

THE CHINA AND EURASIA FORUM QUARTERLY

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*Central Asia- Caucasus Institute
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Editor-in-Chief

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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

For Central Asia the year 2009 was dominated by the impact of the global economic crisis. While the national economies resisted more or less successfully the global downturn, and the regimes managed to avoid any social destabilization (the mechanisms of assistance functioned, in particular in Kazakhstan, where the government released billions of dollars in aid to bankrupt companies) the crisis continues to weigh heavily on everyday life: household revenues must deal with inflation, in particular on the prices of food products, and the remittances sent by millions of Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tajik migrants were less sizeable than anticipated, rendering the situation in the countryside more difficult. In Kazakhstan, banks and construction companies will have difficulties setting themselves straight again after the bubble, that had fed the frenetic development of the financial and real estate sectors, burst. Furthermore, the year ended with two major geopolitical events: the scandal surrounding Kazakhstan's likely sale of more than 1,000 tons of slightly enriched uranium to Iran, information which Astana immediately denied, but which, true or false, reveals the tensions linked to the Iranian nuclear program in the region; and the inauguration of the Chinese gas pipeline, which confirms that, as regards the export of hydrocarbons, the Central Asian regimes are clearly focused on the East.

Two thousand and nine was also a year in which Islamist activities revived in the region. Given the fact that the Uzbek, Tajik, and Kyrgyz governments habitually brandish the threat of Islamist subversion to justify their interventions, it is necessary to be cautious as to the extent of this "revival." In the spring, bomb attacks were organized in Khananad, in the Uzbek part of the Fergana Valley, leading to the closure of the border with Kyrgyzstan. In Tajikistan, the events connected with the return of the warlord Mullah Abdullo in the Rasht Valley are quite unclear, but the Tajik special forces spent several weeks trying to neutralize resistant groups, comprising of a few hundred men. Several incidents were reported in October involving Islamist militants and forces of order, including the Tajik police in the town of Isfara on the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border, and also the Kyrgyz police in the Tajik enclave of Vorukh in the Batken region. During the fall, Kyrgyzstan was shaken by tensions linked to the religious situation, with the administrations of the

southern regions concerned by the hardening of legislation regarding Islam.

In 2010, Central Asia is set to enter the headlines in a more favorable light, since it is Kazakhstan's turn to take up the OSCE chairmanship, and Uzbekistan's to take up the presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. If the entire international community is looking at Kabul with concern, for the states of Central Asia 2010 is well and truly the year of Afghanistan: with the United States and NATO establishing a Northern Distribution Network, givens of the situation are bound to change drastically, for better or for worse. For Washington this corridor is a key element of the new Afghan strategy, since the supply routes through Pakistan are overloaded and are attacked with increasing regularity. Following Barack Obama's decision to send 30,000 additional American soldiers, the non-military stock requirements of the international coalition will increase from 200 to 300 percent for 2010–2011 as compared with 2009. The northern corridor has re-launched cooperation between the United States and Central Asia, in particular with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The idea is for it to be accompanied by a reinforcement of American economic aid and a renewal of military cooperation with Tashkent. It will modify the regional balance insofar as Uzbekistan will thereby again come to have a central place in NATO's designs and will reinforce its influence in the Mazar e-Sharif region, where it has been established since the Soviet period. For those states being used as transit corridors to Afghanistan, this new situation increases the risks: the local governments as well as NATO take the probability of terrorist attacks seriously, and the experience will serve as a test concerning the presence of organized Islamist networks in Central Asia.

In this issue, brief comments are provided to shed light on these current issues: the role played by the European Union during the Spanish Presidency in relation to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan (Nicolas de Pedro); Beijing's management of the Xinjiang crisis (Yuhui Li); the potential role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Afghanistan (Azganush Migranian); and the crucial question of the collective use of water in Central Asia (Li Lifan). Two analytical articles cover key moments of the regional situation: the renewal of the activism of Uzbek Islamists in both Afghanistan and the tribal zones of north Pakistan (Peter Sinnott); and the prospects of developing an energy partnership between the European Union and Central Asia, in particular Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan (Luba Azarch). Two more articles are devoted to studying the evolution of Turkey's geopolitical situation from the perspective of the Abkhaz diaspora issue and Ankara's energy

ambitions (Laurent Vinatier and Thrassy Marketos), while another article tackles Afghanistan and the question of water, irrigation development, and future climate change (David W. Rycroft and Kai Wegerich).

Sébastien Peyrouse, Managing Editor

Spain and Central Asia: Prospects for 2010

*Nicolás de Pedro**

Introduction

During the first six months of 2010, Spain holds the European Union Presidency. At the same time Kazakhstan would be chairing the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Uzbekistan would be chairing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). This triple coincidence has awoken numerous expectations in the three capitals, due to, on one hand, the prospect of a satisfactory interaction among organisations, especially what EU-OSCE are concerned, and on the other hand, the possibilities to reinforce bilateral relations during this period. Besides, during the Spanish presidency, a review of the European strategy adopted in July 2007 will take place in order to give a boost to Brussels' role in Central Asia. Therefore, Madrid's bilateral relations with both Astana and Tashkent might actually have significant weight during this process.

The Strategy represents the EU's attempt to develop a comprehensive and long-vision approach with political aims in Central Asia, a region of mounting strategic importance for Brussels. In the Strategy, the EU identifies security and stability as its strategic area of focus, but it adopts a comprehensive approach as the EU wants to see "a peaceful, democratic and economically prosperous Central Asia" believing these aims are interrelated. The objectives of the European Union also include a political, an economic, a social and a cultural dimension, since the evolution of those issues in Central Asia has a direct and an indirect impact in the own security and interest of the EU.

Spain is a relative latecomer in Central Asia, though Madrid's action on the region has sped up over the last two years, mainly since the Spanish OSCE presidency in 2007. Besides, some qualitative issues single out Spain's role and interest in the region, up to the point of including Central Asia among the priorities of Spanish authorities during its European presidency, and an ambassador-at-large has been appointed in

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order to ease coordination among the diverse aspects of Spanish foreign affairs.

The decision to include Central Asia among the priorities of the Spain's EU presidency, which appears surprising at first sight, is justified on four reasons. First is the fluency of its bilateral relations between Spain and Kazakhstan. Both Madrid and Astana have described their relations as "excellent." Similarly, the fluent relations between Madrid and Tashkent will be dramatically reinforced during 2010. Second, the Spanish troops deployed in Afghanistan pass through Central Asia. Third, there is recognition of Central Asia as an outstanding area of 21st century world politics and as a key scenario for configuring a new model of interaction among great powers (U.S., EU, Russia, China, India). The last, but not less relevant reason is the increasing presence of Spanish economic interests in the area.

Kazakhstan

On Spanish-Kazakh relations, the friendship between King Juan Carlos I and President Nursultan Nazarbayev has been an important factor. The personal relationship between the two Heads of State has been the key element for the dynamics of bilateral relations, beginning in March 1994, when the first State visit made by the Kazakh president to Spain took place. Ever since then, the visiting exchange between them (official, private, or technical stopovers) has been relatively frequent and remarkable, especially considering the scarce profile held by Spanish diplomacy in Asia. Nazarbayev has visited Spain at least seven times and King Juan Carlos had travelled to Kazakhstan on at least in five occasions. Among these mutual visits, Nazarbayev's presence at Prince Felipe's wedding in Madrid, on May 2005 must be pointed out, as well as his presence at the royal summer residence in Palma de Majorca on July 2008 (as a previous stop to his call at Zaragoza's International Exposition). Both visits are a clear evidence of the fluent degree of personal relations between the two leaders. In the other direction, besides private visits, the King and Queen made an official trip to Kazakhstan at the end of June 2007, after visiting China.

Such a fluent personal relationship has reinforced the bilateral relations at all levels, especially since the opening of the embassies in both countries in 1999. Another remarkable milestone was the presence of Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, at President Nazarbayev's investiture in Astana, on January 2006. The Spanish delegation was the Western representation of highest rank, as other Western chanceries preferred to deliver lower rank delegations, as a protest towards how the December 2005 Kazakh presidential election was held.

When Spain was chairing the OSCE in 2007, it actively supported the idea of Kazakhstan chairing the OSCE. This gesture further consolidated the link between both countries. Relations further solidified during the 2007 OSCE Inter-Ministerial Summit in the Spanish capital city. The recently appointed Kazakh Foreign Affairs Minister, Kanat Saudabayev said, “Kazakhstan will never forget that Madrid was the place where the decision about the OSCE presidency took place, on November 30th, 2007.”¹ Since then, both Madrid and Astana have expressed their expectations with regards to what Spain’s EU Presidency and Kazakhstan’s OSCE Chairmanship could deliver together.

Thus, Konstantin Zhigalov, Kazakh vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Angel Lossada, Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, held meetings in Astana and Madrid on November 2009, in order to evaluate the potentials of coordination for the first half of 2010. Spanish support could be a key factor for implementing certain ambitious Kazakh initiatives, such as holding an OSCE Heads of States summit, which has not taken place since 1999 in Istanbul. Besides, Kazakhstan wants to take advantage of its OSCE presidency to reinforce its bonds with Brussels and make Europe one of its strategic vectors of development. At present, an inclusion of the Central Asian country in the European Neighbourhood Policy is not on Brussels’ agenda. Nonetheless, Astana sees Madrid as its reliable and clear ally for its dialogue with the EU. In fact, on July 2009, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos and his Kazakh counterpart at that time, Marat Tazhin, signed the Agreement of Strategic Partnership between Spain and Kazakhstan in Astana.

Uzbekistan

The 2007 Spanish OSCE Chairmanship has also been a key factor for reinforcing relations with Uzbekistan. During his visit to Tashkent in April 2007 as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister, Moratinos, held a meeting with both President Islam Karimov and Moratinos’ equivalent, Vladimir Norov. With regards to the Uzbek case, personal relations have also been a key issue for strengthening bilateral links. Besides, the embassy of Castilian Ruy González de Clavijo in 1403 to Tamerlan’s court, appears as a useful rhetorical background of these new dynamics, occasionally presented by both sides as continuing or rapprochement dynamics, rather than the establishment of new ties.²

¹ “Kazakhstan expects to strengthen its relationship with the EU during Spain’s Presidency,” Terra Noticias/Agencia EFE, December 5th, 2009, <<http://noticias.terra.es/mundo/2009/1205/actualidad/kazajistan-espera-fortalecer-relaciones-con-ue-durante-presidencia-espanola.aspx>> (January 8 2010).

² In spite of the time passed, Clavijo’s embassy is one of the referents and myths of the Spanish diplomatic service; it is still popular in Uzbekistan today. This is what justifies

Spain's traditionally low-key attitude with regards to human rights and democratization has undoubtedly eased this approach. However, it has also caused some suspicions and critics among some human rights groups. This Spanish approach is not due to the lack of interest, or a clear strategy for the sake of Spanish business penetration into the region, as has been occasionally suggested. Instead it stems from Madrid's belief that strong engagement would contribute positively on the opening-up of authoritarian regimes.³ It can be inferred Tashkent generally feels at ease towards Madrid. In fact, President Karimov's last visit to Spain on May 2009, an official stopover on his trip to Brazil, coincided with the news on violent events in Andijan and at the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border.

There were serious rumours in summer 2009 on the possibility of an official royal visit to Uzbekistan. It was initially said that the trip could take place before the end of 2009. However, due to different reasons, the trip was postponed; while a visiting date is yet to be set, it will likely be carried out by summer 2010.

All of this above-mentioned, along with the opening of embassies,⁴ foretells a dramatic increase in bilateral diplomatic activity in 2010. In fact, Gulnura Karimova, the Uzbek president's eldest daughter, would most likely be appointed as the Uzbek ambassador to Madrid by the time this article goes to print.⁵ This would be a clear sign of the relevancy Tashkent is granting Madrid, which could pave the way for improved relations with Brussels.

Afghanistan and 21st Century World Politics

Afghanistan is another outstanding matter on the Spanish agenda for Central Asia. From the beginning of 2002, there has been a Spanish contingent established at Manas base in Kyrgyzstan, supporting Spanish troops deployed in Afghanistan as part of the ISAF Mission. Nonetheless, on October 13, 2009, the contingent was forced to abandon this base as the existing agreement expired and Madrid and Bishkek were unable to reach an agreement for its renewal. Ever since then, and until the over-flight and logistic facilities supply agreement recently reached with Kazakhstan, Spanish troops have been using Dushanbe as stopover. For the time being, (and predictably until the A400M enters into service),

the existence of a city (a neighbourhood nowadays) called Madrid in Samarkand, and an avenue with the Spanish ambassador's name.

³ Madrid's position also arouses suspicions regarding other contexts, see for instance "Castro's Man in Europe," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 20, 2009, <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704500604574484923135150240.html>> (January 8 2010).

⁴ The Spanish one has been officially approved, but frozen right now, because of budget cuttings due to the economical crisis.

⁵ While this article is being written, there is a *chargé d'affaires* in charge of the embassy.

the transport of Spanish troops is mainly done through commercial flights, which requires a stop-over in Central Asia.

Besides, Spanish interest in Central Asia is spurred by the behaviour of the great powers (USA, EU, Russia, China, India) in the region. In the last fifteen years, a remarkable increase of Madrid's international profile has developed, along with a strong internationalization of the Spanish economy. Even if the traditional vectors of Spanish foreign policy – towards Europe, Mediterranean and Latin America – are maintained, there is growing consensus within the country on the need for Spain to consolidate as a “medium-sized power of regional scope but global projection.”⁶ This entails Spain's need to be an established actor in the key areas of international geopolitics, and also explains Spain's increasing interest in Central Asia. For instance, over the past two years, there has been a significant increase in research focus towards Central Asia by the main Spanish think tanks such as Alternatives Foundation, Elcano Royal Institute, OPEX and CIDOB Foundation.

Spanish Economic Interests

Finally, and equally important, Spanish economic interests in the region are still limited, but they are growing. The most visible Spanish presence is Talgo, a train manufacturer operating in Kazakhstan since 2003. Two Talgo trains link Almaty and Astana daily, and a third train links Almaty to Shymkent. Besides, there is serious potential to increase the company's presence in the coming years since it is well-placed to play a key role in the development and upgrading of Kazakhstan's railway ring. Similarly for Uzbekistan, a contract for the sale of two high-speed Talgo trains to the Uzbeks has just been signed.

Spanish Oil Company Repsol operates an offshore block of Zhambay oilfield, in the Northern Caspian area. Repsol has a 25 percent share in the project, along with Lukoil (25 percent share) and Kazmunaigaz (50 percent). Spanish IT Company Indra has also reached some agreements, including some defence systems.

It was previously mentioned that Madrid's low-key attitude with regards to human rights and democratization was not a deliberate strategy to advance Spanish business. Nevertheless, the Spanish government's attitude obviously helped to smoothen the business networking process for Spanish companies. For instance, the CEOs of Repsol and Indra accompanied Moratinos during Nazarbayev's investiture in January 2006 and they got to meet the then-Kazakh Prime

⁶ About this on-going debate see “Spain and the G-20: A Strategic Proposal for Enhancing its Role in Global Governance,” *Working Paper April 8, 2009*, Elcano Royal Institute, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_eng/Content?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/Elcano_in/Zonas_in/00033> (January 8 2010).

Minister, Daniyal Akhmetov. In the same way, representatives of these two major companies and others joined the Spanish minister during his Central Asian tour in summer 2009. Besides consolidating their presence in Kazakhstan, their interest in expanding their business presence in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is clear.

In any case, the overall economic Spanish presence in the region remains very modest at present. Spanish Foreign Direct Investment in the region is currently almost inexistent and the bilateral trade figures with the respective Central Asian republics remain rather low. The highest turnover is with Kazakhstan. In 2008 the total volume of bilateral business was around 750 million euros, but in 2009, due to the economical crisis, there has been a sharp fall in the business between Spain and Kazakhstan. The figures for the bilateral trade with the other Central Asian republics are quite low. They range from 15 million euros for Uzbekistan to less than 3 million in the Kyrgyz case, and around 9 million euros for Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

Conclusion

Both Astana and Tashkent harbour significant expectations on the possibility that their fluent links with Madrid would allow them to strengthen their relationship with the EU and influence the review process of the European strategy, during the Spanish EU presidency from January to June 2010. On the Spanish side, the government hopes to improve Europe's relations with these countries during its EU presidency. Nevertheless, the big challenge during the Spanish presidency, as it was suggested on a recent EUCAM editorial, will be to take the EU Strategy's implementation concretely forward, and initiate a review process beyond its own national economic interest and the coincidence of the Presidency with Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship.⁷

⁷ See "Spain and Kazakhstan in the chair," *EUCAM Watch*, 7 (2009), <http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Newsletters/EUCAMWatch7.pdf> (January 10 2010).

Notes on the Chinese Government's Handling of the Urumqi Riot in Xinjiang

Yuhui Li*

Urumqi Riot and the Chinese Government's Reaction

China is facing the daunting task of finding appropriate measures to deal with the aftermath of the bloodiest ethnic violence in decades in Xinjiang on July 5, 2009. The riot took place in Urumqi, the region's capital city, and caused the deaths of nearly 200 people and injury to at least 1,700. On December 30, 2009, nearly six months after the riot, the information office of Xinjiang announced that internet services, eliminated within a few hours of the event, would be gradually restored in Xinjiang. Only two official websites, and with limited accessibility, will be made available initially. It is not known when the restrictions on services for international telephone and text messaging, cut off shortly after the riot, will be lifted.¹ If these measures could be taken as an indicator of the seriousness of the ethnic riots, then the government is certainly dealing with the Urumqi riot with greater caution as compared with the Tibet riot in spring 2008 which lasted for weeks and resulted in the death of scores of people; internet services were unavailable in Tibet for only three months due to the latter riot.

Prior to proceeding with the prosecution of those involved in the Urumqi riot, the government, on October 10, 2009, first sentenced two men of Han nationality; one was sentenced to death and the other one to life in prison, in Shaoguan city of Guangdong Province in southern China. Both men received sentences for their roles in leading the beating of Uygur migrant workers – two Uygur men subsequently died – at a local toy factory on June 26 of that year, following rumors that a Han Chinese woman had been raped by Uygur men. Information about the ill-treatment of the Uygur migrant workers, including that of the two men beaten to death by their Han co-workers, was apparently circulated

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¹“Net Access Being Restored in Xinjiang,” *People's Daily Online*, December 30, 2009, <<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6855852.html>> (December 30 2009).

among many Uygurs, but was practically ignored in the mainstream media. It was only after the Urumqi riot that news about what had occurred in Shaoguan was reported to the general public in China.

Immediately following the sentencing of the two men in Guangdong, the court in Xinjiang started prosecuting those accused of having committed crimes during the riot, including murder, assault, arson, and robbery. By the end of 2009, at least 22 people had received death sentences for their involvement in the riot,² with the vast majority of those being Uygur men.

In September 2009, the Chinese government published a white paper on conditions of social and economic development in Xinjiang. The document states that significant achievements have been made in Xinjiang's economy and in the improvement of people's lives during the 60 years of the PRC. The document also asserts that terrorist groups, Islamic fundamentalist and separatist forces, such as those associated with the "East Turkestan" organization, have been responsible for a series of uprisings and violence in Xinjiang in recent years.

A Brief Analysis of Ethnic Unrest in Xinjiang

There is no doubt that profound changes have taken place in economic and social development in Xinjiang during the last six decades. In 2008, Xinjiang's GDP per capita of US\$5,385 ranked Xinjiang number 15 among the 31 provincial level units in China, making it one of the most economically advanced regions and provinces of non-coastal areas in China. However, the fruits of development have not been shared equitably among the numerous ethnic groups. Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between ethnicity and socioeconomic development in the oasis towns of Xinjiang.³ For example, areas that have the highest number and concentration of Uygurs, such as Khotan (96 percent Uygur) and Kashgar (90 percent Uygur), both in southern Xinjiang, are at the very bottom of the scale when measuring community socioeconomic status. Communities with the highest concentrations of Han population, on the other hand, such as the cities of Urumqi and Karamay, both with 75 percent, are at the top of the economic scale. These figures show a strongly disproportionate distribution of resources among ethnic nationalities in Xinjiang. Minority nationalities, especially the Uygur, find themselves in a severely disadvantaged position.

² "Death sentences over Xinjiang riots," *Aljazeera.net*, December 24, 2009. <<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2009/12/2009122461218484397.html>> (December 28 2009).

³ Yuhui Li, "Racial Relations in Xinjiang and Sustainability of Xinjiang Bingtuan's Drive for Urbanization and Modernization," in Marco Keiner (ed.), *Sustainable Urban Development in China, Wishful Thinking or Reality?* (MV-Wissenschaft, 2008), pp. 123-141.

The marginalization of the Uygur ethnic group is also reflected in the regional division of Xinjiang's administrative units. Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is composed of 16 prefecture-level units that include cities, prefectures, and districts. Given that Xinjiang is a multi-nationality region, several districts and areas within Xinjiang have been designated as autonomous prefectures of particular ethnic groups. The designation and classification of these areas in Xinjiang is strategically determined in such a way that results in the Uygur being isolated and marginalized in the region. Most of northern Xinjiang, for example, where the levels of urbanization, industrialization, and technological development are much higher compared with the rest of Xinjiang, is heavily inhabited by the Han. The northwestern part of Xinjiang, i.e., the Yili area bordering with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, is designated as the Kazak Autonomous Prefecture. In roughly the center of Xinjiang is the vast Banyingol Mongol Autonomous Prefecture. What remains that can be identified as Uygur territory are only the areas along the rim of the Taklamakan desert (where both Khotan and Kashgar are located) plus Tulufan, a district in eastern Xinjiang.

This situation has led many Uygur to complain that "autonomy" for the Uygur is exactly what is lacking in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Historically, Xinjiang was a target of competing tribes and numerous ethnic forces. Although the Han population has been present in the Xinjiang area for thousands of years, they were only able to set up permanent settlements there, through constant Han-migration and land reclamation, after Xinjiang was officially declared a province of China in 1884. Formerly, various other groups had fought for and gained control of the area over many hundreds of years.⁴

The influx of Han migration to Xinjiang from inland China escalated after the PRC was established in 1949, gradually but drastically changing the ethnic composition of Xinjiang's population due to deliberate governmental policies to populate the northwest territories. The proportion of the Uygur population in Xinjiang dropped from 75 percent in the early 1950s to the current level of 45 percent. The proportion of the Han population in the same period increased from 6 percent to 40 percent.⁵ Such demographic change is one of the major reasons for the Uygur's resentment of the Han population in Xinjiang. They believe their homeland has been taken over and is not controlled by themselves.

The revolts against the Chinese authorities by the Uygur seem to have become increasingly more frequent and violent in recent years. The

⁴ James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads, A History of Xinjiang* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2007). See also, Owen Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia, Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950).

⁵ Stanley W. Toops, "The Demography of Xinjiang," in Frederick Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (London: Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 241-263.

riot in Urumqi on July 5 was said to have been participated in by thousands of Uygur people from many districts of Xinjiang. In August 2008, furthermore, a bus with explosives had been driven into a group of police officers who were jogging in Kashgar, resulting in the deaths of 16 officers. Both the 2008 Kashgar attack and the 2009 Urumqi riot were determined by the Chinese government to be terrorist activities instigated by exiled Uygur dissidents who advocate the independence of Xinjiang, as was asserted in the white paper mentioned above. Assuming these charges are true, the question is how and why these forces were able to stage atrocities of such scale and intensity in Xinjiang. Notions of ethnic nationalism and separatism cannot be isolated from those of ethnic identity, nor do they exist in a vacuum, as the following examples will illustrate.

During the late 1980s, the Chinese government relaxed the censorship of intellectual and academic discussion on the history, culture, and ethnicity of Xinjiang. This generated a flood of literature and products that were the result of scholarly research and artistic works by Uygur and other minority authors and elite members. These works and products are believed by some to have also served as the ideological impetus that furthered Uygur nationalist sentiment as well as ethnic unrest since the 1990s.⁶

After isolating itself from the outside world for decades, China has opened up several port cities to neighboring countries along Xinjiang's border for trade and tourism. What has been channeled through these port cities is more than just material goods, however. Information, literature, religious influences, and other cultural exchanges have also crossed over the border, promoting aspirations for autonomy and self-determination for particulate groups and minorities.⁷

China is facing a serious dilemma. The Chinese government has a policy of zero tolerance towards any attempt to separate regions inhabited by ethnic minority populations such as in Xinjiang and Tibet from China. Yet, separatist ideas and movements continually emerge, particularly since the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the subsequent independence of countries across the border from Xinjiang. As long as China keeps pursuing economic developmental policies and maintaining a trade relationship with neighboring countries, it will be nearly impossible to keep separatist ideas at bay.⁸

⁶ Justin Ben-Adam Rudelson, *Oasis Identities of Uyghur Nationalism along China's Silk Road* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1997).

⁷ Marlene Laruelle and Sebastien Peyrouse, "Cross-border Minorities as Cultural and Economic Mediators between China and Central Asia," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, 1 (2009), pp. 93-119.

⁸ "Death for Factory Fighter Inciter," *People's Daily Online*, October 12, 2009, <<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6780356.html>> (December 28 2009).

Future Policies

In November 2009, the Chinese government dispatched to Xinjiang nearly 400 governmental officials, including numerous high-profile ones such as the Secretary-General of the State Council, Mr. Ma Kai, and the heads of the Departments of Propaganda, Mr. Liu Yunshan, and the United Front Work, Mr. Du Qinglin, of the CCP Central Committee. These officials represent almost all state agencies and departments such as politics and propaganda, education and culture, ethnicity and religion, finance and economy, security and national defense, etc. Officially forming the ad hoc Team of Investigation and Research on Xinjiang, they stayed in Xinjiang for weeks to gather information and conduct an investigation in their respective areas and fields. Their reports based on the investigation and research will serve as the foundation for China to design a blueprint for the social and economic development of Xinjiang at the “Special Meeting on Xinjiang’s Economic Development” to be held in spring 2010.⁹

To fundamentally solve the problems of racial conflict, the Chinese government needs to carefully review historical patterns of ethnic relations in China, particularly those since the founding of the PRC, and try to come up with the most appropriate strategies for dealing with racial tensions. Such a long-term solution should be the product of joint efforts by intellectuals and leaders and legislators of all ethnic nationalities. First and foremost, the Chinese government has to win the trust and confidence of people from all ethnic groups by demonstrating that it has the determination and ability to find such solutions. This is the difficult task that the government of China cannot avoid.

⁹ “Death for Factory Fighter Inciter,” *People’s Daily Online*, October 12, 2009, <<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6780356.html>> (December 28 2009).

Reassessing the SCO Economic Security in the Context of the “Afghan Factor”

*Azganush A. Migranyan**

Introduction

In the light of contemporary political and economic threats such as terrorism, economic and financial crises, shortages of resources, and global environmental problems, regional security issues have been elevated to paramount importance. But while the need to establish regional economic security among the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states has become increasingly apparent, cooperation has thus far been largely limited to the military-political level. Furthermore, the world economic crisis has aggravated the already existing problems within the SCO region, and highlighted the issue of economic security. Among the problems that threaten the economic security of the region, it is worth mentioning the low competitiveness of national economies (excluding China and Russia in some sectors); the dependence on raw material exports of the SCO economies, which require the differentiation of markets, and, consequently, the expansion of communication infrastructure, as well as fuel and energy complexes; regular crises over water issues; regulation of migration flows and their social adaptation; and, finally, a growing shadow economy across the region, mainly in the form of drug trafficking.

The abovementioned factors are serving to destabilize the economic systems of each member state as well as that of the SCO as a whole. In addition, tensions continue to undermine relations between the SCO states: political ambitions and competition for regional leadership, disparity of national economic systems, different levels of natural resource endowments and access to them, unresolved economic and political disputes, etc. However, it is the so-called “Afghan factor” that represents the main threat to the SCO region’s stability. Putting the spotlight on Afghanistan invites developing the concept of “regional

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economic security”, i.e., a set of conditions and factors that can ensure stability and mutually beneficial economic cooperation in the region. It should be noted that in most cases, “an unstable Afghanistan” thwarts in large part mutually beneficial economic cooperation among the SCO. The expansion of the drug trade by Afghan producers is becoming a major threat to the economic security of the SCO, since it leads to an increase in the shadow sector of these economies. The repercussions of drug trafficking include increased corruption and threats to economic and political security, but also to public health.

This economic strategy of the SCO vis-à-vis Afghanistan should focus on the concentration of investment efforts in the country, which should be based on a specific plan of reconstruction for Afghanistan. It is an inescapable fact that the SCO’s regional economic well-being is intertwined with the development of Afghanistan’s economy, and, therefore, it is imperative for SCO member states to include Afghanistan in the economic plans of the regional organization.

SCO Economic Development Without a Solution for Afghanistan?

The economic and geographic isolation of the Central Asian countries is mainly due to the lack of outlets to the sea lanes which, in turn, serve to facilitate world trade. On the one hand, this isolation complicates the development of trade relations with countries outside of the SCO. On the other, it is a factor that propels the development of economic relations *within* the SCO, which certainly enhances the potential of the organization. However, in the field of transportation of energy resources, all the SCO countries are interested in expanding their infrastructures to link up with the outside world. The rise of extremist Islamic groups based on Afghan territory, and supported by the Taliban, directly threatens Central Asia. The Obama administration’s attempts to strengthen the power of the international coalition does not provide security guarantees to the SCO states. Therefore, to overcome the threats deriving from Afghanistan and Pakistan, the SCO needs to accentuate its regional cooperation.

The SCO could be understood as a closed system of producers and consumers, but the growing need for energy generates a need for diversification, and the finding of alternative resources. In addition, the connection of the energy resources of SCO member states with the energy needs of the observer countries to the organization (Iran, Pakistan, and India) significantly extends the energy market potential. The expanded system of gas and oil pipelines between the world’s largest producer of hydrocarbons (Middle-East and Iran) and the most dynamic regions in the world (China and Asia-Pacific countries), with branches in

the direction of Europe, could enable the SCO to significantly increase its economic influence on the Eurasian continent. However, the implementation of such ambitious economic projects necessitates the active participation of Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan as transit countries. Consequently, an unstable and economically backward Afghanistan allied to the precarious situation in Pakistan can be considered the main threat to economic development and the achievement of progress in the SCO energy market.

What are the prospects, then, for future cooperation between the Central Asian region and Afghanistan? The memory of the ancient "Silk Roads," and a common ethnic unity among Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Turkmens across their respective borders with Afghanistan could facilitate economic collaboration at the level of small localized projects, and improve contacts in relatively stable northern Afghanistan. The Soviet experience of economic cooperation with Afghanistan could also, potentially, help Russian politicians and businessmen to become more involved in Afghanistan. China's ties with Pakistan, and the need of the SCO countries to use Afghan territory as a transit zone, is another constructive element. In addition, among the SCO members, it is worth noting that it is China that has the greatest financial investments and economic projects in Afghanistan. In pursuing economic cooperation with Afghanistan, the SCO countries can display relatively solid proposals but, most importantly, their cooperation will require ensuring security in the region. The main objectives of cooperation between the SCO and Afghanistan are to achieve economic security by reducing Afghan drug production, and by minimizing the infiltration of drugs into neighboring countries. One of the key issues is thus to eliminate paramilitary factions in Afghanistan, to help them to overcome their conflicts, and to achieve peace agreements between warring parties, including with the international coalition.

The SCO members need to move from issuing general statements to pursuing concrete action, without recourse to military means. The SCO proposed solution must include the building of a unified and legitimate Afghan state, as well as real economic development so as to raise the living standards of the population. It should be based on the principle of equal co-partnership in the economic sphere, which will raise interest among Afghan representatives. The trade contacts should be aimed at solving social problems through the creation of infrastructure implemented at the level of local performers (the heads of tribes, territories). Humanitarian assistance should be provided through cultural, educational, and medical programs.

SCO Economic Interests in Afghanistan: Strengths and Weaknesses

The SCO emphasizes the need to invest in mutually-beneficial sectors: strengthening security in border areas, development of joint irrigation systems and technologies of agricultural production, and increased trade and economic ties. But first, trade between the SCO and Afghanistan has to grow: China-Afghanistan trade amounted to US\$600 million in 2008; Russia-Afghanistan trade was worth US\$190 million.¹ Afghan foreign trade turnover still displays a negative balance, with the country lacking consumer goods as well as consumer demand. Considering the SCO's geographic proximity, it would be extremely unwise to abandon the benefits of active trade cooperation not only bilaterally, but also through multilateral agreements. Second, Afghans outline the need to develop dynamic border retail trade with their neighbors. For these purposes, it could be beneficial to create special trade areas, with simplified visa, and preferential custom regimes. For the moment, exports of energy reserves in the region are partially restricted by the Afghan deadlock, which makes it impossible to utilize the country as a communication corridor. The second stage of the SCO's cooperation with Afghanistan could include specific investment projects, related to the interests of the individual members in question, and developing electricity imports from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The scope of Chinese economic interests in Afghanistan includes the development of rich copper deposits in Aynak (Logar).² In addition, Beijing has significant economic interests in Pakistan, namely, in the strategic sea port of Gwadar. Located in Baluchistan, 400 km east of the Strait of Hormuz, Gwadar is a convenient operating base to ensure the security of Chinese energy imports – 60 percent of China's oil is imported through it. China has invested a significant amount in building the port, and it is now financing the construction of a railway connecting the Aynak mine to Gwadar, and another railroad from Gwadar to Xinjiang.³ Through these economic involvements, China could put

¹ On China-Afghanistan, see Nicklas Norling, "The Emerging China-Afghanistan Relationship," *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, May 14 2008; on Russia-Afghanistan, see Marlène Laruelle, "Beyond the Afghan Trauma: Russia's Return to Afghanistan," *Jamestown Occasional Paper*, August 2009, p. 16.

