

Central Asia Seminars  
2nd GCSP-NUPI-OSCE Academy  
Seminar:  
"Central Asia 2009"

Seminar Rapporteur: Diana Golikova

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On 3-4 September 2009 the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy in Bishkek, held a forum for security policy experts from Eurasia, East and South East Asia, Europe and the United States. The purpose of the meeting was to analyse and discuss the continued interaction of key regional security dynamics and functional issues in Central Asia in the course of 2009.

A series of panel discussions identified major emerging themes, linkages and trends, and reflected on their strategic impact and security policy implications. Issues highlighted included the impact of the Afghan factor and the conflict in Georgia on Central Asian security politics, energy geopolitics, the role of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the region, as well as US, Chinese, Russian, Iranian and Indian policies towards Central Asia.

The seminar, attended by over forty-five participants, highlighted and analysed some of the key security tendencies and practical aspects of security in the region including emerging trends and themes, their interplay and contradictions, as well as their likely strategic influence and consequences. This Geneva Paper proposes a synthesis of the work presented and the opinions expressed during the seminar.



The OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

# New Problems, Perspectives and Paradigms: Unilateral, Bilateral, and Multilateral Approaches to Security Challenges in Central Asia

Throughout 2009 Central Asian security politics were strongly influenced by continued uncertainty as the global financial crisis revealed risks and threats of a structural and systemic nature. The region is not self-sufficient in terms of security and therefore the involvement of outside actors is only natural. This trend of turning to external 'security assistance' may be characterised by the interference of geopolitics into terrorism-related and other security spheres. Consequently, security issues in the region are complex and may best be explained from three perspectives: multilateral, bilateral and unilateral formats of security.

The multilateral format comprises two forms: external and regional. The external multilateral format may be viewed through the paradigm of several international organizations active in the region, namely the CSTO, the EU, the UN, the OSCE, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and finally, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a product of joint Sino-Russian and Central Asian efforts.

The CSTO, a post-Soviet organisation 'modeled' on NATO was intended to unite its members under one security umbrella. However, since its very inception, CSTO activities have not extended beyond several joint military exercises and military-technical cooperation; they have been

lacking authentic cohesion and the organisation itself is more façade than real.

Determined to contribute to regional security in the region, the EU has been involved in the anti-terrorist military contingent in Afghanistan, and sponsorship of post-conflict reconstruction programmes there, cooperation with the OSCE and the UN in a number of other programmes in the region by providing military-technical assistance to Central Asian states and by cooperating with them on anti drug-trafficking, infrastructure, science, education and security sector reform related endeavours.

The UN contribution to security matters in Central Asia mainly concentrates on promoting political and economic reforms in the various countries, providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and regulating border management issues in the region.

Among its various other activities in the region, the OSCE has promoted programs to prevent light weapons proliferation, reinforce border control systems and train law enforcement personnel. However, rather than having a one-on-one dialogue with the individual states in the region, it has yet to engage in projects which would promote cooperation and integration of the region as a whole.

NATO has a comprehensive approach to security in the region. In addition to conducting military activities, it promotes a wide range of programs related to crisis management, scientific cooperation, environmental and social as well as diverse educational programs.

For its part, the SCO primarily engages in combating terrorism, religious extremism and separatism. It has been successful in creating accepted definitions for these 'three evils'. Furthermore, in the framework of its regional anti-terrorism structure (RATS), it has drawn up a list of ten terrorist organisations, something the international community has yet to achieve. However, in most of the cases requiring immediate attention, the SCO has remained inactive.

Finally, one of the most recent SCO initiatives involved Uzbek President Karimov's attempt to create a '6+3' forum as a continuation of the already existing '6+2', to include the 6 countries neighbouring Afghanistan as well as NATO, Russia and the United States. Thus far, however, this initiative has not garnered sufficient support.

From the perspective of regional multilateralism it is important to point out that the Central Asian states have already demonstrated a potential for cooperation in the security sphere. For example, on 21 April 2000, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed a Treaty 'On Joint Actions in Fighting Terrorism, Political and Religious Extremism, and Transnational Organized Crime'. In another instance, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan reached an Agreement 'On Eternal Friendship'. Simultaneously, less positive tendencies may be observed as well. One of them is the merger of the Central Asia Cooperation Organization (CACO) with the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) in 2005. CACO served as the initial regional cooperation and integration mechanism - its dissolution marked the end of any attempt to create a long-lasting regional cooperation structure in Central Asia.

Bilateral security arrangements in the region generally take the form of cooperation between Russia and the US, Russia and China, Uzbekistan and Russia and etc., predominantly in dealing with anti-terrorism activities. It remains difficult, however, to determine whether this juxtaposition of multilateral and bilateral formats is complementary or competitive in nature. The fact that all countries in the region have been able to combat terrorism individually testifies to the existence of a unilateral format of security in Central Asia. A good illustration of this may be Uzbekistan.

Multilateral, bilateral and unilateral security arrangements are not necessarily complementary; at times they may even be mutually exclusive. Individual attempts by Central Asian states to extend their relations with NATO or with separate European countries quite often meet with

counter initiatives from the CSTO or SCO to prevent this. Until Central Asian methodology is reversed, its geopolitics revised and its integration revisited, security strategy will remain unchanged and states in the region will not move any closer towards a common Central Asian collective security mechanism.

# New Strategies in Central Asia: Between Russia and America

Russian policy towards Central Asia is entering a new stage of development. This may be confirmed by the transformation taking place in the region and the change in the international status of the Russian Federation. Previously, Moscow's Central Asian policy sought to implement the so-called 'Putin Doctrine', aimed at the economic integration of post-Soviet space, and later, at political integration as well. However, this was not successful. Russian interests have not changed since 1992. Moscow still gives priority to stability in the region, protection of its soft power influence there, and to preventing extension of external players' influence, namely that of Europe, the United States, and possibly China.

