

THE CHINA AND EURASIA FORUM QUARTERLY

Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program

Volume 5, No. 3

August 2007



*Central Asia- Caucasus Institute
Silk Road Studies Program*



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- November 2007 – (Deadline for Submissions October 1, 2007)
- February 2008 – (Deadline for Submissions January 1, 2008)

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Editor-in-Chief

Niklas Swanström

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This publication was made possible with the support of



The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

A number of important events with direct implications for China's engagement in Central Asia have occurred since our last issue in May 2007. China seems to be stepping up its activity in the region and this was seen not least in the events surrounding the annual Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) heads of state summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on August 16. The attendees to this summit included the six heads of state of the SCO member states as well as the heads of state of Mongolia and Iran, while Pakistan was represented by its Foreign Minister and India by its Minister of Oil and Gas. More significantly, both Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov also attended the summit while the UN was represented by Under-Secretary General Lynn Pascoe. This could indicate a more active role for these two former actors in SCO in the future.

Two key documents were signed: the Bishkek Declaration outlining SCO's priorities and future challenges and a Long-term Treaty of Goodneighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation which yet is to be made public. Considering the alliance-like nature of the previous Treaty on Goodneighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation adopted in 2001 the new Treaty will certainly be worth a read. Not least because the Treaty signed in 2001 was inked at a time when Russia-China relations were standing at a lower mark than at present. Although the summit in Bishkek dealt with all issues of concern to SCO, including the struggle against "terrorism, extremism, and separatism" as well as military, cultural, and economic cooperation, a major focus was reported to be on energy security and energy cooperation.

The Bishkek Declaration also gave emphasis to energy cooperation in stressing that: "The heads of the SCO member states note the important role of the energy sector as a basis for steady economic growth and security, and attach special significance to strengthening interaction in this direction." Although no major progress was reported to have been achieved in forming the SCO energy club/hub it is clear that energy is set to be an important component in the SCO member states' interaction. As will be noted, this is not to say that the military and security aspects have necessarily decreased in importance, but it definitely points to SCO being more multifaceted than before.

A day after, on August 17, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Hu Jintao and the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attended the Peace Mission 2007 military exercise in Russia's Chelyabinsk region. The exercise involved mostly Russian and Chinese troops, but also troops from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In an exercise lasting two hours, the troops carried out a joint operation to disarm and destroy "a large terrorist organization".

About 4,000 troops, 80 aircrafts, and 500 combat vehicles participated in the joint exercises. China and Russia supplied the 500 combat vehicles together with 1,600 and 2,000 troops respectively. Also participating were two paratrooper companies with around 100 men each from Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, a platoon from Kyrgyzstan, and a group of staff officers representing Uzbekistan. China supplied 46 aircraft, including IL-76 transport-planes and eight JH-7A "Flying Leopard" fighter-bombers. 36 Russian aircraft participated as well, including Su-25 fighters.¹ Not limited to this, China's armed police (PAP) and Russia's interior forces carried out a joint counterterrorism exercise dubbed "Cooperation 2007" in early September. The exercise took place in Moscow, spanned over three days, and was developed in accordance with the principles established by the SCO and other bilateral agreements. Ahead of the Bishkek heads of state summit, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) also announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed between CSTO and SCO, along the lines of other MOUs signed with ASEAN and CIS.

What does all this imply then? Are China and Russia strengthening bilateral ties? Is energy set to become a third major component of SCO activities next to economic/infrastructural cooperation and counterterrorism? Central Asia seems to be an integrated part in this equation, even if not necessarily an equal partner. If China and Russia continue on the current set course, the roles of the US and Europe seem to be much more insecure than before.

The significance of the Bishkek summit should not be underestimated. Despite the absence of any sensational or provocative statements along the lines of the Astana Declaration in 2005—calling for a US departure from SCO member states' territory—the Bishkek Summit, Peace Mission 2007, and other events occurring just after the summit give tentative indications as to the SCO's current dynamics. These revolve partly around pragmatic interests of counter-terrorism and economic development—but more importantly—around internal conflicts on issues of vital national security to both Russia and China, and especially in the energy sector. These are issues in which China and Russia to some extent share interests in, although the competitive component in this relationship appears to have taken precedence.

Spectacularly, only two days after the SCO summit, on August 19, China signed two vital energy agreements with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan—both directly confronting Russia's interests. The first deal specified the final phase of the Chinese plan for an oil pipeline stretching all the way to the Caspian Sea. Two-thirds of this link has already been completed through the Atasu-Alashankou pipeline and a pipeline stretching from Atyrau to Kenkiyak, while the phase in question consists of a connection between Kenkiyak and Kumkol. Most significant was however the second deal involving the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to China which, if completed, would essentially break Russia's long held monopoly over

¹ "Peace Mission 2007 and the SCO summit," *PINR*, August 10 2007.

Turkmen gas. Although the deal in itself was no news since it has been circulating for some time, it now seems as if both Turkmenistan and China are intent on finalizing it. The capacity of the pipeline will be around 30 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas annually and it is set for completion by 2009.²

Considering that Turkmenistan's total extraction only reaches 70 bcm per year, of which 8 bcm goes to Iran and the remaining 62 bcm through Gazprom's network controlled by the Kremlin, the deal is unlikely to go through smoothly without Russian interference. Access to cheap Turkmen gas is critical for Russia's domestic consumption and the ability to free up Russian domestic production for the European market largely depend on Turkmen imports. With China slicing off almost half of Turkmenistan's export capacity, Russia's massive export incomes to Europe are directly threatened.

Although Turkmenistan has also made pledges to construct a pipeline to Russia it is clear that a Turkmen-China pipeline, which today appears very likely, would be built at Russia's expense. In view of the fact that energy is Russia's strongest lever over both Europe and China and the primary means through which it projects its power, not even SCO could act to bridge these conflicting interests. This is not to say that the strong ties that do bind China and Russia—as witnessed with Peace Mission 2007, the accompanying arms-transfers between the two, and large Russian oil exports—should be discarded. But it is to say that China is looking for diversification and to unlock Russia's strategic advantage over Turkmenistan's strategic gas reserves, thereby, in effect, threatening one of the most vital components in Russia's national security.

The driving forces of the SCO may be conceived as evolving around two axes: one internal and one external. The internal drivers can be traced to bilateral relations between China and Russia and their respective relations with Central Asia—primarily so in terms of arms, security assistance, as well as economic and energy spheres of interaction. The external driver is first and foremost the United States but the European Union is also currently aspiring to become a significant player in Central Asia, especially in the energy sector. These two actors' direct interests in the region inadvertently push China and Russia closer and could arguably be one of the few common interests that China and Russia shares.

Externally then, it is clear that the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan leaves SCO with no other option than allowing a continued US presence at Manas air-base in Kyrgyzstan. The SCO knows it cannot guarantee security in Central Asia on its own should violence escalate further in northern Afghanistan. Despite Kyrgyz domestic opposition to the US deployment combined with China, Russia, and Uzbekistan which are all but unhappy with the air-base—the base is still there. Though this could partially be explained by the massive income of US\$ 150 million that Kyrgyzstan derives from the air-base, this is hardly a satisfying explanation for Bakiyev's refusal to

² *Kyivpost*, August 30 2007.

sign the Kyrgyz parliament's decree on expelling the US. Both Russia and China could provide this amount should it be needed. The primary explanation for the continuing presence at Manas should rather be sought in SCO's poor record as a security provider.

Paradoxically, a continued US presence in Central Asia is part and parcel of the glue that keeps the SCO together while the conflicting interests in the energy sector is what drive it apart. With Kazakhstan drifting away from Russia and Turkmenistan following its lead, Russia will not stand idle. How Gazprom and the Kremlin should prevent this from happening will likely be a big headache for Russia's new president in 2008. Another headache will be what lever Russia should use to exert pressure on the Central Asian states when a majority of the energy contracts runs out and are re-negotiated in 2010-2011.

In the wake of the Bishkek summit, it is clear that the SCO and its rapid institutionalization fills an important component in regulating the relations among SCO members and their interests vis-à-vis other actors. It is equally clear, however, that the organization suffers from strains, frictions, and paradoxes. One frequent argument heard is that SCO's primary purpose is for Russia to monitor, and partially regulate, China's engagement with Central Asia whereas China benefits from a forum where this engagement could be "legitimized."

That analysis still seems plausible even though the main conclusion from the Bishkek summit should be that China is asserting its interests, fearing little in the way of Russian reprisals. Turkmen President Berdimukhamedov's presence at the SCO summit, the first of a Turkmen president, and the agreements signed with China a few days later sums up the complexity within SCO well. Moreover, it remains to be seen how far-reaching the Treaty on Good-neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation will be. Obvious is, however, that there are various pull and push factors in place that will ultimately decide the content of this document, of which some have been mentioned here. Energy could arguably be singled out as one of the most important sources of friction. Ironically, the Bishkek summit will likely go down in the history books as the summit in which energy security made a serious entry.

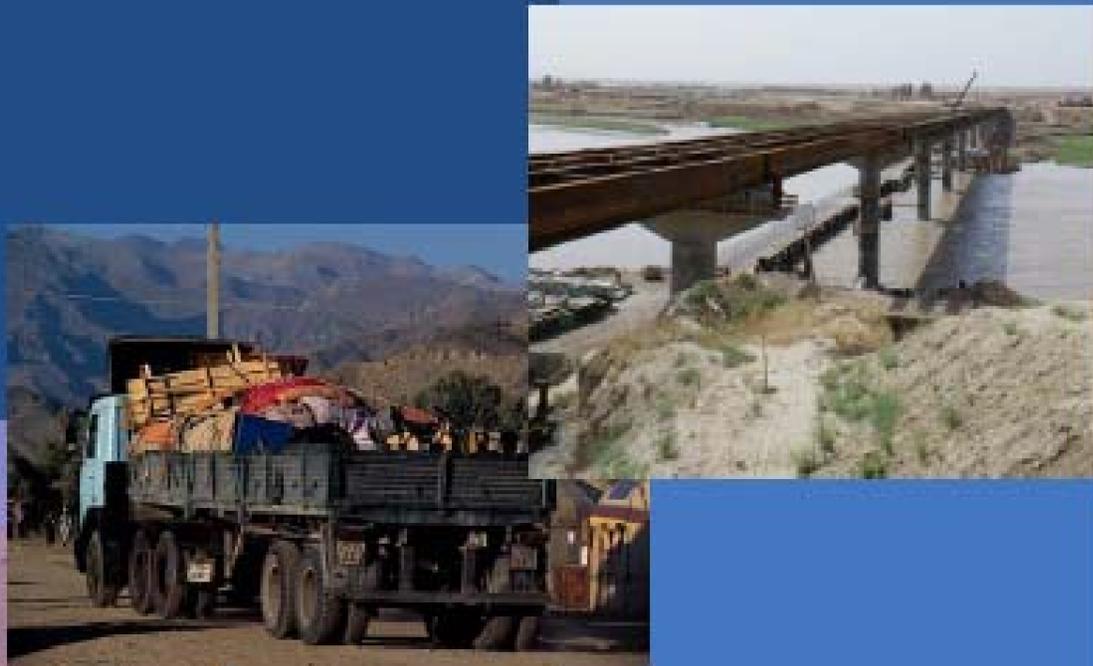
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Niklas Swanström
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The New Silk Roads

Transport and Trade in Greater Central Asia



S. Frederick Starr
Editor

THE NEW SILK ROADS: TRANSPORT AND TRADE IN GREATER CENTRAL ASIA

Ed. S. Frederick Starr

It has been centuries since the last discovery of a new continent. Yet something like this is happening today. Long before the voyages of exploration that began in the fifteenth century it was customary to speak of Europe and Asia as separate places divided from each other by a huge and forbidding territory.

This is now changing. Thanks to the collapse of the USSR, whose closed border stood like a wall across the heart of Eurasia, to China's decision to open trade across its western border, and to the gradual return of Afghanistan to the community of nations, continental trade spanning the entire Eurasian land mass is again becoming possible. Western Europe, China, Russia, the Middle East, and the Indian sub-continent can, in time, connect with one another and with the lands between by means of direct roads, railroads, and technologies for transporting gas, oil, and hydroelectric power. These "new Silk Roads" have enormous potential for the entire Eurasian continent, and especially for the countries of "Greater Central Asia" which they must traverse.

This book, with contributions by eminent scholars from sixteen countries, reviews the state of the links of transport and trade that are bringing about this fundamental change on the world's largest continent. It explores the potential of such interchange for fifteen of the countries most directly affected by it. It identifies some of the many impediments to the full realization of this epochal project. And it suggests a few steps that might be taken to ameliorate or remove these impediments.

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Central Asia – National Interests and Regional Prospects

Johannes F. Linn*

Central Asia¹ is one of the pivotal regions of the world. It is located at the core of the Eurasian continental space and represents a critical connection between the large and dynamic continental economies – China, the European Union, India, Japan and Russia. The Central Asian countries with their large natural and human resources face both an opportunity and a challenge as the Eurasian economic space is now rapidly integrating as part of a new phase of global integration.² This note reviews the national interests of key countries inside and outside the region and how they determine the prospects of Central Asia in successfully integrating into the Eurasian and world economy. A full exploration of these interests goes beyond the scope of the paper.³ Hence, I will summarize here only some key elements that appear to be particularly relevant for the future of the region. I will focus on four sets of actors: (1) the countries in the region; (2) the principal neighbors, China and Russia⁴; (3) other key partners, the EU and the U.S.; and (4) the international institutions (UN agencies and the International Financial Institutions, in particular the Asian Development Bank, EBRD, IMF and the World Bank).

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¹ Central Asia is here defined as the Central Asian CIS republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), as well as Afghanistan.

² For more background on Eurasian economic integration, see Johannes Linn and David Tiomkin, “New Impetus towards Economic Integration between Europe and Asia”, *Asia Europe Journal* 4, 1 (2006). One could of course add other big Eurasian economies to the list of significant neighbors, including Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

³ A more complete, but by no means exhaustive account of the many and complex interests can be found in UNDP, *Central Asia Human Development Report* (New York: United Nations, 2005) <<http://europeandcis.undp.org/?wspc=CAHDR2005%20>>.

⁴ Other neighbors could be added, such as India, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. The EU could also be counted among the neighbors of Central Asia, since they share the Eurasian continental space. For the current analysis, however, we focus on the two big neighbors bordering on Central Asia.

Interests

A prosperous and stable Central Asia is a *long-term interest* that is shared by all partners in and around the region.⁵ Most obviously this is the case for the Central Asian countries themselves, their governments, elites and broader populace. For the neighbors and for the EU, Central Asia is the hub of a Eurasian wheel the spokes of which are tied together ever more tightly through the forces of economic integration, which have gathered great intensity since the break-up of the Soviet Union. A prosperous and stable Central Asia is an essential land bridge and transit point for trade and communication for the Eurasian continent, while a destabilized, conflict ridden, poor region would present all of Eurasia with significant barriers to integration and with risks of widening conflict.⁶ For the rest of the world, including the U.S., failed states in Central Asia would add to the risks and burdens that other such states have created, e.g. in Somalia and elsewhere.

To overcome the barriers created by their fragmented borders and land-locked status, the Central Asian countries need to collaborate, create open borders “with a human face” – to borrow the term used in the UNDP’s *Central Asia Human Development Report* –, use their abundant energy and water resources wisely and cooperatively, and connect with the rest of the world. They also could benefit significantly from cooperation in addressing key human security risks, including threats from natural disasters, epidemics and drug trafficking. The benefits from such a cooperative approach could mean a doubling of the region’s GDP over 10 years over and above the growth that would occur without intensive cooperation.⁷

This shared long-term interest in a prosperous and stable Central Asia should not be lost sight of by all partners in the region, even as their legitimate national *interests in the short term* may well diverge, compete or be in conflict and as there may be disagreements about how best to achieve the shared long-term interest most effectively. Let us briefly consider how and why the short term interests may diverge.

⁵ See also Olga Olikier and David A. Shlapak, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005), p. 21; Richard Weitz “Averting the New Great Game in Central Asia”, *The Washington Quarterly* 29, 3 (2006): p. 156; Eugene B. Rumer, “China, Russia and the Balance of Power in Central Asia”, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University *Strategic Forum* 223 (2006): p. 1; Jim Nichol, “Central Asia’s Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests”, *CRS Report for Congress*, April 26, 2007.

⁶ See Linn and Tiomkin, “New Impetus towards Economic Integration between Europe and Asia”.

⁷ See UNDP, *Central Asia Human Development Report*, Chapter 9.

Central Asian Countries

The interests of Central Asian countries are manifold and differentiated among and within them. However, among the most prominent are the following:

- nation building, the creation of secure borders, and protection from possible external and internal threats to national security
- a quest for leadership within the region by the larger countries, and a quest for respect and equality of treatment by the smaller countries;
- access to, use of and protection of the shared natural resources (esp. water, energy and environment);
- access to the financial revenues created by the natural resources and from cross-border trade, both for broad-based national development and for maintaining the current governments; and
- access to world commodity, capital and labor markets with low transit costs and minimal disruptions.

Some of these interests point in the direction of greater economic protection and isolation of the national economy, others – especially the last one – call for openness, integration and cooperation. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have traditionally followed the former course, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and, recently, Afghanistan the latter. In any case, most Central Asian countries, particularly those which are new nations, have had difficulty in sharing key aspects of their national sovereignty, which is a key prerequisite for effective regional cooperation among nations.

China and Russia

These two big neighbors of Central Asia share a common interest in keeping other geopolitical powers out of what they regard as their “back yards”. They have competing interests in controlling the energy resources and pipelines of the region: China in securing access as a user, Russia in controlling access as a producer and transit country.⁸ Firms of both countries have an interest in gaining access to non-energy markets in the region, as well as owning key productive assets in the industrial and commercial sphere. Much of this is a reflection of genuine

⁸ Russia has a special interest in Central Asia’s gas resources since it makes a significant profit in purchasing them at much lower cost than it sells its own gas to its European neighbors; moreover, with stagnant gas resources of its own and growing European demand for gas, it needs Central Asian gas to fill domestic needs. See Ariel Cohen, “U.S. Interests and Central Asia Energy Security”, The Heritage Foundation *Backgrounders* No. 1984 (2006): p. 8.

commercial interests, but national security and regional or geopolitical concerns may also enter, especially when state-controlled enterprises are involved.⁹ China and Russia share a much higher tolerance for state intervention in the economy than most other partners from outside the region. They also place a high value on stability in their immediate neighborhoods, which for them means supporting the ruling elites and their power structures against any real or perceived threats from “color revolutions” or Islamic fundamentalist upheavals. Beyond this, China wants to assure that Central Asia harbors no support for possible irredentist movements in its Western provinces. Russia would like to maintain its long-standing role among the CIS countries of the region, and has an interest in protecting the Russian minorities.

EU and U.S.

Short term national interests also are reflected in the engagement of the EU and the U.S. in Central Asia. Access to Central Asia’s energy resources is usually at the top of the list of concerns, followed by security concerns centered on the protection of NATO engagement in Afghanistan, and in the case of Europe concern about drug trade and migration. Beyond this, EU and U.S. support for democratic norms and liberal market principles is grounded in the belief that they will bring long-term economic benefits and stability to the region.¹⁰ These interests are reflected in the U.S. “southern strategy” (which aims to provide Central Asian energy producers access to South Asian ports and energy markets and links the security of Afghanistan with that of Central Asia)¹¹ as well as in the elements of the new EU Central Asia strategy (which stresses along with stability in the region, the propagation of “European values” and access to Central Asian energy resources)¹².

⁹ While the commercial and state interests also often converge in the engagement by the EU, Turkey, the U.S. and other countries in the region (and elsewhere), the prevalence of state enterprise engagement in the case of China and Russia makes the link between commercial and national interests significantly stronger.

¹⁰ But the governments of the region, and China and Russia, tend to see such support more as an expression of an interest in protecting and promoting western ideologies.

¹¹ See Evan Feigenbaum, “Central Asian Economic Integration: An American Perspective”, Presentation at the W.P. Carey Forums Hosted by CACI, Johns Hopkins University, February 6, 2007 <<http://www.sais-jhu.edu/centers/caci/audio.html>> (August 2007). Note that this statement of U.S. interests in Central Asia’s stresses mostly the long term U.S. objective of supporting Central Asian sovereignty, integration and stability. It does not focus on U.S. short term interests in the region, such access to energy resources and U.S. security interests in Afghanistan.

¹² Council of the European Union, “The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership”, Document 10113/07, Brussels, 31 May 2007 (endorsed by EU Council Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council 21/22 June 2007).

The International Institutions

These institutions (UN agencies and IFIs) have diverging mandates, but all stress the long-term development objectives of a prosperous and stable Central Asia. With their multilateral membership and their exceptional standing as impartial partners, these institutions can play a special role in helping to bridge the diverging short-term interests of the partner states in the region as well as bridging from the diverging short-term to the shared long-term goals of all. Their main challenges in playing this role is their fragmentation of effort with traditionally little coordination among them; the limited resources and leverage that they have individually; and the risk averseness that comes from having to satisfy many different stakeholders, among them the key partner states engaged in Central Asia. There are indications, however, that the international institutions are playing a more active and collaborative role in Central Asia. Their close cooperation in supporting the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) forum, in the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs (PRSPs), in their support of MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), in their joint country strategies for some countries (esp. Kyrgyz Republic), and in their collaborative projects (e.g., the regional HIV/AIDS projects) and analytical efforts (e.g., the UNDP *Central Asia Human Development Report*, which was supported by ADB and World Bank) are prominent examples.

Prospects

Based on the interests presented, two scenarios – one positive and another negative in their implications – can be considered, spanning broadly the range of potential future developments. Other scenarios are possible, of course,¹³ but the two presented here represent a useful framework for considering how the prevailing interests of different players may interact to produce quite different outcomes. They can serve as a basis for formulating the recommendations that could help bring about more positive results for the regions, for its immediate neighbors and for the international community.

A Cooperative Scenario

This benign and, one would hope, more likely scenario represents a bridge between the differing short-term and the converging long-term interests of the various partners in Central Asia. Under this scenario Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan will pursue a strategy oriented towards integration with each other and the rest of the world, with open borders, predominantly market-based policies, and cooperation

¹³ See, for example, *Central Asia Human Development Report*, Chapter 9

among each other. In their relations with their neighbors and with the international community they take a “multi-vector” approach that is accepted and supported by their many international partners. Their governance system remains dominated by strong presidencies, but gradually develop towards a more open, inclusive and stable democratic form, along the lines of Korea or Singapore. As a result these countries grow and develop successfully. Over time, through their demonstration effect, they provide an incentive to Uzbekistan to follow suit. Turkmenistan manages a peaceful transition from its past repressive and isolationist approach to a more open and cooperative strategy. Afghanistan’s troubles are settled over time by its own efforts and with international support and it serves increasingly as an essential land-bridge for the rest of Central Asia to the ports on the Indian Ocean and the rapidly growing Indian sub-continent.

China and Russia under this scenario will support the cooperative and multi-vector approach of Central Asian countries, they accept a gradual liberalization of the Central Asian governance and economic systems, and they cooperate with each other across a broad range of energy, infrastructure and trade issues. Their cooperation in turn helps facilitate the access of land-locked Central Asian economies to world markets. The EU and the U.S. engage constructively in Central Asia and with China and Russia, by stressing the shared interest of a peaceful and stable integration of the Eurasian continental economic space, by supporting gradual reform, and by engaging in a constructive dialogue on values and policy that is respectful of alternative perspectives. The international institutions proactively play a catalytic and bridging role with a full engagement in the region in support of and in partnership with the countries of the region and their regional organizations such as SCO, EurasEC and CAREC.

Under this scenario, many of the benefits for regional cooperation and integration for Central Asia which were identified in the UNDP’s *Central Asia Human Development Report* will come to fruition with sustained high economic growth rates, improved social conditions and reductions in poverty.

A Disintegration Scenario

Under this scenario, hopefully less likely, the Central Asian countries and their partner states do not build bridges among themselves and between their conflicting short-term and shared long-term interests. The currently more open countries become increasingly isolationist and control-oriented in their domestic governance.¹⁴ While stability may be

¹⁴ For an explanation of this scenario see UNDP *Central Asia Human Development Report*, Chapter 7.

preserved in the short term, the regimes are inherently unstable in the longer term, partly because their economic and social policies undermine growth, and partly because they may result in resentment and radicalization among the populace and possible palace revolts among the elites.

China and Russia under this scenario support increasingly restrictive regimes because of their promise of short-term stability. They aim to secure long-term dominance over most natural resource and industrial assets in Central Asia, and in their competition for these assets fail to cooperate with each other in providing for long-term trans-Eurasian integration with suitable infrastructure investments and trade-supporting measures. The EU and the U.S. in turn aggressively pursue their own ideological, security and energy interests, alienating in the process not only the Central Asian governments but also China and Russia. The international organizations are weak and disengaged in the region as a result of the seemingly hopeless task of building bridges across uncooperative camps. Cold War rhetoric and confrontation once again take hold instead of cooperation among the main external players in the region as a new “Great Game” gets played out to the detriment of Central Asia. The region’s economic performance suffers, its social conditions worsen, poverty remains stubbornly high, and instability and unrest take hold as repressive regimes change hands and get challenged by popular unrest, radical fundamentalist movements or competing elites.

Implications

The two scenarios presented above may seem unrealistically far apart. However, one should remember that similar, but even more divergent scenarios characterized the actual history of 20th Century Europe: the first half of the century was punctuated by discord, war and disintegration; the second half saw a process of peace, cooperation and integration. The challenge for all engaged in Central Asia will be to avoid the former and achieve the latter.

The implications for the key actors are clear. All of them need to focus on their shared long-term interests and aim to bridge their potentially diverging short-term interest. For the Central Asian states this means moving towards the more open economic and governance model described under the first scenario. It requires that the leaders aim persistently towards market oriented policies and institutions and towards more transparent and accountable governance structures. Externally, they would seek to strengthen their cooperative mechanisms among themselves, maintain control over their energy resources and assets, and follow a multi-vector approach in building balanced partnerships with China, Russia and other international players.

For China and Russia in turn the implication is that they would accept the multi-vector policy of Central Asian states, and also encourage broadly market-based economic policies and cautiously liberalizing reforms. They would support the Central Asian countries in their access to markets through infrastructure investments and improved border and transit management, strengthen cooperative regional institutions and foster commercially based investments by their own firms in Central Asia.

The EU and the U.S. would be well advised to recognize that with limited resources and great distance they have little leverage in the region, although their constructive engagement will likely be welcomed by most Central Asians. The EU and the U.S. can provide access to trade, capital and technology. Rather than leading with their own short-term interests in security, access to Central Asian energy and democracy building – which runs the risk of appearing intrusive and self-serving –, it would help if the EU and the U.S. were to lead with their commitment to the shared long-term goal of a stable, integrated and prosperous Central Asia.

For the multilateral institutions it is important to stay fully and actively engaged in Central Asia. They can serve as honest brokers and as a source of hard-nosed technical analysis of the benefits of cooperation and integration. They need to provide financial support that provides the wherewithal for investments in regional infrastructure and the support for domestic reform. The international organizations also should reach out to regional organizations and forums and offer their technical and financial capacity for win-win initiatives in the region.

THE CHINA AND
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QUARTERLY

Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program

Volume 4, No. 1

February 2006

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The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Europe

*Alyson JK Bailes**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has never claimed a European model and analogue, in the way that the Russia-led Cooperative Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) likes to profile itself as an equivalent to NATO. If the SCO has any substantial European antecedents they are most easily found in the CSCE/OSCE, where the ideas of mutual confidence building and border management – the cornerstone of Beijing’s and Moscow’s original “Shanghai process” – were elaborated from the 80’s onwards. Up to very recently, analytical writing about the SCO in the West has been somewhat U.S.-dominated and the authors have liked to stress how far away the Organization actually is from European traditions and norms in its way of dismissing human rights concerns and forbidding mutual “interference in internal affairs”. In purely institutional terms, the SCO stands near the opposite end of the scale from the EU in being extremely inter-governmental with only minimal central institutions and centrally managed resources. Its evolution has also followed the opposite route from that of the EU – and within the Asian sphere, ASEAN and APEC – in focusing on security first and the economy – or other functional cooperation – second: even if the SCO’s security agenda is itself a pretty wide and “post-modern” one.¹

Despite all this, the reasons for Europeans and their institutions to start taking the SCO seriously have been piling up lately. Perhaps the most basic is the sheer staying-power of the organization: it is, for example, clearly more substantial and dynamic than any of the previous structures tailor-made for Central Asia, and has come more clearly into the EU’s focus as the Union itself has prepared to adopt its own first ever

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¹ For more on this and other analytical questions see the opening chapter by A.J.K. Bailes and P. Dunay, in “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization”, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 17, May 2007, text at <<http://www.sipri.org>>.

Central Asian "strategy".² Russia and China, the organization's joint designers, are growing in importance all the time as objects for collective European diplomacy, even if Europeans at the moment look remarkably divided over Russia and somewhat slow in learning how to integrate strategic issues into their China policy. On a more philosophical plane, the EU's Security Strategy of 2003 defines "effective multilateralism" as a key security goal and also as something of a normative ideal for the EU and its members. If nothing else, the SCO is multilateral and it raises the intriguing question of whether there can be such a thing as "bad multilateralism". Should Europeans conclude that in the SCO, as in the former Warsaw Pact and perhaps also the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) today, a good method is being used for illegitimate goals and thereby merely making our opponents more efficient than we would like them to be? Or could we argue that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" and that even if using a somewhat outdated and hollow form of multilateralism, the SCO's members – and particularly their elites who come into contact on a more-than-bilateral basis as a result – are having their security cultures subtly transformed into something we shall be better able to coexist and work with in the end? And how much right do cultures subtly transformed into something we shall be better able to coexist and work with in the end? And how much right do Europeans have to pass judgment anyway so long as the EU and NATO themselves have no large resources or realistic alternative models to offer the regions concerned? It is no coincidence that several new papers about the SCO have been published by European institutions in the last year or so.³ This short comment will not try to duplicate their general analysis of the SCO's strengths, weaknesses and future prospects, but will aim, rather, to think through what are the more specific benefits or disadvantages of the organization's existence for Europe as such. A few words will be added at the end on European-SCO contacts.

² The text of "The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership" (Council of the European Union document 10113/07 of 31 May) was finally approved at the European Council on June 21-22, see para. 47 of Presidency conclusions at <www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/94932.pdf> (August 20 2007).

³ Aside from the SIPRI study already mentioned, see e.g. Henry Plater-Zyberk, UK Defence Academy (JCDC, Shrivenham), "Who's afraid of the SCO" accessible at <<http://www.defac.ac.uk/colleges/csdc/document-listings/caucasus-publications>> and a paper by Oksana Antonenko for the London Centre for European Reform, April 2007, at <www.cer.org.uk> (Both available August 25 2007).

The “Up-side” for Europe

However low or high we place the possibility of a direct Russia-China conflict in post-Cold War conditions, the SCO is designed to avert it both by methods of restraint (the confidence building regime inherited from the Shanghai process) and by positive co-management of these two states’ overlapping influence in Central Asia. However intriguing a prospect it might look from the safe distance of the U.S., any serious new Russia-China rift would be bad news for Europe not least because of the impact on Moscow’s general mentality and the problem of avoiding taking sides. Somewhat paradoxically, the managed framework of the SCO also seems to have given the Central Asians, at least so far, a firmer base for calculating their traditional balancing act, both between Moscow and Beijing and between their Eastern and Western friends. (It would be a different story if the SCO was actually more effective at shutting out Western influence but there is no evidence yet that its policies – as distinct, perhaps, from bilateral Russian pressure – have yet stopped any Central Asian leader from doing what he wanted to do either for or against the West).⁴ The SCO has also made more headway, faster, than anything else so far - including NATO’s partnership framework - in getting the Central Asians to work together on real issues in a non-zero-sum fashion. If it can start to channel Chinese finance for coordinated infrastructure and other physical development plans in and across Central Asia this will potentially benefit everyone, and the risk of China flooding out all other competitors is limited because the Russians and Central Asians themselves are so much on their guard against this.

Secondly, the SCO addresses security problems that are common to its members and to European nations notably in the fields of anti-terrorism, anti-smuggling and anti-drugs work. To the extent that it succeeds without blocking any of its members’ access to Western aid and expertise in the same fields, it reduces the overall global threat and also the risk of such phenomena “leaking” Westward from SCO territories.

Thirdly, returning to the question of whether the SCO is “real” or “bad” multilateralism, it stands out from all Russia’s other main integrative experiences other than the G8⁵ by the fact that it includes an equally, and increasingly, strong partner country – China. Just as with

⁴ See Ruslan Maksutov’s paper “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A Central Asian perspective”, SIPRI, August 2006, text under “Project Papers” at <<http://www.sipri.org/contents/worldsec/eurosec.html>> (August 27 2007); and the discussion in the SIPRI Policy paper (note 1 above) on the SCO’s Astana declaration of 2005.

⁵ The author, perhaps controversially, is not including the NATO-Russia Council or EU-Russia relationship as “integrative experiences” because the whole problem with them is that Russia is a single-nation outsider facing the “ganging-up” of a collective power. Far from developing real joint interests and political styles, Moscow seems to act in an extremely Realpolitik and often zero-sum style in the EU framework particularly.

