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INVITATION TO THE NEGOTIATION TABLE

In accordance with the Treaty, its states parties cooperate on the basis of principles of indivisible and equal security, non-infliction of damage to the security of each other. Any measures in the sphere of security undertaken by each state party... shall be carried out in conformity with the security interests of all other states parties...'', claims the draft of the European Security Treaty published by Russia in late November 2009.

I don't know how much time will pass before this phrase becomes a legally binding norm. I am not sure that the new treaty will be concluded in the near future. But I certainly believe that it high time we started the reform of the European security architecture. Many in Russia have this feeling and the country has initiated the elaboration of the EST, the opening article of which I have just cited. However, this feeling is also typical of other European capitals — above all, in Paris, Madrid, Berlin, and Bern.

Many actors of ''the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian zone from Vancouver to Vladivostok'' (this is how Article 10 of the draft treaty indicates its broad geographical scope) are still hesitating. They see familiar and correct wording in the Russian proposal, but they also seek for some hidden agenda. This confusion proves that the treaty is indeed needed. It should be simple, may be even banal sometimes. But it should be lack any ambiguity. The treaty is on demand because the parties should stop cultivating suspicion and mistrust. Europe has entered a new age. European security mechanisms should be adequate to the requirements of this new age, should be based on trust in Europe and Eurasia. The OSCE is a product of transition (even though the Russian draft does not campaign for its dismantlement, hence, demonstrating too much irrelevant tact). The Cold War is over. The Berlin Wall is back in history. And we must no longer focus on post-bipolar, post-Communist and other post-something relations. It's time we worked at new relationship — equal, based on mutual respect and pan-European solidarity.

Russia should struggle for global political warming in Europe. However, Moscow cannot cope with this problem alone and, like in case of real climate change, it needs allies.

The draft of the treaty comprises 14 short articles. The invitation is on the table. From the ''like–dislike'' of the current *kitchen table* discussions we should pass to the constructive debate at the negotiation table. Hey, Europe, the dinner is served!

This is a topic for Kseniya Smertina from St. Petersburg, ''The initiative gives a positive feeling — this is the first Russian proposal of such scale in a long while... The Treaty should not be taken as ends, but rather as means, which will help to involve Russia in the dialogue with the existing European and Euro-Atlantic structures.''

I have no doubt that nothing prevents us to go in parallel courses — along with consultations and then negotiations on the EST, the parties could start the dialogue on the legally binding regulations for the conventional arms and forces in Europe. Shall the CFE Treaty be revived, if all Russian appeals for universal ratification of the adapted document are neglected? The CFE Treaty somehow becomes a ghost of the transition period, a ghost of the past. But we are in the new

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century, we have new landmarks and priorities, so we should all launch a new study – a comprehensive, up-to-date treaty on conventional forces in Europe.

* * *

However, even after setting forth the EST initiative, Russia cannot relax. And I don't mean the need for long and serious dialogue with any potential member of the treaty — from listening Spain to interested but skeptical Germany, to even more skeptical Poland and yawning Obama's administration. I am speaking about Russia's allies now. And we all know that their list is quite short, it is mainly limited to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

One may keep saying the CSTO mantra and write it down in the draft of the treaty, but it will hardly change the situation. I remember an important debate on the future of the EST in one of the European capitals. The Russians insisted on the participation of a CSTO representative. The European participants were attentively following the Russian arguments, when suddenly the CSTO member raised his voice and ruined all Russian diplomacy with his incompetence.

Hence, it would make sense to establish order and discipline in Russia's backyard (the CSTO occupies this niche, albeit the phrase must be a stumbling block for you, since the reality does not correspond with the declarations). Then Moscow should establish dialogue with its neighbors — those components of the allegedly existing CIS, which are not members of the CSTO. And then they should develop joint initiatives and construct a new building of the European security together and not on their own.

Russia is losing in this sphere. It loses one point after another. However, is it all so bad in Eurasia for us to be in depression (or to justify the unwillingness to do anything)? Read the polemics between Murat Laumulin and Farkhod Tolipov, leading Kazakhstani and Uzbek experts. I looked through it several times — and not only because I am an editor and it's my duty, but also as a curious reader. The experts argue about integration in Central Asia, but at the background of their discussion one can see three major external actors (Russia, the EU, and China). And when they say ''Europe'', they actually mean ''Russia'' in most cases. No, they are experienced researchers and do not confuse political terms with geographical ones. They sincerely believe that the Central Asian states can still overcome regional disputes and integrate with Europe (not limiting themselves to the OSCE chairmanship) together with Russia and not by circumventing Russia. Murat Laumulin claims that despite fairness and political rationale of many Russia's proposals on European security, Kazakhstan should also pay its tribute to ''the maintenance of integrity of the Eurasian (post-Soviet) space.''

Working with the CSTO and EurAzES, Russia should not forget about simple things, which may attract or push away its natural strategic allies (even though they may not admit such status). What is important for the ordinary Russians in relations with Europe (i.e. the EU)? Obviously, the elimination of the Schengen visas and free movement of people. Then the idea of united Europe will be clear. Ask people in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, or Armenia. Instead of Schengen visas they have to overcome the piles of bureaucratic obstacles (especially, if they want to work in Russia) and sometimes they are much more humiliating than visa applications. I know what I am saying — we have recently been collecting the documents to employ an intern from Uzbekistan in the PIR Center. And we decided to act in compliance with the law (it did not seem very strict) and without bribes. Of course, we have eventually got the labor permit. But the process was... shameful.

And there can be no justifications such as ''we defend the rights of the Russian labor.'' Does Russia need new joint European security mechanisms? Does Russia need allies in Eurasia? If yes, Moscow should try to create a model of *attractive Russia* — attractive to neighbors and friends. Russia should not be friendly with an amorphous ''post-Soviet space'', it should be nice with people who live in our neighborhood.

* * *

New prospects for Moscow emerge in Northeast Asia (of which we are part). It is important not to lose the momentum and to move from slogans to practical implementation. Our author from Vladivostok Maria Teploukhova has submitted an analytical article, even though she could well

write a report on the preparations for the APEC summit there. She investigates the public sentiments in the Russian Far East, studies geopolitical partnerships and regional rivalries. But her key question is what Russia wants and can gain from holding the APEC summit? The event is still two years ahead, but we should formulate now our objectives in the Far East, in Northeast Asia and in the Asia Pacific, insists Ms. Teploukhova. And I believe, she is right.

* * *

The discussions on nuclear disarmament are not new to our readers. However, as I am writing this article, the new START Treaty is yet to be signed (perhaps, it is ready by spring), while the 2010 NPT Review Conference is approaching. Nuclear disarmament should not be the oligopoly of the two powers. Thus, what can be done by all nuclear-weapon states to demonstrate their commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament?

I suggest three simple steps, which can take a form of the statement by P-5 (in development of Resolution 1886 and on the eve of the NPT Review Conference) and then supported as a unilateral initiative by India.

- ❑ Nuclear-weapon states agree not to build up their own nuclear arsenals any longer.
- ❑ Nuclear-weapon states pledge to refrain from deploying their nuclear arms on the ground beyond their national territories.
- ❑ Nuclear-weapon states refuse to develop new, more advanced types of nuclear weapons.

These and other ideas will be discussed in detail in the White Book on Nuclear Nonproliferation, which the PIR Center plans to publish on the eve of the NPT Review Conference. We want the conference to be successful, even though we also see today many more obstacles than in *romantic* spring of 2009.

Vladimir Orlov

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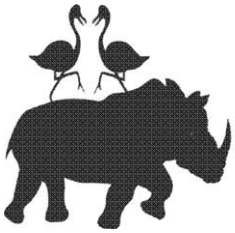

Anne Pringle

NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES ARE TO EXERCISE MORAL AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ON DISARMAMENT

We continue to inform our readers about the positions of the nuclear weapon states pertaining to nuclear disarmament. What is the role of the U.K. in this area? Is it unique? What is the national strategy in the multilateral process of nuclear disarmament?

HM Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Russia Anne Pringle answers our questions.[1]

SECURITY INDEX: What is the general vision of the U.K. concerning the progress of a nuclear-weapon-free world?

PRINGLE: My Government—and Prime Minister personally—are deeply committed to the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

This objective has always been recognized as being difficult and challenging. It is a path of steps, not a single leap. But with each step we must aim to build confidence that action to prevent proliferation is working and that states with nuclear weapons are making strides to live up to their commitments.

The five nuclear weapons states (NWS), through Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, made a commitment to nuclear disarmament when we signed the NPT in 1968, a commitment shared by all other States party. The global community needs to work together to create the conditions to realize that goal and obligation. Civil society has a role here too: the *Global Zero* campaign—supported by many political and civic leaders from around the world—has added impetus to the work of governments.

In a speech at Lancaster House in London on 17 March, 2009, Prime Minister Gordon Brown called for the refreshment and renewal—at next year's Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference—of the *grand bargain* at the heart of the NPT.

This *bargain* gives all states the right to develop civil nuclear power, but there is at the same time a responsibility for those states to reject the development or deployment of nuclear weapons. And there is a responsibility on NWS to reduce their nuclear weapons, and ultimately disarm.

We warmly welcome the fact that other NWS have also made clear their determination to achieve the objective of a world free from nuclear weapons and have made deep cuts in their nuclear arsenals: an estimated 40,000 warheads have been destroyed since the end of the Cold War.

The determination of Presidents Medvedev and Obama to agree a successor to the START Treaty, leading to further reductions from the two countries with the largest arsenals, is a vital step on this path. If the NWS are to exercise moral and political leadership on nonproliferation, they must also show the same leadership on disarmament.

But nuclear disarmament cannot take place in isolation from the international security situation. Creating the conditions that will enable further progress requires action by all states. The responsibilities do not lie with the NWS alone.

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Nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing. If we fail in one, it will gravely undermine progress in the other. All states party must take action to meet their obligations under all three pillars of the NPT—nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

SECURITY INDEX: What is the position of Great Britain with respect to the emergence of new de facto nuclear weapon states?

PRINGLE: Self-evidently, the emergence of new nuclear-armed states would be a huge setback for nuclear disarmament and a body blow to international security. Resolution of the North Korea and Iran nuclear dossiers is a top priority. We are working closely with international partners, including Russia, to ensure that both countries comply with their UN Security Council obligations. Both Iran and North Korea face the choice between a return to the international mainstream, the development of modern economies with jobs and prosperity for their citizens, or yet further isolation.

The Six reaffirmed our unity of purpose and collective determination through direct diplomacy to resolve our shared concerns about Iran's nuclear programme, in line with the package proposals for cooperation with Iran, and in the context of our dual-track strategy. This significant and forward-looking proposal fully recognizes Iran's right to a civilian nuclear program. But with that comes the responsibility to restore confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities, in line with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. We continue strongly to urge Iran to take advantage of this opportunity to engage seriously with us in a spirit of mutual respect.

The UN Security Council has strongly condemned North Korea's nuclear tests. It is a clear breach of UN Security Council Resolutions and the NPT. It undermines regional security and further isolates North Korea. It is vital that North Korea refrains from further such actions, and returns to compliance with its international obligations.

SECURITY INDEX: What are the prospects of Great Britain's participation in nuclear disarmament?

PRINGLE: In putting forward the vision of a world free from nuclear weapons and announcing practical steps towards that goal, we are not only enunciating a desirable political goal. We are also setting out a hard-headed strategy based on the belief that to get more on nuclear nonproliferation, the NWS must give more, and be seen to give more, on nuclear disarmament.

Britain has a strong record of fulfilling its obligations under Article VI. Since the end of the Cold War, we have reduced the explosive power of our arsenal by 75 percent; we have reduced the number of our operationally available nuclear warheads to fewer than 160; we have reduced the number of nuclear weapons systems to just one. Our weapons are not targeted at any country.

As a responsible nuclear power, the U.K. is committed to maintaining a minimum, safe and effective nuclear deterrent. We keep the size of our arsenal under constant review, and as the Prime Minister has made clear, when it will be useful to do so, Britain will be ready to include our small arsenal in any future multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

There will be skeptics. Some will say that nuclear disarmament can only take place as part of a process of complete and general disarmament. The U.K. strongly supports measures to reduce and control conventional weapons. That is why we have been at the forefront of efforts to limit the use of cluster munitions and landmines. It is why we place such importance on the agreement of an international and legally binding Arms Trade Treaty. Conflicts across the globe are made more likely and more intense by those who trade in all arms in an irresponsible and unregulated way.

But it is not credible to make nuclear disarmament subject to the destruction of every last armored car and attack helicopter. Conventional arms control is a vital but parallel process to that of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.

There will be those who ask why the NWS should disarm when there are those outside the Treaty who are not bound to follow our lead. We believe that a world free from nuclear weapons must be just that. We will therefore need to bring the de facto nuclear weapons states—Israel, Pakistan and India—into the process at some point, as well as ensuring the denuclearization of North Korea.

We believe that by giving a strong lead the NPT NWS will shrink the political space for those outside the NPT to stand aside indefinitely. And in parallel we must also work to bind them into the nonproliferation and disarmament mainstream through instruments, such as the Comprehensive

Test Ban Treaty and Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, on which negotiations are finally due to start in Geneva after 12 years of stalemate.

SECURITY INDEX: What is the strategy of the U.K. on that matter?

PRINGLE: In February 2009, David Miliband, the foreign secretary, launched a paper, ''Lifting the Nuclear Shadow,'' which sets out the U.K.'s strategy for creating the conditions for abolishing nuclear weapons. In it he laid out in detail the conditions and the steps that we believe need to be taken by the international community to bring about nuclear disarmament.

The U.K. sees six key steps as necessary to move the world towards the abolition of nuclear weapons:

(1) U.S.–Russia negotiations and agreement on substantial further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. Such agreement will be a major contribution to our global disarmament task;

(2) Bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty into force. We warmly welcome the announcement by President Obama that he will work for early ratification of the Treaty by the U.S. Senate. We strongly urge other countries to do likewise;

(3) Stopping proliferation in those countries subject to UN Security Council resolutions—most especially North Korea and Iran. And renewing agreement among all the NPT States Party that the way forward must include tougher measures to prevent proliferation. The key to preventing acts of proliferation is to ensure certainty of detection and certainty that serious consequences will follow;

(4) Multilateral negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. This is vital to help make reductions in nuclear weapons irreversible and to establish many of the mechanisms that would constitute the core of an eventual regime to oversee a global ban. We are delighted that the breakthrough at the Conference on Disarmament on May 29, 2009 means that after a decade of deadlock, negotiations can now begin;

(5) Working for agreement on a new International Atomic Energy Agency-led system that would help states wishing to develop a nuclear energy industry do so without increasing the risks of nuclear weapon proliferation. The U.K. has been a leader in this field. The U.K. proposal to the IAEA Board of Governors for a Nuclear Fuel Assurance is complementary to a number of other proposals, including Russia's International Uranium Enrichment Centre at Angarsk;

(6) Finally, we need to resolve the many technical, political, military and institutional problems that must be overcome if the states that possess nuclear weapons are to reduce and ultimately eliminate their arsenals securely, and to prevent nuclear weapons from ever reemerging.

For our part, the U.K. will be seeking to share the ground-breaking research we are undertaking at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) on the key stages in the verification of the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. In particular, issues related to the verification of disarmament, including the authentication of warheads, chain of custody problems in sensitive nuclear weapons facilities and monitored storage of dismantled nuclear weapons. AWE have also participated in trilateral work with Norway and the verification NGO *VERTIC* on managed access to sensitive nuclear facilities and the authentication of nuclear warheads.

SECURITY INDEX: What are your expectations with respect to the 2010 NPT Review Conference? Will we witness substantial shifts in nuclear disarmament?

PRINGLE: I would like to reiterate the need to build on the success of the 2009 NPT Preparatory Committee as we move forward towards the Review Conference. We hope to offer a basis for identifying areas of convergence for the strengthening of both the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the broader nonproliferation architecture.

We believe the international mood has changed. Despite the many challenges that lie ahead, the 2010 NPT Review Conference offers the opportunity for significant progress on both nonproliferation and disarmament. We want to work closely with Russia and other P5 partners and the Non-Aligned Movement to build critical momentum.

Of course, none of this will be easy. We cannot be confident that our generation will live to see a world free from nuclear weapons. But demonstrable progress towards a world without nuclear weapons will deliver a dual dividend: to crack down on proliferation and promote international security. We have an opportunity to reinvigorate our common endeavor as we approach the 2010 Review Conference, and to establish a clear, credible and forward-looking roadmap towards that ultimate goal. Now is the time to act. 

NOTE

[1] The interview is based on HM Ambassador's speech at the international conference ''Multilateral Approaches towards Nuclear Disarmament: Planning the Next Steps'' held by the PIR Center on July 3, 2009 with the financial support of the NTI and the Royal Foreign Ministry of Norway.

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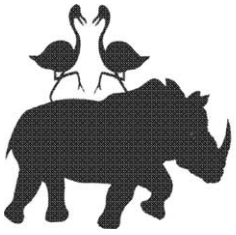

Igor Bratchikov

''ITS *NON-BLOC APPROACH* ALLOWS SWITZERLAND TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT''

Russian–Swiss relations have long become a most important link in Russia's relations not only with European countries but with the whole of the international community. Switzerland has supported Russia's initiative for a new European security architecture and is drawing up proposals for strengthening the nonproliferation regime. Would it be possible to say that our relations have entered a new level? What role can these relations play in promoting Russia's initiatives in the sphere of security?

Our guest today is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Swiss Confederation, Igor Bratchikov.

SECURITY INDEX: How would you assess the current level and prospects of Russian–Swiss relations?

BRATCHIKOV: Russian–Swiss relations today can serve an example of how two countries that are different in size and political setup can cooperate in any area on the basis of the principles of equality and mutual respect.

SECURITY INDEX: What is the role the business community is playing and can play in developing bilateral relations, be it large Russian business in Switzerland or Swiss business in Russia?

BRATCHIKOV: It is significant that despite the crisis such well-known Swiss firms as *Nestlé*, *Holcim*, *Liebherr* have not only cut down on it but continue to increase capital investment in Russia's real economy. Similar far-reaching plans are being developed by the pharmaceutical giants *Roche* and *Novartis*. Switzerland, on the whole, has secured itself a firm position among the top 12 major foreign investors in Russia.

Small and medium-size companies, which form the basis of the Swiss economy, also see good prospects for themselves on the Russian market. Incidentally, there are over 600 firms with Swiss capital currently operating in Russia and providing over 80,000 jobs.

At the same time the overall amount of Russian capital invested in Swiss industry in recent years is quite comparable with the amount of Swiss investment accumulated in Russia (some $4 billion).

Developed economic ties serve a stabilizing factor in political relations.

SECURITY INDEX: During his visit to Switzerland in September 2009, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev invited Swiss companies to take part in investment projects related to the 2014 Olympics in Sochi. Are Swiss companies prepared to invest in that event?

BRATCHIKOV: I think they are. Swiss companies have considerable experience of participation in similar projects. Their interest in Sochi projects is obvious and there are already some specific examples of it. For example, in 2007 the hotel group *Kempinski* signed an agreement with the Krasnodarsky krai administration for the construction of four hotels in Sochi and a golf club on the Black Sea coast. In late September 2009 the *Olimpstroy* state corporation approved the architectural concept of a 40,000-capacity Central Olympic Stadium presented, among others, by

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the Swiss company *Botta Management Group*. The same company is taking part in the construction of an Ice Palace with a seating capacity of 12,500. Overall investment in these facilities will reach over 600 million euros.

Swiss business culture is famous for its propensity to thoroughly check investment projects, to comprehensively consider and analyze them ahead of their implementation. That is why Swiss entrepreneurs were invited on customized trips to the region to get first-hand experience of ample opportunities for investment that are opening there thanks to the Olympic Games.

SECURITY INDEX: President Medvedev said that Switzerland was a ''special'' country for Russia because it was not bound by ''bloc discipline''. What role, do you think, Switzerland is now playing in Europe? Can Switzerland take an active part in reforming the modern European security architecture?

BRATCHIKOV: At the Congress of Vienna back in 1815 it was Russia that insisted on Switzerland's neutrality and independence, while 65 years ago it was thanks to the victory of the Soviet Union and the Allies in the Second World War that these key values of the Confederation were preserved. Thanks to its neutrality, Switzerland has been able to maintain the unity of its state that brings together people of different cultures, languages and faiths. For almost 200 years Switzerland's neutrality has proven its viability in a changing world.

Switzerland's place in today's world is quite unique. It is a small country but a respected diplomatic power with longstanding democratic traditions. The fact that Switzerland *is a non-bloc country* and is firmly committed to the *human rights* aspect of international relations allows Bern to play a significant role on the European continent.

As for Switzerland's participation in the international discussion of Russia's initiative for reforming the European security architecture, Bern has already started playing an active part in establishing a comprehensive discussion of this topic. In particular, in September 2009 the Swiss side convened a meeting of experts in Geneva to discuss this initiative.

SECURITY INDEX: Switzerland continues to pursue its traditional policy of offering a platform for dialogue and other mediatory services in resolving a whole range of conflicts, from Armenian–Turkish relations to the situation surrounding Iran to the South Caucasus and others. What prospects and new opportunities or, possibly, limitations do you see there?

BRATCHIKOV: Switzerland, as a country hosting the European headquarters of the United Nations Organization and head structures of many other international organizations, a country which regularly holds various conferences and negotiations, some *behind closed doors*, views its conflict resolution mission as an integral part of its foreign policy.

We are grateful to the Swiss side for its effective work in representing our interests in Georgia.

In principle, Bern's intermediary role in resolving international conflicts is a welcome one. It goes without saying that in some cases these efforts should be agreed with other influential negotiation participants acting, for example, in accordance with a UN Security Council mandate. As a rule, this is what happens in practice and Swiss efforts ultimately work towards a common positive outcome.

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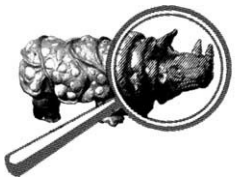

Yury Fedorov

TURKMENISTAN: CHANGE IS COMING?

There has been a sharp rise in the perceived strategic significance of Turkmenistan over the past 18–24 months. In October 2008, Britain's *Gaffney, Cline & Associates* published the findings of an audit of several new gas fields in the east of the country. Turkmenistan's gas reserves appear to be higher than previously thought by some 6–7 trillion cubic meters.[1] *British Petroleum*, whose estimates tend to be rather conservative, increased the figure of proven Turkmen gas reserves in its *2009 Review of World Energy* to 7.94 trillion cubic meters—more than triple the previous estimate.[2] The country could well be sitting on top of the world's sixth or seventh largest gas reserves—ahead of Algeria, Nigeria and even Saudi Arabia. These reserves are already becoming the subject of heated competition between Russia, China and Europe. Ashgabat's position will largely decide the fate of the *Nabucco* pipeline, which has a key role to play in Europe's energy security, and of the strategic Black Sea–Georgia–Azerbaijan–Turkmenistan transport corridor, which will have a spur to Afghanistan and another to Uzbekistan and on to China. In other words, Turkmenistan is the gate to inner Central Asia. Another thing to consider is that the country borders Iran and Afghanistan, the key trouble spots of international politics. Having surfaced from international isolation, into which it was submerged by the previous regime, Turkmenistan has become an important geostrategic player on the former Soviet Union's southern periphery.

Events in Turkmenistan defy the idea that the departure of an authoritarian leader in a country with a fragmented ruling elite inevitably leads to a bitter conflict of clans vying for power and influence. Such clashes bring instability, which can in extreme cases deteriorate into paralysis of government, chaos and violence. Experts of the International Crisis Group, one of the world's most reputable conflict research organizations, made this prediction in 2004:

> Niyazov's sudden death could produce alternative scenarios. Without a consolidated political elite to agree on succession mechanisms, and lacking state institutions that operate effectively, there is risk of a violent struggle that could destabilise the country. That risk is exacerbated by the fractured nature of society... Clan leaders often perceive themselves as discriminated against in government appointments and resource allocation... Compromise is made less likely by the level of rivalry among top players and the likelihood that the opposition-in-exile, potentially with foreign backing, would seek to intervene in the process.[3]

These predictions have not come to pass. Careful analysis of political stability factors in Turkmenistan is required to assess the country's prospects and better understand the possible scenarios in neighboring Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, both of which are nearing a transition of power.

TURKMENISTAN'S NEW INTERNATIONAL ROLE

The arrival of Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov has transformed an apathetic and isolated country into a new Central Asian power whose foreign policy activity is drawing serious attention. More than 300 official delegations visited Turkmenistan in 2007, and its president made more than 10 foreign trips. In 2008, those figures rose even higher: 422 official foreign delegations (including 14 led by heads of state or government), and 15 foreign trips by the Turkmen president. All that

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foreign policy activity had yielded 85 bilateral agreements. The trend continued in 2009—but the figures alone do not tell the whole story.

Ashgabat is implementing a multi-directional strategy, establishing and developing relations with an increasing number of countries—which for their part are interested in dealing with Turkmenistan. In all its foreign policy, Ashgabat is sticking to the principle of *strict neutrality*. The country is not a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In 2005, it also downgraded its CIS status to associate member, essentially leaving the organization which Ashgabat sees as ineffectual and subservient to Moscow's interests. At the same time, the Turkmen leadership categorically denies periodic reports that it is planning to allow U.S. military bases on its territory, or take part in any future coalition against Iran. But according to the U.S. Department of Defense, Ashgabat airport is being used for refueling planes carrying non-military cargo to Afghanistan, and hosts a small group of U.S. military personnel.[4]

Ashgabat's key foreign policy goal is to diversify its gas exports routes, and put an end to Russian monopoly on Turkmen gas transit. The Turkmens remember very well the episode in 1997 when Gazprom stopped buying their gas, forcing the country to slash gas production to domestic consumption levels and wreaking havoc to its gas industry. The greatest hopes are being pinned on a new gas pipeline to China, which was scheduled to come on stream by the end of 2009.[5] An agreement was reached in 2008 to increase annual gas exports to China from 30 to 40 billion cubic meters over the course of several years. But relations between the two countries go much further than that one project. Some 49 Chinese investment projects, worth a combined $1.3 billion plus 1.5 billion yuan, were launched in Turkmenistan in 2008.[6] In June 2009, it was announced that China would give Turkmenistan a $4 billion loan to develop the giant South Yoloten gas field.[7] Ashgabat views cooperation with Beijing as a way of ending economic and transport dependence on Russia.

Meanwhile, relations with Russia itself have been thorny. The Turkmen leadership was dismayed by Russia's aggression against Georgia in August 2008. The Turkmen Foreign Ministry's statement on the events in South Ossetia was studiously neutral. ''Turkmenistan would like to express its deep concern and regret over the tragic events in South Ossetia, which have led to heavy casualties among peaceful civilians,'' the statement read. ''Turkmenistan supports international efforts to foster dialogue, prevent a new outbreak of fighting and resolve the humanitarian issues caused by this tragedy.''[8] In other words, Ashgabat refused to accept Russia's interpretation of the war against Georgia, which under the precepts of Eastern diplomacy means a de facto condemnation.

Moscow is working to stymie Ashgabat's military and political cooperation with the United States, NATO and Turkey, and to block its independent access to the European gas market. Russian diplomacy is playing on the Turkmen establishment's instinctive distrust of the Western countries. Asghabat is annoyed by their human rights rhetoric, and wary that, sooner or later, they will throw their weight behind democratic change in Turkmenistan—although for now any such change does not seem all that imminent. They also worry that a military and political romance with the West could make Moscow jealous—and the events of last August have amply demonstrated that such jealousy could lead to a military intervention. The Turkmen elite would prefer to avoid such a turn of events.

In energy, relations between Moscow and Ashgabat are also becoming frosty. Russia is trying to derail *Nabucco* and lobbying the rival Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, as well as the project to upgrade the existing Central Asia-Center pipe. It hopes to keep Turkmenistan wholly dependent on Russia for its gas transit. Such a policy is increasingly antagonizing Asghabat: witness Turkmenistan's disproportionately angry reaction to a stoppage of the Central Asia-Center pipeline on April 9, 2009 due to a technical fault, and the failure of the talks on the Trans-Caspian pipeline in Moscow at the end of March 2009. Turkmenistan has ruled out linking its future domestic East–West pipeline to the Trans-Caspian pipe, and invited international companies to bid for the construction of the new domestic pipeline.

More importantly, Turkmenistan has been trying to normalize relations with Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, which had taken a nosedive under Niyazov. During a period of domestic political turmoil in late 2002, Niyazov accused the Uzbek leadership of meddling, expelled the Uzbek ambassador and pulled his troops to the border. And although tensions were somewhat defused during Niyazov's meeting with his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov in Bukhara in 2004, relations

remained strained until the arrival of the new Turkmen president. Karimov has now been awarded the title of the Honored Elder of the Turkmen people, for his contribution to ''developing friendly relations'' between the two countries and ''strengthening political, economic and cultural ties.''

Even more important is the rapprochement with Azerbaijan. Diplomatic relations were severed in the second half of the 1990s after a row over the division of the Caspian Sea into national sectors. After the change of government in Ashgabat these relations were restored. The two leaders have exchanged visits and signed several bilateral agreements. But the problem of dividing up the Caspian remains unresolved. It flared up again in the summer of 2009, becoming a new stumbling block for the *Nabucco* project.

Normalization of Turkmenistan's relations with Uzbekistan—and potentially with Azerbaijan as well—is very significant. It opens up the possibility—albeit theoretical for now—of creating a *strategic belt* that would include Georgia, Azerbaijan, the southern Caspian, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, linked by a network of bilateral and multilateral economic and military-political agreements, as well as a system of communications and pipelines. That belt could include gas pipelines across the Caspian, linking Kazakhstan's gigantic new Kashagan oil fields, the equally impressive Turkmen gas fields and the sea ports near Baku. That would mean a dramatic shift in the international political situation in the south of the former Soviet Union. GUAM (or GUUAM, if Uzbekistan chooses to return to the fold) would then play a far more important role here. And there will be a real prospect of recreating the Silk Road linking China and Europe.

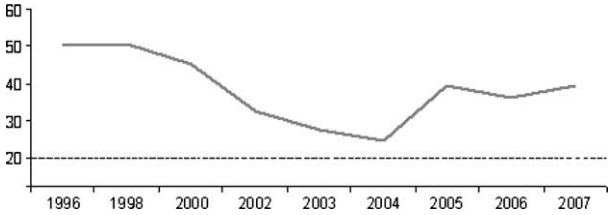
TURKMEN CLANS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Turkmenistan could become one of the central elements of the new system of international relations being shaped now in Central Asia and the Caspian region. But much depends on how events will unfold in the country itself. The arrival of Berdymuhammedov has put the spotlight on the issue of democratization (or at least a certain liberalization) of the regime in Turkmenistan. But any talk of such democratization is beside the point. There have not been any democratic changes in the country, and none can reasonably be expected. For all practical purposes, the problem of stability of the Berdymuhammedov regime is far more important.

Many believed that the Niyazov regime was rock stable. But the internal power struggle did flare up from time to time, and the late president's grip on power was not quite as firm as it seemed from the outside. The World Bank's political stability index for Turkmenistan had roughly halved over the period 1998–2004,[9] pointing to a serious political crisis. The index rose again in 2005, but it never returned to the highs of the mid-1990s.

The index reflects general social trends, but it does not clarify their underlying causes or mechanisms. Stability in authoritarian states is mainly achieved by suppressing protest and maintaining the balance between rival groups among the elite, to make sure than none of these groups becomes predominant in the bureaucratic system. In other words, an authoritarian leader must act as the *ultimate arbiter* whose job is to broker relations between the competing clans, and not as the chief of a small ruling clique which holds a monopoly on power. The leader's failure to play that role results in latent instability, which can become manifest as the ruling clique's grip on power starts to slip.

Figure 1. **Index of Political Stability in Turkmenistan in 1996–2007**
Source: World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_chart.asp#>, last accessed September 14, 2009.



The future of the new Turkmen regime is largely predicated on its past. The country acquired statehood only after the civil war of 1918–1922. That is also when the shaping of Turkmens as a separate nation began—and it is not yet complete. The country's people have multiple identities: they think of themselves as Turkmens but also as members of their own tribes, clans, families and other groups. Shokhrat Kadyrov, a renowned expert on Turkmenistan, describes the Turkmens as a *nation of tribes*. ''Soviet Turkmens were born as a nation in 1924,'' he writes. ''That is also when the actual word Turkmenistan appeared. Before that, the Turkmens used to think of themselves as members of their family clans, not as a territorial community. They had had no experience of centralized rule over tribal federations.''[10]

The 20 or so tribes that make up the Turkmen nation are dominated by the Teke (Tekins), who make up about 40 percent of the population, as well the Yomud and the Ersari. Relations between these three tribes are strained, and they often do not see eye to eye. The two key sub-tribes vying for power and influence are the Akhal-Tekins, who inhabit central Akhal province around Ashgabat, and the Mary-Tekins, who hail from Mary province. Domestic politics in Turkmenistan, just like in many other societies divided into ethnic and tribal groups or territorial and family clans, boils down to rivalry between tribal leaders for power and control of the bureaucratic apparatus and key sectors of the economy.

Moscow's policy in the former Soviet republics followed the old ''divide and rule'' strategy. ''Initially, the Soviet government in Moscow consolidated its grip on Turkmenistan using the leading Akhal-Tekin territorial tribe as its proxy,'' Kadyrov writes. ''But once that grip became firm enough (during the postwar period), the new strategy was to weaken the dominant tribe by transferring the key posts in the party apparatus, the government and the legislature to representatives of the remote provinces.''[11] The logic of such strategy was simple: the weaker clans needed Moscow's support to stay on top, while the strong ones, such as the Akhal-Tekins of central Ashgabat province, were forced to supplicate to Moscow in order to defend their interests in a situation where the power lay with the rival tribes and clans. Moscow abandoned that policy only in 1985, when Saparmurat Niyazov, a representative of the Akhal-Tekins, was appointed head of the Communist Party in Turkmenistan. He immediately began a massive purge of the old cadres, justifying it by the need for new blood to implement the doctrines of Perestroika, but in truth he was simply filling all the key posts with loyalists from Akhal province.

Avdy Kuliyev, the country's first post-independence foreign minister, has compiled a list of 23 large family clans which controlled the key sections of the economy and bureaucracy in the last years of Soviet rule. Most of them were Akhal-Tekins (nine clans) and Yomuds (seven clans). The Yomud clans, for their part, are made up of three smaller family and territorial groups: the Kizil-Arvat (who are close to the Akhal-Tekins), the Balkan, and the Tashauz. The Mary-Tekins were represented by two clans: the Ersari, who live in Lebap province (formerly Chardzhou province), and the Salyrs.[12]

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Niyazov proceeded to construct one of the most oppressive and farcical regimes in the whole world. Before the 2008 reform of the constitution, the ultimate power in the country formally belonged to the Halk Maslahaty (People's Assembly), which was made up of 2,500 delegates and convened once a year. The assembly included the president, government ministers and other senior officials, heads of provincial government bodies, leaders of NGOs and political parties. But the real power resided solely with the president, who was also the head of the Cabinet. All the members of the People's Assembly were appointed by the president, who essentially hand-picked what was under the constitution the country's supreme governing body. The 50-seat Majlis (parliament) had no real power whatsoever.

Niyazov had a fixation on purging all Soviet-era clan representatives from the governing bodies. Arbitrary sackings and reshuffles were his main instrument of domestic policy. All the positions of power were eventually filled by loyal people from Akhal province, the vast majority of whom were not part of the Soviet-era Turkmen elite. One of the consequences of such policy was the alienation of the rest of the clans. Such a situation forced the Akhan-Tekin leaders to rally around the president as the main, if not the only, guarantor of their political—or even physical—survival. ''Niyazov's goal is not to aggrandize the Akhal-Tekins, and certainly not to turn Turkmenistan into an Akhal-Tekin state,'' wrote the opposition Turkmen website *Erkin Turkmenistan*. ''His goal is to alienate all the other tribes from them, to make them universally loathed. To some extent, Niyazov has achieved his goal. The Turkmen tribes are now distrustful of the Akhal-Tekins. This distrust is also being stoked up by certain groups among the provincial tribal elite who are fomenting separatist sentiment.''[13]

Very few people in Niyazov's coterie were not Akhal-Tekins. One of the most influential of them was Akmurad Rejepov,[14] head of the presidential security service. He hailed from Chardzhou province (now Lebap province) and was thought of as the informal patron of the Chardzhou grouping. Other prominent non-Akhals were presidential aide Viktor Khramov and deputy head of the presidential administration, Alexander Zhadan. All three were part of the small coterie of Niyazov's closest confidants who managed to avoid the purges and reshuffles, which often ended with a prison term or sudden death. By the end of the 1990s, the leaders of most of the territorial or family clans who used to occupy positions of power in Turkmenistan had either lost their influence, fled or ended up in jail. Among the people who fled in the mid-1990s were Valeriy Otchertsov,[15] a party apparatchik and one of the architects of the Niyazov regime after 1991, and Nazar Suyunov, one of the key Turkmen officials in the early 1990s who for a time held the post of deputy prime minister.[16]

NOMENKLATURA OPPOSITION AND POLITICAL CRISIS OF 2000–2003

By the turn of the century, tensions between Niyazov and a large part of officialdom, living in dread of incessant purges, had reached boiling point. The decision by the People's Assembly and the Council of Elders in 1999 to declare Niyazov president for life had further exacerbated the situation by snuffing out any remaining hope for a lawful change of leadership. Niyazov's policy of sidelining the *old cadres* was causing resentment among the former Soviet nomenklatura clans and the first post-independence generations of bureaucrats, who faced the threat of losing their privileges and sometimes even their freedom.

