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Editorial Office:
CA&CC Press AB
Hubertusstigen 9. 97455 Luleå
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IN THIS ISSUE:

REGIONAL POLITICS

- Vahram Soghomonyan.** THE INTEGRATION-ORIENTED FORCES IN THE MAKING OF THE NEW SOUTH CAUCASUS ORDER 7

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

- Oleg Sidorov.** THE ISLAMIC FACTOR IN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES' DOMESTIC STABILITY 14
- Amir Navruzov.** "THE YAWNING HEIGHTS:" ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN POST-SOVIET DAGHESTAN AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL NETWORKS 21

**POLITICAL PROCESS TODAY
IN THE COUNTRIES OF
CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS**

- Alisher Tastenov.** THE COLOR REVOLUTION PHENOMENON:
FROM CLASSICAL THEORY
TO UNPREDICTABLE PRACTICES 32
- Sergey Diachenko.** THE GOVERNMENT AND NGOs IN KAZAKHSTAN:
STRATEGY, FORMS, AND
MECHANISMS OF COOPERATION 44
- Kamoliddin Rabbimov.** UZBEKISTAN'S POLITICAL PARTIES BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY 57
- Iury Sulaberidze.** THE NATURE OF POLITICAL SPLITS:
THE ROSE REVOLUTION 73
- Bakhodyr Ergashev.** NETWORK STRATEGY AND
CONFIGURATION OF THE PARTY SPACE 85
- Gulbaat Rtskhiladze.** STATE SOVEREIGNTY
IN GEORGIAN POLITICAL THINKING AND PRACTICE 93
- Elmira Nogoybaeva.** POLITICAL ELITES OF KYRGYZSTAN:
HOW THEY APPEARED AND HOW THEY INTERACT 101

**ENERGY PROJECTS AND
ENERGY POLICY**

- Li Lifan.** NATIONAL ENERGY SECURITY AND
SINO-RUSSIAN-KAZAKH-JAPAN ENERGY COOPERATION ... 110
- David Preyger,
Vladimir Omelchenko.** PROBLEMS OF TURKMEN GAS EXPORT:
VIEW FROM UKRAINE 120

REGIONAL ECONOMIES

- Sergey Smirnov.** THE ECONOMY OF "ROSE" GEORGIA:
FLOWERING OR FADING? 134

ETHNIC RELATIONS

Guram Svanidze. NATIONAL MINORITIES:
CIVIL INTEGRATION IN GEORGIA 145

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Special Feature section in the next issue will discuss:

Central Asia and the Caucasus

- Fifteen Years of Independence: the Central Asian and Caucasian Countries Sum Up the Political and Economic Results of This Period
- China's Policy in Central Eurasia: Specifics and Prospects
- U.S.'s Policy in Central Eurasia: Specifics and Prospects

REGIONAL POLITICS

**THE INTEGRATION-ORIENTED FORCES
IN THE MAKING OF
THE NEW SOUTH CAUCASUS ORDER****Dr. Vahram SOGHOMONYAN**

*Member of European Integration Research Group
under the supervision of
Prof. Frank Deppe and Prof. Hans-Jürgen Bieling
at the Institute for Political Science,
Phillips University of Marburg. Is affiliated
with the Erevan-based NGO "Collaboration
for Democracy" Union
(Erevan, Armenia)*

While economic interdependence and security divergence are shaping the regional political agenda of the Southern Caucasus, the European Union expands its policy measures in the way of supporting a multilevel regional cooperation model. In its turn, the expansion of the European integration process favors especially the integration-oriented actors in the Southern Caucasus and describes its policy character. I may describe it as a process of "double integration": the integration of the Southern Caucasus itself and the transregional integration of the Southern Caucasus into Europe.

The enlargement of the European Union toward East was the result of a reconfiguration of

power relations in the world as an outcome of globalization. The Southern Caucasus stands also in the centre of capital interests and interests of supranational actors. The penetration of the transnational capital in new geographic areas and the European ambitions of a neighboring region, in this case Southern Caucasus, characterize the geostrategic dimension of this integration. The strengthening of the EU positions is in no small part connected with the establishment of a certain social-political model in the countries of the Southern Caucasus.

Considering the existing accents of the economic development models of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia several options, like elements of

neomercantilistic and neoliberal approaches, as well as social-democratic trends can be observed. Meanwhile, the primary interest of the European

Union lies in security issues and overcoming the socioeconomic asymmetries to stop migration streams from the region.

Major Capital Factions in the Region

Two capital factions, the transnational oil companies in Azerbaijan and the capital of the Armenian Diaspora, are the main non-state integration-oriented actors in the region. Consequently, the economic success of the national governments depends on their ability to carry out an effective geo-economically reasonable regulation policy. In this context, the Armenian state has to ensure a balanced economic policy with regard to the acting different capital factions: the transnational enterprises, the Diaspora capital, the newly forming national bourgeoisie and the oligarchy.

In each case, there are typical national factors, which coinfluence the preferences of these countries' geopolitical orientation. Armenia sees its Diaspora, which resides in more than 90 countries, "as a possible integration means, as well as an Europeanization and globalization instrument, which is unique in its kind in the whole Black Sea region."¹ The political participation possibilities of the Diaspora will be even more extended with the abolition of the ban on the double citizenship. On the other hand, Azerbaijan's orientation to the West is mainly conditioned by the developments in the oil industry. Since independence, more than 15 billion USD were invested by the oil companies in Azerbaijan. These investments remained largely concentrated in the oil sector and were mainly directed to the attainment of oil drilling technologies. The involvement of transnational capital has its positive impact also in social life, but it also launches a new challenge within the redistribution policy. The dominant player in Azerbaijan is British Petroleum, which is represented in both oil and gas consortiums. Its power in the domestic politics of Azerbaijan is typically described in the following quotation: "Azerbaijan is known as 'BP country,' as the company wields a budget of \$15 billion to be invested off the Azeri coast over the coming years. If we pulled out of Baku," a former BP spokesman once told, "the country would collapse overnight."² BP, Statoil and other companies influence strongly the government decisions.

A more diversified picture appears in Armenia considering the areas, which attracted the most investments of the Armenian Diaspora and other foreign companies in diamond processing, information technologies, mining sectors, etc. These investments counted more than 2 billion USD and increased rapidly during the last two years. The largest investments in Armenia came from Germany and are mainly concentrated in the mining industry. According to this growing heterogeneity of market players, a strong fragmentation of interest groups and correspondingly the political landscape is on its way in Armenia.³ This demonstrates the character of the Armenian model, as well as the representation of interests, which are shaping the social transformation and the role of the state in the country. As an important precondition in this regard is the fight against oligarchic structures and the strengthening of the legal awareness, without which an uninterrupted circulation and accumulation of the production capital will be hindered.

¹ R. Shugarian, "From the Near Abroad to the New Neighborhood...", in: *Armenia on the Way to Europe*, MFA RA, FES, ACHS, Erevan, 2005.

² L. Kleveman, "Oil and the New 'Great Game'," *The Nation* (New York), 16 February, 2004.

³ See: M. Sarkisyan, "The Armenian Opposition: Time is Demanding the End of the Authoritarians," *Lragir.am*, 12 October, 2005.

A Functionalist Perspective: Regional Mergers

The cooperation between the nation states of the Southern Caucasus in selective areas allows me to take into consideration the functionalist perspective of the regional integration as a compromise structure tolerating the "status quo." For example, the lucrative transit function of Georgia is partly ensured by the crisis of the Armenian-Azerbaijani or Armenian-Turkish relations because of which Armenia cannot take over transit on the East-West direction. On the other hand, the BTC pipeline is a decisive source of income for Azerbaijan, so that a renewed outbreak of the conflict in immediate nearness of the pipeline might not lie anymore in the interest of the government in Baku. Furthermore significant is the option of the Georgian government to balance its controversial relations with Russia with the help of the Armenian side and to avoid thereby a strong dependence on the Turkish-Azerbaijani axis. Consequently, in view of the interdependence between the regional states and subregions the national governments have arrived at a turning point in which they continuously follow the requirements of a so-called spill over process after the formula: "form follows function." This process is accompanied by regional civil society actors as well as enterprises and trade associations.

In the case of Southern Caucasus the negative integration is expressed in bilateral agreements signed by Georgia with Armenia and Azerbaijan. These refer to the reduction of custom duties and transit fees as well as to arrangements for concrete projects of economic collaboration. Since 1992 between Georgia and Armenia were signed more than 70 bilateral agreements. This number stays only behind the Armenian-Russian contractual framework.⁴ Azerbaijan and Georgia have signed up to now 90 bilateral agreements.⁵

A great number of Georgian-Azeri and Georgian-Armenian joint-ventures were created in the last years. Some mergers are already observed also in the financial markets. Especially during the last years a number of takeovers took place. Such takeovers have the aim to strengthen positions at the finance markets of Georgia and Armenia as well as positively affect the interstate regulations in the financial sector.⁶

The condition for the successful expansion of the European common market is the realization of the idea of a common market or a free trade zone of the South Caucasian states. This was also brought up for discussion by the former German foreign minister Fischer as a proposal for a customs union. As the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) describes, it has to work in a way of "an attraction of the EU-neighborhood program."⁷ A gradual liberalization of trade between the countries of the Southern Caucasus may promote the growth as well as create a complementary system in the regional economy.

National Models and Regional Coordination

In the course of the consolidation process at the national and regional level, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are confronted with the effects of a neoliberal restructuring and overcoming the dras-

⁴ See: *Aib Fe*, 30 October, 2004.

⁵ See: *Echo*, 20 July, 2005.

⁶ See: "Cascade Bank Takes over the Emporiki Bank," *Delovoy Express*, 19 January, 2006.

⁷ J. Leithäuser, "Fischer-Reise: Zupfen am kaukasischen Knoten," *FAZ*, No. 96, 24 April, 2004, S. 6.

tic income polarization. In contrast with the investments in energy sector and transit infrastructures in Georgia and Azerbaijan the investment boom has begun in Armenia only in the final phase of the liberalization and restructuring reforms. The coexistence of the national production structures and the new Diaspora capital decisively initiated the process of the internationalization of the capital. Both most important capital factions, the transnational oil companies and the Diaspora capital, appeared as essential transforming forces within the state and influence the formation of national bourgeoisie. At the same time, a preferable environment for the growing activity of the Diaspora investors has to be understood by the inclusion of Armenia in the common European framework and the adoption of the European legal base.

The phenomenon of the Colour Revolutions, which resulted from the persistent social mobilization and was connected with certain external factors, showed that a “change in the elite” without a basic shift in values is not a sufficient precondition for modernization of the post-Soviet states. In case of avoiding a “top-down” strategy with a rapid “change in the elite” in Georgia as a result of a revolution, the Armenian model could be simplified as a gradual Europeanization of the social and political life. This political consciousness exists in the circles of the ruling coalition, as well as in the Armenian opposition, in particular in their reformist factions. Besides this, both political camps are meeting the challenge of an undelayable qualitative change.

As a result of a developing multiple pipeline system the meaning of energy and transport infrastructures as pressure means in the regional geopolitics decreases. For the creation and diversification of energy supplies numerous pipeline infrastructures are promoted by the European Union. The Southeastern dimension covers the construction of several oil and gas pipelines which should supply Europe either through the Southern Caucasus and Turkey, or through the Southern Caucasus and Ukraine. These are the new oil pipelines Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Odessa-Brody (Ukraine-Poland) as well as the South Caucasian gas pipeline (Baku-Erzurum) and the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline. The last one should deliver Iranian gas to Europe in case of its continuation bypassing Georgia and Ukraine.

Clarifying the regional economic structure outlines of the Southern Caucasus the following signs can be ascertained as starting points with regard to the regional coordination: The economic positions of Azerbaijan increase along the regional energy-political projects, while these stand in connection with Russian and Iranian activities and contribute to the development or diversification of the energy infrastructure of the region. Nevertheless, as a negative impact the Azerbaijani oil prevents the development of other branches of the country’s economy that creates a substitution necessity. Under these conditions Georgia ensures its geo-economic advantages from intermediary trade of Azerbaijani energy sources and Armenian production goods.

“Geopolitics by Integration”

The common strategy of the European Union is based on the special interests of its member states and non-state actors. It promotes the deepening of mutual dependences and networks between the regional states. As it has been mentioned above there are two integration processes complementing each other, in other words “double integration.” A distinctive characteristic of the European policy in the region of the Southern Caucasus is an integration concept, which promotes indirectly the regional cooperation framework and solves concrete geopolitical tasks creating structural advantages. The European Union integration patterns that have been used up to now are transforming its policy to a new geostrategy, which I would simplify in a form of “geopolitics by integration.” The European strat-

egy in the hegemonic environment of the Southern Caucasus, like the regional concepts of the U.S. and Russia, is also related to the objectives of “conquering markets, control over geographic areas and political involvement of elites.”⁸

From a perspective of concentric circles,⁹ the regional impacts of the European integration process are based not only on the resources related branches, but also, on the development of diversified production structures in the Southern Caucasus to realize its bridgehead function towards the East. The relevance of the Southern Caucasus could be discussed with regard to the constitutional process in the EU and arises in connection with the identity debate on the borders of Europe. As a

Table 1

**The Integration Framework of the Southern Caucasus:
“Double Integration” Model**

A R M E N I A	diaspora capital	diamond processing, IT, mining, finances	Integration Framework of the Southern Caucasus	legal adjustment, institutional reforms	European Neighborhood policy		
	national capital or oligarchic factions	finances, services, mining, etc.		bilateral agreements		implementation of Individual Action Plans	stability and a ring of friendly countries
	transnational companies	diamond processing, IT, etc.		functional interdependence		conflict resolution	geopolitical considerations
	Main investor country	Germany		reduction of custom duties and transit fees		advantages of the common market	oil and gas supplies
A Z E R B A I J A N	national capital and oligarchic factions	oil and gas, services, etc.	(negative integration)	deepening of mutual dependences	balancing factor in the relations with Turkey and Russia		
	transnational oil companies	oil and gas	regional mergers, joint-ventures	“Mini EU”-model	special interests of EU member states		
	Main investor country	Great Britain	trade associations	infrastructure development	transit routes to Iran, India and China (“Silk way”)		
G E O R G I A	transnational and other foreign capital	transit of resources, finance	civil society networks	geo-economic bridge	traditional and cultural relations		
	oligarchic factions	transit, transportation, services etc.	cooperation in environmental issues	reduction of social polarization	EU enlargement (special relations with the new member states)		
	Main investor country	Kazakhstan		European values and identity policy	3+3 initiative with Baltic states		

⁸ F. Deppe, *Stürzt das europäische Haus ein? Zur Krise der Europäischen Union*, FEI, Marburg, 2005.

⁹ According to the pattern of concentric circles, as soon as an old periphery is fully integrated in the EU, it develops a strong interest in the calculated inclusion or integration of its own periphery (see: G. Vobruba, *Die Dynamik Europas*, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005).

region with European aspirations, appears the Southern Caucasus to fulfill certain functions for the unified Europe. The upcoming transformation of the European Union from a project pushed forward by the élites to a more public policy will make the European public, including non-member states, which identify themselves with Europe, more important. This is relevant for the Southern Caucasus as the European orientation appears to be one of the central tasks of the identity policy in Armenia and Georgia. Meanwhile, the European policy in the Southern Caucasus is based on the following special priorities of the EU member states: Germany—extension of the common market, France—political presence of the EU and Great Britain—transatlantic geopolitics or support for oil and gas projects. The leading French-German tandem puts new special accents in achieving a greater European role in the region.

- Firstly, the modernization of Turkey is an essential aspect for decisive widening of the European presence. This modernization process in no small part presupposes the Armenian-Turkish reconciliation and recognition of the Armenian Genocide.
- Secondly, a new German initiative named “European neighborhood policy +” is planned to be discussed during Germany’s EU presidency in 2007 and is aimed to provide for the European Neighbors Ukraine, Moldova and the three countries of the Southern Caucasus—Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan a “tangible integration within European structures, which whilst not including membership would not completely exclude it.”¹⁰ The objective of this initiative is also to avoid a security vacuum between the EU and Russia.¹¹ With the inclusion of the South Caucasian republics in the ENP, the European Union showed its big interest in the developments in this region. The three states struggle already through their regulation policies and legal adjustment plans to increase the regional competitiveness. “At the same time, as far as Europe is concerned, Armenia is a horse that runs really fast. Erivan is a good pupil, where the European Union’s new neighborhood policies are concerned. Compared to Georgians, Armenians respond more easily to the demands established by the European Commission.”¹²

The European Union already supports a common regional energy policy and different infrastructure projects. In the strategy planning of the European Union a distribution of certain policy areas or priorities for each of the regional states is intended. Therefore, Georgia has become a regional environmental center through the EU-funded environment protection organization in Tbilisi with its affiliated offices in two other countries. Armenia is on a good way to realize its claim to develop into a regional center for information technologies with European support. The role of Azerbaijan is emphasized as a regional location for energy supplies.

C o n c l u s i o n

Due to the delay of the final formulation of a common Southern Caucasus agenda and the antagonistic character of each country’s particular interests as a result of the existing conflicts, the inter-governmental issues move increasingly to the European level, particularly to the structures of the

¹⁰ L. di Pippo, “Will Germany’s New Initiative Answer the Aspirations of its ‘European neighbours’?” *Caucas.com*, 9 October, 2006.

¹¹ According to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, observer status would be conferred on these countries, which would be consulted on EU decisions in Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP) matters (see: “Berlin entwickelt neue Nachbarschaftspolitik,” *FAZ*, 3 July, 2006, p. 1).

¹² C. Chaffour, “Three Myths Undermined by Two Revolutions. Interview with Dov Lynch,” *Caucas.com*, 20 June, 2006.

Council of Europe. In contrast with this, the functionalist approach is expressed in a bilateral framework of interstate relations at the regional level. Eventually, the European structures indirectly influence the internal transformation dynamics of the Southern Caucasus.

With regard to the geostrategic objectives, the European policy is provided not only by the capital expansion, but also by social forces and civil society actors and is pushing forward a corresponding socialization mode. From a theoretical perspective, predominantly the social mediation is considered to be important, by which these actors succeed in anchoring the appropriate social structure, the values and identities at the regional level. Consequently, the main outcome of their adoption is the formation of a new regional order in the Southern Caucasus, which links the European integration project to the East. This geopolitical role of the region depends on the formation of effective national and regional capital accumulation structures. The above-mentioned two capital factions are the key transforming forces in the region. By summarizing, the European policy in the Southern Caucasus relies on the interests of regional integration-oriented forces, on the identity policy motivated behavior of national élites and on the existing civil society networks.

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

**THE ISLAMIC FACTOR
IN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES'
DOMESTIC STABILITY**

Oleg SIDOROV

*Ph.D. (Political Science),
analyst at the Central Asian Foundation
for the Development of Democracy
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

We have to admit that the counterterrorist strategy the world has accepted as the dominant one turned out to be counter-productive in at least two respects: it relies too much on the use of force and mars relations with the Islamic world: The clash of civilizations that so far remains a much discussed theoretical issue may turn into an unwelcome reality. This fully applies to the Central Asian countries, which, after the Soviet Union's demise, have been living through a renaissance of certain religious teachings. All sorts of public associations are exhibiting an obvious bias toward religion and the spiritual factor to the extent that the neighboring Soviet successor states and the West developed a deep concern over the spread of so-called Islamic fundamentalism commonly believed to be generated by the Islamic world, which, according to

a widespread Western opinion, regards Central Asia as part of its religious territory to be drawn closer and engulfed.

Early in the 1990s, the newly independent states experienced an upsurge of national self-awareness inevitably accompanied by a similarly active religious factor. The region was acquiring new mosques and madrasahs at a fast pace and accommodated a flow of Muslim clerics from abroad. This objective process brought the latent threat of Islamic fundamentalism augmented by the closeness of Afghanistan and Iran, as well as by Wahhabi emissaries and organizations that operated on Saudi money.¹ The domestic situation, a product of two newly developed prob-

¹ See: V. Panfilova, "Islamskie fundamentalisty gotoviat proryv v Tsentral'noy Azii," *NG-Religii*, No. 7, 2005, p. 4.

lems—the absence of an official ideology and the inefficient efforts of religious organizations to restore stability in the region or, at least, in some countries—was far from simple.

During the years of independence, many of the local countries have accomplished much in this sphere: local people en masse are embracing their traditional religions, which is simplifying regional integration.

The wave of religious activities in the first years of sovereignty not only added to tension among religious confessions, it also consolidated believers around one of them. This created the semblance of domestic stability in the Central Asian countries and turned them, by the same token, into a testing ground on which Islam acquired certain socially important norms and political hues.

This happened because the statehoods and nations were not yet fully developed, while numerous economic, social, and political problems typical of the transition period called for attention. Many of the local countries are still coping with the same problems.

First, national and religious (Islamic) identities cannot be separated in countries where state and national development is still going on. Second, economic changes, which will obviously take many years to come to fruition, will inevitably cause social tension. The radical Islamic opposition is only too willing to exploit the resulting popular discontent in an effort to replace the secular regimes with Islamic ones. Third, the politics vs. religion dispute is limited to the heads of secular states and those who speak in the name of political Islam. Fourth, the secular leaders have done nothing to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, a failure which the Islamic opposition is exploiting in its interests.²

The post-socialist ideological vacuum gradually filled with religious ideas; Islamic religious organizations became very active in the Central Asian, predominantly Islamic, republics. Religious organizations emerged out of the shadow to

become a social and political force to be reckoned with.

As a religious teaching, Islam helped settle ethnic relations in multi-national states, as well as regulate social relations in republics with one dominating ethnos. The pattern was more or less the same everywhere: first came economic decline followed by an ideological vacuum; domestic tension began to build, especially because the rights of the most vulnerable groups were infringed upon, while the authorities suppressed all grassroots initiatives.

At a later stage, Islam was used in the Central Asian states to address domestic political issues related to the distribution of cabinet posts and achievement of power. As a rule, Islamic clerics became involved in elite and clan squabbles, which could either be peaceful or develop into a civil war (as in Tajikistan). In Uzbekistan too, the clerics' involvement in domestic disagreements resulted in armed clashes and rising social tension. In Kyrgyzstan, members of religious organizations have already gained official posts (especially in the south).

In all the Central Asian countries, the shared religion ignited an interest in local national and ethnic roots. Today, national self-identity is on the rise—this can be seen in all the Central Asian republics; in the predominantly Islamic region, the Islamic factor has moved to the fore in the social life of many local republics and developed into an effective instrument of the power struggle. Islamic revival was hailed everywhere in Central Asia: hajj became popular among the common people and in the political class alike. As a result, pilgrimage, respected by all believers and performed only for religious purposes, has recently opened the door to high posts. Any Central Asian politician who neglected this risked losing his post and forfeited his chances of promotion.

At that time, state power and religion became fused, while Islam rapidly developed into a political factor. In some countries, clerics turned to politics and became visible on the domestic political scene.

In the absence of guarded borders between the CIS members and other non-CIS neighbors, religious literature of educational and Islamist

² See: A.K. Zeifert, I.D. Zviagel'skaia, "Primirenje Evropy i islama v Evrazii," *Vostok. Afro-aziatskie obshchestva: istoria i sovremennost'*, No. 5, 2004, p. 77.

nature began arriving in huge amounts. Books and pamphlets promoted the idea of an independent Islamic state in what are now the territories of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

The flow that came from the Middle East ignited an interest in religious issues, which the local mullahs and imams proved unable to satisfy. The results were fairly unpleasant. The situation worsened when officials began appointing members of certain clans or influence groups as imams and muftis. Not respected by professional clerics, they were not popular among the common people either.

Ignorant clerics could not attract new believers; nor were they able to keep the old flock—interest in religion subsided. At that stage, it was not yet obvious that a few discredited clerics could create more problems than scores of radical-minded missionaries.

Mosques mushrooming under the benevolent eye of the official structures in all the countries created a shortage of clerics. Those who worked were not knowledgeable enough to discuss religious problems in a language the people could understand. For this reason, the most inquisitive turned to those who knew Arabic and were able to explain the Koranic and other texts.

The interest in Islam was fanned by the gradually widening systemic crisis in all the Central Asian countries caused by economic problems and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Disillusioned people started looking for an alternative, which added a political dimension to Islam. Foreign Islamic emissaries provided a solution: they found a common language with the local people and helped them by word and deed.

The result could not remain latent for long; political Islam moved to the fore, where it pushed aside many of the secular politicians, thus causing armed clashes in many countries, which could potentially develop into a civil war and regional tension.

Radical and militant Islam in the Central Asian countries and their neighbors is fraught with disrupted balance and structural problems. Today there is an alarming tendency to dismiss Islam as

an extremist religion because it prompts certain social groups (mostly young people) to form protest movements and encourages them to raise social tension. There is another extreme: religion can be used to justify terrorism.

We should bear in mind that anti-Islamic propaganda and oversimplification of the religious and political situation in Central Asia resulted in wrong decisions. This is confirmed by the growing number of deportations of foreign citizens engaged in trade, tighter passport and visa conditions, as well as restricted trips throughout the region, etc. At the same time, the present level of economic development of the Central Asian republics is not conducive to social and economic stability; this increases ethnic and social tension, which may result in direct clashes. This means that latent conflicts may develop into open confrontation in the near future.

This is confirmed by the civil war in Tajikistan, the poorest among its Central Asian neighbors, the government of which has not yet regained control over the entire territory. Having left behind the period of Islamic revival largely encouraged by secular power, many of the local countries tried to limit Islamic impact on the domestic situation. As soon as they became aware of the power and might of Islam, the power-related structures tried to uproot its radical manifestations. They seem to be unaware, however, that social and political tension in all the countries and legal nihilism of the state organizations provide fertile soil for protest sentiments and opposition to the regime.³

For this reason, the government is concentrating on limiting the role of Islam to the normative-legal framework to keep it away from politics. The Islamic threat has recently developed into a much-discussed issue of the special services and international conferences, as well as the media.

The events in Namangan and Batken, widely covered by the media and which occupied the front pages for a long time, demonstrated that the Islamic threat is very real. We can predict with a great degree of certainty that the coming spring

³ See: V. Panfilova, *op. cit.*

and summer will bring tension to Central Asia. This fully applies not only to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, but also to Kazakhstan.

The Islamic factor proved itself to be a serious destabilizing force during the civil war in Tajikistan (1991-1992); the Batken events in Kyrgyzstan; IMU fighter inroads into Uzbekistan; in the late 1990s when the Taliban ruled in Afghanistan, and during the Andijan events in Uzbekistan (2005).

On the whole, however, the threats related to Islam were mostly of a domestic nature, which means that other Islamic states were not responsible for them. They were caused by domestic disharmony and the social and economic difficulties typical of all the Central Asian countries.

The following domestic political and economic factors contributed, to different degrees, to proliferation of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism: political crisis; economic problems; the power struggle among clans and groups; unemployment; social stratification into the very rich and the very poor; high population density; the absence of ideological education that the state should provide; increasing corruption; the low educational level of the local clerics compared with the missionaries who come from other countries to disseminate their ideas, etc.

It is more or less commonly expected that a better economic climate will reduce ethnic and religious tension; we should bear in mind, howev-

er, that no changes for the better in any of the local states can be expected unless the social and economic situation improves. So far, the prospects of radical improvement in the region are dim.

Some of the republics suffer from high unemployment among young people, which means that the number of jobless will continue rising. After a while, this social category will acquire a new image and become a fighter for its unrealized rights. This has already happened in Kyrgyzstan where young people moved against the government.

Continued economic decline will have a negative effect on the social situation. Taken together, the two processes are fraught with separatism, which might become even more active than it is today. There are many disagreements among the local states over trade rules, customs dues, borders, water and energy distribution, as well as old debts. This will obviously add to the protest potential.

The water used by the republics for irrigation is developing into another issue fraught with potential conflict. In the post-Soviet years, the irrigation and water distribution systems fell into disrepair; their complete failure will lead to even fiercer regional conflicts.

Drug trafficking is one of the worst headaches: the number of people involved in drug production, transportation, and drug pushing is immense, which is especially obvious in the Fergana Valley, the main transit territory.

Influence Groups

Foreign factors played an important role in disseminating religious ideas across the region; this is especially true of some of the Arab states actively involved in Islamic propaganda in Central Asia.

Today, the number of states seeking influence in Central Asia is on the rise; the struggle over the region's future has already attracted several countries, which could be divided into two groups: the first group would prefer an Islamic future for all the countries, while the second, made up of states and interstate structures, would like them to remain secular states in which Islam would be limited to the cultural sphere and totally excluded from politics and economics.

The first group comprises some of the Islamic states, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan, as well as other OIC members (there are over 52 of them).

The second group consists of several European states, the U.S., Russia, China, India, and Israel. India and China, with separatist movements of their own (Punjab and Kashmir in India and the Xinjiang-Uighur Region in China) are even more concerned than the others.

They, as well as other states, know that a stronger Islamic bias will change the Central Asian republics' political and economic course and increase regional tension. Much has been said about the Central Asian neighbors, but some of the Islamic states able to alter the regional context remain in the shadow.

I have in mind those Islamic states that have stepped up their involvement in the Central Asian republics in the religious and secular spheres. The region's more or less recently assessed natural wealth (this is especially true of Kazakhstan) attracted even greater interest from the Islamic countries, which would not mind using the local riches for their own aims.

They are exploiting the Islamic revival as an ideological smokescreen to camouflage their desire to gain access to the local energy sources, their production and transportation. The Middle Eastern countries are fully aware of the fact that lost control over Kazakhstan will turn the latter into another rival on the oil and petroleum products market, which will inevitably undermine their own position. This means that all the OPEC members will profit from instability on the Caspian's shores, which would suspend oil production.

Iran. Its moderate policies in Central Asia are baffling since lately Tehran has been accused of exporting the Islamic revolution. In the case of Central Asia, however, Iran showed its influence in the early 1990s in Tajikistan. Iran has been concentrating on the Caspian region, where its national interests are obvious: first, it wants closer cooperation with the littoral countries (Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan in particular) to put forward its own interests in the area and, second, it tries to reveal Kazakhstan's weak points (its inadequate military presence in the region being one of them).

Iran is an Islamic state, which, however, should not be regarded as a negative factor, but it mars Iran's image in the West. At the same time, the Iranian leaders' growing popularity with other leaders of the Islamic world might affect some of the Central Asian republics ethnically and religiously close to Iran.

Turkey is another country with interests of its own in Central Asia. During the period under review, Ankara has been playing a dual role: as a NATO member, it has been involved in Western strategies; as a Turkic state, it has been involved in local policies, its presence being especially prominent in the early 1990s.

It should be said that the only difference in the Islamic world with respect to Central Asia's future is limited to the choice between a secular (Turkey) or a theocratic state (Saudi Arabia).

Ankara's involvement in the region has become even more obvious recently: for several years in a row, the republics have been receiving financial and other aid from Turkey designed to promote all kinds of, including religious, projects.

Afghanistan is another state whose direct influence on Central Asia is strongly felt, while the Central Asian countries, in turn, are part of its political expanse. Their interdependence in the security sphere is obvious to the extent that the local states can never be sure of their security.

It should be said that the Islamic factor lost its importance in Central Asian geopolitics for a very short, post-Taliban period.⁴ Afghanistan's territorial proximity to Pakistan and Iran, as well as Islam's very possible victory in Turkey (which will turn the country into a vehicle of so-called Islamic geopolitics) add weight to the Afghan factor.

⁴ Since late 2001 when the Taliban regime fell, Afghanistan has gradually developed into the largest drug producer responsible, according to different sources, for 70 to 80 percent of the world's production.

In recent times, the idea that the defeat of the Taliban did not remove the Taliban issue from the agenda and did not bury its members (whom many of the foreign media pushed into oblivion for no reason) has been gaining popularity in different circles.

The Taliban changed its tactics and moved slightly away from the terrorism it was practicing inside and outside the country toward a political struggle. This has already brought some of its members to the parliament; we can expect Taliban members among the ministers.

The changed tactics and stepped up activities suggest that the Taliban acquired an analytical center of its own that prefers to play within the law and push its members to the top. The Taliban resumed radio broadcasts (began in April 2005) that cover five southern provinces, which is more confirmation of readjusted tactics. Today, the local people prefer three radio stations broadcasting in the local languages of Pushtu and Dari (the government station, the BBC, and Voice of America) mainly engaged in planting the idea of Western-style democracy, which is alien to the local mentality. In this context, the Taliban may count on restoring its audience within a very short period and gaining even more listeners.⁵

Activities revived with renewed enthusiasm in 2005 say that the Taliban used the lull not only to regroup, but also to revise the tactics of struggle for political domination in Afghanistan and Central Asia as a whole.

The leaders, however, never ignored their traditional forms of struggle: their raids are growing more regular even though they remain limited. The Karzai government, nevertheless, is very much concerned with the fighters' resumed activities and Pakistan's continued support of them.

The fighters changed their tactics: those who did not move to far away areas to wait for an opportune moment blended into the local social environment. The hour may soon strike. The Taliban ideas have already captured the minds of members of certain social groups in Central Asia, which suggests that in future the Taliban will work hard to disseminate its religious ideas there and to organize locals into armed units to fight on its side when the time comes.

* * *

Central Asia is not free from ethnic conflicts; the region is a potential seat of religious extremism that has already had a taste of civil war, political instability, and social and economic hardships. Geopolitically, Central Asian security is a complex structure in which all sorts of external forces are involved. It has several levels and sublevels created by the involvement of the regional states in various regional organizations and their contacts in the security sphere with several centers of power. It seems that Central Asian strategic stability, which is extremely important for geopolitical, economic, and energy reasons related to many external forces, should be preserved, while social and ideological conflicts should be stemmed to prevent their development into political antagonism. The West should obviously revise its ideas about Islam within its own political context. To achieve this it should start treating Islam and the Islamic political movement in the Western countries' Asian security sphere as an inalienable element of the local landscape. Muslims will embrace common national interests only when they become convinced that the religious and sociopolitical structures in their countries and in Eurasia are well protected. The West should make friends with the Islamists in its own countries rather than let them conclude that their values can be protected with outside extremist interference alone.

⁵ Information supplied by the Regnum Agency, available at [www.regnum.ru].

At the same time, the Central Asian geopolitical context, the result of the aggravated domestic political situation in Afghanistan (the public remained ignorant about the results of the election to the parliament, while every day brings more news about the Taliban's activities), Uzbekistan (the Andijan events may trigger a crisis in the Ferghana Valley), Kyrgyzstan (where domestic policies may develop into a civil war), the relatively shaky stability in Tajikistan, as well as potential threats to the security of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries (China and Russia) suggest that military-political potential should be strengthened and the social and economic situation in each of the republics improved.

An analysis of the situation that has developed in the region confirmed that in the mid-term, extremism and terrorism will come to the fore as the greatest and gravest threat to the local states. International terrorism, religious extremism, organized crime, poverty, and drug trafficking combined are a mine under Central Asian stability. Economic backwardness, overpopulation, and the water shortages acutely felt during the irrigation periods are threats that may disrupt the precarious Central Asian balance.

Most of the local states are demonstrating a widening gap in their economic and political development.

The armed conflicts of 1999-2001 in the south of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, as well as the spring 2005 domestic political developments in Kyrgyzstan, are all signs of domestic political weakness of the newly independent states and their moving away from one another. Most of the countries that belong to any of the influence groups mentioned above do not want the region to become another hot spot with religious extremism as the main igniting factor.

The influence groups will remain in Central Asia to continue their struggle with varying success, while many of them will extend their aid (economic, financial, or even in the form of membership in interstate structures and international organizations that presupposes considerable support in dealing with all sorts of problems) to the region's states. This suggests a choice that might create even more tension than the struggle against religious extremism in which both groups are currently involved.

The future is easily predictable: we have to admit that Islamic radicalism looks at Central Asia as its reserve with a considerable protest potential. We cannot ignore the fact that in the past an independent Islamic state existed in Central Asia; the idea of its revival has been inspiring many religious figures for a long time.

When discussing the spiritual factor and its role in the Central Asian republics, we should never equate Islam with a religion and political Islam with an instrument of the power struggle. We should bear in mind that political Islam flourishes in those countries where the gap between popular expectations and realities is too wide to be accepted.

Under these conditions, political Islam will offer, in full conformity with its traditions, a different and fairly efficient answer. If ignored, that possibility may send local tension up and push the Central Asian states into the ranks of those who support political Islam. Central Asia is a territory of potential spread in terrorism and religious extremism, the level of which may easily reach its peak to attract the attention of the leading countries once more. As an area in which the world's leading states clash in pursuit of their interests, it will turn into a ground on which new political techniques and fresh approaches to neutralizing public organizations that either promote or put radical religious ideas into practice are tested.

**“THE YAWNING HEIGHTS:”
ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION
IN POST-SOVIET DAGHESTAN AND
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL NETWORKS**

Amir NAVRUZOV

*Senior fellow at the Institute of History,
Archaeology, and Ethnography,
Daghestanian Scientific Center, RAS
(Makhachkala, Daghestan)*

The reproduction and transfer of Islamic knowledge has moved to the fore in the context of the religious upsurge at the turn of the 21st century in Daghestan and other post-Soviet Muslim regions. Religious institutions that have mosques, communities, and schools associated with them are mushrooming within a very short period, their numbers increased ten- or even hundred-fold. Back in 1988, there were only two legal Islamic educational establishments in the Soviet Union: the Mir-i ‘Arab Madrasah in Bukhara and the Islamic Institute in Tashkent. The number of registered Muslim communities (jamaats) in Daghestan increased from 27 to 599 between 1987 and 2006; there are 1,679 newly opened mosques. Scores of illegal Koranic study circles, which functioned in the private houses of alims, were replaced with 278 primary schools (maqtabas), 132 colleges (madrasahs), and 14 Islamic higher educational establishments with 43 branches at newly opened mosques.¹

The upsurge of Islamic education across the republic (today 40 of the 42 districts of Daghestan have Muslim schools) is arousing interest as well

¹ See: Archives of the Administration for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Nationalities, Information, and Foreign Relations of the Republic of Daghestan (hereinafter, A ARA), Islamic Educational Establishments folder. The author would like to thank the head of the Administration for Cooperation with Religious Organizations, K.M. Khanbabaev, and his employees, Murtuzali Iakubov and I.R. Shikhzadava, for the information used in the article.

as panic. The press accuses the madrasahs of spreading Islamic radicalism and aggression against the non-Muslim world and calls them “schools of jihad,” a holy war by Muslims against the unfaithful; not infrequently those who talk about the “export of Islamic extremism” to the Caucasus accuse foreign anti-Russian agents.² The abundance of quasi-academic speculations on Islamic issues notwithstanding, in Daghestan, as well as across Russia, religion, its key practices, and its institutions largely remain terra incognita. This is especially true of the Islamic education system.

Little is known about the curricula, subjects, and teaching methods used by the formal and informal Islamic education system in Daghestan. We still lack reliable information about the teachers and students, the funding sources, and the careers graduates pursue. A first step in the right direction was made in 2002-2004 when an international project called Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States directed by Professor Dr. Raoul Motika of the University of Hamburg studied the Islamic and sociological aspects of the problem. As one of the participants, I gathered a wealth of sociological information about the republic’s Islamic institutions, which I am presenting here.

² See, for example: A.A. Ignatenko, *Islam i politika*, Moscow, 2004, pp. 181-188.

The article consists of two parts: the first part gives us a detailed description, the first of its kind in Russian and foreign publications, of three of the most influential Islamic higher educational establishments—the Imam ash-Shafi‘i Islamic University, the North Caucasian Islamic University of Sheikh Muhammad Arif (both functioning in Makhachkala), and the Imam al-Ash‘ari Islamic University in Khasaviurt. They all have already acquired a certain amount of prestige inside and outside the republic. Some of the graduates have already gained recognition among the republic’s spiritual elite, including those who went into teaching. The institutes have regular contacts with similar establishments in Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia. I intend to use these examples to demonstrate the highest level of Islamic education and the changes that occurred in it after the Soviet Union’s disintegration in 1991 and the routing of the Wahhabi opposition in the fall of 1999, as well as to show the elements that post-Soviet higher education inherited from the madrasah and the Soviet higher school, and the extent to which it is influenced from abroad.

The second part of the article offers an overview of Daghestan’s post-Soviet Islamic educational system. I compared the information re-

lated to the three higher educational establishments and field data gathered in Daghestan within the current revival and development of the post-Soviet Muslim school and its social component. I paid special attention to the social role Islamic knowledge is playing today, as well as to the problems of funding and graduate employment.

The first part offers a description of the three educational establishments based on the same criteria: the institute’s name and its etymology, address, and brief history; its rules and state license, if any; its registration with the Main Administration of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Daghestan for the Russian Federation (MA MJ RF); its heads and teachers; the number of students and composition of the student body; the number of branches; curriculum; textbooks and teaching aids; the languages used for teaching; the length of study; contacts with the sheikhs and branches of the Sufi brotherhoods (Tariqahs) in Daghestan as well as other Islamic schools; careers pursued by graduates; and sources of funding. All the information was carefully collated with the statistics offered by the Administration for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Nationalities, Information, and Foreign Relations of the Republic of Daghestan.

Three Examples of Daghestan’s Islamic Institutes

The Imam ash-Shafi‘i Islamic University

1. 14 Lenin Prospect, Makhachkala; has no fax number, e-mail address, or website.
2. Opened in 1991 to replace a madrasah; at first was named after the first Daghestanian Naqshbandi Sheikh Muhammad-Effendi al-Yaraghi (died in 1838-1839) who took part in the Caucasian War of the 19th century. He brought the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya Sufi brotherhood to the Northern Caucasus. Later the school became an institute and still later a university named after Imam Shafi‘i, the founder of one of the four religious and legal teachings (madhabs) of Sunni Islam that traditionally dominated in Daghestan (Muhammad ash-Shafi‘i died in 820).
3. Its first license was issued by the RF Ministry of Education for 1994-2001; it was extended until 14 May, 2008 (license No. 24-0392); the Rules were registered with MA MJ RF on 29 October, 1999.

4. Murtuzali Karachayev is the rector; Mahomed-hajji Hajiev is the deputy rector, both are Naqshbandi sheikhs of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya trend; they were allowed to teach in the post-Soviet period. Since 2001, M. Karachayev has also represented well-known Naqshbandi Sheikh Muhammad Nazim of Cyprus in Dagestan.
5. The staff consists of 15 lecturers, seven of whom are the university's graduates, two are graduates of the famous Mir-i 'Arab Madrasah in Bukhara (Uzbekistan), one of the two legal Islamic educational establishments of the post-war Soviet Union. They are all Dagestanians and citizens of the Russian Federation; before 1998, however, there were citizens of Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Algeria in the teaching staff.
6. There are 250 students, one third of them girls. The university runs 17 branches in villages and towns, which educate 980 students (who belong to all the republic's major ethnic groups and come from various settlements and the countryside of the republic's north, south, and center).
7. The courses are taught in Russian and Arabic.
8. The curriculum drawn up by the Council of Alims of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Dagestan was approved by the rector's office. Its major disciplines are: Arabic, the Koran, at-tajwid (the rules of Koranic reading), at-tafsir (the Koranic exegesis), the hadith (Islamic tales about the Prophet Muhammad's pronouncements and deeds), as-siyar (the Prophet's biography), 'aqida (fundamentals of Islam), usul al-fiqh (Muslim law), and tasawwuf (Sufi religious practice, its methods and ethics). The subjects (particularly Islamic rites and law) are taught according to the Shafi'i madhab of Sunni Islam. Undergraduates attend seminars at which Wahhabism is criticized.
 There are no secular disciplines in the curriculum. According to the rector, the university has no money to pay for secular teachers. In fact, this is typical of most of the republic's Islamic educational establishments; time and again their heads confirm their willingness to teach secular subjects, but complain that there are no funds for this.
9. The seven-year course is free. Those who wish to enroll attend an interview; those found ill-prepared for immediate enrollment are invited to attend a two-year preparatory course at the madrasah, after which they become first-year students. In Makhachkala, the students study in two shifts; four- and five-year students do on-the-job training as imam assistants; senior students train by reading the Koran at cemeteries, participating in singing in honor of the Prophet Muhammad (mawlid) in the homes of the faithful, and giving private lessons in the fundamentals of Islam and Arabic.
10. The university follows the teaching of Dagestani Sheikh 'Abd ar-Rakhman of Sogratl (as-Suguri, 1792-1882), hero of the 19th century Caucasian War. Like Muhammad al-Yaraghi, he belonged to Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya. There are murids of over ten contemporary Dagestani sheikhs among the students, including Serajutdin Israfilov, Murtuzali Karachayev (the rector), Muhammad-hajji Hajiev, and Muhammad-Mukhtar Babatov. Enrollment does not require being affiliated with the Tariqat. According to the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya teaching, first-year university students should not be encouraged to join Sufi brotherhoods by taking on a task (vird) recommended by their spiritual teachers. They should first acquire enough knowledge of the fundamentals of religion and Islamic rituals. Normally, senior students take on a vird; there are no conflicts among the murids of different sheikhs.
11. The university trains the Muslim well-educated spiritual elite (ulema). Graduates major as Muslim clerics. During the six years of its existence the university has educated 120 people,

some of whom teach in madrasahs, and others work as mullahs or assistants of mullahs in the republic's mosques.

12. The university functions on private donations (sadaqa), has its own bank account as a legal entity; part of the money comes from renting out premises to shops and cafes. It has no hostel, but it owns a building transferred to it under a government decision. The main library contains about 500 textbooks and works of 19th century Daghestanian Sufis Jamal ad-din of Kazi-Kumukh, 'Abd ar-Rakhman of Sogratl, and Ilyas of Tsudakhar.

The North Caucasian Islamic University of Sheikh Muhammad Arif

1. 136 Dakhadaev St., Makhachkala; it has no fax or e-mail; with no Internet resource of its own, the university actively uses that of the SAMD.
2. It was set up in 1999 and was named after Muhammad Arif-afandi al-Kakhi (died in 1977), son of Khasan Khilmi of Kahib (died in 1937), one of the most popular Naqshbandiyya and Shaziliyya sheikhs. The SAMD is controlled by the murids of Said-afandi (Atsaev) of Chirkey (born in 1937), who is a spiritual follower of the brotherhood (silsilah).
3. The university is registered with MA MJ RF on 5 January, 2000; its state license No. 24-0669 was issued on 24 January, 2002; the SAMD approved its Statute on 20 December, 1999.
4. Its rector, Ahmad-hajji Abdullaev, is also a mufti and the SAMD chairman. The building is close to the residence (2 Aliev St., Makhachkala) of the muftiat, the university's patron.
5. The staff consists of 17 teachers; there are also non-staff lecturers.
6. There are 600 young men studying at the day department. Unlike other Islamic educational establishments, the university has no village branches. It runs a madrasah of about 150 students and an evening department of about 100. There is a female branch that educates 70 young women in the village of Separatorov outside Makhachkala. This brings the total number of students to 800. The university attracts students from all corners of the republic, Chechnia, the Zakataly District of Azerbaijan, and Tatarstan. In Soviet times, the level of Islamic education in these places was lower than in Daghestan, which explains the attraction.
7. The courses are taught in Russian and Avar.
8. The SAMD curriculum of two educational levels was approved by the muftiat's Council of Alims.

The preparatory course offers tutoring in nine disciplines: the fundamentals of Islam and its morphology; Arabic grammar and syntax; the rules of Koranic reading; learning the Koran by heart; calligraphy; the Prophet's Life (as-siyar), ethics, and Russian.

The main program consists of 30 subjects: Arabic syntax and morphology, learning the Koran by heart, Koranic commentaries (at-tafsir), Koranic sciences; the Prophet's Life; the hadith; Muslim law and its foundations (usul al-fiqh); legal studies; the dogmas (al-qalam); logic (al-mantiq); rhetoric (al-ma'an); lunar chronology; Sufi ethics (as-suluq); Sufism; Sufism in Daghestan; history of Islamic law; geography of the Arab countries; history of Daghestan; political science; sociology; oratory; Russian and English; standards of speech; social pedagogy; methods of teaching Arabic in school; astronomy; and information technology.

The university was the first in the republic to use new teaching methods; it has a reading room, an assembly hall, gymnasium, and a computer class. Since 2004, it has a fairly wide set of secular disciplines in its curriculum taught by lecturers from the State University of Dagestan and other secular institutes invited to join a specially organized department of the humanities. So far, however, few of the republic's Islamic educational establishments have followed suite.

The curriculum differs little from the standards the RF Ministry of Education established for higher and secondary schools. The female department offers training in skills inherited from the Soviet vocational schools and secondary special schools, such as manual jobs, sewing, and cooking.

9. Students take a seven-year course, including two years in the preparatory department. The day department students start their day at 8:00 a.m. and end at 12:30; evening classes start at 18:00. After the lunch break, the day department students engage in sports and other educational pursuits. There is a three-year postgraduate course. Enrollment is based on interviews; all freshmen have to attend a two-month course at the preparatory department before becoming first-year students in November. According to the administrator, those without a secondary education certificate have no chance of being enrolled at the university.
10. The university follows the Khalidiyya-Mahmudiyya-Shaziliyya trend of Sheikh Said-afandi of Chirkey.
11. It specializes in educating mullahs, Shari'a judges (qadi), mudarris teachers, and other members of the Muslim spiritual elite.
12. In full accordance with the Statute, the university functions on monetary donations (sadaqa), voluntary donations (nazr), and the money earned by teaching services, business activities, bank credits, money transferred by legal and physical entities (from Russia and other countries), and other means not prohibited by Russian law. The library contains 870 copies of textbooks, including 40 audio and 25 video records. Each student receives the necessary textbooks and other literature free of charge.

The Imam al-Ash'ari Islamic University

1. 115 Buynakskiy St., Khasaviurt; it has no fax, e-mail address, or website.
2. The university is based on the madrasah opened in 1991 in the private house of the highly respected imam of the Friday mosque of Khasaviurt, Muhammad-Seyyid Abakarov, from the village of Khushtad (died in 2004). The university is named after a prominent medieval lawyer of the very popular Shafi'i School.
3. The university is registered with the MA MJ RF; state license No. 24-0259 of 21 July, 2002.
4. Rector—Mahomed-Dibir Omargadjiev.
5. The staff comprises 11 lecturers, all of them Dagestanians between the ages of 28 and 64. Nearly all of them are murids of recently deceased Naqshbandi Sheikh Tajutdin of Ashalya (died on 11 September, 2001) along the Khalidiyya-Mahmudiyya and Shaziliyya.
6. There are 200 male students; only 2 surviving branches out of the initial five opened in the 1990s with 40 students. The students are mainly Avars; even though the original madrasah

was transformed into a university, it continues to enroll schoolchildren and teenagers of 14 and older; the preparatory department is open to even younger children—from 7 years up.

