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**ETHNIC RELATIONS AND
MIGRATION PROBLEMS****INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF
ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA:
A (DE)STABILIZING FACTOR
IN THE CAUCASUS**

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Introduction

The August 2008 war and recognition, on 26 August, 2008, of the independence of the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia by the Russian Federation and, later, by several other countries created a new situation in the Greater Caucasus, which many of the regional and world geopolitical players have found unpalatable. Their active efforts to change the new reality run up against the recognition of independence of these two states,¹

¹ It should be said that the U.S., EU, and NATO insist that Russia revoke its recognition of independence, although they do not demand the same from Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru and Tuvalu (and probably Vanuatu), which

which Russia cannot revoke without losing its international prestige and influence in the Caucasus right up to possible secession of the Northern Caucasus. The above-mentioned players have no choice but to use force to liquidate the republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia; if this happens, complete and final destabilization of the Caucasus will be inevitable.

Meanwhile, neither the young republics nor the Russian Federation are making it a point to get more states to recognize the independence of the first.

also recognized the independence of the two breakaway republics.

Georgia and the Western Actors: “New Approaches” to South Ossetia and Abkhazia

Georgia, which is still deliberating the question of “restoring territorial integrity” (“reunification” with Abkhazia and South Ossetia contrary to the will of their populations), is the most active among the regional players determined to change the post-August 2008 landscape. This will inevitably call for the use of force despite Georgia’s ardent desire to join the EU and NATO and the large-scale economic and social reforms designed to confirm Tbilisi’s “European choice.” In view of the allied relations between Russia and each of the new states and the presence of Russia’s military bases in their territories, another attempt to restore Georgia’s “territorial integrity” by force will lead to its crushing military defeat, disintegration of its statehood, and the emergence of several puppet quasi-states in its territory.

Fully aware of this, Tbilisi will hardly venture to use arms any time soon. Georgia gained much more influence in the Northern Caucasus when it unilaterally abolished the visa regime with the Russian Federation; however the process stopped at the borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Tbilisi, however, could tip the balance in its favor by skillfully applying “soft power.”

Some of the American think-tanks can be described as the main world actors determined to help Tbilisi regain control over the two republics. They guided the North Caucasian “initiatives” of Georgia up to and including the use of the “Circassian card” and the attempts to re-orientate South Ossetia and Abkhazia away from Russia toward the West (as represented by the EU and U.S.). In fact, Washington is pursuing its own geopolitical aims: restructuring the Greater Caucasus by pushing Russia out of it and diminishing the role of Turkey and Iran by various, including military, means.

By necessity the European Union has become a vehicle of Western interests in the Caucasus: America’s political and financial support of Georgia and the obvious Russian-American rivalry in the region have made it ill-suited to this role.

While the officials of the United States, the EU, and NATO are talking about their support of Georgia’s territorial integrity and continue to call on Russia to revoke its recognition of the new republics, the White House is feverishly looking for a more pragmatic angle for its Georgian policy. In the spring of 2010, Alexander Cooley and Lincoln Mitchell of Columbia University offered a “new course”: they recommended different policies for these republics. They suggested that the Republic of South Ossetia, which depended on Moscow politically and economically, should be left within Russia’s orbit, while Abkhazia should become the target of an “engagement without recognition” policy.²

The EU has been applying this principle for over a year now to develop social, economic, cultural, and public contacts between Sukhum (in the sphere of civil society) and the EU member states (without recognizing Abkhazia’s independence) in the interests of Tbilisi and on the strength of a mutual understanding between the EU and Georgia.

In March 2009, Peter Semneby, EU Special Representative for the Southern Caucasus from 2006 to 2012, explained to the then President of Abkhazia Sergey Bagapsh (without mentioning “engagement without recognition,” the latest Western invention) that the EU was prepared, without recognizing Abkhazia’s independence, to help Abkhazia implement humanitarian projects “to improve

² L. Mitchell, A. Cooley, “After the August War: A New Strategy for U.S. Engagement with Georgia,” *The Harriman Review*, Vol. 17, Nos. 3-4, May 2010, available at [<http://www.harrimaninstitute.org/MEDIA/01798.pdf>].

the living conditions in the republic.” The EU representative mentioned the visa question (the situation in this sphere had considerably worsened by that time) and “humanitarian projects in the sphere of health protection, education, and restoration of infrastructure,”³ in particular in the Gali region, which borders on Georgia. A year later Peter Semneby deemed it necessary to specify to President Bagapsh that by “engagement without recognition” the European Union meant “the implementation of all sorts of projects through the European Commission and student exchange programs,” as well as restoration of the severed contacts between the Abkhazians and Georgians in various, including economic, spheres.⁴

“Engagement without Recognition” Fails

Even before Russia recognized the independence of the two republics, Western states had tried to re-orientate the South Ossetian and Abkhazian leaders away from Russia toward the U.S. and the European Union. In the 2000s, EU officials frequented Tskhinvali and Sukhum, while OSCE missions worked in the zones of the Georgian-Ossetian and Georgian-Abkhazian conflicts; this was also when several small economic projects were implemented.

The EU stepped up its activity after February 2008 (when Kosovo became independent) and remained quite active until the August 2008 war. It was then that the Europeans (who coordinated their actions with the United States) tried in earnest to re-orientate civil society and, in some cases, statesmen in both republics away from Russia toward the EU. It was believed that after a while both conflicts would be resolved in favor of Georgia’s territorial integrity.

In 2008, it was planned to allocate €500 thousand and €100 thousand to Abkhazian and Ossetian NGOs, respectively, within the European Commission for Georgia Program called Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development.⁵ The war disrupted the program (which had barely started) and the process of re-orientation of civil society, which consisted mainly of marginal figures with no real weight in the so far unrecognized republics. A year after the war, the “engagement without recognition” formula was employed as better suited to the new reality.

At first the new approach caused no negative feelings in Abkhazia; after a while, however, moderation developed into skepticism. The EU expected that the political issues (the status of Abkhazia, Georgia’s territorial integrity, etc.) would remain suppressed or not included on the political agenda. Very much in line with this policy, the EU emissaries exerted efforts (both directly and indirectly) to make implementation of the humanitarian programs hinge on Abkhazia’s agreement with the Georgian point of view. Predictably, this caused nothing but irritation in Sukhum; in 2012, Abkhazia clamped down on all sorts of EU structures working in its territory. If the EU continues lobbying Georgian interests (the main reason for the EU’s presence in Abkhazia), relations between Abkhazia and the EU might be severed once more (they were severed after the August war in South Ossetia).

³ “Evrosoiuz gotov finansirovat gumanitarnye proekty v Abkhazii,” Novy Region Information Agency, 18 March, 2009, available at [<http://www.nregion.com/txt.php?i=30036>].

⁴ “Spetspredstavitel ES na Yuzhnom Kavkaze Peter Semneby provodit vstrechi v Abkhazii,” Kavkazkiy uzel Information Agency, 14 July, 2010, available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/171616/?print=true>].

⁵ See: A. Bitarov, “Yuzhnaia Ossetia-2008: Evrosoiuz i ‘tretya sila’,” Osinform Information Agency, available at [<http://osinform.ru/6411-andrej-bitarov-juzhnaja-osetija-2008.html>].

It should be said that neither the U.S. nor the EU recognized the parliamentary and presidential elections in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, or their results,⁶ which says a lot about their real attitude toward the young republics.

The European Union is persisting in its efforts to consolidate its position in Abkhazia, even though President Alexander Ankvab described relations with the EU as “far from perfect” and said that he had no illusions about their future.⁷ It seems that the “engagement without recognition” policy is doomed to failure in Abkhazia; if spread to South Ossetia it will fail there too.

President Ankvab explained why further attempts to talk to the EU were senseless: “No projects created within the Georgian political milieu will be accepted in Abkhazia. We have covered a fairly hard road and met many more difficulties than Europe can imagine.”⁸

The new American-European strategy failed not only because it was closely tied to the interests of Tbilisi, but also because the Georgian leaders refused to abandon the thesis of Russian occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and insisted on Georgia’s territorial integrity. This has left the European Union with no other options.

“Weaker Dependence on Russia:” Is this True?

The “engagement without recognition” strategy should be developed beyond the economic and cultural sphere. In an interview, American political scientist Paul Goble designated a scenario of its further development: “The step that would most disturb Moscow would be if the West and the U.S. in particular were to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia. ...It would be more interesting if Georgia has recognized Abkhazia.”⁹ He is convinced that it would weaken Sukhum’s dependence on Moscow. He gave the West five years to retreat from its position—three of the five years have already passed. It should be said that his deliberations and the frantic efforts of other Western analysts to find ways and means to weaken Russia’s influence in the Caucasus are utopian.

Significantly, it was South Ossetia (which the West dismissed as a hopeless case) rather than Abkhazia that demonstrated “weaker moral-psychological dependence” on Russia when mid-level Russian officials unceremoniously interfered in the 2011-2012 presidential campaign. Their clumsiness raised a wave of anti-Kremlin and, to some extent, anti-Russian sentiments (in the broad sense of the word) in the republic.¹⁰

This was partly corrected when Leonid Tibilov, elected president of the Republic of South Ossetia, invited some of Alla Jioeva’s supporters to join his team (Alla Jioeva as a presidential candidate won the “first round” of presidential election). The future depends on the people appointed by the federal center to supervise relations between Russia and South Ossetia and on the pace of economic reconstruction; the new teams in power in the Russian Federation and South Ossetia breed cautious optimism.

⁶ Presidential elections were held in Abkhazia in 2009 and 2011 and parliamentary elections in 2012. The president of South Ossetia was elected after two rounds—in 2011 and 2012.

⁷ See: “Alexander Ankvab ne pitaet illiuziy po povodu uluchsheniia otnosheniy s Evrosoiuzom,” Apsnypress Information Agency, 21 February, 2012, available at [<http://apsnypress.info/news/5479.html>].

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ “How the Russian-Georgian War Has Changed the World—Interview with Paul Goble,” VOA News, 11 August, 2010, available at [<http://www.abkhazworld.com/news/interview/539-paul-goble-interview-voa-news-august-2010.html>].

¹⁰ See: Ya. Amelina, “Uroki prezidentskoy kampanii v Yuzhnoy Osetii i perspektivy razvitiya osetinskoy gosudarstvennosti,” Regnum Information Agency, 12 December, 2011, available at [www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1478599.html].

In Abkhazia, too, there are mild anti-Russian sentiments among the Abkhazian intelligentsia, part of the academic and educational communities, journalists, writers, etc. They find no support at the state and the grass-roots level, but crop up as publications of biased versions of Abkhazia's national history in which Russia is presented as the main villain, the source of corruption, and other negative phenomena previously unknown in Abkhazia. It is constantly asserted that Russia needs Abkhazia more than Abkhazia needs Russia, which means that Abkhazia is free to develop contacts with the West and Turkey without looking back at Moscow. The independent media indulge in criticizing practically all the Russian-Abkhazian treaties as unequal, unprofitable, and anti-state.

These sentiments can be observed among the ordinary people as well. In the last two or three years, Russian tourists have begun complaining on the Internet about the far from friendly treatment they receive in Abkhazia, and this is despite the fact that a large part of the local population lives on the money tourists from Russia spend in the republic during the tourist season.

It is no wonder that official statistics have registered a steady decline in the number of Russian tourists in the republic; and this trend continues.

The Adighe-Abkhazian Brotherhood Falls Apart

At the same time, Sukhum successfully resisted Tbilisi's attempts to draw it into a campaign of recognition of the so-called genocide of the Circassians, a hope to start a common Adighe movement: by that time the subject had been banned in Abkhazia for five years. On 20 May, 2011, the Georgian parliament recognized the so-called Circassian Genocide to take its revenge on Moscow for its loss of influence in the former autonomous territories. The soil was properly tilled: the deputies convened two international conferences allegedly to discuss the events of the mid and late 19th century and the Caucasian War, which attracted radical leaders of the Circassian national movement and political scientists from the U.S. and Europe.

These efforts are directly connected with the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, which are eating up huge budget funds. Its failure would undermine Russia's international prestige and destabilize the region even more.¹¹

Contrary to what was expected of them in Tbilisi, the Abkhazians preferred to keep away from the anti-Russian "Circassian" project. The split in the Abkhazian-Circassian ideological and political camp became obvious some time ago in the course of several scientific-public and political actions. The events of the winter and spring of 2012 clearly indicated that the former allies would finally part ways.¹²

The radical Circassian leaders, in particular Ibrahim Yaganov, leader of the Hase Movement in Kabardino-Balkaria, who during the Abkhazian-Georgian conflict commanded a Kabardin battalion, moved to the side of external (Georgian) actors, which caused confusion in the ranks of the ideologists of the Adighe-Abkhazian unity."

At first Yaganov carefully avoided direct contacts with the Georgians. As recently as 2010 he refused to attend the Tbilisi conferences on the Circassian genocide and argued that the Circassians should avoid contacts with Georgia until it recognized Abkhazia. He deemed it necessary to specify

¹¹ See: "*Cherkesskiy vopros*" i vneshniy faktor. *Analiticheskiy doklad*, RISS, Moscow, 2012.

¹² Circassians were actively involved in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict of 1992-1993.

that he did not want “to betray the memory of his fallen comrades.”¹³ Shortly after that, early in 2011, he retreated from his previous position; in October 2011, he appeared on Georgian TV (the PIK Channel) with a detailed interview in which he spoke about the need for a “direct dialog” between Georgia and Abkhazia and suggested the Circassians as intermediaries.¹⁴

The leaders of Abkhazia found it hard to see eye to eye with Yaganov. Two years before he had tried to draw Abkhazians into what President Ankvab called “the Tbilisi squabbles” and was deported from Abkhazia.¹⁵

After realizing that the Abkhazians were determined to stay away from the Circassian radicals, Tbilisi started talking about the Abkhazians as a “second-rate nation” compared with the Circassians and even denying their belonging to the Circassian community.¹⁶ Popular Georgian bloggers say the same.

In fact, the new Georgian policy of “separating” the Abkhazians and Circassians strengthens Russia’s position in the republic and the region.

In view of the firm position of the Abkhazian leaders and President Ankvab on the problems of the republic’s independence, “genocide of the Circassians,” and the resettlement of muhajir descendants, as well as the Winter Olympics in Sochi, it can be said that the Republic of Abkhazia will not support the Circassian radicals in the near future. President Ankvab has dotted the “i’s”: “Our position is absolutely clear: we will never allow anyone, whenever possible, to speculate on this issue. Our relations with the Russian Federation are not based on what happened a century and a half ago. This is history. We should analyze history but should not build our relations on it. We should know history but should not rely on the results of the Caucasian War in our relations with Russia. Abkhazia will never do this.”¹⁷

For independent Abkhazia the Circassian support is of purely moral importance. What the radicals do and say is killing the illusions of some of the Abkhazians about Abkhazian-Adighe unity; these illusions will soon be finally dead.

The “Neutral” Neighbors

While Georgia, as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan, will not recognize the new republics, Turkey and Iran have already displayed a lot of interest in both countries at an unofficial level.

Turkey is home to a fairly large Abkhazian diaspora (several hundred thousand); some of the Sukhum intellectuals believe that this human and economic potential can be used to build an independent Abkhazian state. This, however, is impossible for several reasons, the main being the Islamic factor, considerable social and cultural distinctions, and Russia’s opposition to the threat of widespread Turkish influence in the Republic of Abkhazia.

¹³ A. Babitskiy, D. Polandov, “V gruzinskiy parlament postupila prosba o priznanii genotsida cherkessov,” *Ekho Kavkaza*, 21 March, 2010, available at [<http://www.ekhokavkaza.com/content/article/1989419.html>].

¹⁴ “Vasha pravda s Davidom Sakvarelidze: Adygsky vopros,” PIK TV Channel, 20 October, 2011, available at [<http://pik.tv/ru/shows/vasha-pravda/video/64/2459>].

¹⁵ See: “Alexander Ankvab: ‘Otnosheniia Abkhazii s Rossiei ne baziruiutsia na tom, chto bylo 150 let nazad,’” Interview to Yana Amelina, Regnum Information Agency, 22 August, 2011, available at [www.regnum.ru/news/1437495.html].

¹⁶ See, for example: Kvakhadze, “Rukovodstvo cherkesskogo kulturnogo tsentra pod cherkessami podrazumevaet iskluchitelno adygov i ubykhov,” Prepared by Solomon Lebnidze, AntiSochi, 28 February, 2012, available at [<http://antisochi.org/2012/02/квахадзе—«руководство-черкесского/”>].

¹⁷ “Alexander Ankvab: ‘Otnosheniia Abkhazii s Rossiei ne baziruiutsia na tom, chto bylo 150 let nazad.’”

Turkish diplomats visited Abkhazia after its independence had been recognized by the Russian Federation. This does not mean that Turkey will do the same any time soon: Ankara has to retain friendly relations with Russia, the U.S., and NATO (of which it is a member).

Iran, the diplomatic steps of which are invariably cautious and balanced, will not recognize Abkhazia despite the unofficial talks between the two countries.

Turkey and Iran are unlikely to recognize the independence of the Republic of South Ossetia either. It should be said that Iran has been demonstrating more interest in South Ossetia, probably because of its remote linguistic kinship; Iranian diplomats held several unofficial meetings, some of them in the republic.

Tehran decided that it would be politically risky and, therefore, hardly wise to recognize the independence of South Ossetia in the near future. This does not mean, however, that the sides will not revive the issue in a different geopolitical situation. Russia, which has been recently openly supporting Iran on the international scene, may play an important role in this respect.

By Way of a Conclusion

In the future, several more countries might recognize the republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. So far their statehoods and physical safety are guaranteed by the fact that Russia has recognized their independence.

Any possible attempts by the United States, the EU, or NATO to change the status quo should be prevented: further destabilization of the region could lead to disaster.

NATIONAL POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN STATE: DELIBERATIONS ON PUTIN'S ARTICLE

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Introduction

On 23 January, 2012, *Nezavisimaia gazeta* carried an article by Prime Minister of Russia Vladimir Putin entitled "Russia: The National Question," which took the Russian public by surprise. Indeed, this was the first time in his twelve years on the political Olympus that the

Russian leader had turned to the national question. The article invited very contradictory opinions and sent waves in all directions.

The presidential candidate (he was elected president a couple of months later) tried to analyze various aspects of national relations in Russia—a fact which in itself deserves the close attention of the expert community. And it was with

this aim that I too took up the pen. I live in the Chechen Republic, the most complicated and conflict-prone constituency of the Russian Federation (part of the North Caucasian Federal District, which also includes the Stavropol Territory and all of the North Caucasian republics, with the exception of Adigei, which belongs to the Southern Federal District).

Vladimir Putin: The National Question

It seems that the presidential candidate turned his attention to the national question in Russia under the pressure of the rising tension that became obvious some six years ago and has been steadily climbing. The events of September 2006 in Kondopoga were the beginning: the conflict that arose in this Karelian town had criminal overtones and ended in the murder of two local crime bosses.

This stirred up the local people; migrants from the Caucasus were attacked, their property burnt down; and over 100 rioters were arrested. To avoid further disturbances, about 60 people of Caucasian origin were evacuated to Petrozavodsk.

On 24 May, 2007, Stavropol was shaken by another ethnic conflict when a Chechen student G. Ataev was killed in a massive scuffle. On 3 June, two Russian students—D. Blokhin and P. Chadin—were found murdered. “The Chechens have taken revenge for the death of their friend,” was the common opinion.

On 11 June, 2007, an impromptu rally in Stavropol gathered about 700; as could be expected, it developed into mass disturbances. The gathering demanded the removal of Chechens and Caucasian migrants in general from the city. Alexander Chernovolov, who was more active than the rest, stirred up the crowd with nationalist slogans and called on the local authorities to evict all non-Russians from the city, using barefaced obscenities to describe them. The law enforcers instigated a criminal case against him under Art 282 “Incitement of National, Racial, or Religious Enmity” of the RF Criminal Code. Over 50 other rioters were detained.

On 27 November, 2010, in a scuffle between several dozen Cossacks and Chechens in Zelenokumsk (the Stavropol Territory), several Cossacks were wounded and one Chechen received a head injury. The clash was caused by the attempted rape of a 15-year-old girl, which had allegedly taken place on 21 November. Sergey Ushakov, Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Stavropol Territory and responsible for security, told the Novosti Information Agency that the conflict was a purely criminal clash with no ethnic overtones to it.

On 6 December, 2010, Spartak football fan Egor Sviridov was killed in a fracas with people from the Caucasus in a Moscow café. On 11 December, 2010, over 5 thousand football fans and Russian nationalists gathered on Kronstadt Boulevard (in Moscow’s outskirts) for a procession in memory of their dead comrade. Very soon, however, the action moved to Manezhnaya Square (in Moscow’s center) where the disturbances caused 32 casualties. Criminal cases were instituted against the initiators and people who resisted the police. Finally, five people were brought to court: two activists of Other Russia (K. Unchuk and R. Khubaev); I. Berezyuk, a citizen of Belarus and member of the Strategy 31 move-

ment, as well as L. Panin and A. Kozevin. They were accused of calling to mass disorder, inciting national hatred and enmity, using force against representatives of the government, and engaging in hooliganism.

Members of the national (mainly Caucasian) diasporas of Moscow reciprocated with an attempt to rally at the Kievskaya metro station, which was cut short by law enforcers.

On 16 December, 2010, during the annual Q&A session “A Conversation with Vladimir Putin, Continued,” Prime Minister Putin said that extremism would be mercilessly persecuted and pointed out that “we must not tar everyone from the Northern Caucasus or indeed any other nationalities, in fact anyone at all, with the same brush.” He called on all citizens of Russia, irrespective of age, to remember that they lived in a multinational and multiconfessional state and that citizens of the same country should make sure that “people feel at home everywhere in Russia, we must all behave appropriately, so that a person from the Caucasus feels safe walking around Moscow, and Russians of Slavic origin feel safe living in the Northern Caucasus.”

On 21 December, 2010, Vladimir Putin met with the football fans and laid flowers on the grave of Egor Sviridov, killed in a skirmish. This put the Caucasian diaspora on guard.

On 27 December, President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev opened the joint session of the State Council and the Presidential Commission on Nationalities Projects with a statement that the nationalities problem was still acute in Russia; he pointed out that ethnic tension was very obvious in many regions and that “ethnic conflicts are lethal for Russia, no matter where they occur.” The president was concerned about the fact that the centuries-old ethnic balance in many of Russia’s regions is undergoing rapid changes. These changes are mainly responsible for the ethnic conflicts fanned by political extremists and criminal communities.

The president was absolutely right: no matter where ethnic conflicts flare up, be it in the Caucasus, the Volga area, Siberia, or Moscow, they undermine the foundations of society and the state.

President Medvedev was obviously convinced that the inflow of migrants to Russia and the resultant demographic pressure were behind at least some of the numerous problems.

In the small hours of 1 July, 2011, local people in Sagra, a Ural settlement, clashed with newcomers from Ekaterinburg. The sides used pneumatic pistols, rifles, nunchaku, baseball bats, truncheons, knuckle-dusters, axes, etc. The fight, started by the activities of a local drug dealer, was not free from criminal undertones. Twenty-one people were incriminated under Art 209 (banditry) and 212 (mass riots) of the RF Criminal Code; 18 of them were detained; the most active fighters—Sh. Katamadze, M. Bekov, P. Safarov, and A. Selimov—were put on the federal wanted list; an order was issued on bringing them to criminal responsibility.

These conflicts, which looked like criminal clashes and were later treated as national, served as the starting point for assessing the national situation in Russia and formed the foundation of Putin’s article, the conclusions of which proved to be timely and highly necessary.

Russian Marches: Nationalism Comes to the Fore

On 4 November, 2008, the Movement against Illegal Migration and the Slavic Alliance started a series of so-called Russian Marches. The first of them attracted about 850 people, mainly from the Russkiy obraz (Russian Image) and the Narodny Soyuz (People’s Union) structures. The sanctioned rally took place on one of the Moskva River embankments under the flags of the Navy of Russia and

the People's Union and red flags of the Soviet Union, as well as banners with icons; about 20 participants were clad in hauberks and carried shields.¹

In 2010, Russian Marches took place in 46 cities of Russia (in 38 cities), Ukraine (7), and Moldova (1). In 2011, the geographical scope of the Russian Marches widened by almost 25%.

The largest of them took place in Moscow on 30 October, 2011; there were no less than 15 thousand people in the 1.5-km-long column. None of the opposition structures had managed to gather together such a large crowd, to say nothing of the nationalist movement. Eyewitnesses later said that the march had been as impressive and as igniting as the Olympics or military parades.²

Konstantin Krylov, one of those who organized the procession, was arrested on its eve; a criminal case under Art 282 "Incitement of National, Racial, or Religious Enmity" of the RF Criminal Code was instituted against him.

On the eve of the main Muslim holyday, Russian Marches were organized in many cities of Russia; this time the participants did not limit themselves to their famous slogan "Stop feeding the Caucasus!" but added obscene commentaries about Allah to hurt the religious feelings of the faithful.

They also shouted their usual slogans: "Russia is for the Russians!" "Russia is for the Russians, Moscow is for the Muscovites!" "Russia should have Russian Power," "One for All and All for One!" "Beat the Khachiks to save Russia!" "Stop feeding the Caucasus!" "Down with the Party of Swindlers and Embezzlers!" "Russia without Putin!" "Ziga-zaga," "Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil—we shall build a paradise for the whites!" "They will build minarets in Moscow—we should thank Putin!" "Why is our budget in holes? Because Kadyrov is full!" "Budanov is a hero of Russia," "Moscow is a city without churki."³ The participants used other derogative terms that insulted the human dignity of the peoples of the Caucasus.

Similar marches took place in other cities of Russia (St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Saratov, Tula, and Novosibirsk) and in Ukraine.

Early in 2011, the nationalists intended to organize regular youth marches to make them look like a natural and absolutely acceptable phenomenon.⁴

In expectation of repressions, the nationalists started planning a united political structure. Chairman of the Main Council of the Union of the Russian People Alexander Turik deemed it necessary to say: "I call on the leaders of all Russian organizations to start a dialog, to close ranks. Our enemy is strong because we are disunited. In fact, our disagreements are much less important than our common super task: we should take power and start building Russia our own way."⁵ The participants wrote that during Putin's presidency no less than 1,450 nationalists had been repressed.⁶

According to Leonid Byzov, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences, the Russian March 2011 was an important event which brought together the entire protest electorate: "Today there are leaders and a more or less stable ideology. One can even say that a revolution in Russia, if any, will not be free from nationalist slogans."⁷

¹ See: "V Moskve nachalis 'Russkie marshi'," available at [<http://www.ves.lv/article/60130>].

² See: "Russkiy marsh—2010. Triumf natsionalizma," available at [http://clubs.ya.ru/4611686018427440168/replies.xml?item_no=110].

³ "Uchastniki 'Russkogo marsha' v Moskve oskorbili musulman," available at [<http://ansar.ru/rfsng/2011/10/30/23949?>]. Khachiki and churki—derogative term applied to all people from the Caucasus; Sieg Heil—hail victory, fascist greeting; Colonel Budanov was sentenced for killing a Chechen girl.

⁴ See: "2011-i god dlia Russkogo natsionalizma. Khonika i itogi," available at [http://dpni.org/articles/novosti__d/28600/].

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ [http://dpni.org/articles/novosti__d/29685/].

⁷ L. Byzov, "Natsionalisty stali takoy siloy, na kotoruiu nevozmozhno ne obrashchat vnimaniia," available at [<http://www.lentacom.ru/comments/12820.html>].

Any attentive analyst can easily detect that the radical nationalists have moved closer to certain groups of the liberal and leftist opposition, which might create an anti-government popular front.

The Russian Marches might develop into a political force; today the Russian nationalists are moving toward the ideology of the European right, the determined opponents of migration.

The Levada Center, which studies the rise of nationalism in Russia, obtained the following answers to the question “Do you feel hostility from people of other nationalities?”: “Very frequently,” 4%; “Fairly frequently,” 14%; “Rarely,” 27%; and “Practically never,” 50%.

Over half of the respondents agreed that in the last 5 or 6 years the number of Russians who share extreme nationalist views had considerably increased because of the provocative behavior of national minorities, the low standard of living, and frequent terrorist acts.

Forty-two percent is convinced that the Russian authorities are fighting extreme Russian nationalism, while 20% is convinced that the authorities are encouraging nationalists and promoting nationalist feelings.⁸

If encouraged, nationalism might develop into an uncontrollable element with a dynamics and development logic of its own; it will not be easy and will definitely be very expensive to put the genie back into the bottle.

Who Wants to Isolate the Northern Caucasus?

Russian nationalists are fond of holding forth about changing the Constitution (which describes Russia as a federal state) to transform Russia into a mono-state with gubernias instead of national republics (constituencies of the Russian Federation).

There is the opinion in the expert community that the Northern Caucasus is the main source of the steadily rising national tension.

It should be said that in Russia there is a stable negative attitude toward people from the Caucasus (“people of Caucasian nationality” is the current term). In the last 10 to 15 years, the media and certain political figures have done a lot to create a highly negative image of the Chechens; at first people were scared by the talk about the “Chechen mafia” and “forged Chechen banking documents”; then the hostilities added new terms: “Chechen bandits,” “the Chechen war,” “Chechen terrorists,” “Chechen Wahhabis,” “Chechen female suicide bombers,” etc. Prominent Russian ethnologist Valery Tishkov has gone even further: one of the chapters of his *Society in an Armed Conflict (Ethnography of the Chechen War)* is called “Chechen Anti-Semitism and Conspiracy Theories.”⁹

Never in their history have the Chechens been anti-Semites; Dr. Tishkov’s invented term, however, stuck: duly impressed, the Russian public became even more negative about the Chechens.

People in Russia remain captives of what looks like the ideological myths the authorities have imposed on them; today, very much as before, the negative image of the Chechens is still alive among Russians, who use derogative terms, such as “blacks,” “bandits,” etc., when talking about Chechens and other people from the Caucasus.

⁸ See: V. Bode, “Nationalizm v Rossii,” available at [<http://www.svobodanews.ru/content/article/24338237.html>].

⁹ V.A. Tishkov, *Obshchestvo v vooruzhennom konflikte (etnografiya chechenskoy voyny)*, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 2001, p. 476.

Some think that the crisis in the Northern Caucasus is gradually becoming systemic; so far neither the government nor society has pointed to the way out.

The leading media are indulging in writing about so-called financial discrimination against the Russians. *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, for example, insists that the authorities are trying, without tangible results, to “buy stability” in the Caucasus. Until 2025, writes the newspaper, “Chechnia can expect 498 billion rubles from the federal center; 156.2 billion of this huge sum is intended as compensation for ‘the housing lost during the military crisis in the Chechen Republic’.”¹⁰

It further writes that the North Caucasian republics are turning into a huge “black hole” that sucks in budget money. Journalists quote the following figures: the Center covers 69% of the budget spending of the Caucasian republics; in the case of Chechnia and Ingushetia, the share is 91%; Daghestan, 75%; Kabardino-Balkaria, 60%; and North Ossetia and Karachaevo-Cherkessia, 55%. The state budget pays 47 thousand rubles per capita in Chechnia, 27 thousand rubles in Ingushetia, while the average figure for Russia is only 5 thousand.

The above suggests obvious unfairness: some constituents of the Russian Federation are living at the expense of others.

These disproportions cause separatism and national tension; there is the opinion that the Caucasian regions that enjoy lavish donations produce nothing but crime and terror exported to central Russia.

It is suggested that financial donations should be proportional to the regions’ contribution to the state treasury. On 23 January, 2012, Vladimir Putin had the following to say on this score at the Forum of Ethnic Groups of Southern Russia in Kislovodsk: “All our political opponents and rivals have been constantly trying to split off the Northern Caucasus from Russia, century after century. This only goes to show the geopolitical importance of this region in the world. If (and I hope this will never happen) Russia is stripped of any of its national formations, it will immediately shrivel up and turn irrevocably into a third-rate regional power.”

When talking about the role of the Russians in integrating the Russian state and society, Vladimir Putin said at the Forum: “Russians are like a magnet: they attract other peoples of the Russian Federation today. If Russia is pulled apart, it will simply cease to exist and the first people to suffer will be the Russians. We must not, we have no right to permit this under any circumstances, and we will not permit it.”

By way of commenting on the calls to separate the Caucasus from Russia, Prime Minister Putin deemed it necessary to warn: “Why am I telling you all this? I am telling you this because we know what happened in Chechnia in the past, and how difficult it was for everyone throughout Russia, including the Chechen people. When I first went to Chechnia, the hostilities were still going on there. I went into a school and found out that children had not been coming to that school for several years. There were no desks or chairs in the classrooms. Do you see what I am driving at? If we allow ourselves to be drawn into such processes, the same will happen all over the Caucasus. We must prevent this. These negative effects can happen both in the Caucasus and throughout the whole of Russia. When they start screaming: ‘Stop feeding the Caucasus,’ just wait, tomorrow a new call will inevitably follow: ‘Stop feeding Siberia, the Far East, the Urals, the Volga Region, the Moscow Region...’ This is the procedure followed by those who brought the Soviet Union to its knees.”

Vladimir Putin shared his conceptual considerations: the West, confronted by a huge wave of migrants who brought their specific customs with them and who could not integrate into the new social environment, was not prepared to accept them. This feeds nationalist sentiments and talk about the failure of multiculturalism.

¹⁰ “Chechnia vystavila Tsenru schet na poltrilliona,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 20 April, 2011.

The prime minister of Russia wrote on this score: “The ‘melting pot’ of assimilation is stalling and smoking, unable to ‘digest’ the growing migration flow. In politics, this has been reflected by ‘multiculturalism,’ which rejects the notion of integration through assimilation. It elevates the ‘right of minorities to be different’ to an absolute and, at the same time, fails to balance this right with civil, behavioral, and cultural obligations with regard to the indigenous population and society as a whole.

“Behind the ‘failure of the multicultural project’ stands the crisis of the very model of a ‘nation-state’—a state historically built exclusively on the basis of ethnic identity. And that is a serious challenge to be faced by Europe and many other regions of the world.”

And further: “Historical Russia is neither an ethnic state nor an American ‘melting pot,’ where everyone is, one way or another, an immigrant. Russia emerged and for centuries developed as a multiethnic state—a state with an ongoing process of mutual adjustment, mutual understanding, and unification of people through families, friendship, and work, with hundreds of ethnicities living together on the same land. The development of these vast territories, which has filled the whole of Russian history, was the collective effort of many nations.”¹¹

Vladimir Putin is convinced that Russia should remain loyal to the historical idea of a multinational state in which the Russian people remain the core; at the same time any person can call himself Russian irrespective of his ethnic origin; the cultural code and common values are more important.

He described Russia as a polyethnic state and a unique civilization: “The core, the binding fabric of this unique civilization is the Russian people, Russian culture. And it is this core that various instigators and our opponents will make every effort to tear out of Russia with false assertions about Russians’ right to self-determination, ‘racial purity,’ the need to ‘finish the job of 1991 and complete the destruction of the empire, sitting on the necks of the Russian people’ in order to ultimately force people to destroy their Motherland with their own hands.”¹²

He criticized those who favor the idea of a purely Russian state: “I am deeply convinced that attempts to promote the idea of creating a Russian ‘national’ mono-ethnic state contradict our thousand-year-old history. Moreover, it is the shortest path toward the destruction of the Russian nation and Russian statehood as well as any viable sovereign statehood in our land.”¹³

Who insists on a Russian state and who is the organizer of the Russian Marches? The answer is found in one of the documents of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia, which offers the reader “a new nationalities policy of Russia”: a national state of the Russian people.¹⁴

Russians should be officially recognized as the state-forming nation: the authors argue that as the officially recognized national majority Russians should be compensated for the absence of their own autonomy with official recognition of them as the state-forming nation with additional state support comparable to what other peoples receive from their regions.¹⁵ The document says in part: “This is not only justice. This is a question of the survival of Russia and its prosperity.”¹⁶

This means that the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia has formulated the idea of setting up a Russian state and official recognition of Russians as a state-forming nation. Its role in the Russian Marches, at which all sorts of nationalist slogans are loudly proclaimed, is obvious.

¹¹ V.V. Putin, “Russia: The National Question,” available at [<http://rt.com/politics/official-word/migration-national-question-putin-439/>].

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ See: *Novaia natsionalnaia politika Rossii*, LDPR Publishers, Moscow, 2011, p. 38.

¹⁵ See: Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

Russians and the Other Peoples of Russia

Today, the national-political situation in Russia is fairly tense, while the Russian patriotic and nationalist forces are only making things worse. They pose as defenders of the oppressed Russian people who live in extreme social and economic poverty. Other peoples of multinational Russia, for that matter, are in the same material and economic situation.

The money being poured into the North Caucasian republics, including Chechnia, does not reach each and every village, district, city, office, the ordinary people and their families, etc. Corruption has survived everything that has been said and written about corruption schemes in Moscow; it makes the top crust of the Russian bureaucracy and the local political and economic ethnic elites rich.

What are called “ethnic clashes” are, in fact, outcrops of economic and social problems of a vast social stratum caused by the low standard of living, lack of social justice, and the law enforcers, who are never on time. This has become a chronic ailment and a systemic phenomenon.

This is what Vladimir Putin had in mind when he wrote: “Systemic problems in society are often expressed in the form of ethnic tension. We should always keep in mind that there is a direct correlation between unresolved socioeconomic problems, flaws in the law enforcement system, government inefficiency, corruption, and ethnically-motivated conflicts. If we look at the history of all the recent ethnic incidents, we will notice this ‘trigger’ in practically all of the cases: Kondopoga, Manezhnaya Square, Sagra. Everywhere we are seeing a keen response to the absence of justice, the lack of responsibility and inaction of certain state representatives, impunity for criminals, and disbelief in equality before the law, the conviction that everything can be bought and there is no truth.”¹⁷

It seems that having diagnosed the illness and identified the causes of ethnic tension in Russia, Putin should have come up with a solution. The article, however, does not offer any clear-cut proposals for improving the situation; the author limited himself to pointing out that in each case the causes of mutual claims should be identified and that mass disturbances and separatism should be prevented; much space is given to the problems of a democratic multi-party system.

Vladimir Putin pays particular attention to the problem of external and internal migration, which not infrequently adds vehemence to ethnic relations inside the country. He concludes that the state migration policy should be improved. Even if illegal migration cannot be eliminated, it should be minimized with the help of the police and migration services.

The author offered certain fairly interesting ideas about legal migration (permanent and temporary): preference should be given to qualified, competent, competitive, and educated people who can easily adjust their behavior to the Russian standards and will easily integrate into Russia.

The adaptation of migrants is a complicated and contradictory phenomenon that calls for adequate legal and civilizational conditions (professional training and language courses among other things) in which migrants of different nationalities will find it easier to integrate into Russian society.

Social disintegration is inevitable in the absence of a well-substantiated nationalities and cultural strategy designed to bring the Russian peoples closer together (with due account of the basic national interests and civilizational development of each of the national groups). This strategy should intercept nationalist, extremist, and separatist manifestations and help formulate human values.

We urgently need a new strategy of nationalities policy in Russia, a country that can bring peoples closer and integrate them on the basis of clearly formulated and shared principles.

¹⁷ V.V. Putin, *op. cit.*

Conclusion

The article "Russia: The National Question" revealed Vladimir Putin's philosophical principles: he is a traditionalist and supporter of Eurasianism. Russia historically formed as a multinational and multiconfessional state; this means that in order to preserve traditions we should avoid standardization or building a state that is only for Russians (Zbigniew Brzezinski has already favored this project).

Putin clearly outlined the role of the Russian nation as the civilizational core of the Russian state. It is the Russian nation that ties together all ethnicities and makes them part of the multinational people of Russia as described in the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

Prime Minister Putin's article is fairly interesting because it raises the most topical issues of the nationalities policy in Russia.

It should be said that there are certain shortcomings: it lacks theoretical substantiation of the problems discussed; some of the propositions are eclectic and are obviously borrowed from different conceptions.

It is, however, a clear description of the official position as laid out in the 1996 Conception of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation. The article responds to burning national questions that require prompt and efficient resolutions.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN UZBEKISTAN IN LIGHT OF SOCIAL SECURITY

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Introduction

Demographic development issues in today's world are undeniably important. The rapid growth of the world's population, shortage of resources, and increase in migration are creating numerous difficulties in affording a dignified

standard and quality of life on the planet. The size of a country's population, its distribution, and its gender-age composition frequently come forward as strategic factors in economic development and the formation of its future parameters.

The demographic situation takes shape during population reproduction, the intensity of which determines the size and gender-age composition of the population, as well as the dynamics of its changes. It is characterized by several demographic indicators that have been prevailing in a particular territory over a specific period of time. The main ones are the birth rate, death rate, migration, marriages, and divorces. As the world becomes globalized, promoting a favorable demographic situation that maintains a balance among the interests of family, society, and the state is very important for the social stability and national security of any country.

Demographic security is the most important component of social security. It reflects the level of the state's protection from demographic threats, that is, from phenomena and trends that could have a negative effect on the country's social stability

and sustainable development. This concept is relatively new. According to several specialists, the demographic crisis in a whole number of countries, particularly industrially developed ones, which in some cases has escalated into a demographic catastrophe, has made it necessary to place demographic security in a separate category on an equal footing with economic, military, social, and other forms of security.¹

This article examines the demographic situation in Uzbekistan from the viewpoint of global demographic development, as well as in the light of the possible risks and threats that might appear with respect to the republic's social security.

¹ See: A.G. Vishnevskiy, G.S. Vitkovskaia, *et al.*, *Migratsiia i bezopasnost v Rossii*, Interdialekt, Moscow, 2000, p. 56.

Optimization of Demographic Growth

Demographic growth is a universal problem. The extreme population growth in some countries and depopulation in others are creating different aspects of demographic security, which is essentially the most important component of social and national security.

Uzbekistan is a state with a growing population. At the beginning of 2012, more than 29 million people lived there. In terms of the size of its demographic potential, Uzbekistan is the third largest state in the CIS after Russia and Ukraine. During the years of independence, the size of the republic's population has increased by more than 8 million people (see Fig. 1).

