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ETHNIC RELATIONS AND REGIONAL CONFLICTS

TWO POSITIONS ON THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH WAR: RUSSIAN AND TURKISH (1990-1994)

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Introduction

The winter months of 2011/2012 marked the 20th anniversary of the beginning of full-scale warfare in the highlands of Nagorno-Karabakh, de jure an Azerbaijani enclave inhabited mostly by ethnic Armenians and controlled

by the latter and an unrecognized republic that has essentially been claiming independence since the final days of the Soviet Union. The armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas, which with various levels of intensity lasted

from the end of the 1980s until 1994 when a ceasefire brokered by Moscow was signed, has greatly shaped the post-Soviet independence of Armenia and Azerbaijan, contributing to the long-term fragmentation of the Southern Caucasus and complicating its integration into world affairs. Indeed, the fundamentals of the regional power constellation that has endured since then were laid down at the beginning of the 1990s, with the Karabakh conflict playing a significant role in it.

As of yet, years after the end of the Karabakh war, a definite solution to the conflict still seems to be out of sight, with both the Azerbaijani and the Armenian governments occasionally making use of militarist rhetoric in order to either reverse the current status quo in their favor or ensure it, respectively.¹ Small-scale fighting in the borderline areas of the disputed territory has never completely stopped, and every year hundreds of Armenian and Azerbaijani soldiers fall victim to occasional positional warfare. Importantly, the foreign political agendas of Baku and Erevan have been heavily centered on the Karabakh issue, with Azerbaijan routinely investing billions of dollars of its oil and natural gas revenues in the improvement of its military capabilities and advocating on the international scene for regaining the territories lost in the conflict.²

Like other post-Soviet states, Armenia has also recently been experiencing what a number of commentators both inside and outside this South Caucasian country regard as a certain reduction in the nation's economic independence in favor of Russia. Vis-à-vis Baku's prospective attempts to restore its territorial integrity by launching a renewed war effort in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenians consider the rather significant concessions the Armenian Republic has made to its major ally north of the Greater Caucasus Mountain Range with respect to its economic and political autonomy to be instrumental in containing the

Azerbaijani (and Turkish) threat. As a "lesser evil," they are still being accepted by mainstream Armenian public opinion, even though opposition opinions are articulated from time to time by local intellectuals. Interestingly, many Armenian politicians tend to point at Moscow's stance in the 2008 Russo-Georgian war over South Ossetia; according to the prevailing view, it indicated the Kremlin's commitment to defend its remaining bastions in the Southern Caucasus providing full-scale support of its allies.

However controversial Russia's role in the current stage of conflicts on the Georgian and Azerbaijani periphery, the details of the Nagorno-Karabakh war with regard to Russia's involvement in it still remain largely unclear. Yet an understanding of Moscow's policy toward the chronologically first armed conflict that occurred in the Soviet Union and continued following its dissolution is instrumental in realizing Russia's attitude toward the Southern Caucasus in general and Armenia and Azerbaijan in particular.

However, Russian policy in the Southern Caucasus cannot be viewed separately, as it is interconnected with the policies of the other geopolitical actors in the region. Historically, the struggle for the Southern Caucasus has been among Turkey, Iran, and Russia. Due to Iran's recent more passive policy, Turkey and Russia were regarded as the main contenders for the status of regional superpower. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Turkey's South Caucasian policy was significantly activated, which in turn was conditioned by several factors. First of all, Russia's political impact on the former "Soviet territories" was sensibly reduced, which gave other "interested parties" an opportunity to realize their geostrategic plans. Besides the traditional regional players, the West, especially the United States, also began actively showing its interests in the strategically vital regions of the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. NATO member and pro-Western Turkey was regarded as the best counterbalance to Russia's influence and Islamist Iran's possible political comeback. This is the reason Turkey was heavily supported by the West in its attempts to become a regional superpower. However, Tur-

¹ In fact, merely a ceasefire, not a peace accord, was signed by Armenia and Azerbaijan back in 1994.

² Along with the area of Nagorno-Karabakh, seven districts of the Azerbaijan Republic are controlled by Armenian forces.

key itself had its own interests and plans, which in some respects coincided with those of the West. The dispute around Nagorno-Karabakh was used effectively by all the regional rivals, including Turkey and Russia, as grounds for realizing their strategic goals.

This article is an attempt to shed light on the evolution of Russian and Turkish policy toward the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between 1991 and 1994 and show how it has affected these countries' attitude toward the post-Soviet nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Russia's Position

Russia and the Southern Caucasus

As Dov Lynch points out, in Russian strategic thinking “the Northern and Southern Caucasus are integral parts of the same security system. Developments, whether positive or negative, in one area are seen to impact automatically on the other.”³ The parts of the Northern Caucasus located within the borders of the Russian Federation are ethnic republics (before 1991 they were ethnic autonomous republics within the Russian Federation)⁴ spreading from the Caspian Sea almost all the way to the Black Sea; certain North Caucasian ethnic groups called for independence in the 1990s, and Chechnya nearly achieved independence. Moreover, “the indigenous population [of the Northern Caucasus] is closely linked, both culturally and ethnically, to their brethren in the south of the Greater Caucasus and the predominantly Russian-populated plains. The unity of the Federation is therefore at stake.”⁵ Thus, it is believed that separatist moods among the North Caucasians must either be directly stimulated from the south of the Greater Caucasus Range, or encouraged by the example of the already recovered South Caucasian republics. Seen from this perspective, securing Russian military and political dominance in the Southern Caucasus would serve as a stabilizing element for the internal development of the Russian Northern Caucasus.⁶ Importantly, the Caucasus is in a strategic position between the Middle East and Russia, Europe and (Central) Asia, and is the key to the Caspian Sea with its rich oil and natural gas fields from the west. Furthermore, “the strengthening U.S. presence in the South Caucasus is seen to mean weakening Russian control over the North Caucasus.”⁷ Any loss of the Northern Caucasus facilitated by Moscow’s strategic retreat from the Southern Caucasus could cause a domino effect throughout the territory of the multiethnic Russian Federation. In light of Moscow’s growing fears of America’s activity in Russia’s “soft underbelly,” in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, it was necessary to do everything possible to secure firm control over the South

³ D. Lynch, “Why Georgia Matters,” *Chaillot Paper* (Institute for Security Studies, Paris, February 2006), No. 86, p. 50.

⁴ From the east westwards, these ethnic republics comprise Daghestan, Chechnia, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and the Adighe Republic, which until 1991 was formally within the administrative borders of the Krasnodar Territory.

⁵ D. Trenin, “Russia’s Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus,” in: *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, ed. by B. Coppieters, Vrije Universiteit Press, Brussels, 1996, available at [<http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/ContBorders/eng/ch0301.htm>], 3 January, 2008.

⁶ The Northern Caucasus, together with Tatarstan, have traditionally been among the Russian regions with the most pronounced tendency toward secession, but unlike Tatarstan, the Northern Caucasus is not in the middle of Russia, but in a strategically important border area that would enhance risks for Moscow in case of regional secessionism.

⁷ D. Lynch, op. cit.

Caucasian area. This strategic task was already motivating Russian foreign policy toward Baku and Tbilisi during the first years after the end of the Soviet Union.

Relations with Azerbaijan

Formerly the leader of the National Front of Azerbaijan, the second president of post-Soviet Azerbaijan and a devote pan-Turk with a strong pro-Western attitude, Abulfaz Elchibey consistently rejected Azerbaijan's ascension to the CIS, deployment of Russian military bases in Azerbaijani territory, and joint guarding of the Azerbaijani-Iranian and Azerbaijani-Turkish borders with the Russians—in fact, he rejected the full list of Moscow's demands at the time.⁸ A no less serious problem was that Elchibey's government absolutely excluded any share of Russian (and Iranian) companies in the hastily organized Azerbaijani international oil consortium, from which it expected large financial profits and greater political weight around the world.⁹ For Moscow, Elchibey's (and later on Aliev's) intentions to prepare the ground for a strong Western, especially U.S., presence in the region rich in oil and natural gas in keeping with a more significant role for Turkey in South Caucasian affairs was unacceptable as such a development would greatly reduce Russia's dominant standing in a strategically important area of the Caspian in general and the Southern Caucasus in particular.

Importantly, during the course of 1992, the space allotted to the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia on Moscow's foreign policy agenda was rather marginal. It is widely believed that this was caused by the general lack of interest of Andrey Kozyrev, Russian foreign minister at the time, in the current developments to the south of Russia's borders; the motto of the "early" Yeltsin government until the middle or the end of 1992 was the military and political withdrawal of Russia from its former provinces, a definitive break with its imperial past, and a "return to the family of civilized nations."¹⁰ Moscow's unruled relationship with the West was given clear priority over post-Soviet affairs as Russian-American relations were witnessing their euphoric stage in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In its foreign policy, Kozyrev's administration made every possible effort to distance itself from what was then perceived as the imperial Soviet legacy.

However, in 1993-1994, following the general weakening of Yeltsin's liberal entourage and the stronger role of (neo)conservative and revanchist sentiments in the country's domestic policy fuelled by increasing popular disaffection with the ongoing socioeconomic collapse and calling for Moscow to establish relations with the West, the Russian strategists reversed their attitude toward the former Soviet colonies, formulating principles of a new foreign policy strategy in relation to the countries of the Near Abroad. This new concept assumed Russia's more active participation in the territory of the successor republics of the Soviet Union; dominance in that territory was, among other things, supposed to secure the renewal of its superpower status for the Eurasian power.¹¹

⁸ During his only visit to Moscow in the course of his presidency in September 1992, Elchibey, being a former anti-Soviet dissident and university professor of Arabic philology, even refused to speak in Russian, requesting a personal Turkish-Russian interpreter.

⁹ See: J. Mollazade, "Azerbaijan and the Caspian Basin: Pipelines and Geopolitics," *Demokratizatsiya*, January 2006, p. 30.

¹⁰ Cf. P. Kuchyňková, "Utváření ruské zahraniční politiky po roce 1991 v postsovětském prostoru," in: *Rusko jako geopolitický aktér v postsovětském prostoru*, ed. by P. Kuchyňková, T. Šmid, Mezinárodní politologický ústav, Brno, 2006, pp. 22-25. For a categorization of the particular phases of the foreign policy of post-Soviet Russia, see: N.J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions*, Routledge, London, New York, 2003.

¹¹ See: W. Russell, "Russian Relations with the 'Near Abroad,'" in: *Russian Foreign Policy since 1990*, ed. by P. Sheoran, Westview, 1995, p. 50.

In the context of the renewed Russian aspirations for regional hegemony, Moscow pushed for the signing of the Tashkent Collective Security Treaty (May 1992); among the original signatories were the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Armenia. Among other things, the parties to the treaty agreed to join in the common defense of the “external borders of the CIS,” establish military bases of the Russian Federation in their territory, and not to enter into any military pacts with other countries. The Tashkent accords created a military and political framework for the planned integration—military and economic—of the post-Soviet republics into the Tashkent Treaty.¹² Since 1993, Russian foreign policy has generally become more steadfast and assertive; as previously mentioned, Moscow’s exclusive dominance in the Southern Caucasus, among other places, seemed to be a necessary starting point for the recovery of Moscow’s power in the post-Soviet space, thereby guaranteeing Russia’s equality in relations with the West, notably the United States.

Moscow’s strategic approach, however, was blocked by the continuing unwillingness of the government in Baku to accept Russia’s demands for the country to join the CIS and to ratify the Tashkent Treaty. In the cabinets of the Moscow strategists, concern was therefore growing about the possible consequences of Elchibey’s policy regarding the presence of the West in Azerbaijan. The Elchibey regime was understood in Moscow as a sort of “Trojan horse” in post-Soviet territory, striving for the establishment of a strategic partnership with Turkey, a NATO member state and Russia’s most important rival in the Southern Caucasus, which was moreover attempting to draw influential Western countries into events relating to Russia’s vital interests.¹³ The war in Nagorno-Karabakh was therefore perceived as an opportunity to exert pressure on Baku, which was finally supposed to force that South Caucasian country to accept Russia’s demands; this is also where we can look for the causes of the increasing Russian support of the Armenian military on the Karabakh battlefield and beyond.

In the second half of June 1993, the ceremonial signing of the “Contract of the Century” was supposed to take place in London—this was to be the title of an agreement between Baku and a number of mostly Western oil drilling companies on the exploitation of the rich Azerbaijani oil deposits. At that time, it was assumed that Azerbaijan would soon become the “Kuwait of the Caucasus.” Regardless of the continuing defeats on the Karabakh front, Elchibey’s government exhibited no signs of flexibility, and it was still unwilling to accept even the mildest of Russian demands. As the subsequent pages indicate, the result of the uncompromising line taken by Baku, as well as of the government’s inability to take important steps in both the military and the socioeconomic sphere, was the loss of not only nearly all of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and several areas around it by July 1993, but also a drastic worsening of relations with two powerful neighbors—Iran and especially Russia.

Relations with Armenia

Few people in Armenia in the early 1990s doubted that their tiny, mountainous country lacking natural resources with its small population would need a powerful ally to guarantee its territori-

¹² For the text of the Tashkent Treaty that came into effect two years later, see [<http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/cfe/text/tashka.htm>].

¹³ For more detail on this matter, see: S.E. Cornell, “Undeclared War: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Reconsidered,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Fall 1997.

al integrity; for some, even the nation's survival was at stake given the increased tension with two of four neighbors, Azerbaijan and to some extent Turkey too. Indeed, two decades ago it could have been said quite confidently that Armenia was predestined to be oriented toward Russia as the country most willing to provide it with the security guarantees it needed given the geopolitical stalemate it found itself in.

Initially, however, it was far from clear whether or rather how vigorously the Armenia-Russia alliance would be renewed after the breakup of the Soviet Union. After 1990, when Ayaz Mutallibov, a (post-)communist and heavily pro-Moscow figure with strong ties to the Kremlin, came to power in Azerbaijan, Moscow was not as clearly in favor of Armenia's efforts in Karabakh as it might have seemed at first glance. In fact, in the spring of 1991, Soviet Army divisions even took part together with elite units of the Azerbaijani Interior Ministry in an operation named *Koltso* (Russian for "ring") in areas to the north of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁴ The prevailing opinion was that as long as the (pro-Moscow) communists stayed in power in Baku, such a "sign of loyalty" on the part of Moscow would not be exceptional. After satisfying certain conditions, and especially after approval of Moscow's access to the dominant use of Azerbaijan's oil wealth and in light of the close military and political cooperation between Baku and Moscow, Moscow's relations toward economically and geopolitically more important Azerbaijan might have been more favorable, and this would have undoubtedly influenced Russia's stance in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. Moreover, Armenia's continuing security concerns regarding Turkey (and Azerbaijan) made it an ally with very limited room for maneuver. As it turned out, however, Baku and Moscow never became so close; this was mainly thanks to the domestic failures of Mutallibov's rule and to the policies of Abulfaz Elchibey and subsequently of Heydar Aliyev, who were notably opposed to Russia's positions.¹⁵

Russia and the War in Nagorno-Karabakh

After the breakup of the U.S.S.R., Russia inherited an effective tool for putting pressure on Azerbaijan and Armenia—the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The close military and economic union of Erevan supporting the military campaign of the Karabakh Armenians with its strategic ally in the region, Moscow, and at the same time the unwillingness of the Baku government to yield to Russia's demands played an instrumental part in the course and outcome of the war. In retrospect it turned out that the joint operation in 1991 was the only case of Russian-Azerbaijani military cooperation in Karabakh and its environs.

There is no unanimous opinion about whether the Kremlin was basing its policy toward Armenia and Azerbaijan before the middle of 1992 on any overall concept. As outlined above, many analysts believe that Moscow's approach toward Baku and Erevan during the earliest period of their independence was characterized by chaos and overall lack of interest. In this regard, Pavel Baev suggests differentiating between the top Russian generals' approach to the Karabakh conflict and to the conflicts in Georgia; he states that "the key guidelines were to stay away from the Nagorno-

¹⁴ For more detail, see: Th. de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, New York University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 113-117.

¹⁵ Fears that Baku and Moscow would come to an agreement "behind their backs" and that the victim of that agreement would be Armenia continue to some degree in Armenian society to this day.

Karabakh quagmire and to concentrate on consolidating the military presence in Georgia.”¹⁶ The key was supposed to be gaining control over Georgia’s deep-water ports and the South Caucasian Black Sea region.

The interventions of Russian soldiers in events on the Karabakh front, for example the deployment of the 366th regiment of the 4th Russian Army at the start of 1992 in the Armenian campaign in Nagorno-Karabakh, are explained by an overall decentralization in policy formation in the early 1990s, when the Ministry of Defense was acting as an independent player, often ignoring the propositions of the Foreign Ministry.¹⁷ According to this interpretation, Russian military commanders intervened capriciously in local conflicts based on their own sympathies or motives without having to take into consideration the official position of Moscow. Similarly, Russian soldiers and pilots (along with their colleagues from Belarus, Ukraine, etc.), captured mainly by the Azerbaijani side during the conflict, were labeled by Russia as mercenaries who had nothing in common with the policy of the Russian state. Not even the supplying of weapons to both parties in the conflict was entirely balanced, but depended on the benevolence and financial cravings of individual Russian commanders.¹⁸ The fact that even international observers in the Karabakh conflict noted many more cases of support for the Armenians by the local Russian units is explained by the far greater share of high-ranking ethnic Armenians than Azerbaijanis in the Soviet (Russian) armies, including in the Transcaucasian Military District. The Armenians were also more willing to provide tangible support to their countrymen than the Azerbaijani officers.¹⁹ And last but not least, Russian officers were inclined toward the Armenians, who were considered culturally closer than the Muslim Azerbaijanis.²⁰

However, as early as the first months of the war between the newly established South Caucasian republics, a series of events occurred that can call into question the thesis regarding the lack of any clear concept in Russian policy in the early 1990s. In May 1992, after Azerbaijan refused to enter into the Tashkent Agreement and suspended its activities in the CIS, the Armenians decided, within a few days, to go on the offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh, the result of which was the occupation of Shusha and the opening of the so-called Lachin Corridor leading to Armenia.

Then in February 1993, Suret Huseynov willfully ordered the retreat of his units from the battlefield in northern Karabakh, thereby causing the collapse of Azerbaijani defense in the area of Mardakert and Kelbajar. This happened a few days after Elchibey’s government again refused to have the country join the CIS and deploy Russian peacemaking troops in Nagorno Karabakh.²¹ The Elchibey regime then accused Huseynov of treason, claiming that the latter had been carrying out Moscow’s orders. It is not without interest that Huseynov’s troops, which set out in June of the same year to march on Baku for the purpose of overthrowing Elchibey, and thereby preventing the signing of the “Contract of the Century,” were generously supplied with arms and munitions by the 104th division of the

¹⁶ P. Baev, *Challenges and Options in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Strategic Studies Institute Report, 22 April, 1997, available at [<http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/lps12677/00111.pdf>].

¹⁷ For more detail on the competing roles of individual state institutions in the initial years of post-Soviet Russia, see: P.J. Dobriansky, “Russian Foreign Policy: Promise or Peril?” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1999, p. 137.

¹⁸ See: D. Trenin, op. cit.

¹⁹ See: S.E. Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, Report No. 46, Department of East European Studies, Uppsala University, 1999, p. 54.

²⁰ In this regard, it is worth mentioning the case of former Soviet General Anatoly Zinevich, who was involved in planning and carrying out a number of important operations of the Armenian forces of Nagorno-Karabakh from 1992 until the end of the war. For more information on the matter, see, for instance: L. Chorbajian, P. Donabedian, C. Mutafian, *The Caucasian Knot: The History and Geopolitics of Nagorno-Karabagh*, Zed Books, London, 1994, pp. 17-18.

²¹ See: F. Hill, P. Jewett, *Back in the USSR: Russia’s Intervention in the Internal Affairs of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy toward Russia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1994, pp. 12-13.

Russian Army, which had just pulled out of Ganja. It was no secret that Huseynov was under the protection of General Shcherbak, the commander of the 104th division.²² As a result of the *coup d'état*, anti-Russian Elchibey was overthrown and the ground was prepared for the comeback of Heydar Aliev, a former communist and KGB general who was widely believed to be a pro-Russian cadre. In fact, according to a widely shared belief, the *coup d'état* of 1993 was organized by the Russian intelligence services.²³

There is also evidence that the Karabakh Armenian and Armenian divisions were using Russian oil; it is known that the commander of the 7th Russian Army deployed in Armenia was also the chief-of-staff of the Karabakh Army.²⁴ It is not without interest that in the summer of 1993, Colonel Aliakram Gumbatov, who had close ties with Huseynov, declared the separatist Talysh-Mughan Autonomous Republic in the southeast part of the country in the Lenkoran region, inhabited mainly by the Iranian-speaking Talysh ethnic group.²⁵

The regime change in Baku could, under certain circumstances, have caused a noticeable shift in Russian policy toward Armenia and Azerbaijan. After taking power, Heydar Aliev repeatedly emphasized that the republic's recovery demanded the deepening of mutual ties with the republics of the former U.S.S.R. and above all with Russia. He took a number of important steps in foreign policy that were understood at the time to be part of a 180-degree about-face in Baku's foreign policy orientation from Ankara toward Moscow. Nonetheless, as Svante Cornell points out, this was not an instant process, so Aliev's efforts had to be speeded up somewhat: "However, Aliev had not yet committed Azerbaijan to the CIS [in the summer of 1993]. Just as the Armenian forces were about to seize Jabrail on 20 August, a Russian deputy minister of foreign affairs flew to Baku with the simple aim of 'ascertaining Azerbaijan's position regarding the CIS.' The Armenian offensive continued unabated, and on 5 September, Aliev flew to Moscow and promised Azerbaijan's application to CIS membership. He even spoke of Russian military bases in Azerbaijan financed by the Azerbaijani government."²⁶ Azerbaijan finally joined the CIS (in September 1993) and signed the Tashkent Agreement on mutual defense (that very month).²⁷ Aliev cancelled Elchibey's Russia-free "Contract of the Century" and postponed its signing indefinitely. He objected that in principle he was not opposed to the deployment of Russian military bases in Azerbaijani territory, but he demanded reciprocal support from Moscow for the territorial consolidation of the country, i.e. in the matter of the retaking of Nagorno-Karabakh. In one of his first presidential interviews, Aliev unequivocally expressed his approach, saying: "We understand that Russia has its interests, but we also have our own interests. The participation of Azerbaijan in the CIS depends on the prospects for regulating the conflict with Armenia... As long as Armenia's aggression continues and the demands of Azerbaijan are not given a hearing, what would we need such a confederation for? ...The key to resolving the Karabakh conflict is in Russia, which is capable of resolving the conflict."²⁸

At this time, Moscow did not hold back from making promising gestures toward Baku: it supported three U.N. Security Council resolutions dated 29 July, 1993, 14 October, 1993, and 12 No-

²² See: V. Shorokhov, "Energy Resources of Azerbaijan: Political Stability and Regional Relations," *Caucasus Regional Studies*, Issue 1, 1996, available at [<http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/crs/eng/0101-04.htm>], 28 December, 2007.

²³ See: F. Hill, P. Jewett, op. cit. (see also: St. Blank, "Russia's Real Drive to the South," *Orbis*, 39, Summer 1995, p. 371).

²⁴ See: D. Trenin, op. cit.

²⁵ See: E. Nuriev, *The Southern Caucasus at the Crossroads. Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics*, LIT, Berlin, 2007, pp. 226-227.

²⁶ S.E. Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, p. 56.

²⁷ In 1999, however, Azerbaijan withdrew from it.

²⁸ Quoted from: V. Shorokhov, op. cit.

vember, 1993. In early 1994, General Pavel Grachev, Russian defense minister, joined in persuading the Azerbaijani president with a statement that Aliev had already signed the Tashkent Agreement, which was supposed to become a new platform for negotiations.²⁹ As a friendly gesture, Moscow soon closed the Russian diplomatic mission to the separatist movement Sadval that was demanding, among other things, the separation of northern areas of Azerbaijan inhabited by Lezghians. The separatist efforts in Lenkoran were stopped. “In November, Kozyrev threatened the Karabakh Armenians with retaliation if they did not stop their activities; Russia also sent 200 military ‘advisers’ to aid the Azerbaijani army,” which received helicopters and tanks and soon attempted a counteroffensive.³⁰

Eventually, on 12 May, 1994 a ceasefire was signed in Bishkek between Erevan and Baku mediated by Moscow. The three-month ceasefire was signed by the defense ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the commander of the army of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, and Pavel Grachev as a mediator. On 27 July, a framework peace agreement was signed between the warring parties. It cannot be ruled out that the Azerbaijani president consented during internal discussions to the stationing of Russian troops (most likely under the mandate of the CIS) in the territory of Karabakh, but that was supposed to have been preceded by the complete withdrawal of Armenian troops from the security zone and an agreement on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.³¹ The Armenian side—both Erevan and Stepanakert—insisted, however, that it was not willing to withdraw its troops from the security zone before an agreement was made on the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The final disagreement between Erevan and Baku gave the Azerbaijani side a strategically important break. Using this formal excuse, Baku delayed its consent to the request to station Russian military bases on its territory.³² While Moscow was focusing on persuading the parties to the conflict, Baku intensified its efforts to implement the “Contract of the Century,” which was eventually signed in Baku in September 1994, opening a new page in the history of the Southern Caucasus in general and Azerbaijan in particular.

Turkey’s Position

Turkey and the Southern Caucasus

Due to their geopolitically important positions, large amount of natural resources, and linguistic-historical ties, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia have historically been in the center of Turkey’s geostrategic interests. The dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh and the collapse of the Soviet Union essentially changed the geopolitical order in Eurasia, creating an opportunity for Turkey to become a regional superpower. As a result of the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., the five Turkic repub-

²⁹ See Jan Wanner’s article in: B. Litera, L. Švec, J. Wanner, B. Zilinskij, *Rusko? Vzájemné Vztahy Postsovětských Republik*, Ústav Mezinárodních Vztahů, Praha, 1998, p. 120.

³⁰ See: S.E. Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, p. 56.

³¹ It should be added, however, that no document regarding this has yet been made public, and it is hard to say whether one ever existed.

³² Jan Wanner points out in this connection Aliev’s unwillingness to accept the peace contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh that Moscow was pushing for in 1994-1995, more than a quarter of which would consist of Russian soldiers (see: B. Litera, L. Švec, J. Wanner, B. Zilinskij, op. cit., p. 114).

lics (Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) became independent in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, which Turkey saw as a “historical chance” to realize its euphoric Pan-Turkic ideas. The Turkish government has continuously used ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural ties to spread and expand its sphere of influence on the newly independent Turkic republics, acting as a political and economic “role model.” The Turkish leaders began speculating on the idea of creating an “All-Turkic Union” with Turkey’s dominance. Slogans such as a “Turkish world from the Adriatic to the China Sea” were heard from such people as the President of the Republic.³³ Nevertheless, this shift in Turkey’s status quo policy adopted since 1923 was expected, since it had a strong historical base. Even Atatürk, who officially condemned the Young Turk’s Pan-Turkic ideology, noted in his speeches the kinship between the Turks and the Azeris and underlined the importance of acting as a protector of the newly formed Azerbaijan Republic: “...Today Russia is our friend, our neighbor and an ally: we are in need of that friendship. But no one can predict what will happen tomorrow. As the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, it can be disintegrated and split in pieces as well. ...The world order can be changed. In that case Turkey must know how to react. Under the rule of our friend (the Soviet Union) live our brothers, who share our language and religion. We should be ready to recall them... We cannot wait until they reach us. We should reach them.”³⁴

However, Turkey’s policy toward the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia were not limited to its Pan-Turkic ambitions. The Turkish president at the time Turgut Özal (1989-1993) was concerned about enhancing Turkey’s strategic importance to the West by deepening Turkish influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia.³⁵ It was believed that the Turkic countries would help Turkey in international relations and become a loose union in which they, enjoying status and veto rights, could possibly control a Russian threat to Turkey.³⁶ Last, Turkey was interested in establishing direct economic relations and entering their raw material production markets ahead of other states.

It is noteworthy that the current form of pan-Turanism, unlike the one during the Young Turks’ rule, was mostly based on principles of *realpolitik*. Turkey’s goal was to spread its political influence to the geopolitically vital Caucasus and Central Asia and become a regional superpower, for the status of which several regional and non-regional “actors” (Russia, Iran, Turkey, the U.S., and the EU) have been striving throughout the history.

Turkey’s main target was Azerbaijan, as “...the independence of the Central Asian states can be rendered nearly meaningless if Azerbaijan becomes fully subordinated to Moscow’s control.”³⁷

It is noteworthy that even before the fall of the U.S.S.R. and since the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkey had been activating its policy toward Southern Caucasus and Azerbaijan in particular. However, the first reactions by the Turkish government concerning the Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute were moderate because of their fear of possible counteractions by the Soviet Union. The Turkish side refrained from direct expression of its position on the conflict, but prepared the domestic scene for possible future developments.

The circumstances around the Nagorno-Karabakh, Bulgarian, and Bosnian crises, on the one hand, and the “Kurdish issue,” on the other, stimulated the rise of nationalism and Islamism in Turkey,

³³ See: B. Oran, “The Turkish Approach to Transcaucasia and Central Asia,” in: *Contrast and Solutions in the Caucasus*, ed. by O. Høiris, S.M. Yürük, Aarhus University Press, Denmark, 1998, p. 457.

³⁴ M. Mufti, “Daring and Caution in Turkish Foreign Policy,” *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 1, Winter 1998, p. 33.

³⁵ See: F.S. Larrabee, “Turkish Foreign Policy in the Age of Uncertainty,” RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, 2003, p. 99.

³⁶ See: B. Oran, op. cit., p. 458.

³⁷ Zb. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York, 1998, pp. 46-47.

storing the position they lost as the result of the 1980 *coup d'état*. Unlike the cautious Turkish government, which did not want to experiment with the results of “interference in the domestic issues of Soviet Union,” the nationalists, with their leader Alparslan Türkeş, began actively making use of the “Outer Turks” factor.³⁸ The Turkish press also contributed to the rise of the pan-Turanist, nationalistic atmosphere in Turkish society. The lobbies of the Caucasian diaspora in Turkey, composed of Azeris, Abkhazians, and Circassians and totaling around 8 million, were working to keep public and political concern alive.³⁹

As a result, Turkey was among the first countries to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan and the Central Asian republics. Moreover, Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs came up with an official statement, expressing Turkey’s contentment with Azerbaijan’s proclamation of sovereignty and once again pointing out the cultural and historical “brotherly” ties between the two nations. Turkey also announced its willingness to be a mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Azerbaijan, being involved in the armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and due to its closer cultural and linguistic ties, was the most pro-Turkish country among the Turkic states. This is also explained by the rise of national awakening in the second half of the 1980s. Parallel to the perestroika process, several interconnected nationalist groups appeared in Azerbaijan, the strongest and largest of which was the pan-Turkic Azerbaijani People’s Front (Azərbaycan Xalq Cəbhəsi), established in 1988 in the context of the first developments around Karabakh. The head of the APF was former Soviet dissident, pan-Turanist, nationalist Abulfaz Elchibey, who considered himself “a soldier of Atatürk.” Unlike the pro-Soviet (pro-Russia) communists, the People’s Front, playing the “Karabakh card,” was efficiently gathering great masses of people.

Turkey was actively backing the APF as it was seen as an appropriate base on the Azerbaijani domestic scene for implementing Turkey’s geostrategic plans.

Relations with Azerbaijan in the Context of the Nagorno-Karabakh War

The activation of Turkey’s policy toward Azerbaijan was affected by the January 1990 deployment of Soviet troops in Baku. The Turkish political and public sectors began to show even more interest in the fate of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani Turks. Azerbaijan, in turn, had a rather strong Turkish orientation. Even during the rule of communists Vezirov and Mutallibov, who are believed to have adopted pro-Soviet (then pro-Russian) policies, the Turkish factor still played a major role in building an independent Azerbaijani state. That is primarily because almost every group or organization that had at least some power in the country was pro-Turkish and anti-Soviet.⁴⁰

However, in spite of the widely shared opinion about first Azerbaijani President Ayaz Mutallibov’s Russian orientation, the first official political and military ties with Turkey were established during his rule.

³⁸ Türkeş, who had developed ties with Azerbaijan and Central Asian Soviet Republics, periodically made public speeches about the ethnic, cultural, and religious affinity between the Turks and other Turkic peoples living in the territory of the U.S.S.R., encouraging warm, brotherly relations among them.

³⁹ See: B. Oran, op. cit., p. 463.

⁴⁰ The Azerbaijani people also, in general, had sympathy for Azerbaijani-speaking APF leaders, rather than Russian-speaking Vezirov and Mutallibov. The APF’s nationalist pro-Turkish ideas spoken in the mother tongue were much more acceptable and comprehensible to the Azeri people.

Soon after Turkey's recognition of Azerbaijan's independence, Head of Turkish General Headquarters General Doğan Güreş visited Baku and met with President Mutallibov. Azerbaijan, being engaged in the Nagorno-Karabakh war, was first trying to get diplomatic and military support from Turkey. The latter chose the second option after its diplomatic failure in an attempt to play a mediator's role in the resolution of Karabakh conflict. Thus, as early as 1991 through 1992, the first military supplies, including approximately 5,000 submachine-guns, grenade-guns and ammunition, arrived in Azerbaijan by secret air operations through Nakhchivan.⁴¹

In late January of 1992, Mutallibov paid an official visit to Ankara that resulted in a mutual agreement on the retraining of Azerbaijani officers in Turkish military colleges. In March-April of 1992, Turkish military officers trained 450 Azerbaijani volunteers at the base of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan.⁴² During one of the interviews, Mutallibov stated that when forming the Azerbaijani Armed Forces Azerbaijan relied on Turkish support.⁴³

Turkey's policy toward Azerbaijan was especially activated after Azerbaijani People's Front's candidate Abulfaz Elchibey came to power. Elchibey adopted an exclusively pro-Turkish and Western-oriented policy, deteriorating relations with Russia and Iran. Elchibey even went as far as officially declaring Turkish the state language of Azerbaijan. He also promised Turkey full participation in the exploitation of Caspian oil.

Turkey, using this favorable atmosphere in Azerbaijan, began expanding its influence there. However, due to the international situation, Turkey had to continue its military assistance unofficially and indirectly, involving the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (Milli Hareket Partisi-MHP) and its head Alparslan Türkeş. For this purpose, Türkeş had several meetings with Elchibey. As a result, a powerful military unit was to be formed, which later would become the core of the regular army. This, in turn, ensured the security of Elchibey. To this end, with the efforts of Turkish nationalists led by Türkeş, a "grey wolves" camp (named "Rüzgâr" (wind) as suggested by Türkeş) was built in Azerbaijan, where Azerbaijani soldiers were supposed to have military trainings and diversion tactics classes. In addition to Azeris, volunteers from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkey were to be trained in the Rüzgâr camp, thus supposedly forming a "Turan Army" ("Turan ordusu").⁴⁴ After the Susurluk scandal of 1996, it was revealed that the idea of forming a "grey wolves" camp in Azerbaijan did not belong to Türkeş, but to MİT (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı),⁴⁵ which traditionally used Turkish nationalist and radical right-oriented elements for its plans. It was disclosed that a large amount of money had been transferred to MHP (Milli Hareket Partisi)⁴⁶ from the fund of Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller for development of their activities in Azerbaijan.

During Elchibey's rule Turkish-Azerbaijani relations entered a qualitatively new phase. But Elchibey's power lasted for only a year, and after Heydar Aliev returned to power, Azerbaijan adopted a more balanced foreign policy. Aliev normalized relations with Russia and Iran and retained highly developed relations with Turkey and the West. Aliev, who had great experience in politics, was viewed as a "better option" for Turkey than the temperamental Elchibey, who had little political clout. Thus, Turkey's policy toward Azerbaijan did not offer much change. Azerbaijan's policy toward Turkey became more moderate in comparison with Elchibey's fanatic pan-Turkism, but did not change in

⁴¹ See: R. Bhatty, R. Bronson, "NATO's Mixed Signals in the Caucasus and Central Asia", *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 3, Autumn 2000, p. 134.

⁴² See: Ibidem.

⁴³ See: H. Demoyan, *Karabakh Drama: Hidden Facts*, Erevan, 2003, p. 6.

⁴⁴ See: Yu.Z. Arpacık, *Kan Fırtınası*. İlteriş Yayınları. 4. Baskı, 2005, pp. 89-95.

⁴⁵ National Intelligence Organization.

⁴⁶ Nationalist Movement Party.

essence. The slogan “one nation and two states” first used during Elchibey’s rule continued to be the principle of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations.

The military support by Turkey continued as Azerbaijan’s efforts on the Karabakh front remained unsuccessful. In November 1993, Baku came up with an appeal addressed to several countries, including Turkey, to send troops to Azerbaijan.⁴⁷ In a meeting with Turkish Chief of General Staff Doğan Güreş, at the request of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan Minister of Foreign Affairs Hasan Hasanov asked for Azerbaijan to be provided with direct military support.⁴⁸ But Turkey refused to be directly engaged in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

In February 1994, during an official visit to Ankara, Heydar Aliyev appealed to the Turkish president and vice president to send a large contingent of Turkish officers to train the Azerbaijani army and was promised all the necessary support.⁴⁹

Despite this, Azerbaijan did not glean any tangible results on the Nagorno-Karabakh front. Azerbaijan continued to suffer losses one after another, thus also disillusioning Turkey’s expectations of its geopolitical benefits if the Karabakh conflict were resolved in Azerbaijan’s favor. On the other hand, even after the ceasefire protocol was signed in May 1994, Turkey continued playing the “Karabakh card” in the policy toward achieving its major goal of becoming a regional superpower. In order to secure its military presence in the Southern Caucasus, Turkey suggested it deploy its peacekeeping mission in Karabakh. But after stern replies from Armenian and Russian officials, Turkey had to reconcile itself to its defeat in the geopolitical struggle with Russia, which restored its regional power in Southern Caucasus.

Relations with Armenia in the Context of the Nagorno-Karabakh War

Armenia, being at the crossroads of the Turkey-Azerbaijan-Central Asia strategic path, has historically been one of the obstacles to realizing Turkey’s pan-Turkic plans. This is one of the primary reasons why Turkey has particularly focused on its relations with the newly independent Armenian Republic. The latter hoped to kill two birds with one stone by regulating its relations with Armenia.

- First, Turkey wanted to prevent any steps Armenia could take toward international recognition of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, thus also ensuring the reduction of political pressure by the West.
- Second, Armenian-Turkish relations being the only problematic ones for Turkey’s Southern Caucasus policy, if normalized, would expand Turkey’s regional role in the Southern Caucasus, becoming a counterbalance to Russia.

After Turkey officially recognized the independent Armenian Republic as an international entity, it became clear that this gave it preconditions for establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia. This would mean that Armenia would have to officially renounce any territorial claims against Turkey, abandon the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and stop aggression toward Azerbaijan.

⁴⁷ See: H. Demoyan, op. cit., p. 19.

⁴⁸ See: S.I. Cherniavskiy, *Novy put Azerbaidzhana*, Moscow, 2002, p. 231.

⁴⁹ See: H. Demoyan, op. cit., p. 20.

Armenia, taking into consideration its historical experience with Turkey and the rise of its population's nationalistic moods and popular pan-Turkic slogans such as "Union of the Turkic World," etc., remained skeptical toward Turkey's intentions of establishing normal bilateral relations. After Turkey's preconditions and evident political support of Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, Armenia's concerns about Turkey became even more substantial.

Thus, Armenian-Turkish diplomatic relations failed to become established. Moreover, along with the military gains of the Armenian armed forces, Ankara's policies toward Erevan became more severe.

In May 1992, after the Armenian forces took control over Shusha and Lachin, Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin stated that Karabakh was Azerbaijani land and Turkey would support Azerbaijan in all international entities. He added that Turkey would not allow changes of Azerbaijan's borders, otherwise Armenia would be responsible for the consequences.⁵⁰ Turkish President T. Özal claimed the necessity of deploying Turkish troops in Nakhchivan to protect it from a "possible Armenian attack."⁵¹ That was followed by some activation of Turkish armed forces along the border of Armenia-Nakhchivan, which made Armenian-Turkish relations even more strained.

