

# THE CHINA AND EURASIA FORUM QUARTERLY

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Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program

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*May 2007*



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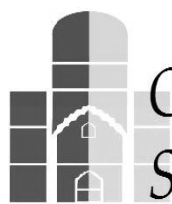
*Volume 5, No. 2*

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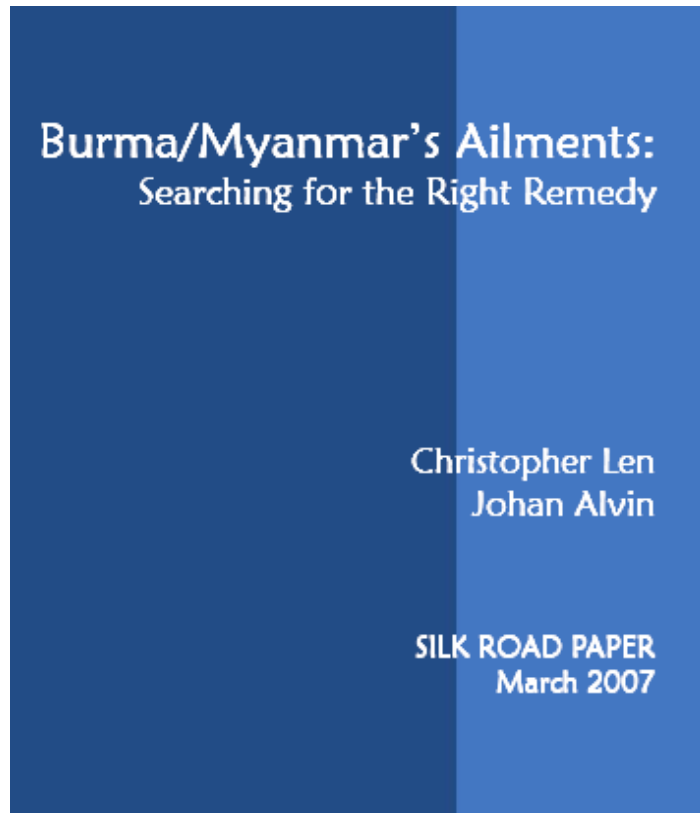
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# New Silk Road Paper



 *Central Asia- Caucasus Institute*  
*Silk Road Studies Program*

## **Burma/Myanmar's Ailments: Searching for the Right Remedy**

by Christopher Len and Johan Alvin

This 108 page Silk Road Paper analyzes the myriad challenges facing Burma/Myanmar today and discusses the role the international community should play in order to help the country embark on a genuine and sustained path of recovery. The Paper is available from the Offices of the Joint Center cited on the inside cover of this issue, or freely downloadable in PDF format at [www.silkroadstudies.org](http://www.silkroadstudies.org)



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

This spring has so far witnessed a number of events which will prove to have major implications for the security situation and the geo-political alignments in Eurasia. Russia has stepped up its activity in Central Asia, especially in the energy sector but also through an expanded military presence. The European Union has under Germany's presidency for the first time demonstrated intent to take the strategic significance of Central Asia seriously. Meanwhile, the U.S.' deployment at Manas airport in Kyrgyzstan is looking increasingly uncertain after a fatal shooting of a Kyrgyz citizen combined with a Kyrgyz domestic political opinion questioning a continued U.S. presence. China has maintained a relatively low profile in the past months and most of its attention seems focused on infrastructural development. This is both in the energy sector with the planned China-Uzbekistan pipeline as well as in the further development of the Asia-Europe transport corridor via Xinjiang and Central Asia.

Despite the significance of Central Asia, the world's attention is on Afghanistan. The country is spiraling downwards in radicalism and 2007 increasingly appears to be the make-or-break year for this country's distressing development; either the Taliban will continue its offensive and further adapt the tactics used by insurgents in Iraq or the ISAF will be able to counter this before it reaches its tipping point. As Thomas Johnson argues in his article in this issue, what seems to be the key to win back the country is to win back the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. This needs to be complemented by a troop surge. Heavy investments in infrastructure and institution building may also be required to give Afghanistan tools to manage its own future. However, even if this could be accomplished, the U.S. and NATO's mission in Afghanistan is increasingly becoming more and more dependent on Pakistan's stability. Musharraf's increasingly fragile position, his dependency on the radical Muttahida Majles-e-Amal, and the upcoming general elections will have major implications for stability in the region, and indeed for Afghanistan's and Pakistan's future.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has so far had limited success in acting as a security provider for the region and it is becoming increasingly evident that a continued NATO and U.S. presence in the region is crucial. Even if SCO has stepped up its activity in both the economic field, in cooperation with the CSTO, and its engagement with Pakistan, India, Iran, Mongolia, and Afghanistan, there is little in way of effective cooperation as of today. This spring has witnessed a number of exercises: the recent "Issyk Kul Anti-Terror-2007"

exercise in Kyrgyzstan in May and the CSTO's Rubezh 2007 exercise in March being two examples. An upcoming major event is the SCO's anti-terrorist exercises named Peace Mission 2007, which will take place in Russia's Chelyabinsk region. Judging by the nature of the last large-scale exercise Peace Mission 2005, it is likely that the upcoming exercise will be another demonstration of power-politics by Russia and China. Considering the deterioration of relations between Russia and the U.S. over the missile shield, as well as Russia and Europe over energy, this exercise will likely be interpreted as a further step away from the West by Russia. The results of the upcoming SCO heads of state summit in July will also be watched closely by Western observers.

Moreover, in end of June the German presidency of the European Union will present its conclusions and launch the EU's new Central Asia Strategy for 2007-2013. Although it is unclear how much influence Germany, the one power in Europe with the most evident interests in Central Asia, has had in the formulation of this, it is clear that Europe has realized its energy vulnerabilities and the importance of Central Asia and the Caspian in meeting these needs. The announcement in May that Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan have agreed to build a pipeline along the Caspian coast is clearly not in the interest of Europe's future energy security since additional Central Asian energy resources will be channeled through Russia. It may even be argued that the Central Asian states themselves may not have an interest in continued dependency on Russia for their energy sales. It remains to be seen whether the Western backed trans-Caspian pipeline eventually will be built and this will also be an indicator as to the future direction of Central Asian and Caspian supplies, and possibly even these states' political alignments.

The authors to this issue will explore these issues further and we trust that you will find their arguments interesting. Considering the importance of the upcoming SCO summit this summer we invite you to submit contributions to the August 2007 issue analyzing the outcomes of this meeting. Article submissions can be sent to me at [nswanstrom@silkroadstudies.org](mailto:nswanstrom@silkroadstudies.org).

Finally, on behalf of the CEF team we hope you will enjoy your read.

Niklas Swanström  
Editor, China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly  
May 2007

# The New Nomads? The American Military Presence in Central Asia

Dan Burghart\*

*Comrades, before it is too late,  
Sheathe the old sword, may brotherhood be blest  
--Alexander Blok, The Scythians<sup>1</sup>*

## ABSTRACT

Much has been written on U.S. involvement in Central Asia, and specifically the military component of that involvement. This article presents a short history of this involvement since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the reasons behind this effort, and how it is perceived by the various regional actors. It concludes with future prospects, as well as the logic supporting regional cooperation.

*Keywords* • U.S. • Central Asia • U.S. Military Bases • Security Assistance

## Introduction

Central Asia has long stood at the crossroads of East and West, and has both benefited from and suffered because of that location. On the positive side, the people there were able to derive and sustain a livelihood from the trade between Europe and the Orient, and received inputs from each of these cultures respectively. On the less than positive side, this location, combined with a lack of natural geographic features that might serve as barriers, led to wave upon wave of invaders transiting the territory and leaving their mark on the land. In this regard, Central Asia became the grounds for a clash of Empires, as the Russians, British, Persians, Turks and Chinese all sought to establish control or exert their influence on the region.

Of these attempts, probably the most familiar is the period known as “The Great Game”, a term coined by Arthur Connolly, an early British agent in the region, and popularized in Kipling’s story *Kim*. As expertly

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\* Dan Burghart is a Professor of National Security and Eurasian Studies at the National Defense Intelligence College, Washington DC. The views expressed here are those of the author, and do not reflect the official policies of Department of Defense or the United States Government. Special thanks are given to Ms. Erin Dean and Ms. Denise Campbell for their expert assistance in researching this article.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Blok, *The Scythians*, as extracted in Orlando Figes *Natasha’s Dance*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), p. 419.

told by Peter Hopkirk in the book of the same name, the “Game” reflected the rivalry between the Russian and British Empires in Central Asia throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>2</sup> Russian interest in the region was a natural outcome of their Empire’s expansion to the east, and was ironically spurred by the American Civil War and the Union blockade that stopped Southern cotton from reaching European mills.<sup>3</sup> Britain’s concern was a reaction to Russia’s advances into the region, and fears that this would threaten British interests in India, the “Jewel” of the Empire. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the region remained under first Russian and then Soviet control, and isolated from the rest of the world.

All this radically changed with the breakup of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991. While independence was welcomed by many, at the same time there was recognition of the myriad of problems that the new states, in what was formally known as Soviet Central Asia, faced.<sup>4</sup> In the words of Fiona Hill, a leading specialist on the region, “the stability and development of the states of Central Asia [were] threatened by their extreme domestic fragility.”<sup>5</sup> The region also continued to be subject to outside influences, both traditional and non traditional. The former included Russia, which was tied to the region both by the legacies of the former Soviet system that were still in place, and by the energy infrastructure that governed the development and transport of the area’s major resource, whose exploitation had the potential to transform the region. China represented a major influence as well, because of its proximity and the potential for trade. Turkey and Iran both sought to expand their influence, based on their historical and cultural ties. Saudi Arabia desired to exert an influence through the revival of Islam in the region. India also sought to play a role, not as part of the British Empire as in the past, but as a player in its own right. Finally, a relative newcomer was making its appearance in the region--the United States.

Much has been written on U.S. involvement in Central Asia, and specifically the military component of that involvement. Officially, U.S. goals for its involvement have been summarized as “instituting sustainable policies to promote national and regional stability.”<sup>6</sup> Unofficially, U.S. actions in the region have been described as “More ad

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, (New York: Kodansha International, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Charles Manes, “America Discovers Central Asia,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, 2 (2003). Accessed via ProQuest, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Debate continues for what constitutes Central Asia, and while arguments can be made for the inclusion of Afghanistan, parts of Pakistan and western China, for the purposes of this paper it will be considered to be the five former republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Giragosian, “The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus: An Overview,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004), p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

hoc than well reasoned in terms of future implications....”<sup>7</sup> Overarching this range of views is the oft stated fear that the U.S. presence has ignited a “New Great Game”, and that the rivalry between the great powers for influence/control of the region and its resources will hinder, rather than help, in achieving the objectives of security and stability, which are key for economic and political development. The goal of this article is to examine the nature of the U.S. military involvement in Central Asia, as a way of gauging whether this is in fact the case, and whether the U.S. presence is a destabilizing, as opposed to a beneficial factor.

### **U.S. Involvement in the Region—From Independence to 9/11**

Active western and U.S. involvement in Central Asia began in 1992, when the U.S. government made the decision to establish relations with, and open embassies in, all of the former Soviet Republics. Diplomatic representation was followed quickly by business interests, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The newly independent states of Central Asia faced a panoply of challenges, ranging from dealing with a crumbling infrastructure inherited from the Soviet Union, to economic and political reform, border and security issues, and the need to create national identities where none had previously existed.<sup>8</sup> Official U.S. policy priorities included “democratization” of the centrally controlled political systems, marketization of the centrally planned economies, and assisting in the establishment of regional security and a stable environment that would allow for the development of the area’s resources.<sup>9</sup> Primary among these resources was energy, which was seen not only to benefit the West, but as a means of generating desperately needed development capital for the states of the region.<sup>10</sup>

Along with aid and assistance in the spheres of politics, the economy, and social programs, came military assistance. For those not familiar with such programs, military aid goes far beyond the realm of upgrading the receiving country’s military equipment and capabilities. Under the umbrella term “engagement”, exchange programs were initiated to expand the ties between the militaries of the United States and the Central Asian countries, with the goal of professionalizing and reforming

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<sup>7</sup> Rouben Azizian, “Central Asia and the United States 2004-2005: Moving Beyond Counter-Terrorism?” *Special Assessment: The Asia-Pacific and the United States* (2005), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Manes, “America Discovers Central Asia,” p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Giragosian, “The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus,” p. 47.

<sup>10</sup> Strobe Talbot, “A Farewell to Flashman: American Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia.” Address at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, July 21 1997, US State Department Document, accessed at <[www.state.gov/](http://www.state.gov/)>.

militaries that were built on the Soviet model, and encouraging regional cooperation between these militaries and their respective states.<sup>11</sup> Through exposure to western militaries and their workings, it was hoped to plant the seeds for ideas, such as civilian control of the military, which are the hallmark of militaries in democratic societies. By increasing each country's capabilities in areas such as border control, it was also hoped to address problems, such as transnational crime, that were becoming a concern. Professionalization was also key to limiting some of the abuses that Soviet style militaries were known for. Overall, military exchanges and assistance programs were seen as complimenting political and economic programs, and were integral to a holistic approach toward addressing the challenges facing the region.

The natures of these exchanges were many and varied, with a good number falling under NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Starting in 1993, military officers and civilian officials from Central Asia, as well as the rest of the Former Soviet Republics and countries of the former Warsaw Pact, were invited to attend courses at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany, where they studied topics such as civil-military relations.<sup>12</sup> In 1994, U.S. forces began advising Central Asian militaries in their own countries and participated in joint exercises designed to build mutual understanding and increase interoperability, should joint operations need to be undertaken at some point in the future.<sup>13</sup> The largest of these was establishment and training of a Central Asian Peace Keeping Battalion (CENTRAZBAT), conceived to be a multinational unit that could be deployed to carry out peacekeeping missions throughout the world.<sup>14</sup> Smaller exercises involving U.S. Special Forces units, whose mission is to train foreign militaries, were carried out with the goal of increasing the host nation's internal defense capabilities. At the same time, a select number of Central Asian officers and soldiers were given the opportunity to attend military and language schools in the United States, under the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET). These types of programs were also conducted by other countries, such as Britain and Germany, though on a somewhat smaller scale.<sup>15</sup> It should also be noted that these efforts were

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<sup>11</sup> Giragosian, "The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus," p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48-50.

<sup>13</sup> Fred Lawson, "Political Economy, Geopolitics and Expanding US Military Presence in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 13, (Spring 2004), p. 11. This work contains a detailed listing of these exercises.

<sup>14</sup> The author was personally involved in this program when serving as US Defense Attaché to Kazakhstan.

<sup>15</sup> Farkhad Tolipov and Roger McDermott, "Uzbekistan and the US: Partners Against Terrorism," *The Review of International Affairs* 2, 4 (Summer 2003), p. 11.

not unique to Central Asia, but mirrored efforts in other parts of the former Soviet space.

One area that came in for special attention on the part of the U.S. and the West was the nuclear legacy that the Soviets gave to the region. At the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union, nuclear weapons and delivery systems were deployed in three of the republics (Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan) in addition to Russia, making them nuclear states with independence. Dealing with these weapons became a priority for U.S. policy. In addition to getting these states to sign on to agreements to observe the treaties already in place governing these systems, steps were taken to secure these weapons and either disarm them or have them returned to Russia. In the case of Kazakhstan, a Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) agreement was signed in December 1993, which provided for the safe disposition of these weapons and launch systems, and further securing of related materials and facilities.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the 1990s, nuclear facilities such as the testing site at Degalin Mountain were closed, while other related industries were converted from their military purpose to civilian uses, in what was known as defense conversion. This program was also expanded to include facilities in other Central Asian states that, while not directly related to the Soviet nuclear program, still represented a significant threat, such as the Soviet biological testing facility on Vozrazhdeniya (Rebirth) Island in Uzbekistan.

In summary, the military programs that the U.S. and other nations pursued in Central Asia throughout the first ten years of independence represented a mix of bi-lateral and multi-lateral efforts. All of them were designed to assist these states in improving their defensive capabilities and, in conjunction with economic and other assistance programs, develop the secure and stable environments that would allow each country to flourish. All of these efforts were also transitory in nature, and aside from the Defense Attachés assigned to the Embassies and small assistance groups, there was no formal permanent military “footprint” in the region. In the words of one official: “Through engagement, the U.S. [was] trying to build the capabilities of the individual Central Asian States, not exert a force presence.”<sup>17</sup> This, however, would change in the aftermath of the events of 9/11.

### **U.S. Involvement in the Region—Post 9/11**

As a result of 9/11, the United States greatly expanded its presence in the post-Soviet space, and specifically in Central Asia. Initially, this was

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<sup>16</sup> Giragosian, “The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus,” p. 46-47.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

because Central Asia found itself on “the Frontline of Operation Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> The logic for this was based in large on geography; just as during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, the region was a logical staging point for operations there.<sup>19</sup> The increase in U.S. forces was coordinated, not only with the nations of the region, but with other interested nations and specifically Russia. As part of this process, the United States gave assurances that it would withdraw its military forces from the region, after the situation in Afghanistan had stabilized. As a result of these efforts, “by the official end of combat operation in Afghanistan on May 1, 2003, the United States had established forward bases housing a combined total of 3000 troops in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan...”,<sup>20</sup> and had engaged in close cooperation and intelligence sharing with all of the Central Asian states except Turkmenistan.

While this represented a significant change in the relationship between the United States and the Central Asian states, the change cannot be tied entirely to the events of 9/11. As part of the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review conducted by the new leadership in the Pentagon after the 2000 U.S. presidential election, the need to transform both U.S. forces and the nature of U.S. relations with its allies and other partner nations had been highlighted.<sup>21</sup> The new National Security Strategy released in September 2002 emphasized that “a military structure to deter massive Cold-War-era armies must be transformed to focus on how adversaries might fight, rather than where and when a war might occur.”<sup>22</sup> Washington began to focus on what was referred to as an “Arc of Instability”, that ran from the Middle East to North Asia. To address the threat that was seen as emanating from this area, the Pentagon launched a global realignment of its defense posture, to gain strategic control of this arc through an expanded military presence in these theaters.<sup>23</sup> The result, with regard to Central Asia, was that the United States launched broad new diplomatic and military initiatives in the region. Where earlier efforts were more limited and focused, the new emphasis, based on the perceived needs for fighting the War on Terror, resulted in much more attention and activity.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> Svante Cornell, “The United States and Central Asia: In the Steppes to Stay?”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, 2 (July 2004), p. 240.

<sup>20</sup> Ilan Berman, “The New Battleground: Central Asia and the Caucasus,” *Provocations*, 28, 1 (Winter 2004). Accessed via LexisNexis Academic, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> For a summary of the discussions leading to this change, see Stephen Blank, *US Military Engagement with Transcaucasia and Central Asia*, a report prepared by the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, (2004).

<sup>22</sup> Berman, “The New Battleground: Central Asia and the Caucasus,” p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*



The earliest and most obvious result of this change in emphasis was the establishment of U.S. military bases in the region, to help prosecute the war in Afghanistan. "As early as 5 Oct 2001 the U.S. secured permission to establish a military base in Khanabad in southwest Uzbekistan" and by December of that year had established another base at Manas, just outside of the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek.<sup>24</sup> Designed to serve as a refueling and transfer point for personnel and material going south, each of these bases would eventually house between 1000 and 3000 U.S. service members.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the facilities in these two countries, Kazakhstan offered the use of two air bases on its territory, at Shymkent and Lugovoy.<sup>26</sup> Facilities were also surveyed in Tajikistan, but were deemed to be in too bad a state of repair to be brought up to western standards, and instead were designated for use as emergency refueling points.<sup>27</sup> Even Turkmenistan, which under its policy of "positive neutrality" officially maintained a stance of non-involvement, unofficially allowed use of its facilities to assist in providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

Along with the increase in the physical American presence, came an increase in material assistance to the Central Asian states. In the case of Uzbekistan, US\$60 million in aid was to be given annually to Uzbekistan in return for the use of Khanabad, in addition to a one time payment of US\$100 million.<sup>28</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, while the assistance numbers were somewhat less, other payments were made, including a landing fee of US\$7,000.00 that was paid for each flight in and out of Manas.<sup>29</sup> Much of this assistance was designed to help deal with the newly perceived threat posed by terrorist elements, and focused on such areas as border security, counter proliferation, and anti-drug efforts.<sup>30</sup> Assistance was increased to states not directly involved in U.S. operations as well; in the case of Kazakhstan, the U.S. committed millions of dollars to purchase equipment and provide training for Kazakh security forces.<sup>31</sup> These

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<sup>24</sup> Cornell, "The United States and Central Asia: In the Steppes to Stay?", p. 240.

<sup>25</sup> Giragosian, "The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus," p. 52.

<sup>26</sup> Doulatbek Khidirbekughli, "U.S. Geostrategy in Central Asia: A Kazakh Perspective," *Comparative Strategy* 22 (2002), p. 160.

<sup>27</sup> Giragosian, "The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus," p. 51.

<sup>28</sup> Cornell, "The United States and Central Asia: In the Steppes to Stay?", p. 241.

<sup>29</sup> Lawson, "Political Economy, Geopolitics and Expanding US Military Presence in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia," p. 14. Rumors persist that much of this money ended up in the hands of then President Akayev's son.

<sup>30</sup> Berman, "The New Battleground: Central Asia and the Caucasus," p. 3. It should be noted that anti drug efforts were seen as closely tied with the War on Terror, and terrorist organizations obtained a large portion of their financial support through the drug trade.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

efforts where in addition to existing programs, such as the Central Asian Border Security Initiative (CASI), which had already given “millions in security assistance to each of the five Central Asian states.”<sup>32</sup>

It should again be noted that this shift in programs and emphasis was not unique to Central Asia, and can be found to have parallels in other parts of the former Soviet Union, as well as other regions of the world. One of the better known of these initiatives was in the South Caucasus state of Georgia. In response to the threat posed by Chechen rebels who were seeking sanctuary in the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia, the United States initiated a train and equip program (GTEP), to increase the ability of the Georgian forces to deal with the threat posed by these terrorists.<sup>33</sup> While nothing of this scale was done in Central Asia, a number of smaller programs along the same lines were undertaken. In one example, in July 2002 U.S. specialists did a two week training course in Uzbekistan to train Uzbek forces in detecting and dealing with incidents involving WMD; at the end of this training, US\$270,000 worth of material was left with the Uzbeks to help them deal with the results of chemical, biological or nuclear incidents.<sup>34</sup> In another, training was provided to the naval forces of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, to improve security on the Caspian Sea.<sup>35</sup>

What can be seen from these examples is a difference in the nature of the programs between the pre and post 9/11 eras. Whereas earlier efforts were smaller and concentrated on general goals, such as professionalization of the military and education about Civil Military relations, post 9/11 military assistance tended to be more extensive and concentrated on developing capabilities deemed desirable in dealing with the new threats identified after the attacks on the U.S.. While this is understandable given the nature of the post 9/11 world, it none the less gave a different tone and perspective to these efforts, and one whose consequences may not have been that well thought out and fully understood.

### **The View from Other Perspectives**

With regard to the Central Asian states, the most obvious reason for this shift in the nature of the military commitment to Central Asia was the identification of a concrete threat, against which such efforts could be directed. The threat posed by terrorist groups, as embodied by Al Qaeda

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<sup>32</sup> Giragosian, “The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus,” p. 45.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60. See Giragosian for a summary of this program. The author was also involved in evaluating this effort.

<sup>34</sup> Tolipov and McDermott, “Uzbekistan and the US: Partners Against Terrorism,” p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> Known as Operation Caspian Guard, this program has also been cited by some observers as helping to ensure the security of the flow of energy in the Caspian region.

and the Taliban which gave them sanctuary in Afghanistan, was real, as opposed to the general statements about “stability and security” in the pre 9/11 era. The Central Asian states had talked about the existence of such threats before 9/11, and some had actually suffered because of them, as in the bomb attacks against President Karimov in 1999 by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).<sup>36</sup> Now, however, there was recognition of this threat by the U.S., and with that recognition came support. Probably the most obvious example of this shift, were the military attacks conducted by the United States against elements of the IMU operating in Afghanistan, which reportedly killed the IMU’s field commander Namangani and disrupted the organization to the point that it became ineffective.<sup>37</sup> Terrorist groups, often associated with Radical Islamic movements, became a target for intelligence collection and in some cases security operations, depending upon the circumstances.

Yet at the same time that this was taking place, there was also recognition in the West that the rulers in Central Asia had often “hyped” the threat posed by these groups, as a means of justifying the repressive measures they employed in maintaining their own rule. Islamic fundamentalism had always existed in some regions of Central Asia, such as the Fergana Valley, but fundamentalism did not automatically equate to Radical Islam and terrorism.<sup>38</sup> The failure of the Central Asian states to allow dissenting views, and the harsh actions they took against anyone criticizing their regimes, drove opposition groups either into exile or underground, where Islamic networks often afforded them a means of maintaining contact and communication with their followers. To counter this trend, the United States and other western nations continued to push the states of Central Asia for political reforms that would allow pluralism, and provide opponents a means to express their grievances. The irony was that at the same time, the aid being provided often helped to bolster the ability of the security services in these countries to continue to repress opponents of the regimes. From the point of view of the regimes themselves, there was often disappointment that, while they were receiving more assistance from the U.S. and other western states, the one thing that they craved for most--formal security guarantees from the West--eluded them. And when the West continued to critique them on their human rights records and repressive measures at home, as in the case of Uzbekistan after the events in Andijan, the reaction could be

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<sup>36</sup> The author was in Tashkent two weeks after this attack. Literally every street corner in the downtown area had an armed military presence.

<sup>37</sup> Cornell, “The United States and Central Asia: In the Steppes to Stay?”, p. 242.

<sup>38</sup> Alec Rasizade, “Washington and the ‘Great Game’ in Central Asia,” *Contemporary Review* 280, 1636 (May 2002), p. 259.

extreme; in this instance, leading to the request by Uzbekistan for the United States to withdraw from the base in Kanhabad.<sup>39</sup>

To the surprise of many observers, Russia initially did not object strongly to U.S. deployments to what, only a few years previously, had been in their sphere of influence. Part of the reason may have been that Russia was only too happy to see the destruction of the Taliban, in that they viewed Radical Islam as a threat to their own security interests.<sup>40</sup> Part of the reason may also have been the nature of the personal relationship between Presidents Putin and Bush. Whatever the reasons, there is evidence that there was reluctance on the part of the Russian military to allow the U.S. to establish bases on what had formerly been Soviet territory, and was still considered to be Russia's sphere of influence, captured in the term "the Near Abroad."<sup>41</sup> This opposition was somewhat blunted by the argument that these bases were temporary, and would be removed once their usefulness for prosecuting the War on Terror was finished. That this opposition was still a factor in Russian politics is reflected in the words of Russian State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznyov: "Russia will not endorse the emergence of permanent U.S. Bases in Central Asia."<sup>42</sup>

While grudgingly accepting U.S. bases on a temporary basis, Russia also took actions to mitigate this presence, by establishing bases of their own in Central Asia. "In Oct 2003, Russia established its first new regional military base since the Cold War at Kant, Kyrgyzstan, which lies 30 kilometers from the U.S. Base at [Manas]."<sup>43</sup> The rationale for the base was to serve as the marshaling point for multi-national Collective Rapid Deployment Force (CRDF) established under the Collective Security Treaty (CST) signed by Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in late 2002, though most observers saw it as a way of answering and countering the American presence.<sup>44</sup> In October 2004, Russia established a permanent base in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, for its 201<sup>st</sup> Motorized Rifle Division, which had remained in the country after the breakup of the Soviet Union to help with border security.<sup>45</sup> Also in 2004, Russia and Uzbekistan signed a Treaty on Strategic Cooperation, and in

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<sup>39</sup> Richard Weitz, "Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, 3(Summer 2006), p. 165.

<sup>40</sup> Alec Rasizade, "The Specter of a New "Great Game" in Central Asia," *Foreign Service Journal* (November 2002),p. 49-50 .

<sup>41</sup> Members of the Russian Military had strong objections to any American presence in the region, but these were reportedly overruled by President Putin.

<sup>42</sup> Rasizade, "The Specter of a New "Great Game" in Central Asia," p. 50. (Emphasis added by author).

<sup>43</sup> Giragosian, "The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus," p. 50.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

<sup>45</sup> Weitz, "Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia," p. 157.

2005 Russian and Uzbek forces conducted their first joint military exercises.<sup>46</sup> This last case represents perhaps the most prominent shift in allegiances in Central Asia in the post Soviet period. Since independence, Uzbekistan had sought to distance itself from Russia; however, the break with the United States over Andijan opened a door that had been all but closed to Russia, resulting in a budding Russian-Uzbek relationship.

Iran, while no great fan of the United States, accepted the U.S. bases in Central Asia in the same way that the Russians did. Since these bases were to be used for attacks against the Taliban, whose regime was opposed to Iranian interests, they could be tolerated as long as they were temporary.<sup>47</sup> The Chinese view was somewhat more complex. China saw an advantage to a U.S. presence in the region that was designed to counter terrorism, and had agreed to support the U.S. War on Terror in return for the United States classifying elements of the Uighar insurgency in western China as a terrorist movement.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, however, there was Chinese apprehension about U.S. bases on China's border being part of a U.S. attempt to gain a strategic advantage over China, and some even saw this as an attempt at encirclement.<sup>49</sup> For their part, the Chinese continued building relations throughout the region, including strongly backing Uzbek actions in Andijan as being in line with fighting the struggle against the "three great evils" of separatism, terrorism and extremism.<sup>50</sup>

## Opposing Views

As the war in Afghanistan continued, and was joined by the war in Iraq, opposition to the continued U.S. presence in Central Asia began to coalesce in a number of fora. The most visible of these was the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Originally formed as the Shanghai Five in 1996 as a way of resolving border issues, it has grown both in membership and stature to become involved in a number of regional issues, including security.<sup>51</sup> At its meeting in March of 2005, the SCO members issued a joint declaration calling for the removal of U.S. bases from the region as soon as practicable.<sup>52</sup> While essentially not calling for any action that the United States hadn't already agreed to do, the

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 157-158.

<sup>47</sup> Cornell, "The United States and Central Asia: In the Steppes to Stay?", p. 241.

<sup>48</sup> Weitz, "Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia," p. 159.

<sup>49</sup> Maynes, "America Discovers Central Asia," p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Weitz, "Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia," p. 159.

<sup>51</sup> The original members of the Shanghai Five were Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It became the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with the addition of Uzbekistan. India, Pakistan, Mongolia and Iran presently have observer status, and discussions continue about these states becoming full members.

<sup>52</sup> Weitz, "Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia," p. 155.

declaration was seen as significant step by these countries in asserting their right to determine the nature of the security situation in the regions. It also marked a change in the nature of the SCO, which until that time had functioned primarily as a forum for internal discussion on issues relating to the member states, rather than a means of representing unified positions of its members to the outside world.<sup>53</sup>

The SCO declaration also reinforced a draft military concept put forward earlier by the Russian Defense Minister, the so called Ivanov Doctrine, which stated in part that “the introduction of foreign troops (without the agreement of the Russian Federation and the authority of the UN Security Council) onto territories of states which are adjacent to states friendly toward the Russian Federation” was unacceptable.<sup>54</sup> Elements in Russia had long been concerned about encroachments on what had traditionally been viewed as their sphere of influence, such as the expansion of NATO into the Baltic States and Central Europe. The SCO, as the most prominent and seemingly most effective security organization in the region, lent legitimacy to Russian attempts to limit outside influences, by claiming to speak for a majority of the Central Asian nations.

Finally, opposition to an increased U.S./Western presence seemed to reflect the growing concern among the Central Asian States over the “colored revolutions” that had occurred in other parts of the former Soviet space. These had been brought about, it was viewed, by the liberal reforms that had been supported by the West in general, and specifically the U.S.. Increasing restrictions on western sponsored NGOs and other organizations that were supporting democratic reforms, signaled a shift from earlier attitudes that welcomed any outside assistance. If the cost of continued U.S. support was implementation of reforms that would ultimately serve to undermine their continued rule, then the benefits these regimes were receiving hardly seemed worth that cost.<sup>55</sup>

## **Conclusions—The Future of U.S. Military Involvement in Central Asia**

Just as nomadic tribe after nomadic tribe swept across the steppe throughout Central Asia’s history, some have viewed the U.S. presence there as temporary, and that at some point the Americans will “pack up

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<sup>53</sup> The role of the SCO is evolving and a fascinating topic, but unfortunately is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>54</sup> Berman, “The New Battleground: Central Asia and the Caucasus,” p. 4-5.

<sup>55</sup> Azizian, “Central Asia and the United States 2004-2005: Moving Beyond Counter-Terrorism?”, p. 1.

and go home”.<sup>56</sup> Others have argued that, even after the conflict in Afghanistan is over, there will be the need for the U.S. to maintain a strategic presence there.<sup>57</sup> It has been envisioned by some that, as the United States realigns its forces to meet the post Cold War realities, it will try to maintain smaller bases or “lily pads” throughout the arc of instability.<sup>58</sup> Others see this as a pretext for the U.S. to keep forces stationed in the area, and just like any imperialist power, once they are in a region it will be difficult to get them to leave. The key questions then become, how long will the United States maintain its presence, and what form will that presence take?

The answer, succinctly stated, is “it depends”. The latest U.S. National Security Strategy states that Central Asia is an “enduring priority”.<sup>59</sup> Others have characterized the region as a unique combination of “weak states, proven energy resources, radical Islamist movements and important geopolitical location...”<sup>60</sup> The United States originally went into the region in the 1990s with the idea of helping the countries develop, and though the events of 9/11 have caused a temporary shift in the nature of the involvement, this should not be viewed in any way as permanent. The U.S. is in the region to establish stability and security; once established, there is no need to maintain an active force presence.<sup>61</sup> Just as the nomads of previous times, the U.S. may leave their mark, in terms of encouraging development and open access to the region for all, but that does not mean that that it has to “settle” in order to do this.

This does not mean, however, that the United States will no longer have reasons to remain engaged with the region, or maintain a presence that is not tied to force structure. Central Asia is on path that will hopefully lead to peace, prosperity, and active participation as a member of the world community. It could also, however, be diverted from this path to one that could lead it to becoming a center for crime, terrorism, and instability. In his “Farewell to Flashman” speech made in 1997, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot emphasized that the United States must take a long-term approach to the region, unlike the adventurers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, personified by the character made famous by George McDonald Frasier.<sup>62</sup> In line with its policies in other parts of

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<sup>56</sup> In a private discussion with a Russian in Central Asia, this sentiment was expressed to the author. “The US will become tired, pack up, and go home, and leave Central Asia to us and the Chinese.”

<sup>57</sup> Cornell, “The United States and Central Asia: In the Steppes to Stay?”, p. 240.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>59</sup> *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (March 2006), p. 40.

<sup>60</sup> Cornell, “The United States and Central Asia: In the Steppes to Stay?”, p. 243.

<sup>61</sup> Giragosian, “The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus,” p. 56.

<sup>62</sup> Talbot, “A Farewell to Flashman: American Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia.” Flashman is humorously portrayed by Frasier as a bit of a buffoon, who stumbles his way

the world, the United States is committed to working with all of the countries in the region, to ensure the path they take is the former, and not the latter.

This means that it also must be realized by the other countries engaged in Central Asia, specifically Russia and China, that the United States does not have long term ambitions in the region, other than peaceful development that will benefit all. Too many times the situation in Central Asia is cast as a Cold War “zero sum game”, and that the region is something to be won or lost. Instead, an effort must be made to get all the participants to understand that there is far more to be gained through cooperation than through confrontation. There are already some signs of this cooperation in place. Russia and China have worked together on issues relating to the region through the auspices of the SCO, which has proved to be the most successful of a number of regional security organizations in the region. The U.S. and Russian bases in Kyrgyzstan peacefully coexist, separated by only a few kilometers.<sup>63</sup> The United States needs to ensure that both Russia and China clearly understand U.S. intentions, so they are not misunderstood and/or used to bolster domestic opposition to U.S. efforts in the region. In the words of one analyst, “Washington should make the U.S. presence [in Central Asia] more transparent, as well as look for ways to work with the Russian and Chinese militaries to address some of the local security threats.”<sup>64</sup> Multilateral initiatives, as well as bipolar agreements, would go a long way to eliminating suspicions and building trust.

Finally, all of the outside actors need to recognize the sovereignty of the Central Asian states, and that the actions and fates of these states are ultimately in their own hands, and not the hands of others. “Although Russia, China and the United States substantially affect regional security issues, they cannot dictate outcomes the way imperial governments did year[s] ago.”<sup>65</sup> For the United States, “U.S. involvement in the region depends on the willingness of the host states to participate”<sup>66</sup>, and should be tailored to the individual needs and desires of each state. Thus, U.S. military involvement in the region is, and will continue to be, a symbiotic relationship designed to benefit all. The process of change in Central Asia will be long, and patience must be had by all of the parties,

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through most of the major historical events in the British Empire throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>63</sup> Weitz, “Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia,” 162. Quoted in the same source, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov was reported by Interfax to have commented, “Russian and US Military Bases in Kyrgyzstan are not bothering each other.”

<sup>64</sup> Maynes, “America Discovers Central Asia,” p. 5.

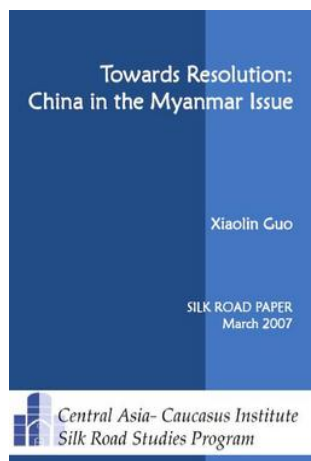
<sup>65</sup> Weitz, “Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia,” p. 155-156.

<sup>66</sup> Giragosian, “The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus,” p. 75.

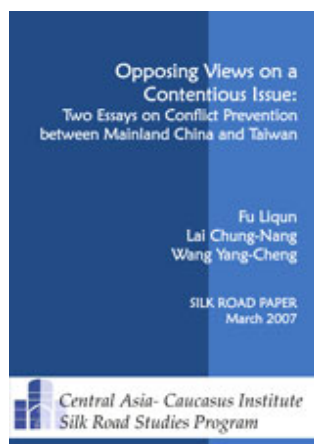


but the potential for positive results from this process should more than justify the time and efforts needed to achieve them.

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# Not Much of a Game: Security Dynamics in Central Asia

*Michael Mihalka*\*

## **ABSTRACT**

The security dynamics of Central Asia do not represent a "great game" as some people suggest but several competing agendas with differing goals and time frames. To the U.S. with a global outlook, interest in the region is fleeting. Access to the region's resources is problematic and the radical Islamist threat has been dealt with for now. Central Asia is fallow ground for liberal democracy. A Russia revived through petrodollars is newly assertive in what it considers to be its own backyard. China takes a long view using economics and multilateralism to further its security interests. The EU has yet to develop a coherent policy towards a region of increasing strategic importance because of its resources and as a conduit of illegal drugs from Afghanistan.

*Keywords* • Central Asia • "Great Game" • U.S. • EU • Security Politics

## **Introduction**

Policy interest in Central Asia waxes and wanes depending on the price of oil, the prospects for terrorism in the region and the perception that the region serves as an arena for geopolitical and ideological competition.<sup>1</sup> Taking these three dimensions into account, the United States should assign a low priority to Central Asia and simply work to maintain an ongoing presence in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this article, Central Asia will consist of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Soviet literature excluded Kazakhstan from the region. A recent report by the Western Union Parliamentary Assembly adds Afghanistan and Pakistan to the five state grouping (see Assembly of Western European Union, "Security and Stability in Central Asia," Document A/1952, December 19 2006.) As Olivier Roy has noted, Central Asia is an area of "variable geography," that could refer simply to Transoxiana or the cultural space defined by Turko-Persian civilizations that extend from Istanbul to Sinkiang, see: Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p.1.

None of the above stated main factors call for greater U.S. involvement in the region. Central Asia is still a minor player in the global oil and natural gas market, and the U.S., unlike Russia and China, does not have ready access to the region.<sup>2</sup> Despite an upsurge in Islamic jihadist activity in 1999-2001, the 2001 war in Afghanistan effectively eliminated the major jihadist threat to Central Asia. The three major players pursue different strategic agendas in Central Asia. For the U.S., Central Asia remains an area of peripheral interest in its global war on terrorism and pursuit of energy security. Moreover, the U.S. was unable to leverage its initial defeat of the Taliban to pursue its policy of global democratization in the region. For the U.S., Central Asia has significance more for derivative reasons because of its importance to China and Russia. Russia views Central Asia as its backyard and vital to re-establishing itself in the near term as a global power. China has long term interests in the region that it believes it can secure through economic means.

The EU has not yet developed a coherent policy towards the region even though Central Asia is a major source of energy and illegal drugs. EU countries have a large presence (through NATO) in Afghanistan. The EU remains a bit player in the area but has begun to realize the shortcomings of previous neglect. Thus for the first time the EU troika met with the foreign ministers of the region on March 27-28 2007 in Astana, Kazakhstan.<sup>3</sup>

The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has led to calls for renewed U.S. involvement in the region. These calls will go unanswered because of decreasing public support and the continuing drain that Iraq has had on U.S. resources. After his party's defeat in the U.S. midterm elections, President George W. Bush no longer has a compliant Congress to rubberstamp his policies in the region.

## Oil and Natural Gas

Until the discovery of the Kashagan field in Kazakhstan, Central Asia was estimated to have oil reserves similar to those found in the North Sea.<sup>6</sup> The Kashagan field itself may have doubled that estimate. The

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<sup>2</sup> "At the moment, the countries of the Caspian Sea region are relatively minor world oil and natural gas producers, struggling with difficult economic and political transitions." Energy Information Administration, *Caspian Sea Region: Survey of Key Oil and Gas Statistics and Forecasts*, January 2007,

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/Caspian/Background.html> (January 10 2007).

<sup>3</sup> "Ferrero-Waldner to attend EU-Central Asia ministerial Troika 27/28 March", <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/420&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (April 2 2007).

<sup>6</sup> As late as July 2005, the Congressional Research Service Issue Brief for Congress was reporting that Caspian Sea reserves were comparable to those of the North Sea. Jim

picture in regard to natural gas is even bigger. Nevertheless there remain “inter-related geographical, political, economic, technological, legal, and psychological obstacles to the further exploration for, and development of, Caspian Sea region energy resources.”<sup>7</sup> Because of these obstacles, Central Asia will remain much less attractive to the U.S. than other regions as a future source of energy reserves.