US President Obama's Administration came to power in difficult economic and political circumstances; matters in Central Asia were not a priority, except as related to Afghanistan. Beginning in spring 2009 attempts were made to revise the Bush strategy which totally neglected Russian interests in the region and blocked all efforts for dialogue in the security sphere. What does each of the states represent to the US?

It could be said that Kazakhstan is the most predictable partner for the United States. Unlike the rest of the countries in the region, it is open to constructive dialogue and continues to enjoy a close relationship with Washington. Turkmenistan is primarily concerned with the preservation of its regime and is not taking any significant steps towards enhancing military cooperation with the United States. Uzbekistan has the reputation of being a difficult and unpredictable partner, although recently US-Uzbek relations have known a certain rapprochement. This shows a gradual warming of relations after the deep freeze that followed the Andijan events in May 2005. As for US-Kyrgyz relations, they endured some disappointment due to Bishkek's hasty attempt to close the Manas airbase and terminate its use by the US. Kyrgyzstan later found a compromise solution, allowing the US to stay at the base and to re-supply its troops in Afghanistan. The US military campaign in Afghanistan could lead Dushanbe to become an increasingly important partner and ally of the United States in the Central Asian region. Nevertheless, despite growing cooperation between the two countries recently, Tajikistan has not yet given any clear signs to Washington that would allow it to consider President Rakhmon as a reliable and predictable strategic partner.

On the whole, further developments in Afghanistan will remain the deciding element to influence any expansion of US presence in the region. Central Asia will be important to the US first and foremost as a transit route to access Kabul. In addition to this, the US has signalled that it wants to increase its humanitarian aid and to intensify promotion of democracy and human rights in the region. At the same time, Russian influence is expected to decrease in Central Asia.

# Energy Geopolitics in Central Asia

## Kyrgyzstan

Today the issue of water and hydro-energy supply remains one of the few of crucial importance in Central Asia. While it is perceived as one region, there are in fact very few issues that its leaders are eager to discuss together. In addition to the border delimitation issue that has been ongoing ever since the countries gained their independence in 1992, all states in the region are also concerned about water sharing and hydro-energy development. Water distribution in the region is the job of two small and poor upstream states (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), and three larger and more prosperous downstream states (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Notwithstanding the multiple agreements on water management currently in effect, none of them are efficient enough and the republics fail to cooperate to find a way on how best to use their water resources. During the Soviet period hydraulic energy represented only a marginal part of energy production as coal and gas were easily exchanged. However, after the countries gained independence it became more challenging for the upstream states to afford hydrocarbons and the use of hydro power emerged as a cheap source of energy. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Kyrgyzstan began to rely increasingly on the production of hydro energy. At the time of writing, Kyrgyzstan possesses the Toktogul water reservoir, one of the largest in

Central Asia with a capacity of about 19 billion cubic meters. Statistics suggest that over 80 per cent of the energy consumed in Kyrgyzstan comes from hydro power, confirming that water resources have become an essential element of the Kyrgyz energy system and that the country is trying to use it as foreign policy leverage. In addition to this, if the selling of water does not seem possible at the moment, Kyrgyzstan is determined that downstream states share the costs of maintenance.

Water and energy are linked to various security aspects such as environmental security, food security - dependent on agriculture and irrigation - and the increasing importance of military security where chances for inter-state conflicts are multiplying. Today Central Asian leaders see the issue of water as one of conflict yet with the exception of short-term intermediary agreement no further resolution of this critical issue has been achieved.

## Tajikistan

Tajikistan is the second upstream country and possesses the world's largest reserves of water energy resources per capita, accounting for approximately 80 per cent of all water energy potential in Central Asia. Nevertheless, the country is suffering an energy shortage and its annual water consumption is much lower than that of its downstream neighbours.<sup>1</sup> In winter Tajikistan endures an electricity deficit of 5 billion KW/hour while in summer, it records a 1.5 billion KW/hour electricity surplus.

Severe electricity shortages in wintertime have severe consequences: they bring social tension, impede sustainable economic development and worsen a situation with already high poverty incidence. In this context, the Government's prime task is resource mobilization to complete priority energy projects such as the Rogun hydro power plant

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Tajikistan's annual water consumption of 1843 cubic meters per capita to Turkmenistan's 4 044 cubic meters.

(HPP) as part of the Vakhsh Cascade, as well as the work on other major projects and construction of small and medium HPPs.

However, the construction of new dams in Tajikistan poses several potentially threatening conflicts for the whole region. First, the threat of an armed conflict is real. No major conflict has yet broken out over the water issue but conflicts on a smaller scale have been registered.<sup>2</sup> Growing water deficiency is a second threat. Inefficient and wasteful management of water resources is typical of all Central Asian states. Moreover, mountains in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan may lose most of their glaciers by 2020 due to global warming which means that by the mid-2020s, it is expected that the entire region will be in need of additional water resources. Finally, downstream countries, particularly Uzbekistan, are concerned by the construction of large upstream dams with water regulation capacity such as the Rogun project.

According to preliminary research, energy consumption of Tajikistan's economy within the framework of possible intense development may increase from 21.4 billion KW/hours in 2010 to 32.5 billion KW/hour by 2025, simultaneously increasing future energy export potential from 5 billion KW/hour in 2010 to 47.5 billion KW/hour in 2025.

## Uzbekistan

In the Soviet period an arrangement between Central Asian states provided that 75 per cent of water was released to the downstream states in summer during the vegetation period and 25 per cent released in the winter season. This order has since been reversed - in the summer period downstream states receive 45 per cent of water release versus 55 in the winter season. According to Uzbek statistics, in 2008 the country received 36 per cent of water in summer and 64 per cent in winter which resulted in severe flooding, the direct damage of which is estimated at

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<sup>2</sup> In March 2008, 150 Tajik residents from Isfara attempted to destroy a dam in Kyrgyz territory and retreated after armed threat by Kyrgyz border guards.