In June 1992, during a meeting between Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian and Turkish Vice President Süleyman Demirel, the Turkish side demanded that recently gained Shusha and Lachin be relinquished. In return, the Armenian side remained in its position of seeking problem resolution within the framework of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe).⁵²

As Armenian subunits continued to record military achievements on the Karabakh front, the Turkish leaders made a number of statements on Turkey's possible direct intervention in the conflict. In order to substantiate its intention to control the Turkish-Armenian border, Turkey occasionally accused Armenia of allegedly supporting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerê Kurdistan, or PKK), which is recognized by Turkey as a terrorist organization. Several Turkish media sources also condemned Armenia for hosting PKK training camps in its territory.⁵³

Seeing no positive changes in Azerbaijan's favor, some circles in Turkey began to actively support direct military involvement in order to stop the Armenian military advance in Karabakh. In April 1993, the speaker of the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) and the deputy of the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi) claimed the necessity of Turkish military intervention in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.⁵⁴ The Deputy Chairman of the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) İstemihan Talay accused the Turkish government of not providing Azerbaijan with enough military support, which he regarded as the main reason for Azerbaijan's losses.⁵⁵

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Turkey notified ambassadors of France, Great Britain, and Russia about the possible Turkish intervention. But the United States' and especially Russia's strict warning of a direct counteroffensive if the Turkish military intervened in Karabakh forced Turkey to abandon the idea of military involvement, understanding the risk of a possible clash with Russia. However, Turkey engaged in diplomatic demarcations and economic sanctions by hermetically sealing the border with Armenia in April 1993.

⁵⁰ See: Milliyet, 21 Mayis, 1992.

⁵¹ Hürriyet, 23 Mayis, 1992.

⁵² See: AZG, 29 February, 1992.

⁵³ See: Hürriyet, 25 Ekim, 1993; Türkiye, 20 Şubat, 1994.

⁵⁴ See: A. Avagian, "The Activities of the Turkish Nationalists in Azerbaijan from 1990 to 1994," *Haykakan Banak* (Armenian Army), Defense-Academic Journal, Vol. 3, No. 49, 2006, p. 54 (in Armenian).

⁵⁵ See: Ibidem.

Turkish-Armenian relations were not affected even by the Bishkek ceasefire protocol. Turkey continued its diplomatic and economic sanctions, supporting Azerbaijan in all international entities within the framework of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution.

Conclusion

The Russian attitude toward the war over Nagorno-Karabakh significantly evolved between 1991 and 1994 and reflected on the evolution of its alleged national interests vis-à-vis the parties to the conflict, Azerbaijan and Armenia, and its self-perception as a post-Soviet nation with respect to the disputed role it should play in what was further termed its Near Abroad. Toward the year of 1993, a rather self-isolating agenda as regards the southern frontier of the former Soviet Union advocated by the “early” Yeltsin administration greatly diminished paving the way to a more assertive policy toward the Southern Caucasus, the aim of which was to secure Moscow’s dominant position in a strategically important area of the Southern Caucasus and, in a broader context, of the Caspian region. Within this constellation, the Nagorno-Karabakh factor was crucial as it provided Russian authorities with a welcome lever of influence on the policies of the internally rather unstable, economically weak, and militarily far from self-sufficient nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In fact, Moscow’s stance toward the Karabakh conflict in 1991-1994 was significantly shaped by two major factors: first, as Erevan’s tension with Azerbaijan and, as a matter of fact, with Turkey too intensified and Armenia increasingly found itself in an overt military confrontation with its neighbor, its room for maneuver gradually shrank along with its increasing dependence on Moscow as far as military, political, and economic issues of common interest were concerned.

Second, the fact that Erevan had to rely on Moscow’s support provided Russian policy with more opportunities with regard to Azerbaijan, which was considered a key country of the Southern Caucasus ensuring access to the Caspian Sea with its rich deposits of oil and natural gas. Initial Soviet cooperation between Moscow and Baku in the armed Karabakh conflict, enabled by the prevalence of the (post-)communist regime in Azerbaijan, was later reversed; both Elchibey and, as it turned out, Aliev continually, though with varying degrees of commitment, turned down Moscow’s demands for military, economic, and political integration. The commitment of the Azerbaijani elite to follow its own path was most likely dictated by the existence of the vast oil resources in the vicinity of the Azerbaijani shores of the Caspian Sea, a fact that was supposed to attract significant Western, above all American, presence in the region as a counterbalance to Moscow’s dominant position, the integration attempts of which were widely considered detrimental to the newly gained independence of the Azerbaijan Republic. All in all, optimistic expectations for the country’s future, given its rich natural resources, should it retain and ensure its independence from Moscow seem to have played a significant role in shaping the foreign political agenda of both Elchibey and Aliev. As a matter of fact, Moscow, with varying levels of intensity, used the Karabakh conflict as a lever to force the Azerbaijani leadership to adopt a more benevolent approach toward its demands; however, to largely no avail.

Analyzing Turkish policy toward the Nagorno-Karabakh war, we can draw the following conclusions:

- First, the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. changed the geopolitical order in the region, thus activating the struggle among the main contenders to a regional superpower status. Turkey, being among them, used the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute as grounds for expanding its influence in Southern Caucasus and Central Asia.

- Second, Turkey's policy toward the Nagorno-Karabakh war was conditioned by the rise of the nationalistic, pan-Turanist moods on the domestic scene and the West's (particularly, the United States') heavy support of the "Turkish model" of development (for the newly independent Turkic-speaking states) on the foreign scene. Therefore, Turkey's policy during the Karabakh war was exclusively pro-Azerbaijani.
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REGIONAL POLITICS**CHINA'S APPROACH
TO MULTILATERALISM WITH
AN EMPHASIS ON ITS INFLUENCE
IN CENTRAL ASIA****Kushtarbek SHAMSHIDOV**

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Introduction

This research considers that from a regional perspective, multilateralism can be an effective way to understand great power behavior on the international arena. The way emerging great powers interact with neighboring countries, and the way they work with regional powers has always been one of the best indicators of their future intentions as a great power. This concept proves very useful when examining an emerging power's capacity and attempting to predict its future behavior in the international system. There is tremendous speculation around what kind of China we are going to see in the near future, particularly if China surpasses all other states eco-

nomically. The objective of this research is to contribute to this question by examining China's use of multilateralism in its near neighborhood, more specifically by examining the form of multilateralism China is using to engage with Central Asia.

The author believes that it is counterproductive to examine China's use of multilateralism solely through the lens of western political science concepts. Given China's 3,000 years of historical relations with foreign countries and the way China has been conducting its foreign policy with bordering countries as one single entity, one civilization, Chinese political culture has a very

strong and unique history. Since China opened up to the West, many consider that it shares the same views as the West on international relations and political science. This perception is misleading and has led to confusion among many academics in their attempt to understand China. In order to avoid this confusion when explaining China's approach to multilateralism, this research will use both contemporary and Chinese traditional concepts.

The main research question of this paper is to what extent is China engaging in multilateralism in its relations with Central Asia? After analyzing China's use of multilateralism in today's international system, particularly with the Central Asian states, the analytical part of this research will address the extent to which China's use of multilateralism matches classical multilateralism principles.

Chapter One:

Defining Multilateralism

1.1. Multilateralism as a Theory

From the historical perspective, the concept of multilateralism first appeared in the twentieth century "as a central norm of diplomacy, joining bilateral diplomacy as another key diplomatic-culture norm underpinning the institution and practice of diplomacy."¹ It was also referred to as an alternative and a complement to bilateral relations. Geoff Berridge and Alan James (the authors of the *Dictionary of Diplomacy*) state with respect to multilateralism that "in the wake of real-world practice, the study of diplomacy added a second dimension to the bilateral form to arrive at multilateral diplomacy, which now means relations among three or more states at permanent or ad hoc international conferences."²

One of the most widely acknowledged definitions of multilateralism came from the well-known scholar of international relations, Robert Keohane, who defined it as follows: "Multilateralism can be defined as the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions."³

According to Caroline Bouchard and John Peterson, the literature on multilateralism has not agreed on a common conceptual framework and concrete tools with which to measure the process of development.⁴ Neither is there a commonly agreed definition that can explain current day multilateralism. They also argue that multilateralism "can take various forms, but in all cases it constitutes 'the scope (both geographic and functional) over which costs and benefits are spread' when actions are taken that affect collectivity."⁵

After reviewing the literature on multilateralism, the author has decided to choose the following definition of multilateralism as valid for the purpose of this article: "Three or more actors en-

¹ G. Wiseman, "Norms and Diplomacy: The Diplomatic Underpinnings of Multilateralism," in: *The New Dynamics of Multilateralism*, ed. by J.P. Muldoon *et al.*, Westview Press, Boulder, 2011, p. 13.

² Quoted from: *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ Quoted from: M.G. Schechter, "Systemic Change, International Organizations, and the Evolution of Multilateralism," in: *The New Dynamics of Multilateralism*, p. 26.

⁴ See: C. Bouchard, J. Peterson, "Conceptualizing Multilateralism: Can We All Just Get Along," *EU Seventh Framework Program, MERCURY*, No. 1, 2011, p. 29, available at [www.mercury-fp7.net], 10 January, 2012.

⁵ J. Caporaso, "International Relations Theory and Multilateralism: The Search for Foundations," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1992, p. 602 (quoted from: C. Bouchard, J. Peterson, *op. cit.*, p. 7).

gaging in voluntary and (essentially) institutionalized international cooperation governed by norms and principles, with rules that apply (by and large) equally to all states.”⁶ In theory, most of the current day multilateral instruments look the same, although there are always weak and strong states with their national interests bound to certain multilateral institutions. In this case, strong states play a decisive role in deciding the direction the institution will follow. For the remaining members, especially for weaker states, “multilateralism thus not only promised benefits but also constrained a hegemon.”⁷

1.2. Main Principles of Multilateralism

From a practical point of view, the idea of multilateralism is “a deep organizing principle of international life.”⁸ For that reason, multilateralism possesses three main properties or three essential features: indivisibility, generalized principles of conduct, and diffuse reciprocity.⁹

Indivisibility

Indivisibility in multilateralism refers to peace and security. For J. Ruggie, indivisibility is a principle embodied in “a collective security system.”¹⁰ He basically considers that “it rests in the premise that peace is indivisible, so that a war against one state is, ipso facto, considered a war against all. The community of states therefore is obliged to respond to threatened or actual aggression, first by diplomatic means, then through economic sanctions, and finally by the collective use of force if necessary. Facing the prospect of such a community-wide response, any rational potential aggressor would be deterred and would desist. Thus, the incidence of war gradually would decline.”¹¹

This means that the core of collective security is the indivisibility of peace and moving toward a declining nature of aggression. This principle initially carried a legacy of Cold War understanding of security and peace. However, indivisibility in today’s utilization is openly applicable to other tracks of multilateralism. As noted by A. Kingsley, “the principle of indivisibility, although originally intended only to counteract acts of aggression after the Second World War through collective security, has become indirectly relevant in the context of other issues, such as social, environmental or economic threats making indivisibility and unity also applicable in these cases.”¹²

⁶ C. Bouchard, J. Peterson, op. cit., p. 10.

⁷ G.J. Ikenberry, “Is American Multilateralism in Decline?” *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2003 (quoted from: C. Bouchard, J. Peterson, op. cit., p. 14).

⁸ J. Caporaso, “International Relations Theory and Multilateralism: The Search for Foundations,” in: *Multilateralism Matters. The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, ed. by J.G. Ruggie, Columbia University Press, New York, 1993, p. 53.

⁹ See: Ibidem.

¹⁰ J.G. Ruggie, “Multilateralism: An Anatomy of an Institution,” *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1992, p. 569, available at [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706989>], 7 February, 2012.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² A. Kingsley, *Multilateral Diplomacy as an Instrument of Global Governance: The Case of the International Bill of Human Rights*, Thesis diss., University of Pretoria, 2009, p. 36.

Generalized Principles of Conduct

According to Caporaso, generalized principles of conduct “usually come in the form of norms exhorting general if not universal modes of relating to other states, rather than differentiating relations case-by-case on the basis of individual preferences, situational exigencies, or a priori particularistic grounds.”¹³ For Ruggie, this principle is the main element that coordinates interstate affairs. He argues that “multilateralism is an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct: that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrences.”¹⁴ For the purpose of applying this principle to security affairs, Ruggie gives an example where the generalized principle of conduct is “the requirement that states respond to aggression whenever and wherever it occurs—whether or not any specific instance suits their individual likes and dislikes.”¹⁵ This principle once more highlights the equal participation of member states in commonly agreed principles under multilateral institutions.

Diffuse Reciprocity

The term “diffuse reciprocity”¹⁶ was first used by IR theorist Robert Keohane, and further utilized by J. Ruggie and J. Caporaso in multilateralism studies. Ruggie briefly summarizes this principle by saying in “diffuse reciprocity” “the arrangement is expected by its members to yield a rough equivalence of benefits in the aggregate and over time.”¹⁷ At the same way, Caporaso more or less supports Ruggie’s characterization by identifying the following: “Diffuse reciprocity adjusts the utilitarian lenses for the long view, emphasizing that actors expect to benefit in the long run and over many issues, rather than every time on every issue.”¹⁸ For this motive, in terms of international governance, “actors recognize the existence of certain obligations and feel compelled, for whatever reason, to fulfill them.”¹⁹ In a few words, states are pleased to face the negative consequences of today’s actions as long as there is the hope of pleasing in the future. The diffuse reciprocity principle also facilitates our view about certain states’ choice of multilateral institutions, where there might be no significant objectives in the present, but greater gain in the future.

Indivisibility, generalized principles of conduct, and diffuse reciprocity are the main principles for understanding modern day multilateralism. We can also test China’s multilateralism toward Central Asia against these three principles, but before doing so it is important to review China’s specifics. This research argues that China’s multilateralism in Central Asia is deeply rooted in Chinese tradi-

¹³ J. Caporaso, “International Relations Theory and Multilateralism: The Search for Foundations,” in: *Multilateralism Matters. The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, p. 54.

¹⁴ J.G. Ruggie, “Multilateralism: An Anatomy of an Institution,” in: *Multilateralism Matters. The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, p. 11.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ See: R.O. Keohane, “Reciprocity in International Relations,” *International Organization*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 1986.

¹⁷ J.G. Ruggie, “Multilateralism: An Anatomy of an Institution,” in: *Multilateralism Matters. The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, p. 11.

¹⁸ J. Caporaso, “International Relations Theory and Multilateralism: The Search for Foundations,” in: *Multilateralism Matters. The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, p. 54.

¹⁹ V. Rittberger, *Global Governance in the United Nations System*, United Nations University Press, New York, 2001, p. 5.

tional thinking, and therefore most of China's policies in the region carry elements of historical interstate relations.

Chapter Two: **China's Understanding of Multilateralism**

2.1. Peaceful Development and the 24-Character Plan²⁰

Taking into consideration China's uniqueness and its historical past as a civilization, it is necessary to understand China's current-day multilateralism from a Chinese perspective. Similar to claims made by Chinese officials about its path of development, which is "the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics," it can be argued that the same approach should be used in understanding China's approach to multilateralism via a concept of "multilateralism with Chinese characteristics."

Peaceful Development

Today, China's path of development is identified as peaceful development. China claims "a path of scientific, independent, open, peaceful, cooperative, and common development."²¹ The last three notions (peaceful, cooperative, and common development) are directly related to China's multilateral attitude toward foreign countries. Under the notion of peaceful development, China claims that it will use diplomacy to create a stable international environment that as a result will enable China's domestic development. Therefore, Chinese diplomacy is trying to persuade those who are suspicious of this peacefulness by stating several "nevers." It says never to aggression, expansion, and hegemonic ambition.²²

Under the notion of cooperative development, in order to pursue peace China will continue to encourage development and resolve conflicts through different forms of cooperative relations with other countries. Two key elements of the above-mentioned notions, diplomacy and different forms of relations, are inseparable parts of today's Chinese multilateralism in Central Asia.

According to the Chinese understanding, a peaceful international environment and favorable external conditions are a means of continued development. To achieve this peaceful environment, China's relations with other nations are formulated around five focal areas.²³ These five focal areas are very complex in terms of practicality and, by their nature, they are the main driving forces behind modern Chinese multilateralism:

- China's proper relations with the developed countries or major countries;

²⁰ The popular theory set forth by Deng Xiaoping defining China's development and its relations with the outside world in the 1990s was comprised of 24 characters (the 24-Character Plan).

²¹ *China's Peaceful Development*, Information Office of the State Council, Beijing, 2011, p. 3.

²² See: Ibid., p. 5.

²³ See: Ibid., p. 17.

- China's continued policy of developing good neighborly relations (other Asian countries are also included in this principle);
- Bilateral and regional cooperation to promote peace and stability;
- China's active engagement in global and multilateral issues and contribution to building a more equal and fair international order;
- Development of friendship or “people-to-people and cultural exchanges” between foreigners and Chinese people.²⁴

Why did China choose a peaceful development path and is it really peaceful and cooperative? If China's multilateralism is formulated under peaceful development, what are the fundamental principles of and incentives for this specific choice?

China's growth dynamics convince most of us that sooner or later China will become a great power. For now China ranks second in the world economy and military spending. China has achieved the status of an Asian power and most of its activities are highly visible in its immediate neighborhood. China's activities vary from region to region, however, analyzing China's involvement in Central Asia from both present-day and traditional perspectives will help us to some extent to predict China's possible behavior in the future. China has been rising and falling throughout history. Therefore, it has been possible for China's neighbors to approximately predict China's behavior as a weak, rising, and strong power. It is also important to consider what kind of foreign relations pattern China has used in the past and whether or not it is still embedded in today's Chinese political culture.

2.2. The “Tianxia” Concept and China's Traditional Relations with Neighboring Countries

Tianxia (All-Under-Heaven)

Tianxia is a purely Chinese, historically important, traditional concept. Until recently, this concept had never been discussed internationally. However, Zhang Yimou's movie, “Yingxiong”²⁵ (Hero), which came out in 2002, and Zhao Tingyang's academic research, “Tianxia Tixi: Shijie Zhidu Zhexue Daolun”²⁶ (The Tianxia System: A Philosophy for the World Institution) published in 2005 paved the way to a new school of thought. Zhao's rediscovery of *tianxia* and its application to the modern world order has given rise to a lively discussion both in China and abroad. According to Ren Xiao, “the *tianxia* idea may provide an alternative way to think about various kinds of relationship in the world and to find a new and more constructive way forward.”²⁷ There is no exact definition of *tianxia* as it is deeply rooted in all aspects of Chinese society and it has different implications as *tianxia* in the geographical sense and in the political and cultural sense.

²⁴ See: Ibidem.

²⁵ See: Zhang Yimou (Movie Director), *Yingxiong*, Beijing, 2002.

²⁶ See: Zhao Tingyang, *Tianxia Tixi: Shijie Zhidu Zhexue Daolun*, Jiangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe, Nanjing, 2005.

²⁷ Ren Xiao, “Traditional Chinese Theory and Practice of Foreign Relations: A Reassessment,” in: *China and International Relations. The Chinese View and the Contribution of Wang Gungwu*, ed. by Zheng Yongnian, Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 114.

Literally “*tian*” means sky, heaven, or top. While “*xia*” means what is below, subordinate and lower. Together it has an immense conceptual perspective that refers to “*tianxia*” as a “world order,”²⁸ as “all-under-heaven,”²⁹ and finally *tianxia* as “*zhongguo*” (China).³⁰ As Zheng Yongnian argues, *tianxia* was established based on a natural order that existed between family members, such as between father and son. The same relations applied to public affairs between emperor and minister, and subsequently an equivalent approach was adopted in its foreign relations with nations other than China.³¹ Is China’s current approach to multilateralism based on old *tianxia* principles or does it follow modern IR multilateralism principles? According to Zheng, “while the *tianxia* and the modern international order are two distinguishable orders, there are also similarities between the two orders in terms of their organizing principles.”³²

Feng-Gong System (Tributary System)

The tributary system goes back to the northern Hsiung-nu (209 BC-AD 155) nomadic state’s relations with the Ch’in and Han dynasties (221 BC-AD 220). Before establishing the tributary system, relations between the two states were based on peace treaties under the ho-ci’in policy (established in 200 BC), whereby Hsiung-nu negotiated peace with goods annually received from the Chinese. In spite of this treaty, Hsiung-nu continued to terrorize the Chinese court by attacking frontier villages in order to increase receipts. Another point of note is that under this policy both China and Hsiung-nu ranked as equals.³³ However, in 133 BC, Han Wu-ti decided to end this unacceptable equal status and destroy Hsiung-nu in order to establish a new type of interstate relations. Hsiung-nu was defeated in 119 BC, but it took the Chinese another fifty years to make Hsiung-nu agree to China’s tributary system. The reason Hsiung-nu finally agreed was that it discovered a huge economic benefit in making symbolic tributary submissions to China.

A remarkable period in Tang-Turkish relations unfolded when Tang emperor Li Shih-min practiced a second offensive strategy similar in nature to Han Wu-ti’s offensive strategy toward the Hsiung-nu state mentioned above. Li Shih-min stands out among the Tang emperors for his creative foreign policy. When he observed a problematic recurring succession in the neighboring Turkish Empire, he sent Tang troops to conquer the Turks. After invading the Turkish Empire in AD 630, he was creative enough to accommodate Turkish leaders in the Tang system and make them Tang officials by letting them govern their own tribes.³⁴ In so doing, Li Shih-min used the Turks to expand Tang territory to the west, to what is today Xinjiang, even reaching as far as modern-day Central Asia.

The two offensive cases mentioned above carried out by Han Wu-ti and Tang emperor Li Shih-min, with regards to the northwestern nomads, clearly demonstrated that regardless of their Confu-

²⁸ Zheng Yongnian, “Organizing China’s Inter-state Relations: From ‘*tianxia*’ (All under Heaven) to the Modern International Order,” in: *China and International Relations. The Chinese View and the Contribution of Wang Gungwu*, p. 293.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 301.

³⁰ Ren Xiao, op. cit., p. 111.

³¹ See: Zheng Yongnian, op. cit., p. 302.

³² Ibid., p. 293.

³³ See: Th.J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier. Nomadic Empires and China*, Blackwell Publisher, Oxford, 2006, p. 45.

³⁴ See: Ibid., p. 145.

cian education and despite laborious ministerial discussions in the Chinese court, these two Chinese rulers made a decision to change from a defensive to an offensive strategy. Wang Yuan-Kang, who researched Confucian pacifism and the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) security policy, concluded that the Ming strategic choice of power was based on the function of relative power. According to Wang, during powerful periods (1368-1449) of the Ming dynasty, it adopted an offensive policy in its relations with the Mongols. However, during 1450-1548, when Ming became comparatively weaker, a defensive policy was adopted, and “defense became the chosen strategy only after China had lost the capability to launch offensive campaigns.”³⁵

Today, the United States has a foothold in Central Asia, as well as in Southeastern Asia, which can be viewed as a relative power with respect to China. For China, in terms of external threat, the United States holds the same nature of threat as the Mongols in the 14th-15th centuries. One of the main reasons for China’s multilateralism in Central Asia is particularly related to the United States’ unilateral policy in the region. China has not yet reached the point where it can challenge the U.S. globally, therefore while it has comparatively sufficient power in the region, China has been pursuing its foreign policy, which is multilateralism, in order to eliminate the U.S.’s power regionally.

Nowadays, for China, multilateralism in Central Asia also means a certain type of defense system, which is traditionally regarded as defense through the tributary system. This will be elaborated on through so-called “*si yi*,” which is a concept that means defense through barbarians.³⁶

Si Yi (Defense through Barbarians)

After a period of offensive relations with neighboring nomads, Chinese officials realized that the best way to secure China from outside forces was to establish tributary relations with neighboring states. A senior official of the Ming dynasty put forward this idea by saying the following: “Mollifying the barbarians with *de* (virtue), convincing them with strength, and making them defend their own territories are the best options China could have.”³⁷ China had cultivated special concepts for dealing with barbarians and the most important ones were to use *de* (virtue), *li* (rites), and *ji mi* (loose rein) instead of using force. Most of the time, using offensive policies with barbarians had led in the past to internal uprisings and state failure, therefore cultural and economic attraction and most importantly making barbarians a “*shu-bang*” (dependent state)³⁸ ultimately produced better efficiency in maintaining peace.

Wang Yuan-Kang argues that China also had an advantage by making neighboring states economically dependent on China through tributary trade. By suspending tributary relations, China could punish disruptive dependent states and enforce certain behavior, which would be considered economic sanctions in modern-day terms.³⁹ Once the bordering state became economically dependent on China, the Chinese court had political influence and used that state as a buffer zone to protect its territory from outside powers. One of the periods when *si yi* was used most efficiently was in China’s Tang relations with the Uighur Empire (745-840). The reason the Uighurs became the richest

³⁵ Wang Yuan-Kang, *Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2011, p. 114.

³⁶ See: Ren Xiao, op. cit., p. 107.

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ See: Ibid., p. 105.

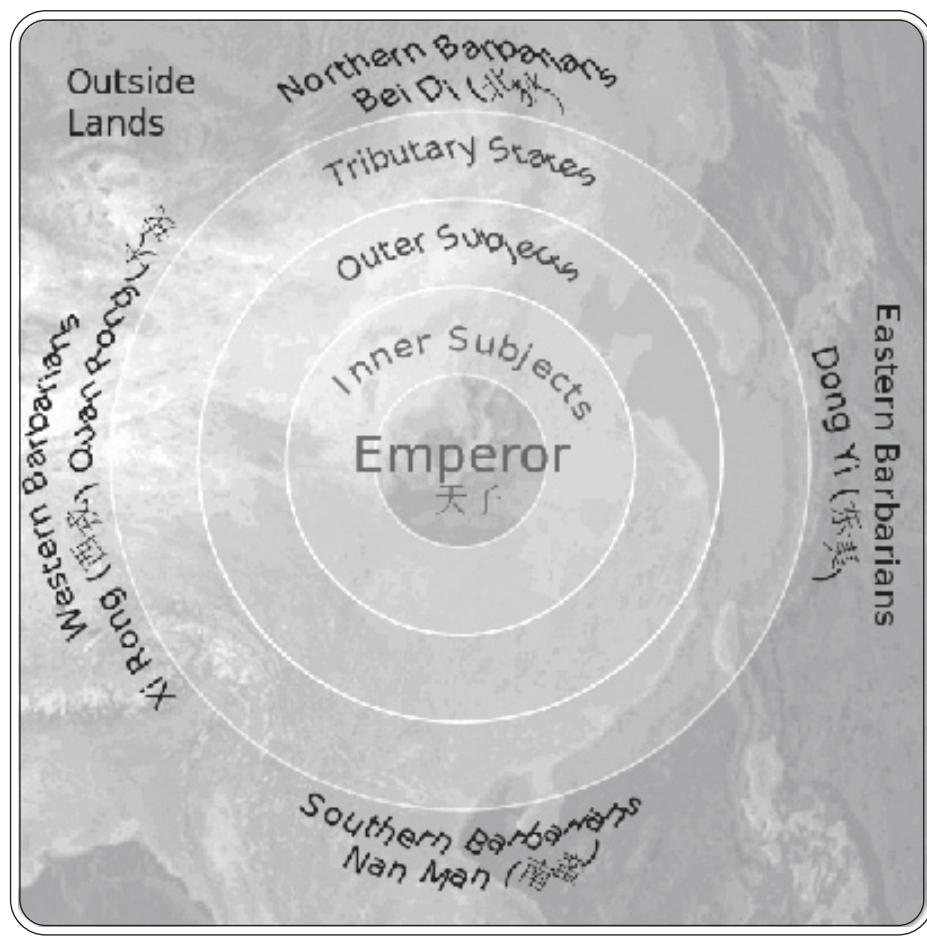
³⁹ See: Wang Yuan-Kang, op. cit., p. 148.

nomads can be explained by their vital position and support of the Tang dynasty from possible foreign invasions. In return, the Uighurs received annual gifts of 20,000 rolls of silk, honorary titles, and other goods.⁴⁰ Today the main parts of the Uighur Empire have been absorbed and constitute the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), while Central Asia has replaced the Uighurs and become one of the main security challenges to modern China's frontier policy.

For example, for *tianxia* China, states located in the northwestern parts were considered as tributary, dependent, and buffer zone states. Today, through trade and investment, China is trying to make the Central Asian states stronger and at the same time dependent on China. Whereas today some Central Asian states' trade dependency on China has already reached roughly 40%, as is the case for

Figure 1⁴¹

**Sinocentrism and the Role of
the Tributary States as Security Actors**



⁴⁰ See: Th.J. Barfield, op. cit., pp. 150-152.

⁴¹ See: "The Sinocentric System," *New World Encyclopaedia*, available at [<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Sinocentrism>], 10 March, 2012.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, political dependency is also shifting, at least from Russia to China. For China, it means the threat coming through Central Asia from outside powers, particularly from the U.S., has to some extent been eliminated. This gives China further motivation to develop multilateralism in Central Asia.

Throughout many centuries, the *feng-gong* system of the *tianxia* concept, which ultimately led to *si yi* with neighboring countries, taught Chinese officials to create a systematized way of interstate relations. This can be clearly explained through a detailed comparison of China's traditional and modern foreign policy toward Central Asia. Modern-day China's perception of Central Asia and its security policy strategies are closely tied to the policies that were cultivated during *tianxia* China. The author considers that the ultimate success of modern China's foreign policy toward Central Asia is multilateralism, which can bring guaranteed security to the northwestern part of China only through *si yi*.

Chapter Three:

China's Foreign Policy Toward Central Asia

3.1. China's Perception of the Central Asian Region

From a realpolitik perspective, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian region had no geopolitical strategic importance, it was simply a geographical location. For the United States, Central Asia was strategically unimportant except for oil and gas, and Russia believed Central Asia to be within its traditional sphere of influence. Meanwhile, China looks at Central Asia through the prism of the Xinjiang dilemma. According to D. Kerr, Central Asia is close to "regionalism without a region."⁴² However, discovery of Central Asia's energy potential, its increasing geostrategic importance due to Afghanistan's proximity, and China's involvement in Central Asia changed the old picture of the region. China expert Zhiqun Zhu thinks that China's main strategic concern with regards to Central Asia is the stability of the region. Any conflict that might occur in Central Asia is likely to spill over into Xinjiang.⁴³

Xinjiang is one of China's three primary internal problems after Taiwan and Tibet. The Xinjiang Province, which is predominantly inhabited by Muslim Turks, was invaded by the Qing Dynasty in 1877, at which point it was named "Xin Jiang," which literally means new territory.⁴⁴ Since then, even though the Uighurs were under Qing authority, they were always in search of greater autonomy and even sovereignty. For example, the rebellion of 1933 was caused by strong Han involvement and restrictions on making pilgrimages to Mecca, which ultimately led to the foundation

⁴² D. Kerr, "Central Asian and Russian Perspective on China's Strategic Emergence," *International Affairs*, No. 86, 2010, p. 143.

⁴³ See: Zhiqun Zhu, *China's New Diplomacy. Rationale, Strategies and Significance*, Ashgate, Surrey, 2010, p. 117.

⁴⁴ See: M. Oresman, "Repaving the Silk Road: China's Emergence in Central Asia," in: *China and the Developing World. Beijing's Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by J. Eisenman et al., M.E. Sharpe, Inc., New York, 2007, p. 81.

of the Turkish Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan. The second major attempt to create an independent state followed the Uighur uprising in 1944 and led to the establishment of the East Turkestan Republic in 1945.⁴⁵

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of the independent states to the West of Xinjiang further contributed to the existing Xinjiang issue. The main trouble for China was the Uighur diaspora and its activities in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan is home to 50,000 Uighurs, while Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan host 180,000 and 30,000 Uighurs, respectively.⁴⁶ At the same time, there are 1.24 million Kazakhs, 150,000 Kyrgyz, and 30,000 Tajiks living in Xinjiang (figures from 2003).⁴⁷

Beijing had no other option than active diplomatic involvement in the newly independent Central Asian republics. Immediately after Central Asia gained its independence, the Uighur diasporas took an active stance in supporting Uighur independence in Xinjiang. In the case of Kazakhstan, the Uighurs formed the Uighur Liberation Organization and even registered it in April 1991. A year later, the Uighurs in Kyrgyzstan successfully established the Free Uighuristan Party.⁴⁸ At the same time as these Uighur organizations were forming, Central Asia was becoming a hub for other radical movements, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb ut-Tahrir, and other extremist movements of Ferghana Valley.

Despite Beijing's exerted efforts over two decades to resolve the Xinjiang issue, the July 2009 ethnic clash in Xinjiang proved that it is still very crucial and sensitive. Another critical concern is that approximately 300 to 700 Uighurs were detained during the U.S.-led operation in Afghanistan.⁴⁹ Moreover, feasible links between the Uighurs and al-Qa'eda confirm that Central Asia is an important security concern for China and will become an even more critical issue after the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan in 2014.

The evolution of Chinese foreign policy toward Central Asia can be viewed in three major phases.

- The first phase occurred between 1991 and 1995, when China was heavily involved in building strong diplomatic relations with the Central Asian states. During this period, embassies were established in all the Central Asian countries and the main consultations on border issues began.
- The second phase was conducted between 1996 and 2001 and was focused on economically driven diplomacy. It was a period of economic development in Xinjiang and at the same time a period of booming bilateral trade relations with the Central Asian countries (see Table 1).

The two above-mentioned phases were important prerequisites for China's ultimate political objective, which is frontier security, focused on in the third phase. This phase covers the period from 2002 until the present. It concentrates on stabilizing the region using all possible means. Beijing's third phase diplomacy is all about securing the region from internal conflicts and conflicts that might be caused by foreign involvement. In order to achieve its objectives effectively, Beijing has decided to be creative and has therefore chosen multilateralism as a guiding principle. The first multilateral organization initiated and created with China's support in Chinese history is the SCO.

⁴⁵ See: H.H. Karrar, *The New Silk Road Diplomacy. China's Central Asian Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, UBC Press, Vancouver, 2009, p. 34.

⁴⁶ See: J. Eisenman, E. Heginbotham, D. Mitchell, *China and the Developing World. Beijing's Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*, M.E. Sharpe, Inc., Armonk, New York, London, 2007, p. 67; R. Dwivedi, "China's Central Asian Policy in Recent Times," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, No. 4, 2006, p. 142.

⁴⁷ See: H.H. Karrar, op. cit., p. 20.

⁴⁸ See: Ibid., p. 71.

⁴⁹ See: J. Eisenman, E. Heginbotham, D. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 66.

Table 1

**Chinese Trade Turnover with
Central Asian Countries
since 1991**

Year	\$m
1991	—
1992	422
1993	512
1994	360
1995	486
1996	674
1997	699
1998	588
1999	733
2000	1,041
2001	1,478
2002	2,798
2003	3,305
2004	4,337
2005	8,297
2006	10,796
2007	16,038
2008 ⁵⁰	25,000
2009 ⁵¹	25,900

S o u r c e: V. Paramonov, A. Strokov, O. Stolpovskiy, *Rossia i Kitai v Tsentrinoi Azii: politika, ekonomika, bezopasnost*, Printhouse, Bishkek, 2008, p. 158.

⁵⁰ See: Zhiqun Zhu, op. cit., p. 114.⁵¹ See: E. Wong, "China Quietly Extends Footprints into Central Asia," *The New York Times*, 2 January, 2011.

3.2. Analyses of Modern Chinese and Traditional *Tianxia* Foreign Relations

After studying China's traditional understanding of the world and China's relations with its northwestern neighbors in the context of *tianxia*, the author would like to compare its main elements with the current-day Chinese approach to foreign relations with Central Asia. The author will argue that there is no fundamental change between *tianxia* and the modern Chinese approach. To support this argument, the author would like to draw your attention to the chart provided below, as well as its analyses:

Table 2

Modern Chinese and Traditional *Tianxia* Foreign Relations

Stages	Four Stages of Modern Chinese Foreign Relations with Central Asia	Four Stages of <i>Tianxia</i> Chinese Foreign Relations with its Northwestern Neighbors
1	Diplomatic Relations	Receiving Envoys
2	Economic Relations	Entering into Tributary Trade Relations
3	Security Relations	Mollifying and Civilizing Neighbors through Titles
4	Multilateralism	Defense through “ <i>si yi</i> ” (barbarians)

First Stage

The modern Chinese diplomatic approach in the initial phase of interstate relations was also practiced by ancient Chinese emperors. The only difference is that this time China took the initiative to approach other states first, whilst in ancient China it was always neighboring states that came and asked for diplomatic relations.

At this first stage the two sides came to an agreement on further development of their relations. As already mentioned, the deal was to acknowledge the Chinese ruler as the ruler of the world, accepting ritual ceremony where *kowtow*⁵² was performed, and finally accepting its own tribute status by paying material tribute. In return, China promised trade, support in the event of attack, and noninterference in each other's internal affairs. A comparable scenario occurred in the early 1990s, when China, during its diplomatic negotiations, assured its Central Asian partners of equality, support, and respect for each other's sovereignty. Even though at the time some politicians in Central Asia were feeling intimidated by their giant neighbor, the Chinese government once again provided reassurance by accepting consensus decisions and not projecting its power.

⁵² See: Lingvo Dictionary definition “to touch the forehead to the ground as a sign of deference: a former Chinese custom.”

Second Stage

In *tianxia* China, once an agreement was reached at the first stage, states entered into the tributary trade system. It was voluntary for states to enter and they were not forced. Instead, as it was economically beneficial for barbarians, most of the time it was the northwestern nomads who pressed China to accept their request for a tributary system.

Tributary trade relations were performed only between tributary states and the Emperor through the Chinese court. Today the picture has changed slightly compared to this period, however similarities still remain. Right after the successful establishment of diplomatic relations, bilateral trade between China and Central Asia skyrocketed. Total trade turnover between the two increased from \$527 million in 1992 to \$25.9 billion in 2009.⁵³ To date it has not slowed, in 2011 Central Asia's main trade province XUAR increased its foreign trade by around 33%, whereby XUAR's export amounted to \$16.8 billion and import to \$6 billion. In the same year, the five Central Asian states accounted for 78% of the XUAR's foreign trade.⁵⁴

According to Zhiqun Zhu, "trade between China and Central Asia has been favored by both sides throughout history. The only change today is that the traders have replaced jade, tea, silk, and rhubarb with oil, gas, weapons, and other consumer products."⁵⁵ Of course we cannot compare the exact value of the silk or the quantities of silk rolls with today's finished products coming from China, but the point here is the pattern of trade relations has more or less remained the same.

Third Stage

Once diplomatic and economic relations have become institutionalized and systematized, China strives for what should be considered the ultimate goal, the third stage—security. This has been, and still is, the core of China's approach to foreign relations. Having effective diplomatic and trade relations with barbarians was considered a slow transforming process from barbarianism to a more or less civilized culture. China assumed that in doing so it would mollify the barbarians and eventually turn them into civilized cultures close to the Chinese level of civilization. Ultimately the intention of this transformation was to create a peaceful neighborhood.

The so-called "good neighborly policy," "harmonious world," and "public diplomacy" concepts of today's modern China are very close to what is mentioned above and intended to create a stable environment around China's immediate neighborhood. In addition, modern day China's support of, or at least warm relations with the authoritarian regimes in Central Asia is very similar to the way in which traditional China dealt with local rulers. For example, in *tianxia* times being recognized by China as a local ruler and receiving titles from the Chinese emperor advanced the legitimacy of those rulers in their home country. This kind of support from the Chinese Emperor was especially helpful for local rulers during periods of rivalry over power.⁵⁶

Since independence, most of the authoritarian presidents of Central Asia have been very proud of being invited to Beijing by the Chinese government and hosting Chinese officials. Both were considered actions that further legitimized their power. The behavior of the Kazakh and Uzbek presidents stand out as being most comparable to the *tianxia* tribute state rulers in their relations with the PRC.

⁵³ See: E. Wong, op. cit.

⁵⁴ See: "Xinjiang Foreign Trade Rises 33 pct in 2011," *China Forum*, 8 February, 2012.

⁵⁵ Zhiqun Zhu, op. cit.

⁵⁶ See: Wang Yuan-Kang, op. cit., p. 150.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev has had the most interaction with the Chinese government. His visits were viewed as a big achievement and represented as such in the Kazakh media, especially compared with other Central Asian states. Unlike Nazarbaev, Uzbek President Karimov did not visit Beijing, instead he seemed to be waiting for an important reason before taking the opportunity to go to Beijing. When the Andijan insurrections occurred in May 2005, Karimov was heavily criticized by the West, especially by the United States. Later in November 2005, Uzbekistan asked the U.S. to leave the Karshi-Khanabad base as soon as possible. The feeling of being marginalized by the international community motivated Karimov to make his long-awaited trip to Beijing. In doing so he regained his legitimacy at home and made a strategic shift toward China and Russia.

