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Central Asian Survey
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ccas20

Russian foreign policy and security in central Asia and the Caucasus

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Published online: 13 Sep 2007.

To cite this article: Mohiaddin Mesbahi (1993) Russian foreign policy and security in central Asia and the Caucasus, Central Asian Survey, 12:2, 181-215, DOI: 10.1080/02634939308400813

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02634939308400813

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Central Asian Survey (1993), 12(2), 181–215.

Russian foreign policy and security in Central Asia and the Caucasus

MOHIADDIN MESBAHI

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Russian foreign policy since December 1991, like other aspects of the Russian polity, has gone through considerable fluctuations in both formulation and implementation. Lack of clear-cut foreign policy concepts has been the common criticism which has been laid on the Russian Foreign Ministry by almost every political force in Moscow. From the 'red and brown' media to the influential Speaker of the Parliament and obviously the academia, the unanimous critique has been the inability or unwillingness of Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's team to identify the key concepts of Russian national interests and develop a strategy for their implementation. Mr. Kozyrev's repetitive comments on the removal of ideology and the real end to the cold war have not been enough to answer the critics; and his rather eccentric answer that 'there is no such thing as a blue print for national security concept' and that 'we have been asking around among our friends in the West and they do not know either'—only fuelled the critique. Now 18 months since the collapse of the Union, though the critique has not diminished, the overall parameter of debate or trends in Russian foreign policy is emerging.

It is important to note that these emerging parameters are official trends taking shape within the official establishment of Russian foreign policy. The non-official positions may be similar or deviate from these official trends but they usually find some common ground within the official lines. While a microscopic analysis of the official trends might lead to the identification of several trends in thinking on foreign policy, a more general and sweeping approach will point to two broad trends or 'schools of thought'. The first of these, which I have termed the *Euro-Atlanticist*, has been represented primarily by Mr Andrei Kozyrev and some of his younger advisers in the Foreign Ministry. It was backed in the Cabinet by powerful personalities such as Yegor Gaydar (until his removal), and has enjoyed the overall support of Boris Yeltsin. This school of thought has until recently been the prevailing 'mode' of thinking in Russian foreign policy. The second school of thought, termed here as the *Neo-Eurasianist*, which has increasingly been dominating Russian foreign policy in recent months, has been advocated by a powerful coalition of influential groups such as the Civic Union, or the army, and individuals such as Alexander Rutskoy, Ruslan Khasbulatov, Yuri Skokov. It is now also reluctantly being supported by President Yeltsin.

This article will first address the key concepts of the two 'schools of thought' and will then address the policy implications of Russian foreign policy thinking

in Moscow's security policy in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The study will argue that in the 1990s the Neo-Eurasianist thinking, or variations of it, will provide both the theoretical and policy guideline for Russian foreign policy in the CIS and in particular towards its southern flank.

The Euro-Atlanticist perspective

An elaborate discussion of the roots and 'sociology' of this school of thought is beyond the scope of this study. Here we may identify the key concepts, especially as they relate to Russia's relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus.

First, and perhaps the very philosophical underpinning of this school, is the predominance of domestic considerations in the shaping of foreign policy. According to proponents of this view, not only are domestic and foreign policy closely interrelated, but domestic considerations, and in this case the success of economic reform in Russia, carry the overwhelming weight in the making of Russian foreign policy. The most important function of Russian foreign policy is to create an international environment/relations that will enable Russia to become a 'democratic, market oriented, civilized nation'. 'The country's greatness, particularly on the threshold of the 21st century, is determined not by the scale of its empire, but above all by the level of its people's well being', declared Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.[1] The Russian Foreign Minister approvingly recalled Charles de Gaulle's statement on France's foreign policy objective—'when every French woman came home from the market content and smiling ...'—when identifying what he considers to be Russia's foreign policy 'supertask'. 'The Russian Foreign Ministry will feel that it has been useful when Russian women no longer wait in line for hours thinking of how to feed their families, but are able to spend more time thinking of how to use their charms to please their replete Russian men.'[2]

Second, the only logical approach to achieve this objective is for Russia to become a permanent member of the 'civilized' world, more specifically, and to use Mr Kozyrev's phrase, 'a special civilized club', i.e. the G-7.[3] The Russian inclusion into this 'club' could only take place through renunciation of any ideological vestiges of the Russian past both Tsarist and Soviet; Russia has to achieve a psychological breakthrough by overcoming messianic temptations, and 'excessive Russianess'.

Once and for all, Russia has to accept the fact that only by following the western model can she find her proper place in the emerging pan-European home. Western democratic values, and above all, respect for the principles enunciated in the UN Charter, the Helsinki declarations (CSCE Charter), the Paris Charter on human rights, should be used as a guide for formulations of Russian foreign policy.[4] The pursuit of western principles are not lofty aims and empty proclamations, but should be taken as serious criteria for Russian foreign policy to set the Russian national objectives. This will bring Russian foreign policy in par with global trends. Further, it will generate respect and trust, and

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will be the only available mechanism to protect the basic human rights of the Russian minorities now living outside the borders of the Russian Federation in the former Soviet republics.[5] While Russia understands the difficulty of full membership in the civilized club (the G-7) in the current transitional phase, and might tolerate a 7 + 1 formula for now, the ultimate objective is to achieve full membership by being part of the G-8. 'It is important to give up the formula, 7 + 1, of major democratic economic powers and work towards the formula of 8. Russia is for alliance with the United States and the West', declared Andrei Kozyrev, in his recent speech at Columbia University.[6]

Third, Russia will remain a great but 'normal power'.[7] She will carry her 'historical responsibility' granted to her by the possession of nuclear weapons and the seat in the UN Security Council. The key and new concept here, is the concept of 'normal' power, implying absence of global ambitions of Soviet scale, and no traditional superpower status; the Euro-Atlanticists advocate multipolarity and politely ignore US claims of a unipolar world. An additional theoretical issue here is the concept of Russia as a 'continuer state' [*Gosudarstvo-prodolzhatel*], as opposed to 'successor state' [*Gosudarstvo-preyemnik*]. Both Yeltsin and Kozyrev have repeatedly argued that Russia is a continuation of the USSR as it relates to its international responsibility and privileges of being a big power, thus the exclusive claim over nuclear weapons, and occupation of the Security Council seat.[8] These concepts have important ramifications for Russia's relations with the rest of the CIS republics, as Russia will have the exclusive right over the global privileges of the former Soviet Union while it will share with the rest all the obligations including USSR's international debt and adherence to nuclear arms cuts and disarmament measures.

Fourth, this 'civilized', 'continuer', and 'normal power' has, of course, the distinct geographic characteristic of being situated both in Europe and Asia. This would give it a *Eurasian character*, acting as a linkage or bridge between Europe and Asia. What distinguishes this Eurasian concept from the traditional one is that Russia as a Eurasian state is not a static self-contained link, but a modern westernized and dynamic agent of change.[9] This modern Russia while transforming itself would also change the 'Asian wing' of the Eurasian entity into a pan-Euro-Atlantic one. The 'immature' states of the former Union (i.e. Central Asia), to use Mr Kozyrev's words, which 'belong to another world',[10] will by the persistence and dynamism of 'an enlightened Russian big brother' become part of this Euro-Atlantic 'family'.[11] The 'continuer state', now 'civilized' and 'normal', will shed not only her own Asiatic baggage but will become the bridge that transforms the Central Asian part of the former Union. The key mechanism for this transformation will be Russia's and Central Asia's active participation in a new, invigorated and expanded CSCE process.

Fifth, the issue of security in the Euro-Atlanticist school is guaranteed for the most part by the unique historical opportunity provided by Russia for the first time in its history of not having an enemy, though some other forms and sources of potential danger persist.

Two components of Russia's security system according to the Euro-Atlanti-

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cists are: (1) the 'partnership' (or eventual alliance) with the United States and Europe through confidence-building measures, disarmament and a global collective security system which stretches from Vladivostok to Vancouver; and (2) the collective CIS security system in which Russia, for all practical purposes will be a guarantor and dominant player. The CIS collective security will be part and parcel of this global system.[12] This vision was clearly defined in the Charter of Russo-American Partnership and Friendship signed by Boris Yeltsin and President Bush on 17 July 1992 in Washington.[13]

The Euro-Atlanticists and the 'Islamic threat'

Two fundamental and largely interconnected sources of threat have been identified by this view. First, ethno-nationalist regional conflicts that might jeopardize the security of 25 million Russians living in other republics; extraterritorial but ethnically driven conflicts that might involve a CIS member and necessitate Russian intervention. Second, the real concern over the spread of 'Islamic radicalism' both in Russia proper and in Central Asia. The primary sources of the 'Islamic' threat are identified as being both internal and external. The external sources of this Islamic threat have been perceived as emanating specifically from the South, i.e. Iran, Afghanistan, the Middle East, etc. In this context, Central Asia is intimately connected with the political and security dynamics of the old 'southern flank' and thus its security and defence now preoccupy a significant place in the Euro-Atlanticist view.

What is important is that the Euro-Atlanticists and the West have identical views of the Islamic threat and one can deduce that Russia will in fact provide the 'front line' of defence against the perceived threat of Islamic fundamentalism. The Euro-Atlanticists will delegate to Russia the role of 'container' of the Islamic threat on behalf of the 'civilized world', i.e. the West, in Central Asia.[14] Both the religious and ethno-nationalist dimensions of the threat will be tamed by the rapid incorporation of the Central Asian states into the CSCE process. These states—though geographically distant—have all expressed their desire to participate in the process and have in principle accepted the CSCE charter. It is hoped that Russia will be the catalyst of this inclusion and the 'educational' source for the 'Asian wing'.

The 'continuer' state, according to Kozyrev, is 'the primary thread of communication of the CIS to the outside world'. Russia will shed its Asiatic baggage and will also pull Central Asia in the direction of the civilized western world. (All Central Asian republics and Azerbaijan have expressed on record their concern over the Islamic threat and share the Euro-Atlanticist general view that they should neutralize the domestic dimension of the Islamic challenge by increasing contact with the West and especially the pan-European process.)

Perhaps the most important policy ramification of this view will be a much closer overall security relationship with the West and rather a cooperative policy in the Persian Gulf/Southwest Asian region. The US preponderance in the Persian Gulf will not be questioned, Iran will be kept under a watchful eye,

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while the role of Turkey as the western endorsed model for the region will, with some reservations, be accepted. No controversial 'and out of line' stand will be adopted that might jeopardize the strategic direction of Russia for inclusion in the 'civilized club'. Russia wants to be treated as a normal western great power with identical interest.

The Neo-Eurasianist perspective

The second trend/'school of thought' which I will term *Neo-Eurasianist*, has become increasingly relevant in recent months. What is significant is that while this trend was initially developing on the periphery of the Euro-Atlanticist view, it now has considerable voice within the official establishment in foreign policy circles, Cabinet level, the army and obviously in the Supreme Soviet. Individuals such as Vice-President Alexander Rutskoy; Speaker of the Supreme Soviet, Ruslan Khasbulatov; Russia's State Counsellor, Sergei Stankevich; Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Yuri Skokov; Commander of the CIS Joint Armed Forces, General Shaposhnikov; General Samsanov of the CIS; Russian Defence Minister General Pavel Grachev, and the powerful centrist political forces gathered under the umbrella of the 'Civic Union', which now hold considerable clout in the Russian political establishment, and an increasingly vocal number of Foreign Ministry advisers, scholars from the Russian Academy of Sciences, as well as other think tanks have severely criticized some of the fundamentals of the Euro-Atlanticist school, and have individually or collectively elaborated a more 'realist' vision of Russian foreign policy. The emergence of Russia's 'Security Council' and its enhanced and perhaps predominant position in the formulation of foreign policy, have signified a dramatic change. The dominant centrist/realist makeup of the Security Council, both in personnel and ideology has led to the gradual emergence of a competitive, if not prevailing Neo-Eurasianist perspective on Russian foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the Euro-Atlanticist.[15] The combination of the 'Security Council' and the 'Civic Union' reflects a symbiosis of domestic and foreign policy forces that has become the foundation of the Neo-Eurasianist foreign policy. The following are some of the key arguments of the Neo-Eurasianist school.