The leading role in the nomenklatura opposition, which had taken shape by the late 1990s, was played by Boris Shikhmuradov,[17] who had at various times held the posts of Niyazov's first deputy at the National Security and Defense Council, deputy prime minister and foreign minister. Until 1997–1998, he had been one of Niyazov's closest cronies. But in autumn 2001 he fled the country. He must have had supporters among the bureaucracy and in the security services, which he was in charge of in the 1990s. In an interview published in May 2002, he made several interesting statements. He outlined some of the causes and triggers of the crisis, saying that he had been waging ''cold war on Turkmenbashi'' (the president's honorific) since 1998, and accusing him of usurping power—a reference to Niyazov's president-for-life status. He also said that the Turkmens in exile had ''established a reliable system of cooperation with people inside the country... We have our people in every influential group of the Ashgabat and provincial elite.''[18] Other exiles also spoke of internal opposition to Niyazov within his own government. Avdy Kuliyev said in spring 2002 that 4,000 people were awaiting a signal for a decisive attack on the president.[19]

Those statements may not have been too far from the mark. Niyazov's own actions suggested that he was aware of the growing discontent among the Turkmen elite. In summer 2001, he issued a list of officials who were forbidden from leaving the country.[20] That was one of his methods of fighting the nomenklatura opposition, after several senior officials and diplomats fled the country in 2000–2001. Most of them declared their opposition to Niyazov and said they wanted him deposed.

The crisis culminated in an unprecedented campaign of purges in 2001–2003, which affected not just the bureaucracy but also the twin pillars of the despotic regime, the security services and the army. In June 2001, the then security service chief, Muhammed Nazarov, was appointed the president's advisor in charge of all the law-enforcement agencies. The next autumn, the Committee of National Security (KNB) struck at the Turkmen Interior Ministry. But in March 2002, Nazarov himself was sacked and imprisoned, along with his two deputies. Within the month, about 60 senior KNB people were taken into custody. Interior Minister Poran Berdyev was appointed the new security service chief. Then in October 2002, he too was sacked, and a month later he was killed under suspicious circumstances.[21]

The top brass also found themselves in big trouble. The deputy defense minister, Col Gen Soltanov, was convicted and jailed on charges of helping Shikhmuradov sell military equipment to the *Taliban*.[22] In June 2001, the deputy KNB chief for military counterintelligence, Gurbanberdy Begendzhov, was appointed the new defense minister. In March 2002, he was replaced by Rejepbay Ovezov, who had until then been the chairman of the Majlis.[23] Lt Gen Serdar Charyarov, formerly Niyazov's close associate, the army's second in command and chief of General Staff, was put on trial in May 2003.[24]

These are just a few examples of the orgy of sackings and incarcerations of senior officials, which can hardly be put down to the usual bickering between rival clans vying for the dictator's ear. That orgy was an indication of panic that had engulfed Niyazov in the face of growing opposition sentiment, which had spread even to the law enforcement agencies. The fall of the *Taliban* regime in Afghanistan could have been another reason. Unlike all the other Central Asian rulers, Niyazov had maintained close relations with the *Taliban*. In the 1990s, the Turkmen secret services were involved in drugs trafficking from Afghanistan into Russia and then on to Europe.[25] Niyazov feared that his dealings with the *Taliban* would persuade the United States—and possibly even Russia—to back the Turkmen opposition and bring it to power. After all, there were serious arguments in favor of deposing a regime that had been caught not only doing business with Islamic extremists but also profiteering from drug trafficking.

Tensions reached their peak in late 2002. Early in the morning of November 25, 2002, Niyazov's motorcade came under fire. Some reports say the two attackers were injured, others claim both were killed. Niyazov himself said that ''the killers shot each other.'' Immediately after the incident, he named the people he held responsible for the attack: Shikhmuradov; former deputy prime minister and Central Bank chief Khudayberdy Orazov; former ambassador to Turkey Nurmuhammet Khanamov; and the former deputy agriculture minister, Saparmyrat Yklymov. All four had fled the country and were part of the governing body of the opposition People's Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan. Before the day was out, 16 people had been taken into custody. The Russian secret services were accused of helping the plotters, but a few days later officials said the help had come from Uzbekistan, not Russia. The Uzbek ambassador, Abdurashid Kadyrov, was declared persona non grata, and a motor rifle division was pulled to the Uzbek border.[26] In late December 2002, it was announced that Shikhmuradov had been arrested. The official version was that he had been in hiding at the Uzbek embassy, and that he had given himself up to the Turkmen authorities voluntarily. Some sources claim he had been arrested in Moscow or Kiyv and dispatched to Niyazov. But the most common belief is that he was forced to return to Turkmenistan in order to save his relatives, who had stayed behind, from torture and death.

The unprecedented speed of the investigation (the authorities said the organizers had been identified within a few hours of the attack) suggests that the attempt on Niyazov had been staged as a pretext for a new wave of arrests. More than 60 people were taken into custody in the wake of the attack, most of them representing the first generation of the post-Soviet elite. Among them were the former chief of the Border Guards, Akmurad Kabulov; Saparmurad Seidov, who was the head of the KNB in the mid-1990s; former foreign minister Batyr Berdyev; former governor of Dashoguz province, Yazgeldy Gundogdyev; and former deputy KNB chief Orazmuhammed Berdyev.[27]

The political crisis of 1999–2003 ended with Niyazov coming out on top—but his victory was incomplete. He had managed to jail, exile or intimidate the leading figures of the first post-Soviet generation of the elite, who were also leaders of their respective family and territorial clans. He filled the vacated positions in the bureaucracy mainly with new people from Akhal province. But he did not have full confidence in the loyalty of the new appointees or the surviving first-generation apparatchiks. Although the scale of the repressions diminished, the purges and chaotic reshuffles continued. In 2005, the then oil and gas minister, Ilyas Charyev was put on trial. He was followed by Rejep Saparov, who served as deputy prime minister in 1992–2002 and later as deputy chief of the presidential administration, and by Elly Kurbanmuradov, the deputy prime minister for the key oil and gas sector. Saparov and Kurbanmuradov occupied the key positions in the government in the early 1990s, and were seen as Niyazov's possible successors—which probably led to their downfall. In 2006, prosecutor-general Kurbanbibi Atadzhanova, who had held her post for a decade and won herself a reputation as a fanatical admirer of Niyazov, also ended up in jail.

The core of the opposition remained in exile in Russia and some European countries. That gave Moscow leverage on Niyazov, who could be blackmailed by the prospect of a Turkmen government in exile. It cannot be ruled out that Niyazov's fears of Russia backing his opponents forced him to sign a 25-year contract in 2008 to sell huge quantities of gas to Russia. But, most importantly, the Soviet-era system of checks and balances that had kept Turkmenistan's various tribes, clans, bureaucratic cliques and economic factions evenly matched had been deformed by the ascendance of the Akhal-Tekin clans. This has laid the ground for fresh political conflict and instability, because the rival clans are unlikely to acquiesce in the diminution of their political influence and economic power.

OPERATION *SUCCESSOR*, TURKMEN STYLE

The official version claims that Niyazov died of sudden cardiac arrest at 01.10 on December 21, 2006. It has been suggested that he was killed by his own coterie. These claims may not be entirely groundless. Senior Turkmen mandarins could well have decided to dispose of the unpredictable, capricious and cruel dictator, who posed a threat to their very existence. Madame de Stael's brilliant formula that ''Russia's political system is absolutism limited by a garrote'' can be applied to any other despotic regime. There are certain facts as well. The last time Niyazov was seen alive was on December 15, 2006. On December 17, senior army officers were called to Ashgabat. The following day they hurriedly left the capital to close off the border crossings.[28] And most importantly, there is a strong impression that people from Niyazov's inner circle were well prepared for his death, and acted quickly, decisively and in a coordinated manner, as if following a carefully orchestrated plan.

Events after Niyazov's death have been extensively covered in the media, but let us recount a few points that are key to understanding the developments in the subsequent months. Under Article 60 of the Turkmen constitution of 2003, if the president is incapacitated, ''the chairman of the Majlis becomes acting president until the election of the new president. Presidential elections...must be held within two months after the transfer of the president's powers to the chairman of the Majlis. Acting president cannot take part in the elections as a candidate.''[29] In other words, the then parliament speaker, Ovezgeldy Atayev, should have become acting president, and he would not have been able to run in the presidential election. But several hours after Niyazov's death, Atayev was taken into custody, and the following day he was sacked. The charges he faced were, by Turkmen standards, ludicrous: he was accused of driving a young woman to attempted suicide by forbidding his son to marry her ''for reasons of tribal hostility.'' Several months later, he was sentenced to five years in prison.

The real power in the country was seized by the National Security Council, a junta which was sometimes dubbed ''the *initiative group.''* It included the national security minister, Geldymuhammet Ashyrmuhammedov, the interior minister, Akmammet Rakhmanov, the defense minister, Agageldy Mammetgeldyev, the chief of the Border Guards, Bayram Alovov, prosecutor-general Muhammetguly Ogshukov, and the chief of the presidential security service, Akmurad Rejepov. Some say Rashyd Meredov, the foreign minister, was also part of the group, whose informal leader was Rejepov.

Legally, the National Security Council had no authority. It had been created at the height of the political crisis earlier in the decade as an advisory body under the president. But it was at an urgent sitting of this council and of the cabinet of ministers that the decision was made to appoint Berdymuhammedov as the caretaker president. The council also decided to convene the People's Assembly, with a recommendation to support Berdymuhammedov, who was serving as deputy prime minister and health minister at the time, in this caretaker capacity. On December 26, 2006, the assembly followed that recommendation, and also lifted the constitutional restriction which prevented the caretaker president from taking part in the election. The assembly also selected several candidates to run in the presidential race—Berdymuhammedov was naturally one of them. As expected, he won the election on February 11, 2007 by a landslide.

The participation of several candidates in the presidential race was initially taken for a sign of democratization. In truth, it simply reflected the political instincts of either Berdymuhammedov himself or the initiative group, and the desire to create a positive image for the new leader abroad. There was never any real risk for Berdymuhammedov. All his so-called rivals had all been carefully handpicked. They understood very well the role they were given in the upcoming political show, and were not all that keen on victory. Strictly speaking, none of them had any chance to win even had the election been free and fair. The leaders of the opposition in exile had no chances either, even had they been allowed to take part in the race. This is what the emigre website of the United Democratic Opposition of Turkmenistan had to say in early 2007: ''Initially, many people really wanted the opposition to take part in the election. But after interviews with opposition representatives shown on Russian television...a lot of people said that these guys will not do this country any good... People are worried that the opposition could lead the country to a colored revolution and subsequent chaos, and their lives will deteriorate even further.''[30]

The orderly transition of power was made possible by a combination of several factors. Niyazov's purges had eliminated or sidelined, politically and economically, the tribal, regional and bureaucratic leaders who could have stood up against the *initiative group* of army and security

chiefs which seized power on December 21, 2006. After the arrests of Saparov and Kurbanmuradov in 2005, there was none left in the country with sufficient influence or reputation to claim the presidency. In addition, the initiative group itself had turned out to be strong and united—which is why none in their right mind would risk opposing the coordinated action of all the army and security chiefs. Had there been any open conflicts between those chiefs, tribal or regional leaders could have entered the fray. As for the bureaucrats, their strength had been sapped by years of uncertainty under Niyazov. Battling it out with the security chiefs would only mean further instability and risk.

The real question is, why Berdymuhammedov? One possibility is that the initiative group had picked him because he had no power base of his own in the security agencies or the bureaucratic apparatus. The emigre circles had sneeringly dubbed him *the dentist*, in reference to his education and his position as director of a dentistry clinic in the mid-1990s. It was even rumored that he owed his ascendancy to Niyazov, whom he had treated—though that last bit of gossip is very implausible. The Turkmen dictator would hardly have entrusted his teeth to a local clinic when he could afford the best dentists from abroad.

In any case, one explanation was that Berdymuhammedov represented a compromise figure—someone who could pose no threat to any of the members of the junta, while also preventing any single one of them from gaining power over all the rest. That allowed the balance to be maintained between the top power brokers, and prevented an open power struggle between them, at least in the first few months after Niyazov's death. In other words, Berdymuhammedov's perceived weakness made him acceptable to all the security and army chiefs—a typical situation for any authoritarian regime. But history demonstrates that many figures who were thought of as weak and temporary soon outplayed their rivals and settled in for the long haul. And that is exactly what happened in Turkmenistan.

Those who thought of Berdymuhammedov as weak and incapable of independent action failed to take his record into account. He was appointed health minister in May 1997, and deputy prime minister in April 2001.[31] That means that by early 2007 he had almost 10 years of experience in the upper strata of the Turkmen hierarchy under his belt. It must have taken an extraordinary capacity to adjust, dissimulate, scheme and plot to survive for so long where so many others have ended up in jail or exile. He must have been an excellent judge of character, including Niyazov's own character. He must have been good at building tactical coalitions, identifying weaknesses in friends and foes alike, and making use of them. It must have taken intelligence. Berdymuhammedov has turned out to be much stronger than those who helped him climb to the top. But the stability of his regime still remains subject to debate.

PSEUDO-REFORMS

Many analysts have been looking for signs of democratic reform in Berdymuhammedov's statements and actions. On the one hand, their efforts are rooted in a genuine and very reasonable conviction that only democratization can lead the country out of the current authoritarian impasse. But on the other, for those politicians in the West (and even some in Russia) who are interested in cooperation with Turkmenistan, it is important to convince themselves and everyone around them that positive changes are under way in the country, that the human rights situation is improving, and so on.

In truth, there have been no democratic reforms in Turkmenistan. The new president has defenestrated some of Niyazov's most asinine policies, which were making the already desperate plight of the people even worse, and keeping the country's technology stuck in the dark ages. He has restored universal 10-year education, and full courses in the country's universities. The number of students sent to study in Russia, Turkey and some other countries is on the rise. The Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan, which Niyazov abolished in 1993, has been resurrected. There are also plans to restore the network of hospitals and clinics in provincial towns and villages, although these are being held back by the shortage of qualified medical staff. The government continues to subsidize natural gas, water and electricity. It has also begun subsidizing petrol. Nyiazov's decision to stop paying pensions to some groups of retirees has been reversed. Old-age pensions are now paid even to those who have no official employment record. Several Internet cafes have opened in Ashgabat—though the Ministry of National Security is keeping a close watch on them. Libraries are being opened in provincial capitals. State agencies have been allowed to subscribe to newspapers and magazines from Russia and some

other countries. The opera and ballet theatre has been reopened—Niyazov had it shut down because he ''did not understand ballet.'' The country now has several currency exchange booths. Of the 16 people jailed for the attempt on Niyazov, 11 have been pardoned, including the former supreme Mufti of Turkmenistan, Nasrulla ibn Ibadulla.[32]

That, however, more or less completes the list of measures Berdymuhammedov has taken to turn down the pressure and ease the lives of ordinary people. These steps have made the regime more rational—i.e. they have eliminated the irrationalities and eccentricities of the previous ruler. But in no way do they represent any democratization of the political system, or any condemnation of the previous regime. The dismantling of Niyazov's personality cult is aimed at ending the deification of Niyazov personally, not at weakening the regime he had built. All the key mechanisms of strict ideological and security control over the population remain intact. This includes the law which equates questioning the president's policies to high treason.[33] And the new practice of vetting all the letters to foreign addresses right in front of their senders is another illustration of change in Turkmenistan. Of course, these letters were subject to vetting even before, just as in all other authoritarian regimes. But at least under Niyazov it was not done so openly.[34] Meanwhile, many of the nomenklatura opposition figures, including Shikhmuradov, are still languishing in prison.

Any specific information concerning the social and economic plight of the population is either classified or simply not available, because the authorities are not really interested in such things. But it would not be an exaggeration to say that Turkmenistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the World Bank report for 1988, the average daily income of 62 percent of the Turkmens was less than $4.3. By 1998, the situation had become even worse. Comparable data indicate that almost 80 percent of the population was living on less than $4.3 a day, 44 percent on less than $2.15, and 25 percent on less than $1.15.[35]

With such pervasive poverty, even a slight increase in living standards is seen as a boon from the government, which helps to maintain the stability of the regime. Ideas of democracy or human rights are unfamiliar and even alien to the Turkmen psyche. Shokhrat Kadyrov lamented the ''social backwardness and immaturity of the national consciousness, which has only been exacerbated by presidential power.'' ''Turkmen society, like many other agrarian ethnic groups, is naive and conservative. Apart from the Basmach period [anti-Soviet resistance in the 1930s], it has spent the entire Soviet era silently trying to adjust,'' he wrote. Coupled with extremely low living standards, this makes for a very quiescent populace, focused entirely on trying to survive and to avoid absolute penury rather than any abstract social or political ideas. Such a populace can easily be manipulated by the powers that be.

In addition, the long period of ideological indoctrination under Niyazov has produced a whole generation of young people who lack adequate perception of the outside world and see life through the tinted glasses of primitive nationalistic delusions. This group, which tends to be socially active, has become one of regime's main power bases, as they see post-Soviet Turkmenistan as an embodiment of all ideals. Meanwhile, the few remaining adherents of democratic virtues have been jailed, exiled or intimidated into keeping their views to themselves.

The political passivity of the masses means that the regime's stability depends solely on the state of affairs within the elite itself. In early 2007, many analysts predicted that the absolutist ''institutionless'' Niyazov system—which is based on personalities rather than institutions—will inevitably be replaced with an oligarchic system, in which key decisions will be ''the result of difficult compromise within the collective leadership.''[36] Such a system is inherently more stable than a unipolar setup in which all the power lies in the hands of one person and a narrow circle of his cronies. But the power architecture created by Niyazov still remains intact. The ongoing changes mainly affect the personal make-up of the ruling clique. Niyazov's practice of constant reshuffles also continues, although arrests and trials of senior officials have become an exception rather than the norm.

The expectations that power will remain in the hands of the security chiefs who nominated Niyazov for presidency have not come to pass, either. The new president left them all in charge of their respective agencies immediately after his inauguration in February 2007. But in May, presidential security service chief Rejepov, who was considered the mastermind of the events in December 2006–February 2007, was placed under arrest. The move heralded a whole series of reshuffles and sackings in the security agencies. On April 9, 2007, Interior Minister Akhmad Rakhmanov lost his job. He was replaced by Khodzhamyrat Annagurbanov, who had been a district police chief in Ashgabat until January 2007. On October 8, 2007, Annagurbanov was relieved of his duties and

demoted from his rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He was replaced by the dean of the Military Academy, Orazgerly Amanmyradov[37]—who held on to the job until May 2009, when he was himself replaced by Isgender Mulikov.[38]

Similar woes befell the Ministry of National Security. In February 2007, right after the inauguration, the new president reappointed the minister, Geldymuhammet Ashyrmuhammedov.[39] But in October he was relieved of his duties on health grounds, at the age of 50. His job went to Charymyrat Amanov, who was the deputy head of the foreign nationals registration service.[40]

In March 2008, prosecutor general Mukhammetguly Oshgugov, who had held the post since April 2006, was replaced by Chary Khodzhamyradov, who had until then been the Supreme Justice. Berdymuhammedov put Oshgukov's sacking down to bribery and other shenanigans in the prosecutor's office.[41] The vacant Supreme Justice post was filled by Yaranmyrat Yazmyradov.[42]

The sackings of the police chief, national security minister and prosecutor general were followed by reshuffles at the lower levels. Many deputy ministers and provincial police and security chiefs were replaced as well. On the whole, by early 2009, only two members of the initiative group out of the original six had kept their jobs: Defense Minister Agageldy Mammetgeldyev,[43] and the chief of the Border Guards, Bayram Alovov.[44] However, both were sacked on January 21, 2009 during yet another reshuffle. Alovov was dismissed with the standard explanation ''for poor performance'' and demoted in military rank. But Mammetgeldyev was sent into honorable retirement with gratitude ''for loyal service to the Motherland.''[45] He was replaced by Myrat Yslamov, who was the deputy Customs Service chief for anti-drugs policy.[46] Yaylym Berdiyev, the chairman of the Customs Service, was appointed the new defense minister.[47] According to patchy reports leaked to the press, most of the new security chiefs had made their careers in the foreign nationals registration service, i.e. the agency that keeps an eye on all foreigners. Apparently, for some reason the agency is thought of as particularly loyal to Berdymuhammedov.

But in Central Asia, positions in agencies and ministries in charge of the economy are just as important as control of the security forces. As a rule, if such an agency is chaired by the same person for any significant period of time, all the key positions in the industry overseen by that agency gradually become filled by members of the boss's extended family or territorial clan. They essentially privatize the most attractive companies, and manipulate the industry's financial flows in their own interests. Which is why the redistribution of government posts between members of the various clans has an immediate effect on their financial well-being, and consequently on the extent of their loyalty (or disloyalty) to the country's leaders.

Over the 18 months since Berdymuhammedov's election as president, the Cabinet has been radically overhauled. By April 2009, only three members of the Niyazov Cabinet had kept their jobs.[48] Apart from the usual ministers, the Turkmen cabinet also includes the prosecutor general, the Supreme Justice, the head of the central bank and the chief of the Border Guards. Most of the current members hail from Akhal province. Of the 37 cabinet members in 2008, 27 were Akhal-Tekins, three from Mary province, three from Balkan province, one from Lebap, one from Dashouz, one was born in Moscow, and for the remaining one there is no information regarding his place of birth.[49] Emigre circles claim that many of the Berdymuhammedov appointees come from his own extended family.

Most of the people who are thought to be part of the new president's coterie were appointed shortly after his coming to power, and they are the ones who have kept their posts to this day. Among them are two deputy prime ministers: foreign minister and deputy premier Rashyd Meredov,[50] and Khadyr Saparlyev, who is in charge of education, science, healthcare, culture, the media and NGOs.[51] Another of the president's confidants is his aide Viktor Khramov,[52] who is sometimes called Turkmenistan's Number 2 man. Then there is the head of the presidential administration and cabinet minister without portfolio, Iklymberdy Paromov,[53] and the national security minister, Charymyrat Amanov. That last one has held on to his job since October 2007, which probably means that the president is happy with him.

The motives behind Berdymuhammedov's personnel decisions usually remain a mystery, though sometimes bits and pieces of information are leaked from behind the thick walls of government palaces in Ashgabat. In early 2007, the rumor making the rounds among the bureaucracy in the Turkmen capital was that Niyazov had told the National Security Ministry in the fall of 2006 to start digging for information on Berdymuhammedov, who was to be put on trial on corruption charges. Other reports claimed that Ashyrmuhammedov had spoken out against Berdymuhammedov's nomination as president, and that he had even wanted the job for himself.

Berdymuhammedov's reshuffles apparently pursue two objectives. First, he wants to fill the key posts in the bureaucracy, the security services and the army with people whose personal loyalty he does not doubt. And second, apart from loyalty, he wants these people not to make a total mess of their jobs—which is a tall order. The system of higher education in Turkmenistan has gone sharply downhill since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Most of the Slavs who made up the bulk of the professional top and middle managers in the late Soviet era have either retired or left the country. And the Turkmen elite of the first post-independence generation, who actually had some technical and managerial skills, have been sidelined during Niyazov's presidency.

2008 REFORM OF THE CONSTITUTION

One indication of the difficult situation within the Turkmen ruling circles is the 2008 reform of the constitution, which was approved in September 2008 by the People's Assembly. The reform introduced several key changes:

- The People's Assembly itself was abolished, and its powers were divided between the president and the Majlis.
- The president was given the right to appoint and dismiss the provincial, district and town chiefs, who had previously been appointed by the legislatures (although it was just a formality).
- The new constitution formalized the role of the National Security Council. It specifies that ''if for some reason the president is incapacitated, the National Security Council shall appoint one of the deputy prime ministers as acting president until the election of the new president.''
- The president does not have to seek the approval of the Majlis for his choice of minister of national security—although he needs the legislature's vetting for the prosecutor general, interior minister and Chief Justice.
- The number of seats in the Majlis was increased from 50 to 125.

Elections to the new Majlis were held in December 2008. The People's Assembly was disbanded in the same month. The decision to abolish it was based on the premise that the assembly was outmoded, unwieldy and ineffectual. All that is true—but from the moment of its creation the assembly was purely a matter of decorum anyway. Under Niyazov, no one worried about it being unwieldy or ineffectual. When the 2008 reform was still on the drawing board, Berdymuhammedov sought a substantial dilution of the assembly's powers, ceremonial though they may have been—but not its complete abolition. The idea was to cut the number of seats in it, and turn it into an ''advisory and consultative body of people's representation''. And in emergency situations, the National Security Council would step in, which is why Berdymuhammedov wanted it to be given formal status.[54]

In other words, the initial idea was to keep the People's Assembly, albeit as a purely advisory body. Logically, such a situation would serve the interests of the regional clans, and possibly of the president's secret opponents as well. But Berdymuhammedov managed to overcome the opposition and push through the decision to abolish the assembly altogether. He must have reasoned that most of the assembly's 2,500 members represented regional and local groupings, tribes, and territorial clans. Naturally, all of them were nominated to the assembly by the president himself—but he could not pick his own people to represent various regions and districts if they did not actually have any links with the regions they were supposed to represent.

That was a major concern for the president. During a political crisis, the People's Assembly could suddenly find itself in a position of power, because formally it was the country's supreme governing body. And if the ruling clique were weakened by some political or economic emergency, its rivals could well try to use the assembly to take over. And keeping in line 2,500 members of the assembly would be much more troublesome than 125 Majlis members. As for the president's newly acquired right to appoint top regional and district officials, and to pick his own national security minister, defense minister and head of the Border Guards without the vetting of the Majlis, these constitutional innovations hardly require any comment.

Turkmenistan is now undergoing a change of ideological slogans. Under Niyazov, the post-Soviet period was officially proclaimed ''the Golden Age of Turkmenistan.'' But in 2008, the country entered the ''Era of Great Renaissance.'' In January 2008, Berdymuhammedov replaced his spokesman, who was also the editor-in-chief of the official presidential paper, and ordered reshuffles in the Ministry of Culture, TV and Radio. The official line was that the reshuffle had followed sharp criticism of media editors' policies at a cabinet meeting. Berdymuhammedov was quoted as saying that ''there is no creativity or genre diversity in the work of the mass media, there are very few really interesting programs or articles.''[55]

A few days later the president held a meeting with the media bosses and representatives of the creative intelligentsia. His keynote speech contained several new messages. First, the president said, ''Turkmen society needs an entirely new ideology, which would be rooted in reality and modernity.'' This was a recognition that the previous doctrine, set out in *Rukhnama* (a book by Niyazov) and aimed at the deification of Niyazov was outmoded and needed to be replaced.

Second, the new ideology was required to provide justification for the country's paternalistic and authoritarian regime. The key element of that ideology, according to the president, is the slogan ''The State Serves the People.'' Laying out his vision in more detail, he had this to say: ''The state must of course be strong. It should provide political stability in and around the country, foster the growth of the national economy and create a good climate for the development of Turkmen society, whose main principles should be humanism, social justice and spirituality. A strong state means a strong government plus an effective legal system. Such a combination would guarantee our people's security, protect their rights and freedoms, and give them ample opportunity for development, self-realization and creativity.''[56] The proposition behind this statement is quite clear: security for the people in exchange for stability, i.e. people's refusal to engage in any opposition activity.

Third, the new Turkmen ideology must serve the purpose of technological modernization of the country and make use of the world's latest achievements in science and technology, while also preserving the national identity and unique features of the Turkmen people. That third component of the new ideology is entirely understandable. The Turkmen leadership realizes that Niyazov's economic and social experiments have left the country teetering on the brink, and its very survival depends on improving education, adopting the latest technologies, and so on. But the leadership wants this modernization to be limited to technology—the political system should remain intact. Hence the proviso about national identity, which is often used by authoritarian rulers in their debate with proponents of democratic change.

And fourth, Berdymuhammedov set out two specific tasks before the mass media. The first is to change the Turkmens' mentality, and their attitude to ideas such as responsibility and duty to their Motherland and society. And the second is to advertize ''the stability that reigns in all spheres of public life, including the work of our government, our ideological openness, and the attractiveness of our economy to foreign investors in view of the latest initiatives on reforming the government system and creating a universal legislative field.''[57]

STABILITY OF THE REGIME

The nature of the events of September 2008 in Ashgabat remains unclear—but they suggest that the political stability inside the country is not as unshakeable as the authorities like to pretend. The facts are these.[58] On Friday, September 12, 2008, a group of armed people seized a drinking water bottling plant north of Ashgabat, not far from the international airport and the Karakum canal. Some reports claim they also took about 50 hostages. At 21:00 on the same day, the authorities imposed a curfew on the city and stormed the plant. The operation continued into the evening of the following day, and made use of armored vehicles, including tanks. Heightened security measures across the city continued into the next day. The security services conducted several massive raids. The authorities said there were casualties among the government forces, but did not specify how many. Unofficial reports claim that up to 20 officers of the Interior Ministry and the National Security Ministry were killed. Speaking at a meeting of the National Security Council (itself an extraordinary event) on September 15, 2008, Berdymuhammedov said government forces had destroyed a gang of drug traffickers.

The explanation is plausible, but requires additional commentary. It is well known that a well-established drug trafficking route goes via Turkmenistan's Mary province, which borders

Afghanistan. Traditionally, that route has been under the control of large Mary clans, who are in cahoots with the Turkmen border guards and some of the security agencies. Until the September 2008 events, the drug traffickers had had no serious problems with the authorities. So if the clashes on September 12–13 really were a showdown between the government forces and drug lords, they must have resulted from a tiff between the Mary clans and the central government. That tiff could have been over the division of the drug money, or over some matter of politics.

The alternative version is that the attackers were Islamic extremists, who were going to make an ultimatum demanding the proclamation of an Islamic state in Turkmenistan. The demand was to be made during the last sitting of the People's Assembly on September 26, 2008, when the delegates were to approve the new constitution. It is said that the core of the group of the attackers had arrived from Afghanistan and included fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. It was also claimed that the Islamists had the support of some members of the armed forces and the security services.

Events of September 12–13, 2008 raised the question of how stable the Berdymuhammedov regime really is. The importance of this question is based on the notion that the massive foreign investment required to ramp up gas exports will not be made if the investors are spooked by high political risks.

The passivity of the masses is one factor of stability. Another is that political opposition in the country is nonexistent, for all practical purposes. Those few pro-democracy outfits that sprang up in the late 1980s–early 1990s, mainly the Agzybirlik society, were crushed by Niyazov's security forces in 1992–1993. The Communist Party of Turkmenistan is working underground, and its only known contribution to politics in the country is the address to the people of Turkmenistan released in 2005. Almost all the other opposition groups are based abroad, mainly in Moscow.[59] They are led mainly by prominent nomenklatura oppositionists, and it remains unclear how much support they really enjoy in Turkmenistan. Their political prospects are mainly predicated on the hope of Russia's intervention in Turkmenistan to install a pro-Russian regime. But, so far, such an intervention remains only a theoretical possibility.

Meanwhile, there are several good reasons to doubt the stability of the Berdymuhammedov regime. One of them is the constant reshuffles in the bureaucratic apparatus, which suggest that the president is finding it difficult to put together a loyal group of people he can rely on. The reshuffles in the security agencies and army are especially important here, because loyalty of the army and the security services is a key pillar of stability in any authoritarian regime. On the whole, Berdymuhammedov is continuing the policies of his predecessor, which were based on total domination of the economy and bureaucracy by the president's loyalists. As a result, all power and the economic opportunities it brings are focused in the hands of the dictator's cronies. That inevitably leads to discontent among the clans that have been sidelined—and they are in the majority. Niyazov had achieved notable successes in his policy of emasculating the clans of the later Soviet era, both in Akhal province around the capital and in the outer provinces. This has seriously weakened the opponents of the clique that has now come to power in Turkmenistan. But the clan structure of Turkmen society remains intact, and a new generation of clan leaders is now emerging. These new leaders have already entered the struggle for power—or are about to.

NOTES

[1] According to the findings of the audit, the lower estimate of gas reserves in the South Yolotan-Osman field is 4 trillion cubic meters, the optimal figure is 6 trillion, and the higher estimate is 14 trillion. See: Vladimir Solovyev, ''Peremennik Rodiny,'' *Kommersant*, October 23, 2008.

[2] *BP Statistical Review of World Energy* (June 2009), p. 22.

[3] ''Repression and regression in Turkmenistan: a new international strategy,'' *International Crisis Group. Asia Report*, no. 85 (November 4, 2004), p. 21.

[4] Tynan Deirdre, ''Turkmenistan: Ashgabat Hosts U.S. Military Refuelling, Resupply Operations,'' *Eurasia Insight*, August 7, 2009, http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav070809_pr.shtml, last accessed September 14, 2009).

[5] Turkmenistan–China gas pipeline talks held in Ashgabat. March 9, 2009, <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=ru&elem_id=14670&type=event&sort=date_desc>, last accessed September 15, 2009).

[6] Rewriting Future: China–Turkmenistan Relations Fly High. *NCA Report and commentary*. September 1, 2008, <http://www.newscentralasia.net/Articles-and-Reports/305.html>, last accessed September 15, 2009).

[7] Amangeldy Nurmuradov. Tukrmenistan to use Chinese loan to fund gas field development. *RIA Novosti,* June 29, 2009, <http://www.rian.ru/economy/20090625/175441022.html>, last accessed September 14, 2009.

[8] Russian–Turkmen cooperation agreements signed in Ashgabat, August 30, 2008, <http://www.gundogar.org/?topic_id=25&year=2008&month=8>, last accessed September 14, 2009.

[9] The index of political stability is a percentile rank of the country in the world, as rated by a panel of experts. See: World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_chart.asp#>, last accessed September 14, 2009.

[10] Shokhrat Kadyrov, ''Turkmenistan: institute of presidency in a post-colonial clan society,'' *Eurasia*, <http://turkmeny.h1.ru/analyt/a4.html>, last accessed September 14, 2009.

[11] Shokhrat Kadyrov, ''Ethnic basis of governance in Central Asia: yesterday, today, tomorrow'' (special report for the Conference ''The Turkmenistan: not an Orange revolution but Regional?''), Oslo, June 6, 2005, <http://igpi.ru/bibl/other_articl/1119947605.html>, last accessed September 14, 2009.

[12] Avdy Kuliev, ''Turkmen elite—an insider's view,'' *Eurasia Internet*. <http://www.eurasia.org.ru/archive/2001/top5/03_20_Elita.htm>, last accessed September 14, 2009.