It is worth noting that the Central Asian rulers have much more to share with the PRC than with the Western states. In contrast to Western credits and loans, Chinese loans have no binding human rights fulfillment or democracy requirements behind them. It is unfortunate that this trend will continue to grow in the future and is likely to become one of the serious obstacles in Central Asia's democratic transformation.

Fourth Stage

Why did China opt for multilateralism in its most recent relations with Central Asia? Is it, as many China experts argue, really an untraditional and new foreign relations approach for China? In light of the information provided above,⁵⁷ it is valid to argue that from a security perspective today's multilateralism approach chosen by modern China is comparable to the traditional concept of *si yi*. The ultimate objective of Chinese officials was to use the barbarians living in the surrounding countries as a defense orbit (see Fig. 1) in order to fully assure China's physical safety. In so doing, they hoped to guarantee the preservation of a long-lasting civilization and further prosperity was hopefully guaranteed.

Basically, the idea behind *si yi* was to secure China from possible outside forces. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the close relations between Tang and Uighur in the 8th-9th centuries was mainly focused on defending China from other small and medium size nomadic tribes living in the far northern parts of the Uighur Empire. In Turkic historical sources, there are many cases when nomadic kingdoms, such as the Khirghiz khaganate and others, attacked the Uighurs but often failed to break through to China. However, *si yi* does not always work as it is supposed to. An exceptional situation arose when China was invaded by the Mongols in the 13th century and *si yi* failed.

According to Chien-peng Chung, the broader prerequisite for a state's decision to choose a multilateralism approach is as follows: "When national objectives cannot be achieved, or cannot be achieved satisfactorily, either unilaterally or through bilateral arrangements, states turn to collective arrangements such as multilateral regimes."⁵⁸ The security aspect of China-Central Asian relations is still the predominant core driving force. One example, argued by Zheng Yongnian, about the SCO's nature is that "the SCO brings together China, Russia, and the Central Asian states for the first time in history in a multilateral mechanism of regional security, and economic and cultural cooperation."⁵⁹

Since the Western invasion of China in the early 19th century, mainly by Great Britain, the second time (after the Mongols) in its history, the Qing officials understood that there are other

⁵⁷ See: Chapter Two, Section 2.2. of this article.

⁵⁸ Chien-peng Chung, *China's Multilateral Cooperation in Asia and Pacific. Institutionalizing Beijing's "Good Neighbor Policy,"* Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Zheng Yongnian, op. cit., p. 316.

superior nations and therefore their foreign policy should be re-evaluated. Before it became aware of the technological supremacy of the West, China was confident in its interstate relations pattern. It was very hard for China to accept this humiliation, but there was no other choice. It took nearly a century (roughly 1850-1950) to merge into the existing international interstate relations pattern created by the West. It took China another fifty years (1950-2000) to learn the system and to achieve the “super state level” to which it had been accustomed centuries before. Currently China is very close to making the process of living together with the Western powers and with the rules set by the West a fait accompli. Therefore, multilateralism can be viewed as a strategic choice made by Chinese officials as the final stage necessary to complete the above-mentioned process. Central Asia could be viewed as an experimental region in China’s further development of multilateralism elsewhere in the world.

The multilateralism initiatives taken by China vis-à-vis Central Asia are the same as adopting the “*si yi*” doctrine. Outside threats coming from Afghanistan to unstable Xinjiang and the intensified U.S. military presence in bordering Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were the main motives for adopting the current day multilateralism policy toward Central Asia. Ancient China never had such a policy due to distance, technology, and the wars among the nomads in the region.

To summarize, by drawing a comparison with the tributary policy and contemporary foreign policy in Chinese-Central Asian affairs, we mostly see continuity in economic relations and security cooperation. Chinese *tianxia* tributary trade and defense policy understanding through *si yi* are still more or less unchanged. We mostly see modification in the field of diplomatic and leadership relations. In this field, Chinese officials have become more innovative and mastered Western-type interstate relations, specifically multilateralism. China’s strategic approach toward Central Asia, the way in which it structures its policies and goals, expectations and interests, and the preferred policy outcomes are all deeply calculated and firmly rooted in traditional *tianxia* thinking.

In order to see this clear connection between modern and *tianxia* China, the author would like to briefly describe the main goals and objectives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). As stated earlier, economic and security cooperation are the two main courses of China’s policy toward Central Asia, which are doubtlessly the key components of SCO multilateralism. Therefore, it is important to understand how these two components are being implemented and what directions they are taking.

Chapter Four: **The SCO and Multilateralism Principles**

4.1. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization

On 15 June, 2001 in Shanghai, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People’s Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan created the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The main objectives of the SCO are good neighborly relations among the member states; mutual confidence; and promoting effective cooperation in politics, trade, and the economy. At the international level, the SCO actively participates in making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, preserve security and stability in the region, and move toward

the establishment of a new, democratic, just and rational, political and economic international order.⁶⁰ Additionally, its foreign policy is conducted in accordance with the principles of nonalignment, not targeting anyone, and openness.⁶¹

It has two main decision-making bodies. The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the highest decision-making body in the SCO. It meets once every year to take decisions and give instructions on all the important issues of SCO activity. The Heads of Government Council (HGC) meets once every year to discuss strategy for multilateral cooperation and priority directions within the Organization's framework. This body mainly works on security and economic cooperation issues and adopts the Organization's annual budget as well.

Besides sessions and meetings of the HSC and the HGC, there are also mechanisms of meetings on the level of Speakers of Parliament, Secretaries of Security Councils, Foreign Ministers, Ministers of Defense, etc. The Council of National Coordinators of the SCO Member States (CNC) is in charge of coordinating interactions within the SCO framework. Moreover, the Organization has two permanent bodies – the Secretariat in Beijing and the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) in Tashkent. As its supreme representative, the Secretary-General is appointed by the HSC for a period of three years. The heads of the SCO member states also appoint the director of the RATS executive committee.⁶² After gaining an understanding of SCO from the historical, political, and economic perspective, it is logical to divide its development into three main periods.

Even though the SCO is aimed at multilateral cooperation, there are several existing barriers within the Organization. The serious ones are imbalance among the member states and the clash between Russia and China. Many observe that the decisions made within the framework of the SCO do not satisfy all of the member states and there are disagreements between countries. However, as matter of fact, in the SCO structure any initiative and any decision has to be made jointly. So, before coming to a common agreement all the member states confirm that they fully agree on the decision made. And if one of the member states does not agree on some issues, the right of veto can be used to vote down the proposal. As a result, in the field of economic cooperation the SCO already has functioning economic institutions that have been created jointly, such as the SCO Business Council, SCO Interbank Consortium, and Development Fund. Nonetheless, a serious clash of interests and conflicting aims still exist among member states, which might affect the peaceful development of SCO economic co-operation.

4.2. Is China Following the IR Principles of Multilateralism? The SCO Case

The indivisibility principle in the SCO main documents is perfectly projected. China, together with other member states, was able to accept that peace and security in the region was and still is indivisible. Chinese policies, such as peaceful coexistence, good neighborly relations, and the Shanghai spirit doctrine are the foundation of China's multilateralism in Central Asia. China, in addition to

⁶⁰ See: Chen Yurong, 《稳步推进的上海合作组织》 (The Steadily Advancing SCO), ed. by Ma Zhenggang, World Affairs Press, Beijing, 2006, p. 301.

⁶¹ See: Ibid., p. 341.

⁶² See: "Director of EC RATS," SCO RATS website, available at [http://www.ecrats.com/en/director_of_rats/], 20 March, 2012.

Table 3

**Implementation of Multilateralism Principles
in the Activity of the Shanghai
Cooperation Organization**

Main Principles of Multilateralism	Key Aspects	Fulfillment by the SCO
Indivisibility	(1) peace is indivisible in a collective security system	(1) Shanghai Five-Shanghai Spirit ⁶³
	(2) indivisibility can also be applied in the context of economic and social issues	(2) Peaceful Coexistence ⁶⁴
Generalized Principle of Conduct	(1) general regulations that coordinate interstate affairs	(1) Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization ⁶⁵
	(2) equal participation	(2) Decision-Making Procedure and Status of Equality (Arts 2, 16)
	(3) common response despite individual interests	(3) SCO Charter Arts 1, 2, 3: The main goals, principles, and areas of cooperation
Diffuse Reciprocity	(1) benefits in the aggregate and over time	(1) SCO membership shall be open to others (Charter, Art 13)
	(2) Utilitarian: to benefit in the long run and with respect to many issues	(2) To cooperate in the prevention of international conflicts and in their peaceful settlement (Charter, Art 1)
	(3) no significant objectives in the present, but greater gain in the future	(3) To jointly search for solutions to the problems that arise in the 21st century (Charter, Art 1).

⁶³ The Shanghai spirit doctrine stands for mutual trust and mutual benefit, respect for cultural diversity, mutual consultations, equality, and striving for joint development.

⁶⁴ The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual nonaggression; mutual noninterference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; peaceful coexistence (for more detail, see: "China's Peaceful Development," *Information Office of the State Council, the People's Republic of China*, Foreign Languages Press Co. Ltd, Beijing, September 2011).

⁶⁵ See: Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, available at [<http://www.sectsco.org/EN/show.asp?id=69#>], 21 March, 2012.

demonstrating the indivisibility of peace, is also reassuring its neighbors about China's peaceful rise. The only concern of the Central Asian states is the extent to which peace is going to be equally indivisible among all the member states. The rapid influx of Chinese companies to Central Asia has already created doubt among politicians in Central Asia. Since Chinese companies are so much more efficient than post-Soviet companies in the region many local companies are becoming uncompetitive and eventually disappearing from the market. Doubt about China's peacefulness is increasing not due to China's assertive power projection, but due to China's economic expansion in Central Asia. For instance, the only reason for the endless discussions on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railroad project for the last three years is fear and suspicion from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan about China's peacefulness.

The generalized principles of conduct principle can be explained by the main articles of the SCO Charter. The Charter includes various mechanisms of coordination among member states. The Charter also guarantees equal participation of the member states in the decision-making process. From a regulatory perspective, one state cannot dominate another and in order to pass specific proposals states need the agreement of all the other members. The SCO's regulatory aspects are all accepted by the United Nations and the SCO is recognized as an organization that supports peace and stability in the region. So, in general, the SCO as a new multilateral organization has been able to adjust its institutional structures to the main requirement of multilateralism—the generalized principles of conduct.

The diffuse reciprocity principle in the SCO is based on China's long-term policy toward Central Asia and Russia. Based on the region's reality in the future, once the SCO's institutionalization process is complete China can use this Organization for various purposes. It may not be seen now, but China has grand plans for the SCO in the future. At the moment, China is opening up the doors for possible maneuvering in the future. For China, the SCO will accumulate its strength slowly by maximizing China's leverage, not only in Central Asia, but also in Greater Asia. SCO membership and partnership aspects will also increase gradually and China will eventually try to establish strong ties between ASEAN and the SCO. In this case, this cooperation will start with strong economic cooperation and will eventually end up with strong economic and security relations. This will ensure China significant benefits in the long run and with respect to many issues. At present, the Central Asian states are enjoying the SCO's economic and, to some extent, security benefits by receiving credit loans and participating jointly in antiterrorist exercises. China is not losing at present, instead pumping energy resources and freezing the Xinjiang issue are fully covering China's sacrifices in the SCO.

To conclude, Chinese-led SCO multilateralism in Central Asia corresponds to the classical multilateralism principles. Indivisibility, generalized principles of conduct, and diffuse reciprocity principles are all being neatly cultivated. The only delicate part of SCO multilateralism is the crucially innovative proclamation stated in Art 1 of the SCO Charter, "to consolidate multidisciplinary co-operation in the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security and stability in the region and promotion of a new democratic, fair and rational political and economic international order."⁶⁶

Unquestionably, this clause is not referring to the Central Asian states' concerns and more or less matches Russia's global interests, but is something down to earth. However, this is what diffuse reciprocity means for China. Multilateralism in Central Asia does not go beyond regional thinking for Russia and the Central Asian states, but for China it is a provisionally experimental form of interstate relations in which hegemonic long-term ambitions undoubtedly dominate. If China succeeds in mastering Western-classical multilateralism, it is likely to see the SCO type of multilateralism elsewhere in China's neighborhood.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Art 1.

Chapter Five: Findings

Five main findings that are applicable to Central Asia:

1. The understudied *tianxia* system and failure to draw its relevance to contemporary China-Central Asian relations might cause serious miscalculations in adopting state foreign policies toward China.
2. China's multilateralism approach in Central Asia is the product of a cultivated, adjusted, modernized, and transformed *tianxia* tributary interstate relations pattern.
3. By strengthening multilateralism in Central Asia, China will exert every effort to make the Central Asian states acknowledge China's superiority and continue the transformed and adjusted tributary relations under the *tianxia* concept.
4. China will continue making exerted efforts to convince the United States to recognize China's supremacy in Central Asia.
5. Through multilateralism, China will continue killing two birds, even three, with one stone. (Stability in Xinjiang, countering the U.S. in the region, and energy and trade deals.)

Five findings and their implications for the China studies IR discipline:

1. There is a greater need to further study *tianxia* and its influence on Chinese foreign policy preferences.
2. Drawing on the research findings based on China-Central Asia multilateral relations, the author assumes that if China does develop its own non-Western IR Theory, it is highly likely that *tianxia* will be central to it.
3. The recently developed non-Western IR Theory studies and their publications in Asia recommend that Western institutions develop a specific approach that researches China's traditional world view and its possible transformations and adjustments.
4. The same approach needs to be carried out in researching China's interstate relations with its eastern and southern neighbors. After specific and detailed research about *tianxia* China's relations with its eastern, western, northern, and southern neighbors, broader conclusions can be drawn about modern-day and future China's attitude in the international system.
5. Based on the findings, this research also reflects that one of the key indicators of China's rise will be China's multilateral relations with Central Asia. Therefore, the approach taken in this research needs to be further developed and could also be applied to other regions' relations with China.

Conclusion

China's foreign relations with Central Asia are just one aspect of China's foreign policy. Present-day China is engaging with almost all other regions of the world, predominantly in the fields of economic and political relations. By drawing a comparison with the tributary policy and contemporary

foreign policy in Chinese-Central Asian affairs we mostly see continuity in economic relations and security cooperation. Chinese *tianxia* tributary trade and defense policy understanding through *si yi* are still more or less unchanged. We mostly see modification in the field of diplomatic and leadership relations. In this field, Chinese officials have become more innovative and mastered Western-type interstate relations, specifically multilateralism. Nevertheless, China's strategic approach toward Central Asia, the way in which it structures its policies and goals, expectations and interests, and the preferred policy outcomes are all deeply calculated and firmly rooted in traditional *tianxia* thinking.

Today's Chinese multilateralism in Central Asia is well-suited to classical multilateralism requirements. Chinese-led SCO multilateralism neatly corresponds with the classical multilateralism principles of indivisibility, generalized principles of conduct, and diffuse reciprocity. The Chinese multilateralism approach to Central Asia is a provisionally experimental form of interstate relations in which *tianxia*-hegemonic long-term ambitions undoubtedly dominate. If China succeeds in mastering Western-classical multilateralism, the SCO type of multilateralism is likely to be seen elsewhere in China's neighborhood. If China becomes a great power, it is also likely to apply the SCO's main concepts and ideas to the new international order.

Contemporary Chinese policies, such as peaceful rise, peaceful coexistence, good neighborly relations, and the Shanghai spirit doctrine are the fundamental principles of China's multilateralism in Central Asia. The same policies are indisputably connected with the notion of peace under traditional *tianxia* concepts such as defense through tributary trade, *si yi*, and sinocentrism. If China, together with other member states, officially claims the need to establish a "new, democratic, just and rational, political and economic international order" in the main document of the SCO, where will China get this new order? This research has provided an answer to this question from the Chinese-Central Asian perspective. In order to receive a full answer to this question further development of this approach to other regions and a general analysis are very crucial.

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE AZOV-NORTH BLACK SEA SUBREGION: PRESENT STATE AND FUTURE PLANS

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Introduction

The Azov-North Black Sea Subregion is one of the planet's strategically important areas; it is where the interests of different countries meet and intertwine. It is also tied by multiple threads not only to the Azov-Black Sea Region, but also to different regions of Russia and Ukraine.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is pursuing an active policy in the above-mentioned regions. Furthermore, it is primarily interested in the Crimea, which virtually adjoins the Caucasus, the Rostov region, and Donbass (particularly the Lugansk and Donetsk regions); by establishing

contacts with them, the PRC is strengthening its position in the Northeast Black Sea and Azov regions. This kind of policy is in keeping with China's overall geopolitical strategy in the Black Sea basin; below we will look at some of its vectors.

The Crimean Vector

China is showing a clear interest in the Crimea, or to be more precise, in the various branches of the economy of this autonomous republic. The PRC is one of the Crimea's main trade partners. For example, according to the year-end results of 2011, China had the greatest share in the Crimea's total import volume (it accounted for almost 40% of the autonomous republic's total import volume).¹

The energy industry presents one of the most promising spheres of cooperation; the PRC intends to invest in building a combined heat and power plant in the Crimea.² It will be created at the site of the Shchelkino nuclear power plant, the construction of which was abandoned in 1989. The capacity of the power plant is to amount to 700 MW; its estimated cost is \$800 million, and gas will be supplied to it via a special branch from the recently laid Jankoi-Feodosia-Kerch gas pipeline. Furthermore, the gas to be produced on the shelf will also be taken into account.³

At the moment, a drilling platform is being installed at the Turkish port of Giresun, which will be the largest and most efficient facility in the Black Sea. It will be set up on the Crimean coast for producing oil and gas on the Ukrainian sea shelf. Furthermore, enough gas will be produced to meet the consumption needs of every sixth utility enterprise in Ukraine.⁴

As for China, it also intends to provide Ukraine with a drilling platform (costing \$200 million) for producing hydrocarbons on the shelf under a leasing agreement.⁵

China and the Crimea are also planning to cooperate in agriculture. At the end of 2011 in Beijing, the government of the Crimean Peninsula signed a memorandum on cooperation with the Export-Import Bank of China and China National Machinery Industry Complete Engineering Corporation (CMCEC). The memorandum envisages implementing construction projects of agricultural complexes, including a grain elevator, mixed feed plant, refrigeration facilities, a plant for manufacturing bio fuel, bio gas power plants, fruit and vegetable storage, bovine cattle-breeding farms, pig complex-

¹ For more detail, see: *The Crimean Peninsula: Macroeconomic Review for 2011*, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Crimean Peninsula, Simferopol, 2012, p. 11 (in Russian).

² See: "China Will Invest in Building a Power Plant in the Crimea," *TSN*, available in Russian at [<http://ru.tsn.ua/groshi/kitay-dast-deneg-na-stroitelstvo-elektrostancii-v-krymu.html>], 3 September, 2010.

³ See: O. Dorozhovets, "The Chinese Crimea," Industrial Policy Information Agency, available in Russian at [<http://minprom.ua/articles/70547.html>], 24 June, 2011.

⁴ See: G. Vivdenko, V. Osipov, A. Stechenko, "The Crimea is Waiting for a Drilling Platform—The Hope of Domestic Gas Production," *Re:public*, available in Russian at [<http://republic.com.ua/article/25164-V-Krymu-jdut-burovYu-plateformu—nadejdu-otechestvennoy-gazodobychi.html>], 29 April, 2012.

⁵ See: "China Will Allot 700 Million Dollars to Building a Power Plant in the Crimea," *Correspondent.net*, available in Russian at [<http://korrespondent.net/business/economics/1113229-kitaj-vydelit-700-millionov-dollarov-na-stroitelstvo-elektrostancii-v-krymu>], 6 September, 2010.

es, poultry factories, and wholesale markets.⁶ In addition to this, there are plans to restore and develop the irrigation infrastructure and land reclamation network.⁷

China is also interested in Crimean wines. The Hainan Airlines Company (HNA), in particular, intends not only to buy wines for serving to passengers during flights, but also wants to purchase them wholesale. The company plans to supply wines, primarily dry reds and whites, to large companies and state structures in the Hainan Province and other Chinese regions. It is also looking at the possibility of supplying Ukrainian wines to China's large supermarkets.⁸

The PRC also has its sights set on developing cooperation in tourism, anticipating, in particular, that more Chinese tourists will begin visiting the Crimea.⁹ Moreover, Chinese companies in the hotel business are showing an interest in the prospect of developing the peninsula's recreation complex.¹⁰

The development of the transport sphere, particularly sea and air shipments, is a very interesting vector in cooperation between the Crimea and China. In this context, I would like to note the willingness of the Chinese side to take part in reconstruction projects of the Simferopol International Airport and the Yalta Commercial Sea Port, the cost of which amounts to almost \$500 million.¹¹ It should be noted that in terms of passenger travel volume, the Simferopol International Airport ranks second in Ukraine after Kiev's Boryspol airport.¹²

The Crimean authorities intend to go even further: they believe that cooperation with the PRC will make it possible to turn the peninsula into a major transport hub (sea and air). For example, they have made a proposal to Hainan Airlines that entails carrying out joint flights with the local Krymavia company to several Ukrainian and Russian cities, in particular, along the Simferopol-Kiev, Simferopol-Moscow, and in the summer Simferopol-Nizhny Novgorod and Simferopol-St. Petersburg routes.¹³

Moreover, according to the agreement reached between the Crimean government and China National Technical Import & Export Corporation, the latter will build a commercial port on Lake Donuzlav (approximately 30 km from Evpatoria) with investments totaling more than \$1 billion.¹⁴ Building a modern port in the Crimea is a vital strategic project for China, making it possible to ship goods from the PRC to Eastern Europe.¹⁵

⁶ See: "China Exim Bank is Issuing a Loan to Develop Crimean Agriculture," *Obozrevatel*, available in Russian at [<http://finance.obozrevatel.com/business-and-finance/na-razvitiye-selskogo-hozyajstva-kryimu-vyidelyat-kredit-exim-bank-of-china.htm>], 10 November, 2011.

⁷ See: E. Yurchenko, "The Crimea is Waiting for Chinese Investors in Agriculture," Ministry of Economic Development and Commerce of the Crimean Peninsula, available in Russian at [http://www.minek-crimea.gov.ua/news_content.php?skey=%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B9&search_resultsPage=2&cid=2435], 9 November, 2011.

⁸ See: O. Tanasiychuk, "One of China's Largest Airline Companies Will Serve Its Passengers Ukrainian Wines," Ukrinform Information Agency, available in Russian at [<http://photo.ukrinform.ua/rus/current/photo.php?id=425444>], 10 November, 2011.

⁹ See, for example: "China Has Been Waiting for 10 Years to Send Its Tourists to the Crimea," *Novosti Kryma*, available in Russian at [<http://news.allcrimea.net/news/2011/11/10/1320921000/>], 10 November, 2011.

¹⁰ See: "China Will Invest in the Crimea," *Argumenty i fakty Ukrainia*, available in Russian at [<http://www.aif.ua/money/news/40748>], 10 November, 2011.

¹¹ See: "Chinese Investors Have Found 500 Million Dollars for the Simferopol Airport and Yalta Port," E-Krym Information Agency, available in Russian at [http://e-crimea.info/2012/07/03/59983/Kitayskie_investoryi_nashli_500_millionov_dollarov_na_Simferopolskiy_aeroport_i_YAltinskiy_port.shtml], 3 July, 2012.

¹² See: Ibidem.

¹³ See: O. Tanasiychuk, "The Crimea's Investment Breakthrough to China," *Kievsky Telegraf*, available in Russian at [<http://telegrafua.com/social/12550/>], 10 July, 2012.

¹⁴ See: "The Chinese Are Giving \$1 Billion to Build a Port in the Crimea," *Rosbalt*, available in Russian at [<http://www.rosbalt.ru/ukraina/2011/11/09/910481.html>], 9 November, 2011.

¹⁵ See: Ibidem.

In turn, the Crimean authorities think that implementing this project will help to create thousands of jobs, boost development of the building industry, build new modern highways and railroads, develop the trade infrastructure, and draw a multimillion revenue into the budget.¹⁶

It is particularly worth noting that at the end of July-beginning of August 2012, a fleet of Chinese naval ships entered the Black Sea for the first time in history. As part of the fleet commanded by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Navy Northern Fleet Rear Admiral Yan Jiufei, torpedo-boat destroyer Qingdao with guided missiles and Yantai torpedo escort also entered the Sevastopol fairway on the invitation of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense and Naval Command.¹⁷ The Chinese naval ships primarily entered the Black Sea to study its special navigational and geographic features.¹⁸

It is entirely clear that the PRC is conducting an extremely active policy in the Black Sea basin, which it is continuously developing and honing.

The Azov (Rostov-Donbass) Vector

The Rostov Region

The relations between the PRC and the Rostov region, which is particularly interested in establishing cooperation in machine-building and construction, are also developing quite dynamically. These issues were discussed in particular when a delegation from the region visited China at the end of February 2008. During the visit, Ivan Stanislavov (first deputy governor of the Rostov region) said that the Rostov region was one of the largest machine-building centers in Russia and although the products manufactured by its plants were extremely competitive in the West, they were not readily available in the Chinese market, so cooperation should be developed in that vector.¹⁹

With this in mind, the possibility was examined of building an automobile complex with China's Chery Company in the Rostov region. Cooperation in construction, studying Chinese experience and technology, and involving construction companies and workers from the PRC in building various facilities in the Rostov region were also discussed.²⁰

China's interest in the Rostov region is growing with each passing year. In May 2012, a delegation of PRC businessmen arrived in the region. Building kindergartens, a sugar refinery, and a specialized center of Chinese commodities were among the possible vectors of cooperation.²¹ The Chinese businessmen noted the region's high investment appeal and expressed the desire to take part in implementing several projects.²²

¹⁶ See: "China Will Allot \$1 Billion to a New Port in the Crimea," LB.ua, available in Russian at [http://economics.lb.ua/state/2011/11/10/123265_kitay_videlit_1_mlrd_na_novy.html], 10 November, 2011.

¹⁷ See, for example: "A Fleet of Chinese Naval Combat Ships Enters the Black Sea," ITAR-TASS, available in Russian at [<http://www.itar-tass.com/c96/484829.html>], 31 July, 2012.

¹⁸ See: Ibidem.

¹⁹ See: "The Rostov Region of the Russian Federation Wants to Develop Economic Ties with China," *Renmin ribao*, available in Russian at [<http://russian.people.com.cn/31518/6358190.html>], 21 February, 2008.

²⁰ See: Ibidem.

²¹ See: "The Rostov Region Will Expand Cooperation with China," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, [<http://www.rg.ru/2012/05/14/reg-uko/china-anons.html>], 14 May, 2012.

²² See: "Chinese Investors Are Coming to the Don," Official portal of the Government of the Rostov Region, available in Russian at [<http://www.donland.ru/EventScheduler/EventSchedulerViewPost.aspx?pageid=92218&ItemID=35783&mid=83793>], 12 May, 2012.

One of the successful joint projects between the Rostov region and the PRC envisages cooperation between the Taganrog Automotive Plant (TagAZ) and the Chery Company. In 2010, TagAZ started assembling its own Vortex Corda and Vortex Tingo models, both of which are modifications of cars manufactured by Chery.²³

In the summer of 2011, TagAZ representatives said that they intended to put a new car, TAGAZ C10, on the market manufactured jointly with China's Jianghuai Automobile Co Ltd, based on JAC A138 Tojoy, presented in 2008 in the PRC.²⁴

The Rostov region and China are also cooperating at the city and district levels. In this respect, it is particularly worth noting the agreement on establishing twin-city relations between Rostov-on-Don and Xiameng (the Fujian Province), as well as between Taganrog and Jingying (the Shandong Province).²⁵ Taganrog will primarily develop economic cooperation with China in the production sphere.²⁶

Humanitarian cooperation between the Rostov region and the PRC is also of particular interest; the matter particularly concerns education and culture. For example, there are plans to establish a Confucius Institute in the region. This question was discussed when an official delegation from the Qufu State Pedagogical University headed by its president visited Taganrog at the end of June 2010. The sides examined the prospects for creating a cultural and educational Confucius center in Taganrog and an Anton Chekhov Scientific and Cultural Center in Jingying.²⁷

There are also plans to open a Confucius Institute in Rostov-on-Don (at the Rostov State Construction University).²⁸

The establishment of two Confucius Institutes will not only help to strengthen cooperation between the Rostov region and China, but will also play an important positive role in developing humanitarian ties between China and the Northern Caucasus as a whole.

The development of ties between the PRC and the Rostov region is also having an impact on the dynamics of bilateral foreign trade. According to the year-end results of 2008, the foreign trade turnover between the region and China amounted to \$388 million, increasing by \$164 million compared to 2007.²⁹ In 2011, the trade turnover between China and the Rostov region amounted to \$712 million. So, in three years, the trade turnover volume increased more than 1.8-fold. According to this index, China ranked fourth among the region's trade partners.³⁰ Furthermore, it ranked second in terms of import, accounting for 13.7% of the total import volume. In terms of this index, the PRC yielded only to Ukraine.³¹

²³ See: "TagAZ Renames Another Two Chinese Models," *PBK Daily*, available in Russian at [<http://www.rbcdaily.ru/2010/10/14/industry/519046>], 14 October, 2010.

²⁴ See: "China's JAC A138 Tojoy Will Be Assembled in Taganrog, It Will Cost No More Than \$12,500," *Gazeta.Ru*, available in Russian at [http://www.gazeta.ru/auto/news/2011/06/07/n_1873533.shtml], 7 June, 2011.

²⁵ See: "On Chinese Culture Minister's Visit to the Rostov Region," Representative Office of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rostov-on-Don, available in Russian at [http://www.rostov.mid.ru/doc/vizit_kitai.htm], 10 May, 2009.

²⁶ See: "Cooperation with China," *Nashe vremia*, available in Russian at [<http://www.ngvazeta.ru/business/2594.html>], 20 August, 2010.

²⁷ See: "A Delegation from China Visits Taganrog," *Studencheskaia pravda*, available at [<http://www.spravda.ru/news/10235.html>], 17 July, 2010.

²⁸ See: "Visit of a Chinese Delegation," Anton Chekhov Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute, available in Russian at [<http://www.tgpi.ru/news/01-07-2010/1>], 1 July, 2010.

²⁹ See: "Economic Cooperation Between the Rostov Region and the People's Republic of China in 2008," Official portal of the Government of the Rostov Region, available in Russian at [<http://www.donland.ru/Default.aspx?pageid=88491&mid=80407&ItemID=76857>], 28 April, 2009.

³⁰ See: "Foreign Cooperation of the Rostov Region," Official portal of the Government of the Rostov Region, available in Russian at [<http://www.donland.ru/Default.aspx?pageid=76521>], 11 March, 2012.

³¹ See: "Foreign Trade Statistics of the Rostov Region for 2011," Southern Customs Administration, available in Russian at [http://yutu.customs.ru/images/stories/2012-03-13-STATISTIKA_ROST_OBL_2011-_.doc], 14 March, 2012.

It is interesting that the Rostov region has one of the largest communities of Chinese migrants in the south of Russia. It is located in the region's administrative center, to be more precise, in one of the suburban micro regions known as Temernik.³² However, even though it is mainly populated by Chinese merchants, it is still too early to call it a Chinatown.

Donbass

Developing cooperation with the Rostov region is making it possible for the PRC to raise its relations with adjacent regions of Ukraine to a new qualitative level; the Euro-region of Donbass is of particular interest for the Chinese side. Possible strengthening of China's relations with this Euro-region in the future could help socioeconomic development of the Rostov (RF) and Lugansk and Donetsk regions (Ukraine) and development of cooperation between them in environmental protection, as well as in science, education, culture, and sports.³³

The Ukrainian side is also very interested in developing relations with the PRC; Kiev regards the PRC as one of its most strategically important partners, particularly for Donbass.³⁴

It should be noted that this interest is not accidental; Ukraine understands that establishing relations with the PRC will boost development of its own energy industry. As for Donbass, it can play a very significant role in raising the country's level of energy security. The sides have already taken several important steps in this direction. For example, in 2010, a memorandum was signed between the Chinese State Bank of Development and the Ukrainian Ministry of the Coal Industry. According to this document, more than \$1 billion will be allotted to the reconstruction of the Ukrainian power industry.³⁵

Several pilot projects have already been launched within the framework of this agreement; one of them envisages re-equipping and reorganizing three Ukrainian mines for a total of \$120 million (over 15-20 years). The PRC has also expressed its willingness to purchase Ukrainian coal.³⁶ For example, \$85 million in Chinese investments will go to the Melnikov mine in Lisichansk (the Lugansk region), in particular to assist its technical re-equipping and refurbishing with material (Ukrainian) and equipment (Ukrainian and Chinese). The Melnikov mine is to assimilate these funds within two years and return the investments in 2020.³⁷

Development of cooperation in the power industry was boosted by an agreement on investing \$3.6 billion in the construction of two coal gasification plants and the transfer of Ukrainian district heating companies to coal, signed in 2012 between the Ukrainian Ministry of the Energy Industry and

³² For more detail, see: A. Krepkiy, "Chinese Migration to the Rostov Region: A National Security Threat or Contemporary Globalization Trend?" Association of Military Political Scientists, available in Russian at [www.milpol.ru/sgs/krepkii.doc], 9 January, 2012.

³³ For more detail on this organization, see, for example: "The Donbass Euro-Region," The Donbass Euro-Region Official Internet Resource, available in Russian at [http://euroregion-donbass.ru/about.php], 15 July, 2012.

³⁴ See: N. Pilipenko, "Chinese Combines for Donbass Coal," Newspaper *Zhizn*, printed organ of the Donetsk Regional Council and Regional State Administration, available in Russian at [http://lifedon.com.ua/home/1545-kitayskie-kombayny-dlya-ugly-a-donbassa.html], 12 July, 2012.

³⁵ See: Ibidem.

³⁶ See: "China Is Giving \$120 Million to Re-Equip Three Mines in Ukraine," Environmental Portal "Climate and the Weather," available in Russian at [http://www.carnivorousplant.info/klimat/28294-kitaj-daet-120-mln.-na-pereosnashhenie-trekh-shaxt-ukrainy.html], 12 July, 2012.

³⁷ See: "China Will Sponsor Modernization of a Mine in the Lugansk Region," LB.ua, available in Russian at [http://economics.lb.ua/trades/2012/02/21/137833_kitay_prosponsiruet_modernizatsiyu.html], 21 February, 2012.

the Chinese State Bank of Development.³⁸ The Ukrainian side believes that this will cut down on the purchase of natural gas by 11-12 billion cubic meters and so raise the level of the country's energy independence.

It should be noted that the PRC is not only developing relations with Donbass in the energy industry, but in other spheres too. China is placing particular emphasis on establishing ties with the Lugansk region, which has great economic potential and is one of the five most developed industrial and economic regions of Ukraine. The city of Lugansk is the largest industrial center in the east of Ukraine; it is the most important transport hub, through which rail, road, and air routes pass from the west and the east of the country to the northern, central, and southern regions of Russia.³⁹

China is one of the main foreign trade partners of the Lugansk region. The PRC accounted for 2.1% of its import in the foreign trade turnover structure of the region in 2011 (according to this index China ranked fourth), which amounted to more than \$100 million.⁴⁰

The Lugansk region and the PRC are also cooperating in the humanitarian sphere, particularly in education and science, where real achievements are obvious. In this context, it should be mentioned that the first Confucius Institute in Ukraine functions at the Taras Shevchenko Lugansk National University⁴¹; the Chinese language and culture are studied there.

In turn, the Taras Shevchenko Lugansk National University is actively cooperating with a whole number of Chinese educational institutions, including the International Professional College (Shanxi Province), Yongching State University, Guangdong Scientific Technical College, Daqing Pedagogical University, Chengjiang Tourist College, Weifang Professional College, Shangxi College of Economics and Business, Zhejiang Tourist Institute, Ji Shou University, Chong Zhou University, and so on.⁴² Professors, postgraduate students, candidates for doctor's degrees, and students of the university take internships and carry out scientific research at the leading educational institutions of China, as well as take active part in different research projects (the Chinese Ministry of Science helps to fund them). Chinese citizens are also studying at Lugansk University.⁴³

One of the productive results of cooperation between the Lugansk region and the PRC in the humanitarian sphere was the decision to open a Ukrainian scientific center at Zhejiang University. A library and museum will also be established there.⁴⁴ The purpose of the center's activity, the researchers at which will be scientists from both countries, is to study the Ukrainian economy and culture.

Mention should be made of China's active cooperation with the Donetsk region. According to the results of 2011, China was the fourth largest partner of the Donetsk region in terms of import. It

³⁸ For more detail, see: O. Gavriš, D. Belikov, "China Provides Coal. The PRC Will Help Ukraine to Get Rid of its Gas Dependence," *Kommersant Ukraina*, No. 110, 2012, available at [<http://kommersant.ua/doc/1981624?isSearch=True>], 16 July, 2012.

³⁹ For more detail about this region, see: "Brief Survey of the Economy of the Lugansk Region," Regional Agency of Investment Assistance of Ukraine, available in Russian at [<http://ripa.org.ua/index.php?route=product/category&path=35>], 2 August, 2012.

⁴⁰ See: *Draft of the Socioeconomic Development Strategy of the Donbass Euro-Region Until 2020*, Secretariat of the Donbass Euro-Region, Rostov-on-Don, Donetsk, Lugansk, 2012, p. 36.

⁴¹ See: "The Confucius Institute in Lugansk is a Unique Opportunity to Learn the Chinese Language and Get to Know the Culture of the World's Oldest Civilization," Taras Shevchenko Lugansk National University, available in Russian at [<http://www.luguniv.edu.ua/?z1=b,115>], 7 March, 2008.

⁴² See: "International Activity/Cooperation," Taras Shevchenko Lugansk National University, available in Russian at [<http://www.luguniv.edu.ua/?z1=b,78>], 10 February, 2011.

⁴³ See: *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ See: "A New Scientific Center for Studying Ukraine Will Appear in the PRC," Taras Shevchenko Lugansk National University, available at [<http://www.luguniv.edu.ua/?z1=b,2598>], 22 April, 2011.

accounted for 5% of the total import volume of the region.⁴⁵ It is very likely that China's share will gradually increase in the foreign trade balance of the Donetsk region. This is shown by the steps being taken by both sides to expand and intensify bilateral cooperation. For example, in 2010 an agreement was reached on cooperation between the Donetsk region and the Guangdong Province, which is one of the most economically developed regions of China.⁴⁶

The Donetsk region is also developing relations with other Chinese provinces. In 2011, representatives of the Donetsk region visited China and acquainted themselves with the work of the free economic zones in Shanghai and Shenzhen; several business meetings were held in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and other cities.⁴⁷ The Donetsk region, which hopes to implement 129 projects totaling \$6.7 billion, has also invited Chinese investors to participate.⁴⁸ The region is particularly interested in attracting Chinese investments in tech parks, as well as in the development of advanced scientific inventions.

China intends to implement several joint programs with the Rostov region and Donbass. This particularly concerns a large-scale project (in which the Rostov, Lugansk, and Donetsk regions are involved) for building roads that stretch across almost the whole of Ukraine and reach the Rostov region and Volgograd, then go on to China.⁴⁹

Conclusion

The PRC is conducting a very active policy in the Azov-North Black Sea Subregion. It stands to reason that establishing ties with the Caucasus, Crimea, and Donbass is creating favorable prospects for China to expand and intensify mutually advantageous cooperation, whereby not only in the Azov-North Black Sea Subregion, but also throughout the Black Sea basin. In this respect, Chinese investments in the port infrastructure of essentially all the countries of the Black Sea basin are of vital importance.

For example, Chinese investors are interested in the Bulgarian port of Varna and want to participate in its administration under a concession agreement. According to Chinese Ambassador to Bulgaria Guo Yezhou, the question of the Varna port is always on the agenda of meetings between the leaders of the two countries.⁵⁰

Great importance is given to China's cooperation with the Rumanian authorities; this could give them a good opportunity to develop the port of Constanța and turn it into a regional trade center.⁵¹

⁴⁵ See: "Зовнішньоекономічна діяльність," Донецька обласна державна адміністрація, available at [<http://www.donoda.gov.ua/main/ua/2175.htm>], 10 August, 2012.

⁴⁶ See: V. Avdeenko, "The Donetsk Region Will Cooperate with China's Guangdong Province," *RIA Novosti*, available in Russian at [<http://rian.com.ua/economy/20100715/78451886.html>], 15 July, 2010.

⁴⁷ See: "The Donetsk Region Sends its Missionaries to China," *Novosti Donbassa*, available in Russian at [<http://novosti.dn.ua/details/157117/>], 21 June, 2011.

⁴⁸ See: "The Donetsk Region Wants an Invasion of Chinese Dollars. It Is Ready to Assimilate Almost 7 Billion," *Ostrov*, available in Russian at [<http://www.ostro.org/donetsk/economics/news/206370/>], 1 July, 2011.

