

The 4th GCSP-OSCE Academy-
NUPI-NESA-GCMC Seminar
"Central Asia 2011"

Rapporteurs: Kushtarbek Shamshidov, Pal Dunay,
Graeme P. Herd and Maxim Ryabkov

September 2011, Bishkek

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The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy in Bishkek, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESAS in Washington, DC) and the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (GCESS) hold an annual forum for security policy experts from Eurasia, East and South East Asia, Europe and the United States. Through a series of inter-linked panel discussions, this seminar identifies and analyses key security trends in Central Asia, with a particular focus on their likely strategic implications. This seminar, initiated in 2008 as a joint GCSP-OSCE Academy dialogue initiative, has since become a regular forum of exchange of experts and policy-makers on Central Asia.

In September 2011, the 4th Central Asia 2011 Security Policy Seminar took place at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. Political and military developments in specific Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, including the assessment of international response to crises, a critique of development assistance programmes and the human security context were focal points of the seminar. Over fifty participants were present and the GCESS joined the initiative as the fifth co-sponsor. At the concluding session, the PIR Center (Moscow) announced that it would like to explore the possibility of becoming the sixth co-sponsor for 2012.

Central Asia and Afghanistan: Regime Change, Conflicts and Non-State Actors

The Kyrgyz Crisis and its Lessons: Human Security, International Response and Regional Implications

The first session of the seminar addressed developments in Kyrgyzstan during 2010. On 7 April, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was overthrown in a violent confrontation between armed and unarmed demonstrators and the Presidential Guard in Bishkek, which left 80 dead. Conflicts continued in May and June 2010, with major inter-ethnic clashes occurring in Osh, Kyrgyzstan's second largest city, and Jalalabad, both located in the south of the country.

The Kyrgyz crisis of 2010 can be viewed from domestic, regional and international perspectives. Most analysts agreed that the violent regime change of April 2010, followed closely by inter-ethnic conflict in the south of Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 was primarily a national and domestic tragedy, though there was a real potential for it to become regional. The Kyrgyz government showed its weakness as a sovereign state and was not able to prevent the same type of conflict that had occurred in 2005, when President Askar Akayev was overthrown during the so-called "Tulip Revolution" and President Bakiyev came to power. The hope had then been to end authoritarian rule and radically reduce corruption.

Instead, an increasing tendency toward nationalism and a widening gap between north and south emerged. The family-centred Bakiyev regime's political discrimination of the Uzbek minority reinforced an ongoing historical conflict between the two ethnic groups in the context of worsening socio-economic disparities, increased drug trafficking and the criminalization of the state. According to independent analysis based on empirical research in the field, 435 people, predominantly Uzbeks, were killed and 40 percent of the city's infrastructure was damaged. In June 2011 the prosecutor's office finally published the official results of its investigation and concluded that 24 persons were still missing. Uncountable human rights violations were registered and many people lost their houses. By

December 2010 only approximately 30 percent of the promised housing was erected in the south of Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz authorities only began to move on the matter of investigating the situation after the publication of a report by Human Rights Watch and even then with significant delay.

According to the introductory presentation, there were also irregularities in the judicial processes. For example, following the April 2011 events, lawyers were threatened in order to deter them from representing their clients to the best of their abilities and demonstrators were intimidated to prevent them from entering court buildings. The June 2011 conflict was difficult to manage as all conflict management mechanisms and forces were located in the north, while the conflict took place in the south. As the central government was regionally non-representative, its orders had little traction in the south. Moreover, there was an unequal representation of ethnic minorities both in the government and in the army. During the conflict the Kyrgyz army was wholly represented by the soldiers of the titular nation. The Osh event was the second conflict after Andijan (2005) that highlighted the structural problems of the Fergana Valley: it is a densely populated and impoverished multiethnic region with artificial borders that cut across parts of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In this context, one notable success of the reconciliation process was to secure the return of weapons and ammunition into private hands. Since the 2010 conflict, a working group has been actively studying the effect of all new legislation on armament security.

The Kyrgyz crisis has demonstrated a key regional deficit: regional security integration is weakly embedded in Central Asia. The absence of regional architecture in Central Asia helps explain the absence of effective conflict resolution mechanisms. The “international community” listened attentively to the voices of two regional organizations, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which are in a comparatively close relationship with the region both geographically and politically. However, both organizations were unable to apply consistent mechanisms of conflict resolution – they restricted themselves to broadcasting speeches representing their position. As a result of this passivity and impotence, both the CSTO and SCO have begun to address their mandates and foundational documents to include amendments specifically facilitating greater cooperation during inter-ethnic conflicts.

In the case of CSTO, its own Charter did not allow it to deploy to contain and ameliorate internal conflicts on the territory of its members. Kyrgyz President Rosa Otunbayeva requested an emergency or interim peacekeeping force under the CSTO flag on 11 June 2010. When the secretaries of the National Security Councils of the member states met in Moscow three days later, they could not respond unanimously to the request. This was due to a lack of consensus, as Uzbekistan was opposed to the idea. Belarus found the issue too sensitive and also blocked consensus. The absence of a rule that would have allowed CSTO involvement in a domestic contingency served as an appropriate rationale for inaction. The SCO's response was also passive and three key explanations can be offered to account for this. First, upholding the unqualified norms of sovereignty and territorial integrity are key features of both Russian and Chinese diplomatic discourse. Second, China was sensitive to the nature of the conflict in Kyrgyzstan in relation to both potential and actual internal unrest in China and the SCO's own well-established "three evils" security concept: terrorism, extremism, and separatism. Third, the contingency that evolved in Kyrgyzstan was not one that was practiced at SCO military exercises. Thus the Kyrgyz case presented both the CSTO and SCO with the dilemma of how to prevent potential spillover while respecting state sovereignty.