[13] ''Tribal allegiances cannot divide us,'' *Erkin Turkmenistan,* <http://www.erkin.net/news/analitika/rodoplem.html>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[14] Akmurad Rejepov—born 1952 (approximately) in Chardzhou province (now Lebap province). Tribe: Ersari. Studied at the Higher School of the KGB in Moscow in 1974–1979. Served with the KGB department in Chardzhou province in 1979–1980. Worked in the security service of first secretary of the Turkmen Communist Party (who also hailed from Chardzhou province), Muhammednazar Gapurov in 1980–1985, until Gapurov's dismissal in 1985. After the appointment of Niyazov as head of the Communist Party in Turkmenistan, Rejepov became head of Niyazov's security. The core of the service was made up of Slavic KGB officers. In 1991, Rejepov became head of the presidential security service, which was granted special status and given the right to conduct its own investigations. The service became the country's most influential security agency, higher even that the Ministry of National Security and other law-enforcement agencies. Various estimates put the number of its staff at up to 2,000–3,000 people. Until the death of Niyazov, Rejepov's son Nurmurad served as deputy ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. It was said that he was in charge of Niyazov's financial transactions via the United Aran Emirates. Most Turkmen observers believe Rejepov was in charge of the group that took power after Niyazov's death. For a time he was seen as the leading political figure in the country. On May 15, 2007, the new president, Berdymuhammedov, signed a decree relieving Rejepov of his duties ''in connection with his transfer to another post.'' Several days later Rejepov was taken under arrest and then sentenced to a long prison term. See: Personae. *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[15] Valeriy Georgievich Otchertsov—born 1945 in Irkutsk region (in Russia). Graduated from Izhevsk Institute of Mechanics. Served in the Komsomol (youth wing of the Communist Party) in 1969–1978, including the post of second secretary of the Turkmen Komsomol branch. Served as the deputy head of science department of the Communist Party in Turkmenistan in 1978–1979. Second secretary of the Ashgabat city branch of the Communist Party in Turkmenistan in 1979–1986. Head of organizational and personnel department of the Communist Party in Turkmenistan in 1986–1990. Deputy chairman of the Turkmenistan parliament in 1990–1991. Deputy prime minister of Turkmenistan in 1991–1996. Some reports say he also held the post of economics and finance minister during that period. Relieved of his duties ''in connection with departure from Turkmenistan, in accordance with his own request and due to family circumstances.'' Appointed as special advisor and envoy on economic issues at the Turkmen embassy in Russia on August 23, 1996. Appointed first vice-president of the ITERA group in 1997. President of *ITERA holding* since 1999. The following quote is attributed to Otchertsov: ''The Turkmens do not understand what the word 'state' means, they take it for a collective farm. All they need is as much power as possible, an opportunity to boast and to steal, and they are happy, they don't need anything else…'' See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[16] Nazar Soyunov (Suyunov)—born in 1936 in the town of Nebit-Dag, Krasnovodsk region (now Balkan province). Tribe: Yomud. Graduated from the Azerbaijan Institute of Oil and Chemistry (1959), Moscow Institute of Economic Management under the U.S.S.R. State Committee for Science and Technology (1974), Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R (1982). Holds a PhD in Economics. Served as chief engineer and first deputy head of the State Committee for Geology

of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (T.S.S.R). Head of department for geology under the Council of Ministers of T.S.S.R, chairman of the State Committee for Geology of T.S.S.R in 1967–1978. Deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1978–1985. Head of the Geology Directorate of T.S.S.R in 1985–1987. Director-general of *Turkmengeologiya* concern in 1987–1990. Member of the Presidential Council, chairman of the Committee for Fuel, Energy and Industry under the Presidential Council in 1990–1994. Appointed deputy prime minister and oil and gas minister in 1990. Resigned in 1994 ''in connection with transfer to another job''. Left the country in 1995. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[17] Boris Shikhmuradov—born in Ashgabat in 1949 to a family of a senior Soviet Ministry of State Security official. Graduated from the Journalism faculty of the Moscow State University and the Diplomatic Academy under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Served at the APN (official Soviet news agency) and the Foreign Ministry, Soviet embassies in Pakistan and India in 1971–1992. Appointed first deputy foreign minister of Turkmenistan in 1992. Appointed deputy chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan the same year. Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan in 1995–1999 (he also held the deputy prime minister's job during that period). Special envoy on the status of the Caspian Sea and Afghan settlement, rector of the Turkmen National Institute of Sports an Tourism, president of the National Olympic Committee in July 2000–March 2001. Ambassador to China in March–November 2001. In October 2001, while in Moscow, made the decision not to return to Turkmenistan. On November 1, 2001 announced his decision to join the democratic opposition to Niyazov and the creation of the People's Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan (NDDT). Put on the wanted list by the prosecutor-general's office in Turkmenistan on charges of illegal sale of five Su-17 combat aircraft, 9,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles and 1.5 million rounds of ammunition. Arrested in Ashgabat on December 25, 2002. Sentenced on December 28, 2002 to 25 years in prison for attempted coup and an assassination attempt on Niyazov. On December 30, 2002 the People's Assembly increased his sentence to life imprisonment. Boris Shikhmuradov's brother Konstantin, born 1951, was arrested in early December 2002. Konstantin's son Murad, born 1981, was arrested in Ashgabat on March 21, 2001, four days after Boris Shikhmuradov left for Beijing; he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for premeditated murder. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[18] Rustem Safronov, ''Night of the Big Mouths,'' *Novaya Gazeta*, May 30, 2002.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Viktoriya Panfilova, ''The Khan can pardon, the Khan can kill,'' *Nezavisimaya gazeta—Dipkuryer*, June 21, 2004.

[21] Turkmen secret services. *Agentura.ru*, <http://www.agentura.ru/dossier/turkmen>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[22] Viktoriya Panfilova, Shokhrat Kadyrov, ''Turkmenbashi fearing military coup,'' *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, May 28, 2003.

[23] Turkmen secret services. *Agentura.ru*, <http://www.agentura.ru/dossier/turkmen>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[24] Panfilova, Kadyrov, ''Turkmenbashi fearing military coup...''

[25] Former deputy Central Bank chairman Annadurdy Khadzhayev said large quantities of drugs were stored in the Central Bank's vaults and then shipped abroad via the VIP lounge of Ashgabat airport. He said this drug-trafficking channel was controlled by the former head of the presidential security service, Akmurad Rejepov, and the deputy head of the presidential administration, Zhadan. Panfilova, ''The Khan can pardon, the Khan can kill.''

[26] Orkhan Jemal, ''Who fired at Turkmenbashi?'' *Novaya gazeta*, January 20, 2003.

[27] Orkhan Jemal, ''Jail terms handed down by the dozen in Ashgabat,'' *Novaya gazeta*, January 23, 2003.

[28] Batyr Mukhamedov, ''President's wrath,'' *Novaya gazeta*, January 9, 2003.

[29] Constitution of Turkmenistan (of August 15, 2003), <http://www.centrasia.ru/cnt.php?st=5>, last accessed September 14, 2009.

[30] M. Khemrayev, ''Turkmenistan. How the West took the death of the leader (correspondent reports),'' February 7, 2007, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1170835860>, last accessed September 14, 2009.

[31] Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov—born 1957 in Akhal province. Held minor positions until 1995. Appointed head of the main dental clinic under the Turkmen Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry in 1995. Appointed minister of healthcare and medical industry of Turkmenistan on May 28, 1997. Oversaw some extremely controversial decisions, including the closure of provincial clinics and hospitals. Appointed deputy prime minister for healthcare, education and science on April 3, 2001. Culture and the mass media were included in his remit starting from August 2004. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[32] ''Berdymuhammedov pardons participants of attack on Turkmenbashi,'' *Novaya gazeta*, August 10, 2007.

[33] Georgiy Sitnyanskiy, ''Turkmenistan spring, Berdymuhammedov-style,'' *Analitica.org*, January 22, 2008, <http://www.analitika.org/article.php?story=20080118002019400>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[34] ''TIPC: Censorship of letters. Why should Turkmenistan hide the obvious?'' July 21, 2008, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1216621320>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[35] Highlights on health in Turkmenistan, 2005. World Health Organization (2006), p. 4.

[36] The interesting term ''institutionless'' was aptly used by Russian researcher A. Kazantsev. He proposed a theory that a more oligarchic system of government would emerge under Berdymuhammedov. All the important decisions would be a product of difficult compromise within the collective leadership rather than being made by one man. That would lead to those decisions actually being carried out, rather than being changed all the time. ''The institutionless personalized authoritarianism will start to evolve into a more institutionalized oligarchic authoritarianism''. However, developments in 2007–2008 have put paid to that theory. A. Kazantsev, ''Prospects for evolution of the political regime in Turkmenistan after the death of Turkmenbashi,'' *Analitica.org*, February 12, 2007, <http://www.analitika.org/article.php?story=20070212060327550>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[37] Orazgeldy Amanmyradov—born 1970 in Akhal province. Graduated from the History faculty of the Turkmen National University in 1992. Received an appointment in the Ministry of National Security in 1995. Studied at the FSB Academy in Russia in 1997–1998. Appointed rector of the Great Saparmurat Turkmenbashi Military Academy in 2007. Appointed Minister of Internal Affairs on October 8, 2007. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[38] The only information available on Ingender Mulikov is that he served as deputy interior minister in February 2009. In February–May 2009 he was chief of police at Dashoguz province. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[39] Geldymuhammet Ashirmuhammedov—born 1957 in Balkan province. Graduated from the Physics faculty of Turkmen National University. Served with the KGB of the T.S.S.R, then the KNB of Turkmenistan. Took KGB courses for senior officers in Minsk in 1983 and in Kiev in 1985. Served in the presidential security service in 1992–1997. Commander of the Army in 1997–2002. Graduated from the Chinese Academy of General Staff in 2001. Appointed deputy chief of the KNB in 2002. Appointed first deputy interior minister the same year. Appointed interior minister in August 2004. Minister of National Security since December 2004. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[40] Charymyrat Amanov—born 1966 in Geoktep district of Akhal province. Graduated from the Mathematics faculty of Turkmen National University in 1990. Studied at the Higher School of the KGB in 1991–1992. Served with the KNB since 1992. Appointed deputy chairman of the State Agency for Registration of Foreign Nationals in February 2007. Appointed head of the presidential security service in May 2007. Appointed minister of national security on October 8, 2007. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[41] Chary Khodzhamyradov—born 1962 in the village of Bakharly, Akhal province. Graduated from the Law faculty of the Turkmen National University in 1984. Held minor posts until 1992. Served as a judge of the Supreme Court of Turkmenistan in 1992–1998. Served as deputy chairman and then chairman of the city court of Ashgabat in 1998–2002. Chairman of Dashoguz provincial court in 2002–2006. Chairman of the city court of Ashgabat in 2006-2007. Appointed Chief Justice of Turkmenistan in 2007. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[42] Yaranmyrat Yazmyradov—born 1971 in Akhal province. Graduated from the distance learning department of the Law faculty of the Turkmen National University. Served in the Supreme Court in 1992–1996. Served as a military tribunal judge of Ashgabat garrison in 1996–1997. Served in Ashgabat city court and municipal agencies in 1997–2007. Served as a judge of the city court of Ashgabat in 2007–2008, chairman of Akhal provincial court since 2008. See *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[43] Agageldy Mametgeldyev—born 1946 in Akhal province. Graduated from the wartime Medicine faculty of Saratov Medical University (in Russia) with a degree in ''Treatment and Prevention of Diseases''. Worked as a doctor, head of a first-aid unit with a separate motorized battalion in the Turkestan military district. Head of a regimental medical unit with the Soviet troops in Germany, head of the medical service of an air-defense brigade in 1974–1979. Head of a military sanatorium in 1979–1983. Resident physician, senior resident physician at the Turkmen military district army hospital in 1983–1988. Lecturer at the military department of the Turkmen State Medical Institute in 1988–1992. Head of a military sanatorium in 1992–1994. Appointed deputy defense minister for administration in 1994. Head of the Border Guards service, commander of Turkmen border troops in March 2002–September 2003. Defense minister, secretary of the National Security Council in September 2003–January 2009. Army general since October 2004. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[44] Bayram Alovov, born 1969 in Ashgabat. Graduated from the Moscow Institute of Culture in 1994. Served with the KNB in 1994–1995, then with the presidential security service until 1999. Appointed deputy chief of the Border Guards service in May 1999. Appointed acting chief of the Border Guards service and commander of the border troops on November 2, 2006. Appointed chairman of the Border Guards service and commander of the border troops on February 27, 2007. Promoted to Major General in November 2004. Dismissed in January 2009. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[45] ''Chief of Turkmen border guards sacked,'' Turkmenistan.ru, January 21, 2009, <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=ru&elem_id=14322&type=event&sort=date _desc; ''New defense minister appointed,'' Turkmenistan.RU, January 21, 2009, <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=ru&elem_id=14319&type=event&sort=date _desc>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[46] There is no information on Myrat Yslamov's date and place of birth. His first appearance in the political arena dates back to November 2002, when he became a Majlis member and head of a Majlis committee. Appointed chairman of the State Agency for Registration of Foreign Nationals and head of the department for military and law-enforcement agencies at the presidential administration in March 2003. In December 2006, shortly before Niyazov's death, Yslamov left Ashgabat to serve as first deputy governor of Mary province—an obvious demotion. Appointed head of the national anti-drugs service in January 2008. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[47] Yaylym Berdiyev—born 1972 in Bekharly district of Akhal province. Graduated from the Turkmen University of Agriculture in 1994. Served with the KNB in 1995–2003. Served in the foreign nationals registration service in 2003–2006, reaching the rank of deputy chairman. Head of the foreign nationals registration service and head of the department of analysis of law-enforcement and military agencies' activity at the presidential administration in 2006–2007. Head of foreign nationals registration service in 2007–2008. Head of the State Migration Service in May–June 2008. Chairman of the Customs Service from June 19, 2008 until January 21, 2009. See: *Centre Asia*, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

[48] These three are: deputy prime minister and foreign minister Rashyd Meredov; agriculture minister Esenmyrat Orazgeldyev; and environment minister Makhtumkuli Akmyradov.

[49] E. Aman, ''Who rules Turkmenistan. Who is who,'' April 3, 2008, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1207209120>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[50] Rashyd Meredov—born 1960 in Ashgabat. Graduated from the Law faculty of the Moscow Lomonosov State University. Holds a PhD in Law. Elected chairman of the Majlis in 2001. Appointed foreign minister in July 2001. Deputy prime minister in 2003–2005, and then again since February 18, 2007. See: <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1207209120>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[51] Khydyr Saparlyev—born 1958 in the town of Mary. Graduated from the Turkmen Polytechnics in 1982. Holds a PhD in Technology. Worked as researcher and educator until 1998. Berdymuhammedov's aide in 1998–1999. Later appointed as head of the science and education department under the Cabinet of Ministers. Appointed rector of the Turkmen Polytechnics in 2001. Education minister in 2004–2005. Appointed ambassador to Armenia in October 2005. Appointed minister of education on February 16, 2007, then deputy prime minister for education, science, culture, sports, the media and NGOs in March 2007. See: <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1207209120>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[52] Viktor Mikhaylovich Khramov—born 1952 in Chardzhou (formerly the capital of Chardzhou province, now renamed Turkmenabad, capital of Lebap province). Graduated from the Tashkent Polytechnics (in Uzbekistan). In 1985, appointed as an aide to Niyazov, shortly after the latter's appointment as head of the Communist Party in Turkmenistan (other reports suggest he had been appointed to this position by Niyazov's predecessor Gapurov). As an aide of Niyazov, Khramov was responsible for maintaining his schedule of meetings, prepared press reviews, and was also responsible for censorship in the media. It is speculated that Kharmov's role had grown substantially after the departure of Valeriy Otchertsov to Moscow. There have been reports that he had worked with Otchertsov (who was already in Moscow at the time) and presidential security service chief Rejepov on a plot to assassinate Shikhmuradov in the late 1990s. Together with Rejepov, Khramov initiated the arrests of Kurbanmuradov, Saparov and Charyev. Led Berdymuhammedov's election campaign in 2007. It has been speculated that he was behind the downfall of Rejepov in 2007. He is thought to be the Number 2 man in Turkmenistan, in charge of domestic policies and propaganda—although this information is hard to verify. He is also a proponent of the hard line in dealing with the opposition. See: <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1207209120>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[53] Iklymberdy Paromov—born 1965 in Mary province. Graduated from the Turkmen National University in 1990 as a teacher of history and social sciences. Taught social sciences at the Mary medical school of nurses and physician assistants in 1990–1995. Served with the KNB in 1995–1996. Deputy head of the military agencies department under the Cabinet of Ministers in 1996–1998. Spent the subsequent seven years working in the special department of the presidential administration and in the presidential security service. First deputy foreign minister in 2005–2006. Served as chief administrator at the presidential administration from January 25 until May 16, 2006. Minister of the textile industry from May 16 until July 14, 2007. Appointed

chief administrator at the presidential administration and the cabinet of ministers on July 14, 2007. See: <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1207209120>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[54] ''Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov proposes reform of the People's Assembly,'' May 23, 2008, <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=ru&elem_id=12840&type=event&sort=date_desc>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[55] ''President appoints new spokesman and culture minister,'' January 12, 2008, <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=ru&elem_id=11975&type=event&sort =date_desc>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[56] ''Universal prosperity through peace, progress and advances of the civilization,'' *Turkmenistan: the Golden Age*, January 21, 2008, <http://turkmenistan.gov.tm/_rus/2008/01/21/print:page,1,vseobshhee_blagopoluchie_i_procvetanie__cherez_mir_progress_dostizhenija_civilizacii.html>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[57] Ibid.

[58] The factual side of the events of September 12–13, 2008 is recounted using information from <http://www.gundogar.org>, which provides the most detailed description of what happened.

[59] (1) People's Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan (NDDT), founded in 2001 by Boris Shikhmuradov. No information about its activity following Shikhmuradov's arrest. (2) The Vatan movement—date of creation unknown, led by former Turkmen deputy prime minister Khudayberdy Orazov, who lives in Sweden. (3) United Democratic Opposition of Turkmenistan, founded in 1998, led by Avdy Kuliev. Not active after Kuliev's death in April 2007. (4) Renaissance Party, led by Nazar Suyunov, former deputy prime minister. No further information available. (5) Republican Party of Turkmenistan, no information on date of creation or founders. Chaired by Nurmuhammed Khanamov, who was the head of the state department of procurement in Turkmenistan in 1990—August 1994, and the Turkmen ambassador to Turkey until February 2002. The party's website was last updated in early 2007. (6) The Russian Community of Turkmenistan, founded in 1991. Chaired by Anatoliy Petrovich Fomin, who lives and works in Moscow. Its main activity is providing assistance in obtaining Russian citizenship. See: <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1207209120>, last accessed September 17, 2009.

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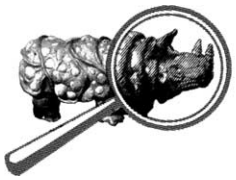

Mikhail Yakushev

INTERNET GOVERNANCE: POLITICS AND GEOPOLITICS

There is no longer any need these days to begin an article about Internet technology by recounting the history of the net's creation or by explaining why it is so important for human civilization. The Internet is now part of everyday lives for most of the people on this planet. Network technologies are an integral part of the economy. ''Electronic government'' (or to be more precise, electronic interaction between the government, society and citizens) no longer seems an exotic privilege of technologically advanced countries. Of course, the penetration rate of Internet technologies varies from country to country, for a whole number of reasons. These reasons, as well as the various consequences of the rapid development of the Internet, have been the subject of numerous studies in areas such as technology, macroeconomics, culture, law, philosophy and even religion—several religious groups have already sprung up whose members maintain contact only via the net. But the question that often remains unasked is, who governs all this multitude of electronic communications, data transfer protocols and domain name registration systems? That question is becoming especially important now that the Internet, unfortunately, is increasingly being used as a weapon in information wars—a weapon of ''mass destruction'' or a weapon for ''surgical strikes''. The Georgian–Ossetian military conflict that broke out in the summer of 2008 saw widespread use of Internet technologies for propaganda purposes (which, admittedly, was not the first time that this had happened). What is more, entire ''hostile'' domains on the territory of one of the participants in the conflict came under attack. It is quite indicative that the country that effected such a radical restriction of freedom of information was no other than Georgia, whose leaders like to call themselves ''the bulwark of democracy in the confrontation with imperialist Russia.'' Meanwhile, in Russia itself no punitive measures were undertaken against any segments of the Internet, including the Georgia websites.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the current situation concerning Internet governance on the global scale, and the attendant political and geopolitical problems.

THEORY

First, let us acquaint ourselves with the basic terminology.

For now, there is no commonly agreed definition of ''the Internet'' or ''Internet governance''. In 2004–2005, these issues were put on the agenda of the Working Group on Internet Governance under the U.N. Secretary-General. The workgroup included Internet experts representing more than 40 nations. The conclusions reached by the workgroup can be outlined in the following way:

1. The term ''Internet'' has by now become so widespread and intuitive that no definitions are necessary.
2. ''Internet governance'' is a process of regulating the Internet's functioning and development, which requires the cooperation of three key stakeholder groups: government

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agencies, businesses, and civil society institutions (such as NGOs and nonprofit groups representing Internet users).

3. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has been created to serve as an international platform for discussions on this issue.[1] Over the period 2006–2009, IGF meetings were held in Athens, Rio de Janeiro, Hyderabad and Sharm el-Sheikh.

From the very beginning of international debate over Internet governance, two different approaches to this issue took shape. Under the so-called narrow approach, Internet governance was restricted to technical issues such as setting common rules for the allocation of IP number blocks on the international level and within individual nations the procedures for domain names registration, rules for allocation of IP numbers by network operators, etc.

The second approach defined Internet governance in much broader terms. It encompassed humanitarian, political and economic issues. These included the need to recognize the multilingual nature of the Internet, accommodate cultural diversity and prevent the Net from being used for illegal purposes. It also included such controversial proposals as revising the entire global economic model of managing the telecommunications infrastructure to empower the less developed nations. But considering the multi-stakeholder nature of Internet governance (government + business + civil society) the best way forward would be through a combination of the two approaches. It would, however, require a clearer understanding of what level (international or national) various problems should be addressed at, and using what instruments (legal, technical or organizational).

It is quite clear that the entire complex of Internet governance issues should be based on the key principles that lie at the foundation of the Internet. And it is these same principles that have made the explosive growth of the Internet possible in the first place. They include:

- the procedure of routing content and service information between the Internet nodes. In other words, this information should reach its destination with minimal cost, and preferably without any loss of data;
- the procedure for allocation and use of the IP numbers. This procedure should be the same for the whole net—otherwise it will be impossible to ensure the integrity (territorial and technological) of the various segments of the Internet;
- the procedure for translating network IP numbers into unique domain names, which is instrumental for ensuring universal connectivity.

Let us recall that all these basic principles are a direct result of the idea in the 1960s to build an information network that would be resilient and retain at least part of its functionality in case of a massive Soviet nuclear strike against U.S. military command centers.

Because of the nature of Internet architecture as an information network, and for a variety of historical, technological and political reasons, the key factors in the regulation of domain names and IP addresses are as follows:

1. the transnational nature of relations in maintaining the functionality of the Internet—this information network does not know national borders;
2. the important role of standards and protocols, as well as technical regulation and self-regulation;
3. America's technological and economic leadership, which came about due to obvious historical reasons. It is clear, however, that this leadership is no longer as undisputed as it was only five years ago, and an increasing number of countries are refusing to accept it.

All these factors have led to the appearance of a modern system of managing the core functions of the Internet. It is believed that the general coordination of the development of the Internet is carried out by the Internet Society,[2] a not-for-profit organization with offices in Virginia and Geneva. Its engineering wing, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF),[3] develops and adopts standardized Requests for Comments (RFC), which are then used to develop Internet protocols and ensure the integrity of the various components of the net.

But the key role in maintaining the global IP address space and the universal system of unique domain names belongs to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN),[4]

which will be discussed in more detail later on. Both organizations (ICANN and the Internet Society) were set with the support of the U.S. government. They have managed to develop fairly productive cooperation with most of the organizations and state agencies that have a role in Internet regulation and/or self-regulation in other countries.

Apart from the already mentioned organizations, the following entities have a role in Internet governance:

- the U.S. government, including the Department of Commerce, which has transferred to ICANN the responsibility for managing the Domain Name System from a government agency;
- international organizations (including special UN agencies);
- the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which develop and implement standards and regulations used to maintain Internet functionality, primarily in the area of telecommunications infrastructure. Some aspects of Internet governance also lie with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and UNESCO;
- Regional Internet Registries (RIRs)—nonprofit organizations that receive blocks of IP numbers from ICANN based on a special agreement, and then allocate these addresses between the Internet Service Providers in their region. One of the five such centers is RIPE NCC,[5] which covers Europe, including the Russian Federation;
- top-level registries—organizations that maintain top-level domain name databases and make sure that each domain name is unique. In Russia, this organization is the autonomous not-for-profit Coordination Center for National Internet Domain;[6]
- registrars—organizations that register domain names based on agreements with the users and with the national registry (or ICANN). More than 20 registrars are accredited in Russia;
- Internet Access Service Operators (often and incorrectly called Internet Service Providers, or ISPs)—numerous and predominantly commercial organizations that offer Internet access services to end-users;
- server (resource) administrators—users (organizations or individual citizens) who have obtained a permanently registered IP number and domain name to host information resources or information services;
- users—individuals and organizations who are provided with access to the Internet based on their contracts with the ISPs. Global and national communities of Internet users play a fairly important role in Internet governance;
- national authorities, which pass laws and regulations on the use of the Internet in their national jurisdictions.

Relations within the Internet are mainly between the end user and the resource administrator, or in some cases between individual users or peers. But as part of maintaining Internet functionality and providing access to Internet resources, there are also many other kinds of relationships between the various players. In terms of the volume of traffic, first and foremost is the relationship between the various Internet service providers. But the central role belong to relationships in the area of ensuring the integrity of the Internet and maintaining a universal IP address space, domain names, port numeration, standards and protocols, all of which makes the Internet universally accessible.

The main resource in terms of Internet access is the network IP number.

The domain name is a secondary resource, which was created to make access to Internet sites more convenient. It is a character string (i.e. www.pircenter.org for PIR Center), which corresponds, via one-to-one mapping, to a unique IP number.

An IP number is a limited resource. It is not owned by anyone, and it cannot be sold. Users are granted temporary use of it, and if a number is not in use for a certain period it is returned to the general pool. Users acquire their IP number from their ISP; the ISP acquires it from the local

(national) registries or from regional registrars. The domain names are chosen from among any available names that are not already in use and that are supported by the Domain Name Servers (DNS) administrators at various levels. It is expected that the current version of the Internet protocol (IPv4) will run out of IP addresses (numbers) in 2010 (the current system supports several billion IP numbers). The new version of the protocol, IPv6, increases the number of available IP addresses by a factor of several trillion,[7] resolving the problem completely. It also offers improved routing and added functionality.

But although it seems to be a purely technical problem, it also has an important political component (or to be more precise, this component is being highlighted by certain countries which do not want the issue to be resolved as a purely technical problem). The underlying reason is that currently regional registries allocate blocks of IPv4 numbers without any reference to national borders. That is not the approach that is used, for example, in telephony, where every sovereign nation has its own country code. There are certain exceptions to this system: the United States and Canada share the +1 code, for example, while Russia and Kazakhstan have joint use of +7. The telephony numeration system is therefore critically dependent on national regulation by the national telecommunication authorities. In Russia, this authority is the Ministry of Telecommunications, as well as the Federal Communications Agency. On the Internet, meanwhile, ''primary'' blocks of IP numbers are distributed in a fairly democratic (market) way, without any reference to national or international mechanisms. But the proposal for the new IPv6 system is to use the address distribution system that is similar to traditional telephony. Nations such as China, Brazil and Syria have repeatedly called for transfer of the responsibility for allocation of IP blocks to the ITU. This would allow a large degree of national control over the distribution of ''primary'' blocks of IP numbers within each individual nation. It is one of the most contentious issues in the whole debate on Internet governance, in terms of the Internet's primary infrastructure and the need to take *national interests* into account. However, such calls (which are not, by the way, shared by the majority of ITU members) can hardly be justified by the intention to ''ensure the right of sovereign nations to use the *limited resource.''* Even if every country has thousands of registrars (and even the most developed ones now have only a thousand at the very most), each of these registrars would still have a block of trillions of IP numbers available to it, at no cost whatsoever. So the resource is not at all *limited* in any way.

Nevertheless, this example clearly demonstrates how politics can become part of even such technical issues as a transition to a higher IP version, which does not directly affect the majority of end users. The situation is even more complicated with the management of the Domain Name System—the system that makes the Internet look the way it does now.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND GEOPOLITICS OF THE INTERNET

Internet technology allows for a whole multitude of different services—many of them unknown or seldom used by ordinary end users. But we all know the service which is used to represent text, graphics and other information on the websites—the World Wide Web, as well as the service that is used to send and receive emails. Web technology is being put to increasingly numerous uses. Only a couple of years ago the number of users of Internet blogs or social networks was just a fraction of what it is now. Five years ago, these services were virtually unknown. There are also the file-sharing networks, instant messaging services, IP telephony and IP television, search engines and data storage systems. But to make all these and future Internet services easy to use, we have a single technology called the Domain Name System, which allows all the information resources on the Internet to be easily found and accessed. Unlike the IP numbers, which are all situated at the same level, in a multitude of nodes linked together by communication lines the DNS is a hierarchical system, like a tree with many branches. In this system, all the nodes (servers) on the Internet are grouped into separate branches (domains). The DNS is a distributed system that includes many servers, each with its own place in the overall hierarchy. Historically, the top level of this hierarchy is made up of 13 *root servers* in the United States, several European countries and Japan. These root servers are distributed computer systems, which store some of their information on physically separate machines (some of which are geographically located in Moscow and Novosibirsk).[8] All these servers maintain and update several times a day the so-called routing tables, which are used by network routers to determine the destination of information being sent between various domains (and the end users in those domains).

The *top level domains* have a special role in the functioning of the Internet. Until recently, they were traditionally divided into geographic (country-code top-level domains) and generic. The top-level domain name is the rightmost part of the Internet address, separated from the lower-level domain names by the dot. For example, the top-level domain name is .ru for the Russian Federation, and .aero for the generic domain used by civil aviation. The rules for creating new domains allow for an unlimited variety of such names. The number of possible combinations of letters and symbols in these names is more than the entire vocabulary of any language. So the crucially important thing is who administrates any given domain, and what the rules are for registering new lower-level domains in the top-level domain.

The choice of administrator for any given domain is based on whether the candidate organization has the required technical capability, and whether it can perform this function equitably, honestly, competently and without prejudice, ensuring equal rights for all.

Of the 20 or so generic domains (.com, .org, .net, etc), most are administered by American commercial organizations—or, in the case of domains such as .gov or .mil, by the relevant government agencies. The vast majority of U.S. users are registered in the generic domains (rather than the geographic .us domain).

As for the geographic (country) domains, the distribution of addresses here does not follow the political map of the world very strictly. To begin with, ICANN is very flexible when it comes to creating new domains or abolishing the old ones. Some countries have more than one domain name registered to them. For example, Britain has the widely used .uk and the nearly extinct .gb. Russia has the national .ru domain as well as .su, inherited from Soviet times. In cases where the national borders are redrawn, the new international entity receives its new domain name after a certain period. Such decisions are based on the international ISO 3166-1 standard,[9] which recommends two-letter country codes.

Formally, this standard (approved by the International Organization for Standardization) helps to avoid geopolitical conflicts on the Internet in situations when separatist territories break away from recognized international entities. This is why Kosovo still falls under the Serbian .rs domain (although most Kosovar websites are registered in other domains), whereas Montenegro has been issued with a new domain name, .me. But tensions still exist between the People's Republic of China and ICANN over the .tw domain used in Taiwan, which China considers as a breakaway province.

Meanwhile, while new domains are appearing, some disappear:.dd (former East Germany), .cs (Czechoslovakia), and .yu (Yugoslavia) have all been abolished. Two other domain names, .tp and .zr, have been replaced after their countries, East Timor and Zaire, renamed themselves into Timor-Leste and the Democratic Republic of Congo, respectively. Their new domain names are .tl and .cd.

More than 200 top-level geographic domains now exist, in accordance with the ISO 3166-1 standard. Most of them are active (i.e. they have lower-level domains registered in them). There are, however, some domains that are not being actively administered. One example is the country domain of Western Sahara; another is the short-lived international entity of Serbia and Montenegro, as well as some French overseas territories. There are also some national domains that are not in use, for one reason or another. There are no registrations in the .gb domain, which formally belongs to Britain. The only British domain that is now in use is .uk. Other domains still exist in contravention of the ISO 3166-1 standard (for example, the old Soviet .su domain, which is still in use in Russia).

As the examples above suggest, the existence of new, non-standard or unused domains is mainly due to geopolitical changes on the world map. In all such cases, the priority for ICANN is to ensure the stability of the existing domains and of the sites registered in them. Just as there are no two identical political systems even in geographically and historically close countries, there are no two identical models of administrating the national (country) domains. And it has to be said that the administration model itself does not directly affect the domain's development (i.e. the number of registered lower-level domains, growth figures, etc.). These indicators are far more dependent on other factors such as Internet penetration rate, level of the country's economic development, computer literacy of the population, national policy on the Internet, etc. Nevertheless, for the

purposes of this discussion, there are several typical models for administrating the national domains:

1. direct administration by a government agency (in countries such as China or Argentina);
2. administration by a commercial company, which, apart from administrating the top-level domain, also acts as a registrar for lower-level domains; that includes professional (self-governing) associations of registrars (Britain, Austria, Ukraine);
3. national domain administration by a ''compromise'' nonprofit, educational or academic organization, authorized to do so by the local Internet community and/or the relevant government agency (Lithuania, Cyprus, and the Russian .ru domain);
4. national domain administration by a foreign commercial company under a contract with the nation's government (one typical example is the .tv domain of the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu.)

There are of course substantial differences in the rules of registration in various national domains. There are domains with millions of registrations; some have only a few dozen or several hundred. In some cases, the two-letter code of the national domain looks similar to a popular abbreviation (such as .tv), artificially inflating the number of registrations in the domain.

The .tv domain, which belongs to Tuvalu, is a typical example. The small and remote Pacific island nation has no natural resources to speak of—but its two-letter national domain code is also the common abbreviation for television in many languages. Quite a few television-related Internet sites have therefore chosen the Tuvalu domain for registration, for the sake of .tv at the end of their Internet address. That is why the number of registrations in the Tuvalu domain is much higher than the size of its population or economy would warrant. The domain is administrated under a 1996 contract with the government of Tuvalu by *dotTV* (.tv) Corporation, a subsidiary of *VeriSign*. A fixed share of the registration fees, reaching several million dollars every year, makes up a big chunk of Tuvalu's national budget. The nation's domain is essentially being administrated by a foreign commercial company (although the government has a share in it) for purely commercial reasons. There are no checks on the country of domicile or the purpose of registration for anyone wishing to obtain an address in the .tv domain.

Niue island in the South Pacific has found itself in a similar situation. Its .nu domain means ''now'' in Scandinavian languages, and ''nude'' in French. The island's national domain is therefore popular with product promotion companies in Scandinavia and with the adult industry across the world. The .fm domain, belonging to Micronesia, is popular among radio stations, and the new .cd domain (DR Congo) is used for CD promotions.

A similar kind of popularity may await the Turkmen .tm domain—for now, the rules of registration in Turkmenistan remain too rigid. But all that raises the question of how far this practice of farming out the national domains to foreign commercial operators might go. Can these operators be kept under appropriate controls, and can information about them be properly collected and registered? Meanwhile, new revolutionary changes are in the pipeline once the new top-level domains are introduced, and the border between generic and country domains disappears completely.

Back in 2005, ICANN approved new top-level domains. These include such ''industry'' domains as .travel, .mobi and .tel. There is also a new supranational domain, .asia. And the new .cat domain belongs to neither a country nor an international organization (such as the European Union, with its .eu domain), but to what is essentially an ethnic or language group—the Catalan language foundation. (Though it is quite likely that were it not for the stringent requirements for registration in this domain, .cat would have become the favorite of cat food and grooming companies.)

Another innovation is the Internationalized Domain Names, the top-level domains which allow for Web addresses in scripts other than Western. Finally, a radical decision has been made to allow for a virtually unlimited number of top-level domains, created at the request of any interested party.[10] It is estimated that in the first few years after this ''open'' top-level domain registration begins, the number of domains such as .google or .pircenter will reach thousands or even tens of thousands.[11]

Debates over the ''non-standard'' generic top-level domains are still under way, and ICANN is not in a hurry to launch them. But the internationalized top-level domains in scripts such as Cyrillic are expected to appear in the first half of 2010.

The idea of creating a system of network addresses using symbols that are not part of the traditional Western set became popular in the 1990s, when millions of new users came on line in the former Soviet republics, the Arab countries, India, China and other nations whose languages use non-Western scripts. Temporary technical fixes soon appeared, allowing some users of the country domains to type in the part of the address before the national prefix (i.e. before .cn for China) in their national script. The system would automatically replace the non-Western characters to identify the unique IP number corresponding to the web address. There is such a fix for Cyrillic languages too, though it has never been implemented. But these fixes had some serious drawbacks. For a start, the user had to type in the address in two different scripts. In addition, these systems never became a global standard. If the user tried to type in such an address on a computer that was not part of the relevant domain, the address would either be displayed incorrectly or fail to reach the required website. Work soon began to create a single set of standards for ''internationalized'' domain names for most of the existing non-Western scripts (Cyrillic, Greek, Georgian, Armenian, Arabic, Hebrew, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.). At the 4th meeting of the Internet Governance Forum in Sharm El-Sheikh, several countries submitted applications to register their national domains in the native scripts. The proposed Russian domain is .рф. Egypt and Saudi Arabia applied to set up their own national domains in Arabic. China submitted an application for a national domain in Chinese. The first non-Latin top-level domains are expected to come on line in the first half of 2010.