⁴⁹ See: "Russian-Ukrainian Donbass Will Build a Road to China," *Rosbalt*, available in Russian at [<http://www.rosbalt.ru/federal/2010/10/29/785355.html>], 29 October, 2010.

⁵⁰ See, for example: "China Interested in Concession of Bulgarian Black Sea Port Varna," Novinite Sofia News Agency, available at [http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=138813], 25 April, 2012.

⁵¹ See: L. Liam, "Region's Infrastructure to Get USD 10 bln Chinese Boost, Romania's Constanța Port Could Be Import Hub," *Romania-Insider*, available at [<http://www罗马尼-Insider.com/regions-infrastructure-to-get-usd-10-billion-chinese-boost-romania-constanta-port-could-be-import-hub/56270/>], 27 April, 2012.

The PRC does not exclude the possibility of implementing investment programs in Turkish ports.⁵² Cooperation is developing in port infrastructure between Batumi and the ports of Guangdong.⁵³

It is worth noting that several European Parliament deputies are also showing an interest in involving the PRC in the development of the European Black Sea ports. For example, Béla Glattfelder (a deputy from Hungary) said that China should invest in the port infrastructure of the Black and Mediterranean seas in order to boost trade with Central and Eastern Europe. He also noted the importance of investing in the port infrastructure of Rumania, Croatia, and Slovenia.⁵⁴

The Chinese side has also been focusing its attention on the Odessa port.⁵⁵ Incidentally, there is quite a large Chinese community in Odessa. It is also interesting that in July 2012, an electronic version of the regional council newspaper *Odesskie izvestia* was launched, part of the circulation of which came out in Chinese. A presentation of the Chinese-language electronic version of the newspaper was held at the Odessa Regional Council. It is called upon to become a unique information portal for the members of the Chinese community who want to find out as much as possible about life in the region.⁵⁶

Chinese representatives are also talking about the importance of the Black Sea Region. For example, according to Mo Wenhe, who is vice president of China Harbor Engineering,⁵⁷ one of the China's largest international corporations, the Black Sea regions are of immense geographic importance. In his words, they offer enormous opportunities for building ports and expanding Chinese business in the region.⁵⁸ It is obvious that Beijing will continue to expand and intensify its ties with the countries of the region. In this context, establishing stable relations with the Azov-North Black Sea Subregion is especially important for the PRC.

The importance of this region is defined both by its powerful economic potential and the geopolitical imperatives. By intensifying economic ties with this region, Beijing, in addition to everything else, is combating the penetration into China of such ideologies as Islamic fundamentalism and pan-Turkism. Furthermore, the PRC is placing its main stakes on improving the socioeconomic situation in the region's constituencies.

It should also be noted that China's stronger position in the Azov-North Black Sea Subregion is also beneficial to Russia; due to its geographic distance from China, Moscow does not see any geopolitical danger in this.

⁵² See: "Chinese Firms Seek Investment in Turkey," *Hürriyet Daily News*, available at [<http://www.hurriyedailynews.com/chinese-firms-seek-investment-in-turkey.aspx?pageID=238&nID=18306&NewsCatID=345>], 13 April, 2012.

⁵³ See: "Friendly Relations between Guangdong Province, China, and Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Georgia," Government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, available at [<http://www.ajara.gov.ge/eng/index.php?page=show&id=234>], 6 August, 2011.

⁵⁴ See: Fu Jing, "Black Sea Ports Offer Much Promise," *China Daily*, available at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011weneurope/2011-06/25/content_12774677.htm], 25 June, 2011.

⁵⁵ See, for example: "Ministry of Transport and Communications: China Intends to Draw its Container Lines into the Odessa Port and Is Interested in Building New Terminal Complexes," Cabinet of Ministers of the Ukraine, available in Russian at [http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/ru/publish/article?art_id=243683833&cat_id=244314008], 28 September, 2010; "The Odessa Sea Port Plans to Attract Chinese to Install Helium Collectors," *Korporativnye Novosti*, available at [<http://www.corpnews.com.ua/content/news/7/5006/>], 16 July, 2012.

⁵⁶ See: "Newspaper of the Odessa Regional Council Comes out in Chinese For the First Time," IA UNIAN, available in Russian at [<http://www.unian.net/news/513547-gazeta-odesskogo-oblsoveta-vpervyyie-vyishla-na-kitayskom-yazyike.html>], 7 July, 2012 (see also the Chinese version of the newspaper *Odesskie izvestia*, available in Russian at [<http://cn.new.izvestiya.odessa.ua/>]).

⁵⁷ For more on this company, see: Official website of China Harbor Engineering Company, available at [<http://www.chec.bj.cn/tabid/67/Default.aspx>], 9 August, 2012.

⁵⁸ See: Fu Jing, op. cit.

On the whole, intensifying ties with China is having a positive effect on the socioeconomic situation in the region and making it possible to successfully fight extremism.

So the PRC is unlikely to encounter geopolitical opposition from the key players in the Azov-North Black Sea Subregion, which will help to expand and intensify its ties with this region even more.

TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS: ECHOES OF THE ARAB SPRING

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Introduction

In recent years, Central Asia and the Caucasus have traditionally been a priority of Turkey's foreign policy. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Ankara has been pursuing an active campaign aimed at establishing close relations with the Turkic republics in this region. However, despite the loud statements and assorted declarations about the development of friendly relations with fraternal peoples, Turkey has not made any significant progress in this vector (apart from strengthening its relations with Azerbaijan).

Furthermore, when the Arab Spring uprisings began at the end of 2010-beginning of 2011, Turkey's official authorities were accused, both inside and outside the country, of conducting a

one-dimensional foreign policy oriented only toward the Arab world. The opposition also joined these accusations, saying that the ruling Justice and Development Party was ignoring the Central Asian vector of foreign policy.

So two questions arise. First, how can the Arab Spring demonstrations have an effect on the development of Turkey's relations with the Central Asian and Caucasian countries? And second, what will Ankara's foreign policy be in the region in the next few years?

The author primarily focuses on Turkey's relations with the region's Turkic republics—Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan; other countries remain beyond the scope of this study.

Central Asia and the Caucasus in Ankara's Foreign Policy Priorities

At present, Turkey's foreign policy course is being set by the triumvirate of leaders from the ruling Justice and Development Party—Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President Abdullah Gül, and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. The latter, a professor and well-known academic in international relations, is the ideologue of Turkey's current foreign policy. It was he who elaborated the concept of "strategic depth," the main idea of which boils down to increasing Turkey's influence on the former Ottoman world and turning the country into a regional super power. According to analysts, this policy shows that Turkey is no longer giving preference to the West or the East; it is making its own debut on the stage.¹

Turkey embarked on its new foreign policy course in 2009 when the country gradually began moving away from the European integration policy and paying more attention to its own region. According to Ahmet Davutoğlu's concept, the new policy was to include such vectors as improving relations with immediate neighbors, primarily with Syria and Iran (the "zero problems with neighbors" policy), developing maximum cooperation with the Islamic countries of the Middle East (the "wise country" policy), and moving toward confrontation with Israel; all of this was supposed to promote a rise in Turkey's authority in the Islamic world.

In keeping with the new course, the Turkish Foreign Ministry mainly concentrated on the Middle East; the Central Asian region was also seen as one of the priority targets.

The election platform of the Justice and Development Party adopted in 2011 defined the main vectors in Turkey's political and socioeconomic development until 2023. It should be noted that it also gave significant attention to developing relations with the Turkic states of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

This document envisaged that the Justice and Development Party's policy toward the Turkic republics would be aimed at cancelling visa regimes, intensifying the political dialog, developing commercial ties, and supporting the activity of nongovernmental organizations. Particular attention would go to developing education and culture; Manas University in Kyrgyzstan and Hoja Ahmed Yasawi University in Kazakhstan established with Turkey's assistance are noteworthy cooperation projects in these areas. There were also plans to extend a new format of cooperation to the Turkic republics involving the establishment of High-Level Strategic Cooperation Councils.

However, the Arab Spring events changed the initial plans of the Turkish leadership. The urgency of the situation in the Arab world, where spheres of influence were being redrawn, compelled Turkey to focus on its own interests in the Middle East and relegate other regions into the background.

Impact of the Arab Spring Events on the Development of Turkey's Relations with the Turkic Republics

For many years now, Turkey has been trying to advance its own model of political structure of an Islamic state, which analysts call liberal Islamic democracy. However, after the Arab Spring demon-

¹ See: "Türkiye: Avrasiyanın yeni büyük gücü," *Newtimes*, 17 July, 2012, available at [<http://newtimes.az/print-204.html>].

strations, Ankara acquired a real chance to increase its influence on the region and particularly on the new young Islamic democracies that emerged there. The Turkish leadership was convinced that establishing political models and institutions similar to the Turkish in the Arab Spring countries would help to raise Ankara's influence on the Middle East.

Judging by foresaid, it would seem that Turkey could count on acquiring a similar chance in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where most of the countries also have authoritative regimes. However, the Turkish leadership came across problems in this area.

According to American researcher Richard Weitz, "one of the few points of division among Turkish government officials and analysts is their competing views regarding future political developments in Central Asia.

"One group believes that Central Asia is ripe for deep political change. They see the region as the last bastion of one-party authoritarian rule and consider the prospects for its near-term democratization to be high. This first group would also welcome a phenomenon like the Arab Spring in the region since they consider the absence of functioning democracies in most Central Asian countries a significant problem for Turkish entities. In addition, the constraints on most individuals' ability to access information in authoritarian regimes as well as the legal arbitrariness common in non-democracies present major obstacles to domestic and foreign entrepreneurs seeking to run profitable businesses in these countries.

"But another group of Turkish officials consider the prospects for Central Asia's near-term democratization to be low because they are more optimistic about these regimes' ability to withstand the kind of political chaos sweeping through the Arab world. They argue that it would take decades for these countries, whose leaders still consist of people who have overwhelmingly developed their political views during the Soviet period, to abandon their Soviet mentality and adopt Western liberal values. In the view of these Turkish analysts and officials, another constraint on political change in Central Asia is the geographic isolation of these states from other democratic countries as well as their history of authoritarian rule. They argue that Central Asia's democratization would entail a lengthy process requiring the further political and economic evolution of these countries. Conversely, this second group of Turkish officials fears that efforts to rush Central Asia's democratization could easily backfire and lead their rulers to adopt even more repressive domestic policies.

"It is worth noting that at present, this second group of Turkish officials seems to have greater influence in Ankara,"² since the solution to Central Asia's political future they espouse looks more pragmatic and corresponds to current reality. By striving to promote democratization and Islamization of the region, Turkey would most likely lose more than it gained.

Central Asia today has once of the most repressive political systems in the world, and it is unlikely that any revolutions will happen there. Religion could be a potential starting place for building a civil society in the region's countries, but the authorities keep it under tight control. For example, in Uzbekistan, Islamists were repressed from essentially the outset. The governments of other countries also gradually repressed the Islamists, accusing them of participating in the civil war in Tajikistan. Consequently, today there is no organized Islamic movement in the CA countries along the lines of the Muslim Brotherhood, for example.³

In this situation, the moderate Islamic position of the Turkish leadership, which it used as a trump card in its relations with the Arab countries and Turkic republics of the region, could play a negative role. The thing is that even the moderate Islamism is seen by the existing regimes as a direct threat. This is confirmed by the events in Uzbekistan that occurred in 2011-2012. The authorities of this country,

² R. Weitz, "Turkish Foreign Policy in Evolution," *Turkey Analyst*, Vol. 4, No. 21, 7 November, 2011.

³ See: S. Radnitz, "Waiting for Spring," *Foreign Policy*, 17 February, 2012.

fearing that Turkey's stronger cultural and political influence might encourage an increase in religious and revolutionary moods in society, unleashed an anti-Turkish campaign. Within the span of two years, 54 prominent Turkish businessmen were arrested in the country and sentenced to 1 to 3 years in prison. In addition, at least 50 Turkish companies operating in the republic were closed down. Examples are the Turkuz supermarket chain, the Mir Store shopping mall, and several enterprises of the light industry. At the end of February 2012, Turkish television programs were taken off the air and compulsory closedown of educational institutions financed by Turkey began.⁴

Despite the displeasure voiced by several media, the Turkish leadership made no response to these incidents. However, in October 2011, the Turkish parliament did not include Uzbekistan on the list of countries with which it planned to create interparliamentary committees (the other four Central Asian republics were on this list).

There are no active anti-Turkish campaigns in the other Central Asian republics; nevertheless, their authorities continue to intensify their repressive political systems and, should a threat arise, might begin acting along the lines of Uzbekistan.

A Turkic Union: To Be or Not To Be?

Ever since the Soviet Union collapsed, Turkey has been actively supporting the idea of Turkic unity. It sees itself as the center of the Turkic world and a model for the young Central Asian and Caucasian republics. It even established a ministry responsible for relations with kindred states. But these far-reaching plans were not realized, partially because the Turkish foreign policy machine proved incapable of introducing systematic activity (economic and political) in the region.

The idea of Turkic unity was revived in 2008-2009. During these years, with Turkey's active participation, several new interstate structures of Turkic unity appeared, among which the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking States and the Turkic Council can be named.

The Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking States was established in 2008 in Istanbul with the participation of the parliamentary speakers of four countries—Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. The headquarters of the organization's secretariat is located in Baku.

In September 2009, the first plenary session of the Assembly was held in Baku. At the second plenary session held in April 2011 in Astana, chairmanship was passed from Azerbaijan to Kazakhstan. The third plenary session of the Assembly was held in June 2012 in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan).

The history of the Turkic Council goes back to the first sitting of the heads of the Turkic republics held in 1992 in Ankara. Since then similar meetings have been held more or less regularly for 18 years.

In September 2010, the 10th summit of the heads of the Turkic-speaking states was held in Istanbul. The Turkic Business Council with its headquarters in Istanbul was founded at the summit. It was decided that the Council's secretary general would be elected for a three-year term, and the Council itself would have five subdivisions: the Council of Presidents, the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Committee of Administration Heads, the Committee of Experts, and the Secretariat.⁵ All the Turkic states, apart from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, became members of the Council.

⁴ See: "Uzbekistan: Tashkent Takes Hardline Approach on Containing Turkish Soft Power," *EurasiaNet.org*, 3 April, 2012.

⁵ See: "Turkey Set to Head New Secretariat to Develop Ties with Central Asia," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 9 June, 2010.

In 2011, the first summit of the member countries of the Turkic Business Council was held in Astana. The second summit was held in August 2012 in the Kyrgyzstan capital of Bishkek. Four of the six Turkic-speaking countries participated in it; Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan still showed no desire to join the organization.

At the last summit, internal issues were decided. A decision was also made to establish a Turkic academy (in Astana) and a Turkic Cultural Heritage Foundation (in Baku).

On the whole, when summing up the activity of the Turkic organizations, it can be noted that things did not go as far as resolving important political and economic issues and no real results of their activity (apart from in the cultural sphere) are yet to be seen. The Council may prove to be lucrative if it expands the range of problems it examines, but it cannot yet be described as an organization on the same level as the League of Arab States or the EU.

The Achilles' heel of such organizations is that their activity is limited to the cultural sphere, and international practice shows that such associations are not very effective. Moreover, they encounter problems even in the cultural sphere. For example, a very urgent but still unresolved problem is creating a common alphabet for the Turkic-speaking countries. It is raised at every summit, but so far without results.

Interstate tension is also causing difficulties with Turkic integration. At present, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not interested in Turkic integration. Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are also in disagreement over the controversial sections of the Caspian Sea. Moreover, as mentioned above, there are religious problems between Turkey and Uzbekistan.

All of the above factors are complicating the prospects for Turkic integration. So far the Turkic Business Council does not have much more to show for itself than a series of vociferous declarations. At the organization's third Assembly, its Secretary General Halil Akıncı said that in the future there were plans to carry out a unified foreign policy of the Turkic-speaking countries. Keeping in mind the countries' ambitions and their different interests on the international arena, this statement looks highly dubious.

Economic Issues— Priority of Developing Bilateral Relations

The obstacles constantly arising on the path to political integration of the Turkic states have forced Turkey to pay more attention to resolving economic issues and overcoming ongoing urgent problems. For example, in order to help strengthen the contacts among countries, Ankara has unilaterally cancelled the visa regime for citizens of all the Turkic-speaking states. Turkey has also begun using a new format of cooperation with respect to the Turkic republics that envisages establishing High-Level Strategic Cooperation Councils (in certain countries).

In October 2011, the first sitting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council with Azerbaijan was held. In May 2012, during Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Kazakhstan, a joint statement was signed on establishing a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Turkish Republic. The first sitting of the new Council was held in October 2012 in Ankara.

Turkey's relations with its strategic partner Azerbaijan are developing the most successfully. The close cultural and economic proximity of these states at one time prompted former Azerbaijan president Heydar Aliyev to put forward the slogan "One nation—two states."⁶

⁶ M. Aydin, "Turkey's Caucasus Policy," *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, No. 23, May 2010, p. 189.

Turkey is Azerbaijan's largest trade partner and investor in non-energy spheres. As of today, such strategic facilities as the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline have already been implemented; steps are being taken to join up the railroad systems of both countries. At the end of December 2011, Azerbaijan and Turkey signed a memorandum on implementing a new Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline project (TANAP), which aroused a great public response. If constructed, it will transport gas from the second stage of Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz gas field.

In September 2012, at the second High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council meeting, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, when summing up the achievements of bilateral relations development, stated that whereas 10 years ago the foreign trade volume between the two countries amounted to \$1 billion, today it is equal to \$3.5 billion. Over the last 7 months, the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Turkey reached \$2.7 billion.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan also said: "If we exert a little effort, we will reach the \$5 billion mark planned for 2015 by the end of the year. After 2020, we will raise trade turnover to the \$20 billion mark."⁷

So, there is every reason to talk about positive trends in the development of relations between these two countries, and the disputes that periodically arise between them will unlikely become a serious obstacle on the path to mutual understanding.

Turkey's most important economic trade partner on the other side of the Caspian is Kazakhstan; in 2011, the trade turnover between these countries topped the \$3.3 billion mark. The total volume of Turkish investments in Kazakhstan amounts to around \$2 billion; they are made in the oil, food, and chemical-pharmaceutical sphere, as well as in the hotel business, banking, and construction. The total cost of the construction projects carried out by Turkish contractors amounted to \$15 billion.⁸

During the official visit of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Kazakhstan in May 2012, a joint statement was signed on establishing a Kazakh-Turkish High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. At a business forum held during this visit, 13 agreements totaling more than \$1 billion were signed.

After a long period of hostility and disagreements, a thaw has also begun in Turkey's relations with Turkmenistan. In 2012, the Turkmen president has made two official visits to Turkey (in February-March and in August of this year). An increase in reciprocal trade turnover between the two countries has been designated, which in 2011 rose by 25% compared to 2010.

Today more than 600 Turkish companies operate in Turkmenistan, which have already implemented and continue to implement several projects in the textile industry and construction (housing and medical and cultural centers). Turkish enterprises are developing more than 1,270 investment projects in Turkmenistan; more than \$15 billion were spent on 1,200 of them, 26 cost almost 2 billion euro, and another 26 cost more than 56 billion manat.

More than 100 different agreements entered at the interstate, intergovernmental, and interdepartmental levels form the legislative framework of Turkmen-Turkish partnership. The possibility is also being examined of Turkey's participation in modernizing the sea port in Turkmenbashi and developing the tourist zone of Avaza on the Caspian coast, as well as its participation in different energy projects.

Turkey is also developing economic trade relations with Kyrgyzstan (although not as intensively as with the above-mentioned countries). As of today, more than 50 economic agreements have been entered. Turkey, which is the second largest investor in Kyrgyzstan, has invested \$450 million in it and issued financial aid in the form of grants and low-interest loans (\$20 million in 2001 and \$106 million in 2012), as well as waived the country's debt to Exim Bank.

⁷ Trend, 12 September, 2012.

⁸ See: Ekspress K, No. 232 (17347), 14 December, 2011.

A Turkish international cooperation agency (TİKA) actively operates in the country. The total amount of resources TİKA has allotted Kyrgyzstan (since the agency was established) amounts to more than \$30 million.⁹

As for Uzbekistan, the policy it is pursuing aimed at aggravating relations with Turkey could be detrimental for the country's economy in the future. Turkish companies occupy a significant place in different branches of Uzbek industry, including textile, food, pharmaceutical, the manufacture of plastics, construction, and the hotel business. The total trade turnover between the countries, which showed an increase from \$1 billion in 2010 to \$1.3 billion in 2011, began to drop in 2012. For example, during the first 8 months of 2012, it amounted to \$846 billion, compared to \$867 billion in 2011.¹⁰

Conclusions

Despite everything, Turkey does not want to lose Central Asia and the Caucasus. But it has proven much more difficult to have influence on this geostrategically important region than the Turkish authorities thought in the 1990s. Turkey's efforts directed toward creating integration structures in the region similar to the LAS or EU *have not been crowned with any significant success* so far. Today, cooperation has only been established in the cultural sphere and has not spread to all the Turkic republics of the region: Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are still out of the picture.

In recent years, Turkey has significantly increased its economic presence in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan; relations with Azerbaijan are also successfully developing. However, it should be kept in mind that Ankara has already encountered the growing influence of China and Russia on the region, which, despite the increase in Turkey's economy and its immense investment potential, have greater possibilities.

The Arab Spring events, which presented Turkey as a protector of political Islam, could have a negative effect on its heretofore far from simple relations with Uzbekistan and with other countries of the region in the future (should Turkey decide to support the local opposition). But the Turkish authorities, who are conducting a pragmatic foreign policy course, are unlikely to do that.

If Turkey wants to become a strong country capable of dominating in Central Asia, it will have to choose its foreign policy methods more carefully; in order to become a stable power center, it must improve its tools and levers of pressure on the region's countries.

⁹ See: A. Pazarcı, "Turkey, Kyrgyzstan Set Common Goal to Further Regional Peace, Stability," *Todays Zaman*, 22 August, 2012.

¹⁰ See: "Foreign Trade Statistics," *TurkStat*, available at [http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=12].

NATION-BUILDING**GEORGIA'S HISTORICAL ELECTION:
A CHANGE IN POWER AND
THE EMERGENCE OF
A NEW POLITICAL TRADITION****Beka CHEDIA**

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Introduction

On 1 October, 2012, the Georgian people made an important historical choice in favor of the Georgian Dream political opposition coalition headed by billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili. This event will undoubtedly go down in the country's annals as the first time the opposition was brought to power not by revolution, but by election. And despite a certain opinion prevailing in society that a revolution might be possible, political tradition in post-Soviet Georgia took an extremely unexpected turn.

The thing is that elections of any scope in Georgia have long failed to be a mechanism for

bringing about a democratic change in power, acting instead as a pretext for carrying out coups or revolutions. Since the Soviet Union collapsed and Georgia acquired its independence, essentially no power change in the country has occurred by means of an election.

An exception was the first multiparty parliamentary election held on 28 October, 1990; at that time, the ruling Communist party conceded its position to a national political force in the form of the Round Table-Free Georgia opposition bloc headed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia. It is also worth noting that victory over the communists was sus-

tained while the Constitution of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic and other Soviet laws were still in effect.

Another salient point is that despite the impressive victory of the opposition bloc and the antagonism existing between the national government (which struggled for Georgia's secession from the Soviet Union) and the communists, the latter also acquired deputy mandates; they were even able to create an opposition faction.

Fourteen political parties participated in the election of 28 October, 1990, held according to the mixed system. Two hundred and fifty members of parliament (125 under the proportional and 125 under the majority system) were elected for a five-year term. Furthermore, only two political parties—Round Table-Free Georgia (81 deputies plus 43 majority deputies) and the Communist Party of Georgia (44 deputies plus 17 majority

deputies)—were able to overcome the 4% election barrier.¹

However, at that time six parties were represented in the Supreme Soviet of Georgia, four of which managed to acquire deputy mandates under the majority system. After Zviad Gamsakhurdia's government was overthrown, all the subsequent elections ended with the victory of the ruling party: first, of the Union of Citizens of Georgia party headed by Eduard Shevardnadze, and after 2003 the United National Movement party headed by Mikheil Saakashvili. This party came to power in November 2003 with the help of the Rose Revolution, after which it was able to win another two parliamentary elections.

On 1 October, 2012, the era of the United National Movement party came to an end.

¹ "History of Election," available at [www.cec.gov.ge].

A New Political Era

At the election on 1 October, 2012, Bidzina Ivanishvili's the Georgian Dream opposition bloc received 54.97% of the votes, while the United National Movement party received 40.34%, also losing in the majority districts. So it is appropriate to draw a parallel between the 1990 and 2012 elections; both the Communists and Mikheil Saakashvili lost even despite the fact that laws were in effect in the country aimed at preserving the existing government.

During Mikheil Saakashvili's rule, amendments were made to the election code calling for its adaptation to the current political situation. What is more, a law was even adopted on the financing of political parties, which became so rigorous before the election that the opposition leader (who had \$6.5 billion to his name) was almost entirely prohibited from spending money on the election campaign.

A total of 2,215,661 of the 3,613,851 voters registered in the country took part in the election on 1 October, 2012.² The Georgian Dream received 44 of the 150 deputy mandates (73 deputies were elected according to single-mandate districts and 77 according to party lists), while the United National Movement received 33 mandates.³ The Georgian Dream received 41 deputy seats according to single-mandate districts, while the United National Movement acquired 32.

Consequently, Bidzina Ivanishvili's party received 85 seats in the new legislative body (although it initially counted on 92), while the United National Movement acquired 65. Furthermore, the Georgian Dream coalition is counting on swelling its ranks by means of majority deputies from the United National Movement and gaining approximately 101 seats in the parliament. Some of the majority

² [http://www.cec.gov.ge/files/2012/shemajamebeli_okmi_2012.pdf], 2012.

³ [http://www.cec.gov.ge/files/2012/shemajamebeli_okmi_2012.pdf], 2012.

deputies representing the United National Movement decided to disassociate themselves from their party immediately after the election and join the new parliamentary majority that the Georgian Dream has the opportunity to form.

Three factions will join Bidzina Ivanishvili's coalition in the parliament of the new convocation: the Georgian Dream, the Georgian Dream-Free Democrats, and the Georgian Dream-Republicans. If independent deputies join the Conservatives, Industrialists, and National Forum, a few more factions might be created.

The United National Movement party has also created several factions within the parliamentary minority. According to former Georgian parliament chairman David Bakradze, this party will act as a unified team, the decision to create several factions only being made to expand possibilities (more time for speeches and debates, more votes for the bureau, and so on). Incidentally, David Bakradze will be leader of the parliamentary minority.

A distinguishing feature of the election results of 1 October, 2012 is that in contrast to the former parliament, the newly elected legislative body will comprise of only two political organizations. Something similar also occurred after the special parliamentary election of 28 March, 2004 held in the wake of the so-called velvet revolution of 2003; the matter concerns distribution of deputy mandates according to the proportional system. At that time, two parties overcame the 7% barrier: 67.02% of the votes (135 seats according to the party list) went to the National Movement-Democrats party (Mikheil Saakashvili) and 7.62% (15 seats according to the party list) to the Industrialist-New Rights.

According to the results of the parliamentary election of 2008, the ruling party received 59.18% (48 seats) of the votes. The votes were distributed among the other parties as follows:

1. United Opposition-National Council—17.73% (15 seats).
2. Christian-Democratic Party—8.66% (6 seats).
3. Georgian Labor Party—7.44% (6 seats).⁴

Even though 41 parties participated in the election on 1 October, 2012, a two-party parliament was formed in Georgia. Furthermore, it should be noted that several parties belong to the Georgian Dream coalition: the Republican Party, the National Forum, Our Georgia-Free Democrats, the Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia, the Conservative Party, and Industry Will Save Georgia.

Mikheil Saakashvili had no choice but to concede to the opposition's victory, otherwise a new revolution might have occurred. The opposition was supported by the majority of the population; if the government had decided to fiddle with the election results, this would have led without fail to mass demonstrations and unrest. And in that event, Saakashvili might not only have lost the parliamentary majority, but also his presidential seat.

Nevertheless, according to the Georgian Constitution, the president retains all the real attributes of power in the country until the presidential election in 2013. Before the parliament of the new convocation was convened, he held consultations with its majority regarding who would fill the positions in the future government. In the event that the newly elected parliament rejected the cabinet of ministers proposed by the president three times, the fourth time the head of government would have the right to personally nominate candidates for prime minister and ministers for approval without consultation. If the parliament rejected the nominated cabinet of ministers the fourth time, the president would have the right to disband the parliament, but no earlier than six months after its election.

The president also holds real levers for creating a political crisis in the country, although right after the election the members of Saakashvili's team assured that they had no intention of doing this.

⁴ [www.cec.gov.ge], 2008.

Moreover, after the preliminary results were announced, the government held meetings with representatives of the Georgian Dream and expressed their willingness to begin a gradual transfer not only of legislative, but also of executive power.

Even before the government was officially approved, so-called transition groups were formed from the winning Georgian Dream political coalition. In order to ensure a painless transfer of power, their representatives joined all Georgia's governmental structures; a corresponding agreement was reached at the first working meeting with members of the ruling United National Movement party held on 5 October. Some representatives of the Georgian Dream are also members of the Georgian delegation at the talks in Geneva and with the EU.

As early as 25 October, the parliament approved the new composition of the government headed by Bidzina Ivanishvili.

Opposition President: A New Model of State Rule

Without waiting for the official results of the election to be announced, Mikheil Saakashvili declared that the United National Movement was going into opposition; neither society, nor the leaders of the Georgian Dream coalition were ready for this turn in events. On the one hand, the government's easy concession of its position took the Georgian Dream totally unawares. While on the other hand, the election results posed new challenges for the Georgian political system, since during the 20 years of its independence the country had pursued a different model of administration.

For example, during the rule of all three Georgian presidents (Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Eduard Shevardnadze, and Mikheil Saakashvili), their parties had a majority in the parliament. For a long time it was considered that the head of state could not become a strong political leader without the support of the parliamentary majority (although during Eduard Shevardnadze's rule, there was talk of how the president should not head a political party at all). However, it is absolutely clear that all the above-mentioned presidents of Georgia were unable to rule the country without a party and without a parliamentary majority.

After the election of 1 October, 2012, the Georgian president was left without a parliamentary majority for the first time. For countries with a democratic political system, demarcation of power between the executive and legislative bodies is nothing unusual. But for Georgia's hybrid system, such a situation is fraught with diarchy and the emergence of a political crisis.

Even the Patriarch of all Georgia (the Patriarchy of Georgia, which billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili has been assisting for many years, supported the opposition) said in the Sunday sermon he gave after the election that "the change that has occurred in Georgia is God's will and for the good of Georgia. The government, the opposition, the patriarch, the president, the prime minister, and all the ordinary people should work for the good of the Homeland. How can the president be in opposition when he is president of the entire country?"⁵

Mikheil Saakashvili responded as follows to the Patriarch's statement: "We are not the country's opposition. We cannot be the opposition of the Homeland. We can only be the opposition of another political force, which is a healthy process, particularly for the political force that has come to power."

⁵ [<http://www.maestro.ge>].

The Georgian President also said that the views of the opposition coalition were alien to him and “remain so,” but democracy works in a way that the Georgian people accept the decision that is supported by the majority.

The fact that after its election defeat the ruling party was not automatically disbanded, as has happened over the past 20 years with other ruling parties, is an unprecedented event in the political history of the country. Furthermore, it should be noted that Mikheil Saakashvili’s party will continue to exist as long as he is president (despite the fact that disagreements have appeared within the party and there have been so-called “turncoats” to the Georgian Dream). But after he leaves the political stage, the future of the United National Movement will be questionable. Mikheil Saakashvili himself optimistically assesses the future of his party.

Immediately after the election, the president said at a meeting with the members of his team that “more and more people have recently been joining the National Movement. The party needs new faces; people of all ages are needed, including young ones.” In his words, this stage will become a period of cleansing and rejuvenation for the National Movement.

“The National Movement was able to create the most successful government in the country’s history. I am sure that the National Movement will maintain its key role in the country’s political life,” he said.⁶

According to a decision of the political council of the United National Movement party, Vano Merabishvili, who at that time was performing the duties of Georgia’s prime minister, was appointed as its secretary general; Vano Merabishvili took Mikhail Macharaviani’s place.

Based on Mikheil Saakashvili’s personal qualities, it can be presumed that he will achieve greater success as an opposition president. It is already possible to determine where his team will place the emphasis if it is mobilized and finds the strength to move on.

On 21 October, when speaking at the first session of the newly elected parliament, Mikheil Saakashvili repeated that from now on the government should be regularly replaced, and by means of ballots rather than bullets, tanks, or dramatic revolutions, including those dubbed as Rose. What is more, the president proposed introducing elections of regional governors.⁷

Such supposedly democratic initiatives from Mikheil Saakashvili took the new authorities by surprise, since during his rule the president had personally appointed regional governors, and during the election campaign said that his team had no intention of leaving the government. Now, however, after the election, he is talking about the importance of regular changes in power.

Saakashvili’s behavior suggests that he and his team will most likely step up their so-called democratic initiatives and try with the help of black PR (to which they have repeatedly successfully resorted) to discredit the new authorities, to which they have already hastened to attach the label of a pro-Russian force. They will try to secure political support, primarily from Western countries, by presenting themselves as being infringed upon. This is confirmed by the fact that the U.S. ambassador to Georgia has already welcomed the appearance of “real opposition” in the country in the form of the United National Movement.

According to a statement by Vano Merabishvili, the election results showed the need for renovations. He said he has drawn up a plan for creating a new contemporary-style national party that will protect and strengthen democracy in Georgia.

Today it is entirely clear that it will be very difficult for Mikheil Saakashvili to stay in power until the end of his presidential term, particularly since his political team is demoralized and several high-ranking officials have already left the country.

⁶ [<http://geo.interpressnews.ge/ge/politika/217562-mikheil-saakashvili-qnacionaluri-modzraobaq-qganakhlebis-dagatsmendis-etapzeaq.html>].

⁷ [<http://1tv.ge/news-view/43238>].

Meanwhile, the opposition leader is already talking about impeachment of the president. After the election, Bidzina Ivanishvili, when talking about the opposition's victory on his television channel TV9, called on Mikheil Saakashvili to retire and schedule an early presidential election.⁸

However, Mikheil Saakashvili's retirement could lead to immense legal confusion since according to the amendments to the constitution adopted on 15 May, 2010, after 2013, the president of Georgia will be called the head of state and guarantor of unity and national independence, while real power will be concentrated in the hands of the prime minister. In so doing, the authority of the latter will significantly increase at the expense of a reduction in power of the president, but this will not happen until after the election of the head of state to be held in 2013.

It should also be noted that nothing is said in the constitution about who will rule the country (the president or prime minister) if an early presidential election is held, that is, before October 2013.

It can be presumed that the opposition leader, billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, will in all likelihood become prime minister, who even before the presidential election of 2013 will try to at least weaken Saakashvili's power, right down to securing his retirement. Despite the fact that Saakashvili continues to hold the legal trump card, he will not be able to use it due to the political shock caused by the crushing defeat of the United National Movement.

According to the constitutional amendments of 17 May, 2011, the legislative body elected on 1 October will hold plenary sessions in Kutaisi (Georgia's second capital).

After the election of October 2012, Tbilisi essentially lost the status of Georgia's political center, since the government headed by the prime minister, who, according to the constitutional amendments, will rule the country beginning in 2013, should be in the same place as the parliament, i.e. in Kutaisi. As for Tbilisi, it will remain the site of the president's residence.

Before the election, the opposition leader said that if he won, he would give Tbilisi back its status of parliament capital and political center, but this will require amending the Constitution. It should be noted that even before the election, the authorities hastily dismantled the meeting hall in the old parliament building located in Tbilisi.

I would like to remind you that after the Rose Revolution, the Georgian political leaders had great ambitions aimed at removing the Soviet "blemish" and assigning Georgia a place among the East European countries.

The 2012 election was a kind of test in democracy; the Western political community waited impatiently for the results, which were to finally determine whether Georgia would assume its place in the community of civilized states or whether it would continue to be unhappily called part of the post-Soviet expanse.

A White House representative, Jay Carney, made a statement in which he called the parliamentary election in Georgia "another milestone in democratic development." Furthermore, the U.S. State Department made special note of the fact that the president "politely conceded" to the opposition.⁹ Head of EU Diplomacy Catherine Ashton and European Commissioner for the European Neighborhood Policy Štefan Füle also expressed their congratulations and made special statements.

The election engendered serious processes, particularly a crisis in the electronic media that actively supported the government. They had played an important part in governing the country, but after the election they became disoriented and demoralized. A similar situation also occurred in the state power bodies.

⁸ [<http://www.tv9.ge/>].

⁹ [http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/international/2012/10/121002_georgia_saakashvili_defeat.shtml].

The End of Neolibertarianism in Georgia: Will the Country Take the Path of Socialism?

Despite the fact that opposition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili is a businessman, he upholds socialist views; his long engagement in charity activity confirm this. In recent years, Bidzina Ivanishvili has built a genuine “socialist paradise” in the village in the west of Georgia where he was born and grew up. For many years, the fund he created covered the local population’s medical expenses; a modern hospital was built in his home village where local residents received free treatment. Moreover, the fund paid for the village residents’ electricity, natural gas, and other utility fees. Ivanishvili also rendered significant financial assistance to the creative intelligentsia, people of art, and athletes of Georgia.

As for Saakashvili and his team, they considered themselves adherents of neolibertarianism and promulgated the state’s refusal to take responsibility for citizens’ social security.

According to Bidzina Ivanishvili’s world outlook, the most important thing is the people and their social security, and the government should take care of those who need help. The opposition leader has already promised that in the near future natural gas and other utility fees will be reduced in the country.

It is also well worth noting that despite its neolibertarian views, the United National Movement party used leftist slogans during the election campaign (as the Georgian Dream and almost all the other parties did).

Moreover, it cannot be said that the United National Movement and Mikheil Saakashvili are advocates of neolibertarianism, particular against the background of the infringement of property rights and business restrictions seen in the country since 2003.

Nevertheless, as we know, property, the development of free business, and encouragement of a real market economy comprise the nucleus of the liberal ideology. From this it follows that Mikheil Saakashvili and his team only paid lip service to their neolibertarian views. In those cases when the authorities were unable to resolve urgent social and economic problems, they tried to put their helplessness down to conducting a premeditated policy, that is, to neolibertarianism.

The president long harped on about the fact that the state should not take care of its citizens. But before each election live broadcasts were frequently aired on television about the masses of new jobs that were supposedly being created. Moreover, on the eve of the election on 1 October, 2012, a ministry of employment was established.

As the public opinion polls conducted in recent years show, one of the main economic problems in Georgia today is unemployment. For example, according to a poll conducted in February 2012 by the U.S. National Democratic Institute (NDI), 63% of the respondents noted that the most important national question is unemployment, 36% pointed to the country’s territorial integrity, 31% to accessible medical care, 26% mentioned poverty, 26% price increases and inflation, 21% small pensions, 15% low wages, 10% the quality of education, and 10% human rights.¹⁰

During the election campaign, the United National Movement put forward a slogan calling for “More Benefits for the People.” The party posed itself three main tasks: accessible medical care, an

¹⁰ *Public Attitudes in Georgia: Results of a February 2012 Survey*. NDI, available at [<http://www.ndi.org/files/Georgia-Survey-Results-0212.pdf>].

increase in the number of jobs, and strengthening of agriculture. It is worth noting that the election platform of Bidzina Ivanishvili's coalition targeted these very same issues.

It should also be noted that there are political parties in Bidzina Ivanishvili's coalition that uphold rightist views. However, Georgia's political parties are difficult to classify; only their names can give some inkling of their ideological orientation. As for programs, all of the parties pursue the same ones.

It is very unlikely that Georgia will take the socialist path; in order to effectively provide the population with social benefits, the country's economy must first be raised, and Bidzina Ivanishvili is unlikely to spend his own money on this.

Another Change in Georgia's State Insignia?

During the political struggle for power that intensified on the eve of the election, representatives of the rivaling parties not only put forward different ideas, but also tried to distinguish themselves from each other by resorting to different symbols. At party meetings, the supporters of the current authorities wore white and red clothing symbolizing the country's national flag. The thing is that until the Rose Revolution Georgia's current flag, which depicts five crosses, was only the party banner of the opposition National Movement party at that time headed by Mikheil Saakashvili.