² Its reserves are estimated at 240 million tons of ore, the copper content at 2.3 percent. Nine companies from the United States, Canada, Russia, Kazakhstan, and China participated in the tender. The Chinese winner is ready to invest in the project US\$2.9 billion in the development and production of copper, and US\$0.5 billion to build a power capacity of 400 MW, and a railway from Hairaton or Shirhan-Bandar to Tor Khama. After completion of the metallurgical plant, with an output capacity of 200,000 tons of copper a year, Afghanistan will earn annually gain approximately US\$400 million.

³ Michael Wines, "China Willing to Spend Big on Afghan Commerce," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2009.

pressure on Islamabad and force the Pakistan government to take more vigorous action against the jihadists along the Afghan border.

Russia is still quite poorly represented in foreign trade with Afghanistan: Russia's exports comprise mainly of timber, helicopters and their spare parts, as well as aeromechanics and sugar products. The main items of Afghan imports to Russia consist of dry and fresh fruits, and carpets. The SCO works to attract Russian companies to implement projects in Afghanistan. Technopromexport launched a project to upgrade the Naglu power plant and increase its capacity to 105 MW. Consultations between Russia and the Afghan Ministry of Energy have begun related to the reconstruction of the Puli Khumri-2 power plant, and the construction of dams and two canals on the river Kokchar, including a micro-power plant. The Afghan Ministry of Public Works has requested Zarubezhtransstroy to examine the technical condition of rebuilding the Salang tunnel. This firm is already exploring the possibilities of cooperation in the reconstruction of old roads as well as the building of new ones. The Embassy of Russia in Afghanistan recommended to Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture the holding of preliminary consultations with Zarubezhvodstroy concerning the renovation of irrigation systems in the Nangarhar province. Other Russian companies are interested in infrastructure facilities in the Shirhan and Kunduz provinces, where the addition of a new bridge across the Pianjd will compliment the Northern Corridor.

Until now, SCO economic cooperation with Afghanistan has been carried out mainly on a bilateral basis. The multilateral potential is still hampered by the recurring tensions between the Central Asian states over the allocation of water resources, which affects the credibility of the organization. The SCO also lacks the requisite institutional mechanisms for financing large-scale economic projects in Afghanistan, and resisting the expansion of drug trafficking would necessitate the participation of Iran, which is not a full member of the organization. Moreover, each member state understands differently the threats emanating from Afghanistan: Russia and Central Asia are focused on the drug issue, which is less the case for China. However, the SCO bloc has the necessary ingredients for further economic integration: already existing mechanisms in political cooperation and security issues; complementary division of labor between member states; availability of abundant energy resources; a strong technological and productive capacity; cheap and skilled labor; a large volume of effective demand for all resources within the SCO. Yet, it should be recognized that the huge differential levels of economic development reduces the dynamics of the integration process: China and Russia account for more than 95 percent of the organization's GDP. The potential success of the SCO in implementing a strategy of economic involvement in Afghanistan must thus be based on multilateral

actions, and on a logic of cumulating the strength of each member state. The GDP of the SCO countries in the total world economy up to 2008 was US\$11 trillion, third only to the European Union (US\$15.2 trillion) and the U.S. (US\$14.2 trillion).⁴

The promotion of economic self-sufficiency in Afghanistan is the only possible way to efficiently combat drug trafficking: the eradication of drug production will only happen if it becomes uneconomical for Afghan producers. Creating such conditions is possible only with the efforts of the international community. These findings provide a direct point of convergence between the European Union, the United States, and the SCO.

Conclusion

Ensuring the security of national economic systems has attracted the attention of the SCO member states only relatively recently. The combined competitive potential of the SCO members could be used to accelerate the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and the economic growth in its neighborhood. However, an effective use of these potentialities needs significant efforts to overcome the numerous problems hampering the development of the SCO. For the moment, the cooperation and assistance to Afghanistan is much more successfully implemented by the SCO member states on a bilateral basis. In any case, until the moment the SCO is able to articulate a joint strategy on Afghan issues, it will not generate the necessary mechanisms to efficiently fight the drug issue.

⁴ Author's calculations. For sources, see the list compiled by the International Monetary Fund, for 2008, <<http://www.imf.org/external/russian/index.htm>> (November 2 2008).

Presidential Elections in Kyrgyzstan: Strategies, Context, and Implications

Li Lifan*

Introduction

Water has unique features that make it difficult to regulate using laws designed mainly for land. Water is mobile, its supply varies by year and season as well as location, and the same source can be used simultaneously by many users. The National Analysis and Research Group from the Chinese Academy of Sciences published its eighth research report in 2009 entitled *Two Kinds of Resources and Two Markets: Constructing China's National Security System on Natural Resources*. The report noted that China's population will reach a peak of 1.6 billion in 2030, that per capita share of water resources will decrease to about 1,760 cubic meters, and that per capita share of cultivated land will also be down to about 1.1 acres. All of these figures are dangerously close to the internationally accepted bottom line.

Water shortage is increasingly becoming an issue on a par with population growth, economic development, and global warming. There appear to be water conflicts on the verge of breaking out in all regions of the globe, and some scholars have predicted that the 21st century will be the century of water wars. The restoration and establishment of water management resources and the peaceful resolution of water conflicts is clearly urgently needed. Something that has been reflected in the fact that the water crisis and global warming have both been listed atop a list of global concerns, through such vehicles as "The Hague Ministerial Declaration" on March 2000, the "World Water Assessment Program," and the UNESCO-launched program called "From Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential: PC to CP."

These organizations established a global model to share best practices in dealing with the challenges of developing water resources, while also creating a tool for decision-making and to avoid conflicts. At the same time, the International Green Cross Society and the UNESCO co-sponsored "Water for Peace" program, which aims to increase local

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authorities' and public awareness of water conflicts. This helps establish an integrated management system, while contributing to the relevant national dialogue and minimizing the tension of a potential or actual crisis. Jill Bergkamp, expert and director of water resources projects at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)¹ in Beijing, stated: "At present, the world's largest water crisis is not a crisis of water, but crisis of water management and water use, we must be more efficient and sustainably use existing water resources."

Competition for Water Resources in Central Asia

The distribution of water resources in Central Asia is very uneven, with the main sources of water for the region in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the two smallest countries. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan on the other hand are all water-scarce countries. The average of the penultimate column of annual runoff of rivers from Kazakhstan is less than that in all the other CIS countries, while in oil-rich Turkmenistan "water is more expensive than oil,"² with many residents receiving drinking water only from time to time. And finally, Uzbekistan also has serious water-scarcity issues.

These realities are only one way to explain the problem; another factor to consider is that Central Asia has always been a dry area with little rainfall, although it is not as serious as the Middle East. Limited supplies of water are a global issue. Allocation of water resources among neighboring countries has always been a heated topic in terms of diplomatic relations, all thanks to the indispensability of water resources.

On the one hand, water resources put the Central Asian countries "in the same boat": they are obliged to forge together and unite to form an Economic Community whose fate is shared. On the other hand, water scarcity means that competition for water resources has become another hidden crisis of regional security and stability in Central Asia. In these countries, annual per capita water utilization has been around 2,800 cubic meters in recent years. By 2020, the Central Asian region's population will reach more than 60 million, and by then annual per capita water consumption in the region will drop to 1,600–1,700 cubic meters. This means that Central Asia will fall into the official United Nations classification of being a serious water shortage area.

¹ The International Union for Conservation of Nature helps the world to find pragmatic solutions to the most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network – a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries. <www.iucn.org> (November 15 2009).

² "When will the water crisis in Central Asia end?" *Wen Hui Daily*, Shanghai, August 5, 2008.

Central Asian countries often compete and are in dispute with each other over water issues in their bordering areas. In 1992, thanks to a disagreement over the distribution of water from the Toktogul reservoir, located in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan's airborne forces moved to the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border, putting considerable pressure on the Kyrgyz side. During the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in 2008, the most acute arguments broke out in discussions over cross-border rivers, water resources, and their utilization. Uzbek President Islam Karimov criticized the fact that water-rich countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were using water resources as a tool to put pressure on his country; something that became a major obstacle in bilateral relations. In February 2009, the Tajik president canceled his attendance of the CSTO Summit in Moscow, because the Russian president opposed the resolution to build the Rogun hydropower station.

International Experience of Institutional Management of Water Resources

Adopting useful models

There are different channels that already exist among countries to solve the problems associated with water resources. It may be possible to find out whether some payment agreement or other more practical compromise can be reached with both sides. In a market economy, water resources have a value. Therefore, the related countries have to push forward market mechanisms to create a series of bilateral agreements on the utilization of water resources. They must propose and improve the water distribution program by adopting useful models based on the principles of “rational allocation, condominium shares and scheduled adjustment.”³

For example, through the adoption of a tripartite system for discussion, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq have developed a new strategy to discuss and resolve water issues, and found a way to resolve the contradictions amongst themselves. Using scientific research and establishing a water association along the Euphrates River centered at the Turkish Atatürk dam, they were able to establish a way of effectively sharing the scarce common water resources.⁴ It can be said that the abovementioned river dialogue experiences in enhancing public

³ Da-Ming He, “The study of distribution of water resources in international rivers,” *Acta Geographica Sinica*, 54 (1999), p. 47-53.

⁴ Xiaochen Zhang, “Turkey as a model for solving the water crisis in Central Asia,” *Network of hydro information*, July 16, 2008.

participation in water management to coordinate common interests are highly effective.

Joint-water management scheme in resolving water conflict between China and Russia

Creating a joint-water management scheme focused on water quality supervision of cross-border rivers is what was needed between China and Russia. In February 2002, the two nations signed a memorandum, and designated a specific department to monitor cross-border rivers. According to the "Memorandum of Joint Monitoring on the Sino-Russian Boundary River," in 2002–2003 China and Russia were to conduct eight monitoring tests along the Heilongjiang and Wusuli Rivers (which they did). As China is generally located upstream in the relevant international watercourses, it has in the past also given anti-flood assistance to downstream countries. For example, in 2002, China and India signed the "Program of supplying the hydrological data of Brahmaputra River" during the Indian flood season.

The Irtysh River originates in China, in Xinjiang's Altay region, and flows through Kazakhstan, then Russia, and finally into the Arctic Ocean, a cross-border trajectory which is typical of most international rivers. At present, Kazakhstan, Russia, and China have not set up special joint agencies for the mutual management of the Irtysh River's waters. Therefore, mutual arrangements need to be proposed and negotiated by the three states to create a special committee to unify its management and monitor implementation of any agreement. A unilateral approach driven by one party is not an approach that is conducive for resolving such complex issues.

Setting up regional coordination mechanisms and water trade compensation mechanisms

As a water-rich country with the perspective of finding solutions for water distribution while safeguarding its own interests, Kyrgyzstan has led the way in commercializing water resources, creating trading and market-oriented programs. Tajikistan, another country of rich freshwater resources, proposed to establish mutual cooperation mechanisms, which will lead to rational utilization of this precious natural resource. The nation hoped, through the provision of agricultural water for irrigation and other uses, to obtain economic benefits and other interests from neighboring Central Asian countries. In this way, it hopes to attract international investment for the construction of power plants, the laying of pipelines, and the improvement of the water system to act as a power supplier to the other Central Asian states. During the Soviet period, upstream countries protected water resources so that downstream

countries would be able to access water. In exchange, the upstream countries would receive forms of compensation for maintaining their side of the bargain. But this was an enforced agreement, with the real question being: can all the countries reach such an agreement now?

The legal issues on the transfer of water rights in China and Russia

Water law deals with the issue of ownership, control, and the use of water as a resource. Much of this legislation is based on the Clean Water Act,⁵ the Clean Water Protection Act,⁶ etc. Legislation like international water law is dedicated to preventing conflict and promoting cooperation and mutual coordination of the management of shared water resources. It has evolved and crystallized through state practice into codification and progressive development efforts undertaken by the United Nations. The treaty practice in this area encompasses a broad range of instruments, from general agreements (which provide basic principles for water resource development) to specific “contractual” type legal and technical arrangements (which set forth detailed operational schemes). While water users compete for the same resource and struggle for increasing control, they also need to cooperate if they want to make effective use of water and sustain the water’s quantity and quality in the long run.⁷

China's Water Law is based on the principle of public ownership of water resources. This law is formulated for the purposes of rational development, utilization and protection of water resources, control of water disasters, while fully deriving the comprehensive benefits of water resources and meeting the needs of national economic development and people’s livelihoods.⁸ In the meantime, the development and utilization

⁵ The Clean Water Act is the primary federal law in the United States governing water pollution. Commonly abbreviated as the CWA, the act established the goals of eliminating releases to water of high amounts of toxic substances, eliminating additional water pollution by 1985, and ensuring that surface waters would meet standards necessary for human sports and recreation by 1983.

⁶ The Clean Water Protection Act (H.R. 1310) is a bill introduced in the 111th United States Congress via the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. It proposes to redefine “fill material” to not include mining “waste” under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

⁷ Knowledge Base “International and National Water Law”, which contains generalized information about the international water law and national water laws of the Central Asian states, <http://www.cawater-info.net/bk/water_law/index_e.htm>, (November 15 2009).

⁸ Water Law of the People's Republic of China – 1988, Adopted by the 24th Session of the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress on January 21, 1988, promulgated by the Order No 61 of the President of the People's Republic of China on January 21, 1988, and effective on July 1, 1988, <<http://www.lehmanlaw.com/resource-centre/laws-and-regulations/environment/water-law-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-1988.html>>, (November 15 2009).

of water resources and the prevention and control of water disasters is carried out under comprehensive planning to ensure that all factors have been taken into consideration. A further emphasis is put on multipurpose use and on achieving maximum benefits so as to give full play to the multiple functions of water resources.

According to the Russian Federal Water Act, the provisions of water use rights can be transferred to another person by someone, on the condition that the water is for the individual's needs for human life, and the purpose of using the water individually should be ensured. These aspects are particularly relevant to the Central Asian states. Generally speaking, the future in solving water issues in Central Asia is far broader than simply relating to water use, with issues revolving around population growth, improving regional economic structures, and developing water-saving agriculture all pertinent.

Establishing scientific and rational water distribution system in Central Asia

In order to maintain regional peace, stability, and development, the Central Asian countries need to find a way to bury the hatchet amongst them. There is a clear need to deepen understanding and cooperation on these issues to maximize their benefits and enhance their common interests. A focus needs to be made on developing a strategy which is rational, scientifically sound, and ensures equitable distribution.

First, Central Asia needs to develop a unified legal basis to their water sharing resources, and establish a rational scientific water distribution system and water exchange mechanism. Secondly, the Central Asian countries need to repair and modernize the hydro conservancy facilities to secure their long-term interests, to actively prevent and control pollution, and to improve the ecological environment. Thirdly, they need to strive to attract international aid and foreign investment for the construction of water supplying facilities and the better maintenance of cross-border water transfer facilities. This is something crucial, for it will improve the efficiency of distribution of water resources in the region. And finally, there needs to be a regional effort to control or manage population growth, improve local economic structures, and develop water-saving agriculture – all of which are fundamental ways to address the underlying water management issues.

The Impact of Water Security on China

The gap between supply and demand of water resources in China is increasing, with the demand side of the equation widening substantially. By 2030, China's per capita water resources will be as low as 1800 cubic meters, from the current 2,200 cubic meters, meaning that the strain

between the supply and demand of water resources will be even more severe.

As has been mentioned before, cross-border water disputes also exist in Central Asia, where about half of the water resources originate from outside the countries; in the case of Kazakhstan, one third of the water originates in China. Occasionally, there have been news reports in the Russian media carrying headlines concerning China's water policy. For example, Russian Independent Media News put out a report entitled "China's water policy," which claimed that Beijing intended to use and develop more than 30 rivers from China to Kazakhstan, such as building a canal upstream of the Artsy River, which would divert the water for use in irrigation for the Karma oil field in Xinjiang instead. The article suggested that this will have serious consequences for Kazakhstan, as China will be diverting some 485 million cubic meters of water (5 percent of average annual flow).⁹

Therefore, China needs to know how to deal with water conflicts, and the following points outline some thoughts concerning the impact of water security on China.

Water security issues in Central Asia have created a new challenge to China's stability and the development of its western region

There are two main cross-border rivers between China and its western neighbors, the Irtysh, which crosses the Kazakh northeast before entering Russia, and the Ili, which ends in Kazakhstan, both of which originate in Chinese territory.¹⁰ The rivers act as an international watercourse, with Kazakhstan and Siberian Russia downstream, both of which are developing in their own right, but which are a far cry from China's breakneck growth. In recent years, Kazakhstan, with its domestic water shortage problems, has complained about the development and utilization by China of the upper reaches of this river, and has focused in its foreign economic policy on the cross-border distribution of water resources with China.¹¹ In this case, enhancing the safety and scientific governance of water resources in Central Asia has become the major concern of developing a common interest between China and its neighboring countries. A "win-win" solution which helps alleviate these trans-border problems needs to be considered in future development. While one possible solution, diversion necessities a winner receiving more water

⁹ Jiang Yong, *Hunting 'Chinese Dragon'? The perspective of China's economic security* (Beijing: Economic Science Press, 2009), p. 61.

¹⁰ Jack Carino, "Water woes in Kazakhstan," *China Dialogue*, April 1, 2008, <<http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/1860>> (November 15 2009).

¹¹ Li Lifan and Liu Jinqian, "Cooperation and Prospective of Water Resources in Central Asia - The Strategy of SCO Evolution," *Foreign Affairs Review*, 1 (2005), Journal of China foreign affairs University, Beijing.

and a loser receiving less – a situation which will invariably lead to tensions.

Expanding the spirit and framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

In accordance with the new security concept within the SCO and the requirements of international law, there should be a greater effort on exploring the feasible options in the issues of governance and the equitable and comprehensive utilization of water rights among Central Asia, China, and Russia. The promotion of more in-depth development of the SCO through increased economic cooperation will reinforce the cornerstone of relations between China and Central Asia. This will in turn help maintain regional stability and development in the western part of China – both of which are important political goals. On October 10, 2008, at the summit on the use of water resources held in Bishkek, the five presidents of the Central Asian states reached the following important agreement: to protect Central Asian rivers and their volume of water in Kyrgyzstan, which will keep supplying water to its neighboring countries during the irrigation season. This was the basic shape for coordination of water resources within the framework of SCO, and it was also supported by China.

Thinking through and Multi-utilizing market principles

The rational utilization of water resources can both improve the upper reaches of the ecological environment, which will in turn maximize the benefits to all involved. With regards to the allocation of water resources of international rivers, regional cooperation can be enhanced if the water is treated as a commodity. Dr. He Daming from the Asian International Rivers Center at Yunnan University pointed out that if the Irtysh River Basin States can identify a series of water indicators, China can give up some of its agriculture in order to consider the communal interest of maintaining regional integration and developing greater economic and ecological values. In exchange, China can offer water-related data in exchange for natural gas from neighboring countries, and then use the money received for grain and cotton.¹² This method has not only helped with regards to sovereignty issues, but also ensures the comprehensive utilization of water resources. The key lesson is that, in general, the issue of water can rely on market forces.

¹² Zhao Jialin, "Russia overstates China's Water Resources," *International Herald*, <http://news.h2o-china.com/information/world/407701127447220_1.shtml>, (January 12 2010).

Building mechanisms for international cooperation with Central Asia

Finally, I believe that China, as an international responsible stakeholder, can, under appropriate conditions, establish a “reciprocal mechanism” through its interaction as an upstream water supplier and as a consumer of Central Asian hydropower. Xinjiang has carried out scientific and technological cooperation with Central Asian countries, including the investigation and cooperative development on water resources, animal and plant resources, mineral and oil and gas resources. Meanwhile, China has expressed its willingness to participate in a regional water governance structure such as the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) and the CAREC Comprehensive Action Plan which was adopted by Council of Ministers in Central Asia. China also considers comprehensively supporting the Global Water Partnership (GWP) Technical Committee, which supports governments' efforts to tackle water and economic development in Central Asia and Xinjiang. Chinese and Central Asian governments will take on the practical steps needed for forging national water management strategies so as to support their efforts toward the sustainable economic development levels required to reach the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).¹³ China intends to help the Central Asian countries with a more efficient utilization of their common water resources and electricity system reform. In that way, China can combine its own experience on reform initiatives, while promoting the building of a new regional institutional capacity, to establish jointly a new “sub-reciprocal mechanism” with the coastal-river countries – an outcome which will be of benefit to all actors in the region.

¹³ *Catalyzing Change: A handbook for developing integrated water resources management (IWRM) and water efficiency strategies*, Global Water Partnership, 2006, <http://www.gwpforum.org/gwp/library/Catalyzing_change-final.pdf> (November 15 2009).

Peeling the Waziristan Onion: Central Asians in Armed Islamist Movements in Afghanistan and Pakistan

*Peter Sinnott**

ABSTRACT

The specter of a force of close to five thousand Uzbek Islamic militants throughout the Tribal Areas of North and South Waziristan was presented to a Pakistan senate committee in September 2009 by Senator Muhammad Ibrahim Khan. The history and motivation of the Central Asian forces that have been in Waziristan since their retreat from Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and the fighting at Tora Bora in December 2001 warrants scrutiny. This force to a large degree represents not only the transformation of those who left Uzbekistan and other Muslim regions of the Soviet Union initially for religious reasons into armed militants, but also the transformation of a small number of them into suicide bombers and terrorists clearly aligned with the ideology and goals of Al-Qaida.

Keywords • Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan • Islamic Jihad Group • Islamic Jihad Union • Tohir Yuldash • Waziristan

Introduction

The specter of a force of close to five thousand Uzbek Islamic militants throughout the Tribal Areas of North and South Waziristan was presented to a Pakistan senate committee in September 2009 by Senator Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, while Pakistan Army generals predicted Uzbeks would provide the hardest resistance to an army-led “invasion” of South Waziristan. Prior to the military operations, U.S. drone-based missiles attacked the key leadership of both the Islamic Movement of

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Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) leading to the deaths of both established figureheads. The presence of Uzbek militants who waged armed attacks and bombings against Uzbekistan has come to be seen as a contributing factor in terrorism waged against the Pakistan government and international targets as well. Their seeming sanctuary in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, a region arguably protecting Al-Qaida's leadership, as well as the base for the Tehrik-e-Islam Taliban, who have been waging a sustained suicide bombing campaign against Pakistan and Afghanistan over the past three years, has begun to be challenged.

The history and motivation of the Central Asian forces that have been in Waziristan since their retreat from Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and the fighting at Tora Bora in December 2001 warrants scrutiny. This force to a large degree represents not only the transformation of those who left Uzbekistan and other Muslim regions of the Soviet Union initially for religious reasons into armed militants, but also the transformation of a small number of them into suicide bombers and terrorists clearly aligned with the ideology and goals of Al-Qaida.

Waziristan now symbolizes the failure of Pakistan to control its own territory. The presumed presence of Osama bin Laden and his most important lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri, in the Tribal Areas adjacent to Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) over the past eight years along with an assortment of foreign fighters, especially Uzbeks, renews this region's role as a mountainous frontier that has escaped integration into Pakistan while remaining, as Akbar Ahmed once characterized it, an "encapsulated region."

Waziristan has come to serve as a frontier to both Afghanistan and Pakistan. As a rule a frontier forms between two distinct societies, such as nomadic and sedentary, as was the case for the steppe regions of Central Asia with the oasis-based agriculture and trade societies to the south. This seeming frontier to a 'frontier province' is the result of British as well as Pakistani policy. Just as Russia needed to define its "frontier" in terms of land aggrandizements south and east in the 17-19th centuries, so did Britain's policy on the sub-continent shift from its mainly commercial aims to geopolitical concerns that saw Russia's movements south in Central Asia as threatening to the British government in India. This led to what has come to be known the past century as the "Great Game," which saw a competition for influence, especially over Afghanistan, that has strongly affected the political developments of Central Asia and South Asia to this day. Lord Curzon's

solution was to build what he termed a “Frontier of Separation” between the two empires, rather than a “Frontier of Contact.”¹

After the British captured the Punjab region following the Second Sikh War of 1848–49, access was gained to what is today the frontier province and tribal areas inhabited by the Pushtun and Baluchi, but the British government maintained a policy of a “closed border” with the tribal peoples until the formation of the NWFP in 1901. Integration was not the initial aim in this region; the large Muslim populations of Punjab and Bengal became the critical components of political development in British India, not the Muslim border regions.

Tribal Areas and Curzon

The creation of the NWFP in November 1901, as well as the formation of Political Agencies in Tribal Areas, has been characterized as the “cheapest and most efficient political structure that would permit ultimate control but would not require direct administration of the kind that existed in British India.”² Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, and well-travelled throughout Persia and Russian Central Asia as well, explained his policy succinctly as “the substitution of frontier garrisons drawn from the people themselves, for the costly experiment of large forts and isolated posts thrown forward into a turbulent and fanatical country.”³

Waziristan proved the exception. During the winter of 1919–20, over the course of six months, more than 80,000 British troops were deployed due to an uprising that was partly the consequence of the Third Afghan War as well as fears that Bolshevik consolidation in Central Asia would lead to a renewed Russian thrust south. The British destruction of Kanigurram, the most populated village in South Waziristan and a traditional weapons-making center then and now, put Britain on the path of attempting to control the region by force, garrisoning troops throughout the region.

The case of a sixteen-year old Hindu girl, who fell in love with a Muslim man and subsequently converted and married, which led to the British intervening and returning her to her parents while her husband was charged with her kidnapping, became the spark for a broad revolt. Islam Bibi, as she became popularly known, stated in court that she converted to Islam of her own volition and was legally married, not abducted. Because she was younger than 16 at the time of marriage, she was returned to her parents again and quickly married to a Hindu, but

¹ Ainslee T. Embree (ed.), *Pakistan's Western Borderlands: The Transformation of a Political Order*, (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1977), p. 26.

² *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

³ Thomas Raleigh (ed.), *Lord Curzon in India, Being a selection from his speeches as Viceroy & Governor-General of India 1898-1905*, (London: MacMillan & Co., 1908), vol. II, p. 416.

the intervention of the British led to the last major popular armed revolt in Waziristan.⁴ The revolt was led by the Faqir of Ippi, as he was popularly known, who raised a lashkar, or peasant militia, of several thousand tribesmen and declared jihad against the British, which led to protracted operations over the years 1936–1938. The Faqir of Ippi was never able to lead the sustained insurrection he desired but spent years of his life digging caves along the Durand Line, the demarcated border with Afghanistan, that later served as refuge for the Mujaheddin during their war with the Soviets as well as for the Taliban and Al-Qaida forces. His actions later even attracted Nazi agents hoping to build an insurrection to draw British troops from other fronts; they sent weapons as well as plans for their local manufacture, which led to nothing. His final stand was against the establishment of Pakistan. His published tracts invoked both Pushtun independence and the depiction of the Pakistan state as a state dominated by Punjabis:

Pakistan is full of faults but is defective for two reasons. One of their main defects is the introduction of man-made laws and the other is the encroachment upon the legal rights of Pushtuns⁵

The view that the establishment of Pakistan by Mohammad Ali Jinnah as a largely secular state for Muslims to live without fear of Hindu or other groups' domination in India is a well-held precept of Pakistan. Still, as the Pakistani state was being launched, Maulana Daududi, the founder of the Jamiat-e-Islami movement that became and remains an important force for an Islamist state, characterized the new nation's leadership as containing "no one who could be credited with an Islamist point of view."⁶ The struggle between the Islamist and secular vision for the Pakistani state continues to this day.

"The violence which preceded partition was grave, widespread and lethal,"⁷ but the fragile state was especially dissatisfied with the borders partition gave to Pakistan. In October 1947, the contested state of Kashmir led to clashes where the Pakistan forces relied heavily on "a force of some 2000 tribesmen from the NWFP" with Mahsuds and Waziris comprising their main element to bolster Pakistan's claim to territory.⁸ During December 1947, the government of Pakistan withdrew its army from the border regions of North and South Waziristan as it

⁴ Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *Waziristan Tribes*, (Peshawar: Provincial Services Academy, 1991), p. 131.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁶ Khalid bin Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase 1857-1948*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 194.

⁷ Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition*, (Yale University Press, 2007), p. 148.

⁸ Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army, and the Wars within*, (Karachi: Oxford UP, 2008), pp. 48-49.

bolstered its forces for Kashmir thereby ending, in effect, the long-standing army presence there.

The Soviet-Afghan War and the presidency of Zia-ul-Huq led to the North West Frontier Province and Tribal Areas becoming the hub of training for fighters, not only for Afghan refugees but local Pushtuns as well, while Saudi Arabian money came to enlarge the base of radical madrasahs.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Jihad Union

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Jihad Union remain the most active symbols of armed resistance to the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan as well as other authoritarian regimes in Central Asia. Both these groups are now largely based in Waziristan and are regarded as terrorist groups internationally. The significance of these movements' threat needs to be reexamined in light of Central Asia's continuing political crises and weak economic conditions.

The emergence of what has come to be seen as radical Islam or political Islam in Central Asia has many roots historically. The transformation of Uzbekistan's Communist Party First Secretary into the "President" of an independent Uzbekistan was accentuated by the simultaneous religious suppression of an emerging independent Islam as much as any independent political movement. The consolidation of political power around President Islam Karimov following the flawed December 1991 presidential election and the emergence of a Civil War in Tajikistan in 1992 that resulted in the formation of a United Tajik Opposition, led to a wide variety of political opponents leaving their homelands. Pakistan and Taliban Afghanistan offered a refuge to those fleeing Central Asia's repressive policies as well as a place for the organization of an armed resistance for national liberation based on militant Islamist principles such as those of the IMU. It also became a center for books and pamphlets that presented views that justified not only their existence in exile, but also their own politicized interpretations of history.

Following the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, orchestrated by Al-Qaida from Afghanistan, the invasion of Afghanistan by U.S. and coalition forces resulted in the death of the former military leader of the IMU, Juma Khodjiev – popularly known as "Juma Namangani" – and a retreat to Pakistan where their cohesion has been jeopardized by several Pakistani Army campaigns. The emergence of the "Islamic Jihad" movement in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan will be examined as an attempt to integrate Central Asians into a different form of Islamist armed resistance. These movements will be

compared on the basis of their actions, organization, goals, and published statements.

Social Conditions and Mobilization

Uzbekistan since the early 1970s underwent a process of population growth that differentiated it and the Central Asian region sharply from the Slavic regions of the Soviet Union, which were below replacement levels. Here high urban population growth rates were surpassed by even higher rural growth rates resulting in ruralization as the percentage of the urban population retreated incrementally annually. Soviet success in some spheres such as literacy, which dwarfed results in social change for neighboring Central Asian societies in western China and Afghanistan, was no longer matched by corresponding success in education as more and more students came to compete for the same amount of seats in higher education institutes. Uzbek-language primary and secondary schools often had reduced hours for students to work at home, if not help in the fields. The result was that neither the economy nor the education system could grow fast enough to secure a level of social mobility commensurate with the population growth.

There was not yet significant out-migration from the large rural economy. Soviet social welfare policies toward large families and the value of Central Asia's many abundant fruits in the marketplaces of Russia contributed to the lowest mobility rates in the Soviet Union. Eastern Ferghana had become the most densely populated part of Central Asia. As the Soviet Union inched towards its implosion in the early 1990s, the lack of a sustainable local economy became more apparent and a large young unemployed population became part of the Soviet Union's legacy to Uzbekistan.

The social mobilization that occurred as a result of the Aral Sea Environmental Movement that began in 1986 in Uzbekistan had a grass roots base in its attempt to use the changing atmosphere of Gorbachev's perestroika to focus on the severe effect increasing cotton irrigation had on the degradation of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya river systems and the rapidly shrinking Aral Sea. There was enough acknowledgement of this environmental disaster by some competing circles within Uzbekistan's ruling elite to allow very open debate in its newspapers of the cotton monoculture and Moscow's policies, which now opened the possibility of diverting part of the Siberian Ob River's flow south through Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan in order to increase the level of irrigated cotton lands even more. The southern Central Asian states had long been directed by Moscow policy toward a cotton plantation economy at the perceived cost of little investment in modernized sectors of the economy long championed ideologically.

The initial large, overflowing crowds in Karakalpakistan in 1986 that heard debates, promoted by environmentalists, on Moscow's role in their deteriorating environmental and health conditions had by 1988 been largely replaced by a different kind of movement. Emphasis shifted to more mobile traveling campaigns, such as "Aral Crisis '88," which traveled throughout the Ferghana Valley – one of the regions of Uzbekistan least environmentally impacted – mobilizing large crowds into what was coalescing into a nationalist flavored movement.

Social mobilization reached another level when, in October 1989, 20,000 demonstrators, most of whom were students, marched through the streets of Tashkent demanding that Uzbek become the state language; the Birlik social movement played a critical role in organizing the demonstrations. In May 1990 an equally large demonstration demanded the removal of the Soviet appointed Islamic religious leader, the Mufti. Abdumannob Polat described this protest as "an unsanctioned five-mile-long rally from Tashkent's main mosques in the city's old town to the city center."⁹ It thus spanned from the neighborhood of one of Uzbekistan's two state controlled madrasahs to the seat of Communist Party power. The state's response by the head of the Council of Ministers only repeated the essence of the Soviet lie, which was that since the state and religion are separate, the government had no role in this. The reaction of the crowd was to call for the resignation of the Communist Party leadership as well.

Clearly the authority of the Communist Party and its self-proclaimed right to not only limit religion, but to monitor and control it was being challenged. Gorbachev's glasnost policy in Central Asia had the effect of bringing up for debate several aspects of the Stalin period in Uzbekistan like the collectivization of agriculture, but many topics such as the purges and the labor camps were not discussed on any level comparable with Russia's well-publicized media discussions. Instead, there was an increasing openness about the discussion of the *jadid* movement in Uzbekistan in the first quarter of the twentieth century. This movement, which sought to bring Central Asia out of its backward slumber of centuries, focused on broadening the education syllabus within the madrasah (thus, the use of "Jadid" from Arabic meaning "new" as in new education approach) and a determination to be part of a larger world. As Abduvakhitov has noted: "Had Central Asian Jadidism of the early 1900s not included political activism, it would have disappeared from the

⁹ Abdumannob Polat, "The Islamic Revival in Uzbekistan: A Threat to Stability?" in Roald Sagdeev and Susan Eisenhower (eds.), *Islam and Central Asia: An Enduring Legacy or an Evolving Threat?* Washington, DC: Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000), p. 41.

political and cultural scene as a transient phenomenon.”¹⁰ As its most renowned writers began to be reprinted, it became not only an intellectual legacy, but also the basis for a new nationalism that did not have to divorce itself from its Islamic identity.

