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- Conflict Settlement in Central Eurasia: Mechanisms and Prospects

REGIONAL SECURITY

CENTRAL ASIA AS
A REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX¹

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Introduction

According to the *Failed States Index* developed by the *Foreign Policy* magazine, for the last five years three of the CA states, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, have been among the 60 weakest states in the world. Turkmenistan "left" this group only in 2011. Kazakhstan is the only CA state, which has been considered to be a relatively sustainable state.² De-

spite this alarming statistics, the region gave the impression of relative stability. There have not been any major conflicts in CA since the Tajik civil war. However, the tragic events in the South of Kyrgyzstan of June 2010 have revealed the vulnerability of the region to various security threats.

For two decades of independent existence, CA has attracted significant academic attention. Nowadays, one can distinguish several directions in the literature devoted to the analysis of CA and its particular countries. Some studies focus on the interests of great or regional pow-

² See: "The Failed State Index 2010," *Foreign Policy*, available at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/2010_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings], 28 July, 2011.

¹ The longer version of this article was presented as a *Research Paper for the Geneva Centre for Security Policy*, European Institute of University of Geneva (GCSP/EIUG), Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in International and European Security.

ers in the region. Many scholars explore the political systems of CA countries by studying the undemocratic nature of CA regimes, while others focus on transnational threats to regional stability, such as the influence of Islamic terrorism, religious extremism, and organized crime.³

³ See: *Tsentral'naiia Azia 1991-2009*, ed. by B.K. Sultanov, KISI, Almaty, 2010, pp. 11-36.

However, despite the wide variety of security studies on CA, until now, one can discern a lack of inclusive analysis focusing on a combination of different aspects of the regional security. The present article argues that the current security architecture in CA can be better explained by considering all levels of CA insecurity. In this regard, the combination of Barry Buzan's Regional Security Complex theory and Karl W. Deutsch's concept of security community proves to be a valuable tool for analyzing the regional security.

Regional Security Complex and Security Community: An Application to Central Asia

In his book *People, States and Fear*, Barry Buzan focuses his analysis on regional security complex (RSC), "a group of states whose primary security concerns linked together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another."⁴ A RSC is characterized by a set of intense security interactions between the members of a RSC that have strongly pronounced inward-looking character. The interaction within RSC is defined by the patterns of "amity and enmity between state"⁵ that stems from distribution of power within the RSC, long-term historical links, and such specific issues as border disputes, ethnical relationships, common culture etc.⁶ Significant advantage of Buzan's approach is inclusive analysis of regional security by focusing on three levels of RSC: domestic (internally generated vulnerabilities), regional (shared security concerns and the way to deal with them) and international (role of external powers in the region).⁷ At the same time, his theory draws only general picture of security architecture. It answers the questions of "what is happening on one or the other level?" and "when it happens?" But it does not give an answer to the question "why?" Basically, Buzan's theory is empty in content and value free. It can demonstrate the different spectrum of intense relationships that can range from excellent relations to war that is in fact also one of the intense relationships, but this does not explain why countries take one extreme or another.

It is important to mention that Buzan was not the first author analyzing regions through the lens of security. The idea traced back to Karl Deutsch's theory of "security community," a group of people or states integrated to the point that they resolve their tensions without resort to war.⁸ Deutsch goes deeper into understanding why states go further from being a security complex meaning simple security interdependence, which still has the potential of going into war, to becoming a se-

⁴ B. Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, ECPR Press, 2007, p. 160.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ See: Ibid., p. 159.

⁷ See: Ibid., p. 182.

⁸ See: A.J. Bellamy, *Security Communities and Their Neighbours: Regional Fortresses or Global Integrators*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, p. 6.

curity community that excludes struggling. A security community is founded on the mutual “we-feeling,” trust and compatibility of values that stems from basic capabilities of states.⁹ Such capabilities are of two main kinds. First is the state’s maturity or “capacity to act as a political unit” and second, the certain degree of state’s “responsiveness.”¹⁰ Deutsch argues that adherence of countries, specifically their political elites, to the same values improves understanding between them and favors the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The states responsiveness to each other’s needs is reflected through the mechanisms to respond to the needs of other states, mutual interest and ability to make concession to each other.¹¹

In my opinion, the combination of the RSC theory and the theory of security community provides a good theoretical platform to study regional security as they significantly supplement each other. The RSC theory helps to structure the analysis of security architecture by splitting it into three levels, whereas the security community concept provides deeper insights into the internal characteristics of states that influence the security dynamic in the region.

The five CA states, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, are closely related by centuries of common history, similar languages, culture, and religion. Despite the fact that every CA state tries to underline its uniqueness and distance itself from other countries of the region by appealing to difference of economic and political development, they still bear consequences of being part of one state, in particular, shared hydroelectric, energy, and road systems, unresolved border disputes. Thus, although it is difficult to predict whether the five “-stans” will stay together in the nearest future, the multiple shared security concerns allow to analyze CA as a RSC. In this regard, exploring three levels of the CA RSC is a valuable insight to understand security challenges faced by the region and interplay between them. The security community concept, in turn, is used to explain why the CA countries have achieved little progress in addressing existing security concerns and have not formed a security community.

International Level of Analysis

After the collapse of the Soviet Union scholars and policy makers have started to talk about the new “Great Game” in CA. Indeed, due to the vast energy resources and important geostrategic position CA has become a zone of competing interests of many players of the international arena. Nowadays, in addition to the Russian and U.S. presence the strategic environment in CA is also characterized by considerable involvement of China. Overall, the interests of great powers focus on two spheres: political/security and economic.

The Evolution of Great Powers’ Interests in Political/Security Sphere

The 1990s can be characterized by limited involvement of all great powers in the security sphere due to the absence of urgent necessity and importance of the CA states to their strategic interests. Policies of the U.S., Russia and China in CA were mostly focused on overcoming political and

⁹ See: K.W. Deutsch *et al.*, *Political Community in the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957, p. 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹¹ See: *Ibid.*, pp. 123-133.

security concerns left by the collapse of the Soviet Union, dealing with Soviet political and military legacy, and building the relationships with the newly independent states. The political involvement of the United States, for instance, was confined to support a set of donor projects and policies aimed at democratization, promotion of human rights and establishment of market economy. It also worked with states that were left with nuclear arsenals from the Soviet Union.¹² Russian involvement in CA was also very limited due to both internal political problems and pro-Western/European orientation of its foreign policy aimed to free Russia from «the burden of the national republics.»¹³ Russia's cooperation with CA states within the *Collective Security Treaty* and its bilateral agreement with Tajikistan over the 201st Motorized Rifle Division had mostly declaratory character and did not give any substantial results except for the significant efforts to mitigate the civil war in Tajikistan and prevent its horizontal escalation. China's major security objective was fighting against Uyghur separatism in Xinjiang.¹⁴ It also tried to settle its border disputes with CA states and to reduce heavy military presence in regions bordering the Xinjiang region.¹⁵ The border disputes were negotiated within bilateral consultations with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and in the framework of the so-called "4+1" formula. The "Uyghur question" was discussed on multi-lateral basis in the "Shanghai Five."

The relative disinterest of these players in the 1990s has dramatically changed after 9/11. The beginning of *Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)* has significantly increased the importance of CA. During the first two years after 9/11, the U.S. guaranteed its physical military presence in CA by opening military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, signing strategic partnership agreements with Uzbekistan, and getting approval from other CA states for overflight through their territories. Since 2001, the U.S. agenda of human rights and democracy promotion has stepped back giving way to the strategic interests related to the operations in Afghanistan. The disagreement with the Uzbek government over the Andijan events (2005) and the forced closure of its military base in Uzbekistan has made the U.S. policy in the region even more pragmatic: to keep its *status quo* in the region and not confront the existing regimes as long as it can avoid it.

The intense U.S. involvement into the region has provoked significant concerns on the side of Russia and China as neither of them wanted to have U.S. bases in CA, the region that had traditionally been considered as their backyard. Additionally, Russia has been interested in increasing cooperation to fight terrorism and drug trafficking coming from Afghanistan through CA.¹⁶ China has also particular interests in fighting Islamic extremism and terrorism in CA due to the fact that it borders XUAR, one of China's most unstable regions.¹⁷ This Russian-Chinese common interest has resulted in the establishment of the SCO, which has become an important platform for security cooperation between Russia, China and the CA states. The principal point of the SCO founding agreement was the formulation of the so-called "three evils," in particular, cooperation in combating terrorism, extremism and separatism. In fact, the SCO was supposed to contribute to counterbalancing the U.S. and NATO and keeping friendly regimes in CA. However, it can hardly be said that it succeeded in this regard. Despite the *SCO Astana Declaration* that claimed that forces out-

¹² See: R. Giragosian, "The Strategic Central Asian Arena," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2006, pp. 139-159.

¹³ V. Paramonov, A. Stokov, *The Evolution of Russia's Central Asia Policy*, Defense Academy of the United Kingdom (DAUK), Shrivenham, June 2008.

¹⁴ See: V. Paramonov, O. Stolpovski, *Chinese Security Interests in Central Asia*, DAUK, Shrivenham, May 2008.

¹⁵ As a result of the Chinese-Soviet conflict during the late 1960s Soviet armed forces were significantly concentrated in the CA countries bordering China. The Xinjiang region is the source of significant security concerns for China as Uyghur separatist movement wants to separate the region and establish an independent state of "Eastern Turkestan." In this regard, CA countries are of special attention to China as the independence of CA could inspire Uyghur separatists.

¹⁶ See: V. Paramonov, A. Stokov, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ See: V. Paramonov, O. Stolpovski, *op. cit.*

side of the region should leave CA,¹⁸ the U.S. military base in Kyrgyzstan, which is now called *Transit Center in Manas*, will stay at least until 2014.¹⁹

In contrast to China, Russia has one more tool for projecting its power in the region, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The CSTO allowed Russia to legitimize its military presence in the region. The Kant airbase in Kyrgyzstan, the first new Russian airbase in the region was opened under the auspice of the CSTO.²⁰ In addition, the 201st Motor Rifle Division in Tajikistan was transferred under its patronage. The CSTO serves as a platform to indicate the tolerance of CA regimes toward Russia and vice versa. For example, after the Andijan conflict and the break-up of the Uzbek-American relationships, Uzbekistan joined the CSTO and Russia in turn declared its full support to the Uzbek government. CSTO has also been used to legitimize Russia's policy abroad. For instance, the CSTO countries supported Russia's action in Georgia. However, it had its limitations: no CSTO states followed Russia to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The real effectiveness of both organizations as security structures that are capable of contributing to security in CA is, however, debatable. Neither antiterrorist structures nor military exercises within them have actually contributed to the improvement of the situation in CA.²¹ Both SCO and CSTO are dependent on the agenda set by the big players that often does not reflect the real situation in CA. For instance, both organizations have failed to provide sufficient support in the June events in Kyrgyzstan in 2010. Covering by the principle of non-interference into internal affairs the CSTO rejected to send troops into Kyrgyzstan. Although the SCO humanitarian assistance was appreciated by the Kyrgyz government,²² there were no real steps to stop the violence. The internal conflict did not represent any direct threat to the interests of big players that can partly explain their relative reluctance to react. However, it is important to mention that different structures of these organizations give more space for maneuvering of the CA states; presence of two big players in SCO allows small CA states to balance between them.

Competition for Central Asian Energy Resources

The other sphere that attracts significant attention from great powers to CA is energy resources. Russian interests in CA energy resources are twofold. First is the joint development of oil and gas fields.²³ Second Russia traditionally had the monopoly over the transit of the CA oil and gas through its pipelines to the world energy markets. The Caspian Pipeline Consortium and Atyrau-Samara pipelines that connect Kazakhstan to the world market cross the territory of Russia. Whereas the Kenkiyak-Orsk pipeline delivers Kazakh oil to the Russian Orsk refineries, the Central Asia

¹⁸ See: *Declaration of the SCO Member States*, Astana, 5 July, 2005.

¹⁹ See: "Robert Blake: Soglashenie po tranzitnomu centru mezhdru Kyrgyzstanom i SShA imeet silu do 2014 goda," *AKIpress*, 12 March, 2011, available at [<http://kg.akipress.org/news:341881>].

²⁰ See: *Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC), Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010*, 2011, p. 11.

²¹ See: S. Peyrouse, "Central Asia's Growing Partnership with China," *EU-Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM)*, September 2009.

²² See: "Otonbaeva poblagodarila strany ShOS za okazannuiu Kyrgyzstanu gumanitarnuiu podderzhku," *Kabar*, 25 November, 2011, available at [http://kabar.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10579], 28 July, 2011

²³ See: I. Overland, S. Torjesen, "Just Good Friends: Kazakhstan's and Turkmenistan's Energy Relations with Russia," in: *Caspian Energy Politics: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan*, ed. by I. Overland, H. Kjaerndet, A. Kendall-Taylor, Routledge, New York, 2010, pp. 136-150.

Center gas pipeline controlled by Gazprom is one of the major routes for the CA natural gas. Dependency of the CA countries on transportation allows Russia to collect significant transit revenues and guarantee the security and sustainability of its energy supplies to Europe.²⁴ The control over energy transport routes also allows Russia to influence the CA states politically. However, nowadays Russia's relative monopoly over energy transit has been significantly undermined by other players.

The CA resources have never been the top priority for U.S. energy security.²⁵ The major objective for the U.S. has always been to back up the participation of American companies in the development of Kazakh oilfields and to promote the transit routes bypassing Russia to decrease its political and economic influence over the region.²⁶ Besides joint development of Tengiz and Kashagan oilfields in Kazakhstan, one of the projects was the new Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline that came into operation in 2008. As for CA natural gas resources the U.S. supports two projects for the delivery of Turkmen gas, Nabucco and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline. The TAPI pipeline would allow transporting the CA energy resources to Pakistan and India through Afghanistan.²⁷ So far, these projects are still under consideration.

China's rapid economic growth and need to diversify its energy supply in terms of origin and in ways of delivery has made CA resources crucial for its development. Nowadays, most of the energy resources come to China from the Middle East and Africa via sea routes through the Straits of Malacca. The pipeline system within CA will allow China to have land routes for delivery of energy resources. Although China has had less comparative advantage to buy oil and gas fields due to the late arrival to the CA energy market, its energy portfolio in the region has significantly improved. It controls over 24% of Kazakh oil production.²⁸ It is the only foreign investor in Turkmenistan's gas sector. Moreover China has guaranteed independent delivery systems, the Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline and the Central Asia Natural Gas Pipeline (CAGP). This pipeline system is a significant defeat for Russia's attempt to be a monopoly in the transit of CA resources.²⁹

Interestingly, the economic/energy dimension has not provided the ground for effective multi-lateral cooperation in CA. Most of the deals in the energy sector are bilateral. Russia's promoted economic organizations, such as EurAsEC and CIS, do not go further than agreements on paper. Although some argue that China boosts the economic dimension of SCO, in reality even if agreement is reached within the SCO, it is implemented bilaterally.³⁰ One of the evident examples of such cooperation can be the SCO Energy Club. Agreement signed in 2006 on establishing the Energy club for coordinating energy policy and increasing energy cooperation in the region has not resulted in any common policies. China and Russia compete for access to CA energy that prevents them from cooperation in this field. In addition, it is easier to achieve more favorable deals separately with each CA as it gives advantage to greater power over the smaller state.

²⁴ See: M. Laruelle, "Russia in Central Asia: Old History, New Challenges?" *EU-CAM*, September 2009.

²⁵ See: O. Olikar, D.A. Shlapak, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles*, Rand Corporation, U.S., 2006, pp. 6-7.

²⁶ See: E.C. Chow, L.E. Hendrix, "Central Asia Pipelines: Field of Dreams and Reality," *National Bureau of Asian Research*, September 2010.

²⁷ See: D. Tynan, "Afghanistan: Will TAPI Pipeline Be Able to Beat Back the Taliban?" *Eurasianet*, 13 December, 2010, available at [<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/62565>], 13 March, 2011.

²⁸ See: S. Peyrouse, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

²⁹ See: Y. Kim, *Central Asia's Great Game and the Rise of China*, Presented at the 2nd International Conference of the HK Russia-Eurasia Research Project, Hanyang Univ., Korea, available at [<http://www.eurasiacenter.org/data/ftproot/2010%EA%B5%AD%EC%A0%9C%ED%95%99%EC%88%A0/%EA%B9%80%EC%97%B0%EA%B7%9C.pdf>], 13 March, 2011.

³⁰ See: A. Matusov, "Energy Cooperation in the SCO: Club or Gathering?" *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2007, p. 85.

Regional/Interstate Level of Analysis

There is a number of security concerns that unites all CA countries: problems of water/energy management and potential for conflict among CA states related to it, and border security that includes such issues as drug trafficking and the spread of Islamic extremism.

Water and Energy

CA countries are united by the system of rivers of the Aral Sea basin. The distribution of water resources in the region is highly unequal: two upstream countries, Kyrgyzstan (18%) and Tajikistan (66%) are the source of drinking and irrigation water for the rest of the region.³¹ There has always been a so-called conflict of interest between downstream and upstream countries on the use of CA water resources: irrigation versus hydropower engineering. Downstream countries, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan need water during the summer agricultural season for irrigation of its crop and cotton fields, whereas upstream countries need water in the winter period for the production of electricity. The upstream countries, in turn, depend on energy resources supplied by downstream ones, which are rich in hydrocarbon resources such as oil and gas.

The barter mechanisms developed in the Soviet Union allowed mitigating the needs of all states: for irrigation water upstream countries were compensated by the system of subsidies from the central budget and provision of cheap fuel from neighboring countries and electricity through the CA common energy system. However, the collapse of the Soviet state destroyed the system of compensation. New attempts to reestablish it failed.³² The main problems of water distribution are twofold: first, the failure of barter agreements, second concerns building of new plants. Indeed, compensatory mechanisms do not work. Uzbekistan, and to a lesser extent, Kazakhstan, has strenuously opposed all attempts to equate their natural resources in the form of hydrocarbons with natural resources of upstream countries, water. In addition, Uzbekistan's aspiration to build its reservoirs for accumulating the water in winter time and the withdrawal of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan from the common energy system reduces the possibility of their participation in barter agreements.³³ As a result, there is less possibility to reach new agreements on water sharing in future.

Construction of new dams in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, Roghun and Kambar-Ata, respectively, increases the tension between upstream and downstream countries. The situation can escalate into a conflict with relatively high probability of the use of force. Recent tension between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan took the form of open confrontation. The Uzbek government declared that the construction of the Roghun station will cause environmental damage and violate the water balance in the region.³⁴ In response to the Tajik attempt to construct the dam Uzbekistan cut the supply of gas by half and closed the railway connection with Tajikistan.³⁵ In turn, the Government of Tajikistan believes the

³¹ See: V. Niiatbekov, Kh. Dodikhudoev, "The Republic of Tajikistan in the Regional Dimension," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (39), 2006, p. 76.

³² See: G. Petrov, "Conflict of Interests between Hydropower Engineering and Irrigation in Central Asia: Causes and Solutions," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2010, p. 53; St. Hodgson, "Strategic Water Resources in Central Asia: In Search of a New International Legal Order," *EUCAM Policy Brief*, No. 14, 10 May, 2010.

³³ See: E. Akhmadov, "Uzbekistan Exits Central Asia's Common Energy System," *CACI Analyst*, 26 November, 2009, available at [<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5226>], 20 January, 2011.

³⁴ See: *Ibidem*.

³⁵ Due to geography connection between some areas of Tajikistan is only possible through Uzbekistan in winter time.

construction of such a facility is the sovereign right of any state, and is in full compliance with international law.³⁶

Thereby, despite the obvious necessity for cooperation to work out mechanism to regulate water and energy issues, CA states failed to establish any. Indeed, the CA countries have huge potential to develop common energy market that can be a strong driver for economic integration and sustainable development of all CA states. Nevertheless, there are no sufficient steps to boost it; neither of the countries is ready to step back. The situation has direct security implications: controversy over countries' water and energy policies can result in open confrontation which in turn may lead to an armed conflict.

Borders, Drugs, Islamic Extremism

Border issues can be divided in three main groups, which are closely related to each other: border disputes resulted in tense relationships between CA leaders, lack of capacity to control borders with Afghanistan, which caused the increase of Islamic extremist activities, and drug trafficking.

Since the first years of independence the CA countries have had to face challenges they have no experience in handling. Dissolution of the Soviet Union made loose borders between CA countries the frontiers of newly independent states. Long history of "national delimitation" within the Soviet state resulted in a number of border disputes closely related to the problems of national minorities and enclaves left in the territories of different states. There were several disputed territories between Uzbekistan, on the one hand, and all CA countries on the other; in addition, there were disputes between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Despite a number of bilateral agreements on delimitation of borders the process of demarcation took long time. In addition, the establishment of national border guards, and entrance fees for crossing check-points created enormous problems for population living along the border zones. This resulted in several armed clashes between the people and border guards. For instance, the incidents on Turkmen-Uzbek border in 2001 and 2002 resulted in several people being shot or wounded by border guards.³⁷

The other source of potential threats to the CA countries stems from the neighborhood with Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan created serious problems for Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which had to protect their borders from side effects of the Afghani conflict: drugs and insurgencies.³⁸ Tajikistan has been mostly affected as it shares the longest border with Afghanistan and lacks physical capability to protect it. As a result, religious extremists, who found safe haven in Afghanistan, could easily penetrate CA borders. Thereby, the Islamic factor proved to be a serious security concern for the CA countries, in particular, for Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) crossed the borders of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 1999 and 2000 with the aim to overthrow the regime in Uzbekistan and establish an Islamic state in the Ferghana valley.³⁹ In addition, the loose control of borders made it possible to spread the ideas of Islamic

³⁶ See: S. Majidov, "Tajikistan-Uzbekistan Relations Freeze over Roghun Project," *CACI Analyst*, 17 February, 2010, available at [<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5271>], 31 January, 2011.

³⁷ See: "Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict Potential," *Asia Report*, No. 33, International Crisis Group (ICG) Osh/Brussels, April 2002, p. 18.

³⁸ See: *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁹ Islamic factor as a destabilizing factor revealed itself in several occasions: the civil war in Tajikistan (1991-1992), the Batken events in Kyrgyzstan, IMU fighter inroads into Uzbekistan (for more information, see: O. Sidorov, "The Islamic Factor in Central Asian Countries' Domestic Stability," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (43), 2007, pp. 15-16).

state as in the absence of effective border control the extremist religious literature could go through the territory without any obstacles.⁴⁰

The other problem closely related to the issues of border control and its delimitation is “prosperous” drug trafficking in the region. Around 25% of the Afghan opiate (total production amounts to 93% of the world supply⁴¹) is being transported through the territory of CA.⁴² Tajikistan again bears the heaviest burden on opium seizures.⁴³ Major drug routes originating in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan cover the territory of all CA countries and mostly have Russia as a final destination.

Obviously, all the above-mentioned challenges need cooperative action of all CA states. It seems that religious extremism is the problem of Fergana valley; however, it is difficult to deny that increasing instability in the Ferghana valley will affect neighboring Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Additionally, there is sufficient evidence that there is a close link between activities of religious extremists and drug trafficking, the problem that for sure impacts the whole region.⁴⁴

However, the CA countries do not demonstrate any major attempts to solve these problems in cooperative manner. With the exception of border disputes that were mostly resolved peacefully by 2008,⁴⁵ the CA countries fail to act together. Moreover, in some cases the reaction to these threats is inadequate and counterproductive. Most of the measures aimed at the prevention of the above problems resulted in unilateral strengthening of border checkpoints between states to control the movement of goods and people. For instance, Uzbekistan’s reaction to the IMU insurgency was very rough. It accused Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan of being unable to control their borders⁴⁶ and took unprecedented measures to plant mines around the perimeter of the state borders with them. As a result, since 1999, dozens of Tajik and Kyrgyz citizens have died and were injured from stepping on land mines on borders with Uzbekistan. There is no evidence that this improved the control of either the spread of Islamic activities. As for combating drug trafficking, the situation is quite similar: Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have been relatively ready to cooperate whereas Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan took unilateral measures to protect their borders.⁴⁷

Domestic Level of Analysis

CA has significant potential for internal conflicts due to the considerable concerns regarding difficult economic conditions, human security, and possible ethnic clashes. The situation is often exacerbated by incompetent government, bad leaders, and corruption. Additionally, some security issues that have internal character or origin may have repercussions for neighboring countries.

⁴⁰ See: *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴¹ See: *EU Central Asia Drug Action Program*, available at [<http://cadap.eu/ru/node/29>], 4 August, 2011.

⁴² See: *Ibidem*.

⁴³ See: “UNDOC, Central Asia Drug Seizures, Online Database,” available at [http://dbroca.uz/?act=seiz_chart&drug_type=19], 3 August, 2011.

⁴⁴ See: S.E. Cornell, N.L.P. Sandström, “The Eurasian Drug Trade: A Challenge to Regional Security,” *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 53, No. 4, 2006, p. 16; S.E. Cornell, R.A. Spector, “Central Asia: More than Islamic Extremists,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2002, pp. 193-206.

⁴⁵ See: “Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict Potential.”

⁴⁶ See: *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ See: E. Marat, *The State-Crime Nexus in Central Asia: State Weakness, Organized Crime, and Corruption in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*, Silk Road Paper, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Silk Road Studies Program, October 2006.

Human Security

The CA economies have all experienced serious difficulties since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Their industrial and agricultural production has sharply decreased because of the collapse of the command economy and the withdrawal of subsidies and transfers from the Soviet central budget as well as problems of transition such as price liberalization, privatization, and closure of unprofitable enterprises. The economic recovery was fostered by economic reforms, foreign investments, and rich natural resource base.⁴⁸ However, the distribution of economic development in the region is very uneven; oil and gas rich countries, such as Kazakhstan and to a certain extent Turkmenistan, significantly outpace the rest.

Dramatic changes in economy in the first years of independence resulted in drastic decrease of income and standards of living of the population. Until now most of the countries cannot overcome this problem. According to the OECD, only Kazakhstan is ranked as a country with the per capita income higher than average. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are ranked as countries with low income, whereas Turkmenistan is a country with lower middle income. Additionally, economic stagnation, unemployment, mistakes of the privatization and liberalization programs have resulted in significant income inequalities and appearance of extremely poor population. Except Kazakhstan, all countries are characterized by high number of population living below the poverty line (see Table 1). This led to migration and outflow of the highly skilled labor trained during Soviet times from the region, which negatively influenced other spheres of the social life.

Since independence the education and healthcare systems in the CA states have struggled with difficulties associated with economic stagnation, underinvestment and shortage of human capital. Many teachers, academics and experienced medical personnel have left the region due to the low standards of living. Low salaries combined with significant delays in their payments discouraged most of the young specialists to work in these spheres. All CA countries launched programs aimed at modernization of their education and healthcare. So far, these programs have been ineffective and failed to make any difference. The main reasons are again lack of financing and bad governance exacerbated by the high level of corruption in the ministries.⁴⁹ CA states already bear consequences of these failures, although MDG database shows that the CA countries still have very high literacy rates (see Table 1). This statistics most probably reflects the levels in capital cities and will not be the same in the next decade. The problems of the healthcare system have already resulted in low life expectancy and significant problems with tuberculosis and spread of HIV/AIDS.⁵⁰ According to the MDG database neither of the CA state will meet MDG on reduction of high levels of child and maternal mortality.⁵¹

The problem of electricity supply is another dimension of human insecurity in CA. The electricity shortages are common in all CA states. However, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan experience severe energy crisis. For instance, during the winter of 2008 and 2009, the poorly maintained energy system in Tajikistan simply collapsed. In most rural areas people had electricity not more than three hours a day. In Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, the electricity cuts left thousands of people without heating, and hot and cold running water.⁵² It is remarkable that the Aluminum plant, the major consumer of electricity in Tajikistan and the main source of revenues for the Rakhmon's clan, was still running.

⁴⁸ See: H. Peimani, *Conflict and Security in Central Asia and Caucasus*, ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009.

⁴⁹ See: "Central Asia: Decay and Decline," *Asia Report*, ICG, No. 201, 3 February, 2011.

⁵⁰ See: *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵¹ See: MDG Monitoring Database, 25 April, 2011, available at [<http://www.mdgmonitor.org/>].

⁵² See: *Tajikistan on the Road to Failure*, ICG, Osh/Brussels, 2009; C. Kindelan, "Central Asian Energy Crisis Leaves Millions of Tajiks without Heat," 4 February, 2008, available at [<http://www.groundreport.com/World/Central-Asian-Energy-Crisis-Leaves-Millions-of-Taj/2854707>].

Table 1

Selected Developmental Indicators*

	Population below Poverty Line %	Maternal Mortality Ratio per 100,000 Live Births	Adult Literacy Rate (both sexes) (% aged 15 and above)	HDI Rank
Kazakhstan	13.8	140	99.7	66
Kyrgyzstan	40	150	99.4	109
Tajikistan	60	170	99.7	112
Turkmenistan	30	130	99.6	87
Uzbekistan	33	30	96.9	102

* Based on MDG Monitor, and Human Development Index databases.

Thereby, the issues of human development and security pose serious concern in most of the CA countries. According to the Human Development Index database, only Kazakhstan is ranked as a country with high level of human development. The source of the problem is twofold: economic stagnation and bad governance. In many cases the CA governments ignore the problems of human security; this, however, has already influenced stability in the region.

Domestic Security Concerns with Regional Implications

Ignoring issues of human security, as well as failure to deal with internal conflicts, may result in significant security implications not only for the domestic stability of CA countries but for the whole region. The events in Andijan in 2005 and in the South of Kyrgyzstan in 2010 demonstrate how internal conflicts may spill over to the neighboring countries and generate instability in the region.

Unpopular economic reforms undermining the living standards of the poorest population, shortages of gas and electricity supply during cold winter, worsening corruption and bureaucracy provoked a wave of protests throughout Uzbekistan in 2004.⁵³ The events in Andijan in May 2005 became the tipping point of the long-term dissent in the country. The demonstrations in support of local Andijan businessmen transformed into the massive uprising against the existing government system that, in fact, failed to provide basic human needs to the population.⁵⁴ The Uzbek government severely suppressed the popular unrest and accused its participants of terrorist activities. As a result, up to 500 people were killed and thousands of people had to seek asylum in neighboring Kyrgyzstan in order to avoid the persecutions.⁵⁵ The massive movement of people created difficult situation on the border between the two

⁵³ See: *Uzbekistan: The Andijan Uprising*, ICG, Bishkek/Brussels, May 2005.

⁵⁴ See: *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ To be precise 187 people according to official data (Prosecutor General, Report on the investigation of Andijan events for Olij Mazhlis (Parliament)), 7 September, 2005, available at [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1126077420>],

countries. Moreover, it created significant political tensions as the Uzbek government required extradite the asylum seekers back to Uzbekistan.⁵⁶

The ethnic clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities in the South of Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 had similar consequences. Searching for rescue from massacre about 111,000 people were displaced to Uzbekistan while 300,000 internally displaced people stayed at the border areas. As in case of Andijan events, tensions on the borders and difficult humanitarian situation had considerable security repercussions for both countries.⁵⁷ The June violence was the result of rising ethno-nationalism and long-term unresolved problems of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan as well as difficult economic and political situation in the country left after the coup in April 2010. Due to the continuing political struggle within the Kyrgyz political elite the interim government failed to assess the situation adequately and take necessary measures to prevent the burst of violence.

Although the reasons of these events may seem different at first glance, the nature of both conflicts is the same, in particular, the failure of government systems to solve internal problems. Neither of them addressed the root causes of unrests. In case of Uzbekistan, repressive security apparatus suppressed popular opposition, while the main reasons of anger with the regime, such as uneven regional development, economic inequality, and systematic violation of human rights, remain unresolved. Adoption of new constitution and political system in Kyrgyzstan did not increase an opportunity for national minorities to participate in political life of the country. Hence, both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are still vulnerable to future conflicts.

Additionally, in both cases, the system failed to prevent the consequences of the conflict for the neighboring countries. Refugee movements and difficult humanitarian situation created significant economic burden for recipient countries. However, political cost could be even higher. In case of aggravation of the situation, mutual accusations between countries, tensions in border areas between people and border guards could result in significant interstate conflict.

Thereby, the accumulation of various internal security problems has led to their internationalization, and resulted in increase in the number and severity of interstate tensions. The fact that many of the CA states do not address the internal security challenges, such as human security, underdevelopment, corruption, institutional weakness makes internationalized internal security problems one of the major factors of future instability in CA.

C o n c l u s i o n : *State Regimes as the Major Obstacle to Stability in Central Asia*

Analysis of the CA RSC reveals that the major factor of instability in CA is the coexistence of multiple security challenges on all levels. Moreover, the security problems faced by the CA states are closely inter-related and often reinforce each other. Considerable tensions over water-management and border disputes may provoke traditional inter-state conflict in the future. Proximity of Afghani-

29 March, 2011, and 300-500 according to OSCE (*Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, 13 May, 2005*, OSCE ODIHR, Warsaw, 20 June, 2005).

⁵⁶ See: A. Baltabaeva, "Kyrgyzstan's Intention to Return Uzbek Refugees Causes Concern," *CACA*, Vol. 6, No. 13, 2005, pp. 14-15.

⁵⁷ See: *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010*, KIC, 2011, pp. 45-46.

stan aggravates transnational threats such as terrorism and drug trafficking. All regional problems have significant implications for human security due to considerable impact on population. Human insecurity, in turn, has become the main driver of internal conflicts, which have considerable potential for internationalization and regional spill-over. This can aggravate each of the existing traditional and non-traditional security threats and have a trigger effect on regional instability. In my opinion, there will not be any major breakthrough in improving the existing situation as current regimes fail to address them on both domestic and regional levels. Moreover, political elite in CA states often represents the main obstacle to achieve any progress.

Indeed, the nature of current political regimes is an obvious obstacle to domestic security. One of the reasons is the high degree of state privatization by existing leadership and their families. All the CA political rulers see the state and power as a method for self-enrichment. Control over natural resources, remaining viable parts of the national infrastructure and the most profitable sectors of the economy and successful businesses are common practices in CA. This kind of resource management significantly undermines the ability of the CA states to develop their economy, decrease poverty, and address problems of human security. Additionally, the fact that the population cannot influence the situation due to the absence of legitimate mechanisms to change the ruling elites creates the ground for possible popular unrests and conflicts over them.

Cooperation and peaceful resolution of the existing tensions on the regional level is significantly confined by the absence of necessary preconditions within the CA elites. As it was mentioned above, according to Deutsch, effective cooperation is largely defined by compatibility of values of ruling elites, the “we-feeling,” and certain degree of states’ “responsiveness.” One can argue that values of the CA elites are quite compatible: they are all authoritarian states interested in regime survival. However, a deeper look reveals that this type of values does not favor building the necessary trust between states creating necessary “we-feeling». On the contrary, fixation on necessity to stand in power by any means often causes mutual suspicion about both internal and external partners. One can also claim that elites in all CA states are united by the interest in stability as this secures their power. However, they do not try to achieve this stability through cooperation. On the contrary, stability of the regime and the state is often viewed in isolation from others. Turkmenistan and, to a lesser extent, Uzbekistan can be good examples of this tendency.

The level of elites’ “responsiveness” is insignificantly constraint.

- First, the CA countries did not experience full sovereignty before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Once the CA countries got independence strengthening of statehood or sovereignty became the priority goals for the political elite. “Priority of independence” declared by many CA countries became the ultimate goal for their foreign policies.⁵⁸ Any type of integration and cooperation presuppose sharing sovereignty. Leaderships of the CA countries are not ready to delegate it to any other state or organization. This prevents them from any successful and effective cooperation within the region.
- Second, and perhaps, most important is that responsiveness of the CA states is considerably confined by the political culture of the current leaders. Concentration on power and its maximization, “zero-sum thinking” dominates the political behavior of the current CA presidents. The fact that maximization of power is the primary goal makes it difficult to think strategically and search for compromise at both regional and domestic levels. Thereby, the inability of CA elites to adequately respond to each other’s needs creates significant constraints for addressing any regional security problem.

⁵⁸ See: *Tsentrāl'naia Azia 1991-2009*, p. 44.

Thereby, with the existing nature of the political regimes in CA it is impossible to make any progress in stabilization of CA security. There is an urgent need in further reforms of political system in the CA states. Although one can argue that any political transition in CA may also result in further instability, it is necessary to recognize that the current system hides even greater danger. Unless regional elites and the great powers acting in the region support the status quo, the region will remain vulnerable to various types of insecurity.

REGIONAL POLITICS

**THE SHANGHAI
COOPERATION ORGANIZATION
(2001-2011):
TASKS, RESULTS,
AND PROSPECTS**

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Introduction

On 15 June, 2011, the tenth anniversary summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was held in Astana. The declaration adopted at the summit stated in particular that “the decision to create the SCO was a strategically calculated step,” while “the choice made by the SCO member states at the beginning of the 21st century to intensify good neighborly, friendly, and partner relations in the region was a commendable example for the world community. Its member states ... have laid a strong foundation for the organization’s efficient functioning

aimed at jointly ensuring peace, security, and stability, as well as developing multifaceted cooperation in the SCO expanse in the political, economic, humanitarian, and other spheres.”

The SCO has indeed become a phenomenon of global dimensions. During the first years of the organization’s existence, the necessary regulatory framework and relevant institutions for carrying out its activity were set up. Several dozen essential documents were signed, such as the SCO Charter, the Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighborly Relations, Friendship, and Cooperation, the

Shanghai Convention on the Fight Against Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Fight Against the Illicit Circulation of Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and Their Precursors, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Fight against Crime, the Agreement on Cooperation in Ensuring International Information Security, and other intergovernmental agreements.

Over the past years, the system of SCO structures (which includes the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the Council of National Coordinators) has been supplemented with annual meetings of the secretaries of the member states' security councils and regular sittings of the defense and internal affairs ministers and the heads of anti-drug departments.

The SCO Secretariat has been established in Beijing, while the SCO regional antiterrorist structure (RATS) functions in Tashkent. Mechanisms of interbranch cooperation (from the expert to the ministerial level) have been set up and a whole series of specific cooperation projects in various areas have been launched.

The international community's recognition of the SCO is proof of its growing significance; for example, the U.N. granted the organization the status of observer and signed a memorandum on cooperation with it. Such structures as ESCAPO and the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as many regional organizations, including the CSTO, EurAsEC, CIS, and ASEAN, have established official contacts with the SCO. As of today, India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan are observers in the SCO, and Belarus and Sri Lanka are dialog partners; representatives of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan participate in some of the organization's undertakings.

The SCO's potential is not merely the arithmetic sum of the potential of its participating states, although the fact that China and Russia are members gives it enough of a name in itself. The SCO is an entity of qualitatively new dimensions; most experts think that its appearance in the region has given rise to a force capable of realistically opposing the challenges and threats to security and has become an important component of the geopolitical landscape (regional and even global).

At the same time, it is obvious that the evolution of the world situation, the events in Afghanistan and Central Asia (CA), and the economic integration and energy cooperation processes in the Eurasian expanse are making ever higher demands on the regional organizations functioning here. In this respect, very legitimate questions arise: "Does the SCO meet these demands? What is the real potential of this organization currently celebrating its anniversary? What vectors and forms could the organization's transformation take in the short and mid term, keeping in mind the forecasted development of events, and how will this affect the interests of its members, statutory goals, and practical capabilities?"

From the SCO's documents it follows that the organization has far-reaching plans to expand cooperation aimed at ensuring regional security (in the broadest sense of this word), building up economic interaction, expanding cultural and educational exchanges and contacts among people, and developing external ties in the spirit of network diplomacy. But there are several issues that the SCO will have to resolve in the next few years (whether it wants to or not) that are vital for guaranteeing the organization's viability and the validity of the tasks it is dealing with.

The SCO: Its Three Main Issues

It appears that the following three issues will be the most imperative and vital for the SCO in the next few years: Afghanistan, hydropower, and enlargement. The future of the SCO and the place it is

to occupy in the world community will largely depend on the position the organization's participating states take on each of these issues.

Afghanistan. It is said that withdrawal of part of the foreign military contingent from Afghanistan that has already begun should be complete by the end of 2014; this designates one of the vectors of the future development of events, but many unresolved problems remain. It is still not clear how the many different internal and external factors will affect the situation in Afghanistan, the countries next to it, and the region as a whole.

Obviously the first issue requiring attention is the military-political vacuum that will inevitably form when the U.S. and NATO withdraw from Afghanistan—how and with what should it be filled? There are very few serious analysts who think that in three years contingents of the Afghan National Army will be a reliable substitute for the professionally trained and armed American GIs and NATO servicemen who, as we know, have a well-regulated intelligence service and air support. In other words, it can safely be said that the Taliban, or local ethnic leaders, who do not wish to knuckle down to Kabul, will return to power in some regions of Afghanistan. Even if the key U.S. bases are retained and fortified in Afghanistan (there is no doubt that the agreement on strategic partnership being drawn up between Washington and Kabul will contain a corresponding provision), the Americans will no longer be able to rid entire provinces of insurgents as they used to.

It is doubtful that Hamid Karzai's government will be able to maintain control over the territory in its power and guarantee smooth running of the wheels of state from top to bottom.

The low efficiency of the state machine, corruption, the insufficient number and low qualification of trained staff, the weakness of the national army, the inadequate level of police organization and training, as well as several other systemic defects will make it impossible in the near future (even with significant financial and material assistance from the West and the large number of foreign advisors) to count on any considerable progress in Afghanistan's state- and military-building.

The main unknown quantities in the Afghan equation are the conditions and parameters of national conciliation between the oppositionist Islamists and America's protégé Hamid Karzai (if this were even possible). It seems clear that even if divvying up political power in Afghanistan with the participation of all the main forces is successful, the newly baked regime will be far from the democratic ideal the U.S. and its allies hoped for when they began the Afghan campaign, which is part of the Greater Central Asia mega project.

Moreover, it is highly doubtful that Afghanistan can be restored as a united multinational country.

In these conditions, it seems that the opportunistic undertaking and mistakes made by George Bush's administration will legitimately end in the regionalization of Afghan settlement. This trend is already being seen, which can be judged both from Hamid Karzai's behavior and from the diverse regional-level political and economic initiatives being put forward recently. Nor does Washington have any objections; what is more, the Americans are essentially overtly looking for a candidate that could act as "nanny" for Kabul and take on responsibility for ensuring Afghanistan's security and socio-economic development (but in so doing not object to American retaining its patronage and military presence as a whole in Afghanistan), thus ridding the U.S. and NATO of a burden they have clearly been unable to deal with. It came to light that the SCO is also being considered as a candidate for this role.

Theoretically, recognizing that the SCO has a central role to play in regional security might meet the common interests of the organization's countries. In particular, it will advance Russia's initiative to form a consultation mechanism under the SCO's auspices with the participation of the member states, observers, and Afghanistan (since the special conference on Afghanistan in March 2009 in Moscow, three rounds of such consultations have already been held). In addition to diplomats, representatives of the defense and security departments and, consequently, of the special services of the organization's participating states should also take part in discussing regional security. It is desirable that such

multilateral discussions lead to the elaboration of specific coordinated steps aimed at strengthening security in Afghanistan and around it. Other interested countries could also be invited to participate in this dialog, for example, Turkey and Turkmenistan, representatives of the U.N. and other regional organizations and forums, and at some point states from outside the region too.

It can be presumed that the SCO will have to briskly step up its efforts to assist the Afghan government. This could be expressed in augmenting cooperation in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, in developing and implementing economic assistance programs for Afghanistan in building and restoring facilities that are important for reviving the country's economy and social sphere, and in coordinated training of military and civilian personnel. The SCO member states could use their capabilities (in particular, levers of influence on several ethnicities of Afghanistan) to incline the Afghans toward national conciliation. According to several experts, the organization could become an arena for an inter-Afghan dialog.

And, finally, Afghanistan needs to be granted the status of observer in the SCO (Hamid Karzai made an official request to the SCO regarding this at the beginning of June 2011) and drawn into cooperation in all vectors.

As for passing on the baton of responsibility for security in Afghanistan, most researchers participating in the scientific conferences held in May-July in Beijing and Shanghai on SCO issues recommend showing caution in this issue. Their opinion is also reflected in the reserved approaches of the governments of the SCO countries. Of all the organization's members, only Kazakhstan said it was ready to provide a small number of servicemen for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (as we know, however, Kazakhstan's parliament did not approve of this idea). Neither Russia, nor China, nor any other SCO member state is willing at present to send large military contingents to Afghanistan. Nor is it clear just how much and in what way the SCO will assist the Kabul authorities.

However, experts are unanimous in their opinion that, no matter what, the situation in Afghanistan will remain one of the SCO's main issues.

Hydropower. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it has been impossible to establish rational and fair use of water and energy resources in CA; this is precisely why this issue is one of the most urgent in terms of the region's socioeconomic development and economic security. Moreover, the tight knot of mutual contradictions has given rise to an acute political standoff.

Problems associated with the conflict of interests between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (countries on the upper reaches of the Central Asian rivers), on the one hand, and Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan (countries on the lower reaches), on the other, and with disruption of the balance maintained since Soviet times between use of the water resources of the Pamir and Tian Shan (for generating electricity and irrigation) have been added to the long-standing territorial contradictions, ethnic tension, and personal ambitions of the leaders.

All of the above-mentioned conflict-prone factors put together have led to serious discord in the relations between Tashkent and Dushanbe (manifested in particular in the transport and economic blockade of Tajikistan), an increase in tension on the border, the exchange of hostile rhetoric in the spring of 2009, and aggravation of Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations due to the outburst of the ethnic conflict in the south of Kyrgyzstan in the spring and summer of 2010.

The existence of a knot of conflict in the very heart of the SCO contradicts the spirit of mutual respect and trust and undermines the principles the capitals of the organization's participating countries are so proud of. We are essentially dealing with a delayed-action mine that is capable of both blowing open the situation in CA and reducing the SCO's activity to naught.

The damage internal troubles are inflicting on the SCO is obvious. For example, the unsettled nature of Uzbek-Tajik and Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations concerning the building of new and reconstruction of existing hydropower plants is one of the reasons why Tashkent has been obstructing the establishment of cooperation in energy and environmental issues for many years, in which all the

countries of the region are objectively interested. The organization, however, is still loath to mediate in the settlement of the hydropower contradictions among its members and is steering clear of Uzbekistan's conflicts with its neighbors Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Whereby such players outside the region as the EU, OSCE, and Japan are actively offering their services to resolve the hydropower disputes among the CA countries. Western nongovernmental organizations are also showing a similar initiative.

So, by ignoring the presence of a serious regional-level problem in CA (and essentially within itself), the SCO is risking losing control of the situation directly in the zone of its own responsibility, whereby in such a priority sphere as energy security.

At the SCO summit held on 15 June, 2011 in Astana, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev came forward with an initiative to create a Water and Food Committee within the organization and form a unified energy space. PRC Chairman Hu Jintao also supported creating mechanisms for ensuring energy and food safety at the summit meeting. The idea of developing a unified Development Strategy for the Eurasian Expanse for the next ten years was also supported by Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon.

All of this shows that the SCO countries are re-examining their attitude toward including hydropower issues on the organization's agenda. The SCO will possibly be faced with proving its efficiency when resolving this problem in particular.