In the 1990s, after the country gained its independence, the national flag and coat-of-arms of Georgia used insignia created in 1917 during the existence of the first Georgian Democratic Republic. They were called insignia of the Georgian Mensheviks who ruled the country for a total of three years; in 1921, Georgia was occupied by Soviet Russia. It should be noted that the design of the Menshevik flag was influenced by the flag of Germany, which at that time (between 1917 and 1921) was an ally of the Georgian Democratic Republic.

After Soviet power was established in the Georgian Soviet Socialistic Republic, its own flag appeared, the insignia of which corresponded to the heraldic attributes of the Soviet Union (they were last changed in 1951).

It is worth noting that after first Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1991-1992) was overthrown, Eduard Shevardnadze, who took his place, did not change the state insignia adopted by his predecessor.

However, after the Rose Revolution, the country's new leadership decided to get rid of the remnants of the past and in its first decision of 25 January, 2004 approved new state insignia. The new authorities could not wait to use the new symbols; the parliament hurriedly approved a flag and, later, coat-of-arms portraying clearly Christian symbols before Mikheil Saakashvili's inauguration. For example, the flag depicts five red crosses, while the coat-of-arms portrays St. George (one of the most revered saints of Georgia). The new flag and coat-of-arms were to serve as a kind of advertising banner to show the country's European origin.

In the meantime, adoption of the five-cross flag as the national one aroused a certain amount of concern in society. This was because the four small crosses portrayed on it were very similar to Catholic ones, and on the whole the flag was reminiscent of a crusaders' banner. Under pressure from the Patriarchy of Georgia and public opinion, the revolutionary authorities were compelled to change the design of the crosses. It should also be noted that according to historical sources, as early as the Middle Ages, Georgia's national flag was a five-cross flag similar to the one

approved after the Rose Revolution. This was during the rule of Georgia's most powerful czar, David the Builder.

The new flag automatically began to be associated not with the state, but with the party that came to power by means of revolution. Unwittingly, parallels were drawn with Soviet times when the Communist flag was identified with the national flag. It can be said that the flag adopted after the Rose Revolution became a symbolic manifestation of the country's post-revolutionary political regime. This gave rise to worries that the "party-state" concept that existed in Soviet times would be transferred to present-day Georgia.

Meanwhile, no one in Georgia, in the throes of revolutionary euphoria, gave any serious thought to this; many liked the nice bright new national flag. Furthermore, the Christian community (to which the majority of the country's population belongs) and the Patriarchy of Georgia approved the fact it had crosses on it.

It should be noted that after the Rose Revolution, the opposition parties also unconditionally approved the new flag; people brought it with them to the meetings and demonstrations against Saakashvili.

Before the election, the opposite picture was seen: the opposition tried to disassociate itself from the five-cross flag as a symbol of the ruling party. For example, at the campaign meetings of opposition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili held in different regions of the country, the old tricolor flags began appearing along with the national flag.

It is possible that the opposition's victory will lead to restoration of the old national flag, since Bidzina Ivanishvili promised to revise many of the decisions of Saakashvili's team after he comes to power.

It is also intriguing that the opposition leader's many years of charity activity tie him closely to the Georgian Patriarchy. He participated in restoring many churches, as well as in building a cathedral in Tbilisi that is considered to be one of the tallest Orthodox churches in the world. So restoration of the Menshevik flag, which has no Christian symbols, will most likely arouse the Patriarchy's discontent.

After the Rose Revolution, a precedent emerged in the country for changing the state insignia to suit the political situation. So it is very likely that it will become a target of political confrontation.

The External Enemy Factor and Patriotic Rhetoric during the Election

The parliamentary election of 1 October changed not only the domestic political lay of the land. It also gave a boost to various kinds of "speculations" (particularly outside the country) about a possible change in Georgia's foreign policy orientations. It is no secret that Mikheil Saakashvili, who obtained an American education, had the image of a pro-Western leader; after the defeat of his party at the parliamentary election some observers began talking about the imminent change in Georgia's foreign policy course toward Russia.

Such presumptions are related to the fact that opposition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili earned his money in Russia during privatization of the post-Soviet economy that occurred in the 1990s. This is precisely why the election campaign of Saakashvili's team was built on "exposing" Bidzina Ivanishvili as a Russian oligarch who is trying to return Georgia to the sphere of Moscow's influence. It should be noted that elections in Georgia always stir up the "external enemy" factor.

In 2011, after announcing his participation in Georgian politics, Bidzina Ivanishvili sold all the assets he had in Russia. In response, Saakashvili's team repeatedly pointed out that no one can become a billionaire in Russia, retain all of that wealth, or later sell one's assets at a fair price without the Kremlin's permission.

Meanwhile, at a press conference held immediately after the election, Bidzina Ivanishvili said: "Our strategy is NATO and movement toward NATO."¹¹ Moreover, on 3 October, the leader of the Georgian Dream said that he would pay his first official foreign visit as prime minister to the United States. Soon thereafter he changed his mind and said he would first visit Brussels.

It is also worth noting that almost everyone in Bidzina Ivanishvili's team and the government uphold a pro-Western political orientation, one of them being parliament chairman and representative of the Republican Party David Usupashvili (who studied social administration and law in the U.S.). In his very first speech, the parliament chairman (88 of 129 deputies voted for him) called Russia an occupant country. As for former Georgian ambassador to the U.S. Defense Minister Irakly Alasania, who graduated from the Sorbonne, he, like the coalition leader, said that Georgia's integration into NATO was continuing.¹²

The new Minister of Justice Tea Tsulukiani also studied at several prestigious universities in France and worked for 10 years in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Minister of Foreign Affairs Maya Panjikidze was Georgian ambassador to Germany and the Netherlands.

Bidzina Ivanishvili himself was a French citizen (after he became involved in politics, he gave up his French citizenship); in all likelihood, he sympathizes more with Europe (this is also shown by his choice of proposed first visit) and in this way wishes to disassociate himself from Saakashvili, who was unequivocally considered a pro-American leader.

In actual fact, it is not that important where Bidzina Ivanishvili pays his first visit. It is enough to recall Eduard Shevardnadze, who made his first official visit to Iran, but then knocked on NATO's door.

It would also be appropriate to mention the statement by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Eric Rubin, who came to Georgia immediately after the election; in his words, everyone he met confirmed that Georgia's foreign policy course would continue to be aimed toward developing Euroatlantic values.

What is more, it is also very important that Bidzina Ivanishvili is not planning to visit Moscow. Before the election, Russian politicians said that they have a problem with Saakashvili but respect the Georgian people; now this formula has lost its meaning. It is worth noting that they also said the same thing about Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Eduard Shevardnadze.

Based on the above, it can be boldly presumed that after Saakashvili's departure, bilateral relations between Georgia and Russia are unlikely to clear up.

Nevertheless, when commenting on the election results, Chairman of the Russian Government Dmitry Medvedev said that "the information on the election results coming from Georgia shows that the population of this country wants changes." He also added that "if these results become reality, the political landscape of Georgia will become more diverse." Dmitry Medvedev thinks that this can only be welcomed, since, in his opinion, more constructive and responsible forces will appear in the parliament.¹³

However, it is now clear that it will be rather difficult to smooth out relations between the two countries in the near future; in any case, most Russian experts and politicians are not expecting any serious shifts.

¹¹ [<http://inosmi.ru/sngbaltia/20121003/200287639.html>].

¹² [<http://pirweli.com.ge/?menuid=10&id=18354>].

¹³ [http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/international/2012/10/121002_georgia_saakashvili_defeat.shtml].

"No matter who comes to power in Georgia, it will not radically change its relations with Russia," said Chairman of the Federation Council Committee for Defense and Security Viktor Ozerov. He clarified that improved relations with Russia required Georgia recognizing the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and this, in his opinion, would be tantamount to political suicide for Tbilisi.¹⁴

Russian expert Andrei Epifantsev even put forward several conditions: rejecting anti-Russian rhetoric, closing the occupation museum in Tbilisi, cancelling recognition of the Circassian genocide, and opening the Transcaucasian rail road. The only thing Georgia can expect in return is the possibility of exporting its products to Russia.

According to a statement by Georgian Foreign Minister Maya Panjikidze, under the Ivanishvili government, the country's foreign priorities will not change, and while Georgian territory remains occupied by Russia, relations between the two countries will be limited to economic and cultural ties. "Georgia's foreign priorities are not changing, and they will continue to focus on integration into European and Euroatlantic structures, intensification of strategic partnership with the U.S., good-neighboringly relations with our neighbors, and an attempt to begin a dialog with Russia, either directly or with the help of international organizations. But while the current situation remains, diplomatic relations will not be restored....,"¹⁵ said Maya Panjikidze on 26 October.

So it is entirely clear that, contrary to the geopolitical expectations abroad, the change in power in Georgia will largely influence the domestic political processes in the country. In other words, it can hardly be expected that Georgia will change its foreign policy vector.

Conclusion

At first glance, the October election of 2012 in Georgia cannot be viewed as a kind of democratic breakthrough. This is because during the election campaign, the authorities traditionally made use of the so-called administrative resource. But for a country like Georgia, recognition by the authorities of their defeat at the election is a great political achievement.

In Georgia, the presidency is associated with real power. For example, many of the politicians and a significant part of society at the time took Zviad Gamsakhurdia's overturn as elimination of the institution of presidency. Even Eduard Shevardnadze, who returned from Moscow in 1992, did not at first resolve to preserve it; he was simply afraid of going against public opinion. He enforced the post of president later, referring in so doing to state expediency.

Keeping in mind Georgia's political practice, it is hypothetically possible that the institution of presidency will be restored again after a while in the country. It stands to reason that the president will either be Georgian billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili or one of his followers (Bidzina Ivanishvili himself intends to leave politics in 2.5 years).

The election held in Georgia showed that there is objectively a so-called protest electorate in the country that votes not "for" but "against." The reason that the Georgian Dream won the lion's share of the votes was not because the people liked it, but because they hated the government. The electorate saw the new political alliance as a force capable of kicking out a government that had no intention of leaving the political stage any time soon. This is confirmed by Saakashvili's statement on the eve

¹⁴ [http://www.for.ge/view.php?for_id=17364&f_cat=3&a_title=%E2%80%9Ejer+nu+uityviT%2C+rom+opozicia+xelisuflebaSi+movida%E2%80%9C].

¹⁵ [<http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/world-georgia-panjikidze/1534374.html>].

of the election at a meeting of his supporters when he said that he would not allow anyone to destroy what he had built.

The population's attitude toward the opposition and the possible change in power radically changed when Bidzina Ivanishvili arrived on the political scene; this caused a large part of the electorate to vote against Saakashvili.

It is worth noting that some of the electorate that voted for the Georgian Dream were motivated by pragmatic expectations that Bidzina Ivanishvili would continue his charity activity (now as a politician) and would personally help the state financially (for example, he would pay the population's utility fees). This attitude toward the new political leaders is nothing new for Georgia's political practice.

What are the reasons for the collapse of the Georgian model of modernization? Mikheil Saakashvili's rule can be provisionally divided into two stages: ideological and post-ideological. The reforms carried out in the country during the first years of his presidency were clearly radical and were implemented without a dialog between the government and society; this caused the rift between them to widen. Furthermore, political decisions were made within a narrow circle of the ruling elite. After 2007, when anti-government speeches began and an early presidential election was scheduled, all the most important political decisions were not made to modernize the state, but to strengthen the government.

The state interfered in essentially all spheres of society's life, beginning with business and ending with education, culture, and sport. On the one hand, they were all politicized, but on the other, they were controlled by the state. If the new authorities decide not to control public life, they will have to build everything anew.

For example, after the election people began talking about replacement of the rector of Tbilisi State University. This was related to the fact that after the Rose Revolution, higher education institutions were heavily politicized, and although they formally became autonomous under Mikheil Saakashvili, the university rector was almost a government official.

So modernization of the country from above and the use of command methods led to collapse of the Georgian model of reform. Moreover, the "Action rather Than Words" slogan was used at elections to local self-government bodies; in other words, the government totally refused to hold a dialog with society.

The new authorities will have to begin the difficult reform progress over again, although it is still not entirely clear what model of development they will prefer. And it should not be forgotten that the people voted not for them, but against Mikheil Saakashvili, who took the Singapore model as a basis.

Meanwhile, the new authorities have still not chosen a model for the country's future development. It is only clear that after acquiring its independence, the transit process in the country has become very drawn-out and the governments that come one after the other in Georgia have to build the state and its institutions each time from scratch.

THE POLITICAL SCENE IN SOUTH OSSETIA: THE 2011-2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM

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Introduction

By mid-2011, the Republic of South Ossetia (RSO) was gradually sliding into the abyss of a political, social, and economic crisis. The people of South Ossetia had lost confidence in those who ruled them: the republican leaders were making too many mistakes, the republican elite were bogged in contradictions, while postwar rehabilitation was deliberately slowed down. This and the conviction, very popular in the Russian public (and even in the expert community), that the rehabilitation money was being shamelessly embezzled served as another argument in the political struggle raging in the RSO.

Very much as usual, an external factor (in this case Russia) merely added to the far from simple situation. I have in mind certain bureau-

crats accustomed to semi-military discipline and “gray practices.”

Left alone to shift by itself the republic would have degenerated either into another devitalized “Oriental despotic state” (even if a tiny one) or, if the opposition came to power, into a small developing state with a democratic future.

By the November 2011 presidential election, the republic had reached a crossroads: President Eduard Kokoity was completing his second, and last, presidential term.¹

¹ I covered in detail the prehistory of the presidential elections in South Ossetia in A.Yu. Skakov, “Yuzhnaya Ossetia nakanune prezidentskikh vyborov,” *Kavkazkie nauchnye zapiski*, No. 2 (7), 2011, pp. 30-44.

Pre-Election “Casting”

Early in 2011 (when Eduard Kokoity’s second presidential term was drawing to an end), one of four equally possible scenarios was in the offing:

(1) *Eduard Kokoity amends the Constitution to run for a third term.* It should be said that his personality defies straightforward description along good/evil lines; his role changed along with the circumstances. It seems that after 2008 he lost his bearings; protest feelings were gradually mounting, while Moscow, which no longer trusted the president of South Ossetia, created a new center of power headed by RSO Prime Minister Vadim Brovtsev.

At the same time, a group was set up to initiate a referendum on a constitutional amendment to allow a third presidential term. Its head, Deputy Defense Minister of South Ossetia Ibrahim Gaseev, a bureaucrat without political ambitions, would have never dared to do this without the president's explicit orders. The situation was not that simple: the question of a third presidential term was coupled with the question of Russian becoming the second official language, which, if it failed to be approved at the referendum, would have been an unpleasant surprise for Moscow.

The law enforcers and President Kokoity's retinue, meanwhile, launched a campaign to persuade the public and deputies to support the referendum.

The president put a brave face on a sorry business: he insisted that Moscow was on his side and parried all statements about the opposite signals coming from Moscow by saying that they came from obscure experts and insignificant officials.

On 14 June, 2011, the Supreme Court of South Ossetia ruled that the planned referendum was unconstitutional. This caused what can be described as a de facto coup d'état: on 15 June, a group of law enforcers under Ibrahim Gaseev and Igor Alborov, another deputy defense minister, together with Gennady Kokoev and people from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, burst into the parliament to demand approval, under the threat of force, of the contested constitutional amendment. Speaker Stanislav Kochiev, who had barely recovered after an illness, demonstrated a lot of determination. He rebuffed the aggressive invaders who forced 12 deputies (three of them absent from the session) to agree on an alternative: they signed a document on an initiative group for constitutional amendments.

Having achieved this and probably on Moscow's orders, the invaders left; the head of the presidential administration came to the parliament to downplay the situation and keep information away from the Russian media or, at least, to circulate its "softened" version.

This confirmed that the president of South Ossetia had no chance of legally remaining in power. After the events of 15 June, Moscow clearly demonstrated (although not immediately after the scandal) that it did not want to see Eduard Kokoity as president.

(2) *The president appoints a successor:* this is a time-tested variant (the "Kremlin tandem" being the best proof) which, however, could go askew: in Armenia, Serzh Sargsian, offered the nation as a successor of President Robert Kocharian, once elected started his own fairly independent political course to the displeasure of his predecessor.

At first, Prosecutor-General Taymuraz Khugaev looked like a possible successor, but neither Moscow nor the public wanted him. Not very charismatic and obviously not of "presidential caliber," he was suspected of corruption.² As a close relative of the incumbent (the president's brother Robert Kokoity, Ambassador of the RSO to Abkhazia, was married to Khugaev's sister), he looked like a perfect choice. Eduard Kokoity attached a lot of importance to this fact: he spared no effort to push Khugaev forward by consistently neutralizing opponents, weakening rivals, and trying to persuade Moscow to change its mind.

² [<http://www.cisnews.org/news/5228-generalnyy-prokuror-hugaev-prestupnik-i-dolzhen-sidet-v-tyurme.html>].

(3) *Moscow selects its own candidate to replace Kokoity as president;* it turned out, however, that Anatoly Bibilov, Minister of Emergencies of South Ossetia, was the worst among possible candidates as obviously ill-suited for the presidency.

It looks as if he was suggested by his omnipotent Russian colleague Sergey Shoigu, the then Minister of Emergencies of the RF. Bibilov, also a minister, can be described as another Khugaev minus corruption charges.³

Kokoity was displeased, yet never outspoken: he supported Bibilov in public and played against him behind his back. Spoiler candidates appeared who deprived Bibilov of what looked like an easy victory. Kokoity's deliberate support of Bibilov (whose anti-rating was huge anyway) did nothing to promote the former's chances. The president was fully aware of the pitfalls and was consistently adding tension to create "controlled instability" to postpone the presidential election.

(4) *The incumbent's ambitions are clipped to allow the people to elect the president they really want.* This was done in Georgia where the Americans, after allowing the Georgians to vote for the Georgian Dream Party, gained a serious psychological and geopolitical victory, the repercussions of which are probably greater than they look today. This would have been logical in South Ossetia too, yet, unfortunately, this was not done.

The First Election

As a result, Anatoly Bibilov failed his election campaign disgracefully and irrevocably; he listened to those who told him "not to promise anything to anybody" and lost the support of experienced and respected South Ossetian politicians; left without a team he insistently demonstrated that his victory was guaranteed.

The team of Ala Jioeva, who ran for the opposition, talked to all representatives of the republican political elite and distributed among them all the available posts down to the district level.

On 13 November, 2011, election day, Anatoly Bibilov and former Minister of Education Ala Jioeva gathered a more or less equal number of votes—24.86% and 24.8%, respectively, which made a second round inevitable.

The spoilers deprived Bibilov the number of votes he needed to make him president in the first round. Vadim Tskhovrebov, director of a bakery in Tskhinvali, received 9.90% of the votes; Alan Kotaev, Deputy Head of the Administration of Tskhinvali, 9.66%; and Georgy Kabisov, Chairman of the State Committee for Information, Public Relations and Mass Communications, a relative of Khugaev's, 7.62%. Dmitry Tasoev, leader of the unregistered Social-Democratic Party who hoped to reap opposition votes, received 9.50%; Vladimir Kelekhsaev, deputy of the RSO parliament of two convocations who ran for the Communist Party, received 6.65%; other candidates ("extras") received between 0.95 and 3.34% (several hundred votes on the republican scale): they were Chief Bailiff Sergey Bitiev, Soslan Tedety, commander of the SOBR of the republican Ministry of Internal Affairs; Alan Pliev, Deputy Foreign Minister, and Jemal Jigkaev, former Health Minister among the "supporting actors."

For the first time in the history of South Ossetia, the formerly monolith communist electorate split: some people, together with S. Kochiev, leader of the Communist Party of South Ossetia, voted for Bibilov; others preferred Kelekhsaev; the majority followed the opposition.

³ Shortly before the election he was described as "the leader of an organized criminal group" with its center in Vasilkov, a city in Ukraine (see [<http://kavkaz.ge/2011/11/18/kto-takoj-anatolij-bibilov/>] and other sites).

As could be expected, the political landscape changed after the first round: before the second round scheduled for 27 November, Vice Speaker of the RSO parliament Yury Dzitstsoy abandoned Kokoity to side with Bibilov; A. Jussoev, an influential Moscow businessman, did the same. Keleksaev and Pliev supported Ala Jioeva.

Vadim Tskhovrebov, who came third in the first round, announced that he preferred to remain neutral; later he changed his mind and joined Bibilov. The latter, who looked like Kokoity's appointed successor, tried to move as far as possible from the incumbent and his crowd. He demanded that Khugaev, Khugaev's deputy Eldar Kokoev, Georgy Kabisov, Zurab Kabisov who headed the State Committee for Reconstruction, and Atsamaz Bichenov, Chairman of the Supreme Court, resign from their posts before 27 November.

The South Ossetians were very displeased with the people Moscow had dispatched to the republic to supervise its rehabilitation: they turned out to be embezzlers; they stole the money Russia allocated for reconstruction and tried to shift the blame onto the local officials unceremoniously pushed aside from matters financial. Fully aware of this, Bibilov promised to place the stakes on local people and limit appointments of "experts from other places" to deputy heads or assistants.

On 21 November, Anatoly Bibilov met President Dmitry Medvedev in North Ossetia: Moscow had made its choice.

The moment of truth came on 27 November. After tallying up 80% of the votes, the leaders of the republic discovered that Bibilov had received about 40%, while Ala Jioeva was leading with 56.7%. The president and his retinue could accept Bibilov, but they could not accept the opposition leader as president.

In Moscow, people refused to take this for a failure: they spoke about the coup or even a Color Revolution, and started talking about decisive measures.

On 29 November, the Central Elections Commission announced that Ala Jioeva had won the election; on the same day, the ruling Edinstvo (Unity) Party (controlled by Kokoity) asked the Supreme Court of South Ossetia to annul the results because of "numerous violations of citizen rights." The Supreme Court, at Kokoity's beck and call, obeyed. The parliament fixed 25 March, 2012 as the date for the next round, which meant four more months of presidency for Eduard Kokoity. Vice speakers Yu. Dzitstsoy and M. Tskhovrebov moved to Jioeva's side, which meant that they had severed their ties with the ruling party.

The republic voted against Kokoity and his regime rather than for Ala Jioeva, who could hardly claim the title of the opposition leader with a 3% to 5% approval rating on the eve of the election. The former minister brought together the opposition voters very much contrary to her expectations.

Regrettably, neither Moscow nor Kokoity were ready to accept the voters' choice: Kokoity was prepared to "leave in order to stay," while Moscow wanted a president obedient to its commands. In fact, Ala Jioeva, who depended on sportsman Jambulat Tedeev, the actual leader of opposition, could have easily got rid of this dependence after winning the election (in emulation of Eduard Kokoity's trick).

She submitted an appeal to the republic's Supreme Court; later she and A. Barankevich, her authorized representative, met Eduard Kokoity and Sergey Vinokurov, Head of the Department for Regional and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, Administration of the President of RF, with no positive results.

Those who voted for Jioeva and wanted the election results recognized poured into the central square of the republic's capital where they set up a government (the State Council of 10 members) and fixed 10 December as the inauguration date. The republic, brimming with weapons, came dangerously close to an armed confrontation. This was what Eduard Kokoity needed: the opposition provoked into action could be routed enabling him to assume control over the election and get rid of not totally reliable Anatoly Bibilov.

Early on 6 October, Khugaev's apartment was shelled from a grenade launcher, which supplied the republic's leaders with a pretext to close the border with Russia.

The meeting in the central square should be disbanded—this much was clear, but the Kremlin did not want the Kokoity regime to survive in any form; bloodshed in the central square was an even worse prospect. As long as Sergey Vinokurov remained in Tskhinvali, Kokoity and his retinue would not and could not use force.

Nothing is that simple, however: later, after an attack on Ala Jioeva's office, someone spread information that a representative of the Administration of the President of the RF had been present in the office during the attack, leading the expert community and the public of South Ossetia to the conclusion that he had sanctioned the use of force. In fact, it was probably a set-up to discredit the Administration of the President of the RF by shifting the responsibility for the use of force onto it.

On 9 December, at the eleventh hour, Ala Jioeva, without waiting for inauguration, came to an agreement with the opposite side mediated by Sergey Vinokurov (who had probably applied pressure). E. Kokoity, Prosecutor-General T. Khugaev, his deputy E. Kokoev, and Chairman of the Supreme Court A. Bichenov (the most compromised members of the president's men) resigned. Prime Minister Vadim Brovtsev became acting president.

The inauguration was no longer possible; however, Ala Jioeva was able, on 25 March, 2012, to run for president once more. In an effort to end the confrontation, Moscow resorted to the Abkhazian scenario (tested in December 2004 when S. Bagapsh and R. Khajimba came to an agreement to stave off an armed conflict after the presidential election disastrous for the "Moscow supervisors"). This meant a compromise: the results of the previous elections were annulled, which could hardly be described as absolutely legal. This meant that the sides had moved outside the law; the situation could no longer be controlled.

The compromise was faulty from the very beginning because it envisaged resignation of the Prosecutor-General and the Chairman of the Supreme Court. Eduard Kokoity merely promised to dismiss them, but under the law their resignations had to be approved by the parliament, which was not part of the agreement. The president retained his grip on the parliament, which meant that he could save the posts for the prosecutor and the chairman of the Supreme Court without damaging his own reputation. With Chairman of the Supreme Court A. Bichenov still in his post, the president could easily annul any objectionable election results.

Between the Elections: Regrouping and Maneuvering

In December 2011 and January 2012, dual power in the republic was represented by Acting President Brovtsev and Eduard Kokoity, who was still very much in control. The effect was mainly positive with an absolutely new configuration of forces.

By that time it had become known that Vice Speaker Dzitstsoyty and Dmitry Medoev, Ambassador of South Ossetia to the Russian Federation, intended to run for presidency. (It is commonly believed in the republic that the latter was kept out of the race by officials from the Presidential Administration of the RF.) Both candidates were equally acceptable (Medoev, who during the political crisis had been vehemently anti-Jioeva, was acceptable to a lesser extent than his potential rival) to the official circles and the opposition. This could close the gap that split society after the election of 27 November.

Another bout of complications was caused by what could easily be predicted: on 17 January, 2012, Ala Jioeva left the compromise because not all promised resignations had been submitted. Moreover, she probably realized that she stood little chance of running again and even less chance of being elected. Some of her former supporters abandoned her while the protest electorate could be lured to several much stronger rivals.

Indeed, Jambulat Tedeev, chief coach of the Russian free-style wrestling team, who had supported Ala Jioeva in November 2011, was contemplating running for presidency. The meeting of 21 January attended by 100 to 200 people confirmed that Jioeva had lost much of her former potential. She may have initially agreed to take several official posts for herself and her closest circle, but no such offers were forthcoming. In this situation she had no other choice but to declare herself the legally elected president of the republic; this improved her rating, at least for a short time. The people and political elite were undecided: on the one hand, no one doubted her victory, while on the other, the majority of the political class and the voters were looking forward to the upcoming election and, therefore, did not take her statement seriously.

Aware of the disorder in the ranks of her opponents, she raised her demands from a couple of official posts to the presidential post and scheduled her inauguration for 10 February. On 23 January, after talking to Acting President Brovtsev, she became even more determined: she rejected compromises, demanded that she should be recognized as the legally elected president, and announced that the upcoming election was illegitimate.

Jioeva managed to consolidate her electorate and gained even more supporters from among those who appreciated her determination and detected vacillations among the republican leaders and presidential candidates. This created a “no-win” situation, which called for more negotiations because Jioeva’s inauguration would have created an intolerable situation of two not quite legitimate presidents in the republic.

Regrettably, the solution was short-sighted and even disgraceful: on 9 February Jioeva’s headquarters were attacked and routed; she was beaten up and hospitalized. Tension increased: it became clear that the people in power, an apology for professional politicians, were not alien to intimidation, the basest of methods of political struggle. The former president controlled the defense and security structures from abroad.

Everything the power structures did earned them no respect from the republic’s population; this is particularly true of the meeting organized on 9 February “in support” of the election scheduled for 25 March, to which the employees of ministries and other official structures were herded.

Tension was mounting as the presidential election drew nearer. After getting rid of the “second president,” the “puppeteers” continued pushing forward their own candidate: it seems that the disgraceful failures of 27 November and of the presidential elections in Transnistria and Abkhazia were safely ignored and forgotten.

It is not easy to conduct sociological polls in a republic where there are no experienced sociologists, however the results of the polls conducted in January and early February 2012 looked quite convincing.

According to the results obtained by Media-Center Ir (under pressure from certain forces, these figures were promptly removed from the Internet) on 20-26 January, 16% of the respondents preferred to see Ala Jioeva president of South Ossetia; 9%, Yu. Dzitstsoyty; 8%, J. Tedeev; 7%, D. Sanakoev; while D. Medoev and M. Tskhovrebov each received 6% of the votes. Forty-eight percent of the polled intended to ignore the elections.

The situation was further aggravated when on 18 February Vice Speaker Yu. Dzitstsoyty, practically the only independent candidate (with the exception of S. Zasseev) and one of the favorites, was kept away from the election under obviously false pretexts. Technically, this action was entrusted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of South Ossetia, which used the fact that the dates on the subscription

lists (they were inserted by those who collected the signatures) and the signatures were written by different people even though the law was very vague in this respect.⁴ During the fall election, those who signed the lists were expected to personally write the entries, the rest was written by the signature collectors. Other candidates, L. Tibilov and D. Sanakoev in particular, were returned their lists with a request to change them according to the instructions. Yu. Dzitstsoyty's lists were sent straight to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for an expert handwriting appraisal.

According to the available information, the Ministry sent the document with expert opinion to the Central Elections Commission on 15 February, although the findings were not made public until 18 February. The organizers of the "triumph of the rule of law and democracy" were probably biding for time in expectation of signals from Moscow.

Meanwhile, on the evening of 16 February, G. Yanovskaya from Echo of the Caucasus (Tbilisi, PIK [First Information Caucasian Channel]) interviewed Yu. Dzitstsoyty; later she published bits and pieces from this extensive interview taken out context on the Internet to paint the following picture: first, it was the leaders of Russia, not Eduard Kokoity, "who were guilty of the ugliness taking place in the republic" and of the attack on Jioeva's headquarters; second, "this has stirred up just indignation" among the people of South Ossetia; if people went to the polls on 4 March (the date of the presidential election in Russia), they would vote against Vladimir Putin, whose name is associated with the above-mentioned scandalous practices. These quotes were, in fact, opposed to Medoev's balanced and loyal statements.

Enraged, Dzitstsoyty called the journalist to demand an apology and removal of the article; not satisfied with that Dzitstsoyty sent refutation to the website where his interview had appeared. It was published early the next day (17 February) only to be hastily removed a couple of hours later together with the offending interview.

It, however, survived long enough to be noticed. This looked very much like a classical special operation: anyone who counted could read it and draw conclusions. The question remains: How did the Russian and South Ossetian "puppeteers" find a common language with Georgian anti-Russian journalists? (Let me remind you that Echo of the Caucasus is a joint project of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty funded by the U.S. Congress.)

"Angered citizens" showered the republican media with letters of indignation; it seems that the Kremlin, likewise, was promptly informed about what Dzitstsoyty "thought" and "had said." It amazed no one, therefore, that his name was removed from the list of presidential candidates.

This meant that insistent, obviously unprofessional, and unconstructive interference in the election campaign (which damaged Russia's basic interests in the region) was accompanied by very strange, to say the least, cooperation between those who started the ball rolling in South Ossetia and Georgian propaganda networks (PIK and Echo of the Caucasus radio and TV channels). This brings to mind what Pavel Milyukov said on 1 (14) November, 1916 in the State Duma in his famous "Stupidity or Treason" speech: "And, does it matter, gentlemen, as a practical question, whether we are, in the present case, dealing with stupidity or treason? The consequences are the same."

What happened to Dzitstsoyty confirmed that the authorities remained indifferent to public opinion. Sergey Zasseev, leader of the Social-Democrats and one of the potential winners, was likewise removed from the list of candidates.

⁴ Art 30 of the Constitutional Law of RSO on the main guarantees of election rights and the right of citizens of the Republic of South Ossetia to take part in referendums says: "A voter or participant in a referendum should sign a subscription list indicating his last name, first name, and patronymic; date of birth; address of domicile; RSO passport series and number and the date of its issue, as well as the date of subscription. Information about the voters signing the lists in support of a candidate or a list of several candidates may be written by the signature collector. All entries should be made by hand."

It seems that the opposition candidates were kept away from the race by those who had probably learned only one lesson from the November election: the people should not be allowed to choose, they may only participate in “no-alternative elections.”

This time the “Moscow curators” decided to act on a dead certainty—no dark horses on the ballot papers. All popular opposition candidates were safely pushed aside under different, frequently obviously false, pretexts.

It looked as if the republic was being deliberately led to another election disaster that would deprive the republic’s power structures of legitimacy and destroy South Ossetian statehood. The result would be catastrophic for South Ossetia and Russia’s Caucasian policy.

Russia’s interests would have been better served if external unconstructive and rude interference was limited, while the ballot papers contained as long a list of candidates as possible; this would have made the election legitimate and falsifications on a great scale impossible.

By that time, however, annulment of the obviously illegitimate election and the decision to disband the Central Elections Commission looked like the best solution; all candidates who represented the entire spectrum of South Ossetian society were to be registered for a new election.

It could be expected that the majority would ignore both rounds of the presidential election: in fact the low turnout on election day (less than 50% of the voters) was the gravest threat to South Ossetian statehood.

On the other hand, the corrupt South Ossetian clan (the so-called Kokoity clan) and corrupt bureaucrats from North Ossetia and Moscow, hand-in-glove with it, would have preferred a “failed” election and continued conservation of status quo in the republic. They wanted to remain in control through the defense and security structures and parliamentary majority.

No-Alternative Election

The political elite of South Ossetia was trimmed down to four figures acceptable to Moscow and the former president, who was still in control. The final ballot contained four names: Dmitry Medoev, Ambassador of South Ossetia to the RF; Leonid Tibilov, former chairman of the KGB, a man of no ambitions; Ombudsman David Sanakoev, never caught defending human rights, and Stanislav Kochiev, leader of the Communist Party of South Ossetia.

It seems that Medoev had the Presidential Administration of the RF behind him; Tibilov was supported by his Moscow and local colleagues, while Sanakoev was a man of the Kokoity clan. All were decent people untainted by corruption charges, but none of them had figured prominently in local politics, which meant that each of them was acceptable to Moscow and the Kokoity clan.

The fourth candidate, Stanislav Kochiev, speaker of the local parliament and uncontested leader of the local communists, was needed to create the illusion of choice. It was expected that people who had parted with the Soviet past would hardly fancy a communist for president; moreover, Kochiev had not fully recovered after a recent stroke.

This meant a “no-alternative election” pure and simple.

The Kokoity clan would have hailed failure or the election of a puppet (either Tibilov or Sanakoev) as president. Medoev, who sought support in the Moscow corridors of power and was, therefore, out of Kokoity’s control, was less desirable.

Probably advised by Moscow, Dmitry Medoev posed himself as “a man supported by the Kremlin,” therefore it was too risky to remove him from the race, but absolutely safe to use his status of “Moscow favorite” against him. In fact, the earlier developments in the republic doomed any candi-

date supported by the Kremlin and Russian structures to failure. This meant that Medoev's failure could be interpreted as rejection of the Moscow diktat.

The turnout was the worst headache of the Moscow "curators": it remained to be seen whether the people would be willing to take part in a prearranged show with all roles distributed in advance. The organizers relied on the election technologies tested in Chechnia, where the "pre-elected" candidate reaped 90% of the votes with a 95% turnout.

In South Ossetia, people were obviously bored with elections and meetings: they wanted to finally see the end of the endless show.

The protest electorate remained an enigma, but then no one expected concerted voting from it.

It could be expected that a certain portion of the protest electorate would ignore the election or vote "against all" (an option which survived on the ballot papers by oversight) or cast their votes for Kochiev or Tibilov. The latter was supported by Jambulat Tedeev, very popular in South Ossetia, businessman A. Jussoev, former candidate Tskhovrebov, and weathered politician Gobozov. This meant that Tibilov consolidated a large share of the republican political elite, which made the failure of the election less plausible.

Dmitry Medoev, an intellectual and a very decent person, had lived and worked in Moscow far too long: on the one hand, he was forgotten in his own republic; many regarded him as an "alien from another planet." The Kokoity crowd used the media to circulate rumors about his alleged Georgian roots. On the other hand, Medoev, skilled in the games practiced in the Moscow corridors of power and accustomed to "puppet" existence, preferred to remain in the background and take orders from his bosses.

This was a bad mistake: not ordered to act on his own, he did not try to attract those who were displeased or offended (Yu. Dzitstsoyty and S. Zashev in particular); he never talked to the protest electorate and remained an alien to the ruling elite, the members of which owed their status to Kokoity and who remained predictably loyal to their former patron.

The fact that he had the Presidential Administration of the RF behind him, the image of which had been tainted by the Jioeva scandal, was a minus rather than a plus. In short, Medoev stood little chance and could somewhat improve his rating only at the expense of the communists.

The systemic mistakes of Dmitry Medoev (and, probably, of his Moscow patrons) destroyed his competitive advantages, even though at first his rating suggested that he would run in the second round. According to one of the polls, he led with 37%; S. Kochiev received 24%; L. Tibilov, 24%, and D. Sanakoev, 15%; another poll produced the following figures: Medoev, 28%; Sanakoev, 28%; Kochiev, 12%, and Tibilov, 5%; 17% said they would stay away from the polling stations.

The elections became a race between Tibilov and Sanakoev. The former placed the stakes on his experience as an official in an effort to draw the largest number of members of the political elite to his side. The latter, young and innovative, and at the same time cautious or even calculating, persistently courted all social and age groups, especially the youth.

He was deliberately moving away from the former president (and his clan), who had lost popularity with the voters. If elected president, he would probably try to get rid of his patron's firm grip, which might be appreciated in Moscow. He had the defense and security structures on his side, together with NGOs and the People's Party devoted to Kokoity. On the eve of the first round, he was one of the favorites with the expert community, which predicted a second round.

South Ossetia surprised everyone again: on 25 March, 2012, Leonid Tibilov won the first round with 46% or 44.81% (according to preliminary calculations) and Dmitry Medoev with 25% came second.

What happened next cannot be explained in rational terms: the share of votes cast for Tibilov and Medoev started shrinking, while the share of Sanakoev's votes (who came third according to preliminary information) started growing.

As a result, it was announced that Tibilov received 42.48%, Sanakoev, 24.58%, and Medoev, 23.79%. It looks as if Sanakoev's results were deliberately inflated at the expense of Medoev's, who, as a well-trained bureaucrat, pretended not to notice. Medoev's votes were stolen pure and simple.

Finally, in the second round, the voters were left to choose between two "technical" candidates, two "Kremlin favorites" and two bureaucrats. The tired voters, who no longer trusted their political leaders and who had lost reference points, had to choose between Tibilov and Sanakoev.

Leonid Tibilov was 60, while David Sanakoev had just turned 35. The former was an experienced bureaucrat, the latter cautious, calculating, and young. The winner (in the second round Tibilov had a much better chance of being elected) had to remain a bureaucrat with no political ambitions. Having excluded politics from everyday life in the Russian regions (and the country as a whole for that matter), certain forces might try to achieve the same in South Ossetia.

The events of the fall of 2011 and winter of 2011/12 did nothing to flatter a "Moscow candidate," but association with the Kokoity clan was even worse. This meant that both of them (especially Sanakoev) had to get rid of unwelcome associations to pass for "independent candidates." They both, on the whole, succeeded. It should be said, however, that Sanakoev's public vows over the graves of fallen soldiers were a bit too much, to say the least.

On the eve of the second round, the fog dissipated. Stanislav Kochiev called on his electorate to vote for Leonid Tibilov, who could also count on the votes of Dmitry Medoev's electorate, some of whom, however, intended to stay away from the polling stations. Primitive arithmetic suggested that Leonid Tibilov would reap at least 65% of the votes: he had 42.80% of those who had voted for him in the first round plus 5.26% of Kochiev's votes and 23.79% of Medoev's (minus those of the Medoev's supporters who would not vote).

Leonid Tibilov and his team could rest assured: the victory was guaranteed, which made falsifications or bribing the voters absolutely unnecessary. The Kokoity camp, likewise, remained absolutely calm: they were probably reluctant to bring "skeletons out of the closet."

Then, practically on the eve of the second round came a bolt from the blue: several corrupt Internet resources and certain obscure newspapers published disgusting articles spearheaded against Tibilov (and not only him): his age, one kidney, previous work in the KGB, contacts with South Ossetians doing business in Russia, etc. were raked up; for better effect he was accused of being a candidate of the Kokoity clan.