Internationally, the Kyrgyz conflict was defined as a violent inter-ethnic clash. Additionally, the international community struggled to find a proper form of mediation during the conflict. There was a chance for Russia, China and the West to cooperate and take common action to prevent the elevation of the conflict. Nevertheless, the approach of Russia, China and Western organizations with regards to the role of ethnic minorities is significantly different. China perceives ethnic conflict as being primarily fuelled by economic inequality and as a product of socio-economic underdevelopment. China's policy responses flow naturally from this understanding. China considers the violent protest in Xinjiang (a large autonomous province that borders Central Asia beset by Uighur nationalist unrest) in 2009 and the Kyrgyzstan conflict in 2010 as one type of ethnic social unrest. According to this view, both the Chinese and Kyrgyz governments faced the same kind of challenge. From a short term perspective, pushing forward economic development is the key to solving violent ethnic conflicts and, although

Beijing recognizes that over the long-term a more complex approach is needed, economic development is the priority for now. In line with this understanding, China assisted with a large amount of financial support and provided loans to Kyrgyzstan. China considers that Kyrgyzstan needs strong leaders, and would be in favour of a presidential, rather than a parliamentary system.

Russia’s position is slightly different. Russia seeks to reassert its influence in its neighbourhood. Approximately 250,000 people living in Kyrgyzstan possess a Russian passport. Combating drug trafficking is a declared priority for Moscow, one that requires the cooperation of the Kyrgyz authorities. The Kyrgyz economy is dependent on Russian (and Kazakh) employment opportunities, as well as oil, textile and agriculture export markets and credits (although the data is inconclusive). However, according to analysts, approximately 57 percent of Kyrgyzstan’s total imports come from China versus only 20 percent from Russia.

Tajikistan: Human Security, Extremism and Regime Stability

To understand how contemporary Tajikistan experiences the process of globalization, one can focus on four domestic perspectives: national ideology, internal politics, economic stagnation and the country’s security environment. Tajikistan is still in the process of constructing a suitable national identity, that is, a foundational and unifying national narrative that can mobilize the support of all its citizens – one that answers the questions: Who are we? What does it mean to be a citizen of the state? Where are we collectively heading? To that end, Tajikistan has experienced several confusing iterations in the process. First, it rejected the communist ideology and tried to structure its own national ideology by attaching some elements of the free market. When this failed to gain traction, the government placed an emphasis on Ismoil Somoni, the name given to the highest mountain in Tajikistan and the ancestor of the Samanid dynasty. After this, in 2006 Tajikistan celebrated the year of the Aryan Civilization. Then it made a sudden ideological turn to Islam by announcing Dushanbe as a capital of Islamic culture and chairing the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). By the end of 2010, this too was reversed as a de-Islamization process became the ideological preference. Finally, in 2011, China’s Communist Party signed an agreement with the

Tajik president's party, so heralding a second renaissance of communist ideology in Tajikistan.

The internal politics of Tajikistan is also repetitive of the first stage of the 1990s. At that time, the government's refusal to countenance an opposition was the core reason of the civil war. Then in 1997 closer relations were developed between the government and opposition and a relatively stable political life ensued. In 2003, after amendments to the constitution, cooperation with the opposition weakened and the arrests of the Democratic Party leaders began. The 2006 presidential election raised the hope that reforms and change in politics were possible. Instead, the role of the president's family in Tajikistan has been strengthened, and, similar to the 1990s, a lack of dialogue among political actors inside the country became a characteristic feature of political life. The government is monopolized by the Dangara people (the President's native region), whereas other regions are marginalized in Tajik politics.

For twenty years there was a lack of projects to positively influence the economy of Tajikistan. According to unofficial sources, there are two million migrants from Tajikistan working outside of the country. Most of them are in the Russian Federation. And they are the ones keeping social stability in the country through their remittances, in the range of USD 2 billion per annum, which approximates to half of the Tajik state budget. However, remittances in no way support the state economy as money is spent on food and other daily products imported from China. In this sense Tajikistan is similar to other countries, which heavily rely on remittances. Such income generates consumption but not investment. Citizens would prefer to find employment within the country, but the labour market cannot absorb them. This can be attributed to a number of factors, primarily the failure to push forward land reform thereby attracting workers into the farming sector.

Security and stability conditions in Tajikistan are unpredictable and the country is not in the condition to guard its Afghan border alone as border protection receives inadequate funding. The government cannot even afford to carry out helicopter patrols. The 2009-2010 events illustrated that the military and security services are ineffective in combating rebels, mainly due to a lack of profession-

alism, a deficiency that can only be addressed through properly funded education and training.