Enlargement of the SCO. The SCO will have to face another challenge in the next few years—defining a coordinated procedure regarding its membership. Art 13 of the SCO Charter unambiguously states that “the SCO is open to membership in it of other states of the region that pledge to observe the goals and principles of its Charter, as well as the provisions of other international agreements and documents adopted within the framework of the SCO.”¹

In 2006, Pakistan made an official application to join the SCO, in 2007 and 2008, Iran did the same, and in 2010, the leaders of India began showing an interest in acquiring full-fledged membership in the organization. In other words, there is now a waiting list of countries wishing to join the SCO that must be dealt with.

Putting the principle of the SCO's openness into practice required developing a regulatory base for enlargement; in June 2010, a Resolution on the Procedure for Receiving New Members into the organization was adopted at the summit in Tashkent. A year later in Astana, this document was developed further when the leaders of the organization's member countries approved a Memorandum on the Obligations of Candidate States for obtaining the status of a SCO member state. However, even this proved insufficient. As the Information Statement on the results of the sitting of the Council of Heads of SCO Member States held on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the organization notes: “The Council of National Coordinators and working group of experts will continue to examine all the issues regarding enlargement of the SCO, including coordination of the legal, administrative, and financial conditions for receiving new members.”²

Despite the fact that the above-mentioned issues are technical in nature, they are extremely important. It is enough to look at the EU's experience, which made long and careful preparations for its own enlargement. However, the SCO has one significant drawback: there is no unified political will among its member states. Opinions differ both regarding whether the SCO should enlarge at all and regarding the specific candidates for membership. Judging by everything, there are very good reasons for these differences in opinion.

¹ Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (7 June, 2002), available at [<http://www.infoshos.ru/ru/?id=33>].

² Information Statement on the Results of the Sitting of the Council of Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the Occasion of the SCO's Tenth Anniversary (15 June, 2011), available in Russian at: [http://news.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/965].

As for the potential candidates, they have more or less been determined; clarity in this issue was introduced by the Resolution on the Procedure for Receiving New Members mentioned above, which envisages the following criteria for membership in the SCO: countries seeking membership in the organization must belong to the Eurasian region, have diplomatic relations with all the SCO member states, have the status of an observer state or dialog partner of the SCO, not be in a state of armed conflict with another state or states, conscientiously perform its obligations under the U.N. Charter, and observe the generally recognized principles of international law. Moreover, the international obligations of the candidate countries with respect to security should not contradict the corresponding international agreements and other documents adopted within the SCO; and, finally, there must be no U.N. Security Council sanctions in effect against them.

In keeping with the above-listed criteria, at the present stage Iran can be excluded from the list of possible candidates, which has U.N. Security Council sanctions in effect against it, and Turkmenistan, which does not have the status of an observer or dialog partner of the SCO (it has still not declared its intention to acquire the first or the second). Mongolia could theoretically join the SCO, but it does not want to; which leaves India and Pakistan.

When analyzing the possible consequences of the SCO's enlargement, experts usually give the following arguments against this process: the necessary conditions for enlargement, which requires consolidation, have not matured, it could make the organization difficult to control, the consensus principle will become a very serious challenge, while India and Pakistan will complicate the situation with their bilateral contradictions.

At the same time, the supporters of enlargement put forward hefty counter arguments; they believe that enlargement raises the political clout and increases the practical capabilities of any international association (India's membership in the SCO will immediately turn the organization into a global structure with enormous potential); all regional organizations (for example, the EU, NATO, ASEAN, and so on) are striving for enlargement in order to increase their influence within their geographical space, and the obligations India and Pakistan assume when joining the organization will prevent them from bringing their bilateral conflicts into the SCO (that is, involving Delhi and Islamabad in the SCO's activity could help to establish cooperation between them).

It is also understood that official applications to join the SCO cannot be examined forever; like any requests, they require a response. What is more, the rise in geopolitical competition should be kept in mind, particularly in such promising regions as Asia and the Pacific Ocean; being slow and indecisive in fighting for allies could turn into any of the major players losing its initiative and appeal.

Key Decade: Scenarios of the SCO's Development

In the next few years, the SCO will have to solve several extremely important tasks; the organization will have to pump new energy into a mechanism that was established in the first decade of its existence, consolidate its ranks by settling internal contradictions, and develop a clear unified policy regarding all the issues on its agenda.

But even more important are those inevitable decisions relating to the setting of priorities in the SCO's activity that the member states will have to make as they adapt to the changing external and internal realities. This, in turn, will set new tasks for the organization, the main one being harmonizing national interests.

An analysis of the situation in the SCO and throughout its expanse shows that the present day is opening up the most diverse opportunities for the organization, and the choice of a particular vector of development for the Eurasian six will have the most direct effect on the formation of the regional security and cooperation architecture.

What scenarios of the SCO's further development can be construed? It appears there are at least five, and we will attempt to give a brief description of each of them.

The SCO could continue to evolve as a regional organization, the main tasks of which are "to develop multifaceted cooperation aimed at maintaining and strengthening peace, security, and stability in the region..., to jointly oppose terrorism, separatism, and extremism in all of their manifestations, and to fight the illicit circulation of drugs and weapons, as well as other types of cross-border criminal activity and illegal migration."³ In this case, events could develop according to two scenarios; we will provisionally call them "conservative" and "radical."

Priority on Security Issues—the Conservative Scenario. The SCO will concentrate on implementing what was designated by the previous decisions of the leaders in keeping with the approved priorities.

The main emphasis will be placed on raising the efficiency of measures to ensure regional security and significantly strengthen the SCO's capabilities in fighting terrorism. Within the framework of China's proposal, which envisages creating an improved cooperation system in regional security based on enhancing the rapid response potential, the SCO will form rapid response forces that perform counter-terrorist functions at the request of member states by closely coordinating their actions with the CSTO. The combat-readiness of the SCO's rapid response forces will be ensured by regular training sessions and targeted exercises carried out in cooperation with the defense ministries of the participating states (including along with Peace Mission military exercises).

The material base will be reinforced and the legal base and practical mechanisms of the activity of SCO RATS enhanced. Thanks to the involvement of observers and dialog partners and the establishment of rapid response with partner antiterrorist centers in the post-Soviet expanse and in the Asia Pacific Region (APR), RATS will become an efficient entity capable of providing the SCO countries and other partners with the necessary information for taking prompt action to eliminate terrorists and prevent their possible acts, as well as methodize antiterrorist activity and coordinate staff training.

Anti-drug cooperation in the SCO will be raised to the level of cooperation in fighting terrorism. An independent SCO Anti-Drug Center will be created for establishing partner relations with observer states, dialog partners, the Afghanistan and U.S. governments, the International Security Assistance Force or NATO, and the national and regional anti-drug structures operating in CA and APR. In cooperation with the CSTO, the SCO Anti-Drug Center will initiate the development of a network cooperation program with CA to counteract the Afghan drug threat, which will be coordinated by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Practical cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime and ensuring cyber security and emergency response will be developed.

On the initiative of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, an Assembly on Settling Territorial and Regional Conflicts (Council on Border Security) will be founded within the SCO. This structure will be engaged in settling the conflicts existing in the SCO's zone of responsibility, as well as implementing confidence measures and advancing preventive diplomacy methods.

Cooperation in other vectors of the SCO's activity (primarily in the economic and humanitarian spheres) will develop in parallel, and the organization's foreign political cooperation and external

³ Art 1 of the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (7 June, 2002), available in Russian at: [<http://www.infoshos.ru/ru/?id=33>].

relations will be expanded. All of this will help the SCO to gradually become a strong and efficient regional organization. At the same time, the CSTO will continue to be the champion in regional security issues in CA, while the Customs Union and EurAsEC will take priority in economic integration issues.

Priority on Security Issues—the Radical Scenario. With the consent of the CA countries, Russia and China will decide to take full control over security in the region after coming to terms with the CSTO on how to share responsibility. A contractual base will be drawn up for this purpose aimed at jointly ensuring security. Mechanisms will be reinforced for making political decisions (including emergency) on issues concerning peacekeeping and stability in the SCO's zone of responsibility. The role and place of cooperation among the defense departments will grow and SCO peacekeeping forces and a base for their deployment in the territory of the organization's member countries will be created.

Counterterrorism cooperation will be stepped up by introducing systematic implementation of joint special operations aimed at doing away with the terrorist underground in the SCO member states and primarily in the CA countries. A terrorism prevention system will be created; the SCO member countries will carry out joint special operations against al-Qa'eda in Afghanistan at the request of the Afghan government. Effective steps will be taken to intercept drug flows from Afghanistan to Russia and China through the CA countries; special attention will be paid to rendering Tajikistan assistance in fortifying protection of the Tajik-Afghan border and strengthening border control.

U.S. and NATO military contingents will gradually be removed from CA. Steps will be coordinated between the SCO and ISAF in Afghanistan and, after 2014, between the SCO and the U.S. International assistance regarding regional security with countries outside the region will be rendered on conditions set by the SCO.

Implementation of this scenario will give the SCO many attributes of a military-political alliance with all the ensuing consequences, one of which is the predicted aggravation of relations between the organization's countries, on the one hand, and the West, on the other.

At the SCO summit held on 15 June, 2011 in Astana, it was stressed that today economic cooperation is coming to the fore on the agenda as the SCO's "second image." There is nothing surprising in this, keeping in mind the priority nature of the indicated problems being resolved by all the organization's member countries without exception.

We will note that this vector also figures on the list of the SCO's statutory goals and tasks, which envisage "encouraging efficient regional cooperation in trade and economic, ... scientific-technical, ... energy, transport, credit and financial, and other areas of common interest; assisting comprehensive and balanced economic growth and social and cultural development by means of joint action on the basis of equal partnership in order to steadily raise and improve the standard of living of the people of the member states; coordinating approaches for integration into the world economy."⁴

Let us take a look at the possible scenarios of SCO development keeping in mind the above-mentioned tasks.

Priority on Economic Issues—the Conservative Scenario. The economic component of the SCO will become increasingly significant on the organization's agenda, while remaining subordinate to the main priority—security.

The SCO will adopt the Road Map for implementing the Program of Trade and Economic Cooperation until 2020 and begin to carry out specific projects. A Special Account (SCO Development Fund) will be created to support them, the resources of which will be used to pay for compilation of the feasibility reports for the proposed projects. The SCO Interbank Association, or one of the author-

⁴ Art 1 of the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (7 June, 2002).

ized banks, will mobilize investments, while the organization's Business Council will coordinate implementation.

Large projects, which not all of the member countries are interested in at the first stage, will be carried out, according to Art 16 of the SCO Charter, with limited participation. Observer states and dialog partners will be actively drawn into economic cooperation. Attracting private business and creating a SCO Business Association and Venture Fund will help to intensify economic cooperation.

A SCO Energy Club will be founded, in the format of which a unified energy strategy for development of the Eurasian region will be drawn up. Special attention will be focused on building transport corridors that meet the SCO's interests. Wide-scale cooperation will be enhanced in such spheres as high technology, supply lines, agriculture, tourism, and interregional relations.

A mechanism will also be created within the SCO for monitoring the economic situation in the region, which will make it possible to follow the negative trends that arise and carry out early prevention of economic crises. The SCO Rating Agency created on Russia's initiative will also serve these goals. A set of measures will be drawn up for helping the most vulnerable economies of the Central Asian states in order to modernize them and instill dynamism in economic cooperation within the SCO.

The SCO's economic policy will be pursued in close coordination with the Customs Union and EurAsEC, which play a key role in the integration processes in the Eurasian expanse.

Priority on Economic Issues—the Radical Scenario. The SCO member states will strive for integration that envisages creating conditions for the free movement of goods, capital, and services, introducing payment of transactions in national currency (and in the future also introducing a supranational currency), and instituting a mechanism of monetary cooperation and privileged lending. For this purpose, a SCO Development Bank will be established for financing economic projects, an arena created for regional electronic trade, and mechanisms improved for exchanging information on the potential of the enterprises and companies of the SCO countries. Efforts will be stepped up to harmonize the trade and investment legislation of the SCO member states and unify customs regulations and procedures. Conditions will be formed for signing Agreements on Free Trade.

A supranational forecasting institute will be established for drawing up a single vision of the SCO's development on Kazakhstan's initiative. A unified Development Strategy for the Eurasian Expanse and a forecast of the development of the SCO region until 2030 will be elaborated.

A Committee on Infrastructural Integration of the organization's member states will be founded that will be responsible for coordinating energy and transport policy, developing and monitoring the implementation of investment programs for prospecting and operating oil and gas fields, building and modernizing power stations, power transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines, and road, rail, and air routes, creating contemporary logistics centers and other infrastructure facilities, as well as ensuring the SCO's participation in forming international East-West and North-South energy and transport corridors.

Cooperation mechanisms will be elaborated for ensuring food safety. The SCO will begin to implement cooperation programs in growing, processing, storing, and selling grain and food. An SCO Grain Bank will be established.

Border and interregional cooperation among the SCO countries will increase in significance. Preferential trade and economic growth zones will be created in border areas.

The problems associated with reinforcing the economic potential of the SCO's Central Asian member states will be raised to an organization-wide level. Russia and the PRC will render them extensive financial and technical assistance through the SCO, as well as help to train personnel for the national economies.

Rendering Afghanistan assistance in its economic restoration will be a separate vector of the SCO's activity. The SCO will dispatch assistance to Kabul through bilateral channels and draw member countries and observers into participating in the implementation of economic and social projects. The

SCO will primarily take responsibility for satisfying Afghanistan's most urgent needs, as well as for restoring and modernizing facilities built with the assistance of the former Soviet Union. This work will be carried out in cooperation with the U.S., EU, and other donor countries, including at their expense.

Putting this scenario into practice will make it possible to ensure economic security in the mid term and accelerate development of the CA countries, fortify the SCO's position and actively draw observer countries, and also Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, into its orbit.

However, this could also lead to the agreements reached within the Customs Union being corroded and to the SCO becoming a rival of the Customs Union and EurAsEC, whereby the latter, keeping in mind China's growing economic might, will clearly not benefit from this.

Marginalization of the SCO. If the SCO proves incapable of adapting to the demands of the times, consolidating its ranks, resolving the urgent problems, and adjusting its strategy and tactics on time, it will gradually have to yield its initiative within CA. Political declarations will not be translated into the language of practical actions, while the SCO's statutory goals and tasks will not be duly implemented. As a result, the member states, while formally retaining their membership in the SCO, will look for other collective or individual means for ensuring their interests.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

The SCO's tenth anniversary is a good excuse for its members to try and sum up the accumulated experience, look beyond the horizon, draw up a renewed strategy that meets the dynamically changing reality, and make the necessary decisions. At stake are Russia's global and regional interests, peace and security in CA, the fate of energy cooperation and transport routes, the political stability and economic prosperity of the states located in the region, and Eurasia's image in the foreseeable future.

THE EUROPEAN UNION IS READJUSTING ITS CENTRAL ASIAN STRATEGY

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Introduction

As soon as the Soviet Union fell apart, Central Asia, together with the rest of the post-Soviet expanse, became part of so-called political Europe, that is, it was drawn into the EU's sphere of interests on the strength of the OSCE membership of all the post-Soviet states.

The European Union's strategy and policy in Central Asia are not directly related to the region's military-strategic security, although they can indirectly affect it through

- (1) European institutions such as the OSCE, the European Commission, the European Parliament, etc.;
- (2) the policy of the European powers (the U.K., Germany, and France in particular); and
- (3) NATO, the military-political institution that unites most of the EU countries.

The EU is guided in its Central Asian policy by two very important considerations.

- First, as distinct from the U.S., China, and even Russia (which have no conceptual documents related to the region), the European Union is the only geopolitical actor that has a strategy outlined in detail in a document entitled *The EU's Central Asia Strategy* adopted in 2007, even though it has not yet shown its efficiency or produced any impressive results.
- Second, the European Union demonstrates its preference for "soft power" at the conceptual and practical levels as

opposed to the use of force as a traditional geopolitical instrument. This is true of Brussels' foreign policy in Central Asia and elsewhere.

The European political community is convinced that sustainable democratic and secular regimes in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus will create a security belt of sorts to protect Europe from the unstable regions of the Muslim world. On the whole, however, European political analysts have not yet decided whether the EU needs Central Asia and to what extent.

The EU members, however, never hesitate to support their companies functioning in Central Asia (particularly in the energy sector) to ensure a steady flow of oil and gas from this fuel-rich region.¹

¹ See: I.V. Bolgova, *Politika ES v Zakavkazye i Tsentralnoy Azii. Istoki i stanovlenie*, Navona, Moscow, 2008, 184 pp; M.T. Laumulin, "Strategiia Evropeyskogo soiuza v Tsentralnoy Azii: osnovnye etapy i tseli," *Kazakhstan v globalnykh protsessakh* (IMEP, Almaty), No. 2, 2009, pp. 72-85; D. Malysheva, "Tsentralnaia Azia i Evropeyskiy soyuz," *Rossia i novye gosudarstva Evrazii* (MEMO), No. 11, 2010, pp. 24-34; L.A. Salvagni, "Quel role pour l'Union européenne en Asie centrale?" *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est*, No. 1057, 2006, pp. 17-29; S. Peyrouse, "Business and Trade Relationships between the EU and Central Asia," *EUCAM Working Paper*, No. 1, June 2009, 16 pp.

EU Strategy in Central Asia: A Security Factor

In the first half of 2007, when Germany assumed rotating chairmanship in the Council of Europe, Berlin was convinced that the EU's strategy in Central Asia should be revised.² In June 2007, the Council of Europe adopted a new EU Central Asian Strategy (drafted mainly by the Germans) which revealed with unprecedented clarity the pluses and minuses of European Central Asian policy.

The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership was drafted on 31 May, 2007 for 2007-2013 and specified the aims the European Union was prepared to pursue in the region:

- (1) stability and prosperity for all countries;
- (2) poverty reduction and higher living standards in the Millennium Development Goals context;

² See: A.B. Tuyakbaeva, *German Politics in Central Asia*, KazNU, Almaty, 2009 (in Kazakh).

- (3) regional cooperation among the Central Asian states and with the EU for the sake of interstate energy, transport, environment, and education initiatives.³

The European Union specified its strategic aims and practical tasks as follows:

- (1) The threat of Islamic radicalism should be given serious attention while the region's countries (Uzbekistan in particular) should receive assistance for strengthening their law-enforcement structures and radically reforming their security system.
- (2) Afghanistan and its role in the Central Asian economies and security should be carefully studied, while transcontinental trade should develop in all vectors (not only in the Russian and European vectors).
- (3) Turkey should become a critically important connecting link to help Europe affect the processes underway in Central Asia, which means that cooperation with Ankara should be upgraded.
- (4) Cooperation with the reformers in the Central Asian governments and parliaments should be strengthened.

European experts have come to the conclusion that the EU's Central Asian strategy might fall through; there is a more or less commonly shared opinion in Brussels that it is too early to assess its results: progress and mutual trust call for patience and time.⁴

In fact, the EU has reached none of the strategic aims it formulated back in the 1990s: it did not reduce poverty or overcome the opposition to the reforms, nor did it accomplish anything in the sphere of human rights and democracy. Its energy interests remain as vulnerable as ever.

No progress has been detected in the security sphere. European analysts are convinced that the time has come for the European Union to abandon its image of a "toothless paper tiger" and come forward as a serious force to be reckoned with. Europe should demonstrate more confidence in the energy sphere and more realism with respect to democracy.⁵ It is more or less commonly believed that the EU should coordinate its strategy with the other international actors, such as NATO and the OSCE.⁶

This is happening because there is no coordinated conceptual approach to the EU's Central Asian strategy, at least at the level of the largest powers. With its own interests in mind (which Berlin presents as common European), Germany has tried more than once to formulate the EU's strategic aims and arrive at what looks like a coordinated policy.

In 2010, the leading EU experts in Central Asia supplied two types of recommendations: general strategic and more specific technical.⁷

The *strategic aspects* of EU-Central Asia cooperation included the following:

³ [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf]; on the prehistory of the question see: B. Eshment, "Regionalnaia integratsia v Tsentralnoy Azii: vzgliad iz Evropy," in: *Materialy 6-y Almatinskoy mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii po bezopasnosti*, KISI, Almaty, 2008, pp. 19-24.

⁴ See: *Strategiia Evropeyskogo soiuzha dlia Tsentralnoy Azii. Tri goda spustia*, FFE, Almaty, 2010, 243 pp. (see also this publication in German: *EU-Strategie für Zentralasien. Drei Jahre danach*, FES, Almaty, 2010, 243 S.).

⁵ See: Sh. Akiner, "Partnership Not Mentorship: Re-appraising the Relationship between the EU and the Central Asian States," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* (ISDP, Stockholm), Vol. 8, No. 4, 2010, pp. 17-40; N. de Pedro, "The EU in Central Asia: Incentives and Constraints for Greater Engagement," in: *Great Powers and Regional Integration in Central Asia: A Local Perspective*, ed. by M. Esteban, N. de Pedro, Exlibris Ediciones, Madrid, 2009, pp. 113-135.

⁶ See: K. Isaev, "Current Issues of Interaction between the EU and Central Asian Countries in the Context of Kazakhstan's Chairing of the OSCE," *Central Asia's Affairs* (KazISS, Almaty), No. 2, 2009, pp. 3-4.

⁷ See: M. Emerson, J. Boonstra, N. Hasanova, M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse, *Into Eurasia: Monitoring the EU's Central Asia Strategy. Report of the EUCAM Project*, CEPS, Brussels; FRIDE, Madrid, 2010, III+143 pp.

- (1) A possible re-vamping of the strategy would be more appropriate in 2011 when the new External Action Service is in place.
- (2) The EU has some clear security concerns with respect to Central Asia: energy supply security through diversification of sources and linkages with Afghanistan. Contrary to the opinion of some experts, this does not look like a conflict of interests vs. values as long as legitimate interests are pursued in a principled manner. However, Central Asia presents a real challenge in this regard, since the present state of governance in the region is far removed from these principles. This presents the EU with a choice: either to pass over its preferred principles in this case or to make a special effort to apply its principled approach in ways that are realistically operational in this difficult political environment.
- (3) The case of Kazakhstan deserves special mention as a key country in the region that has chosen to respond to the EU's strategy by adopting its own "Path to Europe." Coupled with Kazakhstan's new chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010, this European orientation as part of a multivectoral foreign policy presents an important opportunity for political and economic convergence with Europe, including deepening relations with the Council of Europe. These strategic directions have been announced, and the EU has also responded by agreeing to work toward a new treaty-level agreement with Kazakhstan. If this succeeds, it could have a positive effect throughout Central Asia, which would be an achievement of strategic importance. In particular, it would promote a breakthrough in the EU's relations with Uzbekistan.
- (4) The EU's concept of regional cooperation in Central Asia needs revision. However, it should not be overemphasized with respect to the opportunities for regional cooperation with neighbors external to the region (Eastern Europe, Russia, China, and South Asia) or in those areas where the EU has several major interests (e.g. in energy, transport, and security). The EU is working on this wider regionalism with projects to link Central Asia to its Eastern Partnership initiative. Such elements of wider regional cooperation could help disenclave the landlocked Central Asia, and for the EU contribute to a wider "EurAsia strategy" overarching and going beyond the several regional dimensions of the EU's present neighborhood policy. This wider Eurasian dimension, involving all the major powers of the Eurasian landmass, would fit in with the increasingly evident need to channel the new global multipolar dynamics into an ordered world system. These considerations go well beyond concern for Central Asia alone, but the region is inevitably going to be at the crossroads of many issues of political and economic significance.

The *technical aspects* are as follows:

- (1) The EU intends to increase its diplomatic presence in the region, and with the impetus of the new Lisbon Treaty provisions this needs to be done decisively, with adequately staffed EU delegations in all five states.
- (2) A structured process has been set up in the human rights field at both the official and the civil society levels. But this needs to be carefully upgraded, without which it risks becoming little more than a token routine of political convenience for both sides. The interaction between the official dialog and civil society seminars could be strengthened, with the civil society seminars invited to undertake regular year-to-year monitoring of progress in the human rights field.
- (3) The full development of the rule of law initiative is important, especially given the absence of an explicit democratization agenda with respect to Central Asia.

- (4) The sanctions on Uzbekistan after the Andijan events in 2005 did not yield substantial change and have now been lifted for the sake of engaging with the regime. If the EU should resort to such measures in Central Asia (or elsewhere) in the future, it needs to be disciplined and unified. And when the decision is made it should be loyally backed by all, otherwise the operation and the EU itself will be discredited.
- (5) However, the Commission should now evaluate the first results of the Erasmus Mundus program in the region, which does not seem to be adequately adapted to Central Asian realities, and undertake a broader education strategy review for Central Asia. Consideration should be given to other projects with a view to a clearer branding of the EU as promoter of a cluster of high-quality and independent education and research institutions, as well as a supporter of reform of the basic education systems.
- (6) In the area of water management and hydroelectric power, there is a robust case for major investment in upstream states that could also bring huge benefits for downstream states, and avert the real risks of interstate conflict over water. The European Union, which has failed to clearly outline its position in relation to water conflicts and the methods of their settlement, should be more explicit about the desirability of big investments in the projects from which the local countries will profit to the greatest extent.⁸
- (7) The EU could help to establish a technical-economic case for investment in increased hydroelectric capacity that could offer benefits to both upstream and downstream states, outline the mechanisms for regional cooperation that would assure equitable implementation, and raise these issues at the top political level in alliance with major multilateral organizations.

The EU should make available a special trust fund of grant resources for this purpose to enable the World Bank to draw up scenarios and cost-benefit calculations in collaboration with the U.N. Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and the Asian Development Bank. In any case there is also a large agenda for 'no regrets' investments in improved water management, modest-sized hydroelectric facilities, and solar and wind renewable energies.

- (8) In the field of energy policy, the EU is conducting wide-ranging energy dialogs with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The EU has a nonbinding memorandum of understanding with Turkmenistan that envisages the purchase of gas, and this would fit into its Southern Corridor concept of diversifying gas supplies with a trans-Caspian link. While the EU has been debating various pipeline options for years, China has acted with great speed in constructing oil and gas pipelines across Central Asia. This is a classic example of how the EU and its member states have to negotiate and decide faster on elements of a common energy policy, or see the world leave it behind.⁹
- (9) In the field of transport, the EU's present corridors and axes that extend east through or around Central Asia have become in part obsolete and need to connect with the new trans-continental Eurasian realities, East-West and North-South. The EU, and in particular the Commission's transport department and the European Investment Bank, should communicate to the CAREC program of the Asian Development Bank their willingness to enter into discussions

⁸ See: M. Kramer, *Integrirovannoe i orientirovannoe na ustoychivost upravlenie vodnymi resursami. Potentsial sotrudnichestva mezhdru Germaniyei i Tsentralnoy Aziey*, Idan, Almaty, 2010, 332 pp.

⁹ See: L. Azarch, "Central Asia and the European Union: Prospects of an Energy Partnership," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* (ISDP, Stockholm), Vol. 7, No. 4, 2009, pp. 55-72.

to optimize the coherence of EU and CAREC transport corridors that do or could link Central and Eastern Asia with Europe. In addition there is a new U.S. initiative (Northern Distribution Network) to develop supply routes from Baltic and Caspian Sea ports to Afghanistan via Central Asia. Since China, Russia, and the U.S. all have major stakes in these transport corridors, the case for explicit coordination is evident.

So far, the EU remains indifferent to the steadily growing flow of Chinese commodities and the increasing Chinese investments in Central Asian infrastructure, which obviously calls for revised transportation policies in the region. Rationalized, the routes can be united into a Central Trans-Eurasian Corridor which will cross Russia and Ukraine in the south and meet the North-South corridor in the strategically important point in Western Kazakhstan. The European Commission and the European Investment Bank should start consultations with the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program and the corresponding international institutions. Cooperation with the U.S.-developed Northern Distribution Network also looks promising.

- (10) Security and stability in Central Asia can be described as one of the main concerns of the European Union, yet most of the projects are unrelated to them. The main contribution to combating common security threats has been regional programs for border management (BOMCA) and hard drugs (CADAP). They are fairly effective and mostly approved; until recently they were managed by UNDP offices. CADAP is being transferred to the European Aid Agency, which is expected to improve the EU's image as a partner. The BOMCA model might be applied to other parts of the security sectors in Central Asia to enhance effectiveness and good governance of police and security forces, at least in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan; cooperation with similar programs in Afghanistan should be extended.

Cooperation with the OSCE and through the active involvement of key EU member states is also possible; both sides should maximally coordinate their actions. Europe should also readjust its governance structure.

- (11) As for EU assistance, Brussels should consider focusing on fewer priority areas, given the impossibility of having a real impact on all seven priorities of EU strategy with the 719 million Euros available over seven years under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The EU does make differentiated priorities by country, but still there are difficult issues of assuring real effectiveness, going beyond "ticking the boxes." The expert community supports the present move toward according higher priority to education programs.
- (12) Assistance is most needed in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The EU has some leverage on the dire conditions in these countries through its sectoral budget support programs. The impact of the economic crisis might, in combination with other security-related factors, even destabilize Tajikistan, which justifies the new social-policy-orientated program of the EU.

The EU has every interest in fostering donor coordination on the spot. Assistance allocated to energy-rich and fast developing Kazakhstan should be mainly confined to education and support to civil society, while Astana is in a position to buy into European expertise for many policy advice needs. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are only marginally receptive to EU assistance initiatives, where the EU would do well to focus on education for the time being.

- (13) In the near future the EU will double the size of its assistance to the Central Asian countries; this means that the efficiency of the recent European programs in the region should

be assessed. The grants to oil-rich Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan should be cut down; educational programs should receive more attention. Larger volumes of aid to Uzbekistan should not be contemplated before the country has demonstrated more interest in its cooperation with the European Union.

The EU should create a database for monitoring reports to be made available on the Commission's website in the interests of transparency and accountability. There is also a case for administrative separation of project evaluation from project operations to further guarantee objective analyses. The European Parliament should strengthen its oversight role in scrutinizing EU Commission assistance to Central Asia.

- (14) The administration of funds for civil society should be simplified.

European analysts agree that the EU's failure is due to the strategic interests being expressed in such general terms that they lack vivid meaning. The EU relies on a varied and vast set of regulatory acts and technical mechanisms as so-called instruments of action. The experts insist that the EU is not sufficiently equipped to be a hard security actor and so frames its foreign policy as seeking to contribute to the development of a regulatory, rules-based world order with strong reliance on human rights, international law, regional cooperation, and multilateral institutions.

It is commonly believed that Central Asia is in fact the only place in the world that sees the interests of all the major powers—Russia, China, South Asia, and Europe, together with the ubiquitous presence of the United States.

Differentiated Approach to the Central Asian Countries

The EU and Kazakhstan

Brussels is convinced that Kazakhstan and the EU have major opportunities to deepen their bilateral relationship with the objective of bringing the rapid economic development of this rich country into harmony with political and social progress, and its participation in an enlightened conception of international relations.¹⁰

European experts think that the workings of the state power system are complex and see different factions acting in different directions. However, the leadership is pursuing a staunch modernization strategy; its multivectoral foreign policy includes a European vector and the clear wish not to be overly dependent on its two big neighbors, Russia and China.¹¹

The markers of the European dimensions of Kazakhstan's foreign policy are the "Path to Europe" white paper adopted early in 2009 and its OSCE presidency for the year 2010. The "Path to Europe" is an action plan reminiscent of those produced by the European Union.¹²

¹⁰ On the prehistory of the question, see: *Kazakhstan i Evropeyskiy soiuz: rezultaty i gorizonty sotrudnichestva*, Brussels, 2007, 315 pp; *Kazakhstan, Rossia, Evropeyskiy soiuz: perspektivy strategicheskogo partnerstva. Materialy mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii*, KISI, Almaty, 2009, 200 pp.; M. Laumulin, "EU-Strategie in Zentralasien und die Interessen Kasachstans," in: *EU-Strategie für Zentralasien. Drei Jahre danach*, pp. 164-178.; R.S. Serik, "Kazakhstan i strategii ES v Tsentralnoy Azii: problemy i perspektivy," in: *Tsentralnaia Azia v usloviiakh geopoliticheskoy transformatsii i mirovogo ekonomicheskogo krizisa. 7-ia ezhegodnaia Almatinskaia konferentsia*, KISI, Almaty, 2009, pp. 224-233.

¹¹ See: "Le Kazakhstan: Partenaire Stratégique de l'Europe," in: *Diplomatie. Affaires Stratégiques et Relations Internationales*, AREION, Paris, 2009. 16 pp.

¹² See: *Politicheskie i ekonomicheskie interesy Germanii v Kazakhstane i Tsentralnoy Azii*, KISI, Almaty, 2010, 132 pp.; *Put v Evropu: model sotrudnichestva ES i Tsentralnoy Azii*, KNU, Almaty, 2010, 176 pp.

The EU and Kazakhstan envisage the negotiation of a new Agreement that would replace the existing PCA. The content of the new Agreement could be much more developed than the PCA and take as a reference the structure of the new model, Advanced Agreements of the European Neighborhood Policy/Eastern Partnership, which has been completed in the case of Morocco and is well advanced in the case of Ukraine.¹³

The main feature of these new agreements is that they can cover the whole range of EU competences, combining those stipulated at the time the PCAs were negotiated with those in the spheres of justice, home affairs, and foreign and security policy. However, the trade policy content will be limited by the fact that Kazakhstan is now joining the Customs Union with Russia and Belarus, which excludes the possibility of a free trade agreement with the EU unless done by all three together.

The EU can also consider how close Kazakhstan could be brought toward or into the Eastern Partnership. There are two options. The first, which could already be activated, would be to invite Kazakhstan to join in the work of the region-multilateral working groups of the Eastern Partnership. The second more ambitious option would be to invite Kazakhstan to fully join the Eastern Partnership.

Overall, the EU intends to encourage Kazakhstan “to aim as high as it wants to in terms even ultimately of Council of Europe membership” based on serious political freedoms and greater adherence to human rights requirements, and also to get observer status at the Parliamentary Assembly. The education sector deserves priority support from the EU in ways that go beyond existing programs such as Tempus, which however is well placed to help Kazakhstan’s move to align higher education based on the regulations of the Bologna process. The European Commission should promote the European institutions’ greater involvement (going far beyond the granting of scholarships) in the educational process at the newly opened technical university in Astana.

In its human rights dialog with Kazakhstan, the European Union is determined to insist on strengthening judicial authorization of arrest (approval of arrest warrant); non-interference of the state in legal professions; protection of rights during pre-trial stages of prosecution; de-criminalization of slander and insult; further development of the legislation on freedom of assembly; legislation on freedom of association in line with international standards; promotion of the freedom of expression; liberalization of legislation on the media; and strengthening of the Ombudsman office.¹⁴

The EU and Kyrgyzstan

It is commonly believed in the European expert community that the economy of Kyrgyzstan is fairly weak, the situation in the capital being the only exception. When Kazakhstan and Russia joined the Customs Union, commodity export from Kyrgyzstan dropped; and large investments in the hydro-power sector have not improved the situation.

The revolution of 2005, which replaced one clan at the top with another, narrowed down political freedom.¹⁵

¹³ See: K. Isaev, “Cooperation between Kazakhstan and the European Union,” *Central Asia’s Affairs*, No. 1, 2010, pp. 8-11; M. Laumulin, “EU-Strategie in Zentralasien und die Interessen Kasachstans,” pp. 164-178.

¹⁴ See: M. Emerson, J. Boonstra, N. Hasanova, M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

¹⁵ See: N. Omarov, “Kyrgyzstan-Evropeysky soiuz: osnovnye napravleniia sotrudnichestva i perspektivy ego razvitiia,” in: *Tsentrlnaia Azia: vneshniy vzgliad. Mezhdunarodnaia politika s tsentralnoaziatskoy tochki zreniia*, Friedrich Ebert Fund, Berlin, 2008, pp. 222-253; idem, “Vneshniaia politika Kirgizstana posle 24 marta 2005 g.: osnovnye tendentsii i perspektivy,” in: *Vneshnopoliticheskie orientatsii stran Tsentralnoy Azii v svete globalnoy transformatsii mirovoy sistemy i mezhdunarodnykh otosheniy*, ed. by A.A. Knyazev, A.A. Migranyan, OFAK, Bishkek, 2009, pp. 155-161.

Within its human rights dialog with Kyrgyzstan, the EU insists on cessation of harassment and persecution of opposition members; liberalization of law restricting the freedom of assembly; cessation of government harassment of human rights groups and activists; independent investigation of allegations of deaths and injuries from torture in police custody; cessation of violence against journalists and guarantees of their safety; and cessation of government intimidation of NGOs.¹⁶

The EU and Tajikistan

Tajikistan may be regarded as a fragile but not a failed state. This very poor country suffers grave hardships through extreme poverty compounded by breakdowns in electricity supplies in the winter, despite its endowment with huge hydropower potential. Tajikistan is also highly sensitive to the risks of spillover of the war and chaos in Afghanistan, where the ethnic Tajik population accounts for 35% of the total.¹⁷

The Commission and Germany together represent the bulk of aid from Europe. The EU's aid aims at poverty reduction and avoiding state collapse, with sustained budget support for social welfare programs. This is a controversial program with diverging views between its supporters and opponents; the latter argue that at the present level of corruption all efforts will be in vain.

There are some opportunities for civil society, and this makes the EU's human rights dialog potentially meaningful, even if there are signs that these existing civil liberties are under threat.

One of the EU's projects could be to support a political dialog with the Islamists.

The government's major economic priority is completion of the Rogun dam, for which it would welcome a consortium of international investors. This could be linked to investment in high voltage power lines into South Asia, through Afghanistan into Pakistan and India. While this project is extremely ambitious, it deserves support by the EU since it offers both some chance of advance for the economy and regional links to South Asia.

The EU agenda for the human rights dialog with Tajikistan includes open access to prisons for civil society organizations and the Red Cross; ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention against Torture and the Convention on Discrimination against Women; de-criminalization of punishment for defamation; discontinuation of the use of child labor on cotton fields; an article on torture added to the Criminal Code; reforms of the system of free legal aid to the low-income population; and compensation for forced displacement of people due to state needs.¹⁸

The EU and Turkmenistan

European experts have pointed out that the second president has made some positive moves, but only very limited ones, compared to the record of his notorious predecessor.¹⁹ The population now has freedom of movement within Turkmenistan; the former president's idiosyncratic education policy of reducing schooling from 11 to 9 years and university from 3 to 2 years were reversed.

¹⁶ See: M. Emerson, J. Boonstra, N. Hasanova, M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse, op. cit., p. 106.

¹⁷ See: R. Khaydarov, "Tadzhikistan-ES: problemy i vozmozhnosti sotrudnichestva," in: *Tsentralnaia Azia: vneshniy vzgliad*, pp. 360-367.

¹⁸ See: M. Emerson, J. Boonstra, N. Hasanova, M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse, op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁹ See: S. Horák, J. Šír, *Dismantling Totalitarianism? Turkmenistan under Berdimuhamedow*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, Washington, D.C., 2009, 97 pp.

Turkmenistan remains an authoritarian state with zero opportunities for political opposition, media freedom, or NGOs concerned with political and human rights issues. The only NGOs are for family problems and citizen advice bureaus. Experienced observers say that the people know full well what the rules are and what can and cannot be done, which narrows down the field for manifestations of political debate or opposition, or excludes them altogether.

Overall, Turkmenistan entered the 21st century still largely cut off from the rest of the world and having wasted huge amounts of its natural resource wealth on grandiose construction in the capital city. In these circumstances, the room for the EU to develop its relations with Turkmenistan is severely limited, even though an interim agreement on trade policy has now entered into force and a human rights dialog has been set in motion.²⁰

A first step to establish the EU's credibility has to be a fully accredited delegation. The present "Europa House" exercises some functions of a diplomatic mission on a small scale, without diplomatic accreditation.

As for aid activities, the most plausible at this stage is to support scholarships for students to study in universities outside the country. However, in 2009 the Turkmen authorities denied the exit of Turkmen students heading abroad for the beginning of the new academic year. Those who left earlier were forced to return to Ashgabat due to the security services putting pressure on their families and have been black-listed.

The main strategic question open at this stage is whether the EU will become a large-scale buyer of Turkmen gas, which would be transported across the Caspian Sea to Baku. The moment to make such a proposal is relatively propitious (since the explosion of the gas pipeline to Russia in April 2009) due to the sudden reduction in Russian demand. While the pipeline has now been repaired and a new commercial agreement was signed with Moscow in January 2010, the incident has made Turkmenistan increasingly interested in a multivectoral gas export policy.²¹

China built and inaugurated its gas pipeline link from Turkmenistan, with transit across Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which could carry 40-50 bcm of gas per year when fully operational. Supplies through a pipeline to Iran are now likely to go up from 8 to 14 bcm.

An internal West-East pipeline has been put up for tender, which would take gas west to the Caspian coast, and thence either go north up the Caspian coast to connect with the Russian network, or cross the Caspian to connect with the Nabucco. The gas fields to be developed are deep down and will need foreign technology, and Turkmenistan may be obliged to change its restrictive policy on foreign investment.

The agenda for the human rights dialog with Turkmenistan includes discontinuation of the practice of collective punishment (family members of prisoners should be released); discontinuation of the practice of recruiting prisoners to coercive labor that is hazardous to their health; creation of harmonious conditions for culture and tradition of national minorities; creation of conditions for independent mass media (state censorship should be outlawed); guaranteed possibilities for independent

²⁰ See: E. Ionova, "Mnogovektornost vneshney politiki Ashkhabada," *Rossia i musulmanskii mir* (INION, IV RAN), No. 9, 2009, pp. 98-105; M.T. Laumulin, "Mezhdunarodnoe i vnutripoliticheskoe polozhenie postniyazovskogo Turkmenistana," *Kazakhstan v globalnykh protsessakh*, No. 2, 2010, pp. 111-123; No. 3, pp. 26-39; L. Anceschi, "Analyzing Turkmen Foreign Policy in the Berdimukhammedov Era," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2008, pp. 35-48; R. Pomfret, "Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2008, pp. 9-34; L. Anceschi, "External Conditionality, Domestic Insulation and Energy Security: The International Politics of Post-Niyazov Turkmenistan," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2010 (Special Issue: Turkmenistan), pp. 93-114.

²¹ See: L. Timofeenko, "Problema eksporta energoresursov Turkmenistana," *Rossia i novye gosudarstva Evrazii* (IMEMO), No. 11, 2010, pp. 93-100; idem, "Turkmenistan: diversifikatsiia marshrutov eksporta energoresursov," *Rossia i musulmanskii mir*, No. 9, 2010, pp. 85-91; Yu. Fedorov, "Turkmenkie gazovye igry," *Indeks bezopasnosti* (PIR-Tsentri, Moscow), No. 2, 2010, pp. 73-86.

public organizations; revision of the NGO law; discontinuation of persecution of dissidents and civic activists; free entrance into and exit from the country (notably for students); and establishment of standards of economic transparency for the use of energy revenues.²²

The EU and Uzbekistan

It is commonly believed in the European Union that the lifting in October 2009 by EU foreign ministers of the remaining arms embargo sanction imposed after the 2005 Andijan events was a controversial decision. The EU hopes that this will be taken as encouragement for progressive reforms, whereas independent human rights NGOs protest that this will give a wrong message to the country's rulers. However, a decision has been made to end the sanctions, and this logically marks the switch to a mode of engagement and the need to work out how to make this effective.

The next step already envisaged will be to open a full EU delegation in Tashkent, which should incorporate a strong public information unit to make the EU better known and understood.

Brussels is still convinced that Uzbekistan remains an extremely difficult environment to work in, given the omnipresent security services exemplified by internal checkpoints on the borders of every region. However Uzbekistan has the ambition of being a leading player in the region and of regaining international prestige as the most populous and geographically central state. This can only come with a greater openness for the movement of people and commerce across its borders, and after profound reforms designed to liberalize internal commerce and agriculture. The EU can advocate this in its political dialog and also try to persuade Uzbekistan to adopt a more constructive and modern attitude toward regional cooperation, particularly in water issues. The EU has several technical assistance cross-border or regional projects in the field of water management, which Uzbekistan is currently blocking or excludes itself from.

The state is investing heavily in infrastructure and education. Its industry depends on protectionist measures (car manufacturers are protected by 200 percent import tariffs) except for free trade within the CIS, from which it has evidently profited. There is a new rail link inside Uzbekistan that extends to Termez on the border with Afghanistan and then links up to the routes to Iran (down to the port of Bandar Abbas). Uzbekistan is concerned with disenclaving its economy to the South Asia, and this fits well with the revision of the transcontinental transport corridor strategies.

European analysts have pointed out that there are almost no functioning EU projects in Uzbekistan at present. An exception is an EU funded (UNDP-executed) rural living standards project, which received favorable evaluation for getting to the grass roots of poverty reduction. Given the extreme difficulties with respect to active operations within Uzbekistan, the education sector provides a plausible area for concentrated effort. For example, the British Council's offices in Tashkent are a beehive of learning activity for Uzbek students, with a German cultural center next door doing the same. In spite of the regime's repression, there is a private Westminster University flourishing in Tashkent.²³

In the human rights sphere, the EU demands release of human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience; liberalization of accreditation and operation of NGOs; guarantee of freedom of speech and of independent media; implementation of conventions against child labor; alignment of election processes with OSCE commitments; cooperation with U.N. special rapporteurs on human rights is-

²² See: M. Emerson, J. Boonstra, N. Hasanova, M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse, op. cit., p. 109.

²³ See: Kh. Inomjonov, "Otnosheniia Uzbekistana s Evropeyskim soiuзом," *Tsentralnaia Azia: vneshniy vzgliad*, pp. 464-486; M. Laumilin, "Vneshniaia politika Uzbekistana na sovremnnoe etape," *Kazakhstan v globalnykh protsessakh*, No. 1, 2010, pp. 56-72.

sues; abolition of restrictions on free entrance and exit of the country; cessation of fabricated “terrorist threats” for imprisoning religious leaders; independent investigation of allegations of torture in prisons and punishment for offenders; adoption of a law to permit independent journalism in all areas (economic, political, cultural); liberalization of international cooperation of civic activists and organizations; and legislation to regulate law-enforcement bodies (police).²⁴

From Central Asia to Eurasia

The EU has based its approaches to Central Asia on the idea of placing it in the Eurasian context. It seeks to foster regional cooperation among the five states and is allocating 30 percent of its budget to regional projects. It comes to Central Asia with a presumption in favor of regional cooperation, the prospects of which look vague. But has the regional dimension of the EU Central Asia strategy been adequately conceived for the 21st century? This question is suggested by the great and growing regional role of China and India.

The EU Central Asia Strategy has already seen significant development of the regional dimension to the political dialogs between the EU and all five Central Asian states. Foreign minister meetings are being held to discuss broad political and security issues, sector-specific dialog circuits for education, water and the environment, and the rule of law, even though they were sporadic and took place within a very short period between 2008 and 2010. No specific results of these activities are visible so far; there are some sharp contrary developments happening outside these meetings (e.g. the current breakdown of the regional electricity grid). The EU, however, seeks to promote a gradual movement of ideas among the Central Asian participants in favor of regional cooperation.

