whose religion plays an ethnically forming role. Today, the Yezidi Kurds, who are descendants of the ancient population of Upper Mesopotamia, are part of a multi-million ethnos in which Muslims predominate. The number of Yezidi Kurds is relatively small—there are about 1 million of them. They live mainly in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Georgia, and Armenia; the recent migration processes brought them to Russia, Ukraine, and Western Europe.

Initially, the Yezidis worshipped Water, Fire, Air, and the Celestial Bodies. The ancient cornerstones of this religion, the Sun, Moon, and Fire, were laid in Sumerian and Babylonian times; their traces can be discerned in the contemporary religion of the Yezidis. Later, after passing through several development stages, their religion became a monotheist faith, the followers of which believed in one single God.⁵

As a result of political, economic, and other perturbations, the Yezidi religion became confined within itself. But this did not prevent it from being passed on from generation to generation and from surviving endless repressions, since its followers were able to zealously defend it. They lived amid constant inroads and under relentless oppression. These factors affected their educational level. They were unable to accept education from the Muslim religious leaders. Because of this faithfully observed tradition, most South Caucasian Kurds remained illiterate until the beginning of the 20th century.⁶

As distinct from the Muslim Kurds, the Yezidic society was organized according to the theocratic-caste principle: it was divided into two castes—the laity and the clergy—each of them closed and unattainable. Members of one caste could not transfer to another and inter-caste marriages were banned.⁷

Today, the Kurdish religious leaders discern the main threat to their ethnic specificity, in which religion plays the main role, in the trends that have been unfolding since the 1990s. Some of the Yezidi Kurds have already become Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Adventists, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, and Krishnaists.⁸ The religious leaders are convinced that this is because they have no deep knowledge of the faith of their ancestors. Frequently, however, religion changes unconsciously, either for material reasons, or under the influence of active proselytism by apologists of other confessions, or because the Yezidi clergy

³ See: *The State Department of Statistics of Georgia. Results of the First National General Population Census of Georgia*, Vol. I, Tbilisi, 2003, p. 100 (in Georgian).

⁴ The Muslim Kurds were deported from Georgia to Central Asia in 1944 as one of the unreliable Muslim population groups living along the Turkish border; in this way Georgia lost nearly all its Kurds. (In the 1880s, there were about 3,000 Muslim Kurds in the Tbilisi Gubernia and about 1,000 in Ajaria.)

⁵ See: Pir Dima, *Na puti k istine. Ezidizm*, Tbilisi, 2003, p. 4.

⁶ The problem of literacy was resolved, to a certain extent, in the Soviet Union, yet some Yezidi Kurds remained illiterate. For more detail, see: D. Pirbari, "Ezidskoe pis'mo," *Etнологический сборник Кавказа*, Tbilisi, No. VIII, 2003, pp. 199-202.

⁷ About the religion and traditions, see: A. Amoev, *The Holy Yezidic Books*, Tbilisi, 1999 (in Georgian); A. Menteshashvili, *The Kurds and Kurdistan*, Tbilisi, 1977, pp. 44-48 (in Georgian); L. Pashaeva, "Pogrebal'nye traditsii Kurdov," *Etнологический сборник Кавказа*, No. VIII, 2003, pp. 191-198.

⁸ See: Sheikh T. Bavki, "I slovom, i delom," *Kaniya Sipî*, No. 5, August 2003.

are too passive. Indeed, most Yezidi Kurds know next to nothing about their religion.⁹ The Yezidi religious leaders think that the religious holydays have lost their true meaning and become a mere formality. This creates the threat of assimilation; in secondary schools, moreover, Christianity is essentially the only religion offered to the pupils. This greatly affects what the children of parents with different religious backgrounds know about the world.¹⁰ It should be said that proselytism does not feature in religion of the Yezidi Kurds.¹¹ This explains why for many centuries the number of followers of this religion grew at a slow pace.

The religious leaders are convinced that building a Yezidic temple might have helped to preserve ethnic specificity and the faith itself.¹² Because of financial problems and contradictions among the Georgian Kurdish organizations, a temple has not yet been built. The main barrier, however, is the current agreement between the Georgian state and the Christian Orthodox Church, under which the Patriarchate must give its consent to building temples of a different confession. In the case of the Yezidi religion, the Patriarchate objected to this.

Religion as a Factor of Ethnic Self-Awareness

As a result of historical processes, the term "Yezidi" came to denote a sub-ethnos within the larger Kurdish ethnos. The Yezidi Kurds recall the massive religious persecutions in the Ottoman Empire, in which Muslim Kurds took an active part. The Yezidi community had to seek shelter in the Russian Empire, on the territory of Armenia and Georgia. The fact that Muslim Kurds were involved in the religious repressions drove the two sides of one ethnos apart. The Yezidis gradually acquired an ethnic self-awareness of their own: the religion of their ancestors played an important role in the process. As a result, this particular ethnic group acquired the term "Yezidi" as part of its ethnic name. (The academic community throughout the world is divided on this issue; here I have limited myself to the trends typical of the Southern Caucasus.)

In Soviet times, the division into Muslim and Yezidi Kurds was caused by political expediency; the Soviet political leaders were guided by the foreign and domestic situation. Not until the late 1980s did the mounting ethnic tension cause ethnic conflicts. The Kurds of Azerbaijan and Armenia were affected by the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, into which they were directly or indirectly drawn. Baku exploited the religious factor to draw the Muslim Kurds onto its side; Erevan used the same tactics to enlist support of the local Yezidi Kurds. As a result, the Muslims and Yezidis found themselves on opposite sides of the conflict. This gave rise to the so-called Yezidi Question in Armenia: supported by all kinds of nationalist groups, certain religious circles tried to present the Yezidis as a separate ethnic group which had nothing to do with the Kurds in general.¹³ Indeed, 52,700 Kurds out of the total 60,000-strong Kurdish population in Armenia were identified as Yezidis for the first time during the last Soviet population census of 1989. Some people believe that it was the war in Nagorny Karabakh that added urgency to the issue. Those who defend the Yezidi religion say that the Muslim Kurds have been oppressing the Yezidis, therefore, despite their common tongue, the Yezidi Kurds, as a separate nation, came to acquire a national identity of their own. They allege that this started the Yezidic movement in Armenia.¹⁴ On the other hand, there are forces in Armenia which insist that the Yezidic religious and cultural traditions are deeply rooted in the Kurdish culture and that nearly all the Yezidic holy books were written in the Kurdish language.¹⁵ These ideas, however, failed to gain wide public support.

⁹ See: L. Safarova, "Interview so sviashchenosluzhitelem Pire Omar Khali," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 7, August 2003.

¹⁰ See: D. Pirbari, "Ostanemsia samimi soboy," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 5, June 2003.

¹¹ According to a Yezidi saying one cannot become a Yezidi, one must be born a Yezidi.

¹² See: L. Safarova, "Drevo zhelaniy," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 5, June 2003.

¹³ See: Ashiri, "Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv, sud'by i nadezhdy," *Azia i Afrika segodnia*, No. 2, 1998, p. 35.

¹⁴ See: O. Krikorian, "Being Yezidi," *Transitions Online*, 11 November, 2004.

