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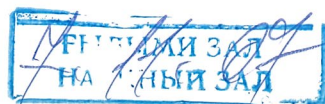
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Kazakhstan and the Problems of Ensuring Regional Stability in Central Asia

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In his address, *A New Kazakhstan in a New World*, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev argued that our state needs to step up its efforts to ensure regional stability. Many of Kazakhstan's problems are in fact crossborder in nature. They can only be solved jointly with neighboring countries. That is why the Kazakh leader was quite right to stress the need for expanding cooperation between Central Asian countries in order to seek solutions to such regional issues as, on the one hand, energy security and socioeconomic projects involving foreign capital, and, on the other, coordinating the fight against international terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking and other present-day threats [1].

We must start by recognizing that Central Asia, as a region, unites countries with similar economic and geographical, cultural and historical and religious features. In social and territorial terms, the people display certain common characteristics. As a result, Central Asia has its specific interests, not least in the sphere of ensuring regional stability. This stability must exist at three levels: stability in each country; in the region as a whole; and in countries bordering the region.

At this point we believe it is necessary to define clearly what we mean by this region. It is one thing to group together the newly independent states that emerged in Central Asia after the break-up of the Soviet Union. It is a very different matter to view the region in its more modern interpretation, i.e. including Afghanistan, the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region of China and Mongolia. That is why we suggest we should look at the issue of ensuring regional stability primarily within the context of the closer definition of Central Asia.

Stability in Central Asia today depends directly on the development of a new, just and democratic world order, which can guarantee an equal degree of security for all countries. At the same time, only through close cooperation can Central Asian countries achieve regional and internal stability and solve old and new problems.

One of the main challenges to regional security is uncertainty about the political future of the ruling regimes in certain Central Asian countries. The crisis in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005 created a precedent for changing a regime in a

violent, unconstitutional way. This was echoed by the Andijan events in Uzbekistan in May 2005. The political regimes in some Central Asian countries are currently unstable and there is a serious likelihood of further destabilization. The grounds for concern stem from a growth in people's dissatisfaction with the weak economic performance of some governments, the continuing fall in living standards and the lack of political modernization. The post-revolutionary situation in Kyrgyzstan is equally a cause of concern. The country is facing an imbalance between its political and economic sectors. The relationship between the various centers of power, on which stable state governance ultimately depends, remains very fragile.

A key priority for ensuring security in regional countries is economic stability. In this respect, the situation is not developing smoothly. Kazakhstan has in many ways managed to overcome the problems of transition from the Soviet planned economy to a market economic model, whereas we can see a different picture in other countries of the region. Meanwhile, the global economy is developing in new ways that affect the international division of labor. This is creating new risks and problems that cannot be solved by countries individually.

In these conditions, the Kazakh president proposes to use the opportunities of regional development to bring about a deep and mutually beneficial integration between the regional countries, in particular, to agree on developing a favorable business climate throughout Central Asia [2].

Terrorism and religious extremism meanwhile represent a serious challenge to national and regional security. A powerful generator of terrorism and extremism is the complicated socioeconomic and political processes that are taking place in Middle Eastern and South Asian countries. Terrorist and other criminal groups are actively carrying out operations in these countries. A related threat stems from the radical separatist organizations that aim to undermine the independence and territorial integrity of these countries.

At present, the Central Asian countries are on the frontlines of the fight against religious extremism. The operations of extremist groups are becoming increasingly visible. Campaigning on the basis of a false and distorted interpretation of Islam, these organizations are trying to impose their system of values on the secular societies of the region. Their

aim is to undermine the constitutional systems of Central Asian countries and create a theocratic state in the region – an Islamic caliphate that would, by its nature, change the political-geographical map of the region.

Ignoring these negative trends may lead to serious consequences for the domestic political situation in the region. There is a threat here of a vicious circle that is characteristic of a number of developing countries: poverty creates the conditions for the emergence of terrorism, which, in turn, deprives the economy of investment, threatening the commercial activity of the people.

International organized crime groups have grown to an unprecedented scale in recent years. Along with expanding their sphere of activities (drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal migration, arms smuggling and financial machinations), national criminal groups are in the process of developing into multinational networks. Their organizational and financial resources are also increasing. The growing globalization of the economy and the freedom of movement of capital, goods and services make borders increasingly “transparent”, enabling criminals to move easily from one country to another, while the law-enforcement agencies have to act strictly within the sovereign territories of their states and have limited powers and resources.

The events in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, despite degrees of controversy and differences in interpretation, have all served to reinforce the correctness and timeliness of the market and political reforms that are being carried out in our country. The “color” revolutions were possible mainly because the governments of these countries had systematically failed to carry out reforms, thus generating social discontent and paralyzing the powers of the authorities.

It is worth mentioning at this point the obvious fact, repeatedly proven in world practice, that democracy cannot be imposed on society from outside. Civil society and democratic institutions have to undergo a certain evolution, they have to “ripen” and become part of a country’s political culture.

Under the influence of socio-political processes in Russia and the Central Asian neighbors of Kazakhstan, the role of religious factors is growing in the region, accompanied by the spread of religious extremism and intolerance. This trend is threatening mutual understanding and accord between the various peoples living in the region.

The need to cope with environmental disasters and epidemics also demands joint efforts by the regional countries. The former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground and the dried-up bed of the Aral Sea remain major environmental disaster zones inherited by Central Asian countries from the Soviet Union. Large masses of land have become useless for human activities. The colossal damage inflicted on the countries of the region and the health of their population is hard to estimate.

The regional countries’ state environmental protection bodies are still failing to pay proper attention to halting the degradation of the environment and to preserving our historic heritage of unique ecological systems and the habitat of rare and precious species of flora and fauna. The encroachment of mankind on nature and predatory economic activities aimed at quick profits are exhausting our biological resources and further exacerbating the environmental situation. Poaching and illegal trade in wild animals are also posing a real threat to many rare species. Another new problem created as a result of industrial activities by the newly independent states is the pollution of the Caspian Sea shelf.

In this situation, ensuring the equal involvement of regional countries in the global economy is possible only thanks to regional integration. Kazakhstan, which is successfully demonstrating the efficiency of its economic model and the stability of its political system, is ready to act as “a regional locomotive of the Central Asian economy.” This demands the expansion of cooperation not only in the economy, but also in the political and cultural and humanitarian spheres, as well as the field of security. In this context, the Kazakh president stressed that “we will further strengthen our role and reputation as a responsible member of regional cooperation and the international community” [3].

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2. Ditto.
3. Ditto.

Asian Security and Central Asia by 2020

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Asia is the world's most densely-populated continent, very diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion, as well as the form of state system and ideology. These circumstances explain the contradictory path of the development of Asian countries and the opposite directions of their foreign policies.

This report discusses topical aspects of the Asian security system by 2020 and the potential of their influence on security in Central Asia in the form of brief analysis of key development problems in five of the region's countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

I. TOPICAL ASPECTS OF ASIAN SECURITY

The modern world is changing rapidly, and these changes can be equally felt in and be dangerous both for traditionally weak and vulnerable states and for prosperous countries in Asia. The main modern trend bringing these changes to Asian countries is globalisation, or, to be precise, its specific effects in the spheres of economy, international relations, environmental protection and humanitarian development.

Asia has large reserves of natural resources, which are conveniently geographically located in zones of important transport arteries, and the main centres of power. This results in conflict potential because regional countries will always be on the constant orbit of the strategic interests of their more powerful neighbours.

As a result, Asian countries are becoming increasingly vulnerable to regional and global challenges, often turning into an arena of confrontation between greater regional powers; especially if major powers that were in more or less similar starting positions but have aims and tasks inadequate to the position they desire to occupy in Asia, then ensuring stability in the region can be regarded as being hard to achieve. These factors make it very interesting to look at the links between them, and this report will pay particular attention to this.

1.1. Topical aspects of the Asian security system. One of the obvious conflicts of global scale today is confrontation between the Islamic and Western civilisations, which has become particularly obvious since 11 September 2001. Moreover, in addition to threats from an international terrorist network, the issue of using a fundamentally new strategy based on ideological and information-propaganda confrontation is becoming increasingly topical. War for the minds and moods of masses and the extrapolation of terrorist threats in some states will be the most typical tactic of international terrorist groups and organisations' activities.

The most serious threat to the Asian regional security system will be posed by a global terrorist network with its active desire to access new nuclear, biological, bacteriological and information technology which is particularly dangerous in the situation of the openness of modern society.

The likelihood of the uncontrolled spread of nuclear technology, weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them is high. An additional danger is hidden behind the fact that nuclear weapons created by North Korea and Iran may lead to retaliatory nuclear programmes by Japan, South Korea and other countries. According to forecasts, the number of "nuclear states" will reach 10-14 by 2020.

Great danger is posed by the likelihood of nuclear components spreading into terrorist organisations because it is not that hard to create a nuclear bomb with present-day knowledge. By 2020, a number of terrorist organisations and ideological-political illegal military organisations and structures in the Middle East and South Asia may get hold of primitive nuclear technology components. This will lead to another escalation of tension in the Asian region. The military and political diktat by Western countries towards ambitious Asian countries – North Korea, Iran and some Arab countries – will only worsen the situation, acting as a catalyst in these circumstances. In addition, the rich-poor divide will exacerbate in many Asian countries by 2020 and some countries will be "proletarianised" as the result of moving heavy industries there from the first-world countries. This will lead to turning country-nations into state-classes and spreading the working class mentality among the overwhelming majority of population in Asian countries, which may finally shatter the belief in the myth about the universality of the Western values of liberalism and democracy and cause a new surge of political activity in non-Western societies, above all, communist ideology and Islamic fundamentalism.

1.2. Build-up of resources and energy shortages in Asia. In the beginning of the 21st century, demand for oil and gas has been growing, mainly from the growing consumption of these raw materials in China, India and other new industrial countries in Asia. According to the International Energy Agency, the world demand for energy will grow by 37-50% by 2030. In 1999, oil prices stood at \$15-\$17 per barrel, whereas this figure may exceed \$100 by 2020. At the same time, the greater part of world oil and gas resources will be concentrated in extracting countries in the Middle East, the CIS and Latin America. These are mainly Iran, Venezuela and Russia, whereas oil output in the North Sea and the USA will drop significantly.

The rapidly-growing energy market in China and India opens up huge prospects for Russia and Central Asian countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan). Over the past few years, these countries have started building a number of powerful pipelines in European and Asian directions. The combined capacity of pipelines under construction is comparable to that of the existing ones. However, the issue of filling them with energy sources remains open.

The problem is that the increasing export obligations of Russia and Central Asian countries are not seeing symmetrical growth rates in the extraction of energy resources in the countries. The number of prospecting oil and gas projects by 2020 will steadily decrease by over three-quarters and the commissioning of new fields by four-fifths. It is no accident that Russia's intention to increase energy supplies to Asian markets and bring its shares up to 30% of the total volume of energy exports by 2020 (this is a minimum of 64 billion cu. m. of gas and 60 million tonnes of oil a year) has literally shocked Europe. The EU is concerned, and very soundly, that there will not be enough gas for everyone.

All these processes have already resulted in the formation of a global energy market which will function according to the principle of competition between consumers, not producers. And this is a fundamentally new situation in the world and new rules of game.

1.3. Specifics and problems of migration processes in Asia. Many researchers increasingly often talk about borders between certain countries gradually losing their traditional importance and becoming transparent and mostly fulfilling functions of interacting territories with different political risks. The transparency of borders is turning large-scale migration from poor countries to the more successful ones in the region into a very serious challenge to Asian security. The migration problem will be a greater world issue than ever before by 2020, because the trend of the movement of people from poor and unstable countries to richer and stable ones has become a universal phenomenon of globalisation. This trend, caused by acute political and socioeconomic reasons, is topical not only in the West but also in many parts of Asia. For example, this problem is already present in Russia and a number of Middle Eastern countries (monarchies in the Arabian Peninsula, Syria and Jordan), Central (Kazakhstan) and South Asia (India).

For example, a large number of labour migrants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova try to get to Russia every year, whereas Kazakhstan is a magnet for labour migrants from the former Soviet republics in Central Asia – Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Because of the war and instability in Iraq a huge flow of Iraqi refugees and migrants (now they make up more than 2 millions) is heading for Syria and Jordan, whereas Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Oman are flooded by Muslim labour migrants from South and Southeast Asian countries. India is attracting great numbers of people from neighbouring Bangladesh, and Pakistan has long been flooded by people from neighbouring Afghanistan.

Another problem is the trend of internal migration, which has become a reality for many Asian countries. The urbanisation process, uneven regional development and socioeconomic modernisation in Asian countries in the beginning of the 21st century caused large-scale internal migration. This problem is a particular issue for China where the migration of farmers, which started in the 1980s, acquired unseen scales back in the early 1990s because the freeing up of huge masses of rural population from agricultural production as the result

of reforms carried out in China in the 1980s significantly changed the structure of labour resources in the rural areas and helped them migrate to towns.

According to the fifth Chinese census, China is experiencing growth trends not only in the flow of migrants but also in the trend of their migration to other provinces. About 144 million people lived in places where they were not registered, according to the census. If we exclude the 23 million people who make up the urban population, then the number of local migrants stood at 121 million people. According to the latest census, farmers who do not live in towns accounted for over 50% of the total number of the Chinese working class. These are, mainly, migrants from rural areas who have turned into an important social category not only for the town but also for the town economy in general.

Another, larger-scale migration in Asian countries may be caused by global warming, namely, as the result of the rise in the sea level. According to scientific forecasts, in the near future because of the greenhouse effect the sea level will rise by 1.5 metres, which will lead to increasing the number of floods, man-made disasters, soil degradation and large-scale desertification. As the result of the climate change coastal regions will be flooded and farming yields will drop in tropical and subtropical countries, increasing demand for food imports. The destruction of natural ecosystems may destroy clean water sources. Environmental disasters may turn into the main driving force of migration in South and Southeast Asia. For example, the rise in the sea level may flood huge areas in Bangladesh and China and drive out 140 million people. In Bangladesh, where the population will double by 2020, according to estimates, this rise will destroy social and environmental stability and may have a negative impact on security in neighbouring South Asian countries, above all, India.

Desertification and soil degradation may turn into an environmental disaster and cause large-scale migration in the Middle East, where the Sahara and Asian deserts are on the offensive. The death of the Aral Sea in Central Asia became the largest environmental disaster in the 20th century, destroying the environmental equilibrium in the entire region (see below).

II. CENTRAL ASIA BY 2020

The Western strategy of the Great Game for oil resources in the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, judging by all accounts, has now turned out to be a failure and does not sustain any serious grounds. The West lacks a clear understanding of the processes in Central Asia. As for the USA's military presence in the region, taking into account the consequences of withdrawing the US air base from Uzbekistan and the possibility of withdrawing one from Kyrgyzstan, it will not have a great impact on Central Asian countries in the long-term. It is most likely that by 2020 US air bases will be withdrawn from Central Asia, including Afghanistan. In this situation, Russia and China will have increasingly growing influence on the main aspects of foreign policies of Central Asian countries, influencing domestic policy to some extent or another.

The additional complexity of this situation is caused by the fact that Central Asian countries have not yet drawn up clear positions and long-term regional strategies. The unpredictability of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, open clashes of major powers in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the political uncertainty of Turkmenistan's future – all these are the result

of a complex and tangled situation which has developed in Central Asian countries. Consequently, any fluctuation in the regional countries' foreign policies should be considered as a response, which reflects their current possibilities and needs, to growing pressure from foreign forces.

2.1. Geopolitical and economic situation in Central Asian countries at the moment. The current configuration of forces in Central Asia has been mainly caused by the West's inadequate policy and, as a result, active involvement in regional affairs by Russia and China. That is why the main foreign players at the moment, who influence the future development of Central Asian countries, are Russia and China. For its part, the growth in the influence of Russia and China in the region has led to significant expansion in cooperation between them and Central Asian countries in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which in the long-term may draw up a new geopolitical scenario for the development of the situation in the region. Despite the absence of the ideological aspect, political and economic rapprochement between Russia, China and Central Asian countries within the SCO has a structural form and a certain development vector. One can say that quickly acquiring a momentum, the organisation, in terms of its future development, is entering the home stretch and all the expected geopolitical changes will gradually take a stable form, content and prospects of development. It is most likely that at the next stage of its development the SCO will develop in line with the geopolitical scenario drafted in Moscow and Beijing because the socioeconomic processes that are taking place in the region can already direct the situation in the region.

The events around the withdrawal of the US troops from Uzbekistan and tension between Washington and Tashkent are a classical example of how a strategy "should not be" built towards Central Asian countries. In the USA, it seems, many have already admitted that they committed a strategic mistake in this direction. At least, this can be concluded on the basis of numerous articles and analyses written by Western experts on this topic.

In this context, economic relations between Russia and China and Central Asian countries have been intensifying in recent years. At the moment, the scale of Russian and Chinese economic presence in Central Asia is more or less comparable. However, for the regional countries economic relations with China have somewhat great prospects than with Russia, for example a higher growth of trade is currently being observed between China and Kazakhstan compared to trade between Russia and Kazakhstan.

At the same time, the development of relations with China for Central Asian countries will be accompanied by strengthening the raw materials orientation of their national economies which will lead to gradual but steady economic exhaustion of the regional states. For example, according to statistics for the regional countries, trade between China and Central Asian states is characterised by a stable surplus in favour of China. Moreover, China is increasingly acting as a supplier of finished products to the region.

According to statistics for 2004, over 80% of Kazakh exports to China were raw materials (energy 58%, ferrous and nonferrous metals 24%). In return, a range of goods supplied from China, included machinery and metal products (about 69%), foodstuffs (about 9%) and other goods¹. Kyrgyz exports to China, according to statistics for 2003, were

textile raw materials (mainly leather and wool – 23%) and scrap ferrous and nonferrous metals (about 60%). Chinese imports included machinery and equipment (about 11%) and foodstuffs and other essentials (about 65%)². Uzbek exports to China included services (48%), vehicles and equipment (19%), cotton fibre (4%), foodstuffs (4.6%) and nonferrous metals (1.5%). Chinese supplies included mainly machinery (about 48%), chemicals (about 19%) and foodstuffs (9%)³. Turkmen supplies to China mainly included energy sources (about 83%), cotton fibre and other textile raw materials (about 5%). Chinese supplies mainly included machinery and metal products (about 60%)⁴.

The result of this trend may be the emergence of socio-economic crisis zones in Central Asia, which poses a threat to security in regional countries. Potential states where the emergence of these zones is possible by 2020 are, judging by all accounts, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

No less a threat is posed by a scenario for the rivalry between the main centres of power – Russia and China – for influence in the region. Despite cooperation between Russia and China in Central Asia, the strengthening of the SCO's position as a new regional centre of power, a number of serious disagreements are growing in the positions of Moscow and China in this direction because each of them understands the organisation's priorities differently and pursues their own national interests in the region, which will lead to serious contradictions. The essence of this is simple – Russia is aiming to preserve its influence in Central Asian countries and block this region off from China's growing influence. China, in contrast, is aiming to increase its influence in the region by weakening Russia's influence. Accordingly, this explains the presence of the number of disputed and contradictory points between Russia and China that are already tending to grow.

2.2. The prospects for demographic processes in Central Asia. Other, no less important development aspects, which may change the economic and demographic situation in the region, are the problems of and prospects for internal migration processes in Central Asia. The matter is that in recent years the widespread trend of migration of people has been observed in Central Asia along the principle of from poor and unstable countries to richer and stable ones. For some regional countries (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) this means the loss of human resources, shortages of specialists and a drop in their economic development, for others (Kazakhstan) – the problem of en masse floods of cheap labour, changes in the ethnic structure and the further deterioration of social problems in society.

Former Soviet Central Asian republics – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan – and Afghanistan, the region's southern edge, are regarded as politically unstable and socially unconfident. This permanent smouldering hot-spot is pulsing migration to the north towards Kazakhstan and Russia, and further to EU countries.

Depending on the situation, outward migration from there sometimes gets stronger, sometimes weaker, but it is not going to die down in the next few years. A wide range of events may increase the migration flow from this region. This might be another deterioration of the political situation

¹ V. Paramonov China and Central Asia: State of and Prospects for Economic Relations. Conflict Studies Research Centre. 2005, page 4.

