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**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN CENTRAL-EASTERN ASIA:  
GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS  
FOR POLITICAL COOPERATION**

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The USA became a “Central Asian power” in 2001 – unexpectedly, abruptly, and irreversibly. The strategic importance of the two small American military facilities that were based in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan from the fall of 2001 was underscored Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s visit to Tashkent on 23-24 February, 2004, after which Uzbekistan was ranked by regional analysts as a new American “factual partner” in Central Asia.<sup>1</sup> Negotiations in Uzbekistan were followed by a visit from Secretary of State Colin Powell to Pakistan on March 17, 2004, during the course of which Pakistan was labeled as one of the USA’s most important allies outside NATO. Washington is changing its attitudes vis-a-vis the region from sporadic spasms of military activities (as in Afghanistan) to a more systematic and traditionalistic power-projection. This prompts a question: will the other Central Asian powers – Russia historically, and China more recently – regard this as a challenge?

### **“Soviet Middle Asia” to Central Asia**

During most of the 20th century, the vast territory between the Caspian Sea in the west and China in the east was part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. There were a few archaic monarchic states in this region (Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand); all three were conquered or dominated by imperial Russia and formally incorporated into the USSR during the early 1920s. The states which existed in the region were not nation-states but typical multi-ethnic feudal monarchies. Each state was based on control by a ruling group (dynasty) over a certain oasis or a group of oases surrounded on all sides by desert or mountains. The population of each oasis was usually ethnically mixed, as proximity to water was more of a determining migratory factor than the ethnicity of the ruler who controlled it. Local people did not have a notion of belonging to a nation; rather, “*oasis thinking*” served as a basis for their identity – a local and territorial identity rather than an ethnic and cultural one.

In the 1930s, the Soviet Bolsheviks, seemingly inspired by the Wilsonian idea of “self-determination of nations” and a desire to win support from the local populations, created five Union Republics in the region. They were based on the principal of ethnicity: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. These newly created Union Republics were part of the Soviet Union, though formally they had a right to leave the USSR and become independent states. Indeed, after the peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, all five republics suddenly became independent states.

Largely inexperienced, they immediately entered the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Created in the wake of the former Soviet Union, CIS was merely a loose international organization rather than a state-like confederation of the former Soviet republics. In 1992, four states of the former Soviet Middle Asia (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan), together with Russia signed the “Treaty of Tashkent,” which provided a formal basis for deployment of Russian troops on their soil.

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<sup>1</sup> Ruzikulova, Saiora. 2004. Ministr oborony SSHA vstrechayetsya s prezidentom Uzbekistana (U.S. Secretary of defense meets with the president of Uzbekistan). *Tribune-UZ*, February 24. <http://www.tribune-uz.info/politics/?id1=519>

Turkmenistan did not join the treaty. It declared neutrality (recognized by the United Nations) and opened its frontiers to its neighbors, dissolving its border-guard troops.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, however, invited Russian troops to stay. In 1992, Kazakhstan signed a military treaty with Russia. Initially Kyrgyzstan formally declared neutrality, but very soon it reconfirmed its alliance with Russia, for the Kyrgyz government clearly recognized its inability to defend itself from incursions by gangs of war lords from abroad (largely from parts of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, these gangs occasionally fall out of the control of the respective governments).

The dismantlement of the USSR was used in Central Asia by many antigovernment forces, including some liberals, in attempts to overthrow former communist rulers. In Turkmenistan, the opposition was totally destroyed by the dictatorial regime. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, moderate reforms were implemented and regimes of “guided democracies” consolidated power. In Uzbekistan, power was concentrated in the hands of the strongest regional clan, whose leaders established a rather rigid authoritarian rule.

Tajikistan found itself in the worst situation. After the former communist leaders were overthrown by a coalition of moderate liberals and Islamic radicals in 1991, a sharp conflict between regional clans was unleashed. Liberals were completely displaced from government by religious extremists and regional and tribal chiefs. After six years of bloody civil war, a sort of domestic balance between regional clans was restored with direct military intervention by Russia and Uzbekistan who supported the government, on the one hand but pressed, on the other, to find a negotiated compromise with the Islamic opposition. An agreement was signed in Moscow in 1997. The civil war in Tajikistan was strongly influenced by the groups of ethnic Tajiks who constitute a major part of the population of neighboring Afghanistan and systematically interfered in the fighting, instigating forceful clashes in Tajikistan.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the 1990s, the situation in the region was largely stabilized. The sole remaining source of lawlessness was in the Fergana Valley and the surrounding mountain areas, which have resisted control by the local states, allowing gangsters to easily infiltrate in and reach out of the area to Afghanistan using mountain routes. The general stability in the region led Uzbekistan to decide that Russian military assistance was no longer necessary, and in 2002 Uzbekistan left the Tashkent treaty, which was subsequently re-named the Collective Defense Treaty Organization (CDTO).

As the region stabilized, China moved more actively to develop economic ties and cooperate with individual nations against Islamization, a threat that China, with its massive Islamic population in Xinjiang province, feared would come from the south (Afghanistan and Pakistan). Russia largely shared China’s prejudices against radical

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<sup>2</sup> The first post-Soviet comprehensive version of international relations in Central Asia was published in Russian in 2003. See: Bogaturov, Alexei, ed. 2003. *Sistemnaya istoriya mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii v chetyrekh tomakh*. (Systemic history of international relations in four volumes). Vol. 3, 1945-2003. Moscow: NOFMO.

Islam and religious extremism. Some of the smaller nations, while concerned about China as a threat in part because of territorial disputes with Beijing, were equally concerned about Islamic extremists and inclined to cooperate with China and Russia against terrorism. The terrorist attacks against the United States in September 2001 provided another mighty impetus for reevaluation of strategic realities of the region.

As a continental power, Russia is much stronger and more engaged in the *mainland* international organizations than in those of the *Pacific Rim*: (1) Russia is at the center of the Collective Defense Treaty Organization (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, and Armenia), which ties Russia with at least three of the smaller states of Central Asia. (2) Moscow, together with Beijing, cosponsors the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan). (3) On May 28, 2004, Russia was (surprisingly, for many) admitted into the Central Asian Cooperation Organization, which had been kept closed since 1994 by its four founding member nations (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan). (4) Moscow is the strongest member of the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC, in operation since October, 2000), which unites Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus (Ukraine, Moldova, and Armenia have observer status). (5) The EEC partially overlaps with the Common Economic Space, which encompasses Russia and Kazakhstan in Asia and Ukraine and Belarus in Europe (created September, 2003). (6) Last but not least, there are “special” bilateral relations between Russia and Kazakhstan (military-political treaty of 1992) on the one hand and a Moscow-Beijing partnership based on the political (-military) treaty of 2001, on the other.