¹⁵ The Kurds of Georgia and Armenia are using the northeastern dialect of the Kurdish tongue.

This division was officially registered in the data of the population censuses carried out in Georgia and Armenia, which means that the two countries independently divided the Yezidis and the Kurds into two ethnic groups. (The 1939 population census in Georgia treated them as one group.) This was done at the request of the Center of Yezidic Traditions Razibun. Those who claimed themselves to be Yezidis were registered as such (18,329 people), while those who called themselves Kurds were registered as Kurds (2,514 people).¹⁶ The same can be said about Armenia: according to the latest population census, there are 40,620 Yezidis, or 1.3 percent of the total population, in the republic, and 1,519 Kurds (or 0.1 percent).¹⁷ Obviously, there is uncertainty among the Yezidi Kurds, as well as in Georgian¹⁸ and Armenian societies, about their ethnic affiliation.

The Yezidis' national self-awareness was further promoted by the military campaign against the Saddam regime in Iraq which unfolded in the 1990s. The war boosted Kurdish nationalism in the north of Iraq, which is populated by the multi-million Kurdish diaspora; its echo reached the Southern Caucasus. Significantly, the Kurdish political leaders make regular public statements to the effect that the Yezidi Kurds are members of the larger Kurdish nation, from which they differ by their religion alone.¹⁹ This is done to preserve the unity of the Kurds scattered across many countries. Since the 1990s the Yezidi Kurds have been calling themselves Kurds more often than before, which can be explained by the rising wave of Kurdish nationalism. It seems that in Georgia the Kurdish organizations and public figures have reached a consensus and selected a neutral term "Yezidi Kurds." The issue has not been finally settled yet. This is confirmed by the Kurdish organizations in Georgia, which cannot agree on a single name for the local Kurds.²⁰

The Kurdish Organizations

The first Kurdish organization Ronai²¹ appeared in Georgia in Soviet times, in 1988. Later it was renamed the Society of the Kurdish Citizens of Georgia; after its second registration in 1998 it became known as the Union of Yezidis of Georgia. With the financial help of the German embassy the union bought an office building.²² Since then, the number of similar organizations has increased, while the level of their consolidation is low. They are more concerned with their image of the only defender of the diaspora's interests. Their squabbles do not allow them to effectively defend the rights of the Kurds and to build a Yezidi temple in Tbilisi.

The Kurdish Information-Cultural Center founded in 1991 as the Georgian Branch of the Kurdish Liberation Front is especially radical. Many experts tend to associate it with the leader of the Kurdish Worker's Party (Kongra-Gel), Abdullah Ocalan, whom Turkey declared terrorist No. 1. The Center is still openly and actively promoting Ocalan's ideas in the diaspora; it regularly organizes cultural events and offers language training. At the same time, its other activities attract the attention of the law enforcement bodies. According to its employees, on 20 March, 1999 armed policemen and members of the Georgian security service entered their office where, without sanctions, they detained six Kurds and later more people staying with Kurdish families. It turned out that out of the 13 detained, seven

¹⁶ See: *The State Department for Statistics of Georgia...*, p. 110.

¹⁷ See: M. Toumajan, "Armenian Census Results," *Armenian News Network/Groong*, 27 February, 2004.

¹⁸ The conference organized several years ago in Tbilisi with the help of the Council of Europe was very illustrative in this respect: it was attended by two representatives of the Kurdish diaspora, one of them representing the Kurds, and the other, the Yezidis.

¹⁹ It is interesting to note what Masoud Barzani, one of the popular Kurdish leaders, has to say on this score: "If the Yezidis are not Kurds, then there are no Kurds at all" (see: *Kaniya Sipî*, No. 5, August 2003).

²⁰ For example, there are the Information-Cultural Center of the Kurds, the Union of Yezidis of Georgia, and the National Congress of the Yezidi Kurds in Georgia in this country. The same can be said about Armenia. For more detail, see: M. Djafarov, "Interview s glavnym redaktorom gazety *Ria taza* Amarike Sardar," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 3, April 2003.

²¹ See: L. Berdzenishvili, "Interview s prezidentom kurdskey assotsiatsii 'Ronai' Iuriem Nabievym," *Svobodnaia Gruzia*, No. 169 (369), 12 December, 1992.

²² See: *Mnogonatsional'naia Gruzia*, No. 4 (20), August 2002.

were citizens of Armenia, who were forced to sign a promise to promptly leave Georgia. The others turned out to be citizens of Turkey and they were deported back home. This prompted the National-Liberation Front of Kurdistan of the CIS and Western Europe to make a statement that, in so doing, official Tbilisi was courting Ankara. The diaspora is convinced that the detained were exchanged for Georgian children detained in Turkey in August 1998 on the charge of murdering a Turkish child in a summer camp.²³ Three out of the six suspects were released in December of the same year, while the court recognized the innocence of the rest eight months later, that is, immediately after the detained Kurds had been extradited to Turkey.²⁴

In 2003, the Center organized several actions in Tbilisi in support of Ocalan. On 20 August, the diaspora marked the 25th anniversary of the Kurdish uprising headed by the Kurdish Worker's Party.²⁵ When the health of imprisoned Ocalan deteriorated, the Center started a three-day hunger strike in support of the solidarity actions of all Kurdish diasporas all over the world.²⁶ On 25 January, 2004, the Center's representatives attended the inauguration of Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili holding state flags of Georgia and Kurdistan and accompanied by children dressed in national costumes. The slogan said: "The Kurds of Georgia Support Mikhail Saakashvili."

The Center of Kurdish Culture set up in 1992 is also very active. Its leaders organize regular political actions and demonstrate their anti-Turkish sentiments. On 2 March, 1999, in particular, they carried out a rally in Tbilisi to protest against Ocalan's imprisonment. The few participants shouted anti-Turkish, anti-American, and anti-NATO slogans.²⁷ On 8 October, 2002 the Center's members held a rally in Tbilisi to protest against military cooperation with Ankara and set fire to Turkey's state flag in public. The Center is convinced that as soon as Georgia joins NATO, Turkey will station its military bases in Georgia. This will start anti-Kurdish repressions; and the Kurds, in turn, will refuse to serve in the Georgian army, which is currently switching to the Turkish model.²⁸ The desecration of the Turkish state flag prompted Ankara to send a note of protest to Tbilisi, in which it demanded that Georgia make a proper response to this act. Tbilisi responded immediately: the Center's head was summoned for an explanation and was released only after he presented an explanatory note.²⁹

There is also the Union of Young Yezidis of Georgia, the Kurdish Yezidi National Congress,³⁰ the Georgi Shamoev International Foundation of Rights Protection and Religious-Cultural Kurdish Heritage, the Independent League of the Kurdish Yezidi Women of Georgia,³¹ and other organizations functioning in Georgia. They all function on their enthusiasm and irregular private donations.

The Kurdish Organizations— Political Discrepancies

The discrepancies among these organizations prevent them from pooling their efforts and working more efficiently, and are even causing political dissent in the diaspora.

²³ See: T. Rusitashvili, "Ocalan's Supporters are Threatening Georgia with Terrorist Acts. Has Georgia Handed Over the 'Kurdish Patriots' to Turkey?" *Alia*, No. 52 (646), 3-4 April, 1999, in Georgian.