But that upcoming launch has already raised a whole number of technical, legal and political issues—and more will surely arise in the future.

First, some Internet users are worried—and not without reason—that the introduction of the ''national script'' domains is an attempt to divide the Net into fragments and hamper the free flow of information between the geographic segments. It is certainly true that filtering out the whole Internet traffic that originates from ''unreadable'' domains is much simpler than analyzing the content of the sites themselves. And users in other countries who cannot type in non-Latin addresses on their keyboards will have no way of accessing the sites in the ''foreign-language'' domains. However, all these issues can be resolved by setting up automatic forwarding between websites in different domains, and a properly structured system of links.

There is also a strand of opinion (especially in countries like Russia) that once the ''national'' domains are introduced, the Internet will be fragmented into the ''first-class'' global segment, and the ''second-class'' local segment—in the same way that many Russians see the offerings of their local car industry as ''second-class''.

These issues are largely psychological. But there also real problems caused by the increasingly complex structure of Internet services, including the introduction of new domains. That could certainly create problems for fighting Internet crime, including the publication by websites of antisocial (i.e. illegal) information, or numerous variations of fraud. In the case of ''conventional'' domains and websites, which use the English language (or Western script) for their addresses, the task of identifying their administrator can be done relatively easily thanks to existing algorithms and technical means. But if, for example, calls to commit acts of terrorism (written in Russian) are posted on a website somewhere in the Amharic, Burmese or Singhalese domains, finding the perpetrator will be more difficult, for obvious reasons.

In addition, there are certain problems with the internationalized domain names themselves. Under the acting IDN standards, at least one symbol in such a domain name should be unique to non-Western scripts. For the Arabic script, that is not a problem. But for Cyrillic, which shares many characters with the Western script, things are more complicated. The Cyrillic domain name .ру (reads as ''ru'' in Russian) would not be allowed, because the two Cyrillic symbols look exactly like .py, the Western-script domain name of Paraguay. But Russia at least can use. рф (reads as ''rf'' in Russian) for Russian Federation, whereas in the Ukrainian word for ''Ukraine'' (Україна), all the characters look exactly like letters of the Western script (though some are pronounced differently). So coming up with the Ukrainian domain name in Cyrillic script will be a problem.

There also problems with the names of sovereign countries that are disputed by their neighbors. The most famous case is the dispute between Greece and the former Yugoslav republic of

Macedonia (Skopje). Another problem is with the sequence of symbols in the address: in Arabic, letters are written right to left, but numbers left to right.

The whole transition to internationalized domain names has also given rise to another idea: why not allow a Cyrillic version of the national domain name for countries where large minorities speak Cyrillic languages? We are talking about domain names such as .сша (.usa) or .фрг (.germany), or even. .лондон (.london) and .мальорка (.mallorca). Technologically, this can be done. The only thing that stands in the way of such proposals is the unwillingness to ''rock the boat'' at such an early stage of creating internationalized domain names. But, on the whole, there are quite a number of exciting ideas in the pipeline for the Internet.

Of course, all the examples given are not the biggest problems facing the Internet community. But they illustrate one of the key political questions of Internet governance: who and by what right should make fundamental decisions about the future of the Internet? Even those issues that appear purely technical can have far-reaching social, legal, economic and political implications.

ICANN CORPORATION: BIG POLITICS OF A ''NON-POLITICAL'' ORGANIZATION

A key role in Internet governance—or the part of it that deals with the IP numbers and the Domain Name System—belongs to ICANN, which is registered in California as a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation. Its president since 2009 is Rod Beckstrom (a U.S. citizen and former director of the National Cybersecurity Center). The corporation's HQ is in Los Angeles; there is also a European office in Brussels. The HQ and the European office employ a total of about 100 staff.

ICANN was founded in 1998, after the Department of Commerce ordered the transfer of the responsibility for assigning IP numbers and top-level domain names from the so-called Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA),[12] which worked under a contract with the U.S. government. (The national domain names under the ISO 3166-1 standard were issued by IANA).

The work of ICANN as an organization authorized to assign domain names globally is based on a Memorandum of Understanding between ICANN and the Department of Commerce of the United States (the document is sometimes referred to as an Agreement on Joint Projects). This memorandum has often been cited as proof of ''American influence'' on the global Domain Name System. But it should be remembered that the memorandum only came about because the Department of Commerce wanted to end all formal ties between the technical management of the DNS and the U.S. administration, after a certain transitional period that was originally meant to expire in 2000. It was declared that the purpose of transferring the responsibility for Internet administration to ICANN was to foster competition and facilitate international participation.

The text of the memorandum was later changed or amended several times, and the transitional period was extended. In 2006, a final decision was made that the memorandum should expire on September 30, 2009, and from then on ICANN would carry on without reporting on the implementation of the terms of the memorandum to any U.S. government agency.

ICANN was authorized to perform the following DNS management functions:

- ❑ establishment of policy for and direction of the allocation of IP number blocks;
- ❑ oversight of the operation of the authoritative root server system;
- ❑ oversight of the policy for determining the circumstances under which new top-level domains would be added to the root system;
- ❑ coordination of the assignment of other Internet technical parameters as needed to maintain universal connectivity on the Internet;
- ❑ other activities necessary to coordinate the specified DNS management functions, as agreed by the parties involved.

As a non-for-profit public-benefit organization, ICANN is subject to several regulatory restrictions. It is now allowed to engage in lobbying or political activity ''to any substantial degree'' (such activities should not represent more than five percent of its costs). At the same time, the ICANN management and staff are not liable for any of the corporations' liabilities, and the corporation itself enjoys substantial tax breaks.

ICANN's internal structure is quite complex. The main decision-making power lies with the Board of Directors. Members of the board are periodically rotated under a fairly complicated procedure. Another important part of the corporation is the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). Initially it was made up of government experts representing a small number of countries, and did not have any real decisionmaking power. But the role of the GAC is gradually becoming more important. It now has more than 80 members. In November 2009, the committee got its first Russian representative, who is the director of a department in Russia's Telecommunications Ministry.[13]

On the whole, ICANN has been doing its job quite well. There have not been any serious technical problems with the DNS, or any political conflicts over the essence or timing of ICANN's decisions. The biggest such conflict was over the already mentioned Taiwanese domain, .tw, which led to cooperation between ICANN and China being put on hold for several years. ICANN is generally very reluctant to make any radical decisions that are likely to provoke a negative reaction even from a few countries or a small part of the Internet community. Taiwan received its own domain based on the existing ISO 3166-1 standard. But the launch of the ''specialized''.xxx domain for adult websites was cancelled due to opposition from a number of nations and international organizations at the preliminary discussion stage. ICANN has also desisted from abolishing the .su domain, although the country it was registered to (former Soviet Union) no longer exists, because the domain still has a large number of registered websites (mainly scientific and educational institutions).

Nevertheless, ICANN often comes under fire from various quarters. Some nations still see the corporation as an advocate of the American model of Internet management. That model is based on refusal of any attempts to police the *content* of the Internet, but on the other hand it also suggests the possibility of government control over *access* to some Internet resources.[14] Rights groups often accuse ICANN of failing to uphold freedom of information (though to be fair, that was never part of the corporation's remit anyway). Many experts say ICANN's decisionmaking mechanisms are overly complex, cumbersome and insufficiently transparent—in other words, not very fit for this day and age.

But what could be a realistic alternative to ICANN? The International Telecommunications Union, or some other international organization? Some new UN agency? A mechanism within the G8 or G20 framework? Or should the corporation's functions simply be transferred to national administrations, without any global mechanism for managing the DNS? Such proposals obviously will not have any significant support even among governments, let alone the world of business or the Internet community. Although there are some issues that need to be resolved (and they will be resolved in time), there have not been any serious problems with global DNS administration—so why try to fix something that is not broken? Russia too is gradually moving towards that view. Its official position is evolving from unconditional support for transferring DNS administration to the ITU towards recognizing the fact of ICANN's existence and the need to cooperate with it on a whole range of issues.

On September 30, 2009, ICANN entered ''a new era.'' The memorandum with the Department of Commerce, which had been extended several times, finally expired. A new document, with a curious name ''Affirmation of Commitments,'' was signed to replace it. It confirms all the powers that were earlier transferred to the corporation from the U.S. government, and ended the practice of ICANN reporting to the DoC. The corporation will now submit its reports to the Government Advisory Committee (GAC). That is of course meant as further proof that the corporation is not controlled by the U.S. government. However, the actual powers wielded by GAC make it unlikely that the decision-making process on managing the global DNS will change in the foreseeable future. And a number of documents between ICANN and the U.S. government (mainly regulating the technical aspects of DNS management) have remained in place even after September 30, 2009. One example is the contract for performing the functions under the IANA project.

WHAT'S NEXT?

This article presents just a brief outline of the key problems of Internet governance. It does not touch upon issues of information security, protection of network infrastructure, control over the spread of information, or applied aspects of Internet technologies. All these issues have a political component, the importance of which is comparable (or even greater) than the importance of *geopolitics of the network address space*.

It is also important to note that in recent years the Internet has not only been expanding (new nations coming on line, new communication lines being built, and more powerful servers installed), but also going ''deeper''. New resources are appearing in national languages, and new functionality is being added all the time. It may sound counterintuitive, but the Internet is also becoming less international and more *local*. From an exotic toy (''a window to the world'') it is turning into a *household appliance*, and a necessary business instrument. All this multitude of opportunities (old functionality is still retained when new functions are added) is a guarantee that the applications of the Internet will continue to improve and develop indefinitely.

At the same time, the use of the Internet at home or at work is becoming a clear competitive advantage for countries which facilitate such use. Which means that decisions affecting the global development of the Internet are increasingly becoming part of every country's national interests. New Internet technologies have enabled each one of us to take part in devising solutions to numerous technological, social, cultural, legal and political issues. 

NOTES

[1] See: <http://www.intgovforum.org>

[2] See: <http://www.isoc.org>

[3] See: <http://www.ietf.org>

[4] See: <http://www.icann.org>

[5] See: <http://www.ripe.net>

[6] See: <http://www.cctld.ru>

[7] See: <http://www.isoc.org/briefings/001/>

[8] See: <http://www.root-servers.org>

[9] See: <http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes>

[10] See: <http://gnso.icann.org/issues/new-gtlds/>

[11] The registration is expected to cost $150,000–300,000, and will only be allowed if there are no conflicts with trademark owners.

[12] See: <http://www.iana.org>

[13] See: <http://minkomsvjaz.ru/news/xPages/entry.9385.html>

[14] ''Bill would give president emergency control of Internet,'' <http://news.cnet.com/8301-13578_3-10320096-38.html>, last accessed December 20, 2009.

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Murat Laumulin and Farkhod Tolipov

UZBEKISTAN AND KAZAKHSTAN: A RACE FOR LEADERSHIP?

From: Farkhod Tolipov

To: Murat Laumulin

Subject: Roots of Antagonism

Dear Murat Turarovich,

It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to discuss with you such a peculiar topic. The concept of the so-called rivalry between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan for leadership in Central Asia is quite widespread and it distorts the understanding of the real situation in the region and the actual state of relations between the two states. This false stereotype had an impact on political positions and academic approaches towards studying complicated processes in Central Asia. As a result, this thesis is now shared in both countries and the features of rivalry emerged in such a sphere where they could not have occurred at all.

A race for regional leadership between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is a myth, which may become a *senseless* virtual *reality*, as it may help to distract the attention and resources from the *actual reality*, i.e. from topical issues and specific situation in the region. Even if the dream to become a leader exists, it will never come true.

It is worth discussing the very notion of leadership and the evidence of such rivalry. As soon as we do so, it becomes clear that any debate points out the aforementioned *senseless reality*.

The notion of leader is multi-faceted—leader as hegemony (omnipotent subject); leader as the one who leads (while others follow); leader as an example (authority); leader as a success (advanced subject). The first type possesses physical power, the second one judicial; the third one normative; the fourth one has no power at all.

At present, in Central Asia there is only the fourth type of leadership. In the long run, the third model may emerge as well, but it will never be the first or the second pattern.

Once upon a time the idea of supposed rivalry between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan was *injected* by the *U.S. friends* of Tashkent. The U.S. researchers spoke about the rising trend, which originated from the inertia of Russian geopolitics. Zbigniew Brzezinski, for instance, recognizing the existence of competition, wrote in his *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (Basic Books, 1998), that the antagonism between Islam Karimov and Nursultan Nazarbaev was always beneficial for the Kremlin, which tried to play one off against the other. But he also indicated that the presidents eventually realized the need for cooperation and foreign policy coordination for the sake of maintaining their sovereignty.

On the other hand, the Russian analysts did not only speak about rivalry, but also recommended the Russian government to support and stimulate it. I would like to remind you of a large article in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* of March 26, 1997 titled ''CIS: beginning or end of history.'' Let me quote it:

> Integration inside Central Asia undermines the interests of the Russian economy in the region, while the course to submit the post-Soviet economies to the developed countries of the West and the South

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leaves no room for Russia. Russia should focus on washing out the emerging bloc (Central Asian Union), splitting it and instigating intraregional rivalry. Lack of trust caused by the desire of Nazarbaev and Karimov to lead in Central Asia has repeatedly called into question the existence of the Central Asian Union. The game of personal ambitions of these leaders may actually change the entire political map of the region . . .[1]

Yours sincerely,

Farkhod Tolipov

From: Murat Laumulin

To: Farkhod Tolipov

Subject: Re: Roots of Antagonism

Dear Farkhod Fazilovich,

Thank you for your interesting statement! In fact, what does it mean ''to be a regional leader''? One requires that appropriate resources—economic, politico-military, strategic, should possess attractive ideology and image, etc. Neither Kazakhstan nor Uzbekistan has all that. Moreover, even Russia, if it attempted to win the hearts and minds of the population in the region, would fail to play the role of such a regional leader. Alas, it is all in the past . . .

I have an impression that someone intentionally *injected* the idea of alleged rivalry between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. This must have happened in the early 1990s. To my mind, the authors are the *friends of Uzbekistan*, such as Graham Fuller, Martha Olcott, Shirin Akiner, and, naturally, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who proclaimed Uzbekistan the *Central Asian counterpart of Ukraine*, i.e. the state that can confront the ambitions of Moscow. At the same time, Kazakhstan was a priori regarded as a pro-Russian country.

However, some elements of rivalry are there. There is a historical context (relations between the settlers and nomads), personal competition of the leaders (it existed in the era of Kunaev-Rashidov and by tradition moved to the epoch of Nazarbaev-Karimov), and the difference in the patterns of development, etc.

Uzbekistan is a unique Central Asian nation. It is the only republic which borders all other states of the region. The large communities of ethnic Uzbeks exist on the territories of all neighboring states, including Afghanistan. These factors could not but affect the foreign policy of Tashkent and its relationship with the neighboring countries.

After the collapse of the U.S.S.R., the attitude of the external world to Uzbekistan was forming in a rather favorable environment. For the West, Uzbekistan was a country with the demographic and economic potential large enough to confront the willingness of Russia to restore its position in Central Asia.

For the Muslim world, Tashkent was the heir and keeper of the millennium-old traditions related to the brilliant Islamic past of the region, including such sacred Muslim sites as Bukhara and Samarkand. Uzbekistan was also regarded as the second largest Turk country in the world.

For the Asian world, Uzbekistan was a country with a high density of population, with well-preserved traditions of culture and labor ethics, i.e. a certain Central Asian sample of the *East Asian tigers* (new industrial states). Presumably, a favorable investment climate and the import of appropriate technologies could help Uzbekistan to repeat the fate of many Asia Pacific and Southeast Asian nations.

However, all these hopes did not come true. Uzbekistan proved that it was a real post-Soviet state with all the implications that followed. The economy concentrated on the model of state capitalism, which soon evolved into a clan economy.

As far as domestic policy is concerned, the regime of personal power of President Islam Karimov was established. He once came to power with the consent of Moscow, but on the wave of national democratic sentiments typical of all Soviet republics during the time of perestroika. By 1994 Karimov pulled up the weeds of any *secular* opposition. Nonetheless, the post-Soviet democrats

were replaced by the Islamic opposition, which first revealed itself in February 1999 with the failed assassination attempt against Islam Karimov. Since then, the Islamic militants, who are officially called *Wahhabis*, have bene the toughest opponents of the regime. The years 2002–2005 were marked by constant terrorist acts, attacks against the Western embassies and antiterrorist coalition members.

The late 1990s and early 2000s were the time of social unrest in Uzbekistan caused by serious economic problems, the failure of economic reforms, low life standards, permanent interference of the state in the economy and the inconsistent financial policy of Tashkent. The culminating point of social violence and growing role of the Islamic clandestine organizations was the bloody drama in Andijan in May 2005. The suppression of riots led to a deterioration in relations with the West.

As far as the foreign policy is concerned, Islam Karimov tried to balance all the time between different centers of power. Rapprochement with the West (for two–three years) was normally replaced by tensions and rapprochement with Russia (and a return to the integration structures of the CIS). Then this pendulum swung back. In its contemporary history Tashkent has managed to spoil relations with all neighbors, partners and potential allies—Central Asia, Russia, Turkey, Iran, the United States, the EU, the international financial institutions, the OSCE, and NATO. Perhaps the only exception was the relationship with China, even though it also had its ups and downs.

Meanwhile, one has to appreciate Karimov's consistency in maintaining freedom from any external dependence and keeping the sovereignty of Tashkent in decisionmaking, even if there was a direct threat to security and stability of the nation, as in 1999–2001.

Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in the world and the second largest country in the CIS after Russia. It has enormous natural resources and is considered to be the most stable of all post-Soviet nations.

In 2003 the aggregate GDP of Kazakhstan exceeded the overall GDP of all other Central Asian republics. Since then everyone has been talking about Kazakhstani leadership in the region. In 2004 the United States and the West recognized Kazakhstan as a free market economy. In 2005 leading Western politicians and large businesses de facto legitimized Kazakhstan and its political regime and it was admitted to the club of *non-failed* successful *states*. To make this happen, Kazakhstan and its elite had to pass through many difficulties, resolve numerous geopolitical problems, eradicate challenges to domestic stability and implement complicated projects. This path took about 15 years.

Foreign and domestic policy of Kazakhstan in the first decade after the independence was formed under pre-determined conditions. Today one may argue that the Kazakh leaders had a choice—between the bad and the worse, between the two evils. In the conditions of geopolitical, economic and political chaos of the early 1990s, the logic of survival and stability pushed Kazakhstan to be flexible and get out of trouble with minimal losses, reconciling the contradictory interests of the large actors.

Kazakhstan officially uses the term ''multivector diplomacy'', which became popular in the mid-1990s. This notion hides the balance between different geopolitical centers of power, which affected Kazakhstan and Central Asia as such.

The general public in Kazakhstan is quite indifferent towards Uzbekistan (the preceding feeling was irritation, which emerged after every border or customs incident with Tashkent). Nowadays Uzbekistan is not regarded in our society as a leader or a rival, it is merely not considered at all. The media try to raise artificial interest in the policy of Uzbekistan, e.g. through this concept of competition, but nobody cares. Everyone has got used to the fact that the period of friendship and hugs will inevitably be replaced by another period of withdrawal of Uzbekistan from the agreements with the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAzES) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Thus, Uzbek's foreign policy with all its illogical moments is understood, but nobody rushes to take it seriously.

Yours,

Murat Laumulin

From: Farkhod Tolipov

To: Murat Laumulin

Subject: Re: Re: Roots of Antagonism

Dear Murat Turarovich,

The rivalry, if it exists, comes and goes. It is a rudiment of the post-Soviet ambitions of the former Soviet leaders. When the post-Soviet independence euphoria and the notorious transition period are over, other regional development forces will become effective. The new generation of leaders will face the impact of globalization and regionalization, with the political awakening of masses. Meanwhile, so far we have to revise the state of bilateral relations, check the situation in the region, make the inventory of assets, for the two personified political regimes are the countries that bear responsibility for the fate of Central Asia.

Both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have proved that they are the real post-Soviet nations. This implies the unrestricted powers of the president. Kazakhstan is even ahead of Uzbekistan in the imitation of democracy, as the Constitution grants the president the right to be elected for an unlimited number of terms. As far as I know, nowadays there is discussion about proclaiming life presidency for Nursultan Nazarbaev. And this is where Kazakhstan really *leads* in Central Asia. The bitter irony is in the fact that a state demonstrating neglect of democratic principles will preside in the OSCE in 2010.

As far as the leadership is concerned, there is a curious fact. The key role of Uzbekistan is emphasized by all officials who visit the region in general and Tashkent in particular, while the authorities or academics in Uzbekistan themselves do not actually mention their *leadership*. In Kazakhstan the situation is the opposite—officials and political analysts speak all the time about some mythic leadership of Astana in the region, while Western experts—both governmental and nongovernmental—mostly keep silent on the issue.

This is the path towards *senseless reality*. One needs an unbiased comparison of foreign policy activities of both states and the effectiveness of their actions, in order to make any judgment about leadership.

I agree that the Kazakhstani multivector approach conceals the balance between various geopolitical centers of power affecting Central Asia. However, one can also notice some alter ego of the multivector approach—Kazakhstan's obsession with noisy but inadequate initiatives, such as the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. This forum lacks sense even as far as its title is concerned, let alone the practical substance. It is an example of multivector *foreign policy hyper-projecting*. The same fate was typical of Nazarbaev's concept of the Eurasian Union.

In this context one cannot skip the famous initiative by Nursultan Nazarbaev—the establishment of the Central Asian Union. Thanks to this idea, Kazakhstan could become a real leader in the region. However, the concept became a part of multivector policy and simply sank in it, instead of turning into a priority, a mainstream of the Kazakhstani foreign policy. Astana did not pay attention to the fact that *Central Asia, Eurasia, Europe* and *Asia* are not equal-weight notions.

Uzbekistan also demonstrates significant *achievements*. After declaring the concept of ''Turkestan—our common home'' and promoting the concept of Central Asian integration, Tashkent did little in practice to implement the idea. On the contrary, it placed mines at the border with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, introduced a visa regime for its neighbors (except Kazakhstan) and could not come to an agreement with them on distribution of water resources in the region.

As far as the international initiatives of Uzbekistan are concerned, they were quite a bit closer to the earth than the Kazakhstani, albeit they were not always successful and efficient. One may remember a series of appeals by Islam Karimov to the international community pertaining to the issue of Afghanistan, or his proposal to set up an antiterrorist center under UN auspices. Even in case of integration in the CIS, Uzbekistan has always tried to stipulate this process with certain conditions.

Kazakhstan is *dizzy* from alleged *successes* (some of which can be called into question, as economists say). This feeling brought to life the *leader complex* and the desire to position Kazakhstan as a sustainable state. Uzbekistan does not have such *impressive* results, so it

functions as a state that may *radically* change its course and force the world powers to take it into account. So, who is the leader?

You are right, Murat Turarovich, when you point out that in 2003 the aggregate GDP of Kazakhstan exceeded the total GDP of all other Central Asia republics. But the truth is also that in 2008 the GDP growth rate of Uzbekistan (according to the World Bank) was the highest among the CIS countries.

Uzbekistan is striving to join the World Trade Organization (WTO). Will this step be helpful for the country? Yes, it will provide access to world markets, reduce discrimination and antidumping procedures, and improve life standards thanks to the liberalization of the trade regime. Control on the part of the WTO will impair lobbying of private interests and will diminish protectionism. What are the impediments for accession? Differences over industrial policy methods, lack of transparency in state regulations, contradictions between the state regulations and the principles of market economy.

WTO members (including Russia, Ukraine or Kazakhstan in the future) may demand from Uzbekistan further liberalization of its foreign trade, and Tashkent is not ready for this. Besides, they may also ask for compliance with the WTO standards (legislation, customs tariffs, prices). What consequences may it have? I assume the bankruptcy of some enterprises, or even industries, growing unemployment due to the lack of competitiveness, and the problem of protection of intellectual property rights.

Taking into account that the accession of Uzbekistan to EurAzES required changes in the national legislation, a step Tashkent was not ready for, its membership in the WTO is a very distant perspective.

Who is the leader?

F. Tolipov

From: Murat Laumulin

To: Farkhod Tolipov

Subject: History

Dear Farkhod,

I suggest that we look into the past for a moment. The historical context is very important for the relations between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan—its impact is serious, even though not always noticed.

In various periods of common history Kazakhs were always mocked at by their neighbors. After the accession of Kazakhstan to the Russian Empire and then to Soviet Russia, they were laughed at by their traditionalist neighbors who did not want to abandon Islam and other characteristics of their medieval lifestyle. Before that they had been laughed at as nomads, then they were the object of mockery for their extreme russification (which, in fact, was a modernization). Fairly speaking, such modernization affected all nations of Central Asia, but only Kazakhs use it as a real tool to make a bridge to the future.

This became clear a few years after getting independence. Kazakhstan was consistent in conducting economic reforms, the elite was investing in the post-Soviet market modernization its human capital—a market-oriented, Western-thinking young generation. Meanwhile, its neighbors focused on returning to their historical roots—in practice, to archaic social institutions and relationships, Islamization and an impoverished system of education.

This gap between the Kazakhs and their neighbors became clear at the beginning of the new century. Nobody was laughing at or arrogant with respect to the successors of nomads. On the contrary, thousands of *successors of the ancient Islamic civilization* moved to Kazakhstan in search of jobs, markets for their fruit and a better lot. Quite soon they turned into an integral part of the local economy and occupied relatively prestigious niches there. The same process took place in Russia.

One has to point that the Kazakhs were not in the habit of humiliating or mocking at new *guest labor*—they used them and started to prepare for the time when the neighbors would come out of the deep economic crisis caused by their ambitions and failed governance. History helped Kazakhs to increase tolerance and flexibility, i.e. wisdom, but the price of such history lessons was high.

After a while, the Kazakh elite succeeded in teaching its Russian and Western partners to talk equally. Nowadays the major mystery and the biggest challenge for Kazakhs is China—they have to deal with the Chinese for economic and political reasons. But Kazakhs remember their Oriental roots and there are high chances that they will not allow China to transform the dialogue into a monologue.

At the same time, Kazakhstan has no complacency about the current success and remembers the attitude of the neighbors in the past. The Kazakhs are diplomats, so they keep silent—they remember the past, but think about the future.

Yours,

Murat Laumulin

From: Farkhod Tolipov

To: Murat Laumulin

Subject: History

Dear Murat,

Returning to the past is not always good. History ''teaches that it teaches nothing,'' as some people say.

The argument about the nomadic past of the Kazakhs is no longer relevant, as they modernized and became settlers a century ago. The Uzbeks also have some nomadic past, as any Turk nation.

I do not understand the phrase about the ''bridge to the future.'' Let us compare Tashkent and Almaty from the modern point of view, compare the behavior of the youth in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the e-lifestyle, the obsession with the Internet and English (and not Russia, which helped to modernize our nations), etc. Hence, I see no reason to articulate Kazakhs as more advanced people from the viewpoint of modernization. And archaic features exist everywhere, especially in the provinces.

And your statement about the neighbors who ''did not want to abandon Islam and other characteristics of their medieval lifestyle'' sounds pseudoscientific. Why should Islam be treated as an attribute of the Middle Ages? If so, Uzbekistan is doomed to be a medieval state unless it rejects Islam? And what about Islamic countries that are persistently moving towards modernization, such as Morocco, Egypt, Malaysia, and Turkey? Are they lagging behind Kazakhstan? The revival of religious values is typical of the entire world, including newly independent states. Russia and Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia prefer Christianity, while Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and even...Kazakhstan worship Islam. I dare to say that the resurrection and strengthening of Islam in Central Asia will not bypass Kazakhstan. Kazakhs refer to themselves as Muslims and this is enough to expect the Islamic boom in this country as well—sooner or later. The trends in the south of Kazakhstan indicate that the Islamization is under way.

I agree that Uzbekistan places too much emphasis on the return to historical roots. But it does not mean the restoration of archaic institutions and Islamization. It is the revival of national pride for the achievements of the previous generations, some of which did not deserve to be forgotten, restoration of historical memories, monuments, truth about the facts and developments of the past. Without all this, the national mentality, as you would agree, will remain incomplete. This is the right angle from which to look at the return to historical roots in Uzbekistan. I wonder how this issue is treated in Kazakhstan. Perhaps not so much attention is paid because the nomads did not leave many large and significant historical monuments.

It is also a mistake to believe that this process in Uzbekistan was under way while Kazakhstan was on the way to economic reforms. The reforms are taking place in Uzbekistan as well, but slower than in Kazakhstan (I have already mentioned the GDP growth rate figures).

Your irony about the proud successors of the *ancient Islamic civilization* is irrelevant as well. Uzbek migrants rushed to Kazakhstan and Russia due to the mistakes in economic policy of their country, which could not cope with unemployment. It is worth noting that a large army of young Uzbeks moved also to the United States, Europe and Japan in search of new knowledge, education, skills.

Finally, as far as mockery of Kazakhs is concerned, it is a normal part of everyday life which is typical of many nations. But since you touch upon this topic, I would disagree with your conclusion about the tolerance of the Kazakhs who do not laugh at their new neighbors. Recently at the border crossing between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in Chernyaevka there was a slogan—''An Uzbek needs money, while a Kazakh needs slaves.''

Hence, as we see, it is not always beneficial to treat history...

Best,

Farkhod

From: Murat Laumulin

To: Farkhod Tolipov

Subject: Foreign Policy—Common Issues

Dear Farkhod,

Perhaps, it is so, but history determines the present, to a large extent.

Many suspected that Kazakhstan, without any grounds, attempted to occupy the place of regional leader. Many our initiatives on the establishment or reinvigoration of the Central Asian Union were considered in this context. Moreover, our Kyrgyz colleagues interpreted the Kazakhstani initiative of March 2008 as the willingness of Kazakhstan to create CAU, in order to increase its influence in SCO and speak on behalf of all republics in the region. Are they right? Let us look at the Kazakhstani foreign policy, including the regional level.

After the demise of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan found itself in a very difficult situation. There were many traps and dilemmas related to geography and geopolitics, demography and history, economics and politics.

The country got a huge territory with long and unprotected borders (except with China), it was sparsely populated, and did not have sophisticated transport and communication systems. The economy was fully oriented towards functioning in the Soviet system. The regions in their entirety were not connected with the republican or external markets, but only with their existing Soviet suppliers and customers. The regions had little connection to each other, but for administratively belonging to a single state. They differed a lot as far as economic structure, industrial potential, demography and ethnic balance were concerned.

One of the most complex problems that Kazakhstan inherited from the past (and closely related to the external factors) was ethnic. Its ethnic composition was full of dichotomies—Kazakhs/Russians, Turks/Slavs, Muslims/Christians, etc. And this system had embedded corporate, group and social interests which did not contribute to the national unity of the young, forming Kazakhstani nation.

Since the first days of its independent existence, and even before the official disintegration of the U.S.S.R., Kazakhstan *volens nolens* has been involved in a large geopolitical game. It concentrated all the problems of the post-Soviet period—demise of the superpower and the weakness of Russia, which played on the part of the West; problems of nuclear heritage; the Caspian *knot*; Islamic fundamentalism approaching from the south; a shadow of China emerging in the East; strong willingness of the West, notably the United States, to impose its own rules of the game, etc.

The first flexibility test for Kazakhstan was the problem of the Soviet nuclear legacy. Destiny and geopolitics put our republic in the same company as Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine—other heirs of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Kazakhstan found itself under the severest pressure. The West began to suspect Kazakhstan of sympathy with the Muslims and a desire to assist the Islamic world in developing the so-called *Islamic nuclear bomb*. All that happened against the background of unfolding bloody conflict in Tajikistan. In order not to lose and to bargain deliberately with Washington on nuclear issues, Almaty required consultations and clear advice from Moscow, but did not get it. Under these circumstances, the Kazakhstani leadership commenced a more cautious game—by declaring itself an *interim nuclear state*, or by agreeing to unconditional withdrawal of missiles. Washington could not understand what to expect from Kazakhstan. Moscow realized the tactics, but did not want to explain these to the Americans.

Very soon the bargaining got a new element—Caspian oil. As a matter of fact, Kazakhstan was following the principle ''nuclear weapons for investments.'' One has to remember that at that time Washington did not realize the amount of explored and predicted reserves in the Caspian Sea and was cautious about the response of Russia, as it did not have clear-cut information on the degree of weakness of the Yeltsin regime. Under these circumstances, the George Bush Senior administration tried not to run the risk. In exchange for Kazakhstani consent to remove ballistic missiles from its territory, the United States exerted pressure on *Chevron* and encouraged the company to invest in the profitless, as it seemed then, Caspian enterprise. Only later did the Caspian Sea become the key to U.S. geopolitics in Eurasia.

Sino–Soviet relations began to improve during the Gorbachev era. After the demise of the U.S.S.R., the heirs had to deal with Beijing all by themselves. One of the conditions already set out by China during the time of perestroika was full normalization of relations in exchange for the settlement of border issues and resolution of all territorial disputes. By the way, the areas were *disputable* only for China. As Kazakhstan was eager to develop economic cooperation with China and preferred not to have problems with its large neighbor, the country agreed to accept the sovereignty of China over some deserted territories, which did not belong to anyone anyway during the Sino–Soviet confrontation. But the very fact of territorial transfer was quite sensitive and painful for the general public for socio-psychological reasons.

It is known that it is more difficult to be a friend of America than its foe. Kazakhstan's relations with the United States did not develop smoothly. In 1994 the presidents signed the Strategic Partnership Charter. It did not impose any obligations on the United States, but provided for certain commitments for Kazakhstan. The country had to comply with the letter and spirit of the agreement, i.e. consolidate democracy and market economy, observe human rights, conduct fair elections under international control—under permanent supervision of a *strategic partner*, the United States.

It turned out that the White House seriously intended to interfere in the internal affairs of Kazakhstan. However, the more or less independent course of Kazakhstan, especially as far as its domestic problems were concerned, strengthening of vertical power and statehood were mainly neglected by Washington—Astana could get away with it. The reason for that was Washington's extreme geopolitical focus, as the United States was trying to implement its Caspian strategy at any price.

The Caspian direction in foreign policy was the most complicated and the most multivector in Kazakhstan. On the one hand, the nation had to survive the increasing pressure of the key investor—the United States—and of *brother* Turkey. On the other hand, Astana had to maintain a complex dialogue with its major ally—Russia—and other former Soviet states, including such an ambiguous partner as the late Turkmenbashi. One has to add Iran, which allegedly made quite rational proposals. It was impossible to say a firm ''yes'' to one party without hurting another. It was also impossible to say a firm ''no'' without inflicting damage on national interests and even the security of Kazakhstan.

Under these circumstances, Kazakh diplomacy showed ingenuity and the art of balancing. For a long time Astana kept silent about the Baku–Ceyhan pipeline and used this time to intensify negotiations on the legal status and resolution of disputes with its major partner at the Caspian Sea—Russia. In parallel, Kazakhstan made statements without commitments about the acceptability of the Iranian route, and this should have calmed down Tehran. In 1998, Kazakhstan and Russia managed to make a breakthrough on delimitation of their sectors of the Caspian shelf and, hence, launched the real process of dividing the sea and its resources. Iran was put out of the

game, but this was a headache mainly for Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, to which Moscow and Astana gave the right to settle all the issues with Tehran.

Moreover, after reaching agreement with Russia, Kazakhstan had its hands free as far as the Baku–Ceyhan project was concerned. Kazakhstani diplomacy could now speak freely on this pipeline. The essence of the statements was and still is the following. ''You can construct whatever you want, we are ready to transfer our oil along any pipeline and even through all of them simultaneously, if only we have customers and high oil prices.'' Russia was probably not happy about such a position. For a better multivector approach Kazakhstan pulled into the game two more players. One of them was China—the parties succeeded in signing a $10-billion agreement in 1997 and this was the *project of the century*. Beijing, however, was also an experienced multivector-diplomacy actor and Kazakhstan had the time to learn this.