The objective limits to Central Asian regionalism are evident, and this is reflected in a shift in EU spending, reducing the weight of regional programs and increasing that of bilateral ones.

At the same time, there is also a case for a second concept of regional cooperation, which we can call “external” rather than “internal” regionalism. External regionalism would involve cooperative activity with neighbors external to the region, whereas internal regionalism is restricted to the five Central Asian states. With its modest population size, Central Asian regional cooperation does not have much potential if it is not part of wider economic openness. While there are some activities which intrinsically have a cross-border regional cooperative dimension, such as border management itself, transport corridors and, above all, water management, it is nonetheless the case that these three examples have vital cross-border dimensions linking to neighbors external to the region with transcontinental dimensions. Thus, border management largely concerns drug trafficking, where Central Asia is just a transit passage between Afghanistan and Europe, Russia and China.

The European Commission is seeking to develop links between the Eastern Partnership and Central Asia through regional projects joining the two regions, especially in the energy, transport, and environment sectors. However, what is lacking is a framework for wider Eurasian cooperative projects in which the EU’s activities in Central Asia would also link to Russia, or China, or South Asia, or combinations thereof.

The political priorities of the states of the region can also be viewed in this light.

Kazakhstan looks west to Europe with its “Path to Europe” program as a strategic move to avoid exclusive dependence on Russia and China, and as part of its modernization drive.

Turkmenistan, while remaining a closed and repressive political system, nonetheless frames its development priority in the opening of gas pipeline connections toward all points of the compass: Russia,

²⁴ See: M. Emerson, J. Boonstra, N. Hasanova, M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

China, Iran, and potentially across the Caspian Sea to Europe, if the EU were to make a credible and major offer.

Kyrgyzstan's economy is now substantially dependent on a transit trade function for Chinese goods to flow to Kazakhstan and Russia.

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are concerned with disenclaving themselves to the south with transport corridors through Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan to the Gulf and Indian Ocean.

There are important long-term implications for the EU's relations with Russia, China, and India, as well as the shorter-term priority of finding some kind of political resolution of the Afghanistan imbroglio. The EU has already moved in this direction; it has regrouped Central Asia with South Asia, rather than in a former Soviet Union group. The EU has moved partly in this direction by grouping Central Asia with South Asia for the purpose of its aid administration.

Some think that a Eurasian frame is more suitable for the EU than just a link to South Asia. In this context, Central Asia is unique as a landlocked region sitting amidst the Big Four of Eurasia: Russia, China, India, and the EU.

Today, the EU has to concentrate on a new picture of the multipolar world: there are new geopolitical players (or old players with new images), such as Russia, China, India, and the European Union itself. The new picture calls for new approaches and creates new strategic challenges—preserving order and the spirit of cooperation.

The EU has reason to take further steps in its conception of the multiple regional dimensions of its foreign policy, which already has the Eastern Partnership, Northern Dimension, Union for the Mediterranean, Black Sea Synergy, and now the Central Asia Strategy. Each of these initiatives has its rationale.

What is missing, however, is an overarching Eurasian dimension, looking for ways to devise cooperative ventures reaching across these several regions into the wider Eurasian landmass, adapted to the needs of the emerging multipolar world. Such an initiative would, *inter alia*, be a constructive move toward Russia after the awkward period in which the launching of the Eastern Partnership has been seen as deepening the segmentation of the post-Soviet space in EU policies.

European analysts are convinced that the present "internal" regionalism of the Central Asian strategy should continue its role of facilitating a dialog with and among the five states. But major issues should find their place in "external" regionalism that could be framed as part of a wider Eurasian strategy.

Central Asia and the Security Problems of the European Union

The European Union is exploring how the Central Asia strategy might fit into a global concept of EU foreign policy. The EU already has relations with most of the world's regions, including sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, as well as the European neighborhood, and bilaterally through strategic partnerships with China, India, and Russia.

Brussels is looking for ways and methods to unite the trends and contacts into a single vector in which Central Asia should be given a niche.

The European strategists are aware that the region is sparsely populated. However, due to its geographic location, it is an important special case, given that it sees the presence of virtually all the world's global actors at a time when a new world order is in the making. The new assembly of major

powers might as well try to come to terms with one another in this relatively simple and unthreatening case, since they will be faced with far more dramatic challenges elsewhere. In this respect, Central Asia could be of some exemplary importance for the future world order.

European analysts have concluded that the world is entering a new multipolar epoch, with emerging or re-emerging major powers—China, India, Russia, and Brazil, to which the EU may also be added. Europe intends to contribute to a stable regulatory world order; recently this has become an inalienable part of EU policy as declared by the Lisbon Treaty.

Other actors are inclined to use force to a much greater extent than the EU. This is certainly the case in Central Asia where the actual political environment is so distant from the European values of human rights and democracy, and where Russia and China are now the most prominent external actors, with Russia pursuing an ultra-realist policy, and China, very present economically, but abstaining from any kind of regulatory influence beyond a general doctrine of political non-interference.

Brussels proceeds in its Central Asian policy from the assumption that the region does not threaten the European Union; there are three indirect factors, however, which might affect the European Union as well as other actors.

- First, insecurity of energy supplies. Central Asia can contribute to the expansion and diversification of supplies of oil, especially from Kazakhstan, and gas, especially from Turkmenistan. The exploitation of energy resources can be framed by regulations of environmental sustainability, corporate governance, and income distribution. Diversification of oil and gas supplies dilutes the monopolistic concentration of energy power, which is in principle desirable both as a matter of economic policy and in order to lessen the hazard of energy supplies as a method of geopolitical manipulation, which is typical of Russia's current policies.
- Second, al-Qae'da and Talibanization. Central Asia is adjacent to the war in Afghanistan, which is being fought to protect Europe and the world from the terrorist threat of al-Qae'da, with logistical routing of supplies for NATO forces through Central Asia. These routes have to be maintained and can hardly be criticized as an unprincipled pursuit of interests. Central Asia is not, at least for the time being, seeing a spillover of Talibanization as in Pakistan, but there are dangers of spreading Islamic radicalization in Central Asia, with Europe inclined to advocate a dialog with moderate Islamist movements, and their inclusion in the political processes.
- Third, drug trafficking. Central Asia is also part of the route for drug supplies from Afghanistan to Europe, which is a matter of vital concern for the public health of Europe and its society. The EU supports a sustained effort to combat drug trade and addiction in Central Asia and should explore ways to extend this into effective cooperation with Russia and Eastern Europe.²⁵

The values-based agenda, as can be extracted from official documents, is long and complex. Political values can be discussed, but for countries faced with huge economic development challenges, the priorities most often begin with basic issues of poverty reduction, food security, economic development, and environmental security. The EU has aid instruments aimed at several points on this agenda, but the scale is modest compared to the massive investments now being made by China, particularly in economic infrastructures.

This means that the EU's efforts have to be profiled very distinctly, the grants for social and educational programs being cases in point. Expansion of the education program could prove the most

²⁵ For more detail, see: G.K. Kydyrkhanova, *Borba s narkotrafikom i mezhdunarodnym terrorizmom v sotrudnichestve stran Tsentralnoy Azii i Evropeyskogo soiuza*, KazNU, Almaty, 2009, 121 pp.

effective and durable way to introduce European civil, professional, and cultural values and standards into Central Asia.

It is evident that the EU is making a substantial effort to help Central Asian states improve their highly problematic human rights situations. The legitimacy of this activity is based on the common regulatory principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, to which all Central Asian and EU states have subscribed, coupled with the voluntary willingness of the Central Asian states to enter into a human rights dialog with the EU.

The EU is well placed to do this, since the human rights Conventions of the Council of Europe, to which all the EU member states adhere, are based on the Universal Declaration and are further developed through the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. It is notable that no one else among the major external partners of Central Asia is willing or able to engage in a human rights dialog with Central Asian states, certainly not Russia or China, or even the United States at present.

In contrast to human rights, democracy is not internationally codified legally. There are open questions concerning the length of the time horizon—from medium to long-term—over which major progress might be expected in Central Asia. The EU is cautious in pushing for Western-style democracy in the political and cultural contexts of Central Asia. The major contribution of the EU at this stage would be in helping to create a rules-bound context in Central Asia conducive to political change. Beyond domestic legal systems this should also mean the entrenchment of European and international law in the bilateral relations the EU establishes with the Central Asian republics. The EU is well placed to do this, given that its foreign policies are typically carried out through contractual relations with third states. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with the Central Asian states are the vehicle for this, and these agreements can be progressively renewed and deepened, as is planned with Kazakhstan in the first instance.

European analysts believe that Central Asian regional cooperation should be supported where it can clearly deliver benefits, but the EU should not imagine some transplant of its own experience of regional integration in Central Asian soil. The Central Asian region is too small, heterogeneous, and enclaved between very big neighbors for intra-regional cooperation to become a main driver of progress, as has been the case in Europe. The quest for a modern Central Asian regional identity is something that should be viewed sympathetically, with the chance that this would naturally lead to some authentic regulatory foundations. The development of several regional policy dialogs between the EU and the five states together could help to foster this.

On the other hand, the concept of regionalism advocated by the EU for Central Asia could be supplied in a more outward looking or “extroverted” direction, in addition to the quest for intra-regional cooperation. This links to the issue of transcontinental cooperation around Central Asia or a Eurasian dimension to EU policies, and the quest for cooperative multi-polarity.

This is the new challenge, given the passing of the unipolar U.S.-dominated epoch and the rise of the new or renewed major powers, almost all of which are present in Central Asia. The challenge is extremely difficult, given the different foreign policy philosophies currently on display between non-democratic Russia and China, which joined the SCO club, on the one hand, and the Central Asia states agreeing on a strong doctrine of political non-interference versus the democratic EU, U.S., Turkey, and India, which are all inclined to perhaps different degrees to advocate a different regulatory foreign policy concept, on the other.

According to European analysts, there are at least three spheres of policy where the EU, Central Asian countries, and other powers (Russia, China, the U.S., India, etc.) can work together.

- First, cooperation to combat the common security threats coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan, in particular in the form of drugs and radical Islamic terrorism.

- Second, the regional water-hydropower nexus, where major solutions could best rely on international consortia with all major players present.
- Third, optimization of transcontinental transport routes for trade.

As for organizational initiatives, the EU might, if invited, become an observer member of the SCO. Or, alternatively, the EU meetings with the five Central Asian states could for some purposes be extended to include Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.

Moreover, since the EU has decided to have a Central Asia strategy, it is obliged as a matter of strategic consistency to articulate this in its world view.

Conclusion

For obvious reasons, the EU needs Central Asia as a sustainable source of natural resources. This is not all, however: Brussels is convinced that it should expand its regulatory values to the region.

On the other hand, the European states (NATO members in particular) play an important role in combating the threats emanating from Afghanistan. The European Union does not hail the steadily increasing involvement of the United States in Eurasia and has to take Russia's interests into account. Recently, European experts have come to the conclusion that the EU will balance out China's increasing influence in the region, since Russia has stepped aside. These factors should be taken into account when formulating Central Asia's position in relation to the European Union.²⁶

In the near future, the relations between Central Asia and the EU will be affected by the geo-economic situation and geopolitical factors, such as Washington's new strategy in Central Asia; the vague military-strategic prospects in Afghanistan; the relations between Russia and the West; the world economic crisis; and the much greater importance of energy sources and food safety.

This can either positively or negatively affect the relations between Europe and Central Asia. Much will depend on the political will of the actors involved in the geopolitical intricacies. One thing is clear: Europe and Central Asia need each other for objective reasons.

²⁶ See: M.T. Laumulin, "The EU and Central Asia: The View from Central Asia," *Central Asia's Affairs*, No. 4, 2009, pp. 20-24; idem, "Central Asia in the Foreign Policy Strategy of the European Union," in: *New Europe* (Brussels), *Special Report: Kazakhstan*, No. 878, 2010, pp. 20-21.

NATION-BUILDING

**SEPARATION OF POWERS
IN THE STATES OF CENTRAL ASIA AND
THE CAUCASUS**

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Introduction

Today practical realization of the classical principle of the separation of powers in all states (in the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus, two regions of key importance, in particular) has acquired special urgency as directly related to global, national, and regional security. Indeed, coordinated functioning of independent and interacting branches of state power (legislative, executive, and judicial) is part of a reasonable and adequate foreign policy which stems from the country's national interests and to a great extent helps the state deal with threats, risks, and challenges.

The experience of state development and the application of the separation of powers principle in nine countries (Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) has already confronted the expert community with a set of far from simple questions about the role of the traditional forms of governance; the way the classical principles should be borrowed and applied; and the impact of starting conditions on what the governments, parliaments, and courts of the newly independent states can do. Not infrequently those undertaking the reforms refer to the threats to national security to explain what has or has not been done; in some countries reforms degenerated into a pure formality, etc.

I have deliberately included Afghanistan, the specific conditions of which set it apart from the post-Soviet states, and will show how it is developing into a unique platform on which histori-

cal and national elements are being strengthened to move the country toward democracy. All the developed democracies are closely following the political reforms underway in Afghanistan and are extending it ever larger amounts of humanitarian aid.

It is expected that the discussion about the future political system of Afghanistan that will unfold at the May 2012 meeting in Chicago with NATO allies and partners convened “to shape the next phase of this transition” will be very intensive.¹

The recent history of the countries bordering on the region under review suggests that the emergence, functioning, and development of the “tripartite” system of the separation of powers call for close attention. I have in mind the constitutional crisis in Russia in 1992-1993; the political crises of 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008-2009 in Ukraine, the 2009 April parliamentary elections in Moldova, and the political crisis that followed.² Caused by confrontation among the branches of power, some of them developed into clashes of different dimensions (on 3-4 October, 1993, the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation was disbanded by force; on 7 April, 2009, there were large-scale riots in Chiçinâu, etc.).

¹ “Obama Says 10,000 U.S. Troops Leaving Afghanistan in 2011,” 22 June, 2011, available at [iipdigital.usembassy.gov].

² For more detail, see: C.R. Wise, T.L. Brown, “The Separation of Powers in Ukraine,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, No. 1, 1999; E.V. Mandryka, *Realizatsiya printsipa razdeleniya vlastey v Rossii i v Ukraine: sravnitelno-pravovoe issledovanie*, St. Petersburg, 2006; W. Crowther, “Second Decade, Second Chance? Parliament, Politics and Democratic Aspirations in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova,” *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 17, Issue 2, 2011, etc.

So far, the separation of powers issue has not attracted the attention of the academic and expert communities and has not become a subject of closer scrutiny. There is, however, a small number of works dealing with individual countries,³ as well as contributions to the *Central Asia and the Caucasus* journal.⁴

This article is an attempt to widen the circle and number of studies using the traditional “state-problems-prospects” formula and go beyond the scope of political scientific and legal analysis to concentrate on the

- (1) specific,
- (2) comparative, and
- (3) conflict-prone aspects of the phenomenon.

³ See: R. Grote, “Separation of Powers in the New Afghan Constitution,” Max-Planck-Institut für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht, available at [www.zaerv.de]; K.A. Nurpeisov, *Stanovlenie natsionalnoy modeli razdeleniya vlastey v Respublike Kazakhstan: politologicheskiy analiz*, Almaty, 2003; D.J. Jangiryan, *Razdelenie vlastey v Respublike Armenia: konstitutsionnaya model i praktika*, Moscow, 2004; G.A. Shmavonyan, *Konstitutsionnoe pravosudie v Armenii v sisteme razdeleniya vlastey*, Moscow, 2000; A.A. Karaev, “Konstitutsionny sovet Respubliki Kazakhstan v sisteme razdeleniya vlasti,” *Rossiyskiy yuridicheskiy zhurnal*, No. 6, 2008; B.A. Mukhamejanov, “Institut prezidentsva i mekhanizm razdeleniya vlastey: sootnoshenie v edinstve gosudarstvennoy vlasti,” *Srednerusskiy vestnik obshchestvennykh nauk*, No. 2, 2007, etc.

⁴ See: F. Arifoglu, Sh. Abbasov, “The Azerbaijani Parliament—Hostage to the Executive. The First Milli Mejlis: A Five-Year History (a Review),” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6, 2000; N. Saparov, “‘The Turkmen Model of Democracy’: Specific Features,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2, 2000; A. Tukvadze, G. Jaoshvili, R. Tukvadze, “Transformation of the Political System in Georgia Today,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (38), 2006; B. Chedia, “Constitutional Reform in Georgia as a Result of its Political Instability,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 12, Issue 2, 2011.

The Common and the Specific in the Functioning of the “Triad of Power”

The separation of powers principle was outlined, in one way or another, in all of the Constitutions of the Soviet Union (1924, 1936, and 1977) and the Constitutions of Afghanistan (1923, 1964,

1976, 1987, and 1990), which means that on the eve of the Soviet Union's disintegration all of the Central Asian and Caucasian countries and Afghanistan had a *political-legal foundation of sorts as an instrument of further transformation of the "tripartite" system*.

During perestroika the Soviet election system was improved and in December 1988 corresponding amendments were made to the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.; the Congress of the People's Deputies of the U.S.S.R. acquired more powers, a law that was passed in December 1989 strengthened constitutional review; a multiparty system was introduced; the institution of presidency was established in March 1990; in December 1990 the spheres of activity of the legislative, executive, and judicial power branches were separated, etc. This means that the newly acquired independence created "*new conditions for the democratic separation of powers.*"⁵

In the early 1990s, *executive power* (omnipotent under Soviet power) *acquired a new content*. What looked like a fairly banal change of name from Council of Ministers to Cabinet of Ministers meant that the socialist system was gradually turning into a capitalist system with collective executive structures operating within the laws passed by the legislature.

The post-Soviet cabinets of ministers had to work hard to cleanse the economy from the ideological debris that clogged it, soberly assess the natural economic, mineral, and human capabilities of their countries, remove the totalitarian administrative systems together with the planning and distribution functions and price-formation structures of all sorts, etc. The governments had to operate amid the never ending administrative reform.

*The national parliaments, which replaced the Supreme Soviets of the previous period in the first half of the 1990s, had a fundamentally new role to play. Why did this happen? One of the leaders of the newly independent states answered this question by saying that the new model of state order of his newly independent state "contained from the very beginning the deeply rooted and insurmountable contradiction between the new, presidential form of government and the old system of the Soviets that infected the new state with its faults and shortcomings."*⁶

This explains why in 1993 the deputies of the Soviets of all levels (from the local structures of popular representation to the Supreme Soviet of the 12th Convocation) in Kazakhstan began resigning; this self-liquidation took less than a month and a half. It was decided that until new representative structures were elected, all power should be transferred to the president.

Similar processes in other republics took a different course. In 1995-2005, in Kyrgyzstan, for example, the two-chamber parliament failed to fulfill its mission while the results of the elections to the Jogorku Kenesh of 13 March, 2005 were grossly falsified; in 1992-1994, the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan dominated on the domestic political scene; the State Council functioned in Georgia (where it replaced the Supreme Soviet) until 1995, and on 22 November, 2003, rioters captured the building of the Georgian parliament (the first act of the Rose Revolution); in 2003-2008, in Turkmenistan, the role of Mejlis was limited in favor of the Halk Maslahaty; in Afghanistan in 2006 Pakistani leaders were invited to take part in the Loya jirga, and in 2009-2010, liberal members of the Taliban likewise enjoyed this right; on 27 October, 1999, there was a terrorist act in the Armenian parliament, etc.

The above shows that *the road toward true parliamentarianism was a thorny one*.

It should be said that the Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan, Majlisi Oli of Tajikistan, Mejlis of Turkmenistan, Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, and the Majlisi milli (the National Assembly) of Afghanistan relied, to a much greater extent than the parliaments of other states with a predominant Mus-

⁵ I.A. Karimov, "Put sozidaniya—osnova skoreyshego protsvetaniya Rodiny," Speech at the fourth session of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 21 December, 1995, available at [www.press-service.uz].

⁶ N. Nazarbaev, "Konstitutsiya—osnova stabilnosti i protsvetaniya Kazakhstana," 30 August, 2000, available at [www.akorda.kz].

lim population, on the historical principles and traditions of the Islamic political system based on a permanent professional parliament functioning in parallel with the generally elected consultative assembly.

The Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan tried to rely on the country's previous parliamentary experience; the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Parliament of Georgia, and the National Assembly of Armenia *tried to rely on the experience of the developed, European in particular, countries.*

What role does *the institution of presidency* play in the separation of powers in the two regions or, to put it differently, what is the place of the head of state in the "tripartite" system?

The institution of presidency was introduced in Central Asia in 1990: in Uzbekistan in March; in Kazakhstan in April; in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in October; and in Tajikistan in November. The process in the Caucasus began in 1991: in Georgia in April; in Azerbaijan in August, and in Armenia in October. The specific dates were determined by the then leaders of the Soviet republics who wanted to be independent.

According to the Constitutions of Afghanistan (1382 [2003]) and Kyrgyzstan (2010), the president is *the head of state with no functions beyond this definition*. One of the experts has rightly pointed out that in Afghanistan this provision rests on the desire to create a "strong presidential system" and invest the head of state with "*comprehensive responsibility for the smooth functioning of the state as a whole.*"⁷

In Kyrgyzstan, those who wrote the new constitution obviously wanted to overcome the negative political heritage and set up a parliamentary democracy. According to the Venice Commission—European Commission for Democracy through Law, the 2010 constitutional reform in Kyrgyzstan moved the country closer to a much stronger system of separation of powers; it removed the president from the traditional "tripartite" system.⁸

The constitutional reform of 2010 in Georgia changed, in the most radical way, the tripartite system and the functioning of the institutions of presidency and head of state. According to the latest Georgian constitutional innovations, the president cannot annul or suspend any legal act passed by the executive structures or initiate a meeting or a session of the parliament, etc.⁹ There is a Public Service Council in Georgia which functions as a consultative structure under the president to draft decisions in the public service sphere. It consists of representatives of the legislative, executive, and judicial power branches and local administrations (3 from each of them). State development in Georgia has other specifics.

On the other hand, in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and especially Azerbaijan (under its Constitution executive power belongs to the president, while the "Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic is the highest body of executive power of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic" [Art 114.II]) the constitutions make the president part of executive power; there is another specific feature in Azerbaijan's Constitution: "The President of the Azerbaijan Republic is the guarantor of independence of judicial power" (Art 8.IV).

The paradox of our days which says that in Asia "the smaller the country, the higher the centralization of power in it" is explained by the fact that there is a desire to allow the state as the "main reformer" to address and resolve the problems of the transition economy.

Under the constitutions of Uzbekistan and Armenia alone, the president is responsible for *coordination and interaction among the three branches of state power.*

⁷ R. Grote, op. cit.

⁸ "Zaklyuchenie po proektu Konstitutsii KR (redaktsia, opublikovannaya 21 maya 2010 g.). Prinyato Venetsianskoy komissiiy na ee 83-m plenarnom zasedanii (Venetsia, 4 June, 2010)," available at [www.venice.coe.int].

⁹ For more detail, see: B. Chedia, op. cit.

The 2011 constitutional reform in Uzbekistan invested the prime minister with the power to give the president suggestions for candidates for the post of hokims—governors of the vilayats; the chairman of the Senate (the upper chamber) of the Oliy Majlis was invested with the responsibility to act as the head of state (if the president is incapacitated), etc.¹⁰

The Constitution of Kazakhstan defines the president as “*the head of state, its highest official*” (Art 40.1), a status which allows the president to remain above all disagreements. Those who drafted the constitution were convinced that in a polyethnic, multi-confessional, and highly differentiated society, the president should be “the symbol and guarantor of the unity of the people and the state power” (Art 40.2) seen as an effective instrument for ensuring “responsibility of the institutions of power to the people” (Art. 40).

Natural Collisions in Implementing the Classical Model of the “Tripartite System”

The evolution of *the institution of the head of local state administration structures* is another specific feature of the vertical of power. During perestroika, the territorial C.P.S.U. structures lost their monopoly on power, part of which was transferred to the local representative structures (mainly headed by party functionaries). Such specific institutions as *akims* (heads of state territorial administrations) in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan where they head territorial administrations which represent the president and the government, *hyakims* and *raises* in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan (in both republics they head the territorial executive structures and represent the president), *hokims* in Uzbekistan (official representatives of the president who head the legislative and executive power branches), *gamgebeli* in Georgia,¹¹ *başçı* in Azerbaijan, *vali* in Afghanistan, and *marzpet* in Armenia (appointed and removed by the government; the mayor of Erevan being the only exception) reflected the specifics of each country, but, as time has shown, were not equally effective.

The specifics of cooperation between the head of the local state power branch and the local representative power structures explained why they functioned differently in different countries. In Kazakhstan, corresponding legislation was revised several times (including during the constitutional reforms of 1998 and 2007); according to the decision of the Constitutional Council of 2000, the akims have much broader powers than the maslihats (the local representative structures), particularly in the budget sphere.

It seems that some of the innovations introduced in many CIS states merely reflected *the trend toward a stronger vertical of power* started in Russia by Putin during his presidency.

The specifics of the functioning of local self-administration structures and their interaction with the state administration structures, which differed from country to country, explain the differences in efficiency of the former in different countries. Uzbekistan’s experience can be described as most pertinent. After liberating themselves from Soviet domination, the people revived the centuries-old mahalla (meeting of local people) institution. During the transition period (1991-2000), it assumed social security functions; today it has accumulated about 30 functions of the local self-administration structures.

¹⁰ See: Zakon Respubliki Uzbekistan O vnesenii izmeneniy i dopolneniy v otdelnye statyi Konstitutsii Respubliki Uzbekistan (Arts 78, 80, 93, 96, 98), available at [www.lex.uz].

¹¹ For more detail, see: P. Bolashvili, “Osobennosti reformirovaniya systemy upravleniya v Gruzii,” available at [emsu.ru].

During the 2011 elections, about 10 thousand aksakals (heads of meetings of the local people) and over 98 thousand of their advisors were elected (in November-December 2008, 9,881 aksakals and over 85 thousand advisors were elected).

The Afghan experience deserves special attention in the context of a discussion of the roles of the local state administration and self-administration structures and strengthening the vertical and horizontal separation of powers. In Afghanistan, the governors have relative freedom to maneuver, they maintain close contacts with the elders and ulema, local cells of the political parties, human rights organizations, the media (in the form of weekly press conferences), and other civil institutions; they are making efforts to draw women into administrative work, are paying attention to computerization, etc. This can be described as a highly positive experience. On the other hand, they are not bothered about the confessional and ethnic balance in the administrative structures, many of them prefer to see their relatives in responsible posts, which is easy to arrange in the absence of a clear staff structure; there are no strictly outlined budgets for the lower administrative structures; governors and their deputies often do not act as one team; the Taliban is still fairly influential; there is corruption and many other shortcomings.¹²

To exclude any revival of authoritarianism and totalitarianism and to consolidate their “tripartite systems,” the Central Asian and Caucasian countries should develop democratic standards and procedures. One of the local leaders described authoritarianism as a “road to nowhere” and totalitarianism as a “supranational phenomenon”¹³ to be defeated by concerted efforts.

The president of Uzbekistan believes that “poorly educated and ignorant people” support authoritarian and totalitarian trends and that these faults should be remedied during the transition period. There trends should be counteracted by “strong mass public structures” represented by the institutions of civil society, “higher political awareness of the nation during elections,” etc. This is a dual phenomenon: authoritarianism and totalitarianism might be revived in the absence of a separation of powers; the Uzbek president pointed out that chauvinism is one of the instruments which could revive both negative phenomena.¹⁴

Liberalization as a form and post-transition development stage of the “tripartite system” deserves special mention. In Armenia, for example, liberalization is understood as overcoming the negative features of Gorbachev’s perestroika and freedom of movement. In Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, liberalization is associated with financial and economic reforms; in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, with economic modernization. In Kazakhstan, liberalization has been placed in the wider context of the political, economic, juridical, media, and even religious spheres.¹⁵

¹² See: S. Lister, *Caught in Confusion: Local Governance in Afghanistan*, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul, 2005; *Local Governance and Development*, UNDP, Kabul, 2009; *Final Report: Local Governance and Community Development Program Evaluation*, USAID, Kabul, 2009; *Executive Summary: Sub-national Governance Policy*, Independent Directorate of Local Government, Kabul, 2010; S. Miakhel, N. Coburn, *Many Shuras Do Not a Government Make: International Community Engagement with Local Councils in Afghanistan*, United States Institute for Peace, Washington, 2010; M. Lefevre, *Local Defence in Afghanistan: A Review of Government Backed Initiatives*, Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul, 2010; D. Saltmarshe, A. Medhi, *Local Governance in Afghanistan. A View from the Ground*, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul, 2011.

¹³ N.A. Nazarbaev, “O polozhenii v strane i osnovnykh napravleniyakh vnutrenney i vneshney politiki: demokrati-zatsiya obshchestva, ekonomicheskaya i politicheskaya reforma v novom stoletii. Poslanie narodu Kazakhstana,” September 1998, available at [www.alorda.kz].

¹⁴ See: I.A. Karimov, “Gotov sporit s lyubym opponentom,” *Otveti na voprosy gazety Trud*, available at [www.press-service.uz]; idem, “Vazhneyshie zadachi uglublenniya demokraticeskikh reform na sovremennom etape. Vystuplenie na VI sessii Oliy Majlisa Respubliki Uzbekistan pervogo sozyva,” 29 August, 1996 [www.press-service.uz]; idem, “Uzbekistan na poroge XXI veka: ugrozy bezopasnosti, usloviya i garantii progressa,” 1997, available at [www.press-service.uz]; idem, “Po puti demokraticeskogo razvitiya,” Interview to the media in connection with the National Referendum, 27 January, 2002, available at [www.press-service.uz]; idem, “Protsessy preobrazovaniy i obnovleniya neobratimy. Doklad na VIII sessii Oliy Majlisa Respubliki Uzbekistan vtorogo sozyva,” 4 April, 2002, available at [www.press-service.uz].

¹⁵ See: N.A. Nazarbaev, “Istoricheskaya pamyat, natsionalnoe soglasie i demokraticheskie reformy—grazhdanskiy vybor naroda Kazakhstana. Doklad na chetvertoy sessii Assamblei narodov Kazakhstana,” 6 June, 1997, available at [www.akorda.kz].

In Uzbekistan, in December 1995, the first calls to liberalize public life were heard¹⁶; later the media and state-building were also included.¹⁷ In 2000, the country received integrated Programs of Liberalization and Intensification of Reforms in the Political, Economic, and Spiritual Spheres and Ensuring the Country's Security. On the whole, liberalization in Uzbekistan affected state-building and the creation of a civil society and helped to "consolidate the separation of powers principle."¹⁸

Current experience shows that *the stronger controlling functions of the legislative and representative power structures*, in other words, *control by the parliament and the deputies*, can play an important role in strengthening the "tripartite system." The approaches to this are different in different countries.

Under the Constitution of Turkmenistan, the Mejlis "enacts laws, makes amendments and additions to the Constitution and laws, and monitors their performance and their interpretation" (Art 63.1).

Under the Constitution of Tajikistan, the Majlisi milli and the Majlisi namoyandagon are responsible for holding parliamentary hearings; the latter is vested with the power to control the implementation of the budget (Art 60).

The political system of Georgia is shaped by the country's leaders according to the formula: "a strong President and a strong Parliament that will staff and control the Government." The Constitution of Georgia states that "the Constitution must regulate relations with the government, parliament and, what is most important, with society, the demands of which take priority."¹⁹

Independent courts are indispensable for developing the power triad. Armenia's experience is very interesting. According to the Armenian president, to be independent the judges and courts should acquire "financial independence, be independent of the people in power and bureaucrats but, at the same time, should not be independent of the law."²⁰ "The 2008 political crisis revealed the vulnerabilities of our legal framework and practice, lending additional impetus to our efforts. As a result, legislation underwent serious revisions. Fundamental reform of the police system is currently underway. The 2012-2014 Judicial Reform Plan is now being elaborated with the aim of safeguarding judicial independence. Important changes have been made to the Criminal Code articles regarding mass disorder and seizing power by force. The legislation was revised in order to guarantee the exercise of the right to freedom of assembly," etc.²¹

The structures designed to select judges can be described as one of the important instruments of the judicial system's independence. In Armenia, for example, this mission belongs to the Council of Law which submits lists of candidates for judges and proposed promotion of judges to the president.

There is a similar structure in Kyrgyzstan. In Uzbekistan, this function belongs to the Supreme Qualifying Commission under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which selects the best judges and recommends them.

The term in office of the head of state is extremely important for the emergence, functioning, and development of the tripartite system. It bears recalling that when amending the Constitution and

¹⁶ See: I.A. Karimov, "Put sozidaniya—osnova skoreyshego protsvetaniya Rodiny."

¹⁷ See: I.A. Karimov, "Uzbekistan na poroge XXI veka."

¹⁸ I.A. Karimov, "Uzbekistan, ustremlyenny v XXI vek. Doklad na chetyrnadtsatoy sessii Olij Majlisa Respubliki Uzbekistan pervogo sozyva," 14 April, 1999, available at [www.press-service.uz].

¹⁹ "The Meeting of the President of Georgia with the Majority Members of Georgia's Supreme Legislative Body in Anaklia," available at [www.president.gov.ge].

²⁰ S. Sargsyan, "Pozdravlenie prezidenta na prieme v chest 10-letiya Kassatsionnogo suda," 10 July, 2008, available at [www.president.am].

²¹ S. Sargsyan, "Rech na Parlamentskoy Assamblee Soveta Evropy," 22 June, 2011, available at [http://commonspeak.eu/eng/speeches/6/id260].

conducting pre-term presidential elections, the official circles of Kazakhstan (the first to address and resolve the problem) were guided by the desire to avoid the negative impact of the Russian default of 17 August, 1998 on the republic's economic and political stability.

In Uzbekistan these processes took a slightly different course: the transition period had to be lived through, the country's two-chamber parliament launched, the Cabinet of Ministers endowed with more powers, and the results of the reforms in the legal sphere assessed. This meant that *the optimal term of presidency should be established* in full conformity with the president's role as head of state rather than of the executive power branch.²²

I want to conclude my overview of the problems related to the triad of powers with the observation that because of its "deficit of law" Afghanistan could not escape certain collisions. President Karzai pointed out that there was a "unitary presidential system;" he had to admit that the country's leaders are engaged in "intensive examination of the municipal, district, and provincial level governance." At the same time, Hamid Karzai and his associates have rejected the "false choice between centralization and decentralization" and are seeking the best possible correlation between the vertical of power and civil self-administration.

The president of Afghanistan pointed out that there are problems in the "alignment between the levels and functions of government and the delivery of services to citizens" and that his government is convinced that "accountability is imperative in this regard through checks and balances throughout the three branches of power."²³

The Future of Democratic Reforms in the Context of the Separation of Powers

Today, the parliaments of the nine countries have to address different tasks (where content and scope are concerned). In accordance with the Conception of Further Intensification of Democratic Reforms and the Creation of a Civil Society in the Country formulated by the president of Uzbekistan in November 2011, the Oliy Majlis will address *six issues*: the democratization of state power and governance; the transformation of the legal system; the conducting of reforms in the sphere of information to ensure freedom of speech, information, and choice; improvement of the election laws; the creation and development of the institutions of civil society; and the promotion of democratic market reforms and liberalization of the economy.

President of Kazakhstan Nazarbaev has pointed out that the present parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan must address *four sets of law-making tasks* intended to stimulate innovations (in the priority spheres, in particular); to further social modernization; to create a wider legal base for reform of the law-enforcement structures and the judicial system; and to develop the national media and NGOs.²⁴ Even though both chambers of the parliament of Kazakhstan are fairly efficient, the parliamentary opposition creates certain problems while the legislature is not always satisfied with what the government is doing, etc.

²² See: "Osnovnye napravleniya zakonodatel'noy raboty po itogam referendum Respubliki Uzbekistan ot 27 yanvarya 2002 goda. Utverzhdeny Postanovleniem Oliy Majlisa Respubliki Uzbekistan ot 4 aprelya 2002 goda," available at [www.lex.uz].

²³ H. Karzai, *Statement at the 47th Munich Security Conference*, 6 February, 2011, available at [president.gov.af].

²⁴ See: N.A. Nazarbaev, "Vystuplenie na otkrytii 5-y sessii Parlamenta chetvertogo sozyva," 1 September, 2011, available at [www.akorda.kz].

The Majlisi Oli of Tajikistan is improving the mechanisms for applying laws and drawing the expert community into legislative projects.²⁵

The Mejlis of Turkmenistan is engaged in improving the quality of laws and increasing the number of draft laws (in 2009-2010, it discussed 300 drafts, adopted 66 laws, and passed 94 decisions,²⁶ which is considered insufficient); the deputies intended to improve the legal environment of the market economy and mobilize society to pool efforts to promote the changes underway in the republic. In short, the country is moving toward the presidential election scheduled for 12 February, 2012.

The Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan is expected to improve the political system, ensure pluralism of opinions, and promote free competition of ideas and opinions in the media.²⁷

The National Assembly of Armenia is amending some of the regulatory legal acts related to conscription and military service, etc.

The Parliament of Georgia is working on constitutional reform (greater powers for the parliament and the government), while the country is moving toward the parliamentary elections of 2012. Today, the Georgian deputies are working on regulatory legal acts to make the country more attractive for investments and protect state control of sensitive facilities, the rights of national minorities, etc.

John Dalberg-Acton said at one time that “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” This formula remains highly topical, which explains why all constitutional governments take into account and establish the check-and-balances system as practical realization of the separation of powers principle. Different countries realize the principle in different ways.

The constitutional reforms carried out in Uzbekistan in the last ten years can serve as an example: the two-chamber parliament (established in 2002) balanced out state and regional interests; in 2006, the Oliy Majlis and the local Kengashes of people’s deputies acquired new powers; the executive branch of power became more independent, while the functions and powers of the president were somewhat trimmed, etc.²⁸

It should be said that the role of the two-chamber parliament (it exists in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan) is not limited to its regulatory functions. The fact that political parties, self-administration structures, and public movements are involved in parliamentary elections (to the lower chambers in particular) means that *the interests of the broad masses are taken into account to the maximum degree*.

It seems that the Kyrgyz experience of restoring the one-chamber parliament is an exception to the rule. This was done to limit the powers of the president and ensure more democratic decision-making in line with the recent experience and traditions. There are other opinions as well.

It is not easy to put the checks-and-balances system into practice because it incorporates not only the power branches and political parties, but *also other public and civil institutions* into the decision-making (the media and NGOs in particular). We should always bear in mind that the tripartite division of government functions is a social contract of sorts. For example, it is commonly asserted that the

²⁵ See: E. Rakhmon, “Vystuplenie na vstreche s predstavitelnyami intelligentsii strany,” 19 March, 2011, available at [www.president.tj]; idem, “Vystuplenie na zasedanii po sluchayu 15-letiya Obshchestvennogo Soveta Respubliki Tadzhikistan,” 29 April, 2011, available at [www.president.tj].

²⁶ See: “Prezident Turkmenistana podverg kritike deyatelnosti parlamenta,” 20 January, 2011, available at [www.regnum.ru].

²⁷ See: I. Aliev, “Rech na pervom zasedanii Milli Majlisa AR,” 29 November, 2010, available at [www.president.az].

²⁸ See: I.A. Karimov, “Izbranny nami put—eto put demokraticeskogo razvitiya i sotrudnichestva s progressivnym mirom. Doklad na XI sessii Oliy Majlisa RUz 24 aprelya 2003 goda,” available at [www.press-service.uz]; idem, “Obespechenie interesov cheloveka, sovershenstvovanie sistemy sotsialnoy zashchity—nasha prioritnaya zadacha. Doklad na torzhestvennom zasedanii, posvyashchennom 14-letiyu Konstitutsii RUz,” 7 December, 2006, available at [www.press-service.uz].

Law on Political Parties and the Law on the Press (adopted in 2002 and 2003) contributed to the separation of powers in Afghanistan.²⁹

The world community has learned from experience that the checks-and-balances system can become highly effective when *not only the leader but all the people are free to speak for themselves and initiate important constitutional amendments*. This will happen sometime in the future when the countries have laid the foundations for a strong, open, and fair civil society. So far, Afghan law “does not provide for such an individual complaint procedure,” however this can be done through the Independent Human Rights Commission.³⁰

The “*fifth power*” in the region (*religious organizations, the relatively independent economic structures, informal diasporas, public opinion, experts, the blogger communities, and even the shadow sector, organized crime, and the mafia*), as well as the “*fourth power*” (the media), are all equal members of the separation of powers system.

Today, the expert community is interested in *the structures bordering on the “fourth” and “fifth” powers, viz. the social networks* which have already revealed their potential in Moldova, Belarus, and North Africa. This means that the tripartite system will be tested for durability once more.

“Control of the social networks in the Internet is a task to be addressed in the future: all states should act together to stand opposed to this evil.”³¹ This dictum belongs to the Prosecutor General of Kazakhstan; the leaders of some countries are concerned with the possible use of the Internet for destructive purposes.³²

Recently, the “permanent representatives of China, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to the United Nations jointly sent a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon asking him to circulate the International Code of Conduct for Information Security as a formal U.N. document of the 66th session of the General Assembly”³³ to prevent information technology being used for acts of hostility or aggression, for creating threats to international peace and security, and for proliferating information weapons and technologies.

There are many other issues directly related to the future of the tripartite system. Here is one of them: “Where does the public prosecutor’s office belong in the region: does it function inside the triad or outside it?” (In Hungary, for example, there are four independent power branches—three of them common to all other countries, while the fourth is the public prosecutor’s office.)

The public prosecutor’s office (at least throughout the post-Soviet expanse) is relatively free from executive power; it has its own checks-and-balances system when dealing with the other branches of power. It operates at the same level as the legislative, executive, and judicial powers and has its own sphere of competence and exclusive powers, which makes it an independent element of the system.³⁴ At the same time, the far from clear legal status of public prosecution at the constitutional level is still being discussed in the academic circles.

²⁹ See: R. Grote, *op. cit.*

³⁰ See: *Ibidem.*

³¹ “Genprokuror Rossii khochet kontrolirovat sotsialnye seti,” 14 September, 2011 [bbc.co.uk]; “Prokurory vystupayut za kontrol nad sotsialnymi setyami,” 15 September, 2011, Kazakhstan Today Information Agency, available at [www.kt.kz] (see also: B. Temirbolat, “The Political Internet in Kazakhstan: Trends, Problems, and Prospects,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, 2011).

³² Public prosecutor Askhat Daulbaev reminded that in Kazakhstan “public prosecution takes rigid measures” and that “dozens of sites” (LiveJournal among them) had been closed.

³³ See: “China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan Jointly Submit Int’l Code of Conduct for Information Security to U.N.,” available at [http://business.highbeam.com/62876/article-1P2-29622780/china-russia-tajikistan-uzbekistan-jointly-submit-intl].

³⁴ See: V. Yu. Shevchenko, “Mesto prokuratury v sisteme razdeleniya vlastey,” “*Chernye dyry*” v *rossiiskom zakonodatelstve*, No. 1, 2008.

The judicial system should be removed from executive control during the transition period if we want an effective separation of powers system. The legislative and judicial branches should be invested with corresponding powers to keep the executive branch under control.

In Afghanistan, the position of the head of state is relatively strong in relation to judicial power, “the appointment and dismissal of judges in lower courts does not require the parliament’s approval.” “The President is in a position to exert considerable influence over the review practice of the Supreme Court with regard to the constitutionality of laws, legislative decrees, and international treaties, i.e. those matters which are politically most sensitive,” while the “Court cannot exercise these powers on its own initiative.”³⁵

In Uzbekistan, on the other hand, in full accordance with the new version of the Law on Courts adopted in December 2000 (the previous version is dated September 1993) and the amendments and addenda to criminal and procedural legislation, the Ministry of Justice lost its right to recommend candidates for judges, to suspend or terminate pre-term the powers of the judges, and to institute disciplinary proceedings against them. In 2007, the courts acquired the right to sanction detention; the amendments introduced in 2010 improved interaction among courts, prosecutors, investigators, pre-trial investigation structures, and competent structures of other states, etc.

Today, the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus rely on foreign experience and standards to promote state-building at home. President Nazarbaev offered the following comment on Montesquieu’s doctrine of the separation of powers: “It is not of an absolute but rather of a suggestive nature.”³⁶ To improve the tripartite system, however, it is necessary to study and apply the experience accumulated by the democratic countries and the most developed states.

The Central Asian and Caucasian countries should concentrate on developing the “lower stories” of their representative structures and on gradually shifting the triad to the municipal level (Germany has progressed further than the other developed states in this respect).

It is absolutely necessary to strictly delineate the functions unrelated to any of the main branches—public prosecution, central banks, central election commissions, auditing chambers, ombudsmen, presidential administrations, national security councils, etc.). American experience can and should be borrowed.

There are several other pertinent issues.

Conclusion

In all the countries discussed above foreign policy is the prerogative of the heads of state and government. However, today behavior on the international arena depends not so much on coordination and interaction among the power branches as on the relations among those who coordinate foreign policy with the business community and national and international NGOs, etc.

It seems that in the near future the Central Asian and Caucasian countries should move away from arithmetic to algebra; to be implemented the separation of powers principle demands that political-legal issues of a higher order should be successfully resolved.

It is highly important to avoid the extremes that can be described as “divided power,” which leads to an open confrontation among the branches of power, conflicts among the people in power, and mounting opposition between the people and the government. Even the most detailed models of

³⁵ The Constitution of Afghanistan. Year 1382, available at [www.afghan-web.com].

³⁶ N. Nazarbaev, “Konstitutsiya—osnova stabilnosti i protsvetaniya Kazakhstana,” 30 August, 2000.

the tripartite system will never work in a society that has not yet completely accepted democratic values, that is, remains at a fairly low level of legal awareness.

This makes democratic changes absolutely indispensable, and, as we see it, they should occur first and foremost in public conscience.

THE INSTITUTION OF PRESIDENCY IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES: PERSONALIZATION VS. INSTITUTIONALIZATION

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Introduction: Presidentialism and Political Stability

Much has been written about the institution of presidency and its traps, which are especially dangerous in political regimes undergoing transition.¹ Some authors agree that during transition to a new regime, the presidential form of government (as an alternative to deposed dictatorship) makes it harder to consolidate

democracy, while the parliamentary (or parliamentarized semi-presidential form) leads to stronger democracy.

I have already written that today political institutionalization and consolidation of political regimes pose a greater challenge for the Soviet successor-states than making the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. In other words, they must achieve political stability and manageability.² None of the post-Soviet political regimes of the CIS countries can be described as a consol-

¹ See, for example: J. Linz, "The Perils of Presidency," *Journal of Democracy*, No. 1, 1990, pp. 51-69; S. Mainwaring, "Presidentialism, Multipluralism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination," *Comparative Political Studies*, No. 26, 1993, pp. 198-228; M. Shugart, J. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies*, Cambridge, 1992; A. Figueiredo, F. Limongi, "Presidential Power, Legislative Organization, and Party Behaviour in Brazil," *Comparative Politics*, No. 32, 2000, pp. 151-170, etc.