The political and religious crisis centered on the role of Islam in Uzbekistan stemming from the Soviet period continues. Its roots lie in the nature of the Bolshevik imposition of power and its initial social and religious policies. The Bolsheviks in Central Asia had neither forces nor party members. Soviet power was achieved essentially by a “Colonial Revolution” where local Russian settlers and forces recognized the Bolshevik leadership though cut off from them by Russia’s civil war. The Central Asian resistance to a second colonial conquest lasted until the late 1920s in some areas and received the denigrating title “Basmachi” or “repressors” by the Soviets. It was actually a large and diverse resistance that included Islamic and nationalist aspects, but not Jadidist. The Soviets always treated the Basmachi as the product of backward Islam and landowners. By the late 1980s their legacy was being reviewed with a few articles even substituting the word “*Qorbashi*” – Central Asians’ term for those who fought Bolshevik rule – in positive affirmation of their resistance.

The suppression of Islam in Central Asia became historically linked by the Soviets to its support among the local resistance to Soviet power in the 1920s and paired with the unveiling of women. This assault on religion and the unveiling of women was a conscious cultural war meant to provide the conditions for their integration into Soviet institutions. Bolshevik campaigns against Islam had initially focused on the destruction of most mosques in the country and the limiting of madrasahs – eventually only two remained in the entire Soviet Union, with both being in Uzbekistan. All lands associated with religion became property of the state, pilgrimage to Mecca or *Hajj* became severely restricted, and all Islamic charitable institutions were banned. The practice of *Shariat* became outlawed and even the call to prayer disappeared in practice.

One result of this was a massive migration from the Ferghana Valley and other parts of Central Asia, variously estimated at 100–250,000 people, mainly to northern Afghanistan, and for some to Saudi Arabia and Turkey where they established émigré communities that to a degree have maintained an identity with Central Asia. All of these migrants from Soviet Central Asia were accepted as *muhajir*, or Muslim religious refugees. Indeed, Shalinsky, interviewing them and their descendents some 50 years later, noted that they continued to see themselves as

¹⁰ Abdujabbar Abduvakhitov, “Islamic Revivalism in Uzbekistan” in Dale F. Eickelman (ed.), *Russia’s Muslim frontiers: New directions in cross-cultural analysis*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 80.

religious migrants.¹¹ The Soviet-Afghan war brought Central Asian conscripts to Afghanistan where not only aspects of their own language, rural life, and culture were very evident, but also where some of the elderly who had migrated from the Soviet Union and their descendents could be encountered.

The institutionalization of Bolshevik power brought with it a policy of militant atheism that was officially taught in every school, and museums of atheism could be found in high schools and every city. The denigration of sacred places was also emphasized such as turning Andijon's large madrasah into a Museum of Atheism with crude paintings of "Atheists in History" on the walls of the former student quarters, the *hujra*. In a Marghilan high school that included Arabic in the curriculum (there was another in Bukhara) there was a museum focused on the theme of linking the liberation of women under the Bolsheviks through unveiling to victory over the backwardness of Islam.

The destruction of the mosque system and the denigration of sacred places forced Islam underground while over time the Soviets developed their system of tightly controlled Islam. "The fact that this parallel Islam existed was because of the repression, but also because this repression was ineffective, at least in the countryside" is a paradox that Olivier Roy has noted.¹² Nevertheless, this parallel Islam was effectively cut off from the world of Dar ul-Islam. The later Soviet period saw the best educated Imams in the Soviet religious system enjoy study abroad in those Arabic countries with which the Soviet Union had good relations as the wall between underground Islam and official Islam narrowed slightly.

An overarching struggle for authority in Islam and in the political sphere began in the late 1980s in Uzbekistan. It was not just the impediments to public prayer and religious studies that affected Islam severely, it was the policy of limiting mosques and institutions of Islamic education that the public increasingly was overturning that was rapidly transforming Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the early 1990s.

Pakistan sought to take advantage of this situation on many levels. Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the military intelligence branch most involved in the support and training of the Mujahideen for the Soviet-Afghan War began new initiatives with the demise of the Soviet Union. According to General Javed Ashraf Qazi, the newly appointed director of the ISI in 1993, he was shown "the 'strong room' that once had 'currency stacked to the ceiling' but was now empty as adventurist ISI officers had taken 'suitcases filled with cash' to the field, including to the newly

¹¹ Audrey C. Shalinsky, "Islam and Ethnicity: The Northern Afghanistan Perspective," *Central Asian Survey* 1, 2/3 (1982), p. 71-83.

¹² Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p. 151.

independent Central Asian States, ostensibly to set up safe houses and operations there in support of Islamic causes.”¹³ According to Anatoli Beloyusov, a KGB deputy director, “the strengthened influence of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism [in Tajikistan] was directly linked to increased activities by Pakistani special services,” which he linked to program “M” – an operation of Pakistan. He further stated that “some schools have been set up in Afghan settlements near the border to give religious and military instruction to young Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmens.”¹⁴ Reports of Soviet border and KGB troops capturing “dozens of Soviet Uzbeks and Tajiks trying to cross into Afghanistan to join the Mujahideen for training” circulated.¹⁵ The question that cannot be completely answered as of yet is to what degree was there a pre-existing organized Central Asian armed force already in place in the early 1990s?

The Significance of December 9, 1991

The emergence of what has come to be termed radical Islam or political Islam in Central Asia has many roots. The vacuum of knowledge of Islam by the majority of the population and their strong desire to rebuild their cultural heritage after 70 years of Soviet policies resulted in thousands of mosques being built by poor communities within the space of a few years in the 1990s. The lack of qualified Imams compounded the situation and thousands of Central Asians ventured to Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia to study. Few could afford to stay long, and Pakistan and Saudi Arabia took on special roles because their madrasahs were willing to provide room and board.

Foreign Islamists were able to take a prominent role early on because of their financial backing and greater knowledge of the Islamic world outside the Soviet Union because few Central Asian Muslims had participated in Hajj, let alone studied in a madrasah abroad. By 1990 foreign influences began to challenge the long insulated world of Soviet Islam as missionaries from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan appeared throughout Central Asia. The building of mosques and various levels of Islamic schools suddenly flourished while the rest of the dying Soviet system shirked investment in education. Central Asia was suddenly becoming a place of competing voices for authority in Islam and government.

In the early 1980s there were only three mosques functioning in Namangan, a city of more than 22,000, while “before 1917 there were 360

¹³ Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army, and the Wars within*, op. cit., p. 468.

¹⁴ Martin, Ebon, *KGB: death and rebirth*, (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994), p. 161-162.

¹⁵ Afzal Mahmood, “Unrest amongst Soviet Muslims,” *Dawn*, February 26, 1990.

mosques and 2 madrasahs in Namangan.”¹⁶ Islamic activists in Namangan began a series of protests to recover sacred space. They focused on one of the strongest symbols of Soviet denigration of Islam, the Gumbaz Mosque, which was being used as a warehouse for the state wine factory and contained large vats of wine. When a meeting was planned for the site, many involved were arrested, but released as they planned a hunger strike to gain more attention. Within a short period the vestiges of the wine warehouse disappeared and it reverted to a place of prayer.¹⁷

Uzbekistan outlawed demonstrations on the streets in 1991, and any mention of rallies and demonstrations disappeared from Uzbekistan’s press. An article in the Russian newspaper *Kuranty* noted that Uzbekistan’s press had “ignored recent rallies of Muslim believers in the Uzbekistan cities of Andijon and Namangan, while the authorities have denied that any rallies took place at all.”¹⁸ Large meetings did in fact take place, not on the streets, but in several mosques, with the largest estimated at some 20,000, and were organized by the Islamic Renaissance Party, which was trying to get registered as a political party. The Islamic Renaissance Party had held its initial organizing conference in Tashkent in January, but the authorities had disrupted it.

The emergence of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan has its inception in part due to the failure of the December 9, 1991 debates between President Karimov and Tahir Yoldash and other Islamists to result in a realized compromise. The removal of four Imams from a list of 100 people considered politically important enough to meet Islam Karimov, who had been the CPSU First Secretary for Uzbekistan, and was now “campaigning” for the presidency while being the acting president, led not only to protest later that day, December 8, 1991, but to the seizure of the former Communist Party headquarters in Namangan by protesters in support of the disinvited Imams.

The result, the next day, was the return of Islam Karimov and an open debate on issues raised by the primary spokesman for the four Imams, Tahir Yoldash, then 23 years old, that took place on a square within the building with thousands in attendance, nearly all male and thousands more outside listening through loudspeakers. The issues raised were as follows: Why was the political registration of the Islamic Renaissance party as well as other parties, such as Birlik, denied? Why not postpone the election until there is time for more candidates to be heard? What is the relationship between the state and Islam? Will there be a new constitution that will follow debate on such an issue?

¹⁶ Abdujabbar Abduvakhitov, “Islamic Revivalism in Uzbekistan,” *op. cit.* p. 88.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ I. Chantseva, *Kuranty*, October 21, 1991.

Immediately following the public debate Karimov met privately with Yoldash and other prominent Islamic activists for nearly an hour and promised several times that the Islamic Renaissance Party of Uzbekistan would be registered within a month of the election.

The declaration by some Islamists later that Namangan was an independent Islamic emirate, and attempts to provide private policing of the city that included criticism of women if not deemed appropriately dressed, led to a deterioration in relations with the Karimov regime and the departure of Yoldash and some hundreds of supporters to Tajikistan and, ultimately, Afghanistan and Pakistan to escape arrest. The era of open discussions and demonstrations had ended for Uzbekistan and steps toward armed conflict had begun.

Profile of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

Two generations of Islamist Uzbeks now reside in Pakistan. Many came for Islamic study and have stayed because it would be politically difficult to return. Some of the more radical madrasahs began to feed students into paramilitary training camps in the 1980s.

The Central Asian presence in the North West Frontier Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas was initially related to the Soviet Afghan war, as many deserters and prisoners-of-war were given the option of becoming Muslims and soon began to attend local madrasahs. For those of Central Asian or North Caucasus background this was an opportunity to develop their religion on a level that was simply impossible in the Soviet Union. The Deobandi madrasahs of Samiul Huq became the most significant. Jama'at-e-Islami, Maulana Dawdudi's movement, as well as Jama'at-e-Ulema Islami (JUI), gave significant help in this as well. Other radical madrasahs too, while less comprehensive, simply became feeders for paramilitary training camps. These training camps in the 1980s were evolving toward a system where basic arms training was accompanied by an ideological emphasis, which placed jihad and martyrdom at the center of Islam. This first step entailed a 21-day training course, and could be followed by a special course or series of courses with more depth in weapons use, tactics, and explosives that could last from three to six months.¹⁹ Over time both the training camps and madrasahs adapted to the needs of their students and recruits by producing syllabi in Russian and Soviet Uzbek and, presumably, other languages of the Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union. The nexus of funds from Saudi Arabian and Turkish Islamist organizations and the political will of Pakistan via its Inter-Services Intelligence, as well as the coalescing support of Turkistani émigré organizations, gave birth to armed groups that participated in incursions

¹⁹ Ayesha Siddiqi, "Terror's Training Ground," *Newsline*, September 2009, p. 23.

into Tajikistan in March 1987 and Uzbekistan in April 1987 – which marked the first attempt since the distant Basmachi of the 1920s to attack the Soviet Union in Central Asia. The training of Soviet Central Asians and other Muslim peoples did not end with either the Soviet-Afghan War or the demise of the Soviet Union. Several training camps formed in the tribal areas of Pakistan, such as Miramshah in North Waziristan, were utilized by Uzbeks and Chechens in the late 1980s and 1990s.²⁰

The arrival of Juma Namangani and Tahir Yuldash in Pakistan led to the formal establishment of the IMU as an armed Islamic group in Peshawar in 1996. Their strong formal military organization was attractive to Taliban Afghanistan, which allowed them to have a base for operations into Central Asia, as well as take on a conventional military role against Ahmed Shah Masud's forces. Other factors, such as the ethnic kinship of most members of the IMU to the Central Asian peoples predominant in northern Afghanistan contributed to their greater acceptance there than the Taliban and partially transformed them into the Taliban's army in northern Afghanistan.

The IMU distinguished itself from other groups trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan paramilitary camps in that it planned to act on a military unit basis headed by field commanders. The plan envisaged the latter leading their men in attacks designed to "liberate" Uzbekistan by militarily defeating border guards and small units of the Uzbekistan army, and in thus doing, trigger a popular revolt.

For instance, there was an emphasis on testing a recruit's mental maps of his own village or town.²¹ The challenge to know where the militia station was, where the Karimov party headquarters were located, as well as government buildings, forced a recruit to think in terms of infrastructure. The IMU certainly had a component that was a conventional army headed by field commanders who had progressed through a series of military courses. Formal aspects such as taking an oath to "fight to the last drop of blood" and the immersion into different sequences of military courses were all designed to build self-confidence as well as the ability to work both on a unit and individual level. Typical of their design was to have three levels of training in a subject up to the level of instructor. A field commander's course meant completing three levels of light weapons mastery as well as small unit tactics. These courses were mainly derived from U.S. and Soviet training manuals.

²⁰ Abdujabbar Abduvakhitov, *Mezhdunarodnyi Terrorizm, Ekstremizm: Poniatie, Istoriia i Sovremennost'*, CD [International Terrorism: Concepts, History and the Current Situation], (Tashkent: Academy of State and Social Construction under the President of Uzbekistan, 2003).

²¹ This paragraph is based on my experience translating materials brought from Afghanistan by New York Times reporters Chris Chivers and David Rohde. Much of this material is presented in *The New York Times*, March 17-18, 2002.

Explosives school had a three-level intricate course, which was clearly focused on the destruction of infrastructure – buildings, bridges, etc. Poisons, Stalking, and Assassinations schools involved training that could easily lend itself to terrorism scenarios.

Clearly, there were also Central Asians trained in paramilitary camps in Afghanistan who were never incorporated into the IMU but were infiltrated back into Central Asia. This was also fundamental to the IMU's strategy of eventually being able to coordinate uprisings involving local situations with an invasion of more conventional forces. Consequently, the IMU's 'Order of Battle' was organized around the concept of a field commander for every province or viloyat in Uzbekistan as well as for part of Ferghana in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Every viloyat would also have an "amir" who would have leadership and religious qualifications to be respected locally. The combination of field commanders and local infiltrated combatants was expected to serve as the backbone to any uprising.

Waziristan

The ranks of those affiliated with the IMU that came to Pakistan as part of the retreat from Afghanistan in late 2001, including those who have come back independently in the past seven years, have been severely depleted by the continuing attacks of U.S. and Pakistan army forces as part of operations to not only defend southern Afghanistan from renewed Taliban attacks, but also to target Al-Qaida strongholds in the tribal areas. Initially, the IMU was able to maintain substantial clustered concentrations and unit integrity under field commanders in Waziristan that allowed them a great deal of contact with each other

The IMU's role in Pakistan from 2002–5 can be interpreted as serving as a blocking agent for Taliban and Al-Qaida forces to Pakistani military operations that were attempting to gain control of the tribal areas. In March 2004 they fought several pitched battles against the Pakistani Army that resulted in substantial Pakistani Army casualties. Their fighting when surrounded by Pakistani Army units was captured partially in a video, which showed them fighting in burial shrouds. Their escape was thanks to their support from Nek Muhammad, a local Warzai Waziri commander who used his own armor-plated jeep to get a wounded Tahir Yoldash to safety. The killing of Nek Muhammad later that summer by a U.S. drone removed some of the visible support that the IMU had locally. Their subsequent alliances with Waziri Taliban commanders deteriorated substantially over the next two years as Pakistan initiated a policy that advocated the removal of foreigners and ending their alliances with local Pushtun groups, with the result that Uzbeks were targeted to leave. A Waziri Taliban commander, Mullah

Muhammad Nazir, affiliated with Afghan Taliban leader Jalaluddin Haqqani, initially supported their sanctuary, but turned vehemently against the IMU in 2006 and began a campaign to drive Uzbeks out of tribal areas “because they refused to fight in Afghanistan.”²²

It also resulted in their shift to Mehsudi sponsored support and their greater fragmentation into smaller clusters of fighters. While their fighting had prevented deeper Pakistani Army penetration and safeguarded many Islamist armed groups and Taliban forces, the ability of IMU forces to operate freely in South Waziristan sharply declined.. .

The surviving few hundred IMU members in Pakistan today lack the clustered concentrations that gave them cohesion. The IMU is now divided among smaller units and often found with other foreigners. Does all this dispersion of forces point to U.S. and Pakistan policy success, or, the rising role of Al-Qaida in building its international terrorist groups? The goals of Al-Qaida have consistently been to serve as a diffusion agent for international jihad. Its main focus in recent years has been to build distinct groups that carryout terrorist activity in designated countries.

As the Waziristan-based Tehrek-i-Taliban have brought their campaign of armed attacks and suicide bombings from the tribal areas against Afghanistan and the Pakistan government , it has also been accompanied by an increased use of more conventional troops, often of an international background as well. In short, there is greater use of international jihad participants by groups affiliated with Al-Qaida networks in operations waged against Afghanistan and the Pakistan Army from the tribal areas of Pakistan.

The IMU became an armed movement not only associated with seeking the liberation of Uzbekistan on an Islamic basis, but with broader Central Asia, as every state acquired most of the oppressive policies toward Islam associated with Uzbekistan. It also became clearly associated with terrorist activities, such as the kidnapping of Japanese geologists in 1999 and American trekkers in 2000 in the Ferghana Valley. There are many stories from government militia members in Termez, and from various citizens of Uzbekistan that crossed paths with them in the mountains, that lend an individual aspect to the terror endured. When the IMU was able to infiltrate forces into Uzbekistan, it never prompted the public support anticipated. With the goal of overthrowing a dictator thwarted, the mission has changed because they are increasingly dependent on the most radical forces in Waziristan to stay there, as clearly there is no sanctuary elsewhere.

²² Carlotta Gall, *New York Times*, April 21, 2007.

Islamic Jihad Group/Union

The formation of the Islamic Jihad Group and its emphasis on suicide bombers as a means of punishing the Karimov regime represents a dramatic change in tactics and strategy. This stems, perhaps, from the realization that the IMU could no longer field enough troops at any point to infiltrate a force capable of fighting Karimov's forces. The last such IMU significant infiltration in August 2000 was quite successful in that it got a unit of more than 100 well-armed fighters into Uzbekistan following successful border area skirmishes, only to be later caught in a box canyon where most of the unit were killed, while other units along the Uzbekistan Ferghana border engaged militarily but failed to infiltrate. Since then the idea of either controlling a significant piece of territory or even being able to infiltrate significant forces has nearly vanished. There is also the reality that these military operations failed to engender enough public support or sufficient number of infiltrated combatants to contribute to the large scale of operations envisioned.

The Islamic Jihad Group was originally organized by Najmiddin Jalolov, also known as "Ebu Yahya Muhammad Fatih," and Suhayl Buranov in North Waziristan in 2002, following the completion of the IMU withdrawal from the Tora-Bora fighting.²³ They were members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, but formed this separate wing because Tahir Yoldash was no longer seen as an active member in resistance to the Karimov regime since there had been no new attacks in Uzbekistan, as recounted by Nartbay Dutbayev, then Chairman of Kazakhstan's Committee for National Security in a 2005 interview.²⁴ Another explanation for the group's emergence could be the decision by the Al-Qaida leadership in May 2001 to remove Juma Namangani from his role as military commander of the IMU and assign him to head "a brigade of foreign guerillas called Livo that encompassed Uzbeks, Turks, Uighurs, Pakistanis and some Arabs,"²⁵ who were largely destroyed by American forces in November 2001. It would be strange if many of Namangani's closest commanders and soldiers did not follow him into this new organization.

By the fall of 2003 Islamic Jihad had organized an operation for Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan designed to build a coterie of suicide bombers to be recruited locally. They sent two "amirs" named Ahmed

²³ U.S. Treasury Department, "Treasury Designates Leadership of the IJU Terrorist Group," June 18, 2008.

²⁴ I met with Nartbay Dutbayev in Almaty as part of a Central Asia Project delegation from the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, May 2005.

²⁵ Peter Baker, "Renewed Militancy Seen in Uzbekistan," *Washington Post*, September 28, 2003.

Bek Mirzoev and Zhakhsi Bi Mirzoev, who were not related, to carry out operations in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Both were Uzbek, but Bi Mirzoev was a Kazakh citizen. Other support people were trained but the critical factor was the use of local networks to obtain housing. Both men had charismatic personalities that allowed them to attract and recruit women of college-age as well as middle-aged to carry out attacks in both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

In Tashkent, the young woman who threw herself upon a group of policeman at the Chor-Su Bazaar, and a middle-aged woman who chased a policeman to blow herself up were some of the most poignant scenes enacted in late March 2004. The final wave of bombers that struck in July in Tashkent targeted first the Prosecutor-General's Office and then the U.S. and Israeli consulates. The total of 47 killed in Tashkent and Bukhara attest to the group's impact on one level, but there was no mass popular support. The targeting of the July attacks was meant to coincide with trials of supporters arrested after the first wave of bombings. The selection of the U.S. and Israeli missions signaled that this group was targeting the main enemies of international jihad rather than additional Uzbek targets.

It is interesting to note that the Islamic Jihad Group stands out in its demand for media attention and desire to take responsibility for attacks. Several websites refused to publish their "communiqué" following the first series of suicide bombings in the spring of 2004. Finally, the editor of the website StopDictatorKarimov included it:²⁶

We sent our communiqué [*bayonat* in Uzbek] to several sites with the request that they announce it. Dear brother, do you know for what reason no one has announced our communiqué?...Islamic Jihad is a group of Muslim Fighters for the Faith (*Mujahid*) who take responsibility upon themselves for the attacks and bombings carried out in the "Uzbekistan" homeland against the "Uzbekistan" government and its hirelings that have strongly tyrannized Uzbekistan's people.²⁷

A few days later the same website received another short missive promising that "documentary films have been made, but they are very far

²⁶ Hazratqul Hudoiberdi, the editor of the website stopdictatorkarimov.com, explained: "Having absolutely no information on this group, I have nevertheless published this letter in the hope that it will to some measure throw light upon the events of recent days in Uzbekistan."

²⁷ "Islamiyy Jihad" gurukhi ma'suliatni o'z bo'yiniga oldi! ["Islamic Jihad" group claims responsibility]," April 3, 2004, <www.stopdictatorkarimov.com> (August 4, 2004).

from us now and we cannot give this thing to you quickly...”²⁸ This need to focus on the recording of an event by email and video has become characteristic of this group. Again announcing their next series of bombings in Tashkent in July 2004 that were timed to coincide with the trial of those affiliated with the spring events, they not only described them as “necessary executions against Jews and Christians, the enemies of Islam...” but wanted the announcement of their actions by email to “serve as a document that the group of amirs informed us of this before the attacks.”²⁹ Seeking such a relationship with websites and media, where they are put in the role of serving as a “timestamp,” is another indicator that the group measures its success in terms of publicity.

The scenario for Kazakhstan was never played out, according to Nartbai Dutbayev, and sixteen members were caught, mostly women, several of whom were mothers. “They were so full of their ideas and committed to their cause in just eighteen months doctrination,” he said. They believe, he noted, that “if they can eliminate Karimov, Islamic believers will support them.”

A series of additional attacks in Pakistan spanning the first half of 2004 were linked to eight captured men that were described by the interior minister as being of Central Asian origin and belonging to a group called “Jundullah” that was linked to training in Waziristan.³⁰ This group name also turned up on videos of jihad fighters in Pakistan largely from the former Soviet Union and Turkey, some of whom also turned up in IMU films as well. A Turkman explosives trainer linked to Islamic Jihad Group arrested in August 2004 admitted that his trainees included Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmen and Tajiks.³¹

Even the planning of the suicide bombing outside the U.S. consulate in Karachi in March 2006 was linked to Uzbeks affiliated with Al Qaida according to Pakistan security officials.³²

Additional events, which targeted Germany in 2007 and Turkey in April 2009 but which were thwarted, have also demonstrated a need to focus on international targets combined with a broad use of video and media announcements. In September 2007, a few days before the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, two Germans and a Turk were arrested as they began to mix a 1,500-pound hydrogen peroxide based explosive. The planned attacks on Germany represented a departure from the previously Uzbekistan-centric nature of

²⁸ “Islamiyy Jihaddan navbatdagi maktub! [Latest letter from Islamic Jihad],” July 5, 2004, <www.stopdictatorkarimov.com> (August 4 2004).

²⁹ “Islamiyy Jihad gurukhining shoshilinch bayonoti [Islamic Jihad group’s urgent message],” July 30, 2004, <www.stopdictatorkarimov.com> (August 4 2004).

³⁰ “8 linked to Al Qaeda arrested,” *Dawn*, June 14, 2004.

³¹ Ismail Khan “Turkman trainer held in NWFP,” *Dawn*, August 11, 2006.

³² “Al Qaeda was behind attack on American consulate,” *Dawn*, July 27, 2006.

this group. The focus on Germany clouds the Uzbek aspect of the movement first emphasized. A video appeared in May 2008 centered on a German convert to Islam who explained that Germany was a target because “the Germans are directly involved in the war which is taking place in Afghanistan.”³³

Additional video targeting Germans appeared in September 2008 under the IMU banner with Tahir Yoldash (appearing as “Muhammad Tahir Farooq”) voiced over in German advocating: “Come and join the ranks of the Mujahideen and fill in the gaps of the already fallen martyrs.”³⁴ Along with a German and two Moroccans who grew up in Germany and could speak German, one clearly received the impression that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan had become nearly indistinguishable from the Islamic Jihad. One of the German speakers from Morocco in the video even promised that you can bring your families (to Waziristan presumably) and they will be well taken care of some distance from the front, which adds a surreal element to the already prodigious videos and slide shows that continually present smiling, well-scrubbed jihadis in clean camouflage uniforms carrying weapons, accompanied by captions that emphasize their diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The thwarted attacks that were planned in Turkey yielded 37 arrests on April 20, 2009, throughout Turkey, including two Uzbeks. Turkish police described the group as being members of Islamic Jihad and planning attacks on NATO facilities.

Islamic Jihad’s shooting of its way through a police checkpoint at Khanabad close to the Kyrgyzstan border on May 25–26, 2009, as well as its carrying out of attacks on two buildings in the city that symbolized much of their hatred for the Karimov regime, the National Security Service and Internal Affairs buildings, followed by a suicide bombing in Andijon near a café frequented by security personnel, resulted in relatively few official casualties. But the ensuing transportation paralysis and communications blocking of cell phones locally as well as Russian cable news reports of the incidents had an impact.³⁵ As expected, email announcements from Islamic Jihad claiming responsibility³⁶ ensued as did a video announcement from its website.³⁷

³³ See the video on <www.nefafoundation.org>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Aleksei Volosevich “Uzbekistan 2009: ‘Islamskii dzhikhad’, ‘seryii import’, zakrytye granitsy i tainye sudebnye protsessy [Uzbekistan 2009: ‘Islamic Jihad.’ ‘grey import,’ closed borders and secret judicial processes],” *Ferghana.ru*, October 10, 2009, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6328>>, (January 10 2010).

³⁶ “Little-known Islamic Jihad claims responsibility for Hanabad explosion,” May 28, 2009, <http://www.uznews.net/news_single.php?lng=en&cid=8&nid=10496>, (January 10 2010).

³⁷ <www.sehadetzamani.com> June 3, 2009 (January 10 2010).

The deaths from U.S. drone attacks of Jalolov last summer as well as the death of Yoldash later from wounds removes the most long-lasting Uzbek militant leadership associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida. It can be expected that Tahir Yoldash will be replaced, but no one has the historical sense and longevity that he possessed because of his prominent role in challenging Karimov in debate publicly in December 1991.

Conclusion

I believe that it has proven unsustainable for the IMU in Waziristan to maintain their former cohesion because Pakistani and U.S. operations since 2002 have both pushed them back and killed their most significant leaders. They have certainly lost hundreds of troops and several commanders since they came to Pakistan and lost dozens in Tajikistan who have been captured in recent years. The patronage conditions that allowed them to find sanctuary have been dramatically curtailed. New recruits continue to journey southwards, according to Major General Bozhko of Kazakhstan's Committee on National Security, though in lesser numbers and via a more circuitous route through Iranian Caspian ports and overland routes that bring them to porous Afghan and Pakistani borders.³⁸ The rise of Islamic Jihad reflects the integration of fighters once committed to the armed liberation of Uzbekistan and the removal of President Karimov into a movement whose agenda is increasingly indistinguishable from that of Al-Qaida.

June 2009 marked two decades in power for Islam Karimov. In this time, substantial numbers of men who cannot find employment in Uzbekistan have gone to work abroad; freedom of the press, assembly, and religion remain only slight memories. The Karimov regime's use of force in Andijon in May 2005 remains a reminder that there can be no large demonstrations.

Antipathy toward the Karimov regime is clear, but it is also clear that the IMU networks that were once even quite visible in parts of Uzbekistan no longer have much potency. The idea of building a large armed Islamist force abroad that will liberate Uzbekistan can no longer be taken seriously. Its replacement by a philosophy centered on suicide bombings that target Uzbekistan power organs as well as international targets closely aligned with the goals of Al Qaida or Tehrik-e-Taliban represents not so much an alternative strategy as an affirmation of terror and revenge as the basis of policy. Still, the resentment felt by those suppressed in their religion runs high, and clearly Islamic religiosity has risen greatly over the past twenty years. The challenges that remain are the same that Islam Karimov faced on December 9, 1991: will free

³⁸ I met with Vladimir Bozhko in Almaty as part of a Central Asia Project delegation from the National Committee on American Foreign Policy delegation in June 2006.

elections be allowed with parties representing a broad range of interests, including Islamists? Will there be a constitutional congress that will allow discussion of the relationship of Islam and the state? The role of the police organs and prosecutor-general's office as part of the Karimov legacy of political suppression is sure to be on the agenda as well.

Waziristan, where both the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Islamic Jihad have been located, is a region that did not begin to have roads built until the late 1960s and radio broadcast signals (FM) could not be received until the latter half of 2004. The region has come to epitomize the remoteness of the Pakistan government to one of its provinces. The lack of Pakistan territoriality in the region owes much to the British heritage of using remote frontier posts as a symbol of governance with agency headquarters in each of the tribal areas of the North West Frontier Province serving as the closest resemblance to market towns for decades. Hassan Abbas recently wrote that, "there is an emerging consensus among foreign policy experts that the growing insurgency and militancy in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) poses the greatest security challenge not only to Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also to the United States."³⁹ The result has been a military invasion by the Pakistani Army that remains incomplete. If the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Jihad Union are finally forced from Pakistan, it can be expected that another form of armed movement will emerge until Uzbekistan creates conditions that reconcile political and religious freedom.

³⁹ Hassan Abbas, "President Obama's Policy Options in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)," Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 2009.

Central Asia and the European Union: Prospects of an Energy Partnership

*Luba Azarch**

ABSTRACT

Launched in 2007, the “Strategy for a New Partnership” has increasingly put Central Asia into the focus of European foreign policy. Seeking to combine a regulatory and developmental approach with its interests in the economic, energy, and security realms, the EU hopes to deepen the relationship with the region. The following analysis will deal with the European ambitions in the energy sector in particular and put forward the argument that, taking into account the internal political structures of Central Asia, the EU’s conditional approach, as well as the internal and external (geo-) political and economic constraints Brussels is confronted with in this context, the projected partnership can hardly be considered as promising.

Keywords • Central Asia • European Union • China • Russia • Caspian Energy Resources • Energy Geopolitics

Introduction

When in the summer of 2007 the European Union launched its “Strategy for a new Partnership with Central Asia,” it made a conscious step towards engaging a region that beforehand, with the exception of technical cooperation in the realms of transport and energy infrastructure, was rather neglected by its foreign policy. Seeking to move “beyond the well-trodden paths ... of power and spheres of influence expansionism” and to further the sustainable transformation of the region’s political, economic, and social structures as well as its rapprochement towards European standards, Brussels hoped to establish

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stability, welfare, and security in Central Asia.¹ The engagement, however, was also tied to the region's "considerable energy resources" and the ensuing desire to upgrade energy relations with this region. Thus, the document emphasized Central Asia's potential of meeting the "EU's energy security and supply needs."²

Indeed, being the world's largest importer of oil and gas, the EU has long been keen on making energy security part of its foreign policy.³ More concretely, the aim has been to develop energy partnerships with producing countries so as to eventually integrate them into the European energy market. The creation of such a "pan-European energy community" has a regulatory character and builds upon the multilateral "management of mutual dependencies."⁴ The emphasis is also on the improvement of local investment conditions through the introduction of market mechanisms and the establishment of transparent, stable, and non-discriminatory legal framework conditions. Thus, the main objective of European energy policy is to connect its energy market, and with it its economic, political, and technological standards, to its energy-abundant neighbors.

Unsurprisingly, then, the EU's Central Asia Strategy attempts to reconcile its developmental approach with its interests in the realm of energy supply. Thus, Brussels presses for the region's convergence towards European standards, and, in return, it promises to support the construction of a new, western-oriented energy transport corridor and offers a diversification of consumer markets. Whether this strategy is to be successful depends on various circumstances – the role played by actors that are already established in the region, the domestic and foreign policy interests of the Central Asian states, and not least the impression made by the EU. The analysis seeks to illuminate these factors focusing on the Central Asian energy sector in general and the Turkmen natural gas resources in particular. The following points will be dealt with:

- The size of Central Asian resources and the actors established in the region;

¹ Gernot Erler, *Mission Weltfrieden. Deutschlands neue Rolle in der Weltpolitik* [Mission World Peace. Germany's New Role in Global Policy] (Freiburg: Herder, 2009).