The southern or Islamic vector has always been the most difficult in the diplomacy of Kazakhstan. In its relations with Islamic countries, Astana had to take off its European dress and put on something more Oriental. Kazakhstan did not prevent the others, who wanted to regard it as a close Turkish relative, as part of the Islamic world, and sometimes even an inheritor of the Soviet–Indian friendship. Following this path and pursuing specific political and economic goals, Kazakhstan allowed other countries to engage it with various *exotic* international associations—the Organization of Economic Cooperation, the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Union of Turkophone States led by Turkey.

To be frank, the Kazakhstani flirting with Ankara under the disguise of pan-Turkism, Turkish unity and recognition of Turkey as an *elder brother* soon ended. It was replaced by real, intense and mutually beneficial economic cooperation. Secular Turkey also served for Kazakhstan as another channel of relations with the West and NATO. It was more difficult to keep a balance with such Islamic states as Iran and Pakistan. In relations with Pakistan and India the country had to strictly observe the parity in visits, signed agreements and diplomatic activities.

One cannot help mentioning one more vector—the integration of the post-Soviet space. Since the first days of the establishment of CIS, Kazakhstan was undertaking titanic efforts to ensure integration within the Commonwealth or other entities with a narrower number of partners. And this policy was quite sincere. Kazakhstan with its former dependence on the all-Union economy was more than others interested in maintaining traditional links. Besides, it was also the matter of common strategic security. This line was not welcomed by our friends in the West, but Kazakhstan was stubbornly setting forth one integration initiative after another.

The multivector policy bore its fruit. Kazakhstan took advantage of its history and geology, minimized the risks and threats originating from a not very lucky geopolitical situation and geography, and became a leader in economic reforms and development among the Central Asia and CIS nations. At the same time, Astana maintains good relations with all participants in the big geopolitical game, close neighbors and distant but important states. Security issues were also resolved by joining or cooperating with various alliances and blocs, such as the CSTO, SCO and NATO.

So it was not a matter of leadership, but of survival. And the recent economic crisis raised this issue once again.

Yours,

Murat

From: Farkhod Tolipov

To: Murat Laumulin

Subject: Re: Foreign Policy—Common Issues

Murat,

If the concepts of a multivector approach are correct, if diversification is important for Kazakhstan, if it wants to position itself as a truly independent state willing to get rid of different turns of geopolitics, Astana can and should join the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan project.

The foreign policy of Uzbekistan passed through almost the same stages. After gaining independence the country established relations with practically the entire world and joined the same international organizations as Kazakhstan. Uzbekistan has its own success stories, failures and contradictory activities in the area of foreign policy.

Let me speculate on the substance and characteristics of the foreign policy of the two states from the point of view of the situation in Central Asia. To my mind, the foreign policy of all Central Asian states in the last 18 years was formed within the context of the so-called *geopolitical triangle*—the United States–Russia–China. Central Asian countries tried to adapt to the geopolitical game played by these three great powers in our region. So their foreign policy was fast-changing and dependent on the situation. They perceived the model of balance of power as a key component of contemporary international relations. Thus, they kept reiterating their commitment to the pseudo-concept of a multipolar world.

The experience of Uzbekistan is quite indicative and instructive. Its foreign policy was reversible and passed through three stages. At the first stage it was more oriented towards Russia (for reasons of a certian post-Soviet inertia). At the second stage Uzbekistan drifted to the West, notably the United States (this was an approbation of independence). The current third stage is a modification of the previous two and it can be called global adaptation. During the second stage (in the mid 1990s–2004) the geopolitical tensions in Central Asia increased. Uzbekistan, dizzy with the euphoria of sovereignty and independence, rushed to the West but faced impediments placed by Russia and China.

The series of pro-Western foreign policy steps of Uzbekistan (participation in the ''Partnership for Peace'' program, joint military exercises with NATO and the United States, Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, provision of its territory for deployment of U.S. and German troops, signature of the Strategic Partnership Declaration with the United States) was interrupted in May 2005 after the notorious Andijan events.

Since then the third stage has begun. There was a series of anti-American foreign policy steps (signature of the similar 2004 Strategic Partnership Agreement and the Treaty on Alliance with Russia in 2005, joining the CSTO and EurAzES, including the ultimatum to the United States in 2005 concerning the withdrawal of its bases from Central Asia), which ended with the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Uzbekistan. Nonetheless, all these measures can hardly be called pro-Russian. They were the defensive reaction of Uzbekistan against the bogus U.S.-inspired colored revolutions. As a result, Uzbekistan fell under EU sanctions, which lasted for three years.

Some time has passed, the situation calmed down and in 2008–2009 the EU sanctions were fully lifted, while Uzbek–U.S. relations normalized and began to develop rather dynamically. In 2009 the country was visited by a number of U.S. official delegations, including two visits by the head of the U.S. Central Command and two meetings of President Karimov with the U.S. ambassador to Tashkent.

Meanwhile, 2009 also started with the first state visit of President Dmitry Medvedev, who was accompanied by a large official delegation. Hence, we witness the attempts of Uzbekistan to adapt to the current global trends. This period is full of contradictions, just like the regional and international political context, which is characterized by strategic uncertainty, as President Karimov put it.

The position of Uzbekistan within the CSTO also indicates the adaptive reversibility of its foreign policy. At first, the country acceded to this quasi-military bloc in response to the myth of the U.S. threat. Then it turned out that the organization does not have a unified vision of challenges and threats. For instance, Uzbekistan did not support the establishment of the Collective Rapid Response Force and stood against the deployment of the second Russian base in the south of Kyrgyzstan within the CSTO framework.

Thus, Uzbekistan tries to adapt to modern international conditions, but it is not free from strategic and geopolitical uncertainty, and was even dragged into the competition over leadership in the region.

In general, Central Asia demonstrates the coexistence and rivalry of two geopolitical paradigms—imperial and democratic. The first strives to return to the Heartland its former static status, while the second introduces dynamics based on functional openness.

The micro-geopolitics of the regional states is moving like a pendulum between these two macro-geopolitical statuses. So their foreign policies are fluctuating all the time.

It is interesting to know how Kazakhstan considers its positions in the CSTO, SCO, and coming chairmanship in the OSCE?

Yours sincerely,

Farkhod

From: Murat Laumulin

To: Farkhod Tolipov

Subject: OSCE Chairmanship

Dear Farkhod,

I like your fresh idea about coexistence and competition between the imperial and democratic paradigms. If one looks attentively at the developments in the region, it becomes clear that all large geopolitical actors follow this pattern, even such *democrats* as the EU.

The OSCE topic is quite annoying (since the Madrid summit in October 2007), since I hear it quite often and have to write on this issue a lot. But you are absolutely right in raising the question in connection with the CSTO and SCO. There is an abnormal situation in Central Asia, when at least three politico-military blocs (plus NATO) are acting here without even contacting each other. Hence, the historic mission of the Kazakhstani chairmanship of the OSCE is to put this item officially on the agenda, or at least to attempt to do so, especially bearing in mind that the operation in Afghanistan is far from ending.

The official agenda of Kazakhstan will tackle two issues—transcontintental transportation and communication corridors and inter-religious (inter-civilization) cooperation.

However, this chairmanship also conceals many problems that may aggravate the foreign policy environment for Kazakhstan in the future. The real issues for the OSCE may go far beyond the traditional perceptions (security, humanitarian cooperation) of functions, objectives and goals of the organization. The membership in the OSCE of the post-Soviet states results in the emergence of issues pertaining to their relations with the West in general, and with the EU, NATO and the United States in particular. Moreover, this range of issues has recently been expanded to include energy security in Europe. A new context emerges for our relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

So Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE is a certain geopolitical *maturity test*, since it relates to the fundamental problems of relations with the West—security, geopolitics, and geoeconomics.

Cooperation with the OSCE is important for Astana from the point of consolidating its position in the international arena, strengthening ties with the OSCE nations (representing Eurasia and North America), and maintaining the security of Kazakhstan and the entire Central Asian region, development of democracy, human rights, a balanced ethnic policy and domestic security. The OSCE experience would also be useful and applicable to the concept of convening the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia initiated by Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan's policy is aimed at strengthening the unity of the organization and reducing the level of confrontation between North America, Europe and Eurasia. In March 2008 President Nazarbaev declared the ''Path to Europe'' program within the framework of his annual Address.[2] The key issues were the following. First of all, Kazakhstan remains an important and influential player in the system of global energy security. And the emphasis is placed on using internal investment resources. Second, Kazakhstan has begun to get engaged actively with the global transportation system (North–South, and West–East).

As far as security matters are concerned, Astana will continue to focus on the existing systems of regional and international security—the aforementioned Conference, SCO, and CSTO. Meanwhile, it will not dodge cooperation with such powers as the United States, the EU, and NATO, which are crucial for stability in Central Asia. In the long run Kazakh diplomacy will concentrate on preventing the establishment of a Russo–Chinese condominium in Central Asia. The OSCE

chairmanship and the consolidation of ties with this organization, and strengthening of its role in the region will contribute to this objective.

Nonetheless, it was Russia that played the decisive role in supporting Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE along with some other post-Soviet nations. Thus, Astana received a collective mandate from the CIS to defend the interests of these states in the OSCE. Besides, due to objective factors, Kazakhstan should and tends to coordinate its activities with Moscow during the OSCE chairmanship. Astana has some commitments with respect to other republics of Central Asia.

The OSCE chairmanship will become an important landmark in the foreign policy of Kazakhstan and it will evidently try to use it in order to legitimize its claims for regional leadership. For Russia, as some local experts assume, this would rather mean problems, not opportunities. They argue that, unlike Russia, Kazakhstan does not pretend to change the format of OSCE functioning. The geopolitical weight of Astana implies that it would merely be enough to gain some local profit. Meanwhile, the Kremlin aims at rewriting the rules of the game, and this task is much more complicated. Of course, Russia has more levers to affect the situation than Kazakhstan.

What are the Russian goals with respect to the OSCE and how will they affect the Kazakhstani chairmanship? The major strategic objective of Russia at this stage is to prepare the new comprehensive European Security Treaty put forward by Dmitry Medvedev in June 2008 and published in late 2009. So, Kazakhstan has a dual task. On the one hand, it has to deter any destructive actions aimed at splitting or provoking confrontation within the OSCE, even if they are set forth by Russia. In fact, Moscow did not reconcile the failure in reforming the Bureau for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and is ready for a new round of confrontation with the OSCE.

On the other hand, taking into account the fairness and political rationale behind many of Russia's initiatives and the biased character of some OSCE activities, Kazakhstan could support those proposals of the CIS countries that are targeted at protecting their sovereignty and consolidating the Eurasian (post-Soviet) space.

In the course of its chairmanship Kazakhstan could follow certain principles. First of all is coordination and promotion of a unified policy on all issues related to the OSCE, taking into account the interests of the West, Russia, Central Asia, and CIS allies.

It is quite a promising idea to link the European and Asian security systems—the OSCE and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. One has to bear in mind that the West may be indifferent to this initiative, or even give a negative response. However, Kazakhstan as the OSCE chairman will have the tools to enhance the dialogue between this organization and NATO on the one hand and SCO, CSTO and the Conference on the other. Under these circumstances, Astana could (in agreement with Moscow) launch new talks on the CFE Treaty within the OSCE agenda.

The most difficult situations will occur for Astana when it has to voice OSCE criticism with respect to its allies and partners in the CIS. In this case, Kazakhstan will only have the chance to soften the statements and to shift the emphasis.

The key goal of the OSCE chairmanship of Kazakhstan in 2010 should be the achievement of increased international influence of the country and an improved foreign policy environment.

M. Laumulin

From: Farkhod Tolipov

To: Murat Laumulin

Subject: Re: OSCE Chairmanship

Dear Murat!

Your speculations on the historic mission of Kazakhstan in the OSCE sound interesting, albeit they contain elements of some political idealism. I agree that it is a *maturity test* and the chance for Kazakhstan to demonstrate its regional leadership potential. However, this will become possible if

Kazakhstan does not rush to implement an empty idea of connecting European and Asian security systems, but will rather involves the OSCE more in Central Asian affairs.

It also sounds very attractive that Astana may undertake efforts to prevent the emergence of a Sino–Russian condominium in Central Asia. But let us not forget that Kazakhstan has recently followed at least twice the line of the great powers. In 2003 it joined the demarche of the CIS led by Russia against the OSCE, which was criticized for its allegedly imbalanced and biased activities in the human rights sphere to the detriment of other dimensions of its work. And in 2005 it signed the Astana Declaration together with other SCO members—the document contained an ultimatum to the United States concerning the withdrawal of its military base from Central Asia. The future chairman of the OSCE would not join the criticism against this organization, while the Central Asian leader would not back the ill-grounded appeal of SCO to the United States.

Speaking about the idealistic project of connecting SCO, the CSTO, the Conference and the OSCE, you must forget a much more realistic idea of connecting Central Asian nations with this organization. The adaptation of our countries to the OSCE standards, and their compliance with norms and commitments of the OSCE is a simple, clear and at the same time fundamental task, which is much more significant than any mythical global projects.

Particular attention to large regional organizations and projects, on the contrary, brings Central Asian states down into the shade of such structures, while the goal is to bring them up as independent actors in international relations.

Another issue is integration. What are the prospects of real integration in Central Asia?

Best,

Farkhod Tolipov

From: Murat Laumulin

To: Farkhod Tolipov

Subject: Integration in Central Asia

Farkhod,

From time to time Kazakhstan undertakes sporadic attempts, in order to invigorate regional cooperation—*pour le bien public*. As a result, the proposals of Kazakhstan are rational and reasonable—development of the common management of hydro- and energy resources; restructuring of transportation and communication means; putting an end to the disorder in tariffs, etc. When these things originate from Kazakhstan, it is normally condemned for regional hegemony. Of course, each state looks for advantages, but not to the detriment of others.

Regional cooperation (integration), Kazakhstan believes, will require short-term, medium-term and long-term measures and programs. The short-term perspective implies the solution to labor migration issues, including amended legislation and tax systems, stricter anticorruption measures; stimulation of migration and its return within the legal framework; coordination of activities of the law enforcement, customs and border services; unification of law systems and instructions; quick settlement of border and transportation problems in order to intensify the communications among the republics; introduction of the *green corridor* for Central Asian citizens; quick resolution of all tariff, tax and other issues pertaining to the growth of trade turnover and movement of goods and services (especially seasonal); better management of water use and electricity supplies through the establishment of the clear scheme of mutual payments.

At the mid-term level (5–10 years), more fundamental matters should be tackled—official recognition of the need to integrate (this should be reflected in the official doctrines and disguised under the term ''cooperation'' at first); political resolution of all problems related to the investment of Kazakhstani capital and investments; review of interaction of banking systems; elaboration of the interconnected financial system (currency snake or joint float); creation of new transportation and communication opportunities; broad Kazakh investments in mining, energy and agriculture (to make the later more market-oriented); common regulations for macroeconomic development (perhaps in the form of state three- to five-year plans); the basis for a unified educational policy, cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

The long-term (10–20 years) program provides for the following strategic goals: establishment of an integrated market of labor, goods and services; development of an integrated energy system and unified transportation and communication system; creation of conditions for the introduction of a single currency; the setting up of supranational bodies and integration structures; close coordination of foreign and security policy; a coherent policy aimed at expansion of the Union of Central Asian States and interaction between the Union and other integration entities of the CIS.

It may sound utopian, but we do have success stories—I mean the European Union. It is just a matter of political will. But it is lacking in the Central Asian capitals. And it is not only typical of Tashkent. Today it is the most profitable of all, but tomorrow the situation may change and the alternative will be deplorable.

After all, Central Asia may succeed in creating some sort of th Central Asian Union, but this will be a rather fragile entity (a shotgun marriage). There is no doubt that the neighbors will continue to face economic, technological, demographic and environmental issues. This is why Astana is forced to choose the strategy of *selected* cooperation, i.e. interact with its neighbors only in the areas of specific interest—energy, water resources, transport, etc. Strategically Kazakhstan has a partner for cooperation—Russia—and together with Moscow it can expand cooperation with the EU (at least, as a source of natural resources), or with China. Hence, Central Asia may *lose Kazakhstan* in the future. Who will benefit from this?

Best regards,

Murat Laumulin

From: Farkhod Tolipov

To: Murat Laumulin

Subject: Re: Integration in Central Asia

Dear Murat,

The more I study the problems of our region, the more I think about the prospects of creating a regional collective security system for Central Asia. It is a difficult process from the point of view of building such mechanisms, as there are different forces in the region. A particular role here belongs to Uzbekistan, which should become the locomotive of regional integration.

It is the most populated country in the region, it is in the center of the region and it has borders with all other states. It possesses Maverannahr and Afrasiab—the cradle of civilization and the storage facility of key historical and cultural monuments, which form the common legacy of all Central Asian nations. Uzbekistan is the leader in this sphere, but its leadership is static, based on historical heritage. By the way, Kazakhstan tries to be a dynamic leader here, but it does not succeed, due to the multivector character of its foreign policy.

Unfortunately, the regional policy of Uzbekistan today does not provide for such a historic mission as the locomotive of integration. It has tough relations with Kyrgyzstan due to the problems of water distribution, mined frontiers (on the part of Uzbekistan), potential interethnic tensions (such incidents occurred in the late 1990s). Uzbekistan has visa regimes with nearly all neighboring states, except Kazakhstan. The water problem exists in its relations with Tajikistan. In October 2009 Uzbekistan suddenly decided to abandon the joint energy system of Central Asia, thus creating problems for the adjacent countries. Tashkent did not back Nazarbaev's initiative on the establishment of the Central Asian Union, etc. The more such unresolved regional problems are accumulated in the relations of Central Asian states, the more they will speak about the need to have a mediator (a great power or a great international organization), in order to settle the disputes. This is particularly typical of the regional security domain.

The prospects for integration and cooperation among the Central Asian nations do not cease to exist, but they are neglected in favor of some narrow, wrongly realized national interests. Let us touch upon the water distribution problems in the region. It is believed that Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, together with Turkmenistan, possess the lower parts, while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan possess the upper parts of Syrdarya and Amudarya. It is known that the water interests and

strategies of the two groups differ dramatically—the first group is focused on irrigation, the second group concentrates on hydropower capabilities. Seemingly, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan should then coordinate their policy in this area, but Astana even wants to invest in the construction of hydropower plants in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. But why not to sell Uzbek gas to Kyrgyzstan at the internal prices of Uzbekistan? Perhaps this will help to alleviate the tensions in the area of water resources, as Kyrgyzstan will obtain a source of power.

Another problem is borders. The countries have hundreds of disputed sectors in the border regions. Even though Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have nearly signed delimitation agreements, the process is taking too much time. However, the interests of the integration proclaimed in 1991 require a moratorium on that matter, so that the frontiers may be fully eliminated in the future. A leader would have brought other countries of the region to such a solution. But the region lacks a real leader.

If you ask common people, especially the dwellers of the border regions, they would show you that the phenomenon of frontiers is weird to them. By the way, all the talks about integration or disintegration, disputes and cooperation, leadership and confidence in Central Asia have never gone beyond speculations and analytics. They have never been supported by public opinion surveys on integration. And if this issue of integration is still on the agenda, why don't we conduct a referendum on unification and put all dots over this ''*i*'' of integration?

I agree entirely with your description of short-, mid- and long-term goals of integration. But when you speak about political will, which is lacking in other capitals, I agree, but with the reservation that it is not present in Kazakhstan either.

Let us remember the idea of the Central Asian Union. This concept does not solely belong to Kazakhstan—it has been set forth since 1991—the Commonwealth of Central Asia (1991), Central Asian Economic Commonwealth (1994), Organization of Central Asian Cooperation (2001). They all made the framework for the Central Asian Union, they bore the real potential of future, even political, integration. However, this process was suddenly interrupted by the decision of the presidents in October 2005, when they agreed to unite the Organization of Central Asian Cooperation and EurAzES. They de facto deliberately sacrificed their own regional integration structure, which they had been constructing for several years.

Murat, your thesis about the *loss of Kazakhstan* in the future tells me about the gap between the Uzbek and the Kazakh schools of political thought (if they exist at all). While studying the phenomenon of Central Asia, the Kazakh analysts and politicians refer to Kazakhstan as a Eurasian, not Central Asian country; at the same time, Uzbek experts identify their country mainly as part of Central Asia. Of these two schools, the first has some errors in its speculations. So we can *lose Kazakhstan* not because of the failure of the integration initiatives (they have never gone smoothly, even in Europe), but because Kazakhstan is obsessed with the pseudo-concept of Eurasianism to the detriment of its own Central Asian identity.

Nowadays Central Asia is in an ambiguous situation due to the fundamental geopolitical transformation started after the collapse of the U.S.S.R. For the first time, the region is not only open to world politics and external influence, but is involved directly in the new big game. Moreover, the consequences of this involvement are curious as well—the countries of the region have launched the *small game* among themselves.

Being squeezed in the symbolic geopolitical triangle of Russia, China, and the United States, Central Asia is under serious stress. It is not clear why politico-military presence (bases) of the United States in the region gets only a negative response from Russia. Why does Russia perceive as a strategic security challenge the flights of U.S. cargo aircraft to Afghanistan? Moscow has always demonstrated concerns (in different forms and at the highest level) about the very fact of a U.S. presence in Central Asia starting from 2001 when U.S. troops were first deployed on the territory of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Three great powers have three different attitudes to the issue of Central Asian integration. For Russia it is divide and rule (imperial syndrome), for the United States it is unite and rule (missionary syndrome), for China it is come and rule (career syndrome).

Farkhod

From: Murat Laumulin

To: Farkhod Tolipov

Subject: Re: Re: Integration in Central Asia

Dear Farkhod,

It is all clear with China—Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are moving simultaneously, as they become more and more dependent on China in finance and economics. Now about Russia—there is widespread opinion in Kazakhstan concerning the *Medvedev indifference*, i.e. concerning his low interest in Central Asia and Kazakhstan in particular. Our people feel hurt. It is good for Uzbekistan, since the reaction of Putin, as president, on some fluctuations of Karimov's policy could have been much tougher.

The policy of Barack Obama with respect to Central Asia is also an enigma. We can only guess. Will the Democratic administration reject the former policy of Great Central Asia and colored revolutions, or will it return to human rights rhetoric? Will Obama take into account the interests of Russia and China, as well as SCO? U.S. policy in the region normally demonstrates three major approaches—*balanced consolidation*, *democracy above all*, *security above all*. What will be more typical of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton?

One can only make assumptions about the Obama course in Central Asia. Obviously, he will try to correct the mistakes of the previous U.S. administration, e.g. as far as the coordination of activities by the Pentagon and the State Department is concerned. The continuation of the war in Afghanistan makes it necessary to use the transportation routes passing through Central Asia. Access to the northern route is possible through Georgia and Azerbaijan, or through Russia. The first scenario provides for the increased presence of the West in the South Caucasus, including enlargement of NATO. The second scenario requires arrangements with Russia, i.e. rules out the involvement of Georgia and Ukraine in NATO and continued attempts by the United States to dominate in Central Asia.

In this new situation the United States has to resolve the inherent structural contradictions of its policy and find the solution to three key problems. The first problem is the apprehensions and the lack of trust on the part of Central Asian states with respect to the U.S. efforts to restore democracy in the republics of the region. The White House should strengthen its contacts with the governments of the region, in order to improve its image. The second challenge to the U.S. policy is Russia, which does not agree with the U.S. policy and will confront it. The third problem is Afghanistan.

Each country in Central Asia tries to overcome its own domestic difficulties, the United States attempts to increase its influence, while Russia imposes restrictions. Many states in Central Asia can simply be *bought*, some pursue their own game, others are firmly waiting for Moscow's consent to such a deal with the United States.

The United States and NATO can invent a new transit route to Afghanistan, circumventing Russia and neglecting its position. Some U.S. experts argue that this could be the Caspian route, which enables the country to move cargoes to Afghanistan via Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and/or Kazakhstan. This scenario is fraught with the growing U.S. military presence in the Caspian region and it runs counter to Russia's interests as well. Another priority for Washington is to contain the activities of China in the region.

The United States should also amend its policy with respect to the CSTO. Washington assumes that the organization is under Russian control and any relationship with it would mean its recognition as a legitimate member of the international community. However, the United States needs to maintain at least at the minimum level its contacts with Russia and China on key issues occurring in Central Asia. This would facilitate progress in relations with the countries of the region and would indicate to Moscow and Beijing that Washington is not pursuing its selfish interests only without taking into consideration all other actors. Brzezinski has recently been quite explicit about this.

U.S. analysts consider Kazakhstan to be the most important, the largest and the most influential state in Central Asia. It is not only the key link in U.S. foreign policy in the region, but also the most predictable and understandable partner for Washington. It is quite difficult for the United States to maintain its relations with other Central Asian nations; the activities of their leaders sometimes

seem contradictory, while with Astana the White House maintains a long-time, constructive and intimate dialogue. And the clear and friendly policy of Kazakhstan with respect to the United States is favorably accepted and positively perceived in Washington.

The situation is different when it comes to Uzbekistan. Theoretically, the country is significant for the United States from the point of regional security schemes, but Washington has little confidence in the policy of Tashkent. General phrases about the joint struggle against international terrorism and assistance in the operations of the coalition in Afghanistan cannot hide the substantial apprehensions of the U.S. leadership with respect to Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan is a crucial actor in Central Asia, as viewed from Washington—it has regional hegemonic ambitions and is capable of challenging Moscow, unlike other countries of the region. Large Uzbek communities are present in all neighboring states, so Tashkent enjoys the right to interfere in the policy of any adjacent nation.

As a matter of fact, Uzbekistan is the most important potential partner for the United States, as it has railways and roads connected with Afghanistan and a Soviet military base once used by the Americans. Uzbekistan has also proved lately that it is not afraid of Russia, despite the Russian–Georgian war—U.S. experts attach particular importance to this fact. Washington realizes that Islam Karimov is also unpredictable for other actors in the region—Russia, China, and the EU. So the White House will continue to develop relations with Tashkent, if the situation allows.

There are some promising opportunities for Uzbekistan in this area. I hope they will not be eradicated by radicals in the State Department, in the Congress, or by Islam Karimov's suspicions. Anyway Kazakhstan will have to get ready for the new phase of *U.S.–Uzbek friendship* with all the implications it may have for Russia and for Astana.

As far as the energy and water issues are concerned, I see no problem here. It is quite simple. Hydro resources have turned into a tool of political pressure and economic blackmail. Those sitting at the source of rivers try to dictate the rules. However, taking into account our interdependence, the situation is not always favorable for them. It is also clear that water should be paid for. Kazakhstan has learned this lesson. We are able to replace the Bukhara gas in the future with our own, as we extend the pipelines from Western Kazakhstan, but the water factor is a natural constraint. Under these circumstances, Astana has to pay a fair price (and take advantage of its partners' dependency in other spheres). As for the future, it is obvious that the water will be lacking and the problem will only be exacerbated. There is also the factor of China, which tries to control the Central Asian rivers.

Yours,

Murat Laumulin

From: Farkhod Tolipov

To: Murat Laumulin

Subject: Re: Re: Re: Integration in Central Asia

Dear Murat,

The changes in the geopolitical situation in Central Asia indicate that the countries of the region can easily be submitted one by one, especially through manipulating the elements of geopolitical strategies of the Central Asian regimes. Their *small game* may only deteriorate the strategic developments in Afghanistan and in the region itself, and inflict damage on themselves.

It is to the benefit of the international community and the Central Asian nations to finish successfully the antiterrorist and peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan launched in 2001. Therefore, the ISAF and the coalition as such have only one option—to build on the existing progress and advance to the declared objective, i.e. to follow the offensive, not defensive strategy. ISAF should have more powers and should be augmented. The UN should play the leading role in the fate of Afghanistan, I believe. It should be the key manager in the antiterrorist operation and in the rehabilitation of the country.

Many of those who speak about security in Central Asia try to connect this issue with various international organizations. Such services are normally supplied by the CSTO, SCO, OSCE, NATO, or some great powers in individual capacity—Russia, or the United States. This is a certain *market of security services*. Moreover, such organizations are frequently called integration structures. I disagree with such a definition.

The term ''integration'' has been freely used and the very substance of it is distorted. It is a special term which does not imply any time of cooperation within international structures, but very specific unification of the states in their desire to forge a regional identity. The latter should be based on common values, culture, civilization, and a historical preponderance towards unity. This list may also contain the common vision of threats and the willingness to unite against them. Hence, the aforementioned entities can render some security or other services, but they cannot be regarded as integration structures. So the attitude towards them should be mainly functional; they should not be considered supranational bodies.

SCO, despite the decisive statements of its recent summits on the ability to solve regional security problems, can hardly provide such a *security umb*rella to Central Asia. SCO, as well as CSTO, lacks three aspects: a common vision of threats, egocentric forces and a regional identity. SCO has not yet demonstrated its real capacity in assisting the settlement in Afghanistan or solving the regional problems in Central Asia. In tje case of real threats of terrorism or war in Afghanistan in the late 1990s, Uzbekistan managed to deal with them on its own, without resorting to the help of SCO or CSTO. And there was no need for such aid, bearing in mind the character and the scale of threats.

Therefore, the participation of Central Asian states in various international organizations, development of cooperation with the world, and with the great powers in particular, and foreign policy steps of our states should be subordinate to the idea of Central Asian regional security, regional development and regional unification.

Two leaders—President Nazarbaev and President Karimov—have repeatedly mentioned in their statements the need for such integration and the objective factors that may facilitate it. This goal is correct, but the strategy will most probably be implemented by the next generation of leaders, if they are not concerned about narrow national interests and will not sacrifice high regional interests and objectives.

Yours,

Farkhod Tolipov

NOTES

[1] ''SNG: nachalo ili konets istorii,'' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, March 26, 1997: 1,5. See also: <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/slavistik/zarchiv/0397m/k054-11.htm>, last accessed on November 21, 2009.

[2] State Program ''The Path to Europe'' for 2009–2011. Approved by Decree of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 653 of August 29, 2008. See: ''Programmnye dokumenty. Komitet po tekhnicheskomu regulirovaniyu i metrologii Ministerstva industrii i torgovli Respubliki Kazakhstan,'' <http://www.memst.kz/ru/pb/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=536>, last accessed November 21, 2009.

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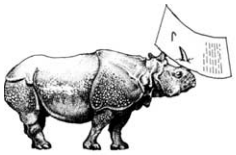

Kseniya Smertina

REFORM OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE: RUSSIAN PROPOSALS AND EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Almost immediately upon his inauguration in June 2008, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev proposed an initiative on improving European security architecture. It has now been more than a year, and the proposal remains the subject of lively debate in the diplomatic and expert communities.

This analysis takes a critical look at the Russian initiative to understand how well it fits with Europe's own security agenda. The main thrust of the argument is that Russia and Europe understand security differently. This makes constructive dialogue problematic. But the very fact that such an initiative has been proposed, especially against the backdrop of Russia's new foreign policy doctrine and its emerging European strategy, suggests that Moscow is seeking constructive dialogue. Right now, there is no alternative to the proposed European Security Treaty (EST). Russia would do well to continue propounding the EST principles on the international stage as a means of achieving harmony in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Putting these principles into practice would make Moscow's European policy more productive, and improve Russia's own image as a country that shares the European values and approaches to security cooperation.

EUROPEAN SECURITY TREATY

Speaking at a news conference in June 2008 in Berlin, President Medvedev outlined his proposal to negotiate a new European Security Treaty. The initiative, dubbed Helsinki-2, set out the goal of rebuilding Europe's security architecture and achieving Russia's deeper integration into that architecture. What makes the proposal particularly interesting is that for the first time in a very long while, Russia is offering its own analysis of developments on the European continent, and outlining the priorities in its dialogue with the West.

Back at that time, Medvedev's proposals were greeted with little enthusiasm and failed to spark much of a discussion. European leaders said they needed more detail before they could comment. But repeated at Evian in October 2008, after the dramatic events in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, those very same proposals evoked both interest and perplexity in equal measure. The perplexity was due to the fact that despite the difficult foreign policy context of that time, the Russian president chose to speak about European security issues at all, reiterating the proposals first made under very different circumstances. And the interest boiled down to a single question: what new ideas could Russia offer in reforming the existing security system?

By October 2008, the draft of the treaty first made public in June had already become part of Russia's official foreign policy strategy. That too had made European politicians take Moscow's proposals more seriously. Proclaimed as the ''main goal'' of Russian foreign policy, the initiative is aimed at ''creating a truly open and democratic system of collective security and cooperation for the whole region''. One of its main features is the absence of ''new fragmentation or old-style division of nations into blocs.''[1] There are relatively few clearly stated foreign policy priorities in the new Russian foreign policy doctrine. The fact that the EST, designated as the key goal of Russia's European policy, is one of those priorities has made Western diplomats take the

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proposed treaty a lot more seriously. The ideas that lie at the foundation of this initiative will inform Russia's relations with its European partners and regional organizations for years to come.

The initiative itself focuses on several central elements that form the concept of *hard security*. This includes shared security, arms control, settlement of regional conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic, and a number of general principles. Structurally, the proposals are divided into nine areas, which will form the basis of future negotiations on reforming the European security system.

The shared security element includes:

1. reaffirming the basic principles of security and international relations in the Euro-Atlantic;
2. equal security (the Three No's principle and the right to neutrality);
3. a declaration that no nation or organization has an exclusive right to maintain peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic; and
4. a single set of rules on security.

The second element includes basic principles on arms control, confidence-building, moderation and reasonable sufficiency in military strength. The third element outlines the principles of conflict settlement in the region. It proposes a common standard for prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts based on negotiations, respect for the position of each party, and unconditional adherence to peacekeeping mechanisms. Finally, the general principles element outlines the basic premises of modern security, such as non-use of force or threat of force, and greater cooperation on *soft security* issues.

The Russian proposal is to discuss all these ideas at a special summit involving individual nations as well as international organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS,) Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), EU, NATO, and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Speaking about the Russian proposals themselves, it is important to remember that they are centered, in full or in part, on principles outlined in the OSCE founding documents. That includes the ideas of equal security, shared security and inadmissibility of ensuring one's own security to the detriment of others, which are reflected in almost every single European security document. The idea of equal security is reflected in the Helsinki Final Act (1975), the Charter for a New Europe (1990) and the Code of Conduct (1994). It is also reiterated in the Charter for European Security (1999) adopted at the Istanbul summit. The charter also reflects the principles of neutrality and of the right to choose the means of ensuring one's own security, including participation or non-participation in alliances.[2] The OSCE documents also outline special mechanisms for regional conflict settlement. Agreements signed in 1991 set out the mechanism of resolving disputes between the nations, as does the convention on arbitration within the OSCE framework (1992).[3] There are also separate agreements on arms control. So the question is, why renegotiate the existing agreements on all these issues?

The answer lies perhaps in Russia's unhappiness with a whole number of recent developments. That includes NATO's eastwards expansion towards the Russian borders, Kosovo, the crisis over the CFE treaty ratification, etc. But it is also quite clear that those events were only a consequence of the poor state of dialogue between Russia and Europe. The underlying problem is Russia's lack of integration into the European systems—and that problem remains unresolved.

The Russian leadership is quite right to want to discuss this problem and to argue that there is a problem here that requires a common and mutually acceptable approach. Moscow is now trying to begin a comprehensive dialogue on issues that have for many years remained taboo, for a variety of reasons.

Another welcome proposal is to hold a meeting at the level of international organizations, including the OSCE, NATO, EU, CIS and the CSTO, to compare their security strategies[4] so as to avoid duplication[5] in their future agendas.

