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Development Strategy Outline

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In his speech at the opening session of the 17th annual OSCE Parliament Assembly on June 29, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev set the record straight on the progress of democratic reforms in our country, an issue which has been the subject of debate over the last year. "Our concept of democratic processes is based on two main factors. **Firstly**, there are a number of universal democratic principles. **Secondly**, there are specific national and cultural methods of implementing those principles," the President defined "**Kazakhstan's way**" of creating a democratic society.

Appropriately, "**Kazakhstan's way**" has become a topic of discussion for both domestic experts and foreign analysts who have witnessed the development of the political situation in Kazakhstan. The discussion took a new turn when Kazakhstan was chosen to chair the OSCE in 2010. This historic decision was taken at the meeting of foreign ministers in Madrid last November. Significant amongst the reasons for this decision was the domestic political situation viz.: **no threats to stability, interethnic unity and religious tolerance**.

It should be noted that **domestic political stability** is a priority component of the Kazakhstan Development Strategy for 2030. The notion of domestic political stability includes equal opportunities for all citizens, elimination of ethnic conflict, equal rights for all ethnic groups, reduction of the wealth gap between rich and poor, the strengthening of mutual respect, tolerance and confidence between different religions.

In his speech the Kazakh President stressed again that the course taken by Kazakhstan adheres to the important principles of **domestic stability** and the **constant improvement in living conditions of the people of Kazakhstan**. Both the economic and political reforms being implemented in Kazakhstan aim to achieve those objectives.

When discussing the direction of future development, the President emphasized the three following areas: **socio-economic, humanitarian and political**. Developments in these areas are aimed at resolving the following fundamental tasks: firstly, the creation of a socially oriented economy; secondly, the regulation of relations between different ethnic groups and religions; and thirdly, further development of the political system.

The first goal is to develop modern education, health and social systems. The second is to develop civil and social rights and consolidate equality of rights and unity between all ethnic groups and religions. The political development goals will be to maintain the political structure.

The President's proposals of June 29 defused controversy over issues relating to future procedures in domestic policy. Firstly, **a legal framework which leads to a parliament of not less than two political parties should be created**. Secondly, **conditions for state registration of political parties should be improved**. Thirdly, **the electoral procedure should be improved**. Fourthly, the **excessive bureaucracy which regulates mass media activities** should be eradicated.

Implementation of these proposals will bring a new impetus to the development of democratic processes in Kazakhstan. They primarily represent the formation of a new party structure in the political arena, as well as the development of a true multi-party system. These combined proposals will enable the general public to be directly involved by participating in the political process.

It is well accepted that a stable political system cannot exist without strong political parties which support the principles of an effective multi-party system. Such a system ensures political diversity where the varying political preferences of the people are represented. A multi-party system is essential if the general public are to have access to political life. For this reason one of the most important goals of political modernization is the formation of **a developed political party system**.

It is very important for Kazakhstan to achieve these goals if it is to improve the role of political parties in the social life of the country. Alongside this, the election to the Mazhilis of the Kazakh Parliament last August showed the weakness of the majority of the existing parties, with the exception of Nur-Otan which was initially supported on the authority of the President. It is clear that further development of the political party system will bring about an improvement in the organization and composition of political parties. However, this will not be possible without experience of the parliamentary activities which provide the link between state policies and the wishes of the electorate.

Hence, expansion of political party membership in the Kazakh Parliament will be a positive move towards giving more attention to the needs of people in political life, developing conditions for political parties and, as a consequence, improving the political culture in general.

Amongst the undertakings declared by the President was the necessity to tackle the issue of the 7% threshold as a condition for representatives of political parties to be elected to Parliament. This is a new approach for Kazakhstan as a majority election system previously prevailed in parliamentary elections. It is acknowledged that the Kazakh law, which established a limit for parliamentary elections, was based on experience in Russia. In line with changes made to the Russian Federal Law *On Elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation* (2005) the minimum threshold for election to the top legislative body was increased from 5% to 7%. This change was explained by the necessity to prevent insignificant and populist or nationalistic parties from entering Parliament. In addition, the Russian legisla-

tion has a significant reservation clause: "The parties to be elected to Parliament shall have 60% of the total votes of the electorate." This means that more than two parties can be elected to the Russian parliament.

In Kazakhstan, a legal system which enables the formation of a Parliament with a minimum of two parties will create conditions which both support political stability as well as pay more attention to the wishes of the electorate. In turn, a reduction in the 7% threshold will significantly affect the further development of the political party arena in Kazakhstan.

Indeed, a decision to improve the role of political parties in Kazakhstan reinforces the President's proposals made during the opening session of the 17th annual OSCE Parliament Assembly.

When these proposals are implemented and a modern **political system** which incorporates **strong, competitive parties has been** established, then Kazakhstan will have passed into a new stage of development.

GUAM and the SCO: a Comparative Analysis

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Numerous organizations have been born and died on the post-Soviet expanse; the larger part of them left no trace and therefore can be safely forgotten. Two organizations, however, deserve our special attention. I have in mind the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development—GUAM and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, not so much because they are rivals of sorts, but because the way they were formed and developed, their response to events, and many other things are similar. Any attempt to compare two international organizations is a thankless task, however, I shall undertake it here.

THE OUTSIDE PLAYERS

The SCO and GUAM are not mere rivals—each of them is supported by outside players with great geopolitical ambitions. GUAM is backed by the United States joined recently by the European Union; the SCO has China behind it, which has great designs for the post-Soviet expanse. This accounts for their specifics and their attitudes toward Russia, which claims the role of key player on the post-Soviet expanse.

Proof of the above is easily found in the two structures' history, which reveals not merely the reasons for their emergence, but also the interests of the outside players involved.

The SCO's status is clear enough: China is obviously interested in it and is working hard to channel it in the desirable direction. Sometimes it succeeds, sometimes it fails, because so far it is treading cautiously so as not to irritate Russia. In short, it has to bear in mind Russia's interests and ambitions. The expert community, however, agrees that the SCO was set up on China's initiative, which needed a lever of influence in Central Asia.¹

The Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Sphere in Border Areas signed in April 1996 in Shanghai and its component, the Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Armed Forces in the Border Area signed in Moscow in April 1997, laid the foundation of the Shanghai Five; in the late 1990s it was transformed into the "Shanghai Forum," which in June 2001 became the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

From the very beginning, that is, from the mid-1990s, China regarded the new structure as a vehicle of its interests in Central Asia. It was thanks to the Shanghai Five, within

which the format of talks was changed in April 1997 from bilateral (China plus four post-Soviet states) to a format that involved five states (each of the states being an independent entity at the talks), that China successfully coped with the most intricate border issue,² while leaving all the other border problems open.

It was thanks to this structure that China resolved many important geopolitical problems. It was in Shanghai that China formed a strategic alliance with Russia, which was "able to balance off Western domination," as Russian President Yeltsin mentioned during his visit to Shanghai. He clearly stated that none of the countries should be allowed to impose its will on the world.

During his official visit to Kazakhstan on July 4-6, 1996, Jiang Zemin pointed out in his address to the parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan that "the unfair and irrational international economic order" should be changed through closer South-South cooperation in particular. He went into details: "South-South cooperation should be realized in many spheres, at various levels and in different forms, in the economic as well as political, cultural, and social spheres. The South-North dialog and South-South cooperation are two linchpins of the current worldwide developments and international cooperation." China, which claimed authorship of the idea and which expected much of its future geopolitical situation, offered its services as a coordinator of such cooperation.³

The Russian-Chinese Joint Declaration on the Multipolar World and the Establishment of the New International Order signed in April 1997 shocked the world, particularly its Western part. In fact, Jiang Zemin's Moscow visit showed the world that China and Russia were resolved to actively oppose American domination at the global level. The document's obvious anti-Americanism confirmed that Russia and China intended to play a greater role in world politics. This triggered talks about a "new bloc confrontation."

GUAM history is more complicated. The GUAM Consultative Forum was officially set up on October 10, 1997 within the framework of the Council of Europe summit in Strasbourg. Ukraine suggested the idea of pooling the forces of the four states (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) to create Eurasian and trans-Caucasian transportation corridors and enhance friendly and good-neighborly relations and cooperation among them to fully tap the already existing economic potential.⁴

It stands to reason that GUAM is a logical response to the Kremlin's foreign and domestic policies of the early 1990s. First, by concentrating on drawing closer to the United States and the West, Russia had no strength left to preserve its influence in the post-Soviet expanse. It failed to set up effective instruments of economic, political, and military integration. Second, engrossed in political squabbles over former public property, which created oligarchs and financial-industrial groups, it looked scary to its potential CIS partners, which feared its revived imperial ambitions and continued re-division of property. This was especially true of the states with real or potential territorial disagreements with Russia or "frozen conflicts" on their territories. All the GUAM members belonged to this category.

Russia demonstrated neither enthusiasm⁵ nor hostility, probably due to its foreign policy inertia. In any case, until 2001 Russia not only dispatched its observers to the GUAM summits, but also expressed the desire to join it.

The GUAM members are responsible for Russia's changed attitudes: its request was declined, while GUAM stepped up its contacts with the United States, its main financial sponsor; it was obviously looking at the EU and NATO and stated in so many words that economic cooperation should go hand in hand with military cooperation. In April 1999, Uzbekistan joined GUAM, thus indirectly spreading American influence to Central Asia as well. Russia began to suspect that there were hidden currents under the smooth surface.

Western political analysts confirmed Russia's doubts; shortly before GUAM moved onto the scene, Brzezinski published a book on America's strategy in the world and the post-Soviet expanse, which said in particular: "In the short run, it is in America's interest to consolidate and perpetuate the prevailing geopolitical pluralism on the map of Eurasia. That puts a premium on maneuver and manipulation *in order to prevent the emergence of a hostile coalition that could eventually seek to challenge America's primacy...* By the middle term, the foregoing should gradually yield to a greater emphasis on the emergence of increasingly important but strategically compatible partners who, *prompted by American leadership, might help to shape a more cooperative trans-Eurasian security system.* Eventually, in the much longer run still, the foregoing *could phase into a global core of genuinely shared political responsibility*" (italics mine – K.S.).⁶

It seems that Washington became convinced that despite the far from simple relations inside GUAM it could serve not only as a "regional counterbalance to Russia,"⁷ but also as a vehicle of American strategy in Eurasia. The following provides the best illustration of the fact that by the early 2000s GUAM developed from a predominantly economic into a geopolitical bloc through which the U.S. intended to realize its Eurasia strategy: Uzbekistan joined the structure (under Washington's pressure according to certain sources); America worked hard to push Kazakhstan toward it⁸; the U.S. Administration dispatched its representatives to all the summits; it pays for some of the projects, and finally, in 1999, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan left the Collective Security Treaty (obviously after consultations with their American sponsors).

EVOLUTION

For obvious reasons Russia could not accept this balance of forces in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia; it moved ahead, first, to confirm its position in these regions and, second, to downplay America's influence, thereby undermining GUAM, among other things. The situation in the post-Soviet expanse and in Central Asia⁹ was conducive to this.

Moscow advanced in two directions. First, it transformed the Customs Union into a structure that would bring economic integration of the former Soviet republics closer. On October 10, 2000, five states (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan; Armenia formally belonged to the new structure from the very beginning, while Uzbekistan joined later, in January 2006) signed an agreement on the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) in Astana. On February 23, 2003, the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine announced that the "new stage of economic integration" allowed them to form a Single Economic Expanse, thus delivering another blow to GUAM. So far the two newly formed structures and their economic effectiveness leave much to be desired, but they played their role by diminishing GUAM's economic effectiveness and bringing discord into its ranks.

Second, the Shanghai Five was transformed into a fully-fledged regional security structure. All the summits of the Five in 1999 and 2000 concentrated on security issues for the simple reason that the virtual regional threats had developed into real ones and become a destabilizing factor that could send waves across Central Asia and the adjacent regions.

The number of members increased: Uzbekistan, the first to realize that it was running the risk of becoming another Tajikistan, joined the Shanghai Five. It became absolutely clear that the regional powers could and should deal with regional problems without waiting for possible assistance from across the ocean. America's growing might and influence in the region notwithstanding, it was absolutely clear that its role in Central Asia did not go beyond its mere presence and could vanish without trace in the event of a serious conflict.

At the summit of the Five in Dushanbe on July 5, 2000,¹⁰ President of Uzbekistan Karimov deliberately flattered China by saying that "under Central Asian conditions the presence of two great powers—Russia and China—with vast potentials not only guarantees peace, but also the region's sustainable development." The Uzbek president went on to say: "I believe that understanding between Russia and China in this region is the main factor of further cooperation among the member states of the Shanghai Forum."¹¹

The jubilee summit convened on June 14-15, 2001 put all the dots on the i's: Uzbekistan joined the Five, while the Declaration on the Creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization laid the foundation of a new international structure.

The Declaration described the SCO aims: "promoting and developing good-neighborly relations, mutual confidence, and friendship among the member states; encouraging effective cooperation between them in the political, trade and economic, scientific and technical, cultural, educational,

energy, transportation, environmental, and other spheres; exerting joint efforts to maintain peace, security, and stability in the region and to build a new democratic, just, and rational political and economic international order." The member states concentrated on the economic side; at the concluding press conference, Zhang Deguang, who represented the Foreign Ministry of China, deemed it necessary to point out: "Both the Shanghai Five and the SCO have nothing to do with the principle of an alliance and will never develop either into a military bloc or into a collective security system."¹²

No objections followed; the prospect of another regional economic structure was hailed: this tactic allowed the founders not only to take into account the interests of all of them,¹³ but also not irritate the other regional players too much, particularly the United States.

Russia supported the idea, since the economic bias allowed it to deal with the key point on its Central Asian agenda: enticing Uzbekistan to its side and fitting it into the Russian-controlled structures. China's greater economic involvement looked like a problem of secondary importance. It seems that the Russian leaders remained convinced that, first, much time would elapse before the SCO economic projects were put into practice and, second, in the economic sphere China would run across not so much the foreign companies present in the post-Soviet expanse as the CIS integration structures (CAEC and EurAsEC).

Central Asian and worldwide reality upturned these plans and pushed the economic issues to the back burner. The decision passed by the summit to set up an Antiterrorist Center to oppose terrorism, separatism, and extremism moved to the top of the SCO development agenda.

The St. Petersburg summit convened in June 2002 strengthened the SCO mechanisms. The SCO Charter formalized its members' rights and duties, an inevitable and very important move in the emerging geopolitical situation in Central Asia.

It is no accident that Art 2 of the document says: "prevention of any illegitimate acts directed against SCO interests;" Art 13 talks about adequate measures applied to any of the members "violating the provisions of this Charter and/or systematically failing to perform its obligations under international treaties and instruments concluded within the framework of SCO." These provisions were suggested by the vague positions of some of the SCO members. Officially, none of the member states contradicted the negotiated agreements, but there was discernible coolness among the members.¹⁴

This is explained not so much by America's presence in the region (not only military, but also economic, political, and cultural), but mainly by the objective contradictions among the SCO members.

The central contradiction was caused by the organization's fairly vast mandate, which made its mission vague and open to biased interpretations. Russia saw it as a chance to restore the "global actor" image it lost in the early 1990s and to keep the Central Asian states within its field of attraction. At the same time, it hoped to use the SCO to expand its military-political¹⁵ and the still fairly modest economic presence. China looked forward to stronger economic and

political influence and the chance to localize the region's threats (ethnic separatism, political and religious extremism, Islamism, political and ethno-national uncertainty). China hoped to use the SCO to prevent destructive processes and to limit America's presence in the region, using Russia for this purpose. Uzbekistan hoped to catch up with the process of setting up regional security structures and head this process if possible. It also hoped to use SCO potential to address domestic economic problems and suppress domestic opposition by hoisting the flag of struggle against international terrorism and religious extremism. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan demonstrated their loyalty to Russia while flirting on the side with the Americans and Chinese. They used the SCO structures (in particular RATS) to deal with their domestic problems and to obtain access to additional sources their economies could use.

There was another problem: the SCO and other integration alliances in the post-Soviet expanse (CST and EurAsEC) addressed more or less similar problems. China, which suggested that the experience acquired by the CST members should be used when drafting the SCO key documents and setting up its structures,¹⁶ probably tried to convince Moscow to speed up the process of setting up SCO permanent structures. China's interests in Central Asia are much wider than its cooperation in the economic and security spheres: it seeks greater political and cultural influence as well as greater presence as a demographic component. This hardly fits Russia's interests in the region.

The need to specify the nature of the SCO-NATO dialog, as well as the SCO members' positions vis-a-vis the U.S.-led counterterrorist coalition, was the third problem. While dealing with a seemingly isolated problem, namely regional security, the SCO, NATO, and the U.S. were pursuing different aims, which complicated the situation still further.

America's presence in the region created another (fourth) problem not only because certain regional leaders tended "to sit on the fence," but also because the United States wanted, and could, split the SCO.¹⁷ The potential was unlimited, starting with propaganda campaigns in the Western media about "Russia's Euro-Atlantic choice" and "its inevitable drawing closer to the West" and ending with paying money to some of the Central Asian leaders and subjecting them to economic and political pressure.

The above was directly connected with another uncertainty factor. Being fully aware of the threat created by the growing American military presence in Central Asia, China and Russia did not want a direct confrontation with the U.S. A revived anti-Western pole fit badly into Vladimir Putin's policy of Russia drawing closer to NATO and the United States. Some Russian experts believed that the SCO could have served the cornerstone for another organization integrated into Western structures and rooted in open regionalism; such structures could have attracted a wide range of observer states and members.¹⁸ China, however, could not accept this.

The interest Mongolia, Afghanistan, Iran, India, and Pakistan showed in the SCO has created another problem. None of the SCO members objected to their membership, however, certain doubts lingered. Indeed, would wider mem-

bership diffuse the SCO's functions and priorities? Could it undermine the efficiency of the regional security mechanism on the brink of failure?

Finally, the organization's declarative nature was another hindrance: first, the United States demonstrated that the problems the SCO outlined as priorities could be resolved much faster and much more effectively. Second, the SCO members have different ideas about what should be described as terrorism, ethnic separatism, and extremism. Third, economic cooperation remained nothing much but words.¹⁹ Fourth, no one knows whether the SCO is ready to guarantee the domestic stability of its members and outline measures the regimes can use in crisis situations.