7. The courses are taught in Avar and Arabic.
8. The curriculum is divided into three levels: the first includes disciplines and works that were part of the madrasah teaching program before the 1930s. The second-level students study disciplines that have already been tested by the lecturers and found instructive and comprehensible to beginners. They rely on pre-revolutionary textbooks and teaching aids of the 1990s. The third level, also based on pre-revolutionary and post-Soviet textbooks, offers training in 15 subjects traditional for the Daghestanian madrasahs of the 19th and first third of the 20th centuries: Arabic grammar, morphology (as-sarf) and syntax (an-nahv), Koranic recitations (al-kira'a, at-tajwid), exegetics (at-tafsir), hadith studies, arithmetic, rhetoric, metrics of Arabic verse (al-'arud), Muslim law subdivided into family law, etc; fundamentals of Muslim law (usul al-fiqh), theology (al-qalam), the ethics of Sufism (adab), and Islamic philosophy (falsafa).
 All capable students attend two, three, or more lessons every day and work at two or three levels. Less talented students have to limit themselves to one lesson at the first level; and after completing the first level, they proceed on to the second and then the third level. The three levels offer training according to the students' personal abilities. On the whole, the curriculum of the Imam al-Ash'ari University is typical of the republic's higher educational establishments and madrasahs; the set of disciplines and methods are borrowed from the traditional madrasah curriculum of the pre-revolutionary and early Soviet periods.
9. According to a decision by the Academic Council, the university takes fee-paying students as well as offers free education; there is no fixed study term.
10. The university follows the trends of Khalidiyya-Mahmudiyya and Shaziliyya approved by the AMD. There are murids of still living Daghestanian sheikhs among the students. Even though it is not controlled by the muftiat, the university maintains close relations with it. It does not teach Sufism and its ritual practices as obligatory subjects and offers no courses in the works of the Daghestanian Sufi sheikhs.
11. The university sees its aim as providing both higher religious and general secular secondary education to all who need them. The students graduate either as imam-hatybs at Friday mosques or teachers of the Islamic sciences. Those who wish have the chance to continue their studies and on-the-job training abroad: the Khasaviurt religious Muslim community sent 8 university students to Egypt to study at the famous Cairo Al-Azhar University.
12. The university functions on material and monetary support from the founders and the faithful; partly or completely paid training; business activities; bank and other credits; voluntary donations (sadaqa) as well as donations for specific purposes from legal and physical entities (Russian and foreign). Its building is new; the library contains about 1,000 Arabic textbooks.

Past and Present Challenges Faced by the Muslim Schools

What does the above suggest? What place do the Islamic higher educational establishments occupy in Daghestanian society? What can be said about their attitude toward the foreign Islamic influences

of the post-Soviet period and the Soviet and pre-revolutionary heritage? In the past there were no Islamic higher educational establishments. The name (university or institute), the language classes are taught in, the division into year groups and arrangement of the teaching process into classes, the five-year study course, exams, and diplomas, as well as the age limit, were borrowed from the secular (and Soviet) state school of the latter half of the 20th century. At the same time, as I have pointed out above, the curricula of the Islamic institutes preserved the priorities of the madrasahs of the pre-revolutionary and early Soviet period in Daghestan, together with some of the subjects and textbooks of these periods. According to 'Abd ar-Rakhman Gazi of Kumukh (Kazi-Kumukh), Imam Shamil's son-in-law, and Shamil's secretary Hajji-Ali of Chokh, in the first third of the 19th century, the madrasahs taught the same subjects using the same books and commentaries.³

At the same time, the system of Islamic education became much more fragmented and formal. Prior to the 1930s, there were two or three main levels—home Koranic classes (1); primary school, which taught reading and writing (maqtab, 2), and small specialized colleges (madrasahs, 3). Today, there are five levels: (1) short-term primary courses, which teach the fundamentals of religion and the Arabic language; (2) primary schools (maqtabs) at the mosques; (3) madrasahs, which became very close to state secondary schools; (4) Islamic universities and institutes, and (5) village branches. In a way, the contemporary hierarchical system of non-state Islamic education imitates the earlier Soviet one with specific features of its own.

The first two stages of Islamic education are of limited duration with no permanent student body; their tasks and nature bring to mind the elimination-of-illiteracy courses of the early Soviet period. The maqtabs teach the fundamentals of Arabic grammar (as-sarf); Islamic ritual practices (usul ad-din); and the rules for reading the Koran. The madrasahs mostly function at large Friday cathedrals (juma) and neighborhood mosques in which imams and their assistants (mu'azzin/budun) serve as teachers. The longer (3 to 5 years) study course and much more fundamental knowledge they provide make them different from the primary courses and maqtabs. The level of tutoring in the village branches is closer to that in an average madrasah. The relations between most of these branches and the central structures are largely formal: the branches receive neither money, nor textbooks, nor teachers from them. Enrollment and graduation require no exams; the teaching staff normally consists of graduates of the central institutions and the imams of the mosques at which the branches operate.

It is next to impossible to calculate the number of primary courses; according to the Administration for Religious Affairs, Daghestan has 453 Islamic educational establishments of other types that provide tutoring for about 14,000 students. K. Khanbabaev has distributed them according to the four higher levels of Islamic education as 27.4, 34.4, 19.1, and 19.1 percent.⁴ These figures do not take into account the curriculum of the Muslim schools, so they cannot be regarded as exact. Some of the higher educational establishments that call themselves institutes or universities are in fact mere madrasahs; some of them belong to an even lower, maqtab, level. The Imam al-Ash'ari Islamic University, for example, slipped from the heights it occupied while its founder was still alive to the madrasah level. Only four higher educational establishments out of 14 can be placed at the highest level: the Imam ash-Shafi'i and the Muhammad Arif universities in Makhachkala, the Saypula-Qadi University in Buynaksk, and the Imam an-Navavi University in Novoserebriakovka.

In the first half of the 2000s, the pace at which Islamic educational establishments appeared in Daghestan slowed down; the number of maqtabs and Islamic higher education establishments dropped: the number of the former decreased from 670 to 278 in the last ten years; the number of the latter, from

³ See: Hajji-Ali. *Skazanie ochevidtsa o Shamile*, Makhachkala, 1990, p. 80; *Abdurakhman from Gazikumukh. Kniga vospominaniy*, Makhachkala, 1997, p. 85.

⁴ See: K.M. Khanbabaev, "Religioznoe obrazovanie v Daghestane," *Problemy politkul'turnogo obrazovania v Daghestane*, Makhachkala, 2002, p. 129.

16 to 14 in the last two years. The system has obviously reached a level of status quo. The students, mainly male, of the five levels are between the ages of 12 and 23; in towns and townships girls account for 25 to 30 percent of the student body of madrasahs and higher educational establishments, but are practically absent from the mountain schools, especially in the Avar and Darghin regions.⁵ Before the revolution and in the early years of Soviet power, the madrasahs were mainly limited to the mountain and piedmont regions; today they, together with the Islamic institutes, have moved to the cities. The majority of them are found in nine out of ten large cities in the valley and piedmont areas, as well as in the republic's central and southern regions.

While the students and graduates of the Islamic educational establishments belong to the post-Soviet generation, two-thirds, or 58 percent, of their teachers grew up in the late Soviet, otherwise known as stagnation, period. According to information supplied by the Administration for Religious Affairs, 42 percent of the teachers and lecturers are men of 30 and younger; 41 percent are between 30 and 45; 14 percent between 45 and 60, while 3 percent are older than that. Ninety-three percent of the madrasah and Islamic university teachers have secular secondary or incomplete secondary education; and 7 percent are graduates of secular institutes and universities. The majority, or 78 percent, obtained higher local Muslim education either studying in illegal Koranic circles or with alims of the late Soviet period or at post-Soviet madrasahs and Islamic institutes and universities (the latter group is fairly large: 45 people out of a total 178 teachers and lecturers). Twenty-two percent described their educational level as "secondary."⁶

The very fact that the republic's Muslim spiritual elite is dominated by people who grew up and received an informal Islamic education locally during the Cold War period explains why the local alims remain prejudiced about "foreign Islam." Most are convinced that Islamic knowledge and rituals have been preserved in their purest form in Daghestan. The teachers of all higher educational establishments covered by the study program are convinced that the curricula of their institutions are much better and more Islamic than those in the Middle East and North Africa. The Daghestanian mudarrises reject in principle any novelties either in education content or in the teaching methods. The Muhammad Arif Islamic University is a happy exception to the rule.

Young people do not share the conservatism of the older generation because the real educational level of nearly all Islamic educational establishments of Daghestan is very low. Prof. A. Shikhsaidov, an Islamic lawyer, has aptly called them "the shadow of the famous madrasahs of the 17th-first third of the 20th century."⁷ This is confirmed by Ilyas-hajji Ilyasov, one of the most respected alims and Sufis, who said that none of the rectors of Islamic universities or institutes has higher or at least secondary theological education.⁸ I heard many complaints about the teaching programs from the students and mudarrises. The persecution of the Soviet times destroyed the high level of religious education in Daghestan and narrowed down the worldview of both the students and their teachers. The curricula are limited to a small number of legal Shafi'ite works. The graduates find it hard to orientate themselves in the key fiqh schools, they know nothing of the most prominent Muslim lawyers of the 20th century, which explains why in the mid-1990s Wahhabi ideologists were invariably the victors in discussions with the traditionalist local alims.

It stood to reason that, as a result, the local youth learned to mistrust the local traditional school of Islamic knowledge. In the 1990s, when the Iron Curtain was finally lifted, scores of Daghestanian boys and girls went abroad to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Iraq, Qatar, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Iran, Sudan, Malaysia, and Pakistan in search of Islamic university education and spoken Arabic, the tutoring in which was very poor at home. The Administration for Religious Affairs sup-

⁵ See: *Religii i religioznye organizatsii v Daghestane*, Compiled by K.M. Khanbabaev, Makhachkala, 2001, pp. 101-107.

⁶ See: A ARA, Islamic Educational Establishments folder.

⁷ A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Islam v Daghestane," *Tsentral'naia Azia i Kavkaz*, No. 4, 1999, p. 110.

⁸ Quoted from: A. Savateev, "'Wahhabit' 'Wahhabitu' rozn'," *Azia i Afrika segodnia*, No. 2, 2002, p. 6.

plied the following figures: there are 913 Dagestanians studying abroad; 400 came back after completing their education. In fact, the first figure is at least 150 percent higher: Khanbabaev has quoted a figure of 1,200.⁹ A great number of young people left the country on tourist visas or on the pretence of going on hajj, which means that they had no official permission to go abroad to study.

After routing the Wahhabis and closing the foreign Islamic missions and schools in the republic, the authorities tightened control over trips abroad. Under the Law on Banning Wahhabi and Other Extremist Activities in the Republic of Dagestan of 16 September, 1999, those wishing to study abroad had to apply to the SAMD, which in turn consulted with the Committee (since 2006, Administration) for Religious Affairs under the RD Government. This discouraged many of those wishing to study abroad, but there is any number of Dagestanian students still living and studying in other countries. The border cannot be closed after all; it was the disappointing results of Islamic education abroad rather than the official bans that slowed down the outflow of potential students.

After more than 15 years, it became obvious that most Muslim students found the results disappointing. Those who went abroad on their own, without a preliminary agreement with one of the Arabic universities, had to enroll in four-year preparatory courses (irrespective of their command of Arabic and level of Islamic knowledge) before becoming university students. This extended the study period to nine years or even longer. Many students had to repeat the course several times. Without money or good training, young men found employment with local businesses (including work with tourists from Russia) or returned home. Many of them came back because they had no money and could not master the language. Most of those who stayed found themselves repeating the preparatory course or the first year indefinitely.

A large number of young Dagestanians educated in the Arab Middle East preferred to stay: they feared persecution at home as "Wahhabis and extremists," which they were regarded as by their fellow villagers. This is particularly true of the graduates of the Mecca and Medina universities of Saudi Arabia, yet, according to my field information, those who studied in Damascus were also flatly dismissed as Wahhabis. Many of the former students never went back home, where there was no work for them. Russia does not accept Arabian university diplomas, which means that graduates have no chance of finding employment at state higher educational structures of Dagestan or xenophobic Islamic higher educational establishments. Recently, the problem triggered a heated discussion in the press.¹⁰

Employment prospects are also one of the worst headaches for those who study at home; 5 or even 7 classes have already graduated from some of the universities; the graduates normally major in one of three disciplines: Koranic reading (kari'); imam-hatyb; and alim, or specialist in Arabic and Muslim sciences. Jobs are few and far between even for those who graduate from the best SAMD-controlled universities (the Muhammad Arif in Makhachkala and the Saypula-Qadi in Buynaksk): the majority of the republic's Muslim communities (especially in the south and north) do not recognize the muftiat. Graduates have a better chance of becoming mudarris at their alma mater's branches and at associated village madrasahs. Many of those who remained jobless enrolled in the republic's secular higher educational establishments.

As a teacher, I know from personal experience that there are many graduates and former students of Islamic institutes and universities among the students of the Department of Oriental Studies of the State University of Dagestan in Makhachkala, which has been functioning since 2001. Recently, the lecturers and students of the state and Islamic institutes have established close and mutually advantageous relations. In 2004, Ia. Khanmagomedov, Ph.D. (Philos.), assistant professor at the Department of Oriental Studies of the State University of Dagestan, became head of the Department

⁹ See: A ARA, Islam folder; K.M. Khanbabaev, op. cit., p. 134.

¹⁰ See: Ia. Rasulov, "Problemy i perspektivy islamskogo obrazovaniya v Dagestane," *Novoe delo*, No. 19, 2003, p. 12.

of the Humanities at the Muhammad Arif Islamic University. It is hard to find work in a secular state that does not recognize the diplomas of the Islamic institutions because their curricula do not correspond to the state standards established by the Ministry of Education of Russia. It is much easier for a secular Oriental scholar to find employment at an Islamic institution, as Ia. Khanmagomedov's example has shown.

The above should not be taken to mean that post-Soviet society rejects Islamic education; in fact, the opposite is true: its prestige is very high. Even those who failed to find jobs are proud of graduating from an Islamic higher educational establishment. It seems that many of the social problems of the Islamic institutes and universities are caused by their heads' futile attempts to return to the pre-revolutionary past and their failure to take the specifics of secular society into account; meanwhile the institutes themselves bear traces of the Soviet past. More than that, they are exact copies of the Soviet higher educational school with certain elements of traditional madrasahs. As a result of the reforms in the ethnic sphere that took place in the 20th century, the Islamic institutes and universities offer tutoring in the national tongues of Daghestan, while the Imam ash-Shafi'i, the Saypula-Qadi, and Muhammad Arif universities teach in Russian—something that was impossible even in the Soviet prewar madrasahs.

The funding system has also changed: in the past it relied on public donations in the form of zakat (alms) and charity funds (waqf) from the jamaats. The Islamic educational system was restored on the money of private charities (sadaqa, nazr): the Mesed commercial bank, the Kirgu trade house, enterprises of Dagenargo, the Marine Trade Port, Sulakenergo, Dagvodokanal and Chirkeygesstroy companies, as well as the heads of district administrations who appropriated former state or collective property, being the most lavish donors. Director of the marine port murid Said-afandi Kharkharov from Chokh is the most generous among those who support the Islamic institutes of Makhachkala. Some of the money goes through charity funds named after S.-M. Abubakarov, Said-afandi of Chirkey and Khasan Khilmi. In the 1990s, the waqf property nationalized in 1927 and plundered was partly restored, but never regained its legal or social importance.

Unlike their predecessors, the Islamic educational establishments of Daghestan are much more closely connected with Sufism, as the above description has demonstrated. It is no accident that many of them bear the names of Daghestanian Sufis of the 19th and 20th centuries. In many of them, Saypula-Qadi, Said-Muhammad Abubakarov, and Yusuf-hajji in Buynaksk and Khasaviurt, in the villages of Komsomolskoe and Ghergebil, and in the settlement of Novy Chirkey, Sufism (tasawwuf) is studied as a discipline in its own right. The final-year students are expected to become murids of Said-afandi of Chirkey. There are murids of the recently deceased Sheikh Badrudin of Botlikh (1919-2002) and Said-afandi who belonged to the Mahmudiyya-Shaziliyya branch in the Saypula-Qadi University (the village of Komsomolskoe). I have calculated that about 30 percent of the students at the eponymous Buynaksk University belong to the murids of Said-afandi, while 70 percent are murids of his successor within the Shaziliyya Arslanali Gamzatov (born in 1954) trend. The Imam an-Navavi Institute is the only place that does not patronize any of the present Tariqah trends.

On the one hand, the Sufi component of the higher Muslim school creates a bias toward monopolization of Islamic education in the hands of the sheikh of Chirkey, who dominates the republic's north and center. On the other hand, this is a source of numerous conflicts. Post-Soviet Muslim society is torn apart by people who carry weight in the Islamic sphere and have adequate Islamic knowledge. In the latter half of the 1990s, those who closed ranks around the local Sufi tradition and the dissident Wahhabis who tried to purify the local variant of Islam from unacceptable novelties (bida') introduced by the Sufis were locked in heated discussions. Today, the relations among the Sufi sheikhs themselves have grown tense: they refuse to recognize one another and dismiss their rivals as false sheikhs (mutashayikhun) and impostors. The followers of Said-afandi are es-

pecially intolerant—they recognize only four sheikhs in the Khalidiyya-Mahmudiyya-Shaziliyya trend (Arslanali included).

The above provides a background for the post-Soviet Islamic education of Daghestan. The very strange combination of Soviet and traditional madrasah elements is another sign that it is hard to move toward true Islamic knowledge in the republic. This suggests certain general observations. In the near future the Muslim school is unlikely to push the secular school aside. The prospects for Muslim education in the republic are determined by the blend of secular and religious educational elements and the clash between the local, general Russian and foreign influences. It is impossible to seal off the borders to separate the republic from the Mid-Eastern Islamic centers. We should learn that madrasahs do not necessarily export terrorism. In fact, the squabble over power and resources, as well as domination in the educational sphere that is unfolding before our eyes among the Muslim traditionalists, the 1999 winners, is much more dangerous.

POLITICAL PROCESS TODAY IN THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS

THE COLOR REVOLUTION PHENOMENON: FROM CLASSICAL THEORY TO UNPREDICTABLE PRACTICES

Alisher TASTENOV

*Master of Political Science,
Senior fellow at the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Research
under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

Between 2003 and 2005, a relatively new trend—the transformation of political regimes in some of the Soviet successor states, coined in political science as “velvet revolution”—became obvious in the post-Soviet expanse. The normally evolutionary dynamics of regime changes were moving at an accelerated pace toward the use of force, which echoed across the post-Soviet territory. The term “revolution” was applied to several interconnected events, starting with the dissatisfaction of a large number of citizens with the elections and their results produced by the government’s interference in the form of

abuse of the administrative resource and cheating; the losers’ ability to mobilize the discontented voters; and encouragement from Western leaders and the public, which made it impossible to use force against the rallies, and ending with the opposition coming to power after a series of mass street actions.

In the past, the expert community believed there were various reasons why Central Asia was less prone to fall victim to this phenomenon than Georgia and Ukraine. The events of March 2005 in Kyrgyzstan and of May 2005 in Uzbekistan demonstrated that the velvet revolution phenom-

enon was spreading far and wide and that it may destabilize all the other Central Asian countries. Recent developments have taught us that socio-political destabilization may develop into a protracted and unpredictable process.

Obviously the phenomenon calls for theoretical investigation, whereby the results

should be compared with reality and common political, social, economic, and geopolitical repercussions identified. An analysis of the “revolutionary regime change” in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine makes it possible to provide a certain theoretical explanation of the phenomenon.

Velvet Revolutions: Similarities and Differences

The phenomenon of the “revolutionary” regime change in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine brings to mind the velvet revolutions of 1989 in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and some other countries. There, and in the three post-Soviet states, the political regimes were changed, but the velvet revolutions in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine differed, for objective reasons, from the East European phenomenon: the development process and the desired aims were different. In Eastern Europe, the velvet revolutions developed, on the whole, according to the classical pattern of genesis and revolutionary aims not limited to a regime change; they aimed at deep-cutting and overall transformation of the state and social order.

Significantly, the use of the “revolutionary” metaphor points not merely to the similarity, but also to the genetic kinship of these phenomena. They are part of a certain logical regularity, resistance to which looks less like “maintaining law and order and the continuity of power” and much more like a conservative response to the “relentless course of history.” More than that: as a “revolutionary” phenomenon, the process has acquired a wide range of descriptions suggested by the metaphor.¹

The events that took place in the three Soviet successor states should be regarded solely as a form of coup d'état that made wider use of certain revolutionary technologies. Their mass nature and the relatively peaceful transfer (seizure) of power are shared elements.

A genuine revolution is a much larger and much more radical form of political and social change. The post-Soviet states, however, demonstrate a rotation of bureaucratic elites presented as democratic change. This means that we are witnessing a gradual redistribution of power in favor of certain political groups, the members of which until recently belonged to the same ruling elite.

In fact, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine (and Serbia before them) became the testing ground for a qualitatively new form of regime change: the elite vs. counter-elite confrontation on the domestic political scene reached a critical point and, actively encouraged from the outside, developed into a public conflict devoid of any ideological overtones typical of the traditional revolutionary processes.²

The changes were predated by a long period during which protest potential accumulated, caused by the complex diffusion of interaction in the power-society system, economic difficulties, and other negative phenomena. This intensified the conflict inside the ruling elite itself. To an even greater extent, however, the opposition elite groups with limited access to power used this potential as a pressure tool.

¹ See: B.V. Mezhev, “‘Oranzhevaia revoliutsia’: vosstanovlenie konteksta,” *Polis*, No. 5, 2006, p. 75.

² T. Poliannikov, G. Prokopov, “Sindrom ‘tsvetnykh revoliutsiy,’” *Svobodnaia mysl-XXI*, No. 6, 2005, p. 148.

From this it follows that the thesis of the velvet revolutions' democratic nature should be regarded as a surrogate used to fill in the ideological vacuum, a usual feature of the confrontations between elites and their support groups. In fact, the velvet revolutions discredit democracy: elections as its central mechanism and their results are contested to generate a coup. This is spreading far and wide to become a frequently used practice. Without this, no wide popular support is possible: to mobilize its latent and inert discontent society needs ideological justification.

The revolutionary process can be managed from both inside and outside: objectively speaking, this can be described as one of the central and very specific factors. Together with domestic political groups, certain external forces are interested in developing manageable dynamics of such processes based on the widest possible use of political technologies (in the context of manipulating public consciousness and the changed balance of forces).

The wide-scale revolutionary scenarios of regime change translated into reality in Ukraine, Georgia and, to a lesser extent, in Kyrgyzstan have demonstrated that they were realized with the aim of imposing a system of manageable democracy on them in which foreign factors play the key role.³

Manageability proved to be limited since the external and internal forces involved in the process can do nothing more than generate (with the help of political technologies) a quasi-revolutionary upsurge rooted in a wide range of basic factors. This upsurge starts the process of evolutionary development according to the "revolution's" own rules, which merely need to be trimmed. In this way, the velvet revolution differs from the endogenous (created by internal reasons) classical revolution.

In fact, manageability of the revolutionary process realized from inside and outside the country demonstrates that pre-revolutionary moods are not indispensable. In the absence of objective prerequisites, consistent and purposeful implementation of corresponding tools and skilful management of society alone can bring tension to a critical level.

The above suggests that manipulating mass consciousness in the process of artificially created domestic political crises is one of the key constants of the velvet revolutions of the new wave. Revolutionary manipulation of collective consciousness does not use newly discovered social and psychological prerequisites: it relies on those already existing (lack of confidence in the government, override political changes, etc.). Arguments are of secondary importance in such cases: it is more than enough to bring into play the emotional subconscious potential by initiating an emotional upsurge.

In classical revolutions, individual and collective emotions and psychology are also important, but the emotional and psychological impact does not develop into a chaotic and widespread sociopolitical performance: in classical cases it results from a gradual process, in the course of which the level of all-embracing social tolerance is exceeded. In velvet revolutions, on the other hand, manipulative mechanisms of internal and external impact are used to stir up the masses and provoke society, or part of it, into opposing the government. This is done by deliberately heating up latent discontent that has not yet reached its critical level.

The velvet revolutions have become a specific and highly effective tool of geopolitical rivalry; destabilization of the opponent's zone of influence is achieved by establishing control over the state selected for this purpose. These are the distinguishing features of the phenomenon of velvet revolutions in the post-Soviet expanse. To a certain extent they may be described using a somewhat modified formula of political transformation: "replacement," that is, a relatively quick transfer of power from one elite group to another in the midst of a political crisis.

³ See: T. Carouthers, "The Backlash against Democracy Promotion," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006.

One more important aspect should be mentioned: the open legitimization at the international level, with the direct involvement of foreign forces, of a velvet change in regimes that contradict international law. Whereby this legitimization predates the revolution itself. Consistent recognition of the legitimacy of the gradually intensifying process that uses force to depose constitutional power should be regarded as an indirect threat at the international level and not just something limited to national proportions.

This is confirmed by the fact that official U.S. circles look at the Color Revolutions as part of a democratic process leading to freedom. They tend to use the local terms—Rose Revolution, Orange Revolution—to refer to these developments; they do not hesitate to apply the term “revolution” to the Color Revolutions. During a visit to Central Asia, Condoleezza Rice described the events in Kyrgyzstan as an inordinate and exceptional revolution.⁴

What Causes Velvet Revolutions

Velvet revolutions are a phenomenon limited to the developing states at the transition stage, where objective and subjective situations create and stimulate crises.

The following can be described as factors conducive to a revolutionary situation:

- An economic crisis and wide gap between the poor and the rich;
- A politically weak government unable to control the political, social, and economic situation in the country;
- A split in the ruling elite that produces a counter-elite;
- A strong opposition supported to a considerable extent by society, and a widespread NGO system;
- A low level of public confidence, or its complete loss.

The above creates a context in which a revolutionary situation may take shape and unfold; in fact, just a few of these factors are enough.

Economic crisis. Social and economic difficulties that squelch public expectations and send up the number of unemployed, along with the number of those living below the poverty level (which was especially obvious in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan), are the main causes of social and political tension. Unequal economic development of the industrial branches leads to uneven distribution of profit, which in turn leads to considerable social stratification and social inequality. The steadily widening gap between the poorest and richest groups does not allow a middle class (the basis of society’s stability) to appear and develop. Unequal distribution of profit at the regional level produces a pitfall of separatism, while the elite might start dividing into regional groups.

This is one of the key factors that, being charged with tension and conflict potential, might lead to a revolutionary situation. Driven by their social and economic demands, the discontented masses pour into the streets.

The depressed districts, small towns, socially vulnerable population groups, etc. constitute the main problem areas and factors of the state’s socioeconomic sphere, which might contribute to a revolutionary situation.

It should be said that social and economic problems should be treated as priorities: if the standard of living continues deteriorating latent discontent may trigger active protests.

⁴ See: V.A. Barsamov, “‘Tsvetnye revoliutsii’: teoreticheskiy i prikladnoy aspekty,” *Sotsiologicheskie issledovania*, No. 8, 2006, p. 63.

Politically weak government. Many ruling regimes fell because their political systems lost their structural strength. A politically weak government unable to control the political, social, and economic situation may create a revolutionary situation. This happened in Kyrgyzstan, where the leaders proved obviously unprepared to use force to dispel the rallies and neutralize the opposition, while the weak power-related structures proved unable to oppose the crowds. This resulted in anarchy and chaos in the republic.

In addition, monopolized power, which reduced the democratic procedures to a mere formality unable to act within the legal limits to change power, was responsible for the development of such a situation. Indeed, society cannot do much under such conditions: it can only put direct pressure on the leaders. Force remains the only tool in a country where there is no legal procedure of power change, where corruption reigns at all levels, and where alternative regulatory sources are practically non-existent. The absence of regular channels of "power-society" interaction leaves power impotent.

Under a weak government, the most important and urgent national issues degenerate into collisions conducive to higher tension and multiplying "problem issues" in all spheres of social life.

Protest and separatist sentiments, disunited regions, mounting ethnic contradictions, and centrifugal trends create the most hazardous "problem issues" fraught with irreversible crises.

A weak government splits the elite; political parties are crystallized, while the interests of the main political actors are polarized. The opposition uses relatively the weak government to strengthen its position as the only rational and active alternative to the people in power, who are gradually losing their grip.

Split in the ruling elite. A gap between the elite and counter-elite gradually develops under the mounting impact of their disagreements. The counter-elite, which accumulates considerable resources and political potential, develops into a serious opponent to become the moving force behind any velvet revolution.

Redistribution of power among the elite groups and fairly contradictory agreements among them inevitably cause a split and may lead to regionalism. In the final analysis, this destabilizes the political system. In Ukraine, for example, the central and regional elite reached agreements outside the legal frameworks; they achieved a bureaucratic consensus about their common interests regarding the election results and redistribution of resources, which produced vertical elite groups with central and regional components; the center's clan interests were projected onto the regional level, while regional impact could be felt in the center. Then Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma's inability to resolve the conflicts that repeatedly cropped up among the local oligarchs divided the core financial-industrial groups into two camps.

This led little by little to an alternative to those in power: in crisis, the alternative force became the moving force behind the velvet revolution.

Strong opposition and widespread NGO system. The split in the elite adds weight to the opposition, which may comprise some of the financial-industrial groups, part of the political establishment, and regional elites. In certain circumstances, this opposition supported by the masses may rally the core public and political forces and develop into a real alternative to the government.⁵

This means that networks of various oppositional organizations able to transform themselves into hierarchical structures and to lead the masses are critically important. In Ukraine, for example, it was the united opposition that advanced the revolutionary process, while its leaders' support in the foreign media played an important role by creating an attractive image of the previously selected presidential candidate. In Georgia, where the economic and political crises had reached their peaks,

⁵ See: V.A. Barsamov, op. cit., p. 62.

Mikhail Saakashvili, leader of the National Movement opposition party, and Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Zhvania, who headed the Burjanadze-Democrats alliance, could be accepted as potential national leaders. A velvet revolution becomes possible if the opposition controls some of the power structures, which can be used to popularize its ideology across the country.

The NGOs funded from abroad are equally important for an unfolding revolutionary situation. In Ukraine, it was NGOs, the absolute majority of which operated on Western money, that supplied the velvet revolution with its social and organizational basis. In fact, they paid for the velvet revolution.

Lost confidence. The nation has no confidence in weak rulers and power structures; when people reject the ruling elite for moral reasons, the political situation becomes wobbly.

This happens when bureaucrats abuse their power or become too corrupt to look after the interests and observe the rights of the common people. Normally, the people do not trust, partly or completely, a government that has moved far away from them. Elections that faithfully mirror the public confidence level are the point of no return at which a revolution becomes possible.

In Georgia, for example, on the eve of the velvet revolution, about 75 percent of the nation had no confidence in President Shevardnadze. In March 2004 in Ukraine, the share of those who had no confidence in the government and the Supreme Rada exceeded the share of those who thought differently by 39 percent; in the case of the president, the figure was 41 percent. On the eve of the presidential election, Leonid Kuchma's popularity plummeted. In Kyrgyzstan, during and after the parliamentary elections, the level of President Akaev's job approval dropped to an impossibly low level, which triggered mass rallies and unrest.

In principle, a country in which the head of state is popular is immune to velvet revolutions, but we all know that manipulation of the election results and political technologies applied to public consciousness may change job approval ratings to a great extent.

A revolutionary situation develops if:

- The regime's social basis has narrowed down dramatically;
- The regime has lost its legitimacy;
- The political and economic elite organized into an opposition becomes aware of its impotence within the system;
- The opposition enjoys consolidated support of the world's leading powers;
- The ruling elite depends on the same powers;
- The capital and the largest cities display anti-government sentiments;
- There is a charismatic leader of the opposition who symbolizes change.

The above shows that if the main potentially critical circumstances develop, a velvet revolution becomes a reality; for objective and subjective reasons, however, ethnic, geographic, ecological, and other crisis-conducive factors may also become velvet revolution catalysts.

In the final analysis, social and political tension in any country is fed by a crisis of power accompanied by corruption in the center and periphery and financial swindling, antagonism between the government and society instigated by the widening gap between the rich and the poor, as well as economic instability that creates unemployment and poverty.

Left to accumulate, latent conflicts may increase tension; if a crisis develops, these conflicts may come out into the open and develop into a destructive force. This means that old social and state problems left to simmer for any reason may lead to velvet revolutions; pre-revolutionary situations lay bare such problems and bring them to the fore, where they add to the nascent crisis.

Velvet Revolutions: Genesis and Realization

An analysis of domestic political crises that develop into velvet revolutions suggests certain common regularities and a hierarchy of their elements. The events in Georgia, Ukraine, and, partly, Kyrgyzstan have revealed identical development patterns and mechanisms with which the coups were brought to fruition.

The following stages can be described as basic for all velvet revolutions.

- First stage. Deliberate worsening of the social and political situation.

This is a fairly prolonged period, especially if the ruling elite is strong enough. External and internal forces begin working on it several months before events (parliamentary or presidential elections in particular) that are hazardous for the ruling regimes.

Outside pressure mounts, while the opposition is actively rallying supporters. At this stage, political manipulation is widely used as the main tool for discrediting power and the state of affairs at home; political and social tension rises, while the image of the country's rulers is tarnished.

- Second stage. Building up tension to the maximum.

At the first signs of power disintegration and an ebb in its social support (which may happen for any reason), the destructive forces build up pressure on the government and society as parliamentary or presidential elections draw nearer.

Political manipulation of public opinion is replaced with psychological pressure that makes intensive use of the widest possible range of political technologies, the thesis about the malfunctioning government being the central one. Tension gradually reaches its peak as the election campaign unfolds.

- Third stage. A revolutionary upsurge.

It comes at the turning point; in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, it came when the election results were announced. The opposition relies on the existing social and political atmosphere and capitalizes on external pressure to create chaos and spontaneous developments by stirring up the masses.⁶

At this stage, discrediting the government is the counter-elite's main aim, achieved with the help of numerous facts of falsification of the election results presented as another batch of lies coming from above.

On the whole, the opposition steps up its activity to:

- Appeal against the election results on the strength of information supplied by "independent" and international organizations;
- Apply political and psychological pressure;
- Enlist considerable human resources within a very short period of time;
- Stage rallies under the slogan of revising the election results;
- Blockade state offices and strategic facilities.
- The opposition media provides information support.⁷

⁶ See: T. Poliannikov, G. Prokopov, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

⁷ See: V.A. Barsamov, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

The elements and mechanisms of velvet revolutions can be arranged in a conceptual complex, the particulars of which may vary from country to country depending on their specifics. We should bear in mind that the mechanisms and tools of revolutionary techniques are intertwined and synchronized, therefore they should be perceived as a single whole.

Political Manipulation

Internal and external forces resort to political manipulation to create a situation conducive to a velvet revolution. The government is discredited and deprived of its legitimacy during a stage-by-stage process that requires numerous intricate moves. The negative image of the government based on a misrepresentation of its actions, as well as far-fetched identification of the crisis with the people in power breed uncertainty among the masses and antipathy for the leaders, which becomes obvious by the time of a possible crisis (elections, etc.).

This tactic works well in marginalized politically passive or even indifferent societies known to shift their political loyalties unexpectedly and quickly; under careful coaching, which uses obviously populist slogans, they may become radicalized, producing large-scale and uncontrolled shifts in political balance.⁸

There are focal points, such as corruption, undemocratic nature, etc., that are most frequently used to discredit the ruling elite, which is unable, for objective reasons, to whitewash itself. The basically unproven facts of the top people's involvement in criminal acts (such as the murder of Georgy Gongadze in Ukraine, or the financial machinations in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan) are widely discussed, which forces the ruling elite to take the defensive.

We know that nearly all the members of the counter-elite in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan were connected with the government, which means that the opposition might have come to terms with certain members of the ruling elite (or deliberately created the illusion of such consent). This "paralyzes" power and deprives it of the ability to oppose (by using force among other things) the deepening political crisis. An analysis of the Ukrainian and Kyrgyz events reveals that the opposition relied on the regions with good results and that it tapped disagreements between the clans and groups to push the country's leaders into a narrow corner.

More often than not, the opposition in the three states took advantage of the absence of a charismatic figure in the ruling elite able to oppose, together with the head of state, the counter-elite. This allowed the opposition to concentrate on promoting its own leaders (Saakashvili, Nino Burjanadze, Iushchenko, Iulia Timoshenko, and Felix Kulov) as the only alternative. Much is said about their persistent efforts to check corruption in the higher echelons of the authoritarian government, even though some of them were part of this government directly involved in illegal proceedings.

Political manipulation during election campaigns forms a class of its own: the ruling elite is accused of falsifying the election results and never relieving its pressure on the opposition. In fact, the real state of affairs is unimportant: mud slinging creates a vast zone of public mistrust and hesitation; the nation's political ideas change in favor of the opposition.

The opposition takes recourse to subjective and, in fact, illegitimate methods—publication of preliminary election results, exit polls, and interviews with foreign observers—to support their allegations. Society, or a large part of it, rejects the official election results, while the government is forced onto the defensive.⁹

⁸ See: T.E. Grinberg, *Politicheskie tekhnologii. PR i reklama*, Aspekt Press, Moscow, 2005.

⁹ Ibidem.

Protest actions against the election results are planned in advance, whereby the accent is placed on “peaceful” confrontation against the government. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that groups are being secretly trained for carrying out forceful opposition. The country’s leaders are driven into a dead end: the use of force is impossible as “anti-democratic” and detrimental to the ruling elite’s image—something that the opposition wanted from the very beginning.

By the final, post-election stage of a velvet revolution, the ruling elite has lost its resolve; it fails to formulate a clear strategy and remains passive under external and internal pressure. The opposition insists on a dialog, which inevitably leads to concessions and means that the government accepts the opposition’s demands and actions as legitimate. The ruling circles reveal their weakness; political balance is upturned, while the nation rejects the “discredited” leaders and is ready to overthrow them.

Manipulating Public and Personal Consciousness

Manipulation of public and personal consciousness is part of a wider technique of political manipulation used to discredit and demonize the ruling elite when applied in equal measure to the political and social spheres. In fact, the opposition never aspires to convince the nation that it (the opposition) is worthy of power. Its aim is different: it seeks to create a feeling of its sure victory and tries to convert the rising enmity toward the ruling figures into political assets of its own.

A mobilization strategy is highly effective: a “revolution” needs no full-fledged social basis. The destructive forces apply social and psychological manipulation to ignite a crisis; they use support bases for the purpose and draw passive social groups to their side. The youth, a large part of which has found itself at the social margins, has no stable political convictions, which makes it an obvious target of psychological and information pressure. In the absence of consistent patriotic and political education, young people easily succumb to radical ideas and become the core of velvet revolutions.

The older generation is another target of psychological pressure. Success comes relatively easily: older people are socially vulnerable and seek political action, so the opposition had no difficulty in recruiting their support, which the events in Georgia clearly demonstrated. On the whole, however, this group is fairly conservative in its political sympathies: to stir it up, objective (low living standards, etc.) rather than invented reasons are needed.¹⁰

People in the capitals and large regional centers constitute another target of political manipulation. In Georgia and Ukraine, the loyalty of the capitals helped to neutralize the government and limit its field of maneuver. Organized radical forces use these techniques to gain the approval of fairly large population groups in large cities (capitals). In some cases, the absence of enthusiasm can be replaced with indifference to the regime’s future.

The opposition applies all types of psychological manipulation and crowd control: populist slogans consistently yet wisely repeated to gain popularity, especially if popular discontent has objective causes.

For obvious reasons, populist slogans related to socioeconomic sores, national revival issues, uprooting corruption, etc. are especially welcome. The opposition presents itself as the only force capable of dealing with nearly all the problems. These slogans go well with the efforts to stir up social unrest and fan it: society learns to distrust the government and to accept a possible regime change.

¹⁰ See: V.A. Barsamov, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

It should be said that incited by populist slogans, people are ready to sacrifice their basic and long-term interests. In fact, the causes of such discontent vary from one social group to another; in some cases they are absolutely incompatible. Under very favorable conditions, the opposition manages to ignite even the privileged groups, which risk losing everything if the regime changes.

The “branding” technology is a tool of psychological manipulation. The counter-elite works hard to synchronize public consciousness by imposing behavioral and identification matrices on society as a form of fashionable behavior: external and internal forces employ psychological, semiotic, and other mechanisms to plant conscious and subconscious identification with the opposition and its aims in the minds of the people. This makes it much easier to plant political ideas later.

The genesis of velvet revolutions in the post-Soviet expanse demonstrates that political movements with short and eloquent names (Pora in Ukraine, Kmara in Georgia, etc.) help to synchronize public consciousness; symbols (the color orange or red carnations, etc.) play the same role. For some time the masses remain consolidated and euphoric. A short comprehensive slogan serves the same aim (“Down with Kuchma!” and the like).¹¹

Significantly, the opposition speaks in the name of the nation, which is presented as a single whole; it uses the effect of the masses, which works well during elections. The counter-elite vests its supporters with the right to speak in the name of society. In a socially marginalized and basically apolitical society, this causes a “chain reaction” of support, which is especially obvious if the government remains passive. This means that the willpower of the counter-elite is described as the willpower of the majority, which eventually begins to believe this. When it turns out that the opposition received between 20 and 30 percent of votes, the government is accused of falsifications, while the opposition’s victory is taken for granted.

Information and communication play a special role in manipulating public and personal consciousness. While tilling the soil for a future velvet revolution, the opposition uses a wide range of brainwashing channels (the Internet, foreign and domestic opposition media, etc.) to discredit the government and destabilize the political situation. The velvet revolutions in the Soviet successor states demonstrated that the state media, which dominate the market, could not prevent a landslide. People do not trust official information, especially if it distorts the truth.

Elections serve the starting point for mobilizing the already agitated masses: to initiate action, it is enough to declare that the election results were falsified. Against this background, a velvet revolution unfolds in great haste or is heated up by a series of new crises (this happened in Ukraine), which may urge the masses to go further.

The External Factor

This is the least studied factor because the expert community cannot agree on the role external actors play in velvet revolutions. A comprehensive analysis, however, has shown that external forces are either directly or indirectly involved in regime changes to shift the balance of forces in favor of the internal opposition.

To achieve this, external forces use the NGOs they have been supporting for some time, which can help the opposition forces or even become engaged in destructive activities inside the country. International NGOs and human rights organizations play a special role.

¹¹ See: T. Poliannikov, G. Prokopov, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

By presenting themselves as vehicles of democracy and freedom, they intentionally or unintentionally shape popular moods accordingly. Their influence is not limited solely to consultative or educational aims; they extend financial and other aid to “democratic” (and radical) opposition structures. It should be said that certain states extend overall support to “democracy” at the official level, which primarily presupposes an elimination of “authoritarian” regimes.¹²

There is another effective tool. I have in mind continuous and strong direct external pressure through diplomatic and other channels under the pretext of inadequately developed democracy and an unacceptable political and economic situation. Officials, however, prefer indirect pressure, but, on the whole, official representatives of external forces (diplomats in particular) are actively involved in the pre-revolutionary hustle and bustle. This was especially obvious in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan.

Foreign actors readily extend information and propaganda support designed to promote “controlled democracy.” In fact, foreign information sources, the Internet, etc. add to the gradually increasing social and political chaos. Foreign forces help the opposition media in their propaganda efforts: money arrives through NGOs and official channels.

The institution of international observers that de facto deprives power of its legitimacy at the time of elections, thus supplying the pretext for a velvet revolution, was another popular tool widely used in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, where negative assessments of the elections by international observers and organizations justified the regime change.

Color Revolutions: From Theory to Practical Results

The recent events confirmed the obvious: velvet revolutions largely destabilize the social-political and economic spheres. Political power is restructured; new people move to the top and drive away what remained of the fallen regime. The post-revolutionary practices in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan confirmed that certain negative effects of the “democratic” revolutions are common to all countries. They can be systematized in the following way.

Domestic political and economic results:

- No strategic political landmarks are possible in the near future, while the political context remains vague;
- The political crisis may develop into a prolonged open conflict between the old and new elites;
- Centrifugal trends and separatist sentiments come to the fore together with an open or latent regional split;
- Protest sentiments and general social tension fraught with more conflicts are still smoldering;
- Former leaders are persecuted;
- Economic priorities are shifted;
- Property is re-divided among new elite groups.

Foreign policy results:

- A damaged status in international organizations caused by a shift in geopolitical sympathies;

¹² For more detail, see: M. Arstanov, “Menedzhery ‘barkhatnykh revoliutsiy,’” *Kontinent*, No. 3, 2005.

- Ruined relations with former strategic allies;
- Dependence on the countries that helped to carry out the velvet revolution.

On the whole, there is the danger that a velvet revolution might repeat itself at some point in future; this has been confirmed by post-Soviet experience.

In November 2006, in particular, Kyrgyzstan was drawn into another “revolution” that took a week to complete. On 2 November, the parliamentary opposition organized a mass rally in the country’s capital to protest against the president’s refusal to sign the draft constitution, under which some of the presidential powers should be transferred to the parliament (for instance, the parliament would receive the right to form the government). Those who supported the new document had no absolute majority needed to transform the draft into a law without the president’s approval. In the small hours of 8 November, the opposition deputies set up a Constituent Assembly that adopted the new Constitution. It was a coup d’etat.

The country has lived through another successful coup in the last eighteen months. The concerted efforts of President Bakiev and Premier Kulov, the documents published to compromise the opposition, and rallies of pro-government supporters did not help. On 8 November, the draft was hastily signed. The public was informed that the sides had reached a compromise and that the president and the premier would remain in their posts until their terms expired. This and the haste with which the new Constitution was adopted were something out of the ordinary.

This time, the confrontation reached the point beyond which there was nothing but an open civil conflict; it was not easy to retreat from the brink: the sides involved had to save face and convince the allies that much had been done and that the opponent had been defeated.

The opposition may describe its struggle against President Bakiev as another round of “color revolution for the sake of democracy,” which might be accepted, since the conflict unfolded under the banner of a parliamentary republic. There is an a priori opinion that this form of governance is much better than presidential, which inevitably tends toward authoritarianism. It is commonly believed that a less corrupt parliament less biased toward nepotism is much better suited to rule. The parliamentary-presidential republic is accepted as a means of clipping presidential powers and redistributing some of the powers—and resources—among the majority of the elites. The sides, however, will never be satisfied—this will become obvious fairly soon. A document, even if this document is the Fundamental Law, and political realities (in a country where unlawful action is the usual way to seize power) are two different things. The struggle has just begun—those who count themselves the victors will try to wrench as much power from the unwilling president as possible.¹³

* * *

The revolutionary events in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan remain a mystery. The public is intrigued; conspiracies are suspected, myths are created. This is to be expected. On the one hand, the color (velvet or orange) revolutions have dramatically changed the format of the post-Soviet expanse. On the other, the speed of the changes and their scope have not yet allowed analysts to accumulate enough information to probe deeper into the revolutionary processes.¹⁴

We all know today that none of these revolutions produced the desired results—they were mere upsurges of public emotions that brought to power another elite that pursues the same aim: gaining access to the state’s finances and resources. Democracy was a mere rallying cry. The Color Revo-

¹³ See: S. Akimbekov, “Grom pobedy razdaetsia?” *Kontinent*, No. 22, 2006.

¹⁴ See: T. Poliannikov, G. Prokopov, op. cit., p. 158.

lutions are not so much a logical outcome of domestic political and social processes as a result of external pressure. The coups neither liberalized nor democratized the countries' political systems. In fact, after the revolution and regime change, aims and interests polarized to lead to political purges and splits. The Color Revolutions made the far from simple geopolitical realities even more complicated.

One thing has become absolutely clear: velvet revolutions have become a regime change tool that, when applied, brings domestic tension and instability to boiling point during general elections. The process hovers on the brink of the use of force and may end in an open confrontation beyond the main actors' control, while political developments may become unpredictable and irreversible. Post-Soviet experience has taught us that the classical political techniques of "democratic revolutions" fail to produce the desired effects: they lead to political destabilization, economic decline, and disillusionment.

THE GOVERNMENT AND NGOs IN KAZAKHSTAN: STRATEGY, FORMS, AND MECHANISMS OF COOPERATION

Sergey DIACHENKO

*Deputy Chairman,
Majilis of the Parliament of
the Republic of Kazakhstan
(Astana, Kazakhstan)*

A conspicuous trend in the development of the contemporary world is the growing role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in politics, the economy, and sociocultural progress. This phenomenon is typical of most states that are at different levels of socioeconomic and political development. On the whole, the growth of the nongovernmental sector can be characterized as a global phenomenon. An analysis of the entire range of socioeconomic and political changes associated with the growing role of NGOs in the world at the current stage shows that the so-called Third Sector is an important factor of social transformation.

Taking into account advanced foreign experience and the current development trends in the world's leading countries, several widespread sociopolitical changes have occurred in Kazakhstan. One of the main trends was the change in paradigm of interaction between the government and the nongovernmental sector: the inconsistent dialog of the past has given way to mutually beneficial cooperation.

It is a well-known fact that liberalization of the political system in any country is not only aimed at increasing citizens' participation in sociopolitical life, but also at encouraging their integration in

the system of power relations within the framework of the state's Constitution. One of the main characteristics by which the potential development of a civil society in a particular country can be judged is the ability of its population to carry out sociocultural and political self-organization. In this sense, improvement of the nongovernmental sector is an inalienable attribute of a transforming society, since it directly encourages and expands methods of interaction between civil society institutions and the government. A civil society must be structured in order to function efficiently; therefore, nongovernmental, non-profit associations and organizations are an important part of this society. It stands to reason that the development of a civil society is gauged by the amount, condition, and efficiency of the activity of nongovernmental organizations.

It is believed that NGOs can efficiently mediate between the state and its citizens in regulating public relations by fulfilling many important functions in social processes and transformations. The current disputes concern the relations between a civil society and nongovernmental organizations: do NGOs create a civil society, or vice versa? For example, specialists from Freedom House, an American nongovernmental organization, believe that a civil society creates conditions for the emergence and activity of NGOs, since they make a civil society more viable.¹

Today we are observing the complex and multifaceted formation of the Kazakhstan nongovernmental sector, on which the foundations and traditions of its future enhancement are being built. The logic of Kazakhstan's further sociopolitical modernization requires building a sustainable civil society in the country at a faster, but qualitative rate. Without the development of this mandatory component of a contemporary civilized state, it will be impossible to achieve further economic and political progress in the country, since the economic, political, and civil spheres form a single system, the elements of which are in intricate, close, and constant interaction with each other.

* * *

Historically, various models of the emergence, progress, and functioning of nongovernmental organizations are forming in different states. The development of the nongovernmental sector is related in each country to the special features of socioeconomic and sociopolitical progress, as well as to historical and cultural traditions. In transition states, NGOs are becoming one of the main tools of the market-democratic reforms. They are helping the state's modernization policy, society's sociopolitical structuring, the formation and realization of diverse citizen interest groups, the self-organization of the population, the implementation of civilian initiatives, and the formation of an infrastructure of sustainable and efficient democracy.

It should be kept in mind that strictly speaking, the abbreviation "NGO" is not a legal term. However, its use is enforced in practice largely because it is widely used in the documents of the U.N., World Bank, and several other international structures for designating nongovernmental, nonprofit associations engaged in development and outreach. In particular, the term "nongovernmental organization" in Kazakhstan largely came into circulation with the help of international sponsor associations to replace the domestically coined "amateur" or independent public associations. It can also be acknowledged that there is still no generally accepted and universal terminology that describes the NGO sector in its entirety. In different countries, a variety of structures and public formations are included in the composition of nongovernmental organizations, as well as excluded from it. In the narrow sense, applied to each state, the term "nongovernmental organization" means only a formally

¹ See: *Nations in Transit Methodology 2002. Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia*, available at [www.freedomhouse.org].

and de jure founded structure that is recognized as a legal entity in the particular legal system in which it was established.² In general, NGOs are customarily regarded as *open nonprofit organizations not limited by professional specifics (so trade unions are not NGOs) and not striving for state power (so political parties are not NGOs)*.³

As an assessment of contemporary Kazakhstan's potential shows, the necessary conditions have long emerged in the republic for the further development of the Third Sector and its integration into the system of state relations. Determining the specific results of the development of a civil society achieved by Kazakhstan during the reform years carried out on the basis of several generally accepted criteria shows that as of today, the country is only just setting out on the path taken at one time by the states of so-called developed democracies. According to international experts, Kazakhstan already noticeably differs from other countries of the Central Asian region in terms of the influence of NGOs on social life and the level of civil society activity. For example, despite the fact that the legislative base in Uzbekistan today is more favorable for the institutional development of nongovernmental organizations, while in Kyrgyzstan the number of NGOs per capita is much higher than in other Central Asian republics, only Kazakhstan has the necessary balance of factors and conditions for forming a mature and professional corps of nongovernmental organizations.

