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**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

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

**Central Asia and the Caucasus**

- The Democratic Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and their Impact on Central Asian and Caucasian Politics
- Border Delimitation and Separatism
- What Makes the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in Central Asia and the Caucasus Specific

**REVOLUTION IN KYRGYZSTAN:  
WHILE THE TRAIL IS STILL  
WARM****THE 2005 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS  
IN KYRGYZSTAN AND  
COLLAPSE OF THE AKAEV REGIME****Zaynidin KURMANOV***D.Sc. (Hist.), professor,  
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(Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)*

**E**xperts' forecasts about the Rose revolution spreading across the post-Soviet expanse proved true. After Georgia and Ukraine, it was Kyrgyzstan, known among politicians as "an island of democracy" in Central Asia, that got a taste of the revolution. In contrast to its Georgian and Ukrainian colleagues, the Kyrgyz opposition failed to keep the democratic revolution within peaceful limits, mainly because official Bishkek persisted in its desire to ignore the opposition as an alternative force and a partner in negotiations to reach a compromise. The opposition, which expected to come to power by peaceful means, was not anticipating violence and the three-day plundering of the capital.

It should be said that Akaev's third presidential term (officially counted as second) was a difficult one from the very beginning. It was as if fate tried to warn him against clinging to power; it hinted that the time had come to retire; that the nation was sick and tired of the demagoguery, corruption, arrogance, and stupidity of the ruling circles; of the poverty and lack of rights of the ordinary people; and of the insolence and criminal machinations of Akaev's family. His third term started with a raid by international terrorists into Kyrgyzstan in the fall of 2000; the nation lost many lives and discovered that its army was not battle-worthy and ought to be completely modernized, retrained, and rearmed. Discussions in the parliament developed into a three-day-long scandal and led the country to the brink of crisis: the opposition deputies accused the head of state of violating the constitution and abusing power by using the army against the international terrorists.

The events of 9/11 in New York led to deployment of an American counterterrorist air base at the Manas airfield at Bishkek. Ratification of the treaty caused another storm in the parliament and was accompanied by spontaneous rallies and numerous anti-American statements by the leftist opposition leaders.

Early in the spring of 2002, the parliament spent three weeks discussing ratification of the Kyrgyz-Chinese additional protocol about the transfer to China of disputed Uzenguu-Kush territory controlled in the past by the Soviet Union and then the Kyrgyz Republic. The opposition turned this fairly routine procedure into a large-scale demarche against the official authorities and accused the president of betraying the republic's interests. All this was accompanied by threats of impeachment. The authorities retaliated with harsh administrative measures which gave rise to a grave political crisis. Azimbek Beknazarov, one of the opposition deputies, was arrested; the scandal that followed ended with fire being opened on a peaceful demonstration in the Aksy District in the south; five were killed. Kurmanbek Bakiev's cabinet had to resign.

The movement for liberating Beknazarov enveloped the country after people in Aksy, along with the demand for liberating their deputy and bringing to court those responsible for firing on the peaceful demonstration, began to insist on returning the territories illegally transferred to China. Meanwhile, the struggle over the parliamentary seats vacated by the newly appointed cabinet members was gaining momentum. Administrative pressure on undesirable deputies, including former premier Bakiev (who people in the South considered to be unlawfully fired and not implicated in the firing on the demonstration participants), and removal of opposition candidates from the election lists caused another flare-up of popular discontent. Mass rallies swept the country; people were ready to march on Bishkek to restore justice by peaceful means.

This was when it was first demanded that Akaev should resign—the popular masses approved of the demand. To prevent a coup and avoid the need to quit his post, the president supported the constitutional reform initiated by the opposition. As soon as the passions subsided and life returned to normal (with the help of the Constitutional Assembly, which appeared to have reached a political compromise with the authorities), Askar Akaev suddenly revised everything the Assembly had achieved and imposed on the nation his variant of the constitution. With certain negligible changes in favor of democracy and the parliament, this variant was designed to consolidate the personal power regime of the head of state. The opposition criticized the draft stipulating a transfer from the proportional-majority to the majority system of parliamentary elections. Far-sighted politicians predicted that this could lead to a new political crisis or even to a split into South and North and a civil war, taking account of popular discontent in the Aksy and Kara-Kulji districts in 2003. President Akaev refused to heed them; the new variant of the Constitution was adopted by the 3 February, 2003 referendum initiated by the president. This was a prelude to the March revolution which deposed the anti-popular regime.

As soon as the constitution was endorsed, the nation was offered a new variant of the election code: the country was moving toward the next parliamentary and presidential elections. After the Aksy tragedy, Askar Akaev repeated several times in public that he was not going to run for presidency, yet everything he, his administration, and his relatives were doing pointed to the contrary. In particular, a family political party called Alga, Kyrgyzstan! (Forward Kyrgyzstan!) appeared. It was clear that Akaev was plotting a constitutional coup.

M. Ashyrkulov, Secretary of the republic's Security Council and one of the president's closest friends, abandoned the head of state six months before the parliamentary elections in the spring of 2005. He announced that he was setting up an oppositional Civil Union for Fair, Transparent, and Straightforward Elections, which brought together certain radical and moderate politicians and deputies. Saying that his former friend had left "the sinking ship," the president removed him from his post. No matter what was behind this move, it was clear that the ruling clan and family, which



had always strongly affected all appointments, were split over the right to inherit the presidential post.

It should be said here that the revolution accelerated the adoption of a new election code, under which all candidates were to be offered equal conditions and opportunities and fair, straightforward, and transparent elections were to be ensured. From the very beginning (at the stage of drafting and parliamentary discussions), the election system of the 2003 constitution (outdated from the viewpoint of a modern social and state system) did not ensure legal equality of all entities in the election process. Art 1.3 of the Constitution proclaims the people of Kyrgyzstan as “the only source of state power.” This is obvious, yet we all know that the choice depends not only on the election results, but also on the election system. Political scientists are quite right when they say that the successes or failures of democratization are largely conditioned by the election system. It was for this reason that most African states and some Asian countries failed to achieve democracy as their final goal.<sup>1</sup>

For this reason it has always been extremely important to choose an election system which is adapted as fully as possible to the local conditions and completely corresponds to the generally approved international standards. The nature of the future parliament and its political course, the relations between society and the state, the nature of the future political system (one-, two- or multiparty) and the political regime, the way the political elite will be shaped, and the social image of the authorities, etc. hinge on the choice of election system. The nation’s choice depends on the degree to which the structures responsible for the election process are impartial and independent of executive power and on their openness and transparency, as well as on the degree to which society can control the funding of candidates and political parties, etc.

The amended election code was expected to promote political balance and encourage people to vote. The deputies suggested that election commissions at all levels should include special quotas for representatives of political parties, public alliances, and budget structures. Members of election commissions at the regional (city), district, and constituency levels should be independent of the state bodies and local administrations. They should be formed on a parity basis: each election commission should include no more than one representative of a political party, public association, or voters’ meeting. State and municipal officials should not make up more than one-third of the total number of commission members. All election commissions should be formed on the basis of recommendations from corresponding keneshes and suggestions by political parties, public associations, and voters’ meetings. The political parties’ appointees are endorsed, not elected. They should constitute no more than one-third of the total number of members of any election commission. If their number is larger than the quota, lots should be drawn (Art 11.7 of the Election Code).

In many countries, the way the polling stations are readied for voting is also determined by the election laws. The polling station is opened and considered ready for elections after the election commission members and observers sign a corresponding protocol, and the ballot boxes are sealed in the presence of authorized representatives, observers, and the persons representing the candidates. This was taken into account in the new variant of the election code (Art 40.1).

Independent observers sent by international and domestic organizations are allowed to take part in the election process; they are allowed to familiarize themselves with the voter lists, watch the voting process, take part in the vote counting, receive copies of the protocols of constituent commissions, appeal against any of its actions, etc.

Some of the clauses, however, contained loopholes; the Central Election Commission insisted on representatives of the election commissions closely cooperating with the local state administra-

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<sup>1</sup> See: *Konstitutsionnoe stroitel'stvo prezidentsko-parlamentskikh vzaimootnosheniy na postsovetskom prostranstve*, Collection of seminar documents, OFTsIR Publishers, Bishkek, 2003, pp. 71-79.

tions and self-administrations even though this obviously gave executive power a chance to influence the election process and the voting procedure to a great extent by using the so-called “administrative resource” in favor of “desirable” candidates.

The code does not clearly outline the legal status of the Central Election Commission as an independent structure; this resulted in repeated violations of the election process and the rights of voters and negatively affected the election campaign of the opposition and independent candidates: under administrative pressure nearly all violations of candidate and voter rights were ignored, so there was no point in instituting court procedures. Election commissions did not deem it necessary to answer complaints about violations in writing or inform the undesirable candidates about such complaints, etc.

Any election code is meant to ensure transparency of the election commissions’ activities at all stages. And the amended election code also envisaged the presence of observers, including foreign observers, at sittings of the election commissions where the voting results were tallied, protocols drawn up, and repeat voter tabulation conducted.

The minimal standard for voter registration and drawing up voter lists envisaged their complete transparency; it was extremely important to envisage a clause in the code on protecting the personal information gathered during voter registration. The adopted document contained no such clause.

To realize their right to vote, citizens should be registered on the voter lists, which should be verified not only on the eve of the election, but also between elections. This was not done.

Para 7.8 of the OSCE Copenhagen Document stipulates that no legal or administrative barriers be put up to prevent political parties and individuals wishing to take part in the election process from contacting the media. The media in Kyrgyzstan priced their services too high, which excluded many of the candidates. So *Alga, Kyrgyzstan!* found itself in a privileged position: it could use the *Vechny Bishkek* newspaper and the family TV channels free of charge. In fact, these TV channels were branches of the pro-presidential parties *Alga, Kyrgyzstan!* and, to a lesser extent, *Adilet (Justice)*.

According to international standards, secret ballot is the voter’s main right and main responsibility. The latest parliamentary elections, however, abounded in violations of this right; there were cases when one family member cast a vote for a particular candidate for the whole family in violation of Art 40.2 of the election code, which envisages voting in person. This should have been rectified by introducing a regulation under which all voters were duty bound to present identification and bringing election commissions which failed to observe this regulation to legal account. But this was not done either.

Voting outside the polling stations is fraught with frauds, therefore the amended code limited this practice to physically incapacitated voters, who were supposed to apply in writing for this opportunity before the date of elections. But this regulation was not envisaged in the code: under Art 42.2 oral requests could be accepted, which increased the risk of falsifications. At the same time, the code failed to stipulate who is empowered to observe the printing of ballots and their delivery to the polling stations, while these processes should have been transparent.

There are numerous cases of election commissions counting votes without observers and candidates’ representatives empowered to supervise the process, therefore the election code specifically prohibits state and local officials, as well as others (the military or people employed by the Ministry of the Interior) from being present at vote counting directly at the polling stations (Art 44). It was also necessary to prohibit unauthorized people from attending sittings of the constituent election commissions; the code likewise did not contain prosecution of registered candidates in order to prevent the judicial system being used for political purposes.

While the new election code was being drafted, the impression was created that all the loopholes the authorities could use to influence elections were removed, yet it is no coincidence that the majority election system is known among lawyers as *Caligula’s Horse*: practically anyone stands the chance of being elected to the parliament. In other words, the amended code (impaired by the election system’s shortcomings, vague wording, and unclear regulations) did not allow the voters and candidates

to fully realize their rights. This, and different interpretations and applications of the regulations by the election commissions triggered numerous court cases.

In fact, it was clear from the very beginning that the 2005 parliamentary elections would have their share of political scandals. The opposition, however, tacitly agreed to the code: it was still cherishing the illusion that the official authorities would act with decorum and was convinced that it had done enough to prevent interference of the powers that be in the election process. The country's political leaders, in turn, loudly announced that the new election code could serve as a model for other states.

In October 2004, the country elected the local keneshes (councils), which became a dress rehearsal of sorts for the parliamentary elections (to a new one-chamber parliament with 75 seats elected under the majority system in one-candidate constituencies) scheduled for February-March 2005. The previous parliament had two chambers—the standing Legislative Assembly with 60 seats and the Assembly of People's Representatives with 45 seats, which met for sessions. It was at the 2005 elections that the authorities efficiently applied all the administrative tools at their disposal (including pressure and bribery) to achieve an absolute majority. President Akaev managed to secure 71 seats out of the total 75 for his supporters; at the local level the pro-government parties *Alga*, *Kyrgyzstan!* and *Adilet* secured over 50 percent of the seats out of over 4,000 mandates. Others—*Elet*, the *New Force*, and *My Country*—received from 50 to 200 seats. The large opposition parties had to be satisfied with what was left: the Communist Party obtained eight seats, the *Ar-Namys*, 1, etc. Even though they were fully aware of the large-scale violations of the constitution and the election laws, the popular masses remained composed: rallies and demonstrations were still limited and mercilessly cut short. Encouraged, the country leaders expected to use the same tools (pressure, provocations, falsifications, and massive bribery of voters) to score a victory at the parliamentary elections. They expected a manageable deputy corps to extend President Akaev's term without a murmur and endorse all the other unpopular decisions.

Elections to the Bishkek kenesh, which abounded in gross violations of the constitution and the election code, gave a taste of what was in store for the nation at the parliamentary elections. The authorities were openly pushing through candidates of the pro-government parties; the pro-presidential media, election commissions, teachers, medics, local self-administrations, local state power structures, public prosecutor's structures, the militia, and even the criminal structures all pooled their forces against the opposition and independent candidates. *Alga*, *Kyrgyzstan!* and *Adilet* received over 50 percent of the total 45 seats. Their majority was further strengthened by the fact that some of the independent and opposition candidates had to join the two parties under pressure. Out of the 12 parties that competed for the seats in the capital's kenesh, only four reached the finish. As a result, the majority of those who planned to run as party members had to register as self-nominees. The results refuted President Akaev's predictions that the new variant of the constitution would speed up party development in the republic. Instead, the nation witnessed unprecedented lobbying of the interests of the pro-government parties. Other political organizations attained nothing from the constitutional amendments.

Late in December 2004, the president signed a decree that established 27 February, 2005 as the day of the parliamentary elections. The decree was preceded by a rather prolonged pause; there were rumors that because of the bitter experience of the 2003 off-year parliamentary elections by one-candidate constituencies, which aroused mass unrest, the president would extend the powers of the representative structures in order to return to the mixed election system. At the last moment, however, the president refused to heed his self-preservation instinct and learn a lesson from the events in Georgia and Ukraine.

Once more the opposition refused to close ranks because of the leaders' personal ambitions. They were much more interested in who would replace Akaev rather than in what was in store for the country. It was only when a prominent diplomat and public figure, Roza Otunbaeva (three times foreign minister, vice-premier, and an ambassador to the U.S. and U.K., Ph.D.), came back that the opposition showed more signs of life. She attracted the youth and urban intellectuals to the opposition's side, set up the Ata-

Zhurt (Motherland) movement, and headed it. Murat Imanaliev, a former diplomat, twice foreign minister, united intellectuals and big officials into a new political structure called Zhany Bagyt (New Trend). Shortly before the elections, Kurmanbek Bakiev, former premier and parliament deputy, was invited to head the largest (and politically amorphous) opposition structure, the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (PMK), which united nine political parties and some of the public movements. To coordinate their actions in the election campaign, Ata-Zhurt and PMK set up the Coordinating Council of the People's Unity Movement under Bakiev, which came to power after the revolution. Independent and opposition deputies of the parliament of the third convocation added to the organization's potential. This is especially true of Azimbek Beknazarov, Oksana Malevannaia, Arslan Maliev, Akylbek Zhaparov, Bolot Baykozhoev, Ishenbay Moldotashev, Tashbolot Baltabaev, and others.

The new political season brought another political scandal, a sign that the opposition had become resolved to fight for power. A group of diplomats previously stationed abroad and wishing to register as candidates was turned down under the pretext that they had not permanently lived in the country for the required five years. On top of this, the country's leaders insisted that the opposition was responsible for this stupid constitutional limitation introduced by the Constitutional Assembly in 2002. In fact, an analysis of the constitutional amendments revealed that the limitation was a result of the constitutional reform of 1998 initiated by the president. Kyrgyzstan inherited the Soviet practice of using ambassadorial posts to exile undesirable top officials. Nearly all of them came back to join the opposition. The opposition and its deputies failed to change the decision: the deputies were left outside the race for the parliament, while Roza Otunbaeva, who was already registered with the University constituency No. 1 (where the president's daughter, Bermet, was also running) had her registration annulled. On the same day, Ms. Otunbaeva's supporters put up two tents on the central square and began picketing the parliament building. A day later the militia removed the tents, while the picketers, between 100 and 150 people, marched along the capital's central streets. The local people, however, displayed no enthusiasm.

On the whole, about 400 candidates, the absolute majority of them self-nominees, competed for 75 seats in the Zhogorku Kenesh (parliament). Alga, Kyrgyzstan!, Adilet, Elet, the New Force, the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, the Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan, Ar-Namys, etc. nominated their candidates at election conventions. Finally, many of the candidates, including those who belonged to the opposition (with the exception of the communists), decided to run as self-nominees. As a result, only four parties (Alga, Kyrgyzstan!, Adilet, the New Force, and the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan) were represented on the ballots. The Elet Party was removed by a court statement insisting it had failed to adhere to the procedure and draw up its documents correctly. At the request of their members, the My Country Party and many others did not hold election conventions and advised their members to run as independent candidates.

The election campaign went on amid an unprecedented information vacuum, financial and administrative pressure on the undesirable candidates: the state was obviously concentrating on securing a victory for Alga, Kyrgyzstan! In almost all the constituencies, there were candidates from Alga, Kyrgyzstan! (which nominated 30 candidates) and the pro-governmental Adilet Party. There were also dozens of seemingly independent candidates (economically, financially, and politically associated with the Akaev clan) competing for parliamentary seats; the president's daughter and son also ran, along with their maternal aunts and other close relatives; and the premier's son and relatives of certain governors were also seeking parliamentary mandates. Executives and loyal businessmen also competed for seats. They pooled their forces to defeat the opposition and win an absolute majority. The present premier and acting president, Kurmanbek Bakiev, eloquently described the situation in the republic's south, where he ran for the parliament: "What we all saw during these elections can be described as madness. If I had been told ten years ago that this was possible in Kyrgyzstan I would have refused to believe it... The authorities are using their administrative resource openly and insolently; they are

making no effort to conceal what they are doing. This shows that they have become degraded and are in the throes of death.”<sup>2</sup> He lost the battle to an absolutely unknown businessman, S. Nyshanov, who “won” nearly twice as many votes as the opposition leader. This is true of all the other constituencies where Alga, Kyrgyzstan! deputies ran for parliament.

Signatures on the voter lists were forged on a mass scale; people voted in place of their absent friends and relatives; ballots were placed in ballot boxes after the polling stations were closed; state officials and employees of local self-administrations were involved in the propaganda campaign; there were irregularities during vote counting and drawing up protocols; people were allowed to vote without identification, etc. All this happened while President Akaev tried day after day to convince the nation that it was witnessing the fairest, purest and most straightforward election. The nation was first amused, then irritated.

The first sign of trouble came shortly before the first round of elections scheduled for 27 February. Two former deputies—moderate politician Arslan Maliev and Social-Democrat Akylbek Zhaparov—were removed from the ballots by court-confirmed decisions of the constituent election commissions. The latter was opposed by Turdakun Usubaliev, former head of the republic’s Communist Party, who spent 26 years as head of the Kirghiz S.S.R. Soon after that people of the Ton District, Issyk Kul Region, followed by people of the Kochkor District, Naryn Region, carried out the first large-scale action to protest against the illegal decisions against the candidates. About 15,000 of their supporters blocked the Bishkek highway for three days. They retreated when the authorities promised to restore the candidates. When this never happened, tension increased and the candidates’ supporters occupied the local administration building and appointed a new district head in the Kochkor District. The militia moved over to their side.

In the wake of the elections, after the Central Election Commission made public the official results—31 candidates mainly from Alga, Kyrgyzstan!, the known favorites of the ruling circles, won the first round—spontaneous protest enveloped the South. None of the prominent opposition members, with the exception of Beknazarov, whose rating had been the highest throughout the election campaign, were among the winners.

On 4 March, Dzhahalal-Abad became the scene of mass rallies in support of the opposition; the republic’s southern capital Osh with its half-a-million population had its share of popular discontent. The official media were still insisting that the situation was under control and that the nation had accepted the results of the first round. Rumors were traveling fast across the country. The southerners were irritated by the dearth of information about what was going on in Dzhahalal-Abad and the Kara-Su District. The media meanwhile added oil to the fire by tagging the protesters as “political provocateurs,” a “handful of dissatisfied people,” “the losers’ supporters,” etc. The protesters occupied the buildings of the regional administration, the militia, and other state structures. Dzhahalal-Abad, Osh, and Talas elected “people’s councils” and their heads at local kurultais; the militia sided with the people. Control was lost over the local developments. On 9 March, Western and Russian TV channels began talking about what was going on in the republic. They showed how power-wielding structures beat, wounded, and arrested women who had captured the regional administration building. The rally pushed the militia back, recaptured the building, and burned down the militia headquarters. The protesters, who no longer believed the authorities would start negotiations, demanded that the results of the first round of elections be annulled and that the president resign. Thousands of indignant people were readying for a peaceful march on Bishkek.

At the same time, the deputies of the old parliament suggested that it should meet for a special session on 10 March to discuss the election results and the political situation. To prevent the session, on 9 March, forces of the Ministry of the Interior occupied the building. Legislative power remained

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<sup>2</sup> *Obshchestvenny reiting*, 11 March, 2005, p. 6.

paralyzed until the events of 24 March. It resumed its sittings late at night on the day the revolution finally came to its victorious conclusion. Before that the events developed as follows. On 10 March, in response to the capture of the parliament, the deputies gathered at the central entrance to make public their appeal to the nation and the international community, in which they accused Akaev of staging a coup. The special session failed due to the absence of a quorum: some of the deputies busy with the election campaign could not attend, while others stayed away under pressure from the authorities. Still, there were enough deputies to adopt several addresses; the last of them, dated 23 March, called on the people and authorities to annul the election results as illegitimate and demanded that President Akaev, who refused to talk to the opposition and was obviously biding for time, resign.

The second round took place on 13 March with predictable results: Alga, Kyrgyzstan! received the absolute majority: 24 out of 27 or 29 candidates won the elections. The pro-governmental Adilet Party obtained four seats; the opposition failed to secure at least 10 percent of the seats, even though preliminary assessments predicted at least 30 percent. Several prominent and popular politicians (Adakhan Madumarov, Kurmanbek Bakiev, Marat Sultanov, Ismail Isakov) lost the elections. Some of them were quite open about their premier and presidential ambitions. This fanned protest sentiments. The center lost control over the republic's south and the Talas Region in the north. Protest rallies regularly engulfed the capital. This urged Askar Akaev to speed up legitimization of the newly elected parliament: the results were made public on 22 March. The next day, the deputies received their mandates; the new parliament hastily met for its first session in the government building. This infuriated the already displeased people. On 23 March, organizations of young people, students, and other social groups organized a meeting in Bishkek at the monument to famous revolutionary Urkuia Salieva under the slogan: "Wake up, Bishkek! We want to know the truth," attended by nearly 1,000 people. It was cruelly suppressed: 30 were arrested, and over 140 were wounded.

This was the last straw: on 24 March, 2005, the Akaev regime collapsed. Later on the same day, the parliament met for a special session; it accepted resignation of N. Tanaev's government; it elected Kurmanbek Bakiev, leader of the Coordinating Council of the People's Unity movement, as premier and acting president, which made the Coordinating Council a provisional cabinet. But this is not the end of the story of the revolution in Kyrgyzstan.

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## KYRGYZSTAN AFTER AKAEV: WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY, WHAT NEXT?

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**N**o one expected the fall of Askar Akaev's regime, a major political sensation in March 2005, to be so sudden and swift.

Like everyone else, the opposition was taken by surprise. Just a few days later, Felix Kulov had to admit: "It was all more or less spontaneous. A

crowd gathered for an open-ended rally. Then some people started chasing others, who ran to the 'White House' for shelter, and those pursuing them burst into the office building after them."<sup>1</sup>

This appears to be a pretty accurate description. The "White House" security, militia and special forces were obviously at a loss and acted haphazardly; taken by surprise, the republic's leaders and President Akaev seemed unable to make up their minds. Defeat was imminent. The myth about Kyrgyzstan, an "island of democracy" in Central Asia, dissipated; the head of the republic fled the country in the manner of a Latin American dictator. The country's future is dim.

<sup>1</sup> *Komsomolskaia pravda*, 29 March, 2005.

All this, however, was no accident. For the past 15 years, President Akaev and his supporters have been marching toward their fall: their foreign and, especially, domestic policies abounded in errors and miscalculations. Over time, historians and political analysts will undoubtedly acquire new facts and new eyewitness accounts to complete the picture of the Kyrgyz "revolution."

Here I will analyze certain facts of the republic's recent past to provide answers to the following questions:

- What made the political crisis possible?
- Why was official power defeated?
- Could the crisis have been avoided altogether?
- How will the "revolution" affect the Kyrgyz Republic, its Central Asian neighbors, and the region as a whole?

## The Early 1990s

As distinct from its Central Asian neighbors, independent Kyrgyzstan opted for the Western variant of political and economic development. The republic did not waste much time pondering the alternatives before adhering to the monetarist model of reform, probably under the influence of the liberal reformers in Russia and Western advisors. The West appreciated the country's absolute devotion to the recommendations of the IMF and other international institutions. Between 1993 and 1996, the republic regularly received credits, the per capita amounts of which were much larger than in any of the CIS countries. In 1996, the IMF granted the republic most-favored nation treatment and increased its aid to allow it, the first among the Central Asian countries, to acquire its own national currency (the som). Every year the West poured up to \$100 million into the republic to keep it afloat.

In 1993, then U.S. President's advisor Stroub Talbott visited the country to praise its achievements and pointed out: "Today, Kirghizia gets much more per capita aid than other countries."<sup>2</sup> He encouraged the country's leaders and hinted that the West would continue supporting them. The media in the West and in Russia spoke of the Kyrgyz president as an enlightened ruler devoted to the ideas of market economy; his reforms were offered as an example to be followed in all other Central Asian countries.

The West, absolutely convinced that democracy is a perfect state order suitable for every country, looked at Bishkek as a shop window of its ideas. In Russia, the rulers and the liberal media alike went out of their way to present the Kyrgyz experience as the only correct way to carry out economic reforms. In fact, reforms Kyrgyz-style dealt a heavy blow to the nation, which was duped and robbed. The republic came to be known as "an island of democracy and stability" in Central Asia. The compliments went to the heads of the people at the helm; they became convinced that democracy, a perfect political order, "could be borrowed and inserted at home, like an electric light bulb."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Res publica* (Bishkek), 22 November, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> I. Efimov, "Demokraticheskaia otmychka," *Ekspert*, No. 38, 11 October, 1999, p. 50.

The reforms, however, triggered deep-cutting negative processes in the economy inherited from the Soviet Union and in the republic's social structure. In 1995, for example, the manufacture of 31 out of 32 main industrial products was on the steady decline; only the baking industry was flourishing. The republic was hit by a chronic deficit of capital investments: in 1993 they barely reached 10 percent of the 1989 level.<sup>4</sup> In 1992, the rate of industrial decline was 26.4 percent; in 1993, 24.6 percent; in 1994, 27.9 percent (an alternative figure, about 50 percent).

The already weak economy was further undermined by low solvent demand, slackened production cooperation, the low quality of certain products, the lack of material and financial resources, and a growing number of accounts receivable and payable.<sup>5</sup> By 1996, 121 industrial enterprises, or one out of five, were idling.<sup>6</sup> Over half of them were underloaded; home-grown businessmen were exporting everything that could be sold at a profit: non-ferrous metals, machines and machine tools, all kinds of equipment, raw material, wool, hides, etc.

In addition, deep property stratification occurred in Kyrgyzstan. By the fifth anniversary of the republic's independence, 97 percent of its population were living below the poverty level.<sup>7</sup> Kirghizia was not rich in Soviet times, while in democratic times it became a pauper. There was not enough cash: it was replaced by sheep, with which people paid for goods and services everywhere, especially in the remote areas. Over time, there were no longer enough sheep either: the reforms hit cattle breeding hard, and cattle stock decreased several-fold. It should be said that for a large part of the titular nation who descended from nomadic cattle-breeders, cattle was a sign of wealth and source of livelihood. Deprived of it, thousands of countryside dwellers and their children were doomed to eternal poverty.

This was the backdrop against which a handful of highly placed officials and their callous business friends openly divided the country's riches among themselves in complete disregard of their sinking reputations and public opinion. In October 1991, Askar Akaev personally participated in setting up the Siabeko-Kirghizia JV. Boris Birshtein, a notorious businessman well known in certain circles, who owned Siabeko, was appointed Chairman of the Committee for the Republic's Restoration and Development (!). Much time passed before the country's leaders discovered that the chairman was doing nothing to restore the republic. He was fired, yet nobody bothered to calculate the damage he had done. In the fall of 1993, another scandal, this time around the gold mining industry, shook the republic: in the absence of strict control, a closely-knit group of the country's top officials (which included several of the highest officials and President Akaev) appropriated hard currency incomes earned by mining gold.

The country became completely dependent on foreign loans—this was the worst possible result of the economic reforms. The West never hesitated to extend loans under the pledge of the country's natural riches (gold, silver, antimony, mercury, etc.). Foreign creditors preferred to invest in infrastructure related to mining and exporting local resources. A large part of foreign credits was embezzled. By the mid-1990s, the country had accumulated a foreign debt of about \$1.5 billion, which made Bishkek completely dependent on its foreign advisors when it came to important foreign and even domestic policy decisions. Early in 1994, foreign experts decided that the reforms were stalling: disregarding the power abuses and embezzlement at all levels, they recommended accelerated privatization, which amounted to criminal privatization under Kyrgyz conditions. The parliament objected and

<sup>4</sup> See: *Istoria kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana*, Bishkek, 1995, p. 284.

<sup>5</sup> See: *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Kyrgyzskoy Respubliki v 1995 g.*, Natsional'ny statisticheskiy komitet KR, Bishkek, 1996, pp. 13-14.

<sup>6</sup> See: *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Kyrgyzskoy Respubliki v ianvare 1996 g.*, Natsional'ny statisticheskiy komitet KR, Bishkek, 1996, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> See: *Res publica*, 15 December, 1995.



was disbanded in 1994 at the suggestion of the same experts. This caused an acute political crisis in the republic.

Along with the parliament, President Akaev disbanded a special commission set up to look into all sorts of violations of the privatization process. Its members had amassed enough facts about the criminal sources of wealth certain deputies and heads of local administrations (akims) amassed by abusing their official positions. With a population of barely 4.5 million, the republic is too small to conceal anything. The public watched how top-level bureaucrats and their business friends plundered the country. The authorities remained indifferent.

President Akaev, too, completely abandoned all caution: in 1998, his son married President Nazarbaev's daughter. The destitute nation was invited to watch two presidents dressed up for the wedding, guests arrayed in finery, and an abundance of food on the tables. The people were probably even more irritated by the official propaganda which described the "wedding of the century" with gusto and enthusiasm.

The president of Kyrgyzstan lost all sense of proportion; his cronies and his close and distant relatives followed his example. I should say that President Karimov of Uzbekistan wedded his two daughters without much ado, TV programs, and excitement in the press. What is more, a top-level official responsible for a wedding in Tashkent at which \$100 bills were thrown at the feet of the newly weds received a severe dressing down from the president before being fired. This had a positive and educative effect across the country: flaunting of wealth in a poor country is immoral.

The official media of Kyrgyzstan spoke of achievements: production was going up, inflation was going down, agriculture was stable, structural reforms were unfolding, administration and management improving, etc. In the summer of 2000, however, President Akaev suddenly said in one of his interviews: "To tell the truth, we have just started reforming the social institutions and our economic system. Many of the changes have not yet become irreversible."<sup>8</sup> It was an indirect admission that ten years of his rule had been wasted. One result, however, was obvious.

The efforts to plant a Western model of reforms in disregard of the local realities and traditions exacerbated all the domestic problems, regionalism being the most dangerous of them.

## The Local Clans

From time immemorial the political and economic elite of Kyrgyzstan has been divided into two clans—the Northern and the Southern. They differ geographically, ethnically, economically, and even historically (the South joined Russia later than the North).

The Ferghana Range divides the country into the southern and northern parts connected by the only road. The Issyk Kul, Talas, Naryn, and Chu regions belong to the North; the Osh, Dzhahalal-Abad, and the recently formed Batken regions, to the South. The Northern clan includes several families: Sary Bagysh, Bugu, Solto, Tynay, Kushchu, and Sayak. The Southern consists of only one family—the Ichkiliks.

The industrial North is sparsely populated by Kyrgyz, Russians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Uighurs, and Dungans, who follow the European lifestyle. All higher educational establishments are found in the North too. From the mid-20th century onwards, the Kyrgyz Republic was ruled by Northerners (with the exception of a short period when Absamat Masaliev from the South was in power). The Northern clans became Russian subjects in 1855; the Ichkiliks remained part of the Kokand Khanate until 1876.

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<sup>8</sup> An interview with *Kommersant* newspaper, 26 July, 2000.

The South is a densely populated predominantly agricultural area plagued by land and water shortages. There is no industry to speak of here; the Russian culture and language are not as prominent as in the North: most of the local people (mainly Uzbeks and Tajiks) can barely speak Russian. The South is much more religious than the North, while the Osh and Dzhahal-Abad regions are described as Islamic strongholds.

For historical reasons, the South was barely represented in the republic's ruling structures; this and many other signs of inequality bred jealousy of the North. No wonder the "revolution" of March 2005 was launched by discontented masses in the republic's South. According to the information available today, the so-called "Osh detachments" played a key role in the Bishkek developments. It is still unclear who formed them, what they did, and how they contributed to the looting in the capital that followed the capture of the "White House." Under Akaev, official ideology insisted that economic reforms would diminish the clans' influence and social role. The Central Asian hearings in the U.S. Senate, which took place on 27 July, 2002, shared this opinion.

This proved to be wrong: in Kyrgyzstan, the clans have always been involved in political rivalry (in recent history, too, they fought for power and influence). Normally the struggle is latent and positional; from time to time it flares up or almost disappears. In the 1970s-1980s, for example, the situation was relatively balanced: the spheres of influence were strictly delineated to the sides' mutual satisfaction. In the 1990s, however, tension returned: the reforms brought about redistribution of property and lucrative posts, which upset the old balance.

When Akaev came to power, the Northern clan gained a lot of weight.<sup>9</sup> In the past, too, the Northerners were more numerous and more influential. In the 1990s, they became even stronger, because until March 2005 they dominated in the upper echelons of power where people from the South were few and far between. The 1994 crisis was largely born by the South-North standoff. It was then that some of the media warned against the "Tajik variant" repeating itself in the RK. The public at large believed that the fears were imaginary or fanned deliberately. (Today, however, nobody would sign to this.) At that time, the powers that be cut short all the attempts by certain politicians and businessmen to change the rules the top crust had established. For example, ambitious Felix Kulov, former vice-president of the RK, former governor of the Chu Region, and the Mayor of Bishkek, was relieved of his rank of Lieutenant General and sent to prison for 10 years. According to local observers, he lost the struggle against the president, because he underestimated the clan factor and failed to draw prominent Northerners to his side. Zhalgap Kazakbaev, former director of the Kara-Baltinskiy ore dressing combine and a deputy in the country's parliament, found himself locked up for 14 years for the excessive zeal with which he objected to the way Akaev and his circle dealt with the gold mines in the republic. In 2002, the rulers took pity on him and he was amnestied.

Several businessmen who failed to conform to the "clan ethics" of doing business and earning money lost their wealth and freedom. The fates of the first "liquor kings," Muhammed Ibragimov and Boris Vorobiov, are the best example. The authorities took away their businesses and property. Ibragimov remained free, while Vorobiov spent four years behind the bars. Their distilleries and shops went to the ruling group, of which the Akaevs were a prominent part.

By the early 21st century, the top posts in the law enforcement bodies, the cabinet's economic bloc, the key posts in the president's administration, and the lucrative businesses belonged to Northerners, who sided with Akaev. His closest circle consisted of Bolot Jankuzov, head of the republic's National Security Council, who later became the president's advisor; Temirbek Akmatalliev, former finance minister and the most obvious presidential candidate (he and Akaev both belonged to the Sary

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<sup>9</sup> Askar Akaev belongs to the Sary Bagysh family of the Chu Region; his wife Mayram to the Kushchu family of the Talas Region.

Bagysh family); Misir Ashirkulov, head of the presidential administration (known across the country as the “gray eminence”); Il’ias Bekbolotov, the president’s press secretary and Ashirkulov’s nephew (both from the Solto family); and Chubak Abyshkaev, the republic’s public prosecutor (the Tynay family). The Akaevs, who had climbed to the very top of the power pyramid, controlled gold mining and the sale of gold, as well as the mining of nearly every other mineral. The family owned numerous enterprises and a great number of expensive shops, boutiques and supermarkets in Bishkek, the country’s capital. Kazakh Adil Taygonbaev, who is married to the president’s oldest daughter Bermet, had all distilleries under his control; he also patronized his friends from Kazakhstan. A school-friend from Kazakhstan, Igor Zabara, won all the tenders in which his firm took part. The president’s son, Aydar Akaev, monopolized trade in oil products.

It looks as if President Akaev was trying to create a secure future for his family. In any case, people are convinced that the Alga Kyrgyzstan party headed by Bermet Akaeva was set up to create a political niche for the president’s oldest daughter and her brother Aydar. Askar Akaev was probably toying with the idea of transferring power to them.

The positions of the Southerners were much weaker: by tradition they could count on the post of prime minister. In May 2002, Premier Kurmanbek Bakiev from the South was forced to resign when the way the mass rallies in the Aksy District (Dzhalal-Abad Region) had been dealt with on 20 March, 2002 became known: five killed and about 80 wounded. In 2000, Southerner Omurbek Tekebaev ran against Askar Akaev for president. There were several Southerners among the deputies and the opposition; Tursunbay Bakir-Ulu, a Kypchak from the Ichkilik family, even headed the Human Rights Committee under the president.

The Southerners refused to be satisfied with insignificant posts in the republic’s administrative structures, which brought no real power; their discontent kept tension at a high level and created the danger of mass actions against the ruling elite. In the mid-1990s, there was a lot of talk in the South about an independent South Kyrgyz state; it seemed to be about to happen, when the separatist leader, Governor of the Dzhalal-Abad Region Bekmamat Osmonov, suddenly died in 1997. The trend stalled.

The president was warned on all sides that the interests of the Southerners and of other Northern families should not be ignored, that he had to share power, reach compromises, and smooth out regional contradictions. Akaev preferred to turn a deaf ear to these warnings: during his 15 years in power he did nothing to remedy the situation or to liquidate, even partially, the southern regions’ appalling backwardness.

## Religious Extremism

In the 1990s, the Osh and Dzhalal-Abad regions became part of the drugs route which began in Afghanistan and crossed Tajikistan before it reached Kyrgyzstan. It was then that religious extremists, particularly the Hizb ut-Tahrir party, came to the fore in the republic’s south. Local businessmen, active people, and even some politicians could finally realize their ambitions by being involved in drug trafficking and religious extremism.

Osh became a transshipment point where heroin and opium from Afghanistan and marihuana and hashish from Tajikistan met. Very soon the South acquired drug barons of its own with a lot of political influence. Religious extremists also became gradually involved in the far-flung drug network. They used drug money to enlist supporters and set up new cells. In fact, the South proved to be an ideal breeding ground for extremist ideas: widespread and strong religious feelings of the local people; high density of the extremely poor population; urgent economic and social problems that the authorities preferred to ignore; drug money; and slackened control of the central power, including law

enforcement bodies. This all helped Hizb ut-Tahrir to create a ramified clandestine network in the Osh and Dzhahal-Abad regions.

It was for the same reasons that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) with an international membership—there were Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, North Caucasians, and even Arab mercenaries among its members—was also attracted by the republic's South.

Islamists created several bases up in the mountains of the Osh Region, on the Tajik border. On the other side of it, in the village of Khoit in the Iasman Gorge, there was a large base, which was in fact the headquarters of Juma Namangoni, one of the IMU's most prominent leaders. The Islamists kept an eye on the developments in the Osh Region before they decided it could be used for an Islamist enclave similar to those which existed in Chechnia in 1996-1999, in the Kadar zone of Daghestan, and the Tavildar District of Tajikistan. They planned to gain a foothold in the South to move further on to the Ferghana Valley and create a theocratic state, the Caliphate, in the south of Kyrgyzstan and the valley.

In the spring of 1999, Mullah Omar, one of the Taliban leaders, and Tahir Yoldosh, one of the IMU leaders, met in Kandahar to discuss a possible breakthrough of IMU fighters into Uzbekistan across the mountainous regions of Kyrgyzstan. In the summer of the same year, the Taliban and IMU brought the leaders of 14 extremist religious groups together in Kandahar and Karachi, in Pakistan. The result was a plan called Kyrgyzia-South, according to which the IMU fighters were expected to invade the Batken District of the RK from Tajik territory, gain a foothold there, beat off the government troops, and declare a Caliphate.

The operation began in July; fighters crossed from Tajikistan into Kyrgyzstan and invaded the Batken District, where they took General Shamkeev, four Japanese geologists, and their interpreter hostages. One of the leaders, Zubair ibn Abdurahman, who called himself chairman of the IMU political council, faxed a document to the presidential administration, in which he announced a jihad.

It took the army and the law enforcement bodies of the RK two months to beat off the extremist attack and free the hostages. The operation revealed that the Kyrgyz army was badly trained and poorly equipped; it had no fighting equipment and aviation (in any case they could not be used in the adverse mountainous terrain where the fighters were entrenched). There were no mountain troops either. To help the extremist vanguard, the IMU allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan dispatched a detachment of about 40 people under bin Laden's two close associates, Abu Suhaib Al-Ansari and Abu Jandal. On 26 August, Afghan and Pakistani officers instructed them in Kandahar. At the very beginning, there were only 15 fighters who crossed over to the Batken area; later 20 more fighters joined the original group, some time later, 45 mercenaries from Afghanistan arrived.

The extremists were localized and destroyed with the help of Russia and Uzbekistan; later it turned out that some of the killed fighters carried passports of the citizens of the RK issued illegally by the Batken regional department of internal affairs. Before the attack, these people used the documents to move around the country. The law enforcement bodies learned that more than 100 Kyrgyz, mainly from the South, were being trained in terrorist camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In the summer of 2000, extremists repeated the raid. Two IMU detachments simultaneously invaded the Surkhandaria and Tashkent regions of Uzbekistan. This time Kyrgyzstan was much better prepared: the fighters were defeated in both sectors. New inroads were expected in 2001 and 2002, yet they never happened because of the important events in Russia and the United States. The separatist regime in Chechnia was defeated in 1999-2000; in 2001 the counterterrorist operation began in Afghanistan. The IMU lost interest in Kyrgyzstan.

Today it is very important to establish the degree to which the drug mafia-controlled detachments from the South were involved in the "revolution" and the aims the extremists set for themselves. According to eyewitness accounts, "the faces of Osh fighters were bluish—the color of habitual opi-

um users.”<sup>10</sup> It seems that in the small hours of 25 March, they started plundering the capital; later the local mob joined them. Those who sent these units to Bishkek probably wanted to pave the way to the top for the Southerners, to begin redistribution of property, and to weaken the already weak control of the central structures over the South. This is what is going on. Kurmanbek Bakiev from the South is the acting president; property is being actively redistributed. To be more exact, it is being taken from the Akaev family, but also from other people who had nothing to do with the ruling clan at all.

Today, with the election battle for the main post in the country in full swing, central power cannot tighten its control over the South: the elections scheduled for June 2005 are just around the corner. There is general confusion in the country, with several big and a multitude of little leaders representing all sorts of political forces, groups, clans, and families; the people’s minds are full of all sorts of ideas and of bright and naïve hopes of a better future. Unexpected people and forces might come to the fore. There is a very important question that requires an answer: What are the religious extremists in the South up to? They too might exploit the situation to claim power.

In the past the democratic opposition maintained contacts with the Islamists; late in the 1990s some of its leaders met Namangoni and Yoldosh, two notorious personalities, to discuss the situation in the RK. It looks as if some of them planned to use the Islamists as a battering-ram against the Akaev regime. If the Islamists and the drug mafia start manipulating the sentiments of the poorest sections in the South, the opposition will have no hope of keeping intact its authority among the southern poor.

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

The above analysis of the post-Akaev situation in the country suggests that the regime fell because the social and economic problems were neglected far too long; the nation was poor, while the South and the North could not resolve their contradictions; the South and its problems did not receive adequate attention, while religious extremists gained authority with the local people; foreign foundations and other foreign structures represented in the republic were not adequately controlled. In addition, Askar Akaev proved to be ill prepared for the role of the country’s ruler. It turned out that power, the law enforcement structures, and the army were caught unawares; they were not ready to rebuff the domestic and foreign threats. This, and the fact that Akaev was unequal to the task he had shouldered, brought the regime down at a critical moment. It is only partly true that America also contributed to Akaev’s downfall through its embassy and the American NGOs working in Kyrgyzstan. True, American diplomats maintained close ties with the opposition, yet there is information that they did not plan a coup, at least in the context of the recent parliamentary elections. It seems that the events in Kyrgyzstan cannot be likened to the change of power in Georgia and Ukraine. There was outside influence in the RK, yet it cannot be described as decisive. The crisis was rooted mainly in the country’s domestic developments.

Determination could have helped Akaev to remain in power. First, he should have closed the road between the North and South to stop the “Osh detachments.” Second, he should have used force to cut short the mass rallies in the capital. Third, he should have remained in the country. His behavior in the days of the crisis can be described as strange at least. Rather than shouldering the burden as befitted the nation’s leader, he shirked responsibility, moved away from his presidential duties, and allowed his press secretary, who demonstrated a lot of courage, act instead of him.

It was Akaev’s duty as president to make decisions in the name of the state or even use force to maintain security of the country and its citizens. The leader should not explain his passivity by his fear

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<sup>10</sup> *Komsomolskaia pravda*, 31 March, 2005.

of bloodshed; in fact, by refusing to lead the country he caused bloodshed and two days of plundering in the capital.

As president, he was either unaware of the true state of affairs in the republic or avoided sober assessments of it. It is common knowledge that the presidents of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, Karimov and Nazarbaev, repeatedly warned him about the danger and pointed out the critical situation in the South. Akaev obviously preferred to ignore these warnings. He was living amid illusions. This is best confirmed by the title of his book published in Moscow in the summer of 2004: *Gliadia v budushchee s optimizmom* (An Optimistic View of the Future).

Other Central Asian leaders should learn from the sad experience of their Kyrgyz colleague. In Kazakhstan, in particular, there is a ruling clan, the members of which reached top posts and are prominent in big business. This means that there is still clan inequality and rivalry; the political and business elites are increasingly dissatisfied with the ruling group. The “market reforms” drove the larger part of the nation below the poverty level; there is a religious extremist clandestine network in the republic’s South while the legal secular opposition is getting ready for the presidential elections of December 2005. Several years ago, Nazarbaev wisely moved the country’s capital up north, to Astana. To capture it in the Kyrgyz style, the opposition will have to cover over 1,000 km of practically uninhabited land. If the authorities fail to take necessary measures, however, and let the country drift into a grave crisis, neither the distance nor other factors will save it.

The international community should also learn a lesson from the Kyrgyz situation. It is unwise to impose Western standards of state and social life on regions without taking into account their past, specific features, customs, and traditions. What can we expect of countries like Iraq and Afghanistan if the Akaev regime, propped up from all sides with funds and grants, finally collapsed?

It will soon become clear whether the new authorities can cope with the avalanche of problems and steer the country through the crisis. Today, while the trail is still warm, we can draw preliminary conclusions: as long as the “revolutionary disorder” continues, the threat of separatism in the South will remain; the Islamists might move into politics to claim power and to elbow the so-called democrats from the helm; the graver danger is that the country may hit a long period of instability abounding in conflicts and coups, and this will negatively affect its Central Asian neighbors.

Today, the country needs support and aid to stabilize the situation. This is clearly understood in Russia, which acted as a guarantor between the former president (who resigned on 4 April) and the new authorities; America and all other interested states are fully aware of their responsibility too. This gives grounds for cautious optimism about the near future of Kyrgyzstan.

## REGIONAL CONFLICTS

**NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT:  
LEGAL ASPECTS OF  
A SETTLEMENT**

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*Intentio inservire debet legibus, non leges  
intentioni (Lat.).*

Intentions ought to be subservient to the laws,  
not the laws to intentions.

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

**A**ny international conflict can be resolved only when the world community makes an objective political and legal assessment of that conflict. A thorough study of the root causes of the confrontation and a comprehensive analysis of the current situation is absolutely essential for:

- (1) the adoption of a fair decision by the parties (with the participation of mediators);
- (2) legally correct and effective use of generally recognized rules of international law; and
- (3) the establishment of a stable and lasting peace guaranteed by the international community as represented by authoritative international organizations such as the United Nations,

OSCE, European Union, Council of Europe, NATO and others.

Their immediate duty is to maintain and restore peace and stability both on a global scale and in various parts of the world, and to apply sanctions against the aggressor state.

On 25 January, 2005, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted its Resolution 1416 (2005), "The Conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh Region Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference"<sup>1</sup> (rapporteur David Atkinson). In this document, the Assembly ac-

<sup>1</sup> See: [<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Adopted-Text/ta05/ERES1416.htm> /accessed 2005-03-31/].

knowledges the occupation of a significant part of Azerbaijan's territory by Armenian troops and reiterates that "the occupation of foreign territory by a member state constitutes a grave violation of that state's obligations as a member of the Council of Europe." Consequently, this resolution can be hopefully regarded as the first, albeit belated, step in this direction. Such documents containing a political and legal assessment of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should also be adopted by other international organizations, primarily the OSCE, which provides the framework for the ongoing Minsk negotiation process. The lack of an objective assessment does not encourage the parties to the conflict to show goodwill for the purpose of resolving it and serves (as is the case today) to prolong the confrontation and to create illusions among certain forces that in

this way it is possible to overstep the rules of international law, to occupy a sovereign state's internationally recognized territory and, once these acts have been committed, to draw the desired dividends from the negotiation process. It should be remembered that Azerbaijan and Armenia signed the Helsinki Final Act, so recognizing, in accordance with their constitutions, the supremacy of the provisions of this Act in both internal and external legal relationships and the principles of inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of states.

Only an objective position of the world community will make it possible to withdraw the armed forces deployed in the conflict zone and to resolve the conflict by peaceful means, without military pressure, on the basis of the principles of international law.

## Approach to the Problem

The importance of studying the legal aspects of a settlement of ethnoterritorial and ethno-political conflicts in Europe and other regions of the world is due to several factors. First, such conflicts have existed (Aland Islands in Finland, Flanders in Belgium) and continue to exist (Basque Country in Spain, Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, Corsica in France) for decades and sometimes even for centuries. Second, throughout mankind's entire history such conflicts have often been resolved by means of specific legal solutions pivoted on a distribution of powers between different levels of authority, between the center and the region, the state and the autonomy, the federation and its constituent entity. Theoretically speaking, the range of distribution of these powers stretches from "full sovereignty" to "total lack of authority." Naturally, a conflict can hardly be resolved if only one of these categories is ensured, so that in practice its fair settlement (at a particular stage) should lie somewhere in the middle of the given range. A characteristic example here is provided by the recent history of Belgium, which used to be a unitary state but, with a gradual phase-in of appropriate changes, has turned first into a regional state and then into a federation.

In the event, we take into account that the situation in Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh differs from the situation in Finland, Belgium, Spain, Britain or any other country or region.

## On the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination

It should be noted in this context that, basing ourselves on the norms of international law, we categorically rule out from the very outset, for a number of well-known reasons, the possibility of applying the "self-determination of peoples" principle to the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh.



- First, Nagorno-Karabakh is part of the territory of Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan as a sovereign state is the result of an expression of the will and the self-determination of the entire Azer-bajani people (including ethnic Armenians) living throughout the whole territory of the republic, and not of a part of this people. A part of the people cannot make decisions that are crucial to the future of the whole people. In accordance with U.N. General Assembly Resolution 47/135 of 18 December, 1992, "Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities," the principle of self-determination of peoples is not included among the rights of national minorities; the international community did not consider it possible or necessary to reflect this principle in the Declaration.<sup>2</sup>
- Second, having signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the countries of Europe, the U.S. and Canada tied in the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as written into the Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (24 October, 1970), with the principle of territorial integrity of states. The Declaration says that effective application of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples "is of paramount importance for the promotion of friendly relations among states, based on respect for the principle of sovereign equality." The principle of self-determination can find its solution only in the context of the principle of territorial integrity of states. The Declaration proclaims that "any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a state or country or at its political independence is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter."<sup>3</sup> This is precisely why the Helsinki Final Act put this principle in eighth place (out of ten) and called it "the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples."
- Third, Nagorno-Karabakh is a region of Azerbaijan where, prior to the ethnic cleansing organized by Armenians, there were two communities (Armenian and Azeri) constituting the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, but by no means a "people." "People" is a political category, and peoples in this context are the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis, who have already implemented their right to self-determination within the framework, respectively, of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. The term "people" cannot be applied to the population of Nagorno-Karabakh as part of the Azerbaijan Republic.
- Fourth, even if we assume the impossible and say that the population of Nagorno-Karabakh consisting of Armenians and Azeris is a people with a right to self-determination, this will not mean that Nagorno-Karabakh should secede from the Azerbaijan Republic. In the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law, advocacy of the principle of self-determination is not equivalent to encouragement of secession or fragmentation of countries. This document explicitly states that the principle of self-determination can and must find its solution within the framework of the principle of inviolability of borders and the principle of territorial integrity of states. This principle "should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states... Every state shall refrain from any action aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of any other state or country."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See: [<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r135.htm> /accessed 2005-03-31/].