USD 40 million per year. Given this context, Uzbekistan maintains that the current water management system is inefficient while claiming that the one that had existed under the Soviet regime - and was modified by multilateral agreements after gaining independence - was unique and effective. It needs to be strengthened and developed further. Uzbekistan believes that the problems need to be resolved together during negotiations and that the issue of water resources management should be settled with the help of international law. Uzbekistan justifies its opposition to the construction of Rogun HPP claiming that the Rogun dam construction site is located in a seismically active area. The magnitude of quakes could be as high as 8 or 9 points on the Richter scale and any potential bursting of the dam could result in flooding of a very sizeable amount of territory, not only in Tajikistan but also in neighbouring countries.

Statistics differ on the degree of dependence of the downstream countries for water supply. Thus, 13 per cent of water supply of Uzbekistan export is allocated to agricultural crops which account for about 30 per cent of employment. However, taking into account the other sectors of economic development which are also dependent on agriculture, the employment number increases to 65 per cent. In addition to this, Uzbekistan is concerned that the construction of dams could accelerate the drying up of the Aral Sea, thereby creating additional water shortages. As a result, Uzbekistan holds that the construction of dams must be agreed upon by all parties concerned and should be conducted under the aegis of the UN.

## Kazakhstan

Unlike Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan takes a neutral stand on the construction of the dams and water disagreements have not affected its cooperation with other countries. Astana believes that it is important to take into account natural and economic factors, as well as the balance between economic development and ecological security. Moreover, it is inter-

ested in buying electricity both from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and therefore in participating as investor and stockholder in the construction of the Kambarata hydro electric dam in Kyrgyzstan and the Rogun dam in Tajikistan. Kazakhstan is also interested in the construction of electricity lines through Kyrgyzstan to its own territory, in order to buy and transfer electric power from Tajikistan. Russia's participation in this project, through technical assistance and finance, consolidates its position as an indispensable partner in the hydro-energy sector within the region. Potential future water and energy sector disputes between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan cannot be managed, let alone solved, without Russian support, so creating a dependency relationship in which Russia holds the balance of 'power'.

## Turkmenistan

In Turkmenistan more than 90 per cent of water is used for agriculture purposes, representing 11 per cent of GDP and 48 per cent of total employment. Therefore, at the socio-economic level, water resources are very important for Turkmenistan even though natural gas sales remain stable. Currently construction continues of the Turkmen Lake in the desert to prevent drainage water flow into the Amu Darya river and to reduce the level of drainage water in collectors for which all available resources are used. Nevertheless, Turkmenistan produces a lot of electricity using turbines fuelled by natural gas and it is a significant net exporter of electricity to Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan and Turkey via Iran. Turkmenistan is not interested in hydroelectric projects in the upstream countries neither as investor nor as importer of electricity.



# The Afghan Factor and Security Problems of Tajikistan

Tajikistan neighbours Afghanistan, sharing a long border of 1 400 km with the country. During the Soviet period Dushanbe enjoyed a rather peaceful neighbourly relationship with Kabul. Upon the emergence of the Taliban movement however, relations began to deteriorate as Taliban sympathisers started to infiltrate Tajik territory.

At present Dushanbe perceives two particular issues as threatening to its security. One is the long porous borderline, which creates unfavourable preconditions for arms and drug trafficking via Tajik territories. According to certain data, the amount of drugs transported to Russia accounts for 26 per cent of all drugs produced in Afghanistan. Currently Tajikistan is unable to deal with this problem unilaterally and has called for the creation of an “anti-drug security belt”, a concerted effort on the part of all countries neighbouring Afghanistan.

The other security issue concerns the export of religious extremism, and support by the Taliban of the already functioning extremist organisations in Central Asia such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Salafia, Tablig and the others. Aiming for the creation of an Islamic Caliphate, the Taliban has promised IMU and Hizb-ut-Tahrir support of this goal in the Central Asian states and currently these organisations are partially financed by the Taliban.

One possible solution to this problem could be the expansion of anti-Talib coalition forces to such new partners as the SCO and the CSTO to secure border control, as well as support for democratic reform in the country, and enhanced economic opportunity for Afghan society.

### Balkan-Caucasian Precedent: the Central Asian Dimension

The independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have had a direct impact on Central Asian countries. If we consider the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the recognition of former Soviet republics as sovereign independent states as the first phase, the further dissolution of former Soviet Republics through the recognition of constituent parts – such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia – might herald the start of a secondary phase of an ongoing process. In other words, the dissolution of Georgia and the USSR did not stop at the level of divorce of these former republics making up these two states. There appeared to be a political and legal precedent in the first hand. This means that the process of secondary dissolution has started as such and may take up a chronic character.

Second, international law, which from the very beginning has had some element of contradiction in the functioning of two principles—territorial integrity and self-determination—and has completely stopped functioning as a legal regulator of international relations. Strange as it may seem, Central Asian states also contributed to this contradiction as participants in the process by which the Soviet Union dissolved. While still part of the USSR, they invoked the principle of self-determination. But later, after gaining independence, they rigorously opposed this very principle and even called its validity into question, including undertaking to remove this principle from the list of principles and norms of international law. Restoration of previous adherence to international law will most probably be possible only if all countries of the world decide within the UN framework that this case, along with the Kosovo scenario, would be considered exclusive and will not be repeated in the future. At the same time, it becomes obvious that secondary

dissolution does not necessarily take place along the previously marked administrative borders of autonomous entities but, for instance, on the basis of ethnic minorities or some political (including external) preferences of certain elite groups. Central Asian states must reconsider the political and other consequences in the case of possible crossing recognition of the independence of Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia which in principle would stand for the secondary dissolution of Soviet republics and Yugoslavia.