In short, Tajikistan is commonly perceived to be on the road to failure. It suffers from a failure of leadership. Institutional structures that support political regimes are absent – indeed, it is increasingly compared to its southern neighbour, Afghanistan. However, if Tajikistan is viewed through the prism of globalization, a “strong/weak state” explanation emerges. The Tajik government is functioning weakly but at the same time there are hidden strengths that render the state more resilient and robust than it might appear to be. For example, Tajikistan has denationalized parts of its public sector, and integrated the most profitable enterprises into the global economic and political order. The case of the largest state-owned enterprise, the Tajik Aluminium Company Talco, is illuminating. Talco represents 60 percent of national exports, 20 percent of GDP and it consumes 40 percent of electricity. Insofar as Tajikistan can continue to open its borders to global economic and political networks, the probability that Tajikistan could move toward democratization and development increases. To conclude, the term “newly emerging weak state” provides a more accurate characterization of contemporary dynamics in Tajikistan than the term “failed state”.

Afghanistan: Transition and Implications for the Region

According to the presenter introducing the panel, the promotion of a peaceful transition in Afghanistan is of utmost importance. The transition should entail four elements: from foreign forces to Afghan security; from President Karzai to another administration; from aid dependence to sustainable economic situation; and from conflict to reconciliation, both nationally and in the various regions. The key to achieving this goal is an integrated strategy that combines a military strategy with political and developmental objectives. The transition of Western forces is expected to be a drawn-out process that will exceed the 2014 timeline for the withdrawal of combat forces. The question is to what extent the Afghan government improves its capacity to control its territory throughout the timeline. It is doubtful that Afghanistan’s security and governance capacity can respond to threats after 2014. Therefore, the Afghan government hopes to conclude a long-term strategic partnership with the United States that will include a residual

American military presence (possibly about 20,000-30,000 troops) beyond 2014. The partnership is also seen as a US requirement to achieve its counterterrorism security goals in the region. Continuing US commitment is indispensable. The United States invested USD 60 billion in Afghanistan of which 29 billion in the security sector.

According to the presenter, the Afghan government's ability to sustain the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) presents another challenge. The total strength of the ANSF is expected to total around 305,000 by November 2011: 171,000 in the Afghan National Army (ANA) and 134,000 in the Afghan National Police (ANP). It is expected that by 2014, the annual cost of ANSF will amount to USD 6 to 8 billion, which is far in excess of the Afghan budget. In 2011, the training budget of the ANSF and ANA equalled USD 1 billion per month. The entire country's GDP for 2011 was about USD 16 billion. The International Monetary Fund has concluded that the Afghan government will be incapable of covering ANSF costs until at least 2023.

Furthermore, it is essential that the economy would become less dependent on agriculture. Currently, 80 percent of the population lives on agriculture while 40 percent of economic assistance subsidizes this sector alone. Without change in this field it will be impossible to achieve economic sustainability that will move the country in the direction of modernity.

The speaker went on to note that a successful transition is contingent on progress in reconciliation and reintegration with the insurgents. The Taliban has been removed but by far not defeated. Its stated objective is to create an Islamic state, peaceful and tolerant. Will this declared objective expedite reconciliation or will it be understood as an empty promise? Security arrangements for the reconciliation process need to accompany peace talks. In this context, the military strategy should play a supporting role in creating the space for an effective political strategy. The gradual drawdown of US forces should be balanced by shifting the responsibility for security to Afghan security forces as they progressively become more capable of doing the job.

From the point of view of regional powers, security in Afghanistan and a peaceful transition will enhance fostering economic and political cooperation in Central Asia. In Indian strategic thinking, all five states of Central Asia are

considered part of its extended/strategic neighbourhood. For India, Afghanistan and Central Asia are interlinked and organically belong to a single geopolitical space. Since the Taliban regime emerged as the epicentre of extremism and rise of radical Islam, India's concern about the region's security has increased. India is especially sensitive to inefficient border management, which increases the potential for extremists and terrorists to flow into Tajikistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan. India has also raised the danger that these extreme forces could strengthen their presence in the Fergana Valley. Any destabilization of the Fergana Valley, the heart of Central Asia, would have a ripple effect affecting the stability of the Central Asian region as a whole.

India seeks opportunities to contribute to peacebuilding in the region. It is the fourth largest aid giver to Afghanistan, with assistance so far amounting to USD 2 billion. In view of its increasing involvement in Afghanistan, Indian engagement with the Central Asian states has also intensified. India's fast growing economy is dependent on energy and so energy security is a rising strategic priority that shapes Indian interests in Central Asia, as underscored by the strong Indian support for the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project. The interests of Central Asia and India are compatible. There are several Indian-financed economic projects with Central Asian states and Afghanistan that are in the process of realization. Moreover, energy routes and transport corridors connecting India with the states of Central Asia through Afghanistan would augur well for the economic prosperity of the region. It would also give the Central Asian states a much needed opening in the southern direction.

In sum, there was a consensus amongst the participants that trans-Afghanistan infrastructure – pipelines, road and ultimately rail links – are critical to the development of Central and South Asia.