² The Kyrgyz Economic Development, Industry and Trade Ministry. Bishkek, 2004.

³ The Uzbek State Statistics Committee. Tashkent, 2004.

⁴ The Turkmenistan Information and Business Centre website at: <http://www.turkmenbusiness.org/turkmen.asp?id=5>.

in Kyrgyzstan and a new spiral of civil confrontation in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, a quite probable (for many reasons) socio-political crisis in Turkmenistan and the intensification of separatist trends in Afghanistan. Each country of "the region's southern edge" is potentially explosive.

Other important reasons are environmental problems: the continuing desertification in Central Asia and the growing shortages of water resources in the region with the overpopulated Fergana valley and other oases, the environmental disaster in the Aral Sea region and so on.

Any of these factors will inevitably lead to a sharp growth in the migration flow to the north. The first country on its way – Kazakhstan is in some ways more attractive than Russia, firstly, thanks to its geographical closeness and a more familiar ethno-cultural climate, and, secondly, thanks to its successful economic development and the stability of its political system. Unwillingly, Kazakhstan will accept the first blow of the Central Asian migration wave and Russia will only encounter the second wave. Very soon, Kazakhstan, located in the centre of the major Asia-Europe migration route, will experience increasingly more serious difficulties in controlling migration flows.

For example, Uzbek experts estimate that from 600,000 to 1.7 million people migrate from Uzbekistan to Russia every year. A third of them stay in Kazakhstan. These are official estimates by Uzbek experts. If it continues this way, the situation which happened in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan's Jalalabad Region may repeat itself in Kazakhstan's southern regions. In Jalalabad Region, the majority of local population, some 70%, are ethnic Uzbeks who are now demanding that Uzbek be granted the status of the second state language and that ethnic Uzbeks be allowed to fill in government posts in the local executive and legislative bodies.

It is absolutely obvious that the best preventive solution to this problem will be measures to assist economic development and political stabilisation in Central Asian countries. Moreover, since Kazakhstan and Russia, for the reasons mentioned earlier, are the countries which are interested most in solving these problems, efficient and coordinated measures should be expected from them.

Another problem is internal migration which has already become a reality for most Central Asian countries. The urbanisation process, unequal regional development and socioeconomic modernisation in the region caused large-scale internal migration. These migration processes, which have reached levels that have not been seen since the late 1990s, are continuing their growth trends every year.

2.3. The political and socio-economic development prospects for Central Asian countries by 2020. Central Asia, because of its geopolitical position, is a catalyst of its kind for world superpowers' policies. This fact was obvious back in the early 1990s when many foreign forces firmly went in and got actively involved in forming the region's geopolitical configuration.

At the same time, the 15-year watershed has showed that the development scenario for each of the region's countries to a greater extent depends on their domestic situation. The only exceptions are Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, because these countries remain vulnerable to foreign influence and the geopolitical development of the situation emerging around Central Asia.

Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's socioeconomic and political successes provide an example of the most successful development among regional countries, and this trend will continue until 2020. The situation in the country is favourable

compared to its neighbours. The gap between Kazakhstan and its neighbours in the region is so wide that the issue of the country's growing influence on regional development will soon be a topical one. In addition to the oil sector, which is the major sector of Kazakhstan economy, the Kazakh Government is now implementing a significant cluster industrial approach. They have identified seven sectors, for all of which they are trying to build cluster strategies. In each sector, there are many interesting elaborations, the point here being that Kazakhstan is now the obvious economic leader in the region.

However, the growing rivalry for Kazakhstan's energy resources makes it vulnerable to foreign geopolitical players. The likelihood of Kazakhstan falling into significant political dependence on Russia in the near future remains high. Similarly, the likelihood of Kazakhstan falling into significant economic dependence on China also remains very high. A possible exacerbation in the rivalry between Russia and the West and Russia and China for Kazakh resources may worsen the situation.

In the political context, Kazakhstan is currently taking large-scale measures to democratise its political system. The experience of all the previous reforms in this sphere proves its validity and vitality. However, the issue of institutionalising an efficient mechanism for power change remains the keystone of political realities which will influence a wide range of domestic political aspects of society's development.

However, the main internal factor of Kazakhstan's sustainable development are the prospects for diversifying the Kazakh economy and switching from a raw materials-based economy to a competitive, knowledge-based and hi-tech national economy.

Uzbekistan. The instability of the political regime and inadequate model of socioeconomic development will remain the main problem for Uzbekistan over the next five to 10 years. However, by 2020 under the pressure of socioeconomic and political problems accumulated in society the country will take important steps to reform its political and economic systems.

At the same time, some observers' conclusions that Uzbekistan is "a failed state" are an absolute exaggeration. The country has a great potential in terms of demography and culture. In terms of the size of its population, Uzbekistan is the largest country in Central Asia. As of 2005, there were 26 million people living in the country, or over 44% of the total population living in all the five Central Asian countries⁵. Human resources are its most significant component, which is absent in all the other Central Asian countries. That is why in terms of demographic and cultural expansion Uzbekistan is already the leader in the region.

The issue of power change or succession will be solved in Uzbekistan by 2020. Of course, there will be some changes in the meantime. How painless and stable the power change will be in Uzbekistan will depend on the situation of its internal stability and security in the country and in the region. President Islam Karimov will most likely be replaced by a compromise and weak figure whose arrival will mean movement towards gradual reforms in the country's political and economic systems, although the issue of a violent power change remains open.

⁵ The Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 2004. Statistical Selection. The Uzbek Tashkent: State Statistics Committee, 2005. – P. 8-16.

In any case after a power change there will not be a radical destruction of the existing model of the state-political system of Uzbekistan because this may explode the country from within. Moreover, this scenario for the development of the situation will not benefit anyone because internal destabilisation in Uzbekistan may have an impact on the interests of its regional neighbours. This means that the power change will be carried out in a closed regime, as the result of agreements within the Uzbek elite, in a similar way as it took place in Turkmenistan, without foreign powers' active involvement. The approaches of the West, Russia and China to this issue, we should assume, are clear. The current strategies of foreign powers are based on the denial of support to forces that are in opposition to regional governments. The West to a greater extent than Russia and China is interested in Tashkent's stability because disintegration in this country may produce unpredictable results for the whole southern edge of the region.

Kyrgyzstan. By 2020, Kyrgyzstan will, unconditionally, remain the weakest link of the Central Asian countries in terms of many development parameters. Divisions in the political elite, conflict potential in the political sphere in a complex socioeconomic situation and the geographical disunity of its territory due to the country's predominantly hard-to-reach mountainous terrain and the diverse ethnic composition of the population create unfavourable conditions for the long-term stabilisation of the situation in the country.

Moreover, under the current rates of migration of the most active population from the country Kyrgyzstan will face shortages of human resources by 2020. For example, 20,000-25,000 people leave Kyrgyzstan every year. Initially, they go to work but later stay there permanently. According to official figures, in 2005 alone about 40,000 citizens left Kyrgyzstan for mainly Russia and Kazakhstan. At a government meeting these figures were regarded not as migration but as the "evacuation" of the population. Despite high unemployment rates, many sectors of the Kyrgyz economy are already facing shortages of specialists, for example in power engineering, education and the health service. According to official statistics, 90% of labour migrants are people aged between 19 and 45, of whom about 50% are with university degrees. This trend will continue to grow in the future⁶.

The situation with migration is an illustrative reflection of the continuing crisis in the development of the political, economic and social spheres of the state, a combined expression of which is the crisis of state governance. If power continues to remain weak and foreign factors increase, Kyrgyzstan will face the threat of defragmentation along the spheres of influence of superpowers and neighbours along the north-south divide.

Of course, Kyrgyzstan will preserve its independence, although in many aspects this independence will be formal. Moreover, foreign influence on Bishkek's domestic political processes and foreign policy will have some extent, whereas the Kyrgyz economy's dependence on neighbouring countries and international financial institutions will be more obvious. For example, Kyrgyzstan's dependence on Russia, Kazakhstan and China will be clearly seen in the political aspect and in some sectors of its economy, whereas

⁶ I. Shestakov. Labour Migration from Kyrgyzstan: People Have Immigration Intentions. The Ferghana website at: <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4458>.

international financial institutions will influence structural reforms in the Kyrgyz economy. The Kyrgyz economy is already dependent on foreign investment in many ways – joint production and exports, i.e. on involvement in the system of international trade and orientation on exports. For instance, "gold constitutes 35% of Kyrgyzstan exports. The same on fruits, vegetables, dairy products, sugar, tobacco, canned foods and glass, which are exported to many countries too"⁷.

Moreover, it is not ruled out that another country that Kyrgyzstan will depend politically and economically on will be Uzbekistan because its closeness to the greater regional neighbour is already affecting people living in border zones in both countries.

In general, Kyrgyzstan's political prospects, in contrast to other regional countries, have their own specifics. What is alien to other regional countries is characteristic of Kyrgyzstan. The principle "Strong executive power as a guarantor of consolidation and stability in the political system" has already ceased to work in Kyrgyzstan. This offers two scenarios for Kyrgyzstan's development which are not typical of the region.

The first scenario is more likely, where the strengthening of the presidential form of rule will mean a state of permanent instability and a fight for power between central, regional and clan interests.

The second scenario is less likely and assumes balancing regional interests and the country's development through institutionalising a certain type of parliamentary-presidential or parliamentary form of rule where the institution of presidency will be downplayed.

Tajikistan. Tajikistan, like Kyrgyzstan, will remain a weak state formation on many parameters by 2020. Regional differences, the complicated process of ethnic consolidation of the Tajik society, the absence of infrastructural links between the regions within the country and the raw material orientation of the country's economy significantly complicate chances for modernising the country and boosting competitiveness and the social consolidation of society. "Tajikistan is still a very poor country with very weak opportunities in its economical development. One aluminum factory is responsible for 60% of their national exports. The only advantage that they have for the moment is very cheap hydroelectricity, which is used to produce aluminum. They also have cotton and some textiles"⁸.

If the Tajik economy's raw material orientation is still a dominating factor by 2020, in the economic context the country will fall into greater dependence on foreign influence, above all from Iran and China. This, in return, may lead to the emergence of unstable socioeconomic zones which will be sources of social conflicts, regional separatism and religious and political extremism.

In the political context the uncertainty in relations between the authorities and religious circles pose a potential danger. The current involvement of religious-political forces in political processes in Tajikistan has created a balance of interests between the state and religious circles, the authorities and the opposition. However, there are two

⁷ D. Akopyan. Trade Promotion in Central Asia: Opportunities and Obstacles. Social Research Center American University-Central Asia (AUCA), Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. – P. 5

⁸ D. Akopyan. Trade Promotion in Central Asia: Opportunities and Obstacles. Social Research Center American University-Central Asia (AUCA), Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. – P. 5

possible scenarios for the development of political events in the country in the future.

The first scenario suggests the further institutionalisation of religious-political forces and their right to involvement in the Tajik society's political life. This scenario for the development of the situation remains the most likely, because the settlement to the bloody civil war in Tajikistan in the early 1990s has become a rare example of the potential of the Tajik nation and elite to unite and consolidate in extraordinary situations.

The second scenario presumes the deterioration of confrontation between the authorities and opposition forces under the banner of a fight between supporters of the religious and secular paths of development. The conflict, in this case, will be permanent, but latent (hidden). In the worst-case scenario the conflict may afghanise the situation, which is very unlikely, but possible, because Tajikistan's geopolitical position makes it a buffer zone between Russia and the West, Central Asia and South Asia. For many years this circumstance will influence the arrangement of political forces in the country and the situation in the Central Asian region, in general. At the same time, the events that will take place in Afghanistan and border areas of Pakistan will exert significant influence on the situation in Tajikistan.

Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan is the most unusual state formation in Central Asia. In the years of Saparmurat Niyazov's rule, the country had been isolated from the outside world, turning into a sort of island in the region's geopolitical configuration. Since the beginning of 2007 the country has been coming out of its state of self-isolation and there are first signs of boosts to Ashgabat's foreign policy towards Russia and expanding regional cooperation. However, fundamental changes in Turkmenistan's domestic and foreign policy are hard to achieve for many reasons, above all, because the new government has inherited a wide range of issues relating to Ashgabat's relations with many regional and world players. The revision or changing of these relations may change the existing configuration of forces and the geopolitics of transport routes in Central Asia, and this will not be beneficial

either to Turkmenistan or the main centres of power at the moment. Despite the fact that the process of forming a new Turkmen foreign political line is currently under way, the main centres of power would prefer the status quo, which Ashgabat has always adhered to.

For their part, the country's new authorities will be relying for a long time on the vertical of power and the model of government adopted under Saparmurat Niyazov. This model has proven its validity and vitality. Turkmenistan's experience clearly shows that the West's strategy towards Central Asia is based, above all, on the possibility of accessing the region's enormous natural resources, when the issues of political reforms and democracy can be secondary. Taking into account the fact that the country's entire energy sector is concentrated exclusively in the state's hands Ashgabat has far greater advantages over oil and gas corporations and foreign investors. Correspondingly, in contrast to Astana or Baku, Ashgabat is less dependent on the energy policy of external forces and the influence of multinationals. It is easier for the Turkmen authorities to defend its foreign political line because of its geographical isolation from other regional centres of power too.

One should also take into account a number of other important domestic political factors that ensure the stability and viability of Turkmen society's political system, which are:

Firstly, the specifics of the nation's mentality that the government is perceived as the main centre of power and influence in the traditional Turkmen society. It is mainly because of this that the country practically lacks a wide social support for opposition and political dissent in the public consciousness remains a taboo phenomenon.

Secondly, the combination of huge energy reserves and a small monoethnic population means that the nation is capable of satisfying the main needs of its citizens and, as a result, avoiding the potential for social conflicts. All this, in return, creates favourable conditions for the Turkmen authorities to conserve the existing model of the state-political system, which seems that it will last in its main form until 2020.

Internal Development and Regional Security

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It seems that like any other region, security and cooperation in Central Asia depend on elements, which are present in level of internal, regional and global contexts. National determination, internal desired conditions, cooperation among regional countries and collaboration among Tran regional actors are crucial for regional cooperation.

The experience of developed regions, achievements of human and social sciences show that regional security is largely conditioned on the improved internal politics and multilateral development. In the other words, absence of a bright outlook for internal development in Central Asian region would cause to waste resources, create crisis, and spill over problems to regional level and continuity of weakness and inferiority in international level.

The main aim of this article is to address the theoretical approach about development and security. Also the paper will shed light on the situation of internal development in the countries of central Asia, and the future prospect for security and cooperation in the region.

For this purpose, I review the statistics on the economic and social development of the countries of the Central Asia in recent 17 years.

In this article, I argue that the security in the Central Asia is more influenced by central governments of the region in pursuit of their internal development programs and resolving their problems by themselves, and that these governments should not pay attention to marginal issues, instead, they should follow their main plans that certainly are their Development Projects. It is in this case that we can be hopeful to expect regional security. Though regional insecurity may have different incentives, I suggest, here in this paper, that the main factor in creating regional security crises in most parts of the world is failure in fulfilling the development processes.

To clarify the point, I have tried, first of all, to deal with theoretical basis of regional security.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL SECURITY

There are four sets of theories in international relations that studied the regional security.

In the realistic and nonrealistic theories the establishing of security in a region, demands a hegemonic power or the situation of balance of power between the countries of that region because power as an efficient instrument is very important for conflict limitation (1).

From the viewpoint of institutional and liberal theories security in a region is the outcome of common ideas, and common arrangements for replacing cooperation instead of competition, these arrangements could become regimes to rule over behavior of states (2).

Social constructivist theory addresses sociological perspective on politics of regional security. They argue that, security interests are defined by actors who respond to cultural factors, in this perspective regional security, is outcome of inter-subjective interactions and socially formation. States assume as social actors that embedded in social rules and constitute its identity and the reasons for the interests that motivate actors, the identities of states emerge from their interactions with different social environments (both domestic and international). In fact, regional security depends on the actions and interpretations of actors (3).

From the viewpoint of theories of development-based, regional security depends on nature of states and the situation of their strength and weakness. Weak state is the main factor to the absence of security in the regions.

The nature of states in this framework depends on the level of development and sociopolitical cohesiveness. The weakness of state creates many problems for national security.

When states are weak, fragmented and inefficient, internal situation become insecure and the problems affect regional level spillover to other countries. In addition to the degree that states are internally fragmented, they contribute more to the instability and insecurity of the regional system than to its order. Because they lack cohesion themselves, weak states are poorly placed to make any contribution to the order of system as a whole (4).

There is some danger, as discussed that thinking in terms of national security generates an assumption that all states are similar in security terms except for their differences in power. But in the real world, the distribution of states in terms of political cohesiveness is all too obviously not homogeneous, and this, too, has major security consequences. In the international system as we find it, strong unified states do not homogeneous and this too has major security consequences. In the international system as we find it, strong, unfired states do not add up to more than a substantial minority of the system's members, anarchic states are usually a tiny, but persistent, minority, and a range of variously weak and fragment states make up the majority. This mixture of types means that the character of the international security environment is quite different from that assumed in a homogeneous model of strong in terms of the classical balance of power with states perceiving mainly external threats from each other (5).

In a mixed system, international relations take place not only between states with different levels. Strong states, can relate to each other as coherent political entities on a fairly detached and continuous basis. All interaction between states is to some extent a form of indirect intervention in domestic political affairs.

The logic of relations between weak and strong states, and also between weak states, therefore leads directly to the intermingling of the international balance of power and the domestic balance of power within weak states. Any state which befriends the government of a weak state almost automatically strengthens whatever faction is in control in relation to its domestic rivals. Similarly any state that is hostile to the government of a weak state will have every incentive to weaken the faction in power by supporting its domestic rivals. When the internal balance of power within a weak state is precarious, then outside support may well be a crucial factor in domestic outcomes. Both the frequent changes of government and the extent of the measures taken to suppress political opposition on many third world countries indicate that their internal balance often is precarious (6).

The variable of sociopolitical cohesion thus gives us an insight into the security environment of states as well as into the nature of national security in domestic terms. Since the character of the security environment cannot be separated from the nature of the states within it, the fact that not countries in the Third world are weak states means that their security environment will be distinct from that of the mostly strong states of the west. Amongst the strong states of the west, the security environment is dominated by traditional balance-of-power relations. But for third world countries, the security environment is dominated by asymmetric and transnational balance-of-power relations.

The security environment of third world states is also, as suggested in the previous section shaped by the variable of power in their relations with each other, third world states are more distinctively affected by the cohesion variable than by power. Amongst the third world states variations in power are as large as those amongst and between the states of East and West. Where power does make a difference to the third world is in terms of its position in the global hierarchy as a whole. Nearly all of the third world states rank low in the global power hierarchy, which means that while their relations with each other may be normal in power terms, their security environment as a whole is substantially shaped by their relative weakness as powers in relation to the states of the North.

A local security environment composed of weak states contains within itself many sources of instability. A state within such an environment cannot count on the political continuity of its neighbors, and therefore cannot easily build up a durable and stable set of local political relations (7).

Insecure rulers can succumb to the traditional temptation to consolidate their domestic position at the expense of their neighbors by cultivating external frictions or conflicts.

SECURITY CONCERNS IN CENTRAL ASIA

In Central Asia there are multi dimensions issues in the internal, regional and from near regions around. In addition there are common problems in the Central Asia that remain and the difficulty in resolving them at the in-

ternational, regional, and national levels. These challenges include: (i) a lingering tension surrounding management of common water supplies; (ii) borders and the treatment of minority populations; (iii) the difficulty of trade within the region; (iv) the threat posed by drug-traffic and organized crime; and (v) the export and spread of extremist ideologies. State failure in one or more countries in the region is the gravest potential problem, and the risk will increase as the transfer of power to a post-soviet generation of leaders occurs.

During the last two decades, Central Asia has been faced with various issues. New experience of state-building and nation-building in these countries was encountered with the power-seeking groups rooted in religious, ethnic and local flows. On the other hand there has been some unrest with roots in historical and boundary conflicts. Moreover, there have been some counter-security factors from without. Additionally, security arrangements have been established that are influential in controlling the security issues. That fact, however, is that regional security goes beyond the arrangements per se, because security is an issue interwoven in cooperation and interaction of countries in a region and the surrounding countries. In fact, regional security is tied to the security of other nearby nations, global security, and, at the first place, national security of the countries in the region. Also, national security means more than security of governments. So, security in the Central Asia requires the national security of every country in the region, and the latter, in the political literature, implies not the power of police and army as well as the military hardware, but to multi-dimensional development.

