

The 3<sup>rd</sup> GCSP-OSCE Academy-  
NUPI-NESA Seminar  
Central Asia 2010

Bishkek, September 2010

Rapporteur: Ekaterina Klimenko

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\*The GCSP is very grateful to Sarah Tishler for copy editing this report.

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On September 15-17, 2010 the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESAS) in Washington, DC, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy in Bishkek, held an annual forum for security policy experts from Eurasia, East and South Asia, Europe and the United States. The seminar facilitated regional dialogue on comprehensive security issues and provided insights on the multidimensional character of the security challenges the region faces. Through a series of interrelated panel discussions, the seminar attempted to identify and analyze the key security trends in Central Asia, with particular focus on their likely strategic implications.

Issues highlighted in previous seminars have included the impact of the Afghan factor and the conflict in Georgia on Central Asian security politics, energy geopolitics, the role of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the region, as well as US, Chinese, Russian, Iranian and Indian policies towards Central Asia. In addition, this year the seminar focused on political structures and their adaptive ability in wake of the Kyrgyz regime change in April 2010 and violent conflict in June 2010. Some of the papers presented at this Seminar but not summarized here will be published in the GCSP-OSCE Academy 'Central Asia Security Policy Brief' Series.

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# Central Asia 2010: Challenging Assumptions

Central Asia attracts a significant amount of academic attention. Most literature portrays the region as having large potential for localized conflict that could erupt into large scale violence. However, for the past decade the region has been relatively peaceful. Since the end of the Tajik civil war in 1997 there has not been any real conflict in the region. Recent events in the South of Kyrgyzstan in 2010 have changed this reality. The conflict occurred in the Fergana valley and centered on Osh in accordance with many predictions.

Three assumptions regarding conflict in Central Asia prevail in the literature. First, there is a geopolitical regional race being played by extra-regional great powers. Second, there is rivalry between countries within the region that could easily result in war. Third, the Fergana valley is itself a bomb waiting to explode. However, an analysis of these assumptions in light of events in Osh demonstrates that such assumptions can be questioned.

From the perspective of the “Great Game”, great powers, namely Russia, the United States, China, and also India, Iran and Turkey are competing for influence over the region in order to gain access to its energy resources. Some have been maintaining a strong military presence in Central Asia. The airbases at Manas Airport and Kant (Kyrgyzstan) are often presented as examples of this rivalry between Russia and the US. Much of this thinking focuses on the energy resources of the Caspian, and South-Eastern Turkmenistan. The events in the South of Kyrgyzstan, however, revealed that disinterest was more compelling than rivalry between great powers in the region. Neither Russia nor the US took an active role in the conflict, although the crisis presented an opportunity to strengthen their military presence in the region.

The second assumption holds that rivalry exists between countries of the region: Uzbekistan is often presented as the “big aggressor” in the region, one that wants to use its capacities to threaten smaller countries (specifically Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan). However, looking at the events in the South of Kyrgyzstan, one can

see that Uzbekistan was more interested in conflict mitigation, rather than military intervention.

The third assumption concerns the potential of the Fergana valley for conflicts. Analyzing the events in the South of Kyrgyzstan, it is apparent that this happened at a very specific moment – just after the fall of Kurmanbek Bakiev’s regime – and served the interests of power elites associated with the ousted Bakiev regime. Thus, today the real security concerns of the region are neither centered on the geopolitical rivalry of great powers nor the intra-regional players but rather on the democratic deficit and lack of capacity for political governance that would stimulate economic growth and reduce inequality.

# Socio-Economic Development in Kyrgyzstan

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were designed by the United Nations to address key aspects of human security. For the first time in history, the MDGs provide clear developmental targets and set specific timeframe for their achievement. In Kyrgyzstan for example, the MDGs have become a fundamental part of the government's planning. It can therefore serve as a good benchmark to determine the extent of change in the Kyrgyz Republic after the fall of the Bakiev regime on April 7, 2010. Despite the change of the political leadership of the country, the MDGs remain one of the main goals of government policies in Kyrgyzstan, and there have been some significant achievements. For instance, efforts aimed at reducing extreme poverty resulted in decrease of this indicator to 6%. More than 93% of the population have access to potable water (the target was 90%). However, there are sectors where progress is lacking. For instance, reducing malnutrition among children has been mostly unsuccessful, and half of the children in Kyrgyzstan remain in poverty. One out of every eighth child suffers from extreme poverty and deprivation, and it appears that there is little chance to reach the MDGs in this area by 2015, the target date set by the UN. There are also severe problems with achieving health-related MDGs. Maternal and child mortality do not show any sign of declining. Official government statistics give a rate of 78 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, however, UN statistics give a much more grim picture, with over 100 per 100,000 live births.