² *European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*. Council of the European Union, Printed Matter QC-79-07-222-29C, (May 19, 2009).

³ Christian Egenhofer, "Noch keine Europäische Energieaußenpolitik [No European Energy Foreign Policy Yet]," *Weltverträgliche Energiesicherheitspolitik. Jahrbuch Internationale Politik 2005/2006* [Globally Sound Energy Security Policy, Yearbook of International Politics 2005/2006], in Josef Braml (ed.), (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008).

⁴ Kirsten Westphal, "Wettlauf um Energieressourcen. Markt und Macht in Zentralasien [Footrace over Energy Resources, Markets and Power in Central Asia]," *Osteuropa*, 8, 9 (2007), p. 463-478; *European Union and Central Asia*, *op. cit.*

- The scope left for the EU in this regard;
- The interest of the Central Asian states to transform their internal political structures and reorient their foreign affiliations for a diversification of trading partners;
- The future of an energy partnership between the European Union and the Central Asian states in the medium and long term.

The analysis will proceed as follows: firstly, the resources of the hydrocarbon-abundant Central Asian states will be examined. Subsequently, focus is placed on the already successfully established actors in the region, before taking stock of European engagement in Central Asia. Finally, and against the background of the EU's conditional approach, the potential for a bilateral partnership will be discussed.

Central Asian Energy: Resources, Transit Routes, Actors

Oil

With 3.2 percent of proven global resources (39.8 billion barrels) and the region's most stable polity and economy, Kazakhstan has been of major attractiveness to private and state-owned enterprises. The country's three main oil fields – Tengiz, Karachaganak, and Kashagan⁵ – represent the main target for investments. However, smaller and more remote fields have increasingly gained attention, too. Indeed, production has doubled since 2000 and is expected to rise, especially after the giant Kashagan oil field is put into operation in 2013. Due to the lack of transport infrastructure, however, it remains to be seen as to whether future production expectations – and with it export projections – can be met. To be sure, there are various export possibilities. Since 2006, Kazakh oil has flowed in all directions – to the north via the Atyrau-Samara pipeline into the Russian distribution network (approximately 480,000 b/d), westwards via the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) (approximately 620,000 b/d) to the Russian port of Novorossiysk, southwards via a swap deal with Iran, and to China via the new Atasu-Alashankou pipeline (approximately 85,000 b/d).⁶ However, these pipelines do not suffice in practice. Due to its yet relatively small export capacity, the Sino-Kazakh pipeline is unable to contribute to the increase of Kazakh oil production.

⁵ Estimated reserves are: Tengiz (6-9 billion barrels); Kashagan (13 billion barrels); Karachaganak (8-9 billion barrels). *Country Analysis Briefs, Kazakhstan*, Energy Information Administration, <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Kazakhstan/Full.html>> (July 18 2009); *Kazakhstan Fact Sheet*, Chevron, <<http://www.chevron.com/documents/pdf/kazakhstanfactsheet.pdf>> (July 18 2009).

⁶ *Country Analysis Briefs, Kazakhstan*, *op. cit.*

The larger and older pipelines (CPC and Atyrau-Samara), on the other hand, operate to the limits of their capabilities.⁷

As for international engagement, the Kazakh oil sector is characterized by the interaction of various actors. Western European and American multinational corporations are leading in the Kazakh upstream sector – Chevron alone holds a 50 percent stake in Tengiz, the world's largest oil field, and the total stake of western enterprises held in the Kashagan field is 75 percent. Nonetheless, the role of Russia and China is not to be underestimated, too.

Due to its dominant position in the regional pipeline infrastructure, Russia finds itself in a particularly good position to exert influence in the region. Thus, not only does Russia's state-owned pipeline monopoly Transneft hold a majority stake in the CPC (24 percent) – responsible for more than half of gross Kazakh exports – but it also operates the Atyrau-Samara pipeline through which one quarter of all Kazakh exports are piped. Consequently, Russia controls almost 80 percent of the Kazakh oil transport – a circumstance that is not necessarily in Astana's favor: Transneft, for instance, refuses to increase the volume of the CPC unless transit tariffs are increased and the consortium's debt restructured. In addition, Moscow presses for the distribution of Kazakh crude in Europe through the Kremlin-sponsored Bourgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline. Russia seeks to thus consolidate its inter-regional transport monopoly as well as its power in the realm of Kazakh oil production and export.⁸

China has been active in the Kazakh oil sector since 1997, investing in both oil fields and pipelines. Having appeared last in the Kazakh hydrocarbon market, at a time when the doors to the large consortia were closed, Beijing was compelled to invest in more remote fields of smaller capacity.⁹ Nevertheless, by now, Chinese companies control roughly a quarter of Kazakh crude oil production.¹⁰ The idea of a Sino-Kazakh pipeline has also been in the air since 1997, but its implementation became concrete only after the discovery of the giant Kashagan field in 2002, as Astana was in urgent need of an additional customer, and China had to

⁷ Thus far, the pipeline's expansion has failed due to the unwillingness of its operators. *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, International Energy Agency, OECD, 2008.

⁸ The most significant connection in this regard is the Pan-European Oil Pipeline which is to carry oil from Romania via the Balkans to Italy. *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*

⁹ Sebastien Peyrouse, *Economic Aspects of the China-Central Asia Rapprochement*, Silk Road Paper, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, (2007).

¹⁰ The most profitable production in this regard is that of Aktobemunaigaz, a former Kazakh state holding of which almost 90 percent are owned by Beijing. A further major producer under Chinese control is the formerly Canadian company PetroKazakhstan, responsible for approximately 12 percent of Kazakh oil production and acquired by Beijing in 2005. Lowell Dittmer, "Central Asia and the Regional Powers," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4 (2007), pp. 7-23.

make sure that Kazakhstan disposed of enough oil to fill the projected pipeline. The Sino-Kazakh Atyrau-Alashankou pipeline consists of three sections, with two already in operation.¹¹ Currently, China imports about 10 million tons of Kazakh crude per year. Once the last section of the pipeline is operational (projected to be in 2011), Chinese imports are expected to increase to 20 million tons per annum. As of 2011, then, the Atyrau-Alashankou line will be filled with Kazakh crude of Chinese (2/3), Kazakh (1/4), and potentially Russian production (Rosneft and Lukoil have voiced pronounced interest in thus arranging their entry into the Chinese market).¹²

In contrast to Russia and China, the European Union – the main importer of Kazakh hydrocarbons – does not play a pronounced role in the region's oil industry. Here, those European energy companies that, as mentioned above, have stakes in Kazakhstan's most productive fields are the protagonists. Indeed, the future increase in production will stem to a great extent from the western-dominated Kashagan field, provided that sufficient export capacity can be warranted.

To this end, the Kazakh state-owned company KazMunaiGaz, in tandem with Tengizchevroil and the AGIP KCO Consortia (developing the fields Tengiz and Kashagan, respectively), is in the process of examining the possibility of a trans-Caspian shipment system with a final capacity of one million barrels per day. The objective in this regard is to transport Kazakh oil to Azerbaijan and from there on to Europe, using the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and thus bypassing Russia.¹³ The Kazakhstan Caspian Transportation System (KCTS) is projected to include a pipeline within Kazakhstan, a port facility, and an appertaining fleet in Kuryk (Kazakhstan) and Baku (Azerbaijan) as well as a connection to the BTC-network. Both countries concluded an intergovernmental agreement as early as 2006, and there is also a corresponding Memorandum of Understanding between the Kazakh state and the consortia in question. However, due to the multitude and complexity of interests (actors involved include the governments of

¹¹ The first section between Kenkyiak and Atyrau has been operational since 2004 and delivers oil westwards from the fields in Kenkyiak to the port city of Atyrau, and from there on to the north/northwest via the Atyrau-Samara and the CPC connection. It will be inverted upon completion of all three sections and the oil will be transported eastwards from Atyrau to China. The second section, connecting the Kazakh city of Atasu with the Chinese border city of Alashankou, has been operational since 2006, filled with oil from the fields of CNPC and KazMunaiGaz. Additionally, Gazpromneft and TNK-BP export parts of their production from western Siberia through this pipeline (it is connected with the Omsk-Pavlodar-Chymment pipeline). *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹² Peyrouse, *Economic Aspects of the China-Central Asia Rapprochement*, *op. cit.*

¹³ There already exists a similar connection between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan (Aktau-Baku). Its capacity, however, amounts to only 32,000 barrels per day – merely 1 percent of daily Kazakh exports. Cf. *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*

Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as well as the shareholders of the Tengiz, KCO, and BTC consortia), an agreement, notably in regard of technical and financial questions, has not been reached so far, thus putting a brake on a project that is crucial for the increase of Kazakh oil production.¹⁴

It is at this point that the EU might take a lead in offering political support and thus gain in visibility. As yet, it does not have any role in the construction of the KCTS, but it seems safe to say that requiring expenditures of up to US\$3–4 billion, the network will hardly manage without public investments, loans, or guarantees (similar to the BTC pipeline in its day). This circumstance renders engagement on the part of the EU (along with the EIB and the EBRD) probable, to say the least. What is more, taking into account the European energy consumption and the ownership structure of the above-mentioned fields, supporting the construction of the network – directly or indirectly – appears to be in Brussels' interest.

Gas

The regional champions in the realm of natural gas are Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, ranking globally as 11th and 10th in production and 16th and 6th in exports, respectively.¹⁵ The latter however, is not particularly attractive to international investors, due to its government's authoritarian traits, a heavily restricted economy, and, not least, the relatively weak export potential. The export-oriented Turkmenistan, on the other hand, although politically and economically at least as illiberal as its heavily populated neighbor, is increasingly becoming the focal point of international investors, particularly since the confirmation on the part of energy consultancy Gaffney, Cline and Associates that the Turkmen reserves indeed may belong to the global top five. According to this estimate, the giant South Yolotan-Osman field alone, situated in southeastern Turkmenistan, holds up to 14 trillion cubic meters (tcm) of gas. Additionally, there are various fields in the highly productive Amu

¹⁴ "Kashagan Partners Eye US\$4-bil. Trans-Caspian Oil Transport System to Connect to BTC Pipeline,"

Global Insight, <<http://www.globalinsight.com/SDA/SDADetail6096.htm>> (August 2 2009).

¹⁵ *Turkmenistan Energy Profile*, Energy Information Administration.

<http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=TX> (July 18 2009);

Uzbekistan Energy Profile, Energy Information Administration.

<http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=UZ> (July 18 2009). The discrepancy in production and export of both countries is due to their population and the ensuing domestic consumption: Uzbekistan, with a population of 27.6 million (the most populous country of Central Asia), has a high domestic consumption of natural gas.

Turkmenistan's population, on the other hand, numbers less than 5 million, thus leaving pronounced leeway for gas exportation.

Darya, Murgab, and South Caspian basins.¹⁶ The Turkmen government aims at increasing production to 230 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year.¹⁷ If successful, the country would be able to export between 140 and 160 bcm annually. The interest of the international community is accordingly high and Ashgabat, since the government's foreign policy re-orientation under Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedow, knows how to fully exploit this to its advantage.

Russia is the main actor in Central Asia's natural gas sector, with the import of the region's resources enabling Moscow to postpone its own, rather capital intensive gas production in Yamal and the Barents and Kara Seas without suffering losses in exports and consumption.¹⁸ Such a strategy, however, comes at a cost: while in 2006 Russia paid US\$44 per thousand cubic meters for the region's gas, the price in the second half of 2008 was US\$150 and is expected to further rise in the next couple of years.¹⁹ Turkmenistan is Russia's main supplier: their 2003 agreement provides for Turkmenistan to supply an annual 80 bcm of natural gas to Russia between 2009 and 2029. Moscow is also pursuing a long-term strategy in Uzbekistan which, in comparison, is a small exporter (10.5 bcm in 2007, 2008 supplies are estimated at roughly 16 bcm). In 2004 a Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) worth US\$1 billion and with duration of 35 years was adopted, mainly to proceed with exploration works in the promising Ustyurt basin.²⁰ In addition, Gazprom is the sole operator of all Uzbek gas exports.²¹

The trade with the Central Asian states is of advantage to Moscow because it can use the old Soviet transport infrastructure, which needs to

¹⁶ Bruce Pannier, "Independent Audit Shows Turkmen Gasfield 'World Class'," *Eurasianet Business & Economics* October 19 2008, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp101908.shtml>> (August 2 2009); *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁷ Richard Pomfret, "Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4, (2008), pp. 19-34. It is questionable, however, whether this target may be considered realistic as the former government-set targets were never reached. In 1993, the government intended to increase gas production to 180 bcm by the year 2000. Eventually, however, only 43.8 bcm was achieved. *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2009, p. 24, <http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2008/STAGING/local_assets/2009_downloads/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_report_2009.pdf> (July 19 2009).

¹⁸ The production of Russia's four largest gas fields (Medvezhye, Yamburgskoye, Yamsoweyskoye, and Urengoykoye) has been retrogressive in the last few years. Primarily, this is due to the fields' age, but is also due to state regulation, Gazprom's monopolistic control of the sector, and not least the lack of adequate infrastructure. Jonathan P. Stern, *The Future of Russian Gas and Gazprom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005), p. 51.

¹⁹ *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, p.6.

²⁰ Martha Brill Olcott, "Friendship of Nations in the World of Energy," *Pro et Contra*, 10, 2-3 (2006), pp. 1-12.

²¹ *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, p.17.

be upgraded and restored. Such expenditures, however, are much smaller than investing in the building of new pipelines – as China and Europe have to do. Consequently, for now, Moscow is in control of the Central Asian gas producers in the realm of transport, too: the main route for Central Asian gas is the Central Asia Centre pipeline network (CAC) consisting of four parallel conduits and flowing into the Russian pipeline system. But while the CAC's actual capacity amounts to 90 bcm, its defective quality means that only 40 to 45 bcm can in fact be used.²² Since 2007 the parties involved (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia) are planning to modernize the network. In this respect, upgrading the capacity of the western branch of the CAC (from as few as 400 million cubic meters (mcm) to 20, potentially 30, bcm per year) is of particular relevance. This "Caspian coastal pipeline," which runs along the eastern bank of the Caspian Sea, is projected to become the main transport route for the Turkmen post-2009 exports to Russia. It still remains to be seen, however, whether and to what extent appropriate investments will be made.²³

Although Moscow has a clear lead in Central Asia's gas sector, China, due to its growing consumption of natural gas, is increasingly becoming an important and visible actor, too. The Chinese energy strategy has made provisions to increase the share of gas in its gross energy consumption: in 2020 the aim is to use as much as 200 bcm natural gas per year, a quarter of which will have to be imported.²⁴ Due to the country's relatively small LNG-potential (20 bcm), moreover, the bulk of imports will flow via pipelines.²⁵ It appears therefore that here too, Turkmenistan is to take up a key position: in 2007, the Chinese state-owned energy company CNPC on the one hand, and the Turkmen State Agency for the Management and Use of Hydrocarbon Resources as well as Turkmengaz on the other hand, concluded a PSA for the right bank of Turkmenistan's south-eastern Amu Darya basin (region of Bagtyarlyk) and a purchase

²² Robert M. Cutler, "Moscow and Ashgabat fail to Agree over the Caspian Coastal Pipeline," *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, April 08, 2009, <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5080>> (January 10 2010).

²³ Moscow, thus far the only operator of all Central Asian pipelines (with the exception of the 2008 closed Turkmen – Iranian Korpezhe – Kurt Kui pipeline), seeks to preserve its monopolistic position and to manage the restoration works alone while arguing in favor of an equal distribution of the financial burden. Pannier, "Independent Audit Shows Turkmen Gasfield 'World Class'," *op. cit.*; Cutler, "Moscow and Ashgabat fail to agree over the Caspian Coastal Pipeline," *op. cit.* However, Turkmenistan frustrated Russian expectations by putting out the Turkmen part of the pipeline to an international tender. "Turkmenistan: Western Companies Line Up for a Slice of East-West Pipeline," *Eurasianet*, May 28, 2009, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/news/articles/eav052809a.shtml>>, (July 20 2009).

²⁴ *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

and sale agreement under which Ashgabat is to export 30 bcm per year as of 2012.²⁶ The gas is to be transported via an eastward connection that passes through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The construction is currently underway and the pipeline is projected to be put into operation in 2011.²⁷ Uzbekistan, too, is hoping for some profitable discoveries in its as of yet not fully developed oil and gas basins in the Aral Sea, the Amu Darya bank, and the Ustyurt lowlands. China is strongly interested in those basins – in case of appropriate findings investments of up to US\$600 million will be made.²⁸ As yet, however, there is nothing that could elevate the country beyond its “high potential” status towards production.

The European Union is quite active in the natural gas sector as well. European – and especially German – companies are involved in the realm of Turkmen gas production. RWE, for instance, is performing feasibility studies in fields of the country’s western offshore basin, which is expected to hold reserves of up to 6 trillion cubic meters of gas.²⁹ Already since 2005, moreover, Wintershall, the subsidiary of BASF, and the Danish shipping company Maersk have been performing seismic studies in the Turkmen part of the Caspian Sea.³⁰ Last but not least, the European Commission is working on the development of a “Caspian Development Corporation” – an umbrella organization for European businesses interested in investments in the Caspian basin.³¹

Brussels is especially committed to expanding the region’s transport infrastructure and seeks to create an “energy transport corridor” between the Caspian Sea and the European Union. The Nabucco pipeline, carrying gas from the Caspian region (as well as potentially the Maghreb region and the Middle East) via Turkey and the Balkans, and thus bypassing Russia, is the main project in this regard. Here too, Turkmenistan, especially since the confirmation of its considerable resources in the South Yolotan – Osman field, may become an important

²⁶ The Bagtyarlyk region has proven reserves of 1.3 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Exports of 30 bcm can thus be easily guaranteed. Therefore, in 2008 Presidents Hu and Berdymukhammedow decided to increase the export amount to 40 bcm per annum. *CNPC in Turkmenistan*, China National Petroleum Cooperation. <<http://www.cnpc.com.cn/eng/cnpcworldwide/euro-asia/Turkmenistan/>> (August 5 2009).

²⁷ Pannier, “Independent Audit Shows Turkmen Gasfield ‘World Class’,” *op. cit.*

²⁸ Peyrouse, *Economic Aspects of the China-Central Asia Rapprochement*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

²⁹ “RWE und Turkmenistan werden Energiepartner: Langfristige Rahmenvereinbarung mit der Regierung Turkmenistans [RWE and Turkmenistan Become Energy Partners: Long-Term Framework Agreement with the Turkmen Government],” *EnRo Portal News*, April 19, 2009, <<http://www.enro-portal.de/news/do-read/id-2430/read.html>> (December 3 2009).

³⁰ “RWE steigt in Gasförderung in Turkmenistan ein [RWE enters Gas Production in Turkmenistan],” *Financial Times Deutschland*, April 16, 2009.

³¹ John Roberts, “Russia and the CIS: Energy Relations in the Wake of the Ukrainian Gas Crisis,” *ISS Opinion*, February 2009.

supplier.³² The country's gas would then have to be transported across the Caspian Sea to Azerbaijan and there be connected to the South Caspian Pipeline/Nabucco network. To this end, western construction and energy companies have been examining the feasibility of a Caspian seabed pipeline. For instance, RWE, a member of the Nabucco consortium, and the Turkmen government have concluded a framework agreement providing for cooperation in gas supplies and gas development as well as for the transfer of best practices. Moreover, RWE and OMV, a further member of the Nabucco consortium, have launched the Caspian Energy Company (CEC), which aims at examining and furthering the possibility of Turkmen gas supplies to Germany and Europe.³³

Due to the disputed legal status of the Caspian Sea, however, the subsea pipeline is a politically contested project which the available agreements neither permit nor prohibit. Yet, Russia and Iran, both rather mistrustful in regard to the project, contend that such an undertaking needs to be sanctioned by all five littoral states.³⁴ Therefore, alternatives regarding the transportation of Turkmen gas across the Caspian Sea are considered as well. Most notable in this regard is the natural gas compression (CNG) method that allows carrying 50 bcm of natural gas per annum between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.³⁵ Such an option requires a compression station on the Turkmen part of the Sea, special CNG-carriers, and a decompression station on Azeri ports. According to

³² Azerbaijan, with an estimated gas production of 12–15 bcm per year as of 2013 (9–12 bcm thereof for export), could fill the pipeline in its first operation phase (2013–2019). In phase 2, however, the pipeline would have to transport 25–31 bcm per year to be economically viable – an amount that Azerbaijan, even in the most productive stage of its giant gas field Shah Deniz, will not be able to produce. Iran – after Russia, the country with the largest proven resources in the world – is considered as a potential supplier of Nabucco, too. At present, however, the role of Iran with regard to Nabucco remains questionable, as, due to a lack of investments, technological backwardness, and high domestic consumption, it is a net importer of gas itself. Still, Teheran does not make a secret of its readiness to supply Nabucco in all its operative phases. Thus, it aims at doubling production to 240 bcm as of 2010 to reach an export capacity of 70 bcm per year. It remains to be seen, however, whether this target can be reached. The present sanctions against the country as well as the possibility of even deeper isolation due to its controversial ambitions in the nuclear energy sector have a negative impact on foreign investment, which, in turn, may have consequences with regard to future production and export. *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 42; “Gaskrise sorgt für neuerliche Zweifel an Nabucco-Pipeline der EU [Gas Crisis provides New Doubts Regarding Nabucco Pipeline],” *EurActiv*, January 20, 2009, <<http://www.euractiv.com/de/energie/gaskrise-sorgt-neuerliche-zweifel-nabucco-pipeline-eu/article-178646>; <http://www.nabucco-pipeline.com/company/mission-statement-strategic-goals/index.html>> (July 18 2009).

³³ “RWE steigt in Gasförderung in Turkmenistan ein [RWE enters Gas Production in Turkmenistan],” *op. cit.*.

³⁴ John Roberts, “Energy Resources, Pipeline Routes and the Legal Regime in the Caspian Sea,” in Gennady Chuffrin ed., *The Security of the Caspian Sea*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 56–78.

³⁵ *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

INNOGATE, CNG trade is economically viable and, in addition, it adroitly bypasses the problem of the Sea's legal status. Similar to the pipeline project, however, this option needs further feasibility studies as well as pronounced technical progress on the part of the Turkmen gas industry if it is to become realizable.³⁶

To sum up, Russia and China represent the most visible actors in the energy sector of Central Asia: China controls 24 percent of the Kazakh crude oil sector and will be responsible for a quarter of Kazakh exports by 2011. Russia, on the other hand, is not strongly represented in the upstream sector of Kazakhstan. However, as it controls 80 percent of the country's export routes, it still manages to wield considerable authority in the realm of production, too. Moreover, as long as the Chinese West-East gas pipeline is still in construction, Moscow controls 100 percent of Central Asian gas exports as well as the bulk of Turkmen and Uzbek gas production. The EU, too, has a considerable presence in Central Asia, notably in interaction with those European energy companies that are active in the Kazakh oil sector. In addition, the Union seeks to enhance its visibility and its regulatory influence in the Turkmen gas industry. The following section will discuss this undertaking's prospects for success.

What Chance for the EU in the Central Asian Energy Sector?

Internal Political Structures in Central Asia and the European Engagement

In examining the true potential of the Central Asia – Europe partnership, it is imperative to contrast the region's governmental structures with the EU's conditionality, and to compare the engagement of the latter with that of Russia and China.

Central Asia may be considered as one of the most authoritarian and corrupt regions in the world.³⁷ The core unifying feature of the five states is the patrimonial character of their governments. Indeed, the region's main, albeit informal, political dynamic is represented by the relationship between the heads of state and certain interest groups rather than by the rule of law or the relationship between the government and its people. In other words, the government derives its power from the patronage of

³⁶ David Conway, *Pre-feasibility studies and facilitation for developing the North-South gas transit interconnections in Caucasus and Central Asia*, INOGATE Technical Secretariat and Coordinators Network: On-Going Project Status Form, (2007).

³⁷ Indeed, Freedom House denotes Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan as "not free" with regard to political rights and civil liberties. Also, the three countries rank in the lowest quarter of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (2008). See: <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=475&year=2009>; <http://www.transparency.de/Tabellarisches-Ranking.1237.o.html>> (August 11 2009).

powerful family networks, regional groups, and business magnates.³⁸ Such political structures may survive only in the absence of transparent institutions, civil liberties, and the rule of law. Therefore, maintaining the political status quo in the region is the core interest of Central Asia's governments as the transformation of the political and social structures is inevitably linked to the current regimes' loss of power.³⁹

With its objective of establishing a "stable political framework [that is based upon] the rule of law, human rights, good governance and the development of transparent, democratic political structures" in Central Asia, Brussels' strategy aims to bring about a departure from the region's status quo.⁴⁰ In the energy sector, too, the EU seeks to promote convergence with its own environmental and technical standards as well as the strengthening the establishment, of a single energy market in the region. The modernization, commercialization, and the ensuing increase in efficiency of Central Asia's energy industry are hoped to improve the local conditions for western companies and to thus attract hitherto reluctant investors.⁴¹

Unsurprisingly, the EU's interference into "internal affairs" and thus into the painstakingly guarded national sovereignty, which, according to Westphal, represents the "supreme principle even in regard of incidental decisions," is not welcome.⁴² Indeed, it is the renationalization of the formally strongly liberalized Kazakh energy sector which demonstrates that a turnaround (especially if projected by "outsiders") regarding the concentration of political and economic power is unlikely to come about.⁴³ Likewise, the deficient progress in the realm of regional energy

³⁸ Boris Rumer, "Central Asia: At the End Of Transition," in Boris Rumer (ed.), *Central Asia: At the End of Transition*, (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), pp. 1-64; Michael L. Ross, "The Political Economy of the Resource Curse," *World Politics*, 2 (1999), pp. 297-322.

³⁹ Dmitry Furman, "The Regime in Kazakhstan," in *Central Asia: At the End of Transition*, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-267.

⁴⁰ *European Union and Central Asia*, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Kirsten Westphal, "Wettlauf um Energieressourcen [Footrace over Energy Resources, Markets and Power in Central Asia]," *op. cit.*

⁴³ In particular, this is manifested in a law passed in 2007 that authorises the Kazakh government to modify agreements with energy companies unilaterally – either through forced renegotiation of shares or through the cancellation of agreements within a period of two months. It is thus that the shares of Kazakhstan most promising field Kashagan were 'renegotiated' to the advantage of the Kazakh state holding KazMunaiGaz. The Tengizchevroilconsortium (TCO) has felt the state's growing influence within the energy sector, too, notably concerning ecologic matters of the Tengiz field. Finally, due to the increase of export tariffs (US\$ 109 per barrel) the energy business in general has become less profitable for the multinational companies in the country. *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, Robert M. Cutler, "Moscow and Ashgabat fail to agree," *op. cit.*

cooperation (and other sectors) indicates that the inhibition threshold of giving up political control over national resources remains very high.⁴⁴

Russia and China, on the other hand, not only respect but also promote the principle of “non-interference into internal affairs” themselves and hence are wary of insisting upon those administrative and developmental conditions that go against the interests of the Central Asian governments. Quite to the contrary, Moscow and Beijing seek to maintain the political status quo in the region as it is of political and economic advantage to both of them. A transformation of the current structures could have a negative impact upon their energy relations and also affect the political realm. Indeed, to Russia, maintaining the status quo in Central Asia means to retain (relatively) friendly governments in its “sphere of influence,” thus ensuring its domination in the region and satisfying its “great power” complex. China, on the other hand, regards the maintenance of the existing status quo pivotal in ensuring stability in Xinjiang, a region on its western frontier that is inhabited by Muslim Turkic Uighurs and inclined to achieve more independence from Beijing. While Central Asia’s current governments rigorously support the Chinese policy of suppressing separatist-minded Uighurs on Central Asian soil, future governments may rethink such policy, considering the ethnic ties between the Turkic peoples of Central Asia and Xinjiang’s Uighurs.⁴⁵

To sum up, Russia, China, and the Central Asian states pursue one common interest – the maintenance of the region’s political status quo – which brings the practicability of the European approach into question.

Economic and Geopolitical Aspects

Although the EU requires the Central Asian governments to converge with European norms, values, and standards in order to receive support in procuring large investments, it is not in the position of making any short or even medium term commitments in the economic realm, which is the main crux of its strategy. Thus, for instance, due to the high sulfide and carbon dioxide content of Turkmenistan’s untapped fields, production will be difficult and expensive. The bulk of investments will have to be made by the Europeans as the technologically and economically weak Turkmenistan will not be able to carry such a burden. The same can be said about the transport infrastructure-to-be. For the time period between 2007 and 2010, however, Brussels plans to allocate €22 million to Central Asia’s entire energy sector – an amount that will not be sufficient to expand the existing production and transport

⁴⁴ Kirsten Westphal, “Wettlauf um Energieressourcen,” *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Graham E. Fuller and Starr S. Frederick, *The Xinjiang Problem*, Central Asia Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program (Washington, D.C., 2004).

infrastructure.⁴⁶ Such an undertaking, if it is to go beyond feasibility studies, requires investments that amount to billions – money that individual European firms are not able to raise by themselves. Whether the Commission's project of creating a "Caspian Development Corporation" to facilitate large investments will be timely and financially strong, moreover, remains to be seen.⁴⁷

What is more, the development of a gas corridor between Central Asia and Europe is still in its infancy and appears politically risky, especially if the political insecurities of the South Caucasus – the "frozen" conflict over Nagorno Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the post-war instability in Georgia, as well as the general unpredictability of Russia in respect of the post-Soviet space – are taken into consideration. Indeed, last year's conflict between Russia and Georgia has accentuated the risks facing this transport route and the project of connecting the Central Asian energy market with Europe in general. Moreover, it has dampened the Caspian producers' preparedness to take risks.⁴⁸ Bearing in mind the high militarization of the Caspian Sea, the laying of a trans-Caspian pipeline against the will of Russia and Iran may entail considerable political costs – for the regional states in question as well as the EU. This, in turn, also dampens the preparedness of the financially potent institutions such as the EIB and the EBRD to make the necessary investments available.⁴⁹

Furthermore, the role of Turkey and the other European transit countries is not without ambiguity. As for the former, the Turkish energy consumption is continuously increasing and raises questions regarding Ankara's readiness to function solely as a transit country for Central Asian gas. What is more, Turkey is aware of its geopolitical significance and knows how to employ it – notably in its accession talks with the European Union, which may additionally raise the economic as well as political costs of Nabucco.⁵⁰ As for the transit countries, three members of the Nabucco consortium (the Austrian OMV, the Hungarian-Slovak MOL, and Bulgargaz) have also pledged to participate in the South Stream pipeline, the competition project of Gazprom. The possibility of a conflict of interest and even the termination of collaboration on Nabucco cannot be ruled out.

Last but not least, there is no internal consensus regarding the financial support for the €7.9 billion pipeline and the general political approach towards the Central Asian energy suppliers. Indeed, citing

⁴⁶ *Central Asia Indicative Programme (2007 – 2010)*, European Commission, Brussels, 2007.

⁴⁷ John Roberts, "Russia and the CIS: Energy Relations in the Wake of the Ukrainian Gas Crisis," *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ *Perspectives on Caspian Oil and Gas Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁴⁹ Pomfret, "Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy," *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

doubts as to its viability and necessity, some European countries, notably Germany, France, Italy, and Greece, are still reluctant to allocate EU funds for Nabucco, thus slowing down the project's progress significantly. The name Nabucco was even withdrawn from the list of those energy projects that were supposed to receive financial aid within the framework of the EU's 2009 stimulus plan; instead it was replaced by the term "Southern Corridor – New Silk Road." The pipeline thus lost its central symbolic role.⁵¹ To be sure, because of pressure on the part of the Polish government, the designation "Nabucco" did reappear in the final document. However, the actual implementation of the project remains murky.

As for Brussels' foreign policy orientation, the European institutions appear to work against each other and are thus also impeding the realization of the Central Asia strategy: while the European Commission, notably the Directorate-General for External Relations under Benito Ferrero-Waldner, considers economic cooperation as the first step for deepened political dialogue, the European Parliament refuses to make any concessions in the economic realm as long as certain political conditions are not complied with. As a consequence, there is still no mutual consent regarding trade relations with Turkmenistan – the pragmatic position of the Commission favoring an official agreement is blocked by the parliament due to human rights covenants. For Ashgabat, however, this deal is pivotal as it is considered to represent the necessary fundament for the development of further economic relations, especially in the realm of energy.⁵²

All in all it remains to be said that although it has pledged support for the establishment of a western-oriented energy infrastructure in Central Asia, the EU's ability to actually do so is very limited. The internal institutional structures and the ensuing ambiguity with respect to the character of relations with the Central Asian states as well as external (geo-) political factors – from the insecurity of the South Caucasus, the question marks regarding Turkey, to the ambivalence concerning the

⁵¹ "EU schließt Finanzierung von Nabucco Gaspipeline aus [EU Excludes Financing of the Nabucco Gas Pipeline]," *EurActiv*, January 28, 2009, <<http://www.euractiv.com/de/energie/eu-schliet-finanzierung-nabucco-gaspipeline/article-178915>> (July 25 2009);

"Nabucco von der Liste der Energieprojekte gestrichen [Nabucco Withdrawn from the List of Energy Projects]," *EurActiv*, March 17 2009, <<http://www.euractiv.com/de/eu-summit/nabucco-liste-energieprojekte-gestrichen/article-180342>> (July 25 2009).

⁵² "Merkel: Keine EU-Gelder für Nabucco [Merkel: No EU Funds for Nabucco]," *EurActiv*, March 03, 2009, <<http://www.euractiv.com/de/energie/merkel-keine-eu-gelder-nabucco/article-179897>> (January 10 2010); Ulrich Speck, "EU Weighs Image, Energy in Relations with Turkmenistan," *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, February 20, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/content/EU_Weighs_Image_Energy_In_Relations_With_Turkmenistan/1496786.html> (August 11 2009).

transit countries – are frustrating not only the EU’s political profile but also its political ambitions.

