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Fifteen Years of Transformation in Central Asia and the OSCE

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One central element in the crisis of the OSCE¹ is the question of the relationship between the Organization's Western participating States and the leaders of those states that accuse it of pursuing a one-sided policy against them, consisting in enforcing the "human dimension" (democracy, rule of law, and human rights) in a way that infringes basic principles of the Helsinki Final Act, "such as non-intervention in internal affairs and respect for the sovereignty of nations".² Of course, this rebuke is aimed at the West. The Western countries continue to insist that all OSCE States have to conform to the CSCE Charter of Paris for a New Europe of 1990, in which the participating States "undertake to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the *only* system of government of our nations".³

"The key problem [...] seems to be disagreement over the human dimension".⁴ How to overcome this central contradiction is indeed the biggest question. It is one that needs to be answered by not only all sides within the OSCE, but by Europe as a whole. For both, the search for a compromise solution is extremely important, as Europe should prepare itself to take on a new policy field: dealing with the Euro-Asiatic continental space. By means of the OSCE, Europe has expanded its political borders to China and Afghanistan. On its southern flanks, this Euro-Asiatic area is bordered by a belt of Islamic states.

Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia, China, India: the scale of the emerging shared Euro-Asiatic continental space is unique. It amounts to Europe's most important "strategic reserve" in every regard. If Europe wants "to become self-determined in this world"⁵ and "to achieve global actorhood"⁶, as it appears determined to do, strategic partnerships in this area will be *the* central condition. That is particularly true in the context of transatlantic relations, as Egon Bahr, the architect of the Federal Republic of Germany's policy of détente vis-à-vis the Eastern bloc in the 1960s and 1970s, describes: "The closeness that we experienced during the Cold War between America and Europe will never be recaptured".⁷ As a result, Bahr concludes: "The only way for Europe to achieve self-determination is by emancipating itself from America".⁸ And furthermore: "It is Europe's responsibility to ensure that 'co-operation' is the keyword of our century".⁹

European self-determination, the Euro-Asiatic continental area, strategic partnerships, co-operation as the keyword of our century: if, in terms of these premises, one examines how, after 15 years of transformation in Central Asia, the geostrategic heart of this area, the sociopolitical environment, the character of the ruling elites, and their preconditions for co-operation have developed, and if one compares the situation today with the condi-

tions that prevailed when the Charter of Paris was signed, bearing in mind the West's Central Asia transformation strategy, a picture emerges that is described in the following section.

New Regional and National Identities

Fifteen years of transformation have radically changed Central Asia, its societies, and the living conditions of the roughly 60 million people and 40 ethnic groups that live there. The most important result of the transformation period is that, for the first time in their history, they possess their own states and are in charge of their own national destinies. For the peoples of this region, this is a major historical watershed.

At the same time, a process has begun to restore Central Asia's traditional geopolitical place and role as a bridge between eastern and south-western Asia, Russia, and Europe. In the course of this process, the region's traditional civilizational, cultural, and religious face has rapidly reasserted itself. On the one hand, Islam and the Muslim character of the majority of the population are becoming increasingly prominent – between 60 and 90 per cent of the populations of each country are practising Muslims. On the other hand, the secularism inherited from the Soviet period appears to have relatively deep and firm roots, as reflected in the state-building processes. All the Central Asian states have secular constitutions. The need to avoid conflict between secularism and Islam is one of the key issues facing the region in the future.

Over the last 15 years, the countries of Central Asia have developed close co-operative relations with their most important southern and eastern neighbours: China, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey. As a result, Central Asia is gradually returning to the circle of Islamic states to which it historically belonged. With the exception of Turkmenistan, all the Central Asian countries are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which also counts China and Russia as members, and India, Iran, and Pakistan as observers.

The West has been insistent in its attempts to influence internal transformation processes, which will be the subject of further discussion below.

Transformation and Western Pressure

In evaluating the Western transformation strategy it is important not to neglect the political, economic, and theoretical climate that predominated in the West during the period following the break up of the Soviet Union.

For the West, the transformation of socialist systems into capitalist ones was a political project from the start.

The priority was the irrevocable uprooting of all political and economic foundations of the socialist social system. Attempts at restoration of whatever kind had to be forestalled. The most certain way of achieving this appeared to be reforms that created facts on the ground as directly and rapidly as possible, without what could be called “evolutionary delays”: the implantation of a market economy and a Western-style political system. It was therefore also necessary to open the doors to outside influence in the young states of the post-Soviet area to enforce the implementation of these reforms.

Theoretical discussions at that time over the best way to “manage” transformation became intertwined with those on the repercussions of globalization for international relations and politics. In foreign policy practice, a kind of “post-national” conceptual approach began to predominate. It assumed that “the role of the nation state has been considerably relativized by the increased importance of human rights and the globalization of the economy and society”¹⁰, and that the nation state’s powers in a number of strategic aspects of sovereignty (democracy, human rights, rule of law; economic and financial policy) should be restricted and opened to intervention by external actors.

This “post-national” approach was diametrically opposed to the task of creating nation states in Central Asia for the first time. It was strengthened by the view that democracy is also a guarantee of security. The prominent German peace researcher Ernst-Otto Czempiel recommended that democratization be made the “primary and central topic” of foreign policy: “After all, if all the political systems in the Euro-Atlantic system are democratized and developed, i.e. if the same states and conditions that characterize the Atlantic community prevail everywhere, the problem of comprehensive security is solved, and stability and non-violence are permanently guaranteed. Non-violent, interventionist contributions to the democratization of all political systems must become the heart of foreign policy in global civil society [...] German foreign policy must give the strategy of democratization the highest priority”¹¹.

The theoretical discourse also created links of conditionality between democracy and market economy. “The only condition under which a market system and democracy can be *implanted simultaneously* and can come to thrive is when they are forced upon a society *from outside* and guaranteed in the long term by international relations of dependency”¹².

In this way, a package approach came into existence that aimed at the simultaneous transformation of all political, economic, and social systems in a “frontal assault”. As Madeleine Albright expressed it in a speech of April 2000 in Tashkent: “The best way to take a bitter pill is simply to swallow it whole”¹³.

According to this approach, the strategic links in the chain were “the revolutionary installation of an entrepreneurial class”¹⁴; the determined and comprehensive privatization of state and collectively owned property; the introduction of the instruments of a market economy; where possible, a change of elite; the reorganization of the political system as a representative democracy and with its characteristic division of powers.

By means of international organizations and bilateral relations, the West thus exerted considerable pressure on all transformation processes and on the leaderships of the Central Asian states that had to implement them. The OSCE as “one of the agents of change”¹⁵ has played and continues to play a central role in this scenario. By considering the human dimension as “the core of efforts to guarantee comprehensive security”¹⁶ in Central Asia, the OSCE made itself one of the central supports of the Western strategy towards the societies and leaders of Central Asia.¹⁷

The Qualities and Dynamics of Internal Transformation Processes

Influenced by the political culture, social hierarchies and loyalties with deep historical roots, and economic conditions in each country, the transformation process proceeded differently in each case. In Turkmenistan, for instance, progress was minimal, while in Kazakhstan, the results have been substantial. Overall, the following picture has emerged:¹⁸

Regional Differentiation

After 15 years, a certain degree of differentiation is evident: Kazakhstan, thanks to its rich reserves of oil and gas and extensive market reforms, and Turkmenistan, with its large fossil fuel resources, stand out. Kazakhstan, (at 2.7 million km² the ninth largest country on earth) has become something of a regional power. The proven reserves of its three largest oil fields comprise around 53 billion barrels. Kazakhstan also possesses around six per cent of the world’s iron ore reserves, and is responsible for some 2.3 percent of copper production. With a population of only 15.2 million, Kazakhstan has received direct investment of 28.4 billion US dollars since 1993. That amounts to 80 per cent of all inward investment in Central Asia. GDP growth in recent years was around nine per cent.

At the other pole are the least economically developed states: Kyrgyzstan and, in the far south-east of Central Asia, Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan occupies an intermediate position. All three states border on the Fergana Valley, a conflict zone steeped in traditional Islam. They appear to be developing into a geo-political group.

On the Economic and Political Consequences of Transformation

In the economy, the transformation has been systemic. While the extent differs from country to country, radical economic reforms and extensive privatization have been implemented, the private sector has been boosted, and most currencies are freely convertible. In general, the foundations of market economies have been laid, and the possibility of returning to a socialist economic system can be effectively ruled out.

The same is true in the political sphere. Despite the existence of many limitations, basic democratic structures are present in every state: a democratic constitution, parliament, jurisprudence, multiple parties, NGOs, and parliamentary and presidential elections.

Nevertheless, these countries are still dominated by authoritarian regimes led by powerful presidents. However, here too, a degree of variety should not be overlooked: from totalitarian, as in Turkmenistan, to a kind of “enlightened guided democracy”, as in Kazakhstan.

Measured against the criteria of representative democracy, however, the political transformation shows serious weaknesses: there is no genuine separation of powers, no system of checks and balances to keep the power of the state under control, human and civic rights are restricted and often brutally violated, media freedom is limited, democratic means for the transfer of power do not exist, the system of parties, trade unions, and NGOs is weak and is still not fully integrated into the parliamentary system. A report by the Bertelsmann Foundation estimates that “with the exception of the Communist parties, no party possesses either a broad membership or a stable basis in society”¹⁹.

Particularly damaging for the future development of the individual states and the region as a whole is the monopolizing of power in the hands of relatively small ruling groups whose focus lies on particular interests. This leads to a

high degree of particularist narrowness, which particularly hampers the development of the regional co-operation that is vital for the development of the whole region.

The Economic Consequences of Transformation for the State-Formation Process

Most of the Central Asian states, with the exception of Kazakhstan (at least according to Kazakh publications), experienced rapid economic decline following the dismantling of the Soviet Union. From the mid-1990s, a relative recovery took place, though levels equivalent to the late Soviet period were not achieved. On average, GDP growth from 1997 to 2001 averaged 6.1 per cent.²⁰

In Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and, to some extent, Uzbekistan, privatization of the former state sector and the weakening of the collectivized sector led to deindustrialization. The bulk of the means of production is worn-out and uncompetitive. Foreign investments are generally not being made in the development of industry, but in the exploitation of energy resources.

With the exception of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, who can rely on profits and a certain boost to their industrial sectors thanks to revenue accumulation as a result of their oil and gas resources, the Central Asian states thus find themselves in the same economic situation as most developing countries. They are namely reliant on the extraction and export of raw materials: energy sources (fossil fuels [3.3 per cent of global natural gas reserves] and hydroelectric power), precious metals, cotton, ore, aluminium, and uranium (19.7 per cent of global reserves).

The strategic dangers of this one-sided economic profile are well-known: technical underdevelopment, a high degree of dependence on fluctuations in the prices of raw materials, unemployment, and environmental degradation. In addition, all the profits from the export of raw materials are appropriated by a small circle of entrepreneurs, which leads to a weak internal market and exacerbates social polarization.

In other words, after the collapse of the division of labour that characterized the USSR, the transformation strategy was not focused on the creation of a solid basis for the self-sustaining economic development of the young states.

Effects of Transformation on the Quality of Life of the Population

There can be no doubt that transformation has drastically reduced the quality of life of the population. Central Asia remains far from fulfilling the UN millennium goals for social development. Poverty is a fundamental problem throughout the region. For instance, the proportion of the population with a daily income of less than one US dollar was 56.6 per cent in Tajikistan, 40.8 per cent in Kyrgyzstan (both 2003), 27.5 per cent in Uzbekistan (2000), and 27.9 per cent in Kazakhstan (2002).²¹ The above-mentioned report by the Bertelsmann Foundation estimates that “everywhere the social divide is growing wider [...] Poverty is spreading, especially in rural areas, and is increasingly including a gender component [...] The formerly large potential for education is disappearing”.²² The report diagnoses “sclerosis of the education and social systems and increasing poverty”.²³

No Change to the Basic Social Framework

Social subsystems remain trapped in patriarchal social structures with specific leadership mechanisms characterized by a social “pyramid” with a strong leader at the apex, who holds the system together by means of a hierarchical system of relations consisting of traditional loyalties and material bonds. The reference point of collective consciousness of the

population, which remains largely rural, is not so much the “*citoyen*”, i.e. the bearer of civic rights, although this model has taken on political and social life among the population of the major urban areas, but rather the group, the extended family, clan, and region.

These networks are the foundation of political power and its justification. While these networks taken together do amount to a plurality, it is not the unrestricted plurality of Western democracy. In political life, this hampers the establishment of independent civil and political institutions, and imposes restrictions on the autonomy of the individual. Currently, the growing poverty of the mass of the population is driving them back to the groups and extended families that function as substitutes for the social security systems they no longer have.

The Maintenance of Peaceful Conditions for the Functioning of Society

In December 2006, at a conference held by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Bulat Sultanov, the director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, assessed that the “general political situation in Central Asia remains tense”, “negative trends are growing stronger”, and the internal situation in a number of states is “unpredictable”.²⁴ He justified his views in reference to many of the phenomena mentioned above.

The strategy described at the start of pursuing radical transformation of all social, economic, and political systems *simultaneously* carries a high risk of destabilization. It creates dissatisfaction in a society that still remembers the high level of social security provided under the Soviet model, politicizes it, and places it, for a specific historical phase, in a state of tension. This raises the conflict-readiness of the society as a whole. The Tajik civil war, in particular, showed that system transformation could also politicize and mobilize the entire society in a negative direction. This general effect can itself trigger a violent chain reaction that can lead to the society fracturing and losing what could be considered its “natural” potential for living conflict management. In Tajikistan, the process ended in the wholesale collapse of the society into anarchy and the temporary failure of the organs of state. Similar aspects of anarchy were also evident in Kyrgyzstan’s “Tulip Revolution”.

Consequences

Several consequences can be drawn from this:

1. The key goal of the Western transformation strategy – the uprooting of the political and economic foundations of the Soviet type of society – has been achieved. There is no way back to the old Soviet imperium. That is a great victory, maybe even a historic one.

The Rubicon has also been crossed in the transformation to a market economy. Even if Western companies are not yet satisfied in every area – there seems to be no way back to a centralized, state-controlled economic system.

2. The transformation strategy has failed in the urgently necessary task of creating and consolidating the economic foundation for further state formation. The record with regard to the living standards of the overwhelming majority of the population is also clearly negative. Here the transformation is not only revealed to be entirely regressive, it is also hampering the transition to democracy by failing to establish the economic foundations for a social market economy and democracy. Criticism of the transformation process in this area therefore has to be particularly strong, given that these foundations were already established once during the period of Soviet rule. While the Soviet leadership did not make

use of them for the development of democracy, the West has tolerated their final collapse. Here the West must face the question of how much distance from modernity it can accept without risking a civilizational regression for which it would itself be partly responsible.

A great divide between rich and poor is being created, such as we know from the majority of developing countries, with all the social and political risks that this brings, including Islamist radicalization.

3. The West has so far failed to achieve its goal of establishing political systems in its own image. Sober reflection is needed on the question of whether and over what timescale this can be remedied. In all likelihood, liberal democracy will not be able to take root in the Central Asian societies in the foreseeable future. There is considerable evidence that it may prove impossible to ever achieve this goal to the satisfaction of the West.

What are the circumstances that support this hypothesis?

Growing Self-Sufficiency

To resist the West's democratization offensive, the Central Asian states have performed a fairly successful "entrenchment". They were helped in this by the West's own miscalculations. In its haste to promote the "revolutionary installation of an entrepreneurial class" (Offe), it entirely failed to identify the *type* of entrepreneurial class that would arise against the background of the specific character of Central Asian society.

The winners of a strategy of forcing "revolutionary" privatization "from above" were the large clans, above all those of the "first transformation generation", because they were the only ones with the administrative and financial resources to make privatization work in their interest following the break-up of the Soviet Union. Never before had the clan system, a closed social group that opposes the opening of society, received such an economic boost as during privatization "from above". Even in the Soviet period, the fusion of political, economic, and military power in the hands of one individual was not as tight and all-encompassing as currently in the clans of this "first generation".

The paradox consists in the fact that the West's strategy of transformation failed both to separate political and economic power, and to create the social basis for the "open society" that it would like to see. In fact, these policies have to some extent led to the opposite result: the emergence of a type of capitalism that can be characterized as "family-clan-bureaucratic capitalism". The new entrepreneurial class installed in "revolutionary" circumstances is essentially undemocratic. And so is the political system that this class has installed.

The dilemma for the Western democratization strategy is that it would have to abolish this type of capitalism in order to achieve the type of democracy that it would like to see. That, however, is something that the West would not dare to do, and it thereby places the basis for a successful realization of its democratization strategy in doubt. Furthermore, this class of clan oligarchs of the "first generation", which holds political, economic, and military power, will, sooner or later, have to make way to competition from new entrepreneurial classes of a second and a third generation. The latter will seek to acquire political power, but will not relinquish their economic strength. These struggles will drive future domestic political battles and will determine their shape and direction. However, they will not "abolish" the predominant type of capitalism nor the aversion of its representatives towards the separation of political and economic power, the open society, and Western-style democracy.

The second "line of entrenchment" that the Central Asian leaderships are currently excavating in their effort to

retain power is collective security, union, and co-operation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, an international organization with unparalleled human and economic potential. This alliance is quickly gaining substance, as is readily apparent in connection with the oil and gas sector – an area of enormous strategic consequence.

Nineteen of the 127 projects for economic co-operation in the SCO framework are devoted to the energy and transportation sectors, and particularly to co-operation between Russia, China, Kazakhstan, India, Iran, and the other Central Asian states.

Kazakhstan-China: In 2006, the Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline went online. It supplies China's largest refinery. As of 2011, an additional 20 million tonnes of oil is to be extracted, amounting to 20 per cent of Chinese oil imports. Plans also exist to connect this pipeline with the West Siberian pipeline system at Omsk. The following are also planned:

- An additional pipeline system stretching from the Kazakh port of Atasu to China (3000 km). Cost: three billion US dollars. Annual capacity: 50 million tonnes.

- In 2006, Kazakhstan joined the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline.

- Via a joint venture with the Russian company Gazprom, the Kazakh company KazRosGaz is to supply 6.5 billion cubic metres of natural gas to Omsk and Europe.

- Gas will be delivered to Ukraine and the Russian Federation via the Central Asia-Centre (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan) pipeline.

- The Russian oil company Rosneft is to explore for oil on the Kazakh shelf in the Caspian Sea.

Russian Federation-Uzbekistan: In October 2005, Russia's Gazprom and Uzbekistan's Uztransgaz concluded a contract dealing with gas transportation between 2006 and 2010. It allows Gazprom to use 90 per cent of Uzbekistan's pipeline capacity, which is also the means by which Turkmenistan exports its gas.

Russian Federation-China: In July 2005, the Russian company Rosneft and the Chinese Sinopec signed an agreement to enter into a joint venture to explore for oil as part of the Sakhalin-3 project. The Indian company ONGC also has a 20 per cent holding in this.²⁵

"Lessons"

With regard to the key notions of European self-determination, the Euro-Asiatic continental space, strategic partnerships, and co-operation as the keyword of our century – what "lessons" can be drawn after 15 years of transformation?

1. The type of capitalism that has arisen in Central Asia, the "family-clan-bureaucratic capitalism" described above, and the entry of the Central Asian states to the SCO have changed the political balance of power between Europe and Central Asia to the latter's benefit and continue to do so. The leaderships of Central Asia are no longer dependent on Europe for their political and economic survival. They have a choice.

2. Central Asia occupies a favourable central position in the Euro-Asiatic continental space. Both the region's growing power in relation to Europe and the understanding that is finally growing in Europe of Central Asia's special role create a new but quite central challenge for European politics: if the Central Asian states are no longer forced to climb into the European "boat" by circumstances, but are still interested in tying their boat up alongside ours, as the meeting of foreign ministers on the EU-Central Asia strategy in Astana in March 2007 made clear, then the time has arrived for Europe to examine how it can learn to deal *democratically* with successful autocratic regimes as equals. Thankfully, the OSCE exists for this purpose.

3. Measured *against* the West's original strategic goals (and not popular expectations), the achievements of the transformation accomplished under the leadership of the ruling Central Asian elites and Western pressure are not at all bad. In this respect, we can certainly speak of successful leadership, especially if we bear in mind that these are extraordinarily complex processes, and that, in Central Asia, transformation, state formation, and the creation of national identities have to be managed simultaneously. In fact, the West could be satisfied with these results. It could also accept that the ruling elites do not want the West to interfere in their structures of power.

In considering the area as a whole, the results of China's transformation should also be taken into consideration. China has decisively chosen to develop along a capitalist path. In objective terms, it is immaterial that this process is being led by a communist party, but subjectively it is of considerable import. That is because it demonstrates that even a communist party as powerful as the Chinese one sees no realistic alternative to the market economy as a means of enabling the desired rate of economic development. This view can be said to be shared by the leaderships of all the countries in the Asian part of the OSCE. It is of the greatest importance for the West's future strategy – more significant than the fact that the introduction of the capitalist economic order is not being steered by a political model of the kind the West would like to see, but rather by a Chinese one, a Central Asian one, a Russian one, and so on.

Thus, in the last 15 years, in the Central Asian part of the OSCE, geo-strategic constellations have shifted, the social-systemic landscape has changed, elites have rearranged themselves, their character, their interests, and the preconditions for their co-operation. The days of high optimism are coming to an end, and the West can no longer believe that it will be able to implement its "democracy as the only system of government"²⁶ in the massive post-Soviet space, with its high degree of plurality in terms of social nature and political culture. Attention must also be paid to ensuring that new contradictions do not undermine the still existing conditions that enable strategic partnerships and co-operation. These contradictions have already caught up with the OSCE. The most significant is that between the West's desire to shape world-wide democratization processes and the actually existing structures of governance. If one were to follow the premises detailed above, it would be necessary to examine the practical political consequences that would arise from correctly recognizing that "external promotion of democratization cannot be imposed, exported, or executed. It can only play the role of a catalyst, optimizing tendencies towards liberalization and democratization that are already present in the target country. But not in Marx's sense that an idea becomes a material force when it grips the masses".²⁷

Can the Contradiction be Overcome?