<sup>3</sup> See: [[http://www.sam.sdu.dk/samnet3/jura/F05\\_Folkeret\\_valgfag/UN\\_GA\\_resolution\\_2625\\_XXV.pdf](http://www.sam.sdu.dk/samnet3/jura/F05_Folkeret_valgfag/UN_GA_resolution_2625_XXV.pdf) /accessed 2005-03-31/].

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

- And fifth, neither the theory nor the practice of international or constitutional law has ever had to deal with cases of repeated exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. If we assume the impossible and such a precedent is actually created, the world community will be faced with the inevitability of Armenian self-determination in Russia, the U.S., France, Turkey, Canada, Australia, Iran, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Spain, Holland, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Syria and many other countries.

In view of the above, I would venture to disagree with “self-determination without the right to secession,” a formula suggested by R. Mamedov for the solution of the “Karabakh problem.”<sup>5</sup> The right to self-determination belongs to the people. A settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani (Nagorno-Karabakh) conflict should be based exclusively on compliance with the generally recognized principles of inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of states. Among the indisputable principles of such a settlement should be guaranteed protection of the rights of national minorities, their security and existence within the Azerbaijan Republic.

## Form of Government

Questions connected with the concept, subject and even the terminology of territorial structure are reflected in the legislation of different states with considerable diversity, which is due not only to difference of opinion between these states, the fact of their belonging to different legal systems or the domination of a particular legal conception, but also to certain political motivations.

The former U.S.S.R. is a case in point. Thus, the concept of constitutional law in the U.S.S.R. was replaced with the concept of state law, and this had an effect on all institutions within the given sphere, particularly on the institution of territorial structure, renamed “state structure” in the narrow sense of the term, which did not include the political aspects of the problem. In 1977, this unfortunate term introduced into legislation by Stalin’s 1936 Constitution, was replaced with two other terms: “national-state structure” and “administrative-territorial division,” which covered both the political and the territorial aspect of the given problem.

Another example is when the desire of some states to ensure their sovereignty and territorial integrity and to assert their rights to the natural resources located in the territory belonging to them has led to an actual description in their constitutions of the geographic territory of these states (such as the Philippines, Cuba, etc.).

As a result of the evolution of society and law, the component parts of the state, just as the state as a whole, have their own public authorities, which are interconnected by systems of mutual relations regulated by the rules of constitutional law. Today’s self-governing territorial units (subnational entities) often enjoy a measure of autonomy under the basic or other law. Such entities are designated by the generic term “territorial autonomy.”

So, in some cases the geographical parts of a state are its administrative-territorial units devoid of political autonomy, and in others, they are state-like entities (statoids) with their own legislation. The decisions of the public authorities or the population of such entities adopted within the limits of their autonomous rights established by the constitution (or law) often cannot be overruled by any government or public bodies of the larger structure that includes the given entity.

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<sup>5</sup> See: “Vremia rabotaet na nas. Karabakhskaia problema mozhet i dolzhna reshat’ sia na osnove mezhdunarodnogo prava (Kruglyi stol),” *Azerbaidzhanskii izvestia*, 25 January, 2005, p. 2.

In the current classification of forms of territorial state structure (government) based on the relationship between the state as a whole and its component parts, two main forms predominate: unitary and federal. Naturally, we take into account that confederation as a community of states (associated states) has no direct bearing on the problem of territorial state structure, since it is an association of sovereign countries and not of the component parts of a single state. The doctrine of constitutional and international law is sufficiently conservative in its definitions. That is why scholars have tried for many decades to fit all the models of actually existing states into the framework of the concepts of “confederation,” “federation” and “unitary state.” However, a political and legal analysis of empirical reality shows that in pure form these categories are virtually nonexistent and that their elements are interlinked to an extent resulting in the emergence of various hybrid forms. For example, there are generally recognized federal states whose constituent entities are entitled to conclude international treaties (Austrian lands, territorial entities of Bosnia-Herzegovina).

At the same time, use of inductive methods to investigate these problems leads to certain definitive generalizations. In my view, an analysis of the various methods of state organization suggests the conclusion that, depending on the relations between the state and its component parts, today we can speak of the following generalized forms of state structure (forms of government by autonomy of regions): confederation, federation, unitary regional state and unitary state with special autonomous status for some of its territories. In this context, a “blind” approach to traditional concepts, definitions and classifications often produces an opposite effect. An attempt to fit current realities into a definitive framework could lead to a simplification or, even worse, to a distortion of today’s constitutional diversity, and in the process of conflict resolution this could become an obstacle blocking the way to a settlement. That is why in resolving an ethnoterritorial or ethnopolitical conflict one should bear in mind the doctrinal concepts and definitions of constitutional and international law, consider the constitutional and international legal realities existing in the world, and be prepared to make unorthodox, non-routine decisions in order to resolve the given conflict.

### **Federalism**

As a legal means for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, this form of government (state structure) has been repeatedly examined at different levels: mass media, expert, scientific, diplomatic and political, including the very top. It should be pointed out in advance that Azerbaijani society takes a negative view of federation as a form of government for the republic. There are many reasons for this, primarily the existence of aggressive separatism, which has been a feature of life in the country for many years.

However, the introduction of federal relations has made it possible to settle a number of ethnopolitical conflicts in Europe (Belgium, Britain, Spain). It is precisely federalism (in a form yet to be elaborated) that can enable us to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on the principles of liberation of the occupied territories and retention of Nagorno-Karabakh within the Azerbaijan Republic. At the same time, a concession on the part of the Azerbaijan Republic (incidentally, there is much talk in the world community about the need for such concessions) could theoretically consist in a renunciation of vertical relations between the Nagorno-Karabakh region and Azerbaijan’s central authorities. In this case, relations between the center and the autonomy would depend on the distribution of legislative powers. The scientific concept of federation implies that each level of government derives its authority from the constitution, that is, there are no relations of direct administrative subordination between them. Any changes in the distribution of legislative powers between the levels of government are possible only with the direct or indirect participation of both the subnational entity and the federal center.

It is quite obvious that upon the resolution of the conflict the relations between the Azerbaijan Republic and the Nagorno-Karabakh region will include elements of a federation, even if the peace agreement does not contain such terms as federalism, federation or federal.

### **Some Forms of Federal Relations and Autonomy**

In drawing a distinction between unitary and federal states, let us note that the component parts of a federation (its entities) usually have their own constitutions (as, for example, the states of the U.S., the lands of Germany or the republics of the Russian Federation) or laws (such as the charters of RF regions, territories and autonomies). That is how the system of government bodies of federal entities, their powers, etc., is established in these countries. Dr. Konrad Hesse, a professor at Freiburg University, formulated this idea as follows: "Despite common structural principles, each federal state is a historically-specific individuality."<sup>6</sup>

The system of government bodies of administrative-territorial units in a unitary state and their powers are established by the constitution and laws of the whole state.

In contrast to the component parts of a unitary state, the constituent entities of a federation have a large degree of political and state autonomy. But it would be a mistake to think that public administration in all unitary states is centralized, whereas federal states are characterized by decentralization and a clear division of powers between the center and the regions. Every unitary and federal state has its own specific features, which are often very significant. For example, in such unitary countries as Spain and Italy the highest-level territorial units enjoy a greater measure of state autonomy than the constituent entities of some federal states. In this context, one could recall the practices of the U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia in the conditions of totalitarian regimes, where all power was in effect monopolized by the central authorities.

The status of some component parts of unitary and federal states often differs from the status of other component parts of the same state. This means that territorial state structure can be either simple (symmetric) or complex (asymmetric). Under a symmetric structure, all the component parts of the state have equal status. For example, the lands (states) of Austria and Germany, the provinces of Poland and the regions of Belarus have equal rights. Under an asymmetric structure, the component parts of the state have unequal status. Thus, alongside regions with equal status, unitary Ukraine includes the Crimean Autonomous Republic, which has been granted special status. Sicily, Sardinia, Venezia Giulia and other regions of Italy (under the country's constitution) enjoy special forms and conditions of autonomy by virtue of their special status approved by constitutional laws. In Spain, autonomy has been granted to the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, Andalusia and other regions. Each of the self-governing regions has its own assembly elected by its population, which issues laws that are effective in the given territory. The United Kingdom, being a unitary state, consists of historically evolved parts: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As regards their administrative-territorial division, England and Wales are divided into counties, Northern Ireland into districts, and Scotland into council areas. Greater London is a separate administrative-territorial unit (local government area).

Consequently, as noted above, the degree of territorial autonomy may differ, and depending on that degree such autonomy may be divided into two forms: state (legislative) and local (administrative). Under the former, the given territorial entity has the outward signs of a state: parliament, government, sometimes constitution, citizenship, etc., with the range of legislative powers of the auton-

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<sup>6</sup> K. Hesse, *Osnovy konstitutsionnogo prava FRG*, Yuridicheskaya literature Publishers, Moscow, 1981, p. 114.

omous parliament usually established by the constitution of the whole country. The local form of autonomy has no such signs, and the range of autonomous rights of territorial units is established, as a rule, by ordinary laws. Constitutions and other laws usually provide that autonomous units are entitled to draft (and sometimes also to adopt) basic normative acts determining their internal structure (constitutions, statutes, self-government charters, etc.).

Territorial units with a large proportion of people of different ethnic origin with their own specific features of daily life determined, say, by the insular position of the given territory are often granted special autonomous status, characterized in certain cases as national-territorial or ethnic-territorial. For example, such autonomy is enjoyed by the Swedish-speaking Aland Islands in Finland, by insular and border regions in Italy, autonomous areas in China (mostly inhabited by indigenous non-Han peoples), the Eskimo island of Greenland in Denmark, Zanzibar in Tanzania, and others.

In particular, the Aland Islands, which are a province of Finland, have their own parliament and government with guaranteed powers, guaranteed territorial integrity and their own citizenship (native Alanders automatically acquire Finnish citizenship, whereas other Finnish citizens, even when they settle on these islands, do not automatically acquire Aland citizenship). At the same time, the president of Finland has a right to veto Aland laws. The law on the autonomy of the Aland Islands is adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Finnish parliament, and the Aland parliament approves it by the same majority. Another noteworthy fact relates to autonomous Greenland: in 1985, it withdrew from the European Economic Community, while Denmark remained a member.

A territorial government model largely similar to the Finnish and Danish systems will be found in the United Republic of Tanzania, which in the literature is usually referred to as a federation. In actual fact, there is no reason to call it so, in spite of the treaty origins of that united state. Tanganyika, the mainland part of the country, does not have any special government bodies of its own that would operate alongside the state authorities. In effect, Tanzania is a unitary state with Zanzibari autonomy.

Scotland's autonomy within the United Kingdom also has its peculiarities. Scotland has no legislative or executive bodies, but under the 1707 Act of Union it is entitled to have its own legal and judicial system, its own (Presbyterian) church, and special representation in the House of Lords (in the House of Commons, Scotland is represented on a general basis).

Territorial or national autonomy or self-government can range from very broad to very narrow. Examples of very broad self-government are provided by Switzerland, the U.S. and partly England. The Swiss republic consists of separate states or cantons, and each of these enjoys full autonomy: its elected government is entitled to run local affairs without permission or authorization from the central government. This includes matters of war and peace, cooperation with other states, railroads, industrial legislation, telegraph services, finances, customs and other areas.

## The Powers of the State and the Autonomy

In the distribution of powers between the state and the autonomy (autonomous community), it is necessary, in my opinion, to specify the following: the exclusive powers of the central authorities; the exclusive powers of the autonomy; the possibility for granting residual powers either to the central authorities or to the autonomy; the conditions for applying a legislative technique known as "concurrent powers" without the granting of residual powers either to the central authorities or to the auton-

omy; and the possibility for the adoption by the central authorities of framework laws specifying the law-making powers of the autonomy.

The principle of concurrency without the granting of residual powers either to the central authorities or to the autonomy was used to resolve the problems of the Aland Islands. Nevertheless, in my view, its implementation is a technically difficult matter and can subsequently lead to complications: it is very difficult in practice to draw up an exhaustive list of powers and then to divide them between the state and the autonomy. At the same time, the object of division in the case of Finland and the Aland Islands was legislative and executive power. Matters of judicial power are not covered by the agreement on self-government, so that the application of Aland laws is referred to the competence of Finnish courts, including the country's Supreme Court and Supreme Administrative Court.

As I see it, the division of legislative powers between the state and its autonomous entities should be based on a clear delimitation of the exclusive powers of the state and the autonomy. In other areas, it is possible to take several paths: to create competing powers, when the autonomous entity will be entitled to adopt legislative acts on matters that are not regulated by the relevant laws of the state; to adopt framework laws; and to delegate (by mutual consent under an authorizing law) a number of the state's legislative or administrative powers to the autonomous region.

International practice shows that such areas as foreign policy, defense, monetary system, customs services, intellectual property, bankruptcy and some other areas remain under the jurisdiction of the state (the central authorities).

The adoption by the central authorities of framework laws specifying the law-making powers of the autonomy means that the central authorities establish certain limits for the operation of the autonomous authorities. Within these limits, the central authorities cannot intervene in the activities of the autonomy, and beyond these limits all power belongs to the center.

## Compromises

On the part of the Republic of Armenia:

- (1) an end to the occupation and a withdrawal of its armed forces from the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic;
- (2) disbandment and disarmament of the armed formations of Nagorno-Karabakh.

On the part of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- (1) granting of the highest autonomy status to Nagorno-Karabakh;
- (2) renunciation of claims to the Republic of Armenia at the International Court of Justice for the rehabilitation of areas destroyed during the war or for payment of compensation for the more than thirteen years of forced expulsion of their inhabitants, for the inflicted economic and moral damage;
- (3) consent to the temporary stationing of U.N. peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh;
- (4) consent to the establishment of horizontal relations between the center and the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomy with clear division of powers under one of the aforesaid variants.

## KARABAKH SETTLEMENT DISCOURSE: ENEMY AND PARTNER IMAGES

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It is commonly believed that the conflicts in the Caucasus are preventing it from developing into an integral geopolitical unit and a link between the East and the West, and the North and the South of Eurasia. It is tempting to ask who needs this geopolitical integrity: the local states, international organizations, or the main geopolitical forces present in the Caucasus? Can it be achieved at all? These questions surface in the Caucasian states from time to time: they seem to be too politicized or even deliberately invented. The processes underway in the Caucasus testify that there is a trend toward bilateral relations contrary to what a third side might wish. If we distance ourselves somewhat from the present state of regional relationships, the above questions can be unequivocally answered as follows: it is the South Caucasian states that primarily need cooperation and integration to achieve dynamic economic development and long-term domestic stability.

There is an opinion shared by many that the Karabakh conflict is the main stumbling block on the road to the unity all the local states need, and that neither the Abkhazian, nor the South Osset, nor the Chechen confrontations contain as prominent a geopolitical component as that present in the Karabakh conflict. This can be heard from foreign and even from Armenian and Azeri experts. The recent processes have demonstrated, however, that this is not the only truth, and that the still unsettled Armenian-Turkish and Georgian-Russian relations

are curbing regional cooperation even more. Indeed, the geopolitical component in the relations between Georgia and Russia has not diminished over time—it has become even more prominent. This trend is further promoted by the fact that Russia does not need a Georgian-Abkhazian settlement. The prospect of EU membership for Turkey enhanced the geopolitical component of Armenian-Turkish relations. In the past, this component came to the fore not so much in Turkey's sealing off its Armenian border because of the Karabakh conflict, as in its response to the recognition by other countries of the 1915 Armenian genocide.

The Karabakh conflict can be singled out among other factors because it is gradually developing into a protracted conflict with the adverse effects typical of such situations. At the same time, as distinct from other regional conflicts, the sides have been adhering to cease-fire conditions for over 10 years now without international peace-keeping interference; in fact, international peacekeepers never had any role to play in the conflict. This is seen as the only positive result of the negotiation process.

We all have to admit that the sides involved have absolutely different ideas about the settlement problem: they disagree about the subjects and objects and about the definition of the sides in the conflict; there is an inadequate interpretation of its political nature and, therefore, of the main aim of its settlement.

### ***(a) Disagreements over the subjects and objects, and the sides in the conflict***

At different times, responsibility for future settlement was placed either on the sides' leaders, or on their political elites, or, recently, on the nations and societies of the countries involved. The sides

and the intermediaries have not yet reached a mutually acceptable definition of the role of Nagorny Karabakh in the settlement process. Baku is convinced that contacts with the Karabakh leaders may be interpreted as de facto recognition of its independence. This explains why Azerbaijan frowns at trips by international intermediaries to Karabakh through the Lachin corridor connecting Armenia and Karabakh rather than from Azerbaijan across the mined buffer zone and the front line.

***(b) An inadequate interpretation of  
the conflict's political nature and,  
therefore, of the main aim of settlement***

Azerbaijan insists on calling the Karabakh conflict a territorial conflict, which means, according to numerous relevant statements, that the country should preserve its territorial integrity. Baku refuses to discuss any other aspects (confidence-building measures, safety guarantees to the people of Karabakh under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction, and the status of Nagorny Karabakh) on which long-term settlement depends. In Erevan and Stepanakert, this is a legal problem of self-determination.

The above has led to prolonged discussions about settlement. An analysis has revealed that the conflict is steadily developing into an ethnic one with corresponding repercussions in the form of widespread phobias and propaganda of an enemy image represented by the opposing side. We all know that once established these phobias demonstrate amazing tenacity.

## At the “Neither War nor Peace” Crossroads

The classical variant of conflict settlement involves negotiations and political methods of meeting the sides' demands. Such negotiations should normally start immediately after the cease-fire and involve international intermediaries. A compromise is the only way to reach a settlement, which means that the concessions (either made or offered) should be equal and mutually acceptable if we are aiming at long-term settlement once the relevant agreements are signed. This is the only way to transform the formula of mistrust, “everything they like is bad for us” (typical of confrontation), into a formula of cooperation, “if it is bad, it is bad for all.” This is a theory that can hardly be applied to the Karabakh settlement because of the still lingering and interconnected domestic and foreign political psychological and social circumstances that time makes deeper. This theory can be translated into reality if the sides are simultaneously confronted with unconnected dangers. Naturally enough neither Baku nor Erevan wants this: they will have to be satisfied with a variant neither of them wants, while a long-term settlement will be ruled out.

The “neither war nor peace” conditions formulated in 1994 by the Bishkek agreement on a cease-fire along the frontline offered the chance of compromise. It seemed that by that time the sides had already left all conflict stages behind, while everyone was fed up with the fighting. This was true of the winners, the losers, and the geopolitical actors present in the region. However, the bitter information struggle, meant to keep the fighting spirit alive in both countries, shows that the sides preferred to ignore the chance offered by the cease-fire. A mere agreement is not enough to reach a long-term settlement: it also needs an adequate propaganda. In other words, the sides should accept the idea of mutual concessions.

In fact the logic of the “neither war nor peace” conditions is a crossroads leading either to war or to peace, therefore it requires dual propaganda. If war is preferable, society should prepare for it by



planting an enemy image in people's minds. If the sides opt for peace, society should not only be prepared to accept it, but be ready to preserve it. This can be achieved by promoting the idea of mutual and, more important, equal concessions. The statements offered by the sides' spokesmen on a possible settlement in the first years reflected this ambiguous situation. (To satisfy the international community, the sides loudly stated their willingness and determination to use diplomatic methods to reach a settlement. At home, they spoke about their willingness to fight if need be.) Azerbaijan wanted to change the postwar situation immediately, while Armenia wanted to consolidate it at the international and diplomatic level.

In fact, Baku is prepared to return Karabakh by force if peaceful means (not only a mutually acceptable agreement, but also all other diplomatic means, "peace-enforcement" included) fail. The use of force conditions the sides' dual behavior. What head of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan Ali Kerimli said in an interview explains why the use of force alternative was revived in Azerbaijan in 1999 (under President Heydar Aliev). While talking to us, Ali Kerimli said the following: "In Azerbaijan the war and peace issue cannot be discussed. The Popular Front of Azerbaijan is following a course for liberating our lands. There are several options; the range is wide. So far, we still welcome the efforts of the co-chairmen of the Minsk OSCE group to reach an agreement by diplomatic means. We should keep in mind that new generations have appeared on both sides of the front. There is a new Armenian generation in Karabakh that knows nothing of Azerbaijan's jurisdiction. In ten-years' time, the word "Karabakh" will mean nothing in the rest of the country. This must be prevented if we want to avoid a strategic defeat. For our children a war will be meaningless. We know what we are fighting for. I should say that a peaceful settlement looks much more natural: the sides should meet at the negotiation table to discuss their own interests and priorities and those of their strategic allies. In short, everything depends on the Armenian politicians' goodwill. If they continue speculating on the officer's death (we should first investigate the crime in detail), the process will be protracted. First the shooting in the parliament, then the death of an officer at his Azeri colleague's hands. The tension has reached its peak; if procrastination continues, our party will be categorically against it. We will demand resolute steps, and society will support us."<sup>1</sup>

Compare this with what Georgi Khaindrava, state minister of Georgia for conflict settlement, said in his interview about Tbilisi's official position on settlement. Let me remind you that the Abkhazian and South Osset settlements are an issue of territorial integrity (in the same way as the Karabakh settlement is for Baku). It is very important that in Georgia the Abkhazian conflict is seen as an ethnic conflict. Said the minister: "The old rulers used force and this was their big mistake. We want a constructive and, most importantly, peaceful dialog. Force can return the territories, but it cannot settle the conflict. We are working hard to remove the mistrust and rejection now evident between the Georgians and Abkhazians. I think everyone should openly recognize his mistakes. We should start the ball rolling. As the majority of Georgia's population, we should shoulder this responsibility."<sup>2</sup>

## We and Our Enemies

The *Region* Research Center, along with the Institute of Peace and Democracy of Azerbaijan and with the support of the Erevan office of the European Commission in Georgia and Armenia, started investigating the discussions around the Karabakh settlement in June 2004. We are working in two

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with A. Kerimli, 20 February, 2004 [www.caucasusjournalists.net].

<sup>2</sup> "Pravo na avtonomiu," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 23 April, 2004.

directions: we are analyzing the images of enemy and partner promoted by the Armenian and Azeri media, as well as the stereotypes accepted by the Armenian and Azeri public.

It is not our aim to prove with facts and theories what is obvious and what the intermediaries have been recently talking about. Everyone knows that there is enmity and even hatred between the sides. The settlement is stalling and the process keeps coming back to the starting point. This means there are mutually exclusive ideological and psychological parameters and fewer things in common. Those that have still survived are rooted not in the sides' approaches—they are created by circumstances beyond their control. What is more, the frequent talk heard in Baku about war as the only way out of the protracted conflict leaves no doubt about who is seen as the enemy in the two capitals.

Reality proved to be more complicated than we expected it to be at the project's start. We are not limiting ourselves to simple interest in how the opposite side assesses its opponent. It is very important to understand why these conclusions are made, how convincing they are, how each of the sides looks at itself, etc. Comparing adequate approaches and arguments, assessing the level of motivation of negative and positive attitudes toward enemies, partners, themselves, etc. is just as important for studying the stereotypes of enemy and partner.

We have analyzed the press (six newspapers in each of the countries) in order to study the stereotypes of enemy and partner promoted in Armenia and Azerbaijan. We selected the press because even though the electronic media have a wider audience than the press they, as a rule, do not reflect the entire range of opinions current in the political discussions in Erevan and Baku. In other words, the press makes it possible to trace the changing opinions of all kinds of political forces.

We used the following methodology:

- Identification of the dynamics of negative and positive stereotypes (their stability);
- Degree of their motivation (which of the images are explained, which of them are taken as an axiom, etc.);
- Thematic gradation of stereotypes (which domestic or foreign forces and international organizations act as partners for achieving the goal);
- Identification of stereotypical types (whether any given negative stereotype is specific: a definite or abstract enemy or opponent) and their correlation (comparison of positive, negative, or neutral descriptions of the opposite side and the forces involved in the settlement);
- Identification of the main sources of stereotypes, that is, identification of political biases of the "architects/co-architects" of these stereotypes (the power structures, opposition parties, and public figures in one's country and abroad, etc.).

I would like to describe a circumstance that suddenly appeared at the project's first stage and which demonstrated the project's immense practical importance: the members of the monitoring group themselves were under the spell of certain stereotypes. This became obvious when we started formulating the key parameters of the stereotypes. Ours and similar projects designed to simultaneously monitor the media in two countries to compare the obtained results naturally require maximally formalized content assessments and consistently observed research parameters (something that we achieved). Still, at the early stage of our joint work (during the project's first two weeks), we ran across such formulas as: "One should not come to an agreement with an aggressor (Armenians.—*L.B.*)," "Azerbaijan will never cede its position to the enemy," "Turkey will never re-open the border (with Armenia.—*L.B.*) until Azerbaijan's demands are satisfied." The monitoring group in Baku marked these opinions with a + sign. The monitoring group in Erevan marked the following statements of the Armenian press in the same way: "Turkey has no chance of joining the EU," "Merzliakov (Russia's representative in the Minsk OSCE group.—*L.B.*) said that the Azeri media

attributed to him statements he never made,” “Russia is not ceding its position in the region,” etc. Later, such cases became rare.

To avoid boring quantitative descriptions of our findings, let us look at the main trends typical of the Armenian and Azeri stereotypes. On the whole, the media in both countries proceed from negative assessments when talking about the conflict and its settlement. This is true of the so-called “descriptions of relationships inside the country” (domestic policies, the relations within society and among individuals) and the opinions held by the sides about the intermediaries. Positive assessments could be found only in declarations about the sides’ willingness to cooperate and in all sorts of politically biased promotion information. For example, members of international organizations invariably gave a positive description of their role in achieving cooperation among the region’s countries. The same fully applies to the representatives of power and the opposition who tend to approve of what power (opposition) has done to resolve the conflicts, domestic problems, or foreign policy contradictions.

Journalists naturally lead when it comes to the number of positive and negative attitudes promoted by the sides’ press. Reports which are expected to be neutral lead in terms of the number of positive and negative assessments among all other genres expected to be biased (interviews and analysis). No wonder, the results showed that the journalists were the most active promoters of an enemy image as represented by an Armenian in the Azeri media and by a Turk in the Armenian media.

The enemy image is a very specific one: there are fewer vague descriptions of the “foreign forces that try to destabilize the situation in the country,” “the powers that be are pursuing their personal interests when talking about a settlement” type (they belong to the category of “an abstract enemy,” etc.) than much more specific negative descriptions: “the Armenian aggressors,” “the enemy will never tread the land of Azerbaijan,”<sup>3</sup> and “Azeris and Turks are the same,” “Turks are always Turks,”<sup>4</sup> etc. When applied to domestic forces, descriptions become vague: there are forces that “are pushing the country toward a precipice,” “occupied the country as an enemy force,” “create an atmosphere of fear and impunity,” “simulate struggle against corruption,” “are concerned with personal wealth and prosperity,” etc. (this is a collective image of the enemy at home represented by the powers that be). The same applied to the press reports about the structures (or prominent figures) who “obediently follow instructions,” “disgrace the country and the image of the state and the nation,” “play into the enemy’s hands,” “paralyze the country for the sake of their narrow political interests, while the threat to the state’s continued existence has become obvious,” etc. This is a collective image of the enemy at home represented by the opposition. Here are more examples: “These people (the judges who passed judgment in the case of the activists of the Azeri Liberation of Karabakh Organization who tried to burst into the premises of the Armenian participants in the NATO training exercises in Baku.—*L.B.*) are Armenians.”<sup>5</sup> “In Azerbaijan there are traitors who are worse than Armenians,”<sup>6</sup> “We (the Armenian delegation in the PACE.—*L.B.*) are the only ones, after the Albanians, whose opposition members discredit our country in the eyes of the Assembly,”<sup>7</sup> “Our (Armenian.—*L.B.*) nation is profoundly uncultured and ignorant. We are appalled to realize at times that we are living exactly as the Azeris. Who knows, if 100 years ago we were similar to what we are now, the Turks would have never annihilated us.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The most frequent descriptions found in the Azeri press studied during the NATO training exercises in Baku in the summer of 2004.

<sup>4</sup> In several successive issues, the Armenian *Ayots ashkhar* used these titles to describe the picketing of the hotel where the Armenian officers who arrived in Baku to take part in the NATO training exercises in July 2004 lived.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 September, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> *Eni Musavat* (Baku), 23 June, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> *Novoe vremia* (Erevan), 28 September, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> *Ayots ashkhar*, 2 September, 2004.

Both the Armenian and Azeri press speak about their enemies with passion and never fail to explain to readers who are they: the Azeri readers should know that Armenians and everything Armenian are absolutely hostile, even if they are present inside the country. Any Azerbaijanian citizen with Armenian roots is a potential enemy ready to betray the country. ("Those in power should know that the children they conceived by *akhchis* (a vernacular name for a woman in Armenian.—*L.B.*) have already surrendered the lands of Azerbaijan."<sup>9</sup> The readers in Armenia, on the other hand, should know that the Azeris are enemies like the Turks, that they are doing everything to resume the fighting, that the Turks will never recognize the Armenian genocide. They are a perfidious nation that will never become a civilized one even after they become part of Europe. ("Have the Turks changed their nature? No, they have not, in the same way as nothing has changed in the 'Greater Turan' program."<sup>10</sup> "The European and Armenian officials who believe that, after joining the EU, Turkey will become a more democratic state should be asked to explain why the Turkish authorities permit arrests of those of Turkish citizens who dare to talk about the Armenian genocide issue."<sup>11</sup>

To sum up. The Armenian press intensifies its negative treatment of the Azeris when certain events take place (such as statements of prominent Azeris, rallies and pickets triggered by Armenian participation in the NATO military exercises in Baku, etc.). The assessments are both negative (and accompanied by explanations) and categorical. During the lulls, the Armenian press resumes neutrality both when writing about Azerbaijan (with the exception of the Karabakh-related issues) and reporting about categorical statements coming from Baku or even ultimatums addressed to Erevan.

In Azerbaijan the picture is different: the press is nearly always negative when writing about Armenians, Armenia, and everything Armenian. This is practically never explained, which means that the enemy image (Armenians) has taken shape at the propaganda level. The examples are numerous: an Armenian is a vehicle of numerous negative traits; he uses his skills to undermine Azerbaijan. Here is the most typical example: "Armenia shows us an example of how everything should be presented promptly and in a way that forces the Azeri side either to remain silent in the face of the Armenians' skilful propaganda efforts or try to vindicate itself post factum."<sup>12</sup> All positive features ("persistent and purposeful," "know how to convince people," "they are well organized abroad," etc.) are mentioned when the press talks about the need to consolidate, or when it warns readers against the carriers of these traits.

The Armenian media writes less about the Turks' positive traits ("the Turks are good diplomats," they are "resourceful", etc.) than about their negative features. Today, the number of negative publications about the Turks, who for many years have been refusing to recognize the fact of the Armenian genocide and who moved away from Erevan because of Karabakh, has decreased. Categorically negative statements about Turks are reserved for the Azeris. On the whole, however, there are more negative publications about Turkey (and Turks) than positive or neutral ones. They are invariably accompanied by explanations. Categorically negative and unexplained statements are also reserved for the Azeris described as enemies.

It should be said that the Azeri media are also fond of describing a relatively new enemy in old and familiar terms. Armenians, their nature, and separatism are denounced in articles that speak of countries with a more or less large Armenian diaspora (Georgia, Russia, the U.S., etc.).

The image of a potential adversary ready to help the enemy holds a special place in the press. Normally such descriptions are accompanied by a generalized motivation: "Our partner is an enemy of our enemy or the partner of our enemy is our enemy too." This applies to articles about the international organizations involved in the decision-making or commenting on the present state of the Kara-

<sup>9</sup> *Eni Musavat*, 26 July, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> *Ayots ashkhar*, 9 September, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> *Azg* (Erevan), 7 October, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> *Ayna-Zerkalo* (Baku), 11 September, 2004.

bakh settlement; about the countries involved in the talks and about the neighbors wishing to enter into more active relations with one of the sides. On the whole, all negative descriptions of Turkey in the Armenian media are related to the need to normalize Armenian-Turkish relations in the context of the Karabakh issue. Some of the positive publications about Turkey in the Azeri media are also related to the same sphere. The same applies to positive or negative attitudes in the publications about Iran, Russia, America, France, etc.

Both countries differ in their approach to international organizations. In the Azeri press, the important information about international mediators and organizations is directly related to the Karabakh conflict. This includes discussion of statements (which can be described as pro-Azeri or pro-Armenian), for example, "Armenians are our sworn enemies—why does NATO invite them to our country?"<sup>13</sup> "We have an enemy—Armenia, therefore, we cannot meet NATO's military standards,"<sup>14</sup> "If it wants to cooperate with us, NATO should help us liberate our lands."<sup>15</sup> In the Armenian media, positive or negative assessments depend on how international organizations treat the country's domestic problems, the level of democratic freedom, and the institutional development of democratic society in the country. The result of our study is predictable: during the periods of worsened relations between the ruling circles and the opposition in Armenia, the Karabakh issue (except in relation to the 1998 events) is normally pushed aside.

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

1. On the whole, the stereotypes offered by the Armenian and Azeri media are based on negative assessments. This indicates a certain aggressiveness of the public and political elites in both countries. This is true of bilateral relations and the domestic situation. The propagandist clichés (created for foreign and domestic use) show that the sides are still living in the "regime of coercion" typical of the periods of hostility.
2. The Karabakh conflict figures more prominently in the negative publications carried by the Azeri press than by the Armenian press. This shows that in Baku the still unresolved problems are connected with and explained by the still unsettled Karabakh conflict.
3. The Azeri press, which writes a lot about the need to rekindle the hostilities, is insistently promoting the image of a victim that should be prepared to revenge itself. But on the other hand, this might negatively affect the nation's belligerence in the future.
4. The Armenian media demonstrate the victor syndrome, which should no longer link the domestic problems to the still lingering Karabakh conflict, at least while the status quo is preserved.
5. Both countries are promoting the enemy image for domestic use. This demonstrates the dual standards the countries apply when talking about compromises on the Karabakh issue and about creating open civil societies.

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ekho* (Baku), 19 June, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> *Eni musavat*, 1 July, 2004.

# RELIGION IN THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF CENTRAL ASIAN AND CAUCASIAN COUNTRIES

## THE ISLAMIC FACTOR IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS

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The role of Islam in North Caucasian politics has long been a topic of discussion in the academic, political, and journalist community. The term “the fault line” used by Prof. Huntington to describe the clash of civilizations looks tempting in the North Caucasian context. Indeed, it is an area with a high level of social and political tension and ethnic conflicts (more or less natural in the homeland of nearly 100 nationalities) rooted in economic and political inequality, unjust distribution of land, and an unwillingness to show justice when dealing with these evils. In addition, there are attempts to add religious hues to the already burning ethnic issues.

Perestroika started Muslim renaissance in Russia; it was at that time that Islam moved into the sphere of politics. In 1990, Akhmad-qadi Akhtaev and the Kebedov brothers, among others (very popular as the leaders of “renovationist” Islam in Daghestan also known as Wahhabism), set up the Islamic Revival Party (IRP). Wahhabism is part of a wider movement called Salafism. We can paraphrase the formula “every Islamist is a Muslim, while not every Muslim is an Islamist” used by political scientist Igor Dobaev<sup>1</sup> to say “every Wahhabi can be described as a Salafi, but not all Salafis are Wahhabis.”

<sup>1</sup> I.P. Dobaev, *Islamskiy radikalizm: sotsial'no-filosofskiy analiz*, ed. by A.V. Malashenko, SKNTs VSh Publishers, Rostov-on-Don, 2002, p. 32.

The local Salafis concentrated on criticizing the Sufi Sheikhs for their complete loyalty to the secular state, which developed into conformism. In fact, they were also criticized by common Sufis for the fairly superficial nature of the process of re-Islamization limited to building new mosques and restoring holy places (*ziyarat*)—nothing was done to revive Tariqah as the method of mystic cognition.

There is the opinion that in the Northern Caucasus, Wahhabism was promoted on foreign money, but we should bear in mind that no radical idea could have been accepted in the Caucasus in the absence of adequate local conditions. Soviet power destroyed the network of Islamic educational establishments: by the late 1980s, decades of repressions, anti-religious propaganda, and mosque closures wiped out the knowledge of Arabic to the extent that not all imams could independently study the necessary theological literature. Islam was no longer a religion—it had degenerated into a system of rituals and moral prescriptions. This gave rise to groups that called for the revival of “pure” Islam and detached themselves from “everyday” Islam. The youth alien to Sufi mysticism was very much attracted by Salafi rationalism.

The “traditionalist” leaders proved unprepared for theological disputes and let the initiative slip between their fingers. By calling on the state to oppose “the Wahhabi threat,” some of the Islamic functionaries tried to shift the burden of confrontation onto the state. At the same time, those Salafis who wanted to restore the basic Islamic values channeled popular protest against the official clergy. At the first stage, opposition was dominated by the Salafis engaged in charities and enlightenment; as tension between the Salafis and the Tariqah Sufis within the opposition camp mounted, radicals little interested in enlightening the masses came to the fore with their slogans of deposing power.

The range of so-called non-traditional Islam is very wide—it is not limited solely to the radicals, therefore it is critically important to identify the fundamentalists seeking purification of Islam and distinguish them from extremists using Islamic rhetoric as a smokescreen. Not all fundamentalists are extremists and separatists. They merely want to restore Islam to its original purity. For example, in one of the villages of the Tsumada District of Dagestan, a plaque can be seen on an administrative building that reads: “Islamic Territory. Russian Federation.”<sup>2</sup> The conflict stemmed from social problems and corruption of the local authorities and the militia. The so-called Wahhabis of the Kadar zone, who earned money by hauling cargos on their trucks, refused to pay tribute to the traffic controllers and united into jamaats (communities). The authorities, which refused to talk to the opposition, had to pay dearly for their shortsightedness.

It should be said that the very formula “traditional Islam” is not completely correct since it implies closeness to secular power. In the 19th century, Naqshbandi imams Gazi-Muhammad, Gamzatbek, and Shamil waged a holy war (*gazavat*) against tsarist Russia and the unrighteous Muslims who supported it.<sup>3</sup> As distinct from Shamil, Qadiriya leader Kunta-hajji Kishiev called on the Muslims to accept the power of the “white-faced czar” to preserve the nation. This all changed in the 20th century: in the Chechen-Ingush Soviet Autonomous Republic the Naqshbandi Tariqah actively cooperated with Soviet power, its members filling the majority of posts in the party nomenklatura. The Qadiriya Tariqah found itself in opposition. No wonder General Dudaev relied on its members. Under Dudaev the Naqshbandi Tariqah moved toward the opposition. Today, the state has recognized all Sufi Tariqahs, while radical Salafis, or Wahhabis as they are often called, are in opposition. This is why I believe that the terms “traditional” and “non-traditional” Islam are incorrect—today we are witnessing a confrontation between “official” and opposition Islam.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Islamic revival in Dagestan was ethnically tinged. Fuel was added to the Salafi/Sufi opposition in the republic by serious contradictions between the ethnic

<sup>2</sup> A. Stepanov, “Islamskaia ugroza: mif ili real'nost'” *Trud*, 2 October, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Islam i islamizm na iuge Rossii*, ed. by Iu.G. Volkov, SKNTs VSh Publishers, Rostov-on-Don, 2003, pp. 78-79.

spiritual leaders. The Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Northern Caucasus (SAMNC), which had fallen apart, was not replaced with another central structure able to unite the republic's Muslims. The Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Dagestan (SAMD), which replaced it in 1994, is known as the Avar administration because of the Avar majority in the highest posts. There are also the Kumyk and Lak spiritual administrations and the Darghinian kaziat. In the past ten years, the spiritual administrations have become purely bureaucratic structures, while the Muslims prefer to congregate around sheikhs or opposition fundamentalist leaders. This process is also ethnically tinged. Late in the 1980s, the Sufi sheikhs and the future Salafis were fighting together against M. Gekkiev, who headed the SAMNC. As soon as they won the battle, they began squabbling over posts in the new administrative structures and finally parted ways after the first serious clashes between the Sufis and the Salafis in the mid-1990s. Supporters of Sheikh Said Afandi of Chirkey, who by that time had the SAMD under their total control, proved to be the most belligerent group.

Conventionally, the fundamentalists (or the Salafis as they prefer to call themselves) can be divided into three movements headed by Bagautdin Kebedov (Bagautdin Muhammad), Angut Omarov (Aiub of Astrakhan), and Akhmad Akhtaev. The former two are more radically minded; their followers are the harshest critics of Sufism and the republic's regime. They tend to freely apply the concept of *taqfir* and accuse their opponents of lack of faith. Akhmad Akhtaev showed more flexibility: he believed it possible to follow a Sufi imam in prayer and himself attended Tariqah-controlled mosques; he also favored an active dialog with the authorities and criticized the radicals for their indiscriminate application of *taqfir*.

Gradually, under the pressure of several factors, the Salafis grew more radical. First, after finding a common language with the SAMD, the republic's leaders no longer needed the Salafis and, therefore, pursued harsher policies against the religious opposition. Second, Chechnia, as the closest neighbor, also influenced the process. After the clashes in the village of Karamakhi in May 1997 between the Wahhabis and united Tariqahs, law enforcement bodies, and mafia structures, detachments of the Chechen field commanders looked like a military force able to support the religious opposition. Finally, the moderate Salafi wing was left without a leader when Akhmad Akhtaev, who had at one time been deputy of the republic's People's Assembly, died. Much more radically-minded Bagautdin Kebedov filled the vacated niche. In July 1999, he, together with the detachments of Khattab and Basaev, invaded the Tsumada District of Dagestan from Chechnia.

The results were tragic for the Salafis: the republican leaders acquired an external enemy against whom society could be united. In September 1999, the People's Assembly adopted a Law on Banning Wahhabi and Other Extremist Activities in the Republic of Dagestan,<sup>4</sup> which put the moderate Salafis in the same category as the radicals. The problem of the religious opposition, however, survived the rout of the invading fighters and establishment of control over the Kadar zone. Even though the SAMD regularly criticizes secular power, "official" Islam does not constitute the opposition, rather it is part of the republic's political system. By tagging the Salafis "the Wahhabis," the republican leaders have outlawed them as the real opposition. Prominent Russian expert on Islam Alexey Malashenko has discerned numerous pitfalls created by this approach: "There is not much sense in branding the Salafis or sending special forces against them: this is a struggle against ideas and thoughts. Meanwhile, all of us, including officials in the administration of the second president of Russia, learned in school that Thought could not be destroyed."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See: K.M. Khanbabaev, "Wahhabism v Dagestane," *Islam i politika na Severnom Kavkaze, Collection of scientific articles*, SKNTs VSh Publishers, Rostov-on-Don, 2001, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> A. Malashenko, "Oshibka analitikov. O predskazuemosti kavkazskogo islama," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 18 May, 2000.



It should be said that at first the Islamic movements in Daghestan had no contacts with similar trends in Chechnia. They were developing independently for purely internal reasons. They appeared because of ethnic tension and the resultant principle of distributing state posts according to ethnic origins. On top of this, “official” Islam was in crisis, while the authorities became bogged down in the conflict between it and the Salafis.

The situation in Chechnia was different: the conflict was a political one between the authorities and the opposition which exploited Islamic rhetoric for its own political purposes (the Islamic factor is figuring prominently in the confrontation). It was the Popular Front, well accepted in the late 1980s, that launched the national-liberation movement in the republic. It started with the problems of corruption and ecology, yet carefully avoided nationalist and Islamic slogans. Later, the nomenklatura of the Chechen-Ingush Soviet Autonomous Republic managed to tame Kh. Bisultanov, the opposition leader, by appointing him director of one of the enterprises. This moved the leaders of the National Congress of the Chechen People (NCCP) to the forefront of the struggle against the party functionaries. They needed attractive leaders—this was how General Dudaev appeared on the scene. At no time did he support the idea of an Islamic state. At an election meeting with the students and teachers of the Grozny Petroleum Institute, he succinctly answered the question “Which state—Islamic or secular—do you plan to create if you win?” with “secular.”<sup>6</sup> Significantly, it was Beslan Gantamirov, who later became an ardent supporter of the Russian Federation’s territorial integrity, who headed the Islamic movement as the leader of the Islamic Way party. Adam Deniev, later an implacable enemy of Islamic radicals, was the first to call on the nation to restore “the purity of Islam” early in the 1990s.<sup>7</sup>

The people, however, coolly responded to the calls of the self-appointed Islamists to purify Islam from local impurities. First, the people knew little about Islam to accept these ideas, while the nationalist opposition was speaking about an independent secular state. Second, the so-called Islamists were not true Islamists at all. The opposition was teeming with nationalists, some of them outstanding personalities. The niche of political Islam, however, remained vacant. Those who cared to fill it had a chance to plunge into the republic’s political life. Chechnia is a republic of Sufi Islam (Qadiriya and Naqshbandiya being the most popular orders). In the post-perestroika period, the Sufi orders became completely legal. I have already written that Johar Dudaev and the NCCP nationalists relied on Qadiriya members from the mountainous regions. The Naqshbandiya leaders did not want to separate from Russia, therefore their followers could not be a target of separatist propaganda. By that time, the niche of “pure” Islam remained unoccupied: the Chechen pseudo-Islamists hastened to appropriate it, though without many political dividends.

The Chechen conflict is rooted in the struggle between the center and the local elites for the republic’s political status. The war in Chechnia that started in December 1994 made Islam a political factor and forced the supporters and opponents of General Dudaev to close ranks; after that they needed a common ideology to become a single force. (The Kremlin was fighting for Russia’s territorial integrity, while the Chechens assumed the image of fighters for an independent secular state.) As the conflict spread and the sides became even more desperate, Islamic elements came to the fore in the separatists’ rhetoric.

Armed confrontation attracted numerous fighters from Muslim countries who remained in the republic when the hostilities ended in 1996. Headed by the notorious Khattab, they developed into an influential political force which relied on Wahhabi ideology. Islam moved to the center of the republic’s sociopolitical life, which was finally reflected in the constitution of independent Chechnia. The processes, however, were fairly superficial: there was not a single respected theologian among those who preached the Islamic way. The Shari‘a criminal code was copied from a similar code adopted in

<sup>6</sup> I personally heard him saying this.

<sup>7</sup> See: *Islam i islamizm na iuge Rossii*, p. 106.

Sudan. There it was based on the Maliki madhab, while Chechnia and the entire eastern area of the Northern Caucasus were the territory of the Shafi'ite madhab. Between the two wars, the relations between the Sufis and Wahhabis deteriorated and, in the summer of 1998, led to an armed clash in Gudermes. After that Aslan Maskhadov moved away from the Wahhabis.

The radical ideas in Chechnia became popular due to several external factors. The Wahhabi leaders were funded from abroad—everyone knew that. Former Minister of Internal Affairs of the RF A. Kulikov went as far as to say that the Chechen mafia operating in Russia had to share their profits with the Wahhabis; he never proved this though. Aslan Maskhadov accused persecuted oligarch Boris Berezovsky of consistently funding groups that took hostages.<sup>8</sup>

The radical wing of the Chechen separatists might have contacts with international terrorist organizations, yet I personally cannot say that Russia is encountering international terrorism in Chechnia. Escalation of the war added religious overtones to the Chechen resistance; Islam united the separatists. The fact that the local terrorists are using the al-Qa'eda rhetoric does not mean that they are connected with bin Laden. To avoid accusations of a one-sided approach let me quote Prof. Marc Sageman, a former CIA employee. In the 1980s, he worked with the Afghan mujaheddin; today he is a U.S. government advisor on the counterterrorist struggle. In an interview with the *Ekspert* journal he said: "You see similar things and want to believe that they are connected... In such places as Chechnia and Palestine there are people who sympathize with al-Qa'eda. This does not mean, however, that this is one and the same organization."<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, if it is international terrorism that declared war on Russia, why has not one of the many Islamist groups attacked any of the Russian facilities abroad? The capture of *Avrasia* cannot be regarded as an attack for two reasons. First, those who captured it demanded that talks with the separatists be started immediately; they never formulated any Islamist demands. Second, the attack happened long before the counterterrorist campaign began. On the other hand, in Iraq, Russian citizens were treated with deference. Here is another argument: each terrorist act the separatists carry out is accompanied by demands to start negotiations and withdraw the troops from Chechnia; there are no statements about a war "on Crusaders and Jews." I am convinced that the events in Chechnia have been unfolding not because of foreign interference: the unregulated conflict attracted foreign forces to the region.

It turned out that not only Wahhabis were responsible for the second war. According to Sergey Stepashin: "An active campaign has been unfolding in this republic since March... This would have happened even had there been no Moscow blasts."<sup>10</sup> The aggressive raid by Basaev and Khattab and their Wahhabis into Dagestan merely brought the second war closer.

Salafism swiftly spread across the Northern Caucasus from Dagestan. In the latter half of the 1990s, the government no longer exploited the contradictions between the religious opposition and official Islam for its own ends. It sided with the SAMD and pushed away the Salafis prepared to hold a dialog. It was then that Dagestani radicals started moving toward Chechnia, where Wahhabism was of a purely military nature. It was politically oriented, while some of the Wahhabis never hesitated to use this ideology to justify their crimes. They concentrated on hostage taking; the Akhmadov brothers and A. Baraev were especially active. As distinct from the Dagestani Salafis, the Chechen Wahhabis had no religiously educated leaders, while in Dagestan the Kebedov brothers and Akhmad Akhtaev were teaching in illegal madrasahs back in the 1970s.

The situation in Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR) arouses concern. Any mosque attended by people the law enforcement bodies describe as suspicious can be declared Wahhabi and closed down.<sup>11</sup> Re-

<sup>8</sup> See: S. Shermatova, "Tak nazvyvaemye Wahhabyty" [[http://www.sakharov-center.ru/chs/chrus20\\_1.htm](http://www.sakharov-center.ru/chs/chrus20_1.htm)].

<sup>9</sup> M. Chernov, "Marc Sageman: udarit mechttoy po terroru," *Ekspert*, No. 38, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> S. Pravosudov, "Bloka OVR vooobshche moglo ne byt," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 14 January, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> See: A. Petrov, "Neosmotritel'nye deystvia vlastey provotsiruiut radikalov," *NG-Religii*, 1 December, 2004.

cently the authorities established a unified prayer day and hour when the mosques may remain open. At other times they are closed. Most of the mosques were closed down and Islam was driven underground. Without local registration a Muslim cannot perform namaz in the local mosques. The Ministry of Internal Affairs sees to this. Today there is only one cathedral mosque in the republic's capital of Nalchik.<sup>12</sup> The Yarmuk Jamaat, about which much has been said recently, is the tip of the iceberg. The republic's Muslim community is split. One group is headed by the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims (SAM), and the other by Mussa Mukozhev educated in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Khazratoli Dzashev, SAM deputy chairman, explains the split by the generation gap, not by Wahhabism. Early in the 1990s, a group of young men went to study Islam in Arab countries; upon their return they found themselves in conflict with the older generation of imams who knew no Arabic. The young people accused the older clerics of ignorance of Islamic sources and their misinterpretation.

To my mind, the official religious policies are another reason for the current situation in the KBR. In 1998, after the shelling of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the authorities, not bothering to find the real culprits, detained over 100 people, who were mercilessly beaten and some of whom were even shaved by force. The law enforcement bodies should fight extremism and prevent its outburst, yet the methods applied in the republic are not very appropriate. In April 2004, the congress of the Muslims of Kabardino-Balkaria amended the SAM Charter: the mufti was given the right to appoint imams in line with the official anti-extremist policies. The SAM leaders have just acquired the right to exclude undesirable imams, which implies radicals and clerics critical of the SAM. This will merely broaden the radicals' social base.

Confrontation between the traditionalists and Salafis is not as sharp in Ingushetia as it is in Daghestan and Chechnia, probably thanks to the well-balanced official policies. In December 1997, Ingushetia adopted a law on "justices of the peace," who are expected to apply the norms of adat and the Shari'a. There is also a conciliatory commission. The tension in the republic persists because of its territorial and confessional proximity to Chechnia and due to its internal problems: according to official figures, the unemployment rate in Ingushetia is 32.4 percent.<sup>13</sup> Under the influence of land shortages, the high population density, and tough competition on the labor market, the standard of living is gradually deteriorating. There is also the still unsettled conflict with North Ossetia.

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In summing up I can say that political Islam, which began as a revivalist movement in the Northern Caucasus, has gradually been gathering momentum. This happened against the background of the deepening Chechen crisis. In the latter half of the 1990s, the separatist sentiments in the region somewhat subsided due to the failure of Chechnia's experiment to lead a semi-independent existence. The Islamist ideas have been gathering more supporters. I think that this happened because Chechnia failed to become a secular state. Today, the Islamists are no longer seeking independence or autonomy inside Russia—they dream of creating a state from the Caspian to the Black Sea based on the Shari'a.