First, the philosophical underpinning and objective of Russian foreign policy remains largely similar to the Euro-Atlanticist school: to provide a conducive international environment for Russian transformation and reforms. This fundamental similarity in main objectives should not, however, obscure some key differences offered by the Neo-Eurasianists. They believe that the success of the reform depends to a large extent on the reassertion of Russian statehood and the recovery of some of the lost ground resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union. This view also sharply differs in the ideology, strategy and tactics of reform and thus in their foreign policy/international dimensions, aspects and requirements. The recent alternative economic reform plan offered by the 'Civic Union' has laid down a more centrist evolutionary socioeconomic plan, a plan closer for example, to the Chinese model.[16]

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Yegor Gaydar's downfall and the emergence of a new Cabinet led by Viktor Chernomyrdin—a trusted technocrat from the old system—have signalled the end of the ideological certainty and conviction which surrounded the issue of economic reform in the early days of Yeltsin's rule and have further pointed to the realignment of economic and political forces in Russia. The new premier, who came to office after the stormy Seventh Russian Congress of People's Deputies, favours a market reform with a 'human face', one with clear commitment to the 'strengthening of the social orientation of reforms.'[17]

While transformation to market economy is accepted in principle, the extent, scope and method of 'marketization' have been questioned. 'Primitive capitalism', the 'shock therapy' of the 'Chicago school of economics' and the IMF programme is sharply criticized,[18] not only because it has not worked, but further because it has put undue pressure on Russian foreign policy to become excessively one dimensional, focusing on the West as the primary source of aid and inspiration. This has led to a 'concessionary,' 'naive', and 'confused' foreign policy, which has neglected other actors and above all the CIS members, Asia, the Middle East, etc. A different, and one might say, more centrist reform model preferred by the Neo-Eurasianists, will have a more centrist/realist foreign policy requirement. Further, the Neo-Eurasianists do not share the view that foreign policy is an extension of domestic factors—as in the case of the Euro-Atlanticists—but as an equally important pole of an interdependent dynamic. While the Euro-Atlanticist vision of Russia is an 'enlarged Switzerland', the Neo-Eurasianist view reflects a modern, yet unique, great power.

Second, within this vision, the West/the 'civilized world' does not enjoy the same status. While the West, and close and friendly relations with it, is strongly encouraged, its 'romanticism' is being rejected.[19] Permanent interests, not permanent friends, is the favourite catch phrase of the proponents of this school. Kozyrev's idealized vision of the 'civilized West' is being replaced by a vision of the West that will pursue its own interest based on cold calculations. The West, Ednan Agayev, a Russian foreign ministry adviser, warns, is not interested in a strong Russia.[20] General Pavel Grachev, Russia's Defence Minister, believes deep and unnecessarily rushed concessions have been made to the West without extracting a comparable price for the enormous political investment made by the Union in the last two decades.[21] Even Russia's Ambassador to the United States, Vladimir Lukin, a man apparently in the Euro-Atlanticist camp, has raised questions about America's intentions, calling them contradictory. According to the Neo-Eurasianist school, relations with the West must be devoid of Kozyrev's 'messianic illusions' of shared values and should instead be put on the firm and more predictable foundation of an enlightened realpolitik.

It is important not to overlook the subtle yet significant shift in the perception of the West in general and the United States in particular. While the earlier phase of the nascent Russian foreign policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union reflected a severe self-criticism and a complete embrace of the United States' international role and posture, the current phase reflects a more critical attitude towards the United States and a 'rediscovery' of realism as the philosophical

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foundation of Russia's perspective on international relations. The Neo-Eurasianist perspective rejects the notion that a qualitative shift and transformation has taken place in the nature of interstate relations—a belief which was characteristic of Gorbachev's new thinking and to a considerable degree shared by the Euro-Atlanticist view of the international system.

While acknowledging the relative decline of the role of military power in international relations and the increasing interdependence and the significance of economic power, the Neo-Eurasianists maintain that the underlying philosophy in international relations has remained intact. Ruslan Khasbulatov, the Speaker of the Supreme Soviet, thus argues: 'We must always bear in mind that the struggle for economic and political influence is continuing in the world. There remains a complex hierarchy of relations conditioned by the real power of this or that country.'[22] The struggle for influence has taken 'more civilized, as well as more complicated forms than before.'[23]

Yevgeny Primakov, the head of Russia's Foreign Intelligence, has reflected on a similar theme: '... geopolitical factors continue playing a very big role in the framing of Russia's foreign policy'. Russia's geopolitical realities, according to Primakov, cannot but be *global*. Russia's greatness could only be realized in a global setting which encompasses China, India, Japan, the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and also the Third World:

> Russia cannot be great, it cannot play the positive role it is destined to in the absence of such a wide geopolitical scope. In promoting relations with all those countries, *we must remember that history never nullifies geo-political values.* [emphasis added][24]

One of the most telling official indications of the Neo-Eurasianist perspective on Russia's global position, and especially the role of the United States, recently emerged from a 'scientific conference' which was held in Moscow in early November 1992 with the participation of the General Headquarters of the CIS, representative of all the CIS states, think tanks, and leading military scientists. This 'historic' conference, according to the spokesman of the joint armed forces of the CIS, Lieutenant-General Valery Manilov, laid down the 'foundation for consolidating the military and strategic thought of the CIS'. The conference identified two sets of *stabilizing* and *destabilizing* factors in the current international system. The 'most serious destabilizing factor' was considered to be:

> the attempts to use the disintegration of the former Soviet Union in order to create a unipolar structure of the world. Laws of natural sciences teach us that a stable system must be balanced. The absence of the balance that kept the world together and the attempt to reduce world order to the priority of the US's objectives may lead to the destabilization of the situation ... escalation of armed conflicts throughout the world.[25]

The conference also called for 'the formation of a military-political alliance as a 'counter-balance to destabilizing factors'.[26]

Further indication of the official shift in the perception of the United States was reflected in the recently released official draft of Russian foreign policy concepts. The draft, which has been prepared by the Russian Foreign Ministry,

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though it gives development of ties with the United States a top priority, points to the intention of 'leading western countries to maintain their dominance' and the US attempt 'to ensure unilateral advantages' in the process of disarmament negotiations, thus undermining 'Russia's military related technical potential'. The document also warns that 'the United States might try to replace Russia in the countries of its traditional influence'; a clear reference, not only to Eastern Europe, but also Central Asia.[27]

Third, Russia will have to play its proper role as a great power. Comparison of Russia with other 'normal' powers like France and Britain is to ignore the geopolitical realities of this unique Eurasian state. This Eurasian entity differs from the Euro-Antlanticist conception of it, as it does not gravitate toward the western pole; it is not looking for a 'fitting place in the civilized club'. Its destiny does not belong to either Europe or Asia, West or East. It is a self-contained, 'independent' and unique entity, and, in the words of Sergei Stankovich, 'one of the fundamental geopolitical realities of the world' that touches Christian, Islamic, Chinese and Indian civilization. It is a stabilizing pole by itself.

Thus, as Primakov has argued, Russia's foreign policy context should remain global; regional confinement of Russia to a 'western' or 'Asian' context—or even simply a geopolitical linkage between the two—is simply to ignore her unique geopolitical realities, potentials and historical responsibilities.[28]

To be sure, the Neo-Eurasionist view of the West is not hostile but it is non-euphoric and 'non-fraternal'. The absence of a fundamental hostility towards the West, and in fact the willingness to cooperate with it, separates this modern version of Eurasianism from the traditional one, which took its main characteristic as being not only distinct from the West, but distant and generally hostile. The modern version, the Neo-Eurasianist perspective, carries some of the baggage of the past, but more so it is firmly informed by the realistic view of power and security and some of the elements of the historical continuity of the Russian experience. It is concerned over the 'utopian' nature of the westernization trends and fears the subsequent alienation of the rest of Russia's contiguous world: Asia and the Muslim world.

The Neo-Eurasianists and the 'Islamic threat'

The most immediate objective of Russian foreign policy must be to secure both the interior and the exterior borders of the CIS. To have a belt of 'good neighbours' especially along 'the southern flank' is considered to be most essential.[29] Accordingly, Russia's relations with the CIS members must be the number one priority. Central Asian republics play a pivotal role in this regard as their domestic and international stability remains essential to the overall security of Russia. Russia's interest in this region could be undermined by overlapping ethno-territorial nationalism, in which local conflicts might jeopardize the Russian minority population, creating the nightmarish trap of intervention by the Russian armed forces.

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The influence of Islam or the 'threat of Islamic fundamentalism' is another source of threat that this school of thought has taken seriously. A vulnerable 'southern flank' will be an invitation for regional actors such as Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan to effectively interfere in the sociopolitical dynamics of the Central Asian republics. Thus a strong and increasingly integrated collective security process within the CIS and an activist Russian role in it, seems essential to protect the vulnerable social and political borders of the Eurasian entity.

It is important to note that although the fear of Islamic revivalism is being shared by both trends, a subtle yet important difference separates the two. While the Euro-Atlanticists have adopted western perceptions of threat and the idea of its containment, the Neo-Eurasianists prefer a more subtle and sophisticated approach. First, their containment of the Islamic threat should not lead to wholesale opposition and hostility toward Islam and the Islamic world, but must be presented in the form of a legitimate security concern. According to Alexei Maleshenko, a leading Russian specialist on Islam, 'Proximity with the Muslim world had always determined Russia's geopolitical position and diversified its international relations'.[30]

Second, and equally important, this containment should not be part of the Russian conspiracy and partnership with the West against Islam and the Muslim world.[31] In fact, Russia's geographical contiguity with the Islamic world, its own Muslim population, and its close relations with the Central Asian republics should be used to maintain friendly relations with the countries of the Middle East and especially with the 'southern flank' states. A united Russian-western anti-Islamic front—a view seemingly advocated by the Euro-Atlanticists—could be detrimental to the interest of Russia and the CIS as a whole.

It is important to note that the underlying ideological underpinning of the Neo-Eurasianist perception of Islam carries a historical ambiguity and contradiction. The historical fear of being 'encircled' by an Islamic-Turkic world, which preoccupied the traditional Eurasianists of the 19th century, still resonates among the modern Eurasianists; a fear which is now reflected in Russia's policy in the North Caucasus, Tatarstan and the Chechnia and Ingush republics. The Neo-Eurasianists, nevertheless, look into the Islamic world as a potential, if not a necessary friend, both required for maintaining Russian and Central Asian domestic stability and also in counter-balancing the western world. The potential for friendship with the Islamic world, especially in view of the increasing power of the Islamic states in the world and the continuous tension between Islam and the West, might present Russia with a historical opportunity. Sergei Stankevich, the influential State Counsellor of the Russian Federation, and one of the most vocal of the Neo-Eurasianists, has recently called for the 'revival of the Eastern question in Russian foreign policy', and the enhancement of Russia's 'unifying, reconciling role' in bringing together the Turkic and Muslim elements. He argues that 'Russia has always been a mix of Slavic and Turkic components, of Orthodoxy and Islam'.[32]

The Neo-Eurasianists' historical distaste for the spiritual ills of westernization can provide a potential element of commonality with the Islamic world, which

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has displayed similar tendencies towards the West. The removal of Marxism–Leninism and its atheistic vestiges could remove a critical obstacle for a closer spiritual/cultural relationship with the Islamic world. In an interview with *Al-Hayat*, Viktor Posovalek, Head of the Middle East and African Desk at the Russian Foreign Ministry, underlined the potential significance of this cultural affinity: 'When the Communist covers are removed, the ring of spiritual attraction between the Russians and the people of the region [the Middle East] can be restored.' As a leading authority within the Russian foreign policy establishment, Pasovalek considers the Islamic world, 'a belt extending from Kazakhstan to Mauritania', a region which is among the top priorities of Russian foreign policy in the coming decades; an area which will witness Russia's multi-layered military, diplomatic, economic and spiritual presence.[33] The new draft of Russian foreign policy concepts also emphasizes the importance of the Arab world and Southwest Asian states for Russia and stresses that, notwithstanding cooperation with the United States, Russia intends 'to maintain its own initiative' in the region.[34]

The challenge facing the Neo-Eurasianists' relations with the Islamic world, however, will be their ability to balance the historical legacy of Russia's fear of an Islamic encirclement, the treatment of its 'internal Islam' on the one hand and the common areas of mutual interest with the Islamic world—especially in its relations with the West—on the other. A balance that is as much a function of Neo-Eurasianist policies as it is of the internal dynamics of the Islamic world, and Central Asia in particular.