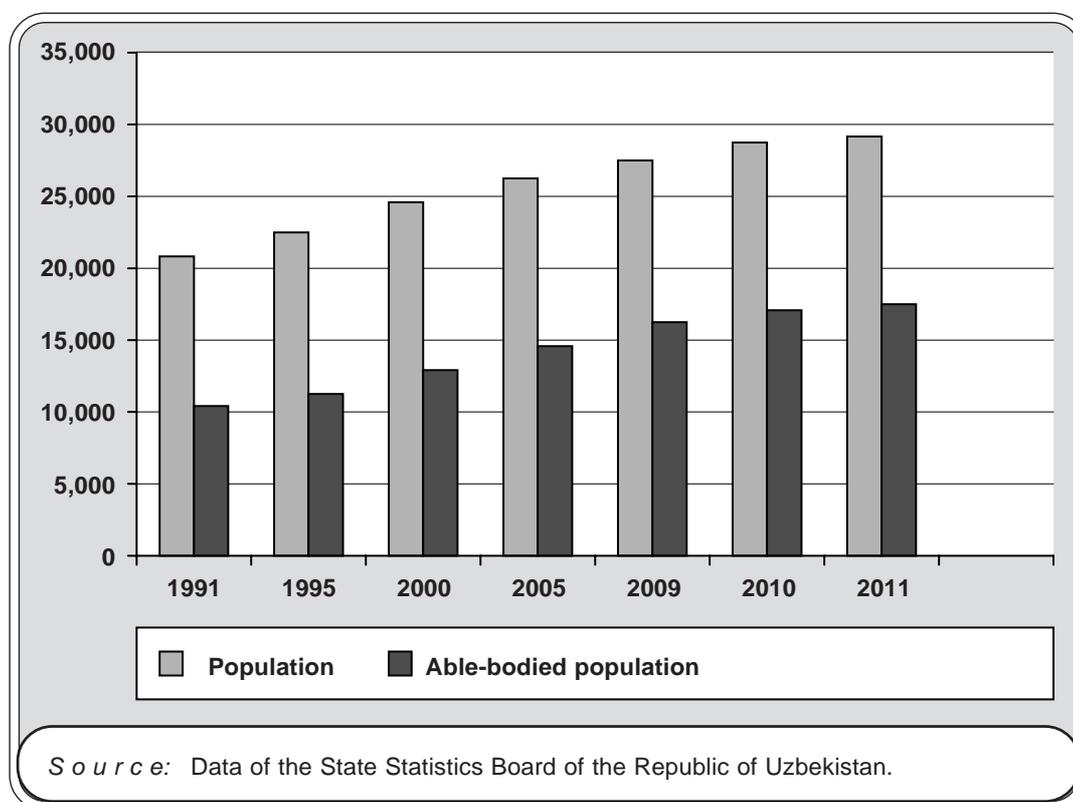
Population growth at this time occurred in waves. In the 1990s, the average annual growth rates dropped to 1.2-1.3% against 2.8-3.0% in the 1980s. At the beginning of the new century, the rates remained at the level of 1.1-1.2%, but in 2004-2009, they rose slightly to 1.6-1.7%. Nevertheless, despite a certain amount of change in the population reproduction regime during these 4-5 years, the general trend toward a slowdown in demographic growth continues. It is characteristic both of urban and rural settlements. According to the estimates, in the past three years, the number of urban residents increased on average by 1.2-1.3% a year and the number of rural residents by 1.7-1.8%.²

The data presented show that at present the republic's demographic situation is characterized by moderate population growth, which is caused by the impact of all the transformations that have occurred in economic and social relations, as well as the change in the reproductive behavior of the population expressed in a decline in the birth rate.

² Calculated according to comparable data for the urban and rural population.

Figure 1

Size of the Permanent Population at the Beginning of the Year
(thou. people)



New Trends in Population Reproduction

The republic's current demographic development is being shaped by a downward trend in the birth rate. This development has experienced several waves and fluctuations mainly determined by the birth rate dynamics. When Uzbekistan acquired its sovereignty, it had a very high birth rate: the crude birth rate amounted to 34.5 per mille, while the aggregate rate was 4.199 children per woman of reproductive age; however, by 2010 these indices had decreased to 22.7 per mille³ and 2.6, respectively. The continuous drop in fertility continued for more than 10 years. According to the State Statistics Board of the Republic of Uzbekistan, between 1991 and 2003, the crude birth rate decreased to 19.7 per mille, while the aggregate rate dropped to 2.4. However, in 2004 it began to rise, which was related to a whole number of factors. This was when women born during the peak fertility years in the mid-1980s reached active childbearing age. A particular role was also played by families who for

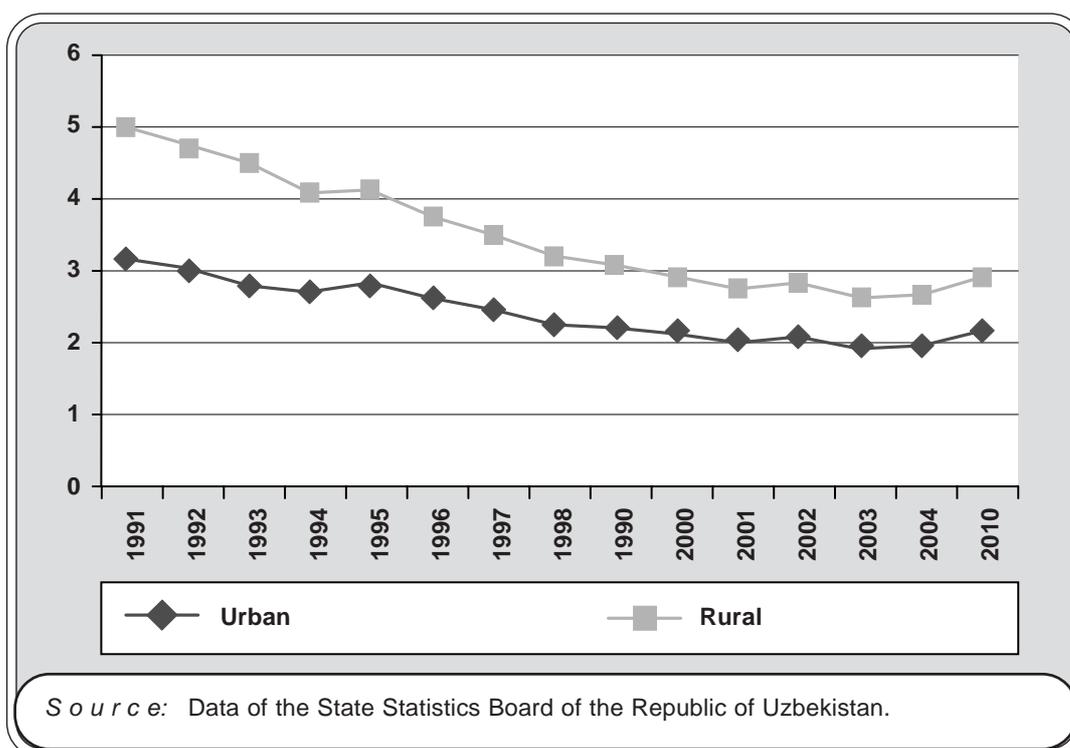
³ See: *Socioeconomic Status of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2010*, State Statistics Board, Tashkent, 2011, p. 18.

economic reasons decided to put off having children in the 1990s. Later people began to feel a new confidence in the future. Altogether this produced an upsurge in the birth rate in 2004-2008. During this time, the crude birth rate rose to 23.6 per mille, while the aggregate rate increased to 2.8 children per woman of reproductive age.

At present, several viewpoints are popular in the country regarding further birth rate dynamics, including its possible rise in the future. In our opinion, due to the changes in the republic itself and keeping in mind the global trends, Uzbekistan will most likely not return to a high rate of fertility. 2008 may go down in history as the year the birth rate peaked, particularly since in recent years, the statistics have been registering a drop in fertility. In 2010, the crude birth rate dropped to 22.7 and in 2011 to 21.5 per mille, while the aggregate rate was 2.4. The birth rate is declining both in cities and in rural areas (see Fig. 2). Even during the peak, only 4.4-4.5% of the total number of newborns accounted for fifth or later children in families compared to 15.3% in 1989.⁴ Women today are giving birth to an average of one child less by the age of 30 than 20 years ago, which shows the stability of the new trends and their possible intensification in the foreseeable future.

Figure 2

**Dynamics of
the Aggregate Birth Rate**



In present-day Uzbekistan, the population's views on the optimal and desirable number of children in the family have significantly changed. According to polls conducted in the mid-1980s, 60% of the respondents expressed the desire to have 5 or 6 children, 22% wanted six or seven, 12% up to ten,

⁴ Calculated according to the data of the State Statistics Board of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

and only 6% wanted no more than four children.⁵ Ten years later, the picture had dramatically changed: 60% of the polled couples planned to have between one and four children, and only a small number of rural women were traditionally oriented toward having a large number of children.⁶ Furthermore, many young women thought two or three children in family was optimal.

These trends in the population's reproductive plans are sufficiently stable. According to the studies carried out by the Izhtimoiy Fikr Republican Center, in 2011, more than 60% of the republic's population (including 68.0% in cities and 58.5% in rural areas) planned to have 2-3-children families and only 2.6% wanted five and more children.⁷ Such family planning trends are realistically reflected in the official statistics. According to the State Statistics Board of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in 2011, for example, most (72.3%) of the newborns were first or second children in the family, while third and later children among mothers accounted for only 27.7%.

The birth rate in the republic is being increasingly regulated within the family. At present, the state is pursuing a policy aimed at bolstering family relations and improving the health of mothers and the upcoming generation oriented toward a fertility model based on rational choice, which is showing realistic results.

In terms of birth rate, present-day Uzbekistan already differs significantly from several countries with which it recently had identical parameters. These are a whole number of countries of Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Southeast and Central Asia, in which the aggregate birth rate is still within the range of 3-4 children per woman of reproductive age.⁸

Uzbekistan in World Demographic Development

Population development in Uzbekistan is following the world demographic patterns, the general trend being from high to low parameters of reproduction. As world experience shows, all the countries of the world go through certain stages of demographic evolution or transition. The first of them is characterized by a high birth and death rate, a high number of large families, and one generation rapidly replacing another. At the second stage, social progress and health achievements cause a severe drop in the population's mortality, however, the birth rate remains high, which leads to an abrupt and uncontrolled increase in the size of the population. Uzbekistan, like most countries of the world, has already passed through these two stages and is currently at the third stage when, owing to the young structure of the population, the crude death rate remains low and is accompanied by accelerated rates of decline in the birth rate. Furthermore, population growth is greatly slowing down, as mentioned above. All the CIS countries of Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus are currently at this stage. At the fourth stage, the death rate is higher than the birth rate and depopulation occurs, that is, an absolute decrease in the size of the population based on the natural trend and rapid demographic aging. Depopulation creates certain risks and threats to those states in terms of demographic and social security, since their need to maintain an able-bodied workforce essentially makes them dependent on other countries. Many European countries, as well as Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic republics, are currently at this stage.

⁵ See: *Human Development Report*, Uzbekistan, 1995, p. 48.

⁶ See: *Ibidem*.

⁷ See: *Semya i nrvastvennost*, Tashkent, 2011.

⁸ See: *State of World Population 2003, Investing in Adolescents' Health and Rights*, UNFPA, 2003, pp. 86-89.

Based on the above description, the third stage of demographic transition is the most favorable for forming an optimal demographic situation. However, the gap between the third and fourth stages is often very narrow. This is confirmed by the rapid shift to the depopulation stage in numerous CIS countries, particularly Moldavia, Georgia, and Armenia, as well as Kazakhstan in Central Asia.

At present, Uzbekistan occupies a middle position in world demographic development in terms of birth rate among countries with high (a crude birth rate of more than 25 per mille) and low (up to 15 per mille) indices.⁹

Family and Family-Marital Relations

In Uzbekistan, the family and children are traditionally the most esteemed things in life. A healthy family is the basis of a future healthy generation and creates the necessary prerequisites for high-quality population reproduction and upbringing of the younger generation. It is no accident that 2012 has been declared the Year of the Family in Uzbekistan at this unstable time when the country has still not recovered from the world financial, economic, and debt crises. Drawing special attention to the Year of the Family is aimed at further strengthening and developing the institution of family as the main fulcrum in society, raising the wellbeing of the family, and providing material and moral support to young families, particularly among the vulnerable strata of the population. Furthermore, the most important task is to create broader opportunities for women and raise the role of the family in bringing up a physically healthy, spiritually mature, and harmoniously developed generation.¹⁰

In keeping with the national mentality, the marriage rate in the republic is very high. Despite the changes going on in the world in types of marriage and the various new trends in family-marital relations, the population of Uzbekistan prefers to live in officially registered marriages, which are frequently underpinned by religious rituals (“nikokh”). According to the sociological polls conducted in 2010 by the Institute of Social Studies under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 90% of the family members polled are currently in an officially registered marriage, 0.6% are in a civil marriage, 2% are divorced, and 5% are widowed.¹¹ According to the State Statistics Board of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in 2000-2010, 2,283,400 marriages were registered, that is, the total number of newly-weds during this time topped 4.5 million people. Furthermore, the number of registered marriages increased 1.7-fold, the number of divorces dropped 10%, and the divorce rate decreased from 0.8 to 0.6 per mille. This is one of the lowest indices in the world.

Uzbekistan’s high marriage rate accompanied by a low divorce rate favorably distinguishes it from most countries of the world. Maintaining the most optimal family-marital relations has led to achieving and preserving commendable patterns of family life and an overall healthier way of life for young people. This is shown by the fact that young people consume much less alcohol and use fewer drugs in the republic, while the HIV/AIDS morbidity level is one of the lowest in the world.¹²

⁹ See: *World Population Data Sheet*, Population Reference Bureau, 2010.

¹⁰ See: *Narodnoe slovo*, 20 January, 2010.

¹¹ See: T. Akhmedov, B. Abdullaev, D. Zakirov, “Sotsialno-ekonomicheskie aspekty razvitiia semey v Uzbekistane,” in: *Demograficheskoe razvitiie Respubliki Uzbekistan za gody nezavisimosti*, Tashkent, 2011, p. 109.

¹² See: *World Population Data Sheet*, 2010.

Young People are Marrying at an Older Age

In recent years, the average age of first time brides and grooms in Uzbekistan has been getting older. According to the State Statistics Board of the Republic of Uzbekistan, between 2000 and 2010 alone it rose among men from 24.2 to 26.5 and among women from 21.4 to 22.4 years. These dynamics are characteristic of many countries of the contemporary world. For example, in Russia over the past 30 years, the average age for marrying increased from 26.3 to 29.3 in men and from 24.3 to 26.6 in women.¹³ In Germany over the past fifteen years, it has increased by 5.4 years among men and reached 36.9 and by 5.0 years among women; German women on average get married at the age of 33.8.¹⁴

A comparative analysis shows that the population of Uzbekistan usually marries at a younger age than in most other countries of the world. At the same time, despite the impact of many new trends and young people choosing to marry at a slightly older age, the average age at which women give birth to their first child is decreasing, from 23.3 in 2000 to 22.6 in 2010. However, globalization and free development are promoting increasing integration of the republic's young people into world processes (study and internships abroad, international forms of business, tourist and business trips, and so on), so it stands to reason that they are oriented to a certain extent toward Western standards. Based on this, it can be expected that couples in Uzbekistan will also choose to marry at an older age, thus prompting a further (and perhaps even more significant) increase in the average marrying age.

Improvement in the Age Composition of the Population

The new trends in population reproduction are having a favorable qualitative effect on the age composition of the population. This is particularly noticeable in the dynamics of population correlation in the main age groups (see Fig. 3). The percentage of able-bodied contingents in the total number of residents is increasing (from 49.1% in 1991 to 60.3% today), while the share of children and adolescents under 16 is decreasing from 43.1% to 32.4%, respectively.¹⁵

The shifts in age composition of the population not only have demographic, but also economic consequences that are directly influencing both the qualitative population indices and the quality of life. They primarily promote an increase in the republic's labor potential (see Fig. 1). The size of the working population during these years has greatly surpassed the increase in the total population size, which is a real prerequisite for accelerating economic growth. At the same time, the demographic load on the working population is decreasing. According to the estimates, between 1991 and 2010, it dropped from 1,036 to 652 people per mille of the working population, that is, 1.6-fold.

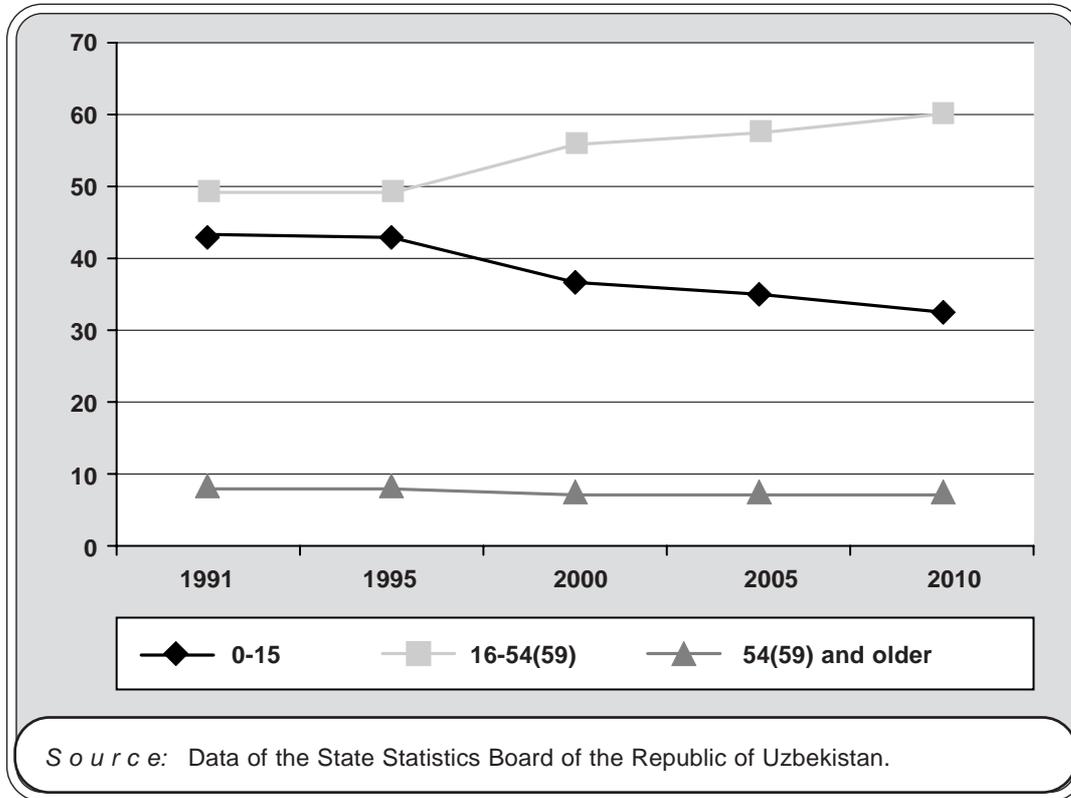
¹³ See: *Naselenie Rossii 2009*, Higher School of Economics Publishers, Moscow, 2011, p. 67.

¹⁴ See: V. Tyshkevich, *Osnovnye napravleniia issledovaniia semeynogo domokhoziaystva v sovremennoy sotsialnoy rynochnoy ekonomike na primere Germanii*, MAKSPress, Moscow, 2009, p. 41.

¹⁵ See: *Demographic Yearbook of Uzbekistan, 2003*, Statistics Collection, State Statistics Board of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 2004, p. 38; *Data of the State Statistics Board of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2009*.

Figure 3

Age Composition of the Population
(%)



As world experience shows, such shifts in the age composition of the population give countries additional opportunities to invest in the younger generations. On the whole throughout the country, this could promote an acceleration in economic growth and increase in prosperity, and provide some families with resources for investing in their children. To a certain extent, this is also confirmed by Uzbekistan's experience, where along with an improvement in the demographic situation, economic development has been outstripping population growth for more than 10 years now. In 2010, for example, the GDP rose by 8.5%, while the population only grew by 1.6%. Due to the increase in production volumes, the development of the service sphere, as well as the decrease in demographic load, incomes and the standard of living are rising. In 1990, it was the other way around: population growth was 4.2-fold higher than economic growth.

As a rule, a drop in the birth rate is inevitably accompanied by demographic aging, and this has numerous negative sociodemographic consequences. In Uzbekistan, aging processes are occurring almost imperceptibly. In 2010, people 65 years and older accounted for only 5% of the population, while in other countries of the world as a whole, they accounted for 8%, in Western Europe for 18%, and in Russia and North America for 13-14%.¹⁶

¹⁶ See: *World Population Data Sheet*, 2010.

In Uzbekistan, demographic aging processes are not yet arousing serious concern. Nevertheless, they are already occurring and are being manifested in the gradual decrease in the number of children and adolescents in the age composition of the population (aging from below). Aging of the population is presenting a significant threat to the country since it could lead to a decrease in the working population with all the ensuing consequences. According to specialists, demographic aging is no less of a threat than a high birth rate and rapid population growth. Based on this, a drop in the growth rate of the working population expected in the near future (from 2.7-2.8% today to 0.8-0.9%) presents a certain threat to the republic's social security. This will happen as the result of the sufficiently extended drop in the birth rate in the 1990s. According to estimates, the intensiveness of generation replacement, that is, the ratio of the number of young people reaching working age to the number of people reaching retirement, will significantly drop in the period under forecast: from 3.9:1 today to 1.7:1 in 2020.

According to the international classification system, at present Uzbekistan has a young population. The average age of the country's residents is 25. On the whole, the current age composition shows the potential for favorable development of the demographic situation and ensures the republic's demographic security in the future.

Drop in the Death Rate of the Population and Increase in Life Expectancy

A relatively low death rate is characteristic of Uzbekistan, which is due to the specifics of the population's age composition and the favorable ratio of young to old people. For example, in Uzbekistan, the percentage of the population older than working age with relatively high mortality amounts to only 7.3%, while in Russia, Ukraine, and the West European countries, it is more than 20%. Standardized death rate coefficients, that is, calculated without the influence of the age composition, show that in Uzbekistan, the death rate did not significantly differ from other Central Asian republics and many countries in the CIS. Nevertheless, rather noticeable quantitative and qualitative changes are going on in these processes. On the whole, they can be assessed as positive. There is drop in the death rate in all the childhood, adolescent, and youth age groups and in essentially all the other age groups of the population.

In the first years of independent development, the death rate of the republic's population was formed under the relatively strong impact of the difficulties of the transition period. However, in the second half of the 1990s and subsequent years, a clear trend toward a drop in the death rate was seen, which had an impact on the dynamics of both the absolute and relative indices. The crude death rate compared to 1991 dropped from 6.2 per mille¹⁷ to 4.9 per mille.¹⁸ At present, in terms of both the crude death rate and individual coefficients, Uzbekistan is one of the highest ranking countries in the world. In the past 10 years, the number of deaths in Uzbekistan has decreased by almost 10%. The number of annual deaths is 4.0-4.2 times lower than the number of births (see Fig. 4).

The infant mortality situation has significantly improved. According to the national calculation method, its level dropped from 35.1 per mille in 1990 to 10.8 per mille in 2010,¹⁹ i.e. by almost

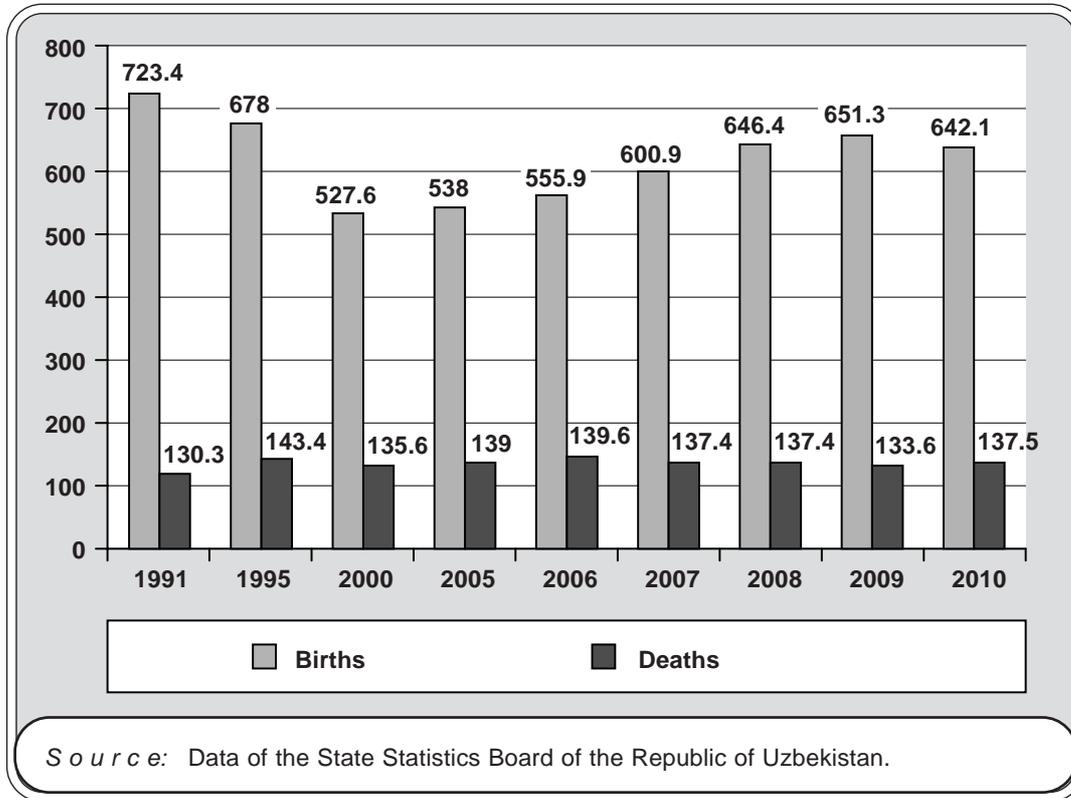
¹⁷ See: *Demographic Yearbook of Uzbekistan 1991-2003*, Statistics Collection, Uzbekiston, Tashkent, 2004, p. 109.

¹⁸ See: *Socioeconomic Status of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2010*, State Statistics Board, Tashkent, 2011, p. 18.

¹⁹ See: *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Figure 4

Ratio of Births to Deaths
(thou. people)



3.5-fold. At present, this is the lowest index throughout the Central Asian region. However, according to international reporting standards, the methodology of which significantly differs from the one used in the republic, the infant mortality rate in Uzbekistan looks less favorable, particularly compared to the West European countries. This means that despite the significant positive shifts, the infant mortality rate remains high. The comparative data presented show there is room for improving this index. In the most developed countries of the world, infant mortality is much lower—in the Scandinavian countries it amounts to 4-5 per mille and in Japan to only 3 per mille.²⁰

At present, Uzbekistan has one of the most favorable maternal mortality rates calculated according to international standards. On the whole throughout the world, it amounts to 400 cases per 100,000 live births, while in the republic it is 24. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, for example, the maternal mortality rate is much higher than in Uzbekistan.²¹

The drop in death rate in the republic is due to the fact that during reform of the economy, great attention has been given to the social development, support, and protection of the vulnerable strata of the population. The death rate is not only an indicator of the demographic situation, it is a good reflec-

²⁰ See: *World Population Data Sheet*, 2004.

²¹ See: *World Mortality*, 2009. United Nation, Economic and Social Affairs, 2009; *State of World Population in 2011*, UNFPA, 2011, p. 129.

tion of the socioeconomic development of the state and state of health of its citizens. Based on this, questions of health, reproductive health, drop in the death rate, and increase in average life expectancy are the main priorities of the republic's social policy and are constantly monitored by government bodies and public health institutions.

The acceleration in economic growth and drop in the death rate ensure an increase in the average life expectancy of men and women. According to the State Statistics Board of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in 1990 it reached 69.2 years²²; during the republic's independence, it has significantly increased. In 2010, it was 72.9, whereby 70.6 for men and 75.1 for women.²³ The decrease in the gender gap in average life expectancy from 5.4 to 4.5 years is also a positive development. This is a very important trend since men throughout the world have a shorter life span than women. In Russia, for example, the gender gap in life expectancy is about 14 years.²⁴

So during the past twenty years, there have been sufficiently perceptible positive changes in the republic's demographic situation that are directly influencing both the qualitative population indices and the quality of life. From the viewpoint of social and national security, the current demographic situation does not present any particular threats, it is sufficiently stable and is developing positively. The size of the population, its gender-age composition, the ratio of deaths to births, the current population reproduction regime, and the new trends in its changes show Uzbekistan's powerful demographic potential and the relatively good opportunities for its development in the future.

Nevertheless, the country needs to focus on promoting a further decrease in the death rate indices and increase in average life expectancy. This was a main priority envisaged in the Action Program adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo to be implemented nationwide.

Decrease in the Migration Outflow of the Population beyond the Republic

From the viewpoint of social security, the current migration situation in Uzbekistan is relatively stable. The peak of migration outflow from the country has long passed; it came at the turn of the 1990s. In subsequent periods, the republic experienced several migration waves (see Fig. 5).

They were mainly determined by ethnic migration of the population (Russians, Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, Jews, Germans, and others) to their historical homeland. In recent years, as a result of implementing a state policy of social and political consent in society and prevention of ethnic conflicts, the outflow of the population began to consistently drop and in 2010 amounted to only 39,600 people.²⁵ This means that at present emigration processes have reached the parameters that were characteristic of the republic 25-30 years ago.

²² See: *Human Development Report. Uzbekistan—2005*, UNDR, Center for Economic Research, Tashkent, 2005, p. 105.

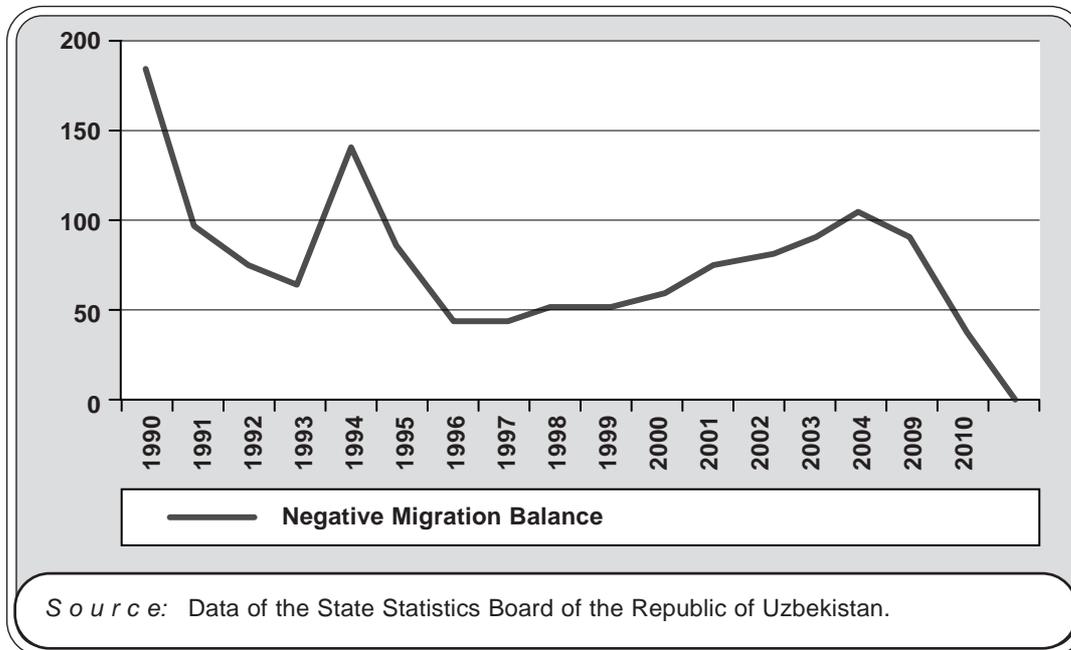
²³ See: *Narodnoe slovo*, 13 December, 2011.

²⁴ See: *Naselenie Rossii 2009*, p. 183.

²⁵ See: *Socioeconomic Status of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2010*, p. 19.

Figure 5

**Migration Outflow of the Population
from the Republic of Uzbekistan**



Interstate Migration of the Workforce as a Risk and Threat Factor for Demographic and Social Security

At present, labor migration of the population has acquired rather significant proportions in Uzbekistan. There is an increasing number of families in the republic in which the young generation of men periodically leave the republic to earn a living.

Labor migration should expediently be viewed from both positive and negative perspectives. On the one hand, it has great economic significance for Uzbekistan. Most important, it reduces tension in the local labor markets, particularly in densely populated regions, and helps to ease unemployment. The remittances of labor migrants are also extremely important. According to the estimates, the current volume of remittances into the republic, keeping in mind official and unofficial sources, is no less than three billion dollars.

On the other hand, labor migration has negative consequences.

It drains the republic's labor market of its young workers. Many of these people have higher and secondary special education, as well as professional skills that are lost during migration, since migrants in the host countries are mainly hired for the least qualified jobs. The negative consequences in the social and demographic respect are just as important. Mainly young and middle-aged people partici-

pate in migration. Most of the migrants have families. The long absence of one or several members of the family undermines the established family relations. According to poll data, many migrants rarely communicate with their families left at home, and every fourth noted that long separation from the family creates family problems, destroying the formerly good relations in the family. Mass labor migration has a negative effect on the family composition of the population, to a certain extent on the reproduction regime, as well as on the state of health of the migrants.

Studies show that mass labor migration of the population from the republic can continue for a while longer. In these conditions, it is important to protect its labor potential quantitatively and qualitatively. Achieving more efficient international cooperation could promote these aims. Both the sending and receiving countries would do well to draw up strategies that make it easier and more dignified to work abroad and envisage the elaboration of new approaches to organized labor migration.

In current conditions, labor migration has acquired global dimensions, which requires an increase in the attention of the administration bodies in each country to this important social and demographic problem. According to U.N. experts, in order to maximize the benefits and reduce the risks of population migration, countries should:

- view migration as a development tool and an important source of capital;
- recognize migration as an essential and inevitable component of the economic and social life of every state;
- ensure orderly and properly managed migration.²⁶

Conclusion

As the studies show, the current demographic situation in Uzbekistan is quite stable and positive. Essentially all the quantitative development indices are very favorable. The size of the population, its gender-age composition, the births to deaths ratio, and the current population reproduction regime show Uzbekistan's powerful demographic potential and its development opportunities in the future. Improvement of the demographic situation has had a direct impact on the qualitative aspects of the population's development. An increase in the labor potential and decrease in demographic load on the working population are real prerequisites for accelerating economic growth, reproducing healthy and harmoniously developed generations, and raising the standard and quality of life of the population.

However, despite the doubtless positive shifts in the economic and demographic situation in Uzbekistan, globalization and accelerated modernization of the national economy are making the qualitative aspects of demographic development more important. The quality of school education, professional education of young people, intellectualization of labor potential, and the quality of life are becoming increasing priorities. There are certain problems in public health, reproductive health, and family planning. A further decrease should be promoted in infant and child mortality. More workers are going abroad to earn a living.

Based on the need to maintain demographic security, which directly influences the state of the country's social and national security, it is expedient to focus greater attention on further improvement of the demographic situation, carry out permanent monitoring of the demographic processes,

²⁶ See: *State of World Population in 2011*, UNFPA, 2011, p. 79.

and, keeping in mind global problems, ensure timely identification of the threats and risks that might lead to negative consequences for the republic. Great efforts are also required to achieve higher goals in demographics ensuring from the Millennium Development Goals envisaged by the U.N.

MANAGING DIFFERENCES IN THE MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITIES OF SOUTH KAZAKHSTAN¹

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Introduction

Kazakhstan is frequently looked upon as a country that has succeeded in harmonizing an extremely ethnically and confessionally diverse social environment. There are indeed reasons for such inferences, one in particular being the absence of open mass opposition among different groups of the population in the Republic of Kazakhstan. However, this in no way means that the country's social development is entirely free of collisions or inter-group tension. Such conflict is apt to erupt whenever the government and society fail to react on time to the challenges arising in our ever complicated social world.

In turn, the shortcomings of the local self-government system tend to sap faith in the fairness of government institutions and the invincibility of constitutional principles. As a result, ethnic mobilization is becoming an effective way to form and uphold particular group interests. So it stands to reason that the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan is increasingly faced with the task of shifting the focus of its attention from ceremonial issues to everyday relations among the people.

The aim of this article is to analyze the integration and disintegration of rural communities in which different ethnic groups reside and live side-

¹ The field studies used in this article were conducted within the framework of the Norwegian Institute of International Studies (NUPI) in 2009-2011.

by-side in the same territorial and social environment of South Kazakhstan, as well as ways for the government and society to optimize their relations.

In order to achieve this aim, the following research tasks must be solved:

1. Revealing how public requests form with respect to realizing specific ethnocultural rights of the residents of multiethnic rural settlements.
2. Defining the factors that have the greatest influence on types of identity (general civil, local, and others) that predomi-

nate in the minds of the region's residents.

3. Identifying the role of the local power bodies in managing differences by analyzing several conflict situations.
4. Drawing up recommendations for optimizing existing mechanisms and raising the effectiveness of their impact on the situation.

We focused on the relations between three South Kazakhstan communities—Uzbek, Turkish (Ahiska Turks), and Kurdish—and the local power bodies.

Target and Methods of Study

The Uzbek community. The size of the Uzbek population of the South Kazakhstan Region (SKR) reaches 420,000 people (as of the beginning of 2010, it amounted to around 470,000 for the country as a whole). Furthermore, it should be noted that rural residents predominate among the Uzbek population of the SKR.

Outside the SKR, a large number of Uzbeks live in the suburban settlements and towns of the Zhambyl Region. Most Uzbeks live in the Sayram District (65%), the cities of Turkestan (45%), Kentau (25%), and Chimkent (15%), as well as in the Tole Bi (14%), Tulkubass (4%), Kazygurt (5%), Saryagash (4%), Maktaaral (4%), and Sozak (4%) districts.

A large number of Uzbeks live compactly in four population settlements of the Sayram District—the villages of Sayram, Karabulak, Mankent, and Karamurt. The size of the population in each of these villages comprises several tens of thousand people, and in the first two, more than 40,000, whereby the overwhelming majority of residents are Uzbeks (95% and 99%, respectively). This has given rise to a specific sociocultural environment based on traditional ways of Uzbek everyday life.

At the same time, it cannot be said that the population of these villages is entirely isolated from the other residents of the region. For example, 70% of the residents of Sayram, which is situated 10 km to the east of Chimkent, work in the city. The village of Karabulak, which is surrounded by several auls with a predominantly Kazakh population, is the infrastructural center, if you will, of the northern part of the Sayram District; it boasts the largest bazaar, numerous tea-houses, and so on.

So there are areas of interception and interaction among the residents of different ethnic groups in these villages, which proved to be the reason for the minor confrontations that occurred in 2007-2009; in some cases, the authorities had to interfere.

In light of the above, these two villages were chosen as the main target of this study; three focus groups and seven expert interviews were held with representatives of the rural district administration, deputies of the municipal and regional maslikhats (local representative power bodies), teachers, journalists, and public activists.

The Turkish community (Meskhetian Turks or Ahiska Turks). According to expert assessments, approximately 170,000 Meskhetian Turks currently live in Kazakhstan; it is difficult to present more precise data, since these people are registered under different categories (Turks, Meskhetian Turks, and Azeris). There are around 55,000 Turks in the South Kazakhstan Region, who live predominantly in rural areas. Turks account for 5% of the population of Chimkent; the same figure applies to the Tole Bi, Tulkubass, and Sayram districts. Turks also comprise 1.5% of the residents of the Ordabasy District.

The largest number of Turks can be found in the village of Karasu (around 50% of the entire population) and the rural district of Zhuldyz (around 30%) of the Sayram District; focus groups were also held in these population settlements. Since Zhuldyz adjoins Chimkent, the social context of the life of its population is very different from life in the village of Karasu. Focus groups were held among population categories of different genders, age, level of education, and prosperity. Moreover, six expert interviews were held with employees of the district akimiat, white-collar workers, businessmen, and activists of ethnocultural associations.

The Kurdish community. There are approximately 35,000 Kurds in the South Kazakhstan Region; they themselves believe their numbers to be higher. They justify this deduction by the fact that some Kurds are registered as Azeris or Turks.

Most of the Kurds live in the Tole Bi, Sayram, and Baydibek districts of the South Kazakhstan Region, as well as in the suburbs of Chimkent.

The largest number of Kurds (in terms of percent) live in the rural part of Kazygurt in the Tole Bi District, where their numbers amount to around 3,000. In the fall of 2007, Kurd pogroms took place in Maiatas, one of the villages in this rural neighborhood. This was the reason for holding one of the focus groups there; another study was carried out in the Kolkent neighborhood of the Sayram District where several authoritative Kurds of the older generation live, one of whom heads the council of aksakals at the regional Kurd ethnocultural center.

A total of two focus groups and five expert interviews were held in different villages with public activists, businessmen, and pensioners.

Several expert interviews were also held with the head of the department of internal policy of the district branch of the Nur Otan party, an employee of the department of internal policy of the city administration, the secretary of the district Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, and an employee of the district sociopolitical newspaper *Yuzhny Kazakhstan*. During the interviews, questions were raised relating to the sociopolitical situation in the region.

In addition to this, an analysis of the way the akimiats function in the rural neighborhoods of Sayram, Karatube and Zhuldyz of the Sayram District and several case-studies of some actual and prevented conflicts were carried out.

Problems of Meeting Specific Ethnocultural Needs

The Uzbek population of Kazakhstan often brings up problems relating to the administrative measures employed by the local authorities aimed at ubiquitous introduction of the Kazakh language. Art 21 of the Law on Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan of 11 July, 1997 says: "Whenever necessary, the texts of visual information may also be given in other languages;" however, such information is given only in the Kazakh language. Moreover, in villages where most of the population is Uzbek, the names of streets are written only in Kazakh and Russian.