### **The Asianization of NATO**

Four new factors are reshaping the regional security landscape in the 2000s. First, after the campaign in Afghanistan in 2001, the U.S. came to the strategic northwestern rear of China and “closed the door” China had hoped to keep open to expand its political and economic influence into the smaller states on its western frontier. Now the USA can directly affect China’s security from two places – the northwest, or “inner Asia” (Xinjiang, China’s “heartland”), as well as the southeast (Taiwan, China’s “rimland”). Strategically speaking, the “old” region of Eastern Asia ceased to exist as a security buffer separated from the “old” region of Central Asia. No security-related matter in China’s northwestern frontier region can now be handled without factoring in the American military presence in the Central Asian states.

“*Central-Eastern Asia*” emerged as a single, indivisible security area and sphere of political and economic interaction. Notably, Russia’s diplomatic and strategic position is stronger in the “new” geopolitical region than in the “old” area defined as *Northeast Asia* or the *Far East*.

A second factor is that Central-Eastern Asia is a unique region where three major powers – the USA, China, and Russia – have clearly defined, shared security concerns. Moreover, China and the USA have strong trade and economic ties while Russo-Chinese relations involve cooperation on arms deals, military-technical cooperation, science and

technology, antiterrorist activities, and multilateral and bilateral regional cooperative projects in Central Asia and the Far East.

All three nations see terrorism based on religious fanaticism as their primary enemy and define continental Central-Eastern Asia as a potentially dangerous zone that may be dominated by militant Islam if timely preventive measures are not undertaken. While China and Russia have avoided explicit approval for what the Bush Administration is undertaking in Iraq, they both support American policies in Afghanistan. Moscow and Beijing may be willing to cooperate with the USA to contain threats of political Islam, but they are extremely apprehensive about the forceful unilateral strategies employed by Washington to fight terrorism. Russian and Chinese politicians denounce the Bush Administration's strategy of "preemptive action" based on arbitrary assessments by President Bush and his close advisers and consider it potentially damaging to Russia's and China's national interests and international stability.

Third, international relations in Central-Eastern Asia are increasingly influenced by the energy-related needs and aspirations of all interested nations, including the USA.<sup>3</sup> China is becoming a major energy consumer and needs oil and gas from Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.<sup>4</sup> Japan is competing with China for Russia's energy resources while simultaneously seeking access to the energy resources of some of the smaller nations in the region. American companies are working to secure their participation in regional energy development projects, placing more attention on the Caspian states rather than the Russian Federation. Russian private businesses and the federal government have started to treat the East Siberian oil and gas resources with unprecedented care, clearly seeing them as tools to increase Russia's economic and political role in Asia, which was weakened during the 1990s by the decline in Russia's military presence in the Far East.<sup>5</sup> Russia's heartland, traditionally viewed as European Russia (the lands of the Medieval Great Moscow Princedom), is now *moving eastward*, closer to the Siberian energy resources that are feeding the Russian federal budget and elevating Russian oil and gas companies into strong international market actors. Russia is becoming a more active Asian player, profoundly interested in the industrial development in its Siberian and Far Eastern provinces and in stability in Central-Eastern Asia.

The oil and gas resources in the Caspian region are viewed by experts as being of global importance. Western Europe and the USA as well as China may be dependent on them in the near future. The reserves are located largely on the *eastern coast* of the sea and geographically belong to Central Asia. Numerous conflicts in neighboring areas have created problems in both the transportation of extracted energy resources and development of oil and gas fields. Some writers expect sharp competition between larger

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<sup>3</sup> Herberg, Michael and Joseph Fergusson. 2004. Energy security in Asia. *The Wall Street Journal*, March 22.

<sup>4</sup> Jardley, Jim. 2004. China's economic engine needs power (lot of it). *The New York Times*, March 14.

<sup>5</sup> See: Skorniakova, Anna. 2004. Neft v Kitai poidet po relsam (Oil to China will go by rail-road). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, March 29, p.1

nations, including China, Russia, the USA, Pakistan, and India, over energy transportation routes to the west, south, and east of the region. Competition over the resources is complicated by additional forceful clashes between the regional states over territories and political domination combined with historical mistrust and hostilities of ethnic, regional, tribal, and religious origins. Stability in this vast energy-important region is becoming a key precondition for steady development of the world economy and global system.

Fourth, NATO, or more accurately, major NATO nations, in recent years have claimed a distinct strategic role in Inner Asia by expanding new zones of informal strategic responsibility from *Central Eastern Europe* and the Balkans to the Middle East, *Central-Eastern Asia* (areas around Afghanistan and Uzbekistan), and South Asia (Afghanistan and Pakistan). Caught between these two informal zones of NATO responsibility, Russia continues to preserve its presence in the region. Russia maintains a military presence in Tajikistan, a bilateral alliance with Kazakhstan, enjoys “special” security relations with Kyrgyzstan which provide Russia with a military base on Kyrgyz soil, and dominates the multilateral Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which includes six states of the CIS (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, and Belarus). The most irregular and perhaps promising feature of the regional strategic landscape (by criteria of the bipolar world) is that Kyrgyzstan currently hosts both Russian and American military bases, connecting in a peculiar way the existing Russia-centric security machinery with what may be a USA-led cooperative security scheme in the future.

Right or wrong, judgments on the “de-Europeanization” of Washington’s international priorities are based on grave facts. Indeed, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have signaled that a long-debated transformation of NATO is becoming real, or at least less unreal than before.<sup>6</sup> The political implications of the advancement by the USA-led coalitions of selected NATO member-states into Asia far exceeded expectations. The two American-British campaigns in 2001 and 2003, supported by a group of NATO member-nations, marked a shift of alliance focus to Asia.