The Neo-Eurasianists would need the assistance and active participation of their Central Asian allies, especially Kazakhstan, for a meaningful rapprochement with the Islamic world. As the Soviet Union tried to utilize Central Asia as a conduit of influence with the Islamic world, there are indications that Russia might use its Central Asia connection to do the same. Kazakhstan's recent initiatives might indicate her willingness to become the *bridge* between Russia, the CIS, and Muslim states. As the leading Central Asian state, and one with considerable prestige, among the Islamic states, Kazakhstan might be suited to play such a role. N. Nazarbayev's recent call for the creation of a *Conference on mutual action and confidence building measures in Asia*—a replica of the CSCE—might be an initiative along this line. This conference would incorporate the Central Asian states, in addition to Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Kazakhstan, the quintessential Slavic-Turkic state in the CIS, the one with the closest relationship to Russia, might be able to play the role of bridge between the CIS and the Islamic states, a role that Russia itself finds difficult to perform.[35]

Russia, the CIS and the southern flank: from theory to policy

In the short life span of the CIS, Russian policy toward its southern flank in the Near East has gone through two phases. In the first phase, the prevailing attitude in Russian foreign policy since December 1991 reflected the views of the Euro-Atlanticists with its heavily western orientation. The initial move of

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creating the short-lived 'Slavic Union' in the absence of the Central Asian republics set the atmosphere and the mood for the first phase of Russian foreign policy; a near complete neglect of Central Asia, the Caucausus and adjacent regions, i.e., the Persian Gulf, and total emersion into relations with the West.

The Russian neglect of Central Asia was perceived as a clear message to the new Central Asian states and other regional actors such as Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey that a historical shift in Moscow's strategic perception had taken place and a power vacuum which had been filled by Russia for the last 200 years was now again open to penetration. The regional reaction was twofold. In Central Asia, ideas of an 'Asian Turkic Islamic bloc' were toyed with. In several consecutive meetings in Alma Ata, Bishkek and Tashkent, general aspects of this bloc were discussed. Meanwhile the two dynamic regional actors with clear interest in the region, Iran and Turkey, responded to the apparent vacuum. The obscure names of Central Asian capitals: Alma Ata, Dushanbe, Bishkek, Ashkhabad, Tashkent, became 'household' names for the media, politicians and analysts of these two countries; a series of diplomatic initiatives led to numerous economic, cultural and political agreements between the new Central Asian states, Iran and Turkey.

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) summit in Tehran, in addition to its original members, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, was attended by its new members, the Central Asian states and Azerbaijan. The Ashkhabad summit meeting which brought together the leaders of Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and all heads of Central Asian states, highlighted the new activism and indicated the underlying fact that Central Asia will now have a much more intimate relationship with its southern neighbours and as such has brought the region, with all of its complexities closer to Russia's heartland.

While the eastern borders of the 'southern flank' witnessed intense diplomatic activity, the western border—i.e. the Caucasus—was engulfed in the explosive issue of Nagorno Karabakh. Again, Iran and Turkey were the most active actors. Iran's mediation efforts in Karabakh and its apparent initial success was matched by Turkey's overt support for Azerbaijan and an open discussion about possible military intervention in Nakhichevan and Nagorno Karabakh.

What was perhaps more remarkable in this phase which lasted until mid-1992 was the uncharacteristic passivity of Russian foreign policy towards the region and lack of any concern for the shrinking of Russia's underbelly. Russian Defence Minister, General Grachev, bitterly complained: 'We are now facing a truly unprecedented situation, the Moscow Military District has essentially become a frontline location. This is all together mind boggling.'[36] The apparent US interest in Central Asia and the Caucasus and high-visibility diplomacy of Secretary Baker's Central Asian tour was perceived by Russian critics as a clear indication of the lack of direction in Moscow's policy towards its southern region. While Mr Kozyrev argued that US diplomacy in the region and contacts with the Asian republics and Azerbaijan was a normal development within the rights of the new sovereign states, others believed that Russia's bias against or indifference *vis-à-vis* the southern region is a clear signal and invitation for both

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regional and extraregional actors to expand their influence in the region at Russia's expense.

The policy shift

A discernible shift in Russian policy towards Central Asia and the 'southern flank' has taken place since mid-1992. Several reasons and, viewed from Moscow, several dynamics, have contributed to this adjustment. First, the sheer realization that the security of Russia and the Central Asian states are mutually interdependent, as these young states with weak economies, unstable political systems and no independent defence capability have become vulnerable to external pressure and penetration. Russia's comprehensive and longstanding relations with Central Asia—notwithstanding prevailing nationalism—are deeper than could be overcome overnight.

Second, the growing concern over the ethnic factor in the overall security of the CIS and Russia in particular was another and essential factor in refocusing Russian policy. Protection of the basic rights of Russian minorities 'left behind' and the real possibility of military clashes with the republics over this issue demanded much closer relations with these republics. The CIS and its collective security arrangements were thus to be taken more seriously.

Third, the growing influence of more centrist conservative political forces in the Russian government, and especially the reassertion of the army's role in defining Russia's general security requirements, were important changes which brought new inputs to the formulation of Russian security policy, demanding a renewed and focused attention toward Russia's southern border. What was perhaps more significant was the fact that this Neo-Eurasianist position was, at least partially, supported by Yeltsin himself. Rejecting the accusation of Russia's pro-West policy, he, in a major interview, reaffirmed the new shift in Russian foreign policy; '... The time for the Eastward move has arrived'.[37]

Fourth, the demand for Russian activism was not confined to political forces in Moscow, but was coming from Central Asia itself. All Central Asian states without exception, though with varying degrees of emphasis, preferred and in fact insisted on a substantive collective security system with active Russian participation. The Central Asian élites from Kazakhstan to Turkmenistan were not satisfied with the token gesture of the nuclear umbrella of the CIS for their security. They were demanding a more comprehensive, meaningful security system which included practical measures in dealing with the conventional defence of their security and their borders. Early optimism over the formation of an 'Asian-Turkic/Islamic bloc' was fading in the face of the realities of historical interdependence with Russia. Commenting on the pivotal role of Russia in the security of Central Asia, Askar Akayev, the President of Kyrgyzstan, argued, 'The Eurasian entity hinged on Russia would collapse if it [Russia] ceased to be a world power, with painful implications for Kyrgyzstan as well. That's why we must make our contribution to Russia's revival.'[38]

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Fifth, the concern over the 'Islamic threat' while all along present in Russia and Central Asia, now demanded some practical measures. A long-term view of problems meant that although the domestic dimension of the threat was driven by internal instabilities, a *containment* of its external dimension meant the protection of the exterior borders of the CIS and especially Central Asia along the 'southern flank'. If Islam were to penetrate the CIS, the main direction of its external route would be the southwest Asia/Persian Gulf region, particularly Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The security of southern borders would not only have enhanced the physical security of the new Central Asian republics, but it was loaded with a clear political message of Russian sensitivity to all regional actors toward this issue.

Finally, one might add that the Russian recognition of western limitation in affecting the reforms in the former USSR and the excessiveness of the earlier one-dimensional and western oriented foreign policy was a further impetus in promoting the shift. An overall wariness over a romantic foreign policy driven by 'shared values' with the civilized West and 'values common to mankind', ideas that for the critics had echoes from the Gorbachev era, was now visible in Russian foreign policy circles; a more balanced policy based on realism and more traditional realities of a Eurasian power seemed to be needed. This mood was perhaps captured best by General V. Samsanov, Chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces General Staff, on the eve of the important Summit of the CIS in Moscow in July 1992: 'We must realistically grasp that the principles of relations between states that have prevailed throughout mankind's history remain mostly unchanged. As 100 and 200 years ago, they are based on certain principles—a state's strength ensures that it enjoys complete independence and freedom of development along whatever path it believes necessary. After all, even Karamzin wrote in the *History of the Russian State*: "There is no freedom where there is no strength to defend it ..." '[39]

This policy shift away from the Euro-Atlanticist to a Neo-Eurasianist outlook should not be taken as a complete victory of one view over the other, yet it clearly indicates a serious accommodation of and adjustment to the emerging realities facing Russia and the new Central Asian states. The fact that Yeltsin has elevated himself above the debate, and has given support to both perspectives indicates that a certain symbiosis of both views—albeit with the Neo-Eurasianist view increasingly dominating—might be the overall guide to and framework of Russia's policy in the near future.

Russia's southern flank: collective and bilateral security

The Russian policy shift in Central Asia and the Caucasus has been reflected in a two-prong strategy of advocating: (a) the reintegration of Central Asian, Caucasian, and Russian security within the institutional context of the CIS; and (b) simultaneously pursuing bilateral security arrangements with individual states in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

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Russia and the CIS collective security

The most significant dynamics within the CIS with far-reaching security implications is the Treaty on Collective Security signed between Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Armenia, in Tashkent on 15 May 1992. While the treaty was initially perceived as a mere rhetorical stand and another 'declaration of divorce' in Commonwealth life, recent and subsequent meetings in Moscow and Tashkent provide substance for a more serious and perhaps an eventually enduring security system. Although discussion of all aspects of the collective security agreement is beyond the scope of this paper, what is critical for our purpose are articles 1 and 4, which state:

> If one of the participating states is subjected to aggression by any state or group of states, this will be perceived as an aggression against all participating states to the treaty. In the event of an act of aggression being committed against any of the participating states, all the other participating states will give it the necessary assistance, including military assistance, and will also give support with the means at their disposal by way of exercising the right to collective defence in accordance with article 51 of the UN charter.[40]

Article 4 and article 1 of collective security prohibit the participating states from 'entering into any military alliances' or taking part in 'any groupings of states or actions directed against another participating state'.[41] General Leonid Ivashov, head of the working group on defence issues, and one of the key participants in preparation of the documents for the Tashkent Summit in May, argued that the Treaty 'confirms already established views, particularly within the military circles of the Commonwealth governments, that the establishment of a system of collective security, *or more accurately, its preservation*, is a practical necessity and an objective requirement'. [emphasis added].[42] General V. Samsanov, Chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces General Staff, in an article published by *Krasnaya Zvezda*, pointed to the political significance of the Treaty: 'The Treaty on Collective Security is the basis for forming a defence alliance' and '. . . the first and probably the most complex step toward creating an effective *military and political structure* capable of being a guarantee of security for the *successful political and economic development* of the subjects that form the CIS'. [emphasis added][43]

Equally, if not more significant, were the agreements reached among the 'participant states' in Moscow (6 July 1992) and Tashkent (16 July 1992) which provided more substance to the collective security agreement reached in mid-May. The two meetings specifically addressed the twin and significant issues of the creation of a CIS 'blue helmet' force (Moscow Summit) for rapid deployment in the area of regional conflict within the CIS and the issue of security of the southern border of the CIS (Tashkent meeting). The Moscow Summit, among others, witnessed discussion and reached agreements on missile attack early warning systems, operational principles of Supreme Command of CIS Joint Armed Forces, and the approval of the Statute of the CIS State Border Security Committee.[44]

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What was especially noteworthy was the active participation, and in fact insistence of the Central Asian states in putting the two critical issues of 'blue helmet' forces and the security of the southern borders of Central Asia on the agenda. Islam Karimov, President of Uzbekistan, had put the rest of the participants on the spot by his relentless pressure to put the issue of border security along the southern republics—especially those facing Iran and Afghanistan—on the agendas of the Moscow Summit and Tashkent meeting.