Looking at the development process in the region, we can be hopeful to the future. However, reminding that this process is imbalanced and it varies from a country to the next. Indeed, people compare themselves to the developed countries and cannot wait for a long period of time. The subject increases the potential for objection and dissidence. Most of the problems in the region have roots in this. Those who have not suitable welfare are more subject to propaganda from radical bodies. The Andijan case indicates what can spread the crisis generally has an economic incentive, although Taliban was eliminated from power.

While the requirement of state-building and nation-building is focusing on nationality and national identity, overemphasizing the issue can jeopardize the atmosphere and lessen the possibilities of cooperation. Today, this problem is the origin of many difficulties in some regions, and we may see some indications of that in Central Asia.

Another issue related to the security in the region is the competitions of the great powers. In most of the regions in the world, there happen some issues whose origin is outside the region and the great powers use these weak countries as scapegoats. In Central Asia we can see such issues and the states contribute the process.

DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA

The economic development of the states of Central Asia in the first decade of independence consists of two periods: a precipitous decline in the first half of the 1990s and a tentative, modest recovery in the second half. During the first period, all five of the central Asian states

experienced a profound economic decline. Thus, during the period 1990-1995, the gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 58 percent in Tajikistan, 49 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 39 percent in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, and 19 percent in Uzbekistan (8).

The economic situation in Central Asia is totally dependent on the world prices for raw material commodities and metals, as well as the influx of foreign investments. Because raw materials and goods with a low level of processing predominate in exports, the economies of Central Asia cannot control export earnings by such customary devices as currency devaluation or wage cuts. Direct foreign investment has placed central Asia firmly in the raw material niche for the global division of labor. A combination of foreign and domestic factors have created a structure of economic growth where abort periods of rapid growth can easily and quickly give way to equally intensive periods of economic contraction. For a small, open economy such a jagged fluctuating picture of growth is quite normal (9).

The growing dissatisfaction among the Central Asians has created suitable grounds for the rise of dissent in various forms. Lowering living standard, rising unemployment, and poverty have made them dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. Added to this, the rampant corruption among their ruling circles and a prevailing undemocratic environment have made them disillusioned about the ability of their leaders and their political systems to address the enormous transitional problems. This situation has paved the way for the emergence of popular dissatisfaction and political discontent in organized and unorganized forms (10).

Certain external factors have further convinced these governments of the merits of authoritarianism. Radical ethnic movements in countries in their proximity or in those neighboring their regions have certainly alarmed them. The ethnic makeup of the CA countries makes the expansion of ethnic movements in violent and nonviolent forms from one country to another a feasible scenario. The existence of the same ethnic groups on both sides of the borders between Central Asia and their neighboring China and Afghanistan has also created a potential for the expansion of an ethnic conflict (China) and a civil war (Afghanistan) to the CA countries. In particular, the continuation of instability in Afghanistan has created a well-founded anxiety, which has lasted in the post Taliban era as the overall situation in Afghanistan has created grounds for a new round of civil war. Civil war and instability in that country could potentially even radicalize the ethnic minorities of Russia and is thus a concern for the Russians, who have also used it as a pretext for their return to their former CA republics. Besides this political incentive, it is a fact that instability in the Caucasus and Central Asia neighboring Russia could expand to that country and vice versa. Until the fall of the Taliban, China's fear of the expansion of extremism and terrorism from Taliban-dominated Afghanistan to its troubled Xingjian Province via its neighboring Central Asia also had realistic grounds. In the absence of the Taliban, the persistence of political uncertainty in Afghanistan should still make the Chinese fearful of the spillover of instability and extremism, as dissatisfied Afghan groups could resume the civil war – an undesirable scenario. The shared fear of expansion of instability has justified cooperation among most of the Caucasian and CA countries with China

and Russia within the context of the CIS collective security agreement and also that of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (11).

The countries of the Central Asia have become prone to the rise of instability in different forms. On the hand, the growing dissatisfaction among their peoples has prepared grounds for the emergence of political opposition in different forms, including popular dissent targeting the very existence of their political regimes. Needless to say, this is an ideal environment for the rise and growth of extremist groups to take the lead in such eruptions of dissent. The worsening overall situation in those countries will gradually make their peoples interested in extremist political views that sound more in tune with their situation than those of their ruling elites. These situations will likely lead to violent political activities, matched by violence by the challenged regimes (12).

Some specialists even began echoing of the arguments of Central Asia's leaders: these countries were not really ready for economic and certainly not political reform, given their long experience under the Russian and Soviet colonial yoke. These versions of the past were no less simplistic than the earlier sociological and historical renderings of Soviet scholars, long mocked by the very Western analysts who were now content to hide behind their own historical claptrap (13).

Evidence that got in the way was conveniently forgotten, such as the fact that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were outperforming Russia in many macroeconomic indicators. Kyrgyzstan was the first post-Soviet state to engage in financial restructuring, and Kazakhstan had the strongest banking sector in the Soviet successor states. Both countries had introduced private ownership of land, albeit with some restrictions, and both had reorganized pension systems, health-care systems, and education systems to make them financially self-sustaining. But making them self-sustaining was not synonymous with maintaining the same standards of living that those who are dependent upon the social service sector for their survival had enjoyed during the Soviet era.

The quick survey of the economic and social developments in the region from 2001 through the first half of 2005 records few encouraging developments.

Kazakhstan's economy is by far the strongest in the region, and has been further bolstered by the high price of oil. The Kazakhstan recognize that windfall profits in natural resource extraction could fund longterm economic development that would secure the country's future. But it is unclear if they have identified the right formulas to do this, or have the will to see the projects through (14).

Turkmenistan faces all the challenges if structural reforms that it did five years ago, and shows fewer signs of being capable of modifying the political power structure those geopolitical challenges that also prevent them from marketing their gas at competitive prices.

Uzbekistan, like Turkmenistan, had yet to modify the state command structure of the economy, which has seriously retarded the development of agriculture in particular as the cotton sector is still largely unreformed.

There, in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, developments underscore the slow nature of economic transition in resource-poor countries that accept macroeconomic reforms. The situation in both these countries attests to the difficulties of balancing the need for reform with the risk of indebtedness, and how the latter eventually defines the pace of the former.

The economic progress of all five states countries to be held back by the failure of the Central Asian states to deal with their common problems: the absence of a regional trade regime, the competition over water, and the lack a regional understanding of how to allocate energy resources most efficiently.

The Central Asian states all had a considerable absorption capacity for foreign assistance, with well-educated populations and professional bureaucracies. Most policy makers believed that the central Asian regimes could make effective use of far larger sums of money than were being allocated to them and would have accepted them. This was especially true of funds targeted for teacher training and curriculum reform in the natural sciences, healthcare reform and even reform of the penal system. In these areas host governments might have locked horns with their foreign advisers on selective questions, but they were willing to take a great deal of direction from the outside world, especially if in the process the changes that were possible were more than those of just a demonstration effect. Nor did U.S. policy makers see corruption as so endemic as to make increases in foreign assistance seem a bad investment.

Some assistance money clearly went astray, sometimes because of the incompetence of those administering the projects, by choosing inappropriate partners or being unaware of malfeasance by foreign nationals or grant recipients working on these projects. Nevertheless, much of the money went to the projects and audiences it was intended to serve, and as USAID became more accustomed to working in the conditions of Central Asia, its monitoring of projects improved as well (15).

The problem was one of priorities; the administration did not direct congress to allocate the kind of money necessary to make the U.S presence an effective one which would only have occurred if the threat of the withdrawal of funds would itself serve as strong incentive for recipient

government to modify policies. The foreign assistance monies at risk would have needed to be large enough to create unfunded mandates in areas that the local population has grown used to receiving.

CONCLUSION

As I mentioned earlier in this article, while the security issues in the region emerge from various factors, based on the theoretical framework I presented here, the continuous solution to these problems is dealing with development.

Development, as a multidimensional and national project should be the dominant discourse of intellectuals as well as the public, and the governments do their best to fulfill its goals. Of course, this has a economic basis, but the cultural, social, and political dimensions will be brought into consideration, too. This will eliminate the poverty and inefficient labor forces. The people who enjoy welfare in the society are the best capital for the country and its stability. The stable societies exchange goods, products and thought, in stead of insecurity, and crisis.

In recent years, the developmentalist policies have been the priority of many countries in Central Asia. If they are taken seriously, we can expect a promising future for the region. And it makes the region more secure than ever. In the subject of international competitions, instead of relating all matters to a single country it is better for countries to have balanced relations with all important countries and regulate their connections.

My conclusion is that the key of security is in the hands of the regional countries. Most of the theoretical attempts in politics and IR and practical experience of successful countries and developed regions have shown that the main cause of insecurity and inefficiency of regional security structures is the lack of development in these countries, and developmentalists states are corner stone for building security in the Central Asia.

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Promoting Democracy or Undermining Regimes? Central Asian Experience

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Before its disintegration in 1991, the Soviet Union – of which Kazakhstan was an integral part – was a stable totalitarian state with some imperial characteristics. At the end of the 1980s, when Gorbachev reforms had opened the country, both internally as well as externally, many people, in the West as well as in the former USSR, believed (now we may say, rather naively believed) that it would be possible to relatively quickly and painlessly transform this closed totalitarian society into an open, democratic, market oriented country. Unfortunately this was not to be the case. Its disintegration was not only inevitable; for most of the people it was quite a positive development and not at all ‘the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century’, as President Putin put it¹. Alas, some states can exist only as autocracies, since when they open up they tend to disintegrate and attempts of the world community or regional alliances to keep them together may only prolong and increase the suffering. The fate of the USSR and maybe also the SFRY testifies to that effect; today Iraq may well be on its way either to a stable dictatorship (not a very plausible scenario at the moment) or to the disintegration into different entities with equally questionable democratic credentials (this at the moment seems to be a much more plausible scenario).

The regime in the USSR was not simply authoritarian; it was, using the distinction made by Jeane Kirkpatrick between ‘traditional autocracies’ and ‘radical revolutionary’ or totalitarian regimes², totalitarian. Moreover, it was a utopian, artificial totalitarianism.³ Therefore its transformation was to be especially difficult and painful since these societies had

to radically change their economic and political systems as well as discard completely their ideological basis that in many cases left a deep void that in some instances became filled with extreme nationalistic or religious ideas. Some parts of the former USSR, for example, the Baltic countries, due to a series of factors, among them their past encounters with democratic ideas and practices, small size and closeness to the EU, have had relatively fast and not so painful democratic and market-oriented evolutions. However, if your neighbours are not Finland or Sweden, but, say, states more like Afghanistan, the reform processes – political, economic and social – are much more difficult. These factors, together with historical heritage – both pre-Soviet and Soviet – have to be taken into account when one is assessing the process of reforms – their speed, success or failure – in Kazakhstan.

Practically all states with authoritarian or totalitarian pasts, whether they are newly born like Kazakhstan, or like China – a state with an ancient and more or less continuous statehood – that since the end of the 1970s has undergone processes of more incremental but quite radical reforms, face a threat of what is called the J Curve.⁴

J Curve is a graphic tool, which is used in various sciences. In political sciences it is applied to illustrate the transformation of societies from closed societies to open ones; regimes from authoritarian or totalitarian to open and democratic. The concept of J Curve graphically illustrates the nature and causes of difficulties and dangers inherent in this process. The vertical axis of the graph measures stability; the higher a country is on this axis, the more stable it is. On the horizontal axis, there is the measure of openness. The

light, as something that has to be discarded or overcome. This is a wrong and dangerous tendency.

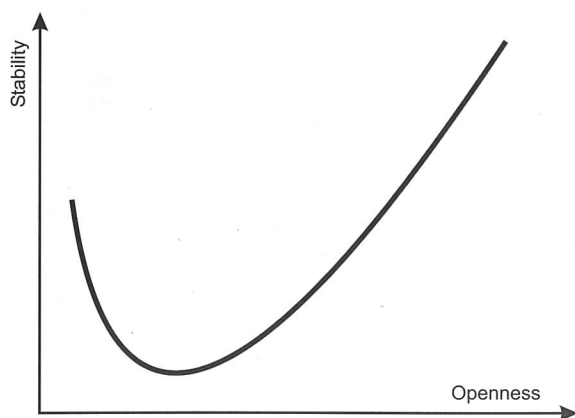
Besides high levels of repression that was common both to communism and fascism (how else could one realise utopian projects?), communism and fascism both were ideological, experimental or artificial dictatorships. This makes them somewhat different from most other dictatorships that have existed in history in all parts of the world or that still subsist today in various regions. It may be politically incorrect to say that dictatorships or authoritarian regimes are natural but it has certainly been true in most of periods of human civilisation and may well be true in some cases even today. Although no nation deserves to be led by such bloody social experimenters as Stalin, Hitler or Pol Pot, there is at least some truth in the saying that ‘people deserve their leaders’. Usually it is not by chance or historical accident that some societies have freely and democratically elected leaders while others have authoritarian rulers or outright dictators.

⁴I. Bremmer, *J Curve: A New Way to Understand Why Nations Rise and Fall*, Simon & Schuster, 2006.

¹ MSNNews, 25 April 2005 (<http://msnbc.com/id/7632957>, visited 16 June 2005)

² J. Kirkpatrick, ‘Dictatorships and Double Standards’, *Commentary*, November 1979.

³ There were two great social experiments in the twentieth century – communist and fascist experiments. Although they were very different in many important respects, they had also several substantial things in common. Unfortunately, these common features were, to some extent, due to a few aspects of the Enlightenment heritage, especially of its emphasis of the power of reason to foresee and mould the future – a feature that both the Soviet communists and German Nazis distorted and abused to the extreme, while neglecting such important aspects of Enlightenment as democracy and individual liberties. I am saying unfortunately, since because of this link between the Enlightenment, on the one hand, and communism and fascism, on the other, the whole Enlightenment heritage have become considered by quite a few authors (see, e.g., John Gray’s *Black Mass. Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia*, Allen Lane, 2007) in a negative



further to the right, the more open and freer is a society. According to Ian Bremmer 'for a country that is "stable because it's closed" to become a country that is "stable because it's open", it must go through a transitional period of dangerous instability. Some states, like South Africa, survive that journey. Others, like Yugoslavia, collapse'.⁵ It seems that no closed society that is democratising or liberalising can completely avoid the J Curve, i.e. some instability is inevitable. Therefore a realistic goal should be to have the curve as flat as possible. The problem is how to get from the left to the right without finding oneself at the steep bottom of the curve where there is chaos, anarchy, or even civil wars and state disintegration.

One of the characteristics of the J Curve is that when a country, as a result of opening up, finds itself at the low part of the curve (i.e. it becomes less stable as a result of, say, mass demonstrations, strikes, increase of interethnic tension or religious extremism), natural instinct for survival prompts the regime in power, instead of moving rapidly further to the right in order to start ascending on the right side of the curve (often this is simply impossible), to ascend on the left side of the curve, i.e. the regime tries to restore stability by suppressing liberties that are associated with the increase of instability and chaos. Uzbekistan, after the May 2005 Andijan tragedy, may serve as an example of such a process. There was indeed a threat of serious instability that would have affected not only the regime and the country but potentially the whole region; however, the government overreacted on the spot and in a longer run restored stability by further tightening already tight screws.

It is important to note that what every so often some on-lookers and commentators, especially from the West, consider shoots of democracy and liberalism, are in reality more characteristics of the lower bottom of the J Curve than precursors of democracy, i.e. there is chaos, anarchy and inability of the government to govern. It is not difficult to agree with those who, for example, say that democracy and human rights are not exactly flourishing in today's Russia, but it would not be correct to say, in my opinion, that in Putin's Russia there is less democracy and freedoms than there were in Yeltsin's Russia. Free for all (or rather free for those who are ruthless, well-connected, who lack integrity and often are clever too) is not necessarily a sign of emerging liberal democracy but rather that of chaos that is well expressed by the Russian word

⁵ I. Bremmer, p. 5.

– *bardak* (mess, disorder). Therefore it would not be surprising that in order to restore some order Putin's Russia is moving up on the left side of the J Curve. Hopefully (hopefully mostly for the Russians but to some extent for the rest as well), Russia will start moving to the right without hitting, like under Yeltsin's Presidency, the bottom of the J Curve.

When I was working for the United Nations in Central Asia, I could hardly agree with those who claimed that democracy and human rights were more developed, for instance, in Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan than in Kazakhstan. The Freedom House 2006 rating on civil and political rights also put Kyrgyzstan above Kazakhstan.⁶ However, Kyrgyzstan, both under Akayev as well as during and after the so-called 2005 'tulip revolution' was close to the bottom of the J Curve – corruption, violent crime and ineffective administration had become all-pervasive. Only now the country is slowly stabilising itself and doing it without significantly climbing up on the left side of the J Curve, i.e. without excessive curbing existing liberties. Therefore, the views that put unstable, chaotic, ungovernable societies higher on the democracy scale than more stable societies, which sometimes indeed may use authoritarian methods for the sake of stabilisation, either express genuine misunderstanding of the situation and are therefore naïve, or they may be even expressive of more sinister motives.

In a book published a couple of months ago, Charles Tilly, a prominent American historian and social scientist, comparing Kazakhstan and Jamaica and using the Freedom House criteria, writes that 'Kazakhstan does not qualify as a democracy in any usual sense of the word',⁷ while Jamaica 'made the grade'.⁸ And this notwithstanding that Tilly himself acknowledges that Jamaica suffers from 'rampant crime, high levels of unemployment and lack of investment in social development'⁹ and has 'one of the highest per capita rates of police killings in the world'.¹⁰ Reading such things one may conclude that either something is wrong with the very definition of democracy, or that democracy does not matter, or that it may be, at least for some countries, even a very dangerous concept.

Those who, from the outside, push for quick democratic reforms in societies that are not able to do that, i.e. in societies which do not have the economic, political and social capacities to rapidly carry out such reforms, whose historical baggage does not contain seeds of liberalism, are either incompetent or they are consciously trying to weaken states whose governments refuse to toe the line.

Anatol Lieven and John Hulsman observe that 'among neoconservatives and liberal hawks, the desire to spread democracy can also take a form that is explicitly dedicated to the weakening or even destruction of other states, even when these are by no means full-fledged enemies of America'¹¹, or that 'too many American Democratists (i.e. those who believe in what the US National Security Strategy of 2006 says about the export of democracy) base their approach to the world on the assumption that they know how best to run countries of which they know nothing and whose languages they don't speak – countries that quite often they have never even visited'.¹²

⁶ C. Tilly, *Democracy*, Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 46.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ A. Lieven, J. Hulsman, *Ethical Realism. A Vision for America's Role in the World*, Pantheon Books, 2006, p. 104.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

Sometimes I indeed have the feeling that the West, especially Washington, prefers to deal with weak and unstable states rather than face stable and strong but uncomfortable powers that pursue their own interests (like the US itself naturally does) and do not act according to the 'Washington consensus' (WC) (not in narrow economic-financial sense but in a wider philosophico-political sense) but prefer, say, the 'Beijing consensus' (BC) or have their own understanding of their national interests. This does not mean that there is nothing good in the WC or that the BC is preferable to the WC; the point is that in today's globalising world there should be some consensus between the WC and BC and that none of them can be imposed. Nations, like individuals (especially young) tend to reject what they perceive as imposed on them, even if this may indeed be for their own good. The adage that the road to hell is paved with good intentions is truer in international relations more than in any other area of human activity. This is one of the characteristics of the so-called 'soft power' that it has to be perceived as accepted voluntarily.

It may well be true that in some circumstances a society may benefit from enlightened authoritarianism; in that respect Singapore and Malaysia may arguably serve as examples, though a caveat is necessary – reliance on autocrats, even if enlightened, is a risky business; moreover, for one Lee Kwan Yew or Mahatir there are usually dozens of Mobutus or Mugabes. In 1787 in America Benjamin Franklin said that 'there are two passions which have a powerful influence in affairs of men. These are ambition and avarice; the love of power and the love of money'.¹³ In this country, exactly a hundred year later, Lord Acton observed that 'power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely'.¹⁴ The points of these wise men ring true also in 2007 and that is why at the end of the day democracy, notwithstanding all its deficiencies, is so far the best available social arrangement. However, how to get there while avoiding the deep bottom of the J Curve is a million dollar question to which there isn't a single answer.