Ironically, the new NATO members of Eastern Europe, who enthusiastically supported the American campaign in Iraq, were slow to realize the implications of what they were doing. They might have been less supportive of Washington if they knew that a deeper involvement of NATO in Asia undermines its role as a purely European security body designed to provide stability primarily to Europe. The ongoing Asianization of NATO implies that its global and Asian functions may begin to outweigh the prescribed missions for which NATO was created a half century ago.<sup>7</sup> The USA no longer needs NATO in its old form. The North Atlantic treaty is no longer adequate to contemporary security thinking. *Either NATO must obtain new geopolitical roles (most probably in China-related regions) or it will be doomed to further marginalization.*

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<sup>6</sup> Legvold, Robert. 2002. All the Way: Crafting a U.S.-Russian Alliance. *National Interest* 1(15). <http://www.inthenationalinterest.com/Articles/Vol1Issue15/Vol1Issue15Legvold.html>

<sup>7</sup> Compare: Kagan, Robert. 2003. *Of paradise and power. America and Europe in the new world order.* New York: Alfred Knopf.

The problem for Europeans may appear to be related to major asymmetries in the European integration process and European thinking. Economically, the European nations feel much stronger, more mature, experienced and successful in Asia. They are hardly a political factor in Central Asia, but they are rather aggressive in Southeast and South Asia. At some point, the EU may enter the competition for economic mastery in Central Asia – to do so is not counter to their *prospective* inclinations.

NATO, however, is a defense organization. Military engagement and security commitments, especially those related to security and international combat operations outside the *traditionally defined* Europe, have been controversial issues for European nations since World War II. In order to meet (ascribed) American expectations of NATO in Central Asia, one should allow ever more freedom and flexibility for member nations to choose the form, scale, and intensity of individual participation in prospective collective operations by NATO in Asia. An imaginable lack of coherence between smaller and larger NATO nations and (or) between the European members and the USA might be one day be “rewarded” (compensated) by a broader and deeper factual and semi-official association, or “special relationship,” between the USA-led NATO and Russia, even if Moscow’s formal membership in the alliance remains outside its political agenda, as it is for the time-being.

The Asianization of NATO is hardly good news for the Baltic states, who for the past ten to fifteen years have persuaded themselves and others that the prime mission for NATO is to protect them from Russia’s westward expansion. The Arab states and China seem to be even more disappointed by NATO’s increasingly Asian outlook. In the Arab world, a major intervention of political will and military might by the USA and Europeans could compel a major restructuring of inter-Arab relations that would provoke hostilities toward Westerners and each other and increase insecurity in the Middle East. For China, the “NATO-ization” of Central Asia would mean imposition of hard limitations on Beijing’s westward strategy, one principal objective of which is to secure access to the energy resources in the Caspian region.

Europeans are disappointed with the Asianization and are tempted to resist or at least slow changes. From the American perspective, discontent in Europe might be viewed as somewhat legitimate and understandable, but lacking sufficient weight to change the basic vision of the current Republican Administration. Distinctions and nuances between “securities” (global, regional, national, homeland and international) are losing meaning in the eyes of Washington policy-makers driven by a unilateralist perspective.

From the U.S. perspective, there are more concerns in Asia than in Europe. It is difficult to foresee any major threats to stability in Europe other than minor disputes stemming from old-fashioned European “home quarrels” (e.g. ethnic minorities, small-scale separatism, social unrest, etc.). Europe has become a relatively quiet place, “a peaceful rear” to the United States. Strategic and geopolitical “front-lines” are moving in the direction of the Caspian Sea, and to the deserts and mountains between Central Asia in the north and in India-Pakistan’s disputed area of Kashmir in the south. Add to this

American suspicions of a hesitant Russia, rising China, nuclear South Asia, and independent-minded Japan. The Middle East and Central-Eastern Asia are becoming more important than Europe – a symbolic price Europe must pay for a half-century of peace and wealth.

*Russia's renewed "march to Asia" is accelerated by the ongoing "de-Europeanization" and increasing "Asianization" of U.S. foreign policy.* In a way, Russian President Putin is heading for Asia because his "friend" President Bush is heading there and the Russian leader does not want to be late. For many years being a Eurasianist was viewed in Moscow as almost equal to being barbaric, backward-looking, illiberal and anti-Western. Now that the USA is becoming a Eurasian power, the common Russian view has changed: there is nothing wrong about being an Asian power if the USA is not ashamed to "join" Asia.

### **Shanghai Organization and Russia-led Groupings vis-à-vis American Bases?**

Despite China's confusion over the USA's arrival at her strategic rear, the Chinese leadership believes it is Islamic extremism that poses a greater threat to Beijing. This does not mean that the PRC is happy about American interference in regional affairs. Rather, it fails to see it as a practical challenge for the time being. Beijing *formally* attempts to behave as if there were no "American factor" in Central Asia, and continues its normal policy of building regional alliances.

The most important Chinese initiative in the region since the early 1990s has been the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which includes China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In 1996, Russia and China signed a bilateral agreement to promote confidence-building measures along the Russo-Chinese frontier. The following year, Moscow and Beijing invited four smaller nations in Central Asia (all four were former republics of the USSR) to join the Russo-Chinese agreement and extend it along the long borders between the Central Asian states and the PRC. In this way, the "Shanghai Five" (Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) was established in April 1997. With no shared borders with China, Uzbekistan did not join, but was admitted as an observer.

The "Shanghai Five" was a loose grouping with no clear powers and mission beyond merely promoting confidence-building measures along the national frontiers of the member-states. However, Beijing insisted on transforming it into a "normal" organization. Russia was watchful about the nature of the "Shanghai Five," seeing no clear reasons for making it a strong international body. Moscow viewed it as a tool for conflict-prevention between member-states (especially between China and smaller regional states) rather than as an instrument for active regional maneuvering. Moreover, Russian leaders understood that China was de facto the strongest actor in the "G-5" and felt a disguised inferiority vis-à-vis Beijing.

However, China was far too huge and insistent and the Russian Far Eastern provinces too vulnerable vis-a-vis Chinese "peaceful weaponry" (i.e. demographic pressures) for



Moscow to ignore Beijing's invitation. Smaller nations, in turn, were concerned about both bigger nations, China and Russia. The last thing smaller states wanted was to be involved in a Russo-Chinese dispute or estrangement. Cautiously, they signaled to Moscow that they viewed a dialogue with Beijing better than uncertainty about China's intentions, no matter how unproductive and unfocused such a dialogue might be.