This “injustice” is substantiated by the fact that the text of this law does not give any clear instructions on how to use languages when writing the names of streets. At one time, there were fervent disputes about this, but a solution that suited everyone was never found. Today, a situation has developed in the country where any attempt to revive the discussion on the use of language is interpreted as disloyalty to the authorities.

It is the same in the sphere where the Kazakh language is exclusively used, i.e. the paperwork of all budget-supported organizations, including schools and hospitals. The Uzbek participants in all the focus groups noted that this creates significant difficulties in everyday life.

Many of these statements came from the residents of Sayram included in the study. This, evidently, is related to the fact that compared with other Uzbek villages, more people with higher education who are employees of city and district organizations (located beyond their villages) live there. However, here too topics related to language are only discussed at private meetings among closely acquainted people.

As for Karabulak, its population is more oriented toward everyday rural concerns. As one of the participants of the focus group said, the life of most people in this village goes no further than the fields, the bazaar, the school, and the hospital.

The only way to raise questions concerning the use of a particular language is for a representative of the population, prepared in advance, to present a speech at a rural gathering (held once a year in the presence of the district and village akim) or at some assembly in which the authorities participate. This representative is usually a respected person or pensioner who used to hold a high position in the village or district. This choice is explained by the fact that someone who has retired is no longer involved in current labor-management or power relations. Even if the powers that be do not like his speech, he will not suffer any negative consequences.

In the last year, there have been two cases of such speeches by aksakals (one each in Karabulak and in Sayram) who asked their district akims to expand the sphere of use of the Uzbek language in paperwork within the villages. In both cases, the aksakals were told that their requests were invalid; whereby the akims referred to the instructions set forth in the Law on Languages.

Moreover, the akim of Karabulak added that it was a very dangerous precedent; if these requests from Uzbeks were granted, the representatives of the other 56 nationalities living in the district could request the same.

The arguments of the regional authorities are entirely unsound since only Uzbeks form settlements with a concentrated monoethnic population (more than 90%) in the district. Nevertheless, the officials are constantly driving it home to the Uzbeks that they, just like the other peoples living in the district (who amount to a mere handful), are a national minority.

Activists of the Uzbek community are very well aware of the existing situation; this is apparently why they do not raise the topic of the use of languages during regular meetings between the village akim and representatives of smaller territorial divisions (makhallas or precincts). Each such community comprises approximately 5,000 people (1,200 farmsteads); it has its own *bey* (usually an honored senior) who passes all the requests of the local residents concerning their daily needs on to the village akim.

In recent years, questions relating to the constricted sphere for using the Uzbek language and the inconveniences this entails for the population have never been a topic of discussion at the meetings of akimiat councils; nor are these problems mentioned in any of the outgoing documents sent to a particular government body. This may be because the residents understand that it is impossible to resolve such questions at the level of the akimiat.

On the other hand, there is an extensive network of organizations in the region, as throughout the country, that is especially oriented toward resolving problems precisely in this sphere. Each vil-

lage has an Uzbek ethnocultural center, all the village centers are joined under the district Uzbek ethnocultural center, and all the district centers under the regional center, the chairman of which is a member of the small Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan of the South Kazakhstan Region created in 1989.

There is also a republican organization called the Dostlik (Friendship) Association. Its chairman (at the time this study was conducted) is R. Khalmuradov, a member of the Majilis (Parliament) of the Republic of Kazakhstan according to the quota from the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan.

It is these organizations that bring the specific interests of Uzbeks to the attention of the authorities.

Ever since Kazakhstan gained its independence, the regional ethnocultural center and the Dostlik Association, with the mediation of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan and in some cases the representatives of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, have been collaborating with the regional and republic authorities to improve the mechanism for granting the specific ethnocultural requests of the Uzbek population.

Certain achievements have been made in this collaboration; for example, in particular, almost 90,000 schoolchildren in South Kazakhstan study in Uzbek, textbooks are published in Uzbek, regional and district newspapers come out in Uzbek, and some radio and television channels broadcast in Uzbek. Moreover, in 2003, the only regional Uzbek drama theater in Kazakhstan opened. It should be noted that all of these undertakings are funded by the state.

In 2009, graduates from Uzbek schools were allowed to take the common national test when applying for university on the same basis as everyone else, which students can take in either Kazakh or Russian (in the past, they had to first take a comprehensive test in Uzbek, which made getting into higher educational institutions throughout the republic more difficult).

In January 2012, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan issued a new order, according to which all graduates from schools where lessons are taught in Uzbek, Uyghur, or Tajik must mandatorily (and not voluntarily, as before) pass the common national test in Kazakh and in Russian in order to be admitted to a higher educational institution.

This innovation took the Uzbek community by surprise, since most of the graduates were studying to take the comprehensive test, which calls for one mandatory subject less. It is expected that a much lower number of students will be admitted to higher educational institutions in 2012 on the basis of the common national test. This is because, without special preparation, it is very difficult to successfully pass tests in a language you have not studied in.

Against this background, problems relating to the fact that the Uzbek language is not used in street names, visual information, and paperwork (in villages with a predominant Uzbek population) seem trivial, although villagers face them every day. It is precisely these problems that create difficulties in the relations between the Uzbek population and the authorities; officials berate the complainers for showing a lack of gratitude toward the state, which has already done so much for them. Government representatives justify their position by saying that it is the indulgence and leniency of the state and not its obligations to a specific group of citizens that have created all the conditions for meeting ethnocultural needs in Kazakhstan. As a result, the Uzbeks feel as though they are living in a "foreign" country, where their status depends on how the country's leaders relate to them.

The representatives of Turkish and Kurdish communities say that they do not experience any particular difficulties in getting their ethnocultural needs met. Due to their small numbers and dispersion, they do not try to open special schools where lessons are taught only in Turkish or Kurdish. Furthermore, in some schools extracurricular lessons are given in Turkish (the village of Karasu) and

Kurdish (the village of Kazygurt). These lessons fall within the overall curriculum funded by the state and school directors have the right to schedule them as they see fit.

Moreover, the republican ethnocultural centers fund the publication of Turkish and Kurdish newspapers at the republican level; the resources needed come from sponsors from the diaspora.

Turks and Kurds do not feel alienated from the informational-cultural environment, since they can watch television programs broadcast by satellite in their native language.

It can be said that today questions relating to the specific ethnocultural rights of individual minorities are raised only by the population of large Uzbek villages, whereby special institutions (ethnocultural centers, branches of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan) capable of formulating particular demands at the local level (district, village) are essentially not used.

This situation can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, the local population does not believe in the effectiveness of the above-mentioned organizations and prefers to address the district leaders directly. While on the other hand, people believe that these special institutions have already accomplished a lot (as already mentioned above, schoolchildren study free in Uzbek, some programs are broadcast, separate newspapers are published, and a theater functions in Uzbek) and perceive them as organizations responsible for the cultural sphere (holding folklore celebrations, festivals, and so on). As for everyday matters, they are mostly discussed directly with the executive power bodies at the district level.

For what it is worth, speeches given at the annual village gatherings held in the presence of the district akim are not an effective way to make demands. At best, the akim, after listening to them, might promise to deal with them, but he usually regards such statements as misunderstanding by the Uzbek population of the special features of the country's policy. Moreover, he is not competent to resolve many of the issues brought up.

So, it can be concluded that there is no collaboration between the population and local authorities today in South Kazakhstan. The matter primarily concerns questions relating to granting specific cultural requests of certain groups of the population.

Identity: General Civil or Ethnic?

Creating equal opportunities for all residents when meeting their everyday needs and realizing their civil rights is an equally important factor influencing the social situation in multiethnic villages.

- First, all residents should feel confident that their ethnic origin will not influence the government's attitude toward them and make it difficult to realize the universal social rights envisaged by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- Second, all citizens should feel they have equal opportunities for realizing their capabilities in any sphere of activity, including as members of the state power bodies, especially at the local level.

Only in this case will ideas related to nationwide and other forms of supra-ethnic identity (neighborhood, regional) dominate over narrower solidarities (ethnic, clan, group, and so on).

It can be noted that on the whole the residents of the villages and neighborhoods studied are satisfied with their own social and legal status and nature of their relations with the lower power bodies, which makes it possible for them to largely realize their main requests without conflict.

Nevertheless, in some cases the basic principle of equality of rights and opportunities is consistently ignored.

In particular, the participants of the focus group in Sayram noted cases when government representatives made it understood that they were primarily Uzbeks and so should seek protection of their rights in Uzbekistan. This argument was given in reply to an address by a resident of the village of Sayram to the law-enforcement bodies of Chimkent. Another example: at an army recruitment office in the village of Sayram, a draftee was told to go and serve as a street-sweeper in Uzbekistan.

What is more, the participants in different focus groups emphasized that compared to Soviet times, their status had declined.

Although the above-mentioned incidents are isolated, they show how the predominantly Kazakh power bodies perceive the non-Kazakh population. For example, a prosecutor declared in public that he could not understand why there were so many Uzbeks living in Kazakhstan; higher education professors, representatives of the power bodies, and young rural people also make similar statements. No matter how widespread these sentiments may be, they nevertheless affect all strata of the population.

In particular, in 2007-2009, mass fights took place between Kazakh and Uzbek young people in the villages of Sayram and Karabulak. They were instigated by some of the Kazakhs resenting that Uzbeks live too well in Kazakhstan, particularly against the background of the recent repatriates (oralmans) who have found it difficult to integrate back into the country's life. Such moods are having a strong impact on how Uzbeks living in South Kazakhstan feel about themselves.

Another important aspect lies in the special features of regional personnel policy at the local level and its perception by different categories of the population. Many of the Turks and Kurds who participated in the focus groups talked about how their communities were insufficiently represented in the power bodies.

The situation is slightly better among the Uzbeks. For example, one Uzbek is a member of parliament, two work in the regional maslikhat (the legislative power body), and a few are members of the district power bodies; one representative of this nationality is deputy akim of the Sayram District. However, Uzbeks think that this is not enough.

The situation is different for the Turks and Kurds. For example, one Turk is employed at the district education department of the Sayram District, and one is the deputy akim of the rural neighborhood (in the same district); two Kurds work as deputy directors in schools (in the Tole Bi and Baydibek districts). This state of affairs does not suit the Kurds, particularly since in Soviet times many of them worked as chairmen of Soviet state farms, heads of economic organizations, or served in the law-enforcement agencies, and so on.

The Turks, in turn, express their discontent, saying, "We are not allowed higher than a certain level. So here we sit... Not everything depends on nationality. Some people are respected regardless of their nationality, but still the titular groups have many more opportunities. Turks can be normal executives and partners behind the scenes, but not directors. Turks must work twice as hard as Kazakhs to get anywhere."

Similar moods can also be found among the Uzbeks, since Kazakhs prevail in all positions in the sphere of state control (even in villages where Uzbeks form the absolute majority). For example, Kazakhs predominate in the police precincts of the villages of Sayram, Karabulak, and Karatube; frequently they are not even local residents, but come to work on a rotational basis from other settlements. There are no Uzbeks at all among the employees of the tax police, only Kazakhs.

On the one hand, there are no visible obstacles for non-Kazakh people to occupy certain posts. However, the appointment procedure is not transparent, which leads to favoritism when appointing

people to specific positions. If, however, appointments require general elections or must be underpinned by citizen support (the election of maslikhat deputies and village akims), the level of ethnic diversity is much higher.

On the other hand, people often perceive this appointment procedure as evidence that the authorities do not trust them; it raises the significance of general civil categories of identity and increases the role of local forms of solidarity and loyalty. For example, the Turks who participated in the focus groups declared frankly that they regard government representatives from the Turkish community as “their own” and expected special treatment from them. And this was frequently the case, whereby the Turkish community used this to compensate for the otherwise insufficient attention they were shown by the authorities. If a Turk acted in keeping with civil servant ethics and did not give special treatment to his own people, he was criticized; this kind of reaction has undermined the principle of fairness of the power bodies, which was fragile anyway.

The Kurds also mentioned similar things; the matter particularly concerns the residents of the village of Maiatas who, without their own government representatives, achieved protection from the local leadership by means of bribes. They simply did not see another way to protect their interests in conditions of a biased government and non-transparent administrative decisions; however, in many cases (allotting land plots and in controversial and conflict situations) it was impossible to manage without the support of the law-enforcement agencies. It should be noted that the village residents hid the fact they were giving bribes, but this came to the surface during conversations and interviews with their neighbors and government representatives.

It can be said that in the rural areas of South Kazakhstan, many residents do not believe the authorities are capable of fairly taking account of and meeting their interests and requests. This has given rise to the use of illegal and illegitimate social resources in everyday practice: ethnic, group, alliance (clandestine agreements with government representatives), corruptive, and others.

All of this has destroyed the unified social environment in the rural settlements based on the principles of equal opportunities and fairness of the government. Moreover, mutual mistrust and alienation among people belonging to different ethnic groups has increased; this was shown most graphically during the open conflicts and clashes that arose as a consequence.

Government Action in Difficult Situations

In order to confirm the influence of the above-mentioned factors and assess how effective the actions of the local power bodies are in particular situations, we decided to take a brief look at several instances of escalation of social tension in the villages of the South Kazakhstan Region that have occurred over the past few years.

We will not go into depth about each of them, but will concentrate only on describing the active forces and presumed motives, relying on information obtained during conversations with experts who know about what happened.

1. The anti-Kurd pogroms in Maiatas in November 2007. They were caused by the unfair distribution of the best pasture land in favor of certain families of Kurds. It should be noted that a few more families cooperated with the local police in criminal business, to be more precise, in drug trafficking. The local population repeatedly complained to the authorities

about the privileged position of these families, but no active measures were taken, whereby moods of “we are not in charge in our own country” built up. So when a conflict arose between a new settler from the Kazygurt District and the local administration, these moods were skillfully used by those in favor of redistributing property and business infrastructure.

Neither the rural administration, nor the local law-enforcement agencies were able to change the situation since they themselves were involved in creating it and were not perceived by the population as impartial fair authorities. In addition, the people saw some of the local Kurds not as “fellow villagers,” but as a “special group with special rights,” which complicated settlement of the conflict; nor did appealing to the traditional authority of the elders of both sides help. Police cordons were set up to prevent violence; the conflict was settled only by bringing in authoritative people with no relation either to the local authorities or to the local Kurds (a special representative from the city administration and an influential businessman from another village).

2. A series of Kazakh-Uzbek clashes and arsons in Karabulak and the adjacent villages that occurred in 2008. On one side of the conflict were young Kazakh people from auls near the village who came on the weekends to go to the bazaar and tea-house in Karabulak. The young people expressed their disdain for the local Uzbeks and, saying that they were “the country’s bosses,” refused to pay, beat up the employees of several shops, and so on.

On the other side were local, mainly young, Uzbeks who tolerated the situation for a while and did not turn to the local police or akimiat for help; later they decided to retaliate en masse. The local policemen, who were mainly Kazakhs, at first arrested the Kazakh instigators, but then let them go. Furthermore, the released Kazakhs accused them of violating ethnic solidarity.

The local Uzbek akim, known for his authoritative style of leadership, would not accept the appeals from citizens and, trying to present what happened as “isolated cases,” gave absolutely no attention to preventing small conflicts and took no active measures. It is possible he was worried the higher authorities might accuse him of showing favoritism. In other words, good relations with the district bosses were more important for the akim than the village residents.

In the end, after mass fighting broke out, there were no authoritative people in the village to stand up for either side; police contingents had to be brought in and mediators invited from the outside (deputies of the regional maslikhat).

3. The events of the winter of 2008-2009 in the village of Sayram. They were caused by the founder of the Sayram folk museum, who was its director for many years, being suddenly dismissed and a specialist from the city (a Kazakh woman) being appointed in his place. The village residents were up in arms and appealed to the maslikhat deputies and local power bodies.

The thing was that this museum was founded on the initiative of the previous director with the active participation of the villagers themselves. Later it was transferred to the jurisdiction of the regional museum. When the museum director was dismissed, the village residents saw this as the authorities’ disregard for them. People were indignant that no one had asked them before replacing the museum director, for whom they had collected exhibits themselves. Moreover, soon after the appearance of the new director, significant changes were made to the museum of the Uzbek village of Sayram. Instead of Uzbek exhibits, the central place was occupied by exhibits on the general Kazakh theme.

As soon as it became clear how indignant the people were, an initiative group of deputies from the district maslikhat, with the approval of the village akim, visited the regional cultural department responsible for administration of the museum. At the meeting, recommendations were given for changing the actions of the museum administration in order to normalize the situation in the village. Soon thereafter, a delegation from the regional department of culture visited Sayram and presented the former director with a fancy chapan (an Uzbek quilted dressing gown) and certificate of appreciation in ceremonious circumstances in the presence of hundreds of residents. He was also appointed as advisor to the new director.

This act diffused the atmosphere in Sayram and calmed the people down.

A little later, the authorities, taking advantage of the good lesson they learned from the situation with the museum, acted much more solicitously when replacing the elderly director of the sports school of Sayram. He was warned in advance, chose the person to replace him, and became the advisor to the new school director.

This effective settlement of the situation was possible only thanks to the active interference of the local authorities, who spearheaded the public initiative and made it non-conflict. This is explained by the fact that the akim and public activists of Sayram are open to each other and able to collaborate effectively and productively even in the most sensitive matters.

4. A domestic fight that occurred several years ago between Kurds living in the rural neighborhood of Zhuldyz and Turks. Mass violence was stopped thanks to the village akim who prevented several dozen Kurds from taking revenge on someone who had insulted their fellow countryman. In this case, an immense role was played not by the fact that the *akim* (who no one knew personally at the time) took part in settling the conflict, but by the fact that he was a relative of some Uzbeks who lived next to authoritative Kurds. By taking advantage of his acquaintance with them, the head of the village authorities managed to stop the crowd and win over its leaders.

So the success of the akim's actions are explained by the fact that he was not afraid to rely on the support of people who were an authority for one of the sides. Merely as a government representative, it is unlikely that he would have been able to do anything.

There are also other examples of the rapid settlement of domestic ethnic conflicts; most often authoritative elders, who are members of special councils of elders that exist in each of the twenty ethnocultural centers, act as mediators. The chairman of one of these councils related a similar experience.

But it should be kept in mind that success can only be achieved if the elders enjoy authority on both sides, which is not always the case as the experience of Maiatas shows.

Conclusion

The ability of the local authorities to prevent and efficiently react to conflict situations that mobilize ethnic feelings depends on several conditions, including the following:

- trust on the part of the local residents;
- openness of the power bodies to all appeals from local residents;

- ability of the authorities to formulate the requests of local residents and present them to higher organizations;
- ability of the authorities to keep a track of the moods prevailing among the local residents and predict how the situation will develop.

It is easy to see that all the above-mentioned recommendations are acceptable for any conflict situation between residents and the local authorities. This is confirmed by fact that all the conflict situations that occurred in the region we have been examining were caused not by ethnic differences as such, but by the local residents' certainty that the authorities cannot be fair and impartial when dealing with their problems.

There were no conflicts in those cases when the authorities were able to be objective. However, when the authorities tried to ignore the social roots of ethnic tension and did not take any measures, conflicts grew and escalated into violence.

All government representatives need to do to manage ethnic differences is to clearly distinguish between situations when the residents of the territory under their control are entities of the action of general civil rights and when they are the bearers of specific ethnocultural requests. This in turn will make it possible to correctly understand the sources of conflict among the population and prevent ethnic identity from becoming a resource for protecting one's social rights (as is still happening).

This requires that employees of the rural administrations, policemen, and employees of educational and cultural institutions have at least minimum knowledge about the interaction between general civil and specific ethnocultural rights on the basis of existing OSCE recommendations (The Hague, Oslo, Lund, and so on). It is administration employees who could be able to act as an impartial source of information capable of helping residents to choose the right tools to uphold their rights and prevent charging of the conflict situation.

In order to correct the situation, employees of the local administrations should,

- first, know about how the ethnic composition of the population of their district and village formed, which will allow them to explain to residents why different communities reside in their territory,
- second, be familiar with international and national legislation relating to satisfying requests from a multiethnic population in the education, language, and culture (including the special recommendations of international organizations), and,
- third, be able to gather source information and carry out situation analysis and forecasting using specially developed indicators.

These indicators could also be used for predicting the results of their own decisions in difficult situations.

Employees of the local power bodies can acquire these skills by attending special seminars and training sessions which should combine the existing experience of the postsocialist Eastern European countries in organizing the vital activity of multiethnic communities and knowledge of the local specifics.

ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE BALOCH PEOPLE

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Introduction

The national self-awareness of the Balochis, who live in several countries and have no statehood, is very specific in many ways. The problem of their identity can be better understood in the context of certain parallels between them and European peoples (ethnic groups), since their ethnogenesis displays certain common features. We should bear in mind, however, that the formation and development of the Balochis differed in many respects from those of the European peoples.

The Balochis of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan are not absolutely identical, in this respect they differ greatly from the Europeans.

We treat the Balochis as one people with local distinctions and specifics, including, among other things, their linguistic diversity. In Europe, they would have composed a single linguistic group consisting of several subgroups using several more or less different dialects (which at a later stage would have become ethnic groups).

Elements Typical of Ethnic Groups and National Minorities

A minority as a group of people is identified (or can be identified) on the strength of certain specific features that distinguish it from its ethnic environment. The key and most obvious features that make ethnic groups (and hence minorities) different are their *language, culture, and historical*

consciousness; we can also add racial identity, slight physiognomic specifics, original settlement areas, etc.

Language

This is one of the most specific features of the majority of ethnic groups, even if it is not official (codified). Slight linguistic nuances may point to origins (including geographic origins) within the same ethnic group.

The Balochi Language

The Balochis speak the Balochi language, which belongs to the northwestern group of Iranian languages and is similar to the Kurdish language.

There are three large groups among Balochis who speak their native language:

- Eastern Balochis (1.8 million), who live in Pakistan (Balochistan, the northwestern part of the Sindh Province and southwestern Punjab); about 800 Balochis live in India (Uttar-Pradesh);
- Western Balochis (1.8 million): 1.1 million live in Pakistan (northwestern Balochistan); 0.4 million in Iran (northern Sistan); 0.2 million in Afghanistan; and about 30 thousand in Turkmenistan;
- Southern Balochis (3.4 million): 2.77 million live in Pakistan (mainly southern Balochistan); 0.4 million in Iran (southern Sistan); 0.13 million in Oman; and 0.1 million in the UAE.

The attempts made in the latter half of the 19th century to codify the Balochi language and its grammar failed; this means that until around the 1940s this language had no written form: fairy tales and heroic eposes survived in oral form and were transferred from one generation to another by word of mouth. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Balochis used the Persian language as the written form of their native tongue; in the latter half of the 20th century, they switched to Urdu. In the Soviet Union in the 1930s, textbooks in the Balochi language based on the Latin script and newspapers in Balochi were published in Ashghabad and Mary, respectively. In the 1940s, the first literary Balochi works were published in Arabic in Pakistan.

There are three Balochi groups in Pakistan that use different dialects of the same (Balochi) language. They live mainly in Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh, the Brahuīs separating the eastern and western language groups.

The Pakistani Balochis do not form compact ethnic groups; they live among other peoples: the Afghans (Pashtoons,) Punjabies, Brahuīs, Lases, and Sindhis. Despite Pakistan's ethnic diversity and the fact that Balochis are scattered across the country and live among other peoples, they have preserved their identity and language, while their neighbors have borrowed certain elements of the Balochi culture and language (some of the Brahuīs, in fact, use the Balochi language).

The Linguistic Situation in Turkmenistan

The Turkmen Balochis use the Rashkhani language (dialect), which differs greatly from the dialects used in Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan.

According to Ivan Zarubin, to whom Edit Gafferberg refers in her fundamental work *Beludzhi Turkmenskoy SSR. Ocherki khozyaystva, materialnoy kultury i byta* (The Balochis of the Turkmen SSR. Essays in the Economy, Material Culture, and Everyday Life),¹ the languages of the Balochis of Khorasan and Turkmenistan are close to the dialect used by the western group, albeit with certain phonetic specifics.

The dialects of the Turkmen and Pakistani Balochis are very different (sometimes they even cannot understand each other). Turkmen and Iranian Balochis use more or less similar dialects.

The Brahuis of Turkmenistan also use the Balochi language; they arrived there together with Balochi nomads from Iran and Afghanistan and became completely assimilated in the 1960s. They regarded themselves as Balochis of the Brahui clan, even though members of the older generation still used their native language,² which belonged to the North Dravidian branch. In Turkmenistan, the Brahuis³ belong to the same level as members of the Balochi clans with whom they intermarry.⁴ The Balochis polled in the village of Turbin, however, remain convinced that “darker skin is worse than lighter” (Brahuis are dark-skinned).

As mentioned above, a short-lived attempt to create a written language of the Turkmen Balochis based on the Latin script was made in the early 1930s; it ended in 1938 after producing several textbooks and political leaflets.⁵ Until the end of the 1980s, the Turkmen Balochis spoke their native language, which had no written form, and, therefore, there were no newspapers or books.

Political liberalization of the 1980s gave the Balochis a chance to acquire their own education system and their own written language based on Cyrillic. In independent Turkmenistan, which abolished Cyrillic in favor of the Latin script, textbooks in Cyrillic proved useless.

Historical Self-Identity

Cultural memory does not reflect history; instead it presents it through defeats, treachery, wise rulers, the Golden Age, victims, embellishments, etc. In some cases, cultural memory can be considerably distorted or based on inventions. This gives rise to folk legends that simplify and embellish the past; sometimes history is adapted to current reality.

Ancestors of the Turkmen Balochis

There are any number of theories that look for the ethnic roots of the Balochis in the Arab regions, India, or Iran. According to one of the legends, the roots of the Balochis are found in Aleppo in

¹ See: E.G. Gafferberg, *Beludzhi Turkmenskoy SSR*, ed. by S.M. Abramzon, Nauka Publishers, Leningrad, 1969, p. 4, footnote 5 (I.I. Zarubin, *K izucheniu beludzhsogo yazyka i folkloru. Zapiski Kollegii vostokovedov*, Vol. 5, Leningrad, 1930).

² See: E.G. Gafferberg, op. cit., p. 16.

³ In Turkmenistan, the Brahui are divided into smaller groups—Aydozi, Raatzi, Iagesi, Chaynal, Keran, Mirkhanzi, Sorabzi, Sasoli, and Zerkali.

⁴ See: E.G. Gafferberg, op. cit., p. 9.

⁵ See: “Izdan pervy perevod Evangelia ot Luki na beludzhskiy yazyk,” *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov. Otdel vneshnikh tserkovnykh svyazey*, 22 August, 2005, available at [<http://www.mospat.ru/archive/10105.html>].

Syria and go back to the time of Caliph Ali (a cousin of the Prophet Muhammad). His uncle moved to the region of Makran where he married a fairy who appeared before him. Their son was the ancestor of all the Balochis.⁶

According to Veluroza Frolova,⁷ the "Iranian" version is much more probable: it says that in the 5th-8th centuries, the Balochis moved from the southern Caspian to Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, where they live today.

The ballads and heroic epos of the Balochis, which recount the events of the 15th-16th centuries, call clans *bolaks*; there were 44 bolaks (40 of them were Balochi proper, while four were considered to be vassal). Throughout the centuries, the bolaks have undergone many changes because of their nomadic lifestyle and intermixing. Not infrequently people escaped from their clans to set up a new clan, either because of marriage or because of blood feuds.

Wars and poor living conditions caused by inept khans or foreign invasions changed the structure of the Balochi clans.

Mikhail Pikulin⁸ wrote that some of the Balochi bolaks disappeared to give way to smaller groups. In Afghanistan and Iran, they are known as *tayfa*; in Balochistan as *tuman*. They were based on political rather than clan principles and on submission to one of the khans.

The first nomadic Balochi tribes came to southern Turkestan (the Saraghs settlement and the town of Bayramali in the territory of Turkmenistan) at the turn of the 20th century; they arrived from Afghanistan and Iran on camels and donkeys. Edit Gafferberg⁹ wrote that their presence in this region was confirmed, among other things, by the lists of volunteers to the Red Army compiled in 1919 in Saraghs and kept in the State Archives of the Turkmen S.S.R. (now the State Central Archives of Turkmenistan), where Balochis were registered together with Turkmens.

The Balochis were driven away from Afghanistan and Iran by lack of pastures, feudal suppression of land tillers, and the inroads of alien clans.

The Balochis and their State: A Look into the Past

In antiquity, the territory of Balochistan served as a bridge of sorts between Mesopotamia, on the one hand, and the Iranian Plateau and Indo-Gangetic Plain, on the other. The old maps dated to antiquity use the name Gedrosia for Iranian and Pakistani Balochistan; it can be found on the map showing the route across the deserts of Balochistan Alexander the Great chose for his army in 325 B.C., which returned from India. After his death and the disintegration of his empire, Gedrosia became part of the Parthian Empire (3rd century B.C.-A.D. 3rd century) and the Persian Sassanid Dynasty (from the first half of the A.D. 3rd century). The local Balochis were first mentioned in the 10th century.

In the 7th century, when Arabs came to Persia and spread Islam in it and the neighboring territories, the geographic term Makran appeared (an arid deserted strip along the Arabian Sea known as Gedrosia in antiquity).

⁶ See: L. Rzehak, W.A. Prischepowa, *Nomadenalltag vor den Toren von Merw. Belutschen, Hazara, Dschamschedi*, Dresden, 1994, p. 5, footnote 23 (Muhammad Sardar Khan Baluch, *History of Baluch Race and Baluchistan*, Karachi, 1958, pp. 1, 191).

⁷ See: V.A. Frolova, *Beluzhskiy yazyk*, Nauka, Eastern Literature Publishers, Moscow, 1960, p. 7.

⁸ Quoted from: E.G. Gafferberg, *op. cit.*

⁹ See: E.G. Gafferberg, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

In the 12th century, the Balochis found themselves in the Khwarazm Empire; in the 13th-14th centuries contemporary northern Balochistan was part of the domain of Genghis Khan and later Tamerlane.

According to M.K.B.M. Baloch (a Balochi author¹⁰) in the 15th century, Mir Chakar, one of the Balochi leaders, managed to unite the tribes to set up an empire in southeastern Persia, southern Afghanistan and, what is today, Pakistani Balochistan (by that time the Balochis had obviously spread across these territories); the empire, however, did not outlive its founder.

Other authors, too, mentioned this state. Tajik philosopher and Orientalist Mukhamed Asimov and British historian Clifford Edmund Bosworth wrote that in the latter half of the 15th century Mir Chakar from the Balochi Rind tribe founded the state of Balochi, in which members of the Balochi Lashari tribe lived side-by-side with the Rind tribe. The state disappeared because of a civil war between them. The Lashari were headed by Mir Goran Khan Lashari. After the war, known as the Thirty Years' War, both tribes spread to Sindh and Punjab.¹¹ In the 17th century, Brahui and Balochi tribes rebelled against the Great Mogul rule and set up the Kalat Khanate. Fred Scholz supplied detailed information probably retrieved from Baluch, another Balochi author.¹²

It is impossible to find out whether Balochis or Brahuis played the first fiddle; what we know is that the history of the Kalat Khanate is part of the history of Balochistan (even if many of the Balochi tribes did not belong to it).

The Khanate was not a centralized state; during the wars with Sindh, its neighbor, and Afghanistan, its borders were constantly changing. Throughout its history it remained under the strong influence of the rulers of either Iran or Kandahar.

Everything changed when Mir Nasir Khan came to power; he subjugated all the local rulers and extended the territory approximately to the borders of today's Balochistan.

When the Dutch and later the British reached the Persian Gulf, the Kalat Khanate and the Balochi-populated territories around it acquired strategic importance as a toehold of Britain's imperialist expansion to India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

In 1839, the consulate of Britain and the khanate signed an agreement under which Kalat had to guarantee the British troops safe passage to the borders of Afghanistan. Britain, in turn, pledged to guarantee sovereignty of the khanate and safety of the borders of the Balochi-populated territories (so-called Balochistan), which, however, lost some of their importance once the agreement had been signed.

The Persians, equally interested in this territory, tried even harder to conquer it and subjugate the Balochi tribes.

Late in the 19th century, Persia, Afghanistan, and the United Kingdom signed an agreement under which the territory of Balochistan was divided into Western (Persian) and Eastern (British) Balochistan.

Early in the 20th century, the term Balochistan came to be applied to four different units:

- (1) The Kalat Khanate often called Balochistan;
- (2) Persian Balochistan ruled by Kerman;

¹⁰ See: F. Scholz, *Belutschistan (Pakistan)*, Verlag Erich Goltze, Göttingen, 1974, S. 33 (M.K.B.M. Baloch, *The Balochis through Centuries*, Quetta, 1964).

¹¹ See: M.S. Asimov, C.E. Bosworth, *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Historical, Social and Economic Setting*, Motilal Banarsidass Publ, Delhi, 1999, pp. 304-305.

¹² See: F. Scholz, op. cit., S. 33 (Muhammad Sardar Khan Baluch, *History of Baluch Race and Baluchistan*, Karachi, 1958).

- (3) British Balochistan;
- (4) the Balochi-populated territories in British India (the Punjab and Sindh provinces).

All the Balochi-populated territories, with the exception of Persian Balochistan (initially part of the Kalat Khanate and later part of the Persian Empire),¹³ belonged to Great Britain, even though the form of British rule differed from one territory to another.

- (I) British Balochistan covered former Afghan territory (Shahrigh, Saba, Duki, Peshin, Chaman, and Shorarud).
- (II) The territories ruled by Agent to the Governor General were divided into:
 - (a) territories under direct rule (they earlier belonged to the Kalat Khanate, or were tribal territories, or the areas Great Britain had acquired by changing the Afghan borders);
 - (b) formerly independent countries (the Kalat Khanate and the Lasbela and Charan principalities). At that time, the khan was the head of the Brahui tribe Qambarani and the highest representative of the confederation of the Balochi and other, subjugated, tribes.
 - (c) tribal territories of the Marri and Bugti ruled by their chief without Kalat interference.¹⁴

Nationalism of the Balochis

In 1947, British India was divided into Hindu India (the Dominion of India) and Muslim Pakistan (the Dominion of Pakistan); until 1971, the latter consisted of Eastern Pakistan (later the independent state of Bangladesh) and Western Pakistan (today's Pakistan) separated from Eastern Pakistan by 1,500 km.

The same year, the U.K. recognized the independence of Balochistan, which soon thereafter signed an agreement with Pakistan under which Pakistan recognized Balochistan's independence and the Khan of Kalat as its representative. Very soon, however, Pakistan occupied Balochistan and in March 1948 declared it its fifth province.

Both dominions set up on the strength of the Indian Independence Act of 1947 remained dominions until they passed their own constitutions.

The Constitution of India enacted on 26 January, 1950 proclaimed it a republic.

The first Constitution of Afghanistan enacted on 23 March, 1956 proclaimed the Islamic republic; until that time the country formally remained a monarchy with the last Governor General of the Dominion of Pakistan Iskander Mirza becoming the first president of the Islamic Republic.

Throughout the 20th century numerous attempts of different intensity were made in Iran and Pakistan to set up an independent Balochistan.

In the 1950s, a union of Balochi provinces was established in Pakistan; in 1974, the simmering separatist sentiments developed into an armed clash between tens of thousands of Balochis and the Pakistani army. The uprising was suppressed, but the Balochi language became one of the offi-

¹³ The borders established by the Anglo-Persian Boundary Commission in 1870-1872 were finally confirmed in 1895-1896.

¹⁴ See: M.Th. Houtsma, A.J.E.J. Wensinck, *Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam 1913-1936* (reprint Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993).

cial languages and institutions appeared that studied the culture and languages of the Balochis and Brahuis.

The Balochis, who have not accepted their dependent position in Pakistan, crave for independence, their nationalist feelings fed by the fact that their natural riches (gas, coal, uranium, gold, and oil) of Sui on the eastern borders of Balochistan enrich Islamabad, while the living standards of the Balochis remains low: many of their settlements have no running water or electricity.¹⁵

Enkelab, one of the locals, described the sad state of affairs in his village: "In my village there is no gas, electricity, or running water. Our people fetch water from the gas station in Sui under fear of punishment, torture, or even imprisonment."

This gas station is one of Pakistan's most important facilities and, to a great extent, a source of the Balochi protest sentiments.

Young Balochis determined to fight the government of Pakistan join rebel structures of the Lashkar-e-Balochistan type; enraged, they want to know why they have to sacrifice their right to freedom and their federation, in which one people dominates.

In Iran, likewise, the rights of the Balochis are infringed upon, in particular, in the province of Sistan and Baluchestan with sizable Balochi populations. The identity cards of the Balochis state that they belong to one of the clans (Esesi, Nautani, Kalbeli, etc.) rather than their common nationality. This places clans higher than the nationality, which keeps the ethnic group disunited and distorts demographic statistics.

We all know that the people in power tend to ignore the interests of small ethnic groups; it is much easier to deny them education in their native language.

The Balochis as an Ethnic Minority

The territory that since the time of British colonial rule has been called Balochistan according to the name of the Balochis, its local population, is today divided between three countries with a total area of 647 thousand sq km, the bigger chunk of it (347,190 sq km) is occupied by Pakistani Balochistan; 200 thousand sq km belong to the Iranian province Sistan and Baluchestan (Sistan and Baluchestan became a single administrative unit in 1959), and less than 100 thousand sq km stretch along the Helmand in Afghanistan.

In many places, Balochis live alongside former nomadic tribes, the largest of them being the Brahuis, Pashtoons, Lases, and Sindhs. They live close enough for intermixing and cultural exchange.

With no compact settlements, the Balochis of Sistan rapidly assimilated the languages and traditions of their neighbors. The territory of Baluchestan, on the other hand, is the only place where Balochis live in compact groups and where, therefore, there is no assimilation.

Veluroza Frolova¹⁶ discussed this back in the 1960s and pointed to the main distinctive features between the Balochi settlements in Pakistan and Iranian Baluchestan (with practically no other ethnic groups), on the one hand, and in Iranian Sistan, on the other:

¹⁵ See: K. Zurutuza, *Den v poušti s balúčskými povstalci* (A Day in the Desert with Balochi Insurgents), Překlad, Albert Friess, *Vice Magazine*, 21.2.2012, available at [<http://www.viceland.com/blogs/cs/2010/02/26/den-v-pousti-s-balucskymi-povstalci/>].

¹⁶ See: V.A. Frolova, op. cit., p. 9.

Region	Compact settlements	Assimilation
Pakistan (Balochistan)	No	No ¹⁷
Pakistan (Sindh and Punjab)	No	No
Iran (Sistan)	No	Yes
Iran (Baluchestan)	Yes	No

The Shi'a in the village of Baluch Khan to the west of the Iranian town of Mashhad (not far from the city of Sabzevar) are one of the smaller Balochi groups that have preserved what was left of their specifics. The village is relatively hard to reach; unlike the Balochis of Sistan and Baluchestan, its population adopted Shi'a Islam, but preserved their language, colorful dress (Iranian women wear black yasmaks), decorated homes, and national self-identity and are engaged in growing almonds.

There are Balochi settlements along the Iranian-Turkmen border, in which people (all of them Shi'a) preserve their semi-nomadic lifestyle. In the summer, several families leave their homes to graze cattle; they live in tents, or *gedans*, and form a self-supporting community.

The Balochis who live on the southern shores of the Caspian (the original homeland of all Balochis, according to Frolova) in the Mazandaran Province of Iran not far from the city of Gorgan are Sunni Muslims (like most of the Balochis). They have preserved their language and elements of traditional culture—clothes and some customs.

The Baluchis who live in big cities Mashhad (Northern Iran), Zahedan (Sistan and Baluchestan), Quetta (Pakistan), and Muscat (Oman) can be described as assimilated Balochis, even though they themselves and the relatives who visit them insist that they have not lost their sense of belonging to their ethnic group; they use the Balochi language, wear Balochi dress, and, on the whole, follow the Balochi lifestyle. These ethnic elements, however, differ to a great extent from the traditional Balochi.

Turkmen Balochis

Early in the 20th century, the Balochis driven away by lack of pasture lands, floods, high taxes, etc. moved from Afghanistan to Iran. After a while, some of them returned; others moved further on to the territory of contemporary Turkmenistan (the Merv area) where they worked on cotton plantations that belonged to the local feudal lords (*bays*), built irrigation structures, or remained semi-nomad cattle breeders.

In her fundamental work quoted above, Edit Gafferberg¹⁸ wrote that the Balochis found it hard to adjust to Soviet power and described the changes that it introduced into their lifestyle. Her monograph is based on data she gathered during her long field seasons in 1926-1929 and 1958-1961 when she lived among the Turkmen Balochis. She pointed out that while Soviet power greatly improved the living conditions, it strove to disrupt the Balochi clan ties at any price and reduce the Balochi cattle breeders' dependence on their khans.

According to a Balochi mullah, Kerim Khan was one of the strongest and the most influential leaders in Turkmenistan. The head of a large Balochi group in the Iolotan District, he, together with

¹⁷ The closest neighbors, mainly the Brahuis, adopt the Balochi language and traditions.

¹⁸ See: E.G. Gafferberg, op. cit.

his men, helped Turkmens imprisoned for anti-Soviet activities to escape; the people asked him for advice or practical help.

Later outlawed as a basmach,¹⁹ he fled to Afghanistan with a large group of Balochis (women, old people, and children among them). At one point, when camping in the desert, they were attacked by a Soviet plane.

Today, there are about 30 thousand Balochis in Turkmenistan, all of them Sunni Muslims; they live in villages in one-story houses; according to the tradition they inherited from their nomadic and clan past, parents and married sons live together forming extended families. They share a courtyard, a kitchen with a special place for cooking, and an elevated place on which they sleep in the open air (*tapchan*); not infrequently there are *tandyrs* (clay stoves in the open where they bake bread). They use gas; the government plans to organize water supply.

Post-Soviet Historical Constructions

In the 1990s, the Soviet Union disappeared leaving an ideological void behind to be filled with a new identity model. The key role in the process belongs to the state or, rather, the ruling group, which should refer to the old traditions and go back to its ethnic roots.

The regime of late President of Turkmenistan Saparmurad Niyazov, better known as Turkmenbashi, moved further than any others toward new historical constructions. The state ordered a new history designed to prove that the Turkmens were the world's oldest and in all respects exceptional nation.