Sources give widely varying estimates of the energy reserves in Central Asia.<sup>8</sup> According to British Petroleum, the world had 1200.7 billion barrels proven reserves of oil in 2006.<sup>9</sup> Of this total, Kazakhstan had 3.3 percent and Uzbekistan 0.3 percent. By contrast, Russia had 6.3 percent, Venezuela 6.6 percent and the Middle East 61.9 percent. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Central Asia has between 17 and 49 billion barrels of reserves comparable to Qatar on the low end and the U.S. on the high end.<sup>10</sup> These assessments depend on the price of oil. As the price rises so do estimates of proven reserves because these estimates rely often on what is economically viable to extract. For example, according to Forbes, the reserves of oil in Canada jumped from 5 billion to 180 billion barrels in 2003 when the Alberta oil sands were reevaluated as economically viable given the rise of oil prices.<sup>11</sup>

According to British Petroleum, the world had 173.9 trillion cubic meters of proven natural gas reserves in 2006. Of this total, Kazakhstan had 1.7 percent, Turkmenistan 1.6 percent and Uzbekistan 1.0 percent. By contrast, Russia had 26.6 percent, Venezuela, 2.4 percent and the Middle East 40.1 percent. The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that Central Asia has reserves comparable to those of Saudi Arabia.

As one Russian analyst has concluded: “...the theory of a “second Persian Gulf” on the Caspian is greatly exaggerated, and that

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Nichol, *Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests*, CRS Research Service Issue Brief for Congress, July 20 2005, p. CRS-14.

<sup>7</sup> Bernard A. Gelb, *Caspian Oil and Gas: Production and Prospects*, CRS Report for Congress, September 8, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Energy Information Administration, *Caspian Sea Energy Data, Statistics and Analysis - Oil, Gas, Electricity, Coal* January 2007, <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Caspian/pdf.pdf>> (January 10 2007).

<sup>9</sup> British Petroleum, *Statistical Review of World Energy 2006*, <<http://www.bp.com/productlanding.do?categoryId=6842&contentId=7021390>> (January 10 2007).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> “Canada To Compete In Oil Market,” *Oxford Analytica*, February 17 2005, <[http://www.forbes.com/energy/2005/02/17/cz\\_o217oxan\\_canadaoil.html](http://www.forbes.com/energy/2005/02/17/cz_o217oxan_canadaoil.html)> (January 10 2007). Synthetic crude from the oil sands only becomes economically viable when the price of a barrel of oil exceeds \$30. Energy Information Agency, *Canada: Country Analysis Brief: Oil*, April, 2006. <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Canada/Oil.html>> (January 10, 2007).

multinational oil companies view this basin more as a strategic reserve for the distant future: The opportunities for turning investment into real oil flows are not sufficiently straightforward, and the oil then has somehow to be transported to the international market.”<sup>12</sup>

Access and control also raise issues about the attractiveness of Central Asia energy resources. Most of the oil and gas from the region runs through Russian territory. Questions regarding the reliability of Russia as a supplier increased when the Russians tried to turn off the spigot to Ukraine in January 2006 and Belarus in January 2007. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which avoids Russian territory, opened in 2005 but only has a limited capacity and is extremely vulnerable to disruption.

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Energy Information Agency (EIA) lists two of the major global chokepoints as controlling access to Central Asian oil and gas supplies. The Bosphorus sees considerable traffic and the Russian ports in the Black Sea are operating near or at capacity. The EIA also considers the Caspian Sea, the Caucasus and Russia as major energy “hotspots” with significant potential of disruption.<sup>13</sup>

In short, there are a number of factors that impede access to and development of Central Asian oil. As a 1998 Baker Institute study concluded: “[A] host of complex technical, logistical, geopolitical, social, religious and cultural factors also weigh into the equation.”<sup>14</sup>

China has taken a long term approach to the possibility of energy disruption. Given China’s growing energy needs, Russia would seem to be an attractive supplier. However, there are currently no pipelines and much of Russia’s oil exports to China are supplied by rail. Chinese hopes to build a spur off the Eastern Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline from Skorovodino remain in the planning stage as doubts persist of the availability of reserves along the route.<sup>15</sup> In addition, China is financing a pipeline through Kazakhstan to access Caspian Sea energy supplies even

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<sup>12</sup> Sergei Kolchin, “The Caspian Misses Out On the Current Oil Boom,” PRISM (Jamestown Foundation) 6, 12 (December 20 2000), <[http://www.jamestown.org/publications\\_details.php?volume\\_id=7&issue\\_id=440&article\\_id=3781](http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=7&issue_id=440&article_id=3781)> (September 28, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Energy Information Administration, World Energy Hotspot, <[http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/World\\_Energy\\_Hotspots/Caspian\\_Sea.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/World_Energy_Hotspots/Caspian_Sea.html)> (September 30 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Amy Myers Jaffe, “Unlocking the Assets: Energy and the Future of Central Asia and the Caucasus,” Rice University, April 1998, <[http://www.rice.edu/energy/publications/docs/UnlockingtheAssets\\_MainStudy.pdf](http://www.rice.edu/energy/publications/docs/UnlockingtheAssets_MainStudy.pdf)> (January 12 2007).

<sup>15</sup> Steven W, Lewis, “Chinese NOCs And World Energy Markets: CNPC, Sinopec And CNOOC,” The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, 2007 [http://www.rice.edu/energy/publications/docs/NOCs/Papers/CNOOC\\_Lewis.pdf](http://www.rice.edu/energy/publications/docs/NOCs/Papers/CNOOC_Lewis.pdf) (May 19, 2007); Michael Levyveld, “Kazakhstan, China Revive Pipeline Deal,” *Middle East Economic Survey*, XLVII (July 19 2004) <<http://www.mees.com/postedarticles/oped/a47n29doi.htm> > (May 19 2007)

though the project may not meet Western standards of commercial viability.<sup>16</sup> For the Chinese, energy security sometimes trumps economics.<sup>17</sup> Even so, the pipeline from Kazakhstan is projected to meet only 5 percent of China's oil needs.<sup>18</sup>

Finally there is the prospect of a "gas OPEC" emerging, especially since some sources estimate that Russia controls 27 percent of the global reserves and Iran 17 percent. Thus Putin's proposal to form an energy club within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) caused quite a stir since adding Central Asian reserves would give this organization control over 50 percent of the global total.<sup>19</sup>

For the United States the good news is that it receives very little oil and gas from Central Asian and Russian sources and is unlikely to do so. On the other hand, Europe is heavily dependent on this region and is a major consumer of Russian natural gas. Many European countries receive over half of their domestic consumption of natural gas from Russia. Germany, for example, receives 44 percent, France, 26 percent and Italy 29 percent.<sup>20</sup>

### Prospects for Violent Radical Islam in Central Asia

Violent radical Islamism does not look set to recover anytime soon in Central Asia. The defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001 decimated the only radical Islamist group committed to violent action, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The other major radical Islamist group, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) failed to exploit the major political opportunity provided by the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005.<sup>21</sup>

Social Movement Theory (SMT) provides a point of departure for analyzing the prospects for radical Islam in Central Asia in general and the IMU and HT in particular.<sup>22</sup> SMT examines structural factors such as poverty and inequality, resource availability, political opportunity and ideology. The devastating poverty, ethnic discrimination, extreme

<sup>16</sup> Levyveld, "Kazakhstan, China Revive Pipeline Deal".

<sup>17</sup> Cf., Sebastian Mallaby, "What 'Energy Security' Really Means," *Washington Post*, July 3 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Energy Information Administration, Kazakhstan, Background <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/kazak.html>> (September 30 2006); Minxin Pei, China's Big Energy Dilemma, *Straits Times*, April 13 2006

<sup>19</sup> "Russia Initiates SCO Energy Club, *Ria Novosti*, June 21 2006, <<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20060621/49855458.html>> (September 30 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Energy Information Administration, Russia <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Russia/NaturalGas.html>> (September 30 2006).

<sup>21</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the issues in this section, see Michael Mihalka, "Counterinsurgency, Counterterrorism, State-Building and Security Cooperation in Central Asia", *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 4, 2 (May 2006) and Vitaly Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. David S. Meyer, "Protest and Political Opportunity," *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004), p. 125-45.

inequality and oppressive governments found in Central Asia have led many to conclude that radical Islamism should have found much greater traction in the region. However, the IMU failed to develop much of an organization and the HT failed to develop a clear plan of action. Poor structural conditions are not enough for radical Islam to succeed; it must also organize systematically and have effective courses of action. Programs for security cooperation in the region such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the SCO did little to suppress local insurgency and terrorism despite some claims to the contrary.

Prior to 2001, Afghanistan had served as the major source of instability in Central Asia and provided a sanctuary for radical Islamists. The Russians, for their part, had failed in their strategy of supporting the Northern Alliance to defeat the Taliban. The U.S. effectively eliminated the major threat to Central Asia by defeating the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001. The Central Asian countries were very willing to provide bases to the U.S. so long as the Taliban remained in power. Once gone, regimes in the region thought that the U.S. presence might become a major threat to their own survival especially in light of the so-called "color" revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Matters were brought to a head with the brutal suppression of the Andijan demonstrations in May 2005 in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek authorities blamed these demonstrations on the Americans and engineered a declaration at the SCO summit in July 2005 which effectively called for U.S. withdrawal from the region.

Much has been made of the recent increase in violence in Afghanistan. The Taliban appear resurgent. However, much of this violence results from NATO and U.S. forces taking action in areas in the south and east, primarily in the Pashtun areas, that they had previously left alone. The north and west continue to remain relatively quiet.

Recent hostilities in Pakistan between local tribal elements and foreign fighters, reportedly Uzbeks under the command of Tahir Yuldashev, illustrate yet again the difficulties for violent radical Islamism in Central Asia.<sup>23</sup> The Pakistani government has characterized the fighting in South Waziristan as a clash between pro-government local forces against foreign militants. The fact that the local forces are led by a pro-Taliban commander Mulavi Nazir makes interpretations of the actions even more difficult. The Pakistani government says the clashes are a vindication of the deals it signed with local tribes in South Waziristan in 2005 and in North Waziristan in 2006 to police their own

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<sup>23</sup>“ 'Dozens die' in Pakistan fighting,” BBC, March 30 2007, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6511375.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6511375.stm)> (April 2 2007).



areas.<sup>24</sup> Some sources said the fighting started as a result of an assassination attempt on a local tribal elder.<sup>25</sup> Whatever the motivations, it is clear that the local tribes wanted to eject the foreigners and be left alone to manage their own affairs.

One account of the fighting singles out “bad Uzbeks” as the targets.<sup>26</sup> Apparently a group of Uzbeks associated with Tahir Yuldashev opposed the agreement Pakistan reached with tribal elders in 2004 and began targeting their leaders. In the last year, the locals had become increasingly disenchanted with these killings.<sup>27</sup> The killing of Sheikh Asadullah on March 13, 2007, a local Saudi moneyman, brought matters to a head. Secondly, the leadership of the local Taliban has changed. The Uzbeks had been under the protection of Mulavi Omar (not the Mullah Omar who was head of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan) who was replaced by Mulavi Nazir with much less sympathy for the Uzbeks. Thirdly, Nazir comes from a different tribal grouping than Omar. Nazir’s group objected to the Uzbeks because they were unwilling to fight the U.S. in Afghanistan and instead focused their attention on Pakistani forces. Moreover the “bad Uzbeks” had apparently used their foreign funding to buy up land and turn the locals into landless laborers. Uzbeks and other foreign fighters who have respected local customs and integrated into the local communities have allegedly been left alone.

Thus the fighting in South Waziristan has apparently more to do with local tribal politics than with the Pakistani government campaign against jihadists. As one commentator has written, “all that is happening has little to do with the government’s ingenuity – a government that has shown remarkable ignorance of tribal history. One government official admitted it had fallen into the government’s lap like a ripe fruit.”<sup>28</sup> Some expect the bloodshed to continue against the Uzbeks’ tribal supporters once the “bad Uzbeks” are finally killed or expelled.

In mid-April, 2007 tribal leaders, militant commanders and local clerics inked an agreement in the Wana district of South Waziristan that prohibited all support for the Uzbeks with a potential penalty of housing confiscation, a large fine and expulsion from the tribal area.<sup>29</sup> Unlike the earlier 2004 agreement, the government was not a signatory. All of the

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<sup>24</sup> “Pakistan Hails Tribal Strategy Against Foreign Militants Along Afghan Border,” AFP, March 26 2007.

<sup>25</sup> “Pakistan gets tribes to fight its battles in new strategy,” AFP, March 22 2007.

<sup>26</sup> B. Raman, “Anti-Uzbek Anger In South Waziristan,” *International Terrorism Monitor—South Asia Analysis Group Paper No. 215*, April 8 2007 <<http://www.saag.org/percent5Cpapers22 percent5Cpaper2200.html>> (May 2 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Ismail Khan, “The game is up for Uzbeks,” *Dawn*, April 5 2007. <<http://www.dawn.com/2007/04/05/top9.htm>> (April 10 2007).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Ismail Khan, “Tribe vows not to shelter Uzbeks,” *Dawn*, April 16 2007. <<http://www.dawn.com/2007/04/16/top7.htm>> (April 30 2007).

militant commanders who signed this earlier agreement have reportedly gone into hiding. The Uzbeks themselves are believed to have fled to North Waziristan.

To be sure, the old tribal elders are losing ground to a more radicalized pro-Taliban leadership.<sup>30</sup> Many commentators have noted the increasing talibanization of Pushtun society.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, some see in this trend a Pakistani willingness to conclude agreements with the tribal elements in the Northwest Territories, a return to the old Pakistan policy of supporting the Taliban, this time directed against the Karzai government.<sup>32</sup> Reportedly, Pakistan's intelligence services reported to President Musharaff: "the NATO consensus on Afghanistan will not long survive a U.S. defeat in Iraq and/or U.S. hostilities against Iran."<sup>33</sup> So, in this view Musharaff is hedging his bets against an early NATO departure – divide and rule now and later a return to the old pro-Taliban policy, this time without the support for al Qaeda.

Assessments on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for Central Asia run the gamut from chaos to measured success with both sides pointing to the renewed violence in the south and east of the country to support their argument. On the one hand, a recent report by the British development think tank, SENLIS, demurs, "The international community has reached a tipping point in southern Afghanistan. The anticipated major spring offensive by the Taliban against international forces requires an urgent reassessment of the international community's counter-insurgency strategy." In contrast, a U.S. military spokesman in Afghanistan viewed the rise in violence that began in 2005 as the Taliban acting "out of desperation". However, the UN Special Representative for Afghanistan Tom Koenigs said that 2006 provided a mixed picture with three quarters of the country showing some progress and the rest with serious problems. For his part, the counter-terrorism adviser to the U.S. Secretary of State, David Kilcullen, said: "Even in the worst-case scenario of Talibanistan to the south and east, Afghanistan would not fall. It has a whole area north of the Hindu Kush which would be viable as a state; Kabul would still be viable as capital."

Even the SENLIS report sharply distinguishes between the local "grassroots" insurgency in Afghanistan and the so-called "Global Jihad Insurgency." SENLIS asserts: "Research shows that the 'grassroots' insurgency driven by economic concerns and grievances significantly

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<sup>30</sup> Presentation by US Army Colonel Thomas Wilhelm, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, March 29 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Sushant Sareen, "Changing Face of Pashtun Society," *The Tribune Online Edition*, April 25 2007, <<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070425/edit.htm#6>> (May 1 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Pakistan's Talibanization," April 3 2007, <<http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2007/4/3/134120.shtml>> (May 1 2007).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

overshadows the political and religious insurgency.” The conflation of these two trends in Afghanistan (as well as in Iraq) has inflated the threat posed by radical Islam. This difference is further blurred in Afghanistan as recruits join the Taliban for economic rather than religious motives. Apparently individuals fighting for the Taliban will earn at least four times as much as they would from the government. For example, Kandahar policemen receive their salary of US\$80 a month only irregularly while local Taliban commanders are willing to pay up to US\$500 a month.<sup>34</sup>

There is a strong tendency among some Western commentators to see the bogeyman of radical jihadists everywhere in Central Asia. But much of the fighting has often more to do with local tribal politics. To be sure, jihadists can hijack a movement such as they did with the Taliban under Mullah Omar. But as we see with the “bad Uzbeks,” tribal politics will often come to the fore eventually. It is perhaps singularly ironic that the “bad Uzbeks” were being targeted in part because they refused to attack the Americans in Afghanistan. It is also ironic that periodic tribal bloodletting and not a brilliant counterinsurgency campaign by the government leads to stability in the region.

### **Weltanschauung and Realpolitik in Central Asia**

Although many commentaries suggest that a new Great Game has arisen in Central Asia, with the United States (and to a lesser extent the EU) on one side and Russia and China on the other, these commentaries misread the strategic agendas pursued by each of these major players. Each of these major powers is pursuing a different agenda typified by a different historical figure. For Russia that figure was Alexander Gorchakov, for China, Deng Xiaopeng and for the United States, Andrew Jackson.

#### *Russia, Putin and Alexander Gorchakov*

*With each attempt to divide [Russia] and after each disintegration it restores itself again by the mysterious ancient power of its spiritual identity.*

--Ivan Ilin<sup>35</sup>

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia’s power declined precipitously. The 1990s saw a continuation of this decline as Boris Yeltsin oversaw the further weakening of the Russian state and a

<sup>34</sup> SENLIS Council, *Afghanistan Five Years Later: The Return of the Taliban*, (Spring/Summer 2006)

<[http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/014\\_publication/documents/5y\\_chapter\\_01](http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/014_publication/documents/5y_chapter_01)> (May 21 2006).

<sup>35</sup> As quoted in Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia* (Taurus: New York, 2004), p. 3.

continuing loss of status. Parallel with this decline was the decrease in the price of oil which sunk to a low of US\$10 in 1999. Russia found itself incapable of resolving the Chechen conflict. Vladimir Putin took over the presidency in 1999 with a vow to resolve the Chechen conflict, strengthen the Russian state and revive Russia as a great power. The model for this revival is Prince Alexander Gorchakov, a 19<sup>th</sup> century foreign minister who restored the perception of Russian as a great power after the Crimean debacle in 1856.<sup>36</sup> Gorchakov combined domestic reforms with an active and flexible foreign policy. For his part, Putin knew that he needed to strengthen the Russian state and rely more heavily on the economic instrument of power.

By 1999, the Central Asian countries had increasingly fallen out of the Russian orbit. Only Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan remained members of the Collective Security Treaty and none except Tajikistan welcomed Russian military cooperation. However, several events in 1999 increased the sense of vulnerability in the region to transnational terrorism. In particular the IMU incursions in Kyrgyzstan in August 1999 and the February 1999 bombings in Tashkent reminded the locals that they could do little to assure their own security. Russia became committed to a more active policy targeted against terrorism and the 2000 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit in Bishkek announced the formation of a rapid reaction force. Unfortunately for Russia, rhetoric and commitment did not match capabilities – the oil market had not yet begun to revive. So while Russia was willing to do more, it lacked the capacity do so and the Central Asian states knew this. Russia was also ineffective in defeating the Taliban through its Northern Alliance allies.

The attacks in America on September 11, 2001 posed a policy dilemma for Putin. Should he cooperate and acquiesce to American and allied basing in Central Asia or should he follow a policy of passive resistance. In hindsight it appears he gambled that American interest in the region would prove transient. Putin's policy towards the region became more active and he pursued several economic agreements with individual countries. At the same time, it should be noted, the price of gas and oil continued to rise. Thus when American policy of promoting democracy ran into trouble in Central Asia after the "color revolutions" in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, Russia was willing to step in with security assistance. In particular, a disaffected Uzbekistan forged new bilateral agreements with Russia.

Thus Putin's policy was to revive Russia as a great power using the increasing importance of the economic instrument of power, as the price of oil and gas continued to rise. He was well-positioned to exploit

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6-8

Central Asian disaffection with the U.S. policy of promoting human rights and democracy in light of the effective elimination of the radical violent Islamist threat in 2001. Throughout the 1990s, Russia's relations with Uzbekistan were poor as the Uzbeks were intent on pursuing their own independent regional policy. In a remarkable turnaround, Russia was able to secure basing rights in Uzbekistan in December 2006. This decision followed the vote in the Uzbek parliament to rejoin the Russian-led CSTO.<sup>37</sup>

In recent years, Russia has moved beyond Gorchakov to a much more assertive, some might say arrogant, regional approach. The British newspaper the *Guardian* said that recent efforts by the Russia hydrocarbon giant Gazprom could place "western supplies at risk."<sup>38</sup>

In August 2006, Senator Richard Lugar called Russia, along with Venezuela and Iran, an "adversarial regime" because it used energy supplies for political gain.<sup>39</sup> In May 2006, U.S. Vice President Richard Cheney said, "Other actions by the Russian government have been counterproductive, and could begin to affect relations with other countries. No legitimate interest is served when oil and gas become tools of intimidation or blackmail, either by supply manipulation or attempts to monopolize transportation."<sup>40</sup> At least one Russian pundit interpreted these remarks as furthering U.S. energy interests.<sup>41</sup>

For his part, Putin had harsh words for the U.S. in his Munich speech in February 2007. He was referring to the United States when he said: "Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force – military force – in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts."<sup>42</sup> He continued, "One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political,

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<sup>37</sup> M K Bhadrakumar, "The Great Game on a razor's edge", *Asian Times Online*, December 23 2006, <[http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central\\_Asia/HL23Ago1.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/HL23Ago1.html)> (February 26 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Terry Macalister, "Russian oil grab 'puts western supplies at risk'", *The Guardian*, October 2 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Senator Richard Lugar, Speech at Purdue University, August 29 2006, <<http://news.uns.purdue.edu/html3month/2006/060829.SP-Lugar.energy.html>> (January 19 2007).

<sup>40</sup> Vice President's Remarks at the 2006 Vilnius Conference, May 4 2006, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060504-1.html>> (February 26 2007).

<sup>41</sup> Dmitriy Orlov, "Wrath of Raw Materials Cardinal -- Dick Cheney's Anti-Russian Statements Based On US Administration's Energy Interests", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, June 1 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Speech at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy February 10 2007. <[http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu\\_2007=&menu\\_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=179](http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2007=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=179)> (February 26 2007).

cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations. Well, who likes this? Who is happy about this?”

Russia actions continue to raise European security concerns. The Russian agreement with Turkmenistan to ship its gas via a new pipeline to be constructed through Kazakhstan seemed to undercut U.S. and European plans to build a trans-Caspian pipeline. The recent EU-Russian summit in May 2007 ended badly amid recriminations over human rights, the status of Kosovo, a cyber war against Estonia and the continued embargo of Polish meat.<sup>43</sup>

#### *China and Deng Xiaoping*

China's approach towards Central Asia reflects the dominance of economic factors in its overall strategy and its perception that it needs to build influence slowly and steadily. Moreover it is willing to cooperate with Russia tactically because it considers Russia to be a reviving power. In contrast, the U.S. is perceived to have a declining influence in the region. According to one Chinese scholar:

“[T]he United States, long the dominant force in the Asia-Pacific region, has been so preoccupied with the war on terror and so mired in the Iraqi war that it has precious little energy left to deal with the rapid changes taking place in the Asia-Pacific region. Other than continuing to strengthen its bilateral security alliances, which it dominates, the United States has failed to come up with any appropriate strategy. The trend is for U.S. influence in the region to continue to decline.”<sup>44</sup>

The same Chinese scholar sees cooperation with Russia as a mixed bag. Although the Russians are willing to cooperate on security and cultural matters through the SCO, they are more reticent about trade and economics. Moreover, he views the Eurasian Economic Community and the CSTO as direct competitors to the SCO.

Chinese cooperation with Russia must be understood in light of their perception of the main threat and the assessment of Russian weakness. Many Chinese commentators view the U.S. establishment of bases in Central Asia as part of a long term U.S. strategy of containment.<sup>45</sup> They

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<sup>43</sup> “EU-Russian talks end in acrimony,” *BBC News Online*, May 18 2007. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6668111.stm>> (May 22 2007).

<sup>44</sup> Xu Ping, “Analysis of China's Peripheral Security Environment,” *Journal of International Studies* 118 (March 2007), China Institute of International Studies, Open Source Center translation, CPP20070419455002.

<sup>45</sup> Cf., Liu Jingbo, *Chinese National Security Strategy in the Early 21st Century* (Shishi Chubanshe, 2006).

view the differences between the U.S. and China as “structural in nature.” They believe that the U.S. exploited the post 9/11 environment to establish strategic supremacy in regions such as Central Asia where previously the U.S. was not a major player. In contrast, Russia is viewed as a much lesser power than the Soviet Union and therefore a country with which China needs to cooperate in order to offset U.S. influence. Together through the SCO they have enough strength to resist U.S. penetration in Central Asia, something they could not have done separately.<sup>46</sup>

Common cause against the Americans provides the main stimulus for Sino-Russian cooperation. Once (and if) the U.S. withdraws, that cooperation should decline. The differences between China and Russia are substantial and “structural in nature.”<sup>47</sup> First, Russia has promoted the CSTO as the primary security organization in Central Asia. This contrasts with China’s desire to give precedence to the SCO. Second, Russia has pushed economic integration through such mechanisms as the CIS and the Eurasian Economic Community that exclude the Chinese. Moreover, China and Russia are perceived to be pursuing different objectives through the SCO. Russia for its part is viewed as mainly wanting by partnering with China to balance the West.<sup>48</sup> By contrast, China’s goals are more specific and pragmatic. The Ferghana valley, viewed as a hotbed of the so-called “three forces” – separatism, extremism and terrorism, is only a mountain range away. Moreover, China views Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan as important sources of energy supplies and the SCO provides a forum in which to engage these countries. Even here there are tensions since Russia would prefer to control access to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Despite these underlying tensions, China realizes that it must manage its security relationship with Russia successfully in order to protect its vulnerable north and west flanks. For the Chinese the SCO and multilateral relations are the fora of choice. The fear is that Russia may take its own independent course, or worse yet be seduced by the West as it was in the early 1990s. Chinese fears are not misplaced in this regard. As one Russian scholar has noted, Russia’s approach to China depends on Russia’s relationship with the West.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ping, “Analysis of China's Peripheral Security Environment”.

<sup>47</sup> Jiang Xinwei, “Sino-Russian Relations under the Framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,” *Contemporary International Relations*, State Council's Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations (March 20 2007), translated by Open Source Center, CPP20070418455001.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Alexander Lukin, “Russia’s Image of China and Russian-Chinese Relations,” CNAPS Working Paper, May 2001, <[http://www.brookings.edu/fp/cnaps/papers/lukinwp\\_01.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/fp/cnaps/papers/lukinwp_01.pdf)> (May 1 2007).

The point of departure for an understanding of China's approach to Central Asia is Deng Xiaoping, who argued in the early 1990s that China should "lie low and bide our time" [taoguo yanghui] and wait for opportunities for decisive action (yousuo zuowei).<sup>50</sup> China should take only that action necessary to assure peaceful development. My own survey of Chinese "Americanists" found only one individual who thought that China should take a leadership role by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most scholars think that China may achieve a prominent position only after 100 years and believe that China should cooperate with its neighbors. They view only the Japanese with real suspicion. Although individuals in the American embassy thought that most Chinese were spouting the official line, I found the views remarkably widespread among undergraduates, graduate students, scholars and professors.<sup>51</sup>

The Chinese also demonstrate a remarkable appreciation for Russia's interests in Central Asia. China works with the Russians through the SCO while not opposing Russia's efforts to further its CSTO activities in the region. Moreover, China realizes that it can cut deals quite successfully with individual Central Asian countries and use the SCO as a multilateral forum. The Chinese engaged the Uzbeks quite skillfully early on by switching the anti-terrorist center for the SCO from Bishkek to Tashkent and putting an Uzbek at its head.

*America, Mahan and Andrew Jackson*

Although several scholars have called George W. Bush's foreign policy Wilsonian because it advocates the spread of liberal democracy, others have resisted that description because of the administration's willingness to use unilateral violent action rather than multilateral consensus as the means to promote democracy. For his part, American foreign policy scholar Walter Russell Mead calls George W. Bush a Jacksonian – a willingness to use quick decisive even violent action to rectify perceived wrongs.<sup>52</sup>

The speed with which America acted after the 9/11 attacks and the willingness to carry the fight to Iraq bespeak a Jacksonian approach – a need to strike out at the bad guys. It follows also in the U.S. tradition of the strategic offensive at least since the Spanish-American conflict when

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<sup>50</sup> Yongnian Zheng and Sow Keat Tok, *China's 'Peaceful Rise': Concept And Practice, Discussion Paper 1*, China Policy Institute, University of Nottingham, November 2005 <[http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/china-policy-institute/publications/documents/DiscussionPaper1\\_ChinaPeacefulRise.pdf#search=percent22deng percent20lie percent20low percent22](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/china-policy-institute/publications/documents/DiscussionPaper1_ChinaPeacefulRise.pdf#search=percent22deng percent20lie percent20low percent22)> (September 30 2006)

<sup>51</sup> Interviews with about fifty Chinese nationals, Beijing and Tientsin, June 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Walter Russell Mead, "Bush's Policies Achieve Success in Difficult Year," Council of Foreign Relations webpage, December 22 2003, see <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/6626/mead.html>> (February 28 2007).



the Navy Policy Board, heavily influenced by one of its members Alfred Mahan, articulated a policy of bringing the fight to the enemy before he could bring it to the U.S..<sup>53</sup>

This global approach however also exposes the transient nature of U.S. policy in Central Asia and its willingness to advocate democracy in particularly infertile areas. A recent Rand report referred to U.S. interests in Central Asia as “limited” prior to 9/11 and said the “region was remote, landlocked, and of little strategic consequence”.<sup>54</sup> Once the U.S. succeeded in ousting the Taliban from Afghanistan it really had no clear strategic interest to remain in the region. Despite the fascination of many commentators with the energy resources in the area, these resources are not of very direct importance to the United States. Moreover, while defeating the Taliban the U.S. also oversaw the destruction of the IMU. So in regard to the U.S.’ two main areas of concern, energy and terrorism, the situation in Central Asia was largely resolved.

Why then promote democracy? For one thing the Bush administration sincerely believes that the most effective way to counter terrorism is to promote democracy. It also believes that democracy will result in governments favorable to the U.S.. This can be seen in the latest National Security Strategy that appeared in March 2006 which said that U.S. goals were to end tyranny and further democracy.

Central Asian regimes believed that U.S. policies had led to the color revolutions and did not want to see their own hold on power threatened. They had welcomed the U.S. as a counterweight to the Russians but later came to see the Chinese as a better balance to the Russians. Therefore the Central Asian countries and particularly Uzbekistan thought they could dispense with American assistance, which came at too high a cost.

Despite some misguided rhetoric regarding the success of U.S. pro-democracy policy in Central Asia, the reverse is true.<sup>55</sup> One relatively unbiased indicator by Freedom House (which receives funding from USAID) shows a decline in its democracy index for all the countries in Central Asia from 1999 to 2006.<sup>56</sup> Kazakhstan went from 5.5 to 6.4 with the higher number meaning less free on a scale from 1 to 7. And although the U.S. government is quick to applaud economic reforms in the region and particularly in Kazakhstan, these economic reforms are part of a global pattern and were well in motion before the U.S.’ renewed interest

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<sup>53</sup> Norman Friedman, “Transformation a Century Ago,” *Naval History* 19 (April 2005).

<sup>54</sup> Olga Oliker and David Shlapak, *US Interests in Central Asia*, (RAND: Santa Monica 2005), p. v.

<sup>55</sup> Joanna Lillis, “Kazakhstani Leaders Hail Success of President’s Washington Visit,” *Eurasia Insight*, October 2 2006  
<<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav100206a.shtml>> (April 2 2007).

<sup>56</sup> Freedom House, Table 8, Democracy Score, Year-to-Year summaries by Region, <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/Chart100File117.pdf>> (April 2 2007).

in 2001.<sup>57</sup> For example, Kazakhstan moved from an index number of around 40 percent economically free in 1998 to around 60 percent free in 2007.<sup>58</sup>

The U.S. does have a long term interest in opening up all regions globally, especially those with large energy reserves. But it must reflect on the costs and benefits and pick its fights, or better yet to get others to do the fighting on its behalf. Hence, we have seen the Europeanizing of the U.S. Central Asian policy. This is most starkly illustrated by the fact that NATO has taken the lead in ISAF in Afghanistan as well as in the relaunch of the EU strategy towards Central Asia in 2007. The EU Commission said in a confidential internal memo in February 2007 that it should increase contacts with Central Asian countries to secure energy resources that are of ‘permanent strategic importance’.<sup>59</sup> Increasing EU interest in Central Asia can also be seen in a variety of other sources. Both the International Crisis Group and the EU’s own Institute of Strategic Studies wrote reports in 2006 advocating a more engaged EU policy towards Central Asia.<sup>60</sup>

### The Europeanization of the West’s Zentralasienpolitik

In contrast to the U.S., the EU does have direct, clear and immediate strategic interests in Central Asia. Russia provides over quarter of the EU’s natural gas (and half its imports). According to the International Crisis Group, Russia “mops up” Central Asian gas and resells it at a significant markup to Europeans.<sup>61</sup> Central Asian gas will become an increasingly large percentage of the natural gas that the Russians supply the Europeans. Currently Gazprom exports over 150 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas to Western Europe. Central Asia may soon supply 100 bcm of that total.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Cf., Tim Kane, et al., 2007 Index of Economic Freedom, Heritage Foundation, <<http://www.heritage.org/research/features/index/index.cfm>> (April 2 2007).

<sup>58</sup> Heritage Foundation, Kazakhstan, see <<http://www.heritage.org/index/countryFiles/pdfs/Kazakhstan.pdf>> (April 2 2007).

<sup>59</sup> Stephen Mulvey, “EU dreams of Central Asian gas,” *BBC online*, March 27 2007, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6500943.stm>> (April 2 2007).

<sup>60</sup> International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role for the European Union?* April 10 2006 <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4065&l=1>> (April 2 2007); Anna Matveeva, *EU stakes in Central Asia*, July 2006, <<http://www.iss-eu.org/chaillot/chaig1.pdf>> (March 28 2007); see also Uwe Halbach, *Uzbekistan as a Challenge for the West’s Central Asian Political Policies (Politik)*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, September 2006 <[http://www.swp-berlin.org/de/common/get\\_document.php?asset\\_id=3314](http://www.swp-berlin.org/de/common/get_document.php?asset_id=3314)> (April 2 2007).

<sup>61</sup> International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role for the European Union?*, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Daniel Kimmage, “Eurasia: Central Asian Gas Powers Regional Aspirations,” *RFE/RL*, January 25 2006 <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/01/cc5007c-e8bc-4a9d-8a7f-a36b3fa27b85.html>> (April 26, 2007).

The EU has launched a major initiative towards Central Asia just as its sources of supply for natural gas are increasing.<sup>63</sup> However, demand will outstrip supply by 2012 so the long term prospects still look bleak. At a landmark meeting of the EU troika with the foreign ministers of the Central Asian states in Astana on 28 March 2007, the German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said, "The EU aims to diversify its energy policy. This is why it is necessary to increase our contacts with Central Asia."<sup>64</sup>

Central Asia also lies astride a major transit route for illegal drugs from Afghanistan to Europe. Around 65 percent of Afghani opium transits Central Asia en route to Western Europe.<sup>65</sup> Apparently over 90 percent of the heroin in the United Kingdom originates in Afghanistan.<sup>66</sup> Thus drugs and the drug economy pose a serious problem for Europe.

Energy security, drugs, transnational terrorism, the need to assure the continuing relevance of NATO and their own armed forces as well as real humanitarian concerns were among the factors that led the European countries to support NATO's increasing involvement through the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. There are clear tensions among the European forces participating in ISAF between those engaged in active hostilities against insurgents in the south and east of the country such as the UK, Denmark or the Netherlands, and those more oriented towards peaceful reconstruction in the north and west such as Germany and Italy. Even the EU representative to Afghanistan has complained that German reticence to deploy troops to the south "would be acceptable if it were accompanied by a greater willingness to proceed against the illegally armed groups in the north."<sup>67</sup>

Whatever the motivations and approaches of individual countries, the European presence in ISAF shows a clear commitment to Central Asia as well as Afghanistan. They may have been dragged there by the United States through NATO but their strategic interests in the region will ensure that they remain.

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<sup>63</sup> Derek Brower, "Impossible bedfellows," *Petroleum Economist*, April 2007; see also Nicklas Norling, "EU's Central Asia Policy: The Adoption of a Strategy Paper 2007-2013," *Central Asia and Caucasus* (forthcoming, June 2007).

<sup>64</sup> EU Observer, "EU launches new Central Asia policy in Kazakhstan," March 28 2007 <<http://euobserver.com/9/23805>> (April 4 2007).

<sup>65</sup> Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy, "Opiate Smuggling Routes from Afghanistan to Europe and Asia," *Jane's Intelligence Review* March 1 2003.

<sup>66</sup> UK Parliament, House of Commons, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, May 14 2002, <<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/voo20514/debtext/20514-01.htm>> (April 4 2007).

<sup>67</sup> Germany Defends Its Operations in Northern Afghanistan as 'Model for NATO' EUP20061128086001 Berlin ddp in German 0501 GMT 28 Nov 06 [Report by Martin Roy: "Germany Campaigning for Its Afghanistan Strategy"]

### Policy Implications

First, U.S. policy-makers should understand that Central Asia is largely peripheral to their global strategy. It is not, as some have argued, of increasing strategic importance. This is true for a variety of reasons. Despite the drumbeat about large supplies of readily accessible energy, the reverse is true. The supplies are not as large as some propaganda suggests and the quality is often uneven. Moreover, access to this energy is controlled by Russia which intends to use energy to revive and reassert its regional hegemony. Russia views Central Asia as its backyard. In addition, in the short to mid term, radical violent Islam will not find fertile ground in the region.

Second, the policy of promoting democracy and human rights in the region will continue to prove ineffectual and indeed counterproductive. The U.S. lacks any real leverage to further democratization in a region where the Russians and the Chinese are much more important actors.

Third, nevertheless, the U.S. should sustain a minimum presence in the region. In particular, it should continue to maintain the base at Manas. This has several benefits. The Afghan conflict will continue for another generation with likely NATO and U.S. involvement. As the Rand study concludes: "From a purely operational perspective, the key goal for the U.S. military in the region is to build the framework that will allow for the smooth and rapid reintroduction of American forces into Central Asia should this be necessary or desirable in the future."<sup>68</sup>

Fourth, the U.S. should maintain a continuing presence to counter charges that it lacks staying power and to facilitate reentry. This was certainly the charge made after the U.S. was perceived to abandon Afghanistan at the end of the Cold War. Further interventions here and elsewhere will be eased by a sense among the locals that the U.S. will continue to support them if they are threatened again by Islamist elements. A continuing U.S. presence will also prove useful to Central Asian governments as they continue to play the major powers off against each other.

Fifth, the U.S. should exploit local tribal and clan politics to deal effectively with the jihadists in Central Asia. The episode of the "bad Uzbeks" in south Waziristan illustrates this very well. Mullah Nazir is no friend of the Americans but he was willing to take action against the IMU. If the local tribes are fighting each other then they are not fighting the Americans.

Sixth, the U.S. should maintain a presence in the region because it is a global player, Central Asia is not important so much in its own right but because of the interaction of regional players that surround it –

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<sup>68</sup> Olikier and Shlapak, *US Interests in Central Asia*, p. 45.

particularly Russia, China, and to an increasing extent the EU and India. As Eugene Rumer has argued: “In the context of the U.S. global posture which puts a premium on unimpeded access and ability to deploy forces quickly, the crossroads of Eurasia is an important piece of real estate. Its control by a hostile power resulting in U.S. loss of access could hurt U.S. interests in several regions—from China to the Middle East.”<sup>69</sup>

Seventh, the U.S. should engage the Europeans to have a stronger presence in the region and support ongoing EU initiatives. Europeans are the ones who benefit most directly from the supply of natural gas from the region. And they are the ones who are most likely to suffer from Russian attempts to manipulate supplies or simply from the uncertainty and instability that characterizes the region.

Eighth, U.S. policymakers should realize that it is the very U.S. presence in Central Asia that provides the major basis for Sino-Russian cooperation. The larger the U.S. presence the more the cooperation there will be between China and Russia. Indeed China and Russia like having a minimum U.S. presence in the region if only because it allows them to cooperate when there would otherwise be tensions.

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<sup>69</sup> Eugene B. Rumer, *American, Russian and European Interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, The Aspen Institute, August 2006  
<[http://www.aspeninstitute.org/atf/cf/{DEB6F227-659B-4EC8-8F848DF23CA704F5}/cpEBRumer percent20Paper.pdf](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/atf/cf/{DEB6F227-659B-4EC8-8F848DF23CA704F5}/cpEBRumer%20Paper.pdf)> (April 4 2007).



# A Match Made in Heaven? Strategic Convergence between China and Russia

*Kyrre Elvenes Brækhus and Indra Øverland\**

## ABSTRACT

This article examines the strategic convergence between Russia and China. Strategic convergence is understood as material compatibility and overlap of key interests with regard to long-term developments in world politics, providing the basis for extensive tactical co-operation between two or more states. The article focuses on the compatibility of Russia and China in terms of complementary economies, location and political outlook. The match between Russian natural resources and Chinese markets is examined in particular. The article concludes that a closer relationship between the two countries in many ways would be of mutual advantage, but that it is far from certain that an alliance will develop.

*Keywords* • China-Russia Relations • Strategic Convergence • Arms • Economy

## Introduction

Russia is the world's second largest oil producer, after Saudi Arabia,<sup>1</sup> and China the world's second largest oil consumer, after the United States.<sup>2</sup> While bilateral trade-flows are still small, there is great potential inherent in the relationship. Old hostilities have been put aside after the final settlement in 2004 of a series of disputes along the 3645-km border which had plagued Sino-Russo relations for centuries and caused war in

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<sup>1</sup> Russia had an output of 9.5 million barrels per day in 2005, the most recent year for which figures are available, compared to Saudi Arabia's output of 11.1 million barrels per day. Energy Information Administration, *Top World Oil Producers 2005*, <[http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/topworldtables1\\_2.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/topworldtables1_2.html)> (March 15 2007).

<sup>2</sup> China passed Japan as the second largest consumer of petroleum in 2003, and is currently the world's third largest net importer of oil behind the US and Japan. Energy Information Administration, *China Energy Data, Statistics, and Analysis: Oil Gas, Electricity and Coal* (Washington DC: Energy Information Administration, 2006), p.2. Throughout this paper, data for China refer to mainland China, excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan, unless otherwise noted.

1969.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Beijing and Moscow have compatible views on separatism, Islamism, terrorism, democratization and stability. American commentators such as Peter Brookes of the Heritage Foundation have argued that the Sino–Russian relationship undercuts U.S. global interests “on an unprecedented scale.”<sup>4</sup> This article explores whether the strategic convergence is sufficiently strong for the two states to set aside their differences, and build a sustainable partnership. The article aims for as neutral a stance as possible, neither cheering on nor condemning cooperation between China and Russia. Instead it aims to provide a simple assessment of the scope for closer cooperation between the two countries on the basis of strategic convergence.

“Strategic convergence” is here defined as the overlap of key objectives and interests with regard to long-term developments in world politics, which provides the basis for extensive tactical co-operation between two or more states.<sup>5</sup> To examine strategic convergence between China and Russia we analyze material as well as ideational factors. By “material factors” we mean physical and economic aspects, with the emphasis on complementary economies, natural resources, geography and technology. At the level of specific resources, the focus is on oil and gas, but other non-renewable extractables like wood and food are also included. By “ideational factors” we refer to ideology and values with focus on views of separatism, independent politicized Islam, terrorism, democracy and U.S. hegemony.