²⁴ See: A. Mirotadze, "Georgian Children Detained in Turkey are Set Free," *Akhali Taoba*, No. 80 (1208), 24 March, 1999 (in Georgian).

²⁵ See: *Novy vzgliad*, No. 7, August 2003.

²⁶ See: V. Nabiev, "Aktzia protesta v Kurdskom mezhdunarodnom kul'turnom tsentre," *Kaniya Sipî*, No. 6, September 2003.

²⁷ See: M. Lebanidze, "Labor and Komsomol Joined the Kurds' Action," *Rezonansi*, No. 57 (1464), 3 March, 1999 (in Georgian).

²⁸ See: *Prime News*, 9 October, 2002 (in Georgian).

²⁹ See: R. Machaidze, "The Kurdish-Turkish War in Georgia," *Rezonansi*, No. 277 (2762), 11 October, 2002 (in Georgian).

³⁰ See: M. Karamanova, "Yezidskaia molodezh: realii i perspektivy," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 1, February 2003.

³¹ See: A. Kazazian, "V Tbilisi sozdana organizatsia kurdsikh zhenshchin Gruzii," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 8-9, September-October 2003.

So far, during the entire period of Georgia's independence, only one Kurdish deputy has been elected to parliament (of the 1995-1999 convocation). This happened in the following way. In 1995, the Citizens' Union of Georgia headed by President Shevardnadze offered the diaspora one place (the 35th) on its election list. The Kurdish organizations took too much time to agree on their candidate and finally had to be satisfied with 78th place for Mame Raiki, a candidate nominated by the Society of the Kurdish Citizens of Georgia (now the Union of the Yezidis of Georgia). The chances for 78th candidate were slim, yet the landslide victory of the Citizens' Union of Georgia made Mame Raiki the first Kurdish deputy in the highest representative body of power. During his deputy term, the parliament allocated 50,000 laris (\$25,000) for developing the Kurdish culture. In 1999, the Kurdish organizations failed to agree on a single candidate; Mame Raiki believes that this cannot be achieved until the diaspora becomes consolidated.³²

The same problem revealed itself at the parliamentary elections of 2 November, 2003: Kurdish candidates represented three absolutely different political parties, while their places on the lists gave no hope for success. Some of the Kurdish public organizations supported President Shevardnadze and its election bloc, For New Georgia (in exchange they placed their candidate, Isko Daseni, on its party list). Others brought together several Kurdish structures to set up the Coordinating Council of the Yezidi Kurds of Georgia (presented on 26 September, 2003), which supported the government bloc.³³ With the help of the government, it began publishing the *Media* journal.³⁴ Registered as No. 81 on the party list, Isko Daseni had practically no chance of being elected.

The Union of Yezidis of Georgia supported the Union of Democratic Revival of Georgia, the ruling party of the autonomous republic of Ajaria, and the Union of Yezidis nominated its leader, Rostom Atashev,³⁵ as its parliamentary candidate. Even though the leaders of the Union of Democratic Revival insisted that Atashev would be elected,³⁶ his 64th place on the election lists gave him practically no hope.

The National Congress of the Yezidi Kurds selected the opposition New Right political party, which paid for its *Novy vzgliad* newspaper, as its election partner.³⁷ Congress Chairman Aghit Mirzoev, who was convinced that Daseni's and Atashev's chances were slim, held 30th place on the New Right's list³⁸ and did not get into parliament either.

Even falsification of the results of the parliamentary election of 2 November, 2003 organized by the authorities at that time failed to get the three Kurdish candidates who ran with the pro-governmental parties into parliament. The popular unrest which began several days later ended in the "velvet revolution." President Shevardnadze resigned; pre-term presidential elections were held according to the law, which were followed by pre-term parliamentary elections (28 March, 2004). The Kurds had no candidates on any of the lists of the potentially successful blocs or parties, therefore there are no Kurds in the new parliament.

C o n c l u s i o n

The repressions carried out by the Muslim Kurds against the Yezidi Kurds were responsible, in part, for the emergence of a sub-ethnic group of Yezidis in the larger Kurdish ethnos. The lively debates currently being held on this issue among the intelligentsia and public organizations of the Kurdish diaspora have confirmed that the Yezidi Kurds are acquiring their own ethnic self-awareness, which is being further boosted by the mounting Kurdish nationalism that took place in the 1990s. While in the past they did not hesitate to call themselves Yezidis, today there are people among them who call themselves Kurds

³² See: M. Karamanova, "Mame Raiki: 'Ia podderzhu edinogo kandidata'," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 3, April 2003.

³³ See: M. Metreveli, "One 'Nut' for all Kurds," *24 saati*, No. 139 (351), 23 May, 2003 (in Georgian).

³⁴ See: *Novy vzgliad*, No. 7, August 2003.

³⁵ See: M. Djafarov, "Konferentsia Soiuzu ezidov Gruzii," *Novy vzgliad*, No. 5, June 2003.

³⁶ See: V. Nabiev, "V Gruzii sozdan Sovet stareyshin kurdov-ezidov," *Kaniya-Sipi*, No. 4, July 2003.

³⁷ See: *Novy vzgliad*, No. 1, February 2003.

³⁸ On the debates between the Kurdish candidates and their opinions about the parliamentary elections of 2 November, 2003 see: M. Djafarov, "Krugly stol 'Kurdskoe naselenie v preddverii vyborov: vasha pozitsia,'" *Novy vzgliad*, No. 8-9, September-October 2003.

who profess the Yezidi faith and who identify themselves with the larger Kurdish ethnic group. The diaspora has agreed that the Yezidi faithful should have the neutral name of Yezidi Kurds, which also describes their ethnic and confessional affiliation. We can say, however, that the process of ethnic self-identification among them is still in flux.

ETHNOPOLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE ROSTOV REGION, THE KRASNODAR AND STAVROPOL TERRITORIES: PROBLEMS, CONTRADICTIONS, AND PROSPECTS

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Ethnopolitical processes in the so-called Russian regions of the Caucasus should be studied not only for academic but also for practical purposes. All students of the Caucasus concentrate either on Chechnia or the armed conflicts in Abkhazia, Nagorny Karabakh, South Ossetia, etc. Experts tend to pay attention to the latent conflicts in the North Caucasian republics and the South Caucasian states (the conflicts in Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria, the Lezghian question, the Armenian-Georgian relations in Samtskhe-Javakheti). The Rostov Region and the Krasnodar and Stavropol Territories, however, on the whole have so far remained outside the scope of the expert community's attention.