Central Asia in the Eurasian and Global Context

West of Vienna versus East of Vienna

Members of the panel introducing the topic noted that the “West of Vienna versus East of Vienna” notion was fully examined during the Kazakh Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairmanship in 2010. The wide range of OSCE participating states demonstrates the inclusiveness of the organization. However, its very inclusiveness has increasingly constricted its efficiency – both in formulating a consistent strategy and in managing the transformation process from a conference to a full-fledged international organization. As a matter of fact, the current OSCE institutional structures and procedures still resemble more those of a conference than those of an international organization. The acceptance by the participating states of Kazakhstan’s bid for OSCE Chairmanship itself undercut the OSCE’s advocacy of the principles of human rights and democratic institutions – Kazakhstan is an authoritarian country with one-party rule and serious deficits in the rule of law. How could it then credibly argue for human rights and fundamental freedoms from the position of the chairmanship without opening the OSCE and itself to accusations of hypocrisy and double standards?

Some of the speakers argued that, ultimately, the fact that the Kazakh bid for the OSCE Chairmanship was successful reflected an identified set of shared interests and benefits which both Kazakhstan and some other OSCE participating states hoped to realize. Whether these interests complemented each other and the net outcome for all parties concerned was positive, remains an open question. According to this understanding, Central Asia was a region of strategic importance for the OSCE for three primary reasons: its proximity to Afghanistan; understanding the nature of Russia’s post-imperial policy; and gauging China’s emergence as a key actor within its own neighbourhood. Additionally, Kazakhstan is an influential regional power with considerable hydrocarbon and mineral resources. Kazakhstan’s own interest in securing the OSCE Chairmanship is exclusively attributed to its focus on regime security. Kazakh foreign policy, its participation

in international organizations and its emphasis on cordial regional cooperation have a predominately domestic purpose – generating legitimacy and containing civil society actors. The OSCE, as well as Western organizations, aim to support the liberal elements of civil society. However, the Kazakh Chairmanship did not support the OSCE field missions' agenda, which it did not share.

The speakers noted that chairmanships usually hope that no major events will derail or obscure the realization of their national objectives and priorities while in office. The fall of the Bakiyev regime in April 2010 and subsequent ethnic clashes in the south of the country constituted a regional crisis. Had the OSCE Chairmanship been held by a small European state with no presence and expertise in the region, this crisis would have proved far harder to manage. In June 2010 Kazakhstan airlifted the ousted Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev to Belarus from the south of the country, under the guise of being "invited for talks" with the President of Kazakhstan. Bakiyev was willing to relinquish power in return for a Kazakh guarantee for his personal safety. It is likely that Kazakhstan would have acted in this manner irrespective of its position as Chair as it had already facilitated the departure from Bishkek and transit to Moscow of the then Kyrgyz President, Askar Akayev, five years earlier.

The situation became far more complex for Astana thereafter and its record more muddled. The new leadership of Kyrgyzstan had difficulties in establishing itself and Kazakhstan played a mixed role in this regard. Kazakh diplomacy was very supportive of the new Kyrgyz leadership, emphasizing in official declaration that "it trusts the wisdom of the Kyrgyz leadership". Possibly, less diplomatic language was used behind closed doors. What may have mattered more than words were actions. Notwithstanding its Chairmanship role, Kazakhstan did the following. First, it closed its border with Kyrgyzstan right after the 7 April events in Bishkek and did not reopen it until 20 May. Whether there was a need to keep the border closed for such an extensive period is questionable, particularly as President Nazarbayev and then-acting Prime Minister, later Kyrgyz President Rosa Otunbayeva, allegedly agreed on the telephone on 4 May to reopen the border. The closure was particularly unhelpful as most of the south-north trade went through Kazakhstan. Furthermore, it exacerbated the humanitarian situation, as the Kyrgyz labour force was excluded from the Kazakh labour market and the shuttle traders

from the Kazakh market. Second, President Nazarbayev was not ready to receive Ms. Otunbayeva until she was actually sworn into office, highlighting a collision between the role of OSCE Chairmanship and national president. The strict adherence to formality signalled an expression of national reservation, despite the fact that it was incumbent of Kazakhstan, as OSCE Chairman, to mitigate the internal conflict. Third, Kazakhstan did provide an extra-budgetary contribution to help with the recovery of Kyrgyzstan. However, it is unclear whether this compensated for the severe road/transit related losses caused by the closing of the border with Kyrgyzstan for 43 days.

In May, ethnic clashes started in the south of Kyrgyzstan and in June inter-ethnic violence resulted in 420 or so dead, three quarters of them Uzbeks. As a result, by June 100,000 refugees – overwhelmingly of Uzbek ethnicity though not exclusively – entered Uzbekistan. The Uzbek leadership ordered the opening of the border and three days later, the flow of asylum seekers went in the opposite direction. The conflict remained unresolved and the OSCE effort to establish a Police Advisory Group was effectively blocked by local forces. According to the members of the panel, this failure indicates more about power relations inside of Kyrgyzstan than about the capacity of the OSCE Chairmanship to manage the crisis and contribute to post-conflict reconciliation.

The speakers noted that the accounts of the Kazakhs and the Uzbeks regarding the management of the crisis differ greatly. According to Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan's President, "the organization failed to prevent the conflict" whereas President Nazarbayev argues that "Kazakhstan has tried to use all available OSCE instruments to prevent the escalation of the conflict". Interestingly, the two statements are not mutually exclusive. Kazakhstan (together with some other states) indeed tried to prevent conflict escalation in and from Kyrgyzstan, though unsuccessfully. Under any chairmanship it would have been very difficult to effectively address a fast and somewhat unpredictably evolving crisis. When inter-ethnic clashes reached the level that resulted in massive population movement, the threshold of diplomatic preventative action had already been breached. The OSCE as a whole, just as the CSTO and SCO, experienced real difficulty in effectively intervening to manage a fast evolving acute crisis, just as in protracted conflicts.