It has to be emphasized that an approach expressed in President George W. Bush's words about freedoms in the United States and the world, that if 'the self-evident truths of our founding are true for us, they are true for all'¹⁵, is not only simplistic; it is simply wrong and dangerous. There are societies, some of them in Central Asia, that prioritize many things higher than personal freedoms though this does not mean that such freedoms do not have value at all. There are many peoples in the world who put stability first and value strong, even authoritarian-style leadership over individual liberties because these are not always just the leaders of these countries and their closest entourage who directly benefit from such authoritarian regimes. Many people who may even suffer from such regimes nevertheless believe that strong, that is to say authoritarian, leadership is preferable to chaos that may (or will) follow if the reigns of power are loosened. Therefore, President George W. Bush is wrong when he believes that everybody in the world cherishes individual liberties to the same extent as most Americans do. People who have gone through wars, be they international or civil, or revolutionary turmoil in which thousands perish, usually

value stability and order more highly than individual liberties. Besides, historical traditions often support and magnify value ladders that may significantly differ from Western priorities. Randall Peerenboom, for example, writes that 'not everyone assigns the same value to civil and political freedoms relative to social order. Social order ranks much higher in the normative hierarchy of most Chinese than it does in the normative hierarchy of many Westerners, in part because stability is precarious in China. The consequences of instability for China, the region, and the world would be severe. Adopting this measure virtually assures a wide margin of deference to restrictions in the name of public order'.¹⁶ This is not to say that there are not people in Central Asian societies who highly value individual freedoms; this is not even to say that such societies will never start valuing individual freedoms more highly than an order that denies these freedoms; this is to say that because of different histories, both ancient and recent, as well as differences in their current situations, societies have different value priorities.

An article in *The Herald Tribune* (IHT) by two American authors¹⁷, probably inadvertently, reveals sensitivity and delicacy of Western human rights diplomacy and democracy promotion in non-Western countries, including those in Central Asian region. The authors correctly observe that today there are autocrats who open up economies of their countries, carry out successful market-oriented reforms but suppress civil and political rights. However, there is nothing new in it. Chile under General Pinochet, South Korea under the military rulers and Taiwan until rather recently have all been such states. In today's world Malaysia and Singapore represent successfully developing non-liberal states. Commenting on the Chinese development Randall Peerenboom observes that 'despite an inevitable increase in social tension as a result of economic reforms, China has remained relatively stable, notwithstanding – or perhaps because of – the brutal crackdown on demonstrations in 1989'¹⁸ and that 'today, public opinion remains divided in China about the government's policy regarding Tiananmen, in contrast to nearly universal condemnation abroad'.¹⁹

The authors of the IHT article, however, lament that today's autocrats granting their populations so-called 'standard public goods' such as public transportation, primary and secondary education and public health, all that contributes to economic growth, restrict so-called 'coordination goods' such as civil and political rights. The reason for such policies, as the authors point out, is quite obvious. They correctly observe that, '... the suppression of coordination goods keeps autocrats in power. An autocrat who permits both freedom of the press and civil liberties reduces the chances that he will survive for another year by about 15 to 20 percent'. Asking what the West or international bodies have to do about it, the authors answer: '... the United States, the European Union, aid agencies and other donors must keep exerting pressure to change'. To put it otherwise, they call for regime change since by opening up their societies to civil and political rights autocrats shorten their life expectancy (at least in political terms), as the authors quite convincingly prove. Does it mean that the West should have pressured Mohamad

¹³ M. Farrand (ed.), *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, 4 volumes, Yale University Press, 1966, vol. 1, p. 82.

¹⁴ R. Dahl, *On Democracy*, Yale University Press, 1998, p. 73.

¹⁵ President G. W. Bush, Commencement Address to the United States Coast Guard Academy, 21 May 2003.

¹⁶ R. Peerenboom, *China Modernises. Threat to the West or Model for the Rest*, OUP, 2007, pp. 124-25.

¹⁷ B. Bueno de Mesquita, G.W. Downs, 'An open economy, a closed society', *The International Herald Tribune*, 17 August 2005.

¹⁸ Peerenboom, *Op.cit.*, p. 20

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

Mahathir of Malaysia or Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore out of office because they secured to their people only 'standard public goods'? I do not think so. Limitation of some civil and political rights, such as the freedom of press or association, though deplorable, should not be a cause for exercising pressure on the leadership with the aim of getting it out of office, especially if the population as a whole (and not only a few individuals who are not representative of their societies) itself does not actively demand such changes and the leadership indeed secures 'standard public goods'. The problem is that only very few of such authoritarian rulers secure such 'standard public goods', while some dictators, like General Pinochet of Chile or the military rulers of Argentina, become bloody and start using massive repression to quell popular discontent. Then even successful market reforms should not save autocrats from pressure that may indeed get them eventually even out of office.

The character and speed of opening up previously closed societies depends, to a great extent, on historic traditions of a society. In Kazakhstan, Mr Imangali Tasmaganbetov, the Head of the Administration of President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and therefore the second most powerful man in the country after the president (today, as the Mayor of Almaty – the biggest Kazakh city – he may have lost some of his authority but as my autumn 2007 conversation with him showed, he has not changed his views), responded to my carefully formulated remark on some democracy deficit in Kazakhstan with a lecture on stability versus democracy. Mr Tasmaganbetov, a historian by education and one of most erudite persons in the country (he is an inspiring collectors of fine arts, archaeological artefacts and old cars), emphasized again and again that one cannot understand the politics of a country without knowing and understanding its history. This comment is fair enough, but it is also important to identify what to pick up from a usually long and controversial history of society, how and for what current political purposes to interpret the controversial past of the people. Mr Tasmaganbetov emphasized that the struggle for unification had always been one of the main themes of Kazakh history since the Kazakhs had indeed for centuries suffered from foreign invasions that could not be successfully staved off because of constant internecine conflicts between the three Kazakh zhuses (there are three zhuses or tribal unions in Kazakhstan) and dozens of tribes. This historical struggle for unity, in his view, was one of the reasons why the Kazakhs have become rather intolerant towards various kinds of opposition, why in the political life of the country they prefer bandwagoning to balancing and vote for the President and his party rather than for the opposition.

It is interesting to note that Mr Tasmaganbetov, in his conversation with me, counted Kazakh statehood back to 1991, the year when the Soviet Union collapsed and the current Kazakh state emerged. Such an interpretation of the age of the statehood of one's own people is all the more surprising in the light of the general tendency amongst most historians and politicians in newly independent states to trace their statehood back to ancient times – the older, the better. I wondered why Mr Tasmaganbetov emphasized that the Kazakh statehood was so young, while, say, Estonian, Georgian and Armenian historians compete in trying to find more and more traces, often more imaginary than real, of their 'glorious' ancient statehood? Why did Mr Tasmaganbetov think that different khans, such as the famous Ablay Khan after whom streets are named in most cities of the country, or the last Kazakh khan – Kenessary Kassymov, who in the

nineteenth century ruled over nomadic Kazakh tribes and for a while quite successfully countered the onslaught of the Russian Empire, did not count as founders of Kazakh statehood? My interpretation of such an unexpected approach to the age of the Kazakh statehood is the following: all previous attempts in unifying of feuding Kazakh zhuses and tribes had ultimately been unsuccessful; though several times in history independent statehood may have been achieved, it was always lost due to the constant infighting between various tribal leaders; they had been disunited at their own peril. Now when the Kazakhs have finally (or once again, depending on the interpretation) gained their independence, they have to avoid any opposition to the incumbent authority in order not to endanger young and fragile statehood. The fear of losing newly founded statehood, the fear that, in my opinion, in current circumstances is somewhat exaggerated, makes the preservation of unity the primary task of the Government that trumps and overshadows all other tasks, especially that of developing democracy and expanding individual liberties. 'We go at our own pace, a pace which takes into account our history', is the usual explanation when somebody from outside criticizes the slow pace of democratic reforms. How much of this use of history stems from a genuine concern for the future of newly found statehood and how much is manipulation and abuse of the past of one's nation in order to stay in power is difficult to say precisely. But certainly both of these concerns – the genuine one and the manipulative one – pay a role in the politics of Kazakhstan.

The same quest for unity that is affecting contemporary politics is not unique for the history of Kazakhstan. Other Central Asian countries have had similar experiences. For example, the satirical Uzbek poet of the seventeenth century Turdi (Farogiy), who was very critical of various khans (there is indeed encouragingly strong critical satirical tradition in Central Asian literature) nevertheless lamented: 'Oh! Selfish beks! Don't say "me, me", be generous, This is the land of the ninety-two Uzbek tribes, treat each other as equals. Don't say "this one is Kipchak or Khitay or this one is Yus or Nayman", gather together in your hundreds of thousands and recognize the rule of one khan.'²⁰

So, how has Kazakhstan done on the J-Curve? In my opinion, reasonably well; it has certainly avoided a deep bottom on the vertical axis of the curve and has made cautious progress on the horizontal axis. Kazakhstan has been successful in carrying out economic reforms, and in its political transformation Kazakhstan has managed to avoid the bottom of the curve, i.e. the country has enjoyed rather stable development. However, one of the important questions is: have not the authorities, in their quest for stability, unnecessarily sacrificed the pace of political reforms and democratisation? When I say 'unnecessarily', I assume that some limitations on freedoms, especially if compared, say, with developed Western countries, with their standards may have indeed been necessary. It is very difficult to find the right balance here, but when during my UN posting I met high ranking Kazakhstani officials in Astana, I used to tell them that, in my opinion, Kazakhstani society had become mature enough to withstand and benefit from more rapid political reforms, that quicker liberal reforms would not jeopardise stability and would release even more the creative potential of the

²⁰ Quoted from N. Kilic-Shubel, 'Poetry and Political Dissent in Central Asia from a Historical Perspective', in *Prospects of Democracy in Central Asia* (B.N. Schlyter ed.), Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2005, p. 207.

people. The same is even truer today. Kazakhstan has a highly educated population, its economic development has been impressive and quite a significant middle class, which many justifiably consider to be one of the prerequisites of a sustainable democracy, has emerged. The per capita GDP (Purchasing Power Parity - PPP) of \$9,100 is well above the range (\$4000-6000) considered by many²¹ as a necessary, though naturally not sufficient, condition for the emergence of a sustainable democracy.

When 2-3 years ago I worked in Kazakhstan, the introduction of trial by jury and issuance of arrest warrants by courts were among the measures that were advocated by many in the country as well as by international bodies. Now this has become a reality. Spring 2007 reforms, such as the increase of the number of parliamentarians, the introduction of a proportional system of their election, as well as the widening of the competence of Parliament, including increasing its role in the formation of Government, are steps in the right direction. However, one of the Kazakhstan most respected intellectuals, Murat Auezov, who, while welcoming the democratic potential of the May 2007 constitutional amendments, calls the Majilis's proposal to make an exception for President Nazarbayev to run for the Presidency 'provincialisation of democratisation'.²² He observes that such a step discredits both the Parliament as well as the President. I hope this is not, as the Kazakh say, the proverbial 'spoonful of tar that may mar a keg of honey' or 'a drop of poison that infects the whole tun of wine'.

Widening of political rights such as freedom of expression and association, having effective political opposition and undertaking further steps towards creating truly independent judiciary are not only important issues by themselves but they would also all make effective contribution to the sustainability of economic reforms, particularly helping combat corruption.

In summer 2007 President Nazarbayev dissolved the Majilis (the lower House of the Parliament) and decreed the snap elections for 18 August that were held according to the spring constitutional reforms. These elections, and especially their results that led to the emergence of a one-party House (the ruling Nur Otan had around 88% of votes while none of the six opposition parties taking part in the elections cleared the 7% hurdle), had controversial repercussions. The OSCE, welcoming the 'progress in the pre-election process and during the conduct of the vote', 'an increased ability for political parties to convey their messages to voters, including through media' and mentioning 'a noticeable improvement over previous elections', concentrated, however, on shortcomings and violations.²³ *The Independent* in an article headed 'Less than a model democracy' wrote that 'the elections this weekend suggest it may be time for the outside world to take a closer look at Kazakhstan and stop treating it with quite such delicate kid gloves'.²⁴ At the same time, Ariel Cohen in *The Washington Times* observes

that 'what OSCE has not mentioned was that the opposition – unfortunately – shot itself in the foot. As Kazakhstan has a high electoral threshold of 7 percent, it would have made sense for Social Democrats and Ak Zhol to unite. Their platforms are not that different from each other. Nor are they that far from the ruling Nur Otan. After all, the leaders of the opposition are all the former senior officials under Mr. Nazarbayev, including his ex-prosecutor general, the former finance minister and former chief of staff' and he notes that 'Saturday's vote for stability is strategically important for energy-rich Kazakhstan, its powerful neighbours Russia and China, and for the United States'.²⁵

There is no doubt that Kazakh democracy has still significant room for improvement and some measures adopted recently, like the requirement that eligible candidates must have been permanently resident for at least ten years in Kazakhstan or that deputies will lose their mandate if they resign from or are ejected from the party in whose name they are elected, are dictated by the almost instinctive tendency of the authorities to closely control political processes in the country. If in Britain, for example, Tony Blair for such a tendency was sometimes by the opposition and media called 'control freak', in Kazakhstan, due to historical traditions and existing realities, there is nothing freakish in the desire of the government to closely control the development of all important issues. Loosening the reins would be a gradual process, though, in my opinion, the authorities are too cautious and conservative in their reforms. However, this is my opinion and it, like views of other foreign observers, matters much less than the opinion of the Kazakh people.

Certainly, the continuing economic boom in Kazakhstan, and consequently also the social stability in the country, are to a certain extent, or even to a great extent, due to rich energy resources and high oil prices. However, this is not the whole story. Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea, for example, are also oil-rich countries for whom oil has, however, been more a curse than blessing. Although Kazakhstan in that respect is not (not yet anyway) a Norway or Alberta in Canada, which have used wisely their oil windfalls for the benefit of current and future generations, it is even further from being similar to Nigeria or Equatorial Guinea. Natural resources have benefited Kazakh society as a whole, though growing inequality remains a serious problem. However, this problem affects practically all countries in transition. The government has set up the National Fund, based on Norwegian experience; there are substantial investments into the education system (e.g., under the *Bolashak* (Future) programme every year 3000 Kazakh students are sent to best Western universities and many young Kazakhs study in China and Russia).

Today Kazakhstan is actively seeking the OSCE chairmanship for 2009. Most OSCE member-states support them in this quest and I believe that deciding in favour of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship would be important not only for that country but also for the OSCE as a whole and even for the wider international community. Kazakhstan, notwithstanding difficulties and problems, has shown stable development. Although in the field of political reforms these developments seem to be too slow, who can tell precisely what pace of reforms is exactly correct; this question is more complex than problems of nuclear physics. One has to take into account that this progress has been achieved in very difficult conditions, in a very complex historical and

²¹ See, e.g., R. Peerenboom, *China Modernizes: Threat to the West or Model for the Rest*, OUP, 2007, p. 124.

²² 'Servile Parliament Deserves to be Dissolved' *Svoboda Slova* (Freedom of Speech), 24 May 2007, p. 7 (in Russian).

²³ OSCE/ODIHR, OSCE PA, Council of Europe. International Elections Observer Mission, Parliamentary Elections, Republic of Kazakhstan, 18 August 2007. Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions.

²⁴ Leading Article: 'Less than a model of democracy', *The Independent*, 20 August, 2007.

²⁵ A. Cohen, 'Kazakh vote: A step forward', *The Washington Times*, August 21, 2007.

geographic context. Ethnic and religious diversity, like the one in Kazakhstan, may indeed be a source of richness if wisely and carefully nurtured (and Kazakhstan has done well and a lot in that respect), but more often than not it makes reform processes more difficult and threats of destabilisation, if reforms are not carefully thought through, more imminent. I am sure that Western leaders, who sometimes are too critical of Kazakhstan, would have all dismally failed had they been in the shoes of Kazakhstani politicians.

In the light of Kazakhstan's strive to assume the one-year rotating chairmanship of the OSCE for 2009 and the role of the 2007 elections for deciding on the issue it is interesting to note that a day before the 18 August elections *International Herald Tribune* published an article stating that a secret document allegedly originating within the secret service of Kazakhstan and addressed to the President of the Republic. This document, the article claimed, contained the enumeration of measures to discredit and mislead election observers, especially OSCE observers, during the 2005 Presidential elections.²⁶ Without special access to Kazakh state secrets it is impossible to tell whether such a document was indeed sent by the Kazakh secret service to the President, but what is important and obvious is the timing of the emergence of such information. Somebody really wanted to cast doubt on the fairness of forthcoming elections in that country.

If the OSCE were to refuse to grant the 2009 chairmanship to Kazakhstan, it could be seen with some justification

that not only the OSCE member-states, but the world as a whole, is increasingly being divided into groups of states – those who teach and those who are taught, those which toe the line of 'Washington consensus' and those who, as President Nazarbayev put it in his 16 May 2007 speech to the Houses of Parliament in Astana, 'are against the forced introduction of democracy, especially when it comes from outside'. A negative decision on Kazakhstan's 2009 Chairmanship would be a step, probably not the biggest one, but nevertheless a step among some other steps, towards the division of the world into the West and the rest. This is in nobody's interest.

As a university professor I prefer those students who disagree with me and question my wisdom rather than those who always quote from my books. They may be sometimes a bit more difficult but they are usually also more interesting and promising. Similarly, states that do not blindly copy the experiences of others but use it creatively while sometimes even rejecting it, refusing to accept recipes worked out in Brussels or Washington, may have more promising future than those who always toe the line. There simply is not a single line, which all countries should necessarily follow. However, once again a caveat is necessary: there is also no need to reinvent the wheel. Much that has been tried and found to work well elsewhere is acceptable in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries too and this includes basic freedoms and principles of democracy.

²⁶ C.J. Chives, 'Case if spy vs. vote monitor in Kazakhstan? Some clues surface', *International Herald Tribune*, 16 August 2007.

Political Culture and Development of Democracy in Kyrgyzstan

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Increasingly often we have started to hear the words *ideologization* and *de-ideologization*, *politicization* and *depoliticization* and so on. Fortunately, we are living in times when the interest in these notions is not imaginary and is generated voluntarily under the influence of real events, inducing people to be publicly and politically active. But are we always able to understand this terminology and use them in the correct sense?

At present, when a policy to democratize the socioeconomic and political spheres of public life is being pursued, we often hear calls for de-politicization and criticism of the excessive politicization of society; while describing the country's history and assessing current events in society as positive, we witness a rise in the level of people's political activity.

Well, what is politicization: benefit or damage? What sort of phenomenon is it that can appear in so many forms at one time? Is it possible that its explanation is hiding in us ourselves, in the level of our political culture and in our perception of political ideas and events?

Politicization that aims to realize democratic and humanistic ideals will not have many opponents. Moreover, efforts in this direction can only be successful when this process is growing.

US political analyst Dankwart Rustow says that the process of the rise of democracy should not necessarily be the same all over the world: many roads may lead to democracy.

Mr Rustow's model demands only one precondition for the transition to democracy—the presence of national unity. He believes that the precondition for transition to democracy will be realized only when national unity is accepted at an instinctive level—when it is accepted uncontested, as something self-evident.

Mr Rustow does not regard factors (or preconditions) for transition to democracy such as a high level of economic and social development and the presence of initial consensus as being the main components of his model. Economic growth, he believes, can be one of the circumstances needed for a stage, but there may be other types of circumstances too (1).

What are the prospects for democratization in Kyrgyzstan using the concept of Dankwart Rustow? It is obvious that even if we accept his thesis that there is no need to take into account the level of economic and social development

and for initial consensus to be present in society, we have to admit that the political development of events around the problems of democratic reforms in Kyrgyzstan is now in many respects connected to problems of conformity or unconformity of typology and the level of the political culture of society's social groups to the level of problems faced by this society. Do the ruling elite have the political will and capability to carry out intense democratic reforms? Do other social and political groups of society have sufficient potential to reform?