The EST initiative is also very timely in view of the new generation of various security strategies, doctrines and concepts now being developed by the EU, NATO and Russia. The initiative has opened a window of opportunity for Russia. The last EU security strategy expired in 2008; negotiations on a new document are now in full swing. NATO adopted its own new strategy in 2009. The EST could therefore become a starting point for discussion on Russia–EU–NATO

Table 1. ***Russia in the European Security Architecture (CSCE/OSCE, NATO, EU, EST)***[1]

CSCE/OSCE	RUSSIA–NATO	RUSSIA–EU	EST
Principles 1. ''Helsinki decalogue'' 2. Equal security for all member states; conflict settlement by peaceful means, creation of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms; prosperity through economic freedom and social justice; commitment to democracy based on human rights and freedoms[2] 3. Code of conduct on military-political aspects of security[3] 4. Shared security[4] 5. Charter of European Security[5]	1. Central role of the UN and OSCE in Russia–NATO cooperation 2. Shared security for every nation of the Euro-Atlantic community 3. Cooperation in strengthening the OSCE, creation of common security and stability area without any division lines or spheres of influence, search for a common answer to new risks and challenges 4. Commitment not to use force or threat of force against member states or any other state, including threats against national sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence in any way that runs counter to the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act 5. Respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all nations and their right to choose ways of ensuring own security, inviolability of their borders, and the right of peoples to self-determination 6. Mutual transparency in developing and implementing defense policies and military doctrines 7. Support for peacekeeping operations conducted under the auspices of the UN Security Council or the OSCE[7] and others	1. Use of principles and commitments outlined in the CSCE Final Act, final documents of the Madrid and Vienna meetings, and the document of the Bonn CSCE conference on economic cooperation, Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the 1992 Helsinki CSCE document ''Challenge of Change'' 2. Commitment by Russia and the Community and its member-states to the goals and principles set out in the European Energy Charter signed on December 17, 1991, and the statement of the Lucerne Conference of April 1993,[7] and others	1. Shared security: ● commitment to basic security principles ● Equal security, the Three No's—No to ensuring own security to the detriment of others; No to actions that weaken the unity of the shared security space, including use of one's own territory to the detriment of security of others, peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic; No to growth of military alliances to the detriment of security of other members ● Recognition and respect for the right to neutrality ● No nation or organization has exclusive right to support peace and stability 2. Single set of rules for security structures (based on the central role of the UN), arms control 3. Unity of approaches to prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts[8]

COMMENTARY

Table 1 (*Continued*)

CSCE/OSCE	RUSSIA–NATO	RUSSIA–EU	EST
Measures 1. Military-political cooperation: ● Prior notification about large military exercises ● Sending/ exchanging observers during military exercises ● Prior notification about large troop movements ● Exchange of invitations to military personnel, including visits by military delegations ● Coordination on disarmament issues 2. Social and economic cooperation: ● Trade, business contacts, economic and commercial information, marketing ● Industrial cooperation ● Environment ● Tourism, etc 3. Humanitarian cooperation	1. International terrorism 2. Conflict resolution 3. Nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and arms control 4. Creating a system of nonstrategic missile defense in Europe 5. Search and Rescue operations at sea 6. Cooperation between armed forces in military reform, emergency relief[9]	1. Shared external security space: ● Enhanced dialogue and cooperation on the international arena ● Anti-terrorism ● Nonproliferation of WMD and means of their delivery, more stringent export controls and disarmament ● Cooperation on crisis settlement ● Cooperation in civil defense 2. Shared space of freedom, security and justice: ● Freedom: Development of visa policy, fight against illegal migration (liberalization of visa regime and readmission), the guarding of common borders ● Security: Fight against terrorism and organized crime, cooperation on documents protection, measures against money laundering, illegal circulation of drugs, people trafficking and corruption ● Justice: Judicial cooperation on civil and criminal cases (cross-border crime)	

Notes: [1]Other important agreements in which Russia takes part: Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), 1990, and Treaty on Open Skies, 1992. [2]Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990), Paris, OSCE documents, 1990, <http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1990/11/4045_en.pdf>, last accessed November 23, 2009. [3]CSCE Budapest Document 1994 on the road towards true partnership in a new era, Budapest, 1994, <http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1994/12/4048_ru.pdf>, last accessed November 23, 2009. [4]Lisbon document of 1996, Lisbon, 1996, <http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1996/12/4049_ru.pdf>, last accessed November 23, 2009. [5]Charter for European Security, Istanbul Document 1999, <http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1999/11/4050_en.pdf>, last accessed November 23, 2009. [6]Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between the Russian Federation and NATO, May 27, 1999, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/fndrus.htm>, last accessed November 23, 2009. [7]Agreement on partnership and cooperation between the Russian Federation and the European Community and its member states, 1994, <http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/ru/p_457.htm>, last accessed on November 23, 2009. [8]Russia–NATO Relations: New Quality. Declaration of Heads of State and Government of the Russian Federation and NATO Member States, May 28, 2002, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/SID-4B790EE9-3633D502/natolive/official_texts_19572.htm>, last accessed November 23, 2009. [9]Annex 3: Road map on shared external security space, approved at the Russia–EU summit, Moscow, May 10, 2005.

cooperation, and determine Russia's role in solving common security problems. That is what NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen talked about in his speech ''Russia–NATO: A New Beginning'' in September 2009.

But many questions still remain.

Take, for example, the existing deficit of ''control mechanisms''. The Russian initiative says future collective mechanisms of maintaining peace, security and cooperation should be based on the central role of the UN and its Charter. The same sentiment is expressed in the EU security strategy, as well as many OSCE and NATO documents. But does the Russian initiative deliberately overlook the crisis that has gripped the UN, partly as a result of its Charter no longer reflecting international realities? Or is Russia proposing to begin dialogue on this issue as well?

The initiative also aims to engage most of the European nations in the proposed talks, including all the members of the OSCE, CSTO and the CIS. But although all these organizations clearly have a role to play in reforming the current security system, everyone knows how difficult it is to work out a common stance on key issues even within the UN Security Council. The existing proposals do not detail any mechanisms for making such a broad conference a productive platform for cooperation. These proposals are often compared to Russia's initiatives on signing a pan-European document put forward in the 1990s. But the need now is for something more specific and innovative. Also, Moscow needs to decide what exactly its new initiative wants to be—a positive agenda for Europe in the twenty-first century, or a ''requiem for the Cold War''. It cannot be both.

In addition, many of the key principles in the proposed EST are admirable in theory, but quite impossible to put into practice, experts argue. Take, for example, the principle of not providing one's own security to the detriment of others. It is not part of any existing European documents. And there are no clear-cut criteria for deciding whether one nation's objections to another's security measures have merit.[6] Meanwhile, in the context of the current situation in the Euro-Atlantic, the principle inevitably impinges upon NATO's expansion and the right of every nation to decide whether or not to participate in alliances. The expert community believes this issue should not have been raised at all, if only to avoid *intellectual embarrassment*[7] and forestall Western charges of imperialistic proclivities in Russian foreign policy.

The EST proposals also stress that Russia wants a legally binding document. That is undoubtedly a serious step for the Russian leadership, demonstrating the seriousness of its intentions. But how much is this idea of a legally binding document in Russia's own interests? And could the Europeans and Americans actually sign such a document?

There are several other observations on Russia's new EST proposal.

1. The very fact that the initiative has been put forward is a plus. The EST is the first specific proposal to formulate Russia's principles on issues that for many years have not been discussed out in the open. The initiative is part of Russia's logical, well-argued and direct international policy, which was launched by Vladimir Putin at the Munich conference in February 2007. This new policy has since been reflected in the Russian Foreign Policy Strategy approved in July 2008, and in the National Security Strategy approved in 2009. If events go according to plan, Russian and European leaders will discuss many of those principles during negotiations within the framework of Russian cooperation with the OSCE, NATO, and the EU.

2. Some of the Russian proposals focus on *soft security*, but the bulk of them deal only with *hard security*. Issues such as economic and energy security have largely been left on the sidelines. The same can be said about the need to study the effectiveness of the existing structures.

3. President Medvedev has repeatedly stressed that the Russian proposals are not aimed at undermining the existing mechanisms. On the contrary, they are supposed to be complementary. But at the same time, NATO's eastward expansion is still being seen in Russia as an external security threat.[8] That contradiction creates a problem for the acceptance of the Russian initiatives in the West. It also creates a problem for Russia itself, saddling it with old stereotypes in its search for new approaches to cooperation. Meanwhile, NATO has already made the first step towards beginning a broad dialogue. In his speech ''Russia and NATO: A New Beginning,'' Anders Fogh Rasmussen said

President Medvedev's proposals should be discussed. ''To the degree that these ideas demonstrate Russian concerns about being marginalized in European security, I believe that a NATO–Russia dialogue could provide real added value,'' Rasmussen said. ''We must all aim for a Euro-Atlantic security architecture in which Russia sees herself reflected.''[9] Russia needs to come up with an adequate response to the proposals it has received. Much will depend on the ability of both sides to overcome their mutual stereotypes.

4. The EST initiative does not fully recognize America's role in the European security landscape. This failing should obviously be addressed. It is quite clear that many issues can only be solved in close cooperation between Russia and the United States (in areas such as arms control in Europe), between the US and Europe (security, conflicts, the future of NATO, European security and defense policy), and between Russia and Europe. But the Russian proposals fail to reflect how closely America's and Europe's interests are interlinked, or to offer workable solutions to various problems that spring up during this three-way interaction.
5. For all its significance, the Russian initiative does not detail a clear plan of action, or any specific steps towards the final goal. All it has is an invitation to hold a discussion at a special conference within the framework of the Cooperative Security Platform[10] under the OSCE. More than a year has passed since the initiative was announced,[11] but even its latest version offers no answer to the question of how and when such a conference might be held, or which issues should be at the top of its agenda.

All these considerations lead to a number of conclusions:

1. The EST initiative, and the way it has been promoted and reflected in Russia's key foreign policy documents, demonstrates that a new era has begun in Russia's foreign policy. Moscow is now coming up with is own ideas and proposals, which are based on its own vision and analysis of international trends.
2. The EST initiative aims for the long term. This, as well as Russia's push for a legally binding document, demonstrates the seriousness of Moscow's approach to the problem. A year and a half since the initiative was announced, it has not become much more detailed. But it would be wrong to attribute this apparent lack of progress to political differences. The search for the best ways of cooperation between Russia and Europe has been under way for quite a long time. Russia's understanding of its European policy is becoming increasingly pragmatic. The Russian initiative aims for the long run, and Russia itself is gradually becoming closer to Europe. So a quick evolution of the EST proposals towards greater specifics is unlikely. The initiative's main principles, ideas and goals will remain fairly general.
3. In its current shape, the EST initiative focuses on *hard security*. The reasons for that are quite obvious. Some of the most urgent problems that need to be solved fall under the *hard security* category. And it is these problems that the Russian foreign policy community has traditionally considered to be its forte. Russia feels that its position on these problems is stronger than in other areas. But to understand the current situation in its entirety, we need to take a closer look at the complicated history of Russia's dialogue with Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union. We need to take into account what *security* means for Russia, and what it does for Europe.

In order to understand where the EST initiative came from, and why the Russian president says it has no alternative,[12] it helps to recall the history of Russian cooperation with Europe in the framework of the existing mechanisms and structures. It is necessary to establish the reasons for the existing contradictions, and the source of different attitudes to security cooperation.

HURDLES ALONG THE WAY

There are several issues that have become a stumbling block in Russia's cooperation with Euro-Atlantic structures. The fundamental problem lies in the different understanding of approaches to achieving security.

Looking at the Russian foreign policy documents (such as the National Security Strategy of 2009 or the Foreign Policy Strategy of 2008) and similar EU documents (such as Secure Europe in a

Better World, the EU security strategy)[13] it becomes clear that European and Russian understanding of security—and of the threats to it—is largely the same. These threats include social and economic problems, corruption, the environment, etc. But Europe sees Russia more as a source of all these threats—and Russia has long taken offence at this attitude. Russia's new National Security Strategy demonstrates a certain rethinking of security problems. The Russian security priorities include such common items as fighting organized crime, strengthening the nonproliferation regime, and of course fighting international terrorism. But other things about Europe's and Russia's understanding of security are not quite as simple.

SECURITY IN EU DOCUMENTS

For Europe, where most nations are members of the Council of Europe—the *conscience of the continent*,[14] for the EU, with its debate about *normative* and *civilian* power; for the OSCE and NATO, where despite different strategic cultures and foreign policy priorities, nations manage to achieve common ground on military-political issues—for this Europe, the idea of security has many dimensions. It includes the military and political dimension, but also the civilian one. Every year, as European nations get a clearer understanding of the new threats and challenges facing them, the idea of security becomes ever more complex. It now spreads far beyond its original military and political context.

''The EU Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World,''[15] adopted in 2003, was a real step forward in this regard. The document begins by declaring, ''Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure, nor so free.''[16] These words are central to our understanding of what security means for Europe. It is no longer about security *in* Europe—it is about security *from* external challenges and threats. Security for Europe means maintaining its common borders. And it is not just the guarding of the actual territory that is important, but the ability to solve social, economic and humanitarian problems. One of the key priorities here is eliminating instability to the east of the EU and along its Mediterranean borders. Countries lying beyond these borders are being told that economic and political cooperation with them will be improving to the extent that they are able to resolve their domestic political problems.[17] The threat of terrorism Europe is now facing is linked with militant religious fundamentalism, which is itself stemming from various cultural, social and political crises, as well as from resistance to modernization. As part of the ongoing fight against this threat, Europe is trying to expand its ''security zone'', which includes countries lying just beyond its borders. The question is, does Russia share Europe's understanding of terrorism and of the measures being taken against terrorism?

Europe believes that one of the key mechanisms of dealing with the new challenges and threats is to create flexible and mobile armed forces. Its objective is to minimize or eliminate completely any duplication of the military efforts of its member-states, and to effect an intellectual advancement of cooperation on security issues. Europe also highlights the need to bolster military operations in crisis-stricken regions with a civilian component aimed at overcoming the chaos that follows the military phase of any conflict.[18] It is also being stressed that these tasks should be achieved in close cooperation with Europe's main ally, the United States.

It is obvious that the European security and defense strategy is to build upon the existing security structure, and to enhance Europe's capability for rapid reaction to any emerging challenges and threats. That capability is especially important in situations where other existing security structures cannot provide the solution because they lack either the ability or the political will.

RUSSIA'S UNDERSTANDING OF SECURITY

In Russia, meanwhile, the idea of security has long been framed in traditionally *hard* geopolitical terms. As one group of experts has put it, ''there was neither understanding nor acceptance of the idea that true security also depends on the development of political and civic values.''[19] But the adoption of the 2009 National Security Strategy has demonstrated a transformation in this area. The document includes social and economic issues, it is linked to the foreign policy strategy, and it does not have the traditional ranking of challenges and threats.

Russia's idea of national security now consists of two components: the internal and the external. The former includes social and economic problems. There is now an understanding that the main threats and challenges are focused in the area of domestic policy. Furthermore, the new slogan of

the National Security Strategy—Security in Development—signifies a realization that absolute security is only possible if the country is secure from both external and internal threats.

The fact that the document no longer has a list of challenges and threats shows that it was produced in a different environment. In the late 1990s, Russia's internal security agenda was headlined by the fight against terrorism and by tensions between the central government and the provinces. These domestic tasks were projected onto the foreign policy agenda. But it is clear that Russia's and Europe's ideas about what terrorism is and how to fight it were rather different. Now, the situation is changed. Russia is trying to cope with the aftermath of the economic crisis, and prosperity for its citizens is the new priority. By the same token, the search for common ground with the Euro-Atlantic structures has also become broader. Russia's security language has become richer, and it has more flexibility to accommodate cooperation.

Nevertheless, the proposed reform of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture and the EST initiative are all too focused on NATO. They create an impression that all the key threats to Russia's external security lie in the West, in the Euro-Atlantic area. This idea of a threat at the western borders becomes even more apparent when you realize that the document does not even mention the problems on the eastern borders. That includes the Kuril Islands in the Sea of Japan, the difficult situation with the nuclear-armed North Korea or the uneasy Russian–Chinese relationship.

It therefore becomes obvious that Russia and Europe have a different understanding of security, and different approaches to achieving it. In Europe, the idea of security is multidimensional. It encompasses the military, political, economic and intellectual areas. In Russia, security cooperation is understood mainly as military cooperation, i.e. *hard security*. There is no doubt that Soviet-era ideas about *the division lines*, *zero-sum game*, *the balance of forces* or *the spheres of influence* are becoming a thing of the past. New ideas are coming to replace them. Speaking about the National Security Strategy, the new Russian president now talks about ''security in development''. He puts forward the EST initiative; he mentions the ''interface'' of cooperation between the security structures, and talks about the need to rethink their ways of working.

But that is not enough.

The comparison of European and Russian ideas of security in this analysis is made on the basis of two documents that belong to different generations: the European security strategy of 2003–2009, and the new Russian strategy of 2009–2020. But this new Russian document will still look obsolete compared with the new security strategies now being developed by the EU and NATO.

The EST initiative is an important and welcome milestone in the transformation of Russia's European policy. The question it raises is whether the existing multilateral security system in Europe, with its multitude of structures and mechanisms for cooperation, is fit for purpose. It can be, if all the participants have similar ideas about the sources of the threats and the ways of countering them. Nevertheless, the experience of negotiations even within the EU and NATO clearly demonstrates how difficult it can be to find common ground on strategic issues if there is more than one participant at the negotiating table. So we can only imagine how much more difficult it would be if some of the countries and organizations taking part in these negotiations actually saw each other as a threat to their own national security. And even if these countries and organizations agree on the threats and challenges, what happens if they cannot agree on the actual methods of countering those threats? No system can be ineffective in such a situation.

Russia's internal political discourse on security in the Euro-Atlantic is often very immature. We advocate cooperation with the very organization whose expansion we then label as a threat to our own security. We are skeptical of cooperation with those whose partnership could offer us clear economic and political benefit. There is also the idea that we should either work with NATO or try to begin dialogue with the EU—but not both. Such an approach is said to be more productive—though any illusory gains quickly disappear as soon as yet another crisis breaks out in Russia's relations with Europe or the United States. The question of why we cannot cooperate with both at the same time remains unanswered.

Differences will surely remain in Russia's relations with the EU and with NATO. But these differences are only a consequence, not the cause of the ongoing stand-off over Russia's role in the European security system. This problem will most likely be solved when both sides begin to speak more or less the same language. And that moment will come sooner if we continue joint peacekeeping operations, if we look for a mutually acceptable resolution of frozen conflicts, and

develop the economic component of our cooperation. We also need a greater public diplomacy effort, on both sides.

But the biggest concern for now is the unnecessary fixation on *hard security* issues. The Russian initiative fails to make full use of the opportunities offered by economic cooperation. The entire project therefore becomes too dependent on the climate of foreign policy relations with the European nations, the United States and Euro-Atlantic organizations. Closer economic ties would be a more reliable way of promoting cooperation, so long as this policy is based on mutual interest. In its efforts to promote the EST initiative, Russia should come up with economic diplomacy projects relevant to the area of security. Otherwise we will have a presence in Europe in terms of hard security—but we will not really become an equal partner in the modern sense of this word, based on the use of the intellectual and economic potential.

EUROPEAN REACTION TO RUSSIA'S INITIATIVE

European experts began the debate on the Russian initiative almost immediately after President Medvedev's Evian speech in October 2008. Much of that attention can be explained by the Russian–Georgian crisis and by the political support for the initiative from French President Nicolas Sarkozy, whose country then held the EU's rotating presidency.

Most independent European observers agree that Russia is unhappy with the current European security architecture, which took shape after the end of the Cold War. Russia feels unappreciated and lonely. Meanwhile, the security landscape itself is becoming ever more complex. There are growing differences between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic structures over their approaches to the emerging problems and threats. Moscow is also very unhappy with the NATO-centric nature of the European security system. Observers believe these are the key reasons why Russia, which still considers itself a great power, is putting forward initiatives such as the EST.

NATO as a threat to Russian security

Experts say one of the purposes of the EST initiative is to weaken America's influence on the European continent. This influence largely stems from European–American cooperation within the framework of NATO, whose expansion Russia sees as a threat to its national security. The EST initiative can saw divisions between the NATO nations, and even bind them with certain commitments if the treaty is actually signed. That would halt NATO's eastwards expansion, and strengthen Russia's positions in Europe.

Western experts also note that the timing of the Russian initiative was carefully chosen. Russia announced its vision of security at a time when the Bush administration, which was very unpopular in Europe, was on the way out, while the new administration was only preparing to take over. The new US president would obviously need time to assert his leadership. Meanwhile, many of America's NATO allies were disgruntled by the Bush presidency, and exhausted by the unwinnable war in Afghanistan. The relatively weak Western reaction to the Russian–Georgian conflict is often cited as evidence. Moscow saw the transition of power in Washington as a window of opportunity. The moral standing of the United States as world leader was at a record low. America was further weakened by the global banking crisis and the ensuing panic. The situation in Europe at the time (June–October 2008) was not much better. Ireland had just said ''no'' at the June 2008 referendum to the Lisbon Treaty, which aims to give the EU a greater say in international affairs. In the Czech Republic, the treaty was facing similar problems. Some experts were openly doubting that the EU even had a common future.[20] Analysts believe Russia knew that, despite all this, the initiative would be met with skepticism in the Baltic states, Poland and Britain. But it hoped other nations—such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain—would be supportive.

Russia is right to be concerned that the role of the UN Security Council is diminishing. But that trend has to a large degree been triggered by Russia's own obstructionism and ''Mr. No'' stance at the council, reminiscent of its behavior during the Cold War. The initiative to create an additional structure for the Euro-Atlantic aims to bind NATO hand and foot. If that happens, another humanitarian intervention to prevent ethnic cleansing—such as the 1999 intervention in Kosovo—will become impossible under the new treaty.[21]

Russia, the near-abroad and the CSTO

Experts believe that one of the key aims of the initiative is to have Russia's special role in the post-Soviet space recognized and strengthened. The announcement of Russia's special policy on the CIS is part of that strategy. Another important task is to give the CSTO a greater role in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. That is why the EST initiative stresses the importance of involving the CIS and the CSTO in future dialogue, in addition to NATO and the EU.

The end of Helsinki?

Another key aim of the initiative is to weaken the existing security arrangements such as the CSCE/OSCE or the CFE treaty. For a long time, Russia listed among its key priorities the creation of a European security regime in which the OSCE would play a central role. But that was made impossible by the Western strategy to bolster European security institutions by building upon the existing structure of Euro-Atlantic organizations, rather than creating a new pan-European structure. That, as well as the OSCE's growing involvement in the post-Soviet countries, has changed Moscow's attitude to this organization much to the worse.[22] Russia now says the OSCE has become obsolete—but it is Russia's own leaders who are doing all they can to undermine the organization. All the talk of launching the Helsinki-2 process is part of the Russian policy to weaken the OSCE.[23]

Experts are unanimous that the beginning of a new debate on revising the European security system would be a success for Russian diplomacy, inasmuch as it would signify a partial recognition that Moscow's grievances are legitimate. They argue that even if President Medvedev's proposals do not result in an actual conference being held, his initiative itself has already achieved the goal of dividing the NATO allies.[24]

EUROPEAN NATIONS ON EST

France

France is definitely one of the countries that are prepared to back the Russian initiative. Partly that is explained by the strength of the two countries' bilateral relations. Another reason is that the initiative could serve France's own foreign policy goals, and add weight to its own views on security. France's 2008 White Book[25] on foreign and European policy says one of the key priorities for Paris is to secure a greater role for itself in international and European affairs.[26] The country traditionally plays a prominent role in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and crises (witness its involvement in the events of August 2008 in the Caucasus). Paris is also very sensitive about preserving the role of the United Nations in resolving many security problems. In recent years it has been more actively involved in NATO and improved relations with the United States—but on the whole, France pursues a fairly guarded NATO policy. All this suggests that Paris will back the Russian proposals.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy welcomed the EST idea almost as soon as it was put forward. Speaking at the Evian conference, he proposed that the discussion of the Russian initiative should continue at a special summit to be held in late 2009 within the OSCE framework. But for now, it is not clear how far the French are prepared to go with their support. Is it just a matter of ''politeness''[27] for them? Or are they actually prepared to back specific proposals outlined in the initiative?

Spain

The Spanish foreign policy strategy is to continue mutually beneficial cooperation with the EU and NATO. Madrid also aims to play a prominent role in various international and regional organizations. It uses them as a platform to promote its own interests, as well as the interests of the countries which maintain traditional links with Spain. Being somewhat on the periphery of international decisionmaking—it is not, for example, a member of the G8—Spain tries to play a greater role in those international organizations where it is represented.

Madrid has welcomed the EST initiative. During his October 1, 2008 visit, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Zapatero expressed his backing for the proposed new treaty. During President Medvedev's visit to Spain (March 2009) and at the Yaroslavl forum (September 2009), Spanish officials reiterated on several occasions that they are ready for cooperation on the EST. They emphasized that Russia's concerns on Euro-Atlantic security cannot be ignored, and if Russia wants the issue to be discussed, then it should be discussed. But Spain's preferred platform for cooperation is the OSCE forum and a Helsinki+ format rather than a new Helsinki-2 process. In addition to hard security, the energy component should also be discussed.

Germany

Germany's foreign policy strategy is to develop close cooperation with the Euro-Atlantic nations and to maintain its status as one of the leading EU and NATO members. But political and economic contacts with Russia are also a significant component of that strategy.

Nevertheless, the Russian initiative did not attract much interest at the Berlin summit in June 2008. That was largely because the initiative itself lacked any real detail. And besides, right now Germany is entirely happy with the existing security architecture. It is a member of NATO, and it is a vocal proponent of cooperation on security within the EU framework. One year on since the Medvedev initiative was put forward, the level of detail in it is still not enough for a proper discussion, although Berlin strongly supports the idea of such a discussion.

The German foreign minister, Frank Walter Steinmeier, has said in an interview that he ''has always insisted that Russia should participate in those debates [on European security]... After a phase of tension we must now enter a phase of confidence-building.''[28] The Germans are also prepared to discuss the CFE issue, and they are following with great attention the Russian–U.S. dialogue on strategic arms reduction,[29] the installation of ABM elements in the Czech Republic and Poland, and Russia's possible response to such moves.

But although Germany is willing to begin dialogue with Russia on Euro-Atlantic security, German experts point out several problems. Among them is the lack of detail in the Russian initiative, as well as attempts by Moscow to carve divisions between NATO members, to undermine NATO's influence, and to create new spheres of influence in Europe.

Italy

Relations between the Russian leaders and their Italian counterparts are very warm and friendly. Italy is traditionally thought of as an ally in Russia's dealings with the EU, and on a more global level during the G8 talks. Speaking about the events in the Caucasus, the Italian prime minister highlighted Italy's contribution to the settlement of the Russian–Georgian conflict. Italy has also given a warm welcome to the EST initiative. Russian diplomats are very appreciative of the role Silvio Berlusconi has played in fostering dialogue between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic structures, including the meeting of Russia and NATO foreign ministers in Corfu[30] in July 2009.

It is too early to say whether these declarations of support will be followed by concrete steps. But judging from previous cooperation and Italy's foreign policy priorities, there is common ground to be found.

Poland

Poland understands that Russia has real concerns, and it is ready to listen to Russian proposals. But it believes the discussion should be held within the OSCE framework. Poland realizes that possibilities for building relations with Russia based on common values are limited, so common rules should be worked out.

The Russian proposals were met in Warsaw with both interest and mistrust. Several Polish experts have expressed doubts that the mechanisms proposed in the initiative are realistic.

One expert believes Russia's aim is simply to divide Europe and the United States. One proof of that, he says, is that ''the Russian proposals offer no solution to the problem of conventional arms, demonstration of military power or rapid modernization of the armed forces.''[31]

Polish experts also say the EST initiative is part of the Russian foreign policy strategy aimed at revising the current European security architecture. They say the Kremlin believes that this architecture was engineered by the West while Russia was weakened after the collapse of the Soviet Union. ''There is no doubt that in the short term, the proposal to negotiate a new security treaty aims to stop once and for all NATO's expansion towards the CIS. As an indirect result of this, the West will be forced to recognize that Russia has special interests in the CIS. In the longer term, the proposal also aims to begin political dialogue on reshaping the European security system.''[32] A complete reshaping of the European security system, which the Russian plan aims for, seems unlikely, but Moscow will probably succeed in its short-term goals, Polish experts believe.

They also point out that if the Russian proposals were to be fully accepted, Moscow would have the right of veto on a whole range of issues. That includes the deployment of international peacekeeping forces, ABM plans, NATO enlargement and any other changes in the military landscape which Russia sees as a threat to its security interests.

Poland views the EST initiative in the context of the problems and tasks facing Russian foreign policy. The biggest cause for concern in Warsaw is Russia's declaration that relations with the CIS countries are a key foreign policy priority. Poland is therefore trying to understand whether the EST initiative is a sign of Russia's strength or weakness.

The eastern direction plays a prominent role in Poland's own foreign policy. Polish experts therefore raise the question of the format the proposed discussion should take. Who should be invited to participate in the EST talks? The Poles believe such a discussion cannot happen without Ukraine, because of the country's special role in security on the continent.

Britain

The general thrust of British foreign policy is well reflected in the title of the yearly FCO report for 2007–2008: ''Better Britain in a better world''. British foreign policy priorities include prevention of terrorism and proliferation, a stronger international system to deal with new challenges and threats, and a more effective and globally competitive EU in a secure environment. In order to achieve these goals, Britain uses traditional diplomacy (participation in international organizations and alliances, development of bilateral relations) as well as public diplomacy. British policy in the Euro-Atlantic represents the Atlanticist line in European affairs.

British diplomats have busily discussed the proposed EST at various analytical and political forums. But that is probably a reflection of Britain's general public diplomacy trend and its active stance in the world arena, rather than any real interest in the Russian initiative or genuine support for the Russian proposals. Britain's view is that the main problem with the EST initiative is the lack of any detail, as well as a different understanding of security problems in Russia and in Europe.

British commentators say that, initially, the EST proposals were thought to be aimed at weakening NATO. Now, the bigger concern is that Russia is pushing the idea of ''not providing its own security at the expense of the security of others''—which is seen as an attempt to stop NATO's eastwards expansion.

In general, Europe understands and shares Russian concerns about the architecture of European security. But all European nations agree that any reform of this architecture should not require a wholesale revision of the existing arrangements or a ''Helsinki-2 process''. They believe a more appropriate formula would be ''Helsinki + ''. They also question the idea of a legally binding document, and say the scope of it should not be limited only to military and political issues.

EST SCENARIOS

So what does the future hold for the EST initiative? Let us look at three basic scenarios.

Scenario 1: too good to happen

Under this scenario, Moscow hosts a summit of CIS, SCTO, EU, NATO and OSCE nations. The participants develop a set of new principles for European security, and approve the basic

principles and guidelines for future negotiations on the proposed EST. Some time later, all these countries sign the EST, which would include all the key points of the original Russian initiative. On the plus side, we shall have an obvious success for Russian diplomacy, a legally binding document, recognition of the legitimacy of Russian grievances against Western structures, and a greater role for the SCTO. On the minus side is the price Russia will have to pay. Will the project change the already existing system in a radical way? Will it really promote Russian–European dialogue? And even under the very best case scenario, it is hard to imagine that a legally binding document can be signed.

Scenario 2: pessimistic

After Russia fleshes out the details of its EST proposal, a summit is held. All the nations and organizations that received the invitation take part. The summit fails to achieve anything. Later on, Euro-Atlantic allies present their own vision of how cooperation with Russia on key security issues should develop. Rasmussen's initiative is an indirect Western response to the EST. The Western proposals will be in line with Russia's own interests in the Euro-Atlantic security system only to a certain degree. They will not change the existing model of relations, and they will not promote real cooperation. Russia, weakened by the world economic crisis, will still remain in the shadow of Western structures. It will continue to face the challenges and threats to its security alone. Cooperation with the West on these issues will be only occasional.

On the plus side of such a scenario, Russia will have secured some temporary concessions on individual issues during the negotiations. But the larger diplomatic battle for the EST will be lost. And on the minus side, Russia will have missed yet another chance to take part in shaping the modern system of Euro-Atlantic security, and lose its political influence in the region, especially in the SCTO and CIS countries.

Scenario 3: realistic

The treaty itself will not be signed. But the initiatives and proposals it contains will be discussed within the framework of the existing Euro-Atlantic structures. In this context, the treaty should be seen not as an end in itself but as an instrument to begin dialogue between Russia and the existing European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

On the minus side, many of the Russian proposals will not be accepted. Many will be only politically binding, others will based on unwritten understandings. On the plus side, Russia will secure a stronger position for itself in the Euro-Atlantic structures, and both sides will find common language in discussing security issues. And in the long term, there is the prospect of open and equal dialogue between Russia and its European and Atlantic partners.

It is quite obvious that at this point, the EST initiative is the best available instrument in Russia's European policy. There is no alternative to it. Every part of Russia's foreign policy apparatus should make use of this instrument and explore the opportunities it presents.

As part of that effort, the following steps should be made:

- ❑ continue working on the existing proposals. Decide which of the problems raised in the EST initiative can be discussed jointly, and start looking for common solutions;
- ❑ analyze which issues will cause the greatest difficulties, on the intellectual and practical level. This will require a detailed and sober analysis of Russia's policies on Euro-Atlantic security. We need to identify the strengths of our cooperation with Europe, and avoid any decisions, proposals or statements that could trigger a crisis;
- ❑ decide whether the goal of securing a legally binding agreement on each of the proposals outlined in the Russian initiative is entirely realistic. Find possible alternatives to legally binding documents;
- ❑ make Russian participation in the existing structures more productive. The EST principles could be used as a starting point for a rethink of Russian participation in Euro-Atlantic structures. Cooperation within the framework of the OSCE, Russia–EU mechanisms and

Russia–NATO institutions could be reformatted in accordance with shared understanding of the security goals and objectives;

- analyze the state of cooperation on security issues within the Russia–Europe–America triangle. America's role in European security must be properly taken into account. We should not imagine that the American factor will somehow just go away. The focus should be on learning to work together;
- explore opportunities for economic cooperation on security issues;
- look at the role of the SCTO in the European structures. Russia is interested in securing a role for the SCTO in the European security system. But we need a careful and realistic analysis of what the organization can deliver at this stage and how it can enhance European security;
- work on improving the positive international image of the initiative. Western critics of the project question the sincerity of the ''positive'' agenda when it is combined with turns of phrase such as ''a requiem for the Cold War''. And why is the proposed document called European Security Treaty when it is the Euro-Atlantic security system it aims to reform? These criticisms may not be fundamental, but they are important psychologically for the European perception of the Russian initiative. Addressing these concerns could really help to promote the Russian project and improve Russia's own international prestige; and
- make use of public and people's diplomacy instruments to promote the initiative.

CONCLUSION

Russia's European policy and its ideas concerning the Euro-Atlantic architecture have long been burdened by illusions, fears, lack of confidence and too much ambition.

But now Russia has a new foreign policy strategy. Brinkmanship has been replaced by well-balanced political decisions. The country is now seeking dialogue on security problems, and it is prepared for lengthy consultations on issues that require a common approach.

President Medvedev is making a new attempt to strengthen Russia's positions in Europe by improving the continent's security architecture.

In terms of scale and ambition, this is the first such initiative coming from Russia for quite some time, and it should be welcomed. The proposals, which have been enshrined in key Russian foreign policy documents, demonstrate that Russia is genuinely seeking deeper cooperation with Europe on matters of common interest.

But for all the importance of the new initiative, much will depend on how Russia goes about implementing it. Moscow needs to provide a clear answer to the question of what the proposed EST really is. Is it just yet another attempt by Moscow to demonstrate its special status on the European continent? Or is it the beginning of a new course towards improving security cooperation in Europe?

If the answer is the former, it would mean further departure from what seemed like a new strategy to begin a constructive dialogue with the West. In that case, Russian politicians and diplomats should brace themselves for yet another long and exhausting round of talks with their European partners, which will end in disappointment on both sides. That would mean there is really no need for the EST. Russia will simply have made a point that it is not happy with the current state of affairs regarding security in Europe. It will also have demonstrated that it does not yet know how it could contribute to European security, what concessions it could make and what it would expect in return.

But if the EST proposal is a genuine attempt to improve security cooperation, then the situation is entirely different. There will still be new rounds of long and exhausting talks—but both sides will actually be trying to understand each other's interests and concerns, and in the end they will find common ground. That common ground will come in the form of common security architecture on the European continent—a territory stretching politically from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

NOTES

[1] Russian Foreign Policy Strategy, approved by President Dmitry Medvedev on July 12, 2008; http://www.mid.ru/nsosndoc.nsf/0e9272befa34209743256c630042d1aa/d48737161a0bc944c32574870048d8f7?2008>, last accessed June 27, 2009.

[2] Igor Yurgens, Alexander Dynkin and Vladimir Baranovskiy, eds., *Architecture of Euro-Atlantic Security* (Moscow, 2009), p. 48.

[3] Ibid., p. 50.

[4] Vladimir Voronkov, ''European Security Treaty: after Corfu,'' *Security Index*, no. 1 (Winter 2010).

[5] Dmitry Medvedev, ''Constructive Agenda for European Security'', June 4, 2009, <http://www.kremlin.ru/articles/217262.shtml>, last accessed June 4, 2009.

[6] Igor Yurgens, Alexander Dynkin and Vladimir Baranovskiy, eds., *Architecture of Euro-Atlantic Security*, pp. 48–49.

[7] Ibid., p. 49.

[8] Russian National Security Strategy to 2020, May 12, 2009, no. 537, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/99.htm>, last accessed September 15, 2009.