This raises the question of whether Islamism was brought into the region from outside or whether it sprang from local soil. Without rejecting the former I tend to agree with the latter.

Indeed, any war is a struggle of ideologies. In the 19th century, the harsh, or even cruel, politics of General Yermolov brought together the formerly disunited tribes of Daghestan and Chechnia; they were held together by Muridism, a new Sufi movement in the Caucasus. Today the Murids follow traditional peaceful Islam. In the past they were described as follows: "The Murids are supporters of

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<sup>12</sup> See: M. Fatullaev, "'Navedenie mostov' s pomoshch'iu beteevov," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 2 February, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> See: A. Malashenko, *Islamskie orientiry Severnogo Kavkaza*, Moscow Carnegie Center, Gendalf, Moscow, 2001, p. 6.

Muridism, a Muslim trend, the aim of which is to destroy the Christians.”<sup>14</sup> Much of what happened at that time has repeated itself today: Salafism replaced Muridism, which lost its political potential. It is highly attractive for those who stand opposed to the central authorities. To resolve this problem, the RF leaders are proposing that the power-wielding structures be granted more rights, the terrorists be physically destroyed, new jobs be created, and the poor regions be lavishly funded. These are half-measures: not all Salafis are terrorists; new jobs remain on paper, while funds are stolen. Here is another quote from Prof. Marc Sageman: “The greater the role of the power-wielding structures—the more terrorists there are ... the fight should be limited to the ideological front.”<sup>15</sup>

The above measures cannot defeat political Islam—they offer no adequate response to the challenge of Islamism. The Salafis are promoting the idea of an Islamic state based on the Shari‘a and the Koran, values which the Muslims cherish higher than common human values. The newly created holiday—the Day of National Unity on 4 November—will do nothing to unite the nation. We have still to find a “counter-idea.”

<sup>14</sup> V. Dal, *Tolkovy slovar zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka*, Tsitadel Publishers, Moscow, 1998.

<sup>15</sup> M. Chernov, op. cit.

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## ISLAM IN THE DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT OF KYRGYZSTAN: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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

In Kyrgyzstan, Islam is developing along its own lines—in this respect our republic does not differ from other post-Soviet states. The democratic changes have encouraged the building of numerous mosques and madrasahs. Here are several circumstances of obvious importance.

First, religious slogans are used to camouflage political activities. This is true, first and foremost, of Hizb ut-Tahrir, an extremist religious party engaged in destructive activities, and of the active opposition to its ideas recently launched by society and, most importantly, by the clergy. We should always bear in mind, however, that Hizb ut-Tahrir will not shun cruelty.

Second, the clerics across the country have become aware of the need to adjust their methods to society's current demands, to strengthen the horizontal and vertical structures, to establish stable contacts with the faithful, and to become involved in dealing with the urgent social problems.

Third, the radical Islamic ideas brought to the country by all kinds of missionaries and

preachers are gradually replacing traditional Islam with previously unknown madhabs. The Kyrgyz educated abroad in radical religious institutions might add to the tension in the religious community if they try to spread their ideas in Kyrgyzstan.

Fourth, the network of religious organizations is growing at a fast pace—this is one of the dominant local trends. It is obviously important to help the faithful become aware of their spiritual requirements, yet the current trend is mainly quantitative rather than qualitative. This may undermine the position of traditional Islam in the republic. Aware of the danger, the clerics are trying to modernize teaching methods in order to educate a spiritual elite of their own.

## Islam in Kyrgyzstan

Islam has deep roots in Kyrgyzstan; but it took it several centuries to become the main local religion. It ultimately became accepted, among other things, due to the trade and economic ties between the Kyrgyz tribes and the Muslim East, the similar nomadic lifestyle of cattle-breeders, and the fact that the country was far removed from the developed Christian states. Moderate Sunni Islam (akhli Sunnat val Jamaat, the Hanafi madhab) predominates in the country for certain historical reasons, while Shi'a Islam is mainly practiced by Azeris and some other peoples.

The religious situation across Central Asia underwent considerable changes when the region joined Russia. Islam's position depended on the way the Russian authorities (whose policies could not be described as consistent) treated it. Russian and Ukrainian peasants, who migrated to Kyrgyzstan in great numbers, created a Christian Orthodox community, a fact that never caused tension or religious conflicts with the local Muslims. Metropolitan Vladimir of Bishkek and Central Asia pointed out that Muslim donors funded construction of three village churches in Turkestan.

The Russian Christian Orthodox Church did nothing to promote Christianity among the local people: only 8 Kara-Kyrgyz, 2 Turkmen, 3 Uzbeks, and 1 Persian (probably a Tajik) embraced Orthodox Christianity during the entire imperial period. Ten Russians (one of them Orthodox Christian priest Gromov) adopted Islam during the same period. It seems that they changed faiths because of their convictions, rather than because of the contacts between Christian Orthodoxy and Islam as a whole.<sup>1</sup> A Kyrgyz iurta (ethnic portable homes of Kyrgyz nomads—*Ed.*) served the first Christian church in the town of Karakol; later it was replaced by a wooden church covered with felt Kyrgyz rugs. Christian priests mainly worked among the Orthodox Christians, while the local Muslims were left in peace to follow their faith.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the governor of Turkestan issued a decree banning missionary activity among the local people.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See: Archbishop Vladimir, ...*A druzey iskat' na Vostoke (Pravoslavie i Islam: protivostoianie ili sodruzhestvo?)*, Tashkent, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> See: A. Bedelbaev, "Iz istorii deiatel' nosty evropeyskikh missionerov na severe Kyrgyzstana v XIX-nach. XX vv.," *Materialy mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii "Buddizm i khristianstvo v kul'turnom nasledii Tsentral'noy Azii,"* Bishkek, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> See: E. Ozmitel, *Pravoslavie v Kirgizii. XIX-XX vv. Ist. ocherk*, Bishkek, 2003.

In Soviet times, religion was treated either negatively or very negatively, even though at the very beginning of the communist regime local clerics still retained their role. Beginning in the 1920s, however, the state became very aggressive: religious communities had their temples destroyed or confiscated to be turned into clubs or schools. The number of Muslim communities dropped. Numerous Muslim theologians were subjected to repressions; therefore Islam's intellectual potential and its ability to develop were impaired. Closed mosques and persecuted clerics caused a rapid decline in religious education; religious festivals and rites were strictly limited. The people never completely submitted to the bans: Muslim rites and festivals survived.

During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, the state relieved its pressure on religion: in 1943, the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan acquired their Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (CASAM) with its headquarters in Tashkent. It is believed that the organization gradually gained weight to finally become the most authoritative among the four spiritual Muslim administrations in the U.S.S.R.<sup>4</sup> Late in 1945, after a long interval, hajj was permitted again, albeit for small numbers. The faithful were returned several of the previously confiscated mosques.

For nearly forty years the local Muslim communities lived under the jurisdiction of the CASAM. It coordinated the activities of the religious organizations in five union republics—Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenia (the kaziats in the latter four were the CASAM's structural parts). The CASAM had two educational establishments: the Madrasah Mir Arab in Bukhara (opened in 1945) and the Islamic Institute in Tashkent (opened in 1971). Until 1990, they were the only two Islamic educational institutions in the Soviet Union. Duyshonbek azhy Otonbaev, advisor to the mufti of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, reminded us that the extended CASAM kurultay (congress) of 18 October, 1943 appointed Shakir Kozho uulu Alimkhan toro and Shabdan uulu Kamal Moldo the republic's first kazis. During their terms in office, the republic acquired no fewer than 30 cathedral mosques in which namazes were regularly held on Fridays.

## Confessional Development of Islam

Beginning in the mid-1980s, the first radical changes in the socialist system were accompanied by revived confessional activities in Kirghizia. Together with other Central Asian republics, it set off on the road to sovereignty, while the republican kaziats began drifting away from the CASAM.

Between 1987 and 1990, prominent theologian S. Kamalov headed the Muslims of Kirghizia; K. Abdurakhmanov came after him and filled the post in 1990-1996 and 2000-2002; between 1996 and 2000, the post belonged to Moldo A. Majitov; and since 2002, M. Zhumanov has been the republic's highest Islamic cleric. Today, religion is playing an increasingly greater role in all spheres of public life in the country populated by representatives of about 30 large ethnic groups and over 80 nationalities. Religion has laid the foundation of their new spiritual values, while this process is being accelerated by the CASAM reforms. New mosques and madrasahs appeared everywhere; many more Kyrgyz students enrolled in Islamic institutions at home and abroad; religious traditions and feasts were revived, missionaries from Muslim states arrived; books and other publications printed at home and abroad became available to all.

In the spring of 1991, Muslims of all nationalities gathered for a congress to set up the Islamic Center of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan; in June the "Turkestan" Spiritual Charity Center appeared.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See: A. Malashenko, *Islamskoe vozrozhdenie v sovremennoy Rossii*, Moscow Carnegie Center, Moscow, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> See: B.A. Maltabarov, "Islam kak religia monoteisticheskogo kredo," *Materialy mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii "Islam v istorii Kyrgyzskoy gosudarstvennosti"*, Bishkek, 2003, pp. 17-27.

In 1993, the system of Islamic religious organizations was restructured. As a result, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (SAMK) appeared, which began publishing the *Islam Madaniyaty* newspaper in Russian and Kyrgyz. On 26 December, 1996, on the demand of the regional kaziats and the majority of the members of the Ulema Council, the First Kurultay of the Muslims of the republic, which brought together over 450 delegates, was convened. The congress adopted a charter regulating the activities of all the Islamic religious organizations, including the Ulema Council and the Central Auditing Commission. The Kurultay elected Moldo Abdusatar Majitov (the candidate was approved by the Ulema Council) Azreti Mufti. It also elected the Ulema Council, consisting of the republic's 25 most prominent theologians, to supervise religious life in the periods between kurultays.

## Qualitative, Quantitative, and Structural Changes

The growing number of Muslim communities and mosques is the most obvious sign of Islamic resurrection in the republic and in other post-Soviet countries. Today, there are 1,613 mosques in Kyrgyzstan (compared with 39 cathedral mosques in 1991). Islamic revival is especially evident in the South, the population of which has, at all times, been more religious than in the North due to its geopolitical situation and ethnic composition. By early 2005, there were 1,598 registered mosques. In 1998, there were 464 mosques; in 1999, 765; in 2001, 924; in 2002, 975; in 2003, 1,144; and on 15 April, 2004, 1,588. The Osh Region leads in terms of the number of mosques (545); until 1989 there were only 10 of them, dating from 1943-1947; there are 440 mosques in the Dzhahalal-Abad Region, 219 in Batken Region; 161 in the Chu Region; 73 in the Talas Region; 56 in Issyk Kul Region; and 52 in the Naryn Region.

Some of them belong on the republic's list of historical and cultural monuments: the Ravat-i Abdullakhan mosque was built in the 16th century; the Takht-i-Sulayman, Muhammed Iusuf Baykhodji ogly, and Bokiy mosques date to 1909; the Shahid-Tepe, to 1909-1910; the Sadykbai mosque in Osh, the mosques in Karakol and in the villages of Kalininskoe and Zhayylgan (Manas District) were built early in the 20th century; and the mosque in the village of At-Bashi (At-Bashi District) late in the 19th century.

New and reconstructed Islamic religious facilities undoubtedly help satisfy the nation's spiritual requirements, yet the process no longer takes into account the real demands. On many occasions new mosques, which cost a lot and required other investments, stand idle without either imams or the faithful (this is especially typical of the Chu Region). Sometimes, new mosques and madrasahs are located haphazardly: there are settlements or even urban neighborhoods with several mosques in them; and there is a new trend toward performing religious rites according to ethnic and cultural specifics. Here is how a newspaper commented on this: "In a small village in the Talas Region, there are four (!) mosques. People who pass through the village invariably marvel at the local people's piety. Each of the mosques belongs to a clan and is attended solely by its members. The local people have grown accustomed to this; the number of imams is the only inconvenience."<sup>6</sup> Another author has written: "There are several mosques in some villages because tribes and clans want to pray in their own mosques. They compete among themselves by hastily erecting beautiful buildings. I am afraid, however, that haphazard mosque-building will cause clan clashes or even serious clan conflicts."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> R. Rakhimov, "Verui!", *Argumenty i fakty Kyrgyzstan*, No. 1, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> V. Djumataeva, "Problemy islamizatsii v Kyrgyzstane," *Delo No. ....*, No. 30 (448), 3 October, 2001, p. 5.

Analysts expect that the non-registered Islamic facilities might cause problems: certain forces could use them to meet and ideologically justify their anti-democratic actions. According to President of Tajikistan Rakhmonov, mosques are used for extremist propaganda. By way of example, the president pointed to one of the largest districts, the Isfara District, which lies between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, experts fear that the money certain mosques and Muslim communities receive from abroad is making the local clerics and the faithful dependent on foreign “investors.” This creates conditions for unlimited propaganda of religious ideas and madhabs alien to Kyrgyzstan.

This may cause religious tension and threaten society and the state. The republican clergy should decide how to develop Islam in full accordance with the local mentality, traditions, and historically shaped canonical ideas. We have to study in detail the interaction among all kinds of religious schools (Andijan, Namangan, Ferghana, Khujent, etc.) and the local type of Islam and their influence on the religious situation in the Central Asian countries.

It is believed that a serious analysis of the religious situation should be launched; that alternative approaches to religious education should be sought; and that the state should adequately respond to the confessional changes in the local countries. We should take into account, however, that because the faithful move from one madhab to another, the traditional Hanafi madhab is ceding its place to Hanbali madhab, Wahhabism, and certain other radical Islamic trends.

## Problems of Religious Education

Before 1991, the republic had no Muslim educational establishments of its own; today there is one Islamic university, as well as 6 colleges, and 43 madrasahs. At the same time, increasingly larger numbers of young people are seeking religious education abroad. According to the local media, there are about 600 young men from Kyrgyzstan studying in Islamic educational establishments abroad. The SAMK offers the following figures: in Pakistan there are over 50 Kyrgyz students; in Turkey, 76; in Egypt, 185 (all of them students of the Al'Azhar International Islamic University); in Syria, 17, Kuwait, 7; Saudi Arabia, 43 (7 of them studying in Mecca, others in Medina); Jordan, 3; the UAE, 1; Libya, 1; Iran, 10; the Russian Federation, 20. The list is not complete since many of those studying abroad found their own illegal ways to get there.

In the 1990s, the Islamic education system in the republic consisted of three stages: madrasahs at village or cathedral mosques (hujira), which provided basic information about Islam; independent madrasahs with fixed terms of study; and higher educational establishments. The Soviet Muslims were isolated far too long (seventy years) from the rest of the Islamic world to maintain an adequate educational level; and the Islamic legal culture and spiritual roots were lost.<sup>9</sup> The majority of the religious educational establishments are unable to properly organize the teaching process due to an inadequate material and technical base and insufficient experience, as well as a shortage of trained teachers and religious teaching aids. In many of the republic's madrasahs and colleges, teaching is limited to Koranic studies and religious rites. On the one hand, there are not enough trained teachers prepared to work on teaching curricula; while on the other, the majority of the local Muslims are convinced that the ability to read and understand the Koran, perform the rites, and explain the basic Surahs is more than enough for any Muslim.

<sup>8</sup> See: V. Volkov, N. Khorunzhiy, “Rossia sokhraniaet svoe prisutstvie v Tsentral'noy Asii,” *Izvestia*, 5 December, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> See: D.B. Malysheva, “Postsovetskiy Vostok v poiskakh religioznoy identichnosti,” *NG-Religii*, 18 September, 2002, p. 3.



However, the clergy believes that religious education should be better organized to cover Islamic theology and law, as well as secular subjects such as management, marketing, computer skills, history of religions, and foreign languages.

At the same time, in many madrasahs study courses are prolonged without good reason; some of them teach a narrow circle of theological subjects, thus making it hard for their graduates to find employment and become socially adapted. Today, the integration of the young madrasah graduates into civil society and their development into socially active individuals is one of the most urgent problems. They cannot be employed by secular organizations since the republic still lacks a system for licensing religious educational establishments, as well as certifying and accepting their graduation documents. (It should be added that religious education is not covered by the Law on Education.) This makes young graduates unemployable: nearly all imams are old people who prefer to transfer their posts to relatives.

The ICG analysts believe that religious education is one of the major problems of Islam in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>10</sup> Recently, experts have pointed out that this problem has not been resolved in any of the Central Asian republics; their state structures are just as concerned with it as the clerics. They believe that secular education and the principle of separation of religion from the state should become part of the country's legal system (that is, what we should expect from the Law on Religious Education). There is the opinion that religious extremism and terrorism are, in some way, products of an inadequate religious education and that it should be improved and upgraded to contribute to the common counterterrorist efforts.<sup>11</sup>

The revived religious activities have created a shortage of well-educated clerics in Kyrgyzstan, and elsewhere. According to the media, this was one of the reasons why all manner of foreign funds and missions were able to flood post-Soviet republics with their teachers, missionaries, and publications. It can be said that they were partly responsible for the destructive trends and groups that made their appearance in the republic, as well as for religious extremism. Some of the religious centers are using religious education to turn young men into radical fanatics who, it is reported, may join the ranks of religious extremists. This is very probable in the CIS. Rector of the Moscow Islamic University Imam-Khatyb Marat Murtazin pointed out that in the early 1990s, spiritual revival of the Muslims across the former Soviet Union created a shortage of educated imams, teachers, theologians, and experts in the Shari'a and other Islamic sciences. He said that the Arab Muslim world was expected to supply the post-Soviet countries with purely religious ideas devoid of political overtones and admitted: "The process of spiritual revival through the import of religious ideas turned out to be a painful one."<sup>12</sup>

We must point out that the majority of those who went abroad to receive Islamic education brought back not only Islamic theological knowledge, but also religious ideas and teaching which had nothing in common with the local traditions. Some of the former students are actively disseminating extreme Islamic trends; and their activities are negatively affecting local Muslim communities.

It should be said that the Law on the Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations, which speaks about separating the state educational system from religious organizations, says nothing about religious educational establishments; the law even permits lessons on spirituality and morals in secondary schools without specifying their content. This made it possible to teach the basics of certain religions and to invite clerics to do this in violation of the principles of separation of the state educational system from religion. Indeed, the law stipulates independence of education from the political and religious institutions, as well as the secular nature of education in state schools.

<sup>10</sup> *Tsentrāl'naiā Azia: Islam i gosudarstvo. ICG, doklad po Azii*, No. 59, Osh-Brussels, 10 July, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> See: K.K. Mamataliev, K.S. Murzakhalilov, "Obshchie problemy religioznogo obrazovaniā v Kyrgyzstane," *Materialy Mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii "Svoboda veroispovedaniā i obespecheniā mezhreligioznogo vzaimoponimaniā v stranakh Tsentrāl'noy Azii*, Bishkek, 2004, pp. 150-159.

<sup>12</sup> V. Volkov, N. Khorunzhiy, op. cit.

Many countries around the world are familiar with these and similar problems, yet each of them has specifics of its own. This calls for an analysis of the state of religious education in Kyrgyzstan, its normative and legal base, instances of illegal interference of religious organizations in the functioning of state educational establishments, and the relations between the state and religious associations in the sphere of education. The time has come to draft another Law on Religious Education in order to remove the present misunderstandings. In so doing, we should keep in mind that Kyrgyzstan is a secular state and that religious education is slowly but surely developing into an inalienable part of the general education process.

## Specific Features of Islamic Missionary Activities

Attracted by the Islamic revival, construction of new cultic facilities, and rebirth of religious education, Islamic missionaries from the Middle East started coming to the republic to spread Islam among the local people. Between 1996 and 2004, 243 missionaries were re-registered in Kyrgyzstan with a corresponding state structure. In 2003 alone, 60 of them were working in the republic; while in 2004 there were 43. They come mainly from Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Jordan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and other countries; most of them are employed by Islamic educational establishments where they teach Arabic, the Shari‘a fundamentals, and purely theological subjects.

Since some of foreign missionaries prefer to illegally spread religious ideas, rules, and customs which contradict those commonly accepted in Kyrgyzstan, as well as the traditional madhab, the SAMK leaders kept the services and the number of such people to the minimum. Still, the activities of those who continue promoting a one-sided and destructive approach to Islam should be given a principled assessment, while their negative influence should be cut short. According to A. Kniazev, missionaries from many religious-political groups have been illegally working in the republic since the 1990s. They were sent by Jamiat-ul-Islami and Jamiat-ul-Ulema (Pakistan), Daavat-ul-irshat, Sunni-Tehrib and Hara Qatur-ansar (the Liberation Army) of unknown affiliation; Islami Jamiat-ul Tuliaba (Afghanistan, the Taliban), and others.<sup>13</sup>

We are convinced that Pakistani missionaries and students from Pakistani educational establishments (the SAMK officially sent 51 young men there to be educated) represent the greatest danger to the republic. According to information obtained from indirect sources, there are at least 300 young Kyrgyz studying in that country, who left the republic through unofficial channels. Certain media warn that there are numerous religious extremist organizations engaged in training Islamic missionaries functioning in Pakistan. Their students are then sent illegally to the Muslim countries to preach reactionary Islam.

The ICG has reported that all kinds of Islamic groups have been appearing in Kyrgyzstan under the influence of people who received their religious education abroad: the Tablikh, made up of young men who studied in Pakistan, is the most active among them. The group is engaged in what its members call “daavat.”<sup>14</sup> The combination of destructive Islamic trends and daavat-ists is causing concern. This applies not so much to daavat itself as to the methods and forms used by the daavat-ists to profess Islam, even though the SAMK issued a fatwah against them.<sup>15</sup> The type of Islam they are out to im-

<sup>13</sup> See: A. Kniazev, “Afhanskiy faktor dlia Tsentral’noy Azii,” *Afhanskiy konflikt i radikal’ny islam v Tsentral’noy Azii*, Collection of documents and materials, Ilim Publishers, Bishkek, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> *Tsentral’naia Azia: Islam i gosudarstvo*.

<sup>15</sup> See: O.Sh. Mamaiusupov, *Voprosy (problemy) religii na perekhodnom periode*, Bishkek, 2003.

pose on the faithful causes rejection and frequently destabilizes the situation. For example, the daavat-ists call on the people to stop paying state land and water taxes, they ban TV watching, announce that women should perform namaz five times a day under the threat of divorce, that children should receive education in mosques rather than in secular schools, etc.

The daavat-ists are focusing their attention on young people; they are planting the idea that daavat is the duty of each Muslim and creating a negative opinion about those who disagree with this. This is creating fertile ground for propagandizing religious extremist ideas supported by Hizb ut-Tahrir, disseminating extremist writings, and organizing special events under the guise of daavat designed to attract new members.

## Realization of Religious Rights and Freedoms

Hajj to Mecca holds a special place among the restored Islamic rituals. In Soviet years, hajj was reduced to a minimum. According to the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, in 1989, 31 Soviet Muslims went to Mecca to fulfill their spiritual duty, compared to the 9,000 to 10,000 who performed hajj before the 1917 revolution.<sup>16</sup> During the period of independence, hajj was been revived as a new public phenomenon accepted by the wide masses. Today, over 2 million Muslims go to Mecca every year; in the 10-odd years of independence over 20,000 people have undertaken hajj to Mecca and over 500 citizens of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan have undertaken umra, also known as “smaller hajj.” In 1990, 40 people from Kyrgyzstan performed hajj, in 1991 their number was 350;<sup>17</sup> in 2003, 3,000; and in 2004, over 4,000. This shows that the republican state structures and the clergy have established good contacts and understanding with their colleagues in Saudi Arabia.

As soon as Kyrgyzstan joined the WTO it became much easier to get visas, which allows the local people to individually organize their trips. Starting in 2003, hajj became much better organized; many problems and obstacles were eliminated. The SAMK alone has the right to organize such trips.

Veneration of the holy places (mazars)—mausoleums, cemeteries, and natural objects, such as springs and rivers, groves, trees, mountains and stones, and unusual buildings—is common among the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan. Pilgrimages to such places have been very popular among them at all times, women playing an especially active role in maintaining this tradition. It seems that in Kyrgyzstan there are many more such places than anywhere else in Central Asia.<sup>18</sup> Some areas abound in such places: the Buran Tower in Tokmak, Gumbez Manas. The south, where non-Muslims account for a mere 3 to 4 percent of the total population and where the share of the faithful among the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks is especially high, is rich in holy places. The most important places of veneration are located there, such as Ydyrys Paygambar, Shah Fazil, Pach-Ata, Khoja-Bilial, Kadamjay, Abshyr-Ata, Sakhabalar, Kojokelen, Aiup Paygambar and Taht-i-Sulayman, which attract large crowds in the month of Ramazan and Kurban-ayt. Osh is often called the second Mecca.

## Hizb ut-Tahrir

There are religious political organizations prepared to carry out clandestine propaganda by distributing leaflets and other publications to plant the ideas of jihad in the minds of people in Central

<sup>16</sup> See: M. Zargishev, “S pomoshch’iu Allakha po puti Koranicheskoy istiny,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 2 April, 1993.

<sup>17</sup> See: B.A. Maltabarov, *Religia i sotsial’no-politicheskie protsessy v Kyrgyzstane*, Bishkek, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> See: A. Tabyshalieva, “Vzgliad na religioznuiu situatsiyu v Kyrgyzstane,” *Tsentral’naia Azia*, No. 11, 1997.

Asia. The illegal Hizb ut-Tahrir party has shouldered the burden of what is called “religious enlightenment” of the local peoples, especially of the Kyrgyz, who it believes are not yet ready to embrace its radical ideas. The party declares it is out to revive the Islamic community and Muslim lifestyle in the form of a worldwide Caliphate.<sup>19</sup>

According to the media, the U.S.-led international coalition acting in Afghanistan forced the terrorist structures (al-Qa‘eda, the Taliban, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) to use the latter’s clandestine network to destabilize the situation in Central Asia and the Northern Caucasus. (Significantly, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan now calls itself the Islamic Movement of Turkistan to demonstrate that it is not limiting itself to one country and is resolved to dominate the entire region.) Sh. Akmalov, deputy rector of the Tashkent Islamic University, has pointed out that the defeats the Taliban suffered in the successful counterterrorist operation in Afghanistan made Hizb ut-Tahrir even more belligerent.<sup>20</sup>

As an ultra-reactionary extremist party, Hizb ut-Tahrir is outlawed in the Middle East and Central Asia (including Kyrgyzstan). Due to contradictions among its leaders, two groups recently detached themselves from Hizb ut-Tahrir in Central Asia—Hizb an-Nusra and Akramiyya. In many of the Muslim countries, Hizb ut-Tahrir remains on the periphery of political activities because the mainstream Muslims normally view its ideology as non-orthodox. However, in Central Asia, where theological knowledge is fairly superficial, the party finds it easy to convince people, primarily young people, with the help of theoretical postulates and the latest information technologies.

According to ICG analysts,<sup>21</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir is spreading utopian approaches to political Islam, under which many of the social evils (primarily corruption and poverty) will be uprooted by the Shari‘a and Muslim governance. The organization has failed so far to publicly explain how this can be achieved. This is confirmed, in particular, by the fact that when talking to ICG people, many of the party members failed to explain how the Caliphate would deal with the social problems, how it would treat the followers of other religions, and how it would manage the economy.

An analysis of political publications and other sources shows that in Central Asia the Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders identified the population groups which might potentially support the idea of the Islamic Caliphate (even if it took time to convince them). They were the socially vulnerable groups (unemployed, pensioners, students, and large families); members of local executive structures who have the power to protect party cells against persecution; and people employed by the law enforcement bodies, who if need be could extend real support. The party leaders rely on the ayats of the Koran and the hadiths while openly calling for civil disobedience, fanning religious fanaticism and ethnic intolerance, and supplying very specific advice on how to change the constitutional order. Naturally enough, they select those Islamic postulates that coincide with their intentions. This selective treatment of the main Islamic sources makes it possible to dupe ignorant readers and audiences.<sup>22</sup> The party concentrates on the socially vulnerable groups and on mountain dwellers as potential party members, while piedmont and mountainous regions are regarded as suitable guerilla terrain.

The above testifies that Hizb ut-Tahrir is acting according to a well-substantiated strategic program; this is further confirmed by the stores of explosives and weapons found up in the mountains in 2002.

<sup>19</sup> See: O. Moldaliev, *Sovremennye vyzovy bezopasnosti Kyrgyzstana i Tsentral'noy Azii*, Bishkek, 2001.

<sup>20</sup> See: Sh. Akmalov, *Hizb ut-Tahrir—kak istochnik ugroz regional'noy bezopasnosti* [ЦентрАзия. <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php4?st=1057154700>], 2 July, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> See: “The IMU and the Hizb ut-Tahrir: Implication of the Afghanistan Campaign,” *ICG Asia Briefing Paper*, 30 January, 2002.

<sup>22</sup> See: A.K. Zayfert, A. Kraykemayer, *O sovместимости politicheskogo islama i bezopasnosti v prostranstve OBSE*, Sharki Ozod Publishers, Dushanbe, 2003, pp. 211-224.

While following the general trend of intensified terrorism and extremism around the world, the religious extremist party is stepping up its activities in Kyrgyzstan where its ideas were readily accepted by the socially vulnerable groups in the Kara-Suu, Bazar-Kurgan, Suza, Aravan, and Uzgen districts, and in Osh and Dzhahalal-Abad. The party entered a new stage of its propaganda efforts by reaching the Chu and Issyk Kul regions. Leaflets and other extremist publications have been appearing more frequently in crowded places, while in some places people are becoming open about their support of the party and trying to impose its ideas on their neighbors. The party mostly attracts uneducated unemployed youth from rural areas. In the north, the party's ideas are mostly promoted at the Bishkek markets—the points of convergence of young people flocking to the capital in search of employment. Away from their parents and deprived of family control, they fall easy prey to the party's propaganda.

## Islam and Democracy

In 2002, the Ulema Council of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan held a special meeting to discuss issues that the faithful, the clerics, and the theologians found urgent. This applied to the tasks posed by the First Kurultay of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, which elected a new mufti. The umma hailed the first statements of the new SAMK leaders, while the measures they took gave hope of consolidation inside the SAMK and among the Muslims.

Today, the SAMK structures (the kaziats) are functioning in all regions, there are also district and city mosques headed by chief imam-khatybs whose task is to coordinate all religious activities on their territories. The cathedral mosques that gather people for namaz on Fridays are headed by imam-khatybs; smaller local mosques which do not conduct Friday services are headed by imams. The SAMK and the regional kaziats are responsible for the Islamic educational establishments on their territories.

The Azreti Mufti has four deputies (naibs); the SAMK has the following departments: the fatwah; the daavat; the mosques and educational establishments; foreign relations; construction; press services, office, and bookkeeping department. The new SAMK leaders streamlined the documentary flow and the archives. In fact, in the past the SAMK had no archives to speak of, which made it impossible to carry out scholarly investigations on the history of Islam in the republic. Today, the new leaders are concentrating on the latest information and communication technologies supplied to all departments and local structures.

The Second Kurultay of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan held on 2003 analyzed Islam's confessional development in the republic, and its problems and prospects in light of the democratic changes taking place in the country. The Kurultay pointed out in particular that ordinary Muslims were sometimes pushed toward extremism by the ill-considered actions of non-conscientious imams.<sup>23</sup> In the last two years, the SAMK has done a lot to bring order to the Islamic structure in the republic and to assess the clerics. An Islamic University was opened in 2003 to educate knowledgeable theologians and provide scholarly and methodological assistance for the republic's Muslim educational establishments. It should be said that the local system of Islamic religious education has changed for the better, and that there are obvious efforts to raise its standards and quality with the help of the latest technologies and by familiarizing students with generally accepted democratic values.

To help heal social wounds, the SAMK has established partner relationships with international Islamic sponsors and other organizations; today the SAMK leaders and local clerics are actively coop-

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<sup>23</sup> See: O.Sh. Mamaiusopov, K.S. Murzakhalilov, K.K. Mamataliev, *Islam v Kyrgyzstane: tendentsii razvitiia*, Bishkek, 2004.

erating with the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) and the U.N. Development Program (UNDP). In 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 these two organizations, working together with the religious leaders and clerics, conducted a series of seminars on reproductive health and a proper attitude to a healthy lifestyle. The republic has still be unable to cope with the problems created by infant and mother mortality, the growing number of sick children, including those born sick, prostitution, drug addiction, AIDS, etc. Islamic theologians are convinced that they cannot remain indifferent to these social evils.

According to foreign experts, the pilot forms of involvement of Islamic clerics in socially important projects have no analogies in Central Asia or elsewhere in the world.

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## RELIGION AND CONFLICT POTENTIAL IN GEORGIA

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**R**eligion rarely breeds global conflicts, yet on many occasions it deepens them.<sup>1</sup> Potentially, it can also smooth over conflict situa-

<sup>1</sup> See: H. Müller, "Kampf der Kulturen—Religion als Strukturfaktor einer weltpolitischen Konfliktformation?" in: *Politik und Religion* ("Politische Vierteljahresschrift, Sonderheft," 33/2002), M. Minkenberg, U. Willems (Hg.). Wiesbaden, 2003, S. 575.

tions. This is the way to approach Georgia's conflict potential generated by the religious factor: we must identify the role of religion in the present confrontations (including the ethnic ones). We must analyze the role the outside world plays in this context and the degree to which the religious factor affects Georgia's relations with the rest of the world.

### A Glimpse into the Past

Throughout history, religion in Georgia has almost always been closely connected with the state. The heyday of Georgian church architecture, monasteries, and theological thought fell during the 9th-10th centuries. It directly predated the heyday of the Georgian state under David IV and Queen Tamar in the 12th-13th centuries. Georgia did not know religious strife: the witch-hunting, extermination of those who belonged to other confessions, persecution of the Jews, and so on, typical of medieval Western

Europe and Russia were unknown in Georgia. In the 7th century when Christian Orthodoxy finally triumphed, there were no heresies or dissent in the Georgian Christian Orthodox Church (GOC): all conflicts were timely defused. All political figures, David the Builder among them, paid a lot of attention to developments in the religious sphere and church life, and sought support from the most respected religious leaders.

The decline of Georgian statehood, which occurred in the 14th-15th centuries, led to the breakdown of the united state into smaller kingdoms and princedoms in the 16th century. Christian Orthodoxy also began to lose its foothold. This was mainly caused by external factors: the country found itself to be an island in a hostile Islamic ocean; the Georgians suffered Tamerlane's devastating raids, who insisted on, but failed to achieve, Islamization of the local nobles. Later, at the end of the 15th century, the Ottoman Empire and Iran moved right up to Georgia's borders. To fortify their domination, they tried to plant Islam in the Caucasus and failed because of the Georgian Christians. In the north, the country bordered on the Islamic Northern Caucasus, which Istanbul and Isfahan constantly stirred up against Georgia. Religion—Christianity vs. Islam—determined the continued existence of the Georgian state and the Georgians as a nation. In the latter half of the 18th century, contrary to the political realities of the time, Russia was chosen as an ally because of its shared religion, Christianity. An analytical document compiled by the Collegium for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire in November 1768 entitled "Discussion of Methods Designed to Draw the Georgian Kingdoms into a War Against Turkey" said in part: "The Georgians are a restless nation accustomed to military exercises and feats; the faith they follow here, which is the same as in Russia, arouses devotion to the Russian imperial house and benevolence toward the Russians. There are hopes of being more successful than before if we pool forces with the local empire against the Ottoman Porte... Georgian Czar Irakly, rather than Czar of Imeretia Solomon, may be the cause of something going wrong. The former has to defend his possessions only against the Lezghians—Imeretia separates his possessions from the Turks. At the times when the latter is not attacked, it... protects the Georgian Czar from the difficulties caused by his Turkish neighbor... The Georgians are very religious people, therefore Irakly's unwillingness can be overcome by addressing his conscience."<sup>2</sup>

This is one of many examples testifying that religion played an important role in the Georgian kingdoms when it came to selecting a foreign policy course. Early in the 19th century, the shared religion made it fairly easy for the Russian Empire to absorb the Georgian kingdoms and princedoms.<sup>3</sup> However, this did not prevent the Russian Empire from doing away with the GOC autocephaly and the Patriarchate and banning the use of the Georgian language in church services. It was at the same time that ancient Georgian frescoes in churches were concealed under tapestry. In the 19th and early 20th century, this drove away many Georgians from the church and, therefore, from the faith. Under Soviet power, the GOC like all other churches and confessions in the atheist empire found itself in a quandary. This pushed aside the factor of common faith in the relations between Georgia and Russia. The current relations between the two states have amply testified that the religious factor which tied the two nations together has politically been reduced to naught.

Today, the attitude of Georgian society to religion in the political context and the influence of religion on current Georgian policies are largely determined by the historical aspects discussed above. For the nation's majority its devotion to Christian Orthodoxy has been and remains a demonstration of patriotism and the self-identification of the individual in the nation. (Here I do not refer to an individual's personal religious convictions, his attitude to the church, etc.—I have in mind collective self-identification.) The militant atheism of the Soviet period damaged the position of Christianity in

<sup>2</sup> V. Macharadze, *Materialy po istorii russko-gruzinskikh otosheniy vtoroy poloviny XVIII veka*, Part III, Issue I, Tbilisi, 1988, p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> For more detail, see: G. Rtskhiladze, "Georgian Foreign Policy of the Second Half of the 18th Century and the Religious Factor," *Religion* (Tbilisi), No. 3-4, 1999, pp. 47-55 (in Georgian).

Georgia, yet what Ilya Chavchavadze said in the late 19th century is still full of meaning. This is more so because most people look at him as an absolute authority; in 1987 the GOC canonized him as St. Ilya the Righteous. Said he: "Besides the teaching of Christ, for us Christianity means the land of Georgia. Today, across the Trans-Caucasus the Georgian and the Christian are synonyms. Instead of saying 'he adopted Christianity' they will say 'he became a Georgian.'"<sup>4</sup>

In other words, Orthodox Christianity has an important role to play in the Georgians' self-identification as a nation; and it is primarily important for domestic policies. According to recent public opinion polls conducted by the Tbilisi IRI office, a third of ethnic Georgians do not consider the Muslims and Judaists (religions which have been practiced in Georgia for many centuries) to be Georgians (compatriots), while 92 percent favor expulsion of Jehovah's Witnesses from the country.<sup>5</sup> This is fraught with conflicts.

Religion remains in the foreground when it comes to an assessment of certain foreign policy issues: people look at Turkey as the second, after Russia, most dangerous country for Georgia.<sup>6</sup> Today, Tbilisi and Ankara are actively developing partnership and good-neighborly relations; the state border between the two countries has been demarcated and delimited, trade, communications, etc. are rapidly developing. This shows that this treatment of Turkey (Armenia, Russia's strategic partner, is perceived as the third "most dangerous country," and not Muslim Azerbaijan, which leans toward Turkey) is rooted in the past and in the political and religious confrontation of the old days described above.

## People's Religious Affiliation and the Main Trends of Interaction among the Main Religions in Georgia's Regions

According to the latest population census of 2002, there are 4,371,535 people living in Georgia; 3,872,099 of them, or 88.6 percent of the total population, are Christians; and 3,666,233, or 83.9 percent of the total population, are Orthodox Christians. There are 34,727, or 0.8 percent, Catholics in the country; 171,139, or 3.9 percent, Armenian Gregorians; 3,541, or 0.1 percent, Judaists; 433,784, or 9.9 percent, Muslims; 33,468, or 0.8 percent, belong to other confessions; and 28,631, or 0.6 percent, do not affiliate themselves with any confession. At the same time, 94.7 percent of ethnic Georgians are Orthodox Christians; 3.8 percent are Muslims; and 0.3 percent are Catholics.<sup>7</sup>

Those ethnic Georgians who do not belong to Christian Orthodoxy live mainly in Ajaria (there are about 115,160 Sunni Muslims; over 240,550 Orthodox Christians; 683 Catholics; over 3,160 Armenian Gregorians; 161 Judaists; 966 follow other religions; and over 15,330 describe themselves as atheists) and in the neighboring Akhalsikhe District (there are about 27,870 Catholics).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> I. Chavchavadze, *Thoughts* (compiled by G. Kalandarishvili), Tbilisi, 1989, p. 13 (in Georgian). To exclude possible misunderstandings I should say that Chavchavadze added: the Georgian clerics at all times were doing their best to "uplift, raise, and ennoble the Fatherland and nationality to the level of faith," which means that faith came above all else and that even the Motherland had no meaning without faith. Today post-Soviet Georgian nationalists often ignore this.

<sup>5</sup> The author thanks Mr. Dmitry Shashkin, head of the IRI program in Tbilisi, for this information.

<sup>6</sup> According to information supplied by Mr. Shashkin.

<sup>7</sup> See: *Demografia*, ed. by Anzor Totadze, Tbilisi, No. 2 (7), 2004, p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.



Ethnic minorities in Georgia are mainly not Orthodox Christians and not Christians. The Azerbaijanians in Kvemo Kartli are Muslims, the majority of them are Shi'a Muslims (there are 225,657 of them); the share of the Orthodox Georgian population increased at the expense of Svan migrants (there are over 242,080 of Orthodox Christians); 25,688 Armenian Gregorians live mainly in the Tsalka District; and there are also over 85,000 Armenian Gregorians in Javakhetia. The few Kistin Chechens of the Pankissi Gorge are Sunni Muslims. Abkhazia, with the exception of the Kodori Gorge, was not covered by the population census. There is no information about the religious affiliation of the Ossets of the Tskhinvali Region. Historically, the Ossets of Georgia are either Christians or atheists. The Abkhazes are mainly Muslims, even though for propaganda purposes the authorities prefer to concentrate on the Christian past of these lands.

I shall not go into detail about the confessional affiliation of the Abkhazes and Ossets, since today the religious factor is not prominent in the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Osset conflicts. The conflict potential of religion is limited to a possible confrontation between the churches of Russia and Georgia: the authorities of both Abkhazia and South Ossetia refuse to accept not only Georgian laymen refugees in their territories, but also those Georgian clerics who used to serve in the local Georgian Orthodox churches. The resultant vacuum is filled with Russian clerics (more often than not without the consent of the GOC patriarchy on the canonical territory of which the Georgian Orthodox churches in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region are located). The newcomers refuse to accept the Georgian Patriarch as their head—something which the GOC cannot accept either. Recently a certain Father Georgi made numerous provocative statements: he accused the Georgian clergy of supporting the “genocide of the Osset nation.” (This man is believed to be the chief cleric of the Tskhinvali officials.) The Patriarchy of the Russian Christian Orthodox Church (ROC) dissociates itself from the inadequate behavior of its lower-ranking clerics in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali: it insists that they have neither its approval, nor were they ordained by it. The Georgian and Russian churches are working on settling the problems through a dialog. This became possible when the ROC reconfirmed the autocephaly of the GOC in 1990 (initially confirmed in 1943). Patriarchs Aleksiy II and Ilya II have warm personal relations. At the same time, we should not ignore the fact that continued good relations between the churches depend, in the first place, on the ROC, which has to find the limit beyond which assistance to the believers in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali develops into an attempt to squeeze the GOC out of its canonical territory.

Kvemo Kartli knew no serious religious problems except for small incidences; the same can be said of Javakhetia where on several occasions local Armenians destroyed old Georgian inscriptions on churches to replace them with Armenian ones. This was probably unrelated to religion and for ethnic reasons. The Pankissi Gorge, where Wahhabism flourishes, can be described as a problem territory. Unlike in Kvemo Kartli, in the Pankissi Gorge the Georgian authorities were unable to prevent Wahhabism from being imported from Chechnia, and nor were any real efforts applied. The local Kistin Chechens are less loyal to the Georgian state (this was true even before they embraced Islam of the Wahhabi type) than the other ethnic-religious minorities (with the exception of the Abkhazes and Ossets). In 1992, during the war in Abkhazia, Kistin Chechens boarded a train to go fighting together with Abkhazes against Georgia. Georgians stopped the train in Eastern Georgia and forced the passengers to go home. (Georgian TV covered this in detail.) Today, when the bloodshed in Chechnia is still going on and Chechens are occupied with fighting the Russian army, and when the relations between Moscow and Tbilisi are strained, a religious conflict around the Pankissi Gorge is hardly possible. The local Wahhabis have no other choice: they have to demonstrate their loyalty to the Georgian state. To do this they recently invited the Georgian president's wife to a local mosque. Despite this, the gorge remains a potentially conflict area because the normally not peaceful Chechen variant of Islam has grown even more radical there.

The situation in Ajaria deserves special attention. The figures quoted above show that the Muslims are not in the majority in this autonomous republic populated mainly by Ajarian and Gurian

Georgians. Because of the Ottoman expansion, the former became Muslims while the latter remained Christians. Islam failed to destroy the Georgian ethnic self-awareness among the Ajarian Georgians, even though in the late Middle Ages the Ottoman Empire kindled several fratricide clashes between the Georgian Muslims and Christians. In 1918, the first Georgian republic appeared after the Russian Empire had fallen apart; the Ajarians remained with Georgia despite their faith. During the perestroika years when the state weakened its grip on religion, the GOC turned its attention to Ajaria. Baptisms, etc. became much more frequent there. The communist collapse in Georgia triggered a Christian renaissance and church-building boom in the country, including Ajaria. The process, which started in the late 1980s, is going on fairly smoothly without extremes. In 1991, Batumi, the capital of Ajaria, was a scene of mass unrest: instigated by members of mountainous mosques people took to the streets in protest against the alleged plans to destroy the republic's autonomous status. These were not anti-Christian rallies—they were meant to defend the republic's autonomy, where Aslan Abashidze had been ruling with a firm hand since 1991. Even though he was balancing between Islam and Christianity and funded construction of churches and mosques, Orthodox Christianity gained in strength in the republic during his rule: the number of Christians increased; and the number of churches rose at a faster pace than the number of mosques.<sup>9</sup> (Churches also appeared in the republic's mountainous areas, the stronghold of Islam.) As an Ajarian and relying largely on his Ajarian entourage, Abashidze described himself as a Christian in front of TV cameras and was seen praying in an Orthodox church. The political importance of this cannot be overestimated. At one time his wife (now deceased) was actively involved in charities and collected donations for churches and monasteries. It was in her time that the GOC received a renovated and excellently equipped orphanage and other facilities.

In the post-Abashidze era, Orthodox Christianity continues to gain in strength: in June 2004, about 200 people from the Khelvachauri District were baptized in the Machakhela River and were presented with baptismal crosses (this was the third mass baptism in this eparchy within a very short time). To mark the place of a future church in the village of Zemo Chkhutuneti, a cross was set up with the blessing of Archbishop of Batumi and Skhalt Dimitry. The Trinity Cathedral is being built in Batumi. The new authorities show their respect for Islam: members of the Ajarian government arrived at the Batumi mosque to congratulate the faithful with Kurban-Bayram. Tbilisi will probably continue using Islam of Ajaria to demonstrate to the Islamic world its religious tolerance and respect for Islam. (In 1992, during an official visit to Georgia of then President of Iran Rafsanjani, he was taken to Ajarian mountainous mosques even though, as distinct from Iranians, the local Muslims were not Shi'ites.)

## **The Main Stumbling Blocks in Church-State Relations and Public Sentiments in Georgia**

Orthodox Christianity, the traditional religion of the absolute majority of Georgians, was not the only faith which became more active in the post-Soviet period. The country attracted numerous sects, mostly from America; there are also Oriental (Hindu) sects operating in the country. (I had personal experience of this when exotic Far Eastern members of the Moon church knocked at my door

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<sup>9</sup> Three churches and one monastery functioned in Ajaria before 1991. Between 1991 and 2001, at least 24 churches were either built or renovated (the author would like to thank Archbishop of Batumi and Skhalt Dimitry and the head of the Archbishop Secretariat for this information).

uninvited.) The Jehovah's Witnesses are the most active and most notorious among the foreign sects; they are lavishly funded from Pennsylvania in the United States and from Germany. They, and similar structures, cannot compete with Christianity and create a more or less massive following, yet their noisy campaigns attract public attention. For example, their members who needed a blood transfusion for medical reasons flatly refused to have it for religious considerations. This caused the death of a small girl whose mother preferred loyalty to the sect and its bans. Several times the sect members found themselves in comical situations; they even tried to walk on the water of Lake Bazalet to emulate Jesus Christ who walked on the water of the Sea of Galilee. No wonder these "benefactors" from across the ocean aroused the indignation of the GOC and public at large. This and similar sects, however, found patrons in Georgia as well: they are NGOs functioning on Western money and influential politicians who blocked everything the GOC suggested in order to legally limit the activities of the so-called totalitarian sects in Georgia.

It should be added that in the years of restored independence, the state did nothing to control the sects—they enjoyed complete freedom. For example, as distinct from the Catholic Church, the Jehovah's Witnesses are a legal entity, and they are active in business and publishing: their eye-catching propagandist literature printed abroad is brought into the country exempt from customs duty. Many influential Western politicians did not shun direct lobbying of their sectarian friends' business and religious interests. Former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker (who in 2003 was actively involved in the election campaign in Georgia) wrote the following in a letter to then President Shevardnadze dated 28 October, 1998: "I am writing this note to introduce my friend, Dan C. Jorgensen, and his son, J. Henry Jorgensen. They are business and ranching people from Utah. As you may know, Utah was founded in mid-1800 by Mormon pioneers.

"Dan's youngest son, J. Henry, is currently serving on a voluntary basis as the assistant to the President of the Church's Mission in Rostov, which includes Georgia, Armenia, and the Black Sea area of Russia. If possible and convenient to your schedule, they would like to introduce you very briefly to Robert Schwartz, President of the Rostov Mission, and then meet with the appropriate authority in the government responsible for religious affairs to explain their work and explore the steps necessary to become recognized in Georgia.

"If you cannot see them, I would certainly understand. However, I would be grateful if you could assist them in setting up a meeting with the appropriate officials. They could be in Tbilisi for one or two days between November 12 to 17 for meetings. Please have your staff communicate your decision directly to them at..."<sup>10</sup>

It is commonly believed that Petr Mamradze, former head of the State Chancellery (now the Cabinet Chancellery) and a close associate of late Zurab Zhvania, was one of the most zealous lobbyists of Western sects. Mr. Mamradze never bothered to conceal his bias toward the Baptists; he is known to criticize, albeit indirectly, Orthodox Christianity and the GOC and calls himself "an agnostic." In any case, his pronouncements on religious issues raise certain questions: a head of the State Chancellery is not supposed to offer comments on religious matters.

The Georgian authorities have failed to adjust religious relations to the new realities and finally abandoned the idea of a new law. Instead, they entered into a constitutional agreement with the GOC based on Art 9 of the Basic Law, in which the state recognized the GOC's services to Georgia and its special place in Georgian history. The agreement (concordat) took an unreasonably long time to be completed (for the document's details see below) and left other religions and confessions beyond its scope. The resultant legal vacuum and freedom of sects abetted by the state's passivity and even by the state's latent encouragement aroused illegal and frequently ugly responses. Excommunicated priest Basil Mkalavishvili and his followers made it their business to beat up members of the Jehovah's

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<sup>10</sup> Unpublished document from the author's personal archive.

Witnesses, attack their congresses, intercept and burn their books, etc. This was done with the public's latent yet obvious approval. For this reason the state did not dare to move against him and his crowd. When his actions became known internationally, the government instituted a case against him before the court. He stopped appearing in public, while the law enforcement bodies, in turn, stopped looking for the wanted priest.

These processes drew a response not only from Mkalavishvili's small flock. In the summer of 2002, the office of the so-called Liberty Institute, one of the main defenders of the "oppressed" religious minorities, was raided, and its officials were mercilessly beaten. The media wrote that a certain Orthodox Christian fundamentalist organization Djvari (The Cross) was responsible for this. There are many other signs that the relations between the sects and the radical Orthodox Christians have become explosive.

These developments have inevitably affected the GOC: on the one hand, the ultra-liberals (Basil Kobakhidze and several other priests) became more active. They have outside support from the NGOs of the Liberty Institute ilk that sided with the opposition to Shevardnadze (with the same people who later came to power). Their cooperation is still alive. The ultra-liberals did not limit themselves to just criticism of Mkalavishvili's obscurantist group—they launched an ideological attack on the GOC and specifically on the Patriarchy. They described Mkalavishvili as the product of the policies pursued by the Patriarchy, which had allegedly moved to an ultra-conservative, Russophilic, etc. position; and that allegedly Patriarch Ilya II had been pushed aside and could no longer control the situation. They were especially critical of a decision to withdraw from the World Council of Churches (of which Ilya II was the president for some time) and from the Conference of European Churches passed in 1997. For some reason they were convinced that the decision was instigated by Moscow, or to be more exact, by the ROC.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the "liberals" demonstratively take part in ecumenical services without the permission of their superiors. Thus they are violating one of the underlying principles of the Church—obedience.