² See, for example: N.A. Borisov, "Institutsionalizatsiia instituta prezidentstva i perspektivy konsolidatsii politicheskikh regimov na postsovetском prostranstve," *Politiia*, No. 3, 2011.

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idated democracy. They differ in “the presence or absence of consolidation and stability of their political regimes.”³

It seems that the Central Asian region is more vulnerable than the rest of the post-Soviet expanse to threats to political consolidation: there are too many pending social, economic, demographic, environmental, and ethnic problems. The list is longer still: zero experience of pre-Soviet statehood; no consensus among the states on border issues; politicization of Islam; the threat of terrorism; and having an unstable Afghanistan as its closest neighbor. This explains why some authors look at the five Central Asian states as a homogenous entity, while the degree of manageability and the extent of regime consolidation differ from country to country.

Political institutionalization is the most important single factor of regime stability interpreted as rationalizing (Max Weber) political institutions as sustainable, meaningful, and reproducible forms of behavior. The level of political institutionalization “is the extent to which political organizations and procedures exist independently of other social groupings” (the family, clan, or class) or an individual.⁴

It seems that the institution of presidency is the key factor of transformation, consolidation, and sustainability of the post-Soviet political systems in Central Asia. An analysis of the issues related to political stability and consolidation presupposes an analysis of the institution of presiden-

³ S. Huntington, *Politicheskiy poriadok v meniaushchikhsia obshchestvakh* (*Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 1968), Moscow, 2004, p. 21.

⁴ See: *Ibid.*, p. 39; *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 20.

cy as an independent variable which affects the political regime (a dependent variable).

This means that the consolidation of any political regime depends primarily on the degree of institutionalization (or depersonalization) of the institution of presidency in any state. This is my central hypothesis.

Here I have made an attempt to classify the post-Soviet Central Asian political regimes on the basis of the criteria of political institutionalization of the institution of presidency, the level of democratization, and the form of government index.

I rely on new institutionalism as a methodological starting point which regards institutions as the “rules of the game” created by rational individuals to facilitate their cooperation. I have divided my attention between formal and informal institutions and relied on the indices of statehood and institutional pillars of democracy elaborated by the authors of the *Politicheskiy atlas sovremennosti*⁵ (Political Atlas of Contemporary Times) project, the Freedom House democracy index, and the form of government index supplied by J. McGregor⁶ and A. Krouwel,⁷ as well as my own index of the institutionalization of the institution of presidency.⁸ The scope of this article, however, limits my analysis of the recent constitutional amendments in Central Asian states to those that indicate the trend.

⁵ See: *Politicheskiy atlas sovremennosti: opyt mnogomernogo statisticheskogo analiza politicheskikh sistem sovremennykh gosudarstv*, A.Yu. Melvil. Head; M.V. Ilyin, E.Yu. Meleshkina, *et al.*, Moscow, 2007, pp. 67-225.

⁶ See: J. McGregor, “The Presidency in East Central Europe,” *RFR/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1994, pp. 12-16.

⁷ See: A. Krouwel, *Measuring Presidentialism of Central and East European Countries*, Amsterdam, 2003.

⁸ See: N.A. Borisov, *op. cit.*

Statehood and Institutional Foundations of Democracy in the Central Asian States

When arranged in accordance with the indices of statehood and institutional foundations of democracy, the Central Asian states form two groups:

- (1) political regimes with a high index of statehood and a relatively low index of institutional foundations of democracy (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan);
- (2) political regimes with a low index of statehood and a low index of institutional foundations of democracy (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan).

It should be said that none of the Central Asian states belongs to the two other groups—the third (a low index of statehood and a relatively high index of institutional foundations of democracy) and the fourth (a high index of statehood and a relatively high level of the institutional foundations of democracy).

This means that there are two clusters of the Central Asian political regimes: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, on the one hand, and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, on the other.

The former three have been demonstrating sustainable authoritarian development throughout the last 20 years, which means that there is authoritarian consolidation of their political regimes.

The two others survived for a long time as unconsolidated autocracies, authoritarian consolidation being hampered by numerous ethnic and regional differences and conflicts. The state coups and armed conflicts in Kyrgyzstan have proven beyond a doubt that its political regime is a long way from consolidation, while all attempts to strengthen authoritarianism are invariably failing.

The Institutionalization of the Presidency Index and Political Stability

When calculating the institutionalization of the presidency index (IPI), I paid particular attention to the following⁹: the number of constitutional amendments related to the president's prerogatives; the presence of political parties as the institutional foundation of the president's power; the president's membership in one of the political parties; his official status as the head of state and/or as chief executive; realization of the president's right to disband the parliament (whether this is done according to the Constitution or not); and execution of the transfer of presidential power since adoption of the first post-Soviet Constitution.

My analysis of IPI based on political practices and its comparison with the indices of the institutional foundations of democracy and democratization of the political regime (democracy index) produced the following table (see Table 1).

My analysis has identified two types of political regimes:

- (1) regimes with a low IPI and a low level of institutional foundations of democracy (Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) and
- (2) regimes with a high IPI and a low level of institutional foundations of democracy (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan).

Turkmenistan has the lowest institutional foundations of democracy index, however its institution of presidency is the most stable in the region. Several political decisions passed after the death of President Niyazov depersonalized the institution of presidency. In 2008, the Khalk Maslahaty (People's Council),¹⁰ which did not fit the system of separation of powers and which was the republic's

⁹ For more on the methodology of my calculations, see: *ibidem*.

¹⁰ See: *The Constitution of Turkmenistan*, available at [http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/_ru/laws/?laws=01dw], 20 September 2011.

Table 1

**IPI, the Institutional Foundations of Democracy Index,
and the *Freedom House* Democracy Index for
the Post-Soviet Central Asian States**

State	IPI (max = 1.0)	Institutional Foundations of Democracy Index (max = 10.0)	Freedom House Democracy Index ¹¹ (2010) (max = 1, min = 7)
Turkmenistan	0.53	0.03	6.93
Tajikistan	0.40	1.05	6.14
Kazakhstan	0.40	2.10	6.43
Uzbekistan	0.20	1.87	6.93
Kyrgyzstan	0.13	2.10	6.21

highest structure of state power, was liquidated. Under President Niyazov, it was used to de facto legitimize the president's decisions and was not accountable to any structure (a situation that had no constitutional or political analogues across the post-Soviet expanse).

Kyrgyzstan with its higher (than Turkmenistan's) index of institutional foundations of democracy has a much lower IPI index. This means that political stability in Central Asia depends not so much on the democratization level, but mainly on political institutionalization.

Indeed, during the years of independence, the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan has been amended nine times (practically all the amendments being related to the powers of the president and the parliament). Uzbekistan has amended its Constitution five times; Kazakhstan, four; Turkmenistan, three times; and Tajikistan, twice. In Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, there are ruling parties which supply the president with Constitutional legitimization. They are Nur Otan in Kazakhstan, the People's Democratic Party in Tajikistan, and the Democratic Party in Turkmenistan.

At the parliamentary elections held on 18 August, 2007 in Kazakhstan (in which seven parties competed for seats in parliament), only the Republican People's Democratic Nur Otan Party negotiated the 7% barrier and scooped all (98) seats in the lower chamber (Majilis); 9 seats went to the deputies elected two days later by the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan¹²; this means that the administrative party of the Leader of the Nation not merely dominated in the parliament, it was the only one.

In Tajikistan, the administrative People's Democratic Party acquired 44 seats out of the total 63 (about 70 percent) in the chamber of representatives; the Democratic Party, the only party in Turkmenistan, has all the seats in the republic's Mejlis.

Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have never had a dominant party, hence the high degree of personalization of the presidency in both countries.

¹¹ See: *Nations in Transit 2010*, available at [<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=551>], 15 September, 2011. According to this methodology, the highest index corresponding to consolidated democracy is 1 score; the lowest index corresponding to consolidated autocracy is 7 scores.

¹² *Majilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, available at [<http://www.parlam.kz/ru/mazhilis/history>], 20 September, 2011.

Kurmanbek Bakiev, president of Kyrgyzstan from 2005 to 2010, tried to ensure dominant positions for the Ak Jol administrative party. He succeeded only to be deposed some time later; the party disappeared without a trace. The political reforms carried out in Kyrgyzstan in 2005-2009 and the 2007 parliamentary elections brought the president's administrative party an absolute majority in the parliament; the electoral system was geared toward its absolute domination. In an effort to consolidate his personal power, Kurmanbek Bakiev set up a "parallel government" with Maxim Bakiev (potential successor of his father) as its head.

The coup of 2005 in Kyrgyzstan was triggered by the failed attempt of President Akaev (who filled the post in 1990-2005) to appoint a "successor."

Monopolization of power spells monopolization of responsibility: this is obvious. The structure that President Bakiev painstakingly erected proved highly vulnerable because it deprived all the political institutions (parties, parliament, government, elections, and governors) of subjectivity. Since all the legal institutions of political involvement were obstructed by the ruling elite, a coup d'état was inevitable. In all political regimes of this kind, removal of the president buries the entire power system. The political regime of Kyrgyzstan was unconstitutional, hence the perilous repercussions.

In Uzbekistan, none of the several political parties can be described as dominating; the largest parliamentary faction (of the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan) has 51 seats (36 percent of the total number of seats in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis). The faction of the People's Democratic Party (initially headed by the president) is 30-strong (about 21 percent of the total).¹³ Today, the president is neither a member nor the leader of any political party.

Every time the president goes beyond the institutional limits of his power, he violates the Constitution. Here is one of the most typical examples: in 2007, the President of Uzbekistan ran for presidency in violation of the Constitution. He merely extended his powers for another 7-year term without bothering to amend the Fundamental Law of his country.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Constitutional Court annulled two versions of the republic's Constitution (of November 2006 and January 2007) to adopt the "Bakiev" version of 2007. In this way, the "Akaev" Constitution of 2003 became valid for a while: to justify the unconstitutional amendment procedure the Constitutional Court referred to the Constitution of 1993 (the 2003 version) that was no longer valid in 2007.¹⁴

Two other presidents (Nursultan Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan and Emomaly Rakhmon of Tajikistan) likewise extended their presidential terms and acquired permission to be elected for an unlimited number of terms. They did this through referendums, the results of which were institutionalized through constitutional amendments. Geared toward specific individuals whose terms in office had to be extended, these amendments allowed them to run for presidency without violating the laws.

Measuring Presidential Power in Central Asian States: Trends and Prospects

To measure presidential power we should identify groups of countries by comparing the indices of forms of government of the Central Asian states.

¹³ [<http://www.parliament.gov.uz/en/>].

¹⁴ See: *Reshenie Konstitutsionnogo suda Kyrgyzskoy Respubliki ot 14 Sentyabrya 2007 g.*, available at [<http://www.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=7089>], 15 September, 2011.

To identify the trends let us trace how the volume of presidential power has changed since the first post-Soviet constitutions. Here I shall rely on the measurement methods suggested by James McGregor¹⁵ (ranking and evaluating each of the presidential powers) and André Krouwel (with amendments by O. Zaznaev).¹⁶

James McGregor assesses the volume of presidential powers out of the maximum possible (100 percent or 84 scores). The Krouwel-Zaznaev method is based on subtraction of the parliamentary index from the presidential index (the minimum index being –10 and the maximum +10). The difference in the “plus” field speaks of presidentialization of the form of government; the results in the “minus” field indicate its parliamentarianization.

My analysis is based on the first, one of the later versions, and the current post-Soviet constitutions (see Tables 2 and 3).

Both tables suggest similar conclusions. The first post-Soviet constitutions of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan gave their presidents the widest powers (+ 7 and +6, respectively). The presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan had less power (+ 4 or 46.4%, 46.4% and 61.9%, respectively), which is explained by the correlation between the resources of the political forces at the stage when the first constitutions were adopted.

At the first and second stages of constitutional amendment, all Central Asian presidents gained more power at the expense of the parliaments, while the form of government indices are closer together; this means that the form of government tended toward presidentialization at the level of constitutional regulations; the same happened to the political regimes at the practical level.

The 1995 Constitution of Kazakhstan empowered the president to issue decrees which had the force of laws. Arts 45 and 53 of the Constitution said: “The President of the Republic shall issue laws, and as envisioned by subparagraph 2 of Art 61 of the Constitution, the President of the Republic shall issue decrees having the force of laws in the Republic.” Art 63 says: “The President of the Republic

Table 2

**Index of Presidential Power of
the Post-Soviet Central Asian States based on
McGregor’s Methods**

State	First Post-Soviet Constitutions (year of adoption)	Later Versions (year of adoption)	Current Versions (year of adoption)
Turkmenistan	72.6% (1992)	72.6% (2003)	65.5% (2008)
Tajikistan	61.9% (1994)	64.2% (1999)	72.6% (2003)
Kazakhstan	46.4% (1993)	76.2% (1999)	84.5% (2011)
Uzbekistan	69.1% (1992)	69.1% (2003)	67.9% (2011)
Kyrgyzstan	46.4% (1993)	78.6% (2003) 57.1% (2007)	45.2% (2010)

¹⁵ See: J. McGregor, op. cit.

¹⁶ See: A. Krouwel, op. cit.; O.I. Zaznaev, *Poluprezidentskaia sistema: teoreticheskie i prikladnye aspekty*, Kazan, 2006, pp. 192-193.

Table 3

**The Form of Government Index of
the Post-Soviet Central Asian States based on
the Krouwel-Zaznaev Method**

State	First Post-Soviet Constitutions (year of adoption)	Later Versions (year of adoption)	Current Versions (year of adoption)
Turkmenistan	+6 (1992)	+6 (2003)	+6 (2008)
Tajikistan	+4 (1994)	+6 (1999)	+6 (2003)
Kazakhstan	+4 (1993)	+7 (1999)	+8 (2011)
Uzbekistan	+7 (1992)	+7 (2003)	+4 (2011)
Kyrgyzstan	+4 (1993)	+6 (2003) +4 (2007)	+1 (2010)

of Kazakhstan may disband the Parliament in the event ... of insurmountable differences between the Chambers of Parliament or Parliament and other branches of state power.”

In 2007, the president received even wider powers. Art 63 said: “The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, after consultation with the Chairpersons of the Chambers of the Parliament and the Prime Minister, may disband the Parliament or the Majilis of the Parliament.”¹⁷ According to Art 86, “the powers of a maslikhat shall be prematurely terminated by the President of the Republic,” which means that the president received wide powers in this respect as well.

In 2000, a Constitutional Law on the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan was adopted; it was amended in 2010 to say: “The First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who stood at the source of Kazakhstan’s statehood and has made an outstanding contribution to the development of sovereign Kazakhstan as a democratic, secular, legal, and social state, is the Leader of the Nation.” The First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan—the Leader of the Nation—is exempt from the limitation of presidential terms; he has the lifelong right to address the people of Kazakhstan, state bodies, and officials with initiatives related to the most important issues of state-building, as well as the country’s domestic and foreign policy and security, to be discussed by the relevant state organs and officials. He can address the parliament, its chambers, and the Cabinet, chair the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, and become a member of the Constitutional Council and the Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

All initiatives related to major issues of domestic and foreign policy should be discussed with the First President.¹⁸

This means that the First President will retain his exceptional political weight even if he retires, which is guaranteed at the level of formal institutions. So the institution of the First President has been institutionalized; this did not happen in the other Central Asian states.

¹⁷ Zakon Respubliki Kazakhstan “O vnesenii izmeneniy i dopolneniy v Konstitutsiiu Respubliki Kazakhstan” ot 21 maya 2007 goda No. 254-III, available at [http://online.prg.kz/Document/Default.aspx?doc_id=30103613&sublink=0], 20 September, 2011.

¹⁸ See: *Konstitutsionny zakon Respubliki Kazakhstan “O Pervom Prezidente Respubliki Kazakhstan—Lidere Natsii ot 20 iulia 2000 goda No. 83-II (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami, vnesennymi Zakonom Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 14 iunia 2010 goda No. 289-IV)*, available at [<http://www.kazpravda.kz/c/1276558396>], 20 September 2011.

Under the Akaev version (2003) of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, the president acquired even more power: he could disband the parliament or convene its special sessions and issue decrees which had the force of laws. The Bakiev version (2007) trimmed the president's powers by giving the party that gained the majority at the parliamentary elections the right to take part in forming the Cabinet. This should not dupe anyone: the amendment was geared toward Ak Jol, the recently formed presidential party, to ensure its domination in the parliament.

The tables show that wider presidential powers were a *sine qua non* of further regime consolidation and that the processes were parallel. An analysis of the current versions reveals that presidential power was highly concentrated in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, while in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan presidential power was trimmed in favor of the parliaments.

In Kyrgyzstan that happened because of the coup of February 2010, President Bakiev's resignation, and adoption of the new Constitution, which established a practically perfectly balanced semi-presidential republic (so far the only one in the region) with a form of government index of +1.¹⁹ Under the current Constitution, the president of Kyrgyzstan can only appoint ministers of defense and security (all the others are appointed by the parliament). He lost his previous right to appoint judges of the Constitutional and Supreme courts, the right of legislative initiative, and several other important personal prerogatives. Art 61 limited the number of presidential terms for the same person to one—an unprecedented initiative in the post-Soviet expanse.

In Uzbekistan, the very long process of "further deepening of the democratic reforms and shaping of a civil society" announced by President Karimov²⁰ took the form of a transfer of some presidential powers to the prime minister. This probably means that a mechanism of power transfer to a successor has started. Art 93 of the amended Constitution, for example, deprived the president of the right to form executive structures and to head them, as well as of the right to appoint deputies of the Public Prosecutor General and remove them from their posts. The new version of Art 96 says that if the incumbent cannot perform his duties, they are to be temporarily transferred to the chairman of the Senate; a new president should be elected within three months. Under Art 98, the political party that gained the majority in the Legislative Chamber, or several parties with an equal and largest number of seats, acquired the right to nominate the prime minister (this right used to belong to the president).

After examining the candidates nominated for the post of prime minister, the president submits the proposals to both chambers of the Oliy Majlis within 10 days for discussion and approval by more than half of the total number of deputies of each chamber.

The institution of vote of no-confidence has been introduced: in the event of insurmountable disagreements between the prime minister and the Legislative Chamber, the parliament may pass a vote of no-confidence against the prime minister by no less than two-thirds of the votes of the total number of deputies of each chamber. In this event, the President removes the prime minister, which means dissolution of the Cabinet.

After consultations with all factions of the Legislative Chamber, the President presents a new candidate to both chambers for discussion and approval.

¹⁹ The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic was enacted by the Law of the KR of 27 June, 2010; adopted by the referendum of 27 June, 2010, available at [http://www.gov.kg/?page_id=263], 20 September, 2011. Its efficiency has not been tested because it will be enacted in full after the presidential and parliamentary elections.

²⁰ See, for example: *Kontseptsia dalneyshego uglublenia demokraticeskikh reform i formirovaniia grazhdanskogo obshchestva v strane*, Report by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov at the joint sitting of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 12 November, 2010, available at [http://press-service.uz/#ru/news/show/dokladi/koncepciya_dalneyeshego_uglubleniya_demo], 15 September, 2011.

If the Oliy Majlis declines the candidate two times, the President appoints an acting prime minister and disbands the Oliy Majlis.²¹

C o n c l u s i o n : *Prospects for Political Institutionalization and Political Stability*

We can identify two clusters based on the index analysis of the forms of government: states in which the president's powers were expanded or remained the same (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan) and states in which the president's powers were reduced (Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan). This means that the two latter states once more formed a cluster with a low IPI level, a low level of institutional foundations of democracy, and a relatively low index of presidential power), while Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan belong to the cluster with a high IPI level, a low level of institutional foundations of democracy, and a relatively high index of presidential power.

The fact that the clusters demonstrate sustainability means that the IPI does not fully correspond to the concepts of "extent of presidential power" or "the democracy index."

Uzbekistan cannot be likened to Kyrgyzstan in terms of the democracy index because the latter does not have a consolidated autocracy. The two regimes are similar because of their low IPI, which threatens their stability; in fact, this means the potentially low stability of their political regimes because governance is personalized.

These regimes can be described as a-constitutional because their presidents do not rely on any party and do not regard political parties as an important instrument of their political domination, which might undermine the regime.

In these states, the president's powers are regularly revised, largely by amending the Constitution and using other methods.

The regimes of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are different: the former can be described as a consolidated personal dictatorship, while the regime of the latter is best defined as clan non-consolidated personal semi-authoritarian regime; attempts to consolidate it ended in coups d'état in 2005 and 2010.

On the other hand, the political regimes in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan have a relatively high IPI, which describes them as consolidated institutionalized autocracies and forecasts their relative stability in the near future. Significantly, their presidents head the parties that hold the majority in the parliament and are very prominent in the political process.

The way power is transferred to the successor will be a key event revealing the limits of and prospects for political stability in these republics. An institutionalized mechanism confirmed in laws will raise the IPI level. Turkmenistan has demonstrated that a high level of IPI ensures a peaceful transfer of power and political continuity.

This means that not only the extent of the president's powers, but also the IPI (discussed in the context of the form of government as a whole) can be regarded as important subjects of analysis for the post-Soviet Central Asian states (and the entire post-Soviet expanse for that matter).

Political stability in Central Asia hinges on a relatively high level of IPI—the higher the IPI, the greater the chances of continued political stability.

²¹ See: *The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, available at [http://press-service.uz/ru/content/constitution/#ru/content/constitution/konstituciya_uzbekistana/page/6], 20 September, 2011.

The above suggests that we need to study the reasons for the emergence of institutionalized or a-institutionalized political regimes in the Central Asian countries. This means that we must scrutinize the structural and procedural factors behind the political institutions, the institution of presidency in particular.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION DURING INDEPENDENCE

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Introduction

The Central Asian states are currently attracting the keen attention of the world community due to the geopolitical significance of their location next to China, Pakistan, India, Iran, and Afghanistan, as well as to economic factors (natural and human resources and transit potential for transcontinental trade). The countries of the region, which enjoys considerable natural and human

resources, are vastly different from each other in terms of territorial dimensions, population size, economic potential, mineral reserves, and state of the social, environmental, and managerial spheres.

This article takes a look at how human resources are faring in the Central Asian region after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of the newly independent states.

Demographic Development of the Central Asian Region in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Periods: General and Specific

Demographic processes reflect the deep-seated changes occurring in a country's economic and sociopolitical life. During Soviet times, the population in the Central Asian countries underwent significant growth and life expectancy increased; more than 34 million people, or 11% of the population of the Soviet Union (1991), lived in the Central Asian republics. What is more, considerable success was achieved in public health, education, and raising the standard of living.

The Central Asian republics were characterized by high average annual population growth rates—2.75% compared to 0.90% for the Soviet Union as a whole (in some other regions, in the Baltic states and the NonBlack Soil Zone, for example, this index was even lower). The region's urban population grew rapidly, whereby there was a simultaneous increase in the number of rural residents, which was the main characteristic of the Central Asian urbanization phenomenon.¹

A real picture of the sociodemographic situation in the region's countries that developed during the years of independence can be gained by studying the results of the censuses carried out approximately every 10 years on the U.N.'s recommendations. Population censuses provide a wealth of information about the country's socioeconomic development, but they do not show the short- and mid-term changes that occur at the national and regional level.

Nevertheless, on the whole, the data gleaned from censuses can be an efficient tool for making decisions aimed at improving the sociodemographic situation.

The first population census during the years of independence in Central Asia was carried out in 1995 in Turkmenistan, where a population of 4,481,000 people was recorded. In 1999, the first national censuses were carried out in Kazakhstan (14,953,126 people) and Kyrgyzstan (4,851,000 people), and in 2000 in Tajikistan (6,127,005 people). As for Uzbekistan, no population census has been conducted there since Soviet times (1989—19,905,000 people).

After independence, the growth rates in the Central Asian population compared to previous years significantly dropped (between 1990 and 2004), for the following three reasons.

1. Out-migration occurred, especially in the early years after independence.
2. Each country's birth rate has fallen by at least 25% since 1992. There has been a significant decline in the number of children under five. For example, in Tajikistan in 1990, this group was 18% of the population, but it was only 13.5% in 1998.
3. With the steady dissolution of national health coverage and a significant decrease in expenditures on social infrastructure, all countries in Central Asia have experienced a sharp decrease in life expectancy at birth since 1990.²

This comes at a time when the Central Asian nations are still very young despite declining birth rates: the share of people under age 17 ranges from 32% of the total population in Kazakhstan to almost 48% in Tajikistan.³

According to the 2005 Human Development Report, Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—is home to almost 60 million people.⁴

Hereafter we will rely on the data presented in the UNFPA (U.N. Fund for Population Activities) State of World Population 2010 Report.

Tajikistan

In 2010, the total population in Tajikistan amounted to 7.1 million people, the projected population by 2050 was estimated at 11.1 million people, the average population growth rate (2005-2010) was 1.6%, and the percentage of the urban population (2010) was 26%.⁵

¹ See: A. Saliev, *Problemy rasseleniia i urbanizatsii v respublikakh Sredney Azii*, FAN, Tashkent, 1991, p. 4.

² See: *Central Asia Human Development Report. Bringing Down Barriers: Regional Cooperation for Human Development and Human Security*, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, Bratislava, 2005, p. 42.

³ See: *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁴ See: *Ibid.*, p. IV.

⁵ See: *State of World Population 2010, From Conflict and Crisis to Renewal: Generations of Change*, Published by UNFPA, New York, p. 104.

In compliance with the decree of Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon *On the Population Census*, between 21 and 30 September, 2010, a population and housing stock census was carried out in the country. According to the preliminary data of the republic's Statistics Agency, Tajikistan's population (as of 21 September, 2010) amounted to 7,565,000 people. So compared to the data of the 2000 census (i.e. over a span of ten years), the size of the republic's population increased by 1,438,000 people, or by 23%.⁶

In June 2010, the Tajikistan parliament adopted the Law on Reproductive Health, which envisaged carrying out several birth control measures. During discussion of the law, President Emomali Rakhmon noted in particular that Tajikistan's population is growing in conjunction with a catastrophic drop in GDP (whereby a higher natural increase in childbirth is noted among the less wealthy rural population). According to Emomali Rakhmon's forecast, by 2020, the population of Tajikistan could reach 8 million people. This means that the 10 hundred square meters of irrigated land enjoyed by each resident of the country today will decrease to 8 hundred square meters, which is not enough. Moreover, taking into account Tajikistan's geographic characteristics, there is no way to increase planting acreages.⁷

Uzbekistan

In 2010, the total population in Uzbekistan amounted to 27.8 million people, the projected population by 2050 was estimated at 36.4 million people, the average population growth rate (2005-2010) was 1.1%, and the percentage of the urban population (2010) was 36%.⁸ However, it should be noted that no population census has been carried out in the republic since 1998. The total size of Uzbekistan's population can only be judged from estimates based on vital statistics records or statistical surveys carried out on the basis of a representative selection of the population. According to the current records, as of 1 April, 2011, the size of Uzbekistan's permanent population amounted to 28.54 million people; this is reported by the republic's State Statistics Board.⁹

Uzbekistan, like other Central Asian states, is characterized by a relatively young population, in the structure of which there is a high share of able-bodied people. According to one of the forecasts, the increase in population from 24.6 million (at the beginning of 2000) to 45.0 million (2050) will put an extra burden on the vital support system, primarily due to drinking water and food shortages; the number of people per 1 hectare of cultivated land will increase, which in 1999 amounted to six people.¹⁰

At present, articles on compulsory sterilization of women in Uzbekistan aimed at reducing the birthrate are appearing.¹¹ According to the official data, in the past 10-15 years, the republic's government has been exerting efforts to form a healthy gene pool (by encouraging mothers to space their

⁶ See: "Naselenie Tadjikistana za 10 let vyroslo na 23%," available at [http://www.dp.ru/a/2011/05/24/Naselenie_Tadjikistana_za/], 19 November, 2011.

⁷ See: I. Adyasov, "Osnovnye ugrozy dlia ekonomiki Tadjikistana v 2011 godu," available at [www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1364453.html], 19 November, 2011.

⁸ See: *State of World Population...* p. 104.

⁹ "Chislennost' postoiannogo naselenia Uzbekistana—28,54 milliona chelovek," available at [<http://www.uzdaily.uz/articles-id-6652.htm>], 19 November, 2011.

¹⁰ See: R. Murtazina, "Demographic Processes and the Health of Uzbekistan's Population," *Uzbek Humanitarian Journal. Public Opinion. Human Rights*, No. 1, 2002.

¹¹ See: "Uzbekistan: Zhenshchin sterilizuiut. Khirurgicheskie instrumenty—net," 20 September, 2010, Prepared by Maria Yanovskaia, available at [<http://www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=6740>], 19 November, 2011.

children) and conducting a policy aimed at orienting the family toward bringing up healthy, educated citizens rather than having more children.

The Uzbekistan government organized national campaigns such as “Healthy Generation Year,” “Year of Mother and Child,” and “Health Year.” The international nongovernmental charity fund Soglom avlod uchun was created by a presidential decree of 23 April, 1993, the main objective of which is to ensure the health of the future generation, provide an efficient maternity and child welfare service, and create favorable conditions for the physical, intellectual, and moral development of children.

Since the end of the 1990s, international organizations have been helping to promote extensive educational activity in the country aimed at family planning, encouraging maternal health, and preventing early marriages and too frequent pregnancies.

According to Uzbek researchers, the steady high birthrate in the country was not underpinned by corresponding economic growth, which had a negative effect on the standard of living of large families. Demographic growth was surging ahead of economic development, particularly in the 1970s-1980s. This was when the economy underwent increasing stagnation, while noneconomic forms of coercion did not yield the desirable result. The problematical demographic situation also caused relative overpopulation of the oases; rural migration rates were extremely low.¹²

Concern about the high population growth rates in Uzbekistan was also expressed in the 1999 Human Development Report. It noted that “although it has notably decreased in recent years, at the present growth rate some 48 million people will be living in the republic by 2040, twice the current total. By the end of the next century the total population will reach 100 million. The country’s land and water resources cannot stand such increased demographic pressures without a loss in the living standards of its people.”¹³

Kyrgyzstan

In 2009, the second population and housing stock census was carried out in the Kyrgyz Republic. On 24 March, 2009, the size of the republic’s de facto population amounted to 5,107,640 people, while the permanent population was 5,362,793 (1,827,136 of whom were urban residents and 3,535,657 rural).

One of the most significant changes in the composition of the population was the increase in number of “temporarily absent” people. According to the official data, their number currently amounts to 330,000, which is 6 times higher than in 1999.

According to the National Statistics Board of Kyrgyzstan, between 1999 and 2009, the average annual increase in population amounted to 1.1% (whereby the rural population is growing 0.3% faster than the urban). Among the regions, the maximum permanent population growth was noted in the Osh Region, where the number of residents has increased by 161,000 in the past ten years and today amounts to almost 1 million people (not counting the city of Osh).¹⁴

According to the UNFPA, in 2010, the total size of Kyrgyzstan’s population amounted to 5.6 million people, the projected population by 2050 was estimated at 6.9 million people, the average

¹² See: M. Tokhtakhodzhaeva, *Utomlennye proshlym. Reislamizatsiia obshchestva i polozheniie zhenshchin v Uzbekistane*, Tashkent, 2001, p. 217.

¹³ *Human Development Report. Uzbekistan 1999*, Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 2000, p. 67.

¹⁴ See: A. Zhetigenova, A. Bolotbekova, “Natsstatkom opublikoval detali perepisi naseleniia,” available at [<http://kloop.kg/blog/2010/03/03/nacstatkom-opublikoval-detali-perepisi-naseleniya>], 19 November, 2011.

population growth rate (2005-2010) was 1.2%, and the percentage of the urban population (2010) was 35%.¹⁵

By the beginning of the 21st century, the aggregate birth rate in Kyrgyzstan dropped to 2.4 births per woman of the nominal generation, whereby to 1.7 in the cities and to 2.9 in rural areas. Beginning in 1994, the birth rate in cities was lower than the level necessary to maintain reproduction of the population. According to U.N. forecasts (average estimates), by around 2015, the aggregate birth rate in Kyrgyzstan could drop to a level that does not maintain reproduction of the population.¹⁶

The overall demographic situation in the country is characterized by the fact that more than half of Kyrgyzstan's population is younger than 25, while around 32% of the population is between the ages of 15 and 25.¹⁷ In so doing, the southern regions of the country ensure around 62% of the population growth, whereas it is shrinking in the northern parts of the country. At the beginning of 2005, the country's population growth amounted to 27.5%.¹⁸

Turkmenistan

The demographic data for Turkmenistan are rather contradictory; this is because the country supplies the U.N. and corresponding CIS committees with limited statistics. According to the 1995 census, the size of the country's population amounted to around 4.5 million people. However, attempts to carry out a selected population census in 2004 were not crowned with success. According to the researchers who carried out extrapolation of the 1995 census data, keeping in mind the country's official population growth rates, Turkmenistan's population as of the beginning of 2005 amounted to approximately 6 million people.¹⁹

According to the UNFPA, in 2010, the total size of Turkmenistan's population amounted to 5.2 million people, the projected population by 2050 was estimated at 6.8 million people, the average population growth rate (2005-2010) was 1.3%, and the percentage of the urban population (2010) was 50%.²⁰

According to the Turkmenistan State Statistics Board, as of 1 January, 2011, the share of women in the country's population structure amounted to 50.2%, whereby it was essentially the same among the urban and the rural population.

Turkmenistan is a country with an average urbanization level; the share of urban population in the republic amounts to 50.6% (2010).²¹

The U.N. News Center reports that Turkmenistan is the first CIS country to carry out a trial electronic population census (a full electronic population census of Turkmenistan will be carried out in

¹⁵ See: *State of World Population...* p. 102.

¹⁶ See: M. Denisenko, "Demograficheskiy perekhod v Kyrgyzstane. Rozhdaemost bistro snizhaetsia," available at [<http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0191/tema01.php>], 19 November, 2011.

¹⁷ See: *Human Development Report 2009/2010. Kyrgyzstan: Successful Youth-Successful Country*, UNDP, Bishkek, 2010, 102 pp.

¹⁸ See: *Strategicheskaya matritsa Kyrgyzstana: retrospektiva, sovremennost i stsenerii budushchego razvitiia*, ed. by A. Bayshushakov, Institute of Economic Strategy, Moscow, 2007, p. 213.

¹⁹ See: S. Kamenev, "Demografia," available at [<http://encyclopaedia.big.ru/enc/country/TURKMENISTAN.html>], 19 November, 2011.

²⁰ See: *State of World Population...* p. 104.

²¹ See: "Turkmenistan v tsifrakh," available at [<http://www.stat.gov.tm/ru/content/info/turkmenistan>], 19 November, 2011.

December 2012). According to the results of the trial census, most of the respondents are people with higher education and the students of national and foreign higher education institutions. In addition to the state language, most young people also have command of two or three foreign languages; more than half of the respondents have access to the Internet.²²

Kazakhstan

When it acquired its independence, the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan also encountered several socioeconomic and psychological problems. According to the data of the 1999 population census, 14,953,126 people lived in Kazakhstan. However, according to the 1989 census, the country's population amounted to 16,199,154 people. So during the time that ensued between these censuses, Kazakhstan's population dropped by 1,246,028 people, or by 7.7%.²³

According to the results of the 2009 census, the size of Kazakhstan's population amounted to 16,009,600 people. Compared to the 1999 census, the size of the republic's population increased by 1,028,300 people (that is, during the time between the censuses, there was a 6.9% increase). The size of the urban population amounted to 8,662,400 people and the rural to 7,347,200 people. In so doing, the urban population grew by 206,600 people (or by 2.4%) and the rural by 821,700 people (or by 12.6%). The share of urban population in the country amounted to 54.1%, and the rural to 45.9%, while in 1999, these figures amounted to 56.4% and 43.6%, respectively.²⁴

According to the UNFPA, in 2010, the total size of Kazakhstan's population amounted to 15.8 million people, the projected population by 2050 was estimated at 17.8 million people, the average population growth rate (2005-2010) was 0.7%, and the percentage of the urban population (2010) was 59%.²⁵

Conclusion

If we proceed from the data presented by the UNFPA, the population of Central Asia in 2010 amounted to 61.5 million people, of which Uzbekistan accounts for 45%, Kazakhstan for 26%, Tajikistan for 12%, Kyrgyzstan for 9%, and Turkmenistan for 8%. The lowest level of average population growth between 2005 and 2010 is seen in Kazakhstan; it amounts to 0.7%. It is followed by Uzbekistan—1.1%, Kyrgyzstan—1.2%, and Turkmenistan—1.3%, while Tajikistan has the highest index—1.6%. The highest birth rate among all the Central Asian countries is seen in civil-war-torn and economically beleaguered Tajikistan, while Kazakhstan has the lowest birth rate (0.7%).

On the whole, there are several factors that explain the drop in birth rate seen over the past 20 years in Central Asia. In the first years of the reforms, the standard of living of a significant part of the population dropped, which had a negative effect on family wellbeing and plans to have children.

²² See: "V Turkmenistane proveli probnuiu e-perepis naseleniia," available at [<http://www.ict.kg/v-turkmenistane-proveli-probnu>], 19 November, 2011.

²³ See: *Itogi perepisi naseleniia 1999 goda v Respublike Kazakhstan. Chislennost i razmeshchenie naseleniia v RK*, ed. by A. Smailov, Vol. 1, Almaty, 2000, 100 pp.

²⁴ See: "Itogi natsionalnoi perepisi naseleniia 2009 goda," available at [www.stat.kz], 19 November, 2011.

²⁵ See: *State of World Population*... p. 102.

The increase in labor migration led objectively to a decrease in the number of marriages and undermining of the customary family way of life (due to the long absence of one of the parents). It should also be noted that according to expert evaluations, in recent years labor migration from Central Asia is assuming female features, since women are being increasingly drawn into it.

Moreover, the increase in birth regulation, family planning, and the growing availability of contraception have had a certain influence on the demographic situation in the region.

As for public and international family planning organizations in Central Asia, their activity is aimed at creating the necessary conditions for preserving and improving the population's reproductive health.

At present, trends are appearing in the demographic behavior of the region's population toward small families; according to researchers, economic and social factors are the main reasons for this. However, the drop in birth rate depends not only on socioeconomic (although they play a significant role in certain cases), but also on mental and psychological factors.

For example, in the villages of the southern and western regions of Kazakhstan, where the indigenous population, which adheres to traditional values (including family), predominates, there are more large families than in the industrially developed northern and eastern areas. According to national statistics, in the Mangistau and South Kazakhstan regions, where Kazakhs primarily reside, the aggregate birth rate is more than twice as high as the corresponding index for the Kostanai and North Kazakhstan regions, where the share of European population is high.

So it can be noted that in the Central Asian region, there is trend toward a drop in the birth rate, which is differentiated in terms of country, region, city, village, as well as ethnic and social groups of women. A direct correlation can be seen: the higher the education level of women and the greater urbanization, the lower the birth rate. However, the birth rate index among women of the local ethnicities is largely determined by cultural, national, and religious traditions.

Some countries of the region are carrying out state measures aimed at stimulating the birth rate (for example, in Kazakhstan), while in others they are aimed at restraining it (Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). On the whole, raising the standard of living seems to be extremely problematic for most CA countries, which essentially have a very young population, approximately half of which has not reached able-bodied age. This is because the economically active part of the population is responsible for the upkeep of too many dependants.

At the current stage, it seems important to carry out a deeper analysis of the possible consequences of the demographic and migration processes in Central Asia and their influence on the sociopolitical situation in the region. It should be noted that demographic policy, which is usually based on a variety of different measures (economic, administrative-legal, educational, and propagandistic), could encounter factors that cannot easily be manipulated.

On the whole, as we see it, the demographic situation cannot be changed by either programmed precepts or short-term measures, however, nor should we disparage the importance of socioeconomic measures in stimulating the birth rate.

We can only talk about long-term actions, the results of which will be seen in tens of years. In particular, attention should be primarily focused on cultivating and promulgating family values and on enforcing a corresponding image of the family as the main social state institution in public conscience.

AFGHANISTAN'S POLITICAL SYSTEM: INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS, INTERNAL RESOURCES, AND UNTAPPED RESERVES

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Introduction

A democratic political system is the key to Afghanistan's future prosperity. The world community is convinced of this, while the already achieved legitimization and democratization of power in this country have inspired its neighbors, the Arab Spring countries, and the Muslim East as a whole. However, the Taliban and its abettors in other countries and other more civilized forces (acting on the sly or even openly) are determined to block the road to progress.

The main parameters of the political process in Afghanistan were outlined and accepted as a guide to action ten years ago: a new constitution; a state ruled by law; efficient institutions of state governance; a civil society and political parties as one of its elements; human rights; and a Road Map to free elections. A stronger political system has remained on the agenda of several consecutive international conferences in Bonn (2001); Berlin (2004); London (2006 and 2010), Rome (2007), Paris (2008), Moscow (2009) and The Hague (2009).

It is not easy to study the country's political system during the transition period, identify its context, pinpoint its problems, and outline its prospects. It is much easier to dissect the entire structure of state power (in fact, today the term "political system" looks a bit conservative), which cannot be done in the case of Afghanistan because of the ever widening involvement of non-state civil institutions in politics. In short, we should take into account all the entities of Afghan politics.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has supplied the expert community with a unique target of integrated studies. I have in mind three fairly "widely spaced" components:

- (1) The relations between the International Security Assistance Force — ISAF members, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, the Soviet successor states in Central Asia, etc.
- (2) The country's own past and present.
- (3) Its development prospects.

The Previous Decade Assessed

The country can rely on its previous experience of presidency when Mohammed Daoud Khan (1973-1978) filled the post. This period, however, is best described as tempestuous: coups and regime changes followed one after another: the coup of 16-17 July, 1973; the Saur Revolution of 27 April,

1978, and the events of 27 April, 1992. In Afghanistan, presidency has obviously been associated with dictatorship.

President Karzai is not a dictator; his power is better described as the intention of the international coalition to establish a strong (not yet American) Afghan “intermediate”¹ model of power in the form of “strong government leadership”² in which the head of state is responsible for state and civil development: “The new Afghan Constitution deliberately transcends the classical division of powers in order to assign to the President a comprehensive responsibility for the smooth functioning of the state as a whole.”³

Hamid Karzai proved to be a fairly efficient leader, at least in the early years of his presidency. Zalmay Khalilzad, special representative of the U.S. President for Afghanistan and the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan in 2003-2005, has pointed out that his country first relied on “powerful political figures while helping Afghans to build a political system that would require these forces to play by a new set of rules.”⁴

It should be said in all justice that President Karzai is still coping with his role as head of state. He initiated and realized several important social, economic, public, political, and judicial projects very much approved by the key countries; specific parameters of transfer of power and responsibility to the Afghan authorities being his recent initiative.⁵

The Peace Jirga, an assembly of representatives of wide popular masses convened on his initiative in June 2011, laid the foundation for *the national reconciliation policy*.

Together with former president Burhanuddin Rabbani, President Karzai set up the High Peace Council to represent all parts of the country and to address at least some of the problems.

It should be said that the American president “fully supported an Afghan political process that includes reconciliation with those Taliban who break ties with al-Qa’eda, renounce violence and accept the Afghan constitution.”⁶ After the famous speech U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivered in New York in February 2011,⁷ the United States increased its diplomatic support of the national reconciliation policy initiated by the Afghan president.⁸

In fact, one of the previous regimes, likewise, tried to bring in national reconciliation. I have in mind Mohammad Najibullah who on 30-31 December, 1986 spoke at length in Kabul about peace and security and the measures needed to stop the fratricidal war. For obvious reasons, the ideas and formulas were suggested by Moscow and sanctioned by the Kremlin.

His pro-Soviet regime managed to achieve a ceasefire and involve the tribal chiefs and other respected people from the tribal area in a dialog with the authorities; the top leaders talked to the opposition and neutral forces, helped repatriate refugees, etc.

¹ H. Karzai, *Statement at the 47th Munich Security Conference*, 6 February, 2011, available at [president.gov.af].

² “Clinton Says Building New Silk Road is Critical for Afghanistan,” 23 September, 2011, available at [iipdigital.usembassy.gov].

³ R. Grote, “Separation of Powers in the New Afghan Constitution,” *Max-Planck-Institut für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht*, 2004, p. 905, available at [http://www.zaoerv.de/64_2004/64_2004_4_a_897_916.pdf].

⁴ Z. Khalilzad, “Lessons From Afghanistan and Iraq,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21, No. 3, July 2010, p. 46.

⁵ See, for example: “O vstrechakh zamestitelya ministra inostrannykh del RF A.N. Borodavkina i spetspredstavite-lyu prezidenta RF po Afghanistanu Z.N. Kabulova so spetspredstavitelem SShA po Afghanistanu i Pakistanu M. Grossmanom,” 28 March, 2011, available at [www.mid.ru].

⁶ B. Obama, “Statement by the President on the Afghanistan-Pakistan Annual Review,” 16 December, 2010, available at [www.whitehouse.gov].

⁷ See: “Clinton’s Remarks on Afghanistan and Pakistan to Asia Society,” 18 February, 2011, available at [iipdigital.usembassy.gov].

⁸ See: *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General*, 23 June, 2011, available at [http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/379/13/PDF/N1137913.pdf?OpenElement].

Najibullah's Soviet advisors could rely on the Bolsheviks' vast and unprecedented experience of national reconciliation in the Bukhara Republic (1920-1924), which, by the way, was one of Afghanistan's closest neighbors. This experience was borrowed and is being borrowed by European and African countries; it was applied in Tajikistan and is being applied in Kyrgyzstan.⁹

A stronger vertical of power can be described as another great achievement along with the much more effective local administration structures and improvement of "national and sub-national governance."¹⁰

Today, the governors and their administration tend toward much closer cooperation with the local self-administrations, religious figures, civil institutions, and the media. They have established reception hours for local people, computerized administrative functions, been working to involve women more in the government, etc. Recently, the statuses of deputy governors have been changed; personnel policy has become much more transparent; there is a Commission for Civil Service, etc. The changes have been hailed abroad and, with less enthusiasm, inside the country.¹¹

The international coalition concentrates on encouraging civil contribution to *efficient and conscientious state governance*. In two-and-a-half years—from January 2009 to July 2011—the number of American civil servants and experts stationed in the country increased three-fold. They are doing a lot to promote the country's development. According to Hillary Clinton, however, "it was not, nor was it ever, designed to solve all of Afghanistan's development challenges."¹² Today over 1,100 civil experts from nine federal structures of the United States are working in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; they are dealing with a wide range of problems from agriculture to infrastructure and from fighting drug trafficking to training local civil servants.¹³

Much has been done to improve *legislation and parliamentary activities*; there is a definite strategy to be applied in legislation; the country has joined interparliamentary organizations; people from different, often opposing, camps were drawn into law-making in a more or less consistent manner.¹⁴ The newly elected National Assembly of Afghanistan (or, rather Wolesi Jirga, its lower house) is working toward keeping political confrontation more or less in check¹⁵; it has already established a certain amount of control over the government and is organizing public hearings. Today, people in Afghanistan can boast access to direct broadcasting of parliamentary discussions, a practice borrowed from developed countries.¹⁶

In a very short period of time Afghanistan created a more or less consistent regulatory-legal basis of *elections at all levels*. On 16 August, 2010, the Electoral Law was passed¹⁷ which legalized the system of vote counting, funding of elections, registration of candidates, accreditation of journalists and observers, representatives of political parties and independent observers, and the rules for public opinion polls and, most importantly, allocated a certain number of seats in Wolesi Jirga to women. Several codes of conduct were adopted: the Code of Conduct for the Media, the Code of Conduct for Observers and Political Parties, and the Code of Conduct for Candidates.