As we see it, the nongovernmental sector has passed through several development stages in Kazakhstan:

- the first (end of the 1980s-1994)—the establishment of the nonprofit sector;
 - the second (1994-1997)—the qualitative and quantitative growth of nongovernmental organizations;
 - the third (1998-2002)—raising the question of developing a state mechanism for interaction with nongovernmental organizations;
 - the fourth (from 2003 until today)—constructive cooperation of government bodies and NGOs.⁴
- *The first stage* is characterized by the existence in the U.S.S.R. of the first prototypes of contemporary NGOs and the upsurge of their active development during the perestroika years. In Soviet times, voluntary societies functioned in the U.S.S.R. in compliance with the Regulations for Voluntary Societies and Unions (Organizations, Clubs, Associations, Federations) approved on 30 August, 1930 by a Decision of the Council of People's Commissars and the R.S.F.S.R. Central Executive Committee. According to the official classification, this is what different social institutions—scientific-technical, scientific-engineering, physical education-sporting societies, invalid societies, interests clubs, and so on—were called. Most such structures were created in the 1920s-1930s and met the requirements and tasks of this period: elimination of illiteracy, reinforcement of the defense capacity of the young state, development of sport, etc. The characteristic features of these societies were owning part of the nation's property, having a generally accepted system of values and specific tasks, developing a widespread network throughout the U.S.S.R., and coordinating their activity with the help of the country's central bodies and ruling party. But despite the amorphousness of the first public associations, this period tilled the necessary legal and social ground for the further formation of

² See: *Rukovodstvo po razrabotke i primeneniui zakonov, reguliruiushchikh deiatel'nost nepravitelstvennykh organizatsiy*, International Center of Noncommercial Law, Almaty, 2000, p. 15.

³ See: *NPO: reshenie problem bednosti*, ed. by A. Iliasova and S. Islamova, UNDP Kazakhstan, Almaty, 2004, p. 39.

⁴ See: *Gosudarstvo i NPO posle Grazhdanskogo foruma, Materialy seminara, Astana, 28-29 maia 2004 g.*, RK Ministry of Culture, Information, and Sport, Astana, 2004, p. 38.

a full-fledged civil society, which we are seeing today. In Kazakhstan, the nongovernmental sector as such began to form when the republic acquired its independence and took its first steps toward carrying out democratic reforms in society.

- *The second stage* was a stage of qualitative and quantitative growth of NGOs, the number of which increased threefold during this period. At this stage, the Kazakhstani nongovernmental organizations carried out their activity by following foreign experience in developing the Third Sector, which is largely explained by the absence of their own traditions of a civil society. The functioning of the NGOs was mainly sponsored by international foundations offering small grants for developing social projects and programs. These grant-givers were mainly interested in spreading information and also teaching the population the basics of democracy and civil initiatives.⁵ But, as some experts noted, at this time the sponsors did not take into account the change in the social appearance of the grant-receiving organization, granting financial aid without providing any instruction.⁶
- *The third stage* is characterized by a qualitative change in the situation that developed when the question was raised of developing a state mechanism for interacting with NGOs. The numerous difficulties in building a civil society are related primarily to the fact that the economic and sociopolitical prerequisites for its establishment did not appear in our country until relatively recently, in the last 15-20 years.
- *The beginning of the fourth stage* of development of the Kazakhstani nongovernmental sector was distinguished by the holding of the Civil Forum in October 2003; this is when constructive cooperation between government bodies and NGOs began. According to expert assessments, as a social institution, Kazakhstan's Third Sector is qualitatively superior to the region's other states. This conclusion was drawn up on the following basis: the corresponding legislative base defining the registration procedures and types of activity of the NGOs; the diverse areas of this activity; the relative stability, including organizational and financial, of the NGOs; the place and role of the NGOs in the structure of social relations; the level of interaction between the NGOs and government bodies, and the international recognition of the NGOs.

The NGOs functioning in Kazakhstan are generally distributed unevenly across its regions, since the nongovernmental sector is only gaining ground in the country's economically and culturally developed centers. These organizations registered in the republic's regions and cities of the republic are mainly concentrated in the cities of Almaty and Astana, and in the industrially developed Karaganda, as well as Eastern Kazakhstan and Southern Kazakhstan regions.

Kazakhstan's nonprofit organizations are engaged in a wide range of different activities, whereby the primary emphasis is on resolving social problems. Socially oriented NGOs are in the highest demand, which testifies to the urgency of the existing social problems. Approximately 42% of the NGOs offer services in the social sphere: education, public health, and culture, 24% protect the interests of socially vulnerable groups of the population, and the other 34% concentrate on human rights activity, the environment, and gender policy.⁷ More than two hundred thousand people are employed in the nongovernmental sector, and approximately two million citizens enjoy the services of Kazakhstan's NGOs.⁸ Nevertheless, to be realistic, there are actually only approximately 1,000 NGOs that exist and function effectively in Kazakhstan, which is a relatively low index.

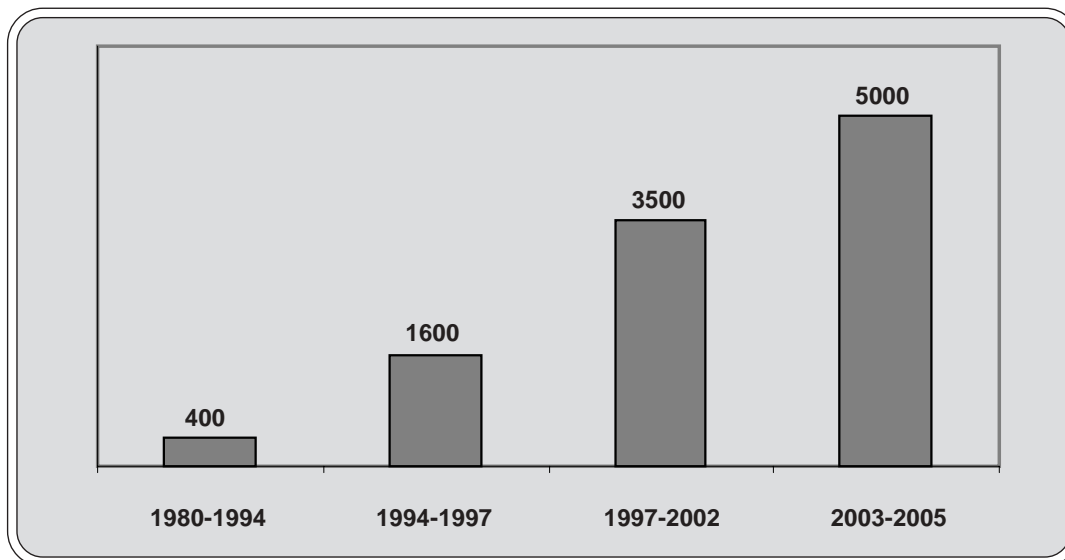
⁵ See: O.G. Riabchenko, "Vlast i NPO: strategii sotrudnichestva," in: *Gosudarstvo i NPO posle Grazhdanskogo foruma*, pp. 28-29.

⁶ National Information Resource Center of RK Nongovernmental Organizations, available at [www.pro.kz].

⁷ According to the data of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Culture and Information.

⁸ According to the National Information Resource Center of RK Nongovernmental Organizations, available at [www.npo.kz].

**Dynamics of the Quantitative Growth of
Nongovernmental Organizations⁹**



The entities of the nongovernmental sector operating in Kazakhstan are grouped according to the degree and nature of their corporate status in terms of republic-wide, regional, and sectoral features. For example, several associations have been created and are functioning in the country, such as the Association of Independent Nongovernmental Organizations of Kazakhstan (AINOK), the Confederation of Nongovernmental Organizations of Kazakhstan (CNOK), the Association of NGOs of the Kostanai Region, the Association of NGOs of the Kzyl-Orda Region, the Forum of Environmental NGOs, as well as the so-called NGO networks—for example, the Asian Society for the Protection of Invalid Rights, Zhan, which unites similar organizations of the Central Asian Region, and others.¹⁰

Today, Kazakhstan's NGOs are represented in all their diversity; they are developing, gradually acquiring experience and maturity. Due to this, it can be maintained with a certain amount of confidence that Kazakhstan's nongovernmental sector has already made significant progress in its development. An analysis of the improvement in the country's Third Sector shows that at the current stage, the following groups have formed among the republic's NGOs:

- 1) *socially significant NGOs* (women's, NGOs for protecting the vulnerable part of the population offering citizens social services, and charity organizations working in the public health sphere);
- 2) *sociopolitical NGOs* (human rights, environmental, youth, analytical, associations of nongovernmental organizations, etc.);
- 3) *reformer NGOs* (sectoral associations working in education and culture).¹¹

⁹ According to the data of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Culture and Information.

¹⁰ See: *NPO: reshenie problem bednosti*, p. 41.

¹¹ See: B.A. Tlepov, A.N. Nukenov, G.K. Kulzhanova, *Praktika vzaimodeystviia vlasti i NPO: na primere g. Almaty*, SaGa, Almaty, 2005, p. 15.

Children's, youth, women's, and gender associations, which have become widely developed in recent years, can also be added to the listed nongovernmental organizations. Nevertheless, most NGOs are best known for their charitable activity. What is more, some data show that society is rather skeptical about the ability of NGOs to improve the situation in several spheres of the country's public life.

As paradoxical as it may seem at first glance, the efficiency of the nongovernmental sector's activity largely also depends on the efforts of government bodies. As a rule, NGO initiatives are being put into practice with the support of competent state authorities, which means that one of the priorities in NGO activity is attracting the attention of government bodies, that is, initiating so-called inter-sectoral interaction.

It is a well-known fact that this interaction is promoted by pooling regulations, methods, and organization techniques jointly drawn up and reproduced without the participation of their creators, providing resources, and implementing joint projects and campaigns put forward by civil society and government institutions, which is incorporated into the functioning conditions of the social sphere in a particular territory and aimed at resolving socially significant problems subject to the current legislation. The essence of inter-sectoral interaction consists in establishing constructive cooperation among the three forces acting on the country's, region's, city's, or other territory's social sphere—state structures, commercial enterprises, and nonprofit organizations.

Each sector occupies its own niche and, as a rule, does not strive to expand beyond it. All the same, not one sector can develop successfully without interacting with the others. In this respect, it is customary to talk about inter-sectoral interaction as a necessary element of efficient nationwide management. The representatives of each sector have different potential and resources for resolving problems in the social sphere, but despite all the differences and associated contradictions, cooperation among the sectors is vital.¹² As for the specifics of the formation of these sectors in Kazakhstan, at the moment, a private business sector has essentially arisen based on a civil business initiative, and the government sector has undergone significant changes due to the reduction of its monopoly influence on the production and social spheres. At the same time, a nongovernmental, nonprofit sector also began to form, being based on civil initiatives in the non-production spheres (education, science, public health, social security, and the environment).

Since the country does not have its own traditions in this sphere, Kazakhstan's NGOs began by basing their activity on international experience. The low level of support from the government in the 1990s was the main reason the NGOs sought comprehensive aid, primarily financial, from foreign sources. And today, the activity of several Kazakhstani nongovernmental organizations is sponsored by international foundations offering grants. But there is the opinion that Western aid was the very reason Kazakhstan's nongovernmental sector failed to undergo robust development.¹³ However, the main problem was not only the absence of institutional and reliable support of the Third Sector by the State, but also, and most importantly, the absence of any dialog between the government bodies and NGOs.

The first attempts to establish constructive cooperation between the government and independent public associations did not appear until the second half of the 1990s, which was largely assisted by holding several international forums and conferences in the republic, resulted in the adoption of several agreements. The key idea behind the mentioned measures was finding points of contact in interaction among the three sectors of society—the state, the nongovernmental sector, and business. What is more, the first international meetings became a powerful engine for

¹² See: E.M. Osipov, *Sotsialnye tekhnologii v mezhshektornom vzaimodeystvii*. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, Series 21, No. 4, 2005, p. 95.

¹³ See: E. Sadovskaia, "O sovremennykh problemakh grazhdanskogo obshchestva i razvitiia 'setevogo' sotrudnichestva NPO Kazakhstana," *OrganiZatsiia*, No. 2-3, 2004, p. 16.

generating fresh ideas, as well as for creating new organizations in Kazakhstan and other countries of Central Asia.¹⁴

Cooperation strategy issues were mainly discussed at the initial stage during meetings between NGO representatives and government bodies. Those interested in establishing a government-NGO dialog focused on analyzing, choosing, and developing forms and mechanisms of interaction between nongovernmental organizations and local authorities. They considered the need for establishing close working ties, holding joint seminars, exchanging information, and creating NGO coalitions. They studied the possibility of involving nongovernmental organizations in resolving a variety of different social problems.

Cooperation between the government and the nongovernmental sector developed with the active participation of foreign structures and funds, keeping in mind foreign experience and cooperation models. This period is characterized by cautious relations between the government and the NGOs, as a result of which the slightly slower process of understanding the need for inter-sectoral cooperation led only to formal cooperation. Nevertheless, this period should not be underestimated, for this was the time when the foundations of a civil society were laid in the republic. The formation process itself occurred by means of evolution—systematically overcoming the political, social, and cultural barriers.

At the end of the 1990s, the transition to a qualitatively new stage began in the development of interrelations between the government and the NGOs. This was a time for strengthening cooperation and developing practical mechanisms of interaction. *The Social Democratization Program* offered by President Nursultan Nazarbaev within the framework of his annual address of 30 September, 1998 to the people of Kazakhstan.¹⁵ The head of state noted that strengthening the role of the NGOs in building a civil society is the key element of democratization. As a result, the theses expressed became a powerful boost for developing interaction between the government and the nongovernmental sector.

Subsequently, the talks between government structures and Third Sector organizations ended in the formation of a special republic-level center for the support of nongovernmental organizations. On 12 February, 1999, twenty-four Kazakhstani NGOs signed an Agreement on Cooperation and the Formation of a Republic-Level NGO Support Center called Info-Center of NGOs.¹⁶ For several years now the center has been rendering government support to the nongovernmental sector by providing informational, methodological, consultative, and organizational-technical assistance. The activity of Info-Center of NGOs is aimed at strengthening and expanding the interrelations between state power bodies and nongovernmental organizations. On the whole, this organization should be regarded as the first dialog platform between the NGOs and the government.

This dialog has led to perceptible activation of NGOs that in the past were distinguished by passivity. A Confederation of Nongovernmental Organizations of Kazakhstan (CNOK) was created at a founding conference held in Almaty in 2000. Its founders were well-known republic nongovernmental public associations, foundations, nonprofit associations, and nongovernmental organizations engaged in implementing various socially significant programs.¹⁷

The following are designated among the CNOK's main tasks at the current stage: coordinating the activity of nongovernmental organizations on general problems; creating stable mechanisms of

¹⁴ See: *Gosudarstvo i NPO v Kazakhstane: opyt i formy vzaimodeystviia*, UNDP Kazakhstan, Astana, 2003, pp. 5-7.

¹⁵ See: *On the State of the Nation and Main Areas of Domestic and Foreign Policy: the Democratization of Society and Economic and Political Reform in the New Century. Address of the Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev to the People of Kazakhstan*, September 1998, available at [www.akorda.kz].

¹⁶ See: *Vzaimodeystvie gosudarstva i NPO: iz opyta sotrudnichestva*, Methodological Textbook, RK Ministry of Culture, Information, and Public Consent, Astana, 2002, pp. 17-18.

¹⁷ See: *Istoria sozdania KNOK*, Official website. Confederation of Nongovernmental Organizations of Kazakhstan, available at [www.knok.kz]

cooperation between the government and society; lobbying the passage of draft laws through the Kazakhstan parliament; making amendments to current legislation; and forming a clear idea of the activity of nongovernmental organizations in society and government structures and of their potential and role in resolving society's significant problems.¹⁸

On the whole, it can be stated that the CNOK has played a key role in actually bringing the government and nongovernmental sector closer together. For example, the first Civil Form of Nongovernmental Organizations held on 14-15 October, 2003 and attended by the head of state was a result of the Confederation's activity.¹⁹

Nevertheless, despite certain achievements in establishing inter-sectoral cooperation, an acute need was still felt for large-scale public campaigns, innovative approaches, and decisions capable of bringing cooperation between the government and the nongovernmental sector to a qualitatively new level. There was a need for a systemic and organized approach, as well as for involving a wide circle of government, business, and NGO representatives in the inter-sectoral dialog. The first Civil Forum was extremely instrumental in satisfying the needs of the NGOs, government formations, and business structures. The Civil Forum was created for the purpose of establishing a new model of partnership relations among the government, business, and the nongovernmental sector.

The precedent of holding the Civil Forum with the participation of the republic's leader and government representatives helped society to better understand the importance of building a constitutional triad in Kazakhstan—a law-based, democratic, and social state. Objectively, the forum was instrumental in defining the nature of further interrelations between the government and the nongovernmental sector.

On 11-12 September, 2005, the Second Civil Forum was held in Astana attended by President Nursultan Nazarbaev. During this event, the results of the First Civil Forum held in 2003 were summarized and tasks were defined for enhancing cooperation between government bodies and NGOs in the near future. The new initiatives of the Second Civil Forum consisted in creating a Civil Alliance of Nongovernmental Organizations to support the ideas of the Kazakhstan president; introducing a government social order system at the central, sectoral, and regional levels; and drawing up proposals for interaction between the NGOs and the business sector.

The Civil Forum expresses the desire to raise the status and level of NGO development, as well as to bring the government structures and nongovernmental organizations closer together. Initiation of the forum is a serious attempt by government and nongovernmental organizations to become social partners. Based on this, the Civil Forum should be viewed as an evolutionary shift in cooperation between NGOs and the government; and the fact that it was organized largely on the initiative of the nongovernmental sector shows in turn a certain level of maturity of the contemporary NGOs.

The events held showed that relations between the government and the NGOs should be partner-oriented: a joint strategy should be drawn up to involve the Third Sector in resolving urgent social problems. The Forum formed a productive dialog platform for the government and the NGOs—within this formation, many urgent issues of civil society development are being born and transformed into a real program of action. As a result, positive advancements were traced in the government-NGO dialog.

For example, according to the results of the decisions of the Civil Forum, *Interaction Councils* were formed, which are consultative structures under the republic-level and local government bodies.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ See: V.A. Sivriukova, "Ob osnovnykh problemakh i perspektivnykh napravleniakh vzaimodeystviia i effektivnogo partnerstva organov vlasti i nepravitel'stvennykh organizatsii," in: *Gosudarstvo i NPO posle Grazhdanskogo foruma*, pp. 14-15.

NGO representatives have become members of the National Council under the Kazakhstan President, the Human Rights Commission, expert councils, and the Council for Sustainable Development under the government.²⁰ Thanks to the activity of the Interaction Councils, a system of dialog and partnership relations has currently been set up between government bodies and the NGOs. Within the framework of the talks, it has also been possible to discuss practical solutions for urgent social problems. The Interaction Councils are helping to exercise public control over the work of the government and making a systemic impact on its decisions reflecting society's interests. In so doing, raising the efficiency of its own activity in order to carry out its chosen mission is motivating the NGOs to cooperate. On the other hand, the government is primarily motivated in its cooperation with nongovernmental organizations by more precise orientation of its work toward the needs of society, an increase in resources, an increase in activity efficiency, the creation of feedback channels, and, of course, greater trust and support by society.

An important aspect of inter-sectoral cooperation is overcoming the stereotypes and clichés popular in government bodies with respect to civil society structures. It is also important for NGOs to carry out an analysis of the principles and mechanisms of the government's activity, find out how the country's budget system works, and become knowledgeable in methods and ways to control budget spending.²¹

The adoption of the Conception of Government Support of NGOs in 2003 was a significant event in the development of inter-sectoral interaction. In addition to concerned ministries and departments, well-known representatives of NGOs and international structures, such as the UNDP, TACIS, and the Counterpart Consortium, participated in drawing up this strategic document. The adopted Conception sets forth the main goals, assignments, principles, and forms of state support of nongovernmental organizations, the development of which is ensured by the specific steps taken by government bodies to cooperate with NGOs.

One such specific step is the Program of State Support of NGOs in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2003-2005, drawn up by the Ministry of Culture and Information. This document was aimed at forming an efficient system of partner relations between the country's government bodies and nongovernmental organizations. The program also envisaged creating specific conditions for encouraging the sustainable development of NGOs as a part of a civil society and increasing their role in resolving socially significant problems.²² In compliance with this document, government support of NGOs can be carried out in different forms: informational, consultative, methodological, and organizational-technical, as well as by rendering assistance through state orders.²³

In cooperation with the government and NGOs, the legislative base is also playing an important coordinating role. On the one hand, legislation is an element of state control over NGOs, while on the other, it acts as a shock absorber for government policy with respect to the nongovernmental sector. There is the opinion that after enforcing certain prohibitions, the government should interfere as little as possible in the development of the nongovernmental sector. It is thought that legislation regulating the NGO sector should permit and support the existence of such organizations, as well as ensure their legal protection, while in so doing protect society from violations and abuses by government representatives. On the whole, the legislative foundations of public participation in the adoption and implementation of government decisions are regarded as one of the main elements in the interrelations between the government and the nongovernmental sector.

²⁰ National Information Resource Center of RK Nongovernmental Organizations.

²¹ See: V.A. Sivriukova, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²² See: O.G. Riabchenko, "Vlast i NPO: strategii sotrudnichestva," *Gosudarstvo i NPO posle Grazhdanskogo foruma*, pp. 28-29.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

In this context, the participation of Third Sector representatives in the law-making process is significant, since the government bodies that draw up laws for regulating both the nongovernmental sector and the social sphere in which NGOs function, frequently have different subjective views of the social processes or are not entirely clear about society's real needs.

It seems to us that citizens and a civil society should show an interest in the policy being drawn up and take part in all the corresponding stages—beginning with problem formulation, policy elaboration, and decision-making and ending with putting decisions into practice and assessing them. In the developed countries of the world, the practice of involving NGOs in the law-making process is a customary phenomenon.

It should be noted that such steps have long been taken in Kazakhstan. For example, in 2003, representatives of the nongovernmental sector became involved in drawing up laws within the framework of the *Assisting the Development of Legislation for NGOs* project. This issue was actively discussed by the Kazakhstan parliament. In particular, according to the initiative of the Senate Committee for Legislation and Judicial-Legal Reform, hearings of the draft law *On Nonprofit Organizations* were arranged, in which deputies of the Majilis participated, as well as representatives of Kazakhstani and foreign NGOs.²⁴

The regulations of the Majilis and the Senate of the Parliament contain special provisions regarding the holding of open parliamentary hearings with the participation of its representatives. Employees of nongovernmental organizations have often been included in parliamentary working groups for drawing up and reviewing draft laws. In this respect, it should be emphasized that a form of extra-parliamentary discussion of certain draft laws is largely used—round table meetings attended by representatives of the public, NGOs, political parties, and trade unions. Draft laws are subjected to broad public discussion in the mass media.

Debates resulted in a project being presented for systematizing law-making partnership between the government and NGOs within the framework of creating a Public Experts Chamber (PEC) under the Majilis of the Parliament. Founded in 2006, the PEC aims to develop cooperation between legislative power and civil society institutions, improve legislation, adopt effective laws, form a legal culture in society, and create conditions for raising the civic activity of the population and developing a civil society.²⁵ The working principles of this body are legitimacy, open access, and transparency, but in so doing the Public Experts Chamber has the status of a consultative body. The PEC is not a government structure, but its members are approved by the Majilis of the Parliament. The Chamber's decisions will be recommendatory in nature and adopted in the form of conclusions, proposals, and statements.

In 2006, the Conception of the Development of a Civil Society in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2010 was approved and adopted, the main idea of which is equal partnership between the government and civil society institutions. This document enforced the government's initiatives to establish constructive and productive relations with NGOs in order to build an open, democratic, and prosperous society of free people and a ruled by law state in which the vital features and traditions of our multinational and polyconfessional society are harmoniously blended.

In this way, the government's current interest in a full-fledged civil society, as well as the nongovernmental sector's desire for cooperation with the government are conducive to transforming the periodical campaigns for state support of the NGOs into a regulated system.²⁶ Today we can confidently say that a strategy has been drawn up in Kazakhstan, areas of activity designated, and efficient

²⁴ See: G.T. Iliasova, "Zakonodatel'stvo o gosudarstvennom sotsial'nom zakaze kak mekhanizm resheniia aktualnykh problem obshchestva," *Gosudarstvo i NPO posle Grazhdanskogo foruma*, pp. 28-29.

²⁵ National Information Resource Center of RK Nongovernmental Organizations.

²⁶ See: V. Ovcharenko, "Kratkiy obzor mekhanizmov vzaimodeystviia i gosudarstvennoy podderzhki grazhdanskogo obshchestva v Kazakhstane," *OrganiZatsiia*, No. 2-3, 2004, p. 37.

mechanisms of inter-sectoral interaction established with a transfer to equal cooperation. An assessment of Kazakhstan's potential shows that all the prerequisites exist in the republic for further qualitative development of the Third Sector and its successful integration into the system of contemporary social relations.

The discussion on inter-sectoral interaction is also raising the question of serious organizational-practical support of nongovernmental organizations. At this point in Kazakhstan's historical development, the state's support of NGOs is acquiring special importance, since it has the necessary resources for raising the productivity of the entire nongovernmental sector.

One of the most widespread forms of such support in world practice is a government social order. As we know, such bidding is based on state financing projects drawn up to resolve specific social problems, and nongovernmental organizations working directly with the population put these projects into practice. The principle of subsidiariness forms the core of the social order (as of other forms of interaction between civil society institutions and government bodies). That is, the introduction of the social order will mean the government is showing a greater interest in creating and developing civil society institutions, since this is the only way to achieve social participation. The main thrust of this order is to prompt target groups to create objective and subjective conditions for developing their ability to provide for themselves and is not aimed at serving everyone who might be in need, since this list could be prolonged infinitely.²⁷ It is the state's responsibility to determine the most competitive supplier of a particular service by means of a tender in order to make rational use of budget funds. At the same time, the state order should be open to any nonprofit organization able to offer the service in demand.

It should be noted that the Law *On the Government Social Order* adopted in 2005 takes significant account of world experience in executing government orders by implementing NGO social programs drawn up in keeping with a wide range of the country's urgent problems:

- in social security;
- in public health and the environment;
- in civil law;
- in science and education;
- in culture.

The legal field created by the legislative acts adopted makes it possible to carry out a competitive order for social services offered by nongovernmental organizations. In turn, the NGOs are showing an interest in participating in such competitions. Today we can already talk about the first, but important, practical results in this area. For example, 120 applications from 109 NGOs were submitted to the first pilot tender (September 2003) from almost all the republic's regions. The corresponding commission selected 20 projects as winners, totaling 10.7 million tenge. One hundred and nineteen organizations (from all the regions of Kazakhstan), which submitted 142 applications, participated in the second tender (May 2004). Twenty projects totaling 9.7 million tenge were implemented. On 19 July, 2005, a third tender was held in which 165 NGOs submitted 234 applications for projects totaling 59,700,000 tenge, that is, the financing volume increased six-fold. Fifty NGOs were the winners. The Kazakhstan Government allotted 350 million tenge in the 2006 budget for holding contests to carry out government social orders, and according to the proposal put forward by the Ministry of Culture and Information, this sum was increased by another 200 million tenge, which presumed participation in the tender of a larger number of NGOs.²⁸

²⁷ See: E.M. Osipov, op. cit., p. 98.

²⁸ According to the information of the RK Ministry of Culture and Information, available at [www.sana.gov.kz].

However, there is an inconsistency in the technique for carrying out a government order with respect to cooperation between the government and NGOs, which is expressed in the following statement: “NGOs receive support or help from the state in the form of a social order.” Here it should be emphasized that socially vulnerable strata of society are in need of help, and NGOs, in turn, help the government to resolve the population’s problems in a more targeted manner, using their own methods, resources, and budget funds.

Nor is it expedient to equate a social service with a commercial one aimed at obtaining profit. The purpose of the social order is to raise the quality of citizen life, without aiming to obtain pure profit, and most projects are carried out at self-cost. On the whole, the government social order is regarded as the most efficient economic-legal way of carrying out priority targeted social programs aimed at resolving socially significant problems at the state, sectoral, or local levels.

As a result of the practical application of government social orders, the financing of the activity of domestic organizations by international foundations in Kazakhstan is being gradually replaced by internal sources.²⁹

On the whole, cooperation with the government is a qualitatively new stage in the development of the nongovernmental sector, but, objectively, far from all NGOs today are ready for this work in the interests of their own target groups. For example, certain nongovernmental organizations are refusing to cooperate, believing that the government should be controlled at a distance. There are NGOs that are steadily financed by foreign sponsors, so they have no need for domestic relations. Of course, there are plenty of other problems in developing a dialog between the government and NGOs, but the main result of establishing cooperation today can be considered the transfer from word to deed. The rate of development of civil society institutions in Kazakhstan is not very high at the contemporary stage of modernization, but certain measures aimed at strengthening local NGOs have already been adopted.

* * *

Summing up the above, we can say that it is difficult to overestimate the role of the nongovernmental sector today in building a civil society, developing its democratic foundations, and transforming public opinion during the political decision-making process. The participation of NGOs in the formation of social policy is manifested at different levels of interaction between government bodies and private business structures, whereby in the most diverse forms.

In the end, close cooperation among all three sectors—the government, business, and NGOs—is helping to improve the business environment and resolve the population’s social problems, as well as strengthen stability, promote social progress, and enhance the development of a mature civil society.³⁰ What is more, it should be recognized that building a civil society is a long evolutionary process. It is impossible to achieve instant results by simply skipping some of the development stages. In contrast to many countries in which democracy grew on the basis of a civilized civil society, Kazakhstan is building democracy, its civil society, and its statehood at one and the same time. There can be no doubt that the Third Sector has reached a major milestone in its evolution, and the nongovernmental organizations have confidently moved on to a new level of development characterized by an intensive improvement in interrelations between the government and NGOs.

During the more than ten years of the republic’s independence, certain positive results have been achieved in forming NGOs. These primarily include the creation of a functioning nongovernmental

²⁹ See: Z. Balkenova, “Gosudarstvennyy sotsialnyy zakaz: kto pridumaet pravila igry?” *National Information Agency KazInform*, 20 September, 2005.

³⁰ See: Speech by Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev at the Second Civil Forum. Astana, 12 September, 2005, available at [www.akorda.kz].

sector, comprised today of more than five thousand different organizations and associations. Significant changes have occurred in the legislative sphere that regulates the activity of the sector, as well as positive shifts in the mutual perception of NGOs and government bodies. The noticeable activation in state support of the development of the nongovernmental sector is reflected in the creation and introduction into practice of a system of privileges, as well as in the distribution of government social orders among nongovernmental organizations. The mechanism of the government social order is opening an entirely new page in the cooperation between the government and NGOs, promoting the formation of as favorable an environment as possible for the development of the Third Sector.

We can already say that cooperation between the government and NGOs is acquiring a systemic nature. A reliable dialog and partnership relations mechanism is being developed in the republic between the government bodies and nongovernmental organizations, and the key link in this is played by the Civil Forum. Trends have also been designated toward internal consolidation of NGOs, which is evidenced by the activity of the CNOK, the Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan, and so on.

Nongovernmental organizations are already playing a certain role as mediators between the government and citizens, are assuming certain functions in the social changes, and are making a specific contribution to resolving various problems in the social sphere.

Nevertheless, certain difficulties relating to the development of the NGO sector in the republic are drawing attention to themselves. This applies in particular to improving the legislative-legal base, ensuring government support of the sector's functioning, simplifying relations among NGOs, government bodies, business, and so on. To be objective, it should be noted that there is still insufficient stability in the activity of the NGOs. The measures being carried out by nongovernmental organizations are frequently incomplete. The NGOs are still not capable of independently resolving urgent social problems, which is largely due to the underdeveloped material-technical base of the domestic Third Sector, as well as the absence of specialists working on a permanent basis. Despite the overall increase in the number of registered NGOs, a significant percentage of the organizations are still passive. The unequal development of the nongovernmental sector at the regional level is giving rise to a good number of questions, particularly in rural areas. All the same, it is important to emphasize that the above-mentioned problems relating to the activity of nongovernmental organizations are the topic of an open public discussion aimed at achieving a broad consensus based on dialog.

We believe that further expansion of cooperation between NGOs and the government and business will help to successfully resolve the above-mentioned issues. Ensuring sustainable development mechanisms of Kazakhstani society and drawing up efficient social policy are the main tasks of constructive inter-sectoral interaction. Cooperation between the government and NGOs is focused on achieving a high standard of living for all Kazakhstani.

Today the government is openly making contact with nongovernmental organizations and attracting the business sector into cooperation. It is presumed that the NGOs and business will become actively involved in the public processes by means of social partnership with the State. What is more, by representing civil and private interests, as well as by retaining a certain amount of autonomy, the NGOs and business can become a force capable of correcting and supplementing the social policy of the government bodies. At this stage of development in Kazakhstan, impressive democratic prerequisites have been created and stage-by-stage reform of social relations is being carried out. The NGOs, in turn, are becoming visible participants in public life. It is expected that the governmental and civil initiatives put forward today will have a positive effect on the republic's socioeconomic progress, as well as on the establishment of a full-fledged civil society in Kazakhstan.

UZBEKISTAN'S POLITICAL PARTIES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

Kamoliddin RABBIMOV

*Independent political scientist
(Tashkent, Uzbekistan)*

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

Uzbekistan's official¹ political parties have become an important institution in the republic's political life, but they function very differently from parties in democratic countries.

If we were to make a schematic drawing of Uzbekistan's political system, the head of state would be in its center as a powerful nucleus, and all the rest—the government, parliament, parties, judicial power, mass media, and society as a whole—would revolve around him, protecting and attending to the country's leader. Although their proximity to the center (that is, to the nucleus) and rotation rate around it differ, there is es-

entially not one political party that would be willing to leave its orbit and exist in free flight or swim against the current, claiming, in so doing, to be creating its own alternative system.

This is legitimate, since the nucleus has always feared any deviations in rotation around it, never sparing any resources to increase people's disposition and sympathy toward it and always confidently applying negative sanctions, that is, punishing those who tried to launch into free flight or go against the grain.

There is no doubt that this primarily applied to political parties. The president has always had biased opinions regarding many of the democratic values and institutions, including the opposition, mass meetings, free mass media, political parties, and democracy as a whole. He has never had any particular confidence in society and the above-mentioned institutions, always considered it necessary to keep control over them, and essentially seen them as threats to stability and security, as well as to his power.

A vivid expression of the president's non-confidence in a civil society was his proclamation during the first years of independence of five principles of the transition period. The first of them said: "The state is the main reformer," which for all intents and purposes entirely contradicted the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This principle, which had defined Uzbekistan's entire era of sovereignty, de facto established an etatist system of statehood and greatly strengthened authoritarianism. The "state is the main reformer" thesis defined the government's unconditional

¹ Uzbekistan's political parties can be divided into "officially registered" and "those not registered by the state." The latter include such democratically oriented parties as Erk, Birlík, the Party of Agrarians and Entrepreneurs, as well as the Party of Free Peasants. The Erk (Will/Freedom) Democratic Party and the Birlík (Unity) National Movement Party were set up at the beginning of the 1990s; the first of them was registered by the Republic of Uzbekistan Ministry of Justice on 3 September, 1991, but when the government gained in strength (or for the purpose of strengthening it), their activity was ceased not only de jure, but also de facto. Two more opposition parties, which define the agrarian-entrepreneurial problem as the most important, were founded in 2002: the Party of Agrarians and Entrepreneurs and the Party of Free Peasants. One of the main reasons for the activation of opposition parties was the Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the U.S. and Uzbekistan signed by the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United States, which was perceived by the opposition parties as a new way to legalize their activity. In the past four years, all the opposition party projects submitted documents repeatedly to the Uzbekistan Ministry of Justice. For example, Birlík alone submitted documents for state registration five times, but not one opposition party project has yet to obtain an official status.

supremacy with respect to other branches of power and a civil society.

It goes without saying that political parties were created and their activity carried out with this principle in mind. It was against the background of the "state is the main reformer" thesis that the political culture of the leaders and political party activists formed, their attitude toward society, the government, and politics developed, and stereotypes and forms of thought were elaborated. As a result, political parties became important tools of the president's policy.

On the other hand, the parties themselves were amorphous enough to gradually create their own independent policy and own game rules within the established game rules in order to expand the sphere of their activity.

At the end of the 1990s, the president announced another thesis that essentially contradicted the "state is the main reformer" principle:

"from a strong state to a strong society," thus giving the go ahead for making a gradual transfer to a civil society. Nevertheless, in reality the political system became liberalized relatively slowly, and this principle was essentially ineffective with respect to turning political parties into genuinely independent institutions.

Whatever the case, political parties understand that the nucleus of the republic's political system currently faces difficult political, legal, and physical problems, while the republic as a whole is entering a period of hyper-transformation, during which changes in the nucleus will legitimately lead to a review of the entire politico-legal system.

In light of this, some of the parties, for different reasons, are trying to come closer to the nucleus by speeding up their rate of rotation around it, while others are slowing down and showing restraint.

Political Parties and Their Classification

From the first days of independence until the present, the Ministry of Justice has officially registered seven political parties. Five of them are functioning today: the National Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the Erk Democratic Party,² the Vatan Tarakkieti Democratic Party, the Adolat Social-Democratic Party, the Milliy Tiklanish Democratic Party, the Fidokorlar National Democratic Party, and the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan.

The first of them (the NDPU) was founded on 1 November, 1991. The party's history was part and parcel of the history of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan itself. We know that the last, 23rd, special congress in the history of the Uzbekistan Communist Party was held on 14 September, 1991, at which a resolution was put forward on its withdrawal from the C.P.S.U. and on the need to set up the National Democratic Party of Uzbekistan.

On 1 November, 1991, a founding congress of the NDPU was held in Tashkent, at which its Charter and Program were adopted.³

The Vatan Tarakkieti Party (Progress of the Homeland) was created in 1992, but this structure no longer exists, since after the parliamentary election held in April 2000, it united with the new Fidokorlar (Self-Sacrificers) National Democratic Party.

² The Erk Democratic Party was an opposition party registered on 3 September, 1991. It was headed by poet and politician Muhammad Solih, who currently lives abroad. The party's activity was halted by the Ministry of Justice in 1993. But according to the legislation, a party's activity may only be halted by a court order. This situation, according to the party's activists, gives legal grounds to say that the party exists.

³ See: V. Tiurikov, R. Shaguliamov, *Nezavisimaia Respublika Uzbekistan: Pamiatnye sobytiia i daty*, in two volumes, Vol. 1, Uzbekiston Publishers, Tashkent, 1997-1998, p. 8.

The history of the creation of the Adolat Party contains many interesting facts and events that occurred during the first half of the 1990s. According to official sources, the Adolat Social-Democratic Party was set up in February 1995.⁴

But, according to independent observers and political scientists, the creation of the Adolat Party in Uzbekistan was publicly announced for the first time on Radio Ozodlik (Freedom) in November 1994 by former vice-president of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shukrullo Mirsaidov,⁵ who drew up the charter and program of this formation along with his associates. They later began creating provincial party organizations. Later, in 1997, at the 2nd congress of the Uzbekistan Human Rights Society (UHRS) held at the Republican House of Knowledge (Tashkent), Shukrullo Mirsaidov announced from the congress rostrum that his party had approximately 15,000 members!⁶

This gives observers grounds to claim that the idea of creating the Adolat Party with a social-democratic bent was possibly “abducted” to prevent the formation by a group of politicians of a party headed by then vice-president that was not controlled by the head of state.⁷

In 1995, a new structure was created called the Milliy Tiklanish (National Revival) Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. Its charter and program were adopted at the MT congress, which was held at the House of Cinema on 3 June, 1995. Aziz Kaiumov, then director of the Institute of Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences, was elected the chairman of MT, and on 9 June of the same year, the party was registered with the Ministry of Justice.⁸

In 1996-2004, writer Ibrokhim Gafurov was chairman of the Central Kengash (Council) of MT; what is more, he was editor-in-chief of the Milliy Tiklanish newspaper, the party’s printed organ. At the 3rd MT congress, which was held on 31 October, 2004 at the House of Cinema (Tashkent), journalist and writer Khurshid Dustmuhammad was elected chairman of the Central Kengash.⁹

At the end of 1998, a new national democratic party of Uzbekistan called Fidokorlar¹⁰ was set up. Its founding congress was held on 28 December, 1998 in the building of the Kamolot Republican Youth Organization.

After the parliamentary election, the Fidokorlar NDP joined the Vatan Tarakkieti Party. The new structure was called the Fidokorlar NDP, and Akhtam Tursunov became its leader (he led the Vatan Tarakkieti Party before the merger).

This merger led to the formation of the largest parliament faction—Fidokorlar, which had 52 deputies out of the 250 parliament members. In so doing, the party, which nominated Islam Karimov from among its members as presidential candidate in 2000, acquired more influence after the merger and began to correlate more with the president as “the party in power supported by the electorate.”

⁴ See: *Mustakillik: Izokhli ilmiy-ommabop lugat* (Independence: Scientific-Public Dictionary with Commentaries), Shark Publishers, Tashkent, 1998, 320 pages.

⁵ The post of vice-president existed in the history of independent Uzbekistan for a very short time. This institution was abolished after the new Constitution was adopted in 1992. Shukrullo Mirsaidov was the only person who worked as vice-president of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

⁶ See: Sh. Akhmajonov, “O shesti zaregistrovannykh i odnoi ‘skrytoi’ propravitelstvennykh politicheskikh partiiaxh Uzbekistana,” available at [<http://www.jahongir.org/Russian/opartiyax.html>].

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ See: *Uzbekistonning yangi tarixi* (History of Independent Uzbekistan), Compiled by N. Zhuraev and T. Fayzulaev. Board of editors: A. Azizkhuzhaev (chairman), B. Akhmedov, S. Kamolov, *et al.*, Shark Publishers, Tashkent, 2000, 560 pp.

⁹ See: Sh. Akhmajonov, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ The word “Fidokorlar,” which means “Self-Sacrificers,” was possibly borrowed from the national movement “fidaiyyun” (Arabic for “self-sacrificers,” “self-sacrificing”) of Egypt during the time of President Gamal Abdel Nasser as the idea for a new party. This is evidenced by the head of state’s speeches at this time and articles in the country’s central newspapers, the authors of which were government officials and political scientists. What is more, the idea of “fidoyilik” (“self-sacrifice”) became one of the most important values the country’s president called on civil servants, party members, and society as a whole to observe, particularly after the end of the 1990s (see: I. Karimov, *Milliy davlatchilik, istiklol mafkurasi va khukukiy madaniyat tugrisida* (I. Karimov, On National Statehood, Ideology of Independence and Law-Based Culture), Academy of the Uzbekistan Ministry of Internal Affairs, Tashkent, 1999, p. 158).

Uzbekistan's last political party was set up in mid-November 2003. Its full name is the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen, the Liberal-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (UzLiDeP), and it remains the last party to be officially registered with the Ministry of Justice.

It is difficult to classify the political parties according to their political and philosophical trends for several reasons. First, the parties themselves are still going through the process of self-identification (from the viewpoint of political-philosophical vectors). Discussions about which party is leftist and which rightist began not that long ago. These discussions became particularly lively after the NDPU declared itself to be the leftist opposition at the beginning of 2004 in the newly formed Legislative House of the Oliy Majlis (the Lower House).

Each party acquired a few vivid "central" slogans and epithets indicating its main values. But the problem is that parties, while sometimes having a well-structured scale of values, goals, and assignments, frequently do not have programs of action, according to which the mentioned goals and assignments could be put into practice.

What is more, Uzbekistan's parties suffer from populism. They are very glib, make very good points about their main values, and often repeat their own slogans and epithets. However, the party activists and leaders hardly ever answer the following questions: "Who and what threatens those values you are focusing your attention on; and what problems exist in those strata of society you intend to protect?" The caution that the parties demonstrate in this respect might be related to their status in the system of power relations.

It should be noted that the many contradictions contained in the programs of the parties themselves make it very difficult to classify them. The economic bloc of issues frequently focuses more on economic liberalism and the protection of private property, while the social bloc concentrates on concern for the low-income and poverty-stricken members of society. As for cultural policy, the programs are entirely devoted to national cultural values and their revival.

The universalism of values and the absence of vivid anti-theses in the parties' programs show their striving to correspond to the viewpoints of the country's president in the questions being raised, as well as to avoid conflicts and manifestations of conformism.

All the same, all the parties have a central idea, slogan, and reference points that are considered higher and more important than other values.

The NDPU regards itself as a leftist, social-democratic party. It believes its social base to be large families, invalids, the poverty-stricken, and people without education and special qualifications.¹¹

In addition to spurring on its leftist ideology, the NDPU explains its attitude toward liberalism as follows: "One of the key principles of liberal democrats is placing priority on personal freedom ensuing from the conception of individualism. But just how acceptable is this idea in our country, just how well does it correlate with the historically developed traditions of the mahallia (neighborhood) community? Under these specific conditions, we believe the principles of collectivism and social solidarity to be more attractive and closer to the mentality of our people."¹²

The party also raises several objections to other liberal viewpoints: "Our party considers a serious shortcoming of the liberal-democratic ideology to be its attitude toward sources of social prosperity. Restricting itself to the claim that social prosperity is based on the prosperity of property-owners, liberal democracy does not offer adequate solutions for ensuring the social equalization of incomes and for preventing stratification of the population into the rich and the poor."¹³

¹¹ On the new NDPU program and the party's tasks for democratizing and renewing society, see: *Speech by Chairman of the Central Committee of the NDP of Uzbekistan Asliddin Rustamov at the 5th NDPU Congress on 2 July, 2005*, Tashkent, 2005.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 9. All the same, with respect to individualism, the NDPU expresses its objections not to a specific liberal-democratic party, but to the general theory of liberalism, since the UzLiDeP, which regards itself as a liberal-democratic party, also, paradoxically, criticizes "individualism."

¹³ *Ibidem.*

During the last election campaign to the Legislative House (December 2004), the NDPU raised several rather urgent social and political problems, as a result of which it acquired substantial public support and also put the government on the alert. Unemployment became one of the problems frequently raised by the NDPU, which was reflected in the party's program: "We are not entirely happy with the ways the liberal democrats suggest for overcoming unemployment. Can this problem only be resolved by involving the unemployed population in business activity? And will all of the unemployed able-bodied population (primarily rural) without exception want and be able to engage in business? For it is no secret that today quite a number of people in search of work are resorting to 'mardikor markets' or leaving the country."¹⁴ In this respect, the NDPU cannot be viewed as an anti-liberal party in the political sense of this word; it believes that a more responsible socioeconomic policy should be conducted.

The Adolat Social-Democratic Party has established itself in the political system as a leftist political force (just like the NDPU).

The Adolat SDP also considers itself a leftist party, but it is in the Democratic Force bloc created at the beginning of 2005 in the parliament's Legislative House.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the Adolat SDP is not as laconic in its political statements as the NDPU; it does not focus so intently on its social-democratic orientation, but under the supervision of skilful female politician Dilorom Toshmukhammedova, this structure is gradually acquiring the image of a feminist party in the positive sense of the word. There can be no doubt that a party with this image is very important in the formation of a civil society. The viewpoints of people who think that "politics is not for women" are still strong in public opinion and the mass consciousness of Uzbek society.¹⁶

The Fidokorlar NDP is also quite a respectable party, its place being between two large and two relatively compact parties; it has experienced politicians. It is difficult to classify the Fidokorlar NDP because it is liberal in the economic sphere, believing that the country's progress should be based on the development of small and medium business, as well as of private property. All the same, the party is conservative in the cultural sphere. The very idea of "self-sacrifice" contradicts the ideas of liberalism, since the party in this case raises public interests higher than individual concerns.

But such a hybrid ideology could, due to the flexibility and skills of the party's politicians, guarantee its success. Conservatism in the cultural sphere and an inclination toward liberal values and principles in economic issues make it logical to regard the Fidokorlar NDP as a rightist party.

The Milliy Tiklanish (National Revival) Democratic Party (DP) has the image of a party of the intelligentsia; its founders and current leaders are national-conservative scientists, writers, and poets. The party believes the source of its inspiration, as well as the reference points promoting an understanding of national revival, to be the Jadids and those who fought for the country's independence: "The party feeds on the ideas of national independence and national revival formed in the conscious-

¹⁴ Ibidem. Mardikor markets—traditional markets of short-term hired workers. In Tashkent, such mardikor bazaars exist in almost every region and next to large markets. What is more, in the last 5-6 years, women's mardikor bazaars have appeared. Mardikors are mainly people who come from the country's provinces; among them are both skilled (carpenters, mechanics, welders, etc.), and unskilled workers. The problem of migration in contemporary Uzbekistan is a very urgent and painful issue for society. There are still no precise statistics on how many Uzbek citizens travel to neighboring and more distant countries in search of work, but it is known that most migrants go to the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan.

¹⁵ The Democratic Bloc created by the UzLiDeP, Fidokorlar NDP, and Adolat SDP factions constituted the majority, 57%, of the Legislative House at the beginning of its new convocation. The NDPU declared itself to be the parliamentary opposition with respect to UzLiDeP and the Democratic Bloc that is headed by the latter. Milliy Tiklanish NDP and independent deputies do not belong to any bloc. The Democratic Bloc is considered rightist from the viewpoint of political-philosophical categories, but it also represents the government's interests, since it is headed by UzLiDeP, and one of the members of the UzLiDeP political council is the country's current prime minister.

¹⁶ For example, according to the surveys by the Izhtimoiy fikr Sociological Center in 2004, 79% of the respondents expressed their support of male politicians, and only 19% were willing to support female politicians. What is more, it is known that 52% of the republic's population is composed of women.

ness of the self-sacrificing sons of the people who fought against the yoke of czarist Russia and the totalitarian Soviet system.”¹⁷

The Milliy Tiklanish DP’s program has several specific aspects that essentially define the party’s main reference points and central values. MT’s highest purpose is national revival, and it defines several parameters to achieve it: “Spiritual unity of the nation (Millatning Maanaviy birligi); the Homeland (Turkestan) is one family; a strong democratic state; national values; scientific-technical progress and global integration; contemporary man; and national independence.”¹⁸

The Milliy Tiklanish DP is not considered a very strong party, it suffers from a shortage of resources; nevertheless, this structure is unique from the viewpoint of its ideology. It is the only party that focuses great attention on retaining and multiplying ethnic values and the values of the traditional family, with respect to which it can be called conservative. Under globalization and information technology conditions, when issues relating to the preservation of culture, language, and traditions are becoming more urgent, this party can help to preserve ethnonational values and counteract assimilation of the titular nation in this sphere.