At the same time, "ultra-conservatives" also became quite active in the church and quasi-church circles. They are obscurantists who are placing their stakes on xenophobia and total confrontation with the entire world. There are forces oriented toward similar groups in the ROC (they refuse to recognize the Cross of St. Nino, a symbol of Christianity in Georgia, kept in the Cathedral of Sioni). Their influence is fairly limited. There are several larger groups which think along "national Orthodoxy" lines and are paranoid about everything foreign. (They never tire of looking for masons, producing forgeries like a Dulles speech that has never been made, etc.) These groups might have gained some weight. It was obvious that in recent years Patriarch Ilya II and other high church figures were under pressure from the ultra-liberal and ultra-conservative fronts. Judging by the rumors about Ilya II's possible replacement with the Bishop of Dmanissi Zenon, which appeared in the press late in 2004, the liberals scored a temporary victory. Bishop Zenon, however, resolutely denied this possibility and condemned all attempts at putting pressure on Ilya II; the public negatively responded to the very possibility of replacing the patriarch; students went into the streets to support him. (According to the public opinion poll carried in 2003, the GOC enjoyed the support of over 80 percent of the country's population.) These acts have somewhat defused the tension.

Back in 2003 Patriarch Ilya II and the GOC Holy Synod warned the nation: "Recently our society has been demonstrating lamentably unhealthy trends. Some people seem to be unaware that religious extremism and radical liberalism deepen the existing split... We would like to point out that the Orthodox Christians of our country are not irritated by all sorts of religious groups and sects per se—it is their unscrupulous proselytism that causes displeasure. It seems that the state should take timely

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. an article by a "liberal" priest Father Mikael Asatiani of 10 July, 2004 [<http://kavkaz-uzel.ru/printdigest/digest/id/683372.html>].

measures to adopt a Law on Religion to bring order to the current situation and uproot the wrong trends.”<sup>12</sup> Even before that, on 12 July, 2003 the Patriarchy issued a statement in which it condemned both liberals and conservatives who put pressure on the Church. At a press conference, Archpriest David Sharashenidze, who heads the Patriarchy press center, said that the extremists who were accusing the Georgian Orthodox Church of contacts with other confessions and the liberals who spoke about its contacts with the Russian special services “were manipulated by all sorts of forces trying to establish their control over the Georgian Orthodox Church.” He pointed to Archpriest Basil Kobakhidze as the pillar of the “liberals,” who was convinced that the GOC was influenced by dark forces which gained control in 1997 when the GOC left the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches. He rejected these accusations as false and confirmed that the Patriarchy maintained friendly contacts with all Christian Orthodox churches. He went on to say that the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches “failed to justify the hopes and did not till the ground for a genuinely Christian unification.”<sup>13</sup> The Synod, which met for its session late in 2004, had to suspend the performance of religious rites by priest Basil Kobakhidze for flagrant violations of the Church canons; other “liberal” priests were warned.<sup>14</sup> These resolute steps poured cold water on the zealous radicals, yet they failed to resolve the contradictions inside the Church.

This relatively protracted conflict inside the Church belongs to the relations between the GCO and the state: I have already written that all kinds of groups actively involved in Church and religious developments were closely connected both with certain sections of society and NGOs and with all sorts of political forces. There are two fields of problems in state/Church relations: the attitude to the sects and non-interference in the Church’s domestic affairs. While the GOC, society, and the state remain riveted on these problems, other urgent issues actively discussed in the West on the initiative of the Catholic and other confessions (abortion laws, social programs, etc.) are left outside the scope of public attention in Georgia. Meanwhile, in our country education is an obvious priority in the GOC’s relations with the state.

The concordat between power (represented by the president) and the Church (represented by the Catholicos-Patriarch) signed on 14 October, 2002<sup>15</sup> envisages the sides’ cooperation in this sphere. Art 5 of the document contains three paragraphs: teaching the Orthodox faith as an optional subject in schools, the Church being responsible for its content and the teachers; under Georgian law and on an equal basis, the state and the Church agreed to recognize and accept the certificates, academic titles, and ranks issued by educational establishments; the state and the Church acquired the right to carry out joint educational programs in this sphere, and the state undertakes the task of ensuring the functioning of religious educational establishments.

Very soon after the ceremony to sign the concordat (this is still the only legal act related to the Church or religion in Georgia), new people came to power in the republic. At first, the new Minister of Education Alexander Lomaya, who used to head the Georgian Office of the Soros Foundation, was not a zealous supporter of the document. He wanted to draw a line between secular secondary education and religion. In one of his interviews he pointed out that he was not only opposed to religious lessons in schools, but also preferred to keep Georgian hagiography from the school courses of Georgian literature (since Soviet times, Georgian schoolchildren have become acquainted with the masterpieces of Georgian hagiographic literature). The minister called hagiographic works “dead texts” and went as far as saying that “history contains a lot of rubbish.” Naturally enough the public negatively responded to the minister’s unethical and superficial pronouncements. It turned out that the high official had meager knowledge of the history of his own country: when asked by journalist Sharashia during

<sup>12</sup> *Sakartvelos Respublika*, 11 September, 2003 (in Georgian).

<sup>13</sup> [<http://www.iberieli.org.ua/ru/?do=snews&id=1332>].

<sup>14</sup> [[http://patriarchate.ge/ne/akt\\_sinoda.htm](http://patriarchate.ge/ne/akt_sinoda.htm)].

<sup>15</sup> For the Georgian original and Russian translation see the Portal-Credo.ru Web site.

a live TV show about the first czar of united Georgia, he failed to supply the name. A considerable part of the public and the GOC found it hard to accept other measures the minister carried out to reform the educational system. There is tension in the relations between him and the Church. Many people look at Mr. Lomaya as the embodiment of cosmopolitanism and globalism, which are competing with Georgian traditions, culture, and the Orthodox faith. This was why teachers, parents of schoolchildren, and students gathered outside the ministry's building to demand Mr. Lomaya's resignation. The Liberty Institute mentioned above and the youth organization Kmara sided with the minister.

The minister had to retreat from his uncompromising positions and enter into a dialog with the GOC. In January 2005, the Church and the Ministry of Education signed a memorandum on cooperation in the sphere of school education. Patriarch Ilya II wanted it to be made more specific in order to put the principles of the two documents (the concordat and the memorandum) into practice. He pointed out that the ceremony of signing the memorandum was merely the first step. It is still unclear how far the sides are prepared to move toward each other and whether they will reach a compromise on the fundamental issues. In any case, education remains the main point where the state and the Church meet for possible fruitful cooperation; at the same time, this sphere remains volatile.

## The Religious-Church Policies of “Revolutionary” Power

The political elite which came to power in November 2003 is actively drawing on the religion's political and consolidating potential. The president treats the GOC with a blend of Byzantine popery of Caesars and American Civil Religion. Let's discuss this in the right order.

Eduard Shevardnadze was deposed on 23 November, on St. George's Day; Aslan Abashidze was forced to emigrate on 6 May, another St. George's Day. Inspired by this coincidence, I. Okruashvili, the president's "right hand" (now Minister of Defense), predicted in front of TV journalists that before the next St. George's Day (23 November) Eduard Kokoyta would be expelled from Tskhinvali. In the fight against Shevardnadze and his government Mikhail Saakashvili's National Movement was actively using the cross, one of the Christian symbols. Later, the flag with five crosses was accepted as the official flag of Georgia (the Muslim minority—Azeris and Ajarian Georgians—did not object). Today, once a week every school holds a hoisting of the flag ceremony. The president himself can be seen in different churches at all turning points in the country's policies. His pompous inauguration began in the Helati monastery built by Czar David IV the Builder, the most beloved of the Georgian monarchs. It was in the Kashveti Church in Tbilisi that he announced "national reconciliation," on the anniversary of the Rose Revolution he addressed the Ukrainians in Ukrainian from the new St. Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi, and it was in the same cathedral that the president made his political statement in connection with the death of Premier Zhvania. In most cases, the president is greeted with a red carpet in front of a church. Recently, he started kissing the Patriarch's hand (even Minister of Education Lomaya learned to do the same). In the fall of 2004, at a reception of representatives of NGOs critically disposed toward the Patriarchy and the GOC in general, the president said that nobody should interfere in the Church's affairs.<sup>16</sup> This confirms that the disagreements between the Patriarchy and the president personally have been resolved. By making these statements, the president moved away from his "liberal" supporters. It seems that among other things he realized that the public did not approve of the pressure on the Church.

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<sup>16</sup> He said the same when opening the spring 2005 parliamentary session and described the Patriarch's neutrality during the Rose Revolution as a "civil act of heroism."

The impression is created that the president's policies take into account the interests of Orthodox Christianity as the country's key religion. A closer inspection, however, reveals that he is following in the footsteps of Shevardnadze's religious policies (if he had any at all). On the one hand, he demonstrates his respect to the church; on big religious holidays he can be seen in a church with a candle in hand; he meets the GOC half-way on property and money issues; while on the other, he is stalling on the most urgent issues—education and the sects. In fact, Mikhail Saakashvili has demonstrated what can be called at least ignorance of Orthodox Christianity or even disrespect of this religion: on two occasions he stood in church with his back to the altar and gave political speeches not agreed on in advance with the clergy. No wonder Basil Mkalavishvili was arrested inside the church built on his parish money: law enforcement bodies used a bulldozer to enter the church, thus desecrating it and the icons. The police and state security officers mercilessly beat up those who defended the church, mainly women. At all times in Georgia, churches and other holy places have been respected. The public was divided over the fact of Mkalavishvili's arrest (he was recently sentenced to six years in prison) because he raided meetings of sect members. Few people, however, approved of the barbarian methods used to arrest him.

The above suggests that many of the president's symbolic actions (and power as a whole) related to the religious sphere have nothing in common with the spirit of Orthodox Christianity. They can be described as an attempt to turn the Church into a political instrument. This is a Byzantine tradition that comes close to the phenomenon of "Civil Religion" in the United States, which means a "combination of elements of faith, symbols, and rituals which ties citizens to a political community and, in the final analysis, legitimizes this community as represented by its institutions and representatives."<sup>17</sup> Civil Religion supports "the idea that keeps the nation together as a single whole."<sup>18</sup> At the same time, there is the opinion that Civil Religion is merely "a faith of order" rather than "a faith of salvation" (which is Christianity), and that Civil Religion is a "deistic religion of burgher consciousness."<sup>19</sup> I am convinced that an attempt to plant the principles of Civil Religion diluted with Byzantine traditions and more or less adjusted to "local specifics" is fraught with a sharp rebuff from the large part of society who are oriented toward Orthodox Christianity, and not only as their "personal faith."<sup>20</sup> It is resolutely opposed to imported values that have nothing in common with Christian Orthodox values and principles.

The GOC, it turns, does not want to be drawn into domestic political conflicts; it is trying to defuse volatile situations while remaining neutral by calling on the sides to enter into negotiations and even offering its mediation. (This happened in particular during a crisis between the Georgian leaders and Aslan Abashidze, head of Ajaria.) On different occasions the Church achieved different results.<sup>21</sup>

### *Key Conclusions*

There is no direct danger of a religious confrontation in the country; and there can be no confrontation along Christianity-Islam, Christianity-Judaism, etc. lines. There are practically no religious

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<sup>17</sup> M. Brocker, "Zivilreligion—missionarisches Sendungsbewusstsein—christlicher Fundamentalismus? Religiöse Motivlagen in der (Außen-)politik George W. Bushs," *Zeitschrift für Politik*, Heft 2, Munich, 2003, S. 122.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem. Here is an interesting parallel: Civil Religion has boosted American patriotism ("America, the freest country of the world," etc. See: *ibid.*, S. 123). Saakashvili, too, is trying to boost Georgian patriotism with slogans of the "Ours is the finest flag in the world!" "Ajarians are the best Europeans!" type.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. topical processes of "deprivatization" and politicization of religion in Latin America, the U.S. and Europe (U. Willems, M. Minkenberg, *Politik und Religion im Übergang—Tendenzen und Forschungsfragen am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts*; Dies. (Hrsg.), 2003, s. o., S. 14).

<sup>21</sup> The authority of the GOC proved insufficient to stem the confrontation of 1991-1993; it was more successful when it called for not using force during the "revolutionary" events in Tbilisi and later in Batumi.

overtone in the ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. There is an obvious confrontation, however, between Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism, as well as with the Protestants: Vatican emissaries are convinced that the rights of Catholics in Georgia are violated,<sup>22</sup> while in 2002 the GOC deliberately defeated an interstate agreement between Georgia and Vatican. There is a conflict between Orthodox Christianity and foreign sects, which causes confrontation inside the GOC and disagreements between it and the state. The West, which under the guise of freedom of conscience is supporting the sects working in Georgia, is making things worse: this may fan anti-Western sentiments in society. The Georgian public fears the encroachment of alien cultures and values.

On the whole, this tension should not be overestimated since the followers of non-Orthodox Christian trends and sects are few and far between. In fact, the tension is caused by the inappropriately high (taking into account their numbers) level of the latter's activity at the political level too.

<sup>22</sup> [<http://www.civil.ge/rus/article.php?id=3320>]. It should be noted that the non-Orthodox confessions keep together.

## THE ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN KYRGYZSTAN

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Kyrgyzstan is a multiethnic and multi-confessional republic in which, according to the 1990 population census, more than 90 different ethnic groups live. The largest is represented by the Kyrgyz, who comprise 64.9% of the republic's residents, followed by Uzbeks, 13.8%, and Russians, 12.5%. But significant changes have occurred in the ethnic structure of the population since this census was carried out. For example, the size of the Muslim ethnic groups has dramatically grown: the Kyrgyz by 40%, the Turks by 57%, the Dungsans by 40%, the Uighurs by 27%, the Tajiks by 27%, and the Uzbeks by 21%, while the number of Christians has decreased. In particular, the percentage of Russians has decreased by 9%, Germans by 2%, and

Ukrainians by 1.5%. All of this has created enormous shifts in the structure of believers. According to the data of the Commission for Religious Affairs under the Kyrgyzstan Government, the country's population is currently broken down in terms of confession as follows: 80-84% of the residents are Muslims, 14-15% are Christians, and approximately 3% belong to other confessions.<sup>1</sup>

The liberalization of sociopolitical life, building of a democratic society, and observation of human rights have promoted an increase in

<sup>1</sup> See: N.M. Omarov, "K probleme stanovleniia polikonfessional'nogo obshchestva v suverennom Kyrgyzstane," *Orientir*, Analytical bulletin of the International Institute of Strategic Research under the Kyrgyzstan President, No. 1, 2003, pp. 7-8.



ethnic self-awareness among all the republic's residents. It is expressed in the formation of national and cultural centers, the activity of which is aimed at reviving the native language, history, and

culture of the republic's ethnic groups. In turn, this ethnic renaissance has tilled the ground for religious revival and the reanimation of corresponding traditions, primarily Muslim.

## The Revival of Islam

Since the end of the 1980s, there has been a significant upswing in Muslim consciousness and a substantial increase in the number of mosques (in 1991, there were 39, whereas by 2003 there were as many as 1,600)<sup>2</sup> in Kyrgyzstan, as well as in other republics of the region. For example, more than 1,000 mosques operate in the south of the republic in the Osh, Dzhahalal-Abad, and Batken regions. At the beginning of the 1990s, there was not a single religious learning institution in Kyrgyzstan. The local priests used to go to Bukhara and Samarkand to receive their education. Today, there are eight Islamic higher learning institutions in the republic, including joint Kyrgyz-Iranian and Kyrgyz-Kuwait universities. What is more, a theology (Islamic) department financed by the Turkish Dianet Wakfy Foundation opened at Osh University in 1993. A similar department was created at the Manas Kyrgyz-Turkish University. What is more, there are 38 active madrasahs in the republic, and in 2001-2002, 284 Kyrgyzstan citizens studied in foreign Muslim centers: 155 in the Al'Azhar University (Cairo), 84 in Turkey, 22 in Pakistan, 24 in Syria, 5 in Kuwait, 4 in Saudi Arabia, 3 in Jordan, and 1 in Libya.<sup>3</sup>

The interrelationship between Islam and the state is also problematic, since for 13 centuries, Islam has been the political foundation of state formations in Central Asia and the main regulator of social relations. The Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (SAMK) and its nine kaziats (territorial structures) which function in the republic testify to this.

After gaining its independence, our republic carried out important reforms in the religious sphere, in particular, the Law on Freedom of Confession and on Religious Organizations was adopted in 1991. But the rapidly changing international situation, as well as the socioeconomic state of affairs in the country revealed the shortcomings of this document. A new draft has already been prepared, which OSCE experts believe to be more in harmony with current reality.

A Republic of Kyrgyzstan presidential decree of March 1996 envisaged creating a Commission for Religious Affairs in the government responsible for drawing up and implementing government policy in this field. It functions in compliance with the country's Constitution, in which such generally accepted regulations are enforced as freedom of conscience and secularity of the state. Pursuant to Art 16.11 of the Constitution: "Each citizen is guaranteed freedom of conscience, confession, religious or atheistic activity. Each citizen has the right to freely confess any religion or not to confess a religion at all..." Art 8.3 declares: "Religion and all cults are separate from the state." Art 15.2 envisages: "...No citizen may be subject to discrimination or infringement of rights and freedoms based on origin, gender, race, nationality, language, confession, or political and religious convictions..."

## Islam and Ethnic Identity

Islam is an important element of the Kyrgyz ethnic identity. But the potency of the Muslim component in the national identity of the peoples of Central Asia does not always nurture a convinc-

<sup>2</sup> See: O.Sh. Mamaiusupov, *Voprosy (problemy) religii na perekhodnom periode*, Bishkek, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> See: N.M. Omarov, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

ing feeling of affiliation with the broader supranational Muslim community. With respect to the Muslims of Central Asia, who acquired their national identity during the Soviet era, the Islamic identity should be viewed in keeping with ethnic and national categories.

The Muslim revival and rise in religious consciousness among the Kyrgyz were largely generated by the ethnic renaissance at the end of the 1980s-beginning of the 1990s. Islam is viewed as a way to reconstruct and acquire a Kyrgyz ethnic and cultural identity under the conditions of new independent statehood and is important as part of the historic memory of the indigenous ethnic groups. Identifying ethnic with religious origins is characteristic of Kyrgyz society, so national traditions are perceived as Muslim in the public consciousness of the Kyrgyz, and Muslim traditions as national. Today, even those who do not consider themselves true Muslims believe it their duty to observe the corresponding holidays and rituals. Even during Russian colonization and the years of Soviet power, both identities (Islamic and ethnic) were perceived as a single whole.

When talking about the growing significance of Islam as a factor of the Kyrgyz ethnocultural identification, two main levels should be singled out (according to A. Malashenko's classification).<sup>4</sup> At the first (personal) level, the matter concerns belief in the Almighty and changes in the individual's world outlook. This means that by turning to religion, an individual is primarily trying to rid himself of the Soviet world outlook and to a lesser extent is setting himself against the believers of other confessions. The second level is traditional-ritual, where the degree of affiliation with Islam is defined by the regularity with which rituals are carried out and by the observation of Islamic behavior codes, including prohibitions. At this level of group identification, Islam is one of the elements of the Kyrgyz identity (along with language), it is affiliation with one's kin and communality of historical destiny and territory.

In specifying these levels, it should be noted that manifestations of personal religious consciousness are inherent in the first, while so-called secularized religiosity, which plays the role of ethnocultural identifier, is manifested at the second.<sup>5</sup>

In the post-Soviet period, Islam is becoming a way to legitimize almost all social forms and actions, since regulating public opinion and human behavior through traditions, customs, rituals, and religious rites is still important in Kyrgyzstan society. Kyrgyzstan is still a traditional society, where morals prescribe performing certain acts and refraining from others, respecting certain freedoms, and adhering to specific values. This reflects the special features of Islam, which plays the role of the moral factor forming people's value systems and regulating relations between them. Jumping ahead, I will note that a second type of religiosity and believer predominates in the republic, which is not related to regular cult practice.

## The Ethnoreligious Situation

Although in terms of size, the Muslim community is the largest in the republic, other ethnic groups also live in Kyrgyzstan, including those which traditionally confess Christianity. Today, there are Russian Orthodox churches and parishes in every region of the county (a total of 44, including one women's convent). They are mainly in the northern regions: there are twenty in the Chu and eleven in the Issyk Kul regions. This is due to the special historical and geographical features of the settlement of ethnic Slavs in the republic.

During the Soviet era and earlier, Islam and Orthodoxy were perceived as ethnic religions, affiliation to which determined the ethno-confessional identification of the peoples of Kyrgyzstan. For

<sup>4</sup> See: A. Malashenko, *Islamskie orientiry Severnogo Kavkaza*, Moscow, 2001, pp. 82-83.

<sup>5</sup> See: G. Kurbanov, "Religion in Post-Soviet Daghestan: Sociological Aspects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (18), 2002, p. 134.

example, the Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Uighurs, Dungans, and Tajiks were considered Muslim ethnic groups, while Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians were considered Orthodox. In the post-Soviet era, mixed communities appeared (Protestant, Evangelist, and others), in which the representatives of different ethnic groups (Muslims and Christians) preached common spiritual values.

The most serious alternative to Orthodox Christianity is Protestantism. At present, there are 218 Protestant churches and 11 Protestant trends in the country. The largest are the Jehovah's Witnesses (7,000), Baptists (3,000), and Pentecostals (1,500), as well as Adventists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans.<sup>6</sup> Until the mid-1990s, the Germans living in the north of the republic formed the traditional ethnic foundation of Protestantism. But due to their mass emigration (70%) to their historical homeland, since 1995-1996, the Kyrgyz have been swelling the ranks of these communities. According to the State Commission for Religious Affairs, in 2003, approximately 20,000 Kyrgyz Protestants were registered in the republic.

At the same time, religions which are non-traditional for its peoples have appeared in our country: the Scientology and Universal churches, the community of Emmanuel Presbyterian Christians, the Saran Presbyterian Church, the Unification Church (Moonies), the Harry Krishna Society, and many more. Financed by corresponding organizations in the U.S., Germany, and South Korea, they are becoming increasingly popular. Many of their centers are engaged in charity, they participate in the building of schools and hospitals and hand out humanitarian aid. What is more, theology is taught in their religious schools along with general educational subjects.

Foreign missionaries are striving to adapt theology to the local conditions, particularly by simplifying rituals and performing them in the local language. Several communities, for example the Evangelist Christian Baptists, hold special prayer meetings in Kyrgyz, have copies of the Bible—*Inzhyl*—in Kyrgyz, and put out hymnals and cards with excerpts from the Bible in Kyrgyz.<sup>7</sup>

The Bahai community is particularly popular among the Kyrgyz, which has created 18 local spiritual assemblies united into a National Spiritual Assembly. The Bahai teaching assimilates and integrates the spiritual values of different religious systems. Bahais do not deny other gods and prophets and preach the traditional universal values of good, humaneness, and morality. Their community appeared in Kyrgyzstan in 1992 and was registered with the Ministry of Justice in 1997. The National Spiritual Assembly holds seminars and conferences at which the Bahais share their experience based on their theoretical and practical work. For example, in December 1999, a conference called "Inculcating Morality in Children and Young People (based on the experience of the Bahais)" was organized on the basis of the country's National Library, in which not only members of this community participated, but also teachers from schools, colleges, and universities, and representatives of Kyrgyzstan's creative intelligentsia.<sup>8</sup>

What is more, there are three Catholic, two Jewish, and two Buddhist communities in the country. They are mainly based in the north and in the republic's capital, while in the south radical fundamentalist Islamic groups hold sway.

Most of the newly converted Protestants, Bahais, and representatives of other non-traditional trends are women, that is, the most vulnerable members of the population, who are trying to find spiritual support in religion. What is more, they are possibly attracted to the non-traditional confessions by their codes of behavior, which are more democratic than Muslim with respect to everyday and family life.

Due to Kyrgyzstan's special features, the problem of inter-confessional relations is spreading to the ethnic sphere. The close tie between religion and ethnic groups is expressed in the negative atti-

<sup>6</sup> See: N.M. Omarov, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> See: Z. Galieva, "Problemy i protivorechia sovremennogo polikonfessionalizma v Kyrgyzstane," *Trudy Instituta mirovoi kultury*, Issue 3, *Gosudarstvennost i religia v dukhovnom nasledii Kyrgyzstana*, Ilim Publishers, Bishkek-Leipzig, 2003, pp. 159-160.

<sup>8</sup> See: S.M. Gromova, "Vera Bakhai v sisteme mirovykh religii," *Trudy Instituta mirovoi kul'tury*, Issue 3, p. 166.

tude toward people who change their traditional ethno-confessional affiliation. At the everyday level, there are frequent clashes between Kyrgyz Muslims and Kyrgyz Protestants. For example, the first say that infidels should not be allotted land for growing vegetables or given water for irrigation, and should have their electricity cut off. Sometimes such conflicts assume more radical forms. In particular, the residents of a settlement in the Aktiuz Keminsk Region demanded that the Kyrgyz Protestants be driven out of this population settlement.<sup>9</sup> Clashes during the performance of funeral rites are particularly frequent. For example, one such clash occurred in the village of Usabaliev in the Naryn Region during the funeral of Kyrgyz Zamir Istiev, a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Three sides took part in this conflict: the village residents (Kyrgyz), the members of the sect, and the relatives of the deceased, since the followers of Islam, headed by the local imam, objected to him being buried in the Muslim graveyard.<sup>10</sup>

At the beginning of 2002, the republic's mufti issued a *fatwah* (decision), according to which Kyrgyz who changed to a non-traditional faith during their lifetime were not allowed to be buried in Muslim graveyards, which aroused a wave of protest among the Protestant organizations. In particular, the leaders of one of them, which is quite well known and has both Kyrgyz and representatives of other nationalities among its members, tried to influence the official authorities, saying that this *fatwah* violates the right of citizens to freedom of conscience and confession.

## Aspects of the Formation of Linguistic, Ethnic, and Religious Identity

An ethno-sociological study carried out by the author of this article in the form of a questionnaire in the summer of 2003 focused on these problems, as well as on the degree of integration of Kyrgyzstan society. One thousand people of 16 years and older were questioned, whereby 200 people were questioned in each of the following places: the Chu, Issyk Kul, Osh, and Dzhahalal-Abad regions and Bishkek. This was because the population of these territories is multiethnic and, which is particularly important, they all have a high percentage of non-indigenous residents. Whereas the regions of the country not encompassed by the study, the Talas, Naryn, and Batken, are monoethnic. Based on the ethnic structure of the republic's population, 63% of the respondents were Kyrgyz, 18.8% Russians, and 11.7% Uzbeks. The representatives of other nationalities (6.5% of the total number of respondents) were placed in a separate column entitled "others."

According to the results of our survey, 76.7% of the respondents consider themselves to be Muslims, 15.1% Christians, 0.2% the followers of Judaism, and 7.2% said they did not profess any religion at all. The results we obtained are almost identical to the data of the State Commission for Religious Affairs, which vouches for the study's high representation and reliability.

In terms of nationality, the indices of affiliation with a specific confession are presented in Table 1. Although 92% of the respondents consider themselves to be followers of one of three confessions—Islam, Christianity, and Judaism—the number of those who observe the necessary religious rituals (regularly or sometimes) constitutes only 77.4% in terms of the regions studied (see Table 2).

<sup>9</sup> See: *Delo No. ...*, No. 13, 13 April, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> See: *Analiticheskiy otchet po materialam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya "Molodezh i religia,"* Bishkek, 2002, p. 16.

Table 1

## What Religion Do You Confess? (%)

	Kyrgyz	Russians	Uzbeks	Others
Islam	96.3	0.5	100	70.8
Christianity	0.5	73.8	0	15.4
Judaism	0	0	0	3.1
Do not confess any	3.0	25.1	0	9.2
Other (undecided)	0.2	0.5	0	1.5

Table 2

## Do You Observe Religious Rituals? (%)

	Bishkek	Chu Region	Issyk Kul Region	Osh Region	Dzhalal-Abad Region	Total
Always observe	4.4	7.2	3.6	5.5	5.0	25.7
Observe, but not always	10.5	7.6	12.1	10.1	11.4	51.7
Do not observe	2.4	4.7	2.5	2.8	1.9	14.3
Undecided	2.7	0.2	1.7	1.6	1.6	7.8

The number of those who pray is even less (Table 3).

Table 3

## Do You Know How to Pray and How Often Do You Pray? (%)

	Bishkek	Chu Region	Issyk Kul Region	Osh Region	Dzhalal-Abad Region	Total
I know how to pray and pray every day	3.0	3.0	2.1	3.2	4.2	15.5
I know how to pray, but I do not pray regularly	8.0	5.7	6.3	6.5	7.9	34.4
I know how to pray, but I do not pray	2.9	2.7	2.5	4.0	1.8	0.4
I do not know how to pray and I do not pray	6.1	8.4	8.9	6.2	6.0	13.9

Church attendance gathered the lowest indices (see Table 4).

Table 4

**How Often Do You Attend the Mosque  
(Church or Other Prayer Houses)? (%)**

	Bishkek	Chu Region	Issyk Kul Region	Osh Region	Dzhalal-Abad Region	Total
Once a week	2.1	1.5	1.1	2.4	2.8	9.9
Once a month	2.4	1.2	1.2	0.8	2.0	7.6
Occasionally	6.7	6.4	5.3	5.8	4.9	29.1
I do not attend	8.8	10.9	12.1	10.7	10.3	52.8

In terms of nationality, the Uzbeks are the most religious (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

**Do You Observe Religious Rituals? (%)**

	Kyrgyz	Russians	Uzbeks	Others
Always observe	25.9	13.3	41.0	33.8
Observe, but not always	55.2	49.5	44.4	41.5
Do not observe	12.8	24.5	7.7	12.3
Undecided	6.1	12.8	6.8	12.3

Table 6

**How Often Do You Attend the Mosque  
(Church or Other Prayer Houses)? (%)**

	Kyrgyz	Russians	Uzbeks	Others
Once a week	8.1	2.7	28.7	15.4
Once a month	8.3	9.1	3.5	4.6
Occasionally	29.0	42.8	15.7	16.9
I do not attend	54.5	45.5	52.2	63.1

The second group of most religious respondents comprised representatives of “other” nationalities: Dungans, Uighurs, Ukrainians, Tatars, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Turks, and so on. All religious rituals are always observed by 33.8% of this group, while 41.5% do not always observe them. What is more,

15.4% of the respondents attend a mosque or church once a week, 4.6% once a month, and 16.9% occasionally.

In terms of religiosity, the Kyrgyz occupy third place. In so doing, 25.9% of them always observe religious rituals, 41.5% do not always, 8.1% attend prayer houses once a week, 8.3% once a month, and 29% occasionally.

As we have already mentioned, after the republic gained its independence, an increase in religious self-awareness was observed. Democratization, as well as the ideological and spiritual vacuum which arose as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, encouraged an interest in religion. As a result, the number of those who have one of the following three books, the Koran, Bible, or Torah (or other religious publications), at home significantly increased. But only 16.2% of the respondents have read them in full, 49.1% have read certain chapters and pages, and 34.4% are not familiar with them at all.

In so doing, the highest index of those who have read the Koran (Bible, Torah) in full was noted among the respondents from "other" nationalities, 23.1% (see Table 7).

Table 7

**Have You Read the Koran  
(Bible or Other Religious Books)? (%)**

	Kyrgyz	Russians	Uzbeks	Others
<b>Yes, I have read in full</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>23.1</b>
<b>Yes, I have read certain chapters or pages</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>41.5</b>
<b>I have not read</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>33.8</b>

Since the end of the 1980s, pilgrimages to the holy places have acquired unprecedented popularity. Incidentally, Kyrgyz nomads made them long before they turned to Islam. Pilgrimages to Takhti-Sulayman in Osh are the most popular, to which hundreds of pilgrims from all over Central Asia flock during Muslim holidays. What is more, the number of those who carry out hajj to Mecca has also dramatically grown (3,000 people annually). According to the data of our study, 11.5% of the respondents make pilgrimages to the holy places. Among them, 14.7% are Kyrgyz, 13.7% are Uzbeks, 6.1% fall under the "other" column, and 1.6% are Russians.

Summing up the results obtained, we would like to note again that many believers do not observe the requirements prescribed by the religions. A large number of respondents adhere to their rituals. However, while giving preference to these rituals, the followers of different confessions cannot subordinate themselves to a set of strict religious rules or follow them in their daily lives. In this way, they primarily single out the national-identification element in religion. Affiliation to a religion, in the understanding of the respondents, largely helps to form their ethnic identity.

## RELIGION IN GEORGIA'S SOCIOPOLITICAL LIFE

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Christianity was brought to Georgia by Apostles Andrew the First Called, Simon of Canaan, and Matthias. St. Nino of Cappadocia completed the Christianization process. Early in the 4th century, Christianity officially became the state religion and throughout the country's history played a huge role in Georgia's sociopolitical life. So it can be considered one of the older Christian states.

For many centuries the Georgians, encircled by enemies who professed a different religion and repeatedly tried to subjugate them and impose Islam on them, remained loyal to their faith. Christianity became a symbol of Georgia's independence. At the same time, Georgia is a multinational and multi-confessional country; from time immemorial it has been populated by many different ethnic groups which followed different religions; some of them rooted in distant past are still very much alive. Jews brought Judaism to Georgia, Armenians belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church, Arabs brought Islam to Georgia, which the local Muslims still confess; and the Catholic Church reached Georgia when Europe displayed a particular interest in our country.

When Russia used force to accede Georgia in 1801, Protestant and other sects began infiltrating Georgia: the Mennonites, Molokans, Dukhobortsy, and later Baptists, Pentecostals, and Adventists. Recently, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Krishnaists, etc. have appeared. At first there were no Georgians among them; over time, however, the situation changed. Today, a lot of Georgians have embraced Catholicism, or become Baptists, Pentecostals, Old Believers, Evangelicals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Krishnaists, Muslims, etc. The Georgian state and the Georgian nation have invariably demonstrated tolerance of members of other ethnic groups and confessions. There has been no enmity among them: Georgians and Jews have been living side by side for twenty-six centuries. Religious tolerance in Georgia is best illustrated by the fact that Georgian Christian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic churches, a Catholic cathedral, a synagogue, and a mosque all function in Tbilisi.

Georgian historians write that at all times religious tolerance was taken for granted, so it was never mentioned in the Georgian historical sources, while amazed foreigners never failed to mention the Georgians' religious tolerance, humanity, and hospitality. In the final count, these features saved Georgia from total extinction. Georgian historians commonly quote from a French traveler, Jean Chardin: "It seems that these Georgian properties are rooted in the traditional freedom of religion typical of their country."<sup>1</sup>

Religious tolerance and the acceptance of alien customs, interests, and way of life have survived over the centuries. Anatoly Sobchak, who chaired a commission of the U.S.S.R. Congress of People's Deputies sent to study the causes of the tragic events of 9 April, 1989 in Tbilisi, said in a TV interview: "The Georgians stand out among all the trans-Caucasian nations because of their

<sup>1</sup> A. Dumas, *The Caucasus*, Tbilisi, 1987, p. 15 (in Georgian).



religious tolerance.” He repeated this in an article that appeared in *Ogonek* magazine: “From time immemorial, Georgia has stood out because of its ethnic tolerance. For many centuries it has been home to hundreds of thousands of Armenians, Azeris, Abkhazes, and other peoples. Despite this, there have never been ethnic conflicts... Georgians have always been marked by a high level of religious tolerance.”<sup>2</sup>

Recent events again confirmed the Georgians’ tolerance: despite the grave consequences of the bloody clashes during the Georgian-Osset and Georgian-Abkhazian conflicts inspired by Russia’s aggressive forces, the Georgians never developed hatred of the Ossets, Abkhazes, or Russians.

This raises some pertinent questions: Has the Georgians’ desire for revenge been atrophied? Why did they not feel hatred toward their enemies, and why did they never create “an enemy image” as happened in Abkhazia and Ossetia? These questions call for well-substantiated answers—to provide them we should look back into our past. Tolerance was not imposed on the nation by a czar or a public figure, nor is it a chance feature. It is a product of many centuries of deliberate efforts conditioned by Georgia’s adverse situation: its location at a geographical crossroads, being surrounded by aggressive neighbors, and having to deal with mass migrations and the ensuing ethnic diversity. The country has always been a multi-religious unit that needed tolerance to live in peace: ethnic and confessional relations could have caused a lot of problems. These processes had to be controlled; relations with the ethnic groups which came to settle in Georgia had to be well organized.

Under these conditions, the country either had to be strong enough to suppress all alien elements to preserve its specific features and independence, or display tolerance and flexibility in order to incorporate these alien elements to the benefit of the state, even if this required certain concessions. Georgian historians were quite right when they wrote that even while the Georgian state was fairly powerful at certain times, it has never been strong enough to use force against all the different ethnic groups on its territory. Therefore it opted for a more flexible and more reasonable way—religious tolerance—to achieve its aim: using the newcomers in the interests of the state.

Some believe that tolerance of other nationalities is explained by the fact that the newcomers (Armenians, Jews, and Muslims) never invaded the Georgians’ traditional economic niche and were mostly engaged in trade and handicrafts. The Georgian rulers who wanted to develop the skills their country needed preferred to steer clear of the aliens’ faith. In other words, ethnic diversity did affect, to a certain degree, the Georgians’ lifestyle, traditions, customs, and national character and taught them to be tolerant. The Georgians stopped looking at other nationalities as alien elements, never envied them, and never fought them. As distinct from many other countries, Georgia never at any time persecuted people of other nationalities.

Georgian historians have pointed out that religious tolerance became a state policy under David the Kuropalat. The trend became especially obvious under David the Builder. An Arabian historian wrote that when Tbilisi was acceded to Georgia in 1122, David the Builder granted privileges to the Tbilisi Muslims; and Islam was offered state protection, while the Georgians were instructed to treat it with respect. People of other faiths were not allowed to visit the bath-houses or to slaughter pigs in the Muslim part of the town. On Fridays, the Muslims were to pray for the Caliph and the Sultan, and not for the Georgian czar; they also paid lower taxes than the Georgians. The same author wrote that David the Builder respected Muslim theologians and Sufis. According to other sources (Ibn-al-Djauzi, for example), the czar not only read the Koran: on Fridays, he went with his son Demetre to the mosque and donated great sums of money to it. According to the same source, the czar gave palaces to prophets, Sufis, and ascetics. If a Muslim left the city, the czar gave him money, and in general he treated the Muslims better than many of the Muslim rulers.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ogonek*, No. 7, 1990.

Armenians were similarly treated; the czar helped them restore their persecuted church. Jews enjoyed the same rights as the Christians and were even granted tax privileges.

Religious tolerance was a state policy, even though some historians believe that the final aim was to make all aliens Christians. (Allegedly the Georgian rulers preferred to rule a state in which everyone confessed the same faith and even surreptitiously tried to convert Armenians to Orthodox Christianity.) Even if this was true, no radical steps were taken. The scheme failed; the Georgian rulers opted for religious tolerance, while people of other nationalities who lived in Georgia never clashed with the titular nation.

The Georgian sources rightly wrote that before Georgia joined Russia, the policy of tolerance was a rational choice. This made it possible for the state to survive under arduous conditions and preserve its specific features. The Georgians were never isolated or embittered; they never hated their neighbors. We should, however, distinguish between the types of tolerance typical of Georgia not only before, but also after it joined Russia, when the situation changed dramatically. Czarist autocracy acted according to the “divide and rule” principle and tried to sow enmity among the local peoples, while assuming the role of a third force. There were attempts to replace all local tongues with the Russian language.

The results were negative: ethnic tension created doubts about the ethnic policies Georgia pursued earlier. Religious tolerance was questioned, along with the Georgians’ acceptance of alien roots. Why did the Georgians retreat in the face of newcomers; why did alien ethnic groups feel more comfortable than the local people; wasn’t this policy an impermissible luxury for a small and ill-protected country; didn’t it foster its enemies itself? These doubts fed by the numerous misfortunes plaguing our independent state are still alive. The questions can be rephrased: To what extent does Georgians’ tolerance help them preserve their national specifics? Were we right to help others (often to our own detriment) develop economically and culturally, allow them to have their own press and theater, and help them attain places in higher educational establishments?

This support allowed other nationalities to consider Georgia their own country. They did not feel grateful, however; they tried to insist on their own interests at the expense of the local people. While this was allowed they were satisfied; but as soon as Georgian self-awareness began to revive, they started protesting and even opposing the process.

The language of the third force played an especially negative role: “National subjugation and oppression of the local people is a relatively novel phenomenon in the history of international relations,” wrote Academician Ivane Javakhishvili.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, such facts were absent during the earlier stages of Georgian history. It was czarist autocracy that began suppressing the Georgian in favor of the Russian language used in record keeping, administration, courts, churches, etc. The area in which the Georgian tongue was used shrank dramatically. In the past, it was absolutely necessary for the non-Georgians to speak Georgian; over time, Russian became the key to success. The Georgians preserved their native tongue, yet it became superfluous for the non-Georgians.

At first glance, the Georgian language underwent development during Soviet power: it acquired scientific vocabulary and was the language of Georgian fiction, yet it could not be used to communicate with other nations. The knowledge of Russian was needed to work in other Soviet republics, to serve in the army, to defend a thesis, etc.

The peoples of the autonomies within Georgia likewise abandoned the Georgian and even their own tongues to switch to Russian. Most Armenians, Azeris, Greeks, and Kurds sent their children to Russian schools, since the Georgian language stopped being indispensable in the republic. The graduates of Russian schools had poor knowledge of their own native languages. They did not know Georgian either, which made them the bastion of the third force (they were all united by the Russian lan-

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<sup>3</sup> Iv. Javakhishvili, *History of the Georgian Nation*, Book Five, Tbilisi, 1953, p. 126 (in Georgian).

guage). In this way, the Center was able to knock together so-called international fronts in the non-Russian republics, through which it pursued its own aims.

Thank goodness the Soviet Union disintegrated in December 1991. Nearly fifteen years have passed since the day Georgia became independent. We can forget about the third force's impertinence, even though in many spheres its influence is still felt. We are doing our best to overcome its pernicious influence. If we succeed, forbearance and religious tolerance will no longer look outmoded or defeatist political instruments. They will become factors of generous, humane, and genuinely international Georgian policies, the hallmarks of the Georgians' high morality, balanced and rational nature, and kindness. This policy will bring practical dividends in the Georgians' relations with other nationalities inside the country. We should always bear in mind that forbearance in general and religious tolerance in particular have always been, and remain, the most important factors in the Georgian nation's viability.

When we abandoned the communist world outlook, however, and our religious organizations became free to openly preach their ideas, other problems appeared in the state's sociopolitical context. Today there is no peace among the confessions, despite the past religious tolerance. The main, Christian Orthodox Church, has certain grievances against other traditional faiths—Judaism, Islam, the Armenian Apostolic Church, and Catholicism. There are certain unresolved problems related to the ownership of old churches, the building of new ones, church property, etc. Relations with the so-called non-traditional religions are even worse: their followers encounter tough competition. The country's main church accuses other faiths of encroachment on its historical rights and of illegal proselytism.

Today, all confessions have become involved in a marathon aimed at winning over as many believers as possible; they are out to broaden their sphere of influence in order to improve their financial situation. They are pouring their talents, energies, and abilities into this marathon; each has its own considerations and "irrefutable" arguments. The Christian Orthodox Church insists on its traditional presence in Georgia, which dates back to ancient times; it argues that it guided the Georgians in their arduous and dangerous journey and helped them preserve their tongue, ethnic specifics, religion, religious festivals, and way of life. The Christian Orthodox Church insists that Orthodoxy is the only God-inspired teaching of light and truth. Its enemies describe this as a sign of weakness. They are convinced that Orthodoxy has become fossilized; it fails to respond to the changing world, it has become a museum exhibit of sorts, intolerant of all other faiths. The opponents of Christian Orthodoxy argue that 21st century man cannot live according to the rules of the 4th or 5th centuries. The Orthodox Church responds with the following: the Divine word and the Divine truth have been sent to mankind once and for all and cannot be changed. The enemies of Christian Orthodoxy counter those who say that Orthodoxy is the Georgians' national religion with assertions that there is no specifically Georgian Christian Orthodoxy; that Orthodoxy is a shared denomination of the Greeks, Russians, Serbs, etc. since all of them share the same dogmas, Typikon, and feasts.

In the absence of a common enemy—atheism, which described all religions as an ugly remnant of the past—the struggle between confessions became embittered. The beginning of this marathon merits special attention. On the one side, there are religious organizations backed by powerful religious centers (mainly foreign) which rely on their rich experience of luring people away from other faiths and huge financial resources. While on the other, there is the Georgian Christian Orthodox Church defamed by czarist autocracy and the Russian Orthodox Church and suppressed by the communists. Certain other structures have also gained prominence due to these obviously unequal starting conditions and acquired many new Georgian members. Irritated by successes of aliens on its canonic territory, the Georgian Orthodox Church demanded that the state legally register its special role in a treaty under which the state should assume responsibility for the priority of Christian Orthodoxy in Georgia. In this way, the Georgian Christian Orthodox Church tried to protect itself against the onslaught of

other religious trends, attack them, and outlaw the most dangerous and annoying of them, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Some of the persecuted organizations tried to protect themselves by referring to international law and the documents relating to religious minorities. Others complained to their donor states (America, Britain, Germany, etc.), which may even retaliate by cutting short their financial aid to Georgia. It should be said that the apologists of religious minorities are not always straightforward; they are busy luring people away from other religions and even trying to enlist atheists. Members of the Jehovah's Witnesses are not alien to door-to-door propaganda in order to tell people about the coming Armageddon.

The Orthodox Church lacks a social program, which undermines its position: today, when a handful of "masters of the situation" have appropriated the country's riches, leaving the common people to starve in the absence of adequate wages or pensions and to fend for themselves amid the incomprehensible reforms and much more expensive and much more inferior education and health services, large masses of people have been deprived of consolation and hope. Today, it is hardly wise to talk about the after-life as the Church's main concern and leave out the social sphere. Other confessions concentrate on people's earthly concerns and try to lighten the burden of everyday life. Some of the charities (the Salvation Army and the Jehovah's Witnesses) are especially successful in this.

This confrontation pushed some of the Orthodox believers toward radical measures and the use of force. I have in mind, first and foremost, Basil Mkalavishvili's group known as the Gldanskaia Eparchy Under the Open Sky. Its members refuse to obey the Patriarchy, they burn religious literature of other confessions (the Jehovah's Witnesses and Baptists) in public, carry around crosses and slogans, interfere with the media they disapprove of, etc. Some other structures officially detached themselves from the Patriarchy and call themselves the Orthodox Church of Georgia, even though they found a new master in Boston, U.S.A.

The struggle in the religious sphere is going on with no end in sight. The present government has resolved to stick to the Constitution, which speaks of freedom of conscience, people's right to freely confess any faith, and the rights of religious minorities. The authorities have already started a criminal procedure against Basil Mkalavishvili's extremist group; and he himself is facing a sentence of seven years in prison. Today, there are no religious clashes in Georgia, yet tension persists, while the processes in this sphere remain uncontrolled.

The current developments are caused by the clergy's natural response to the lack of rights of all religious organizations and by their desire to find an adequate niche in the new context. Success depends on the domestic situation: the social conditions should be improved to where people no longer need to abandon the faith defended by their ancestors in favor of an alien confession in order to prevent themselves from starving. Religious conflicts will disappear along with the social problems. People should be allowed to choose their faith freely, without undue interference.

In a strong and united multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state, people should not be divided into categories according to their religious beliefs. So far, Georgia cannot achieve this ideal: its territorial integrity has been disrupted; not all its regions are under the central power's jurisdiction; there are zones of conflict; there are foreign military bases on its territory; industrial enterprises are idling; a large part of the nation is living on the brink of destitution; many are starving; a lot of people commit suicide in desperation. This is fertile soil for ethnic and religious conflicts, since when driven to despair people are apt to look for enemies among other ethnic groups and followers of other religions.

There is still hope that life will improve; that religious confrontation will ebb away; and that genuinely democratic, humane, and tolerant Georgia will be revived and join other civilized states.

## INTERACTION BETWEEN POWER AND RELIGION IN DAGHESTAN: EXPERIENCE, ERRORS, AND LESSONS

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### The Heterogeneous Nature of the Islamic Space

At no time could Daghestan be described as an ethnically, politically, or confessionally homogeneous territory. It is an ethnic patchwork—Russia's and the world's most ethnically diverse region. The past of this mountainous country is filled with the efforts of its peoples to beat off the attempts of their neighbors to establish total domination over them (with the exception of some cases of economic or political dependence).

Local traditions contributed to the region's political diversity. Nearly all specialists on Daghestan pointed to the varied forms of administration and political-administrative structures as one of the key features typical of the mountain communities. M. Aglarov, for example, described the community of the northeast Caucasian peoples as a "museum of a multitude of political units with varied forms of political and administrative structures."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, khanates, aristocratic and democratic jamaats, unions of jamaats ("free societies"), and democratic "federative societies" under the nominal rules of the khans coexisted in Daghestan. The efforts of some of them to spread their rule to neighboring territories invariably triggered powerful, sometimes "suicidal," opposition.

As distinct from the rest of the Northern Caucasus, the Muslim expanse of Daghestan has never been homogeneous either. Three types of religious world outlook dominated Daghestan's religious culture: Sufism, schools of the Shafi'ite legal experts, and Salafi (fundamentalism). Sufism has preserved its strong foothold in the republic. This is a mystical-ascetic teaching which preaches humility and retirement from the world. Some of its numerous interpretations and applications served as an ideology for rebels and anti-colonial wars. Three of its Tariqahs (orders) exist in Daghestan: Qadiriya, Naqshbandiya, and Jazuliya; they are spiritual schools which combine the means and methods of mystical cognition of the truth, a special code of moral and ethical rules, and forms of its internal organization.

The school of Shafi'ite legal experts (faqih) appeared in the Darghinian free societies where Muslim legal experts and judges were strong enough to challenge the position of the elected rulers. The Akusha-Dargo society lived under the dual power of two political leaders: the elected one and the judge (qadi).

<sup>1</sup> M.A. Aglarov, *Sel'skaia obshchina v Dagestane v XVII-nachale XIX veka*, Moscow, 1988, p. 6.

Contrary to the opinion actively promoted by state propaganda that Salafi (fundamentalist) Islam is alien to Daghestan and has no local roots there, it has existed in Daghestan for over 300 years now. It preaches a return to Islamic fundamentals, the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad and the “righteous ancestors” (*as-salaf as-salikhun* in Arabic), and purification of Islam of later additions.

## Monopolization of the Islamic Expanse of Daghestan by the Spiritual Administration of the Republic’s Muslims

The authorities have limited their political and legal patronage to one of three Islamic schools or, rather, an even narrower “Gidatlinskiy” Naqshbandi branch, busy imposing on the local faithful the Jazuliya Tariqah, which is absolutely alien even to the Sufi followers. This is one of the gravest mistakes of the republican authorities. The fact that the Gidatlinskiy Tariqah mainly staffed the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Daghestan (SAMD) with Avars who come from two districts (Shamil and Gumbet) and who follow only one Sufi sheikh—Said Afandi of Chirkey (Atsaev)—made the situation even worse. All the followers of other trends (and other Tariqahs) doubt the legitimacy of the SAMD and the sheikh’s authority. Their criticism concentrates on the following:

- *Lack of legitimacy.* The fact that after 1992 all muftis were elected by the Council of the Alims of Daghestan rather than by Muslim congresses (the Council was also staffed by supporters of Sheikh Said Afandi of Chirkey in disregard of the congress of Muslims), the SAMD opponents describe it as “self-proclaimed” and “appointed;”
- *The non-traditional nature of Jazuliya,* which became the leading Tariqah in Daghestan through the efforts of the sheikh’s supporters. The faithful are indignant because the official clerics pushed aside the more familiar Naqshbandi Tariqah and are ignoring the traditions of the great sheikhs and murids of the mountainous regions, Magomed Yaragsky, Jamaludin Kazikumukhsky, and Abdurakhman Sogratlinsky.
- *Reliance on clans, regionalism.* Up to 98 percent of those employed by SAMD, a structure functioning in a multi-national republic, are murids and followers of one sheikh only. Nearly all key posts are filled by Avars from two districts (Gumbet and Shamil). The SAMD opponents refer to the structure as the Avar SAMD and the “Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Gumbet District.” Under the guise of fighting Wahhabism, it tries to usurp the right to appoint imams.
- *Intolerance.* The SAMD leaders and its supporters look at the four sheikhs of the Said Afandi branch as genuine and dismiss all others as muta-sheikhs (false sheikhs). The madrasahs and Muslim universities controlled by Said Afandi’s followers teach intolerance to other sheikhs. This has already triggered a chain of conflicts, many of which almost turned into armed clashes. In September 2001, a group of followers of Muhammad Mukhtar Kyakhulaisky burst into the SAMD building with threats to “leave no stone standing” if Said Afandi’s murids did not stop insulting Muhammad Mukhtar. In the spring of 2004, members of other Tariqahs whose indignation with SAMD’s stupid and aggressive policies reached the boiling point tried to set up an alternative SAMD based on the mosque of the Reductornoe settlement of Makhachkala. The SAMD had to dispatch fighters armed with cold steel (brass knuckles and sharp instruments); to avoid bloodshed the opposition dispersed.