## Complementary Economies

### *China's Dependence on Russian Oil and Gas*

The new Sino–Russian relationship is driven by trade and mutual economic interest. China's economy is the fourth largest in the world, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$2.8 trillion;<sup>6</sup> in terms of purchasing power parity it is the second largest, with an output of US\$8.6

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<sup>3</sup> Most of the border had been agreed upon when Jiang Zemin visited Moscow in 1991. Vladimir Paramonov and Aleksey Stokov, *Otnosheniya mezhdru Rossiey i Kitaem: Istorija, sovremennost i budushchee*, (Relations between Russia and China: History, Contemporaneity and Future), CSRC Occasional Paper, 2006, p.5

<sup>4</sup> Peter Brookes, “Sino–Russian Strategic Romance,” *Military.com*, March 27 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Gary Hamel, *Leading the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2000) employed the term “strategic convergence” to refer to the limited scope of strategies used by rivals in different circumstances. He argued that strategies converged more than they ought to because strategies which are successful in certain contexts get imitated in other contexts by agents that do not understand the need to design custom strategies for different situations. This is not the sense in which the term is employed here.

<sup>6</sup> Total GDP 2005, *World Development Indicators* (Washington: World Bank, 2006), p.1. China is likely to overtake Germany as the world's third largest economy by the end of the decade.



trillion.<sup>7</sup> China has pursued a dual transition process, moving simultaneously from a planned economy to a market economy and from a rural, agrarian economy to a more urban, industrial one. In this process it has emerged as the world's second largest consumer of oil products at 7.4 million barrels per day,<sup>8</sup> a figure projected to at least double to 13.4 million barrels per day by 2025.<sup>9</sup> Around 40 percent of growth in world oil demand between 2001 and 2005 came from China.<sup>10</sup>

Russia provided 10.1 percent of China's total oil imports in 2005. This amounted to 257,000 barrels per day, and was up from 29,700 barrels in 2000.<sup>11</sup> However, this figure is set to increase steeply, in particular if Russia's oil can provide China with a more secure foundation for its economic transformation than supplies from volatile Middle Eastern and African states. Energy reserves in western Siberia are estimated at up to 200 billion barrels, and those in eastern Siberia 50bn barrels. In the Sakhalin region there could be 28 billion barrels. For comparative purposes, Iraq is thought to hold 112.5 billion barrels.<sup>12</sup> Rising global temperatures will in the future make it easier for Russia to access these resources.<sup>13</sup>

Geography in the form of the shared Sino-Russian border has a crucial impact on the potential for trade between the two countries. For China, the strategic importance of access to Russian raw materials is great, because other assets are largely dependent on open waterways, in particular the straights of Hormuz and Malacca. These could be cut off in the event of a crisis over Taiwan or other major confrontation with the U.S.. Moreover, conflicts not directly related to China and beyond its control could result in supply disruption, for example a confrontation

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<sup>7</sup> PPP GDP 2005, *World Development Indicators* (Washington: World Bank, 2006), p.1. This is only USD 3.8 billion behind the United States.

<sup>8</sup> 2006 Estimate. Energy Information Administration, *China Energy Data, Statistics, and Analysis: Oil Gas, Electricity and Coal* (Washington DC: EIA, August 2006, p.2.

<sup>9</sup> Wayne Morrison, *China's Economic Conditions*, CRS Brief for Congress, May 15 2006, p.16. The International Energy Agency projects that China's oil imports will surge from around 2 mb/d in 2003 to more than 10 mb/d in 2030, equal to over 74 percent of expected domestic demand. See Faith Birol, "China Presentation," *World Energy Outlook 2004* (Paris: International Energy Agency, 2004), p.23. China's reliance on imported oil was slightly down in 2005, but this trend is unlikely to continue. See *People's Daily*, "China's Dependence on Imported Oil Down 2.2 Percentage Points in 2005," January 13 2006.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16

<sup>11</sup> Tian Chunrong, "2005 nian zhongguo shiyou jinchukou zhuangkuang fenxi" (Analysis of China's Oil Import and Export in 2005), *Guoji Shiyou Jingji (International Petroleum Economics)* 14, 3 (2006), p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> See Lyle Goldstein and Vitaly Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," *Survival*, 48, 1 (2006), p. 176.

<sup>13</sup> "Comrade Climate Change: Rising Global Temperatures is Good for Russia," *Economist.com*.

<[http://www.economist.com/daily/columns/greenview/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=8443195&fsrc=nwl](http://www.economist.com/daily/columns/greenview/displaystory.cfm?story_id=8443195&fsrc=nwl)> (March 29 2006).

between Iran and the U.S.. Iran currently supplies 11.2 percent of China's total imports and the Middle East as a whole supplies 47.2 percent of total oil imports.<sup>14</sup> China sources 30.3 percent of its total petroleum imports from Africa.<sup>15</sup> A crisis in these regions would have severe consequences for Beijing. By contrast, Russian supplies can arrive in China through their shared border or the Pacific, and therefore carry a different risk profile.

*Russian Raw Materials to Avoid Confrontation with the West*

Chinese imports of raw materials from conflict-ridden countries in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia led to accusations from Washington and NGOs that China is propping up unsavory regimes and failing to act as responsible member of the international community. This argument carries some weight, given that approximately 60 percent of Sudan's oil output is sold to China,<sup>16</sup> and 5.2 percent of China's imported oil comes from Sudan.<sup>17</sup> Until 2007 China consistently refused to support the presence of UN peacekeepers in Sudan, but after coming under heavy criticism it has changed its position. When President Hu Jintao visited Khartoum in February 2007 he appears to have leaned on Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir, and soon after China's Assistant Foreign Minister explicitly called on Sudan to accept UN forces, something which Khartoum subsequently decided to do.<sup>18</sup> While China now has worked out a position on Sudan which makes it less likely that Beijing is singled out for criticism, the situation illustrates the difficulties China faces in terms of balancing its hunger for resources with its commitment to non-intervention and the demands of the international community. China also has established a strong presence in Myanmar and in Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe, and future tension with the West could emanate from there. Considerable concern arose in Washington after Venezuela, the world's fifth largest oil exporter, led by left-wing president Hugo Chavez, offered Chinese firms operating rights to mature oil fields.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Chunrong, "2005 nian zhongguo shiyou jinchukou zhuangkuang fenxi" (Analysis of China's Oil Import and Export in 2005), p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> The leading suppliers are Angola (13.7 percent), Sudan (5.2 percent), Congo (4.4 percent) and Equatorial Guinea (3.0 percent). *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Drew Thompson, "Disaccord on Sudan Could Poison China-US Ties," *International Herald Tribune*, November 18 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Chunrong, "2005 nian zhongguo shiyou jinchukou zhuangkuang fenxi" (Analysis of China's Oil Import and Export in 2005), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Edith M. Lederer, "Sudan Allows UN Forces in Darfur", *Associated Press*, April 17 2007; Helene Cooper, "Diplomatic Memo; Darfur Collides with the Olympics, and China Yields," *New York Times*, April 13, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Hennock, "China's Global Hunt for Oil," *BBC News*, March 9, 2005. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4191683.stm> (March 29 2007).

While such developments are often interpreted as part of a strategy to support what Washington considers “rogue states,” they are not so much an ideologically motivated challenge to the United States as a reflection of China’s rising demand for imported raw materials, and a series of pragmatic decisions to channel Chinese investment to states where there is little competition from American and European corporations. China seeks to expand control over supplies of petroleum, minerals and other raw materials through equity investments primarily for reasons of state and economic security.

This strategy has in a sense been encouraged by Washington, because it has sought to block Chinese bids for less controversial assets, such as CNOOC’s US\$18.5 billion attempted takeover of Unocal,<sup>20</sup> on the grounds that China should not be allowed to take over “American” resources. In fact, Unocal’s assets are not, strictly speaking, American: most of them are located in Asia, an important reason why Unocal was attractive to China. In a context where Beijing is criticized for collaborating with African and Middle Eastern states with little Western presence, while it struggles to gain access to raw materials in more stable areas, China has strong incentives to increase imports from Russia, even though the current political climate in Russia makes it unlikely that China will be allowed to make large equity investments. On the other hand, in June 2006 Sinopec was able to acquire a 97 percent stake in Udmurtneft, a medium-sized unit of BP’s Russia vehicle TNK-BP, for US\$3.5 billion.<sup>21</sup>

*Chinese-Russian-Japanese Energy Cooperation: Three’s a Crowd*

Whether Moscow favors Beijing or Tokyo in the construction of energy transport infrastructure in Siberia will have important implications for the balance of power in East Asia. If China wins, this will both support China’s claim to regional pre-eminence and promote the Russia–China axis; if Japan were to succeed, a more multi-polar structure would emerge in East Asia. The main issue is the route of a new pipeline to carry oil eastwards from Siberia. If the pipeline is laid directly from Siberia to China and does not reach the Pacific Ocean, the supply will be preeminently for China. If a pipeline is laid all the way to the Pacific Coast, for example to the port of Nakhodka, the oil could become available to any countries on the Pacific Ocean, including Japan and the U.S.. This option is more expensive, but gives Russia greater flexibility and less dependency on relations with China and the Chinese market.

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Blustein, “Many Oil Experts Unconcerned Over China Unocal Bid,” *Washington Post*, July 1 2005, p. D01.

<sup>21</sup> Energy Information Administration, *China Energy Data, Statistics, and Analysis: Oil Gas*, p.5

The Kremlin's hesitation on the matter is one indication of the geopolitical implications of the choice.

In 2004 Japan seemed to emerge as the core partner for Russia in the construction of Siberian energy infrastructure, after Beijing had earlier appeared to be Moscow's favorite. Tokyo was willing to guarantee financing for the project, possibly in the range of US\$15 billion. The pipeline to Nakhodka would be the longest in the world: at around 4,180km, it would be three times the length of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.<sup>22</sup> The pipeline terminus would be just one day away by tanker from Japan.

Putin had reasons to favor the Nakhodka pipeline, because Japan's deal promised greater net investment in Russia and because a pipeline to the Pacific would make Russia less dependent on China as a customer for its sales. Russia is concerned about monopsony, a situation in which there is only one buyer but many potential sellers – a concern further reinforced after the construction of a pipeline from Kazakhstan to Xinjiang in western China was finished in 2006.

However, the core reason why China fell out of favor in 2004 was the role that Yukos had played in exporting oil to China. Putin was displeased by Mikhail Khodorkovsky's political ambitions and his plans for privately controlled export routes for Russian petroleum products. Both in the Murmansk and the Far East, Yukos seemed poised to play an influential role. The Yukos affair is an indication that internal dynamics in Russia can be extremely important to foreign policy outcomes. While the episode was unfortunate from Beijing's point of view, China has been careful not to criticize what it regards as an internal affair of Moscow.<sup>23</sup>

The pipeline to Nakhodka is yet to be built, and at present there is no final decision as to whether it will be. However, Russia appears to have decided to build a pipeline to Skovorodino only 70km from the Chinese border, scheduled for completion in the second half of 2008.<sup>24</sup> This is set

<sup>22</sup> Goldstein and Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia", p. 170.

<sup>23</sup> As central tenet of China's foreign policy is that it shall not intervene in the domestic affairs of other states, it is hardly imaginable that Chinese politicians would comment openly on the Yukos affair. However, Chinese scholars have expressed opinions – see for example You Fang, "Youkesi: liushui luohua chun quye" (Yukos: Swept Away), *Zhongguo shiyou shihua banyuekan (China Oil and Petrochemical Fortnightly)*, 16 (2006), p. 24–25; Feng Yujun, "Laolao zhangwo zhanlue ziyuan kongzhiquan: Eluosi "Youkesi shijian' pouxi" (Firm Strategy for Right of Control of Natural Resources: Analysis of Russia's "Yukos Incident"), *Guoji maoyi (International Trade)*, 9 (2004), p. 32–33; Qu Wenyi, "Cong Youkesi shijian kan Pujing zhengfu dui guatou jingji de zhili" (What the Yukos Incident Says About the Putin's Government Economic Policies Towards Oligarchs), *Shijie jingji (World Economics)*, 3 (2004), p. 34–37.

<sup>24</sup> "CNPC are satisfied with starting of ESPO pipeline construction from Skovorodino," *Transneft*, May 30 2006, <<http://www.transneft.ru/press/Default.asp?LANG=EN&ATYPE=8&PG=7&ID=11039>> (June 30 2006).

to include a spur to Daqing, and carry as much as 600,000 barrels a day.<sup>25</sup> The construction of the pipeline to Skovorodino strengthens China–Russia relations, while simultaneously giving the Kremlin the option of extending the pipeline to Nakhodka. This allows Russia to maintain leverage over China and Japan.

The territorial dispute over the Kurile Islands north of Hokkaido continues to plague relations between Japan and Russia, which have yet to sign a peace treaty to end the Second World War. If there is no agreement on the issue, the pipeline to Nakhodka may not move beyond the planning board. The shooting dead of a Japanese crab fisherman in Russian-controlled waters near Japan's northern island of Hokkaido in August 2006 is one example of the scope for worsening of this conflict.<sup>26</sup> If Tokyo is unable to settle its territorial dispute with Russia, and Beijing–Moscow relations remain good, Moscow may conclude that it has more to gain by constructing an additional pipeline to China. China, after all, is a market enjoying strong growth, and is unlikely to jeopardize future energy security by demanding renegotiation of price agreements once the pipeline has been built.

Natural gas co-operation in the massive Kovykta field, and perhaps Sakhalin, are likely elements in future Chinese–Russian energy co-operation. In April 2006 President Putin and Hu Jintao reportedly agreed on the construction of a pipeline from Kovykta to China and possibly South Korea, at an estimated cost of US\$12 billion.<sup>27</sup> However, no formal decision on the project has been announced. Meanwhile there have been significant increases in rail shipments of oil to China and a commitment to increase these further. Heilongjiang has been importing electricity from Russian hydroelectric power stations since 2004, and plans to import 18 billion kilowatt hours by 2010.<sup>28</sup> Sales to China decrease Russia's dependence on the European market and partially strengthen the Russian argument that it can turn to others if Brussels does not accept Moscow's conditions. China's energy consumption is predicted to surge from 1,675 TWh in 2002 to 5,573 TWh in 2030.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Energy Information Administration, *China Energy Data, Statistics, and Analysis: Oil Gas, Electricity and Coal*, p.5.

<sup>26</sup> David Pilling. "Japan–Russia Territorial Dispute Escalates," *Financial Times*, August 16 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Energy Information Administration, *China Energy Data, Statistics, and Analysis: Oil Gas, Electricity and Coal*, p.9–10.

<sup>28</sup> "China Imports Electricity from Russia," *People's Daily*, May 5 2004; Yang Li, "Electricity Trade Flourishes," *Xinhua*, March 23 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Birol, "China Presentation," p.24.

*Other Extractable Commodities*

The natural resources that Russia has and that China needs, extend far beyond the energy sector. China is already the world's largest consumer of steel, cement and copper;<sup>30</sup> and while Russia and Central Asia currently account for only about 6 percent of China's total supply of raw material imports, this is likely to change.<sup>31</sup> As Factbox 1 shows, Russia has a strong position in the global supply of many strategic non-ferrous metals necessary for the type of industrial production at the core of China's strategy for continued economic growth. This gives the relationship between the two countries a material, constant aspect and potentially a firm basis over time as ideology and outlook change. Whatever happens in domestic politics in the two countries, in the diplomatic relations between them and in world politics, resource-rich Russia will have many of the commodities that the Chinese need, and the Chinese will be able to provide vast non-Western markets for Russia.

*Food*

Another area where China and Russia may come to work together more closely is agriculture. Arable land covers approximately 13 percent or 122 million hectares of China's territory, which amounts to only 0.27 hectares per capita. This is less than 40 percent of the world average, and half the level in India.<sup>32</sup> As China industrializes and urbanizes, while also seeking to convert lower-quality arable lands into grasslands or forest to prevent desertification, arable land is becoming increasingly scarce. Between 1996 and 2005, China lost approximately 8 million hectares or 6.6 percent of its arable land.<sup>33</sup> Between 1999 and 2003 grain production dropped continuously; although the situation has since improved somewhat, China faces a shortfall of nearly 20 million tons by 2010.<sup>34</sup> Adding to the difficult situation, one-sixth of China's total arable lands are polluted by heavy metals.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Wayne Morrison, *China's Economic Conditions*, CRS Brief for Congress, May 15 2006, p.16.

<sup>31</sup> Goldstein and Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," p. 167.

<sup>32</sup> Yingling Liu, "Shrinking Arable Lands Jeopardizing China's Food Security," *Worldwatch Institute*, April 18 2006 <<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/3912>> (March 29 2007).

<sup>33</sup> Xingjingbao (Beijing News), "Guotu ziyuanbu baogao xianshi, zhongguo shi nian gengdi jianshao 1.2 yi mu" (Ministry of Land and Resources Reports China Lost 122 Million Hectares of Arable Land Over the Last Ten Years), *Xinhuanet*, March 16 2006 <[http://news.xinhuanet.com/house/2006-03/16/content\\_4308627.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/house/2006-03/16/content_4308627.htm)> (March 16 2006).

<sup>34</sup> *Zhongguo nongye wang* (China Agricultural Net), "Shiyiwu' qijian: ruhe tianbu 1000 yi jin liangshi quekou" (The Eleventh Five Year Plan: How to Fill Grain Shortfall of 20 Million Tons), March 29 2006 <<http://www.zgny.com.cn/ConsHtml/5/9/4/94082.html>> (March 31 2006).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

**Factbox 1. Russian Natural Resources<sup>36</sup>**

**ALUMINIUM:** Russia's biggest aluminium producer Rusal will buy up its closest rival Sual to create the world's number one aluminium firm, with output of 4 million tonnes per year.

**NICKEL:** Russia's Norilsk Nickel is the world's major producer of nickel, a vital ingredient in the production of stainless steel. Output was 243,000 tonnes in 2005. Compatriot miner Ufaley produced 10,701 tonnes of nickel.

**TITANIUM:** VSMPO-Avisma is the world's biggest supplier of titanium. It supplies 40-45 percent of the titanium products used by Boeing and has won 60-70 percent of titanium supply contracts for Airbus between 2008 and 2013.

**PALLADIUM:** Russia's Norilsk Nickel is the world's number one palladium producer, with 3.1 million ounces in 2005. Palladium is used for aircraft production, electrical contacts, dentistry, surgical equipment, jewellery and sign production.

**PLATINUM:** Russia produced an estimated 27,000 kg of platinum in 2005, putting it in second place behind South Africa.

**VANADIUM:** In 2005, Russia produced an estimated 9,000 tonnes of the hardening alloy vanadium, used in oil pipes, making it number four in the world, after South Africa, the United States and China. The Russian steel producer Evraz has since announced plans to buy a majority stake in the US producer Stratcor, and 24.9 percent of South Africa's Highveld Steel and Vanadium, which would make it world number one.

**MAGNESIUM:** Russia is the world's third largest supplier of magnesium, after China and Canada. VSMPO Avisma produced 19,000 tonnes of magnesium in 2005 and Solikamsk 17,600 tonnes.

**COBALT:** Russia is the world's fifth largest producer of cobalt, widely used in aircraft engines and batteries. Norilsk Nickel accounts for most of this, where cobalt occurs as a by-product of nickel mining. Total mine production was 5,000 tonnes in 2005.

**GOLD:** Russia is the world's fifth largest gold producer. Polyus Gold, a spin-off from Norilsk Nickel, is Russia's biggest gold miner. Its output in 2005 was 1.076 million ounces in 2005.

**COPPER:** Russia is the world's sixth-largest copper producer, with total mine production of 675,000 tonnes in 2005. Both Norilsk Nickel and UMMC, controlled by Makhmudov, produce copper.

**COAL:** Russia has the world's second biggest coal reserves, after the United States. It holds 17.3 percent of the world's proven coal reserves.

<sup>36</sup> Data from Reuters, BP Statistical Review 2006, US Energy Information Administration, Norilsk Nickel company website, United States Geological Survey Mineral Commodity Summaries 2006, <<http://cn.today.reuters.com/stocks/FinanceArticle.aspx?view=CN&symbol=HK1q.L&storyid=155589+30-Aug-2006+RTRS>> (posted 30 Aug. 2006, downloaded Nov 21 2006.)

Self-sufficiency is a strategic priority for Beijing, and the government has tightened control over land conversion for construction purposes. However, there is little that can be done without undermining the economic growth that is the source of political legitimacy for the Communist Party. Beijing, therefore, appears to acknowledge that it will have to import food, and in this context Russia is a natural partner. Guo Binqi, for example, suggests that, “Russia in the near future could become China’s granary.”<sup>37</sup> While Russia’s cultivated land currently comprises only 7.17 percent of its territory,<sup>38</sup> 55 percent of the world’s black earth (*chernozem*) is located in Russia and there is clearly much more which could be put to agricultural use.<sup>39</sup> Thus Russia has the potential for a massive increase in grain production through the application of modern technology and improved organization of its agricultural sector. Unlike most other countries, Russia’s agricultural sector may even stand to benefit from global warming.<sup>40</sup>

#### *China’s Growth Not an Economic Threat to Russia*

China’s growing competitiveness does not represent any great threat to Russia compared with the U.S. and the EU. Manufacturing in the Russian Federation is weak and unlikely to recover, particularly given Russia’s new wealth from natural resources and the lingering risk of Dutch disease. Instead China’s cheap consumer goods present an opportunity to Russian consumers. There has been a notable shift in China’s revealed comparative advantages, a measure used as a proxy of a country’s international competitiveness<sup>41</sup> away from resource and labor-intensive products towards medium-tech, more capital-intensive products, IT and machinery. China produces two-thirds of all photocopiers, microwave ovens, DVD players; over half of all digital

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<sup>37</sup> Guo Bin Qi, “Zhong e nongye hezuo qianjing guangkuo” (The Prospects for China–Russia Agricultural Co-Operation Are Broad), *Xiboliya yanjiu* (*Siberian Studies*), 30, 3 (2003), p. 25.

<sup>38</sup> “Russia,” *CIA World Fact Book 2006* (Washington DC, 2006). <<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rs.html>> (March 29 2007).

<sup>39</sup> “Rossiya prokormit milliard zelmyan” (Russia Will Feed a Billion People), *Rossiia vybiraet* (Russia Chooses), 105, 23 (2001), p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Natalia Reznik, “Globalnoye poteplenie v Rossii: Bolshe zasukhi i kartoshki” (Global Warming in Russia: More Droughts and Potatoes), *Izvestiya*, September 11 2004, p.1. As the country with the largest Arctic and sub-Arctic territories in the world and vast unused areas of land (mainly in Siberia) Russian agriculture may benefit from a warmer climate in terms of an extended growing season and more available arable land. This is of course a risky bet since a warmer climate may also result in side effects like droughts.

<sup>41</sup> European Commission, *European Competitiveness Report 2004*, SEC(2004)1397, p. 248–249. Revealed comparative advantage is a measure of relative export performance by country and industry defined as a country’s share of world share of world exports of a good divided by its share of total world exports.



cameras and around two-fifths of personal computers<sup>42</sup>— all of which a rapidly expanding Russian middle class wants. Simultaneously China has retained and even strengthened its competitiveness in labor-intensive products such as textiles, clothing and leather.

Low-quality apparel and footwear play a large role in China's exports to Russia, but China's export of machinery and electronics is growing. In the first 11 months of 2005, export of machinery and electronics to Russia grew 70 percent, and made up 24 percent of China's total exports to Russia.<sup>43</sup> Export of high-tech products to Russia grew 58 percent in the same period and accounted for 7 percent of China's total exports to Russia. Because of income from its exports of raw materials, Russia had a current account surplus of almost US\$85 billion in 2005<sup>44</sup>, set to be even greater in 2006. For this reason Russia worries less about China's exporting power or the undervalued renminbi than do many other states. This means that a point of tension that characterizes Sino-U.S. and Sino-EU relations is not present in the Sino-Russian relationship. China and Russia have acknowledged each other as market economies and China was amongst the first to conclude WTO negotiations with Russia in October 2004, indicating China's emphasis on building close trade relations with Russia.<sup>45</sup>

Russia is the world's fourteenth largest economy, with an output of US\$760 billion, while in terms of purchasing power parity it is the world's tenth largest economy.<sup>46</sup> It is the world's seventh most populous state, with 143 million people.<sup>47</sup> Figures from Chinese customs show that total trade volume between China and Russia in 2005 reached US\$ 29.1 billion, up 37.1 percent year on year, and 14 percentage points higher than the growth rate of China's total foreign trade. China is Russia's fourth largest trade partner, but Russia is only China's ninth largest export market, accounting for 1.5 percent of China's export markets.<sup>48</sup> These figures make it reasonable to project that while Russia will be of growing importance to China as an export market, its significance will remain

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<sup>42</sup> Pam Woodall, "The Dragon and the Eagle," *Economist*, September 30 2004.

<sup>43</sup> "Backgrounder: Current Sino-Russian Economic, Trade Cooperation," *People's Daily*, March 22 2006.

<sup>44</sup> "Russia," *CIA World Fact Book* 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, China and Russia Sign the Market Access Agreement on Russia's Accession to the World Trade Organization between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, 14 October 2004. <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceee/eng/dtxw/t166041.htm>> (March 29 2007).

<sup>46</sup> PPP GDP 2005, *World Development Indicators*, p.1. In PPP terms Russia's economy amounts to USD 1.6 trillion.

<sup>47</sup> Population 2005, *World Development Indicators*, p.1.

<sup>48</sup> "Top Ten Export Markets," Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, August 3 2006.

small. It is a source of raw materials and as a partner in *Machtpolitik* that Russia is important to China.

### Military Convergence

The U.S. is the silent party at the table in all China–Russia meetings, not in terms of pressure, but in terms of mutual interest on the part of China and Russia in constraining American hegemonic behavior. Beijing’s current starting point is “one superpower, many powers”. Russia seems grudgingly to accept U.S. primacy, but Putin has on numerous occasions made clear that Moscow would like to see a multi-polar world.<sup>49</sup> Beijing’s current foreign policy discourse is centered on the “peaceful rise” thesis, now re-baptized the “peaceful development” thesis so as not to frighten anyone, but the underlying perspectives are in many respects similar.

Because both Russia and China are heavily armed, including nuclear arsenals, there is a balance of power. China’s nuclear arsenal is far inferior to that of Russia and even more so that of the U.S., but it is significant enough to decrease the attractiveness of a nuclear conflict for Russia.<sup>50</sup> In terms of conventional forces, China is superior to Russia. The chance that one state could seek to invade the other is low. Although many Russian actors do fear Chinese demographic and/or territorial expansionism in Siberia, occasionally backing up their fears with inflated numbers on Chinese cross-border migration, this aspect of the relationship may recede into the background as China increases in importance for Russia and on the world stage in so many other respects.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, both Russia and China are without significant allies. Moscow

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<sup>49</sup> Aleksandr Shumilin, “Mnogopolyarnyy egoizm” (Multipolar Egoism), *Ekspert*, December 25 2000; Evgeniy Revenko “Rossiya, Kitay, India: Novaya os mnogopolyarnogo mira” (Russia, China, India: New Axis of a Multipolar World, *Vesti Nedeli (Week’s News)*, December 8 2002 <<http://www.vesti7.ru/news?id=1645>> (March 29 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Pentagon, *Military Power of the People’s Republic of China* (Washington DC: Pentagon 2006), p.26; cf. *Economist*, June 10 2006, p. 60; Vyacheslav Baskakov, “Raketno-yadernyy arsenal Pekina” (Beijing’s Arsenal of Nuclear Rockets), *Nezavisimoe voennoye obozrenie (Independent Military Review)*, July 12 2002; I.A. Andryushin et al., *Yadernoye razorozheniye, nerasprostraneniye i natsionalaya bezopasnost*, (Nuclear Disarmament and National Security) Moscow: Institut strategicheskoy stabilnosti, 2002; Yuriy Gavrilov, “Yadernyy arsenal obnovyat polnostyu” (The Nuclear Arsenal will Be Fully Renewed), *Rossiyskaya gazeta (The Russian Newspaper)*, April 14 2006).

<sup>51</sup> The population of the Russian Far East has tumbled even faster than that in the rest of Russia, from 8 million inhabitants in 1991 to about 6.5 million in 2006, or slightly more than one person per square kilometer. The Russian government is considering a range of re-population programs to avoid the forecasted drop to 4.5 million people by 2015. By contrast, the three bordering Chinese provinces contain more than 107 million inhabitants. See “Russia and China: When Dragons Dance with Bears,” *Economist*, November 30 2006; “Russian Far East,” *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition. (Columbia University Press, 2003); “Russian Far East,” *Wikipedia*, 2005. <[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian\\_Far\\_East](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Far_East)> (March 29 2007).

and Beijing might have hoped that the Iraq War would change the Western alliance structures fundamentally, but this has not been the outcome.

China and Russia have expanded military co-operation. They have been collaborating on foreign and military intelligence since the early 1990s, and in 2005 they conducted their first joint war games. The exercise included 10,000 military, intelligence and internal security forces. Given China's reluctance to enter military alliances, it was a significant gesture to allow the games to be staged on Chinese soil.<sup>52</sup> Russia and China have strong incentives to expand their military co-operation in a context where U.S. military spending amounts to 47 percent of world total.<sup>53</sup> However, Moscow recognizes that Russian arm sales to China may represent a long term strategic threat to Russia. Russian worries about this are reflected in Moscow's decision to sell its most advanced military aircraft technology to India rather than to China.<sup>54</sup>

#### *Russian Arms to China*

Russia has been China's main source of arms since the end of the Cold War, and has accounted for 90 percent of the estimated 165 billion renminbi in arms sales to China from the states of the former Soviet Union since 1991, according to a Pentagon report from 2004.<sup>55</sup> Moscow has sold Beijing advanced submarines, fighters, destroyers and missiles as well as strategic aircraft for troop movement and air-to-air refueling. As the EU is unlikely to lift its 1989 arms embargo on China in the near future, and the U.S. is determined not to, Russia seems set to continue as China's main source of arms.

Economic exigencies made Russian weapons sales to China a necessity in the 1990s.<sup>56</sup> With Russia's current record trade and budget surpluses this is less the case today.<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, the sale of sensitive

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<sup>52</sup> "Russia and China: When Dragons Dance with Bears".

<sup>53</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Chapter 8. China's military expenditure is estimated at \$US 65 billion for 2004; Russia is estimated to have spent \$US 50 billion. The US spent a whopping \$US 466 billion. "World Wide Military Expenditures," *Globalsecurity.org*, October 15 2005, <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/spending.htm>> (November 1 2005).

<sup>54</sup> China has only been allowed to buy the Sukhoi Su-30 MK2 from KNAAPO, while India has given access to the more advanced Su-30MKI from the Irkut Corporation..

<sup>55</sup> Cited in Guy Dinmore and Demetri Sevastopulo, "Asian Neighbours Look Beyond Symbolism," *Financial Times*, February 9 2005.

<sup>56</sup> Rajan Menon, "The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China," *Survival*, 39, 2 (1997), p. III.

<sup>57</sup> High energy prices have allowed Russia to build the third largest currency reserves in the world at \$US 263 billion. China has the largest \$US 941 billion as of June 2006. "Foreign Exchange Reserves," *Wikipedia*, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign\\_exchange\\_reserves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_exchange_reserves)> (Oct. 11 2006).

technology from Russia to China still has considerable potential. Contracts worth billions of euros will be available as China pushes to expand its nuclear energy capacity. China plans to quadruple its nuclear output to 16 billion kilowatt-hours by 2010, and double that figure again by 2015.<sup>58</sup> The Chinese reportedly use Russian spacesuits, and Russia provided technical assistance to China in the development of the Shenzhou spacecraft, thus helping China become the third state to send a human being into space.<sup>59</sup>

The simultaneous demise of the Soviet Union and the rise of China fundamentally changed the dynamics in China–U.S. relations. Washington stopped viewing China as an ally against Moscow, and began to see it as a potential rival. The U.S. is wary of the communist government in Beijing, and many senior actors in the U.S. political landscape, especially among the Democrats, are increasingly skeptical of authoritarian trends in Putin’s Russia. Putin initially built his political image on waging war on the Chechen separatists, has reasserted Moscow’s right to appoint regional governors and effectively re-nationalized much of the petroleum industry. Beijing, on the other hand, is more comfortable with a relatively stable authoritarian Russia than the chaos of the 1990s, and feels vindicated in its decision to put down the rebellion at Tiananmen Square in 1989.<sup>60</sup> The consolidation of what Putin calls the ‘power vertical’, i.e. centralization, has made Moscow a more reliable partner for Beijing.<sup>61</sup>

## Outlook

### *Views of Separatism and Islam*

While Chinese Islamic separatists have not gone as far as some of their Russian counterparts, Beijing and Moscow have a shared fear of restive minorities and independent politicized Islam. Given Beijing’s policy of

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<sup>58</sup> Howard French, “China Promotes another Boom: Nuclear Power,” *New York Times*, January 15 2005.

<sup>59</sup> Marcia S. Smith, *China’s Space Program: An Overview CRS Report for Congress*, October 18 2005.

<sup>60</sup> Given China’s policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states we have been unable to find official comment to this effect. However, discussions with leading academics at Tsinghua University and Peking University strongly suggest that this is the case.

<sup>61</sup> Aleksey Tarasov, “Na vertikalni vlasti rastut vetki nefi” (Oil Branches Are Growing on the Power Vertical), *Novaya gazeta (New Newspaper)*, July 3 2006; Elena Borisova, “Vertikal vlasti: Vid snizu” (The Power Vertical: The View from Below), *Ekspert*, March 21 2005; Kseniya Fokina, Andrey Lavrov and Aleksandr Sargin, “Vertikal vlasti opyat ukreplyayut” (They Are Strengthening the Power Vertical Again), *Gazeta (Newspaper)*, September 8 2006; Maksim Shishkin, “Vertikal vlasti izmerili v lyudyakh” (The Power Vertical Was Measured n People), *Kommersant (Merchant)*, April 12 2006.

non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states, it has not at any point criticized Moscow for its war in Chechnya, and the war is highly unlikely to surface as source of bilateral tension. China faces politicized Islam among the Uighurs in Xinjiang and Moscow does not feel uncomfortable with China's harsh treatment of the Uighurs and other minorities, notably the Tibetans. The Taiwan issue is not a factor in China-Russia relations, unlike the case with China-U.S. or China-EU relations. China and Russia will not criticize each other for their records on representative democracy, individual freedom or human rights.

The debate on Kosovo relates to two of the main discourses in both Russian and Chinese foreign policy: skepticism towards intervention in the affairs of other states, and the rejection of separatism.<sup>62</sup> For Russia, negativity towards Kosovar independence is further fuelled by an underlying identification with Orthodox Christian, post-communist Serbia. Although China lacks the Orthodox Christian connection, the anti-interventionist and anti-separatist doctrines are strong enough to place the China solidly on the Russian side of the important debate in contemporary diplomacy and international relations about whether independence is permissible for Kosovo.

The significant internal contradictions in Russia's position on separatism, underlined by its simultaneous crackdown on Chechnyan separatists and support for separatists in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Trans-Dniestria,<sup>63</sup> need not worry us unduly here. Although it partially undermines Russian credibility on separatism issues in relation to the West, it does not seem to pose a problem for the Chinese, and the leaders of the two countries are happy to talk almost identically about separatism.

#### *Shared Geo-Strategic Interests*

China and Russia have displayed coordinated reluctance to back the West in sanctions towards Iran. This illustrates how Moscow and Beijing can

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<sup>62</sup> Viktor Kaspruk, "Nezavisimost Kosovo ili pretsedentnoye resheniye dlya evropeiskikh natsiy?" (Kosovo's Independence or Precedence for European Nations?), *Zerkalo nedeli* (Weekly Mirror), February 25 2006, <<http://www.zerkalo-nedeli.com/nn/show/586/52712/>> (March 29 2007); Armen Khanbalyan, "Dokazatelstvo ot protivnogo" (The Rule of Contraries), *Moskovskie novosti* (Moscow News), September 22 2006, <<http://www.mn.ru/issue.php?2006-36-12>>; Petr Iskenderov, "Evrope iz-za Kosovo grozit novaya perekroyka granits" (Because of Kosovo Europe is Threatened by a Redrawing of Borders), *Vremya novostey* (Newstime), September 9 2006, <<http://www.vremya.ru/2006/206/5/165170.html>> (March 29 2007); Oleg Ortyukov, "Nezavisimost: Chto mozžno odnim, togo nelzya drugim?" (Independence: What Some Can Have, Others Can't?), *Pravda* (Truth), February 23 2006, <<http://www.pravda.ru/world/former-ussr/23-02-2006/77335-independence-0>> (March 29 2007).

<sup>63</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2004: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.61.

realize their national interests more effectively by co-operating in international forums in a way whereby neither is singled out as an obstacle to Western interests. China has billions invested in Iran's oil and gas fields and Iran is the source of 11.2 percent of China's petroleum imports.<sup>64</sup> Russia also has several billion dollars of invested in the country and wants to make more by reprocessing Iranian reactor fuel. Both sell advanced weapons to Iran. At the same time, China has vital security interests in the Middle East and Africa – with Iran, Syria and Sudan, among others. Russia also has strong historical ties to several Arab states not favored by Washington, which allows for collaboration in areas where few other weighty allies can be found.

China and Russia have played an active role in the Six-Party Talks on the DPRK's nuclear program, but both have been reluctant to exert the pressure that Washington would like to see. North Korean nuclear weapons are not primarily pointed towards China or Russia, and Beijing and Moscow may benefit from the problems that North Korean nuclear weapons cause to the U.S.–South Korean alliance and in relations between South Korea and Japan. Seoul believes that U.S. rhetoric towards North Korea has been unnecessarily aggressive,<sup>65</sup> while Washington has been frustrated with Seoul's efforts to push ahead with industrial zones in North Korea despite Pyongyang's disregard of commitments to nuclear disarmament. North Korean nuclear advances may therefore weaken U.S.–South Korean relations without representing a substantial threat to China and Russia.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. established a network of jumping-off bases across Central Asia. The ostensible rationale has been the fight against terrorism and support for operations in Afghanistan. However, and particularly when coupled with Washington's rapprochement and strengthened military co-operation with India, these developments are often interpreted as being motivated by containment of China and especially Russia. China's Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, for example, has stated that China "would like the Americans unequivocally to make clear that they have no intention of maintaining a long-term military presence in Central Asia".<sup>66</sup> Moscow's and Beijing's calls to have the bases closed have succeeded in Uzbekistan, but fallen short in Kyrgyzstan. The U.S. presence has a direct impact on the political processes of the states in the region, and Beijing and Moscow consider

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<sup>64</sup> Chunrong, "2005 nian zhongguo shiyou jinchukou zhuangkuang fenxi" (Analysis of China's Oil Import and Export in 2005), p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> In particular President Bush's reference to North Korea as part of the 'Axis of Evil' in his 2002 State of the Union Address.

<sup>66</sup> Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing in interview with *Der Spiegel*, December 2 2003. Translated directly from the original Chinese version posted on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/wjdt/wshd/t54781.htm>> (March 29 2007).

this a potential threat to their security. As long as Washington maintains a presence in Central Asia, Beijing and Moscow are likely to find that they have more to gain by uniting in seeking restraint on U.S. power than by seeking mutual confrontation.

In a long-term perspective, in particular in the case of decreased U.S. interest in Central Asia, it is possible that the area could become an arena for competition between Russia and China. For most of the post-Cold War period, Central Asia has largely been left to Russia, for historical reasons and because Russia has claimed it. But with China increasingly active in Central Asia, albeit mostly in the energy sector, Russia may at some point feel challenged. However, the U.S. does not seem intent on abandoning the region, and is rather attempting to extend the energy corridor that already exists between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. In this perspective Chinese-Russian relations in Central Asia are likely to remain mostly congruous, united by the external threat that U.S. influence can be seen as posing to Russian influence over, and Chinese access to, the Caspian basin's vast natural gas deposits.

Chinese and Russian outlooks have also converged in the UN Security Council. During most of the Cold War, the U.S.S.R and China approached the Security Council in diametrically opposite ways.<sup>67</sup> The U.S.S.R took an ideological and activist stance and used its veto more than any other Permanent Member of the Council did. During the first ten years of the Council's existence, the U.S.S.R laid down 79 vetoes, earning its representative Vachyeslav Molotov the nickname "Mr. Veto". China strove to avoid unnecessary entanglements in international organizations and has used its veto less than any other Permanent Member of the Security Council, a total of five times.<sup>68</sup> In case of disagreement, China has generally preferred to abstain from voting. Since 1984 the U.S.S.R/Russia has gravitated towards the relatively passive behavior of China. During this period China has used its veto twice and the U.S.S.R/Russia four times. This is yet another area where there is increased overlap between the outlook of China and Russia.

### **Conclusion: The Strategic Potential**

A realist perspective can be employed to understand China–Russia strategic convergence. According to both classical and neo-realist theory, a unipolar order is inherently unstable, and the emergence of a sole

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<sup>67</sup> Yitzhak Shichor, "China's Voting Behavior in the UN Security Council", *Jamestown China Brief*, September 6 2006.

<sup>68</sup> China was represented in the United Nations Security Council by Taiwan/the Republic of China until 1971 and the People's Republic of China thereafter. The non-interventionist policy and reluctance to use the veto right have nonetheless been consistent.

dominant power will lead other powers jointly to oppose the hegemon. Hans Morgenthau wrote that states are domination-seeking, but that the balance of power leads to the restoration of equilibrium.<sup>69</sup> Kenneth Waltz argued that the instinct for survival in international anarchy “stimulates states to behave in ways that tend toward the creation of balances of power.”<sup>70</sup> Realists essentially presume that negative feedback is the rule in international politics, and that deviation from equilibrium automatically sets in motion countervailing forces to re-establish it. Waltz, writing about the U.S. in the 1990s, argued that “[u]nbalanced power, whoever wields it, is a potential danger to others.”<sup>71</sup>

For leaders in Beijing and Moscow, this appears to be true as they have watched Washington’s invasion of Iraq and its unrelenting support for Israeli policies. In the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has generally remained relatively close to the U.S., a behavior which might be described as bandwagoning. Moscow, however, is increasingly disappointed with the results of its attempts to stay close to the West. At the same time, Western governments increasingly appear to conclude that Russia is unlikely to become democratic in the near future, and categorize its regime as having more in common with that of China than with for example the Polish case.<sup>72</sup>

In this article we have examined the key factors that bring Russia and China together. The two states have complementary economies, shared concerns about U.S. power, fear of more Orange/Rose/Tulip revolutions, and common interests in the Middle East and Africa. There are, however, several significant obstacles to closer co-operation between Russia and China. The most significant weakness in the relationship lies in Russia’s concern over China’s dominance, particularly in connection with Siberia, which it is feared could fall victim to Chinese expansion – Manchuria in reverse.<sup>73</sup> Russia is currently wary of both Chinese migration and economic dominance in Siberia, which was illustrated when China was awarded shares worth just US\$500 million in Rosneft’s IPO in 2006, having reportedly sought US\$3 billion. This was less than BP (US\$1 billion) and Petronas (US\$1.1 billion) were awarded.<sup>74</sup> In 1997 Menon pointed to difficulties in Sino–Russo relations due to the

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<sup>69</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, [1948] 1973).