Judging by what the West has to say about GUUAM, the organization failed to justify the hopes it pinned on the new structure. According to Roy Allison, despite the fact that the GUUAM members did look for ways to boost their political, economic, and military potential to be able to neutralize, to a certain extent, Russia's influence in the CIS, the organization never developed into an "anti-CIS."²⁰ Its appearance was accompanied by a noisy propaganda campaign, but practical measures left much to be desired. The project set up to create alternative transportation routes for Caspian fuel remained, at least at that time, unrealized. Designed to protect the territorial integrity of its members, GUUAM produced the opposite result: instead of reaching an agreement with the separatist leaders, it was confronted by the Association of Unrecognized States.

GUUAM, however, achieved a lot in its institutional development. On November 6, 2000, at the 55th Session of the U.N. General Assembly in New York, the presidents of the GUUAM members met to produce a New York Memorandum that made cooperation within the structure multi-layered. It was decided to regularly convene GUUAM summits and meetings of foreign ministers, as well as to set up a Committee of National Coordinators (CNC) as the working structure.

On June 7, 2001, the GUUAM presidents signed the Yalta GUUAM Charter, which created the GUUAM Alliance. The Charter identified the main goals: "promoting social and economic development; strengthening and expanding trade and economic links; developing and efficiently using the transport and communication arteries, in the interests of the GUUAM states, with their corresponding infrastructure situated on their territories; strengthening regional security in all spheres of activity; developing relations in the field of science and culture and the humanitarian sphere; interacting in the framework of international organizations; and combating international terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking."²¹ The Charter said nothing about the military side of the collective activities²²; nor did it mention concerted peacekeeping or regional conflict settlement.

This can be interpreted as a bow to Uzbekistan, which, after withdrawing from the CST, announced its principled position of keeping away from military blocs. The gesture proved futile: on June 14, 2002, Uzbekistan left GUUAM because of "the absence of progress in its activities." Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov confirmed the decision by saying: "Uzbekistan's involvement in GUUAM

was dictated by its desire to integrate into multilateral economic cooperation, but we failed to detect any positive shifts in the right direction in the four years of our membership." The foreign minister went on to say that his country "does not see why it should continue cooperating with GUUAM. It intends, instead, to concentrate on friendly and mutually advantageous bilateral relations with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldavia."²³

A week later Uzbekistan changed its position and explained that it had been misunderstood: it had not wanted to leave the structure, but merely to suspend its membership. Anyone could detect White House pressure. On June 16, the U.S. State Department announced that it believed that GUUAM membership would strengthen Uzbekistan's position as regional leader and that it hoped the Uzbek government would retract from its decision.²⁴ Tashkent could not ignore its strategic partner. It remained a formal GUUAM member, but its president never attended its summits.

Uzbekistan's decision to stay away from the organization put the security issue back on the agenda. At the Yalta summit on July 19-20, 2002, Ukraine suggested that a "safety belt" be established along the members' state borders to uproot terrorism and other non-traditional security threats.²⁵ The summit stressed once more that any efforts to support separatist and extremist forces should be resolutely stemmed; the same applied to all efforts to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member states. It was pointed out that the conflicts should be settled in full conformity with international legal norms and principles. The heads of state spoke of the prospects for a Euro-Asian Oil Transportation Corridor within the conception of diversified transportation of Caspian oil to the world markets.²⁶ The project looked utopian because of the insufficient resources, however, in view of the increased interest in transportation routes from the Caspian to Central and Western Europe, GUUAM could expect international support. Speaking at the summit, William Taylor, the U.S. State Department coordinator of U.S. assistance to Europe and Eurasia, said that his country wanted several more oil pipelines in the region besides the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline and promised America's support if the organization was prepared to launch the project and create an oil transportation corridor.²⁷

There were unpleasant surprises as well, President of Moldova Vladimir Voronin being the author of one of them by saying: "The fact that Uzbekistan suspended its GUUAM membership should be treated as a warning and a sign that we should revise its prospects" and "Moldova has many reasons to be concerned with GUUAM's viability and with our country's place and role in the organization and the emerging system of relations in it." He went on with more detailed arguments: "Economic integration within GUUAM looks fairly artificial. This is confirmed by the drop in trade turnover within it. We have obviously failed to identify the priorities of our economic cooperation. I think that the entire complex of economic, social, and cultural problems, which GUUAM intends to address have been just as fully and as promisingly developed within the corresponding CIS programs."²⁸

The years 2003 and 2004 proved to be trying for GUUAM, which found itself on the brink of disintegration.

The Yalta summit on July 3-4, 2003 was ignored by three presidents: Uzbekistan was represented by State Foreign Policy Advisor of the President of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov; Azerbaijan by Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, and Moldova by First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Stratan. The large number of foreign guests could obviously not fill the three gaps. Late in July Foreign Minister of Moldova Nicolae Duceu made a statement to the effect that his country doubted its continued GUUAM membership as useful, since "Chisinau was not very sure of the effectiveness of the cooperation mechanisms."²⁹ The 2004 summit did not take place.

GUUAM remained afloat thanks to American funding and, strange as it may seem, the appearance of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in May 2003, which revived the military aspects of GUUAM. Georgia and Ukraine, at least, agreed to appoint military coordinators.³⁰

The sponsors revived their former interest, while the United States made an effort to revive the organization itself. In December 2004, Richard Armitage met with the ambassadors of the GUUAM members in Washington to discuss the possibility of giving the structure a new lease on life.³¹ Later developments revealed that it had been decided to strengthen GUUAM's ideological component to turn it into a mechanism of regime-change in the post-Soviet expanse.

FIGHT FOR THE GEOPOLITICAL EXPANSE

A first step in the right direction took the form of the Carpathian Declaration President Saakashvili and President Yushchenko signed early in January 2005. It said that their coming to power launched a new liberation wave in Europe, which "will spread the final victory of freedom and democracy across the European continent."³² This meant that the two chief "democrats" of the CIS had been given the role of GUUAM revivers on the platform of the color revolutions which were expected to engulf the entire post-Soviet territory.

Uzbekistan's position was more or less clear, therefore the revivers had to tread cautiously so as not to scare away Ilham Aliyev with their color revolution ideas, while attracting Vladimir Voronin into their "democratic" company.

The latter turned out to be easy prey: first, late in 2003, Chisinau refused to sign the already agreed upon Kozak Memorandum, which contained Russia's plan for settling the Transnistrian conflict; this soured the previously friendly relations with Moscow. Second, President Voronin had enough reasons to believe that the opposition might turn the color revolution tide against his regime: he armed himself with liberal slogans, thus pulling the "democrats" supported by the West to his side. In February and March 2005, the three leaders met several times on a bilateral basis before finally reaching a consensus.

Azerbaijan tactfully kept away from the project, but never rejected it: on the eve of elections, the safest place in the country was on the "democratic" side of the barricades. Ilham Aliyev continued to regard GUUAM as an economically attractive mechanism designed to expand the pipeline network to move Caspian fuels to the world oil markets.

President Karimov turned the deaf ear to the "revivers:" late in January he warned them that the political biases of

Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova had forced him to revise his attitude toward GUUAM.³³ On May 5, he sent a letter to the Moldovan president in which he substantiated his decision to leave the structure. It said, among other things, that "due to its geographic location Uzbekistan sees no possibility of realizing its economic and security interests within the new initiatives and projects GUUAM intends to promote and, therefore, is leaving the organization."³⁴

The Chisinau summit convened on April 22, 2005 was expected to formalize the new role of the old structure. Not all the expectations came true, however, the Declaration "In the Name of Democracy, Stability, and Development" demonstrated that GUUAM was not only alive, but had also acquired a new role in the post-Soviet expanse.³⁵ First, it clearly stated that it would export color revolutions (to Belarus in particular); second, it described integration into Europe as the final goal of the member states; third, it revived the old idea of an alternative oil and gas production and transportation network designed to leave Russia in the cold; fourth, it bypassed in silence the right of nations to self-determination and described settlement of the "frozen conflicts" as one of the aims to "reintegrate uncontrolled territories into the states, of which they are a part;" to achieve which the members formulated the fifth task as squeezing Russia out of the zones of conflict and replacing the Russian peacekeepers stationed there with peacekeepers from other countries.³⁶

On top of this, the two main "revivers" harbored geopolitical ambitions as well. The declaration made no mention of them, however, they found their way into President Saakashvili's interview with *La Repubblica*³⁷ and into the ambitious settlement plan in the Transnistria area President Yushchenko laid on the table at the summit.³⁸ The attempt to draw some of the East European states into GUUAM can be interpreted as another ambitious project. In fact, President of Romania Trajan Basescu and President of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus attended the summit as guests.

The final goal was absolutely clear: Russia should be separated from "old Europe" by a belt of pro-American regimes to prevent its revival as a superpower and to drive it back into the "outside administration" of the 1990s.

The response was prompt. The 10th SCO summit held in Astana on June 5-6, 2005 added another dimension to it. First, the number of observers increased from one (Mongolia) to four (Iran, Pakistan, and India), which meant that the organization had rallied nearly half of the globe's population and that its decisions, therefore, could hardly be ignored.

Second, the member states finally identified their mission. The Blueprint for Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism the summit adopted said in part: "The member states proceed from the fact that their priority is to fight terrorism, separatism, and extremism using the SCO's own forces."³⁹ According to President Karimov, "it was a vast strategic design, the final aim of which was to change the political and economic balance of power and domination in the Central Asian region in our interests."⁴⁰

Third, the summit removed the second vague circumstance created by the foreign military presence in Central Asia. Despite the frantic efforts of the United States and

the West as a whole, they failed to drive a wedge between China and Russia, the SCO's two locomotives, or to detach the Central Asian states from the tandem.

Judging by the summit results and reports in the Western media, the West lost the battle: on the one hand, America's request for observer status in the SCO was ignored; on the other, the final declaration stated: "Taking into account the completion of the active combat phase of the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan," the SCO members deemed it necessary to point out that "the relevant members of the antiterrorist coalition make a decision on the deadlines for the temporary use of the above-mentioned infrastructure facilities and military presence on the territory of the SCO member states."⁴¹ In other words, America was asked, on Russia's initiative, to leave the region.⁴²

This was not all. The Declaration pointed to several circumstances in a way the U.S. and the West found unpleasant. First, it stressed the world's cultural and civilizational diversity and insisted on the obvious right of every nation to choose its own road. This means that the SCO countries rejected all attempts at imposing certain development patterns on them.⁴³ Second, the member states voiced their conviction that "any efficient and just world order should be based on strengthening mutual trust and good-neighborliness and on the establishment of genuine partnership free from any claims to monopoly or dominance in international affairs."⁴⁴ In other words, the policy of American domination was rejected. It seems that in anticipation of the color revolution methods applied in their countries, the local leaders preferred "authoritarian Russia" and no less authoritarian China as their strategic partners. Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov confirmed: "The corresponding structures of the CSTO and SCO can cope with the task of localizing and defeating the remnants of the extremist units that are crossing into the region from Afghanistan."⁴⁵

In the fall of 2005, Russia took a second step. It made energy policy the main instrument of the CIS's new strategy.⁴⁶ It was suggested that energy resources could either be supplied at world prices or at prices much lower than the world ones if the customer agreed to transfer its energy infrastructure to Russian companies.

The "gas conflict" with Ukraine, which in the winter of 2006 nearly undermined gas supplies to Europe, forced the EU to look for new methods of putting pressure on Russia. GUAM was selected as one of the levers. In May 2006, the GUAM summit in Kiev transformed the structures into the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development-GUAM and significantly adjusted its tasks.

The final Kiev Declaration contained, together with the usual set of issues (combating international terrorism, extremism, and aggressive separatism; settling the still smoldering conflicts; continuing the advance toward European integration, etc.), two new interesting points. The first stated: "no economic pressure and monopolization of the energy market can be accepted,"⁴⁷ and pointed out that the countries should pool efforts to ensure their energy security through diversification of the supply routes, among other things, from Central Asia and the Caspian to the European market. The second confirmed the GUAM members' course

toward deeper integration with Europe and closer relations with the European Union and NATO.⁴⁸

The Joint Declaration on Conflict Settlement was worded in even harsher terms. First, it confirmed a principle according to which the conflicts should be resolved by "reintegrating uncontrolled territories into the states, of which they are a part." Second, it openly stated that security in these zones was "ensured with the help of multi-national peacekeeping forces under the U.N. or OSCE aegis stationed there."⁴⁹ In other words, Russia was indirectly informed that the presence of NATO units on its southern borders was already a settled issue and, if it continued to negatively affect Europe's energy security, the EU would find the means and ways to make it see differently.

This looked threatening, but judging by the 2007 developments Russia ignored the warnings coming from GUAM and its Western sponsors. It was resolved to upturn these plans and even succeeded to a certain extent.

The initiative of the GUAM members to take the "frozen conflicts" issue in former Soviet republics to the U.N. General Assembly met with Russia's active opposition. It struck back in 2007 in the form of referendums in support of independence in the breakaway regions, which asked the Russian Federation for associated membership. Let sleeping dogs lie as they say in such cases. Moldova sized up the threat and preferred to steer clear of stirring up any trouble with Russia; it looks as if its GUAM colleagues failed to grasp the situation. The political context in these countries is far from optimistic. In fact they cannot threaten Russia and are not even interesting enough for the EU and NATO.

The situation on the energy security front is far from clear. There is no shortage of projects. Indeed, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline is already in operation; there is a project for a trans-Caspian pipeline along the Caspian bed; Ukraine's pet project of the Odessa-Brody-Plock-Gdansk oil pipeline, and the trans-Caspian gas pipeline. There is no shortage of projects, but there is an obvious shortage of oil and gas. Today GUAM has to decide what it can offer to entice the Central Asian countries into its orbit.

The year 2007 demonstrated that the struggle over transportation routes is serious to the extent that it called for the presidents' personal lobbying. The informal GUAM summit in Krakow held on May 11, 2007 and attended by Lithuania, Poland, and representatives of Kazakhstan produced a communiqué on energy issues related to the construction of the Odessa-Brody-Plock-Gdansk pipeline. The next day, the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, who met in Turkmenbashi, signed an agreement on the Caspian gas pipeline and on additional capacities for the Central Asia-Center gas pipeline, which was also signed by Uzbekistan. The central issues of both summits were: Whom will the Central Asian countries befriend? and Which countries will serve as transit territories for the new pipelines?

It seems that Russia has won the first round: President Nazarbayev chose not to attend the Krakow summit; he kept Polish companies away from the oil projects in his country and refused to join the Odessa-Gdansk project without Russia. Without Kazakhstan, the Krakow summit became a discussion club of oil consumers: Azerbaijan did not have

enough oil to fill the planned pipeline to capacity—it had to fill its geopolitical rival, the BTC pipeline.

Russia's victory, however, turned out to be a Pyrrhic one: President Berdymukhammedov began lavishing promises of Turkmenian gas right and left, on Russia, Europe, and China. The transportation routes of Turkmenian gas were suspended once more when late in July Turkmenistan and China signed a treaty on a gas pipeline⁵⁰ and when, on August 14, Assistant U.S. State Secretary for Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs Daniel Sullivan successfully completed his visit to Ashgabat by reaching an understanding on the trans-Caspian gas pipeline.⁵¹

The Bishkek SCO summit held on August 16-17, 2007 attended, for the first time, by the president of Turkmenistan as a guest failed to clarify the situation. No agreement on an Energy Club was reached for the very simple reason that, first, the material interests of the supplier and transit countries clashed and, second, because there was much fiercer rivalry over the region's energy sources and China's active involvement in the race.

In the near future, the problem will loom high in the post-Soviet geopolitical expanse. In the past there was a lot of talk about Russia – the West competition and about the West's intention to set up a "cordon sanitaire" of sorts around Russia. Today, the West has to cope with "oil-

thirsty" China. This factor will not go away: China will need more and more energy sources to cover its growing energy deficit. This means, on the one hand, that China, Russia, and the West will have to compete for Central Asia's resources and transportation routes. On the other, China's share in the region's oil and gas sector will inevitably increase. There is another aspect: the local countries might be tempted to exploit China's heightened interest in their resources to wrench concessions from Russia and Western companies.

Today, no one can predict the future developments in the context of China's snowballing energy deficit and Russia's resolve to dominate fuel transportation from Central Asia. As long as there is the common aim of keeping American influence in Central Asia in check, the Russian-Chinese tandem will continue to function. The same is true of the SCO, its main institution. No one knows what will happen to either country when the shared aim disappears and China grows stronger.

China will undoubtedly pursue its national interests, which at a certain development stage might clash with Russia's national interests and strategy. China might try to impose on the local countries the dilemma of choosing between its "investment potential" and Russia's "imperial ambitions." So far, the choice of the local elites is hard to predict.

ENDNOTES:

1. For more detail, see: Kitai v XXI veke: Globalizatsiya interesov bezopasnosti, ed. by G.I. Chufrin, IMEMO RAN, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 2007, pp. 257-287.

2. The basic border agreement with Russia was signed in November 1997, the additional agreement in October 2004. The basic border agreement with Kazakhstan was signed in April 1995 and the additional in September 1997. The basic border agreement with Kyrgyzstan was signed in July 1996 and the additional in August 1999. The basic agreement with Tajikistan was signed in February 1999 and the additional in May 2002.

3. See: *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, July 6, 1996.

4. See: Joint Communiqué Meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Strasbourg, October 10, 1997, available at [<http://www.guam.org.ua/226.469.0.0.1.0.phtml>]. The official site says: "The new organization intends to develop new effective mechanisms of cooperation, restore the considerably weakened economic contacts, and improve the climate of friendly relations for the sake of more harmonized economic development across the post-Soviet territory" (see: [<http://www.guam.org.ua/history.phtml>]).

5. Russia might have been justifiably concerned about the fact that a new alliance, which could control the Black and Caspian Seas, had appeared next to its European part and the troublesome Northern Caucasus.

6. Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York, 1997, p. 198.

7. See: R. Allison, "Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security Management in Central Asia," *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 3, May 2004, pp. 435-457.

8. In November 1997, the U.S. and Kazakhstan signed the production sharing agreement for the Kazakhstani part of the Caspian shelf and an agreement on economic and strategic partnership. U.S. President Clinton said that Washington regarded Kazakhstan as the key Central Asian state. In October 1999, Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian states were included in the responsibility zone of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

9. For more detail, see: K. Syroezhkin, "Central Asia between the Gravitational Poles of Russia and China," in *Central Asia: The Gathering Storm*, ed. by B. Rumer, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, London, 2002, pp. 109-207.