The promise and effort of the Kazakh Chairmanship to highlight the strategic importance of Central Asia did occur, but in an unintended way. The Kyrgyz crisis and its spill-over to Uzbekistan eclipsed Kazakhstan’s sincere effort to portray itself, if not the wider region, in the best light possible. The old rivalry between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan also influenced the workings of the OSCE. While President Karimov stayed away from the December 2010 OSCE Astana Summit, the Uzbek foreign minister was there to “spoil” it. Last but not least, Uzbekistan also insisted on not managing Afghanistan through the OSCE, an organization which finds little favour in Tashkent. Rather it pushed to establish its own preferred multilateral framework (“6 + 3”). The “six” refers to the immediate geographical neighbours of Afghanistan – China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – and the “three” denotes other actors identified as the Taliban, the United States and NATO – but not the Karzai government. This factor rather than an effort to undermine the Kazakh Chairmanship better explains Karimov’s motivation. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan raised Afghanistan’s importance within the OSCE agenda as never before – at least at the level of declaration – and, more concretely, begun implementing President Nazarbayev’s initiative for an educational programme to train Afghan young people at higher and vocational educational institutions in Kazakhstan.

Those who expressed an opinion agreed that the Kazakh government considered the OSCE Chairmanship first and foremost as an international public relations exercise rather than a way of boosting democracy. In fact, Kazakhstan organized meetings effectively and performed the technical aspects of its role very well. Analyzing the December 2010 OSCE Summit held in Astana, one can conclude that Central Asia did not receive much attention. Astana promoted itself at the expense of Central Asia, placing an emphasis on the difference between Kazakhstan and the rest of the region, thus returning to the old concept of Kazakhstan and Middle Asia (*Srednyaya Aziya*) rather than strengthening the Central Asian identity of the five.

According to one participant, Kazakhstan’s OSCE Chairmanship was a valuable experience and a prerequisite for its chairing of the OIC from June 2011. The OIC is located predominantly in the North African and Middle Eastern regions, where the geopolitical and military-political situation is crucial. Unquestionably, most of the largest and extended conflicts are located in this zone. Therefore, during its

Chairmanship, Kazakhstan plans to carefully calculate political decisions, be more active in the fields of economic cooperation, cultural-humanitarian cooperation, and develop inter-confessional and inter-civilizational relationships. It seeks to buttress its position as regional leader by sensitizing Islamic organizations to the needs and problems of Central Asia. To that end and in this context, Kazakhstan will support Central Asian initiatives. Internationally, Kazakhstan aspires to a strategic role as an international mediator in East-West dialogue.

Strategic Games: Old and New

Central Asian states are moving individually in the direction of building security in the region. All state actors agree that they cannot reach a common understanding about Central Asia's security identity. As a consequence, there are diverse bilateral and regional security relationships with global powers. Different actors with different interests operate in the region, not least NATO through Partnership for Peace, the OSCE, CSTO, SCO, and the UN. Most actors concentrate on strengthening stability and security cooperation in the region but to little strategic effect. Rather, rivalry in the shape of competition for resources and influence among great powers is booming. Suspicions over the strategic role of the US airbase in Central Asia, China's economic penetration, and Russia's self-evident leadership aspirations all undercut the construction of a regional security identity.

According to one participant, one of the most active external actors in Central Asia is the European Union (EU). From the early days of independence, EU countries have cooperated with Central Asian states and to date the EU has invested EUR 2 billion in the region. There is a growing number of EU member states embassies in Central Asia. After the 2005 Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan, the EU itself opened offices in the region and introduced sanctions against Uzbekistan in response to the massacre. This action heavily influenced the EU approach to the region. During the German EU presidency in 2007, an EU Central Asia strategy was elaborated. This focused mainly on international terrorism, water management, and human rights development. Despite increasing levels of EU assistance, civil societies in both Europe and Central Asia are critical of the role of the EU, particularly with regards to progress in its human rights dialogue. Some analysts argue that Central Asian states maintain a dialogue on human rights with the EU,

as this is a source of regime legitimation while at the same time continuing with human rights abuses. Sceptics argue that the EU should adopt a new approach toward Central Asia, placing an emphasis on developing and implementing conflict prevention strategies and improving relations with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Why did the Kazakh and Uzbek leadership fail? According to one speaker, these two states represent two different schools of thought with regards to the region to which they belong. The Kazakh school sees itself as playing a leadership role within a larger Eurasian region, of which Central Asia is but a part, as demonstrated by its eclectic, multi-vector foreign policy. In contrast, the Uzbek school has until recently rejected Eurasianism and adhered to Central Asianism instead. Its belief in itself as natural hegemon helps account for its isolationist and non-cooperative foreign policy within the region. It is unimaginable that Tashkent and Astana would forge the types of links France and Germany constructed after the Second World War, given current levels of regional and international geopolitical flux.