[9] ''NATO and Russia: A New Beginning,'' Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Carnegie Endowment, Brussels, September 18, 2009, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-56F5C234-4A09A2C3/natolive/opinions_57640.htm>, last accessed October 6, 2009.

[10] Vladimir Voronkov, ''European Security Treaty: after Corfu.''

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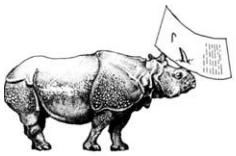

Maria Teploukhova

RUSSIA AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC: AGENDA FOR THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST

The development of the Russian Far East, as well as other Asian parts of Russia, is ambiguous—the regions are quite heterogeneous from the point of view of living standards and economic progress. However, it is quite clear that the area is not competitive on external markets—it significantly lags behind the economies of the Asia-Pacific. Taking into account that the latter advance faster than the rest of the world, it is necessary to assess the new role of the Russian Far East and the security prospects of this area. Now, nearly 90 years after the Japanese intervention in Russia, the underlying economic factors that provoked it are still in place.

Today there is no clear development strategy for the Russian Far East. Nonetheless, one of the most rational and promising lanes is integration, which implies equal focus on regional economy and politics, educational programs and security projects. Such a model would destroy the pattern relationship between the Center and the regions built in the last two decades—when the border territories were regarded mostly as a source of natural resources.

One of the most effective solutions to the regional problems and the best platform for a new partnership could be the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), which will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2009. Since its first summit in Canberra, the structure has changed a lot and acquired new missions to add to its economic credo. At present, it is the association of the influential political, military and economic actors of the region, i.e. the basic institution for maintaining strategic stability and security in the Asia-Pacific. The 2012 APEC Summit, which should take place in Vladivostok, may open up a new era in the development of the Russian Far East and create a discussion platform for tackling the most urgent regional security issues. Such a debate may co-opt the draft of the Development Strategy until 2025 for the Far East, Buryatia, Zabaikalsky krai, and Irkutskaya oblast set out by the Russian government in May 2009.[1]

According to many analysts and diplomats, the twenty-first century will be the age of the Asia-Pacific region. Russia is a Euro-Pacific power and has a unique chance to keep up with the *world leadership train* and find constructive and cheap solutions to a number of problems pertaining to its border territories. One should realize that the solutions should be adapted to the geopolitical and economic particularities of the region—the economy of the Far East and in part Siberia should not concede to the European trends. This is true with respect to security matters, the configuration of which is totally different here.

SECURITY CHALLENGES FOR THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST

According to the Russian Foreign Policy Concept,[2] Russia aims to pursue a multivector foreign policy and the Asia-Pacific is receiving more and more attention from Moscow. The situation is exacerbated by the fact the integration process is managed from Moscow, which is 9,000 km away from its eastern neighbors. As a result, a number of problems are emerging.

First of all, with such a pattern one cannot ensure intense interaction between the border regions and not only the capitals. Second, it is difficult to understand in Moscow the need for constructive dialogue. Local authorities and the public feel it much better to strive for cooperation with

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neighboring countries.[3] Third, the hierarchy of priorities and the lists of urgent matters differ for Moscow and for the Far East and they are not always adequate when elaborated in the Center. The vision of security issues as seen by local authorities and the population is not always shared by the Kremlin.

The Far Eastern federal district—the most distant, lowest populated and most vulnerable from the viewpoint of Russian geopolitical interests—comprises nine territories. Bearing in mind the research objectives of this paper, we will attach particular importance to the border regions—Primorsky and Khabarovsky krai, as well as Amurskaya and Sakhalinskaya oblast. It is important to analyze the situation there from the standpoint of global processes (as part of the Asia-Pacific macro-region) and developments in the Asian part of Russia (which are under domestic transformation).

Like any border territory, the Far East feels pressure from its neighboring states and requires a *special* attitude. Most of the challenges related to illegal border crossing (human beings and commodities) may affect Central and Western Russia. At the same time, the Far East itself is a vulnerable territory due to the high amount of trans-border relationships which are not regulated by any laws; and besides, the area is remote from the capital and this makes its management difficult.

In the first 15 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Far East was the most criminal and de facto unmanageable part of the country, existing in chaos. However, in the last few years the situation has partly changed—the federal authorities have started to demonstrate their interest in the region. Not all the decisions of the Russian government pertaining to the Far East can be called a success (e.g. raising the customs duties on imported secondhand cars). As far as security is concerned, the authorities quite often shift their attention from real threats to dummy challenges, which are far less hazardous for the region than the central government may imagine.

There is a deep gap in understanding of the external challenges and threats for the aforementioned four regions—federal experts and officials disagree with their regional colleagues.[4] This state of affairs is aggravated by the fact that the central government often tries to take into account the overall national interests and neglects the regional ones, or sometimes acts even to their detriment. An eloquent example is the difference in assessments of the Russian response to the nuclear tests and missile launches in North Korea in late May 2009. The federals assume that Russia pursued its policy in good faith, while the regional experts argue that the policy was ''extremely pro-Western and ad hoc''.

What are the major real challenges to the Russian Far East?

Apart from fires and floods, which are also typical of the rest of Russia, the Far East also has to face the seismic shifts that jeopardize the region with potential earthquakes. This is extremely significant for the southern part of Primorsky krai, which is situated in one of the most earthquake-prone sectors of the world. The idea of an early warning system was raised by the local administration as early as the late 1980s. Then, due to the cuts in funding for science-intense production, the issue was shelved. It reemerged only in 1995 after the earthquake in Sakhalin, when Neftegorsk was totally destroyed and 80 percent of its population died because of a magnitude-nine disaster. Shocks beneath the Pacific Ocean and the tsunami that follows occur in Sakhalin and the Kurila Islands every two to three years. A powerful earthquake is expected in the south of Primorsky krai before 2012.[5]

Due to this fact, an urgent issue is the establishment of a unified regional early warning and post-disaster system. Russia and China made the first step in this direction in May 2008 after the participation of Russian experts in the elimination of the consequences of a devastating earthquake in the province of Szechuan. Nowadays EMERCOM is ready to enhance cooperation with China, e.g. aimed at developing rescue technologies and means.[6]

If the Russian–Chinese experience is successful, it may be translated into multilateral partnership mechanisms or be incorporated into one of the existing Asia-Pacific structures. Russia has an impressive background in this area and may lead the rescue operations and the work of such a task force. The same relates to the existing scientific, educational and technological basis—if funding is provided, the Russian institutions will be the best in the region. For instance, the Institute of Volcanology and Seismology of the Far Eastern Directorate of the Russian Academy of Sciences predicted the most powerful Cape Kronotsky earthquake, which took place on

December 5, 1997 with a magnitude of 7.7. This was the most accurate forecast in the entire history of volcano research and observations. The exercises within such a framework can be reasonably compatible with the military exercises conducted at bilateral level or on the basis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or other regional structures.

A complicated *environmental situation* does not only originate from the unlimited export of biological resources and related natural disasters (e.g. current annual floods caused by the felling of forests), dust storms and chemical fallout brought from the industrial zones of neighboring countries, but also from the problem of dismantlement of nuclear-powered submarines in the Far East. The eastern areas were selected for this *noble* mission as the least populated part of the country and the preparatory works are under way.[7] However, the region also has negative experience in this area—in 1985 the explosion in Chazhma Bay in the course of reloading of nuclear fuel on a submarine resulted in 10 fatalities and over 300 injured.

One should point out that regional and international cooperation in this sphere is the most intense. For instance, Japan provides Russia with economic and technical assistance. One of the documents that lays the foundations for such aid is the intergovernmental memorandum on the development of bilateral cooperation in assisting disarmament, nonproliferation and dismantlement of nuclear weapons to be reduced in Russia. The implementation of this memorandum would help to improve the environmental situation in the Far East.[8] The United States funds the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program, within the framework of which 13 nuclear-powered submarines have already been destroyed.

Industrial activities in China also affect the environmental situation in the region. In October 2005 the series of explosions at a chemical factory in China resulted in the contamination of the Sungari River (a feeder of the Amur River) and the Amur River for a long period.

Regional integration should focus on a project aimed at maintaining the environment. Particular attention should be paid to environmental safety, protection and rational use of natural resources, elaboration of unified regional standards and a common legal basis for regulating the environmental issues and prevention of violations. Additionally, it would be apposite to sign a number of bilateral treaties, e.g. a Treaty on Protection and Rational Use of Trans-Border Waters, etc. The least developed countries in the region should obtain financial, technological and legal assistance in the area of environmental protection.

Epidemiology and sanitary issues are also topical for the population and the local authorities. The border regions are a priori more vulnerable and Russia borders several countries in the Far East, one of which is China—the home of several epidemics which led to the suffering of mankind in the early 21st century.[9] The number of daily legal tourist transfers in Primorsky krai, Khabarovsky krai and Amurskaya oblast is up to 10,000 people.[10] Such intense human contacts may have negative consequences. According to some experts, illegal migrants worsen the epidemiological situation due to the higher risk of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS.[11]

One of the most urgent challenges to humanitarian security is allegedly the illicit human trafficking, i.e. *uncontrolled migration flows*, mainly illegally from China. However, the *yellow threat*, which is widely discussed in the Russian Far East, is bogus—it is not a real peril for the security of the Russian Far East.

The proponents of the theory of soft Chinese occupation provide official statistics indicating the gap in demographic potential on both sides of the border. China has high unemployment rates and is overcrowded, while the Russian Far East is losing its ties with the European parts of Russia and becoming more and more dependent on Beijing.[12]

At present, the Russian Far East has a population of less than seven million people. They are mostly concentrated in large cities with the distance between them exceeding 400 km. In the border area in three Manchurian provinces there are more than 100 million people, i.e. the difference in the concentration of population is 62 times. The Russian Federal Migration Service (FMS) argues that the number of Chinese immigrants in the Far Eastern federal district is over 130,000 people. Thus, some experts assume that there is a danger of gradual cultural occupation of the region.[13]

Nonetheless, it is important to understand that the citizens of China who come to earn money do not squeeze the Russian population from these territories. The Russians leave for other reasons (normally due to socioeconomic factors). Besides, the Russian economy still lacks unskilled labor

and such a shortage cannot be covered by domestic human resources. Moreover, surveys indicate that the external labor migration does not affect the wages, i.e. the migrants do not bring down the price of labor, as they occupy the evident vacancies, the jobs which are not suitable for or are rejected by the local population.[14] And finally, nobody knows the exact number of Chinese on Russian territory—this is true not only of unofficial statistics,[15] but also of official FMS spokesmen.[16] It may be noted that in many developed countries the Chinese community is one of the most prevalent but does not raise the concerns of their governments.[17]

Therefore, nowadays migration in the Russian Far East remains a labor migration; it is interim and recurrent. Only a small number of Chinese settle in the border territories in Russia. This is not good either, as it means the outflow of capital from Russia. Chinese who work in Primorsky and Khabarovsky krai and certain other regions come for a limited and rather short time and see no need for cultural assimilation or to take up Russian citizenship. Their approach to the resources of the region is consumerist—''gain and go''.

Despite all the negative aspects of labor migration, Russia cannot afford to reject the inflow of foreign labor force in the Far East. Hence, it is irrational to fear or to oppose the use of foreign (Chinese, North Korean or Central Asian) labor. It would be more useful to set up legal regulation mechanisms to stabilize the legislation. The local authorities should design and implement policies that would ensure safe and normal living standards for incoming workers and provide assurances to the indigenous population (i.e. moderate paternalism in employment).

It would be wrong to confuse the problems of unregulated migration with the *territorial security* of the region. This challenge is the most sensitive and frustrating for the Russian Far East and Russia in general. Key differences exist with Japan, which for decades has been claiming four Russian islands in the Kurila Archipelago. The Japanese cite the 1855 Treaty on Commerce and Borders, which situated the border between the Urup and Iturup islands.[18] The Russian Federation insisted on gaining control of the islands after World War II and believes that its sovereignty should not be disputed.[19] The parties have kept returning to this issue for nearly 60 years now, and despite the ongoing economic partnership the Japanese parliament raises the issue regularly. And even though Russia demonstrates a tough position, the population is apprehensive that in the end Moscow will make a concession and give the islands away.

Such a viewpoint is based on the precedent of border demarcation with China. In 2004 Beijing claimed the Tarabarov Islands and part of Bolshoi Ussuriisky Island, a total of 320 km^2. More than five years after the signature of the agreement, it is still quite difficult to give an unequivocal assessment of this Russian step. On the one hand, the land mass was not large; by 2008 it contained only dachas (country houses) and was exchanged for a strategically important stronghold. In comparison with the overall territory of Russia it amounted to peanuts. On the other hand, the territory is not large or significant enough for China either, so why would Moscow make such a concession? Thus, there are no claims on Russia, but the problem of the border remains de facto unresolved.

According to the Russian legislation, the issue of border changes should be approved by referendum. Such a procedure was neglected, even though the population attempted to collect signatures in Khabarovsk and to overturn the decision of the government as *anti-state*. There is evidence that the decision was taken exclusively in Moscow. For evidence one can look at the statements by local authorities. Former Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy in the Far Eastern federal District Konstantin Pulikovsky repeatedly argued that the disputed territories belonged to Russia,[20] while the then Governor of Khabarovsky krai, Victor Ishaev, made efforts to develop Bolshoi Ussuriisky Island as part of Khabarovsk.[21]

Of course, partnership with China is one of the key foreign policy and economic priorities of Russia. The common border is over 4,200 km, the number of border crossings in Primorsky and Khabarovsky krai is constantly increasing, and more and more cultural, social, scientific and trade agreements are being signed. On the other hand, the imbalance in the development rate of China and Russia causes obvious concerns, as the border territories of the Russian Federation are successfully transformed by Beijing into the raw material appendage of China.

Under these circumstances, there is a need for a better thought strategy in discussing any territorial issues with China. One has to take into account the 20-year-old experience of the 1991 agreement.[22] This implied that the border with China should follow the navigating channel of the Amur River. And China not only insisted on obtaining the islands near Khabarovsk, but from time

to time has tried to change the bed of the river—bank protection on the Chinese side makes the channel move to the north and the Russian bank, which has no protection, shrinks.

Another territorial dispute that sometimes occurs on the territory of Primorsky krai is connected with the estuary of the Tumannaya River, which flows close to the borders of Russia and North Korea, South Korea and China. The bed of the river is not stable and there is a chance that the border may move. The bank protection in Korea results in the shrinking of the Russian bank, just like the situation seen on the Amur River.

In 1991 the parties developed the Tumangan project, which provided for the establishment of an international economic zone (10,000 km) in the triangle of three ports—in the D.P.R.K., China and Russia. This plan was beneficial for all participants, but it had strategic importance for China—the country would have gained access to the Sea of Japan and this would be a new step in its trade relations with Tokyo. Russia would have benefited from the inflow of investments. However, the only project of joint and mutually beneficial use of the disputed areas was not carried out. China and North Korea attempt to maintain contacts at this part of the border, while Russia's decision to raise tariffs and make the customs procedures more complicated seems illogical.

Another factor of regional security is the *proximity to North Korea* with its tests, missile launches, and withdrawal from multilateral negotiations. To evaluate the dangers originating from the nuclear activities of North Korea, one has to answer the question: what does Russia really fear? Attack on its borders, war on the Korean Peninsula, environmental disaster caused by the nuclear tests or failed missile launches against Japan and the United States, or the implications of the collapse of North Korea?

Each of the aforementioned scenarios is a challenge to international stability and security, but which of them is the most probable? Attack on Russia can be ruled out, as it is one of a few powers that supports in one form or another the North Korean regime. New missile launches are expected by the international community, but most probably they will fail, just like the previous tests—this fact is proved by the available intelligence data on Korean rocket-building technologies and analysis of previous launches.[23]

The threat of environmental disaster cannot be excluded for Primorsky krai. The prevailing wind-flow is from the Korean Peninsula to the southern parts of Primorsky krai and further deep into the country. Depending on the intensity of the fallout, time of the year (which determines the direction and strength of the winds) and the coordination within the Russian EMERCOM, the area of radioactive contamination may vary. If an underground nuclear explosion is conducted, the waste can contaminate subterranean waters and spread over a greater distance. Bearing in mind that the territory of the Korean Peninsula is not large, any nuclear tests conducted without serious analysis of their consequences may lead to environmental dangers jeopardizing the Russian Far East as well.[24]

As far as hostilities on the Korean Peninsula are concerned, such a scenario may pose a number of threats to the Russian territories. Beside the aforementioned effects, one may mention the uncontrolled flows of migrants, high probability of involvement of the Russian Armed Forces as a peacekeeper, security threats to the border settlements, and deterioration of relations with other countries in the region (Japan, South Korea, and perhaps China). However, the chances of large-scale military action are low, since this is not in the interests of Pyongyang's major rival—the United States of America. Any armed conflict would impair relations with China. Besides, the waging of war would not bring substantial benefits to North Korea either. The only result would be the quick death of the regime, as the nuclear arsenals of Washington and Pyongyang cannot even be compared. And other countries in the region would demonstrate maximum restraint in this matter and will not interfere in such nuclear conflict.

The *threat of terrorism and extremism* is directly connected to the problem of transport and sea security, piracy and regional drug trafficking. These are transnational challenges that cannot be solved locally.

At present, the seas of the Asia-Pacific region are considered to be the most dangerous.[25] The triangle in the South China Sea, which is close to the Russian borders (Hong Kong, Macao, China), is characterized by the quasi-official nature of Chinese piracy—the desire of the China's leaders to impose territorial sovereignty in the disputed areas (which are rich in mineral resources, notably oil and gas) leads to clandestine support for the criminal groupings.[26]

There are a number of structures which are charged with combating piracy—the International Maritime Organization of the United Nations (since 1983), the ASEAN Regional Forum (since 2002), and the International Symposium on Marine Safety in the South China Sea (piracy and drug trafficking). Russia is fully involved in the activities of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP). Regular international naval fora are conducted to discuss joint action against piracy and terrorism at sea.

As far as drug trafficking is concerned, the most productive way of confronting this challenge would be to stimulate international cooperation among law enforcement bodies and to undertake regular joint action.

FAR EAST AND THE INTEGRATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

The majority of the international alliances in the modern world are based on economic relations, or specifically on the economic advantages originating from such partnerships. The Russian Federation is one of a few developed countries rich in mineral resources and energy. This creates a perfect basis for solid economic and political relations with all countries around the globe.

Dynamic development of the Asia-Pacific region in the last 25 years, especially in China, is pushing Moscow to use the natural resources of the Far East more actively, in order to be incorporated in global and regional economic processes. At the same time, if such a raw-material line is the only course pursued, the country may eventually lose its standing (economically) and face the threat of border changes (i.e. confront a national security challenge). Such a policy has no merit for a country which positions itself as one of the world leaders and a G8 member. Therefore, Russia should also play a significant role in collective security structures, as well as in the establishment of such mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific.

There are practically no regional or subregional security organizations in the region. The only exception is the ASEAN Regional Forum. It is broader than ASEAN itself and comprises 26 countries, including Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Vietnam, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Canada, China, North Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Russia, Singapore, the United States, Thailand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Japan, as well as the EU. The list of applicants contains Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. The presidency of the Forum belongs to the foreign ministry of the country chairing the ASEAN Standing Committee.

ASEAN as a mother organization enjoys the support of the countries of the region. The heterogeneous character of the economies and political systems in the region makes it difficult to create a single platform that would be suitable for all. Therefore, one of the emerging actors is ''ASEAN + 3'' (i.e. China, South Korea and Japan) with potential extension towards Russia and the United States. Among the impediments to such a structure are geographical factors, non-homogeneous economies and traditional rivalry with the aggressively developing China. In general, internal integration and expansion processes occur simultaneously.

For over ten years Russia has been developing relations with ASEAN and participates in subregional projects, sets out initiatives on energy and trade cooperation, and fights terrorism and organized crime.[27] However, one can hardly speak about fully fledged integration of Russia in the activities of ASEAN as a partner or member of the association. The reason for this is the apathy and inconsistency in Russian policy, as well as a certain caution on the part of member states. The formal pretext is the great geographic distance between Russia and Southeast Asia; the real factor is containment of the country, which is interested in the alliance only for symbolic reasons of confronting U.S. engagement with the developing economies.

It seems that political cooperation with ASEAN is much more topical and strategically important for Russia than economic concerns. The structure may be used to promote Russia's initiatives related to the new security architecture in the region. In November 2004 Russia joined one of the fundamental regional legal acts—the 1976 Bali Treaty (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia). In order to consolidate its positions in this structure, the Russian Federation began to propose new forms of cooperation[28]—in science, new technologies, education, tourism, culture—and these efforts help to reduce the skepticism of the ASEAN members.

Russia was one of the founders of the ASEAN Regional Forum and had its own Russian National Committee of CSCAP (which is the second track of the Regional Forum). However, the work of the committee can hardly be called productive. Despite the clear definition of areas of joint action and proposed solutions, CSCAP–Russia activities are reduced to nil from time to time. In June 2009, after a few years' break, the council was reformed and new approaches towards Russian participation were determined, in order to enhance efficiency.[29] It now consists of experts who know better the problems of the Russian Far East and are more mobile.

Beyond CSCAP, Russia maintains close cooperation with ASEAN in combating terrorism. Moscow is willing to set up practical routes of interaction between the special services, promote exchange of information and experience and even conduct joint operations. In 2009, Russia proposed to adopt the joint political document reflecting common approaches by Russia and ASEAN to the future security and cooperation architecture in the Asia-Pacific region.[30]

As far as security is concerned, one has to bear in mind the existence of an actor such as SCO. It comprises large global powers, such as Russia and China, and a number of less ambitious but strategically important countries—Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. This is a purely political, not economic, platform of cooperation. Russia's attention to it has grown in the last three years, due to a multivector approach and the desire to preserve Moscow's influence in Central Asia. The SCO summit in Yekaterinburg in May 2009 marked the climax of its popularity within the Russian elite.

At the same time, this structure is exclusive, as it was partly artificially formed and did not invite other countries (e.g. Japan[31]) to join. It is quite difficult to see how the Russian Far East may be involved in the work of this organization, since Russia's real, not declared, interest in the organization is relatively weak. The principal objectives of SCO are strengthening of stability and security, combating terrorism, separatism and extremism, development of economic cooperation, energy partnership, and scientific and cultural interaction.[32] However, the Russian Far East, which is in the geographical center of SCO, suffers from different threats: the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, territorial claims by neighbors, sanitary and environmental effects of the developing economies, etc.

The interaction with China within SCO only weakens Russia's position in the long run. Beijing is one of the major foreign policy partners of Moscow, bilateral dialogue is well set, and SCO cannot be regarded as a priority for further development of interaction. Even for military exercises both parties do not need SCO—they can simply continue them in the bilateral format, as they do now. Meanwhile, te attempts to compete with China within SCO are also doomed to failure, since for China SCO is a matter of foreign strategy and for Russia it is a matter of prestige. Therefore, Moscow either has to agree to the position of second player (as it does now), or to spend much of its resources on real rivalry. Cooperation between SCO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization helps to improve the position of Russia, but again the overall context implies that the structure is more oriented towards Central Asia rather than the Russian Far East.

APEC is the largest economic forum that is not formally engaged with non-trade issues. It is a key organization for Russia in the Asia-Pacific region and the list of priorities for discussion has recently been expanded to security—food security, humanitarian issues, reliability of energy supplies and climate change.

In 2012 Vladivostok will host the APEC summit on the initiative of Vladimir Putin. Many rest their hopes on this event from the angle of solving infrastructural problems in the Russian Far East and better strategic planning. This would help to go beyond declarations in symmetric federalism, i.e. multi-faceted development of non-capitals and the country's periphery. Moscow also attaches special importance to external promotion of the country through the APEC summit. It should help to raise the level of political confidence in Russia in the region where it is still regarded as a European state.

There are different views on how the event will affect the economy, politics and security of the region. The most popular opinion is that there will be no impact, except the restoration of roads and other facilities in Vladivostok and Primorsky krai on the eve of the summit, and the construction of a few hotels, conference halls and a new airport. This scenario is quite probable, since a single event cannot be a remedy for the protracted problems—both local and typical of all regions of Russia. Besides, the topic of the summit has not yet been approved or defined. Despite the frequent visits of the federal authorities, the decisions related to the forum are mainly technical, not political and strategic.

Such a state of affairs indicates to the world community and experts that Russia, despite its repeated declarations concerning Asian foreign policy aims and investments, has no evident integration strategy on the eastern front. One of the reasons for this is the continuing Eurocentric approach in Russia's policy. Many politicians regard Siberia and the Far East as a colony, which should work for the sake of the European part of Russia. The region still lacks a solution to the most urgent issues—decent living standards, protection of national interests and integration in the Asia-Pacific.[33]

Nearly two years have passed since the decision on the host of the 2012 APEC Summit and the mood in Primorsky krai has changed. At first, everyone was obsessed with the idea of transforming Vladivostok into the eastern capital of Russia. Nowadays local businessmen speak about the losses for the region and the city. Under the pretext of providing assistance to the entire region, the Far East eventually has something that it now does not need at all.[34]

The changes in the city are not always constructive.[35] The impetus to development meant for local businesses was finally given to the Moscow companies that infiltrated the region a few years earlier. One of the most evident trends is that the more remote the area is from the center, the higher the hypercentralization and corruption. The same relates to new jobs—as before, the construction sites employ workers from Northeast and Central Asia. At the same time, the regional authorities now have a perfect tool for manipulating public opinion—they can shift the focus from public claims to the positive aspects of hosting the summit.

Meanwhile, the summit could be a unique chance for Russia to move the attention of the APEC from an economic agenda to political and humanitarian security issues and discuss matters topical for the Russian Far East. Integration into the Asia-Pacific should not be a declarative, on-paper decision by Moscow, but should be compatible with the processes and transformations going on in the Russian border regions.

Currently the city is not ready at all to host such an event—the clock is running, but the projects lack progress.[36] A congress hall, a press center, several modern hotels (for 15,000 people; presently there is only one modern hotel—the *Hyundai* with 125 rooms), an Oceanarium, an advanced medical center (which after the summit should be transformed into a regional hospital) need to be built. The project also includes two bridges, one of which, connecting Russky Island with the continental part of the city, is called the *construction of the century* in Vladivostok. The idea of building such a bridge arose in 1939! However, the construction of both bridges is still proceeding slowly after two years of preparations.

The budget for the summit has decreased as well—instead of the initially planned 284 billion rubles, only 140 billion will be spent.[37] Even this amount is in question. Nearly every month the number of facilities to be constructed is reduced and there is some confusion about absolute and relative costs.[38]

Thus, the issue of convening the summit in Vladivostok remains doubtful, if not open. Foreign experts argue that if the APEC Summit is not held in Vladivostok, Russia would lose face.[39] And for the Oriental people this would mean a complete failure by the state.[40]

WHAT SHOULD THE RUSSIAN AGENDA BE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REGION?

One of the major problems is the growing difficulty in keeping the Far East within the Russian Federation—not only physically, but mentally. And this is a domestic policy issue. As soon as Moscow is ready to explain why it needs the Far East and whether it needs it at all, some foreign policy matters will disappear without any particular effort. The mission of the government should be the replacement of a forming Far Eastern identity with an all-Russian identity. Besides providing external security for the border territories, the Russian leadership should endeavor to prevent overall intrastate disintegration.

Thus, it is vitally important to elaborate a realistic development concept for the region, which would ensure its progress. An equal partner for the developing countries of Northeast Asia would be a competitive actor—and the Russian Far East is quickly losing this status. To ensure the security of the region, particular emphasis should be placed on solving the real, rather than fictional problems of the Russian regions that make up part of the Asia-Pacific.

NOTES

[1] Development Strategy of the Far East, Buryatia, Zabaikalsky krai, and Irkustkaya oblast until 2025. Draft sent to the Government of the Russian Federation on May 12, 2009, No. 14179-VB/02.

[2] The Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, July 12, 2008, <http://www.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/0e9272befa34209743256c630042d1aa/d48737161a0bc944c32574870048d8f7?OpenDocument>, last accessed November 13, 2009.

[3] The northeastern provinces of China and the Russian Far East are actively cooperating at the regional level. They account for nearly 80 percent of the entire Sino–Russian trade volume, especially after signature of the 2001 Treaty on Good Neighborly Relations, Friendship and Cooperation. The treaty defines promising new areas for interaction—in the nuclear energy sector, IT, transport, finance, cooperation in space and aircraft-building industries. See: Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation. ''Russia–China trade and economic cooperation,'' January 18, 2009, <http://www.economy.gov.ru/wps/wcm/connect/economylib/mert/resources/b1741e804d958e92a52deddf1ee07782/teo_china.doc>, last accessed November 15, 2009.

[4] The anonymous survey included the Far Eastern experts, members of the Russian national committee and working groups of the CSCAP.

[5] Marina Ivleva, ''Will There Be an Earthquake in Vladivostok,'' *Vladivostok*, November 21, 2006, <http://old.vladnews.ru/magazin.php?id=9&idnews=33237&current_magazin=26>, last accessed November 3, 2009.

[6] Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM) of the Russian Federation. ''Russia and ChinaAre Ready to Develop Cooperation in Prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations,'' <http://www.mchs.gov.ru/portal_news/detail.php?ID=12329>, last accessed November 15, 2009.

[7] Government of the Russian Federation. The Federal Program ''Industrial disposal of arms and materiel (2005–2010),'' December 30, 1995, no. 2355-rs, <http://www.mil.ru/info/30372/33924/33948/index.shtml>, last accessed August 28, 2009.

[8] Yury Kuznetsov, ''The State of Russia–Japan Relations in the Early 21st Century.'' In: *Japan: Yearbook. 2001–2002* (Moscow, 2002), p. 62.

[9] The first registered case of atypical pneumonia in 2002 in China resulted in a pandemic with 8,000 victims all over the world. As far as avian flu is concerned, it has now infected 3,000 people, and two-thirds of them have already died. According to the WHO, only three people in China were infected with H5N1 in 2009. See: WHO. World Health Statistics 2009, <http://www.who.int/whosis/whostat/RU_WHS09_Full.pdf>, last accessed November 15, 2009.

[10] Federal Service of State Statistics. Primorsky krai—socioeconomic indicators. Statistical Yearbook (Vladivostok: Izdatelstvo Primkraistata, 2007), p. 148.

[11] Leonid Rybakovsky, *Strategy of Russia's Demographical Development: Strategies of the Migration Policy* (Moscow: Russky Arkhipelag, 2004), p. 21.

[12] See: V. Larin, *In the Shadow of the Awoken Dragon: Sino–Russian Relations at the Edge of the 20th–21st Century* (Vladivostok, 2006), p. 167.; G. Vitkovskaya and Zh. Zaionchkovskaya, *New Stolypin Policy in the Far East of Russia: Hopes and Realities* (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment, 1999), p. 88.

[13] See: Igor Romanov, ''State regulation of migration in the Far East: history and current problems,'' *Socis*, no. 11 (2004), p. 37; Zh. Khaliman, ''Social technologies in the work with the IDPs (the example of the migration service in Vladivostok),'' *Psychological and Pedagogical Problems of Social Work* (Materials of the All-Russia scientific conference, February 21–22, 2000) (Magnitogorsk: MaGU, 2000), p. 133.

[14] E. Sorensen, ''Measuring the Employment Effects of Immigration with Different Legal Statuses on Native Workers,'' in *Immigrants and Immigration Policy: Individual Skills, Family Ties, and Group Identities* (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1996), 378 p.

[15] It is a matter of dozens of thousands or up to three million migrants unaccounted for (they are mostly concentrated in Amurskaya oblast, Khabarovsky and Primorsky krai).

[16] ''Chinatowns are under a ban,'' Interview with Konstantin Romodanovsky, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, April 23, 2007, <http://www.ng.ru/economics/2007-04-23/1_china.html>, last accessed November 16, 2009.

[17] The Chinese community in the United States is 2,889,280 people (as of 2005), <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/IPTable?_bm=y&a...:016;ACS_2005_EST_G00_S0201PR:016;ACS_2005_EST_G00_S0201T:016;ACS_2005_EST_G00_S0201TPR:016&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=Census>, in Canada—936,210 people, according to the 2001 census, (<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/ETO/Table1.cfm?Lang=E&T=501&GV=1&GID=0>). In none of these countries are the Chinese the largest ethnic group after the title nation; however, the Chinese communities are the most numerous.

[18] The Treaty on Trade and Borders between Russia and Japan of January 26 (February 7), 1855 was signed in Simoda (Japan). Article II states that ''the borders between Russia and Japan shall now lie between the Islands of Iturup and Urup. The entire Iturup island shall belong to Japan, and the entire Urup and other Kuril Islands to the north shall belong to Russia. As far as the Krafto (Sakhalin) Island is concerned, it shall remain undivided between Russia and Japan, as it has been until now.''

[19] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Statement of June 11, 2009, <http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/CA9C13935257ACA1C32575D20053F625>, last accessed November 16, 2009.

[20] Such a position was voiced during the visit of the Presidential Plenipotentiary in the Far East to China in early 2004.

[21] According to the general development plan of Khabarovsk, the islands should be the territory of the city, <http://www.travel.khv.ru/invest2.nsf/General_ru/3A4B8F0B2D925FF6CA25714100229F8C?OpenDocument>, last accessed October 8, 2009.

[22] ''The Agreement between the U.S.S.R and the P.R.C. on the Soviet–Chinese State Border in Its Eastern Part. Moscow, May 16, 1991,'' *Collection of the Russian-Chinese Treaties, 1949–1999* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 117–125.

[23] For instance, it is a matter of launching a few ballistic missiles in July 2006, one of which is Taepodong-2 (long-range missile). It fell into the Sea of Japan 10 km from the Russian port of Nakhodka.

[24] ''Nuclear explosion in North Korea could be accompanied by the extraction of radioactive waste,'' Ekologicheskaya hronika okruga- Dalny Vostok, <http://eho-dv.com/news.details.php?id=%2013491>, last accessed October 6, 2009.

[25] See: A. Voitenko, ''Fighting piracy at sea,'' Central Internet Portal of the SCO, <http://infoshos.ru/ru/?idn=2615>, last accessed November 16, 2009.

[26] Narat Rezyapov, ''Pirates of the 21st century: Fight against them is possible only in cooperation with the international community.'' *Nezavisimoye voennoye obozreniye*, September 13, 2002, <http://nvo.ng.ru/spforces/2002-09-13/7_pirates.html>, last accessed November 16, 2009.

[27] See: ASEAN Secretariat. Table of ASEAN treaties/agreements and ratification, December 1, 2008, <http://www.aseansec.org/Ratification.pdf>; ASEAN Secretariat. ASEAN-Russia dialogue relations, <http://www.aseansec.org/5922.htm>, last accessed November 14, 2009.

[28] Gennady Chufrin and Mark Hong, eds., *Russia–ASEAN Relations: New Directions* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), p. 17.

[29] See, for example, <http://www.fondedin.ru/article142.php>, last accessed November 14, 2009.

[30] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Records of the speech by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the Russia–ASEAN ministerial meeting on review of cooperation between Russia and ASEAN and its prospects, July 22, 2009, <http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/5A3567E04310C8B1C32575FB005A3BCA>, last accessed November 15, 2009.

[31] V. Frolenkov, ''Politico-economic interests in Central Asia of key global and regional actors,'' *SCO: to the New Horizons of Development* (materials of the round table) (Moscow: Institute of Far Eastern Studies, 2008), pp. 63–90.

[32] The Treaty on Long-Term Good Neighborly Relations, Friendship and Cooperation of the States Parties to the SCO. Bishkek, August 16, 2007, <http://sco2009.ru/docs/documents/treaty.html>, last accessed November 2, 2009.

[33] Report by V. Larin, Director of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Far Eastern Peoples, ''Asia Pacific in the Early 21st Century: Chances, Challenges, Threats for the Pacific Part of Russia,'' at the meeting of the Presidium of the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladivostok, October 2009.

[34] See: ''Vladivostok will change for the worse through the APEC summit,'' *Ezhednevnye novosti Vladivostoka*, July 4, 2009, <http://novostivl.ru/msg/7481.htm>, last accessed November 15, 2009.

[35] One of the key moments is the resettlement of people—those who currently live on Russky Island (part of Vladivostok) and those who have apartments in the historical downtown. They should be resettled in order to construct the pillars for the bridges.

[36] According to the Federal Law of April 29, 2009, the organization of the summit should be completed by January 1, 2012, <http://www.kodeks.ru/noframe/com-pus-FullLegRF?d&nd=902155733&prevDoc=9014668>, last accessed November 2, 2009.