- *Mercantilism.* There is a widespread opinion in the republic that the SAMD leaders are not particularly scrupulous when it comes to money. The way hajj is organized also draws criticism—some people believe that annual hajj brings the SAMD over \$100,000.
- *Incompetence.* The opponents accuse the SAMD of inadequate religious knowledge. It should be said that throughout its existence this structure has not issued a single fatwah. Alims speak about Said Afandi's lack of adequate religious knowledge. Most of the local Muslims are angered by obvious violations of the commonly known Islamic postulates (permission to and encouragement of selling portraits of the sheikh and his predecessors and, most important, of the Prophet Muhammad) committed by the SAMD and its structures.
- *Political biases.* The SAMD tends to support the Avar groups trying to seize power. Some of the prominent local politicians who lobby the interests of the Chirkey group are considered its supporters.

The Dagestani authorities, who tried, before the 1999 events, to maintain contacts not only with various Tariqah branches, but also with the members of the Dagestani radical Salafia (the Karamakhi jamaat), later placed their stakes on Said Afandi's group for two reasons:

1. When Moscow instructed the republic's leaders to mercilessly fight the radical Salafi jamaats, only the Chirkey group fully supported (and justified from the Islamic viewpoint) the authorities' attempts to uproot Wahhabism in Dagestan. And only the Chirkey group managed within a very short time to plant anti-Wahhabi ideas in people's minds and start anti-Wahhabi hysteria in the republic.
2. Since the Darghinian clan of the republic's president Magomedali Magomedov was adamant about remaining in power, vent had to be given to the discontent that had been building among the Avars. As the largest Dagestani ethnos, the Avars were highly irritated by the fact that the Darghins were remaining at the helm far too long. They were given religious power to quench their thirst for secular power.

The faithful were obviously indignant about the state's efforts to place them under the control of one ethnic group and one Islamic trend (or, to be more exact, one narrow branch within one of the trends). This was a bad mistake with no analogies in the republic's past: the diversity of Islamic intellectual, cultic, ethnic, and cultural life was forced into the pinching limits of the "Avar-Gidatinskiy" (as interpreted by the Chirkey sheikh) Tariqah.

This policy has already betrayed its weaknesses. First, it contradicts the provision about separation and equal distancing of religious branches from the state. Second, the adepts of the Gidatinskiy Tariqah are not educated enough to oppose the Salafi ideology. Third, by concentrating on one of the trends inside the Tariqah, the state is ignoring all the other constructive trends and communities. Fourth, encouraged by state support, the SAMD moved against its ideological opponents, thus alienating not only the faithful, but also the academic and creative elite of Dagestan. Fifth, close cooperation between the SAMD and the law enforcement bodies has completely discredited it in the eyes of young Muslims.

## The Rout of the Salafi Jamaats

In September 1999, the People's Assembly of the Republic of Dagestan adopted the Law on Banning Wahhabi and Other Extremist Activities on the Territory of the Republic of Dagestan to provide the legal basis for the struggle against the bands of Basaev and Khattab and for routing the Salafi jamaats in the republic. Because of the haste and highly emotional context in which the draft was pushed

through the People's Assembly, it can hardly be called a well-substantiated law; it abounds in serious faults. In particular, it speaks of religious extremists, yet fails to provide a clear definition of them, therefore secular or religious power is free to persecute all those who arouse their displeasure.

The republican authorities made another bad mistake by transferring the power to define Wahhabism to the SAMD rather than to the expert council at the Committee for Religious Affairs functioning within the republican government. The SAMD willingly shouldered the responsibility and opened fire at its ideological opponents among the Salafi and in the Tariqahs. It accused them of "Wahhabi and other extremist activities." By drawing the media into the process, the SAMD initiated "anti-Wahhabi hysteria;" it drew the law enforcement bodies into a protracted war against its ideological opponents. Along with the militia, SAMD people took part in searches and expert assessments of religious writings. By publicly accusing the so-called Wahhabis of all deadly sins (such as distortions of the Islamic doctrine, desecration of the Muslim holy places, incest, etc.), the clerics in fact invited rough reprisals against them. Being allowed to mete out punishment (both "secular" and "spiritual" authorities did not object to it), the law enforcement bodies (in particular the Administration for Fighting Extremism and Criminal Terrorism set up for the purpose) assumed the role of the religious police. Instead of protecting law and order, the militia plunged into persecutions for religious reasons; they allied with one of the sides in a religious confrontation, the meaning of which they did not fully understand.

Still, they carried out what can be described as "religious and ideological mopping-up operations." The militia was allowed to identify potential extremists by their religious convictions, their attitudes to the Tariqahs and Sufism, and their affiliation with different madhabs. To arrest so-called Wahhabis, militiamen planted weapons, ammunition, and drugs on them. To extort confessions, the detained were tortured, beaten up, and subjected to other forms of violence in district precincts and in the Administration's local offices. Those arrested with planted weapons could buy their freedom for \$3,000. Cruelty and militia arbitrariness embittered even the most moderate of the Salafis. The response was obvious—it was only a matter of time. After several acts of subversion failed, the mujaheddin finally set up a smoothly functioning clandestine network of semi-independent detachments. They opened an unprecedentedly large-scale and systemic hunt for those responsible for anti-Salafi repressions. Administration and Federal Security Service officers, as well as ordinary militiamen, were killed in great numbers (sometimes several people were murdered a day). Concentration of the mujaheddin along the administrative border with Chechnia, around Khasaviurt and even around Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan, reached a critical level.

It seems that Amir of Makhachkala Rasul Makkasharipov (alias Muslim), who was also Shamil Basaev's personal Avar interpreter and leader of the Jannet jamaat, was one of the most successful clandestine leaders during the Chechen invasion of the Botlikh District. He managed to organize a clandestine subversive network that covered the jamaats of Makhachkala, Buynaksk, Khasaviurt, and Kizliar and synchronized their activities. It was during the period when he headed the jamaat that the mujaheddin reached previously peaceful Southern Dagestan. In the summer of 2004, a female suicide bomber was detained in Derbent; in the forests of the Kurakh District, local people discovered a group of mujaheddin and its local Salafi guides.

## **The Years 1999-2004: a New Mujaheddin Generation**

Five years have elapsed since the time when the gangs that invaded Dagestan were routed and the second Chechen war began. The time has come to look back and assess the results of our anti-



terrorist and anti-extremist efforts. We should ask ourselves whether the Caucasus has become a safer place; whether the threat of its destabilization has been removed; whether separatism has been uprooted; whether the separatist leaders have been liquidated; and whether the problem of radicalization of North Caucasian Islam has been successfully dealt with.

During these years Russia experienced several unprecedented terrorist acts: hostages were taken in a Moscow theater, President of Chechnia Akhmad Kadyrov was assassinated; Ingushetia suffered an attack; fighters raided Grozny on the eve of the elections; two aircraft were simultaneously destroyed, and the Beslan tragedy occurred. In Daghestan, people from the law enforcement bodies are murdered in greater numbers than before; concentration of the fighters around Makhachkala has reached its maximal density, while rumors about a possible attack against Daghestan are circulating with even greater intensity. War is still shattering the Caucasus; there is still a threat of Russia's disintegration. It has become even greater than before the second Chechen war because the Western bloc is pressing at the RF's southern borders.

The separatists were not weakened by the deaths or neutralization of some of their leaders—Khattab, Arbi Baraev, Salman Raduev, Zelimkhan Iandarbiev, Ruslan Gelaev, and Abu al-Walid. The resistance forces rotated, new fighters arrived. The second Chechen war raised and steeled another generation of Muslims even more devoted to their ideology and even more resolutely opposed to Russia. The old leaders who grew up in the Soviet Union had a common history, culture, and mentality with the rest of the country; they felt at least some guilt for their attacks against civilians. Many of them had criminal contacts or cooperated with the Russian special services, which compromised them in the eyes of their comrades-in-arms. During the first Chechen war, they committed crimes against the Russian and Shari'a laws, which made them easy prey for the RF propaganda machine.

Ten years of the Chechen war has created a generation with no experience of school attendance and Komsomol membership—they have nothing in common with Russia. Those who were 8 or 10 in 1994 when the war started are now nearly twenty. For them the Russian language, culture, and laws are alien and even hostile. This generation, which is crueler and bolder than the "old men," is determined to take revenge on Russia with blood, death, and fear. They need no leaders: they have learned the lessons of history and international experience. Young Chechens, Daghestanis, Kabardins, and Karachais resolved to fight the state create small mobile detachments to perform irregular operations. After several attacks, they might disband to wait, sometimes for a long time, for another opportunity. They have already carried out numerous terrorist acts and blasts in Grozny, suicide attacks, the war of leaflets in Daghestan; and they murdered two soldiers in the village of Gimry.<sup>2</sup> There are small terrorist and subversion groups of 2 to 3 members in the republic made up of local young men rather than of war-hardened fighters.<sup>3</sup>

In five years, the local authorities have failed to stem radicalization among the young Muslims. Aggressive consumerism, the mass culture, and the breakdown in traditional society, which was forced to accept alien lifestyles, have inevitably aggravated the social context (this created a chain reaction akin to that which takes place in nuclear fission reaction and liberates huge amounts of destructive power).

The Daghestanian faithful look at Westernization and spiritual colonization as a spiritual and social catastrophe and the collapse of their traditional world order. They are prepared to fight brutally and implacably for their spiritual culture and historical landmarks. In other words, the more active part of the republic's Muslim community is readying itself for a jihad in all spheres—from ideology to armed struggle.

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<sup>2</sup> During the fight between the federal forces and the Gelaev group in the Tsuntinskiy District in 2003, local civilians killed two Russian soldiers guarding an infantry fighting vehicle which had fallen behind the column moving ahead toward the fighting area.

<sup>3</sup> One of those who were killed in an exchange of fire outside Makhachkala in June 2004 was a student of the Daghestanian Polytechnic.

At the same time, the Islamic youth is rapidly becoming politically aware. While several years ago the dreams of an independent North Caucasian Imamate and Islamic Caliphate were discussed in private in the radical mosques, today many young Muslims are actively seeking ways to translate the Islamic political doctrine into reality. They are moving away from spontaneous and "home-grown" forms of military-political self-organization to the rich experience of international Islamic political structures. Hizb ut-Tahrir is gaining popularity among the youth attracted by the logic of its ideology and practice, its complete loyalty to the spirit of the Koran and Sunna, as well as implacable devotion to the principles of taqfir and jihad, which are expected to establish the rule of Allah on earth in the form of the Caliphate.

Despite official ideological efforts and propaganda, young Muslims are increasingly convinced that the 1999 attack was justified as a logical and legitimate continuation of the mountain peoples' struggle headed by three imams against the Russian state. Young Muslims would either like to camp in the Chechen forests, or at least help the mujaheddin in Daghestan. A generation wishing to fight and undermine Russian statehood is growing in the Caucasus.

## The Factors of Radicalization of the Salafi Jamaats

It seems that the time to oppose the Salafi protest ideology has passed. With its current level of popularity in the region, none of the states would have been able to stem its spread. What is more, the local people are willingly embracing it despite the official propaganda and repressions. For example, Salafization of the Nogai districts, Lakia, and Lezghistan, where Islamic traditions became completely buried under Soviet power, have passed the point of no return. For several years now large Salafi jamaats have been functioning in Derbent, Daghestanskije Ogni, the Bebedji village, and in the Magaramkent, Akhty, and Kurakh districts. Today the state should stem radicalization of the disseminated ideas.

It was clear from the very beginning that, under certain conditions, Salafi ideology could remain moderate and absolutely peaceful. According to Vladimir Muratov, who headed the Federal Security Service for Daghestan, "not every Wahhabi is a criminal. He has the right to remain a believer if he does not encroach on the rights of others. We limit ourselves to those who violate law and order."<sup>4</sup> This was ignored in the heat of struggle against terrorism and religious extremism; the dividing line between the radically and openly anti-state groups and loyal religious communities was also ignored. These rash steps and decisions damaged beyond repair the cause of preventing radicalization of the Salafi communities which were keeping away from radical anti-state slogans and practical actions.

Late in the 1990s, the moderate Salafis in Daghestan were represented by the followers of Akhmad-qadi Akhtaev, who used to head the Islamic Revival Party. Until March 1998, when he died under strange circumstances, he demonstrated the most flexible approach to religious and legal issues; he objected to attempts to realize the taqfir principles in the republic and the calls to jihad. At the same time, he supported the idea of cooperation between the Muslims and the state, and called on the Salafis to abandon squabbles inside Islam and opposition to the state for the sake of creating an attractive image for their religion. He was well aware that at all times the Caucasus would remain Russia's neighbor and was known as an opponent of armed struggle against Russia's presence in Daghestan.

<sup>4</sup> See: "Kto budet vospityvat imamov," *Novoe delo*, No. 45, 7 November 2003.

For some time, the moderate Salafis tried to prevent radicalization of a large number of their coreligionists; they neutralized the impulses emanating from the radical groups and helped maintain stability in the region. Under their influence, some of the amirs did not support the calls for war against Russia and were in favor of the idea of a dialog between the republican and federal authorities. Many of the members of the internal (not performing a Hejira to Chechnia) jamaat of Muhammad Bagautdin were resolved to continue their legal educational efforts in Daghestan. This was done even after the short wave of repressions.

The death of Akhmad-qadi was a heavy blow to the moderate Salafis. There was no other person like him; the new leaders of the Daghestanian Salafis were too weak, therefore the moderate wing was gradually affected by radical anti-governmental and anti-Russian propaganda. Finally, due to the sociopolitical dynamics in the republic and the region as a whole, the authorities ignored the moderate ideas. The moderate Salafi wings were left to the mercy of the more radical groups. As a result, by the late 1990s the Islamic jamaat of Muhammad Bagautdin was the only surviving moderate Salafi organization in Daghestan.

There are several possible explanations for the failure of the moderate Salafi wing to triumph over the radical (or even extremist) groups, as a result of which some of its members moved over to the radical camp. First, the absence of a fairly respected person able to lead the faithful and knowledgeable enough to oppose the ideological attacks of the radicals.

According to the second version, the sociopolitical dynamics in the region forced the government to ignore the moderate ideas. The authorities did nothing to strengthen the moderate wing and help it oppose the radical Salafi ideas. Foreign sponsors, who also wanted to see as acute a collision as possible between Islam in the Caucasus and the Russian State, did nothing to support the moderate Salafis. They were instilling the ideas of an immediate and relentless jihad in the Northern Caucasus and rejected the very possibility of peaceful dialog and coexistence. This was why the still weak moderate Salafi structures were swept away and buried under the deluge of radical ideas.

The third version accused the government (the law enforcement structures included), the media, and the Tariqah Islam opposed to Salafi of being unable to distinguish between the moderate and the radical Salafi communities and of their totally erroneous conviction of their *a priori* radical and illegal nature.

The fourth version looks at radicalization as a response to the repressions. For example, wishing to avoid them, many moderate Salafis had to go underground, while others joined the mujaheddin in Chechnia. The latter came back as radicals well trained for ideological and armed battles. Abdurashid Saidov, who saw the rout of the Salafi communities with his own eyes, described this in his book: "When the authorities started fighting religious ideology using the crude methods typical of them—repressions and persecutions—dissidents crossed over to Ichkeria in great numbers. Persecutions and an exodus to rebel Ichkeria drove the fundamentalists closer together, inspired them, fortified their will to victory, improved the quality of their weapons and upgraded their battle-worthiness."<sup>5</sup>

Rather than contradicting, these versions complement each other; they offer an objective assessment of the very complicated process of radicalization of the moderate Salafi movement. Today, when the radical and moderate communities have all been destroyed without discrimination, the moderate Salafis have no organization; they are scattered across the region and lack a commonly recognized leader. To preserve their ideology and their physical existence, they unite into small social groups of close friends and relatives. Scattered and deprived of a religious leader capable of offering clear landmarks and behavior patterns, such people fell easy prey to more radically-minded Muslims. The latter

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<sup>5</sup> A. Saidov, *Taina vtorzhenia*, Makhachkala, 2001 (see: [http://lib.baikal.net/win.cgi/POLITOLOG/saidov.txt], 15 April, 2005).

are well organized, lavishly funded, and rely on a detailed military-political doctrine and a corresponding program of action.

Today, several trends have manifested themselves among the moderate Salafis:

- A certain category of the faithful (mainly village and mountain dwellers, as well as people with secondary education or without it) has temporarily moved away from the radical issues of taqfir and jihad to concentrate on Islam's ritual and ethical side;
- Another category (mainly urban dwellers and people with university diplomas) is making increasingly bolder attempts to legalize a moderate and constructive Salafi community through their mosques and Islamic shops; with this aim in view, it is tentatively exploring public opinion and the sentiments among the people at the top;
- The third group (the faithful integrated into the republic's public, economic, political, and academic structures and the elite) is demonstrating its ever-mounting desire to establish cooperation and a mutually advantageous alliance between moderate Salafis and secular society. Those of its members who have already formulated the best possible variants are people with high social statuses, and material and intellectual potential; they can soberly assess the situation and are prepared to enter into a dialog with the authorities on a wide range of problems.

The republican authorities are sure to display great interest in this group. This is not enough though. They must display a readiness to cooperate for the sake of restored religious and political stability in the republic in order to draw at least some of the faithful away from the radicals.

## What is Needed to Prevent Radicalization of Islam?

Persecutions failed to uproot the Salafi movement; in fact, history has shown that none of the modernist and reformative ideologies were liquidated using the methods the authorities applied in the Northern Caucasus. Force will fail: as an alternative and reformist ideology, Salafi will always attract people living under hard social, economic, and political conditions when religious self-awareness among the religiously ignorant population is on the rise.

This should not be taken to mean that radicalization and opposition to a non-Islamic state (Russia, in our case) are inevitable: on the whole, Islam preaches law-abidance and loyalty to a government prepared to respect Islamic values. Here is what the Koran says on this matter: "Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them, for Allah loves those who are just" (Surah 60, ayat 8).

The contemporary Salafi interpretation of the above says that believers should be tolerant of and loyal to people, communities, and states not engaged in a direct aggression against the Muslims. This principle underlies the Islamic principles of international relations which prescribe tolerance and respect for alien laws, cultures, and religions, because "Islam is a religion of peace that speaks of love."<sup>6</sup> The Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad also contains numerous calls for tolerance, respect, and protection of followers of different faiths.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> S. Kutb, *Fi zilyali-l-Kuran* (Under the Canopy of the Koran. Commentaries), Vol. 6, Beirut, 1988, pp. 3544-3545.

<sup>7</sup> See: An-Navavi, *Sady pravednykh*, Moscow, 2001, p. 334; M. al-Khashimi, *Lichnost musul'manina soglasno Koranu i Sunne*, Moscow, 2001, pp. 145, 156; Iu. Kardavi, *Al-khalal va-l-kharam fi-l-islam* (What is Allowed and What is Banned in Islam), Beirut, 1994, p. 306.

There is no doubt that a dialog can and should be entered with the moderate Salafis to find areas of common interest, particularly in view of their increasing influence in the region. The following measures should be promptly taken:

- All spiritual structures and leaders should be at an equal distance from official power; the same applies to all sorts of groups and leaders inside the Tariqahs. To my mind, this corresponds much better to the principles of separation of church from the state than the patronage the state offered to one branch or trend. This will develop a healthy rivalry between the traditional Naqshbandi and “alien” (Jazuliya) Tariqah;
- The time has come to clearly distinguish between radical and moderate Salafi; all statesmen and everyone serving in the law enforcement structures, as well as the ordinary people, should be informed about the difference between them. In the districts where moderate Salafi is still weak or undeveloped, it should be supported in its fight for a place in the sun against radical and ultra-radical Salafi. This will help draw a significant number of radicals away from extremist ideas toward moderate viewpoints and invite to a dialog with the authorities. For example, the RF Anti-terrorist Commission’s report for 2003 says that there are two wings in the Salafi movement; the report calls for a dialog with the moderate wing “to prevent its radicalization.” The Commission relies on a “skillful combination of open and secret measures and on large-scale propaganda among the local people.”
- Moderate Salafi, which avoids politics, should be legalized; all contradictions between Salafi and the Tariqah and between Salafi and secular power should be transferred to the ideological and theological sphere. This will decrease the still mounting radicalization potential of the entire range of Salafi movements and prevent them from becoming too radical during their struggle for survival. Otherwise a much better organized and more powerful underground ideological and political Salafi opposition to the Tariqah and government, or even an ultra-radical fighting branch, will inevitably appear.
- The Avar Tariqah monopoly over the SAMD can no longer maintain religious and political stability in the republic. It has discredited itself and lost its legitimacy: it should be urgently internationalized by setting up a council or a commission in which all Islamic trends should be represented. In fact, a similar collective body—the State Council of Dagestan—has been maintaining ethnic and political stability in the republic for a long time.

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Acting at the request of the RD Ministry of Ethnic Policies, Information, and Foreign Contacts, the Republican Center for Systemic Islamic Studies and Projects has created a plan for setting up a moderate youth Islamic movement which boils down to the following.

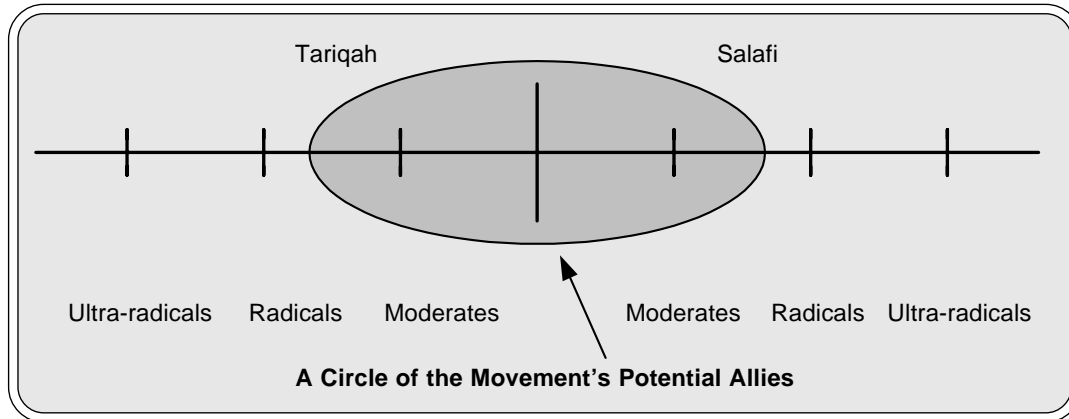
The ideological dividing line should separate the Dagestani Muslims into Salafi and Tariqah supporters with varying degrees of radicalization. Neither of the radical and intractable wings of Islam in Dagestan—unbridled “Tariqatism” and no less unbridled “Wahhabism”—are likely to reach a consensus or a peaceful settlement. Neither of them, however, will prevail, yet their never-ending clashes and conflicts might start bloodshed in the republic once more.

Today, a dedicated young Muslim must either side with ignorant and intolerant ustazes or join a protest movement. The time has come to offer him another option: a strong moderate Muslim movement. Educated young Muslims wishing to move away from the radical Tariqah and radical Salafi

stances should be relatively free in their choice. We should find common points for bringing the moderate members of both wings closer.

This can be done: the moderate supporters of the Tariqah (the murids of Muhammad Mukhtar Kyakhulaisky, for example) can cooperate and communicate in a peaceful way with the enlightened supporters of moderate Salafi (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1



The ideology of a moderate Islamic movement should rest on four components which will make it possible to embrace the interests of a wide circle of the Muslims of Daghestan. The values and dogmas that should be made part of these components are axioms uncontested by all more or less responsible Islamic trends (see Fig. 2).

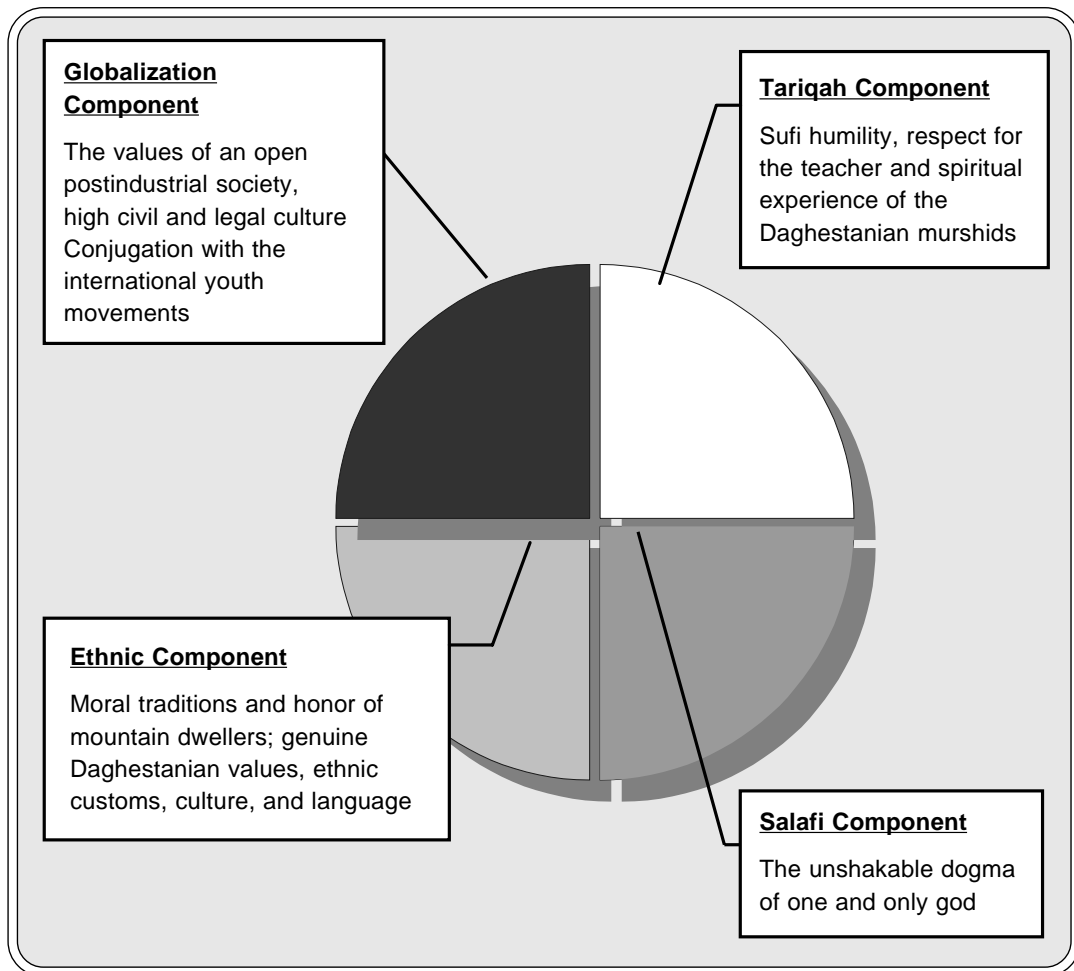
Let's discuss the axiological and ideological content of each of the sectors.

*The Tariqah component:* genuine Sufism should be recognized as such; it should be purified of sham Sufi destructive sects and movements; the rich spiritual Sufi experience accumulated by the classics of Sufism throughout the world should be mastered; we should appeal to the authority, works, and thoughts of the Daghestanian ustazes—Magomed Yaragsky, Jamaludin Kazikumukhsky, Abdurakhman-haji Sogratlinsky; the young Muslims should be taught Sufi humility, asceticism, patience, respect for their spiritual teachers, and struggle against their own passions and sins.

*The Salafi component:* the unshakable dogma of one and only god; acceptance of ijtiḥad as the only way of developing Islam in correspondence with contemporary realities; elaboration of a conception of creative jihad as an inalienable part of the Islamic way of life (jihad in creative or economic activities, in the social sphere, science, etc.) as opposed to armed jihad.

*The ethnic component:* it should be recognized that at all times Islam in Daghestan has its own specific features generated by the specifics of its peoples' ethnic cultures; it should also be accepted that the "ethnic tinge" does not contradict the very essence of Islam. It should be encouraged in order to help different peoples recognize it as a universal way; it should be clearly stated that the Saudi, Pakistani, Egyptian, or any other interpretation of the Muslim faith is unacceptable for our peoples; the entire range of Islamic activities should be adjusted to local Daghestanian conditions; it is necessary to channel the efforts of the young to deal with the specific social, cultural, and economic problems of our republic; the moral traditions of the mountain peoples and their ideas of honor should be revived along with the genuinely Daghestanian values, national customs, culture, and languages.

Figure 2



*The globalization component:* we should abandon the desire to isolate ourselves from non-Muslim cultures and states; we should imbibe the values of open postindustrial society; the local youth should be taught civil and legal culture and democratic values; the young people should be taught to think in a scientific and rational way and to accept a scientific picture of the world. They should become part of the international democratic, ecological, social, and scientific youth movements.

We should concentrate on creative and socially useful activities; convince people to abandon a black-and-white picture of the world; they should be encouraged to cooperate with the youth movements of the Caucasus, Russia, and other countries of the “near” and “far abroad,” and to accept the values of democracy and civil and legal culture. The national-cultural component and potential should play a leading role and be treated as a priority.

To encourage the movement, the state should try, first, to keep the SAMD from interfering in and opposing youth activities; second, the state should explain to the law enforcement bodies the fundamental difference between the youth movement and the radical Islamic groups; the law enforcement structures should be informed of the movement’s positive role in strengthening civil peace in the republic and its full conformity to the law; third, the authorities should refrain from flirting with the

movement for the sake of their own narrow corporate, party, or political interests, otherwise the movement will inevitably plunge into politics. This will be enough to allow the movement to organize itself and grow stronger by means of its own potential.

In fact, the new thinking, which blends the four components into an ideology and channels the activity of young Muslims toward creative goals, has been obvious among young people for some time already. The time has come to organize them.

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# ENERGY RESOURCES AND ENERGY POLICY

## ADDRESSING GLOBAL ENERGY AND SECURITY CHALLENGES

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The geographical distribution of current energy resources is quite uneven which makes some countries and regions major suppliers of energy products, oil and gas in particular. Key-suppliers of energy products are located in the Middle East, the CIS, Africa and Latin America whereas North America, Europe, and South and East Asia are major consumers.

Recent events show that energy prices can change rapidly, reacting to economic, social and political events in oil exporting countries. Ener-

gy policies and strategies may trigger tensions between countries. Moreover, there are growing concerns about the safety of energy transportation routes and security in transit countries. In addition, extraction, transportation, storage, processing and final uses of energy resources do impact on the environment in many negative ways.

These basic facts and the development of energy security concepts and strategies in some countries underline the importance of energy se-

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curity issues and the need to assess linkages between energy and security systematically.

In that context, international and regional cooperation, organizations and treaties are

key-components of energy security and, subsequently, a strengthening and better use of existing institutional frameworks should be advocated.

## I. Key-Energy Issues and Security Implications

More than any other market, the energy market seems to be characterized by very specific features such as geographical concentration and related geopolitical implications, linkages with economic development and growth, the quality of governance and democracy, and the environmental impacts. Given its critical overall importance, the energy sector is also an ideal target for terrorism. These issues raise numerous security concerns that require strategies and policies to contain, reduce or eliminate the risks associated with energy dependency, price instability, economic development strategies, poor governance and corruption, and the environment.

### I.1. Basic Energy Figures and Tendencies

#### *Energy consumption*

Despite gains in terms of energy efficiency, as shown in Table 1, world energy consumption increased by about 16% between 1990 and 2001, to reach 403.9 quadrillion (10<sup>15</sup>) btu (British Thermal Unit) in the last year.

Table 1

World Energy Consumption (quadrillion btu)

	1990	2001	2010	2025
<b>Industrialized Nations</b>	182.8	211.5 [+16%]* (53%)**	236.3 [+12%]	81.4 [+19%] (45%)
<b>Eastern Europe/FSU</b>	76.3	53.3 [-30%] (13%)	59.0 [+11%]	75.6 [+28%] (12%)
<b>Developing Nations</b>	89.3	139.2 [+56%] (34%)	175.5 [+26%]	265.9 [+50%] (43%)
<b>Of which Asia</b>	52.5	85.0 [+62%] (21%)	110.6 [+30%]	173.4 [+57%] (28%)
<b>Total World</b>	348.4	403.9 [+16%] (100%)	470.8 [+17%]	622.9 [+32%]

\* Between [...], percentage changes with respect to the previous reported year.  
 \*\* Between (...), share in total world.

Source: Energy Information Administration (EIA), *International Energy Outlook 2004* [<http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/download.html>].

In absolute terms (for the reference period) consumption increased much more in developing countries than in industrialized ones. This is a reflection of the economic development and fast growth in some newly industrialized countries and emerging market economies. However, energy consumption decreased in transition countries, mainly because of the collapse of output that accompanied the disintegration of the Soviet economic area, liberalization and the adoption of market-based institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Considering Table 1, in 2001, industrialized countries consumed more than half of the world's energy. However, energy consumption is growing much faster in developing countries than in industrialized ones. As a result, developing and developed countries should consume about the same quantities of energy by 2025. Within the group of developing countries, about two thirds of energy consumption shall then take place in Asia, notably in China and India.

#### *Energy supply sources*

Oil accounts for 40% of the world energy supply in recent years (see Table 2); it is followed by coal and gas (about 22-23% for each). These are all non-renewable sources of energy. Both nuclear energy, that is also non-renewable, and hydro-electricity, that is renewable, represent about 7% of world supply. Other sources of energy are *de facto* very negligible. However, the share of wind power is growing fast. The use of solar panels is increasing in developed and developing countries. Biomass energy, mainly from wood, is a major supply source in many developing countries.

Table 2

**Main Sources of Energy Production  
(recent years)**

Sources	Share in total (%)
Oil	40
Natural gas	23
Coal	22
Nuclear	7
Hydroelectric	7
Biomass and others*	1
Total World	100

\* Geothermal, solar, and wind.  
Source: EIA.

#### *The high price of fuel*

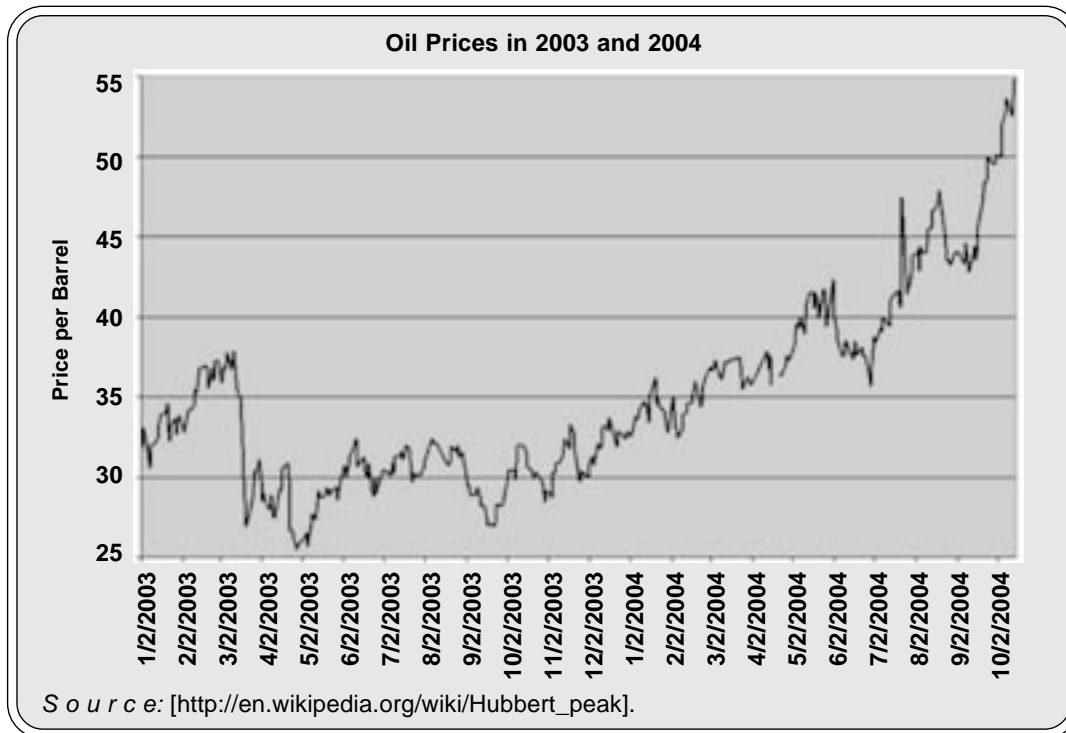
According to experts, high oil prices should become the rule and determine the price of gas and coal (see Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, oil price volatility seems to have also increased recently. These

<sup>1</sup> Former command economies were also characterized by a high energy intensity of output, mainly because of the lack of economic incentives to save resources and a development strategy based on energy-intensive heavy industry.

<sup>2</sup> According to Paul Maidment, "many of the factors behind the recent surge in prices are likely to persist" ("The High Price of Oil," *Energy Brief*, FORBES, 8 September, 2004.)

price features partly reflect news about political, economic and social events (e.g. mass demonstrations and strikes) in major oil exporting countries such as Russia, Venezuela and Nigeria. It may also relate to fundamental factors such as more accurate (and rather pessimistic) information about oil reserves and their speed of depletion. Higher and/or more volatile prices should negatively impact on economic growth, employment and incomes in many countries, in particular poor ones.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1



#### *Geographical concentration of oil and gas resources*

A distinction has to be made between proven, identified and economically recoverable oil reserves. As indicated by Table 3, figures may somehow differ between data sources. New data and information may change reference figures. For instance, the adoption of new technologies should improve recovery rates.

The distinction between proven and recoverable oil reserves is quite essential because proven reserves are not a measure of future supply and, according to some experts, relying on proven reserves figures only can lead to wrong perceptions and decisions. What matters for the future is economically recoverable oil, for which the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Iraq in particular, does not appear as a dominant region.

Table 4 shows that more than two thirds of proven world oil reserves are concentrated in Middle-East countries. Considering recoverable oil, with less than 40% of world reserves, the dominant position of the Middle East deteriorates whereas the combined reserves of North America, Europe and the CIS represent 36% of world reserves.

<sup>3</sup> See: Kofi A. Annan, "Where the High Oil Price Really Hurts," *The International Herald Tribune*, Tuesday, 3 October, 2000.

Table 3

**World Oil Reserves  
(estimates)**

Estimates/Sources	Quantities*	Level
<b>Proven</b>		
DOE / OGJ**	1,016.8	103.6
DOE / GULF***	981.4	100
<b>Identified</b>		
USGS****	1,103.2	112.4
<b>Recoverable</b>		
USGS	2,272.5	231.5

\* Billions of 42 gallon barrels.  
 \*\* Department of Energy / *Oil and Gas Journal*.  
 \*\*\* DOE / Gulf Publishing Co.  
 \*\*\*\* U.S. Geological Survey.

*Source:* Bill Kovarik Ph.D., 2003 [<http://www.radford.edu/~wkovarik/oil/>].

Table 4

**Geographical Distribution of  
Oil Reserves (%)**

Region/Country	Proven	Recoverable
Iran	8.8	5.7
Iraq	11.1	6.5
Kuwait	9.5	5.8
Saudi Arabia	25.9	16.5
<b>Total Middle East</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>39.6</b>
Europe and former SU	7.6	18.6
North America	5.4	17.5
<b>World</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* See Table 3.

More than half of the world reserves of natural gas are located in three countries only: Russia, Iran and Qatar (see Table 5). Russia alone controls almost 30% of world gas reserves, a share that

could still increase with expected discoveries of large fields in Arctic regions, where extraction will be facilitated by the global warming process and the melting of the ice cap.<sup>4</sup>

Table 5

**Proven Gas Reserves  
(1 January, 2002)**

Rank	Country	Billion cu m	Share (%)
1	Russia	47,860	29.7
2	Iran	24,800	15.4
3	Qatar	17,930	11.1
4	Saudi Arabia	6,339	3.93
5	UAE	5,892	3.65
World			
Source: [www.cia.gov].			

#### *Oil and gas companies*

Table 6 proposes a ranking of major oil and gas companies. These companies belong to both public and private sectors. For example, Exxon/Mobil is a private entity whereas Saudi Arabian Oil Co. is listed as a public one. From the perspective of political economy, the distinction between public and private ownership may not matter. Large private oil companies represent powerful lobbies that can have considerable leverages on politicians in parliaments and governments. Furthermore, in some countries, the absence of democratic controls implies that public companies are serving the interests of those who control them and thus engage in rent-seeking activities, which may not be welfare enhancing to society at large.

Considering current production, the largest oil companies are located in the U.S., U.K., Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Venezuela, representing a mixture of public and private interests. Ailing Yukos was the Russian largest oil company in terms of production. The ranking of companies by reserves show that Russian companies are ranked above Western ones.

Russian Gazprom, which already controls slightly less than 20% of world gas reserves (see Table 7), could strengthen its position in the energy sector, which is not well perceived by Western experts and politicians, especially when the State remains the main shareholder.

#### *OPEC*

Besides oil companies, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is a major player on the oil market. It is a permanent intergovernmental organization created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960, by five founding members: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. They were later joined by other Members: Qatar (1961), Indonesia (1962), Libya (1962), United Arab Emirates (1967),

<sup>4</sup> "The Arctic region, particularly offshore, has huge oil and gas reserves, mostly in Russia, Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Norway. Warmer temperatures would make it easier to drill and ship oil (and gas) from the Arctic" (Tom Doggett, "Global Warming Exposes Arctic to Oil, Gas Drilling," *Reuters*, 8 November, 2004).

Table 6

## Ranking of Major Oil Companies

Rank	By production		By reserves*
	# 1*	# 2**	
1	Exxon/Mobil (U.S.)	Saudi Arabian Oil Co.	LUKoil (RF)
2	Royal Dutch Shell (U.K./Neth)	Petroleos Mexicano	Yukos (RF)
3	Chevron Texaco (U.S.)	Petroleos de Venezuela	Gazprom (RF)
4	BP Amoco (U.K.)	China National Petroleum	Exxon/Mobil (U.S.)
5	Yukos (RF)	BP Amoco + Arco	Royal Dutch Shell (U.K./Neth)
6	Total Fina Elf (F)	Exxon/Mobil	Chevron Texaco (U.S.)
7	LUKoil (RF)	Nigerian National Oil Co.	BP Amoco (U.K.)
8	Conoco Phillips (U.S.)	Iraq National Oil Co.	Tyumen (RF)

*Remark:* Other rankings could refer to assets, investments, profit, political leverage (?), etc.

*Source:* \* Forbes (2003) [<http://www.scaruffi.com/politics/oil.html>].  
\*\* Late 1990s [<http://www.gravmag.com/oil2.html>].

Table 7

## OAO Gazprom in Figures (2002)

■ Gas reserves	28,800 billion cu m
■ Share of world gas reserves	17.9%
■ Gas production	540 billion cu m
■ Pipeline system	about 150,000 km
■ Exports	
— Europe	134 billion cu m
— CIS + Baltic states	45 billion cu m
■ E.ON Ruhrgas interest	6.4%
■ Market value	USD 40-60 bn

*Source:* E.ON Ruhrgas.

Algeria (1969), Nigeria (1971), Ecuador (1973- left in 1992) and Gabon (1975-1994). Saudi Arabia is seen as the dominant country in the organization.

The total production of OPEC countries represents about 40% of the world's crude oil. The OPEC Member countries coordinate their oil production policies in order to help stabilize the oil market and to help oil producers achieve a reasonable rate of return on their investments. OPEC decisions regarding oil export quotas of members influence the price of oil. However, quotas agreements are not always strictly followed by members. In that respect, it is worth observing that countries like Nigeria and Venezuela are confronted with high external debts for which regular payments are requested.

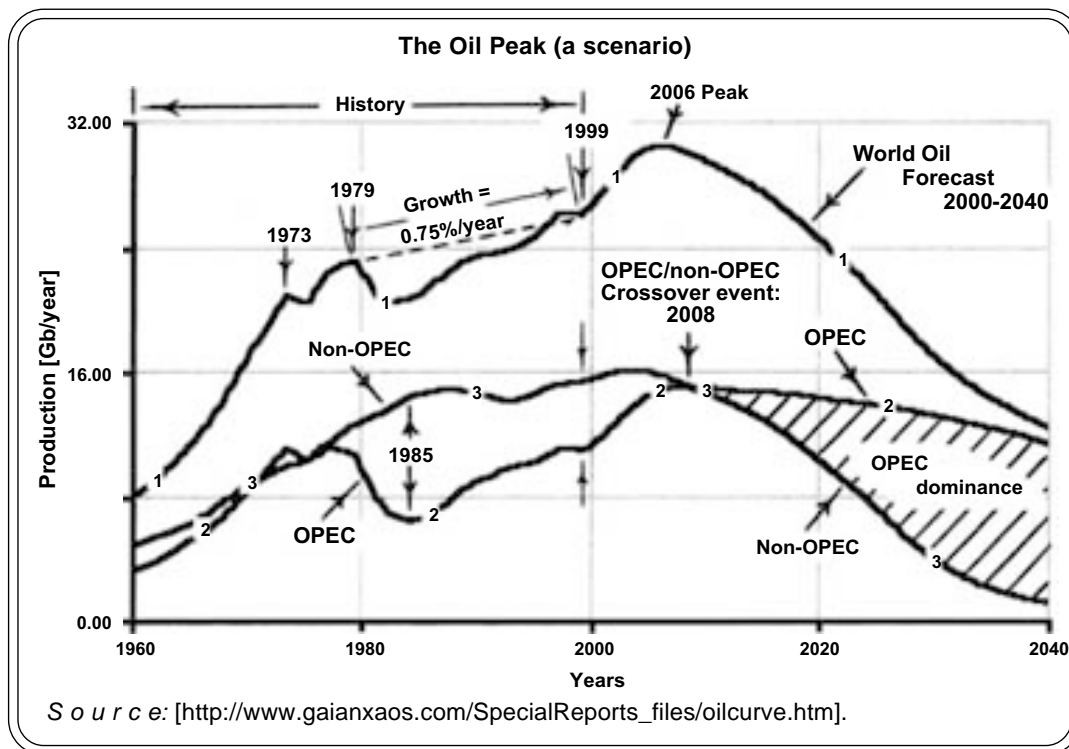
Considering gas, a collusive behavior between Russia and other major gas producers, creating a gas OPEC, must not be excluded, which should have an impact on the long-term price of gas, favoring exporting countries.

*Future tendencies*

There seems to be contradicting views about the future of oil. According to the *World Energy Outlook 2004* published by the International Energy Agency, world reliance on oil should increase sharply as the energy demand will increase by 60% over the next 25 to 30 years. Thus, oil shall remain the single largest fuel even if the role of natural gas shall continue to grow. According to the *Outlook*, the so-called "oil peak" should be observed in 2030.<sup>5</sup> Overall, fossil oil will continue to dominate global energy use accounting for some 85% of the increase in world primary demand.

For the sake of illustrating the oil peak idea, the scenario depicted in Fig. 2 is very pessimistic as the world oil production should start declining before the end of the current decade. Somehow

Figure 2



<sup>5</sup> Oil experts depict the world production of oil by an "inverted U-curve," called the "Hubbert's Curve." The U.S. geophysicist M. King Hubbert proposed a mathematical model to predict the rate of oil production and subsequent depletion of oil fields (see: M. King Hubbert, "Energy from Fossil Fuels," *Science*, Vol. 109, 4 February, 1949, pp. 103-109).



less pessimistic analysts assume that the world production of oil could reach a peak by 2015 the latest as the Middle East may not be able to compensate for the declining production of oil in other regions.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever the exact date of the oil peak, drastic adjustments will be required to cope with the new situation. Higher prices for oil should stimulate sector-specific investments, possibly leading to the discovery of new fields and a more efficient use of old ones, raising recovery rates; it shall also reduce the demand for oil, promote energy efficiency and the use of substitutes, mainly gas. Renewable sources of energy should gain in importance as well as hydrogen that is already used to propel rockets and has a limited impact on the environment.

#### *Security dimensions*

The key-features of energy markets, especially for oil and gas, have security implications:

- Considering the growing demand for energy, competition and rivalry among nations for accessing and controlling energy resources should be expected to increase significantly, especially when access to new energy resources takes time and requires investments.
- The high price of energy products already reflects the growing competition among energy consumers and the fact that oil reserves are limited.
- Oil price fluctuations indicate the need for a more stable or, at least, a more predictable environment in terms of price levels.
- Tensions on energy markets are exacerbated by the geographical concentration of oil and gas reserves on countries and regions seen as risky, potentially unstable or unfriendly.
- In such a context, it is worth monitoring the behavior of major (Eastern and Western, Northern and Southern) companies involved in the energy sector, particularly lobbying activities, and assessing their leverage on political decisions, including those that eventually lead to direct interventions in foreign countries and the funding of terrorism.
- The activities and decisions of OPEC have also security dimensions as they influence the supply and the price of oil.
- In addition, it should be noted that conflicts in the Middle East could stimulate energy producers to better secure their territories to raise the cost of foreign military intervention, which may lead to additional defense expenditures, making the world more insecure.

## **1.2. Energy and Economic Development**

### *The energy sector as the engine of growth and development*

Considering history, dramatic economic changes were often associated with the introduction of new technologies to use and produce energy (see steam engine, dynamo, explosion engine, etc.). Energy is essential for economic growth and development, for both consumers and producers, which explains the increase of the share of developing countries in total energy consumption. This is particularly true for China and India that are significant developing countries in terms of population, economic weight and needs to satisfy. The demand for energy and related policies of these two major countries shall

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<sup>6</sup> "Conservative (for which read pessimistic) analysts say global oil production from all possible sources, including shale, bitumen and deep-water wells, will peak at around 2015 at about 90 million bpd, allowing a fairly modest increase in consumption" (A. Kirby, "When the Last Oil Well Runs Dry," BBC website, 19 April, 2004).

have important implications on international relations, peaceful competition, tensions among nations and eventually conflict.

*Huge needs unsatisfied*

Poverty, low income and the lack of infrastructure imply that access to energy products is difficult for large segments of the population living in developing countries. In 2002, about 1.6 billion people, i.e. one fourth of the world population, were without electricity. That figure should decline by only 0.2 billion by 2030 according to experts. The number of people relying exclusively on biomass energy is also expected to increase, from 2.4 billion in 2002 to 2.6 billion in 2030, overreaching sustainable levels.<sup>7</sup>

*“Dutch disease”*

For some transition and developing countries, excessive exports of energy products (mainly oil and gas) may lead to so-called “Dutch diseases.” High exports of energy products may lead to large trade and current account surpluses that can cause a real appreciation of the domestic currency and, as a result, decrease the competitiveness of non-energy sectors (e.g. manufacturing and services). Thus, the “Dutch disease” corresponds to the decline of manufacturing (or dis-industrialization), which often contributes to higher unemployment and lower incomes. Scholars perceive Russia and Kazakhstan as Dutch disease cases.<sup>8</sup>

*Terms-of-trade risks*

A high concentration of exports or imports on energy products may also increase the adverse impact of significant terms-of-trade (= price of exports/price of imports) changes on the domestic economy and the external balance for both energy exporters and importers.

In the short term, terms-of-trade may change significantly and unpredictably, particularly when exports and imports are concentrated on a few products, including energy ones. According to the evidence, within a year, fluctuations can easily reach 15 percent. In the long run, energy prices shall rise, creating additional adjustment pressures on countries that are energy importers whereas the position of energy exporting countries should improve.

The debt problems of major oil exporters such as Mexico, Nigeria and Venezuela are largely attributed to oil price changes and terms-of-trade fluctuations, macroeconomic and exchange rates mismanagement, poor governance, corrupted practices and capital flights.<sup>9</sup> In addition, oil related terms-of-trade deteriorations created significant current account deficits and debts for energy importing countries like, for instance, Brazil.

*Energy rents, wealth and income distribution*

Oil and gas production may lead to very high rents and an excessive concentration of wealth and power in a few hands and, subsequently, correspond to opaque institutions, corrupted behaviors and large inequalities. High-ranked civil servants and political leaders may take control over energy resources and capture significant shares of export revenues. This can lead to huge amounts of capital flight, which reduces re-investment in the domestic economy. This can also delay political reforms

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<sup>7</sup> For more detail, see: International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2004*.

<sup>8</sup> See: M. Bernstam, A. Rabushka, “The Dutch Disease: Peter the Great’s Real Legacy,” Hoover Institutions, Public Policy Inquiry, 20 June, 2001; A. Cohen, “Confronting Kazakhstan Dutch Disease,” *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, Johns Hopkins University, Central Asia Caucasus Institute, Wednesday/26 March, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Most often, an improvement of the terms-of-trade caused by higher oil prices first led to impressive surpluses, followed by large borrowings and growing indebtednesses, which became unbearable burdens when the oil price started declining, leading to so-called “debt traps,” namely situations where new borrowings are needed to repay old ones.

aiming at more democracy, transparency, rule-of-law and human rights. Vested interests, in particular powerful oil companies, based in high-income energy consumer/importer countries may contribute to these negative features.

#### *Achieving sustainable development*

One of the major challenges for both developed and developing countries is achieving sustainable development. Economic growth should not have detrimental impacts on the natural environment, undermining the prospects of a better life for the future generations. As indicated by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), the U.N. *Agenda 21* and apparent (often irreversible) environmental degradation, mainstream supplies of energy are not sustainable given current levels of energy consumption.

### **I.3. Environmental Aspects of Energy**

#### *Impacts of energy on the environment*

The direct and indirect impacts of energy on the environment may correspond to: a degradation of the ecological balance and the loss of biodiversity, a deterioration of health conditions for human beings, a lowering of the quantity and quality of water, undermining economic activities and lowering living standards, etc. These impacts can be local, transboundary, regional and global. They can trigger tensions and even conflicts within and between countries.