In fact, the geopolitical and socioeconomic role of the so-called Russian regions of the Northern Caucasian can hardly be overestimated. Together, the three federation constituencies cover

68.5 percent of the Russian Northern Caucasus, while their 12 million-strong population comprises 68.35 percent of the total North Caucasian population and 8.25 percent of Russia's population. The Krasnodar Territory is the third in Russia where its population size is concerned; it comes after Moscow and the Moscow Region. The Rostov Region is the sixth among the 89 RF constituencies, with Moscow, the Moscow Region, the Krasnodar Territory, St. Petersburg, and the Sverdlovsk Region having larger populations. The Krasnodar Territory boasts of the Black Sea coast with large recreation centers of international importance: Sochi populated by about 345,000 and Novorossiisk with the population of 189,000. The latter also has terminals for the Azeri and Kazakhstani oil and gas. The Novorossiisk and Tuapse ports are the country's first and third freight haulage centers. In the future the Krasnodar Territory will become the main Black

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Sea naval base of the RF. Rostov-on-Don is the capital of sorts of the North Caucasian Military District (the only one in the country involved in hostilities). The ecological resorts of the Caucasian Mineral Waters set up in 1993 by a presidential decree¹ is part of the Stavropol Territory. At the same time, the Stavropol Territory is found in the very heart of the Russian Caucasus and its ethnopolitical landscape, and borders on the seats of the most complicated ethnic conflicts (Chechnia, North Ossetia, and Dagh-

estan). The Krasnodar and Stavropol territories and the Rostov Region are Russia's largest grain producers that ensure the country's food security. The Russian North Caucasian regions are very important at the time of federal elections: today there are 18 deputies of the State Duma elected in single-member districts (the Krasnodar Territory and the Rostov Region are represented by seven deputies each, while the Stavropol Territory has four deputies). This shows that the future of Russia's policies in the Greater Caucasus, its security in the south and across the country depend, to a great extent, on continued stability, ethnic harmony and prevention of conflicts in the Russian regions of the Northern Caucasus.

¹ See: *Politicheskii almanakh Rossii 1997*, Vol. 2, ed. by M. MacFall and N. Petrov, The Moscow Carnegie Center, Moscow, August-November 1998, Book 1-2.

The Rostov Region: An Island of Stability in the Turbulent Sea

Traditionally this region is regarded as the socioeconomic and military-political center of the Russian Northern Caucasus (until May 2000 this status was an unofficial one). The region covers the territory of 100,800 sq km (it is the 35th among the RF constituencies where its size is concerned) on the lower Don and serves as a gateway of sorts to the Caucasus. It houses the military, socioeconomic, scientific and academic structures of importance for the entire Caucasus: the North Caucasian Military District, the North Caucasian Scientific Center of Higher Education, the North Caucasian Customs Administration, the directorate of the Northern Caucasus Association of Socioeconomic Cooperation. In May 2000 Rostov-on-Don that was founded in 1749 became the capital of the North Caucasian federal okrug (today the Southern federal okrug). The region borders on the Voronezh and Volgograd regions, the Stavropol and Krasnodar territories, and the Republic of Kalmykia. It has a state land and sea border with Ukraine. The region was formed in 1937. Before that it was part of the Southeast of Russia (1920-1924), the North Caucasian Area (1924-1934), the Azov-Black Sea Area (1934-1937). In the prerevolutionary period it was part of the Don Cossack Host Region (the administrative-territorial unit of the Host of the Don Cossacks based in Novocherkassk, the largest in the Russian Empire) and the Great Don Host (the Cossack state of the Civil War period). The symbols selected for the Rostov Region stress this continuity. The flag nearly faithfully reproduces the flag of the Great Don Host: three horizontal blue, yellow, and red lines that back in 1918 symbolized the unity of the Cossacks, Kalmyks and "aliens" (the Russian non-Cossack population). A new element—a white vertical line—symbolizes the region's unity with the Russian Federation. Its hymn was borrowed from the same Great Don Host; the coat of arms is formed of the symbols of power of the Cossack atamans.

The region is home for 4.4 million of which 89.6 percent are Russians. They are by no means a homogeneous ethnic community. With a certain degree of conventionality we can identify its five historically shaped components: the first is made by the Don Cossacks that began moving into what was known as the Wilderness (Dikoe Pole) at the turn of the 16th century. There they came into contact with nomadic Turks (the Crimean Tartars and the Nogais), the Ottoman Empire, and the North Caucasian peoples from whom they borrowed many of their traditions and customs. This was how a highly specific Cossack culture of the Don came into being that gives grounds for regarding the Slavic-Russian part of the Don Cossacks as a sub-ethnos of the Russians. The peasants that came to the Don in the early 18th century when the Cossacks were forbidden to give shelter to fugitive peasants from central Russia formed the second com-

ponent. The third one is made of the so-called aliens who settled on the lower Don when serfdom was abolished in 1861. (By 1917 the peasants and aliens outnumbered the Cossacks.) Today, according to different estimates, Cossack descendants comprise about 15 percent of the region's population. People described as "specialists in national economy" in Soviet times form the fourth component, while the fifth component comprises migrants from the Near Abroad and the RF republics. The Russian migrants from Chechnia are most prominent on the public scene: in 1996 they set up a Movement of Those Who Suffered in the Chechen Conflict and started their own newspaper *Biulleten pereselentsa* (Migrant's Bulletin). Between 1992 and March 2002, 44,162 people out of the total 159,129 applicants received the forced migrant status. Even though the bulk of the migrants came from Chechnia, and from the Central Asian and South Caucasian states the majority among them (87.2 percent) were Russians.

Ukrainians (3.45 percent) are the second largest ethnos; by the beginning of the 21st century many of them were Russified. The Armenian diaspora is one of the oldest in the South of Russia; its share in the total population is 1.8 percent. The first Armenians moved to the Don in the latter half of the 18th century; they opened the first printshop in the South of Russia in 1790; founded a small town of their own called Nakhichevan-on-Don merged with Rostov-on-Don in 1928. Today it is the Proletarskiy District of the region's capital. (There are also compact Armenian communities in the Miasnikovskiy District: in the villages of Chaltyr, Bol'shie Saly, and Krym.) After 1991 ethnic Armenians from Armenia and other post-Soviet states started coming to the region; there are members of other ethnic groups: Azeris (17,000), Chechens (17,000), the Meskhetian Turks (16,800), Georgians (9,900), Darghins (6,000) and Avars (4,000).²

The eastern districts, the zone of traditional sheep breeding that needs shepherds, has a special ethnopolitical role to play. In the 1960s-1970s Chechens and Dagestanis came there as shepherds. In the 1990s ethnic and political tension in Chechnia created waves of migrants from the "rebellious republic" who came to settle in the east. According to the regional administration, in 2002 there were about 1,300 Chechens in the Dubovskoe District, over 200, in the Zavetnoe District; over 1,200, in the Zimovniki District, and approximately the same number in the Remontnoe District. People of Dagestani extraction live in compact groups in the Remontnoe (over 1,200), Zimovniki (over 900), Dubovskoe (about 1,200), and Zavetnoe (about 300) districts. In 1989, driven by the ethnic clashes the Meskhetian Turks left Uzbekistan to settle densely in the east and south: there are 1,400 of them in the Zimovniki District, about 6,000 in the Martynovka, about 3,000 in Sal'sk, and about 1,600 in Volgodonsk districts.³ On the whole the situation in the most polyethnic districts is stable and controlled, yet sporadic conflicts between members of Caucasian ethnoses and Russians cannot be avoided. This is what causes conflicts:

- Criminal behavior of the newcomers and the local people (fights, murders, robberies, and crop damaging);
- Self-isolation of ethnic groups, the members of which refuse to abide by the rules and norms of the ethnic majority and look at their ethnic authorities for guidance rather than heeding laws and power;
- Active migration activity and an inflow of new migrants;
- Migrant-phobia of the local people;
- Delayed response of the authorities to conflicts, insufficient methodological support of ethnic tension prevention;
- Continued Chechen crisis.