This was not all: a notorious lawyer who posed himself as a "human rights activist," Ruslan Magkaev from Vladikavkaz (well-known as an ardent supporter of Ala Jioeva), published a thick volume in which Tibilov looked like a puppet of the Russian oligarchs with Georgian roots (Alexander Ebralidze and others) and through them with Putin's inner circle, suspected, in turn, of allegedly intending to exchange South Ossetia's independence for Mikhail Saakashvili's resignation or, pure and simple, access to Georgian assets.

This was the central accusation in the work written in the best traditions of 1937 (the Great Purge year); he was also accused, absolutely groundlessly, of being involved in the contract killings in South Ossetia during the 1990s, as well as the Zarsk tragedy of 1992, when Georgian fighters fired point-blank at a bus carrying refugees.

It took no wisdom to guess that there were "hidden springs:" it seems that the Kokoity clan had coordinated a far from simple mud-slinging campaign and funded it using the names of Ala Jioeva and her supporters as a smokescreen. Neither Jioeva nor Sanakoev were guilty of this Bacchanalia of lies. This was a well-organized and well-synchronized campaign: its engineers (who had no compromising facts) found the sore spots and mixed everything together in the hopes that the electorate would be unable to separate the wheat from the chaff; Eduard Kokoity still remained outside the fracas.

The accusations hurled at Vladimir Putin and his closest circle meant that Eduard Kokoity had ended the truce with Moscow and come out on the warpath.

This, however, was not enough to close the gap between the two candidates.

The mud-slinging campaign, however, stole a certain share of votes from Tibilov: on 8 April, during the second round, he received 54.12% instead of the expected 65%; Sanakoev, on the other hand, somewhat improved his results by gaining 42.65%.

The “anti-Tibilov strategists” wanted to narrow down the gap between the candidates to start talking about falsifications and annulment of the results for the nth time. It seems that they nearly succeeded.

In Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, obscure individuals offered money left and right to buy more votes for Tibilov (whose rating was high enough anyway)—an obvious provocation.

To supply a pretext under which the results could have been annulled, David Sanakoev should have come out with a statement about falsifications and numerous violations during the election. He never did this because, on the eve, the two candidates met; it seems that Sanakoev, invited to the team of the new president, felt that his political future was assured.

Once more David Sanakoev acted as a cautious and wise politician with good prospects: he refused to dance to the tune of others and pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Kokoity and his retinue.

It should be said that both candidates behaved with great dignity.

R e p e r c u s s i o n s

Everyone was relieved to realize that no destabilization or a small “coup” staged by the supporters of the former president followed the election: the republic finally left the long period of elections behind to resume living.

The president elect faced a challenge: consolidation of split South Ossetian society; to cope he had to draw to his side as many political heavyweights as possible and deprive the ex-president and his people of their destabilization instruments.

The old parliament staffed with Kokoity’s supporters would be disbanded; the republic needed a new parliament, which could not be elected before the republic’s political field had been reformed. So far it remained split among the divided and demoralized Unity Party, the rapidly marginalizing communists, and the former president’s belligerent supporters, who called themselves the People’s Party.

The republic obviously needed new parties: David Sanakoev set up The New Ossetia Party; Dina Alborova, the For Civic Dignity Party, and Ala Jioeva, Ossetia—Freedom Square. The new parties would be able to run for parliament twelve months after the date of their registration, which meant that the present parliament should be preserved in the interests of all.

It should be said that after what happened between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, parliamentary elections would have brought victory to Jioeva and her supporters, therefore, Leonid Tibilov was determined to work with the old parliament and do his best. So far, preservation or disbandment (in any form) of the present parliament remained closely connected with preservation/liquidation of influence of the Kokoity clan.

During his election campaign, Tibilov relied on a diverse electorate; if elected president, he would have to satisfy the (frequently contradictory) interests of all the main forces and groups: it was a challenge, to say the least.

Interference of supporters and appointees of the former president did not help, even though the most odious figures had disappeared from sight. The ex-president relied on deputies of the Unity Party

and the People's Party to keep Speaker Z. Kokoev in his post; he, however, lost it in court to S. Kochiev.

In his personnel policy, Leonid Tibilov tried to be as independent of Moscow as possible and followed its instructions only when it proved unavoidable. He preferred the so-called Chibirov team (Ludvig Chibirov, the first president of the Republic of South Ossetia), to which his own friends and comrades-in-arms belonged.

The opposition represented by Ala Jioeva (appointed vice premier for social policy) and Anatoly Barankevich (head of the government's staff) got its share of the pie.

The post of foreign minister filled by Murat Jioev was contested by David Sanakoev, who came second in the presidential election. He was too cautious to accept the post of a vice premier as too exposed to criticism. He finally got the coveted position, which he probably regarded as another step up the political ladder. The above suggests the following questions: Is Tibilov in control of the Foreign Ministry of South Ossetia? Is this ministry torn apart by contradictions among Tibilov, Sanakoev, the former president, Ambassador Medoev, and someone else?

Today, there are several "power centers" in the corridors of power and inside the political elite: the Chibirovites and Boris Chochiev, head of the presidential administration; the former opposition headed by Jioeva; the parliament headed by Kochiev, as well as Sanakoev and members of Kokoity's team.

Rostislav Khugaev, the newly appointed prime minister, is not alien to political games either.

In this context, conflicts could not be avoided; all the political figures are busy gaining political weight and pushing their supporters into the power structures. This is best described as "unbalanced equilibrium" or "a war of all against all."

In the future, the new president will probably try to get rid of "too zealous" patrons of all hues: it remains to be seen whether he will succeed.

Leonid Tibilov has no one to rely on: he keeps even the most loyal of his supporters at a distance; the government is anything but a closely knit team.

For some strange reason Kokoity's retinue and some of the Cabinet members remain convinced that Tibilov is a stopgap figure and that Sanakoev (or someone else) will win the next pre-term election.

According to various sources, without the interference of Kokoity or Russian officials, the opposition could win any transparent presidential election.

Today, some of the South Ossetian officials and politicians look convinced, for some enigmatic reason, that Kokoity and his crowd will come back. Indeed, they have probably armed themselves with certain instruments for regaining control over the republic's power structures and organizing pre-term retirement for Tibilov.

To sum up: the fairly senseless and clumsy maneuvers of the Moscow "puppeteers"⁵ destabilized the situation in "not totally recognized" South Ossetia even more. I have already written that in the Russian political tradition these and similar "deeds" were described as "stupidity or treason."

There is no need to hold forth about "Russia's national interests"; suffice it to say that against the background of the recent presidential election in Georgia, perfectly calculated and perfectly or-

⁵ It should be said in this connection that Sergey Vinokurov, Head of the Department of the Presidential Administration of the RF for Regional and Cultural Relations with other Countries, and his deputy Vladislav Gasumyanov (about him see [<http://www.rospress.com/government/8918/>, <http://forum-msk.org/material/power/7246764.html>] etc.), who were actively involved in the South Ossetian elections, were removed from their posts in April 2012 immediately after the highly dubious triumph of the presidential marathon in South Ossetia. Sergey Chebotarev, another hero of the election, who headed the department and, according to certain Internet resources, was responsible for carrying out instructions, became deputy head of the same department.

chestrated by the United States, the incompetent or even clumsy intrigues of Moscow officials look even more stupid. In fact, both countries pursued the same aim through very different methods.

Seen from Moscow, South Ossetia should have looked like a “collective farm Soviet style” with a formally elected (appointed) chairman instead of an elected president.

These games in the republic, which remains in a state of war with its former metropolitan country, might cost both South Ossetia and Russia very dearly. More and more people will emigrate, while those who stay behind will become apathetic and resigned to their fate.

If Leonid Tibilov fails to consolidate South Ossetian society, the 2011-2012 elections might be followed by massive emigration. There is the danger that the successful “special” and “cleansing” operations will turn the republic into a large military base with no workforce to run it.

ON THE MULTICULTURALISM PROJECT AND THE SOCIOPOLITICAL STATUS OF ISLAM IN UKRAINE

*Preliminary Theses for a Case Study of
Ethnocultural, Confessional, and Personal Self-Identity
in a Multicultural Environment*

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Introduction

The subject of my article is relatively novel for Ukraine, a country that has been drawn into the worldwide development of multiculturalism. This means that the academic community should identify the parameters, fundamental features, and characteristics of the related changes.

In the course of our project we posed ourselves the task of identifying, on the one hand, the basic features of the Ukrainian society conducive to its multicultural format; on the other, the state of diverse ethnocultural groups living in Ukraine and their religious and cultural parameters that make it easier/harder to build up a

multicultural society in the republic's very specific conditions.

This article is an attempt at describing the contemporary state of Islam and the specifics of its traditions in Ukraine which should be taken into account when developing multiculturalism. We will clarify the ideology of our project and outline several main specifics and problems of contemporary Muslim identity which serve as the background against which multiculturalism will (or will not, which will entail dangerous repercussions) be formed in Ukraine and which call for profound and detailed analysis.

Throughout its history, Ukraine, as part of an associated state structure, has maintained close relations with other countries. Throughout the longest stretch of its history, however, with the exception of short episodes, it remained deprived of the legal rights to be independently and directly involved in international relations. This status, which "truncated" its rights to independent international relations, did not allow Ukraine to regard itself as a de facto/de jure entity of world politics.

At the new stage, Ukraine's recent sovereignty gives it, for the first time in its history, the legitimate right to be involved in international institutions as an independent and fully-fledged entity of international policy. However, the country and its government bodies have to cope with numerous problems, the scope of which has be-

come much wider and calls for well-justified motivations. This constitutes the main specific feature of the new stage.

Today, the country's government bodies are facing the task of working on an algorithm of its own to be applied to systemic problems.

The fact that Ukraine is situated at the cross-roads of the transport and communication main-lines of the Eurasian geopolitical space has made this stage doubly important and created several economic advantages. At the same time, the transit nature of its geopolitical location creates problems in its domestic policy, which call for constructive solutions in order to achieve the best possible social order in line with the responsibilities imposed on the country by the international legal regulations and membership in international organizations.

A new model of ethnogenesis should be treated as a priority; the country must reach an objective comprehension of the main stages of community-building in order to consolidate all the sub-ethnic groups which form the cornerstone of the contemporary Ukrainian nation. It is equally important to structuralize the inner political and demographic structures of the country's population.

This is not an easy task: Ukraine is a multi-confessional country, the citizens of which identify themselves with different historical and cultural values.

The Muslims of Ukraine

Leaving the details of the relations inside the Christian community to be discussed by those who are better equipped to analyze them, I will try to reconstruct the phenomenon of political Islam and its place in the country's political life.

The Crimean Tatars, the autochthonous population of the peninsula, and migrants from the Volga area and the Caucasus who have been living in Ukraine for several generations and have not lost their historical, cultural, and national traditions and religion form part of the Ukrainian population.

According to the latest census, there are two million Muslims (about 4% of the total population) in Ukraine. Today, there are over 280 thousand Crimean Tatars-Muslims in the country; the majority of them live in the Crimea and comprise about 13% of its total population. There are several thousand Volga Tatars and Bashkirs, as well as Azeris and people from the Northern Caucasus. The constantly growing number of immigrants from the Arab East, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Palestine, and the new-

ly independent states of Central Asia with Ukrainian passports identify themselves culturally and religiously with Islam.

I have paid particular attention to the fact that as distinct from the countries of the Arab East, where Islam exists in a monoethnic milieu, in Central Asia, ethnic, sub-ethnic, kinship, clan, and sometimes patron/client relations consolidate confessional self-identity. In Uzbekistan, for example, which supplies the largest number of Crimean Tatar repatriates, the mahallya (quarter) in towns and cities and kishlak in the countryside play a consolidating role and perform the functions of self-administrations. In Kazakhstan, the Kazakhs are consolidated by belonging to the same zhuz; in Kyrgyzstan, this role belongs to the kanat (a group of densely settled tribes). There were sub-levels—the tribe and the clan. The Tajiks, Uyghurs, and Dungans relied on the place where they lived and kinship relations for ethnic, confessional, and cultural self-identification.

When looking into the process of rebirth of the traditional hierarchical structures in Central Asia and the Caucasus from which Islam is spreading across the post-Soviet territory, and Ukraine as its part, I have concentrated on a factor that appears paradoxical at first glance: it was Soviet power, which deliberately limited Islam, that was the main catalyst of clan self-identity in its quasi-traditional forms and outcrops.

The typology of the resultant social structures suggests that the Soviet Communist Party and administrative nomenklatura in the national republics and the authoritarian hierarchical system blended with the traditional model of social relations based on collective solidarity and obedience to the elders. The resultant sustainable symbiosis within the framework of the “socialist system of government” was conducive to the appearance and strengthening of extremely viable structures ruled by clan elites camouflaged as the Soviet party and economic nomenklatura.

To maintain legitimacy, the local rulers continued with the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric, especially when it came to unsuccessful attempts to impose atheism and internationalism on local societies: when used by the party nomenklatura these words sounded like incantations.

In the current demographic situation connected, in many ways, with the power and political structures in the Central Asian states and Azerbaijan, Islam remains the main symbol of national specifics and a factor of cultural and historical self-identity. A wider context of the same problem makes it abundantly clear that traditional clan and tribal relations and belonging to a particular clan serve as the main indicator of political and social identity in the area of Islam rather than the Muslim religion and its institutions per se. The specifics of the new national-state identity and the axiology of relations at the national and individual level are developing along these lines.

When talking about the traditional social hierarchy, which demonstrates viability, we should always bear in mind that the Soviet Union and the Bolshevik ideology left an ideological vacuum behind them that is obvious across the entire post-Soviet space. In these conditions, the struggle against de-nationalization and acculturation rehabilitated the traditional ideological and cultural values as an inalienable part of national cultures. In other words, historical and national cultural values have been revived.

Today, the Muslim renaissance is becoming more obvious and more active in the entire area of Islam. The figures of demographic growth and the unmistakable trend toward migration show that Islam is spreading across the entire post-Soviet space (Ukraine being no exception). Domestic political situation in the newly independent countries is conducive to this. The national and state sovereignties of the newly independent states have exposed them to the entire range of negative repercussions of a systemic economic, financial, demographic, social, and cultural crisis and to the voluntarism of the powers that be and omnipresent corruption in the newly independent states that is obvious at practically all levels.

As soon as they acquired their sovereignty, these countries lost their national intelligentsia: part of it was routed and repressed or forced into emigration; the pauperized majority left to cope

with their leaders are still haphazardly looking for social and political alternatives to what is going today and turn to the “true” Islam, which has nothing to do with the people in power, as practically the only means of dealing with the current social and political situation at the group and existential levels.

There is another, and probably the only, alternative: massive emigration from their ethnic territories. This option, however, does not exclude returning to the “true” Islam. This is extremely important for the political processes underway in all the countries in which Muslim migrants from the post-Soviet states arrive, Ukraine, where these processes remain latent, being no exception.

World history has taught us that those who preach the ideas of a fair and just society stand the best chance in conditions where the ruling elite has exhausted its resources and the interests of which contradict, in the most obvious and uncompromising way, the social and economic expectations of the basic population groups. In this situation, political Islam, which appeals to the traditional spiritual values, can offer a more puritanical and much more demanding alternative, which the populists who have mastered the “language of the street” present as much fairer.

A more detailed analysis relates the new type of relations not to those formed inside states but to those between the financial-industrial corporations that share the spheres of influence on the world markets and the global marginalized masses.

Attitude toward Radical Forms of Islam

The results of numerous recent studies have clearly demonstrated that only liberal Islam based on universal humanist values and the mechanisms of their realization in the sociocultural space can be successfully used to fight the radical forms of Islam.

Early in the 20th century, Jadidism, a movement of enlightenment in Islam, began to form in Ukraine. It was associated with the names of Sh. Marjani, I. Gasprinski, Yu. Akchur, and others who cultivated Islam adapted to contemporary civilizational conditions, universal humanitarian values, and ideas of social justice and liberalism.

To proceed further with our studies, we should re-actualize the philosophical and culturological heritage of the founders of Jadidism and their followers stored in Ukrainian archives and libraries (in the I. Gasprinski Library in Simferopol, among other places). The personal library of Professor of Kazan University Nikolai Katanov taken out of Soviet Russia in the 1920s landed at the Institute of Geography in Istanbul where for want of specialists with good command of Russian it remained piled on the floor.

Zeki Velidi Togan’s attempts to bring together the liberal-democratic ideas of European socialists of the early 20th century and the cultural and social-legal traditions of Islam can serve as a theoretical and methodological basis for our studies.

The attempts at Islamic renovation made in the late 19th century by the Jadids have become even more pertinent today. In the context of Russia’s colonial policy, the enlightened Islamic community of the early 20th century (headed by the Volga and Crimean Tatars) could not set up secular educational establishments, higher schools, or political parties; it was limited in property rights and economic activities. This explains why the secondary educational establishments—the madrasahs, which accumulated the Muslim traditions—remained the only vehicle of national-cultural self-identity of the enlightened Islamic community.

In the pinching context of the political and religious pressure of czarist Russia, the Jadids performed an intellectual feat: they tore themselves away from the conservative forms of Islam to move closer to the culture of enlightened Europe.

This was when the best representatives of Islamic culture in Russia embraced the Jadidist ideas of renovation that inspired the enlightened part of society. In fact, Jadidism was not limited to the idea of reforms in education and modernization of Islam; it believed that many systemic cultural parameters as a dynamically developing whole should also be changed.

Modernization of religion and culture guarantees that the nation and the state will survive and develop. The globalized world has made it impossible to remain isolated from the world cultural trends; since integration of local cultures into the world processes is inevitable, it is doubly important to revive Jadidism and its ideas.

Zeki Velidi Togan, who reconstructed the main ideas of Jadidism, deemed it necessary to stress that the movement has not created a new form of Islam; it merely tried to remove the later historical and ethnic layers which, in the course of time, had developed into taqlid (unquestioned truths). Jadidism should not be understood as reform in the European sense of the term: it purifies Islam, shows a way out of the spiritual and intellectual impasse, and rejects alien regulations imposed from the outside.

It rejected religious xenophobia; it relied on the basic Koranic principles to critically analyze all sorts of scholastic ideas preached by orthodox Muslim theologians.

An objective analysis of the ideas of Jadidism reveals that this religious and educational movement was not a version of Russian Islam but, rather, the core freed from medieval prejudices, which, in one way or another, could emerge in any Muslim region. For some objective reasons, however, it emerged in the Russian Empire. This means that the appearance of Jadidism was dictated by the objective conditions and the logic of historical evolution of Islam; hence we can talk about the universality of Jadidism.

The first Muslim leaders respected the mind as a great Divine gift; their type of critical reasoning (ijtihad) rested on a creative approach. It was ijtihad that helped the young religion to spread far and wide across the world; those societies which abandoned it inevitably ossified their backwardness.

The Jadids restored the freedom of thinking in Islam based on the principle that neither the community, nor the imam or mufti should stand between man and God. This meant that man should be aware of his personal responsibility for what he is doing and should be able to distinguish between good and evil. This also meant that people need comprehensive education to acquire adequate knowledge.

This brings Islam close to the values of Euro-Atlantic civilization: Western culture is rooted in self-reflection, in which creative thinking (later developed into liberal ideas) dominated.

They looked at the world differently; for them Islam as a historical-cultural phenomenon was not limited to contemplation of its information heritage; it was expected to address the most urgent needs created by dynamically developed life. Faith should answer the questions created by life, which is impossible without scientific knowledge and a good education. Any imam worthy of his position should be universally educated to be able to lead others.

At the same time we should bear in mind that today the interests of the world are very different from what they were centuries ago. This means that to preserve its position in society Islam must be able to cope with contemporary challenges; the time has come to abandon the outdated religious opinions to which many of the Eastern countries are still clinging. We all know that the tradition of treating women as second-rate beings crept into Islam from Judaism and Christianity and that, as distinct from Europe, Muslim countries have not yet abandoned it.

Musa Bigiev, a Russian student of Islam, created a theory called Evidence of the Mercy of God, according to which Divine mercy envelops all of God's creatures irrespective of their religious beliefs in life. Surah 2 (62) says, for example: "Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and Sabians, and who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."

Islam is a religion of peace, which is confirmed by the everyday relations between Muslims and Orthodox Christians and between Muslims and Jews in the traditionally Muslim countries of the Middle East and in Ukraine. Peaceful Islam stands a good chance of becoming one of the Ukrainian brands because it, together with Christianity (Orthodoxy, Greco-Roman, and Catholic) and Judaism, shaped the historical and cultural heritage of Ukraine.

Historical experience and the spiritual-intellectual legacy of Jadidism born in the Volga area and Ukraine have acquired worldwide historical importance because today Islam is developing according to the needs of society and the challenges of the times.

The postulates of Jadidism are very close to the conception of civilizational Islam postulated by former Premier of Malaysia Ahmad Badawi and also to what prominent Muslim thinkers and public figures of Asia and Europe say. The new stage in Islamic civilizational revival stems from the desire to restore a creative attitude toward life in Islam.

In Shi'a Iran, the interpretation of the basic canons of Islam is moving in the same direction; Iranian philosophers believe that Islam and the West should start a dialog to achieve reconciliation.

Speaking at a press conference at RIA Novosti, Professor of Islamic law and philosophy M. Damad said that mutual understanding would lead to reconciliation between Islam and the West. When asked whether the time of reconciliation had been lost and whether the threats to Iran had made reconciliation hardly possible, Prof. Reza Davari Ardakani, President of the Iranian Academy of Sciences, said that "it is never late to start a dialog."

The Iranian academics deemed it necessary to stress that they did not succumb to any government pressure imposed on the study of Western philosophy.

The Muslims of Ukraine should serve as a link between the Islamic world and the West—this is their historic mission in a world divided into Christians, Jews, and Muslims separated by an abyss that might become an ultimate obstacle. This split runs through human souls and fills them with anxiety, fear, and mutual mistrust. We need new values, neither liberal nor traditionally Islamic, and therefore acceptable to one and all.

To clarify the role of the Islamic factor in the development of civil society in the multicultural context, we should rely on as wide an academic circle as possible. We should offer weighty arguments to prove that this task is highly topical and that we must act promptly to optimize economic, social, political and cultural, conditions for the part of society that professes Islamic values.

It is no less important to explain to Muslims that they are living in a society prepared to seek constructive compromises; that it does not isolate them and is not hostile to them. Civilized discussions of the Islam-related problems would have been useful; we should address many potentially destructive problems which, if left pending, might erupt into confessional confrontation.

In Ukraine, negative ideas about Islam and its followers are fairly widespread and are actively promoted by the media. This explains why Islam is seen as an aggressive confession (and civilization) hostile to Christianity. This means that the studies of the Islamic factor and its role should concentrate on overcoming these negative attitudes.

In the Soviet Union, official atheism lumped all Islamic societies together and pushed them beyond the limits of rational analysis, which should rely on practical studies of religious rites in their diversity.

In recent decades, we have been watching wide-scale restoration of the old and establishment of a multitude of new Islamic centers. The new reality insistently calls for a new idea of Islam.

The “new wave” of academics who identify themselves with the cultural and historical legacy of Islam believe that Muslims should live in everyday reality rather than be forced to follow the injunctions of their spiritual teaching. It should be said that societies with prevailing Muslim populations are demonstrating a growing number of different approaches to Islam. There is an even greater number of “interpretations” of Islam in the countries with Muslim minorities.

Academic and non-academic circles still rely on the traditional and undifferentiating terms “Muslims” and “Islamic countries”; however, many members of the academic community who have moved away from the inadequate conception of a one “Islamic world” concentrate on the variety of Islamic trends.

“Aliens” in Islam. Faith or Religion in the Contact Zone in the Context of a Dialog of Civilizations

The problem of self-identification of those who do not regard themselves as Muslims in the traditional meaning of the word has come to the fore. They either do not follow many of the required Muslim rules or do not profess any religion. These people, however, identify themselves with the cultural Islamic tradition into which they were born.

A generalized approach to this stratum suggests that traditional Islam is a norm while all other versions constitute deviations from the norm. In other words, those who have no habit of following the fairly strict traditional Muslim rules are excluded from the Islamic cultural discourse. These people are aliens in prayer houses and mosques; society treats them in the same way. On the other hand, Islamic undertones in the existential attitudes of the “aliens” (if discussed in the categories of Carl Jung) at the genetic and historical-cultural levels stir up inner conflicts in them and affect their self-perception.

On the one hand, these people spend their lives in an effort to “escape the shadow of Islam;” adapt themselves to Western values; reassess social and cultural values; and become, in the final analysis, entities of an “open society.” On the other hand, they are constantly aware of the obvious hostility of the followers of traditional Islam, which complicates, at least at the existential level, their historical and cultural self-identification.

It should be said that from the point of view of the “aliens,” the Islamic culture and Islamic politics differ considerably from the orientalist or any other approach to these problems. They look at Islam as a phenomenon of history and culture and at Islamic politics as a component of political culture.

This approach is confirmed by the fact that most conceptions devised to “protect” the Islamic culture stem from extra-confessional characteristics such as ethnic affiliation; this means that Islam is going beyond its religious limits. All national movements treat defense of Islam as their priority, yet nationalism can hardly be equated with Muslim extremism. The events stirred up by the opposition, which protested against the severe persecution of those who failed to agree with the clergy in culture and politics that followed the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, serve as an ample example of the shift in interpretations.

In the Islamic context, the “aliens” are noticed but ignored; they are heard but not listened to since they are ignorant of the correct Islamic terms and vocabulary and cannot formulate their arguments in favor of social and cultural diversity they advocate.

According to the rules of religious piety, everything the Muslim does should be regarded in the context of Islam; the following has gained wide currency: “If you have taken the path of Islam then, no matter how different the end might be, the path will be invariably true.” In the political context, this means that only the Muslim East (and not other historical, cultural, and confessional areas of the world) can seek diversity within Islam (only) with the aim to develop cultural individuality among its followers.

Those who insist, without adequate arguments, that “there is no alternative to Islam in the East” contradict historical facts and the reality of peaceful coexistence among different confessions.

This context suggests several so far unanswered questions: What happens to the non-Muslims in Eastern countries who are seeking their cultural identity within Islam? How does a person “born Muslim” feel in a non-Muslim environment? These questions and the specifics of the “Islamic discourse” inevitably push us into the entanglements of Muslim laws and regulations.

The lexical and terminological labyrinth makes intellectual efforts even harder: we have to identify the “best Islam” in the randomly oriented set of contradictory interpretations of analyzed events and facts. The road is paved with word combinations like “regressive Islam,” “progressive Islam,” “quasi-Islam,” “true Islam,” etc., the real content of which defies rational interpretation.

This means that intellectual energy is wasted on producing banalities such as “this version differs from the others” or “this interpretation has produced amazing results.” This is best illustrated by the interpretations of the fairly shopworn cliché “Islamic feminism.” Its interpretation is not equally authentic to the original because the Koran contains many more ideas of equality than the Islamic feminist interpretations of the Islamic canons can produce.

For example, what do we mean when we talk about more equality for women? Why should their rights stem from the fatwas adopted on the strength of special investigations conducted by influential muftis and fakihs and which do nothing at all except slightly raising the status of women? Which legal norms currently accepted by the countries found outside the traditional Islamic areas serve as the foundation of this “uncontestable” decree?

There are attempts, very much in line with official instructions, to reveal the meaning of those Koranic verses that speak of limited freedom for women. Meanwhile, we all know that any word can be interpreted in several different ways, which provides interpreters with a certain leeway: they are free to select less obviously limiting synonyms to convince the world of the liberal nature of the Koranic canons.

This should not be taken to mean that Islamic law is untouchable; future generations, likewise, will probably change some of the rules to adjust them to reality.

However, there are bones to pick with those “aliens” who see rejection of the Islamic discourse as movement toward the truth and the only alternative to existential and social-cultural existence, since this choice is fraught with a loss of their genetic, cultural, and historical self-identity. The “aliens” born into the values based on the cultural and historical discourse of Islam are free to look for an alternative only in Islam. In line with the traditional Islamic interpretation, however, they are forced to treat human rights and freedoms as a postulate (in disregard of cultural relativism) based on the assertion that “there is any number of objections to our decisions outside the Muslim world, but our decisions correspond to our way of life.” The “aliens” have no ethical rights to refute the above because the followers of “true” Islam are suspicious of and hostile to all attempts at new interpretations of the canonical postulates: they regard such attempts as precedents after which manipulation of the basic values of Islam will be possible.

Liberal students from the “non-Muslim world” should realize that the “aliens” in Islam have long been trying to overcome objective intellectual and ethical barriers in an effort to insist on their cultural and historical identity. For a long time they have remained dedicated to a different, neither “non-Western” nor “true” Islamic point of view. “Silent” pluralism (at best) or humiliating condescension (at worst) on the part of those who defend the “Western” point of view deprive the “aliens” of a chance to join the discussions in order to address and resolve their intellectual and moral and ethical dilemmas. In the absence of a dialog with “true” Islam, the “aliens” cannot constructively correct and readjust their ideas.

The intellectual vacuum provokes “cultural racism” of sorts because, ignored by one side (even if at the subconscious level), problems usually crop up in negative contexts. It seems that the extreme answers provided by the marginalized “aliens” (intellectuals seemingly perfectly integrated into Western society who perform irrational terrorist acts) are caused by the consistently ignored, yet very real problem of overcoming the visually not quite discernable intellectual and ethical barriers.

So far, contemporary terrorism as a social and psychological phenomenon has not been fully studied either from the criminological or the psychopathological point of view. We have merely arrived at a preliminary conclusion that intellectual bifurcation and alienation, which stir up psychopathic stereotypes of potential and real terrorists, form one of the links in the chain of causes of unmotivated aggression. The situation, however, is much more complicated.

The “aliens” in Islam do not expect Western liberals to join the discussion about the place and role of Islam in the contemporary world; these “aliens” have much more in common with people in other countries than with the citizens of their own country. This means that an equal discussion of any of the burning issues should have excluded condescension toward the “aliens.”

It seems that the political or cultural barriers can be overcome if Islam formulates its official credo in terms and concepts that correlate with the categories understandable to the academic and political communities outside Islam.

The problem of the role of religion in a state and of the relationship between the state and religious institutions is signally important: even if the gap between them is fairly wide, in the face of large-scale social crises they act together. Society, however, is billed for their mutual services.

Our studies of the problems of ethnocultural, confessional, and individual self-identity have shown that we should create a “safe space” in which people will be able to freely discuss government actions and religious postulates without running the risk of being accused of high treason or heresy.

So far, any attempt to look for the truth outside the confines of the Islamic discourse runs across “we have an Islamic society within which we should look for our cultural identity.” This invites the following answer: “in the context of other factors (economic, historical, political, and cultural), religion cannot remain the only reference point”; in post-modernist parlance, this sounds like “the sphere of problems has shifted from the object to its interpretation.” This demands the assumption that Islam and its interpretations are found at different taxonomical levels: will supporters of “true” Islam accept this?

This brings us to the main (and insoluble) contradiction created by an inadequate understanding of the conceptual and legal limits of Islamic law by those who do not identify themselves with the Muslim world. If Islamic law is universal and can adequately resolve all collisions in the life of society, it should not be ignored only because it allows numerous interpretations; if the Islamic law is not universal, its vague and shapeless definitions (from the point of view of the non-Islamic legal and regulatory traditions) may be used by the regulatory legal systems outside the jurisdiction of the Islamic world only for fairly limited analytical purposes without further application.

It is common knowledge that there is any number of people in the Muslim world who crave for positive changes; they know that only one religious confession cannot be held responsible for

all the multitude of social ills and that injustice exists outside Islamic law as well. This means that instead of reforms within Islamic law we should act in conformity with the processes unfolding in the wider world.

Many people, irrespective of their faith, oppose all forms of subjugation, including those implied by Islamic law. At the same time, the Muslims are held responsible for the fact that Islamic societies were not determined enough in their protest against exploitation and violations of human rights.

We must admit that today Islamic law is the main factor interfering with social reform. Not infrequently, the law, which does not directly oppose modernization of a social and legal system, limits any necessary efforts. This means that to achieve justice, democracy, and civil rights, we must remove the regulatory legal obstacles and overcome the resistance of the state and religious canons supporting it.

I am not talking about a moratorium on the use of Islamic law and do not suggest that its ideologists should be isolated: the law should be analyzed in an impartial and comprehensive manner.

The aim is to establish a consensus among the faithful without relying on Islamist principles, otherwise a liberal democratic society will remain unattainable.

We should admit that Islamic law in its present state can hardly be used to resolve the multitude of problems the world is facing today. To adjust it to the contemporary world, it is not enough to rephrase its provisions using new wording, rather the entire conceptual system born by Islam must be changed. The above suggests that to achieve social justice, civil freedoms, equality of the sexes, etc., we must go beyond the regulatory legal field of Islam and beyond the framework of its political interpretations in particular.

In other words, full-scale reform of the Islamic legal system, which must be brought into conformity with contemporary reality, demands a lot of political will and determination from the leaders of the Muslim world.

Islam in the Crimea

We all know that Islam was planted in the homogenous Turkic ethno-cultural community in several stages.

There is no written and absolutely reliable evidence about the first Islamic missionaries in the Turkic world. According to legend, Arystan Baba, a contemporary and companion of the Prophet Muhammad, was the first Muslim in Central Asia. The mystic Hoja Akhmet Yassawi, his spiritual disciple, born four centuries later (in 1093) in the city of Sayram (present day Kazakhstan) adapted the Islamic canons to the traditional beliefs of the local Turkic nomads by preserving the cult of ancestors, secularized interpretation of the canons, reducing the role of the institution of intermediaries and the role of the mullahs, etc. Adapted and flexible Islam spread far and wide in the region.

Several centuries later, at the turn of the 20th century, this version of Islam was used as the starting point of Jadidism, which demanded secular education and reforms in several other aspects of life.

It seems that the Crimean Tatars as an ethnicity that has preserved Islam as part of its historical and cultural traditions and collective consciousness should have been more actively involved in implementing the Muslim values of the Jadid social and political legacy, particularly the ideas of Ismail Gasprinski, an enlightener and active political figure, and his comrades-in-arms.

Revived traditions and the promotion of liberal Islam will help to overcome the so far widespread mistrust and fear of the Muslims obvious in the much larger non-Muslim population of the Crimea. It

should be said that the media have been very instrumental in demonizing the followers of Islam. It is also necessary for lifting the threat of social outbursts by the Crimean Tatar community.

Conclusion

The problem of the Islamic factor in Ukrainian politics exceeds the limits of academic studies. The country, caught in social-political and geopolitical transit, will have to probe deeper into Islam as one of the key components of the changing social and political reality. An integrated approach to the problem presupposes a set of applied studies and due attention to the changing demographic situation. Inattention might divide society into separate confessional communities and might breed and encourage mistrust among the main population groups and other negative phenomena.

REGIONAL SECURITY

RUSSIA'S INFORMATION SECURITY IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS: PROBLEMS AND HOW TO SETTLE THEM

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Introduction

The Northern Caucasus, home to numerous ethnicities, is a challenge to the political administration and national security of the Russian Federation; many problems of state order and ethnic relationships, caused by rivalry among political and ethnic elites for power and influence, have reached a critical level. There are ethnic and clan contradictions and territorial disagreements.¹

Today, the information security of the Northern Caucasus should be discussed at two levels—domestic and global. The former is related

to the region's status and role in Russia's domestic policy and development and the latter to its place in Russia's foreign policy and the interest of foreign states and international organizations in the macro region.

In one of his books, Andrey Zdravomyslov wrote that the Northern Caucasus owed its international weight to the fact that it was situated at the crossing of geopolitical "power" lines, "the crossroads of geopolitical aims."² On 12 November, 2009, in his address to the Federal Assembly, President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev pointed out

¹ See: V.E. Mishin, *Bezopasnost Severnogo Kavkaza v usloviakh globalizatsii*, Ph.D. thesis, Pyatigorsk, 2005, p. 85.

² A.G. Zdravomyslov, *Mezhnatsionalnye konflikty v postsovetskom prostranstve*, Moscow, 1996, p. 87.

that “our most serious, domestic political problem [is] the situation in the North Caucasus.”³

³ [<http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/297#sel=162:1,162:5>].

Information security in the Northern Caucasus is directly related to real and potential threats and challenges. In the last few years, their level and scope have increased many times over to become extremely dangerous.

Sources of Information Threats

As one of Russia’s macro regions, the Northern Caucasus is open to globalization impacts, is affected by global information and communication technologies, and is, therefore, open to information threats.⁴ The rapid increase in number of Internet users, electronic media, and data bases is changing the lifestyle in the North Caucasian republics.

The media, the only source of information about what is going on in the world, can affect public opinion by planting all sorts of ideas about events and developments in the public’s mind; very often, however, what they say has nothing to do with reality.

The media invariably stir up a lot of interest; on the other hand, the reading and viewing public should be aware of the considerable changes underway in the information sphere.

At the turn of the century, the fundamental changes in the “balance of power” in the sphere of information and functional purposes of the media created an absolutely new context in which the press, radio, and even TV (recently the most popular information source) were pushed aside. The last decade has seen new communicative and information vehicles: blogs, social networks, and Internet news. In the Northern Caucasus, these trends have not yet become all-important, however they have already transformed the information space and created new actors.

Politically active groups of young or even older people have become active Internet users; they rely on the Internet for communication and the latest information supplied by social networks, blogs, interactive sites, text messages, etc. An analysis has revealed that the terrorist act which took place in Stavropol on 26 May, 2010 was fully and promptly covered on the Internet: some of the websites moved faster than the traditional media to publish the names of those injured and killed; the VKontakte social network brimmed with information and commentaries.⁵

The younger generation has obviously moved away from the traditional media, previously the only source of information and social communication, to the social networks, making the blogosphere the main information source and a platform of discussion.

The science of conflict resolution admits that the mobilization of ethnicity is a purpose-oriented process; this calls for close attention to manipulation technologies. It should be said, however, that certain authors have quite rightly warned that the factor of manipulation should not be absolutized; it should be analyzed within the relevant context of objective and subjective factors (ranging from social-economic to social-psychological) fraught with ethnic confrontation. Ethnicity “can easily be manipulated by political leaders seeking to mobilize a population, especially when a society is undergoing major socio-economic change.”⁶

⁴ See: Ibidem.

⁵ See: “Rol SMI v blokovykh konfliktakh,” in: V.A. Avksentyev, S.N. Zinev, D.A. Lavrinenko, et al., *Etnopoliticheskie protsessy na yuge Rossii: ot lokalnykh k blokovym konfliktam*, Rostov on Don, 2011.

⁶ D. Smith, *Trends and Causes of Armed Conflict*, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2004, p. 11.

The use or, rather, abuse of ethnicity for political purposes threatens the territorial integrity of states; this means that the mechanisms employed in the North Caucasian republics should be carefully studied. According to V. Avksentiev, G. Gritsenko, and A. Dmitriev, “there is a political dominant—a systemic ethnopolitical crisis”⁷ in the Northern Caucasus.

Manipulation of public opinion and human minds (sacralization of traditional elements that are sometimes deliberately presented as archaic) are an important vehicle of politicization of ethnicity and Islam.

Destructive forces in the Northern Caucasus are not alien to using the media for misinformation. In 2009, the *Karachaev-Balkarsky mir* newspaper ran a series of articles designed to discriminate Christianity and the Cossacks and revive certain conflicts of the past. One of the articles dealing with the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 said in particular: “The Caucasian aborigines in the areas occupied by Germans might have thought: is there any difference between Russians and Germans? After all, radish might turn out to be sweeter than horse-radish.”⁸

Traditionalism and Islamism are interconnected (yet not identical), which explains why they might compete with each other, even though the way they are planted in the mind is very similar. Both actively use information technologies; on the other hand, in the Northern Caucasus traditionalism is encouraged by the regional ruling elites who look at radical Islamism as an alien phenomenon.

While Salafism is popularized in illegal publications, the thesis of the exclusive nature of any of the ethnic cultures is openly promoted in academic publications, courseware, and the press. The North Caucasian ethnic elites who pay lip-service to the federal center use the slogans of ethnocultural specifics to their own advantage; they rely on those elements of traditional culture which sacralize power and skillfully keep the people away from political decision-making.

The Russian media are fond of writing about certain elements of Caucasian traditional culture (abduction of brides, abreks, etc.) as something very romantic. President of Ingushetia Yunus-bek Yevkurov spares no effort to reconcile neighbors divided by blood feuds⁹ (another of the North Caucasian traditions), however the media have so far failed to double his efforts with adequate information support, even though this traditional institution is responsible, to a great extent, for the growing number of those who join bands of militants in the Northern Caucasus. We should be aware that the revival of traditionalist attitudes in the minds of the local people constitutes an information threat to Russia as a whole.