But like the Adolat Party, MT also needs resources, which increases its activity to protect the interests of those strata of society it is oriented toward. If elections to the parliament’s lower house are held according to the proportional system, the Adolat SDP and Milliy Tiklanish DP could have had difficulties in overcoming the minimum barrier.¹⁹

The UzLiDeP is without doubt considered a rightist party, although it does not accept and sometimes even rejects certain fundamental values and principles of liberalism, for example, “individualism.” The party is a movement of entrepreneurs and businessmen. In the economic sphere, it sees its main task as follows: “The party is in favor of creating economic, organizational, and legal conditions, as well as guarantees of freedom for entrepreneurs, comprehensively encourages their business activity and the economic independence of managerial entities, and removes any barriers in the development of business activity. Government control structures should gradually move away from directly interfering in the management of enterprises, primarily in the private business sphere.”²⁰ The UzLiDeP’s main slogan is as follows: “One enterprising, capable, active person is better than thousands of unskilled and lazy people.”²¹

Although the party also tries to be consistent in issues concerning liberalization of the economy, it believes the development of private property to be an essential condition of individual freedom. But in practice it systematically supports the policy of the government and head of state.

Of course, there is not one official party of Uzbekistan that would not openly support the policy of the country’s president. However, if we arrange the parties with respect to the level of their support of the government and president, we can see the following hierarchy: the UzLiDeP—the most pro-government, the NDPU—the opposition (as it claims itself to be), and the other three parties are somewhere in-between.

Created the last, the UzLiDeP has become one of Uzbekistan’s two strong parties. It has the best republican office and branches in almost all of the regions and cities of the country; and its activists receive a good salary.

¹⁷ For example, according to the surveys by the Izhtimoiy fikr Sociological Center in 2004, 79% of the respondents expressed their support of male politicians, and only 19% were willing to support female politicians. What is more, it is known that 52% of the republic’s population is composed of women.

¹⁸ *Program of the Milliy Tiklanish DP of Uzbekistan*, available at [www.uzmdp.uz] The party’s website is set up exclusively in Uzbek.

¹⁹ In order to create a faction, parties must have 9 places out of 120; this corresponds to 13% of the total number of places in the parliament’s lower house.

²⁰ *Program of the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen Party—Liberal-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan*, available at [http://www.uzlidep.uz/program.php].

²¹ The UzLiDeP is the leader with respect to self-advertisement. Its slogans and emblems can be found almost all over Uzbekistan—beginning with large billboards on the streets and ending with small posters in the capital’s metro.

If we take a look at the politico-philosophical orientation of all the parties, there are two leftist parties in Uzbekistan (the NDPU and the Adolat SDP), two rightist (the Fidokorlar NDP and the UzLiDeP), and one strictly conservative (the Milliy Tiklanish DP). All the same, it should be noted that not all the parties have become fully established from the viewpoint of politico-philosophical trends. Perhaps the political orientation of the parties will also change under the new political conditions or with a change in leadership (as usually happens in transition countries).

Uzbekistan's Legislation on Regulating the Activity of Political Parties

Uzbekistan's legislation on regulating the activity of political parties evolved along with the latter and reflects the complex history of interrelations between the government and the political parties, on the one hand, and the understanding by the country's highest leadership of the role of political parties in society, on the other.

Here we should say in advance that legislation as such has not played a decisive role in defining the conditions for creating and implementing the activity of political parties. In addition to legislation, there are several unofficial political rules which are usually not talked about, but which are strictly observed.

Most of the officially registered parties were created with the participation or with the public support of the president—these are the NDPU, the Fidokorlar NDP, and the UzLiDeP. The president balloted at the 1992 election as a candidate from the NDPU, and in 2000 as a candidate from the Fidokorlar NDP. When the UzLiDeP was set up, however, the head of the republic received the party's initiative group and expressed his support of the new structure.

As for the Adolat SDP and Milliy Tiklanish DP, they were also set up with the president's consent. So there can be no doubt that submitting documents to the Ministry of Justice for official registration requires the head of state's public or tacit consent and approval (in addition to legislation). In so doing, the law does not set forth regulations for setting up parties, but helps to register the adopted decision. This situation is confirmed by attempts to register opposition parties not controlled by the government, which have had to repeatedly submit their documents to the Ministry of Justice.²²

What is more, the legislation itself is characterized by muddle, unclearness and quite a number of unfeasible demands. This might not simply be due to omissions, but the result of deliberate considerations.

The law on Political Parties of 26 December, 1996, which regulated the creation and activity of political parties in Uzbekistan until the amendments of 12 December, 2003, set forth the following demands:

- *No fewer than five thousand signatures of citizens living in no fewer than eight territorial entities (provinces), including the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the city of Tashkent, and with the intention of uniting into a party are required to set up a political party.*²³

²² Beginning in 2002, all the opposition parties submitted documents to the Ministry of Justice to obtain an official status. The Birlik National Movement Party became the absolute record-holder in this matter, which in the last four years submitted the necessary documents five times. But the Ministry of Justice refuses to register the party and often does not indicate why the submitted documents do not correspond to the law, although according to clause 2 of Art 9 of the Law on Political Parties, the Ministry of Justice must explain in writing the reasons for its refusal to register.

²³ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Political Parties of 26 December, 1996, No. 337-I, Art 6 (the first part).

- Documents confirming that the requirements of this Law have been fulfilled, including a list of five thousand citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan expressing a desire to unite into this party, with their signatures, information on the members of the election bodies (surname, first name, patronymic, year of birth, place of residence and work, telephone number), a decision by the party's highest body on investing powers in the members of the leading body and endowing them with the right to represent the party during registration or in the event of disputes in court.²⁴

But in December 2003, some provisions of this Law were amended. For example, according to the new edition, the expression “no fewer than five thousand signatures” was replaced with the words “no fewer than twenty thousand signatures.”²⁵

This new approach to the activity of public associations, political parties, and the branches of international formations coincided with the events in the countries of the post-Soviet space—the so-called Color Revolutions. At that time, under the effect of the Georgian syndrome,²⁶ a significant portion of the republic's legislation concerning a civil society was reviewed.

Beginning from the end of the 1990s (and particularly since 2002), the government's attitude toward officially registered parties underwent significant changes. This was promoted by the permanent demands of the international community to liberalize the country's sociopolitical life, for example, the registration of opposition party projects, the understanding that the opposition parties kept away from active political life at the beginning of the 1990s have not disappeared, but still exist as such; the wave of Color Revolutions in the CIS countries; and the increased confidence in registered parties. As a result of all this, the government reconsidered its attitude toward official political parties, as well as toward party-building.

The new approach provided for two fundamental clauses. The first concerns the creation of new parties: here, as mentioned above, new legal barriers are being erected that prevent the formation of new parties. This clause, it seems to us, is aimed at unregistered parties not controlled by the government.

The second clause concerns officially registered parties: the increased role of the latter and the removal of limits on their financing, which was stipulated in the old wording of the Law on Political Parties.

The Law on the Financing of Political Parties adopted on 30 April, 2004, is an example of the latter clause. This normative legal act, which was very welcomed by the officially registered parties, envisages three ways to finance their activity: state financing of the statutory activity of political parties (Art 7); state financing of the participation of political parties in elections to the Legislative House and other representative government bodies (Art 8); and state financing of the activity of factions of political parties in the Legislative House (Art 9).²⁷

The main innovations of this Law are the following: the financing of the election campaigns of candidates for deputies to the Legislative House, and the annual financing of the statutory activity of political parties in correlation with the number of seats acquired in the lower house of parliament, as well as donations by legal entities.

A party faction had to be formed in order to receive annual funds for statutory activity. In compliance with Art 9 of the Law on the Rules of Procedure in the Legislative House of the Oliy Majlis

²⁴ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Political Parties of 26 December, 1996, No. 337-I, Art 8 (the second part).

²⁵ *Narodnoe slovo*, No. 30, 13 February, 2004.

²⁶ The term “Georgian syndrome” was used by the author to describe the situation when the authorities in many post-Soviet countries (including Uzbekistan) began to regard the activity of national and international public associations through the prism of the Color Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine (see: “West Presses for Uzbek Reform,” available at [www.csmonitor.com], 7 April, 2004).

²⁷ See: Law on the Financing of Political Parties, 30 April, 2004, available at [http://ngo.uz/zakon1.php?Lang=ru#8].

of the Republic of Uzbekistan, parties must get at least nine deputy seats to create a faction.²⁸ Parties unable to overcome the minimum barrier shall return all the funds received from the state for their election campaign.²⁹

A party that passes the minimum barrier and creates its own faction annually receives funds in the following amount:

- *The annual amount of state funds allotted for financing the statutory activity of political parties shall be formed at the rate of two percent of the minimum salary as of 1 January of the year preceding the allotment of these funds multiplied by the number of citizens on the list of voters at the last election to the Legislative House.*³⁰

Before this Law was adopted, political parties had rather meager financial resources stipulated in the second and third parts of Art 15 of the Law on Political Parties:

- *Political parties, as stipulated by the law, may only carry out such activity as is required for executing their statutory assignments.*
- *The monetary funds of political parties shall be formed from membership dues, revenue from publishing activity, donations by citizens and public associations, as well as other revenue received by lawful means.*

The new Law stipulated that now parties have the right to receive donations from legal entities as well, which was regarded as a crime before this Law was adopted:

- *The amount of donations received by a political party from one legal entity of the Republic of Uzbekistan during a year shall be no more than five-thousand times the minimum salary or wage as of 1 January of the year the donations are made.*³¹

This is a very impressive amount by Uzbekistan standards: today the minimum wage in the country amounts to 12,420 soms, which is equal to \$10. In so doing, every legal entity may donate an amount in national currency equal to \$50,000 to political parties every year. The above-mentioned article makes it possible to provide parties with unlimited financing, and this is primarily a great opportunity for pro-government parties among the registered parties themselves.³²

What is more, this Law also reflects the fears of the government associated with the activity of international organizations. The notorious Art 15 of the Law sets forth a policy of isolationism for officially registered political parties with respect to the outside world:

- *Donations to political parties in the form of monetary resources, the transfer of property, rendering services, carrying out works (including by means of allotting grants, rendering technical assistance, paying for trip expenses, as well as for training sessions, seminars, and conferences held in the Republic of Uzbekistan and abroad) shall not be permitted from:*

foreign states;

legal entities of foreign states, their representative offices and branches;

²⁸ See: Law on the Rules of Procedure in the Legislative House of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Art 9.

²⁹ See: Law on the Financing of Political Parties. 30 April, 2004, Art 8.

³⁰ Ibid., Art 7.

³¹ Ibid., Art 13.

³² Today, among the five officially registered parties, the UzLiDeP is considered the party in power. The country's prime minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev (as a member of the UzLiDeP's political council) participates in its conferences and congresses. The party, in contrast to other similar structures, has huge financial and material-technical resources (see: A. Saidov, "Parlament Uzbekistana razdelilsia na 'partiiu vlasti' i 'opozitsiiu'?" available at [<http://www.CentrAsia.org/newsA.php4?st=1109713020>]).

international organizations, their representative offices and branches;
enterprises with foreign investments;
foreign nationals;
stateless persons.

*Nor shall be donations to political parties permitted in the form of monetary resources, the transfer of property, rendering services, carrying out works by self-government bodies of citizens, religious organizations, anonymous persons, or persons using pseudonyms.*³³

On the whole, the adoption of this Law was a giant step toward the financial independence of political parties, but party activists and legislators had a rather reserved reaction to Art 15. Although it did not meet the interests of the parties, the deputies adopted this article of the Law without any objections. Such strictly political normative legal acts and articles are usually adopted unanimously, since no deputy wants to play with fire. According to the available information, the initiators of this article are not the parties themselves, but high-ranking government officials. There can be no doubt that Art 15 is also the result of the concern aroused by the Color Revolutions.

As a result, direct cooperation in the form of seminars, conferences, and trips abroad, which takes place among various countries, parties, and international organizations, has come to an end.³⁴

Cooperation is continuing under the new conditions, however, not on a direct basis, but through several trustworthy republican nongovernmental organizations, for example, the Institute for Civil Society Studies.

This structure, which has the status of an NGO, was created in 2004 and became a kind of bridge joining four parties: society, international organizations, political parties, and the government.

The president's new initiative gave rise to significant changes in the republic's legislation on the development of political parties. The bill called "The Constitutional Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Strengthening the Role of Political Parties in the Renewal and Further Democratization of State Administration and Modernization of the Country" was regarded by the political parties and the public as a real step toward democratization after a difficult eighteen months in the country's development.³⁵

The new bill sets forth the following aspects regarding the activity of political parties (we will note that the concept "parliamentary opposition" was introduced into Uzbek legislation for the first time; the latter was endowed with certain rights, but in the Constitution there was always the definition of "the opposition minority"):³⁶

- *Factions of political parties, as well as deputies elected from initiative groups of voters not sharing the policy and program of the newly formed government or its individual vectors, may declare themselves to be the opposition;*

³³ Law on the Financing of Political Parties. Article 15. Limits on Making Donations to Political Parties. Adopted on 30 April, 2004.

³⁴ For example, when this Law was adopted, the cooperation project with political parties that existed within the framework of the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Tashkent closed down. Many Western international organizations, such as the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Germany), the National Democratic Institute (U.S.A.), the International Republican Institute (U.S.A.), and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation can now cooperate with parties through the Institute for Civil Society Studies.

³⁵ The president's unexpected initiative was announced on 9 November, one week before the discussion in the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU of the sanctions adopted a year earlier with respect to Uzbekistan after the well-known Andijan events of 13 May, 2005, which many perceived as a signal to the West that Uzbekistan was ready to continue democratization, and this process could be more intensive if the sanctions were halted (see: [http://www.uza.uz/documents/index.php?id1=14262]).

³⁶ The second part of Art 34 of the Constitution reads: "No one may infringe on the rights, freedoms, and dignity of persons comprising the opposition minority in political parties, public associations, mass movements, or representative government bodies." Chapter on Political Rights.

A political party faction that declares itself to be the parliamentary opposition, along with the powers stipulated by the law for factions, shall have the right:

to submit an alternative version of a draft law at the same time as the report on the corresponding issue by an executive committee of the Legislative House;

to enter its own special opinion on the issues being discussed in the minutes of a plenary session of the Legislative House;

to the guaranteed participation of its representatives in a conciliation commission regarding the law rejected by the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The rights of the parliamentary opposition guaranteed by the law may not be infringed upon by the parliamentary majority.³⁷

Art 4 of the new draft law sets forth a new procedure for appointing the prime minister. It suggests strengthening the consultative functions of political parties:

- *The nomination of the prime minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be presented by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for approval by the Legislative House and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan after consultations have been held with each of the factions of the political parties represented in the Legislative House of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the deputies elected from initiative groups of voters within one month after the election of the officials and the formation of the bodies of the Uzbekistan Oliy Majlis Houses.*

The nomination of the prime minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan that gathers the majority of votes from the total number of deputies of the Legislative House and members of the Senate of the Uzbekistan Oliy Majlis shall be considered approved.³⁸

But, as before, in the case of three rejections by the Legislative House or the Senate of a candidate for prime minister presented by the country's president, the head of state appoints an acting prime minister, disbands one or both of the parliament Houses, and announces the date of a new election.³⁹

The constitutional bill mentioned offers to political parties additional "restraining mechanisms" with respect to the country's prime minister, as well as to khokims (governors) of the provinces and city of Tashkent. Now the parties and their factions may initiate dismissal of the prime minister or khokims of the provinces and Tashkent:

- *On the initiative of the factions of political parties in the Legislative House presented for review by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, he shall make a decision on dismissal, if such an initiative with the necessary substantiation is supported by the leading factions of the political parties in the parliament and if he puts it to the vote and it receives more than two thirds of the votes of the total number of deputies of the Legislative House and members of the Senate in the Legislative House and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, respectively.⁴⁰*

³⁷ Art 2 of the draft of the constitutional law on Strengthening the Role of Political Parties in the Renewal and Further Democratization of State Administration and Modernization of the Country.

³⁸ Ibid., Art 4.

³⁹ Ibidem. The country's political practice shows that there has never yet been a situation when a nomination for prime minister or a regional khokim presented by the president was "objected to" by any faction, part of the Legislative House, or the local Kengashes (Councils) of the provinces. The deputies always vote unanimously in favor of supporting the indicated candidate. In so doing, the retention of this clause on disbandment of the parliament after three refusals to accept a candidate nominated by the president in the new version of the Constitutional Law is a strictly psychological aspect, which will probably not be implemented during the current generation of politicians.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Art 5, clause "d." Before that, the Law envisaged three ways of dismissing the prime minister from his post: based on a personal retirement statement; in the event the prime minister cannot perform his duties; in the event of insur-

- *Party groups of the provincial and Tashkent city Kengashes of People's Deputies shall have the right to submit justified opinion to the Uzbekistan President in order to raise the efficiency of the control functions on the unsatisfactory activity by persons approved to the post of khokim of a province or of the city of Tashkent. In the event that this initiative is supported by the leading party groups, the President of Uzbekistan shall schedule a discussion of this initiative in the Kengash of People's Deputies and make a decision in keeping with the results of this discussion.*⁴¹

All of these presidential initiatives were regarded by experts and the political parties themselves as a "worthy" step in the direction of strengthening the position of the latter, which means of the country's parliament as well. What is more, many more laws that regulate the activity of political parties and the republic's parliament must be reconsidered in the future. There is no doubt that very important politico-legal decisions exist, the implementation of which will be more radical than the mentioned draft law to promote the strengthening of parliamentarianism and efficient representation.

For example, review of the country's electoral system: the majority two-stage electoral system is in effect at all the election levels. The transfer to a mixed or full proportional system would significantly increase competition among parties, lead to a weakening of the effect of administrative resources, and help candidates to win who have a strong program on urgent social issues and small resources.

Art 15 of the Law on the Financing of Political Parties should also be cancelled, since it contains the "spirit of isolationism" and mistrust of Uzbekistan's parties. There can be no doubt that the salaries of parliament deputies and senators should be increased manifold,⁴² and deputies should be granted the right to have at least one assistant.⁴³

In the past few years, the executive power has concentrated all the levers of administration in its hands, based on the principle of "the state is the main reformer." The parliament and the political parties have become completely dependent on the executive power, not only politically and economically, but also at the level of the country's legislation. Here it seems prudent to take a look at the most important aspects where the parliament and political parties are juridically under the strong influence of the executive power, which is when the principle of division of powers is violated, as well as the system of checks and balances:

- The Senate consists of 100 senators, 16 of which are appointed by the president, and the other 84 are elected from the provincial Kengashes (Councils) of People's Deputies. In Uzbekistan, there are 14 territorial constituents, and each of them must elect six senators.⁴⁴ The awkward situation consists in the fact that the chairmen of the local (be they provincial, urban, or district) Kengashes under the legislation is the khokim who is directly appointed by the president.⁴⁵ In so doing, the Senate is officially formed under the control of the executive power.

mountable disagreements arising among the members of the Cabinet of Ministers that threaten its normal functioning, as well as repeated adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers of decisions contradicting the Constitution, Uzbekistan laws, decrees, and orders of the President of Uzbekistan.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Art 7.

⁴² The monthly salary of a deputy of the Legislative House currently amounts to around 100,000 soms (before income tax), which is approximately equal to \$80. This sum is insignificant even compared to the salaries of many state enterprise employees. It is expedient to pay the said persons a minimum of \$300-400 for carrying out normal legislative activity and concentrating on urgent sociopolitical problems and their financial independence.

⁴³ Only the heads of committees and factions, as well as the house speaker, have the right to have assistants; ordinary deputies do not have such. It seems particularly urgent for the latter to have assistants, if we keep in mind that there are only a total of 120 assistants for the 27 million population of Uzbekistan.

⁴⁴ See: Uzbekistan Law on Elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Art 50.

⁴⁵ See: Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Art 102; Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on State Power in the Provinces, Art 1.

- The president may disband one or both houses of parliament under certain conditions.⁴⁶ But Uzbekistan's legislation contains no concept of "impeachment" with respect to the head of state, and the parliament does not have any mechanism for restraining the executive power of the president.

If Uzbekistan legislation is conscientiously analyzed, it is possible to find many provisions due to which the executive power is beyond the reach of many of its branches, and the parliament and judges are literally in the hands of the executive power.

Of course, a strong presidential power and executive vertical are possible in democratic states, but when strong authoritarian thinking is preserved in society and a liberal mindset has not yet formed, there is a high sociocultural deficit of democratization of society, the political culture of the bureaucracy is entirely imbued with values of etatism and leader worshiping, and all the above-mentioned legislative provisions acquire a Draconian nature.

Political Parties through the Prism of their Functionality

Public opinion about political parties is directly related to their sociopolitical functions and the duties they perform in society.

In turn, the assessment by political parties of their activity depends on honest and free elections, free mass media, the role of parliament in the system of state power, the electoral system, and on the extent to which the parties depend on society or how decisive a role society plays in their destiny in general. In other words, who plays the main role in the fate of public associations, including of political parties: society or the government? In Uzbekistan's current reality, this question is rhetorical.

When describing the situation that has currently developed around political parties, there can be no doubt that official parties find themselves between two fires.⁴⁷ On the one hand, the government wants to control the situation, which is why it continues to retain tough control over the political parties.

But, on the other hand, public opinion forms its ideas about political parties based on the activity of Russian and Western similar structures.⁴⁸ It stands to reason that domestic political parties cannot correspond to the ideas society has about them. There are many reasons for this, primarily, the lack of independence, which in turn leads to Uzbek society's deep dissatisfaction with the activity of the country's political parties.

Non-confidence is due to the lack of full-fledged cooperation, support, and dialog. Society is not passing on its "social energy" to the political parties, as a result of which they are suffering from an acute shortage of human resources and ideas.

As American writer Michael Novak put it, all crises and shortages stem from a dearth of ideas, and authoritarianism undoubtedly gives rise to its emergence, since society gradually stops reproducing social energy and ideas, as well as engaging in creative work and innovation, not seeing the appropriate conditions for this.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ See: Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Art. 95.

⁴⁷ This definition was also used by the author at the conference on the development of parliamentarianism and political parties held in Vienna on 2-3 November, 2006 and organized by the OSCE/ODIHR.

⁴⁸ In Uzbekistan, such Russian television channels as Channel One, NTV, and Rossia are very popular. What is more, the satellite information channel Euronews has quite a large audience. Uzbekistan's electorate is more informed about the politicians and party activists of the Russian Federation than they are about their own.

⁴⁹ See: M. Novak, *Dukh demokraticheskogo kapitalizma* (The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism), Transl. from the English by V.G. Marutik, Luchi Sofii Publishers, Minsk, 1997, p. 544.

The self-assurance of authoritarianism is becoming a burden, since it legitimizes the deficit in all spheres of activity, and primarily in the sphere of making correct political and economic decisions. Under authoritarianism, the people (including political parties) are always aware that someone is in control of the situation: the citizen does not always mobilize all his energy because there is no competition and pluralism. The absence of honest elections, as well as of free and independent mass media, promotes the conservation of people's inner potential and makes it impossible to identify talented people, who are always a great rarity in all societies. Authoritarianism gradually centralizes the government, and the entire government becomes personified. Although an increase in economic productivity may also be observed in authoritarian countries (under some conditions), there is eventually a steady decrease in the corresponding indices.

Authoritarianism, which is guided by "order and stability," gives rise, as the result of its self-assurance, to such social diseases as anomia, apathy, alienation, desperation, loss of the meaning of life, etc.

Public opinion has a legitimately low assessment of political parties because they are controlled by the government and due to the lack of honest and free competition, since it is the government, and not society, that is the arbitrator in this.

The law-governed social development can be analyzed by using the concept of "social shock absorbers."⁵⁰

Social shock absorbers are sociocultural institutions capable of intercepting signals testifying to the development of sociocultural contradictions, of taking measures to overcome them, as well as of stimulating society's ability to follow sociocultural laws. Social shock absorbers register an increase in latent or blatant public dissatisfaction or a deterioration in the mass comfort level, and launch urgent programs for taking corresponding measures.

In a liberal civilization, such social shock absorbers are freedom of the press, parliament, and political parties, including the opposition, as well as those participating in demonstrations, elections, and so on. Social shock absorbers channel (realistically or potentially) dangerous processes into matters of society's everyday concern, reducing the hope that everything will go right by means of the "totem," under the effect of objective laws of history, the bureaucracy, and so on.

The absence of corresponding social shock absorbers is leading to the phenomenon that can be described as "withdrawal of the disease within."

Now legitimate questions arise: which Uzbekistan institutions are currently carrying out the functions of social shock absorbers, on which values are these institutions based, in what way and how efficiently are these social shock absorbers working, and whether the political parties and the Uzbekistan parliament are social shock absorbers?

There is no doubt that political parties understand that they are the ones that should be the social shock absorbers, should channel society's protest potential, and register the increase in society's latent or blatant discomfort level. Within a certain framework, political parties play the role of social shock absorbers, but the latter's function is to monopolize the bureaucracy. The contradiction consists of the parties nevertheless carrying out certain functions, but the reason for this is that a deep mutual understanding has developed today between the government and the parties on the basis of the government's conditions, and in this sense the parties play the role the government has given them.

There are two more dimensions of political parties; the extent to which they are able to control the executive and judicial powers, as well as create constructive tension for the government, since such functions are classical in liberal societies, and without them it is impossible to talk about democracy.

⁵⁰ The term used in A.S. Akhiezer's book *Rossia: kritika istoricheskogo opyta*, Philosophical Society, Moscow, 1991 (*Sotsiokul'turniy slovar'*, Vol. 3, 471 pp.).

The reproduction of the functions of constructive tension is one of the important sociocultural mechanisms of democracy.⁵¹ By observing the experience of developed democratic countries, we can convince ourselves that the political system's main concern is political pluralism, where there are definitely institutions (in this case, political parties), a parliament (including the opposition), independent mass media, demonstrations, and other forms of protest, the main assignment of which is to create "constructive tension" not only with respect to the government, but also to the other actors in the political processes. Constructive criticism and opposition policy are the products of a normal and healthy political system.

Unfortunately, political parties are still unable to reproduce "constructive tension" with respect to the president and the government. On the contrary, in Uzbekistan, the country's president always expresses dissatisfaction with the activity of the political parties. This may seem paradoxical, but there is something legitimate here: the more the president calls on political parties to be independent, the more dependent they become. This is probably an expression of the double standard characteristic of many politicians: when political parties are criticized for their inactivity, a viewpoint corresponding to public opinion can be expressed. But the very fact that the government is critical of passivity directly indicates its attitude toward the parties, which simultaneously increases the dependence of the parties themselves. If political parties were independent, along with free mass media and honest elections, it would not be so easy for the government to criticize the parties unilaterally; on the contrary—the government in power would be afraid of parties capable of winning at elections and taking away its power.

Honest and free elections against the background of free mass media are capable of dynamically transforming the political processes in society. Under authoritarianism, the mass media are the first to fall under the government's control, and various manipulations are carried out at elections, since the government's main concern is to retain power and its comfortable position, and not concern itself with the comfortable position of society.

Uzbekistan's political parties are deprived of the possibility of carrying out supervisory functions with respect to the executive power; on the contrary, they have accepted the fact that they are controlled by it. Political parties and their parliamentary factions are not even claiming to participate in the development of the country's policy, since the practice that has developed does not place this responsibility on them.

C o n c l u s i o n

Uzbekistan's political parties are an important institution of the republic's political life, but they are not free enough to manifest themselves fully.

There is no doubt that the president wants to increase the role of parties in society. It turns out that society's problems are too much for one leader to deal with, while society is inclined to get excessively tired of one politician. The head of state's image is also retained when parties carry out certain political functions.

Nevertheless, when the president talks about strengthening parties, he in no way means encouraging their independence or full-fledged opposition—he is striving to acquire them as assistants for resolving common problems, but in no way as opponents who act willfully and make claims to power.

The financial status of political parties and their factions in the Legislative House of the Oliy Majlis corresponds to the functions placed on them by the state. Although the Law on the Financing

⁵¹ Ibidem. "Vector of constructive tension."

of Political Parties has helped to change their material and financial status, they are generally experiencing quite a serious shortage of funds.

The state, after reconsidering the financial side of the parties' activity, did not reconsider the political component of their activity. In other words, the state, after increasing the subsidizing of the parties, also increased its political control over them, and not vice versa. It is believed that independent political parties actively representing the interests of society are capable of more efficient self-financing.

Each and every party taken together is the nation's wealth. Their amorphousness and inefficiency result from the nature of the transitional political system, as well as from the absence of historical experience in this sphere. It can be presumed that the era of hyper-transformation of Uzbekistan's political regime is not too far away, and that it will probably begin in at least three of four years.

Intensified modification could gradually create circumstances for free political competition, under which the parties will most probably significantly reconsider their thinking and behavior and concentrate more on society than on the government. This may jeopardize the existence of some of the currently existing parties due to weak public support, but these developments of events does not meet the long-term interests of society.

Under conditions of free political competition, the role of parties in society significantly grows and the most active politicians and very influential people will show greater interest in them. This could lead to a change in leaders of relatively small parties and to energetic political players, who used to engage in politics in the corridors of the executive power, taking their place.

Nevertheless, the beginning of serious political transformations could put an end to the five-party system and lead to the appearance of a significant number of new political parties, as well as to the registration of opposition party projects.

Summing up the aforesaid, we can present the thought of Russian sociologist A.S. Akhiezer, who indicates that several problems relating to sociocultural thinking are encountered on the road to democracy:

- "Misconception of mass consciousness," when public faith in the leadership is so strong that the leaders can do everything. Anyone can essentially take the lead, but the leaders are frequently subjected to attacks, and so on, which requires their urgent replacement by another totem.
- "Misconception of the intelligentsia," according to which the population is always willing, mature, and perfect, only the old state order must be destroyed in order for the people to immediately (as soon as the government is replaced) have the possibility of carrying out radical reforms; everything immediately falls into place and democracy will come.
- And, finally, "misconception of the bureaucracy," according to which the people are not ready for democracy, they should only manage and control it.⁵²

Unfortunately, in Uzbek society, all the above-mentioned misconceptions exist and they are extremely polarized.

⁵² Terms used in: A.S. Akhiezer, *op. cit.*

THE NATURE OF POLITICAL SPLITS: THE ROSE REVOLUTION

Iury SULABERIDZE

*Ph.D. (Hist.), Senior research associate,
Institute of Political Science,
Georgian Academy of Sciences
(Tbilisi, Georgia)*

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

All revolutions—including those described by political scientists as Color Revolutions—share certain regularities and development cycles; all of them resolve contradictions in systems that have fallen behind the times; and all of them create new contradictions as the revolutionary wave moves onward. The Rose Revolution in Georgia was spearheaded against Eduard Shevardnadze's regime, which political scientists described as a "crossbreed of democratic bureaucracy and oligarchy." The system built by the "father of Georgian democracy" turned out to be the worst example of a Soviet successor state: it was ineffective, lacked self-sufficiency, and failed to meet the basic needs of post-Soviet society.

Today the Rose Revolution, which ushered in an era of Color Revolutions across the post-Soviet expanse, has become a target of scholarly studies. It can be scrutinized from different angles; I have posed myself the task of identifying the crucial features that created the genotype of power obvious at a certain development stage. I have undertaken to outline the psychological field in which the Georgian power culture was born.

Did the revolution reflect the cultural-political needs of Georgian society? Whose interests did it promote? What is preventing and what is assisting the achievement of a national consensus?

The Rose Revolution carried out under the slogan "Georgia without Shevardnadze" was obviously staged to remove the architect of the

defective system best described as a "failed state" from power. It was "the birds of Eduard's nest," the young reformers who for some time served the democratization façade, who finally brought down the system.

They struggled against the "dual world outlook" and the "policy of double standards," while social contradictions became more deeply entrenched, ethnopolitical conflicts continued to smolder, and partocracy usurped power based on property. Their efforts rallied all those displeased with the regime in a united "national movement" driven by a slogan that served the image of the younger part of the political elite.

The rising generation of politicians skillfully tapped popular discontent with the Shevardnadze regime and the unfolding systemic crisis to escalate them into a revolution. Not only did the government's weakness help to keep the revolution peaceful. The democratic reforms and the relatively free media had already created a suitable climate and enabled the opposition to make use of the Rustavi-2 TV channel and the press to discredit the regime. The democratic opposition leaders were trained in Belgrade, where the potential of velvet revolutions was first put to the test. The globalization ideologists used the foundations and NGOs they set up to channel money for financing the revolution, bribing officials, and bringing the government to its knees.¹

¹ See: B. Akaeva, "Gor'kiy opyt Kyrgyzstana, i neizbezhnost sobstvennogo puti demokraticeskikh reform," *Politicheskii klass*, No. 1, 2006.

The first stage of Georgia's post-Soviet existence (1992-2003) revealed the deep-cutting contradictions of its domestic development and the wide gap that separated the political class from the nation. To gain the power of which they had been deprived, the young reformers were forced to push the old Communist Party elite from the political scene. Transferred to politics, the "generation gap" problem developed into a political issue, and the time had come to remove the debris of the old communist system. The young reformers who claimed the role of builders of a new society first had to destroy the old one.

By the will of those who "guided" the Rose Revolution, it developed into a geopolitical force that echoed across the post-Soviet expanse.

Early in 2004, its leader Mikhail Saakashvili indulged himself in holding forth about an inevitable "geopolitical revolution" that would change the post-Soviet political map beyond recognition. The Georgian revolutionaries plunged into "exporting the revolution." In fact, the first post-revolutionary stage (November 2003-February 2005) was a period of revolutionary expansion and aggression against those who had already been tagged as "enemies of the revolution." In the spring of 2004, "the citadel of feudal separatism" (meaning Ajaria) fell. There was a certain logic in the fact that the actions of the revolutionary triumvirate, Saakashvili, Zhvania, Burjanadze, who used to be the closest followers of the "father of Georgian democracy," were based on an immoderate eulogizing of power.

The metamorphosis dressed as a peaceful Color Revolution led some to conclude that there had merely been a behind-the-scene agreement on the transfer of power.

The revolutionaries who announced the beginning of a new era of "democratic revolutions" claimed the role of founders of a new post-Soviet ideology. They declared that recent history should make a fresh start; their revolutionary thinking called for fast and radical measures. In February 2004, the revolutionaries amended the Constitution of Georgia to provide the new "version" of authoritarianism with a solid legal basis. The president and the executive branch acquired

more power at the expense of the legislators. The same happened in the juridical sphere. This protected central power against revivals of "feudal separatism." The triumvirate, meanwhile, revealed its first signs of disagreement when distributing the key posts and making new appointments. The state was based on the National Movement, which had developed into a state party. The revolutionaries were obviously moving along the road that Shevardnadze and his Union of Georgian Citizens had already covered. It led to clan politics, although the Rose Revolution had pledged to avoid this in an effort to uproot corruption. So far, corruption has survived to become the "Achilles' heel" of the new government. In order to keep up the pace, the revolutionaries reformed the police, army, and the judiciary; they built and fortified the power vertical and reformed local self-administration by placing it under strict control. What remained of the Soviet system in science and education was consistently destroyed. The ideological sphere was centralized; and the media fell under tight control.

In the summer of 2004, the logic of the revolutionary strategy of destruction led to a "cavalry raid" on Tskhinvali, which was presented as a humanitarian mission designed to spread the Rose Revolution to the conflict zones in order to "defrost" them. Inebriated by their "Ajarian triumph," when they deposed the "feudal oligarch," the revolutionaries hoped to "export democracy" to the "defrosted" conflict zones. They obviously preferred to ignore the contradictions that had been piling up over the last 15 years and, therefore, failed. Revolutionary thinking everywhere tends to standardize political situations and simplify the problems. The revolutionary wave ebbed for a while.

The new Georgian rulers made an attempt to dig down to the roots of their failures. In the first post-revolutionary period (between November 2003 and February 2005), the Republicans and the supporters of K. Davitashvili and Z. Dzidzighuri, who later set up a Conservative Party, left the National Movement under the pretext that the elections in Ajaria had been manipulated. There was a lot of disagreement over the summer events in South Ossetia. Social and economic policies,

which showed no breakthrough, came under severe criticism.

To a certain extent, the above caused the first obvious signs of disagreement inside the revolutionary triumvirate. Later, in February 2005, Premier Zurab Zhvania died under suspicious circumstances. The triumvirate lost its political heavy-weight, who had vast administrative and political experience behind him. His people were removed from their posts and vanished into the "carousel of power." The leaders used the reliable mechanism of rotation not to allow any of the groups to remain on top for long. Mikhail Saakashvili, the architect of the power pyramid, learned the rudiments of balancing interests from the "father of Georgian democracy."

This ushered in the second period of the Rose Revolution; its ebb was first detected in March 2005 together with the first signs of authoritarianism.

According to revolutionary logic, the Georgian Directory was replaced with a duumvirate, although Nino Burjanadze, the Georgian Iron Lady, was rapidly losing her political weight. Her parliamentary team was battered; while in the past Ms. Burjanadze, the speaker, found it hard to remain an independent political figure, she could no longer contain the executive branch once the parliament lost some of its authority. Today she is doing her best to look more "pro-presidential" than the president himself in order remain indispensable in the eyes of the higher echelons of power. By moving his appointee Z. Adeishvili to the post of Prosecutor-General, the president showed he was seeking control over the judicial system as well. Other important posts went to the president's close allies: P. Kublashvili, who became Chairman of the Supreme Court, and K. Kemularia, who was

appointed Minister of Justice to be replaced some time later with G. Kavtaradze, member of the premier's team. Premier Z. Nougaideli is a strictly nominal figure devoid of any political functions. He is kept to voice the president's political initiatives. The presidential team is weakening: there is no agreement on the crucial issues—conflict settlement and relations with Russia. For some time the president managed to maintain the balance between the "doves" (State Minister G. Khaindrava dismissed in July 2006 and Special Representative of the President for the Settlement of Conflict in Abkhazia I. Alasania, later appointed Georgian representative to the U.N.) and the "hawks" (Defense Minister I. Okruashvili, who had to resign in November 2006).

The ruling National Movement Party is very close to a split, which might deprive the president of the absolute parliamentary majority: the Democratic Front faction is stepping up its activities in the hope of building up a stronger opposition. The EU, on the other hand, insists that the election barrier should be lowered from 7 to 5 percent to give the opposition a chance, and that local elections should be transparent and democratic. A large part of the Georgian opposition demands direct elections of the mayors and gamgebeli (heads of the administration).

The opposition, supported to an increasing extent by politicians and the nation, wants less centralized power and a parliamentary republic. Today Georgia has reached a crossroads, from which it could take either the authoritarian or the democratic road. The choice depends to a great extent on the social and economic situation and conflict settlement. So far the prospects are bleak, which might prompt the president to make inordinate decisions.

The Political Split in the Post-Revolutionary Period

The post-revolutionary processes revealed certain regularities of the state and political class development. The revolutionary vanguard, which comprises part of the public and the political elite, is springing leaks.

This is happening, on the one hand, due to the objective revolutionary regularities and inconsistent reforms of the state and social sphere, which are adding more contradictions to those already existing. On the other hand, there are subjective reasons. The ruling class is still in flux; its ideological and organizational restructuring has not yet been completed. The reforms are being carried out under revolutionary slogans, but the new state is being built on principles of neoliberal globalization, which is clashing with the foundations of the traditional conservative culture.

Georgian post-Soviet political history is showing certain regularities, type of political thinking, and political power structure rooted in hoary antiquity. Alexander Neklessa has correctly pointed out: "Any national organism rests, in the final analysis, on a certain semantic field and philosophical justification of its existence."²

The culture-centric approach to the essence of Georgian power reveals the features responsible for the specifics of the Rose Revolution. The sources of the Georgian power culture and its genotype should be sought in Asia Minor.

We all know today that the time has come to look for the geo-cultural roots of the power-property that has taken shape in Georgia.

Significantly, there is interest in the Caucasian archetypes and the methodology of their identification. In fact, much in the political life of the Caucasian nations will remain unstudied if we fail to identify the specific features of the local nations' perception of politics. At the turn of the 20th century, those students of Caucasian culture who looked at it as a civilizational phenomenon leaving its deep imprint on world history were aware of this.³

Georgian power is dual by nature with a core formed by the dualism of its elements. At first there was the idea of predestination of the cultural-national mission of the "creator-heroes" who, having stolen fire from the gods, built life on earth. The demiurge heroes—beginning with ethnarch Kartlos, the legendary ancestor of the Iberian tribe Amiran; first Iberian czar Pharnaos; founder of Tbilisi, the new capital of Iberia, Vakhtang Gorgasal—laid the foundations of Georgian statehood. Orthodox Christianity adopted in the 4th century under Czar Mirian easily imbibed the idea of the Georgian ethnos as the chosen one, which, according to Nikolai Marr, prominent student of Georgian culture, was a "wishing tree" with numerous "ethnic branches" fed by one Asianic root. The single (unitary) Georgian tree of the power culture (the composition of which is highly complicated) has been feeding itself throughout its centuries-long history on Western and Eastern civilizational influences until it finally developed into a unique organism of "life phenomena" that helped preserve and develop Georgia's national self-identity and statehood.⁴

Georgia is a piedmont and mountainous country divided into western and eastern parts, the gorges of which are dominated by separate clans. For this reason, from time immemorial, there have been two states—Colchis and Iberia—on its territory. They had common roots but different cultural and ethnic features and developed under different civilizational influences. Orthodox Christianity as an organism of cultural development synthesized the contradictoriness between the unity and the diversity of the civilizational cultural elements. The Bagrationi Dynasty of Georgian czars was the vehicle of unification; they belonged to the earlier constellation of "hero-builders." Duality of power, however, was a primordial feature. The Georgian czars remained the symbols of unity and hero-builders throughout the Golden Age (the 12th-13th centuries). Particularism repeatedly crept in when the central-

² A. Neklessa, "Mir na poroge novoy geokul'turnoy katastrofy," *Politicheskiy klass*, No. 6, 2005, available at [<http://www.politklass.ru/cgi-bin/issue.pl?id=160>], 1 June, 2005.

³ See: Iu. Sulaberidze, "N. Marr kak istorik gruzinskoy kul'tury," *Nauchnaia mysl Kavkaza*, No. 2, 1999, pp. 90-94.

⁴ Academician Marr's archive is kept at the St. Petersburg Branch of the RAS, Record group 800. It contains preparatory documents on the history of Caucasian culture and the cultural heritage of the Caucasian peoples, Files 31, 410, 461, 467, and others. Some the documents have been published. Here I quote from the lectures N. Marr delivered in 1918-1922 at the Lazarev Institute (Institute of Oriental Studies).

ized power of the patron-father weakened: such periods produced “twin patrons,” while these “tan-dems” of heirs inevitably trailed after the patron-fathers like plumes.

The “patron-vassal” dichotomy is the archetype of Georgian power and the root of Georgian statehood. The patron of a social entity embodied the power vertical and the state-forming center, which attracted all clan interests; his personal status formed the foundation of power. In ethnic mythology, the clan head—*mamasakhlisi*—was responsible for society’s unity and the continuation of its traditions. The patron-czar (*mepe*), or patron-leader, inherited the features of the “father-ancestor,” the “hero-restorer,” of Georgian cultural and political history. Orthodox Christianity sanctified royal power and made it sacred. The theocracy of power erected a hierarchy of its vassals duty bound to serve their patrons. Neo-Platonism planted in Georgian cultural-political history a certain type of contact in the network of power relations based on strong personal ties, sworn brotherhood, and sacrifice for the sake of friendship and mutual assistance.

The country’s cultural-political history unfolded as the Fall and restoration of the Ideal. The power vertical based on loyalty to the patron was a result of cyclical developments in time and space from the piedmont to the mountains. The axiological system rested on the ideas of duty, honor, and sacrifice for the sake of duty and honor. People were free only within the limits of the “patron-vassal” tandem, that is, they were free to seek another, true patron who would be much closer to the Ideal. St. George was a symbol of statehood and the state’s patron; the land (*kvekana*) was a reflection and emanation of the metaculture. St. George was the patron saint of a country of landtiller-warriors and vine-growers. This was an embodiment of the spirit of the nation and its choral symphony, in which each and everyone had an individual role to play, but, nevertheless, remained subordinate to the clan.⁵

The idea of the state as the patron’s patrimonial possession survived for a long time as an institution and as part of sociopolitical consciousness. As distinct from Western Europe that had lived through religious wars, the Reformation, and the Counterreformation, which, in final analysis, proved responsible for the Leviathan state and civil society, the “patron-vassal” dichotomy of Georgian feudal society proved much more tenacious. In fact, the never-weakening pressure from the East doomed Georgian society to stagnation and conservation of its original forms of power.

The archaic type of power structure was on the whole very close to the Asianic society, which was divided into four castes. The second caste was called Kshatriya (landtiller-warriors), who, while being vassals of the priest-kings, had vassals of their own and played the role of “patrons-2” in relation to them. Personal ties strengthened the genetic tissue of power. The “patron-vassal” dichotomy reflected the system’s dualism as well as the fact that the power-forming components could not be separated. Implicitly it presupposed a fair (true) and unfair (false) patron; loyal (*kma*-friend, ally) and disloyal (internal and external enemy) vassal. An image of the supreme patron (*helisupalni*), who acquired his power from God, was also present as a myth.

Neo-Platonism spoke of this in the “single primary” conception. In an attempt to reach perfection and retrieve the Golden Age, the “hero-restorers” reestablished the cyclical cultural-political world.⁶

Whenever the dichotomy was threatened with diffusion under alien cultural and civilizational influence, the durability of the trunk of the “tree of Georgian power” was subjected to doubt. As part of the area where communication trends from the West and East meet, Georgian power demonstrated flexibility when confronted with novelties. It was deeply rooted in the ethnic and the national while its

⁵ See: G. Nizharadze, “Gruzinskaia kul’tura: osnovnye cherty i sravnenie so sredizemnomorskoy kul’turoy, *Caucas-US Context*, No. 31, 2001, pp. 96-103.

⁶ See: Sh. Nutsuridze, *History of Georgian Philosophy*, Vol. 5, Tbilisi, 1988, p. 305 (in Georgian).

branches spread to the West (Greek, Byzantine, and Asianic cultures) and to the East, to Persia. The multi-vector and multi-channel nature of the Georgian power culture ensured its continued existence; it wilted when the cultural influence from internal and external centers were depleted. The idea of Oriental renaissance and enlightened Byzantine autocracy helped to overcome feudal disunity in the territories divided into kingdoms and princedoms, and contributed in the 12th-13th centuries to the emergence of a strong centralized Georgian state.

The fall of the Byzantine Empire and decline of the Persian culture deprived the Georgian power culture of its primary driving force. In the 15th century, the Georgian state fell apart, while genetically conditioned principles of feudal particularism led to unwelcome duality, twin patrons, moral degeneration, and loss of axiological landmarks. In the 16th century, it had become clear that the country needed new external patrons from the West or the North (East). The Eurasian roots of the Georgian cultural-civilizational organism suggested a bias toward the Russian Eurasian civilization, which in the early 17th century showed a trend toward geopolitical expansion into the Baltic region and toward Black and Caspian shores. A. Tsagareli and M. Polievktov, two students of Georgian cultural-political history, have written that in the absence of Byzantium, Christian Orthodox Russia could objectively claim the role of Georgia's patron.⁷

Power was autocratic, but limited: in the "single-primary" concept it showed the "patron-vasal" interconnection of the hierarchical system, and the influence of folk traditions and customs as well as of religion that obliged the patron to become protector of the entire Georgian ethnos.

Decomposition of the spiritual basis of unity and bifurcation of the "single-primary" system brought to life the phenomenon of twin leaders and caused disintegration of the unitary state. Even under these conditions, public conscience was still devoted to the idea of cultural-national entity supported by Orthodox Christianity, culture, historical memory, and the primogeniture of the ruling dynasty.

While Georgia remained part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, its cultural-historical memory still retained the image of its former great statehood and the Golden Age, as well as a gallery of symbols of the hero-builders of Georgian statehood. Public conscience implicitly retained the image of the "state as the patron's patrimonial possession," which was also seen as the defender of ethnic and national interests. It was an ideal cherished in everyday life, which inevitably led to contradictions to be settled in the restored Golden Age of the Georgian power culture.

The Rose Revolution belongs to the context of Georgian cultural-political history. At the same time, it is a direct result of the crisis of the Soviet power system and the trends of the latter half of the 1980s and early 1990s created by the Soviet Union's disintegration. Perestroika of the latter half of the 1980s was a revolution from above carried out by some members of the Communist Party elite in the hopes of marrying socialist and bourgeois values. A return to genuine Marxism cut short by the onslaught of liberal democratic values destroyed the old axiological system. Communist ideology lost its foundation and bared all the superimposed layers and undeveloped forms of public conscience that had remained suppressed or "canned" for a long time. Those members of the CPSU bureaucracy who earned the title of "fathers of perestroika" had long been craving the material fruits of democracy. The first generation of "revolutionary partocrats" rode the wave of democratization of public life and subjected the system they wanted to reform to selective criticism.

By way of studying the nature of the uncompleted "revolution from above" and the advent to power of "sons of mini-fathers" (or replacement of the "patrons-ancestors" with "patrons-2"), I shall offer certain comments and suppositions that might clarify the subject.

⁷ See: M. Polievktov, *Ocherki po istorii russkogo kavkazovedenia XVI-XVIII vekov*, Central State Historical Archives of Georgia, Record Group 1505, File 52.

I think that the transition to democracy has its own specifics in the post-Soviet, Eurasian expanse that help to identify the mechanism of attraction-repulsion between the genotype of power and the structural innovations of civilizational nature being insistently planted in post-Soviet soil.⁸

Today a very complicated and contradictory process of the crumbling of the Soviet cultural-political heritage (the deeper layers of the centuries-old culture are also being deformed in the process) and the appearance of new layers of state and public conscience is unfolding before our eyes. In this respect, the Rose Revolution was the most aggressive attempt to destroy the past, even though its mythologems proclaim a “return to the Golden Age” and the genuinely Georgian national-cultural idea.

The “revolutionary sons” are prepared to “turn history upside down and write it anew.” They want to become the Protestants of the Age of Information. This is another wave of Westernization that uses the techniques tested in the Soviet successor states. At the stage of late modernity bogged down in its spiritual crisis, the globalization fathers who aspire to control the strategically important energy sources are busy exporting democratic clichés through the “sons of the mini-fathers” of perestroika whom they tagged as “the driving forces of revolutionary changes.” What role can half-baked revolutionaries play in borrowing the ready-made techniques of a consumer society? Are they ready to destroy the past and build the future? Is the spiritual basis on which the new structure of Georgian statehood will rest firm enough in the context of strictly controlled globalization? Are there enough internal resources—political, economic, cultural, and symbolic capital—on which they are expected to rely?

There is the opinion among academics that “revolutionary passion and consumerism are kindred phenomena: the former destroys society by means of the activities of those resolved to destroy, while the latter does this by means of passivity and indifference to everything unrelated to things material. Both are equally unscrupulous.” It is often pointed out that Westernization presupposes a collective flight from tradition and borrowing the worst examples of the donor power culture.