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth Waltz *Theory of International Politics* (London: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p.118.

<sup>71</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “Evaluating Theories,” *American Political Science Review*, 91, 4 (1997), p. 915.

<sup>72</sup> Dmitri Trenin, “Russia Leaves the West,” *Foreign Affairs*, 85, 4 (2006).

<sup>73</sup> The weakness of the Chinese empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allowed Russia and Japan to use unequal treaties to impose control over what are now the Russian Far East and China’s north-eastern provinces, previously known as Manchuria.

<sup>74</sup> Joanna Chung, “Chinese Lose Out in Rosneft Allocation,” *Financial Times*, July 15 2006.



reluctance of regional elites to work with the Chinese.<sup>75</sup> This issue has been partly solved as Moscow has reasserted power over its regions, but the underlying fear of the “yellow peril” lingers.<sup>76</sup>

At the level of global politics and trade divergent prospects of the two states may complicate Sino-Russian relations. Russia is a has-been superpower, now most likely to play a role as regional power. Even at that it is often weak and humiliated, as when it blundered in attempting to halt the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. China, on the other hand, is rapidly emerging as a major player in global politics. At the same time China is consolidating its position in lower- and medium-end goods whilst emerging as a manufacturer of high-end goods. Russia’s economic resurgence lacks this broad base, and is built almost entirely on exports of raw materials. As we have argued, this means that the two economies are highly compatible, but it also gives China the dominant role in the relationship. There has been a tipping of the geo-economic balance between the two countries compared with that between the Soviet Union and China.

China and Russia are unfinished international actors: Russia because it is still in the process of redefining its post-Cold War identity and reasserting state control; and China because it is industrializing, urbanizing, growing rapidly and opening to the outside world. Russia is taking important lessons from China about the assertion of state control in strategic sectors of the economy, which in turn signals compatibility of methods and shared worldviews.

Institutionalization of the Beijing–Moscow relationship remains low, but a pattern of regular consultation between top leaders has evolved. Russia and China also meet annually for bilateral military and technical co-operation talks, and have continued to develop the Shanghai Co-operation Organization founded in 2001. China–Russia strategic convergence is a discernible trend which will gain further momentum. However, strategic convergence should not be confused with an alliance, and China and Russia are not perfect strategic partners. Developments inside China and Russia are crucial to how the relationship develops. Key questions are whether political stability will prevail and whether rapid growth can be sustained.

Trenin argues that a Sino–Russian alliance could occur only as a result of “exceptionally short-sighted and foolish policies on

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<sup>75</sup> Menon, “The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China,” p. 104. In 2005, border trade between the two countries reached \$US 5.57 billion, growing 32.7 percent and accounting for 19.1 percent of the total trade. “Backgrounder: Current Sino–Russian Economic, Trade Cooperation,” *People’s Daily*, March 22 2006.

<sup>76</sup> A. Lukin, “Evolutsiya obraza Kitaya v Rossi i rossiysko-kitayskiye otnosheniya,” *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 3 (2003), p. 35–41.

Washington's part."<sup>77</sup> China and Russia are not pro-Western, but neither are they definitively anti-Western. Western policymakers who are worried about the implications of Sino-Russian strategic convergence would do well to pursue a policy of engaging both Moscow and Beijing, and put pressure on Tokyo to resolve the dispute over the Kurile Islands.

Paradoxically, if an alliance, or something resembling an alliance, were to be formed this could lead to a breakdown of the relationship in the medium to long term. China and Russia both command sufficient resources and sophistication to be significant global powers in their own right, and they certainly consider themselves as such. China was unwilling to subordinate itself to Russia for more than a brief period after the Communists came to power in 1949, and Russia would refuse to subordinate itself to China.

The most likely scenario is Sino-Russo strategic convergence based on a relationship of mutual self-interest. The evidence presented in this article indicates that trade and investment between China and Russia are set to continue to grow rapidly, particularly in the energy sector, further enhancing the significance of the relationship. While Beijing and Moscow have common interests in placing restraints on the power of the United States, the creation of a full-fledged anti-Western alliance is unlikely to prove viable in the short term. Russia and especially China are both dependent on open access to Western markets to sustain growth.

The realist prediction that unbalanced power is inherently unstable, and the emergence of a sole dominant power will lead other powers jointly to oppose the hegemon, cannot be confirmed. However, if Beijing and Moscow find that the U.S. hegemon does not allow them the space they need as they re-emerge as world powers, they will have strong incentives to deepen their mutual strategic ties. If Washington were genuinely committed to allowing the concurrent rise of China and Russia as world powers, despite their inherent challenge to Washington's own power, China and Russia would have limited incentives to co-operate, and mutual fear would be the overriding feature in the relationship. Both would seek to work closely with Japan, as a counterweight to the other's power. However, the U.S. has been unable to provide China and Russia with the reassurance they would like, and they may be in the process of turning to each other for collaboration.

The development of China-Russia strategic convergence does not necessarily mean that China and Russia are turning their backs on the West, but it does represent a challenge to U.S. hegemony and could change the world order. The year 2008 will be decisive, with presidential elections in both Russia and the U.S. in which neither of the incumbents can legally participate. The same year, the pipeline from Russia to China

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<sup>77</sup> Trenin, "Russia Leaves the West".

is set for completion. One scenario is that the U.S.–Russia relationship could deteriorate rapidly in the wake of the Russian presidential election if a member of the Petersburg ruling circle is anointed new president, the result is legitimized in a national election, and Washington subsequently deems the election to have been neither free nor fair.<sup>78</sup> The resulting tension between Russia and the U.S. could drive Russia into the embrace of China. Alternatively, fresh presidential faces on both sides of the Atlantic could spell renewed co-operation between Russia and the U.S., lessening the significance of the Russia–China axis. The Beijing Olympics will also take place in 2008, and are set to be China’s coming-out party. Zhongnanhai will do everything it can to avoid confrontation with the West, but at the same time it welcomes close ties with Russia.

To prevent the international system from recidivism into destabilizing great-power rivalry, the U.S. and Europe must seek to manage a precarious and multifaceted balance: on the one hand, pushing Russia and China to reform, whilst acknowledging that pushing too hard could lead to alienation, and allowing Russia and China to rise whilst managing and integrating their power.

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.



# Kazakhstan's Security Interests and Their Implications for the U.S.-Kazakh Relationship

*Olga Oliker\**

## **ABSTRACT**

As the United States continues to rethink its security partnerships and relationships in the dynamic threat environment of the early 21st Century, the role of Central Asia is unclear. Are the Central Asian States to be partners of the United States in its broad global efforts? Which ones? Is the region a priority for U.S. interests or a secondary concern? Kazakhstan is particularly interesting because it differs from its Central Asian neighbors in its relative wealth and in the longevity of its relationship with the United States. This article will examine Kazakhstan's security situation and threat perspective. On that basis, it will derive implications for the United States regarding the prospects for its future relations with Astana.

*Keywords* • U.S.-Kazakh Relations • Central Asia • Kazakhstan • Security Politics

## **Introduction**

Almost six years after the September 11 attacks, U.S. foreign policy is once again in a state of flux, although a far less rapid one than that which followed those harrowing events. As the United States continues to rethink its security partnerships and relationships in the dynamic threat environment of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the role of Central Asia is unclear. Are the Central Asian States to be partners of the United States in its broad global efforts? Which ones? Is the region a priority for U.S. interests or a secondary concern? None of this is by any means decided, and all of it could change in the coming years, with political transitions in the United States and in Russia on the immediate horizon. Moreover, the evolution of U.S. policy towards Central Asia is of interest not only in Washington and the Central Asian capitals but also in Moscow, Beijing, and Brussels, among others. While the sum total of the U.S. approach to the region is grist for a much longer and more comprehensive study, I seek in this piece to examine one component of it, namely, the prospects for shared interests and security cooperation between the United States and Kazakhstan over the next few years.

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Kazakhstan is particularly interesting because it differs from its Central Asian neighbors in its relative wealth and in the longevity of its relationship with the United States. Kazakhstan was one of the four successor states to the Soviet Union left with strategic nuclear weapons on its soil, and as a result, it was an early recipient of U.S. aid to help consolidate those weapons in Russia and to rid the country of the infrastructure of the Soviet Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program that remained. On the basis of this relationship, as well as the solid interests of western energy companies in Kazakh oil and gas, the Kazakh-U.S. relationship has been growing since the very first days of Kazakh independence.

This article will examine first of all Kazakhstan's security situation and threat perspective. On that basis, it will derive implications for the United States regarding the prospects for its future relations with Astana.

### **Kazakhstan's Security Threats: Real, Imagined, and Created**

Kazakhstan is not a country that faces significant external threats. Unique in the post-Soviet Central Asian region for its significant and sustained economic growth which has translated into consistent standard of living increases for the population, Kazakhstan has also had a measured foreign policy since independence. Although Russia and China, its two economically and militarily sizable neighbors, are perceived as threatening by some Kazakhs, it is not in a military sense. Rather, Kazakhs worry about Russian and Chinese investors exerting influence as a result of economic power, and they express concern about political bullying. They have managed these problems predominantly by maintaining good relations with these countries, as well as building ties with the United States. Kazakhstan has sought not so much to balance any one partner against others as it has to ensure that a network of good relationships prevents conflict.

In its own region, Kazakhstan has aspired to Central Asian leadership with variable success. Tiny neighbor Kyrgyzstan is generally acquiescent to Kazakh pressures and influence, while Uzbekistan has tended to be more hostile, with its own goals of local hegemony. Turkmenistan has remained singularly isolationist, and Tajikistan primarily focused on its internal problems. None of these countries pose a significant military threat. Although Uzbekistan has mined borders with its Tajik and Kyrgyz neighbors, and relations with Kazakhstan have been tense (in part because both countries aspire to lead the region), there is little concern about significant state-to-state military conflict.

This is not to say that the Kazakh government does not perceive threats to the country. As elsewhere in Central Asia, Kazakhstan's President, Nursultan Nazarbaev, has held his post since before the Soviet

collapse. As he ages, and talk in the country and outside it turns to transition, his desire to hold on to power—and control any transfer thereof—becomes increasingly clear. In 1998, Kazakhstan's constitution was amended to eliminate the age limit on the presidency (previously set at 65, Nazarbaev's age in 2005) and lengthening the President's term from five years to seven. Neither the parliamentary nor the presidential elections of 2005 were viewed as free and fair by most international observers. There is much speculation about how Nazarbaev's successor, when there is one, will be selected. The decision by the President's eldest daughter, Dariga, to form a political party, for example was seen by some as a sign that she is being positioned to take the helm of the country in the future.

Opposition forces in Kazakhstan are tightly restricted and controlled, and the media is far from free. This situation has gotten worse rather than better in recent years. In the winter of 2005-2006, two opposition leaders died in highly suspicious circumstances, with investigations and trials of alleged perpetrators that seemed forced and not credible to most observers. The increased controls on press and politics reflect a fear on the part of the Nazarbaev government that it may somehow be forced from power. This fear was likely galvanized in large part by the "revolutions" in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, in each of which long-ruling post-Soviet leaders were deposed following disputed elections and public demonstrations in protest. In each case, a new government came to office as a result (although it should be noted that in Kyrgyzstan's case, it was not the parliament, whose election was disputed that was replaced, but the executive branch). Government sanctioned press coverage of the Ukrainian and especially Kyrgyz revolutions in Kazakhstan focused extensively on what was, in fact, very limited violence. Although the threat of an opposition movement coming to power is a threat to the regime, rather than the country as a whole, the two are conflated for Kazakhstan's president and his inner circle. Moreover, even some reformers are concerned that an effort at large-scale political change in Kazakhstan would, indeed, lead to extensive violence and instability.<sup>1</sup>

The Kazakh government and some in its analytical community point to the danger of Islamic radicalism as another threat to both regime and nation. Some radical groups, including the professedly non-violent Hizb ut-Tahrir, have gained a following amongst the ethnic Uzbek minority populations in Kazakhstan's south. Government raids have uncovered caches of leaflets disseminating Hizb ut-Tahrir's views, which focus on the creation of a global Caliphate and the illegitimacy of the vast majority of today's governments—including those of Kazakhstan and

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews in Kazakhstan, March 2006

Uzbekistan. However, there is little reason to think that these groups, or others, pose a significant threat to Kazakhstan at the present time.

This has not prevented Kazakhstani authorities from viewing Hizb ut-Tahrir as a terrorist threat (an attitude they share with their neighbors, Russia, China, and, most recently, the United Kingdom). Kazakhstan has signed on to the appropriate UN resolutions to fight terrorism, is cooperating with the United States in its efforts, and participates with its partners in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (which comprise China, Russia, and four of the five Central Asian States) in a variety of “counter-terrorist” initiatives such as military exercises.

Kazakhstan’s government views increasing limits on political opposition and media freedom as a critical tool for managing the developing threats of legal and illegal political opposition. However, by cracking down on both mainstream political opposition and radical groups in much the same ways and with much the same tools, Kazakhstan’s leaders may be growing a security threat that does not currently exist. By equating radicals with those who seek more democracy and human rights, and by preventing press freedom in a country that had a real taste of it in the early days of independence, Nazarbayev and his inner circle are eliminating legal, aboveboard mechanisms for political participation. This leaves what opposition forces remain with only the option of illegal activity, a situation that can foster radicalization. Moreover, it can increase the risk of violence. If political opposition is illegal, and security forces are called in to put an end to illegal acts, one can easily see how protests could escalate into violence—as they did in Uzbekistan in May 2005.

Thus, the greatest threat to Kazakhstan today is that its ruling cadres will mismanage the question of the opposition, forcing it into more and more radical positions and actions, and leaving itself with less and less recourse other than violence. When this is coupled with increasing public distrust, which some see growing as a result of the political killings of recent months, and increasing concern about succession, the potential that a threat will emerge becomes increasingly cogent. In the meantime, however, Kazakhstan remains relatively prosperous and relatively successful, particularly in its regional context.

### **Kazakhstan in the International Context**

Kazakhstan has the advantage of resources when it looks out into the world and selects its partners. Its substantial oil and natural gas deposits may not rival those of the Gulf or of Russia, but they have to date been sufficient to guarantee a flow of investment and a consistently rising standard of living for Kazakh citizens. This growth also helps play into



Kazakhstan's conservatism when it comes to foreign policy choices. The Kazakhs want good relations with both prospective customers and those who can help support investment. All the more reason to get along with the neighbors, the Americans, the Turks, the Europeans, and whoever else may come calling.

Thus, Kazakhstan has pursued political, economic, and security ties with this broad range of countries, including those that might appear threatening, since independence. As Operation Enduring Freedom began, Kazakhstan offered the U.S. overflight and basing, although the latter did not prove necessary, due in large part to Kazakhstan's geographic location being less than ideal for U.S. needs. The end of Taliban rule in Afghanistan was certainly viewed as beneficial in Almaty, as it was in capitals throughout the region. Kazakhstan has accepted U.S. assistance to eliminate the weapons of mass destruction and related infrastructure that remained on its soil after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It has also been happy to accept U.S. military training and other assistance, including in the areas of health care, export control, economic reform, regional stability, and law enforcement. The U.S. also provides democratization reform assistance. In 2005, U.S. assistance allocations for Kazakhstan totaled US\$85.31 million, of which US\$55.69 million was in security related areas and US\$11.51 million was targeted at democratization assistance.<sup>2</sup>

But, as noted above, Kazakhstan also pursues a range of counterterrorism initiatives with its broad range of partners. It is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Russian-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization, and NATO's Partnership for Peace. Kazakhstan sent about two and a half dozen troops to Iraq: army engineers specializing in mine clearance and helping to supply water to Iraqis. One of their peacekeepers was killed in 2006. Kazakhstan also maintains good bilateral military relations with Russia and has held recent military exercises with China, under SCO auspices.

Thus, while Kazakhstan has sought to build ties with the United States, these should not be seen in a context of a zero-sum game with either China or Russia. Kazakhstan sees friendship with the U.S. as a means to continued growth and stability, and it sees ties with Russia and China the same way. From its perspective, ideally, Russia, China, and the U.S. will each balance the other's influence and each contribute to Kazakhstan's own goals. It sees all three as useful partners to promote Kazakhstan's continued economic growth and political stability.

These relationships are somewhat complicated, however, by Kazakhstan's threat perception, which aligns better with the threat

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, *U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Assistance to Eurasia - 2005*, January 2006.

perceptions of some of its partners than others. Kazakhstan is in fundamental agreement with the United States on some aspects of counterterrorism policy, including stopping funding to radical groups and support for Operation Enduring Freedom. It is somewhat more ambivalent on the U.S. policy in Iraq. Although Kazakhstan has, as noted, sent troops to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, public opinion and elite opinion both are critical of the war as a whole. Even government officials are at pains to note that Kazakhstan's troops are "peacekeepers."<sup>3</sup> In off-line conversations, Kazakh officials and elites discuss the troop contribution as a means of proving friendship and support to the United States and its war on terrorism, but note that they see little real link between the Iraq war and the campaign against terrorism as a whole.<sup>4</sup> It is important to recognize that while Kazakhstan wants to maintain friendship with the United States, and sees its support for Operation Iraqi Freedom as one aspect of that friendship, it does not always agree with U.S. goals or tactics.

Moreover, as discussed above, Nazarbaev and his inner circle perceive a growing radical Islamist threat to the regime, and they also see any growth in power of the political opposition as a threat to state stability. The two dangers tend to be conflated in the minds, writings, and policies of Kazakh officials and some analysts. While the United States has been verbally supportive of Kazakhstan's efforts to fight radical Islam, Kazakh officials are concerned that its rhetoric and actions in neighboring countries to support NGOs and democracy and human rights activists pose a threat.

It should be noted that the United States has not been particularly active in this regard in Kazakhstan. The United States does provide assistance to a number of advocacy groups and other NGOs, but it has not been highly critical of the Kazakh government in recent years. Although the State Department was not able to certify that Kazakhstan had made progress on human rights in 2005 or 2006, the U.S. Secretary of State signed waivers arguing that U.S. national security interests called for allowing the full package of assistance to continue. And although the State Department released in March 2006 a disappointing assessment of the Kazakh human rights record, Vice President Richard Cheney, visiting Kazakhstan in May of that year, praised Kazakhstan as "a good friend and a strategic partner" and voiced "admiration" for Kazakhstan's political and economic development, noting that he thought that "the record speaks for itself."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Interviews in Kazakhstan, March 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2005*, March 8 2006; White House, Office of the Vice President, "Vice President's Remarks in a Press Availability with President Nursultan

Despite the assurances of continued assistance and the Vice President's words, the Kazakh leadership may fear that U.S. pressure will increase in time, reflecting State Department concerns. They may also be concerned that their relationship with the United States will cause NGOs and the international community more broadly to look more closely at its domestic politics, holding them, as it were, to a higher standard than are countries with which the U.S. is not friendly. This is not implausible—pressure on the United States to foster reform in friendly regimes is an approach used by groups who find that direct pressure on governments may not be effective. Certainly, this then draws more global attention. Moreover, insofar as deteriorating human rights and freedoms in Kazakhstan are seen by the United States and others as increasing the dangers to the country, as is argued in the previous section, it seems plausible that pressure will, in fact, increase in time.

In contrast to the U.S. positions, Russia and China are in agreement with the Kazakh leadership regarding both the threats and the best ways to respond to them. They share the view that tighter controls on press and political action are effective and appropriate ways to stem the dangers of radicalism and instability, and they can be expected to support Kazakh policies of this sort indefinitely. The Kazakh leadership likely disagrees with Moscow and Beijing's concerns about U.S. presence in Central Asia, which Astana appears to see as beneficial and a good means of building up its own relations with Washington. However, Kazakhstan did sign on to the SCO statement of June 2005 that the U.S. should have a timetable to withdraw its forces, now that Operation Enduring Freedom is winding down. Perhaps it did this under Russian and Chinese pressure, and perhaps the statement, like the sending of forces to Iraq, is a way of demonstrating solidarity with partners even while fundamentally disagreeing on the issue in question. But whether or not that statement is a reflection of Kazakhstan's true views, if its concern about U.S. "interference" in domestic politics grows, Kazakh policy may evolve in a less U.S.-friendly direction.

In sum, any Kazakh government that seeks continued economic growth and development is likely to seek to maintain good ties with the full range of interested parties. However, insofar as the current regime sees a threat to its hold on power in the form of political opposition, and insofar as it sees the appropriate response to that perceived threat as curtailing freedoms, it will pursue policies that put it at odds with aspects of the U.S. foreign policy agenda. Fundamentally, friendship with the United States is important in a general sense, and the loss of this

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Nazarbayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan," Press Release, May 5 2006; and White House, Office of the Vice President, "Vice President Cheney and President Nursultan Nazarbayev Make Remarks in a Meeting in the Golden Hall," Press Release, May 6 2006.

friendship would be harmful. But the regime would likely seek to remain in power and ensure stability in the short term—and mend fences later on.

### **Costs and Benefits of Partnership from the U.S. Perspective**

For the United States, Kazakhstan is an important partner for a number of reasons. Its energy resources, and the involvement of a number of U.S. energy companies create a certain package of interests. Kazakhstan's geographical location precludes it becoming a mission-critical base for Operation Enduring Freedom, but its assistance has been helpful and welcome. Kazakh troops in Operation Iraqi Freedom help bolster the coalition, despite their small number. Kazakhstan's location makes it a transit point for a number of transnational threats, such as the narcotics trade, weapons and materials smuggling (including nuclear materials), human trafficking, and organized crime, which are of concern to the United States, and the U.S. has sought and generally received cooperation from the Kazakh government on these issues.

Kazakhstan's political and economic development is also of concern to the United States insofar as it can foster or prevent the spread of these transnational threats. Thus, although the potential for significant instability in Kazakhstan is low, that potential is important to U.S. interests. However, it is not clear what tools the U.S. has at its disposal to promote these interests and, ironically, efforts to promote them may lead to rifts between Washington and Astana. Support for groups and individuals that seek greater freedom in Kazakhstan and reform of its political, legal, and other systems are probably at the core of what Kazakhstan needs for long term stability—but they are viewed by Kazakh leaders as perhaps the greatest threat to short term stability.

As U.S. relations with Uzbekistan have deteriorated, Kazakhstan, along with Kyrgyzstan, has come to be perceived by some in Washington as a key partner in the Central Asian region because it is a potential means for the U.S. to counterweigh Russian and Chinese influence in the region. This viewpoint is erroneous however, in light of Kazakhstan's desire to maintain good relations with all parties. It is unlikely to let itself be used as a pawn in a perceived zero-sum game, and has successfully avoided this to date. Because Russia and China have significant strategic interests in Kazakhstan, they have been forced to accept this, and Kazakhstan's continued friendship with the U.S. It is likely that they will continue to seek to expand their influence, and that Kazakhstan will continue to balk. Even if Kazakhstan turns away from the United States as a result of real or perceived U.S. threat to the regime, they will seek to balance Russian and Chinese influence against

one another—although the task may prove somewhat more difficult in the absence of the United States.

## **Implications**

For the time being, it seems likely that Kazakhstan will continue to seek to maintain friendship with the United States and be supportive of a range of U.S. efforts and policies. This support will generally take whatever form the Kazakhs feel they are capable of providing. In exchange, it will hope to have Washington's continued friendship, and to enjoy such things as military cooperation and training and support for WTO membership. There are two areas where Kazakh willingness to help will fall short, however. One is any effort to force Kazakhstan to "choose sides" between the U.S. and Russia, and, to a lesser extent, China. The second is the question of U.S. efforts to promote political liberalization, both in Kazakhstan and more generally.

On the first area, it is quite simply not in Kazakhstan's strategic interests to take steps detrimental to its relationships with Russia and China. No outside actor can credibly promise to protect Kazakhstan's interests in the event of Russian or Chinese hostility—nor would the U.S. want to, even if it could. Moreover, Kazakhstan shares a great many interests with its neighbors, and has found effective ways to manage its concerns about their efforts to increase influence.

On the second, the problem stems from a fundamental disagreement between the United States and Kazakhstan's government regarding the right strategy and tactics for promoting peace, security, and development into the future. Many U.S. policymakers and analysts view oppression and limits on political opposition and freedoms as dangerous trends which can lead to radicalized populations and discontent, and eventually political instability. This viewpoint drives fears that in an increasingly repressive environment, the likelihood that such developments will turn violent is increased. Given concerns about the transnational threats that transit Kazakhstan, the hope would thus be to avoid such developments and instead promote political and social reforms that will help channel opposition into peaceful and appropriate mechanisms.

From the perspective of Kazakhstan's leadership, however, the more room for action the opposition has, the more likely it is to foment unrest. In this context, it tends to view secular, religious, radical, and reformist opposition in much the same light. It is concerned that increased activity by these groups is what is likely to lead to violence, and sees the way to prevent this in increased controls, including on civil society groups and NGOs, as well as the press and overtly political groups. While the United States and Kazakhstan share long-term goals, their policymakers see the ways to attain these goals very differently.

This means that for at least as long as the present Kazakh regime remains in power, U.S. support for a variety of NGOs and civil society groups in Kazakhstan will be viewed as hostile by the government of that country. Moreover, if the United States (and this analysis) is right, the increased repression that the regime is hoping will lead to stability may instead lead to increased radicalism, bringing on the very results the regime - and the U.S. - fears. It is plausible that in the context of such developments, a Kazakh regime that sees itself as under threat will turn away from ties with the United States, to the detriment of both countries. Even given limited U.S. criticism or activity in Kazakhstan, the Kazakh government may well blame the U.S. for opposition activity of any sort, as some in Uzbekistan blamed the United States for the protests in Andijan province in May 2005.

Thus, U.S.-Kazakh relations are likely to remain placid on the surface, but with an underlying tension that could lead to a breach. That said, in the event of regime change or succession in Kazakhstan, the new leadership will face a new set of choices. If it feels relatively confident of its ability to maintain power, it will likely continue the balancing policies Kazakhstan has maintained in the past, and may be more welcoming of reform efforts—particularly if they are accompanied by aid. If it feels threatened and if U.S. policies remain much as they are today, it will likely turn against the United States.

The imperative for the United States in circumstances such as these is to consider and perhaps rethink its programs of assistance to support democracy and human rights in Kazakhstan and places like it. Specifically, it may be time to seek to understand how to develop programs that can more effectively support U.S. goals in environments where the government is hostile to change—but open to friendship.

# The Rise of Islam in Muslim Eurasia: Internal Determinants and Potential Consequences

Galina M. Yemelianova \*

## ABSTRACT

Since the 1990s, the ex-Soviet Muslim Volga-Urals, Caucasus and Central Asia have been among the most volatile and dynamic zones of Islamic radicalization in the Islamic East. The latter, although being part of a wider Islamic resurgence that begun in the Middle East in the late 1970s, has been a specific post-Soviet phenomenon, triggered by the collapse of Communism and the break-up of the *de facto* unitary Soviet empire. For historical and social reasons the proliferation of radical Islam has been most intensive in the Ferghana Valley in Central Asia and north-eastern Caucasus. This article examines the internal sources and social base of Islamic radicalization in the three regions and identifies the differences in Islamic dynamics there. It is based on the findings of three-year international collaborative project, 2003-2005, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, UK.

*Keywords* • Islam • Islamic radicalism • Islamic fundamentalism • Sufism • Volga-Urals, Caucasus • Central Asia

## Introduction

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington, Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic radicalism,<sup>1</sup> in particular, have been at the centre of media, academic and political debate in the West, in the Islamic East and in post-Communist Eurasia. This debate, however, has often been dominated by a decontextualized

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<sup>1</sup> In this article the term 'Islamic fundamentalism' defines a reaction of Muslim believers against those influences which they perceive as a threat to their spiritual and political self-realization according to their faith. They seek to return to what is believed to be the pure, unadulterated Islam of Prophet Muhammad and the four righteous caliphs. The term 'Islamic radicalism' refers to those Islamic fundamentalists who are willing to engage in politics in order to achieve their goal. The Islamic radicals who are prepared to wage an armed struggle against 'unbelievers' and 'non-proper' Muslims are termed as 'Islamic extremists.'

approach portraying Islamic radicalism as a homeless global force, disconnected from real people, places and histories. In reality, it has numerous regional and ethnic forms that are rooted in particular local cultural contexts, traditions, ways of life, and political and social structures. This article is concerned with Islamic radicalization of the ex-Soviet *ummah* (Islamic community). Despite high political and academic topicality of this issue and excessive publications on it in the West and the former U.S.S.R, there has been very limited serious research of this phenomenon. This has been due to political and security sensitivity of the subject, insufficient expertise, as well as funding constrains. Also, most of the existing research on the subject seems to overlook the internal factors behind the rise of Islamic radicalism in the ex-Soviet Muslim community, and focuses primarily either on the activities of Islamic radicals within the separate Muslim communities or on the role of foreign Islamist centres in the Islamist resurgence in the former Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> As a result of such a one-sided approach, the Islamic radicalization all over the ex-U.S.S.R is often portrayed as a by-product of an international Islamist ‘conspiracy.’

By contrast, this article seeks to analyse the internal sources and social base of Islamic radicalization in ex-Soviet Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Volga-Urals and to identify the differences in Islamic dynamics there. It also investigates if there has been any interaction between the Islamist networks in the three regions and assesses the level of foreign involvement in the Islamic dynamic there. In conclusion it evaluates the implications of the rise of Islamic radicalism for social cohesion and stability of particular post-Soviet Muslim regions and the wider international community. The article is based on the findings of a three-year period of field-research of three major Muslim enclaves in the former U.S.S.R – the Volga-Urals, Caucasus and Central Asia.<sup>3</sup> Its main research methods were expert interviews, textual analysis and ethnographic observation.<sup>4</sup> The research focused on those parts of the

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<sup>2</sup> Igor Dobaev, *Islamic Radicalism: Genesis, Evolution and Practice* ( Rostov-upon-Don, 2003), Alexei Malashenko, “Islamism na Vse Vremena” (“Islamism Forever”), *Svobodnaia Mysl’-XXI* (*Free Thought-XXI*), 12 ( 2004); Vladimir Bobrovnikov, “Muslim Nationalism in the post-Soviet Caucasus: The Dagestan Case,” *Caucasian Regional Studies*, 4, 1 (1999); Alexander Ignatenko, “Ordinary Wahhabism. A Heretic Movement in Islam,” <[www.english.russ.ru/politics/2001](http://www.english.russ.ru/politics/2001)>.

<sup>3</sup> The research was conducted by researchers from the UK, Russia and Kyrgyzstan within the Nuffield-Foundation-funded project entitled ‘The Growth of Islamic Radicalism in Eurasia: Internal Determinants, Comparative Perspectives and Potential Consequences’, 2002-2005.

<sup>4</sup> The research’s objectives were met through: (i) 111 expert interviews, including with representatives of the political establishment, the official Islamic clergy, the nationalist and Islamic opposition, intellectual and cultural elites and members of the new business class. All interviews and field notes were transcribed verbatim prior to analysis. These interviews provided critical data on internal determinants of Islamic radicalization among



three regions where the process of Islamic radicalisation had been most intensive.<sup>5</sup>

### Ethno-Cultural and Historical Background

The ex-Soviet Muslims, who number over sixty million, constitute a specific social entity which is distinguishable from other Muslim communities. All of them bear the scars of more than a century of Russian/Soviet political and cultural domination, which significantly mutated their Islamic beliefs and way of life. They have largely adhered to the popular form of Islam, which presents a synthesis of Islam with pre-Islamic local *adats* (customary norms) and beliefs; because of Tsarist Russian and Soviet suppression they are practically unaware of the intellectual form of Islam.<sup>6</sup> The majority of ex-Soviet Muslims are followers of the Hanafi *madhhab* (juridical school of Sunni Islam), although the Chechens, Ingush and the majority of Dagestanis adhere to the Shafi'i *madhhab*. The Azeris are largely Shiites, the *Ithna-'Asharites* or *Twelvers* (75 percent of Azerbaijan's population). Azerbaijan's Lezgins, Tatars, Kurds, Tats and Meskhets are Sunnis of Hanafi *madhhab*.<sup>7</sup> There is also a relatively small group of *Twelvers* in Central Asia. In the Pamir mountains of Tajikistan, there is an Ismaili community of Nizarites, the

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different groups; (ii) ethnographic observation of Islam-related events and practices in the targeted regions; (iii) comparative analysis across the three regions of available Islamic literature and its origins; Islamic websites; staffing, curriculum and teaching materials of *madrassas* (Islamic secondary schools) and Islamic institutes; (iv) through analysis of relevant academic literature, as well as textual analysis of 35 regional and local periodicals. The use of diverse sources and the employment of a combined methodological approach were crucial in providing data on this secretive and controversial issue.

<sup>5</sup> The field work was conducted in: *Ferghana valley in Central Asia*: (1) Kyrgyzstan: in Bishkek (capital); city of Osh; town of Batken, Batken region; town of Djalal-Abad; town of Isfana, Lyilak district, Batken region; town of Kara-Suyu; village of Andarak; village of Kulundu; village of Andarak, Lyilak district; (2) Tajikistan: in the city of Hudjand; village of Chorku, Sogd region; (3) Uzbekistan: town of Ferghana; town of Margelan and town of Andijan; in the *Caucasus*: (1) Azerbaijan: in Baku, village of Nardaran; (2) Kabardino-Balkaria: Nal'chik (capital), Baksan, Tyrnauz, Chegem, Kashhatau, Maisk, Prokhladnyi, the villages of Babukent, Kotliarevskaiia, Natkala, Nizhnii Chegem, Kashtan and Verkhniaia Balkaria; (3) Karachaevo-Cherkessia: Cherkessk (capital), Karachaevsk, the districts of Adyghe-Khabl'sk and Prikubansk; Dagestan: Makhachkala (capital), city of Derbend; in the *Volga-Urals*: (1) Tatarstan: in Kazan (capital), city of Naberezhnie Chelny; (2) Bashkortostan: in Ufa (capital); (3) Tatar-populated regions of the Russian Federation: Samara, Orenbourg, Ul'anovsk, Nizhnii Novgorod, Saratov and Buguruslan.

<sup>6</sup> Isabelle T. Kreindler, "Soviet Muslims: Gains and Losses as a Result of Soviet Language Planning," in Yaacov Ro'i, ed. *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p. 187-200.

<sup>7</sup> Raoul Motika, "Islam in post-Soviet Azerbaijan," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 115 (2001), p. 111-124;

followers of the Aga Khan. Shiism, at least at the everyday level, is also widespread among the Turkmen. The majority of Dagestani Muslims, Chechens and Ingush adhere to Sufi (mystical) Islam of Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya and Shaziliyya *tariqas* (Sufi brotherhoods). Naqshbandiyya is also widely spread among Uzbeks and Tajiks.

In spite of this commonality, the ex-Soviet Muslims do not comprise a homogeneous geographical, ethno-linguistic and cultural community. They vary in terms of their particular historical evolution, their ethnic make-up, their level of Islamization, their relations with Russian culture and with the Russian political centre, and the extent of their exposure to external Islamic influences. Thus, the Muslims of Central Asia who account for two-thirds of the population of the ex-Soviet *ummah* and make up over twenty percent of the total population of the former Soviet Union, belong to five major ethnic groups - the Uzbeks (about thirty percent of all the Soviet Muslims), the Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz, the Turkmen and the Tajiks. The latter represent the titular ethnic groups in the newly independent states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The Uzbeks, the Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz and the Turkmen are Turkic peoples, while the Tajiks belong to the Iranian ethno-linguistic family. Historically, the sedentary Tajiks and Uzbeks are more religious than the nomadic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmen.

In the Caucasus, the largest Muslim groups are the Azeris (a Turkic people) who number about six million and constitute about ninety percent of the total population of the newly independent state of Azerbaijan. The Azeris are followed by the Chechens who make up about one million and the Avars who top 500,000. The other relatively numerous Islamic people of the Caucasus are the Ingush, the Dargins, the Laks, the Kumyks, the Nogais, the Lezgins, the Kabardinians, the Balkars, the Cherkess, the Abkhaz, Adygheans and the Abazins as well as representatives of over thirty other smaller ethnic groups of Turkic, Caucasian and Indo-European origins.<sup>8</sup> In administrative terms they belong to Russia's autonomous republics of Dagestan, Chechnia, Ingushetiia, Kabardino-Balkariia, Karachaevo-Cherkessiia, Adyghea and North Ossetiia and Georgia's autonomous republics of Abkhazia and Ajaria. The most religious among them are Chechens, Ingush and Dagestanis. The largest Muslim community of inner Russia is represented by the Tatars (a Turkic people) who number over six million, although in Tatarstan itself there are only 2 million. The Tatars

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<sup>8</sup> The Muslims of the Caucasus are divided between four major ethno-linguistic groups. The Abkhaz, the Kabardinians, the Cherkess, the Abazins and the Adygheans belong to the Western Caucasian or Abkhaz-Adygh group. The Chechens, the Ingush, the Batsbiy, the Avars, the Ands, the Tsezs, the Lezgins, the Dargins, the Laks, the Tabasarans, the Aguls and the Rutuls belong to the Eastern Caucasian, or Nakh-Dagestani group. The Digors, the Talyshs and the Kurds belong to the Indo-European group. The Azeris, the Balkars, the Karachais, the Nogais and Kumyks belong to the Turkic group.

are followed by the Bashkirs (a Turkic people kindred to the Tatars) who number about 1.5 million and populate Bashkortostan and adjacent areas in the Volga-Urals.<sup>9</sup> In Ukraine's Crimea there are a quarter of million of Crimean Tatars. The Tatars and Bashkirs are the most integrated and secularised Muslims of the former Soviet Union due to their much longer period of social and cultural interaction with the Russians and their higher level of urbanization and industrialization.

### Islamic Dynamic in the Volga-Urals

In the Volga-Urals due to historical, economic and ethno-cultural reasons (400 hundred years of Russian political and cultural domination, higher levels of industrialization, urbanization and subsequently secularization of the population, a large proportion of non-Muslim, mainly Russian, population), the role of political Islam has been insignificant. In Tatarstan, the attempts of various opposition forces to play the Islamic card have failed so far. In contrast to the North Caucasus and the Ferghana Valley in the Volga-Urals region, Islam has not provided a mobilising framework for opposition to the authorities. So far, the governments of Shaimiev and Rakhimov in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan have respectively secured their relative security and undermined the chances of various opposition forces, including those of an Islamist nature, to present a serious threat to them in the foreseeable future.

Nevertheless, until present time, the Volga-Ural region has witnessed some limited manifestations of Islamist activism of *salafi*<sup>10</sup> nature. Of some significance there has been the penetration in the region of *Hizb at-Tahrir al-Islami* (Party of Islamic Liberation, HT).<sup>11</sup> It is hard to estimate the actual number of Islamists and their sympathizers in the region given very secretive nature of their network, however indirect evidence suggests that it does not exceed several dozen. Members of the HT are largely Tatars, although there are some Uzbeks and representatives of other traditionally Muslim ethnic groups of the ex-U.S.S.R. Many have either studied in foreign Muslim colleges, or have been taught by foreign tutors at home Islamic institutions. They have been engaged in propagation of *salafi* Islam through the distribution of

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<sup>9</sup> Galina Aksianova, *100 Narodov Rossiiskoi Federatsii (100 Peoples of the Russian Federation)*, Moscow: Saryi Sad, 2001), p. 16, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Here, the term '*Salafi* Islam, or *Salafism*' (lit. 'Islam of ancestors') is used as synonymous to "Islamic fundamentalism."

<sup>11</sup> *Hizb at-Tahrir* (HT) was founded in 1953 in Jordan by a Palestinian judge, Taqi al-Din Nabhani (1909-77), a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. The declared goal of the HT was "to resume the Islamic way of life and to convey the Islamic call to the world" through the construction of the worldwide Caliphate. From 1977 till 2003 the HT was headed by 'Abd al-Qadim Zallum, a Jordanian national of Palestinian descent. Since 2003 the HT leader has been 'Ata Abu al Rushta, a Palestinian.

leaflets and other *salafi* literature. Among the sites of Islamist activities there have been Naberezhnie Chelny, Al'metievsk, Nizhnekamsk, Buguruslan (Orenburg region) and Penza.

A controversial issue has been the relationship between the Islamic officialdom represented by the *Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Muslul'man Respubliki Tatarstan* (Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan, hereafter referred to as the DUMRT) under the leadership of muftii Iskhakov, the *Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Muslul'man Respubliki Bashkortostan* (Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan, hereafter referred to as the DUMRB) under the leadership of muftii Nigmatullin, and other regional muftiiats, which are affiliated to the *Sovet Muftiev Rossii* (Council of Muftiis of Russia) under Moscow-based muftii Ravil Gaynuttdinov, on the one side, and *salafis*, on the other. For the last decade the latter have been recipients of financial and methodological assistance from the foreign Islamic foundations, primarily from the Gulf region, and *de facto* have sanctioned the penetration of *salafi* Islam into regional Islamic discourse through the Islamic educational establishment. This issue has been aggravated by continuous disarray in the Russian Islamic establishment, the rivalry between the Moscow-based muftii Ravil Gaynuttdinov and the Ufa-based muftii Talgat Tadjuddinov, the unitary leader of the Russian Muslim establishment - the *Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Musul'man Evropeiskoi Chasti Rossii i Sibiri* (the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the European part of Russia and Siberia, hereafter referred to as the DUMES) - until its break up in 1992, who has persistently accused muftii Gaynuttdinov of safeguarding the proliferation of *salafism* in the Russian *ummah*. In February 2006 the twelve most influential Russian muftis agreed to overcome the split of the Russian *ummah* and to establish a single coordination centre of the DUMs.