Separatism is one of the manifestations of ethnopolitical conflict and the most radical type of nationalism. Based on the misinterpreted principle of national self-identification, it demonstrates a certain level of organization. We should not dupe ourselves: demands for sovereignty and independence in an ethnically distinctive territory are nothing but a mechanism of manipulation used by certain groups to promote their own interests.

Administration of Information Flows

Separatism in the Chechen Republic is mainly latent; “cultural separatism” based on traditionalism encouraged in the Northern Caucasus, however, might undermine the political and legal pillars

⁷ V.A. Avksteniev, G.D. Gritsenko, A.V. Dmitriev, *Regionalnaia konfliktologiiia: kontsepty i rossiiskaia praktika*, Moscow, 2008, p. 14; *Yug Rossii v zerkale konfliktologicheskoy ekspertizy*, ed. by G.G. Matishov, N.I. Golubeva, V.A. Avksentiev, Rostov on Don, 2011, pp. 44-48.

⁸ *Yug Rossii v zerkale konfliktologicheskoy ekspertizy*, p. 261.

⁹ See: M. Tangiev, “Mirovorcheskie initsiativy prezidenta Ingushetii,” *Bulletin seti etnologicheskogo monitoringa* (Moscow), No. 85, May-June 2009, p. 80.

of Russia. In the context of the rising ethnic tension, regressive traditionalism connected with the revived custom of blood feud is coming to the fore; “cultural separatism” is partly evident in the relations between the information elites of Chechnia and the federal center: part of the region’s ethnopolitical elite is engaged in nationalist activities, while some of the media shatter the convictions of the masses in and outside the republic.

The above is best illustrated by the media coverage of the July 2010 events at a Don summer camp for children in the Krasnodar Territory. The Chechen media presented the conflict between local young men and groups of young people from other areas as a “pogrom and assault on Chechen children”; the media of the Krasnodar Territory, rather than concentrating on the shocking fact that the young men who arrived from Chechnia tore down the state flag of the Russian Federation, wrote about a “conflict over girls.” The media savored the minutest details of what had happened, but passed over in silence the court sentence and the ethnic affiliations of those who were punished.

This suggests the following: in order to create a negative attitude toward this type of conflict, the media should be guided by the interests of the state and rely on verified information.

Here is another pertinent example.¹⁰ On 26 May, 2010, an explosion at the Palace of Culture and Sport in Stavropol raised a high information wave: all the TV and radio companies across the country deemed it necessary to cover the event. The local people were frightened: it was rumored that the explosion was a prelude to events similar to what had happened in May-June 2007 when several murders (some of them still unsolved) caused panic—in May 2010 people expected mass riots and numerous casualties.

The terrorist act of 26 May, 2010, unprecedented in scope and number of casualties, pushed the city to the brink of another crisis; very much as before it was rumored that ethnic relations had been triggered the events and that the explosion was but the first in a series of terrorist acts staged by goodness knows who as revenge for goodness knows what.

Despite the gloomy expectations nothing bad happened and life returned to normal, which suggests that the administration acted fast and did the right things.

In the majority of cases, negative or even provocative information about events allegedly revealing, directly or indirectly, an ethnic component appears either because there is no objective and complete information, or because the authorities insist that what happened was an act of hooliganism with no ethnic overtones.

Spokesmen of all sorts of bodies of power tend to give everyday rather than ethnic reasons for conflicts, sometimes disregarding an obvious ethnic component. These are wrong tactics that produce no positive results: the public has already acquired its own ideas about what is going on; since people have learned to mistrust official information, the authorities are limited in their choice of settlement methods and instruments.

Media coverage of the Stavropol events in Russia and abroad helped normalize the situation: the public adequately responded to the terrorist act, while the city authorities acquired public support and ensured law and order in the city.

In fact, aggravations caused by ethnically tinged crimes that echoed far and wide in the Stavropol Territory, especially in the Caucasian Mineral Waters area, could not be excluded, however nothing of this sort happened.

The situation worsened on 27 May, 2010 when the people of Stavropol were disturbed by rumors about an explosion in a bus in the city’s center. Contradictory rumors rapidly spread across the

¹⁰ For more detail, see: D.A. Lavrinenko, E.T. Mayboroda, “Informatsionny menedzhment ethnokonfliktnogo protsessa (Stavropol, mai 2010 g.),” in: *Politicheskaiia bezopasnost Yuga Rossii: materialy Mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii i kruglogo stola*, Kransodar, 2010, pp. 83-87.

city; by noon it was on the verge of panic: adults avoided public places and kept children away from schools and sport clubs.

The head of city administration for emergencies and crisis situations made a statement published by Novosti Information Agency; it took the city authorities several hours to return the situation to normal and convince people to trust official information rather than unfounded rumors.

This was another example of the block conflict scenario: real or imagined events were interpreted in the general information context to add an ethnic dimension to what was really happening or was presented as real.

In May 2010, the law-enforcers, acting together with the state and municipal structures which supplied enough adequate information, cut short the unfolding conflict. The fact of an “information breakthrough,” however, shows that the authorities are still lagging behind the demands of the time.

Mechanisms of Translation of Information Threats

In the post-Soviet period, dissemination of contradictory or even destructive political information made solidarity of the social, ethnic, and economic communities and subcultures doubly important. A system of information security based on the communicative-synergetic paradigm was urgently needed.

With this aim in view, a group of lecturers from the Department of Political Science and Political Management of Kuban State University (the basic department of the Southern Scientific Center, Russian Academy of Sciences [RAS]) undertook a vast research project called Information Security in a Polyethnic Society (on information from the Southern Federal District) within a program titled Development of Scientific Potential of the Higher School (2009-2010) implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of the RF and the Federal Agency for Education.

A sociological poll conducted in 2010, under the project, in the Southern and North Caucasian Federal districts to identify which information sources carried nationalist information produced the results shown in Table 1.

Three hundred and twenty-one young men were polled: 92 of them in Adigey; 134 in Ingushetia; and 95 in Daghestan. The results suggested that the greatest amount of nationalist information appears on the Internet: one out of two polled in Adigey and Ingushetia and one out of three polled in Daghestan agreed with this. It should be said that as distinct from the other regions, people in Daghestan more frequently mentioned the regional and national press (about 27% and 22%, respectively).

About a third of the polled in Adigey and Ingushetia and about a quarter of the polled in Daghestan believe that Russian films spread nationalist ideas; 30% in Adigey blames foreign films.

The respondents in the three republics agree that the federal TV channels are guilty of nationalist overtones (29%, 24%, and 22% in Ingushetia, Adigey, and Daghestan, respectively).¹¹

The respondents did not agree about the national and regional press: respondents in Daghestan and Ingushetia blamed the national press (22.1% and 19.4%, respectively), while in Adigey the share was 5%; together with about 5% of the respondents in Daghestan and 8% in Ingushetia most of the respondents in Adigey believe that the federal press and fiction are less guilty of nationalist statements and sentiments than other information sources.¹²

¹¹ See: V.M. Iurchenko, I.A. Gherasimov, “Politicheskie ustavki molodezhi v kontekste obesbecheniya bezopasnosti na Iuge Rossii,” in: *Sotsialnoe samochuvstvie naseleniya v sovremennoy Rossii: tezisy dokladov Vserossiiskoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii*, ed. by G.D. Gritsenko, Rostov on Don, 2010, p. 253.

¹² See: Ibid., p. 254.

Table 1

**Frequency of
Nationalist Information
in Different Information Sources
(% of the polled, by region)**

Information Sources	Region		
	Adigey	Daghestan	Ingushetia
Internet	50.0	36.8	52.2
Federal TV Channels	23.9	22.1	29.1
Regional TV Channels	9.8	7.4	14.9
National press	5.4	22.1	19.4
Regional press	12.0	27.4	11.9
Russian films	31.5	24.2	36.6
Foreign films	30.4	13.7	13.4
Fiction	8.7	5.3	8.2

S o u r c e: V.M. Iurchenko, I.A. Gherasimov, "Politicheskie ustavovki molodezhi v kontekste obesbecheniya bezopasnosti na luge Rossii," in: *Sotsialnoe samochuvstvie naseleniya v sovremennoy Rossii: tezisy dokladov Vserossiiskoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii*, ed. by G.D. Gritsenko, Rostov on Don, 2010, pp. 251-254.

In Daghestan, 27.4% blames the regional press.

The above can be used to set up rules and formulate recommendations for the federal and regional structures and other political actors: the media and education technologies should be used to teach tolerance; religious organizations, national centers and groups, and formal and non-formal politically active youth structures should receive more attention together with the regional media that address young audiences, while public structures and organizations of young people and branches of political parties, etc. should be encouraged.

To sum up: information security in the North Caucasian region realized through the media calls for more active and consistent efforts.

The “Network” Threat to Information Security

The information struggle, which is growing much more complicated and much more subtle, calls for persistent analytical efforts.

New political entities (all sorts of blocs and parties) are coming to the fore to upset the balance of power, change the course of political discussions, and aggravate social problems.

Information policy can be described as efficient when the methods of conflict settlement realized through it dominate the political discourse as the most influential ideologeme. This “political formula” confirms the legitimacy of the ruling elite, which wants to preserve the institutional structure and the mechanism of statehood reproduction.

The symbol-creating elites should build up an ideology of harmony and patriotism. To remain a political entity, their members should consistently and deliberately oppose all attempts to destroy the homogeneity of Russian super-ethnicity on which the security of the state and its polyethnic society hinges.

It was the tragedy in Budennovsk in 1995 and a series of blasts in trolleybuses in Moscow (2005) that brought information terrorism to Russia.

Back in the 1990s in Chechnya, extremists demonstrated that they knew how to use information to manipulate the public. The information component of North Caucasian security should receive adequate attention to prevent having a negative information impact on political decisions and undermining public confidence in the bodies of power and law-enforcers.

A systemic crisis in the Soviet Union crippled the regime and social relations and added vigor to ethnopolitical conflicts. The crisis, which assumed religious dimensions, stirred up ethnic extremism of different hues, ranging from national separatism and national chauvinism to terrorism.¹³

For over 20 years now, terrorism has been and remains the main extremist trend in several of the North Caucasian republics; the largest number of terrorist acts takes place in the Northern Caucasus.

According to A. Dobaev, “since the 1990s terrorism has switched to the network principle to become ‘new terrorism;’ more often than not hierarchical structures cannot adequately oppose it for a number of objective reasons. Network actors can reach the people on top, there are centralization and intensity of contacts; terrorist groups can upgrade their management, they can act autonomously with a lot of flexibility and dynamism and preserve sustainable contacts inside the network for better cooperation and lightning operations.”¹⁴

The same author has pointed out that “the network principle of organization of terrorist groups proved to be extremely effective and asymmetrical when dealing with all types of opponents and creating important advantages: compatibility with transnational terrorist groups; prompt information supply and exchange; unified information structure; prompt decisions; decentralization; secrecy and mobility; and they can act autonomously and efficiently under orders coming from outside the region.”¹⁵

The terrorist network in the Northern Caucasus should be carefully studied because what is called “new terrorism” differs greatly from the previous forms of terrorism¹⁶: it is a response to the “network warfare” concept.

At the present stage, terrorist groups, parties, and other structures are absolutely autonomous; there are cells of 3 to 5 militants who know only their leaders; the leaders, in turn, communicate only with their direct supervisors. Many of the terrorist structures are fairly complicated with different branches in different spheres: politics, finance, and “direct action” (groups involved in terrorist activities).¹⁷

¹³ See: R.G. Abdulatipov, “Sostoianie russkoy natsii—sostoianie gosudarstva,” *Sobytiia i kommentarii*, No. 058, 31 March, 2004, available at [www.trud.ru].

¹⁴ A.I. Dobaev, *Vliyanie ugroz terroristicheskoy deiatelnosti na formirovaniye sistemy ekonomicheskoy bezopasnosti v usloviyah globalizatsii. Abstract of Ph.D. Thesis*, Rostov on Don, 2008, pp. 14-15.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁶ See: Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁷ See: Ibid., p. 28.

Terrorists have mastered elaborate means and methods of target selection and terror, hostage-taking being one of them. They know how to use the latest media technologies to inform the world about their aims. The terrorist acts in Dubrovka (Moscow 2002) and Beslan (2004) received wide coverage all over the world.

Doku Umarov, one of the separatist leaders, used the Internet with much more skill than any of the North Caucasian separatists to communicate, instruct, conscript, and disseminate his ideas, as well as raise funds to go on with terrorist acts against the leaders of the North Caucasian republics.

The Russian special services, on the other hand, are not equally skillful in Internet warfare. For many years now they have been fighting the Kavkaz-Tsentr website without much success: this propaganda resource of the Chechen extremists is still alive, while the opponents of the Russian leaders acquired a chance to blame the Russian special services for hacker attacks. This happened, for example, in the spring of 2007 after a scandalous series of hacker attacks on the Estonian state websites.¹⁸

Chechen extremists use the Internet for fundraising: they inform their supporters about how to transfer donations and where.

The situation in the North Caucasian information space cannot but cause concern; extremist audio records can be easily bought in Kabardino-Balkaria, Chechnia, Ingushetia, and Dagestan. Young people, who are responsible for the future of our country, do not hesitate to visit extremist Internet sites. So far, blocking has proven impossible. On 14 April, 2009, when speaking at a meeting with representatives of the republic's muftiat,¹⁹ President of Chechnia Ramzan Kadyrov said that the growing interest of young people in the Internet might draw the most susceptible of them with pretty vague ideological convictions and ideas about the world into all sorts of structures, thus subjecting them to brainwashing and making them religious extremists.

Continued terrorist acts and the steady replenishment of terrorist ranks with educated young people who have good jobs mean that Russia is once more losing the information war in the Northern Caucasus

Responsibility in the Information Space

The electronic media have become the main instrument of ethnic mobilization; here I am not referring to TV and radio; I have in mind the Internet and cell phones, potential instruments of information warfare that can reach each and everyone.

The Internet is rapidly gaining popularity in Russia where the younger generation is much more interested in this source of information and communication than other generation groups. As a media instrument, the Internet can be both constructive and destructive and produce quite an unexpected impact on people's minds for the simple reason that it is independent from the state.

Laws and repressions are useless when it comes to the destructive impact of information technologies. The government bodies at all levels tend to rely on traditional mechanisms of information impact—the press, TV, and radio—which no longer produce the desired results.

Information security criteria are hinged on obsolete approaches: secrecy and the notorious Soviet idea of counter-propaganda; strange as it may seem the public relations instrument and the Internet remain neglected.

¹⁸ See: A.I. Smirnov, *Informatsionnaia globalizatsiia i Rossia: vyzovy i vozmozhnosti*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 278-279.

¹⁹ [groznyts.ru/forum/lofiversion/index.php/t47.html].

Uncontrolled media coverage of extreme situations causes a response that defies propaganda of anti-terrorism.

When talking about the information aspect of counterterrorist efforts, we should pay attention to NGOs and their activities. Today, some of the commercial media tend to replace anti-extremist propaganda and warnings about dangerous social repercussions of extremist ideology with sharp criticism of the faults and shortcomings of the government bodies and law-enforcers,²⁰ which means that public opinion is warped to acquire a shape of “ideological support of terrorism.”

Distorted information causes a lot of pain for members of different groups (the relatives of hostages, people who hate the government and are prepared to oppose it, psychopaths and psychologically unbalanced people who know next to nothing about real life).²¹ Some human rights activists insist that “the state should employ kid-glove methods when dealing with terrorists.”²²

The right to spread legally acquired information as citizens’ inalienable right is confirmed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other regulatory and legal acts. Art 19.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights²³ says: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”

The next point of the same article specifies: “The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

- (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
- (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals.”

We all know that terrorists invariably succeed in achieving their main aim: to scare people and drive them to panic.

People lose confidence in state power; they become skeptical of everything being done to fight terrorism; fear makes people indifferent to crimes and transforms them into narrow-minded nationalists and xenophobes.

Media coverage of acts of terror is greatly responsible for the above. A sociological poll dealing with the problems of counterterrorist struggle and security measures revealed that only 18.7% believed that what was done was adequate; 62.6% described the security measures as inadequate, while 14.3% was convinced that “nothing important has been done.”²⁴

According to the returns of the poll conducted by the Obshchestvennoe mnenie Fund, one out of five respondents had no negative feelings about belligerent nationalists and blame their victims (migrants); 9% tend to justify skinheads because “they merely do what the militia should have done; they

²⁰ See: A. Tazhudinova, “Protivodeystvie ekstremizmu kak natsionalnaia idea,” available at [<http://www.dagpravda.ru/?com=materials&task=view&page=material&id=3945>].

²¹ See: Ibidem.

²² D.A. Koretskiy, “Ideologicheskoe obespechenie bor’by s terrorizmom,” available at [http://sartracc.ru/print.php?print_file=Pub/kolreckiy%2825-05-07%29.htm].

²³ Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December, 1966; entry into force 23 March, 1976, in accordance with Art 49, available at [<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>].

²⁴ Analytical document on the results of sociological poll conducted by the Saratov Center for the Study of Organized Crime and Corruption to identify what the public thought about terrorism in Russia in 2008, available at [www.sartracc.sgap.ru].

restore order and deal with migrant scum.” Only 2% are convinced that “Russia is a place for all nationalities.”²⁵

Journalists should learn to be responsible for the content and general mood of what they write. This is very important. People and the media do have the right to disseminate information, including information related to terrorist acts; it should be borne in mind, however, that destructive elements might use it in their interests and that this will interfere with counterterrorist operations and endanger the lives and health of civilians and members of special forces.

It should be said that the media create certain problems for those engaged in antiterrorist operations: there were no control mechanisms and, therefore, no responsibility for breaking the rules established by the community; there are no productive contacts between the state structures responsible for antiterrorist operations and the media, which results in disinformation, unnecessary complications, did nothing good for the image of the government and the law-enforcers, and makes the media vulnerable to criticism of their audiences.²⁶

The commonly accepted opinion that “in a counterterrorist operation journalists and the special services pursue different aims”²⁷ disorganizes both, breeds mistrust between them, and makes coordinated efforts impossible.

This explains incorrect media coverage, which may trigger destructive processes and transform them into an information terrorist threat; “the absolute majority of authors describe journalists as spokesmen, or an instrument of terrorists, or even their instigators to arrive at the absurd conclusion that without TV there would have been neither Beslan nor 9/11.”²⁸

Those who stage “protracted” terrorist acts (hostage-taking) as a rule tend to use TV as an instrument of objective online coverage. It creates a sense of being directly involved in the event, incorporates large masses of TV viewers, and produces a simultaneous impact on the multi-million audience. Journalists, who are fond of saying that they are “duty bound to supply the audience with a complete and unedited picture of what has happened or is going on,”²⁹ allow terrorists to stage their actions with a view to global coverage. Terrorist acts, on the other hand, are not a propaganda ploy terrorists use to promote their ideas or seek approval of their actions: violence is a tool used to succumb the state and society to their demands.

It seems that the Russian state and society should arrive at a common strategy of information opposition to ethnic and religious extremism and start working together. The information mechanisms available today are extremely important for shaping a positive civil identity of Russia’s population.

No matter how important, information technologies are not enough; civil society should be consolidated; its members should be encouraged, while the state and people should work together to address the most painful ethnopolitical, social, economic, and cultural problems.

Conclusion

Today, information is used as a political and economic weapon; it has changed our lifestyle and our perception of reality. People are living in a symbolic media-created space in which “society” is

²⁵ S.M. Kochoi, “Ekstremizm: problemy protivodeystviia,” available at [www.sartracc.sgap.ru].

²⁶ See: G.A. Shaginyan, *Antiterroristicheskaya informatsionnaya politika rossiiskogo gosudarstva*, Abstract of Ph.D. Thesis, Krasnodar, 2006.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁸ O. Prikhodko, “Lingvisticheskiy arsenal antiterroristicheskoi bor’by,” *Zerkalo nedeli*, No. 38, 25 September, 2004, available at [http://zn.ua/CULTURE/lingvisticheskiy_arsenal_antiterroristicheskoy_borby-41199.html].

²⁹ L.P. Martirosova, *Osobennosti osveshcheniya terrorizma v SMI*, Abstract of Ph.D. Thesis, Pyatigorsk, 2009, p. 21.

frequently defined as an “information society,” while information is seen as the main and the most important resource of social development.

Democratic institutions, which have spread far and wide, have made politics public, while public opinion and the media as manipulation instruments have become a weapon of the power struggle.

Opposition to the spread of unwelcome information has been going on in peace and war with the help of new, more efficient, and affordable information vehicles that can affect decision-making. This started the process of elaboration and realization of the ideas of psychological wars based on information and waged for strategic and political advantages by warping the enemy’s individual, group, and mass conscience. The technologically advanced countries acquired a considerable leeway, which they used particularly auspiciously in the Cold War.

An adequate assessment of the security problems presupposes that we should recognize the systemic nature of this phenomenon, which calls, correspondingly, for a systemic analysis. This implies careful study of the interaction between the inner components of the security problem and its external elements that produce a direct or even strong social impact on certain social segments.

The contemporary law-governed state needs efficient information security management; the state should devise a flexible information policy that can be easily adjusted to the rapidly changing geopolitical situation to ensure competitiveness in the global media market. We should bear in mind that information has become a strategic reserve and a political instrument.

Academics and politicians have pointed out that information society requires different treatment and different strategies at home and abroad, as well as different approaches to national and regional security. In fact, the information sphere and the way it uses foreign intellectual potential, spreads its own spiritual values and ideology, culture and language, and affects the development and moral and spiritual expansion of other countries is ultimately determining the country’s political potential.

An efficient information policy is an important instrument of information security; it is a phenomenon of the information space as a special type of space with specific forms of activities very different from those of the previous development stage.

A strategically correct information policy is an instrument of control of information flows in a way that leads to social development based on values shared by all. In this case, information affects the target groups to achieve the expected consolidating effect; the state shapes the information space and its relations with society according to the accepted aims and tasks in the information sphere.

Security-wise, the Northern Caucasus is Russia’s most unstable region; this means that the federal center should treat the problem of information security there as one of its priorities.

The government of Russia should pay more attention to the struggle in the information space; we need mechanisms of state information policy in the Northern Caucasus and control over its implementation.

Information security calls for comprehensive and multilayer investigation since the media are coming to the fore in the national security system. The RF Information Security Doctrine should be revised and actively implemented with due account of regional specifics: in the Northern Caucasus terrorists actively use information flows.

Regrettably, the state and regional bodies of power in Russia are not paying adequate attention to the much more prominent threats to information security in the south of Russia; they have not yet completely grasped the role the media play in politics; the information factor is consistently underestimated when it comes to planning political actions.

Protection of the information space should be moved to the center of modernization efforts in the Northern Caucasus; it predetermines, to a great extent, the content and dynamics of the political processes, the specifics of self-identification, and the role of the community in Russia and the globalized world.

We should exclude narrow departmental approaches to protection of the North Caucasian information space; it should be treated as a national task to be addressed by all the structures and all the subjects of the Russian Federation.

To achieve information security in the Northern Caucasus, all the government bodies of power and administration structures, public associations, and people should receive timely and complete information.

The continued instability in the Northern Caucasus is an outcrop of the political transformations; the conflict nature of the republics' political development, the unsettled conflicts, the separatist trends, and the expansion of religious extremism and terrorism. Russia's geopolitical rivals are trying to capitalize on the above, which makes the Northern Caucasus an arena of transborder political competition.

The current situation in the Northern Caucasus calls for a more active and better substantiated policy and systemic measures designed to pull the region out of the crisis and ensure its security. After all, the macro region's strategic importance for Russia's national interests cannot be overestimated.

REGIONAL STUDIES**CENTRAL ASIA AS SEEN
FROM RUSSIA****Murat LAUMULIN**

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Introduction

This is a survey of what has been written in Russia about Central Asia, of the subject range and scope of problems that our Russian colleagues have discussed in their works, and of what they think about the region's future. For obvious reasons, the Russian public as a whole and political scientists and politicians as its part cannot remain indifferent to what is going in Central Asia. Until quite recently, Russia and Central Asia were parts of a single state; today they remain tied together by geographic and geopolitical proximity. For these reasons, the region is still part of Russia's information expanse.

The Russian Federation, which has scored quite a few foreign policy successes, is still facing old and persisting problems and is coping with the new challenges that crop up in the contemporary world. The integration initiatives formulat-

ed by Russia are hailed by some of its post-Soviet partners and rejected (or even undermined) by others.

Russia, which is seeking a stronger position in Central Asia, has to take into account the fact that China, an equal (or in certain respects stronger) economic and political rival, is also present in the region. In this context, the West, as seen from Moscow, looks like the geopolitical counterbalance needed to trim Beijing's great and soaring ambitions.

Afghanistan and China are two factors that Moscow cannot ignore when pursuing its otherwise independent Central Asian policy. It should be said that Kazakhstan has been and remains Russia's closest ally and strategic partner.

In the context of Russia's relations with Central Asia, the interests of the sides are not al-

ways identical, however there are no contradictions between them on the most important issues, including geopolitics and strategic security.

The positions and opinions of our Russian colleagues are highly important as factors directly affecting the Kremlin's Central Asian policy.

Russian Authors about the Region in the Late Putin Period

During Vladimir Putin's second presidential term, relations between Moscow and the West went from bad to worse; the Russian leaders blamed the fairly impudent policy of the United States and its allies in Central Asia and across the post-Soviet expanse, for that matter.

The political scientific and partly Orientalist community responded with political scientific and geopolitical assessments of the West's strategies. Andrey Kazantsev's *Bolshaia igra s neizvestnymi pravilami: mirovaia politika i Tsentralnaia Azia* (The Big Game with Unknown Rules: World Politics and Central Asia) is one of the pertinent examples.¹ The author, who works at the Center for Euro-Atlantic Security, MGIMO, Foreign Ministry of Russia, has formulated many well-substantiated geopolitical arguments.

He proceeds from identifying Central Asia's place on a global scale and tries to resolve the following dilemma: is Central Asia a "temporary and short-term casus" or is it an important constant of world politics.

The author asks another question: will this international region fall apart or will it be "torn apart" to be joined to other regions (the APR, the Middle East, South Asia, etc.)? This question is prompted by the region's diversity and the highly fluid nature of all the elements of its identity (geography, culture, economy, and security), as well as the steady supply of all sorts of reformatting projects supported by the West (the Greater Middle East, Greater Central Asia, etc.).

The author surmises that the Central Asian states do not, in fact, follow the commonly accepted political standards, values, and principles, to say nothing of any sort of coercion mechanism, which means that their regional identity remains highly vague. This means that the regional situation can be described as indefinite, unstable, and unpredictable.

Andrey Kazantsev has enumerated the main Western political-geographic projects related to Central Asia:

- (1) Strengthening the National Statehoods of the Central Asian Countries;
- (2) The "Turkic World;"
- (3) The Region's Internal Integration;
- (4) The Silk Road and "Alternative Integration" Across the Post-Soviet Expanse;
- (5) The Greater Middle East Project;
- (6) The Greater Central Asia Project;
- (7) Spreading and Increasing Euro-Atlantic Influence in the East.

¹ See: A.A. Kazantsev, *Bolshaia igra s neizvestnymi pravilami: mirovaia politika i Tsentralnaia Azia*, Nasledie Evrazii, Moscow, 2008.

The author has concluded: the “kaleidoscopic” projects of Central Asian reorganization and their consecutive failures speak of the Western coalition’s extreme inconsistency and the low efficiency of its efforts in the region.

Andrey Kazantsev writes that the external forces are locked in a struggle over the region’s identity in an attempt to tie it to one of the Eurasian geopolitical components (the post-Soviet expanse, the Islamic world, Europe, or the APR), the energy transportation routes and related policies being an outcrop of this struggle.

In the absence of internal stabilizing resources, the Central Asian countries have found themselves in a total crisis; torn apart by external rivals they cannot develop their region.

All the regional players are puzzled by the “responsibility”/“free hands” dilemma. The relations between the external players are far from perfect: those that invest in regional stability are inevitably worried that others who saved their money will outsmart them. In other words, all the cooperating players, especially from different regional-civilizational “coalitions,” combine cooperation with competition when trying to monopolize *the most promising investment spheres*.

The author has pointed out that the system of regional interaction taking shape in Central Asia is fairly complicated because the external players use different types of resources that are unevenly distributed among them: Russia and the United States, for example, have gradually become geopolitical rivals because they both relied mainly on military-political instruments.

The author has arrived at the following key conclusions:

- (1) The geopolitical vagueness, which is gradually growing as we move across the post-Soviet expanse from west to east, is rooted in the past.
- (2) The neo-patrimonial political system that has taken shape in some of the Central Asian countries may embezzle and waste considerable means supplied by external sponsors for development projects.
- (3) Some of the Central Asian countries, while easily agreeing to host integration projects, shun real responsibility; this means that their involvement in international structures or their withdrawal from them says nothing about the policy of the external players.

This book can be described as a collection of recommendations addressed to the Russian political establishment on how to proceed in the region. It should be said that Andrey Kazantsev is unduly critical of Russia’s role in post-Soviet Central Asian history and obviously downplays Moscow’s role. He is either ignorant of the variety of instruments and methods that post-Soviet Russia had and has at its disposal to retain its considerable influence in the post-Soviet expanse or deliberately passes over this information in silence.

The collective monograph *Gody, kotorye izmenili Tsentralnuiu Aziiu* (The Years That Changed Central Asia) published in 2009 and edited by Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), Vitaly Naumkin² is another important work of the late-Putin period. It continues the monograph (The Fifteen Years That Changed Central Asia) published four years earlier.³ Both deal with similar problems and both are similarly structured.

The authors identified five groups of major problems.

The first group consists of the problems created by the current transformations in Central Asia. The authors asked and answered several questions, such as Have the transformations ended or are they still going on? If they have ended, what state models have appeared?, to conclude that the political transformations in the Central Asian countries are geared toward consolidating national states.

² See: *Gody, kotorye izmenili Tsentralnuiu Aziiu*, TsSPI-IV RAS, Moscow, 2009.

³ See: *Piatnadtsat let, kotorye izmenili Tsentralnuiu Aziiu (1991-2006)*, TsSPI, Moscow, 2006.

The second group deals with the ideology and instruments individual experts or even research schools use to study the region. As could be expected, this chapter brims with criticism of Western ideologists; the authors point out that Western approaches are, at best, abstract and, at worst, ill-intentioned. The West strives to detach Central Asia from Russia which, in turn, regards the region as an extension of sorts of its own territory rather than a geopolitical abstraction.

This chapter contains recommendations related to the role of the external players: Russia should concentrate on fighting poverty; encourage the Russian language; learn to take local specifics and political culture into account; never resort to double standards; prevent NGOs and all sorts of funds from developing into a source of money for the local opposition; warn the ruling regimes against policies in which the elites will not be able to compete; and avoid formal assessments that have nothing in common with regional reality.

The authors pointed out that the transformations have placed the local countries in different groups: Kazakhstan is moving toward the status of a regional power, while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have found themselves in an abyss of poverty.

At the same time, the authors conclude that despite the blunders and errors, none of the local states has joined the ranks of “failed states” (even if the developments in Kyrgyzstan refute this conclusion as being too hasty). As distinct from the post-Soviet Caucasian states, the Central Asian republics demonstrated more stability. Some of the problems proved to be stubborn: so far it is unclear whether these states remain secular or are becoming Muslim. The worsening social and economic conditions and Western pressure are playing into the hands of the local Islamists.

The Central Asian regimes have one common problem inherited from the past: *political and economic power remain closely intertwined*.

The authors admit that the West coped with the self-imposed task of uprooting all elements of socialism and the vestiges of the Soviet system, but the results proved ambiguous. While the West wanted to prevent restoration of the Soviet system and socialism (and the “Soviet empire”) in any form (something which big corporations and the local regimes also wanted), the results proved to be precisely what the architects of the transformations were carefully avoiding.

Europe and Central Asia are close partners; to be more exact, Europe is the closest Western partner of Central Asia. The Central Asian states are OSCE members, but this is not the only reason why the two regions, separated by long distances, do not regard each other as the periphery.

The fourth chapter looks at the problem of radical Islam. It is not a novelty: the local regimes inherited it from the last years of Soviet power and have already arrived at one of three ways of dealing with Islamists:

- (1) Total suppression of all Islamists (Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan);
- (2) Suppression of radical groups and a cautious dialog with the rest (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan);
- (3) Cooperation with Islamists who are represented in all the power structures (Tajikistan).

Chapter Five sorts out the external factors of the political transformations and Central Asian security; Russia, China, the U.S., and the European Union are presented as the key players; Turkey, Iran, India, Pakistan, and Japan are not discussed.

The authors do not beat about the bush: Russia is the main player in the region; its relations with Central Asia cannot be described as interstate because the historical, cultural, social-economic, civilizational, and geographic ties between the former metropolitan country and the region are still strong; the human (humanitarian) factor is still of colossal importance.

Russia is pursuing three main goals in the region:

- (1) Regional stability;
- (2) Reliance on the region's geopolitical potential to upgrade its international status;
- (3) International recognition of Russia's role in the region.

The sides prefer to downplay the factor of Russian-American rivalry, however it is too obvious to be safely ignored. America wants to squeeze Russia out of the region (and from the post-Soviet expanse, for that matter). This creates a paradox: Russia is guided by pragmatic considerations, while Washington is driven by ideological motives (at least during George W. Bush's presidency).

Russia's advantages in the region are the result of its regional policy, which the local regimes find understandable and predictable; unlike the U.S. and the EU, Moscow never moralizes, never applies double standards, and never flirts with anti-government forces.

Russia looks at the Islamist alternative as an unacceptable strategic prospect, therefore, it harshly responds to its manifestations backed by certain forces in Pakistan and Arab countries.

The authors write that China is proceeding cautiously in its relations with the regional states. Beijing has borrowed the "soft power" concept from Washington and profits from it. America, in turn, tries to undermine Chinese policy by insisting on the "Chinese threat" theory, which is fairly popular in Russia and Central Asian countries. The authors predict that China is unlikely to remain an outside observer if radical changes in the region infringe on its interests.

The role and possibilities of the European Union in Central Asia are assessed much higher than America's; relations between the EU and the local states are not burdened by old ambitions. While the United States indulges in the export of democracy, Europe looks at the region as a cultural entity that should develop independently. On the whole, the EU policy in Central Asia is described as "cautious restraint." According to European experts, write the authors, the EU's greater role in the region would have promoted stability and democratic values and would have counterbalanced excessive American, Russian, and Chinese involvement.

On the whole, the authors describe Western policies in Central Asia as "democratic messianism," which presupposes that there should be no alternatives and envisages only those variants from which the West and the loyal local elites would prosper. This has already been tested in Latin America, which plunged the masses into poverty and allowed the elites to indulge in shameless enrichment.

This suggests the following: first, political liberalization should not outstrip economic; second, property has not been transformed: the state has replaced civil society, which split along the "rights-privileges" line; third, democracy in the region has degenerated into a set of democratic institutions.

The main conclusion: the historical example of post-Soviet Central Asia has refuted the generally accepted politological models of transit, which presupposes movement from authoritarianism to consolidated democracy of liberal type. Instead, political regimes of a new type have emerged; in the future, each of the local states will have to "stumble across" its own model of transformations.

In her *Stanovlenie gosudarstv Tsentralnoy Azii: politicheskie protsessy*⁴ (Emergence of the Central Asian States: Political Processes), Prof. Irina Zviagelskaia (Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS) has concentrated, as the title of her monograph suggests, on the political history of the Central Asian countries. As a lecturer at Moscow State University with many years of teaching experience behind her, she naturally intended her book as a textbook for the steadily growing number of young people interested in the region.

⁴ See: I. Zviagelskaia, *Stanovlenie gosudarstv Tsentralnoy Azii: politicheskie protsessy*, Aspekt Press, Moscow, 2009.

Her book is not a political scientific or analytical effort in the true sense of the word. The first three chapters plunge the reader into the history of Russian conquests; colonization of Turkestan and the development of Central Asia and Kazakhstan as Soviet republics.

Prof. Zviagelskaia reveals the historical paradigm of Central Asia's movement toward Russia; she concentrates on the problems of nation-building, political culture, the Islamic factor, ethnic and trade migrations, external impacts, potential and real threats, and conflicts during the post-Soviet period.

Put in a nutshell, her conclusions are the following: the region's future development trends are unclear and, most likely, different for different countries; Russia does not want to, and cannot, isolate the region from the rest of the world, although its cultural and historical ties with the local peoples should be preserved: "We cannot allow the natural and absolutely indispensable ties to become disrupted when the Soviet generation leaves the stage." This is very true.

China and its steadily mounting influence in Central Asia are too obvious to be neglected. It is not neglected by our Russian colleagues. I have in mind the monograph of S. Zhukov and O. Reznikova (Institute of World Economy and International Relations, RAS) called *Tsentralnaia Azia i Kitay: ekonomicheskoe vzaimodeystvie v usloviakh globalizatsii*⁵ (Central Asia and China: Economic Co-operation in the Globalization Era).

The authors are convinced that the global context is the only relevant analytical framework within which the content of relations between China and Central Asia and their trends can be adequately assessed. China, which is moving fast toward a world Great Power status, is one of the most active participants in the current changes in the Central Asian economic expanse. The People's Republic of China relies on its market and non-market competitive advantages and the global and regional mechanisms of cooperation mainly within the WTO and, more and more actively, the SCO to become involved, to a great and increasing extent, in readjusting the vector of economic transformations in Central Asia to promote its national priorities.

The Central Asian economies, very much like the Eurasian economies, are facing a fundamental challenge: none can compete with China in the non-raw material branches, which negatively affects the economic future and economic structures of China's regional and continental neighbors.

The authors conclude that the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region is rapidly moving to the center of economic activities in Greater Central Asia. Today, the consistently developing macro-region includes Xinjiang, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, neighboring regions of the Russian Federation and, to some extent, Tajikistan. It seems that in the future they might be joined by Turkmenistan and, to a certain extent, Uzbekistan. The XUAR is gaining weight through direct (mutually complementary economic structures in Central Asia) and indirect (Central Asia reaches China through the XUAR) factors.

The XUAR's great and growing importance as an economic hub of Greater Central Asia is represented by trade, investments, and construction of trans-border road and transportation infrastructure, all of this made possible because the region serves as a bridge between Central Asia and China's developed center and south and the preferential treatment the region receives from Beijing, which does not grudge economic resources to transform the XUAR.

The Russian authors have pointed out that economic cooperation with Central Asia is a byproduct designed, together with other measures, to whip up the development of the country's western regions and that China is mainly interested in Kazakhstan because of its fuel transit potential. The au-

⁵ See: S.V. Zhukov, O.B. Reznikova, *Tsentralnaia Azia i Kitay: ekonomicheskoe vzaimodeystvie v usloviakh globalizatsii*, IMEMO RAS, Moscow, 2009.

thors are convinced that Kazakhstan deliberately invited China to discuss the regional gas projects to force Russia to reconsider some of its gas-related conditions.

The book offers the following conclusions.

- First, in the next ten years, economic cooperation between China and Central Asia will advance at a fast pace, which fully corresponds to the global trend: China is becoming a powerful economic hub of the world.
- Second, as the flow of goods, services, investments, and technologies along the China-Central Asia line increases, cooperation and the profits from it will become more and more asymmetric because of the very different sizes of their economies.
- Third, for objective reasons, China's economic interests in Central Asia are concentrated in Kazakhstan, the region's leader.
- Fourth, China, very much like all the other global economic power centers, is mostly interested in the region's natural riches, particularly in the oil of Kazakhstan and natural gas of Turkmenistan.
- Fifth, China agreed to set up the SCO as a political instrument of its economic interests in Central Asia among other things; furthermore, the mechanisms of multisided democracy and rhetoric allow Beijing to apply "soft power" in the region.
- Sixth, China's domestic demand for raw materials is steadily growing, which will transform Central Asia into a raw material appendage not only of the European, but also of the Chinese economy.

The authors conclude by saying that adaptation to China's economic might is the main challenge for the region and that the mounting economic cooperation between China and Central Asia directly affects Russia's interests. They recommend that Russia's political leadership take into account the experience of economic cooperation between China and Central Asia when formulating Russia's long-term national development goals.

Central Asia and Russia

The monograph *Rossia v Tsentralnoy Azii* (Russia in Central Asia) is an excellent example of cooperation between Russian and Kazakhstan political scientists. Written by Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences Gennady Chufrin, who is well-known in the academic community, it was published by the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies (KISI).⁶ The author, who for many years headed the Central Asian study programs at IMEMO, was involved in interaction within the SCO, and supervised cooperation between IMEMO and its Central Asian partners, has edited two collective monographs. In 2008, a monograph appeared dealing with Russia's policies in the region *Novye tendentsii vo vneshevoy politike Rossii v Tsentralnoy Azii i na Kavkaze* (New Trends in Russia's Policies in Central Asia and the Caucasus)⁷ to be followed by other collective

⁶ See: G.I. Chufrin, *Rossia v Tsentralnoy Azii*, KISI, Almaty, 2010.