The Treaty on Collective Security has now defined the exterior border of 'the participant states' as the border of the CIS and its defence within the jurisdiction of CIS armed forces. '... We now have common external borders within the framework of the Commonwealth—land, air and sea borders', declared General Leonid Ivanshov.[45] Both Marshal Shaposhnikov, the Commander in Chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces, and General V. Samsanov, CIS Chief of the General Staff, reaffirmed that the quick reaction to the threat posed against the 'outside borders of the Commonwealth' is one of the key tasks of the CIS collective security arrangement.[46]

After the discussion of the ethnic conflict and border issues in the Moscow Summit, a discussion which was characterized by Askar Akayev as being of 'supreme importance and in depth', and by Boris Yeltsin as emotional,[47] a further decision was made for the Tashkent meetings of foreign and defence ministers in mid-July. Uzbekistan's forceful presentation of the border and ethnic conflict issues in Moscow was reinforced by a critical report given by Rakhman Nabiyev, President of Tajikistan, on the serious border problem with Afghanistan. The Tashkent meeting of foreign and defence ministries of the CIS in mid-July came to the general agreement on the mechanism of creation of the CIS peacekeeping force/'blue helmet' and, more importantly, the necessity of reinforcing the security of the southern border, especially the border of Tajikistan with Afghanistan.

The subsequent meetings of the CIS in Moscow and Central Asian capitals, have, with different degrees of precision or success, dealt with the complicated issues of policy implementation and members' force contribution to the collective security arrangements. The eventual success or failure of the collective security awaits the resolution of the political aspects of intra-CIS dynamics. While some Central Asian states, such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have been more eager to solidify the collective aspects of the security, others such as Turkmenistan and the Ukraine, and to a certain degree, Belarus, have remained vague on the merits of this security system. The Ukraine continues to look into CIS structures as being transitional, and while Turkmenistan has emphasized its neutrality and lack of interest in being a member of any security alliance, Belarus continues to show hesitation concerning entanglement in CIS regional conflicts. The ardent supporters of collective security, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, have also shown signs of internal constraint, such as real ability to participate both with men and material in supporting peacekeeping forces. The future of collective security, nevertheless, might have gone beyond just being a cover up for the 'divorce process'.

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The preliminary meeting of CIS defence ministers which took place in Moscow on 26 February 1993, allowed for a discussion of serious issues and for the presentation of a draft agreement on issues such as creating a collective security council for the CIS and the integration of the defence industry. The meeting's discussion for the alternative organization of the CIS Supreme Command on NATO or Warsaw Pact models was a further indication that the Treaty on Collective Security—against all military and political impediments—has moved beyond mere rhetoric, being presented as the only existing basis for collective regional security and might prove, with further modification, to become a viable alliance system in the region.[48]

Russia and the Central Asian republics: bilateral security

While the Treaty on Collective Security provided the security umbrella for the Central Asian republics and must be considered as a significant step in sculpting the ultimate shape of the region, it has still to face major political economic and operational challenges in the implementation phase. The chances of this collective security for survival and endurance have, however, been greatly enhanced by the series of bilateral 'friendship treaties' that Russia has signed with all the Central Asian republics. It is this 'bilateral level' that provides the additional and perhaps real substance to the 'collective level' security.

Kazakhstan

Among the Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan took the lead on 25 May 1992. Following his trip to the United States, Nursultan Nazarbayev arrived in Moscow to sign the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. The two sides agreed that the two countries will form a 'united military and strategic zone and will jointly use the military bases, test sites and other military infrastructures'.[49] The treaty was characterized by Yeltsin's Press office as 'a kind of political test site and verifying philosophy' of relations between newly independent states.[50] Yeltsin and Nazarbayev expressed hope that other CIS states will take the treaty as a model to be followed. This first experiment in bilateral security within the CIS also had an additional regional significance, as it was taking place after the Ashkhabad Summit in which Central Asian leaders as well as the leaders of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan contemplated an 'Asian bloc' formation—a summit that signifies the height of Russia's indifference or passivity on the geopolitics of the southern republics. The treaty with Kazakhstan was the beginning of Russia's 'Eurasian/Eastern' shift and of the regaining of some of the lost ground in the region.

The communique issued after Yeltsin and Nazarbayev's Summit on 26 February 1993, reiterated the commitment of both states to the implementation of the bilateral treaty signed in May 1992, and the enhancement of the treaty on collective security by a Kazakh-Russian decision to 'sign a treaty on military

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cooperation in order to set up a united defence space and make joint use of military capabilities'.[51]

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan was next to follow the model. On 30 May 1992, Russia and Uzbekistan signed the 'Treaty on the Fundamentals of Interstate Relations, Friendship and Cooperation'. The two sides agreed that 'territories of Russia and Uzbekistan will form a common military strategic area'. They also granted the other 'the right to use military facilities situated on their territories in case of necessity on the basis of mutual agreement.'[52]

In subsequent agreements the two states have gradually moved towards planning and implementing the bilateral treaty. In February 1993, a Russian military delegation headed by Pavel Grachev, Minister of Defence, met with President Islam Karimov and discussed the integration of the two states' positions in the sphere of military-technical cooperation, joint utilization of strategic facilities such as anti-aircraft, intelligence gathering and space monitoring facilities, and joint plans for combat, mobilization, training and military exercises of the Russian and Uzbek armed forces. This in addition to the continuous presence of Russian officers who constitute more than 80% of the officer corps of Uzbekistan's armed forces, also point to the close military relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan and its possible development into one of the pillars of security in Central Asia. This, especially in view of Uzbekistan willingness to perform an activist role in dealing with regional ethnic conflicts, as in the case of Tajikistan, might provide the military arm of a Russian-Uzbek political consensus in the region.[53]

Kyrgyzstan

Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan was the next Central Asian leader to go to Moscow for a similar treaty with Russia. The two countries signed the 'Friendship and Cooperation Treaty' on 10 June 1992, a treaty that according to Yeltsin raised the bilateral relations to a new level putting the two states 'on an absolutely equal footing', and thus signifying the end to Russia's 'imperial ambitions.'[54] Russia's role as the guarantor of Kyrgyzstan's security was reaffirmed. Kyrgyzstan's economic difficulties and inability to handle the financial responsibility of taking part in supporting CIS formations in Kyrgyzstan made this bilateral arrangement with Russia more appealing and more of a necessity.

Turkmenistan

Russia's bilateral security treaties with Turkmenistan and Tajikistan were the most significant of all as they directly dealt with the future security of the southern borders of the CIS. The significance of the treaty with Turkmenistan was underscored by the intimate involvement of General Pavel Grachev, the

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Russian Defence Minister, who personally negotiated the agreement with Turkmen defence officials and Saparmurad Niazov, the President of the republic. The treaty with Turkmenistan was a unique one that envisioned the formation of a national army for Turkmenistan under joint command. The armed forces will be composed of the two existing divisions (Kushka and Kizylarvat) and other military units of the former Soviet Union still stationed in Turkmenistan. The control of air force and air defence systems will be entirely with the Russian Armed Forces (with some limited control by Turkmenistan).[55] While logistics, training and exercise will be in Russia's hands the Turkmen will share the costs and will contribute in manpower. It is noteworthy that Russian servicemen will retain the oath of loyalty to Russia, not Turkmenistan, though the option of changing the oath is envisioned. The approximate strength of the army will be around 42,000.[56]

This was an important geopolitical agreement for both Russia and Turkmenistan. For Turkmenistan the financial burden and the structural impediment of creating a national army seemed insurmountable.[57] In the opinion of Valeriy Otchertsov, member of the Turkmenistan Presidential Council 'for small Turkmenia surrounded on all sides by larger neighbours, the creation of its own armed forces guaranteeing the reliable defence of its sovereignty from outside aggression would be highly dubious.'[58] Turkmenistan Vice-Premier, Nazar Soyonov, pointed to the significance of the treaty for Russia; that it strengthened Russia's 'southern flank' by maintaining her defensive flank and strength of its armed forces unchanged, and allowed Russia 'not to build its defence lines in the south of the Urals.'[59] The political significance of the agreement for Russia was understood by Colonel O. Falichev, military observer of *Krasnaya Zvezda*: 'Turkmenistan is choosing Russia rather than any of its southern neighbours as guarantor of its security, its prosperity, and stability in the region.'[60]

Obviously, among Turkmenistan's neighbours, Iran will be most concerned about the nature and the thrust of the treaty as it will continue to affect Iran's overall geostrategic position. In order to neutralize Iranian concerns, Turkmenistan has tried to maintain a posture of neutrality towards the CIS by raising doubt on its viability as a military bloc and emphasizing its role as a political and economic structure and forum, rather than a military alliance. Rhetorically, Turkmenistan continues to portray its foreign policy as neutral, a clear message designed for the Iranians in the aftermath of signing the joint security agreement with Russia.[61]

Turkmenistan's politico-military posture will continue to reflect the two key realities and preoccupations of its post-Soviet positions. First, continuous and direct dependency on Russia for security of the new state *vis-à-vis* its neighbours (at least until Turkmenistan's economic and technical potentials allow for the development of an independent and viable army). Second, the political desire and commitment to remain as independent as possible from Moscow and to avoid meaningful commitment in any regional politico-military bloc (i.e. CIS) which could undermine its newly acquired independence and could become a

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source of provocation and concern for its southern neighbours, especially Iran. Turkmenistan's continuous effort to enhance the political weight of its position in the command structure and decision-making mechanisms of the 'joint command' of the army and its persistent reluctant policy within the CIS—rejecting any notion of creating a 'supra state' structure for the Commonwealth—are reflective of Turkmenistan's dual predicament. Russia's forward politico-military position in Turkmenistan will thus continue to be affected by the inherent tension between Russian security designs and Turkmenistan's independent 'neutralist' regional posture.[62]

Tajikistan

The case of the Russian–Tajikistan security arrangement was more complex. Although Tajikistan was a signatory of the CIS Collective Security Treaty, on the bilateral level, close relations with Moscow remained in the shadows of, and at times hostage to, the ongoing political struggle in Dushanbe between President Rakhman Nabiyev and the democratic and Islamic opposition. What made the Tajik case especially significant was the collapse of the Afghan regime and victory of Islamic forces in that country. The vulnerability of Tajikistan to Mujaheddin influence and border penetration increasingly captured the attention of both Moscow and especially the Central Asian states. The ensuing 'civil war' between northern and southern parts of Tajikistan after the victory of the democratic and Islamic coalition in Dushanbe and the collapse of the Tajik border troops formation, made the infiltration of arms and fighting groups from Afghanistan a potentially explosive issue. Uzbekistan with a clear stake in the security of the 'southern flank' took the lead in addressing the issue in both the Tashkent and Moscow summits. In an interview with *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* on the eve of the Tashkent meeting Islam Karimov, the Uzbek President, gave a frank account of this issue:

> It goes without saying that the ongoing events in Afghanistan, the uncertainty there is an object of close scrutiny on our part. And they can hardly fail to influence the socio-political situation in Uzbekistan and the other republics of Central Asia. When I spoke recently about signing the mutual security document and the fact that *Russia ought to be the guarantor of security* it was this problem that I had in mind. When I was in Ashkhabad I made a statement whose gist was that *Tajikistan is an inseparable part of Central Asia*, and that to assert that Tajikistan might suddenly find itself under the sphere of influence or under any protection of Afghanistan's Mujaheddin is absolutely unacceptable.[63] [emphasis added]

Tajikistan's security problem was raised again in the foreign and defence ministries meeting in Tashkent in mid-July 1992, and an important decision was made to immediately enhance the strength of the troops on the border with Afghanistan. Marshal Shaposhnikov reiterated the now common theme that 'without Russia's assistance, the people of the south will not cope'. The commander in chief of the CIS forces announced the dispatch of 1200 additional

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troops to the border of Afghanistan.[64] The stage was set for a broader security agreement with Russia.