The main thing is that the entire past actual historical and political practice of Kyrgyzstan gives quite important grounds to assume that we still do not quite represent a consolidated ethnosocial and ethnopolitical community, which means that we are not a nation in an established form. There is no main condition for a successful transition to democracy according to the Rustow model—national unity. The policy of double standards as a political and cultural paradigm that had been developed back in Soviet times reduced this issue to eternal nonconformity between how it is now and how it should be. With the break-up of the USSR the concept of a Soviet nation as “a new, united and unbreakable community of Soviet people” also collapsed. With sovereignty, fallen on our heads, we received a new problem of ethnopolitical unity, to be precise, the problem of the absence of ethnopolitical unity. At present, in the conditions of a political “time handicap”, we also have to solve the problems of national consolidation, strengthening statehood, developing democracy and are facing the problem of choosing development priorities.

All our current problems, obviously, stem from the lack of experience of independent national development and the lack of the culture of political and economic sovereignty. Problems of tribalism arise every time, again, because of this. There is no nation, there are no purely political relations that are only set in a developed centralized state. And if these are absent, then relations within power cannot be regarded as purely political and it remains as power that is experiencing significant influence of traditionalism, ethnic, tribal and clan motivations.

Problems of democratization cannot be solved successfully without solving the issues of developing statehood itself. “Before moving into a house, it should be built”, goes the saying. However, we face the situation of “the cart before the horse.” In the specific situation of “catch-up modernization”, these issues, we believe, should be solved dynamically

with adjusted rationalism, but exactly in the following order: united nation-sovereign state-democracy. The logic of evolutionary development and political and cultural continuity demands exactly this sequence in setting the tasks.

"Why do we need a nation?" asks well-known Kyrgyz Prof Aron Brudnyy, continuing, "If it exists, it has its own function. The nation prevents civil society from disintegration, as historically (at the time) the ethnoses prevented tribes, uniting parts of the people, from disintegration. The nation cuts local distances.

"Another question: 'Why do we need a state?' It cuts or keeps in certain limits a distance between the rich and the poor, different ethnic and religious groups and so on" (2).

However, it is obvious that it is impossible to receive a rational Western-style state with a developed legal culture in a ready-made form even if a country's leaders want this very strongly. The legal and political cultures of the people are intertwined. As it is impossible to immediately get rid of blocking factors of traditionalism in political culture, it is impossible to immediately foster legal culture, especially if it had totally different genetic roots of values.

Anyway, let us return to the issue of the primacy of problems of national consolidation, i.e. problems of fostering the political culture of the nation. We believe that not only centuries-long traditions of inter-tribal and inter-clan discord, i.e. tribalism, played a negative role in the political culture of the Kyrgyz but also the very fact that in Soviet times Kyrgyzstan developed as part of a multiethnic state under the concept of "an elder and younger brothers." This means that problems of intra-ethnic consolidation were artificially pushed to secondary roles and they lost their topicality. One can say that there was not enough degree of "rational nationalism" or that it was invisible (suppressed by the system). In world practice, we can see now that countries which have just acquired sovereignty quite sharply cut off relations with their metropolises and demonstratively distance themselves from them. After the break-up of the socialist bloc and the USSR, many central European countries openly demonstrated and are still demonstrating their hatred of everything Soviet and hereditarily Russian. By doing so, they objectively pursue the aim of consolidating the nation, denying the influence of their colonial past. The recent events in Estonia when a monument to Soviet troops, who liberated the country from fascism during WWII, was dismantled and moved from a central square in Tallinn, the Estonian authorities, of course, pursued these aims too—the internal consolidation of the nation. When there are not enough internal incentives, these are compensated at the expense of an external enemy. The policy of modern Georgian authorities towards Russia can serve as a similar example.

Have you noticed how consolidation impulses of the people became active around the issue of Kyrgyzstan's involvement in the HIPC program? Moreover, attempts to force this issue faced widespread protest and denial by the population all over the country.

One can suggest that another of this sort of "irritant" in consolidating efforts may in certain conditions be the issue of the US Ganci air base at the Manas airport, whose operations have already led to casualties among local people and violations of Kyrgyz legislation and which shows the authorities' certain inability to protect the honor and dignity of the state and its citizens.

In our case, the situation with internal consolidating motives is complicated by a weak industrial base of the economy, the lack of well-developed domestic market and

transport infrastructure and peculiarities of social organization. Since ancient times, throughout the history of Kyrgyz tribes and clans, consolidation impulses were prompted by the necessity of protection from external enemies. When there was no external threat, a trend of endless intra-tribal and intra-clan splits into smaller groups prevailed.

In Soviet times when political power centered outside the country, a certain internal political balance of the interests of Kyrgyzstan's regions was maintained. With the movement of the center of power into the country, a balance of the interests of tribes and regional clans was disturbed and problems of rivalry for power surfaced, and we are now observing the effect of regeneration of pre-political, tribal relations with a whole set of socioeconomic problems, but at a different level. There, under way, is the process of the splitting and fragmentation of political power by regional and clan qualities. Neither side's victory in political battles will lead to the consolidation of the nation as a whole.

This is the opinion of the very same Prof Aron Brudnyy, "How much has been written about family, tribal, clan and other relations in Central Asia! The word *family* frightens some authors and induces reserved pride into others. However, in reality here there is again a pronounced process, existing well beyond its boundaries—perhaps, a global one. Ethnologists have showed that in so-called archaic societies people managed to disguise their political or social maneuvers with kin relations; here a question arises: isn't our society trying to disguise genealogical motives under a mask of politics or economy?"

The director of the Center for Studying Transitional Societies, Aydarbek Kochkunov, notes, "The reanimation of regionalism, clannishness and extinct tribal psychology has, unfortunately, become a negative side of elections held in the past decade. Without noticing it, we are backsliding from all-Kyrgyz ethnic self-consciousness to regional and tribal one. The political culture of modern Kyrgyzstan 'has been enriched' by tribal practices... The people of Kyrgyzstan, instead of receiving a powerful consolidating impulse, are receiving discord both at the level of the whole nation and at the level of little population groups. This may stagger the equilibrium of the country's public and political life, which is extremely undesirable for all of its citizens" (3).

Through centuries of their history the Kyrgyz carried the desire to unite and consolidate into a single nation, however, it should be admitted now that the notion of *people* in the natural historical understanding of the Kyrgyz was more linked to internal tribal links and quite strongly differed from the modern Euro-centric interpretation of the people-nation and nation-state.

Specialists say, "The main part of people obsessed with the idea of 'reviving the nation' treat it (tribalism) as the return of traditional *jurtchuluk* (society, community) which helped to unite people since ancient times, although it has always expressed and protected the interests of the tribe alone or its sub-tribe, but not the people as a whole" (4).

Edil Baysalov, the president of the For Democracy and Civil Society coalition, notes, "The problem of regional division is obvious and no-one should ignore it; moreover, we should openly and honestly discuss the ways of solving it, if not root out it, then at least ease it and rule out the risk of a large-scale conflict. We should understand the deep and long-term reasons for it. The fact that in the 15th year of independence we have faced an acute danger of a regional clash is the main sign of the failure of state-building policy: the lack of strong national identity. We need to

depoliticize regionalism, realizing that it is not dangerous on its own. It poses a danger only when it is being used irresponsibly" (5).

What sort of forms of a state are most acceptable for modern Kyrgyzstan with its specific history of statehood, which was always mainly based on tribal values, which now means:

- in political terms, the impossibility of forming power with a single center, to be precise, power based on the monopoly of the influence of one out of several major regional-tribal political forces. The poly-centricity of power is determined by the course of the historical development of the Kyrgyz people. Although, today we cannot say that the Kyrgyz's traditional economy was based only on nomadic animal husbandry, which used to define the specific of social organization and power relations of the Kyrgyz in the past, tribal and clannish-communal psychology formed in many centuries into the values of the people's political culture is one of the least changeable substances in public life;

- in economic terms, a policy of wider adopting market mechanisms, the privatization of state property (people's property in people's understanding) and a switch from collective forms of economic activities to individual ones are facing and will still be facing for a long time resistance from historically developed collective forms of economic thought, psychology, behavior and so on;

- in social terms, attempts to bring processes of "atomizing" social interests of various groups of Kyrgyz society to priorities of interests of a certain person will always face insurmountable barriers relating, again, to socio-cultural and political-cultural values, defining the advantageous position of interests of certain social communities (family, tribe, clan, region and the people); and

- in spiritual terms, an ill-thought through, "naturally undetermined" and deeply "sacrificial" transformation may lead and is already leading, in many respects, to cultural and moral disintegration, spiritual marginalization and, finally, may help a full disruption of the subjects of public relations.

Reasonable questions arise, "Do we really need such great sacrifices? Are there other, less painful, ways of transition to democracy? What does genuine democracy mean for nations like us?"

In the modern legal and political scientific theory there is the notion of forms of state: the form of rule, the form of government (the territorial organization of power) and the form of state (political) system.

Largely, in political traditions of the Kyrgyz, as a representative of nomadic civilization, the monarchic form of rule, i.e. the power of one person, was not a very typical phenomenon as it was in other peoples of the very same Central Asia, representatives of sedentary culture, except for those stages of the history of the Kyrgyz people when it was closer to the most centralized forms of power on the scale of the entire ethnos. All this was objectively set in historical memory and values of the political culture of the people.

Let us assume that it is precisely the political-cultural tradition of the people that says that more natural for Kyrgyzstan will be forms of rule that are not linked to the dominant role of an individual leader. The historical poly-centricity of power of the Kyrgyz originating from the traditions of the era of "military democracy", we believe, corresponds to the modern concept of "division of powers" and representative

forms of democracy more naturally. In this respect, in political-cultural terms more acceptable and justified to us can be the parliamentary-presidential form of rule, and in the future the parliamentary form of rule, which has greater potential to cover the political interests of the heterogeneous geographic and social subjects of our society. We should, finally, admit the objective existence of ethnic, social and regional differences, determined by the incompleteness of the processes of national consolidation. This should be reckoned with, and taken into account in order to adopt specific, effectual measures to overcome these differences, rather than just turning a blind eye to it. We should not aim at the victory of one of the groups of regional elites or one of the groups of regional interests in hidden or practically open confrontation in the situation of one-person, unitary power, but at an equal representation of these elites and interests in government bodies, organized in most democratic forms. Only will the equality of representation of ethnic, social and regional subjects of political relations in government bodies and their purposeful activities to protect people's vital interests give an impetus to completing the process of forming a single nation and the national understanding of economic, social and spiritual interests of the people of Kyrgyzstan.

The correct, naturally determined and evolutionary-justified choice of a form of rule will suggest efficient forms of the territorial organization of power, the direction of administrative-territorial reforms in the country, and the just and equal distribution of budget funds and investment in developing the regions, the adoption of priorities of socioeconomic development on the scale of the whole country.

Valentin Bogatyrev stresses, "Following the logic of our historical experience, we should now create a new efficient system of territorial-administrative management based on national principles of social organization. Anticipating accusations by local modernists about calls for 'returning to the past and archaic forms' we should absolutely definitely say that a government system based on a communal, local self-government and an extremely minimized and strictly regulated central government (what we had before the Russians arrived) is not the past, but the future which is being dreamt of, and being achieved in all developed countries" (6).

In this sense, we believe that political-cultural traditions dictate the logic of evolutionary development toward the strengthening of the regional level of government. Abolishing or significantly reducing the district level of government will save a lot of money by cutting expenses on employing the thousands-strong army of bureaucrats at district level, which will be bigger than the abolition of regional government bodies.

The main element of the production, social and cultural functioning of regions would be more mobile local communities of village or town level. Here market relations could include the potential of traditional forms of social organization: large family, kin and village communities, societies and so on, as primary production units and genuine root elements and institutions of our civil society. On a regional scale, they will not have particular contradictions among themselves because of their sub-cultural identity and this will help to create a healthy competitive medium in production and trade. Moreover, the wise representation and the equal account of regional interests and division of funds in central government bodies will ensure conflict-free relations between the regions.

In this case, the rapid development of regional centers as industrial and socio-cultural centers of the regions will have

defining importance. Naturally, urbanization will reduce internal and external migration, and this will solve many current social and political problems relating to shortages of land, housing, jobs and so on.

The Kyrgyz have never lived in their independent centralized state. This fact is now creating objective additional, genetically-backed up, positive impulses for democratization. We need to strengthen statehood, but not strictly centralized statehood, but a union of equal regions, evenly represented in the legislative, executive and judicial bodies of government, but not as independent political subjects as in the federative system but as economically strong regions of a single unitary state.

In this situation, the slogan "strong regions—strong country!" will acquire a new meaning, bolstered by the specifics of the traditional political, social and economic organization of Kyrgyz society. In this respect, we should not be worried about the necessity of allowing certain elements of federalism. This measure is dictated by objective conditions and will have a temporary nature until socioeconomic achievements and high living standards in the country give a real opportunity to solve contradictions between the regions and will lead to strengthening political, economic, social and spiritual factors of the consolidation of the nation.

As for the form of the state (or, in a wider sense, political) system, when the principles of political-cultural continuity

are applied to an optimal extent in this sphere, obviously, it is then possible to achieve more favorable conditions for switching from a totalitarian and authoritarian state to democracy.

A democratic state system is characterized by the actually working principle of division of powers, the existence of efficiently functioning system of local self-government and the strict observation of human and citizen's rights and liberties. In the conditions of the tribal, eastern political culture of Kyrgyzstan the notion of the democratism of the state system should be supplemented by the necessity of taking account of interests of traditional communities and specific social groups of society (family, kin, village communities and so on). And if in the process of administrative-territorial reforms, precisely these elements of social order are in focus and if they attract particular attention as elements of civil society, we believe we would soon see a boomerang effect in the form of the democratization of relations between the state and local communities.

When there is a good balance between the form of rule and the territorial distribution of power, i.e. wisely built relations between a representatively-organized political center and more independent regions, we could achieve further democratization of the state (and political) system and avoid many conflict-bearing situations in the process of moving toward democracy.

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Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan: the attitudes of Kazakhstani citizens towards Chinese migrants

(Results of a sociological survey)

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The article offers results of an applied sociological survey on attitudes towards Chinese migrants and awareness of China's culture and present-day life in Kazakhstan. The survey focuses on a) awareness on the presence of Chinese citizens in Kazakhstan and reasons for their immigration; b) opinions about the influence of migration on labor market and prospects of Chinese migration; c) degree of awareness of China's culture, history, traditions and present-day social and economic life; and d) attitudes towards Chinese migrants.

China's economic development and changing geopolitical role in the world is a subject of domestic and international scholarly discourse. China is very active in economic cooperation, trade, and population movements both globally and in Central Asia and Kazakhstan in particular. Chinese migration is widely studied by economists, sociologists, political scientists and ethnologists in different parts of the world; surprisingly, however, there is only a limited number of such studies in Kazakhstan, the country that shares a border with China.

As Chinese immigration to Kazakhstan increases, the attitudes of Kazakhstanis towards Chinese migrants are gradually evolving, but have not been studied in depth yet. In order to fill the gap in this sphere, the author conducted a survey collecting representative data about the attitudes of Kazakhstanis towards migrants from China and their awareness of China's culture and present-day life.

The objectives were to find out a) awareness of the presence of Chinese citizens in Kazakhstan and reasons for their immigration; b) opinions about the impact of migration on labor market and prospects of Chinese migration; c) degree of awareness of China's culture, history, traditions and present-day social and economic life; and d) attitudes towards Chinese migrants.

The survey used a representative sample of face-to-face interviews. The sample included 588 urban residents, aged 18 and above. Respondent selection was based on stratified random probability sampling. The

strata included 14 oblasts of Kazakhstan grouped into five regions: Northern (Akmolinskaya, Koustanayskaya, Pavlodarskaya, Severo-Kazakhstanskaya oblasts), Eastern (Vostochno-Kazakhstanskaya oblast), Southern (Almatinskaya, Zhambylskaya, Kyzylordinskaya, Yuzhno-Kazakhstanskaya oblasts), Western (Aktou-binskaya, Atyrauskaya, Zapadno-Kazakhstanskaya, Mangistauskaya oblasts) and Central (Karagandinskaya oblast); the city of Almaty was considered as a separate stratum.

The fieldwork was conducted over the period of May 14 - May 30, 2007, and the data were processed in SPSS software. Sample error did not exceed 4.1%. The survey was conducted by Social and Marketing Research Agency 'BRiF Central Asia' (Almaty).

PRESENCE OF CHINESE MIGRANTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

According to the opinion of majority of respondents in urban areas (68%), there are Chinese migrants in their cities. Among those who noted presence of Chinese citizens in their cities more than half (56%) thought that there were not so many migrants in the city, 36% noted that there were many, and 8% found it difficult to answer the question.

Among the respondents in Almaty and Northern region there are significantly more of those who think that there are Chinese citizens in their cities: 98% and 73% respectively. In the Central and Western regions the share of these is 54% and 51% respectively (average value by regions is 68%). At the same time, a significantly higher number of respondents of Western (39%) and Southern (33%) regions think that there are no Chinese citizens in their cities (average value by regions is 24%).

There is a definite contradiction that in Western region, is one of the centers of Chinese labor force employment, only half of respondents (51%) mentioned that there are Chinese migrants and the greatest number of respondents (39%) answered that there are no migrants from China.

However, according to the governmental data

(Ministry of Labor, Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan), alongside with licensed labor force a large number of irregular labor migrants from China is found in Western region, working without contracts. Though a number of Chinese workers and specialists are working in Western region on a "rotating scheme" ("vakhrovym metodom"), its quantitative presence cannot be missed by local residents.

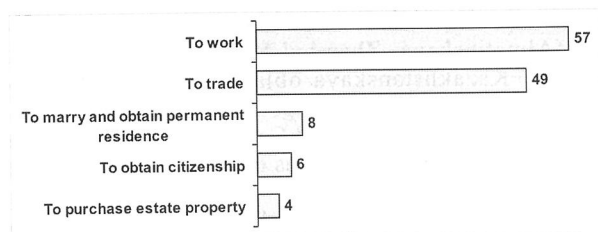
The level of education of respondents in Western region is rather high, although it is lower than the average across the regions. Awareness about China is significantly lower than in other regions, presumably, it has a certain impact on perception of respondents from Western region.

Differences in perception of presence of Chinese migrants in Kazakhstan correlate not only with residence but also with age, national identity and educational groups.

REASONS FOR MIGRATION OF CHINESE CITIZENS TO KAZAKHSTAN

According to the respondents' opinions, the main goals of arrival of Chinese citizens to Kazakhstan are employment (57%) and trade (49%). A certain number of respondents believe that Chinese citizens come to Kazakhstan to pursue other goals: for contract marriage and obtaining permanent residence – 8%, for obtaining Kazakh citizenship – 6%, and for purchasing property – 4%. (Diagram 1)

Diagram 1. "In your opinion why do Chinese citizens come to Kazakhstan?"



The sum of responses to this question exceeds 100% because this question allows more than one response.

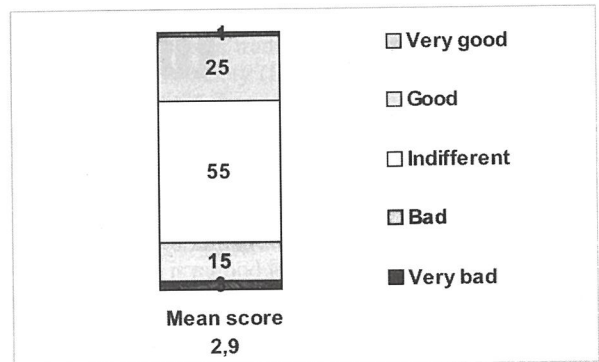
In Eastern region there is the largest share of those who think that the Chinese come in order to trade (69%), which is by 40% more than an average among other regions (49%). 42% of respondents in Eastern Kazakhstan think that the Chinese come to work. This opinion is explained by the fact that Eastern region neighbors on China and transborder trade is rather developed there.

Respondents in Almaty believe that the main goals of Chinese migration are employment (67%) and trade (61%). The city of Almaty is a center of wholesale and retail trade between China and Kazakhstan since late 1980s, and such perception is justifiable. Perceptions of the reasons behind Chinese migration in Kazakhstan are the most diversified in Almaty and the Southern region.