The president was determined to replace the old (everything that reminded of the Soviet past) with a totally new ideology related to the old traditions of the Turkmens. He instituted new holidays and created new national heroes; Cyrillic was abandoned together with the old names of the months and days of the week.

Balochis in Contemporary Turkmenistan and their Cultural Memory

It should be said that President Niyazov did not like the Balochis who lived in his country; he concentrated on the Turkmens and their history. There are any number of eyewitness accounts of how Balochi musicians turned over their musical instruments to the state. The people who had already lived through the trying period of adaptation to Soviet power in the 1930s found themselves in another no less trying situation.

So far, the leaders of Turkmenistan have not bothered themselves with preserving the Balochi traditions, language, or ethnic identity.

At home, the Balochis use their native language; however, the younger generation, exposed to the new social reality, is gradually losing interest in it. At schools, the Turkmen language prevails; children can barely read Latin script, to say nothing about English, which is part of the school curriculum; the teaching of Russian has recently considerably deteriorated.

In the Soviet Union, Balochi textbooks were based on Cyrillic; in independent Turkmenistan with its strong nationalist sentiments, teaching of the Balochi language based on Cyrillic stands no chance.

¹⁹ A member of the anti-Soviet movement in Central Asia.

Old people, mullahs, and educated Balochis spare no effort to pass the history of the Balochis, their clans and traditions (related to marriages and the way the national dress should be worn), on to the younger generation by word of mouth. In an effort to preserve the language, they write poems about the people and its history to be read at marriage ceremonies.

The folk tales Ivan Zarubin wrote down at one time serve as a valuable source about the everyday life and culture of the Balochis of Turkmenistan and their spiritual culture and moral traditions.

Heroes of the Balochis

Kerim Khan mentioned above is one of the main heroes of the Turkmen Balochis: he helped them during the times of trial when they moved to Turkmenistan and even freed Turkmen arrested by the Soviet government from prison.²⁰

Mir Chakar, who united Balochi tribes and set up the first state of the Balochis, is a hero of the Balochis of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran; he is the central figure of the Balochi epic ballad *Hani and Sheh Murid*, which is to the Balochis what *Romeo and Juliet* are to the Europeans: symbols of a pure and tragic love.

Balochi Self-Awareness and Information about the Balochis

In the 20th century, several monographs appeared about the Balochis; Fred Scholz, one of the authors, concentrated on the period of British colonial domination; very much like many other authors who discussed manifestations of Balochi nationalism, he limited himself to the territory of contemporary Pakistan.

In the 1930s, expeditions of the Soviet Academy of Sciences studied the Balochis of Turkmenistan. Edit Gafferberg published a fundamental work in which she described the lifestyle, customs, and traditions of the local Balochis and the problems they had to cope with while integrating into the Soviet Union.

In post-Soviet times, Turkmen Balochis attracted attention and caused a lot of amazement among the Balochis of Pakistan: witness the article "Turkmenistan: The Country of Fifty Thousand Balochis" by Pakistani journalist from Quetta Yar Mohammad Badini.

Lutz Rzehak and his two Balochi colleagues compiled a Balochi, Pashto, Dari, and English dictionary; published in 2007, it was the first dictionary of West Iranian languages used by about 10 million.

The same people initiated a Balochi Academy in Zaranchi in the Afghan province of Nimroz. It started functioning in 2010 as a center of academic cooperation and information exchange among the Pakistani, Iranian, and Afghan Balochis. Together with the Academy in Quetta, it is expected to promote cultural development and more profound study of ethnic traditions. The fact that Balochis took an active part in setting up the academy and building it by funding the project and working on it has added to the Academy's importance.²¹

²⁰ See: E.G. Gafferberg, op. cit., p. 23.

²¹ See: "Die Balutschi-Akademie in Zarandsch — Ein Kurzportrait," 10 February, 2011 // Tethys. Central asia Everyday, 8 March, 2012, available at [<http://www.tethys.caoss.org/index.php/2011/02/10/die-balutschi-akademie-in-zarandsch-ein-kurzportrait/>].

Those who promote these projects strive to inform the world and the Balochis scattered across several countries about the history of the Balochis and their culture in order to show the world that the Balochis are not dangerous nationalists who only cause trouble in the countries they live.

Conclusion

A larger number of Balochis live in Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan; fewer are found in Oman, UAR, and Turkmenistan; their assimilation can be partly explained by the fact they live in compact settlements, but this does not always mean they are more resistant to alien influences. In Pakistan, for example, the Balochis scattered across the country are less assimilated than many other Balochi groups. Not infrequently, in Pakistan, the ethnicities living alongside the Balochis borrow their customs and language.

The Balochis of Oman (in Muscat) and Iran (Mashhad) have become completely assimilated and integrated with the local population.

Compared with other national groups, the Balochis of Turkmenistan are resistant to assimilation, although they have borrowed some of the Turkmen everyday customs and family ceremonies.

The most progressive Balochis do not spare any effort to disprove what the media write about their people as nationalists and rioters; on the other hand, the Balochis should revive and preserve their traditions and their history.

REGIONAL POLITICS

THE NORTHERN CASPIAN ON CHINA'S GEOPOLITICAL AGENDA

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Introduction

Everyone knows that in addition to its keen interest in the Southern and Northern Caucasus, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is also active in Central Asia, another area of its geopolitical interests.

Much has and is being written about this, but for some reason no one has examined China's presence in the Northern Caspian (I have in mind the Atyrau Region of Kazakhstan, the relations with which are part and parcel of China's Central Asian policy, and the Astrakhan Region and Kalmykia of Russia). Here I will dwell on Chinese strategy in the two latter regions of the Russian

Federation, that is, in the Russian part of the Northern Caspian. As a sort of corridor or link between Central Asia and the Caucasus with a multitude of ties between them and this part of Russia, the region is of immense geopolitical importance for Beijing.

Indeed, the Northern Caspian offers a lot of opportunities for China, ranging from the economy to the humanitarian and religious spheres; its strategic location is very important for China's security. This means that this region is one of the components of China's Central Asian and Caucasian geopolitics.

Kalmykia

The relations between China and Kalmykia, with a very specific and interesting history behind them, go back into the past: at the turn of the 17th century, the Kalmyks moved to Russia from China

(from Jungaria, to be more exact).¹ In 1771, a larger part of the newcomers moved back to China; many died before reaching the Celestial Empire, which makes the “Kalmykian exodus” a very contradictory event in the history of the Kalmyks.² Today, there are Mongolian peoples (closely related to the Kalmyks) in the Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region (in the northwest of China); some of them are direct descendants of those Kalmyks who moved back to China in the 18th century.

There are two Mongolian administrative-territorial units in the XUAR: the Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture and the Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture; the former, which covers the area of 470.9 thousand sq km, is the largest autonomous territory in the XUAR and even in China.³ There is also a Hoboksar-Mongol Autonomous County in the XUAR.

Kalmykia is involved in active cooperation with these territories, as well as with the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

The Kalmyks are the only people in the region who profess Tibetan Buddhism. This and the factors enumerated above create a favorable atmosphere for closer relations between China and Kalmykia and add very specific features to their cooperation.

Significantly, the ethno-religious factor played an important role when Russia and China started their relations: in 1709-1713, Peter the Great allowed Kalmykian envoys to go to Tibet on an official visit; in 1712, they unofficially met Jing Emperor Xuan Ye, who reciprocated with an embassy to Russia to persuade the Russian emperor to join forces against the Jungarian Khanate. According to Prof. M. Kapitsa, this was the first ever trip of Chinese diplomats to a European state.⁴

The relations between China and Kalmykia are highly varied and extend to the economy, culture, religion, and politics. They became especially active in the latter half of the 2000s. So far, the share of China in Kalmykia's foreign trade is small; however, the steadily developing ties between China and Kalmykia might, in the near future, considerably change the situation.

Late in March 2007, in Elista, Prime Minister of Inner Mongolia Yang Jing and Head of the Republic of Kalmykia Kirsan Ilyumzhinov signed an agreement on trade, economic, and cultural partnership; Inner Mongolia was included in several projects: building a dairy products processing plant in Kalmykia and establishing partnership in the manufacture and assembly of minibuses and trucks in Kalmykia at the Caspian Machine-Building Plant in Lagan.

The Chinese side invested about \$20 million at the first stage.⁵ Less than a year later, another delegation of potential investors from Inner Mongolia arrived to negotiate investments in the Elista Airport in exchange for their involvement in mining projects (limestone and gypsum in particular). They were also interested in modernizing a wool-washing and hide dressing plants; their interests also extended to wind power production and agriculture, as well as building specialized storage facilities for consumer goods, a Genghis Khan museum, and a sea port in Lagan.⁶

¹ See: *Narody Evropeyskoy chasti SSSR*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1964; *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, Vols. 1-2, Moscow, 1967, p. 70; U. Erdnev, *Kalmyki (Konets XIX-nachalo XX vekov. Istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki)*, Elista, 1970; D.Ts.-D. Nominkhanov, *Ocherki istorii kultury kalmytskogo naroda*, Elista, 1969; “Kalmyki,” *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar Brokgauza i Efrona*, Vol. 82, St. Petersburg, 1904.

² For more detail, see, for example: I. Vishniakova, “K voprosu o begstve volzhskikh kalmykov v Jungarii v 1771 godu,” *Vostokovednye issledovaniia na Altae*, Issue II, Barnaul, 2000, pp. 45-54.

³ See: Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bayingolin_Mongol_Autonomous_Prefecture], 17 July, 2012; the official site of the prefecture [<http://www.xjbz.gov.cn/>].

⁴ For more detail, see, in particular: “Ambassadors from the Celestial Empire in the Kalmyk Khanate,” Kalmykia-online, available at [<http://kalmykia-online.ru/history/328>], 1 January, 2010 (here and elsewhere the Internet sites are in Russian unless otherwise stated.—*Ed.*).

⁵ See: “The Government of Kalmykia and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region have Agreed on Cooperation,” Regnum Information Agency, available at [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/804620.html>], 23 March, 2007.

⁶ See: “Chinese Investors are Prepared to Modernize the Airport in the Capital of Kalmykia,” *Kavkazskiy uzel*, available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/133556/>], 3 February, 2008.

Late in June 2012, a delegation of the People's Assembly of the Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture headed by its chairman, Bora, visited Kalmykia. This event helped the sides to invigorate their mutual relations.⁷ The delegation paid a special visit to the Yashkul District of Kalmykia to meet Chinese cattle-breeders; the Chinese guests were touched by what they saw.⁸

It should be said that the Kalmyk leaders were encouraged by the plans to bring back ethnic Kalmyks from the Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region: in 2006, the then head of the republic Kir-san Ilyumzhinov stirred up a sensation with this statement. Russian political scientists responded by calling his plans "the most ambitious migration project in Russia."⁹

Under the project, no less than 10 thousand Kalmyks-Torguts were to be resettled in Kalmykia; according to some sources, the figure was even higher—100 thousand.¹⁰ The authors argued that, when implemented, the project would eliminate many of the republic's problems, including unemployment: one Kalmykian migrant was expected to produce two or three new jobs in Kalmykia.¹¹ Some of the Xinjiang migrants thought they were performing the important mission of guarding the borders: the local farmers and businessmen were expected to drive Chechens and Azeris away from the local markets.¹² So far, the flow of migrants can best be described as a trickle.

Chinese migrants, however, comprise the second largest group of foreign migrants registered in Kalmykia: 381 persons in 2011. In this respect, Kalmykia comes second after Kazakhstan, which registered 523 Chinese migrants.¹³

On a national scale, Kalmykia, the Jewish Autonomous Region, and the Trans-Baikal Territory have the largest number of Chinese migrants.¹⁴

A project to build the Eurasia shipping canal between the Black and Caspian seas looks very interesting from the geopolitical point of view. It will cross the Republic of Kalmykia, the northern part of the Stavropol Territory, and the south of the Rostov Region. The idea belongs to President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev: he expects it to connect Central Asia with the seas via the Russian Federation.¹⁵ Some members of the expert community think that Kazakhstan is mainly interested in the project to move goods from and to China; if realized the new project will bring additional income to the tune of \$2 billion every year.¹⁶

Kalmykia needs the canal: in an interview, its prime minister, Oleg Kichikov, pointed out that the project was of strategic importance for the republic and that the government would spare no effort

⁷ See: "The Head of Kalmykia Met a Delegation from the PRC," Official site of the Head of the Republic of Kalmykia [<http://glava.region08.ru/ru/soobscheniya-dlya-pressy/3373-delegaciya-knr.html>], 25 June, 2012.

⁸ See: N. Azydova, D. Jambinov, "Guests from China Visit the Yashkul District," *Vesti/Kalmykia*, available at [<http://vesti-kalmykia.ru/society/4026-delegaciya-bayngol-mongolskoy-avtonomnoy-oblasti-s-rabochim-vizitom-pribyla-v-yashkulskiy-rayon.html>], 27 June, 2012.

⁹ See, for example: V. Ishutin, "Chinese Kalmyks Return to the Motherland," *Rossiiskie Vesti*, available at [<http://www.rosvesty.ru/1818/regions/1146-kitaiskie-kalmiki-vozvrashajutsya-na-rodinu/>], 26 April-2 May, 2006.

¹⁰ See: "Kalmykia is the Motherland of the Chinese," *Novaia gazeta*, available at [<http://www.novayagazeta.ru/politics/37257.html>], 25 January, 2007.

¹¹ See: V. Ishutin, op. cit.

¹² See: "Kalmykia is the Motherland of the Chinese."

¹³ See: "In 2011, Kalmykia Registers over 5 Thousand Foreign Migrants," *Kalmykia*, Portal poleznoy informatsii, available at [<http://kalm08.ru/v-kalmikii-2011-godu-na-migracionniie-uchet-postavleno-bolee-5-tisyach-inostrancev.html>], 31 January, 2012.

¹⁴ See: "In 2011, Officials of the Federal Migration Service Deported 5.6 thousand Chinese Migrants from Russia," *RIA Novosti*, available at [<http://ria.ru/society/20120321/601757782.html>], 21 March, 2012.

¹⁵ See: "Nazarbaev: The Eurasia Canal Might Connect the Caspian and Black Seas," *RIA Novosti*, available at [<http://ria.ru/politics/20070610/67005824.html>], 10 June, 2012.

¹⁶ See, for example: "Does Russia Need the Eurasia Canal?" *Ekologicheskaja pravda*, available at [http://www.eco-pravda.ru/page.php?al=canal_evraz], 17 September, 2009.

to implement it as soon as possible.¹⁷ In 2008, in anticipation of implementation of the much needed project, the government of Kalmykia set up a Manych Shipping Canal Company.¹⁸

The project's active supporters argue that, when implemented, the project would create 200 thousand jobs at the clusters of the main project (the Black and Caspian Seas Canal), which would tap the huge management and business potential of the Northern Caucasus, reduce tension in the labor market, and stabilize the social and political situation in the region.¹⁹

They are also convinced that the year-round traffic of oil will increase the volumes moved from the Caspian to the Black Sea 3-4-fold.²⁰

Alternative routes are also being discussed; the opponents of the Eurasia project are no less numerous than its supporters, which explains why the project has stalled at the discussion stage.

On 25 May, 2012, for example, a scientific-practical conference held at the Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS, attracted officials of federal structures, the Committee for Transport of the Federation Council, the RF Federal Assembly, and members of the academic and business communities. First Deputy Prime Minister of Kalmykia Vyacheslav Ilyumzhinov delivered the main report and met the heads of Moscow companies to discuss their involvement in investment projects in the republic.²¹

If implemented, the project will create important means for organizing and developing China's relations with the Northern Caucasus and with the countries on the Caspian, Azov, and Black Sea shores.

Kalmykia and China are developing cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, education being one of the most promising fields. Back in June 2002, Kalmyk State University (KSU) and the University of Inner Mongolia (UIM) signed an agreement on cooperation and academic exchange. Late in March 2007, the two universities signed an agreement of unlimited duration on cooperation and academic exchange.²²

Mutually advantageous cooperation was raised to a higher level when the UIM opened the Institute of Confucius at KSU (it began functioning in May 2008). Today, teachers and lecturers of both higher educational establishments teach Chinese language and culture courses at this institute.²³

The institute received an official letter of congratulations from the President of Kalmykia on the occasion of its opening; he expressed his firm conviction that this cultural and educational center would promote and expand the economic ties between the two republics and consolidate humanitarian interaction and friendship between Russia and China.²⁴

¹⁷ See: B. Jengurov, "The Leaders of Kalmykia Intend to Speed Up Implementation of the Eurasia Project," *Kavkazskiy uzel*, available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/173344/>], 25 August, 2010.

¹⁸ See: B. Jengurov, "From the Azov to the Caspian," *Rossiyskaia gazeta*, available at [<http://www.rg.ru/2008/11/06/reg-jugrossii/manyh.html>], 6 November, 2008.

¹⁹ See: "The Conception of Linking the Caspian and Black Seas was Presented in Makhachkala," *Kaspiyskiy faktor*, available at [<http://www.casfactor.com/rus/news/1597.html>], 27 April, 2011.

²⁰ See: B. Jengurov, "The Leaders of Kalmykia Intend to Speed Up Implementation of the Eurasia Project."

²¹ See: "Kalmykia's Suggestion Causes Heated Debates at the Institute of Oriental Studies," *Pravitelstvo Respubliki Kalmykia*, available at [<http://gov.kalmregion.ru/news/2012-02-03-08-36-50/6718-2012-05-28-05-52-52>], 28 May, 2012.

²² See, for example: "International Activities," *Kalmytskiy gosudarstvenny universitet*, available at [http://www.kalmsu.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=145:2011-03-23-07-33-32&catid=54:2011-03-23-07-21-50&Itemid=86], 8 July, 2012.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ See: "To the Participants in the Gala Opening of the Institute of Confucius," Official site of the Head of the Republic of Kalmykia [<http://glava.region08.ru/ru/kilyumzhinov/86-ot-pervogo-lica/942-uchastnikam-torzhestvennoi-tseremonii-otkrytiya-instituta-konfutsiya.html>], 23 April, 2009.

In May 2012, the KSU and UIM signed a new agreement on the development of their long-term cooperation, under which the Institute of Confucius acquired the right to function as an educational center and open its branches in higher educational establishments in the South of Russia.²⁵

It should be said that every year the best KSU students are given the opportunity to spend one year as students in Chinese higher educational establishments; this is done within the program of annual stipends granted by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China.²⁶

Religion plays an important role in the bilateral relations between Kalmykia and China; not infrequently, however, these relations spill beyond the bilateral framework to crop up in certain global aspects of China's geopolitics.

The Kalmyks are Tibetan Buddhists, this means that closer ties with the Tibetan clergy are an important element of the Kalmyks' spiritual life. This causes certain concerns in Beijing, because of Tibet's special importance for China.²⁷

Beijing hopes that the Russian Buddhists will remain neutral on this painful issue. Certain analysts, however, are convinced that the Government of Tibet in Exile is not sparing any efforts to draw the Russian Buddhists into its conflict with Beijing in the hope of forcing Russia to change its Chinese policy.²⁸

China's concerns are well-justified: in October 1996, at the opening ceremony of the first building of the khurul complex in Elista, there was an attempt to hoist the state flag of Tibet. Everybody agrees that this was intended as a sign that the Kalmyks supported the Tibetans in their struggle against Chinese expansion. Seen from Beijing, however, it looked like an unfriendly act on the part of Russia. Beijing was equally displeased with the plans of the then President of the Republic of Kalmykia Kirsan Ilyumzhinov to build a "Buddhist Vatican" in the republic; he also offered to mediate at the talks between Beijing and the 14th Dalai Lama and even offered the latter political asylum in the republic.²⁹

In December 2006, President Ilyumzhinov conferred the 14th Dalai Lama with the Order of White Lotus, the highest award of his republic, and personally handed it to the political and spiritual leader of the Tibetans in exile at his residence in Dharamshala. In his speech he said, in particular: "The Tibetans and Kalmyks are bound by many centuries of friendship. In times of trouble, we have invariably stood together and helped each other... Today, His Holiness embodies peace, compassion, kindness, and mutual consideration."³⁰

Head of Kalmykia Alexey Orlov, likewise, maintains close contact with Dalai Lama: "Each and every one of our meetings is an important landmark for me," he said in an interview. "The opportunity to be close to Dalai Lama, to say nothing of the chance to associate with him, a man of huge spiritual power and kindness, the guardian of our souls, teaches us to look differently, to look into the meaning of things and acquire answers to many questions."³¹

Contacts with Dalai Lama are not limited to the political leaders of Kalmykia. There is information that the Supreme Lama of this republic, Telo Tulku Rinpoche, one of the leading Buddhists of

²⁶ See: "International Activities," Kalmytskiy gosudarstvennyy universitet.

²⁷ On the place of Tibet in Chinese geopolitics, see, for example: D. Babayan, "Tibetskiy platsdarm kitayskoy geopolitiki, *Vostok (Oriens)*, Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS, No. 4, 2011, pp. 81-99.

²⁸ See: S. Badmayev, "Karma of Russian Buddhism. Politicization of the Community Causes Splits and Conflicts," *NG-Religii*, available at [http://religion.ng.ru/people/2011-08-03/5_karma.html], 3 August, 2011.

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ See, for example: "The Head of Kalmykia Awards Dalai Lama the Order of White Lotus," *Kavkazskiy uzel*, available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/105183/>], 11 December, 2006.

³¹ "The Head of the Republic of Kalmykia Meets Dalai Lama," *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [http://savetibet.ru/2011/08/17/dalai_jama_kalmykia.html], 17 August, 2011.

Russia, regularly goes to India to meet Dalai Lama to discuss with him all the important issues in the sphere of education and culture of the Republic of Kalmykia.³²

Kalmykia's very special role and place in the Buddhist community of Russia suggests that closer contacts between the republic and Tibet are not limited to bilateral relations. Tenzin Tsultim, Supreme Lama of Tuva (another RF constituency), said that the Buddhist clergy of the republic, which during the spiritual renaissance was oriented toward the Buddhist communities of Mongolia and Buryatia (a republic in the RF), regarded Kalmykia as its future spiritual guide.³³

Since 2009, Dalai Lama has been organizing annual training courses for Buddhists from Russia at his residence in Dharamshala; in 2009, they attracted 800 pilgrims from Russia and other CIS countries; in 2010, over 1,200 attended³⁴; and in 2011, 1,300, while only about 1,000 came from Tibet and even fewer from India and other countries.³⁵

These contacts are purely religious, not infrequently, however, they assume political overtones: from time to time Russian Buddhists ask the central authorities for permission to invite Dalai Lama to Russia³⁶; the leaders of Kalmykia³⁷ and certain political figures of the Russian Federation want the same.

Head of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia Vladimir Zhirinovskiy supported the idea and said that Buddhism might become part of Russia's polyethnicity.³⁸

Beijing is very much displeased with these calls and statements, which look absolutely natural to an unbiased observer: in China, Dalai Lama is treated not so much as a religious leader but as a symbol of the Tibetans' struggle for their independence from China.

Russian Buddhists are resorting to political actions: late in March 2007, for example, members of public organizations and Buddhists traveled from Elista, the capital of Kalmykia, to the Chinese Embassy in Moscow to hand an address to PRC Chairman Hu Jintao, in which they invited him to start talks with the religious and secular leader of the Tibetans.³⁹

In April 2008, representatives of the Buddhist republics of the Russian Federation and the Tibetan community, as well as members of all sorts of Buddhist organizations gathered in Moscow for a picket to demonstrate their support of Tibet and gather signatures under an address to the government of Russia and the world community. The document expressed great concern about the "suppres-

³² See, for example: A. Nemtsova, "A Wondrous Buddhist Tradition Resurrected in Kalmykia," *Russia beyond the Headlines*, available at [http://rbth.ru/articles/2011/10/26/buddhist_revival_in_kalmykia_13607.html], 26 October, 2011 (in English).

³³ See: "Kamby-lama of the Republic of Tuva: 'Kalmykia Will Be Our Spiritual Leader,'" *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [<http://savetibet.ru/2011/09/27/tuva.html>], 27 September, 2011.

³⁴ See: "Vladimir Zhirinovskiy Supports Dalai Lama Visiting Russia," *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [http://savetibet.ru/2011/08/15/dalai_lama.html], 15 August, 2011.

³⁵ See: T. Tsering, "Tibetan Spiritual Leader Begins Teaching for Russian Buddhists," Phayul.com, available at [<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30563>], 19 December, 2011 (in English).

³⁶ See, for example: "An Open Letter of the supreme Buddhist clergy of Russia to the President of the Russian Federation Mr. V.V. Putin on a Visit of the Spiritual Leader of the Buddhists, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama," *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [http://savetibet.ru/2006/06/28/letter_to_president.html], 28 June, 2006; A. Serenko, "Buddhists Ask Putin to Give Permission to Invite Dalai Lama," available at [http://savetibet.ru/2006/06/30/russian_buddhists_putin.html], 30 June, 2006; "On a Visit of Dalai Lama to Russia. The Community of the Buddhists of Tuva Sends an Open Letter to S.V. Lavrov," *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [<http://savetibet.ru/2011/10/31/dalai-lama.html>], 31 October, 2011; Yu. Zhironkina, "Dalai Lama Blesses the Project of a New Large Temple in Tuva," *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [<http://savetibet.ru/2011/11/13/tuva.html>], 13 November, 2011.

³⁷ See: "The Head of the Republic of Kalmykia Meets Dalai Lama."

³⁸ See: "Vladimir Zhirinovskiy Supports Dalai Lama Visiting Russia."

³⁹ See: "Statement of the Kalmyk Regional Society of Friends of Tibet," *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [http://savetibet.ru/2007/03/26/tsg_kalmykia.html], 26 March, 2007.

sion of the Tibetan acts and rallies in regions of historical Tibet, which caused bloodshed.”⁴⁰ A similar rally was organized in the capital of Buryatia at almost the same time.⁴¹

China is responding with grave concern to the rallies, which put Moscow in a rather difficult situation. Russia is home to a fairly large Buddhist community of between 900 thousand⁴² and 1.3 million⁴³ members. The number of Buddhists is growing in Russia and in the world.⁴⁴ Here is an interesting fact: in 2009, Head of the Traditional Sangha of Russia Damba Ayusheyev announced that Buddhist lamas would be attached to military units with 10% or more Buddhists.⁴⁵

Wider contacts between the Russian Buddhists and Buddhists from other countries have become part of Russia’s foreign policy issues, since they might complicate relations between Moscow and Beijing. Russia, fully aware of its geopolitical interests, has opted for the essentially only correct strategy: clear delineation between religious and cultural spheres and politics. This is best illustrated by the official attitude toward Dalai Lama and his activities, one of the most sensitive issues.

Here is what Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov said on this score: speaking at the Federation Council of the RF Federal Assembly, he said that Russia was against the attempts to add political overtones to what Dalai Lama was doing and was prepared to cooperate in this respect. The Foreign Minister of Russia said that Moscow supported contacts between religions and confessions, but was opposed to attempts to mix religion with politics: “We are closely following the relations between the Chinese leaders and Dalai Lama and know that they prefer that Dalai Lama detach himself from political activities of all sorts so as not to be associated with the separatist trends in any part of China. We, too, would prefer to see normal relations between Beijing and Dalai Lama.”⁴⁶

Sergey Lavrov deemed it necessary to point out that from time to time certain forces try to exploit the pastoral functions of Dalai Lama for purposes far removed from religion. The Foreign Minister said that these efforts did not bring the desired results and did nothing good for normal communication between the Russian Buddhists and His Holiness.

Beijing, which knows that contacts between Kalmykia and the Tibetan clergy cannot be severed since they are absolutely necessary, is trying to decrease the “factors of risk” in its relations with the Republic of Kalmykia on this issue.

The Chinese have arrived at an interesting solution: they are establishing closer economic and cultural ties between Kalmykia and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. In 2007, a delegation of the autonomous region visited Kalmykia to strengthen cooperation and exchanges between them.

⁴⁰ “The Participants in the Picket in Support of the Tibetan People Sign an Address to the Government of Russia and the World Community,” *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [http://savetibet.ru/2008/04/04/petition_tibet.html], 4 April, 2008.

⁴¹ See: “A Second Action in Support of Tibet and Dalai Lama is Held in Buryatia,” *Save Tibet!* Center of Tibetan Culture and Information, available at [http://savetibet.ru/2008/04/05/tibet_buryatia.html], 5 April, 2008.

⁴² See: O. Kazmina, “Confessional Composition of Population of Russia,” *Narody i religii mira*, available at [<http://www.cbook.ru/peoples/obzor/konfess6.shtml>], 10 January, 2009.

⁴³ See: “Why Dalai Lama cannot Visit Russia,” *Golos Ameriki*, available at [<http://blogs.voanews.com/russian/russia-watch/2011/07/19/dalai-lama-russia/>], 19 July, 2011.

⁴⁴ See: O. Lipich, “More and More People All Over the World are Embracing Buddhism, said Dalai Lama,” *RIA Novosti*, available at [<http://ria.ru/religion/20111228/528298390.html>], 28 December, 2011.

⁴⁵ See, for example” E. Krivyakina, “Buddhists Recognize Medvedev as a Deity Reincarnate,” *Komsomolskaia pravda*, available at [<http://kp.ru/daily/24347.5/536873/>], 24 August, 2009.

⁴⁶ For more detail, see: “Sergey Lavrov: The RF is Against Politicization of the Activities of Dalai Lama,” *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, available at [<http://www.rg.ru/2010/05/13/lavrov-anons.html>], 13 May, 2010; C. Arpi, “Dalai Lama and the Russian Card,” The Buddhist Channel, available at [<http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=70,9233,0,0,1,0>], 29 May, 2010 (in English).

The two capitals, Elista and Lhasa (the capital of Tibet), signed an agreement on a union of twin-cities.⁴⁷

The same year, Elista hosted a Week of Tibetan Culture, which Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the PRC to Russia Liu Guchang described as an important step toward better mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the Tibet Autonomous Region of the PRC and the Republic of Kalmykia and long-term cooperation between them.⁴⁸

Kalmykia reciprocated with an initiative to build a pagoda or a Buddhist stupa to commemorate the Kalmyk monks who had long preached in Tibet.⁴⁹

Beijing is obviously trying to balance out Elista's policy to avoid spiritual and religious sympathies outweighing the economic advantages and prospects.

The Astrakhan Region

China and the Astrakhan Region established their first contacts during Soviet times.⁵⁰ On 27-29 June, 1990, the first official delegation of the Astrakhan Region arrived in the city of Dandung; the visit produced a protocol on cooperation in the economy, technology, and trade between the cities of Astrakhan and Dandung.

Three years later, an official delegation from Dandung visited Astrakhan to sign an agreement on friendship, mutually advantageous economic cooperation, and cultural exchange between Dandung and the Astrakhan Region and on the twin-cities relations between them. Officially, these agreements are still valid.

The sides intended to organize deliveries of young sturgeon and cultivation technologies from Astrakhan to Dandung; it was an important agreement with a practical follow-up. In July 1995, a delegation of the BIOS Scientific-Production Center for Cultivation of Sturgeon arrived in Dandung where it and the Department of Fisheries of the People's Government of Dandung signed a Protocol of Intention.

In January 1996, a BIOS delegation returned to Dandung to readjust the Protocol somewhat: financial problems forced BIOS to drop the previous free-of-charge scheme and sell 200 thousand fish eggs at a price of 8 cents per egg. The first two batches, however, exhausted China's finances. It should be said that until 1998 the sides regularly exchanged official delegations.

On 16-20 September, 2001, a delegation of the Embassy of the PRC in Russia headed by Fan Chunyong, Counselor for Economic Affairs at the Chinese Embassy in Russia, came to Astrakhan to familiarize itself with the agriculture of the Astrakhan Region.

Nearly a year later, on 12-14 October, 2002, a delegation of the Chinese Embassy in Russia headed by Ambassador Zhang Deguang and accompanied by Chinese businessmen paid another

⁴⁷ A Delegation from Tibet Visits Kalmykia," *Kavkazsky uzel*, available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/117649/>], 1 July, 2007.

⁴⁸ See: "The Head of Kalmykia Receives a Letter from the Chinese Ambassador to the RF Liu Guchang," Official site of the Head of the Republic of Kalmykia, available at [<http://glava.region08.ru/ru/kilyumzhinov/82-glave-kalmykii-pishut/200-na-imya-glavy-kalmykii-postupilo-pismo-ot-posla-kr.html>], 2 October, 2007.

⁴⁹ See: "The Head of Kalmykia Intends to Build a Pagoda in Tibet in Honor of the Kalmykian Monks," *Kavkazskiy uzel*, available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/120967/>], 13 August, 2007.

⁵⁰ For more detail about the chronology of their bilateral relations see, in particular: "Information about Cooperation between the Astrakhan Region and the People's Republic of China," Ministry of International and Foreign Economic Ties of the Astrakhan Region, available at [http://www.astmid.ru/uploaded/mezhdunarodka/_fà_nàèò_ÀÏ-Èèòàé_2012.01.30.doc], 26 July, 2012.

official visit to the Astrakhan Region. During the talks with the governor on mutually advantageous economic cooperation, the Chinese discussed the possibility of organizing wholesale and retail trade of Chinese products in the region. The sides agreed that tourism should be developed. Trade representative of China in Russia Wang Jiongwei informed that he intended to add the Astrakhan Region to the list of places recommended to Chinese tourists along with Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Sochi.

Since 2006, the Astrakhan Region has been activating its contacts with China; the same year, within the Year of Russia in China, the regional government held two important international events designed to further identify the prospects for cooperation between the Astrakhan Region and the PRC.

The Astrakhan Region was one of five Russian regions involved in the commercial real estate show MIPIM Asia 2006 (held in September) in Hong Kong and was one of the 20-odd countries that presented their investment projects. This helped the regional government to identify the main spheres of its possible cooperation with China: trade, education, medicine, fisheries, agriculture, and tourism.

In February 2007, cooperation between the Astrakhan Region and China entered a new stage: the Astrakhan Region established relations with Henan, the largest and most developed Chinese province. Several months later, in spring, the first work contacts with the province's department for international ties were established. It was decided to start looking into the potential for their cooperation. Askar Kabikeev, Minister of International Cooperation of the Astrakhan Region, was invited to visit the province on 10-14 June, 2007. The visit produced an agreement on a reciprocal visit to identify the main trends of future cooperation and discuss the prospects for signing a corresponding agreement.

On 2-25 June, 2007, a Chinese delegation headed by Deputy Chief of the Department for International Ties of the Government of Henan visited Astrakhan, where it familiarized itself with the region's economic, cultural, and educational potential; the sides signed a Protocol of Intention, the main point of which was a cooperation agreement for 2007-2008.

On 17-19 March, 2008, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Henan People's Political Consultative Council Zhao Ganteo arrived in the Astrakhan Region on an official visit to discuss bilateral trade and economic cooperation in the form of Chinese investments in the region's economy, the use of Chinese cotton-growing technology, etc.

On 9-12 June, 2008, the Astrakhan Region was presented in Beijing at the Russian Embassy to China—the central event during the year of development of Astrakhan-Chinese relations. It was attended by official representatives of the PRC, including officials of federal structures, vice governors, heads of foreign affairs chancelleries, and people responsible for contacts with other countries of the provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Gansu, Yunnan, Hebei and Henan, and other Chinese regions. Chinese businessmen proved to be as interested in the prospects offered by the Astrakhan Region as the official circles. The presentation at the RF Embassy in Beijing attracted the leading figures of top Chinese companies involved in trade, production, investments, and tourism, as well as representatives of the Chinese Small and Medium Business Association, the Chinese Transport Association, the China International Freight Forwarders Association, etc.

On 12-14 June, 2008, Governor of the Astrakhan Region Alexander Zhilkin visited the Henan Province as head of a delegation of the region's key ministers: he and his colleagues familiarized themselves with the province's industrial and tourist potential and discussed a wide range of issues of mutual interest with the heads of the province and the state university of Zhengzhou, the province's capital.

On 21-22 October, 2008, an official delegation from Henan headed by Vice Governor Zhang Dawei arrived in Astrakhan to discuss joint projects in the oil and gas sphere, as well as roads and

construction, with the region's governor. The Chinese side received information about the construction projects and the conditions on which it could be involved in them.

The contacts continued in November 2011, at the 3rd China Overseas Investment Fair COIFair 2011; Astrakhan arrived with a portfolio of investment projects including:

- (1) developing North Caspian oil and gas fields;
- (2) building the Alcha agro-industrial park;
- (3) creating sturgeon-growing facilities;
- (4) building a sugar-beetroot processing plant;
- (5) establishing the Zaboldinsky industrial-commercial park;
- (6) housing construction in several districts (Moshkarikha, Bekhterev, and the Nachalovskoe Highway);
- (7) manufacturing city and intercity buses in the Astrakhan Region;
- (8) developing efficient innovation technology for the manufacture of pharmaceuticals and medicine based on Caspian lotus;
- (9) constructing a state-of-the-art hothouse tomato complex with a total area of 215 hectares;
- (10) building the first and second phases of the Olya port.⁵¹

In 2012, bilateral cooperation received a significant boost when a delegation from the Henan Province came on an official visit to the Astrakhan Region.⁵² The Chinese came to discuss in greater detail bilateral trade, as well as economic and humanitarian cooperation, the foundations of which were envisaged in the Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological, and Cultural Cooperation signed in 2008.

The sides discussed the possibility of direct air flights between the Astrakhan Region and China which, the Chinese argued, would bring Chinese businesses and tourists to the Astrakhan Region. They intended to look into the details and identify which of the national air companies might be interested in the project; the Chinese were eager to help organize contacts between the tourist companies of both regions.

The energy industry, particularly the oil and gas complex, constitutes the most promising sphere of cooperation. The Astrakhan Region has already organized cooperation between LUKoil and Gazprom, which will work together with Chinese partners at six oil and gas fields.⁵³

Cooperation between the Astrakhan Region and China in building drilling platforms is gaining momentum: in May 2010, China's Yantai CIMC Raffles Offshore Ltd. placed an order for a Super M2 Jackup Drilling Platform (which will be installed in the Turkmen sector of the Caspian⁵⁴) with Krasnye Barrikady, one of the leading Astrakhan dockyards. It was launched in June 2011; the

⁵¹ See: "The Government of the Astrakhan Region Extends its International Cooperation with China," *Astrakhansk-
ie novosti*, available at [<http://astra-novosti.ru/правительство-астраханской-области-4/>], 7 November, 2011.

⁵² For more detail, see: "The Astrakhan Region and the Henan Province are Extending Their Partnership," Ministry of International and Foreign Economic Ties of the Astrakhan Region, available at [<http://www.astmid.ru/index.php?mode=news&iid=1332162483>], 27 July, 2012.

⁵³ See: "The Astrakhan Region is Seeking Chinese Investments," *Vesti/Ekonomika*, available at [<http://www.vestifinance.ru/articles/3541>], 9 November, 2011.

⁵⁴ See: "Astrakhan Shipbuilders Add New Production Facilities to Meet the Order of Oil Business," Astrakhan's site, available at [<http://astrahan.gs/novosti-astraxani/10901-astrahansk-ye-sudostroitel-i-rasshiryayut-moshnosti-pod-novie-zakaz-dlya-neftyanykov.html>], 23 June, 2012.

Astrakhan University is member of SCO University (a network university engaged in an international educational program in Asia), the only one of the universities of the Northern Caspian and the Caucasus that specializes in information technology.⁶³

There is a shortage of workforce in the Astrakhan Region, which explains why it invites 14,785 labor migrants (the quota for 2011). This shortage is most acutely felt in agriculture (over 80%), followed by the processing and construction spheres.⁶⁴

To close the gap, the region needed 16.5 thousand labor migrants in 2012.⁶⁵

In 2011, the region gathered one million tons of vegetables and water melons, which would have been impossible under Soviet power for the simple reason that labor migrants proved to be much better workers than soldiers and students, the main agricultural workforce in Soviet times.⁶⁶ Many researchers think that it was Chinese guest workers who made the greatest contribution.⁶⁷

There are different opinions about Chinese and other labor migrants: according to public opinion polls, 45% of the respondents in the Astrakhan Region agreed that "Russia should mainly invite Russians from the former republics" (23%) and "The fewer migrants there are in Russia the better" (22%); 32% supported the following statements: "Russia should accept all migrants wishing to live and work there, irrespective of their nationality and country of origin" (13%); "There is nothing bad in the fact that Azeris, Armenians, Georgians, Tajiks, etc. come to Russia" (10%) and "There is nothing bad in the fact that Chinese, Afghan, and African migrants come to Russia" (9%).⁶⁸

This attitude is based on what the people in the region think about migrants: 20% believe that the newcomers add to the crime statistics; 18% that they cause ethnic conflicts; 16% that they do not respect the local people and their traditions; and 14% that they monopolize the markets.⁶⁹

On the whole, people are less concerned about Chinese migrants and their compact settlements because migrants from the Southern Caucasus outnumber them by far.

Illegal Chinese migrants are deported: in January 2012, eight Chinese were brought to court and deported by the Administration of the Federal Bailiff Service for the Astrakhan Region.⁷⁰

Conclusion

China's policy in the Northern Caspian region is active and multivectoral, while its relations with Kalmykia and the Astrakhan Region can be further developed.

⁶³ For more detail, see: "The Higher Educational Establishments which Coordinate Training for the USCO," SCO University, available at [http://www.eduweek.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=5&Itemid=7&lang=ru], 27 July, 2012.

⁶⁴ See: "The Astrakhan Region can Expect Labor Migrants in the Coming Year," Ministry of Social Development and Labor of the Astrakhan Region, available at [<http://www.minsoctrud.astrobl.ru/event/trudovye-otnosheniya/trudovaya-migratsiya/astrohanskaya-oblast-mozhet-rasschityvat-na-trudovy>], 19 August, 2010.

⁶⁵ See: K. Aleksandrov, "Prioritet v trudoustroystve za rossiyanami," *Volga*, 12 January, 2012.