In this context, the reform plans of former President Kurmanbek Bakiev had three important pitfalls: the concentration of political power within his family; efforts to guarantee the succession in power of President Bakiev's son, Maxim; and massive state control of the private sector. These factors have exacerbated the main problems in Kyrgyzstan today: poor governance, or more precisely crisis of governance, lack of investment in energy, health, infrastructure and education. The country needs immediate rehabilitation, reconstruction of the South, and programmes to employ people and restore services. Trust also needs to be rebuilt between the population and security/police forces.

# Conflict, Ethnicity, Political Extremism, and Radical Islam in Central Asia

## Ethnic Identity as a Factor in Political Processes in Kyrgyzstan

April 2010 marked an important shift in Kyrgyzstan's contemporary politics and political dynamics. The main actors are leaders that came to power after the events of April 7<sup>th</sup>, the political structures they created (not least of which is the interim government), and the Constitutional Council. It is important to note that former President Bakiev and his regime supporters are no longer some of the main actors.

Since April 2010, the major political events include opposition forming an interim government, the preparation for and the constitutional referendum in May and June, open conflicts in the South of Kyrgyzstan in Jalal-Abad and Osh in June; the defeat of opposition leader Baryktabasov in August; and, the election campaign in September. The lasting effects of these events are still unknown. However, relative clarity will be established by the results of the October 2010 parliamentary elections, culminating with the election of a new president in December 2011.

In this context, identity, in particular ethnic identity, has become one of the main factors in Kyrgyzstan's contemporary political processes. In modern society, the most important forms of social identity that have emerged are ethnic and political ones. There is also the problem that institutionalized ethnic identity interacts with other social and political institutions, the most significant of which are state institutions and political parties. The process of entangling of ethnic and political identities or overlapping ethnic and political institutions is referred to as the politicization of ethnicity or ethnicization of politics. As a result, a new type of identity has emerged – the ethno-political identity.

Ethno-political identity is different from ethnic identity in many ways. The structure of the ethno-political identity includes a historical memory, an assessment of the political history of ethnicity, and the nature of its interaction with other peoples as reflected in the particular myths, legends, historical narratives

and everyday ways of thinking. This structure has become particularly prevalent in Kyrgyzstan in the recent months.

Another element of ethno-political identity is the assessment of the current political and legal statuses of an ethnic group, reflected in the existing distribution of state power as fair or unfair. Today various ethnic groups living in Kyrgyzstan are dissatisfied with the current political and legal statuses of the Kyrgyz people. Ethno-political identity also includes the ethnic group's hopes for its political future. These hopes contain the desired form of statehood and ideas of possible ways to achieve it. For many political groups, the desired result is a state with a single ethnic group. Uzbeks have a different means of attaining their preferred political future, which is at odds with their ideal of a state with one ethnic group. They will not migrate, but instead remain in Kyrgyzstan and work towards achieving an equal status. The means to accomplishing this future are also varied. The concept of building a state with a single ethnic identity includes the possible use of force, segregation or assimilation. For Uzbeks, central to their ideal political future is recognition of the Uzbek language as an official regional or state language, and passing the law on national minorities and representation in government structures. It is also important to note that today, only Kyrgyz people have an official ethno-political status. The preamble of the constitution explicitly states that Kyrgyzstan is a Kyrgyz state.

All these components coalesce in an ethno-political policy which is supported by a majority of people. Ethno-political viewpoints are expressed openly and explicitly in specific documents, and they are also implicitly present. In general, the ethno-political policy in Kyrgyzstan is implicit, but it is clearly reflected in the political slogans and speeches of major politicians. The merging of ethnicity and politics in Kyrgyzstan has resulted in the emergence of the so-called "titular nation", meaning that the Kyrgyz people, the "titular nation" of Kyrgyzstan, maintain a privileged position within the country. This idea was supported by the speech of President Rosa Otunbayeva at a meeting with voters in Talas. This concept legitimizes the targeting of ethnic groups, which began in the early days of the revolution in April 2010 and continues today. Thus, if the government does not change its policy of merging ethnicity with politics, the Kyrgyz Republic will most likely face instability and ethnic conflicts.