KAZAKHSTANIS ATTITUDES TOWARDS MIGRANTS FROM CHINA

In the course of the survey, respondents were asked to evaluate their attitudes towards migrants from China according to a 5-point scale, where 1 is 'very positive', and 5 is 'very negative'.

Diagram 3. "What is your attitude towards migrants from China?"



The results of the survey indicate that generally respondents have an indifferent attitudes towards Chinese migrants – the share of these is 55%; 1% of respondents have a very positive attitudes towards Chinese migrants, 25% – positive; 15% – negative, 3% – very negative. Average point is 2.9. (Diagram 3)

In the course of the research some interregional differences in attitudes were revealed. Although the indifferent attitudes towards migrants prevail, the share of these in Western and Eastern regions is 75% and 73%, respectively. Respondents in Almaty more often reported positive (43%) and very positive (4%) attitudes towards Chinese migrants (47% in total) (Diagram 4)

Among respondents in Central region (Karagandinskaya oblast) there were significantly more negative (22%) and very negative (5%) attitudes towards Chinese (27% in

Diagram 4. "What is your attitude towards migrants from China", by region of Kazakhstan

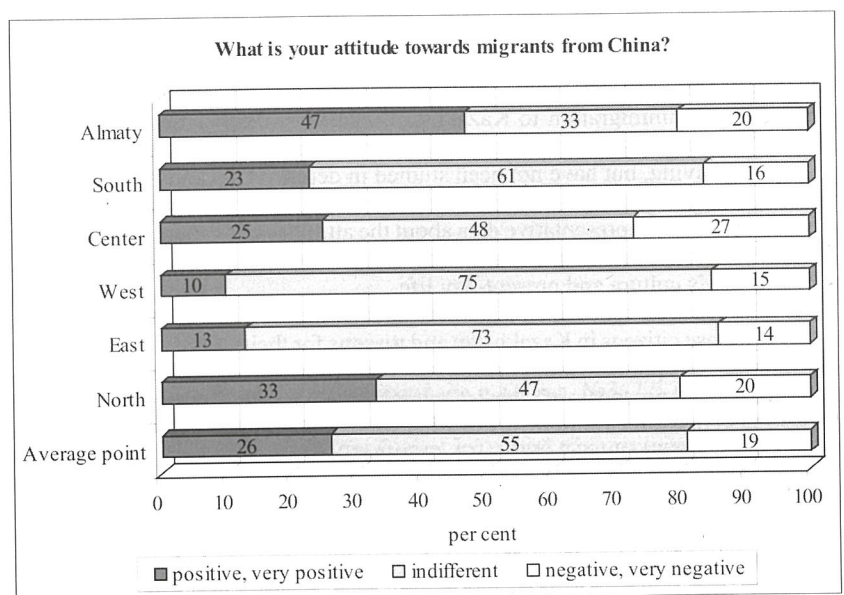
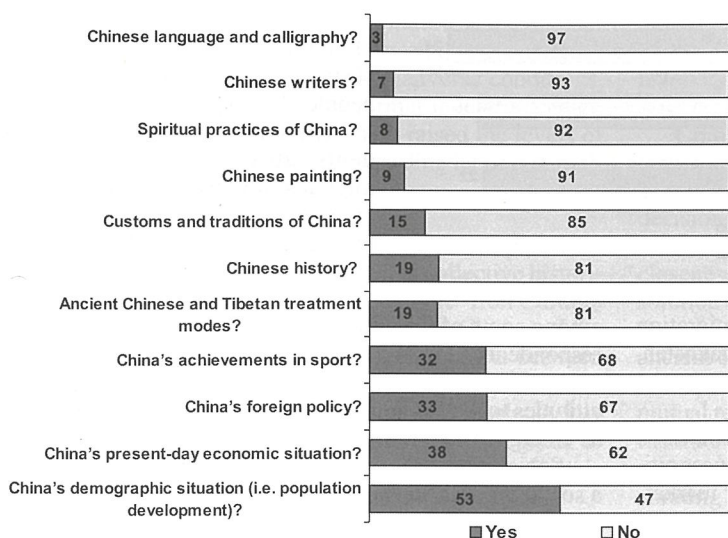


Diagram 4. "Awareness of Chinese culture, traditions and present-day life in Kazakhstan"

Are you familiar with...



total). 25% had positive attitudes towards migrants. Similar distribution can be found in Western and Eastern regions: there are no respondents who have very positive attitudes; the smallest share of respondents who have positive attitudes: 10% and 12%, and bad and very bad attitudes – 15% and 14% respectively.

Thus, the most tolerant attitudes are found in Almaty and Northern region (2.7 and 2.9 points, respectively), and less tolerant – in Central and Western regions (3.1 points each). The largest share of indifferent attitudes was found in Eastern and Southern regions (3.0 points each).

Some of the differences in attitudes varied according to the nationality of respondents. For example, among representatives of different nationalities ('others') there were 1.5 times more of those who have positive and very positive attitudes towards Chinese migrants (36%) compared to Kazakhs (24%).

Russians had more indifferent attitudes towards Chinese migrants than representatives of other ethnic groups ('others'): 59% compared to 45%. The share of those with negative attitudes towards migrants is the following: among Kazakhs – 21%, Russians – 15%, 'others' – 19%. Thus the average is 2.8 for 'different nationalities' (the most tolerant attitudes), 2.9 for Russians, 3.0 for Kazakhs (on a 5-point scale).

AWARENESS OF CHINESE CULTURE, TRADITIONS AND PRESENT-DAY LIFE IN KAZAKHSTAN

The chart demonstrates the respondents' low level of awareness of: Chinese language and calligraphy (3%), literature (3%), spiritual practices (8%), painting (9%), customs and traditions (15%), history (19%). Thus, on average, only 10.2% of respondents are familiar with China's culture, history, and traditions. 19% of respondents are familiar with traditional ancient Chinese methods of treatment. (Diagram 5)

Awareness of present-day life of China (social and economic situation, foreign policy, etc.) is much higher – on

average it is 39%, i.e. almost 4 times more than that of history and culture. Further, respondents were more aware of social-demographic situation (i.e. population development) of China – 53%. As for other aspects of China's present-day life, respondents were more aware of sports achievements – 32%; this indicator was most equally distributed among regions, and insignificantly depended on education, age and social status.

RESPONDENTS' AWARENESS OF CHINA: REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Central and Western regions demonstrate the lowest level of awareness of China's culture, history and traditions, as well as the lowest awareness, compared to other regions, about present-day social and economic realities (except demographic situation in the Central Region).

In the Eastern region, which borders with China, the level of knowledge about history and present-day realities of China is slightly lower than in the republic on average. The level of knowledge in the Southern region is higher than the average, according to the survey. In the Northern region urban respondents demonstrate a higher level of knowledge of almost all issues apart from Chinese traditions.

The city of Almaty is leading: the level of knowledge in some spheres is 1.5-2 times higher than in other regions because of a higher educational level of Almaty residents, its longstanding status of a political and administrative capital, and closer political, business, scientific and academic relations with China.

Respondents in Almaty were significantly more aware of all aspects of China's social and cultural life than respondents in other regions: social and demographic situation – 57% (compared to the average of 53%), present-day economic situation and sports achievements – 47% each (compared to the average of 38% and 32% respectively), and foreign policy – 38% (32% on average).

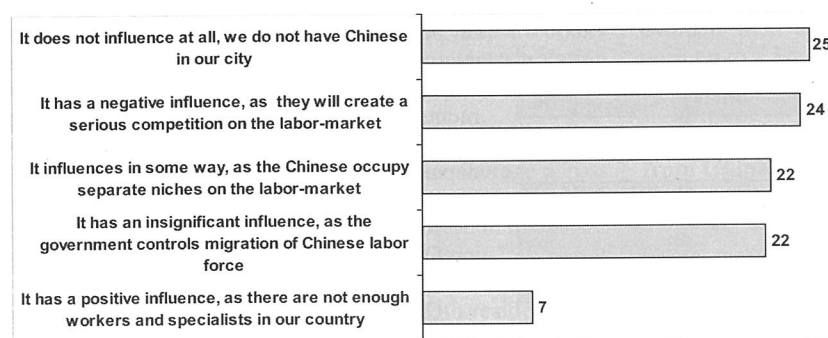
In Almaty, the share of those who used traditional Chinese and Tibetan methods of treatment was two times higher and reached 38% of respondents, compared to the average of 19%. The level of awareness about customs and traditions of China is 33% (15% on average), about Chinese history – 32% (19% on average). The only indicator that is slightly lower (6%) than the country average (7%) was Almaty residents' knowledge of Chinese literature.

The respondents in other regions are mostly aware of the present-day life of China. Among other correlations (apart from regional ones) one may note the dependence of awareness level on education and demographic (age) group. The groups with higher and continued higher education demonstrated higher level of awareness compared to average values almost in all aspects, and the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups – in majority of aspects. The share of those familiar with present-day economic and social of life of China is lower with the decrease of the level of education.

IMPACT OF CHINESE MIGRATION ON KAZAKHSTAN'S LABOR MARKET

In the course of the interviews, the respondents were asked to evaluate the impact of migration of Chinese citizens on the labor market in Kazakhstan.

Diagram 5. "In your opinion, to what degree does Chinese migration influence the labor market?"



Only 7% of respondents think that Chinese migration has a positive impact on the labor market in Kazakhstan, addressing the deficit of workers and specialists in the country (Diagram 5).

24% of respondent think that migration from China has a negative impact on Kazakhstan labor market, as Chinese citizens will create a serious competition on the labor market.

44% of respondents noted that migration of Chinese citizens influences the labor market in the Republic to some extent. 25% of respondents think that migration of Chinese citizens does not influence the labor market at all, because the number of Chinese in their cities is very small.

We may identify a correlation between the opinions regarding impact of migration of Chinese citizens on labor market in Kazakhstan and the attitudes towards migrants from China. The respondents, who believe that Chinese migration has a positive or an insignificant influence of the labor market in Kazakhstan, have a positive attitudes towards Chinese migrants. Whereas the respondents who tend to assess the impact of Chinese migration on Kazakhstan's labor market as negative, have mostly negative attitudes towards migrants from China. Among respondents who think that migration of the Chinese does not influence the labor market in Kazakhstan was a significantly higher number of those with indifferent attitudes.

Expectations regarding Chinese migration in the next 5-10 years

The majority of respondents thought that migration of Chinese citizens to Kazakhstan will increase during the next 5-10 years (67%). Among respondents of Southern region those who think that migration of Chinese citizens to Kazakhstan will increase are prevailing (75%). A significantly higher number of respondents in the Central region, compared to other regions, think that Chinese migration to Kazakhstan will either stay on the same level (44%) or decrease (13%). Only 42% of respondents expected the increase of Chinese migration, which was 1.5 times less than the average.

MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

According to the opinion of the majority of urban respondents there are Chinese citizens in their cities (68%), but their number is not too high (56%). The main goals of immigration of Chinese citizens to Kazakhstan are believed to be employment (57%) and trade (49%). Respondents expect an increase of migration of Chinese citizens to Kazakhstan (67%) within the next 5-10 years.

China is a country that Kazakhstan shares border with, and has ancient history, culture, customs and traditions,

but the survey has demonstrated that Kazakhstan's urban population (and most likely rural population as well) is barely familiar with Chinese culture or present-day life. As the survey revealed, there is a low level awareness of culture and history of China, and customs and traditions of the Chinese people (10.2%).

The survey revealed that respondents' attitudes towards Chinese migrants are mostly indifferent (average point is 2.9 out of 5), but vary by region. According to the survey, negative and alarmist attitudes towards Chinese migrants are evolving among some of the urban residents: almost a quarter of the respondents (24%) are concerned about serious potential competition on the labor market and 18% displayed negative attitudes towards Chinese migrants. This can be interpreted as emerging national stereotypes.

Social stereotype is a simplified, schematic perception of a social process, phenomenon or group. Stereotypes appear in situations of absence or lack of information and allow to quickly 'reconstruct' a situation and 'position' oneself in social relations with 'others'. In other words, a stereotype may serve as an adaptation mechanism in rapidly changing social environment. However, rather often, even as the information about a subject or a process is increasing, the stereotype does not change, or modify, but is preserved as distorted, fallacious knowledge.

Social stereotypes can refer to political, national, gender, and other identity. National stereotype is a schematic image of an ethnic group that often includes evaluations of appearance, intellectual abilities, moral qualities, or lifestyle, etc. The structure of stereotypes includes 3 components: descriptive, evaluative and prescriptive. National stereotypes are usually characterized by congruency of all components and tend to be emotionally charged, negatively or positively oriented¹.

Stereotypes become actualized in a situation of intergroup contact, when individuals perceive each other as representatives of their national groups. In case of interpersonal contact national stereotypes are less salient because the individuals perceive each other in all the rich and multiple personality manifestations that go beyond national components. Like other types of stereotypes, national stereotypes become national prejudices in situations of limited or distorted information. Mass media can play a negative role in formation of national stereotypes and prejudices, triggering and increasing tensions, as was the case in Russia in the last years.

Let us take as an example the Western and Central regions of Kazakhstan, which have an average of 3.1, indicating the least tolerant attitude towards Chinese migrants compared to other regions. A working hypothesis may be formulated that among population of these regions both evaluative and prescriptive elements of national stereotypes towards Chinese migrants are being formed, including negative evaluation of their impact on Kazakhstan's labor market, generally indifferent or negative attitudes (especially in the Western region), concerns over the increase in migration, and

¹ Encyclopedia of Sociology. National Public and Research Fund. In 2 Volumes. Moscow, Mysl, Vol 2. P. 594.

denial of their presence (especially by Kazakh respondents in the Western region).

Unlike in the Western region, where there is a relatively large number of Chinese migrants, the attitudes in the Central region (specifically in Karaganda and cities of Karagandinskaya oblast) are of a more prejudicial nature as the number of migrants is significantly lower. The prejudice is emerging against the background of objectively adverse conditions, such as high unemployment in the former industrial center, and thus lower living standards, which raised the levels of anxiety and negative expectations regarding labor competition against the Chinese migrants.

One of the explanations of this phenomenon is that emerging stereotypes are deeply rooted in collective historical memory of the people, the heritage of the 'Iron Curtain' and decades of distrust and tension between China and the USSR, which weakened the intensity of contacts between the people of two countries. Mass media's opportunistic treatment of the subject might have played a role. A low level of language proficiency, especially with regards to such complex language as Chinese, is a significant obstacle in mutual contacts.

This interpretation is merely a prudent hypothesis and is based on a general observation of how often national stereotypes, based on superficial knowledge about another ethnic group, absence of information and interpersonal contacts, turn into national prejudice and bias.

Studying national stereotypes towards Chinese in Kazakhstan was not an explicit goal of the present research. However, the survey revealed concerns regarding the consequences of Chinese migration to Kazakhstan and emerging negative attitudes towards Chinese migrants among some urban groups. This calls for a further in-depth research of the issue.

Without underestimating the problems of present-day migration processes in Kazakhstan, including those from China, one might have expected that interstate trade and economic relations between Kazakhstan and China would be accompanied by increase in social and cultural relations and human contacts. However, this process is hampered by lack of openness of China itself, as well as bridge-building on all levels including the humanitarian sphere such as education, science, culture, tourism and personal contacts.

China's policies need to go beyond trade or financial components and include encouragement of human contacts. This requires breakthrough thinking from intellectuals and decision makers, along the lines of what happened nearly three decades ago, when China started moving from the closeness to openness and cooperation. This was a win-win solution that can serve as inspiration to revive the best traditions of exchange and cultivation which characterized the ancient Silk Way.

As for Kazakhstan, some of the initiatives to strengthen mutual relations could include reestablishment of Academic Institute of Oriental Studies, support to joint research teams and projects, increased student and scholar exchange, celebrating a Year of China in Kazakhstan and Year of Kazakhstan in China, etc. Media should play a more constructive role in building a positive image of China and encouraging friendly relations between the two nations.

Kazakhstan is yet to learn about the culture and life of China. This opens prospects for discovery of China's rich historical and cultural heritage, learning about its customs and traditions, overcoming stereotypes and prejudices, and developing a tolerant attitude towards Chinese migrants. These should be facilitated by social and cultural traditions of peoples of Kazakhstan, which should reflect their experience of living in a multicultural and multinational environment.

The Current State of, and Prospects for Foreign Economic Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan

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AS a result of reforms conducted by the country's leadership in modern Tajikistan, there is a definite positive trend of important macroeconomic indicators, such as GDP, industrial output, farming output and foreign trade.

Positive changes in Tajikistan's business climate are boosting foreign capital's involvement in restoring the country's economy and developing cooperation with foreign countries. Kazakhstan has shown its interest in ensuring stability and economic development in Tajikistan by developing bilateral mutually-beneficial cooperation.

This is an analysis of economic relations established between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan and the recommendation of promising aspects of developing economic cooperation between these two countries.

ANALYSIS OF BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN KAZAKHSTAN AND TAJIKISTAN

Diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan were established in January 1993. Since then they have become friendly and partner-based. The number of agreements between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan has now reached about 60 joint documents in various spheres of cooperation.

The main document in establishing and developing bilateral relations was *the Treaty on the Basis of Relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan*, signed in 1993. This treaty defined the main principles for bilateral relations: mutual respect for independence and state sovereignty, equality, non-interference in one another's internal affairs, mutual aim to establish beneficial partner economic relations both at a state level and grassroots level.

In general, bilateral cooperation between the countries is based on the interests of the two countries and mutual benefits. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan also cooperate within international structures, such as the CIS, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Kazakhstan regards Tajikistan as a friendly partner in the Central Asian region. During the civil war in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan was an active player in the process of solving the military conflict, acting as one of the guarantors for ensuring the sides' fulfillment of the general agreement on establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan.

An important stage in developing bilateral ties was the Tajik President's first official visit to Kazakhstan in May 2006. During this visit, the sides held talks on many cooperation issues and signed six bilateral agreements in such spheres of cooperation as the social protection of the population and the protection of labor migrants; international road links; fighting economic crime and state youth policy.

The main aspects of economic relations between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan now are: *trade, hydropower engineering, investment, transport and cooperation between administrative-territorial units of the two countries.*

Trade is a traditional and most important aspect of bilateral economic cooperation. Tajikistan is Kazakhstan's eighth biggest trade partner in the CIS.

Table 1. The main foreign trade indicators, million US dollars

Indicators	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Trade	57.8	63.5	48.8	82.7	139.6	167.6	185.1
Kazakh exports to Tajikistan	52.3	61.3	46.0	75.5	136.1	150.6	157.4
Kazakh imports from Tajikistan	5.5	2.2	2.8	7.2	3.5	17.0	27.7
Balance	46.8	59.1	43.2	68.3	132.6	133.6	129.7

Source: the Kazakh Finance Ministry's Customs Control Committee

Kazakhstan is Tajikistan's third biggest trade partner in the CIS (after Russia and Uzbekistan). According to Kazakh customs statistics for 2000-2006, trade between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan totaled \$745.1m, of which exports \$679.2m and imports \$65.9m (Table 1).

In the given period, bilateral trade had steadily grown from \$57.8m in 2000 to \$185m in 2006, i.e. by 220%. Kazakh exports to Tajikistan grew by 200%, while Kazakh imports from Tajikistan by 400%. The main factors of growth were the following:

- a growth in demand for supplies of products thanks to the economic boom in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan;
- the stabilization of the domestic political situation in Tajikistan; and
- a boost in business activity in both countries.

Kazakh exports to Tajikistan include grain, flour and cereals, sugar, animal products, petroleum products, minerals, vehicles, chemical and related products, textiles and other industrial products.

Kazakh imports from Tajikistan include ores, electricity, textiles and products, foodstuffs, fruit and vegetables, nuts and tinned vegetables. For example, the Khujand Cannery supplies a wide range of fruit and berry juices to Kazakhstan.

However, Tajikistan's potential has not yet been tapped fully in terms of trade with Eurasian Economic Community member countries, including Kazakhstan. There are a number of reasons for this, including the lack of efficient transport routes.

In the hydropower engineering sphere one of the important and topical problems for Kazakhstan is the joint efficient *management of water resources* in Central Asia. As an active consumer of water resources, Kazakhstan continues to remain an initiator in the quest to solve this problem.