As distinct from the Enlightenment, the Rose Revolution had no tilled spiritual soil: it was predated neither by religious wars nor the Reformation. It was most probably nurtured by exported models of a world order that underwent a profound crisis right before its decline and a transfer of deep-seated contradictions from the center to the periphery, to Eurasia. This has nothing to do with Huntington’s clash of civilizations—it is a crisis of industrial civilization seeking salvation. It would be naïve and not very productive to look for spiritual undertones of revived spiritual traditions amid “manageable chaos.” In the absence of an integral reform ideology, its driving forces have no choice but to preserve the right to use the cultural surrogates offered by the consumer society to jump onto the bandwagon at the eleventh hour.

A civilian political culture takes a long time to develop, so the “patron-fathers” are still on top because of their charisma. Legitimacy of their power, on the other hand, is very shaky—it rests on utopia and the hope and promise of a breakthrough to the Golden Billion and of finding an external sponsor who will help to restore the Golden Age. The revolutionary approach to the process of assimilation of civilizational values hand-picked for a faster and more impressive effect destroys the continuity of the cultural blocks and ignores the evolutionary nature of the Georgian power culture. The consumer approach reveals the inner potential of the legitimacy of power, which has been very much weakened under the pressure of a globalization project designed to swallow the local area. The normative-moral system borrowed without discrimination is undermining the national organism; it is eroding the ties that keep the “patron-vassal” dichotomy together and damaging its emanation in the “leader-elite” system.

⁸ See: B. Kapustin, “Konets ‘tranzitologii’ (o teoriakh osmysleniya pervogo postkommunisticheskogo desiatiletia),” *Polis*, No. 4, 2001, p. 24.

Negative energy easily ignites the masses: they enthusiastically erect pedestals for their heroes and as enthusiastically dismiss them as “hero-builders.” Power has failed to create conditions in which businesses and civil institutions can be horizontally developed to help corporate citizenship to appear.

The clan principle cannot help to overcome the “power-property” dichotomy; it does not lead to their separation or identification of the personal autonomous elements. For this reason, business that “grows from below” remains under the constant pressure of “state racket.” A civil society is built and controlled from above. The nature of power the “mini-fathers” created is still the same: it is a “clan-limited democracy,” which analysts prefer to describe as hybrid. Georgian academics have already pointed out that token democratic values and institutions are unlikely to grow on Georgian soil.⁹

Today, democratization of Eurasian society is incomplete, smacking of the appearance of parallel leaders, clan parties, and power centers that cannot be described as alternatives. This is rooted in the local mentality and the specifics of the cultural and political development of Eurasian societies, of which Georgia is one.

“Clan power,” which seeks monopoly, where the democratic idea is concerned, as well as monopoly in the sphere of democratic resources and privileges, is recreating a closed space that provides fertile soil for all sorts of revolutionary alternatives. The process channeled into the “revolution-conservation” cycle is leading to another bout of chaos. For this reason we should accept the crises of self-identity, legitimacy, involvement, and distribution as a regular feature of Georgia’s post-Soviet cultural-political history.¹⁰

In the post-Soviet period, the Georgian state developed amid the debris of a great power with anti-communist and anti-Soviet sentiments dominating the minds. This added negative overtones to the sovereignization of the Soviet successor states. It turned out that Georgia was ill-prepared for independence because the processes of immanent national progress were severed for a long time; the country did not have the opportunity to live through all the evolutionary stages that would have transformed it from a “state-bureaucracy” into a “nation-state.” The syndrome of the “state as a patrimonial possession” dominated the minds of those in power as well as the minds of the public and the political class unable to achieve positive national self-awareness. The idea of the “lesser evil” predominated in the geopolitical context, which never created a positive image of how to acquire sovereignty. The level of state thinking was inadequate to the development needs of the Georgian nation and a civil society. The period of alienation from the large system undermined the earlier adaptation mechanisms of self-identification. The old structures were falling apart, while new ties based on clans and hierarchies appeared in a very complicated way.

No strategic priorities or survival programs are possible amid the resultant chaos. The efforts to build a democratic state are hardly systemic, therefore the “dual nature” of the power culture could fall apart at any time. The periphery could move away from the center, while in the absence of a multi-vector mechanism, the latter cannot insist on the legitimacy of the power-culture tradition.

A liberal interpretation of the modernization process prevails; it is dominated, in turn, by a very negative idea of freedom as freedom from the old patron. This cannot produce any fundamental ideas about Western cultural values: they are still perceived in a purely utilitarian way as a random selection. Tradition is sacrificed to post-modernism in the spirit of a “society-show,” in which it is reduced to a symbolic commodity needed for beautifying the façade of the rising experimental building of a

⁹ For “clan democracy,” see: K. Kikabidze, D. Losaberidze, *Institutionalism and Clientelism in Georgia*, Tbilisi, 2001 (in Georgian).

¹⁰ For the nature of the Georgian political elite, see: Iu. Sulaberidze, “Politicheskaia elita Gruzii,” *Politia*, No. 4, 2001/2002, pp. 173-180.

global revolution. The institutionalized formal process is treated as a priority to which the democratization of public life and state power is sacrificed. In the absence of a division of power and an independent judicial system, and in the presence of weakly articulated interests of individuals and groups, the resultant political system is obviously biased toward authoritarianism. This is quite understandable: the fundamental structures of the nation-state are still undeveloped, there is no contemporary bureaucracy; and the political class is disunited and prefers to ignore the Georgian power-culture structure. For this reason, it is expedient to study the specific forms through which the “patron-vassal duality” is demonstrated (their functions being performed by the political leaders and elites), the reasons behind the splits, and the possibility of restoring the unity needed to formulate a survival strategy. To achieve this we should overcome both the utopianism and the mythological nature of political thought that has been expressing itself so far in the conditional and imperative moods and the feeling of despondency that has gripped the public, which has lost its landmarks in the globalized political expanse.

The revolutionaries in power declare that they are devoted to national values, but they are unable, due to limited political and economic resources and the inadequate ideological and symbolic potential of a split society, to offer a program of self-identification as a global social milieu. This is leading to internal crises and splits in the political class and society as a whole.

The previous “father-patron” of post-Soviet Georgia was forced to take the nature of post-Soviet power into account, at a time when the ruling class was a symbiosis of old Communist Party functionaries responsible for the “revolution from above” based on the platform of the convergence of different systems and the “young reformers” who served the façade of the democratization process.

After 2003, the old Communist Party members were removed from “power-property.” The “new revolution from above” called the Rose Revolution redistributed power-property once more. The still surviving blend is another Achilles’ heel in the reformation process. The ruling class (otherwise described as the clan system) is being formed according to the old patterns. After removing the old clan from the political field, the Rose Revolution, which started as an anticorruption campaign, failed to set up a mechanism of social selection. The young reformers preferred an obviously limited method implemented through the National Movement with no integral ideology, an amorphous program, and lack of organizational structures. The Freedom Institute, another political incubator, is devoted to liberal-democratic values that are hardly suitable for the country’s conservative soil. The fact that NGOs are involved in politics speaks of the weakness of civil society and the Rose Revolution’s limited resources. Reform in any Eurasian society is inevitably complex and contradictory: there are still deeply rooted clans that consume only those elements that help them to survive and reproduce themselves.

The young people now in power are poor professionals: they could have acquired political skills, but they prefer cheap effects and PR campaigns. The revolutionaries are seeking instant effects—a mania that drives ailments deeper into the nation’s body. The revolutionaries do not want to talk to the opposition—even to the so-called “pocket” members. They are dizzy from their initial success; they are unwilling to go to “school of democracy,” even though the initial success was followed by crises and domestic and foreign policy blunders.

They are moving father away from the nation, which brought them to power in the first place. It looks as if those who suspected a pact between the revolutionaries and the old party functionaries from the very beginning were right, at least in part. Later, the revolutionaries preferred to ignore some of the conditions: they plunged into redistribution of property. This process, which is still going on, might exacerbate the already existing contradictions inside the ruling class and affect the middle and even the lower class. In this context, much is being done to narrow down the field of the political opponents’ activities from above. This trend first betrayed itself at the initial stage (between November

2003 and February 2005) and became obvious at the second stage (March 2005) when the revolutionary wave ebbed.

The New Right, the party of the Georgian business community, is moving further into the opposition; and the Republicans and the Conservatives, two former allies of the ruling National Movement, are growing more radical. The Labor Party, which openly opposes authoritarianism and policies that ignore the majority's social needs, is stepping up its activities.

In response, the government resorted to force and persecutions typical of undeveloped democracies. V. Gelashvili, one of the New Rightists, was beaten up and deprived of his deputy mandate.

It seems that the government and opposition alike decided to reveal the political undertones of all the events: compromising materials are freely used; what has been going on behind the scenes is offered for public observation. The case of Sh. Ramishvili, head of the opposition "202" TV channel, and the campaign the opposition unfolded against Minister of the Interior V. Merabishvili in connection with the murder of S. Girgvliani are two pertinent examples.

An organizational and ideological split in the Freedom Institute, which, in fact, determined the state's policies, was more evidence of the crisis. The "birds of George Soros' nest" want the niche vacated by Zurab Zhvania's death and disintegration of his team. The field of support is narrowing, while the government is betraying its bias toward authoritarianism with even greater clarity. It turned out that the younger elite has no reserve. There are no positive programs—the messages and PR campaigns serve as substitutes. The revolutionaries are unwilling to slow down the "driving force" and are doing their best to present a united front. The more they try to do this, the deeper the crevices in their ranks become: the formerly united group is falling apart into clans.

Like the "father of Georgian democracy" before him, the revolutionary president is building up a pyramid of power based on a balance of interests of the power-related structures around which the government groups are congregating. Minister of the Interior V. Merabishvili is a pillar of the state system; to a certain extent he binds together the interests of all the power groups operating in permanent tension. Minister of Defense I. Okruashvili served as a counterweight; as distinct from his colleague he nurtured presidential ambitions. Concerned with his popularity, the incumbent president sent the minister who rejected compromises and claimed the role of the gatherer of Georgian lands into retirement. The place of a potential rival of the "patron of the Georgian nation" remains vacant. Candidates might be sought among the members of the Freedom Institute that generates revolutionary ideas and raises cadres for post-revolutionary Georgia.

There are talks about a possible confrontation within the ruling parliamentary faction between the Arveladze-Kirkitadze group (called the "Bolshevik asset of the National Movement") and the intellectual core of G. Bokeria-G. Targamadze, which represents the Freedom Institute. Their functions are different: the Bolshevik asset is engaged in domestic policies, which use force, while the "intellectuals" are busy integrating Georgia into the Euro-Atlantic structures and exporting color revolutions. In fact, this was inherited from the old regime of Eduard Shevardnadze.

Time will show whether President Saakashvili can cope with the role of an arbiter between the two groups. There is the opinion that the Bokeria-Targamadze group will gain enough weight to formulate an independent position. In fact, G. Bokeria has gained control over the parliament and pushed the faction's former head M. Nadiradze aside. Speaker Nino Burjanadze is playing a much lesser role than before; she is often absent from Georgia visiting Eastern and Western countries to rally international support in the event of negative domestic developments. The West, on the other hand, is growing increasingly critical of the Georgian president's authoritarian trends; it is aware of possible radicalization in the republic with social problems and unsettled regional conflicts moving to the fore.

Georgia is entering a post-revolutionary crisis period in which the former revolutionary allies are going their separate ways. In a country where interests are vague while thinking is highly partic-

ularized, a new charismatic leader is possible; he might appear from among the revolutionary ranks. On the whole, post-Soviet experience has demonstrated that power is changed through co-evolution; we cannot exclude the possibility of a new person who has nothing in common with the “carousel of power.”

Unity is not maintained by the ideology of reforms—it survives on personal loyalty to the patron, or even to revolutionary ideals that are rapidly developing from a rose into a whip. The Rose Revolution is losing its dynamism; it is moving forward by momentum caught in a vicious circle of the same accursed questions that the previous government failed to cope with. Inadequate reserves and lack of professionals not only regularly dispose of bureaucrats of the middle and lower levels, but also create an atmosphere of uncertainty and grounds for even worse “ideological” corruption. Those who cannot reconcile themselves to the “biding for time” policies and who feel their inadequacy as deputies are leaving the National Movement parliamentary faction. This is what D. Zurabishvili and G. Tortladze did. More people will follow suit; Salome Zurabishvili, former foreign minister, removed from her post, has found herself among them. This will trigger far-reaching repercussions that will affect the National Movement, the re-grouping in the upper echelons of power, and the political process as a whole. Salome Zurabishvili has headed the Georgia’s Road political movement resolved to oppose the clan-patterned government and those who, she insists, betrayed the revolutionary ideals and are ignoring its principles. In the international context, her retirement delivered a blow to the revolutionary ideals and the hopes of seeing Georgia as the regional leader.

Unity as the National Movement’s key slogan might crack. State Minister G. Khaindrava, the odd man out in the cabinet, had to go after Salome Zurabishvili left, or was forced to leave, the revolutionaries’ team. Hawk I. Okruashvili was also removed. The people at the top have no conception of reforms. There is the opinion that reforms and revolutionary charges can hardly be combined, while a gradual advance toward authoritarianism and the efforts to achieve a balance of forces undertaken by the power-related ministers is a delayed action bomb under the entire edifice of power.

The crisis is especially obvious in the parliament, where a new Democratic Front faction made up of Conservatives and Republicans came together on a “constructive radicalism” basis. The very fact that radicalism is moving to the fore is highly indicative. The institutional basis of power is much weaker than under Shevardnadze and Abashidze; the structures erected by Zhvania were likewise destroyed. Today, the “collective Freedom Institute” has shouldered the task of creating a new institutional foundation (most probably of an authoritarian type). The Republicans, their former comrades-in-arms from the same institute, are determined to stick to “constructive radicalism” to develop liberal democracy. There is no real opposition in the parliament; those who may count as the opposition have been silenced by the pressure group described above and the silent parliamentary majority. The newly formed faction that unites the Conservatives and Republicans may serve as the foundation for a new opposition. Acting together with the New Right, they are trying to build a parliamentary minority, the opinions of which have so far been ignored. Under these conditions, boycotting the sittings of the Georgian legislature cannot be described as effective—no wonder it failed.

No one knows so far whether the group will survive: power that needs a political system dominated by the ruling party has too many tools of pressure. The Association of Young Lawyers, which produced several revolutionary politicians, I. Okruashvili and Prosecutor-General Z. Adeishvili among them, has already learned this. Recently, the Young Lawyers have been accused of excessive politicization and of turning into an appendage of the Republican Party headed by the family tandem of Usupashvili-Khidasheli. This speaks of certain trends: first, the Freedom Institute has monopolized the function of raising revolutionaries, which is probably done by the Bokeria-Targamadze group largely

responsible for the organizational and ideological spheres. It does not need rivals, especially in view of the Young Lawyers' attempts to broaden their possibility of making an ideological onslaught on power (so far criticism remains constructive). The government, in turn, relies on the tested tactics of splitting the ranks of the former "democratic ally" turned political rival. Second, in October 2006, the government won the local elections, which means that the opposition, which lacked a constructive position, was defeated. Those in power never tired of demonstrating the unity in their ranks and popular support; the rating of the ruling party, meanwhile, is declining: the nation is losing the illusions and hopes kindled by the Rose Revolution.

C o n c l u s i o n

It takes a long time to build a democratic state; the process is not simple and is full of stumbling blocks and pitfalls; the political and economic resources are limited, while the post-Soviet inertia has not been overcome. The reforms exacerbated the old contradictions and created new systemic difficulties probably because they lacked a clear ideology and systematic approach. Society is disintegrating: some 1.5-2 percent of the chosen ones acquired power-property, while over 54 percent live below the poverty level.

International organizations have confirmed that the trend is surviving. There are no longer illusions about prompt conflict settlement and integration into the EU. People are concerned with social issues: unemployment, personal security, and earnings.

Society has finally become aware that the young and inexperienced rulers have blundered with respect to Russia, which was dismissed as a "partner" in the recent National Security Conception, at a time when Russia could play the leading role in dealing with the economic and political (conflict settlement) issues. It looks as if the government should readjust its priorities in order to avoid new crises in Georgian-Russian relations. One such crisis happened in the spring of 2006 when a PR war developed into an economic war that closed the Russian market to Georgian products. In the fall, Moscow introduced new economic and political sanctions against Tbilisi—a sure sign of a deep crisis in the two countries' bilateral relations. They undermined the Georgian economy and delivered a heavy blow to the ambitions of the Georgian leaders, who are aspiring to create a developed Georgian state.

Is there the possibility of authoritarian rule in Georgia? There are certain possibilities in all countries that take the road of democracy after long periods of totalitarianism and authoritarian rule. The democratic political and symbolic resources are too limited; illegitimate regime changes might develop into a tradition; the political class is undeveloped; the interests of the masses are inadequately articulated, and the leaders are unable to suppress their personal ambitions for the sake of compromises, all of which indicates that the political culture of the political class and nation as a whole remains low. This provokes conflicts at all levels and pushes the people at the top to undertake democracy-limiting measures and make efforts to impose their own rules of the game on the opposition for the sake of self-preservation. The checks-and-balances system as applied by the revolutionaries is faulty. The legislators and judiciary alike were deprived of part of their powers, which were transferred to the executive branch. This trend clearly seen in the post-revolutionary period (at the second stage in particular) is the opposition's main target.

Independence of the courts is purely formal, and the media, TV channels, and the journalist community are working under pressure. This is obvious to everyone. Georgia should learn from Ukraine, another post-revolutionary republic. The events in this "fraternal revolutionary country" may to a certain extent provoke a split in the ruling elite and bring to the fore those deprived of the fruits of privatization of power-property the Georgian leaders are busy carrying out.

Georgia has entered a very important period of its development. It will be not easy to find a way out of the present quandary while the political struggle continues and new alliances are being formed to seize the vanguard positions. The situation in the conflict zones is going from bad to worse. These are parallel processes that might develop into another tangle of contradictions. A revolutionary approach to it will worsen the situation.

NETWORK STRATEGY AND CONFIGURATION OF THE PARTY SPACE

Bakhodyr ERGASHEV

*D.Sc. (Philos.), professor
(Tashkent, Uzbekistan)*

“We put country before party”—this post-election statement by Al Gore can be fully applied to the general mood in the Central Asian countries now busy strengthening their national security and transforming civil institutions. All of them have already acquired party constructs, but have so far failed to create an adequate opposition to them. The local democracies’ strong sides are better seen in the context of the difficulties they are coping with and will probably overcome.

There is a commonly shared opinion that the 2005 events in Kyrgyzstan delivered a heavy blow to the parties born in the 1990s: the majority of them are in an obvious crisis. Their ideas have lost their attractiveness,¹ while they can no longer

¹ More often than not the regional parties, which are parties of the old, pyramidal type, become a sort of an appendage to the political system. Most of them are either conglomerates of marginal bureaucrats or charismatic public movements. They simulate and imitate political actions, thus being engaged in political profanation without any signs of progress, philosophies, ideas, platforms, or positions. They lack social groups able to invest their political expectations in such parties—and this is their worst failure. This is typical of all Soviet successor states in which the “party brands are moved to the regions as fran-

chises, while political delimitation into parties is purely theoretical” (“Levyi povorot,” *Russkiy zhurnal*, 19 September, 2006).

enlist new allies. “Network structures”² or “meta-action,” “professional structures”—terms borrowed from specialists—are offered as an alternative to the “troubled political waters.”

Sympathies with the network strategy have become synonymous with the *complexity* of the structure of relations among political actors (prominent public figures, heads of state structures, parties and other civil institutions, etc.), efficient means of human resources management, etc. This explains why the people in power, the strengthening business circles, and society, now aware of its integrity, are showing an ever-growing interest in this topic. It may be said without exaggeration that the network tradition is experiencing another period of high popularity.

² It is commonly believed that developed “network” terminology is a relatively recent phenomenon authored by the Rand Corporation in its famous paper *Networks and Networks: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (see: [http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1382/index.html], 8 November, 2006).

I. A Glance into the Past. The Young Bukharian “Dozens” as Network Prototypes

The East, which lives in the midst of permanent wars and punitive expeditions, could have created the network tradition, this widely shared conviction being confirmed by the still surviving and immutable clan-tribal structure obvious in the vast territory between Israel and Japan, as well as by the surviving might of what remained of al-Qa‘eda.³ This conviction, however, is ill-suited to the history and functioning of the powerful Communist Party of China or of the unique Turkish secular parties.

The network tradition and the centralized party structures *are not mutually exclusive*: they are two independent forms of political struggle, each of which has a *raison d’être* of its own in specific, probably temporary situations. They may interact, intertwine, and even mutually enrich one another. Unlike the term “network,” the network structures are not a recent invention. The histories of the largest political parties of the East (of the 20th and 21st centuries included) offer examples of the obvious domination (in the communist parties, in particular) of a centralized over a network structure.

The Bolshevik party-building strategy includes this principle, together with a national political *newspaper*. We all know that the newspaper as a communication form corresponds to rigidly centralized structures. On the one hand, it is “one for everybody” and demands ideological obedience in a police state; on the other, “nothing will be spared”—human lives are regarded as expendable, “part of statistics,” as one of the Bolshevik leaders put it.

The Young Bukharians, the first democratic opposition party in Central Asia serves as a unique example: it borrowed all the best features of the similar and even eponymous structures of semi-colonial Egypt, Turkey, and Afghanistan. Its leaders and ideologists (Faizulla Khojaev, A. Fitrat, and others) used the national *Uchkun* newspaper and a network structure based on the “dozens” principle that united volunteers into groups, in which each of the twelve members knew only the group’s leader, while the leaders of the dozens were under an even higher leader. Secrecy was not an imperative: the party also operated in emigration (Russia, Kazakhstan, China, and elsewhere). From the very beginning, each of the party members (the core was composed of no more than 300) had a chance to distinguish himself in the political and even physical sphere.

II. Synergetics as the Methodology of Contemporary Network Structures

The main principle of synergetics says that a system is always bigger than the mere sum-total of its parts. When applied to society, this philosophy does not deny either individual freedom or collective efforts in public activities. When applied to socio-genesis, it may mean either multitude or poly-

³ One tends to agree with Alexander Bard and Jan Soderquist, two Swedish academics, who have pointed out that 11 September, 2001 will develop some time in the future into a symbol of how “the information society replaced capitalism as the dominant paradigm” (A. Bard, J. Soderquist, *Netokratia. Novaia praviashchaia elita i zhizn’ posle kapitalizma*, The Stockholm School of Economics in St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, 2004, 256 pp.).

centrism; in relation to party-genesis, it implies an effort to introduce *order and dynamics* into the process of party building.⁴

Synergetic principles related in particular to the so-called bifurcation period (transition from instability to stability) make the specifics of party-genesis in transition societies much clearer. The cyclical nature of bifurcation periods may produce any result. It is the job of a responsible politician to identify the *point of bifurcation*, or rather the cluster of trajectories of a political system, in order to realize the desired scenario of social development (contemporary network strategy has recognized, together with synergetics, a political system aptly called plurarchy).

In transition conditions, so-called *fluctuations* (random changes) become even more important: socially insignificant, they may nevertheless change the system's development course. This creates a "charisma effect," which, acting in a definite way at a definite bifurcation point, may resolve a social crisis. Synergetics and rational sociology prefer "small-scale impact with big results," or, to put it differently, non-linear impact.

Today, to a greater extent than before, contemporary network strategy presupposes *open social systems*. According to the synergetic law of increasing entropy, closed systems reach the stage of chaos, which means that any closed system ends up as a disorganized entity. The philosophers of the school of synergetics describe this as a social development law. They are convinced that because of the cyclical nature of public activities of those in power, continuity of the state apparatus should be ruled out.

By way of summing up the above, it can be said that, as distinct from Marxist dialectics, synergetics recommends *openness* (to better respond to external signals), *unity* (to achieve higher results), and *administration* (according to physical and mathematical laws).

III. Fidokorlar and Asar as Products of Political Technologies that Belong to Different Times

Those who set up Fidokorlar in Uzbekistan and Asar in Kazakhstan used methods that largely correlated with synergetic philosophy and even network strategy. The authors of this *social experiment* wanted to create a "unique laboratory of social innovations," "to tap into new sources of human energy," "to find new types of public temperament," and to discover "non-standard schemes of decision-making." It turned out that Asar of Kazakhstan was born by the need "to step up inner competition in the camp of pro-president parties."⁵

In both cases, the organizers, probably for different reasons, appealed to the *multitude of administration centers*. The network organization uses the "expert" method of self-management: a decision on any specific issue belongs to the person whom the cell recognizes as the most competent in any given sphere. He acts in the name of the cell, but is personally responsible for the results. Finally, the rules of both parties presupposed that membership was strictly voluntary. In fact, even leaders found it hard to upgrade the territorial units' efficiency.

Both parties *attached special importance to media* that were slightly oppositional; both parties did their best to attract the "centers of confidence" (people whom the nation respected) to their

⁴ When talking about the importance of defining the methodology of network party-genesis, we agree with Vladislav Surkov, President Putin's aide, who has pointed out that today competitive ideology has become much more important than competitive commodities or services.

⁵ [www.asar.kz], 8 November, 2006.

side.⁶ From the very beginning, Asar relied on “the urban and rural intelligentsia: engineers, teachers, doctors, academics, farmers, inventors, journalists, petty businessmen, and the active part of the youth.”⁷

The leaders of the two Central Asian countries have repeatedly announced that they wanted to create a *patriotically-minded administrative elite*, the interests of which would coincide with those of the nation for the sake of the nation’s education and development. This is seen as the key to success. After the elections, both parties acted as developed network organizations and continued shaping the elite out of local leaders tested by party work: obviously, the parties had not been set up only for the limited purpose of participating in elections.

IV. Extrapolation of Western Tradition. Partocracy under Conditions of Netocracy

The situation in which *Western network policies scored certain points in Central Asia in the 1990s* with the stated aim of “promoting democratization processes” suggests a fresh approach to many of the local social processes. Today, certain specific tasks have become obvious: we should identify the segments of the international organizations network; study in detail the system of influences, impulses, and manipulations; master the methodology of “netcentrist operations,” etc. We all know that the establishment of a network of journalist clubs by the Open Society Institute, of the Civil Society Support Centers by IREX, and the opening of territorial divisions in the regions, districts and cities by CAFÉ (the latter two organizations instituted by the United States) were the most successful Western projects.

We all know that not all operations aimed, and will aim in the future, at democratization. The “network vs. the state” dilemma was created by the 21st-century practices. On the whole, there is still the real danger of transforming the Central Asian states into “nominal states” in which power will be controlled by network structures (religious-extremist structures like Hizb ut-Tahrir are not excluded). The countries risk losing their sovereignties to become an area in which alien interests clash. We feel that the leader of the former Asar party was quite right when he said: “We spent a long time traveling along the road by means of the roadmaps of democracy printed in the West. We even diligently translated them into the Kazakh language to adjust them to our mentality and adapt them to our conditions. Yet they remained Western... Today we see that Russia, China, and the West have gone their separate ways. We feel this. We do not want to become a battlefield for our neighbors.”⁸

The Internet remains a neutral enclave of information warfare. Free access to it and its worldwide nature have made it a contemporary network structure. As distinct from TV, it cannot be subjugated to the limited interests of any nomenklatura group. The Internet is the ideological basis of a contemporary network structure by force of its decentralization.⁹ It is highly unlikely that Western traditions can be ignored in a post-industrial information society.

⁶ Significantly, in Nicaragua the Sandinistas (a network structure) pulled village quack-doctors to their side.

⁷ [www.asar.kz], 8 November, 2006.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Swedish academics A. Bard and J. Soderquist have described the community of “virtual entities” (or, better still, “people of the Network”) as a “plurarchy.” Its population is guided by its own system of values—the netiquette designed to ensure the Network’s uninterrupted functioning (see: A. Bard, J. Soderquist, op. cit.).

V. Will “New Wave” Parties Appear?

The Bishkek and many other events left few who doubted that the time was ripe for *political parties of a new type* with an original organizational structure and a different type of relationship with their electorate and supporters orientated toward post-material values and exhibiting a “style behavior” of their own. The old rules of political struggle are in crisis, the classical parties lost their prestige; they alienated themselves from civil society and moved dangerously close to the state. President Karimov justly pointed out that the party should demand that “its members, founders, and prominent activists in particular look out for the most frequent hazards: careerism, ambitiousness, conceit, and overestimation of their own powers.”¹⁰

The recent political inventions in Uzbekistan demand the existence of (1) a ruling party (the Uzbek Liberal-Democratic Party with the premier among the leaders) and a constructive opposition party; and (2) a parliamentary majority (the Democratic Block of Factions set up in February 2005) and parliamentary minorities (the People’s Democratic Party of Uzbekistan—PDP). The government is exhibiting an unmistakable interest in transferring the huge masses of socially vulnerable groups to the PDP during elections. The PDP’s initiation of the removal of some of the heads of local administrations (khokims) from their posts was widely covered by the press in August 2006, which suggests that this structure was designed for longevity.

In Kazakhstan, it was a political novelty “not to suppress the shoots of dissent,” to “encourage public discussions and living thought,” and “to support the Committees of Public Confidence and reception rooms of the People’s Control structures that express the hopes and dreams of the third sector—civil society institutions.”¹¹ It seems that the methods of *reception rooms* should be improved so that they do not become “emergency rooms” for all citizens with their everyday problems. It should be noted that these structures and “public reception rooms” should attract more volunteers.

Decentralized decision-making, when the lower levels control the party leaders, may be possible in the near future. A *genuine network approach* can be realized when (1) local organizations are relatively independent from the higher party structures; (2) the rank-and-file voters are given a chance to become more active; (3) personnel rotation is registered in the relative documents; (4) the leaders obey the decisions of the local party units regarding “general party” issues, etc. When moving toward its decline, the C.P.S.U. started using some of these methods; today Otan in Kazakhstan and PDP in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also resort to some of these tools.

The network structure will permit the leaders of territorial units to strictly control the members and ensure strong leadership and coordination of actions. The members, in turn, will be able to carry out their difficult and never-ending work: they must study the needs of their areas, maintain ties with the local businessmen, etc. They can receive their *payment* from various sources: some of the network activists may find employment with state and public organizations as well as acquiring donations from trade and industrial companies that need patents or are seeking contracts.

Party programs will become a product of wide, genuinely democratic discussion (Fidokorlar, Asar, and the UzLiDeP have already created precedents). *Contemporary political technologies* demand that the precincts should reach every apartment and every voter, etc. The higher party

¹⁰ I.A. Karimov, *Mirnaia zhizn' i bezopasnost' strany zavisiat ot edinstva i tverdog voli nashego naroda*, Uzbekiston Publishers, Tashkent, 2004, p. 31.

¹¹ [www.asar.kz], 8 November, 2006.

structures will devote their time to serving the lower party activists; they will be engaged in fund-raising to pay for business trips, lectures, distribution of printed matter, radio and TV presentations, etc.

I do not suggest that the American experience should be borrowed indiscriminately: the American network structures are based on a unique political institutional design and *specific political culture*. We all know that political reforms in Central Asia are impossible if infantilism and slavish obedience are not wiped out; self-respect and awareness of dignity should be cultivated together with rebuffs to those doing the bossing around.¹²

VI. Ummah as an Ideal Network

The traditional *Islamic influence* is an important factor that adds to the advantages of network strategy and, at the same time, diminishes them. The Muslim community held together by common religion and the Shari‘a offers daily proofs of its cohesion and activity and rejects formalism and bureaucracy. The so-called cartoon scandal, the Israeli-Lebanese conflict, etc. demonstrated the ummah’s social mobility, while most of the Central Asian parties remained silent.

We all know that the Central Asian parties of today have not yet reached the mosque level, for example, in their care for the people, even though, thanks to the Soviet past, all of them still carry more political weight than another civil institution, namely religious organizations (it is noteworthy that the government has not yet included them in the system of civil institutions as equal members).

The Islamic network structure bridges the gap between the public and the private and satisfies property aspirations with *cooperative property* (a special property type) eagerly accepted by the vast number of those who have failed so far to become adjusted to the market economy. Islam offers an attractive solution to another problem, namely, division of society suggested by the party strategy that aims either at the widest possible platforms to attract the greatest number of voters, or at creating a limited yet clearly delineated group of followers. More often than not, the government wants its party satellite to be as clear about itself as possible—party rivalry encourages a multi-party system, but it alienates many potential voters.

On the whole, in Central Asia, political stylistics is largely determined by *interest groups* (“behind-the-scenes” bustle, to quote Ivan Ilyin, prominent Russian philosopher).¹³ As elsewhere, in Central Asia, the definitions of parties and interest groups should partly coincide, intersect, or become superimposed, because we are not dealing with discrete phenomena.¹⁴ All, or nearly all, leaders are apprehensive of fundamentalists (communist and, partly, religious-extremist), on the one hand, and of rash neo-liberal efforts to speed up the reforms and impose ultra-democratic rules of the game on the nation, on the other.

¹² “The slogan ‘the country needs more parties, good and varied’ is deeply erroneous,” according to what S. Markov has to say. We do not need many parties; the country needs several strong political parties able to compete among themselves and able to fulfill their functions in the common political system” [www.kreml.org].

¹³ The situation in Uzbekistan is somewhat different from the rest of the region’s countries: the media form an interest group, while the criminal community has not yet developed an interest in party-building at the current stage of political modernization.

¹⁴ See: G. Jordan, “Gruppy davlenia, partii i sotsial’nye dvizhenia: est’ li potrebnost’ v novykh razgranicheniakh?” *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia*, No. 1, 1997.

VII. Party Modernization in the Light of Network Strategies

After the 2005 events, it became obvious that civil society institutions had become indispensable to the extent that the government had to accelerate modernization of the party structure. Politics displayed its new forms as orange revolutions and emerged in a different public segment unrelated to the sphere of power. Prominent Russian political scientist Sergey Markov was probably quite right when he said that in the 21st century all sorts of foundations and NGOs, in short, the *nongovernmental sector*, would display more political activity and would look more like parties than the official parties.

It looks as if the government has set about building unassailable and interconnected structures in earnest. The local Central Asian political technologists have returned to two old *system-forming elements*: force and the enemy. Force is presented, as usual, as a national idea, while threats to national security play the role of the enemy. Force (the national idea) of Kazakhstan has been formulated as joining the world's top 50 competitive states; in Uzbekistan this role belongs to the idea of a state that guarantees a future to one and all and in which Peace, Prosperity, Progress, etc. will dominate.

Competitiveness may play a great role in party-building if the leader and the ruling elite are guided by long-term, rather than short- or mid-term aims. No one will quarrel with the idea that competitiveness can be achieved through expansion (or strengthening to a certain extent) of the social basis, identification and "translation"¹⁵ of people's interests, and ensuring civilized rivalry over the electorate's votes in particular.

Tajikistan,¹⁶ Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan are busy looking for the most effective inner party structure, which, given a huge party budget, should have effective management. The experience gained by the UzLiDeP, Otan, and PDPU has demonstrated that their technologies are suggested by an *allergy to the forms and methods the C.P.S.U. used at one time*, on the one hand, while political technologists cannot help but recognize that the C.P.S.U. was an effective and influential force. This can be seen in contemporary Central Asian structures when they mention "the Central Committee," "Secretariat," "Executive Committee," etc. in their speeches.¹⁷

Inner party *discussions* are welcome; the most active *members of the younger generation* with a "competitive" education and creative approach should be drawn into party activities together with the public opinion leaders. The people at the top have obviously come to the conclusion that, first, an inflow of active elements from among the *ordinary people* will mean that the public has accepted the party; and second, that true party functionaries are raised from those who want a *political career*.

VIII. Control and Responsibility

What is more important: to act within the law or to seek victory by any means; to achieve a broad public response or to draw the largest possible number of people into an event? These fairly tricky

¹⁵ The term is an apt description of subtle interference (see documents of Otan's Ninth special congress [www.otan.kz]).

¹⁶ Its party-building experience is interesting not only because there is a religious party—the Party of Islamic Revival of Tajikistan. According to official statistics, there are 8 political parties and 2,700 NGOs there. The so-called Public Council is another important feature.

¹⁷ This occurs when party members call for the party not to be turned into a bulky bureaucratic structure and avoid duplication of functions of the ruling bodies.

questions, which are raised in any more or less free society, call for further improvement of the political parties' *legal, normative, information, and analytical bases*. We should admit that the local political elites tend toward the German experience of party-building, in which every step is supplied with legal formulas and where developed education foundations operate.

Reality does not supply (with few exceptions)¹⁸ examples of open confrontation between the government and political parties.¹⁹ The ruling elites are finding unassailable and interconnected political institutions, network organizations, able to rebuff the "network enemy" increasingly attractive. A network community has no clear center; ideally this role belongs to a super-idea akin to a national idea.

Will the government be able to *coexist* with relatively independent party leaders? After all, hierarchical structures destroy the leading body of any non-conformist organization it has chosen as its aim. Left without guidance, the latter either falls apart or waits for another "boss." The government will find it much harder to dispose of network structures and their charismatic leaders: it will either have to tolerate them or plunge into political and even financial manipulations.

Today, the party-building process is facing two *threats*: between election campaigns, local party structures degenerate into discussion clubs or, worse, are torn apart by personal conflicts and squabbles. The former ailment is created by the absence of an action plan; the latter, by the chance to achieve personal enrichment at the expense of the party. Both ills spring from the very low political culture of the people and party functionaries who, in fact, are expected to plant this culture among the people.

Today, four *approaches* can be used to *set up a network of party functionaries*: party bureaucrats can be appointed from among those employed by subsidiary or basic structures controlled by the party leaders; involvement of regional public figures in the party and offering them corresponding everyday and financial conditions; unification of several public-political organizations into a more compact one; and restoration of a wide party educational network.

* * *

The genesis of the Central Asian political field in the context of political modernization calls for a detailed and deliberate investigation. A network strategy coupled with the rapid reform of the state administration structures, special services, academic science and information sphere could provide a symmetrical answer to the threats, risks, and challenges. Part of the political system should be impetuously cleansed of alien network segments (religious-extremist included) in the shortest time possible; the political system should be switched to exceptional operating conditions and used to set up an adequate network system based on the changing ideology.

¹⁸ The never-ending discussions between the political opponents and E. Ertysbaev, a former presidential aide who now serves as minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, are fairly interesting. Seen from abroad, however, they are regarded as a way for "letting off steam."

¹⁹ We can obviously not object to those who say that "without feedback between the government and civil society, without public control over power, and without raising the role of local self-administration, it will be impossible to raise the standard of living to any acceptable level" (*Materialy Mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii "Dinamika politicheskikh protsessov v Tsentral'noy Azii,"* 15 November, 2005 [www.asar.kz]).

STATE SOVEREIGNTY IN GEORGIAN POLITICAL THINKING AND PRACTICE

Gulbaat RTSKILADZE

*D.Sc. (Political Science),
fellow at the German Analytical Projekt-Planung Center
(Tbilisi, Georgia)*

The Problem and Theme of the Study

Along with the concepts of “state” and “territory,” sovereignty is one of the central themes both in the study and practice of international relations.¹ The sovereignty issue is all-important for Georgia as a post-Soviet “transition state” still working on its statehood.

State sovereignty and state independence are inextricably related to the nation-state² as the main actor in the contemporary international system. (There is no doubt that Georgia is one such state.) Independence within a nation-state can be rationally substantiated as a political tool used to achieve and realize the highest values, as well as specific positive aims and tasks pursued by the population of any sovereign state taking due account of its economic, scientific, cultural, spiritual, etc. development, which cannot be affected by outside factors. Aristotle regarded state sovereignty as a tool in the context of his “happy state” conception; a sovereign state helped realize the highest values and achieve the ultimate aims of its population.³ On the other hand, Aristotle pointed out: “For a state is not a mere aggregate of persons, but a union of them sufficing for the purposes of life.”⁴ This is not a purely instrumental and axiological idea of statehood and sovereignty—the philosopher supplied their final axiological interpretation. Normally nation-states regard sovereignty as their highest value and ultimate aim.⁵ State and national independence develop into the ultimate value with no fair equivalent, even if overpriced.⁶ This is particularly typical of peoples with a mythologized national identity; they regard themselves as a living organism with a creative force and spiritual identity.⁷ For most so-called de-mythologized peoples that mostly regard themselves

¹ See: Th.J. Biersteker, “State, Sovereignty and Territory,” in: *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. by W. Carl-
naes, Th. Risse, B.A. Simmons, London, 2002, p. 157.

² See: B. Anderson, *Die Erfindung der Nation. Zur Karriere eines folgenreichen Konzepts*, Frankfurt-New York, 1996,
pp. 16-17. According to Walter Sulzbach “nation is a group of people that needs a state of its own because it is sovereign
in relation to other states” (quoted from: U. Albrecht, *Internationale Politik. Einführung in das System internationaler
Herrschaft*, München, 1986, p. 46).

³ See: Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book Seven, Chapter VII. When writing about a “happy state,” Aristotle obviously had
in mind a sovereign state with its own territory, even if the term was coined in a different epoch.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter VIII.

⁵ Cf.: H.-U. Wehler, *Nationalismus. Geschichte-Formen-Folgen*, München, 2001, p. 37.

⁶ See: C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, quoted from Henrique Ricardo Otten, “Wie die Realpolitik in den
Mythos umschlägt. ‘Die Sachlichkeit’ des Politischen bei C. Schmitt,” in: *Mythos Staat—Carl Schmitts Staatsverständnis*,
Rüdiger Voigt (Hg.), Baden-Baden, 2001, p. 173.

⁷ See: L. Ranke, quoted from H.Th. Gräf, “Funktionsweisen und Träger internationaler Politik in der Frühen Neu-
zeit,” in: *Strukturwandel Internationaler Beziehungen*, Jens Siegelberg/Klaus Schlichte (Hg.), Wiesbaden, 2000, p. 105.

as a “society” rather than a “nation,”⁸ sovereignty is an indisputable value. The point has been amply demonstrated by international experience.⁹

Inevitably, there are exceptions: for example, the Scots, a nation with a highly developed national self-identity, voluntarily abandoned their sovereignty and independence, while the Canadians, Australians, and some other peoples formally delegated their sovereignty to the English crown. There is another type of collective self-identification that abandons national and state sovereignty in favor of other, much larger entities. It is rooted in a shared culture, faith, language, etc. I have in mind pan-Slavism, pan-Turkism, pan-Islamism, and other similar phenomena,¹⁰ the success of which is always short-lived or even virtual.

The above is part of my discussion, within the limits of the present article, of whether sovereignty as an ultimate aim is self-sufficient and valuable for Georgia at the level of the political elites and society as a whole; how important is sovereignty as a tool for realizing other important values and aims, i.e. what does the political class and society mean by sovereignty, and what specific features can be observed in this connection; how does the present idea of sovereignty in Georgia affect political practice (particularly the country’s foreign policy orientation and implementation of the republic’s strategic objectives).

Pre-History of Russian-Georgian Relations as a Mirror of the Ideas about Sovereignty Current in Georgia

The dissident movement¹¹ of the 1970s-1980s in Georgia aimed at achieving the republic’s national and state independence. This means that sovereignty was valuable per se for a society that regarded itself as a nation created by the Georgian ethnos and confirmed by corresponding myths. The absolute majority of Georgians voted for the country’s independence at the 31 March, 1991 referendum; the world community gradually recognized it throughout late 1991 and the first half of 1992.

As an independent state, Georgia had to cope with the dilemma of CIS membership. We all know that the post-Soviet republics, with the exception of the Baltic states which had different starting and other potential, chose to join the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States. Under Abulfaz Elchibey, Azerbaijan joined the CIS some time later. Georgia was the only state to reject CIS membership. Shortly before he was deposed, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the Georgian president, spoke of the new structure as a “modernized empire.”¹² Several months later, when Eduard Shevardnadze

⁸ Cf.: K. Hübner, *Istina mifa*, Moscow, 1996, p. 329.

⁹ When talking about the European Union, within which the nation-states voluntarily abandon a considerable part of their sovereignty in favor of supranational structures, we should bear in mind that this was a *voluntary* act and that only *part* of their sovereignty was delegated. The recent disagreements over the Iraqi and certain other international issues have shown that the countries retained their own ideas about their national interests—therefore they should be regarded as sovereign subjects of international politics.

¹⁰ German nationalist historian of the 19th century Heinrich von Treitschke put it in a nutshell by saying that it was great powers that could realize great aims (quoted from: R. Aron, *Frieden und Krieg. Eine Theorie der Staatenwelt*, Frankfurt am Main, 1986, p. 677).

¹¹ The Georgian dissidents concentrated on national problems rather than human rights and democracy issues as distinct from the dissident movement in Russia (cf.: J. Gerber, *Georgien: Nationale Opposition und kommunistische Herrschaft seit 1956*, Baden-Baden, 1997, pp. 64-79).

¹² *Sakartvelos Respublika*, 8-9 December, 1991 (in Georgian).

came to power, the supporters of the former president insisted that Shevardnadze had come back as a “Kremlin agent” to incorporate the country into the CIS. It should be said that the plans were opposed not only by those who supported the deposed president, but also by his former opposition (the National Democrats and the Republicans). Georgian society was obviously dead set against CIS membership.

Out of populist considerations, the new president first declined the invitation to join the CIS, even though it would have been reasonable: Russia and its president, Boris Yeltsin, were obviously displeased. This would have been an important step toward alleviating Moscow’s mistrust of Shevardnadze; Russia’s high brass did not like him at all. For this reason, Russia chose to support the Abkhazian separatists. In September-October 1993, when Sukhumi detached itself from Georgia thus threatening Shevardnadze’s power, the president publicly approved CIS membership for Georgia. Moscow reciprocated by supporting him with the Black Sea Fleet under Admiral Baltin when it came to routing Gamsakhurdia’s supporters in Western Georgia.

On the other hand, it was obvious (and it is even more obvious today, even though not all the parties accept this) that membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States, an amorphous structure the very name of which treated independence as a priority, could not limit Georgia’s sovereignty in any tangible way, while the West still regarded the country as part of Russia’s military and political sphere of influence. If Georgia had joined the CIS at the right time, it would have been able to find a common language with the Kremlin and would have probably avoided the conflict in Abkhazia. ... At that time, the Georgian leaders preferred to ignore this and deliberately distanced themselves from Russia.

In 1994, in the wake of the events in Abkhazia, when Georgia joined the CIS, the relations between the two countries improved to a certain extent. President Yeltsin visited Tbilisi, where he addressed the Georgian academic and artistic community with a “reconciliatory” speech at the Academy of Sciences. In January 1996, the Council of the CIS Heads of State passed a resolution on an economic blockade of Abkhazia. In Georgia, the public cherished the fond hope that Russia would help to promptly resolve the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts. In 1998, when it had become clear that this would not happen, President Shevardnadze opted for an obviously pro-Western course. In June 1998, V. Nadibaidze, the pro-Russian defense minister, was replaced with U.S.-educated David Tevzadze. In a statement he made in 1999, Eduard Shevardnadze pointed out that his country would strive for NATO membership and would knock at its door in 2005.¹³ During the Second Chechen War, Georgia abandoned its formerly neutral position in favor of Chechnia. This could not pass unnoticed: President Putin, who replaced Yeltsin as president, responded with open interference in the internal affairs of Georgia’s two separatist regions (the people in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region were given the opportunity to become Russian citizens; Russian companies started buying real estate in the two areas, etc.) and introduced visas for Georgian citizens.

The new leaders brought to power by the Rose Revolution tried to patch up the rip: they changed the country’s policy regarding Chechnia and set up joint anti-terrorist centers together with Russia. President Saakashvili went even further: When answering a question asked by a Russian journalist about the tragedy of 9 April, 1989: “Will the wound heal? Will the Georgians forgive the tragedy?” he said: “It is not easy to forget 9 April. I should say that after the first, and quite understandable, bout of anger, the Georgians realized that it was the Soviet, not the Russian army that attacked the people on Freedom Square. The Soviet empire was bloodthirsty and merciless: it attacked and killed Russians in Novochoerkassk, Lithuanians in Vilnius, Czechs in Prague, and Hungarians in Budapest with the same cruel indifference. Today we have learned to distin-

¹³ See, for example: [<http://www.wps.ru/ru/pp/military/1999/11/15.html?view=for-print>; <http://sovsekretno.ru/2001/09/3.html>], etc.

guish between the Russian and the Soviet. To tell you the truth, I was amazed by the speed with which the people's hearts grew warmer."¹⁴

Still, after the events of the summer of 2004 in the Tskhinvali Region when the Russian peacekeepers helped the separatists retain power, bilateral relations rapidly cooled down. Their level went on sinking until it reached the present-day very low level (I have in mind the scandal caused by the arrest in Georgia of Russian intelligence officers and Russia's unprecedented anti-Georgian steps that followed).

Sovereignty Assessed from the Position of Negation and the Radical Pro-Western Course of the Country's Leaders as an End in Itself

The brief outline of Georgia's recent history presented above permits certain preliminary conclusions to be drawn on how the political community and society perceive the country's state sovereignty and how this perception affects political practice.

Georgian political thinking negatively perceives state sovereignty; political thinking in Georgia bears a stamp typical of all former colonies: maximum distancing from the former metropolitan country (Russia in our case) in all (particularly military and political) spheres is seen as the ultimate manifestation of the country's sovereignty. The rational considerations are vague: *Why should Georgia move away from the Russian Federation? There is no answer to this key question of Georgia's foreign policy* (it proved impossible to promptly move away from Russia in the economic and cultural spheres and personal contacts).

In Georgia, Russia is seen as an enemy; the Georgian ruling circles have been painstakingly promoting this image of Russia (openly or otherwise) for fifteen years now,¹⁵ which is consolidating Georgian society around the ruling circles. State propaganda and Russia's passivity (or even failures in its Georgian policy) considerably diminished Moscow's influence and altered Russia's image among the Georgians: while in 2000-2001 about half of the polled regarded Russia as a country on which the future of their own country depended to a great extent,¹⁶ according to the public opinion polls conducted early in 2006, only 8 percent still shares this conviction (as opposed to 65 percent who believe that it was the United States, and 11 percent who describe the EU as the most influential force).¹⁷ As few as about 32 percent regard Russia as Georgia's partner; over 53 percent ascribe this role to the United States; and over 70 percent perceive Russia as a threat to their country's state security.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Izvestia*, 13 April, 2004, available at [<http://www.izvestia.ru/world/article56054/>].

¹⁵ The Act on Georgia's State Independence adopted on 9 April, 1991 by its Supreme Soviet says: "Georgian statehood rooted in its centuries-old history was lost in the 19th century when the Russian Empire annexed the country and destroyed its statehood. The Georgian nation will never reconcile itself to the loss of freedom" (*Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 70, 10 April, 1991). Whether true or false this statement repeated all over again could not but damage Georgia's relations with Russia.

¹⁶ Figures supplied by Eurobarometer (see: Prof. H. Best, "Druzhestvenny skepsis: Evropa i Evropeyskiy Soiuz v vospriatii naselenia Gruzii i drugikh stran-preemnikov Sovetskogo Soiuz," in: *Materialy konferentsii "Vneshnepoliticheskie priority dlia Iuzhnogo Kavkaza v XXI veke: blokovaia prinadlezhnost ili neitralitet?—Evropeyskiy opyt,*" Batumi-Tbilisi, 2001, p. 52).

¹⁷ Figures supplied by the IRI; polls were conducted in April 2006 (see: [<http://www.iri.org.ge/eng/engmain.htm>], POR-April 2006, diagram 56).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, diagram 55.