Ultimately, by spring 2001, Moscow agreed to upgrade the level of cooperation. In part, Russia's new responsiveness reflected Moscow's dissatisfaction with the state of Russo-Western relations after a series of disputes over the Balkan wars of the late 1990s (e.g. disagreements over the NATO bombardments of Serbia and military interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo). President Yeltsin saw Russia's improved relations with Beijing as a tool to impress Washington and send a message: "Don't take Russia for granted."

Finally, Moscow agreed to reform the "Shanghai Five." In June 2001, it was formally transformed into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at a summit in Shanghai. The new organization became a regional multilateral institution with a permanent Secretariat and an Anti-Terrorist Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. At that point, Uzbekistan joined the SCO as a full member-state. In 2003, the leaders of the SCO signed an organizational charter.

The smaller states and Russia were determined to avoid anything that might be viewed as a potential challenge by Washington. Meanwhile, Beijing signaled its preferences with regard to the future direction of the SCO (and Russia-China bilateral cooperation) – to build a regional security structure to confront common regional threats. Russia and the smaller nations pressed for more emphasis on economic cooperation within the SCO while Chinese representatives exhibited more interest in military and antiterrorist cooperation.

The diplomatic disposition was ever more complicated as local nations did not fully share China's views of regional threats. Kyrgyzstan, for example, shared China's concern with terrorist gangs' activities.<sup>8</sup> But the Kyrgyz government was equally uneasy about China itself due to a 2001 territorial dispute where Beijing pressed Kyrgyzstan to yield a piece of Kyrgyz territory. The Islamic gangs who could easily reach Kyrgyzstan through mountain routes via the "triangle of eternal war" (Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan) were certainly dangerous, but possible "military assistance" from China could be no less threatening for the weak and vulnerable Kyrgyz state. Therefore, the Kyrgyz government had little interest in enlisting Chinese military cooperation against Islamic extremists. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan felt less vulnerable than Kyrgyzstan did, but they too expressed little enthusiasm for military cooperation with China.

Not that Central Asian states were especially attracted to Moscow, but Russia did not claim their territories. Moscow was inward-looking and concentrating upon domestic problems. If Russia's influence was viewed as an "evil," it was a well-known and well-

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<sup>8</sup> Berman, Ilan. 2003. In Central Asia, dreams of a new caliphate. *Eurasia Security Watch*, # 11, December 23. <http://www.afpc.org/esw/esw11.shtml>

understood evil. This is why, without denying China's suggestions for security cooperation, some local states preferred to rely on Russia as a counterweight to China.

Tajikistan was intermittently quarreling with Moscow over payments for the Russian military base in its territory until the summit meeting between President Putin and Tajikistan President Emamoly Rakhmonov in Sochi, Russia took place on June 4, 2004. According to their statement, Russia would continue transforming its 201st Army Division into a permanent Russian base in Tajikistan and the latter would give up all claims for payments. Moscow in turn agreed to suspend the \$300 million debt Tajikistan had owed since 1991. Russian border guards, however, would be withdrawn from Tajikistan after 2006.<sup>9</sup> But Russo-Tajik quarrels over the Russian base became serious only after the American troops were deployed in Afghanistan, and President Rakhmonov started to think there were more reasons to rely on the United States than Russia to secure his regime against local Islamic radicals, who have attempted to overthrow him several times in recent years.

President Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan may be skeptical about Russian motives, yet he knows well that for the time being only Russia is able to come to his aid should Islamic terrorists launch an offensive against him from the Fergana Valley – a scenario that may become a reality any day.

The Fergana Valley is the richest *oasis* in the region. It is the only area in Central Asia with enough water and fertile soil to cultivate almost any agricultural product. Historically, it was controlled by the *Kokand Khandom*, with an ethnically mixed population under a ruling Uzbek dynasty. Later, under the Soviet Union, the valley was divided between the three Soviet fraternal republics of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Uzbekistan gained the major part of the valley while some Tajik parts of Fergana became separated from the Tajik mainland by belts of Kyrgyz territory and evolved into enclaves. There is also an Uzbek enclave surrounded on all sides by Kyrgyz territories (in Sokh). In addition to its agricultural value, energy resources are reported to have been discovered in Fergana.

Islamic extremists (primarily but not exclusively ethnically Uzbek) claimed to take the entire valley under their control to form an independent Islamic state. The extremists, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, had bases in the mountain areas on the territory of Tajikistan and organized raids into Uzbekistan and other states. Tajikistan's government claimed to be unable to control the extremists while Uzbekistan criticized Tajikistan for mildness to terrorists. The extremist groups, who were largely displaced from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan after the collapse of the Taliban regime in Kabul in 2001, are now reportedly in Afghanistan, from which they still can attack Central Asian states, especially if supported by Afghani and Pakistani radicals. They can enter Uzbekistan

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<sup>9</sup> See the interview by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Vyacheslav Trubnikov in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (May 12, 2004). A more elaborated view on Russia's troops in Tajikistan was developed in the interview of Russia's Ambassador to Tajikistan Maxim Peshkov. See: *Dipkur'er NG*. May 31, 2004. [http://www.ng.ru/courier/2004-05-31/10\\_tadzhikistan.html](http://www.ng.ru/courier/2004-05-31/10_tadzhikistan.html). See also: Zaitsev, Andrei and Georgi Ilichev. 2004. V Tajikistane poyavitsya rossiiskaya voyennaya baza (Russian military base finally would appear in Tajikistan). *Izvestia*, June 5.

through the open frontier between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, as Turkmenistan does not participate in any antiterrorist cooperative effort and has open frontiers with both Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. There are territorial disputes between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Historically, many such disputes were handled with Moscow's mediation. After the collapse of the USSR Moscow became less involved, but Russia-led fora continue serving to mitigate territorial frictions between smaller states.

The regional states take the USA's military presence in the region seriously. They do not have a clear sense from Washington just what the U.S. presence means. So far, they do not see the USA as a source of *practical support for their specific, regional needs* under the volatile regional situation. Indeed, would the USA support the ruling regimes in case of possible Islamic uprisings against them or would Washington prefer to support anti-government rebels if they label themselves as "democratic reformers?" Russia's concept of a "guided democracy," and China's doctrine of "economy-first" reform, are more appealing in the eyes of local elites than the patterns of "democratization" shaping the Bush Administration's policy in Iraq.<sup>10</sup> The smaller nations are willing to have the USA in the region, but they do not feel assured that they will benefit more than they might lose.