## Political Islam

The collapse of the Soviet Union sparked yearnings for national identity and gave rise to religious consciousness in the Central Asian countries. These changes in society often resulted in clashes between two value systems: the secular state and Islamic movements, which seek either legal participation in the political processes or changing the secular state structure to a theocratic one.

Overall, political Islam in Central Asia has two different possible pathways. The first is the democratic pathway: legal participation and inclusion of Islamic parties or movements in political processes and structures within a secular state. The second is usually referred to as a “radical direction”; it recognizes neither the secular state nor its constitution and its main objective is to transform the political system into a theocratic state founded on Shari’ah law. This pathway includes more radical and extremist organizations than the democratic method. For example, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), has moved from more benign radical methods to terrorist acts.

The example of Tajikistan demonstrates that a relatively peaceful coexistence between a secular state and political Islam is possible. The government and the representatives of the Islamic movements of Tajikistan have agreed that, on the one hand, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) has the right to participate in the political system. In return, the IRPT must recognize the constitution of Tajikistan and accept the immutability of secular institutions of the state. At the same time, the state sees the IRPT as the only ideological rival, and thereby attempts to take the initiative in debates on religion, as seen in President Emomali Rakhmon’s frequent Islamic rhetoric. The results of the most recent election also revealed tensions between the government and IRPT. According to the IRPT data, it gained around 35% of the votes; however, officially they received about 7%. Independent research has indicated that IRPT got around 20-25% of the votes.

With regard to the role of Islam in Kyrgyz politics, since 2006 the state has actively participated in the exercise of religion. In 2007, a law on religious organizations was adopted, reflecting a new government policy on official mosques and independent non-governmental organizations. In addition, most political parties participating in elections have added religious leaders to their ranks. Thus, despite the fact that the constitution designates Kyrgyzstan as a secular state, where reli-

gious organizations are separate from the government institutions, the state and political structures are not only involved with religious affairs but also use Islamic undertones as another tool to win elections.

Furthermore, an analysis of political Islam's development in the region reveals the following trends. First, there is an overall increase in the profile of Islam in Central Asia. Second, the politicization of Islam and the Islamization of local communities is relatively slow in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, but very rapid in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Third, there is some evidence of the radicalization of Muslims, provoked by politicians and Islamic leaders using stretched interpretations of Islam to increase their personal and political influence.

# Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia

## Current Security Challenges in Afghanistan

The military operation in Afghanistan is now the longest in United States history. It is important to identify the main challenges of this protracted war, as well as the efforts that will be essential to achieve stability. Security, development and governance are the three areas that dominate security policy considerations in Afghanistan.

Security is characterized by the presence of multiple actors, among whom are drug-traffickers, organized crime and other criminal elements. Al Qaeda is no longer the main factor that explains Afghanistan's instability. By contrast, although Taliban forces have been considerably undermined by the coalition operation forces, they still maintain a considerable amount of strength. This situation is complicated by the resistance from the Afghan government and population, who seek to limit coalition military operations. In addition, both the Taliban and Al Qaeda still benefit from tacit support from Pakistan. As a result, the coalition's main objective is to build the capacity of the Afghan national forces and hand over much of the security tasks once they have a suitable capacity.

Afghanistan also faces considerable challenges and constraints that hinder its development. Some sectors of the economy, such as the telecommunications industry and the independent media have grown impressively. However, most sectors continue to lack foreign direct investment. Despite constant GDP growth, unemployment and a lack of market access impose significant limitations on further development. The Pakistan-Afghanistan trade agreement of October 2010 opens up the possibility for considerable improvement of cross-border trade, but it has yet to be ratified by the parties.

The improvement of governance depends on the foundations of the rule of law. Despite the constitution that provides for a democratic republic, in reality the government acts as a constitutional monarchy. As a result, the Afghan government

has suffered from a lack of legitimacy among the population due to its failure to build an equitable system based on the rule of law.

Achieving security in Afghanistan is closely linked with security gains in Pakistan; an objective that also faces significant challenges. First, there is an insurgency in the West, but Pakistan continues to be fixated on India to the East. Pakistan faces similar challenges in regards to governance, such as lack of legitimacy and effective leadership, but in contrast to Afghanistan, it has more effective institutions, an educated civil service, a professional military and an established judicial system. The most significant recent setback for Pakistani development was the flood in the summer of 2010, which wiped out USD one billion of investment and development in infrastructure in a week, and significantly reduced the baseline of economic development.