Third, the two principles invoked by the Russian government as justification for its involvement in the South Ossetia crisis brought a heightened awareness to Central Asian leaders. The first of these, Russia's historical responsibility as peace-maker in the Caucasus, can be accepted, considered legitimate and so supported. But the second one, to protect Russian nationals, caused Central Asian leaders to think again. For the question arises: what precedent has thus been set, possibly to be invoked by other states? For the sake of justice, it should be noted that this kind of thinking is at the heart of real and responsible policy-making of the Central Asian countries. While the establishment of American and other military bases on the territories of these countries arose from a general understanding of a problem common to them all, and whereas reform of the UN Security Council was practically never a problem for the Central Asian states, the issue of the Balkan-Caucasian dilemma is a very different matter and calls for some independent and highly responsible decisions to be taken on the part of the Central Asian republics.

## The CSTO in the context of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Georgia

When discussing the CSTO three aspects about the nature of this organisation should be noted. First, the CSTO as a structure has been in a functional crisis ever since its establishment in 1992, when Uzbekistan was looking for security guarantees at the time of the Civil War in neighbouring Tajikistan. Second, this institution is currently suffering from

another crisis: Uzbekistan is being given security guarantees perceived by Tashkent as threatening. Finally, the CSTO is a still-born organisation for its establishment was not rooted on the common values shared by all humanity. In other words, only democratic and well-functioning states may unite, where the threat to their statehood is exceptional.

Perhaps with the exception of Kazakhstan, none of the CSTO member states may testify their full loyalty to Russia. Moreover, there still remain unresolved territorial disputes among the Central Asian states and in certain border areas between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. And, yet again with the exception of Kazakhstan – thanks to its market economy elements and rich natural resources - none of the states in the region may be considered to be well-functioning. The sole ambition truly shared by all CSTO member states is their desire to secure the existing ruling regimes; which gives rise to an ever present atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion in their interstate relations. Furthermore, in Central Asia this situation is exacerbated by interethnic tensions, economic frustration, and lack of water and land resources.

The structural dysfunction of the CSTO clearly became obvious in the contexts of the conflict in Georgia in August 2008, the conflict between Russian and Ukraine over gas supplies, and the war in Afghanistan. At the end of 2009, when the idea of so-called Collective Forces of Operational Reaction (CFOR) was renewed, this was done in secret, behind doors closed to the media at a meeting of several CIS member states convened shortly after the conflict in the Caucasus. It may be that the Kremlin suggested the CFOR in response to the refusal of all CSTO allies to recognise the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, thereby revealing the frailty of the CSTO system and indicating the need to cement the porous structure of this organisation in other ways.

CSTO member countries are interested in Russia for purely economic or financial reasons but none of the states are ready to pay the price for their close alignment with Russia. The Georgian precedent has shown

that Moscow is ready to create conditions in which its forceful interference might be inescapable. Central Asia and the Caucasus are viewed by Russia as a sphere of Russian national interests; hence Moscow seeks to strengthen its military presence in the region. The conflict in August 2008 allowed for such forceful Russian presence in the area through the establishment of military bases in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, whereas the Caspian military fleet was to become a part of the military grouping being created in Central Asia under the aegis of the CSTO. Leaders of the Central Asian states perceive this development as a potential threat to their regimes.

That the CSTO as an organisation is only marginally better-structured than was the CIS was made clear when Uzbekistan re-joined the CSTO after the Andijan events of 2005. Uzbekistan's return to the CSTO was forced, apparently in return payment for Moscow's support of the Uzbek leadership during their suppression of the events in Andijan.

The failure of the CSTO in its current state is further underlined by the nature of the ongoing military training exercises, meant to be the exercises of the not yet established CFOR. As long as the politics in the post-Soviet Central Asian states remain opaque and closed to public participation, and reflect little more than the personal passions and phobias of their leaders, only bilateral agreements will work effectively; a multilateral organisation such as the CSTO cannot hope to be effective.



# India, Iran and China: Dynamics of Regional Cooperation and Competition

## Indian Perspectives

India's foreign policy has significantly changed since the end of the Cold War. Currently, India pursues its own 'Grand Strategy', constructed around three geographic dimensions. The first focuses on India's immediate neighbourhood where India aims to counter the damaging influences of external players; the second concentrates on the 'extended neighbourhood', comprising the Indian Ocean littoral and the rest of Asia, and finally, the third refers to the 'rest of the world'.

In this 'Grand Strategy' configuration, Central Asia falls under India's 'extended neighbourhood', which is important to India's security and economic welfare. Indian strategic commentators suggest that Delhi must balance the increasing influence of regional competitors.

In the early 1990s, India's engagement in the region was quite limited compared to that of China and Iran. Initially, trade between Central Asia and Delhi was slow and insignificant: credit lines to various Central Asian states did not exceed USD 5 - 10 million. However, during the last decade India's engagement in the region has become more active and gained assurance. India's own economic success brought its relations with the Central Asian republics to a new level. Trade turnover increased from USD 43.96 million in 1996 to USD 366.73 by the end

of 2008. However, India's involvement in the region is complicated by lack of direct access to Central Asia owing to its difficult relations with Pakistan, to instability in Afghanistan, China's proactive stand in the region and US hostility towards Iran.

## The Iranian Perspectives

Iran has a rather pragmatic approach to its relations with the Central Asian states. Iran perceives Central Asia to be comprised of fragile and artificially-created states, fraught with ethnic strife, weak institutions and failed attempts at nation-building. Despite the fact that none of the republics poses a direct threat to Tehran, Iran is cautious with regard to the hostile influence of the US, widespread in the region. Iran is also concerned by the effects of Islamic fundamentalism and Afghanistan 'spill over'.