In Tatarstan, alongside the *salafi* ideas of outside origins, there emerged a locally-rooted opposition Muslim community headed by Faizrahman Sattarov, known as the *Faizrahmanists*.<sup>12</sup> The community's basic postulate is the principle, 'live only by the Qur'aan'. In doctrinal terms it represents a paradoxical mixture of *salafism*, Sufism and paganism. Sattarov recognises that this will restrict his number of followers to only the most 'worthy.' He admits that there are sources other than the Qur'an that form the basis of the shariat, but argues that 'we have no need for them as yet and we need to unite around the Koran

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<sup>12</sup> Faizrahman Sattarov, one of the few Tatar imams of the Soviet period, received professional theological training from 1955-64 in the Bukhara *medresse* and held the post of imam-*khatib* (chief imam) in some of the USSR's largest cities (Leningrad, Rostov, Oktiabr'sk and others) and of *qadi* (Islamic judge) in the DUMES from 1972-6. Thereafter he fell into opposition to the official religious structures.

only.<sup>13</sup> According to Faizrahman, of the seventy-three existing Islamic sects, only one is the 'sect of Allah' and the rest were invented by scholars. He pays lip service to the distinction between Sunnism and Shi'ism and the division into *madhhabs*, but in practice he casts doubt on their practicality, because 'Allah forbade disunity'. Among basic dogmas, he particularly highlights *namaz* (Islamic prayer), *zakat* (obligatory alms) and community tries, often unsuccessfully, to implement a compulsory *zakat* among community members of up to two-thirds of their income.<sup>14</sup>

With regard to the state and politics, Sattarov believes that the state should be secular rather than religious, citizens should be loyal and that participation in politics is permissible. The eclectic nature of the *Faizrahmanist* ideas is particularly evident in their attitude to rites and customs. A fully tolerant attitude to wake rites is combined with non-acceptance of Sufism and some religious festivals, such as, for example, *mawlid* (Prophet Muhammad's birthday). Recognition of the importance of *ijtihad* (independent judgement in Islam) does not prevent the acceptance of some aspects of *taqlid* (Islamic tradition). The *Faizrahmanists* emphasise their native roots and their lack of links with Muslim religious organisations and foundations abroad. This self-sufficiency is evident in the work of their *medresse* which opened in 1997, where teaching is conducted only by trained members of their own community, and textbooks are written (or rather literally copied from various books) by Sattarov himself.

In general, the central vector of Islamic radicalisation in the Volga-Urals has developed within the theological and academic debate among local Muslim clerics, nationalist politicians and Islamic specialists. Among the major issues of this debate have been *taqlid*, *Wahhabism*,<sup>15</sup> Sufism and *bid'a* (illegitimate innovation in Islam), the essence of regional (Tatar and Bashkir) Islam and Euro-Islam. The reasons for centrality of this debate have been particular characteristics of the regional *ummah*, which distinguish it from Muslim communities in the North Caucasus and the Ferghana Valley. Among those specific features have been the almost complete loss of the Islamic heritage because of the lengthy period of Russification, Christianization, consistent destruction of *ulema* (Islamic scholars) by the Russian/ Soviet authorities, as well as the dual script change (first from Arabic into Latin and then from Latin into

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with imam Faizrahman Sattarov, Kazan, December 22 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with imam Faizrahman Sattarov, Kazan, July 15 2002.

<sup>15</sup> *Wahhabism* is a specific form of *salafism*, which evolved into a wider political movement for the unification of mid-eighteenth century Arabia which was initiated by Muhammad ben Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92). Strictly speaking the use of the term *Wahhabism* in relation to the *salafi* movement in the Islamic regions of the former Soviet Union is incorrect because the latter is based on a wider doctrinal foundation than the teaching of Abd al-Wahhab.

Russian). As a result, there is insufficient understanding of what is the 'right Islam'.

By the second half of the 1990s, representatives of official Islam publicly admitted that *salafi* (*Wahhabi*) ideas had penetrated local Muslim communities. Official clerics responded to the 'threat' of *Wahhabism* by defining more clearly their own theoretical position. The central pillars of this position are: propagation of the *Hanafi madhhab*, adherence to the principles of the *taqlid*, and rejection of the need to 'open the doors of the *ijtihad*'. The rejection of *ijtihad* was seen as vital to securing a viable ideological and theoretical base for forming a fully-fledged *ummah* and preventing all possible ideological pretensions from either right (*Wahhabism*) or left (religious reforming and modernising tendencies). Official clerics view the origins of *taqlid* within the doctrine of the *madhhabs*, and are thus rooted in the teaching of the founders of the four major *madhhabs* - imam Malik, imam Abu Hanifa, imam Shafi'a and imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. The appeal to *taqlid*, therefore, is regarded as theoretical protection from penetration in the region of the ideas of both *Wahhabis* and 'modernist Muslims, whose intellect has been damaged by *kafir* (non-believer) influence deriving from western education.'<sup>16</sup>

Most contemporary Muslim clergy support the return of traditional religious values to society. For example, Valiulla Yakupov, the deputy muftii of the DUM RT criticises *jadids* (Islamic reformers of the nineteenth century) for their orientation towards adaptation and simplification of Islamic ideas to fit Western culture. He argues that Islam has always had a cult of science and therefore does not need to bring its theology in line with the achievements of science. Yakupov sees the solution in overcoming existing euro-centrism and establishing respect for the Tatar people and their culture, including Islam. He claims that Tatars must stick to their traditional *Hanafi* Islam, which has allowed the preservation of the ethnic peculiarities of the Tatars as well as local customs in the hard conditions of the centuries-long Christian occupation.<sup>17</sup>

The views of traditionalist majority are opposed by the modernist minority. Thus, Tatar nationalist Rashat Safin regards Islam, which he perceives geopolitically, as an indispensable characteristic of the Tatar nation. According to Safin, Tatars do not need to follow existing forms of Islam and they must have their own Islam. He argues against Tatarstan's gravitation toward Muslim countries on the basis of common religion, and advocates the transformation of Tatarstan into the

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Gabdulkhak Samatov, chief *qadi* (Islamic judge) of the DUMRT, Kazan April 15 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Valiulla Yakupov, Kazan, April 20 2003.

intellectual centre of the Islamic world in the Eurasian space, based on the *jadidist* principles.<sup>18</sup>

Rafael Khakimov, political advisor to president Shaimiev, propagates radical modernization of Islam and development of Euro-Islam. For Khakimov, Islam is the religion of a free man and a path to personal freedom. He argues that in order to succeed in contemporary world, Tatars and other Muslim people of the region have to recognise that the truth is not a set absolute and depends more on particular historical conditions. He argues, therefore, that some instructions given in the Qur'an and shariat are not applicable to contemporary conditions. According to Khakimov, external Muslim symbols, as well as many Islamic prohibitions and rituals, especially those which relate to women's rights, have lost their significance in the twenty-first century.<sup>19</sup>

### **Islamic Fundamentalism in the Caucasus**

In the North Caucasus, the proliferation of Islamic fundamentalism, which has been widely known as *Wahhabism*, began in the late 1980s and in Azerbaijan in the early 1990s. Compared to official Muslim clerics, the Islamists have been prepared to address the key social problems. Islamic fundamentalist ideas have been generated both within local society and imported from abroad. Among its local ideologists, there have been, for example, Ahmed-*qadi* Akhtaev, Bagauddin Kebedov, Abbas Kebedov and Ayub Omarov in Dagestan; Rasul Kudaev, Anzor Astemirov, Musa Mukozhev, Ruslan Nakhushev in Kabardino-Balkaria and Muhammad Bidzhiev and Ramazan Barlakov in Karachaevo-Cherkessia. They claim to follow the ideas of local Islamic thinkers of the early twentieth century, such as Ali Kayaev, a Dagestani, Bekmurza Pachev, a Kabardinian, and Kazim Mechiev, a Balkar. Among their foreign authorities have been Ibn Taimiia, Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, Abul Alaa Maududi, Sayid al-Kutb and at-Turabi.<sup>20</sup>

Among the means by which Islamic fundamentalism has been promoted from abroad have been the participation of local Muslims in the *hajj* (annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina) and the activities of various Saudi and other Middle Eastern Islamic organisations and foundations in the region. The latter subsidised construction of mosques and *madrassas*, the *hajj* of local Muslims, as well

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<sup>18</sup> Rashat Safin, *Tatar Yuly (The Tatar Way)*, Kazan: Iman, 1999).

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Rafael Khakimov, political advisor to president Shaimiev, Kazan, August 28 2003.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Tahir Atmurzaev, deputy muftii of the KBR, Nal'chik, October 31 2000; interview with Mukhtar Bottaev, the editor-in-chief of the news programme, the Russian bureau, Nal'chik, October 30 2000; interview with Rasul Kudaev, one the activists of *new Muslims*, Nal'chik, July 20, 2003; Kudaev 2003; Enver Kisriev, *Islam i Vlast' v Dagestane (Islam and Power in Dagestan)*, Moscow: OGI, 2004).

as scholarships for those local young Muslims who wanted to study in Islamic universities and colleges abroad. Foreign Islamic foundations also supplied teachers for newly opened Islamic schools and colleges, assisted in the establishment of Islamic publishing houses and freely distributed Qur'ans and other Islamic literature, including those of fundamentalist nature. They also invested in the proselytising activities which were conducted by Islamic missionaries and in the organisation of various Islamic training courses and camps, most of which were located in Chechnya. The peak of their activities was in the early 1990s. Since the mid-1990s, and especially since the beginning of the second Chechen war in 1999, almost all the activities of foreign Islamic organisations and Islamic missionaries and teachers have been banned by the authorities. Among the few exceptions have been teachers of Arabic and shariat from the al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, who continue to be employed by the Islamic Institute of Abu Hanifa in Cherkessk on a one-year-long contract basis.<sup>21</sup>

The major Islamist enclaves have been in the north eastern Caucasus, in Dagestan and Chechnya in particular. In Dagestan the relations between *Wahhabis* and dominating Sufis (*tariqatists*) have been controversial, and dependent upon particular religious and political circumstances. In doctrinal terms there is an intrinsic conflict between Sufism and *Wahhabism*. *Wahhabism* allegedly represents the 'pure' and true Islam of Prophet Muhammad and the four 'righteous Caliphs'. *Wahhabis* advocate the *tawhid* (strict monotheism) and oppose *tariqatism* as a deviation from Islam. They seek the restoration of original Islam through its purging of Sufi-related *bid'a*. *Wahhabis* do not consider themselves to be bound by the Shafi'i *madhhab* which has been traditionally dominant in Dagestan, or by any other *madhhab*; they only concur with those regulations of the four *madhhabs* that can be tested by reference to the Qur'an and the Sunna. *Wahhabis* believe that on questions of *ibadat* (homage to Allah) only what is prescribed in the Qur'an and the Sunna is permissible; everything else is a deviation from Islam. In *muamalat* (social practice), everything is permitted unless it is specifically forbidden by the Qur'an and the Sunna.

The *Wahhabi* ideologists count as many as one hundred *bid'a* in Sufi doctrine and practice. They are particularly critical of the Sufi veneration of saints and shaykhs as intercessors between believers and Allah. They regard excessive worship and glorification of Islamic saints (even of the Prophet Muhammad) as a deviation from monotheism, which proscribes the worship of anyone other than Allah. Apart from clear, conceivable knowledge embodied in the shariat, *Wahhabis* rule out the existence in

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Interview with Ismail-haji Bostanov, director of the Islamic Institute of Imam Abu Hanifa, Cherkessk, July 19 2003.



Islam of another hidden, mystic knowledge which is supposedly accessible only to saints and Sufi shaykhs. They do not recognise the mystical ability of the saints and of the Prophet himself to intercede before Allah on behalf of Muslims, and challenge the legitimacy of praying to the saints. Neither do *Wahhabis* accept that *baraka* (blessing) can be passed down through saints, shaykhs and artefacts related to them (such as shrines). *Wahhabis* thus reject such Sufi practices traditional to Dagestani society as *ziyarat*, reading the Qur'an at cemeteries, *maulids* (chanting praise to saints or shaykhs) and using amulets and talismans. While condemning innovations, at the same time *Wahhabis* advocate the strict observance of all provisions of the Qur'an and Sunna concerning ritual and ceremony and the behaviour and appearance of Muslims, even if these provisions are unfamiliar to most Dagestanis. In particular, they insist on unshaven beards and shortened trousers for men and *niqab* (short veil) or even *hijab* (long veil) for women. On the whole, *Wahhabism* attracts new converts by its rationalism, accessibility and ability to overcome the often elitist and closed nature of Sufism.

Of special significance is the difference between *Wahhabis* and *tariqatists* on the issue of *jihād* (Islamic sacred war). *Wahhabis* accuse Sufis of distorting Islamic teaching on the *jihād* and of effectively consigning the *jihād* to oblivion. *Wahhabis* perceive the *jihād* as the core of Islam, without which it is like a 'lifeless corpse'. Unlike the *tariqatists* who interpret the *jihād* predominantly in terms of the spiritual self-perfection of a Muslim, *Wahhabis* believe that the *jihād* also implies a campaign to spread Islam all over the world. Moreover, *Wahhabi* radicals view *jihād* as a preventive armed advance in order to overcome those obstacles which the enemies of Islam place in the path of its peaceful proliferation. This approach opens up the possibility of declaring a *jihād* against the present Government which allegedly resists the effective *ad-da'wa al-Islamiyya* (summon for Islamic way of life) in Dagestan. In this respect, the *Wahhabis* strongly criticise the *tariqatists* for their ideological and political corruption and for their support of the present regime. In particular, they defy Sufis' alleged legalizing of usury, which is forbidden by *sharia* law.

*Wahhabis* have criticized local Islamic clerics – the old imams – for their alleged distortions of Islam and Islamic practices. They have especially opposed the existing practice of *israf* (wastefulness) in the main events of the life circle, funerals in particular, which have a devastating impact on the bulk of the poverty-stricken population.<sup>22</sup> Also,

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<sup>22</sup> According to the local tradition during the first three days after the burial the relatives of a deceased Muslim have to treat his, or her friends and anybody who happened to pass by to a meal and to provide them with a food package containing 1 kg of lamb, 1 kg of sugar, 1 kg of flour and 1 kg of sweets. A similar procedure is repeated on the 40<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup>

compared to the old imams who used to memorize Arabic without understanding it, the *Wahhabis* have begun to conduct prayers in local languages which has enabled them to explain the meaning of the Qur'an to their parishioners. Most old imams have resisted these innovations which they regard as a threat to the 'traditional Islam' that they allegedly represent.<sup>23</sup> Of particular importance has been *Wahhabis'* criticism of the archaic clan-and ethnicity-based stratification of local society and their ambition to replace it by an inclusive Islamic identity. It is significant that they so far have been the most potent agents of trans-clan and trans-national solidarity.

Until late 1997 in the north eastern Caucasus *Wahhabis* were more or less equally represented by moderates and radicals. Since the second Chechen war (1999-2000), the moderates have been greatly outnumbered by the radicals. By comparison, in the north western Caucasus (Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachaevo-Cherkessia) the *Wahhabis*, known as *Novye musul'mane* (new Muslims) had been dominated by moderates until 2005. This had been due to the region's deeper political and cultural integration within Russia, its low level of religiosity and its multi-confessional demographic composition.<sup>24</sup> However, since October 2005 the radicals have prevailed there as well. While the moderates have emphasised Islamic education as the major source of gradual re-Islamization of local societies, while the radicals, or *jihadists*<sup>25</sup>, have been prepared to directly challenge local governments. In particular, they called for the introduction of Islamic rule modelled on the nineteenth century *Imamat* of Imam Shamil. Some of the radicals have been closely linked to the international Islamist centres in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Jordan.

In the aftermath of the second Chechen war, the overt manifestations of Islamic fundamentalism have been suppressed as a result of the Kremlin's and the regional authorities' crack-down on Islamic extremism. At that time, the parliaments of the North Caucasian republics adopted new restrictive laws on religious communities. In 2002 they were reinforced by the federal decree 'fighting extremist activities.' These have provided a legal base for suppression of religious, or any other opposition to the ruling regimes in the region. As in Soviet times the local FSB (the former KGB) have begun to compile lists of active and

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days after the burial. Interview with Ismail Akkiev, one of the elders of the village Babugent, September 1 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Tahir Atmurzaev, deputy muftii of the KBR, Nal'chik, October 31 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Anzor Astemirov, an activist of the Islamic *jamaat*

(Islamic community) of the KBR, Nal'chik, February 2003; Interview with Rasul Kudaev, Nal'chik, July 20 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Here the term *Jihadism* defines an Islamic radical political movement under the banner of *jihad* (Islamic holy war) against the federal Russian and regional authorities which *jihadists* perceive as *kafir* (infidel).

passive *Wahhabis*, as well as *Wahhabi* sympathisers. For example, in Kabardino-Balkaria in 2002 the FSB registered over 300 *Wahhabis*.<sup>26</sup> The pro-government mass media have played a central role in reinforcing the anti-*Wahhabi* and anti-Islamic hysteria in all three republics. Thus, the daily regional newspaper *Severnyi Kavkaz* has specialised in 'exposing' *Wahhabis* in the region, and their alleged links with international Islamic extremist centres based in Turkey, the UAE and Syria. It has routinely depicted local *Wahhabis* as criminals and terrorists who had been trained by the Chechen rebels and subsidized by Western intelligence.<sup>27</sup> Regional and republican mass media have been promoting images of 'good', i.e., pro-muftiat, and 'bad', i.e., all other, Muslims. However, the military and administrative suppression of Islamists and Muslims, in the conditions of continuous economic disorder and the paralysis of democratic processes, have objectively enhanced the underground proliferation of Islamic fundamentalism in the region.<sup>28</sup>

In post-Soviet Chechnya, by comparison with Dagestan and other Muslim republics in the North Caucasus, the Islamic resurgence has been determined by the dynamic of the Russian-Chechen conflict. Initially, Chechen President Dudayev fought a predominantly national liberation, i.e., not religious, war against Moscow and attributed a purely symbolic function to Islam (Sufism). However, the Russian invasion of 1994 Islamicized his politics and rhetoric, which were also aimed at attracting international Islamic support for the Chechen cause. In 1996, Yandarbiyev, Dudayev's successor and an Islamic fundamentalist, declared Islam the state religion and created shariat courts. This action split the Chechen leadership along doctrinal lines: Maskhadov, who replaced Yandarbiyev in 1997, as well as muftii Kadyrov, advocated Sufi (Qadiri) Islam,<sup>29</sup> while Udugov, Yandarbiyev, Basayev and some other leading Chechen politicians and warlords, as well as foreign fighters, subscribed to fundamentalist Islam (*Wahhabism*).

The war conditions have predetermined a prevalence of *jihadism* in Chechnya. Its major agents have been foreign *majahedin* (Islamic fighters), who came to assist their Islamic brethren in fighting the *jihad* against the Russian invasion, and radical Dagestani *Wahhabis*. The overwhelming majority of Chechen Islamists have been marginalised; young people who had a very vague knowledge of Islam treated *jihadism*

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with A'bert Shashev, the assistant to the General Prosecutor of the KBR, Nal'chik, February 17 2003.

<sup>27</sup> *Severnyi Kavkaz* 36, October 22 2000, p. 2; Interview with Louiza Urazaeva, a correspondent of the *Severnyi Kavkaz*, Nal'chik, October 30 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Svetlana Akkueva, professor of the Institute of Humanities of the KBR, Gelenjik, May 28 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Thus, the distinctive Qadiri circular movements and loud *dhikr* (religious chanting) have become symbols of the Chechen resistance to the Russian imperialism.

more as a profession and means of living than a religious belief. During the second Chechen war (1999-2000), Maskhadov sided with pro-Islamist opposition, while Kadyrov maintained his adherence to Sufi Islam. Maskhadov's pro-Moscow successors Akhmad Kadyrov, Alu Alkhanov and Ramzan Kadyrov have maintained their allegiance to Sufi Islam of Qadiri *tariqa*.

However, the military and administrative suppression of Islamists and Muslims in general against the background of continuous economic disorder and the paralysis of the democratic process have objectively enhanced the underground proliferation of Islamic fundamentalism in the region.<sup>30</sup> Since 2002 Islamists have strengthened their presence in Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachaevo-Cherkessia.

Dagestan has witnessed the merger between Islamism and terrorism represented in the activities of the *jamaats* *Jennet* (Paradise) and *Shariat*. North Caucasian Islamists have spread their activities in Central Russia. Among their new tactics has been *shahidism* (suicide in the name of Islam) which is alien to their culture and religious traditions.

In post-Soviet Azerbaijan the Islamic dynamic has been slack due to historical, ethno-cultural and economic reasons. Like Tatarstan, Azerbaijan, with its abundant oil resources, has been more industrialized and urbanized than the North Caucasus. As a result, the level of secularization among the Azeri Muslims has been higher than among their co-religionists in the North Caucasus. Therefore, like in the Volga-Urals, the Islamic revival<sup>31</sup> there has largely occurred in the cultural and intellectual spheres. It has been shaped by the correlation between Shi'ite and Sunni Islam, the external Islamic influences, especially those coming from neighbouring Turkey and Iran, and Azerbaijan's significant role in the trans national oil business.<sup>32</sup>

### Radical Islam in Ferghana Valley

Following the break-up of the U.S.S.R, the Ferghana Valley, which in politico-administrative terms is divided between Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, has witnessed the rise of political Islam. There have been socio-economic, political and ethno-cultural reasons for this phenomenon.<sup>33</sup> The Ferghana Valley is a largely agrarian and densely populated region. It has suffered particularly badly

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Svetlana Akkueva, May 28 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Here, the use of the term "Islamic revival" is problematic because of the specific nature and low scale of Islam-related processes in Azerbaijan.

<sup>32</sup> See more Anar Valiev, "Azerbaijan: Islam in post-Soviet Republic," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 9, 4 (2005), p. 1-13.

<sup>33</sup> The territory of the Ferghana Valley is over 100 thousand sq.km, its population is over 11 million. It is a multi-ethnic region, although the dominant ethnic groups are Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kyrgyz.

from the abrupt withdrawal of subsidies and other supplies. It has become the poorest region of Central Asia with the highest level of unemployment among its population. The situation has been aggravated by the endemic corruption and arbitrariness of local governments and the lack of social mobility. On the other side, Islam has always been an important part of identity among various inhabitants of the Ferghana Valley because of the lengthy period of its Islamicization.<sup>34</sup>

The first Islamists turned up in Central Asia in the mid-1980s. In the early 1990s they were largely represented by the *Islamskaia Partiiia Vozrozhdeniia* (Islamic Revival Party, hereafter referred to as the IRP).<sup>35</sup> In the period between 1996 and 1999 the role of the most dynamic Islamist organisation in the region shifted to the *Islamskoe Dvizhenie Uzbekistana* (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, hereafter referred to as the IMU).<sup>36</sup> Since 1999, the main agents of Islamic radicalism in Ferghana valley has been *Hizb at-Tahrir al-Islamii* (Party of Islamic Liberation, HT) and to a lesser extent *Akramiyya*.<sup>37</sup> Although, HT is a part of a wider international organisation, its objectives and tactics are determined by local context. The doctrinal and legal platforms of the local leaders of the HT are characterized by vagueness and eclecticism which allows significant deviation from Nabhanis's ideas. This relates, for example, to their acceptance of 'urf (tribal law) and 'adat which are conventional in Central Asia. HT, like the earlier IMU, seeks the creation of a caliphate. Similarly, it does not accept a separation between state and religion. Its

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<sup>34</sup> Islam was brought to the Ferghana Valley in the seventh century by Arabs. In the Middle Ages its major cities, Samarkand and Bukhara, were among the leading centres of Islamic culture and scholarship in the Islamic East. See more Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (London: Tauris, 2000); Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2000); Vitaly Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia* (Lanham: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> Originally the IRP in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan represented national branches of a nation-wide Islamic Revival Party which was established in 1989 in Astrakhan. The IRP of Tajikistan became the only Islamic organisation in Central Asia to be registered as an official political party. In 1992 the IRPT briefly entered the government. After the outbreak of civil war the IRPT became one of the warring parties and allied itself with many militant Islamist elements from different parts of Central Asia. As a result of the General Peace Agreement of 1997 the IRPT was legalised and allowed into the government of President Rakhmonov.

<sup>36</sup> The IMU was set up in 1996 by Islamic militants who in the early 1990s began their political activities in the Ferghana valley under the influence of *salafi* mullahs. The IMU propagated a violent removal of President Karimov from power and creation of an Islamic state. After September 11, 2001, the IMU suffered its greatest defeat, and its remnants fled to Pakistan for rehabilitation and regrouping. Its capability was substantially diminished, but the movement has been undertaking steps to reorganize and remobilize.

<sup>37</sup> An Islamist organisation *Akramiyya* emerged in 1996 as a result of a split of the group of Akram Yuldashev from the Uzbek branch of the *Hizb at-Tahrir*. It represented an Uzbekified, grassroots version of the HT. The *Akramiyya* cells supposedly exist in the Andijan region, Osh (Kyrgyzstan), Namangan, Kokand and other regions of Uzbekistan.

goal is to create a state where the leader of the state is the leader of both state and religious affairs, and the authoritative interpreter of shariat. However, compared to the Uzbek-centred IMU, HT advocates a trans-national Islamic identity. This is an important factor for its appeal among local people who bitterly resent existing barriers between states and the dominance of local barons. Also, compared to the IMU, which advocated the use of violence in order to achieve its ultimate goal, HT is against any violent actions. It is oriented towards the propagation of its ideas through the dissemination of printed (and online) materials and education. Yet another difference with the IMU is the fact that the HT accepts the possibility of creation of Islamic Caliphate, initially in a separate or a group of countries - a process that is directly analogous to the theory of revolution of Marxists and Arab nationalists.<sup>38</sup>

HT has a strictly clandestine organisational structure that makes it similar to leftist and nationalist groups of the past. It is built on the principal of a pyramidal hierarchy. It comprises several levels, and the party's primary cell is the *halaqa* (circle). Since 2001 the regional leader of the HT has been Abdurahim Tukhtasinov (Andijan). Although the Islamists do not provide solutions to specific problems, their general call for a caliphate is presented as the solution to many practical problems of direct concern to the individual. It is widely believed that the caliphate will dissolve state borders and shariat will eliminate corruption and social inequality. Both the IMU and HT organisations draw their support mainly from young uneducated and unemployed men and women, but their ideas attract broader discontented groups. Although it is impossible, given the dearth of verified data, to establish the actual membership of HT, Akramiyya, the IMU, and other small Islamist organisations, it seems plausible that those organisations unite between thirty and fifty thousand active members. In addition, the relatives of the activists constitute a much larger group of sympathizers.<sup>39</sup>

It is worth noting that alongside many similarities, there are some doctrinal and practical differences between the Islamists from the HT in the Ferghana Valley and *Wahhabis* in the Caucasus and the Volga-Urals. Among their common characteristics are their ultimate goal of creating a world Muslim Caliphate and their deep hostility towards the Shi'a. However, compared to *Wahhabis*, members of HT recognize the existence of *madhhabs* (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali), as well as *ijtihad*.<sup>40</sup> Unlike *Wahhabis*, they do not preach the idea of *takfir* (non-belief) and do not have a *Wahhabi* fixation on *bid'a*. In comparison with *jihadists*, the *tahriris* adhere to peaceful interpretation of *jihad*. The *tahriris*

<sup>38</sup> Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, p. 135

<sup>39</sup> This estimate represents an average figure which was generated through the comparison of Islamists' number, provided by Islamist and official interviewees.

<sup>40</sup> Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, p. 132

also differ from the *jihadists* by calling for a dialogue with the Central Asian regimes that the *jihadists* label as infidel, pursuing their removal and elimination. On the other side, HT's interpretation of the Caliphate (the Caliph is the guarantor of the realisation of the Islamic ideal) is similar to that of *Jama'at al-Muhajirun*<sup>41</sup> in the UK. Yet another distinctive feature of the *tahriris* is the female membership. In Kyrgyzstan alone, women constitute more than 10 percent of the total membership of HT, which numbers a few thousand followers.<sup>42</sup>

In Uzbekistan the first cells of HT emerged in the early 1990s in Namangan after the swift liquidation of local Islamist organisations, *Adolat* (Justice), *Islam Lashkarlari* (The Army of Islam), and *Tawba* (Repentance). Among its first leaders were 'Isam Abu Mahmud Qiyadati and Abd al-Qadim Zallum, both Jordanians. However, HT gained prominence only after the terrorist acts in Tashkent in February 1999 which were allegedly organised by the IMU. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 attack on U.S. soil, the Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik authorities began a crackdown on the *tahriris* and their sympathisers. HT is banned in all three countries. Following the Andijan uprising in May 2005, the Uzbek government under President Islam Karimov intensified repression against real and imagined Islamists.

In Tajikistan, HT emerged in the late 1990s. Its strongest support has been in the north and the west of the country. The major factors for its growing popularity have been public discontent with socio-economic conditions, strict official control over religious matters which leaves no room for the official Islamic clerics to provide guidelines for believers on contemporary issues, whether social or religious. There was also disappointment with the IRP, which is the only legal moderate Islamic party represented in the Parliament. There has been general frustration among the followers of the IRP, who believe that the party has given into government and that it has abandoned its ambition to create an Islamic state. Among the issues on which the IRP leadership and the official Islamic clergy are unable to speak is the U.S. military presence in Central Asia of which the HT is strongly critical.

In Kyrgyzstan, HT has had a foothold since 1999, particularly in the Jalal-Abad region around Osh in the Ferghana valley. Since September 11, 2001, HT has increased its activities in Kyrgyzstan as it has been able to exploit increasing tension in Kyrgyz society, in particular, between its southern and northern parts.

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<sup>41</sup> *Jama'at al-Muhajirun* (Association of Migrants) was created in 1983 in the UK by Shaykh Omar Bakri Muhammad, the former member of the Muslim Brotherhood. It advocates the construction of a world wide Caliphate. The organisation was disbanded in 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, p. 170

## Conclusion

Since the disintegration of the U.S.S.R in 1991 the ex-Soviet-*umma* has turned into one of the most volatile and dynamic zones of Islamic radicalisation in the Islamic East. The latter, although being a part of a wider Islamic resurgence that had begun in the Middle East in the late 1970s, is a specific post-Soviet phenomenon, which was triggered by the collapse of Communism and the break-up of the *de facto* unitary Soviet empire. It has emerged against the background of the dire deterioration in the social and economic situation, the formation of ineffective and corrupt post-Soviet regimes and an ideological confusion.

The proliferation dynamic of radical Islam has been congruent with social and economic conditions, the policies of the ruling regimes, the ethno-national composition of the population and the level of its Islamic religiosity. Thus, it has been considerably higher in Ferghana valley in Central Asia and the north eastern Caucasus, corresponding to Russia's autonomous republics of Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia. In Ferghana valley, the main agents of Islamic radicalism have been Islamists of *Hizb at-Tahrir*, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and *Al-Akramiyya*, while in the North Caucasus it has been so called *Wahhabis* and New Muslims.

The main recipients of Islamism have been those young men and women of various ethnic origins who have been frustrated with the continuous economic and social disorder, the proliferation of crime, alcoholism and drug abuse, as well as the overwhelming corruption and ineffectiveness of the ruling regimes and Islamic officialdom. They have accordingly seen in Islam a potent ideology for the social and spiritual revival of the people. In doctrinal terms they have adhered to *salafi* Islam and regarded the existing Islamic practices and the mode and language of prayers as deviations from true Islam.

The Islamist activities in the Volga-Urals, Caucasus and Central Asia have displayed some similarities and differences. However, there has not been any established interaction between the Islamist networks in the three regions. In each region Islamists have pursued their specific agenda. Nevertheless, all of them have developed direct links with the same Islamist centres and Islamic funding bodies in Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and some other countries of the Middle East, as well as in Western Europe. However, there has been no direct correlation between the level of the Taliban's activity in neighbouring Afghanistan and Islamists' activities in Ferghana valley. Since the late 1990s the authorities in all three regions have significantly curtailed direct foreign Islamic involvement in the form of foreign Islamic missionaries, teachers and representatives of various Islamic foundations and organisations. However, indirect foreign Islamic involvement in the form of financial, doctrinal and educational assistance has persisted. Among its main



channels have been sponsorship of the annual *hajj* of local Muslims to Mecca and Medina, local Muslims' studies in Islamic Universities and colleges abroad, foreign Islamic publications, and illegally distributed in local Muslim communities and foreign Islamist websites which, however, have been accessible to only a small fraction of the poverty-stricken population.

The impact of Islamism on local politics has remained marginal although it has varied from region to region. It has been greater in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Dagestan compared to the other target areas. In all three regions, the actual number of Islamists has still not exceeded 5-7 percent of the respective population. However, proliferation of radical Islam has been on the rise. In the longer run, the prolongation of the existing dire socio-economic conditions, the ineffectiveness and pervasive corruption of the ruling regimes as well as official treatment of all Muslims with suspicion as potential extremists may enhance political Islam as a potent form of social protest. This could have a direct impact on the socio-political and security situation in each region, Eurasia and the wider Western European and international community.



# On the Edge of the Big Muddy: The Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan

Thomas H. Johnson \*

## ABSTRACT

This article attempts to delve into the morass that is developing for American and NATO forces in Afghanistan. Only through a proper understanding of the motivations and multiple identities that the Taliban lays claim to can their rapidly-growing insurgency be defeated and peace reestablished. By examining the historical and tribal facets of the insurgency, the nature of the Taliban is laid bare. This understanding is absolutely critical if the U.S. and NATO hope to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

*Keywords* • Afghanistan • Taliban • Insurgency • U.S. • NATO • Pakistan

## Introduction

In May 2003, then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld suggested that the war in Afghanistan was in a “cleanup” phase<sup>1</sup>. Now, four years after Rumsfeld’s statement and five and a half years since the conclusion of major Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) combat operations, it is clear that Afghanistan is anything but a stable and secure country. Indeed, the situation in Afghanistan has become extremely volatile. The Taliban is mounting a significant insurgent campaign against a regime that has not delivered on the expectations of the Afghan people. The new era of stability that was expected after the fall of the Taliban has disappeared. Afghanistan is now embroiled in an intense, violent, and growing

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<sup>1</sup> Rowan Scarborough, “War on Terrorism in ‘Cleanup’ Phase,” *Washington Times*, May 2 2003 <[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_g01637/is\\_200305/ai\\_n7511726](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_g01637/is_200305/ai_n7511726)> (April 4 2005).

insurgency. Faced with a resurgent Taliban, criticism over epidemic levels of corruption, lack of development, and rampant crime, Afghanistan is a mess.

While American and world attention focuses on Iraq, the situation in Afghanistan over the past three years has so deteriorated that the shaky American and NATO coalition risk losing the war against the Taliban. To make matters worse, for reasons to be explored in this article, Afghan President Harmid Karzai has warned that Afghans' patience with foreign troops is wearing thin.<sup>2</sup> Finally to add insult to injury, Afghanistan's economy has been captured by opium production and trafficking.

This dire situation is *not* inevitable; through a better understanding of the situation on the ground, and a corresponding shift in military tactics – if pursued immediately and with vigor – the United States, its NATO partners and their related aid and development organizations can reverse the course of the Taliban resurgence and bring peace to Afghanistan. The greatest threat to Afghanistan is not leftover munitions, *al-Qaeda*, or even narcotrafficking; these are merely symptoms of the real problems. Afghanistan faces a lack of control in the countryside by Kabul regime, its international supporters and its internal security forces and the failure to reconstruct the Afghan economy and infrastructure. The Afghan population's expectations have not been met.

In the absence of security and development, the Taliban threat is not going to diminish. The Taliban's presence is particularly pronounced in the south and east of the country, most notably Kandahar, and Helmand but also Zabul, Paktika and Paktya (among others); these provinces have experienced intensified Taliban activity, including attacks on coalition forces as well as the actual establishment of Taliban "shadow governments." These provinces have two key similarities: first, they border Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) or Pakistan's border provinces of Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), where Taliban commanders have allegedly found sanctuary. Secondly, these provinces are in the middle of the traditional Pashtun tribal homeland that has witnessed virtually no meaningful reconstruction since the United States and their Northern Alliance partners drove the Taliban from power in December 2001.

The purpose of this article is three-fold; first it will present a general overview of the present situation in Afghanistan and then examine a number of critical dynamics for the emergent Taliban. Specifically the article will explore the implications of adjacency to Pakistan of critical Afghan border provinces for the Taliban. It will then assess implications of the lack of reconstruction in these same provinces for the insurgency. The article will also address a series of other critical aspects of the on-

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<sup>2</sup> Noor Rahman, "Afghans dispute U.S. version of raid casualties," *Reuters*, May 30 2007, <[www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSISL25509820070530](http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSISL25509820070530)> (May 20 2007).

going conflict in Afghanistan to include the implications of collateral damage to both the staying power of the Karzai regime in Kabul as well as to the influence of the insurgents with the Afghan population. The article will conclude with a discussion of policy options that directly flow from the foregoing analysis.

### Whither Taliban?

According to the U.S. Defense Department, the initial U.S. air campaign of OEF that began on October 7, 2001 “eviscerated” the Taliban’s military capability within two weeks.<sup>3</sup> On October 18, 2001 the air campaign was officially joined by a ground campaign when U.S. Special Forces entered northern Afghanistan and teamed up with the Northern Alliance – a loose confederation of veteran mujahideen and warlords from non-Pashtun ethnic blocs who represented the Taliban’s primary resistance. After only 62 days of conflict the Taliban regime was defeated and the United States and their Northern Alliance partner declared victory in Afghanistan.

The Northern Alliance included no significant Pashtun involvement, and was basically regarded by the Pashtun population (42 percent of Afghanistan) as a foreign entity. That the coalition whisked first Abdul Haq and then Hamid Karzai, prominent Pashtuns, to the fore of the fight against the Taliban after 9/11 showed the realization by the coalition that no one but a Pashtun could eventually rule Afghanistan. Haq was captured on October 25, 2001 by the Taliban and tortured to death; and, of course, Karzai went on to assume the presidency. To this day Karzai’s cabinet and government still contains many former Northern Alliance fighters.<sup>4</sup>

The success of the initial campaign against the Taliban was marred by two serious mistakes, one diplomatic and one military, which would prove to be major strategic blunders for the metaphorical “War on Terrorism.” In mid-November 2001, the Bush Administration permitted the Pakistani Air Force to fly out hundreds of Pakistanis encircled in the northern city of Kunduz, an evacuation that turned into a mass extraction of senior Taliban and *al-Qaeda* personnel, dubbed “Operation Evil Airlift” by appalled U.S. Special Forces personnel on the scene.<sup>5</sup> To many, this revealed the true loyalties of the Pakistani security services,

<sup>3</sup> Romesh Ratnesar, “The New Rules Of Engagement,” *Time*, November 5 2001, <[www.time.com/magazine/article/0,9171,1001123,00.html](http://www.time.com/magazine/article/0,9171,1001123,00.html)> (April 5 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Such as the Tajik Amrullah Saleh, now head of the National Security Directorate.

<sup>5</sup> Marcus George, “Kunduz celebrates end of siege,” *BBC News*, November 26 2001, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/1677157.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1677157.stm)> (May 23 2007); Michael Moran, “The Airlift of Evil,” *MSNBC*, November 29 2001, <[www.msnbc.com/news/664935.asp?osi=-Prior percent20knowledge&cp1=1#BODY](http://www.msnbc.com/news/664935.asp?osi=-Prior%20knowledge&cp1=1#BODY)> (May 23 2007).

and ensured that the fight against the Taliban would continue well into the future. To others, the evacuation reflected a necessity in order to avoid embarrassing Pakistani President Musharrif who had recently become a significant ally in the U.S. War on Terrorism. At the time, India issued a statement of protest against the airlift, on the assumption that *jihadis* returned to Pakistan would soon be appearing in Kashmir.<sup>6</sup> Instead we have seen them return en masse to the tribal territories on either side of the Afghan-Pak border, further hindering the pacification of Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup> Then, the following month, the U.S. failed to commit ground forces to block the escape route at Tora Bora of Osama bin Laden and dozens of his best men who had been encircled near the Afghan-Pakistan border.<sup>8</sup> The opportunity to complete the decisive destruction of the Taliban and *al-Qaeda* before Christmas 2001 was lost.

After the eventual defeat of the Taliban regime, an interim administration was quickly installed in Kabul under the terms of the UN-brokered Bonn Agreement. The Bonn Process which was formulated in December 2001, while flawed, offered real promise for the country.<sup>9</sup> International attention on Afghanistan remained high, *loya jirgas* were held to help formulate Afghanistan's political future, and donor countries were signing-on to help finance Afghan reconstruction and development. Meanwhile, bin Laden and most of the senior *al-Qaeda* leadership, as well as Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar and the great majority of the senior Taliban cadre, were believed to have taken up residence either in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) or Baluchistan Province, where they began to regroup and rearm. While there were surely exceptions, the time period from 2002 until spring 2003 saw Afghans breathe a collective sigh of relief after 23 years of almost continual conflict that had ripped the country as well as its social fabric apart.

The security situation started to deteriorate significantly in 2003 in the south and east of the country. With U.S. forces now bogged down and overstretched by the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the added strain of a continuing low-intensity war in Afghanistan became evident. Many key intelligence, Special Forces and aviation assets were withdrawn from Afghanistan and sent to Iraq. Moreover, during this same period, many Pashtuns became disenchanted with Karzai's Afghan

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<sup>6</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, "The Getaway," *The New Yorker*, January 28 2002, p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, "Saving Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2007), <[www.foreignaffairs.org/20070101faessay86105-po/barnett-r-rubin/saving-afghanistan.html](http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070101faessay86105-po/barnett-r-rubin/saving-afghanistan.html)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Ilene R. Prusher and Philip Smucker, "Al Qaeda quietly slipping into Iran, Pakistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 14 2002, <[www.csmonitor.com/2002/0114/p1s2-wosc.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0114/p1s2-wosc.html)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>9</sup> See Thomas H. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban Transition: The State of State-Building after War," *Central Asian Survey* 25, 1-2 (March-June 2006), p. 1-26.

Transitional Administration (ATA), which was widely viewed as being controlled by the Panshiri Tajik faction that held the government's key ministries of defense, interior and foreign affairs.

Pashtun suspicions and mistrust of the government were further heightened by the ATA's inability to protect Pashtuns from the wave of human rights abuses perpetrated by insurgents and warlords since the fall of the Taliban. Finally, a considerable source of discontent and fuel for the insurgency involved what were widely seen as the heavy-handed tactics of U.S. military operations in Pashtun areas of the country. Despite warnings from many Afghan observers, such "hard-knock" operations continued to be standard procedure for several years, alienating much of the populace.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the Pentagon continued to view the Afghan situation as one of counterterrorism, not counterinsurgency, and conducted operations in the rural areas accordingly. As one U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) commander commented, "Black Ops [Special Operations counterterrorism forces] do more damage in my province in one night than I can undo in six months."<sup>11</sup>

There have been 579 U.S.-coalition casualties and 5,885 have been wounded in Afghanistan since October, 2001.<sup>12</sup> While the overall level of violence in Afghanistan does not yet approach that experienced in Iraq, Afghanistan is actually the more dangerous place to be deployed in terms of fatalities per soldier-day in the combat zone. Furthermore, while the rate of U.S. casualties has stabilized somewhat in Iraq, it has increased steadily in Afghanistan since 2002.

Some analysts believe that the Taliban have at least 12,000 fighters controlling areas in the provinces of Oruzgan, Helmand, Zabul and Kandahar.<sup>13</sup> Extremely troubling indicators – such as the relatively free movement of insurgent groups – reveal that increasingly large areas of the east and south of the country are falling under the political control of the Taliban. Said Jawad, Afghanistan's ambassador to the U.S., recently stated,

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<sup>10</sup> "Expert: Afghan War Needs New Strategy," *United Press International*, May 21 2007, <[www.upi.com/Security\\_Terrorism/Briefing/2007/05/21/expert\\_afghan\\_war\\_needs\\_new\\_strategy/4851/](http://www.upi.com/Security_Terrorism/Briefing/2007/05/21/expert_afghan_war_needs_new_strategy/4851/)> (May 23 2007); Jason Motlagh, "Afghanistan reels under bumper harvests," *Asia Times*, July 11, 2006, <[www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/HG11Dfoi.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/HG11Dfoi.html)> (May 23 2007), and Paul Gallis, "NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance," *CRS Report for Congress*, August 22, 2006 <[www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33627.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33627.pdf)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Marc Sedra, "The Forgotten War Shows No Sign of Abating," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, April 2003.