## NATO: Support for a Comprehensive Approach for Lasting Security in Afghanistan

The operation in Afghanistan is the first counter-insurgency operation conducted in NATO's history. There are some factors that limit the successes of the operation. First, NATO does not have a counter-insurgency doctrine (although its largest member state, the US, adopted one in 2006). Second, NATO is conducting counter-insurgency operations in an exceedingly difficult environment. Further, the institutional knowledge of this environment on the part of the Alliance has remained surprisingly limited, despite their long-term presence in Afghanistan. Third, the campaign has been under-resourced from its inception. Due to the limited success of the operation and the perceived necessity to terminate the campaign, the NATO strategy on Afghanistan has been revised in order to provide adequate military and civilian support.

There are four basic principles of the NATO strategy in Afghanistan. First, it is a shared commitment among 48 contributing nations to the UN-mandated and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The basic goal is to stay in Afghanistan until the provision of security can be guaranteed by the Afghan military and police forces. The commitment is illustrated by the military surge in 2009-10 and an integrated counter-insurgency approach that includes population protection, support to Afghan national security forces, and an acknowledgement that the military operation is not a panacea but creates an environment conducive to better governance and development.

The second principle is to provide support for ultimate Afghan ownership. The operation aims to achieve the Afghan-led stabilization process, through support to the Afghan army and police. Embedded partnering is reflected in joint-Afghan and international security forces operations.

The third principle deals with transition based on the security plan agreed upon by the Afghans and representatives of the international community at the Kabul Conference (20 July 2010). This plan is based on mutually agreed-upon criteria for when to complete the transition (areas covering security, governance and development). The November 2010 NATO Lisbon Summit will determine how and when the transition will start.<sup>1</sup> The fourth principle is the need to integrate Afghanistan into the wider regional context. Stakeholders must understand that the insurgency in Pakistan is a threat to not only Pakistani, but also regional security. NATO has initiated the creation of a tri-party commission with the participation of Afghan, NATO and Pakistani representatives to discuss broader security issues. In addition, NATO has a tailored cooperation program with Pakistan based on political dialogue, public diplomacy, and practical cooperation which reflects Pakistan's interest to develop relationships with NATO on its own terms. Regional cooperation is not only focused on Pakistan – a major logistical role is also played by the Central Asian states (for example, there is a joint Russia-NATO programme on training the border guards from Central Asia to curb drug trafficking).

1 Although the original deadline of 2014 to complete NATO's mission was retained in Lisbon, it has been made more flexible by the introduction of the idea that NATO may stay longer in Afghanistan.

# China vs. India

Following the break-up of the Soviet Union and the resulting uncertainty in Central Asia, India did not have much interest in the region. It was only after the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, and when it became possible for Pakistan to gain strategic depth in that country that India's foreign policy began to focus on Central Asia. In contrast, China immediately considered Central Asia as a significant factor in its national security. Because of the region's strategic importance, Beijing moved quickly to resolve the outstanding border issues with certain states. This process resulted in the creation of a regional organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which grants China the lead position in the region.

The results of these two contrasting approaches are evident. China today is the largest trade partner of most Central Asian states, and India's trade and investment to the region are comparatively small. Even in Tajikistan, where India is reported as using an airbase facility for its Afghanistan-related operations, the trade is very low. While China dominates the region economically, India continues to view the region from a security perspective. Though there are some changes in this approach due to India's growing energy needs, a more active policy has been pursued since the beginning of this decade.

The security dimensions of China's engagement include not supporting forces in Xinjiang from Central Asia, demilitarizing the border and cooperation in anti-terrorist operations. The creation of the SCO has also served Chinese security and economic interests, as it has provided the Central Asian states with an alternative to Russian and American assistance. The pipeline from Turkmenistan that passes through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to China is symbolic of that diversification.

While India remains worried about the Afghanistan-Pakistan situation and is committed to preserve the current situation in Kabul, China is not worried by the regime in Afghanistan. Lately, China has emerged as a major investor in Afghanistan, with the state-owned China Metallurgical Group investing USD 3.5

billion in Afghanistan's Ayanak copper field in 2006 alone. China has also invested in the development of oil and gas resources in Afghanistan in general.

In contrast, India is constantly watching the Sino-Pakistan and Taliban-Pakistan movements in Afghanistan and seeks ways to balance or counter them. India's aid, assistance and reconstruction efforts are focused on Afghanistan and less on its extended neighborhood.