Conclusion - The EU and Central Asia: An Energy Partnership with a Future?

So far, the European engagement has been supported by Central Asia’s governments, as the possibility of a further market entrant increases the competition for energy and raises the region’s strategic, geopolitical, and economic significance. Indeed, all five countries are striving to include the EU into their foreign policy strategies. Such a multi-vector policy enables the Central Asian governments not only to counterbalance the influence of Chinese and Russian influence in the region, but also to benefit from it as much as possible. Indeed, European engagement strengthens Central Asia’s bargaining position towards Moscow and Beijing in political and economic matters – and particularly in the energy sector. After all, it is mainly due to the activities of western energy companies in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan that the price for Central Asian gas has increased substantially over the past year.

However, this analysis finds that the offer of buying Central Asian energy will not entice Central Asian elites to dramatically reform their national governments and thus put their political survival at risk. A European entry into the Central Asian market is by no means urgently required, since the current export of the region’s energy resources via the north and east have already been contractually secured. What is more, Russia and China, the region’s main customers, have a notable competitive advantage over the EU. They do not impose any conditions that may become internally “dangerous” to Central Asia’s governments or demand the adaptation of certain technical standards whilst investing heavily in the region’s resources and infrastructure. Thus, they maintain a duopolistic competition which, even in the absence of a third actor, eventually leads to an increase in the price of Central Asian resources.⁵³ Therefore, a diversification of trade partners that is tied to the EU’s conditionality is not in the interest of Central Asia’s governments’ domestic or foreign policy.

However, it is in their interest to entertain non-binding cooperation with Brussels that bases on rhetoric and feasibility studies – something

⁵³ Robert Sutter, “Durability in China’s Strategy towards Central Asia – Reasons for Optimism,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 1 (2008), pp. 3-10; Sebastien Peyrouse, “Economic Aspects of the China-Central Asia Rapprochement,” *op. cit.*; Anna Matveeva, “Return to Heartland: Russia’s Foreign Policy in Central Asia,” *The International Spectator*, 42, 1 (2007), pp. 43-62; Celeste A. Wallander, “Russian Transimperialism and its Implications,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 2 (2007), pp. 107-122; Andrei Kazantsev, “Russian Policy in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea Region,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 6 (2008), pp. 1073-1088.

that is not “dangerous” but good for business. Indeed, this year’s European Energy Summit in Prague has demonstrated that the EU merely takes up an instrumental role in the negotiations between Central Asia and Russia or China. It is in times of sinking gas prices, tenuous relations with the most important trade partner Moscow, and weakened Chinese interest in the swift development of relations, that Turkmenistan’s president, Berdymukhammedow, likes to regularly emphasize his policy of a “multilateral balancing of interests” and the central role of the EU in his country’s geo-political and economic outlook.⁵⁴ However, he refrains from taking any concrete measures that drive forward the negotiations regarding Nabucco and the trans-Caspian option, such as participating in the European Energy Summit.⁵⁵ The inevitable conclusion in this regard is that Turkmenistan continues to count on Moscow and Beijing as principal customers and that the EU remains on the agenda for bargaining interests only.

Against this background, close cooperation between the EU and the Central Asian states in the energy sector appears difficult to achieve. As pointed out above, this is not only a result of Central Asia’s preference towards Russia and China. The EU would be able to successfully compete, notably in light of its technical expertise. The Union, however, seems to operate in a cul-de-sac due to the incompatibility of its interests in energy and development policy: its conditional approach hinders the progress in the realm of energy since it is deliberately drafted against the interests of the region’s elite. Furthermore, the European ambitions are not backed by sufficient funding, rendering genuine cooperation unattractive – particularly, as long as Russia and China spend billions with no conditions attached. Finally, the EU disqualifies itself as a credible partner since it fails to speak with one voice in respect to the Nabucco pipeline as well as regarding the character of engagement with the Central Asian energy suppliers.⁵⁶

The result of this conditional yet incentive-free policy is that cooperation is unlikely to expand beyond declarations of intent and feasibility studies in the short or medium term. The presumption here is that, from the perspective of the Central Asian states, EU engagement will remain nothing but a bargaining chip to put pressure upon Russia

⁵⁴ Deirdre Tynan, “Turkmenistan: The Bell Tolls For Gazprom’s Dominance of Caspian Energy Market,” *Eurasianet*, April 24, 2009, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eavo42409.shtml>> (July 20 2009).

⁵⁵ “Turkmenistan: Berdymukhammedow Playing Hard-To-Get with the European Union?,” *Eurasianet*, (May 07, 2009), <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eavo50709e.shtml>> (July 18 2009).

⁵⁶ *Ibid*; Speck, “EU Weighs Image, Energy in Relations with Turkmenistan,” *op. cit.*

and China during negotiations. Again, this is not only due to the preponderance of established powers in the region or Central Asia's general unwillingness to reform, but also to the internal as well as external (geo-) political and economic pressures rendering a coherent approach on the part of the EU impossible. To conclude, a genuine energy partnership between the EU and Central Asia can only develop on the basis of common or at least complementary interests. Central Asia expects substantial investments as well as political neutrality. At best, the EU offers financial support for self-help, but it also stipulates unwelcomed political conditions. It seems unlikely that a sustainable partnership can develop based on such a framework.

Between Russia and the West: Turkey as an Emerging Power and the Case of Abkhazia

*Laurent Vinatier**

ABSTRACT

Turkey's foreign policy finds itself in transition. Considering the new emerging context and the constraints that Turkey faces, it is essential to assess the real determinants which would transform Turkish foreign policy to encompass a more pro-active, independent, and regional strategy. Abkhazia, since its recognition by Russia on August 26, 2008, is examined here as a case study. South Caucasian issues in general and Abkhazia in particular may be essential bargaining chips for Turkey to substantially improve its stance from the Black to the Caspian Seas, assuming its new-found "emancipation" from U.S. influence and thus becoming a real regional power in the region. If all these successful challenges are met successfully, then Turkey will move to the gravity center of an EU-Russia-Iran triangle, where it will occupy a pivotal and geostrategic position.

Keywords • Turkey's Foreign Policy • Abkhazia • Abkhaz Diaspora • Soft-Power, EU-Iran Relations • Turkey-Russia-Iran Relations

Introduction

According to prominent analyses by famous columnists and thinkers in international relations, the world is said to have entered a "post-post Cold War era." It is said to be characterized by limits constraining American power and by China's and Russia's growing influence as major regional and even global actors. China's increasing importance in Southeast Asia's economies, on the one hand, and Russia's intervention in Georgia in 2008, on the other, demonstrates the willingness of both

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countries to assert their positions by any means, including military ones in the South Caucasian case.

What about Turkey, then, in this new emerging world? It fully and successfully integrated into the “simple” post-Cold War structure during the early 1990s, democratizing its political life and stabilizing its economic fundamentals. Turkey further confirmed its “Westernization” on a diplomatic level, strengthening its role in NATO, as well as assuming the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) leadership in Afghanistan in 2001. As for the European Union (EU), Turkish commitments and desire to adhere to the EU became stronger and were partially satisfied by the October 3, 2005, EU-Turkey agreement, which opened negotiations on some chapters of the *acquis*. This notwithstanding, it has increasingly appeared necessary in Ankara to also adapt to new and different international realities, in other words, the “post-post Cold War” period.

It firstly became clear that no breakthrough should be expected in the near future in regard to Turkey’s accession to the EU. Many *acquis* chapters either require considerable efforts and/or have proven very hard to adopt. In addition, neither Germany nor France, two of the main decision-makers on Turkey’s prospective membership, are ready to facilitate discussions. German and French reluctance has practically blocked the accession process, delaying Turkey’s membership by at least a decade.

It appeared secondly that it was time to dissociate Turkey’s foreign policy from that of U.S. foreign policy. Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by U.S.-led forces,¹ Turkish authorities chose to distance themselves somewhat from the United States. This wasn’t symbolically achieved until May 2, 2009, however, with Ahmed Davutoğlu’s appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Before his appointment, he had been “behind the scenes” building what was termed as a pro-active and multifaceted foreign policy.² He is now at the forefront of Turkish politics, free to implement his ideas and strong orientations. Eloquently describing his views, he sees that:

[Turkey] has to take on the role of an order-instituting country in all these regions. Turkey is no longer a country which only reacts to crises, but notices the crises before their emergence and

¹ Turkey decided, one month before the U.S.-led invasion, to disallow U.S. ground forces from operating from its territory.

² He is known for his 2001 book, *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic Depth), in which he demonstrates that Turkey has to become a key and independent country, giving up its position as a forward base for NATO and notably the U.S.

intervenes effectively, and gives shape to the order of its surrounding regions.³

Thirdly and finally, Turkey has had to take into consideration a new and regionally powerful Russia willing to engage in a deeper political and economic rapprochement. Duma Deputy Sergei Markov, close both to President Medvedev and to Prime Minister Putin, does not hide this fact, saying that:

Russia and Turkey have achieved a first level of partnership, notably in trade and economic areas. We need now to reach a higher level of cooperation and build a strategic political partnership.⁴

Geopolitically at the crossroads between Iran and Russia, Iran and the EU, the Caspian zone and the EU, Turkey has had to manage by itself all those bi- and multilateral relations. That means engaging in dialogue based on an equal footing and independence. Otherwise, Turkey would not be able to remain a pivotal player but would see its position reduced to that of a simple actor among many others, being a vertex of any of the above triangles only in a best-case scenario. That's why for example, from Turkey's point of view, it is so important to sharply distinguish its strategy toward Iran from that of partnership with Russia. These are two distinct and separate questions.⁵

In this respect, considering the post-post Cold War context, Turkey may become one of two or three major regional powers, including Russia and potentially the EU, in the Black Sea-Caspian Sea zone. Turkey's policy-makers seem aware of that emerging challenge. Their most recent decisions indicate that from now on Ankara will have to promote and defend its own strategic and independent (from any other external actors) interests. Turkey is set to play its own game in the area, using both, when necessary, hard and soft power assets. When compared to Russia, Iran, the EU, and the U.S. (to a lesser extent), Turkey's regional importance should, thus, not be underestimated and it is likely to increase in the near future.

There have indeed already been some positive steps undertaken: this includes Turkey's rapprochement with Armenia. After a first visit by President Gül to Yerevan for a football match, and after months of negotiations, bluffs, and set-backs, Turkey and Armenia eventually, on September 1, 2009, agreed on draft protocols for the normalization of their

³ *Taraf Newspaper*, May 5, 2009.

⁴ Author's interview with Sergei Markov, Foros Conference, Abkhazia, July 22, 2009.

⁵ Author's interview with Mehmet Tuğtan, Bilgi University, Istanbul, July 27, 2009.

relations; these were to be signed the following month in mid-October.⁶ At that time, many experts expected that, under the pretext of a World Cup qualifying soccer match between the two countries in Istanbul, the presidents would be able to sign an agreement to reopen the border and reestablish diplomatic ties within a reasonable timeframe, after ratification by their respective parliaments. Documents were eventually signed on October 10, 2009, in Switzerland. In so doing, Turkey chose to overcome the views of its traditional and historical ally, Azerbaijan, which had argued against the restoration of diplomatic ties between Turkey and Armenia until territories bordering the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh had been returned under Baku's control. Turkish interests, however, simply prevailed over such "outdated" calculations, which included according to Azerbaijan too much weight as well as preserving Russia's privileged relations with Armenia in the South Caucasus.⁷

However, some doubts remain about Turkey's actual ability to take on and fulfill this new regional stance: it seems that Turkey still hesitates to fulfill a role as a significant and powerful actor. The "non-issue" of Abkhazia on the Turkish political scene is one of the most significant examples of this. Sheltering as it has since 1860 a substantial Abkhaz diaspora,⁸ which has maintained contact with its homeland through the existence of the Soviet Union, the post-Soviet wars, and the embargo during the 1990s, Turkey has failed to react to the new realities that emerged in the aftermath of the war in 2008. It appears that Turkish authorities fail to see how symbolic the 2008 intervention by Russia was, especially in regard to the assertion of the latter's ambitions and renewed

⁶ The first affirms the shared desire of the two countries to establish good neighborly relations and their "willingness to chart a new pattern and course for their relations on the basis of common interests, goodwill, and in pursuit of peace, harmony, and mutual understanding." It further confirms their mutual recognition of the existing border between the two countries, and the shared decision to open it. The second protocol outlines three sets of measures to be undertaken to develop bilateral relations. The first of these is the opening of the border within two months of ratification of the protocols by the two countries' parliaments. The second encompasses regular consultations between the two countries' foreign ministries; a "dialogue on the historical dimension" (meaning the creation of Gul's proposed joint commission to research the 1915 killings); and developing transport, communications, and energy infrastructure and networks. The third is the creation of an intergovernmental commission plus sub-commissions to monitor the timely implementation of those proposed steps. Liz Fuller, "Will Serzh Sarkisian's Biggest Gamble Pay Off," *Caucasus Report*, RFE RL, October 15, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Will_Serzh_Sarkisians_Biggest_Gamble_Pay_Off/1852787.html> (December 5 2009).

⁷ Armenia is usually considered as Russia's bastion in the South Caucasus. Reopening the border with Turkey might disrupt this alliance, weakening Russian-Armenian ties and strengthening Turkish-Armenian relations.

⁸ The Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey was constituted by the first flow of refugees fleeing the Tsarist Empire after the Caucasian wars.

role in Eurasia. Nor is Turkish coolness toward Abkhaz independence a better option. It seems that Ankara fears dealing with Russia in taking advantage of multiple economic opportunities in Abkhazia and, at the same time, does not dare to displease Georgia, where Turkish businessmen have some trade assets.

Turkey's foreign policy is in transition. If on Armenia Ankara is changing its stance quite quickly, it may also move on the Abkhazian issue. Nothing a priori may hinder such an evolution. But considering the new emerging context and Turkey's constraints, it is essential to assess the real determinants which would transform Turkish foreign policy to encompass a more pro-active, independent, and regional strategy. Abkhazia, since its recognition by Russia on August 26, 2008, will serve as a useful lens by which to examine Turkish foreign policy. After examining the role of the Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey and the situation in Abkhazia, Turkey's regional ambitions between Russia and Iran are brought into focus, highlighting from a Turkish point of view what is really at stake in Abkhazia and South Caucasian issues.

The Abkhaz Diaspora in Turkey – a Non-Political Actor

There are only a few examples of political diasporic organizations exerting a significant influence on the policies of their host states vis-à-vis their homeland: the Jewish and Armenian diasporas are probably the most well-known cases. Usually, diasporas do not manage to attain a sufficient level of political maturity abroad to be able to weigh on host states' policies toward their homeland. The situation of the Abkhaz in Turkey fits quite well in the latter category.

Historical legacy: within the Turkish political mainstream.

Refugees from the Caucasus arrived in large numbers to Turkey in the 1860s, benefiting from the loose civil and political structure of what was a declining power, the Ottoman Empire. Their integration became, however, an issue when the "Young" Turkish Republic was being consolidated in the 1920s, with the new Republican elites of that time imbued with a strong ideology of nationalism. Consequently, the descendents of those Caucasian refugees of various origins, gathered under the generic term "Circassians," preferred to incorporate themselves into the nation-state project along with the discourse of a homogeneous Turkey.⁹ None of the different Circassian groups quit the political Turkish mainstream or went against the Turkish political establishment

⁹ Ayhan Kaya, "Political Participation Strategies of the Circassian Diaspora in Turkey", *Mediterranean Politics*, 9, 2 (2004), pp. 321-339. The following paragraph is based on this paper.

as such. Opposition and new political strategies remained formalized and shaped by the dominating republican system. It was not until the 1970s that there appeared the first significant attempt by the Circassians to develop an ethnically-based opposition discourse, demanding republican recognition of some specific and distinct rights. Two political, and oppositional, formulations appeared: a Revolutionary group, the *Devrimci*, which saw these rights as being achieved through a socialist revolution in Turkey; and a returnist group, the *Dönüşçü*, advocating a return to the homeland. But, once again, after the military coup d'état in 1980 that silenced those claims, Circassian political groupings still "followed" the Turkish developments of that time. The revolutionaries almost disappeared during the 1980s and the returnists transformed into "Circassian nationalists," very close to the Turkish leftist groups themselves.

Within right-wing circles, a conservative Circassian reaction took shape at the beginning of the 1990s, defining itself as "Circassian Turk" or "Caucasian Turk" and highlighting in particular the Islamic component of its identity. In both cases, a new form of political mobilization emerged based on minority politics. But it did not really become concretized due to internal contradictions. As soon as a minority discourse for Circassians was established, it became very difficult to keep the Circassian peoples together. By definition, promoting minority rights means looking at what distinguishes the minority from the majority, and then, the division into separate "several minorities" within the Circassian minority cannot be avoided. Consequently, regarding Circassian political mobilization, only the classical Turkish political division remains a relevant frame within which to act and to seek representation. So far, Circassians still follow local political evolutions: some groups stick to the Turkish left; others are becoming closer to moderate Islamic Turkish groups now in power. In any case all groups divide themselves along internal national/ethnic lines between "Adyghe Turk," "Abkhaz Turk," or "Chechen Turk." Some of them stay neutral in regard to Turkey's political mainstream, others support the nationalist, Islamic, or left wing.

The Abkhaz are but one group among Caucasian or self-called Circassian peoples. Like other groups, within the framework of minority politics at the end of the 1980s, they rapidly built up their own specific features. Language, of course, is one of the main factors of differentiation and a language revival was observed. (Abkhaz is not Adyghe, although both are quite close). Some old historical movements and notions also emerged, notably the long-lived idea that at the beginning of Atatürk's coming to power, Abkhaz did not accord their full support to the leader, whereas the other Circassian peoples explicitly backed the new "young" Turkish Republic. In addition, a geographical determination should be mentioned. Most of the Abkhaz diaspora live in several cities located in

Western Anatolia not far from Istanbul, i.e., Düzce, Adapazarı, Bilecik, Bursa, Eskişehir. Traditionally, Abkhaz women had valuable connections and work in Istanbul, including in the Sultan's premises.¹⁰ But, more than any other factor, it is the war in Abkhazia in 1992–93 that has been the main determinant in distinguishing the Abkhaz from other groups. It does not mean that the fracture between Abkhaz and Adyghe/Circassians only occurred in the 1990s, but rather that the gap between them substantially increased in this period. The Abkhaz in Turkey today therefore should be considered, as they themselves feel, distinct from the rest of the Circassian diaspora.

Divided and stuck in the Turkish political mainstream, the Circassian diaspora in Turkey does not occupy a particular political space. Regarding the Abkhaz, they do not represent an electorally significant part of the population. Though it has always been very difficult to estimate how many Circassians live and have lived in Turkey, various sources give estimates of between 3 and 5 million people from diverse Caucasian origins. Among them, only fifteen percent are of "Abkhaz origin," around 600,000 people. The latter figure hardly constitutes an electoral stronghold, and, what is more, several voices can be heard within the Abkhaz diaspora itself. Abkhaz representation has thus neither been an electoral stake in Turkey nor has the issue of defending Abkhaz rights been a prominent one. As such, the existence of an Abkhaz diaspora has never been used as an electoral argument: that is to say it is quantitatively irrelevant. It was this fact that the first leaders of the Abkhaz diaspora, who rose to a preeminent position in the diaspora community in Turkey during the war in 1992, did not perhaps really understand.

Failure of traditional leaders

Circassians in Turkey have never existed as a united and influential political force. When in the 1950s other political parties were authorized, Circassians chose instead to focus on culture, leaving political mobilization and claims to the "native" Turkish parties. In 1956, for example, instead of a political organization, they founded the first Kafkaz Kultur Derneği (Caucasian Cultural Association). After 1990, taking into account the new events and opportunities in the post-Soviet zone, a large Caucasian umbrella, the Federation of Caucasian Associations (Kaf-Der), was established in Ankara.¹¹ It constitutes the widest Circassian associational network in Turkey with 34 branches in cities throughout the country and comprising of 56 associations. Shortly after the establishment of the latter, two other major structures emerged. Birleşik Kafkasya Derneği (United Caucasian Federation, with only 16 members)

¹⁰ Author's interview with Murat Paşu, Istanbul, July 14, 2009.

¹¹ This structure was registered in 1993.

and a Caucasus Federation (Kafkaz Vakfı) were created in 1995. All these distinct federations try to go beyond traditional cultural projects to develop real political representation of the Circassian diaspora in Turkey. The first one, Kaf-Der, appears to be closer to liberal-nationalist discourses in the Caucasus, supporting the Circassian nationalist positions, whereas the two others are more Islamic-oriented. From a political perspective, quite significantly, these attempts at Circassian representation fail to circumvent the classic Turkish political division between the left, committed to promoting liberal and democratic values, and a more conservative wing, which today is embodied by the AKP and its moderate but effective Islamic stance. In addition to this, under the influence of minority politics, disagreements exist among them about the situation in the Russian Caucasus and in Georgia.

Very quickly, the Abkhaz in Turkey preferred to follow their own agenda through their own specific structure, i.e., the Caucasus-Abkhazian Solidarity Committee (1992).¹² Chechens also tended to act through smaller but specifically Chechnya-dedicated organizations, such as the Caucasus-Chechnya Solidarity Committee (1995) or the Shamil Vakfı. At the beginning, those sub-organizations proved to be far more effective, politically, than the whole umbrella. Their main task was to collect money from the diaspora in Turkey and to send it to the homeland to support the fight against Russia but also to aid reconstruction.

Their effectiveness, however, did not last long. Very soon, leaders of the committees reached the limit of their influence and power. Because of the weak electoral significance of each ethnic Caucasian diasporic population in Turkey, notably the Abkhaz, any legitimacy based on representation is insufficient to achieve a political capacity. Moreover, as mentioned before, because Caucasian groups remain within the Turkish political mainstream, those kinds of “representative” structures cannot be anything else than secondary to Turkey’s state organs and/or aspiring Turkish political forces. As soon as the war had ended in Abkhazia, such committees essentially functioned as state or para-state institutions. The Caucasus-Abkhazian Solidarity Committee is probably one of the best examples of this evolution. Ilfer Argun, the head of the Abkhaz Committee, took over the reins of leadership in 1995. Capitalizing on the Committee’s activities and prestige during the first war against Georgia, he built it up as the main representative organization of the Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey. But, in reality, far from defending the rights of the Abkhaz minority, which are not really threatened and/or which are subsumed under the larger issue Turkish democratization, he has lobbied the Turkish government to make it improve its ties and relations, even

¹² In Turkish: Kafkas-Abhazya Dayanışma Komitesi, see <www.abkhazya.org> (November 30 2009).

on an informal basis, with Sukhum. Subsequently, he has become the “Abkhaz Ambassador” in Turkey. Indeed, the Committee pays and provides an office to the “official” representative of the Abkhaz government in Turkey, Vladimir Avidzba. He thus acts as the main driving force between on the one side Abkhaz authorities and, on the other side, Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Turkey’s Ministry of Trade. But by targeting official Turkish power structures and living at the same time in Turkey, the leadership tends to be much more dependent on Turkey than on Abkhazia. So, clearly, today the Caucasus-Abkhazian Solidarity Committee appears to be first and foremost a simple annex to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its diasporic representation counts for nothing, as it does not represent a significant electoral stake in Turkey. This is why it is said to be so careful in its actions: it strongly opposes, for example, any street “events” organized by other Caucasian groups.¹³ More harmful, though, is the seemingly huge gap between those who the committee claims to represent (Abkhaz diaspora) and what it is really doing (lobbying on the Abkhaz authorities’ behalf). Using the diaspora’s representation to obtain locally a political capacity, whereas in reality it has nothing to do with the real skills and purposes of the committee, considerably weakens its remaining credibility at two levels, among the diaspora of course, which feels instrumentalized, and in the view of Turkish officials who do not take it very seriously. The leadership should understand that they do not need to establish their political capacity based on democratic and representative legitimacy when it is not the case. They are bound to fail. Political capacity in contemporary and Westernized societies, like Turkey nowadays, can be built on new sources of legitimacy.

A still stammering new political generation

Political activism within the Abkhaz diaspora is not of course limited solely to the Caucasus-Abkhazian Solidarity Committee. A younger generation has since emerged and recently constituted distinct political structures in reaction to old and inefficient representative methods. Also based in Turkey, in Istanbul, they are developing a different approach, aiming rather at civil society and using different and far more effective lobbying and communication tools. The Friends of Abkhazia, or in Turkish *Abhazyanin Dostlari*,¹⁴ and to a lesser extent the Kafkas Forum,

¹³ Those last developments are based on 2 interviews made in Istanbul, July 2009. Interviewees prefer to remain anonymous.

¹⁴ <<http://www.thefriendsofabhazia.org/>> It was founded in 2008, before the war between Georgia and Russia.

Kafkasya Forumu,¹⁵ are now the two main alternatives to the Committee. Both of them are internet-based and rely on new communication technologies. These two groups' leaders also possess a better media strategy, being more dynamic and proactive. They avoid traditional lobbying that typically targets political officials at private dinner functions. Rather their initiatives are bold and striking, such as street demonstrations, even when just a few dozen people are present.¹⁶ Whether Turkish television accords much attention to their actions or not, photos and videos circulate both quickly and widely through local social networks such as Facebook and also Twitter. The two groups' purpose is to raise Turkish civil concerns and promote friendship toward Abkhazia and, for Kafkas Forum especially, toward the whole North Caucasus, particularly Chechnya.¹⁷ Their leaders focus on winning public opinion and do not seek to directly influence political decision-makers as such. They even manage to reach some international audiences thanks to their personal links and contacts with European journalists, researchers, and political personalities. For example, it is of significance that all the main organizers of Friends of Abkhazia, Sezai Babakuş and Ergun Ozgür in particular, work for a private PR company, CSA Celebrity Speakers, whose business it is to invite international figures to speak at meetings and conferences¹⁸ To a lesser extent, by facilitating the travel of foreigners to Abkhazia, they help promote the Abkhaz cause abroad, notably in Western Europe.¹⁹ The above is also true of the Kafkas Forum: most of its members belong to the young Turkish educated and English-speaking generation and for several years now have been developing transnational links with European and American NGOs.

These two new structures appear credible from a political point of view: their legitimacy, based on media and international networks, is almost immediately recognized. In spite of this, one of their main problems is that their websites are still not available in English. Moreover, regarding Kafkas Forum particularly, their strong anti-Russian position, which they openly admit to and are known for,²⁰ reduces in a way the relevance of their discourse. They tend to exaggerate Russian

¹⁵ <<http://www.kafkasyaforumu.org/>> Created in 2005, it covers the whole Caucasus. Their main projects, however, concern Abkhazia (Third way) and Chechnya (Project Marsho).

¹⁶ Author's interview with Ergun Ozgür, member of the Friends of Abkhazia, Istanbul, July 2009.

¹⁷ Author's interview with 2 representatives of the Kafkas Forum, Istanbul July 2009.

¹⁸ <<http://www.groupcsa.com/EN/index.php>> (November 30 2009).

¹⁹ Thanks go to the Friends of Abkhazia which assisted in the author's trip and stay in Abkhazia in the summer of 2009; an interview with Sergey Shamba, Abkhaz Minister for Foreign Affairs, will soon be published in *Politique Internationale* (Winter 2010).

²⁰ Author's interview with Abrek, Kafkas Forum, Istanbul, July 2009 – Author's interview with Ergun Ozgür, Friends of Abkhazia, Istanbul, July 2009.

moves or historical events. Contesting the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi (to take place in 2014) on the argument that genocide was perpetrated against the Circassians in the 1860s, sounds at best far-fetched. The word “genocide” should not be employed lightly. Chechens are more inclined to invoke accusations of genocide perpetrated against them than the Circassians. Besides, the group has been too quick to criticize President Bagpash’s policy toward Russia, without really taking into account the realities of the “new” country and the state of the local political opposition, which is largely incompetent.²¹ However, supporting at the same time both Abkhaz and Chechen independence is an uncommon enough cause to have made it become noticed and highlighted. Acting with greater maturity and effectiveness will thus likely come with experience.

It appears that the Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey is not yet a determining factor in Turkey’s foreign policy calculations toward Russia and Abkhazia. The main historical and political Abkhaz framework has lost much of its credibility. The new ones meanwhile are still in a stage of political maturation. Today, it is the cultural component that is proving itself as the most important and relevant feature of Abkhaz activism in Turkey. The Solidarity Committee posts on its website many cultural programs and student language exchanges. Every year, for a few weeks, the Committee sends to Abkhazia a group of children to learn the language; in return, Abkhaz students visit Istanbul.²² The Caucasus-Abkhazia Cultural Association (Kafkas-Abhazya Kültür Derneği) in Selimiye on the Asian side of Istanbul, near Usküdar, is one of the most visited organizations by Abkhaz descendants living in Turkey.²³ Interestingly, even the Friends of Abkhazia advertize cultural performances (for example a concert in Istanbul by an Abkhaz soprano living in Moscow). According to an Abkhaz Ministerial official, the predominance of cultural activism among the diaspora is not exclusive to Turkey. The situation is similar in Jordan, where the Abkhaz Cultural Center is said to maintain even closer contacts with Abkhaz language schools than its Turkish counterpart.²⁴

Turkey in Abkhazia – a minimal impact

The Abkhaz diaspora does not play a strategic role in Turkey. Diasporic Abkhazians, when they return to visit their homeland, do not really have much of an impact there either. Based on very recent research undertaken

²¹ Kafkas Forum published a harsh and open letter to President Bagapsh regarding his relations with Moscow in the spring of 2009.

²² Author’s interview with Murat Paşu, and Ergun Özgür, Istanbul, July 2009.

²³ Author’s observations, Istanbul, July 2009.

²⁴ Author’s interview, Sukhum, July 2009.

by a Turkish-Abkhaz scholar, Cemre Jade, now living in Sukhum, the figures of those returning Abkhazia are quite revealing.²⁵ There have been several return waves of Abkhazians from Turkey to Abkhazia. Between the late 1980s and 1993–94, around 2,000 families returned to Abkhazia. But because of the harsh embargo imposed by CIS countries, almost all those families left Abkhazia to resettle in Turkey. After 2003 and up until 2008, when conditions became better, only 107 families returned. After August 2008, and Russia's recognition of independence, there was a repatriation of around 500 families from Turkey to Abkhazia. But for a majority of them, links have not been completely cut: they keep a foot in Turkey, not wanting to lose everything that they have built abroad. Round-trips would therefore seem to be the rule; it should also be noted that many of them speak neither Abkhaz nor Russian and that they do not integrate easily. Legally and materially, Abkhaz authorities are apparently helping them to resettle: a specifically-dedicated committee is tasked with finding housing, but it has been undermined by corruption and incompetency. Return is a priority neither for the Abkhaz government nor for the descendants of those refugees who fled during the Tsarist conquest at the end of the 19th century (*moukhajiris*). This very slow process gives an insight into the Turkish non-presence and lack of interest in Abkhazia.

Sporadic Turkish presence in economy

There are only a few Turkish investments in Abkhazia and most of them are related to the tourist sector. Several hotels along the coast between Gagra and Sukhum have been built and are managed by Turkish businessmen of Abkhaz origin. One of the most famous, and probably the most important, hotels stands in the nice village of Pitsunda.²⁶ In all other economic sectors, however, Abkhazia relies on Russian financial aid, material supply, and protection. Accordingly, the Abkhaz economy is completely dependent on its northern neighbor. Furthermore, Moscow pays directly the pensions of Russian citizens living in Abkhazia. Since a majority of Abkhaz hold a Russian passport, Russia is thus effectively paying for all Abkhaz pensioners. It is also directly financing the reconstruction of roads and railways, with Russian companies arriving with their own workers and facilities. In addition, Russian authorities lend huge amounts of money every year to ensure the maintenance of schools and hospitals.²⁷ Yuri Luzhkov, the Mayor of Moscow, is even directly and personally involved in supporting a school in the center of

²⁵ Author's interview, Sukhum, July 2009 – Additional information obtained during a previous interview with an official from the Abkhaz Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sukhum, July 2009.

²⁶ Author's personal observations, Pitsunda, July 2009.

²⁷ Author's interview, Abkhaz Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sukhum, July 2009.

the Abkhaz capital. Other Russian figures, Konstantin Zatulin being a prominent example, own various tourist or industrial businesses.²⁸ Secondly, many Abkhaz products are exported to Russia, such as agricultural subtropical products and wine. Thirdly, most strategic investments in telecommunications, energy production, housing, and tourist infrastructure originate from Russia; like most of the 1.5 million Russian tourists that visit Abkhazia on vacation between May and October each year. Indeed, for many years now, the Abkhaz economy has been relatively stable and has gradually recovered to demonstrate growth, but only thanks to Russia's injections of money.²⁹ The Winter Olympic Games in Sochi in 2014 will only reinforce Abkhazia's dependence on Russia, as the latter will function as a "large warehouse" to the Games as well as provide a reserve workforce.

Faced with stiff competition from Russian business, Turkish business has been unable to establish itself in Abkhazia. There is also a simple practical reason for this: the absence of direct and official sea or air communication between Istanbul/Trabzon and Sukhum. Legally and objectively, Turkey, being outside the CIS, is not bound up by the embargo imposed by Georgia in 1996. But still, Ankara has respected the embargo for the sake of maintaining a good relationship with Georgia. Turkish authorities have only allowed the unofficial shipping of building materials: ostensibly headed for Russia but which at the last moment deviates toward Sukhum. Turkey, however, has never dared to organize passenger transportation, since Georgian customs officials have quite often confiscated material shipments.³⁰ Regarding air connections, the situation has also been far from easy. To travel to Abkhazia, Turkish citizens first have to travel through Russia (Sochi being the closest airport to the Abkhaz border) and so have to obtain a double-entry Russian visa. Such formalities and recurrent difficulties at the border points have simply deterred most potential visitors. As long as direct connections are not agreed upon between Turkey, Abkhazia, and Russia, Ankara will not see its trading and economic influence grow there. Interestingly, furthermore, those negotiations have largely sidelined the role of the Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey. The Abkhaz representative in charge of relations with Turkey, who lived in Turkey until 1991 and who maintains contacts there, pursues discussions directly with the Turkish prime minister as well as other ministers.³¹ Clearly, this "bypassing" diminishes the political usefulness of the Abkhaz diaspora within Turkey.