A draft treaty with principles of bilateral relations between Russia and Tajikistan was initiated on 21 July 1992 in Dushanbe. Russian Vice-Premier, Alexander Shokhin, the head of the Russian delegation, announced after the meeting with President Nabiyev that given the inability of Tajikistan to maintain its border security, Russia will take the border troops of the CIS under its jurisdiction.[65] Deputy commander of the Central Asian border district, General Anatoly Martovitskiy, confirmed that the border troops will be brought to full strength.[66]

Tajikistan's further incorporation into the security agreements was underscored by the request of President Nabiyev for deployment of CIS 'blue helmets' in Tajikistan's 'conflict zones' to dismantle 'the so called "popular front" ' and 'to take over the task of ensuring the activities of the national economy's facilities and protection of the population ...'[67] Russian security relations with Tajikistan, however, remained subject to complicated domestic pressures generated by opposition forces in Tajikistan. Democratic and Islamic groups continued to be suspicious of Russian intentions and policies in the republic and feared that the Russian military presence disguised as 'peacekeeping forces' would in reality be used to tip the balance of political power in the republic toward pro-Moscow, i.e. the supporters of Rakhman Nabiyev. The Committee for National Salvation, for example, strongly protested against the presence of the 'foreign military contingent'.[68]

The ensuing civil war in Tajikistan, especially after the forced resignation of Nabiyev in September of 1992, highlighted the complicated Russian political security role in Tajikistan, and its essential role in defining both its internal political dynamics and its external security. The full and accurate story of Russia's role in the Tajikistan civil war is yet to be told, as the barrage of accusation and counter accusation and denial makes it difficult to discern the real picture with any degree of certainty.[69] But what could be discerned is a pattern of behaviour which may provide indications of Moscow's attitude toward other regional conflicts in the territory of the former USSR; a pattern which has shown the following characteristics: a balancing act among opposing forces, guarded sympathy towards pro-Moscow groups, including former-Communist élites, an initial reluctance to become involved, and the patient period of waiting for an invitation to intervene as the only possible 'peacekeeper'.

There have been numerous accusations that the Russian military, and especially the 201st Motorized Rifle Division, provided support to the opposition groups and to the supporters of the deposed President Nabiyev. Initially, the Russian military refused to participate in disarming Nabiyev's sympathizers who left the Azadi Square in Dushanbe fully armed. Further, the four 'stolen' or 'sold', T-72 tanks and the armoured vehicles and artillery pieces used by the opposition in Kulyab and Gorgan Tyube to overrun the government forces and

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reach Dushanbe in late October, set the stage for Russian intervention and control of the city. Russia was indeed responding to the call of the Central Asian leaders gathered in Alma-Ata to perform the 'peacekeeping role' envisioned in the collective security agreement. The need for Russian intervention was echoed, with no hesitation or ambiguity, by the leaders of the besieged government of Tajikistan headed by Akbarshah Iskandarov. What is critical here is the discussion of two intertwined issues: (a) the presence of a general consensus for Russian political military intervention both at the regional, i.e. Central Asian, and republican, i.e. Tajikistan, levels; and (b) continuity of Russian willingness for political and military intervention in Tajikistan—as in other republics. The consensus for Russian involvement has been instrumental in neutralizing the charges of Russian imperialism. Moscow's reluctant posture to intervene undermines the effectiveness of nationalist charges of Russia's aggressive interventionist policy and further confirms the existence of a 'structural dependency' between Tajikistan and, for that matter, most of the Central Asian republics, and Russia.

I have used the term 'structural' to indicate the enduring elements of continuity of Central Asian and—in this case—Tajikistan's organic and multi-dimensional economic, political, and military dependency on Russia, in spite of a genuine Tajik desire to create a full-fledged independent nation-state. Russian leaders and foreign ministry officials have in fact been cognizant of the 'structural dependency' and expressed confidence in the continuity of the Russian presence amidst Moscow's erosion of power and tide of ethno-nationalist movements in Central Asia. Shelov-Kovedyayev, until recently Deputy Foreign Minister and the official in charge of CIS affairs, in an important interview with *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* in July 1992, argued that Tajik domestic problems, including 'the rivalry of North and South' which 'did not arise yesterday and will not disappear tomorrow' will not have a major bearing on the essential understanding that Russian–Tajik relations will remain close as 'all political forces would welcome the significance of a treaty with Russia and would recognize its legal validity regardless of the development of the situation'[70].

The reality of Tajik structural dependency did not escape even the forces that were, by political orientation and philosophy, not friendly to Moscow. 'We are still connected with Russia like this' said presidential adviser Davlat Khodanazarov 'interlacing his fingers'. 'But I have nothing against being dependent, if it works to help people survive.'[71] Davlat Usmon, Tajikistan's Vice-Premier and Deputy Chairman of the Islamic Party of Revival, also indicated that stability in Tajikistan without the help of Russia and the CIS will be 'rather problematic'.[72] The invocation of a collective security agreement in the case of Tajikistan by the Alma-Ata meeting[73] on 4 November 1992 was a clear indication that Russia and the Central Asian partners—regardless of their intra-CIS differences—will continue to hold the former Soviet Union's southern borders as the border of the CIS and of Russia's sphere of influence. More significantly, it also indicated that the maintenance of the domestic stability

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of the republic has been considered a legitimate security concern of the member states, which falls within the jurisdiction of the collective security agreements.

This was a clear message to all regional actors, including Iran, that notwithstanding the collapse of the Soviet Union, its geopolitical legacy will remain largely unchanged. Sergei Yastrzhemskiy, head of the Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department, in a news briefing in early September, characterized Moscow's position rather frankly:

> The Russian Ministry proceeds from the premise that interference in the internal affairs of *Tajikistan that is located in the area of the Russian Federation's important and versatile interest*, cannot be justified no matter from where it comes and what it is motivated by ... Russia is ready to take all necessary measures to provide assistance to the fraternal Tajik people in stabilizing the situation in the country, to help it shore up its sovereignty and territorial integrity and *ensure the security of the CIS's southern borders.* [emphasis added][74]

Returning from his three-day trip to Iran on 4 November, N. Nazarbayev echoed the sensitivity over the role of the external factor in the crisis in Tajikistan and pointed to the assurance received from the Iranian President of 'non-intervention' in the internal affairs of Tajikistan.[75]

Russian-Uzbek intervention in Tajikistan's civil war The downfall of the 'democratic-Islamic' coalition government in December and the consolidation of 'pro-Communist' forces in Tajikistan headed by Imamali Rakhmanov was a watershed not only in the Tajikistan civil war, but also signalled a qualitatively new stage in the involvement of Russia and its primary regional ally, Uzbekistan, in shaping the political and security dynamics of the region. Uzbekistan's direct involvement in providing political, logistical, and military backing for the 'pro-Communist' forces, namely, the 'People's Front' was critical in changing the balance of power among the contending parties to the conflict. As discussed earlier, Islam Karimov, the Uzbek President, has been from the early days of the Soviet collapse the most outspoken Central Asian leader in promoting a regional security arrangement which would not only safeguard the external borders of Central Asia (i.e., for example borders with Afghanistan), but more significantly, one which will allow a flexible intrusive policy of intervention in the domestic politics of the republics with seemingly threatening dynamics.

While concerns over the instability in Tajikistan were usually coached in anxiety over Afghan infiltration or Iranian influence, the real fear of Uzbekistan, Russia, and other Central Asian leaders, was the threat of an anti-status quo political alternative, be it 'Islamic', 'democratic' or other, that might successfully unseat the existing élite and have contagious political ramifications for the adjacent republics, including Uzbekistan. Thus, Tajikistan's domestic stability, meaning the existence of a political model and leadership acceptable to Uzbekistan, Russia and others, was an implicit, but important justification/rationale for politico-military intervention.

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Uzbek and Russian intervention in Tajikistan's civil war was both indirect and direct. Uzbekistan not only provided logistical supplies for the 'pro-Communist' forces throughout the conflict, but it was more specifically involved in the military aspects of the civil war. Uzbek officers literally formed and trained a brigade of Tajik troops in Termez, a small Uzbek border town. In addition, 'pro-Communist' forces were provided with armoured vehicles and air support.[76]

Uzbekistan's intimate role in the Tajik civil war may point to a potentially significant regional development with far-reaching implications for the security of Central Asia; namely whether Uzbekistan and its leader Islam Karimov have assumed the role of a regional policeman. Uzbekistan's interest in Tajikistan's developments cannot be overstated: cross-border ethno-territorial conflict especially in view of the Tajik-Uzbek ethnic mix of both states, the threat of radical political change in Tajikistan that might set a new precedent for post-Communist transition in Central Asia, hegemonic ambition of perpetuating an Uzbek-Centric regional order, improving Uzbekistan's power and leverage *vis-à-vis* Russia and other regional powers such as Kazakhstan, and the security of the CIS's southern borders, are among the key components of Tashkent security and foreign policy concerns.

Russia's preoccupation with its own deepening political–economic crisis, its explosive entanglement in the North Caucasus conflict, in addition to concern over charges of neo-imperial policies, were factors that collectively encouraged an activist security role for Uzbekistan in Tajikistan. This is not the first time that a great power, itself in crisis, deliberately or reluctantly solicits and or supports the effort of a junior ally. Allowing a degree of generalization in the following analogy, the role of Karimov in Central Asia could be compared to the role of the Shah as the policeman of the Persian Gulf in the 1970s. As in the Russian-Uzbek case, American–Iranian security understanding was based on an overall shared perception of threat, i.e., political instability emanating from revolutionary and unwelcomed political alternatives. And as the United States was uncomfortable with Iran's regional hegemonic ambitions, so too has Russia refused to endorse the ambitions of a 'Greater Uzbekistan'. Yet, Russia's post-Soviet realities have encouraged coordination of interests and modification of differences between Moscow and Tashkent, as American post-Vietnam realities encouraged Washington's accommodation to the Shah's policies. And as Russia itself is moving away from its early enthusiasm over democracy and human rights, these political irritants of earlier months in Russian-Uzbek relations have faded into the background. Uzbekistan's leadership has not only ignored the issues of democracy and suppressed its own domestic opponents and their occasional Moscow supporters, but moreover has openly rejected the inclusion of a human rights clause in the latest CIS charter, discussed in the recent summit at Minsk. (The Shah was also notorious in ignoring occasional American democratic 'reminders'.)

Russia's direct involvement in Tajikistan, nevertheless, indicated that Moscow may not be willing to delegate total responsibility to Uzbek regional policing. Furthermore, a sustained and effective politico-military intervention in the Tajik

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crisis seemed impractical without direct Russian engagement. Russian direct participation has taken two forms. First, a gradual abandonment of the position of 'positive neutrality', which had been adopted during the earlier stages of the crisis, in favour of active support of 'pro-Communist' forces in the latter and crucial stages of the conflict. After the downfall of the 'democratic-Islamic' coalition government in Dushanbe, the Russian airborn units took part in a series of anti-guerrilla campaigns in Garm, Navabad, and Komsomolabad, while the Russian (CIS) airforce and helicopter gunships bombed opposition forces in these regions.[77]

Second, Russia has practically taken over the task of creating a new army for Tajikistan. Participation of General Pavel Grachev and top CIS military officials, such as CIS Deputy Chief of Staff Major-General Farrokh Niyazov, in planning the formation of the new army, only signified the importance of security arrangements in the republic. Thirty-one Russian officers who arrived in Dushanbe on 4 February 1993 as part of the Russian military delegation will assist the new government in building the army.

While initially the Russian 201st Rifle Division was to become the nucleus of the new army,[78] a subsequent decision indicated the use of the division as the independent Russian 'forward position' in Tajikistan (the division also recruits Tajik conscripts only from the pro-government stronghold in the northern region of the republics). The armed formations of the 'People's Front', instead, will be used as the foundation of the new Tajik military.[79]

The new Tajik army, according to Major-General Niyazov, who also acts as the permanent representative of Tajikistan in the CIS, will be built based on the strategic location of the republic and 'special local features of the republic such as its mountainous terrain' which requires 'a mobile and flexible army ... with up-to-date equipment.'[80] Ironically, Niyazov's suggestion echoes what Mikhail Tukhachevsky, the father of Russian mobile warfare, had suggested to the Bolshevik leadership 70 years earlier on what was needed to fight the Basmachi-type challenges in Central Asia.