10. According to the official version, President Karimov arrived at the summit on an invitation from President of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon; there is no doubt, however, that he was invited by Russia or possibly China.

11. ITAR-TASS, July 5, 2000.
12. *Panorama*, June 16, 2003.
13. About China's interests, see: K. Syroyezhkin, "China in Central Asia: From Trade to Strategic Partnership," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (45), 2007, pp. 44-46.
14. Uzbekistan has its own opinions on most of the issues. Its president called on his colleagues not to press on setting up an antiterrorist structure with headquarters in Bishkek and a secretariat in Beijing. At the St. Petersburg summit, President Karimov addressed the heads of state, primarily Jiang Zemin: "The SCO could develop into a serious factor of world politics if the organization takes the trouble to soberly assess the post-9/11 situation in the world... The world is changing together with the balance of power. The pragmatism demonstrated by the leaders of Russia and the United States, as well as those leaders who signed the Russia-NATO documents stems from a sober assessment and profound understanding of the new situation. We should take this into account." This meant that the Uzbek president warned the summit against any steps uncoordinated with the United States. His behavior and his statements caused bewilderment, even among the journalists. The *Vremya Novostei* newspaper asked on June 10, 2002: "Had the presidents realized that the United States was virtually present at the summit?" President Karimov's position can easily be explained. In March 2002, during his Washington visit, the sides signed a bilateral declaration in which Uzbekistan was called America's key strategic partner in Central Asia. Upon his return to Tashkent, the inspired and encouraged Uzbek president issued the following statement: "The main role in defusing tension on Uzbekistan's southern borders belongs to the United States, its determination, and its perfectly trained armed forces, not to the members of the Collective Security Treaty" (*Kommersant*, June 16, 2002).
15. See, for example: A.F. Klimentko, "Znachenie Tsentral'no-Aziatskogo regiona. Razvitiye strategicheskogo partnerstva mezhdu Rossiyei i Kitaem v ramkakh ShOS i nekotorye napravleniya sovershenstvovaniya etoi organizatsii," in: *Problemy stanovleniya Shanghaiskoi organizatsii sotrudnichestva i vzaimodeystviya Rossii i Kitaya v Tsentral'noy Azii*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 62-92; A.V. Boliatko, "Strategicheskaya obstanovka v Tsentral'noy Azii i voenno-politicheskiye problemy stanovleniya ShOS," in: *Problemy stanovleniya...*, pp. 122-134.
16. ITAR-TASS, March 15, 2002.
17. In this context President Karimov's St. Petersburg speech sounds even more adequate (see footnote 14).
18. See: A.F. Klimentko, "Analiz izmeneniy v Tsentral'noi Azii posle 11 sentyabrya 2001 goda i ikh vliyaniya na deyatelnost ShOS," in: *Problemy stanovleniya...*, p. 24; S. Luzyanin, "Shanghaiskaya shesterka uzhe nikogo ne ustraivayet," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, June 6, 2002.
19. Chinese Foreign Minister Shi Guansheng's proposal "to discuss the possibility of setting up a free trade zone" inside the Six made on May 28, 2002 at the meeting of foreign ministers of the SCO countries held in Shanghai was not hailed and was not included in the final documents.
20. See: R. Allison, "Tsentral'naya Aziya i Zakavkaz'e: regional'noye sotrudnichestvo i faktor rossiyskoi politiki," Carnegie Moscow Center. Working Papers, No. 10, 2004, pp. 6-7.
21. <http://www.guam.org.ua/226.472.0.0.1.0.phtml>.
22. Earlier this sphere was rapidly developing. In January 1999, the GUAM members agreed on joint maneuvering and military exercises and on cooperation in military education. Three months later, Ukrainian, Georgian, and Azeri officers of the staff and paratroopers carried out the first joint exercises at the Georgian cities of Supsa and Poti designed to raise the level of safety of the oil pipelines and terminals in the region. In September 1998, the border guards of the GUAM countries signed a cooperation treaty (see: R. Allison, "Tsentral'naya Aziya i Zakavkaz'e: regional'noye sotrudnichestvo i faktor rossiyskoi politiki," p. 7).
23. "GUAM s odnoi 'U,'" *Pravda.ru*, June 17, 2002, available at [<http://www.pravda.ru/>].
24. Reuters, June 16, 2002.
25. See: R. Allison, "Tsentral'naya Aziya i Zakavkaz'e: regional'noye sotrudnichestvo i faktor rossiyskoi politiki," p. 8.
26. See: Zaklyuchitel'noye Kommyunike Sammita GUUAM 2002, Yalta [<http://www.guam.org.ua/181.623.0.0.1.0.phtml>].
27. See: A. Volk, "GUUAM: temnoye budushcheye organizatsii s neyasnym nazvaniem," *Gazeta SNG*, July 22, 2002.
28. RIA Novosti, July 21, 2002.
29. RIA Novosti, July 26, 2003.
30. See: *Vremya Novostey*, 5 May, 2003.
31. RIA Novosti. April 27, 2005.
32. "La declaration des Carpates," *Le Figaro*, January 12, 2005.
33. See: *Ekho*, January 29, 2005.
34. RTR-Vesti, May 5, 2005. It looks as if this step was taken under Russia's pressure. In any case, Uzbekistan left GUUAM and at the same time denounced the documents related to economic integration and trade and economic cooperation within this structure, namely the 2001 Yalta Charter; the Memorandum of Understanding among the

GUAM Participating States on Trade and Transportation Facilitation, and the Agreement on Mutual Aid and Cooperation in the Customs Sphere between the governments of the GUAM member states (both documents were dated 2003). This means that Uzbekistan left GUAM for geopolitical rather than economic reasons.

35. <http://www.guam.org.ua/226.489.0.0.1.0.phtml>.

36. The initiative belongs to Viktor Yushchenko who complained to the GUAM sponsors that the democratic states “could not get rid” of the Russian peacekeepers. In August 2006, at the Tbilisi meeting of the representatives of the defense departments of the GUAM members, it was decided to set up a peacekeeping battalion, which according to the heads of the Georgian Defense Ministry “was suggested by the GUAM members for taking part in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations under the U.N., OSCE, NATO, and EU aegis” (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, August 21, 2006).

37. Immediately after the parliamentary election in Moldova, President Saakashvili said with a great deal of conceit: “Europe is living through a geopolitical revolution no one expected. The balance that the continent achieved when the Berlin Wall fell down has been upset once more. The post-Soviet expanse wants reform, democracy, and freedom. Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova, together with Romania, will pull the Black Sea zone into the European Union. President Putin, who thinks that he can stem the process, will soon watch it flooding Moscow” (“Una rivoluzione scuote Europa. Putin non potrà ‘piu’ fermarla,” *La Repubblica*, March 2, 2005).

38. The plan may produce one of two results: either an independent state will appear in the Transnistrian area (something that Moldova is not prepared to accept) or the area will develop into a quasi-state dominated by Ukraine and Co. In both cases, the problem formulated by the summit (restored territorial integrity of the states with separatist conflicts) is not being solved. It seems that Taras Chornovil, one of the Ukrainian opposition leaders, was right when he said that the summit would end in a scandal for Ukraine since “Kiev interfered in the Transnistrian conflict without full understanding of how serious the issue was” (*Vremya Novostei*, April 22, 2005).

39. <http://www.kremlin.ru/interdocs/2005/07/05>.

40. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, July 6, 2005.

41. Declaration by the Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Astana, July 5, 2005) [http://0-russia.shaps.hawaii.edu.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/fp/russia/2005/20050705_sco_07.html].

42. Several days later in his interview with Russian TV, Kurmanbek Bakiyev specified: “Since Vladimir Putin raised the question (the time during which the American military base will remain in Kyrgyzstan.—K.S.) I have to say: yes, the situation has changed” (*Vremya Novostei*, July 19, 2005).

43. SCO Executive Secretary Zhang Deguang has pointed out: “Export of a ready-made social model will not promote progress; it will create chaos, violate the normal course of political and economic development, and push society backward” (*Kazakhstan Today*, July 5, 2003).

44. Declaration by the Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

45. *Vremya Novostei*, July 6, 2005.

46. In October 2005, Russia’s foreign minister first raised the subject in a narrow circle. He said that the time had come for Russia to apply the entire set of levers of economic pressure to inadequately loyal CIS neighbors (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 13, 2005).

47. American Senator Richard Lugar developed the thought at the Riga NATO summit on November 27-28, 2006: “It would be irresponsible for NATO to decline involvement in energy security when it is abundantly apparent that the jobs, health, and security of our modern economies and societies depend on the sufficiently and timely availability of diverse energy resources.” The U.S. senator suggested that Art 5 of the NATO Treaty be altered to cover energy security (*Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*, December 8, 2006).

48. <http://www.guam.org.ua/181.611.0.0.1.0.phtml>.

49. <http://www.guam.org.ua/181.610.0.0.1.0.phtml>.

50. Under the treaty, construction should be completed in 2009; the pipeline will move about 30 billion cu m of Turkmenian gas to China every year for the next 30 years (see: *Kommersant*, July 19, 2007).

51. On August 16, Chief Advisor of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency James Wildtrotter and President of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Rovnag Abdullayev signed a \$1.7 million grant agreement in Baku. Daniel Sullivan, who attended the ceremony, announced that the grant was intended for feasibility studies for two projects: the trans-Caspian gas pipeline through which Central Asian gas would reach Europe and an oil pipeline to be laid along the Caspian bed to connect Kazakhstan with BTC. According to Mr. Sullivan, there was an agreement with the Turkmenian president on the former and with the Kazakh president on the latter achieved during President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev’s visit to Kazakhstan early in August 2007 (see: *Kommersant*, August 21, 2007).

Russia and Central Asia: Multilateral Security Cooperation

VLADIMIR PARAMONOV AND OLEG STOLPOVSKI

INTRODUCTION

Central Asia has always been of particular importance to Russia by virtue of its strategic geographical location and its wealth of natural resources. Only when Moscow had stable positions in the region was they able to exert much influence in the development of a favorable balance of forces and interests in Eurasia.

It is apparent that the achievement of these strategic objectives is directly linked to a push for multilateral cooperation between Russia and the countries of Central Asia in the security sphere. The main aim of this cooperation would be the formation of an effective security system in the post-Soviet space and its Central Asian sector. Strengthening regional security with the active participation of Moscow is also vitally important for all the countries of Central Asia.

Firstly, none of the states in the region feel fully secure, being neighbors as they are to Afghanistan, one of the most unstable places on the planet. A weak government in Afghanistan, a shattered economy, widespread corruption and the presence of armed bands not under Kabul's authority are the main reasons why there continues to be chaos in that country which could spill over into neighboring countries at any time.

In these conditions the Taliban movement and its allies in other radical groups form focal points for extremism, while there is inexorable growth in the production of drugs and in the volume of drugs trafficked from Afghanistan to its neighbors. Experts have pointed out, with justification, that "in a number of Central Asian countries there is a real and growing threat that their regional elites and corrupt representatives of the forces of law and order will be transformed into mere protectors of the drugs business and the powerful drugs syndicates."¹

Secondly, in conditions where there are unresolved social and economic problems, which in the Central Asian countries are a legacy of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there is a strong trend towards the growth in influence of various religious extremist organisations,² in spite of a package of measures being taken to detect them and counter their activities.

Thirdly, there are so many questions over borders, territory and natural resources between the countries of Central

Asia that disagreements are likely to continue, with the potential to lead to international confrontations.

Overall it can be said that in terms of regional security the Central Asian states had hoped for a great deal more from cooperation with the West, particularly the USA, especially after the appearance of military bases of the US-led international anti-terrorist coalition in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Disappointed that from that quarter the pursuit of deeper political reforms has been linked with harsh criticism, most Central Asian countries now hope that Russia will help them to establish an effective system of regional security.

Multilateral cooperation between Russia and the states of Central Asia takes place within the framework of organizations like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and a number of groupings within these organizations.

Multilateral cooperation takes the following forms:

- elaboration of common concepts and strategic approaches to national and international security (e.g. by signing inter-governmental treaties and agreements, by multilateral high-level discussions and by the creation and financing of international executive organs);
- carrying out multilateral training exercises by units of the armed forces to establish practical procedures to be adopted in case of the emergence of a real threat to national or regional security;
- multilateral cooperation by the countries' security structures in existing international anti-terrorist organizations to counter international terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, and other trans-national threats;
- taking the first steps towards multilateral cooperation in preserving and expanding the links between industrial organizations involved in the manufacture of military hardware.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

Security cooperation between Russia and most post-Soviet states, including the countries of Central Asia, started within the format of the CIS. A declaration "on the non-employment of force or the threat of force in the relationships between CIS member states" was signed in Kiev (Ukraine) on March 20, 1992. The heads of state decided to create a CIS

Council of Ministers of Defence, and in 1992 a CIS united armed forces military command structure was set up.

In May 1992 a Collective Security Treaty was signed in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) by six of the CIS countries: Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This agreement provided for mutual security support in the event of threats from outside the area. Belarus, Azerbaijan and Georgia assented to the treaty later. This treaty was not signed by Ukraine, Moldova and Turkmenistan.

CIS "collective peacekeeping forces" were deployed in Tajikistan during the civil war there in 1992-1996, representing the first attempt to set up regional security mechanisms specifically for Central Asia. In accordance with the decision of the council of heads of state of the CIS countries, the troops deployed there were Russia's 201st Motor Rifle Division and a battalion each from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. According to Central Asia's leading security specialists, "the collective peacekeeping forces played an important role in stabilising the situation and preventing the conflict from spreading into neighboring Central Asian countries".³ The protection of state borders also posed an urgent requirement for multilateral cooperation between the countries of the CIS. The destruction of the once centralized USSR border security system led to an increase in trans-border criminal activities at the external borders of the CIS, especially those parts bordering on Afghanistan.

This led to the formation in 1992 of an integrated coordinating body, the CIS Council of Border Troops Commanders. "Thanks to joint efforts and to the leading role of Russia, the former Soviet republics were able to maintain a stable border defense system. Russia, within the CIS, took on most of the responsibility for setting up border protection structures for Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan."⁴

Another practical realization of multilateral security cooperation was the creation in 1995 of the CIS Joint Air Defense System,⁵ the main functions of which were to coordinate the airspace defense of the region and to coordinate the actions of CIS countries, by agreement, to repel an airborne attack. There was an annual exercise, "Comradeship-in-arms," involving the air defense organizations of the national armed forces of the CIS countries.

Furthermore, within the framework of the CIS, attempts were made to organize multilateral cooperation to maintain the links between the industrial enterprises of the former Soviet military-industrial complex. To do this a CIS Inter-state Commission for Military and Economic Cooperation was created in 1993 as a working group of the Council of Heads of Government of the CIS. This organization was tasked with resolving problems of specialization and cooperation in the development and manufacture of military hardware, cooperation in the creation of joint integrated structures, storage of mobilization equipment, and questions of transfer of technology from the military to the civilian sector of the economy. This branch of multilateral cooperation was not developed further, however, mainly because only six states participated in it: Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.⁶

A major cause of the Kremlin's loss of interest in multilateral cooperation with the countries of Central Asia was

Yeltsin's policy of shedding the burden of their security concerns.

Cooperation in the CIS framework increasingly became a mere formality, consisting mostly of official meetings and declarations of intent. In this situation the commander-in-chief of the united forces of the CIS began to be regarded as an unnecessary supranational arm of military control in many CIS states, let alone someone who could "call the shots with the Council of Heads of Government."⁷ In time this post was replaced by the CIS Military Cooperation Coordination Headquarters which had considerably fewer powers and capabilities.⁸

After a period of cooled relations between Russia and the countries of Central Asia during most of the 1990s, an attempt to consolidate the efforts of the CIS states in the security area was the signature in 1999 by the CIS Council of Heads of State of a Treaty on Cooperation by the Member States of the CIS in the Fight against Terrorism. Although this document was the legal basis for cooperation by the security organizations of the CIS countries in detection and prevention of terrorist actions, it also acted as a substantial stimulus for the development of more widespread cooperation.

THE CIS ANTI-TERRORIST CENTER

The agreements made between the CIS states in 1999 to combine their efforts in the fight against international terrorism came to fruition in 2000, when the CIS Anti-terrorist Center (ATC) was set up. The main roles of this organization were to be:

- to develop plans for cooperation in the struggle against international terrorism;
- to coordinate cooperation of special security forces and police forces;
- to participate in the preparation and conduct of anti-terrorist exercises;
- cooperation in carrying out search operations; and
- creation of a specialized database.

The ATC began its work using the capabilities of the special anti-terrorist units of the law enforcement structures and security bodies of the CIS nations.⁹ In view of the situation developing in the Central Asian region and the detection of tendencies of the leaders of the "terrorist international" to direct their attentions there, the Central Asian region was a primary area of interest for the ATC. A Central Asian branch of the ATC was therefore set up in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) in August 2001. This organization is still working today, manned by personnel from the security services of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This organization, together with the security forces of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia, keeps an eye on the security situation in the Central Asian region with a view to countering international terrorism.

The CIS ATC takes an active part in the annual South-Anti-terror exercise in a country in Central Asia. The main aims of these exercises are to increase the preparedness of the security bodies, special forces and other security structures of the CIS member states for rapid and adequate response to terrorist threats, and practical exercising of procedures in cooperation between the participants in joint anti-terrorist actions.

Its activities take place under the auspices of the CIS Council of Heads of Security and Special Services of the CIS States and in close cooperation with the Councils of Defense Ministers, Ministers of the Interior, commanders of border troops and the Prosecutor-Generals' Coordinating Council. Decisions on matters of principle are made only by the CIS Council of Heads of State.¹⁰

* * *

In general it seems that in spite of the favorable image given by numerous official conferences and the high-sounding declarations made at them, the CIS executive bodies have not made progress in establishing an active security system. The main reasons for this are that they have not yet succeeded in overcoming the legacy of the Yeltsin's "policy" and that the various CIS states have differing views on the potential threats to national and regional security.

It can therefore be confidently predicted that it is only a matter of time until many CIS organizations like the CIS Council of Ministers of Defense wither away. The only exception is probably the Central Asian branch of the ATC which in general has acted positively and now acquired useful experience. But overall, in matters of developing multilateral cooperation, the main focus of attention will probably continue to be the supranational regional organizations, i.e. the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANIZATION

A Collective Security Treaty (CST), involving Russia and the countries of Central Asia, was in force in the 1990s and proceeded, like most things in the CIS format, mainly on the basis of declarations which were never translated into practical actions. It therefore became unpopular with some of its members, and in fact Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia withdrew from it in 1999.