Conflicts have become a more or less regular local feature since the 1970s when the murder of two girls, graduates of a local school in the Remontnoe District in 1976 connected with Chechens caused an

² See: L.L. Khoperskaia, "Rostovskaia oblast," in: *Bezhtensy i vynuždennyye pereselentsy: etnicheskie stereotipy (Opyt sotsiologicheskogo analiza)*, Vladikavkaz, 2002.

³ See: V.L. Marinova's contribution published in *Materialy konferentsii "Formirovanie kul'tury mezhnatsional'nogo obshchena na Donu: opyt i problemy*, Rostov-on-Don, 2003, p. 32.

upsurge of negative sentiments among the local people. In the 1980s-2000s this repeated itself elsewhere in the region. In March 2000, a conflict between the locals and Chechens in the Martynovka District ended with the demand that a referendum should be conducted on evicting the Chechens and Daghestanis from the district. In October 2000, a fight between groups of Russians and Daghestanis developed into a massive unsanctioned rally at the Rostov-Sal'sk highway that demanded that all "people of the Caucasian origin" should be re-registered. In 2001, ethnic tension between the Russians and Chechens was registered in the Peschanokopskoe and Zavetnoe districts. In February 2002, a fight between the local people and Chechens in the Zimovniki District triggered an anti-Chechen rally that insisted that a representative of the regional administration in the east of the region should interfere. The more or less common pattern of ethnic tension is the following: a conflict (a fight, assault, etc.)—demands that extraordinary measures should be applied against the "aliens"—interference of regional or local powers that settle the conflict. On the whole, the region's administration is coping with ethnic tension much better than its North Caucasian neighbors. The local authorities avoid alarmist undertones in their calls and other actions; they refuse to exploit the myth that migration threatens the local Russians, while the local elite never uses nationalism for political purposes.

There is a community of Meskhetian Turks in the region that is as large as a similar community in the Krasnodar Territory, yet throughout the years of V. Chub governorship not a single political threat was pronounced against the Meskhetian Turks. There are conflicts between them and the local people. In 1994, for example, the Cossack meeting of the Krasny Kut village (the Vesely District) passed a decision on their deportation. This and similar initiatives were never approved of or supported by the regional authorities; the regional administration never initiated deportations for ethnic reasons and never looked at them as a means of defusing ethnic tension. It was on its initiative and with its support that Councils of Ethnic Agreement and Councils of Representatives of Ethnic Groups were set up in the east, in the potentially unstable districts. In 1999 the Consultative Council of Ethnic Public Associations at the region's administration condemned the anti-Semitic pronouncement of deputy of the RF State Duma Albert Makashov.

The Kuban Area: A Zone of Latent Ethnic Conflicts

The Krasnodar Territory that covers 76,000 sq km and holds the 45th place in the Russian Federation by its size borders on the Rostov Region, the Stavropol Territory, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Adigey. It also borders on Georgia and on the unrecognized Republic of Abkhazia, a de jure part of Georgia. It is washed by the Black and Azov seas and has 38 districts and 15 large cities. Its administrative center, Krasnodar since 1920, was founded in 1793 as Ekaterinodar. As an administrative unit the Territory appeared on the maps in 1937; before that in 1924-1934 it was part of the North Caucasian Area and in 1934-1937, part of the Azov-Black Sea Area. Before the revolution the Territory was the Kuban Region (the administrative-territorial unit of the Kuban Cossack Host created in 1860, the second largest Cossack army of the Russian Empire) and the Black Sea Gubernia (the smallest in czarist Russia). The Kuban Cossack Host territory also included Karachaevo-Cherkessia (the Batalpashinskiy division), Adigey (the Maykop division), and the Stavropol Territory. During the Civil War there was a Cossack state on this territory; in 1921 the Kuban Area and the Black Sea Region were united into the Kuban-Black Sea Region. In 1991, the newly formed Adigey Autonomous Region was founded as an independent RF constituency. After 1991 the Krasnodar Territory has been attracting the leaders of the Russian ethnic movement of Adigey, as well as of the Urup and Zelenchukskaia districts of Karachaevo-Cherkessia. The symbols selected for the Krasnodar Territory emphasize its ties with its predecessor—the Kuban Region. Its hymn, "Kuban is Our Homeland," was written before the revolution by Chaplain K. Obratsov.

The Territory's population size of 5 million has put it on the third place in the Russian Federation; Russians, the dominating ethnic group, comprise 84.6 percent of the total population. The group is much more varied than the Russians of the Rostov Region where their roots are concerned. Academic and pub-

licist writings of Ukraine look at the Kuban Area as one of the ethnic Ukrainian lands. It was incorporated into the Russian state when the Crimea had been joined to Russia: before 1783 Kuban was part of the Crimean Khanate. The Black Sea Cossacks were one of the important instruments used to consolidate Russia's positions in the area. They are descendants of the Zaporozh'e Cossacks of Ukraine. In 1788 the Camp of the Loyal Zaporozh'e Cossacks was renamed the Host of the Loyal Black Sea Cossacks; in 1792 they were rewarded "for perpetuity with the Island of Phanagoria with lands between the Kuban and the Azov Sea."⁴ Later, those who came to the area from Malorossia (the old name of Ukraine) were also counted as members of the Black Sea army. In 1860, the Black Sea Cossacks were merged with the Caucasian Line Cossack Host (of ethnic Russians) into a single army. In this way, in the mid-19th century Kuban became a Cossack melting pot of sorts that created a mixed Russian-Ukrainian Kuban identity. During the Civil War the heads of the Kuban Council, who were all Ukraine-philic, rejected the great power policies of the White Cause leaders.

Later, in the course of the 1926 All-Union population census the Kuban Cossacks were registered as Ukrainians because of Ukrainization of the language and educational spheres. Later, this trend subsided: during the 1930-1980 population censuses these people were registered as Russians. Under the influence of these processes as well as industrialization and urbanization many of the Ukrainian-speaking Cossacks identified themselves as Russians or as members of a specific ethnic group that differed both from the Russians and Ukrainians. There is also an ethnic group of Russians formed by the descendants of the Kuban "aliens" (Soviet specialists who struck root there), as well as Russian-speaking migrants from other CIS countries and non-Russian RF republics.

In 1989, the Ukrainians formed the second largest ethnic group in Kuban (there were 182,128 of them, or 3.9 percent of the total population). Early in the 21st century they became the third largest group after the Russians and Armenians who in 1989 comprised 3.7 percent of the Kuban population (171,175 people). According to expert assessments, early in the 21st century there were about 244,000 Armenians living in the area (or about 5 percent of its population). Certain publications insisted that there was half a million of them. The Armenian community increased because of the migration of the 1990s. They mainly live in compact groups in cities along the Black Sea coast: in Sochi they comprise 14.6 percent of the total population; in Tuapse, 12 percent; in Adler, 38 percent; in Anapa, 7.27 percent. There are large compact Armenian groups in other places as well: the Apsheronsk District, 7.9 percent; Armavir, 6.98 percent; Otradnaia District, 5.29 percent. Members of the Armenian community are prominent in the area's economy, science, and culture.