Germany and France in the early European Communities or Argentina and Brazil in Latin America, the delicate balance of interests and more visceral mistrust between these powers requires real compromise between them and the exercise of real self-discipline by each side. Moreover, the SCO's extensive (on paper) menu of cooperation also appears to permit or even demand sub-state interactions among several kinds of actors, including e.g. businessmen and parliamentarians, which are another sign of relatively "advanced" forms of multilateralism. If these same features are also having any "educative" affect on the smaller Central Asian states, it could even be argued that the SCO is doing part of the West's job by "softening them up" for more transformative kinds of international partnership in future. Finally, to the extent that China sees the SCO as a successful experiment in multilateralism it ought to reinforce Beijing's tendency to apply multilateral, rather than coercive, bilateral or isolationist, tools to other issues of interest to Europe, such as the Six-Party process over the Korean peninsula or the handling of inherited disputes with ASEAN members.

The "Down-side"

Even if it has become a cliché of analysis, the main point here is still that the SCO explicitly rejects both European ("Western") and global norms of human rights, political liberties, good governance in general, and the right and duty both of states and international institutions to intervene in other states' internal abuses. It thereby helps to shore up authoritarian Central Asian regimes, and panders to the more negative aspects of Russian political culture. (It is less likely that it has anything to do with either speeding or slowing political reform in China.) The SCO is also notably non-transparent in its workings and effects, both for the citizens and representative institutions of its own member states, and the outside world.

It is clear from all recent investigations that the SCO is not and never could be a full Russia-China strategic "alliance", and its military and directly security-related activities are still on a very modest scale.⁶ Even so - and probably above all at Russia's and Uzbekistan's urging - its rhetoric and actions have included elements of deliberate "counter-

⁶ The latest SCO Summit communiqué, issued at Bishkek on August 16 2007, see <http://www.sectSCO.org/news_detail.asp?id=1651&LanguageID=2> (August 27 2007), announces the signing of a new treaty among the members on "good-neighbourly relations, friendship and cooperation": but while the text is so far unavailable, this does not sound like any close approach to a military alliance. From other announcements at Bishkek there are hints that the SCO members' joint military activities will increasingly be set in the context of SCO-CSTO partnership (the CSTO standing for the indisputably "hard" side of Russia/Central Asia security cooperation). Other new initiatives reported at Bishkek were in relatively "soft" areas including disarmament and non-proliferation.

balancing” and ”blocking” of Western nations and organizations that also have legitimate interests and partnership goals in the regions concerned. The supposed ”counter-terrorism” exercises have included forces and activities more relevant to high-intensity warfare against another alliance. The SCO agenda of fighting the ”three evils” - terrorism, extremism and separatism - has too often acted as a cover for suppression of what Europeans would see as legitimate oppositional groups and the cutting off of trans-regional ties between them. The SCO also acts as

a legitimating and coordinating framework for Russian arms transfers to other participating states, which may be excessive and/or block out European suppliers. If we had proof that the SCO really had brought under control the genuine non-state threats to its own and its neighbors’ territory, this unpalatable price might be easier for a realist European policy to live with. But in fact there is no evidence that the related elements of disorder in various Eurasian regions have been substantially reduced as a result, and in the medium term unbridled authoritarianism is only likely to aggravate them.

To cite here the risk of an SCO energy cartel, which would both close doors to Western firms and make it harder for European importers to diversify supplies, would be premature at a time when the organization seems to have produced little but words on this topic - and indeed, on infrastructure development generally. Nevertheless it needs watching. Finally, the fact of Iran being an SCO observer does not seem to have offended European observers as it clearly does Americans, possibly because Europeans desperate to find some way of ”acculturating” the Iranian elites may have a faint hope they will catch the multilateral bug from one of their rare chances to take part in an operationally meaningful grouping.⁷

To Liaise or not to Liaise

The SCO has no institution-to-institution links with Europe-based organizations and indeed has not done much to seek them, while it has proudly advertised its mutual observership arrangements with the UN (and a dialogue link with the ASEAN Regional Forum). For the EU, Javier Solana met the then SCO Secretary-General Zhang Deguang during a visit to China, and NATO officials have discussed SCO developments through a bilateral channel with China. Recent European studies have naturally raised the question of whether Europeans should promote closer and more formal contacts, primarily in the EU context (since U.S. objections within the NATO family look hard to dislodge).

⁷ The presence of the new leader of Turkmenistan as a personally invited observer at the Bishkek summit hints that the SCO could also have some role to play in easing that country out of its former autocratic isolation.

What seems clear from the above is that the practical impact of the SCO, as distinct from its normative characteristics, has some useful sides and could even be seen as positive for Europeans on balance. But the SCO does what it does as a result of the interplay of its members' interests and is likely to go on doing it regardless of what signals it receives from Europe. Moreover, its most significant impacts probably come from what its member states do with each other in its name and under its cover, rather than from transactions (or the use of resources) channeled through the small central secretariat and Regional Anti-terrorism Structure (RATS). Soberly viewed, therefore, more formal staff-to-staff cooperation or even a Western observer presence at meetings would be more significant (at least at this stage) as moves in a titillating diplomatic game than as real vehicles for operational synergy. That may not be an argument against them, especially at a time when Europeans badly need some "good news" in relations at least with Russia, but it is not a strong argument for them. In the near time, much more could probably be learned – and more effective messages and influences conveyed – by the EU and its individual states talking directly to the SCO's member and observer states about what the organization means for them, and what it could and should mean for the larger security interests of Eurasia.

The Russian Resurgence in the Middle East

Robert O. Freedman*

The recent visit to Moscow of Hamas leader Khaled Mashal, which came soon after Russian President Vladimir Putin's trip to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan, has underscored the resurgence of Russian interest in the Middle East. Under Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russia has sought to achieve three major goals in the region. The first is to demonstrate Russia's renewed power and influence in a region where American influence is on the decline. The second is to increase trade with the nations of the region, so as to buttress to Russian economy, especially its non-energy sectors. The third goal is to minimize Arab, Turkish and Iranian support for the Chechen rebellion against Russian control, which the rebels are carrying out in the name of Islam.

Putin has always wanted to restore Russia to the ranks of the great powers, and this became clear soon after he took office in 2000. However, the then weak Russian economy, and the increasingly severe Chechen rebellion against the 1999 Russian invasion, limited his options. After the terrorist attacks on the United States on 9/11, Putin moved to form a tactical alliance with the United States because the Taliban in Afghanistan, who hosted terrorist leader Osama Bin-Laden were as much a threat to Russia and Russia's allies in Central Asia as they were to the United States. Russia moved away from the United States, however, during and after the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003. In 2004 Putin's efforts to restore Russia to great power status suffered two major blows. First, in September 2004 Putin, and his government, looked incompetent when, after a group of Chechen rebels seized a school in Beslan, his security forces badly bungled the rescue mission, leading to a loss of well over 300 Russian lives. Two months later Putin suffered an embarrassing failure in the Ukraine when, following the mass demonstrations of the "Orange Revolution" pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko defeated the pro-Russian candidate Victor Yanukovich in a

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presidential reelection which Putin had publicly opposed. These events put Putin on the diplomatic defensive, and he sought an area where he could once again demonstrate that Russia was a great power. That area was the Middle East.

Beginning in December 2004, Putin began a major effort to increase Russian influence in the Middle East, an area he saw open to a greater Russian role. This was the case for two reasons. First, the United States, hitherto the dominant external power in the region, was now badly bogged down in Iraq and, increasingly, in Afghanistan. Second, the sharp rise in oil prices had strengthened the Russian economy and given Moscow the ability to waive the debts a number of Arab countries had incurred with the USSR. Taking advantage of U.S.-Turkish frictions over the Iraq war, in a journey to Ankara in December, and in Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's return visit to Moscow in January 2005, Putin raised the possibility of US\$25 billion in trade with Turkey, while also signing a number of military agreements with it and promising to help solve the Armenian-Azeri conflict. Moscow also moved to greatly improve ties with a Syria isolated because of its heavy-handed policies in Lebanon. Moscow waived 90 percent of Syria's debt to the former Soviet Union, and also sold it surface to air missiles, something that greatly angered Israel and the United States, along with anti-tank missiles, some of which were transferred to Hizbollah and later used against Israel in the Summer 2006 Hizbollah-Israel war. Then, after Syria was accused of involvement in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005, Moscow sought to prevent sanctions from being imposed on Syria, in the process coming into conflict with both the United

States and France who wanted to penalize Syria for its actions in Lebanon. Putin, in February 2005, also moved to cement relations with Iran, by approving the long-delayed agreement to supply nuclear fuel for the nuclear reactor at Bushehr which Russia was constructing for Iran. Continuing to show the Russian flag, Putin then visited Egypt and Israel in April, with the Russian President promising the Israelis he would do nothing to hurt their country. Most Israelis doubted him, however, given the arms sales to Israel's enemy Syria and the nuclear deal with Iran. Israel's fears were reinforced when, following the election of the outspoken Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in July 2005, Moscow did its best to delay even the discussion of sanctions against Iran in the United Nations Security Council because of Iran's decision to renew enrichment of uranium, and its refusal to supply the International Atomic Energy Agency with information about its atomic programs.

Making matters worse, Ahmadinejad called for wiping Israel off the map and denied the Holocaust. Despite such declarations, in November 2005 Moscow signed an agreement with Tehran to provide it with

sophisticated surface to air missiles, that could be used to protect its nuclear installations against a possible Israeli or American attack.

As Putin was moving to bolster the Russian position in the Middle East, he also tried to prevent the Arab and Moslem worlds from aiding the rebellion in Chechnya. Thus he sought, and obtained, for Russia observer status in the Islamic Conference (OIC), and took the opportunity to side with the Moslem world by denouncing the Danish cartoons which were seen as insulting to Islam. For the same reason, he pursued an improved relationship with Saudi Arabia, an effort that bore some fruit as the Saudi government, distancing itself from the Chechen rebels, promised to help in the reconstruction of Chechnya.

Then, following the Hamas victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections in January 2006, Putin called the event a "very serious blow" to American diplomacy in the Middle East, thus appearing almost to return to the "zero-sum" influence competition in the Middle East that characterized Soviet- American relations. Almost immediately thereafter, he invited a Hamas delegation to Moscow, proclaiming that Hamas was not on the Russian terrorist list, and hence not considered a terrorist organization—a clear change from Russian policy in 2000 when Sergei Ivanov, then head of Russia's Security Council, had stated to a visiting Israeli delegation that what they were facing in Gaza and the West Bank (the Hamas-led Al-Aksa Intifada) was exactly what Russia was battling in Chechnya.

When the Hamas delegation came to Moscow, Putin had a number of objectives. First, by inviting Hamas, he associated Russia with the Arab consensus which was to give Hamas time to change its policies, but in the meanwhile to work with a Hamas government and not to sanction it. Such a position not only enabled Russia to pursue an independent position in the Middle East, it also enabled the Arab world to play Moscow off against Washington and Europe, and Russia was widely praised in the Arab world for the invitation, which bestowed a modicum of diplomatic legitimacy on Hamas. Another goal of Putin was to get Hamas to downplay the Chechen issue, and the Hamas delegation complied, with delegation leader Khaled Mashal stating after meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, that the Chechen separatists were "an internal problem of Russia". This drew a bitter reaction from the Chechen rebels, which called Hamas' decision to visit Putin's Russia, which had killed so many Chechen Moslems, not only regrettable but also "un-Islamic".

Throughout the remainder of 2006, Moscow continued its efforts to rebuild its position in the Middle East. Thus Putin hosted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in the Fall and offered to sell him nuclear reactors. In addition, Moscow continued to maintain its close tie with Iran, delaying sanctions against Tehran because of its defiance of the

International Atomic Energy Agency until December 2006, when Moscow acceded to minimal sanctions which, however, did not affect either Russian arms sales to Tehran or the Bushehr nuclear reactor project.

As the U.S. position in Iraq continued to deteriorate, and the Iraqi policy of U.S. President George Bush was repudiated in the Fall 2006 U.S. Congressional Elections, Putin sought to further Russian influence in the region. Thus in 2007 he visited Saudi Arabia and Qatar—the first visit of a Russian (or Soviet) leader to the Gulf—as well as Jordan. During the visit Putin was not only showing the flag and continuing his efforts to reduce Arab support for the now sputtering Chechen rebellion, he was also seeking major business agreements especially for Russia's arms and nuclear reactors. He also raised the possibility of an OPEC-like natural gas cartel, and sought Arab investment in the Russian economy in such areas as banking and aerospace. He also further distanced himself from the U.S. and Israeli diplomatic position by calling for the lifting of sanctions against the Hamas-dominated Palestinian National Unity Government, despite its failure to meet the Diplomatic Quartet's requirements of recognition of Israel, renunciation of violence and support of previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements. Putin followed up this call by again inviting Hamas leader Khaled Mashal to Moscow, thus further endowing Hamas with diplomatic legitimacy, although the subsequent fighting between Hamas and Fatah, and the Hamas take over of Gaza, posed a difficult problem of choice for Moscow which wanted not only to keep on good terms with both Palestinian factions, but also with the Middle Eastern countries which supported them.

Conclusions

1. Russian activity in the Middle East has become a major challenge to the United States, whose position in the region is weakening. Moscow's arms sales to Iran and Syria, and its diplomatic efforts to legitimize Hamas have made U.S. efforts to bring about an Israeli-Palestinian agreement, already a difficult task, far more difficult. While Russia's recent delay in the supply of nuclear fuel to the Bushehr reactor, and its willingness to consider additional limited sanctions against Iran in the UN Security Council may be seen as an effort to reverse the trend of deteriorating U.S.-Russian relations, the Russian moves may also be seen as an important gesture to key Arab States such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, which are very concerned about Iran acquiring nuclear weapons.

2. Russian-Israeli relations have also suffered a major blow in recent years because of Putin's policies. The relations have been soured by the arms sales to Syria, some of which were transferred to Hizbollah and used

in its Summer 2006 war against Israel, as well as by the decision to supply a nuclear reactor and sophisticated surface to air missiles to Iran, whose President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has called for Israel to be wiped off the map. Moscow's embrace of Hamas, an organization that remains dedicated to Israel's destruction, have further hurt relations, and few Israelis believe Putin's protestations of friendship to Israel.

3. While Russian-U.S. and Russian-Israeli relations have been severely damaged by Russian policies in the Middle East, the question remains as to how much Russian influence in the region has increased. To be sure, there has been a drop-off in Arab support for the Chechen rebels, and this is a plus for Moscow. In addition, Putin has laid the groundwork for increased commercial relations between Russia and a number of countries in the region, although whether Russia will get the Arab investments and additional arms sales Putin seeks remains to be seen. On the diplomatic front, despite its weakened position, the United States remains the main guarantor of the Arab regimes of the Gulf as well as Egypt and Jordan. Consequently, while Putin's efforts have enabled these countries to distance themselves somewhat from the United States--something that is helpful domestically given America's lack of popularity in the region--whether Russia has achieved significant influence in these countries is a very open question.

Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst

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Mongolia and Nuclear Age

Enkhsaikhan Jargalsaikhan^{*}

The 21st century is in many ways a nuclear century since international security, development and progress depends to a certain extent on how we deal with nuclear issues. Mongolia, as a member of the worldwide family of nations, and sandwiched as it is between two nuclear-weapon powers, is directly affected by nuclear issues. As such Mongolia must decide either to be passively affected by the perils of the nuclear age or play an active role, to the extent possible, in shaping its own future. The outcome of this decision depends a great deal on the Mongolian people themselves. This is because nuclear issues affect national security, public health, the environment and energy security.

Mongolia's Nuclear-Weapon-Free Status¹

Mongolia's nuclear-weapon free status (NWFS), the institutionalization of which is yet to be achieved, is based on the country's policy of ensuring its security primarily by political and legal means. In this case the status would mean that all nuclear-weapon states, especially its two immediate neighbors, would not only respect the status and legally commit not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against Mongolia, but also pledge not to involve Mongolia and its territory in their nuclear calculations and policies. As the developing dispute in Eastern Europe clearly demonstrates, the territories of third states can become involved in the "power politics" of the great powers. Thus the U.S. plan to base parts of a missile-defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland "to combat potential new threats from nations seeking nuclear weapons, like

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¹ The National Security Concept of Mongolia, adopted in June 1994 by the State Great Hural (parliament) addressing the ways and means of ensuring the security of existence of Mongolia has underlined the need to ensure the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia at the international level and make it an important element of strengthening the country's security by political means. In February 2000 the parliament adopted the Law on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status that defines the status and regulates the legal consequences of all the related activities.

Iran” has prompted Russia to take a tougher line in its relations with the U.S. and suspend its participation in a key European arms control treaty that governs deployment of troops on the continent.² That is why the latter commitment is very important for Mongolia in order not to be involved in great power rivalry, and also ensures nuclear stability and predictability in the region, since any change in Mongolia’s policy could affect the balance of power in the region.

The policy of institutionalizing its NWFS is also breaking new ground in the theory and practice of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ). The General Assembly of the United Nations in 1998 welcomed Mongolia’s initiative and policy and called upon all member states to work with it in consolidating and strengthening its security and NWFS, while the five nuclear-weapon states (the P-5 which also happen to be the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council) have made a joint statement in 2000 providing negative and positive security assurances to Mongolia. At present the policy needs to be pursued to expand the P-5 political declaration and turn it into a legally binding commitment. When institutionalized, Mongolia would be the first single-state NWFZ in international relations with duly provided security assurances from the P-5. So far no individual state has been able to acquire such a status, while there are over a dozen states that could benefit from such a precedent and ensure their security through single-state NWFZ status as part of the regional security arrangement.

On the other hand, single-state NWFZ status could be *an interim* measure for states that are currently under a nuclear umbrella to abandon it as a NWFZ (with the security assurances provided in such a case by nuclear-weapon states) and negotiate its status as part of a regional NWFZ. Thus in the case of Northeast Asian NWFZ, Japan and South Korea would need to abandon the U.S. nuclear umbrella and level the playing field for negotiating the regional NWFZ. *Interim* single-state NWFZ status could be useful for this purpose.

For Mongolia itself, the institutionalization of its special status in the form of a multilateral agreement with legally binding security assurances would in fact be tantamount to international recognition of its *neutrality policy* pursued since the early 1990s and which is reflected in its national security concept in regard to potential Sino-Russian disputes that do not directly affect Mongolia’s vital national interests. This neutrality policy could, with the support of the internationally recognized NWFS, be extended to Russian and Chinese disputes with other Asian powers or among them. There is already a wide political pre-requisite for such

² Thus Russia has declared that it would halt inspections and verifications of its military sites by NATO countries and would no longer limit the number of its conventional weapons (i.e. limitations on the deployment of tanks, armored combat vehicles, artillery and attack helicopters and combat aircraft.)

recognition which is reflected in United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/77 D entitled “Mongolia’s international security and nuclear-weapon-free status”. The General Assembly thus has welcomed “Mongolia’s active and positive role in developing peaceful, friendly and mutually beneficial relations with the States of the region”, which has generated greater security and stability. The Assembly has reiterated its support for Mongolia’s policy in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006. Therefore institutionalization of the status would in fact be recognition and acceptance of Mongolia’s neutrality policy and would further broaden support of its “good-neighborly and balanced relationship with its neighbors” as an important element of strengthening regional peace. Institutionalization of the status could serve as legal and political leverage in addressing the issue of the silent nuclear threat.

Silent Nuclear Threats

The nuclear age holds enormous promises as well as hidden perils. In the past half century the world witnessed the escalation of the dangerous nuclear arms race and a race to perfect nuclear weapons through nuclear weapons tests. Out of 2036 registered nuclear weapons tests conducted in the world up through today, 760 (or about 27 percent of all the tests) have been conducted by the two neighbors in direct vicinity of Mongolia,³ the health and environmental consequences of which have yet to be studied. We still do not know what the past holds for our children and grandchildren.

The future is not rosy either. Acceleration of global warming demands innovative approaches to the issues of energy production and use. Though renewable power like wind and solar, as well as decentralized power generators are giving some answers, they are not enough to adequately address the issue. That is why more and more people are linking their hopes to nuclear energy since nuclear power plants do not release greenhouse gases (GHGs).

Until the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident there was a tendency of increasing the number of nuclear power stations despite the unresolved issues of nuclear waste. After the Chernobyl accident this tendency slowed down for almost two decades. Now there is again a growing interest in and demand for nuclear power because of the growing greenhouse effect of increased fossil fuel use. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) 2004 report, the 440 nuclear power reactors operating in the world were producing 16% of world’s electricity, with 26 more reactors under construction, including 18

³ Thus the Soviet Union conducted 207 atmospheric and 508 underground tests, while China – 23 atmospheric and 17 underground.

in Asia. The demands of the Kyoto Protocol are also causing state parties to increasingly favor nuclear energy.

The role of nuclear energy is growing especially quickly in Northeast Asia. Thus if by the mid-1990s the share of nuclear energy in the Republic of Korea was 36%, in Taiwan 28.8% and in Japan 33.8%, it is estimated that by 2010 almost half of the world's nuclear energy will be produced and consumed in this region. The Chinese share in nuclear energy production is increasing as well.⁴ Along with producing nuclear energy these countries are facing the dilemma of temporary and/or permanent disposal of nuclear waste, especially high level radiological wastes (HLW), the amount of which is increasing with each passing year⁵. In short, the question of nuclear waste disposal⁶ is one of the most challenging nuclear issues facing not only the international scientific community but the world in general.⁷

Mongolia does not have nuclear reactors and thus is not a beneficiary of nuclear technology. However, despite that it runs the risk of becoming sandwiched between enormous nuclear waste repositories⁸ with all the ensuing potential long-lasting health and environmental consequences.

⁴ It is estimated that in the next ten years China might build up to 30 new reactors, Japan – 13 and the Republic of Korea – 10. Russian is planning to double its nuclear power output by 2020, as is China. India plans to increase its nuclear power output by 8 fold by year 2022.

⁵ There is a common belief that the vast territories of Siberia, the Australian outback, the Gobi Desert and the Canadian Shield could be used to permanently deposit nuclear waste. Many scientific researches are being done and international conferences held on this issue. Thus just recently, on 19-22 June an International Conference on Management of Spent Fuel from Nuclear Power Reactors was held in Vienna under the auspices of IAEA, in which nearly 200 participants and observers from 41 countries and international organizations shared information, lessons and experiences.

⁶ See Dr. Helen Caldicott's article "Nuclear Power Isn't Clean; Its Dangerous" which demonstrates how nuclear waste threatens global health since the toxicity of many elements in the waste is long-lived. Thus Strontium 90 remains radioactive for 600 years. Concentrating in the food chain, it emulates the mineral calcium. Contaminated milk enters the body, where strontium 90 concentrates in bones and lactating breasts later to cause bone cancer, leukemia and breast cancer. Babies and children are 10 to 20 times more susceptible to the carcinogenic effects of radiation than adults. Plutonium, the most significant element in nuclear waste, is so carcinogenic that hypothetically half a kilo evenly distributed could cause cancer in everyone on Earth. Lasting for half a million years, it enters the body through the lungs where it is known to cause cancer. It mimics iron in the body, migrating to bones, where it can induce bone cancer or leukemia, and to the liver, where it can cause primary liver cancer. It crosses the placenta into the embryo and, like the drug thalidomide, causes gross birth deformities. Plutonium has a predilection for the testicles, where it induces genetic mutations in the sperm of humans and other animals that are passed on from generation to generation. The article is available at <http://healthandenergy.com/nuclear_dangers.htm> (August 20 2007).

⁷ The 440 nuclear reactors have produced about 280,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel (over 12,000 metric tons per year).

⁸ It is believed that nuclear waste remains hazardous for tens of thousands of years and that the only way to get rid of it is to put it in containers and bury it deep underground (and pray that geological shifts do not disturb it).

This is because our neighbors not only have nuclear waste repositories on their territories that are adjacent to Mongolia, but in the case of Russia⁹ in 2001, it has adopted legislation encouraging the import of nuclear wastes from other countries¹⁰. Thus it is estimated that in the 10 years since the adoption of the 2001 legislation, Russia could import 10-20.000 tons of nuclear waste, most of which is expected to be stored at the storage facility in Zheleznogorsk (Krasnoyarsk region)¹¹. There are even talks that the decommissioned uranium mines in Krasnokamensk, to the east of the Lake Baikal (not far from Mongolia), might be used as a site of final (meaning eternal) disposal of nuclear waste. Moreover, according to the fuel repatriation program agreed to between Russia and the U.S. in May 2004 as part of the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, a dozen countries have become eligible to receive financial and technical assistance from the U.S. to ship their fresh and spent research reactor fuel, originally obtained from the Soviet Union/Russia back to Russia for “safekeeping and reprocessing into safer materials”. Where all the spent fuel ends up in Russia is anybody’s guess.

The above events cannot be ignored by Mongolia simply because they are taking place in another country or because importing whatever waste is an internal affair of that country. The 6.8 magnitude earthquake that hit Japan a few weeks ago has vividly demonstrated how radioactive elements could be released into the air (and in Japan’s case into ocean) by nuclear power plants.

We cannot blame our neighbors for their policies and choices. It is their sovereign choice as long as it does not now nor in the long run adversely affect the Mongolia’s public health or environment as described in the national security concept (paras. 49.1 and 53.2). Therefore it is up to Mongolians to closely examine either on their own or together with the relevant neighbor(s) the possible long-term effects and consequences of having huge nuclear waste sites almost at our doorsteps.

Data or information which could be used to analyze China’s situation and policy with regard to nuclear waste is scarce. What is known is that not only is China’s nuclear industry producing nuclear waste, but that it has on a number of occasions discussed the possibility of importing nuclear waste from other countries to store in China, possibly in Gansu province (which borders Mongolia) or even in the Gobi desert. Since Russia and China are recognized nuclear-weapon states which are not

⁹ No reliable information in regard to China is available from Chinese or other sources

¹⁰ Meaning importing not only nuclear waste from Soviet-built nuclear power stations but also from other nuclear reactors. Russian official reasoning for importing nuclear waste are as follows: to be able to upgrade Russia’s nuclear storage, clean up heavily contaminated land and expand its nuclear processing operations at Mayak nuclear complex in the Ural mountains.

¹¹ Other known nuclear waste repositories are in Chelyabinsk-65”Mayak” near Ozersk and Novaya Zemlya (Northern Archangelsk).

required to conclude special agreements with the IAEA on strict and rigorous inspection of their nuclear facilities, the safety of their nuclear facilities and repositories acquire special significance for Mongolia. Therefore it cannot afford to be a passive observer of these events and ominous trends. Lately, Kazakhstan, following the examples of Russia, is openly expressing interest, on commercial basis, to store low or intermediate-level nuclear waste from other countries on its territory. Would that mean that Mongolia would have additional nuclear waste sites on its western doorstep?

Mongolian experts and nuclear scientists should closely follow these and related events, make analysis of the situation from the standpoint of Mongolia's immediate and long-term interests and make concrete proposals to the National Security Council, Parliament and Government of Mongolia on ways to deflect the danger and engage its neighbors, other interested states and international organizations on how to address these issues.

Energy Security

As it has been pointed out earlier in this paper, nuclear reactors provide enormous energy that is increasingly being used to generate electricity. In France, for example, up to 80 percent of electricity is generated by nuclear power plants, while in Japan – almost one third. Though Mongolia's energy needs are not enormous, nevertheless they are increasing, and as a result the country depends highly on oil imports from Russia. That is why some Mongolians, including some nuclear experts, propose building a small or medium size nuclear power plant that could resolve most of the country's energy needs. They say that Mongolia has enormous reserves of uranium ore, some of which are included in the list of strategically important mines.¹² Some feasibility studies on constructing nuclear power station(s) have already been undertaken. What is needed now is to move beyond studies and take a decision on the best way of utilizing the uranium mines and building nuclear power station(s) to satisfy the increasing needs in electricity as well as reduce the dependence on foreign energy supply. In order to do that a state policy on promoting nuclear science and energy needs to be elaborated. Also the comprehensive policy for national development, currently under discussion, should address this issue in one way or another. If Mongolia decides to develop nuclear energy, the IAEA could provide appropriate assistance through its statute as well as by Article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).¹³

¹² These include Mardai, Dornod and Gurvan Bulag.

¹³ Article IV of NPT reads as follows: "(1) Noting in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production

Bearing the above in mind, I would recommend the following as concrete steps to address the challenges of the nuclear age:

- intensify our efforts to conclude a trilateral agreement with the two immediate neighbors institutionalizing Mongolia's NWFS and acquire legally binding security assurances from them and other nuclear-weapon states that they will respect Mongolia's neutrality policy with respect to potential future disputes among nuclear and other powers;
- make Mongolia's NWFS integral part of the emerging international network of NWFZs;
- make serious health and environmental assessment of the legacies of over 700 nuclear-weapon tests in the vicinity of Mongolia (together with its neighbors, other interested countries, the WHO, IAEA and others);
- undertake, together with neighboring countries and the IAEA, a study on possible environmental and health effects of nuclear waste repositories of neighboring countries and consider its results in the National Security Council and the Parliament of Mongolia;
- develop and adopt national policy with regard to nuclear issues, including future uses of uranium and nuclear energy;
- if a decision is taken to develop nuclear energy by constructing nuclear reactors, make the best use of IAEA advise to make use of the safest technology.

and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty. (2) All the Parties to the Treaty undertake to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Parties to the Treaty in a position to do so shall also co-operate in contributing alone or together with other States or international organizations to the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially in the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty, with due consideration for the needs of the developing areas of the world."

Cadres and Discourse in the People's Republic of China

Michael Schoenhals
Xiaolin Guo

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August 2007



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HIV/AIDS: Security Threat in Central Asia?

Svetlana Ancker*

Dedicated to the real heroes living with HIV/AIDS and fighting this horrible disease around the world.

ABSTRACT

Today, Central Asian states are facing a number of security threats, including HIV/AIDS and related infections. International experience demonstrates that HIV/AIDS presents a clear danger to states, their citizens and institutions. With its proximity to drug-trafficking routes, poverty and deteriorated healthcare systems, Central Asia is at risk of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The potential consequences are so devastating that the Central Asian states should have no doubt as to the need to take adequate actions before the situation spin out of control and the epidemic explodes. The article, divided into three sections, provides an overview of the history and current trends in HIV/AIDS and related infections in the region; showcases worst-case scenario, witnessed in Sub-Saharan Africa and Caribbean nations, to demonstrate the negative impact of HIV/AIDS; and provides key findings and general recommendations on actions that would benefit the efforts of averting the epidemic in Central Asia.

Keywords • Central Asia • HIV/AIDS • Epidemic • Security • Prevention • Treatment • Injecting Drug Use • Sexually Transmitted Infections • Tuberculosis

Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union have introduced a variety of new threats and challenges to the international community. But it was not until the 1980s, when scholars started looking into other than Cold War security threats. These include, but are not limited to, terrorist activities, proliferation of bio-chemical weapons, and outbreaks of epidemic diseases like human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and avian flu.¹

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¹Andrew T. Price-Smith and John L. Daly, *Downward Spiral. HIV/AIDS, State Capacity, and Political Conflict in Zimbabwe* (Washington, D.C.: United State Institution of Peace, 2004), p. 5.

Today, the nature of the security environment is changing from the traditional meaning of state defense security to non-traditional threats, or so-called “gray area phenomena,”² revealing states’ vulnerability to the potential for turmoil and disorder these threats introduce. Stepping beyond traditional security frameworks, which are focused on state priorities, analysts recognize the transnational character of the infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, and the impact they have both on the individual welfare and on societies as a whole.³ No longer treated just as a medical or healthcare topic, HIV/AIDS, with over 40 million people infected and 20 million killed worldwide,⁴ shares the spotlight with traditional military threats.⁵ As James Wolfensohn, former president of the World Bank, noted in 2000, “Many of us used to think of AIDS as a health issue. We were wrong... Nothing we have seen is a greater challenge to peace and stability in African societies than the epidemic of AIDS... We face a major development crisis, and more than that, a security crisis.”⁶ That year, the United Nations (UN) for the first time in history declared a public health problem, HIV/AIDS, a security threat.⁷

HIV/AIDS poses a direct threat to human life and well-being, which are at the heart of the modern concept of “human security.” Coined by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the term encompasses an individual’s physical safety, rights, and quality of life. According to a UNDP’s *Human Development Report 1994*, “Human security is not a concern with weapons- it is a concern with human life and dignity.”⁸ In combination with opportunistic diseases (infections, such as tuberculosis and hepatitis, that are more likely to affect persons with weak immune systems), it has claimed more people than any of the major wars of the twentieth century⁹ and has become one of the top four

² Jennifer Brower and Peter Chalk, *The Global Threat of New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases: Reconciling U.S. National Security and Public Health Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), p. 1.

³ James J. Hentz and Morten Bøås, *New and Critical Security and Regionalism: Beyond the National State* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), p. 94.

⁴ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and World Health Organization, *AIDS Epidemic Update* (Geneva, December 2005), p. 2. <http://www.unaids.org/epi/2005/doc/report_pdf.asp> (August 20 2007).

⁵ Laurie Garrett, *HIV and National Security. Where Are the Links?* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations, 2005), p. 14.

⁶ Hentz and Bøås, *New and Critical Security and Regionalism*, p. 93.

⁷ Price-Smith and Daly, *Downward Spiral*, p. 14.

⁸ United Nations Development Program, *New Dimensions of Human Security*, Human Development Report 1994 (New York: Oxford University Press), p.22 <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/pdf/hdr_1994_ch2.pdf> (August 20 2007).