Russia took the initiative to revive this treaty. It was decided at the meeting in Moscow on May 14, 2002 to convert it into a full-blown international organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (abbreviated to CSTO). The member states (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) ratified the statutes of the treaty and the agreement on its legal status on September 2, 2003, and on December 2, 2004 the organization was granted observer status at the United Nations General Assembly. Uzbekistan joined the organization in August 2006, thus considerably strengthening its Central Asian component.

The highest body of the organization is the Collective Security Council, comprising the heads of state of the CSTO countries. Between sessions of the full council, a Standing Council concerns itself with questions of coordination and execution of decisions taken by the full council. The Standing Council is composed of representatives nominated by the member states.

The other main bodies of the CSTO are:

- the Council of Foreign Ministers: a consultative and executive body concerned with cooperation between member states on foreign policy matters;

- the Council of Defense Ministers: a consultative and executive body concerned with cooperation between member states on defense matters, including manufacture of equipment and cooperation in military technology;

- the Committee of Secretaries of Security Councils: a consultative and executive body concerned with cooperation between member states on practical security matters;

- the CSTO Joint Staff: a permanent body of the CSTO and the Council of Defense Ministers, responsible for planning and executing CSTO decisions on military matters.¹¹

Back in the days of the Collective Security Treaty, the Collective Security Council took the decision to set up a Collective Rapid Deployment Force for Central Asia, involving contingents from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The force was to be up to 1,500 strong, supported by the Russian Air Force.¹²

In 2003 a detachment of the Russian Air Force, acting as a component of the CIS Rapid Deployment Force, was stationed at the Kant air base in Kyrgyzstan. In 2004, on Moscow's recommendation, the Council of Defense Ministers decided to increase the size of the Collective Rapid Deployment Force to 4,000 men. The main emphasis at the moment is on developing the areas of joint control, communications and reconnaissance.

Since 2004 the CSTO has carried out an annual exercise, called "Rubezh" (Frontier), in a Central Asian country, aimed at providing a counter to regional security threats. The first exercise, Rubezh-2004, took place in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with the participation not only of contingents from the Collective Rapid Deployment Force but also operational units from the Russian Interior Ministry and Border Troops. The next exercise, Rubezh-2005, was held in Tajikistan, followed by Rubezh-2006 in Kazakhstan,¹³ and Rubezh-2007 in Tajikistan.¹⁴

Since 2003, special forces and border troops of the CSTO nations have also participated in regular anti-narcotics operations (operation "Kanal"). In the period 2003-2006 as much as 48 tonnes of narcotics, including both psychotropic and hard drugs,¹⁵ and about 540 tonnes of drug precursor materials were confiscated during these operations.¹⁶

In 2004 Russia, with a view to strengthening cooperation between CSTO member states, called for the abolition of the CIS Intergovernmental Committee for Military and Economic Cooperation (ICMEC), proposing that the work of this body should be organized under the auspices of the CSTO. Russia claimed that this change to the format of the ICMEC's activity would enable it to make more effective use of its experience of privileged-partner cooperation and create more favorable conditions for improving military and economic cooperation. This initiative was supported by all the other states, and on September 15, 2004 the CIS Council of Heads of Government abolished the ICMEC as a CIS organization.

On April 23, 2005 the presidents of the Treaty member states (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) signed a decree creating the CSTO Intergovernmental Committee for Military and Economic Cooperation (still referred to as the ICMEC). The aim of this committee was to unite and coordinate the efforts of

member states of the organization to deepen and improve cooperation, to integrate more closely and to tackle problems of military and economic cooperation and cooperation in military technology in a more systematic way.

To make the ICMEC effective, its CSTO national working groups were chaired by government ministers, deputy ministers or other leaders of branches of the defense industry, and the members of the groups were drawn from senior staff in the ministries and departments concerned with the military-industrial complexes of the CSTO member states.

The ICMEC considers and works on the basis of recommendations aimed at resolving the following problems:

- maintenance of special expertise and cooperation in the manufacture of weapons, military vehicles, support equipment and spare parts;

- development and execution of long-term programmes for military and economic cooperation, and of general rules for cooperation in resolving problems of improving manufacturing quality and the standardization of military hardware;

- agreement on customs regimes and procedures for supplying or transporting military and dual-use equipment;

- making proposals for the conduct of joint development and evaluation trials for the development and updating of military hardware; and

- development of integrated principles and integrated running of joint enterprises for the development, production, modernization and disposal of weapons and military hardware.¹⁷

Important decisions for the future development of cooperation between CSTO members were taken at the CSTO heads of government summit meeting in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) on October 6, 2007. Two sets of documents, tabled by Russia, were signed. These documents set out the organization and principles of peacekeeping activities within the CSTO framework and improvements in the regulatory and legal activities of the ICMEC.

The first set of documents comprised an agreement on peacekeeping activities, a provision on collective peacekeeping activity, a provision on an operational working group for preparing peacekeeping activities and a provision on the head of a CSTO peacekeeping mission. In particular, the agreement on peacekeeping forces meant that peacekeeping brigades with international status could be formed. The idea of forming collective peacekeeping forces under the auspices of the CSTO had been put forward by the Russian leadership as long ago as 2003, but it met with instant opposition from Moscow's partners. In December 2005, Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, was obliged to call the foreign ministers and ministers of defense of all the CSTO member states to the Kremlin, to "clarify" the position to them in person. The package of documents tabled by Russia at the Minsk summit in June 2006 was not signed, however.¹⁸

The second set of documents included a protocol concerning "mechanisms for provision of military assistance to CSTO member states in the event of aggressive action or the threat of aggression" and a plan for the re-equipment of the Central Asian collective rapid deployment forces with modern weapons and equipment, which would be provided at internal Russian prices.

* * *

It is clear that the main value of the CSTO for the post-Soviet space is that it is the one specialized regional security institution with a military dimension and with the organizational and political muscle to stand up to present threats and challenges, and at the same time is "not encumbered with additional concerns (such as political or cultural matters)."¹⁹ This organization makes sense and is attractive to its members, including Russia which sees it as a vehicle for strengthening its position in Central Asia. In spite of having already demonstrated its worth, however, the CSTO faces a number of problems, including those mentioned below.

Firstly, as rightly noted by some of the leading experts in the area, "if the CSTO wants to play a part in the organization of collective security, it cannot avoid paying attention to issues such as the development of political components, dealing with conflicts on the territory of its member states, carrying out pre-conflict monitoring activities, developing conflict-preventing techniques and sanctions and organizing negotiations and post-conflict settlements. So far, judging by the passivity of the CSTO during the events in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 2005, it has got some way to go."²⁰

Secondly, the only fully-trained military units in the collective rapid reaction forces are the Russian ones. The deterrence value of the forces of the other states is psychological rather than military.²¹ The collective peacekeeping forces resolution passed in October 2007 has so far not been given practical effect. In November 2007, however, there were discussions in the CSTO Joint Headquarters on subjects such as manning and structure of the collective peacekeeping forces and the priorities for re-equipping them with modern weapons and equipment, comprehensive logistic support, and the training of military and civilian personnel. To update themselves on training methods, a number of experts visited the 53rd Special Training Department for Peacekeepers in the Vystrel Defense Academy of the Russian Federation.²²

THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an international organization which includes Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The SCO was founded on the basis of agreements on strengthening trust in the military sphere and on mutual reductions of armed forces in border areas, signed in 1996 and 1997 by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia and Tajikistan (the so-called "Shanghai Five"). The creation of the SCO was formally announced in Shanghai (China) on June 15, 2001 at a meeting of the heads of six governments. At a summit meeting in St. Petersburg (Russia) the SCO Charter was adopted. This charter is the basic founding document which defines the roles, aims and principles of the organization, its structure and main areas of activity. Since December 2004 the SCO has had the status of an observer at the United Nations General Assembly. In 2004 and 2005 Mongolia, India, Pakistan and Iran became observers at the SCO.

The SCO is a wide-ranging cooperation organization, covering questions such as regional security and countering trans-national threats. This activity is coordinated, in accordance with the decision of the Tashkent SCO summit

in 2004, by means of regular meetings of the secretaries of the national security councils of the member states of the organization and meetings of the heads of security departments.

To coordinate the activities of security forces in countering international terrorism, a Regional SCO Anti-terrorist Organization was set up in 2004 with its headquarters in Tashkent (Uzbekistan). This headquarters is manned by representatives from the security departments of Russia, the Central Asian countries and China. The council of this organization meets twice a year to take decisions of a mandatory type concerning all aspects of its activity.

Practical cooperation between the defense departments of the SCO member states takes the form of various joint activities involving the troops of the nations' armed forces. In August 2003 the first joint anti-terrorist exercise, Cooperation-2003, was conducted in the border regions of Kazakhstan and China.²³ In July 2004 and November 2005 there were seminars in China for the defense departments of the SCO member states.²⁴ In August 2007, straight after the SCO summit in Bishkek, there was a military demonstration and exercise (codenamed "Peace Mission 2007") on the Chebarkul' test range in Chelyabinsk Oblast, involving about 7,500 military personnel and more than 1,200 vehicles, the largest exercise yet.²⁵

It is also significant that after this exercise, which was attended by the heads of state of all the SCO countries, President Vladimir Putin spoke of the possibility of carrying out similar large-scale exercise on a regular basis. Studies are under way in SCO departments on draft agreements on the organization and execution of future anti-terrorist exercises and on personnel training for the SCO national contingents. It is also being proposed that the observer states, India, Iran, Pakistan and Mongolia, should cooperate within the SCO framework.

So it is clear to see that Russia has an interest in developing the military and political arms of the SCO, seeing this as a method of strengthening its own position in Central Asia and bolstering security in the region by involving the military potential of China and other countries. The future development of relations between Russia and the Central Asian countries belonging to the SCO is however still clouded by a number of important issues.

Firstly, the reaction by the Central Asian members of the SCO to Russia's initiatives to strengthen the military component of the organization has not been unambiguous. At the Dushanbe SCO summit in October 2007, none of the delegations responded positively to the Russian proposals on the military concept of the organization made as long ago as 2005. Furthermore, membership of the SCO has not stopped the states of the region from developing military ties with the USA and NATO. This position seems to be driven by the desire of the Central Asian members of the SCO, balanced as they are between Russia, China and the West, to give themselves more diplomatic room for manoeuvre in the pursuit of their national interests.

Secondly, all the Central Asian member states of the SCO are at the same time members of the CSTO, so there is some duplication of the mechanisms for military coopera-

tion with Russia. It also seems that the CSTO set-up, which excludes China and is therefore more focused on the local "post-Soviet" problems and where there is a certain level of trust between Russia and the Central Asian countries, may be a more favorable forum than the SCO for the resolution of specific problems.

Thirdly, it is clear that the leading position in the SCO is held by China rather than Russia, and Beijing is not about to relinquish this leadership to Moscow. Furthermore, China sees the role of the organization as being primarily in the trade and economic spheres and is resistant to the idea of forming a military alliance based on the organization, especially as at the moment there is no strategic concept for the military role of such an alliance. Against whom would it be directed?

Against the USA and NATO? It is clear that this is impossible in view of Russia's generally westward-looking foreign policy (although the SCO is often quoted both in Russia and in the West for propaganda purposes) and the close economic interdependency between China and the West.

Against trans-national threats (international terrorism, extremism, the drugs business, etc.)? To counter these, the SCO needs cooperation with the West, the USA and NATO. Neither side has made specific efforts in this direction.

Obviously the SCO as a recently-formed organization has yet to undergo the test of time. Much will depend on its ability to strengthen its analytical capabilities, as distinct from its political and propaganda capabilities. For the SCO, as indeed for Russia, it is vital to develop new non-standard solutions, such as asymmetric solutions, to the present security threats, as it is becoming more and more difficult to counter them by traditional military means, and in some cases it is impossible to do so.

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of the steps being taken by Russia to develop multilateral security cooperation with the states of Central Asia leads to the following conclusions:

1. Notwithstanding criticisms that Russia's behavior towards Central Asia in the early and mid 1990s, and even at the end of them, was inconsistent, the reduced military presence maintained by Russia there has contributed a good deal to the prevention of upsurges of tension in the region.
2. The arrival of Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin has seen Russia adopting a more active role in the Central Asian region. As it has come to realize more and more that Central Asia is vital for its own interests, Moscow has been interested in preserving the buffer status of Central Asia and preventing other states, primarily the USA, from strengthening their own positions there. Russia seems to have adopted an intelligent tactic towards the Central Asian countries in encouraging military cooperation with them, including the exploitation of multilateral formats, and this policy has been very successful. This policy is well adapted to the political and economic capabilities of Russia.
3. The most important mechanisms for participation by Russia in the formation of a regional security system in Central Asia have been the CSTO and the SCO. Russia will continue to stimulate interaction with Central Asia under

the auspices of these two organizations. Furthermore the SCO is seen by Moscow as the most useful vehicle, along with Beijing but excluding Washington, for the creation of a regional security system.

4. Although the results of multilateral cooperation between Russia and the countries of Central Asia directly under the auspices of the CSTO and the SCO have only been limited, the prospects for their development in the future are far from clear. This is due firstly to differences between member states of these organizations. Years may be necessary to eliminate these differences, and this process can only be accelerated if there is strong political will on the part of all the member states of the CSTO and the SCO. No less important is the need for these two organizations to attract and employ substantial intellectual resources.

5. The accent at present on political grandstanding and short-term cooperation projects, such as demonstration

exercises, reflects the fact that it is easier to state lofty aims than to cooperate in practice. In reality, Moscow sees multilateral military cooperation merely as a cheap and reasonably effective way of increasing its own geopolitical influence. This form of cooperation does not cost as much as developing full-blooded economic links. But Russia has problems precisely in this area.

From today's perspective the most promising way ahead seems to be to develop a bilateral format of cooperation between Russia and each of its Central Asian opposite numbers, giving both sides more room for manoeuvre in protecting their national interests. The fact that parochial interests dominate and will probably continue to dominate over the development of genuine common interests is a legacy of the parlous situation which these states found themselves in after the collapse of the USSR, which was an era of crisis and struggle for survival in during a turbulent time in the development of a new world order.

ENDNOTES:

1. Z. Dadabaeva, "National Priorities of International Cooperation for Achievement of Stability in Central Asia", *Security Of Central Asia: New Challenges, Threats and Risks*, Moscow: Centre for Strategic and Political Research, 2006, p. 52.

2. Such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, the Islamic Movement of Turkmenistan and others.

3. A. M. Bondarets, "Military and Political Aspects of Integration in Central Eurasia", *Cooperation and Integration Projects for Central Asia: Comparative Analysis, Possibilities and Prospects*, Bishkek: Aleksandr Knyazev Foundation (Kyrgyzstan) and Central Asia and Caucasus Institute (Russia), 2007, p. 92.

4. V. Y. Letov, "The Historic Role of the Border Troops of Russia in Ensuring the Security of the Southern Borders of the CIS", *Cooperation and Integration Projects for Central Asia: Comparative Analysis, Possibilities and Prospects*, Bishkek, op. cit., p. 105.

5. Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine were the founder members of the CIS Joint Air Defense System when it was set up in 1995. Since 2000, Georgia and Turkmenistan have played very little part in the system. Since that date also, Ukraine and Uzbekistan have stopped taking part in joint training exercises. At present operational information on the air picture is exchanged between the central command posts of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The forces of Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan contribute to the routine manning and military preparedness of the CIS Joint Air Defense System. "The Sky Above the CIS. The Post-Soviet States Exchange Cooperation with Russia for Partnership with NATO Countries", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Russia), February 28, 2002).

6. "Allies in the Defense Industry: an Interview with V. Semerikov, Deputy Secretary General of the CSTO", *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier* (Russia), May 8, 2007, http://www.vpk-news.ru/article.asp?pr_sign=archive.2007.182.articles.names_01

7. Ibid.

8. From January 1, 2006, by decision of the CIS Council of Defense Ministers, the CIS Military Cooperation Coordination Headquarters ceased to exist. Kazakhstan had proposed this as long ago as 2004.

9. S. I. Reva, "The CIS Anti-terrorist Center in the International Security System", *Cooperation and Integration Projects for Central Asia: Comparative Analysis, Possibilities and Prospects*, Bishkek: op. cit., pp. 100-104.

10. Uzbekistan occupies a special position in relation to the CIS ATC. Although Uzbekistan takes part periodically as an observer in the South-Anti-terror exercises run by the ATC, it does not take part in the work of the operational group of the center in Bishkek and does not contribute to its running costs.

11. CSTO website, <http://www.odkb.org>

12. The decision to set up the Collective Rapid Reaction Force for Central Asia was taken at the session of the Collective Security Council of the CSTO at Yerevan (Armenia) in May 2001. It was decided that the force would comprise a battalion each from Russia (to be drawn from the 201st Division, based in Tajikistan), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, plus reinforcements. The total size of the force would be about 1,500 military personnel. Coalition forces would be deployed to the territory of any member state of the CSTO in the event of a threat to its security.

13. The theme of Rubezh-2006 was joint planning and collective security operations in the coastal area of Kazakhstan, so Russian naval infantry units and ships of the Russian Caspian Sea Flotilla took part in it as well as the Collective Rapid Deployment Force. The exercise involved about 2,500 military personnel, more than 60 armored vehicles, about 50 artillery pieces and mortars, more than 35 aircraft, including helicopters, and 14 warships and naval supply ships ("Rubezh in the Caspian Sea Area," *Independent Military Review* (Russia), August 25, 2006).

14. The active phase of Rubezh-2007 was conducted on the Liaur test range, 20 km north of Dushanbe, on April 6, 2007. More than 500 military personnel from Russia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan were involved, with about 50 armored vehicles, a flight of SU-25 aircraft and a flight of MI-24 helicopters. An operational group from the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan took part for the first time ("Counter-attack from Rubezh-2007," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier* (Russia), No. 13, April 4-10, 2007, http://www.vpk-news.ru/article.asp?pr_sign=archive.2007.179.articles.army_02).

15. In 2003 1974 kg, in 2004 10,702 kg, in 2005 11,251 kg, in 2006 23,993 kg.

16. "No NATO Reaction to Our Proposals: Interview with Nikolai Bordyuzha, CSTO Secretary General", *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier* (Russia), No 3, January 24-30, 2007, http://www.vpk-news.ru/article.asp?pr_sign=archive.2007.169.articles.names_01.