⁹ See: "Assistant Secretary Blake on U.S. Policy in Central Asia," 10 March, 2011, available at [ipdigital.usembassy.gov].

¹⁰ *NATO Declaration Reaffirming Commitment to Afghanistan's Security*, 20 November, 2010, available at [iipdigital.usembassy.gov].

¹¹ See: *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security...*

¹² "Afghans Seeing Progress from U.S. Civilian Surge, Clinton Says," 23 June, 2011, available at [iipdigital.usembassy.gov].

¹³ See: "Clinton's Remarks on Afghanistan and Pakistan to Asia Society."

¹⁴ See: G. Gran, "Afghanistan: The Beginning of Democracy—Achievements and Challenges," available at [www.asgp.info].

¹⁵ See: *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security...*

¹⁶ See: G. Gran, op. cit.

¹⁷ See: Electoral Law [As in effect 16 August, 2010], available at [www.iec.org.af].

The largest international structures described the parliamentary elections of 18 September, 2010 as an important step toward democracy.¹⁸ The Independent Election Commission continued functioning; the local election structures demonstrated “real courage under pressure from all sides.”¹⁹ This time, warlords stood no chance; it was businessmen and members of civil society who ran for the parliament; those members of the moderate opposition who were elected acquired a chance to organize themselves into a constructive parliamentary opposition.

There is an Electoral Complaints Commission in Afghanistan, a very specific structure entrusted with counting the votes cast at the parliamentary elections once more (the procedure was concluded on 27 April, 2011). President Karzai set it up using the money of international organizations to fight falsifications; as a result about a quarter of those who passed were disqualified. The Independent Election Commission’s powers were not contested.

The *reform of the legal system* very much affected the political system of Afghanistan by legitimizing governance, protection of human rights, etc. It is believed that the reform began in 1964 when the judicial system was revived²⁰; laws registered; all regulatory-legal acts improved; the quality of administration of justice upgraded; new judges trained in a new way; a system of advanced vocational training set up, etc.²¹ Today, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission operating under a special law²² with a strategy for 2010-2013,²³ and the Judicial Reform Commission (the latter not being very successful) are functioning in the country.²⁴ International organizations are also involved in upgrading legal awareness and culture in Afghanistan.

When talking about *fighting corruption*, it should be borne in mind that this crime undermines the legitimacy of any political system because “a citizen that cannot trust the government is unlikely to defend and support it.”²⁵

The international community says that in Afghanistan “corruption remains a major problem” and that “fighting fraud and waste is one of our highest priorities.”²⁶ The country’s leaders adopted several fairly efficient anti-corruption documents: Road-map for fighting Corruption in Afghanistan, Anti Corruption Strategy, and several other documents.

Certain departments and ministries moved farther than others in their anti-corruption efforts; this was especially obvious in the customs structures (previously highly corrupt) where the improved situation immediately raised budget revenues.

The High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption acting according to the Strategic Plan for 2011-2013 has achieved considerable success; there are attempts to spread anti-corruption efforts (with the active participation of civil society) to all structures of state power.

The Constitution pays particular attention to *the rights of women*, who have already become much more active than before; the recent laws specified the number of seats reserved for women in the low-

¹⁸ See: *NATO Declaration Reaffirming Commitment to Afghanistan’s Security*, 20 November, 2010.

¹⁹ M. Sedwill, *Afghanistan: The 2011-14 Campaign*, Speech by Ambassador NATO’s Senior Civilian Representative for Afghanistan, at the Institute for International Affairs, Helsinki, 25 January, 2011, available at [www.nato.int].

²⁰ See: J. Thier, “Reestablishing the Judicial System in Afghanistan,” *Working paper of Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law*, Stanford Institute for International Studies, available at [cddrl.stanford.edu].

²¹ See: M. Tondini, “Rebuilding the System of Justice in Afghanistan: A Preliminary Assessment,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2007, pp. 333-354; N. Nauta, “The Judicial Reform Process in Afghanistan: In Everyone’s Interest,” *NATO Review*, No. 3 (April), 2009, p. 63.

²² See: *Law on the Structure, Duties and Mandate of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)*, available at [www.aihrc.org.af].

²³ See: *Strategic Plan and Action Plan*, available at [www.aihrc.org.af].

²⁴ See: N. Nauta, op. cit.

²⁵ S. Kouvo, “Rule of Law Deficits as a Security Challenge: ‘Touching the Surface’,” *NATO Review*, No. 3 (April), 2009, p. 23.

²⁶ “Clinton’s Remarks on Afghanistan and Pakistan to Asia Society.”

er house of the National Assembly and posts in the government. Much is being done to draw women into other spheres of public activities.

There is the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Afghanistan headed by an ethnic Uzbek woman Husn Banu Ghazanfar; there is the Afghan Women's Business Federation and a fairly large number of women's NGOs. The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan was adopted and is being implemented jointly with several international organizations.

One of the experts has put the very essence of the rule of law in Afghanistan in a nutshell: "The rule of law continues to be a blend of government-centered (formal) and community based (informal) initiatives."²⁷ Since about 80 percent of the country's population lives in the countryside, the community-based principle plays an important role in the country's political system and its evolution. From the very beginning, the Afghan leaders have been determined to encourage local self-administration ("community development councils"); the National Solidarity Program has already been realized in two-thirds of 393 administrative units; this means that more than 26 thousand communities have the opportunity to join small-scale development projects.²⁸

Do Contradictions Move the Political System Forward or Shake It Loose?

The parliamentary system of governance and the federative organization of the state have fairly influential supporters in Afghanistan for several very specific reasons: the president and each of the vice-presidents represent different tribes, while members of national minorities have no chance of filling the top posts. There is a more or less common opinion that this system contradicts the nationalities policy.

The practice of appointment of governors by the president might create numerous problems; the president's constitutional right to "exert considerable influence over the review practice of the Supreme Court" has already invited numerous questions.

Zalmay Khalilzad has offered an apt formula: "The concentration of power in the presidency means that those who lose a presidential election may feel shut out of power."²⁹

The presidential circles remain allergic to the pro-Soviet idea of "all-Afghan" or "national" parties (today there are about 8 major parties in Afghanistan, 7 Islamic, and several leftist parties).³⁰ The presidential order is "guilty" of a special status of *the administration of the head of state*, which opens access to a range of resources and services.

The past experience of national reconciliation (in the Bukhara Republic in particular) confirms what one of the experts described as a key to success: "well-balanced punitive and reconciling components."

Widespread opposition to official powers fed by human vindictiveness can be expected if punitive components predominate.

In the opposite case, crime victims will have no trust in the judicial system and the political process as a whole.³¹

²⁷ S. Kouvo, op. cit.

²⁸ See: H. Karzai, *Statement at the 4th U.N. Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)*, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 May, 2011, available at [president.gov.af].

²⁹ Z. Khalilzad, op. cit.

³⁰ See: "Leftist Parties of the World. Afghanistan," Marxists Internet Archive, available at [www.broadleft.org].

³¹ See: C. Maass, "National Reconciliation in Afghanistan. Conflict History and the Search for an Afghan Approach," *Internationales Asienforum*, Vol. 37, No. 1-2, 2006, p. 35.

National reconciliation takes time; any attempts to speed it up may intensify antagonism and increase social and political instability; procrastination will destroy what has been done and consolidate the destructive forces; this is fraught with passing the social conflict down to future generations.

There are contradictions *between the central and provincial structures of governance*. Local administrators cannot accept the fact that those who promote the national reconciliation programs in the center prefer to deal with former militants in the provinces rather than the locally dominating communities³²; as a result the governors and the communities feel betrayed. On the other hand, executive powers have not yet abandoned the old habit of neglecting the people and their needs; they frequently act instead of the police, public prosecutors, courts, etc. In many provinces corruption remains unabated, undermining the very foundations of constitutional order.

The political regime has failed to make civil service accountable to civil society or attractive to graduates of the best universities looking for good career prospects. The low wages, if any, vague responsibilities, social risks, and inefficient power mechanisms explain why there are so many vacancies in the state power structures; at the district level administrations have neither premises nor personnel.³³

International experts report that Afghanistan has not yet put in place mechanisms for “vetting senior political appointees and political candidates”³⁴ to identify obvious and latent supporters of the Taliban. “Operational challenges remain, such as the delay in the transfer of funds and subsequent delays in associated development projects.” This means that it is next to impossible to ensure a steady flow of money (endorsed by the central government) to the provincial and district powers.³⁵

The president deemed it necessary to point out the following: “At the same time, our bureaucracy, both because of its inherited structures and ill-coordinated technical assistance from our partners (from the donors directly to the consumers bypassing the government.—*B.E.*), has become a patchwork of different approaches to governance.”³⁶

The Afghan parliament, one of the world’s youngest, has all the inevitable faults: “poor parliamentary culture; weak comprehension and understanding of parliamentary principles;” not infrequently the deputies prefer personal interests to the national; factions are undeveloped and therefore there is no faction activity in the parliament. The Secretariat, which, on the whole, is involved in parliamentary procedures, cannot retain better trained staff members because of low salaries; “staff retention, therefore, causes serious concerns.” “The unstable and insecure environment has slowed down the working relationships between parliament members and their constituencies ... in recent years some of the parliament members have been targeted by terrorists and lost their lives.”³⁷

The international community feels that separation of powers is highly important for Afghanistan to move away from the present conflicts toward smooth cooperation. The country needs a *parliament of national unity* to address, together with the president, the tasks of military-political stabilization, socioeconomic rehabilitation, and dynamic development.³⁸

The shortcomings of the election system range “from clarifying the relationships between electoral bodies through to a more transparent vetting process and a thorough voter registry.”³⁹

³² See: *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security...*

³³ See: M. Sedwill, op. cit.

³⁴ S. Kouvo, op. cit.

³⁵ See: *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security...*

³⁶ H. Karzai, *Statement at the 47th Munich Security Conference*.

³⁷ G. Gran., op. cit., p. 3.

³⁸ See: “Ob oqlashenii okonchatelnykh rezultatov vyborov v nizhnyuyu palatu parlamenta Afghanistana,” 26 November, 2010, available at [www.mid.ru].

³⁹ N. Coburn, A. Larson, *Undermining Representative Governance: Afghanistan’s 2010 Parliamentary Election and Its Alienating Impact*, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), Kabul, 2011, available at [www.areu.org.af].

So far, “elections revolve around competing local interests rather than cross-cutting issues or ideologies,” which means that the results are often falsified partly because the deputies are seen as “direct service providers.” In Afghanistan (as well as in many Muslim countries), “collective voting” still persists; the results are very much affected by the “ethnic discourse” and falsifications. Finally, conclusions of the Electoral Complaints Commission cause a lot of disagreement.

The judicial-legal reform is not free from contradictions either, “struggles between religious and secular forces” being one of them; so far, “no war-criminal or human rights violator has yet been brought to justice”⁴⁰ while “drug lords and influential insurgents” are still free.⁴¹

The Bonn Agreement, which admitted that traditional (non-formal) judicial practice still figures prominently in Afghanistan, specifies that it should not be applied if it contradicts the Constitution or international law and that the domestic legal system should be rebuilt “in accordance with Islamic principles, international standards, the rule of law and Afghan legal traditions.”⁴²

The penitentiary system is not up to the mark either: the physical state of prisons leaves much to be desired: “cells are often over-crowded and poorly maintained; some detainees have irregular or no access to the open air, the food is of poor quality; it is impossible for prison authorities to ensure a certain degree of privacy; due to hygiene problems, detainees often become ill; the constructions remain simple, only allowing basic needs such as the flow of clean water and the existence of functional sanitation.”⁴³

The socioeconomic conditions are conducive to corruption, one of the worst impediments of political progress. Everybody knows that law-enforcers are “ready to harass if they do not receive their bribe”; patrolmen earn about \$100 a month (with the average monthly wage being about \$40), while opium poppy brings in about \$600 a month per family without much trouble.

The Afghans still “prefer the use of the informal system, as the formal governmental system is perceived as highly corrupt.”⁴⁴

“Informal justice mechanisms already exist in almost all communities. They are generally called a Jirga or Shura, essentially meaning ‘council.’ In some communities there are long standing traditions of conflict resolution with their own codes, such as Pashtunwali, which is used in predominantly Pashtun areas... The representatives of the community, generally including local elders, landowners and religious leaders, will give a decision which may involve the payment of a fine, a reallocation of land, or mutually agreeable terms for sharing a public resource such as water.”⁴⁵

Such decisions are not necessarily hailed by all community members; they “have not always taken into consideration the views of women and marginalized groups, such as young people.”⁴⁶ Collective voting negatively affects the election process.

Much, but not enough, is being done to draw women into political life, especially at the provincial and local levels⁴⁷ (to say nothing about the communities and communal councils). Not enough is being done to explain the meaning of elections and the electoral procedure to women (they comprise 38 percent of the constituency)⁴⁸ and of political education to young girls. It seems that women’s NGOs

⁴⁰ W. Safi, “Security and Elections in Afghanistan: Why the Two Must Go Together,” *NATO Review*, No. 3 (April), 2009, p. 73.

⁴¹ N. Nauta, op. cit.

⁴² *The Bonn Agreement. Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institution*, available at [www.aihrc.org.af].

⁴³ N. Nauta, op. cit., p. 63.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ C. Dennys, “Conflict Resolution: Afghans, Doing It for Themselves,” *NATO Review*, No. 3 (April), 2009, p. 63.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ See: “Clinton’s Remarks on Afghanistan and Pakistan to Asia Society.”

⁴⁸ See: “Women Indispensable to Elections, Democratization in Afghanistan (Participation supports ‘long-term democratic behavior,’ Foundation says),” 28 July, 2009, available at [iipdigital.usembassy.gov].

are following in the footsteps of similar structures in Central Asia (also operating on international funding) which fell into the traps of grant-mania, inadequate knowledge of social and economic problems, etc; they operate on a limited scale, mainly in the cities.

How the Political System in the Short and Mid Term Can be Improved

National reconciliation and re-integration of former militants remain an important and inalienable part of the current political processes.

The expert community has described the following as the most urgent steps: “extending the impact of the Peace and Reintegration program throughout the country;” “resolving the plight of refugees;” “close coordination between local civilian officials and the local security forces,” “secure sustainable and flexible funding for the program,” and involving religious scholars in the common efforts.⁴⁹

The American president has specified the main task of the Afghan leaders in the sphere of state administration as “there must be a continued focus on the delivery of basic services, as well as transparency and accountability”⁵⁰ that is, governance for the people.

The president of Afghanistan, in turn, has promised “to simplify the process of interaction between the citizens and the government which means reducing procedures and improving laws and regulations,”⁵¹ in other words, continued rationalization of power to add efficiency to administrative efforts.

The expert community has already predicted that in the near future the country will have to cope with the need *to make state governance more democratic* through open, direct, and transparent elections of governors,⁵² a process in which political parties, self-administration structures, etc. should be involved. Civil institutions should be involved in the executive structures to add more prestige to civil services (in the provinces in particular), and the elected structures which should have a say on budget issues; the upper house of the National Assembly should fortify its position, etc. In this way, the governors’ offices will acquire more legitimacy and consistency to operate in a much more constructive way.

The leaders of Afghanistan believe that “a clear and consistent *reform of the civil service and investment in higher education*”⁵³ (realized with international assistance) will eventually improve state governance. President Karzai and other top officials believe that it is extremely important to restore the well-organized system of civil service (upset by the Soviet presence and the Taliban) to train qualified personnel and pursue consistent personnel policy to create an “efficient, modern and apolitical” civil service.

One of the experts has rightly pointed out that the international community should promote “the setting up of a sound, non-tribal, non-religious and Afghanistan-wide opposition to the present govern-

⁴⁹ See: “Afghanistan and the International Community Discuss Reintegration after Afghan Leader’s Assassination,” 22 September, 2011, available at [www.afghanistan-un.org].

⁵⁰ B. Obama, op. cit.

⁵¹ H. Karzai, *Statement at the 47th Munich Security Conference*.

⁵² See: S. Kouvo, op. cit.

⁵³ H. Karzai, *Statement at the 47th Munich Security Conference*.

ment.”⁵⁴ The nation should stop associating political parties “with militias and violence” caused by the “bitter memories of the Soviet-era communist parties and warring mujahideen parties.”⁵⁵

The country obviously needs all-nation or even ethnically based political parties, something that India, a multi-national and multi-confessional country, has already achieved.

The country needs political competitiveness which accompanies economic competitiveness and without which normal legislation is impossible.

Its citizens have all the rights and should use them to express their political preferences; some of the laws still in force in the country have not exhausted their potential: this applies to the fairly liberal Political Parties Law and fairly lenient Law on Gatherings, Strikes, and Demonstrations of 9 January, 2003; the latter calls for “respect [of] the holy religion of Islam as well as the religious, national, historical, and cultural customs and traditions of the country.”⁵⁶

Today, an “electoral road map” has become a must; *election reform* should be carried out according to the obligations the country assumed at the Kabul Conference.⁵⁷ The participants promised the widest possible international support and called on the country’s leaders to launch “a strategy for long term electoral reform” to achieve “sustainability of the electoral process and transparent, inclusive and credible elections,” as well as the widest possible involvement of women in the process.⁵⁸

Political outreach, a term borrowed from one of the international documents,⁵⁹ deserves special attention. People should be introduced to the fundamentals of democracy and civil society and learn how political systems function. The process of national reconciliation and re-integration provides the most adequate context for political outreach. On the eve of the parliamentary elections, local elders, leaders, and the most politically-active women attended seminars. This should be further developed; billboards, posters, leaflets, flipcharts, information bulletins, etc. played a positive role in the election campaign.

The country’s leaders correctly believe that the state should tighten “regulation of the imports of fuels, food, construction materials and pharmaceuticals—commodities on which the poor depend” *to liquidate the corruption ties* between commercial structures and their foreign partners. The government intends to realize the “urban land management programs” and “put in place public-private and community partnerships for housing development,”⁶⁰ etc.

Self-administration should be further developed as a dual process: on the one hand, the communities should be moved into a civilized legal context and armed with modern democratic mechanisms created with the help of state programs which should be elaborated and implemented. On the other, the communities should have more rights; they should work together with state administrations and be invited to resolve certain specific social and economic problems. In the mid-term perspective, they should acquire the right to register acts of a civil status (registration of births, marriages, divorces, and deaths) and perform certain notarial actions.

The Western experts agree that “international standards need to be integrated into the law and practice of all aspects of the Afghan judicial system.”⁶¹ On the other hand, the country will “need

⁵⁴ M. Mehdi, “Challenges Faced by the Afghan Elections: Could They Follow Current Polarizations and Ethnic Divisions?” *NATO Review*, No. 3 (April), 2009, p. 43.

⁵⁵ Z. Khalilzad, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ *The Law on Gatherings, Strikes, and Demonstrations*, available at [www.iec.org.af].

⁵⁷ See: *International Conference on Afghanistan*, Kabul, 20 July, 2010, available at [www.mfa.af]; *NATO Declaration Reaffirming Commitment to Afghanistan’s Security*, 20 November, 2010, available at [iipdigital.usembassy.gov].

⁵⁸ See: *Communiqué, Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan*, 20 July, 2010, available at [www.mfa.af].

⁵⁹ See: *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security...*

⁶⁰ H. Karzai, *Statement at the 47th Munich Security Conference*.

⁶¹ N. Nauta, *op. cit.*

at least two decades” to accomplish this. “In the meantime the informal system is an alternative that should be considered,” writes another author.⁶² “Going forward, it would be necessary to develop new strategies to take advantage of the informal structures and at the same time encourage appropriate reforms.”⁶³

Those who write the laws *should take into account women and their interests* by relying on the 25 percent quota of seats allocated to them in the legislatures and representative structures of power. On the whole, the institution of quotas (which does not entirely meet the modern election standards) is very much needed in Afghanistan where men have an “advantage in terms of electoral knowledge, access to money for political campaigns, and even mobility.”⁶⁴ The problem of training women journalists writing on the subjects of interest to the women of Afghanistan has not yet been resolved.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

One of the experts offered a very apt description of the political processes in Afghanistan as a “hybrid of democratic procedures and existing practices.”⁶⁵ “Existing practices” cannot be studied without profound knowledge of the essence and mechanisms of national traditions; their impact on people’s mentality and psychology calls for an analysis and integrated and comprehensive assessments. The Afghans as a nation are very dubious about the democratic values of the West; their appreciation requires great improvements of everyday life of each and every citizen, irrespective of his ethnic origins and religious affiliation.

The above suggests that the future of the political system of Afghanistan will unfold along eight lines:

- (1) promotion of democracy;
- (2) wider involvement of Afghans in state governance and public administration;
- (3) further improvement of the state machine;
- (4) greater involvement of public organizations;
- (5) tighter public control;
- (6) stronger legal foundations of state and public life;
- (7) wider openness, glasnost, and transparency;
- (8) consistent account for public opinion.

It is extremely important to give the leaders and groups which enjoy popular support and agree with the above more room to maneuver. This should be done as promptly as possible after the conflict has ended.

Violence remains one of the elements of the international (used against the irreconcilable opponents of the regime), national (used against the same entities, albeit selectively, not always logically and effectively), and Taliban strategies in Afghanistan, which is a regrettable fact. The country’s political

⁶² See: C. Dennys, *op. cit.*

⁶³ N. Nauta, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ *Women Indispensable to Elections, Democratization in Afghanistan...*

⁶⁵ O. Lough, “Practicing Democracy in Afghanistan. Key Findings on Perceptions, Parliament and Elections,” Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul, 2011, p. 8.

system is developing in the context of the war which began in 2001 and the armed conflict between the ISAF and the Taliban and Operation Enduring Freedom. This explains the means and methods used, which inevitably affect the political regime of Hamid Karzai.

The summit of regional leaders (Istanbul, early November) and the Bonn + 10 Conference chaired by the Afghan government (Germany, December) can be described as two signal events of the year 2011 which pointed the way to a better political system in Afghanistan.⁶⁶

In Istanbul, Afghanistan's neighbors demonstrated that they were devoted to the state's sustainable development and outlined the mechanism to be employed to fulfill their obligations. In Bonn, the international community supported this regional conception and confirmed that it was prepared to invest in Afghanistan on a long-term basis. The NATO Forum scheduled for May 2012 in Chicago will outline the parameters of the transition process.

⁶⁶ See: "Clinton Says Building New Silk Road Is Critical for Afghanistan."

TWENTY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE IN KAZAKHSTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN: WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT— POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

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In Lieu of an Introduction

The dispute about what is more important, political or economic development, is like the philosophical discussions of what came first, the chicken or the egg. However, despite the ongoing debates, the answer, we think, is obvious: long-term and stable development of society is only

possible with mutual agreement and complementarity, as well as parallel (joint) advancement of political and economic reforms. This is clearly

shown by the 20 years of independence in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, two neighboring countries which chose different paths of development.

“The Economy Should Be Economical”

*(General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party
Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev)*

Since the beginning of 1991, the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been pursuing a path of independent development and market economy-building. During the 20 years of reform, both countries have passed through various stages of internal transformation. But although both countries started off on essentially the same foot, they have achieved very different results.

It is probably not right to compare Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, since they differ significantly in essentially every parameter (beginning with the size of their territories and ending with their political system). But they do have one thing in common: no clearly positive results.

Let us begin by taking a look at the economic situation and evaluating the size of Kazakhstan's and Kyrgyzstan's economy.

In 2010, Kazakhstan's GDP amounted to \$146 billion, while Kyrgyzstan's was only \$4.5 billion. At the beginning of the year, Kazakhstan had an external debt of \$115.3 billion (whereby the state debt amounted to only 3%, while the rest constituted the debts of private companies), while Kyrgyzstan's debt amounted to \$2.6 billion (whereby the state debt accounted for almost all of this amount). Kazakhstan's population comprises 16 million people, while Kyrgyzstan has a population of 5 million.

And, finally, here is another index: beginning in 2000, the annual GDP growth in Kazakhstan reached an average of 10% a year (but during the financial-economic crisis of 2008-2010, its growth rates dropped to 1-2%), while in Kyrgyzstan it was evaluated at only 5% (whereby in 2005 and 2010, GDP growth had a negative value).

It should be added that Kazakhstan is striving to become one of the 50 most developed countries of the world (by 2020). As for Kyrgyzstan, in previous years, the world financial institutions suggested that this country participate in the HIPC¹ program intended for the poorest countries of the world.

What has caused this significant gap between the economic development of two countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union's single economic complex? What is the difference between their economies, and what advantages and shortcomings do they have?

According to world standards, Kyrgyzstan is a poor developing country with limited natural resources. The country's economy is based on agriculture (30% of GDP), trade (19%), and industry (11%). The increase in the share of agriculture in the gross national product combined with the drop in industrial production graphically shows that the country's industrial vector (which thrived during the Soviet period) is falling entirely into decline and the economy is gradually becoming agrarian. In so doing, the economy is developing extensively rather than intensively, which is characterized by an

¹ HIPC is a program initiated by the IMF to provide debt relief to Heavily Indebted Poor Countries on the condition that they meet a range of economic management and performance targets.

increase in small commodity production, use of manual labor, and a drop in the level of technological processing.

If these trends continue, the republic's economy will soon correspond in terms of structure to the level of the underdeveloped African countries, and the industrial sector will only be represented by branches that produce raw materials. The restructuring that was carried out in 1993-1996 under the PESAC² program led to a complete industrial collapse, while transferring the development of gold fields to foreigners led to natural riches being exported out of the country.

The electric power industry, which accounts for approximately 5% of GDP, 16% of the industrial production volume, and 10% of the state budget income, has been almost entirely depleted, with only 10% of its capacity remaining. The state budget is executed at a great deficit every year (in 2010, it reached a threatening 40% of GDP); more than half of the country's population lives below the poverty line. Due to the high level of unemployment, approximately 25% of the population works outside Kyrgyzstan (whereby they provide the country with approximately \$1 billion in remittances every year).

Now let us take a look at the economy in Kazakhstan. Its development rests on the production and financial sectors, which are the driving force behind all the other branches. As of today, Kazakhstan is one of the richest countries of the world in terms of hydrocarbon supplies (and in the near future the country could become one of their top producers); in terms of explored oil supplies, it occupies 12th place (not counting the reserves on the Caspian shelf, which still have to be precisely appraised), in terms of gas and gas condensate it ranks 15th, and in terms of oil production it is in 23rd place.

In addition to its inferred and quite significant oil and gas resources, Kazakhstan has a powerful raw mineral base for developing the coal and uranium industries, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, as well as gold production. The country is one of the top dozen states in the world in terms of annual coal production (more than 79 million tons), iron ore (7.5 million tons), bauxite (3 million tons), copper (more than 300,000 tons), zinc (225,000 tons), manganese (100,000 tons), silver (500 tons), phosphates (1.7 million tons), and uranium (25% of the planet's supplies).

Thus, in terms of reserves of natural resources, Kazakhstan is one of the world leaders. It should be noted that the production of mineral resources forms the foundation of Kazakhstan's illusionary prosperity.

Oil, wheat, bituminous coal, aluminum, ferrous-based alloys, copper, and zinc amount to 86.3% of the country's total export. In turn, the share of oil, which is Kazakhstan's main export commodity, amounts to 20% of GDP. It is oil that provides the main inflow of currency from the enterprises of the raw material sector. Petro dollars are subsequently filtered through the state budget and ejected into the economy in the form of growing salaries and investments in real estate.

This sponging on resources in the country's development strategy has made Kazakhstan completely dependent on the fluctuations in world raw hydrocarbon prices. Kazakhstan has become a hostage of its own raw natural resources and will evidently be unable to escape from the grips of illusionary prosperity for a long time to come.

In order to decrease the raw material dependence of the country's economy, the state is drawing up various programs, creating development institutions (the Samruk-Kazyna National Prosperity Foundation), establishing business support foundations (the Damu Foundation), and forming a social business corporation.

The government is striving to diversify the country's economy by developing non-extractive sectors. One of the initiatives undertaken was implementation of the 30 Corporate Leaders program,

² PESAC is a program initiated by the IMF on industrial restructuring.

which determined the priority branches of the economy. Attempts are also being made to advance cluster development of such sectors as agriculture, the high-tech spheres of the economy, and the manufacture of building materials and electronics.

I would also like to mention the financial sector of the economy, as well as Kazakhstan's pension system, the reform of which is the most advanced among all the countries in the post-Soviet expanse. According to the statistics, in 2010, the sum assets of Kazakhstan's banks amounted to \$81.5 billion (55.8% of GDP), loans to \$61.4 billion (42% of GDP), and deposits to \$46.2 billion (31.6% of GDP). By way of comparison, the same indicators for Kyrgyzstan's banking system are as follows: bank assets amounted to \$1.25 billion (26.6% of GDP), loans to \$559 million (11.1% of GDP), and deposits to \$759 million (16.6% of GDP).

But in Kazakhstan, people are becoming increasingly worried about the further prospects for the country's economic development. Kazakhstan does not want to repeat the grievous experience that several other countries went through last century. I am referring to Argentina's dynamic development, which was recognized as an economic miracle of the 1920s, and the string of crises of the 1990s suffered by the Asian countries.

According to most specialists, the main reason for the crises in the above-mentioned countries was the insufficiently prudent financial policy pursued by the local banks and industrial enterprises that led to the accumulation of exorbitant short-term debts, overall overheating of the economy, and artificial raising of quotas on the stock exchanges and of real estate prices. The abrupt devaluation of the national currencies and landslide in the stock markets led to a significant slump in production, sales, and investments, which subsequently caused a severe economic crisis.

Today, all of the above-mentioned factors are characteristic of Kazakhstan's economy; in addition to its weak diversification, prices are extremely dependent on the export of natural resources, overvaluation of real estate and securities, and concentration of finances in the building sector.

So both Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have certain economic shortcomings that threaten their further stable development. At the same time, in contrast to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan has still not drawn up a long-term real economic policy and strategy. Moreover, the country has not conceptualized the prospects for its further economic development. All the earlier state programs were of a general nature; they did not contain precise macroeconomic estimations or an in-depth analysis of the possible ways to apply the country's economic potential.

‘I’ll Stay until I’m Tired of It. So Long as Britain Needs Me, I shall Never Be Tired of It’

(British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher)

A common trait in Kazakhstan's and Kyrgyzstan's political development is that both countries had no experience in building their own statehood, democratic traditions, or market relations and so were compelled to return to feudal traditions. Nevertheless, there are certain differences between the political processes that unfolded in these countries during the first years of independence.

For example, the president's power strengthened in Kazakhstan; there, as in other CIS countries, this high post raises the personal authority of the person who occupies it. So extending the president's powers has led to a stronger position for Nursultan Nazarbaev.

Kazakhstan's return to the traditions of state rule that existed during feudalism resulted in the establishment of a super presidential administration system, which is explained by the absence of democratic traditions and principles of compromise, dialog, and pluralism of opinions. But these feudal traditions have been modernized to some extent by steering a course toward building a democratic state, which presumes the existence of a constitution, representative power branch, election procedures, local executive power structures, the observation of market relations, and so on. All of this has given rise to the need to build a system of checks and balances, however, not in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of power, but in the sphere of inter-elite relations that guarantee stability of the current power regime.

For example, American researcher Edward Schatz believes that in the post-Soviet expanse "the *clans* and the state construct each other in an ongoing *dialectic*."³ The same applies to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; this strategy allowed Nursultan Nazarbaev and Askar Akaev to become the only arbitrators in the inter-elite struggle, that is, remain above the skirmish.

As a result, the elite groups that acquired a *carte blanche* to strengthen their position took control over essentially all the main economic entities. In the political sphere, on the other hand, they created teams that penetrated the higher, middle, and lower levels of state administration. People were recruited into the elite groups, as well as the administrative teams and businesses they controlled, on the basis of kinship, clan, and friendly ties, which generated a rapid increase in corruption in the state structures, the political and legal consequences of which were a decrease in political competition, citizen disillusion in democratic values, and the danger of disintegration of democratic institutions.

Corruption penetrated deep into the civil service system both in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; however, we should not forget the role played by large mineral fields. Kazakhstan had quite a sizeable number of them (oil, gas, metals, coal, and so on), while Kyrgyzstan only had the gold field in Kumtor. So, despite the fact that civil servants in Kazakhstan appropriated significant budget resources, some of these funds nevertheless reached the population and this was enough to resolve social problems, raise social payments, pay budget employees their wages on time, and so on.

In Kyrgyzstan however, due to the low level of revenue generated by Kumtor and the large number of those wishing to grab a piece of other operating sectors of the economy, money did not reach the population at all. This was characteristic of the presidencies of Askar Akaev and Kurmanbek Bakiev, who ended up fleeing the country.

In contrast to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan's political system proved the most democratic in the Central Asian region until the mid-1990s. As for Askar Akaev, in contrast to other presidents, he did not occupy posts in the party cell of the Kirghiz S.S.R. but came from the scientific world and was a member of that part of the intelligentsia that enthusiastically embraced democratic values after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Askar Akaev positioned himself as a democratic president who tried to create efficient democratic institutions in the republic. However, later he began to carry out a policy aimed at strengthening his own personal power, which was manifested in pursuing a non-democratic repressive course. As in other Central Asian countries, Kyrgyzstan's political and economic life fell under the control of clans that were loyal to the president. In systems where corruption is not simply widespread, but also officially sanctioned, the power structures have neither the opportunity nor the motivation to resolve urgent social and economic problems.

Nevertheless, despite the further transformation of Akaev, the Democrat into Akaev, the Autocrat, semi-free elections were held in the republic and there was a legal political opposition and stand-off between the president and the parliament.

³ E. Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: the Power of «Blood» in Kazakhstan and Beyond*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, London, 2004.

In both republics, the state institution system was structured to provide the near-presidential clans with privileges and was under the direct control of the president. So Akaev and Nazarbaev gave the economic resources of the countries they headed to privileged groups (in exchange for their loyalty). Both leaders declared that preserving territorial integrity and maintaining national security, social unity, and domestic political stability was more important than the opportunity to participate in political life, the carrying out of economic liberalization, and the observance of human rights and freedoms.

However, by pursuing this policy, the leaders of the Central Asian republics themselves became its hostages. For example, Askar Akaev was no longer able to keep in check the activity of the elite groups engaged in plundering national riches. Moreover, the many relatives and members of the presidential clan who controlled a large part of the country's economy tried to reinforce their power with the help of deputy mandates.

Almost the same situation was seen in Kazakhstan, while some of its differences were due to local specifics. Such super institutions as the Nur Otan party, the Samruk-Kazyna National Prosperity Foundation, the National Security Committee, and the financial police became centers of political power and struggle there.

For example, in the future, the Nur Otan party, which consolidated almost all the budget employees in its ranks, will be able to nominate its loyal candidate to elected posts and demand replacement of a particular civil servant (by means of party control), including in the upper echelon of power.

The Samruk-Kazyna Foundation, which possesses all of the state's main assets, has immense political and financial potential; this will be of fundamental significance in the further struggle for power.

The National Security Committee and financial police are two of the largest power blocs; they have the right to instigate criminal cases regarding corruption. Keeping in mind the high level of corruption, they have powerful levers of pressure both on the elite and on the entire state apparatus. The National Security Committee also keeps a list of terrorist and extremist organizations, the activity of which it is authorized to intercept.

A distinguishing feature of the development of the political processes in the countries under review is the fact that real opposition to the president appeared in Kazakhstan (in the form of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan [DCK]) much earlier (2001-2002) than in Kyrgyzstan (2004-2005), where national discontent was manifested during the velvet revolutions that swept the former Soviet Union. This factor also played a decisive role in the Kyrgyz scenario of events.

The confrontation between the Kazakhstan government and the opposition in 2001-2002 resulted from the economic reforms, which led to serious sociopolitical changes. At that time, young businessmen appeared in Kazakhstan's business sphere, many of whom became the owners of enterprises (small and medium) and banks at the beginning of the 1990s and later occupied key positions in politics. Pursuing their personal interests, they tried to have an influence on economic policy and step up the carrying out of comprehensive reforms.

But the high level of politicization of the republic's economy and use of unfair business methods (particularly on the part of Nursultan Nazarbaev's ex-son-in-law Rakhat Aliev) led to the creation in 2001 of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan movement. However, Nursultan Nazarbaev quickly neutralized the open opposition of the Young Turks (the unofficial name of the oppositionists) in Kazakhstan, which was promoted by several factors.

- First, the protest moods (not to mention political campaigns) did not have time to spread throughout the country's vast territory.
- Second, most of the country's population mistrusted the representatives of DCK, who themselves came from the power elites, or were affiliated with them.

- Third, the resolute steps taken by the authorities to put down the protest activity of the oppositionists and the media supporting them, by applying forceful methods, and to discredit the opposition, by winning its leaders over to their side, forced the people to turn away from the Young Turks.
- Fourth, criminal cases were brought against the movement's leaders with subsequent spreading of biased information in the pro-government media.
- Fifth, Nursultan Nazarbaev, after taking up the baton from the opposition that demanded political reforms, addressed the people with a program of further democratization of Kazakhstan's political system.

So the administrative resource, loyalty of the elite groups, and power of the state apparatus made it possible for Nursultan Nazarbaev to bring the opposition movement to its knees. Economic factors went on to further dampen the protest potential in society.

The relative financial prosperity (achieved by means of oil, gas, and an inflow of foreign investments), which made it possible to reduce unemployment, the appearance of additional useable funds among the population, the improvement of housing and the nation's cultural and everyday living conditions, and the availability of consumer goods (due to the geographical proximity of China) allowed Kazakhstan to achieve social stability. For this reason, the country's protest potential has remained at a very low level for ten years now.

Only the impoverished members of the population are engaging in protest activity. They include enterprise employees who have not received their wages for a long time and participants in equity construction who lost their savings and investments during the crisis years of 2007-2009. Other categories of citizens are relatively supportive of the existing regime.

However, as mentioned above the balance that has been reached is very fragile and will only be maintained while mineral fields are in operation in the country, the export of which ensures an inflow of revenue. So the country's economic and social prosperity is extremely illusionary. The depletion of mineral fields will threaten the economy and, more important, the country's national security. From this it follows that the economic boost based on raw material export threatens further democratization in Kazakhstan.⁴

Due to the open opposition of members of the DCK, the backbone of which consisted of people from business communities, President Nursultan Nazarbaev preferred to oligarchize the political system. The objective of this strategy was to ensure that not one oligarch could enlist the support of the population, which did not trust people who were affiliated with the authorities and participated in the plundering of national riches.

As a result of this strategy, competition disappeared in Kazakhstan and there were no political parties (in the classical sense) or opposition; however, there is a united elite, the division of which into "pro-power" and "contra-elite" is only perfunctory.

So the now popular slogan "first the economy, then politics" declared by Nursultan Nazarbaev (whereby despite the 20 years of independence, there can be no talk of any political reforms, apart from the so-called reforms to strengthen presidential power in 2005 and 2007) called for strengthening the president's personal power, removing the political opponents, and creating a system of elite relations.

Moreover, after the events associated with the establishment of the DCK, President Nursultan Nazarbaev took control over the management of all the state defense and security structures. For exam-

⁴ See: Y. Grunewald, "15 let 'transformatsii'—mezhdunarodnaia diskussia o demokraticeskom razvitii v Tsentralnoi Azii," in: *Dinamika politicheskikh protsessov v Tsentralnoi Azii posle 15 let tranformatsii: problemy i perspektivy*, ed. by R. Krumm, Almaty, 2006, pp. 8-30.

ple, in coordination with the Parliament Senate, the President of Kazakhstan appoints and dismisses the prosecutor general, the chairman of the National Security Committee, the higher command of the Armed Forces, and the director of the Syrbar Foreign Intelligence Service. He also forms the President's Protection Service and Republican Guard, which are subordinate only to him, and heads the Security Council. The President of Kazakhstan also appoints the ministers of foreign affairs, defense, internal affairs, and justice, as well as the chairmen of the Constitution Council and Supreme Court.

A directly opposite scenario developed in Kyrgyzstan, where a large part of the country's population was drawn into a widespread opposition movement.

Several factors promoted this course of events.

- First, Kyrgyzstan is a relatively small country in territorial terms and its population is concentrated in the southern districts of the country, where the protest movement began.
- Second, the desire of the southern elites to remove the northerners from the power Olympus had significant financial support.
- Third, Askar Akaev was not decisive enough in putting down the rebellious population. However, to be fair, it should be noted that the events of 2010 showed how unacceptable it was to use forceful methods to repress the people's uprisings in Kyrgyzstan. The matter concerns Kurmanbek Bakiev's overthrow.
- Fourth, neither the state apparatus nor the power elites were ready for this kind of action from the government opponents.
- Fifth, the population was in an impoverished state after 15 years of permanent socioeconomic crisis.
- Sixth, in the context of the government's reluctance to carry out democratic reforms and the vagueness of future development, the president constantly extended his powers, corruption grew, the representatives of the defense and security departments increasingly usurped their powers, and so on.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that there were more than enough reasons for the rapid overthrow of Askar Akaev's regime in 2005.

On the other hand, the very fact that Askar Akaev, who was the most "pro-Western" president in Central Asia, was removed from power could not help but increase anti-Western sentiments among the leaders of the other Central Asian states. The fact that neither the U.S. nor any other democratic nation supported Askar Akaev's regime at the critical moment convinced the leaders of the CA republics once more of the weak partner relations with the West, in the eyes of which the region played an unenviable secondary geostrategic role.

So the West's reaction to the March events of 2005 in Kyrgyzstan demonstrated that it had no intention of keeping a particular regime in power. This prompted the CA republics to step up their efforts to draw closer to Russia, which declared the region a zone of its strategic interests. They began to regard neighboring Russia as a reliable protector of stability and security in Central Asia, as well as a guarantor of the successful existence of the current regimes.

The plans to form the Customs Union and Single Economic Space began to be implemented more rapidly, whereby Kazakhstan was the most active in this.

Moreover, and this seems to be most important, the CSTO Collective Rapid Response Force (CRRF) was created, which was allowed to set up its military positions in the territory of a participating state in order to neutralize or destroy terrorist organizations. Whereby, theoretically, any act carried out by government opponents in the CA republics could be classified as terrorist.

But the events of 2010 in Kyrgyzstan, which led to the overthrow of Bakiev's regime, showed that the decision to bring the CRRF into the territory of a particular participating state depended on Moscow. What is more, such restraining factors as absence of real experience in joint military operations, as well as the negative attitude on the part of public opinion in the world community and the population of the participating states prevent the CRRF from taking decisive steps.

So, the fears of the presidents and elites of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan of losing power led to Russia acquiring another lever of pressure on the Central Asian regimes, which it uses to advance its own interests.

The following conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the political development of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Extension of the president's powers, strengthening of his authority, and intensification of the authoritative trends in the political regimes of both countries were declared necessary conditions for carrying out economic reforms that demand unconditional execution (partly with the use of elements of shock therapy). And whereas in Kazakhstan, positive shifts in the economy were not long in coming due to the large mineral fields in the country, in Kyrgyzstan the reforms were carried out with greater difficulties and at a much slower rate.

In Kazakhstan, strengthening of the president's power was justified by the positive dynamics of economic growth, which Kyrgyzstan did not enjoy. The Kyrgyz contra-elite demanded political reforms, extension of the powers of the representative branch, open elections, and so on, which were prompted by the inefficient activity of the power elite. But the need to reach a consensus between the government and the opposition led to an open clash between them.

It should be noted that the democratic changes that occurred in Kyrgyzstan were much more profound than in Kazakhstan. However, the state coups of 2005 and 2010 were not carried out within the framework of democratic institutions using corresponding tools (in particular elections), but by means forceful methods. Since Kyrgyzstan has been through two state coups, it is difficult to assess the future prospects for development of the republic's political system.

Several negative aspects can be singled out with respect to Kazakhstan that will potentially have negative consequences for the development of the country's political system.

- (1) There is no system of checks and balances in the executive, legislative, and judicial power branches in Kazakhstan; the president has been endowed with the greatest powers and appoints the leaders of the key government structures himself.
- (2) The most significant risk for the country's political system is the age and health of the current president. The indefiniteness of the political situation is also associated with statements that Nursultan Nazarbaev wants to rule Kazakhstan until 2020 and there is no talk about preparing a successor. If this development scenario in the country continues, the clans and oligarch groups may begin dividing up the political pie, which will certainly not lead to stability.

Conclusion

It is obvious that liberalization of the political system in Kyrgyzstan has led to forced regime changes becoming more frequent in the country, while the economic reforms in Kazakhstan have not led to rational growth of the economy (an increase in economic freedoms requires political reform).

The twenty years of independence in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have shown that the authoritative model should first be combined with liberalization of the economy and then followed by polit-

ical reforms. Any misalignment in either of these vectors could lead to political crises and degradation of the state (Kyrgyzstan), or to super authoritarianism and an increase in personal power combined with the economy's raw material orientation, which is also uncompetitive economically (Kazakhstan).

So, based on this analysis, it is obvious that neither economic changes, nor relative political freedom will be successful if they do not comprise a single whole; their separate existence poses threats both to the ruling regime and to the entire state, society, and each individual.

LEVEL OF SOCIAL CONFLICT POTENTIAL IN KAZAKHSTAN: POSSIBLE RISKS AND THREATS

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Introduction

As world experience shows, countries that embark on the path of socioeconomic and political modernization are likely to encounter a rise in social tension and the emergence of numerous conflicts.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is well versed in the prevention of these phenomena. Nevertheless, modernization in Kazakhstan is bringing to the fore other problems relating to efficient conflict management and finding peaceful constitutionally legal ways to carry out comprehensive reform of society.

It is a well-known fact that the aggravation of contradictions and the political conflicts in the post-Soviet states, which in some cases have led to armed conflicts, are undoubtedly related both to historical prerequisites and to crisis phenomena in the development of the sociocultural, soci-

oeconomic, and political spheres of public relations. However, we think that one of the main reasons for the emergence of the domestic political conflicts in the CIS countries has been the poor development of ways to prevent and regulate them. So strategies and efficient mechanisms must be sought for taking preventive measures against possible social upheavals and the outbreak of conflict action and for reaching a consensus among the political entities. It goes without saying that an entirely conflict-free society with ideal social relations is a utopia. Institutionalized conflicts are a different matter however, since they potentially perform a constructive function and help society to progress.

The author of this article concentrates on potentially destructive conflicts, the settlement of which could be accompanied by social upheavals.

Main Factors and Reasons for the Emergence of Conflicts in Kazakhstan

World science offers a variety of methods and models for identifying the reasons for conflicts and measuring the level of social tension that can be used for analyzing this problem within the framework of the following blocks.¹

The first block consists of indicators that characterize the subjective sphere: social deprivation and frustration as an expression of the dissatisfaction an individual or social group feels about the current standard of living, as well as worries about the gap between expectations and real possibilities. These indicators are mainly recorded by assessing the degree to which people's vitally important needs are being met and their expectations of finding a solution to the problems that affect their interests.