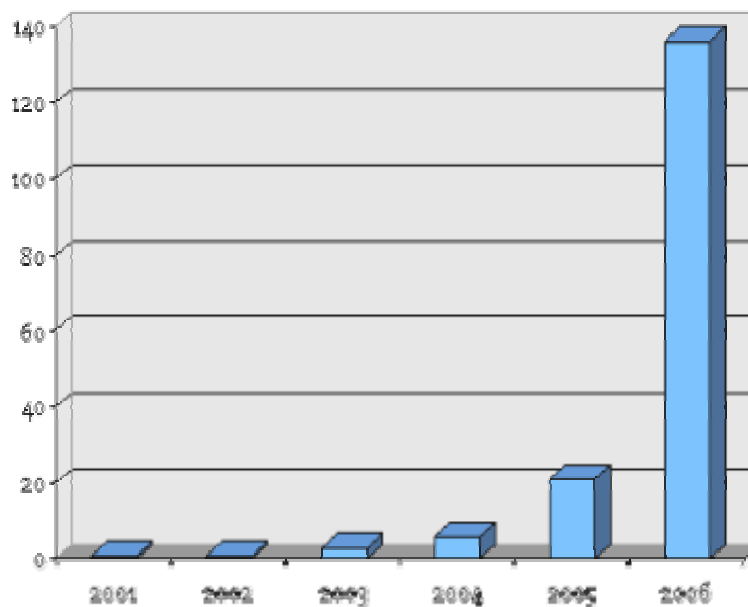
<sup>12</sup> Casualty data as of May 22, 2007. See <[www.icasualties.org/oef/](http://www.icasualties.org/oef/)>

<sup>13</sup> Center for International Issues Research, *Daily Arabic Media Report*, May 25 2006.

“We have lost a lot of the ground that we may have gained in the country, especially in the South . . . The fact that U.S. military resources have been ‘diverted’ to the war in Iraq is of course hurting Afghanistan.”<sup>14</sup>

The last three years have provided ample evidence of increasingly sophisticated insurgent tactics being imported from Iraq and grafted onto classic *mujahideen*-style guerilla warfare. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and suicide operations, traditionally absent from Afghanistan, have become common place throughout the country. Figure 1 illustrates the exponential increase in suicide attacks in Afghanistan. Between 2002 and 2005 there were only four suicide attacks. In 2005, this figure increased to 25 suicide bombings and in 2006, the country witnessed at least 139 such attacks. Taliban Mullah Hayat Khan has sworn to use 2,000 suicide bombers to make 2007 the “bloodiest year” yet.<sup>15</sup>

Figure 1. Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan by Year<sup>16</sup>



<sup>14</sup> “Taliban, Al-Qaeda regroup in Afghanistan, defying U.S. strategy,” *Online International News Network*, <[www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=97378](http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=97378)> (May 22 2007).

<sup>15</sup> Brian Glyn Williams and Cathy Young, “Cheney Attack Reveals Taliban Suicide Bombing Patterns,” *The Jamestown Foundation*, February 27 2007, <[www.jamestown.org/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=222](http://www.jamestown.org/news_details.php?news_id=222)> (May 30 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Data is based on recorded attacks compiled by Human Rights Watch, “Rising Civilian Casualties: Trends and Statistics,” *The Human Cost: The Consequences of Insurgent Attacks in Afghanistan*, *Human Rights Watch* 19, 6 (April 2007), <[www.hrw.org/reports/2007/afghanistano407/index.htm](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/afghanistano407/index.htm)> (May 30 2007).



Similar increases have been witnessed in the insurgent's use of IEDs. In 2006, there were at least 189 bomb attacks in which killed 492 civilians and injured approximately 773, a total of over 1,000 casualties.<sup>17</sup> Overall 2006 witnessed a 200 percent increase in insurgent attacks compared to 2005 with September 2006 being the deadliest month in the country in five years. Many predict that 2007 will be more violent than 2006.

Recent years have also recently witnessed Taliban operations involving larger "unit" sizes. During 2006, for example, Afghanistan witnessed numerous attacks consisting of over 50 insurgents, as compared to just a few such attacks during 2005.<sup>18</sup> Reports of insurgents massing in battalion-sized formations of 300-400 fighters are no longer rare. It is even possible that the future may witness Taliban swarm attacks against smaller coalition Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). In early February 2007 the entire village of Musa Qala, Helmand Province was overrun by 200-300 Taliban. Village leaders had entered into an agreement with the governor of Helmand Province and with British forces that local police groups would keep the Taliban out if NATO forces would remain outside the village. The Taliban takeover resulted in approximately 8,000 people fleeing Musa Qala in fear of a NATO counterattack.<sup>19</sup> In an interview with RFE/RL on 6 February 2007, Ahmed Rashid stated that:

"The Taliban last year fought positional warfare – trying to hold ground, hold territory...The danger this year is that they may try to launch heavy guerrilla attacks with perhaps 200 men at a time, not just in three provinces but perhaps in six or seven provinces, even in Western Afghanistan."<sup>20</sup>

There is no question that Afghanistan's American-backed, post-Taliban government is struggling for its survival. President Hamid

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<sup>17</sup> "Rising Civilian Casualties: Trends and Statistics," *The Human Cost: The Consequences of Insurgent Attacks in Afghanistan*, Human Rights Watch, 19, 6 (April 2007), <[www.hrw.org/reports/2007/afghanistano407/index.htm](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/afghanistano407/index.htm)> (May 30 2007).

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Senior U.S. Government military analyst. For a similar assessment see: Walter Pincus, "Growing Threat Seen In Afghan Insurgency: DIA Chief Cites Surging Violence in Homeland," *Washington Post*, March 1 2006, p. A08.

<sup>19</sup> For more information on the Musa Qala attack see: "NATO names 'killed' Taliban chief," *CNN*, February 5 2007, <[www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/asiapcf/02/05/afghanistan.battle/](http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/asiapcf/02/05/afghanistan.battle/)>, (May 30 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Ron Synovitz, "Afghanistan: Facing the Taliban Threat in the Coming Months," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, February 6 2007, <[www.rferl.org/features/features\\_Article.aspx?m=02&y=2007&id=C6C33122-BEC1-44F1-B576-EDD1DA1FBD46](http://www.rferl.org/features/features_Article.aspx?m=02&y=2007&id=C6C33122-BEC1-44F1-B576-EDD1DA1FBD46)>, (May 30 2007).

Karzai's government is encountering extreme difficulty extending control and mandate outside Kabul into the country's hinterland regions.

The stated goal of the United States since the initiation of OEF and its metric of success has been to create a stable Afghan democracy which would never again harbor international terrorists. By that metric, we are losing the war in Afghanistan. Far from being the "success story" trumpeted by the Bush Administration, a more accurate assessment is that Afghanistan is once again on the edge of a collapse into anarchy and a safe-haven for international terrorism.

For its part, the Karzai government seems to be popular with almost no one. To the Dari-speaking tribes of the north, Hamid Karzai is seen as a tool of the Pashto-speaking tribes of the south. To the southern Pashtuns, he is perceived as a weak puppet of the Americans. Today the Afghan government barely controls even Kabul, where suicide bombers now detonate themselves regularly.

The simple, ugly fact is that the Taliban is making significant progress in regaining control in large areas of the country. Additionally, it has been asserted that a new, independent "Talibanistan" has been effectively created on Afghanistan's southern border inside Pakistan, where international terrorists linked to *al-Qaeda* – from Yemen, Iraq, Chechnya, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and even Turkey – now train and operate freely.<sup>21</sup>

Compounding the problem, Afghanistan has been, for at least three years, the worst example of a narco-state on the planet.<sup>22</sup> Afghanistan now produces annually more heroin than the human race actually consumes in a year.<sup>23</sup> Narcotics are responsible for at least one-half of the GDP in the country in one way or another and, as a result, huge amounts of cash are flowing into the war chests of the insurgency. The primary line of defense in the drug battle, the Afghan National Police, is disorganized, poorly trained, corrupt and one of the most hated and inefficient institutions in the country; the senior U.S. drug enforcement official in Kabul estimated in late 2005 that 90 percent of the police chiefs

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<sup>21</sup> "Afghanistan: The Rise of the Narco-Taliban," *Testimony of Congressman Mark Kirk Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing on Afghanistan*, February 15 2007, <[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/kiro21507.pdf](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/kiro21507.pdf)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Jim Maceda, "Poppies fuel Taliban's return in Afghanistan," *MSNBC*, April 27 2007, <[www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18357411/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18357411/)> (May 23 2007). It should be noted, however, that Karzai emphatically denies this ("Karzai Says Afghanistan Is "Not a Narco State," *Voice of America*, May 11 2007, <[www.voanews.com/english/About/2007-05-11-voa52.cfm](http://www.voanews.com/english/About/2007-05-11-voa52.cfm)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>23</sup> 30 percent more, in fact ("Afghan opium cultivation soars 59 percent in 2006, UNODC survey shows," *UNODC*, September 2 2006, <[www.unodc.org/unodc/press\\_release\\_2006\\_09\\_01.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/press_release_2006_09_01.html)> (May 23 2007).

in Afghanistan are actively involved in or protecting the narcotics industry.<sup>24</sup>

### The Challenges of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border and Other Problems

Afghanistan, as well as Pakistan, has significant problems and challenges in its tribal and areas along their often ill-defined 2,560 km common border. As suggested above and illustrated in Figure 2, the southeastern tier of Afghanistan has become a hotbed of insurgents. The most dangerous and volatile insurgent areas in Afghanistan are those provinces adjacent to the Pakistan border where there has been a resurgence of insurgent violence during the past few years. All of these border provinces are designated as either “extreme risk/hostile” or “high risk/hostile” environments by the UN (see Figure 2).

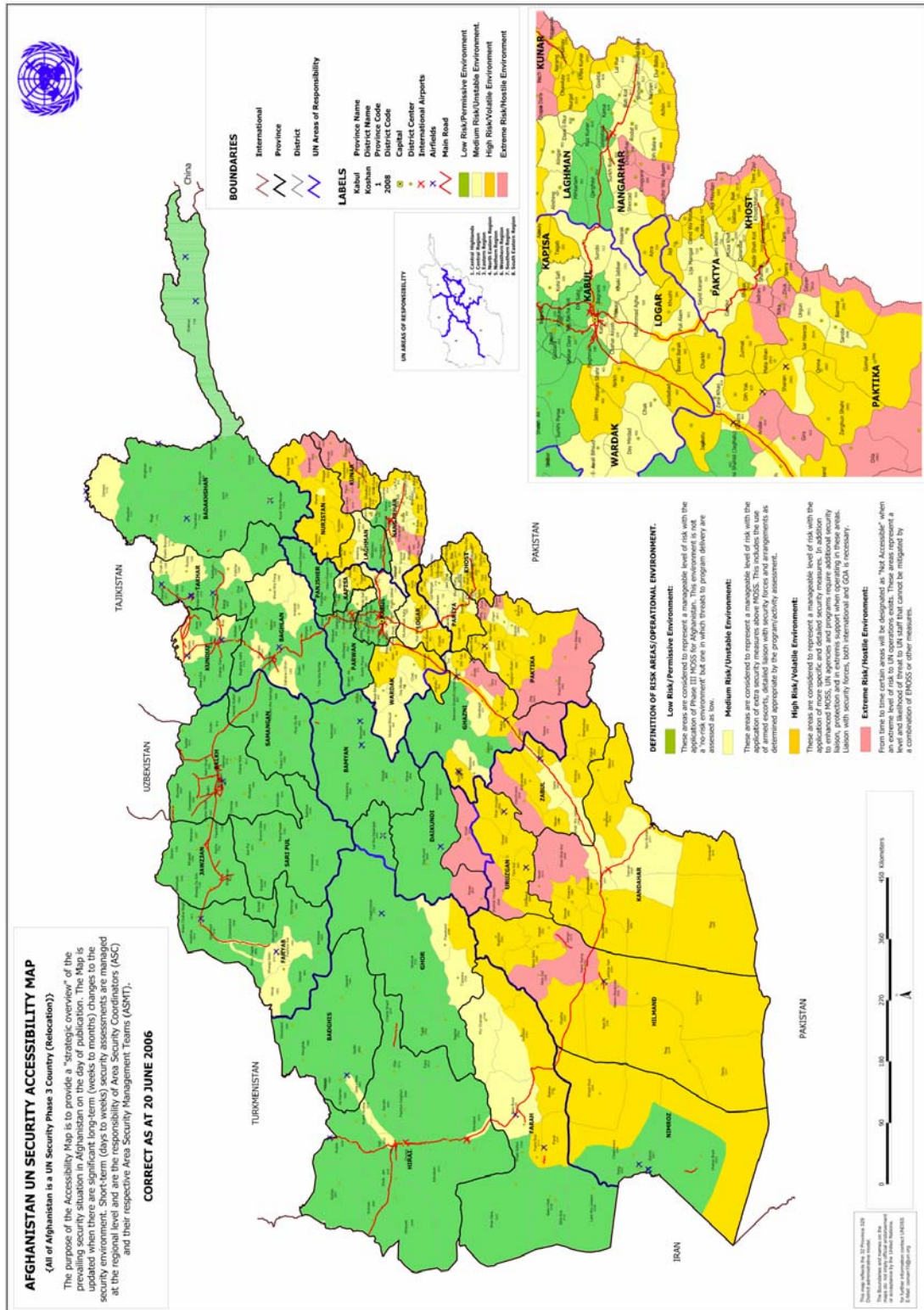
This area has proven vital to the Taliban who form the bulk of the Afghan insurgency and allegedly operate in Afghanistan from bases inside Pakistan. This border region also is central to forces led by Afghan Islamist Gulbuddin Hikmatyar’s *Hizb-i-Islami* (HIG), the *jihadi* network of Maulawi Jalaluddin Haqqani and foreign *jihadi* forces, including the leadership of *al-Qaeda*.<sup>25</sup> These insurgent forces in the borderland provinces present a real and immediate challenge to the Karzai regime as well as state and regional stability.

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<sup>24</sup> Qtd., Steve Kroft, “Afghanistan: Addicted to Heroin,” *60 Minutes*, October 16 2005, <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/10/14/60minutes/main946648.shtml>> (May 23 2007).

<sup>25</sup> For an assessment of the cross-border nature of the Afghan insurgency, see: International Crisis Group, “Countering Afghanistan’s Insurgency: No Quick Fixes,” *Crisis Group Asia Report*, No 123, (November 2006).

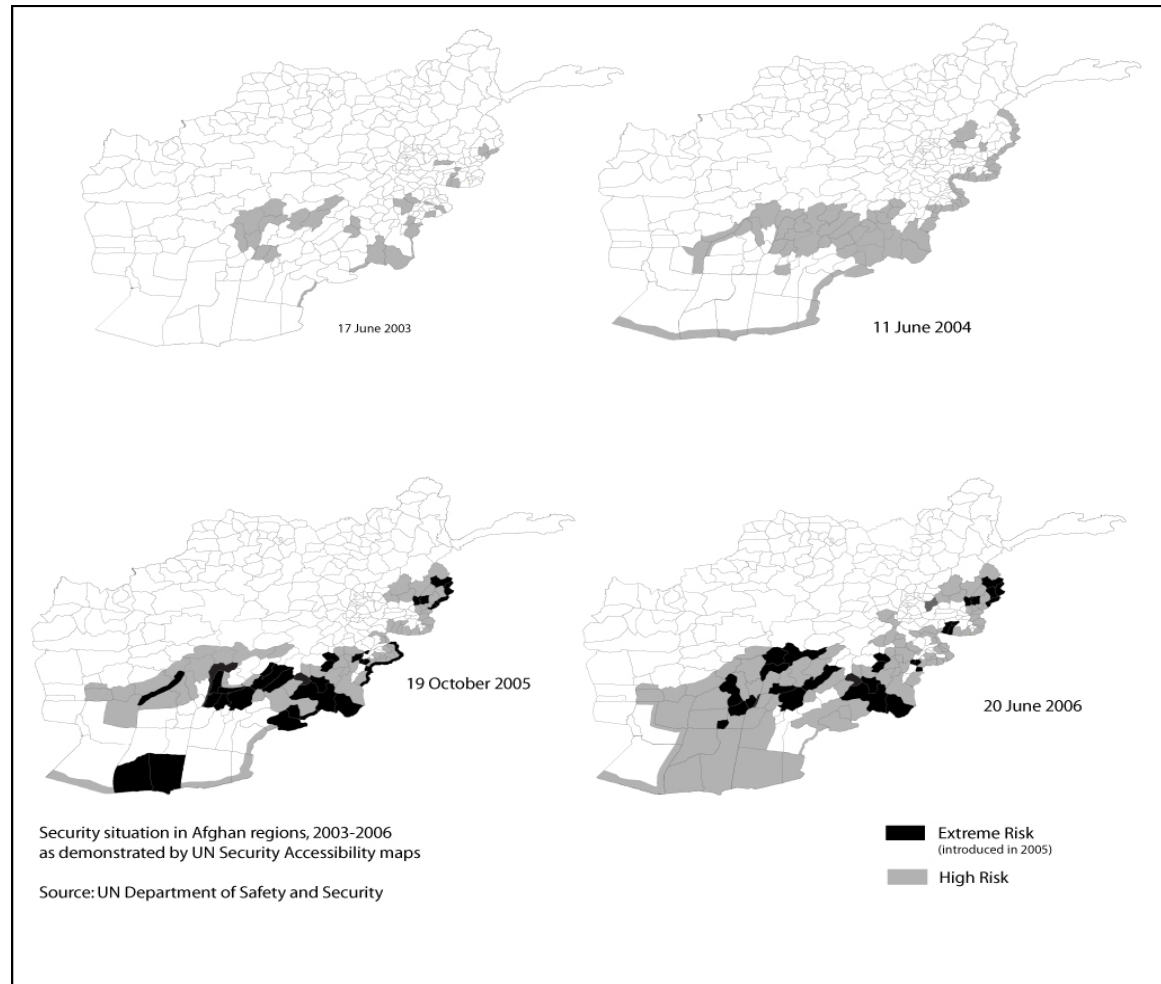
Figure 2. Security Situation in Afghanistan<sup>26</sup>



<sup>26</sup> Source: United Nations Department of Safety and Security . See: United Nations "Afghanistan – Maps," Global Security.org, 2006, <[www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/maps.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/maps.htm)> (November 5 2006).

Moreover, as suggested by Figure 3, the security situation in Afghanistan and especially along the border area has significantly deteriorated in the last few years. This has been the case, as posited above, since spring of 2003 when many key intelligence, Special Forces and aviation assets were withdrawn from Afghanistan and sent to Iraq.

Figure 3. Growth of High Risk Areas in Afghanistan<sup>28</sup>



Besides the importance of the border area to the insurgency, the border area is also the epitome of a damning problem for Afghanistan – the significant difference between Afghan people’s expectations versus reality. While the Afghan population was leery of the United States for abandoning the country after the Soviets withdrew in early 1989, the majority of Afghans welcomed the U.S. action against the Taliban in 2001.<sup>29</sup> The Afghan population expected that the U.S. intervention would

<sup>28</sup> Source: International Crisis Group, *Countering Afghanistan’s Insurgency: No Quick Fixes*, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of Afghan perceptions of the US post-Cold War abandonment of Afghanistan, see Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2000), p. 175-176. For a description of reactions

eventually lead to reconstruction of the country and a betterment of their individual lives.<sup>30</sup> Most Afghans were extremely war weary from at least 23 years of continual and incessant warfare that destroyed Afghanistan as a functioning state; *most of the Afghan populous desperately wanted peace and stability*. This same population believed that the United States would quickly stabilize Afghanistan and better their lives. Tragically for Afghans as well as the regional and international community, these expectations have not been met for a number of reasons.

The “kinetic” battle against the Taliban must be tightly and significantly coupled with “nonkinetic” reconstruction of Afghanistan and this is an area where the counterinsurgency is critically failing. According to a recent report assessing progress of Afghan reconstruction:

- “Afghans are losing trust in their government because of an escalation in violence;
- Public expectations are neither being met nor managed;
- Conditions in Afghanistan have deteriorated in all key areas targeted for development, except for the economy and women’s rights.”<sup>31</sup>

In the first year after the invasion by U.S. and coalition forces, the U.S. donated some US\$350 million to reconstruction,<sup>32</sup> or slightly more than ten dollars per Afghan. For a country that had just experienced decades of fighting resulting in the near complete destruction its infrastructure as well as social fabric, this amount barely began to address the most basic needs. By 2004, a child born in Afghanistan had less than a 75 percent chance of living to its fifth birthday.<sup>33</sup> And yet still much of the aid to Afghanistan went to projects of debatable importance to the average Afghan. Considerable funding went to the Kabul to Kandahar road, in some cases costing US\$700,000 per kilometer for the slender, two lane highway (the U.S. built section of the road is 389 kilometers, the rest

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to the US invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of the Taliban, see William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 265-268.

<sup>30</sup> Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*.

<sup>31</sup> Seema Patel and Steven Ross, *Breaking Point: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan*, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2007), p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> “Humanitarian and Reconstruction Aid to Afghanistan: Fact Sheet,” U.S. Agency for International Development, September 5, 2002, <[www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2002/fso20905.html](http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2002/fso20905.html)> (May 30 2007).

<sup>33</sup> “Statistics,” *Human Development Report 2006*, (United Nations Development Programme, 2006) <<http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/>> (May 30 2007).

being repaved by the Japanese government).<sup>34</sup> Even before cost-overruns, the road was budgeted to cost US\$270 million.<sup>35</sup> In the end, its construction cost over a million dollars a mile, much of which only went to U.S. contractors who then subcontracted the work to Indian and Turkish subcontractors. Considering that the U.S. in the first four years after the initiation of OEF put only US\$1.62 billion into development works,<sup>36</sup> the cost of this one road consumed a significant portion of the budget.

Further hindering international aids' role in reconstruction is the fact that according to some estimates, approximately 86 percent of such aid to Afghanistan is 'tied'; meaning the aid must be spent on goods or services from the U.S. rather than on Afghan indigenous sources. Such aid has little impact on Afghan economic development and has come to be referred to as "phantom aid".<sup>37</sup>

At the 2004 Berlin Donors Conference for Afghan Reconstruction, US\$8.9 billion was pledged by over 60 countries for the period 2004-2009. This equals roughly US\$56 per Afghan per year. If the phantom aid standard of the U.S. is used, only US\$7.84 would reach the average Afghan. Thankfully, other aid donating nations have proved more responsible and tied less of their donations to the donor.<sup>38</sup> Still, allowing for major construction projects, such as the Kabul-Kandahar road (which is planned to eventually ring the entire country), the U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan would do well to pressure their governments to make rural Afghans shareholders in their development works. Without local buy-in and cooperation in the construction of a new Afghanistan, more Afghans will slip into the shadowy worlds of insurgency and narcotrafficking.

The Taliban in the border area have followed an explicit and systematic campaign of violence and intimidation to keep NGOs, aid and humanitarian workers from gaining access to beneficiaries and promulgating urgently needed reconstruction and humanitarian activities. During 2003 and 2004, thirty-six NGO workers were murdered

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<sup>34</sup> Ann Jones, "How U.S. dollars disappear in Afghanistan: quickly and thoroughly," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 3, 2006, <[www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/09/03/INGRoKRGMFi.DTL](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/09/03/INGRoKRGMFi.DTL)> (May 25 2007).

<sup>35</sup> "Phase I: Kabul-Kandahar Highway," U.S. Agency for International Development, December 14 2003, <[www.usaid.gov/press/factsheets/2003/fs031214.html](http://www.usaid.gov/press/factsheets/2003/fs031214.html)> (May 30 2007).

<sup>36</sup> Margaret Coker and Anne Usher, "U.S. aid to Afghanistan falls short," *The Washington Times*, November 19 2005, <[www.washingtontimes.com/world/20051118-110234-707or.htm](http://www.washingtontimes.com/world/20051118-110234-707or.htm)> (May 30 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Jones, "How U.S. dollars disappear in Afghanistan: quickly and thoroughly"; and *Real Aid: and Agenda for Making Aid Work*, Actionaid International, 2006, <<http://www.actionaidusa.org/actionaidrealaid.pdf>> (May 30 2007).

<sup>38</sup> *Real Aid: and Agenda for Making Aid Work*.

by Taliban guerillas.<sup>39</sup> In November 2003, two years after the Taliban retreat from Kabul, the United Nations started pulling staff from large areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan and closed refugee reception centers in four provinces.<sup>40</sup> Unable to provide a reasonable level of security for their personnel, most NGO's, including *Medicines Sans Frontiers* (Doctors Without Borders), CARE, and Mercy Corps followed suit by leaving areas most in need. The specific targeting of NGO staff by the Taliban – in addition to the general situation of insecurity – has created an environment in certain areas of the country (especially in the southern, southeastern and eastern regions) where many NGOs are either unable to operate, or are constrained in their operations. This strategy has inhibited reconstruction that could better the lives of Afghan citizens and, more importantly from the Taliban's perspective, results in the population's disenchantment with policy initiatives from Kabul. When a reconstruction or humanitarian team appears the Taliban either greet it with violence or intimidation until it abandons its efforts.<sup>41</sup> The risk to foreign aid workers was increased when, in 2005, the Taliban issued a *fatwa*, or religious edict, ordering the death of all "infidels" and others supporting the foreign occupation of Afghanistan.<sup>42</sup> This *fatwa* was an explicit part of the Taliban's strategy to inhibit reconstruction efforts and increase the delta between popular expectations and reality. It also, ironically, allowed the Taliban to continually ask the hinterland community, "what has Kabul or the international community done for you lately?"

Kabul and its international supporters have been hindered in countering this Taliban strategy primarily due to their very light security foot print. The absence of adequate number of troops and sufficient resources, they have not been able to secure the countryside to an extent that has allowed for reconstruction strategies to be pursued in an integrated and safe fashion. Table 1 presents data concerning the concentration of international peacekeeping forces in a variety of recent conflict situations. Overall, Afghanistan has the lowest international-troop-to-population ratio (and one of the lowest international-aid to-

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<sup>39</sup> Afghanistan NGO Safety Office and CARE, *NGO Insecurity in Afghanistan*, May 2005, p 3-4, <[www.care.org/newsroom/specialreports/afghanistan/20050505\\_ansocare.pdf](http://www.care.org/newsroom/specialreports/afghanistan/20050505_ansocare.pdf)>, (May 23 2007).

<sup>40</sup> "U.N. Refugee Agency Begins Afghan Withdrawal," *The Associated Press*, November 18 2003.

<sup>41</sup> See Afghanistan NGO Safety Office and CARE, *NGO Insecurity in Afghanistan*; "Taliban Threatens to Kill Afghan Women in Foreign NGOs," *Asian Political News*, October 28 2003; and Medicins Sans Frontiers Article, "Military Humanitarianism: A Deadly Confusion," December 16 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Amnesty International, *Afghanistan, All Who Are Not Friends Are Enemies: Taleban Abuses Against Civilians*, April 2007, <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110012007>> (May 23 2007).



population ratios) of any major intervention in the past decade.<sup>43</sup> In the Kosovo and Bosnia interventions, the peacekeeper-to-citizen ratios were 1:50 and 1:66, respectively. For the first four years of the Bonn process, the comparable figure for Afghanistan hovered near 1:2000. In fact, historically, the force commitment to Afghanistan represents the lowest level of effort in any international intervention since World War II. Today as seen in Table 1, the ratio of NATO and U.S. troops to Afghan population is roughly 1:653, or about 1/10th of the force level required to actually bring about stability when there is no active resistance or insurgency.<sup>44</sup>

Table 1: Comparison of Peak International Troop Strength by Territory and Population<sup>45</sup>

Location	Peak Number of International Troops	International Troops per kilometer	International Troops per population
Kosovo	40,000	1 per 0.3 km	1 per 50
Bosnia	60,000	1 per 0.85 km	1 per 66
East Timor	9,000	1 per 1.6 km	1 per 111
Iraq	155,000	1 per 2.8 km	1 per 161
Somalia	40,000	1 per 16.0 km	1 per 200
Liberia	11,000; 2200 (MEF)	1 per 8.0 km	1 per 265
Sierra Leone	18,000	1 per 4.0 km	1 per 300
Haiti	20,000	1 per 1.5 km	1 per 375
<b>AFGHANISTAN</b>	<b>49,000</b>	<b>1 per 13.21 km</b>	<b>1 per 653</b>

In summary, the international force commitment to Afghanistan is absurdly small for its stated mission. Using case studies of more than 50 insurgencies since WWII, counterinsurgency experts apply a rough rule of thumb of one security provider (i.e., a soldier, reliable policeman,

<sup>43</sup> Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan & Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan,” AERU Briefing Paper, June 2004, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> “Bush, NATO Chief regret Afghan deaths,” *Agence France-Press*, May 22 2007, <[www.afp.com/english/news/stories/070522033722.nl6zihp.html](http://www.afp.com/english/news/stories/070522033722.nl6zihp.html)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Sources: Rubin, B.R., Stoddard, A., Hamidzada, H., Farhadi, A., *Building a New Afghanistan: The Value of Success, the Cost of Failure*, (Center on International Cooperation, March 2004):15; CIA World Factbook ([www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)); Dobbins, J., McGinn, J., Crane, K., Jones, S., Lal, R., Rathmell, A., Swanger, R., Timilsina, A., *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), and; Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan & Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan,” AERU Briefing Paper, June 2004, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Kalev I. Sepp, “Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,” *Military Review*, (May-June 2005), p. 8–12; also see: David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958*, (Rand Corporation, 2006); David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, (London: Praeger, 1964); Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac, 2002), and; John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

temporary armed auxiliary, etc., under the effective command and control of the central government) for every six citizens to shut down an insurgency.<sup>46</sup> Counting the Afghan National Police (ANP), the Border Police, the paramilitary militias and other armed squads not even remotely under government control, the figure for Afghanistan today is not 1:6 but closer to 1:200. This type of security commitment can not pacify the countryside and allow for meaningful reconstruction to take place.

Haji Fezal, an Afghan farmer and transport business owner from Khakar, Zabol Province sums up the problem, when he states, “In our hearts we don’t support the Taliban, but people have no choice because the government can’t provide them with security ... [the Taliban are] pouring across the border from Pakistan, and the government can’t control what is happening in the districts.”<sup>47</sup> Border area villages such as Khakar can be considered “swing areas.” That is to suggest, as Haji Fezal implies, that people living in this border area would probably side with Kabul if the Afghan regime and their international supporters offered the villagers sustained security and hope for a better life. But these desires have not been fulfilled and in their absence much of the population has turned its allegiance to the Taliban insurgents or has remained neutral. Khakar is illustrative of most of the Afghan villages south of the Helmand River where the Taliban’s power and influence is greatest and security is paltry. For example, Khakar has:

- No aid or humanitarian workers assisting to better the lives of its poor and illiterate population (According to the United Nations 80 percent of Zabol’s 300,000 residents are ill fed subsistence farmers and herders);
- Only two midwives, but no obstetricians or trained doctors or any medical facilities, and;
- Less than 10 percent of girls attending school and only 5 percent of woman are literate (in 2005 Afghan legislative elections, 11 percent of Zabol women voted, compared with the national average of 40 percent).<sup>48</sup>

The small number of NATO Forces in the border area provinces compounds the problems because it does not allow for meaningful

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<sup>47</sup> Denis Gray, “A backwater Afghan village straddles the fence between government and the Taliban,” *The Associated Press*, April 30 2007 , <[www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/04/29/asia/AS-GEN-Afghan-Razors-Edge.php](http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/04/29/asia/AS-GEN-Afghan-Razors-Edge.php)> (May 31 2007).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

reconstruction or humanitarian aid. NATO has only 1,000 troops and the Afghan National Army has only 600 troops in the entire province of Zabul; meaning that there is approximately one troop for every 11.3 square kilometers in Zabul. While this troop concentration is greater than the average across the entire country (see Table 1) it is still meager considering the amount of insurgent activity in this critical border province.

### **The Pakistani-side of the Border**

Many claim that attempting to analyze the Afghan-side of the border without recognizing the importance of the Pakistani-side of the border is a fruitless exercise. Afghan officials in the past two years have made progressively stronger comments linking Islamabad to the Taliban insurgency by claiming that Pakistan provides a reliable, safe, and fertile recruiting, training, and fund-raising haven just across the border. President Hamid Karzai has directly accused Pakistan's government of supporting the Taliban: "The problem is not Taliban. We don't see it that way. The problem is with Pakistan ... The state of Pakistan [is] supporting the Taliban, so we presume if there is still any Taliban, that they are being supported by a state element."<sup>49</sup> The Pakistani regime vehemently denies such allegations and argues that they are making incredible sacrifices supporting the U.S. War on Terrorism.

The Pakistani-side of this border area contains the country's two western provinces of Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier (NWFP), as well as the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA). These areas have some of the highest rates of poverty, illiteracy, and violence in Pakistan but they receive little development assistance from Islamabad. The NWFP, for example, received just US\$34 million in federal aid and development grants in 2006, compared with Punjab's US\$210 million – even though Punjab, by many accounts, already has the healthiest economic indicators in Pakistan.<sup>50</sup> Some American intelligence officials place Mullah Omar within 20 miles of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan,<sup>51</sup> although the Pakistani senior authorities vigorously deny

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<sup>49</sup> Alisa Tang, "Pakistan accused of supporting Taliban," *Associated Press*, December 12 2006, <[www.afghanistannewscenter.com/news/2006/december/dec132006.html](http://www.afghanistannewscenter.com/news/2006/december/dec132006.html)> (December 14 2006).

<sup>50</sup> David Montero, "Pakistan losing territory to radicals," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 29, 2007, <[www.csmonitor.com/2007/0529/p01s04-wosc.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0529/p01s04-wosc.html)> (May 30 2007).

<sup>51</sup> Peter Bergen, Anderson Cooper, and Charlie Moore, "Source: Mullah Omar in Pakistan," *CNN*, September 9 2006. <[www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/09/09/pakistan.mullahomar/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/09/09/pakistan.mullahomar/index.html)> (November 11 2006).

this.<sup>52</sup> But what few deny is the apparent fact that economic and political failure in these provinces, as well as in the FATA, is fanning extremism.

The FATA in particular has become an extremely prominent area for the Afghan insurgency. The FATA is located along Pakistan's north western border with Afghanistan, and consists of seven semi-autonomous agencies or administrative districts – Bajaur, Khyber, Kurram, Mohmand, Orakzai, South Waziristan and North Waziristan (see Figure 4).<sup>53</sup>

The name for this area is actually a misnomer. These lands are not *Federally Administered* in any sense of the word.<sup>54</sup> As experienced by the British as well as the Pakistanis, this is an area that has never been under the explicit control of anyone but the Pashtun tribes that dominate the area.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, Islamabad for all practical purposes has never controlled any more than ten yards to the left and right of the major roads of the tribal areas. Just as Kabul has little control on their side of the border, Islamabad comparably has little control on their side.

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<sup>52</sup> "Mullah Omar not present in Quetta: Kasuri," *Pak Tribune*, September 18 2006. <<http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?154478>> (November 11 2006) as well as the author's numerous interviews with senior Pakistani government officials, March 2007.

<sup>53</sup> For an excellent analysis of the FATA and border area: International Crisis Group, "Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing The Militants," *Asia Report* No. 124, December 11, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> As pointed out by Rahimullah Yusufzai, in his analysis for BBC, "...Pakistani courts and police have no jurisdiction in the tribal areas." See Rahimullah Yusufzai, "Analysis: Pakistan's tribal frontiers," *BBC News*, December 14 2001, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/1711316.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1711316.stm)>, (May 23 2007). For an overview of the political administration and control of the FATA please refer to the website maintained by the Pakistan government see <<http://www.fata.gov.pk/index.php?link=3>>, (May 23 2007).

<sup>55</sup> The obstinacy of the Pashtun tribes combined with the inability of the British to control them contributed to the policy of "masterly inactivity" toward Afghanistan and a very loose system of political activity in the area that now comprises the FATA in Pakistan. See Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha America, Inc., 1992), p. 285-286; and Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), p. 76.

Figure 4. Pakistan's Federally Administers Tribal Area<sup>56</sup>



The mainly Pashtun tribes that inhabit the areas are fiercely independent but, until friction resulted following the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan (many of which originally came from refugee camps or madrassas – religious schools – in the FATA), the tribes had primarily

<sup>56</sup> Source: “Welcome to FATA,” Federally Administered Tribal Area Official Government Website, <[www.fata.gov.pk/](http://www.fata.gov.pk/)> (June 4 2007).

friendly relations with Pakistan's central government. These tribes are still governed by the Frontier Crimes Regulation introduced under the British Raj.<sup>57</sup> The head of each tribal agency is the political agent. Historically the political agent wields extensive powers but lately many of these powers have been reduced. Each Agency has roughly two to three thousand *khasadars* (tribal security officers) and five to nine wings of the Frontier Corp<sup>58</sup> to ensure maintenance of law and order in the agency as well as border security.

The FATA's lawlessness and lack of explicit federal control has made it a perfect ungoverned space to be exploited by both *al-Qaeda* and the Taliban. Likewise, Pakistan's failure to extend its control over and provide good governance in the FATA is equally responsible for empowering the radicals. In addition, the FATA is undoubtedly one of Pakistan's poorest regions. With high poverty and unemployment rates and a badly under-developed infrastructure, its economy is dependent on smuggling as well as narcotics and weapons trafficking.

The Pashtuns, whose traditional homeland runs on either side of the Afghan-Pakistan border and prominently includes the FATA, have always been leery of any government control, be it from Pakistan or Afghanistan. Moreover, after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Afghans fled to refugee camps many of which are located in border area (see Figure 5). During the 1980s, millions of Pashtun Afghans fled to Pakistan to escape the atrocities of the Soviet military campaigns. Most of these refugees settled in the camps that had sprung up in the border area provinces. These camps which represent over 40 percent of the estimated Afghan population in Pakistan<sup>59</sup> and the thousands of madrassas located in the FATA have offered the Taliban an almost infinite supply of recruits. Many poorly educated, unemployed Afghan youth who have grown up in the border region's refugee camps have gravitated to the militant madrassas. Hundreds of these madrassas basically function as radicalization academies that eventually feed recruits to Taliban commanders.

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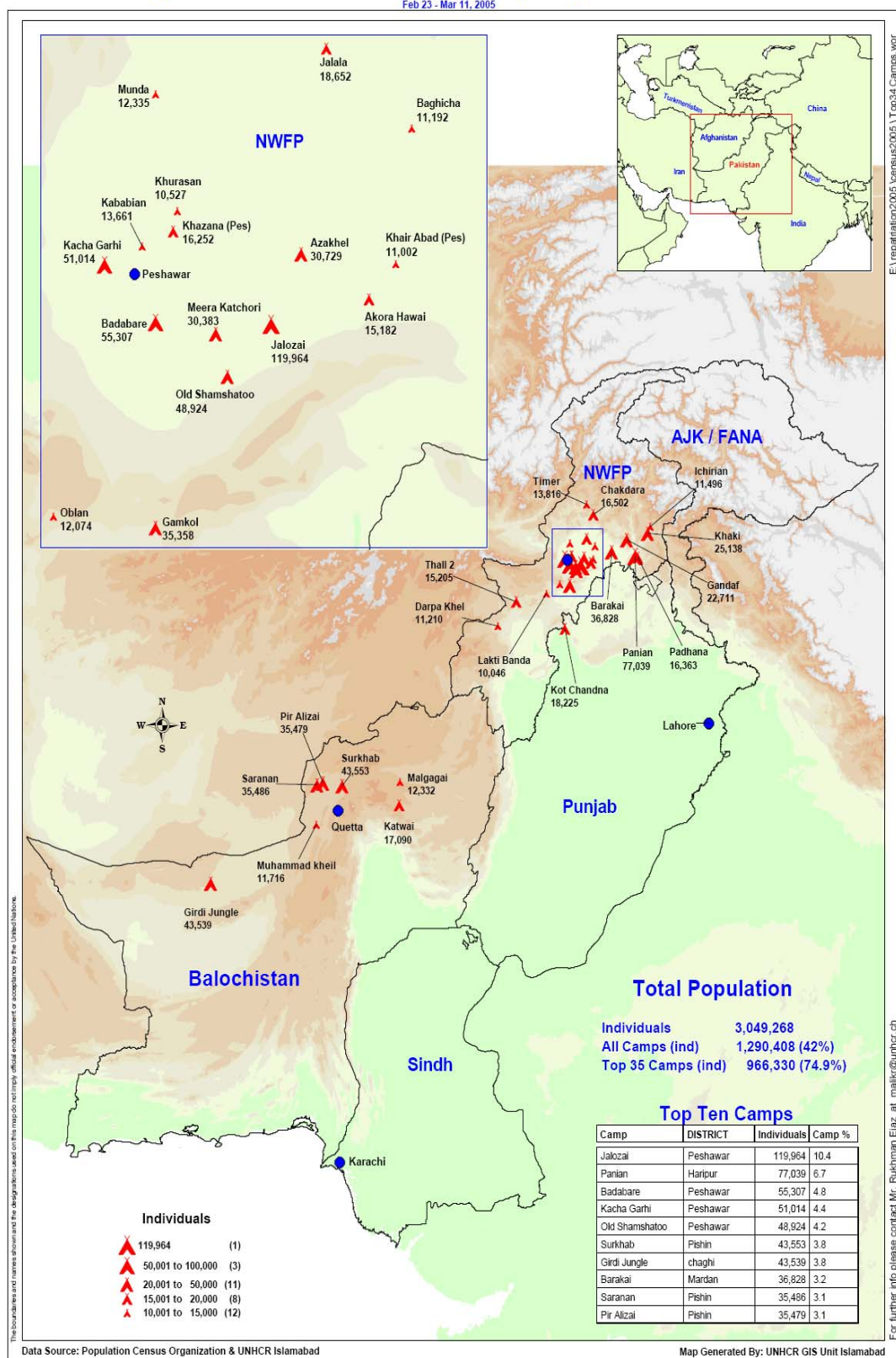
<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Both the Khasadars and Frontier Corps consist of Agency tribal members. A Wing of the Frontier Corp is roughly equivalent to an infantry battalion.

<sup>59</sup> Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), *Afghans in Peshawar: Migration, Settlement and Social Networks*, January 2006, p. 13.

Figure 5: Afghan Refugee Camps in Pakistan: Top 35 Camps by Province<sup>60</sup>

Census of Afghans in Pakistan : Top 35 Camps by Province of Residence



<sup>60</sup> Pakistan Population Census and UNHCR GIS Unit, Islamabad.

<sup>62</sup> Received by author from Senior Pakistani Military Officer, Islamabad, March 2006.