The civil war in Tajikistan may not be over. The fight has continued and potential problems for future conflict, not only among the Tajiks themselves, but between Uzbeks and Tajiks, have increased, as the Uzbek Turks' participation in the civil war has given rise to a Tajik version of the 'Armenian syndrome' for the defeated regions of the republic.[81] Yet the participation of Russia, Uzbekistan, and other CIS members in the conflict indicate that any future security challenge in the republic, either from internal or external sources, will have to calculate the politico-military response of Russia and its Central Asian allies. In the words of Imamali Rakhmanov, the leader of the new government in Dushanbe, Russian and Uzbek involvement in Tajikistan's conflict was the first successful test of the collective security agreements.[82]

Azerbaijan

Russia's security on the western side of the 'southern flank', the Caucasus, has been much more complex as the region has been engulfed in bloody ethnic

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conflict in Nagorno Karabakh and the undeclared war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The involvement of the two powerful neighbouring states, Turkey and Iran in the conflict underlined the extreme fluidity of the geo-political environment of the western side of the flank. Moscow's initial vacillation between support for Armenia and 'doing nothing' undermined Russia's position in the region. Recent months, however, witnessed some change in the policy and a sense of direction.

While Russia's diplomacy anxiously awaited the Iranian failure to mediate, it focused its own conflict resolution strategy on promoting the CSCE mechanism and providing parallel unilateral mediation. The collapse of Azeri defence in Nagorno Karabakh and victory of Armenia, which in no small scale was the result of Russian arms and equipment (mainly from the 7th army) and the apparent participation of certain Russian army and military units (366th Brigade) undermined the balance of power in the Caucausus and also set the dangerous precedent of a change of borders by force. Turkey's support for Azerbaijan and its threat of possible military intervention on behalf of Azerbaijan brought the sharp reaction by Marshal Shaposhnikov and the warning over the 'possibility of a global war'.

Shaposhnikov's remarks, although considered by the Russian Foreign Ministry as a bit overstated, marked Russia's anxiety and also the beginning of the shift in Moscow's policy. The initial pro-Armenian position was gradually modified by a subtle military move in providing Azerbaijan with the arms and equipment and some actual military support (allowing the Russian officers to perform their duty!)[83] by transferring equipment of the 4th army to Azeri authority.[84] It should be noted that some of this equipment had already been confiscated/stolen by 'informal Azeri groups'; however, the main decision for official transfer, especially the air force in Baku, played a critical role in redressing the balance of power between the two sides.

The Russian balancing act seemed to be geared not only to demonstrate evenhandedness, but probably to allow Azerbaijan to regain some of the lost ground in Nagorno Karabakh. A closer politico-military relationship with both sides provided a more flexible environment for Russian policy in the Caucasus. The total alienation of Azerbaijan, a state which had refused to join the CIS, would have carried the twin dangers of creating a power vacuum that might have been justifiably filled by Turkey or Iran and, thus, the possibility of Turkey's intervention against Armenia. This possibility of Turkish intervention has been especially acute in the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic which borders Turkey and has been under Armenian military pressure during recent months. In such a scenario, Armenia as a 'participant state' in CIS collective security could have drawn Russia into a major regional conflict.

Russia's balancing strategy has paid some tangible, though not decisive, dividends. Armenia, clearly unhappy about Russia's involvement in strengthening Azerbaijan militarily, had little option but to rely on its fundamental security guarantee, namely its membership in the CIS collective security system and Russia's principle role in the system.[85] Furthermore, Armenia's continuous

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exercise of military power relies heavily on Russia's continuous goodwill or at least its lack of opposition to access to military hardware and units of the 7th army.[86] Also, Russia's diplomatic support or 'positive neutrality' will continuously be needed in the complex and uncertain dynamics of the conflict. Azerbaijan, although not a member of the CIS (it maintains an observer status), also needs a benevolent Russian military policy and diplomatic support. Although the anti-Russian hostility and ill-feeling generated by the events of January 1990 in Baku and Russia's subsequent pro-Armenian policy still remains intrusive, the realpolitik of the Russian factor is casting a heavy shadow over the emotional dimension of the relations.[87] Furthermore, perhaps a decisive factor is the Azeri leadership's concern over its relations with Iran and the protection of its southern border that mitigates a closer security relationship with Russia.

It is interesting to note that even in spite of Azerbaijan's public position regarding the CIS, some initial contact as early as late May 1992 was made between Russian and Azerbaijani military. General Grachev had in fact discussed the issue of arms transfers and the possibility of Azerbaijan joining the CIS with Azerbaijan's defence minister.[88] Although Azerbaijan's participation in the CIS process remains a possibility, it runs against both domestic and regional obstacles. Domestically, the Popular Front, the dominating political force in the republic, and President Abulfaz Elchibey have campaigned against the idea of joining the CIS and have equated true nationalism and independence as being contradictory to such a participation. Furthermore, given the growing influence of Turkey in Azerbaijan, both in the political and military spheres, Baku's participation in CIS collective security may not have the blessing of Ankara. This might be especially pertinent in view of the *de facto* protectorate position of the Nakhichevan autonomous republic *vis-à-vis* Turkey, a position which had been nurtured by the disintegration of the Russian military presence in Nakhichevan and the increasing isolation of Nakhichevan from Azerbaijan and ensuing vulnerability *vis-à-vis* Armenia. Thus, instead of a problematic collective security arrangement with the CIS, Azerbaijan has opted for bilateral security relations with Russia.

There are several reasons for this move. First the inability of Azerbaijan, like other republics of the former USSR, to field its own army. This is especially an acute problem for Azerbaijan as it has been engaged in a major local war in Nagorno Karabakh and is now in a state of undeclared war with Armenia. Without a good relationship with Russia, the existing military capabilities are hardly sustainable. Second, the close relations with Turkey while flourishing and developing, may have their own drawbacks. In the minds of nationalist Azeris, the relations with the 'elder brothers' in Turkey also run the risk of being entrapped in an unequal relationship between a weak and ruined former republic and the most formidable military actor in the region, one with the rekindled pan-Turkic and possibly hegemonic tendencies. Russia will be a possible balancer over the horizon. Third, relations with Iran are perhaps the key factor in promoting closer military relations between Azerbaijan and Russia. In spite of

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religious, historical, and ethnic ties between the two countries, the Azerbaijani leadership has maintained a cool and at times hostile attitude towards Iran. The most serious potential problem between Iran and Azerbaijan is the 'irredentist claim' for unification of Iranian Azerbaijan with the new Azerbaijani state. On numerous occasions, the leader of Azerbaijan has made open, and at times provocative remarks about the eventual unification with its southern Azeri brother. He had also gone as far as to predict that Iran as a multi-ethnic entity will no longer exist at the end of the decade and that it will be divided into several mini-states. In addition, and as a norm, the threat of 'Islamic fundamentalism' has been presented as the main factor.

Iran's alleged support for Armenia, or to put it more accurately, Iran's unwillingness to abandon its neutrality in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, has been an important source of Azeri irritation. How could a neighbouring Muslim country with more than 15 million Azeris not support Azerbaijan against the aggressive Christian Armenia? Furthermore, Turkey's strong opposition and displeasure over any gains by Iran in the Caucasus is the additional contributing factor in promoting the anti-Iranian position of Azerbaijan. The tougher attitudes towards Iran will also fit into the United States prevailing policy in the region; an issue which was brought home to the Azeri leadership during Secretary Baker's trip to Azerbaijan. Iran as the embodiment of the 'Islamic threat' should be contained. On this not only the Turks, Americans but also the Russians share Azerbaijan's concern.

The combination of these factors provided a basis for a Russian-Azeri security military arrangement dealing with the southern borders. This agreement, though not as far reaching as the ones that Russia reached with the Central Asian republics, allowed Russia's participation and protection of Azerbaijan's border with Iran and Turkey, including the continuous control of air defence systems, reconnaissance and missile early warning systems. According to a press report in Moscow, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, Tofik Gasymov, has been quoted as saying that 'the northern border of Azerbaijan might not have to be closed after all'. On the contrary, it is the southern border of the republic that will have to be strengthened.[89] He anticipated a treaty with Russia which 'would solve issues of mutual interest, including the protection of state borders and the status of border troops'.[90] On 29 July 1992, Azerbaijan and Russia finally agreed on the joint guarding of Azerbaijan's southern borders with Iran and Turkey for a two-year term. The agreement also envisioned that Azerbaijani army personnel will be trained in 'specialist schools' in Russia.[91]

The possibility of joining the CIS was also raised by some Azerbaijani officials, including Isa Gambarov. He argued that the status of an observer at CIS summits is not effective for the conduct of Azerbaijani policy with the former Union republics. This was especially the case in view of the recent warning by some members of the CIS that Azerbaijan's observer status might be terminated, demanding a more concrete approach by the republic toward the CIS.[92]

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Russia's enhanced position in Azerbaijan and the critical role which it played in balancing the relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the presence of the similar 'structural dependency' led to the creation of the political–military environment that gave Russia, in spite of its early weakness, the key role in the Nagorno Karabakh problem. An internationalized conflict which brought actors of different capabilities and objectives into competition for influence and 'peace-making' finally had to be addressed by the Russians. Many actors, including the United States, Turkey, Iran, the United Nations, and the European Community, have attempted individually or collectively to solve the problem of Nagorno Karabakh, all with little or no success. The failure of the CSCE-sponsored conference in Rome was the most serious extra-regional attempt which ended in complete failure. Against this background, the announcement of the Sochi ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan designed and negotiated by the Russian Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev, in late September, took most observers by surprise.

What was perhaps most significant about the ceasefire was not only its scope and detailed military protocol (i.e., demarcation lines, non-military zones, demilitarization), but the unprecedented role of the Russian military in single-handedly negotiating it. In a remarkable interview with *Kraznaya Zvesda*, Defence Minister Grachev provided the details of the top secret negotiations which had been ordered by Yeltsin sometime in May 1992. What is most interesting about the process of negotiations was the pre-eminence of the role of the military establishment of all sides of the conflict and the central and guiding role of the Russian military in pressuring the Armenians and Azerbaijanis to ratify an agreement. Grachev, 'the elder brother'[93] in the negotiations, in a moment of frankness reflected on the underlying causes which forced the Azeris and Armenians to come to the negotiation table, namely the dependence of both republics on Russia. He explains that he had forecasted several months earlier that the military exhaustion and the need for spare parts will force a negotiation in which Russia will play a central role: 'And who will they turn to for specialists and spare parts? Russia? We know what Russia's answer will be.'[94]

The Nagorno Karabakh problem and the Azeri–Armenian conflict is far from over, but the Russian policy reflected an intense desire and determination to remain involved, not as a peripheral observer, but as the principal shaper of its eventual politico-military development and outcome. 'The Caucasus region is a traditional sphere of Russian interest and we do not intend to abandon it', declared Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.[95] Abbas Abbasov, Azerbaijan's Deputy Premier, emphasizing the transparency of the Russian–Azeri border, echoed a similar sentiment: 'Azerbaijan is in the zone of Russia's military-strategic protection' for in addition to being an 'economic nucleus', Russia remains 'the political and military nucleus of our entire region'.[96]

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Conclusion: towards a Russian Monroe Doctrine?

A general overview of the Russian foreign policy debate and actual policy since the collapse of the Union, indicate a clear Russian desire and willingness to protect its historical politico–strategic interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The ascendency of the Neo-Eurasianist thinking and policy in Moscow also indicates that notwithstanding the Soviet collapse and the emergence of new independent states, Russia has been able partially to recover the apparent strategic vacuum through measures such as the Treaty on Collective Security and bilateral security agreements with new Central Asian and Caucasian states. Thus, the entire border of the former Soviet Union with the states of the traditional 'southern flank' (i.e., Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey) remain within the realm of Russian and CIS strategic reach. The treaty-bound presence of Russian troops in the border republics points to a major element of strategic *continuity* in the midst of incredible changes in the region.