⁹ International Crisis Group, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue*, Issues Report no.1 (Washington, D.C. / Brussels, 2001), p.1 <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1831&l=1>> (August 20 2007).

leading causes of death.¹⁰ By 2020, as a 2000 Central Intelligence Agency's report predicts HIV/AIDS will claim more people than any other infectious disease in the world.¹¹

HIV/AIDS threatens human security on several levels. By damaging health and shortening individual life expectancy, it introduces material, physical and emotional burdens on families and communities. It also causes violence and discrimination against the infected and their families, resulting in social tensions and human rights violations. With the family structures breaking down and placing additional burden on already politically and economically fragile states, HIV/AIDS directly threatens the security, viability and prosperity of a nation. The 2000 UN Security Council resolution states, "...the HIV/AIDS pandemic, if unchecked, may pose a risk to stability and security."¹²

Under the effect of HIV/AIDS, economic production and state revenues decline, while needs for healthcare and social benefits increase, leading to further impoverishment of the citizens. Along with depleting economic resources, HIV/AIDS claims the human potential of a country (e.g. political, business, educational and artistic elites), leaving an army of uneducated and socially- abandoned orphans, who are likely to turn to risky behavior and criminal activities. With HIV-infected police and military forces, states lose their ability to defend themselves against both internal and external threats. Sick troops are incapable of protecting state territory or participating in a conflict resolution. The perception of one state's weakened defense may trigger another state to invade it or take hostile actions.¹³ Thus, weak militaries contribute to the national instability and create potential turbulence between states, which may have a destabilizing effect on the rest of the international system.¹⁴ Peter Piot, the executive director of the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), argues:

AIDS and global insecurity coexist in a vicious cycle. Civil and international conflicts help spread HIV, as populations are destabilized and armies move across new territories. And AIDS contributes to national and international insecurity, from high levels of HIV infection experienced among military and peacekeeping personnel, to the instability of societies whose future has been thrown into doubt.¹⁵

¹⁰ Joana Godinho et al., *Reversing the Tide: Priorities for HIV/AIDS Prevention in Central Asia*, Working Paper no. 54 (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005), p. 1.

¹¹ United States Central Intelligence Agency, *The Global Infectious Disease Threat and Its Implications for the United States* (Washington, D.C., January 2000), p. 7 <<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/cia/nie99-17d/index.htm>> (August 20 2007).

¹² Garrett, *HIV and National Security. Where Are the Links?*, p. 14.

¹³ International Crisis Group, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue*, p. 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, "AIDS and Human Security," Speech by Peter Piot at the United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, October 2, 2001,),

Thus, HIV/AIDS poses unparalleled challenges to human development, security and prosperity of nations.

Spreading rapidly across the post-Soviet space, HIV/AIDS is gaining momentum in Central Asia, a region with a unique geo-political location, as well as ethnic and religious composition. Today, Central Asia is facing a myriad of security threats from militant Islam to environmental degradation. Growing drug use, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS all are taking their toll on crumbling healthcare systems. The Central Asian states, located at the intersection of trafficking routes, are flooded with cheap drugs. Trafficking in human beings and the commercial sex trade are on the rise. In conditions of overburdened and failing healthcare systems, as well as widespread poverty and ignorance, HIV/AIDS, the “plague of 21st century,” may potentially turn into the major problem for the region, affecting both the young and the most productive populations. By reducing human capital, reversing economic gains and developmental achievements, HIV/AIDS may hinder the viability and security of Central Asia. Its transnational nature has region-wide implications, and the possibility of failing state/s in this strategically important region should be a concern, not only for the local governments, but also for the international community. As Mark Schneider and Michael Moodie argue, “The devastation of HIV/AIDS is one more ingredient in a potent mix of poverty, disease, and misery, which is already helping weaken legitimate governments and provide recruits for guerillas and terror organizations.”¹⁶

Although the majority of the Central Asian states have acknowledged the presence of HIV/AIDS, few have been treating it as more than just a healthcare issue. As some of the states choose to overlook growing HIV/AIDS problem, it may eventually reach the scale of epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa and Caribbean region, where HIV/AIDS rates have gained critical proportions. While there is an obvious direct threat of HIV/AIDS to the human capital and state’s defense capability, the indirect effects will undermine the structures responsible for economic growth, social development, and political stability. Unlike Brazil or Thailand, where timely and progressive campaigns against HIV/AIDS reversed prevalence rates, and thus offset the negative effects of the epidemic in a long run, lack of action and political commitment in Sub-Saharan Africa has led to serious consequences for many African communities and states. By adopting some of the best international

p. 2. <http://data.unaids.org/Media/Speeches01/Piot_Tokyo_02Oct01_en.doc> (August 10 2007)

¹⁶ Mark Schneider and Michael Moodie, *The Destabilizing Impacts of HIV/AIDS. First Wave Hits Eastern and Southern Africa; Second Wave Threatens India, China, Russia, Ethiopia, Nigeria* (Washington, D.C: CSIS, 2002), p. 12
<http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/0205_destimp.pdf> (August 10 2007).

practices and molding them to local settings, the Central Asian countries will be able to avoid what could become a humanitarian and developmental crisis in the region.

A regional pioneer, Kyrgyzstan has already started some of the prevention efforts, many of which have proven successful. Unlike some of its neighbors, Kyrgyzstan boasts a relatively liberal government and a vibrant civil society with a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), committed to the issues of HIV/AIDS. Meanwhile, heads of the other Central Asian states are more preoccupied with sustaining their authoritarian regimes through suppression of political and religious opposition, restraining public discontent, and resisting pressures of the international community. However, ignoring HIV/AIDS may only exacerbate the problem in a long run. HIV virus is slowly claiming Central Asia's most precious asset- its human potential- which may leave states even with abundant natural resources in despair. A major epidemiological outbreak in Central Asia could potentially become an impetus for civil disobedience, leading to state failure and mass violence within and across the state borders.

Central Asia is at a crossroads right now in terms of dealing with HIV/AIDS problem. The region still does not have the pandemic growth rates comparable to its neighbors such as Russia. But it is obvious that tackling the emerging threat of HIV/AIDS will require the joint efforts of the Central Asian governments, private businesses, international and local NGOs, the scientific and medical community. There is also significant international investment in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs in some of the Central Asian republics (CARs). How they manage these funds, their level of determination, and openness to suggestions of the international AIDS agencies, will determine whether the region becomes a success or a failure story. In conclusion, this article is not intended to paint a catastrophic picture for the region, but rather bring necessary awareness and sense of urgency to address one of the deadliest pandemics in the history of humankind.

Regional Overview: HIV/AIDS in Central Asia

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central Asian societies had to deal with a number of issues. Major structural, societal, behavioral and moral changes associated with a new political reality and market economy, are among the factors that drive HIV/AIDS further in the region. Lifting travel restrictions, which have led to the increased mobility of the local population, as well trafficking of drugs and humans, all play a part in its spread. The HIV/AIDS problem is relatively new to Central Asia, and may seem insignificant when compared to other

regions of the world. However, these “low” HIV/AIDS prevalence rates are no reason for optimism: struggling healthcare systems and outdated testing, as well as inaccurate evaluation and reporting mechanisms, indicate that the numbers of infected could be much higher (see Table 1).

Table 1. Individual-country data on HIV/AIDS rates

Country	Population (total) ¹⁷	Registered HIV cases (total), June 2005 ¹⁸	HIV acquired through IDU mode (total), June 2005 ¹⁹	HIV acquired through heterosexual mode (total), June 2005 ²⁰	Estimated HIV prevalence rates (total), 2006 ²¹	Estimated HIV cases (total), 2006 ²²
Kazakhstan	14,825,000	5,092	3,875	786	0.1- 3.2%	11,000-77,000
Kyrgyzstan	5,264,000	731	580	141	0.1- 1.7%	1,900-13,000
Tajikistan	6,507,000	317	191	25	0.1- 1.7%	2,300-16,000
Turkmenistan	4,833,000	2	N/A*	N/A*	<0.2%	<1,000
Uzbekistan	26,593,000	5,612	2,997	628	0.1- 0.7%	15,000-99,000

* N/A-Not Available

For the smaller Central Asian states, which have modest populations and limited financial, technical and human resources, even 1.0 percent HIV/AIDS prevalence rate will have an enormous impact on their human capital, economic, political and military security, as well as the well-being of their populations in general. With this thought in mind, it is important to analyze current HIV/AIDS rates and major transmission trends in the region.

The first cases of HIV/AIDS in Central Asia were reported at the end of the 1980s, among foreign visitors or their sexual partners. Today, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS,

¹⁷ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2006 Report of the Global AIDS Epidemic* (Geneva, 2006), pp. 384, 388, 464, 473, 482,

http://www.unaids.org/en/HIV_data/2006GlobalReport/default.asp (August 20 2007).

¹⁸ European Centre for the Epidemiological Monitoring of AIDS, *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe*, Mid-year Report-2006, no.72 (Saint-Maurice: Institut de Veille Sanitaire, 2006), p. 15, http://www.eurohiv.org/reports/index_reports_eng.htm (August 20 2007).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

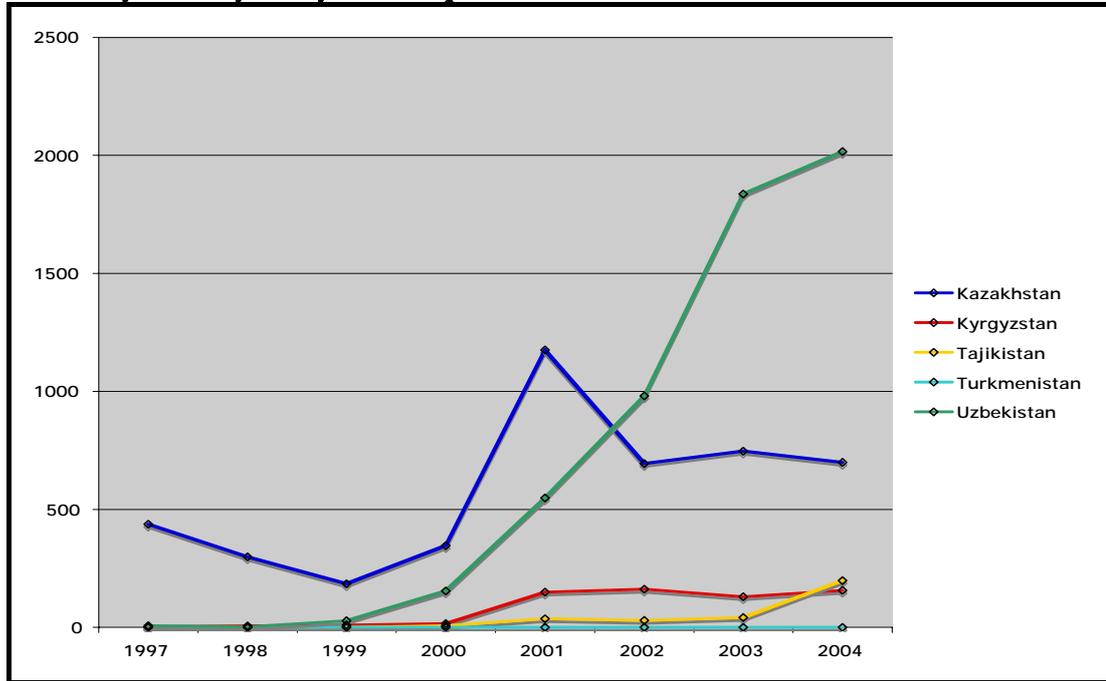
²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²¹ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2006 Report of the Global AIDS Epidemic*, pp. 384, 388, 464, 473, 482.

²² *Ibid.*

Eastern Europe and Central Asia have the fastest HIV/AIDS growth rates in the world²³ (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. HIV/AIDS infections newly diagnosed and rates per million population by country and year of report²⁴



These alarming statistics, which caught many by surprise, show that the majority of the infected (80 percent) are adults of the most productive age- under 30 years old.²⁵ With a prevailing attitude of complete denial, or treating the virus primarily as a healthcare issue, the danger of HIV/AIDS is in its quiet growth: without antiretroviral therapy (ART), it starts showing its deadly effects on the human body on average between eight to ten years after the infection was contracted.²⁶ Half of the infected cases involve people of approximately 25 years of age, who die before reaching 35 years old.²⁷ And this group, which constitutes more

²³ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and The World Bank Group, "HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the Europe and Central Asian Region," Fact Sheet, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/EXTECAREGTOPHEANUT/EXTECAREGTOPHIVAIDS/0,,contentMDK:20319420~menuPK:616556~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:571172,00.html> (March 2 2006).

²⁴ European Centre for the Epidemiological Monitoring of AIDS, *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe*, End-year Report- 2004, no.71 (Saint-Maurice: Institut de Veille Sanitaire, 2005), p. 12-13, <http://www.eurohiv.org/reports/report_71/polt/report_eurohiv_71.pdf>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Kyle D. Kauffman and David L. Lindauer, (Ed.) *AIDS and South Africa: the Social Expression of a Pandemic* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2004), p. 101.

²⁷ Bame A. Nsamenang, *Cultures of Human Development and Education: Challenge to Growing up African* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2004), p. 138.

than half of the Central Asian population, is responsible for the future development and stability of their countries.

In Central Asia, intravenous drug use and heterosexual contacts are the dominant means of HIV transmission. Situated on the major drug routes from Afghanistan, the world's biggest opium producer,²⁸ Central Asia is being flooded with cheap drugs. In 2000, 75 percent of the world's opium supply came from Afghanistan, with half of it transported through Central Asia.²⁹ Opium production increased to 4,500 metric ton in 1999, and despite a brief decline during the Afghanistan's civil war, it climbed back up again in 2002.³⁰ In 2001, one could buy a kilogram of Afghan opium in Tajikistan for only US\$1,200.³¹ In Osh, Kyrgyzstan, one dose of heroin is US\$1-2, less than the cost of a pack of good-quality cigarettes.³² A whole new market has emerged, with young men and women becoming both the users and sellers of illicit drugs. The number of female narco-couriers is increasing: in Tajikistan- they are 35 percent of all drug transporters, and in Kyrgyzstan- almost 13 percent.³³

Drug use rates have increased by five fold in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan from 1990 to 2003, and eight in Uzbekistan since 1991.³⁴ At present, Central Asia is estimated to have more than 500,000 drug users, with the sharing of syringes and preparation equipment widespread.³⁵ Injecting drug users (IDUs) account for approximately 60-80 percent of all new HIV/AIDS cases in the region.³⁶ However, treating HIV-positive drug users with antiretrovirals, which do not cure AIDS but prolong the patient's life, is quiet challenging. It should be implemented together with a substance-replacement therapy, but the use of methadone and other drug replacements is legal only in Kyrgyzstan. There are may be several explanations for resistance to treat IDUs, ranging from social attitudes towards drug users (seeing their addiction as an individual choice rather than a medical problem) to financial profits certain elites

²⁸ Olusoji Adeyi, *Adverting AIDS Crises in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: a Regional Support Strategy* (Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank, 2003), p. 45.

²⁹ Godinho et al., *Reversing the Tide*, p. 15.

³⁰ United Nations Development Programme, *HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Reversing the Epidemic: Facts and Policy Options* (Bratislava: Renesans, 2004), p. 27.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Asel Otorbayeva, "Narkopautina (Drug Web)," *Vechernii Bishkek*, December 6, 2002, p. 13.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Godinho et al., *Reversing the Tide*, p. 15.

³⁵ Joana Godinho et al., *HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis in Central Asia*, Working Paper no. 20 (Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank, 2004), p. 81.

³⁶ European Centre for the Epidemiological Monitoring of AIDS, *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe*, Mid-year Report-2006, no.72, p. 17.

gain from thriving drug trade (e.g. estimates show that illicit drug trade constitutes 30-50 percent of Tajikistan's economy³⁷). Thus, it becomes a vicious cycle: to slow down HIV/ AIDS progression, one should be treated with ART, but drug users can get it only if they undergo substance-replacement program, which in most CARs is prohibited.³⁸

There is a direct correlation between drug use and unprotected sex. Most of the IDUs are sexually active young men and women, many of whom occasionally offer sexual services in exchange for drugs. The same risk factors also apply to commercial sex workers (CSWs), who might be spending parts of their earnings on drugs. In both cases, unprotected sex and sharing contaminated syringes increase the chances of contracting HIV/AIDS.

With spreading poverty, growing mobility, changes in moral values and ignorance in sexual health, these traditionally conservative societies are facing a booming commercial sex trade and the rise of STIs. For example, an estimated 20,000-50,000 women are involved in the commercial sex trade in Kazakhstan.³⁹ One third of them use drugs, and two thirds have one or more STIs.⁴⁰ In Uzbekistan, one fourth of the estimated 20,000 CSWs work in Tashkent,⁴¹ however, a larger number are concentrated on main highways, where truck-drivers from the region commute.⁴² The commercial sex trade promotes human trafficking, abuse, and violence against women. In some Central Asian states, CSWs are legally helpless since prostitution is culturally forbidden and criminally punished. Yet, even in the states where it is legal, it is commercial sex workers who are discriminated against and harassed, and not their "managers" or clients.

Groups such as CSWs, drug users and men who have sex with men (MSM) are often held responsible for the fall of the "moral principles." This kind of stereotyping and thinking about AIDS as "someone else's, not my" disease, builds a barrier between healthy and infected people, and pushes conservative groups to ostracize and punish the so-called "dregs of society," which in their eyes deserve to die anyway. Even some medical personnel refuse to assist IDUs or CSWs, due to their personal

³⁷ UNDP, *Tajikistan Fact Sheet*, <europeandcis.undp.org/files/uploads/_rbec%20web/cahdr/Tajikistan%20Fact%20Sheet.doc> (August 4 2007).

³⁸ Naz Nazar, "Central Asia: What's Being Done About AIDS?" *EurasiaNet Civil Society*, December 31, 2004, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/pp123104.shtml>> (August 20 2007).

³⁹ Godinho et al., *Reversing the Tide*, p. 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁴² Gulnoza Saidazimova, "HIV Infections Build in Uzbekistan as Prostitution Rises," *EurasiaNet Civil Society*, December 29 2004, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/pp122904.shtml>> (August 20 2007).

beliefs, enforced by societal standards and the legal system, rather than medical norms.⁴³ But the old belief that HIV/AIDS can be contained within the highly vulnerable groups is proving wrong. International experience demonstrates that HIV/AIDS is no longer a disease of poor people, gay men, drug addicts or foreigners.⁴⁴ These vulnerable populations interact with the general public, and may pass the infection to their friends and partners.⁴⁵

In such a conservative, homophobic and macho-oriented environment, sexual minorities and women usually become victims of prejudice and violence. Stigma has a dual effect: some people not only refuse to accept and treat the HIV-infected equally, but they also reject using safe practices themselves.⁴⁶ Such developments hinder HIV/AIDS cases surveillance, counting and reporting, and prevention and treatment efforts, but perpetuate the further spread of the disease. This discrimination creates a vicious cycle of marginalization and hatred towards these groups in society. Thus, these groups are driven underground: they are afraid of legal punishment, they avoid coming forward for information, testing or treatment. As Jonathan Cohen, representative of the HIV/AIDS program under Human Rights Watch, notes:

When people are nervous about engaging with the health-care system, when they fear that outing themselves as an injecting drug user or a sex worker will result in arrest and possible incarceration, when they face routine stigma and discrimination on the basis of the fact that they might be addicted to narcotic substances or work in the sex trade, then they are much less likely to come forward and get an HIV test. And that contributes to lower statistics than might otherwise exist, which in turn contributes to less political will to address the epidemic, because one develops a false sense of how serious the crisis really is.⁴⁷

In such a pre-disposed to HIV/AIDS environment, other infectious diseases start spreading rapidly. International experience testifies that the overlap between drug abuse and increasing rates of TB and STIs is a deadly combination. TB, one of the major opportunistic infections and

⁴³ Konstantin Lezhentsev, "The Obstacles to HIV Treatment for Drug Users," *Harm Reduction News* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2004), p. 4.

⁴⁴ Vincanne Adams and Stacy Leigh Pigg, ed., *Sex in Development. Science, Sexuality, and Morality in Global Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 259.

⁴⁵ Adeyi, *Adverting AIDS Crises in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS/ World Health Organization, *AIDS Epidemic Update*, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Kathleen Moore, "Central Asia: Attitudes, Abuse Contribute to Spread of AIDS," *EurasiaNet Civil Society*, December 30 2004, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/pp123004.shtml>> (August 20 2007).

one of the leading causes of death in Central Asia,⁴⁸ makes treatment of HIV/AIDS far more difficult.⁴⁹ Both infections drive and complicate each other: TB takes advantage of the immune system weakened by HIV, while HIV exacerbates development of active TB.⁵⁰ The largest TB epidemic in Central Asia is in Kazakhstan- 50,000 cases of active TB were registered there in 2001,⁵¹ and 25,000 new TB cases and 3,000 TB deaths every year.⁵² In Kyrgyzstan, according to the World Bank, each year about 6,000 new TB cases and 7,000 “chronic” TB cases are registered.⁵³ By the end of 2001, 15,420 people had active TB, and TB death rates doubled.⁵⁴ The majority of those who are TB-infected (about 95%) start at the latent stage, when the disease remains unnoticed. Without timely and proper treatment, they may enter the active stage, which leads to eventual death. Yet, when discovered early, TB can be cured for US\$10-20 a person.⁵⁵

Treatment of opportunistic infections in the early stages of HIV/AIDS can actually prolong individual’s life and make treatment of AIDS easier.⁵⁶ When curing TB with two first-line drugs isoniazid and rifampicin fails, it usually indicates that a patient has developed a multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB).⁵⁷ In the old Soviet healthcare system, misdiagnosis of TB cases and mismanagement of treatment therapies was widespread. Uzbekistan, for example, has one of the highest numbers of MDR-TB cases in the world.⁵⁸ Directly Observed Therapy Short Course (DOTS) is a well-known method, which, according to the WHO, includes five key components crucial to eradication of MDR-TB: “sustained political commitment, access to quality-assured TB sputum microscopy, standardized short-course chemotherapy to all cases of TB under proper case-management conditions, uninterrupted supply of quality-assured drugs, recording and reporting system enabling outcome assessment,”⁵⁹ as well as use of second-line of drugs.⁶⁰ However, it is

⁴⁸ Joana Godinho et al., *Stopping Tuberculosis in Central Asia. Priorities for Action*, Working Paper no.56 (Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank, 2005), p. 17.

⁴⁹ Godinho et al., *HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis in Central Asia*, p. 6.

⁵⁰ Adeyi, *Adverting AIDS Crises in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, p. 19.

⁵¹ Godinho et al., *HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis in Central Asia*, p. 5.

⁵² Godinho et al., *Stopping Tuberculosis in Central Asia. Priorities for Action*, p. 70.

⁵³ Godinho et al., *HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis in Central Asia*, p. 46.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Adeyi, *Adverting AIDS Crises in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, p. 52-53.

⁵⁶ Caroline Sweetman, (Ed.), *Gender, Development and Poverty* (Oxford, UK: Oxfram GB, 2002), p. 66.

⁵⁷ Adeyi, *Adverting AIDS Crises in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, p. 20.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵⁹ World Health Organization, “The Five Elements of DOTS,” <<http://www.who.int/tb/dots/whatisdots/en/index.html>> (July 27 2006).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

expected that the new strains of MDR-TB will emerge before new vaccines are developed, and even those will be out of reach for poor populations.⁶¹ According to the WHO, no treatment will work for about 50 percent of people with MDR-TB, and by 2020, TB may become the second leading cause of death after HIV/AIDS in the world.⁶²

This quick overview of HIV/AIDS situation shows alarming trends in its transmission throughout the region. Although currently Uzbekistan has the highest HIV/AIDS rates, other Central Asian states are catching up. Mounting drug use and commercial sex trade, along with high STI and TB rates, reveal deeper political, social, and economic problems in the region. With current levels of knowledge (or lack of thereof) about the infection, high unemployment rates, and no social support system, the young population is in danger of participating in high-risk and criminal activities.⁶³

However, the situation is not completely hopeless. Central Asian states have been trying to implement local programs to ensure protection and treatment for HIV/AIDS patients, and to prevent the spread of HIV among the general population. For example, in 1993 Tajikistan passed a law that protects HIV/AIDS infected persons from discrimination and violence against them.⁶⁴ Six years later, Uzbekistan followed by adopting a law on HIV/AIDS prevention, stipulating the rights of those HIV/AIDS infected, and guaranteeing them free medical care. Also, a number of Central Asian NGOs work with HIV-positive individuals to offer them medical, emotional, and legal advice.⁶⁵ Recognizing the potential threat of HIV/AIDS to its human resources, most of the Central Asian states have applied for and secured funding from major international donor organizations, such as the World Bank, United Nations agencies, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and others, to initiate prevention programs and control drug use, STIs, TB and HIV/AIDS. Kyrgyzstan, compared to other CARs, has achieved a certain level of success, but is still dealing with issues of stigma and ignorance, as well as inefficiency of intervention and treatment mechanisms. Kazakhstan, like Kyrgyzstan, has done a lot in the sphere of HIV/AIDS prevention, from creating multi-sectoral response mechanisms and launching methadone substitution therapy pilot programs, to opening “trust points”- support sites for highly vulnerable populations.⁶⁶

⁶¹ United States Central Intelligence Agency, *The Global Infectious Disease Threat*, p. 4.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 8.

⁶³ Godinho et al., *HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis in Central Asia*, p. 81.

⁶⁴ Tajikistan: Living With HIV/AIDS,” *Asian Sex Gazette*, August 12 2004, <http://www.asiansexgazette.com/asg/central_asia/centralasiaoinews37.htm> (August 20 2007).

⁶⁵ Saidazimova, “HIV Infections Build in Uzbekistan as Prostitution Rises.”

⁶⁶ Godinho et al., *Reversing the Tide*, p. 51, 60.

Potential Security Implications of HIV/AIDS

While the author does not intend to compare HIV/AIDS situation in Central Asia to other regions of the world, due to political, economic, social and cultural differences, it is worth to note that the individual behavior and health choices that lead to the HIV transmission are universal and are part of basic human nature. In this sense, it is important to analyze the experiences of the Sub-Saharan Africa, which reveal the detrimental impact the HIV/AIDS epidemic can have on the various aspects of state, regional and international security. HIV/AIDS' effect has a complex and multi-dimensional character, involving every layer of society: not only individuals and families, but also the social, political, economic and military establishments.

While the Central Asian states have relatively low numbers of HIV cases, and are still far from full-grown epidemic, the following scenario serves as a vivid example of consequences if measures are not taken to prevent the further spread of the virus in the region. Andrew Price-Smith, assistant professor at the University of South Florida, underlines that "diseases like HIV/AIDS are conducive of declining national prosperity, promote social inequality, drain human capital and facilitate inter-elite conflict."⁶⁷ In a region with high levels of denial and socio-cultural misunderstanding towards HIV/AIDS, lack of political initiative, and deteriorating healthcare, this scenario has the potential to become more than just a scary thought.

Human Security

As mentioned in the introduction, HIV/AIDS and other non-traditional threats have challenged the traditional understanding of the term "security". It no longer focuses exclusively on state interests and priorities, but also takes into account the well-being of the smallest but principal unit of society- the individual. HIV/AIDS impacts the infected individuals, their families, communities and societies at large.

HIV/AIDS hits the young and most productive groups, threatening the economic development of the country. In conditions of growing poverty and fewer life opportunities, young people are more likely to join criminal and high-risk activities for survival and recreation purposes. In both cases, they put their own and their families' lives in danger of physical and emotional violence. For example, socially disadvantaged women, who seek job opportunities outside of their home countries, often become victims of human trafficking and sex slavery. Not only do they have no power to demand safe sex from their clients, these women become objects of exploitation, abuse and emotional pressure, which

⁶⁷ Hentz and Bøås, *New and Critical Security and Regionalism*, p. 94.

sometimes can be more painful than physical.⁶⁸ All of these factors, in turn, may lead to the increased risk of HIV infection and its further transmission to others, contributing to the transnational nature of the epidemic.

This phenomenon becomes even more aggravated during times of conflict, with large numbers of displaced populations and the breakdown of the social fabric. Women left alone without their families and husbands, who might be killed, in combat or in pursuit of work, often have minimal or no protection against sexual abuse and domestic violence. Even those, who escape sexual violence, may be pressured to offer sexual favors in return for food, money or physical protection. As Mohga Kamal Smith states in “Gender, Poverty, and Intergenerational Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS” article, “Rates of coercive sex, sexual violence, and HIV and STI infections are magnified and accelerated by conflict.”⁶⁹

HIV/AIDS depletes human capital and prevents it from replenishing itself.⁷⁰ One of the most significant long-term impacts of HIV/AIDS on human development is on children. Those, who lose their parents to HIV/AIDS, are especially vulnerable to poverty and discrimination. Sometimes, they are sent to live with their grandparents or distant relatives. In other cases, they take care of themselves, or a state or international social agency provides some support.⁷¹ In all of the above, funding is often stretched to the limit, and children miss out on opportunity for a happy childhood. Girls suffer even more; due to their traditional status as caregivers- they have to drop from schools to either get a job or look after a sick parent/ family member.⁷² Many children leave school because they simply can no longer afford school fees. It is estimated that enrollment in primary schools in Africa may decrease by 20-40 percent as result of widening HIV/AIDS epidemic.⁷³ Even those, who stay in school, often do not receive adequate education, as funding for educational programs is diverted to healthcare.⁷⁴ Children, who end up with distant relatives or homeless, may become objects of abuse. Surviving the death of a parent, caring for a sick relative, starting to work at early age, the stigma of possible abuse- all leave a deep emotional scar on the young and frail. Those, who end up on the streets, often get

⁶⁸ Nsamenang, *Cultures of Human Development and Education: Challenge to Growing up African*, p. 142.

⁶⁹ Sweetman, *Gender, Development and Poverty*, p. 64.

⁷⁰ Price-Smith and Daly, *Downward Spiral*, p. 19.

⁷¹ John M. Mbaku and Julius O. Ihonvbere, (Ed.), *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa: the Continuing Struggle*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), p. 330.

⁷² Sweetman, *Gender, Development and Poverty*, p. 53.

⁷³ Nana K. Poku and Alan Whiteside, (Ed.), *Global Health and Governance: HIV/AIDS*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2004), p. 139.

⁷⁴ Price-Smith and Daly, *Downward Spiral*, p. 19.

involved in criminal activities and exploitation practices, such as prostitution, becoming victims of harassment, physical and mental abuse.⁷⁵ In general, AIDS orphans are deprived of emotional and financial support, adequate education and job opportunities, life knowledge and skills that their parents would have taught them.⁷⁶

Thus, HIV/AIDS' negative effect on an individual level leads to the disintegration of families and communities, which are fundamental to a strong society.

Societal Security

The relationship between human security and HIV/AIDS becomes crucial in understanding of the overall danger HIV/AIDS epidemic presents to states and regions. HIV/AIDS' impact on economic and political systems directly affects every strata of the society and causes a breakdown of its fabric.⁷⁷ As discussed earlier, HIV/AIDS challenges both individual and family welfare. It causes sharp declines in the life expectancy of the population to only 45 years,⁷⁸ and female fertility by 25-40 percent, in many African nations.⁷⁹ The number of infected women of the childbearing age and child mortality increases dramatically as well.⁸⁰ The premature death of adults and children means that local, regional and national development goals may not be reached.⁸¹ In Central Asia, with relatively high birth rates and short life expectancies in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the potential epidemic could create an army of orphans. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, lower birth rates would translate into a larger older population.⁸²

The depletion of elites, teachers and healthcare staff, will have a long-term effect on the future of any state. Not only are these highly educated and skilled experts lost to society, but their disappearance leaves a growing pool of abandoned and uneducated orphans without strong leadership.⁸³ As the epidemic claims more people, the demand for medical staff will increase tremendously. However, medical personnel are not immune to the epidemic, and are also in danger of contracting a deadly virus. Teachers, despite their educational role in the society, are usually poorly informed about the disease, and can become its easy victims. This

⁷⁵ Sweetman, *Gender, Development and Poverty*, p. 56.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁷⁷ Brower and Chalk, *The Global Threat of New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases*, p. 48.

⁷⁸ Mbaku and Ihonvbere, ed., *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa*, p. 328.

⁷⁹ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2006 Report of the Global AIDS Epidemic*, p. 90.

⁸⁰ Mbaku and Ihonvbere, (Ed.), *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa*, p. 329.

⁸¹ Poku and Whiteside, (Ed.), *Global Health and Governance: HIV/AIDS*, p. 137.

⁸² The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank Group, *Combating HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia* (Washington, D.C., 2005), p. 2.

⁸³ International Crisis Group, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue*, p. 15.

becomes a self-perpetuating phenomenon: as teachers die, there is no one to teach children; as medical staff die, there is no one to take care of the sick; as workers die, there is no one to put bread on the table; as politicians die, there is no one to lead the country.

Once HIV/AIDS spreads out and costs increase, social programs such as healthcare benefits, education subsidies and pensions, suffer tremendously. As productive adults, who generate income become sick and die, the elderly and children are left to look after themselves. As governments put more efforts into dealing with HIV/AIDS, shifting financial, material and human resources to fighting the pandemic, communities may turn against the infected and their families, as though it is solely their fault. Human rights violations and the stigma of being infected may take a violent spin.

Poverty and disparity lead to further breakdowns in society's structure. Since the majority of the HIV/AIDS-infected in Central Asia are IDUs, their daily survival depends on a steady supply of drugs. Those, who can no longer afford them, may join criminal activities such as stealing, drug trafficking or prostitution, in exchange for money or drugs. With no prospects of a better life, HIV-positive individuals are more likely to commit crimes or choose violence. The same applies to prisons, where infections rates of HIV/AIDS and TB are much higher, and violent outbreaks happen much more often.