⁶⁶ See: N. Bykova, "Migratsiia ostanovit nevozmozhno," *Stavropolskaia pravda*, 24 December, 2011.

⁶⁷ See, for example: A. Malinin, "Kitayskaia interventsia. Astrakhanskii selchane stolknulis s novoy, opasnoy problemoy!" *Fakt i kompromat* (weekly), 18 November, 2011.

⁶⁸ See, for example: *Protokol zasedania Obshchestvenno-konsultativnogo soveta pri Upravlenii Federalnoy migratsionnoy sluzhby po Astrakhanskoy oblasti*, No. 4, Astrakhan, 15 September, 2009.

⁶⁹ See: *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ See: "Astrakhan Bailiffs Deport Citizens of China Who Lived Illegally in Russia," Administration of the Federal Bailiff Service for the Astrakhan Region, available at [<http://www.r30.fssprus.ru/news/document21085013/>], 20 January, 2012.

China is attracted by the region's advantageous geopolitical location: the Northern Caspian is a bridge between Central Asia and the Caucasus, which means that by extending and deepening its contacts with the Russian regions, China is seeking to increase its influence there.

ISRAEL AND AZERBAIJAN: TO COUNTERACT IRAN

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Introduction

It is well known that Azerbaijan's history does not have any anti-Semitic traditions. And during the time of the Russian and Soviet empires, Azerbaijan was not poisoned by anti-Semitism. Obviously, anti-Semitism has not been an issue in Azerbaijan. Moreover, many famous Jews were born and studied in Azerbaijan. The brilliant scientist of modern physics and Nobel Prize Laureate Lev Landau was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 1908 and attended Baku State University in 1922.¹

¹ See: Lev Davidovich Landau, *MacTutor History of Mathematics—University of St Andrews, Scotland*, available at [<http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/>

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the historically close and warm relations between the Jews and Azeris became a solid base for mutual cooperation between the State of Israel and the Republic of Azerbaijan. Both countries have a strategic location but an unfriendly foreign environment, which pushes them to be close and expand cooperation. Azerbaijan and Israel cooperate to counteract or neutralize foreign threats, which is the subject of this paper.

Landau_Lev.html]. Nobelprize.org, available at [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/physics/laureates/1962/landau.html].

Brief Historical Background

Historic sources and research confirm that Jews have lived in Azerbaijan for centuries. They are both Jews of Persian origin (also known as Caucasian Mountain Jews) and Ashkenazi.² The Persian

² See: J. Sloane, "The Virtual Jewish History Tour, Azerbaijan. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise," *The Jewish Virtual Library*, available at [<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Azerbaijan.html>].

Jews can be traced back to Azerbaijan before the 5th century. Their history is more than 2,000 years old, and Azerbaijan has historically always welcomed them. In the 19th century, during the Russian Empire, Ashkenazi began settling in Azerbaijan. And other Ashkenazi Jews came to Azerbaijan during World War II to escape the Nazis.³

In the 19th century, Baku became a center of active Zionism in the Russian Empire. The first branch of Havevei Zion (lovers of Zion) was set up in Baku in 1891. And the first choir synagogue was opened in Baku in 1910.⁴ As early as 1883, oil companies owned by the Rothschild family (of Jewish origin) entered the scene in Baku followed by Rockefeller's gigantic Standard Oil Company.⁵ Thus, the Jews lived in peace and friendship with the local Azeris and engaged in successful business in this country.

In the period of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR, 1918-1920), during which independent Azerbaijan formulated its key ideological, political, and security priorities, the Jewish Popular University was established (1919) and periodicals were published in Yiddish and Hebrew. Moreover, Dr Yevsei Gindes, an Ashkenazi Jew, was Minister of Health in the ADR's Cabinet of Minister under first Prime Minister Fatali Khan Khoyski.⁶

In Soviet times, Jews continued to arrive and settle in Azerbaijan. The Jews in Soviet Azerbaijan were not exposed to the widespread discrimination that was typical in other parts of the U.S.S.R. So, the Ashkenazi Jews formed a significant part of the intellectual and technocratic elites in Soviet Azerbaijan.⁷

Political Dynamics in the Southern Caucasus and Iran's Priorities Toward the Region

The Russo-Georgian War of 2008 significantly shifted South Caucasian policy and created a new political atmosphere in this part of the world. As a result of the war, a completely new strategic situation emerged in the region.⁸

Previously, following Azerbaijan's "Contract of the Century" of 1994, the strategic situation in the Southern Caucasus could be characterized as a period of the West's large-scale penetration. The United States and the European Union, as well as Turkey, started to play a significant role in South Caucasian affairs, which were traditionally orchestrated by Iran and Russia.

³ See: A. Tepper, "The Azeri Exception," *Jewish Ideas Daily*, 29 October, 2010, available at [<http://www.jewishideasdaily.com/content/module/2010/10/29/main-feature/1/the-azeri-exception>].

⁴ See: Elijah, "Azerbaijani Jews," *Bible Discovered*, 25 April, 2009, available at [<http://www.biblediscovered.com/jewish-hebrew-people-in-the-world/azerbaijani-jews/>].

⁵ See: A.L. Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity Under Russian Rule*, Hoover Institution Press 1992, p. 22, available at [http://ebookey.org/The-Azerbaijani-Turks-Power-and-Identity-Under-Russian-Rule_776519.html#3wBsPMWYsEpAcHCu.99].

⁶ See: "Reference for Azerbaijani Jews," Search.com, available at: [http://www.search.com/reference/Azerbaijani_Jews].

⁷ See: A. Murinson, "Jews in Azerbaijan: A History Spanning Three Millennia," *Visions of Azerbaijan*, available at [<http://www.visions.az/history,112/>].

⁸ See: K. Strachota, W. Gorecki, *The Southern Caucasus and Central Asia after the Russian-Georgian War—the Geopolitical Consequences*, Center for Eastern Studies, Poland, 24 September, 2008, available at [http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/commentary_10.pdf].

Moreover, the Clinton administration launched and the Bush administration continued several strategic programs (Partnership for Peace, the Silk Road Strategy Act, later the Caspian Watch, the EU's Eastern Partnership, and others) oriented toward strengthening the West's presence and minimizing both Iranian and Russian influence in this very sensitive part of the world. Unlike Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia started to drift slowly toward NATO membership. In addition, the South Caucasian countries, particularly Azerbaijan and Georgia, started to develop strong relations with the State of Israel.

Meanwhile, Iran, as a key regional player, reacted very painfully to the West's aggressive "advance" into the Iran's and Russia's traditional sphere of influence. Iran's hostility toward the United States and Israel pushed Tehran to stop or limit Western penetration, as well as Israel's cooperation with Azerbaijan and Georgia. Iran welcomed the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 and considered this war to be a brilliant opportunity to reverse the region's strategic atmosphere from pro-Western to much more pro-Russian, which also meant pro-Iranian.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as we know, considers Russia to be a key ally in resisting the United States. Tehran prefers to be under Russia's strategic umbrella and cooperates with Moscow on global and regional levels. Tehran supports the strengthening of Russia's influence in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia for strategic reasons.⁹ In the face of possible American and/or Israeli military options to stop its nuclear program, Iran believes that Russia's dominance in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia means that neither the U.S. nor NATO will be able to deploy military bases in close proximity to the Iranian border.

Meanwhile, Russia's dominance also needs Iran as a strong co-player to secure both the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia under Moscow's control or jointly with Iran. Therefore, we can identify Tehran's strategic priorities in the Southern Caucasus as follows:

- to counter and reduce U.S. influence;
- to oppose U.S., NATO, and EU initiatives and long-term objectives;
- to prevent the deployment of U.S./NATO troops;
- to stop both Georgia and Azerbaijan from moving toward NATO/EU membership;
- to minimize Israel's influence and cooperation with the South Caucasian countries;
- to arrange the security system in accordance with Iran's strategic interests;
- to control the Caspian energy resources and transportation routes;
- to contain the rising influence of Turkey and the Turkey-Azerbaijani alliance;
- to prolong Turkish-Armenian hostility;
- to oppose strategic cooperation in the Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan triangle;
- to ensure Russia's dominance and the current status-quo;
- to support Russia's leading role in the Caspian-Caucasus region.

It is beneficial for Iran to maintain the current status-quo and ensure Russia's dominance in the region. This will enable Iran to reach its paramount strategic goal of limiting or decreasing U.S. influence and preventing America's attempts to redesign the region's political landscape to secure Washington's dominance.

⁹ See: M. Khalifa-zadeh, "Iran and the Southern Caucasus: A Struggle for Influence," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, 2011, available at [<http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2011-01-eng/05.shtml>].

Iran's Attitude and Priorities Toward the Republic of Azerbaijan

In addition to everything else, Iran and Azerbaijan are Shi'ite Muslim countries and have a common historic and cultural heritage, while the Islamic Republic of Iran has a special attitude toward the Republic of Azerbaijan. This attitude originates from the nature of power in Tehran and has a historical and political background. Altogether, these factors determine Iran's policy toward Azerbaijan.

It stands to reason that Iran was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's return to independence in 1991. Tehran established diplomatic relations with Baku on 22 March, 1992. However, since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the unstable relations between Iran and Azerbaijan demonstrate that the Republic of Azerbaijan's independent and secular status makes Tehran feel uncomfortable or insecure. Tehran is also fuming over Baku's strategic relations with Iran's enemies—the United States and Israel.

The government in Tehran considers the Republic of Azerbaijan to be a direct challenge and threat to its security and political future. This key point in Tehran's calculations toward Azerbaijan possibly originates from the following considerations:

Azerbaijan declared the democratic and secular path of development as early as 1918 at the time of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR).¹⁰ After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan adopted the ADR's political values. And now, the modern Republic of Azerbaijan, unlike the Islamic Republic of Iran, is demonstrating a completely different way of development for a country with a predominantly Shi'ite population.

Next, notwithstanding Russia's and Iran's strong opposition, Baku has been able to establish relations with the United States, the European Union, NATO, and Israel. Moreover, Baku is continuing this strategy despite the direct and angry calls from Tehran to stop cooperation with "Great Satan" (the United States) and "Small Satan" (Israel).¹¹ Tehran's official propaganda declares Israel to be the main enemy of the Islamic world. However, Azerbaijan demonstrates the opposite opinion: Israel is not an enemy, moreover, Israel is a friendly country, and Muslims and Jews can live in peace and friendship.

Additionally, unlike the Shi'a ideology in Iran, nationalism and the Turkish identity are key factors in formulating Azerbaijan's political nature, as well as foreign and security policy. Azerbaijan is developing close ties with Turkey, which is Iran's rival in the Islamic world over Turkey's Kemalist heritage. Both Baku and Ankara cooperate and operate as a strong alliance at the global and regional levels, which makes Iran angry as well.

However, the main factor having a negative impact on Iran's attitude toward Azerbaijan is two "divided" Azerbaijanis. This is the fundamental and most influential factor in Tehran's attitude toward Baku.

Iran is very concerned that Iranian Azeris may establish their own Azerbaijani state, as happened early in 20th century,¹² or join the Republic of Azerbaijan. In this context, the existence of the Repub-

¹⁰ See: "Background Note: Azerbaijan," U.S. Department of State, 23 March 2012, available at [<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2909.htm>].

¹¹ N. O'Malley, "'Great Satan' Backs 'Small Satan': Obama Reaffirms Stance against Iran," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 March, 2012, available at [<http://www.smh.com.au/world/great-satan-backs-small-satan-obama-reaffirms-stance-against-iran-20120306-1uf46.html>].

¹² See: N.L. Nassibli, "Azerbaijan-Iran Relations: Challenges and Prospects," Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Belfer Center for Science and International Development, [http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/12750/azerbaijan_iran_relations.html].

lic of Azerbaijan is a strategic factor for Iran's long-term calculations, as well as for the Azeri national-liberation movement in this country. The mullah's regime in Tehran feels extremely uncomfortable about the possibility of Azerbaijan's secular and successful experience inspiring or igniting the Iranian Azeris to put an end to the mullah's power. Moreover, the nightmare that the West may use Iranian Azeris or other strategic options (divide unpredictable Iran and create a United Azerbaijan as a secular and pro-Western state) against Tehran's regime pushes Iran to be aggressive toward the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Thus, Azerbaijan's independence is a strong exacerbating factor for Iran's policymakers. Therefore, Iran's priorities toward Azerbaijan can be identified as follows:

- to limit and minimize the Republic of Azerbaijan's influence on Iranian Azeris;
- to keep Azerbaijan under permanent pressure and intimidate it by threatening to use military force;
- to extend the ideas of the Iranian Islamic revolution to Azerbaijan;
- to intensify Shi'ite propaganda and expand the Islamic network within the country;
- to destabilize the political situation in Baku and try to establish a pro-Islamic regime;
- to intensify intelligence activity and expand the espionage network;
- to support the separatism of local ethnic groups (Talish, Lezghian, others);
- to stop Israel's cooperation with Azerbaijan and Georgia;
- to minimize America's influence and stop Azerbaijan's bid for EU/NATO membership;
- to damage Azerbaijan's international image;
- to contain Azerbaijan's rise to regional power;
- to provide assistance to Azerbaijan's regional rival—Armenia;
- to maintain the balance between Azerbaijan and Armenia;
- to keep Azerbaijan engaged in the war with Armenia;
- to support Russia's "cosmetic" attempts to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict;
- to keep Azerbaijan under Russia's dominance.

Next, as the tension between Iran and the United States and Israel dramatically grows, Iran is increasing the pressure and threatening to use military force against Azerbaijan.¹³ In the face of America's military option to stop the nuclear program, Iran is trying to keep Azerbaijan out of the anti-Iranian alliance. An ideological element must also be identified in Iran's calculations to secure Azerbaijan's neutrality. Tehran's propaganda, as in the Iran-Iraq war, considers Shi'ism to be a powerful ideological factor in consolidating the nation to fight against the enemy. If the Republic of Azerbaijan, as the second Shi'a country in the world, is a member of the anti-Iran alliance, it will significantly decrease the mullah's ideological defense—that only Shi'ism can stop the "crusaders" and the Jews.

¹³ See: "Commander Urges Azerbaijan to Respect Islamic Rules," 10 August, 2011, *ArabsToday* (UK), available at [http://www.arabstoday.net/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21867:commander-urges-azerbaijan-to-respect-islamic-rules-&catid=43:arab-world].

Azerbaijan's Approach Toward Israel

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan has been under direct pressure from Russia and Iran. Russia supports Armenia politically, militarily, and economically, which helps Armenia to occupy the Azerbaijani territories of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Iran is also helping Armenia and blames Azerbaijan for its close ties with the United States and Israel.¹⁵

It should be noted that since the restoration of its national independence in 1991, Azerbaijan has been trying to strengthen its independence and liberate the territories occupied by Armenia. Taking into account Russian and Iranian pressure, as well as trying to stabilize and strengthen Azerbaijan's independence, late Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliev oriented the country's strategic policy toward the West and Israel. In 1997, he met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who made a brief stop in Baku. The two men discussed the threats posed by Iran and talked about Israeli-Azerbaijani intelligence cooperation. Some scholars believe that this meeting was a starting point in the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel.¹⁶

As a continuation of Heydar Aliev's strategy, on 29 June, 2009, current Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliev welcomed Israeli President Shimon Peres to Baku. President Aliev said: "I am happy to host you in my country. This is a most important visit for Azerbaijan and we are interested in expanding and strengthening the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel in the areas of security, diplomacy and the economy."¹⁷

This visit was held despite the strong opposition from Iran aimed at cancelling the Israeli president's visit to Azerbaijan.¹⁸ And, as Israeli experts note, President Aliev's decision gained high respect in Israel. "The clear position of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliev on relations with Israel, in particular his refusal to submit to the demands of Iran to cancel the visit of Israeli President Shimon Peres to Baku and his refusal to joint any anti-Israel campaigns cause sincere respect in Israel."¹⁹

The cooperation with Israel is vital for Azerbaijan for several strategic reasons.

- First, we agree with the opinion that both Azerbaijan and Israel have a similar or near-identical sense of regional insecurity, which originates from the unfriendly environment.²⁰ Azerbaijan is very concerned that Iran is threatening to use force and is gradually expanding its

¹⁴ See: "Russia Extends Lease on Military Base in Armenia Through 2044," *RIA Novosti*, 20 August, 2010, available at [http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20100820/160276128.html].

¹⁵ See: L. David, "Iran Warns Azerbaijan: Keep Mossad Out," *Arutz Sheva*, 12 February, 2012, available at [<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/152671>].

¹⁶ See: I. Bourtnan, "Israel and Azerbaijan's Furtive Embrace," *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2006, pp. 47-57, available at [<http://www.meforum.org/987/israel-and-azerbaijans-furtive-embrace>].

¹⁷ "Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Shimon Peres in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan for Historic First Visit," 28 June, 2009, available at [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2009/President_Peris_visits_Azerbaijan_and_Kazakhstan_28_Jun_2009.htm].

¹⁸ See: "Iran Recalls Azerbaijan Envoy Following Peres Visit," *JTA* (The Global News Service of the Jewish People), 29 June, 2009, available at [<http://www.jta.org/news/article/2009/06/29/1006211/iran-recalls-azerbaijan-envoy-following-peres-visit>].

¹⁹ "Azerbaijan, Israel have Become 'Strategic Allies', Political analyst Arye Gut comments for News.Az," 28 June, 2011, available at [<http://news.az/articles/politics/39340>].

²⁰ See: "Iran Threatens Pre-emptive Action amid Nuclear Tensions," NBC News and news services updated 21 February, 2012, available at [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46461790/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/iran-threatens-pre-emptive-action-amid-nuclear-tensions/].

intelligence network in Baku and in other cities.²¹ Moreover, Iran is providing Armenia with large-scale assistance.²² Iran's behavior and unfriendly attitude creates huge mistrust that seriously damages Iranian-Azerbaijani relations despite official slogans of friendship and brotherhood between the two countries.²³

- Second, the Israeli-Armenian disagreement over the so-called "genocide," or even Armenia blaming the Jews for the "Armenian genocide,"²⁴ pushes Azerbaijan to cooperate with Israel on this matter. The Azerbaijani political elite relies on Israeli or Jewish support to counter the Armenian diaspora, particularly in the United States and Europe. As early as 1997, during his official working visit to the U.S., President Heydar Aliiev of Azerbaijan met in New York with representatives of American Jewish organizations and asked them to help Azerbaijan.²⁵ Azerbaijan is grateful to Israel for lending the Jewish lobby's weight in Washington to counterbalance the Armenian lobby and improve Azeri-American relations.²⁶

The next reason is that the decades-long successful experience of Turkish-Israeli partnership is inspiring Azerbaijani decision-makers to create strategic ties with Israel. Notwithstanding the temporary problems in Turkish-Israeli relations, Ankara "understands that its regional aspirations require correct relations with the Jewish state."²⁷ Moreover, according to Zvi Elpeleg, former Israeli ambassador to Turkey: "I do not think that relations will deteriorate because there are fundamental reasons why Turkey and Israel have the same interests."²⁸ Meanwhile, Azerbaijan is trying to show that Baku can solve or manage, as an honest broker, the latest Israeli-Turkish disagreements that emerged as a result of the Mavi Marmara incident. Undoubtedly, this kind of mediation can expand Baku's role in Middle Eastern affairs and strengthen Azerbaijan's international capacity.

Moreover, Baku welcomes the triangular security and defense partnership among Turkey, Israel, and Azerbaijan that is flourishing in energy affairs.²⁹ We believe that the triangular partnership scheme could be an effective tool in strengthening and supporting America's diplomacy, as well as in counterbalancing the Iran-Russia axis in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia.

Undoubtedly, defense cooperation aimed at modernizing the Azerbaijani Army is the next and most important strategic step of high priority for Baku in its relations with Tel-Aviv. In 1992-1994, Israel supported Azerbaijan in the war with Armenia and supplied Stinger missiles and other weapons

²¹ See: Firuzabadi, "Aliiev'i halka baski konusunda uyardi," Tahran, 10 Ađustos, 2011, available at [<http://www.mehrnews.com/tr/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1380193>].

²² See: "Iran Provides Every Support to Armenia—Azerbaijani MP," 14 February, 2012, available at [<http://www.news.az/articles/politics/54665>].

²³ See: J. Manuelian, "Jews, Zionists behind Armenian Genocide," 23 April, 2004, available at [<http://secretjews.wordpress.com/006/>].

²⁴ "Israel 'Not to Recognize' Armenian Version of 1915 Massacres. News.Az Interviews Israeli Journalist and Political Activist Avigdor Eskin," 20 June, 2011, available at [<http://www.news.az/articles/politics/38758>].

²⁵ See: *Speech of Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliiev on the Official Reception in Honor of President Heydar Aliiev on Behalf of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations*, 28 July, 1997, Heydar Aliiev Heritage International Online Library, available at [<http://library.Aliiev-heritage.org/en/7423863.html>].

²⁶ See: I. Bourtman, op. cit.

²⁷ E. Inbar, "Israeli Turkish Tensions and Beyond," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 12 March, 2010, available at [<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=israeli-turkish-tensions-and-beyond-2010-03-12>].

²⁸ S. Demirtaş, "Amid Sound and Fury, Turkey-Israel Alliance Endures," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 13 April, 2012, available at [<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/10705597.asp>].

²⁹ See: A. Murinson, "Azerbaijan-Turkey-Israel Relations: The Energy Factor," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3, September 2008, available at [http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/documents/2008sep_murinson4.pdf].

to Azerbaijani troops.³⁰ Moreover, the Jews of Azerbaijan fought together with the Azeris against the Armenians. Mountain Jew Albert Agarunov, an Azerbaijani Army officer, became a National Hero of Azerbaijan.³¹ So the latest news related to bilateral defense cooperation is that Azerbaijan has signed a deal to buy arms worth \$1.5 billion from Israel.³²

Finally, Azerbaijan considers relations with Israel to be part of a long-term strategy to draw closer to the United States and so contain the strong Iranian and Russian pressure. At present, Israeli-Azerbaijani cooperation covers foreign policy, military, economy, and intelligence. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan has a Diplomatic Mission in Tel Aviv because Baku does not want to jeopardize its relations with the Muslim countries. Moreover, neither side wants to publicize its relations. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev described his country's relationship with the Jewish state as an iceberg: "nine-tenth of it is below the surface."³³

Israel's Priorities Toward Azerbaijan

Dr Ariel Cohen of the Washington, D.C.-based Heritage Foundation argues: "Israel's strategic priorities include developing good diplomatic and economic relations with Caucasus and Central Asia countries, preventing Iran from increasing its influence in the region, and participating in energy projects, including oil and gas imports to Israel."³⁴

On 23-24 April, 2012, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman came to Baku on a two-day official visit. He met with President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan. The two men discussed bilateral relations and Iran. According to Israeli analysts: "Lieberman's visit comes one month after the American magazine *Foreign Policy* reported that Azerbaijan has given Israel access to Azerbaijani airbases, which is considered an important step toward a possible attack on Iran."³⁵ Both Azerbaijan and Israel rejected the allegations and Lieberman's comments in Baku on this matter: "Such reports are from the sphere of science fiction and do not correspond with the truth."³⁶

Undoubtedly, Lieberman's visit once again confirms the strategic character of Israeli-Azerbaijani ties. According to the Israeli news media: "The foreign minister acknowledged that Israel and

³⁰ See: S. Cagaptay, A. Murinson, "Good Relations between Azerbaijan and Israel: A Model for Other Muslim States in Eurasia?" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 30 March, 2005, available at [<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/good-relations-between-azerbaijan-and-israel-a-model-for-other-muslim-state>].

³¹ See: "Address of Jewish Diaspora of Azerbaijan, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe," OSCE, 19 June, 2003, available at [<http://www.osce.org/secretariat/42078>].

³² See: "Azerbaijan Rejects Iran Fears over Israel 'Arms Buy,'" *Defense News*, 29 February, 2012, available at [<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120229/DEFREG04/302290002/Azerbaijan-Rejects-Iran-Fears-Over-Israel-8216-Arms-Buy-8217->].

³³ P. Brennan, "Israeli-Azerbaijan Deal Leaked, Bolton Blames Obama," 29 March, 2012, available at [<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/294856/bolton-blames-obama-leaking-israeli-azerbaijan-relationship-patrick-brennan>].

³⁴ A. Cohen, K. DeCorla-Souza, "Eurasian Energy and Israel's Choices," The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies Bar-Ilan University, *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, No. 88, February 2011, available at [<http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/MSPS88.pdf>].

³⁵ "Lieberman Denies Israel has Access to Azerbaijan Air Bases," *JewishJournal.com*, 23 April, 2012, available at [http://www.jewishjournal.com/israel/article/lieberman_denies_israel_has_access_to_azerbaijan_air_bases_20120423/].

³⁶ "Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman Visits North Azerbaijan on 20th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations," *BayBak*, Azerbaijan, 24 April, 2012, available at [<http://en.baybak.com/israeli-foreign-minister-avigdor-lieberman-visits-north-azerbaijan-on-20th-anniversary-of-diplomatic-relations.azr>].

Azerbaijan—which is strategically located on Iran’s northern border—have good, stable relations, and he described it as an ‘important country which is now a member of the U.N. Security Council.’”³⁷

It is well known that Israeli policymakers consider Azerbaijan and the Caspian littoral to be part of the Greater Middle East.³⁸ And Israel, as a country with decades-long hostility toward the Arab states, is trying to enhance its security, as well as foreign image and international relations. Israel launched a strategy to develop relations with the non-Arab Muslim states. And as some scholars note: “Expanding its influence into an area of the world heavily Muslim but not Arab has long been a strategic Israeli objective.”³⁹

Indeed, the strategy is designed to improve relations with the Islamic world, as well as to demonstrate that Israel can have peaceful relations with Muslim states. Israel is trying to prove that there is no Israel-Muslim or Jews-Muslim confrontation. The collapse of the U.S.S.R. provided a brilliant opportunity for developing relations with the newly independent former Soviet Muslim republics. And now Israel has diplomatic relations with nine non-Arab Muslim states.⁴⁰

Azerbaijan’s experience of peaceful coexistence between Azeris and Jews is attractive to the Israeli political elite. It also creates a favorable background for developing long-term partnership. And Israeli policymakers are reacting enthusiastically and positively to Azerbaijan’s attempts to establish close bilateral relations.

However, the Islamic Republic of Iran forms the backbone of Israel’s relations toward Azerbaijan. Iran presents the most serious threat to Israel. And Israel launched a strategy of active diplomacy in the regions surrounding Iran. In May 2009, during the conference at the Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University, former Chief of Israeli Defense Intelligence Major General Aharon Zeevi Farkash said: “It is very important to form a coalition with the moderate Sunnite countries which are also aware of the Iranian nuclear threat.” Moreover, according to Israeli analyst Uzi Rabbi, Israel must conduct active diplomacy in the regions surrounding Iran and “...to resist Iranian aggression several coalition alliances should be formed.”⁴¹

Thus, due to its strategic location along Iran’s northern border, Azerbaijan is a top priority in Israel’s foreign policy toward the CIS. Israeli policymakers take into account that Azerbaijan feels insecurity and distrust toward Iran because of Tehran’s large-scale assistance to Armenia, which occupies Azerbaijani territory.

In this context, it should be noted that Israel has repeatedly declared that Tel Aviv supports Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity. Ex-Ambassador of Israel to Turkey and ex-Deputy Foreign Minister Pinkhaz Avivi said: “Our position is the following: we recognize the principle of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity... We don’t try to hide the fact that our relations with Azerbaijan are more intense and rewarding than our relations with Armenia and that relations with Azerbaijan are strategically important for us.” He also added in an interview: “We have common goals. We understand Azerbaijan’s concern with its Iranian neighbor better than anyone, and that’s a good ground for rapprochement. Our dialog with Armenia, on the other hand, has always been interconnected with our relations with Turkey.”⁴²

³⁷ H. Keinon, “Reports Baku Gave Israel Airfields are Fiction,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 April, 2012, available at [<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=267268>].

³⁸ See: A. Bülent, “Post-Cold War Realities: Israel’s Strategy in Azerbaijan and Central Asia,” *Middle East Policy*, January 1998, pp. 68-69, available at [<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-20297513.html>].

³⁹ I. Bourttman, op. cit.

⁴⁰ See: “Israel, Background Notes,” U.S. Department of State, available at [www.state.gov].

⁴¹ A. Grigoryan, “Priority Directions in the Foreign Policy of Israel: Southern Caucasus and Central Asia,” Noravank Foundation, 22 September, 2009, available at [http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=3623].

⁴² Pinkaz Avivi: “We Embrace the Potential of Economic Ties with the South Caucasus,” *Vestnik Kavkaza*, 7 November, 2011, available at [<http://vestnikkavkaza.net/interviews/politics/19641.html>].

The Turkish factor is undoubtedly essential for Israel's foreign and security policy. And Israel considers the Turkish-Azerbaijani alliance to be a favorable factor in deepening and enhancing security and defense cooperation with Azerbaijan despite some cooling of Israel's relations with Ankara. Israel considers the expansion of political and defense cooperation with Azerbaijan to be a determining factor in improving its relations with Turkey. Thus, the Israeli military industry is now a major provider of advanced aviation, anti-tank artillery, and anti-infantry weapon systems to Azerbaijan. Moreover, Aeronautics Defense Systems of Israel is helping Azerbaijan to assemble unmanned aircrafts.⁴³ The latest news is that Israeli defense officials have reportedly confirmed a deal to sell Azerbaijan unmanned military aircraft, antiaircraft, and missile defense systems for some \$1.6 billion.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Israel and Azerbaijan are intensively cooperating in security issues. In October 2001, President Heydar Aliiev of Azerbaijan met with Israel's ambassador Eitan Naeh and confirmed that "their positions in the fight against international terrorism ... were identical." And according to Israeli experts, groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir threaten both Tel Aviv and Baku. Israeli analysts also argue that some Wahhabi organizations may have found refuge in Azerbaijan.⁴⁵ Indeed, cooperation in security covers information exchange, data analysis (including satellite information), briefings, and other activities. Israel trains Azerbaijani security and intelligence service officers and also provides security for Azeri President on foreign visits. Some sources report that Israel set up electronic listening stations along the Caspian Sea and Iranian border.⁴⁶

Israel's next priority is to counter Iran's intelligence network in Azerbaijan and in other Muslim countries of the CIS. Iran is trying to increase its political influence on its immediate neighbors, as well as intensify intelligence operations, particularly in Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani media report that national security services have arrested 22 people who were hired by Iran to carry out terrorist attacks against the U.S. and Israeli embassies, as well as Western-linked groups and companies in Baku. In February 2012, the Azerbaijani Ministry of National Security announced the arrest of a terrorist group allegedly working for Iran's secret services. And in January 2012, the Azerbaijani secret service arrested two people accused of plotting to kill two teachers at a Jewish school in Baku. In 2007, Azerbaijan arrested 15 people in connection with an alleged Iranian-linked spy network accused of passing on intelligence regarding Western and Israeli activities.⁴⁷

Obviously, Azeri-Israeli security cooperation is vital and beneficial for Baku and Tel Aviv. The failure of Azeri-Israeli joint efforts to counter Iran would be daunting. Moreover, it would have unpredictable consequences for Baku and Tel Aviv. Tehran's attempts to expand Shi'ite and Iranian ideology may have a catastrophic impact on Azerbaijan's striving to be an independent and strong ally of the U.S. in this part of the world. The loss of secular Azerbaijan would undoubtedly deal a severe blow to Israel's security and America's strategic interests in the Greater Middle East and particularly in the Southern Caucasus and Caspian Basin.

Lastly, Azerbaijani energy is a critical factor in Israel's strategic calculations. In 2011, Azerbaijan exported up to 2.5 million tons (about 18.5 million barrels) of oil to Israel totaling \$2.1 billion. In

⁴³ See: "Azeris Get Israel UAVs Built under License," *UPI*, 7 October, 2011, available at [http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Azeris_get_Israel_UAVs_built_under_license_999.html].

⁴⁴ See: "Israel Signs \$1.6 Billion Arms Deal with Azerbaijan," *Haaretz.com*, 26 February, 2012, available at [<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/israel-signs-1-6-billion-arms-deal-with-azerbaijan-1.414916>].

⁴⁵ See: I. Bourtnan, op. cit.

⁴⁶ See: Sh. Abilov, "The Azerbaijan-Israel Relations: A Non-diplomatic but Strategic Partnership," *Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu*, Turkey, available at [www.usak.org.tr], *OAKA*, Cilt 4, Sayı 8, 2009, S. 138-156, available at [<http://www.usak.org.tr/dosyalar/dergi/gm3veLfV7Q5rP83jaIV34UObvarinb.pdf>].

⁴⁷ See: "Azerbaijan Arrests Alleged Iran-hired Terrorists," *Fox News*, 14 March, 2012, available at [<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/03/14/22-arrested-in-azerbaijan-in-plot-on-us-israeli-embassies/>].

the same year, the trade turnover between Israel and Azerbaijan reached \$4 billion.⁴⁸ So Azerbaijan is Israel's top trade partner within the CIS countries.

According to Dr Ariel Cohen, Israel: "...can benefit from projects designed to bring Caspian and Central Asian oil and gas to Western markets as they allow Israel to diversify supply and receive abundant energy at affordable price."⁴⁹

Undoubtedly, Israeli-Azerbaijani energy cooperation is of vital importance for Israel's energy security. This cooperation allows diversification of oil and gas deliveries and exploration of Israel's energy resources. Baku provides Israel with over one-third of Israel's oil demand.⁵⁰ And, as result of Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman last visit to Baku, SOCAR will start drilling at Med Ashdod, Israel's oil field located 16 km off the Mediterranean coast. Israeli Ambassador to Baku Michael Lotem said: "The drilling will begin soon. The work is at a very advanced stage and delivery of a drilling rig to the field is now expected."⁵¹ Meantime, the project is SOCAR's first oil-production or drilling operation outside of Azerbaijan. The contract allows SOCAR to gain international experience and expand operations to Turkey, Georgia, Israel, and other countries.

Implications for the United States

It is well known that the United States has declared the Caspian Basin a zone of its vital national interests.⁵² In this context, we believe that Israeli-Azerbaijani partnership is an effective tool for strengthening and supporting America's strategic presence in this very sensitive part of the world. Additionally, the Israeli-Azerbaijani alliance counters Iran, which is of strategic importance for U.S. national interests, particularly in the Greater Middle East and Central Asia.

Unlike Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are America's allies in the Southern Caucasus and Caspian Basin. And the strengthening of Azerbaijan's secular and pro-Western independence should be a strategic priority for U.S. diplomacy in the region.

However, the Obama administration's lack of focus on South Caucasian affairs jeopardizes America's strategic interests in the region. Unlike the Clinton administration and the Bush administration, the Obama administration is not active in containing Iran and Russia in this part of the world. Therefore, as result of the Russo-Georgian war of 2008, the Tehran-Moscow axis effectively decreased America's influence in the Greater Caspian Basin. Now the axis continues to limit and minimize U.S. political activity and puts pressure on Washington's allies.

Indeed, Azerbaijan is under double pressure from Iran and Russia and needs strong America's support to secure its national independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Azerbaijan's pro-Western independence ensures the U.S.'s strategic presence in the Caspian basin and also facilitates

⁴⁸ See: "Lieberman: 'The Trade Turnover between Azerbaijan and Israel Reaches \$4 Billion,'" Contact.az, 23 April, 2012, available at [<http://www.contact.az/docs/2012/Politics/04234650en.htm>].

⁴⁹ A. Cohen, K. DeCorla-Souza, op. cit.

⁵⁰ See: J. Alic, "Azerbaijan's International Energy Aspirations Raise Tensions in Middle East," OILPROCE.com, 15 May, 2012, available at [<http://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/Middle-East/Azerbaijans-International-Energy-Aspirations-Raise-Tensions-in-Middle-East.html>].

⁵¹ Sh. Abbasov, "Azerbaijan: SOCAR to Use Israeli Oil Field as Proving Ground," Erasianet.org, 8 May, 2012, available at [<http://www.erasianet.org/node/65374>].

⁵² See: M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse, "The Militarization of the Caspian Sea: 'Great Games' and 'Small Games' Over the Caspian Fleets," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2009, pp. 17-35.

U.S. power projection deep into Asia. In this context, Azerbaijan is of high geostrategic importance for the United States. Therefore, the loss of a secular and independent Azerbaijan will badly damage U.S. global policy and particularly U.S. oil diplomacy in the Caspian Basin. Thus, we presume that the United States will be very supportive of Israeli-Azerbaijani cooperation designed to counter threats and strengthen their security as reliable U.S. allies.

Conclusion

Despite strong opposition from Tehran and Russia, Azerbaijan has established close relations with the West and Israel. At present, Baku and Tel Aviv are partners in a wide range of issues. Insecurity and regional threats are pushing both Azerbaijan and Israel to create a strategic alliance that enhances their security and defense capabilities.

However, the future of Israeli-Azerbaijani cooperation depends on the political nature of the ruling power in Azerbaijan. Iran is trying to spread the ideas of the Islamic Revolution to Azerbaijan. Iran is also tightening Shi'ite propaganda and expanding its intelligence network in Baku and other major cities.

The strengthening of pro-Islamic or Shi'a political forces will undoubtedly have a catastrophic impact on Azerbaijan's political future as a secular state and strong Israeli and U.S. ally. Azerbaijan's secular independence and its pro-Western foreign policy are extremely important for American and Israeli interests in the Greater Middle East and post-Soviet space.

Therefore, Azerbaijan's future should be a strategic priority for Israel and the United States. We believe that the new U.S. administration will intensify its efforts to support Azerbaijan's independence and territorial integrity, which will extend NATO's security umbrella to cover strategic Western oil infrastructure.

Finally, Azerbaijan is trying to stay neutral in any military option to stop Iran's nuclear program. On 29 May, 2012, during his visit to Tehran, Azerbaijani Minister of Defense said: "The Republic of Azerbaijan, like always in the past, will never permit any country to take advantage of its land, or air, against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which we consider our brother and a friendly country."⁵³

Indeed, Baku would like to avoid any possible military clashes with Iran and maintain its neutrality. However, Azerbaijan's behavior and pragmatic foreign policy indicate that Baku's neutrality is more pro-Western than pro-Iranian. Therefore, Azerbaijan will continue to cooperate with Israel, which corresponds to Azerbaijan's national interests.

⁵³ "President Reiterates Iran's Support for Azerbaijan's Territorial Integrity," Fars News Agency (FNA), 29 May, 2012, available at [<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9012152197>].

ENERGY POLICY**WATER SCARCITY AND
INTERSTATE COOPERATION DYNAMICS
IN NARYN/SYR DARYA RIVER BASIN**

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Introduction

The Syr Darya river (together with the Naryn river) has the length of 3,019 km and its basin is a part of the Aral Sea basin, which makes it one of the most important transboundary rivers in Central Asia. The river is formed in Kyrgyzstan and flows through Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. The flow of the Syr Darya river and its tributaries are regulated by a series of reservoirs built during the Soviet and post-Soviet period. The most important among them is the Toktogul reservoir with 19.5 cu km water storage capacity. Toktogul was constructed in the 1970s, and is currently located in the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The reservoir area is approximately 280 sq km and is capable of regulating the flow of the Syr Darya river.

The riparian countries of the Syr Darya basin have been experiencing intense conflicts over water distribution since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. While the upstream countries constantly face a shortage of energy resources in winter seasons, the downstream countries have to struggle with water shortages in the summer. The states in the upper reach intend to use water from Toktogul for electricity generation, whereas countries in the lower reach want to operate the reservoir for irrigation. The final consensus over reservoir operation mode has not been achieved so far. On the contrary, it generates frequent tensions between the upstream and downstream countries. Moreover, environmental degradation, climate change and population growth can lead to addi-

tional tensions over regional water sharing, which may increase the likelihood of violent conflict in Central Asia.¹

There have been several attempts to regulate water sharing through regional water management institutions and agreements. Although these institutions and agreements were described with the high degree of compliance, their performance left much to be desired.² Why this happens and what factors affect this outcome? Why were negotiations successful, but mutual agreements remained implausible? In this article, I will argue that during the low water periods of

the Toktogul reservoir, one can observe elements of cooperation over water sharing in the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin, whereas during the higher water periods, on the contrary, water cooperation tends to slow down and multilateral agreements remain unfulfilled by the riparian countries. Instead of cooperation, the upstream and downstream countries favor unilateral solutions for their domestic water problems. To illustrate this tendency, I will analyze three water low periods in Toktogul, which include the periods of 1984-1988, 1997-1998 and 2007-2008 (see Fig. 2 on p. 86).

The structure of the article is organized as follows: In the first section I will provide the theoretical and methodological explanation. In subsequent sections I will outline water low periods, where the riparian countries experienced particular conflict and cooperation trends over water distribution. In conclusion, I will summarize the outcomes of the article.

¹ See: R. Strickman, M. Porkka, "Water and Social Changes in Central Asia: Problems Related to Cotton Production in Uzbekistan," *Central Asian Waters*, Helsinki, Finland, 2009, pp. 105-115.

² See: T. Bernauer, T. Siegfried, "Compliance and Performance in International Water Agreements: The Case of the Naryn/Syr Darya Basin," *Global Governance*, No. 14, 2008, pp. 479-501.

Methodological Underpinning

A number of scholars such as Aaron Wolf, Shlomi Dinar, Mark Giordano, Eric Mostert, Thomas Bernauer, and Tobias Siegfried have focused on the relationship between water scarcity and dynamics of conflict and cooperation. The debate was developed between scholars who argue that water scarcity leads to conflicts³ and those who argue that water scarcity can be an incentive for the riparian countries to cooperate.⁴ For instance, Aaron Wolf argues that an important determinant which may lead to a water conflict is rapid change, including changes in environmental conditions, socio-economic circumstances or political structures.⁵ Others suggest that scarcity may lead to both conflictive and cooperative outcomes.⁶ Although these contributions are significant for the scholar debates on the relationship between water scarcity and cooperation, none of the works are able to offer clear practical evidence backed by consistent explanation.

This section attempts to fill this gap by using the case of the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin. In order to understand the water scarcity and cooperation linkage, first and foremost, we need to explain

³ See: M.F. Giordano, M.A. Giordano, A.T. Wolf, "International Resource Conflict and Mitigation," *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 42, 2005, pp. 47-65.