On the other hand, the Georgian leaders are still keeping the door open for the Russian capital; the pragmatically minded cabinet guided by the classical “Non olet” (“money has no smell”) nearly sold the Russia-Georgia-Armenia transit gas pipeline to Gazprom of Russia. The opposition objected on the strength that this would cripple the country’s sovereignty (by selling the pipeline, Georgia would have lost an important political tool when dealing with Russia). Significantly, it was the U.S. State Department that helped to thwart the deal—a visit by one of its officials to Georgia was accompanied by the statement that to protect the republic’s interests the pipeline would not be sold (in this case, the U.S. and Georgian interests coincided). President Saakashvili distanced himself from some of his ministers and the issue was dropped.¹⁹ Today, the Russian VypelKom mobile communications company²⁰ is ready to move onto the Georgian market despite the serious political complications between the two countries. (Russian capital is present in several large Georgian enterprises: the Madneuli mining company, the Azoti chemical plant, Telasi, an energy distributor in Tbilisi, and others.)

To compensate for its strained relations with Russia, Georgia is pursuing an active pro-Western policy that rests on its possible NATO and probable EU membership. The so-called Declaration on National Agreement on the Main Foreign Policy and Domestic Aims (for 2005-2010), which the leading party together with the major opposition parties and all the parliamentary factions joined, says: “The political parties and parliamentary factions declare that Georgia’s defensive policy should develop as part of European and Euroatlantic security.” Georgia sees NATO and EU membership as its ultimate aim; it believes that it should develop and deepen its strategic partnership with the United States.²¹

The Conception of National Security of Georgia endorsed by the parliament on 8 July, 2005 puts bilateral relations with the Russian Federation in fifth place, after the country’s strategic partnership with the U.S., Ukraine, and Turkey, as well as cooperation with Armenia and Azerbaijan. Significantly, no mention is made of any positive circumstances (either past or present) in relation to Russia alone: the document expresses the hope that Russia’s democratization and respect for European values, as well as abidance by the treaty concluded within the OSCE in 1999 on the withdrawal of Russia’s military bases from Georgia would help develop cooperation with the Russian Federation on “principles of good-neighborly relations, equality, and mutual respect.”²²

The Georgian political community, both the ruling elite and the opposition, present their orientation toward NATO, the United States, and the EU as the nation’s will bolstered with historical references. The introductory part of the National Security Conception says: “Georgia as an inalienable part of the political, economic, and cultural European space, the fundamental values of which are rooted in European values and traditions, wants integration into the system of Europe’s political and economic security. Georgia is striving to *regain* its European tradition and *remain* an inalienable part of Europe” (italics mine.—*G.R.*). The latest public opinion polls quoted above demonstrated that even though the nation is positive about NATO and EU membership in the long term,²³ only 2 percent of the polled believe it to be the country’s highest priority; 48 percent consider it to mean Georgia’s restored territorial integrity; and 45 percent more jobs; while only 4 percent (more than those who support NATO and EU membership as a priority) consider reforms to be an urgent task.²⁴

¹⁹ See, for example: [http://www.ng.ru/cis/2005-04-15/1_georgia.html].

²⁰ See: [<http://www.bit.prime-tass.ru/news/show.asp?id=43527&ct=news>].

²¹ See: [http://www.parliament.ge/print.php?gg=1&sec_id=63&info_id=7787&lang_id=GEO] (in Georgian).
²² [<http://nsc.gov.ge/index1.php>] (in Georgian.)

²³ See: [<http://www.iri.org.ge/eng/engmain.htm>], IRI-POR-April 2006, diagram 64.

²⁴ See: IRI-POR-April 2006, diagram 26.

We should ask what ultimate goals and values are offered to justify the pro-Western course of the ruling elite and a larger part of the opposition community. I have already written that Georgia's foreign policy is conditioned primarily by a negative interpretation of sovereignty and the desire to assert itself by moving away from the former metropolitan country; there are formal, fairly superficial positive arguments as well. In any case, those who are positive about Georgia's future NATO and EU membership (see above) nurture the following hopes: 51 percent of the polled who selected three priorities expect that NATO will guarantee the country's security; 52 percent, restored territorial integrity; 24 percent, social prosperity, and 20 percent, stronger democracy. The EU is expected to offer: security (41 percent); restored territorial integrity (40 percent); financial support (34 percent); social well-being (35 percent); and stronger democracy (20 percent).²⁵ The figures coincide with the logic of the Georgian government, which expects that NATO and EU membership will help to deal with the major issues: social and economic problems and territorial integrity. This, however, has never (with rare exceptions) been analyzed in any depth and never openly discussed either by the country's leaders, or by the main opposition forces, or by the various analytical centers functioning in the republic. Everything remains on the primitive level—the two Western structures are merely associated with a “better life.” More likely than not, nobody seems willing to ask whether Georgia can hope to join the EU and (especially) NATO, and how the country will live before the EU and NATO dreams come true (if ever). It is not my task to discuss and analyze these issues; the scope of the article, however, permits a brief outline.

The North Atlantic Alliance is obviously not ready to extend its membership to an unstable state on Europe's fringes. Georgia, with two conflict zones, in which its immediate neighbor, Russia, has its interests, is precisely such a state.²⁶ NATO's members do not want to be sucked into ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus that have nothing to do with their national interests. This alone makes Georgia's membership in NATO doubtful, at least in the near future. Some people may doubt this, but I should say that the NATO bureaucrats have repeatedly confirmed this. Late in 2005, in Brussels, during a visit by Georgian Premier Nogaideli, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer told Georgian TV journalists that he was not ready to say exactly when Georgia would be invited to join NATO. In March 2006, Jean Fournet, NATO's Assistant Secretary-General, said in so many words that Ukraine and Georgia's NATO membership depended on when they settled their domestic crises. He also pointed out that this was a long process that required of certain obligations by the candidates related to the Alliance's principles and rules, which would require several years to master.²⁷ In October, General Henault made a similar statement.²⁸ No wonder, in September 2006, instead of the expected Membership Action Plan (MAP), NATO offered the Georgian government an Intense Dialog²⁹ that would postpone membership for an indefinite time. EU membership is even

²⁵ See: IRI-POR-April 2006, diagrams 65 and 66.

²⁶ Compared: on 16 October Chairman of NATO's Military Committee General Ray Henault informed the journalists that the alliance did not plan to deploy its peacekeepers in the zones of the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts. He pointed out that NATO did not plan to address the issue and added that NATO was involved in negotiations with Georgia and other interested countries. He pointed out that NATO regarded the relations between Russia and Georgia as bilateral and, therefore, had no direct influence on them. He also said that NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer made an official statement, in which he called on Moscow and Tbilisi to settle the conflict as soon as possible. On his part, the Chairman of NATO's Military Committee pointed out that NATO would stay away; available at [<http://www.rambler.ru/news/world/georgiaabkhazia/8910324.html>].

²⁷ Quoted from: *Sakartvelos Respublika*, 10 March, 2006.

²⁸ Speaking on Echo of Moscow radio, the general said that the decision about Georgia's membership would be made by all members at the political level; to reach this stage, the sides should negotiate several critical points, including an invitation to NATO and a certain plan of action. Today, the alliance has not reached any of these points, added the general; available at [<http://www.vz.ru/news/2006/10/16/53027.html>].

²⁹ The official spokesmen of the Georgian leaders repeatedly stated that MAP would be initiated by the end of 2006 (see, for example: [<http://www.newsgeorgia.ru/geo1/20060404/41638357.html>], [<http://www.civil.ge/rus/article.php?id=10183>], etc.).

less probable.³⁰ The EU has not yet recovered from the shock caused by the failure of the European Constitution at referenda, the budget crisis triggered by the EU's eastward enlargement, its obvious contradictions with the U.S. and Turkey, and the cultural shock brought about by the mass disturbances initiated by European Muslims in France, Belgium, and Germany. . . . Even though the prospects for Georgia's imminent NATO and EU membership are vague, Moscow is showing its displeasure. Seen from Russia, this looks like Georgia's anti-Russian course (this is especially true of Georgia's possible NATO membership and, to a lesser extent, of it joining the EU).³¹ It is Moscow's response that causes constant confrontation between the two states; Tbilisi takes Moscow's irritation as a sure sign that the pro-Western course is the correct one; there is the illusion that Moscow is disturbed because Georgia's NATO membership is around the corner.

Georgia does not need confrontation with Moscow for economic reasons in particular (the country's leaders and the public tend to ignore the economic side of Georgian sovereignty). Meanwhile, Georgia, the annual budget of which is about \$1,650 million, owes other countries and international organizations nearly \$1,750 million.³² Former Foreign Minister of Georgia A. Chikvaдзе was quite right when he said: "In the broader perspective, the main problem of Georgia's foreign policy course is that it is absolutely not linked to the Georgian economy or to the country's domestic situation. Whatever it does, the country does not have to pay for it out of its own pocket. This cannot possibly serve as a long-term basis of statehood."³³

The above has amply demonstrated that the country's radical pro-Western course, obvious in Georgia's desire to become a close partner of the United States, a NATO, and probably an EU, member, has become an end in itself. This course has not received profound substantiation (in the context of the country's stronger sovereignty, among other things) and does not rest on more or less reasonable considerations.

American Influence and the Limits of Georgian Sovereignty

Everyone knows that the United States influences the Georgian leaders to a great extent. In November 2003, during the Rose Revolution, the West, particularly the U.S., sided with the Saakashvili-Burjanadze-Zhvania trio. U.S. state and private structures are funding (on a permanent basis or through grants) NGOs in all spheres of life. There are American schools and higher educational establishments patronized by the U.S. embassy in Georgia. Many of the departments and ministries are

³⁰ See interview Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Enterprise and Industry Boosting Innovations Günter Verheugen gave in December 2005, in which he said that the European Union had to decide how many new members it could accommodate at all. The EU paused to ponder, but, the Vice-President said, it was not so much the pondering as the pause; available at [<http://linkszeitung.de/content/view/5578/45>].

³¹ Prominent Russian commentators do not mince words on the subject. See, for example, the comment offered by Viacheslav Nikonov, President of the Politika Foundation, who said: "The Georgian authorities should take into account the fact that Georgia's desire to join NATO causes displeasure in Moscow" (quoted from: *Svobodnaia Gruzia*, 23 February, 2006). The above-mentioned decision to start an "intense dialog" caused a very negative response of the Russian Foreign Ministry, despite the fact that the time limits remained vague. This shows that Moscow is jealous of Georgia's *desire as such* to join NATO. Statement by the Foreign Ministry of Russia of 22 September, 2006 (abridged), available at [<http://vssemi.ru/news/112829/294378/>].

³² See: [http://www.uabanker.net/daily/2006/10/100906_0800.shtml] (information supplied by the Finance Ministry of Georgia.) Georgia owes over \$1 billion to its main creditors—international financial institutions.

³³ A. Chikvaдзе, "No Overcoat, Thank You Very Much!" *International Affairs*, No. 6, 2005.

supervised by American advisors. Americans have already established strategic control over the energy branch.³⁴ Official Washington deems it appropriate to interfere in the state's policy in the religious sphere by supporting all sorts of American sects operating in Georgia.³⁵

Until recently, America's involvement in Georgia's decision-making (which contradicts the very idea of sound sovereignty) did not stir up serious objections in the larger part of the opposition and the public as a whole. In fact, the dissatisfied opposition parties went to the U.S. embassy to complain or approached visiting American dignitaries in an effort to put pressure on the powers that be. Part of the public, especially that close to the government circles, took for granted the fact that the state lived on money shelled out by official and unofficial Western structures: the West, after all, is regarded as a "friend." The money that comes from Russia at least causes concern and condemnation and even goes as far as accusations of "high treason."

The above suggests that the guarded or even negative perception of Russia by the Georgian political establishment, on the one hand, and its close ties with the U.S., as well as America's image as a "friend" accepted by society, on the other, speak of the country's very limited West-biased sovereignty. Political dependence goes hand in hand with the country's economic dependence, while another pillar of state sovereignty—cultural and axiological independence—is totally ignored by the political community and, partly, by the nation. In Georgia, the idea of national independence (at least its foreign policy aspect) is deprived of specific content if we do not count the obsession with NATO and EU membership as such, as well as Georgia's declared devotion to "European values."

Recently, however, certain changes have occurred because politics is a fluid substance. It is wrong to believe that "both the elite and the public pin their hopes *only* on the West (the U.S. and Europe)"³⁶ (italics mine.—G.R.). Georgian society is showing the first signs of its disillusionment with the West and the United States. Some of the opposition parties that carry some weight with the public have started doubting the U.S.'s indiscriminating support of Georgia's ruling regime. Sh. Natelashvili, leader of the Labor Party, subjects America's Georgian policy to scything criticism.

Latent anti-Western sentiments mounting in Georgian society are caused by the persistent social and economic plight: Western aid brought no obvious results—the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. Society is also displeased with the West's political and cultural expansion manifested, among other things, by America's support of its religious sects. It is too early to predict how the trade, economic as well as political and humanitarian, blockade Russia initiated will affect the public's bias: will it become more pro-Western or more pro-Russian? Today, however, we can safely say that the leaders and a large part of the opposition are steering the country toward the Western development vector. They are encountering objective and subjective problems and face the public's mounting dissatisfaction. The country has reached a crossroads—the main clashes over its foreign policy lie ahead.

C o n c l u s i o n

The public looks at the country's sovereignty as a final value limited by the need to uphold Georgia's political independence from Russia as the former metropolitan country. The nation tends to

³⁴ Control is realized in the form of assistance (even though control and technical assistance are not mutually exclusive). The Georgian energy market is patronized by USAID. For more detail, see: [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_urasia/press/success/2006-08-02.html].

³⁵ See: G. Rtskhaladze, "Religion and Conflict Potential in Georgia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (33), 2005, pp. 59, 61, 62-64, as well as letters from the Helsinki Commission of the United States to President Saakashvili relating to the situation with the Jehovah's Witnesses in Georgia; available at: [<http://www.kavkaz.memo.ru/newstext/news/id/639136.html>], [<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-russian&y=2005&m=February&x=20050211072857btruevecr0.8640863>].

³⁶ S. Lounev, "Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus: Geopolitical Value for Russia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (39), 2006, p. 24.

ignore or fails to realize (at least until recently when this turned out to be more painful than expected) that the country has lost a greater part of its real sovereignty to new actors (the U.S. being one of them). So far, Georgia has not tapped its sovereignty potential to the full as a tool needed to realize values and aims unrelated to its independence from Russia. The country's leaders and public have not yet turned their attention to two basic components of sovereignty—the economy and cultural-axiological self-sufficiency.

This idea of sovereignty echoes in the country's political practice in the form of the contradictory foreign policy course described above. The government and a large part of the opposition are still at the helm because the United States has limited Georgia's sovereignty by extending political and financial support. The importance of sovereignty is never doubted at the verbal level, while its curbing is never declared as a deliberate choice.

POLITICAL ELITES OF KYRGYZSTAN: HOW THEY APPEARED AND HOW THEY INTERACT

Elmira NOGOYBAEVA

*Expert at the International Institute of
Strategic Studies under the President of Kyrgyzstan
(Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)*

Some History

Since 1991, that is, from the very first days of Kyrgyzstan's independence, its elites have been following their own paths and developing in ways that do not fit into other models or nation-building projects. This was, in fact, a new stage in the elite-forming process.

Before this time, the local elites developed within larger states and followed the prevailing patterns: partially within the Kokand Khanate, then later within the Russian Empire and the Soviet state. The Kyrgyz elites as a system-forming factor of the Kyrgyz nation mainly adapted themselves to the conditions offered.

There are two sides to the fairly frequent phenomenon whereby one nation develops within another. On the one hand, a nation threatened with assimilation, dispersal, or extermination can save itself by moving into the gravitational field of a stronger entity. This brings security and the chance of self-preservation and, sometimes, modernization. It acquires an elite of its own formed within the new state and may either change itself within the same state to become a system-forming nation, or descend to the lower levels of social development. On the other hand, the nation loses the opportunity to develop its own symbols, traditions, and institutions; it is forced to adapt itself to the dominant subject or, to be more exact, to imitate it.

For nearly a century the political culture of Kyrgyzstan developed as a Soviet political culture characterized by the monopoly of one party and the rigid hierarchy of elites replenished through a closed recruitment system.

Today, in the context of state-building, prime importance is attached to the formation of independent and transitional elites across the post-Soviet expanse that are searching for a political system best suited to Kyrgyz national specifics with all the appropriate forms of political organization and institutions.

Since the country did not have any local recruiting traditions or principles of functioning as it moved away from the communist toward democratic development paradigms, new forms of recruitment and organization of the new/old elites in Kyrgyzstan appeared.

Since 1991, the political elites of Kyrgyzstan (which did not differ much from hardly any of the other post-Soviet countries) have been developing and functioning as the elites of an independent state engaged in nation-building and institutionalization within their geographic and political areas.

The Elites in the Independent State

August 1991 and the election (some time later) of the country's first president, Askar Akaev, ushered in the first stage of the republic's independent existence. This was a time of political euphoria in which the country acquired its statehood.

The country opted for democracy and a market economy with the corresponding procedures. The choice was mainly an alternative to the old, communist paradigm rather than a conscious choice regarding the country's future. Much was done to establish Western democratic values; political Western-style modernization was an officially proclaimed policy supported from abroad. Indiscriminative copying of foreign patterns in a country with its own development trends created a quasi-democracy in Kyrgyzstan: the democratic institutions that emerged barely functioned.

The Soviet nomenklatura, or at least part of it, remained in power even though the country acquired a new president, doctor of physics educated in the Soviet Center. Little by little, a country born as democratic degenerated into an authoritarian state, until it collapsed in March 2005.

The first period of Akaev's presidency (1991-1996) was dominated by the following trends in the formation and rotation of the elites:

- The perfunctorily announced course of “gradual transfer to democratic order” was actually only carried out during the first five years of Akaev's rule: new people from different social groups joined the elites and filled the key posts. It was a new phenomenon in a country where the communist party nomenklatura had never changed and was replenished from very limited and closed circles. It was then that the nation became acquainted with the names of O. Tekebaev, A. Madumarov, and T. Bakir uulu. It was then that the “legendary parliament” was shaken by a fierce political struggle; real reforms were carried out and the president made his first attempts to extend his powers. The political elites of the early 1990s were resolved to carry out the reforms.
- The first protest movement, the Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (DMK), which later developed into a party, was fed by the sentiments of the destitute intelligentsia and land seizures supported by people from the capital's adjacent districts. It was the first real political structure with an ideology of its own and a distinctive and vast social base. Later, nearly all

its leaders—Zh. Zheksheev, D. Nur uulu, T. Mulkubatov, T. Turgunaliyev, and others—joined the republic's political elite. In 1991-1992 several groups (Erkin Kyrgyzstan, Ata-Meken, and Asaba) detached themselves from the DMK to form independent structures. They have retained their political ardor and are still the most active segment of the country's political expanse.

Meanwhile, the distribution of resources and recruitment of new members to the political elites moved behind the closed doors.

The Closed Nature of the Elites Leads to Degradation

At that time, the resources were distributed among the chosen few—this was the hallmark of the elites in power; promising, intelligent and, therefore, highly competitive people were promptly removed from the narrow circle. This happened at different times to I. Abdrazakov, Ch. Jakypov, M. Imanaliev, I. Beshimov, K. Baialinov, D. Usenov, and others, while the circle of “trusted” managers was filled with mediocrities.

Between 1998 and 2005, circulation of the elites as a mechanism of a democratic transition society ground to a halt. Practically no new people joined the cohorts of those at the top: circulation of the elites as a method of bringing “fresh blood” into the ruling class was essentially discontinued. By “fresh blood” I mean people who grew up and were educated under the new conditions, within new organizational and cultural frameworks, ready to accept innovation, etc.

Today, political scientists describe the formation of elites as *reproduction* of them,¹ which means that the old elite, say, in Kyrgyzstan remains at the helm.

The following features were typical of reproduction of the elites under President Akaev:

- A party of power, which is called Alga Kyrgyzstan with the president's daughter as its leader; a rigid administrative vertical; an overused administrative resource, etc;
- Nepotism (the family forms a close-knit circle of persons and vast economic, political, administrative and other resources are concentrated in its hands);
- Revived tribal, regional, and other closed forms of recruitment (regarded as illegitimate inside the elites, as well as in relation to the technically proclaimed democratic principles. They replaced democratic elections as a legitimate way of appointing leaders);
- A trend toward stronger nomenklatura bureaucracy (the key posts under the president and in the upper echelons of power were distributed among the old elite with the new political figures pushed to political periphery);
- Personnel rotation in the upper echelons of power and among the “trusted” top managers (at that time, rotation of governors became absolutely predictable—the same people were shifted among regions, ministries, embassies, etc);
- The Administration of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic was the most active structure engaged in the country's rule (the hierarchically organized elite pyramid was permitted two election terms, that is, a total of ten years, to create traditions, recruitment methods, etc.).

¹ See: A. Ruchka, “Elity transitnogo obshchestva,” Kiev, 2003, available at [www.dialogs.org.ua].

At that time, the country's economic resources, which were essentially identical to its political resources (the two components almost blended into one and became the only condition under which the business activity in the republic could be carried out), were the key tools for retaining power or fighting for it.

The limited nature of distribution of the country's resources inside one elite group and a couple of tribal (read, clan-corporate) communities in the absence of public recruitment and circulation, as well as the doubts (that appeared some time later) about the power's legitimate nature, created tension among the elites.

By March 2005, the country was living in a systemic crisis. This, as well as outside interference and, to an even greater extent, the need to change the political elite—an absolutely indispensable process in any state, especially in those that claim to be democratic—inevitably ousted the Akaev regime from the country.

In fact, the “elite rotation” techniques in post-Soviet countries assumed different forms: either violent, called Color Revolutions, or traditional, “operation successor.” This actually confirms the theory formulated by Aron Brudny, a prominent philosopher and psychologist, about the global re-feudalization of contemporary society, which explained the trends in the formation of elites: “In the latter half of the 20th and early 21st centuries, kindred relations as the cornerstone of mutual trust, if they do not predominate, at least play a very important role. It is enough to mention Akaev's last parliament: it was not by chance that his daughter and son found themselves among the members. It is not by chance that Nazarbaev's daughter leads one of the active political parties, etc. It is not by chance that the U.S. incumbent president is the son of a former president. It is not by chance that the son of the previous president of the Democratic Republic of Congo was elected president. It is not by chance that in Poland the president and premier are brothers. The list goes on. This all started in Asia: let me remind you of Korason Akino and others.”²

Political Parties as a Political Element of the Formation of Elites

In democratic societies political parties are the main element in the formation of political elites and their continued existence. No other political institution can cope as successfully with this problem. Being a resource rather than a tool for setting goals, education cannot cope with the task. Political elites cannot be replenished from among career bureaucrats, since they will be unable to develop within the limits of the state as a system; they will only be able to function. An elite cannot be created by status, since it merely fulfills (sometimes with dubious results) the role of legitimizing power. The elite is that part of society able to specify goals, ensure development, and assume responsibility. It can emerge only in regimes engaged in similar activities.³

Joseph Schumpeter described democracy as a set of clear democratic procedures and institutions. The formula applied to Kyrgyzstan with its 84 political parties describes it as a democratic and pluralist state. Party membership is steadily, if slowly, increasing, even if the parties are not engaged in activities that reflect the nation's real social involvement.

² A. Brudny, “Krugly stol ‘7 noiabrskikh dney v politicheskoy zhizni Kyrgyzstana,” Social Research Center. American University-Central Asia (AUCA), 17 November, 2006, available at [www.src.auca.kg].

³ See: V. Bogatyrev, “Mesto i rol politicheskikh partiy v Kyrgyzstane,” *Politicheskie partii v Kyrgyzstane*, Institut publichnoy politiki IPP, Bishkek, 2006, p. 23.

Here are the factors and reasons behind party genesis in the country, which faithfully reflect the nature of the parties' emergence and activities.⁴ It depends on the milieu, time, and quality of the political social environment (the formation stage). The parties are divided into *program and project* types depending on their axiological and functional principles. The former enjoy active social support enlisted by their programs, which means that their followers are guided by values and ideologies. The party itself develops and organizes itself in full conformity with them. The latter are set up either by the government or opposition as artificial structures designed to serve specific projects. Most parties, be they Democrats or Republicans, Communists or nearly forgotten Constitutional Democrats, were set up in periods of social, class, paradigm, and other rifts. For a certain amount of time they were history-changing factors; they guided the masses wishing to change the world for the better. Their programs and values were accepted as the Fundamental Law. After a while the ideological component, as the party's goal, lost its all-embracing importance to very specific tactical aims: votes, parliamentary seats, factions, lobbyism, and the top office. This is typical of the United States, the U.K., and other countries.

The first parties also appeared in Kyrgyzstan during the social crisis when the country was moving from one paradigm to another; the country, together with the other post-Soviet states, was experiencing ideological, economic, political, humanitarian, and other changes. The first upsurge of national self-awareness, which took the form of land seizures, gradually developed first into institutions (unions of the homeless and landless) and then into political parties. In the spring-summer 1989, in Frunze (as the capital was called under Soviet power), young people at their barely controlled rallies demanded land for housing. The movement then developed into Ashar, an association of those who built their own housing. Informal groups of workers, scientific workers, teachers, creative workers, and young people appeared in many towns (Karakol, Osh, etc.). Later they merged to form a mass opposition structure called the Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (DMK), which intended to transform the republic into a prospering democratic state. In 1991-1992, several groups detached themselves from the DMK to become independent parties (Erkin Kyrgyzstan, otherwise known as ErK; Ata-Meken, and Asaba). On 29 May, 1993, a regular DMK congress transformed the public movement into a political party. The DMK and the *Maydan* newspaper it published were the most popular political force; it is still widely accepted and the most popular party with a broad social basis and supporters across the country. This was the only period when the republic acquired program parties. The time of parties with strong ideological bases is drawing to an end—such parties are no longer needed. Strange as it may seem, there is no need to destroy the old order of things, even though the system crisis is going on—there is no new order of things to replace the old one.

Since 1993, tactical aims and specific political leaders have become and remain the main reason for the emergence of new parties and the transformation of old ones (this happened to the DMK). The huge number of parties that register when elections are drawing close (their number increases when elections are about six months away) is ample proof of this. The new constitution will introduce the proportional-majority system of parliamentary representation rejected by the 2000 referendum, which means that there will be even more political parties. In 2005-2006, the number of parties doubled from 40 in May 2005 to 84 in October 2006.

The project parties of our day and age are formed and function like a vast election campaign, which starts well in advance with a good share of political resource and develops consistently. Party development, however, takes more time than an election campaign. There are parties in Kyrgyzstan

⁴ See: E. Nogoybaeva, "Pluralizm politicheskikh partii Kyrgyzstana 2006 ili konkurs partiinykh proektov," available at [www.tazar.kg], [www.open.kg], 27 November, 2006.

and elsewhere that formed when the election campaign was already underway. Normally, however, party-building covers one or several election cycles, party ideas being promoted by party members rather than salaried agitators.

The Alga Kyrgyzstan Party is the best example of a successful project cut short in March 2005. The mega project was never completed. Three women (the leader, a journalist, and a financier)—Bermet Akaeva, Olga Bezborodova, and Sharipa Sadybakasova—were the project's greatest gain. Skilful project management as well as a powerful administrative resource and lavish funding brought them parliamentary seats that were later, in the wake of the March events, contested. Potentially, the party was a classic example of the reproduction of the elites through power transfer within a limited circle.

That was happened in practically all the post-Soviet states (the Baltic countries being the only exception). Approaches, procedures, and formats may differ, but the result is more or less the same in Moscow and Ashgabad, Baku and Minsk, Astana and Tashkent. Kiev, Tbilisi and Bishkek do not fit this pattern.

Any attempt to change the usual scenario for a transfer of power that lost its token legitimacy in the eyes of the elites and the nations causes a veritable storm among neighboring countries that were recently part of the same country and belonged to the same ideological camp. This accounts for the powerful PR-campaigns and obstruction that swept the post-Soviet expanse; the Color Revolutions and election campaigns were described as hazardous and highly unwelcome developments.

Restored proportionality inherent in the new wording of the Constitution is one of the main mechanisms that ensures the representation of many parties and gives them a chance to remain afloat. The parties may compete during elections, which in turn ensures the continued existence of elite groups and their formation. Today, project parties are appearing in Kyrgyzstan for the following reasons:

Continuity. The administrative and bureaucratic top circles want to reproduce themselves to retain their position. Former bureaucrats, and even those still employed, head most of the parties; aware of the value of the institutionalized representation in power structures they tap their administrative skills to set up new parties.

Lobbying and support of individual public structures and groups of all levels. Each financial group, for example, that reaches a certain development level believes that a political party that will lobby its interests in the corridors of power is an absolute must. Lobbying as a tool of communication within the political field is an institutionalized representation of financial, corporate, clan, etc. interests. There is nothing new in this: recently in Germany one of the main parties and the country's leaders spoke of the automobile lobby.

Protection of one's interests against rivals is a version of lobbying.

Popularization (PR-campaigns on the eve of elections) is described as the most frequent motivation, which does not, however, guarantee victory. It depends not so much on the amount of money spent as on a conscientious approach to strategy and goal-setting. The Mekenim Kyrgyzstan party and its leader Urmat Barktabasov are the best examples of this: the process should be correctly organized, carried out, and completed (an election campaign, etc.).

Association with the communist stereotypes of the past. The communists of Kyrgyzstan and the conservatively minded part of the nation rely on such associations. An archaic structure to the casual observer, a communist party may move to the fore under certain conditions: there is any number of those who pin their hopes on a "strong hand" and the authoritarian trends in some of the CIS countries (Belarus and Turkmenistan, for example) also demonstrated to some extent by the party of United Russia.

Finally, the most formal and officially recognized reason—equal representation of all social groups and strata through parties as independent and equal entities of the political processes. There are much more latent and obvious reasons for party-building, but the political power remains the central one.

The move away from program to project parties has completed a certain development stage of Kyrgyzstan's body politic. Competition through elections is nothing more than the rivalry among projects designed and modeled by people.

Elite Cooperation after March 2005

The March 2005 events that replaced the old system of power transfer did not change much either in politics or in the economy. To a great extent, this process can be explained by the prevailing types of elite leaders.

As a rule these people organize their activities in a more or less similar way and share a more or less similar administrative and management experience; they received a similar education and cherish similar values and ideologies. All of them were economic managers at the top and middle levels of the nomenklatura; all of them prefer to be regarded as "hard-line statesmen" rather than reformers. It should be said in all justice that during the transformation of a society with a traditionalist rather than secular past, it is hard to say which of the elite types is more efficient and will remain such in the future.

It is absolutely clear that this administration type creates contradictions during power transfer and social dynamics. After all, accelerated social development is possible only when new types of managers and administrators familiar with the latest managerial and administrative techniques reach the top levels of power. For example, the public policy technique not required under Soviet power plays an important role in a genuinely socialist and democratic society (which differs from the Soviet type) as a method for correlating key decision-making by the state and civil society. In Kyrgyzstan, the attempts of the nationally oriented elite (which remains outside the power structures) to promote this technology run up against a blank wall of incomprehension.

Today, the region-oriented differentiation of political elites of the South and the North is all-important. Under Soviet power regional and tribal differentiation played an important role as well: indeed, the cultures of the nomads and settled people are very different, while the distances are great (there is only one road that connects the country's two parts and it can be easily blocked at the Too-Ashuu pass). Under these conditions, rotation breeds suspicion and rivalry among the regional and clan groups.

The present power elite of Kyrgyzstan is disunited and is distinguished by a minimum value consensus both in the government and the opposition camp. While speaking about essentially the same destination, the two camps cannot agree on the road to take them there.

Today, political power is a combination of varied vectors; this is best illustrated by the local cabinets acting independently of each other. The so-called propower parties have strengthened their potential: this was mainly caused by the pre-election fever created by the fact that half of the parliament was replaced with candidates elected by party lists according to a novelty introduced by the 7 November, 2006 Constitution initiated by the parliament and the president.

The opposition part of the political elite groups, which are equally removed from the political power, as well as those still involved in some political decision-making, for example, the Zhogorku

Kenesh deputies, former ministers, high-ranking officials of power-related structures, top bureaucrats who sympathize with the new opposition, and former Akaev supporters, can be described as a “segmented space” in the opposition field. Its core is still formed by those who belonged to the Za reformy movement.

Those who poured into the streets on 24 March, 2005 wanted to bring down the Akaev regime—they had no ideological ambitions and the programmatic vision of the future. Their aim was tactical and practical—“Akaev ketsin.” In November 2006 the crowd chanted the unconscious slogans “Bakiev ketsin” and “Kulov ketsin.” This means that the crowd, which wanted the ruler removed here and now, had no positive ideas about the country’s future.

In 2006, the president’s decision to patch up the old and many times patched Akaev Constitution (it was changed four times at referenda) to extend his powers was the formal pretext of more protests. The new/old Constitution and the same old political and economic landscape stirred up another wave of protest. Some of the political elites that took part in the March events later called a revolution found themselves as far from the resources as ever.

The outcome of the prolonged confrontation was easy to predict—seven days of mass protests in the capital’s center in November 2006. Just as happened eighteen months prior to this, the protesters congregated in front of the government building.

In the last couple of years, the nation acquired certain political traditions: massive protest actions typical of democratic societies with local specifics. V. Bogatyrev, a prominent political scientist and former assistant to the republic’s president, had the following to say: “With the Kyrgyz, democratic action is always real—never symbolic. While in the West people come to a rally for a couple of hours and then go back home, our people, after they start protesting, will never leave until they achieve their aim. Democracy Kyrgyz-style is of a precedent rather than a standard nature.”⁵

For seven days the groups and participants involved in the political process looked for compromises. The country’s new Constitution enforced the results of haggling over positions and powers in real and symbolic forms.

The nation had the opportunity to watch how the political establishment shifted its preferences in favor of the powers that be or against them by siding with the opposition. The parliament split: some of the deputies clearly identified their rigid preferences from the very beginning holding out to the last, while others, previously neutral deputies (some of them had already served several terms in the country’s legislature), all of a sudden plunged into feverish activities.

It should be said that some political actors show their real worth precisely when it comes to the crunch: irrespective of their empirical and political luggage of the past, some of the leaders paled into insignificance and moved to the roadside when confronted with a choice of immense importance for their future demanding prompt action and prompt decision.

Inter-elite cooperation left much to be desired during the turbulent years of 2005 and 2006. New traditions of cooperation among the elites suitable for the early 21st century obviously could not rest either on the crumbled traditions of the closed hierarchical code of relations among the Soviet elites, or on the tribal traditions and communications of the Akaev period, which the elites had already rejected as illegitimate, or on any other practices of the past, such as kurultais, gatherings and inter-tribal communications of hoary antiquity.

In fact, in a truly democratic society the elites have to compete; rivalry and conflicts are resolved through consensuses, making it possible to keep rivalry within reasonable and legitimate limits confirmed by the law, Constitution, election legislation, tax and civil codes, and other enactments and procedures (elections, checks and balances, limited powers, etc.).

⁵ V. Bogatyrev, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

To a great extent, social stability depends on the ability of the elites to reach a consensus on political issues, their own relations, and their support of the existing or newly created political institutions. The national elites of Kyrgyzstan are functioning in the context of social and political instability typical of transitional societies forced to defend their right to equal opportunities in the face of outside challenges created by the globalizing and accelerating world. In Kyrgyzstan, the task of stabilization, integration, and consolidation of the nation fell to the lot of elites not yet fully developed themselves.

**ENERGY PROJECTS AND
ENERGY POLICY****NATIONAL ENERGY SECURITY AND
SINO-RUSSIAN-KAZAKH-JAPAN
ENERGY COOPERATION**

Li LIFAN

*Deputy Director of the Center
for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Studies
at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
(Shanghai, China)*

Over the last decade, the oil demand on the Chinese market has been growing at a vigorous rate, and oil imports have continued to rise on an annual basis. In 2003, with its oil imports exceeding those of Japan, China emerged as the world's second largest oil-importing country behind the United States. Today, imports make up 35% of the total amount of oil consumed in China. In the current composition of China's oil imports, the Middle East accounts for about 50%, Africa for 25%, the Asia-Pacific Region for 15%, and Central Asia and Russia together for about 10%, thus constituting more than 90% of the country's crude oil imports delivered via sea transport corridors. During the first half of 2006, China's crude oil output reached 91.66 million

tonnes, an increase of 2.1% over the previous period. And oil imports reached 82.36 million tonnes, an increase of 21.3% over the previous period. It should be added that 70.33 million tonnes of these imports were crude oil, constituting an increase of 17.6%, while the import of petroleum products reached 12.03 million tonnes, i.e. an increase of 48.3%. Thus, China's oil dependence increased to reach 47.3% in the first half year. It is estimated that by 2020, the oil shortage in China will amount to 50-60%, and this deficit will largely have to be compensated by relying on oil imports.

The factors influencing the import and export of oil are becoming increasingly complicated, so much so that oil import is no longer merely

a trade issue, but has become embroiled in politics, diplomacy, and many other issues. World oil trade is largely complicated by the fact that oil energy has become a major resource, the scarcity of which could jeopardize a nation's economic security. More energy reserves mean more staying power for economic growth and greater guarantee of economic security. The worldwide geographical distribution of oil resources means that, in terms of oil demand, most countries and regions are in rivalry with each other. Most countries in need of oil are taking steps to maximize oil imports. As world competition intensifies, international disputes on energy trade will focus on limiting oil exports rather than oil imports.

In order to enhance the situation, National Energy Security Guarantees have been drawn up aimed at accelerating globalization of the energy industry and making the utilization of foreign oil resources a priority. The uneven geographical distribution of oil resources means that oil exploration, development, and sales must be raised to a global level. From the national viewpoint, oil is a strategic material that is indispensable in some cases, and under these circumstances its value cannot be measured in monetary terms. The prac-

tice of drilling oil overseas and selling it on the overseas market indisputably affects how countries manage their economies and contributes to drawing up international strategy for the oil industry. China must further improve its management of oil imports and exports and find a more convenient way to import oil from overseas. Seeking new partners for energy development should be urgently placed on the country's agenda in order to meet strategic needs. While continuing to expand oil trade with the Middle East, it is imperative for China to strengthen economic cooperation with Russia and other oil-producing countries in the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, as well as reduce the risks by maximizing the geographical distribution of oil import sources,¹ while carrying out a strategy aimed at diversifying energy supplies.

China is setting its sights on Russia and the Central Asian states, which are functioning as energy suppliers for the countries contiguous to them.

¹ See: Dan Shi, "Current Oil Pricing Mechanisms in China: Results, Drawbacks and Remedial Measures," *China Industrial Economy*, No. 9, 2003.

Part One:

Russia: A New Energy Supply Empire for China

I. Energy Export as Russia's National Strategic Target

Russia is the world's third largest oil producer and has the largest reserves of natural gas. Given the similarities the two countries share in their free-market oriented reforms, and even more so in their respective approaches to global affairs, it seems natural for Russia to become China's stable energy supplier.

At present, Russia and China are considering only one substantial energy deal—the extraction and transportation of gas from both Eastern and Western Siberia.

As for oil, the Atasu-Alashankou pipeline currently has a capacity of 10 million metric tonnes a year. Previous studies suggested that the pipeline would need to be loaded with Russian crude oil from Western Siberia via the Omsk-Pavlodar-Shymkent pipeline in order to reach its full capacity of 20 million tonnes by 2010. Nonetheless, Russian executives appear keen to indicate that they are already using an alternative pipeline route to export crude oil eastward. However, the Atasu-Alashankou

pipeline would give Russian oil companies access to the Chinese market years before the Pacific pipeline is built.

The Altai gas project includes plans to build a 3,000-kilometer pipeline through Mongolia all the way to the eastern coast of the Shandong Province of China, and finally reaching Shanghai. The pipeline project was supposed to include Japanese and Korean companies as participating investors, with pipeline terminals located in Japan and Korea. Although no substantial progress regarding investments has been achieved recently, the project is supposed to provide for almost 40% of China's total demand for natural gas. Notwithstanding this substantial share, the plan can be considered strategically safe, given the relatively small proportion of natural gas in China's total energy consumption.

II. Political Relations Make a Good Recourse for Energy Cooperation

During the 11th regular meeting between the Russian and Chinese prime ministers on 9 November, 2006, both were committed to facilitating bilateral gas, oil, and nuclear energy cooperation. The two premiers are determined to encourage and promote mutual investments and cooperation in manufacturing, education, public health, and sports. Trade volume between China and Russia reached 29.1 billion U.S. dollars in 2005. In the first nine months of 2006, the bilateral trade volume totaled 24.64 billion dollars, up 18.8% from the previous year.

An official also said that Russia's power monopoly may attract Chinese investments in the development and renovation of the country's power assets. Chinese oil exports by rail from Russia, the world's second largest oil exporter to China, the world's second largest oil consumer, increased to 10 million tonnes in 2005 and to 15 million tonnes in 2006.²

In 2006, China and Russia made "historic breakthroughs" in investments and cooperation in the petroleum industry. So far in the same year, the two countries have signed a series of agreements on setting up two joint venture companies involving oil and gas exploitation and the construction of a pipeline for transporting Russian crude oil to the Chinese border, according to a China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) official. It is clear that Sino-Russian cooperation in the oil industry will help stabilize both the regional and global oil markets. According to official figures, Russia is the world's largest gas exporter and second largest oil exporter, while China is the third largest oil importer in the world. During the first nine months of 2006, Russia's oil output was 358 million tonnes, while China's was 140 million tonnes.

III. The East Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) Pipeline Begins to Emerge

In mid-2006, the long-scheduled project of a Russian oil pipeline from Eastern Siberia to the Pacific Ocean found its final terminal. The East Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline terminal is to be built in Kozmino Bay, and a feasibility study is also being completed for an oil terminal in Perovoynaya Bay built by Transneft, Russia's state pipeline monopoly. The ESPO will supply oil to the Asia-Pacific Region, and it met with strong opposition by environmental organizations combating a

² See: Liang Qiang, "National Interests in the Energy Game between China and Russia," *Nanfeng Chuang* (China), 8 May, 2006.

government decision of 31 December, 2004 on the construction of the pipeline. Engineers chose the longest alternative for the new ESPO route, whereby the pipe was to pass 200 km from Baikal. The bypass route will be 1,920 km long and will pass through the Irkutsk Region, Yakutia, and the Amur Region. The pipeline is slated to pump up to 80 mm tonnes of crude a year (1.6 mm bpd) from Siberia to Russia's Far East, which will then be exported to the Asia-Pacific Region, and in particular to energy-hungry China. The total investments for this project amount to \$11.5 billion.

The first stage of the project of \$6.5 billion in investments will connect Taishet in the Irkutsk Region to Skovorodino in the Amur Region in the Far East and will be completed at the end of 2008, thus providing 30 million tonnes of crude oil per year. The second stage of this project from Skovorodino to Kozmino Bay could provide 50 million tonnes of crude oil per year.

Part Two:

Central Asia: Stable and Long-Term Supplies to China

Central Asian oil resources seem more promising than Russian for China. The estimated oil reserves of the Caspian Basin are quite substantial—possibly as much as 200 billion barrels—although most industrial analysts support a more conservative estimate of 90 billion barrels.

China's deal with Kazakhstan—in which the CNPC outbid Russian and U.S. competitors, including Texaco and Amoco—is remarkable in many respects. Under the terms of the contract, China will acquire the right to develop two oilfields (Aktiubinsk and Uzen) in exchange for its commitment to build a 3,000-kilometer pipeline from the oilfields to the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region of China, and a 250-kilometer pipeline to the border of Iran (via Turkmenistan). Recent information regarding China's plans for this project is rather encouraging. According to the news from CNPC, the 482-kilometer-long domestic section of the Kazakhstan pipeline—from Korla to Shanshan in Xinjiang—has already been completed. The pipeline is expected to transport 25 mt (480 kilo barrels/day) of crude oil from Kazakhstan to China annually.

When viewed from the long-term perspective, it is obvious that China is placing the priority on completing this project with Kazakhstan. First, the projected pipeline to Kazakhstan correlates well with the long-awaited pipeline network to be built inside China. It is hoped that this network will help to resolve the chronic infrastructure bottlenecks in China's energy system, primarily close the distance between the Xinjiang oil and gas bases in western China and the main consumers in the country's eastern and maritime provinces.

China's participation in the Kazakhstan project is aimed at the national development of multiplied oil and gas import. The main geopolitical difficulty with the Central Asian suppliers is establishing a stable transportation system by means of which to deliver energy to the final destinations in the Middle East and Europe. Although currently pursuing different approaches, sooner or later Russia, Turkey, Iran, and the other parties involved will resolve the transportation problem.³ By connecting to the Central Asian transportation system in the near future, China will eventually gain strategic continental access to the Middle East through the future Central Asian networks.

³ See: F. William Engdahl, "The Energy Game: China Looking for the Breach Encircled by the U.S.," *Asian Times* (China), 6 January, 2006.

By means of these two pivotal links from the Middle East through the Caspian to Central Asia, and from Central Asia to China, China will be able to connect existing and potential suppliers to Asia (i.e. the Middle East, Central Asia, and Russia) with the key Asian consumers (China, Japan, and Korea).

China could certainly benefit from such a pivotal geostrategic position. First and foremost, with all the potential suppliers interlinked on a continental base, the stability and diversity of China's oil supplies will be enhanced. Second, China is reasonably confident that its involvement in an international pipeline network will facilitate Japanese and Korean investments in China's domestic pipelines. These pipelines, while connecting Xinjiang with the eastern provinces, would eventually become an important link in the overall chain. Third, China would provide a very important advantage in the refining process, jointly working with Russia and Central Asia, with China's coastal regions serving as the refining link between the Middle Eastern and Central Asian crude oil and the Asian Pacific markets.

Part Three:

Sino-Russian-Kazakhstan Energy Cooperation and Its Impact on Japan

Russia is the only energy-exporting state in Northeast Asia. China and Japan are energy-importing countries. In recent years, China and Japan have been trying to use the import of Russian oil as a strategy for multiplying their oil import channels. In the mid-1990s, Japanese companies were involved in oil and gas development on the Sakhalin continental shelf, and there were immense gains at that time.⁴ Japan signed the Law on Maintaining Oil Reserves, which means that oil-related enterprises must have 70 days of crude oil reserves. But at present, Japan's state and civilian oil reserves together are enough to last for 171 days. Even an oil shortage can do no harm to Japan's oil supply.

However, during the two oil crises in the 1970s, the Japanese recognized that oil security is much more important than anything else. Right now Japan is only 47% dependent on oil. The Japan government believes that the Russian Far East oil pipeline will require too much time and effort to accomplish. On the one hand, they hope that the Russian oil pipeline will reach the Sea of Japan coast; on the other hand, they also hope that more Japanese companies will be involved in Russian oil exploration, even mining areas. In mid-June, Japan adopted a new national energy strategy, which proposes accelerating investments in overseas oilfields. By 2030, Japan plans to raise overseas oil imports by involving domestic companies to bring the independent oil extraction ratio up from the current 15% to 40%.

However, Japan still feels that the entire energy supply system is too fragile. It hopes to acquire East Siberian oil reserves in order to change the situation, in which it is relying on an almost single source of energy supply, by using these huge resources. Oil import prices from the Middle East are high, but the price will be much lower if oil is transited directly from Eastern Siberia. Strategically

⁴ Prof. Koichi Iwama, a Wako University professor and a governmental adviser on energy issues, suggested that Japan should pay more attention to the Sakhalin continental shelf and "rethink its long-term energy strategy" (see: Yuka Hayashi, "Japan Hits Big Setbacks in Push to Expand Its Access to Energy," *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 October, 2006).

speaking, Japan's involvement in the Siberian oil exploration would be crucial in pushing China out of the pipeline competition. From Japan's perspective, it will become the number one country rich in energy resources once it takes control of the Siberian oil resources.

I: Pipeline Competition between China and Japan

Japan's energized diplomatic drive in Central Asia comes at a time when Tokyo is implementing its new energy strategy aimed at ensuring stable oil, gas, and other resource supplies in the long term to feed the world's second-largest economy.

1. Winning the Taishet to Nakhodka Pipeline Project Would Help to Protect Japan's Oil Supply Security

This will mitigate Japan's oil dependence on the Middle East, so that the current ratio of 88% can be cut back to 60%. As everyone knows, Japan's economy has been highly dependent on oil imports. Japan's oil consumption in 2003 reached 260 million tonnes, while domestic oil production was only 680,000 tonnes. Domestic crude oil reserves amounted to only 8.1 million tonnes, thus more than 99% of crude oil needs to be imported. Japan imports 85% of its crude oil from the Middle East region. Given its concerns for its energy security strategy, the country needs to import energy sources through diversified channels. Therefore, the expansion of oil and gas imports from Russia to Japan has become a national priority.

2. Weakening China's Energy Security Following High-Speed Development of the Chinese Economy

China has currently surpassed Japan to become the world's second largest energy consumer. According to the forecast, China's oil import demand in the next 10 years will grow at an average annual rate of 10%. By 2010, it will reach 150 million tonnes. As China's demand for oil grows, ensuring a stable energy supply is of strategic significance for China's economic development. China and Japan are two major oil consumers. In the early 21st century, China and Japan's oil consumption could account for 13% of the total world oil consumption, and in 2025, it could account for 15%, mainly because of the rapid increase in China's oil consumption.

It is a well-known fact that if the Angarsk-Daqin pipeline between China and Russia is completed, it will be very beneficial for China's oil demand and for achieving diversification of China's oil imports.

3. Thinking from the Position of a Power State

The completion of the Sino-Russian strategic oil pipelines not only means China's involvement in resource development in Eastern Siberia, it will further consolidate China's strategic presence in

Northeast Asia. More importantly, these pipelines will be viewed as an enormous strategic link, filling Sino-Russian strategic partnership with substantial content, and the Korean Peninsula could also be eventually incorporated. In this respect, Japan has been pushing Russia to build the Taishet-Nakhodka pipeline instead of the Angarsk-Daqin route. This is to weaken the Sino-Russian strategic partnership of cooperation and development, and mainly to enhance energy cooperation between Japan and Russia and raise Japan's influence in the Far East region.

4. "Win-Win" or Even "Zero Sum"

In recent years, the scramble between these two large energy-resource-consuming countries for oil and gas resources overseas, especially in Russia, has become more noticeable. From the viewpoint of the geopolitical economy of the two countries and their dependence on the outside world for resources, it is inevitable that they will contend for oil and gas resources on the world arena. If the two sides can avoid the traditional game result of antagonistic and exclusive "zero sum" or even a "negative" result and strive for cooperation in a constructive "non-zero sum" competition, they could respectively achieve a "win-win" situation to ensure their own resource security. Furthermore, this will help to stabilize the global oil and gas market and achieve a fair and reasonable configuration for global resources.