HIV/AIDS claims its victims and places a burden on weakened government's capabilities.⁸⁴ It also creates and furthers socio-economic inequality, since poor populations have fewer opportunities and resources to deal with effects of HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the widening gap between the social classes in this situation only adds to already growing social dissatisfaction and instability, which can result in violence against the state and its elites.

Economic Security

While destroying the households and social structure of society, HIV/AIDS threatens the pillars of state economies, such as the development of human and natural resources, economic production and growth, and internal and external business investment.⁸⁵ It has a substantial direct impact on the core of the labor force, and the most valuable commodity- human health. Workers demonstrate increasing absenteeism: those with HIV/AIDS have to take sick leave or retire; while healthy staff may need to take time off to care for a sick family member.⁸⁶ Caring for the infected comes with a hefty price. In Central

⁸⁴ Poku and Whiteside, *Global Health and Governance: HIV/AIDS*, p. 134.

⁸⁵ International Crisis Group, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue*, p. 9.

⁸⁶ Mbaku and Ihonvbere, *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa*, p. 332.

Asia, the cost of ART is about US\$9,000 a year/ per patient. Kyrgyzstan, for example, in 2015 would need to spend about US\$4.5 billion, equal to its annual gross domestic product (GDP), just on ART.⁸⁷ In terms of human resources, both state and private enterprises suffer. The public sector may lose the skilled high and mid-level managers responsible for decision-making and policy implementation, which will impede the economic planning process. In smaller private companies, loss of key personnel may lead to their bankruptcy and eventual collapse.⁸⁸

With ailing employees, productivity falls dramatically. Companies will have to increase their spending on benefit packages (e.g. health insurance, severance, trainings, pensions), thus inducing pay cuts among employees and passing product price increases on to consumers.⁸⁹ Social and healthcare benefits will hit businesses hard. With falling output and increasing benefit expenses, businesses' competitiveness in the international market will suffer tremendously.⁹⁰ When workers become ill and/ or die, both state enterprises and private businesses will face labor shortages of skilled employees, which are hard to replace. Despite the belief that HIV/AIDS is a disease of only highly vulnerable groups, it actually spreads among all levels of society, including groups such as middle and senior management and educated professionals. These are the people who have stable incomes, and can afford drugs or commercial sex services.⁹¹

The declining supply of workers and increasing costs of training their replacements will become very expensive. In many cases, people will die faster than their replacements can be trained, particularly in specialized fields with highly skilled experts. Frequent staff replacements will disrupt the production process, its continuity and long-term stability. Under such conditions, business executives may choose to impose stricter HIV/AIDS screening requirements, which promote further discrimination. Overall, declining production numbers and workers' productivity will translate into lower salaries and higher prices for goods, as well as reduced revenues and investments among local businesses. According to the International Crisis Group report, "AIDS can effectively destroy a national economy by decimating the food supply, decreasing the productivity of the workforce and increasing the cost of doing business."⁹² As for foreign investments, international companies are wary of spending their funds in a country with low health indicators

⁸⁷ Joana Godinho et al., *Reversing the Tide*, p. 23.

⁸⁸ Fred Ahwiring-Obeng and George Akkussah, *The Impact of HIV-AIDS on African Economies*, Research Paper no. 67, (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2003), p. 14, 23.

⁸⁹ Brower and Chalk, *The Global Threat of New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases*, p. 46.

⁹⁰ Kauffman and Lindauer, (Ed.), *AIDS and South Africa*, p. 105.

⁹¹ International Crisis Group, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue*, p. 10.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

and inadequate healthcare systems.⁹³ When the HIV/AIDS prevalence rates reach 10 percent, GDP growth falls by 0.8 percent a year.⁹⁴ In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, as World Bank predicts, the spread of HIV/AIDS will decrease economic growth rates by about 10 percent, and in Uzbekistan- by approximately 21 percent, by 2015.⁹⁵

HIV/AIDS will also weaken the labor force in strategically important regional industries and agriculture (see Figure 1). Many sectors, such as oil/ gas production and coal/ gold mining, where men have to work long periods of time away from home and can afford commercial sex services, will be among the first to be affected.⁹⁶ Since Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan depend on these profitable industries for substantial portions of their state revenues, there will be fewer funds available to ensure future economic growth, and provide for state-sponsored social programs.

In agricultural societies, HIV/AIDS threatens the productivity of the fields; as workers become ill, the planting process is disrupted and harvests are endangered.⁹⁷ In such situations, many farmers may decide to shift from cash crops (e.g. cotton) to less resource and labor-intensive subsistence farming (e.g. fruits and vegetables). This “implies shifting from export crops to food crops, which will reduce national export earnings over the long term.”⁹⁸ For the agro-states, such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which rely on cotton for hard-currency profits, such impacts will be extremely detrimental. In today’s interconnected world economy, decreasing productivity due to HIV/AIDS in states that are major suppliers of natural resources and agricultural crops, will impact international trade and consumption rates. Since Central Asian economies depend on each other and their close neighbors, the fall of one of the regional economies will cause a “domino effect,” putting other countries with fragile political and economic systems in danger.

⁹³ International Labor Organization, *HIV/AIDS and Work in a Globalizing World* (Geneva, 2006), p. 9.

⁹⁴ Kauffman and Lindauer, (Ed.), *AIDS and South Africa*, p. 114.

⁹⁵ Antoine Blua, “A Silent Killer Threatens Central Asia,” *EurasiaNet Civil Society*, November 30, 2004,

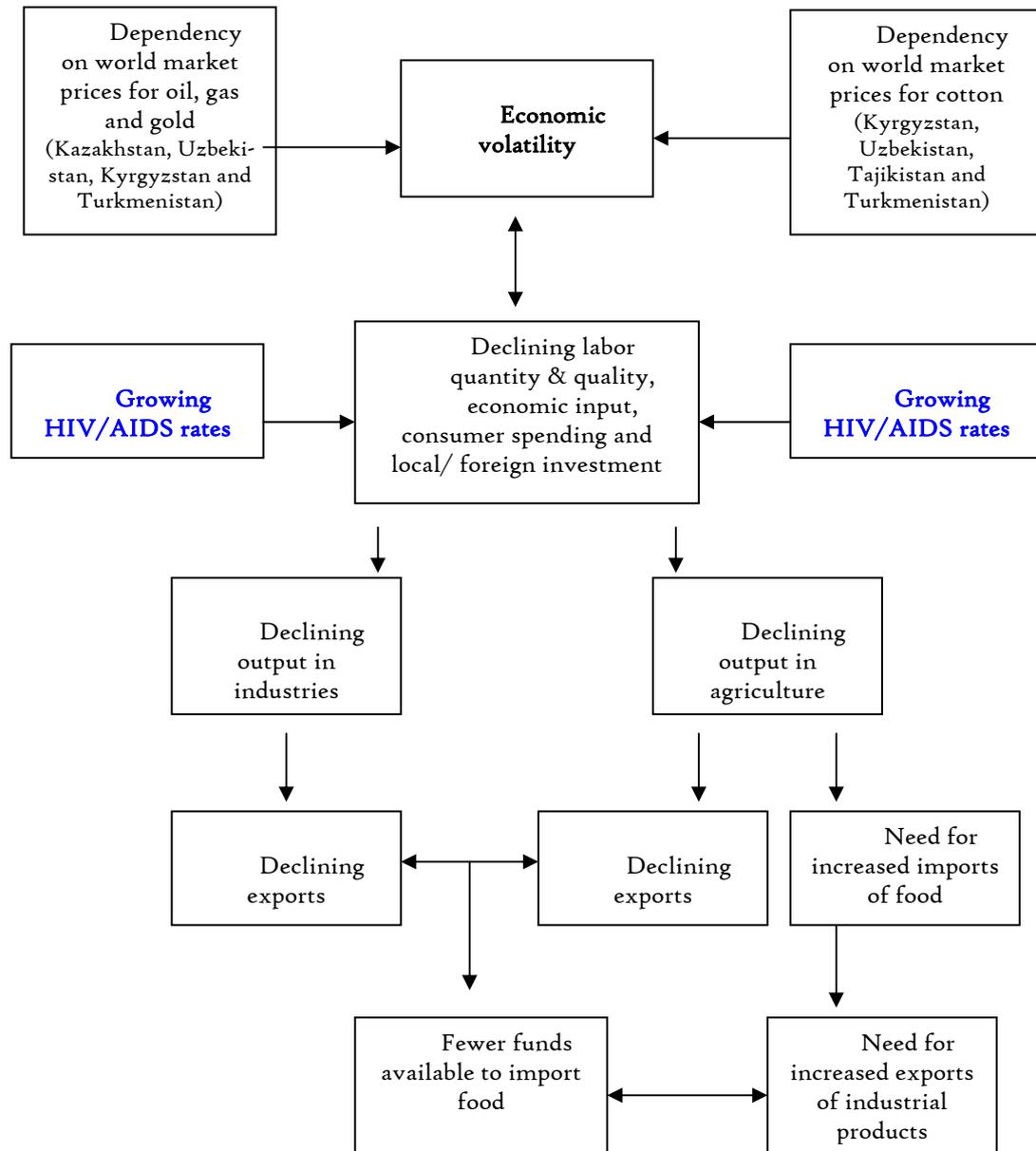
<http://www.rferl.org/features/features_Article.aspx?m=11&y=2004&id=04ECF41F-FC80-4AD1-BC34-397B807B4E17> (August 20 2007).

⁹⁶ International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, International Association of Oil and Gas Producers, and Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, *HIV/AIDS Management on the Oil and Gas Industry* (London/ New York, 2005), p. 4.

⁹⁷ The Development Fund of Norway, *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Agriculture and Strategies for Coping with Less Labor* (Oslo, 2005?), p. 1-2.

⁹⁸ Price-Smith and Daly, *Downward Spiral*, p. 20.

Figure 1. Interrelation between industries and agriculture under the impact of HIV/AIDS in Central Asia



Poverty and HIV/AIDS exist in a vicious cycle. Poor people, infected with HIV, develop AIDS much faster due to malnutrition.⁹⁹ They also cannot afford expensive treatment drugs, and often have to go into debt to buy them. Overall poverty and unemployment lead to labor migration from small towns and villages. In Tajikistan, for instance, about 1 million people are estimated to travel to Russia and other neighboring countries in search of work.¹⁰⁰ Not only does this exacerbate the struggle for

⁹⁹ Mbaku and Ihonvbere, *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa*, p. 324.

¹⁰⁰ Blua, "A Silent Killer Threatens Central Asia."

limited resources, leading to higher rates of crime and promoting high-risk behavior, but it also creates tensions in the society. It also limits employment choices, and pushes people to join activities that increase their exposure to virus.¹⁰¹

The HIV/AIDS' effect, according to Jeffrey D. Lewis of the World Bank, "on human capital, on productivity, and on government finances, could impose a macroeconomic cost which would run as high as 1 percent or more of the growth in GDP per capita, which is already too low to create enough jobs and alleviate widespread poverty."¹⁰² Thus, HIV/AIDS threatens national economic growth by undermining the labor supply, productivity and investment, and promotes further impoverishment of local populations.

Political Security

HIV/AIDS disintegrates political institutions that govern society and address public needs. With states' decreasing ability to respond effectively to the growing pandemic, public discontent will undermine and call into question governments' legitimacy. Illness and death of political leaders disrupts continuity of decision-making, threatens policy implementation, and introduces anarchy and chaos.¹⁰³ As the political leadership turns dysfunctional, due to the loss of prominent figures and growing public anger, the process of building and sustaining civil society becomes endangered.¹⁰⁴ Already weakened state and civil institutions, instead of ensuring the stability and unity of society, will have to devote most of their physical and financial resources to dealing with the growing epidemic. Social services such as education and healthcare, which governments provide, suffer first, as "the continuity and quality of public services and governance" become affected.¹⁰⁵ In many developing countries, up to 50 percent of the healthcare budget is spent on tackling AIDS. Treating one patient may be equal to educating 10 children of primary school age.¹⁰⁶

As governments pick up the costs associated with medical treatment of the unemployed, elderly and other vulnerable populations, less funding from the state budget will be available for state development and other programs. The majority of state health funding will be spent on curtailing HIV infection and treating AIDS, with less money available

¹⁰¹ Poku and Whiteside, *Global Health and Governance: HIV/AIDS*, p. 110.

¹⁰² Kauffman and Lindauer, (Ed.), *AIDS and South Africa*, p. 117.

¹⁰³ Poku and Whiteside, *Global Health and Governance: HIV/AIDS*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁴ Schneider and Moodie, *The Destabilizing Impacts of HIV/AIDS*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2006 Report of the Global AIDS Epidemic*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁶ United States Central Intelligence Agency, *The Global Infectious Disease Threat*, p. 27.

for fighting other diseases and other healthcare priorities.¹⁰⁷ With state revenues declining, individual and business taxes increasing, and crucial foreign investment decreasing, economic frustrations will build upon political discontent, and may lead to internal and external conflicts. Frustrated populations will blame their leadership for resource redistribution decisions and the lack of strong response mechanisms, and may resort to violence.¹⁰⁸ Other consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on political participation may include “declining involvement in voluntary organizations and local politics..., absenteeism and death of elected representatives, and shift from debating long-term issues of democracy and human rights, to focusing on more narrow and immediate issues of service provision.”¹⁰⁹

Everywhere in the developing world, HIV/AIDS has already demonstrated its detrimental effects on democracy building and the civil society processes. Instead of focusing their efforts on political and economic reforms, states will have to deal with the growing epidemic, and may resort to repression against disgruntled citizens. In times of infectious disease outbreak, governments are expected to step up and provide social and medical services to the victims and their families. They are also expected to take care of the elderly and numerous AIDS orphans.¹¹⁰ However, declining production and economic growth will place even greater burdens on government’s decision-making abilities and already thinly-stretched budget.¹¹¹ These governments may also face increasing internal deficits and foreign debt, that will place development efforts and economic growth in jeopardy. Foreign investors will be wary of investing in unstable states. Therefore, there would be a significant decline of direct investment from international donor organizations and private businesses.¹¹²

In Central Asia, with persistent problems of building democratic regimes and fighting widespread corruption, already fragile governments will be challenged to exert their authority over failing socio-economic systems, settling potential tribal and ethnic conflicts, and fighting criminal and terrorist activities.¹¹³ As one World Bank report notes, “In countries where the state is weak or has ceased to exist, the long history of militarization has brought about a gradual diffusion of violence

¹⁰⁷ Ahwireng-Obeng and Akkussah, *The Impact of HIV-AIDS on African Economies*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁸ International Crisis Group, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁹ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2006 Report of the Global AIDS Epidemic*, p. 94.

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Thomas, “HIV/AIDS: Implication for Local Governance, Housing, and the Delivery of Services,” *Emerging Johannesburg*, ed. Richard Thomlison (London, UK: Routledge, 2003), p. 190.

¹¹¹ Mbaku and Ihonvbere, *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa*, p. 325.

¹¹² Price-Smith and Daly, *Downward Spiral*, p. 24.

¹¹³ Schneider and Moodie, *The Destabilizing Impacts of HIV/AIDS*, p. 8.

through the splintering of official militaries and the emergence of guerillas and warlords.”¹¹⁴ In the region, countries with authoritarian tendencies will be more inclined to use violence if popular uprisings, over uneven distribution of resources and government ineffectiveness in dealing with HIV/AIDS epidemic, take place. Other possible scenarios for HIV/AIDS-driven conflicts include inter-ethnic tensions within states, power struggles between political factions, and disputes over the flow of refugees (who may also act as carriers of various infectious diseases) from other countries.¹¹⁵ The threat of citizens rebelling against the state’s inability to control epidemic situations, and states responding in a violent way will increase the chance of state failure.¹¹⁶

Military Security

HIV/AIDS in the military and police forces is a sensitive issue for many states. Since it deals with national security, many states refuse to share information on HIV/AIDS rates in the armed forces.¹¹⁷ HIV/AIDS in the military, one of the most vulnerable groups, affects the core of state and regional defense capabilities. In many cases, the prevalence rates in the armed forces are higher than the general population, and they increase even more during the times of war.¹¹⁸ There are several explanations for this phenomenon. Armed forces are comprised of young, sexually active men, who are away from home for long periods of time. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, the majority of armed forces are under 45 years old, and 80 percent are between the ages of 18 and 20 years old.¹¹⁹ Many recruits come from rural areas, and often lack basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS. In conditions of peer-pressure, homesickness and stress, many soldiers turn to unprotected sex and drug injecting, thus increasing their chance of becoming infected with STIs and HIV. With weakened immunity, they are also more likely to contract the HIV virus through exposure to infected blood through wounds and blood transfusions.¹²⁰ As every layer of the military forces, from upper commanding staff to soldiers, becomes affected, the state and its defense mechanisms become vulnerable to internal and external security threats.

¹¹⁴ International Crisis Group, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue*, p. 15.

¹¹⁵ Price-Smith and Daly, *Downward Spiral*, p. 28-31.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹¹⁷ Sarah A. Grisin and Celeste A. Wallander, *Russia’s HIV/AIDS Crisis. Confronting the Present and Facing the Future*, (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2002), p. 9. <<http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/hiv.pdf>> (August 20 2007).

¹¹⁸ Hentz and Bøås, *New and Critical Security and Regionalism*, p. 102.

¹¹⁹ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic, “Voennyi Proekt- Obrazets Luchshei Praktiki (Military Project- Example of Best Practices),” *Pulse*, special edition (2005).

¹²⁰ Hentz and Bøås, *New and Critical Security and Regionalism*, p. 102.

Infected troops are not only incapable of participating in combat operations, but also develop low moral. Sick soldiers will have to retire or accept logistical support positions, due to their inability to meet physical requirements. Preparing new recruits will be a time and cost-consuming process, and disrupt the forces' response capacity. The overall spread of HIV/AIDS among young men will place enormous limits on the state's ability to replenish decreasing military forces, adding to the already existing problem of recruiting healthy and fit soldiers.¹²¹ As the International Crisis Group report states, "A military force that is sick and dying will not be as effective-or as disciplined-as one that is healthy."¹²² Treating infected soldiers with ART will also be costly, forcing governments to reallocate even more public funds from other strategic and priority areas.¹²³

HIV/AIDS also precludes troops from regional and international peacekeeping operations, since sexually-active young men are at risk of getting HIV/AIDS during their service abroad, and spreading it in the host or their own country. Many countries refuse to send their troops to the regions with high HIV/AIDS rates, or demand screening of foreign soldiers entering the host state territory.¹²⁴ As Stefan Elbe puts, "If peacekeeping operations cannot be staged due to the political problems related to HIV/AIDS, or if governments become reluctant to volunteer them, conflicts that might be averted or diminished with their presence may take on larger dimensions that, in turn, will translate into serious human security threats."¹²⁵ Under such restrictions, each state will have limited ability to quickly and effectively dispatch troops for conflict prevention and resolution purposes.¹²⁶ This fact is especially important for the Central Asian states with smaller armed forces, like Kyrgyzstan, which accounts of about 9,000 active-duty personnel in army and 3,000 in air force.¹²⁷

As a region with multi-ethnic groups, various tribal, regional and criminal factions, Central Asia faces the danger of conflicts that cannot be resolved simply by police forces. This means that if the Central Asian troops become infected, there will be serious limitations to their conflict resolution capacity, with grave consequences for regional stability.

¹²¹ Garrett, *HIV and National Security. Where Are the Links?*, p. 29.

¹²² Hentz and Bøås, *New and Critical Security and Regionalism*, p. 104.

¹²³ Harley Feldbaum, Kelley Lee and Preeti Patel, "The National Security Implications of HIV/AIDS," *PLOS Medicine* 3, no.6 (June 2006), p. 774-778.

¹²⁴ Hentz and Bøås, *New and Critical Security and Regionalism*, p. 106-107.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 106-108.

¹²⁶ Brower and Chalk, *The Global Threat of New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases*, p. 51.

¹²⁷ Mongabay, "Country Profile: Kyrgyzstan. National Security," <http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_profiles/2004-2005/Kyrgyzstan.html> (April 27 2006).

Civil Law and Order

In a situation of growing HIV/AIDS infection and death rates, the general sense of hopelessness and anguish can lead to increasing violence against individuals and the state, reckless behavior, and acts of cruelty such as murders or sexual harassments.¹²⁸ Often HIV-positive individuals and their families become objects of emotional pressure and physical violence. Even healthy individuals in highly vulnerable groups, such as IDUs and gays, may be blamed for spreading the virus.

With most of the state's efforts dedicated to healthcare needs, law enforcements may be underfunded and understaffed. In such conditions, people may feel helpless, while criminals feel empowered. On the other end of the spectrum, public servants in law enforcement and judicial branches' are also at risk of getting infected and eventually leaving their positions.¹²⁹ Early retirements/ replacements of law enforcement officers will endanger the peace and safety of both citizens and communities.¹³⁰ Thus, the state may face outbreaks of anarchy and civil disorder.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The foregoing analysis shows that a potential HIV/AIDS epidemic would pose a serious security threat to Central Asia. Current HIV/AIDS transmission trends indicate that the problem continues to escalate, due to local and regional factors, such as growing intravenous drug use, commercial sex trade and human trafficking, socio-economic hardships, widespread ignorance, failing healthcare systems, and the lack of political commitment. Poverty and lack of social support from state governments force unemployed and restless youth to resort to easily accessible drugs, casual sex, and illegal activities. While HIV is quietly spreading along the drug and human trafficking routes and into the general population, many Central Asian governments, blindsided by their own power struggles, choose to ignore the issue of rising rates of HIV/AIDS and related infections. However, while the numbers of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are still relatively low, there is hope that the situation can be reversed, if a number of timely and sustained actions are taken. Otherwise the region, with its unique socio-cultural traits and geopolitical location, may follow the fate of deteriorating states as those in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To halt the HIV spread among the general population and vulnerable groups, such as IDUs, CSWs, MSM, prisoners, migrants, and youth, Central Asian states have to address and overcome a number of behavioral, cultural, socio-economic, and legal challenges. Problems of cultural conservatism, ignorance, poverty, and human rights violations

¹²⁸ Price-Smith and Daly, *Downward Spiral*, 25.

¹²⁹ Brower and Chalk, *The Global Threat of New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases*, 53.

¹³⁰ Price-Smith and Daly, *Downward Spiral*, 26.

stand out as the most acute of these. However, countries with vigorous civil societies, such as Kyrgyzstan, can turn many of these challenges into an opportunity to carry out an effective HIV/AIDS prevention and care program. For example, by establishing policy and implementation frameworks for all stakeholders involved, the Kyrgyz government has laid a foundation for programs related to sex education and HIV/AIDS/STIs information, risk and harm reduction efforts, and treatment of drug use, STIs and TB. While these endeavors need continuous work and commitment, Kyrgyzstan's openness to suggestions of both local and international HIV/AIDS communities has helped it to pioneer some controversial yet effective initiatives (e.g. substitution therapy), and to secure international assistance funding.

As seen in many international examples, the HIV/AIDS epidemic can be prevented, slowed down and even reversed, but such efforts entail more than just human and financial resources; it requires a major political commitment. Success in Brazil and Thailand's examples of prevention and treatment programs shows that these achievements were possible because of a strong political commitment from the respective governments, as well as civil society's active participation. These serve as indicators of the democratic process, and also demonstrate how good governance and the protection of human rights influence public satisfaction with governmental actions. Political will usually translates into financial allocations and the development of comprehensive response programs. It also requires local and regional cooperation among the various sectors of political, economic and social life, as well as all levels of government.¹³¹ Increased participation of civil society, and PLWHA alliances, are crucial for these programs' successful implementation.

Governments also have the ability to mobilize the business community, which can play a key part in the equal and just treatment of HIV-positive employees. Enterprises may also divert some of their profits towards HIV/AIDS prevention measures in the workplace, and contribute to state efforts to revive healthcare and pharmaceutical systems, fund HIV/AIDS-related research, and the purchase of antiretrovirals. While relying on donor contributions, the Central Asian states also need to develop contingency plans for how to tackle the HIV/AIDS problem in a both short and long run.

HIV/AIDS is clearly a threat to the well-being, security and stability of Central Asia. But in the region, where there are already tensions between the CARs over political dominance and natural resources, sustainable cooperation on HIV/AIDS, commonly-seen by politicians as a healthcare issue, may become difficult. Persecuting political and

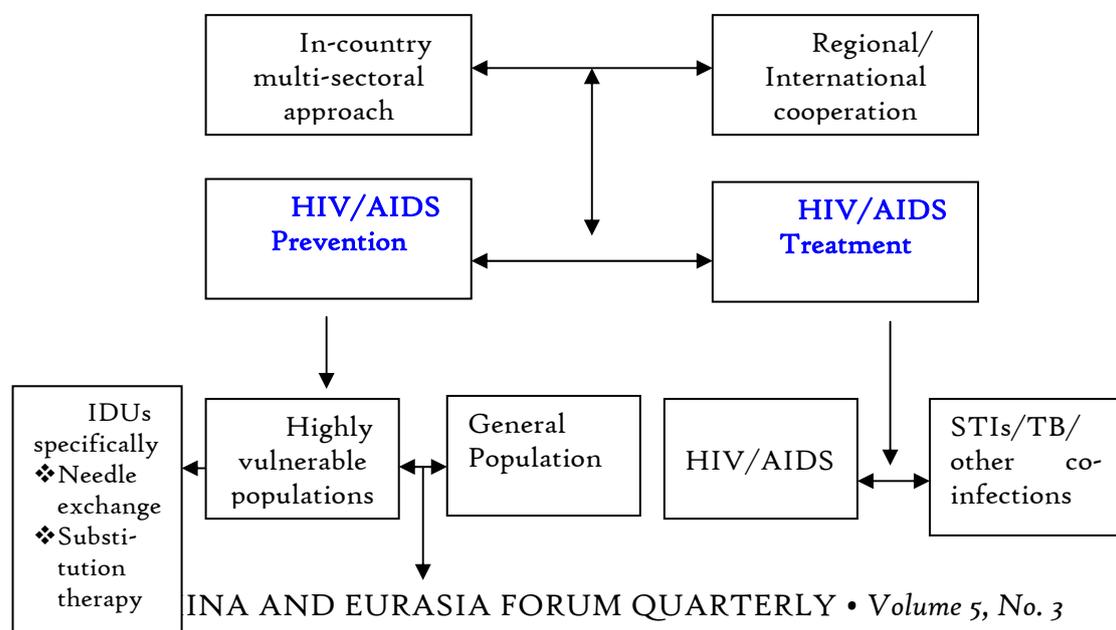
¹³¹ International Crisis Group, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue*, p. 24.

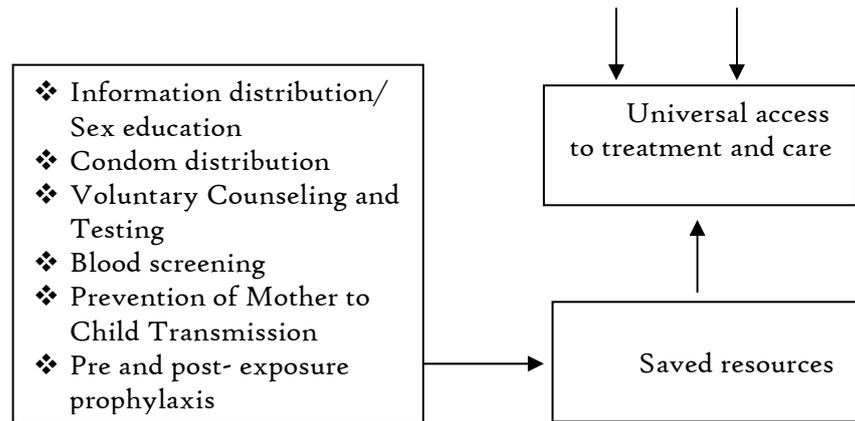
religious opposition in the name of fighting crime and terrorism, these regimes contribute further to the dissatisfaction of the general public, and hinder the efforts of the existing civil society. Constant human rights violations may drive sexual minorities and highly vulnerable populations underground, making it difficult for NGOs and healthcare institutions to reach these groups. Meanwhile, in liberal and democratically inclined states coordinated efforts between the governments and other key players, produce far better HIV/AIDS response mechanisms.

Prevention is considered the most cost-effective response to HIV/AIDS, which results in saving human lives and averting future financial expenses. Such programs include, but are not limited to, education on sexual and reproductive health; information on HIV/AIDS and STIs transmission; harm reduction efforts, such as needle exchange, condom distribution, and substitution therapy; treatment of STIs and opportunistic infections, such as TB; voluntary counseling and testing for HIV/AIDS; blood screening; and prevention of vertical transmission. Treatment is essential to saving the lives of people already suffering from HIV/AIDS and related infections. Since ART is still limited in the region, universal access should become a humanitarian and legal obligation of the Central Asian governments. These governments need to understand that state security begins with human security, and that it is the abundance or lack of human potential that will guide these states to either prosperity or misery.

International experience testifies that until a cure for the “plague of 21 century” is found, countries need a holistic approach to make the fight against HIV/AIDS effective. This means that prevention and treatment programs, as well as research, will have to be coordinated to complement each other (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Interdependence between HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment measures





Efforts in one area, without the other, become worthless. However, overcoming the many issues of prevention and treatment cannot be achieved without addressing the economic and social causes of drug use and the sex trade, or problems in the healthcare and legal systems. Some of the solutions should include creation of local economic opportunities that will prevent financially weak individuals from joining human and drug trafficking, as well as increased efforts against drug trade on all levels, from officials to individual drug barons. State efforts to slow down the HIV/AIDS epidemic and to take care of those already infected require good governance and the willingness of authorities to take blame and responsibility, which, in turn, would lead to greater public confidence and the strengthening of civil society.

Funds saved from successful prevention efforts not only can be redistributed to treatment, but also channeled into social programs such as alleviating poverty, which is one of the biggest problems in Central Asia. In many countries, prevention activities go beyond distributing information and condoms. They often focus on community building, which promotes social acceptance, cultural tolerance and, through understanding and respect of individual/ community welfare, overall better health. The successful stories highlight the crucial connection between effective response mechanisms and democratic processes, open dialog between the governments and civil society, and progressive changes in cultural norms and behavioral patterns. Even faith-based organizations can make a meaningful contribution to HIV/AIDS prevention and care efforts.¹³²

Few of the Central Asian states are on the right track toward implementing these various programs, applying for and receiving grants

¹³² Global Health Council, *Faith in Action: Examining the Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Addressing HIV/AIDS* (Washington, D.C., 2005), p. 9-10.

from the Global Fund and other major international donors. Either civil society-driven Kyrgyzstan, or wealthy Kazakhstan, could become a leader in regional efforts against the epidemic, as did Brazil in project *Frontiers*, uniting eleven countries in Latin America.¹³³ Kazakhstan is already enjoying price breaks (up to 50 percent) for ART, specially negotiated through the Clinton Foundation.¹³⁴ Four out of five Central Asian states are members of the World Bank's Regional AIDS Control Project. According to its director, Tilek Meimanaliev, as the "first-ever multi-country AIDS project for the Europe and Central Asia region," it is designed to strengthen collaborative endeavors and establish financial mechanisms to fight HIV/AIDS in Central Asia.¹³⁵

The virus, which is so unique in its transmission and mutation, will need multi-dimensional and creative approaches. As UN Secretary General's Report on the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS *Five Years Later* states:

A quarter century into the epidemic, the global AIDS response stands at a crossroads. For the first time ever the world possesses the means to begin to reverse the epidemic. But success will require unprecedented willingness on the part of all actors in the global response to fulfill their potential, to embrace new ways of working with each other, and to... sustain response over the long term.¹³⁶

It is now up to the Central Asian states to choose what path they will take. They have the chance to reverse the epidemic in their region, and avert the high human and socio-economic costs such an outbreak would involve. Otherwise, an HIV/AIDS epidemic in Central Asia, which is already vulnerable to a number of internal and external threats, could display a similar effect to that which HIV has on a human body. The virus destroys all defensive mechanisms, leaving the human organism vulnerable to outside infections, while deteriorating its operating functions, and slowly culminating in death. One can only hope that by learning from others' mistakes, and by taking advantage of the resources already available, the CARs will put their differences aside and fight HIV/AIDS jointly, for the greater good and future prosperity of all.

¹³³ Latin America and the Caribbean Council of AIDS Services Organizations, *Civil Society Point of View on the Implementation of UNGASS Goals*, p. 161.

¹³⁴ Corwin, Julie, "East: Former U.S. President Raises Funds to Combat AIDS," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, January 30, 2006, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/01/a66b2505-404f-4b67-a3dc-9387c22c3c14.html>> (August 20 2007).

¹³⁵ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank Group, "Central Asia AIDS Project Launched," Press Release (May 12 2005), <<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/EXTECAREGTOPHEANUT/EXTECAREGTOPHIVAIDS/o,,contentMDK:20488295~menuPK:571178~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:571172,00.html>> (August 20 2007).

¹³⁶ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2006 Report of the Global AIDS Epidemic*, p. 24.