⁴ See: S. Dinar, "Scarcity and Cooperation along International Rivers," *Global Environmental Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2009, pp. 109-135.

⁵ See: A.T. Wolf, "Shared Waters: Conflict and Cooperation," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, No. 32, 2007, pp. 241-269.

⁶ See: E. Mostert, "Conflict and Cooperation in International Freshwater Management: A Global Review," *International Journal of River Basin Management*, No. 1 (3), 2003, pp. 1-12.

the questions when water can be considered as scarce and how the cooperation between the riparian countries can be measured. For the purpose of this article, we cannot use the popular water stress indicator suggested by Falkenmark.⁷ Although the Falkenmark Indicator is the most used one for water scarcity, it concentrates merely on water scarcity within the particular country or region dividing the available water resources per capita and per year. According to Falkenmark, a country experiences water scarcity if the water supply falls below 1,000 cu m and it is considered absolutely scarce if the water supply is below 500 cu m.

In the case of the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin, the upstream and downstream countries have different level of water availability. Whereas Kyrgyzstan has about 9,293 cu m of renewable water resources per capita, Kazakhstan possesses 7,368 cu m and Uzbekistan only 4,527 cu m of water resources per capita for agricultural, industrial and domestic purposes.⁸ According to Falkenmark Indicator, none of the Naryn/Syr Darya riparians can be considered as water scarce. Even if we generalize the water availability of upstream and downstream countries, there will be no variability in the water volume so that it will be impossible to make a linkage to cooperation that may vary over time.

Instead, I suggest we should concentrate on the water availability in the Toktogul reservoir for several reasons.

- First of all, the Toktogul reservoir is the biggest reservoir along the flow of the Syr Darya river. It is located in the Naryn cascade, the Naryn river being the main tributary of Syr Darya along with Kara Darya (see Fig. 1). The Syr Darya river is formed when Naryn confluences with Kara Darya in the Ferghana Valley. Naryn contributes annually 13.7 cu km to the Syr Darya river that is almost half of the annual flow of the river.⁹
- Secondly, Toktogul is a multiyear storage facility with the capacity of 19.5 cu km. This storage capacity exceeds the Naryn river's average yearly inflow.¹⁰ There is no doubt that the delay of 19.5 cu km of renewable water resources into Syr Darya would have drastic effects on irrigation areas of downstream countries. For instance, water from the Toktogul reservoir is an important source particularly for the most populated area in Central Asia, the Ferghana Valley. The population density exceeds here 300-500 people per sq km. The population in the Ferghana Valley is considered to be more than 11 million people, which is more than the total population of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and almost half of the population of Uzbekistan. Most of these people live in rural areas and their livelihood depends mainly on agriculture. Consequently, there is a direct relationship between water volume in Toktogul and the water availability in the river basin.

Last but not least, the water level in the Toktogul reservoir can be measured by considering the annual water inflow and outflow as well as total water volume of the reservoir. This information is available at the CAWATERinfo.¹¹ Our methodological task is to conjugate the water data in Toktogul and figure out the lowest water periods since the operation start of the reservoir.

⁷ See: M. Falkenmark, J. Lundquist, C. Widstrand, "Macro-scale Water Scarcity Requires Micro-scale Approaches: Aspects of Vulnerability in Semi-arid Development," *Natural Resources Forum*, No. 13 (4), 1989, pp. 258-267.

⁸ See: O. Varis, R. Mizanur, "The Aral Sea Keeps Drying Out but Is Central Asia Short of Water?" in: *Central Asian Waters: Social, Economic, Environmental and Governance Puzzle*, Helsinki, 2008, available at [www.water.tkk.fi/English/wr/.../Central_Asian_Waters-book.pdf], 19 June, 2012.

⁹ See: "Vodnye resursy basseina reki Syr Darya," available at [<http://www.cawater-info.net/syrdarya/water.htm>], 19 June, 2012.

¹⁰ See: "Toktogulskoe vodokhranilishche. Rezhim raboty vodokhranilishcha: sravnenie prognoznykh i fakticheskikh znachenii," CAWATERinfo, available at [<http://www.cawater-info.net/analysis/water/toktogul.htm>], 19 June, 2012.

¹¹ CAWATERinfo is the official portal of knowledge for water and environmental issues in Central Asia. CAWATERinfo is the joint project of the main water body in Central Asia, the Scientific Information Center of Interstate Commis-

Figure 1

Background and River Course



Source: Data from [<http://www.icwc-aral.uz>].

Further, we need to agree upon how the “cooperation” can be best understood. According to the theory of International Regimes,¹² cooperation takes place when the parties intend to establish an institution or sign an agreement.¹³ Stephen Krasner defined the regime as “a set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations.”¹⁴ In other words, international regimes are embedded in particular policy processes and aim at solving a concrete problem. For the purpose of the article, I use the established term of “water regimes” as an indication of cooperation that is intended by the riparian countries of the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin.

In the next section, I will draw parallels between the lowest water periods in Toktogul and identify attempts aimed at establishing “water regime” at the regional level. By looking at Fig. 2 on p. 86, we can observe three most water low periods in Toktogul. The regional cooperation efforts in these periods will be scrutinized in subsequent sections.

Cooperation Dynamics during the Soviet Period

One of the water low periods in Toktogul falls between 1984 and 1988. Although in this period the riparian countries were not independent yet, the Central Asian Soviet republics had frequently expressed their concerns over the existing water management system. Since the construction of Toktogul and introduction of irrigation plans in Central Asia, the Aral Sea has shrunk several times in size and volume. Along with the Aral Sea crisis, it became apparent in the middle of the 1980s that the water in Toktogul was not enough for further discharge, so that the riparian countries had to immediately review the water management system and regulate it not only at the national but also, and more importantly, at the regional level.

For this purpose, new water mechanisms were introduced in the middle of the 1980s. For instance, the River Basin Organizations (BVOs) of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers were created in 1986, which took control of the rights over the usage of storage and diversion facilities along the Syr Darya and Amu Darya river basins. The BVOs regulated water allocation and distribution by finding agreements among the riparian countries, which were approved by the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Water Management. The new mechanism of water distribution included a new system of irrigation based on top-down and bottom-up schemas. According to the bottom-up schema, water is allocated on the demand from water users at district, province and state levels. In the top-down approach, in contrast, the limit on water was assigned by the BVOs. The demands by water users and the de-

sion for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC) and international organizations that makes the data source reliable. In CAWATER, in the database section of the Syrdarya river basin, we can find information about the operation mode of the Toktogul reservoir, including data about annual inflow, outflow and water volume in vegetation and non-vegetation periods dated since 1991 to 2012.

¹² The concept of International Regimes was first introduced by Stephen Krasner. In the early 1980s, the theory attracted the attention of many scholars of International Relations, because it offered a more conclusive explanation for international order and international organizations. Later, the concept of International Regimes found its use in the explanation of international environmental management issues.

¹³ See: T. Bernauer, “Explaining Success and Failure in International River Management,” *Aquatic Science*, No. 64, 2002, pp. 1-19.

¹⁴ St.D. Krasner, “Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables,” *International Organization*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Spring 1982, pp. 185-205.

mands estimated by BVOs were translated into water-use plans at the district level and distributed to the users. Even after independence, the riparian countries continued to rely on the irrigation water limit.¹⁵

Since the collapse of the U.S.S.R., the water management system and water sharing principles established in 1986-1987 have not been changed, despite the newly emerged political and economic situation and changed interests of the countries involved. On the contrary, after the region achieved independence, the heads of water economy organizations attempted to retain the previous regulations agreed during the Soviet Union. With the Tashkent Agreement signed on 10-12 October, 1991, water ministers of the Central Asian states agreed that they would adhere to the Soviet allocations and distribution principles from the late 1980s.¹⁶ This was formalized by the heads of state by signing the Almaty Agreement on 18 February, 1992.¹⁷

Why did this happen? One would expect that independent countries discuss the outmoded Soviet water management system and negotiate upon new water regulations considering their national interests. The downstream countries—Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan—were in favor of Soviet water regulations, because they benefited from the irrigation mode of Toktogul. Thus, it is understandable why the downstream countries insisted on the retaining Soviet water regulations. Upstream Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, however, had to be against these regulations, as they did not grant them rights to control water facilities located in their territories.

There is a general assumption among scholars that the newly independent Central Asian countries were overburdened by *nation-building* and the strengthening of sovereignty, so that they did not have enough capacity to adapt water regulation mechanisms to new realities.¹⁸ Although this might be true to some extent, it is also important to consider the fact that there was also no extreme water pressure on the riparian countries in the early years of independence that would leave them in the situation, where they had to renegotiate existing water regulations. As illustrated in Fig. 2, the water volume in Toktogul was above 13 cu km in 1991, so that Toktogul was able to discharge water in vegetation and non-vegetation periods at the same time, satisfying the needs of both upstream and downstream countries.

As Figs. 2 (on p. 86) and 3 (on p. 88) demonstrate, Toktogul has been starting to operate in energy and irrigation mode since 1992. Particularly in 1993, the water level in Toktogul began to decrease and continued to decrease until 1997. In the period between 1994 and 1997, the riparian countries preferred bilateral agreements on water sharing which were signed annually between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as well as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. These bilateral agreements specified the amount of compensatory deliveries of fuel and energy resources as well as releases from the Toktogul reservoir on an annual basis. Based on these agreements, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan received excess energy from Kyrgyzstan generated by the Toktogul hydropower plant in the summer, and in the winter they provided Kyrgyzstan with energy by delivering natural gas and coal, respectively. These agreements were renegotiated every year and, in fact, replaced the long-term regional planning for water sharing.¹⁹

¹⁵ See: H. Murray-Rust *et al.*, *Water Productivity in the Syr Darya River Basin*, Research Report 67, 2003.

¹⁶ See: *Statement of Heads of Water Economy Organizations of Central Asian Republics and Kazakhstan adopted on 10-12 October, 1991 Meeting in Tashkent*, available at [<http://www.icwc-aral.uz/statute2.htm>].

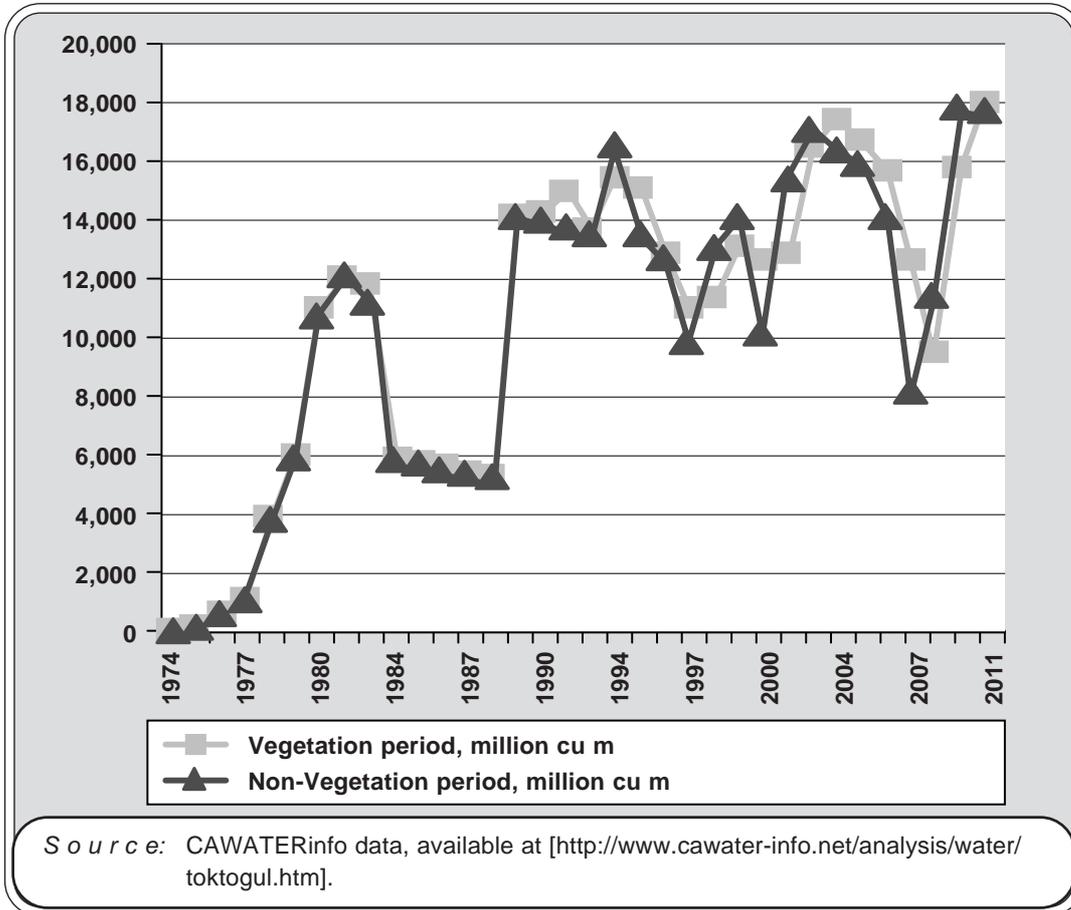
¹⁷ See: *Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Uzbekistan, Republic of Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan on Cooperation in Joint Management of Use and Protection of Water Resources of Interstate Sources*, signed on 18 February, 1992.

¹⁸ See, for instance: *Central Asia: Water and Conflict*, ICG Asia Report No. 34, Osh/Brussels, 30 May, 2002.

¹⁹ See: E. Giese, J. Sehring, "Konflikte ums Wasser Nutzungskonkurrenz in Zentralasien," *OSTEUROPA*, Jg. 57, 8-9/2007, S. 483-496.

Figure 2

Water Volume of the Toktogul Reservoir, 1974-2011



Water Scarcity and Cooperation Dynamics after 1997

The bilateral agreements continued until the winter of 1997-1998, when the water level in the Toktogul reservoir had dropped to a minimum since 1991 (see Fig. 3 on p. 88). The water volume in Toktogul was low to the extent that it was not sufficient for discharge either in the vegetation or non-vegetation period. Since the bilateral agreements did not provide sustainable solution for the water sharing issues, because the water problem in the basin carried more regional and not bilateral character, the immediate need for multilateral cooperation emerged in late 1997. I assume that particularly the shrinkage of Toktogul significantly contributed to the beginning of multilateral negotiations, which one could observe in early 1998.

On 17 March, 1998, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan signed in Bishkek the Agreement on the Use of the Water and Energy Resources of the Syr Darya River Basin,²⁰ of which Tajikistan became a full member in 1999.²¹ The Bishkek Agreement included specific barter agreements on energy and water exchanges and was valid for a period of five years.²² According to the agreement, during the vegetation period Kyrgyzstan was to supply electricity to each downstream country, whereas Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, in exchange, were to deliver energy resources such as coal, gas, electricity and fuel oil in the non-vegetation period. The compensation could be also carried out in the form of labor, services or money.²³

By signing the Bishkek Agreement, the riparian countries brought the water management system practically back to the Soviet period. This agreement recognized the willingness of Kyrgyzstan to use Syr Darya for hydroelectricity purposes, as well as the wish of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to receive the previously agreed volume of water for irrigation and agricultural purposes. The only difference from the Soviet system was that Toktogul was to work in irrigation-energy regime instead of only irrigation regime.

In the same year, in Bishkek, the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan attempted to take the first step in finding a fundamentally new solution to the use of water resources in transboundary watercourses. The Central Asian states signed a protocol decision on the establishment of the international water and energy consortium.²⁴ In accordance with the protocol decision, the purpose and objectives of the water-energy consortium were²⁵:

- creating a system of mutually beneficial joint activities of the participants necessary to ensure effective use and development of hydropower resources of the region;
- deepening the processes of production and technological cooperation of water and fuel and energy industries, and creating conditions for the expansion of export potential;
- attracting investment in the development of hydropower potential in the region;
- providing a strategy saving water and energy resources;
- developing and proposing the introduction of advanced technologies for the use of water and energy resources;
- developing and implementing mutually beneficial joint projects on construction of new and reconstruction of existing ones.

The establishment of the international water and energy consortium could be an effective mechanism to prevent conflicts arising from the use of the Syr Darya transboundary water resources. However, this consortium remained a mere “paper tiger” and was never implemented. Although the progress in the creation of water and energy consortium was renewed within the framework of the Eurasian

²⁰ See: *Agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Use of Water and Energy Resources of the Syr Darya Basin*, 17 March, 1998.

²¹ *Protocol on Amendments to the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Use of Water and Energy Resources of the Syr Darya Basin adopted on 17 March, 1998*, 17 June, 1999.

²² See: *Agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Use of Water and Energy Resources of the Syr Darya Basin*, 17 March 1998, Art 10.

²³ See: *Ibid.*, Art 4.

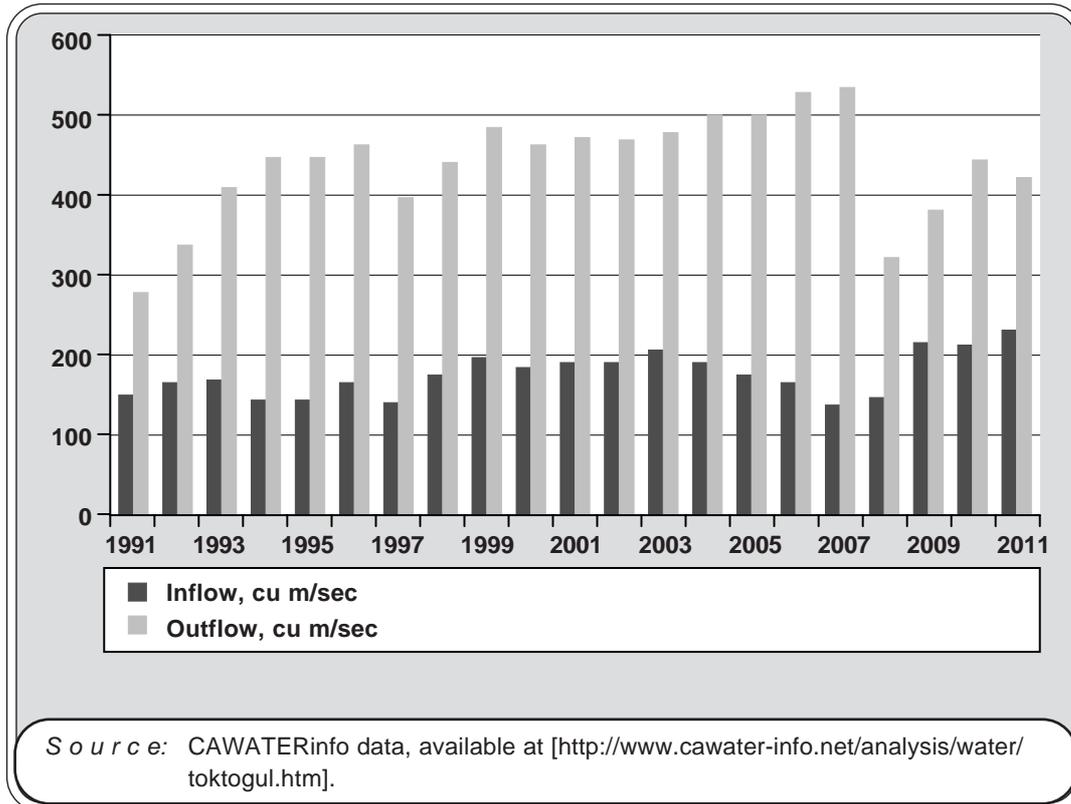
²⁴ See: *Protocol Decision on the Establishment of the International Water and Energy Consortium*, 17 March, 1998.

²⁵ See: *Ibid.*, Section 2.

Economic Community (EurAsEC) in 2006,²⁶ it was of no avail when Uzbekistan suspended its membership in EurAsEC in 2008.

Figure 3

**Operation Modes of
the Toktogul Water Reservoir,
1991-2011**



The Bishkek Agreement could be considered as a success in sharing the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin. However, it also became obvious that it would be problematic to implement this agreement in practical terms. It was argued that the Bishkek agreement could not satisfy the upstream countries during the middle runoff periods and downstream countries during the lower runoff periods. During the higher runoff periods none of the riparians benefited from the Bishkek Agreement.²⁷ The downstream countries have called for below average releases for the growing season during the higher runoff periods. This has resulted in reduced surplus electricity deliveries to downstream countries, accompanied by reduced deliveries of fuel to Kyrgyzstan the following winter season.

²⁶ See: *Decision of the Interstate Council of EurAsEC of 16 August, 2006, No. 315 "About the Concept of Efficient Use of Water and Energy Resources of Central Asia."*

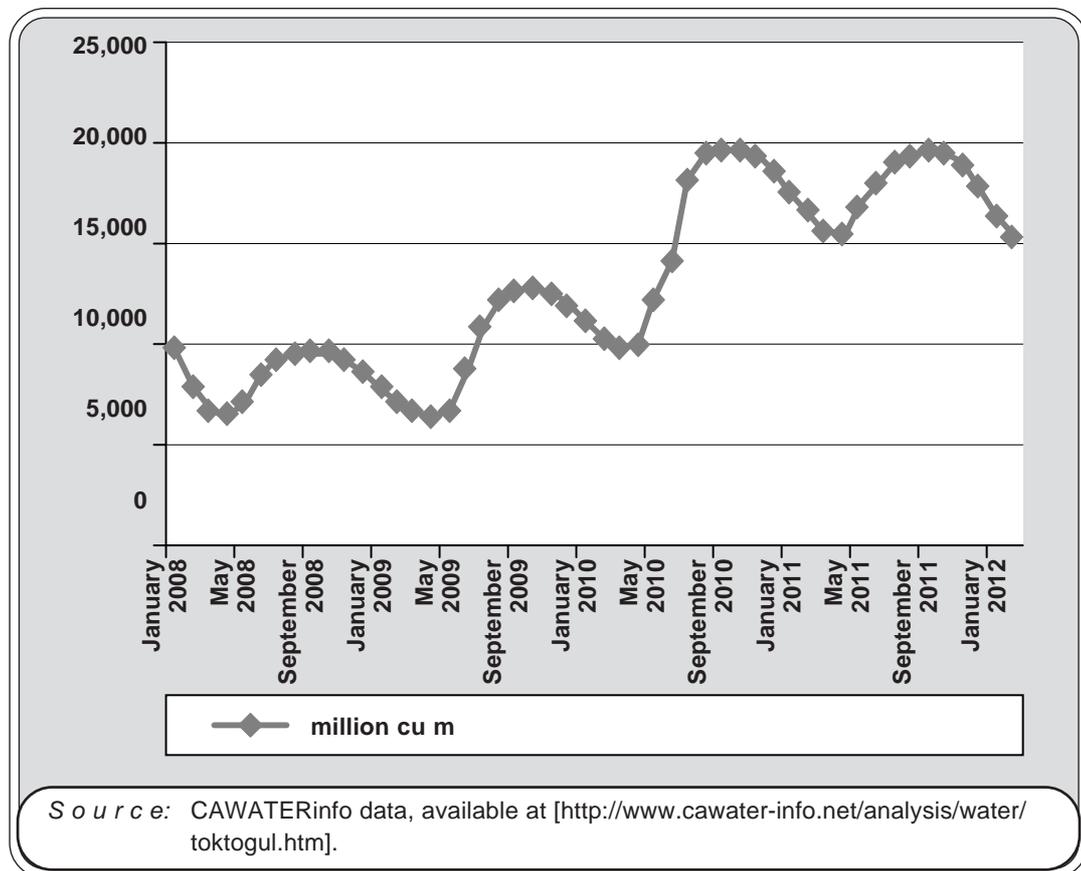
²⁷ See: Y. Rysbekov, V. Sokolov, B. Tillaev, "Vodnye resursy Tsentralnoy Azii: voprosy sovmestnogo ispolzovaniya i potentsial sotrudnichestva," *Kontinent partnerstva*, Evraziyskiy bank razvitiya, Ezhemesyachniy informatsionno-analiticheskiy vestnik, July 2007, p. 39.

The Bishkek Agreement ceased to exist in 2004-2005²⁸ and the riparian countries returned to the bilateral agreements negotiated in the 1990s.

As can be seen in Fig. 3, in 1999, the inflow into Toktogul started to increase and water volume in Toktogul began to restore. In this context, it is possible to assume that the high water period came after 1999, the Bishkek Agreement became useless, and the riparian countries did not feel the necessity to adhere to the agreed regulations. For instance, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan did not consider the necessity to pay for the electricity delivered from Kyrgyzstan, so that fuel resources were not delivered in time and in quantity to upstream Kyrgyzstan. In return, Kyrgyzstan increased winter discharges from Toktogul that caused floods in downstream countries. As a result, none of the riparian countries executed firmly the obligations of the agreement. As soon as one of the riparian states violated the agreed rules and mechanisms, the other party answered with a counter-violation.

Figure 4

Toktogul:
Average Monthly Water Volumes
(2008-2011, relative to multi-year averages)



²⁸ See: Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyz Republic Umirzak Shukeyev at the October meeting of the vice premiers of five Central Asian states in Almaty, *Kazakhstan segodnya*, 20 October, 2008, available at [http://www.03portal.kz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5034&Itemid=57], 20 June, 2012.

As the Bishkek Agreement was frequently violated and excessive winter releases from Toktogul had adverse impacts on downstream countries,²⁹ the downstream countries have started to take unilateral actions toward water management. This was mostly expressed in the form of construction of a number of re- and contra-regulating water facilities. For instance, Uzbekistan proceeded with the design of new water storage capacity of the Karamansay reservoir as well as construction of the Razaksay and Kangkulsay reservoirs in the Ferghana Valley. The completion of these reservoirs should provide additional storage of about 2.5 cu km that could absorb the equivalent additional discharge from Toktogul in the winter and subsequently release the same quantity of water again in the summer for downstream irrigation.³⁰ Similarly, Kazakhstan announced the construction of contra-regulator, Koksarai reservoir near Shymkent.

Water Level and Cooperation Dynamics after 2007

The extensive use of hydropower for heating from winter releases in Kyrgyzstan led to the fact that in 2007 the water level in Toktogul reached its critical point. As a consequence, the downstream countries, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, did not get as much water for irrigation in spring and summer periods as in average years. Kyrgyzstan used most of water resources in Toktogul in order to generate electricity in winter periods. In 2007, the water volume in Toktogul reached 8 cu km, which was 7 cu km less than in 2003 (see Fig. 2 on p. 86). This is almost half of the average levels. According to the results of the ISTC project, the water level in Toktogul decreased by 74 meters compared to 2000.³¹ This shortfall did not bode well both for electricity generation of upstream and irrigation prospects of downstream countries.

In 2008, the Central Asian governments renewed efforts aimed at multilateral cooperation. In May 2008, in the joint statement of the heads of Tajik and Kyrgyz Republics it was declared that the parties agreed to make joint efforts toward intergovernmental protocol on the use of hydropower resources along the Naryn/Syr Darya basin.³² On 10 October, 2008, regional countries used the CIS Summit meeting in Bishkek to announce an expanded regional cooperation program, with a special focus on “*hydro-energy support, fuel resources supply, water accumulation in the Toktogul and Nurek reservoirs.*” The reason for the meeting was the fear of the riparian countries to experience again unprecedented low water levels in Toktogul. On 18 October, 2008, the Protocol was signed between the Governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turk-

²⁹ First of all, because of a drastic decrease of water in summer periods, the oases in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan located along the Syr Darya river had serious problems with irrigation. Secondly, the water release in winters caused harsh floods in the areas located in the vicinity of Syr Darya in Kazakhstan.

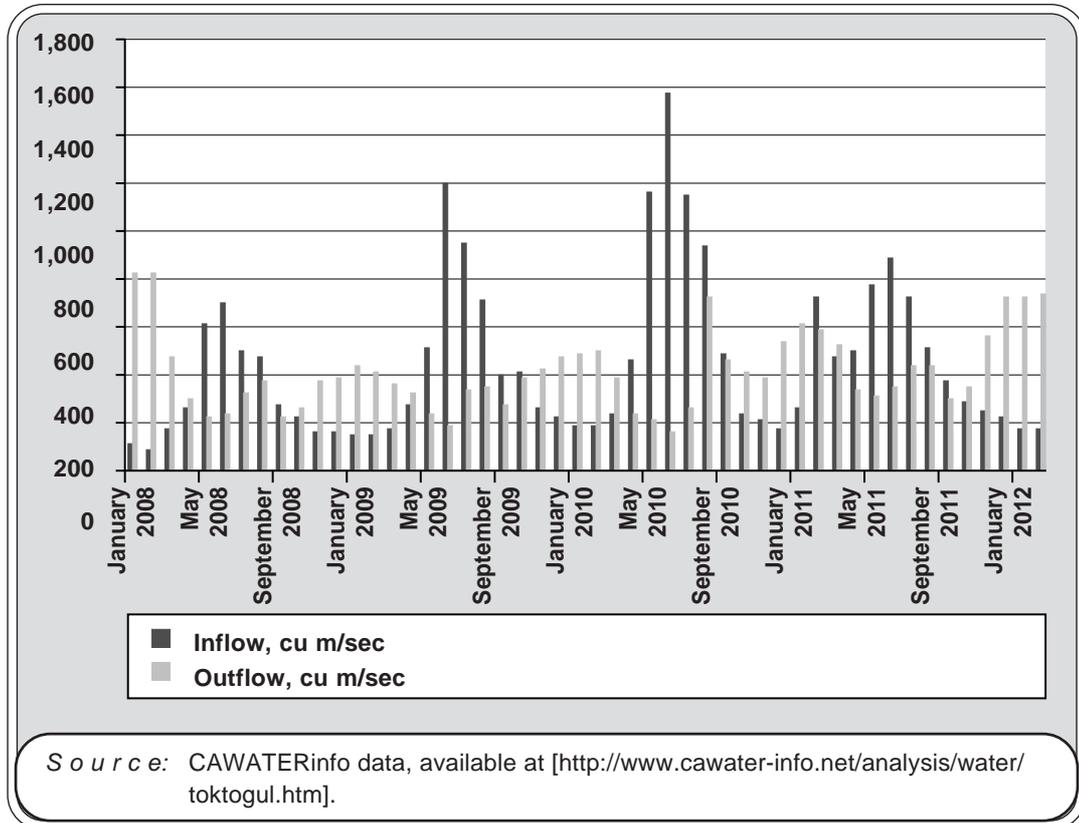
³⁰ See: “Central Asia, Regional Electricity Export Potential Study,” Europe and Central Asia Region, The World Bank, Washington D.C., December 2004, available at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTUZBEKISTAN/Resources/REEPS_Main_Report_Final_English.pdf], 20 June, 2012.

³¹ See: ISTC project KR-1430: “Study of Formation Factors and Estimation of the Nizhny-Naryn HEPP Cascade Effect on the Quality of the Naryn River Catchments Using Isotopic Methods,” available at [http://www.istc.ru/ISTC/ISTC.nsf/va_WebPages/KR-1430Eng], 20 June, 2012.

³² See: “KR i RT namereny podpisat protokol ob ispolzovanii vodno-energeticheskikh resursov,” *Kazakhstan segodnya*, 16 May, 2008, available at [<http://news.gazeta.kz/art.asp?aid=231167>], 20 June, 2012.

Figure 5

**Toktogul:
Average Monthly Water Inflows and Outflows
(relative to multi-year averages)**



menistan and Uzbekistan on the use of water and energy resources of the Central Asian region for the fourth quarter of 2008 and 2009. Kazakhstan agreed to provide Kyrgyzstan with 250 million kWh of electricity and coal for Bishkek TPP in 2009 and Uzbekistan agreed to provide additional 150 million cu m of gas to Kyrgyzstan during the first quarter of 2009. In return, Kyrgyzstan obliged to release 5.25 cu km of water from Toktogul during the vegetation period, thereby ensuring that the amount of water available at the beginning of the vegetation period in 2009 will not be inferior to 2008.³³

Although the worst was avoided in 2010, when Toktogul started to restore (see Fig. 4 on p. 89), it did not remain without trace at the political level. The relative low outflows from Toktogul were done at the expense of upstream Kyrgyzstan that experienced the catastrophic political impacts of water shortfall in the beginning of 2010. Trying to avoid hitting the “minimum level” in Toktogul, the Kyrgyz government had to increase the electricity price which was followed by frequent black-outs during the cold winter in 2009. Some scholars argue that high electricity tariffs introduced in

³³ See: “Strany TsA podpisali protokol ob ispolzovanii vodno-energeticheskikh resursov v TsA, v 2008 i 2009 godu,” 20 October, 2008, *Ekonomika* [<http://www.cis-news.info/read/73798/>], 20 June, 2012.

early 2010 caused a lot of anger across the country, which consolidated the processes that led to the ouster of President Bakiev,³⁴ which, in turn, contributed to the violent ethnic clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz.

Since 2008, there has been no real attempt by the riparian countries to sign the next multilateral agreement on the share of the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin. To a larger extent, this may be related again to the fact that Toktogul started to restore. Currently, there is no guarantee that the scenario of 1997 and 2007 will repeat in the future. According to the outcomes of this analysis, the next multilateral cooperation in the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin will occur when the water volume in Toktogul decreases to the extent that no water is available simultaneously for interests of upstream and downstream countries. In this context, it is also possible to assume that the multilateral cooperation will not occur anymore, since the riparian countries continue ensuring themselves unilaterally by building new hydro facilities in their territories.

Conclusion

Already in 2008, the profound analyses of Bernauer and Siegfried showed that water scarcity relates to cooperation and conflict trends in the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin: "...as soon as an extended period of low precipitation sets in, seasonal trade-offs will become manifest again and the conflict is likely to heat up very quickly."³⁵ Although this observation is accurate, this article attempted to extend their argument by suggesting that the water cooperation should develop in parallel to the conflict during the water low periods in the Naryn/Syr Darya river basin.

As it was argued in this article, the riparian countries of Syr Darya feel the need to cooperate because they all experience the same kind of stress from the water situation in Toktogul. This encourages the parties involved to share water as fair as possible among each other and fix it in relatively long-term multilateral agreements. Once the higher runoff period comes, the riparian countries cease to feel an acute need for water resources. As a result, these countries do not adhere to the obligations agreed within the framework of regional water management institutions or agreements.

Despite the fact that water scarcity is linked to water cooperation dynamics, it is important to consider other political, economic, geographic and hydrological aspects that tend to influence water cooperation. For instance, the willingness of the countries to cooperate does not depend merely on low or high water periods in Toktogul. This issue is also related to economic and political stability in the riparian countries. The instability in upstream Tajikistan, caused by the prolonged civil war during the 1990s and two revolutions in 2005 and 2010 in Kyrgyzstan must have rendered uncertain the agreed multilateral water regulations.

Moreover, it should be acknowledged that the findings in this article might be limited due to exclusion of other significant reservoirs along the Syr Darya river, such as Kayrakkum reservoir on the Kara Darya river—the second important tributary of Syr Darya. Kara Darya contributes annually 11.7 cu km to Syr Darya, whereas the Kayrakkum reservoir with its storage capacity of 4.2 cu km can also significantly influence the water volume in the Syr Darya basin. The implication of this is that with the new reservoirs in Ferghana, Karamansay, Razaksay and Kangkulsay, the Ferghana

³⁴ See: D. Gullet, *Analiticheskiye zametki o politike bezopasnosti v Tsentralnoy Azii*, No. 1, *Vozrozhdenie politiki energeticheskikh tarifov v Kyrgyzstane*, November 2011, available at [http://www.osce-academy.net/uploads/docs/gulette_version_to_upload_ru_.pdf], 20 June, 2012.

³⁵ T. Bernauer, T. Siegfried, "Compliance and Performance in International Water Agreements: The Case of the Naryn/Syr Darya Basin," *Global Governance*, No. 14, 2008, pp. 479-501.

Valley could be completely independent from the operation of the Toktogul reservoir. This may explain why there was no need for Uzbekistan to cooperate with upstream countries on long-term water regulations.

Thus, further research in this area should focus on the general degree of water scarcity, including operation modes of all reservoirs in the basin and its influence on conflict and cooperation dynamics in the basin. To what extent can water scarcity affect conflict trends and when does it start to stimulate cooperation? What can we expect when the next low precipitation and drought period comes? It is also important to consider the question of climate change in this process such as how climate change may influence water scarcity and cooperation dynamics in the Naryn/Syr Darya basin. The answers to these questions may prepare the riparian countries for preventing potential conflicts over water distribution.

REGIONAL SECURITY

**REGIONAL SECURITY AND
COOPERATION ISSUES
IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD
POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA**

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Introduction

It stands to reason that at the early stage of independence the five republics in the Central Asian region—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—previously closely linked to the Soviet economic and political systems, faced a number of challenges, most of which were inherited from the Czarist-Soviet regimes. Coping with the challenges posed by the transition period required foreign support, and all the republics, except Turkmenistan, have been engaged in active cooperation with global powers such as the U.S.

Considering the main features of the Western powers' involvement in the post-Soviet are-

na, we can agree with Gertrude Schroeder, who defined the first years since 1991 as a period of "mutual learning." On the one hand, the leaders of the newly independent states have learned from their experience of establishing a market economy at the speed and with the specifics permitted by domestic reality. While on the other hand, international organizations and countries have obviously contributed enormously to this learning process¹ and, through investment and

¹ See: G. Schroeder, "The Economic Transformation Process in the Post-Soviet States: The Role of Outside Actors," in: *The International Dimension of Post-Communist*

bilateral assistance programs, also learned much about dealing with a previously unknown environment. Schroeder refers to this process as follows:

“They [international organizations and countries] now have much more in-depth knowledge about physical and behavioral legacies from the old Soviet order, legacies that differ significantly among the post-Soviet states. They have learned that changing the habits and mind-sets of employees in the numerous government bureaucracies with which they must deal is a slow, painful, and frustrating business. They have learned that the specifics of reform policies and programs are usually highly controversial among domestic participants, even though consensus may exist on the desired goals and long-run outcomes. They now perceive that general ‘textbook’ solutions or those based directly on ‘another country’s’ experience may require modification to take into account the peculiarities of the communist legacy in each state. Finally, they have learned, hopefully, to avoid some of the inevitable mistakes of the initial years of involvement. For instance, the perceived failure of donors, especially of technical aid, to involve the recipient country’s experts in all phases of project development has been a frequent complaint, especially from local intellectuals.”²

We will note the quite distinctive nature of American policy in Central Asia. In December 1991, Secretary of State James Baker announced that the U.S. “will work with those republics and any common entity which commit to responsible security policies, democratic political practices, and free market economies.”³ Baker specified that some republics (Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan) seemed more prepared to take this course. Kazakhstan, like Russia and

Ukraine, on this list was given priority in U.S. policy because it possessed nuclear weapons.⁴ While recognizing the sovereign status of all twelve former Soviet republics in 1991, the U.S. administration established diplomatic contacts with only five of the former states, plus Belarus, while omitting the Muslim republics of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan from the list, “even though they had not been excluded for that reason [of being Muslim republics].”⁵ Even the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Kazakh and Kyrgyz sides does not signify immediate involvement of the U.S. As Olcott stated, it was rather “show than substance in these bilateral relationships.”⁶

Actual interest grew considerably under George W. Bush with the announcement of the “war on terror” in 2001. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were among the most actively involved players in military cooperation with the U.S. by allowing the use of their airbases in Bishkek and Khanabad, respectively. On the American side, the U.S. Department of Defense has been among the most active players in defining the priorities and channeling huge military assistance to the region, which peaked in 2002-2003.⁷ It is important to specify an essential feature of American aid—conditionality. Particularly in the cases of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the allocation of American aid (aid in Foreign Military Financing [FMF] and International Military Education and Training [IMET]) was linked to progress in the area of human rights.⁸

This paper focuses on analyzing the special features of U.S. Central Asian policy, especially regarding regional security and cooperation issues. I divide my analysis into two periods: the first period covers the years of early sovereignty

nist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia (The International Politics of Eurasia Series, Vol. 10), ed. by K. Dawisha, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1997, p. 246.

² G. Schroeder, op. cit., p. 248.

³ R.L. Gathoff, “Western Efforts to Shape Post-Soviet Behavior: Contemporary Developments in Historical Perspective,” in: *The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, pp. 16-17.

⁴ See: M.B. Olcott, *Central Asia’s Second Chance*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., 2005, p. 66.

⁵ R.L. Gathoff, op. cit.

⁶ M.B. Olcott, op. cit., p. 67.

⁷ See: Ibid., p. 175.

⁸ See: J. Nichol, “Central Asia’s Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests,” *Congressional Research Service*, 11 March, 2010, available at [www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30294.pdf], 20 May, 2010.

between 1991 and 2001; and the second period starts from U.S. involvement after the 9/11 events | until early 2010, including the policy of the Obama administration.

U.S. Policy before 9/11

As mentioned above, the U.S. presence in the region in the early 1990s was of rather a symbolic nature. The period between 1992 and 1994 was marked by the establishment of bilateral contacts with each republic and the transfer of American values of “democracy, human rights, and economic liberalism.”⁹ As Graham Fuller has put it, U.S. national interests during this stage, being “quite limited and primarily ‘negative’ in character,” are observed in six distinctive areas, “four of which are negative and two of which positive:”

1. Spreading U.S. policy all over the former Soviet Union so as to avoid the reemergence of any kind of Russian radical or ideological expansionism that could return the world to global nuclear confrontation.
2. Avoiding or maintaining damage control over further civil war or breakup of nations that might spill over into neighboring states, keeping the world in a state of disorder or mayhem.
3. Avoiding nuclear proliferation.
4. Avoiding the development of radical anti-Western forms of political Islam in the region.

The two positive U.S. interests are:

5. Supporting the enhancement of human rights, democracy, free market economies, and a cleaner global environment.
6. Enabling the United States to play a role in the economic development of the region, especially its raw materials.¹⁰

By defining American interests in the region as “negative,” Fuller meant that U.S. policy in the region was aimed at protecting against the negative developments in Central Asia as envisaged in the four designated areas.