II: Energy Cooperation Difficulties between Japan and Russia

Although the Japanese government has increased the range of business benefits, such as petroleum-metal-mineral-resource agencies, and the Ministry of Economics and Industry has tentatively agreed to participate and contribute to the business benefits in the East Siberian oil field, whereby this contribution may rise from the current 50% to 70%, in reality, it will still be very difficult for Japanese enterprises to gain access to Eastern Siberia.⁵

- First of all, due to the political environment of recent years, Japan and Russia are not showing too much enthusiasm about establishing either political or economic ties. This is mainly because Japan is occupying a too rigid and unreasonable position with respect to the four northern islands. If Japan does not lighten up some, Vladimir Putin is unlikely to show significant interest in Japan. This means it will be difficult to gain Russia's confidence no matter how much Japan has to pay Russia.
- Second, Russia is a country focused on independence and upholding its own judgment. As for the oil pipeline, Russia has not met Japan's demand and insists on carrying out its intentions in 2008 despite Japan's diplomatic efforts as well as the financial lure it provides. It is obvious that East Siberian oil field development issues involving tripartite interests among Russia, China, and Japan, and the more closely related benefits of the oil pipelines, should make Russia very cautious about this issue.
- Third, from the commercial negotiations' viewpoint, Japan and Russia are not in an equal position since Japan is now making greater demand on Russia. As for negotiations, Japan is al-

⁵ See: "Japan Launches a New Foreign Policy on the Silk Road," *World News* (China), 23 March, 2006.

ways more anxious, while Russia is never impatient for results. Therefore, Japan and Russia should continue discussing and negotiating on certain commercial issues, which is unlikely to make substantial progress in the short term.

III: Russia's Energy Cooperation with China and Japan

In accordance with Russia's energy development strategy in the Asia Pacific Region, China and Japan are important partners of Russian energy exports and energy cooperation. In Russia's energy strategy, identifying the strengthening of energy strategy cooperation with China and Japan are of top priority. After the Taishet-Angarsk pipeline was built, Russia drew up a balanced long-term strategy. On the one hand, by making use of the geographical advantage with China, leading to the oil pipeline extension to China, Russia could ensure its niche on the Chinese oil market, and Russian oil companies could greatly improve their efficiency. On the other hand, by laying pipelines to the Pacific ports, Russia will actively attract investments for surveying and developing energy resources to be delivered from the Russian Siberian Far East to the Asia Pacific Region, and increase its energy exports to the APR market. Therefore, the Taishet-Nakhodka pipeline to ESPO ultimately coincides with Russia's national interests.

1. Reflecting on the Geo-Advantages: Geopolitical and Geo-Economic Interests between China and Russia

Strengthening Sino-Russian energy cooperation is a top priority for both Russia and China. Since China and Russia are neighbors, Sino-Russian energy cooperation has obvious geographical advantages. In May 2003, a Sino-Russian Joint Statement pointed out: "The field of energy cooperation between the two countries has great significance. It consists of implementing large oil and gas projects, including Chinese and Russian oil pipeline construction, as well as a gas pipeline between China and Russia, and making efforts to implement natural gas projects and research projects with the necessary energy equipment possibilities. The development of a Russian petroleum company (Rosneft) in oil exploration cooperation should become the basis for strengthening bilateral energy cooperation." In addition to laying pipelines, on 19 July, 2006, CNPC announced the successful purchase of 66,225,200 shares out of the total distributed by the Russian Rosneft Petroleum Company. Not long ago, the Russian Petroleum company planned to carry out initial public offering (IPO), and the China National Petroleum Corporation International (CNPCI) invested 500 million U.S. dollars to purchase the stocks of the successful Russian petroleum company at 7.55 dollars per share. This is a good measure for China's multi-channel buying overseas energy strategy.

2. The Development of Sino-Russian Energy Cooperation with Bilateral Interests between China and Russia has Acquired Geostategic Significance

In any case, this oil route decision identified by the Russian government should fully regard China as the world's largest oil export market. On 27 August, 2005, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Frad-

kov said that Russia will continue to supply oil to China by rail. He told the press that Russia will provide China with enough oil without discontinuing its oil and gas deliveries. Between 2005 and 2006, China planned to increase its import of oil from Russia from 10 million to 15 million tonnes, with rail being the main mode of transport. The Siberian Region is the main source of oil supply.

Energy cooperation with Japan has always included the long-term development of Russia's Siberia and Far East as a priority, which is helping to resolve the territorial disputes.

- First, this is in Russia's interests, since oil exploration and development of the oil and natural gas industry are very backward in Russia's Eastern Siberia and Far East because of the cold weather conditions, coupled with historical reasons and the sluggish economic development in Russia. Russia has always wanted to use foreign investments for developing and operating new oil fields, as well as for encouraging new oil production. Investments in this area will lead to the region's economic upswing; and Japan is regarded as an indispensable factor. Japanese investments in the exploration and development of Eastern Siberia could become the first step in this direction, which would be in Russia's long-term strategic interests.
- Second, another factor concerning the pipeline referred to prevents the worsening of Russia and Japan's territorial disputes. V. Putin tried to use the Joint Declaration issued between Japan and the Soviet Union in 1956 to resolve the territorial dispute between the two parties. However, Russian public opinion is extremely against making the construction of the pipeline conducive to Japan's program. But it was hoped that Japanese investments in the Far East Region might change public opinion with respect to the territorial dispute and help it to reach a positive settlement. At the same time, this implies that in order to resolve the territorial dispute based on the peace treaty negotiations, Japan should offer a compromise that does not insist on the hard-line return of all four islands. Such aspirations may become a reality. Bilateral political relations did not slow down in 2004 and 2005 as we thought. The oil pipeline project may help to improve the plight of the territorial dispute, as has been the case in the territorial disputes over the last few years, by finding a compromise path.

IV: Prospects for Energy Cooperation among China, Russia, Japan, and Central Asia

Russia's interest in China's oil strategy is rather ambivalent. Moscow's main motivation is to orient China toward the Russian energy base and thus "energetically" cement their "trusting strategic partnership." Moscow is increasingly interested in such a partnership, given its ever weakening military-security position and the obvious direct and indirect pressure it feels from the West, with NATO's enlargement and the Yugoslavian crises serving as a clear sign of this pressure. Moscow's secondary motivation stems from the very narrow spectrum of economic ties it maintains with China. Russia is interested in expanding this spectrum in both the political and commercial sense.

Russia is also politicking on Japan's anxieties about China tapping Russia's energy resources. Although Japan is currently only slightly interested in the energy options in Eastern Siberia, Tokyo is anxious to avoid marginalization by China on the Russian energy market, in which case it would potentially face a comprehensively bonded Russian-Chinese alliance. The Russians are interested in attracting Japanese capital to the Siberian energy project in an effort to open up the deeply depressed

Russian Far Eastern territories, thus substantially enhancing the overall climate of Russian-Japanese relations. This climate remains unsatisfactory as a result of the unresolved territorial dispute over the so-called northern territories. Russia's long-term priority is to involve both China and Japan in the economic development of the Far Eastern territories without completely losing its political and administrative clout with the two.

However, Russia's ability to satisfy China's growing appetite for oil is limited. As such, Moscow must face the reality of China's current economic and eventual political penetration of Russia's former zone of domination in Central Asia. Commercially, any progress in the exploitation of Central Asian resources will damage Russia's interests. Every barrel of oil that is extracted from the oil fields of the Caspian Basin will be in direct competition with Russia's oil on the world market, keeping prices low. Because oil trade remains a dominant part of its foreign trade revenues, the low prices mentioned above will cause Russia to continuously lose a great deal of badly needed currency. The economic threat posed by Central Asian oil markets is prompting Russia to make efforts to hinder any pipeline solutions unfavorable to its commercial and security interests.

Russia also possesses effective leverage with respect to both Beijing and Astana, which makes it impossible for either capital to ignore Moscow when discussing Central Asian affairs. Russia's influence on China is based on the broad scope of their shared interests within the framework of a "trusting strategic partnership." The friendly border, intense military rapprochement, and consistent and unconditional support of China on the Taiwan issue, which Moscow is offering Beijing, are very valuable aspects of the Russo-Chinese relationship.

Russian and Chinese behavior toward one another in Central Asia will most probably be compromising in nature and characterized by a set of visible constraints. It is not in the interest of either regional giant to create a new sphere of geopolitical confrontation in Central Asia.

V: The SCO is the Arena for Sino-Russian Energy Cooperation with Kazakhstan

The SCO, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, will promote cooperation among the member states to further develop and diversify cooperation by employing its member countries' potential in mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation as well as broad opportunities, the prospects for which are clearly set forth in the SCO's founding charter.

On the global energy map, the four Central Asian countries and energy-rich countries such as Russia and Iran are playing very important roles on the world energy market. India, a country with a crude oil import dependence of 70%, has turned to Russia, Central Asia, and even Latin America in search of oil supplies, while China's GDP and energy demands are rapidly growing.

In 2004, the SCO adopted an action plan for the program consisting of 127 clauses, 19 of which are related to energy cooperation. Energy production, the development of new hydrocarbon fields, and the construction of oil and gas pipelines are a priority area of cooperation within the SCO, which plans to develop a new energy network in the Asian region.

Given the global growth in energy consumption and oil prices, energy partnership is becoming the key area of international cooperation. SCO members can become a stable source of energy for China. SCO energy cooperation promises to be lucrative; there is the prospect of organizing joint geological exploration and, in this way, beginning joint development of Central Asian resources. The SCO's joint projects include the construction of an oil pipeline from Atasu (Kazakhstan) to Alashankou in China, resumed pumping of oil along the Omsk-Pavlodar-Shymkent-Chardzhou pipeline, cooperation on Central Asian and Russian gas transit, gas supply to China, and joint exploitation of the Kyrgyz sec-

tion of the pipeline from the Bukhara gas-bearing area to Tashkent and on to Bishkek and Almaty. It is clear that the pipeline is not the only transportation project that requires joint efforts and coordination of the parties' interests.

In the future pattern of China's oil imports, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization may have the same status as the African region and even the Middle East. As the data shows, Russia and Kazakhstan as energy-importing countries have significantly advanced to the forefront of China's oil imports. In China's international energy cooperation, the SCO is one of the most promising development vectors. The SCO includes not only a large energy producer, but also energy consumption states. The energy issue is becoming the basic structure for complementary energy cooperation.

PROBLEMS OF TURKMEN GAS EXPORT: VIEW FROM UKRAINE

David PREYGER

*D.Sc. (Econ.),
head of the Department of
Transport Communication Development Problems,
National Institute of International Security Problems
(Kiev, Ukraine)*

Vladimir OMELCHENKO

*Chief consultant at the Department of
Transport Communication Development Problems,
National Institute of
International Security Problems
(Kiev, Ukraine)*

There has been a perceptible increase recently in the public's attention to the energy security problems of the European continent (primarily of the member states of the European Union), particularly with respect to supplying its national economies with natural gas. This was the topic of a discussion arousing great interest at the St. Petersburg G-8 Summit held in July 2006. And it is still drawing the attention of participants in numerous highest-level bi- and multilateral meetings from the Russian Federation, Germany, the leadership of the European Commission, Poland, Ukraine, the states of Central Asia and the Caspian Region, the Middle East, and North Africa. The Russian Federation's guaranteed delivery of natural gas in the future was the most widely discussed topic. Russia currently accounts for more than one quarter of the total volume of the EU

member states' import purchases. In mid-November 2006, the results of a confidential study of gas dependence on Russia carried out by NATO economist experts were published in the mass media (the document was sent to the ambassadors of all 26 member states of the alliance). This document maintains that the RF may try to create a gas cartel consisting of Algeria, Qatar, Libya, the Central Asian countries, and, possibly, Iran.

Against the background of the discussion that unfolded, the interest in states transiting raw hydrocarbons to Europe declined somewhat, although certain European countries (primarily Poland) are trying to prevent this by drawing attention to the role they play in ensuring uninterrupted deliveries of natural gas to Europe from the East.

Nevertheless, certain Central Asian states also have a problem with increasing the export of their own blue fuel to Europe, which is preventing them from realizing their potential. This is a particularly urgent problem for Turkmenistan. Ukraine has always played a significant role in the traditional export route of Turkmen's raw hydrocarbons to Europe, and has been a consumer of large amounts of Turkmen export gas. At the same time, in the post-Soviet period there is no point in looking at gas relations only between Ukrainian and Turkmenistan, since there has always been a third party in them, i.e. states carrying out transit of Turkmen blue fuel from the Turkmen-Uzbek to the Russian-Ukrainian border and attempting (whereby quite successfully) to observe their own national interests along the way. Unfortunately, the authors of this article were unable to find and use Turkmen original sources in their study; they used exclusively Russian and Ukrainian scientific publications, as well as media articles devoted to this problem.

The strategy of Turkmenistan's economic, political, and cultural development until 2020 stipulates that by 2005, gas production will amount to 85 bcm, and export to 70 bcm; by 2010, production will grow to 120 bcm and export to 100 bcm; while by 2020, production will reach 240 bcm. In this way, there are plans to achieve an almost three-fold increase in the production volumes for 2005 over a span of fifteen years (in fact, in 2005, 22 bcm less were produced, whereas almost 25 bcm less were exported). This lag is explained by the unresolved question of exporting gas resources via southern (surface) pipelines through Iran, or via the underwater route through the Caspian (to Azerbaijan). The prospective documents in effect in the country stipulate that between 2006 and 2015, Turkmenistan intends to deliver gas as follows: to Russia and Ukraine in the westerly, to Iran in the southerly, and to Pakistan and India (the Trans-Afghan gas pipeline) in the southeasterly direction. What is more, there are plans to carry out significant deliveries to China (possibly together with Kazakh resources). In compliance with the documents signed by Saparmurat Niyazov and Hu Jintao, beginning in 2009, Ashgabad will sell Beijing 30 bcm of gas a year for thirty years. There are plans to build a special pipeline for this.¹

How realistic are Turkmenistan's plans and circumstances for producing and selling natural gas? Can Ukraine count on the purchase of Turkmen blue fuel in the volumes it needs to equalize its gas balance? How can Ukraine and Turkmenistan uphold their national interests in gas relations in which third countries—primarily the Russian Federation—directly participate? To answer these questions, we should first remember that with the help of Ukraine's gas transportation system (GTS), approximately 75% of all the exported natural gas is transported to Europe from Russia and the states of the Caspian Region, including Turkmenistan. It is expedient here to chronologically analyze the fifteen-year history of cooperation between our countries in buy-sell transactions of blue fuel and its transportation from Turkmenistan to Ukraine, keeping in mind that civilized market relations in the post-Soviet space had only just begun to develop at this time. Unfortunately, even today economic relations among the states participating in the delivery of Turkmen natural gas from the fields to the end

¹ See: *Kievskie vedomosti*, No. 73 (3741), 6 April, 2006, p. 13, available at [http://www.kv.com.ua/index.php?article=39211&number_old=3741].

consumers in Russia, Ukraine, or Europe are still not sufficiently open and stable, and, consequently, can arouse mistrust in any of the players involved.

In Soviet times, no one in Ukraine was interested in whose natural gas it received via the U.S.S.R. unified gas transportation system. There is every reason to believe that a significant percentage of the blue fuel consumed in this country (according to our estimates, Ukraine consumed more than 115 bcm in 1990, while it produced only 28.1 bcm) was precisely Central Asian, including Turkmen, gas, since it was easier to deliver than Russian gas from the Siberian fields. The data on the Turkmen blue fuel balance at the beginning of the 1990s provides indirect confirmation of this. Turkmenistan consumed no more than 8-10% of the total production volume (80-90 bcm), and the rest of the gas went to the Central Asia-Center system built as early as 1967-1985. It was sent to Ukraine via the Alexandrov Gai-Novopskov gas pipeline (through the states contiguous to Turkmenistan—Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan—to the Russian Federation). Part of this fuel, along with the surplus not consumed by the economies of other gas-producing Central Asian republics and the R.S.F.S.R. (together they produced 777.3 bcm in 1991), was exported, and the revenue was shared centrally among the deliverers. This system was retained during the first years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the Russian Federation assumed the role of the Center. For example, in 1992, as noted in one of Russia's studies, "the Russian authorities sent Ashghabad hard currency revenue from the export of only 11.3 bcm of gas."² In the text of the article, the word "only" is not used by accident, since (in today's terminology), Turkmenistan exported 75 bcm of blue fuel in 1991, most of which went to the north—to the Russian Federation. It goes without saying that it was impossible to trace the real directions of use of Turkmen gas going to Russia and, in fact, Turkmenistan itself was not ready to undertake this kind of investigation at that time. So for the next two years, the governments of the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan came to terms on the same export volumes for which payment was made from the total currency revenue. A so-called gas delivery quota for export was used, according to which Turkmenistan was allotted 11% until 1994. However, several circumstances interfered with fulfilling the conditions of the contract, and in 1993, Russia paid Turkmenistan for 8.2 bcm (the export volume of Turkmen blue fuel amounted to 64.3 bcm in 1993). The rest of the gas coming from Turkmenistan to the gas transportation system of the Russian Federation was paid by Gazprom at prices no higher than the domestic Russian ones and, according to this company's assurances, was consumed within the Russian Federation (there is reason to believe that some of the resources were also used for the Ukrainian economy and for the economies of several other former Soviet republics). In 1995, Russia eliminated the quota and refused to pump Turkmen gas for export.³

Nevertheless, the Turkmen leadership was looking for reliable partners to gain access to European and other gas markets. Hopes were frequently placed on large international companies supported by national governments. Incidentally, this should come as no surprise, since, first, the newly independent states that arose after the collapse of the Soviet Union were in no position to provide any assistance, and second, only cooperation with foreign countries (preferably with the U.S. and other influential Western partners) could increase Turkmenistan's chances in the gas delivery negotiations with the Russian Federation. Of course, it could try to raise its own consumption of natural gas, by augmenting the production of cheap electric power, for example, both for domestic requirements (in this sense, Egypt's experience might be of interest), and for deliveries, as well as for developing the chemical industry (to manufacture fertilizers required in agriculture, for instance). However, this required scientific research, investments, expansion of the domestic market, and resolv-

² S. Verezemsky, "Torgovlia gazom v SNG trebuet ot Turkmenistana realizma i gibkosti," *Neft' i kapital*, No. 3, 1996, p. 66.

³ See: S.S. Zhil'tsov, I.S. Zonn, and A.M. Ushkov, *Geopolitika Kaspiiskogo regiona*, Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia Publishers, Moscow, 2003, p. 136.

ing many associated problems, which could take years. There was not enough technology in the region for liquefying natural gas; and it was impossible to assimilate Uzbekistan's domestic gas market (or Tajikistan's or Kyrgyzstan's bordering on it), since, in accordance with the division of labor established in Soviet times, it belonged to Uzbekistan, which did not need any competitors at present. Uzbekistan sent its surplus gas to Russia via the Central Asia-Center and Bukhara-Ural gas pipelines.

Turkmen gas could be sent (and was sent in small quantities) to the South Caucasian regions, although again only via Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation (in so doing, the Central Asian republics set a transit fee of \$1.5 for 1,000 cm per 100 km, which, according to Russian experts, exceeded the average world prices at that time), but interstate contracts and a guarantee mechanism were necessary, both with respect to deliveries and with respect to payment for the natural gas obtained through Russia. Unfortunately, the economies of the new Caucasian states (as well as of Ukraine) became less and less efficient with each passing day, budget revenue dropped, and hard currency takings were clearly insufficient to pay for all of the import, including of Turkmen gas. A solution was found by transferring almost everywhere to barter exchange, including foreign trade transactions. For example, design and construction assembly work, equipment and medication deliveries, the training of Turkmen students at Ukraine's military academies, publishing activity, and so on featured in bilateral agreements between Ukraine and Turkmenistan in the commodity line (including services and work) used for paying for gas. Ukraine also settled Turkmenistan's debt to other countries by means of commodities.

It stands to reason that these systems could not be sufficiently transparent and mutually acceptable, thus giving rise to tension (and this is still a bone of contention) among economic entities, which often reached the interstate level, and enormous debts formed (primarily to Turkmenistan on the part of Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and, partially, Armenia). Since it did not receive its allotted compensation, Turkmenistan was forced to cutback gas deliveries and, consequently, also decrease its production. For example, in 1993, 25.5 bcm of Turkmen gas was delivered to Ukraine, while 28 bcm was planned for 1994, but a debt of \$713 million, which accumulated in 1992-1993 and was not settled (only about 300 million was paid off), meant that Turkmenistan only sent 11 bcm of gas to Ukraine in 1994, and 20 bcm in 1995 (this was when the Omrania Trading Company appeared, which was registered in Cyprus and in 1995 acted as an agent in implementing an intergovernmental agreement on Turkmenistan's delivery of 11 bcm of gas to Ukraine, ensuring 80% of its payment). In 1995, the Ukrainian structure purchased Turkmen gas at the Russian-Kazakh border at \$57 for 1,000 cm and sold it to joint Ukraine-Russian venture OLGaz, which in turn sold it to wholesale consumers. It was not until 1996, after a cycle of talks and almost complete settlement of the state debt, that deliveries began at a level of 23 bcm a year, but by this time under a new system.

A similar picture was also observed at this time in Turkmenistan's gas relations with the South Caucasian republics. Not all consumers could make timely payments for the Turkmen blue fuel they received. Suffice it to say that the total gas debt of the post-Soviet republics to Turkmenistan amounted to almost \$1.5 billion by the end of 1995, part of which was registered bilaterally as a long-term loan. The gas production volume in Turkmenistan dropped from 90 bcm in 1990 to 17.2 bcm in 1997, and only after that began to gradually increase, although it has subsequently not reached the level of the Soviet period (see Table 1).

Keeping in mind the low solvency of the Turkmen gas consumers and, consequently, the unreliable payments for transit services, Russia made certain concessions at this time in its relations with Turkmenistan by agreeing to create a joint venture in the form of a joint-stock company called Turkmenrosgaz, one the founders of which was also the international Itera Company. The latter

Table 1

The Republic of Turkmenistan's Natural Gas Balance*

Index	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
Production	84.3	64.3	31.3	17.2	22.8	51.4	59.1	63.0
Export	75	55.9	22.6	6.5	8.5	37.2	43.4	45.2
Apparent (calculated) consumption	9.3	8.4	8.7	10.7	14.3	14.2	15.7	17.8

* Data from *NGV (Neftegazovaia vertikal [Oil and Gas Vertical] magazine)*, No. 15, 2005, p. 43, is used. In 2005, Ukraine (34 bcm), Iran (6 bcm), and Russia (5 bcm) were the main purchasers of Turkmen gas.

purchased 4% of the shares, Turkmenistan 45%, and Gazprom 51%. Ukraine became the largest sales market for Turkmen gas in the activity of the formed structure (we will remind you that Turkmenistan's gas export quota to Europe was eliminated at that time). Turkmenistan was responsible for deliveries of blue fuel to the Turkmen-Uzbek border, Kazakhstan and Gazprom offered their gas transportation networks, whereby Russia introduced a privileged fee of approximately \$1.1 per 1,000 cm for 100 km, and Itera fulfilled the function of blue fuel delivery and sales operator in Ukraine. After it went into operation, the system, in which everything seemed to be clearly distributed, aroused Turkmenistan's discontent. This country began to receive gas money from Gazprom and Itera on an irregular basis, whereby the percentage of hard currency revenue in the payment decreased and Gazprom was slow to fulfill its investment promises regarding the development of Turkmen gas fields and reconstruction of the Turkmen section of the CAC. In the spring of 1997, without finding an acceptable solution to the problems that arose, Turkmenistan took the drastic step of entirely cutting off blue fuel supplies to Ukraine. And later (in the summer of 1997), according to a special resolution of the state's leader, the structure that was engaged in these deliveries was eliminated (30 bcm were transported to Ukraine over 18 months). Partial export of Turkmen gas to Europe, which began in 1997, was interrupted by Russia in 1998, since the partners could not agree on the price: Turkmenistan insisted on \$40 for 1,000 bcm, while Russia would agree to only \$30-35.

In the next eighteen months, Ukraine and Turkmenistan made repeated attempts to come to terms on blue fuel purchase without mediators. It is entirely understandable that this did not yield any results, since not one gas route from Central Asia in Ukraine's direction bypasses the Russian Federation, which naturally was not interested in issues of natural gas transportation through its territory being resolved without its participation. A compromise was reached in 1999, when the participants in the talks agreed to a new payment mechanism with respect to Turkmenistan. Now Ukraine was supposed to pay for blue fuel (in an amount of 20 bcm per year) directly to Turkmenistan, Itera retained the role of delivery operator, and Gazprom offered its transportation networks for a set fee, which Ukraine was supposed to pay. But this new system did not work either, since Ukraine did not repay its debts to Turkmenistan (according to the estimates of Russian experts, by the beginning of 1999, they had reached a total of approximately \$2 billion) and did not pay for the new deliveries on time. Until mid-May 1999, Turkmenistan sent Ukraine a little more than 5 bcm of essentially unpaid gas (the estimates of its cost varied from \$90 million to \$190 million) and halted

deliveries. At the end of 1999, after long talks about the price of gas and its payment forms held with the participation of high-ranking officials of both states, Russia's Gazprom signed a framework agreement with Turkmenistan on the purchase in 2000 of 20 bcm of gas at \$36 per 1,000 cm at the border of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan with a 40% payment in cash. Itera continued to be the blue fuel transportation operator through Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia, and also its purchaser. This company signed a contract with Turkmenneftegaz on the delivery of goods by way of payment for part of the gas. Itera's transit services were paid for in gas, and the fuel itself (in terms of volume, it was the difference between the amount of gas sent from Turkmenistan and the payment for Itera's services) was paid by the consumers (including Ukraine) both in cash and in goods. Blue fuel deliveries began three days before the beginning of 2000, and by the end of the first quarter, Ukraine received 5.5 bcm. By May, Turkmenneftegaz sent almost 8.8 bcm for a total of \$315.5 million. According to Ukrainian experts,⁴ Ukraine gave half of the gas to Itera for transit services, due to which the actual price of the other half received amounted to \$72 per 1,000 cm at the Russian-Ukrainian border. Keeping in mind the balance carried forward, Ukraine's total debt to Turkmenistan amounted to more than \$100 million by May 2000; deliveries were halted again, and by this time the debt coordinated with Gazprom for the gas consumed amounted to \$1,390 million. Later, Ukraine succeeded in restructuring its debt to Russia and postponing the time of its settlement—including by means of cost allowances for future transit services rendered by Ukraine to Gazprom. This fact was also reflected in the new gas agreements with the RF signed in January 2006. What is more, even the Ukrainian president found the 2000 talks between Ukraine and Turkmenistan arduous. The Central Asian country insisted on a new gas price of \$42 dollars per 1,000 cm and entering only short-term contracts. Later it agreed to the delivery of another 5 bcm of blue fuel at \$38 until the end of 2000, whereby 40% of the total amount was to be paid in hard currency and the other 60% in goods. In 2001, the price increased by 2 dollars, and the percentage of cash was to increase to 50%, but because in 2000 Ukraine stopped paying Turkmenistan the debts accumulated as early as 1993-1994, as well as its service fees (up to \$140 million a year), Turkmenistan halted its gas deliveries. Ukraine was left with no alternative but to come to terms with Itera and consume the blue fuel received from Gazprom in payment for transit services (24 bcm). New talks with the participation of the states' high-ranking officials led to an agreement which stipulated that in 2001 and for the next five years Ukraine would purchase 250 bcm of Turkmen gas, including 30 bcm in 2001, at \$42 per 1,000 cm, 40 bcm in 2002, 50 bcm in 2003, and so on, up to 60 bcm, with 50:50 payment in cash and so-called investment projects. For the period after 2001, the price parameters and range of the commodity part of the blue fuel payment were to be agreed upon separately. At the same time, talks were also underway with the Russian Federation, which was delivering gas to Ukraine.

In April 2003, a contract was signed between the Russian Gazexport Company and Turkmenneftegaz, according to which the Russian Federation purchased 5 bcm of blue fuel in 2004 and up to 10 bcm in 2005. During this time, Ukraine acquired Turkmen gas under separate bilateral agreements, and Russia carried out the functions of a transit state. According to experts' estimates, Turkmen raw hydrocarbons amounted to approximately 45% of Ukraine's gas balance. In the summer of 2004, Gazprom signed a contract with Turkmenistan that boiled down to the RosUkrEnergo Company, the new transit operator of Turkmen gas which took over from the Hungarian company, buying 60-70 bcm a year beginning in 2007 and 70-80 bcm of Turkmen blue fuel a year beginning in 2009. For the entire period until 2028, this would amount to a total of 1.6 tcm of gas. To these export gas expenditures, we should add the obligations to make annual deliveries of up to 8 bcm to Iran via the Korpedzhe-Kurt Kui gas pipeline put into operation in 1998. In 2005, the agreed upon volume

⁴ See: *Gaz & Nafta. Energetichnyi biuleten'*, No. 5, 2000, pp. 15-16.

amounted to 6.5 bcm, and beginning in 2007, it will be no less than 8 bcm. In so doing, after a new compressor station goes into operation, the throughput capacity of this route will rise to 12 bcm a year. By summing up all the obligations of the Turkmenistan leadership with respect to gas sales, we can conclude that as early as 2007, the republic should be exporting 104-114 bcm (we will remind you that in 2005, its production amounted to a total of 63 bcm), 170-180 bcm in 2009-2010, and up to 202-212 bcm a year after 2010 (see Table 2).

Table 2

**Gas Export from Turkmenistan:
Obligations and Intentions, bcm***

Importers	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	After 2010
Russia ¹	5 (anticipated)	10	60-70	63-73	70-80	70-80	70-80
Ukraine ²	34	36	36 ⁴	60 ⁴	60 ⁴	60 ⁴	60 ⁴
Iran	6	8	8	8	8	12	12
Afghanistan-Pakistan-India	—	—	—	—	—	—	30
Austria ³	0.2	1.5	—	—	—	—	—
China					30	30	30
Total	45.2	55.5	104-114	131-141	168-178	172-182	202-212

* Compiled with the use of data from NGV, No.15, 2005, pp. 42-44.

¹ Under the 2003 contract for 25 years; total of 1.6 tcm.
² Under the 2001 contract for 2002-2006; total of 250 bcm.
³ Against the payment of the contract for building the turnkey bypass Dauletabad-Deryalyk gas pipeline (CAC-4)
⁴ Agreed upon delivery volumes, but not officialized by a contract.

- *In light of the new agreements between Ukraine and Russia on gas issues for 2006 and the next four years, the agreement with Turkmenistan is becoming “virtual,” that is, it is losing its original inherent economic component. Now Gazprom is doing everything (quite efficiently) to ensure itself the exclusive right to manage the entire gas flow from the Central Asian republics to Europe. On 27 September, 2005, the company succeeded in enforcing its function as transit operator of Turkmen gas via Uzbekistan by entering a corresponding contract with Uztransgaz (a subsidiary company of Uzbekneftegaz) for five years (2006-2010), according to which Gazprom is being transferred the rights to manage the CAC and Bukhara-Ural main gas pipeline system. However, this does not apply to the pipelines for the export of Uzbek*

blue fuel per se to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as for technological needs. For Ukraine, this could create a new problem of Russia setting the price for fuel sold by the Ukrgaz-energo joint venture under the new conditions, since Gazprom might apply the transit fee at which it is transporting its export gas to Europe via the Ukrainian gas transportation network to Turkmen blue fuel meant for delivery to Ukraine via contracted gas pipelines (in Ukraine a fee of \$1.6 per 1,000 cm for 100 km is currently in effect).

Here it is expedient to present information on Turkmenistan's natural gas resources, which were officially recognized at one time. According to the Russian press, the republic's proved resources in the U.S.S.R. State Reserves Balance for 1991 (last Union publication) were determined at 2.8 tcm. In 1996, the *Neft' i kapital* magazine (No. 3) published data on A+B+C₁ category reserves of Turkmenistan's 15 largest gas fields (in bcm): Dauletabad—1,756.6; Eastern and Western Shatlyk—841.2; Malai—201.91; the Naip Group—179.1; Kirpichli—153.7; Seyrob-Uchaji—120.6; Gugurtli—94.6; North Balkui—90.5; Beurdeshek—58.7; Korpedzhe—60; Kotur-Depe—49; Saman-Depe—101.6; Bota—101.2, Beshkyzyl—82.8, and Elkui—52.2. This comes to a total of 3,943.7 bcm (almost 4 trillion). There is information about the republic's confirmed gas reserves as of the beginning of 2004: at that time, they amounted to 3 tcm, which correlates quite closely with the data of ten years ago, while in terms of blue fuel reserves in today's estimates, Turkmenistan occupies fourth place in the world. In the country's State Balance of Mineral Reserves, there are 127 natural gas fields, 39 of which were developed by the designated time. In 2004-2005, several domestic and foreign organizations, for example, international certification companies, DeGolyer&McNaughton (U.S.A.), as well as Gaffney, Cline&Associates Ltd. (England), have been engaged in estimating Turkmen gas and oil supplies, but their results have not been made open to the public so far. We believe the competition for foreign investments Turkmenistan is having to carry out with its neighbors, both on land (particularly with Uzbekistan) and at sea (where Azerbaijan is the main rival) should be named among the other reasons for the client's behavior. Nevertheless, experts⁵ publish estimates of Turkmenistan's total forecasted gas supplies at 8.1-8.8 tcm. On the whole, the estimates of the republic's reserves differ widely, ranging from 1.5 tcm to 23 tcm. An analysis of the data of various international energy information publications shows that the volume of the republic's proved gas supplies is probably within the range of 2.0-2.5 tcm, and the forecasted volume is between 20 and 23 tcm. So it seems that although Turkmen officials announced the discovery of the Southern Iolotan field in 2006, the reserves of which supposedly amount to 7 tcm of blue fuel, we should be dubious about this claim until the official results of an audit by independent international companies are published, particularly since the data of Soviet geological surveys do not show the possibility of such an enormous field being discovered. On the other hand, it is entirely obvious that if the proved gas reserves in Turkmenistan are not augmented at advanced rates, they will suffice for only about ten years of production at the declared level.

The analysis we conducted makes it possible to presume that at present, Turkmenistan has no real possibility of reaching its planned gas export volumes in the next few years for two reasons: *first*—it has insufficient blue fuel production capacity, making a two-fold increase in production in 2-3 years extremely unlikely, and Russia will not receive 15 bcm of Turkmen gas in 2007, or 25-35 bcm in 2009; *second*—its gas pipelines in the northern (western) direction have limited throughput capacity. The throughput capacity of the Turkmen route of the CAC GTS currently amounts to 50 bcm, and, according to some data, the degree of wear and tear of Turkmenistan's main pipelines is between 72 and 87 percent. In particular, the entire transportation

⁵ See: S.S. Zhil'tsov, I.S. Zonn, and A.M. Ushkov, op. cit., p. 135; L. Gusak, "Anatomia gazovykh problem," 2000 newspaper, 13 January, 2006, p. E4.

and technological chain from the Dauletabad-Donmez field to the Deryalyk compressor station located at the end of the Turkmen section of the CAC GTS is outmoded, and modernization has been going on for more than one year now. According to preliminary data, in 2005, the transportation of Turkmen gas via CAC GTS amounted to approximately 40 bcm, of Uzbek to 3 bcm and of Kazakh to 7 bcm. As a result of the restoration and repair work carried out by the KazTransGaz company (3,939 km of pipelines pass through Kazakhstan), by 2008, the throughput capacity of CAC GTS will be increased to 65-70 bcm (the capacity of the Turkmen section will increase from the current 45 to 50 bcm, of the Uzbek section by 6-7 bcm, and of the Kazakh section by 10-12 bcm). By totaling the export volumes of Turkmen, Uzbek, and Kazakh gas pumped via CAC GTS, we can see that Turkmenistan is left with no more than 50 bcm of capacity.

In this respect, new tension can be expected between Gazprom and the Turkmenistan leadership relating to the real volumes of buy-sell of Turkmen blue fuel. The thing is that under the provisions of a 25-year contract, Russia is obligated to purchase the set amounts of gas, or pay for it, regardless of the actual volumes. So Gazprom will apparently have to begin immediate reconstruction of the Turkmen section of the CAC GTS, which presumes the laying of an additional branch with a throughput capacity of 15-20 bcm a year. But for the reasons mentioned above, Gazprom is not rushing to invest funds in modernizing the Turkmen section of the CAC. In other words, we can conclude that the tasks set by the Turkmen leadership for exporting raw hydrocarbons do not entirely correspond to the real possibilities. It appears that the purpose of this policy is to create conditions for intensifying competition among potential investors in resource development, as well as among the purchasers of natural gas. In this case, both an increase in the amount of investments attracted to the gas complex and an increase in the sales price for blue fuel could be achieved. What is more, based on the published data on gas reserves, Turkmenistan will have to undertake serious measures that would enable it in the midterm to carry out European export in the contracted volumes, as well as implement delivery projects to China and Japan.

In all the years of the period under review, Turkmenistan has been working in the gas sector in two vectors, so to speak. The first involves the sale of its natural gas to traditional consumers—post-Soviet states (the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia), as well as resolving problems of its payment with them. The second entails searching for new sales markets and transportation routes to them for its raw hydrocarbons. Keeping in mind the situation that is developing with the sale of surplus blue fuel in the post-Soviet space and assessing its prospects, the Turkmenistan leadership began taking steps as early as 1992-1993 aimed at gaining independent access to the European gas market, foreseeing, of course, that this would take a long time, if it were possible at all (taking a side step, we will note that obviously with the aim of attracting foreign investments, in 1993, the Turkmenistan government adopted a long-term program for the country's oil and gas industry development until 2020. The document stipulates the task of producing 130 bcm of natural gas in 2000, and 230 bcm by 2020; in 1995-1996, the latter index was reduced to 200 bcm. According to the available information, the current task is to produce 240 bcm in 2020). At this time, Iran and Turkey were the targets for export routes in the hopes of gaining access in the future to the European markets through their territories. The idea of laying gas pipelines in the direction of India and China was not rejected. As early as 1992, the first agreement was signed between Turkmenistan and Iran on the construction of a gas pipeline of 2,300 km in length and costing \$4-5 billion, passing through Iran and Turkey to Europe. In 1993, an international consortium was created for building a gas pipeline that was supposed to pass from Kurt Kui in the Iranian gas pipeline network to the south of Tehran as far as Tabriz (parallel to the existing branch), reach Turkey via Dogubayazit to Erzerum and then go further on to the gulfs. There were plans to complete the project by 2020 with deliveries to Turkey first of 15, then of 28 bcm a year of Turkmen gas, 13 bcm of which were to be sold in Europe. In April 1994, Turkmenistan, Iran, and Turkey signed a provisional agreement on the building of a gas pipeline, and later

a so-called Final Agreement on Joint Execution of a Gas Transportation Project to Europe (by this time, the cost of the construction was estimated at almost \$11 billion).

Turkmenistan needed the pipeline to resolve its urgent problems of independently exporting its surplus blue fuel and reinforcing its international status on the gas market. The project was supported by Iran, since it helped it to resolve several of its economic and social development problems using the revenue from transit services. It was also supported by Turkey, which at that time was anticipating accelerated economic growth requiring a significant increase in raw hydrocarbon consumption, while this development would make it possible to reinforce Turkey's role in providing the European states with natural gas and, in so doing, increase their dependence on Turkey, which wants to join the EU. However, these three states were not the only ones whose interests were affected by the project. Its implementation would have an impact on the balance of gas coming to Europe by ousting established suppliers (including the Russian Federation) from the market; it would allow the Iranian economy to develop more dynamically (in counterbalance to America's interests); it would significantly reinforce Turkey's transit role in tandem with Iran; and it would deprive Ukraine of part of the Central Asian natural gas transported via its territory to Europe. What is more, it might deal a detrimental blow to the interests of other countries playing an active role on the region's gas market. In the end, the project failed to gain momentum due to insufficient funds for its implementation (official version). Admittedly, after it was "buried," and particularly in August 1996, Turkey signed an agreement with Iran on the purchase of 10 bcm of blue fuel a year. In so doing, the latter did not have enough resources in its north not only for carrying out its export obligations, but even for satisfying its own needs, having to use imported gas for this purpose (again Turkmen). Not long before this (in 1995), Iran entered an agreement with Turkmenistan on building a local gas pipeline of approximately 200 km in length intended for delivering Turkmen blue fuel from the Korpedzhe field to the border point of Kurt Kui. As early as September 1996 (after signing the above-mentioned agreement with Turkey), building of the pipeline began with the efforts of the Iranian National Engineering Company under rather beneficial conditions for Turkmenistan. Iran needed gas for the factories and power plants in the country's north.

We think the refusal to build a Turkmen gas pipeline to Turkey primarily demonstrated the tough, but unpublicized, competition between Iran and Turkmenistan in their desire to export natural gas to Europe. Iran won this round of the unannounced competition, and Turkmenistan was left with no other choice but to look for new alternatives for delivering its blue fuel to the market via non-Russian routes. The republic was essentially ready for this turn in events, gradually preparing other alternatives in advance, as well as involving well-known contract companies in their development. For example, in 1992, the Turkish Botaş Company asked Turkmenistan to consider two alternatives for delivering gas to Europe: one—through the Caspian Sea to Azerbaijan, Georgia, and then on to Turkey, and the second—via Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation (outside the CAC GTS) to the eastern coast of the Caspian with subsequent hooking up to the existing gas transportation system going to Europe. The first (Trans-Caspian) version with a production capacity of up to 30 bcm of blue fuel a year was regarded as feasible at that time, while no one has seriously considered the second even to this day. In our opinion, the reason for this is that Kazakhstan has still not made a final decision on its export gas route priorities, wishing to resolve its transportation problems, particularly regarding its own natural gas, as independently as possible. Ukraine did not take direct part in the project, but building a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan and Georgia (participants in the interstate GUAM association which was sufficiently renowned by that time) would be in its interests, with its subsequent continuation to the Crimea along the bed of the Black Sea.

In the Botaş Company's project, the length of the first route amounted to approximately 4,000 km, and the cost was \$15.3 billion. It was supported by the presidents of Turkmenistan and Turkey in the memorandum they signed, which envisaged deliveries of Turkmen gas (beginning in 1998) in an amount

of up to 2 bcm with a subsequent increase to 15 bcm in 2010. However, this project was not destined to become a reality either. Precisely in 1999, rather large (from 0.4 to 1 tcm) resources of natural gas were discovered at Azerbaijan's Shakh Deniz field, which Azerbaijan wanted to export to Turkey via the future Trans-Caspian gas pipeline in an amount of up to 16 bcm a year, that is, load it by no less than half with its blue fuel. Azerbaijan (possibly to play for time in making a final calculation of the gas reserves in its own country) also put forward other demands which Turkmenistan could not agree to. The matter was buried, where it remains to this day, with occasional rises to the surface.

At this time, Turkmenistan continued to look for ways to export gas beyond the country, bypassing its northern neighbors. In 1996-2000, an absolutely new potential export direction for Turkmen natural gas, the easterly direction (to China and Japan), was felt out. It was then (1997-1999) that the Japanese Mitsubishi Company, along with the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation and America's ExxonMobil, carried out geological and economic studies of projects for potential gas pipelines (a route to China of 5,730 km in length and throughput capacity of the first line of up to 18 bcm of blue fuel a year with its subsequent increase to 36 bcm was considered). At the same time, the possibility of assimilating reserves of Turkmen gas on the right-hand bank of the Amu Darya was considered. At the end of this period, surveyors came to the conclusion that the gas there had a high sulfur content and its purification would raise the net cost by at least 25-30%, which, along with transportation costs, would make the fuel uncompetitive. The Americans refrained from taking further part in the projects. However, like the other developments related to Turkmenistan's intentions to export gas, the idea of an easterly pipeline has not been buried for good and could become a target of further research in the future.

At the end of 1997, Turkmenistan's first export gas pipeline went into operation, which was hooked up to the gas-distribution network of the north of Iran (Turkish prime minister and president of Iran attended the opening ceremony of the route held in Ashgabad). For Turkmenistan, this meant a breakthrough to the foreign market via the southern route, which did not depend on the post-Soviet republics and could subsequently be used for increasing deliveries of blue fuel to other countries, too. In other words, Turkmenistan evaluated implementation of the Korpedzhe-Kurt Kui project as the beginning of the realization of its idea to deliver gas to Europe via Turkey. The Iranian side guaranteed the purchase of fuel for 25 years. In the first two years of the gas pipeline's operation (1998-1999), 2.5 bcm were exported per year. The volume was later increased, and in 2005, 6 bcm were delivered, which proved to be 2 bcm less than Iran promised to purchase in 2005, during the time the gas pipeline was going into operation. In our opinion, the insufficient deliveries were related to the overall state of the blue fuel balance in Turkmenistan, the revenue part of which proved lower than planned, which we already mentioned when analyzing the implementation of the republic's socioeconomic development strategy. It should also be kept in mind that Turkmenistan must give approximately 8 bcm of gas every year to the foreign contractors participating in the implementation of the country's oil and gas projects. Nevertheless, none of this prevented Turkmenistan from considering the question of building a new gas pipeline for delivering its natural fuel to Armenia and Turkey via Iran (from Tabriz). This may be possible if the Nabucco gas pipeline construction project is implemented.

Nevertheless, the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline acquired its second wind. At the beginning of 1998, the U.S. showed a certain interest in it, evaluating it as more advantageous than the Iranian, both in length and in the possibility of transporting not only Turkmen, but also Azerbaijani, Uzbek, and even Kazakh natural gas to Europe. Washington allotted Turkmenistan \$750,000 for carrying out a feasibility study of the project with the help of the American Enron Company, which joined this development at the very beginning of 1998. By January 1999, Enron prepared and presented a preliminary feasibility report to the Turkmen leadership, and in February PSG International was declared the gas pipeline construction operator. In mid-1999, the Shell Company became a participant in the consortium. In December 1997, Turkmenistan officially asked the Shell Company to head an international

consortium for building a Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey surface gas pipeline and entered a contract with it on preparing a feasibility study of the entire project. The Royal Dutch/Shell transnational corporation, with which the Turkmenistan government signed a memorandum on mutual understanding at the beginning of 1998, took active part in this project from the very beginning. Confident in the implementation of the Trans-Caspian project, the Turkmen leadership entered a framework buy-sell agreement with the Turkish Botaş Company (beginning in 2002) for 16 bcm of blue fuel with a subsequent increase in this amount to 30 bcm.

By this time, it had essentially become clear that another project—Trans-Afghan (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India)—would not be implemented in the near future. We will remind you that as early as 2002, the presidents of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan formed a committee at the level of the petroleum ministers for carrying it out. One of the absolute prerequisites for the project's further progress was to obtain reliable data about the natural gas reserves at the Turkmen fields (primarily Dauletabad). Turkmenistan's procrastination about publicizing the results of the audit, which was carried out in 2004-2005 by international certification companies DeGolyer&McNaughton, as well as Gaffney, Cline&Associates Ltd., caused Pakistan to leave the committee in 2004. The absence of audit results served (and is still serving) as official grounds for Gazprom to delay the reconstruction of the Turkmen section of the CAC GTS. Although information on the estimated reserves of Turkmen gas has still not become public property, it was passed on to Pakistan, and in April 2005, this country returned to the committee.⁶ It was announced that construction would start at the end of 2005-beginning of 2006, but by the end of 2006, very little had been done to accomplish this.

Here it is expedient to remind you that as early as 2002, during the initial discussion of the plans to build the Trans-Afghan gas pipeline (TAP), Pakistan and Afghanistan set the absolute condition of using it to pump their own natural gas (if the production volume allowed this). Iran also supported this position, since it was also more advantageous for it to export its own, rather than Turkmen blue fuel, via the international gas pipeline to India. Thus an alternative Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline arose, in which Gazprom is also interested, since it is participating in assimilating Iran's South Pars field. There are expert conclusions that give priority to IPI over TAP, but the problem of implementing the first will clash with the interests of the U.S., which supports TAP, in which Iran does not participate. The fact that Turkmenistan had halted blue fuel deliveries within the framework of the Turkmenrosgaz joint venture already mentioned was another reason for the republic's decision to move the Trans-Caspian project to the foreground (with America's support). In order to implement the Trans-Caspian project, the presidents of Turkey and Turkmenistan signed an interstate agreement in October 1998 on the principles of purchasing 16 bcm of Turkmen gas a year for thirty years. A year later, in November 1999, the presidents of Turkmenistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia signed a quadrilateral interstate agreement on building a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline of 1,680 km in total length, a throughput capacity of 16 bcm at the first stage, and of 30 bcm at the second. The British PSG Company with American capital was appointed as the sponsor-founder of the international consortium. Nevertheless, all the mentioned undertakings yielded no positive results, since practical implementation of the project was to come to a halt because of an unsettled political issue regarding the Caspian's status, without which the gas pipeline could not be laid along its bed (the RF and Iran are strictly upholding their interests here). So in counterbalance to the Trans-Caspian project the Russian Federation was able to enter an efficient agreement with Turkey on the joint construction of the Blue Stream pipeline, a route that does not affect the interests of other gas owners in this section of the Black Sea Basin.

Turkey's high activity in issues concerning the country's prospective provision with imported natural gas was based, as already noted, on the certainty that the country's economic consumption

⁶ See: O. Vinogradova, "Lovushka dlia Gazproma," *NGV*, No. 15, 2005, pp. 42-44.

volumes of blue fuel would rapidly grow, from an actual 13 bcm in 1998 to the prospect of 51-52 bcm in 2010 and 80 bcm by 2020 (in 1998, Turkey received 6.7 bcm of gas from Russia via Ukraine and Bulgaria, 4 bcm from Algeria, and approximately 3 bcm from the Middle Eastern countries and other regions; in 1999, it received another 1.2 bcm from Nigeria). Beginning in 2000, an agreement with Russia was supposed to come into force on annual deliveries to Turkey of up to 26 bcm of natural gas. It should be noted that the gas transportation system that existed at that time through Ukraine could not ensure this increase in deliveries to Turkey, and so this agreement was apparently oriented toward the Blue Stream pipeline, which began being built in February 2000. In addition to everything else, the Russian Federation took part in building a thermal power plant near Ankara capable of operating on gas, which could also be delivered by the Blue Stream pipeline. In 2000 the Enron Company clarified the Turkish economy's prospective needs for natural gas. It came to the conclusion that, keeping in mind the projects being carried out, no additional supplies would be required earlier than 2014, and withdrew from the project. A serious counterargument was the fact that the gas pipeline was to pass via Turkey through regions of compact Kurdish settlement, and their consent to this building was dependent on the Turkish government resolving the region's political problem. The idea of a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline is still alive, since the hope of exporting Turkmen gas to Europe along the Kazakhstan and Russian coast of the Caspian has not yet died. Now, as we know, Azerbaijan and other interested countries are participating in implementing the so-called Trans-Caspian gas project.

We believe that Turkmenistan has a greater chance in the Nabucco project, the expediency of which has also been under discussion for several years now. The idea consists in delivering the natural gas of Iran and other Caspian states, as well as of North Africa, via Turkmenistan to the countries of Southern, Central, and Western Europe. Ukraine also sees its potential participation in this project, whereby in two roles, both as a potential purchaser of blue fuel and as a supplier of transit services, although this would require choosing a route from Turkey via the Black Sea with access to the Crimean coast and subsequent joining up to the country's GTS. At one time, a corresponding committee of Ukraine's Supreme Rada drew up several alternatives of a possible route for the gas pipeline from Iran (Iran-Armenia-Georgia-Crimea-Europe) to European consumers via Ukraine. Some experts of this republic are considering the possibility of hooking up to the gas pipeline in Rumania and pumping blue fuel under reverse conditions along the existing Khust-Satu Mare pipeline, that is, by purely surface means.