Greeks form another prominent socioeconomic community in the Kuban Area. They comprise 0.6 percent of its population and live compactly in Gelenjik (6.87 percent), Krymsk (3.49 percent), and Anapa (2.58 percent).⁵

According to the 1989 All-Union population census, there were 2,200 Meskhetian Turks living in the area. Late in the 1970s-early 1980s heads of local collective and state farms invited Meskhetian Turks from Uzbekistan (where they had been moved in 1944 from Georgia's Samtskhe-Javakheti and Ajaria for alleged cooperation with the Turkish special services) to develop crop husbandry and grow tobacco. By the irony of fate, their massive resettlement to Kuban after a series of ethnic conflicts in Uzbekistan in 1989 caused ethnic tension and conflicts in the Krasnodar Territory. Today, academic writings call the Meskhetian Turks (the Akhyska Turks) the twice-deported nation. Driven away from Central Asia by ethnic conflicts with the Uzbeks in the Ferghana Valley some of the Meskhetian Turks settled in Kuban. By the early 21st century there were about 13,500 of them (the local administrations supply the figure of 18,000). Even though the figure increased by 6 to 8 times as compared with 1989 their share in the area's total population is negligible. They live mainly in the Krymsk, Abinsk, and Anapa districts, in Novorossiisk (nearly three-fourths of their local community), as well in the Apsheronsk, Belorechensk, and Labinsk districts.⁶

⁴ *Kazach'i voyska. Kratkaiia khronika kazach'ikh i irreguliarnykh chastey*, St. Petersburg, 1912, p. 112.

⁵ See: M.V. Savva, E.V. Savva, *Pressa, vlast, etnicheskii konflikt (vzaimosviaz na primere Krasnodarskogo kraia)*, Krasnodar, 2002, pp. 40-41.

⁶ See: S.V. Riazantsev, *Sovremennyy demograficheskii i migratsionny portret Severnogo Kavkaza*, Stavropol, 2003, p. 125.

The “Armenian question” and the “Turkish question” are two most acute issues of the post-Soviet Kuban area. They share many common features despite the fact that the two communities have different past. The following factors breed conflicts:

- An intensive numerical natural and migration growth that started back in 1989-1990;
- Weak integration into the Kuban socium (this mainly applies to the Meskhetian Turks) and their nearly complete alienation;
- Concentration of their communities in certain districts;
- A conflict between ethnic and state loyalty with an obvious predominance of ethnic authorities and priorities;
- Occupation of the most competitive economic niches (this is especially true of the Armenians);
- Xenophobia among the ethnic minorities;
- A growth of xenophobia and migrant-phobia among the local people fanned by the media, the area administration, and the local authorities.

In 1992, Armenians were attacked in Anapa, Krasnodar, Armavir, and Timashevsk; in the summer of 1993 there were clashes between Russians and Armenians in Anapa; in March 1994, in the Prikuban District of Krasnodar. In 1997, a mass rally in Korenovsk demanded that all Armenians should be evicted; in the same year there was a Russian-Armenian conflict in Slaviansk-on-Kuban. The Armenian pogroms of 1999 and 2001 were explained by the Armenians’ illegal activities.

According to sociologist S. Riazantsev, between 1989 and 2003 there were over 50 conflicts that involved Meskhetian Turks.⁷ The leaders of the local neo-Cossack movement insisted that the Turks and the Cossacks (Russians) could no longer live side by side. The conflicts between them that took place in the 1990s were unfolding according to the following pattern: document checking—identification of people without documents—public punishment. The Meskhetian Turks are denied temporary or permanent residence permit: this is their main problem. The area authorities argue that until the issue of repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to their historic home area in Georgia is settled between the RF and Georgia this ethnic group should not be granted residence permit in Kuban and should be refused Russian citizenship. In fact, the majority of those who came to the Kuban Area are citizens of the non-existing state—the Soviet Union. After joining the Council of Europe in 1999, Georgia pledged itself to create conditions for their repatriation and to adopt, within the next two years, a law on their repatriation and citizenship. It promised to complete repatriation in the next 12 years. Today, Tbilisi has not yet acquired conditions for the project’s successful realization. In 2004 the United States announced that it was prepared to receive the Meskhetian Turks on its territory. The neo-Cossack leaders and the area authorities welcomed the offer.

As distinct from the Rostov Region the leaders of the Krasnodar Territory have made ethnic nationalism their official ideology. Rather than seeking speedy social integration of the ethnic minorities the area authorities created an image of enemy and artificially fanned the problem of migration and ethnic minorities. In one of his speeches delivered in 2000 Ataman of the All-Kuban Cossack Host (he fills the post of the Territory’s vice-governor) V. Gromov said: “We (the Cossacks.—*S.M.*) are the autochthonous Kuban people. By the way, we are the only Federation constituency the Charter of which says that the Kuban Area is the home of the Kuban Cossacks and Russians. This should be taken into account when the bodies of power are formed.”⁸ On 23 June, 1995 the Legislative Assembly of the Krasnodar Territory adopted the Law on the Order of Registration and Residence in the Krasnodar Territory. In 1996 and 2002 the legislature passed several regulations under the common title On the Additional Measures Designed to Alleviate Ethnic Tension in Places of Compact Settlement of the Meskhetian Turks Temporarily Residing in the Krasnodar Territory. These documents raise barriers between the Meskhetian Turks and their chance of obtaining permanent or temporal residence permit.

⁷ See: S.V. Riazantsev, *Sovremenny demograficheskiy i migratsionny portret Severnogo Kavkaza*, Stavropol, 2003, p. 125.

⁸ Quoted from: M.V. Savva, E.V. Savva, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

In 1996-2000 the then governor Nikolay Kondratenko preferred to fight the Zionist plot, thus fanning anti-Semitic sentiments in the area, while the present governor Alexander Tkachev repeatedly offered anti-Armenian, anti-Turk, and anti-Kurd slogans. In March and June 2002, for example, he spoke about the need to drive out "illegal migrants" en masse. In April 2002 at least two Kurd families were deported to the Rostov Region. On 18 March, 2002, speaking at a meeting on the migration issues held in Abinsk Governor Tkachev said: "It is our task to protect our land and our autochthonous population... This is the Cossack land and everybody should be aware of this. We play according to our rules." In 2004, at a press conference dedicated to the problem of emigration of the Meskhetian Turks to the United States he pointed out: "We have been waiting for a long time for this. Both the Meskhetian Turks and the local people will profit from this. The Meskhetian Turks have failed to adapt themselves to the closely-knit Kuban family of nations. They preferred to live separately in their enclaves; they never adopted the traditions, the way of life and the language of the people among whom they lived."⁹