The Taliban and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)

*Magnus Norell**

ABSTRACT

This study sheds light on the issue of Pakistani support for the insurgency in Afghanistan, mainly the Taliban, who, by way of being the most active, have been – for all intents and purposes – able to direct much of the insurgency in Afghanistan. In the study, it will be argued that without Pakistani support, the Afghan insurgency would not be able to keep up the level of attacks that they have, so far, been able to muster. The study will concentrate on the key political player when it comes to Pakistani support for the Taliban, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). The study will begin with a more general background of the present situation. This will include a discussion of some of the basic tenets of the insurgency as well as of how the present situation, with a more and more efficient insurgency, was reached. Thereafter will follow a discussion on the present set-up of Taliban – MMA relations and how it affects Pakistan and Afghanistan. Finally, there will be a discussion on how this might affect the coalition¹ forces in Afghanistan and some notes on possible future developments in Afghanistan.

Keywords • Taliban • Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) • Insurgency • Pakistan • Afghanistan • Pakistan's tribal areas

Introduction

This study covers the issue of the resurgent Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan and, more specifically, the support the Taliban is receiving from various actors in Pakistan, concentrating on the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). Support for the Taliban movement goes back a long time², and the limited scope of the study does not allow for an in-depth approach. Suffice it here to say that support for the Taliban is not limited to money, weapons and ammunition. The way the Taliban has kept up the pressure on ISAF/NATO forces during winter (normally a time when fighting dies down) clearly shows that manpower is not considered

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¹ 'Coalition' is used throughout the study as a neutral term, encompassing all countries that are participating in various capacities on the government side in Afghanistan, be it military or civilian.

² It goes back to 1980's when Pakistan supported the anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

a problem by the Taliban leadership; despite casualties, they have not had any problems in fielding new fighters into Afghanistan. In short, support comes in the form of equipment, money and manpower, i.e. new recruits. Both U.S. and British military commanders in Afghanistan say that the surge in attacks during late 2006 can be tied to the agreement reached in September 2006, between the Pakistani government and the tribal leaders in Waziristan. Through the agreement the Pakistani government pulled back its soldiers in return for a pledge from the Tribes that they would not shelter militants or allow them to engage in any cross-border activity.³ Instead, the militants, including the Taliban, have been taking advantage of the agreement to launch new attacks.⁴

Furthermore, it is important to note that there is a clear connection between the various "flare-ups" in southern and in eastern Afghanistan. As will be dealt with some more below – there are other problematic groups that constitute a threat to the coalition forces, such as war- and drug-lords and more "common" criminals, but the development over the past few years clearly indicates that the Taliban have made a strong come-back in terms of more coordinated attacks and also in terms of fusing alliances with other, similar, religiously motivated Islamic groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In contrast to most of the more "criminal" groups,⁵ the Taliban is also more difficult to accommodate in a new, more democratic Afghanistan. The Taliban is a Pashtun movement, and a lot of the resistance is directed against perceived attempts by the Karzai government, supported by the coalition forces, to limit the traditional Pashtun dominance of Afghanistan. Most glaring here, for the Pashtun/Taliban, is of course the way in which other ethnic groups such as Tajiks, Uzbeks and, most threatening of all since they are Shi'a, Hazaras have gained prominent places in the new political structure of Afghanistan. In this regard, therefore, one should use the term Taliban with some caution and realize that a major reason for the success of the insurgency lies in the fact that the hard-core Taliban leadership (which still has connections with foreign Jihadi groups such as remnants of Al Qaeda) has been able to draw on traditional *Pashtun* loyalties to support the insurgency.

³ *International Herald Tribune*, January 17 2007, p. 4.

⁴ Among various Pakistani observers, it is a common theme that the Musharraf government "gave in" to the tribes after a series of failed military missions to curb militant cross-border activity. These military offensives have been going on for some years now, without any visible gains for the government. During several trips to Pakistan and Afghanistan, the conclusion that the Musharraf government, through the agreement from September 2006, "acknowledged defeat", was a constant message that the author received. For details of meetings, contact the author.

⁵ Some of these criminal groups could probably be "handled" by efforts based on social and political initiatives, geared towards creating alternative ways for supporting the population.

However, in this lies also, somewhat paradoxically perhaps, a possible way to counter the insurgency by driving a wedge between the more hard-core, Pakistani-supported, part, and the Pashtun tribes inside Afghanistan.

This is already visible in that weapons and equipment are not very difficult to find in Afghanistan, but new recruits might be. A substantial part of the manpower of the insurgency comes from recruits in Pakistan. Contrary to a belief often bandied about in Western media, ideological support for the Taliban is not necessarily so wide-spread in Afghanistan, even among the Pashtun tribes in the country.⁶ A much more common reason for supporting the insurgency, or at least "turning the other way",⁷ is resentment and disappointment with the lackluster performance of the Karzai government and, very important, anger at the way the coalition forces are conducting the war against the insurgents with constant incidents of collateral damage, and the feelings of loyalty with one's own tribes.

Consequently, in order to keep the war going, the Taliban must get new recruits from Pakistan. And it is here that the MMA comes in by creating the ideological and religious atmosphere for the insurgency, and in teaching and training recruits.⁸

Thus, this study focuses on this key aspect of Pakistani support for the Taliban movement, namely the political and ideological support given by various groups and political parties within the MMA. It is the hope that the study will give some important answers on how the insurgency is sustained as well as create possibilities for a continuation of research into the various ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Background: Afghanistan and the Taliban Insurgency

At the end of 2006, and shortly after the NATO summit-meeting in Riga (where the U.S. and Britain in particular asked other NATO countries to

⁶ This was underlined again during several interviews and discussion with prominent interlocutors in Pakistan during a trip to Islamabad and Peshawar in December 2006. For details of meetings, contact the author.

⁷ A common way of doing this throughout the Pashtun tribal areas is for the population to leave foodstuff in the mosques for the Taliban to pick up during the night. Thus, the population tries to keep a certain distance to the Taliban, but also hedging their bets in case they turn out to be more successful.

⁸ Apart from the MMA, the general Jihadi militancy can be said to consist of three other parts: the "official" preachers being employed by the government in the state mosques, the purely militant organizations such as the Jaish-e-mohammad and the Lashkar-e-taiba, and finally, the "foreigners" in al-Qaida and other groups and parties involved in international Jihadi movement.

contribute more troops to the fighting forces in Afghanistan¹⁰), it is clear that, at best, the coalition in Afghanistan can hold the line against the insurgents, whether they are Taliban or belong to some of the foreign Jihadi groups still active in the country. Getting the violence down to a level where some serious rebuilding and reconstruction work can begin seems much more difficult.

Partly this is due to mistakes committed at the beginning of the war in the autumn of 2001. The first mistake made was perhaps the most inevitable; namely focusing too much on ousting the Taliban and hunting down the remnants of the Al Qaeda network, and this to the detriment of trying to concentrate resources on rebuilding the country.

The swift downfall of the Taliban regime (and their foreign allies within the various Islamic networks) opened up a "window of opportunity" for a rather thorough change; political, social and economic. The understandable reluctance, on part of the U.S. and her allies, to try and be too ambitious, did, however, let some of the forces that dragged Afghanistan into 20 years of civil war, slip back into the picture. During the Fall of 2006, the Taliban has regrouped and made a comeback in many areas in the south, but there has also been an increase of tactics formerly only attributed to foreign Jihadists, such as suicide attacks.¹¹

More serious, however, was the slow start of the re-building efforts. And, tied to that, the fact that in the aftermath of the Taliban downfall, perhaps too many international players got involved without a more focused strategic vision for the country. This is not to underestimate the progress that *has* come about since the war; presidential and parliamentary elections, the (albeit limited) success of the PRT's and the fact that the Afghan National Army (ANA) has got more "say" on development projects. At some locations, as well, local progress has been made when it comes to rebuilding and "normalisation".

But at the same time, there is still no clear strategy for the future. The U.S. military strategy of aggressively hunting Al Qaeda and the Taliban, has been rather successful, but more so in parts of the country where the Taliban were never as popular as in the heavily Pashtun areas in the South and South-East. During the latest year, as well, some of these successes have been rolled back due to a failure to follow up these military victories with more vigorous re-construction work. Consequently, the price for this has been that necessary and important re-construction projects have been put on hold or abandoned altogether. This means that the support from the general population as a whole, has

¹⁰ At the end of January 2007, the British commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, General David Richards, was complaining that promised troops from NATO countries to bolster his forces, were still not available. *IHT*, January 18 2007, p. 4.

¹¹ This has been on the increase all through 2006 on a scale not seen before.

been somewhat neglected. And without that support no long-term solution is likely to come about soon.

It is, in this regard, important to point out that this in itself does not translate automatically to more support for the Taliban (and even less for the foreign Islamists, who were never very popular in Afghanistan). The upsurge in attacks during the last year, throughout the country (even in Kunar, Uzurgan, Ghazni and Nuristan), is probably also more of a sign of a feeling, on part of the Taliban, that tactics have to change to be more "visible". That is, there is a feeling that one has to continue to fight in order to "get heard" in Kabul and by the Karzai regime. Especially since the parliamentary elections, this has been seen as a major reason for the increase in the fighting. Attempts from the Karzai government to incorporate former Taliban into the political discourse (including more federalism with more authority for local assemblies for instance) can, if they are allowed to succeed, probably go along way into curtailing these attacks. Discussions with Taliban leaders in Pakistan support this picture.

The more "hardcore" fighters, consisting of Taliban from the "inner circles" as well as Islamists trained in Pakistan, is another issue. Here, continued military pressure is of paramount importance. But as long as Pakistan only reluctantly, if at all, goes along with this, it will be difficult to bring it to a more conclusive end. And, added to this is the wariness, on part of U.S. allies such as Spain, France and Germany, to do more offensive military operations that would increase the risks of more casualties. Today, the U.S., Britain and the Netherlands do most of the actual fighting against the armed insurgents. Here lies a key-factor towards the future of the country; Allied help in this endeavor is necessary, because as long as the war in Iraq drains U.S. resources, it is highly unlikely that more can be done in Afghanistan without other NATO forces doing a more offensive job. Not only as far as the insurgents go, but far more important; going after the local criminals (mainly drug-lords). Given this, and a more centralized vision (this does of course mean more sensitivity towards *local* needs, that might very well differ from province to province) of what the country needs, the U.S. probably would have a lot more leeway than the politicians in Washington might realize.

The war in Iraq disrupted the U.S. vision of a division of labor for Afghanistan, whereby the U.S. did most of the fighting and her allies did "the nation-building". This was never a feasible strategy from the start, but it did have merits that might have worked some of the way towards a more stable Afghanistan. Today, the picture has changed, but from a military point of view, the U.S. can handle that part of the insurgency that is really long-term and intent on disrupting the normalization process (i.e. Islamists and hard-core Taliban). As for the

others, there are roughly two main groups: the first consists of disappointed and disenfranchised Pashtuns, angry with the new government for “abandoning” them (a key group here are the Gilzai Pashtuns from Zabul province who were rather prominent during the Taliban years). They can be handled through a more flexible and decentralized policy towards the country as a whole. With this group (i.e. the Pashtun tribes) it is absolutely paramount that the coalition is doing its utmost to distinguish between them and the Taliban. “Collateral damage” (here, the unintended killing by coalition forces of tribal people adjacent to a target) probably does more than anything else to create enemies of the coalition.

The other groups are the criminal networks that have made much out of the chaos created by this war by making money of the drug-trade. In some instances, these groups have allied themselves with Jihadi groups infiltrating from Pakistan.

In summary, the consecutive attacks during winter are signs that the Taliban are trying to hinder the coalition from starting reconstruction and to try and win the “hearts and minds” war. As long as the coalition constantly must be on its guard against attacks, it will not have the time to switch to a more civilian mode. Furthermore, signs are that when spring comes around we will see a lot more fighting, at least in the south and south-east. Infiltration, not only in Helmand and Kandahar provinces, and the ongoing attacks on coalition forces, as well as on civilian aid-organizations, point to a possible offensive in the spring, if not a full-scale uprising. Since the feeling among Taliban commanders are that they are “winning”, they feel confident enough to take on the coalition on a larger scale than at present.¹² The recent agreements, first between the British and local Taliban in Helmand and, more importantly, the agreement between the Pakistani government and the militants in Waziristan in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas - FATA - (widely regarded as a surrender by the government after having lost hundreds of men fighting militants and local tribes) in September 2006, have both emboldened militants in the insurgency. In the end, this will probably lead to an even lesser will to compromise among the Taliban. It also led to FATA being a virtual “safe haven” for militants fighting in Afghanistan.

The result of the latest violence and the return of more fighters (Taliban and Jihadi alike), is that it has become much more difficult to get extensive and thorough reconstruction going. President Karzai’s attempt to curb ethnicity as a decisive factor by trying to co-opt former Taliban into the political life of the country (tried during the

¹² This conclusion was strengthened during interviews with Pakistanis and Afghans in Pakistan in mid-December 2006. For details of meetings, contact the author.

parliamentary elections), will not succeed if this is not paired with serious reconstruction work.

For this to succeed (and in the long run, the goal of trying to mould Afghans into a national entity, without – or at least more independent of – ethnicity, is probably not going to work) more troops are needed (and to the "hot parts" of the country too), political parties must be allowed to develop from out of an ethnic background since that is the basis on which most Afghans today build their identity. Finally, the coalition must show more determination in the fighting as well as in the long-term reconstruction and in long-term political work, including showing that the international community will stay on.

In this, the Taliban will play a role whether one likes it or not, but not primarily as an insurgent factor, but first and foremost as an ethnic Pashtun-based group. It is important to note that this has been the case throughout the existence of the Taliban. For a majority of the non-Pashtun population of Afghanistan, the Taliban was always primarily a Pashtun-run group, trying to impose itself over everybody else. But then again, there is not an automatic will to support the Taliban from the Pashtun tribes; the Taliban idea of how a society should be run, even though to some extent based on Pashtun traditions, was far too influenced by "imported" Wahabi and Salafi notions from the Arab world to easily fit in with the traditional Pashtuns, to say nothing of other, non-Pashtuns, in Afghanistan.

The present Afghan government's strategy of co-opting some so-called "moderate" Taliban leaders, might work to some extent. But only if this policy is not seen by other ethnic groups as another attempt from president Karzai (himself a Pashtun) to create just another Pashtun-run government. There is still a fear that this is indeed the case and the support given to Karzai from the International community is viewed suspiciously for precisely this reason. There is a real danger that if this view cannot be dispelled – through deeds, not words – the "project" to democratize and "normalize" Afghanistan will fail.

There is also the lingering suspicion among many Afghans that the West in general, and the U.S. in particular, is mainly interested in hunting activists in the various Jihadi groups and networks still in the country, and as soon as that is accomplished, Afghanistan will once again be left to its own devices.

There are several reasons for this suspicion. But one of the more important ones is the lack of progress in drug-eradication and the failure, or rather negligence on part of the West, to curb the drug-lords and a trade that in essence, forces farmers to comply with the drugtrade or getting no help (financial or other) in getting back into a more normal life (it should be pointed out here that drug-money often is the *only* source of revenue for many farmers, who have seen nothing of the

promised help from the government or the International community). This perception (which is real enough) will be extremely difficult to change, mainly because the "window of opportunity" that existed just after the fall of the Taliban, is closed now. Just after the war, the U.S. was clearly feared and there was a wide-spread feeling that the coalition would "get tough" with the war- and drug-lords. This did not happen in the misdirected fear that such an approach would only inflame more resistance.

There is also the problem with Pakistan. Despite assurances (and they can be real enough), the Musharraf regime still has no control neither over the numerous Islamic schools that are breeding-grounds for new recruits to the international Jihadi movement as well as recruiting people for immediate local struggles in Pakistan or Kashmir. Nor has he control over all parts of the ISI, which still harbors important actors that support the Taliban in Afghanistan. It is a rather common idea in Pakistan that only the Pashtun can rule the Afghanistan and that any attempts (such as imposed democracy) to "dilute" that must be countered. It is today difficult to see how this could change. At the very least, Afghanistan needs long-term support to counter Pakistani attempts to influence the country to the detriment of a democratizing project.

Also tied into all this, is the lack of will on part of the U.S. and other NATO countries to provide more manpower for offensive duties (as witnessed at the Riga summit in November 2006). This concerns not only actual fighting against Taliban insurgents and remnants of the Jihadi networks, but also such tasks as drug-eradication and countering more aggressive behaviour from drug-lords (some of whom are in the new parliament, either themselves or through proxies). Moreover, the tendency to limit stints in the country to 6-12 months for both civilians and military personnel, is sending a message – even if it is unintentional – that the West is not really serious in seeking any long-term solutions and that Afghanistan, at the end of the day, might get short-changed again. That is perhaps where the most serious challenge lies when it comes to finding common ground between the International community and the Afghan people. Without that, the long-term project of getting the country back on its feet will not succeed.

The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal

Ever since the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan has come to play an ever more significant role on the world stage. Often praised by the United States for his determination and dedication, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf is regarded as a key player in the international efforts to reverse the trend of increased terrorist activity in

Central and South Asia. Despite Musharraf's apparent support for the struggle against international terrorism he faces strong resistance at home. The October 2002 Pakistani elections resulted in a new power dynamics with the pro-Taliban Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) gaining 60 seats in the National Assembly, an absolute majority in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and becoming second largest party in the province of Baluchistan. The results would come to have profound implications for internal Pakistani politics. However, one should bear in mind that the elections were rigged in favor of the MMA. All the individual parties in the MMA have links to militant groups, hence this coalition is of great interest when examining Pakistani links to the Taliban. Additionally, members of the MMA are known to have contacts with the Taliban and since they now possess political power it is important to take a closer look at their actions. Even though the MMA only became the third largest party in the National Assembly, after the Pakistan Muslim League-Qaid-e-Azam (PML-Q), its leader Fazlur Rehman was granted the role of head of opposition. Due to the MMA's success in the elections the six-party coalition has been able to implement policy reminiscent of the Taliban regime, hence exacerbating difficulties for Musharraf.

The MMA is comprised of six political parties: the Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-S), Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadith, Pakistan Isami Tehrik (ITP) (formerly Tehriq-e-Jafaria (TeJ)) and the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). All of the groups are Islamist in nature, but have emerged from different Islamic backgrounds. The three largest and most influential are the JUI-F, the JUI-S and the JI. These three groups all stem from the Deobandi School and are Sunni Muslim. In practice this means that they lay great emphasis on Islamic morals and principles in every day life. They preach a hard-line and traditional Islamist way of thinking that is shared by the Pashtuns living along the Pakistani-Afghan border, including the Taliban. These political groups all have historical and ethnic links with the Taliban, as they are all Pashtun, which is Afghanistan's largest and Pakistan's second largest ethnic group. The JUP, on the other hand, supports the Barlevi School. Despite it also being Sunni, it is more inclusive than the Deobandi School, hence less traditional. The ITP is, on the other hand, a Shia Muslim group and the Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadith follows the Wahabi sect, which stems from the Saudi Sharia system. What is striking about the MMA is that it is a coalition of Islamist political groups that have constantly been at odds with each other historically, but are now cooperating. It is important to note that the three Deobandi groups are the most powerful and influential within the coalition; the death of hundreds of Pashtuns as a result of the American

“Operation Enduring Freedom” led to growing support for the Deobandi factions and in turn the founding of the MMA. Contrary to widespread belief, ousting the Taliban from Afghanistan did not mean the end of the Taliban regime or Al Qaeda. Instead it simply moved large parts of its organization across the border to Pakistan.

In contemporary Pakistan the MMA is most influential in the NWFP and Baluchistan. Both regions border Afghanistan, hence they are inevitably affected by events in Pakistan’s neighboring state. Moreover, political parties within the MMA have played a prominent role in establishing and sustaining madrassas¹⁴ in Pakistan. These institutions became infamous worldwide as a result of revelations that some of the 9/11 terrorists and one of the terrorists involved in the 7/7 bombings in London had attended madrassas in Pakistan. These schools have been put under scrutiny ever since, and the close ties that exist between them and Pakistani political parties are striking. When examining this, links to the Taliban also become apparent.

The Pakistani government has always had a close relationship with the Taliban. Pakistani support for the Taliban originated from Benazir Bhutto’s regime in the 1970s. Pakistani interests in Afghanistan have always been great for a multitude of reasons, the key ones being that it offers “strategic depth” for the Pakistani military in its confrontation with India and that it is seen as a gateway to Central Asia. The Taliban has also received extensive support from the Pakistani military and the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI). When the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 1996 it enjoyed support from the JUI-F, which in turn gained popular support from Pashtuns living in NWFP, Baluchistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).¹⁵ This support grew steadily after the Taliban was ousted by Western troops in October 2001 and it is arguably one of the greatest obstacles to winning the “war on terror”.

Leadership, Madrassas and Islamic Groups

Contrary to widespread belief the Taliban movement originated in Pakistan. Pakistani madrassas gave life to the movement, although it is important to note that only a small percentage of these schools have been found to be teaching extremist and anti-Western values. Deobandi thought lays the foundation for a number of madrassas in Pakistan, just like it does for the Taliban, hence they share a religious link. Most of the Taliban leaders have in fact graduated from madrassas run by Maulana Samiul Haq and Fazlur Rehman, leaders of the JUI-S and JUI-F

¹⁴ Pakistani religious schools.

¹⁵ FATA is officially part of the NWFP, but has greater autonomy.

respectively.¹⁶ Fazlur Rehman has even admitted attempting to bring about an Islamic revolution, describing the Taliban as an “ideal Islamic system”.¹⁷ He is regarded as the Taliban’s main Pakistani ally and is therefore one of the most prominent figures in Pakistani-Taliban relations. Furthermore, one of the largest madrassas in Chaman, the “Al Jamia Islamia”, is believed to be a recruitment ground for rebels. The cleric Maulana Abdul Ghani, who heads the madrassa, is also a prominent leader of the JUI-F.¹⁸ Moreover, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, an al Qaeda member, was caught in a house owned by the women’s wing of the JI. Yet another madrassa that has been of great concern has been the Shaldara madrassa in Quetta. It is run by Maulana Nur Mohammed, a member of the JUI and former Member of Parliament. According to Afghani President Hamid Karzai this madrassa is the headquarters for the Taliban in Pakistan. Nur Mohammed’s deputy Maulana Abdul Qadir has asserted “we are proud that the Taliban are made and helped here”.¹⁹ Although leaders of the JUI-F and the JUI-S have not officially admitted to cooperation with the Taliban, their support base predominantly consists of people who support the mujahideen²⁰ struggle in Afghanistan. The JUI-F and JUI-S even received support from the Taliban in their electoral campaign. In addition, many MMA leaders are former jihadi commanders who fought alongside the Taliban in their struggle for power in the 1990s.²¹ The JI, the best organized party in the MMA coalition, is also believed to have indirect ties to the Taliban. It is a staunch supporter of the Afghan commander Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who in turn is allied with the Taliban.²²

The Pakistani education system has been of great concern to the West ever since September 11, as it is believed to be fuelling hatred and terrorism. Many madrassas have not only become a breeding ground for

¹⁶ *Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism and the Military*, International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 36, July 29 2002, p. 11.

¹⁷ Owais Tohid, “Pakistan’s Frontier Passes Islamic Law, Ranking Islamabad,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 10 2003, <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0610/p07s02-wosc.html>> (August 20 2007).

¹⁸ Sumita Kumar, “Taliban Successes: A Matter of Concern,” IDA Strategic Comments, July 10 2006.

¹⁹ B. Raman, “The Fall and Rise of the Taliban,” *Asia Times Online*, October 23 2003, Central Asia, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/EJ23Ago2.html> (August 20 2007).

²⁰ Arabic word for a war or struggle.

²¹ Syed Saleem Shazad, *Taliban’s “Call for Jihad Answered in Pakistan,”* *Asia Times Online*, June 16 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/HF16Dfor.html> (August 20 2007).

²² Ahmed Rashid, “Who’s Winning the War on Terror?” *Yale Global Online*, <September 5 2003.

jihadis and criminals, but also a source of revenue for these groups.²³ As a result of U.S. pressure Musharraf introduced an ordinance in 2002 regulating madrassas in order to halt this development. The new madrassa law entailed two major components: mandatory registration and official scrutiny of finances. It was initially thought that these new laws would halt the constant birth of Islamic extremists. The changes were, however, met with widespread criticism from religious quarters and they proved to be superficial at the local madrassa level. Another major obstacle has been the lack of checks that are needed in order to monitor non-compliers.²⁴ Many high-ranking JUI-F officials who also run madrassas strongly opposed the 2002 ordinance. One of their major counterarguments was that most madrassas do not receive any state funding, hence it has no right to control them. Many regarded the introduced changes as an imposition from the West in an attempt to change the whole madrassa system, as argued by Maulana Samiul Haq, leader of the JUI-S.²⁵ In 2004 a ban was lifted on the registration of madrassas, which in practice meant that all madrassas needed to register and provide information on their activities, structure and administration. This modification has also encountered widespread criticism, especially from Deobandi madrassas, which are ruled by the JUI-F and the JI.²⁶

Musharraf's close cooperation with the U.S. government in the "war on terrorism" has had implications for other parts of Pakistani political life as well. Musharraf banned several Pakistani militant groups in January 2002, but this act was of little consequence, as the banned groups simply changed their names and remained active. The second crackdown took place in 2003 and was directed at the same groups i.e. Tehrik-e-Islami Pakistan (formerly known as Tehrik-e-Jafria), Millat-e-Islami (formerly known as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP))²⁷ and Khuddum-ul-Islam (formerly known as Jaish-e-Mohammed). This spurred furious reactions from the MMA, especially as Tehrik-e-Islami is a member of the six-party alliance.²⁸ The MMA has also cooperated with other Islamic groups outside of the alliance. The SSP is probably the most notorious one, mainly known for its violent attacks on Shia Muslims in Pakistan. The SSP has gained widespread support from various organizations in

²³ Laila Bokhari, *Waziristan- Impact on the Taliban Insurgency and the Stability of Pakistan*, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, Report-2006/02895, p. 9,

²⁴, International Crisis Group, Asia Report, p. 25.

²⁵ Kanchan Laksham, "Madrassa Reform: a Habit of Deception," *South Asia Intelligence Review* (Institute for Conflict Management) 4, 9 (September 12 2005).

²⁶ Ashutosh Misra, "MMA-Democracy Interface in Pakistan: From Natural Confrontation to Co-habitation?," *Strategic Analysis* (Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses) 30, 2 (April-June 2006).

²⁷ The Pakistani Army of the Prophet's Companions.

²⁸ Zaffar Abbas, "And Islamabad Plays Footsie with Islamism," *The Indian Express*, December 20 2003.

Pakistan that fear an increase in Shia power. These include support from the ISI and the Taliban. Several high-ranking leaders within the SSP are known to have attended Afghan mujahideen training camps in the 1990s, both aiding the Taliban and using their experience on the home front to kill Shias. The SSP has been run by Deobandi clerics since its formation. For this reason it has always kept close ties with the JUI. Ever since the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s, links among the Taliban, Deobandi madrassas in Pakistan and Islamic extremist groups like the SSP have deepened.²⁹ The SSP's most profound links are known to be with the JI and the JUI-F. The SSP readily recruits members for its organization in the madrassas run by members of the JUI-F. When extremist groups such as the SSP were banned by Musharraf in 2002, madrassas run by these groups were also closed down. They were, however, soon reopened because there were no other schools for the students to attend.³⁰ To conclude, it is evident that members of the powerful MMA have been able to continue running their madrassas, despite connections with extremist groups and the Taliban. The madrassa network is difficult to undercut, as the schools are controlled by some of the most influential politicians in Pakistan.

North West Frontier Province (NWFP)

Since the NWFP directly borders Afghanistan it has always had a special relationship with its northern neighbor. This region is predominantly inhabited by Pashtuns, the same ethnic group the Taliban belongs to. The MMA started gaining ground in this area as early as in October 2001³¹ when it won a majority in the NWFP regional elections (Deobandis have ruled the MMA government in the NWFP ever since). Ever since the MMA's seizure of power in the province, there has been a marked increase in attacks on Coalition troops by insurgents originating from the Pakistani Pashtun belt.³² This trend gives credence to the claim that certain elements of the MMA are closely linked with the Taliban. The MMA's regional predominance has resulted in it giving refuge to the Taliban in Pakistan without any serious repercussions from the government; President Musharraf has been dependent on the MMA for support since its electoral success in 2002, hence outright condemnations of the MMA's policies are unlikely. The MMA's main policy goal in the

²⁹ Eric Brown, Hilel Fradkin, and Husain Haqqani, (Eds.) *Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World*, Current Trends in Islamic Ideology, Hudson Institute, Center on Islam, Volume 4, p. 84.

³⁰ International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 36, p. 21.

³¹ The Pak-Afghan Defence Council was established in October 2001 consisting of 26 parties including the six MMA parties.

³² International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military*, Asia Report No. 49, March 20 2003, p. 4.

NWFP has been to restore, as they see it, the fundamental tenets of Islam within society.³³ This includes introducing sharia law and a vice and virtue police, the core components of the Hasba Bill passed in November 2006. The Bill also entails further segregation of the sexes and marginalization of the role of women in society. In practice this means that a large part of Pakistan will be under Taliban-like rule. The MMA has described these developments as “a step towards the Islamic system that (it) promised in its election manifesto”.³⁴

Baluchistan

Baluchistan is yet another province with extensive links to the Taliban. A large majority of Pakistan’s madrassas are located in Baluchistan. Many of them are controlled by the Deobandi JUI-F. Ever since their electoral success back in 2002, the JUI-F has contributed to the expansion of madrassas in Pashtun majority areas.³⁵ This development has been made possible due to Musharraf’s unrelenting support for the MMA in Baluchistan. Reminiscent of the situation in the NWFP, the extensive madrassa network in Baluchistan has also led to an increased number of Taliban recruiters. Mir Jan, a Taliban fighter in Baluchistan’s capital Quetta, has commented on the JI’s and JUI’s influence in the region by saying “we are at home as we were before Musharraf hatched a conspiracy against us at the behest of the Americans. But our brothers (the mullahs) are in power, so it means we are in power”.³⁶

Since Baluchistan has as of late become the breeding ground for violent conflict between Baluch nationalists and Pashtuns, there has been little focus on the Taliban’s manifestation in the province. Furthermore, Musharraf’s dependence upon the JUI-F has translated into something of a non-interventionist policy with regard to their political cooperation with the Taliban. Paradoxically, the weapons the Pakistani government has been given by the U.S. in order to use in the “war on terrorism” are in fact being used by the military in a national conflict where one of the main political actors supports the Taliban.³⁷

Ever since the rise of the MMA in Baluchistan, the connection between the Taliban, al Qaeda and Pakistani political leaders has become increasingly apparent. Maulana Abdul Bari Agha, the Minister of Public

³³ International Crisis Group, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, Asia Report No. 95, April 18 2005, p. 17.

³⁴ Bill Roggio, “Expanding Talibanization,” *The Fourth Rail*, November 14 2006, <http://billroggio.com/archives/2006/11/expanding_talibanist.php> (inaccessible).

³⁵ International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 95, p. 20.

³⁶ Scott Baldauf and Owais Tohid, “Taliban Appears to be Regrouped and Well-funded,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 5 2003.

³⁷ International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: The Worsening Conflict in Baluchistan*, Report No. 119, September 14 2006, p. 21-22.

Health in Baluchistan, serves as a striking example. His ambition is to introduce the Hasba Bill into Baluch law, so as to replicate developments in the NWFP. This legitimates the fear that Baluchistan may also become a Talibanized province. Furthermore, Bari has made some telling appearances and announcements with regard to the Taliban. In May 2006 a young Pakistani man from Baluchistan died in Afghanistan while fighting for the Taliban. Bari attended the young man's funeral praising him as a martyr and asserting that his place in heaven was now guaranteed. Both Taliban and JUI-F flags were used as decorations at the funeral. Since such a prominent Baluch politician has referred to Taliban fighters as martyrs one could speculate that Baluch politics are headed in a pro-Taliban direction. Furthermore, the explicit expression of support for Taliban fighters clearly illustrates the JUI-F's stance with regard to their cause. Many Taliban leaders are believed to be living in Quetta, Baluchistan's capital, without interference from the provincial government.³⁸ Furthermore, there have been reports of training camps set up by the Taliban and al Qaeda in both the NWFP and Baluchistan. These training camps are believed to be mobile, moving from village to village providing people with training in arms, map reading and methods of attack. Although no direct connections have been found between the MMA and these camps, it would not be too far-fetched to speculate that a connection does indeed exist. Interestingly enough, however, Fazlur Rehman has accused the military of training extremists, not admitting to any links of his own.³⁹

Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)

FATA, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in northeastern Pakistan, is also an area of great concern to advocates of the "war on terrorism" (Neither the British – in their time – nor any Pakistani regimes has ever been able to fully control FATA). The region is semi-autonomous and consists of seven tribal agencies. Conventional politics and political parties have always been banned in FATA, as the tribal areas have been granted special status by the Pakistani government. However, Islamic leaders have been able to gain support from the electorate, as they control all mosques and madrassas. Consequently, the presence of corrupt politicians has flourished, particularly those with roots in radical Islam. During Taliban rule in Afghanistan in the 1990s, Deobandi influence significantly increased in FATA. This led to increased power for the JUI-F with Rehman in the forefront. His status predominantly derived from cooperation with the Taliban concerning

³⁸ Declan Walsh, "Baluchistan Feeds Taliban's Growing Power," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 5 2006.