Iran does not consider Central Asia as a unified entity, preferring to engage in bilateral relations with each of the states. Despite antipodal ideologies, Iran's liveliest relations are with its north-eastern neighbour Turkmenistan, characterized by the highest number of agreements and railway and pipeline connections. With Tajikistan, Iran shares a common cultural and historical past, participated as a mediator in the protracted Civil War and provided economic investment. With Kyrgyzstan Iran has very limited economic relations and with Kazakhstan, limited swap deals. Uzbekistan was the only Central Asian country that subscribed to the US sanctions against Iran.

Overall, since 1993 Iran has invested USD 10 billion in the Caspian reserves bypassing its territory. Currently, Iran has observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Its interest in this organisation is motivated by the fact that the SCO is a regional organisation with no US involvement which could also provide good grounds for alignment with China.

## The Chinese Perspectives

Relations between China and the Central Asian states have evolved in stages. China was one of the first countries to recognise the independence of the republics and from the very outset has set to establish cooperative relations with each of the states. The early period, prior to 1996, was marked essentially by negotiations between China, neighbouring Central Asian states and Russia on border delimitation issues. From 1996 to 1997, priorities moved to security issues, decreased presence of armed forces in the border regions and, simultaneously, trust building. From 1998 to 2001, additional emphasis was given to security aims, namely counterterrorism efforts and economic development: trade turnover increased. And finally, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in 2001.

The SCO is not a military bloc against the US or NATO. It was created as a continuation of the already constituted Shanghai 5, to further cooperation among the countries comprising the organisation. At present there are 4 main SCO goals: cooperation in the political, economic, security and humanitarian spheres. Political cooperation presupposes meetings of government officials at various levels as well as taking the same stand on various issues. Economic cooperation aims to develop communication links, agriculture, trade and tourism. Humanitarian cooperation endeavours to further education, youth and cultural development.

Cooperation in security matters is oriented in four directions: the struggle against 'the three evils' that are extremism, separatism and terrorism; the joint effort against drug-trafficking; to counter organised crime; and to ensure border security. At the time of writing, SCO member states consider 36 organizations functioning on the SCO territory as extremist, separatist or terrorist. Of these, 15 operate in the Russian Federation, 12 in Kazakhstan, 26 in Uzbekistan, 10 in Tajikistan and 4 both in China and Kyrgyzstan.



# Kazakhstan and the OSCE: Implications of Rebalancing the Dimensions

OSCE Chairmanship has three basic dimensions: the inherited, the reactive and the proactive. The inheritance is the legacy of ongoing work, the reactive dimension concerns issues confronting the Chair and the proactive dimension refers to the priorities that a particular Chair brings to its tenure. A second fundamental point is that the Chairmanship does not span one year only. In the case of Kazakhstan, the political intent and preparations began more than 4 years ago. Institutionally, Kazakhstan will remain at the helm of OSCE strategic management until at least 2012 by virtue of the Troika/Quintet arrangements.

President Nazarbayev has described Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010 as a "national strategic project" and instructed the Government to form a State Commission on Preparations. The State Commission will coordinate policy, diplomatic activity, personnel training and public outreach. With Lithuania, the OSCE's designated chair for 2011, Kazakhstan has signed an Action Plan for cooperation between the two chairmanships, which includes developing joint policy priorities. Priorities identified include progress on the resolution of protracted conflicts and the facilitation of international overland transport.

Kazakhstan will be the first CIS country to hold the highest office within the OSCE: an organisation which numerically remains predominantly Western European and North American, and whose human

and financial resources primarily come from the western half of its 56-member contingent. Moreover, Kazakhstan represents the first Asian and predominantly Muslim nation to lead the OSCE.

President Nazarbayev thus summarised the challenges to Kazakhstan: “The backdrop comprises the ongoing world economic crisis, growing tension on international climate issues, energy and food crisis threats, problems related to weapons of mass destruction, non-proliferation and uncertainty about future relations within the international community, including within the framework of OSCE responsibility”. By definition, it falls to the incumbent OSCE Chair to preserve and advance the achievements of the OSCE across the so-called 3 politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions.

As an organisation the OSCE has evolved from being a purely East-West broker to an international organisation, incorporating consensual commitments agreed to by its 56 participating-states.

In 2010, in the politico-military dimension, major issues before the OSCE will include the so-called “frozen conflicts”; Russia’s proposal for a new European security pact and the future of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. With its “multi-vector” foreign policy, Kazakhstan may be well-placed to forge consensus.

The “frozen conflicts” in the Caucasus dating from the early 1990s – in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh – as well as in Moldova (Transnistria) have smouldered in the wake of the Russo-Georgian conflict of August 2008. The situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia challenges core OSCE principles, especially regarding the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity in the OSCE region.

As regards Georgia, the current Greek Chairmanship’s Special Representative participates in the Geneva talks on security and stability and regularly visits Georgia. There remains the possibility that a small logistical office may be opened in Tbilisi before the end of 2009 by the Greek Chair to support the Special Representative. The Kazakh chair-

manship will presumably appoint its own special representative to the Geneva talks and inherit any OSCE logistical office.

Regarding Transnistria, Kazakh Chairmanship is expected to be requested to support the efforts of the OSCE and the EU to re-start the international 5+2 negotiations before the end of 2009. There is the possibility that Kosovo will seek OSCE membership despite Serbia's declaration to block it. On this issue, the Kazakh Chairmanship will have to manage sharply opposing views between Russia and OSCE's western members.

Kazakhstan will have to respond to the global economic downturn; the running debate on the ODIHR mandate; with the spotlight on Kazakhstan's own performance and progress in human rights matters. In assuming the Chairmanship, Kazakhstan will inevitably come under greater international and media scrutiny, the prospect of which Kazakhstan is fully conscious.