Even in its Afghanistan-Central Asia strategy, India is limited by its problematic relations with Pakistan and by the US antipathy for Iran. The plans for the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline cannot proceed, because of India's reluctance to depend on Pakistan for its energy. Similarly, relations with Iran have soured after India twice voted against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). While China develops and cultivates relations with Iran, India is more reluctant to continue even with agreed-upon projects. As a result, progress has not been seen on projects such as the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline, the Chahbahar port, and the North-South transport corridor.

While Beijing views the Central Asian states as a critical buffer for stabilizing and developing its Xinjiang region, India views Central Asia as a region for the containment of terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The main difference is that India has neither been a strong player in Afghanistan nor in Central Asia in general. It has a more minor role in Afghanistan in relation to the US and NATO, and in Central Asia it has a limited influence when compared to other regional actors such as Russia, China, Iran, or Turkey. However, India's more recent and proactive stance toward Central Asia marks a change in its approach that reveals its intention to break out of the confines of its South Asian focus.

Overall, India's new Central Asian policy has been given a new vigor over the last decade. India's emergence as an economic and nuclear power has allowed it to play a more active role beyond its immediate neighborhood, particularly in Afghanistan. Two important benchmarks signified this evolving approach. The first was in November 2003 when Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Tajikistan, where he announced the planned renovation and upgrade of the Ayni air base. The second was in August 2005 when the Indian state-owned company ONGC combined with Mittal Industrial Group made an unsuccessful attempt to acquire energy assets in Kazakhstan.

In general, India has favored low-profile cultural and economic diplomacy in its relations with Central Asian states. Yet Indian success in the region can be attributed to its readiness to emerge as a strong regional alternative to China. Its aggressive energy policy in the region is also showing positive results, especially when other powerful states are grappling with domestic economic crises. Though India has the economic capability, it rarely makes moves that could cause concern on the part of other powers. For example, it is willing to go along with the international consensus on Iran and it does not pursue anything that could jeopardize anti-terrorist efforts in Afghanistan. After all, its Afghanistan-centric approach depends on the stability of the present regime in Kabul, and there is great uncertainty as to what might happen to this strategy if the international forces withdraw from Afghanistan, and what influence it would have if even a fraction of the Taliban were to be integrated in the Afghan government.

# The United States and Russia in Central Asia

Traditionally, the US strategy in Central Asia has mainly focused on energy resources – in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan – one of the most important regional security challenges. However, it appears that the US does not have a clearly defined Central Asian strategy, as its foreign policy priorities are dominated by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

At the same time, Central Asia is still the object of a variety of US policies that vary between agencies within the US government, including humanitarian aid, political and economic assistance, democracy promotion (political parties formation seminars, media seminars, etc.), and a number of educational and economic projects.

The US has developed programme and budget-driven policy approaches to the region, rather than an overarching and general strategy. It also devotes more attention to international and regional organizations such as the UN, OSCE, SCO and CSTO.

Many of the characteristics of the US strategy for Central Asia also hold true for Russia. Most importantly, Russia has no clearly defined strategy for the region, and tends to focus on issues falling into one of the three following categories: energy, security, and economic issues.

Energy concerns are focused mainly on Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Since the 1990s, Russia has tried to establish a monopoly on the acquisition of Central Asian resources. However, the participation of other players in the Central Asian energy market and recent financial crises have considerably undermined Russia's ability to control energy exports from the region. Nevertheless, Russia remains the country with the largest holdings, and therefore its interests and preferences are always taken into account by the exporting countries. In the Central Asian political domain, Russia's influence is more understated. Its main interest lies in supporting pro-Russian intellectuals and political thinkers, in order to cultivate positive Central Asian sentiments towards Russia. Russia is also interested in a long-term military presence in the region due to Central Asia's strategic geographical location; in particular its access to China. Central Asia has also become a zone

for the expansion of Russian business. For Russian communication and construction companies, as well as for energy corporations, Central Asian countries often constitute the markets and the sources of labor. As a result, the main objective of Russian politics in Central Asia is to preserve its status and influence.

# Political Structures and Adaptation

## The Geography of Authoritarianism in Central Asia

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Western scholars have been exploring the tension between democracy and authoritarianism in Central Asia. Indeed, there is a convergence of these two modes of governance in the region. It appears that all countries are in a process of strengthening their authoritarian regimes, rather than supporting democratic processes.