Doing so will be difficult, but it is worth a try. Hence the following considerations:

1. With regard to essential changes in the international and regional environment and new tasks arising as a result, the discussion of the OSCE's responsibilities needs to pay more attention to the Organization's *future* character. A choice needs to be made between the vision of the OSCE as a "regulator" of co-operation and security in the spirit of Euro-Asiatic continental partnership, on the one hand, and an insistence on defending the Organization's conception of itself as a motor of "proliferation" of the liberal-democratic model in the post-Soviet area, which has grown following the victory over the Eastern Bloc, on the other. With the former, the OSCE would first of all be providing Europe with a strategically indispensable service: adjusting its

principles and steering instruments for a partnership with a view to co-operation and security, enabling the reconciliation and harmonization of interests. Furthermore, a renegotiated relationship of this kind would make it easier for key Euro-Asiatic countries, including Russia and the states of Central Asia, to make their choice of strategic partnerships, over which they are still indecisive, in favour of a secure future with Europe within a shared continent. This could also help to dispel fear of competition, which is a source of mistrust, and which is felt in particular by the Russian Federation with regard to its Asian and Central Asian neighbours. Without some sort of reconciliation of interests between Europe and the Euro-Asiatic OSCE states, the latter might at some point agree to sign a "non-proliferation treaty" of quite another kind, one that China would perhaps not look upon with disfavour.

If current deliberations result in a decision that favours co-operation and security in the spirit of Euro-Asiatic continental partnership, it would be no "step backwards" for Europe, but rather a step forwards, as the reconciliation and harmonization of interests could mobilize potential opportunities for Euro-Asiatic co-operation that have not yet been fully recognized: in terms of economics, foreign policy, mutual cultural enrichment, and global policy.

The deliberations over a new relationship must of necessity be a joint task. Geographically, there would be no need for an extension of the OSCE area as it currently stands. The initial concern would be to build confidence between the European and Euro-Asiatic OSCE participating States. A subsequent step would be for the latter to seek to build confidence with their Asian partners.

2. The EU is of central importance for this vision. Following its enlargement to 27 members, it is now more European than the OSCE and may be considered the *de facto* authentic European community of values.

The CSCE, the OSCE's forerunner, never considered itself as a "community of values" but rather as a means to an end: the creation of a regime of co-operation and coexistence, peaceful East-West relations, and the principles, instruments, and mechanisms necessary to bring it about. The CSCE was a community with a particular purpose. If either of the two sides had claimed to embody the genuine European community of values, then neither would the CSCE have become a "success story", nor would the OSCE exist today. In the same way, the OSCE cannot realistically be seen as the incarnation of the European value community, but is rather a conglomerate of Euro-Asiatic states and values. Some of its participating States are even dominated by more or less traditional and patriarchal Islamic societies – Islamic in terms of religion, culture, and values. There are profound differences in terms of socio-political orientation and values, which ultimately form the background to central matters of dispute, such as those concerning "democracy as the only system of government" and the contradictions arising from it.

"Anyone who invokes a community of values without differentiating needs to be aware that this can turn into an act of submission, when one's own values are no longer clearly represented".²⁸ The West "no longer clearly" represents democracy in key aspects of its international conduct. Since the West's leading power, and the player of a central role in the OSCE, has openly supported "regime change", it has been evident that democrats are by no means guarantors of peaceful relations between states. Against this background, a number of Euro-Asiatic OSCE participating States are more than unsettled.

Promoting democracy in a way that contains hidden demands for submission cannot even function as the lowest common denominator in relations between the European and the Euro-Asiatic OSCE participating States. Given the

premises underlying these considerations, however, what is needed is rather the highest common factor: for the OSCE, its principles, its functioning as a whole, and its priorities for action. There needs to be legally anchored partnership and co-operation, reliability and predictability in relations, and guarantees for the upholding of stability and mutual security. There is a need to accept a plurality of domestic governance models, value systems, cultures, and religions, their coexistence in the OSCE, and the setting of priorities for all parties.²⁹

It should be possible for the OSCE to achieve this under the current conditions by acting as a “regulator” of co-operation and security in the spirit of Euro-Asiatic continental partnership. It should also be possible to achieve the necessary division of responsibilities between the EU and the OSCE. The precedent of finding a shared basis that can unite two difficult partners already exists: the CSCE’s Helsinki Principles. The example they set should be taken up again and adapted to new challenges.

¹ Cf. *Managing Change in Europe – Evaluating the OSCE and Its Future Role: Competencies, Capabilities, and Missions*, compiled by Wolfgang Zellner, CORE Working Paper No. 13, Hamburg 2005, reprinted in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2005*, pp. 389-430.

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Information and Press Department, Statement by CIS Member Countries on the State of Affairs in the OSCE, Moscow, 3 July 2004, at: http://www.in.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/3be4758c05585a09c3256ecc00255a52?Open+Document. The statement was signed by nine CIS states, but not by Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkmenistan, and was presented to the Permanent Council of the OSCE on 8 July 2004 by the Russian delegation.

³ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Charter of Paris for a New Europe, Paris, 21 November 1990, in: Arie Bloed (ed.), *The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*, Dordrecht 1993, pp. 141-217, here: p. 537 (emphasis added).

⁴ *Managing Change*, cited above, (Note 1), p. 15.

⁵ Egon Bahr, Europas strategische Interessen [Europe’s Strategic Interests], in: *Internationale Politik* 4/2007, pp. 86-97, here: p. 93 (this and all subsequent translations from non-English sources by the author).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁰ Address by Joschka Fischer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, at the Fifty-fourth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 22 September 1999, at: <http://www.germany.info/relaunch/politics/speeches/092299.html>.

¹¹ Otto Czempiel, Interventionen in Zeiten der Interdependenz [Interventions in the Age of Interdependence], in: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (ed.), *HSFK-Report 2/2000*, Frankfurt am Main, p. 22.

¹² Carl Offe, *Tunnel am Ende des Lichts. Erkundungen der politischen Transformation im Neuen Osten* [Tunnel at the End of the Light. Inquiries into the Political Transformation of the New East], New York 1994, p. 65 (author’s emphasis).

¹³ *Speech by the Secretary of State, Madeleine K. Albright*, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent, April 7, 2000.

¹⁴ Offe, cited above (Note 12), p. 60.

¹⁵ *Managing Change*, cited above (Note 1), p. 12.

¹⁶ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *OSCE Meetings on Human Dimension Issues 1999-2001. A compilation of final reports from OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings and Human Dimension Seminars*, Warsaw 2001, p. 7.

¹⁷ “Human dimension issues have become the most important fields of activity of the OSCE.” In: *Managing Change*, cited above (Note 1), p. 26.

¹⁸ For a more comprehensive analysis see: *Pyatnadsat let, kotorie izmenili Tsentralnyu Aziyu* [Fifteen Years that Have Transformed Central Asia], International Centre for Strategic and Political Studies, Moscow 2006.

¹⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.), *Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2003*, Göttersloh, 2004, p. 163 (author’s translation).

²⁰ Cf. Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook 2005*, at: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/books/ADO/2005/default.asp>.

²¹ Asian Development Bank, *Basic Statistics 2006*, at: <http://www.adb.org/Statistics/pdf/Basic-Statistics-2006-Web.pdf>.

²² Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.), cited above (Note 18), p. 172 (author’s translation).

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 174 (author’s translation).

²⁴ Bulat Sultanov, *The Current Political Situation in Central Asia*, paper given at a conference held by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation on “The Future of Regional Co-operation: Central Asia 2020, 11-13 December 2006.

²⁵ All figures are taken from *Central Asia, Report on Transformation*, Instytut Wschodni, Warsaw 2005.

²⁶ Charter of Paris for a New Europe, Paris, 21 November 1990, in Arie Bloed (ed.), *The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*, Dordrecht 1993, pp. 537-566, here: p. 537.

²⁷ Wulf Lapins, *Demokratieförderung in der Deutschen Außenpolitik* [The Promotion of Democracy in German Foreign Policy], Berlin, March 2007, p. 16.

²⁸ Egon Bahr, cited above (Note 5), p. 87.

²⁹ The international “Alliance of Civilizations” commission convened by Kofi Annan in 2005 demonstrated what the real priorities are here. Cf. Alliance of Civilizations, *Final Report*, 6 October 2006, at: <http://www.unaoc.org/repository/report.htm>.

USA Strategy Toward Central Asia After 9/11

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The events of 9/11 catapulted the Central Asian region into the world's spotlight. The region quickly became known to the world and has grown in strategic importance. Following the events of 9/11, Central Asia emerged from the shadows of the international arena to the forefront of global attention.

September 11 events have changed the world politics and global balance in international arena, which had an impact on situation in Central Asian region. Regional security problems are in the focus of the main regional and non regional powers. I'd like to focus on the main geopolitical actor in the region - the USA: to analyze it's influence on the regional situation in the light of the great powers antiterrorist activity. It is important to discuss a question of the US strategy in Central Asian region after September 11, 2001 in order to analyze the realities and perspectives of the USA and the Central Asian countries relations.

Since 2001 the new period started in the US policy toward Central Asia, which is characterized by the combination of the unique geopolitical factors, appeared after events of 9/11 and the US antiterrorist activity. Central Asia became the American vital interest zone. **That was the beginning of a new understanding of the region by the West.**

In 1990-s and the beginning of 2000-s the American policymakers discussed about the role the US should play in Central Asia: security manager, hegemon or limited partner. They also discussed the ways of this policy.

After years of the US policy to avoid making the region an American responsibility the United States found itself in the middle of Central Asian politics. The terrorist attacks put Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan among the most important frontline states in America's war on terrorism.

Reforms in political and economic field were no longer being a matter of preference in the US regional policy. The war on terror imposed new requirements on the US strategy in Central Asia.

After September, 9/11 and the beginning of the American military presence in Central Asia there were a lot of discussions among the American analytics about the "new Washington's strategy in region".

In 2002 President Bush's administration adopted two principal policy initiatives. First, through the Freedom Act in Afghanistan the US intended to establish democracy and promote civil society as a means of eradicating terrorism. Second, the 2002 "US National Security Strategy" pledged the use of military, political and economic resources to promote open societies and the development of democracy in defense of US national interests.

According to the National Strategy Combating Terrorism the US would wage the global war on the terror. The new strategy consists of four goals: Defeat, Deny, Diminish and Defend.

Defeat terrorist organizations.

Deny support to terrorists.

Diminish the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit.

Defend US citizens and interests at home and abroad.

Military-to-military relations that the US had nurtured in Central Asia since 1992 now proved precious assets for expansion, but more would clearly be needed. Part of the "more" would be material, and that meant more than outlays for new infrastructure. Direct US assistance outlays to the area more than doubled the first year, and the US also supported vastly expanded inputs from international financial institutions.

In 2001 the USA have started in Uzbekistan (airport Hanabad), in Kyrgyzstan airport "Manas" near Bishkek. These bases had regional strategic value; the US could use them not only in Afghanistan, but also in Southern Asia, Trans-Caucasus, northern areas of the Middle East (Iran), and also area of the Indo-Pakistan conflict. Within reach also the Western areas of China, all largest cities of Kazakhstan and Southern Siberia. To reach its geopolitical and geostrategic goals the US is strengthening economic and military-political cooperation with the Central Asian states through NATO's "Partnership For Peace" and other programs and projects. Now NATO is in Central Asia and will likely remain there for foreseeable future. NATO can, and depending on its interests and concerns should maintain productive security relations with Central Asia through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (political dialog) and PFP.

In intermediate term prospect the US military presence should be the permanent factor of the region geopolitics. But in retrospect there apparently existed a broad gap between the US and its Central Asian partners as to how they viewed the war on terrorism and reforms in the region. The United States viewed the situation in central Asia through the prism of the war on terror and long term political and economic changes as an integral part of the National Strategy Combating Terrorism. For regional elite "stability through change" meant a kind of insecurity and multiple challenges to the status quo and the security and well being of their regimes.

But both American and Central Asian policymakers agreed that the stability must be a common goal.

In the report of the US Institute of foreign policy analysis "The USA Strategy in Central Asia" (2004) American experts considered that it is necessary to follow two strategic imperatives.

First, State Department branch responsible for Central Asian region should be separated from Caucasus branch because the first one is geographically located closer to Middle East and Southeast Asia while Caucasus is closer to Europe.

Second, Washington's primary goal is to use incomes of hydrocarbons for stabilization economically weak Caspian states, to improve standard of life. The American experts consider that the bed social situation is extremely dangerous, and could be used as a basis for development of a radical Islam and other forms of extremism.

Additionally experts considered, that the USA should fix its presence in Central Asia for uncertain time, at least within the nearest five years.

In the recommendations for Bush administration American analytics suggested to start with the establishment of closer connections with *Kazakhstan* in the field of security. In their opinion this state has the best political and economic prospects in the long-term perspective and actively shows the greatest desire "to listen" to recommendations of Washington.

The news that the US must evict its forces from Karshi-Khabanad base had a broader strategic meaning for the United States, its policy toward Central Asia and its general strategy in the global war on terrorism.

The deterioration in the US-Uzbek relations and Tashkent's reorientation toward Russia and China also dealt a blow to Washington's long-term war on terror. The discord between Tashkent and Washington undermine the notion that the US could pursue the constrictive relationship with the moderate, albeit undemocratic, Islamic country and simultaneously promote a democratic transformation there.

Central Asia emerged as a key test for the American strategy of democracy promotion, which was articulated by President Bush in his second inaugural address in January 2005.

Moreover, the eviction of the American bases had shifted the geopolitical balance in Central Asia in a relatively short period of time and not in favor of the US.

In that situation the US economic, political, and security engagement with Central Asia needed the new regional strategy. The events have made it clear that the US strategy in Central Asia has three main options:

- to continue with the present policy,
- to concentrate on the security problems,
- to develop a new strategy that takes into account the new geopolitical realities.

According to American analytics (E. Rumer) the first option was clearly unacceptable from the standpoint of the US interests. Aggressive promotion of democracy and the appearance of double standards in American policy allowed authoritarian regimes to consider problems of democratization as minor or to entirely ignore them. The perception of a double standard mentioned by nearly all Central Asian analysts not only damages the proper understanding that democracy strengthens stability and security, and encourages the idea that instead democracy undermines security. The double standard also leads to a growth of the anti-American attitudes in the countries of Central Asia.

The second option was also difficult for acceptance. US strong militarized and unilateralist policy in the region would not only ignore the very real need of reforms, but also let to the contradictions with regional interests of Russia and China the countries playing significant roles in the region and regional processes.

The third option, development of the new strategy is the most challenging for the US, for the regional states and regional neighbours.

The US continues to hold the keys to regional security by virtue of its presence in Afghanistan. According to American experts success in Afghanistan would remove a dark cloud hanging over Central Asian security; failure in Afghanistan would cast a long shadow over it.

The US new strategy toward Central Asia was originated as a proposal by S. Frederick Starr, chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute (CACI) and called The Greater Central Asia Project (GCAP) in 2005. In his report, F. Starr emphasizes that the US has to fulfill its obligations in the region and build its long-term policy strategy which should be more about using regional approach instead of focusing mainly on bilateral relations.

The major US objectives in the region should be advancing the war on terrorism, building U.S.-linked security infrastructures and bases, enabling Afghanistan and its neighbours to defend themselves against radical Islamic groups, strengthening the sovereignties of regional states by promoting economic growth and trade, urging political reform, and preventing any single state from dominating Afghanistan or its region.

It is worthy to mention that State Department considers such an integration to be a natural and reasonable step. American government claims that the region faces the common challenges (terrorism, drug-trafficking, corruption, instable economy, and political regimes) and has the common cultural and historical links. The politicians agree that the enhancement of the political and economic integration will contribute to the stability, economic development and democratization of the region. The ultimate goal of the project is to make region stable, predictable and self-sufficient.

The project followed the pattern of "Greater Middle East" model, stating the necessity of integration of geographical space into the united regional "link" consisting of traditional Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan), and, potentially, Afghanistan and South Asian states (Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri-Lanka) in order to pursue a common policy, of "democratization", economic development and security, according to the official version. GCAP includes Afghanistan which has to be joined to stable and Western-oriented Central Asian states, with the view to reduce internal and external tension in the country and in the region.

In the view of Washington, this would reduce Pakistani and Iranian influence on Afghanistan, stabilize the country internally, and externally.

American experts argue that economy of Afghanistan and neighbouring countries will never flourish in isolation. This is why the key issue in the regional development is trade which requires improvement of transportation, and constructing the pipelines transporting oil and gas from Central Asia to South Asia.

Thus, economically integrated Afghanistan would be a linking bridge between Central Asia and South Asia.

American regional policy stipulates "geopolitical pluralism". Washington invites Moscow and Beijing to take part in the project as guarantors and donors into the regional modernization. The political part of the project claims that the US does not intend to reduce Russian and Chinese presence in the region. Moreover, the US invites these countries to be part of the modernization process.

At the same time, American analytics argue that the US would like to clearly outline its interests in the Central Asian region. They continue by saying that Moscow needs to articulate its interests and negotiate over them with the ruling elites of the regional states. The experts claim that

these interests should be harmonized with American regional strategy as well.

The American policy in the region focuses mainly on security, economic development and democratic reforms (the variation depends on their intensity and interlinks). The GCAP stipulates intensive cooperation of the US, China and Russia in creating single military, strategic and geopolitical whole consisting of Central and South Asia.

However, the GCAP is based on specific and non-equivalent aspects which are seen by Washington as single interdependent complex entity, shaping regional relations and processes.

Firstly, the examination of the Greater Central Asia idea allows us to make the conclusion that the US relations with Central-Asian states have already shifted from its bilateral nature and are to go to regional level. Thus, there should be the regional integration and all characteristics of a region.

It is interesting to mention that the majority of the American experts sincerely consider the GCAP countries the "stans", having, therefore, the common principles of political, social and economic development, similar interests and that they tend to have the similar reaction on the particular processes.

The principle point is that classical Central Asia, not mentioning the GCA, is not a single, monolithic construct. Kazakhstani scholars argue that Central Asia is not more than a handy geographical definition, which does not mean that all regional states are striving for their integration. Moreover, they are not similar as the subjects of international relations which can be measured by single indicators in conducting a certain foreign policy. In current situation, the regional states do not strive for interaction very much. Quite contrary, being purely guided by their national interests, the preferred ways of development and faced challenges, these states head very often the opposite directions.

The attempt to include Afghanistan which is not economically, politically and culturally linked with the rest of Central Asia in the pseudo united GCA region which will barely make a sense.

Moreover, we can hardly bill the Central Asian states as stable and westward oriented.

The USA are continuing the dialogue with the regional regimes about the necessity of liberalizations and political reform, nevertheless, Washington is actually willing to conserve the current authoritarian regimes preferring them to new more democratic but less predictable ones.

The USA facing great obstacles on its way to the "triumphal transition" of the central Asia to the democracy, because, from the one hand, there is no the common vision of the region and, therefore, there is no any common policy based on this vision. From the other hand, democratization policy should be based on consideration of the peculiarities of the region. The political and economic development differences enable to have only the common regional security strategy, not including the issues of human rights and democratization, which are developing on the bilateral levels.

In practice, however, neither Russia, China nor the USA observed the declared balance of the interests in the region, they acted spontaneously, and these actions resembled the chaotic movement of molecules. The point is whether the project of Greater Central Asia will be able to organize this chaotic movements onto a "geopolitical pluralism".

The GCAP would contribute to the harmonization and development of transit routes, reduce obstacles for transit trade through bilateral and regional agreements. The projects and

programs cover a very waste territory. Apart from traditional Central Asia and Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Xingjian, the Ural, Western Siberia and Mongolia sometimes are also included. Experts argue that it is important to develop relations with Turkey, UAE and India.

Participation of Afghanistan in the projects is useful for regional cooperation in spite of the fact that rebuilding of instable Afghanistan would be made at the expenses of the Central Asian states. Stable Afghanistan would prevent the aggravation of the conflict and expanding of religious extremists into the territory of the neighboring states.

The US strategy of "Geopolitical pluralism" and the GCAP envisage the balance of regional cooperation in the sphere of security, energy, economy and human rights through conducting reforms.

First of all, the problem is that none of these players worked out a model of the regional policy, neither in the sphere of politics nor in the economy and energy sphere.

All these competing nations had a certain interest, certain resources, and certain concept of their presence in Central Asia. China is mostly focused on the providing the economic assistance to the Central Asian states. The Russians are mostly interested in stability in the region. The US are interested in democracy.

In practice, however, neither Russia, China nor the USA observed the declared balance of the interests in the region. They acted spontaneously, and these actions resembled the chaotic movement of molecules. The point is whether the project of Greater Central Asia will be able to organize these chaotic movements onto a "geopolitical pluralism".

Secondly, this strategy and concept are, in fact, contradictory with regional interests of Russia and China the countries playing significant roles in the region and regional processes. Consequently, any effort to realize the strategy and concept would face active and sometime coordinated resistance by the mentioned actors. According to the project, the US invites India and Turkey, making them as well as Russia and China the guarantors of modernization process by increasing presence of former two states and reducing of latter two.

Neither China nor Russia would agree to be simple "favorable observers" meaning their derivation from the geopolitical game lead by the US and stabilization of this altered geopolitical space under the patronage of the USA, which these countries will oppose.