Drug-trafficking and terrorism are practical problems for local nations. If Kyrgyzstan is attacked by Islamic extremists and narcobarons, say, in the Fergana Valley, it may lose part of its richest territory long before bureaucrats in Washington convene Congressional hearings on whether Kyrgyzstan should or should not be supported, given the "uncertain nature of its democracy." In the meantime, Islamists are serious about taking the Kyrgyz part of Fergana from Kyrgyzstan to make it a gigantic opium-field controlled by warlords. How would the emerging cooperation between the U.S. and Uzbekistan work? Could it stabilize or destabilize that country domestically? Those are questions currently being asked in the capitals of the region.

In view of China's strategic aspirations in Central Asia and the growing American presence in that region, Russia under President Putin turned to a more active regional agenda. America's aspirations were unclear and needed thorough consideration. Beijing's desire to shape the strategic landscape was clearer. Moscow apparently wanted to strengthen its position toward both China and the USA.

Responding to Russia's invitation, some of the Central Asian states, despite some skepticism, accepted the idea of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) proposed by Moscow in 2002. Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, and Belarus formally initiated multilateral security cooperation within the CSTO in May 2003. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (as well as Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan) refused to join.

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<sup>10</sup> Impacts of the Iraq war on the situation in Central Asia are discussed in: Wishnik, Elizabeth. 2004. *Strategic consequences of the Iraq war: U.S. security interests in Central Asia reassessed*. Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute.

The current Russia-centered system of strategic cooperation in its restructured form looks smaller in scale but politically more coherent than under the auspices of the old, unsuccessful Treaty of Tashkent of 1992, Russia's earlier attempt to create a basis for military cooperation among the CIS nations. However, CSTO does not look promising thus far. It has a relatively weak organizational structure, and is heavily dependent on Russian troops, arms and financing, at a time when Russia itself is in relatively bad shape militarily (though due to high international oil prices Russia can afford to spend more on security).

The new CSTO arrangement went into force in May 2003, two months before the annual session of the SCO, where its Charter was formally issued (July 2003). This meant that Russia and the five CIS nations were one step ahead of the SCO in military affairs. Not only had they blocked China's attempt to make the SCO a principal tool for security cooperation in Central Asia, they also stressed that the CSTO would or should have priority over the SCO in maintaining regional stability.

China appeared to react moderately to Moscow's actions, for Beijing has never questioned what Chinese experts tend to define as "special relationships" between Moscow and the former Soviet states of Asia. China's overarching idea seems to be to promote strategic political cooperation between the SCO nations that surpasses the special relations some of them have with Russia. Beijing's goal of greater strategic cooperation with Moscow seems to have constrained China from expressing annoyance over the disguised competition taking place between the CSTO and SCO. Chinese leaders tend to take the American military presence on China's frontiers more seriously than Russian military commitments to smaller nations.

*The current security mechanism in Central Asia may be viewed as consisting of three overlapping structures: the CSTO dominated by Russia (a military core); the SCO guided by China-Russia in tandem (a political and possibly military "inner shelter"), and the USA's military presence in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (an "outer shelter" of limited military-symbolic nature).*

The process of regional re-structuring in Central-Eastern Asia reveals a few remarkable similarities to that in Southeast Asia. For decades, the ASEAN states stubbornly rejected Soviet and American invitations for multilateral regional security cooperation for fear that they would be overwhelmed in any body dominated by stronger external states. Neither American prospects for a "Pacific (political) community," nor the Soviet idea of a "collective security system in Asia" were supported by nations in the region. Soviet and American projects were based on European history and a European vision of strategic realities. The Asian strategic environment, with its unique historical, geographical, and cultural background, rejected Western models. The "imported" nature of plans suggested by Washington or Moscow made them inappropriate in Asia.

Confronted, however, with conflicts and instability similar to the European experience, Southeast Asian nations were able to develop their own diplomatic and political response to regional challenges by the late 1980s. They began to treat regional conflicts in an

“Asian way” (as defined by Michael Haas).<sup>11</sup> Key elements of the “Asian way of diplomacy” were loose forms of political and military cooperation, prolonged discussions aimed at finding an ultimate consensus between nations, and avoidance of strict military obligations and sanctions. The ASEAN nations rejected U.S. and Soviet suggestions for regional security arrangements, ultimately introducing their own organization for multilateral security dialogue – the ASEAN Regional Security Forum (ARF) – in the late 1980s, which was approved by the major powers.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1990s, the smaller states of Central Asia took notice of ASEAN’s achievements and initiated a thorough examination of the ASEAN experiences in economics, diplomacy, and politics. Leaders in Central Asia appreciated the strategies ASEAN used to deal with stronger nations, and the way the smaller states of Southeast Asia communicated with each other to balance major powers. Central Asian realities were different from those in Southeast Asia, but the ASEAN experience served as a normative behavioral pattern for Central Asians, who hope to repeat the economic success of the ASEAN region.

It is not surprising that regional institutions in Central Asia have developed so slowly and cautiously. Like the dialogue among the ASEAN nations, they began as a loose grouping of nations with no clear-cut political and military obligations. China and Russia have been sensitive to the national interests, and cares and fears of these smaller states in a way similar to how the U.S., Japan, and Australia were sensitive to the anti-strong-powers sentiments of the ASEAN nations during the 1970-1990s.

The SCO, the strongest multilateral grouping in Central-Eastern Asia, is factually based on the principle of “loose and mild cooperation” that originated in ASEAN practices of 1970s-1990s and was informally approved by Beijing, Moscow, and smaller states of Central Asia as the most appropriate system in which to interact. The SCO so far has no counterpart to ARF. Should the SCO decide to involve the USA (and some other nations like Pakistan) in a loose security dialogue structured like the ARF, it would meet the interests of many regional nations as well as those of strong external actors. I would argue that the smaller states, as well as Russia and China, – for different reasons – would like to have the USA in the region, especially since they cannot remove it. The U.S.’s military presence in inner Central-Eastern Asia is a new strategic and geopolitical fact. The task is to fully legitimize it in the eyes of regional states in a way acceptable to all the nations in the region. *In other words, the USA should become a part of the strategic landscape in that part of the world, not against the will of local states, but with their consent.*

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<sup>11</sup> Haas, Michael. 1989. *The Asian way to peace. A story of regional cooperation*. New York: Praeger.