In this block, indicators of the state of people's social existence and their living conditions must be taken into account.

We studied the following parameters in order to discover the reasons for the conflicts in Kazakhstan and identify their characteristics in the context of the first block:

An analysis of the population's assessment of the current economic situation has shown that, on the whole, most citizens feel positive about the socioeconomic course being pursued in the country; 25.3% of the respondents think that it is "absolutely correct," while 62.9% think that it is "generally correct, but requires some adjustment." Only 4.0% of the polled citizens think that Kazakhstan is developing "in an absolutely incorrect direction."²

However, despite the positive assessment of the economic situation, 49.8% of the respondents mention unemployment and 74.9% price hikes and inflation in response to the question, "Which problems personally concern you most of all?"

Indeed, unemployment is characteristic of any economic system. But when more than half of the respondents feel concerned about it and 54.9% think that unemployment and poverty are capable of disrupting order and civil peace in Kazakhstan and causing a social conflict, it can be concluded that the problem goes beyond labor relations and is acquiring rather severe sociopolitical features.

A total of 74.9% of the respondents think that there is a yawning gap among the poor, middle, and wealthy classes.

So poverty and unemployment are still the main reasons for social tension in Kazakhstan. The gap that has appeared between the rich and the poor and the increase in economic inequality are perceptible aggravating factors and could become a potent source of social tension.

An analysis of the population's assessment of the political situation showed that 18.8% of the respondents feel optimistic about the democratization process in Kazakhstan, while 50.5% are "quite optimistic;" the number of the polled who are "pessimistic" and "quite pessimistic" totaled 18%.

Based on the results of the sociological poll, it can be concluded that the population has a high level of trust in the state power bodies, but this stands to reason, since the government is focusing

¹ See: E.I. Stepanov, "Metodologiya analiza sotsialnykh konfliktov," in: *Konflikty v sovremennoi Rossii. Problemy analiza i regulirovaniia*, URSS, Moscow, 2000.

² This article refers to the results of the sociological poll conducted by the International Institute of Regional Studies, Open Society, ordered by the Kazakhstan Institute of Sociological Research under the Kazakhstan President. Based on this poll, the Kazakhstan Institute of Sociological Research under the Kazakhstan President prepared a brochure called *Uroven sotsialnoi konfliktnosti: potentsialnye riski i ugrozy (po rezul'tatam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia*, Almaty, 2010.

great attention on raising the material prosperity of citizens, improving the educational system, resolving housing problems, and so on. So the people are very optimistic about the political reforms being carried out in the country, which is a stabilizing factor in itself.

Therefore, the main reasons for social conflicts are price hikes, unemployment, inflation, tariff escalation, violation of human rights, and corruption.

The second block consists of indicators of citizens' willingness to take part in non-conventional action, protest campaigns (to protect their own interests), and open demonstrations against the power structures.

As we know, *protest is a specific form of active collective or individual citizen action aimed at demonstrating disapproval of any political decisions or changing the current sociopolitical reality.* There can be no doubt that the greatest threat to the political system is posed not by individual, but by collective action of the masses that could turn into open demonstrations and be expressed in aggressive and violent ways.

In their surveys, sociologists asked questions that probed the capacity of Kazakhstan's population to engage in active protest demonstrations. Only 3% of the polled answered "yes" to the question, "Are there grounds for carrying out protest demonstrations in Kazakhstan?", while 18.2% said "possibly," 33.5% answered "unlikely," and 38.5% said "no."

We think that the results of this poll are disconcerting, since most citizens do not exclude the possibility of mass protest, while 58.1% think that such economic problems as price hikes, inflation, and impoverishment of the population, etc. could lead to outbreaks of protest.

Public protest stems from the demands of the population and its value and political orientations. It stands to reason that an analysis of this problem should be based on studies of the psychology of the masses, their behavioral motives, and the formation of protest moods, which will make it possible to identify the factors that promote a buildup in social frustration and discontent.

Based on this, the author of the article asks how real the threat is of spontaneous mass protest demonstrations. According to specialists, such demonstrations should meet the following three criteria:

1. Protest acts should be held in several cities or population settlements.
2. Protest acts should concern the interests or rights of a particular mass category of citizens.
3. Representatives of this category should participate in the protest demonstrations.

In my opinion, another condition should be added: mass protest demonstrations should take place in all the cities involved at the same time. In other words, "if protest demonstrations are drawn out in time, broken down into small groups in different cities, and not organized into a unified movement, it is difficult to describe them as mass."³

So, mass protest demonstrations are public actions of the population organized into a unified movement with the aim of expressing non-acceptance and disapproval of certain actions or decisions of the power structures.

It can be asserted that Kazakhstan does not show any of these signs, so protest demonstrations are unlikely to assume mass proportions in the country. Kazakhstan citizens are not inclined toward manifesting any particular type of destructive activity, while social discontent is local for the following reasons:

- social structuring of society is incomplete and there is a low level of self-organization of the mass social groups;

³ B. Klin, "Odin protsent protestuiushchikh—eto mnogo," *Izvestia*, 26 January, 2005.

- there is no organized political force (party, movement, strong independent trade unions) capable of consolidating protest demonstrations;
- a certain number of citizens have chosen compulsory adaptation to the current reality as their life strategy. In this case, the results of the polls to identify the level of tolerance of Kazakhstan's population are extremely indicative: 42% believe that "things are not that bad and life is acceptable;" 28.2% think that "life is difficult but tolerable," 23.5% say that "life is tolerable, but not for long," and 6.1% admit that their "impoverished state can no longer be tolerated."⁴

Even those who do not like the current situation are afraid of change; they are loath to engage in radical action and prefer gentle reforms that will not affect their customary lifestyle.

The above-mentioned factors make it relatively easy for the authorities to neutralize any isolated acts of protest.

Adaptation to reality helps to prevent social upheavals in the short term. But in the long term, a buildup of social discontent in latent, non-institutional form will have a destructive effect on social development and be fraught with spontaneous outbursts of protest.

So it should be kept in mind that the population's adaptation to difficult conditions is compulsory and cannot last for long. People whose interests are infringed upon sooner or later reach the point where they want to protect them by forceful means; this particularly applies to the poor, who are incapable of independent legal acts of protest but are extremely perceptible to extremist forms of socio-political activity.

Recently, the authorities of several European countries have also been encountering manifestations of public discontent evoked by the socioeconomic situation. But the nature of the social protest is largely in keeping with democratic traditions and the level of political culture existing in a particular society. For example, French trade unions brought 2.5 million people out into the streets, whereby not one shop window was broken. This shows the high level of organization of the protest movement, where no windows were damaged, vehicles set fire to, or government buildings seized.

On the whole, the protests in West European countries and the CIS states have common roots: citizens are dissatisfied with the high cost of living, social inequality, and unemployment. Moreover, in the former Soviet countries, the authorities are trying to enforce their dominating position within the framework of the existing system of sociopolitical relations by personifying all forms of political activity, which is ultimately leading to the manifestation of non-systemic and illegal types of protest activity. For example, in Belarus, where flash mobs are becoming the latest rage as a form of protest, the authorities are aggressively putting down any attempts to express discontent. Here is what happens: protestors, who make arrangements in advance via the Internet, gather on Wednesdays in the center of Minsk and perform some seemingly pointless act, such as simply standing in silence, applauding, or turning on the dial-tones of their cell phones at the same time. Usually all the participants in such acts are arrested within the first few minutes, even though they are not making any political declarations.

It should be admitted that conflicts do not emerge out of the blue and it is very important to catch the signals heralding their outburst on time. These signals are manifested in demonstrations of non-acceptance (disapproval) of the existing state of affairs in society, loss of trust in government policy, differences in ideas about values, pessimistic assessments of the future, spreading of all kinds of rumors, emigration of citizens abroad, and so on.

⁴ G. Akhmetova, "Tipologizatsiia sotsialno-professionalnykh grupp po urovniu sotsialnoi adaptatsii k poreformen-nyam usloviyam," *Saiasat*, No. 2, 2004, p. 16.

It is conflicts that express the demands, interests, and strivings of people and identify the reasons for social discontent or protest hidden behind customary codes of conduct in peaceful situations. Conflict can help the authorities to identify the existence of objective problems and contradictions in social development. So society should have the right to freedom of association that can openly express its viewpoint in the form of meetings, demonstrations, statements, public movements, and so on.

What is more, management decisions can be successful only if a civil society is formed and constructive techniques used for preventing conflicts. In this respect, it is worth recalling the words of M. Ross, who justly noted: "The problem is not in the conflict itself, but in how we resolve it."⁵

The Role of Civil Society in Preventing and Settling Conflicts

One of the conditions for preventing destructive social conflicts is the formation of a mature *civil society*, the stability of which is based on the current system of mutual responsibility of its institutions. Civil society institutions and structures are indeed gradually developing in Kazakhstan. This is shown by the existence of such structural elements as political parties, various citizen unions and associations, nongovernmental organizations, and so on.

Political parties are instrumental in allowing various social strata and groups to institutionalize their interests. Nevertheless, it should be noted that mistrust in political parties is an integral part of the civil culture of Kazakhstan society. On the whole, political parties are not perceived as a bridge between the government and citizens. In my opinion, this is largely because parties are artificially created from above and become nothing more than election machines, while the opposition (which is represented by several parties) is extremely ineffective.

Political parties do not act as a divining rod of the tension existing in society since they rarely generate conflicts that relate to the interests of the protest population. The conflicts that arise among political forces are more personified in nature. In other words, interparty relations are one of the forms of opposition among various political forces, which do not fulfill the function of institutionalizing conflict interaction or maintaining a balance of interests among different social groups.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) should play an important role in government decision-making regarding the need for preventive and restraining action. There are more than 5,000 of them in Kazakhstan today and they are acquiring valuable positive experience in working with citizens. However, in contrast to the developed countries, Kazakhstan's NGOs are individualized, while their activity is often oriented toward private and not collective interests of civil society. Moreover, not all NGOs in Kazakhstan are sufficiently active; the activity of many of them can be described as follows:

- some organizations flicker in and out, that is, they function depending on the availability of grants, when they do not have funding, their activity peters out;
- some of the NGOs created are essentially fictitious and their activity far from coincides with the authorized objectives declared at the moment of registration, which can be explained by their founders trying to evade the high taxes in effect in the business sphere;

⁵ M.G. Ross, "Dva litsa. Interesy, interpretatsii i kultura konflikta," in: *Konflikty. Teoriia i praktika razresheniia konfliktov. Opyt zarubezhnykh issledovaniï*, in 3 volumes, Vol. 2, Conflictology Center, Almaty, 2002, p. 184.

— there is a tendency for political parties to use NGOs as partners for achieving their political goals; consequently, there is the danger of politicization of the public sector.⁶

In short, at present most Kazakhstan citizens are not reaping the benefits of the efforts of domestic NGOs in social conflict prevention. So the role of NGOs should be raised by involving them in drawing up projects aimed at reducing conflict potential and protecting citizen rights. NGO activity should also be developed in the regions (particularly in rural areas) and systematically covered by the media.

Stability in a democratic state is based on a system of social partnership, which should harmonize the interests of different social groups of society. In Kazakhstan, all the attributes of social partnership are being actively used but, in my opinion, its institutions are largely functioning perfunctorily. Kazakhstan's trade unions have proven unprepared for using methods to protect workers' interests and rights; they rarely initiate talks for entering agreements and collective contracts. Moreover, they are not consistent enough in implementing the agreements reached.

It remains to be noted that weak trade unions will inevitably lead to increased instability in the labor sphere, particularly if we keep in mind the fact that one of the most conflict-intensive zones in Kazakhstan society is labor relations. This is shown, for example, by the strikes that are constantly being declared at the country's enterprises.

The 2011 Conflicts in Mangistau

As we know, in May 2011, some 700 employees of the Karazhanbasmunai enterprise began an act of protest, the main reason for which was dissatisfaction with the low wages and inactivity of the trade union. The protest moods swept to two more enterprises. The employees of Ersai Caspian Contractor also demanded re-examination of the work contracts. Then the oil workers of Ozenmunaigaz joined the protest, demanding nationalization of the oil-producing enterprises of the Mangistau region.⁷

It stands to reason that the strikes in Mangistau were of enormous detriment to the entire country. More than 2,000 people were fired and the strike organizers were arrested and convicted. Moreover, according to T. Kulibaev, the Chairman of the Board of Samruk-Kazyna National Charity Foundation, "during the strike, Ozenmunaigaz fell one million tons behind in its oil production. This will reflect in the year-end results for 2011 as underperformance and means that 54 billion tenge will not reach the budget or the National Foundation and that KazMunaiGaz Exploration Production will be faced with a revenue deficit of approximately 40 billion tenge."⁸

It must be admitted that it was very difficult to identify the events leading up to these conflicts for the following reasons:

- *First*, when trying to reproduce the course of events, the parties in the conflict evaluate them so differently that it is extremely difficult to obtain objective information. As for the employers, they of course give extensive arguments of their viewpoints. The workers, in turn, try to

⁶ See: *Prezidentskie vybory v Kazakhstane: fakty, analiz, kommentarii*, Academy of the State Administration, Astana, 2006, pp. 11-12.

⁷ A decision of the Zhanaozen court of 24 May, 2011 showed that the demands of the participants in the protest demonstrations were unsubstantiated and illegal.

⁸ "Volnyy gorod Zhanaozen," available at [www.np.kz/engine/print.php].

develop their interpretation of the conflict by proving the legitimacy and substantiation of their own interests and actions taken to protect them. According to the protesters, it was precisely the administration's unfair decision that prompted the workers to strike.

- *Second*, the media either remain silent about conflicts or present contradictory information. The evaluations of the pro-government and opposition media of the same events are often diametrically opposite.

So we need to conduct a comprehensive conflict-potential analysis of the conditions that made the strike possible. In other words, the following important questions must be answered: "What are the reasons for these labor conflicts?" and "Why have strikes become possible precisely at enterprises that have the highest wages in the country?"

However, A. Aubakirov, deputy general director for corporate development and asset management of KazMunaiGaz Exploration Production, claims that since 2008 all the company has been doing is yield to the protesting workers by constantly raising their wages. In this respect, another question arises: "What techniques are needed to resolve these conflicts?"

As we know, conflicts arise not only for objective reasons, they can also be determined by several subjective factors. Therefore, the determining factors causing a conflict could become more complex. The actual reasons for conflicts, however, are always hidden from the parties drawn into them.

Despite the fact that the main reason for the events in the Mangistau region was the workers' displeasure with the action of the administration of the oil-producing enterprises, this kind of labor conflict has much more extensive social grounds.

In my opinion, the socioeconomic problems of unemployment and migration form the underlying foundation of the conflicts, as well as the fact that the main demands of a certain part of the population of Zhanaozen were not met. According to the opinion D. Ashimbaev expressed at a sitting of the Expert Club created on the initiative of the leadership of the Samruk-Kazyna National Charity Foundation, "the situation in Zhanaozen escalated out of control. There are several reasons for this. First, incorrect social and migration policy. Between 2000 and 2010, the city's population doubled—from 60,000 to 120,000, whereby there has been no industrial growth in the region. That is, there was an abrupt increase in the able-bodied population that was not supported by an increase in jobs. Most of the newcomers are repatriates from Karakalpakia, Turkmenistan, and so on. The migration processes in the country are essentially not controlled; as a result, a large flow of people went to several regions where there were no jobs for them. This led to the formation of a surplus conflict mass."⁹

The conflict was triggered by the steps taken by lawyer N. Sokolova, whose destabilizing role is beyond doubt. Another reason for what happened is that the employers did not have any precise mechanisms for settling such tariff conflicts. The trade unions do not have legitimate methods for defending the interests of workers, who, in turn, have not learned to clearly formulate their demands and are easily manipulated. Moreover, there were no mediators capable of resolving the conflict; at the same time, political forces came into the picture which, by expressing their solidarity with the strikers, tried to turn the situation to their own advantage.

So, the state is still the only real actor. It has an indisputable advantage over the entities and structures of civil society and, with the help of the administrative resource, can prevent the buildup of entropic processes in society.

⁹ "“Kryshu zakazyvali?” Zashchishchat zabastovshchikov Zhanaozena—luchshiy politicheskiy piar,” available at [<http://www.spik.kz>].

State power and government stability in themselves have a sobering effect on potential participants in conflicts. For example, it was the government that eventually took measures to reduce the tension in the Mangistau region; it can even be presumed that without interference by the state the conflict would have continued and become political.

Nevertheless, while recognizing the stabilizing role of the power structures, the degree of state influence on the entities of civil society needs to be addressed. Stabilization achieved by a rigid power vertical is short-lived, while preventing destructive conflicts without feedback is instable.

For example, when interfering in a conflict, the state often resorts to the defense and security structures, which, of course, should efficiently intercept the illegal actions of its participants. But the defense and security structures remove only the consequences of the conflict, while the actual reasons for them remain hidden and unidentified.

Within the framework of the study of this problem, the following conclusions can be drawn.

- *First*, the danger is that conflicts subdued by forceful methods could flare up again and escalate out of control.
- *Second*, in the long run, forceful methods are ineffective, since their use will most likely lead not to consent, but to resistance, which will increase the possibility of new conflict situation emerging.
- *Third*, the use of force shows the absence or insufficient development of constructive efficient techniques of conflict management. In other words, the use of force is frequently opened, makes it difficult to reach a consensus, and raises the destructive conflict potential of society.

Of course, no matter the extent to which different techniques that make it possible to prevent labor conflicts are developed and applied, they cannot fully eliminate the danger of conflicts arising. It is only possible to stop labor conflicts from spreading or to regulate them.

However, the level of conflict potential in the labor sphere is the most important and most precise of the indicators we have identified for gauging the current moral and psychological state of society; it reflects the severity and depth of the socioeconomic contradictions that have accumulated.

As for strikes, they are an extremely significant and prominent social phenomenon and require serious analysis.

It is no accident that labor conflicts and protests are the target of such keen attention. As we know, worker demonstrations can be a catalyst for major socioeconomic and even political upheavals. For example, in Poland, the demonstrations the Solidarity trade union at the beginning of the 1980s led to the collapse of the socialist regime first in the country itself, and then throughout the whole of Eastern Europe, while the miners' strikes that began on 11 July, 1989 in the Soviet Union gave a mighty boost to further democratization and became one of the stimulants for replacing the economic and political system in 1991.

Therefore, the current situation in Mangistau demands the use of new, extremely well-thought-out approaches and the making of joint compromise decisions, since the old strategy has proven entirely useless and unpromising.

The government must employ contemporary negotiation techniques and a set of socioeconomic measures in order to resolve the problem. In so doing, the most important thing must be kept in mind—“legislation must be improved to prevent labor conflicts, which should meet current reality and carry out a radical re-examination of the contents and structure of the minimum consumer basket.”¹⁰

¹⁰ K. Berentsev, “Zabastovka: analiz prichin i puti resheniia,” *Vzgliad*, No. 38 (218), 19 October, 2011.

Conclusion

On the whole, this analysis of how to prevent conflicts in Kazakhstan has revealed a combination of different factors. Some of them are stabilizing, while others cause destructive conflicts.

The stabilizing factors are:

- the absence of destructive sociopolitical conflicts;
- the implementation of socioeconomic reforms;
- the democratization of the political system and reaching a consensus on basic issues of the political system;
- the existence of institutions and structures of a civil society;
- citizen interest in strengthening political stability;
- the high role of the political leader in ensuring consent in society.

Factors causing destructive conflicts are:

- unemployment, poverty, and social inequality;
- underdevelopment of efficient conflict-management techniques;
- conflict-phobia;
- undeveloped institutions of civil society for regulating conflicts;
- corruption among bureaucrats and the use of forceful methods when settling conflicts;
- the absence of a mechanism for preventing and settling political conflicts.

So civil society institutions in Kazakhstan are still rather passive in protecting and realizing their own interests. In the past years of reform, real social entities have not fully developed, which is making interaction among the various elements and civil society structures difficult. As for the mechanism for streamlining positions and assimilating social roles, it is fragmentary and unstable. An “economic man” has still not formed in Kazakhstan capable of independently and responsibly participating in market relations.

In other words, conflict institutionalization in Kazakhstan is at a low level, which is manifested in the underdevelopment of legitimate structures and mechanisms of citizen interest expression.

KYRGYZSTAN: POLITICAL HISTORY OF TWO DECADES OF INDEPENDENCE

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Introduction

For over twenty years now the Soviet-successor states have been building newstatehoods in the territory that used to be the Soviet Union; not all of them have been equally successful, but each has hastened to declare its devotion to democratic ideals and principles. During the first ten years of its independence Kyrgyzstan looked

like a Central Asian “island of democracy”; since that time, however, the country has lived through two regime changes accompanied by the use of force, bloodshed, and mass disturbances.

Below is a summary of the country’s political experience during the two decades of its independence.

The First Decade and a Half: An Oasis of Democracy or the Khanate of an “Emperor in New Clothes”?

On 31 August, 2011, Kyrgyzstan, the role and place of which in the new global geostrategic paradigm has changed much more radically than those of any other country, marked twenty years of its independence.

In the past, few professional political scientists knew anything at all about Soviet Kirghizia. A prominent Sovietologist Prof. Audrey Altstadt of the University of Massachusetts wrote at one time that the U.S. intelligence community, which knew everything about life in the Kremlin, was not prepared for gathering information in the republics of the former Soviet Union.¹ Knowledge was limited to the republic’s strategic uranium resources; it was also known as a place of “soft” exile for Soviet dissident intellectuals and erring Party functionaries such as Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. Dmitry

¹ See: *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict. The Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*, ed. by W.R. Duncan, G.P. Holman, Jr., Westview Press, Boulder, 1994, p. 125.

Shepilov who spent several years working at the Academy of Sciences of the Kirghiz S.S.R. after the June 1957 C.C. C.P.S.U. plenary meeting.

Disintegration of the Soviet Union pushed the republic into the limelight of world politics, mainly because of its proximity to the “arc of instability” (Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq) and its transit potential to be used to deliver military cargoes to the counterterrorist coalition in Afghanistan. Its common border with China’s western regions was another political and strategic argument.²

Kyrgyzstan’s higher “strategic value” opened wide vistas for the country’s political elite and bred hopes that it could exploit the contradictions between the power centers in its political and money-grabbing interests.

The phenomenon of independent Kyrgyzstan (which under President Akaev looked like an “island of democracy” in the Central Asian ocean of authoritarianism) was born in this fairly complex and very contradictory context. In actual fact, however, the first fifteen years of flourishing democracy were nothing more than a product of inertial political thinking. The situation looked very much like the Khrushchev thaw initiated by the 20th C.P.S.U. Congress. Khrushchev could sling around democratic slogans as long as he relied on the repressive machine inherited from Stalin and corresponding ideology deeply rooted in the minds of the ordinary people. But as soon as Khrushchev moved beyond “flirting with democracy,” the same machine and the same ideology ousted him from the political scene.

In Kyrgyzstan, political thinking remained loyal to the Soviet system and the Soviet Union; on 17 March, 1991, the absolute majority voted for a united country (the U.S.S.R.); nationalism was limited to part of the political elite and was practically unknown among the ordinary people.

So far, not one serious author has denied that the Soviet Union exerted immense efforts to develop the republic up to and including consolidation of its national statehood. In this context, it comes as no surprise that former sector head of the C.C. Communist Party of the Kirghiz S.S.R. was elected as the first president of the independent country: people wanted continuity and traditional ties with the other former Soviet republics, Russia in particular.

The radical nature of the post-1991 changes required time to be recognized as such. The inertia of political thinking of the majority of the republic’s population (including its fairly large Russian community) preserved the illusion that the government was untouchable and any encroachments on it would be cut short by force and repressions. For a long time people remained convinced that the republican elite was still taking orders from Moscow and that the Kremlin controlled the most important appointments.

For fifteen years, President Akaev remained an “emperor in new clothes” in real politics and played this role with gusto thanks to his skilful use of political techniques. Belarusian President Lu-

² Political scientists prefer to avoid the subject of American-Chinese contradictions and rivalry in Central Asia, however we must accept the fact that contradictions between the two largest powers of our time—the capitalist United States and the socialist People’s Republic of China—came to the fore once Russia retreated to the periphery of world politics. This is fully confirmed by what R. Bernstein and R. Munro have written about “the statements made by Chinese officials (prominent military and foreign policy analysts as well as members of the C.C. C.P.C. and civilian analytical centers) in closed-door sessions” held in Beijing in November-December, 1993 and which “were echoed in the press.” For eleven days the brain tank discussed Chinese strategy in relation to the U.S. and the rest of the world. The final report said in particular: “From the present stage to the beginning of the next century, the major target of American hegemonism and power politics is China. Its strategy toward China is, through economic activities and trade, to control and sanction China and force China to change the course of its ideology and make it incline toward the West; to take advantage of exchanges and propaganda to infiltrate ideology into China’s upper strata; to give financial assistance to hostile forces both inside and outside Chinese territory and wait for the opportune moment to stir up turbulence ... to fabricate the theory of a China threat toward neighboring Asian countries so as to sow dissension between China and countries like India, Indonesia, and Malaysia; and to manipulate Japan and South Korea to follow American strategy toward China” (R. Bernstein, R. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1997, pp. 46-47).

kashenko summed up his visit to Bishkek and his meetings with Akaev by saying: "He is well-educated and smart and also astute when it comes to defending his country's interests. He is the most intelligent of the presidents; you can learn a lot from him; it is a pleasure to work with him."³

As president, Akaev did his best to preserve positive relations with Russia and even develop them further. The law that made Russian the state language was a clever and far-sighted step, a decision fraught with nationalist and opposition protests that was beyond the powers of many his CIS colleagues. As a scientist, Akaev argued that the higher status of the Russian language changed nothing in the country's political orientation yet would consolidate his position when dealing with Moscow and the republic's Russian-speaking community.

He went out of his way to promote in the West his image of a confirmed democrat and consistent fighter for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Indeed, until the 2005 Tulip Revolution, many Western politicians remained convinced that the Kyrgyz president was "building a Western-type democracy, a phenomenon hitherto unknown in Central Asia" with a multiparty system, opposition press, and numerous international human rights organizations.

He could not, however, remain in power indefinitely: after a while, the political elite realized that the "emperor in new clothes" and his clan had moved beyond his limits. More than that, no defense and security structures either inside or outside the country guaranteed his continued presidency. It should be said that the republic inherited considerable material, technical, and financial resources from Soviet Kirghizia and the Soviet Union in the form of non-liquid assets of the military-industrial complex (the Fizpribor, Lenin, and Kristall plants and the 110th military camp) which the president used to decorate the "shop window" of his democracy during the first fifteen years of independence. When they ended, the republic was left with the task of consolidating and developing its economy.

The Spring of Tulips: A Revolution or Newer Clothes for the "Emperor"?

The 2005 Tulip Revolution, which brought Kurmanbek Bakiev to power, was a fast and relatively bloodless affair. The new president learned the lessons of his predecessor: he put his stakes on a stronger repressive machine to disperse opposition rallies and set up the Ak Zhol (The Bright Road) Party to win the people over to his side. These were the "new clothes for the emperor" which the previous president had never bothered to acquire.

President Bakiev went out of his way to borrow money right and left to keep the rapidly sinking economy afloat and to lubricate the cumbersome and overly large state machinery. He flirted with Moscow, which promised a loan of \$2 billion. Later, when Bakiev's true aims became known, the loan went down in the history of international relations as "the Kirghiz swindle."

He also used, without much success, what he called "the far from simple relations with Moscow" to fill the treasury at the expense of Washington which needed the Manas Transit Center while trying to disprove through diplomatic channels what the opposition said about the embezzlements of his closet retinue.

³ Akaev Askar Akaevich, *byvsh. Prezident Kyrgyzstana*, Federal Investigation Agency, available at [<http://www.flb.ru/persprint/518.html>], p. 4.

On 21 September, 2009, during lunch with U.S. Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller, Maxim Bakiev, son of the Kyrgyz President, insisted that his country should acquire a place of its own on the world scene to be able to move forward. “We do not want this money for ourselves,” he said, “but we want to ensure that it is not used in traditional, unhelpful, assistance projects, but instead in something that is really well-thought through.” When asked about the Russian money, Maxim Bakiev responded that the Russians had not yet come through with the promised loan of \$2 billion.⁴

Even before the lunch it was common knowledge that the president’s clan was a bunch of corrupt officials. Sources in Bishkek quoted Maxim Bakiev as saying to his father that “this money (part of the Russian loan.—*V.P.*) should remain in the family.” This cannot be confirmed or disproved, however at the first press conference the former Kyrgyz president gave upon his arrival in Belarus he was asked whether President Lukashenko had paid the country’s Russian gas debts with the Russian money Kurmanbek Bakiev had allegedly paid for political asylum.⁵

Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. Soviet Legacy or the Cost of Independence?

The Bakievs obviously overestimated the range of their power: they failed to set up a reliable repressive machine to suppress dissent, and they never won the people over to their side. Everything turned against them: the political elite feared dictatorship of one family that might push the other clans away from power.

The Kyrgyz nation consists of over 40 large tribes shown on the country’s national flag, each of them being entitled to a share of political power and a place on the national political stage. This explains the speed with which the anti-Bakiev opposition closed ranks and deposed the “emperor” or the “khan” (to borrow the local term). This revolution claimed the lives of 80 young men who took to the streets in response to the call of tribal patrons and died in the battles for the White House in Bishkek.

Street fighting encouraged plundering on a big scale: in April 2010, criminals and déclassé elements reigned in the streets of the Kyrgyz capital. The building of the office of prosecutor general burned twice and ruined beyond restoration stands as a sad memorial of the tragic events.

Those who organized the April coup had to carry the heavy (or even back-breaking) burden of restoring order in the capital and the country and setting up new power structures. Were they ready to assume complete responsibility for the future? There was any number of those wishing to fill the highest posts, yet competent and trustworthy people were few and far between. The country’s obviously inadequate political potential suggested a wise step: the country was entrusted to an interim government headed by Prof. Rosa Otunbaeva, a conciliatory figure.

The interim authorities found themselves in a very difficult situation: the Bakievs were still living comfortably on clan property in the republic’s south; the rivalry between the regional political elites (the so-called North-South syndrome) was mounting; the demoralized law enforcers were unable to control the situation; and the money shortage was acute.

⁴ See: U.S. Embassy about Maxim Bakiev: “Smart, Corrupt and a Good Ally to Have,” available at [<http://proclus.gnu-darwin.org/wikileaks/www.win.tue.nl/~aeb/soc/wl/rusrep/09BISHKEK1065.html>].

⁵ See: *Komsomolskaya pravda*, available at [<http://www.kp.ru/daily/24511/662254/>], p. 2.

The new people in power turned out to be true revolutionaries: they emptied the personal bank safes of the Bakiev family to use \$21 million to cover the most urgent needs. Later, some of the deputies of the newly elected Jogorku Kenesh (parliament) doubted the legitimacy of what they called expropriation, but the Bakiev money had helped to stabilize the financial situation.

Ethnic and political stabilization required more time and greater efforts. The republic still remembered the clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz that shook the country in 1990 (the Uzgen conflict), yet certain people, in pursuance of political aims of their own, never hesitated to fan another fratricidal clash.

The reports, there were five of them, submitted by several commissions, the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission headed by well-known and highly respected Finnish political figure and diplomat Kimmo Kiljunen among them, offered contradictory or even mutually exclusive assessments of the tragedy that took place on 11-15 June, 2010 in Osh and Jalalabad (in the republic's south). International experts remained undecided: either it was genocide of the Uzbek community of Kyrgyzstan or a patriotic war the Kyrgyz waged against the Uzbek separatists to preserve the country's territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, the Uzgen events should be interpreted as a repetition of what happened in nearly all the former Soviet republics: national relations proved to be the weakest link of the country's social organism undermined by weaker state power, political rivalry among the clans, criminal wars over drug trafficking, and mounting tension. There was any number of people wishing to explain the ethnic clashes by what they described as "natural enmity between the nomad warriors (Kyrgyz) and the trader-artisans (Sarts) that had been ripening for many centuries."⁶

There is no "natural enmity:" in Osh, for example, the areas where Kyrgyz and Uzbeks lived side by side, remained practically intact because neighbors closed ranks to defend their homes. There are, however, seats of potential tension caused by the still unregulated land and water issues, use of the native language, the inadequate system of law and order enforcement, the low level of culture, education, and the media, etc.

In a multinational country, the state should identify contradictions and prevent negative developments; this was done by the Soviet state, the weakening and disintegration of which was accompanied by hundreds of big and small sporadic outbursts of ethnic enmity, the Uzgen conflict being one of the many.

For a while, President Akaev, who relied on the fairly effective concept of "Kyrgyzstan is our common home," kept the situation under control. To remain effective for any stretch of time, this required adequate funding and adequate law-enforcement capabilities. The tragic events of June 2011 in Osh and Jalalabad were an outcrop of the collapse of the Kyrgyz statehood in the spring of 2011.

The new people in Bishkek have to offer the nation their own conception of national policy and ethnic harmony; despite the mounting pressure of the nationalist elements, the new leaders remain confirmed that in a multiethnic state the titular nation should not be invested with privileges and special rights. Rosa Otunbaeva said at the Kurultai of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan: "There are people of about 90 nationalities living in our country; they live according to our law and have the same rights as the Kyrgyz."⁷

"Good" documents are not enough though; they must be put into effect; the nations must be equally represented in the central and local administrations, business, the media, culture, education, and, pri-

⁶ Document "Allah, sokhrani moy Kyrgyzstan ot vseh bed!!" organizatsii "Oppozitsiadagy Tushtuk Kyrgyzstan Eldik Frontu," p. 1.

⁷ "Assambleya naroda Kyrgyzstana prinyala Kontseptsiiu etnicheskoy politiki i konsolidatsii," Document of the Fergana International Information Agency, available at [<http://www.fergananews.com/news.php?id=16899>], p. 2.

marily, in the law-enforcement bodies. The international Kiljunen Commission pointed out the following with good reason: "The Government should ensure that the composition of the security forces reflects the ethnic diversity of society [and] employ a regional rotation policy in the personnel of the security forces."⁸

Much should be done in this respect.

Form of Government: A Parliament or a President?

Kyrgyzstan's post-April 2010 experience of setting up legitimate power structures is especially significant in the context of post-Soviet development of statehood. The new people wanted the new Constitution to prevent usurpation of power by one person or one clan.

All previous constitutions of independent Kyrgyzstan endowed the head of state with extraordinary powers, a practice which proved to be wrong. It was decided to increase the role of the parliament and the speaker (*toraga*), as well as the Cabinet and the prime minister, and limit the president's power to decision-making on issues which require national consensus (mainly under extraordinary circumstances). Today, one person may take presidential office for one six-year term. This can be described as a parliamentary-presidential form of governance complete with a well-organized checks-and-balances system. The constitutional commission headed by Omurbek Tekebaev consulted experts of the Venice Commission and other international organizations.

The draft was approved, albeit not unanimously, in Kyrgyzstan and raised doubts outside it in the Central Asian neighbors. Many experts in statehood and political science pointed out that the country, which badly needed strong vertically organized power and elementary order, also needed a strictly centralized presidential form of government. They pointed out, with good reason, that under a weak government the political sphere is divided between those who strive to preserve independence and the crowd (*ochlocracy*), rather than between democrats and the supporters of authoritarianism.

At some point the debates ran into a dead end: some political forces suggested external governance as an extreme measure; others (the *Ar Namys* and *Butun Kyrgyzstan* parties) made it clear that if they had a majority in parliament they would restore the presidential form of power.

What happened later, however, proved that in many respects the supporters of strong presidential power had their point.

On the other hand, the *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliament) elected on 16 October, 2010 demonstrated the obvious advantages (its shortcomings aside) of the parliamentary form of government: the competitive political process and greater transparency, which brought to power politicians and managers of the top and medium level not involved (or, rather, involved to a lesser extent than others) in corruption.

Anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International ranked Kyrgyzstan 164th of 178 countries in its Corruption Perceptions Index for 2010.⁹ Bribery keeps foreign investors away from the country, which badly needs investments to develop and restructure its economy, a *sine qua non* of integration into the world economy.

Throughout the winter and spring of 2010-2011, the *Jogorku Kenesh* was engrossed in heated discussions of corruption among top-level bureaucrats, fuel deliveries to the U.S. Transit Center, the

⁸ [http://www.k-ic.org/images/stories/kic_report_english_final.pdf].

⁹ [<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/06/28/us-kyrgyzstan-mining-idUKTRE75R1BK20110628>].

scandal around mobile communication provider MegaCom, the way fuel production licenses were issued, etc. In this way, the electorate acquired a much clearer picture of the domestic situation on the eve of the presidential election scheduled for 30 October, 2011, the last stage of statehood development in Kyrgyzstan.

Russia's Policy: Imperial Ambitions or a Wise Response to the New Challenges and Threats?

On 10 June, 2011, Ombudsman of Kyrgyzstan Tursunbek Akun sharply protested against what CSTO Secretary General Nikolay Bordiuzha said about the Organization's willingness to help members confronted with a situation similar to the one that occurred in 2010 in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

He said that this "did not quite fit the international legal regulations" and specified his point by saying: "I should remind you that Art 5 of the CSTO Charter dated 7 October, 2002 says, 'The Organization shall operate on the basis of strict respect for the independence, voluntary participation and equality of rights and obligations of the member States and noninterference in matters falling within the national jurisdiction of the member States'."¹⁰

This statement was suggested not so much by the position of the CSTO Secretary General as by the general sentiments in the republic in the summer of 2010. With the number of casualties in Osh and Jalalabad reaching 400, people saw no other alternative than bringing Russian military contingents into the country. The hottest heads even wanted Kyrgyzstan to become Russia's ninth federal district.¹¹

We should thank the ombudsman who, unwittingly, rescued Russia from a possible dangerous entanglement. Indeed, Moscow has no reason to interfere in the domestic affairs of the small friendly independent state, even though the Kyrgyz, as one of the Soviet peoples, are close to the Russians. In 1991, they chose independence, which means that Moscow is no longer responsible for political stability and ethnic harmony in their country.

In fact, careless manipulation of military-political instruments in Central Asia is fraught with serious consequences. In 1979, few doubted that the Afghan government asked Moscow for a limited Soviet military contingent and that the local people were overjoyed. The result is only too well known.

Today, there is no shortage of crafty politicians ready to play on "imperial ambitions" in order to draw Moscow into the hazards of Central Asian policy.

We should be guided by regional realities rather than emotions:

- first, today Russia is much weaker than the Soviet Union: its GDP is 70 percent of India's, 50 percent of Japan's, slightly over 25 percent of China's and 15 percent of the American and EU GDPs. This means that Russia is not ready to compete for domination in Central Asia.

¹⁰ "Ombudsman Kirgizii: Ni ODKB, ni drugaya organizatsiya ne vprave vmeshivatsya vo vnutrennie dela Kirgizii," *Regnum*, 10 June, 2011, available at [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1414579.html>], p. 1.

¹¹ See: "Nurkamil Saskeev: V Kyrgyzstane neobkhodimo provesti referendum o prisoedinenii k Rossii," *24.kg*, 5 October, 2010, available at [<http://www.24kg.org/community/83950-nurkamil-saskeev-v-kyrgyzstane-neobkhodimo.html>], p. 1.

- Second, the much stronger players drawn into the Big Game are not averse to using Russia's "cannon fodder" to settle scores among themselves. We should be aware of this.

On the other hand, contrary to what those who were actively involved in destroying the Soviet Union are saying today, the post-Soviet cultural-historical community is still alive. There is immense integration potential to be tapped in the political, economic, and ideological spheres; success depends on the situation in the world.

- Third, in the 21st century, the global problems, challenges, and threats of a social and anthropogenic nature calling for consolidated efforts of the world community have somewhat trimmed down political impacts. Our civilization has reached a certain boundary beyond which lies a different world: if left unattended, any of the global problems might prove fatal for mankind.

The risks and threats call for correct and timely assessment. Mankind needs intellectual capabilities to find its way out of the present entanglement. This is where Russia can compete with its partners both in the West and in the East.

The report submitted by the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences said, in particular, that "Russia should address the global problems together with the rest of the world community to become one of its members. It should help formulate common approaches to the mounting global threats. Today, the population is growing faster than the life-supporting resources; production and consumption are growing faster than the alternative resources needed to replace the depleting raw materials and energy resources. Industrial and scientific-technical progress is endangering the quality of the human environment."¹²

At the dawn of the 20th century, the print shop of the Semirechensk Regional Administration (in Central Asia) published an ambitious project entitled "Common Cause" for mankind which called on all the people to transform "the instrument of destruction into an instrument of salvation,"¹³ to replace rivalry and wars with joint efforts of all mankind. The project anticipated the development of world science by a hundred years; the time has come to realize it.

When Central Asia becomes a platform of constructive cooperation of all peoples and all social systems, confessions, and nations, Kyrgyzstan will have the chance to become a unique laboratory of democratic development of the international community.

C o n c l u s i o n : *Realistic Democracy as* *a Road to Democratic Reality*

While analyzing the problems of democratic development, we should bear in mind that authoritarianism, totalitarianism, or any other anti-human political regime is not the only pitfall in the post-Soviet expanse: there is the danger of recurrence of a degenerate form of democracy ruled by the whims of the crowd and influenced by populists and demagogues. Aristotle called this ochlocracy.

¹² "Rossia v sisteme mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy blizhayshego desyatiletia," Report on the Results of a Prognostic Study Carried Out Within the Framework of an Innovative Scientific Project Financed by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research., IMEMO RAS, Moscow, 1995, p. 58.

¹³ *Filosofia obshchego dela. Statyi, mysli i pisma Nikolaya Fedorovicha Fedorova*, ed. by V.A. Kozhevnikov, N.P. Peterson, Vol. I, Verny. Tipografiya Semirechenskogo Oblastnogo Pravleniya, 1906, p. 656.

The recent events in Kyrgyzstan showed that this type of social deviation is as dangerous as the threats created by authoritarianism. Real democracy needs sustainable and legitimate power structures accepted by the people and the international community and efficient instruments of political and economic control.

By the time this article appears in print the presidential election in Kyrgyzstan will be over. To become the final stage of democratic changes in the republic and open the road to true democracy and prosperity, the elections should be democratic, straightforward, and fair. The world community and international organizations are working toward this.

ENERGY POLICY

PROBLEMS OF EUROPEAN COMMODITY SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS REGION

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Introduction

The Russia-Ukraine “gas wars” and the cold winter that hit Southern and Central Europe in January 2006 and 2009¹ highlighted Europe’s commodity insecurity and its dependence

¹ See: J. Stern, *Russia-Ukraine Gas Crisis of January 2006*, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, Oxford, 2006; A. Kovacevic, *The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine Gas Crisis in the South Eastern Europe*, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, Oxford, 2009, and others.

on Russian good will. In all fairness, it should be noted that some studies on this topic appeared even before the “cold winter” of 2009,² but their

² See: N. Campaner, *The Eastern Vector of Russian Oil and Gas Exports: What Impact on the EU Energy Security?* 5th European PHD Gas Seminar, University Paris-Dauphine, CGEMP, Paris, 2007; D. Finon, C. Locatelli, “Russian and European Gas Interdependence: Can Market Forces Balance Out Geopolitics?” *Cahier de Recherche*

impact on the leadership of the European Commission was insignificant, to put it mildly. This is evident from the fact that prior to the 2009 crisis the International Energy Agency did not see any pitfalls in European energy security.³

The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy was much more far-sighted. Back in 2005 it already argued the need to reduce, as far as possible, Russia's influence on the energy sector and developed a model for international trade in gas known as the Baker Institute World Gas Trade Model (BIWGTM).⁴

Thus, there is evidence of Europe's commodity insecurity, and any international conflicts interrupting the steady flow of raw materials to this region can have grave consequences for the daily life of Europeans and the stability of their democratic governments.

The prospects of sustainable development of the Central Asia-Caucasus region are directly associated with Europe's resource security and economy.⁵ Already implemented projects (Baku-

Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and Baku-Erzurum gas pipeline) have fundamentally changed the geopolitical and geo-economic situation in the region and in the whole of Europe.

In this article, we try to analyze the extent to which new projects will affect Europe's commodity security and sustainable development trends in the Central Asia-Caucasus region.

Having at our disposal extensive statistical material on global commodity flows,⁶ we have decided to use this material to analyze the problem of Europe's commodity security and to identify the "black holes" in the highly complex infrastructure of its markets.

We analyze the following types of commodities that have a decisive effect on economic development: oil, gas, coal, iron, copper, lead, zinc, and gold. Other commodity markets of no less importance to sustainable development have no decisive influence on macroeconomic parameters.⁷

LEPII, série EPE, No. 41 bis, 2007, pp. 1-38; A. Loskot-Strachota, *The Russian Gas for Europe*, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, Warsaw, 2006, and others.

³ See: *World Energy Outlook 2008*, International Energy Agency, Paris, 2008.

⁴ See: P. Hartley, K.B. Medlock, *Political and Economic Influences on the Future World Market for Natural Gas*, Geopolitics of Gas Working Paper Series, Energy Forum, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, Washington, D.C., 2005.

⁵ See: E. Ismailov, V. Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Problems of Geopolitical Economy*, Nova Science Publishers, New York, 2008; idem, *Rethinking Central Eurasia*, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS; Stockholm, Institute for Security and Development Policy, Washington, D.C., 2010, available at [<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/Rethinking.html>]; V. Papava, "The Economic Challenges of

the Black Sea Region: The Global Financial Crisis and Energy Sector Cooperation," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2010; A. Tvalchrelidze, A. Silagadze, G. Keshelashvili, D. Gegia, *Socio-Economic Development Program for Georgia*, Nekeri, Tbilisi, 2011 (in Georgian); A. Silagadze, "Current Financial and Monetary Trends in Georgia," *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 4, Issue 1-2, 2010, pp. 51-65; A. Silagadze, S. Gelashvili, "Gegenwärtige Finanzlage und Monetäre Aspekte in Georgien," *Universität Postdam*, No. G-10, 2009, S. 15-25; A. Silagadze, M. Tokmarishvili, *Challenges of the Post-Communist Financial-Currency Policy*, Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York, 2009; T. Basilia, A. Silagadze, T. Chikvaidze, *Post-Transformation: Georgian Economy at the Threshold of XXI Century*, Tbilisi, 2001 (in Georgian), and others.

⁶ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, *Economics of Commodities and Commodity Markets*, Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, 2011.

⁷ See: Ibidem.