For example, at a quadripartite meeting (**Kazakhstan**, Kyrgyzstan, **Tajikistan** and Uzbekistan) in Astana in September 2006, the heads of state discussed the issue of setting up a water and energy consortium to develop an efficient mechanism to solve *problems of rational use of hydropower resources* of the region. Accords reached on reviving the Fund to Save the Aral Sea and creating a special information center in Almaty aim to advance this issue further.

Investment. According to the Kazakh National Bank, as at 1 January 2007, Kazakh investment in the Tajik economy totaled about \$94m.

Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in the investment sphere is at the stage of fulfilling accords reached earlier.

For example, the Tajik-Kazakh joint venture Adrasmon has been set up from the Adrasmon Mining and Ore-enriching Plant in Sogda Region, which is Tajikistan's only producer of lead and silver concentrates. This joint venture's main tasks were to repair deposits and resume mining operations.

Kazakhstan's Kazinvest-Mineral company invested \$0.5m in this project.

Later, this company bought out the Adrasmon Mining and Ore-enriching Plant at a tender for 11 million somoni. The Kazakh company is currently carrying out a \$12m project to apply new technology there.

It is worth noting that the Investment Fund of Kazakhstan is studying a number of investment projects in Tajikistan worth \$17m. Some projects are now being completed, for example projects to build plants in the processing sector.

Another example of cooperation is a joint venture to process fruit and vegetables in Tajikistan. The IAG-Trade company from Kazakhstan is involved in this project.

Cooperation between the administrative-territorial units of the two countries is a new and promising aspect in bilateral Kazakh-Tajik relations.

A positive precedent here was the establishment of direct relations between South Kazakhstan Oblast and Tajikistan's Sogda Region. As a result, for the first time in the history of bilateral Kazakh-Tajik relations the governor of South Kazakhstan Oblast paid a visit Sogda Region in April 2003, during which the *Agreement on Establishing Twin Relations between the Towns of Shymkent and Khujand* and the *Agreement on Cooperation between the Administrations of South Kazakhstan Oblast and Sogda Region in the Trade-Economic, Research, Technical and Cultural Spheres*.

This kind of cooperation makes it possible to better learn about the economic situation and the potential of the partner region and define specific mutually beneficial joint projects.

The transport sphere is very important in economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Export, import and transit flows between the two countries had grown between 2000 and 2005 (Table 2). This was possible thanks to a growth in bilateral trade.

The growth in Tajik freight transited through Kazakhstan was possible as a result of a growth in Tajikistan's trade with Kazakhstan's neighbors, above all, Russia. Tajikistan exports mainly aluminum and cotton and imports petroleum products, construction materials, foodstuffs and other goods.

* * *

In general, the dynamics of the development of Kazakh-Tajik cooperation and mutual desire to make bilateral and multilateral relations large-scale and sustainable point to the countries' interest in expanding mutually beneficial economic relations in various spheres. Moreover, the steadily developing economic relations are becoming more meaningful. This is bolstered by high-level meetings and agreements.

Promising Aspects of Developing Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan

Analysis has shown that regardless of Tajikistan's steady economic development, the situation in the country is not yet stable enough and to a great extent depends on external factors. That is why offering aid to Tajikistan, above all, economic aid, will strengthen positive processes in the country.

Table 2. The dynamics of export, import and transit freight (for Kazakhstan), '000 tonnes

Type of freight	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Export	485.66	521.85	533.3	607.21	667.45	801.23
Import	8.41	4.44	7.42	16.25	14.54	20.02
Transit	691	703	770	993	1,065	1,100

Source: the Kazakh Transport and Communications Ministry

In this respect, Kazakhstan is showing interest in ensuring stability and economic development in Tajikistan. Ensuring the sustainable development of Kazakh-Tajik mutually beneficial relations is a priority task that has regional importance. First of all, work which is already being carried out should be continued and expanded. Not only government agencies, but also Kazakh business structures should play an active part in this.

The trend of the improving business climate in Tajikistan is an important factor in developing economic cooperation. In particular, certain preferences are offered to foreign partners regarding customs duties in importing production technologies and equipment for joint ventures. Foreign enterprises are also exempt from profit tax for the first three years of their operations.

While considering prospects for Kazakh-Tajik economic cooperation, the following aspects should be singled out.

The most topical aspects of **trade** are:

1. Expanding supplies of early vegetables and fruit from Tajikistan. Taking into account that the vegetables season starts earlier in Tajikistan than in Kazakhstan, vegetables and fruit imports will make it possible to a certain extent cover shortages of these products and help to reduce retail prices for Kazakh consumers.

In this respect, additional measures should be taken to ease the process of supplying the growing volumes of various vegetables and simplify their customs clearance.

2. Increasing alumina supplies from Kazakhstan. One of the country's major enterprises, the Tajik Aluminum Plant, which has a capacity of producing 600,000 tonnes of aluminum a year, because of shortages of raw material and semi-finished products, is producing only 400,000 tonnes of aluminum, which is mainly exported.

However, supplies of alumina produced by the Aluminum of Kazakhstan company (*according to information available, some 50,000 tonnes a year*) to this enterprise do not reflect the existing potential.

That is why it is necessary to take additional measures to significantly increase alumina supplies to Tajikistan.

Hydropower engineering. In the hydropower engineering sphere, topical aspects of cooperation are: *the involvement of Kazakh enterprises in fulfilling major hydropower engineering projects in Tajikistan and the coordinated involvement of the two countries in solving problems of the rational management of water resources in the Central Asian region.*

Involvement in fulfilling hydropower engineering projects in Tajikistan. Hydropower engineering, as a strategic sector of the country's industry, generates the interests of major foreign investors. The most important aspects here are projects to complete the construction of two major facilities – the Sangtuda and Rogun hydropower plants, and commission them.

In this respect, Kazakh capital's involvement in these projects is promising. Taking into account that accords were reached on the involvement of Russia's RUSAL aluminum holding company and Unified Energy System company, as well as Iranian companies, major Kazakh companies' involvement along these companies seems also expedient in case the format of projects is changed from bilateral (Russia-Tajikistan and Iran-Tajikistan) to trilateral (plus Kazakhstan).

The coordinated involvement of the two countries in solving problems of the efficient management of water resources in the Central Asian region. Bearing in mind

that Tajikistan has Central Asia's greatest potential water resources and Kazakhstan is their active consumer, it is feasible to continue work in bilateral format in this direction.

Transport. The development of foreign trade and business activity in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan also depends on the potential of freight and passenger transport. Regardless of the growing flow of freight transport, further growth is limited, and this complicates the export of goods from Tajikistan.

In connection with this, measures should be taken to increase Tajikistan's transport potential in terms of export freight. Developing routes for freight transport to/from Kazakhstan and developing transit routes beyond Kazakhstan has great significance. The following measures could increase transport potential:

- *improving and modernizing railway and road infrastructure;*
- *developing and conducting coordinated customs and tariff policy in freight transport;*
- *adopting new information systems for ensuring international freight transport; and*
- *developing infrastructure along transport routes, above all, on transit roads.*

At the same time, routes cutting through Uzbekistan may become more relevant for Tajikistan in the future. This is dictated by the fact that Uzbekistan's membership of the Eurasian Economic Community demands that the country joins and fulfils decisions adopted within the community, in particular, on forming a transport union which envisages a single market of transport services and a single transport system.

Telecommunications. The relatively new telecommunications market in Tajikistan may also be promising for developing cooperation in the future. Expanding foreign business's presence in the country helps the active expansion of new technology, including modern telecommunications technology.

That is why Kazakh operators' entry to the Tajik telecommunications market is very urgent. Given that this market is quite competitive and entering it will demand significant investment, acceptable ways here will include the creation of a consortium of several operators and Kazakh telecom operators acquiring shares in the existing market players.

The investment sphere should remain an important aspect of economic cooperation. According to the World Bank, Tajikistan has created a quite favorable investment climate making it possible to create new jobs and improve the activities of companies through adopting new approaches and corporate governance systems.

Taking into account such assessments and Kazakh development institutions' interest in implementing projects in Tajikistan, priority sectors in addition to hydropower engineering are mining, construction, the textile and food sectors. That is why it is feasible to build up a diversified investment portfolio of projects and attract financial resources accumulated by Kazakh development institutions.

The mining industry. Tajikistan's major high-quality marble deposits offer Kazakh investors an opportunity to make investment in marble extraction profitable. Experts estimate that the production cost of Tajik marble will be three to four times lower than current marble supplies from other countries.

Investment in the joint development of the country's major Great Kanimansur and East Kanimansur deposits will also be profitable.

In *the textile industry*, investment in setting up cotton and textile production lines equipped with modern technology of producing various types of fabric using Tajikistan's high-quality raw cotton also offers promising prospects.

Since cotton enterprises are facing particular problems and their development is hindered by a lack of investment, it is expedient to set up joint ventures to process raw cotton in Tajikistan. Kazakh investors' advantages in making such enterprises successful are modern cotton-processing technologies and corporate management systems, whereas the advantage of Tajikistan is high-quality raw cotton.

In *the food industry*, it is feasible to invest in joint projects to produce dry fruit, juice concentrates and nectars. Here, investment can be made in form of equipping these production lines with efficient technologies for the advanced processing of vegetables and fruit and other plant products.

Developing **direct relations between administrative-territorial units of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan** seems to be expedient as a relatively new aspect of cooperation. A promising project here is to establish direct relations between Almaty Oblast and Tajikistan's central region that unites 11 districts governed directly from the capital, Dushanbe. This region borders Kyrgyzstan in the north, offering transit routes through this country.

Cooperation with this region of Tajikistan has promising prospects, because it produces the bulk of the country's industrial output—over 43%. A significant part of the indus-

trial output (about 80%) in monetary terms is produced by the Tajik Aluminum Plant and the Nurek hydropower plant. This region is also the country's main producer of meat and dairy products.

In this respect, the priority steps are to prepare and sign agreements between Almaty Oblast and this part of Tajikistan on establishing direct relations and developing economic cooperation. These documents should include measures to establish trade and economic relations between enterprises from these administrative territories.

It is also feasible to set up a joint body to coordinate inter-regional cooperation between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

* * *

The expediency of steadily developing Kazakh-Tajik relations is obvious for both countries. Therefore, work should be boosted to fulfill the measures proposed above to expand cooperation in foreign trade, power engineering, transport and telecommunications, the investment sphere and cooperation between administrative-territorial units of both countries.

Bearing in mind that both countries are not limited to bilateral ties, but also are partners in multilateral processes, the expansion of economic cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Community, the CIS, the Economic Cooperation Organization and other regional structures should also become a priority.

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Oil Factor in US-China Relations

(Bush Administration)

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Competition for natural resources control has been a strong drive behind the geopolitical changes throughout history. The power of any state to great extent depends on the complex set of domestic and external factors, and among them- economic potential and natural resources endowment. When a state pursues global interests its demands grow significantly with the effect of eliminating any other actors on its way. As soon as it concerns the natural resources – so much is at stake- the conflict probability grows.

The Bush Administration as the missionary proponent of America's global intentions in so far unbalanced/strategically uncertain global order has been in the process of realization of the plan to establish full control over the major energy sources around the world- from the Asia Pacific through Central Asia and the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

This generalization posits 2 extreme outcomes. The first is that sooner or later some other country with the huge potential and uncontrolled ambitions, will boldly challenge the American unilateralist usurpation of the natural resources control and eventually it might lead to the conflict, not only in bilateral relations, but have regional implications. The second outcome suggests the scenario when the actors set up a mechanism (bilateral or regional) to prevent the conflicting interests escalation and would manage the fair access to resources to some selected parties.

What are major actors – suppliers and consumers in the global energy market? The main suppliers of energy resources are in the third world countries- Africa, Latin America, Islamic states of the Middle East, and the post-soviet republics of central Asia. They all had, or are having histories of complex relations with the USA.

The chief consumers have been- USA, China, EU, Japan, and India. The competition is clearly developing between USA and China, their economies heavily depend on imported energy- primarily oil, and as the dynamics of bilateral relations and unilateral actions demonstrate, especially since China's becoming the net oil importer.

Look at the growth of US oil consumption: preliminary monthly data on the origins of crude oil

imports in July 2007 has been released and it shows that one country has exported more than 1.50 million barrels per day to the USA. Including that country, a total of four countries exported over 1.00 million barrels per day of crude oil to the USA (see table below). The top 5 exporting countries accounted for 68 % of U.S. crude oil imports in July while the top ten sources accounted for approximately 86 percent of all U.S. crude oil imports. The top sources of US crude oil imports for July were Canada (1.797 million barrels per day), Mexico (1.469 million barrels per day), Saudi Arabia (1.434 million barrels per day), Venezuela (1.167 million barrels per day), Nigeria (0.890 million barrels per day). The rest of the top ten sources, in order, were Algeria (0.520 million barrels per day), Iraq (0.460 million barrels per day), Angola (0.392 million barrels per day), Colombia (0.207 million barrels per day), and Kuwait (0.197 million barrels per day). Total crude oil imports averaged 9,901 million barrels per day in July, which is a decrease of (0.082) million barrels per day from June 2007.

Statistics on China's oil consumption is also impressive- it accounts for about 10.8% of the world's total annual energy consumption. China's energy demand has been greatly increasing and is expected to grow at about 5% per year through the year 2020. An historical summary of China's Total Primary Energy Production (TPEP) and Consumption (TPEC) is shown in Table 3. Rising China's oil demand would inevitably pressure on global supply, and at the same time impinge US ability to sustain its oil demand.

Table 1. Crude Oil Imports (Top 15 Countries)
(Thousand Barrels per Day)

Country	Jul-07	Jun-07	YTD 2007	Jul-06	Jan - July 2006
CANADA	1,797	1,873	1,839	1,624	1,742
MEXICO	1,469	1,392	1,458	1,561	1,662
SAUDI ARABIA	1,434	1,501	1,421	1,264	1,400
VENEZUELA	1,167	1,135	1,117	1,191	1,161
NIGERIA	890	893	1,002	1,014	1,097
ALGERIA	520	504	500	413	314
IRAQ	460	573	475	592	553
ANGOLA	392	502	542	666	480
COLOMBIA	207	143	122	144	165
KUWAIT	197	263	196	155	162
LIBYA	165	144	81	104	61
UNITED KINGDOM	162	127	121	229	146
ECUADOR	159	166	189	170	264
BRAZIL	147	121	160	187	121
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	113	69	64	31	67

**Table 2. Total Imports of Petroleum (Top 15 Countries)
(Thousand Barrels per Day)**

Country	Jul-07	Jun-07	YTD 2007	Jul-06	Jan - July 2006
CANADA	2,317	2,375	2,407	2,114	2,250
MEXICO	1,605	1,529	1,594	1,709	1,784
SAUDI ARABIA	1,436	1,534	1,443	1,313	1,442
VENEZUELA	1,357	1,364	1,356	1,467	1,455
NIGERIA	904	968	1,053	1,073	1,171
ALGERIA	730	709	722	743	606
RUSSIA	525	285	417	425	349
IRAQ	460	573	475	592	553
ANGOLA	404	514	556	695	501
UNITED KINGDOM	355	345	319	340	294
VIRGIN ISLANDS	341	218	323	353	305
COLOMBIA	231	164	138	156	185
KUWAIT	202	263	202	155	165
BRAZIL	197	159	207	279	177
LIBYA	184	170	116	116	81

Note: The data in the tables above exclude oil imports into the U.S. territories.

Source: Energy Information Administration // http://www.eia.doe.gov/pub/oil_gas/petroleum/data_publications/company_level_imports/current/import.html

It is also important to take into account that the consumption per capita in China will triple (demography pressure), and economic growth rate, as well as improving life styles of the population.

Thus, the probability of US-China conflict over oil is very high. The USA and China demonstrate rather similar patterns of conduct in getting access or control over oil resources. China shifted from traditional soft and secure energy supply (using primarily economic diplomacy instruments) to political claiming the disputed territory potentially rich with energy resources (South China sea). China has become capable of purchasing abroad the share in oil deposits, mostly due to the china's growing trade surplus with the USA (see Table 4).

The geography of China's oil interests matches that of the America's, especially in Latin America and Middle East. The likelihood of completion is growing, as China is getting more successful in getting more and more that the USA from the same sources. The reasons behind China's successes are quite understandable- its traditional image of being anti- American and supportive to the social and economic problems of the Third World.

The tension is growing between USA and China although they have yet engaged in the open conflict. An attempt of CNOOC to buy California based UNOCAL met strong opposition and criticism from Washington. In other oil deals China and USA have been conflicting behind the scenes, like in case of Central Asia forcing the interested regimes to balance between America and China.

The critics of China's rise warn about the serious consequences for USA - in economics, politics, and security -and call to take urgent measure to control the situation through containment. Their argumentation can be summed up as follows. China has been channeling the economic revenues (gained through negative balance in Sino American trade and unfair access to the to-be American oil sources) into military modernization to use military factor in potential crisis in bilateral relations and finally it would shift the regional/global balance

of power in its favor.

Another implication is that the main obstacle and at the same time the bridge that become the institutionalized mechanism in both states policies - Taiwan status- can be replaced by the oil/energy factor, or become a gambling card for both. More and more issues at the bilateral agenda deal with energy factor- diversification, joint projects (mostly research) and trade, than with Taiwan.

**Table 3. China's TPEP and TPEC, 1993-2003
(in Quads)**

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
TPEP	31.84	34.06	35.46	36.01	37.59	36.33	35.38	36.67	39.97	41.51	44.10
TPEC	31.30	34.02	35.15	35.94	37.60	37.05	36.97	38.83	40.91	42.08	45.48

Note: 1 Quad = 1 quadrillion Btu Source: DOE/EIA // <http://www.cslforum.org/china.htm>

Table 4. Chinese overseas oil ventures 1992-2005

Middle east And North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Americas	Pacific	Former USSR
Algeria	Angola	Argentina	Australia	Azerbaijan
Egypt	Central African Republic	Bolivia	Brunei	Kazakhstan
Iran	Chad	Brazil	Indonesia	Kyrgyzstan
Iraq	Congo-Brazzaville	Canada	Mongolia	Russia
Kuwait	Congo-Kinshasa	Cuba	Myanmar	Tajikistan
Libya	Cote d'Ivoire	Ecuador	Papa New Guinea	Turkmenistan
Morocco	Equatorial Guinea	Mexico	Philippines	Uzbekistan
Oman	Gabon	Peru	Taiwan	
Saudi Arabia	Kenya	Venezuela	Thailand	
Syria	Madagascar		Vietnam	
Tunisia	Mali			
United Arab Emirates	Mauritania			
	Mozambique			
	Niger			
	Nigeria			
	Sudan			

Source: Peter Hatemi and Andrew Wedeman, Oil and conflict in Sino American relations//China security. Vol. #3, summer 2007.

Early Parliamentary Election in Kazakhstan in 2007: Specifics, Results and Prospects

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The article is devoted to early election to the Mazhilis on 18 August 2007 in Kazakhstan. Political reform started with the amendments made to the country's constitution in May 2007 which aim to bring the processes of economic and political development in Kazakhstan to an equal level. The main point of these amendments is to adopt a presidential-parliamentary form of rule in Kazakhstan. The deliberate transfer of some presidential powers to political parties and parliament is not just a sign of the constructive development of the political system, but also a strategically well-thought out step that has accelerated the process of political modernization in Kazakhstan.

This political season will definitely occupy a special place in the contemporary history of Kazakhstan. It would be no exaggeration to note that a political reform now underway has become a symbolic event that has significantly changed the political field and the alignment of forces in the country. This process started with the amendments made to the country's constitution in May 2007 which aim to bring the processes of economic and political development in Kazakhstan to an equal level. The main point of these amendments is to adopt a presidential-parliamentary form of rule in Kazakhstan. The deliberate transfer of some presidential powers to political parties and parliament is not just a sign of the constructive development of the political system, but also a strategically well-thought out step that has accelerated the process of political modernization in Kazakhstan.

A change in the status and powers of parliament led to the dissolution of the lower chamber and a call for an early election to the Mazhilis on 18 August 2007. Analysts suggested various reasons for confining the previous parliament to history. However, it seems that this step was quite logical because it was prompted by the constitutional amendments, and, in turn, by the demands of the time. There were no other clear reasons for dissolving parliament, because there was no criticism of the activities of the previous Mazhilis in the country or society and the chamber was working quite efficiently. This step also met the interests of Kazakhstan's democratic development and the requirements for the rapid modernization of our country.