Kazakhstan's strong willingness to chair the OSCE is an important precondition for success. However, Kazakhstan will have to deal with several other issues in addition to what is already on the agenda. One of them regards the organization itself. At the moment it is difficult to say where the OSCE now stands and where it is oriented. Another is that Kazakhstan will have to find a way to compromise and satisfy everyone, especially the major players whose interests are often quite divergent and even opposing. In this regard, if Kazakhstan does something contradictory to the Russian interest, Russia will have to react to it, although given the proximity of relations between the countries it will most probably not do so publicly. The same applies for the US as well.

The inter-departmental meeting in Astana has thus far identified some of Kazakhstan's priority issues. These include the reduction of weapons of mass destruction, solutions to ecological problems, enhancement of energy security, and institutionalization of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional tolerance. Kazakhstan's own track-record in voluntary de-nucle-

arisation, tackling post-Soviet ecological disasters and tolerance in its own multi-ethnic, multi-confessional society, gives Kazakhstan some comparative advantages. The President also believes the OSCE can play a stronger role in the struggle against terrorism and drugs trafficking.

Overall, there seem to be at least 4 positive potential consequences to the Kazakh Chairmanship: Kazakhstan can raise OSCE awareness and thus equip the Organisation to better address in future the myriad of specific challenges arising from the collapse of the former Soviet Union. This may result in a more nuanced, some would say less dogmatic, Western approach to these challenges. Secondly, Kazakhstan may be better able to rally OSCE's Eastern and Western partners around shared goals. Kazakhstan can also play a useful role in enhancing OSCE's relations with China. Thirdly, Kazakhstan's Chairmanship will inevitably impact on its own domestic evolution as the international spotlight descends fully focuses upon Astana. Finally, Kazakhstan will emerge better-known, better-understood and better-placed to play its part on the wider international stage.

# Russian and US Central Asia Policy after the Financial Crisis

## Russian-Sino Security Parameters and the SCO

Russian-Sino security parameters should be viewed not only from the security perspective but also from the economic and other perspectives. One of the most important issues regarding Sino-Russian security parameters concerns the concept of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) territorial space. Here, two dimensions may be distinguished. The more prevalent one is the narrow Central Asian definition of SCO space which has de jure and de facto been included into SCO organisational practice as territorial space of four Central Asian states. This view first emerged prior to 1996 at the level of bilateral negotiations on border delimitation, decrease of the Chinese armed forces' presence at borders with neighbouring countries, and later at the level of the Shanghai 5.

After the creation of the SCO observer institute and the inclusion of India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia at the expert level, there emerged a second dimension to the new interpretations of SCO geopolitical space. Wider in scope than the regional view, this functions according to the 6+4 scheme (6 SCO members and 4 observer states). This scheme may also be reinforced by the new institute of the SCO dialogue part-

ners, including Sri Lanka and Belarus, created in summer 2009 at the Yekaterinburg Summit.

In the future, SCO development may take any one of the following four directions: the inclusion of Belarus among the dialogue partners implies a certain European Russia and Belarus vector. Another, more prospective direction is South Asian, comprising the four Central Asian states, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A third, theoretical dimension would be a Caspian vector represented by Russia, Kazakhstan and Iran. And lastly, an East Asian orientation would comprise the Russian Far East, Siberia, Mongolia and China, and would potentially include the ASEAN, South East Asia and perhaps even Japan.

Within the SCO, the key problem in terms of Russian-Sino cooperation in the security sphere is that the organisation cannot be represented at the highest political level, as are NATO or the CSTO. De jure and de facto, the SCO has an inter-departmental nature, cooperating at the level of Ministries of Defence of the six member states. Russian-Sino cooperation is also complicated by various psychological differences in social, political and military cultures, as well as by linguistics. In addition to this, certain historical stereotypes rooted in the Soviet-Sino conflict of the late 1960s and 1970s are still at work today. Finally, joint military exercises held between 2001 and 2009 between Russia and China, both bilaterally and within the SCO format were considered a positive experience. Officially they are regarded as anti-terrorist exercises; however, given the equipment employed, some analysts regard them as strategic in nature. The last obstacle arises from the universality of the SCO, since it is impossible for this organisation to evolve into a political-military block such as NATO or the CSTO.

In conclusion, Russian-Sino security cooperation is highlighted in all SCO documents, and will most probably be expanded, taking into account rising new challenges and non-traditional threats. Furthermore, Russian-Sino cooperation will be undertaken in accordance with the

military programmes of all the member states within the SCO framework. The current characteristics of this cooperation not only do not stand in the way of SCO cooperation with NATO but there emerge new opportunities for cooperation within the framework on neutralising threats in Central Asia.

## President Obama's Central Asia Policy: New Priorities and Approaches?

The Central Asian policy of the United States has been shifting over time and now includes a range of foreign policy approaches to the region. In the early 1990s, when the Central Asian states gained independence, Washington mainly focused on their recognition, providing humanitarian and political assistance, fostering democratization and privatization programs through multiple USAID grants and the attention of the US State Department. However, it was not until 1996, when Central Asian energy resources became widely discussed both by private and national American companies, that the new priorities were identified. The US was trying to engage in the region not because it was a way to avoid Russia but rather because it was trying to create alternative routes for Central Asian states and to provide them with more opportunities. After 2001, the policy shifted towards the primacy of security issues. Security became of critical importance in the region in 2001 and remains so to this day. The US view of Central Asia has not changed since 2001 but the perception of the US in the region has evolved over time. In 2001 there was a significant amount of cooperation both at official and unofficial levels.