Keeping in mind the peripheral location of the region vis-à-vis the U.S., America’s involvement at the early stage is mainly explained by its desire to form a counterbalance to Russia. This became especially clear in the mid-1990s when the Clinton administration started to express an interest in the energy reserves of the Caspian Sea Basin, particularly in the transportation of Kazakh oil and Turkmen gas via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline passing through Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, and Turkey to Europe and the U.S. while bypassing Russia.¹¹ However, further progress of the pipeline could pose serious challenges for both Central Asian states. For Kazakhstan, Moscow’s closest ally on the post-Soviet area, this new choice was called on to form a counterbalance between Russia and the U.S. As for Turkmenistan, it has complicated relations with Azerbaijan “over the ownership of sea-floor ener-

⁹ N.S. MacFarlane, “The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 80, No. 3, *Regionalism and the Changing International Order in Central Eurasia*, May 2004, p. 450.

¹⁰ See: G.E. Fuller, “Central Asia and American National Interests,” in: H. Malik, *Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects*, MacMillan, London, 1994, p. 130.

¹¹ See: J.H. Kalicki, “Caspian Energy at the Crossroads,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 5, Sep./Oct.2001, pp. 122-124.

gy deposits, potential competition for gas markets, and concern in this context about dependence on an Azerbaijani export route for Turkmen resources.”¹²

Another area of America’s involvement during this period includes military assistance to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan through NATO’s Partnership for Peace activities. As MacFarlane noted, the U.S. encouraged the establishment in December 1995 of the Central Asian Battalion (CENTRASBAT), which was composed of troops from the three above states.¹³ Other participating nations included Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, United Kingdom, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Mongolia. This regional military unit, “initially sponsored by U.S. Atlantic Command, with sponsorship shifting to U.S. Central Command,” is endowed with a mandate for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.¹⁴ A notable fact regarding U.S. involvement in Centrasbat is that the foundation for this regime was based upon the CAEC (Central Asian Economic Community) established in 1994. The CAEC formed the Council of Ministers of Defense under its auspices in December 1995 with establishment of the tripartite Centrasbat the following year. Tajikistan joined the CAEC in 1998 after the five-year civil war in 1997.¹⁵ The community was an attempt by the member states to find an alternative to the failed framework of the CIS. The U.S. administration appeared on time to meet the needs of the regional governments and to extend support of military affairs. This type of U.S. engagement is a rare example of support of regional cooperation. The latter argument is explained by the U.S.’s preference to deal with each republic bilaterally rather than at the multilateral level.

As for U.S. military cooperation in the late 1990s, it is necessary to mention the emerging importance of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The growing threat from the al-Qa’eda camps in Afghanistan forced the American administration to strengthen security cooperation with Uzbekistan.¹⁶ As a result, during a session of the U.S.-Uzbekistan joint commission in Tashkent in May 1999, the defense ministries of both states signed two important agreements: “one on combating terrorism and the other on cooperation between the Pentagon and Uzbekistan’s Defense Ministry.”¹⁷ The practical use of these agreements appeared in 2000 when the U.S. forces sent Predator drones to Afghanistan in an attempt to kill Osama bin Laden. Additionally, the U.S. Special Forces conducted training in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan within the framework of anti-Taliban operations. Another important area in the focus of the joint commission’s attention was political reforms in Uzbekistan. As Stephen Sestanovich, State Department Special Envoy for the Newly Independent States (definition used by the U.S. officials for CIS), stated, Uzbekistan was facing criticism regarding the status of opposition and media on the eve of the parliamentary elections.¹⁸

However, even with such positive progress in military assistance, we note serious challenges for cooperation in this area. The main challenge was Centrasbat falling under the operational control of U.S. Central Command (CentCom), which was facing challenges of coordination between U.S. military officials and NATO member states looking for assistance to the region. In other words, the West, like Russia, felt the lack of a single policy in dealing with Central Asia.¹⁹

¹² N.S. MacFarlane, op. cit., pp. 451-452.

¹³ See: Ibid., p. 452.

¹⁴ See: “CENTRASBAT,” GlobalSecurity.org., available at [www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/centrasbat.htm], 23 May, 2010.

¹⁵ See: “Tsentralnoaziatskoe ekonomicheskoe soobshestvo (TsAES)—Spravochnaya informatsia,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia*, 17 April, 2001, available at [www.mid.ru/ns-rsng.nsf/0e82a568fbb5b2c043256a65002f56c2/3f235dd67746105243256a5a002bff4f?OpenDocument], 23 May, 2010.

¹⁶ See: M.B. Olcott, op. cit., p. 72.

¹⁷ B. Pannier, Z. Echanova, “U.S. Signs Security Agreements with Uzbekistan,” *Asia Time Online*, 28 May, 1999, available at [www.atimes.com/c-asia/ae28ag01.html], 25 May, 2010.

¹⁸ See: Ibidem.

¹⁹ See: M.B. Olcott, op. cit., p. 71.

A final area of Washington's involvement is rendering technical assistance and making investments through leading international financial institutions and bilateral contacts. Multilateral assistance was conducted through such institutions as the IMF, World Bank, EBRD, and ADB. As for assistance at the bilateral level, the American administration used the Freedom Support Act (FSA), which was called on to assist the republics in carrying out market and democratic reforms.²⁰ However, the U.S.'s preoccupation with energy and military areas minimized the sociopolitical focus of the assistance since "the pursuit of such objectives might have complicated the pursuit of more concrete strategic objectives."²¹

Finally, with respect to U.S. involvement at the early stage, we will note the prevalence of "mutual learning" and the peripheral location of the region. Since the region itself was fairly new for American policymakers, they needed to accommodate their policy to the reality in Central Asia. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan became a primary focus because of the more open nature of the local societies and the presence of the nuclear factor in Kazakhstan. By the late 1990s, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan joined this group of American interests. Turkmenistan with its neutral stance remained mostly outside America's considerations. Despite this low interest in the region, the U.S. contributed significantly to regional cooperation through its energy and military projects. Through these projects, it became possible at the initial stage to conduct joint military exercises with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, and later Tajikistan, under the Centrasbat umbrella. Such cooperation was not limited to military issues, but also covered matters relating to domestic political reforms, as in the case of the U.S.-Uzbekistan joint commission. Lastly, the U.S. played an important role in directing financial flows from multilateral donor institutions to the region. At the bilateral level, the aid was channeled through FSA to support promotion of American values of market reforms and human rights.

U.S. Policy in the Aftermath of 9/11

As noted previously, the region became a central focus for the U.S. and NATO after announcement of the "war on terror" in Afghanistan, with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan providing their airbases for carrying out the anti-terrorist campaign while the three remaining republics opened their airspace.²² According to Olcott, MacFarlane, and reports from the U.S. State Department, Uzbekistan became a key partner of the U.S., which, in turn, significantly hiked its assistance to about \$300 million in 2002, the largest shares being in FSA assistance totaling \$124.46 million and U.S. Defense Department excess and privately donated humanitarian commodities valued at \$78.24 million.²³

When reviewing the impact of American policy on regional cooperation, it is appropriate to mention two features specified by MacFarlane.²⁴ The first feature is the "heavily bilateral focus" of

²⁰ See: M.B. Olcott, op. cit., p. 67.

²¹ N.S. MacFarlane, op. cit., p. 452.

²² See: J.K. Davis, M.J. Sweeney, "Central Asia in U.S. Strategy and Operational Planning: Where Do We Go From Here?" *The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis*, February 2004, p. 2, available at [www.ifpa.org/pdf/S-R-Central-Asia.pdf], 26 May, 2010.

²³ See: *US Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with Eurasia-FY 2002*, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington D.C., January 2003, available at [www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rpt/23630.htm], 26 May, 2010.

²⁴ See: N.S. MacFarlane, op. cit., pp. 455-457.

the policy with special emphasis on Uzbekistan. The policymakers in Washington placed the priority on bilateral contacts and discouraged the Central Asian governments from cooperating at the regional level. The only exception was GUUAM's activity. This association started to receive U.S. support in the late 1990s, but by the early 2000 its activities slowed down to resume again in December 2002 after America raised its interest in the Caspian Basin and Black Sea, a location of competition between Moscow and Washington since the early 1990s. During the Yalta meeting of GUUAM in 2003, the U.S. agreed to provide funding worth \$46 million for training mobile anti-terrorist units to guard pipelines and combat terrorism, increase the number of the special forces based in Georgia to assist the training of border forces, and create the GUUAM Parliamentary Assembly.²⁵

The second feature of American involvement was heavy reliance of assistance on the security component with an emphasis on border control, non-proliferation, and anti-narcotics / anti-terrorist assistance (see the table). In all the republics, except Tajikistan, security assistance comprised the largest share. The total amount of assistance gives an idea of the U.S.'s priority allies in the "war on terror," with Uzbekistan receiving the largest share, followed by Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.²⁶

Table

**U.S. Assistance to Central Asia
(\$m)**

Country	FY 2002 Budgeted	
Kazakhstan	Security & Law Enforcement	41.6
	Market Reforms	14.0
	Democracy Programs	13.7
	Community Development	11.5
	Social Services	6.0
	Humanitarian Assistance	3.2
	Total:	90.0
Kyrgyzstan	Security & Law Enforcement	37.4
	Market Reforms	17.6
	Democracy Programs	16.1
	Community Development	6.0
	Social Services	11.7
	Humanitarian Assistance	6.2
	Total:	95.0

²⁵ See: S. Blagov, "GUUAM Makes Comeback Bid with U.S. Support," *Eurasianet.org*, available at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav070703.shtml], 27 May, 2010.

²⁶ See: N.S. MacFarlane, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

Table (continued)

Country	FY 2002 Budgeted	
Tajikistan	Security & Law Enforcement	21.5
	Market Reforms	9.4
	Democracy Programs	12.4
	Community Development	10.4
	Social Services	12.2
	Humanitarian Assistance	75.6
	Total:	141.5
Turkmenistan	Security & Law Enforcement	8.0
	Market Reforms	0.9
	Democracy Programs	5.2
	Community Development	1.7
	Social Services	1.8
	Humanitarian Assistance	0.5
	Total:	18.1
Uzbekistan	Security & Law Enforcement	79.0
	Market Reforms	10.9
	Democracy Programs	26.2
	Community Development	5.5
	Social Services	45.5
	Humanitarian Assistance	52.7
	Total:	219.8

Source: Data compiled from: M.B. Olcott, "Taking Stock of Central Asia," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 2, Spring 2003, p. 15, available at [www.carnegieendowment.org/pdf/files/jjiaolcott.pdf].

In the process of directing assistance to Central Asia, we notice a shift in U.S. policy toward achieving specific interests at the expense of the American values of free market and human rights. As practical evidence of this statement, MacFarlane presents the case of Uzbekistan which, despite criticism from the U.S. State Department on the human rights situation, was not treated by the Bush administration as a "state of concern."

The last important detail in the U.S. approach regarding the security component is the constant emphasis of American officials on the importance of the rule of law, especially in economic activities.

This emphasis is explained by the need to deal with the widespread corruption in all the beneficiary states of American assistance. However, MacFarlane notes that the increase in security assistance has provided government officials in the region with opportunities to engage in corrupt practices, as in the case of the U.S. military base at Manas airport in 2003, where economic interests were closely linked to the Kyrgyz government.²⁷

Despite the criticism concerning the high level of corruption in the region and the weakness of the U.S. administration in pushing the local governments toward legal reforms, we emphasize one positive sign in this assistance. When examining the annual corruption indexes by Transparency International in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan during the peak period of American engagement (2001-2003), we find out that, owing to prioritization of the reforms and pressure from American officials, Uzbekistan registered significant progress in dealing with corruption, especially in 2002, the peak period of American aid (Uzbekistan's level of Corruption Perception Index (CPI) was registered at 2.9 (68th place among the 102 reported countries), while the indicator for Kazakhstan was 2.3 (88th), Kyrgyzstan not being included on the list). Meanwhile, the reduction in funding and stronger emphasis on reforms, together with negative domestic factors, led to a significant increase in corruption rates in all three states in the following order: 2003—Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan with similar rates of 2.4 (100th) and Kyrgyzstan with 2.1 (118th); 2004—Uzbekistan registered 2.3 (114th), while Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan share a rate of 2.2 (122nd).²⁸

Coming back to the U.S. policies of 2003-2005, we note a policy shift. In Uzbekistan this shift was characterized by a minor decrease in bilateral cooperation by late 2003 caused by the lack of improvement in the area of human rights. Meanwhile, a real disappointment for the Uzbek side was the decision by the Bush administration to establish "a very limited alliance" with Central Asia caused by the Pentagon's policy regarding switching the status of the U.S. facilities in the region from "hot" to "warm." Besides its ability to balance relations with Russia and China, one of Uzbekistan's objectives in establishing close ties with the U.S. was the hope of speeding up its military reform, which would allow it to deal with domestic and regional security challenges. As Olcott notes, until 2005 Uzbekistan placed the priority in its foreign policy on relations with the US. Even though Washington continued to extend military-security support after the series of terrorist acts in 2004, Russia's role in this context appears more effective through offering participation in "joint antiterror operations."²⁹

Relations between the U.S. and Uzbekistan deteriorated resulting from the Andijan events in May 2005 and failure to conduct an international inquiry.³⁰ Since then and until early 2008, we have been observing some cooling off in the relations between Uzbekistan and the West. One of the signs of deterioration was formulated in the SCO Declaration of July 2005 requesting that "the SCO member states consider it necessary that the relevant members of the antiterrorist coalition take a decision on the deadlines for the temporary use of the above-mentioned infrastructure facilities [military bases of U.S. and Coalition in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan] and military presence in the territory of the SCO member states."³¹ Soon after that the U.S. troops left the military base in Khanabad and moved to the Manas airport in Kyrgyzstan.

²⁷ See: *Ibid.*, p. 457.

²⁸ Statistics compiled from the annual surveys on Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International during 2001-2004, available at [www.transparency.org].

²⁹ M.B. Olcott, *op. cit.* pp. 176-179; J. Nichol, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

³⁰ See: J. Nichol, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

³¹ *Declaration by the Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, Astana, 5 July, 2005, available at [http://www.mid.ru/ns-rasia.nsf/3a0108443c964002432569e7004199c0/432569d80021985fc32570350038d121?OpenDocument].

The U.S. officials revised their stance by sending Richard Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, to the region in June 2008.³² This warming in bilateral relations was preceded by the Uzbek President's proposal to expand the "Six plus Two" to a new "Six plus Three" format during NATO's Summit in Bucharest in April 2008. The "Six plus Two" format, originally composed of the six countries bordering on Afghanistan (China, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) plus Russia and the U.S., conducted its activities during 1997-2001 with the focus on "bringing about intra-Afghan reconciliation between the Taliban and its opponents." The format suggested by the Uzbek leader should include NATO.³³ Reset of American-Uzbek relations and the republics in the region came in 2009 with President Obama's idea to refocus military operations from Iraq to Afghanistan.

As for Kyrgyz-American cooperation, it appears even more complicated than in the case of Uzbekistan. Given the small size of its population, economy, and military capabilities, Kyrgyzstan was not in a position to become a central focus of America's considerations. However, despite this limited focus, the U.S. rendered the country military assistance, especially in improving border security.³⁴ Nevertheless, its lack of significant reserves of natural resources, and like Uzbekistan, facing regular terrorist attacks and incursions since the early 2004, as well as the limited attention from the U.S. administration, pushed Kyrgyzstan to strengthen its ties with Russia and China. Additionally, Bakiev, the new Kyrgyz president who came to power as a result of the Tulip Revolution in 2005, requested an increase in the lease payment for the Manas base to about \$200 million a year in 2006 with simultaneous reaffirmation of free use by Russia of the previously established base in Kant. After the Kyrgyz-American negotiations concerning the status of the base, both sides issued a joint statement in July 2006 allowing the U.S. to continue to use the airbase facilities with the American side providing \$150 million in assistance and compensation.³⁵ President Bakiev had the final say on U.S.-Kyrgyzstan relations during a meeting with his Russian counterpart in February 2009 regarding closure of the Manas base and a preferential loan of \$300 million for a period of forty years and financial assistance totaling \$150 million.³⁶ However, the Kyrgyz government appeared unable to proceed with complete closure of the American base since the Kyrgyz Parliament ratified an agreement with the U.S. in June 2009 on establishment of the Transit Center at Manas International Airport to be used for transporting non-military goods to Afghanistan.³⁷ Like the U.S.'s previous arrangements, this time Washington directed financial flows to infrastructure improvements; air traffic control system upgrades; the U.S.-Kyrgyz Joint Development Fund for economic projects; counter-narcotics efforts; and counter-terrorism efforts totaling \$117 million.³⁸

Proceeding with America's policy in Kazakhstan since 2005, we will note that Astana became a key strategic partner of the U.S. owing to the latter's tense and uncertain relations with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Energy issues have been the top priority in bilateral relations, even though Kazakhstan's oil exports can hardly be compared with those of Saudi Arabia or Russia. This interest of the U.S. is closely linked to the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, details of which were mentioned above.

³² See: "President of Uzbekistan Receives U.S. Assistant Secretary of State," *UzA Uzbekistan National News Agency*, 2 June, 2008, available at [www.uza.uz], 3 June, 2008.

³³ M.K. Bhadrakumar, "Afghanistan Moves to Center Stage," *Asia Times Online*, 19 April, 2008, available at [www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/JD19Df02.html], 22 April, 2008.

³⁴ See: M.B. Olcott, op. cit., pp. 180-181.

³⁵ See: J. Nichol, op. cit., p. 37.

³⁶ See: "Bakiev ob'yavil o zakrytii voennoy bazy SShA v Kirgizii," *Lenta.ru Rambler Media Group Publication*, 3 February 2009, available at [lenta.ru/news/2009/02/03/base/], 4 February, 2009.

³⁷ See: "Parlament Kirgizii odobril pereformatirovanie bazy "Manas"," *Lenta.ru Rambler Media Group Publication*, 25 June 2009, available at [http://lenta.ru/news/2009/06/25/manas/], 27 June, 2009.

³⁸ See: T. Namatbaeva, "Kyrgyzstan Allows U.S. to Keep Using Base," *Agence France Presse*, 23 June, 2009.

As for military cooperation, although a less active partner of the U.S., Kazakhstan has been expressing a keen interest in assisting America's efforts in the "war on terror" by allowing use of its airspace for "coalition forays"³⁹ and three airfields in the southern part of Kazakhstan for emergency purposes.⁴⁰

Neither Tajikistan nor Turkmenistan has a prominent place in America's considerations. In Tajikistan, most of the U.S.'s involvement is concentrated on improving drug control funded from the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).⁴¹ In turn, the UNODC obtains financial assistance to run its drug anti-trafficking programs in the Central Asian region from the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), which places particular emphasis on "train[ing] and equip[ment]" programs that aim to establish local capacity. Another notable detail of such assistance is funding to improve the "interdiction capabilities along the borders" in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Speaking of the practical benefit for Tajikistan, we will note a long-term funding initiative for the Tajik Drug Control Agency (DCA), which was included in the UNODC \$17 million project announced in June 2003.⁴²

Although bilateral U.S.-Tajikistan cooperation in the economy is extremely low (as of January 2010, bilateral trade accounted for only \$2 million) compared to that with Russia, which is thirty times higher than the previous indicator, we emphasize America's leadership in rendering humanitarian aid to the republic, which received 48% of the total foreign aid allotted in January 2010. In the meantime, the only visible American investments have been made in constructing the bridge over the Panj River connecting the country with Afghanistan.⁴³ As a concluding remark on U.S.-Tajikistan relations, it is appropriate to mention the search by officials in Dushanbe for political support in building the Roghun hydropower plant. The official response to the Tajik side's request was voiced by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake: "We understand the importance of energy security for Tajikistan and support the government's efforts to make sure its citizens, enterprises, and institutions have access to adequate and reliable power. We encourage Tajikistan to take into consideration the views of their neighbors when pursuing hydropower development plans—like Roghun. In addition to Roghun, we encourage Tajikistan to consider developing small hydropower stations."⁴⁴ In this respect, we share the opinion of Head of the Representative Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation in Tajikistan Rustam Haydarov, who notes that the attempts of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to find allies in the dispute around the Roghun plant are condemned because "neither the U.S., nor Russia nor the EU will act as arbiters, since these countries want to have harmonic relations both with Dushanbe and Tashkent."⁴⁵

As for U.S.-Turkmenistan relations, they are at the lowest level in the region, which is mainly explained by former President Niyazov's "positive neutrality" policy, which rejected American support, especially in attractive oil and gas projects.⁴⁶ From the standpoint of bilateral military coopera-

³⁹ M.B. Olcott, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

⁴⁰ See: "Special Report: Kazakhstan Celebrates 10th Anniversary of Its Military," *Kazakhstan News Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 16, 8 May, 2002, available at [prosities-kazakhembus.homestead.com/050802.html], 6 June, 2010.

⁴¹ See: M.B. Olcott, op. cit., pp. 184-185.

⁴² See: T. Weihman, "U.S. Focus on Interdiction in Central Asia is Inadequate to Meet Drug Trafficking Challenge," *Eurasianet.org*, 22 September, 2003, available at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav092303a.shtml], 6 June, 2010.

⁴³ See: G. Faskhutdinov, "Tadzhikistan raschityvaet na podderzhku SShA v spore vokrug Roghuna," *Deutsche Welle*, 10 March, 2010, available at [www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5338753,00.html?maca=rus-rss_rus_yandex_new_comments_2-4163-xml], 11 March, 2010.

⁴⁴ U. Babakhanov, "Robert Blake: 'We Understand the Importance of Energy Security for Tajikistan'," *Asia-plus*, 13 February 2010, available at [www.asiaplus.tj/en/news/48/62064.html], 6 June, 2010.

⁴⁵ G. Faskhutdinov, op. cit.

⁴⁶ See: M.B. Olcott, op. cit., p. 184.

tion during the “war on terror,” Turkmenistan could have had the most favorable position because of its geopolitical location—50 miles from the Iranian and 100 miles from the Afghan borders. The country also has the largest Soviet military base in Mary. However, because of its policy “at times bordering on isolationism,” Turkmenistan allowed the U.S. and the Coalition Forces to use its airspace only for flights with a humanitarian mission and refused participation in any type of combat operations from its territory, as in the case of the German Air Force in 2002.⁴⁷ However, despite this passive behavior by Turkmenistan, in February 2004 the American administration found a common area of cooperation when the Turkmen side agreed to join the U.S.-funded program on training national law-enforcement staff in narcotics interdiction.

A significant change in government policy occurred after the sudden death of the Turkmen leader in December 2006 when the new president proved to be a proponent of diversifying the country’s international contacts, including energy exports. Turkmenistan, like Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran, exports electricity to Afghanistan. This export is a focus of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency’s (TDA) Central Asian Infrastructure Integration Initiative (launched in 2005) and USAID’s Regional Energy Market Assistance Program (launched in 2006). The objective of both American agencies is to contribute to the “energy, transportation, and communications projects, including the development of electrical power infrastructure and power sharing between Central Asia, Afghanistan, and eventually Pakistan and India.”⁴⁸ Further activities resulted in the four above-mentioned states signing an intergovernmental agreement on the construction of a 500-kilovolt electric power transmission line in August 2008. Funding for this project (\$935 million) is to be provided by the World Bank, IsDB, and the International Finance Corporation.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Involvement of the U.S. in Central Asia—a region previously unknown to it—went through many changes during the two decades being examined. The first decade can be defined as a period of “mutual learning” when the regional leaders made enormous efforts toward diversification of their international relations. This period was followed by rapid growth of the region’s geopolitical significance resulting from the U.S.-led anti-terror campaign in Afghanistan in 2001. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, which provided space for stationing American troops, as well as the remaining three republics, became the recipients of U.S. military assistance. As in other regions of the world, this aid was accompanied by stronger bilateral relations and requests to carry out reforms. However, emphasis on the security factor in the anti-terror campaign led to a decrease in American pressure on the reforms.

To summarize the role of the U.S. in Central Asia, we agree with Oles Smolansky, who stated that for all powers “it should be clear . . . that the Central Asian republics will first and above all pursue their own interests, as defined by their respective leaders. In this endeavor, the local actors will try to extract maximum benefits from all the outsiders and will not compromise their national interests in the name of ethnicity, religion, or anything else.”⁵⁰ By 2005, the U.S. and EU had fully realized the

⁴⁷ See: J.K. Davis, M.J. Sweeney, op. cit., p. 53; M.B. Olcott, op. cit., p. 184.

⁴⁸ “Press Release: USTDA Launches Central Asian Infrastructure Integration Initiative,” U.S. Trade and Development Agency, 14 October, 2005; J. Kucera, “Washington Seeks to Steer Central Asian States Toward South Asian Allies,” *Eurasia Insight*, 28 April, 2006; idem, “USAID Official Outlines Plan to Build Central-South Asian Electricity Links,” *Eurasia Insight*, 4 May, 2006.

⁴⁹ See: J. Nichol, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵⁰ O.M. Smolansky, “Turkish and Iranian Policies in Central Asia,” in: H. Malik, op. cit., p. 306.

importance of the above argument due to their numerous failures in dealing with the region. The first failure came from criticizing the Uzbek government's policy in the area of human rights and economic reforms during the annual meeting of the EBRD in Tashkent. The second failure originated in the request to carry out an international investigation of the Andijan events and the ongoing sanctions by the EU since 2005. Taking into account the lessons of the "mutual learning" period and realizing the importance of the region in economic and geopolitical terms, the Western community began lifting the sanctions against Uzbekistan and promoting cooperation with the other states in the region. Finally, the West eased its initial pressure on conducting reforms and improving the human rights situation in favor of cooperation in economic and security issues.

CENTRAL ASIA AS A SECURITY COMPLEX: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Introduction

The academic community is aware of three hypostases of Central Asia—(1) a geographical region; (2) a political entity; and (3) a civilizational expanse—each with its own limits. As a geographical region, Central Asia is limited by "natural borders" (mountains, rivers, the steppe, and the sea); as a political entity, it is contained within the state borders of the new political units; and as a civilizational expanse, it is described as the local peoples' cultural and/or ethnolinguistic community, that is, by civilizational factors.¹

The idea of Central Asia as the space in which four post-Soviet Central Asian republics

and Kazakhstan are situated is the region's most frequently used, not to say dominating, political description. Central Asia as a political entity is a target of academic studies in its own right² and

Central Asia conception (see: F.S. Starr, "A 'Greater Central Asia Partnership' for Afghanistan and Its Neighbors," *Silk Road Paper*, Washington, D.C., March 2005; idem, "In Defense of Greater Central Asia," *Policy Paper*, Washington, D.C., September 2008).

² See: *Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union: Domestic and International Dynamics*, ed. by M. Mesbahi, University Press of Florida, Florida, 1994; *Central Asia in Transition: Dilemmas of Political and Economic Development*, ed. by Boris Rumer, M.E. Sharpe, New York, London, 1996; U.T. Kasenov, *Bezopasnost Tsentralnoy Azii: globalnye, regionalnye i natsionalnye problemy*, Kaynar University Press, Almaty, 1998; O. Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, New York Univer-

¹ Together with the geopolitical factors, the civilizational factors were laid in the foundation of the Greater

an inalienable part of the foreign policy strategies of the key members of the international community.³

city Press, New York, 2000; *Central Asian Security: The New International Context*, ed. by R. Allison, L. Jonson, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Brookings Institution Press, London, Washington, D.C., 2001; P. Necati, *Boundary Issues in Central Asia*, Transnational Publishers, New York, 2002; R.M. Alimov, *Tsentralnaia Azia: obshchnost interesov*, Shark, Tashkent, 2005; A.A. Kazantsev, *"Bolshaia igra" s neizvetsnymi pravilami: mirovaia politika i Tsentralnaia Azia*, MGIMO-Universitet, Moscow, 2008, etc.

³ The European Union formulated its Central Asia strategy: *European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership* (2007); the 2006 National Security Strategy of the United States of America contains the South and Central Asia section; Washington instituted the post of Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs. Russia's National Security Strategy treats cooperation with the Central Asian states as a priority. The European

An analysis of the dynamics of regional security reveals the complete inconsistency of the "three hypostases" scheme. In the case of Central Asia, security (or the problems of security) is the most acceptable criterion of a region, the cornerstone of the Regional Security Complexes (RSC) idea described as "regions as seen through the lens of security."⁴ The regional security complex is a "very specific, functionally defined type of region, which may or may not coincide with more general understandings of region."⁵ This means that the region's functional factors describe Central Asia as an RSC.

Union, NATO, France, the U.S., and other countries and organizations created the post of coordinator for the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia.

⁴ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 43-44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

The Theory of Regional Security Complexes: Main Provisions

Barry Buzan was the first to formulate the idea of the Regional Security Complexes,⁶ further developed by Ole Wæver and the Copenhagen School (International Relations); not infrequently, therefore, the Theory of Regional Security Complexes (TRSC) is described as "part of the Copenhagen School's collective theoretical approach to security."⁷ Highly structuralized, the Buzan-Wæver theory, which offers a ramified system of criteria, models, and types of regional complexes, has been universally accepted as the most effective analytical instrument applied to regional security dynamics.

At first, in 1983, the RSC was defined as "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another."⁸ This definition was mainly applied to the dynamics of the political and military security sectors⁹ dominated by the state.

It was revised when it became clear that the range of participants in the security sphere was expanding, while the state-oriented approach to security lost some of its former significance. In 2003, it was defined as "a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are

⁶ See: B. Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1983; B. Buzan, *People, States and Fear. An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Second Edition, Lynne Rienner Publishers Boulder, Colorado, 1991.

⁷ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, *op. cit.*, p. xvii.

⁸ B. Buzan, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁹ See: B. Buzan, O. Wæver, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another.”¹⁰

When compared, the above definitions reveal that whereas the first merely declares the objective state of affairs, that is, the actors’ “security concerns link together sufficiently closely,” the second points out that “security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another,” which means that the states should pursue coordinated (and imposed, to a certain extent) concerted policies in the security sphere; this is described as an irrefutable necessity. It should be said, however, that the necessity for carrying out a joint policy, that is, the subjective side, is created by the objective nature of RSC.

The TRSC stems from materialist and constructivist approaches: the materialist approach relies on the ideas of territoriality and the balance of power that stresses the anarchic nature of international relations. In this sense, this approach is very close to neorealism and even borrows its key paradigms. The constructivist approach relies on the conception of “securitization;” as the cornerstone of the TRSC, it concentrates on the political processes within which the “security issues get constituted.”¹¹

Securitization is a discursive process that formulates a social problem accepted by the political community as an *existential threat*; it keeps security and routine policy apart.¹² It excludes the objective nature of threats, while security is viewed as a product of inter-subjective activity. This means that securitization should not concentrate on an assessment of vague objective threats seen as a “real” threat to a certain security object, but on an effort to achieve the actors’ agreement about what constitutes a threat. In this sense, “security is what actors make it.”¹³ This process, which identifies real security threats in the vast number of social (interstate) problems, outlines, by the same token, the boundaries of an RSC; this, in turn, makes it independent of other security complexes.

Security implies “strong territoriality;”¹⁴ this means that it is conceptualized in the (material) expanse limited by the region’s borders, in which the logic of territoriality is its basic property. The state of security and/or insecurity in it is determined by the level of physical interaction among the actors, mainly, the regional states. Transborder relations, a recent and fairly important trend of international relations, have already largely changed our interpretation of security and threats, however the factor of adjacent states in the security policy of the states in any specific region remains its inalienable element.

Still, the dual nature of the proximity/spatiality factor crops up in interstate relations: on the one hand, the geographic location (proximity) of states creates “high interaction opportunities that “may lead to more cooperative behavior;”¹⁵ this promotes trade, economic, and cultural ties and, in the final analysis, regionalism. On the other hand, however, the same factor may lead to conflicts: the history of interstate, ethnic, and religious conflicts shows that more likely than not such conflicts flare up between states, ethnic, or religious groups in the same geographic space.

The TRSC explains this by the amity/enmity model regarded “as distinct factors in the security problematique.”¹⁶ This model largely clarifies the picture of interstate relations and the nature of security and/or insecurity relations in the region. The relations of amity between states, an assurance that other states will help and support, can be treated as qualitative relations of amity; enmity betrays itself in fear and suspicion in the states’ relationships.

¹⁰ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, J. de Wilde, *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publishers Boulder, London, 1998, p. 201; B. Buzan, O. Wæver, op. cit., p. 44.

¹¹ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, op. cit., p. 4.

¹² See: Ibid., p. xvi.

¹³ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁵ H. Starr, “Territory, Proximity, and Spatiality: The Geography of International Conflict,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 7, 2005, p. 397.

¹⁶ B. Buzan, op. cit., p. 190.

Any regional security complex can be described as an “understructure of [the] international system,”¹⁷ that is, there is a certain level of mutual dependence between existing/adjacent RSCs. The global and regional security levels are connected by the mechanism of “*penetration*,” the logic of the balance of power forces the regional rivals to look for allies outside the region.

Penetration may develop into “*overlay*” when the interests of the great powers dominate over those of the regional states. The absence of security relations among states of the same region can be described as the worst scenario for the RSC. This is intensified by regional rivalry/confrontation, a low securitization level, the absence of organizational and legal structures conducive to settlement of common (regional) problems, protracted military occupation, etc.

Can Central Asia be Described as a Security Complex?

There is no straightforward answer to this question.

The authors of the TRSC classified Central Asia as a “weak subcomplex.”¹⁸ They describe Central Asia as a region of weak states and weak nations; moreover, Russia, an extra-regional power, plays a dominant role in shaping the structure and content of regional security. This means that the regional security dynamics and securitization of the numerous security problems remain at a very low level.¹⁹

In Central Asia, security dynamics have been developing as an inalienable part of the process of securitization of the post-Soviet expanse, while the institutionalization of interstate relations and the functioning of individual RSCs there was described by the “subcomplex plus Russia” formula.²⁰ There are objective reasons behind this: first, the security vacuum left by the destroyed unified defense and security system provided by the Soviet Union should be filled; second, for objective reasons it was not easy to build national (interstate) RSC foundations.

The factor of strong and weak states may serve as another argument in favor of the above. It should be said that the weakness was also caused by the regional states’ new, *sovereign*, status. According to the TRSC, neither the military nor the economic might of a state serves as a criterion of its weakness or strength. “The concept of strong and weak states rests on the degree of sociopolitical cohesion within the state.”²¹ States with weak government and public institutions might become vulnerable to external threats and the penetration of external powers.

Analysts have pointed out that the newly independent states of Central Asia have become stronger, they have recognized that they have similar interests and face similar security challenges, geopolitical rivalry in the region has intensified, and there is a foreign military-political presence in the region and in Afghanistan. These factors have forced researchers to readjust their opinions about the status of the Central Asian RSC; they have arrived at the following conclusions:

- (1) Central Asia is part of a larger security complex; those who agree with this thesis believe that China’s stronger influence in the region will probably push Central Asia toward the Asian supercomplex²²;

¹⁷ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

¹⁹ See: *Ibid.*, pp. 423-424.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

²¹ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, J. de Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

²² See: A.P. Lukin, “Teoriia kompleksov regionalnoy bezopasnosti i Vostochnaya Azia,” *Oikumena*, No. 2, 2011, p. 18.

- (2) the bipolar approach according to which Central Asia belongs to the RSC consists of two security complexes with equal statuses. Those who side with the idea do not doubt the separate nature of the Central Asian RSC, however certain circumstances indicate that the two RSCs should be treated as a single whole. In particular, some researchers think that Afghanistan, as the main hub of the RSC of South and Central Asia, brings the two regional security complexes (Central and South Asia) together,²³ or they insist on a single Central Eurasian RSC.²⁴

Central Asia is an independent RSC in its own right; this is what an ever increasing number of analysts (myself included) thinks.²⁵

The Central Asian RSC is primarily formed by the common locality and common history of its peoples/states and by the fairly stable models of amity/enmity, conflict, and cooperation. The global powers' rivalry, an extension of geopolitics and external alliances and a product of the strategic and economic interests of Russia and China, on the one hand, and the United States, on the other, is responsible for the security dynamics of the Central Asian RSC. Afghanistan is a buffer between three RSCs—the Gulf, Central Asia, and South Asia.²⁶

The processes going on in the region and, therefore, regionalism have been serving as the starting point of securitization and security institutionalization in Central Asia from the very first days of independence of the local states. Despite the fact that the currently functioning institutions of security were set up with the active involvement of the global powers, the main role belonged to regional prerequisites and the regional organizations (the SCO and CSTO as the Central Asian projects established to address the region's security problems).

The events of the late 1990s in the south of Kyrgyzstan known as the Batken events²⁷ added vigor to the organizational and legal efforts within the Shanghai Five.²⁸ It should be said that in 1998 its members announced that it was an open structure and they would “greet all interested states of the region (Central Asia.—*I.B.*) wishing to join the process.”²⁹ In this way, the mechanism of more active cooperation between heads of the law and order structures and special services of the Shanghai Five was launched. They coordinate their struggle against security threats; a Bishkek Group was set up to synchronize their activities, etc.

Securitization was manifested in the SCO's activities; its members joined forces to fight “three evils”—terrorism, extremism, and separatism—threats to their continued existence, according to the TRSC vocabulary. On 15 June, 2001 in Shanghai, the constituent session adopted the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, one of the key SCO documents, togeth-

²³ See: A. Priego, “Pakistan mezhdru regionalnymi kompleksami bezopasnosti Tsentralnoy i Iuzhnoy Azii,” available at [<http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2008-06-rus/06.shtml>].

²⁴ See: J. Eyvazov, “Central Eurasia through the Prism of Security: A Regional System or a Subsystem?” *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 5, Issue 1-2, 2011.

²⁵ See: F.F. Tolipov, *Bolshaia strategiiia Uzbekistana v kontekste geopoliticheskoy i ideologicheskoy transformatsii Tsentralnoy Azii*, Fan Publishers, Tashkent, 2005, p. 46; *Central Asian Security: The New International Context*; Sh. Tadjbakhsh, “Central Asia and Afghanistan: Insulation on the Silk Road, Between Eurasia and the Heart of Asia,” *PRIO Paper*, Oslo, PRIO, 2012, available at [<http://www.prio.no/Research-and-Publications/Publication/?oid=3287917>].

²⁶ See: Sh. Tadjbakhsh, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

²⁷ The terrorists who invaded Kyrgyzstan in 1999 demanded a corridor; they wanted to reach Uzbekistan to fight against its constitutional order and territorial integrity. In this way they camouflaged their true aim: control over the Osh-Khorog drug trafficking route and the Sary-Tash hub on the borders of China, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan (see: U. Botobekov, “Situatsiia v Ferganskoy doline: religiozny ekstremizm, oborot narkotikov,” in: *Mnogomernye granitsy Tsentralnoy Azii*, ed. by M.B. Olcott, A. Malashenko, Moscow Carnegie Center, Gendalf, Moscow, 2000, p. 52).

²⁸ Significantly, China was also involved in the Batken events: it used its military transport aviation to deliver weapons to the Kyrgyz military and cooperated, on a free basis, with the border guards of the Batken Region (see: O.A. Moldaliev, *Sovremennye vyzovy bezopasnosti Kyrgyzstana i Tsentralnoy Azii*, Bishkek, 2001, pp. 30-31).

²⁹ *Joint Statement of the Participants of the Almaty Summit*, 3 July, 1998.

er with the Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Taken together, the outcrops of terrorism and extremism in Central Asia in the late 1990s can be likened to the “Kosovo events,” which caused revision and reassessment of the role and place of the European security institutions.

As distinct from the regional security system, an RSC is an objective phenomenon, while the regional security system is its product. The regional security system can be described as “an internal mechanism and mode of organization of interstate relations designed to maintain regional peace and stability;”³⁰ it is a product of activity among the subjects, that is, the regional states. They proceed from their common and mutually conditioned security, which makes coordinated policy and joint efforts indispensable. In other words, these factors determine the dynamics of regional security.

The RSC exists *ipso facto* and concentrates on security problems. Through securitization, that is, active cooperation among the region’s states, a certain security problem is recognized as *a threat to national/regional security*. This means that the security problems of the Central Asian RSC are different from those of the RSCs of South Asia, the Caucasus, and the Gulf.

I have already written that security problems are the main instrument in identifying the *true RSC borders* and the content of regional security dynamics. These problems are absolutely objective and exist independently of the subjects’ intentions. This means that the absence of adequate cooperation level among the region’s states when it comes to opposing common threats (which is typical of the Central Asian RSC) should not be regarded as a factor that makes its autonomous nature non-existent.

The academic community distinguishes between inner (regional) and external threats to Central Asian security. The former includes the still pending international-legal border issues; mounting transborder threats (religious extremism, terrorism, illegal trade migration, etc.); undeveloped constitutionalism and institutions of civil society in some of the Central Asian states; the absence of efficient bilateral and multilateral (regional) mechanisms for settling transborder problems, etc.

External prerequisites might be of global (the events of 9/11) or regional origin and/or be caused by the neighborhood factor. The external prerequisites of the Central Asian RSC are the following: domestic instability in Afghanistan; the “instability belt” around the region—Afghanistan-FATA³¹-Kashmir-XUAR³²; the prospect of a continued military presence in Afghanistan, etc. This means that what is going on in Afghanistan, FATA, XUAR, and Kashmir is directly related to the Central Asian region and the borders of the Central Asian RSC.

Afghanistan— the “Main Nerve of Central Asia”³³

The geographical RSC borders are “zones of weak interaction,” while the states within them are called insulators.³⁴ As distinct from a buffer state found in the center of a strong securitization model, the insulator is found at the margins where two RSCs meet.³⁵

³⁰ I.I. Bobokulov, *Mezhdunarodno-pravovye aspekty regionalnoy bezopasnosti: voprosy teorii i praktiki*, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent, 2010, p. 34.

³¹ The Federally Administered Tribal Areas is a specific region of Pakistan at the border with Afghanistan inhabited by Pashtun tribes.

³² The Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China.

³³ V. Korgun, “Afghanistan—glavny nerv Tsentralnoy Azii,” available at [<http://www.centrasia.Ru/newsA.php4?st=1087426800>].

³⁴ See: B. Buzan, O. Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, p. 41.

³⁵ See: *Ibid.*, p. 41.