³⁹ Sumita, IDA Strategic Comments.

cross-border smuggling. At present Rehman's party, the JUI-F, is the only party allowed to operate freely in FATA⁴⁰ As of 1997 FATA is represented in the Pakistani National Assembly, but the state's power over the region is still minimal, as laws made by the National Assembly do not apply to the tribal areas. FATA is predominantly inhabited by Pashtun tribes, hence the tribal code is regarded as law. The smallest of these regions, the Bajaur Agency, is significantly influenced by the MMA, as two politicians from this area are members of the National Assembly and one is in the Senate. This area of FATA is one of the most critical in counter-terrorism efforts, as it has reportedly been used as refuge for terrorists such as Osama bin Laden and Abu Faraj al-Libbi. Furthermore, it borders the Kunar province in Afghanistan, which is reportedly also an infamous hiding place for terrorists, as well as a Taliban stronghold. Bajaur has gained a great deal of media attention lately as a result of the recent bombings of a madrassa in the region that killed more than 80 people.⁴¹ The leader of the MMA, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, condemned the attack. Although the official announcement stated that it was committed by Pakistani authorities many believe that the U.S. bears responsibility.

The MMA has not only demonstrated its support for the Taliban by implementing the aforementioned Hasba Bill, but also by negotiating a peace settlement with the Taliban in Waziristan. In 2002 the Pakistani army entered the Tribal Areas for the first time in decades. Their mission was to track down al Qaeda, Taliban and any tribal peoples who were cooperating or supporting these groups. The resistance proved harder than anticipated and in April 2004 the Pakistani military signed a peace deal, also known as the Shakai agreement, with tribesmen in South Waziristan. The terms of the agreement included a ceasefire between the military and the tribal peoples believed to be sheltering al Qaeda and Taliban members, as well as an amnesty for all individuals involved in these affairs. They in turn promised to refrain from using Pakistani soil in order to fight foreign countries. Some of the tribesmen in question were on Pakistan's most wanted list for FATA.⁴² They included Saud Memon, the owner of the grounds where American journalist Daniel Pearl was killed in 2002, and Ghulam Mustafa, al Qaeda's chief in Pakistan who is believed to have in-depth knowledge of al Qaeda's

⁴⁰ International Crisis Group, *Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants*, Asia Report No. 125, November 12 2006, p. 11-12.

⁴¹ Hassan Abbas, "Profiles of Pakistan's Seven Tribal Agencies," *Global Terrorism Analysis* 4, 20 (October 19 2006)

⁴² "Pakistan "ends al Qaeda search", *BBC News*, April 22 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3649421.stm> (August 20 2007).

finances and logistics in Pakistan.⁴³ Maulana Merajuddin Qureshi and Maulana Abdul Malik Wazir, two tribal parliamentarians from South Waziristan and members of the JUI-F, negotiated the Shakai agreement, affirming that it would bring peace to the region. In practice this meant that the MMA had encouraged a deal where the Taliban and al Qaeda members could move around freely in the region. A pro-government FATA senator commented on the deal saying that the military had made a mistake by relying, "...[on] the mullahs for brokering peace with militants (...) this is a vicious cycle that undermines the state and reinforces the influence of the mullahs".⁴⁴

The Shakai agreement eventually failed, leading to another one being drafted and signed in February 2005. Comprising the same goals as in the first agreement, this one also failed and violence erupted once again. It is clear that both agreements negotiated by MMA members were unsuccessful, as they led to increased violence. It should also be noted that the increasing control and power of the Taliban has led to the position of FATA tribal elders being undermined. Taliban customs and traditions have been enforced at the expense of tribal traditions. Many tribal elders have even been killed by the Taliban in attempts to eliminate any challenge to power.⁴⁵ It is also interesting to note that more recently, in April 2006, the Taliban was allowed to set up an office in Wana, South Waziristan, in a desperate attempt to restore order. The decision was made in the Jamia-ul-Aloom madrassa, which is run by Maulana Nur Mohammed, a member of the JUI. The office was supposed to work as a local court and was established as a replacement for the traditional jirga (tribal assembly) system.⁴⁶ In short, it could be argued that pro-Taliban militants have infiltrated every level of society, as described by the BBC, "...various local Taliban groups in South Waziristan have taken over the administration of justice, including imposing fines. They also collect taxes and recruit fighters".⁴⁷ This has raised fears that FATA, just like Baluchistan, is becoming a state within a state, subsequently wholly undermining the Pakistani government.⁴⁸

⁴³ Saleem Syed Shazad, "Pakistan: Hello al Qaeda, Goodbye America," *Asia Times Online*, September 8 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/HI08Df03.html> (August 20 2007).

⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 125.

⁴⁵ Suba D. Chandran, *Peace Agreement in Waziristan: New beginning or False Dawn?*, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, Issue Brief 37, September 2006, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Sohail Abdul Nasir, "Taliban set up Office in South Waziristan," *Global Terrorism Analysis* 3, 14, April 11 2006, <<http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369958>> (August 20 2007).

⁴⁷ "Pro-Taliban militants in tax move", *BBC News*, October 23 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/6078380> (August 20 2007).

⁴⁸ Christine C. Fair, Nicholas Howenstein, and Alexander J. Their, *Troubles on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border* (United States Institute of Peace, December 2006).

In September 2006 yet another deal was negotiated in the FATA agencies, more specifically in North Waziristan. This settlement, known as the Waziristan Accord, was also signed by the Pakistani military with the help of the JUI-F and it virtually turned northern Waziristan (one of the seven FATA agencies) over to the Taliban and al Qaeda. Being the only party still in operation in the Waziristans, the JUI-F did this in order to check the power of the Taliban and to get the military to retreat. In doing this the JUI-F offered the Taliban a political apparatus in order to restrict their ambitions; the Taliban has been granted de facto control, consequently granting the JUI-F superficial power.⁴⁹ The deal encompasses two major points: an end to cross-border movements as well as to attacks on government and security forces in the region. In practice the deal has led to grave human rights abuses against individuals believed to be conspiring with the U.S.. Since its implementation, there has also been a three-fold increase in attacks on Coalition troops in Southern and Southeastern Afghanistan. Clearly the deal has led to increased insecurity for the public and to protection of the Taliban. The few restrictions that were placed on the militant groups as a result of the Waziristan Accords have been ignored or reneged on by the signatory parties. It is clear that the security situation has in fact deteriorated as a result of the agreement. It is also imperative to highlight the long-term implications of the agreement. The Taliban are reportedly feeling very secure in Waziristan, hence the region has become a new recruiting ground for both the Taliban and al Qaeda. Several areas of FATA have been used by the Taliban in order to regroup, rearm and attack coalition troops in southern Afghanistan. The Taliban movement would probably not have had a second coming had these bordering regions not been readily accessible to them. The JUI-F has made no effort to halt this development. Interestingly enough the JUI-F's leader Rehman has condemned the Pakistani government for allowing and aiding militants' entry into Afghanistan from Waziristan.⁵⁰

The Waziristan Accord has also increased the Taliban's presence in neighboring provinces such as the NWFP. This poses a grave threat to future developments in the province, as the NWFP may well *also* be lost to the Taliban.⁵¹ One recent incident that has proven to be a catalyst for developments in this direction was the afore-mentioned attack on a Bajaur madrassa on October 30, 2006. This has given the MMA and the Taliban further reason to preach anti-Americanism and jihad in greater

⁴⁹ Syed Saleem Shahzad, "The Knife at Pakistan's Throat," *Da Pashto Network*, September 4 2006, p. 1-2.

⁵⁰ *Daily Times*, August 8 2005.

⁵¹ Bill Roggio, "Pakistan's Slide," *The Fourth Rail*, November 29 2006, <http://billroggio.com/archives/2006/11/pakistans_slide.php> (August 20 2007).

areas of Pakistan. One could speculate that these incidents will have a domino effect and spread to all parts of the country if not met by fierce resistance.

The cooperation between the MMA (mainly members of the JUI-F) and the Taliban is still prevalent today and the Taliban's current upswing in Afghanistan would have been made more difficult had the sanctuary in FATA not existed. The increasing power of the mullahs is manifest in the large number of Taliban existent in Pakistan. This reality has come about at the expense of the authority of traditional elders in FATA, which previously had replaced maliks (traditional tribal chieftains) as power brokers.⁵² The deteriorating security situation has even led to the formation of a "Pakistani Taliban" with close ties to the Afghan Taliban. At present the Pakistani Taliban controls large parts of Waziristan and its influence is believed to be spreading, as no counter forces exist in the region.⁵³ To conclude, some argue that the cooperation between al Qaeda, the Taliban and Pakistan has led to the increasingly coordinated campaign against the Coalition that has taken place in Afghanistan as of late. The prominent Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid has asserted, "al Qaeda...has helped reorganize the Taliban, create unlimited sources of funding from the sale of Afghan-grown opium and forge a new alliance linking the Taliban with extremist groups in Pakistan, Central Asia, the Caucasus and Iraq".⁵⁴ Clearly the Taliban does not only receive assistance from Pakistan, but from other states in the surrounding region as well.

Drugs, Weapons and the Military

The smuggling of drugs and weapons between Pakistan and Afghanistan is yet another area of great concern for all states trying to combat terrorism. The Pakistani and Afghan economies have become increasingly integrated in recent years, something the drug trade has greatly benefited from. It is no coincidence that both the NWFP and Baluchistan act as lucrative drug smuggling routes in South Asia. These provinces are just one stop in the long journey for illegal drugs that are destined for Europe and the United States.⁵⁵ With pro-Taliban parties dominating the political scene in these provinces the Taliban's drug smuggling business makes great profits. It could be argued that the business would become heavily undermined without these links. Some analysts even claim that parties in the MMA coalition, such as the JUI-F,

⁵² International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 125, p. 11-12.

⁵³ Bokhari, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, p. 18.

⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 125, Quote by Ahmed Rashid, p. 22.

⁵⁵ Lowry Taylor, *The Nexus of Terrorism and Drug Trafficking in the Golden Crescent: Afghanistan*, U.S. Army War College Research Project, p. 6.

are benefiting financially from the drugtrade.⁵⁶ Since FATA is only nominally controlled by the Pakistani government, it plays a pivotal role in the smuggling of drugs, weapons and other illicit items across the border. When the Pakistani army entered the region at U.S. request in order to track down al Qaeda and Taliban leaders it made certain promises to the tribal peoples. These promises included a non-interference policy in the smuggling of goods, mainly drugs, between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was also agreed that the sale of weapons and ammunition would be allowed.⁵⁷ With the signing of the recent Waziristan Accord the militants in the area have been compensated for their losses resulting from the military's invasion. Moreover, they have been allowed to retain their weapons.⁵⁸ Consequently we have a whole region where drugs and weapons move freely as a result of a deal brokered by MMA members.

When discussing the drug trade, Afghanistan's infamous heroin production is of great importance, especially as it has multiplied in recent years. The mullahs of the JUI-F are known to be aiding the Taliban by offering logistical support for the drugs industry. Afghan President Hamid Karzai has attempted to negotiate with the JUI-F in order to stop support for the drug trade and especially the regrouping of the Taliban in Quetta (also one of the major bases for the drug trade), but without avail.⁵⁹ With support from the MMA, revenue from the drug trade is used to fuel the Taliban movement. This is one of the greatest obstacles facing the Afghan government, especially considering how widespread opium cultivation is in Afghanistan.

The MMA does not only keep close ties with the Taliban, but also with the Pakistani army, despite denials from both parties. The army has initiated crackdowns on secular politicians, meanwhile letting MMA leaders carry on their business in the NWFP, Baluchistan and FATA. It is also widely known that both the army and the ISI helped the MMA in the run up to the October 2002 elections in the NWFP.⁶⁰ Pakistani officers have even been arrested for having links with the Taliban and Pakistani extremist groups. It seems that together the MMA, the army and the Taliban form a triad of cooperation that is becoming increasingly difficult to crack. Since the MMA is in a position where it can exercise extensive political power and is currently urging the government to

⁵⁶ Iffat Malek, "Islamists Rise to the Challenge," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, November 1-7, 2002, <<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/558/2war.htm>> (August 20 2007).

⁵⁷ Rashid, "Who's Winning the War on Terror?"

⁵⁸ Fair, Howenstein, and Thier, *Troubles on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border..*

⁵⁹ Raman, "The Fall and Rise of the Taliban,"

⁶⁰ Ahmed Rashid, "America's War on Terror Goes Awry in Pakistan," *Yale Global Online*, June 4 2003.

implement Sharia law throughout all of Pakistan, the coalition must be taken very seriously. It seems that Musharraf is failing to do this.

Concluding Remarks- the Talibanization of Pakistan?

The Taliban has undoubtedly increased in both scope and strength in the past few years. The “Operation Enduring Freedom” did not manage to eradicate or even undermine the Taliban movement on a long term scale. It is clear that certain elements in Pakistan have worked as contributing factors to the Taliban’s recent successes. Musharraf seems to be in a deadlock where he is dependent on the MMA for support and simultaneously must appease the United States. As the MMA has the ability to tip the scale in parliament it has had the ability to influence politics on all levels. The situations in the NWFP, Baluchistan and FATA are the most striking and worrying examples of this. They lend weight to the argument that the MMA’s pro-Taliban stance and links to the Taliban have radicalized these areas. Furthermore, one could speculate that the Taliban would be significantly weaker without the present aid stemming from members of the MMA.

Musharraf’s maneuvers will arguably come to play an even more important role for predicting the future of the MMA and in turn the Taliban. It will be interesting to see how Musharraf deals with the situation in 2007, especially as elections are approaching. One could speculate that he will feel obliged to rely on the MMA for support once again, which could have detrimental effects for several Pakistani provinces and indeed lead to the further Talibanization of Pakistan. In a worst case scenario it could come to have negative effects on the international community’s struggle against the Taliban and international terrorism.

Finally, this will also have repercussions for the internal security situation inside Afghanistan, including the foreign troops in the northern part of the country. The expected spring offensive will also affect the northern provinces, albeit not as much as in the south and south-east. For the past year, the Taliban have been active also in the north and have made alliances – new and old – with like-minded Islamic parties and groups there. Among those allies are members from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), who have infiltrated across the border with Waziristan in the FATA-area of Pakistan.

What all this points to is a situation whereby the Taliban, and their allies, feel confident enough to mount new military offensives and to take on NATO-forces in battles. As pointed out above, they also feel secure in the knowledge that they can re-supply their losses quite easily.

Moreover, since *all* foreign troops are considered enemies, forces from countries not active in actual combat in the south are clearly in danger of

being targeted, given that the Taliban can muster the expected number of manpower needed. Targeting those troops is also considered less risky, since they are believed to be “softer” than the more battle-hardened forces from the UK and the U.S. for instance. It is important to remember that the Taliban have watched developments in other locations such as Iraq, whereby attacks on other, smaller and more vulnerable forces than the U.S., have brought about changes in politics as well. Both Spain and Italy are often quoted as examples of this development. In conclusion then, the international forces in Afghanistan should prepare for a continuation and rise in attacks from the Taliban and their allies, even in the North. Judging from events during Spring and early Summer of 2007, this trend is already present, with a rise in attacks in the northernmost Afghan provinces.

The key, as is shown in the study, to successfully combat the insurgency, is to manage a combination of several initiatives simultaneously; political initiatives to make as many ethnic groups as possible feel they have a stake in the success of a “new Afghanistan”; economic initiatives to create alternatives to the drug-trade and other criminal activities such as smuggling. This part would also demand a “sea-change” on part of the coalition forces as well as the Afghan government, in that these actors need to get tough with the drug-traders,⁶¹ a continued military effort to combat the Taliban and their allies, at the same time as work on re-construction goes on *in the same areas*. The hitherto followed line, that before the insurgency is defeated, no serious re-construction is possible, has shown itself to be a failed strategy. It is at present not certain that this understanding of the basic tenets of the insurgency has penetrated the political and military minds that so far has directed counterinsurgency-operations for the coalition in Afghanistan.

But most challenging, from a more long-term perspective perhaps, is to counter the extensive support that the Taliban is receiving from Pakistan, without weakening the position of Pakistani President Musharraf – who himself is politically dependent on some of the same parties that is supporting the Taliban. To charter a successful course between all these potentially lethal obstacles, will decide whether the “afghan project” will succeed or not.

⁶¹ It is a clear sign of failure on part of the coalition that the actual export of drugs from Afghanistan has *gone up* since the invasion in late 2001. As long as drug-trafficking is still such a profitable economic endeavour, the normalization of Afghanistan is bound to fail.

Energy Cooperation in the SCO: Club or Gathering?

*Artyom Matusov**

ABSTRACT

The following analysis will examine concrete events, deals and disagreements that have taken place over the last year which point to certain trends in the area of energy cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The conclusion is that the SCO will likely *not* play a significant role in instituting greater energy cooperation or coordination in the region. Moreover, progress in this direction will be slow, unsteady and uncertain. While the article will mostly focus on the energy sector, it will also include other economic activity such as foreign loans, investment and bilateral trade. This is because any discussion about SCO energy cooperation has to have the Chinese economy as its reference point, since it is the primary economic engine of the region. Energy is one of the more important factors in sustaining China's economic growth, though it also has certain security and strategic implications that a resource like timber might not. Nonetheless, there is little sense in completely isolating energy from the broader economic context, and doing so will make any final conclusions incomplete and inaccurate.¹

Keywords • SCO • Energy Cooperation • Economic Integration • Bilateralism • Gas-OPEC

Introduction

To understand the energy prospects within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), it is first necessary to outline the general dynamic among the member states. In simplified terms, the economic context of

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¹ Which often happens when analysts focus on energy as purely a geostrategic resource and claim that the U.S. and China are likely headed for a showdown as these resources get scarcer and each country needs more of them. This misses the vital point that the U.S. and Chinese economies are interdependent on various levels and that if either doesn't get the resources that it needs, both will suffer as a result. In a globalized economy it is equally important to both sides that the Chinese producer and U.S. consumer do well. Nevermind that many U.S. businesses have operations in China and are also increasingly selling to the Chinese consumer.

the region is increasingly centering itself around China's rapid economic expansion and how best to respond to it. China is seeking raw materials for its manufacturing sector as well as markets for its consumer products. The Central Asian republics and Russia are rich in natural resources and pose as potential markets for Chinese goods. The Chinese are willing to invest in the region and improve its infrastructure so as to widen China's access to raw materials, while increasing Chinese exports to its neighbors (for example many of the loans and investments that China offers for specific projects is contingent upon using Chinese construction firms). The Central Asian republics and Russia want Chinese investment and increased trade. But at the same time they worry that opening their markets to Chinese goods will hurt their own manufacturing sectors, as will continuing to orient their economies on the export of raw materials. They also worry about China owning their national assets and that Chinese laborers will come into their countries and take over the construction and trade sectors, among others.²

The SCO was born out of the Shanghai Five mechanism which was established to introduce a range of military confidence building measures between China and its neighbors in Central Asia (including Russia). The SCO was meant to transform this arrangement into an organization that fostered regional cooperation in a variety of areas.³ Special emphasis was placed on security cooperation⁴ in order to root out terrorism, separatism and extremism in the region.⁵ As time has passed and the stature of the organization has grown, various officials from SCO member states have indicated that they would like to see this regional cooperation extend to other fields. During the 2006 SCO summit in Shanghai, Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed that the organization create an SCO Energy Club for the purpose of coordinating energy policy and increasing cooperation in the region.⁶ Later that year at a prime-ministerial SCO summit in Tajikistan, delegates issued a statement endorsing this proposal.⁷ In June of this year, in preparation for the 2007 SCO summit

² For a good overview of Chinese-Central Asian trade see: Gael Raballand and Agnes Andresy, "Why Should Trade between Central Asia and China Continue to Expand?" *Asia Europe Journal*, May 27 2007.

³ "Jiang: Perfecting 'Shanghai Five' Mechanism." *People's Daily*, July 5 2000, <http://english.people.com.cn/english/200007/05/eng20000705_44747.html> (August 22, 2007).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "Chronicle of Main Events of 'Shanghai Five' and Shanghai Cooperation Organization." Official SCO website, <<http://www.sectSCO.org/html/00030.html>> (August 22 2007).

⁶ Sergei Kolchin, "Russia Initiates Energy Club," *RIA Novosti*, June 6 2001. <<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20060621/49855458.html>> (August 22 2007).

⁷ Bruce Pannier, "Economic Ties the Focus as Shanghai Group Meets," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*. September 15, 2006, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/09/416d92cb-03f1-4cbe-a9d5-fc6e37321147.html>> (August 22 2007).

in Bishkek, Kazakh officials presented a plan for an Asian Energy Strategy that would also seek to coordinate energy policy among SCO member states, on the premise that projected regional demand is roughly equivalent to estimated reserves.⁸ And in an interview about the 2007 summit, Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Ednan Karabayev claimed that the organization has already achieved great strides in ensuring regional energy security and called for the creation of an energy exchange.⁹ Thus, it would appear that the SCO is becoming an important platform for the creation of a major multilateral energy consortium. But how much progress has actually been made on regional energy deals? To what extent can the SCO framework be given credit? And how effective can the SCO be in the future?

To answer these questions it is important to examine what has occurred since last year's summit, when the energy club proposal was first floated. The SCO is still a very young organization, having only been formed in 2001. Projections as to its effectiveness, particularly in the energy field which is an even more recent development, might seem premature. Nonetheless it is reasonable to suppose that if the heightened rhetoric has substance, then the past year would have shown progress and a real effort by SCO member states to actually coordinate and cooperate on their energy policies. However, events suggest that a multilateral agreement that integrates energy policy throughout the entire region is a difficult proposition, and that the agreements which have emerged are not products of the SCO, even if they are influenced by the SCO process. This is primarily due to the fact that when it comes to energy issues, and economic issues in general, agreements between SCO member states are often either reached outside of the SCO framework, or bilaterally, meaning it is quite conceivable that these deals would have been signed even if the SCO did not exist. In addition, Russia has recently committed a number of actions in regards to China that seem to run counter to any genuine attempt at establishing an energy club within the framework of the SCO. This hints at the real energy and economic dynamic at work within the SCO, which is to manage the process of Chinese integration into the region rather than to facilitate its expediency or foster regional multilateralism.

⁸ "Kazakhstan Pushes for Asian Energy Club," *News Briefing Central Asia*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, June 20 2007, <http://iwpr.net/?p=bca&s=b&o=336455&apc_state=henbbcadate2007> (August 22 2007).

⁹ "Kyrgyzstan Promotes Regional Energy Exchange," *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, July 19 2007.

The Implications of Bilateralism

To begin with it should not be so surprising that many regional agreements are bilateral, whether reached within the framework of the SCO or outside of it. This is because the primary precursor to the SCO, the 1996 Shanghai Agreement on Confidence Building in the Military Field in the Border Area which established the Shanghai Five, is in some ways actually four bilateral agreements rolled into one. In that agreement Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were a joint party, while China was the other party with which the agreement was reached.¹⁰ Therefore, the agreement carried force between China and each member of the joint party, but not between the members of the joint party itself. This is despite, or maybe a result of the fact that there is a fair bit of animosity among the post-Soviet republics.¹¹ The 1996 agreement disguised what was at heart a series of bilateral agreements with China in the cloak of multilateralism and this technique continues today in the SCO.¹² One example is the US\$900 million dollars in loans that China offered to SCO members in 2004 for various projects (127 by the 2006 Summit) under the condition that they purchase Chinese exports.¹³ The loans and projects had initially been negotiated at the SCO Summit in Tashkent and were said to be a part of a larger multilateral trade and cooperation agreement that had been signed by all under the “SCO framework.”¹⁴ But is this type of arrangement really multilateral? Ultimately, each country has to negotiate separately with China about specific projects and deals whereby they will purchase Chinese exports.¹⁵ And as far as the “SCO framework” is concerned, in the same year that China offered US\$900 million to its Central Asian neighbors, it also

¹⁰ “Russian Federation, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, and the People’s Republic of China on Confidence Building in the Military Field in the Border Area,” 1996. <http://www.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/shanghai_19960426.html> (August 22 2007).

¹¹ Though of course it wouldn’t have made sense for Russia to enter into such agreements with the Central Asian republics, since it has a fairly wide military presence in the region and is partly responsible for the region’s security. This is particularly true for Tajikistan during the signing of the treaty, at which time Russian border guards were stationed along Tajikistan’s borders.

¹² Though of course this does not mean that the format of the negotiations didn’t have an important impact on the substance of the treaty.

¹³ “US\$900m loans to SCO members for China exports,” *China Daily*, May 31 2006. <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-05/31/content_604550.htm> (July 15 2007).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ It is interesting to point out that it does not appear as if China even used the SCO Inter-Bank Association, the banking vehicle which was established by the SCO in 2005, to distribute the funds. Alyson Bailes and Pal Dunay, “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a regional security institution,” *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization*. Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute. Policy Paper No. 17, May 2007, p. 26.

provided US\$5 billion in similar loans to several African countries, even though they were not part of any special framework.¹⁶ This suggests that there isn't much difference in outcome between ordinary bilateral relations and "bilateral cooperation... within the framework of the SCO," which is how Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiev described the future trajectory of relations with China during a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.¹⁷ It is likely that even without the SCO, China would still have provided Tajikistan with a US\$600 million loan for road and power line construction last year and an additional US\$400 million loan this year, since China is in much need of electricity and Tajikistan has large hydropower potential.¹⁸ On July 11, 2007 Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Masimov and Kyrgyz Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev signed a spur of the moment bilateral agreement establishing a US\$120 million dollar investment fund for Kyrgyzstan outside of the SCO framework.¹⁹ With all the other initiatives that China is taking in order to secure energy supplies and markets around the world, SCO or no SCO, it would have found a way of moving forward in Central Asia. Moreover, ongoing disputes in the Caspian about how the littoral states²⁰ are to divide the sea (which is rich in hydrocarbons) suggests that energy agreements in the Central Asia region will continue to be reached primarily one issue at a time between the parties directly involved and not on a broader multilateral basis.²¹

The Wasted Potential of the SCO

Besides not being an important component for facilitating new investment, the SCO has also not served to resolve problems for which it might seem like an ideal platform. The Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline that runs from Kazakhstan to China is one such example. At the time of its completion in 2005, it was hailed as a significant achievement that

¹⁶ Jane Perlez, "China Competes With West in Aid to Its Neighbors," *The New York Times*, September 18, 2006, <<http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F0061EF738550C7B8DDDA00894DE404482>> (August 22 2007).

¹⁷ "Chinese FM expounds China's proposals to promote SCO development," CCTV.com (eng) July 10 2007, <<http://www.cctv.com/english/20070710/103570.shtml>> (August 22 2007).

¹⁸ Yukifumi Takeuchi, "Asia: Tajikistan barter diplomatic clout for key development loans," *The Asahi Shimbun*, July 12 2007, <<http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY200707120085.html>> (August 22 2007).

¹⁹ Erica Marat, "Kazakh-Kyrgyz Economic Relations Receive New Boost," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, July 12 2007, <http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2372287> (August 22 2007).

²⁰ Of all the littoral states only Azerbaijan is not involved in the SCO. Kazakhstan and Russia are SCO members while Iran and Turkmenistan are SCO observers.

²¹ "Caspian 'Code of Conduct' Will Not Resolve Dispute," *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, June 28 2007.

summoned the beginning of regional energy integration. It was to transport 10 million tons of oil per year from Kazakhstan to China²², with the possibility that its capacity might eventually be doubled.²³ But so far it has not lived up to its potential. The pipeline began commercial operations last July, and in its first year it has only transported 4.06 million tons of oil to China; a disappointment to say the least, especially since the US\$700 million price tag for the pipeline was a joint investment primarily paid for by China.²⁴ Kazakhstan's inability to fill the pipeline's capacity was not unexpected. Most of its oil reserves are located in the west of the country, while the pipeline runs from the east, and there are currently efforts underway to connect the pipeline to western oil fields and pipeline networks which have already been completed as part of China's effort to have a direct link to the offshore fields in the Caspian (not a simple or cheap operation given Kazakhstan's large size and mountainous interior). But what to do in the interim in order to make China's investment worthwhile? Soon after the Atasu-Alashankou pipeline was completed, state-owned Russian oil company Rosneft expressed a serious interest in filling its extra capacity by linking it to the nearby Omsk-Pavlodar pipeline running from Russia to Kazakhstan.²⁵ At the time, Rosneft claimed it needed to achieve the following before oil could begin flowing:

“First, overhauling and expanding the capacity of the Omsk (Russia)-Pavlodar (Kazakhstan) pipeline and linking it with the Atasu-Alashankou line; second, determining the volumes and schedules of Rosneft's oil deliveries to China; and, third, setting the transit charges for those deliveries on Kazakhstan's territory.”²⁶

The resolution of these finer points clearly requires three-way negotiations between the parties concerned.²⁷ If the SCO is to take on the

²² A significant quantity that would amount to roughly 6 percent of China's imports and make Kazakhstan China's sixth largest importer. The completion of the pipeline was also important because it was a sign of tangible progress at a time when similar projects with Russia had continually fallen through.

²³ “China oil imports via Kazakhstan pipeline over 4 mln tons to date,” *AFX News Limited* via *Forbes.I*, July 11 2007., <<http://www.forbes.com/markets/feeds/afx/2007/07/11/afx3901597.html>> (August 22 2007).

²⁴ Vladimir Socor, “Rosneft expanding its role in Kazakhstan,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, February 27 2006, <http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2370818> (August 22 2007).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Since in all three countries energy companies are either controlled by the state outright or closely aligned with it, this means governmental negotiations.

function of energy club, solving this problem would be a perfect trial run since this is precisely the kind of coordination and cooperation issue that it would presumably seek to address. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev suggested as much at this year's summit when he said that the pipeline network in Russia, Central Asia and China should be used to create a common energy market.²⁸ However, in the year and a half that talks about Russia's participation began nothing has happened, neither on Russia's own initiative nor as a result of any SCO proceedings. Lukoil²⁹, TNK-BP and Gazprom Neft have all expressed interest in shipping oil to China via the pipeline. But no firm promises have been made beyond Russian Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko's recent assertion that a general agreement had been reached with China and that "deliveries *may* take place this year."³⁰ This is not a major departure from previous statements.

Another area where these countries could form a common venture is nuclear energy. On October 3, 2006 Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev agreed to construct a joint center to enrich uranium³¹, much of which will come from Kazakh mines as Russia's uranium reserves become depleted³² (Kazakhstan holds 20 percent of the world's uranium reserves³³). Russia is also in the process of getting Uzbekistan to enrich its uranium at the center.³⁴ In February 2006 the Chinese government came out with a report indicating that China planned to build 32 new nuclear reactors by the year 2020.³⁵ At the same time, Russia itself is planning to build between one and two nuclear

²⁸ Peter Fedynsky, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Seeks to Expand Energy and Security Influence" *Voice of America*, August 16 2007, <<http://www.voanews.com/english/2007-08-16-voa9.cfm>> (August 22 2007).

²⁹ Sergei Blagov, "Russian Oil to Flow to China Even Before Pipeline Completed," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 1 2006, <http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=414&issue_id=3708&article_id=2371037> (August 22 2007).

³⁰ Nadia Rodova, "Russian exports to China via Kazakhstan to start this year," *Platts Commodity News*, June 1 2007, (emphasis by author) <<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/chinainstitute/navo3.cfm?navo3=61429&navo2=58139&navo1=57272>> (August 22 2007).

³¹ "Russia, Kazakhstan Sign Energy Deal," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, October 3 2006. <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/10/468d421d-4e46-4bff-9711-dcb2fb5417fb.html>> (August 22 2007).

³² "Kazakhstan, Russia Strike Nuke Deal," *Earth Times.org*, December 7 2006. <<http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/12360.html>> (August 22 2007).

³³ "Kazakhstan: Electricity," County Analysis Briefs, United States Energy Information Administration, <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Kazakhstan/Electricity.html>> (August 22 2007).

³⁴ "Moscow to Enrich Uzbek Uranium," *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, July 10 2007.

³⁵ "China to Build 32 Nuclear Power Plants in Next 15 Years," *Xinhua Financial Network News*, February 27 2006.

reactors per year over the next two decades.³⁶ Since uranium prices have climbed significantly over the past several years as more countries consider nuclear power, it might seem logical for Russia to incorporate China into the joint venture with Kazakhstan as part of the new SCO energy club, particularly as their strategies are so similar. Russia recently finished constructing its first nuclear power plant for China, and as part of the deal it will supply uranium to the facility.³⁷ This could be viewed as the first step in the right direction.

But alternatively it could also mean that Russia is making use of its more advantageous position. The format allows Russia to benefit from high uranium prices while at the same time providing it with an edge when bidding on contracts for future Chinese reactors. If this is the case, then future cooperation on Chinese access to Central Asian uranium is far from assured. What is more likely is that Russia would prefer to act as middleman, buying raw materials from Central Asia and reselling them to China at a higher price, particularly if the raw materials have been refined.

There are other issues not involving China or Russia that would also fit perfectly within the scope and mandate of the SCO. For example there is no long term water agreement between Kyrgyzstan and its neighbors. As a result, in June Kyrgyzstan's monopoly power station company warned that it would not be able to supply Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with all of the water that they requested for 2008 because they had not guaranteed Kyrgyzstan a supply of conventional energy sources:

“Kyrgyzstan needs energy over the winter, so that is the time it needs to let water out of the dams to run the hydroelectric turbines. This is at odds with the needs of the countries downstream, which would like the water to be dammed up over the winter and released in summer to irrigate the fields. Every year, Kyrgyzstan signs an agreement with its three neighbours to let out more water over the summer. The deal is that the consequent electricity shortfall over the winter will be met by the

³⁶ Roman Kupchinsky, “Russia’s Nuclear Ambitions Heating Up,” *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, March 9 2006, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/03/9519DD72-3DD3-47A3-9D4E-5067B25B9FB4.html>> (August 22 2007).