However, the situation began to change in 2003 with the Iraq campaign and the increasingly negative perceptions of its results. The Andijan events in 2005 furthered this downtrend, when the US initiated an international investigation into those events. This signified the demise of the US-Uzbek strategic partnership and simultaneously raised concerns

in the other Central Asian states about US motives for its presence in the region. However, in the past 18 years Central Asia has never been a priority for Washington. US relations with Russia took precedence for the new administration and there is a chance that President Obama will start looking at Central Asia through the paradigm of US relations with Russia.

When seeking to identify any changes in US policy towards Central Asia it is important to look at four main areas: security, political, economic and human rights. The US will prefer bilateral cooperation with each of the states to multilateral regional cooperation. Yet, the US also realises that regional security organisations do play a role. After the Andijan event of 2005, Kazakhstan became the privileged US partner over Uzbekistan. After some initial hesitation, US support for Kazakh OSCE chairmanship is one way in which the US detach Kazakhstan away from Russian influence and strengthen its identity as a European/Asian, multi-ethnic and multi-vector state.

At least four areas could potentially be affected by a shift in US policy. The first involves how Washington prioritizes its strategies within departments. In 2008 the Defense Department conducted a reassessment of central defence priority objectives with Central Asia devolving to the South Asia nexus. However, some experts would still like to see the region as part of the Russian bloc. Most of the budgetary resources will be allocated to agricultural programs and economic assistance, while political support, human rights and security issues will be reduced. Moreover, the Obama Administration will have to struggle with certain limitations such as a deterioration of US standing in the Central Asian region following the US intervention in Iraq; the consequences of the financial crisis and severe budget cuts; economic constraints; and geopolitical reality - Central Asia is viewed only in light of its larger neighbours but never as individual states nor as a collective 5.

# Compound Crises and Development in Central Asia

## Kyrgyzstan

In the winter of 2007 and 2008, Kyrgyzstan faced severe food, energy and economic crises. In June 2009, the water level in the Toktogul water reservoir was 35 per cent lower than the previous recorded from 1989 to 2007. This dramatic decline in water supply caused power cuts directly impacting families, the healthcare and education systems, and the business sector and hence employment. In 2008 industrial output declined by 2 per cent and by September 2009 had declined by a further 22 per cent.

The food crisis in Kyrgyzstan has exacerbated in line with the global food crisis. Despite a 52 per cent decline in global food prices, food prices in Kyrgyzstan have remained high, causing great concern. GDP declined by 30 per cent in the first half of 2009. This is partially due to the decline in remittances which used to flow into the country from the 500 000 workers in Kazakhstan and Russia, but who are no longer involved in the construction industry of those two countries.

Child poverty has declined to 43.3 per cent, however, when the extreme poverty line is doubled, this number increases to 68 per cent. Education is enduring a critical crisis: with net enrolment at approximately 85 per cent, a trend of seasonal attendance is observed showing

that in autumn and in May, school attendance decreases anywhere from 20 to 40 per cent.

Scholastic achievement is an even more dramatic indicator of severe impairment. In 2003 43.1 per cent of eighth graders passed a minimum standard in mathematics, while in 2007 only 10.1 per cent managed to do so. A similar trend is seen in other disciplines as well. In a 2006 assessment of scholastic achievements conducted in 57 countries, Kyrgyzstan ranked 57th, with 50 000 children in the republic are out of school. Such low results are caused by seasonal attendance, school closings due to the energy shortage and a shortage of qualified teachers. In addition to this, 13 per cent of children do not attend school for lack of shoes and uniforms, 43 to 53 per cent are either work or poverty related.

The number of children put in care of the state has almost doubled from 13 000 in 2003 to 22 000 in 2007. Poverty and lack of other alternatives, and migration cause parents to either abandon their child(ren) to the state or leave them in the care of relatives. All of these developments affect children first and foremost, as well as elderly and breastfeeding women. Energy and food insecurity are undermining the gains previously achieved in the social sector and pose serious implications for peace and stability, security and development in the country.

Several areas require immediate attention in order to improve the situation in Kyrgyzstan: bad governance, notorious for its corruption and lack of dialogue, control of resources by the few, marginalisation of youth, women and other vulnerable groups and a low capacity for crisis prevention and response, poor strategy development and implementation. In addition, the still unresolved border issues, especially in the south of the country, disputes over water and land on both sides of borders and poor infrastructure, need to be addressed.

Finally, there is a prevalence of minorities, especially in the Ferghana valley, and marginalisation of minorities and other groups in politics, and increasingly in the economic sphere. Kyrgyzstan is currently facing

a potential budget crisis. This year there were no cuts in the social sector, however, it is still unclear what is going to happen in 2010-11 should there be a budget deficit.

## Tajikistan

At the beginning of the financial crisis there were hopes that Tajikistan would not be largely affected since its financial institutions were not connected to Wall Street. Yet, the republic suffered even more because of its dependence on remittances from abroad which stopped flowing into the country.

Overall, there has been a slowdown of economic growth with GDP growth dropping to 2.8 per cent in the first half of 2009 compared to 8 per cent in 2008. Remittances from abroad, which comprised over half of the income for 55 per cent of the population decreased by 35 per cent in the first six months of 2009 and are expected to further decline to 40 per cent. In addition to this prices for aluminium and cotton have collapsed by 50 per cent, their total exports declining by 44 per cent during January-June 2009. Simultaneously, industrial production decreased by 15 per cent. As a result of these factors, a national currency depreciation in the first quarter of 2009 made up for 14 per cent and is expected to grow up to 40 per cent by the end of 2009. Current external debt comprises USD 1.5 billion, which accounts for 30 per cent of Tajikistan's GDP and new loans are being borrowed from China, Iran, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. External borrowing resources are primarily used for infrastructure maintenance (roads, electricity lines and dams), which yields a low and slow rate of return on investment. Inflation forecasts range between 7% (WB/IMF) and about 20% (EIU).