From the very first days of the political independence of the Central Asian nations, the situation in Afghanistan has been and remains *the external backbone* of their security. This fact is conditioned by several circumstances, the main being geographic proximity, common borders, common history, and common civilization of the peoples of Central Asia and Afghanistan. As the fundamental factors of cooperation of states, they predetermine the common destiny of these peoples and nations.

The *contemporary challenges and threats to the Central Asian states* are equally important; their origins are related, to a greater or lesser degree, to the very complicated situation in Afghanistan. This largely affects the structure and content of the security policy of its neighbors. This means that they underlie the regional and national efforts designed to set up a “security belt” and institutional-legal foundations for combating contemporary threats in Central Asia.³⁶

Globalization and the increasing mutual economic dependence of the states make the “*peaceful potential*” of Afghanistan even more obvious; it may contribute to the stability and economic growth of the Central Asian countries. Afghanistan can become an important link of alternative transportation corridors and the energy system, play an important part in regional trade, and help to diversify hydrocarbon transit from Central Asia to the world markets. In other words, Afghanistan is not only and not so much an instability factor; potentially it may become an important component of the “material basis” of the region’s sustainable stability. This means that the Central Asian states and Afghanistan have mutually complimentary security interests.

The road to peace in Afghanistan, the cornerstone of domestic and regional stability, lies through the country’s direct involvement in the structure of regional cooperation. An analysis of its involvement in regional development reveals that, albeit a backbone, it still remains outside this system: its involvement in the main regional structures (the SCO, CSTO, EurAsEC) is purely token; it is absent from many other regional forums such as 6 + 1 (Japan-Central Asia) and the EU Troika and Central Asia structures. The same can be said of the projects related to energy production, transport, and trade. It seems that this does not suit the interests of the regional states and makes their security-related efforts unproductive.

The Future of the Central Asian RSC

Under the impact of various factors, the RSC might be transformed according to one of three possible patterns:

- (1) preservation of the status quo, which means that its basic structural elements will remain the same;
- (2) internal transformation—changes will unfold within the present borders: changes in the anarchical structure (in the case of regional integration); changes in polarity (disintegration, mergers, unequal development level); changes in the amity/enmity model; and
- (3) external transformation—changes of the RSC’s borders, that is, its expansion or contraction, which will inevitably change the list of its actors.³⁷

³⁶ The emerging security system in the region was intended, after all, to oppose the contemporary threats generated by Afghanistan. Domestic instability in Afghanistan was one of the main reasons why the CIS Collective Security Treaty (1992) was signed in Tashkent (in 2003, it was transformed into the Collective Security Treaty Organization; in 1997, the Contact Group “6 + 2” was formed; in 2005, the Contact SCO-Afghanistan Group was set up; later, in 2012, an anti-drug SCO strategy was formulated).

³⁷ See: B. Buzan, O. Wæver, op. cit., p. 53.

The future of the Central Asian RSC is determined by two trends—internal and external.

Internal transformation of the regional RSC within the limits of the five independent states can be described as unstable. The ups and downs are natural outcomes of the relations among the newly independent states related to building the foundations of regional security. This is shown by the emergence of several similar structures (the CACO and EurAsEC in particular) and their subsequent merging; the appearance of new specialized interstate structures based on the already functioning ones (such as the CSTO and EurAsEC based on the CIS and the SCO based on the Shanghai Five); the conflicting interests related to the unsettled border issues and the use of water from the transborder rivers, etc.

Internal transformation has not changed the anarchical nature of the Central Asian RSC. Despite the efforts of the region's states to develop cooperation within the region (which confirms the absence of disintegration processes), it is too early to talk about regional integration, that is, about a qualitatively new stage in transformation of the Central Asian RSC.

We can, however, point to the basic features of a security community, that is, of a model of interdependent security within which the members do not expect the use of force and are not ready to use it themselves.³⁸ As a rule, the member states of such communities have common fundamental values and share the conviction that peace guarantees the region's stability.

The absence of a roadmap for the Afghan conflict and the fact that the adjacent states are actively involved in Afghanistan's internal development transforms it from an insulator into a link between the Central Asian and South Asian RSCs. In other words, the RSCs are expanding or reaching new borders. The SCO and the counterterrorist operation in Afghanistan have added to the Chinese and American impacts on Central Asia. Today, however, there is no reason to expect a new RSC based on Central and South Asia—there are too many factors preventing this.

³⁸ For more detail, see: *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*, ed. by K.W. Deutsch, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957; *Security Communities*, ed. by E. Adler, M. Barnett, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.

REGIONAL STUDIES

**THE ELECTRONIC IRON CURTAIN AND
VIRTUAL DEMOCRACY:
LESSONS FOR UZBEKISTAN**

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If you shut the door to all errors,
truth will be shut out.

Rabindranath Tagore

Introduction

At the beginning of July 2012, the media and Internet reported that a documentary film shown on Uzbekistan's Eshlar TV channel had compared social networks (in particular Facebook and Odnoklassniki) to machineguns and nuclear bombs. Social networks were also likened to weapons in the hands of the enemy.¹

During the program, an expert from the Spirituality and Enlightenment Center asked the following question: "What is the difference between a terrorist and a blogger's page on a social network showing photographs of naked people?"

¹ [<http://www.iarex.ru/articles/27506.html>].

He also noted that "if terrorists kill people using weapons and bombs, Internet users are ultimately being killed with the aid of 'sweet words;' this kind of mass culture poses a direct danger to our state policy and our sovereignty."

Another expert accused Facebook and Odnoklassniki of propagandizing sexual perversion and "the extravagances of Western democracy."

The film called on young people to use local analogues of these websites instead—Muloqot.uz and Sinfdosh.uz.²

² Ibidem.

Despite all the seriousness of such accusations, it should, however, be kept in mind that the number of users of social networks is steadily rising and already totals hundreds of thousands.

The reviews of some experts about social networks unwittingly makes us think of the recent past when, with the aid of the Iron Curtain, the state tried to shield people, primarily the youth,

from the “pernicious influence of the West;” today many feel that this influence is reflected in advance of democracy in non-democratic countries.

All of this has prompted me to discourse upon what the social networks have added to our lives and to what extent they could be a threat to the country’s national security.

Virtual Democracy

There are already as many as nine million Internet users in Uzbekistan (around 200,000 people are registered on Facebook); this figure comprises more than half of the residents of Kazakhstan and almost equals the population of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan put together.

It is not that difficult to calculate the number of worldwide web users, however, the “impressive figures” far from fully reflect the actual extent to which the Internet penetrates our lives. The most important indicator is the amount of time users spend on the social networks; today we are essentially seeing the virtualization of many sides of everyday life (private, public, family, and state).

It will be no exaggeration to say that virtual space is increasingly becoming the environment in which people feel most comfortable; it is where many insurmountable life problems are resolved. Furthermore, those who “live” on the Internet are turning into a certain demos with their virtual democracy and laws. These virtual laws are being manifested as a transfiguration and reincarnation of real democracy, the lack of which they are compensating for.

The appearance of virtual democracy has made it possible for authoritarian political systems, including post-Soviet, to figure out what failed democracy (analogous to the term failed state) is.

But this is only the visible part of the changes going on in society; in actual fact, there are deeper problems. While our ideologists are trying to find ways to comprehend the social networks using the old ideological methods, the Internet community continues to transform.

As Indian scientists Parag Khanna and Ayesha Khanna point out, having not yet fully entered the Information Age, we are already entering the so-called Hybrid Age, which is a new socio-technical era distinguished by the rapidly merging combinations of technologies with each other and people’s increasing integration with technology, so humankind is becoming part of entirely new social relations. In so doing, the very essence of social activism, which goes beyond the boundaries of traditional institutions, is changing.³

Hybrid reality develops a new eclectic world outlook in people today. As soon as people joined the Internet and acquired cell phones, it was as though they stopped being Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Russians, and so on. People are now borrowing from different resources: other-cultural, other-national, and technological (extra-cultural and extra-national), whereby use of the latter is becoming increasingly important.

Borrowing has always gone on and is inherent in all peoples, however, the technological resource based on digital content that blends everything together has speeded it up beyond belief. Contemporary technological progress is fundamental and unique; against the background of new social engineering, the striving for democracy and the resistance of authoritarian regimes to it are losing their pertinence.

³ See: P. Khanna, A. Khanna, *Hybrid Reality: Thriving in the Emerging Human-Technology Civilization*, TED Books, 2012.

Parag Khanna and Ayesha Khanna show that we need a translator to become a link not only between the representatives of different cultures and nations, but also between generations, since today's young people are assimilating technological innovations much faster than their ancestors.

Some flag wavers and conservatives think that the social networks are to blame, however, to put it in their words, the "plague of the thing" lies in information technology, the Internet, and contemporary means of communication as a whole. They compensate for their inability to adequately participate in contemporary global information processes by creating, in keeping with Soviet tradition, the image of an external enemy and making the social networks a "scapegoat."

At one time, Uzbekistan indiscriminately accused international organizations of being the propagators of the so-called Color Revolutions; today, however, the Internet and social networks have become the target of ostracism. Such rudiments of Soviet thinking as "not allowed" and "permission not granted" have once more proven to be in demand; meanwhile, current reality is insistently demanding that proposals be drawn up called on to ensure the development of entirely new social, political, and even cultural engineering.

Let's take nuclear physics, for example. This science has produced the nuclear bomb, but no one is saying that nuclear physics should be banned.

There may be some amorality, vulgarity, and immodesty on Facebook and Odnoklassniki, but there is also (and much more than the first) open discussion among serious people of the present day (particularly young people) on the widest range of problems; this is where a powerful and new type of socialization is going on and where democracy is finding its own expression.

"But today's information revolution," writes Fareed Zakaria, "has produced thousands of outlets for news that make central control impossible and dissent easy. The Internet has taken this process another huge step forward, being a system where, in the columnist Thomas Friedman's words 'everyone is connected but no one is in control'."⁴

It is interesting that what those attacking the social networks are saying clearly contrasts to the official statements about the need to develop the Internet in Uzbekistan, whereby this process has indeed become irreversible. Internet cafes are overflowing with visitors (mainly young people and even children); today it is difficult to imagine homes and apartments without high-speed Internet connections; thanks to cell phones we carry the Internet around in our pockets. According to the monthly ratings, in terms of the number of users registered on the most popular world social network, Facebook, Kazakhstan ranks 103rd out of a total of 213 countries, Russian 25th, and Uzbekistan 143rd (this is reported on the site itself).⁵

So, although they have detected the problem, our ideologists have not correctly understood it and are not adequately responding to it.

It should be noted that the Iron Curtain, raised by Soviet ideology, was relatively effective only because at the time of the Soviet Union people were not engaged in global communication. From this it follows that it will be impossible to raise the Iron Curtain again for two reasons:

- (1) the country and its people are engaged in world communication;
- (2) post-Soviet ideology has not acquired monolithic and strict content and so is eclectic in nature.

The so-called Soviet syndrome being observed today in politics, public relations, and culture is capable of inducing (fortunately or unfortunately) virtual reflection in the virtual demos, which could regress back from the social networks to real society.

⁴ F. Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom. Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, W.W. Norton & Co Ltd., New York, 2007, p. 15.

⁵ [<http://www.meta.kz/624407-kazahstan-zanyal-103-e-mesto-po-chislu-polzovateley-facebook.html>].

Instead of criticizing the social networks, it would be better to take a look at the anomalies of public life that are being prescribed exclusively to the influence of the Internet. However, we should not forget that the social networks only reflect the defects of society brought to them from real life and virtualized.

When arguing about whether Facebook is beneficial or detrimental, it must be understood that it is a social network where people look for new *friends* and reconnect with old ones. So attacks on social networks where FRIENDS and COLLEAGUES meet and socialize are absolutely inappropriate.

Virtual Democracy and Security

As we know, security (political, information, and ideological) has currently acquired a multidimensional nature, and many phenomena and areas of public life could become a target of securitization; this is what happened with democracy and the social networks. The dual attitude toward this problem has been manifested in such phobias and philias as Americanophobia and Americanophilia, Russophobia and Russophilia, Islamophobia and Islamophilia, Internet-phobia and Internet-philialia.

In Soviet times, films about karate were banned, but young people managed to get their hands on them and watched them at home; when video players appeared they de facto stopped being taboo. The same happened following independence, “the discovery of America,”⁶ the revival of Islam, and hooking up to the Internet. As a result, Islam and the Internet have become an important factor in the self-identification of peoples and the self-determination of the states of Central Asia. Nevertheless, we often hear America being criticized by those who know nothing about it, Islam by those who have not read the Koran, and the Internet by those who only know how to think as a censor.

Meanwhile, a very interesting trend has recently appeared in the democratic evolution of non-democratic countries: it can be called the “*licensing of democracy*.” In Uzbekistan, it is mainly specially authorized people who talk about the problems of the country’s democratic development at the public level: ideologists, journalists, public officials, scientists, and civil servants trained in a special way. Whereby they talk about democracy and violations of its principles with extreme caution, without daring to mention the existing problems.

In essence, licensed democracy performs the mission of restraint (consciously or unconsciously). Instead of promoting true democracy, it precisely repeats what Fareed Zakaria pointed out: “In a world that is increasingly democratic, regimes that resist the trend produce dysfunctional societies — as in the Arab world. Their people sense the deprivation of liberty more strongly than ever before because they know the alternatives; they can see them on CNN, BBC and Al-Jazeera. But yet, newly democratic countries too often become sham democracies, which produce disenchantment, disarray, violence, and new forms of tyranny.”⁷

So the claim that the Arab Spring of 2011 was largely the result of a *Facebook revolution* is only partially true. The protest statements of the masses in the Arab countries were largely the result of what Zbigniew Brzezinski called political awakening. Something like political awakening, although in specific forms that define a different type of dynamics, is going on in the U.S. itself. This is shown by the recent events going on in this country. I am talking about the mass protest demonstrations and manifestations (particular the Occupy Wall Street movement).

⁶ I use the symbolic phrase “the discovery of America” to indicate the newly independent states’ discovery of the U.S., the West, and the world community as a whole and the world community’s discovery of the newly independent states.

⁷ F. Zakaria, op. cit., p. 18.

While Facebook is being criticized in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states, the social networks and the Internet, which are developing at a fantastic rate, are increasingly becoming a factor, means, and indicator of the development of the world's countries.

For example, it recently became known that Washington has become the first American state allowing people to register to vote via Facebook. "Once it is live, Facebook users can click on the application... They'll need to agree to let Facebook access their information, which will be used to prefill their name and date of birth in the voter registration form. Users will still need to provide a driver's license or state ID card number to continue."⁸ Online registration will be opened before the U.S. presidential election scheduled in November 2012.

Politicization of Facebook is obvious and inevitable; the people belonging to this community are not going to discuss only everyday and worldly topics in chat rooms, as was the case at the beginning of Internet socialization. As a new type of community representing a virtual demos, they simply cannot help but talk about politics; after all, as Aristotle said, "man is a political animal."

A manifestation of the politicization of Facebook are the unique public opinion polls—the "like" surveys, which are a unique invention of virtual democracy. Here distortion of statistics, tailoring the data of social polls to fit the political situation, and false propaganda are impossible. It is precisely this Facebook truth that brought up the topic of securitization of the social networks.

The calls being heard in Uzbekistan today to take control over the social networks and create its own national social network on the Internet (along the lines of Facebook) could backfire. It stands to reason that the established and growing Internet community will not shift to national social networks, which will undoubtedly be more ideology-driven.

If ideological activity has little effect in real life, we should not expect it to have any impressive results in national social networks; it must be carried out with a "live" audience.

I think that the authors of the above-mentioned film are quite realistic in their thinking and understand very well the gist of the problem they have raised. However, their attempts to play along with official propaganda are doing the government a disservice. After all, the authorities are worried about the Arab revolutions (which they blame the social networks for) spreading to Uzbekistan and are striving to retain sociopolitical stability in the country. In this context it can be said that virtual (that is, liberal) democracy is mobile, while licensed (that is, non-liberal) is static.

On 10 August, 2012, *Rossiiskaia gazeta* published an article called "Iran is Launching an 'Internal Internet'."⁹ It stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) could join the list of states that rejects use of the Internet in favor of an internal intranet where only approved websites can be accessed. The article also contained a reference to a statement by Head of the Iranian Ministry of Information and Communication Technology Reza Takipur that the Internet is an "unreliable" environment and, what is more, is "under the control of one or two countries."

The author of the article says that "attempts by authoritarian authorities to take control over the entire online content and intercept attempts by the opposition to unite against the tyrant" are obvious. Furthermore, he notes that Iran's leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, has registered an account on Instagram and prior to that opened a micro blog on Twitter. Incidentally, it was reported that several state officials would still be able to use the Internet, and the ayatollah would evidently be among them.

"Ironic Iranization of the Internet" revealed the paradox that the state officials of the IRI want to be able to enjoy the Internet while striving to keep their people away from it; this is simple proof of the mutual lack of correspondence between the virtual and real identity of the members of one and same society. In so doing, the Iranian regime is cutting its own throat.

⁸ [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/18/washington-facebook-voter-registration_n_1682366.html].

⁹ A. Blagoveshchenskiy, "Iran zapustit 'vnutrenny internet,'" *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 10 August, 2010 (see also: [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1344672120>]).

The people in power, ideologists, and licensed speakers need to hurry up and understand that Facebook does not pose any threat to national security. Maybe some think that there is too much talk about politics there. But we need to realize that Facebook is where an intensive information exchange is going on capable of promoting real socialization of young people and giving them the opportunity to raise their education level and make wide use of the academic discourse: this is where constant processes of enlightenment and cultural enrichment are going on, which authoritarian regimes can simply not keep up with.

C o n c l u s i o n

In the era of globalization and increase in the role of electronic means of communication (primarily the Internet), essentially all events going on in the private lives of people, society, and the state will inevitably shift to the free virtual space that is becoming a reflection, continuation, and kind of compensation for the social, cultural, and political deficiencies of real life.

What is more, *the Internet has added a new element to the lives of people today—a network and digital identity in the form of nicknames, logins, profiles, likes, chats, searches, uploads, downloads, and so on.*

An electronic Iron Curtain can neither shield young people today from the “perfidious influence of the West” (if there is such a thing), nor ensure a country’s information security.

It goes without saying that there is an enormous number of sites on the Internet that can be viewed as a source for spreading and propagandizing violence, immorality, lies, and other human defects.

As for Facebook, virtual democracy has come to roost there today, which is sending down deep roots and putting forth an exuberant crown. So the only adequate response to the challenge of the social networks is to direct their “nuclear energy” toward the good of real democracy.

However, as strange as this may sound, the Internet needs to be reformed, on the one hand, while the state’s information policy and ideology need to be revised, on the other.

REGIONAL ECONOMIES

**A FREE TRADE
AGREEMENT AMONG
FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS:
A COMPUTABLE GENERAL
EQUILIBRIUM MODEL**

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Introduction

What would happen to the economies of the former Soviet Union if they finally implemented a full-fledged free trade agreement? How would this change sector output, GDP, prices, international trade, and the economic welfare of the nation? How would it affect the economies of the FSU's other trading partners? This paper attempts to address these and other issues through the use of a computable general equilibrium model (CGE). The model is a large,

multi-regional, multi-sectoral, multi-factor system of simultaneous equations. It introduces the "shock" of zero tariffs between all FSU's trading partners, and solves for a new economic equilibrium. There are some political and practical obstacles to the completion of such a trade agreement, so this mathematical model in some ways is just a hypothetical experiment. But an analysis of trade effects can nonetheless be useful to any policymaker in the former Soviet space.

1. CGE Model for FSU Trade

How would a FSU free trade agreement change the FSU economies and those of the globe? This section will develop a computable general equilibrium model to quantify the macroeconomic effects of lowering all import tariffs between FSU trading partners to zero. The section is broken into several parts, including:

- (a) a background of CGE models;
- (b) the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP);
- (c) the structure of this paper's model;
- (d) model results;
- (e) model limitations and future research.

1.1. Background of General Equilibrium Models

General equilibrium, a concept which dates back to Leon Walras (1834-1910), is a pillar of modern economic thought. General equilibrium recognizes that there are many markets in an economy, and that these markets all interact in complex ways with each other. In rough terms, everything depends on everything else. Demand for any one good depends on the prices of all other goods and on income. Income, in turn, depends on wages, profits, and rents, which depend on technology, factor supplies and production, the last of which, in its turn, depends on sales (i.e., demand). Prices depend on wages and profits and vice versa.¹

Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) modeling specifies all economic relationships in mathematical terms and puts them together in a form that allows the model to predict the change in variables such as prices, output and economic welfare resulting from a change in economic policies. To do this, the model requires information about technology (the inputs required to produce a unit of output), policies and consumer preferences. The key of the model is "market clearing," the condition that says supply should equal demand in every market. The solution, or "equilibrium," is that set of prices where supply equals demand in every market— goods, factors, foreign exchange, and everything else.²

A CGE model is a closed system. This means that no production or financial flow escapes the system and none are created outside of the system. In basic closure terms, we assume output will equal income. Households, businesses, the government, and the financial sector, and the foreign sector are all connected by real flows and financial flows. Intuitively, the idea of a "general" equilibrium is captured; any given market is connected to all of the other markets for the system.

Over the last 25 years, CGE models have become an important tool for analyzing economic issues, including trade policy, taxation policy, technological growth, energy policy, environmental issues, and even warfare. This development is explained by the ability of CGE models to provide an elaborate and realistic representation of the economy, including the linkages between all agents, sectors and other economies. While this complete coverage permits a unique insight into the effects

¹ See: T. Hertel, R. Keeney, M. Ivanic, A. Winters, "Distributional Effects of WTO Agricultural Reforms in Rich and Poor Countries," *Economic Policy*, April 2007, pp. 289-337.

² See: Ibidem.

of changes in the economic environment throughout the whole economy, single country, and especially global CGE models very often include an enormous number of variables, parameters and equations.³

CGE modeling is a very powerful tool, allowing economists to explore numerically a huge range of issues on which econometric estimation would be impossible; in particular, to forecast the effects of future policy changes. The models have their limitations, however.

- First, CGE simulations are not unconditional predictions but rather “thought experiments” about what the world would be like if the policy change had been operative in the assumed circumstances and year. The real world will doubtless have changed by the time we get there.
- Second, while CGE models are quantitative, they are not empirical in the sense of econometric modeling: they are basically theoretical, with limited possibilities for rigorous testing against experience.
- Third, conclusions about trade and other policies are very sensitive to data assumption.

One can readily do sensitivity analysis on the parameter values assumed for economic behavior, although less so on the data, because altering one element of the base data requires compensating changes elsewhere in order to keep the national accounts and social accounting matrix in balance. Of course, many of these criticisms apply to other types of economic modeling, and therefore, while imperfect, CGE models remain the preferred tool for analysis of many global issues.

1.2. The Global Trade Analysis Project

One of the most widely-used CGE models is the GTAP Model. The Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP), with headquarters at Purdue University, has organized a consortium of national and international agencies which provide guidance and base-level support for the Project.⁴

GTAP is a multi-regional CGE model which captures world economic activity in 57 different industries of 66 regions. The underlying equation system of GTAP includes two different kinds of equations. One part covers the accounting relationships which ensure that receipts and expenditures of every agent in the economy are balanced. The other part of the equation system consists of behavioral equations which based upon microeconomic theory. These equations specify the behavior of optimizing agents in the economy, such as demand functions.⁵ Input-output tables summarize the linkages between all industries and agents.

The mathematical relationships assumed in the GTAP model are simplified, though they adhere to the principle of “many markets.” The simplification is that thousands of markets are “aggregated” into groups. For example, “transport and communications services” appear as a single industry. In principle all the relationships in a model could be estimated from detailed data on the economy over many years. In practice, however, their number and parameterization generally outweigh the data available. In the GTAP model, only the most important relationships have been econometrically estimated. These include the international trade elasticities and the agricultural factor supply and demand elasticities. The remaining economic relationships are based on literature reviews.

³ See: M. Brockmeier, “A Graphical Exposition of the GTAP Model,” *GTAP Technical Paper*, No. 8, October 1996, Minor Edits, January 2000, Revised, March 2001.

⁴ See: *Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP)*, Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University, 2008, available at [<https://www.gtap.agecon.purdue.edu/about/consortium.asp>].

⁵ See: M. Brockmeier, *op. cit.*

1.3. Structure of This Paper's Model

The model employed in this paper is that of the GTAP project. While the core database has 57 sectors and 66 regions, we have aggregated the matrices to simplify the world into just nine sectors (plus capital investment goods), nine regions, and five factors of production. This aggregation is described in Table 1.

Table 1

Aggregation Used
in the Model

Regions	Sectors	Factors
Russia	Grain Crops	Land
Armenia	Meat and Livestock	Unskilled Labor
Azerbaijan	Extraction Industries	Skilled Labor
Georgia	Processed Food	Capital
Kazakhstan	Light Manufacturing	Natural Resources
Kyrgyzstan	Heavy Manufacturing	
Ukraine	Utilities and Construction	
Rest of Former Soviet Union	Transport and Communication	
Rest of World	Other Services	
	Capital Goods	

Source: Generated by the author.

The data is, first, “calibrated,” meaning the model is solved for its original equilibrium prices and volumes in all markets. This baseline is meant to represent the economy as is, before any shock takes place. Thousands of equations are created, each representing supply and demand conditions in markets inside each region, including markets for goods, services, factors of production, savings, government expenditure, and more. Equations are also generated for trade of all goods between each of the regions, separately created for each industry. The calibrated result is a large set of simultaneous equations, of which the solution matches the existing prices and quantity levels of the economy.

A “shock” is then introduced to system. Mathematically, a “shock” is the alteration of a single parameter or variable in the giant system. That change acts like a stone thrown in a pond, with waves created throughout every one of the thousands of equations in the system. The model is re-solved with the one autonomous change, and the effects on the system are then measured.

The “shock” in this model is the elimination of all tariffs between the trading partners of the former Soviet Union. The change in relative prices can lead to shifting production between sectors, lower production costs, increased output, and many more effects. Effects include changes in production and allocation efficiencies, GDP, employment, consumption, imports, exports, and overall eco-

conomic welfare. The role of a CGE model is to trace and quantify the direction and magnitude of these changes.⁶

2. Model Results

A computable general equilibrium model can generate an enormous array of matrix results. In this model, results are grouped into the following sections:

- (1) market prices;
- (2) output and income
- (3) factor markets;
- (4) international trade; and
- (5) welfare effects.

2.1. Market Prices

According to the model results, a regional free trade agreement among former Soviet republics would raise aggregate prices in most of the countries involved. The greatest aggregate price increases would occur in Kyrgyzstan (9.79 percent), Georgia (5.75 percent), and Armenia (1.64 percent). Aggregate prices would decrease in Ukraine (-1.15 percent) and in the rest of the former Soviet Union as a whole (-1.11 percent). Aggregate price changes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Aggregate Price Index

pgdp	Percent change
Russia	0.18
Armenia	1.64
Azerbaijan	0.16
Georgia	5.75
Kazakhstan	0.15
Kyrgyzstan	9.79
Ukraine	-1.15
Rest of FSU	-1.11
Rest of World	-0.01

Source: Generated by the author.

⁶ For more on economic efficiency and taxation, see: C.R. McConnell, S.L. Brue, *Economics: Principles, Problems, and Policies*, 16th Ed., McGraw Hill Publishing, 2006.

Free trade agreements can affect prices in all sectors. Many former Soviet republics have already embraced freer trade. In this model, the largest trade effects captured are those among Soviet successor-states and in sectors where tariffs are not already zero. Ukraine and the Rest of FSU are making the largest tariff concessions, yet the largest price changes appear in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia. This appears to be a case of trade diversion, where, for example, Ukrainian imports shift from the rest of the world to sources within the former Soviet Union.

Price effects can be seen across regions. It is striking that in almost all sectors, prices would increase in all regions, except for Ukraine. Perhaps more striking is how little overall market prices change in most sectors. The largest changes appear to be price rise in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, large price increases are seen in utilities and construction (8.09 percent), meat and livestock (7.92 percent), other services (7.41 percent), grains and other crops (7.06 percent), and transport and communications (7.02 percent). Large price increases in Georgia appear in meat and livestock (5.85 percent), grains and other crops (5.54 percent), other services (5.43 percent), and transport and communications (5.02 percent). Market prices across regions are presented in Table 3. Prices of imports across regions are shown in Table 4.

Table 3

**Market Price of Output
(percent change)**

pm	Russia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	RestFSU	ROW
GrainsCrops	0.32	1.58	0.66	5.54	0.45	7.06	-0.26	1.03	-0.01
MeatLstk	0.23	1.5	0.49	5.85	0.27	7.92	-0.8	1.19	-0.01
Extraction	0.06	0.43	0.06	0.87	0.06	2.5	0.04	0.18	0.03
ProcFood	0.2	1.41	0.31	4.83	0.11	6.18	-1.47	-2.28	0
LightMnfc	0.16	1.23	0.11	4.07	0.09	4.29	-0.43	0.5	0
HeavyMnfc	0.14	0.53	0.06	3.85	0.09	6.59	-0.13	0.16	0
Util_Cons	0.17	1.42	0.09	4.04	0.12	8.09	-0.02	0.58	0
TransComm	0.2	1.29	0.13	5.02	0.13	7.02	0	0.63	-0.01
OthServices	0.21	1.42	0.13	5.43	0.11	7.41	-0.04	0.8	-0.01
CGDS	0.13	1.12	0.07	1.79	0.12	4.91	-0.53	-0.25	0

Source: Generated by the author.

Table 4

**Market Price of Aggregate Imports
(percent change)**

pim	Russia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	RestFSU	ROW
GrainsCrops	0.17	1.21	0.36	0.2	0.11	0.23	-3.46	-0.96	0
MeatLstk	-0.04	0.08	0	0.02	0.08	0.04	-0.38	-0.6	0
Extraction	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.1	0.1	0.06	-0.03	0.03
ProcFood	-0.09	-0.2	-0.1	-0.18	0.01	-0.04	-21.72	-44.55	-0.01
LightMnfc	-0.02	0.06	0.02	-0.38	0.01	0.01	-0.99	-0.13	0
HeavyMnfc	0	0.08	-0.2	-0.21	0.05	0.04	-1.23	-2.19	0
Util_Con	0.05	0	0.01	0.46	0.53	0.15	-0.01	0.47	0.01
TransComm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OthServices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Generated by the author.

2.2. Factor Prices

According to the model results, a regional free trade agreement among former Soviet republics would also affect the prices of factors of production. The largest factor price increases (in percentage terms) appear in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia. In Kyrgyzstan, the model suggests that the price increases include those for capital (11.97 percent), skilled labor (10.9 percent), unskilled labor (10.34 percent). In Georgia, price increases include those for land (8.86 percent), unskilled labor (7.1 percent), skilled labor (6.44 percent), and capital (6.15 percent). In both Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, prices on natural resources are estimated to decrease significantly (34.34 percent and 20.50 percent, respectively). The land price changes are the result of a significant increase in agricultural imports in both Kyrgyzstan and Georgia (as reflected in a later section). Factor prices in all regions are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

**Market Price of Factors of Production
(percent change)**

pm	Russia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	RestFSU	ROW
Land	0.56	1.58	1.75	8.86	3.16	1.44	0.97	1.97	-0.01
UnSkLab	0.28	2.03	0.42	7.1	0.19	10.34	0.19	2.43	-0.01
SkLab	0.22	1.9	0.24	6.44	0.11	10.9	-0.03	2.24	-0.01
Capital	0.23	1.69	0.22	6.15	0.1	11.97	0.12	2.25	-0.01
NatRes	-0.41	-7.56	-0.31	-34.34	-0.2	-20.5	0.77	-3.18	0.15

Source: Generated by the author.

2.3. Output and Income

Results of the model suggest significant output changes in selected sectors across regions. Georgia and Kyrgyzstan experience the largest sectoral shifts in output. In Georgia, given significant trade diversion, large output decreases are seen in heavy manufacturing (19.85 percent decrease), light manufacturing (-14.87 percent), and the extraction industries (-7.49 percent). Georgia experiences a large increase in the processed food sector (36.50 percent).

Output decreases in Kyrgyzstan include those in light manufacturing (-12.1 percent), processed food (-8.28 percent), grains and other crops (-4.65 percent), and extraction (-3.76 percent). Factors of production in Kyrgyzstan shift to other industries, where output significantly increases, including heavy manufacturing (8.28 percent). Output changes are presented in Table 6 and Table 7.

Real GDP changes appear the largest (in percentage terms) in Georgia (0.62 percent increase) and Kyrgyzstan (0.84 percent). Private consumption also increases the most in Kyrgyzstan (6.15 per-

Table 6

Change in Output
(percent change)

qo	Russia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	RestFSU	ROW
GrainsCrops	0.12	-0.14	0.42	-0.24	1.87	-4.65	-0.07	-0.97	0
MeatLstk	-0.1	0.04	-0.44	1.25	-0.11	1.7	0.88	2.11	0
Extraction	-0.08	-1.57	-0.07	-7.49	-0.04	-3.76	0.07	-0.61	0.02
ProcFood	0.38	3.56	-0.12	36.5	-1.24	-8.28	1.61	17.83	-0.03
LightMnfc	0.53	-6.32	0.07	-14.87	0.03	-12.1	1.06	-0.64	0
HeavyMnfc	0.11	-2.16	0.25	-19.85	0.25	8.28	-0.1	-1.16	0
Util_Cons	0.03	0.16	0.04	2.02	0.07	-0.94	0.17	0.49	0
TransComm	-0.04	-0.52	-0.05	-2.09	-0.08	-0.45	0	0.69	0
OthServices	-0.06	-0.19	-0.06	-0.34	-0.05	-1.03	-0.46	-0.49	0
CGDS	0.08	0.95	0.1	5.59	-0.04	16.38	1	2.04	-0.01

Source: Generated by the author.

Table 7

**Change in Output
(millions of dollars)**

	Russia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	RestFSU	ROW
GrainsCrops	29.9	-0.7	4.9	-1.7	69.0	-21.0	-4.1	-31.1	-6.5
MeatLstk	-39.3	0.2	-1.5	11.4	-6.9	7.2	38.4	48.9	-26.9
Extraction	-113.2	-3.1	-2.8	-19.1	-7.6	-1.8	3.5	-81.7	357.0
ProcFood	131.1	34.7	-1.1	233.5	-59.9	-14.4	125.2	146.3	-779.3
LightMnfc	288.1	-27.2	0.2	-49.4	1.0	-20.5	102.7	-8.9	-319.0
HeavyMnfc	214.6	-7.5	5.7	-145.0	39.7	75.8	-36.9	-66.6	-107.0
Util_Cons	44.6	2.3	2.4	17.6	8.6	-13.6	58.3	50.1	-104.0
TransComm	-78.3	-4.5	-1.3	-38.4	-17.6	-2.9	-0.3	36.3	154.0
OthServices	-110.9	-1.5	-1.3	-5.1	-8.7	-5.6	-120.5	-26.7	130.0
CGDS	81.8	7.1	5.1	74.9	-3.8	51.9	134.6	78.1	-454.0

Source: Generated by the author.

cent) and Georgia (2.84 percent). Real GDP changes are shown in Table 8. Changes in private consumption are presented in Table 9.

Table 8

Real GDP

qgdp	Percent change
Russia	0
Armenia	0.08
Azerbaijan	0.01
Georgia	0.62
Kazakhstan	0
Kyrgyzstan	0.84
Ukraine	-0.01
Rest of FSU	1.19
Rest of World	0

Source: Generated by the author.

Table 9

Private Consumption

ypev	Percent change
Russia	0.02
Armenia	0.67
Azerbaijan	0.07
Georgia	2.84
Kazakhstan	0.01
Kyrgyzstan	6.15
Ukraine	-0.26
Rest of FSU	1.37
Rest of World	0

Source: Generated by the author.

2.4. International Trade

According to the CGE model results, regions with the largest decreases in trade balances include Ukraine (-\$141.80 million), Kyrgyzstan (-\$113.30 million), Georgia (-\$113.35 million). Trade bal-

ance improvements shifted to Russia (\$96.50 million) and the rest of the world (\$322.10 million). Trade balance changes are presented in Table 10 and Table 11.

Table 10

Change in Trade Balance

DTBAL	Millions of Dollars
Russia	96.51
Armenia	-18.32
Azerbaijan	-7.08
Georgia	-113.35
Kazakhstan	8.54
Kyrgyzstan	-113.38
Ukraine	-141.8
Rest of FSU	-43.2
Rest of World	332.1

Source: Generated by the author.

Table 11

Change in Trade Balance by Sector (millions of dollars)

DTBALi	Russia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	RestFSU	ROW
GrainsCrops	3.09	-1.58	4.85	-31.75	69.17	-24.61	-42.82	-49.33	67.05
MeatLstk	-22.76	-1.77	-0.95	-9.47	-0.88	-6.47	18.6	-4.41	25.46
Extraction	-223.68	-0.84	-5.94	-3.52	-13.43	-5.26	-5.58	-68.91	325.73
ProcFood	117.63	27.18	-0.42	210.54	-55.01	-22.44	27.25	273.9	-605.72
LightMnfc	248.19	-20.76	-0.61	-53.17	2.71	-50.39	15.1	-48.01	-111.78
HeavyMnfc	185.73	-7.62	3.27	-143.22	15.05	79.89	-168.26	-88.81	68.21
Util_Cons	-36.41	-2.52	-3.62	-4.56	0.15	-30.74	-0.82	-25.39	103.92
TransComm	-89.97	-5.99	-1.66	-43.48	-3.33	-26.25	2.43	-14.41	294.24
OthServices	-85.31	-4.43	-2.01	-34.72	-5.87	-27.1	12.3	-17.83	164.99

Source: Generated by the author.

Exports by region and by sector are presented in Table 12, and imports by region and by sector are shown in Table 13.

Table 12

Exports by Sector (percent change)

qxw	Russia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	RestFSU	ROW
GrainsCrops	2.41	-2.21	5.17	-12.83	8.47	-25.53	1.56	-3.91	0.01
MeatLstk	0.49	-4.82	-2.32	60.97	-1.12	-40.52	5.74	-7.23	0.02
Extraction	-0.3	-4.4	-0.29	-7.55	-0.16	-19.34	0.05	-1.37	0.05
ProcFood	3.57	40.41	1.38	141.11	-19.84	-21.43	25.92	651.71	-0.17
LightMnfc	2.49	-7.82	0.2	-22.28	4.05	-14.68	2.92	-0.7	-0.01
HeavyMnfc	0.41	-2.38	1.43	-22.95	0.66	23.23	0.9	3.15	0
Util_Cons	-0.65	-4.32	-0.24	-16.7	-0.42	-19.92	0.17	-2.48	0.12
TransComm	-0.54	-3.43	-0.31	-11.55	-0.26	-21.71	0.02	-1.73	0.03
OthServices	-0.81	-5.24	-0.51	-18.21	-0.44	-23.79	0.14	-2.99	0.01

Source: Generated by the author.

Table 13

Imports by Sector (percent change)

qim	Russia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	RestFSU	ROW
GrainsCrops	0.37	0.82	0.52	15.39	0.69	18.97	7.51	8.57	-0.02
MeatLstk	0.73	4.29	0.93	18.56	0.55	33.48	-0.85	7.05	-0.01
Extraction	0.18	-0.61	0.04	-2.3	-0.08	3.03	-0.04	1.1	-0.01
ProcFood	0.56	3.97	0.59	10.58	0.15	11.27	45.34	100.66	0
LightMnfc	0.4	0.49	0.09	5.63	0.08	6	1.05	1.93	0
HeavyMnfc	0.4	0.34	0.33	3.59	0.25	12.53	2.17	4.95	-0.01
Util_Cons	0.33	3.07	0.22	7.75	-0.71	25.32	0.49	0.48	-0.04
TransComm	0.38	2.58	0.24	10.02	0.21	15.42	-0.07	2.18	-0.01
OthServices	0.35	2.51	0.18	11.36	0.13	12.35	-0.36	1.28	-0.01

Source: Generated by the author.

2.5. Welfare Decomposition

Table 14 presents the overall welfare decomposition from the CGE simulation. The welfare decomposition is essentially a consumer surplus concept, broken down by gains or losses to consumers from efficiency gains, factor endowments, technological improvements, terms of trade effects, and the savings-investment mechanism. According to the CGE model results, regions experiencing the largest welfare gains would include the rest of the former Soviet Union (\$266 million), Kyrgyzstan (\$120.70 million), Russia (\$119.90 million), and Georgia (\$114.0 million). Significantly, Ukraine would experience a net welfare loss of \$144.80 million, mostly due to a deterioration in its terms of trade. A terms of trade loss means the relative price of exports to imports would decrease for Ukraine. This essentially signifies that Ukraine would receive fewer imports in exchange for the exports it sells abroad.

Table 14

Welfare Decomposition by Region (millions of dollars)

WELFARE	Allocative Efficiency	Factor Endowment	Technological Change	Terms of Trade	Savings and Investment	Total
Russia	-26.4	0.0	0.0	242.1	-95.8	119.9
Armenia	2.7	0.0	0.0	8.8	8.6	20.1
Azerbaijan	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.5	5.1
Georgia	27.7	0.0	0.0	64.8	21.5	114.0
Kazakhstan	-0.4	0.0	0.0	7.7	-3.3	4.1
Kyrgyzstan	19.0	0.0	0.0	73.4	28.3	120.7
Ukraine	-7.8	0.0	0.0	-119.7	-17.3	-144.8
Rest of FSU	240.3	0.0	0.0	16.6	9.3	266.2
Rest of World	-78.1	0.0	0.0	-299.1	45.1	-332.1
TOTAL	178.0	0.0	0.0	-3.7	-1.2	173.2

Source: Generated by the author.

3. Model Limitations and Future Research

This experiment raises several methodological questions. The first is aggregation of several of the former Soviet republics. A better model would allow for disaggregation of all 15 former republics.

A second issue is the static nature of this CGE model. It is a counterfactual simultaneous equations model which introduces a one-time shock to an economic equilibrium, and then measures a new equilibrium. A more dynamic model would better capture effects over time, such as the accumulation of capital stock, investment flows, and economic growth over a longer period of time.