China is concerned that the GCAP includes not only Central Asia and Afghanistan but also sometimes Xingjian which threatens Chinese territorial integrity. Moreover, the GCAP implementation may have a negative effect on Chinese midterm and long-term objectives in the sphere of trade, energy and gas. China has become a big investor in oil field of Kazakhstan. The China's presence in oil and gas industry of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is growing. Small and medium entrepreneurs from China are investing in various sectors of Kyrgyz economy. Thus China is the one state which is invested in investment in this small and poor Central Asian country.

Russia takes Central Asia differently than the West. Taking into consideration the historical, military, political, economic and cultural links between Russia and Central Asia, Moscow has wide range of opportunities to strengthen its influence in the region.

Russia and China are concerned that while implementing the GCAP, the USA could realize a number of communication projects linking the Caucasus and the Pamir which are, in fact, anti Russian and anti Chinese. In the energy sector,

for example, the certain conditions are being created to divert the energy pathways from China to Indian Ocean (India and Pakistan).

So, it is possible that Russia would join hands with China to settle issues of common concern in the region. Kazakhstani scholars argue that Russia does not possess sufficient economic resources to maintain its geopolitical influence. Thus, it would share responsibility of stabilization of the region with Beijing.

In general, Russia will enhance cooperation within Organization of Collective Security Treaty and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This would strengthen the recognition of Russian military standards in the region which is not in the Western interests. Central Asian states would possibly join this kind of cooperation, pushed by the threats from terrorism, extremism, drug trade, transnational crime.

The GCAP may not threaten Russian and Chinese interests in the region. However, it is clear that Moscow and Beijing could oppose the Project. The project is seen as symbol of American long-term interests and its presence in the region which could undermine their own interests.

It seems not possible to evaluate the relevance of GCAP without taking into account the interests of the regional states to join this kind of partnership economically and politically. Central Asia is becoming more important in the context of world economy and geopolitics. The regional states are developing their transit capacities and exporting valuable goods to the world market. New oil and gas pipelines, highways outline can be already seen resembling the routs of the ancient Silk Road. The cumulative economic potential of Central Asia is growing.

Common strife for mutual economic and political cooperation between Central and South Asia brought them to capital of Afghanistan where they are beginning to realize common their interests and form Greater Central Asia as a region which can become a new factor of long-term growth of the world economy.

The successful implementation of the GCAP faces the following challenges: instability in Afghanistan, which hampers transport communication between Central and South Asia; shift in Uzbek foreign policy; difficulties in the process of Central Asian integration when most of the states do not believe in successful integration without Russia (lukewarm support of Kazakh initiative of creating the Union of Central Asian states in 2005 is an example); the next challenge is the necessity to persuade Central Asian states to pursue economic and social changes initiated by the US and to persuade them that the measures in the GCAP framework do not harm the neighbouring powers.

The important issue is how the GCAP fits to interests of Central Asia, would the region be a subject or an object of international relations.

On the one hand, since the GCAP would probably include geopolitical maneuvers with the US, China and Russia, it does not fit interests of "traditional" Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan.

In geopolitical sense, the project is aimed to increase break of traditional ties of central Asian states with Russia and, in perspective, with China. The attempt is made to reduce influence of Pakistan and Iran on Afghanistan. The project would break Central Asia from Eurasia and isolate the region from Russia and the rest of the CIS, and build fence between the region and China. Central Asian integration with Afghanistan would reverse the European vector of development of Central Asia and Kazakhstan,

and therefore, suspend the process of modernization in the region. In this regard, artificial matrix of self-sufficiency of the region, cultural and historical closeness is being imposed for the purpose of shaping a common regional mentality.

This process could push Central Asia towards Islamic world, which the US is intending to control through the Greater Middle East and the GCAP.

In the integration realm, the attempt is made to launch specific integration projects and possibly to reduce cooperation within OCST and SCO.

On the other hand, Kazakhstan is a proponent of regional cooperation and supports the GCAP if it serves strengthening of currently existing ties, security and stability in the region. In Kazakhstan's view, the GCAP should be seen as a civilizational and economic concept, but not as military doctrine and geopolitical strategy of the US.

Kazakh experts argue that the GCA should focus on the following priorities: regional transit trade; energy; development of transport infrastructure. However, it is necessary to take into consideration the considerable obstacles. They include the absence of coordination within regional states and international community, instability in certain states, differences in economic priorities, legislature, etc.

Kazakhstan calls for solution of the existing problems and elaboration of common approaches towards the formation of a free trade zone and common market in the region. In this regard, Kazakhstan considers "Silk Way Strategy 2005" to be a positive step.

Afghanistan is crucial state in these processes. The nation-building and socio-economic rebuilding of Afghanistan gives new opportunities for regional cooperation. Kazakhstan has actively supported Afghan government's Strategy of development so-called "Afghan contract" in the course of the recent conference in London. Kazakhstan is ready to assist Afghanistan in various fields.

Kazakhstan supports economic cooperation in the framework of OEC, SCO, EuroZES and regional program of SPECA. This would facilitate Afghanistan connection with the world, rebuilding of its infrastructure, and exporting hydrocarbons to growing economies of South Asia.

Kazakhstan's participation in the GCAP's subprojects, especially in the energy sector, is in the long-term interests of the republic. The project could be used if it is necessary as pressure leverage on China and Russia.

Thus, Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian states consider the GCAP to be a principle basis for economic the cooperation and security in the region, be distinguished from American geopolitical interests.

At least three Central Asian states: Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan would have optional field for international cooperation and "access" to the world.

In the conclusion, I would say that the GCAP is a business project which is in general terms beneficial for Kazakhstan. Russia and China are free to propose the alternative projects, in the case they are not satisfied with the strategy of "geopolitical pluralism", and these projects would be carefully considered in Kazakhstan, because, due to its multivectoral foreign policy.

So, it is clear that the US has geopolitical interests in the region and the US has grater interests at stake in each of Central Asian neighbours: Russia and Iran (oil), Russia and China (nuclear weapons), India and China (two arising superpowers in Asia), Pakistan (is a critical ally in the war in terror).

Central Asia's States Security: Nuclear Weapon Free Zone

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The problem of nuclear security for the Central Asian region plays a very important role in the contemporary world. Therefore, the countries of Central Asia make a significant contribution to the global process of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

On 8 September 2006, the five Central Asian states established a nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ), which reiterated their adherence to non-proliferation values.

Central Asian states by establishing a nuclear weapon free zone agreed to ban nuclear weapons from the region and accepted stricter safeguards to prevent proliferation.

In a September 8 statement, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan hailed the event as a disarmament achievement but urged the Central Asian states to “engage with the nuclear weapon states with a view to bridging the differences and ensuring the treaty’s effective implementation”. The treaty will enter into force after each of the Central Asian states ratifies it. [1]

The creation of such a zone is very significant for a region that was once home to thousands of nuclear weapons and a site of prolonged nuclear tests during the Soviet era. [2]

The nuclear weapon free zone treaty aims at reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation and nuclear-armed terrorism. The treaty bans the production, acquisition, or deployment of nuclear weapons and their components as well as nuclear explosives. Importantly, the treaty also bans the hosting or transport of nuclear weapons, as both Russia and the US have established military airbases in Central Asia. [3]

Article 7 and 8 of the treaty state that peaceful uses of nuclear energy are permitted under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is the first nuclear weapon free zone located entirely in the northern hemisphere and the fifth such zone in the world, besides those created in Latin America (the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco), Southeast Asia (the 1995 Treaty of Bangkok), the South Pacific (the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga), and Africa (the 1996 Treaty of Pelindaba, not yet in force). There are also a number of proposed agreements, covering the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula, Central Europe, and South Asia. [4] Under the treaty, Central Asian states undertake not to research, develop, manufacture, stockpile, acquire, possess, or have any control over any nuclear weapon or other nuclear

explosive device, not to seek or receive assistance in any of the above, or assist in or encourage such actions. The receipt, storage, stockpiling, installation, or other form of possession of any nuclear weapon or nuclear explosive device on the territory of the member states is not allowed. Each party pledges not to carry out nuclear weapon tests or any other nuclear explosion and prevent any such nuclear explosion at any place under its control. Member states undertake to conclude with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and bring into force a Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol within 18 months after the treaty’s entry into force. Parties must also introduce export controls under which they will not provide source or any special fissionable material or related equipment to any non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) that has not concluded an IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement and Additional Protocol. Further, the states undertake to maintain standards of physical protection of nuclear material, facilities, and equipment that are at least as effective as those outlined in the IAEA recommendations and guidelines and called for by the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). The treaty does not affect rights and obligations of the parties under other international treaties concluded prior to the entry into force of the CANWFZ. This clause has become a point of contention between the Central Asian states and some of the nuclear weapon states (NWS). The treaty may be amended by consensus.

The terms of the Treaty itself buttress the nonproliferation regime as they oblige the Central Asian States to accept enhanced International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on their nuclear material, and require them to meet international standards securing nuclear facilities. The CANWFZ draft Treaty does not provide for the establishment of an organization/commission to oversee implementation and compliance verification as do Bangkok, Pelindaba, and Tlatelolco, Treaties which establish NWFZs, or “control systems” as in the case of the Bangkok, Rarotonga and Tlatelolco Treaties. It does, however, provide for annual consultative meetings to review compliance, but no direct linkage exists between this function and IAEA safeguards. The agreement between the Central Asian states is also the first of the NWFZ treaties to require its members to comply fully with the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). [5]

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANWFZ CONCEPT, 1992-1998

Despite the opposition of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France to the draft treaty, many other countries support the initiative to establish a CANWFZ. This support, apparent at numerous meetings of the United Nations General Assembly and during the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), reflects the widespread support in the international community for NWFZs. Since the first NWFZ proposal in 1956, four NWFZs have been established in populated areas of the world, and NWFZs now cover nearly the entire inhabited area of the southern hemisphere, with over 100 member states. Additional treaties ban nuclear weapons from outer space and the seabed. NWFZs are widely viewed as both nonproliferation and disarmament measures. On the one hand, NWFZs aim to prevent the emergence of new nuclear weapon states by addressing regional security concerns. On the other hand, the slow expansion of NWFZs across the globe represents a step toward the ultimate abolition of nuclear weapons. [6]

The Central Asian states have been seeking to construct the nuclear weapon free zone, the first in the Northern Hemisphere, for nearly 10 years. Talks began soon after Kazakhstan renounced nuclear weapons. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, newly independent Kazakhstan inherited more than 1,400 nuclear warheads, a larger arsenal than any of the NPT nuclear-weapon states except for Russia and the United States. In 1992, Kazakhstan voluntarily agreed to transfer these warheads to Russia and acceded to the NPT two years later. Another impetus for the CANWFZ was the health and environmental damage caused by nuclear test explosions in Kazakhstan during the Soviet era. None of the other Central Asian states has possessed nuclear weapons. [7]

The idea of a CANWFZ traces its roots back to the 1992 initiative by Mongolia declaring itself a NWFZ, in which Mongolia also called for a regional NWFZ. Uzbek President Islam Karimov later made a formal proposal for a CANWFZ at the 48th session of the UN General Assembly in 1993. In 1994, at the 49th session of the UN General Assembly, Kyrgyzstan voiced support for the establishment of a CANWFZ, and in 1995 joined with Uzbekistan in proposing the creation of a CANWFZ at the NPT Review and Extension Conference. At the 51st session of the U.N. General Assembly in October 1996, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia also submitted a draft resolution on the issue, although it was subsequently withdrawn when it did not receive the support of the other states in the region.

The crucial step in the process of moving the CANWFZ from an abstract proposal to a concrete policy initiative was taken on February 27, 1997, when the five presidents of the Central Asian states issued the Almaty Declaration endorsing the creation of a CANWFZ. The declaration specifically placed the establishment of the CANWFZ in the context of the environmental challenges faced by all five Central Asian states. Each of these states housed parts of the former Soviet nuclear infrastructure, and they now confront common problems of environmental damage resulting from the production and testing of Soviet nuclear weapons. [8]

In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution 52/38S that called upon all states to support this initiative and commented the first concrete steps taken by the States of the region in preparing the legal groundwork for their initiative. The resolution also requested the Secretary General to provide assistance to the Central Asian

States in the preparation of the form and elements of an agreement on the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in Central Asia. [9]

Central Asian diplomats were initially uncertain how the nuclear powers would react to this draft resolution, especially since the proposed CANWFZ would border on Russia and China. The United States, Russia, China, France, and United Kingdom, however, endorsed the resolution after the Central Asian states agreed to accept several amendments to its original text. The amended resolution was then adopted by consensus on November 10, 1997 by the First Main Committee of the General Assembly, and later endorsed by the full General Assembly on December 9, 1997. A similar resolution endorsing the CANWFZ concept was adopted by the 55th session of UN General Assembly in fall 2000.

Following this endorsement by the international community, the Central Asian states, with the assistance of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and financial support from Japan, made rapid progress in drafting a CANWFZ treaty. At a meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in July 1998, Central Asian experts discussed the basic principles of the proposed CANWFZ with representatives of the nuclear weapon states. Nevertheless, several significant points of disagreement among the Central Asian states remained, halting progress by mid-2000.

THE STUMBLING BLOCKS AND THEIR RESOLUTION, 1998-2002

The differences which threatened to block the treaty were fuelled by continuing regional rivalry among the five Central Asian states and different approaches to relations with Russia, the leading regional power. While Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan had retained fairly close ties to Russia, including on security issues, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan had taken a much more independent stance. The two principal stumbling blocks that emerged were how the CANWFZ treaty would treat the possible transit of nuclear weapons through the CANWFZ; and the relationship of the CANWFZ treaty to previous international agreements, especially security treaties involving some of the Central Asian states. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan argued for permissive provisions regarding transit and preserving existing security arrangements, while Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan favored more restrictions on both transit and security arrangements.

These disputes reflected different views about the importance to attach to Russian interests and perspectives. For its part, Russia did not seem to take the CANWFZ initiative seriously in 1997 and 1998, and Russian diplomats voiced support for the zone in principle, perhaps doubting that it would succeed. This stance changed after April 1999, when the NATO bombing campaign in Kosovo prompted Russia to place greater emphasis on the role of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy and the need to maintain maximum flexibility regarding weapons deployments. It was at about this time that Kazakhstan stiffened its position in the negotiations on the two disputed issues.

Kazakhstan argued that the treaty should allow each party independently to resolve issues related to transit of nuclear weapons through its territory by air, land, or water. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan sought to have more restrictive language placed in the treaty, with Turkmenistan taking an especially hard line on this issue.

Existing security arrangements also divided the Central Asian states, as they debated the relationship of the

CANWFZ to other international agreements. The 1992 Tashkent Collective Security Treaty, to which Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan had originally been parties, served as a focal point for this debate. Russia has never publicly indicated how it interprets Article IV of the Tashkent Treaty, which states that signatories will render each other "all necessary assistance, including military assistance", in response to aggression. On occasion, however, Russian diplomats have signaled to their Central Asian counterparts a preference for a broad interpretation, which the United States, France, and the United Kingdom assume includes nuclear weapons. Taking this Russian position into consideration during the CANWFZ negotiations, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan proposed that the CANWFZ treaty explicitly state that its provisions do not affect obligations under existing treaties and agreements. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, however, which were not parties to the Tashkent Treaty during these negotiations in 1999-2002, refused to accept this language. Turkmenistan had never signed the Tashkent Treaty, while Uzbekistan had let its membership expire in 1999. Uzbekistan later rejoined the treaty, attending a June 2006 meeting of treaty members in Moscow.

BREAKTHROUGH IN 2002

While these disagreements stymied finalizing the CANWFZ treaty for several years, by mid-2002 several factors shifted, enabling their resolution. First, the geopolitical balance in the region changed dramatically following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. The United States became much more active in Central Asia, deploying military forces at bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in support of its ongoing operations in Afghanistan. Russia accepted this increased U.S. role in the region, and in turn the Central Asian states became less dependent on Russia and less subject to Russian pressure. Second, the new prominence of Central Asia as the "front line" in the struggle against terrorism transformed the CANWFZ concept from an abstract idea with only limited practical application to a concrete mechanism that could help prevent the introduction of nuclear weapons into the region and reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism.

In addition to these geopolitical changes, a successful visit to the five Central Asian states in August 2002 by then-UN under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs Jayantha Dhanapala helped jump-start the negotiations. Dhanapala's meetings with all five Central Asian foreign ministers and presidents of three of the Central Asian states gave a new impetus to efforts to find a compromise resolution to the disputed issues. Also helpful was a well-timed Uzbek proposal that the signing ceremony for the CANWFZ treaty be held at the former Soviet nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan. This proposal, which suggested that the CANWFZ treaty, following past precedent, would be known as the Semipalatinsk Treaty, gave Kazakhstan an additional motivation for concluding the agreement.

As a result, the five Central Asian states agreed at Samarkand, Uzbekistan in September 2002 on compromise wording of the articles in the CANWFZ treaty dealing with the previously disputed issues of transit and other international agreements, clearing the way for its signature.

P-3 OBJECTIONS RENEW IMPASSE, 2002-2005

Hoping to gain the endorsement of the nuclear weapon states, the Central Asian states sent the text of their draft

treaty to the P-5 for comment. One of the principal security benefits that NWFZ provide to their signatories is a negative security assurance from the nuclear weapon states (a promise not to attack or threaten to attack NWFZ signatories with nuclear weapons). NWFZ treaties traditionally contain a protocol that is open for signature by the nuclear weapon states, in which those states provide such negative security assurances. Asking the nuclear weapon states to comment on the draft treaty continued the consultation process the Central Asian states had launched in 1998, when the nuclear weapon states were invited to participate in the Bishkek meeting.

In principle, the nuclear weapon states support the creation of new NWFZs, including the CANWFZ. However, in practice, they have refused to sign the protocols to some past NWFZ treaties, citing specific objections. Because its terms can be interpreted as interfering with freedom of the seas, for example, none of the nuclear weapon states have signed the protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok, which established the Southeast Asian NWFZ. Mindful of this experience, the Central Asian states had opened consultations with the nuclear weapon states in 1998, and continued these discussions in 2002 after completing their draft treaty.

New difficulties soon arose in these consultations. To reach agreement among themselves on the disputed issues of transit and existing security arrangements, the Central Asian states had adopted ambiguous language that addressed Russian concerns, but raised questions from the United States, United Kingdom, and France. While Russia and China quickly expressed their approval of the 2002 draft CANWFZ treaty, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France reportedly sent written comments to the Central Asian states criticizing several provisions of the draft treaty, and indicating that they would not be able to sign the protocol unless changes were made.

The United States, the United Kingdom, and France expressed the strongest concern about the article regarding previous international agreements. That article had two clauses: one which stated that the CANWFZ Treaty would not affect the rights and obligations of the signatories under previous international agreements (thus apparently allowing the continued operation of the Tashkent Collective Security Treaty), and another that said the parties agreed not to take any action that would undermine the fundamental purpose of the treaty (apparently ruling out redeployment of nuclear weapons in the zone). The United States indicated that it could not support this article as drafted, since the two clauses appeared to contradict one another. The State Department also complained that this article did not clearly spell out what previous international agreements were involved, leaving countries signing the protocol unclear about what obligations they were undertaking. The United States and its allies recommended that this article be deleted from the treaty. The Central Asian states, however, were disinclined to accept this suggestion, as it would have undermined Russian support for the treaty.

Although one can raise legitimate objections to the ambiguous language in the treaty, the U.S. objection is undermined by its own long-time insistence that NWFZs be consistent with seven principles in order to obtain U.S. support. One of these principles states that:

The establishment of the zone should not disturb existing security arrangements to the detriment of regional and international security or otherwise abridge the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense guaranteed in the UN charter.

If applied universally, this principle would appear to endorse the continued operation of the Tashkent Treaty.

However, the United States seems to apply this principle only to security arrangements it supports, and not to those involving other countries, such as Russia.

The United States also objected to a provision in the draft treaty which provided for the possible expansion of the CANWFZ to neighboring states. The draft treaty stated that neighboring states could apply to join the zone. The United States argued that the zone of application of the treaty should be well-defined, and not open-ended, as this provision suggested. This U.S. concern was probably motivated by concerns about Iran. Iran borders on Turkmenistan, and could thus apply to join the CANWFZ in the future, possibly further complicating ongoing U.S. led efforts to constrain Iran's nuclear program.

Another objection expressed by the United States, United Kingdom, and France relates to the provisions of the treaty governing the possible transit of nuclear weapons through the zone. In one article, the treaty provides that each member state remains free to decide for itself whether or not to allow transit of nuclear weapons through its territory. In another article, however, the treaty prohibits its members states from having "possession or control" of nuclear weapons, or encouraging or assisting the possession or control of nuclear weapons. This article could be interpreted as prohibiting transit. The United States, the United Kingdom, and France have accordingly suggested small changes that would remove this potential conflict and unambiguously permit each CANWFZ member state to allow nuclear weapons to transit its territory.

In contrast to the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, Russia and China did not raise any substantive concerns with the text of the treaty. China had indicated its support in principle earlier, and is apparently not concerned with the details of the treaty. As discussed above, Russian concerns had already been addressed in the Samarkand draft.

The U.S.-led objections placed the Central Asian states in a difficult political quandary, especially in the post-9/11 era, in which both the United States and Russia were actively engaged in the region. If the Central Asian states did not modify the draft treaty, the United States and its allies threatened not to sign the protocol. On the other hand, if they changed the text at U.S. suggestion, Russia could be expected to reverse its position and refuse to support the treaty.