[37] Subprogram, ''Development of Vladivostok as the center of international cooperation in the Asia Pacific.'' Appendix no. 10 to the Federal Program ''Economic and Social Development of the Far East and Zabaikalye until 2013.''

[38] According to Vice Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak, the budget will be reduced by 15 percent. The costs will then amount to 140 billion rubles, but in 2008 it was planned to allocate 300 billion rubles from the federal budget. See: <http://www.ng.ru/printed/223989>, last accessed on November 2, 2009.

[39] Interview with the head of the Kyodo news agency, Asia Pacific Information Portal, <http://ruisland.ru/news/guest/646.html>, last accessed November 2, 2009.

[40] In Confucianism, Shintoism and Zen Buddhism the vital need to correspond with your status (not to lose face) is one of the key concepts that regulates life of a person and the nation in general.

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CASTRO (ALMOST) BY CASTRO

F. Castro, Fidel Castro: My Life. Biography in Two Voices (Moscow: Ripol Klassik, 2009), 684 pp.

Reviewed by Jorge Ferrer

When the aircraft TU-114 that brought Fidel Castro on his first visit to the U.S.S.R—in April–May, 1963—approached Olenia's airport in the Kola Peninsula, the pilot was forced to make two landing attempts before he succeeded. The thick layer of low clouds and fog that covered the runway threatened to cause a catastrophe. Anastas Mikoyan, who was there to welcome the Cuban leader, effusively praised the pilot, whose extraordinary skills helped to avert a gracious historical wink: the young revolutionary Fidel Castro, who soon will take on the mission to represent the Eastern Bloc and the Kremlin in the Western Hemisphere, leaves his soul by accident in one of the famous sites of the Gulag Archipelago.

Much time has passed since then. Half a century after Fulgencio Batista left Cuba and a little less since the largest Caribbean island became a peculiar satellite of socialism in America, just a stone's throw from the coast of Florida, Cuba is a country that appears to be the shabby drawing of a world that no longer exists. A caricature whose many strokes—shared poverty, State violence, the absolute control of the media, the one-party-system doctrine . . .—were drawn with the same charcoal that once drew the landscape of socialism in Eastern Europe, albeit its ability to reinvent itself again and again to achieve a survival that few were betting on 20 years ago.

Meanwhile, the old dictator, retired with an intestinal ailment that forced him to undergo surgery in July 2006, has devoted himself to the crafting of his biography, to the meticulous erection of a monument to achieve a permanent place as one of the most distinct political figures of the last half-century. Not only that. While the chisel works on the past, the pen practices a studied *aggiornamento* of the leader who wants to see himself transmuted from dinosaur of the Cold War into an end-of-the-World expert, herald of environmentalists, and anti-*globalization* activists. An old Castro that, like any of the young people demonstrating against the leaders of the political and economic order in Davos, Seattle or St Petersburg, wears an illusory shirt with the iconic face of Ernesto Guevara emblazoned on his chest—when in fact his work uniform consists of Adidas, Nike and Puma sport suits—and a bunch of bad news to tell. In short, in the twilight of his life, the old dictator is transformed once again.

The ''Reflections by Fidel,'' the opinion articles he regularly publishes at Cubadebate, a website of the Cuban government, serve as testimony to the hold which the Cold War thinking has on the elder Castro. Initially reproduced or profusely commented on by the news agencies and newspapers worldwide, the more recently published ''reflections,'' like the one out there now as I write this note, which argues that the United States has annexed Colombia, are increasingly ignored, as are the conditions of its author's health. A disdain outside that is similar that devoted to Castro by the Cubans.

The volume, plotted with Ignacio Ramonet, editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique* and a known intellectual committed to the European and Latin American leftists, which was launched in Russia a few months ago, constitutes a key piece of that posterity being built with care. *My life. Biography in Two Voices*, as the book title was translated in Russian, is a review of the life of the man who has ruled the destinies of Cuba during the last half-century. It covers his whole life, from his childhood to the abandonment of his duties as supreme leader of the Cuban Revolution—whatever that ''Cuban revolution'' means today—to delegate the leadership of

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government to his brother Raul Castro, a succession of a dynastic nature that was always perfectly preordained.

The book is not a biographer's or a historian's work, but the long story of a life being dictated to a clerk entranced before the hero. ''As I listened to him,'' Ramonet writes when he tells us about the origin of the book, ''I thought it unfair that new generations do not know about his track record better, and that unwitting victims of the constant propaganda against Cuba, many friends involved with the global justice movement . . . sometimes consider him only as a man of the Cold War, a leader who superseded an earlier stage of contemporary history, who can bring little to the struggles of the 21st century.'' Both biographee and recorder know from the beginning where they are going to arrive. The successive stages that they cross—from the leader's childhood to old age, covering the fighting against the previous regime, the consolidation of socialism in Cuba and the endless number of successes that mark the political life of Fidel Castro, if by success we understand his ability to maintain absolute power over Cuba and Cubans and to put the island into the vortex of world events, run through almost 700 pages.

There are two moments of Cuba's relationship with Russia that are addressed in the book. Naturally, the Cuban Missile Crisis, a touchstone of the relationship between two countries that had embarked on a friendship supposedly eternal, but that was disrupted from the outset by the Kennedy–Khrushchev agreement to withdraw the missiles from Cuba. These negotiations took place between the great powers, without Cuba's presence yearned for by Castro, who was eager to exploit the crisis to put Cuba instantaneously at the heart of international relations. The resentment that Nikita Khrushchev's behavior generated in the young Castro never left him. His then fierceness, ready to put Cuba in the position to blow itself up in an attack with nuclear weapons, has been endorsed recently in documents released by the National Security Archive, a private research group at George Washington University. These documents suggest, from an interview with General Andrian A. Danilevich, that in the early 1980s Castro was still insisting on making nuclear weapons land on U.S. territory. Fortunately, Soviet experts were able to dissuade him after explaining in detail what the ecological consequences of an attack of this kind would represent to Cuba.

The retelling of the Cuban Missile Crisis offered by Castro's and Ramonet's book contains some cross-communication between Castro and Khrushchev between 26 and 31 October, 1962. These texts do not bring anything substantial to what was already known to experts—the content of these communications is in the public domain—but their mere inclusion in the book, breaking the dialogue between interviewer and Castro, supplies evidence of the extraordinary importance that the Cuban dictator, still working on his posthumous image, gives the episode that brought the world to the brink of nuclear conflagration. The topic of ''Khrushchev's betrayal,'' minimized at least publicly during the years of greater closeness with the U.S.S.R, a period that coincides with the years that Leonid Brezhnev served as general secretary of the CPSU, comes back in the book with the force of a meteor.

Second, Castro and Ramonet chat on the demise of the U.S.S.R and the evaporation of the munificent subsidies that Cuba received from Moscow. These provided substantial help that allowed Cuba, at least since the 1980s, to enjoy a relatively good economic situation. Finally, the dismantling of the U.S.S.R is also reason to evoke the withdrawal of the last contingent of Soviet troops stationed in the Electronic Exploration Center, the final episode of the relationship between Cuba and the U.S.S.R. On this second occasion, Castro also appears discontented, but this time the target of his criticism is Vladimir Putin, responsible for the sudden and inconsiderate decision to withdraw. Two snubs: one could think Castro received snubs only from Russia.

Neither can be considered a major surprise in the segment that deals with the divorce between U.S.S.R and a Cuban government feverishly seeking the means to resist the wave of democratization. To the old leader, ''the Soviets were victims of a self-destruction'' to please the Americans. And from that point on Russia became a kingdom dominated by the mafia while its population was mired in poverty and ignorance. Naturally, the possibility of considering reinstalling the rule of law, allowing the emergence of an entrepreneurial class alien to post-communist anomalies, permitting freedom of expression or association is not going through the mind of the Cuban leader. If his idea of the bipolar world is anchored in the scheme of the Cold War, his notion of the Russia of today is not going beyond the chaotic landscape of Russia in the early 1990s. Fidel is a man of fixed ideas and loves it when the reality fits his totalitarian vision like

a glove to a hand. The worst Hollywood cliches are enough for him to picture today's Russia, as propagandist *Mosfilm* movies were enough to show Cubans the image of the country he was allied with.

Thus, the chapter on the demise of the U.S.S.R begins with a fierce defense of mistakes, he argues, Cuba never committed. The logical consequence of the disparity between Soviet-style socialism and Cuba's is evident if one follows the perverse logic of the despot indicated by a long-acquiescent Ignacio Ramonet: ''We [i.e. the Cuban government; i.e. Castro himself] don't have to correct mistakes made some place else.'' In fact, Castro does not hesitate to recount in detail how he insisted to Boris Yeltsin on the need to preserve the architectural heritage of old Moscow. There is no bid that Fidel can lose. His memory of the transition to a democratic Russia is one of a wise man in uniform who cares about Patriarshie Prudi, surrounded by palms in the Caribbean, while the Russians—wrong, weak, unconscious—venture into the dark shadows of capitalism.

Russian readers, especially if they are among the hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens who were part in one way or another of the tight political, military and economic relationship between the U.S.S.R and Cuba over the course of 30 years, will face a major disappointment with this peculiar book of memoirs. They will soon discover that Fidel Castro did not find time, during the long hours of conversation lasting three consecutive years and compiled in hundreds of pages, to refer to the brotherhood between the two countries and to properly thank the Russian people for it. His laudatory comments on Soviet socialism, which can be found in the book, pursue a single goal: to claim that the ''socialist'' regime imposed by him on Cuba and validated in the Cuban Constitution as ''immovable'' with an amendment introduced in June 2002—is it necessary to note that it was approved unanimously?—remains a viable political project. A ''socialism''—his kind of socialism—that unlike European or Latin American social democracies, as well as the still fuzzy advances of the so called ''twenty-first century socialism,'' remains firmly anchored by the patterns of the Cold War, in other words, faithful to the most retrogressive principles of the political practice in the West.

But how did this stagnated socialism manage to survive, when it is clearly economically inefficient and politically repressive? ''It's almost here,'' sang Willy Chirino, a famous Cuban musician based in Miami, referring to a change of regime on the Island when the countries subject to the dictates of Moscow turned away, one after another, from totalitarian practice. Cuban democrats keep on singing with Chirino 20 years later, trying to find an answer to a blatant truth: the Castro brothers still rule in Cuba.

Is there any answer to that question in the biographical account written by Ramonet? Obviously not, because there are no easy answers to the lasting pain of many.

Curiously, the way Fidel Castro manages his memory of the relationship between Cuba and the Soviet Union in this book sheds some light on the ability of the Cuban government, led by him for short of half a century, to dodge the chasms that history could have thrown him into. Therefore choosing only critical moments such as the Missile Crisis and the end of the U.S.S.R as the highlights of the truly tight relationship that Cuba kept with the worst of Soviet Stalinism—thus, reducing that period in history to the mere exposition of its critical moments, when Cuba was betrayed and abandoned to its fate—reveals how his selective forgetfulness deletes entire segments of Cuba's history with the purpose of building a teleological device that distorts perception on past, present and future, leading to what has been the eternal lifeline of the Castro regime: the vindication of Cuba as an exceptional country.

Few events are more revealing about the Cuban regime's ability to simulate or annul the past than its strenuous efforts devoted to erasing the traces of Russia in Cuba after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R.

Thus, a review of speeches delivered by Fidel Castro during his visit to the Soviet Union in 1963 and 1972, for example, shows that they were full of praise for the socioeconomic regime the pragmatic Castro had chosen as a partner and parasol in the Cold War landscape. Back then he would acknowledge his mission without reserve: ''Our role? To defend the revolutionary doctrine, the revolutionary course, the principles of Marxism-Leninism, as we have done so far on the other side of the Atlantic, firmly, without hesitation . . .'' In 1991, however, the astute commander needed a quick updating of the ideological principles and abandoned the rhetoric of Marxism-Leninism to charge with nationalist notes the ideological foundations of the revolution. The isolation and, above all, Cuban exceptionalism are brought to the front page of Castro's rhetoric. ''They used to say . . .we were a satellite of the Soviet Union, but today one comes to see clearly

that we are a satellite of the principles . . . History gave us the right to proclaim that we are now the most independent country on Earth!''

The situation today is very different, but one cannot find traces of that in this book, dictated before the relationship between Cuba and Russia experienced a sweet reunion in recent years. Thus, the Castro who protested when Cuba was taken as a Moscow satellite wrote in an article on January 27, 2008 about the end of the Soviet Union in terms that turn the debates into a friendly astronomy: ''the disintegration of the Soviet Union felt as if the sun had stopped shining.''

Now, especially after President Dmitri Medvedev's visits to Cuba in November 2008 and Raul Castro's visit to Russia in January 2009, the two countries seek to capitalize on the common history that both hid in the 1990s. The interests of Russian companies in Cuba are relevant and the credit line of $350 million issued by Moscow to Havana has helped streamline business operations. Among the most recent major transactions which should be mentioned are the acquisition by Zarubezhneft of four blocks (two of them offshore) to seek oil in Cuba. In 2007, Russia ranked tenth among the largest trading partners of the island, a figure that will tend to increase in coming years. A separate issue is the Caribbean country's huge debt to Moscow, a burdensome legacy from the Soviet years. According to one estimate, the amount of debt is $21 billion, just under half the total indebtedness of Cuba, which is about $45.9 billion.

In a world where Low Intensity Democracies are rising stars, the Castro brothers' Cuba seeks integration into the global economy, while pretending to remain locked in its totalitarian solipsism. The ruling elite offered reforms when Raul Castro took power. Two years later, all expectations have been dashed. At first it seemed as if Fidel and Raul had pursued what a character in Il Gattopardo said in the celebrated novel by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: ''Il vogliamo che tutto bisogna che tutto rimanga com'è change,'' i.e. ''if we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.'' It is now evident that they are aware of the impossibility of transforming the lives of Cubans without seriously jeopardizing their own permanence in power. They have contemplated socioeconomic models such as the Vietnamese or Angolan, but they understand the risks and run away from them as one would do from a fire. Finally, they face the challenge posed by Barack Obama's administration. Since his inauguration less than a year ago, the American president has lifted travel restrictions and shipping remittances imposed on the Cuban-Americans and opened up varied possibilities for economic cooperation even without suspending the embargo on Cuba. In 2008, the United States was Cuba's fifth trading partner, thanks to the extraordinary growth in food imports that Havana needs due to the obvious inability of its economy to feed Cubans and close to a million tourists who visit the island each year.

Cuba is, naturally, much more than just a mere piece of the Museum of the Cold War and has symbolic capital and, above all, human capital capable of inserting the country into the politics and the economy of the twenty-first century. But Fidel Castro's Cuba depicted in Ignacio Ramonet's book lacks—by being decrepit, by being monotonous, by being unreal—the tunes that many Cubans on the island or in exile are able to chant. And they are chanting now.

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THE POLITICS OF HISTORY IN RUSSIAN–UKRAINIAN RELATIONS

Y.V. Shevtsov, New Ideology: Holodomor (Moscow: Europe Publishing House, 2009), 184 pp.

Reviewed by Anastasia Ponamareva

In this world, the existence of a nation is based on a ''daily plebiscite,''[1] French scholar Ernest Renan once said. Shared and emotionally charged past is therefore a key instrument of maintaining citizens' loyalty at a level sufficient for the nation's survival. Frequent invocation of shared recollections and regular ceremonies to honor the past are a reliable way of influencing the social and political status quo of the group. Social memory is an integral part of national identity—along with social creativity (which allows members of social groups to redefine the parameters of intergroup comparison) and social rivalry (collective action to change the social structure). Historical memory is also quite selective: society tends to recall those events of the past that are most relevant to present-day challenges.

As Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, ''politicization of history has become a matter of state policy in a whole number of countries.''[2] The government of Ukraine has been one of the staunchest adherents of this course of action. It has chosen the idea of ''Holodomor'', or terror-famine, as the foundation of national and state ideology. It portrays the famine of 1932–1933 as a deliberate strategy by the Soviet leadership to suppress ethnic Ukrainians. The aggressive campaign to secure international recognition of the 1932–1933 famine as the genocide of the Ukrainian people is being waged in full accordance with postmodernist theories of nation-building. But as William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki of the Chicago School of Sociology put it, ''if people think of the situation as real, the situation's consequences are also real.''[3] In an effort to avoid grave consequences of far-fetched political delusions, Russia has been forced to apply efforts at various levels to dispel them.

The new book by Yury Shevtsov, ''New Ideology: Holodomor,'' can be viewed as part of those efforts. The key idea of the book is to draw a clear distinction between the mass famine of the 1930s—which is part of the real history of *de-peasantification* of the Soviet Union—and the fabrication of the alleged genocide of Ukrainians by the Russian people.

The book is based mainly on a critical study of ''The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine'' by Robert Conquest, and it uses a large amount of archive documents and materials. Apart from students and teachers of humanitarian sciences, the intended audience of the book includes all those ''who are interested in the ideological wars of today.'' With this mass audience in mind, the book presents the information in a very accessible form. That too is in line with the overall objective of preventing the tragedy of the entire Soviet nation from becoming a tool of Ukrainian nationalism.

The book begins by addressing the question of ''when exactly'' the political interpretation of the tragic events of 1933 acquired international proportions. The author believes that the issue of Holodomor ceased to be a subject of purely domestic Ukrainian debate on September 25, 2008, when the U.S. Congress officially recognized the events of 1933 as the genocide of the Ukrainian people. Shevtsov believes the move was not so much a demonstration of the American establishment's support for the Ukrainian authorities in their struggle against Russia as evidence that the myth of Holodomor is in great demand by various groups in America.

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The newly independent states that appeared on the map of Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union obviously faced the need to form their own national identity and to find their national idea. National unification on the basis of *victim mentality* is quite predictable, but no less dangerous for that. Suffice it to recall the ascendance of the National Socialists in Germany in the 1930s, which was largely made possible by their clever use of the idea that the Germans were mistreated and victimized in the wake of World War I. That idea had great potential for national unification. In his analysis of the development of modern East European nationalism, Shevtsov argues that the strategy's main thrust is towards downplaying the moral significance of the victory of the Soviet people in World War II. Charges of genocide by the Soviet regime against Eastern European peoples, the pedaling of the Katyn issue in the Western media, allegations of persecutions against the Lithuanians in 1940–1941, and now Holodomor—all this is part of one strategy. And the aim of that strategy is to prepare public opinion for the idea that Communism, as embodied by the Soviet Union, should be recognized as an evil—not a greater evil perhaps than Nazism, but certainly on a par with it. This interpretation of history, Shevtsov rightly believes, allows its proponents to rehabilitate movements such as the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the Polish Armia Krajowa, and the Baltic Waffen-SS legions.

The scale of the tragedies being made use of in these manipulations is very important. And the 1933 famine, presented in a certain light, can well be portrayed as ''the greatest crime of a government against its own people''—which makes the issue of Holodomor even more attractive for various circles. ''Holodomor is essentially a totalitarian ideological construct,'' argues Shevtsov. ''And while it serves the cause of strengthening the Ukrainian national identity, its main role is to take the idea of condemning Soviet Communism above and beyond the Holodomor theory's original Ukrainian scope.''[4]

The author believes that the rise of Eastern European neo-Nazism is a threat not so much to Russia as to united Europe itself. The Eastern European nations' strategy of consolidating their citizens through radical nationalism undermines one of the cornerstones of modern European security, which is an unambiguous condemnation of Nazism. And that is a severe blow for the EU as a well-integrated and internationally competitive political entity.

Shevtsov believes that ''Eastern European countries' immoral strategy of trumped-up genocide charges, and of turning collaborationists into heroes, is aimed at undermining the sense of the developed world's global responsibility to the rest of humankind.''[5] And the way the pan-European discussion of Holodomor pans out will also determine the direction of Europe's cultural and political development.

In his effort to debunk the myth of the genocide of the Ukrainian people, the author looks at the situation prior to 1933. He believes that famine in general was a structural problem inherent in the agricultural economy of the time. The statistics he cites suggest that in the pre-1933 period every Russian region had faced the threat of famine at least once every decade.

The Russian village consisted of two unequal parts. One was the *kulaki*, the well-off households that could survive a famine without any help. The larger part was the village poor, with a smattering of the village middle class. Those who made up that larger part were essentially forced to sell themselves to large landowners in the years when the crops failed. Such divisions made an effective and integrated system of morals impossible in the village community. Shevtsov draws our attention to what is usually left on the sidelines of any such studies—the struggle within the village itself. He describes the history of collectivization, of the slide into famine and of the painful climb out of it, primarily as ''a history of the war waged within the village itself.''[6] He argues that the famine of 1932–1933 was a consequence of the crisis of the village as a social institution, and a reflection of the gradual erosion of the village communities.

The vigorous discussion at the time regarding the direction of agricultural reform ended with the victory of collectivization over the Stolypin model of farming economy. That was partly a reflection of the government's attempts to meet the expectations of its staunchest supporters—the village poor. It is no accident that the grain-accounting policies, pioneered in Western Siberia in 1928 as a dress rehearsal for the notorious grain appropriation system, were welcomed in the villages because they were seen as anti-*kulaki.* It was obvious that the collective farm, which included the village middle classes and the poor, could not peacefully coexist with the *kulaki*. The political struggle in the village was legitimized by holding village council meetings, and by encouraging open criticism and self-criticism, which allowed for a certain degree of government control of that struggle.

The author says this confrontation between the two poles of the village had an economic and cultural dimension. It was a struggle between two systems of values and two different worldviews. One was centered on private ownership, patriarchal family, individual enrichment, and the idea that might makes right. The other was based on the belief in a collective economic model, on the idea that the collective should be above the private, and on solidarity in the face of hardship. In Shevtsov's view, one of the decisive blows that destroyed the very basis of the *kulaki* as a social institution was state intervention in family affairs, which led to the collapse of the patriarchal ideology and the liberation of women, young people, and children from the constraints of the family. This cultural revolution turned the young people into the main driving force behind the confrontation within the village communities. The village poor successfully carried out the policing function entrusted to them by the state, appropriating the ''excess'' grain reserves from the larger family-owned farms. The main objective of the anti-*kulaki* drive was met: the main proponents of antisocial values in the village were defeated. But Soviet industry failed to provide the machinery needed for all the collective farms throughout the country, and the collective farms themselves, built as they were on the ruins of the old village economy, did not deliver a quick increase in agricultural output.

There was also another complication. Agricultural production was falling far short of the government's projections, which were based on sample crop productivity figures. The government refused to believe that there were legitimate reasons for such a shortfall. The situation was blamed on non-collectivized farmers, who were accused of hoarding their grain. Government officials fell prey to the stereotypes made popular during the civil war—they thought the *kulaki* were simply trying to starve the Soviets out. Such an interpretation of the situation was well in line with the party doctrine, which predicted that class war would intensify as further progress was being made in building socialism. And the biggest shortfall in grain appropriation targets was recorded in the main grain-producing regions, which the government took as further proof of sabotage. Officials in Moscow lost confidence in the political loyalty of the local authorities. That gave rise to yet another conspiracy theory. Local cadres, collective farm officials, opposition representatives and Western spies were accused of orchestrating the grain shortages to undermine the Soviet Union's transition towards an industrial economy. The ensuing campaign targeted not so much the underlying reasons of the problem as its consequences. The cities responded to so-called ''mass sabotage by peasants'' and alleged ''regional conspiracies'' with the notorious blacklists and collective punishment for failure to meet the grain delivery targets. The central episode in that war by the central government against the regions was the mass government appropriation of grain in the villages throughout the entire Soviet Union in October–December 1932. That allowed the federal government to begin political suppression of its opponents in the provinces.

Mass purges of 1932–1933 targeted the alleged *kulaki*, who were thought to have infiltrated the collective farms, as well as the local officials who came to power in the early days of collectivization. That led to a change of the ruling elite. The old village activists, who rose to power during the anti-*kulaki* campaign and who were mostly interested in class war, were replaced by technocrats from the outside, whose main goal was improving production and meeting targets. From the moral point of view, Shevtsov says, both of these groups can be described as murderers—the only difference is who they murdered. The history of collectivization, in his view, is ''the history of the village producing wave after wave of murderers,''[7] which continued until the moment when agricultural production stabilized and output began to rise thanks to large collective farms. The central government's strategy of making scapegoats of local officials in order to channel public anger towards specific individuals—rather than the regime as a whole—had paid off. The ensuing reshuffles also helped to stabilize the political situation in the country.

The famine of 1932–1933, which killed several million people, was caused by a combination of a whole number of causes. Among them was the mass cull of plow cattle by the peasants, the government's failure to provide the promised tractors to the collective farms, crop failures due to local droughts, floods and locust infestations, as well as poor harvesting techniques. The Ukrainians were not the only people who suffered from that famine or from collectivization as a whole. The situation was just as difficult in Kuban, the German republic in the Volga region, and especially in Kazakhstan. Shevtsov views the history of collectivization and the slide into famine as part of the transformation of village communities. The reasons for eastern Ukraine being particularly hard hit by the famine can therefore be found within the Ukrainian village itself, traditionally dominated as it was by the *kulaki*.

The Soviet Union felt in the 1920s that its Western borders were very insecure. This is why the government tried to bolster the Ukrainians' loyalty to the Soviet Union. Part of that strategy was to enlarge the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The government in Moscow also launched a policy of appointing indigenous and ethnic Ukrainian officials in Ukraine, and of strengthening the Ukrainian national culture. Meanwhile, relations between the Soviet Union and Britain were going from bad to worse, and there was a distinct military threat from Poland and its allies. That forced the Soviet leaders to try to speed up industrialization and collectivization, even in the face of resistance by the population in the provinces, and despite objections by the local officials appointed during the first wave of the ''indigenous'' policy. This led to forced collectivization and a crackdown throughout the whole country. The cities, which were undergoing rapid industrialization, and the army, which the government feared would soon have to go to war, were facing the threat of starvation. Someone had to be sacrificed to avoid an impending economic catastrophe and, the situation being what it was, that someone could not be the cities or the army. It had to be the village. And when choosing the regions that would have to bear the brunt of the famine, the government chose those parts of the country where passive resistance to collectivization was the strongest, and where grain appropriation figures were the worst.

That policy was in line with the doctrine of class war, and it was not specifically anti-Ukrainian. The Ukrainian villages were hit very hard. But there were never any economic sanctions against the Ukrainian urban communities, even during the most difficult years of collectivization—though clearly the central government could impose such sanctions if it wanted to. It was actually during that period that the Ukrainian cities started to grow, and to become truly Ukrainian in terms of the dominant language and the ethnic make-up of their population. As part of a crackdown against nationalists in 1932–1933, the capital of Ukraine was moved from Kharkov to Kiev, where the Ukrainian national identity was bolstered by a true sense of long history. The majority of the Ukrainian Communist Party functionaries and local government officials were ethnic Ukrainians, and Ukraine was quickly becoming the industrial heartland of the Soviet Union. After most of the industrial and power generation facilities in Ukraine fell under the remit of the Ukrainian Soviet Social Republic's local authorities, not a single regional lobby could even come close to the Ukrainians in terms of influence. And even though eastern Ukraine was supposed to have suffered most from the alleged Soviet genocide, the Nazis never managed to foment an anti-Soviet movement there during their retreat in 1943–1944.

The famine of 1932–1933 was undoubtedly a horrible tragedy for the Soviet people. Memory of that famine should clearly be part of the history of ethnic Ukrainians. But describing it as genocide is a historically inaccurate manipulation of facts, and a basis for future political games around the subject.

Shevtsov points out that it was not actually the Ukrainians themselves who invented the ideological instrument of portraying the 1932–1933 famine as genocide. The idea was invented by the Nazi press in the 1930s, and quickly seized upon by newspapers belonging to William Hearst's media empire. Further contributions to constructing the Holodomor myth were made by Robert Conquest in his book ''The Harvest of Sorrow,'' and by prominent American politician James Mace, who lobbied the Holodomor issue in the U.S. Congress. This trumped-up and essentially anti-Ukrainian project was one of the Western world's most successful inventions in the Cold War against the Soviet Union.

Will the Holodomor delusion turn out to be just one of Ukraine's transitory growing pains in the process of its consolidation? That will depend not just on the Ukrainians themselves, but also on the reaction of the international community, and on whether the key players on the international arena will try to use this delusion for their own purposes. What is important to remember here is that, in the public mind more than anywhere else, ''ideas become reality,'' as idealist philosophers are accustomed to say.[8]

NOTES

[1] Ernst Renan, ''Was ist eine Nation?'' (1882), in M. Jeismann/H. Ritter, ed., *Grenzfalle. Uber neuen und alter Nationalismus* (Leipzig, 1993), pp. 308–310.

[2] Sergey Lavrov, ''The Tragedy of World War II: Who Is to Blame?,'' *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, September 1, 2009.

[3] J.W. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York, 1928), p. 114.

[4] Yury Shevtsov, *New Ideology: Holodomor* (Moscow: Europe Publishing House, 2009), p. 11.

[5] Ibid., p. 16.

[6] Ibid., p. 41.

[7] Ibid., p. 74.

[8] Quote from E. Durkheim, ''Collective Ritual'' (translation by V.I. Garadzhi), in V.I. Garadzha and E.D. Rutkevich, eds., *Religion and Society: Anthology of the Sociology of Religion* (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 1966), pp. 469–471.

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COMPROMISE IN THREAT ASSESSMENT

To the Editor-in-Chief,

Sir,

In May 2009, the New York based EastWest Institute (EWI), which also has officers in Moscow and Brussels, published an extensive and fairly detailed report headlined ''Iran's Nuclear and Missile Potential: A Joint Threat Assessment by U.S. and Russian Technical Experts.''

The depth and the amount of technical detail in the analysis, which relied on open-source information, leaves no doubt that the report has largely informed the Russian and U.S. presidents' decision to conduct a joint assessment of missile threats—unless of course further work will rely mostly on exchange of intelligence information.

The report's assessment of Iran's prospects for acquiring a nuclear weapon makes use of almost all the available information in this regard. Some of this information had previously surfaced in various IAEA reports, but was denied by Iranian officials. This includes:

- the discovery of Iranian documentation on how to turn uranium dioxide into uranium metal and then into hemispheres, which can only be useful for making a nuclear device;
- efforts to modify the payload section of the Shahab-3 missile to accommodate a nuclear warhead;
- attempts to develop special detonators for a nuclear device;
- plans for conducting underground tests and calculations of the kill radius of a nuclear detonation, etc.

The report cites various estimates of how soon Iran might built its first nuclear device, which range from one year to five. It also speculates on whether Iran would actually want to test its putative nuclear weapon or bypass that stage, making use instead of other countries' experience in building uranium devices. Expert estimates are based on the notion that a nuclear warhead for the Iranian ballistic missiles would weigh about 1,000 kilos. But the EWI report fails to take into account that nuclear warhead designs found quite a while ago in Iraq allow for a much smaller device. One such set of designs estimates the mass of the device at 415–868 kilos, and its diameter at 600–650 mm. The device would include a neutron trigger, a highly enriched uranium core (15–18 kg), a natural uranium reflector (100–250 kg), steel casing (50–200 kg), high explosive (250–500 kg) and some other components.

No indications have been found that Iran is actually working on such designs. But the schematics of similar projects are widely available from open sources. And Iran's research and engineering capability is greater than Iraq's was. So it cannot be ruled out that detailed designs for a nuclear device compact enough to be fitted onto ballistic missiles have already been developed by some Iranian facilities that are not part of the country's nuclear infrastructure and therefore not subject to IAEA inspections.

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The report and its technical addenda also contain a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the space and ballistic missile technology Iran has developed indigenously or acquired from other countries, primarily North Korea.

The document analyses the capability of the entire range of Iran's Shahab ballistic missiles (Shahab-1, Shahab-2, Shahab-3 and Shahab-3M), the solid-fuel Sejil missile, the Safir space launcher and its engines, as well as the North Korean Nodong-1, Taepodong-1 and Taepodong-2 missiles.

The assessment of the Shahab-3 and Shahab-3M range contained in the report's technical addendum is at variance with the separate calculations made by Russian experts. According to the report, the maximum range Shahab-3M can achieve with a 1000 kg payload is 1,100 km. The figure arrived at by Russian scientists is 1,500 km. The difference is probably due to the fact that instead of a set of four Scud-type engines, Shahab-3M uses a more advanced single-chamber liquid-fuel engine developed by the Iranians independently or jointly with North Korea.

For missiles of this type, reducing the payload by 1 kg translates into a range increase of roughly 1 km. That means that if the weight of the payload is cut to 500 kg, the Iranian missile's range could reach up to 2,000 km. And judging from the Iraqi warhead designs, building a 500 kg device that could be fitted onto a ballistic missile could well be within the Iranians' reach.

The report speculates that the Iranians may have used the vernier engine block from the Russian R-27 submarine launched ballistic missile for the upper stage of their Safir launcher, which put a 27 kg satellite into low earth orbit in February 2009. The R-27 vernier block is made up of two liquid-fuel rocket engines, with a maximum thrust of 3,000 kg. Each engine is an open layout unit with a turbopump. The propellant used is the same as for the main engine (nitrogen tetroxide and asymmetric dimethyl hydrazine). But it is not clear how the Iranians could have got hold of such an engine. One possibility is that they obtained a salvaged unit via North Korea, after an unsuccessful launch or emergency dump of an R-27 missile by a Soviet submarine. But there have been no events during either trials or exercise launches after which an undamaged engine could have been abandoned in the exclusion zone.

It is therefore more likely that the upper stage of Safir was fitted with the liquid-fuel main propulsion motor of the Soviet S-200 surface-to-air missile. The S-200 was developed in 1967 and exported in large numbers to several countries, including Syria (which received six batteries, with six missiles per battery plus spares), North Korea and, in 1990, Iran.

The report makes an entirely reasonable conclusion that, in its current shape, Safir cannot be used to deliver a nuclear warhead. Any such warhead would weigh far more than the satellite put into orbit in February. But the launcher could well be redesigned into an intermediate-range ballistic missile. If nothing else, the Iranians could use a Scud-type engine as its second stage, just like the North Koreans did in their Taepodong-1, or the main propulsion motor of the S-200.

In that case the missile could achieve a maximum range of 4,000 km with a 500 kg payload, Russian experts believe.

The test launch of Sejil, which uses a solid-fuel engine, has confirmed reports that Iran is developing the technology and manufacturing capability required to build an arsenal of solid-fuel missiles. The technology is very complex and expensive. It requires special chemistry, manufacturing processes, etc. There have been no indications to date that Iran's solid-fuel rocket stages or engines with a thrust of around 55 tons (first stage) or over 20 tons (second stage) were obtained from abroad. That means that Iranian scientists have achieved significant progress in solid-fuel intermediate-range missile technology, leaving behind their North Korean counterparts. Further proof of that came in September 2009, when Iran held another Sejil launch. With a payload of 500 kg, a missile of this class can have a range of up to 3,000 km.

There is little reason to believe that Iran will choose either the solid-fuel or liquid-fuel technology over the other. It will probably continue to develop and manufacture both types of ballistic missiles.

North Korea has also attempted to launch a vehicle into space using solid-fuel technology for the third stage of its launcher. It probably used the solid-fuel body and engines of the Soviet OTR-21 Tochka short-range ballistic missiles, which have been exported to many countries.

The EWI report also contains detailed assessments of how reliably Iranian ballistic missiles could potentially be intercepted by the 10 GBI anti-missiles with two-stage boosters, which the Bush administration wanted to station in Poland along with radar in the Czech Republic. Without dwelling on this part of the report, its conclusion appears entirely justified. The best-case scenario is that the 10 GBI interceptors could destroy no more than two Iranian ballistic missiles, i.e. not nearly enough to defend against a simultaneous launch of several missiles. The report is also fairly impartial in its analysis of the reasons behind Russia's concerns over the global ABM plans announced by the previous U.S. administration. The conclusions of this analysis almost entirely coincide with the earlier conclusions made by independent experts.

The analysis of the Iranian missile potential in the EWI report, written by a group of Russian and American experts with the participation of their German counterparts, is undoubtedly a truly significant international document, the first of its kind. It is entirely fit for the purpose of becoming the basic reference document during discussions on the joint assessment of missile threats, which the Russian and U.S. president have agreed to conduct.

But it also appears that there has been a certain level of compromise in the Russian and U.S. experts' joint assessment of the Iranian missile capability in this document. Earlier calculations by Russian specialists suggest that the report somewhat underestimates the performance of the Iranian propulsion systems and the range of Iranian ballistic missiles. The Iranian scientists are making steady progress in solid and liquid fuel missile technology, and the range of the Iranian missiles is continuously improving.

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