# Map of Central Asia



(Source: [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/cis\\_central\\_asia\\_pol\\_95.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/cis_central_asia_pol_95.jpg))

# Programme

Wednesday, 2 September 2009

Arrival of Participants: Golden Dragon Hotel, Bishkek

18h00

Welcome Reception

Thursday, 3 September 2009: OSCE Academy

09h00 - 09h30

**Welcome, Introduction to the Seminar and Participants**

Dr Maxim RYABKOV, Director, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

Dr Indra ØVERLAND, Director, Energy Programme, and Acting Head, Department of Russian and Eurasian Studies, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, Norway.

Dr Graeme P. HERD, Co-Director, ITC-24, GCSP, Geneva, Switzerland.

09h30 - 10h30

**New Problems, Perspectives and Paradigms in Central Asia?**

Chair: Dr Pal DUNAY, Director, ITC-24, GCSP, Geneva, Switzerland.

'Unilateral, Bilateral, and Multilateral Approaches to Security

Problems in Central Asia' - Dr Farkhod TOLIPOV, PhD (Political Science), Associate Professor, National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

'New Strategies in Central Asia: between Russia and America' – Dr Murat LAUMULIN, Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**11h00 - 12h30**

### **Dam Building, Security and Conflict in Central Asia**

Chair: Dr Indra ØVERLAND, Director, Energy Programme, NUPI, Oslo, Norway.

'NUPI Central Asia Regional Data-Gathering Team'

- Mr Kakhorjon AMINOV, Project Coordinator/Policy Expert, Asian Development Bank/DFID: Implementation Support for Private Sector Development Strategy in Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

- Mr Shairbek JURAEV, Chair, International and Comparative Politics Department, American University in Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

- Mr Jahangir KAKHAROV, Lecturer, Faculty of Economics, National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

**14h00 – 15h30**

### **Afghan and Georgia Factors in Central Asia**

Chair: Dr Roger KANGAS, Professor, Central Asian Studies, Near East South Asia Center (NESAC), National Defense University, Washington D.C., US.

'Afghan Factor and Security Problems of Tajikistan' – Dr Tagai RAKHMONOV, Chief Specialist, Political and Ethno-political Processes Research Department, Strategic Research Centre under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

'The Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict 2008: position of Kyrgyzstan' - Amb. Muratbek IMANALIEV, Director, Institute for Public Policy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

'CSTO in the context of Afghanistan and Georgia' - Mr Arkadii DUBNOV, Political Analyst, «Vremya Novostei» newspaper, Moscow, Russian Federation.

**16h00 – 17h30**      **India, Iran and China: Dynamics of Regional Cooperation and Competition?**

Chair: Dr Graeme P. HERD, Co-Director, ITC-24, GCSP, Geneva, Switzerland.

'Indian Perspectives' - Dr Ajay PATNAIK, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India.

'Iranian Perspectives' - Dr Tim EPKENHANS, Professor, Iranian and Islamic Studies, University of Freiburg, Germany.

'Chinese Perspectives' – Dr ZHANG Ning, Professor and Deputy Director, Central Asian Division, The Institute of Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies (IREECAS), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Beijing, Peoples Republic of China.

Reception/Buffer at Hyatt Regency Hotel, Bishkek (191, Sovietskaya Street, Bishkek) at 18h00

**Friday 4 September 2009: OSCE Academy**

**09h00 - 10h15**      **Kazakhstan and the OSCE: Implications of Rebalancing the Basket?**

Chair: Dr Maxim RYABKOV, Director, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

'The Kazakh Chairmanship: Setting the Scene' - Amb. Andrew TESORIERE, Head of Mission, OSCE Centre, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

'Taking the Helm at the Right Time? Kazakhstan's Impossible Task of Chairing the OSCE' - Dr Pal DUNAY, Director, ITC-24, GCSP, Geneva, Switzerland.

**10h45 – 12h00**      **Russian and US Central Asia Policy after the Financial Crisis?**

Chair: Dr Stuart HORSMAN, Policy Support Officer, Central Asia Desk, Policy Support Service, Conflict Prevention Centre, OSCE Secretariat, Vienna, Austria.

'Russian-Chinese Security Parameters and the SCO' - Prof. Sergei LOUSIANIN, Deputy Director, Far East Institute, Head of North East Asia (NEA) Issues and SCO Center, MGIMO (U), Moscow, Russian Federation.

'Obama's Central Asia Policy: New Priorities and Approaches?' - Dr Roger KANGAS, Professor, Central Asian Studies, Near East South Asia Center (NESAC), National Defense University, Washington D.C.

**13h45 - 15h00**

### **Compound Crises and Development in Central Asia**

Chair: Dr Natalie HASSMAN, Professor, Eurasian Studies, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

'UN System Perspective of the Situation and Challenges in Kyrgyzstan' - Mr Timothy SCHAFFTER, Representative, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Kyrgyzstan.

'The Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on Development in Tajikistan' - Ms. Hongwei GAO, Representative, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Tajikistan.

'UNDP Perspectives 2009' - Mr John LEWIS, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Peace and Development Adviser, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

**15h30 – 17h00**

### **Concluding Remarks and Next Steps**

Dr Indra ØVERLAND, Director, Energy Program, NUPI, Oslo, Norway.

Dr Maxim RYABKOV, Director, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Dr Graeme P. HERD, Co-Director, ITC-24, GCSP, Geneva, Switzerland.

**19h00**

### **Concluding Informal Dinner**

**Rapporteur**

Ms Diana GOLIKOVA, GCSP-OSCE Academy, "A European Scholar for Central Asia 2009-2010, ITC-24, GCSP, Geneva, Switzerland and 4th Masters in Advanced Studies in International and European Security, GCSP, Geneva.

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