Faced with this dilemma, the Central Asian states considered their options for over two years before revising the draft treaty in February 2005 at a meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The revised draft treaty that emerged from the Tashkent meeting contained only a few changes compared to the September 2002 text. While the 2005 draft addresses U.S. concern about future expansion of the zone, it does not address the U.S. objections to the provisions regarding existing international agreements or transit.

The Tashkent meeting produced three principal changes to the draft CANWFZ. First, the revised draft allows the import of low and medium level radioactive waste into the CANWFZ, as long as the imports are managed in accordance with IAEA standards. The previous draft had prohibited all imports of radioactive waste. This change was made at the request of Kazakhstan, which is considering the commercial import of low and medium level radioactive waste for long-term storage. A second change is that the revised treaty does not specifically provide for neighboring states to join the CANWFZ, as did the original draft. Third, the new draft treaty establishes Kyrgyzstan as the depositary state for the treaty. The previous draft had provided that the United Nations would serve as the depositary. This last change is a political gesture, intended to recognize the role

that Kyrgyzstan played in negotiating the treaty. The other provisions of the draft treaty remain largely intact.

At the Tashkent meeting, the five Central Asian states declared their intention to sign the revised draft treaty "as soon as possible". They also formally declared that the treaty signing ceremony would be held in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan. The outcome of the Tashkent meeting appeared to signal that the Central Asian states were prepared to sign the CANWFZ treaty without the support of the United States or its allies, since the revised draft treaty clearly did not address the primary U.S. complaint regarding the relationship of the CANWFZ to existing international agreements. [10] As a result of the Tashkent meeting, Central Asian states were eager to sign the new draft treaty in the shortest time possible, despite the fact that the major complaints by Western nuclear states were left unaddressed. It must be emphasized that according to the guidelines set forth by the UN Disarmament Commission in 1999, "nuclear weapons free zones should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned".

It was predominantly the events of 9/11 and the subsequent anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan, firmly placing the Central Asian region as a "front line" in the struggle against terrorism, that have "transformed the CANWFZ concept from an abstract idea with only limited practical application to a concrete mechanism that could help prevent the introduction of nuclear weapons into the region and reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism." Furthermore, it was also due to the fact that in August 2002 then UN under Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs Jayantha Dhanapala visited the region in order to continue the prolonged negotiation process of the disputed issues.

The five nuclear weapons states on their part must choose whether or not to guarantee security assurances to the zone members by signing the corresponding protocol to the treaty. Article 1 of the Protocol on negative security assurances states that "each Party to this Protocol undertakes not to use or threaten to use a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device against any Party to the Treaty." Such nuclear non-use pledge not to use nuclear weapons against the members of the denuclearized zones is conditional. In case of a direct attack on the nuclear weapons states or their allies conducted or sustained by a non-nuclear weapons state in an alliance with a nuclear weapon state, the pledge will no longer be applicable. Such an intricate clause has led to numerous calls in disarmament circles for making the security assurances unconditional. It remains the most controversial and ambiguous part of the establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone.

Nevertheless there was a widespread endorsement in the international community for the establishment of the CANWFZ. In the view of how much the international landscape has changed following 9/11 events, with new contemporary threats such as nuclear terrorism gaining ground, the Central Asian states' collaborative decision to give their region such an important status directly relates to addressing modern threats and challenges. Despite the fact that much has been done in the region to secure highly enriched uranium and plutonium-fissile material that can be enriched to weapons grade, there is an enduring danger that those materials can still be subject to theft or diversion.

Central Asia is in close geographical proximity to those countries that have become safe haven to terrorist organizations that may seek to gain access to state storage areas of fissile materials; this is also a case with the indigenous terrorist group-the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Under the terms of the new treaty, however, Central Asian

states will be first countries on a global scale legally bound to abide by enhanced IAEA safeguards (known as the Additional Protocol) on their civilian nuclear facilities, hence making acquisition of nuclear materials by terrorists a difficult venture. Central Asia borders on two nuclear weapons states—Russia and China—which along with the US, are seeking to strengthen their presence in the region. Thus, the reintroduction of nuclear weapons into the region must be prevented at all cost. Furthermore, the creation of the nuclear free zone is an opportunity by the Central Asian states to bring the world community's attention to their acute environmental problems – the result of the extensive Soviet nuclear tests carried out on their territories. It will strengthen the efforts of international community to further support environmental rehabilitation of the region. Of the five regional states, the case of Kazakhstan is of particular importance as a success story of a country that has made significant strides to promote non-proliferation in the region. Its city of Semipalatinsk has been especially chosen as a venue for the signing of the treaty, as it once was the world's second-largest nuclear testing facility. It was the site where approximately 500 Soviet nuclear tests were conducted in the years 1949-1989 that have contaminated vast areas of land and affected thousands of human lives.

In 1991 President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev signed a decree prohibiting any nuclear weapon tests on the territory of the country and closed down the test range. Moreover, Kazakhstan was left with a huge stock of nuclear arsenal the world's fourth largest. Hypothetically, Kazakhstan could have become one of the global nuclear superpowers. Yet, through a process of multilateral negotiations, Kazakhstan voluntarily returned all nuclear weapons to Russia and became a signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Kazakhstan has chosen to become a nuclear weapon free nation – a status that “has strengthened [its] positions in the fight for nuclear disarmament, stability, peace in the world and global security. [Kazakhstan's] renunciation of nuclear weapons has become an important factor of [its] economic and political development, and [its] internal stability”, stated President Nazarbayev. Indeed, the country has gained considerably by renouncing nuclear weapons and enjoying a status of a well-respected state in the international community.

Currently, the country plans to develop its own nuclear-energy sector. It appears justifiable for a country that is one of the largest uranium producers in the world to strive to build its own nuclear power plants as a way of developing alternative energy resources. Whether or not Iran has similar intentions to use nuclear energy for solely peaceful purposes remains largely unknown. Clearly, the diplomatic talks over the Iran issue should continue more forcefully, avoiding the option of pre-emptive action, advocated by President Bush in his latest National Security Strategy document released in March of last year.

The case of Iran points to the need to improve the overall non-proliferation regime. The international community should work more rigorously on revamping the global security framework and addressing the root causes of nuclear proliferation. President Nazarbayev has proposed to create a body under the auspices of the IAEA “which would ensure the supply of fuel for atomic power plants and manage the storage and processing of waste”, as a way to oversee any possible leaks of raw materials that could be used to create nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan has proven that it takes nuclear security quite seriously. In October 2005, Kazakhstan's national atomic company, KazAtomProm, in cooperation

with the Nuclear Threat Initiative blended down almost three tons of highly enriched uranium that can be used as fissile material, the key component of nuclear weapons. The project was carried out under the auspices of the IAEA. The Director-General of the IAEA Mohammed El Baradei said of the project that “the NTI-Kazakhstan effort could well serve as a model for future projects in other countries”.

Thus, given its accomplished record on non-proliferation issues, its multi-vector approach to foreign policy, and the fact that it is on good bilateral terms with Iran, Kazakhstan leadership is in a position to engage in a closer diplomatic dialogue with President Ahmadinejad, in order to persuade him to abandon the uranium-enrichment program and make its nuclear activities transparent to the IAEA. It is also vital to let Iran know about the success of the CANWFZ and how much it enhances the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. The signing and ratifying of the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone treaty is indeed of great significance as it represents a rare occasion amidst a setback in the global quest against nuclear proliferation. It is indeed an example to be followed in other regions of the world, more importantly so, in the conflict-prone Middle East. [11]

IMPLICATIONS AND PROSPECTS

CANWFZ is a very important step forward for the global nonproliferation regime. Although none of the five states in the region has nuclear weapons, the treaty will prevent the reintroduction of nuclear weapons into this region by either the formerly dominant regional nuclear power Russia, or by the United States, which now has air bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The CANWFZ will also serve as an island of non-nuclear stability to the north and east of the Middle East and South Asia. The treaty marks an important step forward for the region as it requires the adoption of enhanced IAEA safeguards by the five Central Asian states, obligates them to adopt international recommendations for the security of their nuclear facilities, and provides for regional cooperation in the remediation of environmental damage caused by the Soviet nuclear weapons program.

One question that remains uncertain, however, is the attitude of the nuclear weapon states toward the CANWFZ. NWFZ treaties contain a protocol that is open for signature by the nuclear weapon states, in which those states pledge to respect the NWFZ and refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the states that are part of the NWFZ. In principle, the nuclear weapon states support the creation of new NWFZs. However, in practice, the nuclear weapons states have refused to sign the protocol to NWFZ treaties to which they object for various reasons. Because its terms can be interpreted as interfering with freedom of the seas, for example, none of the nuclear weapon states have signed the protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok, which established the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

Russia has expressed reservations about the CANWFZ in the past, and may now exert pressure on the Central Asian states in an effort to either alter the terms of the treaty or block its signature. Such actions would be consistent with previous Russian efforts to prevent agreement on a CANWFZ treaty that would restrict the possibility of future Russian nuclear deployments.

The United States has not actively supported the CANWFZ in the past, saying it would wait to see the final treaty text. The United States is likely to be particularly concerned about the precedent that the CANWFZ treaty may set regarding issues of transit, negative security assurances,

the relationship of the CANWFZ to other treaties, and the treaty's possible extension to other states. Under these conditions, and given the attitude of the Bush administration toward multilateral arms control treaties, it is conceivable that the United States will withhold its support for the CANWFZ and may resist signing the protocol.

Among the other nuclear weapon states, the positions of Great Britain and France are likely to depend in large part on the position of the United States. China, which has openly supported the CANWFZ in the past, is the nuclear weapon state most likely to support the CANWFZ and sign the protocol.

By contrast, other members of the international community are already expressing support for the CANWFZ treaty. In a statement to the First Main Committee (Disarmament and International Security) of the UN General Assembly on 30 September 2002, the New Agenda Coalition, a group of states that includes Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden, welcomed the conclusion of the treaty. Many other states are likely to follow their example. In his statement to the same committee, UN Undersecretary General for Disarmament Affairs Jayantha Dhanapala also noted that the conclusion of the treaty was a major accomplishment not just for the Central Asian states, "but also for the United Nations, which has been assisting this effort since 1997".

Although the effectiveness of the CANWFZ will be reduced if the nuclear weapon states do not sign the protocol, many positive effects will still follow if the five states of the region sign and ratify it. Regardless of the position of the nuclear weapon states, the CANWFZ enhances the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. When signed and ratified, the CANWFZ will continue the trend toward establishing NWFZs in various parts of the world that has accelerated in the last decade. At a time when disarmament and nonproliferation achievements are few and far between,

the Central Asian states, the United Nations, and other organizations that played a role in achieving the CANWFZ treaty have made a significant contribution to international peace and security.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of the CANWFZ is particularly significant because thousands of Soviet nuclear weapons were once based in Central Asia. The new zone also borders on regions of proliferation concern, such as the Middle East and South Asia. Further enhancing its importance, the CANWFZ will border on two nuclear weapon states, Russia and China, and it will be the first nuclear weapon free zone located entirely in the northern hemisphere. The terms of the treaty itself buttress the nonproliferation regime as they oblige the Central Asian states to accept enhanced International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on their nuclear material, and require them to meet international recommendations regarding security of nuclear facilities. Considering current concerns that Central Asia could become a source or transit corridor for terrorist smuggling of nuclear materials, these terms of the CANWFZ should be viewed as a positive step in the ongoing international struggle against terrorism. In a unique feature, the treaty also recognizes the environmental damage done to Central Asia by the Soviet nuclear weapons program and pledges to support environmental rehabilitation. [12]

The signing of the nuclear weapon free zone treaty at Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, also marked the 15th anniversary of the closing of the nuclear testing site at Semipalatinsk (where the Soviet Union conducted more than 450 underground and atmospheric nuclear tests at the site in a 40-year period before it was closed permanently in 1991) by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

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Central Asian Strategy of Japan and the SCO: Possibilities for Cooperation

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On the modern stage the Shanghai Cooperation Organization attracts great interest of the international community. Leading actors of the international relations, such as the United States of America, Japan and European countries carefully observe over the process of development of the organization. The interest of these countries is mainly related with the lack of information on true activities of the SCO and the real essence of the organization. Leaders of the SCO member-states constantly assure that the organization has peaceful intentions and that the SCO is not going to start confrontation with the West. Nevertheless, some steps and decisions have taken by member-states in frame of the SCO arouse suspicions and distrust of global powers. Thus, any significant event organized in frame of the organization is often considered as challenge to the West and first of all to the United States.

Japan, as one of the leading world powers and close partner of Washington on the international arena, shows the interest to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well. More and more Japanese experts and researchers start thinking on the SCO development issues. In particular, they want to understand and get an exact idea of the organization and possibilities of cooperation with the SCO. Current interests of Japan in the Central Asia can explain attention of Japanese scientists and some politicians to the SCO. It is well known that in recent times Japan is becoming more active in cooperation with Central Asian countries in the sphere of atomic energy. Another important factor arising interest of Japan is participation of Russia and China to the SCO. In particular, no one can ignore the possibility of putting obstacles by Moscow and China on the way of Japanese policy in the Central Asia in future. Moreover, two leading powers of the organization can even use the mechanism of the SCO to reduce current Japanese influence in the region.

JAPANESE CENTRAL ASIAN POLICY

Current position of Japanese government towards the SCO is closely related to strategic interests of Tokyo in the Central Asia. Today SCO is one of the leading international structures in the region and Japan has long term interests in the Central Asia.

First and main interest of Japan in the region is provision of energy security interests. Today Japan imports oil mainly from countries of the Middle East region. Considering high conflict potential in this region (escalation of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, permanent pressure of the US and the Western countries on Iran due to its national nuclear problems, destabilization of Iraq), Japan is interested in searching new partners, who will be able to guarantee uninterrupted supplies of energy resources to the country. Diversification of import routes will reduce dependence of Japan on Arab world. In August 2006, before coming to Astana Prime Minister of Japan D. Koidzumi stated that Japan is interested in the energy resources of the Central Asia. In particular, Koidzumi emphasized: "Regarding our energy resources strategy, it is not good when Japan is too much dependent on the Middle East. But Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan possess vast reserves of resources" [1]. Nevertheless, it is important to mark that Japan is losing its positions on the oil market in Central Asian countries. For example, in the middle of January 2008 Kazakhstani energy company Kazmunaigaz enlarged its share in the Kashagan oil spot project from 8,33% to 18,61%. The deal was made at the expense of Japanese Inpex Corporation. Thus, Japan had to reduce its share in the prospective Kashagan project [2].

At the same time Tokyo is getting more interested in uranium resources of Central Asia [3]. During the meeting of D. Koidzumi with the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev in 2006 in Astana, Japanese Prime minister emphasized that Japanese party is intended to deepen relations with Kazakhstan, especially in cooperation in the sphere of nuclear energy – development of uranium fields. As a result of the visit, parties signed Memorandum of intentions between the governments of Kazakhstan and Japan on advancement of cooperation in the sphere of utilization of atomic energy. Thus, regarding the previous agreements between governments of Central Asian states and Japan on cooperation in the sphere of nuclear energy, Japanese companies gradually settle on perspective energy markets of the region. For example, one of the most recent achievements of modern Japanese diplomacy in Central Asia is agreement, signed with Kazakhstani government on enrichment of the uranium. According to the agreement Kansai Electric Power

Corporation and trade-investment Sumitomo Corporation along with Kazakhstani Kazatomprom Company will enrich uranium on the territory of Kazakhstan. Japanese companies will start enrichment of the uranium from 2010. Agreements also include technical reconstruction and modernization of the old type uranium production plant, which will cost about \$600-700 millions. Total sum of investments in frame of the project is expected to reach several billion american dollars. As a result, the volume of the enriched uranium on the Kazakhstani territory is expected to exceed twice current Japanese uranium demand [4].

Second interest of Japan in the region includes economic cooperation. Today economies of Central Asian countries has growing trend and it gives hope that in future Central Asian states can create prospective consumption market for Japanese high technology products. At the same time it is necessary to mark that economic cooperation is not prior interest of Japan in the region.

The third interest of Japan in the Central Asia is provision of regional security. The reasons for that are obvious. First of all to develop economic ties with Central Asian states, preserve growing investments of Japanese companies and to provide own energy interests Japan needs to support secure and stable political situation in the Central Asian countries. The second reason lies in foreign political specifics of Japan. It is well known that Tokyo is a close ally of Washington and helps it much (mainly financially) in its counterterrorist activities in Afghanistan. In this regard Japan, as well as the United States is interested in fast and successful end of American mission in Afghanistan. In this regard Japan tries to contribute in creation of stable zone in the neighboring countries surrounding Afghanistan.

Considering marked reasons it is necessary to note that in 2004 Japan started new initiative toward the region, which was called "Central Asia + Japan". Actually it was new approach of Japanese government to the region of Central Asia and one of the main priorities of "Central Asia + Japan" was enhancement of security cooperation between member states. Of course, activity of the new structure is mainly declarative, but nevertheless, it marked some new intentions of Japanese government toward the Central Asia.

JAPAN AND THE SCO

To provide own strategic interests in the region Japan has to create constructive dialogue with regional structures and especially with the SCO. The importance of the SCO for Japan is growing because of active positions of Russia and China in the region. Success of Japanese policy in the Central Asia depends much on future development of bilateral relations with Russia and China. Otherwise, these two regional powers may counteract Japanese initiatives in the Central Asia. In this regard it is necessary to mark that Russia and China have significant impact on the development of regional economic and political processes. Regional security and stability issues depend much on these two powers as well.

New Japanese Prime Minister Y. Fukuda declared more flexible foreign policy principles. For example, Y. Fukuda did not continue tradition of visiting Yasukuni shrine (which always had negative reaction of some Asian countries) and marked the necessity of perfection relations with Japanese close neighbors – Russia and China [5]. Considering new approach in foreign policy Japan has chance to become more active player in the Central Asia. At the same time one cannot deny the possibility of future

strengthening cooperation between Japan and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

At present time cooperation between Japan and the SCO is mutually beneficial for Japan and the SCO member-states as well:

- Through activating own foreign policy on the Eurasian continent **Japan can strengthen its international positions and prestige as peaceful power acting in the role of mediator.** For example, Japan can perform as a mediator in creation of constructive dialogue between the SCO and the West. It can be reached if Japan gets supervisor status in the SCO. Such kind of situation would be beneficial for Japan itself, the SCO members and the Western world as well. The SCO will get rid of "AntiNATO" labels. As for Western countries, in particular the USA, they will have an opportunity to start new mutually beneficial relationships with the SCO. According to Japanese expert Akihiro Ivashita: "Japan, as a trustworthy ally of the U.S., should persuade the U.S. to make a more positive commitment toward the SCO, to reshape the Eurasian security situation together. As a historic gateway to Asia, Japan has an incentive to invite other western countries to back up this mission" [6]. Such kind of Japanese peaceful diplomatic activity will definitely strengthen positions of Japan on the international arena.

- At the same time **Japan has possibilities to support development of relations between the SCO and the other regional structures, which has the same aims with the SCO, such as provision of regional security, stimulating of economic cooperation of member-states etc.** For example, on the modern stage Shanghai Cooperation Organization is highly interested in development of relations with ASEAN. The interest of the SCO members to ASEAN is related to the fact that the Asian Pacific region is one of global centers for economic growth on the modern stage. Thus, in April 21, 2005 secretariats of the SCO and ASEAN signed memorandum of understanding, which defines directions of cooperation and interaction in the spheres of economy, finances, tourism, ecology, utilization of natural resources, issues of transnational crime, etc [7]. In this regard in February 2008 Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Yermekbayev emphasized the following: "Member-states of the SCO and ASEAN are tied with geographical proximity and common interests in the Asia Pacific region. Participants of both organizations are interested in strengthening peace and stability in the "areas of activities", in starting mutually beneficial cooperation in such spheres as economy, transport, culture and tourism. At the same time the SCO is interested in broad and diverse forms, methods and mechanisms of interaction in frame of the Association. ASEAN has 40 years working experience and it can give much positive things to such comparatively young structure as the SCO" [8]. In this regard Japan, using its international authority and experience can contribute to the development of comprehensive relations between the SCO and the ASEAN.

- **For the Central Asian states participation of Japan to the SCO is very beneficial as well.** Regarding the long-term regional interests of CA countries participation of Japan to the SCO will give them more space for economic and political balancing between the interests of the great powers.

PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FUTURE OF JAPAN IN THE CENTRAL ASIA AND COOPERATION WITH THE SCO

Japan faces several objective problems on its way of strengthening positions in the Central Asia and cooperation with the SCO as well.

1. Japan is geographically distant power. In this regard it is very hard for Japan to compete with Russia or China for strengthening positions in the Central Asia. To get some visible results Japan needs to create new effective strategy toward the region. Moreover, new Japanese approach will require huge financial assistance.

2. Cultural distance of Japan to the region. Actually this issue comes from the first one. Japan is a very different country from Central Asian region from the viewpoint of culture, language, mentality and religion. Thus, sometimes it makes troubles during communications. For example, when Japanese business groups come to the region with the aim of signing commercial contracts.

3. Japan itself doesn't have strong motivation to involve more deeply into the regional affairs. Traditional strategic interests of Japan do not include the region of Central Asia. Japan is more concentrated on cooperation with countries of South East Asia and ASEAN rather than with Central Asian partners and the SCO. Japan is still giving huge financial aid to South East Asian countries in spite of some of them have already developed well.

4. Frequently changing governments in Japan also makes some difficulties during development of common and comprehensive strategy toward Central Asia. For the last two years Japanese government changed three times. New staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs always comes with new ideas and initiatives regarding Japan's foreign policy issues and strategy. Situation is becoming even harder due to permanent struggle on

foreign policy issues in the Japanese diet between two leading political parties.