Austria is showing the greatest interest in carrying out the Nabucco project at present. Nabucco Pipeline was drawn up by the Austrian OMV Energy Concern, and so it is very important for Austria to ensure that construction of this gas pipeline with a projected capacity of up to 30 bcm a year and cost of 4.6 billion Euros (\$5.42 billion) begins as soon as possible. The project envisages a route passing through Turkey, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Slovakia, where it divides into several branches going to Austria, the Czech Republic, and Germany. Blue fuel can be transported from Austria via the available networks to other European states (in 2005, talks were held between the Dutch government and the company's founders about the possible laying of 1,400 km of gas pipeline from Austria to the Netherlands). There are plans to begin construction in the end of 2007 and to complete it by 2020. Austria is not only interested in having an additional diversified source of blue fuel deliveries to the country, but also in obtaining significant revenues in the future from offering its transit services. The project is being carried out by a consortium (with a share of 20% each) consisting of OMV Gas (Austria), MOL (Hungary), Transgaz (Rumania), Bulgargaz (Bulgaria), and Botaş (Turkey), which signed a corresponding agreement on 29 June, 2005 in close cooperation with the European Union, which is participating in financing this development. A new company has been founded called Nabucco Gas Pipeline International with its headquarters in Vienna. Gas de France, as well as E.ON Ruhrgas and RWE are showing an interest. The project acquired a priority status in the Trans-European infrastructure program of the European Union, which ultimately envisages the integration of transporta-

tion flows to the continent. Sections of the gas pipeline already exist in the European part of its route: in 2004, the construction of a 105-km section between Arad (Rumania) and Szeged (Hungary) was completed that links the GTS of these two countries and has a throughput capacity of 1.5-2 bcm.

Nevertheless, as in the history of other gas pipelines, the Austrians are not one-hundred-percent sure that the new route will actually be built. According to them, the problem is that OMV is a gas-transportation enterprise that is forced to look for gas suppliers, and, most important, in our opinion, is striving to gain the support of potential buyers. At present, many of them are still troubled by the January (2006) events in the Russian-Ukrainian gas vicissitudes that entailed breakdowns in blue fuel supplies to several European consumers. This concern is augmented with respect to the forecasted rapid increase in the requirements of the EU states for natural gas, which could amount to 400 bcm by 2020. So even construction of the North European Gas Pipeline (NEGP) with a throughput capacity of 55 bcm will not resolve the problem of ensuring the rapidly growing demand.

When analyzing the situation developing around Nabucco, we should not ignore Russia's interests. Moscow, of course, understands the EU countries' natural striving to protect themselves from possible upheavals relating to their extreme dependence on one export (Russian) source, and so is extending the Yamal-Western Europe gas pipeline, as well as building a new NEGP. Nevertheless, Nabucco could claim some of Turkmenistan's gas resources, which in another alternative might have ended up in the Russian pipe and at different prices. In this context, Gazprom cannot be interested in implementing the project. However, a different conclusion could be drawn if we presume that Russian gas could also end up in the Nabucco gas pipeline in the Turkish territory via the currently under-loaded Blue Stream pipeline.

REGIONAL ECONOMIES

**THE ECONOMY OF
“ROSE” GEORGIA:
FLOWERING OR FADING?**

Sergey SMIRNOV

*Independent analyst
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

In the days of the Soviet Union, Georgia was one of the most flourishing Soviet republics due to its protected tea and wine market and its attractive Black Sea resorts. The breakup of the U.S.S.R., the opening by the FSU republics of their borders to broad imports following the “parade of sovereignties,” and wars within the country led to a sharp decline in Georgia’s economic indicators, but in recent years the situation has begun to improve (see Table 1).

Nevertheless, living standards in Georgia remain low. Official unemployment is around 13% of the working age population.¹ But independent experts believe² that from 2003 to the beginning of 2005 unemployment rose by 20% to

around 47% of the working age population.³ Most large industrial enterprises remain at a standstill or operate at less than full capacity.

During the years of independence, over 1 million people⁴—the most employable and active part of the population—have left the country. A significant proportion of Georgia’s population subsists, for the most part, on remittances from relatives working abroad. Experts estimate the annual amount of remittances from Georgian “guest workers” living in Russia alone at \$1-2 billion. According to an IMF analytical report on the economic prospects of the

³ Official unemployment statistics do not include people living in rural areas or city dwellers in possession of garden plots.

⁴ See: [http://www.businessuchet.ru/content/download.asp?r=1D66DA02-51E8-4208-BCB0-1EC670DC3083], 20 November, 2006.

¹ See: [http://www.statistics.ge], 20 November, 2006.

² See: [http://www.materik.ru/index.php?country=5], 20 November, 2006.

Table 1

Main Indicators

	2008 (P)	2007 (P)	2006 (P)	2005 (E)	2004	2003	2002
Income per capita, US\$	2,353	2,020	1,681	1,480	1,134	813	730
Nominal GDP, billion lari	17.1	15.3	13.3	12.1	9.9	8.0	7.4
Nominal GDP, US\$ billion	10.3	8.9	7.5	6.7	5.2	3.7	3.4
GDP per capita, US\$ thousand	2.4	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.1	0.8	0.7
Real GDP growth, %	4.7	7.1	6.2	8.7	6.2	11.1	5.5
Real GDP growth per capita, %	5.7	8.2	7.3	9.7	6.9	11.8	6.3
Total public debt, % of GDP	32.1	33.2	35.5	37.1	44.7	62.1	62.3
Real investment, % change	7.2	6.1	8.7	14.1	31.9	21.3	6.7
Real exports, % change	7.9	11.3	14.0	13.0	3.8	21.1	25.5
Unemployment (average number of people applying for benefits), %	16.5	16.3	15.7	14.7	12.6	11.5	12.6
Consumer price index (average), % change	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.7	4.7	6.7
<i>Note:</i> P—projection, E—estimate.							
<i>Source:</i> Standard & Poor's [http://www.sandp.ru/article.php?pubid=2350&sec=cr].							

Middle East and Central Asia, remittances from abroad in 2005 accounted for over 5% of Georgian GDP.⁵ The country's Minister of State Kakha Bendukidze estimates this amount at 4% of GDP.

⁵ See: [<http://www.ruvr.ru/main.php?lng=rus&q=10702>], 20 November, 2006.

In the opinion of analysts, the business environment in Georgia is not conducive to a reduction or elimination of existing investment risks, while the political situation impedes socioeconomic development. Thus, although small and medium enterprises make up 97% of all active companies, their share of Georgia's GNP is only around 10% (compared to 60% in EU countries).

The government has taken some steps to improve the country's regulation and auditing systems: health inspectors no longer "cruise" around cafes and restaurants, and it is possible to start a busi-

ness even without prior registration. Nevertheless, international standards are still a long way off, which is why small business is mostly concentrated in trade.

Budget Revenue Sources

In the period since the Rose Revolution, the state budget has almost quadrupled from \$500 million to \$1.8 billion. At the same time, this can hardly be qualified as a real success, because the increase in budget revenues is mostly due to "one-off" factors: privatization of large state-owned enterprises, confiscation of financial resources from a number of local "oligarchs," and foreign infusions.

It should be noted that as soon as Mikhail Saakashvili came to power, he put the "large-scale privatization" program on the list of priorities. According to official data,⁶ in 2005 privatization contributed over 446 million lari (about \$250 million) to the country's budget,⁷ and this makes up, according to estimates by the IMF mission, 3.5% of GDP. The state has sold such large facilities as the Georgia Shipping Company (\$93 million), Georgian Telecom (\$5 million), the Rustavi Steel Factory (\$27 million) and JSC Madneuli, the country's only copper concentrate plant (\$35.1 million). Overall, more than 1.5 thousand enterprises have been privatized in the republic, so that today very few large facilities remain in the hands of the Georgian state (perhaps only the postal service, long-distance gas pipeline, railroad and Inguri Hydroelectric Power Station on the border with Abkhazia).

According to the projections of Georgian experts, privatization may continue until the end of 2008, whereupon the bulk of the country's economy will be controlled by private (mostly foreign) capital and the budget will be deprived of privatization revenue.

As regards the second source of revenue, for local "oligarchs" the authorities have introduced a practice known as "voluntary payment of ransom" for release from prison. Oligarchs jailed without "excessive" legal procedure are released only when their ill-gotten millions are returned to the treasury. Clearly, such actions have nothing to do with legality, but evoke public sympathy. For example, Gia Jokhtaberidze (son-in-law of ousted Shevardnadze) paid \$15 million for his release. Similarly, the seized funds and property of Aslan Abashidze (ex-leader of Ajaria who fled the country) and of his followers have gone into the budget as well.

After Abashidze's flight from Batumi, the state confiscated his property, estimated at \$100 million. According to Roman Gotsiridze, President of the National Bank of Georgia, "the country's budget was doubled at a stroke. Where did this money come from? Aslan Abashidze profited from trade with Turkey: \$50 million went into the personal budget of this biggest feudal lord."⁸ Today these funds go into the state treasury, but this move has won Saakashvili many influential enemies.

Georgia has become "addicted" to foreign aid. When Saakashvili took office, foreign infusions⁹ multiplied 2.5 times, from \$48 million in 2003 to \$124 million in 2004. In 2005, Georgia

⁶ See: [<http://www.statistics.ge>], 20 November, 2006.

⁷ Significant revenues from privatization have helped to reduce Georgia's net external debt. According to the Georgian Ministry of Finance, the total amount of external public debt (\$1.68 billion) and sovereign credit as of 31 August, 2005, was \$1.77 billion (or 3.16 billion lari).

⁸ See: *Vedomosti*, 23 October, 2006.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

received some \$138 million from the U.S. government alone (about 14% of total budget revenue).¹⁰ In 2006, according to preliminary IMF estimates, foreign “donations” to Georgia were expected to reach \$174 million. But this assistance does not seem to benefit the country, as is evident from the current state of its economy. Let us recall in this context that under the Marshall Plan postwar Germany received only \$1.3 billion. Of course, the dollar at that time was more “weighty,” but then Georgia is no larger than Bavaria (except for the fathomless pockets of the local elite).

Another source of budget revenue (up to 47%) is transit freight (in contrast to the sources listed above, this is a relatively stable source). Thus, during the seven-year operation of the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline used to supply Azerbaijani oil to world markets, a total of 330 tankers have sailed from the Black Sea port of Supsa, bringing over \$30 million into the Georgian budget in the form of oil transit fees. When the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline comes into operation, Georgia will be getting over \$50 million per year for oil transit. In addition, at the end of 2006 it was planned to start supplying natural gas by the South Caucasus Pipeline. Over the next few years, the amount of gas received by Georgia through this pipeline will increase from 200 million to 800 million cubic meters (mcm); of these, transit fees will constitute 300 mcm, and the Georgian government will be able to purchase the remaining 500 mcm at reduced prices.

It should be noted that these pipelines can be profitable only given full capacity utilization. For the oil pipeline, the figure is 50 million tonnes per year, and for the gas pipeline, over 6 billion cubic meters. Azerbaijan’s current potential obviously falls short of these figures. In 2005, the republic exported 13 million tonnes of oil, while its gas supplies to the foreign market were insignificant. Consequently, both these pipelines will probably have to be connected to supply sources in Central Asian countries.

Statistics and Reality

An assessment of the current state of the Georgian economy suggests a pessimistic conclusion: neither Georgia’s accession to the WTO nor the Rose Revolution have radically changed the situation. Economic activity in Georgia is mostly concentrated in the service sector (especially financial services), which accounts for 57% of GDP, in agriculture (cultivation of grapes, citrus fruit and tea)—21% of GDP, in mining (manganese and copper) and the food industry (alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks)—23%. Accordingly, the export structure is dominated by citrus fruit, tea, wine, scrap metal, manganese ore, ferrous and nonferrous alloys, reexported fuel, and mineral water. Imports include natural gas, electricity, oil products, flour, grain, machinery and equipment.

This structure has resulted in a trade deficit, which has been growing every year (see Table 2). Thus, in 2005 Georgian exports totaled \$0.87 billion, and imports, \$2.46 billion.¹¹ But in the first half of 2006 the trade deficit already reached \$1.58 billion, swelling by 82.2% from the same period of 2005.¹² Exports grew by 26%, whereas imports jumped about 61%.¹³ The republic’s export losses only from the Russian ban on imports of Georgian wine and mineral water are estimated at \$35-40 million.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Russian Federation remains one of Georgia’s major trading partners.

¹⁰ See: [<http://www.materik.ru/index.php?country=5>], 20 November, 2006.

¹¹ See: [<http://www.wn.ru/finance/news/07.02.2006/2.html>].

¹² See: [<http://www.izvestia.ru/news/news116774/?print>], 20 November, 2006.

¹³ See: *Transition Report 2006*, EBRD, available at [<http://www.ebrd.com/pubs/econo/6813r.pdf>], 20 November, 2006].

¹⁴ See: *Spirtnye napitki i pivo*, No. 30, 19 October, 2006.

Table 2

Macroeconomic Indicators

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 (E)	2006 (P)
GDP, real % change	1.9	4.7	5.5	11.1	6.2	9.3	7.5
Share of industry in GDP, %	17.3	16.6	17.6	17.7	16.1	15.6	—
Share of agriculture in GDP, %	20.2	20.7	19.3	19.3	16.4	14.8	—
Privatization proceeds, cumulative total, % of GDP	23.0	23.1	23.3	23.6	34.5	38.1	—
Trade balance, US\$ million	-398	-486	-439	-598	-719	-907	-1,048
Net FDI, US\$ million	153	80	122	335	503	415	390
External debt, US\$ million	1,582	1,712	1,858	1,954	2,039	2,137	—
Unemployment, % of labor force	10.4	10.3	11.9	10.7	12.5	13.8	—
Average monthly wage before taxes and deductions, % change	7.1	30.8	20.5	10.4	19.9	22.5	—
Consumer prices at year-end, % change	4.6	3.4	5.6	7.0	7.5	6.4	8.0
Public spending, % of GDP	19.2	18.3	17.8	18.7	19.5	24.9	—
<i>Note:</i> P—projection, E—estimate.							
<i>Source:</i> Transition Report 2006, EBRD [http://www.ebrd.com/pubs/econo/6813r.pdf].							

In the first six months of 2006,¹⁵ trade between the two countries totaled \$324.1 million, up 45% from the first six months of 2005. In this period, Georgian exports to Russia fell by 14.6%, whereas imports from Russia increased by 68.5%. In the first half of 2006, trade with Russia amounted to 15.8% of Georgia's total foreign trade turnover (down 0.7% from a year ago).

Georgia's other major trading partners include Turkey, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Germany, Britain and the United States.¹⁶ According to the Georgian Statistics Department, the trade turnover between

¹⁵ See: [<http://www.izvestia.ru/news/news116774/?print>], 20 November, 2006.

¹⁶ See: [<http://russian.people.com.cn/31519/3408935.html>], 20 November, 2006.

Georgia and Turkey in 2006 was \$243.8 million.¹⁷ The fact that Turkey is a key trading partner is not surprising. Now that Ankara has finally granted Georgia GSP-plus status under the General System of Preferences, this enables Turkish companies to produce some 7,000 goods items in Georgia with subsequent duty-free importation into Turkey.

So, the country makes a living from exports of raw materials and agricultural products, as well as imports of “foreign-made” goods. In July 2006, it adopted a new Customs Code, which reduced the number of commodity groups subject to import tariffs to a total of three. Customs duties will no longer be levied on machines and mechanisms, Georgia’s main import items. At the same time, imports of agricultural products and building materials will be subject to a maximum duty of 12%.¹⁸

Given the current wage level,¹⁹ consumer demand cannot be expected to increase in the next few years. Living standards remain low. Over half of the population is living below the poverty line,²⁰ and this is understandable. Wage rises are closely connected with mass layoffs, and the National Poverty Reduction Program, approved in Washington by the World Bank and the IMF and carried out with difficulty by the former authorities, has been shelved by the present government. The project is said to be outdated, but no one has expressed any desire to bring it up to date.

The budget deficit is another persistent problem. In 2004, it amounted to \$133 million. Under the Georgian Law on the State Budget for 2006, budget revenues are projected at \$1.7 billion, and expenditures, at \$1.8 billion, with the deficit to be covered out of the funds provided under U.S. programs (in terms of U.S. aid per capita, Georgia is second only to Israel).

The country’s economy depends to a significant extent on the volume of agricultural production, but its agroindustrial complex, which provides employment for half of Georgia’s working age population, is going through a difficult period. Only a small part of the former collective-farm lands has passed into the ownership of the farmers, in addition to the private subsidiary plots that were already in their possession. In spite of this land shortage, private farms account on average for over 90% of total agricultural output, including 80% for grapes and cereals, 94% for fruits and vegetables, and 95% for meat and milk. The Georgian mass media, too, speak of a critical situation in agriculture, where the real decline in production in the first quarter of 2006 compared to the same period of the previous year was 8.3%.²¹

In the opinion of experts,²² if the Russian market is closed to Georgian wine and local producers are unable to enter new markets, the demand for grapes will fall sharply, and this will be a blow to thousands of farmers in Kakheti, which has 60% of Georgia’s vineyards.

The authorities and foreign investors have expressed a particular interest in privatizing the most profitable energy facilities, the Batumi and Poti ports, etc., whereas agricultural facilities—vineyards, tea and tangerine plantations—are of little interest both to the authorities and to foreign investors, because there is no reliable market for such products. Clearly, Russia alone can become such a market for Georgia, but for the current Georgian leaders everything depends on global geopolitics, which, in Tbilisi’s view, dictate a confrontation with Moscow.

¹⁷ See: [<http://www.168.am/ru/articles/2259-pr>], 20 November, 2006.

¹⁸ See: *Transition Report 2006*, EBRD.

¹⁹ According to the Georgian State Statistics Department, the official average wage at year-end 2004 was 140 lari (about \$78) per month. In the agricultural sector, hotel and restaurant business, education and health care, the respective figures were 53 lari (\$30), 65 lari (\$36), 75 lari (\$42) and 83 lari (\$46) per month. The average pension was 28 lari (\$15). By comparison (January 2005 data), the price of meat was \$3-3.5 per kg, cheese, \$3-4.2 per kg, and gasoline, \$0.8 per liter. The country has 900 thousand pensioners; the number of people working under oral or written contracts is around 600 thousand, i.e., there are more than two dependents per person.

²⁰ See: [<http://www.businessuchet.ru/content/download.asp?r=1D66DA02-51E8-4208-BCB0-1EC670DC3083>], 20 November, 2006.

²¹ See: *Akhali taoba*, 28 June, 2006.

²² See: [<http://www.civil.ge/rus/print.php?id=10626>], 20 November, 2006.

The weakest point of the Georgian economy is a shortage of energy, especially natural gas, whose share in the country's energy balance is about 24% (Georgian gas consumption is close to 4.7 mcm per day in summer and about 7 mcm in winter). Cuts in gas supplies to consumers are a permanent feature of Georgian life, which is due to unsettled debt owed to supplier companies. Frequent accidents at electric power stations cause power outages now in western, now in eastern Georgia. Nevertheless, the collection rate for electricity charges has been raised from 12% in 2003 to 78% at the end of 2005.²³

Georgia's socioeconomic problems are compounded by a high degree of corruption. Based on the results of 2005, a Transparency International report has ranked Georgia among the most corrupt countries in the world (130th place on a list of 160 states). And this despite the fact that according to a World Bank report published in July 2006 ("Anti-Corruption in Transition 3"), in 2002-2005 the level of corruption in Georgia fell most significantly compared to other transition economy countries.²⁴ IMF experts believe that today some 3% of corporate earnings are used to bribe officials. According to EBRD data, this percentage is twice as high as in Russia. The influential German newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* regards the widely advertised anticorruption campaign merely as a "smokescreen" for the ongoing redistribution of property in favor of the new ruling elite.

A negative influence on the situation in the country is also exerted by its growing militarization. Since the change of government, the budget of the Georgian Defense Ministry has multiplied (doubling in 2004 compared to 2003, and quadrupling in 2005 compared to 2004) and has exceeded 3% of GDP,²⁵ reaching the highest level among the CIS states. In the structure of 2006 state budget expenditures, defense spending makes up 18% of the total and is the top expenditure item.²⁶ In 2003-2005, the United States alone spent \$70 million on training Georgian military personnel and on arms supplies.

Such an excessive increase in military spending, which outruns real economic growth and makes a huge dent in Georgia's more than modest budget, suggests that the republic's leaders may have a desire to resolve many problems by force of arms. In fact, a thirst for revenge can even justify a much heavier military burden: it has long been known that a short victorious war is the best way to distract the people's attention from current socioeconomic problems. Consequently, an improvement of the people's socioeconomic position remains outside the interests and priorities of the new Georgian leaders.

Can Tourism Drive the Economy?

The Georgian government hopes that tourism, which has fallen into decay because of domestic instability in the republic, will once again become a driving force behind the country's economy. Today tourists are gradually returning to Georgia's once-popular resorts, and investors are beginning to buy up Soviet-period hotels in order to turn them into modern five-star hotels.

Of course, Georgia's Black Sea coast is an excellent "lure" for attracting investors and tourists, but there are many obstacles to the implementation of such projects. Thousands of refugees who have found shelter in Ajarian hotels after the suspension of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict are a big problem. Compensation in the amount of \$7,000 can hardly induce them to leave their hotel rooms. For example, the Medea Hotel is located in one of Batumi's most expensive areas: close to a boulevard

²³ See: *Transition Report 2006*, EBRD.

²⁴ In October 2006, the World Bank approved a \$20 million loan to Georgia for fighting corruption and improving the investment climate.

²⁵ See: [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/newstext/news/id/1058048.html>], 20 November, 2006.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

overlooking the sea. This place has already been chosen as a site for the construction of a Radisson hotel. The problem is that some of the refugees have no intention of leaving the Medea.

Ajaria faces the same problems as the whole of Georgia: unemployment, visa regime, and Russian import restrictions on agricultural products, which means that Ajarian producers have virtually no market for their output, leaving it to rot. If the conflict drags on, this could worsen the situation still further, and although Georgian President Saakashvili declared in 2005 that by 2007 Ajaria's Black Sea coast would become a resort of global importance, many are skeptical about this. Even U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Richard Miles takes a very skeptical view of the prospects for the development of tourism. As he put it, tourism will provide a basis for the new Georgian economy, but it cannot be developed to the full extent as long as the breakaway provinces problem remains unresolved.

Investors from Distant Countries...

Investment in the Georgian economy is of great importance for its further development. Thus, Firebird Management LLC, a New York hedge fund specializing in FSU countries, has acquired a 14% stake in the Bank of Georgia, the second largest commercial bank in the country. A Swiss-American company has bought the presidential complex for renovation. In 2004, such transactions generated \$438 million of direct investment, a figure which, according to IMF data, was five times higher than in 2001.

In 2005, foreign direct investment in the Georgian economy was around \$447.8 million (10% less than in 2004),²⁷ making up 61% of GDP.²⁸ But most of the total (over 70%) was investment by British Petroleum (BP) in the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the South Caucasus gas pipeline through Georgian territory. Their completion will lead to a significant reduction in FDI. Thus, in 2004 BP investment totaled \$359.7 million, whereas in 2005 it was only \$264.5 million.²⁹

The Swiss company Wissol Petroleum has recently acquired 50% of the shares of CanArgo Standard Oil, with the remaining 50% held by Georgian private individuals. The company, which has 33 gasoline stations in all regions of Georgia, plans to expand this network in the near future (two new gasoline stations are to be opened in Tbilisi, and another five in different parts of the country). Gasoline is to be imported from European refineries.

According to the EBRD,³⁰ 243 companies have been privatized since August 2005, and another 137 are up for sale. In May 2006, Greenoak, a group of Dutch companies which already owns the Batumi oil terminal, won a contract (\$92 million) for the lease and operation of the Batumi Seaport for a term of 49 years.

At the same time, there are examples "to the contrary" as well. In particular, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has decided to wind down its business in Georgia, giving the low level of income as the reason for closing its representative office. Based on business analysis for 2005, KLM has decided that its income in Georgia falls short of what it expected two years ago. The last Amsterdam-Tbilisi-Amsterdam flight was performed by KLM on 23 March, 2006.

²⁷ See: [<http://www.finmarket.ru/z/nws/news.asp?id=472558>], 20 November, 2006.

²⁸ See: [<http://www.sandp.ru/article.php?pubid=2350&sec=cr>], 20 November, 2006.

²⁹ See: [<http://www.finmarket.ru/z/nws/news.asp?id=472558>], 20 November, 2006.

³⁰ See: *Transition Report 2006*, EBRD.

The Austrian Schinholfer concern, which planned to build a plant for the production of high-quality sausage, has also left the country. In addition to providing at least 1,500 jobs, this plant would have enabled local farmers to supply for processing vast amounts of meat. In the opinion of experts, this caused concern both among importers of Brazilian and Indian meat and among local sausage makers, whose products could not compete with Austrian quality. As a result, Georgian officials began to work against the Austrians (whose sausage was conveniently found to contain harmful substances) and the investor said "auf Wiedersehen."

In June 2005, Russia's mining and smelting group Evrazholding decided not to acquire the state-owned manganese mine (JSC Chiatura Manganese) or the Vartsikhe Hydropower System, for which it had already paid \$20 million (the whole complex was evaluated at \$132 million). The findings of the Russian company's experts that the assets to be acquired were unprofitable and could not generate income were given as the official reason for this decision.³¹ In the opinion of Vladimir Papava, former Georgian economics minister and now member of parliament, this was a case of sheer fraud: "I do not know whether the Russians were deceived or not, but I will say one thing: as a minister, I saw for myself that both these facilities were unprofitable and that no serious investor would have bought them."³²

Nevertheless, for 2006 the Georgian Statistics Department projected an almost two-fold increase in FDI inflows into the country's economy. It was expected that BP investment would total \$195 million; investment by TAV-Urban Georgia LLC in the construction of a new building for the Tbilisi International Airport, \$65 million; investment in the construction of the Kulevi Oil Terminal, \$45 million; investment from Kazakhstan, around \$100 million; and investment by the new mobile phone operator Bloomfin Ltd, around \$90 million. At least \$185 million is to come from privatization, including \$50 million from the sale of the state-owned stake in JSC United Telecommunications Company and \$115 million from the sale of energy facilities. The total volume of other investments is projected at \$20 million, and reinvestments, at \$40 million. Overall, the figure could reach \$740 million.³³ It should be noted that FDI in Georgia (see Table 2) is in no way comparable even to Kazakhstan, where FDI inflows in 2004 were close to \$4 billion, to say nothing of Russia.

...and from Nearby Countries

Kazakhstan is becoming one of the biggest investors in Georgia, focusing on energy, tourism and construction. Whereas in 2003 trade between the two countries barely reached \$10 million, today it exceeds \$60 million, while investment in the Georgian economy in the first five months of 2006 reached \$300 million. If the current investment trend continues, the amount of Kazakh investment in 2006 could exceed \$1 billion.

Kazakhstan's private businesses and state companies are both active in the republic. The main infusions into the Georgian economy are made by a financial-industrial group which includes the TuranAlem Bank³⁴ with its own representative office in Tbilisi and by the national company KazMunaiGaz (which makes its investments in cooperation with Russia's Gazprom).

³¹ See: [<http://www.vz.ru/economy/2006/11/12/56777.html>], 20 November, 2006.

³² In the fall of 2006, Britain's Stemcor UK Ltd acquired the assets of JSC Chiatura Manganese for \$14.15 million and a 40-year license for manganese production for \$5.5 million.

³³ See: [<http://www.finmarket.ru/z/nws/news.asp?id=472558>], 20 November, 2006.

³⁴ As of 1 June, 2005, TuranAlem's assets totaled \$5.3 billion, and its equity capital, \$578 million. Its shareholders are the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Reiffeisen Zentralbank (RZB), International Finance Corporation (IFC), German Investment and Development Company (DEG), and Netherlands Development Finance Company (FMO). The rating assigned to the Bank by Standard & Poor's (BB-) is the highest among financial institutions in the CIS.

The former plans to build a refinery in Georgia with a capacity of 5 million tonnes of crude oil per year. The implementation of this project will require \$350 million of investment, and this money will come not only from Kazakhstan, but also from a number of Western banks. The financial-industrial group has also acquired (for \$90 million) the country's largest telecom company, Georgian Electrical Communications; in addition, it wants to buy about 20 tourist facilities in Ajaria. The Kazakh side plans to invest up to \$200 million in Ajarian tourist projects over the next few years.³⁵

The national company KazMunaiGaz is also involved in the tourist business: it has bought the well-known Likani-Borjomi health resort complex together with the land parcel for \$10 million. The State Food Corporation, the leading operator in Kazakhstan's grain market (with some 40% of the country's annual wheat exports), has also shown an interest in Georgia. As part of its project to create a route to the Black Sea that would provide an alternative to congested Russian and Ukrainian ports, next year it plans to build new terminals in the Georgian port of Poti.

Active cooperation is underway on gas projects as well, and this is only natural: "gas cooperation" is of political as well as economic importance for both Georgia and Kazakhstan because it reduces their dependence on Russia. One example here is the acquisition by state-owned KazTransGaz (in May 2006) of JSC Tbilgazi, a bankrupt Tbilisi gas distribution company (now limited liability company KazTransGazTbilisi). Having paid \$12.5 million for this company, KazTransGaz is planning not only to invest over \$82 million in the gas distribution network of the Georgian capital (which, according to Georgian specialists, "is in a catastrophic state"), but also to achieve breakeven performance within two years.³⁶

However, in order to create effective demand in the Georgian market and to make business profitable, the Kazakhstan company, given the low living standards of a vast majority of the local population, will have to address a number of macroeconomic problems, if not to boost the whole Georgian economy. This is undoubtedly a noble and long-term task which can produce good economic results in the future, but it is clearly beyond the power of KazTransGaz. That is why it is obviously premature to say that the Georgian "gas game" is worth the candle (especially considering Gazprom's desire to double the price of gas supplies). The main thing is that state-owned KazTransGaz should be aware of the large social component in the gas business. High (by Georgian standards) gas tariffs can lead to conflicts with Georgian consumers.

Kazakhstan's assurances that this is a purely commercial transaction are open to doubt. As KazTransGaz General Director Serik Sultangaliev said back in December 2005, the decision to invest in JSC Tbilgazi was taken on the direct instructions of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev. Moreover, he admitted that economically speaking this project was "not entirely attractive" and emphasized that "the Kazakh side intends to provide assistance to the brotherly Georgian people." So, by extending a helping hand to post-Rose Revolution Georgia, Kazakhstan is trying to pull it out of the "gas noose."

In Lieu of a Conclusion

According to experts,³⁷ GDP growth in Georgia will probably peak in 2006-2007 (at 7.0-8.0%), and when the main investments in oil and gas pipelines are completed it will go down to about 4.5% per year. In an attempt to attract investors, Mikhail Saakashvili has simplified the tax code, privatized state-owned corporations and invited Western-educated technocrats to work in government. In partic-

³⁵ See: [<http://www.rosinvest.com/news/163460/>].

³⁶ See: *Invest-Kazakhstan*, No. 3, 2006, p. 39.

³⁷ See: [<http://www.sandp.ru/article.php?pubid=2350&sec=cr>], 20 November, 2006.

ular, the tax reform was accompanied by a tax amnesty: all tax offenses committed prior to 2004 were forgiven. The reform was quite effective:³⁸ government tax revenues rose from 14.5% of GDP in 2003 to 18.2% in 2004 and 19.8% in 2005. In nominal terms, Georgia's GDP in 2005 exceeded 11 billion lari compared to under 10 billion lari in 2004.

Nevertheless, there is growing inflationary pressure on the economy due to high oil prices, rising public expenditures, and foreign capital inflows. According to EBRD data,³⁹ in July 2006 inflation reached 14.5%, significantly exceeding the 6% benchmark of the National Bank of Georgia. Such inflationary pressure is fraught with grave danger, and the task of curbing inflation should be high on the government's agenda.

The illusion that the victory of the Rose Revolution can lead to rapid economic growth in Georgia is being dispelled. Public disappointment is associated with the fact that living standards remain low. Moreover, recent research shows that they have dropped by 40% even compared to the Shevardnadze period; the economy is in a slump, and territorial conflicts remain unresolved.⁴⁰

The present regime takes the credit—and not without reason—for raising wages and pensions, and also for the practical elimination of government arrears on these payments. Nevertheless, this cannot “turn around” the critical situation, because the main social problems—unemployment and inflation—have not been resolved, while wage rises are closely connected with mass redundancies. What is more, the state has virtually abandoned its efforts to regulate labor relations: the law that regulates them is the contract between employer and employee.

The promises made to the people by the country's “rose” leaders are falling like the petals of fading roses. And this is quite understandable: the management team has been replaced, but the rules of the game have remained the same. In effect, the Georgian economy is still subsidized (as noted above, the republic is second in the world in terms of per capita aid provided under U.S. programs of assistance to foreign states). The World Bank has ranked Georgia as the country with the highest absolute poverty level in the region.

Many of the enterprises inherited from the Soviet Union are unlikely to be restarted ever again. The situation in agriculture remains grave, because old markets have been lost and it is necessary to change the sector's entire structure so as to adapt it to new markets, a process that will take time and money. In these conditions, it will be very difficult to curb inflation.

³⁸ See: *Vedomosti*, 23 October, 2006.

³⁹ See: *Transition Report 2006*, EBRD.

⁴⁰ See: *Parlamentskaia gazeta*, 28 September, 2005.

ETHNIC RELATIONS

NATIONAL MINORITIES:
CIVIL INTEGRATION
IN GEORGIA

Guram SVANIDZE

*Ph.D. (Philos.),
employee at the Committee of Civil Integration,
Georgian Parliament
(Tbilisi, Georgia)*

I

The political and legislative communities long ignored the problem of civil integration of national minorities for the simple reason that the nation had had no time to overcome so-called ethno-national thinking. Its apologists regard minorities as part of an ethno-nation with a statehood of its own, or as an ethno-nation living in a state where it forms a numerically small group with no statehood at all. In this way, statehood and an ethno-national community were considered identical to the extent that the terms could hardly be separated.¹

The doctrine was equally accepted by *the titular and non-titular ethnoses*. Its extreme manifestation took the form of ethno-egotism and a “feverish ethnic consciousness;” and general civic principles were pushed aside for the sake of egotistical group interests. The most extreme interpretations of ethno-nationalism result in regimes that tend, on the one hand, toward latent or even obvious ethnic purges. On the other, such manifestations urge national minorities to demand re-division of territories and force them to shift their loyalty from the country they live in to their historical homeland. The non-dominating ethnoses tend to suspect the state of favoring the dominant group at the

¹ See: A. Eide, *Peaceful and Constructive Resolutions of Situations Involving Minorities*, U.N. University, 1995.

expense of the rest. On the other hand, the dominant ethnic group suspects the ethnic minorities of ethnic egotism, etc.

Ethnic nationalism has already caused segmentation of Georgian society, which constitutes a *mêlée* of ethnic communities that are diverse but unable to find unity. This created a paradox: part of the Georgian educational infrastructure serves the minorities; there are minorities-oriented media that manage to keep afloat; and there is freedom of communication with the historical homeland. This never led, and could not lead, to integration, instead it deepened disintegration. Under Soviet power, however, this did not bother anyone.

The empire's Center struck a balance between the population majority and the minorities. It preached proletarian internationalism, an ideology that bestowed the role of a unifying and consolidating force on the Russian nation. The nomenklatura mechanism helped to maintain a balance in state administration and relations among the Soviet nations.

The balancing factors disappeared along with the Soviet Union to allow ethnocentric trends to promptly move to the fore. Under President Gamsakhurdia, the institutions of statehood were destroyed to please ethnocracy, while state interests deteriorated into narrow sub-ethnic interests. The idea of civic awareness died along with the status of Soviet citizen, while the political vocabulary acquired new tags: "masters," who belonged to the titular nation, and "guests," which implied the national minorities.

The ethnocentric regimes of Abkhazia² and South Ossetia supplied an example of another extreme: the small ethnoses saw this as the only chance of setting up independent states and establishing apartheid to remain dominant ethnoses.

The regimes never intended switching from one type of internal integration to another qualitatively new one that would regard civil institutions as *a priority* in which all citizens are equal irrespective of their ethnic origin.

Today, it has become fairly obvious that the Georgian public and its political establishment have become aware of the mistakes committed by the national liberation movement of the early 1990s. The inherited problems have not yet been resolved, while public sentiments display a lot of inertia. National minorities are still divorced from public life; their civic awareness is barely developed, while knowledge of the state tongue is weak or absent. Their representation in the state administrative structures is inadequate; there are separatist enclaves on Georgian territory and latent irredentist trends in the areas populated by compact groups of national minorities. There is a slow yet steady process of cultural, economic, and even political incorporation of certain regions into adjacent states, obvious in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and similar latent processes in Lower Kartli and Javakhetia, regions of compact settlement of Azeris and Armenians, respectively, which border on their historical homelands. This undermines regional and international security and upsets the region's historical balance of forces.

Other negative factors, such as outside impact strongly felt in the areas of frozen ethnic conflicts, also come into play. Openly hostile political and economic measures, as well as propaganda and information wars, have created considerable problems and interfered with conflict settlement and integration in general.

There are numerous remnants of ethnic nationalism in the political and legislative practices:³ the outrageous habit of talking about prominent people's ethnic origin born from deeply rooted mutual mistrust is the most typical manifestation of ethno-national thinking. The minorities side

² MINELRES-L Mailing List Archive - January 2001. G. Svanidze, "A Dangerous Balance: An Essay on Caucasian Mentality," 9k. 17/1/2001 [www.minelres.lv/january2001].

³ The author witnessed the described events; the quoted opinions are his personal choice or are based on his conversations with people involved in lawmaking in the Georgian parliament.

with politicians of the same ethnic origin, while the majority tends to doubt their loyalty. Those who insist on discussing the ethnic side draw on historical experience and political tension in the region.

Some people go as far as differentiating the minorities by the degree of their loyalty to the state; the people are also divided into those who conceal their ethnic origin and those who refuse to do this. As a rule, the former are less trusted than the latter, who, incidentally, may even be liked.

This leads to absurdities: a request by one of the parliament deputies asking his colleagues to reveal their own and their closest relatives' ethnic origin caused quite a stir: "fascism" and "xenophobia" were the most frequently heard epithets, even though the culprit couched his request in assurances of his love for all the nationalities living in Georgia. This suggested to some experts that the Georgian parliamentarians were not proud of their ethnic connections and preferred to keep mum about them. Other experts concluded that under normal conditions such questions are either not asked at all or do not cause a stir if they are voiced.

The bill on amendments to the law on civil status acts and its discussion in the parliament tested the political establishment's readiness to accept civil society standards. The legislature and the public at large became agitated: there was no agreement on whether identification documents should mention ethnic origin or not. It was at that point that the remnants of ethno-national thinking fully betrayed themselves once more.

Society, unable to distinguish between the Soviet (ethno-national) and "new" (civil) interpretation of the term "nation," drove itself into a frenzy. Those who did not want ethnic origin to be mentioned in identification documents argued that this would consolidate civil psychology and corresponding institutions, as well as help to overcome ethnocentric trends both among the minorities and the titular nations. These people insisted that ethnic origin could and should not be regulated by the state. Any mention of ethnic origin in identification documents was taken as discrimination against and segregation of the national minorities: should a person be identified by his ethnic affiliation?

On the other hand, there were fears that the adoption of amendments might encourage dangerous trends in places where national minorities lived in compact groups; those who in favor of mentioning ethnic origin said that both the Georgian and non-Georgian population would find it hard to reconcile themselves to the amendments: they would perceive this step as an attempt to deprive them of their nationality.

Those who wanted to see ethnic origin mentioned in identification documents proceeded from the assumption that the titular nation's domination remained unprotected, demographically among other things. They went on to say that members of national minorities would find such mention more assuring than the mere mention of their citizenship and that state policy would finally arrive at more specific ethnic policies.

There was also the opinion that only internally integrated states could afford to drop the mention of ethnic origin from identification documents. In Georgia, however, the titular nation still had to prop up its domination by means of ethnic conflicts. At the same time, the national minorities are afraid of forced assimilation.

In a country where the ethnic issue is still a hotly disputed topic, "Georgian" cannot be written in identification documents carried by people of other ethnic origins: both the Georgian ethnocentrists and minorities would find this hard to accept.

Turning to the experience of developed states was of no help: there is any number of them to confirm both points. Manipulation of the concepts will not lead anywhere either.

The country meanwhile needs a balanced policy that can protect the national minorities and promote civil integration. In the absence of a developed conceptual approach, the concepts remain vague; the same can be said about the issue's academic and legislative aspects. In the ab-

sence of a system of priorities, no laws can be passed; therefore, the field for making compromises in politics and lawmaking remains limited. There was no consistency either: lawmaking remained a fairly sporadic process; political will was weak, while power could not reconcile itself with reality.

Today the national question is also seen as a highly sensitive and politically risky issue. More than once the public nervously responded to the parliamentary debates on many questions. It should be said that Georgia failed to live up to certain international responsibilities related to the national minorities issue it assumed when it joined the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, as well as when it ratified the corresponding documents. Stormy discussions distracted the parliament from ratifying the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: this was finally done on 8 May, 2005 after numerous reminders to ratify.

II

The legacy the young Georgian democracy inherited from the past was extremely contradictory: on the one hand, the Georgian people can be justifiably proud of their tolerance; on the other, they have to overcome ethno-national thinking.

To finally realize the *policy of civil integration of national minorities*, they *should be* actively and efficiently *involved* in public life and state governance. The country needs a socializing environment that will create a social subject with acute civil awareness for participating effectively and freely in social life and state administration. People should be able to contribute to the creation of material and cultural values *irrespective of their ethnic origin*. Such a socializing environment can only be achieved in a law-based state.

Ethnicity is not something negative: protection of the rights of national minorities presupposes its further development and protection. Here is a hierarchically arranged context:

- *The first level* comprises the rights to life, to self-identification without any hindrances, etc.
- These rights allow the individual to enjoy the civil and political rights that form the *second level*, at which the individual-citizen realizes his rights and fulfills his duties.
- *The third level* is the level of special rights, which are not privileges but other forms of protection of vulnerable population groups, including minorities interested in protecting their ethnic identity.

The levels are interconnected: the guaranteed rights and freedoms of the first two levels are conducive to the realization of rights and freedoms of any individual associated with any of special groups, etc.

Special rights are one of the balancing factors: if ignored or hypertrophied, they upset the balance between the levels. Under adverse conditions, an individual is alienated from his civic duties. If general civic interests are replaced by a group's private interests, affiliation with an ethnic group becomes all-important.

The resulting phenomena are direct opposites of integration. One of them is *segregation*, a targeted policy of exclusion of certain population groups (national minorities in our case) from public, economic, and cultural life. Segregation is complemented with minorities' *self-isolation*, their unwillingness to be drawn into public life.

Separatism and *irredentism* describe crisis phenomena: active opposition of an ethnic group to society as a whole and state institutions, as well as to the titular nation. The opposition is even more active when the ethnic group aims at territorial separation.

I have already written that the vague nature of the term “integration” creates certain problems when it comes to formulating policy in this sphere. Not infrequently members of the public, when speaking at forums and writing in the press, voiced their doubts about integration. It was suspected to be a version of assimilation; what is more—assimilation with the titular nation. This fear goes to the extreme: the demand to learn the state tongue is taken as an attempt at forced assimilation. There is the opinion that the national minorities’ special rights encouraged speculations of all sorts. In fact, there is no assimilation problem in Georgia—there are problems of integration of the minorities. This means that specific ethnic features and languages are not endangered, while ignorance of the state language is not infrequent among the national minorities.

Integration is a dialectical process that reflects the unity and conflict of the general (citizenship) and the particular (ethnic affiliation) and presupposes their internal balance. *Assimilation* in its forced forms upsets the balance between the opposites. It ignores the need to protect, preserve, and develop the language, culture, specific features of the national (ethnic) minorities, and their purposeful leveling out during the integration process.

The principle of free choice of identification with any national minority is deemed especially important; under Art 3 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and other documents, this choice should not incur unwelcome consequences. The individual aspect of this choice is complemented with the right of the individual “to preserve and develop this identity” “in community with others,” that is collectively (as Art 3 and the preamble to the Framework Convention put it).

This suggests that *assimilation* can be *voluntary* and presupposes that an individual rejects his/her self-identification with any national (ethnic) minority of his own free will, which is accompanied by either civil assimilation (when a person abandons his/her self-identification with any of the ethnoses and identifies himself/herself with the institutions of citizenship, which can be described as internal cosmopolitanism), or ethnic assimilation when the person identifies himself/herself with the titular nation.

The Humanitarian House NGO put forward an interesting opinion: it pointed to the possibility of either voluntary or involuntary rejection of ethnic identification in favor of civic identity; the institution of citizenship is a more universal phenomenon than ethnic affiliation. It was suggested that a blanket term, “Iberians,” should be used to describe all citizens of Georgia (I regret to say that the thesis never reached the press).

We should distinguish between the relations among ethnic groups (the titular nation and other ethnoses) and between ethnic groups and the political, legal, as well as state institutions. These collisions are frequently identified, especially under conditions of ethno-national consciousness. In some cases, a purely political conflict is interpreted as ethnic (between the dominant and non-dominant ethnoses) with a lot of ethnic hatred. This fully applies to the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In fact, there were no conditions for ethnic conflicts there since the ethnoses are very close, while the differences were not potentially bloody. More than that, the Abkhazians and Ossets as ethnoses had a much more progressive infrastructure compared to other Soviet ethnic groups, which allowed them to develop their identities. It was the ethnic elites’ desire to gain political domination and monopoly access to the local resources that triggered the conflicts.

The fact that the Georgian tongue and culture, as well as historical traditions, serve as an integrating foundation is an important principle of such integration. From this it follows that inter-national relations in Georgia are determined, to a great extent, by the Georgians’ status as the titular nation and the pillar of Georgian statehood. This should not contradict the principles of a multi-culture as one of the historical acquisitions of all the people of Georgia. It should serve as an efficient factor for perfecting the institutions of statehood and as a condition of real interaction and mutual enrichment of cultures.

The above suggests that the situation of the minorities (Abkhazians and Ossets) should not be compared with the position of the French speakers in Belgium, as this is sometimes done. We all know that, despite their comparatively small numbers, the French speakers are not regarded as a minority. It is unwise to draw upon this unique experience, since it is fraught with grave conflicts, as history has demonstrated.

Traditional tolerance is an important factor of civil integration. If a scale of tolerance is drawn, the “resolution power” of tolerance in Georgia is much higher than in many other countries. Our country is characterized by a centuries-long linguistic and cultural diversity that is unique in its breadth and depth.

At the same time, tolerance in Georgia is rooted in the postulates of a traditional society and traditional consciousness, which have long helped to preserve stability among the ethnic communities, thus ensuring, first, coexistence and, second, integration. Accelerated social processes and market relations have already destroyed traditional stereotypes and given rise to crisis phenomena, such as persecution of members of non-traditional confessions. The civic integration policy should create a social, psychological, and ideological background conducive to even greater resolution power of the institutions of tolerance and their flexibility, in order to adjust them to the rapidly changing social conditions. Traditional attitudes should be replaced by axiological categories: while the former are limited by the customary interpretation of the situation, which does not involve reflection, the latter not only mean that civic interests are rationally perceived, but also teach society to treat them as values. These processes lead to a higher level of civil self-awareness and civil patriotism.

III

The multisided nature of national policy makes the process very complicated; there is a wide range of attributes related to the phenomenon of minorities: different numerical strength, type of settlement (either compact or disperse), and the history of their migration to Georgia. There are ethnic political autonomies. Minorities belong to different religions. It is hard to overestimate the impact made by the historical homeland (which is strong if it is located next to the regions of compact settlement), or by its absence. Significantly, in some places members of the titular nations are in the minority and have to cope with similar problems.

In the past, Georgia’s ethnic diversity was used as an argument against the law on minorities, even though the country had to pass it when it joined the Council of Europe. It was suggested instead that a set of laws be passed to embrace a whole range of related issues.

There are three types of minority-related issues.

- *First*, ethnic, which includes the problems of minorities living in compact groups or dispersed across the territory.
- *Second*, regional, related to cases when the traditional problems of preservation and development of specific features of the minorities are associated with problems of administrative-territorial arrangement of the regions in which the minorities live compactly and are in the majority.
- *Third*, political, related to political autonomy issues.

Each of the types can use different strategies for protecting the rights of the minorities and promoting their civil integration. For example, the institutions of cultural autonomy can be used to settle problems of the first type; federalization and regional status issues can be applied to the second type;

and the third deals with optimization of political relations and distribution of power between the center and the autonomy.

Today, the *first* aspect is amply covered by the laws (on culture, education, etc.). There are still no traces of an institution of national-cultural autonomy that would allow all citizens of Georgia who belong to different national communities (small and dispersed included) to deal with the problems of preservation and development of their traditions, culture, language, and education.

In the absence of absolute clarity in the state's administrative-territorial division, the *regional* aspect remains undeveloped. So far, it is presented by the institution of presidential representatives in the regions, but this can hardly be taken as a model for the country's future federative structure. The situation with the *political* aspect is much more complicated because it deals with the tasks of restoring civil peace and territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, the problems related to these levels are closely interconnected: unless we stumble across their best possible correlation, we will not be able to cope with the problem of integrating minorities, which is not facilitated by the continuing vagueness about the concepts of regionalization, federalization, and autonomization.

I think that federalization (regionalization) should be rooted in the historical tradition of economic and political expediency and the division of labor inside the country, which is expected to create domestic market. The territorial aspect of federalization is in principle fraught with conflicts—if given ethnic hues, it will become even more conflict-prone. In this case, the re-division of territories among the federation subjects will be burdened with ethnic issues.

Our most recent history has been aggravated by autonomy-related conflicts; international experts (A. Eide, among others) believe that there is no alternative to preserving or elevating this status because if degraded for any reason it will cause trouble.

This makes interpretation of the right of nations to self-determination extremely important. The norm presupposes that when realized it should not contradict sovereignty, the state system, territorial integrity, or the country's political independence. It relies on the principle of equality of all citizens and the priority of human rights (internal self-determination). External self-determination is associated with a worldwide consensus, the criteria of which have not yet been formulated. For this reason, it causes crises with grave consequences for the world order.

Art 4 of the Constitution of Georgia proclaimed the right of nations to self-determination, according to which the parliament will consist of two chambers (the Council of the Republic and the Senate, which will include representatives of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Ajaria, and other territorial units) when adequate conditions are created.

We should proceed from the assumption that sovereignty as a qualitative rather than quantitative category cannot be divided. The rights of internally self-determining nations can be reshuffled, but the sovereign right of *all the people of Georgia* to decide the future of their state, territorial integrity, etc. should not be placed in doubt.

C o n c l u s i o n

Georgian society needs intensified integration for its development; the rights of national minorities should be protected by the priority of the universal principles of citizenship as applied to them all. Apart from a purely humanitarian effect, the equal and effective involvement of all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic origin, in state administration will become a confidence-building measure. It will help to prevent conflicts or settle them and to upgrade the quality of the legitimacy of Georgian statehood.

Harmonious integration is our main aim: ethnic minorities should not merely live side by side; their cultures should be involved in mutual penetration and mutual enrichment to increase society's creative potential. This form of integration will finally create a dynamic system of relations between the state and ethnic groups. These processes are promoted by the freedom of each person to identify himself/herself with any ethnic group and with state citizenship. Harmonized processes create a viable and sustainable system—an indispensable factor under the conditions of intensifying and accelerating globalization.

Today, it is extremely important for us to know the extent to which the internal integration of Georgian society will outstrip the globalization phenomena unfolding in our republic. Under favorable conditions, we shall achieve a diverse and flexible social milieu; otherwise society, burdened by its inner multi-cultural nature, will be unable to respond to the challenges of globalization.