Current discussions on why the authoritarian trend seems to be gaining strength reveal a number of hypotheses regarding the long-term survival of authoritarianism in the region. One of these hypotheses holds that the failure of democracy has occurred as a result of Central Asia's geographical location between great powers. This location made it historically more difficult for the individual states to be completely independent and to resist outside influence. The second element of Central Asia's geography is sheer territory. Neil Melvin in 2001 argued that due to Kazakhstan's vast territory, any political opposition has a necessarily more difficult task in organizing itself. Organizing meaningful political opposition in more mountainous countries, such as Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan, would also be difficult due to the obstacles to communication. In addition, the influence of the colonial system during the Soviet era has had a lasting influence on the political systems of Central Asian states.

This geographical reality has formed a certain type of political culture. There is a hierarchical tendency in Central Asia to seek a strong leader, complementing the region's propensity for centralized power. This fits into a broader environment of patron-client relations, wherein the system resists meritocracy and change.

The international dimension has also been important for scholars exploring the nature of authoritarianism in Central Asia. The European Union does not knock on the door of Central Asia – instead there is the SCO that is often referred to as the “Shanghai spirit club of authoritarianism” or the “League of Dictators”.

In 1998 the Turkish analyst Kubicek argued that ultimately, authoritarianism is not a curse for Central Asia but a cure, and that this stage of development was inevitable. Kubicek went on to argue that the international community should not worry about authoritarianism because it does not necessarily lead to exclusive nationalism; authoritarian states can equally be multiethnic.

What do these tendencies imply for Central Asian foreign policy? First, democratization projects must be reviewed, particularly to see how their form and implementation can better address the needs and desires of the region. Second, more needs to be done in order to understand the particularities of Central Asian states and societies, which may not conform to Western traditional understandings of what a state or a society is.

## Democratic Rule of Law and its Role in Kyrgyz Insecurity

To determine whether or not a state is democratic it is necessary to review the effectiveness of its legal system. The legal system is the intermediate level that stands between people and their politicians. There are several criteria through which one can judge the robustness of the state's democracy in regards to the rule of law: whether the legal system extends homogeneously across the state; whether it is applied uniformly among the social classes; whether it contains effective mechanisms of accountability; and whether it dispenses justice fairly. It is also particularly important to understand what O'Donnell called the "democratic rule of law". The democratic rule of law upholds political rights, freedoms and guarantees of democratic regime; it also upholds universal civil rights, and it establishes networks of responsibility and accountability that extend to all citizens.

In the case of Kyrgyzstan, it is important to look at different levels of the rule of law: international, national, and individual levels. At the international level, Kyrgyzstan has conducted a process of legal harmonization which is apparent in certain areas such as environmental regulation, patents and copyrights, and central banking. The rule of law in Kyrgyzstan is relatively effective when it is dealing with international actors. An example is the settlement involving the Centerra Gold Company and the Kyrgyz Government. Although the district court in Bishkek mandated a renegotiation of the contract with the Centerra Gold Company, the Supreme Court nullified the decision as it contradicted international law.

The rule of law simply does not function on the national level. Kyrgyz courts are largely corrupted, partial and unreliable, and they are not able to effectively enforce their judgments. This forces most people to refer to customs-based private methods of dispute resolution. In the South of Kyrgyzstan, for example, most disputes are resolved through Uzbek customary law. If a transaction involves people from that region, it will use this mechanism regardless of the ethnicity of the parties. In the North, ethnic Kyrgyz practices are the mechanisms used to resolve conflicts. Decisions are largely predictable, but they differ from one region to the other. Overall, this type of dispute resolution mechanism is accepted, as official courts are largely ineffective.

At the lower level, the preference for private dispute resolution is even more apparent. People largely use the courts of Ak-Sakal (a local village elder-led process of adjudication). This institution was also incorporated into national legislation. The judgments of these courts are perceived to be impartial, uncorrupted and acceptable.

In general, the absence of effective rule of law negatively influences security in Kyrgyzstan: trade continues but markedly less efficiently, and a lack of redress mechanisms produces the feeling of insecurity.

# Multilateral Relations and Regional Integration

Despite attempts by the Central Asian countries to establish regional institutions for cooperation, the level of integration in the region remains very low. The countries still have an opaque border management, limited inter-state trade, and significant conflicts over hydropower. To understand the lack of incentives for integration in the region, it is necessary to analyze the domestic factors, particularly the role of the elites in their respective countries.

The majority of the Central Asian countries are characterized by factors such as the presence of competing elites who weaken existing state agencies, in order to pursue their projects without interference. All Central Asian countries have adopted the democratic system, characterized by a strong executive branch.

