

**" NEW RUSSIAN POLICIES TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA "**

**A THESIS**

**PRESENTED BY M. GÜNDEN PEKER**

**TO**

**THE**

**INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**IN**

**PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS**

**FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**BILKENT UNIVERSITY**

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Approved by the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. L. Karaosmanoğlu", written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ali Lütfi KARAOSMANOĞLU

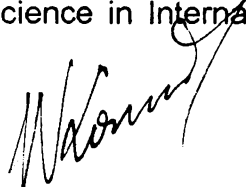
I certify that I have read this thesis and in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in International Relations.

  
Asst. Prof. Nur Bilge CRISS  
Thesis Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in International Relations.

  
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I certify that I have read this thesis and in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in International Relations.

  
Dr. Hakan KIRIMLI

## **ABSTRACT**

In this analysis, it has been attempted to reflect some light into the enigmatic future of the new Russian foreign policy towards Central Asia. To this end, elucidating and discussing the changes in the nature of Russian foreign policy reflected in two phases of time towards Central Asia in terms of economic, ethnic, political, strategic, ideological and military motives has become imperative.

A review of groups in the foreign policy making processes are given, and the two dominant schools of foreign policy making: the Atlanticist and Eurasianist schools are examined. The implications of the presence of 10 million ethnic Russians living in the Central Asian states, an interdependent economic system, the peacekeeping and defense agreements, and the role of Islam in the shaping of politics in Russia towards Central Asia are analyzed with two case analyses. In order to be able to have a full picture of the future balances in Central Asia, Turkish and Iranian roles are also heeded and placed into the Central Asian picture.

The final analysis is devoted to clarification of the Russian position in Central Asia, with the aim of injecting some predictability to the unknown future of a recently growing region in world politics.



## ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Rusya Federasyonunun yeni enigmatik Orta Asya politikasının yarınını, iki zamanlı değişimlerin ekonomik, etnik, siyasi, ideolojik ve askeri temalarla incelenmesi ile aydınlığa kavuşturulmasına yöneliktir.

Dış politikanın şekillenmesinde nüfuz sahibi olan "Atlantikçi" ve "Avrasyacı" dış politika okullarından bahsedilmiştir. Rusya'nın Orta Asya 'ya yönelik yeni politikalarının şekillenmesinde, bölgede yaşayan on milyon etnik Rus'un varlığı, birbirine aşırı derecede bağımlı ekonomileri ve savunma yapıları , yetmiş yıllık Sovyet kültürünün etkisi ve buna karşılık İslamiyetin gittikçe artan rolü belirleyici olmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Orta Asya'nın yeni yeni şekillenmekte olan resmi çizilirken, Türkiye ve İran 'ın da bu resme dahil edilmesi kaçınılmaz olmaktadır.

Son bölümdeki analiz, Rusya'nın Orta Asya'daki politikalarını anlamaya , açıklığa kavuşturmaya ve uluslararası sistemin bilinmeyen karanlığında gün geçtikçe önem kazanan Orta Asya ülkelerinin durumlarına biraz olsun ışık tutmaya ayrılmıştır.

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## I - INTRODUCTION

The disintegration of the Soviet Union which is considered by the current historians to be the most significant incident of the twentieth century, has left Russia searching for a new basis for its security and foreign policy. Undergoing sharp reassessments of its new state, borders and national interests in the wake of the collapse of not only 70 years of communism but also of long years of colonial empire, Russia has to distinguish between the prospects of imperial disengagement and responsible power.

The aim of this study toward an understanding of the argument surrounding the Russian Federation's new view of the world is, to examine the new Russian Policies in Central Asia in the post-Cold War era. Neo-Russian foreign policies are discussed in terms of economic, political, ethnic, military and geostrategic parameters.

While Russia is now a state without the reach of a superpower, it still retains strong influence and interest around its borders. It is Russia's new concept that has become to be known as the "*Near Abroad* ", incorporating the security and defense of the former Republics of the Soviet Union to its own, that has caused the most concern in the West over the nature and direction of the new Russian foreign policy . The belief that Russia should fill the security vacuum in Central Asia and incorporation of this belief into the official doctrine has resulted in the formulation of a new assertive foreign policy led by the Eurasianist school of foreign policy by late 1992, until today.

The aim of this study is to explain and discuss the changes in the nature of Russian foreign policy reflected in two phases of time towards Central Asia in terms of economic, ethnic, political, strategic and military motives with the

objective of injecting some constants of predictability to the future of Russian foreign policy in Central Asia, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

In attempting to understand the basics of the new Russian foreign policy towards Central Asia, certain questions are put forward : What are the factors contributing to Russia's assertiveness, what are the factors inhibiting the establishment of a neo-Russian zone , what are the parameters of Russian action in Central Asia, what are the Russian sensitivities in Central Asia, which are the positions of other states policies for dominance in Central Asia.....? How does this effect policy formulation inside ?