#### *Energy and pollution*

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions caused by the use of carbon fuels (oil, gas and coal) are the main factor contributing to global warming and climate changes. Climate change in turn affects ecological systems and may contribute to increased land degradation, water stress and desertification as well as an increase in dramatic weather changes and related natural disasters. Industrial countries are responsible for most emissions, however developing giants like China and India are rapidly reaching comparable emission levels.

Despite the seeming stabilization of CO<sub>2</sub> emission per capita (see Fig. 3), all the projections from different sources reported in Fig. 4 indicate that CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere shall continue to increase over the next decades, with a predicted 60% rise in climate destabilizing emissions, most of it from cars, trucks and power stations. Two thirds of the increase will come from developing countries. Besides CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other types of energy and economic activity-related pollutions, the transportation and the storage of energy products are potential sources of environmental hazards.

In some countries and regions, the production of hydro-electricity may compete with the use of water for agricultural production, including food crops, creating tensions between up-stream and down-stream users. Moreover, unsustainable use of biomass energy may lead to deforestation and, as result, contribute to water stress, erosion and desertification in some countries.

#### *The case of nuclear energy*

Nuclear energy does not significantly contribute to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, in the case of nuclear power, there is a risk of radiation and contamination. Technical failures and human mistakes may cause disasters like the Chernobyl one. Also, nuclear wastes are a source of concerns. The closure of nuclear power stations leaves a legacy of environmental inconvenience for which mainly future generations shall be responsible. Besides, nuclear technologies can serve both civilian and military uses, which may increase so-called "proliferation risks" ("dirty" and "clean" bombs), stimulate costly arms races and increase material damages and direct and indirect losses of human lives in case of war.

Figure 3

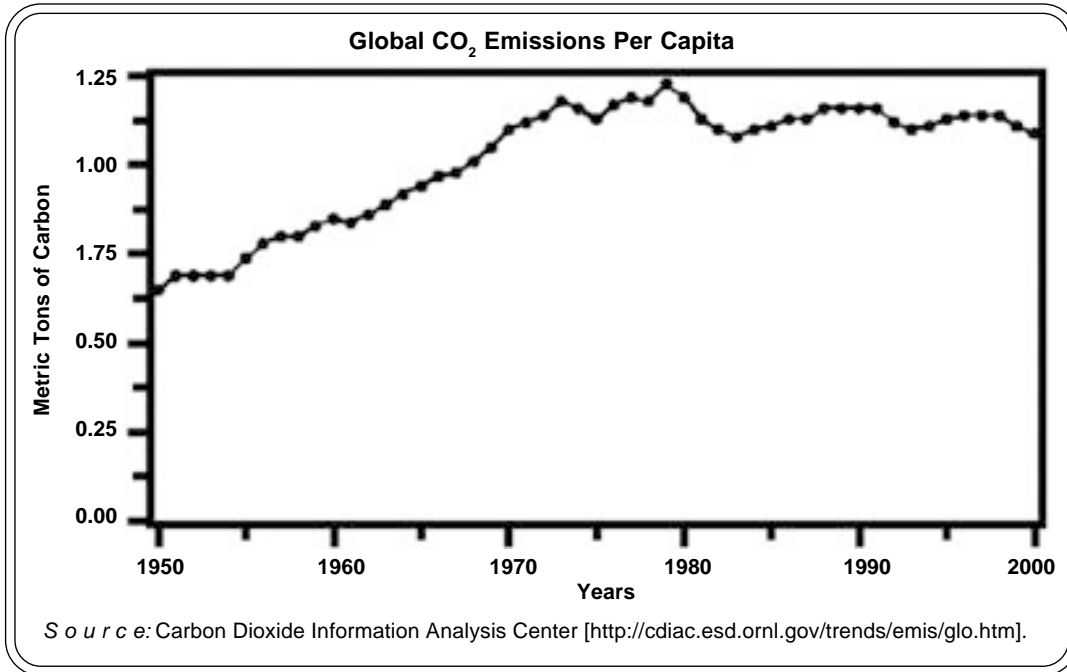
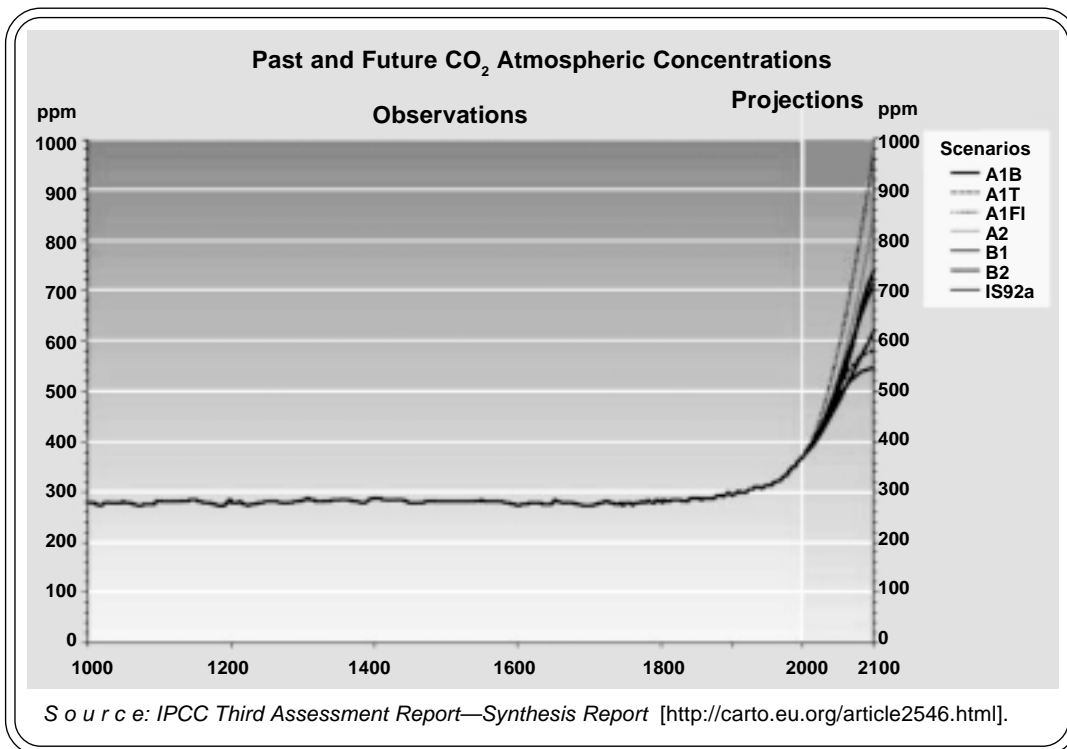


Figure 4



#### **I.4. The Threat of Terrorism**

Terrorism is seen as one of the major threats to security and stability. As indicated by “9/11” the costs of terrorism can be tremendous. Recent analyses indicate that these costs can still increase with the use of so-called “weapons of mass destruction” and the damaging of vital installations and infrastructures.

Considering energy, terrorism is already impeding a full recovery of oil production in the Middle East. Worse can be expected as Osama bin Laden and his followers are calling on fighters to disrupt oil supplies.<sup>10</sup> Some maritime and land routes for energy transportation are also considered as insecure because of terrorism. Terrorists could target nuclear power stations and related facilities.

Another possible linkage between terrorism and energy is the funding of terrorist activities with incomes from oil exports. The media reported that relatives of high ranked Saudi officials provided financial support to some of the terrorists involved in “9/11”, a sensitive issue indeed.<sup>11</sup> The role of Islamic charities (and the rather opaque banking system) funded by the Saudis was also mentioned.

## **II. Addressing Energy and Security-Related Threats and Challenges**

Strategies have been developed to address energy and security-related threats and challenges. They correspond to national responses that combine public and private initiatives for which market-based incentives are essential.

International cooperation, including the role of international organizations and financial institutions, and legal instruments are also important to address energy and security issues, promote scientific research and support investments, mitigate risks of tensions and prevent possible conflicts between countries.

### **II.1. Components of Energy Security Policies**

#### *Scope of energy security*

From a pragmatic perspective, we shall assume that energy security is a multifaceted concept that relates to many issues, including access to resources, the safety of transportation routes, the availability of storage facilities and strategic reserves, the stability and the predictability of prices, the reduction and prevention of environmental damages, etc.<sup>12</sup>

Addressing the various aspects of energy security requires considerable investments in research, equipment and infrastructures. New economically profitable technologies must be developed, as

<sup>10</sup> See: M. Fahmi, “Saudi Al Qaeda Urges Attacks on Oil Facilities,” *Reuters*, 19 December, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> See: J. Risen, “Report Traces Ties of Saudi Ambassador’s Wife to Hijackers,” *International Herald Tribune*, 28 July, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> A formal definition of energy security is provided by B. Barton *et al.*: “We define energy security as a condition in which a nation and all, or most, of its citizens and businesses have access to sufficient energy resources at reasonable prices for the foreseeable future free from serious risk of major disruption of service” (“Introduction” to *Energy Security—Managing Risk in a Dynamic Legal and Regulatory Environment*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 5). This definition precludes environmental aspects which are seen as important by other scholars and policy makers.

well as adequate regulations and efficient markets. Political will and some lobbying are also essential, for which civil society (NGOs), the private sector and public bodies have key-roles to play. International agreements, organizations and cooperation must also be perceived as key-elements of energy security.

*Reducing external dependency*

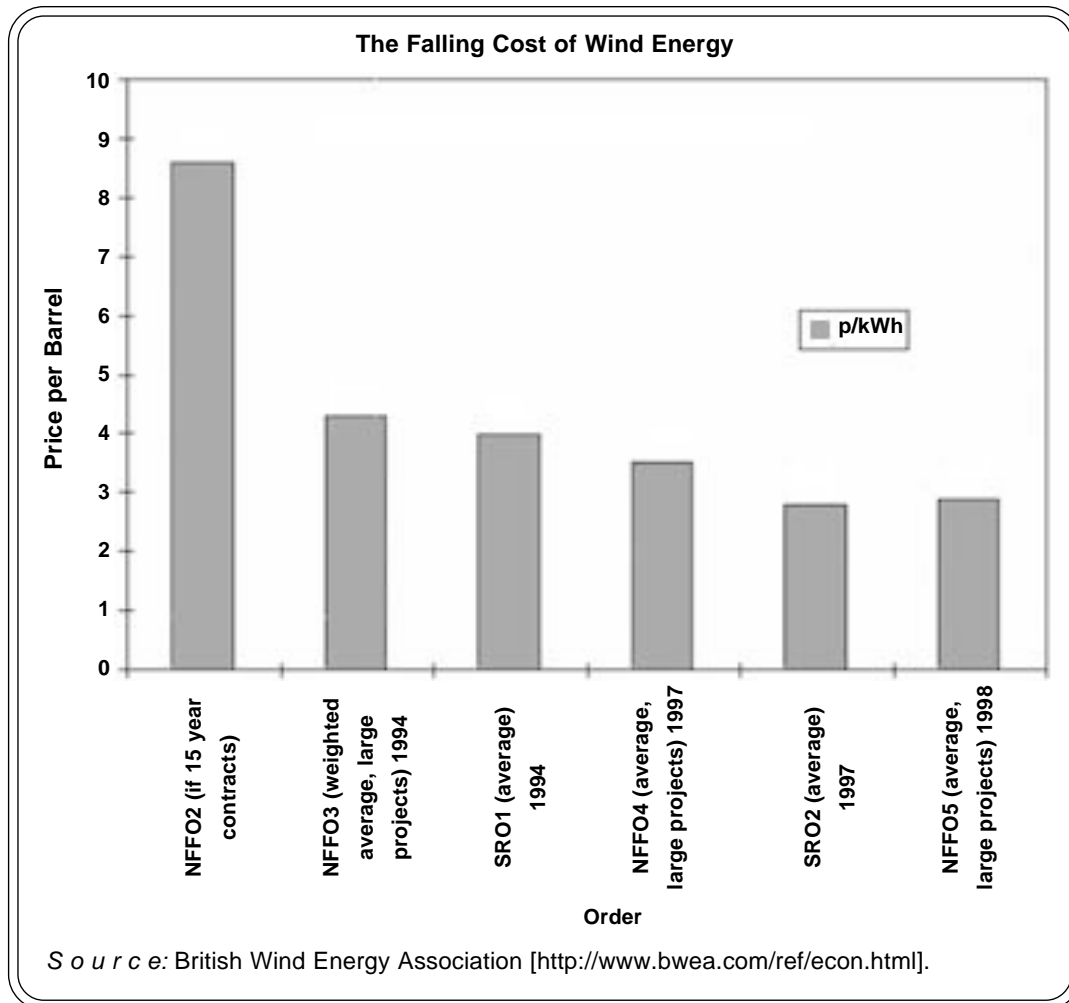
For any country or region, one important step to improve energy security is to reduce dependency on external/foreign supply of energy and diversify both nonrenewable and renewable energy sources.

The geographical diversification of imports of energy products helps diminish excessive reliance on a few suppliers located in specific/sensitive regions. The diversification of energy sources also supports the reduction of dependency on a few energy products such as oil and gas.

*Adopting new energy technologies/techniques*

New technologies can help the identification of new oil and gas fields and increase recovery rates of known fields that are already exploited. New technologies also matters for the better use of coal.

Figure 5



The adoption of new technologies also reduces the energy intensity of productive processes and outputs, and helps improve the environment.

#### *Renewable energy*

Another component of energy security is the more extensive use of renewable sources of energy. Hydro-electricity produced along rivers and sea coasts (using tide-power) is one source of renewable energy.

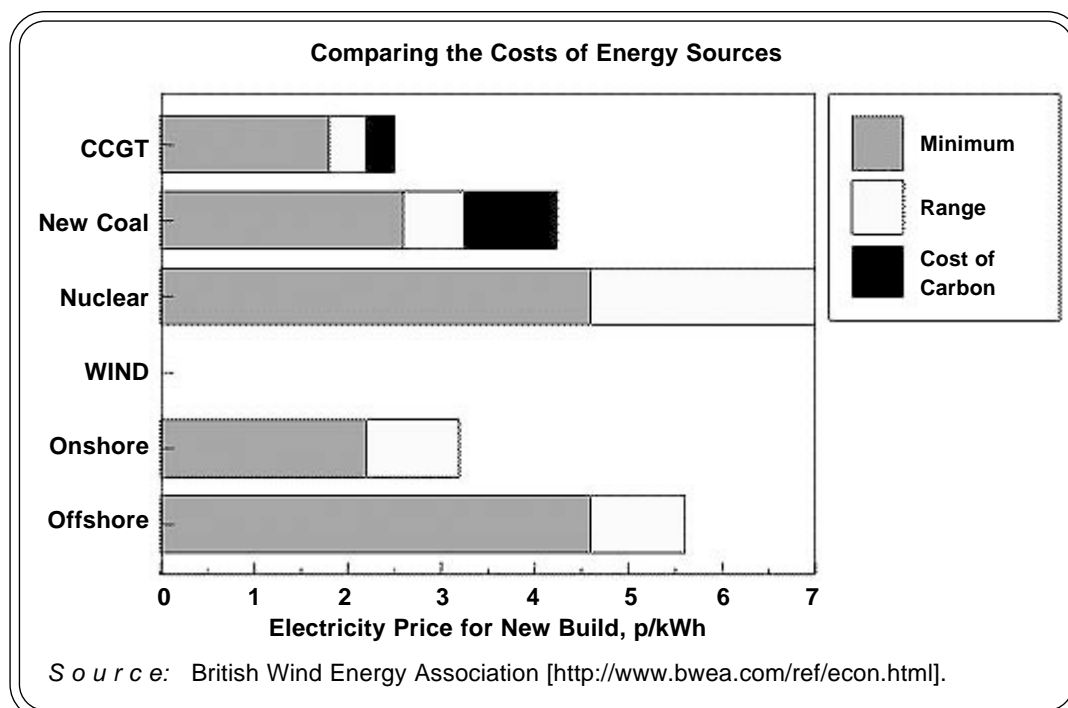
The evidence provided for the U.K. shows that wind electricity is also being generated at declining marginal and average costs because of the adoption of new technologies, making it economically more profitable and competitive (see Figs. 5 and 6). In other words, there should be growing incentives for adopting more environmental friendly technologies. In terms of potential, renewable energies could eventually provide most of the world's energy. However, cost-efficient capture and storage are still problematic.

#### *Economic incentives*

Development and access to the newest and most efficient technologies is a critical matter which requires adequate policies to promote R&D activities, stimulate investments and, for some countries, attract FDIs. For that reason, economic incentives are essential to involve private investors in new energy-related activities and projects. The pricing of energy must reflect scarcities and market conditions. Adequate prices can help contain the demand and stimulate economically rational behaviors.

In some countries, privatization should be seen as a key-policy measure to improve energy efficiency and achieve adequate levels of investments. In the case of privatization in the energy sector, social aspects have to be taken into account. The adoption of adequate legislation, specific regulations

Figure 6



and the use of economic incentives are important to improve the state of environment. The negative influence of specific lobbies in the energy sector should also be reduced.

*Improving the environment*

The development and the adoption of new technologies must take into account the need to improve the state of the environment and better preserve the ecological balance. Considering fossil fuels, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must be further reduced and more steps should be taken to prepare for a shift to a lower carbon intensive energy future. Renewable sources of energy should also be favored as some of them have limited impacts on the environment. Measures should be adopted to reduce the use of wood in developing countries and develop sustainable forestry practices. Energy efficiency must be enhanced across all sectors, especially in carbon intensive ones.

*Poverty reduction*

Some new energy production technologies must also satisfy the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population, particularly in low-income countries. In that respect, possible market failures may require an active role for public bodies with the support of the international community.

*Trading economic development for emissions?*

Many countries use environmental regulations and economic tools such as carbon taxes and tradable permits to take environmental externalities into account when designing national development strategies. According to some governments in both developing and developed countries, this harms competitiveness and hampers economic growth. However, innovation and technological breakthroughs can enhance energy efficiency and, thereby, lower costs. Increased productivity, backed by training and education could also create more jobs in the long run. Given the uncertainties surrounding global warming it might be prudent to take steps, i.e. so-called 'no regret' measures, which have environmental benefits at limited economic costs, and actually may have economic benefits.

*Long-term contracts and investment guarantees*

In some cases, long-term contracts with energy suppliers can raise energy security, assuming their full enforcement and penalties in case of violation. Investment guarantees should also be provided to companies that invest in the energy sector to limit the risks of expropriation and nationalization.

*Averting the "Dutch disease" and terms-of-trade risks*

In countries that are energy exporters, measures should be taken to reduce the risk of a Dutch disease. This may require some degree of interventionism with adequate fiscal instruments to avoid an excessive expansion of and reliance on the energy sector. There should also be incentives to invest the surpluses of the energy sector in other economic activities to support the diversification of the economic base and exports, taking into account WTO rules. The diversification of the economy and exports should reduce terms-of-trade risks.

*Adopting energy security concepts, policies and strategies*

Many countries have adopted energy security concepts that incorporate some of the elements mentioned above. The European Union, the U.S. and Japan designed such concepts and visions that allow for improving long-term energy strategies and policies.

*Energy, democracy and good governance*

In countries dominated by the energy sector, the diversification of domestic economic activities and the reduction of inequalities may require political changes aimed at providing more democracy.



This should improve the rule-of-law and allow for more transparency and good governance regarding the conduct of economic policy in all sectors, including energy. In that context, it is worth mentioning the initiative of U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair to make the oil sector more transparent. Governments in developing and transition countries, oil companies and NGOs support the initiative.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Addressing lobbying*

Lobbying is a feature of modern societies. Elites, big companies and business associations are involved in activities that aim at influencing political circles with the adoption of special-interest legislation and the implementation of specific policies that, most often, should increase their incomes and wealth, strengthen their power and, as a possible outcome, limit the functioning and the scope of democratic rules.

In that context, oil lobbies are not exceptions. In specific cases, lobbying contradicts so-called “public and general interests.” Thus, lobbying may delay the adoption of measures aiming at saving energy and improving the state of the environment; lobbying may lead to the adoption of foreign policies that could prove counterproductive in the long run.

Nevertheless, not all lobbying must be seen as negative. Considering the strategic importance of energy, tax cuts and other advantages could be justified when oil companies are investing in large prospection projects, for instance, in deep seas. The use of (renewable) wind energy is also promoted by associations in the U.S. and Europe and has been met with beneficial tax cuts and other incentives.

#### *Fighting terrorism*

The misuse of oil rents for funding terrorism and other illicit activities is addressed by various organizations, including the IMF and the U.N. Money laundering and the funding of terrorism is the special focus of the Financial Action Task Force hosted by the OECD. The FATF proposes recommendations that can help better identify and suppress banking and financial operations linked to terrorist activities.<sup>14</sup>

## **II.2. Energy, Security and International Cooperation**

#### *From tensions to cooperation*

Energy can be a source of severe tensions between countries that can be mitigated through international cooperation. In addition, the negative impacts on the environment of energy-related activities have to be lessened, which requires international legal instruments. So-called “energy dialogs” between countries and regions can also be useful for reducing risks and stimulate FDIs in the energy sector, etc. In others words, challenges and threats related to energy create unique opportunities for strengthening positive linkages between countries and stimulate far-reaching initiatives.

#### *International agreements and the environment*

Several international treaties address energy-related issues. Most of these legal instruments aim at improving the state of the environment, including air and water quality. They aim at promoting sustainable development and improving the ecological balance.

One of the major documents is the *Kyoto Protocol to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change* that has implications for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the well-being of future generations. The Russian Federation ratified the Protocol recently, making it effective as of 16 February, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Information is provided on the website of DFID, the U.K. Department for International Development.

<sup>14</sup> See: [<http://www1.oecd.org/fatf/>].

Nevertheless, as indicated by the growing CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere, more is needed to address more effectively the causes and the consequences of climate change. Given their status in the Kyoto Protocol, more stringent conditions should be imposed on fast growing developing countries like China and India, and trade protectionism could be justified for environmental reasons when the exporting country does not meet specific environmental standards.

#### *Energy Charter and MIGA*

The “*Energy Charter*” process, that gained momentum in the early 1990s with the end of the Cold War, provides the broadest multilateral framework of rules in existence under international law governing energy cooperation. One key aspect of the EC is the provision of specific rules and guarantees for FDIs and strong commitments regarding the facilitation of energy transit. To date the Treaty has been signed or acceded to by fifty-one states plus the European Communities. It is a major pillar of East-West cooperation in the field of energy. However, Russia has not yet ratified the Treaty.<sup>15</sup>

Another interesting instrument for investment protection is provided by the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA, of the World Bank) that offers insurance schemes to private companies willing to invest in developing countries, taking into account the impact on the economy, social conditions and the environment.

#### *Energy dialogs and regional cooperation*

Russian diplomats seem to favor the notion of so-called “energy dialogs.” The Energy Charter Treaty is seen as a key-element and step in the energy dialog between Russia and the EU. Thus, before the creation of a common economic space between the two partners Russia should be first linked to the EU through the energy sector.<sup>16</sup> Some countries, like Japan, also support regional cooperation on energy issues.<sup>17</sup>

#### *International organizations*

Several international organizations are involved in energy matters. The shared goal of the 26 member countries of the *International Energy Agency* is to create the conditions for a better use of energy within the context of sustainable economic development. For that purpose, open markets, energy efficiency and environmental protection are seen as essential.

The U.N. based *International Atomic Energy Agency* is the world’s center of nuclear cooperation and works for the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies. Other U.N. bodies, such as for instance UNECE and UNEP, are involved in environmental, energy and sustainable development matters.

#### *International financial institutions*

Major financial institutions are working on energy issues. For instance, in December 2004, the IMF posted on its website the preliminary version of a *Guide on Resource Revenue Transparency* that “underscores that institutional strengthening and improved transparency can provide significant benefits to governments and taxpayers.”

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<sup>15</sup> For more detail, see the Energy Charter website [www.encharter.org]. Andrei Konoplyanik, who is Deputy Secretary-General of the Energy Charter, is former Deputy Minister of Fuel and Energy of Russia, which may indicate that his country may at some stage ratify the Treaty.

<sup>16</sup> The common economic space may possibly refer to the creation of a common market, with free trade for goods and services and the free movement of capital and labor (see: V.I. Voloshin, “EU-Russia Energy Dialogue,” Russian-European Center for Economic Policy (RECEP), 12 October, 2004 [www.recep.ru]).

<sup>17</sup> See, for instance: K. Koyama, “Energy Security and Regional Cooperation in Asia,” *IEEJ/KEEI/OPEC Secretariat Joint Meeting*, 27 November, 2003 [http://eneken.ieej.or.jp/en/data/pdf/228.pdf].

On its side, the *World Bank Energy Program* concentrates on issues that are important for economic and social development such as the delivery of modern energy services to the poor, private and public sector roles in the delivery of electricity services, power sector infrastructures with particular focus on networks, renewable energy. The *European Bank* (EBRD) operations for the energy sector cover conservation, transportation and consumption. It also includes power generation, transmission, and distribution.

#### *International NGOs*

The *World Energy Council* and the *World Council for Renewable Energy* are also relevant non-governmental institutions in the field of energy. WEC is 80-year-old and has member committees in 90 countries. It provides services to members, makes forecasts and publishes authoritative studies on energy issues, taking into account economic, social, environmental, R&D and technology dimensions. The WCRE was created in 2001 in Berlin to promote environmentally friendly energy.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Associations*

National and international associations have been created to study and promote specific energy aspects. The U.S. based *International Association for Energy Economics* supports research and academic activities. It publishes the *Energy Journal*. The *Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas* concentrates on the issue of depletion, which matters for economic stability and security.

## *In Conclusion*

- Linkages between energy and security are manifold and complex. Market features (supply, demand, reserve, geography, trends) are *de facto* sources of international tensions and conflict prone.
- In terms of economic development, huge energy needs will remain unsatisfied for decades, contributing to poverty conditions. Developing and transition countries that benefit from generous energy resource endowments are also exhibiting distorted economic structures (Dutch disease) and high levels of corruption.
- The energy sector is a source of environmental concerns such as CO<sub>2</sub> concentration which shall continue to increase significantly and severely impact on global warming, contributing to water stress in some regions and flooding in others. Reliance on nuclear energy is also seen as risky and leaves a legacy of burdens to future generations. The threat of terrorism is darkening the already bleak picture.
- Synergies may emerge when reacting to energy challenges and threats. For instance, relying on renewable sources of energy (e.g. wind and hydro-power) reduces external dependency, does not contribute to climate change and may possibly reduce energy costs in the long run.
- The interests of energy exporters and importers do not necessarily conflict. Reducing reliance on energy should help save energy resources in all countries, postponing the date of both oil and gas peaks. Thus, for some countries, lower energy exports could allow to rebalance and diversify economic structures while, at the same time, stimulate the adoption of renewable energy in importing countries.

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<sup>18</sup> The foundation document underlines “the fact that the global energy demand is increasing faster than the introduction of renewable energy; (moreover) the comprehensive impacts, climate hazards, burdens to the environment, risk of accidents, conflicts around exhausting resources have caused an urgent need to replace nuclear and fossil energy by renewable ones and focus new investments on renewable energy and energy efficiency” (see: [<http://www.world-council-for-renewable-energy.org/index.html>]).

- There seems to be common interests between Russian (and other CIS) oligarchs, Saudi leaders and Western oil companies. For these groups, reliance on traditional non-renewable energy sources provides incomes (rents, royalties and profits), wealth and influence. These groups shall continue to impact on energy policies.
- Energy security concepts and strategies have been developed to address related threats and challenges. Efficiency and sustainable development are key-components of these strategies. However, taking for instance into account expected climate changes, much more might be needed to avoid environmental disasters. In addition, the energy sector should be made more transparent by addressing convincingly related corruption and negative aspects of lobbying.
- Considering the existence of major legal instruments and the work of international bodies, organizations and financial institutions, the international community is not ill-equipped to address energy issues, diffuse tensions and improve the situation in countries, regions and globally, East and West, North and South. However, here also, the picture is rather complex and there might be coherence and coordination problems for which there could be a case for genuine “global governance,” relying on the U.N. system and cooperation with regional security organizations.
- Taking into account international financial institutions, the IMF has certainly a key-role to play to improve the taxation of the energy sector, making it more transparent, which supports PM T. Blair’s oil sector initiative. The World Bank must continue to help developing countries to improve their energy sector, taking into account specific social needs. The EBRD provides loans to enhance the energy sector in CIS countries. Other regional financial institutions do the same in other countries.
- Giving more importance to international organizations in the field of energy and related issues such as *inter alia* development, good governance, the environment and the safety of transportation and transit routes could require the mobilization of additional financial, material and human resources that would be seen as long-term investments for the sake of energy security and peace.

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## IRAN AS AN EXPORTER OF NATURAL GAS TO THE SOUTH CAUCASIAN COUNTRIES

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**M**any countries of the world have been engaged in serious rivalry for many years now over access to energy resources and the right to control their transportation routes. The energy industry has become a priority tool in world diplomacy for smoothing out international

disputes and paving the way, if not to alliances, at least to reconciliation among neighboring countries. Of course, today no one knows who will be supplying the world with energy thirty years down the road and how this will be done, but experts assure us that the production and consumption of natural gas will increase at rapid rates, on an average of 2.4% a year (followed by oil at 1.6% and coal at 1.4%). And the price of blue fuel will also rise. What is more, there is no doubt that Iran, which currently occupies second place in the world (after Russia) in terms of supplies, will

become one of the largest gas exporters to many Eurasian states. Despite resistance and competition from several other countries, this state is already making plans to implement several gas-related projects on an extremely extensive territory in the next few years.

Although Iran is beginning its gas expansion projects in the South Caucasian countries, Tehran intends to put significant pressure on Russia's Gazprom in Europe as well, which could have a serious impact on the balance of power on this extremely solvent market and affect price formation.

## The Critical Gas Triangle: Azerbaijan-Georgia-Armenia

The gas sectors of the South Caucasian republics came to almost complete fruition during the Soviet era, in the aftermath of which, they, like other CIS countries, are faced with the same (and at times common) problems in this sphere. These problems primarily include physical depreciation of equipment and pipelines, shortages of raw material and investments, and so on. But the region's countries have one particular feature which is not characteristic of the other Commonwealth states. They are unable to organize stable deliveries of blue fuel due to internal and interstate conflicts. These include Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia, Ajaria, South Ossetia, etc. Many of these conflicts are accompanied by an economic blockade. The most serious of them, for example in Nagorny Karabakh, make it impossible to use pipelines for delivering natural gas and have entirely changed the system for supplying all three independent South Caucasian states with this commodity. First, Armenia is unable to obtain gas (either Russian, or Central Asian) from Azerbaijan, as it did during the Soviet era, but has to have it delivered via Georgia, whereby these deliveries are unstable (they are systematically reduced, and often even interrupted). There are three reasons for this: Georgia's chronic debt on the gas it consumes, terrorist attacks on gas infrastructure facilities, and the deterioration in relations between Moscow and Tbilisi. Second, the geographical isolation of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic (NAR) of Azerbaijan from the "mainland" is not conducive to providing its economy with regular gas supplies. Third, Armenia's transportation blockade by Turkey and Azerbaijan makes Russia its only gas exporter (the Iran-Armenia pipeline has not yet been extended). Fourth, neither the Russian Federation (in the Caucasus), nor the South Caucasian states can ensure reliable protection of their gas transportation infrastructure facilities, which are threatened by terrorist acts.

In order to analyze ways to revive normal blue fuel deliveries to the South Caucasian republics and evaluate the losses in this sphere, it is worth taking a look at the utilization ratio of their national gas transportation systems (GTS) compared with other CIS and Baltic countries. Of course, today they differ immensely, mainly due to the depreciation of the linear part of the gas pipelines and pumping equipment, and in certain cases complete destruction of some sections, as well as to the fact that the economies of the region's countries have still not attained the development level of Soviet times. Although we have no desire to sing the praises of the Soviet Union, we have to admit that the technological expediency and engineering perfection of its integrated gas supply system has now fallen largely by the wayside. Almost all the post-Soviet countries face the same problem, the need to diversify gas supply sources.

Table 1

**Load Dynamics of the Gas Transportation Systems of  
the CIS and Baltic Countries**

Country	Rated Throughput Capacity of the GTS (bill. cubic m)	1990		1995		2000		2001	
		Actual Utilization of the GTS (bill. cubic m)	Load Coefficient of the GTS (%)	Actual Utilization of the GTS (bill. cubic m)	Load Coefficient of the GTS (%)	Actual Utilization of the GTS (bill. cubic m)	Load Coefficient of the GTS (%)	Actual Utilization of the GTS (bill. cubic m)	Load Coefficient of the GTS (%)
<b>Western Region</b>									
Ukraine	290.0	256.6	88	242.0	83	209.3	72	216.5	75
Moldova	36.0	22.3	62	21.4	60	21.1	59	23.5	65
Belarus	57.3	42.9	75	33.8	59	40.8	71	47.2	82
<b>South Caucasian Region</b>									
Armenia	10.0	4.8	48	1.4	14	1.3	13	1.4	14
Georgia	16.0	10.2	64	2.4	15	2.6	16	2.7	17
Azerbaijan	22.0	16.6	75	6.6	30	5.2	24	5.9	27
<b>Central Asian Region</b>									
Kazakhstan	98.2	84.4	86	26.9	27	33.5	34	45.7	47
Uzbekistan	77.6	77.6	100	24.3	31	33.8	43	45.9	59
Turkmenistan	86.6	76.7	89	20.5	24	28.0	32	40.0	46
<b>Baltic Region</b>									
Lithuania	10.0	6.8	68	2.9	29	3.0	30	3.0	31
Latvia	7.8	5.3	68	3.2	40	3.9	50	4.2	53
Estonia	3.2	1.5	47	0.7	23	0.8	26	0.9	27
<i>Source:</i> Y.A. Kazarian, "Development of Relationship of Russia with other CIS Countries on the Gas Market," <i>Proceedings of the 22nd World Gas Congress</i> , Tokyo, 1 June, 2003.									

A comparison of the utilization dynamics of their gas transportation systems (see Table 1) makes it possible to draw the following conclusions.

First, in 1990, before the Soviet Union collapsed, the average utilization ratio of its GTS was 92% (in the Baltic Region and in the Union republics of the Southern Caucasus it was 62%, and in Uzbekistan 100%). This was both due to the decrease in gas consumption initiated by a partial drop in production, and to the decrease in throughput capacity of this system envisaged in the project.

Second, in the mid-1990s, all the CIS and Baltic countries significantly reduced the utilization ratio of their GTS, on average to 36%, due to the decrease in gas consumption caused mainly by the overall economic crisis and abrupt increase in the price of gas. A relatively favorable situation developed in the countries of the Western Region (utilization amounted to 67%), which is explained by the transit nature of most of their GTS, enabling export to Europe to continue. The most unfavorable situation was in the Southern Caucasus, mainly due to internal and interstate conflicts. According to some data, there were several dozen terrorist attacks on Georgian gas pipelines which transport blue fuel to Armenia.

Third, at the beginning of the 21st century, most CIS countries significantly raised the utilization ratio of their gas transportation systems, which was largely promoted by the economic upswing. But it continued to drop in the South Caucasian states to the lowest indices ever for the Commonwealth. This was initiated not only by the unresolved conflicts in the region, but also by the systematic decrease in gas deliveries to Georgia (which also means to Armenia, where it is transited through Georgia), primarily due to Tbilisi's debt to Moscow for these deliveries and the deterioration in relations between these two countries.

But the main thing is that at the current stage of production increase in the South Caucasian states (see Table 2), albeit at different rates (now stabilization of the level of blue fuel consumption, now its increase is observed), the conflicts in the region and complicated political relations are making it difficult to supply their economies with natural gas. Gazprom, meaning the Russian Federation, cannot provide the necessary deliveries (including due to its inability to ensure protection of the pipelines on Russian territory contiguous to the region).

Table 2

**Preliminary Socioeconomic Characteristics of the South Caucasian Countries and Iran  
(as of the end of 2004)**

Country	Territory (thou. sq. km)	Population Size (mill. people)	Gross Domestic Product (bill. dollars)	Increase in Gross Domestic Product (%)	Per capita Gross Domestic Product (dollars)
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	<b>86.6</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>988</b>
<b>Armenia</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>1,071</b>
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>993</b>
<b>Iran</b>	<b>1,648.2</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>127.0</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>No data</b>

*Source: Global Insight.*

The strategy of exchanging cheap Russian gas for political cooperation or at least loyalty is not working. And the projects sponsored by the U.S. will not provide the region's countries with the necessary amounts of blue fuel. Adequate supplies of hydrocarbons are needed to develop the economy

no matter what the political difficulties. On the other hand, the desire to raise the level of energy security and prevent politics from having an impact on gas imports is prompting a search for and the implementation of measures aimed at diversifying its supply sources. In this way, objective conditions have been created in the South Caucasian countries for the appearance on the traditionally Russian gas market of a new player—the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI).

## Azerbaijan's Gas Sector

Despite the significant deposits of blue fuel (up to 2 trillion cubic meters) and the possibility of obtaining associated gas during oil production, the republic's gas industry is underdeveloped. The domination of oil-and-gas over gas fields, as well as the technical problems related to the use of associated gas, primarily on the shelf, are impeding rapid growth of gas production.

During the Soviet era, Azerbaijan received gas from the Central Asian republics and Iran, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union, these deliveries stopped. For a long time, the International Itera Company supplied Azerbaijan with gas (primarily Turkmenian). After the change in strategy in the CIS, Gazprom returned to this country as well.

In 2004, Azerbaijan's own production amounted to 5 billion cubic meters, 0.2 billion cubic meters less than in 2003 (with a consumption rate of 11-12 billion cubic meters). The reduction in production was caused primarily by the depletion of old fields and the lack of interest by Western companies in increasing the consumption volumes of associated gas, since significant investments were needed to carry out these tasks. The gas shortage is compensated for by the Russian-Kazakh KazRosGaz Joint Venture (4 billion cubic meters of Kazakhstan gas and 1 billion cubic meters of Russian), to which Gazexport (a subsidiary of Gazprom) transferred its contract. It is pumped via the Shirvanovka–Mozdok–Kazi-Magomed pipeline, but it requires modernization and partial restoration for it to operate normally. For example, between 21 and 23 April, 2004, KazRosGaz entirely ceased these deliveries due to urgent repair of the main pipe.

What is more, terrorist acts undermine delivery stability (in 2004 alone there were three explosions, the last occurring on 7 December in Daghestan, as a result of which gas could not be delivered to Azerbaijan for several days). On the whole, accidents and terrorist acts in the North Caucasian section brought the gas pipeline to a standstill for a total of 50 days in 2004. Only the existence of two underground gas reservoirs in the country helped it to alleviate these problems.

Today, up to 40% of the gas produced in the country is obtained on the shelf oil and gas field of Bakhar, which is located to the south of the Apsheron Peninsula. But its supplies are already running out (there are plans to develop the Bakhar-2 field). Additional volumes can mainly be obtained at old fields (by means of associated gas produced at oil fields) and at several new ones. But this requires creating a corresponding infrastructure, in particular, a comprehensive gas preparation installation must be built by expanding the Sangachal oil terminal (the development of offshore oil deposits of the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli project), since associated gas is still being burned at production units in flares. (The plan envisages drilling up to 20 gas wells in the shallow part of the Gunashli field.)

Despite the increase in the price of gas in November 2004 (for the population it increased from 7.2 to 16.5 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters and for other consumers to 48.1 dollars), its sale on the domestic market is unprofitable, since the country imports blue fuel at 52 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters. In 2005, the Azerigaz closed joint-stock company will no longer receive subsidies from the state budget, which will inevitably lead to a further increase in domestic prices.

Talks on the price of Russian gas for 2005 held on 10 December, 2004 between Gazexport General Director A. Medvedev and Azerbaijani Vice Prime Minister Ia. Eiyubov did not yield the desirable



results. The Russian company wanted to raise the price from 52 dollars for 1,000 cubic meters to 70-80 dollars, which the Azerbaijani side could not agree on. And after 1 January, 2005, Gazexport stopped delivering gas to Azerbaijan, not resuming its delivery until the evening of 10 January. According to some sources, an agreement on the price increase was not reached, while others said it would be increased to 60 dollars for 1,000 cubic meters. Nevertheless, forty regions of the country were without fuel for ten days, which created serious problems for the population and industry. According to the official Russian version, the halt in deliveries was due to shutdowns on the pipelines running across Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to Russia.

The second country to continue the "gas price parade" at the end of 2004 was Turkmenistan. It wanted to raise the price of gas delivered to Russia and Ukraine from 44 to 60 dollars for 1,000 cubic meters (according to the plan for 2005, 7 billion cubic meters are to be delivered to Russia alone). Ashghabad stopped pumping gas on 31 December, 2004 (at 10:00 Moscow time), motivating this by the need to carry out repairs and restoration on the Central Asia-Center pipeline. Nevertheless, A. Medvedev mentioned above stated that this would not interfere with Gazprom carrying out its obligations to consumers in Russia and abroad.

Nevertheless, Gazexport's reference to Turkmenistan's problems while delivering Russian and Kazakhstan gas indicates elementary pressure by this Russian gas monopolist on Azerbaijan.

The Shakh Deniz gas condensate field is one of the most important in the republic. This promising structure, which is located on the Caspian shelf, was discovered as early as 1976. But since there were giant fields in Western Siberia, its exploration and development were considered inexpedient. Not until 1996, after signing a contract with a consortium of foreign companies, did in-depth exploration of these fields begin. On the whole, the project is being implemented separately from other undertakings in the republic's gas industry due to its export orientation toward Turkey and Greece and possibly other European countries, primarily Italy (as part of the EU Nabucco project). Baku, Tbilisi, and Ankara reached an agreement on the delivery of 178 billion cubic meters of gas from Shakh Deniz (at the first stage). Production will begin in mid-2006 (it was originally intended to begin in 2004), 8.1 billion cubic meters at the first stage, and up to 16 billion in the future.

The consortium of international companies under the supervision of the Statoil Company (at the first stage of the project) plans to pump 6.3 billion cubic meters of gas to Turkey, 0.8 to Georgia, and 1.5 to Azerbaijan. On 21 October, 2004, the BP Company announced that construction of the South Caucasian pipeline (better known as Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum or BTE) would begin, and a pipe-welding ceremony was held at its 213-kilometer point (Azerbaijan). All the work is to be completed in 10 months, including the laying of a 443-kilometer pipe in the Azerbaijani and the same length of pipe in the Georgian sector. The contractors are a Greek company and French-American joint venture, and the pipes are being supplied by a Japanese Company, Sumitomo.

The directors of the Azerbaijan oil and gas complex say that in the next two or three years, the country will no longer have to import gas. But their optimism arouses skepticism. First, Baku will not be able to independently take charge of Shakh Deniz gas, since the republic's share in the consortium is only 10%. What is more, it will have to export contracted amounts via the BTE pipeline. Second, there are certain technical problems involved in producing and using the associated gas obtained on the shelf, and there is little prospect of producing blue fuel at other fields.

It should be noted that the "weak link" of Azerbaijani gas could be its price—offshore production is usually much more expensive than dry land. What is more, at Shakh Deniz, the depth necessary for drilling wells is more than 6.5 km. As a result, the budget for the first stage of this project has already been increased from 2.7 billion dollars to 3.2 billion (including the cost of building the pipeline). In December 2004, Toby Odone, BP's press secretary, said that the spending on the Shakh Deniz project could increase by 25%. In this way, the initial cost of the work, 3.2 billion dollars (2.3 billion of which are to be spent on gas production and another 0.9 billion on building a pipeline 1,050 km in

length and with a capacity of 15-20 billion cubic meters of gas a year), will increase to 4 billion dollars. And there is no reason to doubt that this will be the last hike.

The field's long distance from Europe and complex geological structure are dramatically increasing the final cost of Azerbaijani gas. At the Turkish border, it will reach 100 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters. This will toughen competition with Iranian gas, the price of which is lower at the Turkish border. Still, Ankara considers Iranian gas too expensive and is asking Tehran to lower its price.

Of course, prices in Europe are much higher than in the Southern Caucasus. But the long length of the gas pipeline to Europe is making the final price of Azerbaijani gas too high even for Turkey. What is more, political support of this project both from the United States and the European Union (the EU is supporting the project financially as well, by means of a loan from the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development to Baku) is guaranteeing its implementation by coming to terms on mutual claims. On 14 December, 2004, the EBRD allotted Azerbaijan 170 million dollars to implement gas projects, 110 million dollars of which are being spent on developing the Shakh Deniz field (the total cost of the work is evaluated at 4.3 billion dollars) and 60 million dollars on building the BTE pipeline (estimated cost—1 billion dollars).

Despite the Russian Federation's formal participation in the project (its LUKoil Company is a member of the consortium), the appearance of a new rival on the EU gas market is not to Moscow's liking, which is demonstrated by the regular criticism of the Azerbaijani project in the Russian mass media. Incidentally, time will show precisely which measures Gazprom intends to undertake regarding export of gas to Azerbaijan. And it has a variety of measures at its disposal, from dramatically increasing the price of gas (which is already happening) to restricting delivery volumes.

In this way, Baku is trying to find a gas niche for itself on the Turkish market in terms of medium-term gas import demands and has its sights set on the European market for the future. Such a vulnerable situation, which is additionally complicated by the high price of its own gas, is making Azerbaijan a hostage of the gas price policy of its main rivals, Russia and Iran. All of these problems are creating grounds for another disruption in the schedule for implementing the Shakh Deniz project.

### ***Iran: Friend and Rival***

Azerbaijan will not be able to manage without Iranian gas, which is indicated by a memorandum signed between the two countries on deliveries to the enclave Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, to which blue fuel was transported in Soviet times across Armenia. This is now impossible due to the conflict between Baku and Erevan. Talks on these deliveries were quite arduous due both to the absence of a gas infrastructure in Nakhichevan, and to the special features of gas payment. In exchange for its gas (0.35 billion cubic meters annually), Iran wants to obtain an equivalent amount from the Shakh Deniz field and in future possibly 0.5 billion cubic meters a year, which is related to the plan to transfer four turbine units of the Nakhichevan thermal power plant from liquid fuel to gas.

Iranian gas will be pumped to the NAR via the Julfa-Nakhichevan pipeline, 42 km in length, which still has to be built (with financing from the Azerbaijan budget). Gasification of the autonomous republic will require 12.6 million dollars, and Baku is willing to have Tehran do the work. Gas should come back to Iran via the Kazi-Magomed-Astara pipeline (in Azerbaijan), but 18.3 million dollars must be found for its restoration. (This is a branch of the Gazakh-Astara-Iran mainline, which was introduced into operation in 1971 and not used for many years, its throughput capacity amounted to 10 billion cubic meters a year). In compliance with the agreements between Baku and Tehran, Azerbaijani gas must be pumped at a pressure of 50 atm., for which gas compressor and gas-measuring stations must be built in Azerbaijan. According to the plan, the first Iranian gas (0.05 billion cubic meters) will reach the NAR in September-October 2005.

What is more, Iran is competing with Azerbaijan for delivering gas to Turkey (where Tehran is already delivering gas) and to Europe, while also acting as a co-developer of the Shakh Deniz field. In this way, Tehran has the opportunity to exert rather strong pressure on the formation of gas flows from Azerbaijan. The problems in this sphere will most likely prevent official Baku from making a “gas breakthrough” into the EU in the next 5-7 years. First, it can be expected that it will only export blue fuel to Turkey, that is, the Shakh Deniz project will have a strictly regional status. Second, due to the small volume of these deliveries, the project, which costs more than 4 billion dollars, will not pay itself off any time soon. Third, Azerbaijan will not be one of the major gas exporters due to the serious miscalculations in its hydrocarbon strategy (it treats the gas industry as a derivative of the oil industry). Fourth, as a net importer, its attempt to export gas could cause Russia, and in future possibly Iran, to dramatically increase the price of blue fuel for Azerbaijan. And the main thing, which is more realistic, Azerbaijan will be forced to concentrate on meeting the country’s domestic gas needs.

## The Situation in Georgia

Georgia produces a miserly amount of gas, only 0.02 billion cubic meters in 2003. At the beginning of the 1990s, it purchased the additional amounts it needed in Turkmenistan, but due to the fact that Tbilisi owed it huge amounts of money, which ran into the millions, Ashghabad stopped these deliveries. In the mid-1990s, the Itera Company became the main deliverer of Russian and Turkmenian gas, in particular, it delivered 1.34 billion cubic meters in 2002 at 60 dollars for 1,000 cubic meters. Some of the gas also went to Armenia by transit through Georgian territory (a total of up to 2.5 billion cubic meters to two countries). What is more, during the years it maintained contacts with Tbilisi, Itera was able to acquire 90% of the shares of Georgia’s Azot mineral fertilizer plant and part of the low-pressure gas-distribution networks for a song. Nevertheless, in October 2003, Itera stopped delivering gas to this country after Gazprom reappeared on the Georgian scene.

The shortest path for Russian gas to Turkey is through Georgia. But at present it passes through Ukraine and other European countries, as well as along the bed of the Black Sea, via the new Blue Stream pipeline. For gas pipeline routes are not always dictated by the economy, they are quite often determined by politics and the countries’ energy security problems, which is confirmed by the agreements between Tbilisi and Tehran (see below).

### *An Old Friend is Better than Two New Ones?*

At the end of the 1990s, Georgia began talks with Gazprom on the creation of the GruzRos-Gazprom Joint-Stock Company. But in 2002, they were interrupted on the initiative of official Tbilisi, which at that time decided that this joint-stock company would have a negative effect on the country’s energy security.

In July 2003, director of Gazprom A. Miller signed a 25-year agreement with Georgian Fuel and Energy Minister D. Mirtskhulava (at the behest of the country’s president, Eduard Shevardnadze) on strategic cooperation in the gas industry. It envisaged not only deliveries of blue fuel, but also reconstruction of the country’s gas transportation system. The Georgian opposition, including Z. Zhvania, called this agreement a “betrayal of the state’s national interests.”

After Itera was ousted from all the CIS countries, Gazexport made its appearance in Georgia on 1 October, 2003, but the price of blue fuel did not change. (Although Tbilisi was in favor of having two suppliers, Gazprom would not allow Itera to stay.) It should be noted that the United States not

only objected to Georgia creating a joint venture with Gazprom, it also proved the inexpediency of delivering blue fuel via the Vladikavkaz-Tbilisi-Erevan main pipeline. Steven Mann, U.S. Secretary of State's Special Advisor for the Caspian issues, talked about this in June 2003: "The interests of the BTE project should not be infringed upon; cooperation with Gazprom, primarily reconstruction of the main gas pipeline, is lowering the market cost of the BTE project, during the implementation of which Georgia will be granted significant preferences, including in gas supply."

The last statement is well-founded, since Georgia will be able to obtain 0.3 billion cubic meters of gas (until 2015) in exchange for transit services via BTE and purchase another 0.5 billion cubic meters at special rates. But at one time Steven Mann warned official Tbilisi: "If the country's main gas pipelines are sold to Gazprom, it will no longer receive the bonuses due it from transporting Azerbaijani gas via BTE." But Georgia's requirements are over three-fold higher. What is more, the BTE will not go into operation until 2006. So Tbilisi had to choose one of the two monopolists, Itera or Gazprom.

In September 2004, the same Zurab Zhvania, in the new capacity of prime minister, held a working meeting with a Gazprom delegation, at which the matter concerned privatizing certain facilities of Georgia's gas industry, primarily its gas transportation system and the Tbilgaz gas distribution company. Gazprom offered 300 million dollars for control of Georgia's GTS, but the Georgian side wanted 5.4 billion dollars for Tbilgaz. So far, the talks have not yielded any positive results.

Due to the accumulated debts for blue fuel, Gazprom (like Itera at one time) regularly lowers the delivery volumes. The main reason for the accumulated debt is the low level of financing by the Georgian government and poor potential of the capital's budget, which must compensate the population and state institutions for part of the cost of blue fuel. Here it is appropriate to note that Gazprom (like Itera) always seems to find the right time to make a major cutback in the supply of gas, just as political relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation are taking a nosedive. For example, during the June events of 2004 in Southern Ossetia, deliveries to Tbilisi were halved.

In October 2004, Tbilgaz and Gazexport signed a contract on gas deliveries in 2005 (at the former price of 60 dollars for 1,000 cubic meters). Debts on Russian gas consumed since December 2003 reach almost 8 million dollars and will be settled in stages. The question of Georgia's solvency will remain open in the near future—its debt to 13 creditor countries tops 600 million dollars. What is more, the country's economy has been suffering for many years from systemic corruption, debts, and ethnic conflicts, and is unlikely to recover any time soon without significant international financial aid.

### *New Friends*

The Iranian-Georgian talks on gas deliveries which began in the mid-1990s have not been crowned with success. The main reason for this is the high cost of Iranian gas. After the Rose Revolution, official Tbilisi brought this topic up again, which was caused by unstable operation of the country's fuel and energy complex and a deterioration in Georgia's relations with Russia. Now there are two real delivery alternatives: via Azerbaijan and through Armenia, but the local gas pipelines are extremely worn out and in need of repair. In so doing, the Armenian direction is more economically profitable, but Georgia preferred transit through Azerbaijan.

During Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili's official visit to Tehran in July 2004, agreements were reached on the delivery of Iranian gas. At the beginning of January 2005, Georgia finished repairing the gas pipeline in this direction (the cost of the work amounted to 0.5 million dollars), and Iran has created a corresponding infrastructure on its territory, on which it spent 180,000 dollars. The pumping of blue fuel (up to 4 billion cubic meters) can begin very soon.