Regarding these issues on the modern stage Japanese policy in the Central Asia can be fairly characterized as colorless. Main reason for that must be absence of effective strategy and enough intentions for deeper involvement into the Central Asia. Thus, today we can see comparatively insignificant presence of Japan in the Central Asian region.

Japanese interest to the SCO should be supported by practical steps of Japan aimed for cooperation with this organization. Of course, it may be negatively considered by China or Russia mainly because of the fact of historical rivalry and that Japan is more considered as Western country. Therefore, Russia and China may try to use diplomatic instruments of the SCO to keep back other players. But Central Asian states due to the previously marked reasons will definitely support such kind of initiatives of Japan. Charter of the SCO confirms that the organization is open for membership [9] and is not a military block. For example, some Kazakhstani experts do not deny the possibility of getting observer status to the SCO by Japan, if Tokyo shows enough interest for cooperation. Thus, it is necessary to mark that on the modern stage Japan has enough opportunities to involve more actively into the Central Asian region and to start cooperation in frame of the SCO as well. And there is only one dilemma for Japan, does it really need heavy involvement into the Central Asia and cooperation in frame of the SCO? Or it would be more effective to continue "colorless" regional policy mainly based development of bilateral commercial relations?

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Migration for Education between Kazakhstan and China in the Context of Socio-Cultural Cooperation Among Shanghai Cooperation Organisation States

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The priorities of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as admitted by the experts' community, lie in the economic and security spheres, which is declared in all basic documents of the organisation: the SCO Charter, annual Declarations of the Heads of the SCO member states, as well as Joint Communiqués of Heads of the SCO member states, governments, ministers, and other documents.

However, already the earliest documents of SCO member states emphasize the importance of cooperation in socio-cultural sphere, in particular, education and science. Recent documents of the SCO adopted in Shanghai and Bishkek prove commitment of the SCO members to the ideas of humanitarian cooperation. For example, the Declaration on Fifth Anniversary of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Shanghai, 15 June 2006) states that "to strengthen and expand the social basis for friendship and mutual understanding among SCO member states is an important way to ensure the SCO's sustainability and vitality. ...the SCO member states need to institutionalise bilateral and multilateral cooperation in culture, arts, education, sports, tourism and media. With the unique and rich cultural heritage of its member states, the SCO can surely serve as a model in promoting dialogue among civilisations and building a harmonious world"¹.

Undoubtedly, exchange of students, interns, scholars, is an important component of this intercultural dialogue. Migration for education between Shanghai Cooperation Organisation states is rapidly growing, first of all, among China, Kazakhstan and Russia. The aim of this article is to study the dynamics and perspectives of the migration for education between China and Kazakhstan as well as other states in the context of socio-cultural cooperation among SCO states.

EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION FROM CHINA TO KAZAKHSTAN
International Labour Organisation, particularly, International Labor Office defined foreign students as "the persons who are allowed to a country not of their own for going spe-

cially for a specific study program. In some countries foreign students are allowed to work under specific conditions"².

Migration for education from China to Kazakhstan started in the 1990s before the SCO was established. It was associated with the activities of the Kazakhs-based World Association of Kazakhs. A program of educating ethnic Kazakhs living abroad was initiated by the Association in 1994. It negotiated an agreement with Kazakhstan's Ministry of education and a number of universities on facilitating education of ethnic Kazakhs from outside the country. 40 students were admitted to a one-year preparatory course in 1994, with the number increasing to 150 students in 1995. The course was offered by a number of universities in Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan at that moment (Agricultural Institute, Pedagogical Institute, University of international relations and world languages) as well as in Taraz, Turkestan and Taldykorgan.³ The intake consisted of Kazakh applicants from a number of countries, including China.

The proposals of the Kazakhstani side on increasing state-funded student exchanges were not initially supported by the Chinese counterparts, who explained their position by limited budget allocations. Later on however, the Chinese side started encouraging exchange among higher education institutions, expanding their cooperation and increasing of the number of students.⁴

Education for ethnic Kazakhs from abroad has always featured highly in programmes of support to Kazakh diaspora. Based on the migration law and the decree on state support to ethnic Kazakhs (*oralmans*), the Ministry of education has developed and adopted the "Rules of order, conditions of selection and direction of representatives of the Kazakh diaspora for education in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan"⁵. Kazakhs' Embassies in China and other countries are charged with student selection. They prepare lists of Kazakh diaspora representatives that are recommended for participation in the selection process, which are then approved by Kazakhstan's Ministry of education; invitations to apply are then sent to those approved. Admission quota for oralman-

who do not have a Kazakhstani citizenship constitutes 2% of annual student enrolment.⁶ The number of places for oralman on preparatory courses has been increasing steadily, from 200 persons in 1995, to 1500 in 2000; the figure is expected to go further up to 2000 persons.

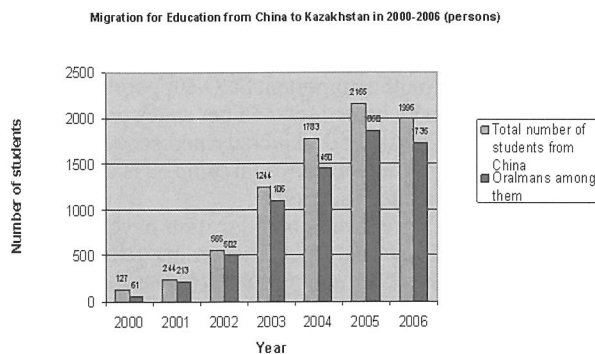
Migration for education between two countries was relatively low in the 1990s, but it increased in the 2000s after the presidents of Kazakhstan and China signed a number of key agreements in June 2003, including two on education: a cooperation agreement between the two Ministries of education, and an agreement on a 20-million Yuan grant assistance to Kazakhstan for the implementation of a number of educational projects.⁷

Five universities in different regions of Kazakhstan offer initial testing for potential students (oralman) from China and other countries. The minimum admission score for oralman is set at 20 points out of 120 points (for Kazakhstani applicants it was 40 points before 2007 and 60 points since 2007). In 2005, 14 universities across the country offered preparatory courses universities and thus accounted for the largest number of students from abroad. Students from China are largely concentrated in a number of universities in Almaty as well as in Shymkent (Southern-Kazakhstan state university).

Migration for education from China to Kazakhstan significantly increased in the 2000s: by more than 15 times between 2000 and 2006. The share of ethnic Kazakhs (oralman) initially constituted less than 50% of the total number of students from China, but increased up to 85% in 2006 (diagram 1).

Diagram 1.

Citizens and stateless persons from China studying in Kazakhstan's educational institutions in 2000-2006 (in persons)



In 2000, 127 students came from China to study in Kazakhstan, out of whom 61 (48%) were ethnic Kazakhs (oralman). During 2001-2003 the number of students from China who came to Kazakhstan for study purposes increased approximately by two times compared to 2000, and the share of oralman constituted 87.3%, 88.8% and 88.9% respectively. The rate of increase in 2004-2006 was slower, but the share of Kazakh students came to 80-85% of total number of students. In 2005, the number of students from China reached its peak (2165 persons), among them 1860 persons (85.9%), were oralman. The number then dropped in 2006 to 1995 persons with 1735, oralman (87%). Alongside with ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Chinese (Han) and representatives of other ethnic minorities from China are enrolled, but their number is considerably lower.

Education for oralman in Kazakhstan is accompanied by a number of difficulties. First is their unfamiliarity with the Cyrillic alphabet used in the contemporary Kazakh

language, second is their lack of fluency in Russian, widely used in economic and socio-cultural spheres in Kazakhstan, including education. Finally, the level of basic knowledge of oralman tends to be lower than that of other applicants. The cooperation agreement between Kazakhstan and China does not provide for preparatory courses that would enhance the level of knowledge and prepare oralman for higher education in Kazakhstan. The preparatory courses offered by universities include teaching Cyrillic alphabet and an introduction to Russian but these are often insufficient to level the difference in language skills and overall knowledge base.⁸

Yet another caveat has been that some of those who come for preparatory courses are issued tourist, not student visas. An attempt to address that has been made by representatives of World Association of Kazakhs who proposed an inter-departmental commission that would assist representatives of Kazakh diaspora in getting admitted to university preparatory courses. Jassau International Kazakh-Turkish University was offered as a base for coordinating the organization of teaching and educational processes, development of training techniques, publishing textbooks and manuals.

Another problem arises with regard to the attitudes towards students from China. A sociological survey conducted among students from China (oralman), reveal that some feel "youth and public negative, or scornful attitudes" towards them. They enjoy studying in Almaty, though experience some difficulties with regard to the Russian and foreign language lessons, communication difficulties in the faculty and some living conditions and adaptation problems. The students from China are in general positive about their carrier and professional perspectives in Kazakhstan, however, only 25% of the "focus group" participants have Kazakhstani citizenship (75% still have Chinese citizenship) and only 75% - "students" visa; some students think about returning to China.⁹

EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION FROM KAZAKHSTAN TO CHINA

In accordance to the 2003 cooperation agreement between the Ministries of education of China and Kazakhstan, the annual exchange of students, post-graduate students and interns should be implemented on equivalent basis. Selection of candidates is based on university recommendations from the pool of high-performing students. Kazakhstani students enroll in the language course during their first academic year in China.

In 2002-2003, Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan organized visits of delegations of higher education institutions of Kazakhstan to China to develop contacts and establish relations between universities of the two countries, which included Kazakh State University, University of Turkestan, Kazakh Agrarian University, Kazakh Academy of Architecture, as well as the Diplomatic Academy of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Diplomatic Academy within Kazakhstan's Eurasian National University.

In the 2003/2004 academic year 20 citizens of Kazakhstan studied in China on the state exchange programme; they came from a range of universities in Kazakhstan, including National University, National Pedagogical University, Eurasian National University, Economic Institute, University of International Relations and World Languages, and International Kazakh-Turkish University. In the 2004-05 academic year this number went down to 8 students. From China, 20 students were sent to study in these universities in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's Ministry of education and respective universities are responsible for overseeing these students.¹⁰

Strategic partnership agreement that was signed between Kazakhstan and China in 2006 has been further comple-

mented by two documents, "Strategy of cooperation between countries in 21st century" and "Concept of development of economic cooperation", which laid a foundation for the development of bilateral relations, including in education.

The Chinese government has expressed its interest in increasing the quota for Kazakhstani students. According to media reports, about 1200 students from Kazakhstan studied in China in 2006, including more than 500 in Beijing, 206 in Shanghai, 108 in Urumqi, 130 in Guangzhou, as well as other cities.¹¹

Cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in education sphere also led to the opening in 2007 of a branch of Confucius Institute, affiliated with the Eurasian National University in Astana, a new capital of Kazakhstan. Confucius Institute is a non-profit public institute whose aim is to teach Chinese and to introduce students to China's culture and philosophy. The first Confucius Institute abroad was opened in Seoul in November 2004; 123 more appeared throughout the world since then.¹²

In addition to state-supported student exchanges, a number of private and private-public companies, such as Aktobemunaigaz and OJSC, run scholarship programmes for their employees. The total number of such students from Kazakhstan (including those who are partly self-financed) comes to up to 100 persons per year. These students tend to specialize in technical subjects, including energy issues. For example, students from Aktyubinsk oblast will major in oil exploration and oil extraction. The increased number of graduates from all these programmes is set to strengthen bilateral cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, both in the energy and other sectors of economy.

According to the 2007 SCO Secretariat report, about 3000 students from Kazakhstan currently study in China, mainly in Beijing and Xi'an.¹³ Based on these figures, we may come to the conclusion that migration for education between China to Kazakhstan is rapidly growing in 2000s. It acquires some characteristics typical for other migration patterns between the two countries, specifically they are as follows:

- 1) Migration for education has been *dynamically increasing* throughout the 2000s,
- 2) It is a *reciprocal process*, i.e., migration for education from Kazakhstan to China has been increasing alongside migration from China to Kazakhstan,
- 3) It is *ethnic Kazakhs-repatriates (oralmans)* rather than ethnic (Han) Chinese who form the bulk of students.

Migration for education among Shanghai Cooperation Organisation states: dynamics and prospects for the future

Bilateral and multilateral agreements within Shanghai Cooperation Organisation states, signed in the 2000s, constitute the international legal framework for the development of student and specialist exchanges. At its October 2005 session the Council of Heads of SCO member states agreed to increase their education cooperation. The expert meeting in Beijing in January 2006 discussed the development of education cooperation among the SCO member-states, an approved a draft of an intergovernmental agreement, which was then signed on June 15, 2006 during SCO anniversary meeting in Shanghai. The following meeting of the ministers of the education of the SCO states is planned to be held in Kazakhstan in 2008.¹⁴

The above mentioned agreements, together with national legislation, lay out the international legal basis for the SCO member states to develop their cooperation in education: exchanging experience on their educational reforms, promoting exchange of students and faculty, exchanging information on relevant legislation and materials, and pursuing an integrative strategy in the educational sphere.

Migration for education from China to other SCO states is currently increasing, because of the demand for qualitative professionals and developing economic cooperation as well as geographic proximity of the countries which stimulates the expansion of host institutions in all SCO countries. For example, the study of Chinese and Oriental languages and cultures has become one of the most popular choices in Kyrgyz universities over the last several years. The number of Kyrgyz students self-financing their studies in China has increased significantly. Presently, about 200 Kyrgyz students study in China, and about 300 Chinese students – in Kyrgyzstan.¹⁵ Confucius Institute was planned be opened in Bishkek, according to the agreement signed by presidents of Kyrgyzstan and China during the Bishkek summit in August 2007.

Following the February 2002 Tajik-Chinese agreement on education cooperation (and its supplementing protocol of January 2007), about 60 students from Tajikistan are currently studying in China, out of who 30 are within the agreed quota. The study of Chinese is considered an important priority in Uzbekistan (as is the study of Uzbek in China). A branch of Confucius Institute was opened in Tashkent in May 2005. In September 2007, Uzbek language department was opened in the Central University of Nationalities in Beijing, with the first enrolment of 18 students. The exchange for internships, advanced studies and other types of courses is increasingly supplementing the language study.¹⁶

In 2005, two-year studies commenced for students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the North-West University located in Xi'an, ancient Chinese capital. Moreover, at the 7th session of SCO Council of Heads of States in Bishkek in August 2007, China's president Hu Jintao came up with a number of suggestions on strengthening educational cooperation among SCO members. Following up from that, China is creating a scholarship programme for citizens of SCO member states, on top of existing bilateral agreements. 20 scholarships will be allocated to each of the 5 state annually. Another important SCO-supported initiative is youth camps to be hosted by member states one after the other. China has invited 50 university and school students from SCO member states to the youth camp on Hainan Island during the 2008 winter vacations.¹⁷

A number of agreements on education have also been signed between Russia and China. According to the Ministry of education of the PRC, about 5,000 students from Russia studied in China in 2006 and China intended to intensify the cooperation with Russia in the area of education.¹⁸

According to China's Ministry of foreign affairs, the number of Chinese students in Russia exceeds the peak number during "Chinese-Soviet friendship period" of the 1950s and constantly growing. Currently in addition to 15,000 Chinese students studying in Russia at their own expenses, about 300 students receive budget allocation. One of the reasons Chinese students prefer to study in Russia is relatively low prices for education compared to the Western universities – USA, United Kingdom, France.¹⁹

Among the agreements on education signed between Russia and China, about 30 are with the Moscow State University (MSU) named after M.Lomonossov only. In 2007, MSU, where currently about 1,500 Chinese students study, sorted out its curricular, arranged unified entry examination, set up the payments for education at the level of US\$ 6,000-8,000 annually. Other Russian universities, such as Saint-Petersburg Technological University admitted 25 Chinese students in 2007. The most demanded technical professions among Chinese students are now: nuclear physics, biology, chemistry.

The professors say that students from China are eager to learn as much as possible, which distinguish them from others.²⁰

In spite of these impressive dynamics, the number of students from the SCO states in China is relatively low. According to the statistical data of the Ministry of education of PRC, the number of foreign students in China reached 162,695 in 2006, which exceeded the 2005 indicator by 15.3%. According to the ministry, 519 Chinese Universities admitted students from 184 countries and regions of the world. Asian nationals prevail among the newly admitted students – their number exceeded 74% in 2006. Europe (12.71%) and America (9.6%) share the second and the third place, correspondingly; then Africa – 2.3% and Oceania – 1.07%. The first five countries sending the largest number of students to China include the same like in 2005 South Korea, Japan, USA, Vietnam and Indonesia. Previously Russia was at the fifth place. At the present time China signed agreements on mutual recognition of scientific degrees and education certificates of previous levels with 30 countries and regions.²¹

However, the major number of students from the SCO states study at the higher educational institutions of Russia. The number of students enrolled at the state universities of Russia from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan exceeded in the number studying in China many folds and was constantly growing in the 2000s, from Kazakhstan alone it comprised 13,900 students in 2003/2004 academic year.²² A significant number of students from the SCO member states study at Russian Foreign Ministry educational institutions.

As for the prospects for the future, migration for education between China and other SCO states is likely to expand, in terms of a) subjects taken; b) geography

of educational institutions; c) duration of study (from preparatory courses in Chinese, or other states' languages respectively, to full university courses, to post-graduate and doctorate studies); and d) conducting research and joint research projects.

Both China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan suffer from a weak system of post-graduation internships, advanced skills training or collaborative research development. According to the definition by ILO International Labor Office, "foreign interns are persons who were allowed by a country that is not their own country to obtain a specific qualification through education at the place of work. Consequently, foreign interns are allowed to work only in a specific institution, where education is implemented, and are allowed to stay for a limited term".²³

Since internships imply participation in practical work, temporary employment of Chinese citizens in other SCO states, and vice versa, are set to expand, which will in turn facilitate business contacts and linkages. This will be further stimulated by increase in joint ventures between the SCO countries, with temporary employment turning into permanent one. These developments call for the revision and expansion of the legal framework for regulating migration and exchange of students, interns and professionals.

Overall, education and research-related migration and exchanges have been facilitated by the rapidly expanding cooperation and mutually endorsed legal frameworks, both between China and Kazakhstan and among other Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states. The dynamics implications and prospects of such migration, need to be further addressed as part of ongoing research agenda.

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¹⁰ <http://www.edu.gov.kz> 24.06.2007

¹¹ <http://www.inform.kz> Kazinform Informational Agency, 23.12.2006

¹² Ni-hao, N 2, 2007, p. 8.

¹³ Cooperation of SCO member-states in the sphere of education, SCO Secretariat report by Sh. Zakirova. <http://www.sectsc.org/html/01863.html>

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Interethnic Relations in Kazakhstan Today

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Kazakhstan entered a new stage of social and economic modernization and political democratization. The government's strategy of preserving and strengthening civil peace and interethnic and inter-confessional harmony aims to consolidate the foundations of society in order to promote democracy.

This principle is being consistently implemented within the framework of the political policy of promoting interethnic relations promulgated by the Kazakhstan President in December 1991, which aims to build "a highly developed multiethnic civilization, in which the Kazakh nationality will revive and in which all other ethnic groups that form our nation will feel free." This vision is the very foundation that determines the political, cultural, spiritual and ethical priorities and values of the Kazakhstan society. Every stage enriches, enhances and defines this vision, but its essence remains the same – in multiethnic Kazakhstan, each person irrespective of nationality, religion, race, etc. should feel free, protected and confident about their future.

The Kazakhstan model of interethnic harmony has proved its viability and efficiency. From the very beginning, the state has favored civil, not ethnic, solidarity and the alignment of the interests of the peoples living in Kazakhstan so as to provide all ethnic groups with an opportunity to take part in building the nation. During his visit to Kazakhstan, Kofi Annan said that our country was "an example for other states of interethnic harmony and stable, sustainable development." **"This is our Kazakhstani "know-how", - President N. Nazarbayev said in his Address to the People of Kazakhstan, - "we are proud of it and should carefully keep it".** [1]

On this way we have obtained significant positive results.

Firstly, interethnic relations in the country can now be deemed stable and there are no apparent or open conflicts between the various ethnic groups. Different ethnic groups evaluate interethnic relations in the regions of their residence as positive and friendly. As an example, look at the data of a nationwide poll*: the majority of respondents (92.5%) evaluate interethnic climate in the country as positive (Table 1) that indicates a high potential of stability of Kazakhstani interethnic relations system.

Table 1.

Assessment of Interethnic Relations in Kazakhstan (%)

Found difficulty in answer	0.9%
Bad	0.5%
Rather bad	6.1%
Rather good	41.4%
Good	51.1%

Reasons for such positive assessment were mentioned by respondents as follows (in decreasing order):

- "People are friendly and tolerant";
- "Peace and accordance are maintained in the country";
- "All nationalities have the ability to be developed";
- "All citizens have the ability to communicate in language suitable for them";
- "All citizens are under the protection of the state despite national identity";
- "All citizens have equal access to employment, education despite national identity".

Secondly, among the considerable part of population appeared a tendency of orientation to identification by national character that shows the beginning of formation of united nation of Kazakhstan. In particular, the third part of respondents (33.8%), participated in the poll, consider themselves primarily as citizens of RK, and this shows the progress in the process of consolidation among the peoples of Kazakhstan.

Taking into account the special care of government to extension of the sphere of state language application in society consolidating purposes, along with miscellaneous concern of society towards language policy in our multinational country, respondents were asked to express their attitude to translation of office correspondence to state language (Table 2).

Table 2.

Do you approve translation of office correspondence to state language? (%)

Found difficulty in answer	1.4%
No	16.2%

* The nationwide poll "The Level of Social Conflicts: Current Risks and Potential Threats" was conducted in all regions of Kazakhstan and in the largest cities of Astana and Almaty from 15 September to 20 October 2007 by the Agency of Social Technologies "Epicenter" on an assignment for the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies.