17. "The Post-Soviet Defense Industry: Interview with V. Semeryukov, CSTO Secretary General", *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier* (Russia), No 16, April 25 - May 8, 2007, http://www.vpk-news.ru/article.asp?pr_sign=archive.2007.182.articles.names_01.

18. "The CIS Presented with a Pact. Russia Unites the Post-Soviet Space", *Kommersant*, Russia, October 8, 2007.

19. K. L. Syroyezhkin, "Cooperation between CSTO and SCO," Documents for the 4th Annual Conference on Concepts and Approaches to Regional Security "Cooperation in Central Asia: Experience, Problems and Prospects," June 7, 2006. 2006, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies (KISI) under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, 2006.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. "The CSTO Puts on "Blue Helmets," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier* (Russia), No 46, November 28 - December 4, 2007, http://vpk-news.ru/article.asp?pr_sign=archive.2007.212.articles.chronicle_01.

23. This exercise involved more than 1,000 military personnel from Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, supported by military vehicles and aircraft.

24. V. A. Shchipkov, "The Shanghai Organization: a New Structure for the World to Live in Harmony, Justice and Peace," *Bezopasnost': Foundation for National and International Security* (Russia), Moscow, 2006, p. 12.

25. Participating in Peace Mission 2007 were 4,700 Russian troops, drawn from the 76th Airborne Division, the 34th Motor Rifle Division from the Volga-Ural Military District, aircraft from the 5th Air Army of the Russian Air and Air Defense Forces, units of the Interior Ministry's troops, the Chief Directorate for Punitive Operations, Federal Security Service's border forces and other Russian security departments. China contributed more than 1,700 troops from the Chinese National Liberation Army. The Central Asian countries were represented by 100-strong units of assault troops from Kazakhstan and Tajikistan and by a Skorpion special forces unit of 30 men from Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan only sent observers to the exercise ("The spirit of Shanghai in the Fight against Terrorism. Heads of SCO Governments Pleased by Actions of Troops in Peace Mission 2007," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier* (Russia), No 32, August 22-28, 2007), http://vpk-news.ru/article.asp?pr_sign=archive.2007.198.articles.army_01.

Waving the Banner of Independence: Kazakhstan's Relations with Russia, China, and the United States*

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout its post-Soviet existence as an independent state, Kazakhstan has pursued a "multi-vectored" foreign policy aimed at balancing relations with its large neighbors, Russia and China, as well as with the global superpower, the United States.¹ In the early years following the country's 1991 independence, Kazakhstan's main goal was to use Russia and China to balance each other in an effort to strengthen Kazakhstan's own sovereignty.² Kazakhstan gradually sought closer ties with the United States in order to provide additional balance.³ Then-Foreign Minister Kassymzhomart Tokayev outlined these principles in his 1997 book, *Pod Styagom Nezavisimosti (Under the Banner of Independence)*.⁴

Recent events have shown this strategy in action. In July 2006, Kazakhstan agreed to ship up to 500,000 barrels of oil per day by tanker across the Caspian Sea to Baku, Azerbaijan. From there, the oil would be shipped west via the new Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, bypassing Russia, as the United States and European countries sought. Astana also expressed interest in building a trans-Caspian pipeline if the project were to become economically feasible.⁵ In September 2006, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev made an official visit to Washington. Despite concerns about Kazakhstan's democratic shortcomings, President George W. Bush thanked Nazarbayev for his cooperation on a range of issues and stressed both countries' "commitment to institutions that will enable liberty to flourish."⁶ In November 2007, Kazakhstan received approval to chair the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010.

In May 2007, the presidents of Russia, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan agreed to build a new gas pipeline along the

coast of the Caspian Sea to carry Central Asian gas supplies north to Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin said the new pipeline would carry at least 20 billion cubic meters by 2012. The leaders also agreed to expand an existing gas pipeline from Central Asia to Russia. Many analysts viewed the decision as a triumph for Russia's efforts to tighten control over Central Asian gas exports, as well as a blow to Western hopes that Turkmen gas and Kazakh oil eventually would flow across the Caspian Sea through new pipelines.⁷ Nazarbayev also pledged that Russia would remain Kazakhstan's top oil export route.⁸

In August 2007, Nazarbayev attended the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Kyrgyzstan. The SCO, whose members are Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, caught the world's attention two years earlier during its summit in Kazakhstan, when it issued a joint declaration calling for the United States to establish a timetable for the withdrawal of the military bases it established in Central Asia following the 2001 terrorist attacks. Shortly after the SCO declaration, Uzbekistan, stung by Western criticism of its bloody crackdown on protesters in the eastern city of Andijon, evicted U.S. forces. These events led to concern that the SCO could develop into an anti-Western "dictator's club." During the 2007 summit, Nazarbayev called for the creation of a unified SCO energy market.⁹ Nazarbayev and other SCO leaders also observed the final stage of joint military exercises in Russia.

At the summit's conclusion, Nazarbayev hosted Chinese President Hu Jintao in Astana, where the two countries agreed to build pipelines to carry Caspian oil and gas to China. One stage of a Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline, the Aksu-Alashankou line, was completed in December 2005.

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The aim is to extend this line from central Kazakhstan to the Caspian Sea, connecting China to the energy-rich Caspian seabed. A gas pipeline capable of carrying up to 30 billion cubic meters would deliver gas to China from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. These deals were another move in Kazakhstan's strategy of diversifying its energy export routes, though analysts noted that the majority of Kazakhstan's oil still would flow through Russia.¹⁰

Kazakhstan's multi-vectored foreign policy, featuring such deft outreach to each of the three major external powers with interests in Central Asia, has helped to establish the country's security, no small task given the potential security threats Kazakhstan has faced.¹¹ For several reasons, Kazakhstan is a strategically important country whose foreign policy strategy merits close examination. Kazakhstan is located in a geopolitically vital region at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. Although Kazakhstan has been largely unaffected by radical Islam, its proximity to countries that have struggled with this problem makes it a key actor in the global war on terrorism. Kazakhstan boasts Central Asia's most dynamic economy, with growth of at least 8 percent per year since 2000.¹² Kazakhstan also possesses vast energy resources. The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates Kazakhstan's total onshore and offshore proven oil reserves at between 9 billion and 40 billion barrels¹³ and its proven natural gas reserves at between 65 trillion and 100 trillion cubic feet.¹⁴

This article examines Kazakhstan's relations with Russia, China, and the United States. All three of these countries remain significantly more powerful than Kazakhstan, but Astana's balancing strategy provides leverage over each.¹⁵ Despite its emphasis on good relations with each of these three major powers, Kazakhstan ranks its foreign policy priorities quite clearly. Relations with Russia are most important, followed closely by China, and then by the United States, the European Union, the other Central Asian countries, and finally, by other Asian countries.¹⁶

Several recent developments call into question Kazakhstan's ability to maintain a balance among the three major powers. These developments include a souring of U.S.-Russian relations, continuing tension in U.S.-Chinese relations, and the development of closer ties between Russia and China based upon common opposition to U.S. hegemony. Nevertheless, foreign policy analysts from Kazakhstan argue that their country's multi-vectored foreign policy is flexible enough to endure the turbulence of great-power politics.¹⁷ This article examines the prospects for Kazakhstan's strategy and concludes with policy recommendations for the United States. Despite the priority Kazakhstan places on relations with Russia and China, the United States and Kazakhstan share key common interests. Kazakhstan's effective conduct of a flexible, balanced foreign policy suits U.S. interests well.

KAZAKHSTAN'S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

If Russia represents Kazakhstan's top foreign policy priority, then Kazakhstan also holds special strategic significance for Russia.¹⁸ Russia views the post-Soviet states, or its "near abroad," as a zone of special importance to its national security. Russia's early hopes of establishing powerful economic and military influence in Central Asia went largely unfulfilled by the mid-1990s owing to Russian weakness.¹⁹ However, Russia's recent economic and geopolitical revival, fueled largely by high oil prices, has encouraged its ambitions to play a stronger role in Central Asia. For several

reasons, including ethnic, cultural, linguistic, demographic, and geographic, Kazakhstan among former Soviet states is especially important for policymakers in Moscow.²⁰

Russia has several security and economic interests in Central Asia. Moscow seeks to maintain Central Asia within its zone of geopolitical influence and encourage Central Asian countries to participate in processes of integration with Russia.²¹ Russia has sought to bring these states into a single defense and security organization under its exclusive control and to exclude the West.²² Russian analysts seek to counteract what they view as the chief U.S. foreign policy goal in the region: edging Russia out of the Caucasus and Central Asia.²³ Russia seeks to secure its vulnerable southern border against numerous threats emanating from Central Asia, including Islamic extremism, drug trafficking, and illegal migration.²⁴ In this respect, Kazakhstan's cooperation is essential.

Russia also seeks to strengthen its economic position in the region. In particular, Moscow seeks to use energy policies to strengthen its influence. It has sought a leading role in the development of offshore Caspian oil and gas reserves, dominance in Central Asia's gas industry, and control of the region's hydroelectric power.²⁵ Moscow hopes to use Gazprom, the largely state-controlled Russian gas monopoly, and its strong position in Central Asia as the basis for a gas union in the former Soviet region.²⁶ Russia would consider any third party's domination over Kazakhstan, Central Asia's largest economy and largest state by territorial size, to be unacceptable.²⁷

Russia is Kazakhstan's top foreign policy priority for several reasons. The border between Russia and Kazakhstan stretches 6,846 km²⁸, constituting the longest land border in the world. Despite substantial outward migration since the breakup of the Soviet Union, more than 4 million of Kazakhstan's 15 million people are ethnic Russians.²⁹ Russia's potential ability to pressure Kazakhstan by raising the concerns of ethnic Russians is a major concern for Kazakhstan's leaders.³⁰ In addition, around 1 million ethnic Kazakhs live in Russia.³¹ Around 95 percent of Kazakhstan's population speaks Russian.³² Tight economic ties between Russia and Kazakhstan further increase Russia's importance for policymakers in Astana. Russia is in a strong position to provide Kazakhstan with economic, political, and military aid. As long as Russia seeks to assert its interests in Central Asia, Kazakhstan must be sensitive to Russia's desires. In the words of one of Kazakhstan's leading foreign policy commentators, "*Byez Rossii nel'zya*" ("Without Russia, it's impossible.")³³

Russia's most important interests in Central Asia, including its relations with Kazakhstan, focus on strategic and security concerns. In particular, Russia seeks to integrate Central Asian states into Russian-led security structures and to establish these countries as allies while denying external actors strategic access to Central Asia.³⁴ Russia has sought to use integration within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including this body's Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), to strengthen its control over Central Asian security.³⁵ The 2001 terrorist attacks and the U.S. response interrupted these efforts, as the United States and its allies established military bases in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to support operations in Afghanistan. Russia supported the U.S.-led campaign to topple the Taliban and pursue al-Qaeda, but this did not mean Russia would support a long-term U.S. military presence in Central Asia.³⁶

Russia responded to this new U.S. presence by strengthening its own. In November 2002, Russia opened an air base in Kyrgyzstan, supplementing its existing base in Tajikistan.³⁷ Subsequently, Russia strengthened both bases. Russia's security goals in Central Asia include improving air defense, extending joint training, enhancing rapid reaction forces, and strengthening ties among the military-industrial complexes of CSTO member countries.³⁸ Uzbekistan, the Central Asian country possessing the greatest military potential, withdrew from the CSTO in 1999 but returned in 2006 following the rupture in its relations with the United States.³⁹ Russia fears NATO encroachment on the CIS, a major reason for its opposition to NATO expansion into East-Central Europe.⁴⁰ Russia also has sought to expand cooperation with China through the SCO. Like Russia, China was wary of a long-term U.S. military presence in Central Asia. China and the four Central Asian members supported the SCO's July 2005 declaration on U.S. military bases, but Russia appears to have been the driving force.⁴¹

Russia's desire to play a strong security role places pressure on Kazakhstan's foreign policy, but Kazakhstan responds in typically multi-vectored fashion. Like other Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan has not been prepared to sever security ties with Moscow.⁴² In fact, Russia remains Kazakhstan's main security partner. Russia and Kazakhstan cooperate on a variety of security issues, including air defense, within the framework of the CSTO.⁴³ Although Kazakhstan has resisted joint military activities with the CSTO, it participated in Central Asian war games under this organization's rubric in August 2006. Russia is likely to increase pressure on Kazakhstan to integrate more deeply into a Russian-led security order, placing strain on Kazakhstan's strategy of balance.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Kazakhstan's participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) complicates its security relationship with Russia.⁴⁵ To date, the CSTO remains ineffective because no Central Asian country, including Kazakhstan, is willing to trade its sovereignty for protection by Moscow.⁴⁶

Moreover, Kazakhstan's participation in the SCO helps to maintain the balance of power between Russia and China in the region. The SCO offers both Russia and China an opportunity to restrain the other.⁴⁷ Thus, for Kazakhstan, SCO membership is part of its strategy of using Russia and China to balance each other. Kazakhstan supported the SCO declaration on U.S. military bases because this was necessary in order to preserve the organization's unity.⁴⁸ In the words of a leading political analyst in Kazakhstan, it was an example of "brilliant political distancing." Kazakhstan satisfied Russia and China by joining the declaration without aggravating its relations with the United States or NATO.⁴⁹ Relations with the West remain sound because Kazakhstan has resisted efforts by Russia and China to use the organization to promote their broader geopolitical interests.⁵⁰ Kazakhstan continues to develop military-political cooperation with both the SCO and NATO, and it recognizes the importance of NATO-led efforts to establish security in Afghanistan.⁵¹

Despite Uzbekistan's eviction of U.S. forces, the United States has retained access to its base in Kyrgyzstan. The SCO's declaration on U.S. bases was an assertion of the organization's growing significance, but it did not represent a larger effort to balance U.S. power through a military alliance. The rise of an anti-American, Sino-Russian alliance would force Kazakhstan to make difficult decisions, placing its multi-vectored foreign policy under strain. However, the competing regional interests of Russia and

China make such an alliance unlikely.⁵² Thus, in the near term, Kazakhstan should be able to continue its multi-vectored foreign policy.

Economic interests are another key component of the Russia-Kazakhstan relationship. At independence, Kazakhstan was more economically dependent on Russia than any other former Soviet republic, especially in its northern regions.⁵³ In order for its economy to survive, Kazakhstan had to ship a substantial amount of goods to, or through, Russia. Although Kazakhstan has reduced its economic dependence on Russia,⁵⁴ bilateral economic ties remain important. In 2006, the volume of Russia-Kazakhstan trade reached \$12 billion, a 30 percent increase over 2005.⁵⁵

Russia's greatest economic leverage was in the energy sector, as Moscow initially held a monopoly over oil and gas pipelines.⁵⁶ Until 2001, Kazakhstan exported nearly all of its oil through the Atyrau-Samara pipeline, a northbound link into the Russian distribution system.⁵⁷ This left Kazakhstan vulnerable to Moscow, and Kazakhstan responded by seeking to reduce its dependence. During the 1990s, the Chevron-led Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) developed a 980-mile pipeline connecting Kazakhstan's oil deposits near the Caspian with the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk.⁵⁸ Although this pipeline transports oil through Russia, the consortium operates independently of Transneft, Russia's state oil-pipeline monopoly, thus reducing dependence on Moscow.⁵⁹ Since 2001, the CPC has transported about one-third of Kazakhstan's exports, mostly from the Tengiz field, and its capacity is set to grow.⁶⁰

Kazakhstan still exports three-fourths of its oil through Russian territory. Russian oil companies also play an important role in the production of Kazakh oil, with Lukoil planning to produce 70 million barrels by 2010 and state-owned Rosneft producing oil at the Kurmangazy field.⁶¹ Some analysts argue that Russia is trying to establish maximum control over Kazakhstan's oil.⁶² Even Kazakh officials who stress the importance of relations with Russia recognize that the two countries' interests diverge over energy exports. Whereas Russia seeks to control the export of Kazakh oil, Kazakhstan needs to diversify its export routes.⁶³ For now, with Kazakhstan's oil and gas production set to surge, Nazarbayev pragmatically recognizes the need for reliance on Russia. This reflects the reality that the major pipelines running out of Kazakhstan still pass through Russian territory.⁶⁴ Several obstacles stand in the way of new pipelines to the West. In the near term, China offers the best chance for diversifying Kazakhstan's energy export routes. This is another example of how China plays an important role in Kazakhstan's efforts to reduce pressure from its northern neighbor.

KAZAKHSTAN'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA

China's influence in Central Asia greatly increased following the Soviet Union's collapse, as five relatively weak new states emerged with considerably less aggregate power than the Soviet Union had possessed.⁶⁵ The emergence of a U.S. military presence in Central Asia beginning in 2001 marked a setback for this newfound Chinese influence.⁶⁶ China's top foreign-policy priorities lie in the Asia-Pacific region, but Central Asia's importance to China is likely to increase. If Russian influence in Central Asia were to fade, China probably would move to fill the void.⁶⁷ For now, Russia and the United States can offer more immediate economic and security benefits to Central Asian countries. Yet China's influence is likely to grow, based on geography and economics.⁶⁸

Regardless of its relative influence, China has pursued a consistent set of objectives in Central Asia. These objectives grow naturally out of its overall foreign policy strategy of nurturing an amicable international environment that allows it to focus on domestic modernization, economic growth, and social stability.⁶⁹ China's top priority in this region is to maintain stability along its borders.⁷⁰ Thus, China used the SCO to reach border agreements with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.⁷¹

China pursues what two analysts have called a "long-term strategy of denial."⁷² Under this strategy, China seeks to deny Central Asia as a base for Uighur separatism in Xinjiang.⁷³ China also aims to deny regional dominance by any external power.⁷⁴ It seeks to prevent the United States from using Central Asia to contain China, a concern that has risen since the establishment of a U.S. military presence. For Chinese policymakers, this presence raises the specter of "strategic encirclement" and possible U.S. use of the situation in Xinjiang to harm China's interests. Like Russia, China supported U.S.-led operations against the Taliban but opposed a long-term U.S. military presence in Central Asia.⁷⁵ China also seeks to deny Russia a monopoly of influence in the region.⁷⁶ Thus, despite China's close cooperation with Russia in the SCO, China does not agree that Central Asia is Russia's "backyard."⁷⁷

China also seeks expanded economic ties with the region, especially secure access to energy resources. China sees Central Asia's energy resources as a means to help satisfy its rapidly growing demand while reducing its dependence on Middle Eastern sources shipped through waters patrolled by the U.S. Navy.⁷⁸ Like Russia, China recognizes Kazakhstan as an especially important Central Asian country.⁷⁹

Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, mostly welcome China's involvement in their region, despite concerns about China's growing power.⁸⁰ Any future government of Kazakhstan is likely to seek good relations with China.⁸¹ Kazakhstan's development requires good relations with neighboring countries, and China's economic dynamism offers especially valuable opportunities.