Figure 6 suggests an additional dilemma of this border. That is, there are numerous villages in FATA and Baluchistan that straddle the Afghan-Pakistan border. Figure 7 presents an overhead photo of one such village – Barabchah, Baluchistan – that is literally cut in two by the border. While the Afghan-Pakistan border has always been artificial to Pashtuns who regularly transverse it, divided villages offer a relatively easy venue for crossing illegally into or out of Afghanistan or Pakistan. Attempting to control such a porous border is difficult enough; with divided villages such as Barabchah any attempts at border control become nearly impossible. The Taliban recognize this and regularly exploit such areas to enter and exit Afghanistan in support of their insurgent activities and there is little any state can do to control this.

Figure 6. Pakistani Villages Divided by the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border<sup>62</sup>

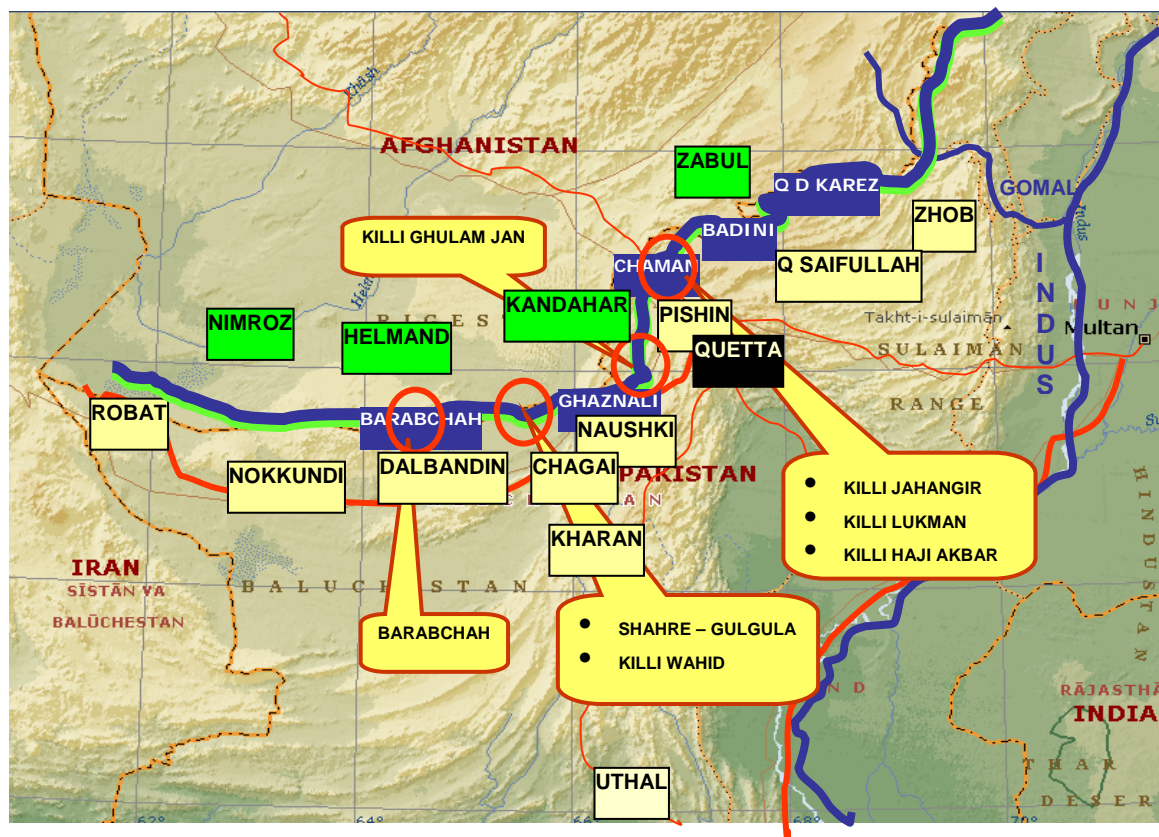
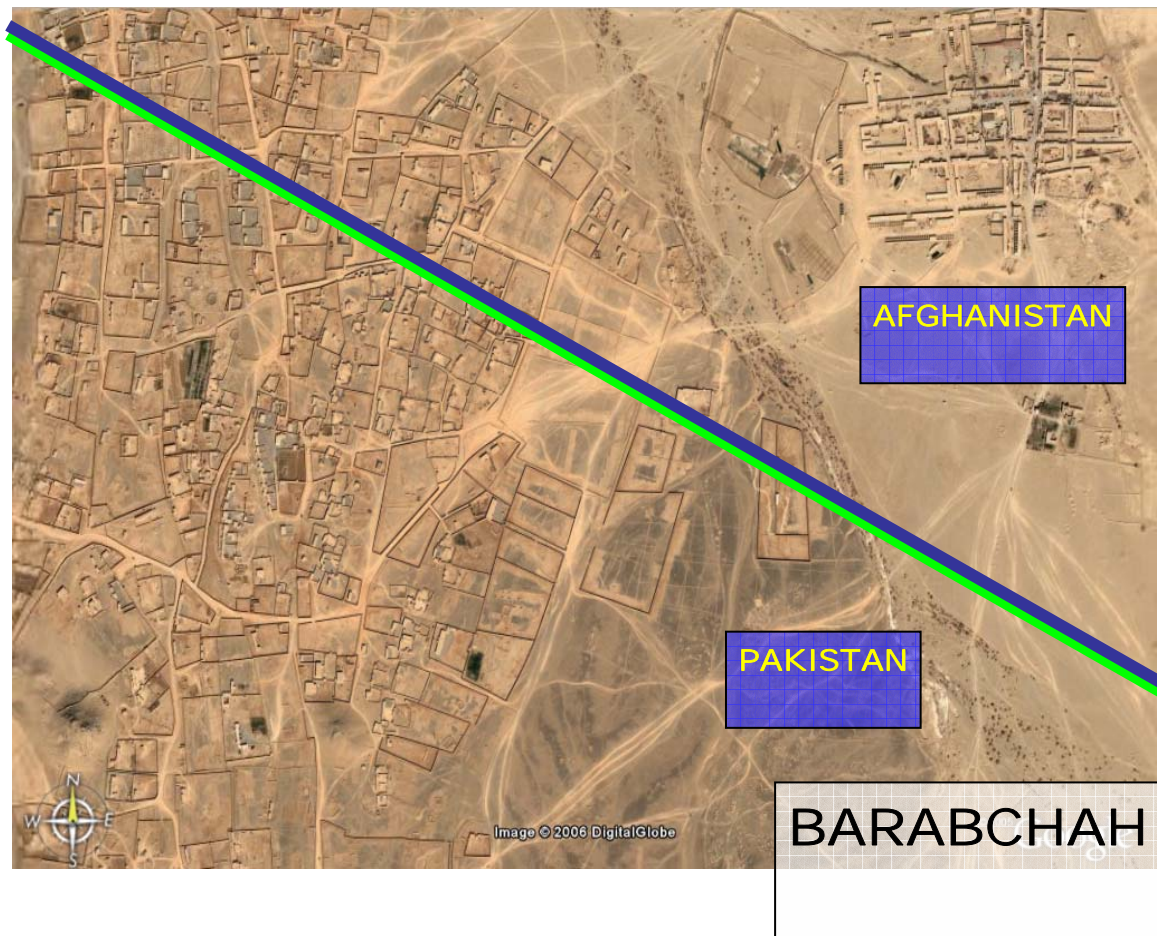




Figure 7. Village of Barabchah: Divided by Afghanistan-Pakistan Border<sup>63</sup>

Further compounding the dilemma of the border is that on the average day 31,000 people, Afghans as well as Pakistanis cross the border at one of the two *legal* crossing points.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, there are thousands who cross illegally at a plethora of other remote border crossing points. The often ill-defined 2,560 km border between Pakistan and Afghanistan does not even constitute a speed bump to groups such as the Taliban and *al-Qaeda* seeking to increase their influence among the Pashtun. To some in the U.S. this has led to a belief that Pakistan is actively supporting or at least complacent regarding Afghan insurgents. As Henry A. Crumpton, the U.S. Department of State coordinator for counter-terrorism, asserts:

“The Americans are finding the Pakistanis much more reluctant to face down the Taliban—who are brethren from the Pashtun ethnic group that dominates in Afghanistan—than

<sup>63</sup> Received by author from Senior Pakistani Military Officer, Islamabad, March 2006; DigitalGlobe data.

<sup>64</sup> The reference is to the border crossing at Chaman, Baluchistan and the data is based on an interview by the author of a senior Pakistani Official, March 12, 2007, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

they have been to confront *al-Qaeda*, who are largely outsiders. Has Pakistan done enough? I think the answer is no. . . . Not only Al Qaeda, but Taliban leadership are primarily in Pakistan, and the Pakistanis know that.”<sup>65</sup>

The problem is more complicated than this. There is little argument that the dynamics of the FATA are closely tied to continuing problems in Afghanistan, especially the Taliban insurgency. As witnessed by recent combat clashes in the tribal agency of South Waziristan, this area is possibly Pakistan’s most troubling. Clashes between native Pashtun tribal elements and foreign militants, primarily disenchanting groups such as Uzbeks and other Islamists, indicate this area is being used for guerrilla training and as an operating base.<sup>66</sup> Many of these groups (but not all) are explicitly aligned with their “Talibanized” Pashtun allies.

In 2004, after negotiating with tribal spokesmen, Pakistan responded to rising FATA Islamic militancy with an unprecedented deployment of a reported 80,000 troops to the border area and started military campaigns against Islamist rebels; “miscreants” in the official language of Islamabad. The major goal of these operations was to forcibly integrate the FATA into Pakistan-proper. Pakistani military actions in the FATA have been conducted primarily by the 11<sup>th</sup> Corp of the Pakistani Army with the support of the Frontier Corp. These actions have resulted in the deaths of some 700 Pakistani troops.<sup>67</sup>

According to the International Crisis Group, the military operations in South and North Waziristan Agencies,

“...to deny *al-Qaeda* and the Taliban safe haven and curb cross-border militancy have failed, largely due to an approach alternating between excessive force and appeasement. When force has resulted in major military losses, the government has amnestied pro-Taliban militants in return for verbal commitments to end attacks on Pakistani security forces and empty pledges to cease cross-border militancy and curb foreign terrorists.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Eric Schmitt, “Springtime for Killing in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, May 28 2006.

<sup>66</sup> “Afghanistan: The Rise of the Narco-Taliban,” Testimony of Congressman Mark Kirk Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing on Afghanistan, February 15 2007, <[foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/kiro21507.pdf](http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/kiro21507.pdf)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>67</sup> M Ilyas Khan, “Taleban spread wings in Pakistan,” *BBC News*, March 5 2007, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6409089.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6409089.stm)> (May 23 2007). Other senior Pakistani Military officials put the death toll closer to 500 (author’s interview with senior Pakistani Military Officials, March 2007, Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta Pakistan).

<sup>68</sup> International Crisis Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” p. i.

Recently Islamabad signed the Miranshah “peace agreement” in North Waziristan, seemingly in an attempt to control militants and their “guest fighters,” who have been operating against NATO forces in Afghanistan as well as Pakistani forces in the FATA. Similar agreements in 2004 and 2005 did virtually nothing to stop cross-border movements of the Taliban and other insurgents. The simple fact is that Pakistan has limited or no control in this area. This most recent “peace agreement” represents either: one, a formal Pakistani surrender to the Waziris, or two, a tactic in a larger strategic campaign to reconstruct the tribal social structure in an attempt to deter the influence of *jihadis* as well as the Taliban in the border area.

One of the very significant consequences of the Afghan’s anti-Soviet *Jihad* of the late 1970s and 1980s relative to the Pakistan border area was the destruction of the Pashtun temporal maliks<sup>69</sup> and khans and their replacement by Islamist mullahs as FATA power-brokers. This became even more important when Pakistan helped push the Taliban into Afghanistan in the 1990s.<sup>70</sup> That is, Pakistan purposefully reconstructed the traditional tribal order in the FATA in an effort to promote radical Islamist mullahs who could recruit for the Afghan *mujahideen* in their conflict against the Soviet occupiers.<sup>71</sup> In retrospect this policy of social reconstruction in the tribal areas helped fuel not only the eventual Soviet defeat in Afghanistan (Pakistan’s as well as the U.S. original strategic objective) but also the promotion and “blowback” from radical mullahs. While this social experiment resulted in the recruitment of many FATA Pashtuns to fight with their Afghan cousins and brothers against the Soviet invader/occupier, it also led to the permanent radicalization of the FATA tribal area and the opening of the FATA area to *jihadist* and other radicals such as bin Laden. Many in Pakistan felt that they could eventually recreate the traditional malik/khan dominated social system once the Soviets were defeated and driven out of Afghanistan. The momentum of radicalization and the very significant presence of foreign *jihadis* in the FATA, however, suggest that the odds of the radical fundamentalist genie returning to the bottle are unlikely indeed. Continued radicalization and the failure to prohibit access and refuge for the Taliban as well as foreign *jihadis* in the FATA has greatly hindered

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<sup>69</sup> The British first introduced the maliki system which Pakistan retained. This system was aimed at creating reliable local elite whose loyalty could be rewarded by the state through special status, financial benefits, and official recognition of influence over the tribes.

<sup>70</sup> Ahmed Rashid delves into the evolution of Pakistan support for radical Islamists and the Taliban as part of a comprehensive Afghan Strategy. See Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, p. 84 and pp. 186-187.

<sup>71</sup> Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2005): p. 67.

stabilization in Afghanistan, and has prompted Washington's criticisms of Pakistan's border policies.

An alternative view of the Pakistan's Miranshah "peace agreement" is that Islamabad has basically been attempting to buy time with the FATA Pashtuns. According to this view, the peace agreement is only understood as a part of a more important, long-term strategy to buy off tribal leaders and others in an attempt to reconstruct the old malik/khan social structure of the FATA. Eventually, according to its Pakistani proponents, this strategy is to result in the FATA's integration into the NWFP.<sup>72</sup> A primary driver of this strategy is its objective to separate the Taliban from the foreign *jihadis*. Inter-militant fighting in Waziristan is, in part, indicative of fissures based on, and demonstrative of ideological rifts between the Taliban and the *jihadis* and reflective of comments made recently by Mullah Omar, who has claimed that the Taliban and *al-Qaeda* operated separately.<sup>73</sup> The differences in opinion are due to differing points of focus for the Taliban and *al-Qaeda*: the Taliban remain focused on Afghanistan, while *al-Qaeda* and its affiliates remain committed to fighting the U.S. and its global allies, including Pakistani President Musharraf and the Pakistani presence in the FATA. These internal differences are indicative of the continued willingness of tribal leaders to sign peace agreements with the Pakistani government and point to why, despite the signing of such deals, militant attacks against Pakistani government officials have continued.

By now, it is obvious the security dilemmas of Afghanistan, Pakistan and U.S./NATO Forces rest in the land of the Pashtuns. Any further analysis of the efforts there must be made with a firm understanding of the Pashtun human terrain.

## The Pashtun Population of Pakistan and Afghanistan

*The Pashtun is never at peace, except when he is at war.*  
- Pashtun Proverb

*You want to know whether I am first a Pashtun, a Muslim, or a Pakistani. I have been a Pashtun for 2,000 years, a Muslim for 1,400 years, and a Pakistani for 30 years. Therefore, I will always be a Pashtun first.*  
- Wali Khan

The Afghan provinces that are significantly threatened by the Taliban or witnessing intensified Taliban activity are predominantly

<sup>72</sup> Author's interview with senior Pakistani Military and Government Officials, March 2007, Islamabad and Peshawar, Pakistan.

<sup>73</sup> Hassan Abbas, "South Waziristan's Maulvi Nazir: The New Face of the Taliban," *Terrorism Monitor*, 5 9, (May 10, 2007), <<http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373385>> (May 23 2007).

Pashtun (see Figure 2).<sup>74</sup> Pashtuns, of course, are also the primary players in the present insurgency rocking Afghanistan. Many policy makers as well as analysts, however, view the Taliban as nothing more than a highly radicalized Islamists, and view all Taliban as terrorists. This view misses the shared Pashtun tribal ethnicity of the insurgency and the family and clan ties that are stronger than any ties to the central government. To understand the Taliban one must understand their Pashtun ethos.

In addition to the Taliban, the two other major insurgent groups challenging the Karzai regime and his international supporters – the HiG and the *jihadi* network of Maulawi Jalaluddin Haqqani – are also Pashtun movements. Quite simply, to understand the Afghan insurgency one needs to understand the Pashtun.<sup>75</sup> As seen in Figure 8(a/b), the home of the Pashtuns is found in the region of southeast Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan. This region has been a crossroads for countless conquerors and is an environment of stark contrasts with snow capped peaks, fertile river valleys, and barren plains and as suggested by Sir Olaf Caroe – a place where the land fashions the people, rather than the people fashioning the land.<sup>76</sup>

Pashtuns represent one of the largest ethnic groups in the world with an estimated 25 million members.<sup>77</sup> With a significant number of people living in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, the ethnic group wields a great deal of influence in both countries. Yet Pashtuns are not homogeneous. As an ethnic group, Pashtuns are divided into several different tribes, which represent larger groupings such as the Ghilzais or Durranis in Afghanistan and the Wazirs or Mahsuds in Pakistan.<sup>78</sup> All members share a common language (Pashto), a common culture (largely based on Pashtunwali), and can trace their lineage back to the tribe's original founding father. Each tribe is made up of different clans, which are also based on paternal lineage.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Pashtuns refer to a tribal society, Pashto or Pushto refer to their indigenous language, and Pashtunwali refers to their cultural/tribal code. Pashtuns are believed to be the world's largest tribal society (as defined by anthropologists), see: James Spain, *The Pashtun Borderland*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1963) p. 17.

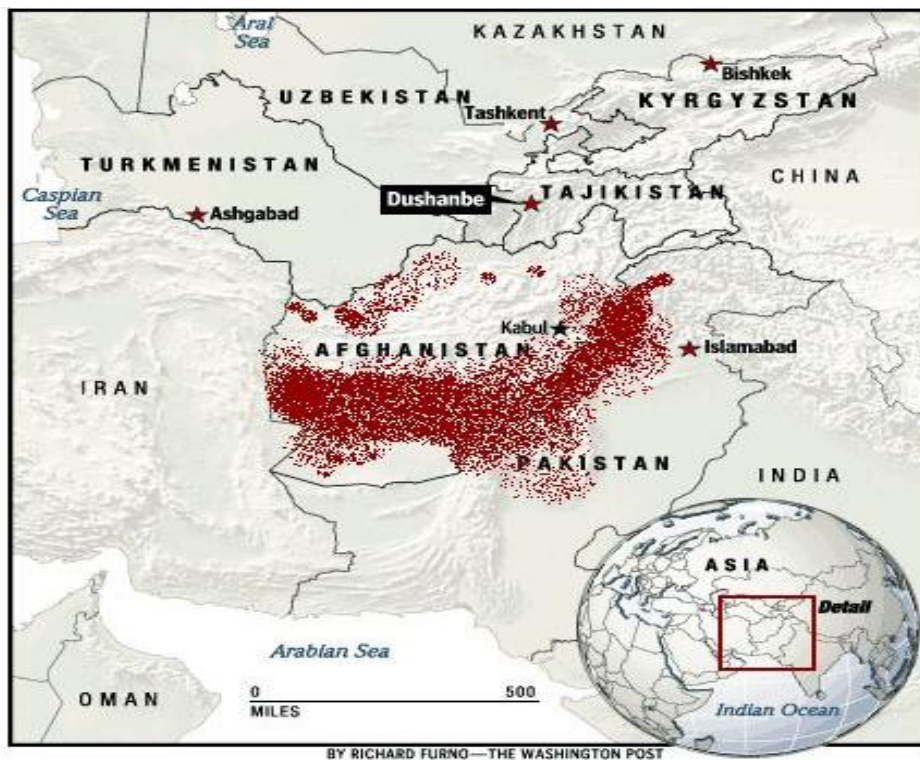
<sup>75</sup> For a discussion of the Pashtun tribal dimensions of the Taliban, see: Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason "Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan," *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* 51, 1 (2007).

<sup>76</sup> Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans* (London: Kegan Paul, 2000), p. xii.

<sup>77</sup> Tribal population estimate from the CIA World Factbook, <[www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html)> (April 6 2007).

<sup>78</sup> For a breakdown of the tribal division within the Pashtun ethnic group, see: Caroe, *The Pathans*.

<sup>79</sup> For more information see: Akbar S. Ahmed. *Social and Economic Change in the Tribal Areas: 1972-1976*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 16; and Akbar S. Ahmed. *Pukhtun Economy and Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 84.

Figure 8a: Maps of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan<sup>80</sup>Figure 8b: Maps of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Source: Richard Furno, "America at War: News Graphic," *Washington Post*, <[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/graphics/attack/investigation\\_15.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/graphics/attack/investigation_15.html)> (June 4 2007.)

<sup>81</sup> Source: John F. Burns, "A Nation Challenged: The Aftermath: Taliban Army Chief Scoffs at Report of Peace Talks," *The New York Times*, October 21, 2001, Section 1B, Page 4, <<http://graphics.nytimes.com/images/2001/10/21/international/1021webPASHTUN.gif>> (May 30 2007);

<sup>86</sup> Louis Dupree. *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 415.

As a people, Pashtuns identify themselves in terms of familial ties and commitments. Social, political, and economic activities exist within this sphere and prevent government oriented institutions from gaining a foothold in tribal areas.<sup>86</sup> Despite the fact that the Pashtun's homeland is an easy area to invade, no foreign entity has been able to truly conquer it.<sup>87</sup> During the period of the Great Game, both Great Britain and Russia struggled and failed to subject the Pashtuns to state authority.<sup>88</sup> The Soviets, during their time of invasion and occupation, were never able to subjugate the Pashtun homelands despite the commitment of extensive military personnel and materiel.<sup>89</sup> Even today on the Pakistani side of the border – the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas – are predominantly inhabited by Pashtuns who are exempt from Pakistani law. This fact also illustrates the importance of the FATA to the Taliban insurgency as a place of refuge, training and cross-border incursions into Afghanistan.

To understand the Pashtuns, and in many respects the Taliban, it is important to understand their tribal code known as Pashtunwali, which translates as “the way of the Pashtuns.” The Pashtuns live in a tribal culture and the Taliban are intimately aware of this fact and play on its implications. For example, the Taliban will regularly appeal to people's sense of “Pashtunism” in their narratives.<sup>90</sup>

First and foremost, Pashtunwali is about honor (*nang*). The Pashtun's concept of honor is not derived from a western society's modern definition of honor based on morality or justice. Rather, the Pashtun's sense of honor is founded on his close, unquestionable observance of Pashtunwali. In the past, this difference has created a great deal of tension between Pashtuns and those states attempting to establish their own rule of law. The concept of justice is wrapped up in a Pashtun's maintenance of his honor. Action which must be taken to preserve honor, but contradicts or breaks the laws of a state would seem perfectly acceptable to a Pashtun. In fact, his honor would demand it.<sup>91</sup> “[Pashtunwali is] an uncompromising social code so profoundly at odds with Western mores that its application constantly brings one up with a jolt.”<sup>92</sup> A Pashtun must adhere the code to maintain his honor to retain

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*.

<sup>89</sup> David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>90</sup> For example, see: Thomas H. Johnson, “The Taliban Insurgency and an Analysis of *Shabnamah* (Night Letters),” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18, 2 (Spring 2007, forthcoming).

<sup>91</sup> Charles Allen. *Soldier Sahibs I* (New York, Carrol & Graf Publishers, Inc., 2000), p.119.

<sup>92</sup> Allen, *Soldier Sahibs I*, p. 13; Also see: John C. Griffiths. *Afghanistan*. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 59; James W. Spain. *The People of the Khyber: The Pathans of Pakistan* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc, 1962), p. 46-47

his identity as a Pashtun. Pashtunwali defines both action and reaction to most circumstances of social interaction. Below, we will see this code's implications for operations resulting in the deaths of civilians in the Afghan insurgency and counterinsurgency.

Pashtunwali encompasses a code of conduct, dealing with everything from such noble ideas as democracy and alms-giving. But what concerns us here and U.S./NATO forces in the field, is the concept of *badal* or "revenge." Life is seen as a sacred gift, and once taken, inadvertently or otherwise, the taker must be prepared for the consequences. The kith and kin of the deceased will remain mortal enemies until the issue is resolved, and therefore "collateral damage" must be avoided at all costs.

Pashtuns represent a "hard case" for any government seeking to establish its central authority over their tribal areas – be it Kabul or Islamabad. Historically, rural Pashtuns have avoided being subjugated or integrated by a larger nation. As one elderly Pashtun tribesman once stated to Mountstuart Elphinstone, a British official in Afghanistan in 1809, "We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood...we will never be content with a master."<sup>93</sup> Many of these characteristics make Pashtuns the perfect insurgents, a fact not lost upon the Taliban.

Respect for their well-established, long standing tribal code binds the numerous Pashtun tribes, especially the rural tribes, and constitutes them as a distinctive ethnic group. Several states have attempted to intervene in Pashtun society and supersede Pashtunwali with a more progressive central rule of law, yet Pashtunwali continues as the rule of law for tribes living in rural areas.

While it would be incorrect to refer to the Taliban insurrection or resurrection as merely a Pashtun affair, it would not be far from the mark. Pashtun areas of Afghanistan have received the least amount of development assistance, and projects undertaken by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are just as easily destroyed by the Taliban once coalition forces leave the area. The head of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Gen. Maples, has stated that due to the Taliban's increased strength within their core Pashtun community, 2007 will witness heretofore unseen levels of violence and possibly twice the casualties of 2006.<sup>94</sup>

The journalist Ahmed Rashid recently claimed that in addition to the noticeable decrease in Pashtun power in Afghanistan since the removal of the Taliban (despite the fact that President Karzai himself is a Pashtun of the Durrani tribe), the Taliban has been working hard to coalesce

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<sup>93</sup> Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban* (New York: De Capo Press, 2002), p. 134.

<sup>94</sup> "Afghan violence 'likely to rise'," *BBC News*, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6153194.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6153194.stm)> (November 16, 2006).



Pashtun public opinion and support behind them. Together with the perception that Americans see all Pashtun as the enemy, the Taliban and their Pakistani sympathizers within the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) have striven to unite the Pashtun conceptions of the mosque (*masjid*) and the throne (*hujra*), under the divine leadership of the Taliban and Mullah Omar.<sup>95</sup>

### Death of Afghan Innocents

While the death of non-combatant civilians (often referred to as collateral damage) has unfortunately accompanied all wars, the death of Afghan innocents has become an extremely significant aspect of the Afghan insurgency and counterinsurgency.

The Taliban regularly threaten and kill Afghan civilians in the pursuit of their insurgent goals.<sup>96</sup> The Taliban often justify such acts through narratives that claim that their battle with the Karzai “puppet” regime and its foreign coalition represents a “cosmic conflict” between the righteous and the infidel. Afghans, in the eyes of the Taliban, have a collective religious responsibility to fight the “apostates and invaders”. Those Afghans assisting or cooperating with the Kabul regime or the United States and its international coalition are legitimate targets because the Afghan population has a “religious duty” to oppose “infidels and foreign crusaders.”<sup>97</sup> The death of Afghan non-combatants by the United States and their coalition does not have such a pat response.

Operations resulting in the death of Afghan civilians have become extremely problematic for the counterinsurgency and have sparked angry protests against foreign troops and calls for President Hamid Karzai's resignation. It is increasingly argued that mounting civilian casualties from U.S. and NATO air strikes against the Taliban are undermining Kabul's mission, and in turn helping the insurgents recruit more fighters.<sup>98</sup> The issue of civilian deaths is a delicate one for Karzai's U.S.-backed government and takes on even broader implications when combined with the Afghan complaint of the lack of development despite billions of dollars spent in Afghanistan.

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<sup>95</sup> Ahmed Rashid, “Pashtuns want an image change,” *BBC News*, December 2 2006. <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6198382.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6198382.stm)> (December 2 2006).

<sup>96</sup> “All who are not friends, are enemies: Taleban abuses against civilians,” *Amnesty International*, April 19, 2007, <[web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110012007](http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110012007)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>97</sup> For an analysis of Taliban narratives see: Johnson, “The Taliban Insurgency and an Analysis of *Shabnamah* (Night Letters),”.

<sup>98</sup> Jim Loney, “Civilian deaths undermine West's Afghan mission,” *Reuters*, May 22 2007, <[http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2007-05-22T184642Z\\_oI\\_NOOTR\\_RTRJONC\\_o\\_India-299435-1.xml&archived=False](http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2007-05-22T184642Z_oI_NOOTR_RTRJONC_o_India-299435-1.xml&archived=False)> (May 23 2007).

Particularly problematic has been the careless use of U.S. air power, which has killed scores of civilians, and the apparent lack of sensitivity by U.S. troops to local perceptions, laws and customs. According to reports in the Afghan press, “U.S. Special Forces, during routine sweeps of Afghan villages searching for weapons and members of resistance groups, have physically abused villagers, damaged personal property, and subjected women to body searches, a major affront on a family’s honor.”<sup>99</sup> UN officials have commented that “This doesn’t help us at all . . . the people are basically pro-America. They want U.S. forces to be here. But American soldiers are not very culturally sensitive. It’s hardly surprising that Afghans get angry when the Americans turn up and kick their doors in.”<sup>100</sup>

There have been multiple episodes of U.S. and NATO counterinsurgency actions that have resulted in the death and injury of Afghan innocents. The implications of this are profound. As suggested by the International Crisis Group (ICG) “when a child is killed in one of these villages, that village is lost for 100 years. These places run on revenge.”<sup>101</sup>

Afghans, and especially Pashtuns, have historically been fiercely independent and highly xenophobic. Operating in such an environment is extremely challenging for foreign forces as witnessed by Alexander the Great,<sup>102</sup> the British,<sup>103</sup> the Soviets<sup>104</sup> and now the United States and NATO.<sup>105</sup> It is especially difficult when such operations involve the loss of civilians and can be explicitly used by the Taliban to seemingly validate their narratives that the conflict in Afghanistan is “a cosmic conflict between the righteous’ and the infidel who want to kill innocent Muslims.” The Pashtun population, in turn, finds itself increasingly siding with the Taliban both on the Afghan and Pakistani sides of the Durand line or at least clinging to neutral positions.

During a 24-hour period in early March of this year, for example, two such events took place that crystallized the damning implications of “collateral damage” in Pashtun Afghanistan. On March 4<sup>th</sup> a U.S. Marine Special Operations Command convoy traveling on a roadway connecting

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Luke Harding, “Heavy Hand of America Fans the Taliban Embers into Life,” *The Guardian*, June 18 2003, <[www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1284,979617,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1284,979617,00.html)> (May 31 2007) .

<sup>101</sup> International Crisis Group, August 2003.

<sup>102</sup> Milt Bearden, “The Pashtuns of Afghanistan: Alexander the Great also got in trouble here,” *International Herald Tribune*, March 31 2004, <[www.iht.com/articles/2004/03/31/edbearden\\_ed3\\_3.php](http://www.iht.com/articles/2004/03/31/edbearden_ed3_3.php)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>103</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*.

<sup>104</sup> David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>105</sup> Thomas H. Johnson, “Afghanistan’s Post-Taliban Transition: The State of State-Building after War,” *Central Asian Survey*, (March–June 2006) 25, 1–2, p. 1–26.

the eastern city of Jalalabad to the Pakistani border, in the district of Mohmand Daraas was attacked by a VBIED (vehicle-borne improvised explosive device) and subsequently starting shooting at passer-bys as the convoy sped from the scene according to Afghan witnesses.<sup>106</sup> U.S. Army sources later reported that ten civilians were killed and 35 more injured by the Marines. This event was broadly criticized by both Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the international media and eventually led to the removal of the entire unit (about 120 Marines)<sup>107</sup> from Afghanistan by Army Maj. Gen. Francis H. Kearney III, head of Special Operations Command Central. He also initiated an investigation into the March 4 incident.<sup>108</sup> The incident also resulted in street protests by thousands of Afghans in Jalalabad calling for the demise of the Kabul Government as well as the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops.

Less than 24 hours after the Jalalabad incident, eight civilians were reported killed and 35 injured in Kapisa during a coalition air strike and artillery attack. Afghan President Karzai was quick to criticize these events and declared that his government can no longer tolerate the deaths of innocent Afghans.

Recently President Bush and NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer have stated they would attempt to “reduce civilian deaths” in Afghanistan. While lamenting the civilian deaths, Scheffer as well as Bush blamed the losses on Taliban tactics such as using “civilians as human shields”.<sup>109</sup> As suggested elsewhere,

“[T]he Taliban purposely retreat to village areas after an operation hoping that the coalition will attack. At the strategic level, the Taliban is fighting a classic ‘war of the flea,’ largely along the same lines used by the mujahideen twenty years ago against the Soviets, including fighting in villages to deliberately provoke air strikes and collateral damage. They gladly trade the lives of a few dozen guerrilla fighters in order to cost the American forces the permanent loyalty of that village, under the code of Pashtun social behavior called Pashtunwali and its obligation for revenge (Badal), which the U.S. Army does not even begin to understand.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> See Griff Witte, “At Least 8 Civilians Dead; Witnesses Fault Troops’ Response to Assault on Convoy,” *Washington Post Foreign Service*, March 5 2007, 10:14 AM.

<sup>107</sup> This was the first Marine Special Operations Command Company foreign deployed since the since the command was created in February 2006.

<sup>108</sup> Robert Burns, “Marine unit ordered out of Afghanistan,” *Associated Press*, March 23, 2007, <<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory?id=2976597>> (May 30 2007).

<sup>109</sup> Laurent Lozano, “Bush, NATO chief regret Afghan deaths,” May, 22 2007, <[http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070522/pl\\_afp/usnatoafghanistanbushrussia\\_070522072916](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070522/pl_afp/usnatoafghanistanbushrussia_070522072916)> (May 23 2007).

<sup>110</sup> Johnson and Mason “Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan,” p. 87.

Even recognizing the insidious nature of such Taliban actions, such as retiring to a village and attempting to bait a coalition response, the lack of an explicit apology to the Afghan people concerning the deaths of innocent civilians is counterproductive. In the prosecution of a counterinsurgency, where the opinions and support of the local, indigenous population are critical for operational success, an official apology for civilian deaths is a small price to pay for hearts and minds. While many U.S. officers recognize this fact, other high ranking U.S. officers seem to lament its recognition. Consider for example the experience of U.S. Army Col. John Nicholson, the brigade commander of U.S. Forces in the eastern sector of Afghanistan. Nicholson recently apologized to the families of the Afghan civilians killed and injured by Marines during the March 4, 2007 event near Jalalabad discussed above. Nicholson apologized because,

“keeping civilians on the side of the U.S.-led coalition was essential in combating the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan.”<sup>111</sup> Gen. James T. Conway, commandant of the Marine Corps, subsequently criticized Nicholson for his apology “because investigators have yet to determine whether any wrongdoing occurred.”<sup>112</sup>

While Conway may be correct in a legalistic sense, his criticism fails to recognize that every civilian death counts against the Americans and greatly hinders the counterinsurgency. The ultimate implications of “collateral damage” to the Pashtun tribal ethos – that puts a high premium on personal and family honor and in codes of revenge that demand revenge – are immense:

“The shopkeepers glower as an American military patrol rumbles past the village bazaar at Afghany, some 80 miles northeast of Kabul. Mohammad Qayam and Ghul Jan are still seething about the precision U.S. airstrike in early March that hit their friend Mirwais's home, less than a mile away. They and other neighbors pulled nine broken corpses from the ruins: Mirwais's grandfather, father, mother, wife and five small children. Mirwais himself and his 7-year-old son were away seeing relatives, the men say; now he has fled into the mountains. Although local officials accuse Mirwais of

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<sup>111</sup> Peter Spiegel, “Army apology to Afghans called mistake,” *Baltimore Sun*, May 18, 2007, <[www.baltimoresun.com/news/nationworld/bal-te.marine18may18,0,4517660.story?coll=bal-pe-asection](http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nationworld/bal-te.marine18may18,0,4517660.story?coll=bal-pe-asection)> (May 31 2007).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

belonging to the Taliban, his neighbors say he was only a farmer. “We hate the Americans so much now, we don't want to see their faces,” says Jan. “They're no different from the Russians.”<sup>113</sup>

The United States and its NATO allies must come to grips with the implications of the death of Afghan civilians and pursue operations that avoid the harm to civilians. Mohammad Farid Hamidi, a member of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, cogently suggests the ultimate implications of civilian deaths when he quotes an Afghan proverb: “A hundred good works can be destroyed by one mistake.”<sup>114</sup>

### **Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

Afghanistan faces significant hurdles as it seeks to overcome the Taliban insurgency in the Pashtun areas. Not only must it prevent the insurgency from spreading into other parts of Afghanistan, but it must deal with the Taliban in the Taliban's home turf, in the Pashtun tribal areas of the Southeast and in the hearts and minds of the Pashtun tribesmen.

Pashtuns, and Pashtunwali, are complicated dynamics that defy any simple explanation. Culture, development indicators, and history all play a huge role in the conflict, and one that cannot be solved solely by combat operations. The culture of the Pashtuns must be accommodated and taken into consideration before the outset of any action. Canine units in homes, soldiers dressed in full body armor, and especially “collateral damage” are things Pashtuns take very seriously. As their support is necessary for a stable Afghanistan, their concerns must be addressed.

Developmentally, the role of U.S./NATO forces must be proactive. Much of the tribal hinterlands that have proved so fertile for the recruitment efforts of the Taliban have seen little or no development works from either foreign forces or the government in Kabul. When the tribes living in these regions can see a benefit for themselves from a stable and democratic Afghanistan, the Taliban will see its sea drained.

Historically, Afghanistan, and especially the tribal belt, has proven impossible to pacify by foreign armies. Since the first Anglo-Afghan War onward, it has been Pashtun tribesmen who have brought destruction to imperial armies. As has oft been stated, however, this war is different. The goal is not territory or domination or colonial interests, but the hearts, minds, and freedom of the Afghan people. With a new government in Kabul, led by a Pashtun president, Afghanistan has a

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<sup>113</sup> Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, “Collateral Disasters,” *Newsweek*, May 6, 2007.

<sup>114</sup> Qtd., Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, “Afghanistan: Anti-U.S. Sentiment on the Rise,” *Newsweek*, May 14, 2007, <[www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18507648/site/newsweek/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18507648/site/newsweek/)> (May 23 2007).

fresh start, and one that is theirs and ours to lose. Both military and non-military resources must be increased if a free and stable Afghanistan free of terrorists is to be realized.

From a military viewpoint, a more determined effort must be made to avoid civilian casualties. Increasingly air power has been relied upon to dislodge Taliban elements from their strongholds, which although effective, also has disastrous consequences for any non-combatants in the area. When an enemy element is located, the area must be secured and the element neutralized *on the ground*, and thereby lessening the possibility of civilian casualties. As one anonymous writer in Kandahar said, "The foreign soldiers don't fight face to face because they are too scared of the Taliban. However, they should fight face to face and not send in the aircraft bombers, because doing so they kill civilians."<sup>115</sup> While airstrikes may prevent U.S./NATO casualties in the immediate term, they will almost certainly prolong the conflict. Although exact figures are classified, in one month of 2006, Human Rights Watch counted more than twice as many airstrikes in Afghanistan than Iraq.<sup>116</sup> This cannot continue without seriously alienating the local populations of the exact regions U.S./NATO forces hope to win over.

As previously shown, the peacekeeper to population ratio in Afghanistan is at a dangerous level. In order to better secure troubled areas, the security footprint must be increased, but only *in tandem* with increased development works. This will release rural Pashtuns from the terror of the Taliban, and the growing dependence on narcotrafficking as a viable means of sustenance.

In fiscal year 2006, the U.S. spent slightly less than one billion dollars on development in Afghanistan, or less than forty dollars per Afghan. Reportedly most never leaves the U.S., being spent on studies, consultants, and administrative costs.<sup>117</sup> Of the funds that eventually do make it to Afghanistan, near half is spent on maintaining the Kabul to Kandahar highway.<sup>118</sup> With this in mind, it can be assumed that roughly

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<sup>115</sup> Qtd., *Countering the Insurgency in Afghanistan: Losing Friends and Making Enemies*, Senlis Council, London: Senlis, February 2007, <[www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/018\\_publication](http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/018_publication)> (May 22 2007).

<sup>116</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Afghanistan: NATO Should Do More to Protect Civilians," October 30 2006, <<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/10/30/afghani4475.htm>> (May 24 2007).

<sup>117</sup> By some accounts as much as 86 percent of American aid dollars sent to Afghanistan are in fact "phantom aid" (Ann Jones, "How U.S. dollars disappear in Afghanistan: quickly and thoroughly," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 3, 2006, <[www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/09/03/INGRoKRGMF1.DTL](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/09/03/INGRoKRGMF1.DTL)> (May 24 2007).

<sup>118</sup> Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," *CRS Web*, 3 November 2006. <[www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30588.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30588.pdf)> (November 15 2006).

the cost of a fast food meal reaches each Afghan per year. More must be spent on the ground improving the lives of average Afghans.

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are an interesting experiment because their combination of counterinsurgent kinetic and non-kinetic foci and objectives, but there are not enough PRTs in the field. At present there are 23 PRTs in Afghanistan – less than one per province.<sup>119</sup> Although significantly more expensive, DRTs (District Reconstruction Teams) could prove invaluable in approaching many of the insurgent and drug related problems that ail Afghanistan, and give peacekeepers and development workers a presence visible to all Afghans. As the number of stakeholders in the success of a democratic Afghanistan increase, the well of despair from which the Taliban draws its support will shrink.

Were these tactics to be adopted, U.S./NATO casualties would increase in short-term. But in order to avoid a prolonged insurgency, with more Afghan civilian and foreign peacekeeper casualties in the long run, a proactive stance must be taken. Without careful study of the human terrain in Afghanistan, and a corresponding shift in tactics, international forces risk getting stuck in the big muddy there.

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<sup>119</sup> “Provincial Reconstruction Teams,” USAID, <[www.usaid.gov/locations/asia\\_near\\_east/countries/afghanistan/prt.html](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/countries/afghanistan/prt.html)> (May 24 2007).





# The Hydroelectric Sector in Central Asia and the Growing Role of China

Sebastien Peyrouse\*

## ABSTRACT

The stakes of hydroelectric matters between Central Asia and China have not been much discussed, though the possibilities for cooperation, as well as the potential problems, between these two zones are numerous. Beijing effectively views Central Asia as a region capable of supplying it with cheap electricity, which could make up with the energy shortfall in Xinjiang. Yet, China has arrived somewhat late on the Central Asian hydroelectricity market, the largest projects for hydroelectric stations being in the hand of Russian companies. However, many China-Central Asian projects play a very important role in local economic development and hydroelectricity cooperation could be promised to a bright future. This article then aims to give nuanced assessments of the Chinese potentials and limitations involved on a country-by-country, project-by-project basis.