Official representatives of the Georgian Ministry of Energy state that Iranian gas will only be delivered in emergencies, if the pumping of Russian gas is halted or entirely ceased. The main reason for the temporary nature of import is the higher price of Iranian gas. Of course, these measures are related to the problem of ensuring the country's energy security, and the flourishing cooperation between Tbilisi and Tehran can be explained by the deterioration in Russian-Georgian relations. Incidentally, any aggravation in Russian-Georgian relations in the future might turn temporary import of Iranian gas to Georgia into permanent, at least for a limited period. And all plans to expand economic contacts between Moscow and Tbilisi, primarily regarding privatization, as well as renting enterprises of the Georgian fuel and energy complex to Russians, are acquiring a political hue and meeting resistance not only in Georgia, but also from the U.S. What is more, the country's diversification of blue fuel import is conducive to lowering its price by freeing it from its dependence on monopoly deliveries from the Russian Federation.

## The Armenian Gas Sector

Armenia does not produce either gas or oil, since it does not have any supplies. In 1959, it was incorporated into the U.S.S.R. Integrated Gas Supply System, and until the collapse of the Soviet Union, up to 2,000 km of gas pipelines were laid in the republic. At that time, all three Union republics of the Southern Caucasus were mainly provided with gas by it being delivered from Central Asia to Azerbaijan and on to Georgia and Armenia. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the interstate conflicts in the region led to the disintegration of its integrated gas supply system. Whereby the last factor led not only to physical, but also to "geographic" isolation: blocking of the borders prevents use of the infrastructure created in past years (which caused it to fall into disrepair) and, of course, in the current situation it is impossible to lay new, alternative gas pipelines.

In December 1997, a closed joint-stock company, ArmRosgazprom, was created (its owners were the Armenian Energy Ministry and Gazprom—45% of the shares each, and Itera—10%). The latter worked for many years in the country, but in June 2003, its niche was entirely filled by Gazprom, which planned to increase deliveries to 1.4 billion cubic meters in the near future.

Today, the two gas pipelines which connect Azerbaijan and Armenia have been shut down; deliveries from Turkey are impossible due to Ankara's blockade of the Armenian border, and Erevan's only blue fuel import route is the pipeline from Russia via Georgia. But the compressor station in Mozdok (the Russian Federation) operates irregularly due to the abrupt reduction in gas pumping volumes to Georgia and Armenia.

It should be noted that ArmRosgazprom is an unprofitable structure, and what is more, at the beginning of 2004, the company had a debt of 17.54 million dollars.

Taking into account the country's gasification rates and total gas consumption growth as a result of the socioeconomic upswing in the republic, ArmRosgazprom is planning to increase deliveries in 2005 to 1.6-1.7 billion cubic meters. And in 2007, Armenia will begin receiving Iranian gas.

### Between the U.S. and Russia

The history of the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline is both simple and complicated. As we have already noted, after the collapse of the U.S.S.R., Russian and Turkmenian gas were pumped to the republic via Georgia. Frequent accidents and a decrease in the supply of blue fuel due to its irregular payment by consumers in Georgia led to systematic interruptions in deliveries. The only prospect for

Armenia was Iran. The two countries began discussing cooperation in this sphere as early as 1992, which did not suit Russia's Gazprom, to put it mildly. All the same, in 1995, Tehran and Erevan entered an intergovernmental agreement-plan of intention on building a pipeline, but could not come to terms on the gas price. They did not sign a more specific memorandum on building this route until the end of 2001.

As for Gazprom, recently its stance regarding this construction project has radically changed. Instead of putting up severe resistance due to possible loss of part of the Armenian market, it has come to understand the need to implement this project. For example, one of the Gazprom directors, A. Riazanov, who came to Erevan in July 2004 on business, noted: "We understand that for Armenia, this project is strategic and related to gas supply and energy security ... since the pipeline on Georgian territory is in a poor state and needs major repairs." But Gazprom did not give a straight answer regarding its participation in this construction project (the first stage began without it). On the other hand, participation in the laying of the Iran-Armenia pipeline will allow Gazprom to control the transit of competitive Iranian gas in the northern direction. On the whole, the Russian Federation considers Armenia one of its most important strategic partners in the Caucasus and is keeping quite a keen eye on the events in this country.

The second, just as important, opponent to construction of this route was the United States, which until 2002 thought it would bring Tehran significant profits. But Armenian diplomats were able to convince the U.S. that the gas pipeline is necessary not only for ensuring the country's energy security (due to diversification of supply sources), but also for its survival. Of course, these are serious arguments, but it is obvious that the country could not manage without the intervention of the influential Armenian lobby in the U.S.

As a result, after 12 years of talks, on 13 May, 2004, a final agreement was signed in Erevan on the construction of this route. There are plans for Iran to export 1.1 billion cubic meters of gas to Armenia every year for 20 years (with the possibility of increasing volumes to 2.3 billion cubic meters) in exchange for Armenian electricity (from the Erevan thermal heat plant). According to some data, the price of Iranian gas will amount to 84 dollars for 1,000 cubic meters. Deliveries are to begin in 2007, and the final deadline for building and putting the pipeline into operation is 1 January of the same year. Each country is to pay independently for this work in its own section (100 km on Iranian territory and 41 km on Armenian). According to preliminary estimates, Erevan will have to fork out 90 million dollars and Tehran 120 million dollars. On 30 November, 2004, a ceremony was held in the Siunik Region (in the south of Armenia) to begin building the Megri-Kajaran section of this route. At that time, the second transmission line of the electricity network between Iran and Armenia went into operation (it ensures export of Armenian electricity to pay for Iranian gas). And Iran began laying the first 10 km of the gas pipeline through its territory in June 2004. What is more, two Iranian banks allotted 30 million dollars for construction projects in Armenia. The question of financing and carrying out the subsequent stages of the gas pipeline of 197 km in length (Kajaran-Ararat) has still not been decided.

It should be noted that the small pipe diameter stipulated by the project does not permit Iranian gas to be pumped via this route to Georgia, Ukraine, and on to the EU countries. In this way, the project talked about for many years in Tehran, Erevan, Tbilisi, and Kiev (the Ukrainian Design Institute even drew up its feasibility report, including laying of the underwater part of the route) has not come to fruition.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the arrival of Iranian blue fuel and the modernization and expansion of the Abovian underground gas storage reservoir (costing 27 million dollars) will help to carry out the main measures aimed at raising the level of energy security in the Armenian gas sector.

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<sup>1</sup> This question is highlighted in more detail in V. Saprykin's article entitled "Iz zhizni gazoprovodov: Iuzhny Kavkaz idet ot Rossii k Iranu?" *Zerkalo nedeli*, No. 2, 22-28 January, 2005, pp. 1, 10.

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The main result of implementing the Iranian gas delivery projects to South Caucasian countries is the increase in their energy security level. But, as we have already noted, these projects are characterized by relatively low economic indices (see Table 3).

Table 3

**Pros and Cons of the Iranian Gas Delivery Projects  
to the South Caucasian Countries**

Pros	Cons
diversification of delivery sources	high cost of the projects
formation of competitive markets, which stimulates a decrease in price by all suppliers	low throughput capacity of the pipelines
creation of new jobs	low level of project profitability

On the whole, despite the relatively small volumes (see Table 4), the arrival of Iranian gas in the South Caucasian states is a propitious event, since it signifies the first real steps to diversify sources for providing the CIS countries with blue fuel. Without driving Russian gas from the scene, it is nevertheless providing them with a real alternative to Gazprom's monopoly.

Table 4

**Feasibility Indices of the Gas Sectors of the South Caucasian Countries and  
Projects for Supplying Them with Iranian Gas**

Indices	Azerbaijan	Armenia	Georgia
Gas supplies ( <i>trill. cubic m</i> )	2	0	0.2-0.4
Own production ( <i>bill. cubic m</i> )	5	0	0.4
Import from Russia ( <i>bill. cubic m</i> )	5.5	1.6-1.7	1.3-1.4
Price of Russian gas ( <i>doll. per 1,000 cubic m</i> )	52	79-89	60
Consumption ( <i>bill. cubic m</i> )	11-12	1.6-1.7	1.3-1.4
Import from Iran ( <i>bill. cubic m</i> )	0.35	1.1	Limited*
Preliminary price of Iranian gas ( <i>doll. per 1,000 cubic m</i> )	90	No data	No data
Year import begins from Iran	2005	2007	2005

\* Import is only envisaged if the delivery of Russian gas is halted or completely ceased.

Despite the fact that in the future Iran hopes to export most of its gas to the European Union, deliveries of blue fuel will begin precisely to the South Caucasian countries. And the appearance of such a serious rival on the Eurasian gas market will force Gazprom to reconsider its strategy and priorities, thus having an impact on most of the countries which consume blue fuel in this extensive area.

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## CASPIAN DILEMMA: HOW TO DELIVER BLUE FUEL TO THE EUROPEAN MARKET

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Globalization is increasingly encompassing regions traditionally closed to the outside world, including Central Asia. This is mainly having an effect on the relations between its countries and European states with respect to hydrocarbon deliveries and promoting the creation of a single geo-communication space. It is initially fraught with a certain amount of tension and discrepancy. But these negative elements will gradually abate, since the creation of this space is based on several objective integration factors. The most important of them include the formation of stability, security, and cooperation policies; mutually advantageous development of transnational communication lines; ensuring environmental balance; and protecting biological diversity.

Recently, most Caspian countries, emboldened by the data of geological surveys on large supplies of hydrocarbons promising significant economic and political dividends, have been independently emerging from the shadow of the major political players onto the geopolitical battle field. These dividends will make it possible for the Caspian countries to establish regulations in the region which will largely meet the interests of the regional elites and transnational companies. Of course, the priority issue in this struggle revolves around transnational communication routes, primarily deciding where to lay pipelines for delivering Caspian energy resources to the international markets. After all, pumping oil and gas not only ensures a stable source of hard currency paid for transit services, but also an



efficient, as well as long-term, lever of political influence. In other words, the distribution of energy resources is becoming not only an economic, but also a sociopolitical problem of international cooperation and competition. So all permissible (and others too) means and methods, from diplomatic and financial resources to specifically adjusted and precisely planned large-scale PR companies, are being launched into action.

American, European, Turkish, Japanese, and Chinese companies, along with the states who own the subsurface, are taking active part in what is going on in the region. Their activity is related to the fact that in addition to the acute shortage of funds, modern technology, necessary equipment and materials, and qualified staff, the Caspian countries do not have direct access to solvent markets. What is more, most of these countries are dealing with extremely urgent social problems, and a certain amount of political dependence on the leading world nations plays an important role. All of this is prompting the leaders of the region's republics to attract foreign capital into their countries' economy, which of course dictates both the need for cooperation among investors and the inevitable rivalry among them.

Ukraine is a serious contender for a role in the transportation of Caspian energy resources to the world markets. It has one of the largest transit systems of gas pipelines in the world (their outlet productivity amounts to about 170 billion cubic meters a year), whereby it also occupies a convenient geographic location between the Caspian's raw hydrocarbon base and the European sales markets. At the same time, Ukraine is one of the five largest world consumers of natural gas and is its solvent importer. The country's annual demand constitutes 75-80 billion cubic meters, while it produces only 20-22 billion cubic meters itself.

But despite such serious arguments, which allow it to be a successful player in this contest, Ukraine is still far from making full use of its potential due to official Kiev's weak political position in the Russia-Ukraine-EU triangle. This thesis is confirmed by the contradictory decisions regarding the Odessa-Brody pipeline project, the insufficiently precise definition of the goals and assignments for creating an International Gas Consortium (IGC) for managing and developing our country's gas transportation system (GTS), as well as the absence of a long-term strategy for forming a gas balance. Russia and the European Union, which have precisely defined and to some extent diametrically opposing goals (Europe is interested in further diversification of deliveries, whereas Russia wants monopolization of the market), with Ukraine occupying an unstable position between them, are able to block the decisions it proposes aimed at achieving national benefits. (The goals of Ukraine and the Caspian states in this sphere usually do not contradict each other, because all the interested parties want to create new transit corridors and the necessary conditions for diversifying gas delivery routes.) Nor can the role of the U.S. be ignored, which has the ability to defend its interests in oil and gas projects essentially anywhere in the world, including in the Caspian Region.

With the election of the new Ukrainian president, who declared a course primarily oriented toward European cooperation and a more pragmatic approach to the resolution of complex international problems, our country has been given new opportunities to form and implement a precisely substantiated national policy, both in defining the transportation routes of energy resources for our own needs and in rendering transit services to Russia and the EU countries. We will note that more than 34% of all the natural gas imported by Europe is currently pumped through the Ukraine's gas transportation network, and Russia's Gazprom depends on this system for 84% of its transit needs. But this policy can only be successful if the real strengths of each player on the gas market are taken into account, where the Russian Federation is represented by Gazprom. Ukraine depends on this large monopolist to realize its transit potential for pumping Russian and Central Asian blue fuel to the European markets and for ensuring its own needs. An increasingly larger percentage of Central Asia's gas resources is gradually falling under Gazprom's control. This is making it possible for the Russian Federation not only to carry out its long-term obligations to Western Europe, the Balkan countries, and Turkey,

but also make up for the shortages on its own domestic market arising from the growth in export and the noticeable drop in its own production.

Here it is appropriate to note that at present Russia is most active in forming gas transportation arteries in the Caspian Region. The Russian Federation occupies first place in the world in terms of proven supplies of natural gas (47 trillion cubic meters, 33.33% of the world supplies). In our opinion, several aspects can be singled out in Russia's activity in this sphere: strategic—its desire to monopolize the export of Central Asian energy resources; economic—its desire to reduce hydrocarbon transportation costs, organize new jobs, and re-export gas purchased in the region's states; and political—its desire to promote a beneficial shift in relations with the CIS states participating in this sphere, as well as with countries requiring Russian energy resources.

The significant annual increase in the consumption of blue fuel in European states (against the background of a drop in their own production and reduction in residual supplies) and the increase in production and explored resources in the Caspian countries are factors which define the transit vector of deliveries until at least 2020. The anticipated increase in the consumption of blue fuel is characteristic not only of EU countries, but also of the entire world. For example, in 1960, the percentage of natural gas consumption in the energy balance of the European countries amounted to less than 2%, in 2000, to more than 22%, and by 2030, according to forecasts, it will reach 29%. This is primarily due to the need for supplying more gas to those countries which are currently receiving it in insufficient amounts (for economic reasons), as well as due to the possible closedown of nuclear power stations in several states of the European Union.

Taking these trends into account, a new EU energy strategy has been drawn up, and the European Commission has prepared a set of regulatory and recommendation documents on development of the gas market and gas transportation networks of the European Union. They orient the organization's member states toward the priority consumption of blue fuel (compared with other energy resources); they envisage basic measures for diversifying its sources and delivery routes; they define the main principles for forming a single European gas market (in particular for simplifying transnational transit); and they set forth the priority routes and conditions for financing corresponding projects. The documents are based on the fact that the energy dependence of the European Union (in its expanded form) on the import of gas could increase from 39% in 2000 to 73% in 2020. In so doing, an annual consumption increase of 3% is forecast and more than 60% will be covered by the Russian Federation, Central Asia, and possibly Azerbaijan (after 2009).

**Reference:** Between 1998 and 2004, the consumption of blue fuel in Europe increased on average by 3% a year, exceeding 500 billion cubic meters in 2004. According to some estimates, by 2010, its consumption in Western and Central European countries will reach 630-650 billion cubic meters. Norway and Great Britain will be able to provide no more than 28% of the continent's demands (in 2002, they supplied 34%). The total amount of gas production in Europe and the export deliveries from Russia, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt will constitute 530-540 billion cubic meters. In this way, a free niche is opening up for its import from other regions, primarily from Caspian countries, of up to 90-110 billion cubic meters a year.

The potential of the Caspian states is confirmed by their proven natural gas supplies (35-40 trillion cubic meters, 26% of the world supplies), that is, it is almost three-fold higher than the total confirmed supplies of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, and Libya (the second vector of European imports). Together with Russia's proven supplies, the Caspian's deposits amount to approximately 58% of the world supplies (6.5-fold more than the same indices of African countries).

Based on this, it can be said that any measures the EU undertakes to further liberate and diversify the gas market in the mid and long term will not dramatically decrease Europe's dependence on

deliveries from the Russian Federation and Central Asian countries, they will only slightly assuage it. In this regard, we should expect an increase in the influence of the leading Western states and transnational companies on price formation and the choice of routes for new gas pipelines. The role of “energy diplomacy” will increase, which is an important component of the foreign policy of interested countries and interstate associations. But this will not have an adverse effect on the significance of the Caspian countries with respect to providing Europe with blue fuel. As for Ukraine, a major gas transit nation, its influence will probably increase even more (with respect to development of the IGC), despite the possible implementation of several projects to diversify sources and ways to deliver gas to the continent. In this respect, it is worth taking a closer look at the problems of implementing the IGC’s ideas.

## The IGC and Gazprom’s Export Policy

The fate of the IGC project is inseparably linked with the reorientation of Gazprom’s export policy from its own resource base to Central Asia’s blue fuel. This is shown by the long-term contracts recently signed by Russia with several of the region’s countries which envisage the purchase of their gas and joint implementation of several projects on its production. Thus, Gazprom is implementing its strategic plan aimed at creating a new eastern corridor for pumping Central Asia’s blue fuel to the European market, keeping the Russian gas monopolist’s interests in mind, which, to put it mildly, do not always coincide with the goals of its partners. It is precisely from this point of view that the latest agreements between Gazprom and National Joint-Stock Company Neftegaz Ukrainy should be evaluated. In particular, on 27 October, 2004, they signed an agreement on cooperation at the investment phase of the International Consortium for Managing and Developing the Gas Transportation System of Ukraine, Ltd. work This phase is to begin in 2005 with building a 214-km Bogorodchany-Uzhgorod pipeline. The cost of laying the first section (50 km) is 54 million dollars. The document was signed under an agreement entered in Sochi on 18 August, 2004 between the Ukraine Cabinet of Ministers and the Russian Government on ensuring strategic cooperation in the gas sphere. It sets forth the conditions for implementing the Bogorodchany-Uzhgorod project, which in turn will ensure loading of the Ivatsevichi-Dolina and Torzhok-Dolina pipelines.

**Reference:** Today these gas pipelines are operating under far from optimal conditions: the first at 28% of its capacity, and the second at 12%. Implementation of all the investment phases relating to building the Novopskov-Uzhgorod gas route (length—1,500 km, pipe diameter, 1,420 mm) will increase Ukraine’s transit capacities by 19-28 billion cubic meters a year. Experts from the Neftegaz Ukrainy Company forecast that, in so doing, the potential capacity of the Ivantsevichi-Dolina route can be increased to 70%, and of the Torzhok-Dolina pipeline to 90%. The tentative cost of the project is 2.0-2.5 billion dollars.

Implementation of the investment phases of the IGC is an integral part of the development plan for the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan-Ukraine-Europe gas transportation corridor, which is important for European energy security. In order to carry out this task, there are plans to modernize (with Russia’s active assistance) the Central Asia-Center (CAC) pipeline branches and lay the Alexandrov Gai (Northeast Kazakhstan)-Novopskov (East Ukraine) gas pipeline through the Russian Federation. It is forecast that the total cost of all this work will reach 10-15 billion dollars. In our opinion, Gazprom is primarily interested in the implementation of this project, since it, as already mentioned, is carrying out an active expansionist policy in this region. The first step taken

by the Russian gas giant to strengthen its foothold here was to create a joint venture in the summer of 2002 with KazMunaiGaz called KazRosGaz, which became a monopoly buyer of Kazakhstan gas. Now KazRosGaz is delivering the blue fuel produced at the Tengiz and Karachaganak fields, but this joint venture's sphere of responsibility also encompasses Moscow's and Astana's future joint gas projects in the region.

What is more, at the end of 2002, Gazprom entered an agreement with Tashkent on the purchase of Uzbekistan gas in 2003-2013 with increasingly growing volumes to 10 billion cubic meters a year. In 2003, Gazprom became the operator for transporting Central Asian gas through Uzbekistan, and in the summer of 2004 it signed a 15-year production sharing agreement (PSA) with the Uzbekneftegaz Company at the Shakhpakhty field (Ustiurt plateau). In addition to this, Uzbekneftegaz and Russia's LUKoil entered a PSA on assimilation of an area of the Kandym group of fields: the Khuazak, Shady, and Kungradsky sections. It envisages an increase in gas production in the Bukhara-Khiva Region (LUKoil's share is 90% and Uzbekneftegaz's is 10%).

**Reference:** Uzbekistan's percentage in profitable production sharing is 50%. In so doing, the PSA envisages the possibility of this share being increased to 80% (with an increase in the project's profitability). The PSA lasts for 35 years. The planned capital expenses amount to approximately 1 billion dollars. The confirmed geological supplies of blue fuel in the contract area amount to 283 billion cubic meters. Industrial production is to begin in the area in 2007, the anticipated maximum annual production is almost 9 billion cubic meters a year. Gas will be exported via the CAC pipeline. Gas is to be sold to Gazprom (at the pipe entrance) at a price of approximately 40 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters. What is more, some of the investor's product is to be sold in Uzbekistan at coordinated prices.

The agreements with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan will make it possible for Gazprom to receive up to an additional 20 billion cubic meters of gas every year beginning in 2010. But, of course, the agreement signed in 2003 between Gazexport, Ltd. (Gazprom's 100% subsidiary enterprise) and the Turkmenneftegaz Company was pivotal for the Russian gas monopolist in the region. Within the framework of this agreement, a long-term purchase and sale contract for 1.8 trillion cubic meters of Turkmen gas was drawn up for 2004 to 2008, in accordance with which Gazexport acquired 4.5 billion cubic meters of blue fuel from Turkmenneftegaz in 2004. In 2006, these deliveries will increase to 10 billion cubic meters, in 2007 to 60-70 billion cubic meters, and beginning in 2009, they will reach 70-90 billion cubic meters annually.

**Reference:** Today annual production in Turkmenistan is approaching 55 billion cubic meters. Ten-twelve billion cubic meters are used for domestic consumption, and the rest is exported via the CAC transit gas pipelines which pass through Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Pursuant to intergovernmental agreements, Gazprom is ensuring the transit of Turkmen gas through Russia to Ukraine. In addition, it is carrying out the functions of transit operator of Turkmen gas through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

When analyzing Gazprom's export policy, we need to keep in mind its changes and try to explain them. Until recently, the company's management was not looking at the Central Asian vector as a priority, but placed its stakes on assimilating the fields of North Yamal, as well as the shelf of the Barents and Kars seas. In order to carry out its export obligations to the EU countries (in 2004, it exported 140 billion cubic meters of gas, while in the mid term there are plans to deliver 180 billion cubic meter

a year under already existing contracts alone), it is no longer sufficient for the Russian company to maintain its production at the current level of 540 billion cubic meters a year. Additional sources are needed. (Annual production in the Russian Federation is approximately 630 billion cubic meters, and consumption amounts to 390-400 billion cubic meters. To this we should add export to the Baltic and CIS countries of up to 100 billion cubic meters per year.) The IGC will need up to 80 billion cubic meters of gas annually to ensure the efficient operation of Gazprom's new pipelines, the Yamal-Western Europe and North European gas pipelines. But the Zapoliarnoe field put into operation in 2004 with a capacity of 100 billion cubic meters a year (peak conditions) can only compensate, until 2007, for the drop in production at the Urengoisky, Yamburgsky and Medvezhy fields, the supplies of which have been exploited by 65-85%. In order to maintain gas production in 2008-2015 at least at the current level, the gas monopolist must assimilate the Bovankovskoe and Kharasaveiskoe fields (their total supplies amount to 5.65 trillion cubic meters). The cost of these projects could reach 60 billion dollars (keeping in mind the transportation and social infrastructure). It is very difficult to evaluate their implementation risks, but it is clear that they will be significant due to the depth of the deposits, the need to create an extensive transportation network under permafrost conditions, and the company's complicated financial situation.

In this respect, it is understandable that Gazprom is keenly interested in Central Asian gas due to the much lower (3-5-fold) investments necessary for carrying out the company's export program, as well as due to the possibility of providing it with resources at higher rates. But this also entails problems related to the different approach of the Central Asian states to cooperation with Gazprom, on the one hand, and to contradictions among the region's countries themselves, on the other. Among them, Turkmenistan occupies the most advantageous position in terms of export potential of blue fuel. But, despite the positive dynamics of cooperation between Ashgabad and Gazprom, several problems have been designated in this sphere. For example, after evaluating the situation on the world markets, Turkmenistan has been trying since 1 January, 2005 to increase the price of gas from 44 to 60 dollars for 1,000 cubic meters. In turn, Russia and Ukraine, who have a monopoly on the transit of Turkmen gas, are putting pressure on purchase prices by re-exporting blue fuel to Europe at a good profit. As for the prospects of the Russia-Turkmenistan-Ukraine triangle, a big game may unfold around resource provision, prices, and gas transit conditions.

The second problem concerns a reliable evaluation of the hydrocarbon supplies of the region's states. Despite the numerous assertions by official Ashgabad that its subsurface supplies are inexhaustible, Gazprom, obviously orienting itself toward Azerbaijan's experience of oil resource estimation, asked Turkmenistan to carry out a corresponding audit. At present, it is being conducted by American and British companies, after which a final decision will be made on modernizing Central Asia's pipeline systems, which could also have an effect on the format of Russian-Ukrainian relations with respect to the development of the IGC. In this sense, replacement of the Hungarian operator for delivering Turkmen gas to Ukraine (Eural Trans Gas) with RosUkrEnergo, created by representatives of Kiev and Moscow, had a perceptible effect on the interests of the triangle's countries. It is considered expedient for Ukraine to insist on gas being delivered by independent producers to satisfy domestic demand (up to 20 billion cubic meters a year) at the talks with Russia.

The revived trans-Afghan gas pipeline project, the feasibility report on which was drawn up by the Asian Bank of Development in January 2004 (with the participation of a group of British experts), could have a significant effect on the relations in the Russia-Ukraine-Turkmenistan triangle. It is presumed that this route, with a throughput capacity of 33 billion cubic meters a year and length of 1,680 km, will run from Dovletabad (Turkmenistan) through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India, and the cost of the work will constitute 3.3 billion dollars. This route is potentially threatening not only to Ukraine, but also to Russia, since it will carry Turkmen blue fuel, which may cause a significant deficit in their gas balance. What is more, Ashgabad will put forward significant arguments

in favor of a tougher price policy. But the complicated political situation in Afghanistan and the smoldering Indian-Pakistan conflict are squelching any hope of the project being implemented soon.

Gazprom came to terms with Tashkent on gas prices, but questions relating to investments in the development of the Uzbek section of the CAC gas transportation system have still not been resolved. It is not advantageous for Uzbekistan to create significant capacities for pumping Turkmen gas through its territory, particularly since it is not the operator of these deliveries. Tashkent's current transit potential does not exceed 43-45 million cubic meters a year. By 2007, it could increase to 55 billion cubic meters, which will require investments of approximately 400 million dollars. As for Turkmenistan, it has already invested approximately 300 million dollars in the development of CAC gas pipelines on its territory and plans to invest up to another 100 million dollars. This will allow Gazprom to pump 80 billion cubic meters annually beginning in 2007. What is more, KazTransGaz invested more than 230 million dollars in its section in 2001-2002, thus raising its throughput capacity to 60 billion cubic meters a year.

But neither modernization of the CAC in Uzbekistan, nor of the entire route as a whole (under current projects) will resolve the problem of pumping the 100-110 billion cubic meters of gas annually stipulated by the contracts. According to experts, another branch will have to be laid within the CAC to resolve this problem and an additional gas pipeline with a capacity of up to 30 billion cubic meters a year built at a cost of 2-2.5 billion dollars (preliminary estimates). Its route through the Central Asian countries is at the discussion stage. Ashghabad, which at present has complicated relations with Tashkent, is suggesting laying the pipeline through the central part of Turkmenistan (from the Sovetabad group of fields to the Caspian coast with access to Kazakhstan in the Beineu region). But Uzbekistan is expressing a different opinion on this issue. Therefore, rather tough talks aimed at satisfying the interests of all the project participants are in the offing.

Kazakhstan, which has the necessary resources for modernizing the CAC gas pipeline system on its territory and also has a large number of managers in the oil and gas industry who are well versed in the subtleties of international business, is trying to carry out its own policy in this sphere. Astana is willing to grant Gazprom certain preferential conditions with respect to joint implementation of production projects, primarily in the legislative area (during the past year, the attitude toward foreign investors has toughened up), but at the same time is trying to independently penetrate the European gas market.

Since Ukraine occupies an advantageous geographic location between Russia and the energy-producing countries of the Caspian Region and, in so doing, has corresponding transit possibilities, its interests in increasing transit coincide with the Russian Federation's economic and geopolitical interests in gas deliveries. Therefore, there are certain grounds for predicting an increase in the role of Ukraine's GTS in the export of Caspian blue fuel to the European markets. Taking into account the significance of Ukraine's GTS in supplying gas to Europe and its integrating role in the Eurasian gas transportation corridors, it is expedient for official Kiev to initiate several agreements with the European Union in order to strengthen its foothold in the European energy security system. As a state wishing to integrate into Europe, Ukraine should, in our opinion, step up its efforts in this area, keeping in mind, of course, the balance of interests between the exporter countries and hydrocarbon consumers. By offering its initiatives for developing the trans-regional communication infrastructure, it will objectively find itself in the epicenter of interests of the three leading geopolitical players (the U.S., Russian Federation, and EU), each of which has its own goals. The difficulty lies in the fact that orientation toward only one of the three power centers will lead to these initiatives being blockaded by the other interested sides, which will directly affect the foreign political status of our country.

So flexible well-considered actions in implementing international energy projects, definitely keeping in mind the balance of interests among the main power centers, including in implementing

the IGC project, are an important prerequisite for consolidating Ukraine's position on the playing field of the European gas market. The problem of blue gas import diversification for domestic consumption can be resolved at the same time.

## The Experience of European States in Diversifying Gas Markets as a Lesson for Ukraine

As already noted, Ukraine is meeting only about 22% of its needs by means of its own gas production, and the rest is compensated by imports from Russia and Turkmenistan (via the Russian gas transportation system). And almost all the West European countries have at least three independent sources each for procuring gas. In 1991, the Central European states began implementing a program for diversifying the import of blue fuel, since this was one of the conditions for their entry into the EU. But not all of them have achieved the desired result, many still depend up to 80-100% (that is, critically) on one supplier, Russia's Gazprom. Ukraine is also finding it quite difficult to resolve this problem. One of the objective reasons for this is the historically developed mono-orientation of its gas supply system toward Russia and the need for large investments (at high risks) in creating access to alternative sources. So this kind of program must be implemented in stages.

At the first stage, Ukraine should gain a stronger foothold as blue fuel purchaser in three Central Asian countries: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. At the second, it can achieve further diversification by replacing gas deliveries on the basis of so-called swap contracts with the use of the GTS's transit possibilities. The third stage envisages delivery of Iranian gas (and possibly of other contiguous states to it) to Ukraine and partially to Europe along alternative routes, which must still be defined. But this is only realistic if Ukraine cooperates with several European states and creates favorable opportunities for attracting large-scale investments. What is more, an important condition at this stage is a high level of gas market liberalization in our country and its gradual integration into the European market (in terms of price formation mechanisms and operational conditions).

Iran's proven supplies of natural gas are close to 27 trillion cubic meters (second place in the world). The most promising field is South Pars, the deposits of which are estimated at 8.4 trillion cubic meters. Large foreign oil and gas companies operate in the country: ENI, Elf Aquitaine, British Petroleum/Amoco, Saga Petroleum, Total, Gazprom, CNPC, and Sinopec. Since it is about to significantly boost its gas production, Tehran is looking for markets to sell it. For example, as early as 1995, a contract was entered for delivering 3 billion cubic meters in 2000 and up to 10 billion cubic meters in 2005-2010 to Turkey via the Tebriz-Ankara pipeline, which is 1,420 km in length. At that time, an agreement was entered on transit of 10 billion cubic meters of Turkmen gas a year via this route through Iran to Turkey. But these projects have not yet been implemented.

In August 2004, the Nabucco International Consortium, which includes OMV, Botas, MOL, and Bulgargaz, founded the ABN Amro Investment Bank as a financial advisor on the gas pipeline construction project from the Caspian Region to Europe (its route has still not been defined). One of the main suppliers, according to the analysts' forecasts, was to be Iran. The length of the route is more than 3,500 km, and the capacity is 30 billion cubic meters. Seventeen to twenty billion cubic meters a year are to be pumped to the Austrian city of Baumgarten (the junction with the European gas pipeline system), the rest is to be distributed by transit countries. It is expected to go into operation in 2009-2012. The fact that the EU allotted 3.3 million dollars to draw up its feasibility report shows its serious attitude toward this project. There are four major alternative routes for transporting Iranian gas to Europe, with a few modifications for each (in some alternatives, Turkmenistan figures as a supplier). The starting point of the future gas pipeline is the South Pars field (provisionally Kan-

gan). Today, the following routes are being discussed: Iran-Turkey-Georgia-Black Sea (Poti-Feodosia)-Ukraine-Europe; Iran-Turkey-Black Sea (Sinop-Feodosia)-Ukraine-Europe; Iran-Turkey-Bulgaria-Rumania (Serbia)-Hungary-Austria-Germany (in so doing, a possible modification is for part of the gas flow to be sent from Bulgaria to Ukraine by reversing the existing Talnoe-Izmail-Rumania-Bulgaria pipeline). Finally, the fourth alternative: Iran-Armenia-Georgia-Russia-Ukraine-Europe (here there is a possible modification from Poti to Feodosia with transfer across the Black Sea). According to the Transgaz Institute (Ukraine), 7-8 billion dollars in investments are needed for delivering gas to our country and 10-11 billion for extending the pipeline to other European countries.

Another possible alternative also deserves attention: Iran-Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan (the CAC gas pipeline)-Kazakhstan-Russia-Ukraine-Europe, in which the economic parameters look more enticing, but the problem of route diversification cannot be resolved. But it will only become urgent after 2008, and only then if gas production in Russia significantly decreases, which could happen due to difficulties in assimilating its new fields in the Arctic zone and the need to compensate for raw material shortages in order for Gazprom to carry out its export obligations.

In terms of economic expediency and political factors, we think the third version is most preferable for Ukraine. And this version essentially coincides with the Nabucco Concern's project. Its modification, based on reversing the Bulgaria-Rumania-Ukraine (Talnoe-Izmail) pipeline and transportation of Iranian gas with hook-up to the Soiuz, Progress, Urogenoi-Pomary-Uzhgorod gas pipeline system, will make it possible for Ukraine to ensure annual deliveries of 10-15 billion cubic meters of blue fuel from an alternative source via a route not associated with Gazprom.

The other alternatives have several significant shortcomings. First, by resolving the problem of delivery source diversification, they are not resolving the question of alternative routes. Second, the construction of a gas pipeline along the seabed of the Black Sea at a great depth is creating technological, ecological and economic difficulties, although the experience of laying pipelines along the Blue Stream route provides grounds for cautious optimism here too. The building of gas pipelines of more than 3,500 km in length is economically advantageous when transporting no less than 55-60 billion cubic meters of gas, for which two branches must be laid with a pipe diameter of 1,420 mm and a working pressure of 7.5 MPa. So when creating deep-water routes of significant length, it is expedient to lay 3-4 branches of lesser diameter and greater pressure, which significantly raises the cost of the work. And projects for transporting Iranian liquid natural gas (LNG) are promising for diversifying the delivery of energy resources to the European Union countries (from the viewpoint of ensuring their energy security). Taking into account Iran's current problems in exporting blue fuel to the world markets (the U.S. sanctions, difficulties in attracting large foreign investments, the risk level, and so on), Tehran has begun to look for ways to transport liquid gas. In particular, it is developing four projects with a total capacity of 42 million tons: NIOC LNG, Pars LNG, Persian LNG, and Iran LNG. This work will tentatively be finished (entry into the production stage) in 2009-2012.

The question of delivering liquid gas to Ukraine may not become urgent until 2020. This is due to the rather high price of LNG (compared with the price of the gas used now), as well as the need to create an expensive infrastructure for its reception and use, which today is essentially nonexistent in our country.

So our analysis shows, first, that a very urgent problem exists relating to further deliveries of blue fuel from the Caspian countries to the European markets. And second, it identifies Ukraine's opportunities with respect to choice and implementation of gas transportation routes, taking into account its national interest in ensuring energy security and efficient use of the transit potential of the country's powerful gas transportation system.



## REGIONAL POLITICS

**TAJIKISTAN:  
THE 2005 ELECTIONS AND  
THE FUTURE OF STATEHOOD**

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**O**n 13 December, 2004 President of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmonov signed a Decree on the next elections to Majlisi namoiandagon (Representative Assembly) scheduled for 27 February, 2005 and the Majlisi milli (National Assembly) scheduled for 24 March (two chambers of the Majlisi oli, the Supreme Assembly).

The new election cycle brought in by the February elections to the already fully developed (where its form and structure were concerned) representative branch of power was expected to put an end to the revolutionary epoch to bring in sedate lifestyle and even routine functioning of the new, post-Soviet Tajik state that had on the whole taken shape: domination of the presidential form of government which had monopolized entire power and the most important political initiatives in the near and mid-term future. The parliament had lost some of its political weight to the same extent that the president was gaining his. In fact, the legislature had no role to play. The same fully applies to other CIS countries; the Russia under Putin was no exception. In this respect the form of statehood the republic has finally acquired and the evolution of parliamentarism in it are not unique. They reflect the processes and general regularities typical of all CIS countries at the present stage.

Throughout the 1990s people of Tajikistan were mainly concerned with political issues: any more or less large group of people gathered for any occasion from weddings to funerals was very soon engrossed in political discussions about the war, peace, and power struggle. Public opinion polls carried out on the eve of the 2005 elections, by the Zerkalo sociological center in particular, revealed that the keen interest in politics had been replaced in people's minds with socioeconomic

concerns. All political forces had not so much to convince the nation of their ability to address the social and political issues in the best and most effective way as to demonstrate the voters that much had already been done.

None of the political parties resolved to join the race could compete with the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT) not only because its administrative resource was large. The PDPT, the party of power, had another obvious advantage in the person of its leader—President Rakhmonov. His name has been firmly connected in the minds of an absolute majority with the main achievements of the independence period: end of the civil war, restored territorial integrity and national unity, a stronger state that no longer has to take the virtually independent former field commanders into account, economic growth by 10 percent in the last three to four years, etc.

It was absolutely clear from the very beginning that the voters would be no longer engrossed in the details of political rivalry mainly because the parliament had no longer been seen as the key political structure able to affect the course of events in the country. It was regarded, at best, as an institution more or less able to fulfill its routine task of building up a legal foundation for the country's further development. In short, it had lost its image of a political structure. The nation, on the other hand, had lost its keen interest in politics to the extent it remained barely interested in the way this election campaign would be different from the previous one of 2000 and in the parties' performance. The PDPT was an obvious favorite; two more parties—the Communist Party of Tajikistan (CPT) and the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT)—stood a good chance of winning parliamentary seats: they had a broad following, while their success promised the republic's leaders certain political and other advantages. It only remained to be seen how many seats they would get.

It should be said that many (if not the absolute majority) of the PDPT members and the party leaders are former communists who find the CPT a predictable and adequate partner or even a potential ad hoc ally. The country's leaders had to take into account the fact that in many other CIS countries communist parties were still enjoying support of a large share of nations and that in Russia, the country of special importance for Tajikistan, the communist party was the second important political power.

Parliamentary seats for the IRPT, the only Islamic political party in Tajikistan incorporated into power, make it possible to preserve peace and stability in the country, consolidate power and achieve the republic's favorable image outside its borders.

The concrete number of the seats these two parties might win was irrelevant from the point of view of the PDPT domination in the parliament: its control was absolute. A shadow of election intrigue, however, was positive from the point of view of further development of parliamentarism and political pluralism: it taught power to be no longer too much concerned with election results, while society was growing accustomed to multiparty elections. On the whole, the authorities that backed the PDPT needed a slightly larger representation of two other large parties and deputies of any third party, which would have never impaired its ability to control the parliament. Election rivalry is good for the image of the authorities at home and especially abroad.

## 2

Having scored a victory in the 2000 parliamentary elections, the PDPT lost no time: it started readying for the next election cycle. The IRPT that came third in the 2000 race opted for a highly pragmatic cooperation/opposition course when dealing with the authorities and the party of power. The events of February 2003, when a group of deputies of both chambers initiated a process of introducing changes and amendments, mainly of the social and political nature, into the Constitution, urged the Communist Party and the parties that described themselves as opposition parties—the Democratic, Socialist, and the Social-Democratic—to follow suit.

At the next stage of the new election cycle all political parties joined a campaign for amending the Constitutional Law on Elections to the Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan. The process of drafting the amendments and pushing them through the parliament proved to be a test on the eve of the next elections.

On 3 November, 2003 the opposition set up a Coalition of the Political Parties for Transparent and Fair Elections—a step that invited negative consequences for them. On that day Rakhmatullo Zoirov who headed the Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT) and Makhmadruzi Iskandarov, chairman of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), reached an agreement on a coalition. Later they were joined by the IRPT and CPT. It was a godsent opportunity for the smaller parties that stood no chance of overcoming the 5 percent barrier independently. Clearly, the coalition was resolved to lobby the new draft of the election law which, they hoped, would improve their chances to be elected and to ensure a transparent election campaign across the country or, at least, their ability to control it.

The authorities were alarmed: the coalition appeared at the time when the Rose Revolution was budding and burst out in Georgia. Central Asia as a whole painfully responded to the Georgian developments. What is more, while power was coping with big and small problems plaguing the country, the smaller parties did their best to enlist support by dwelling on unpleasant or even negative realities such as bribery, inefficient personnel policy, the primacy of political and other considerations over the law, etc. inevitable in a country moving away from the old, Soviet system, in which it had lived for decades, to an absolutely different one.

There is a fairly widely shared opinion that the problems that the DPT and SPT, and later the SDPT experienced when the election campaign was in full swing were caused, among other things, by their involvement in the coalition. In the fall of 2003 DPT leader Makhmadruzi Iskandarov deemed it expedient to leave the capital for his native Tajikabad District, high in the mountains in the country's east, where he had commanded armed opposition during the civil war. As soon as the General Agreement was signed, he was invited to the cabinet as Chairman of the Emergency Committee; later he was promoted to Major General. He filled several important official posts, the latest of them being at the head of Tajikgaz company. In April 2004 he returned to the capital to meet the president; their confidential talk lasted several hours. The discussions of possible amendments to the election law spoiled his relations with the country's leader once more. Late in August he left the country ostensibly to look into family matters elsewhere.

In the summer of 2004 another opposition party—the SPT headed by Mirkhuseyn Narziev split into two new parties. Narziev headed one of them; the other was headed by Abdukhlim Gafforov. Since that time on the two parties have remained locked in struggle for the party's name since the law does not permit several parties with identical names. The opposition parties and the Communist Party, however, looked at the Narziev party as the Socialist Party, while the PDPT remained neutral. Power represented by the Ministry of Justice was biding for time under the pretext that the case required a careful investigation of all concomitant circumstances.

### 3

Between 17 and 19 December, as soon as the decree on the next parliamentary elections appeared, all parties, at their congresses, endorsed their election platforms and lists of candidates. The PDPT, CPT, and IRPT demonstrated a lot of organizational skills: their congresses were smooth and uneventful, while the congresses of smaller parties (DPT, SDPT, and SPT) developed into discussion clubs. Iskandarov, absent from the country at that time, headed the DPT list of candidates, which forced part of the deputies to leave the congress in protest of ignoring their opinion on the issue. The SDPT leaders tried to move away from bureaucratic practice while drawing the lists: they let the congress delegates themselves change the pre-prepared lists arranged in alphabetic order and later endorse it by

secret ballot. They failed to consistently realize this novelty since a compromise was obviously needed: Rakhmatullo Zoirov, the SDPT chairman, and Sultan Kuvatov, leader of the unregistered Tarakkiet Party with which the SDPT had allied for the election campaign, were Nos. 1 and 2 on the list. The rest of the list was compiled by secret ballot. The two SPT hypostases (the parties of Narziev and Gafforov) held two congresses that predictably produced two lists; each of the parties insisted on being the only and true Socialist Party of Tajikistan.

The parties then approached another hurdle: they had to submit their lists and other relevant documents to the Central Election Commission for registration. The Narziev party was denied registration because the election law did not allow two parties to run for elections under the same name, while a letter from the Ministry of Justice to the CEC had, in fact, recognized the legitimacy of the Gafforov party. At the same time, the Central Election Commission pointed out that it could refuse to register the DPT and SDPT lists as well: the former contained the name of Makhmadruzi Iskandarov, against whom criminal proceedings had been started; the latter included the name of Sultan Kuvatov who had to remain in the republic under recognizance not to leave and against whom criminal proceedings had been started, too. He was also accused of fanning ethnic strife. The parties had to remove the offending names from the lists—the SDPT went even further by removing all Tarakkiet members from its list.

The opposition parties applied to the Central Election Commission with complaints against local election commissions that refused to register their representatives. The local commissions went as far as insisting on conditions not stipulated by the election law. For example, they demanded full texts of the party's election platform, birth certificates of those of the candidates who had changed names, documents testifying to the absence of tax arrears and back rent, etc. Under the new election law the candidates had to deposit an amount of money equal to 200 minimal wages (equivalent to \$800). The opposition parties complained that they were prevented from making such deposits on time, while delays were fraught with removing candidates from the race.

## 4

As of 14 January the Central Election Commission registered 21 candidates of PDPT; 15 candidates of IRPT; 9 candidates of CPT; 7 candidates of SDPT; 5 candidates of SPT, and 4 candidates of DPT. According to the Central Election Commission, 209 candidates applied to be registered by one-candidate constituencies, 120 of them being self-nominees. Others were nominated by political parties: the PDPT had candidates in all while the IRPT, in 22 constituencies. Finally, the PDPT managed to register 41 people as candidates in one-candidate constituencies; the IRPT, 20; the CPT, 13; the SDPT and SPT, 6 candidates each.

The PDPT and IRPT had much more candidates than the other parties—this was the main result of the registration stage. These two parties also demonstrated inordinate activity while competing for seats in regional, city, and district legislatures. It became obvious that the IRPT had replaced the CPT as the second (after the PDPT) most influential political force.

The party earned this success by its consistent and painstaking efforts to enlist supporters by communicating with ordinary people—something that each political party is expected to do. It was the only PDPT rival that was doing this after the 2000 parliamentary elections; it had adjusted itself to the new social, economic, political, psychological, and other conditions that had emerged or were emerging in the country. The leaders capitalized on the nation's obviously decreased reluctance to accept an Islamic party in Tajikistan. Finally, the party had managed to raise necessary funds to place deposits for each of its candidates. In this respect, too, it proved to be more competitive than all the other PDPT rivals.

## 5

On 27 February the nation went to the polls for the second time in its history to elect the parliament's lower chamber. Nobody expected unpleasant surprises—everything was expected to follow the course typical of other CIS countries. This means that the “big three” (PDPT, CPT, and IRPT) would carry the day, while the “smaller three” (DPT, SDPT, and SPT) would be satisfied with the very chance of running for the parliament in view of the problems the parties faced during the election cycle.

The election day produced no surprises—everything went on as it had been expected. In fact, an election campaign is a true reflection of the country's social and political development level. Tajikistan was no exception from the rule: the present level of the republic's (and of all other CIS countries, for that matter) social and political development did not allow it to organize elections according to the standards much closer to the Western ones. This happens only in the context of a deep political crisis when power is weak and still weakening, while the discontented popular masses openly question its legitimacy. Tajikistan experienced this 15 years ago: the 1990 elections were commonly agreed to be the most democratic in the republic's history.

On the next day, 28 February, the Central Election Commission published the election results it cautiously described as preliminary: 80 percent of the voters preferred the PDPT party list (the party also carried the majority of the votes in one-candidate constituencies). The IRPT and the CPT came second and third, while the DPT, SDPT, and the Gafforov SPT were left outside the parliament. The Central Election Commission qualified the elections as successful, democratic, transparent and, on the whole, corresponding to the Western standards, despite certain miscalculations on the pre-vote stage and the election day.

The PDPT agreed with the Central Election Commission; the Gafforov SPT also agreed. In an interview to Radio Liberty Tajik service Prof. K. Vosiev, the SPT deputy chairman, said that the party had admitted its defeat. The leaders of other parties, however, were loudly protesting against the published results and issued a joint Statement of the Political Parties of the Republic of Tajikistan about Gross Violations of the Constitutional Laws: On the Elections to the Majlisi Oli of the RT and On the Elections of Deputies to the Local Majlisis of the People's Deputies. They demanded, in particular, that the results of voting in Dushanbe be annulled and another round carried out, otherwise the four parties and Narziev's SPT that sided with them threatened “to withdraw from the Council of Social Agreement of Tajikistan, announce that they refuse to accept election results across the country and recall their deputies from the Majlisi namoiandagon and the local majlisis of people's deputies.”

The negative response was expected, yet nobody expected an ultimatum. The signatures and public statements of the Communist Party's leaders came as an unpleasant surprise: it was for the first time in many years that they took part in a political action that formulated harsh demands and even threatened, together with the SDPT leader, with public actions, including protest rallies. The republic was plunged into a state novel to it: grave post-election political confrontation.

The authorities preferred to avoid any direct response to the statement, the only exception being that on 1 March Chairman of the Central Election Commission Mirzoali Boltuev convened a press conference to announce that, according to the latest figures, the PDPT got 74.9 percent of the votes (as against 64.9 percent in 2000); the CPT, 13.4 percent (20.9 percent); the IRPT, 8.94 percent (7.31 percent). This gave the PDPT 17 seats by party lists; the CPT, 3; the IRPT, 2. Along with the seats gained in one-candidate constituencies, the PDPT got even a wider majority in the parliament: 51 seats; the CPT got 5; the IRPT got 2 in all. Obviously, as compared with the previous elections, the Communist Party did much worse, while the Islamic Revival Party, much better.

The final figures could not conceal the obvious: the IRPT became the second influential political force in the country after the PDPT. The very fact that the authorities had to agree to the IRPT's previously announced figures and publish the data indicating that its following had increased demon-

strated that it not only consolidated its positions but also gained a lot of political weight. The authorities and the public have not yet learned how to assess the situation calmly and adequately because of certain domestic (the Soviet past, suspicions born by the years of political instability and the civil war, etc.) and external factors (the neighbors were still reluctant to accept the fact of an Islamic party legally functioning in Tajikistan).

## 6

The authorities refused to directly respond to the demands formulated by the dissatisfied political parties for the following reasons.

First, the nation refrained from immediate mass support for the demands because the majority of the politically active population is still associating mass protests in support of any of the political forces with outwardly similar actions of 1991-1992 that had triggered the civil war.

Second, while the people are prepared to vote in great numbers they are prepared to defend their choice only if their practical interests, such as jobs and therefore the source of the means of subsistence, are threatened. For example, since the employees of a large enterprise Bodom LLC in Kanibadam (that employs a large part of the city's population) realized that their jobs were threatened, they started picketing the local administration to demonstrate their support of Iu. Akhmedov (a former deputy to the parliament and the Bodom founder where he still carried much weight) in his opposition to the influential figures of the Sogd Region.

Third, as soon as one of the international observers of the CIS said over the republican TV that to his mind such demands were fraught with political destabilization in the country, the dissatisfied parties abandoned their offensive positions, thus lowering the confrontation level.

Fourth, since the IRPT and the CPT could lose a lot along with the seats in the parliament and local majlisis, they carefully avoided harsh statements. The IRPT wished to be regarded as a serious force seeking national unity and stronger independence for Tajikistan. Naturally enough its leader S.A. Noori did not want to endanger the party's prestige and positions because criticism by action of the election results might have become interpreted as detrimental to the cause of peace and stability. For this reason, First Deputy Chairman M. Kabiri who appeared at all post-election events was carefully preserving political leeway. When pestered with a question whether his party would support protest actions he had to finally say that if at all, such support would only be moral. Translated into common tongue, this meant a negative answer. In the early 1990s the party was a constant and important member of all sorts of opposition blocs and alliances—today, its position excluded a possibility of mass protest actions. Naturally, the party accepted the candidate mandates it had won.

The new figures published by the Central Election Commission quenched the Communist Party's opposition zeal. A group of fairly important members of the Dushanbe local party organization together with Abdudjabbor Akhmedov and Bury Sulonov, leaders of the Sogd and Kurgantiube zonal party organizations, respectively, harshly criticized the party leader Sholdi Shabdolov. If continued, the discussion about whether to support the Statement threatened with a split; the party opted for pragmatism and finally accepted the deputy mandates.

Fifth, Russia and the United States, two large countries with a lot of possibilities of influencing the local developments, responded to the election results more or less similarly. Moscow minced no words about its positive assessment presented by the CIS observers and the RF Embassy in Dushanbe.