Cooperation and Competition in Central Asia

Russia, India and the United States in Central Asia

Cooperation between the United States and Central Asia in the first ten years of independence (1991-2001) concentrated on democratization, marketization and cooperation in humanitarian and social dimensions. In the second decade, beginning with the 11 September events, it became apparent that the United States changed its relationship from the humanitarian and social dimension of development to a more traditional politico-military regime and state security emphasis, not least as good relations with Central Asian states facilitated transit to support its campaign in Afghanistan. In addition, according to one speaker, limiting Russian and Chinese influence in the region was also part of the US agenda, accounting for Chinese and Russian suspicions over US strategic intent. However, according to most of the surveys carried out by international organizations, people of the region maintain a positive attitude toward the US presence in Central Asia.

When characterizing US foreign policy toward Central Asia, the first impression is that the United States lacks a clear-cut long-term strategy. Indeed, most US policies in the region work to the timeline of 2014, the date of withdrawal of US combat forces from Afghanistan. Second, while it is possible that over the longer-term the United States will seek to intensify its relations with Central Asian states, without Afghanistan the Central Asian states are of minimal strategic importance for the United States, a fact exacerbated by the lack of Tajik, Uzbek or Kazakh diasporas or business constituencies lobbying for engagement in the region. Third, the current US policy represents an uneasy tension, even double standard, between its values, principles and ideals, and *realpolitik* interests: it pushes for human rights and democratization, but also supports authoritarian regimes for strategic reasons, first and foremost because of its Afghan commitments.

While US strategic engagement in the region looks set to decline, there are emerging Asian powers, such as India and China that are interested in Central Asia. While China's regional role, with its emphasis on trade, investment and aid

is well established, India's role is less known, though it shows greater willingness to play a stronger regional economic role. This was underscored by the government's initiative to push Indian companies to bid for iron ore blocks in the rich Hajigak mines in Afghanistan. Hajigak has a two-billion-ton deposit of high-grade iron ore in the central province of Bamiyan, for which bids were required to be submitted by 3 August 2011. Afghanistan short-listed a total of 22 companies for the Hajigak contract, 14 of which are Indian companies.

Besides Afghanistan, India is actively cooperating with Central Asian states. The building of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline will go a long way in developing a regional economic complex where Indian goods and services can cater to the Central Asian and Afghan markets. Following the Turkmen President's visit, India signed two important agreements on 20 September 2010 for the TAPI gas pipeline project – one initializing the Gas Pipeline Framework Agreement (GPFA), the other being the proposed Gas Sales Purchase Agreement (GSPA) – along with three partner countries. The agreements were signed at the Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) held at Turkmenistan's capital, Ashgabat.

In order to engage in complex security and stability challenges in the region, India chose cooperative relations with China, rather than competition. Common Sino-Indian interests include antiterrorism measures, stability-building in Central Asia, and recognition of the importance of Afghanistan for security in the region, particularly after 2014. Since bilateral ties with Afghanistan are insufficient to address current challenges, India is keen to join the SCO (currently India has observer status), the only forum for discussing the post-US withdrawal situation and the fight against terrorism that includes both Russia and China. While Indian strategic scholars and policy-makers believe that China could oppose India's full membership in the SCO, the Indian press suggests that Beijing has invited New Delhi to play a more substantive role within SCO.

India's changing approach towards the SCO and China's favourable attitude towards India joining the grouping could create another dynamic for greater cooperative relations between the two Asian powers in the Central Asia-Afghanistan region. The participants of the seminar noted that despite continuing Sino-Indian division and rivalry, these two great powers increasingly tend to recognize their interdependent relationships and common interests.

Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia

In Central Asia, several actors, both regional and global, have initiated regional cooperation projects. From the US side, a slow moving but smooth initiative to develop the so-called Silk Road economic project is underway. The Silk Road initiative consists of two components. The first is a railway route that will connect Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan with Europe through Russian railway systems. The second plan is to connect the same countries (minus Uzbekistan) with Europe by truck routes. However, the second connection will not pass through Russia but rather via the Caspian Sea and then through Baku, Tbilisi, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Austria, and finally Germany.

From the US policy perspective, the Silk Road initiative supports development in Afghanistan and so broader US strategic interests. If one looks carefully at the map of the project, Pakistan is excluded and will likely remain so under its current regime. One necessary prerequisite of success of this project will be the ability of participating countries, such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, to put aside existing disagreements, which appears highly unlikely.

During the seminar, increasing attention was paid to the current elaboration of another major regional economic cooperative initiative – the Russian-led Customs Union. Presently Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus are the only member states of the Customs Union. For now, Kyrgyzstan's future within the framework of this Union has not been defined. Kyrgyzstan is expected to take steps after the upcoming presidential elections towards joining, but currently struggles to understand the nature of this Union and its likely influence on the Kyrgyz economy in the short and long-term.

There are five main aspects of the Customs Union that Kyrgyzstan needs to address should it join. First, from a long-term perspective, Kyrgyzstan needs to enter the Union in order to liberalize its domestic economy. However, long-term benefits entail first accepting short-term costs. The second challenge occurs if Kyrgyzstan decides not to enter the Union, as not only will tariffs be high, but the country will also face intensified customs controls, rather than be part of a tariff-free space. Third, what are the acceptable, appropriate and affordable levels of trade-offs? Is it more favourable for Kyrgyzstan to enter the Union and become more economically dependent on and integrated into the Russian economy than

not to enter but to stay with China's economic sphere? Fourth, in the initial phase of membership, Kyrgyzstan would need to manage the rapid rise of prices for daily products, though petroleum will be cheaper. Fifth, Kyrgyzstan should consider its future relationships with the World Trade Organization (WTO), where it is party to more than 200 agreements.