Relationship between Gross Domestic Product and Commodity Consumption in Europe

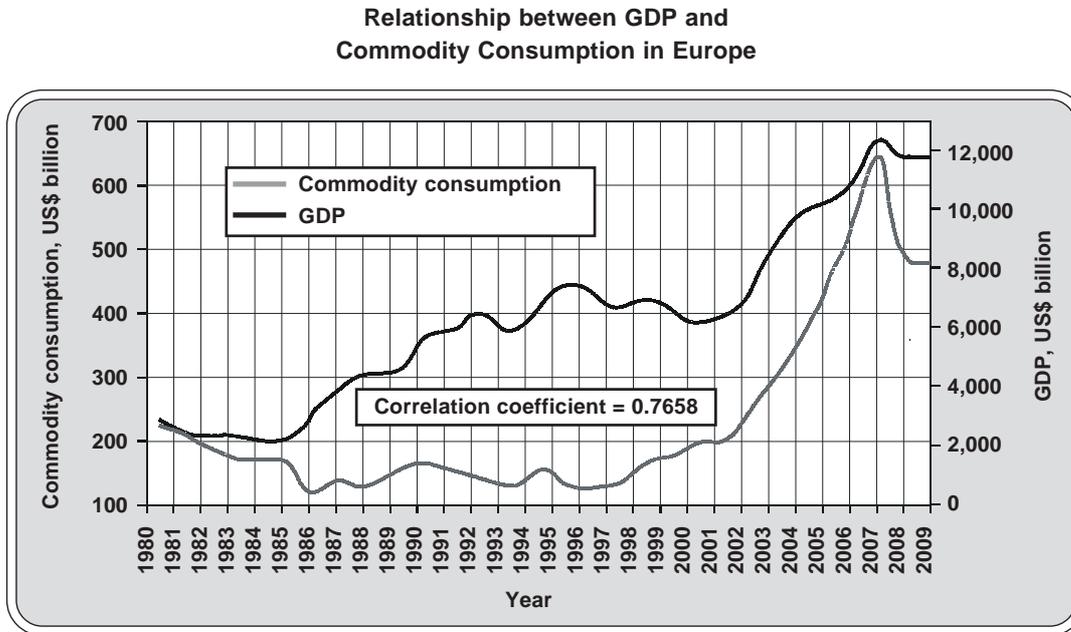
In our analysis, we used the World Bank Data Base, which contains information on gross domestic product (GDP) for all U.N. member countries,⁸ and extensive statistical material.⁹

⁸ See: *World Bank Data Base*, available at [<http://worldbank.org/Indicators/>].

⁹ See: *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, BP p.l.c., London, 2011; *World Oil Outlook*, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Paris, 2009; *Natural Gas Information*, International Energy Agency, Paris, 2008; *International*

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the consumption of the above commodities and European GDP in 1980-2009. Consumption here was calculated as the sum of the products of the volume of commodities used and their average annual wholesale price in current U.S. dollars.

Figure 1



The high value of the correlation coefficient allows the mathematical modeling of this relationship or, in other words, makes it possible to describe GDP in terms of commodity consumption.

Indeed,¹⁰ based on classical definitions,¹¹ GDP can be expressed by the following formula:

$$GDP = \sum_i (P_i S_i) + \sum_i (P_i^n F_n) + A_s, \quad (1)$$

Coal Markets Outlook. The End of the Boom, Wood & Macenzie, Barlow Jenker, and Hill & Associates, New York, 2008; J.D. Jorgenson, "Iron Ore," in: *Mineral Commodity Summaries*, U.S. Geological Survey & U.S. Department of the Interior, Reston, 2009, pp. 81-82; *Iron Ore Market 2008-2010*, Trust Fund on Iron Ore Information, U.N. Conference on Trade and Development, Geneva, 2009; M. Fendon, "Iron and Steel," in: *U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook 2007*, U.S. Geological Survey & U.S. Department of the Interior, Reston, 2009, pp. 37.1-37.18; *The World Copper Factbook*, International Copper Study Group, Lisbon, 2008; *Copper. Commodity Profile*, British Geological Survey, Natural Environment Research Council, Keyworth, Nottingham, 2008; T.J. Brown, L.E. Hetherington, S.D. Hannis, T. Bide, A.J. Benham, N.E. Idoine, P.A.J. Lusty, *World Mineral Production 2003-2007*, British Geological Survey, Natural Environment Research Council, Keyworth, Nottingham, 2009; *Mirovaia statistika*, available at [<http://www.mineral.ru/Facts/stat/index.html>]; *Mirovye tseny na syrio*, available at [<http://www.mineral.ru/Facts/Prices/index.html>]; *Lead and Zinc Statistics*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2006; *Modern and Ancient Gold Prices. Only Gold*, available at [<http://www.onlygold.com>]; *L'état du monde 2008*, Éditions La Découverte, Paris, 2007; "Chapter I. Statistics of Grain and Feed," in: *Agricultural Statistics 2010*, United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 2010, pp. I.1-I.44; *World Coffee Production. Total Production Crop Years 2000/01 to 2008/09*, World Coffee Organization, London, 2009; *Fundamental Factors Affecting Agricultural and Other Commodities*, Research & Product Development, CME Group, Chicago, 2009, and many others.

¹⁰ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, op. cit.

¹¹ See: J.D. Sachs, F.B. Larrain, *Macroeconomics in the Global Economy*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

where GDP is the gross domestic product,

P_i is the weighted average annual price of the i -th commodity,

S_i is the annual volume of consumption of the i -th commodity,

P_i^n is the price of final product n made from the i -th commodity,

F_n is the volume of sales of the n -th product, and

A_s is the value added of all services (government, insurance, finance, education, health care, etc.).

It is clearly evident that the foreign trade balance is indirectly involved in Equation (1). By excluding the services-generated "information noise" and denoting commodity consumption by x and GDP by y , it is possible to build a regression equation linking these two independent variables¹²:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \dots + \beta_p x_{ip} + \varepsilon_i, \quad (2)$$

where ε_i is the remainder of the equation $\vec{x} = \begin{pmatrix} x_{11} & \dots & x_{1p} \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \\ x_{n1} & \dots & x_{np} \end{pmatrix}$, (3)

and coefficient β , determined by the least squares method,¹³ means that the standard deviation in points (\bar{x}_i, \bar{y}_i) should be minimum, which is achieved at the extreme of the regression

$$F(\vec{\beta}_n) = \sum_{n=1}^p \left[\bar{y}_n - B(\bar{x}_n, \vec{\beta}_n) \right]^2. \quad (4)$$

This technique makes it possible to calculate coefficients, standard deviation and remainder even in the nonlinear cases that we consider.

Figure 2 (on p. 114) presents a model of the relationship between commodity consumption and GDP in Europe expressed by a quadratic regression equation.

Thus, commodity consumption has a great impact on Europe's economic development. At the same time, European commodity markets are not protected and depend on imports to a very significant extent.

Figure 3 (on p. 114) shows the ratio of commodity production in Europe to European commodity consumption in 2009. Statistical data are taken from the cited literature and from many other sources.¹⁴ It is clearly evident that Europe cannot be self-sufficient in any type of strategic raw materials.

Let us take a closer look at the main types of strategic resources required by Europe and at the relevant infrastructure.

¹² See: V.L. Mironov, A.Yu. Suranov, *Issledovanie sluchainykh signalov*, Barnaul University Publishers, Barnaul, 2001; A.G. Tvalchrelidze, *Poleznye iskopaemye i mineralnaia resursnaia baza Gruzii*, Rudy i Metally Publishers, Moscow, 2006.

¹³ See: *Least Squares Regression Line*, available at [http://www.une.edu.au].

¹⁴ See: "Uranium," in: *Annual Energy Review 2008*, Energy Information Administration, Washington, D.C., 2009, pp. 273-280; *Uranium 2007: Resources, Production and Demand*, OECD Nuclear Energy Agency & International Atomic Energy Agency, Paris, 2008; L.A. Corathers, "Manganese," in: *U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook 2007*, U.S. Geological Survey & U.S. Department of Interior, Reston, 2009, pp. 47.1-47.20; *Nickel Production*, available at [http://www.chemlink.com.au]; P. Klapwijk, *World Silver Survey 2009. Presentation*, GFMS, New York, 2009; J.F. Carlin, Jr. "Tin," in: *U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook 2006*, U.S. Geological Survey & U.S. Department of the Interior, Reston, 2008, pp. 77.1-77.12, and others.

Figure 2

Model of Relationship between GDP and Commodity Consumption in Europe

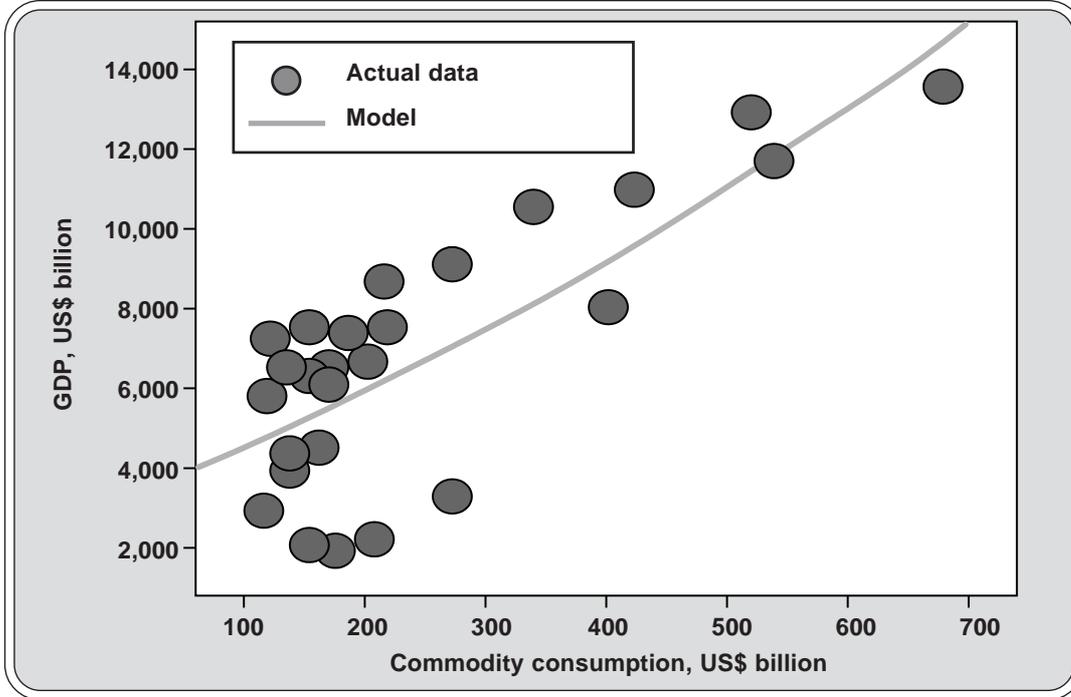
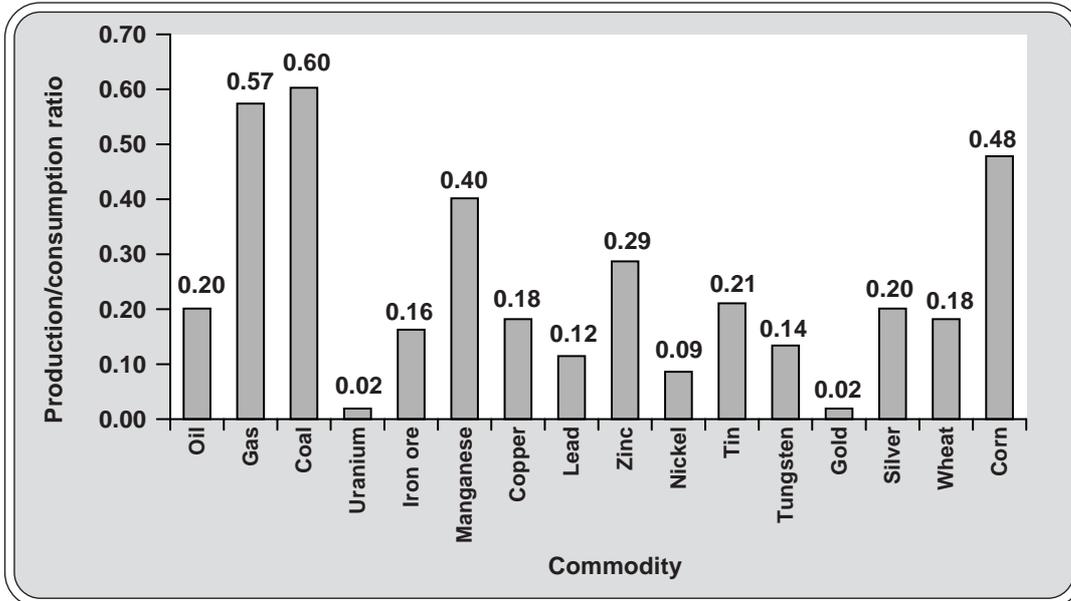


Figure 3

Ratio of Basic Commodity Production to Consumption in Europe



Consumption of Energy Resources

Table 1, based on cited and some other sources,¹⁵ describes the average energy consumption structure in Europe.

Table 1

Structure of Energy Consumption in Europe

Energy Source	%
Hydropower	4.43
Crude oil	40.35
Natural gas	24.85
Coal	18.02
Green energy	0.22
Nuclear energy	12.13

Clearly, preference is given to conventional energy resources such as oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear power and partially hydropower, whereas green energy, despite significant efforts in recent years,¹⁶ is still in its infancy.

A comparison of these data with those in Figure 2 will make it clear that Europe's energy security totally depends on the development of an appropriate infrastructure (oil and gas pipelines, oil, gas and coal ports, tanker terminals, etc.).

To sort out this problem, let us consider Figure 4 and several tables.

Figure 4 (on p. 116) presents the system of Europe's strategic oil pipelines, whose detailed description was published earlier.¹⁷ It demonstrates that this system is either linked to the Druzhba system or connects oil ports with oil refining facilities.

Table 2 describes the main oil ports in Europe,¹⁸ whose total throughput is more than 570 million tons of crude oil, or 18.84% of the throughput of all oil ports in the world.¹⁹

¹⁵ See: *2007 Survey of Energy Resources*, World Energy Council, London, 2008; *International Energy Outlook 2009*, Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, D.C. 20585, 2009; *Oil and Gas Industry and Investment Overview*, Five States Energy Company LLC, Dallas, 2005, and others.

¹⁶ See: *Renewables 2010. Global Status Report. Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Eschborn, 2010.

¹⁷ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, op. cit.

¹⁸ See: *Overview of Cargo Turnover. Port of Hamburg*, available at [<http://www.hafen-hamburg.de>]; *Grand port maritime du Havre. Statistics*, available at [<http://www.havre-port.fr>]; *Tableau general des trafics. Grand port maritime de Marseille*, available at [<http://www.marseille-port.fr>]; *Port of Barcelona Traffic Statistics*, available at [<http://www.apb.es>]; *Port of Leixões*, available at [<https://www.apdl.pt>]; *Focus on Ports*, Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, London, 2007; *Port of Antwerp. Maritime Cargo Statistics*, available at [<http://www.portofantwerp.com>]; *Factual Report on the European Port Sector*, European Sea Ports Organization, Brussels, 2007; *Port of Naantali: Annual Report 2009*, Naantali, Finland, 2010; *Port of Tallinn: Consolidated Annual Report of the Year Ended 31st of December 2009*, Estonia, Tallinn, 2010; *Port of Ventspils*, available at [<http://www.portofventspils.com>]; *Port of Klaipeda*, available at [<http://www.portofklaipeda.lt/en.php/statistics>]; *Thessaloniki Port Authority S.A. Statistics*, available at [<http://www.thpa.gr>]; *Port of Omisalj*, available at [<http://www.jadroagent.com/omisalj.htm>]; *Annual Report: Constanța Port*, National Company Maritime Ports Administration S.A., Constanța, Romania, 2010.

¹⁹ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, op. cit.

Figure 4

System of Strategic Oil Pipelines in Europe



Table 2

Main Oil Ports in Europe

Port	Country	Throughput, million tons/year
Wilhelmshaven	Germany	30.92
Hamburg	Germany	14.70
Marseille	France	55.20
Le Havre	France	30.26
Dunkirk	France	10.21
Trieste	Italy	30.24
Genoa	Italy	15.46
Algeciras	Spain	15.96
Barcelona	Spain	10.10

Table 2 (continued)

Port	Country	Throughput, million tons/year
Leixões	Portugal	7.64
Milford Haven	UK	21.90
Grimsby and Immingham	UK	14.00
London	UK	12.00
Southampton	UK	10.30
Forth	UK	9.70
Cork	Ireland	5.88
Dublin	Ireland	2.49
Antwerp	Belgium	25.43
Bergen	Norway	60.92
Narvik	Norway	12.00
Karmsund	Norway	10.10
Brofjord	Sweden	16.44
Göteborg	Sweden	15.37
Naantali	Finland	2.68
Fredericia	Denmark	10.27
Statoil-Havnen	Denmark	8.35
Gdansk	Poland	10.73
Tallinn	Estonia	36.00
Ventspils	Latvia	20.02
Klaipeda-Butinge	Lithuania	7.14
Larnaca	Cyprus	2.03
Thessaloniki	Greece	8.12
Vlore	Albania	8.55
Omislj	Croatia	7.68
Constanța	Romania	8.58
Burgas	Bulgaria	6.88
TOTAL		574.25

Table 3 characterizes the European tanker fleet,²⁰ whose total carrying capacity is 68.9 million tons of crude oil (37% of the capacity of the world tanker fleet).

Table 3

European Tanker Fleet

Company	Headquarters	Capacity, million tons
Frontline	Oslo	16.08
Euronav	Antwerp	9.43
Angelicooussis Group	Athens	8.30
Tsakos Group	Athens	6.13
BW Shipping Managers	Oslo	5.17
Dynacom	Athens	4.85
Maersk	Copenhagen	4.85
BP	London	4.40
Thenamaris	Athens	3.55
Torm	Copenhagen	3.51
Minerva Marine	Athens	2.63
TOTAL		68.90

Thus, Europe has a well-developed infrastructure for the supply and distribution of crude oil, whose sources are diversified, i.e., there are no real threats in this sector.

The situation with infrastructure for natural gas is different. Europe annually consumes 492.5 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas, or 15.54% of world consumption.²¹

The stable operation of the gas sector of the energy industry requires a developed infrastructure that includes (along with the gas pipeline system considered below) underground gas storage (UGS) facilities, import terminals for liquefied natural gas (LNG) and an appropriate fleet of LNG carriers.

Table 4 contains information on Europe's underground gas storages,²² whose total capacity is 84.6 bcm, and peak withdrawal rate, 1.56 bcm per day. In winter, Europe consumes about 345 bcm of gas, or 1.72 bcm per day. Thus, the maximum deliverability of gas storage facilities roughly corresponds to daily demand, but their capacity can meet only 24.5% of winter demand. In other words, in winter European gas stocks will last, on average, only 40 days.

²⁰ See: "Tanker Fleet," *Tanker Shipping Review*, March 2008, pp. 1-66; *World Tanker Fleet*. Pacific LA Marine Terminal LLC, available at [http://www.pacificenergypier400.com].

²¹ Calculations based on BP statistical data (*BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2011*).

²² See: S. Khan, *Underground Storage of Gas. Report of Working Committee 2. Triennium 2003-2006*, International Gas Union, Amsterdam, 2006; *Current State and Issues Concerning Underground Natural Gas Storage*. Docket No. AD04-11-000, Federal Energy Regulation Commission, Washington, D.C., 2004; E.V. Levykin, *Podzemnyye gazokhranilishcha*, available at [http://www.cultinfo.ru/fulltext/1/001/008/007/951.htm].

Table 4

**Underground Gas Storage Facilities
in Europe**

Country	Number of UGS Facilities	Capacity, million cubic meters	Peak Withdrawal Rate, million cubic meters/day
Austria	5	2,849	32.2
Belgium	2	635	23.0
Bulgaria	1	502	3.3
Croatia	1	558	5.0
Czech Republic	8	2,891	45.4
Denmark	2	840	13.0
France	15	11,683	189.3
Germany	42	19,149	462.9
Hungary	5	3,610	47.5
Ireland	1	210	2.1
Italy	10	17,415	296.1
Latvia	1	4,400	51.0
Netherlands	4	5,000	171.0
Poland	6	1,652	20.2
Rumania	5	3,694	26.0
Slovak Republic	2	2,740	33.4
Spain	2	2,366	12.5
Sweden	1	9	2.0
UK	6	4,364	128.5
TOTAL	119	84,567	1,564.4

The situation with liquefied natural gas infrastructure is even more tragic. Table 5, which describes European LNG import terminals,²³ shows that the total capacity of their gas storage facilities is only 3.3 million cubic meters (mcm) of liquefied gas, while their LNG regasification capacity is 147.8 mcm, or less than 0.03% of annual gas consumption in Europe.

Thus, the main burden associated with gas transportation falls on gas pipelines.

²³ See: *Natural Gas Information*.

Table 5

**Liquefied Natural Gas Import Terminals
in Europe**

Country	Name	Regasification Capacity, million cubic meters/year	Storage Capacity, thousand cubic meters
Belgium	Zeebrugge	9.0	261
Greece	Revithoussa	2.2	130
Spain	Barcelona	24.8	540
	Bilbao	12.0	300
	Cartagena	18.0	287
	Huelva	18.1	460
	Sagunto	12.0	300
UK	Isle of Grain	7.9	200
	Total	84.9	1,887
France	Fos-sur-Mer	12.0	150
	Montoir-de-Bretagne	17.2	360
Italy	Panigaglia	5.7	100
Portugal	Sines	8.9	240
	Total	29.2	510
TOTAL		147.8	3,328

Figure 5 shows Europe's strategic gas pipelines and their links to the export pipelines of different countries.²⁴ As we see, the internal system of gas pipelines is very diversified but, excluding the gas fields of the North Sea, it is connected only with the pipeline leading from Algeria to Bologna, and also with the Urengoy-Uzhgorod, Cherepovets-St. Petersburg and Blue Stream pipelines.

This implies that most of the gas supplied to the European market comes either directly from Russia or from Turkmenistan (via Russia). In this connection, we cannot understand how even after the 2006 Russia-Ukraine gas conflict (but before the "cold winter" of 2009) experts could regard the European gas infrastructure as sufficient to ensure the energy security of the European Union (EU).²⁵ The experts of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy were more far-sighted: in 2004, they

²⁴ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, op. cit.; *The Atlas of Gas Pipelines in CIS, Baltic States & Europe*, available at [http://www.neftekart.ru]; *World Pipelines Maps-Crude Oil (petroleum) Pipelines-Natural Gas Pipelines-Products Pipelines*, available at [http://www.theodora.com/pipelines].

²⁵ See, for example: S. Lochner, D. Bothe, M. Lienert, "Analyzing the Sufficiency of European Gas Infrastructure — The Tiger Model," in: *International Conference ENERDAY 2007*, ENERDAY, Dresden, 2007, pp. 16-32.

Figure 5

System of Strategic Gas Pipelines in Europe



predicted serious gas conflicts with Russia and advised Europe to develop its infrastructure in every possible way.²⁶

In our opinion, the quickest way to remedy the situation is through the rapid construction of the Bacton (UK)-Groningen (The Netherlands) gas pipeline,²⁷ development of the Nabucco project²⁸ and massive construction of LNG import terminals.

Nabucco is a project for the construction of a new pipeline to connect gas fields in the Caspian region and Central Asia with Western Europe (through the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary), so providing access to the gas distribution system of Austria, a major European transit country. The gas pipeline, ending at Baumgarten (Austria), will be about 3,300 km long. According to experts, its throughput will be 31 bcm per year in the first phase, and 50-60 bcm in the second phase. The current estimated cost of the project is EUR 7.9 billion.

²⁶ See: B. Hauhe, *The Changing Structure of World Gas Markets: Natural Gas Trade and its Benefits*, Geopolitics of Gas Working Paper Series, Energy Forum, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, Washington, D.C., 2004.

²⁷ See: *BBL—A Gas Pipeline from Balgzand (The Netherlands) to Bacton (UK)*, available at [<http://www.bblcompany.com>].

²⁸ See: *Nabucco. Project Description/Pipeline Route*, available at [<http://www.nabucco-pipeline.com>].

This project will benefit not only Europe by helping it to diversify gas supplies, but also the whole Central Asia-Caucasus region, primarily Turkmenistan, a major gas exporter in the region. Today Turkmen gas is supplied to the European market exclusively through the Russian gas pipeline system; taking advantage of this circumstance, Russia buys Turkmen gas at very low prices. According to estimates,²⁹ Turkmenistan's annual financial losses exceed \$4 billion.

An even more significant possibility is to encourage Iran to enter international gas markets. Today Iran is the world's second-largest gas producing country after Russia: its annual gas production is 138.5 bcm (compared to Russia's 588.9 bcm in 2010). Thus, Iran's involvement in the Nabucco project (if it abandons its nuclear program) will help democratize the country and reduce geopolitical risks.³⁰ This will also have a positive effect on European security.

Mining and Ferrous and Non-Ferrous Metallurgy

Excluding BHP Billiton (Australian mining giant),³¹ Barrick Gold (the world's largest Canadian gold mining company),³² Newmont Mining Corporation (U.S. company, the world's second-largest gold producer),³³ Gold Fields Co. (South African gold mining company, the fourth-largest in the world),³⁴ Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc. (U.S. mining company, the world's largest copper producer)³⁵ and Codelco Corp (national copper corporation of Chile),³⁶ virtually all other mining companies of the world are registered in Europe.

It should be noted, however, that their worldwide activities are characterized by minimum production in the European countries themselves. For example, the commercial interests of Xstrata Plc include South America, Asia, Oceania and Africa,³⁷ and Rio Tinto Plc has spread its tentacles throughout the world.³⁸ The De Beers Group, the world's largest diamond producer, has its headquarters in Switzerland.³⁹ Perhaps the only exception here is the Polish company KGHM Polska Miedź SA,⁴⁰ a globally important copper and silver producer: it exploits only its own national resources.

Meanwhile, it is Europe that sets the trends in world metal markets. For example, international prices of gold and other precious metals are traditionally established (daily) through teleconferences⁴¹ by members of the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) and major international banks (Scotia-Mocatta, Barclays Capital, Deutsche Bank, Société Générale and others). Non-ferrous metal prices are set by the London Metal Exchange.⁴²

²⁹ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, op. cit.

³⁰ See: Ibidem.

³¹ See: *Resourcing the Future. Annual Report 2008*, BHP Billiton, Melbourne, 2009.

³² See: *Barrick. Annual Report 2008*, Barrick Gold, Toronto, 2009.

³³ See: *Newmont Mining Corporation. Annual Report*, CO, Newmont Mining Co., Denver, 2008.

³⁴ See: *Gold Fields Securing the Future. Gold Fields Annual Report*, Gold Fields Co., Johannesburg, 2008.

³⁵ See: *Freeport-McMoRan Annual Report*, Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc., Phoenix, AZ, 2009.

³⁶ See: *Codelco Annual Report*, Codelco, Santiago, Chile, 2009.

³⁷ See: *Xstrata Annual Report*, Xstrata Plc, Zug, Switzerland, 2009.

³⁸ See: *Keeping the World Moving. Rio Tinto Annual Report*, Rio Tinto Plc, London, 2008.

³⁹ See: *A Diamond is Forever. Operating and Financial Review*, De Beers Group, London, 2009.

⁴⁰ See: *KGHM Polska Miedź S.A.*, available at [<http://www.kghm.pl>].

⁴¹ See: *London Gold Fixing*, available at [<http://www.goldfixing.com/home.htm>].

⁴² See: *London Metal Exchange*, available at [<http://lme.co.uk>].

But in the foreseeable future the situation may change because metal markets are gradually migrating to Southeast Asia. Even today the largest copper consumer is China,⁴³ while the Shanghai Futures Exchange in the past 10 years has risen to second place in the world in non-ferrous metal trading.⁴⁴

Things are not much better in ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy. The world's largest steel producer is Luxembourg-based ArcelorMittal S.A. (with annual production of more than 100 million tons of steel).⁴⁵ But Europe, which produces about 209 million tons of steel a year, controls only 15.6% of its world production (for comparison, China produces 489 million tons of steel a year).⁴⁶

Table 6 shows the top ten steel producing countries in Europe,⁴⁷ which account for more than 80% of European production. But their share in the world steel market is insignificant. Let us note, for example, that Germany, Europe's most economically developed country and the largest European steel producer, controls just over 3.5% of the world market, while China has 36.5%.

Table 6

List of European Countries by Steel Production

Country	Share of Production, %	
	in Europe	in the world
Germany	22.76	3.62
Italy	15.00	2.39
France	9.03	1.44
Spain	8.63	1.37
UK	6.70	1.07
Belgium	5.16	0.82
Poland	4.98	0.79
Czech Republic	3.31	0.53
Austria	3.22	0.51
Netherlands	3.00	0.48
TOTAL	81.79	13.02

The situation in the non-ferrous metal market is also problematic for Europe. As an example let us consider copper, although our analysis holds for other metals as well.

World copper mine production is slightly over 15 million tons of copper in concentrate, and its major producer is Chile (5.5 million tons). Europe produces only about 664 thousand tons of copper a year, with a steady decline in production.⁴⁸

⁴³ See: A. Rowley, *Copper Outlook—Still Tight after All This Time*, London Metal Exchange, London, 2008.

⁴⁴ See: *Shanghai Futures Exchange*, available at [<http://www.shfe.com.cn>].

⁴⁵ See: *World Steel in Figures*, International Iron and Steel Institute, Brussels, 2008.

⁴⁶ See: *Top Steel Producers*, World Steel Association, available at [<http://www.worldsteel.org>].

⁴⁷ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ See: *Ibidem*.

Every year, the world produces about 21 million tons of copper metal (from primary and secondary raw materials), and Europe controls 11.9% of the world market. For comparison, China produces 16.95% of the total, Mexico 15.92%, and Chile 14.04%.⁴⁹

In Table 7, European countries are ranked by production of copper metal.

Table 7

**List of European Countries
by Copper Production**

Country	Share of Production, %	
	in Europe	in the world
Germany	26.71	3.18
Poland	21.39	2.55
Belgium	15.81	1.88
Spain	12.36	1.47
Sweden	8.58	1.02
Finland	4.41	0.53
Austria	3.27	0.39
Bulgaria	2.81	0.33
TOTAL	95.34	11.35

As can be seen from Table 7, more than 95% of the European market is controlled by only eight countries, but their share of world copper production is quite modest. At the same time, let us note that Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Italy and Poland have a number of world-class metallurgical and electrochemical plants with a total capacity of 3.3 million tons of copper metal a year.⁵⁰ This figure exceeds the total production of copper metal in the whole of Europe by 32.6%. Such a sharp decline in economic indicators is due to the fact that plants have either come to a halt or are operating below capacity.

The conclusion from this brief survey is simple: there is a need for a second wave of production growth.

But the “reanimation” of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy is impossible without the involvement of the Central Asia-Caucasus region. Today the market of iron and polymetallic ores is almost totally segmented, and the leading role is played by China.⁵¹ Meanwhile, there are significant untapped reserves of ferrous and non-ferrous metals in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and other countries.⁵² The activity of international mining companies in the region still leaves much to be desired, and there are objective reasons for this.⁵³

⁴⁹ See: *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ See: *The World Copper Factbook*.

⁵¹ See: A. Rowley, *op. cit.*

⁵² See: A. Tvalchrelidze, *op. cit.*

⁵³ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, A. Silagadze, G. Keshelashvili, D. Gegia, *op. cit.*

In addition, a cause for concern here is that the companies active in the region are mainly Canadian, South African and Australian, while there is virtually no evidence of European activity. Meanwhile, estimates show⁵⁴ that the capitalization of these resources with investments amounting to tens of billions of U.S. dollars can create a total net present value of about 1 trillion dollars with a profitability of more than 60%.

All of this leads to the following conclusion: Europe has an opportunity to revive production and economic growth. Moreover, there is no need to fear a lack of a market because the market is in deficit and will remain so in the coming decades.⁵⁵

It should also be noted that the development of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy in the South Caucasian countries will undoubtedly accelerate their integration into the EU.

Europe's Role in International Commodity Markets

Table 8 ranks the world's largest commodity exchanges based on the number of futures contracts traded annually on the exchange.⁵⁶ For Europe, the table paints quite a sad picture:

1. Only three European exchanges are among the top 20 exchanges in the world, and all of them are located in London.
2. These three exchanges account for only 17% of the 1.4 billion futures contracts traded globally.
3. At the same time, 42.36% of futures contracts are traded on U.S. exchanges, and 25.69% on Chinese exchanges. The exchanges of Southeast Asia as a whole (including China) account for 38.42% of commodity contracts traded globally.

Thus, the leading country in this area is so far the United States, mainly due to oil supply contracts.⁵⁷ But the commodity markets of Southeast Asia in general and China in particular are gradually gaining strength and moving into the premier league of financial markets. This means that Europe is losing, step by step, its leading role in international financial affairs.

However, there is undoubtedly a rational way out of the current situation.

According to the World Bank,⁵⁸ the market capitalization of companies in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia is insignificant; the same applies to the countries of Central Asia and Turkey. The establishment of a regional commodity exchange under EU auspices⁵⁹ implies a number of positive effects. Namely, it will:

- (1) have a beneficial effect on the business environment in the region;

⁵⁴ See: *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ See: *Ibidem*; *Commodities Trading. IFSL Research*, International Financial Services, London, 2008.

⁵⁷ See: *Oil Markets and Prices: The Brent Market and the Formation of World Oil Prices*, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, Oxford Press, Oxford, 2007; R.K. Kaufmann, *World Oil Markets: Living Off the Past, Planning for the Future*, Boston University Press, Boston, 2005.

⁵⁸ See: *World Bank Data Base*.

⁵⁹ See: A. Tvalchrelidze, A. Silagadze, G. Keshelashvili, D. Gegia, *op. cit.*

Table 8

Twenty Largest Commodity Exchanges in the World

Exchange	Index	Country	Number of Futures Contracts Traded, million
New York Mercantile Exchange	NYMEX	U.S.	353
Dalian Commodity Exchange	DCE	China	186
Chicago Board of Trade	CBOT	U.S.	173
ICE Futures Europe	ICE	UK	138
Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange	ZCE	China	93
London Metal Exchange	LME	UK	93
Shanghai Futures Exchange	SFE	China	86
Multi Commodity Exchange	MCX	India	69
ICE Futures U.S.	ICE U.S.	U.S.	50
Tokyo Commodity Exchange	TOCOM	Japan	47
National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange India	NCDEX	India	35
Brazilian Mercantile and Futures Exchange	BM&F	Brazil	26
Chicago Mercantile Exchange	CME	U.S.	21
Tokyo Grain Exchange	TGE	Japan	20
Liffe Derivatives Market	LDE	UK	11
Central Japan Commodity Exchange	C-COM	Japan	7
Kansas City Board of Trade	KSBT	U.S.	5
Winnipeg Commodity Exchange	WCE	Canada	3
Malaysia Derivatives Exchange	MDEX	Malaysia	3
JSE Securities Exchange	JSE-SE	S. Africa	2

- (2) accelerate regional economic development;
- (3) create economic prerequisites for a sharp increase in regional security;
- (4) strengthen Europe's role in international commodity markets.

Main Conclusions

1. There are still no guarantees of energy security in Europe. The problem of diversifying gas sources is particularly pressing because Europe depends (directly or indirectly) on supplies from Russia.
2. The only way out of the current situation is the accelerated construction of the Bacton (UK)-Groningen (The Netherlands) gas pipeline, the development of the Nabucco project and the construction of LNG import terminals. Nabucco will ensure a new level of relations between Europe and the Central Asia-Caucasus region. This will lead both to a higher degree of energy security in Europe and to the region's sustainable economic development. It is particularly important to include Iran (eventually) in the Nabucco project (if it abandons its nuclear program), which will help to democratize that country and reduce geopolitical risks.
3. Europe has built up significant metallurgical capacity, but this sector depends almost entirely on imports of raw materials. As a result, metallurgical facilities are idle, and the most developed European countries are beginning to experience serious economic problems. The metallurgical sector is in need of urgent "reanimation" because otherwise this entire market will be taken over by China. But the resurgence of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy is impossible without the involvement of the Central Asia-Caucasus region with its significant untapped reserves of ferrous and non-ferrous ores. There is no need to fear a lack of a metal market: the market is in deficit and will remain so in the decades ahead. Moreover, the development of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy in the countries of the South Caucasus, along with purely economic benefits, will promote their integration into the EU.
4. Europe is gradually losing its leading place in commodity markets, and this place is increasingly claimed by the Southeast Asian countries. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly a rational way out of the current situation: to involve the countries of the Central Asia-Caucasus region in international financial markets. This will help both to accelerate regional economic development and to strengthen Europe's role in international commodity markets.
5. Mathematical modeling has shown that the sustainability of European economic development will depend to a significant extent on how deeply the EU analyzes the global challenges and what instruments it finds to overcome their negative impact.

MASS MEDIA

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN CENTRAL ASIAN MASS MEDIA RESEARCH

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War represented an apparent victory for NATO, capitalism, free enterprise, and democracy over the Warsaw Pact, Marxism-Leninist communism, and the Russian-Soviet empire. In 1991, five newly independent republics of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) emerged from the wreckage of that watershed event. Each new government proclaimed its commitment to free enterprise economic systems and

democratic governance. Western democracies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and human rights groups lauded that commitment to democratic mass media systems as stabilizing, modernizing, and nation-building tools. Unfortunately, significant obstacles remain to functional and effective press systems able to maintain economic, editorial, and political autonomy.

Because Russian and Soviet-era press conventions still strongly influence the press in Cen-

tral Asia, this article begins with a brief overview of the Russian colonial and czarist press system from the 1860s to the Russian Revolution of 1917. It then presents a brief history of press controls under the Soviet Union. Thus, forms of Russian domination of Central Asian journalism persisted for almost 130 years, leaving deeply entrenched czarist-Soviet press methods, controls, and traditions.

The study then summarizes significant arenas of contemporary research on Central Asian mass media, including detailed evidence of the complexity, diversity, and depth of barriers to free and effective press systems. It establishes that imposed Soviet-era journalism philosophy and practices remain much of the foundation for current professional ideology. Although there were some positive aspects to the Soviet press system, inherited professional habits, conventions, ideology, and socialist economics still obstruct adoption of aspects of Western models hallmarked by independent journalism and advocacy of a more operative form of social responsibility to audiences.

The article then outlines the conflict between external and internal pressures to establish free and democratic press systems where regimes actively resist such efforts. That resistance includes formal and informal policies of censorship and repression that restrain journalists and the mass media they serve.

Despite outside efforts to promote democratization of the press, these repressitarian governments remain highly authoritarian and exert varying but high degrees of direct and indirect censorship and content control. Among them are onerous libel laws, fabricated criminal charges against journalists, unfair tax audits, license terminations, and pressure on advertisers and printing houses when media content is deemed overly critical and adversarial. Recent murders of journalists further chill independent reporting.

This synthesized examination of recent mass media research makes clear that five separate systems have replaced the unitary Soviet one, but with such shared attributes as official or quasi-official censorship; self-censorship; lack of free-market sustainability; constraints on independence and professionalism; and a press ideology

that values service to the state above independence, fairness, balance, and accuracy. Distinctions among the systems include the presence or absence of independent and opposition media outlets; degrees of public access to the Internet and foreign media; and availability of university and professional education and training.

Collectively, this research illustrates the limited success of external forces in furthering media pluralism. Those forces are foreign governments and multi-governmental entities, international media-building and civil society-building NGOs, Western journalism trainers and professors, and foreign media outlets that disseminate print, broadcast, and Internet content. In addition, these studies summarized demonstrate how regimes and elites use—and abuse—the law to control news and information about public affairs, controversy, and public issues and how they disregard constitutional and statutory assurances of press freedom. Democratization of the press will also require changing journalists' widely accepted role as acquiescent or reluctant—let alone enthusiastic—apparatuses of the state.

The impetus and energy for developing free press systems in Central Asia are primarily external. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the region has been under pressure, mostly from the United States and Western Europe, to create and sustain “free press» systems essential to civil society. To a great extent, such external advocacy manifested the neo-conservative U.S. foreign policy ideology promulgated by former President George W. Bush and his advisors. Their interest was to democratize authoritarian nations when politically and economically expedient, as in oil- and mineral-rich Central Asia. Intensive Western efforts to encourage market- or advertising-supported media in former communist nations generally succeeded in Eastern and Central Europe. Such efforts failed in Central Asia, where media generally lack mass audiences and economic resources to attract advertisers and support the free market concept of news as a commodity.

Supporters and funders of democratic press projects in the region include the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars; British Broadcasting Corporation; Organization for Se-

curity and Cooperation in Europe; Civic Education Project (Soros Foundation); International Research and Exchanges Board; Cable News Network; Freedom House; Internews; and the International Center for Journalists. Other NGOs, such as the Committee to Protect Journalists, Amnesty International, International PEN, Reporters Sans Frontières, and Human Rights Watch do not directly engage in journalism education and training but monitor press freedom and advocate against harsh restraints.

Some regimes recognize advantages of modernizing media content, even while controlling it, by allowing journalists to learn Western news writing and reporting styles and conventions. Professional writing and reporting skills are useful to journalists, even if they are not permitted to report in an unfettered manner, and to propagandists. Western educators have taught in otherwise tightly controlled newsrooms and univer-

sities because of donor nation and funder pressure; allowing democratic journalism trainings to take place presents at least a façade of a commitment to free press systems.

Yet it remains relatively easy for authorities to censor media content that is too reflective of Western news values and reporting conventions. That is particularly true if content criticizes the regime or other powerful interests. Journalists are often punished for stories they print or broadcast. Not surprisingly, self-censorship remains a domineering force, even in the absence of official censorship.¹

We now discuss the Soviet colonial period and its influence on contemporary Central Asian media.

¹ See: O. Allison, "Selective Enforcement and Irresponsibility: Central Asia's Shrinking Space for Independent Media," *Central Asian Survey*, No. 25 (1—2), 2006, pp. 93-114.

Soviet-Era Influences on the Contemporary Press in Central Asia

Current press systems evolved from the Soviet-era system, but Russian colonial expansion into the region dates to the mid-19th century with the conquest and settlement of what was then called Turkestan. The commercial press system that flourished in Russia and, to a limited extent in parts of its Central Asian acquisitions, before World War I and the Russian Revolution deviated greatly from Western models, as Richard Shafer of the University of North Dakota, U.S., explains. Even so, many elements contributed to the mission of the press as a tool for democracy. One study of pre-revolutionary Russian newspapers² found the press generally supported equal rights, extension of civil rights, and the public's role in political decision-making. Even pro-czarist newspapers carried content inherently subversive to absolutism by advocating empowerment of common citizens and extension of individual rights. Also in the pre-revolutionary period, journalism was modernized with more concise writing and reporting conventions. A brief period of enlightenment began in 1914 and ended with the Bolsheviks' coming to power. It did not re-emerge until the "golden age" of democratic journalism during Glasnost and extended into the early 1990s, immediately after dissolution of the Soviet Union; during this time, the press still benefited from state economic support, but censorship and most other press controls eased.

Hopkins offers an opposing view about the degree of democratic progress in the Russian empire before World War I, identifying a great divide within the press system between the small governing privileged class and masses of peasants and workers.³ Because the press lacked a tradition of advo-

² See: L. McReynolds, *The News under Russia's Old Regime: The Development of a Mass-Circulation Press*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1991, pp. 6-9.

³ See: M.W. Hopkins, *Mass Media in the Soviet Union*, Pegasus, New York, 1970, pp. 117-119.

cating for democracy and individual empowerment, there was little media criticism of government. There was even less criticism in military outposts that became government centers and major cities of Central Asia.

As Russian political philosophy evolved from the early 1900s, there was no popular support compelling the press to assume an adversarial role. The state assumed control of the press, just as it assumed central economic control.

After the Revolution, the Moscow Institute of Journalism, where many Central Asian journalists were educated, emerged as one of the country's most prestigious training programs. It was proletarian in design when established to produce worker-peasant correspondents for community newspapers and periodicals. In the early 1920s, Moscow University began training students in editing, publishing, and literary criticism. In Central Asia and throughout the U.S.S.R., the primary objective of training programs became building the Communist Party while promoting socialism. Provincial universities, newspapers, and journalism organizations also provided training that Hopkins says was often "short on journalism and long on politics."⁴

Central Asian journalists who graduated from high-status and competitive Soviet academic programs, schools, and press institutes were expected to apply the Marxist-Leninist theoretical and Russian journalistic professional skills acquired in the classroom. They were inculcated with a responsibility to serve the working class and use the press to build and sustain a socialist utopia⁵. Thus they were likely to find it professionally repugnant to produce sensationalistic and often shallow journalistic content common in many newly independent countries experimenting with commercial forms of mass media and with marketing news as a commodity to generate profits in the capitalist or Western tradition.

Throughout Soviet times, dissatisfaction and social discontent were primarily confined to quiet grumbling on the street and "intellectual criticism" at home, according to Kulikova and Ibraeva, whose research focused on Kyrgyzstan's mass media.⁶ Official channels conveyed optimism and attempted to thwart discontent. Outright disinformation and lies destructively affected the general population and the journalists charged with informing them, corroding the collective psyche. Since the press was officially an agent and advocate of Marxist-Leninist thought, journalists were rewarded principally for supporting the party.

After the Revolution when the Soviet government carefully controlled the press and demanded full, uncritical support for the regime and party, some journalists—often party members—developed creative ways to express self-determination in their writing and reporting. Educators and enlightened party officials recognized that journalists acting as party apparatchiks—while exhibiting dogmatic adherence to authority—generally produced poorly crafted stories and opinion pieces that highlighted their incompetence. Such articles did little to inform or motivate the public. Citizens ridiculed or ignored such embarrassingly ineffective and counter-productive pro-Soviet propaganda. However, journalists who maintained their self-identity as professionals and eschewed working merely as crude propagandists and hacks refused to be wholly compliant. Thus, Soviet-era journalists did not work under an effective central authority as monolithic and successfully repressive of the press, as Westerners generally assume.

Even in the most repressive days under the Soviets, some journalists demonstrated elements of independent thinking and practices. Those in Central Asia were probably less compliant than Russian peers, whom Moscow could more closely monitor. Unfortunately, the Soviet empire's collapse was

⁴ Ibid., p. 81.

⁵ See: J. H. Altschull, *Agents of Power: The Media and Public Policy*, Longman, White Plains, NY, 1995, p. 195.

⁶ See: S. V. Kulikova, G. Ibraeva, *The Historical Development and Current Situation of the Mass Media in Kyrgyzstan*, Occasional Papers 1, Cimera Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland, 2001, pp. 20-21.

followed in Central Asia by the establishment of repressive new governments headed by former Communist Party leaders. These leaders imposed onerous press constraints to solidify repressitarianism and used the media to further nation-building predicated to a great extent on their self-glorification and consolidating power.

For journalists secretly supporting national independence based on ethnic identity and aspirations, it was probably easier to transition from commitment to Soviet and party ideals to advancing post-independence nation-building. Since such a commitment entailed serving as propagandists and advocates for young authoritarian regimes, journalism professionalism and independence failed to evolve in a democratic direction, as recent mass media studies demonstrate.

Exemplars of Contemporary Mass Media Research in Central Asia

How have journalists in Central Asia emerged from the constrained and narrowly ideological Soviet press system, and how have they dealt with post-independence obstacles to democratic nation-building? Have they been able to contribute to launching effective press models, perhaps remaining authoritarian but better suited to today's political, economic, cultural, and societal realities?⁷ The following summaries of recent studies address these and related questions. They are adapted from the above-mentioned book. Scholars who contributed to the book incorporate analysis and commentary from their own research, as well as their extensive journalism and mass media teaching and training experiences in the region.