²⁸ Author's personal observations, Sukhum, July 2009.

²⁹ Author's interview, Presidential office, Sukhum, July 2009.

³⁰ Author's interview, Presidential office, Sukhum, July 2009.

³¹ Author's interview, Soner Gogua, deputy, Sukhum, July 2009.

Presidential election in Abkhazia: a non-issue for Turkey

The election of the Abkhaz president, set to occur on December 12, 2009, appears to be a non-issue in the neighboring countries as well as, to some extent, in Abkhazia itself. There is almost no doubt that the incumbent President Sergei Bagapsh will be elected. Whether he wins at the first- or the second-round run-off remains to be seen. But in any case, none of his four competitors, who have registered at the Central Election Commission, can really challenge Bagapsh's achievements during his first mandate. Despite his troubled election in 2004, he manages to obtain from Moscow assurances to keep the border on the Psou River relatively open, thus softening the embargo and allowing the Abkhaz to recreate a semblance of normal life and consumption after years of privations. It can therefore be argued that he has presided over the improvement of social and economic conditions in the small republic. He also, of course, has derived benefit from Russia's recognition of Abkhazia in August 2008, with all the implications that entails for the republic's security. In fact, Abkhazia has probably never been better protected as it is today. More than 3,500 Russian soldiers are permanently deployed in the state, directly controlling the border with Georgia. Accordingly, the issue of security ranks high among the concerns of the Abkhaz population.³² On one issue, however, Bagapsh has been forced to backtrack and concede victory to the opposition. In July 2009, he intended to amend the law on citizenship to allow ethnic Georgians living in the eastern Gal region to be granted with Abkhaz citizenship. He faced in response a unanimous Parliament that voted against the signing into law of this amendment. This defeat is, however, not enough to threaten his position at the next election. The electoral stakes do not revolve around this identity question and no one in Abkhazia seriously suspects President Bagapsh of allowing Georgians to colonize Abkhazia. The issue of Russian influence dominates the December elections, with candidates discussing not only "the optimum level of cooperation with, and maximum acceptable level of, economic and security dependence on the Russian Federation, but also the best way to develop the republic's economy without inflicting irreversible environmental damage, and lastly how to continue on building a genuine and democratic civil society."³³

All the four other presidential hopefuls, however, have failed to constitute a real, strong, and credible opposition. In addition to two "minor" candidates, the academic Vitaly Bganba and a business-related figure, Zaur Ardzinba, director of the State Steamship Company, the two

³² Author's interview, Soner Gogua, deputy, Sukhum, July 2009.

³³ "Five Presidential Candidates registered in Abkhazia"; RFE RL, *Caucasus Report*, November 7 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Five_Presidential_Candidates_Registered_In_Abkhazia/1872025.html> (December 5 2009).

most important challengers are former vice-president and the closest challenger in the 2004 ballot, Raul Khajimba, and Beslan Butba, businessman and chairman of the Economic Development Party of Abkhazia. None of them have proven able to build an effective political strategy. First of all, whereas during this summer Ardzinba, Khajimba, and Butba looked to create an opposition bloc and to support among them the one who would have the best chances of competing with Bagapsh,³⁴ quite quickly it appeared that the three opposition figures would each go separately to the ballot, thus dividing effectively by three their chances to accede to an hypothetical second round. Moreover, both Butba and Khajimba failed to overcome their respective weaknesses: their lack of visibility, lack of supportive networks beyond Sukhum,³⁵ and, in the case of Khajimba, a lack of credibility as an opponent after three-and-a-half years spent in power as vice-president and as head of state security.³⁶ Many influential personalities in Abkhazia are indeed wondering how he can criticize the state and government on what has been done during the past presidential term, considering that he has been deeply implicated in it.³⁷

Lastly, the argumentative basis falls short of coherency and conviction. Both Khajimba and Butba accuse Bagapsh of selling out on Abkhazia's interests, and pushing through ill-thought-out agreements for short-term commercial gain. Butba even quotes that two thirds of the Abkhaz budget is made up of Russian financial subsidies, but that these are wrongly used to pay wages and current state expenditures when that money should contribute to capital spending.³⁸ Both argue that instead of this policy, the government should pursue economic and financial self-sufficiency, independent of Russia. But at the same time, Khajimba appears closer to Russian authorities than Bagapsh, and Butba has also asserted that, "Abkhazia can only build its foreign policy through Russia."³⁹ In this context, seen from the outside, the best option has appeared to be "no interference," letting Bagapsh capitalize on his achievements and strengthening Abkhazia's capacity for independence. Russia (but also Turkey), which is the main actor with the interest to

³⁴ Author's interview, Beslan Butba, Sukhum, July 2009.

³⁵ Author's interview, Cemre Jade, Sukhum, July 2009 – She worked for several months in 2008 as a social-marketing expert for the Butba Foundation; one of her tasks was to assess Beslan Butba's popularity in Abkhazia.

³⁶ Raul Khajimba stepped down only in May 2009.

³⁷ Author's interview, Soner Gogua, Sukhum, July 2009 - Marina Gumba, head of the pro-government political movement Amtsakhara. For her opinions, see: "Limited Scope for Different Views in Abkhazia", IWPR, *Caucasus Reporting*, n° 517, October 30 2009, <http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state=hen&s=o&o=l=EN&p=crs&s=f&o=357090> (December 5 2009).

³⁸ Author's interview, Beslan Butba, Sukhum, July 2009.

³⁹ Author's interview, Beslan Butba, Sukhum, July 2009.

potentially be able to interfere in Abkhaz affairs, did not explicitly support one of the candidates.⁴⁰ No stake so far has been worth moving and influencing.

Abkhazia in itself will be unlikely to mobilize Turkey's strategic thinking. Except for some tourist investments and direct export opportunities from Trabzon, Turkish interests in Abkhazia do not suppose a deeper engagement than what has already been undertaken by Ankara. Beyond purely economic and financial interests, Turkey's involvement in Abkhazia is not likely to increase in the near future. This failure to engage more in Abkhazia means that Turkey loses an opportunity to increase its regional power.

Between Russia and Iran: Turkey as an Emerging Power

South Caucasian issues in general and Abkhazia in particular may be essential bargaining chips for Turkey to substantially improve its stance from the Black to the Caspian Seas, assuming its new-found "emancipation" from U.S. influence and thus becoming a real regional power in the region. There are here and now several opportunities for Turkey to seize and some strategic steps to take regarding Armenia, Georgia, and Iran, respectively. All of them would allow Turkey to better face and manage Russia's policies in that region.

Armenian openings and growing Turkish spaces of negotiations on its Eastern side

The long-expected and historical normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia is now proceeding apace. Considering only economic and material aspects, Yerevan will obviously benefit far more from this rapprochement than Ankara. The former still lives under a near-total blockade regarding its exports: only US\$2 million worth of Armenian products are exported to Turkey compared to the US\$250 million worth of Turkish goods imported by Armenia.⁴¹ The normalization process will largely correct this huge trade imbalance. International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials expect "a significant growth in the economy, with an increase in the volume of exports and a growth in investments." For example, still pending and dependent on the progress in opening the Turkish-Armenian border, is a deal between the Turkish UNIT Company and high Voltage Electric Networks of Armenia to sell 1.5 billion kW of Armenian electricity to Turkey. The size of this contract clearly demonstrates the potential for cooperation

⁴⁰ This fact had been confirmed as early as November 1 by the very effective and well-informed press agency <www.Kavkaz-uzel.ru>.

⁴¹ "Armenians Lick Lips at Prospect of Turkish Trade", *IWPR Caucasus Reporting*, 512, September 25, 2009.

and mutual advantage.⁴² On the Turkish side, moreover, the gains will also be in terms of augmenting Turkey's regional power.

Undoubtedly, Turkey, by engaging with Armenia, has substantially increased its influence in the South Caucasus, easing some of the inconvenient pressures coming from Azerbaijan and Georgia. This represents a very well-played foreign policy coup. Significantly, despite some minor criticism toward the protocol, the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal recognizes the achievement of Turkish diplomacy.⁴³ Regarding Azerbaijan, Turkey's move is clearly a success. The first reports announcing a Turkish-Armenian rapprochement triggered furious outrage among decision-makers in Baku: they used any levers available to try to change Ankara's willingness to go further with Armenia. On the one hand, Baku requested Ankara to renounce its 15 percent lift-off of gas volumes bound for the EU. Keeping 15 percent of European supplies allows Turkey to pay for gas from Azerbaijan far more cheaply than it could do normally. On the other hand, Baku played on its cultural, linguistic, and ethnic proximity with the Turkish people, arguing for solidarity with Azerbaijan and raising domestic criticism against Ankara's rapprochement with Armenia. None of those arguments remained at the end of the summer. Ankara accepted to lift its prerequisite in July on the eve of the Nabucco Summit but continued afterwards to negotiate with Azerbaijan on this issue. Negotiations have continued even after the Intergovernmental Agreement in Turkey on July 13.

More importantly, growing domestic discontent in Azerbaijan has been softened by new Turkish guarantees about Nagorno-Karabakh. Precisely on that issue, normalization with Armenia could only bring about promising prospects, with Turkey offering its Armenian neighbor a vast, new, and legally-accessible market and asking in return for some concessions to facilitate a real, definitive, and sustainable solution. As for Georgia, this opening of the Turkish-Armenian borders puts into question Tbilisi's unique position as the sole transit Western-oriented country: Georgia's strategic position should not be overestimated from Turkey's point of view.

The NATO-Russo-Georgian compromise, a Turkish bet

To maintain the status quo in the South Caucasus may not be in Turkey's real interest. Following Russia's war against Georgia in August 2008 and its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Turkish authorities, putting forward their proposal for a Caucasian Stability and Cooperation Platform in September 2008, have clearly opted for stability

⁴² IWPR, *Ibid.*

⁴³ <www.nethaber.com>, September 16, 2009.

and sought to avoid any changes based on military operations. Willing to preserve its good and friendly relations with Tbilisi, Ankara did not initiate or officially accept any contact with Abkhazia and its representatives. Things have changed in recent weeks, however. On September 18, Unal Cevikoz, the Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs in the Turkish Foreign Ministry, who is of Circassian descent, visited Sukhum and met with Abkhazian Foreign Minister Sergei Shamba. That official visit would appear to have been in preparation for a future visit by Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, in order, according to his own words, to “get acquainted with [Abkhazia] and attempt to regulate its relations with Georgia.”⁴⁴ He even went on to insist, just after Unal Cevikoz’s return, that the existence of the Abkhaz community in Turkey compels Ankara to consider how to resolve the issue of South Caucasian stability. For one, if Ankara decides to get to grips with the issue of Abkhazia, this could bolster Turkey’s bid for regional leadership. But this entails a three- step scenario.

As a first step, it should not be too politically costly to open direct sea and air passenger connections with destinations in Abkhazia. As seen above, Turkey though not by definition legally constrained by the CIS-imposed embargo from 1996 (but lifted by Russia in March 2008), has de facto limited its contacts with Abkhazia to energy resources, raw and building materials, as well as agricultural products and shipping. According to Georgian laws, this trade is illegal and over the course of a decade more than sixty such Turkish convoys have been apprehended and accused of illegally crossing into Georgian territorial waters. Recently, two captains, one Turkish,⁴⁵ the other Azerbaijani, were sentenced to 24 years in prison by a Georgian court. In any case, given the rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey, Georgia has lost some of its strategic importance from Turkey’s point of view. And while Turkish businessmen still have interests in Georgia and parts of Turkish energy resources transit through Georgia, without access to the west through Turkey, Tbilisi would find itself in autarky. Turkey would not lose much leverage in opening direct sea and air connections. The second and third steps would, however, change completely the diplomatic scale of the proposed scenario. Turkey has to take into account Russian interests and to manage the potentially reluctant reaction on the part of Moscow to seeing Abkhazia becoming really independent.

As second and third steps, which are inextricably linked and should be presented as such in Turkish diplomatic initiatives, Ankara could propose to exchange Georgian integration into NATO in compensation for Turkish official recognition of Abkhazia’s independence after a

⁴⁴ Paul Goble, *Moscow Times*, September 16, 2009.

⁴⁵ *Sunday’s Zaman*, September 6, 2009 – Turkish diplomats are actively negotiating with Georgia for his release, which should occur very soon.

certain period and under certain conditions. It should probably occur after Georgia has become a full NATO member and if Abkhazia confirms its democratic path, guaranteeing press freedom,⁴⁶ free political associations, and fair electoral consultations. Presidential elections in December 2009 will be the first test, but the next ones in 2014 will serve as a better benchmark to estimate Abkhazian progress on democracy and liberalization. Considering that schema, it is essential that Turkey only recognizes Abkhazia's sovereignty and not South Ossetia's or that of Nagorno-Karabakh or Transdniestria. Though this approach could be accused of double standards, it would give authorities in Ankara the clout and credibility to refuse (of course from Turkey's point of view) renewed Kurdish separatist claims.

Turkey (and subsequently NATO) in such a three-step move could gain a lot in political prestige and regional authority. Firstly, Turkey will impose itself as the main political broker in the South Caucasian region, able to achieve breakthroughs on crux issues: normalization with Armenia, Georgia's entry into NATO. The next challenge would be the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, which may be witness to developments very soon following Armenian-Turkish dialogue – this after years of U.S., French, and Russian failure within the Minsk group framework. Secondly, Turkey will prove to Russia that it should be taken seriously and not treated as a subordinate ally. Thirdly, engagement will substantially raise Turkey's attractiveness for the EU. Brussels has proved unable so far to deploy a coherent political strategy in the South Caucasus. Frightened of displeasing Moscow, the EU has kept a low, economic profile limited to financially supporting market and social developments. Turkey offers a reliable and safe political forefront, which as a partner better suits the EU's goals and interests than does Russia's influence and zero-sum games in the region.

Iran, as a powerful but non-regional player

In historical terms, Iran feels entitled to claim an influence in the South Caucasus. Nevertheless, Iranian tools of influence in the three South Caucasian states are currently of minor significance. Shi'ism in Azerbaijan, shared by a majority, proves to be far from sufficient to constitute an Iranian asset. Its differences with Sunnism are indeed quite loose and it should be noticed that the nationalist feeling tends to overcome any other identity factor. Iran, similar to other countries, is reinforcing its economic presence in Armenia but not strikingly so; it is

⁴⁶ There are doubts, however, concerning this, as on September 21, a journalist, Anton Krivenyuk, received a 3 year suspended sentence for an article criticizing President Bagapsh's decision to hand over the railway network to Russian control. See "Abkhaz Media Fear Free Speech Under Threat", *IWPR Caucasus Reporting*, 512, September 25, 2009.

rather Turkey that is notably deriving benefit from its already well-advanced normalization process with Armenia. Lastly, regarding Georgia, Iranian interests are close to zero. Therefore, including Iran in any regional political informal or formal project would be at best useless and at worst counter-productive. It would only serve to add to the mix the ambitions of an aspiring power, hoping to see its influence increase in a zone where it has no “natural” relays. Turkey seems well-aware of this fact, judging by its proposal for the Stability and Cooperation Platform, which initially included only Turkey, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. Russia on the contrary seems to support the opposite, seeing no problems in dominating the Caucasus, together with Turkey and Iran, as long as the U.S. and the EU are excluded. Duma Deputy Sergei Markov explicitly states that:⁴⁷

There are for the Caucasus several scenarios. The first one is balkanization, each of the three countries following its own interests without or against the others. The second one is another Great Game, each of the three countries becoming a stake in a major powers rivalry. The third one is a kind of superstructure dominated by an alliance between Turkey, Iran and Russia, clearing out any EU and U.S. presence.

Markov does not elaborate, however, on how efficient any Turkish-Iranian-Russian cooperation in the region would be. Seen from Moscow, the problem is not how to make this triumvirate operational but rather how to limit Turkish influence and interest in this zone, which have become stronger following the opening with Armenia.

Turkey has to deal separately with the issue of Iran and partnership with Russia.⁴⁸ To put it in another way, it is essential for Ankara's decision-makers to reduce Iran's global ambitions in the Caucasus and to deal with it not as a regional player but as an international question. It is necessary to “internationalize,” or to widen as much as possible, any contact, any relations, and any negotiations between Turkey and Iran. Some issues, such as the nuclear Iranian project or the radical Shiit connections in Iraq and Lebanon, are already by definition internationalized. For others, such as potential Iranian gas supplies to the Nabucco pipeline or Iran's interests in Abkhazia,⁴⁹ there are still many problems to be solved. Regarding the energy issue, Turkey should act as a mediator between Iran and the European Union. It is indeed in Turkey's strategic interest to become a gas hub. So, from the consumers'

⁴⁷ Author's interview with Sergei Markov, Foros Conference, Abkhazia, July 22, 2009.

⁴⁸ Author's interview with Mehmet Tuğtan, *ibid.*

⁴⁹ An Iranian delegation visited Abkhazia from July 11 to July 14, 2009. Author's interview, Sukhum, Abkhazia.

(European countries) point of view, where the gas comes from is not as important as the reliability of supply, which would then become the hub's problem. Turkey, acting as a shell-country for Iranian and other Middle-East (Egypt, Iraq) resources, would play more than just a simple regional role: it would embody the energy link between Iran to the EU. As far as Abkhazia is concerned, Turkey surely has no interest in seeing Iranian contacts with Abkhazia develop. But would these develop in the first place? What could Iran offer Abkhazia that Turkey could not offer? It is up to Turkey to take or retake the initiative on that issue, perhaps according to the second point of the three-step approach outlined by this article: balancing recognition of Abkhazia by Georgia's integration into NATO.

Conclusion

If all these challenges are met successfully, then Turkey will move to the gravity center of an EU-Russia-Iran triangle, where it will occupy a pivotal and geostrategic position. Turkey could thus be in a position to compete on an equal footing with Russian influence from the Black Sea to the Caucasus. Together in the western Eurasian area, the two countries could maintain an oligopolistic position, keeping outside any other aspiring powers such as Iran and the U.S., as well as the European Union. For example, they would be able to decide and influence positively the frozen conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the future of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. There is also a small chance, as far as military affairs are concerned, that the Montreux Treaty status quo will be put into question.

Second, with Iran, Turkey has to keep to its stance of developing a bilateral dialogue and rapprochement, playing a mediator role between Iran and the West. Turkey alone has to connect Iran with those external actors and thus emphasize the international dimension of the present Iranian problem. Russia here, from a Turkish perspective, is one actor among others. Third, in regard to the EU, there is the question of Russia and how to balance involvement in South Stream with its commitments to Nabucco. Ankara seems to be using this strategy wisely, as it has obtained from Russia significant concessions regarding oil transit.

In going down this path, Turkey would in fact reach a paradoxical stalemate in its relations with the EU. Having become a regional leader, membership of the EU may prove to be far less attractive for Turkey. However, from a European perspective, a strong Turkey that is influential in its regional environment is what Brussels actually needs. If the EU is not ready in the foreseeable future to integrate Turkey, arguing that the Europeans would lose their sense of mission and *raison d'être*, then Turkey itself should not lose time in waiting for the EU. It should

instead actively engage in a regional strategy, leaving the EU with the responsibility to decide whether it wants to become a political power or to remain as a safe and comfortable haven, yet bound to immobility.

Turkey in the Eurasian Energy Security Melting Pot

Thrassy N. Marketos *

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the theoretical, but also realistic, question about Turkey's future geostrategic orientation. More precisely, the question of whether Ankara will play a role in the international arena as a bridge maker between Washington's political realism and the EU's soft power, or whether it will instead pursue a new Ottoman nationalism and forge an energy security partnership with Russia and Iran, is discussed. In fact, this is the question upon which lies the geostrategic equilibrium of the twenty-first century world order.

Keywords • Turkey • Iran • Caspian Sea Energy Resources
Transportation Routes • United States of America • Europe • Russia •
China

Turkey's EU Membership Quest

For the past 60 years, Turkey has prioritized its relationship with the West as is manifest in its membership in almost every Western multilateral organization. Casting its lot in with the West during the Cold War was made particularly easy given Stalin's aggressive moves on the Turkish straits and Eastern Anatolia. As a result, Turkey's Cold War relationship with the U.S. was indicative of most bilateral alliances during the period, representing a two-way street of convergent national interests in containing the influence of the Soviet Union. With the Truman Doctrine, the United States publicly committed itself to protecting Turkey and Greece, thereby linking these two nations with Western Europe.

Turkey's preoccupation with Europe and its subsequent quest for a European identity can be explained on many levels. Historically, Europe

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represents modern civilization in the words of Turkey's founding father Ataturk. Economically, Turkey's strong ties to Europe represent over half of the country's foreign investment; the bulk of its lucrative foreign trade is conducted with European Union member states. Geo-politically, Turkey has always insisted on being part of every European organization based on the fact that only three percent of its territory belongs to Europe. However, despite the arguments made by Atlanticist quarters in Europe who favor Turkey's geo-strategic value within the framework of the EU, most Europeans have remained skeptical about Turkish membership. As a result of this widespread European sentiment, the EU has for various reasons kept Turkey waiting at its doorstep for over four decades. Still, for Turkey, the single most important external factor on its domestic agenda today remains the EU.¹

With the opening of negotiations on Turkey's EU accession in Luxemburg on October 4, 2005, a new chapter was added to the EU-Turkey relationship. Having become a clearly defined candidate country, Turkey has entered official EU negotiation talks; traditionally such talks with other countries have resulted in EU membership offers. Turkey finally seemed to have a real chance at becoming part of a club that up until then had long avoided the question of Turkey's European credentials. The start of EU negotiations has allowed the ruling AKP to keep the Kemalist establishment at bay while continuing to push for further domestic reforms centered around greater economic liberalization and democratization. While Prime Minister Erdogan's AKP has claimed that the EU Copenhagen criteria align with Turkey's own so-called Ankara criteria, Turkish popular support for the reform packages continue to rest upon the promise of full EU membership and not solely on the merits of the reforms themselves.²

Given the highly symbolic nature of a Muslim-majority secular democracy like Turkey waiting at the doorstep of Europe, the larger member states of the EU cannot ignore the global ramifications of Turkey accession negotiations. From a European perspective, the most important question to analyze is the strategic impact of Turkish accession. An EU which stops at the Bosphorus will be a very different type of strategic actor than one which pushes into Central Asia and embraces the Middle East. This question of Turkish accession, which is only now beginning to be considered by policy-makers in the EU, will have massive ramifications and makes Turkish accession the predominant strategic issue for the EU, particularly in regard to a common European Security and Defense Policy. Britain's prominent role in these discussions and strong views in support of an ever expanding

¹ Joshua W. Walker, "Learning strategic depth: implications of Turkey's new foreign policy doctrine," *Insight Turkey*, July 2007, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

union versus France's ever deepening union is critical to understanding the future direction of EU enlargement and Turkey's own strategic thinking.³

As part of Turkey's strategic depth doctrine, Erdogan echoes Davutoglu⁴ when he emphasizes the need for Turkish policies that take the EU into account, but he does not see the EU as the only alternative. Given the changing nature of the Turkish-EU relationship, with the EU recently having partially halted negotiations, maintaining strategic depth flows is logical and even seems like a national imperative. American efforts to convince its European allies of the importance of anchoring Turkey in the West through the EU have often fallen on deaf ears. A spurned Turkey guided by its policy of strategic depth will not follow the typical Kemalist prescription of isolation, but it could just as easily reach out to other important regional actors such as Iran and Russia to form a loose alignment. In this regard, there is a paradoxical convergence between advocates of strategic depth and those who want to assert a neo-Kemalist strategic vision of Turkey as a pivotal actor in Eurasian affairs through closer engagement with both Iran and Russia.⁵

Greater Middle East Ankara Policy

Traditionally, Turkey has been labeled as either a bridge or a barrier between the Middle East and the West; now it finds itself playing the role of a catalyst. Turkey thinks of itself as playing the role of bringing the principal actors of the region together to transform the Middle East in the same way that U.S. involvement helped transform Europe from a hotbed of continental and world wars into a geography of peace. Some analysts argue that Turkey could play a role in the Middle East similar to the one Germany played with its front line position towards the Central European states during the Cold War.⁶ However, many in the region are wary of Turkey being anything more than an agent or functionary of the United States; thus it must build its assets as a bridge of trust for both sides.

Given the United States' recent appetite for nation-building in the Middle East and Turkey's divergent views with the U.S. concerning the second Iraq War, some argue Turkey is uniquely poised to capitalize on its less intrusive offers of assistance and diplomatic help to its Middle Eastern neighbors. Erdogan has thus far been able to play a positive role

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴ See Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik, Turkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth, Turkey's International Position], (Istanbul: Kure Yayinlari, 2001).

⁵ Joshua W. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶ Huseyin Bagci, "Turkey Plays Greater Role in Middle East Than Many Think," *World Security Network News Letter*, February 2002.

in pushing forward Turkey's European credentials, offering economic conduits to Europe, while at the same time embracing the positive aspects of Turkey's strategic depth in terms of its Middle Eastern cultural and religious connections. The tightrope that Erdogan has been walking with the U.S. administration over policy vis-à-vis Iraq has allowed the AKP government to strengthen its pragmatic relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors, while continuing its support for various U.S. initiatives in its neighborhood.⁷

However, by linking itself too closely with the U.S. in the Greater Middle East, Turkey runs the risk of alienating itself from its neighbors. For this reason, Turkey's bilateral ties with Iran and diplomatic overtures to Syria, both acts which the U.S. has strongly criticized, have been interpreted as being part of Erdogan's strategic depth program of maintaining pragmatic and positive relations with Turkey's neighbors. The most dramatic shifts in Turkish foreign policy have been witnessed within the Middle East, where the historically close relationship with Israel has been de-emphasized while former enemies such as Iran and Syria have been openly courted.

One of the most significant departures from previous Turkish foreign policies was committed by Davutoglu in his role as chief foreign advisor when he extended an invitation to Khaled Mashal, the official representative of Hamas in Damascus, following Hamas's victory in the Palestinian legislative elections. This unsolicited attempt at mediation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was seen as hostile and deleterious to Turkish-Israeli relations. The backlash from this faux pas has continued to taint Turkish-Israeli relations, which were once considered to be among the most solid in the region.⁸

In contrast to the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations, the relationship between Turkey and Syria has drastically improved over the last few years. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's visit to Turkey in January 2004 was reciprocated later in the year by Turkish President Sezer, the first presidential exchange of its type in Syrian-Turkish history. These events prompted a negative U.S. response in which the former U.S. ambassador to Turkey, Eric Edelman, called on Turkey to join the international consensus on Syria, which was being pressured at the time to remove its troops from Lebanon. In response to U.S. pressure, the Turkish government emphasized that it was appealing directly to the Syrians, while the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad welcomed the visit

⁷ Joshua W. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁸ The Ankara provoked annulment of the Israeli participation in a NATO military exercise on Turkish soil (October 2009), is indicative in this respect.

as, "[...] evidence that NATO member Turkey is ready to stand up to the United States on issues of national interest."⁹

The constructive direction of recent Turkish-Syrian relations has been seen as an affirmation of Turkey's strategic depth in the Middle East, particularly if it leads to the development of a genuine ally in the region.¹⁰ Meanwhile in Washington, the improvement of Turkish-Syrian relations has been an unwelcome development in its attempt to isolate Syria internationally. America has reacted particularly coolly to the common plan because of its lack of Iraqi participation and the tensions between these neighbors over unresolved claims by their respective Kurdish communities. This type of divergence between Ankara and Washington over relations and approaches to Damascus would have been unthinkable even less than five years ago; however, in the era of "strategic depth" Turkey has put a premium on cultivating better relations with its former Cold War enemy and formerly important Ottoman province.¹¹

The positive direction of Syrian-Turkish relations has been emulated by Turkey's relations with its historical antagonist and fellow non-Arab regional power, Iran. In Prime Minister Erdogan's July 2004 visit to Tehran, the two countries signed a multi-dimensional cooperation scheme that included a series of economic agreements, and a joint commitment to security cooperation with Iran in the struggle against the PKK. Perhaps most surprisingly, given previous Iranian-Turkish hostility during the Cold War, Turkey initially defended Iran's right to a peaceful nuclear program despite the international crisis regarding the violations by Iran of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, as a result of American and EU pressure, the Erdogan government began to change its attitude towards the Iranian nuclear program. Having received calls from the U.S. Secretary of State and the foreign ministers from the EU troika of Britain, France, and Germany which all emphasized the destabilizing effects of a nuclear-armed Iran, Erdogan clarified his earlier position: "The continuation of Iran nuclear program for peaceful ends is a natural right, but it is impossible to support it if it concerns the development of weapons of mass destruction."¹²

⁹ K. Gajendra Singh "U.S.-Turkish Relations Go Wobbly, Now Over Syria", South Asia Analyst Group, paper no 131, March 23, 2005, <<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers14%5Cpaper1301.html>> (January 10 2010).

¹⁰ "Syrian President: Common Interests Of Turkey And Syria Can Turn Into A Significant Brotherhood", *Turkish Press*, March 3, 2004 <<http://www.turkishpress.com/turkishpress/news.asp?ID=18083>> (February 18 2005).

¹¹ Joshua W. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹² Yigal Schleifer, "Caught in the Fray: Turkey Enters Debate on Iran's Nuclear Program," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 2, 2006.

The pragmatic relationship that Ankara and Tehran have formed has allowed a series of important cultural and economic contacts to flourish. Previous regional tensions between Turkey and Iran have been resolved, as evidenced by their joint statements in search of a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Perhaps most importantly, Iranian oil and gas exports to Turkey have allowed the AKP to claim an important economic victory. Turkey has tried to maintain a delicate balance between not openly contradicting U.S. policy towards Iran, and seeking to actively maintain economic and political connections with its largest and most powerful Middle Eastern neighbor. The AKP has increasingly emphasized the need for Turkey to have good relations with Iran and downplayed international concern over a nuclear Iran, something which has frustrated Washington in its attempt to exert international pressure on Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions.

In both of these cases, the policy of strategic depth makes sense in theory, but it fails in the real world by assuming reciprocal goodwill on the part of Syria and Iran. Both Damascus and Tehran have acted with historically consistent ill intent toward Ankara, supporting terrorist groups – the PKK in the case of Syria, and the PKK and Islamist cells in the case of Iran – to undermine Turkey’s secular democratic system and to deter its pro-Western foreign policy orientation. Both countries have taken advantage of the AKP’s strategic depth policy to approach Ankara. Neither has changed its mind about Turkey’s secular democratic regime, but both see reason to win Ankara to their side. Syria, which is surrounded by U.S.-occupied Iraq, U.S.-friendly Jordan, and Israel, sees Turkey as the only neighbor that can ease its isolation. Iran likewise faces U.S. military presence in Iraq to the west and Afghanistan to the east, and hopes that a sympathetic regime in Turkey can help it circumvent America’s grip. In the words of one commentator, “... what is strategic depth for Ankara is strategic opportunity for Damascus and Tehran.”¹³

The Middle East and its current realities represent the most malleable and exciting frontiers for Turkish foreign policy, but also the area in which Washington and Ankara will continue to have the most trouble seeing eye-to-eye. Turkey has had difficulties developing a comprehensive and consistent policy that would serve both its national interests and its interests in the region through strategic depth alone. In many ways, the AKP’s attempts to reach out to the Middle East can be seen through the prism of domestic politics as a signal of the independence of civilian Turkish foreign policymaking outside the realm

¹³ See comments by Soner Cagaptay “*Hamas Visits Ankara: The AKP Shifts Turkey’s Role in the Middle East*,” *Policy Watch* # 1081, February 16 2006, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, <<http://www.iranian-military.org/templateC05.php?CID=2445>> (December 4 2009).

of the Turkish military. Maintaining good relations with Washington while at the same time attempting to reach out to Damascus and Tehran will be an incredibly difficult tightrope for Erdogan and the AKP to walk; however, it also gives Ankara some much needed leverage in an otherwise asymmetric relationship with Washington.¹⁴

Post-Cold War Turkey-Russia Relationship

Turkey's relationship with yet another important neighbor, Russia, has historically always been one of opposition. Starting as far back as 500 years ago, the Ottoman Empire and the Muscovites fundamentally altered the eastern edges of Europe. Despite its decline in the late 19th century, when the Russian czar coined his famous phrase "the sick man of Europe" in reference to the dying Ottoman Empire, Turkey was still considered to be part of the European state system. As the principal antagonists in the European state system, these peripheral powers now, once again, find themselves on the other side of Europe. For Turkey, the Cold War perpetuated the historical trend of antagonistic relations between the descendents of the Romanov and Ottoman Empires. Within a clear-cut, bipolar world, Turkey simply followed the lead of its Western allies in isolating and containing Russian interests in its region. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkey has begun to transform its relationship with the Russian Federation from enemy state to rival regional power. While Turkey and Russia have worked to develop and maintain normal and pragmatic relations in recent years, their competing interests in the mutually shared areas of their environs have led to what have often been tense relations.¹⁵

As two of the most important peripheral states in Europe, Russia and Turkey have continually competed to increase their standing within Europe at the expense of the other. While the great power statuses and approaches of each country have been widely divergent, these competing interests have soured the many opportunities that could exist for cooperation between Russia and Turkey. With the emergence of President Putin in Russia and his skepticism of the West, Turkey has been able to improve bilateral relations through close economic and security cooperation, while continuing to compete with Russia over energy issues such as the recently completed Ceyhan-Tbilisi-Baku pipeline.