Although Russia remains Kazakhstan's most important security partner, China's role is growing. China and the Central Asian states have worked jointly to counter Uighur separatism. Potential instability in Xinjiang could cause China to seek closer security ties with Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan.⁸² Kazakhstan's most important security interaction with China takes place within the SCO, in which China's membership helps Kazakhstan balance Russia's security presence, as discussed above.

China's economic interests in Central Asia are growing. As with Russia, these focus largely on Kazakhstan.⁸³ China's "Develop the West" initiative, which the central government in Beijing views as essential for enhancing its long-term ability to maintain authority over Xinjiang, depends on strengthened economic ties with Central Asia.⁸⁴ China's plans to upgrade rail and highway connections to Central Asia will increase its regional influence.⁸⁵ Kazakhstan and China aim to increase their bilateral trade volume to \$15 billion per year by 2015.⁸⁶

It is in the energy sphere that China offers especially valuable opportunities for Kazakhstan, as China provides an outlet for Kazakhstan's oil and gas toward the Pacific. China offers the most immediate opportunity for Kazakhstan to diversify its energy export routes.⁸⁷ For China, Kazakhstan offers an opportunity to gain ownership and relatively direct control over stable foreign oil supplies, as seen when

Chinese state-owned oil companies won the right to develop oil fields at Aktyubinsk and Uzen.⁸⁸ The Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has invested more than \$6.5 billion in oil projects in Kazakhstan.⁸⁹ Kazakhstan has encouraged Chinese investment in the Kazakh energy sector, partly to lessen its dependence on Western oil firms.⁹⁰ Most notably, CNPC recently acquired PetroKazakhstan, one of Kazakhstan's largest producers.⁹¹ China invested more than \$700 million in the construction of the first phase of the Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline.⁹²

China values the stability of overland oil supplies, especially when its companies have a large measure of control, so it is willing to pay a "security fee" for such supplies.⁹³ Pipelines to China are, therefore, more achievable in the medium term than trans-Caspian pipelines or Kazakhstan's preferred route, an oil pipeline to Iran, which Western opposition has stymied. Kazakhstan plans to limit oil shipments through the Kazakhstan-China pipeline to 400,000 barrels per day, indicating an unwillingness to over-commit supplies to China. In the near term, Kazakhstan will continue to ship most of its oil through Russia.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, this issue illustrates the crucial role China plays in Kazakhstan's multi-vectored foreign policy by relieving Russian pressure.

Yet Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries harbor concerns about China as a potential future hegemon. Like Russia, Kazakhstan is concerned about Chinese economic penetration and migration. Kazakhstan does not wish to become merely an economic appendage supplying raw materials to China. One source of future tension could be the use of water resources from the Ili and Irtysh rivers. Both rivers originate in China and flow into Kazakhstan. China's "Develop the West" project has increased China's water needs, but its growing use of water from these rivers could have negative consequences for Kazakhstan.⁹⁵ In this case, Kazakhstan's interests coincide with those of Russia, as the Irtysh also flows into Russia. These potential flashpoints serve as a reminder of why Kazakhstan values relations with the United States as a hedge against possible future Chinese assertions of hegemony.

KAZAKHSTAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

Since the Soviet Union's collapse, U.S. policy toward Central Asia and Kazakhstan has passed through several phases. Initially, the United States was willing to grant Russia the leading regional security role.⁹⁶ Kazakhstan occupied a central position in U.S. policy toward the region, as the main goal was to persuade Kazakhstan to relinquish its nuclear weapons, a task achieved by 1995.⁹⁷ By the mid-1990s, as U.S.-Russian relations soured, the United States ceased to view Central Asia as a region of special Russian interests. U.S. interests expanded to include promoting democracy, encouraging Central Asian countries to adopt market reforms and integrate into global economic institutions, waging the struggles against terrorism and drug trafficking, and strengthening the sovereignty and security of the Central Asian countries.⁹⁸ The United States also grew increasingly concerned about undemocratic developments in Kazakhstan. In 1995, Nazarbayev disbanded parliament after a court declared the previous year's election unconstitutional. He then ruled by decree for more than a year before extending his term through a referendum, setting a pattern for subsequent backsliding on democracy. At the same time, U.S. policy toward Central Asia, previously focused on Kazakhstan, began to view Uzbekistan as a potential counterweight to Russian influence.⁹⁹

Kazakhstan's large oil and gas reserves, however, ensured the country's continued importance to U.S. policy. The United States became increasingly interested in securing U.S. companies' access to Caspian energy development projects. This reflected not only lobbying by oil companies and the desire to promote global energy security, but also the U.S. goal of strengthening the newly independent states' sovereignty.¹⁰⁰ The United States sought to increase the supply of energy resources, prevent any state from holding a monopoly over Central Asian energy supplies, and exclude Iran.¹⁰¹ U.S. officials insisted they had no desire to establish a monopoly of influence or wage a new "Great Game."¹⁰² Yet the United States clearly sought to help fill the geopolitical vacuum and to reduce the Central Asian states' dependence on Russia, China, and Iran.

Another phase in U.S.-Kazakhstan relations, centering on security issues, began after September 2001, when the Central Asian states played a crucial role in the U.S.-led war on terrorism. The United States established military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan became the main U.S. security partner in the region.¹⁰³ During this period, the United States eased pressure on Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states regarding democracy and human rights.¹⁰⁴ To support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan granted the United States emergency use of its airspace, though not a permanent military presence.¹⁰⁵ In 2003, Kazakhstan sent a 27-member engineering team to clear mines in Iraq.¹⁰⁶ As it had since early in its independence, Kazakhstan continued to participate in NATO's PfP. This fell short of full security cooperation, but it allowed Kazakhstan to diversify its security partnerships, reduce pressure from Russia,¹⁰⁷ and modernize its armed forces.¹⁰⁸ In the view of NATO strategists, Kazakhstan believes that gradually strengthening its relations with NATO is worth the risk in its relations with Russia and China. NATO, in turn, recognizes Kazakhstan's obligations within the CSTO and the SCO.¹⁰⁹

In the second half of 2005, foreign policy analysts from Kazakhstan detected a shift in U.S. strategy. Taking account of recent setbacks, this strategy adopted a more realistic approach.¹¹⁰ Specifically, following the rupture in relations with Uzbekistan, the United States placed greater emphasis on relations with Kazakhstan.¹¹¹ With Kazakhstan's December 2005 presidential election looming, Washington softened its criticism of Nazarbayev's government.¹¹² The United States did not attempt to promote a "color revolution,"¹¹³ an unlikely possibility in any case given Kazakhstan's economic success and Nazarbayev's popularity.¹¹⁴ In August 2005, Tokayev visited Washington, where he met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Kazakhstan, Rice said, could serve as a model for other Central Asian states' development, a message she reiterated during her visit to Kazakhstan that October.¹¹⁵

The United States was moving toward a new strategy dubbed "Greater Central Asia." This strategy aimed to build transport infrastructure, revive continental trade, and strengthen economic connections between Central Asia and U.S. allies in South Asia.¹¹⁶ As the largest provider of direct foreign investment into Kazakhstan, the United States wielded considerable influence with which to promote economic projects.¹¹⁷ The State Department created a new Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, which assumed responsibility for the five formerly Soviet Central Asian states. U.S. officials stressed that helping the Central Asian countries develop into strong, stable, sovereign states was a major U.S. goal. They

also made clear that the United States sought to help the Central Asian states resist pressure from Russia and China by opening alternative trading routes to the south.¹¹⁸ Russia and China viewed the initiative warily, concerned that it could signal a long-term U.S. presence in the region. Supporters of the initiative countered that Russia and China too would benefit from improved regional infrastructure.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, the project faces significant hurdles. In addition to Russian and Chinese concerns, the Central Asian countries themselves have expressed uncertainty. Officially, Kazakhstan expressed its support,¹²⁰ but Kazakh officials also noted several obstacles, including a lack of coordination among regional countries and the international community, continuing regional instability, and the lack of trans-border agreements on crucial issues such as water use.¹²¹ Thus, Kazakhstan supports the project in principle but questions its practicality. Continuing instability in Afghanistan could hinder efforts to expand infrastructural links to South Asia. Additional problems relate to road transport, air transport, banking and financial services, and energy.¹²² The construction of three proposed pipelines—a Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan gas line, a trans-Afghanistan gas line, and a trans-Caspian Kazakhstan-Azerbaijan oil line—have been blocked by political disputes, security concerns, and low interest by investors.¹²³

The United States has encouraged Kazakhstan to increase its involvement in the BTC pipeline and eventually agree to the construction of a trans-Caspian pipeline. This would serve Western interests by providing an outlet for Kazakh oil that bypasses Russia. U.S. officials assert that the project also would serve Kazakhstan's interest in diversifying oil export routes. To Russia's consternation, Kazakhstan joined the BTC in June 2006, agreeing to make oil tanker shipments to Baku. Yet Kazakhstan has shown only mild interest in the project, emphasizing that it is just one possible option for exporting hydrocarbons. Kazakhstan's ambivalence reflects both economic and political considerations. Foreign policy experts in Kazakhstan argue that the Caspian littoral states' failure to agree to the sea's legal division is likely to prevent the pipeline's construction.¹²⁴ Because both Russia and Iran are Caspian littoral states, this could be a formidable obstacle. Many energy analysts, both in Kazakhstan and in the West, also question the BTC's economic viability or consider the pipeline to China more important.¹²⁵

Despite these concerns, Kazakhstan's involvement in the BTC is likely to grow. The project offers Kazakhstan potential economic benefits and an opportunity to diversify its export routes.¹²⁶ Kazakhstan has various options for transporting Kashagan oil, including an expanded CPC or parallel line. Kazakhstan already ships oil from its Tengiz field through the CPC, so it may decide to ship Kashagan oil to the west.¹²⁷

Because Caspian oil tankers have low capacity, the construction of a seabed pipeline may be necessary to make the project commercially viable for Kazakhstan in the long run. The pipeline's realization would face many obstacles, including resistance from Russia and Iran, but a sustained push by the United States and Europe could bring the project to fruition eventually. Kazmunaigaz, the Kazakh state oil company, reportedly has held discussions with the Azeri state oil company, SOCAR, on a trans-Caspian pipeline, indicating that Kazakhstan has given serious consideration to the project.¹²⁸ Regardless, Kazakhstan continues to view the United States as an important element of its multi-vec-tored foreign policy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

For the United States, Kazakhstan is an important country in a geopolitically crucial region. Recognizing its enduring interests in Central Asia, the United States should make a long-term commitment. It should pursue a region-wide approach while maintaining good bilateral relations with Kazakhstan and its neighbors. The most important U.S. objective in Central Asia should be to prevent this region from posing a threat to vital U.S. interests, especially to homeland security.¹²⁹ The United States should seek to prevent outside powers, especially a single hegemonic power, from gaining dominance.¹³⁰ Kazakhstan's multi-vectored foreign policy serves U.S. interests by offering an opportunity for fruitful partnership that helps to limit the prospects for anti-American, Sino-Russian regional balancing in Central Asia.

Together, the United States, Russia, China, and the Central Asian countries should create an informal concert, or some similar arrangement, to encourage dialogue on security issues.¹³¹ These states share several interests, including the desire to eliminate threats from terrorism and Islamic radicalism. The United States should encourage the creation of a NATO-SCO strategic dialogue.¹³² This forum could promote cooperation on counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing, counter-narcotics, and economic development.¹³³ Such an arrangement would ease Kazakhstan's balancing act of maintaining security relationships with NATO, the CSTO, and the SCO.

Economic development is a priority for U.S.-Kazakhstan relations. The Central Asian countries need economic growth in order to strengthen their sovereignty, an interest they share with the United States. The Greater Central Asia project and efforts to expand regional trade are worth pursuing despite significant obstacles. The United States should continue to encourage Kazakhstan's participation in the BTC oil pipeline. However, Kazakhstan's increasing oil exports to China also serve U.S. interests in second-best fashion by helping to loosen Russia's grip over Central Asian energy exports.¹³⁴ This is another example of how Kazakhstan's multi-vectored foreign policy coincides with US interests.

Kazakhstan's democratic shortcomings create the greatest strain in relations with the United States. Kazakhstan's government seeks the security and economic benefits of partnership with the United States while limiting Western influence on its domestic politics, a source of frustration in Washington.¹³⁵ In this respect, Nazarbayev's government

benefits from relations with Russia and China, which have no interest in democracy promotion. The United States should continue to promote democracy in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries, not least because this is necessary for these states' own long-term stability, but it should adhere to a realistic, long-term approach. Delivering harsh public lectures or downgrading relations would do little to promote democracy.¹³⁶

Instead, the United States should continue to engage in an ongoing, fair-minded, and respectful discussion with Kazakhstan's leaders, as well as with opposition leaders, about the need to implement democratic reforms.¹³⁷ To cite one example of the benefits of this approach, engagement with Astana has helped to improve the country's legal system.¹³⁸ The United States opposed Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE in 2009 but relented in late 2007, accepting Kazakhstan's chairmanship in 2010. This decision was in some ways regrettable because of Kazakhstan's failure to implement the very democratic reforms that the OSCE seeks to promote. However, it was consistent with a policy of engagement to promote democratic reforms. As long as the West defends the OSCE's democratic mission and resists Russian efforts to weaken election monitoring, Kazakhstan's chairmanship will not harm the organization. Engagement with Astana may yield minimal short-term results, but it is more likely to promote democracy in the long term than a policy of isolation. The United States need not choose between promoting democracy and pursuing its strategic interests in the region.

Kazakhstan has shown considerable skill in the conduct of its multi-vectored foreign policy. It has established its security and carved out a growing role in the international arena. If a possible democratic opening arises, perhaps at the time of Nazarbayev's departure, prior U.S. engagement may yield great dividends. Kazakhstan's emphasis on relations with Russia and China means it will never be an exclusive strategic partner of the United States, but U.S. interests do not require this. Kazakhstan has proven itself capable of pursuing a balanced foreign policy despite tensions in U.S.-Sino-Russian relations. This serves U.S. interests by reducing the likelihood of domination, by either Russia or China, of Central Asia. Therefore, a productive U.S.-Kazakhstan relationship based on common economic and security interests, as well as a long-term dialogue on democracy, is clearly in the interests of the United States.

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The Cultural and Social Evolution of the Kazakhs in Modern Period

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There can be no doubt that Kazakhs, in their origins, are “children of the steppes.” The steppe and the nomadic lifestyle have left a lasting mark on their notions, their language, customs and behavior. Even today, the descendants of the nomads, who settled in the towns and cities in their third and fourth generations, yearn for the limitless space of the steppe. Look into the eyes of your Kazakh companion and this yearning will be easy to see. Only don’t look too long, else he may recall the warring past of his ancestors.

With time Kazakhstan’s leaders came to master the skills of diplomacy and foreign policy. Kazakhstan was generally successful in finding common ground with different powers and, more or less, it kept itself on a par, even in the face of an obvious inequality in political power. Of course, if Kazakhstan diplomacy was backed up by serious economic potential, an effective army, large population etc, the Kazakh foreign policy and its debut on the geopolitical chessboard would have been more effective. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan could produce politicians from its ranks, who could guide the ship of state on a stable course through the storms and reefs of world politics.

As with other nationalities in Soviet society, Kazakhs had a hierarchy made up primarily on the basis of professional and corporate solidarity. The ancestral remnants of the Kazakhs should be sought in such customs as respect for one’s elders and an affinity with like-minded people. The consequences of the collapse of the previous socioeconomic system and the introduction of market relations came in two forms: first, a killer blow was dealt to the privileges and social status afforded to the previous soviet elite; the intelligentsia and its structures (the academic institutes and universities) were literally laid to waste. Secondly, however, another process followed immediately afterwards, and even in parallel: the elite set about teaching its children in the new, prestigious spheres, linked with the market economy, management and finance. In this way, the principles of stable traditions and the reproduction of the elite were preserved in their principal features. On the whole, the Kazakh elite had to fulfill the same objective it faced in Soviet times, under a state-controlled economy, but under new conditions: to retain control over resources. And in this it was successful.

In Soviet times the Kazakh elite had to bow to Moscow

and this restricted its ability to control economic resources. However, Western sociology states that, in addition to the so-called economic capital, there is also the “cultural capital” and the “symbolic” capital, which are understood to mean the acquisition of knowledge, specific skills, the accumulation of prestige and respect. Once Moscow’s control had gone, the Kazakh elite made full use of the cultural and symbolic capital they had at their disposal.

The ruling trend of the early 1990s, one of ethnic unity, made way for the fragmentation of Kazakh society. One thing that divides Kazakhs is the relationship to the Russian and Kazakh languages, as an attribute of ethnic belonging and social status. A sign of this trend is the striving of the Kazakh elite to preserve their children’s knowledge of Russian and to educate them in Russian-speaking schools. However, this trend occurs against a background of a more extensive process, that of the upbringing of an internationally-oriented (i.e. pro-Western) generation in the new Kazakh elite. And it is this part of the elite, no longer exclusively Russian-oriented, yet also not purely Kazakh in upbringing, who will have to play the decisive role in the future Kazakhstan.

The explosive events of the late 1990s and early 2000s proved a major test of security, statehood and independence in foreign policy. While market reforms were being implemented a generation of young entrepreneurs had grown up. Gaining financial resources, they came to hanker after power. After this new opposition¹ came to receive moral and political support from outside, the stability of the Kazakhstan society was seen to be under threat. And yet Kazakhstan is now acknowledged by Washington and Brussels as the most stable and dynamically developing country in Central Asia. President Nazarbayev’s difficult and initially unpopular reforms of the previous decade have appeared to produce results and the population is now living under a more liberal climate, with a lesser dependence on the state.

Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan’s leader and first president, enjoys immense popularity, even if alleged voting irregularities and Parliament voting for him to remain in power for an unlimited number of terms are taken into account. He is seen as popular both in the West and in the East, among Kazakhs and Russians who live in Kazakhstan. He is a welcome guest in Moscow and throughout the CIS, where he is seen as a main proponent of close integration of the post-Soviet states.