This culture of exclusivity and interference has resulted in weak states. Kyrgyzstan is very much a weak state, while Tajikistan has proven to be more resilient, having learned how to combat instability within society. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan can be considered as stronger states. However, all states of the region are relatively weak compared to states in other regions of the world. They lack the capacity to provide human security, and they lack the political will to resist the machinations of the elite. Furthermore, security agencies fulfill the self-serving projects of the elites (power-continuity and personal wealth accumulation), and they are not under any transparent democratic control.

This weakness has also influenced foreign policy in the region. With this very exclusive focus on “vlast” and presidential administration there is little readiness to give up to any kind of multilateral organization. Thus, it appears that there is no current incentive to make regional integration more attractive.

In the multilateral context, there are two types of regional institutionalization in Central Asia. First, there are multilateral institutions which developed in Central Asia after it gained independence, such as the UN and the CSCE. Although there

were doubts on the ability of the Central Asian states to fulfill obligations under the CSCE, the countries were ultimately accepted in the organization.

The second type is participation in the regional institutions, such as the CSTO and the SCO. Both organizations are consensus-based, have highly centralized decision-making structures and are based on the principle of non-interference into domestic issues. As a consequence, procedural and substantive provisions exclude the organizations from trying to resolve domestic tensions outside their borders.

At the same time, the founding documents of both organizations allow for the possible involvement in domestic affairs, or at least make such an interpretation possible. The text of the CSTO founding document states that the purpose of the CSTO is to contribute to international and regional security and stability. Accordingly, when security and stability are threatened by domestic crises rather than classic interstate warfare, one may question whether the CSTO is mandated to address such instability. A similar issue faces the SCO with its declaration that while member states are mandated to address the “three evils” of separatism, extremism and terrorism, they are not to meddle in the domestic affairs of its members. The question therefore arises whether it is possible to reach consensus among the seven or the six states, respectively, for a scenario such as the one mentioned above. What is important to keep in mind is that it is not likely that any Central Asian country is going to engage in a domestic conflict that could very well happen on their own soil the next time.

There are also substantial differences in these organizations. The SCO has more diverse membership. China’s addition attracts external attention to the organization but also affects the organization’s internal power balance. In addition, the Chinese-Russian relationship leaves more space for the smaller countries to maneuver. In the CSTO, there is no question that the overwhelming share of power is concentrated in the largest member state, leaving little room for six other members to maneuver.

As opposed to the CSTO, the SCO agenda is much broader—it is not limited to security. As a consequence, SCO’s existence and relevance is not determined by its success in the security sector. Furthermore, the main SCO players have different agendas: China has a trade-focused agenda while Russia’s is dominated by security issues. It is very likely that in the future the organization will be more

dominated by China's priorities, because its political agenda has suffered three defeats. The first failure was the inability of the SCO to cope with extra-regional military presence. Second, Russia failed to use the SCO as a platform to gain recognition for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Third, the events in Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 showed that the SCO was even weaker in crisis management than the CSTO; it was largely invisible and issued only two declarations, which did not have a tangible effect.

Thus, these regional institutions tend to act according to the narrow interpretation of their founding documents. The institutions, despite external expectations, were predisposed to this role due to their consensus-based decision making process. Cohesion is not expected to grow, based on two major external factors. One of them has to do with Russia's position. These regional institutions are necessary for Russia to build upon its regional leadership, but not necessarily for much else. Furthermore, Russia's failure in gaining recognition for Abkhazia and South Ossetia may result in Moscow losing interest in the SCO. The second factor comes from the new US policy towards the region. The US now represents something new to the main players in the region: "perezagruzka" ("reset") to Moscow and G-2 to Beijing. This may eventually weaken China's and Russia's bond within the SCO, further compromising collaboration.

# Conclusions

Four main conclusions can be drawn on security issues in Central Asia.

First, there is a close link between governance, security and development. An analysis of the governance crisis in Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan shows that the success of the security agenda depends upon development, and that development projects are highly dependent on the security situation. The resulting dilemma is how development processes can be initiated while ensuring security. Additionally, human security is becoming more strategically important.

Second, identity issues play a significant role in the political arena of the Central Asian states. Ethnic ties, religions and cultural divisions will likely shape the future political processes of the region.

Third, regional security integration is significantly undermined by the types of government in the Central Asian states. The unwillingness of strong authoritarian leaders to cede some sovereignty limits the potential for future cooperation in the security sphere, and also makes it difficult to implement security agendas in both bilateral and multilateral institutions.

Fourth, there is a significant shift in the positions of great powers in the region. There has been a considerable decline in interest from Russia and the US, both of whom have policies characterized by the absence of comprehensive strategies on Central Asia. At the same time, China and India, driven by energy aspirations and concerns about the situation in Afghanistan are becoming more and more involved in the security issues of the Central Asian states.