Washington that could hardly accept the elections as corresponding to the American standards had to voice its opinion. On the other hand, the U.S. had to look after its national interests in Afghanistan; life forced it to describe the elections in positive terms with certain reservations. The dual assessment was the solution. Thus Senator Mackein severely criticized the parliamentary elections that

had taken place simultaneously in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and suggested that the United States should revise its relations with these countries, while the U.S. embassy in Dushanbe made a statement in which it mentioned the shortcomings and positively described the elections as a whole by saying that they were another step in the right direction along the long road leading to democracy. Later, in his interview to the *Azia Plus* newspaper American Ambassador Richard Hoagland said that the elections had been another important step forward, that they could be described as success at the initial stage, that Rome was not built in one day and that the road to democracy was a difficult one.

The ambassador voiced the position of the U.S. executive power which was more important for Tajikistan—today in the United States (and the CIS countries) the position of the president determines many issues, at least when it comes to foreign policy. To succeed in Afghanistan and protect its national interests there the United States needs, among other things, political stability in Central Asia. The local governments can preserve this stability; they also want closer ties with the United States as a factor of their stronger national independence. Tajikistan has something absent in other countries (and not only there): I have in mind a dialog between the authorities and all legal political parties. It seems that the dialog will go on. The pragmatic American politicians are quite satisfied with this for today. Russia, the U.S. and the West do not seem to be ready to support the IRPT and the CPT to spite the PDPT if only because ideologically, politically, and civilizationally these parties have nothing in common with these states.

Two days after the elections it became absolutely clear that the nation and international community refused to support the post-election protests of the dissatisfied parties. This, and Russian and American support of the election results allowed the country's leaders to merely take into account the critical comments of the OSCE observers. On 3 March President Rakhmonov signed a decree under which fixed 17 March as the date of the newly elected Majlisi's first session. The post-election stage was over, the lower chamber met on the fixed date, the session being attended by the deputies of the Islamic Revival and the Communist parties. From that time on, the authorities and the dissatisfied political parties will sort things out among themselves within certain limits no matter how tense their relations will be. They will no longer evoke public response—in other words, 2005 elections became history.

## 7

It is no accident that the PDPT whose ideology can be described as national revival and the IRPT that proceeds from the principles of national-religious revival have become the republic's key political forces. At the present stage of state and social development these ideologies formulate the most urgent tasks addressed within the context of both parties' revival programs. These parties are also more concerned than the others with two other important components of national revival: the secular nature of the new Tajik state (PDPT) and the Islamic identity of the absolute majority of the nation (IRPT).

This adds urgency to the question of the relations between the two parties: mutual ignoring will bring political dividends to neither; conflicts are even less profitable from the point of view of national interests, stronger peace and stability. A conflict between the two parties will undoubtedly make it harder for the IRPT to continue its political activities or will even endanger its continued existence. The PDPT will not profit from this either, especially against the background of the far from simple developments in the neighboring countries and the "colored revolutions" problem that has come to the fore in the post-Soviet expanse. It is vitally important for the parties to preserve mass following and even increase it.

The events in Georgia and Ukraine have shown that those of the post-Soviet rulers who have no allies sharing the authorities' national aims and able to mobilize the masses in support of power will find themselves in a quandary in the case of a "colored revolution." And vice versa, it is hard

or even impossible to stage a “colored revolution” against the rulers enjoying strong support in their countries.

Neither the PDPT nor the IRPT will survive a colored revolution: today, they are far removed from the Western liberal values and will not move closer to them in the near future. The two parties should closely cooperate to help the country withstand the pressure of new challenges and to address national tasks, to create conditions in which the national Tajik state and the Tajiks as an ethnic group will be able to survive. These two parties are the most numerous parties, they have much in common, in any case much more in common than with all other political structures of Tajikistan.

Political reality in our country, as well as in other countries in the region and the world, will force the two parties to follow the latter of the variants, namely, coexistence with cooperation and not without rivalry. Today, there is much more cooperation in Tajikistan when it comes to deal with the vitally important tasks: stronger peace and stability; independence; and effective opposition to the efforts to draw the country into doubtful international political projects that promise nothing for the republic. Cooperation will probably extend into the future. At the local level, however, the parties will remain rivals for the simple reason that in this case they directly influence the masses. Nothing, though, will change at this level, too—at least not in the near future.

No matter how the relations between the two leading political forces will develop it is highly important that they will be flexible and remain within the legal limits. They should not develop into a bitter confrontation because it may end in a catastrophe for the young Tajik state.

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## GEORGIA: REGIONAL STABILITY IN THE TRANSFORMED INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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The end of the bi-polar world raised the questions of how the international system will function, and whether it will become multipolar or unipolar. Some members of the expert community believe that geopolitical rival-

ry in today's multipolar world will be the only way to sort things out among the entities of geopolitics. The struggle for spheres of influence is growing fiercer. Some international factors are gaining importance, while the significance of others



is waning. This was probably why Gernot Erler, a Bundestag deputy, has offered the highly thought-provoking idea that in the early 21st century we are witnessing the regression of political culture to the ideas of the 20th century. The process is gradually becoming irreversible: in the West and in the East, political decision-making depends on geopolitical and geostrategic projects to an extent which is fraught with rising tension.<sup>1</sup>

Many political decisions in the international sphere are still rooted in realism, whereby state interests prevail over all other considerations. But it should be noted that many of the conceptions and approaches circulating in the world system have changed. In the 20th century, it was vitally important to place state interests above anything else since international contacts were limited and the coefficient of their mutual dependence low. Today, globalization is gradually pushing aside national ideologies. Against the background of the changing international system, when the international community and its institutions are gaining weight and states are growing more interdependent, it has become possible to realize common interests. This, in turn, pushed the regional security problem to the foreground. The old models of the Cold War period should be revised.

Security as a social category has long become a liberal postulate along with democracy and human rights, even though Emma Rothschild of Great Britain has pointed out that politicians of various political affiliations, irrespective of their willingness or unwillingness to embrace liberal values, treat security with due attention. The security category presents equal problems for all, despite the fact that it is equally urgent for each and every country: it is hard to determine which security type is needed for countries and social groups and what should be done to achieve it.<sup>2</sup>

The post-bipolar international system tends toward regional security complexes for the simple reason that the capitalism/socialism ideological confrontation no longer interferes with the functioning of regional sub-systems. Today, while

regional and sub-regional systems are gradually coming into being, the process sometimes assumes sharp forms. The international system is seeking roads leading to a secure political and social milieu and complexes which can add stability to security. Today, the Eurasian zone is the main area of international relations; according to Zbigniew Brzezinski, it should acquire a Trans-Eurasian Security System (TESS).<sup>3</sup>

History knows of several regional stability and security models: the Holy Alliance formed in 1815 based on the primacy of super-regional power expected to consolidate other much weaker countries; and the collective security system which emerged after World War II when the West and the Soviet Union found themselves in two hostile camps. This gave rise to NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) as collective security models. Under the latter model, states are fully aware of the real or associated enemy to be stopped by concerted military efforts. The entire model hinges on the idea of a common enemy, therefore it is better suited to rebuff it and deal with international problems rather than with regional socioeconomic issues. Then we see a collective security model designed to address regional problems by means of negotiations within international legal principles, rather than through the use of force. It also envisages a collective response to aggression against one of its members. According to A. Malgin, a system which is too loose at the global level is best suited to the regional level. In his article "Sredizemnomorskoe izmerenie evropeyskoy bezopasnosti" (the European Security Mediterranean Dimension), he used the OSCE to demonstrate that it is successfully coping with the tasks posed by its founders. Not limited to the military sphere, it is dealing with the humanitarian, economic, and political baskets.

The changing international system has posed the problem of choosing a regional security model; by the same token it has confronted the Southern Caucasus (and Georgia as its part) with the need to identify its place in it. The correct choice is critically important: the region is developing into a

<sup>1</sup> See: "Geostrategic Transformation of the Post-Bipolar Period," *Politics*, No. 11, 2002 (in Georgian).

<sup>2</sup> See: E. Rothschild, "What is Security?" *GSC Quarterly*, No. 3, Winter 2002, pp. 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> See: Zb. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York, 1997.

zone of rivalry among the superpowers. The local states, including Georgia, should clearly identify their positions in Eurasia; they should take into account the current and future processes in which the strong states are playing first fiddle. Georgia's position is vitally important in terms of

the regional security system it will choose, even though for political and economic reasons it carries little weight in the international system. The positions of strong states and their geostrategic and geopolitical interests in Georgia and the Southern Caucasus are much more consequential.

## Russia's Role and Strategy

In the wake of the Cold War, when NATO started its rapid eastward movement, Russia allegedly opted for democracy; this eased confrontation in Central and Eastern Europe. The Russian Federation, however, negatively responded to a new regional defense system in this part of the world. Russian politicians are convinced that the enlargement of NATO in Central and Eastern Europe and its presence in some of the post-Soviet states will draw new dividing lines in Europe and cripple the cause of security. On top of this, relations with the West could move away from cooperation to confrontation. Moscow believes that a European system of collective security with the OSCE playing the leading role may become an alternative to NATO enlargement. The Russian Federation is prepared to discuss joint RF-NATO security guarantees to the Central and East European states.

In this way, the NATO transformation process acquired new trends—transition from the conception of “mutually complementary institutions” to the NATO-centrist model, in which the alliance could claim the leading role when dealing with security problems across the Euro-Atlantic expanse (with the OSCE playing a much less prominent role). This created certain problems for Russia: eastward expansion was no longer regarded merely as a source of new dividing lines in Europe. Russia felt threatened because by the same token it would be removed from the centers and mechanisms of decision-making on issues directly related to its national interests.<sup>4</sup>

Regrettably, the fears turned out to be well-founded: the West came to post-socialist Europe and, together with Turkey, started moving toward the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. (This is explained not only by the regions' energy fuel reserves, but also primarily by meta-strategic interests.) “Through the Caucasus, armed forces can soon become deployed in such important regions as Central Asia, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East, as well as in the Persian Gulf trans-region. This explains why early in the 1990s, the Caucasus attracted attention from the viewpoint of safe transportation of strategic resources.”<sup>5</sup> This is related to regional issues. There were also global reasons behind America's interest in the Caucasus and Central Asia: the Taliban, dictatorship in Iraq, and the Indian-Pakistani tension over Kashmir (Islamabad tried to place Afghanistan and Central Asia under its control). These factors are behind the U.S.'s resolution to spread its influence to these post-Soviet regions; otherwise destabilization would have spread from Central Asia and the Caucasus worldwide.

At first Russia watched America's activities in the post-Soviet expanse and all the projected oil and gas transportation routes with a great share of skepticism. Moscow expected to promptly wind up the war in Chechnia, while Russian experts predicted the failure of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, the TRACECA, and the Great Silk Road projects. Their forecasts proved incorrect. The Kremlin started using the agreements with CIS members to consolidate its role of regional leader. It added much more vigor to its efforts to set up a regional security system within the military-political Collective Security Treaty (CST) ratified in Tashkent in 1992. At first it united Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Uzbekistan,

<sup>4</sup> See: V. Laber, O. Skripchenko, “Partnerstvo Rossii i NATO: real'nost i perspektivy,” *Bezopasnost Evrazii* (Moscow), No. 4, 2001, pp. 474-475.

<sup>5</sup> V. Maisaia, “Otnosheniia Gruzii s NATO,” in: *Voprosy politologii*, Tbilisi, 2002, p. 62.

and Russia. Later, Belarus, Georgia, and Azerbaijan also joined it (the latter two left it in 1999). Moscow spared no effort to turn the CST into an effective collective security organization. In 1995, the structure was registered with the U.N. Security Council, which gave it more weight in the international security system. It seems, however, that since several members had already left, its efficiency somewhat decreased. To reach an adequate efficiency level, its members must embrace new principles of strategic thinking; this might attract those that left and help Moscow reconfirm its status as a super-regional power. This might end fragmentation of the CIS expanse into regional groups seen as CIS alternatives (the GUUAM, EurAsEC, and SCO). If Russia changed its strategy for the sake of a genuinely effective regional security system, Georgia and other post-Soviet countries would have become its active partners. On many occasions, Georgia described its good-neighborly relations with Moscow as one of its key priorities and repeatedly stated that stable and secure Russia was the guarantor of regional stability.<sup>6</sup>

## America's Role

In the post-Cold War period Eurasia moved to the forefront of the U.S.'s geostrategic designs. Gernot Erler's words about the revived geopolitical thinking of the 20th century were addressed primarily to Washington. Prominent American politicians have armed themselves with the Heartland theory of British and German political thinkers to insist on three indispensable principles: the United States should prevent Russia's rebirth as an empire; the post-Soviet expanse should acquire geopolitical pluralism; while the West should immediately start looking for a key to the Caspian energy reserves.<sup>7</sup> Washington is pursuing these aims by creating corresponding regional complexes. By actively cooperating with NATO, the CIS countries could create stable structures, which, in turn, would contribute to the regions' economic and political defense systems. At the first stage, the United States contemplated several variants: direct integration of the region's states into NATO; alternative military-political projects outside NATO; a new military-political bloc compliant with Western geo-economic interests. The regional cooperation model, GUUAM being one, could potentially develop its political contacts to bring regional interests closer together in order to become a solid foundation of strategic partnership with the West and the U.S.

On the whole, the United States attaches great importance to strategic thinking and corresponding projects. At the state level strategy is seen as policy; common actions with other countries to secure national aims are seen as politics, while the prospects of strategic thinking are described as strategic vision. Policy is the most important. It also has a great influence on the U.S. political culture, which, in turn, helps the American political elite formulate strategic aims and identify adequate instruments. It is easy to see, considering the above-mentioned values, what radical changes are occurring in U.S. strategy.

According to a prominent Russian expert Alexey Bogaturov, today the United States is busy resolving a dual problem. First, Washington is seeking soft mobilization of the allies' reserves to use them to attain common Western aims under American guidance. Second, America is out to fragment and break up the real and latent potential of opposition to the West, including the "leveling-off" strategy. To achieve this, the U.S. is creating and supports not very strong (and not very stable) new states in the post-Soviet expanse involved in cooperation and "asymmetric mutual dependence" with the West. They cherish American help, which makes these countries responsive to American recommendations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See: M. Saakashvili, President of Georgia, "Georgia's Security Challenges," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 5 August, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> For more detail, see: Zb. Brzezinski, op. cit., pp.120-121.

<sup>8</sup> See: A. Bogaturov, "'Strategia razravnivania' v mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniakh i vneshnei politike SShA," *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia*, No. 2, 2001, p. 24.

Viewed from Russia, the American strategy looks like a resolute turn toward regionalization of the entire expanse of western and partly central Eurasian zones to provide it with a new state and communication structure suited as much as possible to prospective worldwide economic growth, including in the industrially developed countries.

Indeed, America's strategic interests do lie in Eurasia, to be more exact in its central and western parts, which seemingly threatens Russia's interests. We are convinced, however, that its strategy is not aimed either at weakening the Russian Federation, or at squeezing it out of this place for the simple reason that Russia's destabilization and complete weakening will not only threaten Western interests, but may also endanger international stability. This explains why, when it comes to the crunch, the United States never fails to publicly declare its complete trust in and its complete support of Russia. Eurasian security, Eurasia being the central target of the White House's vital interests, makes Moscow Washington's most indispensable partner. The United States sees control over this zone as a tool of protection against Mid-Eastern fundamentalism. With this aim in view, Washington is creating America-oriented complexes in the Middle East able to balance the regional security system to protect the Euro-Atlantic Alliance against Islamic terrorism. In this context, control of the Caucasus will not be enough; it seems that the GUUAM project is stagnating precisely because Washington is mainly interested in Eurasian zones much larger than this "tiny part of the continent." The White House needs new security structures on the continent to serve as regional systems of sorts and as NATO partners able to preserve security in their spheres of influence and on a worldwide scale.

## Georgia's Place in the Regional System

At the beginning of the post-bipolar period, Georgia was busy looking for a new place in the international system; there was no unity in its political elite: there were pro-Russian and pro-Western camps. Some people went as far as saying that Georgia should become a regional state to fulfill what they described as Georgia's historic mission. Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia was one of them: it was his aim to set up the "Caucasian House" in which Georgia would play the role of a link between the region's south and north. The idea was short-lived: it died when a Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, which had no warm feelings toward official Tbilisi, was set up in the north.

In the hope of gaining access to the Black Sea, the Confederation made Sukhumi its capital. The choice was a significant one in terms of geopolitics: at that time, Abkhazia was seen as a toehold of the Confederation's struggle against Georgia and separatist actions against Russia. Later, when Jokhar Dudaev came to power in Chechnia, the Confederation's Chairman Iu. Soslanbekov personally knocked together, in Abkhazia, the Chechen battalion (later known as the Abkhazian battalion) under Shamil Basaev's command. Its widely known cruelty toward those who lived in Abkhazia was later confirmed by the fighters themselves.<sup>9</sup>

On 20 August, 1992, at the very beginning of the war in Abkhazia, a Confederation "decree" instructed its armed units to make their way to Abkhazia, described Tbilisi as a disaster zone, and designated it as a terrorist target. The hysterics in Abkhazia caused panic in Georgia; its political will and economic potential weakened; it could no longer insist on its statehood idea, while its political community was busy discussing neutrality in relation to the Caucasus and the West, even though the geopolitical context was hardly conducive to it. There are many conflict zones inside the country, which makes neutrality next to impossible; on top of this, America, the EU, Turkey, and Russia, all of them strong states, will never agree to Georgian neutrality.

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<sup>9</sup> See: B.U. Kostoev, *Kavkazskiy meridian*, Moscow, 2003, p. 125.

According to a prominent Georgian expert, A. Rondeli, in the early 1990s the country was pursuing the nearest aims, while its strategy remained obviously idealistic. Later, Tbilisi finally arrived at a much more balanced foreign policy. By the end of the 1990s, Georgia had acquired two highly urgent political problems: its dependence on unpredictable Russia and its internal weakness, which did not allow it to pursue independent foreign policy, made it impossible to address Georgia's strategic tasks: European integration and an effective model of regional cooperation. A. Rondeli managed, however, to formulate some priorities: restored territorial integrity; integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures; friendly and balanced relations with the neighbors; decreased Russian military influence; and regional cooperation, including the country's involvement in economic projects.<sup>10</sup>

Its clear priorities made it easier to identify regional partners. In 1997, the GUAM regional structure was set up; two years later, its members were openly discussing the possibility of moving from economic cooperation to a coordinated regional security policy. Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Kh. Khasanov, for example, supported the idea of a coordinated defense policy within the Partnership for Peace NATO program, which had already attracted 16 NATO states and 4 GUAM members (16 + 4). It was realized in April 1999. Georgian territory was used for military exercises of Ukrainian, Georgian, and Azeri armed units. The GUAM members declared that their organization was open to all states; very soon Uzbekistan joined it. The Organization received one more letter "U" to become GUUAM. Since its members left the CST, Russia interpreted GUUAM as a CIS alternative designed to leave Moscow out in the cold. In this context, Russia felt it expedient to assume stricter control over the post-Soviet expanse, which primarily affected GUUAM—the structure was rapidly losing its functions and popularity within its geopolitical area.

Georgian political analyst G. Khelashvili wrote that the processes became irreversible because of the involvement of the United States, Turkey, and Iran, to say nothing of Russia. Today, they are still actively interfering in GUUAM's regional processes with both negative and positive results. There were several reasons behind GUUAM's inadequate functioning: the "frozen conflicts" as factors of potential destabilization and war, and the unregulated border issues fraught with further destabilization or even wars. To be successful, South Caucasian cooperation demands concerted efforts by all the local states. Today, however, Armenia is steering clear of it because of the Karabakh conflict and will continue doing so until Baku restores its territorial integrity or Erevan joins Karabakh. Finally, along with the ruling elites, the ordinary people should recognize the urgency of regional cooperation. This has not happened so far.<sup>11</sup>

Russia's attitude toward GUUAM is another reason for its present condition. It badly hit Georgia as the most active promoter of Western values in the post-Soviet expanse. It is involved in all regional projects funded by the West, the Partnership for Peace being one of them. Since 2001, however, its policies have been changing and not without Russia's influence. Foreign policy and domestic processes have become aggravated; the problems of Ajaria and Javakhetia have moved to the fore. Aslan Abashidze, who headed Ajaria, did not hesitate to blackmail Tbilisi. This undermined its already crippled territorial integrity. Moscow, for its part, violated international legal norms by offering Russian citizenship to the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. On top of this, the Georgian power system was transferred to Russian companies, which made Georgia even more dependent on the Russian Federation.

Paul Goble, a prominent American political scientist, warned that Georgia might lose its independence: he was convinced that Russia would stage a series of political actions aimed at either altering state policies, or removing its leaders from power. Tbilisi would be forced to sign an agreement which would make it even more dependent on Russia than Armenia and Tajikistan. He concluded his analysis by saying that Georgia was the weakest link of the security belt which separates the South and the West from Russia.

<sup>10</sup> See: A. Rondeli, "The Choice of Independent Georgia," *Akhali azri*, No. 3, 2001, p. 7 (in Georgian).

<sup>11</sup> See: G. Khelashvili, "Regional Cooperation in the Southern Caucasus: the Context of a Historical and Political Utopia," *Akhali azri*, No. 4, 2002, p. 8.

The situation did not reach the critical point the American analyst predicted, yet the threat of Russian aggression is still alive. This makes a regional security system very much needed; in fact, both Armenia and Azerbaijan also need it—the recent initiatives of their presidents are ample evidence of this.<sup>12</sup> The South Caucasian states have to decide which type of regional stability they prefer.

We are convinced that a group regional security model based on the regional superpower factor should be rejected for the simple reason that there is no such superpower in the Southern Caucasus. A collective defense system based on the common enemy factor is likewise ineffective due to the absence of such enemy. In fact, regional stability is expected not so much to deal with problem by means of force as to adequately respond to the changes in the international system; it is also expected to address socioeconomic and other urgent problems.

The European Union is the best example of this type of security model. The West European ruling elites have transformed the very idea of security. The states abandoned enmity and territorial claims for the sake of balanced shared European interests. The mutual dependence principle created economic prosperity and ensured continental stability.

French political analyst Jean Radvanyi has pointed out that while in the past stability was interpreted as a political and geopolitical balancing act which ruled out the possibility of violating the achieved balance, European integration turned the balance of power into a balance of interests realized through supra-national structures free from any nationalist, political, or economic biases.<sup>13</sup>

We believe that cooperation within the South Caucasian regional system does not stipulate the local states' complete political, economic, and legal integration. It will be achieved through their goodwill, which will help them identify their common interests and find an appropriate place in the international system.

<sup>12</sup> See: P. Asanishvili, "South Caucasian Dimension of Regional Security," *Politics*, No. 8, 2002 (in Georgian).

<sup>13</sup> See: J. Radvanyi, *Geopoliticheskaia transformatsia na Iuzhnom Kavkaze*, Tbilisi, 1996.

## THE SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN JAVAKHETIA

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

**O**n 10 March, 2005, the Georgian parliament adopted a resolution on the Russian military bases deployed in the country. It noted that if Moscow does not adopt a decision before 15 May on specific deadlines, acceptable to the Georgian side, for withdrawal of these troops,

official Tbilisi will demand that the Russian Federation withdraw them before 1 January, 2006. What is more, the Georgian side will spare no effort to ensure this is done. This document aroused an unequivocal reaction in Javakhetia (the Armenian name for Javakhk), where the 62nd Russian military base is stationed. As early as 13 March, a mass meeting of several thousand participants, unprecedented in the region's history, was held in the town of Akhalkalaki, the region's center, at which representatives of the local Armenian sociopolitical organizations protested the Georgian parliamentarians' decision. What is more, they demanded that the country's leadership take immediate measures to improve the socioeconomic and political situation in Javakhk and recognize the 1915 Armenian genocide that took place in Turkey.<sup>1</sup> This meeting, which became a catalyst for several further events, has attracted the keen interest of political scientists and journalists both in the Southern Caucasus and beyond it to Javakhk once more.

This region, which includes the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts, is located in the extreme southeast of Georgia and borders directly on Turkey and Armenia. The demographic specifics of this territory (Armenians constitute more than 95 percent of its population) have always colored the traditional view expressed by a number of researchers, political scientists, journalists, and politicians of the region as a potential conflict zone. In so doing, Georgian researchers evaluate the region's conflict potential based on the possible separatist sentiments manifested by the local Armenian population. On the other hand, many other specialists, including Armenians, are primarily concerned about the situation in Javakhetia in light of the discrimination of the Armenian minority and protection of its rights to participate in sociopolitical, economic, and cultural life. At the same time, most foreign researchers view the region based on an analysis of the geopolitical problems associated with the Southern Caucasus.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See: V. Novikov, "Gruzinskie armiane ne otpustiat rossiiskie bazy," *Kommersant*, 14 March, 2005; "Armiane Dzhavakheti trebuiut ot gruzinskogo parlamenta priznat genotsid armian" [www.regnum.ru], 14 March, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> See: H. Kanbolat, N. Gul, *The Geopolitics and Quest for Autonomy of the Armenians of Javakheti (Geor-*

The diverging views of Armenian and Georgian researchers (which are frequently diametrically opposed) are also revealed when light is shed on Javakhetia's historical past. For example, Georgian scientists believe Samtskhe (Meskheta) to be one of the cradles of Georgian statehood, noting that the Armenian ethnic element did not appear here until the Russian-Turkish war of 1828-1829. However, Armenian historians claim that the region's indigenous population consisted of Armenians from time immemorial, because this territory has always been part of historical Armenia. The demographic changes of the first quarter of the 19th century only restored the real picture, which had undergone changes due to the many centuries of Turkish dominion in Javakhk.

As already noted, Javakhk is divided into two administrative districts, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda (they compose 3.7 percent of Georgian territory), where approximately 2 percent of the country's population lives. Samtskhe (Meskheta), the borders of which correspond to the historical Armenian province of Lower Javakhk (the Gugark Region) and adjoin Javakhetia in the west, is divided into three districts: Akhaltsikhe, Adigeni, and Aspindza. In this area, the Armenians also comprise a significant percentage of the population. The Borzhomi District, which borders in the north on the Akhaltsikhe District, is separate. As a result of the administrative changes carried out by the Georgian authorities in the mid-1990s, all of these districts were joined into one administrative-territorial unit—the Samtskhe-Javakhetia Region (gubernia), which is governed by an authorized representative appointed by the country's president. As many people in Javakhk believe, the real purpose of creating this administrative-territorial unit was to reduce the percentage ratio of the local Armenian population, which no longer com-

*gia) and Krasnodar (Russia) in the Caucasus*, Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies (AVSAM), Ankara, 28 December, 2001 [www.avsam.org]; Amir-Reza Darabian, "The Role of Armenians Living in Georgia in the Regional Events in the Caucasus," *Amu-Daria* (Iranian journal for the study of Central Asia and the Caucasus), No. 13, Winter 2003.

prises an absolute majority. We will add that as a result of the targeted policy conducted by the Georgian authorities as early as the Soviet era, the migration of Armenians from Javakhk to Armenia, the Northern Caucasus, and other regions of the Soviet Union acquired significant proportions. As a result, by 1989, in the Akhalkalaki and neighboring Bogdanov (now Ninotsminda) districts, there were as many residents as there were in the Akhalkalaki uezd (which also included the terri-

tory of present-day Ninotsminda) in 1914—around 100,000.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For more detail, see: S. Minasian, M. Agajanyan, *Javakhk (Javakhetia): Legal Aspects of Protection of Armenian National Minorities' Rights in Georgia on International Level. Political and Socioeconomic Situation in the Region in Modern Period*, Program for Political Monitoring of Samtskhe-Javakheti. Scientific Research Center for South Caucasus Security and Integration Studies, Research Paper No. 2, Erevan, 2005.

## Negative Potential: The Socioeconomic and Political Situation

Even back in Soviet times, Javakhk was one of the most underdeveloped parts of Georgia. There are not enough roads and railways in the region, and those it has are in an extremely neglected state. And the level of urban development is also very low. Not until the second half of the 1980s, when the unrest began in Nagorny Karabakh, did the Georgian S.S.R. government adopt a Program of Socioeconomic Development for the region's population. This was probably an attempt to insure itself against possible opposition from the local population against Tbilisi. But this Program only implemented measures for resettling victims of the natural disasters in the mountainous part of Ajaria in the south-east of the Akhalkalaki District. Incidentally, the serious climatic conditions and socioeconomic crisis which inflicted the country in the last years of the Soviet Union's existence led to the essential failure of this Program.<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that despite the significant work potential in the region, during the Soviet era, the Georgian government deliberately did not develop industrial production in Javakhk, as a result of which the local Armenians had to go to other parts of the U.S.S.R. to find seasonal work. On the other hand, at that time Javakhk was one of Georgia's most important agricultural regions, where animal husbandry, potato growing, and the manufacture of cheese, butter, and other dairy products were among the leading branches. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation in the region took an abrupt downturn and all the economic indices dropped several-fold.

In 1997, the Georgian government approved a new Program of Socioeconomic Development for Samtskhe-Javakhetia. But it, like all the previous and subsequent projects, remained on paper. All of this only reinforced the firm conviction among the local population that official Tbilisi was deliberately against resolving the region's economic problems and in so doing was encouraging the Armenians living in Javakhk to migrate.

The outcome of the 1990s dealt a heavy blow to the economy of Javakhk, and not only against the background of the deterioration in the situation throughout Georgia. For example, according to the official data, by the end of 1999, the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts were behind even the neighboring districts of the new administrative entity of Samtskhe-Javakhetia in terms of industrial production volume (including in the key agricultural sphere for the region). What is more, when analyzing the quantitative indices it must be kept in mind that the size of the population in the Akhalkalaki District is much larger than the number of residents in all the other districts (see Table 1), while

<sup>4</sup> See: V. Guretski, "The Question of Javakheti," *Caucasian Regional Studies*, Vol. III (1), 1998.



the level of industrial production is much lower. For example, in the Aspindza District, where 13,000 people live, industrial production amounting to 252,500 lari was manufactured in January-July 2001, whereas in the Akhalkalaki District (with a population of approximately 61,000 people), this index amounted to only 71,300 lari.

Table 1

**Size and Ethnic Composition of the Population of Samtskhe-Javakhetia  
(according to the 2002 census)**

Districts	Armenians (thou. people)	Georgians (thou. people)	Total (thou. people)
<b>Adigeni</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>20.7</b>
<b>Aspindza</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>13.1</b>
<b>Akhalkalaki</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>61.0</b>
<b>Akhaltzikhe</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>46.1</b>
<b>Borzhomi</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>32.4</b>
<b>Ninotsminda</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>34.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>113.4</b>	<b>90.0</b>	<b>207.6</b>

The extremely difficult situation in the Javakhetia economy, which is related (as we have already mentioned), in addition to everything else, to the almost entire absence of infrastructure, mass migration, zero government support, and essential collapse of production, is also clearly manifested during an analysis of the quantitative indices of the budget of the Akhalkalaki District in recent years (see Table 2).

Table 2

**Budget of the Akhalkalaki District and Distribution by Item in 2001—2004 (in thou. lari)**

Year	Total budget	Including local revenue	Transfers from the Center	Spending on education and culture from this amount
<b>2001</b>	<b>2,288.0</b>	<b>997.0</b>	<b>1,291.0</b>	<b>1,185.0</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>2,893.0</b>	<b>852.0*</b>	<b>2,041.0</b>	<b>1,750.0</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>3,022.2</b>	<b>886.0</b>	<b>2,156.2</b>	<b>1,856.2</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>3,789.0</b>	<b>839.0</b>	<b>2,950.0</b>	<b>2,420.0</b>

\* After a reduction in and the removal of land tax.  
*S o u r c e:* Data presented by the administration of the Akhalkalaki District.

As early as 1999, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze announced that a socioeconomic development project was about to be implemented in the region. But the local authorities and popula-

tion had no idea of its contents for a long time to come. What is more, when asked about its details and implementation deadlines, then governor of Samtskhe-Javakhetia Gigla Baramidze replied that the project "is classified as secret and not open to discussion."<sup>5</sup> Not until October 2002 was it published under the title "Program of Measures for Ensuring the Socioeconomic Development of Samtskhe-Javakhetia for 2002-2005."<sup>6</sup> It consisted of 15 sections, whereby each stipulated specific measures in specific areas. But their formulation, dimensions, and choice of priority tasks made it unequivocally clear that they were nothing more than another propaganda campaign aimed at giving semblance to the Georgian government's "concern" for the needs of the people of Samtskhe-Javakhetia. Out of the more than 30 items in this program directly or indirectly related to the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts, only a few had been partially carried out by the end of 2004. A logical indication of the purely fictitious nature of all the above-mentioned documents is the fact that, in November 2004, former governor of the region N. Nikolozashvili (possibly as a result of the meeting in October between Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili and Armenian Leader Robert Kocharian) stated that another economic development program for Samtskhe-Javakhetia would begin.

Monetary transfers from Russia and other CIS states comprise a significant percentage of the revenue of the local population. For example, in Akhalkalaki, the funds received from Russia through the local branches of two banks amount to a sum equivalent to approximately \$25,000 a day. For comparison's sake, we will note that between January and July 2001, the industrial production of the entire Akhalkalaki District amounted to only \$35,000. At the same time, Russia's introduction of a visa system with Georgia compelled many seasonal workers from Javakhk to resettle in Russia, since it was impossible for them to return home after completing their regular "work semester" due to the high cost of the trip, bureaucratic difficulties, and so on.

In Javakhk, there are essentially no realistic social security mechanisms for the population, while corruption reaches enormous proportions. The question of interrelations between the Armenian residents of the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts and officials of the gubernatorial structures located in Akhaltsikhe is particularly acute. In other words, discrimination on national grounds is added to the problems already created by the unsophisticated bureaucratic system and corruption. What is more, the energy problem is extremely urgent in the region, which is aggravated by the catastrophic situation regarding heating in Javakhk, the coldest part of Georgia (sometimes snow lies on the ground there from October until April). There are no elementary everyday and sanitary conditions in the region. Many villages of the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts do not have running water, people have to get their water from neighboring villages or pump it from wells. There are no out-patient clinics, qualified medical personnel, or medical equipment in the villages. People have to travel to the neighboring Ashotsi District of Armenia, 50 km from Akhalkalaki, to receive even elementary medical assistance.

At one time, the residents of Javakhk placed certain hopes on the laying of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline through the region. It was believed that a large number of jobs would be created during the construction and subsequent servicing of the route, which would have a positive effect on the region's socioeconomic situation. But the decision made at the political level (under pressure from the Georgian government) to change the direction of this section of the oil pipeline (according to the initial project, it was to cross the Akhalkalaki District and reach the Turkish border through the Armenian village of Karzakh), that is, it is now to be laid through the Borzhomi and Akhaltsikhe districts, again excluded Javakhk from large-scale investment projects. And all the indirect multi-million economic aid programs being carried out within the framework of the pipeline construction also bypassed it. What is more, Javakhk has one of the highest levels of migration and unemployment in the country.

<sup>5</sup> From a conversation with administration representative of the Akhalkalaki District.

<sup>6</sup> *Vrastan*, 26 October, 2002 (in Armenian).

This is manifested both in absolute values, as well as in comparison with the two districts of Samtskhe-Javakhetia, Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe. For example, in the Akhalkalaki District, unemployment reaches approximately 51.3 percent, whereas in the Akhaltsikhe District (at the end of 2002, before the beginning of construction work on the BTC oil pipeline) it was around 33.4 percent.<sup>7</sup>

In recent years, Georgia has received a large number of grants for implementing socioeconomic projects in direct aid from many international sponsor organizations. But Western experts stress that the population of Javakhetia gains little benefit from this, even compared with the Akhaltsikhe District or with other districts of Samtskhe-Javakhetia. Admittedly, representative offices of several international organizations have opened in Javakhetia. But according to the leaders of local NGOs and the administration of the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda District, their extremely meager sponsor programs (apart from information projects) are not yielding any tangible results.<sup>8</sup>

After the Istanbul OSCE summit in 1999, at which an agreement was entered regarding the Russian bases located in Georgia, some Western analytical organizations conducted several studies on the influence of the likely withdrawal of these bases on the situation in the region, including in the socio-economic sphere. Their results only confirmed the opinion that the 62nd Russian military base is a major economic factor for Javakhetia. Its hasty elimination might have a serious negative impact on the situation in the region, despite the possible implementation of large-scale programs for its economic rehabilitation planned by international sponsors. As senior researcher and director of Russian and Eurasian programs at the London International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) Oksana Antonenko notes, more than 10.4 percent of the Javakhetia population (6-7,000 people) depends directly on this base for its livelihood. However the number of people who indirectly depend on it in one way or another is several times higher. This base has a perceptible influence on the economy not only of Javakhetia, but of the entire Samtskhe-Javakhetia Region. As the largest consumer of local production, primarily agricultural, it promotes the development of trade and business. What is more, the indirect influence of the base on the socioeconomic situation and on the standard of living of the local population is extremely tangible. For example, it provides the people with benefits when traveling to Russia and Armenia, supplies the residential areas in its vicinity with light and heat, educates the local children in the garrison school, offers the local population medical services at the military field hospital, and so on.<sup>9</sup>

The aforementioned facts unequivocally show that in terms of socioeconomic status, the region is close to a humanitarian disaster. The situation is complicated by the Javakhetia Armenians' political perception of the economic and social difficulties. Based on the grievous experience of post-Soviet Georgia, they believe politics are to blame for the socioeconomic and humanitarian problems. Correspondingly, these problems can only be resolved by granting the local Armenians broader rights in local self-government (in correspondence with European standards). But after the new leadership headed by Mikhail Saakashvili came to power in Georgia, the situation in the region became aggravated. For example, the mass changes that occurred in the country in the past year hardly affected Javakhetia, which aroused a certain amount of concern among the local residents, who placed their hopes on the Rose Revolution. According to many residents of the region, deliberate discrimination of the local Armenians is continuing and even increasing. Information is appearing that in order to change the region's demographic situation, the governmental program aimed at settling migrants from Ajara and other regions of Georgia in Javakhetia has been revived.

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<sup>7</sup> See: *Economic Capacity Building Project Samtskhe-Javakhetia. Mid-term Report*, IOM, Tbilisi, November 2002, pp. 6-9.

<sup>8</sup> See: J. Wheatley, "Obstacles Impeding the Regional Integration of the Javakhetia Region of Georgia," *ECMI Working Paper* # 22, Flensburg, September 2004, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> See: O. Antonenko, "Assessment of the Potential Implications of Akhalkalaki Base Closure for the Stability in Southern Georgia. EU Response Capacities," *CPN Briefing Paper*, August 2001, pp. 25-26.

What is more, the country's new leadership is not paying proper attention to the signing, ratification, or implementation of the obligations it assumed to European and other international organizations on the protection of national minorities, decentralization, and improvement of local self-government. In this respect, it is not very different from Eduard Shevardnadze's regime. The discussion going on in the republic's sociopolitical circles and the viewpoint of the Georgian political elite indicate the lack of desire to soften policy regarding the Armenian part of the Javakhk population, including on granting it minimal self-government.

Official Tbilisi frequently explains its policy by the poor integration of the Javakhk Armenians into the country's sociopolitical and cultural life, and, as a result, their poor knowledge of the state language (Georgian). In so doing, the true reason is naturally not mentioned—lack of encouragement to learn it. Actual examples of Georgia's cadre policy both in Soviet and in post-Soviet times are evidence of this. Armenians, who constitute according to different estimates between 6 and 10 percent of the country's population, are represented in the executive structures of its central power by only one deputy minister, and at the gubernatorial level, that is, in Samtskhe-Javakhetia, where more than 60 percent of the population are Armenians, by one deputy governor who carries out strictly formal functions. But official Tbilisi's putting this down to lack of knowledge of the Georgian language only applies to the Armenians of Javakhk (to the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts), and not to the other 70-80 percent of Armenians living in Georgia.

Mikhail Saakashvili first visited the region in his capacity as Georgian president on 29 December, 2004. He spent only a few hours in Akhalkalaki, talked before the people of Javakhk, but was essentially unable to answer the most important issues which concerned the local residents. Admittedly, the head of state promised to build a Ninotsminda-Tsalka highway, which was supposed to ensure the shortest route to the Georgian capital, but he did not say anything about restoring the short stretch of road linking the region with Armenia, or about resolving the region's other socioeconomic problems. What is more, Mikhail Saakashvili placed special emphasis on the fact that beginning in 2005, approximately 100 places for young Armenian graduates from Javakhk schools will be allotted annually in Tbilisi higher education institutions, where they will be able to study at the state's expense.

At the beginning of March 2005, it became known that former authorized representative of the Georgian president in Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Georgy Khachidze, had been appointed to the same position in Samtskhe-Javakhetia.<sup>10</sup> There is hope that in this position he will actively put into practice the "new approach" to the region declared by the country's current authorities. In particular, after several meetings with the leadership of the Akhalkalaki District, Georgian parliamentary deputy G. Movsian, and other representatives of Armenian sociopolitical circles, who organized a meeting on 13 March, 2005, the president's authorized representative admitted that all the demands of the people of Javakhk are reasonable and promised to take measures to implement them. During the last meeting, the Javakhks talked in particular about the need to open a passport department in Akhalkalaki, about studying Armenian history in Georgia's Armenian schools, and about use of the Armenian language by the local authorities and in judicial practice. What is more, there was also talk about democratizing elections to the local self-government bodies, offering customs services in the village of Zhdanovka, which is located near the border with Armenia (goods imported from Armenia to Samtskhe-Javakhetia currently go through customs in the town of Akhaltsikhe, 100 km from the border), and repairing the Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki-Ninotsminda-Zhdanovka highway.

The president's representative promised to find a positive solution to the question of the passport department and assist in the rapid approval by the Georgian Ministry of Education of a program for studying Armenian history in Armenian schools. What is more, referring to the fact that he has not

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<sup>10</sup> See: "Naznachen novy upolnomochenny prezidenta Gruzii v Samtskhe-Javakheti" [www.regnum.ru], 3 March, 2005.

been working in the region long, Georgy Khachidze was unable to give an exhaustive answer to the other questions. In the end, the participants in the meeting agreed to submit a proposal to the Georgian government on creating a group of specialists for preparing optimal versions of solutions to the indicated problems.

## **Problem of the Russian Base and Role of the Military Factor in the Political Situation Around Javakhetia**

According to experts, the 62nd Russian base quartered in Javakhetia is of greater political and moral-psychological than military significance, since due to its small size and insufficient level of technical equipment, it is hardly up to performing its main (since as far back as Soviet times) function—defense against an invasion by Turkey. Of course, in the last years of the Soviet Union's existence, the 147th motorized rifle division, on which this base was subsequently created, was one of the strongest units of the then Transcaucasian Military District. But after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a significant part of its armaments and military hardware was officially handed over to the Georgian side or embezzled and sold. As a result, by 1998, it was left with 41 tanks, 118 armored vehicles, and 61 artillery systems. And by the beginning of 2004, the following subdivisions were part of the base: the 409th and 412th motorized rifle regiments, the 817th SP artillery regiment, the 899th separate signal battalion, the 65th separate antitank battalion, and the 176th separate repair and reconstruction battalion.<sup>11</sup> The number of staff did not reach 1,500 men. But in mid-2004, there were significant changes both in the organizational and staff structure of the 62nd base, and in its composition. By this time, it had fully transferred to a brigade structure, consisting of one tank and three motorized rifle battalions, an SP artillery battalion, and so on.

We will remind you that for many years neither the status of these bases, nor how long the Russian troops would remain in Georgia were defined. Not until the Istanbul OSCE summit at the end of 1999 did Georgia and Russia sign an agreement on withdrawal of the 137th Vaziani and 50th Guduata bases by 31 December, 2000. What is more, the sides were obligated within the shortest time to begin talks on the withdrawal deadlines and the functioning regulations for the bases in Batumi and Akhalkalaki and other Russian military facilities in Georgia. But this was where disputes arose. Official Moscow is delaying their withdrawal, claiming that without the necessary infrastructure in Russia, troops cannot be withdrawn from Georgia. But it is political, and not economic, reasons which form the crux of the matter. In so doing, we will note that just at the end of 2004, Georgia was not so categorical in its demands (although it periodically made extremely loud statements). This was largely explained by the fact that official Tbilisi did not feel any real support regarding this problem from NATO and the U.S., as well as by Georgia's desire to receive more favorable conditions from the West in terms of an individual partnership program with NATO, and so on as reward for its tough stance against the Kremlin. What is more, Georgian experts recognized that the presence of Russian bases in the country, which at present have an essentially negligible effect on its domestic situation, allows Tbilisi to use them for political bargaining with Moscow. From this standpoint, it would be expedient to link the new approach put forward at the end of May 2004 by Georgia on this issue with the creation of joint "antiterrorist centers" based on the Russian bases to be withdrawn, which however did not bring it the desired results at the time.

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<sup>11</sup> See: V. Soloviev, V. Ivanov, "Voenno-bazovaia udavka," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 27 February, 2004.

Many experts expected some clarity regarding further functioning of the 62nd base and development of the military and political situation in Javakhk to be introduced by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov's visit to Georgia on 17-18 February, 2005. But a week before this, on 10-11 February, another round of Russian-Georgian negotiations on these bases was held in Tbilisi. Incidentally, like all the previous rounds, it ended in an impasse. Nor were the two-day talks between the Russian and Georgian government delegations on a framework agreement between the two countries crowned with success. Immediately before the beginning of Sergei Lavrov's visit to Tbilisi, a member of the Georgian parliament, Giga Bokeria, who took part in the talks on the bases on 10-11 February, said, "The time has come for our parliament to declare the Russian bases on Georgian territory illegal, since there is already international-legal practice for this."<sup>12</sup> The situation became even more fired up due to the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's refusal to place a wreath at the memorial of those killed in battles for Georgia's territorial integrity, due to which the country's authorities changed the official nature of Lavrov's visit to a working one. All of this led to the fact that his visit on the whole and the meetings with the Georgian leadership in particular took place in a very highly strung atmosphere.

In this way, even before Lavrov flew to Tbilisi, it was clear there would be no significant breakthroughs in the negotiations. Nevertheless, after several talks between the Russian minister and the Georgian leadership, including with Head of State Mikhail Saakashvili, Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze, and Foreign Minister Salome Zurbishvili, the sides took a kind of time-out, but agreed to carry out intensive work in the next two months on the main problems in the current relations between the two countries. Both foreign ministers reported on this on 18 February at a joint press conference, and in particular named six main issues which needed to be discussed by the experts of both sides: the Framework Agreement, the deadlines for withdrawing the Russian military bases, the creation of a joint antiterrorist center, delimitation of the Russian-Georgian border, settlement of regional conflicts, and simplification of the visa conditions for Georgian citizens. "At the end of two months, we will report to our presidents on the work carried out. After that, on 9 May, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili will visit Moscow and meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, if, of course, the talks develop in a way acceptable to both sides," said Salome Zurbishvili.<sup>13</sup>

But soon Georgia made more specific demands about the deadlines for withdrawing the bases, which some people in Tbilisi related to the results of the meeting between George Bush and Vladimir Putin in February in Bratislava, where this problem was discussed among other things. And on 10 March, as we already noted, Georgian parliamentary deputies adopted a resolution on the Russian military bases. This document was an ultimatum to the Russian Federation, since its gist consisted of the following: official Tbilisi is prepared to go to extremes if its demands are not met. This implies stopping the issuance of entry visas to Russian servicemen and establishing special conditions for their movement around the country (under the control of the defense, interior, and social security ministries). The movement of military hardware, armaments, property, and so on will be placed under total control. The Ministry of Finance will define the debts incurred by the Russian military bases and facilities for land rental and present the Russian Federation with a bill by way of its government debt, the sum of which will amount to at least \$400 million. The Environmental Protection Ministry is calculating and estimating the economic damage inflicted by the activity of the military bases and intends to exact it from the Russian Federation. What is more, until 1 January, 2006, the military bases are only supposed to function under withdrawal conditions, which, according to Georgian parliamentary deputies, means tactical and command-staff exercises, as well as personnel rotation, are prohibited.

<sup>12</sup> T. Gularidze, "V sviazi s voennymi bazami Rossiia 'zatiagivaet vremia,'" *Civil. Ge*, 12 February, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> T. Gularidze, "Tbilisi i Moskva soglasovali plan peregovorov," *Civil. Ge*, 12 February, 2005.

Executive power reacted quite cautiously to this initiative, nevertheless it tried to derive the maximum benefit from it in its opposition to Moscow. "The parliament has adopted a rather tough resolution regarding the Russian bases, but I am not losing hope that a civilized agreement can be achieved which will not infringe on Russia's interests, but will also protect Georgia's sovereignty," noted Mikhail Saakashvili at a press conference in Tbilisi on 12 March. In so doing, he placed special emphasis on the 62nd base, which is deployed in Akhalkalaki. After noting that Javakhk, in particular the area where the base is stationed, is mainly populated by Georgian citizens of Armenian nationality who work at this base and are worried that they will soon be deprived of their only source of income, the president said that he would guarantee the region's residents jobs, including by means of re-deployment of the 11th Telavi battalion of the Georgian army in this area.<sup>14</sup> Incidentally, this is extremely disputable, and the presence of Georgian troops in Javakhk will not ensure stability: people in region well remember how cruelly the national Georgian formations of the Soviet Army (even under the command of Russian officers) redeployed at that time in Akhalkalaki treated the local Armenians in 1941—1945.

On 23 March, another round of talks on the bases began in Moscow. This time, the Russian side significantly played down its stance, it can even be said that it almost entirely conceded to Georgia's proposals. Incidentally, official Tbilisi too demonstrated its willingness to make "minimal compromises." Its representatives stated that Georgia is willing to agree to the withdrawal of the Russian troops within four years (before 1 January, 2009), but on the condition that during this time they will function under withdrawal conditions, that is, not carry out exercises, not equip themselves with new military hardware, and their staff will be cut back. What is more, the Georgian side stated that it is willing to give Russian officers apartments in the center of Tbilisi, which they can sell before they leave for Russia. It also intends to find 10-15 million dollars to transport personnel and hardware to the Russian Federation. Georgian Foreign Minister Salome Zurbishvili considered the sum of 300 million dollars, previously requested by the Russian Federation, to be "unrealistic."<sup>15</sup>

### *In Lieu of a Conclusion: Non-Standard Withdrawal from an Impending Crisis?*

Against the background of the continuing discrimination of the Armenian ethnic minority of Javakhetia, the impending humanitarian disaster, and in the context of the possible withdrawal of the 62nd Russian base from Akhalkalaki, ensuring the physical safety of the Armenian population of Javakhk will be one of the main mid-term problems to be resolved. This will be necessary in order to prevent a possible conflict fraught with global consequences for the entire Southern Caucasus. Some analysts are already discussing the alternative solutions to this problem and putting forward rather non-standard presuppositions on the mechanisms for guaranteeing the safety of the region's Armenian residents. One of them, which would suit Tbilisi and be positively perceived by the Armenian side, might be the temporary deployment in Javakhetia of a limited American military contingent.

Incidentally, this project has already attracted the attention of Washington. Recently, the region was visited by executives of the U.S. embassy in Georgia. The Americans' interest in Javakhk was aroused by several factors. First, the White House is concerned about the conflict potential building there, which could create a threat not only to the Saakashvili government, but also to the Armenian authorities, particularly in light of the fact that in the long run, the United States is looking at Erevan as a very serious partner in regional security. Second, the U.S.'s main geo-economic project in the

<sup>14</sup> See: V. Litovkin, "Gotovnost—no!" *Moskovskie novosti*, 18 March, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> V. Novikov, "Gruzia meniaet bazy na kvartiry," *Kommersant*, 24 March, 2005.

Southern Caucasus, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, is to pass through Javakhk, so naturally any destabilization along its route is undesirable for Washington. The fact that several prestigious U.S. institutions, including analytical institutes, are seriously studying this question shows the American administration's real interest in the situation surrounding Javakhetia. According to the available information, Washington demanded obligatory and priority implementation of projects aimed at Javakhetia's economic rehabilitation as one of the conditions necessary for Tbilisi joining the Challenges of the Millennium project. But the Georgian side suggested using these funds not so much for these purposes as for building a Ninotsminda-Tbilisi highway and Kars-Akhalkalaki railroad, which are of vital strategic and geo-economic significance for the country's leadership.

On the whole, it can be stated that the U.S.'s interest in Javakhk is aroused mainly by geo-economic considerations. In so doing, a less significant, but more declarative element of Washington's involvement in the problem might be the White House's striving to accelerate the withdrawal of the Russian bases and its lack of desire to allow a security vacuum to appear in the south of Georgia. What is more, the American administration also has to keep in mind the viewpoint of the extremely influential Armenian community in the U.S. As we believe, it is precisely this factor that may help Erevan and Tbilisi to come to terms on the Javakhk problem. According to repeated statements by the Armenian side, since Georgia is unable for objective reasons to implement socioeconomic projects in Javakhk, Erevan and the Armenian diaspora are willing to take responsibility for carrying out several top priority measures to alleviate the tension in the region (with parallel liberalization of official Tbilisi's political approaches). The ability of this diaspora to resolve these problems is shown by the multi-million funds it is allotting to the development of the Nagorny Karabakh economy.

But large-scale investment programs, including with the participation of international sponsors, can only be implemented if the safety of the Armenian residents of Javakhetia is ensured. What is more, the inflow of foreign investments will help to resolve an important political problem—providing the Javakhk population with at least elementary powers in local self-government, which would also meet Georgia's obligations to the international community.