The old saying goes, "If you want to know who you are, ask what your neighbor thinks". Wording it differently you could say that if you want to know who you are, compare yourself with your neighbors. The time has now come when it would be opportune for the Kazakhs to adopt both versions of the saying.

For centuries, the Kazakhs' neighbors and their ancestors saw these people as ruthless nomads, who had crashed down from nowhere atop their wild horses upon the peaceful farming folk and townspeople. The Chinese were of the same opinion and they tried to keep out the nomadic world with their Great Wall. The Russians, too, had felt the full delights of political control of the nomadic horde, which remained in the national memory as a "yoke". There are some sharp-witted scholars in California who call the nomad's conquest and enslavement of the settled countries, along with the collection of tributes, a "remote exploitation."

More or less the same opinion of the nomads was retained by their Muslim neighbors of Khorezm, Persia, India and the Arab peoples of the Middle East.² However, historical memory is a tenacious thing; it turns to stone and transforms recollections into stereotypes. This is how the settled neighbors have retained a stereotype from the time of the Middle Ages that the Kazakhs are warring and, therefore, dangerous nomads. Human psychology tends to assign the most negative features to all that is alien and hostile: wild, ignorant, pagan, living in unsanitary conditions, smelling of goat's milk, etc.

As the settled civilizations progressed, their ruling classes came to see the nomads as "backward barbarians". This became characteristic for the Russians, who, in the New Age managed to gain command over the Eastern territories of the Golden Horde, to which it had once had to bow before as slaves. The Russians saw the Kazakhs as nomads, frozen in a time gone by and who had forgotten the military glory of their great ancestors. The Russians saw themselves, starting from the reforms of Peter the Great, as unequivocally European.

This would have been funny if it had not been so sad: the residents of the agricultural oases of Turkestan, speaking in tongues similar to that of the Kazakhs and confessing the same religion, Sunni Islam, also tried to look upon their immediate neighbors as poor relations from the past and, accordingly, they regarded them with a feeling of superiority. Thus, they devised jokes with the main character being a steppe-Kazakh, who is terribly afraid upon first hearing the loud call of the muezzin to prayer in the big city.

Credit should be given to the Kazakhs where it is due: they, too, made up countless witty jokes and funny stories about their neighbors, who behaved in their natural environment like little children. The Kazakhs found much to mock in the mercenary, small-minded nature of their neighbors and what they saw as their slave-like psychology. The principal difference lay elsewhere: the Kazakhs had managed to preserve their reigning aristocracy, which was highly revered in the East.

After Kazakhstan had been joined first to Tsarist and then to Soviet Russia, when the Kazakhs displayed a fine sense of adaptation to changing conditions and culturalization, they again became the butt of the jokes for their more traditional neighbors, for trying hard not to be separated from Islam and for other attributes of their medieval way of life. At this time the Kazakhs were laughed at and accused of excessive

Russification, although in reality there was only talk of modernization. To be fair, it should be said that to one degree or another, modernization concerned all peoples of Central Asia, but it was only the Kazakhs who were able to turn it into a real tool to build a bridge to the future.

This became clear several years after independence was obtained. While Kazakhstan was confidently conducting economic reforms and the Kazakh elite was effectively investing its incredibly rich human potential, a young generation of market-oriented, Western-thinking representatives, into the post-Soviet market modernization, its neighbors were concentrating on a return to their historical roots. In practice this meant the revival of archaic public institutions and relations, the Islamization and degradation of the education system.

This divide between the Kazakhs and their neighbors became fully obvious at the start of the new century, when no one would think to laugh or look down upon the descendants of the ungovernable nomads. On the contrary, hundreds of thousands of the descendants of the proud bearers of the "ancient Islamic civilization" rushed to Kazakhstan in search of work, to find markets for their fruit and, generally, for a better life. Very quickly they became an integral part of the local economy, occupying its least prestigious niches. Similar processes were witnessed in Russia, too.

Credit should be given to the Kazakhs, who, rather than making a habit of humiliating or laughing at the new Gastarbeiters, even though they used them for their own benefit, wisely prepared for the time when their neighbors would begin to find a way out of the economic hole into which they had been led by arrogance and poor management on the part of their own governments. This confirms once again the truth that the tolerance and flexibility acquired by the Kazakhs over the course of their history leads to wisdom, as long as the lessons of history are correctly perceived. However, sometimes the price can be too high. No one knows better than the Kazakhs the price of this truth.

With time the Kazakh elite taught their Russian and Western partners to speak with them as equals. The greatest puzzle today, and the greatest challenge for them are the Chinese, with whom economic and political necessity dictate business should be done. However, the Kazakhs have not forgotten their Eastern origins, so the chances are incredibly high that the Kazakhs will not allow their dialogue with the Chinese to become a monologue.

In so doing, without flattering themselves over their current successes or drawing comparisons with that famous character from the La Fontaine fable who could be bought with flattery, the Kazakhs always remember how their neighbors treated them in the past. They are diplomatically silent as to their opinion of them, remembering the past but thinking about the future.

Meeting our compatriots abroad no longer generates surprise. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, many Kazakhs and Kazakhstanis work, study, do business and simply travel all over the world. However, there are times when we encounter Kazakhs with a different past. They do not speak Russian and their Kazakh tongue has a strong Turkish accent. At times they have exotic passports, from such countries as the People's Republic of China (i.e. Kuomintang, or Taiwanese), Saudi Arabia or Pakistan. These are the Kazakhs whom history has flung to the distant corners of the world and further, yet they still see themselves as Kazakhs.

We know that the most significant Kazakh diasporas are presented in China, Mongolia and Turkey (except post-Soviet space—Russia, Uzbekistan, etc. where more than 2 million Kazakhs are concentrated). Kazakhs may also be encountered in such countries as India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, in Arab countries and in Western Europe—in France, Germany and Sweden. Their appearance in these places, far from Kazakhstan, is a consequence of the dramatic historical events which shook Central Eurasia from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The history of the resettlement and movement of the Kazakh clan families from their native steppes is worthy of comparison with the biblical Exodus.

Mongolian Kazakhs are mainly associated with the phenomenon of the current internal social life of Kazakhstan, with the Oralman, the ethnic Kazakh who has returned to his or her ethnic homeland from elsewhere in the Central Asian region. The greater mass of migrants from Mongolia was comprised of urbanized Kazakhs who, having lost their jobs in the towns and cities, preferred to leave for Kazakhstan than return to the rural localities in Western Mongolia.

The intellectuals and students settled in Alma-Ata. The resettlement of the Mongolian Kazakhs in the fertile southern regions of the republic was blocked both by administrative measures and by the objective situation on the market. The settlers found it hard to find their feet in the homeland of their ancestors and some of them decided to return to Mongolia. The Mongolian government supported the Kazakh migration, but then it also welcomed their return to Mongolia, proceeding from concerns of Oirat separatism and from economic considerations, as the Aimak territorial units of Western Mongolia had simply been deserted.

From the mid 1990s the government of Kazakhstan has been conducting a wide-ranging policy on the return of the Oralmans to the homeland of their ancestors. In addition to Kazakhs from Mongolia, fellow tribesmen come here from Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. This process is incredibly complicated from social, cultural and linguistic points of view. Kazakhstan today is a government that is European-orientated in its development, with a considerable part of its population preferring to speak Russian. The process of adaptation is slow and is accompanied by specific problems.

This process cannot influence the principal strategic vector in the development of Kazakhs, both within Kazakhstan itself and the Kazakh diasporas. This vector involves the unavoidable rejection of the traditional nomadic heritage and the move to a contemporary, modernized way of life. Tellingly, this process has not only touched the life of the Kazakhstani Kazakhs, for whom it was to a great extent a forced choice, but also of the descendants of the Chinese Kazakhs who settled in Turkey and countries of the West, for whom the choice was purely voluntary.

The traditional Kazakh society was characterized as a mixture of dependence and independence, subordination and insubordination. The structural hierarchy of traditional Kazakh society, which represents a long historical tradition, was constantly undermined by the everyday need of the nomadic way of life to make decisions in its own right. Thus, despite the outwardly very strict framework for mutual kinship, loyalty and subordination, each nomadic community, for purely objective reasons, continued to remain an independent economic subject with its own economy and potential to

choose its own location for itself. Such a flexibility added a certain dynamism to the tribal structure, enabling it to feel itself freely during constant changes within the intra-regional balance of political forces. This elasticity was lost after Kazakhstan was annexed and after the forced settlement, after which the tribal structure lost its real functional significance and retained only a genealogical status.

Many experts believe that the Soviet heritage is the foundation stone of the modern-day Kazakh identity. The changes that occurred in Kazakh society during the Soviet era represent the chasm that divides the Kazakhs in Kazakhstan from their brethren in China, Mongolia and other countries.

On the whole it is customary to divide the population of Kazakhstan into two main groups: the “Europeans” (Russians and other Slavs, Germans etc) and the “Asians” (primarily all the Turkic peoples—the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Uyghurs and so on). Such a division probably rises from the pre-Revolutionary period. Sometimes Koreans (who in due course adapted Christianity) and Dungans (Chinese converts to Islam) are classed in the Asiatic group, which is explained by their external appearance alone. However, the division into “Europeans” and “Asians” in this way remains very much a provisional matter, as among the “Asians” there are many who look like genuine Europeans. Many anthropologists believe that Russians are “Europeans,” but then only at a stretch.

Several use the term “Muslim” without applying any religious significance at all, only wishing to stress that the subject relates to the Turkic peoples. This is convenient for identification of the Tatars, who are incredibly close to the Kazakhs in a sense of language and culture, but more similar to Russians in their external appearance.

This should be important for foreigners as they often commit the common error (and not only in Kazakhstan; in all the post-Soviet countries as well). To your question as to what a person’s nationality is, a person who grew up in the Soviet Union will answer honestly: I am a Kazakh (Russian, Ukrainian etc), with their ethnic origin in mind, but at the same time they remain a citizen of Kazakhstan (without being a Kazakh), Russia (without being a Russian), Uzbekistan (without being an Uzbek), etc.

The biggest puzzle is how to sort out the question of who the Kazakhs themselves are. Let’s assume you have been fortunate and you have understood that the person standing before you is a representative of the so-called “title nation.”³³ So what is it that makes a Kazakh? Southerner or Northerner? Urban or rural dweller? If the person is pointedly hospitable, even obtrusive to a point, somewhat boastful and enjoys showing off, you can be sure you are dealing with a “Southerner” who in Kazakhstan are deservedly known as “Texans”. Just like the natives from the genuine Texas in America, this category of Kazakhs likes to exaggerate and is full of pride for the recognition of their own significance.

The Kazakh mentality has formed in a very complex manner. Ancient customs and more contemporary concepts have not contradicted one another over the course of history; rather they have supplemented one another and formed layers, one on top of another. They often intertwined harmoniously, creating a wonderful blend of different concepts which, nevertheless, present in their totality a certain well-structured philosophical system to explain the world around the Kazakhs.

From the very outset, when the Kazakhs first entered the historical stage, this world was not friendly towards them. In fact, quite the opposite. Therefore, the customs of the Kazakhs formed in a way that would ensure the nation's survival. The basis of the nation was the clan, a kind of expanded version of the family. The clan and the family, in turn, was formed by the generations, one replacing the other. Therefore, the first and most sacred duty of every Kazakh is to know their ancestors, going back a minimum of seven generations, chronologically accounting for an average of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty years.

However, the majority of Kazakhs hold more extensive information on their origins. This is possible thanks to a largely mythological system with a genealogical tree, well established in the nation's consciousness, and in which every clan and every tribe is presented. Knowing the last seven generations, any Kazakh will find his clan on this tree with ease. At its base sits the legendary Alash, the mythical forefather of all Kazakhs. As such, every clan has the same forefather to whom they trace their origins. Perhaps some of these mythical characters were in fact real people. Sometimes the founding father is replaced by animals, which become a totem for the clan. For Kazakhs, as with other Turks, this is generally the wolf (or the she-wolf). In this way, we see that the traditional Kazakh mythology is very reminiscent of the ancient legends of many other peoples of Eurasia, primarily of their nomadic neighbors. However, parallels are sometimes detected with more distant peoples (as evidenced graphically by the legend of the she-wolf that reared the progenitor). In this case it is with the Romans.

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The stormy events of the 20th century proved that clan belonging is a cornerstone of the Kazakh identity. Clan relations were subjected to erosion even back in the era of Tsarist Russia, in the latter half of the 19th century. Some Kazakhs were drawn into industrial production; they left their native *auls* and resettled in the cities. Some even deserted their native steppes and went to search for a living away from their native Kazakhstan, to the industrial centers of Russia and Siberia. Nevertheless, members of one clan did try to help one another and to support a fellow member of their tribe. This factor considerably simplified the lives of the unprotected members of society: the orphans, the young and inexperienced, the sick, the elderly and the lonely, etc.

However, the real break-up in the traditional system occurred after the Revolution and in the process of the modernization of Kazakhstan. As a result of all the social and demographic shocks in the middle of the 20th century it seemed to many observers that the traditional social structures of the Kazakhs had been destroyed for good. However, they proved their longevity and primarily in the form of a national memory. It is possible that this was one of the manifestations of a survival instinct of the Kazakhs as a nation. One way or another, though, the memory of family connections, which

played but a symbolic role in the Soviet era, lived for the entire duration of the violent Soviet modernization.

With the acquisition of independence for the Kazakhs came a chance to revive former tribal links, at least in the form of historical tradition. Information on the Kazakhs' clan structure came to be openly published (something banned in Soviet times) and it was discussed in society and the media. However, the resistance of the ruling class to the attempts to revive a division of the Kazakhs on a *Zhuz* [horde] and clan basis was steadfast.⁴ From the standpoint of Soviet tradition which stamped its mark on such views as the appearance of "feudal, clan-based antiquity", such behavior of the Kazakh elite, which came out from the depths of Soviet bureaucracy, would have been completely logical. However, the situation is actually not so.

The new ruling class, which took on the reigns of power in Kazakhstan after the ignominious fall of the Soviet regime, was faced with the task of building a nation-state, in which *a priori* there was no place for any division by clan principle. Attempts to divide the residents of Kazakhstan by ethnic origin or confession were also firmly suppressed. Instead, the concept of a "single Kazakhstani nation" was proposed.⁵ Today it is hard to imagine how a single nation could be moulded from segmentary ethnic groups. Even American society could not cope with such a task, where in place of the earlier, "melting pot" concept came the offer of the "salad pot" theory.

It is likely that much will depend on the spirit, the will and the ethnic composition of the elite that is forming. Today it is represented mostly by Kazakhs, who have adopted a consolidating role in the building of a new nation. It cannot be ruled out that in future Kazakhstan will take on the concept of multiculturalism, which is now the subject of sharp criticism in the West. But for now, society is held together by the general, although visibly erosive, Soviet-wide mentality of different ethnic groups.

In connection with the traditional understandings of the clan belonging of the Kazakhs, another delicate matter arises. Foreign observers and researchers of Kazakhstan pointed to the fact that Kazakh bureaucracy apparently functions and is formed on the clan principle. Then they transferred such an approach to post-Soviet Kazakhstan. At the heart of this method lay methodology of Western social anthropology, tested against the example of certain traditional societies of the post-colonial world. However, the more attentive researchers of contemporary Kazakhstani society very logically point to the fact that the formation of a new ruling class and a political and economic elite of the country is by no means developing on the basis of clan-based generality or belonging to some clan or locality.

It is obvious that in this event there are other mechanisms at work. They are closer, it would appear, to those that were in play in Western European societies during the first industrial revolution. The matter relates to economic interests that unite people, not in terms of family indications, but on the basis of a striving toward success, will, talent and their common political views and conceptions of economic expedience, preservation of stability and achieving prosperity.

As far as the place and the role of the clan mentality in the life of the Kazakhs is concerned, practically any Kazakh will answer your question of clan belonging to a reasonable degree of accuracy. He could tell you of his geographical

origins and, more accurately, of his clan and its history. Then he'll tell you of his family ties that bind him with other members of society. On occasion he may joke about other Kazakh clans, each of which holds a specific function in popular folklore, or has certain weaknesses and funny characteristics.⁶ But he will never tell you how his belonging to a certain clan has promoted, for example, his progression at work or his financial successes. All that is left is for you to content yourself with indeterminate rumours and unverified information.

However, you do have the chance to learn to what extent the legends of the Kazakhs' clan system correspond with reality. For this you have to enter from within, meaning you have to become related, marry or be adopted; become a member of this clan. Only in this event and only after many, many years have past, when your children and perhaps your grandchildren have grown up as genuine Kazakhs, will you start to understand how the mechanism of the Kazakhs' close congenic relations really works. But no sooner the Kazakh national psychology formed under the strong influence of traditional factors. However, modern-day factors, as with a modern-day way of life, have had a major impact on them, too.

In times gone by there was a not unkindly joke, for which the Kazakhs are obliged to their derisive neighbors (probably the Tatars). They said that if a Russian gets rich, he will buy himself a cow; if an Uzbek (or a Sart in the original⁷) gets rich, he will build himself another house; if a Kazakh gets rich, he will take himself another wife. This saying bears witness not to the popularity of polygamy among the Kazakhs and not to the hyper-sexual leanings of this nation. What it speaks of is the presence of an institution of status; on the importance of social status for the Kazakhs, something that was determined to a great extent by the number of households. Each household is a separate *jurta* (nomad's tent), a separate herd and a separate family. This means that a well-established polygamist was a potential forefather of a new clan. And this is a ticket to the train of history. However, there were also poorly established polygamists among the Kazakhs. On the whole, though, we have spoken already about the relations of the Kazakhs to their iron-willed wives. And this relationship was no good at promoting the blossoming of polygamy.

And so, in their dreams and prejudices, the Kazakhs always devoted much attention to the issue of status. To occupy a place just a little bit higher was the cherished dream of every dweller of the steppe. In the traditional hierarchy it was physically impossible to rise to the very top: all vacant places in the prestigious clans, the Tore and the Kozha, were taken by the descendants of Genghis-Khan and the Prophet Mohammed. Therefore the simple Kazakhs set about creating their own hierarchy and a new aristocracy, consisting of wise law-makers, gallant leaders and privates (*batyrs*) and zealous organizers of the economy *bais*. All this new aristocracy submitted to the traditional authorities, the sultans and the khans, with extreme reluctance.