Rather "no"	16.7%
Approve if gradually	35.0%
Rather "yes"	11.5%
Yes, fully	20.2%

The third part of respondents negatively accepts this question, despite the majority of respondents (66.7%), who positively accepts the process. Among them the greatest discontent was expressed by Russians – 35% of "No" replies and 27.6% of "Rather no" (other nationalities – 18.9% and 22.5% accordingly, Kazakhs – 7.0% and 8.6% accordingly).

The language problem is also one of the main reasons for migration. According to the data of a nationwide poll*, "unwillingness to study the state language" was mentioned on the 5th place among the top-10 reasons of migration from Kazakhstan by 29.8% of respondents. Among them: Kazakhs – 23.5%, Russians – 43.7%, other ethnic groups – 27.4%.

Thus, the implementation of state language remains questionable, especially in the context of lately passed conception on extension of the sphere of its application. This issue was raised by the President in his speech at the 12th session of the Assembly of Kazakhstan's Peoples: "From the first years of our independence, we have pursued the most liberal language policy in the whole post-Soviet territory. But we need to be more profound and precise in explaining it to the people, since it is the backbone of the national policy of any state" [2]. According to the President, the essence of the language policy lies in the following fundamental principles.

First of all, people should understand the importance and necessity of knowing the state language. According to the

President, one should not make older people learn Kazakh. However, young people in Kazakhstan must understand that it will be impossible to work for governmental bodies, the service sector, law-enforcement or judicial bodies without knowing Kazakh.

Secondly, the conversion of records management processes into Kazakh is not meant to prejudice anyone's rights, but to provide Russian-speaking people with an opportunity to have the necessary documents translated and to use their native language freely.

Thirdly, knowing an international language such as Russian is a factor that enhances people's communications and information horizons in today's world. For the foreseeable future, this language will remain an integral element in Kazakhstan's competitiveness. Therefore, the level of command of the language should remain high. In other words, we need a reciprocal policy for encouraging the learning of both Kazakh and Russian. This in turn will promote mutual respect and enhance stability in the country.

Finally, unnecessary politicization of this issue should be avoided. The language problem should be resolved in a civilized manner, taking into account the language needs of the country's population.

On the whole, the results of abovementioned nationwide polls suggest that the sphere of interethnic relations in Kazakhstan is stable and sustainable. All this confirms that the government has pursued a balanced national policy aimed at achieving strategic tasks without diminishing the national status of any ethnic groups. This policy has become a significant factor in Kazakhstan's success, and it will be pursued.

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* The poll "The Migration Potential of the People of the Republic of Kazakhstan" was conducted in all regions of Kazakhstan and in the largest cities of Astana and Almaty from 20 April to 30 May 2008 by the Agency of Social Technologies "Epicenter" on an assignment for the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies.

National Ideology and State-Building in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*

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This study focuses on the production of national ideologies in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan since 1991. Both states are strongly affected by corruption, suffer from economic underdevelopment, and experience a high level of organized crime fueled by the drug economy. Unlike Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which have been relatively calm since gaining independence, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have dealt with instability and the sudden eruption of political crises. However, while Kyrgyzstan became a corrupt and unstable state after a relatively open political regime led by former Kyrgyz president Askar Akayev, Tajikistan's political problems stem from the legacies of its civil war. Although increasingly authoritarian, the Tajik government managed to develop mechanisms to avoid an escalation of tensions between regionally mobilized violent actors. A series of political showdowns in Kyrgyzstan following the March 24 Revolution pointed at the state's dependence on the shadow economy and the criminal underworld. In attempts to reach national stability and legitimize their own hold on power amid competing political forces, Akayev and incumbent Tajik president Emomali Rakhmon were the main architects of the national projects developed during the post-Soviet period in their respective countries.

Even though the Central Asian nations inherited statehood as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, political elites quickly realized that if their states were to continue functioning as cohesive entities, a unifying national ideology had to be cultivated. Central Asian political elites had to create and reinforce the positive image of newly acquired independence, as well as justify their hold on power. With the urge of fostering nationalism in the early 1990s, the elites produced national ideologies based on revised history without allowing any broader scholarly or policy debate. In this rush, the political elites became the sole producers of national ideologies, with other public sectors, including academic circles, working merely in a support role for the elites and thus not putting forth competing interpretations.

However, Central Asian political elites rarely managed to separate ethnicity from the nation and ideology from nationalism. Some Soviet categories such as "ethnic

genesis" and "ethnic code" were used interchangeably along with concepts of "national identity" and "cultural heritage." Such conceptual confusion has roots in the Soviet academic tradition that treated "ethnogenesis" as a central category in the historiographical research of the formation of ethnic groups. The concepts deal with the nations' wish for a sovereign state, distinct ethnic identities, political coalitions with other similar nations, pretensions for greater territories, and the promulgation of citizens' rights. As during the Soviet period, ethnicity today is still largely understood as a biological category, rather than a cultural one. Such a primordialist approach was shaped by Lenin, Stalin, and leading Soviet historians throughout the Communist regime's existence. The biological definition of ethnicity by Soviet ethnography was influenced and formulated by Nicholas Marr, a historian and linguist, in the 1930-40s. Only in the late 1980s did Russian scholars begin incorporating Western notions of the constructed nature of ethnic identities.

Among Central Asian leaders, Akayev was the most elaborate in moving away from Soviet historiographical traditions towards the recognition of separate concepts of citizenship, nationality, and ethnicity. By recognizing the ethnic minorities living in Kyrgyzstan, Akayev urged them to associate themselves as citizens. He tried to maintain a balance between ethno-centric and civic-based ideas by designing a number of different ideological projects.

Partly due to Akayev's liberal approach to ethnic minorities, Kyrgyzstan was considered to be among the most welcoming countries for Russian and other minority ethnicities in the post-Soviet space. However, Akayev still used ethno-centric ideological projects to mobilize the state apparatus to work for the continuity of his own hold on power. His celebrations of the Manas epic's 1,000th anniversary, as well as Osh 3,000, were used strategically to generate support before the presidential elections in 1995 and 2000, respectively.

Although his ideological projects received extensive criticism from the domestic public, during his 14-year reign Akayev has been Kyrgyzstan's main ideologue. His successor Kurmanbek Bakiyev, in contrast, has ignored the production of state ideologies. Instead of generating nationwide campaigns on ideological concepts, Bakiyev sought to

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emphasize the intensification of divisions between northern and southern political elites. The idea of such a regional divide between elites that emphasizes the unequal distribution of power among northern and southern groups turned into a primary definition of today's interpretation of the Kyrgyz nation. Bakiyev used such arguments of national division in order to legitimize his hold on power despite low public support and widespread corruption.

Soviet ethnographical and historiographical traditions considerably influenced the formation of ideology in independent Tajikistan. The primordial definition of ethnicity as well as the category of ethnogenesis provided the central tenet for Rakhmon's ideologies. Tajikistan's production of ideology based on historical narratives became a highly strategic political issue after the end of the civil war in 1997. In his ideological projects, Rakhmon primarily sought to increase his presidential power and alienate the Islamic opposition. Three projects were predominant in Rakhmon's ideological production: Zoroastrianism, the cult of Ismail Samani, and the Aryan civilization. Among all, the Aryan myth proved to be the most central in Rakhmon's politics which helped him to consolidate the public sector in the wake of presidential elections in November 2006. Since the Aryan project was not adopted by any other Central Asian state, Rakhmon could point at Tajikistan's regional peculiarity. Aryanism emphasized the antiquity of the Tajik as an ethnic group, thus hinting at its cultural superiority. The Aryan project also alienated the Islamic opposition and informally built a link between Tajikistan and European civilization.

Although the Tajiks' connection to the Aryan civilization does not enjoy an unambiguous scholarly recognition – even in Tajikistan itself – Rakhmon nevertheless institutionalized the idea by supporting numerous scholarly writings, promoting it through his own books and speeches, and by holding grand celebrations in September 2006. In this respect, Rakhmon's efforts were similar to those of Akayev's, when the latter fostered the creation of visual images of the mythic hero Manas.

To promote their ideological projects, both Akayev and Rakhmon authored a number of books dealing with issues of statehood, national histories, and the future prospects for national development. While Akayev was Kyrgyzstan's main ideologue and authored most ideology projects himself, Rakhmon heavily relied on a group of historians who advised him on issues of ideology. Like the majority of other states in the world, the Kyrgyz and Tajik presidents believe that their countries are located at the crossroads of great civilizations and have a unique national identity because of their great history and culture. Both states emphasize the immense antiquity of their culture and language, claiming that their nations are among the most ancient in the world. In such a debate, an ethnic group's antiquity alludes to its cultural richness and superiority.

This report shows that ideologies were part of the state-building process and that they strengthened the ruling regime, rather than increasing its popularity among society. State-promulgated ideological projects do not necessarily increase the popularity or effectiveness of incumbent regimes before elections, but they do allow the consolidation of state power in the interests of the ruling elites. The process of ideological production and promotion increased the loyalty of primarily state actors at various levels: from top political elites to the local government – all of who were responsible for disseminating ideologies among the masses.

Both Kyrgyz and Tajik political leaderships promoted state ideologies vigorously before presidential elections. The celebration of national historical events, such as the Manas's anniversary in Kyrgyzstan and the Aryan civilization in Tajikistan, allowed the incumbent regimes to mobilize the entire public sector under the banner of patriotism. Akayev and Rakhmon monopolized their interpretations of national histories by suppressing or rejecting any possibility for public debate over interpretations of histories and their meaning in the present day reality. In this way, any attempt to question the correctness of the regimes' interpretations of history was considered to be unpatriotic.

The report is written within the political science discipline and not from the point of view of history of the Central Asian states. Some arguments on historiography in the Central Asian states' formation might seem to be simplistic and superficial. However, the important goal of the report is to highlight the main aspects in the current interaction of political elites with academic circles in the formation of ideological projects and implications on nation-building in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This report is not about the formation of the Central Asian ethnic or cultural identities, but its main focus lies in the analysis of Kyrgyz and Tajik governments' creation of the national ideologies.

The main recommendations of this study include the necessity of changing and even abandoning some of the existing mechanisms of national ideology construction, to recognize ethnic minorities, and to promote civic culture in both states. The Tajik government must encourage the learning of Tajik and Uzbek languages in the country's northern and western parts. Tajikistan should also allow broader scholarly debates on national ideologies. The current Kyrgyz government is counseled to calm down the north-south divide by accentuating the importance of citizenship ahead of sub-ethnic confrontation. Indeed, similar recommendations are applicable to other Central Asian and post-Soviet states, where national ideologies are often used for the mobilization of titular ethnicities and the ignorance of minorities or civic rights.

The Kyrgyz and Tajik cases show how presidents choose different strategies in designing ideologies. While Akayev was the main ideologue in Kyrgyzstan and authored most of the books on national ideology himself, Rakhmon always heavily relied on the local academic community. Ironically, both Akayev and Rakhmon's advisors received their education in leading Russian universities. Similar to Rakhmon, his Uzbek and Kazakh counterparts relied on known academics in developing national ideology. Former Turkmen president Saparmurat Niyazov, on the other hand, was the main author of pervasive national ideologies in Turkmenistan.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are two post-Soviet states that share many similarities, yet these similarities developed in different settings. Both states are extremely corrupt, suffer from economic underdevelopment, and experience a high level of organized crime fueled by the drug economy.

Unlike Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which have been relatively calm since gaining independence, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have dealt with instability and the sudden eruption of political crises. However, while Kyrgyzstan became a corrupt and unstable state after a relatively open political regime led by Akayev, Tajikistan's political problems stem from the legacies of its civil war. Although

increasingly authoritarian, the Tajik government managed to develop mechanisms to avoid an escalation of tensions between regionally mobilized violent actors. A series of political showdowns in Kyrgyzstan following the March 24 Revolution pointed at the state's dependence on the shadow economy and the criminal underworld. This section takes a close look at the evolution of these countries' national ideologies. Both Akayev and Rakhmon were the main architects of the national projects developed during the post-Soviet period in their respective countries. Indeed, they used the help of local academic elites to gather historical facts.

During his 14-year reign, President Akayev maintained a balance between different ideological projects, ranging from "Kyrgyzstan is our common home" which called for the unification of different ethnic groups in the country, to "Manas-1000", "Osh-3000", and "2200 Years of the Kyrgyz discourse". In his early public addresses to the nation, Akayev warned that nationalism in Kyrgyzstan was potentially risky, if promulgated by former communists and socialists. Instead, he appealed to reviving traditions that existed in the pre-Soviet times that could have a positive impact on contemporary politics. In naming those traditions, Akayev discussed how cultural heritages in Russia and Uzbekistan were also revived during the independence period.

Among the Central Asian states, Akayev used the most liberal approach in defining citizenship in the early independence. Already from the first days of his leadership, Akayev separated two concepts: "nationality" and "people". While the first category referred to ethnic groups, the second one contained a more civic-based understanding almost synonymous to citizenship. According to Akayev, both concepts coexisted in Kyrgyzstan and their coherence was vital for the country. In his public speeches, he was highly elaborate on the importance of revisiting the Soviet understanding of ethnicity. More than his Central Asian compatriots, the former president emphasized democracy as a means for eradicating ethno-nationalistic views and often used the term "mezhdunarodnoe soglasie" (*international accord*). Here, international meant relations between nationalities living in Kyrgyzstan.

Following the March 2005 Tulip Revolution and the establishment of a more decentralized system of governance in Kyrgyzstan, the discourse on national ideologies was actively maintained by several individuals. Among them are the State Secretary Adakhan Madumarov and Dastan Sarygulov. In the course of two years both politicians produced and widely publicized their own concepts on national ideologies. While Madumarov sought to introduce Western concepts of citizenship into the ideology, Sarygulov managed to use the cult of Tengrism in his ethno-centric ideas. In his promotion of Tengrism, Sarygulov treated Tengri and Islam as two separate religions among Turkic peoples. He particularly focused on selected components from the Tengrian period, ignoring some other known cults that existed along with the Tengri god, such as Umai Ene, the goddess of life and fertility, and Erklik, representation of death and hell.

In the past few years Kyrgyz scholars have published dozens of books on national history and its importance in state-building. However, most of these works relied on identical sources primarily collected by Russian or Soviet scholars. The historiographical scholarship, therefore, was similar in its research approach, but contained slight

variation in interpretation. In 2006, Toguzakov and Ploskih, Kyrgyzstan's famous historians, attempted to develop their own interpretation of the national ideology. Their interpretation of a nation largely reflected the Soviet academic tradition and defined the Kyrgyz nation from a primordial and autochthonous perspective.

The central theme of Akayev's books always remained the cultural and historical sophistication of the Kyrgyz as an ethnic group. In *Kyrgyz Statehood and the National Epic 'Manas's*, for instance, Akayev links the idea of presentday Kyrgyzstan with events that took place centuries ago: "By analyzing our multi-century history, I am more and more convinced in the notion that a great national idea about [our] own statehood not only appeared among our ancestors, but was also fulfilled in life. Since then it was rooted in the mass consciousness of the Kyrgyz". Akayev argued that the idea of Kyrgyz statehood continued to mature for centuries and ended in the "successful" and "historically significant" emergence of Kyrgyz modern statehood in 1991. The independence from the Soviet Union, he writes, was a desirable and inevitable historical development for Kyrgyzstan.

Besides developing national ideological projects geared towards the local public, Akayev managed to cultivate a peculiar international image for Kyrgyzstan. During the first few years of his presidency, Akayev promulgated the notion of Kyrgyzstan being a "Switzerland of Central Asia" and an "Island of Democracy" in the Central Asian region. Both concepts played an important role in Kyrgyzstan's appeal for the allocation of international investment and credit in its private and public sectors. This positive external image also boosted the local public's confidence in the regime. The belief in the possibility of democratic development and the international community's support for reforms in the early 1990s set a precedent for Kyrgyzstan's further move towards liberal reforms. However, these internationally popular concepts about Kyrgyzstan were later largely abandoned by the local and international public after Akayev began suppressing the opposition in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

After Akayev was ousted as a result of popular protests on March 24, 2005 and Bakiyev succeeded him, both positive concepts about Kyrgyzstan's course towards democracy were largely forgotten by the new government. This was not due to Bakiyev's less democratic policies or more obvious corruption, but because his government stopped supporting the ideological concepts developed by Akayev. Bakiyev was able to gain quick but shortlived popularity due to his anti-corruption slogans. He received roughly 90 percent of the vote in the July 2005 presidential elections due to his political alliance with Felix Kulov, opposition leader during Akayev's regime. With such high public support, he did not make any attempts to reconstruct old or construct new ideological projects. In contrast to Akayev's regime, Bakiyev ignored the power of national ideology in preserving his own legitimacy and popularity.

Partly because of the Soviet regime's strong ideological indoctrination and partly because of Akayev's ardent attempts to create a unifying national idea, the Kyrgyz public expected Bakiyev's regime to come up with an alternative ideological project. The irony of post-March 2005 Kyrgyzstan is that although the state and society functioned in a relatively open environment and ideological production was a fairly dynamic process, most projects have nevertheless always been initiated by the ruling elite.

The State Secretary always had the official responsibility of developing national ideology, but civil society and academic elites sought participation in promoting their own understanding of a national ideology during Akayev's reign. Thus, the Kyrgyz public remained skeptical about any ideological projects produced by the government. This led to a situation where society was expecting the state to be the main source of ideological production, but at the same time refused to accept any of the state's constructs.

Bakiyev's ignorance about the need to meet society's expectations and produce some overarching ideational rationale for his political course is comparable to the general inefficiency of his government in carrying out economic and administrative reforms. Already after a year into his presidency, the possibility that he might be forced to leave his position before his first term expired in 2010 was debated among Kyrgyzstan's political circles. Realizing his rapidly falling popularity and being aware that a mass upheaval was capable of ousting an unwanted political leader, Bakiyev was nonetheless reluctant to make any visible efforts to boost the economy and curb corruption. He seemed to be unable to and disinterested in designing long-term policies, including ideologies. While Akayev hoped to hold on to the presidency for the longest period possible and perhaps pass his power on to his family members, Bakiyev's low popularity already a year after the Tulip Revolution made it clear that he would be unable to be reelected in 2010. Akayev's search for a suitable ideology was influenced by his fluctuating domestic popular approval rating in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In contrast, Bakiyev's negative image at home failed to motivate the president to design popular political concepts altogether.

Bakiyev created a special committee responsible for producing a new ideological project. The committee included scholars, civil society activists, and politicians. After functioning for roughly two years, the committee failed to publicize any fresh project. The committee members were reluctant to develop ideological projects due to the lack of motivation and organizational coherence. In August 2007, Madumarov declared that the ideological committee decided to shift away from the term "ideology" and replace it with a concept of a "nationwide idea." As Madumarov claims, the Kyrgyz people will realize that the state should not be the main producer of national ideologies. The national idea will be based on constitutional principles and represent a type of document. The main values of the "national idea" will primarily include "statehood, nationwide unity, people, the state power's character, the rule of law, country, patriotism, selfrealization, freedom and economy... the main goal – is freedom of speech". In essence, the ideological committee embraced Western values of democracy without hinting at any ethnocentrism or nationalism. After Madumarov officially presented his national ideology concept he was harshly criticized by most independent mass media outlets for his clumsy formulations and incoherence. The critics raised the fundamental question whether Kyrgyzstan still needs a national ideology and, more importantly, the position of state secretary.

A number of Kyrgyz politicians are actively pushing Tengrism, an ancient Turkic religion dating to the fourth century B.C., to fill the ideological void. Sarygulov, formerly state secretary and chair of the Kyrgyz state gold mining company, has established "Tengir Ordo," a civic group that seeks to promote the values and traditions of the Tengrian period in modern Kyrgyzstan. Tengrism, ac-

ording to Sarygulov, is the genuine religion of the Kyrgyz and helped the people to survive throughout the centuries. In his interpretation, Tengrism promotes an anti-capitalist lifestyle and is a natural response to the problems caused by globalization: "The time has come to get rid of external influences – to lift barriers, the inferiority complex, and centuries of humiliation". Sarygulov found support among Kyrgyzstan's communists who embraced his ideas. Anarbek Usupbayev, secretary of the Kyrgyz Communist Party, saw resilient similarities between values of Tengrism and communism, such as social justice and equality. Usupbayev also tried to draw parallels between Tengrism and the Manas epic, which he refers to as the "Kyrgyz Bible". Supporters of Tengrism do not deny that as a national doctrine, it will represent mainly pan-Turkic and even pan-Kyrgyz views. The current Kyrgyz president's failure to develop a national ideology is a rather uncommon development in the Central Asian context. Today Kyrgyzstan is the only country in the region that lacks a state-fostered ideology. There is, however, a high risk that any ideological project developed under the reign of Bakiyev is bound to fail due to his low popularity. These kinds of dynamics in the realm of ideology production means that Akayev was the country's main ideologue. His ability to express ideas not only popularly, but also academically, while enjoying the status of president overshadowed other elites' attempts to construct national ideologies. Despite the strong criticism of his regime, not all of his ideological projects are bound to fail. His three main ideologies of "Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home", "Manas -1,000", and "2,200 Years of Kyrgyz Statehood" are often used as references in the analysis of stages in nation- and state-building processes in the country.