³⁷ Robert Saiget, “First Russian Built Nuclear Power Reactor in China Goes into Operation,” *Agence France-Presse* via *Energy Daily*, June 19 2007, <http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/First-Russian-Built-Nuclear-Power-Reactor-In-China-Goes-Into-Operation_999.html> (August 22 2007).

country's conventional power stations, running on coal, gas and oil is provided by Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.”³⁸

Earlier in the year a standoff erupted between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan over a similar problem after a Chinese bank agreed to fund a Tajik hydroelectric station on the Zeravshan River which runs to Uzbekistan.³⁹ This is clearly an old and ongoing issue that can only be solved within a multilateral framework. Moreover, due to the fact that the commodities in question are essential for all sides to have, without interruption regardless of the political or economic climate, it makes sense to establish a long term agreement that will be a safeguard for everybody. Following the SCO foreign ministers summit in July, Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrohon Zarifi announced that all six foreign ministers had approved an Energy Charter which was formally signed at the Bishkek Summit in August.⁴⁰ It is supposed to address water and energy conflicts in the region.⁴¹ So perhaps change is on the way. Yet, at the summit Uzbek President Islam Karimov brought up the water issue again, implying that the various conflicts are far from resolved.⁴² There have already been a variety of attempts over the past ten years to somehow institutionalize these types of problems.⁴³ The fact that no long term agreement has been reached up to now on concrete issues like the ones above, suggests that the parties involved do not wish to give up their bargaining position over scarce resources. And if the parties are unwilling to come to agreement amongst themselves on something so fundamental, why would anything change under the auspices of the SCO? Only if China or Russia offer some especially intriguing incentive can the Energy Charter be effective.

Obstacles to Greater Cooperation

One of the chief reasons that the SCO's potential to create a comprehensive energy framework within the region is questionable, is that some SCO member states are currently proceeding in a way that seriously undermines this effort. The most prominent and glaring example is Russia. Its actions over the last year, when put together, are an

³⁸ “Kyrgyz Warn Neighbours of Possible Water Shortage,” *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, June 27 2007.

³⁹ “Tajik-Uzbek Rift over Power Station Plan,” *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, March 15, 2007.

⁴⁰ “SCO Members to Sign Energy Charter,” *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, July 20 2007.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² “SCO: Uzbekistan against Tajikistan plans?” *Uzbekistan Country Weblog*. Neweurasia.net, August 18 2007, <<http://uzbekistan.neweurasia.net/2007/08/18/sco-uzbekistan-against-tajik-plans>> (August 22 2007).

⁴³ “Tajik-Kyrgyz Water Consortium Will Upset Neighbours,” *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, May 23 2007.

ever increasing obstacle to any coordination or cooperation initiative that would include China.

First, there is the deal that Russia made in May with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Russia.⁴⁴ Although Turkmenistan is not a member of the SCO, it was a guest at this year's summit for the first time and is a significant player in the region, especially in terms of energy. It is also becoming more active on the international stage due to a change in leadership, and is likely to be an ever more important consideration in any regionalized energy strategy. The new pipeline will transport 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year by 2009-10.⁴⁵ A month after the initial deal, Turkmenistan announced that it would increase natural gas exports to Russia by 50 percent.⁴⁶ While these agreements are probably a good thing for Europe since it bolsters its access to natural gas⁴⁷, it undercuts China's efforts to construct a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan, the preliminaries of which have already been set.⁴⁸ Though it is unclear just how much gas Turkmenistan is capable of producing as it has not published independent audits about its reserves⁴⁹, data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) suggests that for the time being Turkmenistan is not capable of producing much more than the roughly 80 billion cubic meters that it is producing today.⁵⁰ This is the peak that it reached in 1993 before Gazprom pushed it out of the market, and this is where it stands now following a 1999 agreement with Gazprom to sell its gas directly to the Russian gas giant.⁵¹ Moreover, most of its largest gas fields have been in operation for over 25 years and are likely to decline in production. In 2006 Turkmenistan made a huge gas discovery in the Iolotan field, which

⁴⁴ "Russian, Turkmen, Kazakh Leaders Agree on Caspian Pipeline," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, May 12 2007, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/05/09bf853d-a94b-48be-a3dd-937138dob299.html>> (August 22 2007).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ "Naryshkin's Turkmen Deal," *Associated Press* via *The Moscow Times*, July 12 2007.

⁴⁷ Even though it does mean that a trans-Caspian pipeline that does not go through Russia is less likely, it also means that Europe will get access to more natural gas as Russia becomes increasingly unable to raise its domestic production. As an alternative, it is seeking to increase gas imports while decreasing domestic gas consumption through price increases and switching to coal.

⁴⁸ "The proposed route will run 7,000 kilometres via Uzbekistan and Kazakstan to supply China with 30 billion cubic metres of natural gas a year." Construction is set to start in 2009. "Berdymammedov to Pay First Visit to China," *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, July 3 2007.

⁴⁹ "Russian, Turkmen, Kazakh Leaders Agree on Caspian Pipeline," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, May 12 2007 <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/05/09bf853d-a94b-48be-a3dd-937138dob299.html>> (August 22 2007).

⁵⁰ "Central Asia: Natural Gas," *Country Analysis Briefs*, September 2005, Energy Information Administration, <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Centasia/NaturalGas.html>> (August 22 2007).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

then-President Saparmurat Niyazov claimed contains 7 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and would be enough to double Turkmenistan's production.⁵² Shortly thereafter a subsidiary of China's oil major CNPC won a US\$152 million drilling contract to drill twelve wells in the field.⁵³ But even assuming the reserve figures aren't inflated, with another 20 billion cubic meters of gas going to Russia it is difficult to see how Turkmenistan can honor its agreement with China to supply 30 billion cubic meters in the near future, before it has completely developed the Iolotan field. Turkmenistan is also supposed to almost double its exports to Iran this year to 14 billion cubic meters (and there are talks to increase that even further)⁵⁴ and is considering building a pipeline to Pakistan through Afghanistan that would transport 15 billion cubic meter of gas per year.⁵⁵

Signs of Turkmenistan's inability to fulfill its contracts are already visible. In the first half of 2007 Turkmenistan only delivered 4.1 billion cubic meters of gas to Iran⁵⁶ and there have been additional concerns that Turkmenistan doesn't have the necessary number of engineers to achieve the massive expansion in production that is being promised.⁵⁷ Thus it will be difficult for Turkmenistan to meet all of its obligations, especially within the time frame given. The Chinese project is probably the most ambitious of Turkmenistan's undertakings. At the same time when compared to Russia or Iran, China has the least amount of leverage over Turkmenistan, particularly since China is solely responsible for constructing the pipeline that will connect the two countries. This is why if forced to choose, Turkmenistan is more likely to disappoint China rather than Russia or Iran.

Besides potentially squeezing China out of Turkmenistan in the near future, Russia is also doing so at home. In October 2006 ExxonMobile, which leads the Sakhalin 1 Consortium, signed a preliminary deal with CNPC to sell all of its natural gas exports from the Sakhalin 1 field, located off of Russia's Sakhalin Islands.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Exxon even

⁵² "Turkmenistan's President Found 2 Shtokmans for Russia," *The Times of Central Asia*, November 8 2006.

⁵³ "Turkmengeologia to sign USD 152 Mln contract with CNPC," *New Europe*, November 25 2006, <http://www.neweurope.eu/view_news.php?id=67423> (August 22 2007).

⁵⁴ "Iran to Buy More Turkmen Gas," *Reporting Central Asia*, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, June 7 2007.

⁵⁵ "Afghans to Sign Up for Turkmen Energy," *Reporting Central Asia*, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, July 3 2007.

⁵⁶ "Iran, Turkey Sign Deal on Gas Exports to Europe," *Reuters* via Iran Focus, July 14 2007, <<http://www.iranfocus.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=11851>> (August 22 2007).

⁵⁷ "Engineer Shortage Threatens Energy Expansion," *Reporting Central Asia*, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, July 17 2007.

⁵⁸ Greg Walter, "Exxon Signs Prelim Gas Export Deal With CNPC-Exxon," *Dow Jones News Service* via the China Institute, October 23 2006.,

considered building a pipeline that would run through Russia and transport the gas to China's northeast. Shortly after the agreement, however, Gazprom began to put pressure on Exxon to sell its gas to Gazprom for local consumption instead, claiming that it would provide a fair price and that, contrary to Exxon's own research, building a pipeline to China would be unprofitable.⁵⁹

Along with being uncooperative on new deals, Russia has not kept several of its existing promises to China. For the past three years Russia's state-owned Rosneft has failed to meet its supply targets to China, which were made in an agreement that resulted from the dismantlement of Russian oil giant Yukos⁶⁰ (and the first half of 2007 has seen a 6.7 percent decrease in Russian oil exports to China over the same period in the previous year⁶¹). Rosneft has reached a new deal whereby it will transport an additional 2.5 million tons of oil per year to China via Mongolia, but this will still be below the quota.⁶² According to Russian firms this is due to high rail transit fees⁶³, but it should be noted that attempts to build pipelines in the region are also falling short. On July 20th, Russian Deputy Industry and Energy Minister Andrei Dementyev announced that work on the 50 million ton per year Pacific branch of the Eastern-Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) oil pipeline which is meant to run to an oil terminal on the Pacific Ocean will remain on hold until at least 2015 due to the fact that there isn't currently enough oil produced in East Siberia to fill it.⁶⁴ Only a week earlier Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko had been quoted as saying that there was "more optimism than pessimism" about Russia's ability to fill the Pacific branch.⁶⁵ The first stage of the pipeline which is supposed to have a 30 million ton per year capacity and connect to China through an offshoot is still on, but even here there are doubts about whether Russia will be able to fill it to capacity.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Industry and Energy Minister Khristenko has started hinting that Russia will charge China more than the Urals blend

<<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/chinainstitute/navo3.cfm?navo3=51855&navo2=43661&navo1=43092>> (August 22 2007).

⁵⁹ "Gazprom Makes Exxon Offer on Sakhalin-1 Gas," *The Moscow Times*, June 27 2007.

⁶⁰ "Rosneft to Increase Exports to China," *Reuters via The Moscow Times*, July 6 2007.

⁶¹ "Sinopec Seeks Middle East Oil as Russian Supplies Run Dry," *Reuters via The Moscow Times*, August 9 2007.

⁶² "Rosneft to Increase Exports to China," *Reuters via The Moscow Times*, July 6 2007.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Anatoly Medetsky, "Pacific Pipeline Delayed Until 2015," *The Moscow Times*, July 20 2007.

⁶⁵ Sergei Blagov, "Russia Prods China to Pay for Siberian Pipeline," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, July 18 2007, <http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2372300> (August 22 2007).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

price for this oil, which could cause additional complications.⁶⁷ Contrary to popular belief, the Chinese are not willing to pay any price for energy, which is evident in the CNPC's continued negotiations with Gazprom to lower prices on natural gas supplies to China.⁶⁸ In any case, the indefinite delay of the Pacific branch is a big loss for China since most of the oil going to the Pacific terminal would probably have found its way to there as the market with the highest growing demand in the Pacific region.

China has also had its energy interests hindered in Kazakhstan as a result of Russian oil company Lukoil. Although Lukoil is a private company, it has very close ties to the Russian government and is believed to closely toe the Kremlin line.⁶⁹ In 2005 China's CNPC successfully outbid Lukoil for the assets of bankrupt Canadian oil company PetroKazakhstan, which produced 150,000 barrels of Kazakh oil per day.⁷⁰ Among the assets that PetroKazakhstan owned was the Shymkent oil refinery, the South Kumkol oil field and half of the North Kumkol oil field, the other half of which was owned by Lukoil. At the end of October in 2006, after protracted and intensive litigation, Lukoil was able to gain full ownership of the North Kumkol oil field when a Stockholm arbitration court ruled that Lukoil had preemptive rights to purchase the field.⁷¹ This is not to say that Lukoil acted inappropriately. It does however illustrate that Russia is less than willing to allow China to have direct access to Central Asian energy resources.

Kazakhstan's reaction to the CNPC purchase of PetroKazakhstan was even more volatile. Public protests erupted upon the news that CNPC would own the Shymkent refinery, and just two days before shareholders met to approve the sale the Kazakh Parliament passed legislation, which President Nursultan Nazarbayev immediately signed into law, that gave the government preemptive rights to stakes being sold by foreign companies as well as greater latitude to intervene in such deals.⁷² In the end CNPC was forced to sell 33 percent of PetroKazakhstan to Kazakh national energy company KazMunaiGaz in addition to giving it a 50

⁶⁷ Anatoly Medetsky, "Ministry Touts High-Price Oil to Asia," *The Moscow Times*, July 30 2007.

⁶⁸ Andrea Mihailescu, "China to Get Russian Gas Later than Planned," *The Middle Eastern Times*, July 16 2007, <<http://www.metimes.com/storyview.php?StoryID=20070716-032257-14041>> (August 22 2007).

⁶⁹ For an excellent analysis of the Russian oil sector see: John Grace, *Russian Oil Supply: Performance and Prospects* (Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, 2005).

⁷⁰ "Russian, Chinese Firms Battle for Oil in Kazakhstan," *Agence France-Press*, November 1 2005.

⁷¹ "Russia's Lukoil Claims Victory in Kazakh Case," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, October 30 2006, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/10/BF0192A9-0FCE-41D5-8ECD-91B684DF1A08.html>> (August 22 2007).

⁷² Marat Yermukanov, "Kazakh Government Under Fire Over Chinese Takeover Deal," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, October 27 2005.

percent stake in the Shymkent refinery.⁷³ KazMunaiGaz is also in the process of purchasing 50 percent of CITIC Canada Petroleum, which was purchased under similar controversy by China's CITIC Group at the end of last year.⁷⁴

There are new rumors that China's CNOOC is interested in bidding on Houston based Transmeridian Exploration which holds the license to the South Alibek oil field in Kazakhstan.⁷⁵ The PetroKazakhstan deal was worth US\$4.18 billion, the CITIC deal was worth US\$1.9 billion and the South Alibek field is estimated to have a value of US\$970 million.⁷⁶ China is learning that it must think smaller and smaller when it comes to buying energy assets. What all of this suggests is that if there is any regional cooperation or coordination to be done, it will be to the detriment of China. And in fact, some of the recent proposals from officials and analysts support this contention.

Gas OPECs and the Other Kind of Energy Club

One of the proposals that has gotten much attention is the idea of forming a gas-OPEC, essentially establishing a cartel among natural gas producers that could control global prices and output. This option was supposedly first voiced by Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad at the 2006 SCO summit and has been promoted most vigorously by Iranian politicians.⁷⁷ At the time Russian President Vladimir Putin apparently reacted "coolly" to the proposal, but Western commentators became alarmed after an interview with Putin in February where he said that a gas-OPEC was an interesting idea and that Russia would consider coordinating its activities with other gas-producing countries.⁷⁸ Some began implying that the SCO could act as the underlying structure for this gas cartel.

Since then a number of analysts have rightly shown that the Western media's reaction was overblown. Jonathan Stern from the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies has noted that the Gas Exporting Countries

⁷³ Anna Shiryaevskaya, "KazMunaiGaz Completes Purchase of Shymkent Refinery from CNPC," *Platts Commodity News* via China Institute at Alberta University, November 17 2006, <<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/chinainstitute/navo3.cfm?navo3=53195&navo2=43876&navo1=43092>> (August 22 2007).

⁷⁴ "KazMunaiGaz to Get Loan to Buy 50% of CITIC Canada Petroleum," *Russia and CIS Oil and Gas Weekly*, February 7 2007.

⁷⁵ David Winning, "Why Chinese Firms Are Circling Tiny Transmeridian," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 15 2007.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Vahid Sepehri, "Iran: Politicians Support Establishment of Natural-Gas Cartel," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, February 6 2007, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/02/6FAAFoFE-8FEC-4DEF-B314-B4B474B5A6A7.html>> (August 22 2007).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Forum (GECF), which already exists to serve similar functions, is a chaotic and ineffective organization.⁷⁹ Since Russia and the Central Asian republics deliver most of their natural gas via pipeline rather than converting it into liquefied natural gas (LNG) and operate under long term contracts, it would be difficult to coordinate anything on a global or even regional level.⁸⁰ More importantly, it is unlikely that countries like Russia or Turkmenistan would be willing to handover decision making power over their energy policies to a multilateral organization. And although many commentators pointed to the fact that Iran has the second largest gas reserves in the world, Iran's gas production is very small compared to its potential, and subsidized gas prices in the country make domestic consumption high while exports remain low.⁸¹ The notion that a gas cartel would be built upon the foundation of the SCO seems the most far-fetched assertion of all. A gas cartel, or even a gas coordination mechanism to minimize competition (which is what Putin was proposing in February) would be to the disadvantage of China as it seeks to incorporate more natural gas into its energy mix. Why would the Chinese allow the SCO to form a gas cartel which would then be used to set higher prices for China? Especially at a time when it cannot come to agreement on how much it should pay for Russian gas and is probably eager to see more competition, not less?

But this is not only true of a gas-OPEC. When officials and experts talk about an "energy club" or "cooperation and coordination" within the SCO what some of them really want are "mechanisms to defuse potentially damaging competition among producers, consumers and transit states."⁸² What could this "damaging competition" entail other than a more open market where China is able to have greater choice as to who it gets its energy from and how much it pays for it? It doesn't seem very likely that China would buy into such a scheme.

Current Dynamics and Future Forecasts

If the SCO is not a catalyst for multilateral energy or other economic deals, and if it is not likely to become so in the future, what purpose does it serve in this sector? In a manner of speaking it actually serves to manage Chinese investment and integration with the region. Russia

⁷⁹ Jonathan Stern, "Gas-OPEC: A Distraction from Important Issues of Russian Gas Supply to Europe," *Oxford Energy Comment*, February 2007, <http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment_0207-1.pdf> (August 17 2007).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ "Iran: Natural Gas," *Country Analysis Briefs*, Energy Information Administration, August, 2006, <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Iran/NaturalGas.html>> (August 22 2007).

⁸² "Kazakhstan Pushes for Asian Energy Club," *News Briefing Central Asia*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, June 20 2007, <http://iwpr.net/?p=bca&s=b&o=336455&apc_state=henbbcadate2007> (August 22 2007).

understands that China is a much stronger economic power, in addition to which China is also either on par or significantly outspending Russia on its military.⁸³ So Russia does not have the leverage to keep China out of Central Asia. On top of which the Central Asian republics themselves don't wish to be dominated by Russia and do their best to keep balance between China, Russia, and to a lesser extent the West. China on the other hand is committed to a policy of economic development and peaceful rising, and wishes to minimize entanglement in foreign conflicts. Ultimately China would like a free trade zone in Central Asia where it could sell its exports (in Central Asia the average tariff on Chinese consumer goods is between 15-20 percent⁸⁴) and purchase natural resources, particularly energy.⁸⁵ By coming to an arrangement with China in Central Asia, Russia can concentrate on what it sees as far more serious intrusion by the West into the Balkans, Baltic, Caucasus and Eastern Europe. China on the other hand can pursue its energy and economic interests, within certain bounds. And both can use the organization to counteract what they see as U.S. hegemony/unilateralism and prevent the U.S. from having too large a presence in Central Asia, as was demonstrated in 2005 by the Astana Declaration which insisted that the U.S. set a timeline for the removal of its military bases in Central Asia.

What all of this means is that from an economic perspective the SCO acts as a forum in which Russia can check and/or decelerate Chinese economic encroachment into its traditional sphere of influence in Central Asia.⁸⁶ Russia does not use the SCO framework to make investments into Central Asia, but China does, which suggests that the SCO allows China and Russia to consult with each other about China's activities in the region to prevent a confrontation. This serves the interests of both

⁸³ Russia recently passed a three year budget for 2008-10 where defense spending will rise from US\$39.9 billion in 2008 to US\$49.8 billion by 2010. China's official defense budget in 2006 was US\$35.3 billion and has seen steady double digit growth since 1990. Moreover, some Pentagon officials claim that China greatly misrepresents its true defense spending, and that in 2005 it was actually US\$90 billion rather than the US\$30 billion claimed by the government.

"Russian Parliament Passes 3-Year Budget, 25 Percent Spending Increase by 2010," *The Associated Press* via *International Herald Tribune*, July 6 2007, <<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/07/06/business/EU-FIN-ECO-Russia-Budget.php>> (August 22 2007); "China's Military Budget Jumps 14%," *BBC News*, March 4 2006, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4773358.stm>> (August 22 2007).

⁸⁴ Raballand and Andresy, "Why Should Trade between Central Asia and China Continue to Expand?"

⁸⁵ Bailes and Dunay, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a regional security institution," pp. 25-26.

⁸⁶ For more on this see Mikhail Troitsky, "A Russian perspective on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization*. Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute, Policy Paper No. 17, May 2007.

countries. It allows China to further its economic interests without getting into unnecessary conflicts with Russia, and it provides Russia with a degree of transparency in regard to Chinese activities and possibly even some veto power. Of course, the SCO also helped create a general climate of goodwill by resolving the various border disputes between China and its neighbors, which no doubt facilitated greater investment. And it provides an opportunity for leaders in the region to meet regularly and further their agendas. But as I have shown above, this would happen in any case. Over the past year and a half the presidents of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia have all visited Beijing outside of the SCO context, as has the new president of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov. Numerous Chinese officials have made similar trips to Russia and the Central Asian republics.

Above all, the primary purpose of the SCO is regional security and more open military relations rather than a freer regional economic order. In this latter regard Russia would much prefer working within the Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to create a more favorable trading environment in the region, since both are only comprised of post-Soviet states and exclude China. It is within Eurasec that negotiations are actively taking place about forming a common market for oil and gas, even if thus far these efforts have been unsuccessful.⁸⁷ And it is within the CIS that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia agreed to set up a common electricity market.⁸⁸ This doesn't completely discount the possibility that comprehensive multilateral cooperation will emerge as a result of the SCO, but before that happens the SCO will have to undergo a fundamental change in its internal dynamic. Expanding membership to other countries could be enough to spark that change. India is an observer state to the SCO and sent Petroleum Minister Murli Deora to this year's summit.⁸⁹ This is an indication of how it wants to see the SCO develop and if it became a full member it might try to alter the focus away from the China-Russia dynamic and push for more energy and economic cooperation. But even that would only be a beginning with many of the same obstacles that I have already mentioned still to be overcome.

⁸⁷ "Eurasian Energy Market Still a Long Way Off," *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, April 26 2007.

⁸⁸ "Russia and Central Asia to Share Power," *News Briefing Central Asia Update*, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, May 31 2007.

⁸⁹ "Deora to Represent India at SCO," *India eNews*, August 13 2007, <<http://www.indiaenews.com/india/20070813/65343.htm>> (August 22 2007).

Japan's Upper House Election, July 29: Down or Dawn for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe?

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POLICY PAPER
July 2007



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Central Asian Labor Migrants in Russia: The "Diasporization" of the Central Asian States?

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ABSTRACT

At the turn of the 2000s, the emigration of Russians from Central Asia to Russia began to lose its relevance in comparison with the rapid development of migratory flows of Tajiks, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. These migratory flows have complex repercussions on the societies in question, both in Russia and in Central Asia. In Central Asia's impoverished societies, the possibility to migrate and try to find a job represents a real "safety valve." Indeed, labor out-migration postpones unemployment-fueled social tension and socio-political instability. In any case, these flows will have positive as well as negative consequences for the Central Asian economies and societies. They could also have a political impact. Despite their double edge nature, these migrations confirm the emergence of new interactions between Russia and Central Asia. Their consequences could include the risk of confrontation, but also the continuation of cultural exchanges and the preservation of ethnic diversity.

Keywords • Central Asia • Migration • Russia • Diaspora • Remittances

Introduction

In the 1990s, many observers noted the waning of Russian influence in the post-Soviet space, particularly in the five states of Central Asia. These countries were actively seeking to develop new bilateral relations with other countries, especially in the Middle East and Asia. At the beginning of the 2000s, this situation changed and Russia made a pronounced comeback on the Central Asian scene, both geopolitically and economically. This comeback can be partially explained as a result of a new and somewhat understudied phenomenon: migration. Indeed, at the turn of the 2000s, the emigration of "ethnic" Russians began to lose some of its relevance in comparison with the rapid development of migratory flows of the Central Asian titular nationalities. These flows of seasonal workers have come mainly from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and

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Uzbekistan. They constitute, nowadays, the most dynamic migratory movement within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The post-Soviet space is one of the areas most subjected to large-scale internal migrations and transit flows towards other countries. Russia has, in the span of merely a few years, become second only to the United States in terms of the number of migrants it absorbs.¹ These migrations play an increasingly important economic and social role in both the host country (Russia) and in the republics of Central Asia. They also lie behind fundamental issues in the domestic and foreign policies of these countries – potentially causing a great deal of social instability. As such, the phenomenon of internal Eurasian migration gives scholars the opportunity to rethink relations between a former metropolis and its periphery in a "post-colonial" situation.

Migratory Flows from Central Asia to Russia

Russia, a New Pole of Immigration

Having been a country of emigration since the 19th century, Russia suddenly became a country of immigration in the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2003, the country took in more than 10 million people, of which almost 8 million were former Soviet citizens, working out to a yearly average of 800,000 people.² Immigration from the CIS to Russia reached a peak in 1994, with more than 1 million legal migrants. However, as early as 1996-1997, the official migratory flows between the new post-Soviet states began to decrease. Since then, "ethnic" Russians have, to a great extent, left the republics where they were settled. Furthermore, the interethnic conflicts or the civil wars in the Caucasus, Tajikistan and Moldova have been resolved or at least "frozen," and the economic and political situations seem to have stabilized. In 2004, only 74,000 people from CIS countries legally settled in Russia.³

In the 1990s, particularly in the first half of the decade, immigration to Russia was dominated by forced migrants, asylum seekers, and especially by the return of "ethnic" Russians. Out of 10 million migrants, more than half were "ethnic" Russians (60 percent) or belonged to peoples with national autonomous status in Russia (Tatars, Bashkirs, etc.). In the first half of the decade, this group represented two-thirds of total migration into Russia, but since then their share of total migration has been decreasing progressively. Moreover, this figure only includes legal

¹ See A. Mansoor, B. Quillin (ed.) *Migration and Remittances. Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2006).

² A. De Tinguy, *La grande migration. La Russie et les Russes depuis l'ouverture du rideau de fer* (Paris: Plon, 2004), p. 368.

³ V. Mukomel', *Migratsionnaia politika Rossii. Postsovetskie konteksty* [Russian migratory politics. Post-soviet contexts] (Moscow: Institut sotsiologii RAN, 2005), p. 50.

migrants. It thus inflates the proportion of "ethnic" Russians, who for the most part migrate with official documents, and underestimates the number of illegal workers from other former-Soviet republics. Thus, there could be 2 million Azeris, 1 million Armenians, and 500,000 Georgians working illegally in Russia. As for the number of Chinese who settled illegally, this population is the object of the most controversial appraisals, with some estimates reaching as high as 2 million people, while less alarmist figures cite 500,000 citizens of the People's Republic of China working in Russia.⁴

The Migratory Losses of Central Asia

Central Asia remains the main source of émigrés within the CIS. Of the 8 million individuals who moved to Russia from CIS republics, half of them came from one of the five Central Asian states. In 2004, migrants from Kazakhstan accounted for 35 percent of all migrants coming from the CIS to Russia, while those from the other states of Central Asia accounted for 28 percent.⁵ The relatively high birth rates of the titular populations only partially compensate for these emigration flows. Since 1989, Kazakhstan's population has decreased by nearly 3 million people, or 20 percent. In the other republics, the numbers are lower, but substantial nonetheless. At least 4 percent of Uzbekistan's population (nearly 1 million people), and 7.5 percent of Kyrgyzstan's population (nearly 360,000 people) have emigrated.⁶ Tajikistan, despite having the fastest growth in population among the former Soviet republics, still saw an 11 percent decrease in its population (694,000 people) between the censuses of 1989 and 2000.⁷ The situation appears destined to stabilize in Kazakhstan, which in 2004 posted a positive migratory balance for the first time since 1968.

During the first half of the 1990s, these migratory flows mainly concerned the national minorities of these republics, above all the Russians. Since the second half of the 1990s, migration flows from Central Asia to Russia have primarily consisted of individuals holding titular nationalities. Since 1994, the net migratory balance of each of the titular nationalities from Central Asia to Russia has been positive; however, the number of Central Asian nationals who live legally and permanently in Russia has increased only moderately between the censuses of 1989 and 2002. It rose from 882,000 to 963,000 persons,

⁴ V. Tishkov, Zh. Zaionchkovskaia and G. Vitkovskaia, *Migrations in the Countries of the Former Soviet Union* (Global Commission on International Migration, 2005), p. 38.

⁵ Mukomel, *Migratsionnaia politika Rossii*, p. 53.

⁶ R. Abazov, "Economic Migration in Post-Soviet Central Asia: The Case of Kyrgyzstan," *Post-Communist Economies* 11, 2 (1999): p. 237-252.

⁷ R. H. Rowland, "National and Regional Population Trends in Tajikistan: Results from the Recent Census," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 46, 3 (2005), p. 202-223.

although only half of this increase can be attributed to migration. The number of Kazakhs settled in Russia increased from 636,000 to 654,000; the number of Uzbeks increased from 97,000 to 123,000; Turkmen now number only 33,000; and there are 32,000 Kyrgyz.⁸ The Tajiks have seen the highest proportional increase, from 38,000 to 120,000 people, particularly because of the forced migrant status that Russia granted to people displaced as a result of the Tajik civil war, which lasted from 1992 until 1996.

The Major Emigration Flow: Illegal Workers

These figures cannot be considered complete because they only represent people who have settled in Russia legally and on a long-term basis. As such the numbers fail to account for seasonal and/or illegal workers. In 2005, the Federation officially counted only 180,000 people from the CIS working with residence and work permits.⁹ Most experts agree that only 10 percent of foreign workers in Russia have the appropriate documents and registration with the proper authorities. By their very nature, figures for illegal immigration are particularly prone to fluctuation. Thus, Russian politicians, including President V. Putin, do not hesitate to point to a vague 10 to 15 million people. According to more modest Federal Migration Service estimates, 7-8 million people work illegally in Russia.¹⁰

Among Central Asian populations, the first migrants came from Tajikistan, fleeing difficult conditions caused by the civil war there. The Kyrgyz rapidly followed when the transition to a market economy initiated by Bishkek impoverished rural areas. In the 1990s, Uzbekistan was a country of immigration, in particular receiving refugees from Afghanistan and Tajikistan. At the end of the decade however, the situation changed and the country also became a supplier of migrants, who followed the same routes that Tajiks and Kyrgyz had in previous years. Very few Central Asian migrants have the appropriate documents and registration. According to official figures, Tajikistan sent only 16,800 workers to Russia, Uzbekistan 16,100, and Kyrgyzstan 30,000 in 2002. Even official figures augmented rapidly. Thus, in 2006, the Federal Migration Service counted 102,000 Uzbeks with permission to work in

⁸ J. Radvanyi, "Quelques réponses à une question non posée : l'islam et le recensement de la population de Russie en 2002" [Some answers to questions not asked: Islam and the 2002 Russian census], in M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse (ed.), *Islam et politique en ex-URSS* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), pp. 159-169.

⁹ Tishkov, Zaionchkovskaia and Vitkovskaia, *Migrations in the Countries of the Former Soviet Union*, p. 25.

¹⁰ See "Les migrants en Russie. Des populations fragilisées, premières victimes des crises politiques internes et externes," (International Federation for Human Rights, Paris, no. 472, April 2007), p. 17.

Russia.¹¹ In reality, the actual number for all five republics is estimated at 2 million: approximately 800,000 Tajiks, sometimes more according to the season; 500,000 Kyrgyz; and almost 1 million Uzbeks. In 2005, the Uzbek NGO, Tong Jahoni, reported that the total number of Uzbek migrants in Russia numbered at least 800,000.¹²

A very large majority of all Central Asian migrants work in Russia. This seems natural, since the Russian Federation has the most dynamic economy in the region and one can earn salaries five to twenty times larger there than in Central Asia. In addition, Russia does not require post-Soviet citizens to have a visa, with the exception of those from Georgia and Turkmenistan. A knowledge of the Russian language and the common Soviet past enables the migrants to remain inside a familiar cultural space. Networks that facilitate emigration are also more developed, since the Russian market for produce from Central Asia and the Caucasus was already established during the Soviet period. Yet, since the early 2000s, Russia is no longer the only country that attracts large numbers of Central Asian migrants; Kazakhstan has also become an attractive destination country. Its economic development enables it to absorb some of the workers from neighboring countries, such as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The unidirectional nature of migration towards Russia is particularly marked in Tajikistan. 97 percent of Tajik migrants work in Russia, but only 1.4 percent in Kyrgyzstan and 0.7 percent in Kazakhstan. In the other republics, the flows are more complex. Only half of Kyrgyz migrants work in Russia, while the other half are in Kazakhstan. About 70 percent of Uzbek migrants work in Russia, but tens of thousands of them have also settled in Kazakhstan or even outside the CIS, particularly in South Korea.¹³ One can also notice the existence of the flow of jobs across borders on a small scale. In the Ferghana valley, for example, Uzbeks recruited from day labor markets are authorized by the Uzbek authorities to go to building sites in Tajikistan for five days without a visa.¹⁴

¹¹ M. Vorob'ev, "Rossiia i Uzbekistan pytaiutsia stat' polnotsennymi ekonomicheskimi partnerami," [Russia and Uzbekistan try to become economic partners with one another], *CentrAsia*, March 12, 2007, <<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php4?st=1173671880>> (May 18 2007).