After the Russians came and after the establishment of a Russian administrative system in the Kazakh steppe, many Kazakhs happily rushed into employment in Russian organizations, where they could receive the high social status they cherished and therefore stand out from their fellow tribesmen. This process had a serious, positive effect: by the early 20th century Kazakh society had a powerful intel-

lectual streak of specialists in the most varied of spheres, educated in the European style. After the Revolution, the Kazakhs found that they had to start all over again in many areas. But here, too, the striving to assert oneself in the new hierarchical system was also manifested. However, on this occasion the price was high: the Stalinist purges in the spirit of "nativisation"⁸ of the bureaucratic apparatus regularly created vacant spaces, to be filled by new victims.

In the second half of the 20th century new stimuli and new status symbols appeared in addition to position held: place of residence (capital), car, *dacha* (a cottage), academic diploma, etc. Occasionally, somewhere in the far south, in neglected villages, polygamists could still be found; followers of traditional symbols of status. After the fall of the Soviet system in 1991, everything changed radically. The Kazakhs, just like other nations of the socialist world, came up against the challenge presented by items representing status and prestige, characteristic for the entire world. At first the new Kazakh elite eyed the owners of luxury cars and yachts, villas and palaces, designer clothes and Swiss watches with wonder and envy. Privatization and the new economic order enabled some of them very soon to touch this world of luxury, but they became none the happier for it.

Another section of the Kazakhs dreamed not of symbols of material status but of actual prosperity. This means the power and economic might that were held by familiar leaders of the globalized economy, heads of major corporations and banks. This category of Kazakhs set about creating a similar world in their own back yard, simulating a pseudo-globalized social hierarchy. If in the West the "nouveau Kazakhs" had managed to establish strong relations and had forced others to acknowledge them as part of the "Brave New World"⁹, at home, where in no time they created whole new cities, entire sections of industry, a wonderful banking system, a completely new mass media and where they flooded the market with state-of-the-art goods, they remained the same as they had been, both for themselves and for others: young people who had grown up in modest conditions and who had been raised in families with a harsh socialist psychology.

A vicious circle ensued: dreams push the "nouveau Kazakhs" to achieve the latest heights and overcome new challenges, but it is no easy matter getting out of the embraces of traditional psychology and one's own mentality. Each time the new status is placed in doubt by the surroundings. With each turn of Kazakh history, this tale repeats itself every time. Today we observe how the traditional Kazakh identity, with its funny prejudices and naive delusions encounters once again the challenge of the contemporary. However, there is almost no doubt that on this occasion, too, it will remain on its feet; it will experience the latest breakdown of social relations, to finally draw up the previous hierarchy of values, based on close congeneric and marital, brotherly and amicable links and which is democratic, plethoric and vibrant in its essence. When this cycle ends, for whatever reason, then the Kazakhs will end their existence, too.

During the period of modernization in the 20th century, the role of the Kazakh woman in society underwent a change, but her status in the family as the commander-in-chief remained unaltered. This enabled the Kazakhs, alongside strong, close family ties, to survive in the literal sense of the word over the course of various demographic and social disasters of the tempestuous last century.

However, relationships in the love sense changed dramatically. Under the course of communist modernisation, Kazakh girls willingly supported a rejection of archaic traditions, were delighted to dress in European clothes and came to behaving in a much more uninhibited way with the opposite sex (unfortunately, someones started even to smoke). However, judging by the fact that, until about the middle of the 20th century, Kazakh businessmen gave their preference to Russian and Tatar girls, they still failed to gain satisfaction from the relaxed approach of Kazakh girls. This happened by the 1950-1960s, when urbanization and the urban lifestyle in Kazakhstan became universal. The generation of our parents, whose youth was spent in this time, considered itself very progressive and liberated.

Our generation, whose youth was spent during the sexual revolution of the 1970s, saw its parents as an object of ridicule and an example of traditional archaicism. Today we are coming to be viewed in the same way by our own children, who see us as the so-called "Sovoks,"¹⁰ who, by a strange coincidence outlived their own country, the Soviet Union.

One way or another, the relationships between young people in the latter half of the 20th century altered significantly; they became freer and the compulsion to marriage disappeared. The *kalym* transformed into a seldom-encountered and exotic custom. Relations became simpler, and the traditional system of close family ties was seriously eroded and considerably weakened.

The generation that is now creating the new state and which controls an independent Kazakhstan is comprised of the "children of the stagnation," i.e. people who grew up in this period. The vast majority of these people are either citizens of Almaty, or people who were educated in Almaty at that time. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in that era, in the 1960s and 1970s, the character of the city's residents was formed: a mix of refinement and opportunism, finesse and disorder, chumminess and snobbism, internationalism and brotherhood. For the young, Alma-Ata was a city of joy, love and youth, open to the sun, the mountains and the fresh air and imbued with clear light.

In the 1960s and 1970s a kind of subculture took shape, carried by the youth and, primarily, by the students. Many from this subculture had features that were common with the youth culture of other Central Asian capitals and generally of the major Soviet cities, but there was something else, something difficult to pinpoint, which made those from Alma-Ata different from the rest and which interrelated them and help them be recognised in other republics, in Moscow and then abroad as well. During the spring and summer evenings, when the air in the center of the city becomes soft and full of the aromas from the foothills of Alatau, the lanes and squares would fill with young people and the place would come alive on the benches beneath the canopy of the trees; the strumming of guitars would accompany songs about love, friendship and brotherhood, eternal and beautiful.

If the capital city had remained in Almaty we would most likely be seeing a continuation of former traditions, retained by the former elite, based in the south and thinking in Soviet stereotypes. However, the move of the capital yielded a surprising result, which is clearly what the authors of the project were counting on. Astana became the center for the formation of a new Kazakhstani identity, more than Kazakh, more than Soviet, more than Russian, more than regional

and more than clan-based. That said, the former differences between residents are still retained to a great extent.

The Kazakh officials moved to a small provincial town, where the infrastructure left much to be desired. Refined bureaucrats were housed several to a hostel room, forcing them to recall their distant student past with its disorderly and modest way of life. Similar conditions awaited them at the workplace, as there were simply no regular, modern offices at all. On the whole this was all reminiscent of the development of the Virgin Lands in the 1950s, so the officials were compared with the pioneers of that time. However, unlike during the Soviet period, no one planned to raise monuments or name highways in their honor.

Linked with a certain comic element to this situation, although in reality it was incredibly dramatic (the customary way of life for thousands of people had changed head over heels overnight), a large number of jokes appeared, often arising from a real situation. Thus, it was customary to believe that moving from Almaty to Astana meant passing four phases. The first was "implantation." The immigrant was introduced to an alien and hostile environment and it was awaited to see how this southern flower would take to the harsh northern soil. If the implantation passed more or less successfully, the next phase would ensue, known as the "alcoholization". In this instance, no special explanation is surely needed. In congested living conditions in a hostel or in an apartment block (when a ministry received its housing quota, all employees were moved into one building) a group of lonely men, away from other forms of entertainment (at first it was the men that headed for Astana) did not take long to remember their student ways and Soviet habits, the dominant of which was to spend time together over a bottle of vodka. With time this became the principal and favorite pastime.

The third phase, to become fatal for many families, was the so-called "tokalization."¹¹ Alas, during the early period of development of the new capital, all forced settlers arrived without their families. This living apart could drag on for years and not always at the fault of the government. In time all the officials received their own apartments, but their wives and families did not rush to leave their native Almaty. Moreover, many officials were accustomed to spend each weekend in the old capital, if finances would allow. For many years Astana was a ghost town on a Friday night, with everyone rushing to the railway station and the airport to get to Almaty. On Sunday evening or Monday morning a similar picture could be observed, only in reverse, from Almaty to Astana. And so it continued until the infuriated president ordered the officials to spend more time in the new capital.

Returning to the phenomenon of "tokalisation", without lawful wives and left to their own devices, the young and the very young men in Astana gradually found themselves sympathetic female hearts, prepared to smooth over their lonely existence. In time and as happens the world over, these ladies, truly attached to their chosen ones, began to lay claim to official status. This is how families were destroyed and new ones created, symbolizing not only the power of love but also a new state identity, only in a family context. Not everyone resolved to adopt such an experiment with the creation of a new family (sometimes in parallel with the first family in Almaty still existing), but there can be no doubt that this phenomenon was very widespread. Vigilant wives

succeeded in returning some to the bosom of the family or the return of the lost sheep back home, or they moved to the new capital themselves, thus bringing to an end the free-roaming life of these individuals.

Here we naturally arrive at the fourth and final phase of the modern Kazakhstan epic—the “evacuation”. This word speaks for itself and means the forced and sometimes hurried return of an individual to Almaty as a consequence of the influence of the second or the third factor and at times of both factors simultaneously. In the majority of cases this automatically signified the end of a career which, for a genuine bureaucrat is a fate worse than death. However, as a result, Astana performed a rare socio-historical experiment in the creation of a breed of official, steadfast in the face of deprivation and loyal to a single idea. Once they had passed through the principal phases, the bureaucrats could be used confidently in any circumstances, including expeditions to the Himalayas or the Antarctic. In terms of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, this meant that these people could work in any conditions, from Mongolia to the Sahara.

Initially, the newly-arrived Astana residents naturally evoked a whole range of feelings among the old residents with their presence and their behavior. These feelings were pity (for the Southerners who were unaccustomed to the truly Siberian local winters), mockery (look, someone’s got blown over by the wind; must be someone from Almaty), irritation (they don’t understand the local rules and they just want too much) and hatred (their arrival brought about astronomical price rises on absolutely everything, from housing to produce). On their part yesterday’s Almaty residents laughed and joked to their heart’s content about the provincial locals who to them were like backward residents of Tselinograd. A cause for mockery could be the lack of normal service in restaurants and shops, to which the Almaty residents were able to become accustomed over the years of market reforms, along with the local dialect, mannerisms and customs.

In this way, there were very few chances that these two groups of people, who grew up in the Soviet era, only in completely different conditions, could find any common ground. However, with time, the unthinkable began to happen. As the former Almaty residents grew up and had children of their own in Astana and the city occupied migrants from other regions of Kazakhstan, signs appeared of a new capital-city community. These young people saw themselves not as Almaty residents, not Akmola residents; not Southerners or Northerners, but fully-fledged residents of the new capital and citizens of a new Kazakhstan. The entire might of state propaganda worked flat out to form this new sense of solidarity.

Of course, the two capitals continue to compete with one another behind the scenes, but no longer in the way they did before. This is to a great extent thanks to the fact that the former Almaty residents have grown accustomed to life in the new capital, where they often have better and more modern apartments and where their salary is significantly higher than before; for many the opportunity has unfolded for a brilliant career. Their children do not remember Almaty and consider themselves residents of Astana. The customary way of life has changed, as have the former notions and habits. There can be no doubt that in future Astana will play

a prominent role in the fate of Kazakhstan and this process has actually already begun. At least no one can any longer refute its role in creating a new identity for Kazakhstan and breaking away from the Soviet past, a symbol of which (perhaps deservedly so) is seen by many as being the once resplendent Almaty.

Kazakhstan and its people have lived through a difficult history, which was often excessively harsh on them. The geography and the climate dictated that at the dawn of history the people who settled on this land were forced to fight for their survival. The fight for survival in adverse natural conditions was then supplemented with a struggle with a multitude of opponents. Kazakhstan has experienced the fall of many eras and civilizations, the most poignant of which was the separation from the old nomadic identity. Nevertheless many of its symbols still survive to this day. The last fall was only very recently, in 1991, and it still resonates painfully in the hearts of those who were raised on ideas of equality, justice and brotherhood.

However, history waits for no man and time moves inexorably on. Today Kazakhstan is trying to resolve several tasks at once: to modernize, technically, ideologically and morally, to build a national government and to integrate into globalization. These objectives are closely interconnected and, at times, they contradict one another.

A transition zone in a human, cultural and geographical sense, Kazakhstan today is the product of a peculiar synthesis of different ways to manage an economy, subordinating nomadic livestock farming, the agriculture of settled peoples and the industrial development of rich raw material resources. Finally, it joins various cosmogonical and religious concepts (Shamanism, Islam and Christianity) with certain political and social constructions, including or excluding tradition and modernity. As a result, the internal organization of Kazakhstan is a full reflection of its original state, coming out of the synthesis of the European model, transplanted from Russia, and the inner Turko-Muslim core, that has been preserved in the traditional sphere. All of this has created a polyethnic and multi-confessional Kazakhstani society.

Kazakhstan today is considered to be the most successful economy of the countries of the CIS. The process of economic transformations in Kazakhstan is a graphic example of the difficulties that have to be overcome on the way to a market economy, even for new independent states with the richest of resources. The country’s leaders inherited a situation that gave real grounds for optimism. The economy was diversified in nature and a reasonably well-developed processing industry and agricultural sector presented potential for a smooth transition to independence, by satisfying the material requests of the population to an extent that would preserve political stability.

However, the republic’s economy has come a long way and this path is characterized by a dramatic fall in production and a high level of inflation at the beginning of the 1990s, and a stabilization of the economy, slight economic growth and a drop in inflation at the end. By the end of the 1990s, Kazakhstan has come through a phase of macroeconomic stabilization, the creation of a financial system and privatization in the major sectors of the economy. From that time and to the present, the economy of Kazakhstan has been in the ascendancy.

Economic reforms, implemented under the leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev have led to serious sociopolitical changes. Kazakhstani business now has young entrepreneurs, who have graduated from famous institutes in Moscow or who hold degrees in economics, finance and the engineering sciences from the English-speaking world. In the early 1990s many of them became the owners of small and medium businesses or banks. They acquired the mentality of a liberal market economy and they were ready and able to run their business without state subsidies. These representatives of the younger generation received the best education, they established international contacts and they were not burdened with the ideological ballast of the Soviet period.

In Kazakhstan, just as in other liberal countries, there is a political opposition and no one denies this fact. To a great extent the advent of an opposition was the result of the economic reforms and here we should also mention the political pragmatism of the political elite in Kazakhstan, which coopts its rivals, not in the interests of preserving a monopoly of power, but in order to bind the principal political forces so as to avoid internal conflicts. In its turn, the opposition adheres to principles of loyalty and corporativity, if it wishes to take part in the political process. The Government has picked up and partly even implemented one of the central demands of the opposition, namely reform of electoral law but, at the same time, it has ensured the inclusion of mechanisms that stabilize the process of a change of power.

So what is today's Kazakhstan? It is a country that has successfully rid itself of the negative elements of the Soviet legacy; it is a country that is building an open and democratic society with a liberal spirit. Kazakhstan

is already coming out of the transition phase, where economic reforms come before those of a political nature. Encountering many problems and difficulties, Kazakhstan and its political elite have learnt to resolve them and this should be recognized as the principal achievement of the post-Soviet era.

From political, legal and psychological points of view Kazakhstan is a diverse society, the legacy of the Soviet era. The next unavoidable task facing the new Kazakhstani political class is the consolidation of the society.

The only departure in terms of strengthening the unitarity of Kazakhstan and the preservation of its political stability came to be the combination of the model of a unitary government and powerful presidential authority. The history of the Kazakh steppe is full of examples, when a threat from outside has rallied the nation and led to national and state unity. A similar situation can be observed today as well. The political elite is rallied together through common interests to preserve the state sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Kazakhstan's politicians operate pragmatically and avoid any ideological confrontation.

And yet Kazakhstan has that something which ensures optimism remains high. There are more and more young people in the country, who look with true faith to the future; they build this future and they represent this future in the present. For these young people, who have grown up and have fully developed in what is already an independent Kazakhstan, our worries and doubts mean far less. They are optimistic and, at the same time, not so naive as to fail to understand that Kazakhstan's future fully depends on them, on their will, their professionalism and their persistence in achieving their goals.

ENDNOTES:

¹ The "new" opposition is the name given to the opponents of official authority, which emerged and got rich in the course of the reforms, in contrast to the "old" opposition—the supporters of the communists and of socialism in the Soviet style.

² As regards the Arabs, we should remember that they too, not long before this, were also "ruthless nomads" in relation to the peoples they conquered in the course of the creation of the Caliphate. If we go further into analogies, we should remember that this role was fulfilled by all peoples when they entered history's center stage, be it the Teutons, the Slavs or others.

³ The people who gave their name to their republic figured under this odd name in the Soviet hierarchy. In Kazakhstan, the title nation is the Kazakhs; in Kyrgyziya it is the Kyrgyz people and so on. However, this does not relate to Russians in Russia, although the title nations in the Russian autonomous regions have no qualms about using this term.

⁴ The Zhuz was a union of tribes and clans in the Kazakh khanate. There were three principal Zhuzes, or Hordes, as they are better known: the Great, Middle and Small Hordes. The division of the Hordes coincided in terms of both composition and territory; on the one hand, with the territorial and administrative division of the Turkic states, sequentially replacing one another within Kazakhstan, while on the other hand, with economic and geographical zones, defining the routes and the radius of the nomadic wandering.

⁵ Instead of the term “Kazakh” it was suggested to use the term “Kazakhstani”.

⁶ See the appendix to this section.

⁷ Sart is how the nomads so contemptuously called their agrarian neighbors. After the creation of the Soviet republics of Central Asia in the 1920s, the Sarts, the Iranian- and Turkic-speaking population of the Fergana Valley and Maverennahr, took the ancient and proud name of “Uzbek”. This is how the Turkic-speaking Sarts in Chinese Turkistan acted, who called themselves “Taranchi.” They adopted the ancient name and came to be known as “Uyghurs”. What is most surprising is that over the course of the 20th century they really did develop into new nations. Both the former and the latter cannot stand the Kazakhs, who they unsuccessfully try to see as lower than themselves in a cultural and historical context.

⁸ Localization (nativization) was an official policy in the USSR, directed to preparing Soviet and party personnel in the national republics.

⁹ We have US President Bill Clinton to thank for this expression (Brave New World), coined from the novel of the same name by Aldous Huxley.

¹⁰ “Sovok” is a derogatory term for a resident of the Soviet Union, deprived of access to the good things from the Western market such as fashionable clothes and the other attributes of a consumer society. This labeling should have expressed disdain on the part of the young people, more progressive in terms of getting to know Western civilization, but in time it acquired a somewhat lyrical and gently nostalgic connotation.

¹¹ This flippant term comes from the Kazakh word “tokal”, meaning young (new) wife or, in this case, lover or girlfriend.