⁷ See: *Novye tendentsii vo vneshevoy politike Rossii v Tsentralnoy Azii i na Kavkaze*, ed. by G.I. Chufrin, IMEMO, Moscow, 2008.

effort entitled *Sostoianie i perspektivy vzaimodeystviia Rossii so stranami Tsentralnoy Azii i Zakavkazia*⁸ (The State and Prospects of Russia's Interaction with the Countries of Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus).

The latest monograph by Gennady Chufrin, which develops the subjects discussed in the previous one, consists of three parts.

- The first provides a detailed analysis of the non-traditional security threats and struggle against them, as well as the disagreements and contradictions among the local countries regarded as one of the potential threats.

America's regional policy is discussed in detail in one of the chapters in the context of Washington's foreign policy strategy and its specific military-political goals in the region viewed as a new frontier.

Another chapter looks at the CSTO and Russian-U.S. relations in the sphere of regional security.

The last chapter of the monograph's first part deals with the impact of the Afghan or, to be more exact, AfPak factor on regional security. It should be said that the author agrees with the critics of American policy in the region and their results.

- The second part deals with the region's economies; trade and economic cooperation and other aspects of interaction between the Russian Federation and the Central Asian republics (migration, financial cooperation, transport and communications, and joint use of hydropower resources).

One of the chapters in the second part deals with relations between Russia and Kazakhstan. His detailed discussion brought the author to the conclusion that Russian-Kazakhstan cooperation is the backbone of regional integration and economic ties in the eastern part of the CIS.

- The third part looks at the history, development, and current state of the SCO; the author concentrated on the evolution of its organizational structure, forms and methods of responding to security threats, economic cooperation within it, and the prospects for its further expansion. Gennady Chufrin believes that the organization hardly needs wider membership and, therefore, new members, and the status of SCO partner could attract not only Afghanistan, but also the U.S. and Japan.

The author's conclusions suggest that recently cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Central Asian countries abounded in serious economic and political contradictions which called for difficult and painstaking negotiations.

The author sees four main reasons for what is going on in the region. Among them, he notes the objective difficulties in political and socioeconomic development, as well as the negative impact of international events of a regional and global nature. He also points to the inconsistent assessments by the Central Asian leaders of the scale and aims of their countries' cooperation with Russia, which they regard as hardly useful and effective.

The competitive potential of third countries rapidly coming to the fore in Central Asia, where relations with the West and the East are enthusiastically promoted, can be described as another factor responsible for the problems in cooperation between Russia and the local states.

The author concludes by saying that Russia should pursue a maximally pragmatic policy in the region.

⁸ See: *Sostoianie i perspektivy vzaimodeystviia Rossii so stranami Tsentralnoy Azii i Zakavkazia*, ed. by G.I. Chufrin, IMEMO, Moscow, 2009.

Political relations are geared toward regional and Russia's security ensured by the CSTO and the SCO, Moscow's two main instruments in this sphere.

In the sphere of economic relations, Russia should maintain a maximally favorable climate, otherwise it will lose the last shreds of its influence in the region. The author is convinced that Russia can and should pose not only as a good economic partner, but also as an efficient guarantor of the local states' economic independence.

The bold and far-sighted conclusions of the Russian academic refute the clichés, myths, and sentiments prevalent in the West and among certain groups of Central Asian elites convinced that Russia is seeking control over the region to restore its colonial imperial rule.

It should be said that Central Asian studies are not the prerogative of the Moscow academic community. Konstantin Meshcheriakov's *Vneshniaia politika Rossii v Tsentralnoy Azii v 1991-2009 gody: osobennosti i problemy*⁹ (Foreign Policy of Russia in Central Asia in 1991-2009: Specifics and Problems) appeared in St. Petersburg. (A. Bissenbaev's *Ne vmeste. Rossia i strany Tsentralnoy Azii*¹⁰ [Not Together. Russia and the Central Asian Countries] was also published in St. Petersburg; written in an essayist style it does not belong to the body of Russian historiographic works discussed here.)

Saratov is another Russian city where an interest in Central Asian studies is fairly great. A collective monograph appeared in 2011 dealing with the region's water and energy resources titled *Vodno-energeticheskie resursy Tsentralnoy Azii: osnovnye problemy i perspektivy*¹¹ (Central Asian Water and Energy Resources: Problems and Prospects).

Moscow academics dominate the field: A. Bogaturov, A. Dundich, and E. Troitskiy made a highly interesting contribution to Central Asian studies with their *Tsentralnaia Azia: "otlozhenny neytralitet" i mezdunarodnye otnoshenia v 2000-kh godakh. Ocherki tekushchey politiki* (Central Asia: "Postponed Neutrality" and International Relations in the 2000s. Essays of Current Policies); the same can be said about Dina Malysheva's *Tsentralnoaziatskiy uzel mirovoy politiki* (Central Asian Knot of World Politics).¹² The authors point out that Russia's interests are closely connected with Central Asia's geopolitical role.

A collective monograph *Rossia-Kazakhstan-Evrosoiuz: realii i perspektivy vzaimodeystviia na Evro-Aziatskom prostranstve* (Russia-Kazakhstan-European Union: Realities and Prospects of Cooperation in Eurasia) published by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation is a good example of international cooperation among the academic communities.¹³

Relations between Russia and Central Asia figure prominently in the works of A. Klimenko, D. Popov, and N. Serebriakova dealing with the SCO as a regional security factor.¹⁴

⁹ See: K. Meshcheriakov, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii v Tsentralnoy Azii v 1991-2009 gody: osobennosti i problemy*, St. Petersburg, 2010.

¹⁰ See: A. Bissenbaev, *Ne vmeste. Rossia i strany Tsentralnoy Azii*, Piter Publishers, St. Petersburg, 2011.

¹¹ See: *Vodno-energeticheskie resursy Tsentralnoy Azii: osnovnye problemy i perspektivi*, SGU, Saratov, 2010.

¹² See: A. Bogaturov, A. Dundich, E. Troitskiy, *Tsentralnaia Azia: "otlozhenny neytralitet" i mezdunarodnye otnoshenia v 2000-kh godakh. Ocherki tekushchey politiki*. Issue 4, NOFMO, Moscow, 2010; D. Malysheva, *Tsentralnoaziatskiy uzel mirovoy politiki*, IMEMO RAS, Moscow, 2010.

¹³ See: *Rossia-Kazakhstan-Evrosoiuz: realii i perspektivy vzaimodeystviia na Evro-Aziatskom prostranstve*, FRL, Moscow, 2011.

¹⁴ See: A.F. Klimenko, *Strategiia razvitiia Shankhaiskoy organizatsii sotrudnichestva: problemy oborony i bezopasnosti*, IDV RAS, Moscow, 2010; *Shankhaiskaia organizatsia sotrudnichestva: k novym rubezham razvitiia*, Compiled by A.F. Klimenko, IDV RAS, Moscow, 2008; D.S. Popov, "O probleme rasshireniia Shankhaiskoy organizatsii sotrudnichestva. Analiticheskiy obzor," *RISI*, No. 4 (27), 2010; N.V. Serebriakova, *Shankhaiskaia organizatsia sotrudnichestva: mnogostoronnii kompromiss v Tsentralnoy Azii*, InfoRos, Moscow, 2011.

The Era of Dmitry Medvedev: “Resetting” and Its Political Scientific Echoes

Dmitry Medvedev's advent to power (even if formal) favorably affected the relations between Russia and the West; their resetting was very much in line with what Barack Obama also wanted. Do the foreign policy changes affect in any noticeable way the stereotypes and set ideas of the Russian academics?

In 2011, a collective monograph *Politicheskiy protsess v Tsentralnoy Azii* (Political Process in Central Asia), the third in a series dealing with Central Asian topics, was published as part of the joint project of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (Germany) and the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences. The international collective of authors analyzed the political processes unfolding in the region, the social and economic specifics of the regional states, and the fundamental changes that affected all spheres of life.

The authors of the introductory article (Arne C. Seifert and Irina Zviagelskaia) pointed to the sustainable authoritarian rule in the Central Asian states and a very specific type of clan-bureaucratic capitalism serving a small population group. The region demonstrates a very complicated intertwining of tradition and modernity, as well as the strong and mounting impact of religion on social life. The authors believe that the current political developments reproduce not a Western model (or a set of its elements) based on the separation of personal and public relations, but a model in which power, authority, and influence largely depend on the individual's social status. This explains why political struggle is concentrated on problems of influence rather than on alternative political courses.

The authors have detected a certain similarity between Central Asian reality and the social revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa; they point out that there is a fairly widely accepted opinion that the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt spearheaded at the authoritarian regimes serve as a model for at least some of the Central Asian countries with similar headaches: the growing number of educated youth with no adequate employment at home; painful urbanization accompanied by no less painful social repercussions of the developing market (frequently not market) economy; widespread corruption; poverty, etc.

The Central Asian problems differ from those of the Middle East: tension is fuelled by basic social and economic problems, although outbursts are ignited by the elites locked in rivalry over power and resources. This leads to mobilization on the regional or local basis (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan).

Sergey Abashin's chapter in the reviewed monograph “Tsentralnaia Azia: kak my ee vidim” (Central Asia: How We See It) is of a conceptual nature. The author asks: do these countries constitute a single whole and what are their common descriptions? It should be said in all justice that much of what the author says here was said earlier in his *Natsionalizm v Tsentralnoy Azii* (Nationalism in Central Asia), which appeared in 2007.¹⁵

The author pointed out that the two versions of the region's possible configuration presented as alternative interpretations of the region's past, culture, and political interests—Central Eurasia and Greater Central Asia—were put on the table with the clear purpose of getting rid of the vestiges of the region's Soviet past.

Meanwhile, the Soviet heritage is gradually disappearing; new geopolitical structures that represent certain old and much more solid relations based on culture, language, and religion have moved

¹⁵ See: S.N. Abashin, *Natsionalizm v Tsentralnoy Azii: v poiskakh identichnosti*, Aleteyya, St. Petersburg, 2007.

to the fore. This means, argue those who favor new names, that Central Asia, together with other countries, should become part of a region that from that time on should be regarded as a historical geopolitical entity. The expert community has gradually grown attached to the idea, which is demonstrated by the names for all sorts of events, communities, and departments.

Dr. Abashin argues that the new idea about the region and its new names (in fact the difference between Central Asia and Greater Central Asia is purely stylistic) constitutes a problem because of the vague borders of this new cultural-geographic construct. Indeed, there is a more or less definite consensus that it should include five Central Asian states and Afghanistan, the rest depends on the whims of each specific author. The lists of candidates include Mongolia, Xinjiang, Eastern Iran, Northwestern Pakistan, Western Siberia, the Southern Urals, Volga Area, the Southern Caucasus, and the Crimea.

The author then turns to the “meaningful features” (social and economic characteristics and statistics) of each of the Central Asian republics to conclude that the local societies are stuck between “urbanized/rural” and “industrial/agrarian” categories with a prominent and prevailing rural/agrarian element. It should be said that in Central Asia, the lifestyle in many towns is more rural than urbanized.

This brings Sergey Abashin to certain conclusions related to the modernization/demodernization problem; he refers to the supporters of the classical modernization concept who believe that social and economic development inevitably leads to secularization.

It is absolutely clear, however, that the processes underway in the Central Asian societies are not that simple: a large share of people have completely lost their interest in religion; the majority of those who regard themselves as Muslims have in mind certain cultural values rather than faith per se.

Those who regard themselves as faithful follow the minimal set of religious injunctions maximally adjusted to the demands of the mobile information society of our days.

There are people who claim to be active believers (their ranks swelled after the Soviet Union’s downfall) and call on the rest to strictly follow the numerous religious rules. It should be said that this is not a backward movement toward archaic spiritual practices, but a newly comprehended religiosity that stresses personal faith and personal responsibility.

Each of the categories, irrespective of their share in each of the Central Asian countries, represents a specific version of “inclusion” in the contemporary world. The local society is not a keeper of ancient traditions, but a dynamically changing community that has acquired new layers and creates new, hybrid forms of cultural identity.

The author concludes with a discussion of the “world-system,” which pigeonholes the countries into “central” and “periphery,” and adds the “semi-periphery” category to them to describe a certain transition state. This classification relies on the fact that there are more diverse forms of predominance: redistribution of financial means, flows of people, commodities, technologies, cultural values, fashions, etc. On this scale, the Central Asian countries occupy a subordinate and dependent position compared to Russia (which is a semi-periphery state itself), China, the U.S., and Europe. At best, Central Asia has supplied the developed countries with raw materials and workforce in exchange for greater dependence on loans, investments, and political benevolence. In other words, the outmoded term “third world,” abandoned when the Soviet bloc collapsed, can be used to describe the “periphery” and the lower status.

Dr. Abashin points out that there is no single (nor can there be) opinion about the region. Diverse descriptions reveal a multitude of views and opinions about the region. The ideas about Central Asia greatly depend on the point from which an expert observes the region, the interests, real or imaginary, which are defended, and the mechanisms and methodologies applied.

The Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS, pays particular attention to Central Asia's domestic policy.¹⁶ In 2011, the Center for Strategic Assessments and Forecasting in Russia issued a report in which it pointed to possible connections between the events in the Middle East and Central Asia.¹⁷ The authors had to admit that Russia, one of the key regional players, has failed to restore its former influence in Central Asia.

In one of the chapters of *Vneshnopoliticheskiy protsess v stranakh Vostoka*, Irina Zviagelskaia (Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS) looks at the foreign policy process in the Central Asian states as part of the region's general rebirth and development that has been unfolding in recent decades and the role of external players in the region.¹⁸ The author points to the closed nature of foreign policy decision-making as one of the specific features of the region's political regimes. She also mentions other similar features of the region's political culture, which combined modern and traditional elements: social hierarchy, solidarity groups, etc., and the multiple impact of what is going on outside the region on what is going on inside it and the foreign policy of its states.

The author deems it necessary to stress the following important fact: what the West, very much aware of the importance of energy sources, is doing in the Arab East (removal of elderly leaders, external reorientation, structural economic changes, etc.) should be expected after a while in Central Asia; the region and its neighbors should be prepared. Indeed, some of the Central Asian leaders have been at the helm as long as displaced Mubarak, Ben Ali, Saleh and Kaddafi, their regimes (authoritarianism that pretends to be democracy) being very similar to those in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

In other words, the Central Asian leaders and their regimes have grown old and become worn-out during the 20-odd post-Soviet years: back in 1991, they bred limited enthusiasm; in stormy 2011, they could rely on fear of repression, fear of change, apathy, and post-Soviet conformism.

Irina Zviagelskaia concludes by saying that a peaceful and organized transfer from these regimes to democracy is too complicated to be smooth; what is more, there has been no successful precedence anywhere in the world.

Aziatskie energeticheskie stsenarii (Asian Energy Scenarios), which is part of a series published by the Institute of World Economy and International Relations,¹⁹ looks at the energy problems and the region's role in the world export of energy resources. The authors have pointed out that Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan used their vast oil, gas, and uranium deposits to find a niche in the international division of labor as energy exporters. Many of them, however, failed to modernize their energy and transportation sector, which demands excessive energy-intensity of production and consumption. Very soon this will diminish their export advantages.

Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v Tsentralnoy Azii (International Relations in Central Asia), another fundamental work of Russian academics edited by A. Bogaturov, deserves special mention.²⁰ This is the first attempt in Russia to present an integrated version of the history of the sub-system of international relations in Central Asia in the post-Soviet period. The authors supply an overview of the pre-history of international relations in the region and their evolution in the last two decades. The period between 1991 and 2008 received special attention because this was when international relations in Central Asia acquired new logic, new stimuli, and a new trajectory.

¹⁶ See: *Razvitiye politicheskoy situatsii v gosudarstvakh Tsentralnoy Azii v kontekste transformatsii*, IV RAS, Moscow, 2010; *Politicheskiy protsess v Tsentralnoy Azii: rezul'taty, problemy, perspektivy*, IV RAS/TsSPI, Moscow, 2011.

¹⁷ See: *Tsentralnaia Azia v geopoliticheskikh protsessakh, ee nastoiashchee i budushchee*, TsSOP, Moscow, 2011.

¹⁸ See: *Vneshnopoliticheskiy protsess v stranakh Vostoka*, ed. by Prof. D.V. Streletsov, Aspekt Press, Moscow, 2011.

¹⁹ See: *Aziatskie energeticheskie stsenarii*, ed. by S.V. Zhukov, Magistr, Moscow, 2012.

²⁰ See: *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v Tsentralnoy Azii: sobytii i dokumenty*, Teaching aid, ed. by A.D. Bogaturov, Moscow, 2011.

Rossia v Sredney Azii. Zavoevania i preobrazovania (Russia in Central Asia. Conquests and Changes) by Evgeny Glushchenko,²¹ which appeared earlier and dealt with more or less similar subjects, should also be mentioned here.

The monograph edited by A. Bogaturov pays much attention to the social, political, and economic processes underway in the post-Soviet Central Asian countries. The authors concentrate on the interaction between the regional states and the external world, which underwent great changes when the Soviet Union disappeared and new Russia emerged on the international political scene. The book analyzes in detail the relations with the world and regional actors (Russia, the United States, China, Turkey, the EU), as well as with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. The authors have said enough about the role these countries are playing in the very complicated and consequential geopolitical games and the prospects for their involvement in international regional cooperation in the 21st century.

The American formula Greater Central Asia (analogous to the Greater Middle East) received the full scope of attention. It presupposed that Greater Central Asia will cover not only Afghanistan, but also Pakistan, Bangladesh, and probably India. It should be said that these formulas are quite useful for analytical purposes.

This particular formula draws attention to a specific vector of American strategic interests; the authors absolutely correctly point out that the regional countries' foreign policy and the activities of their common organizations and consultative structures are very important for overcoming or neutralizing extra-regional threats and for more or less successfully addressing many of their domestic and interstate tasks.

The authors conclude that today those Central Asian republics that are still clinging to their "multivectoral" policies (President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov is especially fond of this) have acquired another argument in favor of closer relations with Russia.

The authors point out that in recent years the number of reasons to pursue full-scale and varied cooperation with Russia has been increasing. The stumbling blocks on this road (discussed in detail above) proved to be higher than many of the supporters of reintegration believed, one of them being the diminished international role and weight of Yeltsin's Russia and the imperfect decision-making mechanisms.

In Central Asia, "anti-imperialist" sentiments and the desire to find new foreign partners played an equally negative role. Kazakhstan's and Kyrgyzstan's new ties with China, Uzbekistan's with Turkey and the United States, Turkmenistan's with Turkey and Iran, and Tajikistan's with Afghanistan and Iran proved to be fairly strong. In these conditions, relations with Russia survived, but no longer as a priority; in some countries (Uzbekistan), they were pushed to the backburner. The circumstances gradually changed; under Putin, Russia regained its strength and influence, including, among other areas, in the center of Asia.

The authors stress that Central Asia is very important for Russia in the context of economic and military security; the sub-system of international relations taking shape in this geopolitically highly important region will determine, in many respects, the image of the developing multipolar world.

Conclusion

The numerous and varied Russian studies of Central Asia suggest the following conclusions about Russia's security interests and concerns in the region:

²¹ See: E.A. Glushchenko, *Rossia v Sredney Azii. Zavoevania i preobrazovania*, Tsentrpoligraf, Moscow, 2010.

- (1) military-strategic stability and recognition of Moscow's "special rights" to the region as a zone of Russia's national interests;
- (2) military-political and military-technical cooperation on a bilateral basis;
- (3) unwelcome influence or interference of third countries in the region;
- (4) regional stability (relations among the Central Asian states);
- (5) stability in each of the Central Asian republics;
- (6) dependence of regional stability on the Afghan developments.

The authors practically never admit (but not infrequently imply) that Russia does not have enough money, information resources, etc. to compete with the West's active policies; Russia does not have what is called soft power (its model is not culturally or otherwise attractive). This does not prevent Russian strategists and economists from developing far-reaching integration projects.

Kazakhstan is Russia's key strategic partner in the region, but Moscow does not always take its interests into account. This is confirmed by the methods by which the Customs Union was established, the events in Kyrgyzstan, Russia's relations with Uzbekistan, problems with jointly invested projects in other Central Asian republics, etc.

Today, China's consistently growing influence in Central Asia presents the main challenge for Russia, which has long been concerned about the West's influence.

The scope of studies of Russia's interests and policies in Central Asia is not exhausted by the publications reviewed above; the same can be said about the region's other problems. A. Bogaturov, Iu. Morozov, A. Malashenko, M. Braterskiy, A. Grozin, D. Malysheva, A. Tsyanok, N. Fedulova, and many other authors write consistently and extensively on subjects related to Central Asia.

This far from exhaustive overview demonstrates that the Russian academic and political scientific communities have not lost an interest in Central Asia: in fact, today it is even greater than ever. This breeds hope that relations between the states and peoples, who are not alien to each other, will continue to develop. This is the main idea of most Russian authors.

REGIONAL ECONOMIES

ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE CENTRAL CAUCASO-ASIAN COUNTRIES ADJUSTED FOR THE CATCH-UP EFFECT

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Introduction

One of the main problems of economic development is to ensure stable economic growth. This article examines some issues relating to the measurement of economic growth in the context of Central Caucaso-Asia, a geopolitical region which includes the countries of the Central Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).¹

¹ See: V. Papava, "Central Caucasia Instead of Central Eurasia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (50), 2008; V. Papava, "Central Caucaso-Asia: Toward a Redefinition of Post-Soviet Central Eurasia," *Azerbaijan in the World*, The Electronic Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, Vol. 1, No. 17, 1 October, 2008, available at

It should be emphasized that this problem has been analyzed in a number of significant publications.² In order to measure economic growth,

[<http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/156/20090328041927833.html>], 7 September, 2012; V. Papava, "Eurasia Versus Central Caucaso-Asia: On the Geopolitics of Central Caucaso-Asia," *CICERO Foundation Great Debate Paper* No. 09/8, December 2009, available at [http://www.cicerofoundation.org/lectures/Vladimer_Papava_On_the_Geopolitics_of_Central_Caucaso_Asia.pdf], 7 September, 2012; V. Papava, "Central Caucaso-Asia: From Imperial to Democratic Geopolitics," *Bulletin of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2010.

² See, for example: J.E. Stiglitz, A. Sen, J.-P. Fitoussi, *Mismeasuring Our Lives: Why GDP Doesn't Add Up*, The Report by the Commission of the Measurement of

it is particularly important to use a more or less adequate method allowing a spatial comparison

Economic Performance and Social Progress, The New Press, New York, 2010; R.J. Barro, X. Sala-i-Martin, *Economic Growth*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004; M. Fleurbaey, "Beyond GDP: The Quest for a Measure of Social Welfare," *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 47, No. 4, 2009, pp. 1029-1075.

of countries and regions. But at present such a comparison is complicated by the existence of the so-called "catch-up effect."

The approach proposed below makes it possible to remove this effect and make a more adequate comparison of economic growth in countries and regions (with a case study of the Central Caucaso-Asian countries).

On the Catch-Up Effect

As we know, economic growth is measured using two indicators: gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate (R), and rate of increase of GDP (r). The first indicator is calculated by dividing real GDP in the reporting period (Y^1) by real GDP in the base period (Y^0):

$$R = \frac{Y^1}{Y^0} . \quad (1)$$

To calculate the rate of increase in GDP, the amount of increase in real GDP ($\Delta Y = Y^1 - Y^0$) should be divided by the amount of base-period real GDP (Y^0):

$$r = \frac{\Delta Y}{Y^0} . \quad (2)$$

This results, as we know, in the following relation:

$$R = 1 + r.$$

In practice, economic growth is usually measured in terms of the second indicator: the rate of increase in real GDP (conventionally, in terms of percentage change).

It is common knowledge that one of the problems in measuring economic growth is a comparison of indicators for countries and regions. The essence of the problem is that due to diminishing returns on capital, all other things being equal, it is easier to achieve higher rates of economic growth in countries with relatively low levels of economic development than in those with a more advanced economy. In economics, this phenomenon is known as the **catch-up effect**.³

To illustrate this effect, let us consider the relationship between the indicators of economic growth in the Central Caucaso-Asian countries and the United States for 2010 (annual percentage change from 2009) as provided by the World Bank⁴ (see Table 1).

In 2010, economic growth data for all countries listed in Table 1 (except Armenia and especially Kyrgyzstan, which experienced an actual economic decline) were higher than those for the United States; the "best performers" here were Turkmenistan (3.1 times the U.S. indicator), Uzbekistan (2.8 times), Kazakhstan (2.4 times), and Georgia (2.1 times).

³ N.G. Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, Thomson South-Western, Mason, 2004, pp. 546-547.

⁴ See: *GDP Growth (Annual %)*, The World Bank, 2012, available at [<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>], 7 September, 2012.

Table 1

**Economic Growth and
Economic Development Level
in the Central Caucaso-Asian Countries and the U.S.**

Countries	Indicators of Economic Growth in 2010 Compared to 2009 (Annual Percentage Growth Rate of GDP)	GDP Per Capita (in U.S.\$) in 2009	Ratio of Actual Economic Growth to Similar U.S. Indicator	Coefficient of Proportional Offset of the Catch-up Effect (Ratio of GDP Per Capita in the U.S. in 2009 to Similar Indicators of Individual Countries)	Indicators of Adjusted Economic Growth	Ratio of Adjusted Economic Growth in Individual Countries to Actual Economic Growth in the U.S.	Ratio of Actual Economic Growth in the U.S. to Adjusted Economic Growth in the Respective Countries
Countries of Central Caucasus							
Armenia	2.1	2,803	0.7	16.1	0.13	0.04	23.08
Azerbaijan	5.0	4,950	1.7	9.1	0.55	0.18	5.45
Georgia	6.3	2,441	2.1	18.5	0.34	0.11	8.82
Countries of Central Asia							
Kazakhstan	7.3	7,165	2.4	6.3	1.16	0.39	2.59
Kyrgyzstan	-1.4	871	-0.5	51.9	-0.03	-0.01	-100
Tajikistan	6.5	734	2.2	61.6	0.11	0.04	27.3
Turkmenistan	9.2	3,745	3.1	12.1	0.76	0.25	3.95
Uzbekistan	8.5	1,182	2.8	38.2	0.22	0.07	13.6
U.S.	3.0	45,192	1.0	1.0	3.00	1.00	1.00

Naturally, a direct comparison of economic growth indicators does not give a true estimate of the real situation because the “starting conditions” (i.e. the initial level of economic development) differ significantly from country to country.

A comparison of countries with different economic development levels is only possible by removing the catch-up effect from economic growth rates. For this it is necessary to find a coefficient that would enable us to make an appropriate adjustment of economic growth rates for countries and regions.

As we know, the aggregate indicator of a country's economic development is GDP per capita (y), whose amount is determined by dividing GDP (Y) by the population (N):

$$y = \frac{Y}{N}. \quad (3)$$

It should be noted that in comparing countries and regions, GDP is usually measured in U.S.\$. The figures for GDP per capita given in Table 1 are also provided by the World Bank.⁵

For example, according to Table 1, the U.S. economy is 12.1 times the economy of Turkmenistan (in terms of GDP per capita), 38.2 times the economy of Uzbekistan, 6.3 times the economy of Kazakhstan, 18.5 times the economy of Georgia, etc. Due to the catch-up effect, all other things being equal, it is much more difficult for the U.S. to achieve economic growth of 1% than for each of these countries.

It is logical to assume that since the U.S. economy in 2009, for example, was 61.6 times larger in GDP per capita terms than the economy of Tajikistan, it would be 61.6 times more difficult for the U.S., all else being equal, to achieve the same economic growth as in Tajikistan. This reasoning is based on the following **hypothesis**:

If the level of economic development of one country is n times higher than the level of economic development of another country, achieving the same economic growth in the former will be n times more difficult than in the latter.

Let us call this assumption the **hypothesis of proportional offset of the catch-up effect**, or briefly the **proportional offset hypothesis**. For its mathematical description, let us divide GDP per capita of the i -th country (y_i) by that of the j -th country (y_j):

$$\alpha_{ij} = \frac{y_i}{y_j}. \quad (4)$$

Based on the essence of the above hypothesis, α_{ij} is the coefficient of proportional offset by the i -th country of the catch-up effect of the j -th country. Briefly, let us call α_{ij} the *proportional offset coefficient*.

If actual economic growth in the j -th country is r_j , then economic growth in this j -th country corresponding to that in the i -th country, given the hypothesis of proportional offset of the catch-up effect, will be:

$$r_{ij}^* = \frac{r_i}{\alpha_{ij}}. \quad (5)$$

Consequently, r_{ij}^* is the adjusted economic growth of the j -th country that can be regarded as corresponding to economic growth in the i -th country. Briefly, let us call r_{ij}^* the *adjusted economic growth of the j -th country*.

If the actual economic growth of the i -th country (r_i) is divided by the adjusted economic growth of the j -th country (r_{ij}^*), we will get a value that shows how many times economic growth in the i -th country is really faster than economic growth in the j -th country. In particular, taking into account (3), we obtain:

$$\beta_{ij} = \frac{r_i}{r_{ij}^*} = \frac{r_i}{r_j} \alpha_{ij}. \quad (6)$$

⁵ See: *GDP Per Capita (Current U.S.\$)*, The World Bank, 2012, available at [<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>], 7 September, 2012.

Based on (2)-(5), (6) can also be written as:

$$\beta_{ij} = \frac{\frac{\Delta Y_i}{N_i}}{\frac{\Delta Y_j}{N_j}} = \frac{y_i}{y_j},$$

where y_i and y_j are the increases in GDP per capita in the i -th and j -th countries, respectively.

As is evident from Table 1, actual economic growth, for example, in Tajikistan in 2010 compared to 2009 was 6.5%, and in the United States 3%, while the American economy was 61.6 times larger in GDP per capita terms than the Tajik economy. Consequently, 6.5% growth of the Tajik economy corresponds to U.S. economic growth of 0.11% (6.5:61.6). Similarly adjusted indicators of economic growth in other countries are also given in Table 1.

As noted above, actual economic growth in a number of countries listed in the Table was faster than in the United States: for example, it was 3.1 times faster in Turkmenistan, 2.8 times in Uzbekistan, 2.4 times in Kazakhstan, and 2.1 times in Georgia. But in reality the picture is quite different. In particular, given the hypothesis of proportional offset of the catch-up effect (see Table 1), the ratio of properly adjusted economic growth in Turkmenistan to actual economic growth in the U.S. is equal to 0.25 (0.76:3.0); the ratio for Uzbekistan is 0.07 (0.22:3.0), for Kazakhstan it is 0.39 (1.16:3.0), and for Georgia, 0.11 (0.34:3.0). In other words, economic growth in Turkmenistan is by no means almost 3.1 times faster than economic growth in the U.S.; on the contrary, economic growth in the U.S. is almost 3.95 times (3.0:0.76) faster than that in Turkmenistan; in Uzbekistan, the ratio is 13.6 (3.0:0.22), in Kazakhstan it is 2.59 (3.0:0.16), and in Georgia, 8.82 (3.0:0.34).

In 2010, Kyrgyzstan went into an economic decline: compared to 2009, actual economic growth was -1.4% . At the same time, the country's adjusted economic growth was -0.03% (see Table 1). Evidently, the 47-fold reduction (1.4:0.03) in the adjusted rate of economic decline was due to the fact that the American economy was many times (more precisely, 51.9 times) larger in GDP per capita terms than the Kyrgyz economy.

Invariance Principle

The indicators presented in Table 1 are constructed on the principle of choosing the economy of a so-called “reference country,” which in our case is the United States. The country with the world’s highest GDP per capita can be used in this capacity. In this case, its economic growth indicator will serve to rank similar indicators of other countries.

This approach has one purely technical flaw. In 2009, for example, Luxembourg reached a very high GDP per capita of \$104,354 (in some countries, the figure in 2009 was even higher). That same year, GDP per capita in Burundi was only \$222 (not the lowest in the world).⁶ Thus, for Luxembourg the coefficient of proportional offset of the catch-up effect of the Burundian economy is 470.1 (104,354:222). It is so high that, given actual economic growth in Burundi of 3.8% in 2010,⁷ the adjusted figure will be 0.008% (3.8:470.1). The figure is so small that it can be rounded down to zero. This problem will arise for many countries in the world with a relatively low level of GDP per capita and modest rates of economic growth.

⁶ See: *GDP Per Capita (Current U.S.\$)*.

⁷ See: *GDP Growth (Annual %)*.

In order to avoid such difficulties, it is better to use average GDP per capita for the group of countries in question. For this it is necessary to divide the total GDP of these countries by their total population. The economic growth indicators of any country will then be ranked based on this average indicator. Such an approach to the solution of the problem of removing the catch-up effect obviously implies the use of an average indicator of economic growth.

If the given group consists of m ($i = 1, 2, \dots, m$) countries, average GDP per capita (\bar{y}) is calculated as follows:

$$\bar{y} = \frac{\sum_i^m y_i N_i}{\sum_i^m N_i} = \frac{\sum_i^m Y_i}{\sum_i^m N_i}, \quad (7)$$

where Y_i is the amount of GDP in the i -th country, and N_i is the population of the i -th country.

Such an approach implies that the question associated with an adequate assessment of the economic growth rate is studied based on the example of a group of countries whose composition may change. Hence, it is better to use global GDP per capita and global economic growth data as appropriate average indicators. In this case, the basis for comparing the respective indicators will not change regardless of any changes in the composition of the group of countries being compared.

Consequently, if m is the number of countries in the world, (7) can be used to determine global GDP per capita. In 2009, it was \$8,588.³⁸

Taking into account (4), for the average level of global economic development the coefficient of proportional offset of the catch-up effect of the j -th country ($\bar{\alpha}_j$) can be calculated according to the formula:

$$\bar{\alpha}_j = \frac{\bar{y}}{y_j}. \quad (8)$$

As in (5), the adjusted economic growth of the j -th country (\bar{r}_j^*), i.e. economic growth in the j -th country corresponding to the growth of the world economy, given the hypothesis of proportional offset of the catch-up effect, is determined as follows:

$$\bar{r}_j^* = \frac{r_j}{\bar{\alpha}_j}. \quad (9)$$

If the growth of the world economy is denoted by \bar{r} , then, taking into account (2), we obtain:

$$\bar{r} = \frac{\sum_i^m \Delta Y_i}{\sum_i^m Y_i^0}.$$

It should be noted that in 2010 the world economy grew by 4.2%.⁹

Based on (6), the value of indicator $\bar{\beta}_j$ shows the difference between the growth of the world economy and the economic growth of the j -th country expressed in times:

$$\bar{\beta}_j = \frac{\bar{r}}{\bar{r}_j^*} = \frac{\bar{r}}{r_j} \bar{\alpha}_j.$$

⁸ See: *GDP Per Capita (Current U.S.\$)*.

⁹ See: *GDP Growth (Annual %)*.

Table 2

**Economic Growth and Economic Development Level
in the Central Caucaso-Asian Countries, the U.S. and the World as a Whole**

Countries	Indicators of Economic Growth in 2010 Compared to 2009 (Annual Percentage Growth Rate of GDP)	GDP Per Capita (in U.S.\$) in 2009	Ratio of Actual Economic Growth to Similar Global Indicator	Coefficient of Proportional Offset of the Catch-up Effect (Ratio of Global GDP Per Capita in 2009 to Similar Indicators of Individual Countries)	Indicators of Adjusted Economic Growth	Ratio of Adjusted Economic Growth in Individual Countries to Actual Global Economic Growth	Ratio of Actual Global Economic Growth to Adjusted Economic Growth in the Respective Countries
<i>Countries of Central Caucasus</i>							
Armenia	2.1	2,803.0	0.50	3.06	0.69	0.16	6.08
Azerbaijan	5.0	4,950.0	1.19	1.74	2.87	0.68	1.46
Georgia	6.3	2,441.0	1.50	3.52	1.79	0.43	2.35
<i>Countries of Central Asia</i>							
Kazakhstan	7.3	7,165	1.74	1.20	6.08	1.45	0.69
Kyrgyzstan	-1.4	871	-0.33	9.86	-0.14	-0.03	-30.00
Tajikistan	6.5	734	1.55	11.70	0.56	0.13	7.5
Turkmenistan	9.2	3,745	2.19	2.29	4.02	0.96	1.04
Uzbekistan	8.5	1,182	2.02	7.27	1.17	0.28	3.59
U.S.	3.0	45,192.0	0.7	0.19	15.79	3.76	0.27
World	4.2	8,588.3	1.0	1.00	4.20	1.00	1.00

Table 2 presents indicators of economic growth and economic development level in the Central Caucaso-Asian countries and the United States. In order to eliminate the influence of the catch-up effect, they are adjusted according to the respective global indicators.

Whereas the highest actual economic growth among the countries of the Central Caucasus was recorded in Georgia (6.3%), the highest adjusted rate of economic growth was in Azerbaijan (2.87%).

At the same time, whereas the highest rate of actual economic growth among the Central Asian countries was achieved by Turkmenistan (9.2%), the highest adjusted economic growth (after removal of the catch-up effect) was observed in Kazakhstan (6.08%).

When comparing the data in Tables 1 and 2, one will naturally ask how identical they are, i.e. whether the magnitude of the ratio of adjusted economic growth rates (after the influence of the catch-up effect has been removed) depends on changes in the base indicator of economic development (its initial level) that is used to calculate the coefficients of proportional offset of the catch-up effect.

It is easy to show that *the ratio of economic growth rates adjusted to remove the catch-up effect does not change regardless of how they were calculated* (based on economic development and economic growth indicators for some particular country or globally averaged).

To support this proposition, let us consider the ratio of adjusted economic growth rates separately. They are calculated based on a particular country or on global averages.

Inserting (4) in (5), we obtain:

$$r_{ij}^* = \frac{r_i y_j}{y_i}. \quad (10)$$

Based on (10), the ratio between the adjusted economic growth of the j -th country corresponding to the economic growth of the i -th country and the actual economic growth of the latter is as follows:

$$\frac{r_{ij}^*}{r_i} = \frac{r_j}{r_i} \cdot \frac{y_j}{y_i}. \quad (11)$$

Similarly, inserting (8) in (9), for the j -th and i -th countries, respectively, we obtain:

$$\bar{r}_j^* = \frac{r_j y_j}{\bar{y}}, \quad (12)$$

$$\bar{r}_i^* = \frac{r_i y_i}{\bar{y}}. \quad (13)$$

A comparison of (12) and (13), i.e. the ratio of the adjusted economic growth rates of the j -th and i -th countries corresponding to the growth of the world economy, is equal to:

$$\frac{\bar{r}_j^*}{\bar{r}_i^*} = \frac{r_j}{r_i} \cdot \frac{y_j}{y_i}. \quad (14)$$

Comparing (11) and (14), we get:

$$\frac{r_{ij}^*}{r_i} = \frac{\bar{r}_j^*}{\bar{r}_i^*}. \quad (15)$$

Based on (15), we can formulate the so-called *invariance principle*.

Invariance principle. *The ratio of economic growth rates adjusted to remove the influence of the catch-up effect does not depend on the choice of the base indicators of economic growth and development level that are used to calculate the coefficients of proportional offset of the catch-up effect.*

As an illustration of (15), let us compare the ratios of economic growth rates adjusted for the catch-up effect as presented in Tables 1 and 2, taking Tajikistan and the U.S. as an example. As we see from Table 1, this ratio is equal to 0.04; a similar ratio can be easily calculated from Table 2, and it is also equal to 0.04 (0.56:15.79).

Conclusion

One of the main problems that arise in comparing economic growth in individual countries and regions is the existence of the catch-up effect. The most adequate picture can be obtained only after removal of this effect, while a direct comparison of the respective indicators of economic growth is incorrect.

The adjusted rates of economic growth derived from the hypothesis of proportional offset of the catch-up effect satisfy the invariance principle. According to this principle, the ratio between economic growth rates adjusted for the catch-up effect does not depend on the choice of the base indicators of economic growth and development level.

Observance of the invariance principle shows that the proposed approach to removing the catch-up effect from economic growth indicators for the purpose of their spatial comparison is consistent and can be used for practical purposes without much difficulty.

Further research to remove the catch-up effect from economic growth indicators should evidently be conducted so as to “complicate” the hypothesis of offset of the catch-up effect, primarily by abandoning the assumption of the proportionality of this offset.

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