<sup>12</sup> Bogaturov, Alexei. 1997. *Velikiye derzhavy na Tikhom okeane. 1945-1995*. (Great powers in the Pacific. History and theory of international relations in Eastern Asia after the Second World War. 1945-1995). Moscow: Suita. See also: Ikenberry, John and Michael Mastanduno, eds. 2003. *International relations theory and the Asia-Pacific*. New York: Columbia University Press.

## Where Does Central-Eastern Asia End?

The security situation in the region is difficult to manage, in part because strategically it is almost impossible to separate its eastern part (former Central Asia) from problems in South Asia. Tajikistan's security (and in part Uzbekistan) cannot be divorced from the security of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The formal borders between the latter two are legally inconsistent, politically disputed and systematically violated by Afghans as well as by Pakistanis, even while Pakistan is involved in confrontation with India. Thus, *Central-Eastern Asian security is interrelated with the South Asian strategic environment*, making the whole situation heterogeneous and ever harder to analyze.

Domestically, Pakistan remains an extremely vulnerable nuclear power. The ability of the Pakistani government to secure control over its nuclear weapons is questionable.<sup>13</sup> Radical Islamic groups may eventually overthrow a Pakistani regime that lacks legitimacy, and is not supported by a stable political system and strong democratic institutions. Pakistan is the weakest part of the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime and most unreliable element in the region.

Afghanistan is the primary regional source of drug-trafficking and, therefore, of black market funds which corrupt transnational financial networks and opens them to transnational terrorist groups. A combination of the Afghani drug-money and Pakistani nuclear capabilities, if captured by Islamic radicals, might become a nightmare of unimaginable scale and nature.

Practically all major regional developments contain an implied "China-dimension." Beijing feels vulnerable to the Islamic extremism springing from the Afghani-Pakistani "core of instability." China faces its own Islamic threats in Xinjiang province. At the same time, China is apprehensive about the American military presence at its strategic rear. The absence of a reliable security scheme in continental Central-Eastern Asia makes China anxious about unforeseeable fluctuations of the regional situation.

Instabilities in Afghanistan lead to questions about the expediency of the American "fortress-strategy" toward that country, with the U.S. trying to support a Kabul regime that may lose its legitimacy in the eyes of the tribal elites who de facto independently rule southern and eastern parts of the state.

The USA so far has not articulated a long-term political agenda for the region. Its policies in Afghanistan, South Asia, and Central-Eastern Asia are ambiguous and unclear to the nations in the region. Washington is apparently working on a proposal to India and Pakistan that would satisfy their nuclear ambitions, on the one hand, but would not look like a de facto acceptance of their violation of the formal non-proliferation regime in 1998. China and the smaller states of Central Asia are skeptical about how much value

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<sup>13</sup> Sanger, David and William Broad. 2004. From rogue nuclear programs, web of trails leads to Pakistan. *The New York Times*, January 4.

the United States' assistance could have, should Islamic radicals exert significant pressure on Central Asian secular governments.

Ever more confusing is Washington's approach to Pakistani-Afghani relations. The U.S. does not want to weaken the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. In the meantime, it remains unclear if he is willing or able to control Pashto tribes who occasionally fight against the Afghani government from Pakistani territory and reportedly provide protection to members of al Qaeda.

The ambiguous intentions of the major actors, including the U.S., affect Russia's actions and views about prospects for regional stability. Moscow is currently hesitating between pursuing a narrow-based group effort (i.e. relying on the CSTO), or a broader international cooperative effort that might include China and the USA. Russia's national interests in western Central-Eastern Asia are shaped by a combination of security concerns and economic considerations.

Politically, Russia is apprehensive about its vulnerable, open frontiers with the former Soviet states. Drug-trafficking activity originating from the Afghani-Pakistani "opium-nest" cross through the territories of the smaller states of Central Asia and reach the Russian Siberian provinces (northern route) and the Lower Volga region (southern route). From the cities of Russian Siberia, drugs are transported to the major oil-field areas of Tyumen and Khanty-Mansiisk or to European Russia. From the Volga region, they are carried to the major oil-developing and industrial centers in European Russia (Kazan, Samara, Togliatti), capital cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg) and to Eastern Europe. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan serve as major transit zones for drug-trafficking from Afghanistan to Russia; this makes Moscow perpetually uneasy about its relations with its south-eastern allies and partners. Especially troubling is Turkmenistan; it has an open frontier with Afghanistan and does not participate in any international cooperative efforts against drug traffickers.

For the same reason, Turkmenistan is viewed as problematic with respect to Russia's counter-terrorist efforts. Islamic terrorists can easily reach Russia through the open southern frontier of Turkmenistan. Russian regional police officers have noted numerous cases of illegal infiltration into Russia by individual Muslim terrorists from Pakistan, Afghanistan and even Sri-Lanka!<sup>14</sup> Terrorists who penetrate into Russia normally go to Chechnya to ally with criminal networks there. Turkmenistan is a vulnerable point in the system of counter-terrorist activities Russia and the CSTO nations are trying to establish in the region.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are the two "sick men" of the region, with Pakistan potentially more dangerous and unpredictable. The "Durand Line" marking the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan has not been binding since 1993 (according to the initial treaty

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<sup>14</sup> Golunov, Sergei and Leonid Vardomsky, eds. 2002. *Transparent frontier: security and cooperation in the belt of Russia's new frontier regions* (Prozrachnyye granitsy. Bezopasnost i sotrudnichestvo v poyase novykh pogranichnykh territorii Rossii). Moscow: NOFMO, 2002.

of 1893 between Afghanistan and Great Britain, the “Durand Line” was to serve as a dividing line between Afghanistan and British India for 100 years). Since then, no Afghani government, including the Pakistani-sponsored Taliban regime, has ever recognized it as legally valid. The “Durand Line” divides the historical area of Pashtunistan into two parts, one side in Pakistan and the other in Afghanistan. The entire area of historical Pashtunistan on the both sides of the dividing line is inhabited by Pashto tribes, who never considered the “Durand Line” legal and binding, crossing it freely in both directions. At times, Pakistan indirectly encouraged such violations. Meantime, the “Pakistani Pashtuns” tend not to see Pakistan as their motherland and state; they formally belong to Pakistan but they are legally and ethnically marginalized. They view their motherland as being Afghanistan, where the Pashtuns were represented by the royal dynasty and constituted the majority of the political (though not economic) elite. Afghanistan was viewed as a core of what they believed should be restored as a Pashto state.