A general election on a proportional basis was not only an innovation in the history of Kazakhstan but also, for all political forces and for society as a whole, a test of the maturity of the multi-party system. Very few people had any understanding of the required tactics for a political party in this new situation and the relations which it needed to build with the local and central authorities. For the first time, a party had to compile a list of its leaders and presented them to the voters as a collective image of the party. Studies of public opinion took on a totally different form, while the battle for the ratings of the various parties at the national level turned into one of the most intriguing aspects of the recent election campaign.

Well before the start of the campaign, many experts branded it as "an election with no suspense"—in other words, with a clear favorite and predictable results. In fact, the results of the election astonished everyone and caused a great deal of controversy. Out of all this controversy and the quite unexpected nature of the election results, Kazakhstan has embarked on an important long-term process of political reform. In reality the country has switched from one system to another, from the former Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic and its post-Soviet version, based on unclear legitimacy, to a functioning nation state. The recent election campaign was indeed the logical consequence of this reform. In this way, the authorities broadcast another clear signal to the Kazakh people about their firm intention to democratize the country and an assurance that the process of political modernization would not be scaled down or mothballed.

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The parliamentary election was preceded by a certain process of mergers and transformations among the country's political parties. It was, after all, a multi-party contest. In total, seven political parties took part in the 2007 election: the National Social Democratic Party (OSDP), the Nur Otan people's democratic party, the Party of Patriots of Kazakhstan (PPK), the Auyt social democratic party, the Ak Zhol democratic party, the Rukhaniyat party and the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK).

The favorite was the Nur Otan people's democratic party, which presented itself as the ruling party. The nucleus of its program was support for the president's political and economic program. The second favorite was the National Social Democratic Party (OSDP), which had earlier been joined by the opposition Nagyz Ak Zhol party. OSDP positioned itself as the main opponent of Nur Otan and the government in general, aiming to change fundamentally the country's political and socioeconomic policy and dismantle the existing system of state governance. Among the leaders of the race was Ak Zhol, which was joined by the Adilet democratic party. Ak Zhol represented the so-called moderate opposition and adhered to a constructive line, proposing its own vision of changing the country's development policy.

Objectively, the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan, the Party of Patriots of Kazakhstan (PPK), Auyl and Rukhaniyat were all regarded as outsiders. Their popularity ratings in society were not high and their activities were ineffectual and scarcely noticed. For this reason experts did not consider these parties as potential winners.

The specific feature of the proportional election system is its focus not on certain personalities but on the competition of ideas and proposals, i.e. the election platforms. In the election campaign, the leaders in terms of the election platforms ratings were Nur Otan, Ak Zhol and OSDP. The platforms of the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan, the Party of Patriots of Kazakhstan (PPK), Auyl and Rukhaniyat were very weak. In order to receive a majority of votes a party platform should, above all, meet the interests of the electorate and cover all the crucial and acute problems faced by the public.

In terms of comprehensiveness and coverage of topical issues, the election platforms of Nur Otan, Ak Zhol and OSDP were the best. For example, the platforms of Auyl, Rukhaniyat, PPK and CPPK focused only on certain problems. At the same time, CPPK and PPK did not work out a comprehensive approach to explain the main provisions of their programs. Another serious shortcoming of these parties was the lack of original ideas and proposals which could generate the electorate's interest.

Of course, we cannot ignore the fact that the election was early and there was little time to prepare for it, but it showed which parties were functioning in reality and which ones simply lived "from election to election".

This campaign also displayed some other pronounced features: firstly, for the first time in the political history of Kazakhstan, a parliamentary election was held on party tickets, and secondly, members of the Assembly of Kazakhstan's People were delegated to the country's elected body. At the same time, along with the parliamentary election, there was an election to local representative bodies—the *maslikhats*—which went virtually unnoticed in the heat of the inter-party fight¹.

The actual foundations of power are undergoing transformation in Kazakhstan now and parties are becoming key players in the political process. In this respect changing the election system has significant importance—a switch to electing members of the Mazhilis on a proportional basis. This has boosted the activities of political parties, which until now, in essence, were not involved in the real process of adopting political decisions. On the other hand, the change

¹ M. Abisheva. "No more stakes!" in *Elections-2007 – new stage in the development of political system of the Republic of Kazakhstan* (Almaty: KazISS, 2007), p. 158.

has imposed a requirement that the parties must revise their key policies and priorities, many of them were very "vague", lacking definition and offering no real alternatives to the government course of reforms. In any case, there will be more qualitative shifts to come in the party and political field. The formation of a system of political parties with clear ideologies and specific social bases has yet to be completed in Kazakhstan².

Another specific point worth noting is that this is a Kazakh "innovation" which has no precedent in world political practice. The innovation is that the Assembly acquired a constitutional status and the right to be represented in parliament. The Assembly, set up twelve years ago as an advisory body to harmonize interethnic relations, has become a fully-fledged institution of the political system.

It is important to stress that the 2007 election was held in a peaceful manner, without any excesses or political unrest. This means that the authorities ensured equal rights and all the necessary conditions for a fair and open competition. In the course of the election campaign all participants in the election process aimed to conduct their activities within the bounds of legality and on the basis of mutual respect and objectivity. It is worth noting that a certain illusion was created whereby the radical opposition was also seen to get involved in a civilized political fight.

And, of course, Kazakh citizens became politically more mature, more competent and more discriminating in their preferences. It is worth remarking that Kazakh society showed itself to be immune to radical ideas. The factor of so-called conservatism played its role here, which, by the way, is present in virtually all countries with successful economies. Psychologically, people do not want drastic changes which may create instability. In these conditions the opposition parties had to give up their previous practice of voicing extreme opinions and totally negative criticism. As a result, any radical scenarios that were suggested for the development of the election process fell completely flat.

In addition, this election campaign was distinguished by unprecedented access to the media and a wide of range of facilities and resources offered to all parties to conduct their campaigns. In order to ensure equal access to the media for political parties and better to inform the voters about their election platforms, a format of open political debates was introduced as widely as possible. During the campaigning, all parties could buy space in leading national newspapers and on television and radio stations without hindrance. TV debates and various Internet conferences between leaders of all political parties were also organized. Incidentally, the use of various forms of Internet communications for campaigning is another innovation of this race. Indeed, we have to admit that this was a great breakthrough towards democratization compared with previous elections. From the point of view of the functional parameters of the election system, the nature of coverage of the election campaign in the country was brought up as close as possible to the internationally recognized standards of election law³.

The results of media monitoring to establish the frequency of references to the political parties in the election

² M. Abisheva. "No more stakes!" in *Elections-2007 – new stage in the development of political system of the Republic of Kazakhstan* (Almaty: KazISS, 2007), p. 158.

³ M. Abisheva. Competition, opened for participation in *Elections-2007 – new stage in the development of political system of the Republic of Kazakhstan* (Almaty: KazISS, 2007), p. 130.

campaign showed that the number of references to one party or another depended directly on the activity of the parties themselves. The conclusion based on the results of this monitoring is clear-cut: no party was deprived of media attention. The leaders in terms of the number of references in the media were Nur Otan, Ak Zhol and OSDP. However, this does not mean that the media were more partial to these parties: simply that this troika of leaders held the highest number of image-building and campaigning events.

Society's reaction to the parties' election campaigns was quite calm. The popular mood, reserved and sensible, possibly had the effect of cutting down the level of "black PR" and flows of political dirty tricks in the media to a minimum. Even though there were individual cases, they should be regarded as attempts by certain players to attract the public's attention to themselves and somehow enliven the election campaign. In general, lively discussions, battles of ideas, disputes and polemics between parties and the electorate were held in the virtual space of popular websites, not on the streets. One important conclusion can be drawn right now: the new (proportional) system of electing the Mazhilis has significantly enhanced the culture of public debate and the responsibility of party leaders.

As a result, 377 candidates from the seven parties contested 98 seats in the lower chamber of parliament and a further nine candidate were put forward by the Assembly of Kazakhstan's People, who were elected separately.

At 0700 local time on 18 August 2007, 9,728 polling stations opened in all the country's regions, of which 1,512 stations had the Saylau electronic voting system. By 2100, all polling stations had completed the voting. At 2200 Astana time, the final information about the turnout in the election to the Mazhilis and elections to the maslikhats at all levels was received: 5,726,544 people, or 64.56 percents of the total electorate, had exercised their right to vote.

Distribution of votes⁴

No	Political party	Votes received, %
1.	The National Social Democratic Party (OSDP)	4.54
2.	The Nur Otan people's democratic party	88.41
3.	The Party of Patriots of Kazakhstan (PPK)	0.78
4.	The Auyl social democratic party	1.51
5.	The Ak Zhol democratic party	3.09
6.	The Rukhaniyat party	0.37
7.	The Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK)	1.29

The election results shattered all the political analysts' predictions: only one party—Nur Otan—is to be represented in the new Mazhilis. The other six parties failed to clear the 7-percent barrier. In the run up to the election, both in Kazakhstan and abroad, the victory of the ruling party was never in doubt, but the fact that there would be no other elected representatives, in second or even third place, was a total surprise for everyone. No-one expected this result for objective reasons—neither the government and the opposition, nor the experts and the observers⁵.

In general, leaders and outsiders in the election process were identified a few weeks before the vote. According to

⁴ Information from the Kazakh Central Electoral Commission (www.election.kz)

⁵ M. Abisheva. "Triumph of the "Nur Otan" was predictable", RIA Novosti, www.rian.ru, 19.08.2007

all opinion polls, the greatest level of support amongst the people was for Nur Otan. The main element of suspense was about which parties would manage to get the necessary 7 percents to be in the Mazhilis. Experts predicted that Nur Otan would get up to 80% of the seats and that at least two opposition parties would be represented in parliament. It was expected that these parties would be Ak Zhol and OSDP, which could "enliven" the political process in the country. However, these predictions failed.

In addition to the unexpected results of the votes, experts also noted the unprecedented turnout of Kazakh voters for an election at this level. This was interpreted as showing the desire of the country's citizens to be involved in the process of transformation that was taking place in the country⁶. A total of 8,891,561 citizens were included on the voters' lists, of whom 6,082,430, or 68.4 percents, took part in the vote. A total of 185,979 people voted by post. According to the Central Electoral Commission, the highest turnout was in Almaty Oblast (90.12 percents) and North Kazakhstan Oblast (75.03 percents). The lowest turnout was in the country's two main cities—Astana and Almaty. In general, the turnout for this election was higher than in previous elections: 56.8 percents of voters took part in the election to the Mazhilis in 2004 and 56.4 percents in the 2003 election to the maslikhats⁷. The main reasons for the high activity of the electorate can be attributed to a number of factors:

Firstly, the powerful information campaign that accompanied the election. This election campaign, both technologically and emotionally, significantly outpaced the parliamentary election in 2004. Moreover, the country's Central Electoral Commission, for its part, took a number of systematic steps to enable the political parties to project their election platforms to their voters⁸.

Secondly, the numerous appeals to voters made by the political parties, which needed every possible vote in order to clear the 7-percent barrier. This is another advantage of the proportional system. In the past the fate of parliamentary seats was decided in constituencies, where due to specific local conditions, candidates were not always interested in the activity of voters, whereas now for many participants in the election a high turnout becomes a defining factor for their success.

And, thirdly, the serious support the parliamentary election received from NGOs, which aimed to attract as many people as possible to take part in the election. The large-scale Your Vote—Your Future action and numerous events for young people naturally had an important role in this respect, giving powerful impetus to developing civil society in Kazakhstan. The result was active cooperation between NGOs and political parties. Thus, the election acted as a means to increase the civil responsibility and political culture of the people, assisting the development of their

⁶ M. Abisheva. "No more stakes!" in *Elections-2007 – new stage in the development of political system of the Republic of Kazakhstan* (Almaty: KazISS, 2007), p. 158.

⁷ Information from the Kazakh Central Electoral Commission (www.election.kz)

⁸ M. Abisheva. Competition, opened for participation in *Elections-2007 – new stage in the development of political system of the Republic of Kazakhstan* (Almaty: KazISS, 2007), p. 130.

independence and involvement: a very important factor for the dynamic growth of society and the state.

The election of members of the Mazhilis from the Assembly of Kazakhstan's People was held on August 20. The list of voters included 364 people who are members of the Council of the Assembly of Kazakhstan's People, of whom 337 people or 92.58 percents took part in the vote. Nine candidates stood in the election to the Mazhilis—representatives of ethnic Germans, ethnic Ukrainians, ethnic Russians, ethnic Byelorussians, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Uzbeks, ethnic Bulgarians, ethnic Koreans and Uighurs⁹.

According to the plan, MPs elected by the Assembly were expected to become "envoys of friendship", whose work would aim to further improve state policy taking into account the interests of Kazakhstan's people. It is worth noting that this practice is unique, which is why it is too early so far to talk about its efficiency and to predict its future. In other terms, the idea of ethnic representation in parliament aims to develop further the Kazakh model of interethnic and inter-denominational peace and accord in the country.

The election campaign was monitored by an unprecedented number of observers sent by international organizations and foreign countries. The total number of accredited international observers stood at 1,129 people. The mission of CIS observers was made up of 448 observers from six countries. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization sent 13 observers; 137 observers from seven foreign countries were also accredited and 71 observers from international organizations monitored the vote¹⁰. The OSCE/ODIHR mission included 460 observers from 28 OSCE member countries. The OSCE appointed Canadian Senator Consilio Di Nino its special coordinator and the head of the OSCE short-term mission to observe the election in Kazakhstan, which all points to an increased interest in Kazakhstan.

Observers noted that the struggle between the political parties was conducted correctly, equal access to the media was provided to the parties and that a calm political situation prevailed in the country. They reported a positive assessment of the measures taken by the authorities to ensure equal conditions for election campaigning for all political parties. For example, observers stated, all measures had been taken to enforce the rules for a fairer and freer election. The current political changes were a step in the right direction, observers concluded¹¹.

In general, such an unexpected result of the election race was due to a combination of a number of factors. The most important factor in Nur Otan's victory is, of course, the personality of its leader, Nursultan Nazarbayev, whose image was identified with that of the party. This was the main reason why the election results repeated those of the 2005 presidential election¹². The party differed from other parties in having a well-developed and broad ideological base. Its position could be described as reformist, offering voters the preservation of all the successes achieved over the years of independence together with the determination to push ahead with a policy of all-round reforms. Nur Otan's

⁹ According to the Kazakh Central Electoral Commission (www.election.kz)

¹⁰ According to the Kazakh Central Electoral Commission (www.election.kz)

¹¹ US Politicians about the Election in Kazakhstan. Material provided by the Khabar TV channel on August 15, 2007.

¹² M. Abisheva. "Triumph of the "Nur Otan" was predictable", RIA Novosti, www.rian.ru, 19.08.2007

election campaign focused on positive moments: when the economy and the people's prosperity are growing and a positive mood in the election campaign turns out to be the most efficient theme, because it coincides with the optimistic mood of the electorate.

Regardless of experts' predictions that either the moderate opposition Ak Zhol party or a team of well-known Kazakh opposition members united as OSDP would get into the lower chamber, both failed to clear the 7-percent barrier. It was quite logical to assume that the authorities would prepare for the election in advance, but it was very hard to believe that the opposition would be so unprepared. One can find many excuses now but putting all the blame on the limited period of the election race means admitting their complete helplessness.

It is clear now that the Kazakh opposition in fact failed the test of parliamentary elections. In the 2005 parliamentary election it managed to show far better results. However, the opposition forces showed themselves less than convincing this time, and there were objective reasons for this. The "conflict image" of the opposition leaders again played against them: by raising certain problems they were always staking their bets on negative points. The opposition's fundamental mistake is that even when it unites (into the OSDP) it does so not on a constructive but on a destructive platform, not for "yes" but "against". It was not wise either for radicals from the OSDP to proclaim its union as a means of fighting the current authorities, to position themselves as opponents of the head of state: every opinion poll showed in fact that society strongly supported President Nursultan Nazarbayev's policies. By doing so, the opposition set itself against the majority of the electorate.

Another weakness is that the opposition focused its efforts not on developing its plan of action and bringing its content to the people but on searching out shortcomings in the organization of the election and uncovering certain plots by the authorities against the opposition. The defeat in this parliamentary election should teach a lesson to all Kazakh parties that the voters' trust can only be won as a result of constant and systematic work and that the election is just the final stage of this work. The opposition spent most of its time on certain intrigues, instead of spending it on working with the electorate. This resulted in making the image of certain political figures and parties less attractive. Many political analysts noted that disunity is the greatest weakness of the Kazakh radical opposition: that is why it has neither unconditional unity nor breakthrough projects nor progressive programs. Because of their inability to reach a common position, the disunited and ambitious opposition members are distracted into concluding all kinds of unnatural unions between themselves.

It will not be very good tactics if the opposition parties spend the next five years criticizing and fighting against the authorities, rather than "analyzing and correcting mistakes" and building strong bonds with the electorate. Ak Zhol and OSDP should now revise their approaches to party activities and make appropriate changes to their work, as well as drafting a competitive program of action. The election uncovered all the weaknesses and mistakes of these parties and it is high time now they started to work not "from election to election" but on a constant, professional basis. Otherwise, the electorate, whose political culture and socioeconomic priorities are constantly growing and changing, will not support the opposition in the next election in 2012 either. The electoral test in 2007 showed that the opposition had

not managed to understand the trends of development of the modern political process in Kazakhstan and skillfully use new opportunities in its favor.

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As we have noted, the election attracted controversial assessments—it was organized openly and yet its result surprised everyone—from the authorities, society and international experts. Foreign experts immediately said the election results diverged from the authorities' declared aim to make the political system more open through constitutional reforms held earlier this year. Foreign media outlets picked up this debate, we believe, without a clear understanding of the point of the issue and the peculiarities of the political process in Kazakhstan. Moreover, Kazakh society itself was in favor of undergoing transformations, and isn't it precisely this that is needed in a democratic society? That is why the whole media noise around the election results caused only bewilderment and distrust in the minds of critically-inclined foreign experts.

Certainly, the formation of the Mazhilis on the basis of only one party creates certain challenges. The main one affecting the work of the lower chamber is that this situation could lead to the monopolization of opinion and ideology by Nur Otan. In order to prevent this the head of state called for involving parties which had been left outside parliament in the political process. This process of involving them in discussing and adopting decisions relating to the state's development has already started.

The Mazhilis will now need to prove that its one-party composition is by no means a step backwards in the course of democratizing and further developing Kazakhstan.

The Mazhilis can play the main role in Nur Otan's cooperation with other parties in developing nation-building. It can create a mechanism to carry out Nur Otan's lawmaking work jointly with other parties. As a result, through jointly drafted laws at all levels, both the representative and the other branches of power will reflect the pluralism of views

and ideologies of society. Thus, the account of all these new political conditions will make it possible to organize coordinated and efficient work by the Mazhilis, which, in turn, will have a positive impact on the development of the state and society.

The one-party parliament does not mean that party-building in Kazakhstan has stopped or been thrown back in its development. We believe that the directions for improving party work in the medium term have now been defined clearly. This is important for Kazakhstan because it does not have just a single party which has been working for several decades, has been tested and tried through more than one election and has experience of working with voters. These parties cannot be established in a day, but a modern strong competitive democratic country needs precisely such parties. That is why the political parties' search for their niches and aim to strengthen their positions. This is in the interests not only of the parties themselves but also of the state and society in general.

Meanwhile, thanks to the successes of Nur Otan in developing our state, there is practically no alternative to the domination of this party in the country's political field. In this connection, Kazakhstan's party and political system in the near future will most likely be a kind of one-and-a-half-party state, which means that Nur Otan will have a dominant position and the other parties' roles will be secondary.

Is this good or bad? The experience of Japan, Sweden, South Korea and some other countries shows that a one-and-a-half-party system creates political stability in the country and ensures sustainable economic growth over a certain period of time. The one-and-a-half-party system demonstrates the highest level of efficiency in transitional periods of development, when the country faces large-scale, strategic tasks that demand the consolidation of political forces to carry out radical reforms.

In general, the objectively developed party and political alignment in Kazakhstan is to ensure stability in our country in the future.