Early in the 1990s the Krasnodar elite demonstrated two typical features: the ideological and political opposition to the federal center actively exploited by the then governor Kondratenko who looked at the federal authorities as an anti-Russian force controlled by the "Zionists." It was at that time that the concept of the "creative opposition" to Moscow was coined by deputy governor N. Denisov.¹⁰ Nikolay Kondratenko never tired of repeating that his area was self-sufficient and that Moscow was pursuing a "policy of plunder," that his area needed an economic model different from what the center was promoting. In 1997-1999 the governor limited export of agricultural products to other Russian regions. The second typical local ideological novelty is the idea of a "special Kuban development pattern." The opposition to Moscow molded a special attitude to the North Caucasian regional regimes. Kondratenko insisted on special ties between the Cossacks and the Adighes: "There is nothing over which we may quarrel with other local peoples, our kunaks—the mountain peoples with whom we have been living side by side for centuries."¹¹ In this way the "local people" were opposed to the aliens even though the Cossacks themselves had settled in the area in the late 18th century. In 1997, Kondratenko visited Chechnia (then under the separatists' control), where he met Aslan Maskhadov. Later, he offered his positive opinion about the president of self-proclaimed Ichkeria. In 2000 Kuban acquired a new governor, under whom opposition to Moscow was replaced with an opposition to what was called "domination of the alien ethnic migrants." Meanwhile, the thesis about the mounting migration threat and the radical change of the area's ethnic composition has nothing in common with facts and is rooted in emotional stereotypes. In fact, the migration flow is subsiding. While in 1990 and in 1992 the difference between the arriving and leaving migrants was 47,136 and 91,855, respectively, in 2003 it was merely 10,849. According to the leading ethnopolitical expert of the Krasnodar Territory M. Savva, "in the registered migration flow of the past fifteen years the share of Russians who arrived in Kuban was stable—between 80 and 85 percent, that is, it corresponded to the share of Russians in the area's population structure."¹²

The Stavropol Territory: The Russian "Borderland" in the Northern Caucasus

The Stavropol Territory is found in the very center of the Northern Caucasus and borders on eight constituencies of the Southern Federal Okrug (six of them are republics). It covers an area of 66,200 sq km (0.4 percent of the Russian territory; 19 percent of the territory of the Northern Caucasus). Its border with

⁹ M. Kondratieva, "Turetskiy iskhod," *Gazeta*, 22 July, 2004.

¹⁰ See: S.S. Mints, "Formy tolerantnosti v politicheskoy zhizni rossiiskoy provintsii," in: *Tolerantnost i politikul'turnoe obshchestvo*, Moscow, 2003, p. 86.

¹¹ V. Konovalov, "Obrashchenie k slavianam iuga Rossii," *Kuban segodnia*, 12 March, 2001.

¹² M.V. Savva, *Migratsionnye mify Krasnodarskogo kraia* (manuscript). The author thanks M.V. Savva for this material.

Chechnia is 118,700 km; Daghestan, 197,800 km, and Karachaevo-Cherkessia, 248,100 km. Its capital Stavropol was founded in 1777; between 1935-1943 it was called Voroshilovsk. In 1777 this territory became part of the Azov-Mozdok Line, the Caucasian Region, and the Caucasian Gubernia. In 1847 it became part of the newly formed Stavropol Gubernia that until 1898 remained within the Caucasian Viceregency; later it became a gubernia like any other in the Russian Empire. In the 1920s the Stavropol Territory and the Terek Region were transferred to the Southeast of Russia; in 1924-1934 it was part of the North Caucasian Area. In 1934, when the Azov-Black Sea Area was created the Stavropol Territory became part of the Kuban-Black Sea Area (the Orjonikidze Area since 1937); Stavropol became its capital in 1937. In 1943 the area received its current name the Stavropol Territory; in 1957 it lost some of its districts (Naurskaia and Shelkovskaia) that were made part of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. In November 1990, when Karachaevo-Cherkessia adopted a Declaration of Independence this autonomous region (formerly part of the Stavropol Territory) became a RF constituency on its own right. The Stavropol Territory remains the magnet that pulls Russians from all other North Caucasian districts with a large share of Russian populations. Representatives of the Mozdok District of North Ossetia, the Kizliar and Tarumovka districts of Daghestan, the Zelenchukskaia District of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and the Naurskaia and Shelkovskaia districts of Chechnia repeatedly asked or even demanded that they should be included in the Stavropol Territory. In the 1990s the slogan of "reunification" with the Stavropol Territory was exploited by the leaders of the Russian and Cherkess movements of Karachaevo-Cherkessia.

Today, there are 26 districts and two large cities in the area. According to the preliminary results of the All-Russia population census of 2002, its population is 2,727,000. Russians comprise 83 percent of the total population; together the Slavic population groups make 87 percent. Similarly to the Don and Kuban areas here, too, the Russians are not homogenous where their origins are concerned. As distinct from the Krasnodar Territory and the Rostov Region, however, the Cossack component in the Stavropol Territory is much smaller. The Stavropol Gubernia, the predecessor of the Stavropol Territory, never was a territory of Cossack armies (like Don and Kuban) or the place where Cossack troops were deployed (like the Orenburg and Astrakhan gubernias). It was the territory of peasant and military colonization. After the numerous administrative-territorial changes the area acquired part of the Kuban Region (the Kochubeevskoe and Izobil'ny districts, as well as stretches of the Shpakovskoe and Andropovskoe districts). Before the revolution the south (the Caucasian Mineral Waters and the Kurskaia District) was part of the Terek Region.¹³

At all times the Stavropol Territory has been regarded as a polyethnic region. Armenians comprise the second largest population group (4 percent), followed by Ukrainians (3 percent), Darghins (1.4 percent), and Greeks (1.2 percent). Despite their negligently small shares in the area's total population the ethnic communities of the Chechens (0.5 percent), Nogais (0.7 percent), and Turkmen (0.5 percent) play an important role in the area's ethnopolitical developments. The Armenian community appeared at the turn of the 19th century; the process was considerably accelerated in the mid-19th century and later, in 1917-1939, 1959, and in the late 1980s-early 1990s. Armenians live compactly in the village of Edissia (the Kurskaia District), notorious Budennovsk (formerly Sviatoy Krest), the area of the Caucasian Mineral Waters, and Stavropol. The Armenian diaspora is prominent in the economic, intellectual, and even administrative spheres. Armenians form the largest migration group.¹⁴ Their stronger positions and the considerable numerical growth of 1990-2000 became the factors of conflict. In 1995, for example, a meeting in Georgievsk demanded that the Armenians should be deported. In 2001-2002, conflicts between young Armenians and Russians took place in Stavropol and Piatigorsk. The massive clashes were followed by nationalistic leaflets; both sides started formulating radical ethnopolitical demands.

By the number of the permanently settled Chechens the Stavropol Territory comes third after Chechnia, Ingushetia, and Daghestan. In 1970-1980 the Chechen community was expanding (while in 1970 there

¹³ See: V.A. Koreniako, "Kazachestvo v Stavropol'skom krae—faktor stabilizatsii ili konfliktogeneza?" in: *Vozrozhdenie kazachestva: nadezhdy i opasenia*, ed. by G. Vitkovskaia and A. Malashenko, Moscow, 1998, p. 105.