The Bakiyev government's rather passive attention to issues of national ideology pushed local civil society groups towards engaging more actively in public discussions about what a new ideological project should contain. Several NGO representatives from the state ideological committee participated in debates outside of the committee's meetings. For instance, in January 2007 the NGO "Citizens for Democracy and Against Corruption" staged a demonstration in central Bishkek against the violation of ethnic minority rights, thus promoting the importance of civil rights in national politics. Given that the record of civil rights abuses in Kyrgyzstan is rather mild (with neighboring countries having worse records), such a movement testified to society's active engagement in political affairs. Following the Tulip Revolution in March 2005, Kyrgyzstan's civil society groups noticeably increased in numbers and scope of activities. However, along with high civic activism, Kyrgyzstan today is drowned in political populism voiced by various civic and political groups, as well as individual advocates. Most civic activists condemn the divide between political elites into northern and southern clans or pressure the government to fight corruption. Especially, anti-corruption slogans and warnings over the north-south divide allowed numerous political actors to quickly gain popularity. Meanwhile, although Kyrgyzstan's political domain is filled with populism and loud voices, progress towards meaningful changes in the state's functioning and statesociety relations is rather sluggish.

The increased participation of the Kyrgyz public in discussions of prospective national ideological projects was also evident from the local mass media outlets' ex-

tensive focus on the issue. A number of political officials expressed their views on what the new national idea should represent. Their views received numerous responses in internet forums. Although it is difficult to come up with any systematic conclusion on the Kyrgyz public's attitudes towards any particular ideological project in the past few years, since no such research has been conducted, an overview of local mass media outlets suggests that the public desires to have a "national father" with high moral values and strong patriotism who would encourage economic revival and cultivate national pride. This yearning arises amid continuous political turbulence in the post-March 24 period. Some Kyrgyz express worries that the nation is disintegrating because of widespread organized crime, nepotism, and corruption that also affects the country's international image. Furthermore, there is a collective understanding that massive public mobilization can play a meaningful role in changing the government's policies. Thus, an ideological void during Bakiyev's regime is likely to continue to be part of the president's negative image.

Bakiyev often emphasized how competition among northern and southern political elites fostered corruption and labeled it as the cause of ineffective governance in Kyrgyzstan. A native of southern Kyrgyzstan, Bakiyev sought legitimacy by reminding the public that northern Kyrgyzstan long suppressed southern elites. The idea of a north-south divide in the country has almost become the main definition of the Kyrgyz nation in the post-March 24 period, as it was actively promulgated by pro-regime politicians.

Seventeen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia is still regarded as a historical partner both in Bishkek and Dushanbe. Unlike more negative re-evaluations of the Russian influence in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, Russia is associated with economic and cultural development in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Fluency in the Russian language and familiarity with Russian literature are considered hallmarks of cosmopolitanism and a quality education. Studying at Moscow universities is popular among young Kyrgyz and Tajiks. Russia sporadically supports cultural exchange programs, and Moscow regards Russian TV channels as important transmitters of Russian language and culture throughout the Central Asian region.

Among other post-Soviet states, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan remain especially loyal to the Kremlin. Cooperation with Russia in economic, political or cultural fields is frequently embraced in appraisals of the formidable historical links with the stronger neighbor. Both countries have Slavic universities that enjoy high popularity due to support from Moscow. Akayev summed this ideational connection between Bishkek and Moscow as "Russia is given [to Kyrgyzstan] by God". In Tajikistan, Russia is associated with peacekeeping efforts during the civil war. Moscow's intervention in the Tajik civil war is mostly regarded as a positive development. Yet some Tajik experts take a more negative view, criticizing the Kremlin for pursuing its own interests and pointing out that some Russian military servicemen are pervasively involved in drug trafficking.

After Bakiyev came to power, ethno-nationalist views among the public intensified. These nationalist moods were mainly directed in favor of, or against, international players present in Kyrgyzstan, among them Russia and the U.S. The government's abandonment of a minimal degree of nationalism created an ideological void that was felt in the public's frustration with the allegedly increasing

Western influence in the country. Kyrgyzstan's possibility to join the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) designed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank revealed some of the most radical divides in society's attitudes towards the Russian and Western presence. Shortly after the announcement of Kyrgyzstan's perspective membership in the initiative, the decision gained a deeply nationalistic undertone. The HIPC was associated with Western hegemony over the country, and any display of support for the HIPC was equated with anti-patriotism and betrayal to American politics. A series of protests with graphic images against the HIPC were staged at various locations in Bishkek. As the HIPC in Kyrgyzstan was discussed, local NGOs played a pivotal role in mobilizing society and pressuring the government against the initiative. Kyrgyz civil society groups used slogans of national pride to counter allegations of Western usurpation, thus ascribing the issue a political meaning, rather than regarding it as a purely economic project. The activists used all possible means to reproduce their message through mass media outlets, street protests, and parliamentary lobbying. Such a negative perception of the international, mainly Western, community's engagement with local politics would not have been possible without a pervasive influence of the Russian mass media. The vast majority of Kyrgyzstan's mass media outlets are published and broadcast in the Russian language. Only a handful of newspapers and TV channels use Kyrgyz as their main language. The Kyrgyz government heavily controls channel KTR, which is the only media outlet that broadcasts across the entire country. About a dozen Russian TV channels enjoy widespread popularity in Bishkek, where more than 20 percent of the country's five million residents live. Most Kyrgyz get their international news reports from the Russian state-run channels ORT and RTR, which also broadcast popular entertainment programs.

Since most Russian mass media outlets usually promulgate pro-Kremlin views, the Kyrgyz public's perception of world affairs are similar to those held by Russian citizens. The Russian mass media was especially successful in building pro-Kremlin attitudes toward the U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, and the war in Chechnya. They also propagate Russian President Vladimir Putin's image as a strong-minded pragmatic politician. As a result, the Kyrgyz public's trust in Russian policies in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia is higher compared to their trust in the West.

In May 2007, opposition leader and former Prime Minister Felix Kulov asked the Kyrgyz Central Election Commission to organize a national referendum on the issue of a Kyrgyz-Russian confederation. Kulov's proposal was received with great skepticism both in Kyrgyzstan and Russia. But while it is currently unpopular, the suggestion comes amid mounting public discontent with the U.S. military base in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz capital. Kulov's idea pushed the limits of pro-Russian views among political circles in Kyrgyzstan. Although many in Kyrgyzstan find Kulov's idea absurd, most Kyrgyz citizens agree that today Russia is the country's key strategic partner. Support for greater integration with Russia is noticeable across all generations and occupations. Some believe that while the U.S. presence in Kyrgyzstan is temporary, links with Russia are historical and therefore more stable. On various occasions Parliament Speaker Marat Sultanov has mentioned the need to return Russian border guards to

Kyrgyzstan in order to increase control over Kyrgyzstan's frontiers. According to Sultanov, Kyrgyzstan is not capable of guarding its own borders effectively. Kulov chose such a pro-Russian line primarily to increase his own political standing. Among the Central Asian states, Kyrgyz political officials seek power by subordinating their country to Russia rather than promoting national sovereignty. For example, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, both with strong Russian political and economic influence, maintain a fundamentally different approach toward Russia. While acknowledging the importance of links with Russia, the governments of both states emphasize their country's ethnic identity and sovereignty. Kulov appealed to patriotic feelings to promote his idea. He suggested that Kyrgyzstan would solve its most pressing problems by joining Russia, including the north-south divide and economic underdevelopment. Kulov also brought in historical arguments highlighting the 150 years of Kyrgyz-Russian diplomatic relations.

Among Central Asian leaders, Akayev was the most elaborate in moving away from Soviet historiographical traditions towards recognition of the separate concepts of citizenship, nationality, and ethnicity. By recognizing the ethnic minorities living in Kyrgyzstan, Akayev urged them to associate themselves as citizens. He tried to maintain a balance between ethno-centric and civic-based ideas by designing a number of different ideological projects. Due to Akayev's liberal approach to ethnic minorities, Kyrgyzstan was considered to be among the most welcoming countries for Russian and other ethnicities in the post-Soviet space. However, Akayev still used ideological projects to mobilize the state apparatus to work for the continuity of his own hold on power. His celebrations of the Manas epic, Osh 3,000, and 2,200 years of Kyrgyz statehood were used strategically to generate support before the presidential elections in 1995, 2000, and 2005, respectively. Although his ideological projects received extensive criticism from the domestic public, Akayev was Kyrgyzstan's main ideologue. Bakiyev, in contrast, has underestimated the role of state ideologies. This contributed to the intensification of divisions between northern and southern political elites. On the other hand, Bakiyev's ignorance has also spurred local civil society groups to participate in designing ideas for national unification.

Tajikistan's experience in producing national ideological projects deviates from that of other Central Asian states. It is a highly complicated case of intermixed ideological thinking, in which the Tajik government refrained from playing a leading role for a long time. As Rustam Shukurov argues, the active phase of ethno-nationalist mobilization in Tajikistan coincided with the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan, when Tajik conscripts were recruited by the Soviet army en masse for their knowledge of the area, Farsi language, and culture. Since this was the first time Soviet Tajiks had been heavily exposed to their Afghani neighbors, Shukurov writes that "Tajik interpreters were genuinely shocked to realize that the Soviet troops are killing not strange foreigners in Afghanistan, but Tajiks similar to them". At the same time, Tajik conscripts contributed to the import of Iranian and Afghan literature with both a secular and religious context into Tajikistan. The spread of imported literature by "renowned poets and philosophers (Rumi, Attora, Sanoi and tens of others)" provoked reflections among Tajiks about their own culture and history, and the influence of the Soviet regime. Today, Tajikistan's two major political

forces – Rakhmon's regime and the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) – compete over whose views will play a more dominant role in the national ideology. Although both the government and the opposition have developed a culture of dialogue since the end of the 1992-1997 civil war, they nevertheless vie for their own ideational domination among the masses. The complexity of the Tajik identity, according to Shukurov, includes divides into confessional belonging, citizenry, and the place of birth. The confessional separation among Tajiks includes the majority of Sunni Muslims and a much smaller denomination of Shia Muslims mainly in the Pamiris. Ethnic Tajiks live in neighboring Central Asian states and therefore have Uzbek, Afghan, and Kyrgyz citizenship. The complexity of Tajik identity is also exacerbated by the place of birth, whether in southern or northern parts of Tajikistan or in neighboring countries. According to Shukurov, Aini's works are widely used in interpreting the content of Tajik identity today. Especially his *Images of the Tajik Literature* from 1926 provides historical and philosophical grounds for the definition of Tajiks as a united people and a distinct ethnic group based on the historical narrative of the Tajik ethnos. The government's use of Aini's contribution to narrating the history and content of the Tajiks as an ethnic group today shows the importance of Farsi literature in Tajiks' identity.

In general, since the end of the civil war in 1997, Rakhmon has promulgated three broad projects based on the Samanids historical legacy, Zoroastrian period, and the Aryan civilization. All of his projects are similar in the way that they have aimed at marginalizing the role of Islam and the Islamic opposition in state politics. Rakhmon counterweighted the importance of a secular state with the possibility of renewed hostilities and bloodshed with the religious opposition. According to him, separating religion from politics is a guaranteed path to stability. In his book *Tajikistan at the Threshold of the 21st Century*, he maintains that "for the purposes of preserving peace in Tajikistan, today there is no need for politically charged religious ideology that contains the danger of drastic, catastrophic changes in people's lives."⁷⁵ Rakhmon accused religious radical forces of instigating the war in 1992, while refusing to identify specific actors among these forces. In order to promote secularism in politics, Rakhmon has been willing to tolerate the fact that parts of the population still support the Communist Party – one of the main political forces in Tajikistan – emphasizing that the Communists are secular. The Communist Party currently claims to have about 40,000 members, but some local experts estimate that membership has significantly shrunk in recent years and does not exceed 20,000 people. Even though in the aftermath of the Soviet Union the Tajik Communists inherited a vast infrastructure with members spread throughout the country and offices located in virtually every village, the party is only a nominal structure with insignificant leverage over political processes. Realizing its weakness, Rakhmon's government has not hindered its functioning. The Communists, like other political parties in Tajikistan, represent a "loyal opposition" to Rakhmon.

Since 1997, Rakhmon organized celebrations for a number of national ideological projects, particularly before the November 2006 presidential elections. Two months before the elections, Tajikistan's grand celebrations included: a celebration of 2,700 years of Kulyab, Rakhmon's native

region; the promotion of the Aryan civilization; assemblies of all Tajiks and Farsispeaking people; and Tajikistan's independence day. All celebrations and ideological projects noted the cultural role of Tajiks in Persian and Turkic civilizations. Tajik academicians and the president himself sought historical evidence for ascertaining the validity of these anniversaries. As Rakhmon writes: "In the span of their long history the Tajiks made a substantial contribution to the world culture. They take pride in such great names as Rudaki – the father of Tajik literature, Firdusi – the great poet, Abu Ali Sina – the founder of Eastern medicine and well known poets of the world Hafiz, Omar Khayam, Nosir Khousrav, Jami, Rumi, Saadi".

In the late 1990s the Rakhmon government and IRP stressed the importance of various concepts in their constructions of ideologies. While the government emphasized the idea of statehood, the IRP focused on the role of Islam. Government-opposition competition over the construction of national ideology was especially evident in their interpretation of the importance of the Samanid dynasty in Tajik history. The period of the Samanids in 819-1005, which witnessed the Central Asian region being ruled by a Tajik empire with Bukhara as the capital, is remembered as a great Islamic dynasty. The government's attempts to weave the Samanid epoch into the collective consciousness symbolized its effort to accentuate the importance of the strong Tajik statehood that politically dominated the region at that time. In 2001 the Tajik government initiated a celebration of the 1,100th anniversary of the Samanid Empire. Rakhmon's official stance was that the "Samanid epoch – golden age of Tajiks – enlightens thousands of years of their history", and that "there emerged the idea working for the unifying of Tajiks". Starting from the early 2000s, Rakhmon stressed the need to draw parallels between the Samanid's statehood and the current state-building processes in Tajikistan. In this discourse, Rakhmon emphasized the Samanid dynasty's stability which was able to overcome external pressures. Like Akayev's argument on the importance of the historical idea about Kyrgyz national statehood in today's reality, Rakhmon was keen on linking the Samanid era with the present day. He argued that although the Samanid dynasty collapsed, the idea of Tajik statehood prevailed in the national consciousness through the centuries, and argued the significance of the language of state administration in Central Asia having been Farsi. However, the Samanid period did not lead to the creation of an integral paradigm about the Tajik state that would be somewhat instrumental today. Since Rakhmon's approach to Samanid's legacy represented scrutinized attention and interpretation of selected events and individuals of that particular epoch, the project suffered from a sloppy ignorance of the importance of other historical periods before and after the Samanid dynasty.

In parallel, the IRP, representing a religious alliance of anti-governmental forces, used the Samanid epoch to draw a link with current Islamic identity among Tajiks. However, the opposition's voice was much quieter. The IRP lacked the means and opportunities to spread its own interpretation of historical events. The competition between Rakhmon and the opposition only lasted until the parliamentary elections in February 2005, when the IRP won only two seats. The elections signified that Rakhmon's PDP, which enjoyed access to public administrative resources, was able to suppress other political parties.

In developing ideological projects, Rakhmon arguably tried to alienate northern elites from political and economic power. Being a native of Kulyab, Rakhmon emphasized the ancientness of the city along with its cultural pureness. A number of pro-presidential politicians argued that Kulyab must become the national capital due to its historical heritage. However, Tajikistan's northern elites, who had traditionally occupied leadership positions before Rakhmon came to power, criticized the government for discriminating against other Tajiks. Kulyabi Tajiks were accused of considering themselves as ethnically the most pure compared to populations from other regions. Despite accumulating discontent among Tajik political elites about Rakhmon's calls to elevate Kulyab's status, no open tension is visible in Tajikistan. The November 2006 presidential elections illustrated that the prospect of a renewed civil war is a powerful political instrument for Rakhmon. He and his government repeatedly remind the public about the costs of the war.

As Rakhmon's government became more centralized, the president turned increasingly assertive in taking credit for the stability in the county. The Tajik population largely welcomed Rakhmon's purges of former war commanders, who fought both on the side of the government and the opposition. Roughly a decade after the peace accord between the Tajik government and the United Tajik Opposition was reached, Rakhmon was able to suppress all the former war commanders including: Faizali Saidov, Gafor Mirzoyev, Makhmud Khudoiberdiyev, Ibodullo Boitmatov, Yakub Salimov, and Shamsiddin Shamsiddinov. The suppression of former field commanders, who still had access to arms, controlled groups of soldiers, and were involved in the drug economy was done in the name of lasting national peace in Tajikistan. The Tajik population preferred that the country's regions were controlled by the central government as opposed to former warlords, as had been the case for a few years after the end of the civil war.

By the 2006 elections Rakhmon had become accustomed to being a symbol of post-war stability in Tajikistan. His politics became more personified, bordering on former Turkamen leader Saparmurat Niyazov's personality cult. Like Niyazov, Rakhmon's picture decorates public places and the president is frequently praised in the local mass media. Rakhmon's glamorous and public celebrations of his family events are another instance of the president's uncovered egocentrism. A few months before the November 2006 presidential elections, six new books were published dedicated to Rakhmon's politics and personal qualifications. Two books, *Emomali Rakhmon: Year of Culture that Conquered the World* and *Emomali Rakhmon: The Year of Aryan Civilization* appraised the president's efforts in rediscovering the heritage of the Aryan civilization. Rakhmon also authored several books on pre-Soviet Tajikistan history.

Before highlighting the historical significance of the Aryan civilization, Rakhmon emphasized the importance of Zoroastrianism in Tajiks' history. Like the Aryan doctrine, Zoroastrianism was used to deter the political role of Islam in domestic politics. However, in part because records of the Zoroastrian period are scarce and vague and offered only a loose connection with modern Tajik identity, the Tajik government was fairly unsuccessful in promoting the idea. This is also partly due to the fact that the Zoroastrianism project lacked depiction in visual images that could be associated with the idea.

The idea to dedicate the year 2006 to the celebration of the Aryan civilization in Tajikistan came to Rakhmon in 2003. Tajikistan's praise of its Aryan heritage has been a controversial issue. There is no solid universal consensus about the Tajik connection to the Aryan civilization. However, Tajikistan's academic community voiced little opposition to the idea of placing the celebration of Aryan heritage at the center of national ideology. As Rakhmon himself asserts: "The word 'Tajik' is a synonym of the word 'Aryan' meaning generous and noble. In modern Tajik language this word means 'having crown' and 'peace loving people'".

Upon gaining independence, religion became a political phenomenon in Tajikistan before any other national ideological concept could develop. A decade after the conflict between the secular government and the religious opposition was settled, debates between secular and religious forces continue to lie at the heart of national ideological production. In this contest, Rakhmon's government seems to have emerged as a clear winner despite the fact that Tajik society is deeply religious. As a result, Tajikistan today is an example of a country where the state's national ideology and society's religiosity are two conflicting phenomena. A similar situation can be observed in Uzbekistan. Although both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan incorporate Islamic symbols into national emblems, they act vigilantly to maintain control over religious authorities and feelings among citizens.

Tajikistan's production of ideology based on historical narratives became a highly strategic issue after the end of the civil war in 1997. In his ideological projects, Rakhmon sought to increase his presidential power and alienate the Islamic opposition. Three projects were predominant in Rakhmon's ideological production: Zoroastrianism, the cult of Ismail Samani, and the Aryan civilization. Among all, the Aryan myth proved to be the most central in Rakhmon's politics, which helped him to consolidate the public sector in the wake of presidential elections in November 2006. The Aryan project was not adopted by any other Central Asian state and Rakhmon could point at Tajikistan regional peculiarity. Aryanism also emphasized the antiquity of the Tajik as an ethnic group, thus hinting at its cultural superiority. Finally, the Aryan project alienated the Islamic opposition and linked Tajikistan with European countries. For the large part, Soviet ethnography and historiography traditions influenced the formation of ideology in independent Tajikistan. The primordial definition of ethnicity as well as the category of ethnogenesis provided the central tenet for Rakhmon's ideologies.

Although the Tajiks' connection to the Aryan civilization does not enjoy an unambiguous scholarly recognition – even in Tajikistan itself – Rakhmon nevertheless institutionalized the idea by supporting numerous scholarly writings, promoting it through his own books and speeches and by holding grand celebrations in September 2006. In this respect, Rakhmon's efforts were similar to those of Akayev's, when the latter fostered the creation of visual images of the mythic hero Manas.

Although the Central Asian states' ideological projects are built on the recollection of different historical periods, they share a set of similarities in the methods of ideological production and promotion. These similarities primarily have to do with the use of administrative tools to spread messages about national ideologies to the masses. Some of these similarities include using Soviet formulas to promote national ideas, such as celebrating national independence

and venerating historical heroes. To promote their ideological projects, both Akayev and Rakhmon authored a number of books dealing with issues of statehood, national histories, and the future prospects for national development. Like the majority of other states in the world, the Kyrgyz and Tajik presidents believe that their countries are located at the crossroads of great civilizations and have a unique national identity because of their great history and culture. Both states emphasize the immense antiquity of their culture and language, claiming that their nations are among the most ancient in the world. In such a debate, an ethnic group's antiquity alludes to its cultural richness and superiority.

The fact that their ideological production coincided with the turn of century also plays a symbolic role. Akayev and Rakhmon, like their other Central Asian counterparts, utilized the symbolic meaning of a new beginning and comfortably joined the global discourse about the eventful history of the 20th century and the potential of even more significant changes in the 21st century. Both presidents published books related to the turn of century where they summed up the achievements of independence and outlined prospects for the future. All the Central Asian presidents identified the beginning of the new century as a threshold in political, cultural, and economic development of their nations, and argued that their nations had made important contributions to world cultural heritage. The following sections examine the common features that the Central Asian states share in promulgating national ideologies to the masses. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are given special attention.