*Keywords* • Central Asia • China • Xinjiang • Hydroelectricity • Chinese investments

## Introduction

Despite the fact that the Aral Sea catastrophe and the disputes between neighboring countries over the use of water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers are relatively common knowledge, the stakes of hydroelectric matters between Central Asia and China have not been much discussed. However, the possibilities for cooperation, as well as the potential problems, between these two zones are numerous.<sup>2</sup> Beijing effectively views Central Asia as a zone capable of supplying it with cheap electricity.<sup>3</sup> Contrary to its hydrocarbon policy, the aim of the Chinese here is not, at least not primarily, to have this hydroelectricity delivered to its large cities in the east (the electrical lines required would need to stretch over at least 6000 km) but rather to make up for the energy shortfall in Xinjiang. China would also like to be able to sell Central Asian hydroelectricity to countries of the meridional corridor

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<sup>2</sup> S. Peyrouse, "Flowing Downstream: The Sino-Kazakh Water Dispute," *China Brief* 7, 10 (May 16, 2007) pp. 7-10,

<[http://www.jamestown.org/china\\_brief/article.php?articleid=2373402](http://www.jamestown.org/china_brief/article.php?articleid=2373402)> (May 20 2007)

<sup>3</sup> Ramakant Dwivedi. "China's Central Asia Policy in Recent Times," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 4, 4 (2006), p. 158.

(Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and India) because of the significant transit fees it would accrue. The setting up of Chinese companies in the region, like those it has established in Russia and Mongolia, had thus been centred around two axes: first, the construction of new hydroelectric stations; and second, the installation of new electricity lines, in particular high-voltage ones. These projects are part of the Chinese strategy to establish itself in key domains of Central Asian markets such as energy and large-scale infrastructure. This article then aims to give nuanced assessments of the Chinese potentials and limitations involved on a country-by-country, project-by-project basis.

### **The Central Asian Hydroelectricity Market**

The Central Asian hydroelectricity sector, still relatively underdeveloped, appears promising. With demand for electricity expected to remain weak due to the industrial crisis coupled with high production potential, exports of electricity are destined to experience considerable growth.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the Tajik and Kyrgyz dams constructed during Soviet times were designed to irrigate downstream agricultural zones, not to produce electricity. In addition, the geographical conditions in Central Asia are, ecologically speaking, complex and fragile. The local hydraulic system is peculiar in that the river flow does not reach the sea and peters out in closed, or endorheic, basins. The two main water flows, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, end up in the Aral Sea. But other rivers like the Zeravshan and the Murghab peter out in the deserts of Kyzylkum and Karakum, while the Ili flows into the Balkhash Lake. Only the Irtysh drains into the glacial Arctic Ocean. This situation means that the environment, and in particular the Aral Sea and the Balkhash Lake which both receive their water from these rivers, is very sensitive to hydroelectric constructions. However, the two “water castles” of the region that are Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which are both upstream of the main rivers, possess multiple possible sites for hydroelectric stations. Moreover, both of them are in need of acquiring some autonomy in energy matters from their Kazakh and Uzbek neighbours.

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the breaking off of relations between the Republics, electricity production in Central Asia fell dramatically and projects for new power stations were scrapped. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan quickly experienced energy shortages and Kazakhstan had significant interruptions in its electricity supply. The energy exchanges between the region’s countries fell by more than half between 1990 and 2000. Although they were theoretically very compatible (with three gas and oil producing States and two hydroelectricity

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<sup>4</sup> I would like to thank Gaël Raballand (World Bank) for his valuable comments.

producing ones), cooperation on energy issues between Central Asian States had proved difficult. Negotiations to exchange water for oil and gas regularly broke down, with each of the participants undermining the terms of engagement. The five States are in fact divided over issues of how to use the water: for irrigation in summer or for heating in the winter? In addition, both the Tajik and Kyrgyz governments demand to be paid for water, where the other States would prefer to exchange energy for it.

Two inter-State agreements, the first signed in February 1992, the second in March 1998, were designed to maintain the system inherited from the Soviet era. The terms of these agreements give priority to the distribution of hydroelectricity for irrigation in exchange, in winter, for supplies of gas and oil from the countries having received that water, something that is not at all to the liking of the Tajik and Kyrgyz authorities. In June 2001, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan reached an agreement to pay off their mutual energy debts through energy barter rather than by cash payment. Kyrgyzstan now delivers to both countries more than a billion kwh of hydroelectricity annually. In exchange Tashkent supplies it with 700 million cubic meters of gas and 20,000 tons of petrol, and Astana with 800,000 tons of coal and 20,000 tons of oil.<sup>5</sup> Many regional structures have been created in order to facilitate cooperation in water management, such as the Water Energy Consortium (WEC), which is part of the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO), but they are quite inefficient.

As for electricity, the Central Asian States have retained the Central Asian Power System that they inherited from the Soviet era and created the Central Asian Power Council, which has been put in charge of electricity distribution.<sup>6</sup> However, Turkmenistan, which has the potential to be an export of electricity, is not a member of CACO and, since 2003, is no longer part of the Central Asian Power System. The authorities in Ashgabat have never hidden the fact that they prefer to sell their electricity to their southern and western neighbours – Iran, Pakistan and Turkey – at the expense of other CIS member countries. Until 1998, Kazakhstan was the only importer of Turkmen electricity, but recently 400 km of electrical lines have been opened that stretch all the way to the Iranian border. An export agreement with Pakistan was also signed in 1999. Islamabad hopes that a future line traversing Afghanistan will enable it to take advantage of Turkmen electricity.

With the exception of Turkmenistan, the countries of Central Asia once again have use of an interconnected network. At the end of the

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<sup>5</sup> Gregory Gleason. "Russia and the Politics of the Central Asian Electricity Grid," *Problems of Post-Communism* 50, 3 (2003), p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> "Water Energy Nexus in Central Asia, *Improving Regional Cooperation in the Syr Darya Basin* (Washington, D.C: World Bank, January 2004), p. 5.

1990s, the Russian authorities wanted to revive the interconnections between electricity grids so that the state-run Unified Energy System (RAO-UES), headed by Anatoli Chubais, could take control of the Post-Soviet electricity market. Kazakhstan was favorable to this reconnection since it meant more electricity supply for a part of the country's north. In June 2000, Russian and Kazakh electricity networks were reconnected, followed, in August, by those of the other republics, in a partial re-establishment of the Soviet electricity system. Russia imports cheap Kyrgyz and Kazakh hydroelectricity to supply parts of Siberia and delivers electricity to some regions in the north of Kazakhstan. To reinforce its position, Moscow wants to develop transmission lines connecting north and south Kazakhstan and some interconnecting lines between the Tajik and Kyrgyz networks. Moreover, the RAO-UES dreams of a "North-South energy bridge" which would permit it to develop a Eurasian market and to export, via the Central Asian grid, to the most dynamic markets in Asia.

Apart from fulfilling their own growing needs, the States of Central Asia also hope to export some of their production (in the first place, seasonal surpluses) to neighbouring countries, to Russia, to China, as well as to Afghanistan and its meridional neighbours. Thus, projects for high-voltage line corridors starting in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and going to Pakistan are currently under consideration. In May 2006 in Islamabad, and then in October of the same year in Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan confirmed their desire to export energy to Pakistan via Afghanistan. The four countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Central Asia-South Asia (CASA) project development, with the support of international donors (World Bank, IFC, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, and USAID) and interested private sector investors (AES and RAO UES). The CASA-1000 project consists in the construction of high-voltage lines between the two grids which until now are without any interconnection. The construction of these lines would give the countries of Central Asia access to the electricity-deficient markets of South Asia for the first time.<sup>7</sup>

However, as with the pipeline projects, these electricity corridors come up against the Afghan question: as an essential transit point for any expansion to the south, its political instability has largely put the brakes on developing cooperation in electricity matters with Pakistan. Nevertheless, the Afghan-Central Asian issue remains consequential for electricity matters. Afghanistan experiences critical electricity shortages and public electricity supply there is limited to about 16% of the population. Afghanistan already imports very modest quantities of

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<sup>7</sup> V. Vucetic and V. Krishnaswamy, *Development of Electricity Trade in Central Asia - South Asia Region* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2005).

electricity from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan through existing interconnections (430 GWh in 2006). The investments made so far in the CASA electricity grid provide timely assistance to local populations, although Central Asian electricity is more expensive to import than electricity coming from Iran.<sup>8</sup> The economic and social recovery of the country necessitates a better electrical grid and improved regional integration. Thus, Mazar e-Sharif has great potential to become one of the points of distribution for Central Asian Energy to Pakistan and India.<sup>9</sup> The Pakistani company NESPAK proposed two possible routes between Tajikistan and Pakistan. The first passes through Kunduz and Kabul (650 km), the second via the Wakhan corridor. Although more secure, as it passes only 30 km through Afghanistan, the second route is much more expensive because of the extremely difficult nature of the physical terrain and weather conditions.<sup>10</sup>

After Russia, it is therefore China to which more and more projects are turning. Xinjiang, for instance, is a potential market for exporting electricity: not only are its rivers too irregular to feed its power stations, but the region lacks coal and cannot keep up with its own rapid economic development. In addition, more than half of the 31 provinces of the People's Republic experience regular shortages in electricity supply.<sup>11</sup> This cooperation in hydroelectricity matters is destined to go from being only bilateral to being multilateral. In this vein, the recent summits of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization have confirmed the desire of member countries to develop a common strategy on such issues, and a working group on energy is soon to be formed within the SCO. The Central Asian States, lacking in foreign investment, have every interest in collaborating between Russia and China in the electricity sector. The Tajikistan state-run company in charge of electricity, Barki Tojik, has further stated that the Organization will possibly create a kind of electricity OPEC.<sup>12</sup>

### **Chinese Investments in Kazakhstan**

The majority of Kazakhstan's hydroelectric stations date from the Soviet era and require costly repairs. Astana is thus seeking new partners to aid it to restore its power stations. In addition, the country is divided between two electricity grids, one in the north, the other in the south,

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<sup>8</sup> The average tariff / kWh varied from about 2.5 cents in Herat area to 6.9 cents to 7.4 cents in the Kunduz and Mazar-e-sharif area. *Ibid*, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank, *Central Asia Regional Electricity Export Potential Study* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, December 2004), p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> Vucetic and Krishnaswamy, *Development of Electricity Trade in Central Asia*, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> World Bank, *Central Asia Regional Electricity Export Potential Study*, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> "Expert: SCO's Energy club will become the OPEC alternative," *Regnum.ru*, June 18 2006 <<http://www.regnum.ru/english/658559.html>> (May 05 2007).

which are largely insufficient and badly interconnected. As a result, while the north of the country exports electricity to Russia, the south has to import it from Kyrgyzstan and experiences chronic electricity shortages. In future years, with increases in consumption resulting from economic development, Kazakhstan will have to confront growing risks of electricity shortages in the south and the west. As a programme for privatizing electricity was launched in 1996, electricity production is mostly in the hands of private producers. Only distribution is still in the hands of the state-run company KEGOC (Kazakhstan Electric Grid Operating Company).

Kazakhstan has a particularly acute lack of hydraulic resources: it is one of the most water deficient States on the Eurasian continent. Its territory fulfils only half of its resource requirements (56 km<sup>3</sup> for a total of 100 km<sup>3</sup>), the remainder comes from its neighbours, including 23 km<sup>3</sup> from China. The country, then, produces very little hydroelectricity: the theoretical capacity of its water resources could possibly reach 20,000 MW but until now only about 15% of this potential has been exploited.<sup>13</sup> The south of the country has a capacity of 3,000 MW, of which 82% comes from thermal stations and 18% from hydroelectric stations. Three of them produce 10% of the country's electricity needs: those of Bukhtarma and Ust-Kamenogorsk on the Irtysh and that of Kapchagai of the Balkhash Lake. Close to 400 small hydroelectric stations with annual production capacities of 6 billion kwh were abandoned in the 1990s. Many more sizeable stations like those at Semei (78 MW) and at Kerbulak (50 MW) are under construction.

Apart from its electricity production, Kazakhstan is seeking to develop its export capabilities and has a significant future as a transit point: the Kambarata and Sangtuda projects plan the export of electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Russia and Astana will benefit from the payment of considerable transit fees.<sup>14</sup> Kazakh NGO's denounce, however, the incoherence of this hydroelectricity policy: the country has an increasing shortage of electricity, particularly in its meridional regions, but the authorities seek to export production, particularly to China. To this end, Beijing and Astana held negotiations in 2005 about a project to export 40 billion kwh to China at an estimated price of close to 10 billion dollars. This accord will make Kazakhstan the foremost exporter of electricity to China, but at present it remains no more than a

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<sup>13</sup> Power Kazakhstan 2007, see <[http://www.powerexpo.kz/en/2007/power\\_resources/](http://www.powerexpo.kz/en/2007/power_resources/)> (May 25 2007).

<sup>14</sup> T. Sabonis-Helf. "Notes for Russia/Kazakhstan: The Energy Issues," TOSCCA Workshop: "Kazakhstan Between East and West", November 28 2005, St. Anthony's College Oxford, <<http://www.toscca.co.uk/lecture%20notes/SabonisKazRusEnergy.doc>> (May 12 2007).

declaration of intention.<sup>15</sup> Kazakhstan is also seeking to develop partnerships with China in the area of the construction of power stations. Three projects are either underway or under consideration.

*The Ekibastuz project*

Astana and Beijing are currently discussing the construction of an electrical power station on the Irtych near the city of Ekibastuz in the Pavlodar region. A former GULAG site, the city was founded in the 1950s and numbers approximately 100,000 inhabitants. A number of them work in the two coal-generated electricity stations, Ekisbastuz-GRES-I (4,000 MW) and Ekisbastuz-GRES-II (1,000 MW but its production is set to be doubled within a few years).<sup>16</sup> These two stations are the largest in the country and their electricity is transported to Kokchetau through an electricity line constructed during the Soviet era. Ekibastuz has the largest open-cut coal mine in the country and, with estimated reserves of 13 billion tons, it is one of the richest in the world. The American-based company AES runs Ekisbastuz-I and is financing its modernization (part of production is being exported to Barnaul in Russia), while the Russian company RAO-UES has embarked on a Russo-Kazakh joint-venture to exploit Ekisbastuz-II, of which it owns 50% of the shares.

The new Ekibastuz Sino-Kazakh station, presently under consideration, is to be located near the coalmine. It will dispose of a capacity of between 5,500 and 7,000 MW, that is 40 billion kwh per annum, and will consume 20 million tons of coal, making it the most powerful in the whole of the CIS. Its cost (estimated at between 4 and 7 billion dollars) is to be totally covered by Beijing.<sup>17</sup> The production will be exclusively destined for China via a high-voltage line of 1500 kV, which will export the electricity produced as far as Xinjiang 4000 km away. Many NGO's are, however, concerned about the ecological risks implied by this new heavy coal-consuming construction. Ekibastuz is in fact already considered one of the most polluted cities in Kazakhstan and holds one of the records for cases of cancer in the country since the coal there is particularly dusty and noxious. The president of KEGOC, Kanat

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<sup>15</sup> "Kazakhstan i Kitai dogovorilis' o realizatsii proekta po eksportu elektroenergii stoimost'iu 9,5-10 milliardov dollarov," [Kazakhstan agreed with China to carry out a project to export electricity for 9.5-10 billion dollars], *Tsentr monitoringa obschestvennykh finansov*, <[http://www.pfmc.az/cgi-bin/cl2\\_fmcc/item.cgi?lang=ru&item=20051109234551552](http://www.pfmc.az/cgi-bin/cl2_fmcc/item.cgi?lang=ru&item=20051109234551552)> (May 14 2007).

<sup>16</sup> "Joint-Stock Company "Stantsiya Ekibastuz GRES-2" is preparing for large-scale measures aimed at boosting and upgrading the plant's performance," *RAO UES web site*, <<http://www.interrao.ru/eng/news/group/52/>> (May 12 2007).

<sup>17</sup> "Kazakhstan, China to jointly build large-scale power plant," *People's Daily Online*, April 1 2006 <[http://english.people.com.cn/200604/01/eng20060401\\_255104.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200604/01/eng20060401_255104.html)> (April 11 2007).

Bozumbaev, has confirmed that China will give its definitive response to the proposal sometime during 2007.

#### *The Khorgos project*

The second project involves the Khorgos River, tributary of the Ili, and which serves as an international border between the two countries in the Almaty region. The village of Khorgos, a border-crossing town, has quickly evolved into one of the largest sites of commercial cooperation between the two countries. In 2003, the Kazakh authorities decided upon a reinforcement of the banks of the river level with the village of Khorgos to avoid regular flooding. In order to control the flow of the river, the construction of several dikes has been tabled, on the model of China which already has 25 km of dikes on its side of the river.<sup>18</sup> A project to construct a Sino-Kazakh hydroelectric station called Dostyk ("Friendship") was negotiated in 2005. This electricity station is to be made up of a cascade of small stations with a combined capacity of 21 MW and situated near the village of Baskunchi 20 km from Khorgos.<sup>19</sup> A 11 km length canal will also provide irrigation for more than 40,000 hectares of land on both sides of the border.<sup>20</sup> The electricity produced will be equally shared between the two countries. The Kazakh authorities are hoping similar projects will be proposed by China for the Irtysh and the Ili.

#### *The Moinak Project*

The third common project concerns the hydroelectric station in Moinak, situated on the Charyn River approximately 200 km from the former capital Almaty. Begun in 1985, construction was stopped in 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. During a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in June 2006, the Kazakh President N. Nazarbaev signed with the National Development Bank of China the final contract to finance the Moinak station. The total cost of

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<sup>18</sup> "Prem'er-ministr RK pribyl v Khorgos, gde emu budut predstavleny proekty beregoukreplenitel'nykh rabot na r. Khorgos i sozdaniia gidrouzla Dostyk," [The Kazakh Prime Minister arrived in Khorgos, where he will be presented the project on reinforcement of the Khorgos river banks and the creation of the hydroelectric complex Dostyk], *Kazakhstan-Today*, August 9 2003.

<sup>19</sup> "Kazakhstano-kitaiskuiu granitsu razmyvaet. Na Khorgose budut stroit' damby," [Eroding the Kazakhstan-Chinese frontier. Dams will be built on Khorgos] *CentrAsia*, August 11, 2003.

<<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php4?st=1060553880>> (March 05 2007).

<sup>20</sup> G. D. Bessarabov, A. D. Sopianin. "Vodnye problemy KNP: kazakhskii i rossiiskii aspekty," [PRC Hydraulic problems: Kazakh and Russian aspects], China databases web site, <[http://www.chinadata.ru/china\\_water.htm](http://www.chinadata.ru/china_water.htm)> (May 03 2007).



constructing this station is estimated at 310 million dollars.<sup>21</sup> Beijing has given Kazakhstan a credit of 200 million dollars to finance it. The first construction phase, to cost an estimated 50 million dollars, is being paid for by the Development Bank of Kazakhstan. The project is scheduled for completion in 2009 and the station will then have a capacity of 300 MW, meaning it will partly be able to make up for the electricity deficit in the south of the country.<sup>22</sup> The Moinak hydroelectric station constitutes the first “turnkey” construction project for a new station since Kazakhstan’s independence (the other projects involved increasing the capacity of, or upgrading, stations built in the Soviet era). This is also the first joint Sino-Kazakh project in the domain of non-mineral resources.

### **Chinese Investments in Tajikistan**

Tajikistan is the second largest producer of hydroelectricity in the CIS after Russia. It in fact accounts for more than half of the total hydroelectric resources of Central Asia. Its potential according to official figures is a – probably too optimistic – 40,000 MW, that is 527 billion kwh, or around 4% of world hydroelectric potential.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the country only produces 17 billion kwh per year and still needs to import energy from Uzbekistan. According to the official report “Tajikistan’s National Strategy for Energy Sector Development 2006-2015”, the country could reach a production of 26 billion kwh in 2010, and 35 billion in 2015. Out of the overall potential of 40,000 MW, the functioning stations only currently produce 4000, that is a mere 10%.<sup>24</sup> The authorities hope that the country will be able to produce 6,800 MW per year by 2020. With consumption not set to exceed 3000 MW, or around half, future production is on the whole earmarked for export.

Winter 2006 was particularly cold and the electricity stations were stretched to their limits. This situation revealed the extent of the deterioration in these installations and the inability of the authorities to devise solutions for rapid and effective distribution while the larger stations (Sangtuda-I, Sangtuda-II and Rogun) are awaiting completion. Even without the repeated breakdowns of last winter, the energy situation is critical. More than 40% of the country’s electricity

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<sup>21</sup> G. Feller, "Central Asian Power Rapid Development of Coal And Hydroelectric Power For Export - Financed by Russia, Iran & China," *Eco World*, <<http://www.ecoworld.com/home/articles2.cfm?tid=403>> (May 3 2007).

<sup>22</sup> "Po itogam peregovorov liderov Kazakhstana i Kitaia v Shankhae podpisan riad dvukhstoronnikh soglashenii," [Several bilateral agreements signed following Kazakh and Chinese leaders’ talks in Shanghai], June 14, 2006, *KazKommertsbank news*, <<http://news.kkb.kz/news/show.asp?no=447469>> (March 15 2007).

<sup>23</sup> G. Petrov. "Tajikistan's Hydropower Resources," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 21, 3 (2003), pp. 153-161.

<sup>24</sup> G. Petrov. "Tajikistan's Energy Projects: Past, Present, and Future," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 5 (2004), pp. 93-103.

consumption is absorbed in the functioning of the aluminium plant at Tursunzade. People in rural zones live without electricity during the winter months, while those in the towns have only a few hours of electricity per day.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the country's electricity grids are divided into two: the northern part is interconnected with the Uzbek network but poorly connected to the one in the south. In spite of the fact that the privately-owned Pamir Power Company has obtained concessions for 25 years to run the stations of Gorno-Badachkhan, electricity remains in the hands of the state-run company Barki Tojik, often criticized for its ineffectiveness in dealing with the problems of electricity blackouts.

The country's hydroelectric development is thus as important for the population as it is for export revenues. To reach these objectives, Tajikistan needs to attract foreign investors to repair and/or expand already existing stations and to construct new sites. In addition to the dozen already existing stations, there are new projects on the drawing board for constructions on the Vakhsh, Piandj, Amu Darya, Zarafshan, Surkhob and Obikhingou rivers. The Vakhsh River, in particular, has an estimated potential of 36,000 million kwh per year, but is currently only running at about a third of capacity. Several other modernization projects aiming to double production capacity have been launched for the stations at Kairakkum on the Syr Darya, at Golovnaya on the Vashkh, and for the dam system at Varzob in the south of the country. The Kairakkum and Varzob projects are being financed by EBRD (43 million dollars), and that of Golovnaya by the Asian Development Bank (34 million dollars). Several projects are planned specifically for exporting electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the framework of the CASA-1000 the feasibility of an electricity corridor (transmission line of 220 kV) is under consideration at an estimated cost of 700 million dollars.<sup>26</sup>

#### *The Rogun Question Reopened*

The construction of a hydroelectric station (with a capacity of 3 600 MW) and a reservoir at Rogun located on the Vakhsh River is the great project of Tajikistan. Construction started on the reservoir in 1976 but was interrupted by the Tajik civil war, and then again following a flood that destroyed infrastructure in 1993. The project's relaunch at the beginning of 2000 has raised tensions between local powers and the

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<sup>25</sup> "Elektrosituatsiia v Tadjikistane ukhudshaetsia: sveta net, Nurekskoe vodokhranilishche meleet," [The electric situation in Tajikistan is worsening: no light, the water reservoir in Nurelsk decreases], *CentrAsia*, March 15 2007, <<http://www.centrasia.ru/news.php4>> (March 25 2007).

<sup>26</sup> "Energy Sector Coordinating Committee Status Report," Fifth Ministerial Conference on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, October 18-20, 2006.

central government,<sup>27</sup> and has provoked the concern of Uzbekistan: the reservoir will increase the control Tajikistan has over the flow of the Amu-Darya, of which Dushanbe already controls over 40% through the Nurek reservoir, also located on the Vakhsh. RAO-UES runs, conjointly with the Tajik authorities (75 to 25% of the shares, respectively), the Rxogun-I station, while the running of the Rogun-II station as well as the construction of the reservoir were awarded in 2004 to the company RusAl run by Russian oligarch Oleg Derispaska. The total cost of the two stations has been put at more than 2 billion dollars. The objective of RusAl is to produce electricity not for export but to enable the expansion of the Rogun aluminium smelter. However, in 2005, RusAl withdrew from the project after disagreeing with the Tajik government over the height and storage capacity of the dam. The Tajik authorities then announced that they would alone finance the construction of a dam of 335 meters – which left specialists sceptical since the project, the highest in the world, would be quite a feat – but later decided to put out a tender to foreign companies.<sup>28</sup> Before RusAl, project negotiations had taken place between the Tajik and Chinese authorities. It is therefore likely that Chinese companies will put in a bid, possibly in partnership with other foreign companies.

### **Russian and Iran in Front**

On the Vashkh other large projects are presently underway less than 200 km to the south of Dushanbe on the Sangtuda site. The works being carried out on the Sangtuda-I (650 MW) hydroelectric station are being undertaken by RAO-UES, which has had to finance more than it expected since Iran's entering into the project. The Iranian government is financing the Sangtuda-II (220 MW) station. Iran will hold the rights to exploitation and profits for 10 years after which the station must be retroceded to the Tajik State. Production will be exported to Iran. Russo-Iranian collaboration on Sangtuda was made official by a tripartite agreement signed with Tajikistan in 2005.<sup>29</sup> Of the three large stations currently under construction, only Sangtuda-I appears likely to be operational by 2009. Once completed, it ought to allow the north of

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<sup>27</sup> A. Niyazi. "Tajikistan: Its Hydropower Resources and The Problems of Their Use," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 4 (2003), pp. 109-117.

<sup>28</sup> "Tadzhikistan otkazal RusAlu v prave na stroitel'stvo Rogunskoi GES," [Tajikistan refused RusAl the right to build the Rogun hydroelectric station], April 23 2007, Ferghana.ru, <<http://www.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=5838&mode=snews&PHPSESSID=5dfad75a113d5714b55223de50fa1f13>> (May 3 2007).

<sup>29</sup> E. Marat. "Iran, Tajikistan Strengthen Cooperation in the Energy Sector," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 3, 22 (2006) <[http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article\\_id=2370728](http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2370728)> (March 25 2007).

Tajikistan to become independent of Uzbek imports, an issue of major political importance for the two countries.

Through Sangtuda and Rogun, Russia, followed by Iran, largely dominates Tajik hydroelectric production. Russian supremacy having been assured, cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan is looked upon favourably by Moscow, since it reinforces its own alliance with Teheran. Kazakhstan also hopes to be able to get involved in Tajik hydroelectricity, in particular by financing the construction of an electricity line linking Khujand to Chymkent to enable Tajik electricity to be transported to the south of Kazakhstan. After Russia and Iran, China comes in in third place among the international actors in the Tajik hydroelectric game. Beijing began to take interest in the Tajik market during negotiations on the subject in 2001. At present, China is principally investing in those sectors where Russia is least present, and so one could not really speak of competition between the two powers in hydroelectric matters.

#### *The Chinese Yavan/Zarafshan Project*

China is decided to invest mainly in the Zarafshan, which is located in the Penjikent region in the north, while Russia is dominant in the meridional projects. In December 2005, the Tajik Prime Minister Oqil Oqilov received a loan from the Chinese Development Bank for three investment projects involving hydroelectric stations on the Zarafshan.<sup>30</sup> At the invitation of Hu Jintao, the Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov made a visit to China in January 2007 in the company of several businessmen. The Tajiks presented to their Chinese colleagues investment projects to the tune of a billion dollars mostly involving hydroelectric schemes.<sup>31</sup>

Out of three projects for hydroelectric stations on the Zarafshan, only one has been signed.<sup>32</sup> It was awarded to the state-run Sinohydro Corporation, which is the largest energy production company in China (with 242 million dollars of capital and twenty subsidiaries). Sinohydro was created by the Chinese government in 1949 and has constructed practically all the country's large hydroelectric stations. It operates in ten countries, including Iran and Pakistan.<sup>33</sup> Sinohydro Corporation will take

<sup>30</sup> "China, Tajikistan Set to Strengthen Economic Cooperation," January 19, 2007, *News Eurasia*, <<http://tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=155>> (April 04 2007).

<sup>31</sup> S. Safarov. "On a State Visit of Emomali Rakhmonov to China," *Evrasiiskii dom*, <<http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/expert.xml?lang=en&nic=expert&pid=938>> (April 25 2007).

<sup>32</sup> "Chinese to Build Tajik Hydroelectric Plant," *RFE/RL*, January 18, 2007, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/01/C7ECA5D9-67F9-4659-88F9-696875AC873E.html>> (April 25 2007).

<sup>33</sup> Z. Ergasheva. "China to invest in construction of hydropower plant on the Zarafshon River in Northern Tajikistan," *Asia Plus*, January 18, 2007.

on the construction of the Yavan power station thanks to a concessional loan of 200 million dollars over twenty-five years that China awarded to Tajikistan. Construction is scheduled to start in 2008 and last three years. The Yavan station is supposed to supply close to 600 million kwh per year.<sup>34</sup> Once operational, the Penjikent region, which currently imports its electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, will be autonomous. The project includes the construction of a 60 km long electric line of 220 kV going from the station to the town of Penjikent. Sinohydro Corporation is also considering other projects for power stations on the Zarafshan, the Obikhingou and the Surkhob, projects that have also aroused the interest of the Russo-Ukrainian company RosUkrEnergo.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Two Electrical Lines under Construction*

In September 2006, the Tajik Minister for Energy, Abdullo Yorov, and the Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jiabao, formalized the signing of two contracts between Tajikistan's state-run company Barki Tojik and the Chinese Theban Electric Apparatus Stock Company (CTEAS) to construct electric lines.<sup>36</sup> The first contract is for the construction of an electrical line Lolazor-Obi Mazor in the Khatlon region in the country's south. With a length of 93 km and a capacity of 220 kV, it will be capable of transporting 4 billion kwh per year for a cost estimated at 59 million dollars. The second contract is for a 350 km long high-voltage line of 500 kV that will connect the north and the south of the country. Estimated at 281 million dollars, it will be able to transfer 8 billion kwh to Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Out of a total cost of 340 million dollars, the Exim Bank of China has advanced 300 million. The remaining 40 million is to be paid for out of the Tajikistan State budget.<sup>37</sup>

### **Chinese Investments in Kyrgyzstan**

With an annual volume of 2 450 km<sup>3</sup>, Kyrgyzstan possesses considerable water resources. Three-quarters of the country's rivers come from

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<sup>34</sup> "K Rossii i Iranu, stroiashchim krupnye GES v Tadzhikestane, prisoedinilsia novyi investor," [A new investor joined Russia and Iran to build the large hydroelectric stations in Tajikistan], July 20, 2006, *Varorud*, <<http://www.tajinfo.ru/news/1153973007/pindex.shtml>> (April 25 2007).

<sup>35</sup> "Komu doverit' Zeravshan? O svoikh namereniakh zaiavliaiut kitaiskie energetiki," [Who will Zeravshan trust? Chinese Electricity firms reveal their intentions] *SNG news*, April 25, 2006, <<http://www.sngnews.ru/archive/2006/04/25/62347.html>> (March 15 2007).

<sup>36</sup> "South-North' Electric Main to be Key Link in Tajikistan's Electric System, Says President Rahmonov," *The Times of Central Asia*, September 18, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> "Pravitel'stvo Kitaia vydelit Tadzhikestanu v seredine iunia bolee 603 millionov dollarov," [The Chinese government will give Tajikistan, in mid-June, more than 603 million dollars], *SNG News*, June 5, 2006, <<http://www.cawater-info.net/news/06-2006/05.htm>> (April 25 2007).

glaciers and flow toward Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and China.<sup>38</sup> The country is divided into six basins, one of which lays in the south-east and extends into China, and which, from a hydrological point of view, forms part of the Tarim basin. Kyrgyzstan is considered the third largest hydroelectric power in the CIS after Russia and Tajikistan. Its potential production is estimated at between 140 and 160 billion kwh per year but only 10% of its resources are currently being exploited.<sup>39</sup> The country therefore has sufficient amounts of energy but has need of developing its electric lines which are overloaded (they transfer around 5.5 GW but have a capacity of 4 GW) and have deteriorated since the 1990s due to lack of investment. The government plans the construction of several electric lines, notably that of the Datka-Kemin, a 400km long high-voltage line (500 kV) enabling the south of the country, which produces electricity, to join up with the north, which is lacking in it. Another line of 200 kV is planned for the south; it will take the load off of existing lines and make it easier to manage increased consumption in winter. The electricity sector was privatized between 1998 and 2001, and this has enabled the dissociation of the functions of regulation, which is managed by the former state-run company KyrgyzEnergo, from those of electricity production and of distribution.<sup>40</sup>

Out of an estimated potential of 26,000 MW, the Kyrgyz installations are currently only capable of producing around 3000 MW, of which 80% is from hydroelectricity and 20% from thermal stations. The country has 17 hydroelectric stations and two thermal stations, one in Osh and one in Bishkek.<sup>41</sup> Given the current level of consumption in Kyrgyzstan, the country today has enough electricity to fulfil its needs. Future surplus production will be then largely earmarked for export. In 2005, the country sold more than two billion kwh to neighboring countries, the main ones being Kazakhstan and Russia. According to local experts, Bishkek requires at least 3.5 billion dollars of investment for the development of its electricity sector from 2006 to 2010. Hydroelectricity might also be able to stimulate Kyrgyz exports to China and has been a subject of discussion between the two countries since 1992.<sup>42</sup> In January 2005, Beijing proposed an investment sum of 900 million dollars to Bishkek. This investment is to go toward the construction of a hydroelectric station and two blast furnaces as well as the construction of sections of railway track and two roads. In return Beijing wants Kyrgyz electricity,

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<sup>38</sup> A. Kurtov. "Central Asia Deals With Its Water Problems: A View From Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, no. 6, 2004, pp. 111-119.

<sup>39</sup> Energy Information Administration, *Kyrgyzstan Energy Sector*, May 2002 <[www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/kyrgyz.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/kyrgyz.html)> (March 15 2007).

<sup>40</sup> G. Gleason. "Russia and the Politics of the Central Asian Electricity Grid," *op. cit.* p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> V. Iurikov, T. Shestopalova. "Kyrgyzstan's Electric Power Industry: Problems and Prospects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, no. 3, 2001, pp. 45-51.

<sup>42</sup> "Kyrgyzstan to increase electricity exports," *Interfax*, September 23, 2003.

iron, and precious metals.<sup>43</sup> Kurmanbek Bakiev confirmed during a visit to Beijing in July 2006 that his country was indeed willing to export electricity to the Chinese “Far West” in exchange for investments in equipment.

#### *Supplying China with Electricity*

A first agreement to supply electricity in exchange for oil was signed between Beijing and Bishkek in 1995.<sup>44</sup> Several other meetings have taken place, particularly in 1997 and 1998, at which the two countries tried to reach agreement on long-term electricity exports but so far they have been unable to agree on the price per kwh. In 2004, although the two countries exchange less than a million kwh, a bilateral agreement was made providing for the sale of 20 million kwh annually to China, something that can only become a reality when new electric lines are constructed.<sup>45</sup> Beijing in fact wants to become directly involved in the construction of high-voltage lines in the south of Kyrgyzstan that lead to Xinjiang. These lines could be extended to Pakistan for which China would collect transit fees, an idea raised by the three countries in 2003.<sup>46</sup> In June 2006, Beijing and Bishkek reached a new principle agreement for the export of 50 MW to Xinjiang. Russia also wants to export hydroelectricity produced in Kyrgyzstan to China via companies such as RAO-UES, and new projects are being considered.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Potential Chinese Participation in the Kambarata I and II Stations*

The majority of Kyrgyzstan’s dams are located on the Naryn River, a tributary of the Syr Darya, and are controlled through the Toktogul dam, which accounts for 80% of the country’s hydroelectric production. The Kyrgyz authorities would like a consortium to be created that would include Kazakhstan, Russia and China for the joint financing and exploitation of new stations. Bishkek is in fact seeking external financing for the construction of five new stations on the Naryn, and in 2004

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<sup>43</sup> J. C. K. Daly. "Sino-Kyrgyz relations after the Tulip Revolution," *China Brief*, April 26 2005 < <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373087> > (March 15 2007).

<sup>44</sup> T. Kellner. *La République populaire de Chine et l'Asie centrale post-soviétique : étude de politique étrangère*, Ph.D., Institut Universitaire de Hautes Études Internationales, Genève, 2004, p. 462.

<sup>45</sup> "Eksport kyrgyzskoi elektroenergii v Kitai vyrastet v 20 raz!," [Kyrgyz electricity exports to China will increase 20 times!], *CentrAsia*, October 13, 2004, <<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php4?st=1097644140>> (March 15 2007).

<sup>46</sup> "Kyrgyzstan rassmatrivaet proekt prodazhi elektroenergii v Pakistan," [Kyrgyzstan considers a project to sell electricity to Pakistan], *Kazakhstan Today*, August 21, 2003, <<http://www.gazeta.kz/art.asp?aid=32741>> (April 05 2007).

<sup>47</sup> S. Blagov. "China Eyes Russia, Central Asian States as Source of Cheap Electricity," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 3, no. 123, 2006, <[http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article\\_id=2371219](http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371219)> (March 15 2007).

proposed to China that it invest in them alongside Russia. The two largest stations, Kambarata I and II, begun during the Soviet era upstream from the Toktogul dam, are currently under construction. They are being financed by two big Russian companies for a total cost of a billion dollars: RAO-EUS is constructing the Kambarata-II station (360 MW) and a new electric line starting from there, while RusAl is financing Kambarata-I (1900 MW) and an aluminium smelter linked to it. Their combined capacity will be 1 660 MW, that is 5 billion kwh per year.

However, their total cost is estimated at between 2 and 3 billion dollars and new partners are required. Regular negotiations have been held with China both within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and as part of the bilateral Sino-Kyrgyz framework. A July 2005 meeting saw the issue of Chinese participation raised between the Prime Minister and the Chinese Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan. This question was once again mentioned in 2006 in a meeting between the director of the firm "Elektricheskie stantsii", Saparbek Balkibekov, and representatives from the state-run Electric Corporation of China. It is therefore possible that Chinese companies will become involved in one way or another in the Kambarata-I and II projects, but this will happen without undermining the supremacy of Russian companies. These latter are in any case seeking a partnership for the export of Kyrgyz hydroelectric production to China.

#### *Projects for Stations in Eastern Tian-Shan*

The second zone after the Naryn for the Chinese-Kyrgyz hydroelectric cooperation is in Oriental Tian-Shan, in the region of Lake Issyk-Koul on the border with China.<sup>48</sup> The privately-owned company Sarydjaz-Energo, led since 2006 by Almazbek Atambayev (member of the opposition coalition "For Reforms" and the country's appointed Prime Minister since March 2007), plans to begin, sometime between now and 2008, the construction of a cascade of 5 stations with a capacity of 750 MW (13 million kwh). Negotiations with the Chinese National Electricity Company are being pursued. The cost of the cascade is estimated at close to 3 billion dollars but it could produce 300 million dollars worth of electricity per year.<sup>49</sup> So, negotiations are currently underway for Chinese financing of the construction of three stations for three cross-border rivers – the Sarydjaz, the Enilchek and the Akshirak – which run from Kyrgyz glaciers toward China. The exact sites of the last

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<sup>48</sup> "Kirgiziia predlagaet Kitaiu sovместno dostroit' kaskad Narynskikh GES," [Kyrgyzstan proposes to China joint construction of the Naryn Hydroelectric Cascade] September 22, 2004, CentrAsia, <<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php4?st=1095883140>>.

<sup>49</sup> "V Issyk-Kul'skoi oblasti postroiat 5 GES," [Five hydroelectric Stations will be built in the Issy-Kul Region], *Gazeta.kg*, April 25, 2004, <<http://www.gazeta.kg/kgnews/2006/04/25/svet/>> (April 15 2007).



two are still under consideration. In addition, geological surveys near the Enylchek have confirmed the presence of deposits of tin, tungsten, molybdenite and gold that could be exploited at a relatively low cost thanks to nearby stations.<sup>50</sup> The Chinese would like also to construct high-voltage lines starting at these stations and heading toward Xinjiang. In July 2006, some Chinese experts visited the Kyrgyz sites, and at present the most promising seems to be that of Sarydjaz.<sup>51</sup> Chinese participation in managing the Sarydjaz River is deemed to be strategic especially since this river provides the Tarim depression in the autonomous region of Xinjiang with 75% of its water.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

As is the case in the hydrocarbon sector, China has arrived somewhat late on the Central Asian hydroelectricity market. The largest projects for hydroelectric stations were already launched during Soviet times and are today in the hands of Russian companies, in particular RAO-UES. In addition, the existence of electricity grids connected to Russia's facilitates both cooperation between Russia and Central Asia and the maintaining of preferential flows between post-Soviet countries. China, for its part, must first of all invest in new electric lines if it hopes to take advantage of potential imports from Central Asia. Beijing is thus mostly concentrating on projects of a small to medium size. Though they may not meet expectations for large-scale exporting, these projects nevertheless play a very important role in local economic development. However, hydroelectricity is still in its infancy in the region and it seems, particularly in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, promised to a bright future. In addition, the Indian and Pakistani presence in this sector is bound to remain weak so long as the situation in Afghanistan is not resolved. Beijing can therefore take advantage of this situation to set itself up alongside Iran and way behind Russia. China does not pretend, in any case, to be able to take possession of the Central Asian market in exclusivity: the financial weakness of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan quite often requires the alliance of several foreign investors to guarantee the feasibility of these costly projects. The potential being immense and

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<sup>50</sup> "Almazek Atambaev izbran predsedatelem Soveta direktorov ZAO Sarydzhaz Energo," [Almazek Atambaev elected president of the ZAO Sarydzhaz Energy director's council], July 6, 2006, Tatar.kg, <<http://www.tazar.kg/news.php?i=1230>> (March 20 2007).

<sup>51</sup> "MinProm o razvitii ekonomicheskikh otnoshenii mezdhu Kyrgyzstanom i Kitaem," [Minister of Industry's statement on the development of the economic relations between Kyrgyzstan and China], *AKI-Press*, June 23, 2006, <<http://www.akipress.org/news/29316>> (April 15 2007).

<sup>52</sup> A. McMillan. "Effects of interdependency in the Xinjiang-Central Asian region," Griffith University, Queensland, Australia, <<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/SpecialProj/ASAA/biennial-conference/2004/McMillan-ASAA%202004.pdf>> (April 20 2007).

largely unexploited, relations between Russian, Iranian, and Chinese companies will be ones geared toward strengthening cooperation and sharing of tasks rather than toward competition. This significant division of labor would be mostly to the benefit of the Central Asian states.

## 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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**References.** All authors should adhere to the Chicago reference system in their articles. These should appear in the form of footnotes. References to books and articles should be contained in the notes and not in a separate reference list. Provide translations of non-English language titles.

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](http://www.usoge.gov/exorders/eo12674.html)> (October 30 1997).

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