What are the key ingredients of this apparent continuity? Why can Russia, in the midst of its own deep political and economic crisis, still count on the preservation of its historical interests and influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus? The answer to this question lies in the enduring military, economic, and political legacies of the Soviet Union. On all three levels, military, economic and political, while the Russian 'centre' has been severely weakened, it still outweighs the Central Asian and Caucasian 'periphery'. Between the Russian 'centre' and its Asian 'periphery' there exists a level of *structural dependency/ interdependence* that will not be overcome overnight.

Militarily, as has been discussed, Russian foreign policy is increasingly driven by the belief that Russian security is inherently linked with the security of its Asian periphery, and thus the vigorous protection of Russia's historical geopolitical environment will remain fundamental to Russia's foreign and security policy. In fact, a careful reading of Russian thinking and policy points to the emergence of what could be termed as the Russian Monroe Doctrine in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The draft of 'Russian foreign policy concept' has called the protection of the 'Commonwealth's outer border', an urgent task in Russian foreign policy. The document also clearly warns other international actors, regional or otherwise, that:

> Moscow will vigorously oppose all attempts to build up the political, military presence of third countries in the states adjoining Russia.[97]

This 'strategic denial' to 'third countries' accompanies, and fits conveniently within, the Neo-Eurasianist vision of Russia's role as the sole guarantor of security in the territory of the former Soviet Union. In an important speech to the Civic Union on 28 February, Yeltsin reiterated this critical point:

> Stopping all armed conflicts on the territory of the former USSR is Russia's vital interest. The world community sees more and more clearly Russia's special responsibility in this difficult undertaking.

Cognizant of charges of neo-imperialism and also of the importance of the UN in the post-cold war world, Yeltsin went on to ask for the international endorsement and legitimization of Russia's interest:

> I believe the time has come for distinguished international organizations, including the UN, to grant Russia special powers of a guarantor of peace and stability in the region of the former USSR.[98]

The Russian military has to overcome enormous political, financial, and organizational difficulties to be able to perform its function in Moscow's overall strategy. Yet Russian military activism in Tajikistan and similar efforts in other regions, including the creation of the North Caucasus Military District, indicates the commitment of the Russian military to perform its role.[99]

The Soviet economic legacy and the continuous interstate dependency further perpetuates Russia's dominant position. Not only do the new states still need each other and Russia for their continuous flow of production and trade (on average 25% to 30% of production downfall in Russia and the republics is due to broken economic ties!), but equally significant, the similarity of challenges facing economic reforms in Russia and the Central Asian states points to a level of convergence in the economic models of these states in their post-Communist transition. As the enthusiasm over Russia's experiment with overnight market transition through 'shock therapy' fades into the background and Russia's new Cabinet attempts a more centrist economic policy, Central Asian states find their gradualist, conservative approach toward economic reform vindicated, and might have in fact acquired a new conservative model partner in Moscow.

Chernomyrdin's 'market with a human face',[100] Nazarbayev's 'socio-market economy',[101] Karimov's 'market with strong social policy' with the state as the 'main reformer',[102] and Niyazov's 'socialist-market without ideology' all indicate a degree of economic interdependence/convergence not only on economic ties, but also on the level of intellectual consensus for post-Soviet transition. Free from the ritualistic ideological baggage of Communism, Russia and Central Asia still share the socialist legacies of the Soviet experience.

The political dimension of structural dependency/interdependence between Russia and the new states follows a similar pattern. As Moscow's democratic hype and its claim of becoming an agent of democratic change in the former USSR fades into the background, the Central Asian authoritarian élite may find in new Russia not only vindication of their political model, but also a new model partner. The struggle between President Yeltsin and the Russian Congress has failed to be the struggle between democrats and nationalists, but rather of who will rule Russia. There is little debate in Moscow about democracy. The Neo-Eurasianist political model for Russia essentially values *stability* and a strong state as key requirements of socioeconomic reform and security, and in that there is little disagreement between the Central Asian capitals and Moscow. Thus, convergence of the Russian and Central Asian economic models in the post-Soviet transition phase follows parallel political models required to implement reforms. Furthermore, a shared political vision on the key threat to the

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existing order, namely an 'Islamic threat' also provides a significant common area of interest between the Central Asian élite and Moscow.

The military, economic, and political dimension of Russian-Central Asian interdependence seems even more significant, if analysed in the context of real alternative sources of competition from outside. Much has been written about the United States, the West, Turkey, Iran and others in relation to Central Asia and their attempt to fill the vacuum left by the Soviet collapse. The realities of these actors' relations with the new states, however, indicate that given the enormity of Central Asian needs and the military, economic, and political limitation of these actors, Russia's chance of being the most important actor remains promising. Therefore, will the 1990s witness the reassertion of Russia's dominant centre in its Asian 'periphery'? Are there any mitigating factors which might signal that Russia will not be able to repeat the remarkable imperial comeback similar to the post-1917 period?

One might argue that the presence of such a formidable superpower as the United States, the Russian economic crisis, and the nationalistic-Islamic fervour of the new states, have formed a powerful combination that will not allow the reassertion of Russian dominance. Indeed, these are formidable challenges. Yet Russia has not been unfamiliar with similar obstacles in the past, and in fact Russia's power base, both at home and abroad is, in 1993, much more favourable than it was in 1917.

The key mitigating factor against Russia's reassertion in the long term will be of a subjective nature, namely the absence of a dynamic forward looking neo-imperial vision and zeal. Russia's 'great power ideology' lacks the religiously based 'third Rome' of the Tsars and equally fanatical Marxian-Utopian conviction of the Bolsheviks. The most devastating implications of the current Russian crisis is not only its economic problems, but an emerging national psyche which is largely shaken by the doubt about its glorious past and is devoid of real hope and vision for the future. The 'messianic' elements of the enlightened Euro-Atlanticists is defeatist in nature as it looks primarily to the West for salvation and inspiration, while the Neo-Eurasianist *realpolitik* is inherently cynical and lacks ideological conviction and thus is not equipped with the visionary impulses required to supplement and inspire Russia's objective (i.e., military) power. Gorbachev's 'new political thinking' was too little and too late an attempt to revitalize the needed ideological backup of the empire.

Will Russia's nationalism provide the ideological substitute for Communism? The outdated, nostalgic and inherently exclusivist currency of Russian nationalism, which presently inspires nationalist-Communist factions in Russia, will be a dangerous and poor substitute as it will engulf Russia in a bloodbath of civil war varieties at 'home' and wars of national liberation in its 'nearby foreign parts'.

In the absence of an all embracing visionary ideology and in the context of

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the current deep crisis, Russia must rely on ordinary instruments of power, i.e., military coercion and diplomacy of accommodation and manoeuvre, a symbiosis which may prove inadequate for the repetition of the post-1917 imperial revival.

Notes and References

1. See Andrei Kozyrev's article, 'Transformed Russia in a new world', *Izvestiya*, 2 January 1992, p 3.
2. Ibid.
3. See Andrei Kozyrev's interview with *Le Monde*, 8 June 1992, pp 1–5, *FBIS-SOV* 92–111, 9 June 1992, pp 14–16.
4. For an official and theoretical discussion of this issue and an overview of the Euro-Atlanticist view, see Yevgeniy Gusarov, 'Towards a Europe of democracy and unity', in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 5 March 1992, p 7; and Andrei Kozyrev, Russian Foreign Minister, 'Challenge of transformation', *Izvestiya*, 1 April 1992, p 6.
5. According to Yevgeniy Gusarov, one of the main architects of the Euro-Atlanticist view, '... humanitarian sphere must not be bound by considerations of state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs', ibid.
6. For a review of Kozyrev's lecture at Columbia University, see *ITAR-TASS*, 25 September 1992, in *FBIS-SOV* 28 September 1992, pp 7–8.
7. See A. Kozyrev, 'Challenge of transformation'; and A. Kozyrev, interview with *Le Monde*, ibid.
8. For an early discussion on the 'continuer state' concept, see Kozyrev's interview in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 21 January 1992, p 5; and also his interview with *Al-Hayat* (in Arabic) 28 January 1992, in *FBIS-SOV*, 92-020, 30 January 1992, pp 31–33.
9. See A. Kozyrev's interview with *TASS* 26 March 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-060, 27 March 1992, pp 19–20; and Yevgeniy Gusarov, 'Towards a Europe of democracy and unity'.
10. Ibid; and Kozyrev's interview with *Le Monde*. The Russian Foreign Minister makes the point that European republics of the former USSR are in the CSCE sphere and will belong to the civilized world. On the other hand, 'the Asian republics belong to a different world and although at first they had illusions, they back-peddled when faced with the reality of Asia. Those republics realized that it was better to conclude the political and military alliance with Russia in one form or another'.
11. Yevgeniy Gusarov, 'Towards a Europe of democracy and unity'.
12. Ibid.
13. The Charter contains many elements of the Euro-Atlanticist view and particularly carries the language of the Russian theorist of this school of thought. For the full text of the Charter see *ITAR-TASS* World Service, 17 June 1992, in *FBIS-SOV* 92-118, 18 June 1992, pp 18–22.
14. For an expression of this view see, for example, Yu. B. Solomonov's report on a round table discussion on this issue with Foreign Ministry officials including F. V. Shelov-Kovedyayev, A. A. Avdeyev and others in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, No 18, 29 April 1992, p 11, *FBIS-USR* 92-057, 13 May 1992, pp 12–13; Alexei Pushkov, 'Is alliance with the West feasible?', *Moscow News*, No 9, 1–8 March 1992, p 12; and Sergei Strokan, 'Russia–India: the pause to extend' *Moscow News*, No 10, 8–15 March 1992, p 13, in *FBIS-USR* 92-044, 20 April 1992, pp 2–3.
15. For a review of the importance of the Security Council and the predominant role of centrist forces in the Council, see the following sources: *ITAR-TASS*, 11 September 1992, *FBIS-SOV*, 11 September 1992, p 4; *Moscow Russian Television Network*, 11 September 1992, *FBIS-SOV*, 14 September 1992, pp 4–6; and *Moscow Radio Television Network*, 7 September 1992 in *FBIS-SOV* 9 September 1992, pp 28–29.
16. For this important economic programme, which was offered as an alternative to Gaydar's plan by the Civic Union, see A. Volskiy's article, 'The crisis isn't so terrible if we don't lose our heads', in *Robochaya Tribuna* 29 September 1992, pp 2–3.
17. *Itar-Tass* Chernomyrdin interview with *Moscow World Service*, 5 January 1993, cited in *BBC-Monitoring: Summary of World Broadcasts, (SWB)*, 7 January 1993.
18. For a powerful critique of Russia's economic reform, see the interview with Arkadiy Volskiy, President of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and a prominent member of the 'Civic Union' in *Pravda* 9 September 1992, pp 1–2; and *La Republica*, 3 October 1992, p 19, cited in *FBIS-SOV* 8 October 1992, pp 29–30.
19. 'The end of ideological and political confrontation with the West does not mean that we want to embrace it with reckless abandonment. There is a limit to everything. There is no "fraternity" in international relations, any policy worthy of being called a policy must be based on cold calculation and nothing else.' Ednan Agayev, 'Russia above all else', *Moskovskiye Novosti*, No 18 (3 May 1992), p 12.