The differences among the Central Asian states were continuously cultivated by the Soviet leadership throughout the Soviet Union's existence. During the Soviet period, nations were compared to each other in terms of economic achievements and the loyalty of local political elites. During the independence period, in addition to rewriting their own national histories, the Central Asian states sought to form images about their neighbors. These narratives usually question neighboring ideological projects. In the case of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, scholars and politicians from both states accuse each other of pretensions for cultural dominance in the region. In his historiography works, Masov depicts early 20th century Uzbekistan as chauvinistic towards Tajiks, who were suffering from economic troubles. Masov's works became official and scientifically documented evidence of Tajiks' rights to Bukhara and Samarqand.

As a result of each Central Asian state attempting to build a particular national identity, regional identity has obviously suffered. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the weakest states in the region, had to maneuver between prioritizing the cultivation of national uniqueness and regional integration. The wish to build stronger links with neighboring states was evident in the fact that the Kyrgyz and Tajik governments joined every regional agreement. But an ongoing competition between Tajik and Uzbek scholars on ideological projects pushes both states apart. Neither side is ready to compromise on the meaning of the historical heritage of its people and politics. In the case of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, both states prefer to focus on the differences of their historical backgrounds rather than cooperating on an ideational basis.

The idea of Turkic civilization, which is the only concept that could potentially unite the Central Asian states on the grounds of common identity, is either ignored or

monopolized by individual state leaders. Rakhmon promoted a regionally peculiar Persian identity while also mentioning the importance of the Turkic civilization in the country's history. He preferred to juxtapose pan-Turkism with Uzbekistan's nationalism, while also treating it as a basis for mutual friendship with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Karimov, by promulgating the ideology of Tamerlane, seeks to lead Turkic regional identity.

Common Turkic culture only unified the five Central Asian states in the early 1990s, when numerous regional multilateral and bilateral agreements were established based on shared identities. Indeed, most of these agreements proved to be dysfunctional, especially when security threats to the Central Asian states became more pressing towards the end of the 1990s. Yet, ideational commonalities paved the way for an agreement on peaceful coexistence and non-interference. These regional norms were encouraged both by national regimes and Turkey's increased presence in the region in the early years of independence.

Each Central Asian state explicitly indicates that no other nation or group of nations can be treated as national enemies. Such a tolerant attitude towards the external world can be explained by three main reasons. Firstly, at the time of independence no Central Asian state had articulated its own foreign policy divergent from the Soviet perception of international relations. In the 1990s, coherent political attitudes towards the rest of the world had yet to be formed. Secondly, international expectations that the former Soviet states would seek to form sovereign governments reinforced domestic statebuilding processes based on international norms of peaceful coexistence. The states quickly moved towards creating bilateral and multilateral agreements that proved to be inefficient in practice. Lastly, the newly independent Central Asian states were too weak to allow themselves confrontation with the external world. Partly due to the inertia of Soviet perceptions, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan vaguely declared that nations pursuing the un sanctioned proliferation of nuclear weapons would be treated as potential threats. But to a large extent, all states were quick to declare friendly relations with regional neighbors, former Soviet republics, and with the rest of the world.

Today many countries seek to cultivate their international images as much as they work to develop national identities. Thanks to globalized mass media and business, states are able to attract more tourists and investors by promoting their images across the world. These images usually emphasize states' positive traits, uniqueness, and geopolitical importance. It was mentioned that Akayev invested substantial efforts into constructing an image of Kyrgyzstan for international consumption. This image, referred to as the "Island of Democracy" or "Switzerland of Central Asia", still permeates Kyrgyz public discourse about its national identity. Rakhmon's celebrations of Farsi-speaking nationalities in 2006 also pursued a two-fold agenda: to establish Tajikistan's external image and increase national consciousness.

A rather interesting situation developed around Kazakhstan's external image. Kazakhstan's international image was affected by British comedian Sasha Baron Cohen through his character "Borat". While Borat attracted international attention to this newly independent state, Kazakhstanis themselves found it difficult to laugh off his jokes. Similar to other Soviet successor states, Kazakhstan is struggling to build its own image as a sovereign state

with a legitimate government when the country is home to numerous ethnic groups. However, Kazakhstan's case shows that international factors often emerge *ad hoc*, while national elite efforts to promulgate ideologies are more strategic. The accidental international media blitz played a far greater role in the Kazakh public's realization (be it of dismay or cheerfulness) of what their external image represented than any comparable domestic ideological projects. Although national political elites find that national ideological projects are important for societal cohesion, cultivating international images may prove to be far more effective for social mobilization.

As no systematic study of the impact of national ideology on society has ever been done in the Central Asian states, it would be fair to give only rough conclusions on how effective national political elites have been in promoting their ideas. The Soviet tradition of ideological production is still prevalent among both state and society actors. Political elites treat ideologies as part of their function and societies accept the fact that ideologies are the state's product. The role of the government office of the state secretary presupposes creation of and finding suitable strategies to spread national ideological projects. Although society might disagree, and even mock the state's ideological production, there is a tendency that the state will nevertheless be able to dominate the discourse over the national "important past". Such a domination of the state in the historical discourse is also present among historians and academics who often find themselves executing the government's requests to fill in certain ideological concepts with "scientific" content. High demand for the construction of historical narrations in the post-Soviet period encouraged many teachers and scholars of history to treat their own profession as a mission. They were bound to look for manifestations of antiquity in their researched objects.

In producing state ideologies, all Central Asian leaders face a similar set of difficulties. First, since all Central Asian states are multiethnic, with at least one ethnic group representing over 10 percent of the total population, political elites need to find a balance between a conservative ethno-nationalist public and ethnic minorities. Any ethnocentric ideological concept inevitably suppresses ethnic minorities' identities. However, the push by political elites towards adhering to ethnocentrism is often stronger than incentives for a balanced inter-ethnic policy. The Soviet tradition of treating ethnogenesis as the only possibility of explaining the modern existence of ethnic groups and ethnic identities, as opposed to treating ethnicity as a social construct pertinent to concrete territory and state, is still predominant across the Central Asian region. Most political leaders responsible for the production of ideologies rarely question the scientific underpinnings of such an autochthonous approach and therefore routinely refer to it.

Second, to receive international recognition, Central Asian political elites cannot fully ignore the concept of citizenship. But not all political elites seem to want or know how to separate citizenship from ethnicity. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were more successful in bringing in the idea of citizenship into the discourse on state ideology. Both Nazarbayev and Akayev constructed their national ideologies by referring to the importance of the equality of citizens and respect of civic rights ahead of ethnic identities. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, however, citizenship is still a rare concept used in discussions on the role of state ideolo-

gies in the state's functioning. By and large the category of citizenship is used interchangeably with ethnicity and this prevents the larger public from understanding the differences between the two. This fuels inter-ethnic confrontation between ethnic minority and majority groups.

Third, all Central Asian political elites need to be attentive in addressing the role of Islam in state ideologies. Even in Kyrgyzstan, where the public is religiously less conservative, a mere elimination of the definition of the state as secular in the new constitution, adopted in December 2006, gave rise to numerous religious organizations. In Tajikistan, Rakhmon's efforts to alienate Islam from the national ideology are a result of the inter-elite struggle between the ruling elite and the religious opposition. In Uzbekistan, Karimov is also determined to dissociate the cult of Tamerlane with Islam, portraying him as a secular national hero.

This study shows that ideologies were part of the state-building process and that they strengthened the ruling regime, rather than increasing its popularity among society. State-promulgated ideological projects do not necessarily increase the popularity of incumbent regimes before elections, but they do allow the consolidation of state power in the interests of the regimes.

The process of ideological production and promotion increased the loyalty of primarily state actors at various levels: from top political elites to the local government – all of who were responsible for disseminating ideologies among the masses.

Both Kyrgyz and Tajik political leaderships noticeably promoted state ideologies vigorously before presidential elections. The celebration of national historical events, such as the Manas's anniversary in Kyrgyzstan and the Aryan civilization in Tajikistan, allowed the incumbent regimes to mobilize the entire public sector under the banner of patriotism. Akayev and Rakhmon monopolized their interpretations of national histories by suppressing or rejecting any possibility for public debate over interpretations of histories and their meaning in the present day reality. In this way, any attempt to question the correctness of the regimes' interpretations of history was considered to be unpatriotic.

The main difference between the two countries' experience with production of national ideologies is that Akayev authored most of the projects himself and resorted to the academic community for historical evidence, while Rakhmon largely followed influential historians in promoting his projects. Also, Rakhmon's ideas had to compete with the popularity of the Islamic opposition, while during his reign Akayev did not face any significant challenge from his political opponents in constructing ideologies. Both states actively created visual interpretations of their ideological concepts. Even ideologies based on semi- or mythic

events such as Kyrgyzstan's Manas hero or Tajikistan's Aryan civilization were supported with visual symbols. The governments indeed monopolized the construction of these symbols. Along with the state's reliance on Soviet techniques of promoting ideological concepts to the masses through presidential speeches, books, celebrations, and public education, the internet also serves as a competing medium for a more informal discourse on state ideologies. A number of internet sites and loosely administrated forums feature lively debates on nationalism and ideologies. In fact, it could be argued that internet forums have become the main medium for mainstream discussion on the importance and effectiveness of national ideologies. Both Akayev and Rakhmon interpreted national independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 as inevitable and positive historical developments. Unlike their neighbors, both presidents see Russia's historical influence on their country's economic, political, and cultural development as a positive legacy. A striking difference between Akayev and Rakhmon's ideologies is their focus on national and regional domains. Akayev was mostly oriented towards the local public in Kyrgyzstan, whereas Rakhmon promulgated the idea of a "Greater Tajikistan" that embraced the territories of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

For Akayev it was necessary to face the double pressure of a nationalist public and a Russian-speaking population. The former president had to maneuver between ethno-nationalist and civic-based nationalism. Rakhmon, on the other hand, had to consolidate his government in the post-civil war period and respond to the Islamic opposition's influence in the country. It was imperative for the Tajik President to design a political ideology that could compete with the religious ideology, which was promoted by the opposition. Akayev authored national ideological projects himself, while Rakhmon actively used the help of the local academic community. Both presidents, like their Central Asian counterparts, fostered national ideologies to prevail over other political powers. They acted as their nations' main ideologues and tailored discussions on economic and social issues according to their ideological projects.

The importance of UNESCO in the Central Asian states' ideological production should not be underestimated. The organization has played a visible role in legitimizing Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan's celebrations of historical events. UNESCO secures a certain recognition by the international community of the national elites' ideologies. When UNESCO refused to recognize "the year of Aryan civilization in Tajikistan" in 2006, the Tajik government sought to convene a conference of Farsispeaking countries the same year to show international recognition of its celebrations. When UNESCO and other international organizations support national cultural projects, they risk strengthening incumbent regimes instead.

Kazakhstan's Current Priorities for its External Economic Policy

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Today modernization processes involve both the internal and external economies of Kazakhstan. Any decisions or changes to monetary relationships with other countries affect the development of the national economy, economic restructuring and any reforms which may promote external economic activities.

Kazakhstan's outlook depends on the result of the current modernization of the economy, which is influenced significantly by the choice of priorities in its external economic policy. Such priorities should specifically aim to protect the interests of the country by ensuring national security (including economic security), strengthening Kazakhstan's world status and its influence on the global economy, and by carrying out effective economic restructuring to establish a diverse, competitive, modern economy as well as improving the welfare of its people.

Kazakhstan's priorities for its external economic policy, which result from the above strategic objectives, have not changed since independence. They were based on communications from President Nazarbayev and later developed and accepted into the legal systems of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The wisdom of the selected priorities can be assessed by considering their effects on national interests. The country has strengthened its position within the international community, has established stable and secure relationships with many countries, both developed and less developed, and has made some progress towards integration into the world market.

External economic priorities are secondary to specific political objectives and in reality comprise part of the external policy. Consequently, trade and economic activities support the political interests of the country on the international scene.

This can be shown by analyzing collaboration between Kazakhstan and countries, or groups of countries, which have a significant political and economic influence on Kazakhstan. Discussions centre on the development of, and compliance with, priorities in relationships with countries which are the most important for the security of Kazakhstan as well as the successful development of its national economy. In particular, over 50% of exports from Kazakhstan are linked to the most developed countries, primarily Western Europe and the USA. At the same time, the country's location in Central Eurasia facilitates close links with China and other

countries of South East Asia. The close relationships with Russia and the Central Asian States are not only the result of political and economic interests, but stem from deep seated historical roots.

At present, Kazakhstan has reasonably successful trading and economic relationships with Russia, a significantly important partner which owns a 20% share in the country's external trade. The two national economies both complement and depend on each other, thus explaining Russia's leading role in the external trade of Kazakhstan. Furthermore, the recent improvement in the economic situation of both countries is helping to encourage the exchange of commodities and to develop business relationships between enterprises and border areas.

Kazakhstan has no access to international shipping routes, so oil and gas transportation through Russian trunk pipelines from mining areas of the country is strategically important for the export of hydrocarbons. In 2007, over 60 million tonnes of Kazakh oil were transported via Russian pipelines for export to other countries [1]. Major export pipelines are the *Caspian Pipeline Consortium* and the *Uzen-Atyrau-Samara* pipeline. Kazakhstan is keen to take part in the Burgas-Alexandropolis pipeline project and to tap into the Baltic pipeline system since both are of significant importance for the distribution of energy supplies.

Following an increase in gas production and sales, Kazakhstan has expanded its gas processing in Russia as well as exports via the Russian transport infrastructure. In December 2007, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan formed a collaborative Agreement to construct the Caspian gas pipeline from the Belek gas compressor station (Turkmenistan) to the Alexander Gai gas measuring station (Russia) subject to the reconstruction of the existing gas pipelines between Okarem-Beineu and Central Asia-Center. The aim is to transport natural gas produced in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan through the territories of Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. The agreement to establish a Kazakh-Russian partnership to process gas from Karachaganak at the Russian gas processing plant in Orenburg is dependent on one important factor, viz. the expansion of production capacity at the plant [2].

Political considerations are being given significant prominence in the building of economic relations between Kazakhstan and China. Over the last sixteen years stabilization and development of political relations have consider-

ably eased economic relations between the two countries, and at the end of 2006, President Nazarbayev made an official visit to China. Both countries have expressed an interest in developing closer economic ties, particularly in the energy industry, where China has a 60% share in the energy resources export structure of Kazakhstan. Today, China ranks second in the commodity turnover of Kazakhstan (\$9.2bn in 2007). According to the Customs Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the volume of trade between the two countries has increased almost seven times since 2002, and in 2007, the positive trade balance exceeded \$2bn [3].

Another important decision by Kazakhstan and China is to continue the construction of the RK-China oil pipeline, together with the laying of a gas pipeline with a capacity of 30bn m³. In fact, the second section of the oil pipeline construction (Kenkiyak-Kumkol) was agreed because the first section (Atasu-Alashankou) had already been completed. The estimated cost of the project is approximately one billion US dollars with oil field reserves in the Aktyubinsk oblast and Western Kazakhstan deemed to be the project resource base. Commencement of full-scale construction is scheduled for March 2008 with a projected completion date of October 2009 [4].

A specific area of achievement for Kazakhstan's strategic objectives is the emergence of market collaboration with Central Asian countries. According to customs statistics, trade between Kazakhstan and this group of countries amounted to 3.2% of the total trade for 2007, which is 0.9% higher than the corresponding figure for 2006 (2.3%). This clearly shows steady progress in trade and economic relationships, as well as potential for future development, with countries of the region. During the period from 2002 to 2007, exports from Kazakhstan to the Central Asian countries increased by 6.8 times (from \$272.4million to \$1,583.3million) [3].

Further development of trade and economic relations between these countries will focus on the mutual development and management of resources with the intention of developing industry, services, transport, the power generating sector and the strengthening of collaboration for investments. Consolidation of resources, coordination and compatibility of regional policies may help the Central Asian countries to avoid simply being raw materials exporters, and thus being passive targets of interest for leading geopolitical centers. Establishment of relationships in key industries, taking into account the mutual interests of all concerned, will facilitate the strengthening of business relationships, rapport and mutual understanding between countries. This in turn will strengthen competitive benefits for the region, as well as the economic growth of the Central Asian countries.

Currently, Kazakhstan is competently developing trade and economic relationships with countries who are major participants in the world market, and who have an influence on global practices. There is talk of achieving a favorable trade regime and stable, mutually beneficial economic relations with these countries. In particular, Kazakhstan is developing and strengthening its economic relations with the USA and the EC countries.

There is steady progress in the development of economic collaboration between Kazakhstan and the USA which is having a positive effect on the security and economic development of the country. Currently, there is a downward trend in the USA share of trade with Kazakhstan

(2.5% in 2007, compared with 3.6% in 2002). The main reason is a widening of trade relationships by Kazakhstan, while trade links with the USA consist mainly of imports (\$1.6bn). Since 2005 when exports from Kazakhstan reached a high of \$660million, they have since reduced (in 2007) to \$422.2million [3]. However, the USA is still the major foreign investor in Kazakhstan (currently accounting for 15.7% of total direct foreign investments). According to the National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan the USA's direct investments in Kazakhstan totaled \$15.2bn [5] between 1993 and 2007.

Collaboration in the oil and gas industry remains a very important area for relationships between Kazakhstan and the USA, with the focus on the potential for the trans Caspian oil and gas pipeline. In addition, joint initiatives for the development of small and medium size businesses, together with projects for the economic integration of the Central Asian countries are being accomplished. In 2007, a new Kazakhstan-USA program, aimed at infrastructure development, was established in a Partnership between the State and Private Sectors.

Trade and economic relationships between Kazakhstan and the EC are also reasonably effective. Different collaborative styles have been created with leading countries of the EC which are gradually leading to interstate partnerships. According to the Customs Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, trade relations in 2007 improved significantly with EC members such as France, Italy and The Netherlands (\$16.4bn). Contribution to the foreign trade of Kazakhstan with these countries has more than doubled since 2002 (from 9.1% to 20.4%) [3]. This trend is largely explained by the economic stability of many sectors in these countries and, the resulting increased demand from those sectors for resources, essentially oil, from Kazakhstan. Currently, excluding OPEC members, Kazakhstan is the third largest provider of oil (after Russia and Norway) to the EC market. Kazakhstan is developing a program entitled *The Way to Europe* which takes account of mutual interests when supplying energy resources (predominantly hydrocarbons).

Currently, Kazakhstan is developing its economic links with other countries who have an interest in the Caspian sector, with the aim of broadening its trade and economic relationships in this area. Iran is the principal partner for Kazakhstan in this region, and its share in Kazakhstan's trade increased from 2% in 2002 to 3.1% in 2007 achieving \$2,495.7m (7.7 times the growth from 2002 to 2007, and mainly due to an increase in the supplies of oil products). Imports to Iran are insignificant at \$44.4m [3]. In the future, Iran may become one of the largest importers of agricultural products from the country. Kazakhstan intends to expand collaboration in the region by increasing the port capacity at Aktau, which will facilitate Caspian Sea shipments of oil, grain, animal products, etc, between Kazakhstan and Iran. The railway construction project, which forms part of the transcontinental trunk railway, runs through Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran. It will promote the development of relations between Kazakhstan, Iran and connecting countries of the Asia Pacific Region with the main European markets, Russia and Middle Eastern countries. It will also enable an increased capacity for the transcontinental transportation corridors. Given Iran's geopolitical location in the Middle East, cooperation with this country is of great importance for Kazakhstan in terms of access to world trading routes and markets.

Thus, the current integration of Kazakhstan into world economic relationships reflects the state of the national economy. At present, the country's raw material resources represent the major factor in the development of external economic relations, whilst continued low levels of technological production are inhibiting Kazakhstan's integration into world trade. The transition to a modern economy, based on advanced technological industries, may be the only way to help Kazakhstan restructure its trade and economic relations with the world community. For this reason the country is determined to stick to the key directives of the foreign economic strategy, including improved competitiveness of domestic goods and services, the development of export targeted products, and the improved State supervision of exports and imports.

In order to resolve these issues, Kazakhstan has to actively invest, and take part in, new projects developed by the international financial institutions, as this will encourage integration of the country into the global economy as well as supporting domestic export companies. In the near future Kazakhstan plans to participate in finance consortiums for large scale international projects, although it will still maintain a watchful eye on domestic business interests, particularly those of export companies. The country will develop collaboration with international financial institutions, with a focus on the projects of the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the recently established Eurasian Development Bank (EDB). Presentation of investment opportunities in Kazakhstan and the search for foreign partners, especially in transnational companies, will also continue. Collaboration with world leading transnational companies will enable Kazakhstan to develop high value added exports and to utilize the latest international marketing tools. When considering technical progress, it is

important to develop technological collaboration with large international companies, as well as providing the necessary environment for the establishment of technological parks and free enterprise.

Currently, Kazakhstan is concentrating on developing and producing final products aimed at the export market, joint ventures in engineering for the oil and gas industry, transport vehicles, etc., metallurgy, the chemical industry, the industrial agricultural sector and biological technologies, all of which attract active foreign input. This will result in positive changes in the export import structure of Kazakhstan's foreign trade and will increase the rating of the country as a participant in world economic relationships.

The export import structure of the national trade can also be improved by the development of regional trade and economic blocks within associations such as the EEC, the CES and the EES. For this reason, economic integration with regional countries must be improved and based on collaboration in production, scientific and technological areas, the establishment of customs unions, free trade zones, development of long term relationships in finance, trade and economics.

It is also necessary to focus on strengthening integration with other countries who are key trade partners. This will encourage the strengthening of existing links as well as forming new competitive advantages for the country. It will also improve the effectiveness of links between domestic and foreign entrepreneurs.

Generally, the establishment of effective trade and economic relationships, and the optimization of the commodity pattern of the country's foreign trade are important for the development of a competitive, innovative economy. At the same time this must be offset against the requirements of the global market if the short and long term development strategies are to contribute the economic growth of Kazakhstan.

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