The AKP led by Erdogan has been quick to capitalize on President Putin's skepticism of the West and to offer itself as a strong regional partner. Building on Turkey's need for strategic depth when dealing with

¹⁴ Joshua W. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁵ For a full discussion of this important relationship, see Joshua Walker, "Turkey and the Post-Soviet States: A New Way Forward", *Insight Turkey* 4 (2005), pp. 13-20.

the EU, Davutoglu sees Russia as a natural ally in Eurasia and an effective counterbalance to the EU. Given historical perceptions of Europe as being defined in opposition to the two great Eurasian powers in the East, represented by the Turks and the Russians, these two European periphery nations now find themselves feeling similarly isolated from the EU. While Russia has not expressed any interest in EU membership, it clearly wants to be considered part of Europe and has proposed a special relationship with the EU similar to the one that it now enjoys with NATO.¹⁶ Thus, both Russia and Turkey seem to have common grievances with Europe or, more precisely, the EU.

As a result, the eastern peripheries of Europe have increasingly begun to look towards each other and their shared neighborhood for partners. The antagonistic tones of historic Turkish-Russian relations have been replaced by pragmatic dealings between the two countries. The post-9/11 environment that Erdogan and Putin have inherited forces the two leaders to focus on points of common strategic interest, while quietly negotiating their existing points of contention. Both nations have been quick to stress the importance of state sovereignty, and have committed to cooperating in creating a new multi-polar order in Eurasia. Given both Turkey's and Russia's continued fight against internal separatist movements, the emphasis placed on fighting terrorism has allowed for a convergence of interests. Despite the difference in scale of the current operations in Chechnya and Southeastern Anatolia, neither country has criticized the other in its handling of the ongoing military operations despite external European pressures.¹⁷ In sum, Russia no longer represents the strategic threat it posed during the Cold War.

However, the continued tension between Moscow and its Muslim minorities does not bode well for the stability of the entire region. Given Washington's and Ankara's convergent interests in maintaining constructive relations with Moscow and containing the spread of Islamic extremism, developing parallel common policies towards Russia and its environs would seem to be relatively easy.

The improved atmosphere between Moscow and Ankara reflects the personalities and friendship of Putin and Erdogan, while the common threat from Islamic fundamentalism within both countries has caused a convergence of interests. While this connection does not immediately eliminate the Russian-Turkish economic and political rivalry for influence in the post-Soviet states of Central Asia or the Caucasus, it offers a prescriptive way forward for future relations. As Russia and Turkey watch the developments in neighboring Ukraine and Georgia, each seems to be on the opposite side of the democratization trends in

¹⁶ Joshua W. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

their neighborhoods. However, as Turkey has demonstrated through its improved relations with neighbors such as Syria, Iran, and Azerbaijan, shared perceptions of democracy need not be the only means of progress towards pragmatic relations.

In addition, given the current levels of official economic commerce and the thriving black-market trading between the two countries, Erdogan sees the potential for closer relations with Russia. By emphasizing common interests and positive convergences, Erdogan has already laid the framework for improved Russia-Turkey relations. In keeping with Erdogan's vision of strategic depth in Turkish foreign policy, Russia is a key regional actor for Turkey.¹⁸

Ankara's Relations with Former Soviet Turkic States

As far as the post-USSR states are concerned, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkey's relations with the post-USSR states have been dictated largely by cultural and historical bonds. With the emergence of post-Soviet Turkic states that share linguistic and ethnic ties with Turkey, many Turks optimistically pointed towards a new sphere of influence in Central Asia. However, Turkey quickly discovered that competing regional powers such as Russia and Iran were increasingly setting the stakes of the great power game being played out in Central Asia. Backed by U.S. support for the "Turkish model," Turkey fostered fledgling economic and cultural unions among its fellow Turkic states, but ultimately discovered that these states did not want to be dependent upon any single regional power.

In fact, most post-Soviet Central Asian states preferred to deal directly with all the regional actors independently and saw no need for a particular model. Despite these facts, Turkey's role in this region has been extensively considered, not only within Turkey but also in the West. The underlying reason for this attention stems from a fear that radical Islam might fill the power vacuum that occurred in the region with the demise of the Soviet Union, a fear which has led to strong encouragement from the West to the newly independent states to adopt a "Turkish model" of secular democracy, combined with a liberal economy.¹⁹ In particular, in a post-9/11 world in which Western strategic interests have shifted to discouraging radical Islamic regimes that might foster future extremist terrorists, Turkey's role has been cited as an important one in the region given its strong historical, cultural, ethnic,

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁹ To read more about this "Turkish Model," see Mustafa Aydin's chapter "Between Euphoria and Realpolitik: Turkish Policy toward Central Asia and the Caucasus," in Tarek Y. Ismael, Mustafa Aydin, *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century* (London: Ashgate, 2003).

and linguistic bonds with the newly independent states of Central Asia (plus Azerbaijan).

The emergence of eight independent states to Turkey's northeast at the end of the Cold War arguably enlarged Turkey's role in the world and made it deeply aware of a vast territory inhabited largely by fellow Turkic-speaking Muslims. The effects of 9/11 have re-emphasized both to Turkey and to the West the importance of encouraging positive examples of secular democracies in Muslim-majority nations like Turkey. As evidenced by Turkey's increasing presence both economically and diplomatically in the newly independent states of Central Asia, Turkey seems poised to capitalize on the momentum and on post-9/11 Western support. While Erdogan's Turkey has been quick to rhetorically assume the role of an "elder brother" to its northeastern neighbors, only time will tell what tangible results this approach might entail. With the recent examples of unrest in Uzbekistan and irregular elections in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, the U.S. has increasingly looked towards Turkey to play a leading role, which fits well into Erdogan's vision of strategic depth.²⁰ In fact, while Turkey has traditionally been looked upon as an exceptional case of a Muslim-majority democracy lying at the heart of the Eurasian landmass, Turkey's challenge is to prove that its own experiences can be applied and generalized to its wider neighborhood. As Turkish-Russian relations improve, the suspicion of Turkish activities in Central Asia and the Caucasus could ideally give way to an understanding that Turkey's appeal to its neighbors comes not from its imperial claims of pan-Turkism, but from a sense of shared common identity and destiny. But is that really happening?

This article discusses below whether Ankara's new Ottoman geostrategy is "endowed" with U.S. support and, finally, examines Turkey's broader Eurasia geostrategic dilemma.

Turkey's New Ottoman Energy Security Strategy in the Greater Middle East: A U.S.-Turkey Synergy?

Turkey and Russia were bitter enemies with a history of conflict throughout Ottoman and Czarist times.²¹ Turkish and Russian interests aligned somewhat during the 1920s and 1930s with Bolshevik-Kemalist cooperation but quickly collapsed under Stalin. Despite historical wariness and differing interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Turkey's relations with Russia have cautiously improved in recent years

²⁰ Joshua W. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

²¹ Igor Torbakov, *Making Sense of the Current Phase of Turkish-Russian Relations*, The Jamestown Foundation Occasional Paper, October 2007, <<http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/GeorgiaCrisisTorbakov.pdf>> (December 9 2009).

due largely to growing economic ties. Russia has become a major market for Turkish exports, and Russian investment in Turkey has grown. However, the relationship is far from cordial. Turkish leaders remain concerned about Russia's assertiveness with regard to Ukraine, Kosovo, and the Caucasus, and its threats to withdraw from the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. Moscow's close ties with the Cypriot government and economic activities on the island are also viewed with concern in Ankara. Russia, for its part, has no interest in seeing Turkey realize Ozal's vision of becoming the leader of a group of modernizing, market-oriented democracies in the Caucasus and Central Asia and a bridge between those regions and the West.²²

Moscow has also been suspicious that Ankara has at least tolerated unofficial support from groups in Turkey to Chechen separatists. Turkey's good relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan, including support for Azeri Turks in Nagorno-Karabakh, reflect divergent interests in the Caucasus. However, most Turks also want to avoid serving again as the frontline of a new Cold War between Russia and the West. Turkey's dependence on Russia for 67 percent of its natural gas inputs also creates certain vulnerabilities.²³ The two governments have increased their cooperation on Black Sea economic, energy, and security issues and have resisted efforts by the United States, Bulgaria, and Romania to extend NATO's maritime surveillance under Operation Active Endeavor into the Black Sea. Neither Turkey nor Russia shares Washington's view of Iran as an immediate security threat of the highest priority.

While Moscow sees Tehran as a strategic partner in the Middle East, Ankara's goodwill does not extend as far.²⁴ Still, in a recent survey of evolving Turkish policy in the region, Graham Fuller concludes that, "Turkish and Russian views tally closely on the handling of most Middle East issues."²⁵ As a further example of their convergent interests in the region, Turkey and Russia both opposed a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq on not only political but commercial grounds, as each country had lucrative contracts with the Baathist regime that it did not wish to see disrupted. Both countries have sought to have those contracts honored by the new Iraqi government, especially in the energy sector, and both have complained about U.S. interference in awarding new contracts. It is also

²² Stephen J. Flanagan, Samuel J. Brannen, Kaley Levitt, Bryan Shea, Cassandra Smith, *Turkey's Shifting Dynamics: Implications for U.S.-Turkey Relations - A Report of the U.S.-Turkey Strategic Initiative*, (Washington DC: CSIS, June 2008), p. 16.

²³ Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar, *Russia and Turkey in the Caucasus: Moving Together to Preserve the Status Quo? Russie, NEI Vision, no 8*, (Paris: Institut Francais des Relations Internationales, 2006), <http://www.brookings.edu/views/papers/fellowshilltaspinar_20060120.pdf> (January 10 2010).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Graham Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2008), p. 79.

safe to say that while Turkey and Russia fear a precipitous U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, they would chafe at a long-term U.S. presence in the country. Both also maintain closer relations with Syria and generally see the region as a zone of commercial opportunity rather than instability. The instability, both believe, occurs largely because of the U.S.-led agitation of the status quo.²⁶

As Russia's indigenous energy supplies face pressure in the face of meeting higher domestic and European demand (as well as growing demand from China and Japan to the east), Moscow has attempted to lock in rights to Central Asian reserves to resell to Europe at a higher price. Pipeline projects transporting Central Asian reserves to Europe through Turkey present an alternative route that would bypass Russian territory and infrastructure, and so challenge the Russian monopoly on Caspian and Central Asian resources. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) crude pipeline began transporting crude oil from Azerbaijan to Turkey's Mediterranean Sea port of Ceyhan in July 2006 and was successful enough to inspire more projects that bypass Russia. Constructed parallel to the BTC by the same consortium, the South Caucasus Gas Pipeline (SCGPL) came online in December 2006, transporting Azeri gas to the Turkish terminal at Erzurum.

The Southern European Gas Ring Project links the operational SCGPL to an Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy pipeline (ITGI), of which the Turkey-Greece portion came online in November 2007 – the first pipeline transporting Caspian gas to Europe bypassing Russian territory. The second segment between Greece and Italy is set to carry 11.5 bcm to Italy through an undersea pipeline by 2012. In addition to the ITGI, the EU has hoped for a Trans-Caspian Pipeline, which includes plans for an undersea route transporting Kazakh and Turkmen gas westward to Baku to then feed the SCGPL that runs parallel to the BTC. The planned Nabucco pipeline would then transport an estimated 31 bcma of Caspian or Central Asian gas to Europe via Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Austria by 2013.²⁷

²⁶ Stephen J. Flanagan, Samuel J. Brannen, Kaley Levitt, Bryan Shea, Cassandra Smith, *op. cit.* p. 63.

²⁷ However, according to Vladimir Socor, once Russia increases its purchase price for Turkmen gas, the EU and the United States will have more trouble getting Turkmenistan to support the planned Trans-Caspian pipeline project. Since the Caspian Coastal line project is already further ahead, with the security of higher prices paid by Russia, Turkmenistan will have little impetus to send Central Asian gas westward toward Nabucco. The TCP's viability is vital for Nabucco's future, which the United States and the EU have put all hope in. Russia's stake in European gas will only grow. Vladimir Socor, "Russia to Increase Purchase Prices for Central Asian Gas: Outlook and Implications," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 5, 50 (2008) <http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33464>, (December 4, 2009). See also Thrassy Marketos, "Eastern Caspian Sea Energy Geopolitics: A Litmus Test for the U.S. – Russia – China Struggle for the Geostrategic Control of Eurasia," *Caucasian Review of*

However, these projects face a number of issues, including competition from Russian projects and disputes between suppliers and transport countries. This puts Turkey and the United States in direct competition with Russia. Turkey and the United States are also united in concern over Russia's meddling in the internal politics of Georgia and Azerbaijan, especially after the ten-day August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia over the fate of the breakaway South Ossetia region of Georgia. Turkey, though, has concerns about unilateral U.S. influence in the region and is adamant that the United States engage Azerbaijan jointly in a trilateral framework. In Georgia, Turkey is concerned with the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and sees their independence, as acknowledged by Russia, as a bad precedent for its own southeastern Kurdish-populated region; this despite Turkey's support for the independence of Kosovo and Turkish Cypriots (a point the Russians have not missed). Still, Turkey has been subdued in its overt response to growing Russian support for Abkhazia, a Turkic-speaking region, and this leads some to wonder what that may indicate about Turkey's overall tolerance of a resurgent Russia.²⁸

The U.S.-Turkey-Armenia Energy Game

On the other hand, Turkey's border with Armenia has remained sealed since 1994, due to Turkish support for Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Turkey has in recent years reached out to Armenia on the genocide issue as a precursor to opening relations more generally. On the vexed question of how to describe the Ottoman-era massacres of Armenians in the First World War – widely known as the Armenian genocide, but a label rejected by Turkey – the Protocol on Development of Relations agreed to “implement a dialogue on the historical dimension with the aim to restore mutual confidence between the two nations, including an impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations.” In short, Turkey and Armenia have taken a brave and statesmanlike step. If it succeeds, Armenia will overcome the sense that it is surrounded and under siege; it will open a new commercial and psychological gateway westward to Europe; it will be able to look better after the interests of the many tens of thousands of Armenians working in Turkey; and it will be able to market its electricity surplus, and have easier access to the many Armenian cultural and religious sites in eastern Turkey. For Turkey, the gains are just as significant: the ability to show European and Western

International Affairs, 3, 1 (2009), pp. 53-67, <http://cria-online.org/Journal/6/Done_%20Eastern%20Caspian%20Sea%20Energy%20Geopolitics_Marketos.pdf> (January 15 2010).

²⁸ Stephen J. Flanagan, Samuel J. Brannen, Kaley Levitt, Bryan Shea, Cassandra Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

partners that it is working toward closure with Armenians on the contested matter of the First World War massacres; second, it adds a new plank in its efforts to bring stability, prosperity, and cooperation through relations with all three of its Caucasus neighbours; and, finally, to achieve the satisfaction of full and public Armenian recognition of its borders.²⁹

The August 31, 2009, step toward normalization had originally been expected to take place in April, but Turkey backed away from the deal. All that could be announced on April 22, 2009, was a vague road map. This hesitation was apparently due to pressure from Azerbaijan – a major supplier of cheap gas to Turkey, and with which Turkey shares close linguistic ties – and continued nationalist opposition to compromise with Armenia inside the Turkish political system. This coincided with a period in Turkey in which reforms towards EU accession had virtually halted; in which Prime Minister Erdogan appeared disengaged with EU ambitions and to be pursuing alternatives in Russia and the Middle East; and in which Turkey appeared to be taking sides in Middle Eastern issues, with notably harsh criticism of Israel. Turkey also appeared to side fully with Azerbaijan against Armenia.

The news that normalization with Armenia is back on track, therefore, is a signal that Turkey may be changing direction again. In the past few months, Turkey and the AKP leadership have also begun to push hard for progress on two other difficult dossiers: coming to terms with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, and firmly setting out a framework of reconciliation with its own substantial Kurdish community. Progress towards Turkey-Armenia normalization has also been helped by the unusual way that the U.S. and Russia appear to have been working separately toward a similar compromise outcome, and pushing more actively for progress toward a settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

In that sense, the recent visit of U.S. President Barack Obama to Turkey (April 2009) was very significant. For Washington, Turkey today has become a geopolitical pivot state that is in a position to tilt the Eurasian power equation towards Washington or significantly away from it, depending on how Turkey develops its ties with Moscow and its role regarding key energy pipelines. If Ankara decides to collaborate more closely with Russia, Georgia's position becomes more precarious and Azerbaijan's natural gas pipeline route to Europe, the so-called Nabucco Pipeline, would be blocked. If it cooperates with the United States and manages to reach a stable treaty with Armenia under U.S. auspices, the Russian position in the Caucasus would be weakened and an alternative

²⁹ Hugh Pope, "The EU-Turkey-Cyprus Triangle: Turkey and Armenia vow to heal past wounds," *International Crisis Group*, September 1, 2009, <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6295&l=1>>, (December 4 2009).

route for natural gas to Europe would open up, decreasing Russian leverage over Europe.³⁰

For Washington, the key to bringing Germany into closer cooperation with the U.S. is to weaken German dependence on Russian energy flows. Twice in the past three winters, Washington has covertly incited its hand-picked president in Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, to arrange an arbitrary cut-off of Russian gas flows to Germany and other EU destinations. As William Engdahl points out, the only purpose of the actions was to convince EU governments that Russia was not a reliable energy partner. Now, with the Obama visit to Ankara, Washington is attempting to win Turkish support for its alternative and troubled Nabucco gas pipeline through Turkey from Azerbaijan, which would theoretically at least lessen EU dependence on Russian gas. But, however willing Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan might be to accommodate Obama, the question of Turkish relations with the EU is inextricably linked with the troublesome issue of Turkish membership of the EU, a move vehemently opposed by France and less openly by Germany.³¹

Since it became clear in Moscow that U.S. strategy was to extend NATO to Russia's front door via Ukraine and Georgia, Russia has moved to use its economic carrot, its vast natural gas resources, to at the very least "neutralize" Western Europe, especially Germany, in regard to Russia. Accordingly, Obama's goal while in Ankara was to break the political deadlock in Turkey over the construction of a major gas pipeline to Germany and other EU countries, in direct opposition to Russian Gazprom's South Stream pipeline. The scheduled Nabucco gas pipeline is an integral part of a U.S. strategy of total energy control over both the EU and all Eurasia. Or as Senator John Kerry, chairman of the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee, put it: "There is a striking overlap between the world's sources of energy and the world's sources of instability, and we need to take note of that carefully. Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Russia, the Caucasus, Nigeria, Venezuela are all on the frontlines of our energy supply challenges, but also the fault lines of our geopolitics." In other words, Washington made those countries the fault lines of our geopolitics in order to increase U.S. control over the economic future of Eurasia, including both China and Russia, as well as over the energy-dependent European Union. For Washington, that control has been the central preoccupation of all U.S. foreign policy since the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.³²

³⁰ F. William Engdahl, "Turkey: Washington's Geopolitical Pivot," *Asia Times Online*, April 16, 2009, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/KD16Ako1.html> (December 1 2009).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

But Azerbaijan faces problems providing enough gas to make Nabucco feasible, because in June 2009 it signed with Russian company Gazprom an agreement to export gas from Stage 2 of the Shah Deniz field – the same field Nabucco hopes to tap for its pipeline. The Gazprom-Azeri deal states that other purchasers must outbid Gazprom, giving Russia a possible lever to stall or even to kill the Nabucco project, by pushing up the price of gas from Shah Deniz to a level that would make Nabucco unprofitable on commercial terms as a rival to Russia's South Stream. Azerbaijan's President Aliyev seems to be playing a cat-and-mouse game with both Russia and the EU and Washington to play one off against the other for the highest price. Gazprom agreed to pay an unusually high price of US\$350 per thousand cubic meters for Shah Deniz gas, a clear political, not economic, decision by Moscow which owns the controlling interest in Gazprom.³³

To keep Nabucco's hopes alive, Washington has few cards to play, since the Azeri gas would alone not suffice to fill the pipeline. Where, then, could the remaining gas come from? One possible answer is Iraq; the second is Iran. However, both engender huge geopolitical problems for Washington, because even with the U.S. retaining its vast network of permanent U.S. military bases across Iraq, Iraqi gas to Turkey would pass through Kurdish areas, providing the Kurds with a lucrative new revenue stream, something that is far from desirable to Ankara.

The second option, the country which also happens to hold the world's second-largest reserves of identified natural gas next to Russia, is Iran. In fact, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan invited both Russia and Iran to join the Nabucco project. Tehran agrees, as it sees itself as the most economical alternative for the Nabucco gas pipeline schedule. Washington, for its part, notes that Nabucco could be used only as an incentive to get Iran to better cooperate and engage with the international community.

In this context, it is expedient to analyze Armenia's role in the "New Silk Road" geopolitics game in Western Eurasia. The natural route to bring Iranian gas to Europe via Nabucco goes through Armenia. In early 2007, a small pipeline opened bringing Iranian gas to Armenia. A second pipeline, if built, would potentially allow Iran to transport its gas via Turkey and Nabucco to European markets. This begins to explain why Obama made the issue of Turkish reconciliation of the long-standing tensions between Ankara and Armenia over the Armenian charges of genocide during World War I a priority in his April 2009 talks with Prime Minister Erdogan.

It seems as if Obama's advisers are playing a far more subtle geopolitical game than did Cheney and Bush. By holding out several

³³ *Ibid.*

juicy financial carrots to Turkey, Armenia, and even to Tehran, if the latter were to abandon its nuclear ambitions, Washington hopes to stop the attempt of Moscow to retain a significant control over Eurasian energy supplies to the EU, a major lever to ensure more stable EU-Russian relations. The fact that Turkey is now leaning towards reconciliation with Armenia, as American advisers in Ankara suggest, will do much to clear doubts about the country's posture in Western Eurasia.³⁴ These advisers suggest that Ankara's normalized relations with Armenia will also give real substance to the new foreign minister's (Ahmet Davutoğlu) stated goals of zero problems and peace in the neighborhood. However, while reconciliation with Armenia will rightly attract positive attention in Europe, the next test will not be long in coming: Turkey has to find a way to expedite a solution to the long-running Cyprus problem in the next several months, or see its EU accession process effectively grind to a halt.

Conclusion: U.S. Regional Planning in Western Eurasia and Turkey's Geostrategic Dilemma

However, in order to safely transport Iranian gas to Europe by means of the Nabucco project, one has to safeguard the pipeline's passage through the Kurdish-populated, south-eastern Turkish border to Iran, an area which has been ravaged by ferocious guerrilla war for the last twenty years. The Turkish AKP administration, following Foreign Minister Davutoglu's guidelines, and under the burden of an excessive resurgence of the "common threat" of the Kurdish sectarian movement, enforces its relationship with Iran and Syria.³⁵ However, this perception leads Ankara to pursue maneuvers not agreeable to Washington and NATO. This creates two strategic trust vacuums in the south-eastern flank of NATO: first, in the relationship of the troika U.S.-Turkey-NATO, and secondly in that of Turkey and Israel.

It is worth noting that, as Professor Ioannis Th. Mazis points out,³⁶ within the geopolitical complex of the Greater Middle East and the Wider Mediterranean System where Turkey, Israel, and Cyprus coexist, the pole Israel-Cyprus is influenced (and influences) the axis Suez-Gibraltar on the 36th parallel. This horizontal axis is of particular geopolitical importance for the Anglo-Saxon maritime powers, as these powers control through it the transition of whatever commerce stream

³⁴ Hugh Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

³⁵ See Tunkay Babali, "Turkey at the Energy Crossroads," *Middle East Quarterly*, 16, 2 (2009), pp. 25-33.

³⁶ Ioannis Th. Mazis, "I geopolitiki tis Tourkias ston 21o aiona" (Turkish Geopolitics in the 21st century), *Amyntiki Epitheorisi* (Defense Review) 77 (2009), <<http://greeknews.byzantinewalls.org/archives/10625>> (December 3 2009).

(hydrocarbons, food-stuff, and industrial products) that crosses horizontally or vertically both the Aegean Sea archipelagos and all of the Mediterranean. In that sense, the Turkey-occupied cape of St. Andreas in Cyprus, in synergy with the Turkish coast of Alexandretta, Syria, and Lebanon, will definitely control a scheduled undersea gas pipeline carrying Azeri and Russian gas from Samsun to Ceyhan (both in Turkey) to Haifa (Israel). The same applies to an also scheduled, in parallel to the second part of the aforementioned pipeline (from Ceyhan to Haifa), undersea pipeline bringing Euphrates river water to Israel. The so-called Blue pipeline bringing oil from Kirkuk to Mosul (semi-autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan) to the Yumurtalik port, by Ceyhan, in Turkey also terminates in front of St. Andreas Cape. This cape is also important for controlling the strategic terminal of the Syrian and Lebanon coast pipelines (Latakia and Sydon).

Considering all the above, Israel evidently considers the military Anglo-Saxon control of Cyprus (applied through the use of sovereign British military bases) as its only security guarantee. It is important to stress here Davutoglu's views – influenced by Alfred Thayer Mahan's theory on maritime powers (“On Naval Warfare”) – on Cyprus's geostrategic importance in his book from 2001 *Stratejik Derinlik. Turkiye nin Uluslararası Konumu* (Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position):

The Cyprus island possesses a central position in the world continent [meaning the World Island of Spykman], as it is situated in equal distance from Europe, Asia and Africa, and along with Crete on the same line separating the maritime transport crossroads. Cyprus lies between the Straits separating Europe and Asia, and the Suez passage separating Asia and Africa, while maintaining a solid base position, similar to that of an aircraft carrier, caching up the pulse of Aden sea lanes and Hormuz, along with the Gulf and Caspian basins, which are the most important transport corridors connecting Eurasia and Africa.³⁷

The aforementioned analysis, based on the prerequisites of U.S. foreign policy, entitle us to think about the turbulent Afghan-Pakistani frontier and the nightmare scenario for the West of a potential overthrowing of the Islamabad administration by radical Islamist forces. In this context, many analysts argue that the creation in Northern Iraq of a secular Kurdish state, controlling the Middle-Eastern rivers of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Caspian Sea oil crossroads (including the

³⁷ Ahmet Davutoglu, “Stratejik Derinlik, Turkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu” [Strategic Depth, Turkey's International Position], (Istanbul: Nisan, 2004), p. 398.

operating Baku-Ceyhan pipeline), and the fields and transport lanes of Iraqi oil, either through Turkey (through the existing pipeline Kirkuk-Mosul-Yumurtalik) or through Israel (the scheduled Mosul-Kirkuk-Jordan-Haifa pipeline), would be a scenario highly appreciated by Israel as such a state would act as a geostrategic counterweight, a strategic depth shoulder, and an eventual lever against Iran, and if needed against Syria or Turkey too, in case Ankara pursues a new Ottoman strategy along with Syria and Iran.

In fact, as Professor Ioannis Th. Mazis notes:

[...] in case of a tripartite Iraq, the Israeli and American policy will not alternate significantly. That is because a new Great Kurdistan will be able to provide the above mentioned characteristics to the “special relationship” twin pole of the UK and U.S. and Israel:

1. It doesn't belong to the Arab world.
2. It will be benevolently orientated to the U.S.
3. It will incorporate within its borders the most important strategic deposits of the Middle East sub-system (water and hydrocarbons).
4. It will control the strategic energy lanes of the Caspian deposits on their way toward the Mediterranean.
5. It doesn't threaten Israel, but will be able to consist a frontline to assure its viability with the cooperation of the UK and U.S.³⁸

In an opposite scenario, that is, in the case that Iraq is not split into three states, that will lead to the empowerment of a dominant in national-religious terms, Shiite element of Iraq, which will permit Tehran to project power in the Arab-Persian Gulf, notably known for its geostrategic importance to the West, as well as in Lebanon. Such an event would evidently provoke a major strategic security vacuum for Israel, which Tel-Aviv will try to mend by choosing Athens instead of Turkey as a counterweight. Of course, the whole scenario could be totally altered, in case Washington chooses to negotiate with Tehran for Greater Middle East security, in the context of a “rebut” strategy with the major Eurasian powers, including China and Russia.

³⁸ I. Th. Mazis, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

The Three Blind Spots of Afghanistan: Water Flow, Irrigation Development, and the Impact of Climate Change

*David W. Rycroft and Kai Wegerich**

ABSTRACT

The article discusses the three blind spots of northern Afghanistan: water flow, irrigation development, and the impact of climate change. Consideration is given to the different data sets for the current irrigated areas, water resources, and future potentials according to identified projects in northern Afghanistan. The water accounting programme WEAP (Water Evaluation and Planning System) has then been applied to estimate the current demands for water as well as the increased demands resulting from climate change.

Keywords • Northern Afghanistan • Water Flow • Irrigation Development • Climate Change

Introduction – The Blind Spot of Afghanistan

So far in all the literature on the Amu Darya, Afghanistan has either been a blind spot in terms of its current and future irrigated area and water demands or, depending on the author, estimated water demands vary enormously. Generally, authors only consider the increase of irrigated areas and ignore the effects of climate change. Given the uncertainties, it is difficult to provide accurate estimates of future demand. A similar blind spot applies to the amount of water which originates in Afghanistan and which is then utilized in the Amu Darya basin.

In this paper the different data sets for current irrigated areas, water flow, and future potentials are reviewed. The water accounting

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programme WEAP (Water Evaluation and Planning System) has then been applied to estimate both the current demand for water from a representative irrigated area as well as the increased demand expected to arise due to climate change.

The first section of this paper provides a short introduction to the Amu Darya basin and the different sub-basins contributing flow from within Afghanistan. The second section considers the different data sets for flow at an individual gauging station. The third section considers the different perceptions concerning the current irrigated areas in Afghanistan, the driving forces for expansion, as well as the different assumptions on the potential increases in irrigated area. The fourth section considers the impact of climate change on demand, taking as a case study 111,600 ha of irrigated land surrounding the town of Emam Saheb in northern Afghanistan.

Background

The Amu Darya is the largest river in Central Asia, formed by the confluence of its main headwater tributaries, the rivers Vaksh and Pyanj. The total length from the head of the Pyanj to the Aral Sea is about 2,540 km, although the length from the confluence with the Vaksh to the Aral Sea is 1,415 km.¹ The catchment comprises 309,000 km² and is shared between Afghanistan, Iran, and the four Central Asian Republics: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The most important river, the Pyanj, originates at the glacier in the Vakjdjir Pass and forms the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Ahmad and Wasiq identify three sub-basins within northern Afghanistan.² The first includes minor rivers which are adjacent to the Amu Darya but only contribute rarely to the flow in the Amu Darya: these are the Khulm, Balkh, Sar-e-Pul, and Sherintagau rivers. The second sub-basin includes the Harrirud and Murghab rivers, but their links to the Amu Darya have been discontinued (Map 1). The Harrirud joins the Tijen river, which originates in Iran before entering Turkmenistan. These rivers are, however, interlinked with the Amu Darya system by their contribution to the flow in the Kara Kum Canal. This is believed to be the longest canal in the world, with a maximum capacity at its inlet from the Amu Darya of 600 m³/s. The third sub-basin contains rivers which continue to contribute flow to the Amu Darya: the

¹ J. Froebrich J and O. Kayumov, "Water management aspects of Amu Darya," in J. C. J. Nihoul and al. (eds.) *Dying and Dead Seas - Climatic Versus Anthropic Causes*, Nato Science Series: IV, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Volume 36 (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2004), pp. 49-76.

² M. Ahmad, M. Wasiq, *Water Resource Development in Northern Afghanistan and its implication for Amu Darya Basin*, Working Paper no. 36 (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004), p. 3.

Wakhan and Pamir as well as other rivers of Badakhshan, the Kokcha, and Kunduz. The emphasis here is mainly on sub-basin three, but consideration is also given to aspects of sub-basin one, particularly because, according to former Soviet plans, irrigation in these sub-basins depended on diversions from sub-basin three.

Map 1: Amu Darya Basin



Source: NeWater.

Trends

There are no agreements between the former Soviet Union and Afghanistan on water sharing for the Pyanj and Amu Darya. Nevertheless, Ahmad and Wasiq make reference to different protocols and agreements between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union signed before 1965.³ They state, “these documents provide a treaty basis for prohibiting any construction work on Pyanj and Amu Darya whether by Afghanistan or by the other Central Asian republics (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) without consultation, although Afghanistan may, without consultation, use and regulate water on tributaries of the Pyanj and Amu Darya.” It appears that the Soviet Union did not consult Afghanistan when it constructed pump stations serving the major canals: the Amu-Bukhara, the Amuzang, or the Karshi/Kashkardarya); or even the huge Kara Kum canal, or further down the Amudarya at the head of the Aral Sea delta the Tuyamuyun reservoir complex.

In 1977 Afghanistan sent a delegation to Tashkent to prepare a water sharing agreement for their claim to 9 km³ from the Amu Darya; the Soviet

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

Union only offered 6 km³, however, so no agreement was reached.⁴ In September 1987, the Scientific-Technical Council of the Soviet Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Management decided on annual water-distribution limits for the Union Republics of the Amu Darya Basin and at the same time created River Basin Organizations (*Basseynoie Vodnoie Ob'edinenie*, BVOs), which were responsible for managing the water according to the set limits. Afghanistan did not participate in this decision-making process. Hence, the limits established in 1987 ignored claims by Afghanistan, and simply assumed a utilization of 2.1 km³; this was actually less than Afghanistan was already using in 1965, namely 3.85 km³.⁵

Even to the present day, there is no agreement about how much of the flow in the Amu Darya originates in Afghanistan, with estimates indicating that some 8–21 km³ of the mean flow of the Amu-Darya originates in the country.

Table 1. Different Data Sets for the Amu Darya Basin

Amu Darya basin (km ³ /year)				
State	ICWC data ⁶ on river runoff	International data ⁷ on river runoff	Set limits ^{8, 9}	Officially used water (1993 - 1999)
Afghanistan and Iran	8.06	21.6		
Kyrgyzstan	1.5	1.6	0.4	0.2
Tajikistan	42.6	49.6	9.5	7.3
Turkmenistan	1.549	1.5	22	21.5 ¹⁰
Uzbekistan	1.2	5.1	29.6	21.6
Aral Sea				6.1
Total				56.7

⁴ Personal conversation, Dukhovny, 2008.