National Perspectives: Realities and Challenges

Oligarchs and Media Ownership in Kazakhstan (Barbara Junisbai)

"Print," Josef Stalin said, "is the sharpest and the strongest weapon of our party." Barbara Junisbai of Pitzer College in the United States recasts Stalin's statement in the context of contemporary Kazakhstan as she examines how corporate-government interests rather than political parties use media ownership as a strong, sharp weapon to gain and maintain wealth and power. "Financial-industrial groups" with close ties to President Nursultan Nazarbaev have purchased or gained control of much of the country's print and electronic media. Led by wealthy business and political elites akin to oligarchs, these groups lead, control, or own industrial, financial, retail, media, and other businesses. They wield media holdings as weapons against rival groups and attempt to shape public opinion in their favor, according to Junisbai.

Her research concludes that press coverage of politically sensitive issues and events appears driven in large part by conflict within Kazakhstan's elite. That elite is divided into financial-industrial groups

⁷ Scholars from four continents explore these and related questions in the forthcoming book, *After the Czars and Commissars: Journalism in Authoritarian Post-Soviet Central Asia*, edited by Eric Freedman and Richard Shafer, to be published by Michigan State University Press.

vying for preferential access to lucrative political and economic goods, including the president's favor. The process began in 1997 with the government's first tender to reallocate private television and radio frequencies. The cost of obtaining rights to electronic media became prohibitive; most broadcast companies lost their licenses, a situation that some observers interpreted as an effort to silence President Nazarbaev's critics. Junisbai describes how rival groups ripped apart Rakhat Aliev, Nazarbaev's former son-in-law, who had commanded a media empire with the president's daughter, when he fell from presidential favor, lost his official titles, was divorced and criminally investigated, and went into exile. At that point, the rivals found it no longer dangerous to broadcast or print material critical of Aliev.

What explains the dominance of financial-industrial groups in media ownership? In Junisbai's assessment, print and electronic media are desirable—not necessarily because of profitability, but as potential instruments to sway public opinion and attack rival elites in a legal and seemingly neutral form. For example, 120 applicants competed for rights to about fifteen radio frequencies in a 2007 tender; only three companies owned by pro-Nazarbaev financial industrial groups were successful bidders: the Irbis television group, the Astana channel, and Ria-Arna. While avoiding direct monopolization of the media—and therefore outwardly meeting certain democratic standards—the government remains positioned to ensure media conformity and regulate information to its citizens.

Turkmenistan's Press: The Most Controlled in Central Asia *(Luca Anceschi)*

While Junisbai's work on Kazakhstan shows how an authoritarian government uses nominally "independent" media to retain power, Luca Anceschi of La Trobe University in Australia shows how the media in Turkmenistan fails at even a pretense of independence from government control. None of the other four Central Asian nations has been as consistently authoritarian and nondemocratic as Turkmenistan has, and Anceschi's research explores how post-independence media policy significantly strengthened its authoritarianism before and since the death of President-for-Life Saparmurat Niyazov in 2006.

Anceschi explains the progression to near-absolute control of mass media by following the development of two major policy prongs: repression and propaganda. Repression helped maximize control over political life by silencing dissent and obliterating independent voices. Meanwhile, an intensive propaganda campaign indelibly marked the public's political behavior through a window-dressing ideology engineered to legitimize the regime and build a perverse nationalism resting on Niyazov's cult of personality. To different degrees and through different approaches, repression and propaganda established a media policy that abetted the regime in consolidating dictatorial, all-pervasive powers.

Only Turkmenistan has used the media to cultivate such a wholly totalitarian government based on a brutal campaign of nation-building grounded in cults of personality. That strategy differs strikingly from choices by the other Central Asian nations that opted instead to use their media to foster statehood and nationhood within less harsh authoritarian frameworks.

The media landscape remains rigidly state-controlled with government the sole legal editor, broadcaster, and publisher. Propaganda has played a substantial role in the process of regime consolidation and enhanced public compliance with rules promoted by Niyazov, his successor, Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, and their associates. The main attributes remain regulation, rigid restraints over content—only an estimated 1.6 percent of the population has Internet access—and brutal suppression of dissent. Berdymukhammedov continued systemic harassment of journalists. In 2008, for example, an unpaid contributor to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was beaten, tortured, and detained in a

psychiatric clinic. In 2009, Berdymukhammedov removed the most prominent censor of the Niyazov era as chief editor of *Turkmenistan*, the principal Turkmen-language newspaper; that merely symbolic action did not lead to a relaxation of media constraints, however.

Coverage of Extremism by a Kyrgyzstan Newspaper *(Irina Wolf)*

In contrast to Turkmenistan, independent and opposition media outlets continue to operate in Kyrgyzstan. In her research into coverage of Muslim extremism there, Irina Wolf of the University of Konstanz in Germany content-analyzes how Kyrgyzstan's largest national newspaper, *Vechernii Bishkek*, reported on Hizb ut-Tahrir, an international extremist political party with Islam as its ideological foundation. *Vechernii Bishkek* printed considerably more stories about the group than any other quality newspaper.

Her study begins in 2001—the year of al-Qa'eda attacks in the U.S.—and concludes on 31 December, 2005, the year of the Tulip Revolution. It assesses the quantity and kinds of information presented about Hizb ut-Tahrir, then looks at how coverage of the party changed over those years, including the fact that the number of articles about the arrests of party members grew significantly after 2001. Finally, the study addresses the extent to which terminology (rhetoric) and information Kyrgyz journalists used reflected their personal opinions and state policies.

During the study period, she finds a lack of journalistic neutrality regarding dissemination of information about Hizb ut-Tahrir based on interviews with four journalists who wrote the majority of relevant articles. The study also discovers that the overwhelming majority of articles were written in very negative tones, for example referring to members as extremists, terrorists, radicals, and/or religious fanatics. No articles were found about positive aspects of Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities, such as charitable work. Wolf notes that the law prohibits the mass media from providing a forum for extremists but the newspaper at times provided a platform for the organization, such as interviews with its press attaché and an imprisoned member.

Wolf attributes the expanded number of articles with neutral references to Hizb ut-Tahrir—including calling it a Muslim religious political organization aimed at building a caliphate—to changes in the government and in *Vechernii Bishkek*'s directorship in 2005. Although journalists' personal views about religion and combating extremism influenced coverage, Wolf cautions against underestimating the government's role in setting the agenda for privately owned *Vechernii Bishkek* and, in this case, determining the tone of news and information about oppositionist political groups that may be deemed as posing a threat.

Internet Control in Uzbekistan *(Zhanna Hordegen)*

Anceschi's study of national press policy in Turkmenistan addresses a traditional form of media, newspapers, while Zhanna Hordegen of the University of Zurich, Switzerland, studies a much newer form of media, the adoption, use and control of the Internet in Uzbekistan.

Internet connectivity has improved, and the regime has pursued infrastructure development, but rigid state controls impede wider access and use. The government maintains the most extensive and intrusive state-mandated filtering system in Central Asia. Websites operated by international and

domestic human rights organizations and opposition-in-exile political parties are permanently filtered and blocked. Regime hostility to the medium has reinvigorated debate about the significance of a state's coercive power to control information flow within its borders.

Although censorship was officially abolished in 2002, the government systematically monitors mass communications by collecting information products that individuals and legal entities disseminate, analyzing their content and sending warnings to the media. Hordegen observes that the country's regulatory framework no longer distinguishes between Web and traditional print forms of content distribution; the legal framework requires websites to officially register as mass media. That regulatory structure is reminiscent of Soviet laws that regarded every computer or word processor connected to a printer as a potential printing press that could be used as a subversive tool against government. On a practical level, it means registered websites may be closed without written notice of alleged violations of the regulatory framework and without opportunities to correct any purported violations.

Regulation of access to information is more sweeping in implication. In Uzbekistan, information security goes beyond a general understanding of "computer security" or "network security." Rather, it is considered integral to national security. That means perceived threats against territorial integrity and state secrets automatically become threats to information security. In addition, speech banned by the Criminal Code is deemed a threat to information security. Uzbekistan's information security rules and their practical implementation rest on a formally constructed national ideology called the "idea of national independence." Under that ideology, government legislates rules that control Internet use. Thus the concept of information security is corrupted by contradictions, she notes, undermining interests in open access to information, democratic civic discourse, and press freedom.

Censorship and Self-Censorship in Tajikistan (*Peter Gross and Timothy Kenny*)

Beyond formal and quasi-formal systems of media control such as those studied by Junisbai, Hordegen, and Anceschi, Central Asian regimes encourage and sustain informal systems of media control, as Peter Gross of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, U.S., and Timothy Kenny of the University of Connecticut, U.S., explain in their survey-based study of professional journalists in Tajikistan. Censorship—although officially but not *de facto* discontinued—coupled with self-censorship by news organizations are two of seven paralyzing obstacles faced by Tajik media and society.

They identify other major obstacles as: absence of independent news distribution; poor financial market conditions, including low salaries; high taxes; lack of journalism professionalism; and journalists' unwillingness to produce stories based on fact and supported by truth.

Although the press appears on quick examination to function effectively, Gross and Kenny conclude that it avoids gathering and disseminating potentially controversial news and information that would benefit society and serve as a check on government. According to their study, self-censorship—"soft censorship"—lies at the core of the country's press problems. It is circumscribed by a political system controlled by President Imomali Rakhmon and his People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan and undermined by economic conditions promulgated by a quasi-feudal financial system. Indirect pressure on the media comes from abuse of public funds and monopolies, abuse of regulatory and inspection powers; and extra-legal pressures. Thus journalists who stray too far from the dictates of self-censorship risk loss of government financial support or other income from related work, such as public relations.

Violence, intimidation, regulations, and lawsuits encourage self-censorship too. Those factors are reflected in the murders of at least twenty-seven journalists during the 1992-1997 civil war, defamation laws, licensing for broadcast stations, and a history of media closures.

The government has been loath to end censorship of print, broadcast, and Internet media, while politicians capitalize on traditions and norms that quash initiative and foster self-censorship. The press is also hindered by a culture that puts a premium on familial ties, friendships, and personal contacts, which together are the social glue that encourages journalism to maintain society's status quo. Thus self-censorship serves as an important social control mechanism. The study finds that establishing independent media and protecting journalistic freedom are proving daunting, although some impediments may be resolved over time if the yoke of self-censorship is lifted.

Trans-Regional Perspectives

Journalists' Rights and Duties under Media Law

(Olivia Allison)

Olivia Allison of the global intelligence firm Stirling Assynt in the United Kingdom evaluates how media laws in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan remain influenced by the juxtaposition of "rights" and "duties." Her analysis asks whether the principle of loyalty remains central in media law and its enforcement, and it identifies the most important categories for assessing the role of loyalty in governmental restrictions on press freedom.

Her hypothesis is that media laws and enforcement remain framed by the expectation of loyalty under statutes that target "disloyal" media rather than encouraging pluralism. Because journalistic "duties"—which include the ill-defined duty of responsibility—form the basis of journalistic rights, disloyal media have fewer rights than pro-governmental media. Indeed, the goal of such laws is not to sustain a vibrant press, but one that is uncritical of the regime.

The interview-based study addresses multiple categories of law—media registration; frequency licensing; access to information; libel and defamation; finance and tax; and censorship.

It suggests it is insufficient merely to look at the language of such statutes because libel awards for moral damages are often alarmingly high in lawsuits brought by judges and other public officials against financially vulnerable press outlets. At best, media registration agencies move slowly. At worst, they intentionally work against opposition and independent media, often taking longer than the mandated period without explanation or accountability. In addition, enforcement of those laws is uneven and frequently discriminatory. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, Allison says tax inspectors interfere in media businesses' activities, arbitrarily reviewing their books and ignoring tax-code violations in exchange for bribes unless instructed to act otherwise.

In addition, the study looks at journalism practices, including how some professionals manifest "disloyalty" or opposition through technically illegal activities, such as printing "state secrets." Such materials often fall short of ethical standards; journalists' outputs are often factually unsupported and libelous even by Western standards. Some media evade taxes; ironically, that conduct helps authorities because charging a disloyal media outlet with hefty back taxes can quickly shut it down without litigation. When both pro-government and oppositionist media outlets violate the law, only opposition media that are penalized. The study faults journalists themselves for remaining uncommitted to, or equivocal about, professional ethics and corrupt business and public practices, saying such misbehavior weakens attempts to expose official corruption.

Ethnic Minorities and the Media (Olivier Ferrando)

Following independence, the language of each country's largest ethnic group became the *lingua* of the mainstream media, often displacing the dominant Russian language, according to Olivier Ferrando of Sciences Po in France. Examining state-owned media for native minorities in the Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, he explores the role of such media in a multiethnic society and considers how the press may encourage audiences to retain ethnic values and promote a common civic identity. In a diverse region transected by political borders that ignore ethnicity, how do media navigate among specific aims—such as community-based expectations—and universal appeals, market imperatives, and systems of patronage? Addressing those questions, he notes that ethnic media help authorities reach citizens who lack functional bilingualism or fluency in the official state language. For instance, the official newspaper of Tajikistan's Sughd province has been edited in three language versions since 1930: *Khakikati Leninobod* in Tajik, *Leninabadskaia pravda* in Russian, and *Leninobod Khakikati* in Uzbek (Truth of Leninabad). Certainly state-owned minority language media serve the interests of their editors, who are state administrations; their editorial leaning favors the authorities. However, their impact is questionable because of low public interest in reading government decisions and official chronicles. Thus their circulation has dropped, and most copies circulate to the subscribing state administrations. Other minority media are edited by ethnic associations and sometimes by private interests.

His study also looks at the education of minority journalists. It finds that universities and foreign trainers generally offer courses only in the state language or Russian, so journalists for Uzbek-language media in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, or Tajik-language media in Uzbekistan, receive no such training in the language they write or broadcast in.

Ferrando finds that the minority press shows vitality but cautions that ethnic specialization in multiethnic societies may lead to the "ghettoization" of minority newspapers and marginalization of their audiences. The research concludes that a highly differentiated public sphere—where minorities talk to and among themselves in their native languages amid a deaf mainstream culture—does not promote shared space and values. The republics' borders in Soviet times were insignificant, so minority media circulated freely within their respective language groups; today, each nation-state enforces strict border controls. Finding cross-cutting cleavages is a more creative solution than restricting mainstream and minority cultures and their media channels.

The Human Impact of Press Constraints (Eric Freedman)

From the perspective of individual journalists and independent or opposition media, the situation in Tajikistan that Gross and Kenny discuss has much in common with the situation elsewhere in Central Asia, as Eric Freedman of Michigan State University, U.S., details. His research into the human impact of press constraints explores dangers for journalists. The reasons include the authoritarian nature of its regimes, lack of a tradition of independent media, inadequate education and training for journalists, pressure on journalists and news organizations to advance the development of national identity and statehood, and fiscal dependence on governments, political parties, oligarchs, business interests, and foreign donors. Yet if a principal role of post-Soviet journalism is building public support for transparent, honest, participatory institutions, individual journalists and their mass media outlets

must be free to report on public affairs and controversial issues in a fair, accurate, balanced, ethical, and professional way.

The study highlights several high-profile incidents of assassination, assault, disappearance, self-exile, and arrest and puts them into a broader context of press constraints: In Kazakhstan, Oralgaisa Omarshanova of the Astana-based independent weekly *Zakon i pravosudiye* (Law and Justice), disappeared on 30 March, 2007. In Kyrgyzstan, Alisher Saipov, a human rights activist, editor of the Uzbek-language newspaper *Siyasot*, and contributor to Voice of America, Institute for War & Peace Reporting, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and independent online outlets Ferghana.ru and Uznews, was murdered on 24 October, 2007. In Turkmenistan, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty contributor Sazak Durdymuradov was arrested by secret police on 24 June, 2008, tortured, and detained in a psychiatric hospital; and in Uzbekistan, independent journalist Solidzhon Abdurakhmonov received a ten-year prison sentence on 10 October, 2008 on fabricated drug charges. Those kinds of incidents deter professionalism and independence and may provoke journalists to go into self-exile, as some did after covering the military's violent suppression of protests in Uzbekistan.

The study identifies the challenge for press rights advocates and defenders to keep the issue fresh and prominent for multiple publics: ordinary citizens and decision-makers inside and outside Central Asia, multinational agencies, and foreign NGOs involved in civil society development and democracy-building. While official reports are one avenue for meeting that challenge, it may be more effective to disseminate personalized accounts of journalists at risk. That strategy may pressure regimes to release imprisoned journalists, punish attackers, rein in abusive officials, and take other action to ameliorate repressive conditions.

Western Broadcasting to Central Asia (*Navbahor Imamova*)

An important avenue to diversify news and opinions is for outside news and information sources to circumvent domestic controls and provide content directly to their audiences. International broadcaster Navbahor Imamova of the Voice of America (VOA) Uzbek Service looks at the reach of three Western external news outlets into Uzbekistan: VOA, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).

International broadcasters have always struggled to maintain audiences within Uzbekistan and have never attracted more than four percent of potential listeners. Reasons include the fact that international shortwave broadcasts are often jammed and the agencies are be short-staffed and underfunded. Despite such obstacles, the quality and reliability of their content provide a competitive edge; they supply informative, critical analysis of current policies, plus accurate news and information that opens a wider window to the outside world.

Despite the struggle to serve audiences in Uzbekistan, Imamova cautions against underestimating the importance of international broadcasting to the development of civil society. BBC, RFE/RL, and VOA enable political opposition forces to have their voices amplified. However, it is also important in developing civil society that international broadcasters not become advocates or mouthpieces for these groups and avoid promoting specific agendas of domestic opposition groups or interests. Instead, they should reflect a balanced approach to issues so audiences receive information to make decisions and form their own opinions. International broadcasters also can help drive the domestic news agenda because journalists, editors, and producers at state broadcast and independent stations use them to inform their own programming.

Imamova's study found a continuing need in Central Asia for improving local and independent media. Respondents and interviewees confirmed that the dearth of non-governmental press and elec-

tronic media remains a major barrier to developing civil society. It concludes that these three international broadcasters often provide the only dependable sources of uncensored news, although they are not immune to criticism as post-Cold War anachronisms and foreign propaganda agents.

Supporters of international broadcasting services argue that the process of change requires nurturing, and that RFE/RL and VOA shortwave radio remains an effective way to reach audiences in closed countries like Uzbekistan. All are available on the Internet, and Imamova documents how the Web's spread expands their reach and programming as vital sources of information unavailable through domestic media.

Journalism Education and Professionalism

Journalism Education in Kazakhstan

(Maureen Nemecek, Stanley Ketterer, Galiya Ibraeva, and Stanislav Los)

In exploring the education and preparation of aspiring journalists, independent scholar Maureen Nemecek, Stanley Ketterer of Oklahoma State University in the U.S., and Galiya Ibrayeva and Stanislav Los of Kazakh National University review journalism education in Kazakhstan in light of the history of the country's mass media. Its first professional journalists were trained in Alma-Ata in 1934 by the Kazakh Communistic Institute of Journalism, forerunner of the faculty of journalism at al-Faraby Kazakh State (now National) University. Teachers considered it a great honor to be a journalism teacher in Soviet times because of the prestige, possibility of wealth and status, and feeling of solidarity with institutions of power.

Changes in overall ideology have led to significant changes in the journalism curriculum since independence. Gone are courses on propaganda, demagoguery, Marxism-Leninism, and the theory of communist Soviet journalism; much more attention focuses on practical aspects of journalism, press freedom, and legal protections for the mass media. Leaving the Soviet mentality behind has not been easy. The method for changing or adding to the curriculum remains bureaucratically cumbersome, for example, and some professionals complain that their university training did not provide skills necessary to do their jobs.

The study finds the legacy of Soviet journalism ideology and practice lingers today long and that privatization, the marketplace, competition, and creation of new curricula challenge educators who seek to prepare a new generation of professionals to advance a media system that better serves the public.

The country has twenty faculties (departments or colleges) of journalism, five of them private, and regional universities offer journalism on an as-needed basis. In the authors' survey, journalism instructors said teaching ability has more influence on students than curriculum but favored updates to include new media and student internships. They supported teaching focused on national history and culture, and training students to report the country's accomplishments; some recommended that the curriculum emphasize accomplishments of past Kazakh journalists and writers and the country's traditions.

Asked how to help instructors to teach better job, respondents' main ideas recommendations were higher salaries, less paperwork, and stronger support for scholarship. They said reforms and incentives should assist teachers in improving their qualifications to meet student demands in a changing media technology environment. The study notes instructors' interest in forming an association to advance professionalism through a support network for grant opportunities, syllabi, research ideas, conferences, and academic journals.

Obstacles to Professional Practices and Ethics in Kyrgyzstan (*Gregory Pitts*)

While the study of university-level journalism education in Kazakhstan examines questions relevant to the preparation of future journalists, survey research by Gregory Pitts of the University of North Alabama, U.S., shows that Kyrgyzstani professionals value “correct” professional practices, such as applying their training and learning new journalism skills. Professionalism lies at the heart of their support for press freedom. The study notes that failing economic conditions have separated the Kyrgyz population into a small cadre of government supporters with access to wealth and from a much broader impoverished population. Meanwhile, a separate class—journalists—aspires to thrive personally and professionally in a field that offers only limited prospects for financial security.

Thirty-one full-time and sixty part-time journalists, the majority women, participated in the project. Others chose not to take part out of concern about potential intimidation and violence.

Pitts found that journalists significantly value a number of factors, such as the chance to learn new skills, career advancement opportunities, a job that fully uses their professional abilities, and opportunities for originality and initiative. All four of those factors received ratings of extremely important or quite important from more than 95 percent of the respondents. Fewer than half gave similar high ratings to whether the job was essential to their community or whether they could change their workplace.

Aside from elements of professionalism, three other variables ranked high in importance among respondents: personal security—a good salary; job enjoyment; and job security. At the same time, fewer than 75 percent considered it extremely important or quite important to have a job that carries prestige, does not disrupt family life, and provides contact with important people.

As another signal of their commitment to professionalism, more than 70 percent of those surveyed foresaw themselves as pursuing some element of media work in the next five years despite uncertainties about the country’s media environment.

The study also examined journalism practices. In response to questions about ethics, the survey found that only 30 percent agreed that journalists should be willing to go to jail to protect the identity of confidential sources; 56 percent agreed or strongly agreed that journalists could accept trips paid for by government or business if no “story-specific coverage” is required. Three-quarters felt journalists should periodically take refresher courses, and more than 70 percent favored certification of professional journalists.

New Media, New Frontiers

Internet Libel in Tajikistan (*Kristine Kohlmeier and Navruz Nekbakhtshoev*)

While Uzbekistan’s strict regulation of the Internet, including access and content, formed the focus of Hordegen’s study, Kristine Kohlmeier, an attorney, and Navruz Nekbakhtshoev of Indiana University, U.S., examine the extension of Tajikistan’s criminal libel law to the Internet. The context of their research is a country where widespread Internet use is prohibitive due to power shortages, antiquated electrical infrastructure, theft of equipment, lack of skilled computer technicians, poor Internet connections, reliance on slow modems, language limitations regarding Web use, outdated or unavailable software, and obstacles related to government controls. The government has shut Web

sites that “undermined the state’s policies,” although filtering and blocking sites is generally not official policy lest it jeopardize access to foreign aid.

The country’s post-independence civil war remains a pretext for restraints on free expression. The regime proffers several rationales for its criminal libel laws. One is “information security,” which is similar to—but broader than—legal provisions guarding state secrets. For example, information security includes limits on distribution of information about pornography, violence, and ethnic and religious hostility, as well as information that tends to “discredit the honor and dignity of the state and the president.” Another proffered rationale is to enhance the professionalism of journalists by making reporters and editors “think about the consequences of their actions before they do anything”—an approach that encourages self-censorship.

Journalists were not consulted before the Majlisi Oli, the parliamentary body dominated by the president’s party, made the libel law applicable to the Internet in 2007. Online violators face potential heavy fines and jail sentences. In terms of enforcement, distribution through the Internet is hard to track because content can be easily forwarded, reposted, translated, and sent through blogs, chatrooms, social networking sites, and listservs; content also can be hosted on servers in multiple countries. Meanwhile, the law is detrimental to democratization by deterring journalists and lay commentators from writing openly about internal affairs while the regime monopolizes mainstream print and broadcast communications.

Given the trans-border reach of the Internet and Tajikistan’s close ties with regional powers Russia and China, extension of national libel law carries international implications. Given that most critical Web sites are hosted outside the country and do not use .tj in their domain names, it remains to be seen whether those countries will help Tajikistan enforce its Internet libel amendments.

Blogs as an Alternative to Official Information in Kyrgyzstan *(Svetlana Kulikova and David Perlmutter)*

The Hordegen and Kohlmeier-Nekbakhtshoev research examines government constraints on the Internet. Taking a different approach, Svetlana Kulikova of Georgia State University, U.S., and David Perlmutter of the University of Iowa, U.S., address the Web’s potential to circumvent government controls and supply non-official information to the public. Their case study about the toppling of autocratic President Askar Akaev assesses the Akaevu.net (Akaevu.net means “down with Akaev” in Russian) blog in the run-up to the Tulip Revolution of 2005 as a temporary vehicle for disseminating news and information regarding the country’s volatile political situation. They found no direct link between Akaevu.net and similar advocacy blogs and the downfall of the regime.

Akaevu.net was launched one day before the revolution by the administrators of gazeta.kg, an online opposition newspaper whose own site had been blocked or hacked by the government. Operating for about one month, it was hosted and administered from the United States and positioned itself as “a trumpet of the Kyrgyz revolution.” Its predominantly Russian-language content targeted users of the Russian segment of the Internet with a combination of stories from mainstream media and Web sites, material generated by bloggers, and reader comments, some of them anonymous. It included as proprietary material the group created, such as petitions, analyses, and alternative interpretations of other media stories. English-language content came from foreign media.

Akaevu.net could break news—as it did with an exclusive advance announcement that a recently imprisoned opposition leader would make his first television appearance—or make mistakes—as with an erroneous report attributed to another source that Akaev had resigned. And as an advocacy blog its content was understandably imbalanced: Almost half the posted stories that mentioned Akaev

or his family were negative, about the same proportion was neutral, and few were favorable to the president.

The study concludes that such Third World blogs—virtual “samizdat” media in the context of Soviet history—can be significant producers, collectors, distillers, distributors, and exhibitors of information and can serve as either constructive critics that facilitate public debate or lonely opposition voices “cornered” on the Internet for a limited number of users. Their research offers insights into new technologies that may lessen press controls and governmental information management in Central Asia by providing a space where anonymity can shield bloggers with little risk of tracing and where readers can engage in commentary and dialog.

Summary and Conclusions

This wide range of contemporary mass media research illustrates how Central Asia press outlets remain tightly controlled and manipulated, first under the czars, then under the Soviets, and now under authoritarian regimes. Over the past two decades, the press systems have not achieved even minimal democratization and independence by international standards. Perhaps the Internet and other technologies will have a better chance of circumventing censors and the economic obstacles that deny the great mass of Central Asians the ability to participate in a useful dialog leading to more transparent and participatory governance.

Several overarching observations emerge from this synthesized examination of recent research. The five separate press systems that replaced the single Soviet system share many commonalities, although significant differences also exist. These studies indicate varying but not decisive degrees of external influences from multi-governmental entities, media-building foundations, and promoters of civil society; such influences on Central Asian media development originate with mostly Western-based journalism and mass media trainers.

Another observation concerns regimes’ use and abuse of laws to control information about public affairs and public issues. That pattern evident from several studies reflects a disconnect between constitutional and statutory guarantees of press freedom on one side and actual threats to those guarantees on the other side due to libel and “honor and dignity” suits, criminal prosecutions, and tightening regulation of the Internet.

Examined collectively, these studies suggest the following obstacles to democratic and independent media development in Central Asia:

- strict governmental and extra-governmental restraints on the press, regardless of the type of medium—print, broadcast, or Internet;
- inadequate professional training, leadership, resources, financial incentives, and ethical standards for journalists and prospective journalists;
- limitations on the ability of domestic and international press and human rights defenders to compel changes in policies and laws;
- insufficient market resources to create and sustain independent news organizations; and
- a resulting lack of credibility and public trust in the press.

Important lessons relevant to the future of Central Asia press systems emerge. First, the virtually complete absence of independent media is a significant barrier to democratic institutions and human rights protections. Press freedom is not an end to itself, but a cornerstone of civil society and the rule of law.

A second lesson is that foreign models of press systems and journalism education and training cannot serve as templates for Central Asia. The structure of news organizations, their operations, and their regulation in any country—developed or lesser-developed, authoritarian or post-authoritarian—must reflect that country's traditions, cultural values, societal standards, and political and economic realities. Journalism models and press conventions cannot be summarily imported and transplanted.

As a cautionary note, we recognize that a country's media environment, like its political environment, is subject to unpredictable change. For example, Kyrgyzstan experienced growing authoritarianism, including tighter constraints on the press, in the five years following the March 2005 Tulip Revolution that ousted President Askar Akaev. An April 2010 coup removed Akaev's successor, raising hopes for a liberalization of media controls. Events intervened again in June 2010 with the outbreak of ethnic violence in the south of the country, raising fears that the interim regime would again suppress press rights and other individual liberties as a means of retaining control.

That said, there is some reason for optimism that these countries will move toward wider adoption of new media technologies and greater participation in the global economy by accelerating press development, including eventual acceptance of international media standards such as a higher degree of media accuracy, fairness, balance, and ethical professional practices. If so, however, they will move at their individual paces, whether voluntarily or under pressure from foreign donors and multinational organizations.

THE NEW MEDIA AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC POLITICAL SPHERE IN GEORGIA

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Introduction

Today, when information technology is sweeping the world, it is commonly thought that the social media have essentially pushed the traditional media aside to emerge as an important factor behind public opinion. This is especially obvious in countries where the traditional me-

dia (including TV) lack pluralism and operate under the pressure of the powers that be. Georgia is one such country, where the social media serve as a lifebuoy for the public political sphere.

They provide the luxury of interactive communication, while the traditional media drown the

audience in unidirectional information flows. This means that the social media not merely disseminate information, they serve as a platform for political discussions (something which Georgia lacked in the past). It has become absolutely clear that people are not indifferent to political issues—this is confirmed by the heated discussions on the Internet.

According to the polls conducted by the Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC), the Georgian population prefers to watch entertainment and sports events than to ponder on political issues. This means that the country will not acquire new public-political TV and radio channels any time soon. Meanwhile, the Internet and social media are rapidly developing.

Transformation of the Information Field

Social networks and the Internet have not merely changed the traditional media and the country's political sphere, they have changed the cornerstone of the country's political communication.

In the last few years, the Georgian electronic media have abandoned political issues to concentrate on entertainment, which means that the political parties and political figures have moved, albeit partially, to the virtual sphere to discuss public and political issues; this, in turn, has encouraged the social media.

The number of Internet users is rapidly rising: in 2000, there was no more than 400; whereas by 2009, this number had reached approximately 20 thousand. According to the U.N. ITU, today there are 1,300,000 Internet users in Georgia (about 28.3 percent of the total population).¹

“Most Georgian users, about 55 percent, access the Internet from home, while about 21 percent use a friend's computer. Others use connections at the office (9 percent), on mobile phones (6 percent), or in cybercafes (6 percent).”²

In recent years, the regions have joined the Internet frenzy; however, Tbilisi and other big cities remain the leaders, partly because many smaller towns, as well as villages lack the adequate infrastructure. On average, each user spends between \$7-10 and \$25 every month on the Internet, sums which villagers cannot afford.

There are 19 Internet providers in Georgia, two of which have scooped over two-thirds of the market: Silknet (with over 40 percent of the Internet market) and Caucasus Online (with a large share of the Georgian market of Internet communications).

Three mobile communication operators are trying to squeeze into the Internet market by using wireless telecommunications.³

New Paradigms of Political Communication and Virtual Elections

The Egyptian revolution, which has been dubbed the Facebook Revolution, taught users and the people in power to treat the social networks with caution.

¹ See: ICT Statistics 2009—Internet. International Telecommunication Union (ITU), available at [<http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ICTEYE/Indicators/Indicators.aspx>].

² [<http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fotn/2011/FOTN2011.pdf>].

³ [http://top.ge/all_report.php].

In Georgia, the mobilization potential of the media had already been tested and found effective, which forced the victors of the Rose Revolution to take control of the electronic media as soon as they came to power.

Very soon, however, the social networks and media showed they were even more effective; the Georgian political leaders and the leaders of other Soviet successor-states have already voiced their concerns.

In the wake of the mass riots in Tunisia and Egypt, which demonstrated the inordinate impact of the social networks and media, the latest CSTO summit spoke about tighter control over them.⁴

The Arab Spring urged the Georgian political establishment and the country's leaders to become active users of social networks. In the summer of 2011, Speaker of the Georgian parliament David Bakradze began actively promoting his page on Facebook: it took him three or four months to gather a large crowd of 20 thousand supporters (by 30 September, 2011, 15 thousand were already registered); and the number is growing.

Prime Minister of Georgia Nika Gilauri has even more virtual friends: 24,744 by the fall of 2011.

The Mayor of Tbilisi Giorgi Ugulava has outstripped both: he has 42,812 supporters, the ranks of whom are swelling by the day.

The Internet activities of the speaker and the mayor of Tbilisi are attracting particular attention: the ruling party has already earmarked them as presidential candidates in 2013. Their virtual friends might support them at the coming presidential elections if the ruling party does not change its mind and take a fancy to someone else.

Meanwhile, the two potential presidents are competing on Facebook; Speaker Bakradze initiated regular personal meetings: he invites small groups of his supporters (no more than 10 at a time) to parliament tours followed by lunches. During one such meeting, he told the journalists: "Any power that thinks it necessary to communicate regularly with the people should use the social networks."

It should be said that the Georgian legislators have made communication with their virtual friends a habit: Akaki Minashvili and Giorgi Gabashvili, members of the parliamentary majority and chairmen of two parliamentary committees, have organized personal meetings with their Facebook friends.

In the fall of 2011, the Georgian parliamentarians, driven by their newly awakened enthusiasm for the virtual world, launched an Internet game to stir up the young people's social activity. For 45 days, anyone could join the game to test themselves as candidates for the virtual post of parliament speaker and as voters.

The executive branch, likewise, appreciated the usefulness of social networking: practically all the ministers have opened their pages on Facebook.

Late in September 2011, the president started his official site with, so far, a very limited number of friends (600 people). The prospects, however, are good: he will gather more friends than any other official in no time. It should be said that in view of the 2012 parliamentary and the 2013 presidential elections, the number of virtual supporters of the political heavyweights is fairly suggestive and might affect members of the political community and the ruling class.

Political parties are widely using Facebook; everyone who talks about the weakness of the opposition in Georgia obviously underestimates the huge potential of the social networks, which function beyond state control. It seems that the opposition is accusing the people in power of monopolizing the traditional media to justify their own passiveness.

Meanwhile, the developing social media and networks can obviously offer Georgian society a much greater role than the one played by political parties.

⁴ See: "ODKB vozmetsya za sotsialnye seti; Revolutsii budut predotvrashchat cherez Facebook and Twitter," *Izvestia*, 12 September, 2011, available at [<http://www.izvestia.ru/news/500269>].

The social media and networks articulate political interests, ideas, and slogans, while the traditional media in Georgia have always been (since the 1990s) talking and writing about what interests the actors actively involved in the political processes (the political elites, people in power, the opposition, etc.) rather than society; the people remained silent. Nothing has changed since that time: very much as before, the traditional media are serving the people in power.

The social media has crystallized real public opinion, which has nothing to do with the interests of all sorts of political circles and groups. Some think that in the future, confrontation with the authorities will no longer follow the old pattern typical of Georgia: dominating political leaders and a potential messiah. Confrontation, which could develop into a revolution, will begin at the grass-roots level with the social media playing an important role in the process.

We should bear in mind that Georgia ranks 88 among the 213 countries which use Facebook; it is more popular in Georgia than Twitter, MySpace, and others⁵; this is confirmed by several sources which cite more or less similar figures. In June 2011, for example, the number of Facebook users in Georgia was 615,960 (44 percent of them men and 56 percent women)—a huge figure for a country with a population of about 4,500 thousand. It should be said that the absolute majority of users are young people, the most active population group.

The age distribution of Facebook users in Georgia is as follows:

13-15	— 8 percent;
16-17	— 8 percent;
18-24	— 36 percent;
25-34	— 27 percent;
35-44	— 12 percent;
45-54	— 5 percent;
55-64	— 1 percent;
over 65	— 2 percent.⁶

The Internet Media— Second Wind for Freedom of Speech in Georgia

The media in Georgia are developing at a slower rate than the social networks, however an ever growing number of journals, newspapers, and agencies are opening their online versions and posting information on Facebook and in blogs. Youtube is used to exchange video information. According to Freedom House, many of the Georgian journalists employed by the traditional media lack the necessary knowledge and experience to use the latest Internet technologies with good results.

Some think that in Georgia (and elsewhere for that matter) social and other types of media are locked in uncompromising rivalry, however in Georgia TV has been always regarded as the main source

⁵ See: "Top Sites in Georgia," *Alexa*, available at [<http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/GE>], 20 September, 2010.

⁶ [www.socialbakers.com].

of news (even though it was hugely biased). A poll conducted in 2011 by one of the Georgian research groups revealed that although 70 percent of the republic's population prefer social networks and 45 percent use the Internet to obtain information (in 2009, these people comprised 34 percent of the total population), only 5 percent of the total population regard the Internet as the main source of news; this means that it comes after TV; 11 percent (twice as many as in 2009) describe it as a source of news of secondary importance.⁷

As distinct from TV programs, newspapers which criticize the regime have to be bought; and in order to obtain detailed and objective information people have to pay for more than one newspaper. There is another negative factor: many of the newspapers support one of the politicians or parties and in this respect cannot compete with the Internet. They compete with one another, mainly for money.

In this way, the Internet cuts down newspaper sales; this, however, should not be taken to mean that people have lost interest in newspapers: all the traditional newspapers run their own sites with a stable Internet readership. Significantly, at no time have any of the newspapers in Georgia been able to sell more than several thousand copies; the Internet audience is much vaster. On the other hand, newspapers are losing money because access to their electronic versions is free.

We should take into account that at no time have the printed media enjoyed lucrative incomes in Georgia; journalists (mainly students) have always worked and are working on raw enthusiasm. The owners or editors (in most cases one and the same person) manage to preserve the core of their editorial staff and remain in business on foreign grants.

The new information technologies created electronic newspapers and journals to be read online; they are highly popular. Today, people read more newspapers and journals (albeit online) than before; in Georgia, unlike in many other countries, the Internet does not compete with the traditional press but helps it reach its readers.

The TV audience, likewise, has acquired its own alternative in the form of the Internet and social networks; Internet TV, which is developing in Georgia, threatens the monopoly of the country's national TV company.

Nothing is known about the incomes and profits of the social media and about their share in countrywide advertising; in its report for 2011 Freedom House pointed out: "At present, most online media outlets find it difficult to attract advertisers," and expressed the hope that the situation will improve as the number of users grows.⁸ So far, the Internet media live on foreign grants, which have paid for several new online newspapers.

In recent years, Freedom House has been using the following criteria to measure the freedom of the Internet (apart from the traditional media):

1. Obstacles to access.
2. Limits on content.
3. Violations of user rights.

The 2011 rating described Georgia as "partially free;" Freedom House deemed it necessary, however, to point that "government censorship is not a major hindrance to Internet freedom in Georgia. Users can freely visit any website around the world, upload or download any content, and contact other users via forums, social-networking sites, and applications like instant messaging."⁹

The report goes on to say that "this was in contrast to the period in August 2008, during a brief military conflict with Russia, when the government blocked access to all Russian addresses (those

⁷ [<http://www.tabula.ge/article-5434.html>].

⁸ "Freedom on the Net 2011," Freedom House, available at [<http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/FotN/Georgia2011.pdf>].

⁹ *Ibidem*.

using the .ru country code), including the popular blogging service LiveJournal, in an effort to prevent users from receiving ‘unofficial’ information about the fighting. The move was also a response to attacks launched by Russian hackers against Georgian government websites.”¹⁰

The Georgian journalist community and part of the public interpreted this as an encroachment on information freedom.

“There is no law that specifically regulates Internet censorship or bans inappropriate content, such as pornography or violent material. The Law of Georgia on the Protection of Minors from Harmful Influence addresses gambling and violence, but it does not refer to online activities.”¹¹ The Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC) is the country’s main regulator in this sphere.

Freedom House voiced its concern that legal vagueness can be used to restrict access to the Internet.

The Traditional Media on the Brink of Extinction

In July 2009, Vice President of the United States Joe Biden opened his address to the Georgian parliament with the following statement: “The revolution will end only when the media become completely free and completely professional.”¹²

Soon after that one of the Georgian media, the state-controlled Imedi TV Company, blundered once more. On 13 March, 2010, it issued so-called “simulated information” as part of its Special Report program that spoke of an alleged Russian invasion of Georgia. The program began at 08:00 p.m. when the audience habitually switches on for the Chronicle, the main information program. On 13 March, it reported that Russians had bombed airports and sea ports, causing numerous casualties, that three Georgian battalions had gone over to the enemy, and that President Saakashvili had been liquidated. The pictures of the calamity carried no warning, they merely suggested what could happen in the event of a resumed military conflict with Russia.

Many of those who had missed the beginning and had not heard the warning panicked and poured into the streets; they gathered on squares in anticipation of Russian tanks, which, according to the TV report, were already at Tbilisi’s doorstep.

Very soon, however, it became clear that the government was merely “experimenting” in order to find out how the public, political parties, and even some of those close to the people at the top might respond to Russian aggression. This unprecedented experiment and the public’s response revealed the extent to which the Georgian electronic media could manipulate the masses. This “simulated information issue” of the Georgian TV Company (under the title “Georgia on Everyone’s Mind”) climbed to the top of the list of the “Top 10 Shocking Hoaxes” run by the *Time* journal.¹³ It pushed aside the previous leader—Orson Welles’ radio adaptation of the classic H.G. Wells novel *The War of the Worlds*. Performed by Welles’ Mercury Theatre on the Air as a Halloween special on 30 October, 1938 (and aired over the Columbia Broadcasting System radio network), the radio play—which took the form of a series of faux newscasts—caused many listeners to believe that an actual alien invasion was taking place. Millions of Americans rushed around looking for shelters for their families. The American authorities went on the air to call on the people to stop panicking and go back home since the threat

¹⁰ “Freedom on the Net 2011.”

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21283&search=biden%20parliament].

¹³ [http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1931133_1931132_1972067,00.html].

had been nothing more than an advert gimmick by director and star Orson Welles who arranged the book into a direct report from the place where men from Mars had landed. He never expected such a disastrous response.

The Georgian company apologized, while its director remained convinced that such developments could not be excluded: “If in late 1920,” he argued, “television, non-existent at that time, broadcasted a simulation of what happened in February 1921 (when Soviet Russia occupied Georgia.— *B.Ch.*), many more Georgians would be forewarned and many more determined to rebuff the enemy.”

In 2010, Freedom House ranked Georgia (along with Moldova) 118th among 196 countries of the world in terms of freedom of the press (in 2009 Georgia was 126th). The local expert community explains the country’s progress and the much healthier editorial policy of the Public Broadcaster of Georgia by the methodological and financial assistance of BBC and the EU. Very much as in previous years, Georgia found itself on the brink beyond which it would be among the countries which were “not free.”

After the Rose Revolution, the dynamics of the freedom of the media looked as following:

YEAR	PLACE	SCORE	STATUS
2004	114	54	Partly free
2005	116	56	Partly free
2006	118	57	Partly free
2007	121	57	Partly free
2008	129	60	Partly free
2009	129	59	Partly free
2010	118	55	Partly free. ¹⁴

In 2011, Freedom House included the disputed territories (Abkhazia and South Ossetia among others) in its survey: the former was rated as “partly free,” the latter as “not free.”

In 2012, Georgia might move several points lower compared to the 2011 figures: in the summer 2011, the electronic media (private owned radio and some of the TV stations which cover the capital and environs and which criticize the authorities) were pushed into a quandary. The authorities transferred (without preliminary warning) control of the Tbilisi TV tower (an object of strategic importance) to a private company (the only one that took part in the tender) for 110 thousand lari. The new owner is duty bound to preserve the tower’s profile for the next 4 years. This means that the private company loyal to the authorities may raise tariffs to a level outside the reach of independent channels.

After the Rose Revolution, foreign donors, which discerned democratic developments in the country, cut down their financial aid to the Georgian media; after several years, in 2010, they resumed their support. This means that, dissatisfied with the state of freedom of the press in the country, the West had decided to remedy the situation. This is being done to restore the trust in the Georgian media by developing professional skills, independence, and a politically balanced media sector. USAID, for example, started a four-year program called Georgian Media Enhance Democracy, Informed Citizenry and Accountability (G-MEDIA); the European Union allocated large sums to improve the quality and availability of news and information on new and traditional platforms produced by professionals with new skills and by citizen contributors.¹⁵ Since 2010, international donors have been extending

¹⁴ Based on annual reports of Freedom House.

¹⁵ [<http://irex.ge/programs/media/gmedia>].

large-scale financial support to the Georgian media, including traditional media. For the first time, the Internet and new media technologies are receiving a great deal of attention.

More often than not, however, the money lands in a narrow circle of journalist syndicates that specialize in fund-raising rather than professional services.

Today, much is being done to raise a new generation of journalists; society refuses to look at the older generation as members of a free profession (this is true even of those employed by the opposition media) since they have to follow the political preference of the editors-in-chief.

Robert Parsons, a veteran of international journalism who worked for the BBC and Radio Liberty and who, in the summer of 2011, left the post of Director General of the First Caucasian Channel (Georgian Russian-language TV Channel), said that the media which “at the moment dominate the media scene in Georgia are already the dinosaurs of the media. For sure, before very long they are going to be extinct” and that “one set of channels says one thing and, in response to this, you get something almost as extreme on the other side.”¹⁶

Conclusion

Further development of the social media and networks will promote civil-minded journalism because practically all Internet users become journalists with no editor above them and no censorship to take into account: they are free to disseminate all kinds of information, even if it is unreliable. On the one hand, there is the danger that the social networks might be used to discredit politicians or political groups. On the other, the authorities have long been using the national TV channels to discredit their opponents. The social media, therefore, provide the opponents with a chance to popularize their values and political ideas.

New media and wider social networks will help to overcome monopolization of public consciousness, which is best described as a “natural calamity.” The times when the audience of strictly controlled electronic media had to constantly watch the same personalities presented as the true representatives of civil society have ended. The social media encourage civil society and push people with leadership talents to the fore.

Today, the social networks allows their multimillion audience to freely circulate their ideas, describe their civil principles, find new friends, etc. (active Facebook users have thousands of “friends”).

At all times the media have been described as an instrument of information and entertainment. In Georgia, entertainment and propaganda will remain the main missions of the national channels, while information will emigrate to the social and Internet media.

¹⁶ [<http://en.tabula.ge/?p=5677>].

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