¹² Quoted by A. Ilkhamov, "Geographic mobility of Uzbeks: the emergence of crossnational communities vs. Nation-state control," Paper Prepared for NBR Conference on "Generational Change and Leadership Succession in Uzbekistan" March 2, 2006, Washington D.C., <www.nbr.org/programs/eurasia/Ilkhamov.pdf> (June 1 2007), p. 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴ D. Kimmage, "Uzbekistan: Migrating To Make Ends Meet," *RFE/RL*, August 2005, <www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/08/92b91bf8-3979-4b77-8d85-014d27b4b1e6.html> (April 12 2007).

Sociology of the Migrants, Sociology of Poverty?

The Sociological Profile of the Migrant

Migrants develop different family structures depending on whether they are settling for a long time, even illegally, or whether they work seasonally. Thus, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Afghan migrants who have settled in Russia are mostly accompanied by their families and they settle for the long term, while Central Asian migrants essentially seem to look for temporary work and, as a result, stay in Russia alone. About 200,000 Tajiks have nonetheless settled permanently in the Federation, while others work irregularly or seasonally. The average migrant is a young married male with a secondary education. In Central Asia, two age groups seem to be particularly subjected to migrations: young people in their twenties, who have to pay for a wedding or the building of a house; and older men in their forties or fifties, who need more sporadic financing for family celebrations such as children's weddings, circumcisions, or the extension of the family property. In Tajikistan, 90 percent of migrants are men. A quarter of them are between the ages of 18 and 29, another quarter are between 40 and 49, and those from 30 to 39 represent 40 percent of the total number of migrants.¹⁵

The older generation is statistically more educated and generally has a good command of the Russian language. As a result of this, they find better and more skilled labour. The youngest ones are less skilled, have a poor command of Russian, and get low-paying jobs – particularly in the building trade. More than 18 percent of Tajik migrants have completed higher education, 28 percent have completed an average specialized education, and 34 percent have completed an average general education.¹⁶ In the 1990s, migration appeared to affect the rural population less than it did others, relatively speaking. They were traditionally less mobile, as agricultural work requires a year round presence, and their mutual aid networks in the host countries were not very developed.¹⁷ Today, migratory flows originating from rural areas largely dominate. Likewise, sociological surveys signal the rapid feminization of Central Asian migration to Russia. This feminization is not attributable simply to the development of human trafficking, as prostitution is mainly directed at countries outside the CIS, but to the need for a low-skilled workforce in

¹⁵ A. Erlich, "Tajikistan: From Refugee Sender to Labor Exporter," *Migration Information Source*, <<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=411>> (May 22 2007).

¹⁶ S. Olimova, "Migratsionnye protsessy v sovremennom Tadjikistane," [The migration processes in contemporary Tajikistan] *Demoskop Weekly*, October 2005, <www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0223/analito5.php> (April 13 2007).

¹⁷ S. Soboleva, O. Chudaeva. "Inostrannye migranty na rossiiskom rynke truda," [Foreign migrants on their way to work in Russia], in *Migratsia i natsional'naia bezopasnost'*, pp. 90-104.

Russia, with female migrants taking jobs as waitresses, shop assistants, cleaning ladies, and day care workers.

The Geographic Origin of the Migrants

In Kyrgyzstan, migrants mostly come from the poorer, southern regions. In May 2006 the head of the Kyrgyz parliamentary Committee on Labor Migration, Kubanychbek Isabekov, admitted that the regional economies of Osh, Djalal-Abad, and Batken were doing so poorly that almost 70 percent of the population had to look for a job outside the country, mainly in Russia and in Kazakhstan.¹⁸ According to Mr. Isabekov, almost 90 percent of the 300,000 migrants (the figure officially recognized by the Kyrgyz government) came from the southern regions of the country, and only 10 percent came from northern regions like Bishkek, Kant, and the area of Issyk-Kul. The situation is similar in Tajikistan, where migrants mostly come from the mountainous regions, since the agricultural plains offer more opportunities for employment. Since the middle of the 1990s, more than 80 percent of the young men from Pamir have migrated for work.¹⁹ The mountainous nature of the two poorest republics, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—where almost 90 percent of the territory lies at an altitude above 1,500 meters—works in favor of these massive migrations. In Uzbekistan, where agriculture provides a livelihood for a majority of the population, migrants come mostly from the Ferghana valley. Though fertile and irrigated, the valley is overpopulated and more than half of its population, particularly young people, are unemployed. Some migrants also come from the poor southern provinces of Surkhandaria and Kashkhadaria.²⁰

The Geographic Distribution of Migration in Russia

The Russian region with the most illegal migrants is Moscow, which absorbed at least 1 million illegal workers.²¹ Second to Moscow is the central region of Centr, which absorbed nearly a third of all migrants. Southern regions like Krasnodar and Stavropol follow, experiencing a rise in the number of migrants due to the deterioration of the situation in

¹⁸ "A Kyrgyz lawmaker today said that the number of people seeking jobs abroad has reached alarming proportions," *RFE/RL*, May 31 2006, <www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/05/A1D6201D-A78B-4F4F-A692-2AA44C05AAE5.html> (May 30 2007).

¹⁹ S. Olimova, "Protsess suverenizatsii strany i migratsionnye protsessy v Tadjikistane," [Sovereignization and the migration process from Tajikistan] in *Zh. Zaionchkovskaia. Migratsionnaia situatsia v stranakh SNG* [The migration situation in the CIS countries] (Moscow: Kompleks – Progress, 1999), p. 230.

²⁰ Kimmage, "Uzbekistan: Migrating To Make Ends Meet".

²¹ On the situation in Moscow, see A. V. Dmitriev, *Migratsia. Konfliktnoe izmerenie* [Migrations. The conflictual dimension] (Moscow: Al'fa-M, 2006), pp. 231-269.

the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasus.²² While migrants from other post-Soviet republics mostly settle in the cities of European Russia, Central Asian migrants mainly go to the countryside and to Siberia, a sign of their low skill level.²³ The main Kyrgyz community in Russia is settled in Yekaterinburg and engages in the trade of Chinese products.²⁴ As for the Uzbeks, they make up the majority of illegal immigrants in Barnaul. A city in the Altay *krai*, Barnaul has a reputation for salaries which are low in comparison to those in other provincial Russian cities.²⁵

Half of the Tajik migrants in Russia are based in Moscow, while 14 percent have settled in Siberia, and 10 percent in the Volga-Ural regions. The largest communities have settled in sizeable provincial towns such as Yekaterinburg, Tiumen, Surgut, Novosibirsk, Novokuznets and Krasnoiarisk. In these heavily industrialized regions, Tajiks are employed in oil and gas firms, as well as in chemical factories. Migrants with relatives who moved to the agricultural sector at the beginning of the civil war try to settle, according to these networks, in the most agricultural regions. Few Central Asian migrants settle in the autonomous ethnic republics of the Russian Federation, which are perceived as pockets reserved for the titular nationalities. Central Asian migrants thus prefer to settle in Russian regions. The only exceptions to this are the republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, which seem to be relatively attractive destinations for the Turkic-speaking migrants, perhaps because of their linguistic and cultural links²⁶. Moreover, one can notice that the Tajiks are starting to migrate toward Afghanistan, as that country has a significant need for educated migrants, especially from the fields of medicine, technology, and engineering.²⁷

The Professional Distribution of the Migrants

The labor market for illegal migrants is separate from that which is reserved for citizens and legal migrants. Low wages, difficult working conditions, and jobs with little prestige do not attract Russian citizens

²² Zh. Zaionchkovskaya, "Rynok truda kak reguliator migratsionnykh potokov," in G. Vitkovskaia (ed.). *Migratsia i rynki truda v postsovetskoï Rossii* [Migration and the labor market in post-Soviet Russia] (Moscow: Carnegie, 1998), p. 13.

²³ I. N. Molodikova and N. N. Nozdrina, "Prichiny i geografia migratsii v Rossii," [Causes and patterns of migrations in Russia] in *Migratsionnaia situatsia v stranakh SNG*, p. 147.

²⁴ N. Zotova, "V Moskve sozdana novaia organizatsiia dlia pomoshchi migrantam iz Srednei Azii," [A new aid organization for Central Asia migrants created in Moscow], Ferghana.ru, January 12 2007, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4830>> (May 3 2007).

²⁵ Iu. Guzhvenko, "Podavliaiushchee bol'shinstvo trudovykh migrantov v Barnaule – uzbeki," [The vast majority of migrant laborers in Barnaul are Uzbeks], Ferghana.ru, October 9 2006, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4629>> (May 3 2007).

²⁶ V. Lunin, "Tatarstanu nuzhny trudosposobnye migranty – kvalifitsirovannye rabochie," [Tatarstan needs skilled, qualified migrants], Ferghana.ru, April 26 2007, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=5090>> (May 3 2007).

²⁷ Olimova, "Migratsionnye protsessy v sovremennom Tadjikistane".

and thus create many vacancies. These vacancies cannot be filled through official immigration quotas, which are not large enough to compensate for the labor shortages. Indeed, almost one-third of Russian firms would face labor shortages without migration, particularly in industrial regions in crisis, like the Urals.²⁸ Thus, they recruit many illegal migrants, especially during the spring and summer months, when open-air sites are at peak of their operations. The recruitment of migrants by these companies creates tensions between employers and the local administrative services, which want firms to hire local staff. However, wages are so low in these regions (from US\$100 to US\$200 per month) that few Russian citizens would agree to work.²⁹ Thus, the migrants fill roles that Russians have cast off. According to the group "Delovaia Rossia," which represents Russian small businesses, foreigners account for 40 percent of construction workers, 30 percent of shuttle trade workers, 7 percent of agricultural workers, and 4 percent of transport workers.³⁰

More than half of the migrants coming from Central Asia work on building sites in the construction sector, and suffer from particularly difficult living and working conditions. One-third of them have jobs in "ethnic businesses" like transportation and trade—for example in produce from Central Asia, or everyday goods, textiles and tools from China, all passing through Central Asia *en route* to Russia. Consequently, Central Asian migrants dominate this sphere of activity, although Russians from the Southern republics also play an important role. The spheres of activity least favored by migrants are agriculture (though it remains the favorite sector of Uzbeks and Kyrgyz working in Kazakhstan), and the business services industry (particularly within the field of oil production). Only 6 percent of Central Asian migrants work in each of these two areas. Nonetheless, the position of Central Asians in Russian agriculture seems to be on the rise. Their skills in this sector combined with the desire of Russian citizens to leave the rural areas in favour of work in urban centres encourage this trend. Thus, close to 70

²⁸ Ivankhniuk and R. Daurov, "Nezakonnaia migratsia i bezopasnost' Rossii: ugrozy, vyzovy, riski," [Illegal migration and Russian security: threats, issues and risks], in *Migratsia i natsional'naia bezopasnost'* [Migration and national security] (Moscow: Maks Press, 2003), p. 34.

²⁹ Z. Ibragimov, "Ferghana valley's unemployed feed a thirsty russian labor market," *Eurasianet.org*, March 10 2003, <www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav100302.shtml> (May 15 2007).

³⁰ N. Zotova, "Trudovaia migratsia v Rossii i stranakh SNG: tendentsii, problemy i puti sotrudnichestva," [Labor migration in Russia and the CIS countries: trends, problems, and avenues for cooperation], *Ferghana.ru*, May 16 2007, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=5138>> (May 30 2007).

percent of agricultural workers in Astrakhan and Volgograd come from Central Asia.³¹

The Deterioration of Transportation Conditions

The number of airline flights between Russia and the capitals of Central Asia doubled in the 1990s, confirming the importance of the economic relationship between the two areas.³² However, this mode of transportation remains much too expensive for the majority of migrants. In the 1990s, most of them arrived in Russia by train, a journey that cost no more than US\$300. Currently, the pauperization of some social strata in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan compels many Central Asian migrants to use buses, as rail and air travel have become increasingly inaccessible.³³ Thus, transit conditions on trips that can last several days are exhausting and are further complicated by racketeering schemes organized by the customs services at the borders. These difficult circumstances are exacerbated by poor bilateral relations between the Central Asian states. In 2001, authorities in Astana refused to allow the Astrakhan-Dushanbe train to pass through because of the number of illegal Tajik migrants who could get off along the way on Kazakh territory. Since the Tajik civil war, Uzbekistan has also blocked the railway line that once connected Tashkent and Dushanbe, and has demanded a transit visa for Tajik citizens on their way to Russia. Tajikistan, in particular, thus suffers as a result of being surrounded by unfriendly states which impose strict transit visa regulations.

The Legal and Social Difficulties Resulting from the Migrants' Unlawful Status

Illegal migrants working in Russia live in extremely difficult conditions and do not benefit from legal protection. The general political situation in the Federation does not allow them to be helped by the public administration or NGOs responsible for defending workers rights. Indeed, Lydia Grafova's Forum of Migrants' Organizations was suspended in 2006, like many other associations that the Kremlin considered too favorable to Caucasian migrants. Moreover, Russia has

³¹ N. Zotova, "Pochti sem'desiat protsentov sel'khokul'tur Astrakhanskoi i Volgogradskoi oblastei vyrashchivaetsia migrantami iz Srednei Azii," [Close to 70 percent of agriculture in Astrakhan and Volgograd is cultivated by Central Asian migrants], Ferghana.ru, September 13 2006,

<<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4590>> (May 10 2007).

³² J. Thorez, "Itinéraires du déracinement. L'essor des migrations de travail entre l'Asie centrale et la Russie," *Espace, population et sociétés*, 1 (2007).

³³ M. Mansur, "Uzbekistan: Migrants Suffer Russian Humiliation," May 24 2002, Institute for War and Peace reporting web site,

<www.iwpr.net/?p=rca&s=f&o=176446&apc_state=henirca2002> (April 12 2007).

implemented an ambiguous and contradictory migration policy, mainly conceived in a reactive, rather than proactive, manner. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the Russian authorities have acknowledged that the country has begun to experience a demographic crisis. Russia will lose a million people in the next twenty years. The rapid aging of the population creates a substantial labor shortage, which has already been noticeable for several years in certain sectors. Some experts estimate that 3 million (mostly low-wage) jobs could be filled in Russia. Finance Minister, Aleksei Kudrin, has even openly acknowledged that the country would have to legalize migrants *en masse* in order to maintain the development of its economy. On several occasions, President Vladimir Putin cited the importance he places on migrants from the post-Soviet republics who share Russian culture and have a command of the Russian language, adding that they could be among the first to benefit, along with the "ethnic" Russians, from the migration policy of the Federation.³⁴ However, since public opinion is mostly hostile to opening the border, and the Russian political elites remain divided on the issue, Russia does not presently have a coherent policy concerning migration.

Economic Exploitation without Any Legal Protection

Central Asian migrants are completely vulnerable to the arbitrary whims of their employers in Russia. They suffer from the absence of decent housing, the lack of access to hygiene (unhealthy groups of huts, disused carriages, etc.), exhausting work conditions on building sites plagued by industrial accidents, the absence of any work contracts that would make it difficult for employers to fire migrants without notice, the regular refusal to pay wages, and a quasi systematic lack of health insurance. On top of this, the police forces are often corrupt, and exploit the migrant's illegal status in order to extort money from them. The migrants cannot try to secure better living and working conditions because they send the vast majority of their wages back to their countries of origin. They also are increasingly forced to rely on companies that specialize in sending seasonal workers to Russia. These labor traffickers help migrants who do not have sufficient networks to find work on their own, but they also raise the cost of migration due to the fees they charge. In these conditions, many migrants are forced to become involved in illegal activities in order to accumulate large sums of money quickly. This only contributes to the sentiment among Russians that illegal immigrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus work alongside mafia networks.³⁵

³⁴ M. Laruelle, "La question des Russes du proche-étranger en Russie (1991-2006)", *Étude du CERI*, 126 (2006).

³⁵ See for instance Iu. Latov, O. Vykhovanec (ed.), *Nelegal'naia migratsia v sovremennoi Rossii* [*The illegal migrations in contemporary Russia*] (Moscow: RGGU, 2006).

Daily Xenophobia and Racist Murders

In such conditions, the death rate of Central Asian migrants in Russia has reached significant heights. In 2005, the Tajik Interior Ministry had to recognize that 246 Tajik citizens had died in Russia: 115 from disease, 99 from accidents, and 36 from murder. According to unofficial figures, between 600 and 700 Tajiks die in Russia every year. To this phenomenon one can add the worrisome rise of xenophobia within Russian society.³⁶ Sociological studies carried out on this subject confirm that a major part of the Russian population believes that Russia takes in too many foreigners. This same segment of the population maintains that migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus should not benefit from preferential conditions that allow them to settle in Russia, even though they are former Soviet citizens. As a result, racism has now become an integral part of the everyday life of Central Asian migrants. They face discrimination in the housing market, unfair treatment when attempting to access social services, and repeated insults. According to a study conducted in 2003, 70 percent of Tajik migrants limit their time in public to travel to and from work and home.³⁷ Migrants often worry about this deterioration of interethnic relations between former Soviet peoples. Moreover, skinhead movements, which recruit heavily in certain provincial towns and in the two capitals, Moscow and St. Petersburg, have drawn attention to themselves on several occasions due to their attacks against "Southerners." The SOVA Center, an analytical center that conducts sociological research on development of nationalism and racism in modern Russia, reported 520 such racist attacks in 2006, of which 54 were deadly.³⁸ These increasingly violent attacks, supported by far-right groups, are essentially organized pogroms. They often lead to the death of the victims, many of whom are Tajiks, Kazakhs, or Kyrgyz. One of the latest pogroms, on August 21, 2006, resulted in the death of twelve people in the market of Cherkizovo, including four Tajik nationals.

Lack of Mechanisms to Legalize the Migrants

The administrative complexity of regulatory procedures in Russia does not encourage companies to apply to the Federal Migration Service on behalf of their foreign employees. Russian legislation on naturalization, work permits, and residence permits is particularly complex and thus

³⁶ See "Les migrants en Russie. Des populations fragilisées, premières victimes des crises politiques internes et externes," (International Federation for Human Rights, Paris, no. 472, April 2007).

³⁷ S. Zaurbekov, "Nekotorye osobennosti tadjzhikskoi trudovoi migratsii v Rossiui," [Some specificities of Tajik labor migration in Russia], Ferghana.ru, February 21 2007, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4928>> (April 30 2007).

³⁸ For more information, see their web site, <http://xeno.sova-center.ru>.

discourages migrants from seeking legal work status. The compulsory registration (*propiska*) is so difficult to obtain in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other Russian cities that it compels migrants to remain outside the law. This legal situation has worsened since 2001, when the Federal Migration Service came under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry, which is characterized by a political culture which does not support legalization in favor of migrants.

Since 2006, the Russian authorities have become aware of the importance of regulating migratory flows, and accordingly they passed legislation which aims to select immigrants. The new law on migrants was voted on July 18, 2006, and entered into effect on January 15, 2007. It reduces the requirements for registration and obtaining a work permit for those migrants who cross, or crossed, the border legally. It does not, however, normalize those already present on Russian territory without formal status. More than 700,000 foreigners received work permits in 2006 – a number which remains small compared to the millions of illegal immigrants living in Russia.³⁹ Due to this law, the Russian authorities now have the right to establish quotas for economic migrants coming from countries that do not need visas to enter Russia: for 2007, their number is fixed at 6 million. Since April 1, 2007, another law concerning the limitation on the number of foreigners in bazaars and retail commerce entered into effect. Its objective clearly seems to be to calm the xenophobic worries of the majority of Russian citizens regarding Central Asians and Caucasians working in the small business sector.

Some Initial Legal Improvements

The difficult situation faced by migrants in Russia can only be improved through bilateral or multilateral agreements between the states supplying the migrants and those receiving them. In Central Asia, Uzbekistan has refused to recognize the scale of the migratory phenomenon and its major economic role. Consequently, this country has not tried to reach any diplomatic agreement with Russia on the issue. The State Agency for Labor Out-Migration is the only institution with the right to organize the migration of Uzbek citizens. In 2005, new restrictions on travel to Russia were introduced, and since then Uzbek workers have been forced to obtain exit visas to travel to Russia.⁴⁰ Only Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have attempted to set up legal mechanisms to facilitate this migration and to protect their nationals once they are settled in Russia. As

³⁹ F. Dzhani, "Rossiia: novye pravila dlia tovgovtsev-inostrantsev kak 'fors-mazhorne obstoiatel'stva'," [Russia: new rules for foreign vendors presented as 'a case of major importance'] January 16 2007, *Ferghana.ru*, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4847>> (May 4 2007).

⁴⁰ A. Ilkhamov, "Geographic mobility of Uzbeks: the emergence of crossnational communities vs. Nation-state control," p. 19.

Tajikistan was the first state to experience the phenomenon on a large scale in the 1990s, it managed to open some initial negotiations on the matter, due to its close economic and security links to Russia (the 201st Russian armed division guarded the Tajik-Afghan border until 2005).

As early as 2000, the Tajik government asked the Russian authorities to sign a bilateral agreement in order to protect Tajik nationals and force Russian employers to ensure decent living and working conditions for Tajik workers.⁴¹ In 2002, Dushanbe approved a multi-year program aimed at regulating its migrants. However, Russian-Tajik relations on issues related to migration are not always good. In 2003, for example, Moscow caused an uproar by returning one hundred Tajik seasonal workers to their home country. However, Russia quickly returned to its previous position and announced that it wanted to favor more open labor immigration. In 2004, the Duma passed a law on social protection for Tajik migrants, which was supposed to facilitate their legalization and give them access to health insurance. The legislation of post-Soviet countries is nonetheless becoming more complex, which does a disservice to the migrants. Since July 2005, for example, internal passports do not allow their holders to pass through the borders of the countries of the CIS. Instead, one must have a visa or an international passport, which can be particularly costly – particularly for impoverished segments of the population. In December 2005, the Duma approved a new text according to which Kyrgyz and Tajik labor migrants could enter Russia with only their external passport (except for those coming by train, since Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan demand a transit visa). The Duma's document caused violent opposition from the Russian nationalist parties, in particular the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia of Vladimir Zhirinovskii and the parliamentary fraction Rodina. The Tajik government went back on its decision, and again required a compulsory international passport from its migrants.⁴²

Despite the presence of legal complexities, it seems that migrants have begun to organize themselves in order to collectively defend their rights. The Tajiks were the first to do so. For several years, many organizations, among them the "Tajikistan Fund" directed by Garvkhar Dzhuraeva and "Inson," directed by Muzaffar Zaripov, offer consultative, legal, health, and psychological services to migrants.⁴³ Since

⁴¹ N. Zokirova, "Tajikistan: Treaty Boosts Migrant Workers," August 13 2003, Institute for War and Peace reporting web site,

<www.iwpr.net/?p=rca&s=f&o=175247&apc_state=henirca2003> (April 2 2007).

⁴² A. Fradchuk, "Tajik authorities withdraw a major concession for migrant workers in Russia shortly after announcing it," December 5 2005, *Spero News*, <<http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?id=2239>> (May 21 2007).

⁴³ Zotova N, "Regional'nyi obshchestvennyi fond 'Tadzhikistan' aktivno pomogaet migrantam v Rossii otstaiivat' svoi prava," [The regional association "Tajikistan" actively

2002, these two groups have published the journal *Migratsia i pravo*. In 2006, a new organization, Centrasia, was created. It aims mainly to assist Kyrgyz migrants, but also supports the activities of other Central Asian interest groups, particularly among the Uzbeks.⁴⁴

The Economic and Social Impact of Migration in Central Asia

During Soviet times Central Asia was characterized by one of the lowest rates of out-migration inside Soviet Union. The post-Soviet development of this region drives major social changes, as these previously immobile societies become diasporas. The disappearance of the industrial fabric of the republics and the regular increase in unemployment cause Central Asians to look to emigration as one of the only routes to exit poverty. Established strategies therefore move from the individual to the group. Very frequently families, the mahalla or village support the migratory departure of young men and finance the trip.

Economies that Cannot Function Without Migrants

In the Soviet era, the republics of Central Asia benefited the most from the distribution of Soviet incomes on the financial, technical and human levels. The impoverishment of the new states has thus been a crucial factor explaining these migratory flows, and presently Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian country that appears to have emerged from the post-Soviet economic crisis.⁴⁵ Therefore it is no coincidence that the countries now experiencing the biggest migratory flows—Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan—are also the countries with the smallest GDP, highest rates of unemployment, and most substantial birth rates. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which remain the poorest republics in Central Asia, have particularly weak economies for which the remittances from migratory work constitute an essential cash inflow. Both countries are listed among the poorest in the world, with a GNP per capita of close to US\$350 per year. According to UN data, more than 60 percent of the population of Tajikistan lives below the poverty line, subsisting on less than a dollar per day.⁴⁶ In Kyrgyzstan, where this figure is about 50 percent, many rural areas still remain on the edge of economic suffocation. For example, almost 90 percent of the population of the Naryn region lives below the poverty line. For Tajikistan, with a workforce estimated at less than 2

helps migrants to Russia defend their rights] December 8 2006, Ferghana.ru, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4773>> (May 3 2007).

⁴⁴ "V Moskve sozdana novaia organizatsia dlia pomoshchi migrantam iz Srednei Azii," [A new aid organization for Central Asian migrants is created in Moscow] January 12 2007, Ferghana.ru, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4830>> (May 3 2007).

⁴⁵ See the Central Asia Human Development Report 2005, <http://europeandcis.undp.org/index.cfm?wspc=CAHDR2005_ru>.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

million people, migrants are crucial, since they represent about half of the entire working age population. The figures are almost the same in Kyrgyzstan. There, almost 10 percent of its citizens migrate for work, which is equal to about 20 percent of the male population. One-third of all Kyrgyz families depend directly on the income sent by migrants. In Tajikistan, at least one household in four includes a migrant.⁴⁷

The Importance of Remittances

Detailed facts and figures concerning remittances are difficult to obtain, since local banks do not release information concerning financial transfers from Russia to the countries of Central Asia. In addition, a good part of this money circulates informally. For the three countries in question—Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan—the total amount of these transfers is valued at US\$4 billion per year.⁴⁸ According to the IMF, the remittances from Tajik migrants will soon reach US\$1 billion, a sum equal to almost 50 percent of the Tajik GDP.⁴⁹ These figures indicate that this country is possibly more dependent on remittances than any other country in the world, even more so than the countries of Central America. In Kyrgyzstan, the figures are similar. According to Isabekov, each Kyrgyz worker sends an average of US\$100 per month, and sometimes more to his family. The total amount of remittances would equal at least the annual budget of the country, which is less than US\$500 million. In total, these 500,000 migrants directly finance more than 1 million citizens out of the 5 million living in Kyrgyzstan.

One of the economic issues faced by the Central Asian countries is the capacity of the state to receive a part of this financial inflow in order to incorporate it into its budget and eventually redistribute it. With the notable exception of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, the other countries of Central Asia do not have any effective system for bank transfers. In 2001, the Tajik government decided to impose a 30 percent tax on remittances. Migrants have preferred to conduct these transfers in cash to avoid paying this tax – however personally transporting this money increases the risks of corruption at customs and the dangers of extortion during travel. However, for several years banks specializing in transfers, like Western Union, have multiplied in the post-Soviet space, and increasingly facilitate secure monetary transfers. In addition, the Tajik

⁴⁷ See the remarks made by M. Naderi, the representative of the International Organisation for Migration in Tadjikistan, IOM Web site, September 8 2006, <<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pbnEU/cache/offonce/lang/fr?entryId=10647>> (April 20 2007).

⁴⁸ Tishkov, Zaionchkovskaia and Vitkovskaia, *Migrations in the Countries of the Former Soviet Union*, p. 28.

⁴⁹ A. Kireyev. "The Macroeconomics of Remittances: The Case of Tajikistan", *International Monetary Fond Working Paper* (Washington: IMF, 2006), p. 4.

government has been working for several years with the UNDP to optimize these incomes and combine them with projects sponsored by the international funds to support local infrastructure and micro-credit.⁵⁰ The Kyrgyz authorities have recognized that this financial contribution was beneficial to the country: it contributed to improving Kyrgyz economy, particularly because of the investments made by migrants in sectors such as agriculture.

The Social Impact of Migrations on the Central Asian Societies

According to a study conducted by the International Organization for Migration in 2003, the money saved by migrants and sent back to their countries of origin was used by only a quarter of the families to finance everyday life purchases. The remaining three quarters of the families put the money towards the building of a house, the purchase of a car, the financing of their childrens' education, or to establish a private business. In Central Asia, almost 70 percent of remittances are sent to rural areas, while in the other countries of the former USSR, such as the Caucasus, they are mostly sent to urban areas. Thus, the social transformations caused by these massive migrations are significant. Among other potential benefits, the transfer of funds ensures a regular source of income, creates a rise in the domestic demand for goods, supports economic growth, and broadens possibilities for investment. The Tajik and Kyrgyz governments admit that migrations allow for improvements in human capital. Migrants return with new training, expertise, and linguistic knowledge that they cannot acquire in their home countries. This also indirectly compensates for the disappearance of an efficient school system in Central Asian rural regions.

Among the negative aspects, the "brain drain" should be mentioned, as should the surge in prices. For example, in Dushanbe some migrants returning from Russia have above-average standards of living – this alters the balance of prices, especially in the real-estate market.⁵¹ These massive migrations also have an important impact as a result of the loss of workforce. From April to November, villages become empty, commerce in markets drops, prices fall, and marriages are postponed until the fall. One also notes the critical absence of students from technical schools.⁵² The disappearance of so many men in villages and small towns creates a

⁵⁰ E. Trouth Hofmann and C. Buckley, "The Value of Remittances. Effects of Labor Migration on Families in Tajikistan," Paper read at the *Annual Convention of the Association for Study of Nationalities (ASN)*, New-York, Columbia University, April 12-14 2007.

⁵¹ Personal remarks from the field, Dushanbe, June 2004.

⁵² D. Sulaiman, "Sezon nachalsia: uzbekskie trudovye migranty otpravilis' za rubezh," [The season began: Uzbek migrants depart for abroad] May 31 2007, Ferghana.ru, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=5160>> (June 3 2007).

labor shortage, intensifies the lack of small shopkeepers, and has a detrimental impact on the agricultural industry, since the migratory flows are most intense during the harest months. Migration also has a complex impact on the position of women in society. As it happens, women remain alone in their home countries with elderly persons and children. They become the managers of the households and obtain a certain autonomy in the daily management of family life. At the same time, they suffer the repercussions of a strong decline in their already low living standards, since they must often cope with unforeseen economic events of their own. They are increasingly subjected to polygamy and the principle of the "extended family," principally due to the decreasing male population. Many migrants start their lives over again in Russia, marrying other women and ceasing to finance their family members in Central Asia. In societies traditionally defined by patriarchal structures, the absence of fathers and husbands will likely lead to significant long-term cultural consequences.

Conclusion

These migratory flows have complex repercussions on the societies in question, both in Russia and in Central Asia. The economic development of the Russian Federation benefits from these migratory flows, which compensate for the aging population and the labor shortage. Yet, xenophobic tensions may lead to a serious destabilization. Despite the arrival of several million "ethnic" Russians in the country since the 1990s, the percentage of ethnic Russians has decreased between the two censuses, from 81.5 percent in 1989 to 79.8 percent in 2002. The changes in the ethnic urban landscape caused by the arrival of migrants on a large scale—whether they come from the former Soviet republics or from the "far abroad"—are being exploited by Russian nationalist movements in order to radicalize the population in their favor. Hence, the Russian Federation experiences the same processes as Western European countries, whose migratory policies waver between the pragmatic acknowledgement of an inescapable economic necessity to accept more migrants, and the nationalist phobias brought about by social and ethnic diversity.

For the three states of Central Asia confronted with these massive migratory flows, the stakes seem to be even higher. In impoverished societies, for which the disappearance of the Soviet Union has above all signified the decrease of living standards, the possibility to migrate to try to find a job represents a real "safety valve." Today, the Tajik and Kyrgyz governments seem to be well aware that the political stability of their countries depends on these migrations; and that it is in their interest to accept the resulting social impact, and to legally control and politically

defend these migratory movements. Indeed, labor out-migration postpones unemployment-fueled social tension and socio-political instability. Uzbekistan is, for the moment, the sole republic that refuses to acknowledge its difficult social situation, particularly in the Ferghana valley. In any case, these flows will have positive as well as negative consequences for the Central Asian economies and societies. Migration could also have an important political impact: the populations that regularly go to Russia have access to a society which, though far from being democratic, nonetheless constitutes a model of development for the countries of Central Asia. Despite their double-edged nature, these migrations confirm the emergence of new interactions between Russia and Central Asia. Their consequences could conceivably include the risks of some confrontations but also the maintenance of some cultural exchanges and the preservation of a certain ethnic diversity. Thus, the former imperial power continues to play a stabilizing role by absorbing a part of the economic and social current difficulties of Central Asia.

China's Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations

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ASIA PAPER
July 2007



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The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly (ISSN: 1653-4212) – formerly *CEF Quarterly* and *CEF Monthly*. Volume and issue numbers follow the sequence of *CEF Quarterly* and *CEF Monthly*. The first issue of *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* was numbered Volume. 3, No. 3, November 2005.

THE CHINA AND EURASIA FORUM QUARTERLY

Volume 5, No. 3

August 2007

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ISSN: 1653-4212