⁵ M. Qaseem Naimi, "Conflict Prevention and the Politics of Central Asia Water Co-operation from the Point of View of Afghanistan," Paper presented at a workshop (University of Peace: Central Asia Programme, Almaty, 2005).

⁶ Source: Dukhovny (without date).

⁷ Source: Diagnostic Study, November 2001, SPECA.

⁸ Figures agreed by Protocol 566 of the Scientific-Technical Council of Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Management of the USSR on September 10, 1987.

⁹ Dukhovny and Sokolov (no date (b): 13) highlight the temporary nature of the set water allocation, by arguing "The principles of water allocation that existed in Soviet times have been retained for the purpose of annual planning until new regional and national water management strategies can be developed and adopted"

¹⁰ Stanchin and Lerman (2006) show that Turkmenistan's agricultural area increased from 1,329,000 ha in 1990 to 1,843,000 ha in 2003. At the same time the total water use increased from 22.435 cu km to 27.958 cu km. Even though the paper does not state directly that the overall increase comes from the Amu Dar'ya, it is very doubtful that this increase could be achieved only from the smaller rivers (Murgan, Tedjen, and Atrek) and that no additional water was taken from the Amu Dar'ya.

Notwithstanding this uncertainty, there is conflicting flow data even for the same measuring stations (e.g., Freenet and Kunduz River Basin Program).

Table 2. Different Data Sets for the Kunduz River at Pulikumri

	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.
Freenet - Mean (1951-67)	37.1	35.2	33.8	32.2	31	30.6	39.7	98.8	233	149	60.3	38.6
KRBP - Mean (1968-79)	21.8	21.1	19.3	18.1	17.4	18	21.8	51.3	95.2	53.6	26.6	22.1

Irrigation Development in Afghanistan

By the mid-1970s some 3.3 million ha had been brought under irrigation in the whole of Afghanistan. Currently, approximately 1.8 million ha are irrigated.¹¹ Based on Development Alternatives Inc's (DAI) 1993 analysis of satellite imagery, Ahmad and Wasiq concluded that 385,000 ha of this are within sub-basin 3, where rivers continue to contribute flow to the Amu Darya.¹² The data indicates that 21,000 ha are inactive. The same value (385,000 ha) is reported by Qaseem Naimi.¹³ Other reports, however, provide different estimates which are considered to be less reliable. For example, Uzvod reports a current irrigated area in sub-basin 3 of 148,000 ha (and a further 250,000 ha in sub-basin one).¹⁴ Uzvod provide as source of this information "the *State and Prospects of Irrigation Development in Northern Afghanistan*, drawn up by the Sredazgiprovodkhlopok Institute." However, it is unclear how this information was derived. According to Pasquet, after the decrease of irrigation during the Russian war and the Mudjaheddin period, the irrigated area in the third sub-basin has increased once again.¹⁵

Given the decline of irrigation during the last 40 years and the considerable potential for irrigation, it is not surprising that the Afghan

¹¹ WSS Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Draft Water Sector Strategy 2008 – 2013, February 2008*, p. 24.

¹² M. Ahmad, M. Wasiq *Water Resource Development in Northern Afghanistan and its implication for Amu Darya Basin, op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹³ M. Qaseem Naimi, "Conflict Prevention and the Politics of Central Asia Water Co-operation from the Point of View of Afghanistan," *op. cit.*

¹⁴ SANIIRI/UZVOD Afghanistan: Water consumption, demand and forecast Contractor: SANIIRI Subcontractor: UZVOD ECC Co. European Community Commission. General Investigations Directorate; Integration and Reinforcement of European Science; JAYHUN; Interstate water resource risk management: towards a sustainable future for the Aral basin; International Cooperation – INCO; Contract 516761, 2008.

¹⁵ J. Pasquet, *Farming systems research – Final Report, PMIS/URD, (Plaisians, France, 2007)*.

Water Sector Strategy (WSS) is driven by ambitious plans to improve and/or to rehabilitate and re-establish irrigated areas.

The Draft WSS places its emphasis on poverty reduction, and the strategy to achieve this relies on irrigated agriculture.¹⁶ The draft provides detailed information about major infrastructure projects which have been identified for implementation, some having already been started. It provides as justification for these 27 projects “the needs of the population and the growth in the economy of Afghanistan requiring continued and accelerated implementation of projects.” However, it is unclear whether these projects are based on old or new pre-feasibility studies. An earlier Draft WSS (July 2007) was itself highly critical about water management projects which were mentioned in the same 2008 WSS report.

The Draft WSS states “Sociological and environmental considerations tend to nullify much of the planning study selection criteria upon which most of these former studies have been based.”¹⁷ Sociological considerations are, for example, the return of refugees who are now living in areas that were previously considered for water developments. These constraints are not restated in the Draft WSS of February 2008. Hence, it is highly doubtful whether all these 27 projects are feasible or as beneficial in terms of irrigated area or hydro-power production, or whether they might even have some negative consequences or cannot be implemented.

There are not only considerations for the local communities living in these identified areas. Afghanistan is very well aware that any irrigation development in the country has implications for downstream riparian states, and the transboundary concerns raised:

Afghanistan has been extremely reluctant in facing these pending confrontations, as the country has been in a total state of disarray with respect to evaluating its current and future needs. Afghanistan attention has been focused upon national reconstruction and the underlying problems of poverty alleviation. No resources have been made available to ascertain its physical position on determining its own requirements.¹⁸

Because of Afghanistan’s innate land locked setting, virtually all of its major rivers drain into riparian neighbouring states. Transboundary concerns are intensifying along all of

¹⁶ WSS (Draft February 2008) *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)*, p. 3.

¹⁷ WSS *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Draft Water Sector Strategy 2008 – 2013*, July 2007, p. 20.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Afghanistan's borders, and with the added impetus of climate change and diminishing glaciers, can no longer be avoided. Afghanistan has been preoccupied with so many other problems, that it has not had either adequate resources or sufficient time to thoroughly address the issues. Afghanistan requires solid support from the donor/financing community to study and add dimensions to both its current and future water requirements. Based on more clearly defined facts, Afghanistan can approach its neighbours on an equal footing, and can then participate in achieving optimal efficiency in regional development of these water resources.¹⁹

Different estimates exist concerning the potential total area of land suitable for irrigation in sub-basin three. Ahmad and Wasiq claim that "a 15–20 percent expansion would be feasible purely on technical grounds," and state that it should be possible to expand the area to 443,000 ha. They consider, however, that this will only be achieved over the next 20 years. Similarly, they refer to Soviet, French, and World Bank surveys. According to Ahmad and Wasiq:

In 1971, the State Planning Committee of the Soviet Union concluded that: Though most of the proposed waterworks would be effective, construction of a big waterworks with hydropower stations, generation, and capacity of which considerably exceeds current needs of Afghanistan, requires great investments. In this context, as well as taking into account construction of a large scale hydraulic works on waterways of Central Asia, the USSR only could be interested in developing these water and power resources not earlier than 20 years from now.²⁰

Uzvod identifies a potential increase of 142,700–152,900 ha to a total of 290,500–300,800 ha in sub-basin three. According to it, work has not progressed because of the deteriorating security situation, and not because of prioritization of the Central Asian Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs).

An extreme estimate by Zonn identifies the potential for sub-basin three as being 840,000 ha by 2020. He argues that:

¹⁹ WSS (Draft October 2007) *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Draft Water Sector Strategy 2008 – 2013*, October 2007, p. 9.

²⁰ M. Ahmad, M. Wasiq *Water Resource Development in Northern Afghanistan and its implication for Amu Darya Basin*. *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Irrigation of the whole free land stock of Northern Afghanistan (more than 1.5 million ha) is possible without the construction of waterworks, it will be enough to construct a damless water intake with water pumping in three places: near the confluence of the Pyanj and Vakhsh Rivers; near the Geshtepe outpost (opposite the mouth of the Kafirnigan River); near the Kelif gap. In all cases water should be pumped to a height of no more than 20 to 30 m.²¹

However, it seems that Zonn did not consider the operational costs of pumping. If these projects need “only” to lift water by 20 to 30 m, they may actually be more economically feasible than the existing canal systems located downstream which rely on high pumped lifts: e.g., the ABMK Canal serving Bukhara (discharge: 270 m³/s, lift 57 m) or the KMK Canal serving Karshi/Kashkardarya (discharge: 350 m³/s, lift 170 m). In the past such high lift pumping was possible because of the distorted economics of the Soviet Union, but in any new developments this will no longer apply.

Considering abstractions, Ahmad and Wasiq (2004) argue that there will be a total water diversion of about 5.8 km³, or at the most 6 km³, by 2020. According to Zonn the demand for water within the direct tributaries of the Amu Darya in sub-basin three will increase to 3.9 km³: including 1.2 to 2.5 km³ from the Kunduz; 0.3 to 0.7 km³ from the Kokcha, and 0.4 to 0.7 km³ from the Pyanj.

Given the current deteriorating security situation, even in northern Afghanistan, it is very doubtful whether such large-scale projects, some relying on dams, can be implemented. Nevertheless, one EU funded project, “The Kunduz River Basin Project” (KRBP), is currently rehabilitating and constructing new intakes and water diversions in the Kunduz basin. Another EU funded project, “the Amu Darya Basin Programme” (ADBP), is surveying the Pyanj river. Hence, small-scale projects are already underway. Since the long-term objective of the Afghan WSS is poverty alleviation, and also cost recovery of the water delivery services, it is highly doubtful if such costly projects will ever be implemented. Hence, even though it might be technically feasible to construct pumping stations, as proposed by Zonn (and mentioned by Ahmad and Wasiq), it appears that the costs of lifting water to 20–30 m will impose an unacceptable burden on agricultural water users.²²

²¹ I. Zonn, “Water Resources of Northern Afghanistan and their Future Use,” Paper presented at workshop on water, climate and development issues in the Amu-Dar’ya basin, Philadelphia, PA, 2002.

²² It is doubtful whether lifting the water 20-30 meters will be sufficient to allow the projects to proceed. A 20-30 km wide strip of land between the river and the potential irrigated areas is occupied by sand dunes (Barkhan sands) which will require an expensive

Taking the data of Ahmad and Wasiq as being the most reliable, and bearing in mind that the KRBP has already begun rehabilitating weirs and intakes, it is likely that the canals in their study of the Lower Kokcha and Gawhargan-Chardara areas will go ahead.²³ From an economic standpoint, it is unlikely that pump stations will be constructed and from a social stability perspective, it is highly unlikely that dams will be constructed when resettlement is the priority. According to Landell Mills Ltd., in 2006 only 6 percent (about 600,000 Euros) of the total budget (11.6 million Euros) had actually been spent on irrigation scheme rehabilitation, although 17 scheme rehabilitation works had been contracted. The Participatory Management of Irrigation Systems (PMIS) project also drew attention to the increased rice production after the KRBP rehabilitation. This is mainly the result of the collapse of the established agricultural industries (cotton and sugar beet factories in Taloqan and Baghlan provinces).

Therefore, one can assume that from the projects identified by Ahmad and Wasiq for the Kokcha basin that 29,420 ha could be newly irrigated and 33,140 ha be provided with improved access to water. In the Kunduz basin, 3,450 ha could be newly irrigated and 24,860 ha have improved access to water. Finally in the Pyanj basin 41,500 ha could be provided with improved access to water. Hence, there would only be a marginal increase of newly irrigated areas, equivalent to 32,870 ha, and improved access to water for a further 99,500 ha. Given the current activities of the KRBP and the assumed activities by the ADBP, the areas with improved access to water are likely to increase even more. Bearing in mind that the preferred crop in the Kunduz basin is the cash crop rice, it is highly likely that at least in the Kunduz basin, rice production might dominate.

If the dam projects are established in the future, given the high costs of pumping, and the current need for electrification for urban and rural areas in Kunduz, it is considered much more likely that the generated electricity would be used either for domestic or industrial supply, rather than for agriculture. In addition, with the expansion of the current electricity grid from Tajikistan to the south and north, it is likely that any surplus electricity would be sold to Afghanistan's neighbors.

Taking the figures mentioned by Ahmad and Wasiq and confirmed by Qaseem Naimi, of the 385,000 ha currently irrigated area in sub-basin

lined canal to be provided. It would also be difficult to prevent this from becoming blocked by wind blown sand leading to high maintenance costs.

²³ Landell Mills Limited (2006) 4th Progress Report (January – June 2006); TA to the Ministry of Energy and Water for the Implementation of the Food Security/Water Management Project in Kunduz, Baghlan and Takhar Provinces, <http://www.krbp.net/eng_reports/4th%20KRBP%20Progress%20Report%20Jan-June%2006%2010.11.06.pdf> (August 25 2008).

three, it could be argued that the irrigated area might increase to 417,870 ha. The rehabilitation projects might also lead to a change of cropping patterns which might further increase the demands for water.

Influence of Climate on Water Demand

So far, only the expansion of the irrigated area has been considered. Another uncertain issue is the impact of climate change on crop water requirements and the demand for irrigation. The analysis here considers the demands for water for a representative area located in sub-basin three which is irrigated with water from the Pyandj. The area occupies 111,600 ha around the town of Emam Saheb in northern Afghanistan.

The procedures used to determine crop water requirements and the demand for water are described in further detail in the annex to this paper.

The analysis considers firstly the crop water requirements (potential evapotranspiration) for the existing climate (1961–1990), using downscaled climatic data derived by the Climate Research Unit of the University of East Anglia (CRU data). Secondly, the demands in 2070–2099, using temperature rise data derived from the most recent 4th assessment report of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC). The monthly temperature anomalies (increases in temperatures) are the means of seven global circulation models included in the IPCC 4th assessment for the climate change scenario judged to most closely correspond to recent patterns of climate change in Central Asia, the A2 climate change scenario. This assumes a very heterogeneous world, with high population growth and slower economic growth than other climate change scenarios. The time interval 1961–1990 is a period used by the IPCC to represent the existing climate, whilst the future time interval of 2070–2099 represents a period which today's young children can expect to experience in their lifetime.

Table 3. Potential Evapotranspiration (Crop Water Requirements) for the Emam Salieb Area for 1961-1990 and 2070-2099

Monthly Potential Evapotranspiration, million cubic metres													
Climate 1960-1991													
Crop	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sum
Barley	0.52	1.81	3.36	2.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.56	8.83
Cotton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.87	5.53	8.57	8.68	5.46	2.86	1.03	0.00	35.01
Fodder	0.78	2.42	4.50	6.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.40	0.84	16.06
Fruits	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.43	3.64	7.01	7.60	6.69	3.81	2.04	0.00	0.00	32.21
Maize	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	15.81	22.86	24.15	16.03	7.62	0.00	0.00	86.46
Oil Crops	0.00	0.00	0.43	1.13	3.16	3.56	2.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.85
Pulses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.79	2.00	2.77	2.00	0.36	0.00	0.00	7.92
Rice	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.29	23.00	21.13	15.30	5.83	0.00	0.00	85.55
Vegetables	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.93	8.57	8.68	6.28	2.86	0.00	0.00	32.32
Winter Whea	12.93	26.16	58.93	90.24	59.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	14.31	8.56	271.03
Sum	14.23	30.39	67.23	101.50	69.57	58.92	75.18	72.08	48.88	21.55	16.74	9.96	586.23
Monthly Potential Evapotranspiration, million cubic metres													
Climate 2070-2099													
Crop	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sum
Barley	0.62	2.04	3.81	2.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.62	10.03
Cotton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.20	6.16	9.41	9.63	6.10	3.22	1.20	0.00	38.93
Fodder	0.92	2.73	5.10	6.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.62	0.92	18.30
Fruits	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.63	4.06	7.81	8.34	7.42	4.25	2.30	0.00	0.00	35.81
Maize	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.67	17.83	24.64	17.90	7.56	0.00	0.00	77.60
Oil Crops	0.00	0.00	0.49	1.29	3.52	3.96	2.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.09
Pulses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.88	2.20	3.07	2.24	0.40	0.00	0.00	8.79
Rice	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.59	25.25	23.45	17.08	6.58	0.00	0.00	94.96
Vegetables	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.60	9.41	9.63	7.02	3.22	0.00	0.00	35.88
Winter Whea	15.36	29.55	66.82	102.97	66.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.65	9.48	307.58
Sum	16.91	34.32	76.23	115.82	77.54	57.68	75.27	77.84	54.59	23.29	19.47	11.02	639.97

The annual potential crop evapotranspiration for the existing climate for the 11,600 ha equates to 586 million m³ (Table 3). Specifically, crops such as rice occupying 7,812 ha consume 85.6 million m³ (1.1 m); cotton occupying 3,348 ha consumes 39.9 million m³ (1.05 m), whereas winter wheat occupying 69,750 ha only consumes 308 million m³ (0.44 m).

The overall demand for water (Table 4) includes more water than is consumed by the crops to allow for irrigation efficiencies, assumed in this case to be 50 percent.²⁴ Thus the equivalent total demand for the existing climate is 844 million m³. Part of the crop water requirements is supplied by precipitation (80 percent of the P₅₀ values in Table 5 is considered to be effective) but most is provided by irrigation. Specifically rice requires 170.6 million m³ to be provided (2.2 m equivalent depth), cotton requires 67.5 million m³ (2 m equivalent depth), whilst winter wheat only requires 263 million m³ (0.38 m equivalent depth) reflecting both the low

²⁴ J. Berkof, "Irrigation in the Balkh Basin. A Preliminary Assessment," 2004.

evaporation rates during the winter-spring period as well as the contribution of rainfall.

The existing demand, 844 million m³ (averaging 7,564 m³/ha or 0.75 m/ha), is relatively low because of the high proportion of winter wheat grown (62.5 percent of the area); this only requires 3,775 m³/ha compared to cotton (3 percent of the area) which requires 20,158 m³/ha (2.0 m) or rice (7 percent of the area) which requires 21,834 m³/ha (2.1 m).

**Table 4. The Demand for Water (Supplied by Irrigation):-
Emam Salieb, 1961-1990 and 2070-2099**

Monthly Demand for Water per Crop, Million Cubic Metres Climate 1960-1991													
Crop	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sum
Barley	0.00	0.07	1.54	1.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.06
Cotton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.34	11.06	17.14	17.35	10.93	5.49	1.16	0.00	67.49
Fodder	0.00	0.00	1.29	6.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.97	0.00	9.01
Fruits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.50	14.01	15.20	13.38	7.61	3.79	0.00	0.00	59.50
Maize	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	31.60	45.72	48.29	32.06	14.65	0.00	0.00	172.31
Oil Crops	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.90	5.62	7.11	5.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.78
Pulses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.58	4.00	5.53	4.01	0.64	0.00	0.00	15.76
Rice	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40.56	46.01	42.25	30.60	11.15	0.00	0.00	170.57
Vegetables	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.85	17.14	17.35	12.57	5.49	0.00	0.00	64.41
Winter Wheat	0.00	0.00	38.88	124.00	90.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.94	0.00	263.30
Sum	0.00	0.07	41.72	133.09	105.94	117.77	150.36	144.17	97.77	41.21	12.08	0.00	844.17
Monthly Demand for Water per Crop, Million Cubic Metres Climate 1960-1991													
Crop	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sum
Barley	0.00	0.54	2.44	2.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.15
Cotton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	12.32	18.82	19.26	12.20	6.23	1.50	0.00	75.33
Fodder	0.00	0.21	2.50	8.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.43	0.00	12.61
Fruits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.33	15.60	16.69	14.85	8.50	4.31	0.00	0.00	66.29
Maize	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	19.33	35.66	49.28	35.79	14.53	0.00	0.00	154.59
Oil Crops	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.22	6.35	7.92	5.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	21.13
Pulses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.76	4.39	6.14	4.47	0.73	0.00	0.00	17.50
Rice	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	45.17	50.50	46.89	34.17	12.65	0.00	0.00	189.38
Vegetables	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.20	18.82	19.26	14.03	6.23	0.00	0.00	71.54
Winter Wheat	0.00	5.19	54.67	149.45	104.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	14.61	0.00	328.11
Sum	0.00	5.95	59.61	161.31	121.88	115.29	150.53	155.68	109.17	44.68	17.54	0.00	941.64

By 2085 the crop water requirements are predicted to rise by 9.2 percent, from 586.2 to 643 million m³. The overall demand, taking into account the contribution of precipitation, is expected to rise by 11.6 percent, from 844 to 942 million m³.

Estimates of demand are of course quite specific to the particular range of irrigated crops adopted; other cropping patterns would clearly result in quite different values. Nevertheless, the importance of these findings is in revealing that demand is likely to rise by approximately 12

percent by 2070–2099, and this could rise even further if cultivation of either rice or cotton were to expand.

For example, if the irrigated area in sub-basin three were to increase to e.g., 417,870 ha, then the demand for water for the existing climate would be 3.16 km³ rising by the period 2070–2099 to 3.52 km³. If half of the newly irrigated area (16,435 ha) and half of the area having improved access to water (49,750 ha) were to be used to cultivate rice instead of winter wheat, the total demand for the existing climate would rise to 4.37 km³, increasing even further with climate change to 4.84 km³ by 2070–2099.

Conclusion

Flow data

Until now there has been no consensus on the mean flow in the Amu Darya which originates in Afghanistan. Estimates vary between 8.06 and 21.1 km³ for Afghanistan as well as Iran (including all three sub-basins). Given that in 1977 the Afghan delegation demanded an allocation of 9 km³ and the Soviet Union offered 6 km³, it seems that the debate concerning the contribution of Afghanistan to the flow in the river is not new and has not yet been resolved. Even existing data sets provided by Freenet or KRBP for the same gauging station (but for different time periods) vary so much as to call into question whether these apply to the same river.

In the study we have not considered the issue of decreasing river flows. Despite all the uncertainties, there is general consensus among relevant scientists that the flows in the rivers will diminish.²⁵ The reductions will be caused by a combination of factors: the shrinkage of the glaciers which are important for maintaining flow during summer; the rising snowline which will free up land on which plants will grow, and more significantly will consume water due to evapotranspiration; the changing patterns of flow as snow, with its slow release during melting, increasingly falls as rainfall encouraging rapid runoff. Estimates of flow reduction across the Amu Darya basin, including the Pyanj, indicate that these are anticipated to be within the range 10–30 percent. The implied

²⁵ V.G. Konovalov, "Past and prospective Change in State of Central Asian," in *Glaciers in Watershed and Global Hydrology*, International Commission on Snow and Ice Workshop (Austria, August 2007), p. 47-52; D. P. Bedford, *Climate Sensitivity and Water Management In The Upper Amu Darya Basin* (PhD Thesis, the University of Colorado, Boulder, 1997); *The First National Communication of the Republic of Tajikistan to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (Dushanbe, 2002): Chapter 4. Projected Impacts and Vulnerability Assessment (National Project Manager Begmurod Makhmadaliev).

shortage of water is certain to have a dramatic effect on plans for the expansion of irrigation in Afghanistan.

Irrigation development

The evaluation of the different projects referred to suggests that water use in Afghanistan is likely to increase in the future. However, most of these projects were based on old Soviet plans, which also reflected the rationale at that time, low electricity prices, and an emphasis of expansion of irrigation at any cost. Hence, only the capital costs of construction were considered. The modern rationale, cost recovery of provided services, and assumed realistic energy costs make it highly unlikely that most of the former identified projects will ever be implemented.

The current deterioration of the security situation in northern Afghanistan also makes it unlikely that the identified dam projects will be implemented. As stated, returnees might have settled in the former surveyed areas. Therefore, it is considered that the irrigated area is unlikely to increase beyond about 420,000 ha, much less than the figure suggested by Zonn, and less than that suggested by Ahmad and Wasiq.

The current water use of 3.07 km³ estimated by Ahmad and Wasiq is likely to increase with the ongoing rehabilitation of existing projects. With improved access to water, farmers might change from the crops identified by Berkhof and FAO (see Annex for more details) to the cash crop rice, as observed by Thomas and Wegerich. Hence, there is already a likely increase of demand for water from the 99,000 ha of rehabilitated land. With the increase in the number of smaller rehabilitation projects, demand will continue to increase. Taking into consideration the current national focus of the Afghan Water Sector Strategy, it is evident that these projects will affect the total water availability of water for downstream states.

Climate change impacts

The SRA2 climate change scenario considered is only one of several possible climate change scenarios; others predict that temperatures could rise even more, whilst the generality of climate change models suggests that precipitation will, if anything, be less. Based on the SRA2 scenario, our estimates of the grossed up water requirements for the likely increased irrigated area of 417,870 ha will rise for the assumed cropping pattern (based on Berkhof/FAO, see also Table 8) by 0.36 km³, from 3.16 km³ to 3.52 km³ by 2070–2099.

Changing cropping patterns

The likely increase in demand for changing cropping patterns was considered. This assumed that half of the newly irrigated area (16,435 ha) and half of the area having improved access to water (49,750 ha), equating to 66,185 ha, might be used to cultivate rice rather than winter wheat. The analysis indicated that the demand for the existing climate would rise from 3.16 km³ to 4.37 km³ and would increase even further with climate change to 4.84 km³ (by 2070–2099). This indicates that changing cropping patterns could be of potentially more significance than climate change.

Annex: Procedure Used to Determine the Future Demands for Water

The demand for water was established for a representative area in northern Afghanistan (Emam Salieb) with the help of routines available within the software package WEAP (Water Evaluation and Planning System) developed by the Boston Centre of the Stockholm Environment Institute (<http://www.weap21.org>). WEAP is a water balance accounting programme, but in this case it was only used to facilitate the estimation of the demand for water for irrigation. Demands were determined for the climate in: 1961–1990, a period used by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a reference for the existing climate as well as the climate predicted to exist in the period 2070–2099. The future time period was chosen as being a time which those born today can expect to experience in their lifetime.

WEAP uses the FAO Cropwat routines to determine crop water requirements (FAO, 1998). Input data includes the mean monthly reference crop (grass) potential evapotranspiration, the mean monthly precipitation, the range and distribution of crops, as well as the crop growth factors.

Table 5. Climatic Data for Emam Salieb (1961-1990):- Source IWMI Climate Summary Service

Emam Saheb-Afghanistan (Lat 37 ° 11 ' 13 " N Long 68 ° 53 ' 54 " E)								
	P50 (Mm/month)	Rainfall (P75) (mm/month)	Temp (mean) (deg. C)	(DTR) (deg. C)	Ref Humid (%)	Sunshine (% of Hrs)	Wind Run (m/s)	Penman E _{Te} (mm/day)
Jan	37.81	23.19	2.10	9.10	76.00	38.00	1.70	0.81
Feb	48.36	32.08	4.90	9.70	73.00	40.00	1.90	1.28
Mar	70.77	49.15	10.70	10.50	70.00	44.00	2.10	2.21
Apr	50.61	32.79	17.10	11.90	66.00	52.00	2.00	3.54
May	26.27	13.47	22.20	14.10	53.00	65.00	2.00	5.30
Jun	0.13	0.01	27.80	16.40	34.00	77.00	2.40	7.69
Jul	0.02	0.00	29.70	16.10	31.00	78.00	2.50	8.09
Aug	0.00	0.00	27.70	16.20	32.00	78.00	2.40	7.12
Sep	0.00	0.00	22.80	14.90	35.00	78.00	2.20	5.36
Oct	4.11	0.92	16.80	14.90	46.00	66.00	2.00	3.21
Nov	16.74	7.16	10.00	12.70	61.00	57.00	1.60	1.54
Dec	25.09	12.86	4.90	10.00	72.00	40.00	1.50	0.88
Data from IWMI Water & Climate Atlas (www.iwmi.org)								

The climatic data for the period 1961–1990 was derived for the Emam Salieb area from the IWMI Digital World Water Atlas (IWMI, 2007: see

Table 5). Values for the reference potential evapotranspiration (shown as ET_0 in Table 5) were then re-calculated using the Penman procedure (Penman, 1963) within the FAO “CropWat for Windows” programme (FAO, 1998 and Clarke et al, 2000), to ensure consistency between the values applicable to the existing climate and those in 2070–2099.

The range of crops was developed from reports by Berkof (2004) and FAO (FAO AQUASTAT) for Afghanistan. Crop growth factors, k_c factors, needed to convert the reference crop potential evapotranspiration into the individual crop water requirements were also derived from FAO guidelines (FAO, 1998). Both sets of values are detailed in the following two Tables:-

Table 6. The Range and Distribution of Crops Adopted for Emam Salieb

Assumed Area Distribution of Crops for Emam Salieb, %										
111,600 ha										
Crop	Cotton	Winter Wheat	Fruits	Fodder	Veg	Maize	Barley	Pulses	Rice	Oil Crops
% Area	3	62.5	3.8	6.1	3	8	4.1	1	7	1.5

Table 7. The Crop Growth Factors (k_c) Used to Determine Crop Water Requirements (k_c Factors Based on FAO Guidelines FAO, 1998)

Kc (monthly)	Crop Growth Factors (k_c) to convert Reference Crop (grass) Evapotranspiration into the Evapotranspiration by the Crops											
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
W Wheat	0.65	0.95	1.15	1.15	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0.4	0.4
Maize	0	0	0	0	0	0.4	0.7	1.1	1.1	0.7	0	0
Barley	0.4	1	1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4
Pulses	0	0	0	0	0	0.3	0.7	1.1	0.8	0.3	0	0
Vegetables	0	0	0	0	0	0.75	1	1.15	1	0.7	0	0
Cotton	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.15	1	0.8	0.6	0
Fodder	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4	0.4
Rice	0	0	0	0	0	1.1	1.15	1.2	1.2	0.6	0	0
Oil Crops	0	0	0.35	0.6	1.1	0.9	0.6	0	0	0	0	0
Citrus	0	0	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0	0
Grapes	0	0	0	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.45	0	0
Orchards	0	0	0	0.3	0.7	0.9	0.95	0.95	0.85	0.7	0	0

The impact of climate change was confined to considering the impact of rising temperatures. No attempt was made to consider changes of precipitation, partly because such predictions are generally considered unreliable; whilst in addition precipitation is low and its contribution to

crop water requirements minimal, particularly in relation to the water needing to be provided by irrigation. In the calculations, eighty percent of the monthly precipitation (80 percent of the P_{50} values in Table 5) has been considered to be effective in meeting crop water requirements.

The increases in monthly temperatures due to climate change (1961–1990 to 2070–2099) have been derived from the most recent 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC, for the scenario judged to correspond most closely to recent patterns of climate change in Central Asia (the A2 storyline). The increases, termed anomalies, are the means of the monthly values based on seven global circulation models²⁶ included in the IPCC 4th Assessment for the Emam Salieb area (see Table 8).

Table 8. IPCC 4th Assessment: Mean Monthly Temperature Anomalies for the SRA2 Climate Change Scenario: 1961–1990 to 2070–2099 for the Emam Salieb Area; Means Based on 7 Global Circulation Models

Grid Centre: 37.50°N, 67.50°E	
30 Year 2m Mean Surface Temperature (TAS) Anomalies 1961-1990 to 2070-2099, for the SRA2 Climate Change Scenario, means based on 7 National Global Circulation Models °C	
January	4.64
February	4.04
March	4.40
April	4.58
May	4.82
June	5.81
July	5.03
August	5.35
September	5.21
October	4.51
November	4.30
December	4.04

These values were then used to amend the temperatures within the IWMI climate file (Table 5) before being processed using the CropWat for Windows programme to determine revised values of reference crop potential evapotranspiration applicable to 2070–2099 (Table 9).

²⁶ CCSM3; NRM-CM3; CSIRO-MK3; ECHAM5; GFDL-CM2; HadCM3; MIROC3.2

Table 9. Reference Crop (Grass) Mean Monthly Potential Evapotranspiration Rates:- Climate in 1961-1990 and 2070-2099

	Mean Reference Crop (grass) Potential Evapotranspiration (ET_o), mm/month	
	Emam Salieb	
	1961-1990	2070-2099
January	28.52	34.1
February	39.48	44.8
March	73.47	83.7
April	112.5	129
May	171.74	192.2
June	236.1	264
July	256.06	282.1
August	225.37	251.1
September	163.2	183
October	106.64	120.9
November	51.3	60
December	30.69	34.1

The potential evapotranspiration (the crop water requirements) for the individual crops grown was then determined using WEAP (Table 4). The demand for irrigation (Table 5) was then established by summing the individual elements of crop water requirement and increasing them (in this case by the factor 2) to allow for the reported irrigation efficiency of 50 percent.

Submission Guidelines and Process of Selection

Many of the articles are solicited, but authors are encouraged to send their work directly to the Editor who will suggest changes and determine the relevance of the articles for each issue. Articles can also be sent to any of our senior advisors, but the Editor has full responsibility on accepting or refusing individual articles. Shorter articles will be responded to within a week, whereas the response to longer analytical pieces could take up to three weeks. Some articles will be dealt with by the editors immediately; most articles are also read by outside referees. Copyright of articles remains with *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program*, unless another agreement has been reached.

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Commentaries: Commentaries require a three to four sentence introduction to the article based on a news hook. Rather than a general, overarching analysis, the article must offer considered and careful “judgment” on the issue supported with concrete examples. Recommended length is 2000 words.

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Articles from Journals: Phil Williams, “Transnational Criminal Organizations and International Security,” *Survival* 36, 1 (1994): 96.

Books: Patrick L. Clawson and Rensselaer W. Lee III, *The Andean Cocaine Industry* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998)

Newspapers, News-agencies & Magazines: Toby Harnden, “Drug Trade ‘Reaches to Afghan Cabinet,’” *Daily Telegraph*, February 5 2006.

Electronic Sources: George Bush, “Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Officers and Employees,” Executive Order 12674, April 12 1989, pt. 1, <www.usoge.gov/exorders/eo12674.html> (October 30 1997).

Subsequent references: a reference to a single source in the previous note should be replaced by ‘*Ibid.*’; in later notes by author’s surname, title and page number.

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