The Pashto factor has a two-fold impact over regional politics. First, it makes the Pakistani Pashtuns disloyal to the Pakistani state. At the same time, the Pakistani Pashtuns as well as their Afghani brothers may be hostile to official Afghani governments in Kabul (especially if the latter are dominated by the Tajiks, who controlled the capital in the 1980s-1990s).

Second, the Pashto problem forces any Pakistani government to tolerate and even, at times, support local Islamists. The Pan-Islamic ideology is the only cultural-philosophical basis to justify Pakistan’s possession of Pashto territories on the eastern side of the Durand Line. This was one of the reasons why Pakistan supported the radical Islamic groups of the Taliban, though the latter ultimately deceived Pakistan and never recognized the legitimacy of the “Durand Line,” even after they were put into power in Kabul through Pakistani sponsorship in 1996.

Add to this that the concept of “Greater Pashtunistan” includes the Tajiks-inhabited northern lands of the contemporary Afghani state. The Afghani Tajiks, in their turn, dream of a “Greater Tajikistan” that would include all the Tajik-inhabited lands not only in Afghanistan but Tajikistan proper and parts of Uzbekistan (the Bukhara and Samarkand areas). *The idea of Greater Pashtunistan links the security of Pakistan and Afghanistan with that of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.*

Afghanistan also connects Pakistan (and South Asia) to Central Asia’s economic security. The Afghani opium economy feeds shadow enterprises in countries from Pakistan in the south to Kazakhstan and Russia in the north, from China in the east to Central Europe in the west. Russia and China have a strong interest in Afghani affairs in terms of drug trafficking.

A national reconciliation in Afghanistan may be a precondition for stabilization of the situation in that country, with Kabul then more likely to compromise with Islamabad on the border dispute. However, it is questionable whether the two countries can agree if unassisted by external powers and the United Nations.



Russia and China are interested in an Afghani-Pakistani compromise, for it would weaken the control of the radical Islamic groups based both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and perhaps curtail the semi-legal production of opium. The U.S. may have parallel interests on the Afghani-Pakistani issue with China and Russia, and therefore the three nations may have an interest in cooperating to develop a solution. Apparently, the Pakistani leaders feel they might gain support from Moscow and Beijing in dealing with the Afghani problem as well as in improving Pakistan-India relations. At any rate, Pakistan's intention to join the SCO remains a recurrent theme in Pakistani official statements.

India has no particular interest in Central-Eastern Asian affairs beyond its relations with Pakistan. Islamabad is haunted by the prospect of a war on two fronts – against India in the east (Kashmir) and a Pashto-Afghani dispute in the west – while New Delhi sees the “Pashto-splinter” as a tool to press Pakistan from the rear. Tactically, India's aim may be to build a coalition of nations with a sort of anti-Pakistani tilt. Strategically, however, New Delhi is interested in having a stable anti-fundamentalist regime in Pakistan; a nuclear Pakistan ruled by Islamic extremists would be a nightmare for India. Indian diplomacy is focused on relations with Pakistan; and it is in fact pretty difficult for India to strive for broader influence in the northern predominantly Muslim states, given its strong anti-Islamic record. Therefore, India may be willing to cooperate in a broader regional context so that other non-Islamic states (China, Russia and the USA) could participate.

### **Preventive Diplomacy Instead of Preemptive Strikes**

Old regionalist approaches in regional policy research are becoming outdated. The autonomous regional political and security areas of East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Central Asia are ceasing to exist in a meaningful way, and a Greater Central-Eastern Asia is coming to replace them, much in the way that Central-Eastern Europe in the early 1990s emerged to displace what for an entire century was accepted as Western and Eastern Europe and European Russia. None of the major nations are completely prepared to accept this changed international context and treat new Central-East Asian realities both analytically and practically. This, however, is hardly an excuse.

Historically unprecedented, the current strategic disposition in the region is often viewed in Russia and Western countries as a version of “re-appearing balance of powers,” “soft-confrontation,” “underground rivalry,” and potential conflict.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, a temptation to apply “good, old” analytic matrices to new situations is very strong. I would argue however, that there is no reason to expect that Russia and the USA will inevitably clash in Central-Eastern Asia, as Russia did with Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>15</sup> Strezhnev, Roman. 2003. The Asian border? *Krasnaya zvezda*, October 28. Petrov, Nikita. 2003. Stanet li ODKB protivovesom NATO (Would the OCST become a counter-balance to NATO?). December 12. <http://www.strana.ru>

There is ample room for strategic cooperation in the region between Moscow and Washington on the basis of a division of labor. First, Russia does not have the resources or any intention of making Central-Eastern Asia a closed zone of her exclusive interests. Second, if well negotiated and delicately performed, America's involvement in regional affairs would ease Moscow's dealings with Beijing. Third, in the foreseeable future, U.S. involvement in Central Asia will not become strong enough to displace Russia. Moscow will be able to retain its existing moderate level of influence over local nations. Fourth, both the larger nations (China, Russia, and the USA) and smaller states are facing common threats: religious extremism and terrorism, Afghani-Pakistani tensions, and drug trafficking. These threats may be a decisive precondition for multilateral cooperation.

Russo-American disagreement over concrete issues in the region's affairs are inevitable but would hardly amount to enough to cause a serious estrangement between Moscow and Washington. It is equally improbable that possible quarrels over Taiwan between the United States and China would be transformed into a systemic conflict that may have a military dimension. The problem is how properly to articulate a strategic role the USA would be willing to play in the region and get Russia and China to agree to an American agenda. *The American military presence in Central-Eastern Asia should be cautiously transformed into security participation, without provoking conflict with either Beijing or Moscow.* Smaller nations would welcome a trilateral Russo-Chinese-American negotiated arrangement, especially if assured that they too may join at some point.

However, one should keep in mind that there is a debate in Russia on Russo-American interaction in Central-Eastern Asia. Russian left-wingers and a group of "statist-nationalists" (as opposed to "statist-liberals") in government and the Duma express suspicion of the American military presence in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The Russian military and a few high-ranking bureaucrats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs argue that the USA's troops should be withdrawn after the campaign in Afghanistan is completed.<sup>16</sup> Like many American experts, some Russian analysts admit the possibility of serious disagreements between Moscow and Washington on Central Asia.<sup>17</sup> President Putin, who is in full control of Russia's foreign policy, is an unknown factor as he has never made any definitive statements on the issue.