¹⁴ See: M.A. Astvatsurova, *Diaspory v Rossiiskoy Federatsii: formirovanie i upravlenie (Severo-Kavkazskiy Region)*, Rostov-on-Don, Piatigorsk, 2003, pp. 494-495.

were 4,400 Chechens living in the Stavropol Territory; in 1980, there were 9,400 of them; in 1989, 15,000). They live compactly in the south (the Kurskaia, Stepnoe, and Andropovskoe districts), in the west and north (the Kochubeevskoe, Trunovskoe, and Grachevka districts). Here (like in the Rostov Region) they are mainly engaged in animal husbandry. Late in 1991, in anticipation of the "second Kuwait" in independent Ichkeria they went back to Chechnia in great numbers; in 1995 their return was caused by the Budennovsk tragedy. The Khasaviurt Agreements signed in 1996 and Chechnia's de facto sovereignty started colonization of the border areas. According to M. Astvatsurova, an expert in the Stavropol Territory's diasporas, the diaspora is constantly acquiring new members who emigrate from the Chechen Republic.¹⁵

The Chechen crisis exerts a serious or even the determining influence on the ethnopolitical situation in the Stavropol Territory. In 1990-2000 it was a territory of active terrorist actions and attacks of Chechen separatists. Shamil Basaev's raid into Budennovsk on 17 June, 1995 shattered the world community. Terrorists were active in Piatigorsk, Essentuki, and Nevinnomyssk. In 2002 alone, 10 trials of Chechen fighters were completed in the Stavropol Territory. The events in the rebellious republic caused important shifts among the top figures of the Territory's administration. The Budennovsk tragedy, for example, cost Governor E. Kuznetsov, deputy head of the Territory's Administration of Internal Affairs M. Tretiaikov and several officials of lower ranks their posts. The local elite concentrates on the common desire to protect the Territory against Chechnia and ensure its safety. In May-June 1992 Chechens were evicted en masse. The Territory's Charter passed in 1994 established a status of local residents that amounted to the local Stavropol citizenship. In 1995, the Territory acquired the Law on the Status of the Resident of the Stavropol Territory that borrowed the Moscow model of paid registration. In February 1997 the local administration adopted the Immigration Code (Russia's only regional document designed to regulate migration). Later the documents were annulled as contradicting federal legislation. Still, the local administration is insisting on its ethnic policy designed to control migration. In 2002, the local Duma passed the Law on the Measures Designed to Cut Short Illegal Migration in the Stavropol Territory. It should be said here that in 2001 the population increase through migration was 16-fold lower than in 1997.¹⁶

Turkmen (Trukhmen) form a very specific diaspora of the Stavropol Territory. They first came to the Northern Caucasus together with other nomads in the 17th century. Today, they form the largest Turkmen diaspora in Russia. According to the All-Union population census of 1989, there were 11,100 of them (today, there are 13,000 of Turkmen living there). In 1920, the Turkmen District was formed within the North Caucasian Area; in 1956 it was destroyed only to be restored in 1970 within new limits and with the administrative center in the Letniaia Stavka village. There the Turkmen form the second largest population group (about 15 percent) after the Russians. Members of the same diaspora also live in the Ipatovo, Neftekumsk, and Blagodarny districts. Religion is the main cause of conflicts between Russians and Turkmen. Experts believe that propaganda of the Salafi of Daghestan in 1998-1999 created even more tension in the Turkmen and other districts. On 19 January, 1999, the clashes between Russians and Turkmen in the Kenje-Kulak village developed into a massive fight. In 2000-2002 conflicts between these two groups regularly flared up.

Nogais live in compact groups in the Territory's eastern steppe part (in the Levokumskoe and Neftekumsk districts). Before the revolution they were allowed to use about a third of the gubernia for roaming. In 1957, their ethnic region was divided between Daghestan, the Stavropol Territory, and Chechnia. Today, 20.6 percent of the total number of the Nogais of the South of Russia lives in the Stavropol Territory. Their economic situation is better than of the parts of the same ethnos in other places, yet the issues of their involvement in the administrative structures is much more acute. The problem of their restored ethnic unity and their social marginalization cause conflicts with the Russian and other ethnic groups. In 2000-2002 there were ethnic clashes between Russians and Nogais in Neftekumsk and Stepnoe districts.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 513.

¹⁶ See: M.A. Astvatsurova, *Pressa Stavropol'skogo kraia: mezhetnicheskie otnoшения i etnokul'turnye obrazy kak ob'ekty professional'nogo interesa*, Rostov-on-Don, Piatigorsk, 2003, p. 16.

Meskhethian Turks came to the Stavropol Territory late in the 1970s at the invitation of the heads of the local agricultural enterprises who needed them as skillful crop and tobacco growers. According to the 1989 All-Union population census, there were 1,623 Meskhethian Turks in the Stavropol Territory. The events of 1989 in Uzbekistan brought large groups of Meskhethian Turks to the area; the next migration wave brought Meskhethian Turks from Chechnia. According to expert assessments, early in the 21st century there were 3,500-3,800 Meskhethian Turks living in the Stavropol Territory. Until recently they lived in compact groups in the Kurskaia and Kirovskiy districts (nearly three-fourths of their total number), as well as in the Blagodarny, Budennovsk, and Novoaleksandrovsk districts. Their social niches (trade and “gray” business) are a constant source of conflicts with the local Russians. Since 1994-1995 members of this ethnos living in the Sovetskoe village (Kurskaia District) have been under constant attacks. In 1995-1996, criminal cases were opened against those who started and some of those who took part in them.

There is an opposition between members of non-Russian ethnic groups as well. Darghins who are actively settling in the eastern districts of the Stavropol Territory claim the competitive economic niches (they belonged to them in other parts of the same territory). This makes conflicts inevitable. In 1999, there was a clash between Darghins and Nogais in the village of Irgakly (Stepnoe District) that required interference of the law enforcing structures. In 2001-2002 there were conflicts between Darghins and Turkmen in the Neftekumsk and Stepnoe districts; there were clashes in places where Meskhethian Turks and Nogais or Meskhethian Turks and Darghins lived side by side.

This gave rise to Russian nationalism and xenophobia. At the elections to the first RF State Duma the Liberal-Democrats gained there 38.85 percent of the votes (the second largest share across Russia). In 1995, the Congress of Russian Communities got 8.5 percent of the votes; even though they overcame the 5 percent barrier in the Stavropol Territory this was not enough to get seats in the parliament. The Stavropol branch of the Russian National Unity organization is one of the strongest regional structures in Russia. At the same time, as distinct from the Krasnodar Territory, the local elite is keeping away from nationalism despite the very “troublesome” community of the Meskhethian Turks and the area’s direct proximity to the region of the Chechen crisis. Nationalism is restricted by hard migration control.

* * *

Reality is far removed from the declared image of the North Caucasian Russian regions as an oasis of peace and stability in the turbulent sea of conflicts. However, this should not cause alarm even though there are numerous sore spots and potentially conflict situations between the autochthonous population and migrants and between various ethnic groups. The local situation has revealed urgent problems to be addressed by the federal center rather than by the area and regional administrations. The priorities are the following:

- Creation of a single political nation—the people of Russia—to integrate all ethnoses (local and migrant);
- Better regulation of migration in order to turn it into an effective social and economic instrument rather than a threat;
- Ethnic and migration myths should be exposed as false: they interfere with the efforts of creating normal relations among different ethnoses;
- Local particularism should be overcome to include the South of Russia in the country’s single legal field.

To a great extent stability and security of the Russian regions, the entire Caucasus and the Russian Federation as a whole depend on the regional leaders; the national interests should prevail over the local short-term advantages.