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20. Ibid.
21. Interview with *Izvestiya*, 2 June 1992, pp 1–3.
22. *International Affairs* (Moscow), No 4–5, April–May 1992, p 82.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p 92.
25. Cited in *Federal Information System Corporation, Federal News Service*, 6 November 1992.
26. Ibid.
27. This draft was delivered to the Supreme Soviet for further discussion, though according to Russian Foreign Ministry officials, no drastic modifications are expected. For a brief version of the document, see *Interfax*, 2 November 1992, in *FBIS-SOV*, 2 November 1992, pp 11–13.
28. *International Affairs* (Moscow), No 4–5, April–May 1992, p 82.
29. Ibid. Also see Giorgiy Arbatov interview with *Moscow Radio*, 18 February 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-035, 21 February 1992, p 49–50.
30. Alexei Maleshenko, 'Russia and Islam: will we cross ourselves in time?', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 22 February 1992, p 3, *FBIS-USR*, 92-037, 2 April 1992, pp 1–2.
31. Ibid. Maleshenko approvingly cites another Russian observer, Dubrovsky, who argues that America may permit itself to regard the Islamic world as a scarecrow, but we must remember that this is a complex heterogeneous structure in which there are perfectly realistic spheres of mutual understanding and cooperation. See also a very interesting discussion of a pragmatic approach towards Islam and the danger of its alienation by Sergei Nikolayvich Goncharov, a leading Russian foreign policy specialist, 'The special interest of Russia', *Izvestiya*, 26 February 1992, p 3, *FBIS-USR* 92-028, 12 March 1992, p 94–96.
32. See Sergei Stankevich's lecture at Moscow Institute of International Relations, published in *International Affairs (Moscow)*, No 4–5, April–May, 1992, p 94. A similar view concerning the unity of the Turkic-Islamic world has also been expressed by Vladimir Lukin, who served as the Russian Ambassador in the United States. See the same source.
33. See *Al-Hayat* (in Arabic), 17 September 1992, cited in *FBIS-USR*, 2 October 1992, p 49.
34. For this document see *Interfax*, 2 November 1992, cited in *FBIS-SOV* 2 November 1992, p 12.
35. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 18 September 1992, p 3.
36. Interview with *Izvestiya*, 2 June 1992, pp 1, 3.
37. Moscow Russian Television, interview with Boris Yeltsin by *Izvestiya, Litraturnaya Gazeta*, 15 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-137, 16 July 1992, pp 18–22.
38. *Interfax* 15 July 1992, in *FBIS-SOV* 92-138, 17 July 1992, p 59.
39. *Krasnaya Zvezda* 3 July 1992, p 1.
40. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 23 May 1992, p 2; also see *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* 23 May 1992, p 2.
41. Ibid.
42. Moscow Central Television, 4 May 1992, cited in *FBIS-SOV* 92-099, 21 May 1992, p 31.
43. *Krasnaya Zvezda* 3 July 1992, pp 1, 2.
44. *Interfax* 6 July 1992 cited in *FBIS-SOV* 92-130, 7 July 1992, p 7.
45. Interview with General Leonid Ivashov, Moscow Central Television, 19 May 1992, cited in *FBIS-SOV* 92-099, 21 May 1992, p 31.
46. See Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov's interview with *Krasnaya Zvezda* 29 May 1992, pp 1–2 and V. Samsanov's article 'A collective security system is an objective necessity' *Krasnaya Zvesda*, 3 July 1992, pp 1–2. This is a particularly interesting article, for the Chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces General Staff provides a conceptual analysis of key tasks of the CIS Strategic and General Purpose Forces. See and compare with an article by Marshal Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov 'Military aspects of collective security' *Izvestiya* 4 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-131, 8 July 1992, pp 12–14. These two articles are perhaps among the most authoritative discussions of CIS military practices and doctrine.
47. See the post-Summit News Conference *FBIS-SOV* 92-130, 7 July 1992, pp 8–10.
48. In the press conference after the meeting, the CIS Commander in Chief, Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov told the audience that neither NATO nor the Warsaw Pact in 'their pure form' could be adopted as the model for the CIS, and a new organizational scheme should be developed in the near future. It is noteworthy that Russia and Uzbekistan both supported the Warsaw Pact model as the future pattern of CIS politico-military command structure. See *Interfax*, 25 February 1982, in *BBC Monitoring: Summary of World Broadcasts*, 1 March 1993, p C2/1 and *Interfax*, 1 March 1993, in ibid., 3 March 1993, p C2/3.
49. Moscow *ITAR-TASS*, 25 May 1992 in *FBIS-SOV* 92-101, 26 May 1992, p 14.
50. Moscow Mayak Radio Network citing the press-Secretary of the Russia President, Vyacheslav Kostikov comments made to *Interfax FBIS-SOV* 92-101, 26 May 1992, p 14.

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51. A draft treaty to that effect was to be prepared by the defence ministries of Kazakhstan and Russia by the end of April. See *ITAR-TASS*, 26 and 27 February 1993, in *BBC Monitoring: Summary of World Broadcasts*, 3 March 1993, pp B/1 and B/2.
52. See especially Islam Karimov, President of Uzbekistan, interview with *Pravda* 2 June 1992, pp 1–2, *FBIS-SOV* 92-107, 3 June 1992, p 23; also for Yeltsin's comments see *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 1 June 1992, p 3, *FBIS-SOV* 92-107, 3 June 1992, p 21.
53. For a report of the Grachev-Karinar meeting see *ITAR-TASS*, 3 February 1993, in *BBC Monitoring: Summary of World Broadcast*, 5 February 1993, p C3/2.
54. *Interfax*, 11 June 1992 in *FBIS-SOV* 92-114, June 1992, p 13.
55. See interview with Valeriy Otchertsov, member of Turkmen Presidential Council, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 16 June 1992, p 3, *FBIS-SOV* 92-117, 17 June 1992, pp 53–54.
56. For this figure and also details of the agreement see *Interfax*, 11 June 1992, in *FBIS-SOV* 92-114, 12 June 1992, pp 82–83.
57. 'We cannot afford maintaining an army guaranteeing the defence of the republic's sovereignty.' Valeriy Otchertsov, member of Turkmenistan Presidential Council, quoted in *Interfax* 11 June 1992, in *FBIS-SOV* 92-114, 12 June 1992, p 83.
58. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 16 June 1992, p 3.
59. Ibid.
60. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10 June 1992, p 1.
61. This information was provided to the author in an interview with Mr Va'ezi, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, 7 October 1992, New York. In a remarkable gesture of sensitivity and goodwill, President Saparmurad Niazov, in a low key, half-day trip to Tehran, immediately after the signing of the treaty, met with President Rafsanjani to explain the defensive and non-aggressive nature of the security treaty with Russia and handed him a copy of the agreement.
62. For the latest indication of Turkmenistan's reluctant approach towards the CIS, see the coverage of the Minsk CIS Summit meeting in Minsk which took place in January 1993; see *FBIS-Central Eurasia*, 22 January 1993, pp 5–14.
63. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 15 May 1992, pp 1–3, *FBIS-USR* 92-063, 19 May 1992, p 86.
64. Interview with *Moscow Mayak Radio Network*, 16 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-138, 17 July 1992, pp 9–10.
65. *Moscow Radio Rossi Network*, 21 and 22 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-141, 22 July 1992, p 72.
66. *Interfax* 23 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-143, 24 July 1992, pp 61–62.
67. Nabiyev's remark was part of his address to an extraordinary joint session of the parliament's Presidium and Cabinet of Ministers, see *ITAR-TASS*, 20 July 1992, in *FBIS-SOV* 92-139, 20 July 1992, pp 60–61.
68. Moscow *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 2 August 92, *FBIS-SOV* 92-150, 4 August 1992, pp 73. In the interview, Shodmon Yusupov, Chairman of the Committee for National Salvation and leader of the Tajik Democrats, argued that the democratic forces of Tajikistan have convincing proof of the participation by sub-units of the Russian motorized rifle division in the armed clash between the conflicting groups which took place in a settlement in Bokhtar Rayon in Kurgan-Tyube Oblast on 27 July.
69. Akbar Iskandarov, Acting President of Tajikistan shortly before his resignation, in a letter to the UN General Secretary, indicated the 'illegal armed units of one of the sides have secured the backing of some Russian officers'. *ITAR-TASS*, *FBIS-SOV*, 3 November 1992, p 63. For a series of reports on Russian military forces supporting the opposition forces, especially in Kurja, Tyube, see several reports by *Interfax* in *FBIS-SOV* 92, 28 September 1992, pp 40–45.
70. Interview with *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 30 July 1992, pp 1, 5. This is an interesting interview which reflects the general view of the Russian Foreign Ministry on Central Asia.
71. *The Washington Post*, 3 November 1992, p A14.
72. *Interfax*, 3 November 1992, *FBIS-SOV*, 4 November 1992, p 60.
73. For the earlier statement issued by Russia and the Central Asian states concerning the need for intervention in Tajikistan, see *Interfax* 4 September 1992, in *FBIS-SOV* 8 September 1992, pp 4–5. For the new statement see *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 5 November 1992, p 1.
74. Moscow *ITAR-TASS* in *FBIS-SOV*, 9 September 1992, p 11.
75. *ITAR-TASS* reported by *Agence France Press*, 4 November 1992.
76. For an interesting account of Uzbekistan's role in the Tajik civil war, see Mark Frankland, 'Old style party boss turns the tide of Islam', *The Observer*, 7 February 1993, p 12.
77. *International Herald Tribune*, 22 February 1993, p 4.
78. During the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the battle of Stalingrad, Grachev had indicated such options. See *ITAR-TASS Moscow World Service*, 2 February 1993.
79. *ITAR-TASS, Moscow World Service*, 6 February 1993.
80. *ITAR-TASS, Moscow World Service*, in *BBC Monitoring*, 5 February 1993, p C2/2.

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81. I am indebted to Marie Broxup for bringing this point to my attention. Apparently the anti-Turk (anti-Uzbek) feeling among Tajik refugees in Afghanistan is most prevalent.
82. *Izvestiya*, 12 January 1993.
83. According to a Moscow Television report the Nagorno Karabakh headquarters has obtained photographs of Russian servicemen who died in Karabakh while serving in the Azerbaijan Army. This report put the Russian casualties to about 300. Moscow Ostankino Television, 19 June 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-120, 22 June 1992, p 82.
84. On the equipment of the 4th and 7th army, see Ostankino Television, 28 June 1992; *FBIS-SOV* 92-125, 29 June 1992, p 13.
85. For the Armenian view of Russia's balance of power game see interview with Georgiy Petrosyan, acting chairman of Nagorno Karabakh Supreme Soviet in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 16 July 1992, p 3 in *FBIS-SOV* 92-138, 17 July 1992, pp 64–65.
86. According to a report by *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (18 July 1992) based on a personal agreement between Russia's and Armenia's presidents, the Yerevan motor rifle division including 200 tanks was turned over to Armenia in early July.
87. In an interview with Moscow Television, Abulfaz Elchibey, Azerbaijan President, expressed satisfaction over the relations with the Russian army units stationed in Azerbaijan. See *FBIS-SOV* 92-130, 7 July 1992, pp 66–69.
88. See Grachev interview with *Nezarisimaya Gazeta*, 9 June 1992, pp 1–2.
89. *Moscow Radio Rossii Network*, 17 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-139, 20 July 1992.
90. *ITAR-TASS*, 22 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-142, 23 July 1992, p 62.
91. Baku *ASSA-IRADA*, 29 July 1992, in *FBIS-SOV* 92-147, 30 July 1992, p 53.
92. *ITAR-TASS*, 23 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-14 27 July 1992, p 66.
93. During the negotiations, according to Grachev's account, he was repeatedly called 'the elder brother' by the Defence Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia. *Krasnaya Zvesda*, 24 September 1992, p 1.
94. Ibid.
95. *Rossiyskiye Vesti* in *FBIS* 10 September 1992, p 17.
96. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 5 September 1992, p 3 in *FBIS* 25 September 1992, pp 115–116.
97. *Interfax*, 2 November 1992, in *FBIS-Central Eurasia*, 2 November 1991, p 12.
98. For the text of Yeltsin's speech to the Civic Union, see 'Russia' TV Channel, Moscow 28 February 1993, in *BBC Monitoring: Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 March 1993, pp B1/B3.
99. For Grachev's comments on the role of the Russian army in regional conflict and also the North Caucasus Military District, see interviews with 'Russia' TV, 28 February 1993, in *BBC Monitoring: Summary of World Broadcasts*, 3 March 1993, p C2/1 and *ITAR-TASS*, 26 February 1993, in ibid. 1 March 1993, p B7/B8.
100. See Chernomyrdin interview with *ITAR-TASS* 5 January 1993.
101. See Besenbay Iztelevov's, Kazakh Minister of Economics, interview with *Izvestiya*, 30 January 1993.
102. See Islam Karimov's interview in *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, 24 February 1993.

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