Overall, the discussion left some questions unresolved: Will Islam gain more political recognition in the region? What is the probable impact on the region if the current operations in Afghanistan fail? What does the future hold for regional integration? Finally, will regime change have an effect on the situation?

# Seminar Programme

## Wednesday 15 September 2010: "Human Security and Development"

**Keynote Address: "Central Asia 2010: Challenging Received Wisdom?"**

Dr. Indra ØVERLAND, Director, Energy Program, NUPI

**Socio-Economic Development and Security**

**Chair** Dr. Maxim RYABKOV, Director, OSCE Academy

**Speakers** Neal WALKER, Country Representative, UNDP, Kyrgyzstan: "Socio-Economic Development and Security"  
Jackie CHARLTON, Senior Regional Governance Advisor, DFID: "What Impact Can Development Have on Radicalization and Extremism?"

**Conflict, Ethnicity, Political Extremism, and Radical Islam in Central Asia**

**Chair** Dr. Roger KANGAS, Professor in Central Asian Studies, NESAS

**Speakers** Dr. Larisa KHOPERSKAYA, Network for Ethnic Monitoring and Early Warning: "Ethnic Identity as a Factor in Political Processes in Kyrgyzstan"  
Dr. Kadyr MALIKOV, Independent Analyst, Kyrgyzstan: "State and Islam"  
Dr. Parviz MULLOJANOV, Independent Analyst, Tajikistan: "Political Islam in Central Asia: Main Characteristics, Current State and Future Prospects"

## Thursday 16 September 2010: "The Role of States"

**Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia**

**Chair** Thomas WILHELM, Director, Foreign Military Studies Office (US Department of the Army at Ft Leavenworth, Kansas)

**Speakers** Prof. John WOOD, NESAS: "Current Security Challenges in Afghanistan"  
Daniele RIGGIO, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO: "NATO: Support to a Comprehensive Approach for Lasting Security in Afghanistan"

**China and India in Central Asia**

**Chair** Dr. Graeme P. HERD, Head of International Security Programme, GCSP

**Speakers** Dr. Ajay PATNAIK, Professor, JNU, New Delhi: "Comparing India's and China's Approaches in Central Asia"

## US and Russia in Central Asia

- Chair** Dr. Natalie HASSMAN, Professor of Eurasian Studies, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany
- Speakers** Dr. Roger KANGAS, Professor in Central Asian Studies, NESAS: "US Policy in Central Asia: Pragmatism and Future Options"  
Dr. Ivan SAFRANCHUK, Associate Professor, MGIMO, Moscow: "Russia's Interests in Central Asia and the Instruments of their Realization"

## Political Structures and Adaptation

- Chair** Violetta YAN, Deputy Director, OSCE Academy
- Speakers** Dr. Sally CUMMINGS, Senior Lecturer, University of St. Andrews: "The Geography of Authoritarianism in Central Asia"  
John COLLIS, Senior Partner of JCS and Director of the Kyrgyz-British Society: "Democratic Rule of Law and its Role in Kyrgyz Insecurity"

## Friday 17 September 2010: "Multilateral Solutions"

### Multilateral Relations and Regional Integration

- Chair** Dr. Indra ØVERLAND, Director, Energy Program, NUIP
- Speakers** Dr. Pal DUNAY, Director of the International Training Course in Security Policy, GCSP: "Multilateral Relations and Regional Integration"  
Dr. Tim EPKENHANS, Associate Professor, University of Freiburg: "Multilateral Relations and Regional Integration"

### OSCE Kazakh Chairmanship: A Score Card?

- Chair** Amb. Andrew TESORIERE, Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek
- Speakers** Dr. Murat LAUMULIN, Senior Researcher, Institute of Strategic Studies, Kazakhstan: "OSCE Kazakh Chairmanship: A Score Card?"  
Dr. Anna KREIKEMEYER, Centre for OSCE Research (CORE), Hamburg: "Trust in a Tolerant, Traditional, and Transparent Multi-Level Game? The Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship 2010"

### Approaches to Hard Security

- Chair** Dr. Pal DUNAY, GCSP
- Speakers** Dr. Farkhad TOLIPOV, Uzbekistan: "Integration Agenda and Disintegration Policy in Central Asia: Implications for Regional Security"  
Dr. Gregory GLEASON, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: "Hard Security, Hard Choices: Collective Security in Central Asia"

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