From a strategic perspective, Russia and Kazakhstan are interested in Kyrgyzstan's membership in the Customs Union. As Kyrgyzstan's economy is comparatively small, it is clear that Russia's desire for Kyrgyz membership reflects more geopolitical calculations than economic factors. The formation of a Russian-led Customs Union also would speed up Russia's access to the WTO. However these various factors are weighed, Kyrgyzstan will need to make a decision to join or stay out of this Union.

Development Assistance: Concepts and Perspectives

According to the introductory presentation of this session, four main interconnected propositions account for the role and nature of international development assistance.

First, aid effectiveness is dependent on measures taken by both the host recipient country and the donors. If one hand gives, there has to be a hand to receive and to use resources in accordance with intended purpose. Excluding contributions from Russia, Kazakhstan and other non-development assistance countries to development assistance for Kyrgyzstan in 2009 amounted to approximately USD 300 million. Turkey was the biggest donor (USD 85.65 million), followed by the United States (USD 50.6 million) and the Asian Development Bank (USD 36.75 million). Effective accountability is a function of coordination. However, coordination efforts are hampered by two factors – one donor- and the other recipient-related. International donors have different budget years, different planning timelines, different priorities, and different political and economic interests. If recipient authorities may suffer from a lack of legitimacy (due, for example, to rampant corruption) in the eyes of their own population, then accountability and therefore the effectiveness of development assistance is lowered.

Second, the international community has produced meaningful principles which once applied could ensure aid effectiveness. The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which is supported by 114 signatory states and 26 signatory organizations, provides a solid frame of reference outlining the responsibili-

ties and obligations of both international donors and recipient countries. Its five principles are ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for development results and mutual accountability.

Third, the application and implementation of these principles is weak. International Organizations (IOs) simultaneously compete and cooperate, keeping some information from each other while sharing some other, preaching anti-corruption in the host countries, but at times failing to effectively fight corruption within their own system. IOs accept the principle that greater intra-donor coordination optimizes effectiveness, but in practice follow their own priorities rather than those of a coordinator. This reflects the fact that IOs have to report to their member states' capitals, not to the community of beneficiaries, the population of the host country.

Fourth, the ability of recipient states to make effective use of financial support and aid is a function of good governance. IOs need to embed their assessments of their aid effectiveness into the broader system of governance within host countries, when allocating and determining the use of aid.

According to the panellists, there is widespread suspicion that international aid is not promoting effective development. A lack of long-term strategies coupled to a surfeit short-termism and a lack of local knowledge all undercut implementation efforts. For example, the longest USAID contractors work in Afghanistan is two years, allowing for just glimpses of the country through the tinted windows of air-conditioned cars. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, over the last ten to fifteen years hundreds of peacebuilding and conflict prevention personnel were deployed to the south, accounting for millions in development aid payments each year. Nonetheless, massacres in Osh and Jalalabad occurred in 2010.

IOs have yet to accept that their current approaches are not effective or efficient and need to be changed. Planning for flexible strategies to be implemented in the long-term (a minimum of between six and nine years) is one recommendation. The other is to accept that current recipient state partners are corrupt and to work from the bottom up, focusing on field projects with businesses, Non-Governmental Organizations, schools and hospitals as partners.

Looking Forward

The final session took stock of strategic change and continuity on the twentieth anniversary of the collapse of the Soviet Union. One main conclusion was that two projects have failed in Central Asia: the Western liberal (market-democratic) modernity paradigm, and the post-Soviet post-imperial alternative. The United States is in the process of withdrawing troops from Afghanistan and its strategic interest in the region wanes, though the importance of 2014 and the Afghanistan draw-down focuses attention for now. It is predicted that over the next decade China's engagement will expand from its narrower aid, trade and strategic investments focus to include a more explicit politico-military security agenda as its presence in the region widens and deepens. In light of this finding, the 2012 Seminar will focus primarily on politico-military security issues.

Seminar Programme

Thursday, 1 September 2011 : Conflicts in Central Asia and Afghanistan

- 09:00-09:30** **Welcome to the Seminar Participants**
- Ambassador Andrew TESORIERE, Head of OSCE Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Dr Maxim RYABKOV, Director, OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Dr Graeme P. HERD, Head, International Security Programme and Co-Director, International Training Course (ITC), Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), Geneva, Switzerland
Dr Roger KANGAS, Academic Dean, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESAS), National Defense University, Washington, DC, US
Dr John C. REPPERT, Dean of the College of International and Security Studies, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (GCMC), Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany
- 09:30-12:30** **Kyrgyz Crisis and its Lessons: Human Security, International Responses and Regional Implications**
- Chair:** Dr Maxim RYABKOV, Director, OSCE Academy in Bishkek
- Speakers:** Ms Glushair ABDIRASULOVA, Human Rights Protection Centre “Kylm Shamy”, Kyrgyzstan
 “Human Rights and Human Security in Kyrgyzstan 2010-2011”
 Dr Vadim KOZIULIN, Director, Conventional Arms Programme, PIR Center, Moscow, Russian Federation
 “Kyrgyz Crisis: Its Regional Implications and Russian Policies”
 Dr David LEWIS, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, UK
 “International Response to the Kyrgyz Crisis”
 Prof Feng SHAOLEI, Director, Center for Russian Studies, School of Advanced International and Area Studies, East China Normal University, Shanghai, People’s Republic of China
 “Understanding the Kyrgyz Events in the Context of Security Cooperation and Socio-Economic Development in Central Asia”
- 14:00-15:30** **Tajikistan: Human Security, Extremism and Regime Stability**
- Chair:** Dr Tim EPKENHANS, Professor of Iranian and Islamic Studies, Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany

Speakers: Dr John HEATHERSHAW, Lecturer, Department of Politics, University of Exeter, UK
"Tajikistan amidst Globalization: State Failure or State Transformation?"
Mr Faredun HODIZODA, Director of the Academy of Dialogue, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
"Twenty Years of Independent Tajikistan: a Country Still at the Crossroads"

16:00-17:30 **Afghanistan: the Transition and Implications for the Region**

Chair: Dr Pal DUNAY, Course Director, ITC, GCSP, Switzerland

Speakers: Minister Ali JALALI, former Interior Minister of Afghanistan, and Distinguished Professor, Near East South Asia Center (NESAC), National Defense University, Washington, DC, US
"Challenges of Transition from the Afghan Perspective"
Prof Nirmala JOSHI, Director of India-Central Asia Foundation, New Delhi, India
"India's Central Asia Strategy – the Role of Afghanistan?"

Friday, 2 September 2011: Central Asia in an Eurasian and Global Context

09:00-12:30 **West of Vienna versus East of Vienna**

Chair: Dr Anna KREIKEMEYER, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for OSCE Research (CORE), Hamburg, Germany

Speakers: Dr Pal DUNAY, Course Director, ITC, GCSP, Switzerland
"The Bearable Lightness of Division"
Dr Murat LAUMULLIN, Senior Researcher, Institute of Strategic Studies, Kazakhstan
"Kazakhstan's Experience of Chairmanship of the OSCE and Organization of the Islamic Conference"
Prof Dr Tim EPKENHANS, Professor of Iranian and Islamic Studies, Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany
"Hearts of Lightness: The OSCE and its Commitments after the Kazakh Chair"

14:00-16:00 **Strategic Games: Old and New**

Chair: Dr John C. REPERT, Dean of the College of International and Security Studies, GCMC, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

Speakers: Dr Gregory GLEASON, Professor of Eurasian Security Studies, GCMC, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany
"Power Trades and Competition in Central Asia"
Col. (ret.) Thomas WILHELM, Director, Foreign Military Studies Office, US Department of the Army at Ft Leavenworth, Kansas, US
"A Contemporary History of Military Actions, Events, and Activities in Central Asia"

Dr Neil MELVIN, Director, Armed Conflict and Conflict Management Programme, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Sweden

"In Search of a Strategy: the EU in Central Asia"

Dr Farkhad TOLIPOV, Director, Education and Research Institution "Knowledge Caravan", Tashkent, Uzbekistan

"Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan: Two Failed Leaders of Central Asia"

Saturday, 3 September 2011: Cooperation and Competition in Central Asia

09:00-10:30

India and the US in Central Asia

Chair: Dr Graeme P. HERD, Head, International Security Programme, GCSP, Switzerland

Speakers: Dr Roger KANGAS, Academic Dean and Professor of Central Asian Studies, NESAS, Washington, DC, US
"US Policy Toward Central Asia in an Era of Austerity"
Prof Ajay PATNAIK, Chair of the Centre for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India
"India and Central Asia: Key Dynamics in 2011"

11:00-12:30

Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia

Chair: Dr Maxim RYABKOV, Director, OSCE Academy Bishkek

Speakers: Dr Chyngyz SHAMSHIEV, Director, National Institute for Strategic Studies, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
"Kyrgyzstan's Prospective Accession to the Customs Union"
Ms Brianne TODD, Associate Professor of Central Asian Studies, NESAS, Washington, DC, US
"The Silk Road Initiative and Long-Term Economic Viability of the Northern Distribution Network"

14:00-15:30

Development Assistance: Concepts and Perspectives

Chair: Dr Indra OVERLAND, Head, Energy Programme, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), Oslo, Norway

Speakers: Dr Volker JACOBY, Senior Economic-Environmental Officer, OSCE Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
"Recipient Country's Governance and International Development Assistance"
Mr Jonathon HORN BROOK, Programme Director, Support of Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
"It's Evidently Not Working, So Why Don't We Admit It and Try a New Approach?"
Ms Ana HOZYAINOVA, Director of Research, Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization
"The Role of Aid in Developing Sub-national Governance in Afghanistan"

16:00-17:00

Looking Forward: Reflections and Key Findings

Chair:

Dr Maxim RYABKOV, Director, OSCE Academy in Bishkek and Dr Graeme P. HERD, Head, International Security Programme, GCSP

Speakers:

Dr Vadim KOZIULIN, Director, Conventional Arms Programme, PIR Center, Moscow, Russian Federation

Dr Neil MELVIN, Director, Armed Conflict and Conflict Management Programme, SIPRI, Stockholm, Sweden

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