I would still argue that the current regional situation is conducive to a broad compromise between Russia, China and the USA on security matters, especially those dealing with extremists,<sup>18</sup> drug-trafficking, and non-proliferation. The three powers may negotiate the mechanism – "linking" the USA to the SCO, or the SCO-attached structure for multilateral regional security dialogue similar to the ARF in Southeast Asia.

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<sup>16</sup> Skosyrev, Vladimir. 2004. Yest predel ustupkam Moskvyy (There is a limit to Moscow's concessions). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, May 12.

<sup>17</sup> Suslov, Dmitry. 2004. SSHA zastryanut v SNG nadolgo (The USA would stay in the CIS for long). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, March 26.

<sup>18</sup> Kazakov, Igor. Shanhaiskaya shesterka budet borotsya s terrorizmom (The Shanghai Six would Fight Terrorism). <http://www.strana.ru/stories/01/09/13/1553/213532.html>

The sole source of fundamental disagreement would be *unilateralism* on the part of Washington, i.e. a *fait accompli* that may confront Russia and China with a massive unexplained and unconsulted American military presence in the regions of direct proximity to Russian and Chinese frontiers. Only new fears of indefinite goals by the U.S. in the region could push Moscow and Beijing to do what they actually would like to avoid – a *factual* security alliance, a *formal* basis for which is theoretically provided by the Russo-Chinese Treaty of 2001.

A sort of preemptive diplomacy should be used to avoid tensions between the major powers. Formal legalization of ongoing American participation in regional affairs – something now viewed as temporary and unjustifiable over the longer run – is necessary. To not do so would be self-serving on the U.S. part, and could potentially breed competition and instability – among the smaller states and even China. The USA would be imprudent to choose to be driven by slogans of “democratization” as it was in Iraq in 2003-2004.

Efforts to legalize the USA’s presence might include a number of steps:

- Recognizing the insufficiency of the CDTO-based anti-terrorist efforts, Moscow may be interested in forming a broader anti-terrorist and anti-drug cooperation regime with regional nations, to include the USA, China, Turkmenistan and, advisably, Afghanistan, and all the Central Asian transit nations (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan);
- After preliminary discussions between Russia and China, the U.S. could be formally invited to become an observer some relevant sessions of the SCO dealing (depends on preliminary agreements) with economic issues or antiterrorist coordination;
- China, the USA, and Russia could work together to develop multilateral guarantees to secure borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan;
- The three large powers could encourage Pakistan and India to compromise on Kashmir; the issue of Pakistan’s frontiers with Afghanistan and India may be linked to a conventional recognition of factual status of Pakistan and India as nuclear states. Despite mutual distrust, India and Pakistan have a major common interest: they are eager to be formally “admitted” as nuclear powers;
- Given how much the conservative secular regimes of the region are frightened and confused by forceful American policies in Iraq as well as by the reactionary religious and nationalistic responses provoked by such policies, a sort of political statement joined by or co-issued together with the U.S. on regional stability would be helpful (a sort of Pact of Stability for Central Asia that would help assure local states that “regime change” scenarios anywhere in the region would be avoided);
- Informal bilateral or trilateral consultations between Moscow, Washington, and Beijing on regional security affairs should be started as soon as possible, followed by

a formal dialogue to be established for discussing regional political, economic and military problems.

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In initiating its campaign in Afghanistan in 2001, the USA took a step toward a more assertive policy in Mainland Eurasia. By continuing military operations there, Washington may be reacting to its perception of how stronger regional powers (India, Pakistan, China and, potentially, even Russia) reevaluate their policies in a typical Hobbesian way. These powers, in turn, insist they are merely responding to the newly emerged strategic activism of the United States. As a result, all nations may see ever more value in strength and martial glory than in peaceful, low-profile policies.

An assertive Asia-focused diplomacy by Washington, viewed against the background of the political interests of the nations in the region, may produce a renewed regional confrontation or result in multilateral cooperation – such is the substance of “the Bush Dilemma” in the foreign policy of the United States.

## APPENDIX 1. RUSSIA’S ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES IN THE REGION

<i>Agreement</i>	<i>Members</i>
Collective Defense Treaty Organization (CDTO)	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Armenia
Bilateral Treaties	Russia-China; Russia-Kazakhstan
Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
Eurasian Economic Community	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus
Central Asian Cooperation	Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia
Common Economic Space	Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Belarus

**APPENDIX 2. SECURITY PRIORITIES OF THE THREE POWERS  
IN CENTRAL-EASTERN ASIA**

<i><b>Russia</b></i>	<i><b>China</b></i>	<i><b>USA</b></i>
CDST (multilateral security arrangement)	Taiwan	North Korean Nuclear Program
East Siberian Energy Development and Transportation	SCO (6 nations: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)	Alliances with Japan and ROK
SCO	Energy Supply from the west	Taiwan
Control drug-trafficking (“Islam-related”)	Control separatism (“Islam-related”)	Reassuring of Pakistan (“Islam-related”)
Non-nuclear Korea	Non-nuclear Korea	Military presence in Central Asia (“northern arch” to “retake” Russia’s role)
Afghanistan stable and neutral	Afghanistan stable and neutral	Afghanistan stable
Managed proliferation	Managed proliferation	Managed proliferation
Energy routes	Energy supply and routes	Energy supply and routes
Security dialogue with U.S.	Security dialogue with U.S.	Beyond unilateralism?

### **APPENDIX 3. COMMON OR CLOSE INTERESTS OF THE THREE POWERS**

- Prevent and control Islamic extremism
- Prevention of drug-trafficking
- Freeze nuclearization of Korea
- Facilitate Afghan-Pakistan reconciliation
- Keep American presence in Japan
- Impose rules of Responsible Nuclear Behavior on Pakistan and India
- Engage smaller states into multilateral dialogue and cooperation

#### **APPENDIX 4. SOURCES OF INSTABILITY**

- North Korea
- Afghanistan-Pakistan core (“Iraqi Scenario”)
- China-USA misunderstanding over Taiwan
- The USA’s unilateralism (non-negotiated military presence)
- Pakistan-India rivalry
- Domestic conflicts in Asian states (postponed)