In attempt to make an introduction to the subject, and answer the questions above, a review of the present international system is given with a special emphasis on the political- geostrategic vacuum created by the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. The new role played by Russia is explained in terms of the unique economic, ethnic, geostrategic, factors linking the Central Asian Republics to it . The groups in Russian foreign policy making are also covered in the Second Chapter.

*"Policy towards Central Asia"* debate in Russia has developed in two major phases of time among two camps : The first camp and phase in Russian Foreign Policy is characterized by the ascendance of the Atlanticists to power, who had a pro- Western approach to foreign-policy which resulted in distancing itself from the near abroad. In the second phase, starting from mid-1992, the Eurasianists became the dominant school in foreign policy-making , incorporating the security of their *Near Abroad* to their own.

The Eurasianist school of foreign policy is emphasized throughout the study as it constitutes the dominant path of action since 1992, until the present time.

In the Third Chapter, the *Near Abroad Concept* is analyzed. The factors contributing to Russia's being assertive in its Near Abroad are discussed within the framework of the Eurasianist school : implications of the concept is given upon Central Asia is presented. In this context, the ethnic Russians living in Central Asia are presented as the central theme to the understanding of the Near Abroad concept. The concentration will be upon the Russian commitment to guarantee the security and stability of its *Near Abroad* in Central Asia .

With its geographical proximity to Russia and the presence of a large Russian population, the Kazakh case is illustrated as the *litmus test* for the relations between Central Asian states. The factors contributing to the establishment of a neo-Russian sphere of influence in Central Asia are discussed analyzing the impact of several factors: 10 million *ethnic* Russians living in Central Asia, the *economic* network of the former Soviet Union instituted on the rationale of interdependence, the *geostrategic* factor ; incorporating the security of the *Near Abroad* by military doctrine . Seeing the stability of its *Near Abroad* integral to its own security , which for example resulted in its intervention in the Tajik crisis and the consideration of the fundamentalist and pan-nationalist threats emanating from various sources as major threats to the stability of Russia, have pushed it toward pursuing a policy of *special responsibility* in Central Asia.

The Tajik case is illustrated as an example of the Russian sensitivity on the fundamentalist threat where in the context of the Eurasianist school, it has undertaken military and political responsibility to serve for the security and

stability of its *Near Abroad*. The Tajik case also exemplifies the nature and format of Russian peacekeeping role in the post-Cold War era in Central Asia.

Nature does not bare vacuum: competition for Central Asia is a reality ! In *Chapter IV* , the role and activities of Turkey and Iran are discussed and their impact on the formulation of Russian foreign policy is given as external factors . The discussion of the Turkish and Iranian roles are inalienable to the understanding of the balances of Central Asia . The Turkish role is the secular and modern one, which is backed by the Western world while that of Iran is associated with the fundamentalist and isolationist one. An assessment of the implications of the new Turkish role in Central Asia upon Turco-Russian relations is also presented.

The corner-stone of this thesis is that Russia is undeniably the dominant external power in Central Asia. Not only through the use of its inherited power at hand, but also through manipulating these assets to gain maximum gain out of them, Russia will extend its influence to its *Near Abroad*. The successful transition for the post -Soviet space depends on the condition that the well-entrenched economic, political, demographic, cultural and military ties be preserved in the short-run. It is inevitable that in the long-run relations will be diversified and the age-old relationships with Russia will take a new style. Yet, for the time being, it is both to the interest of Russia and the Central Asian Republics that this special relationship is sustained.

Based on this reasoning, the study seeks to present an analysis of the parameters of the new-Russian policies towards Central Asia and project some form of predictability to the future as to how the Russians will formulate their policies towards Central Asia.

In the concluding Chapter, a realistic appraisal of the future of Central Asia is presented with a special emphasis on the inevitable and assertive neo-Russian role in Central Asia.

## CHAPTER II -GROUPS AND SCHOOLS IN RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY - MAKING

The last decade of the 20 th century has brought unexpected changes to the entire international order, transforming geopolitical relations all around the world. One of these most striking changes in the international order has been the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Soviet successor republics, particularly, the Central Asian States, <sup>1</sup> present a considerable challenge and opportunity for observation and analysis of some of the most pressing ingredients of the post-Soviet international relations. Russian Federation, now the inheritor of the former USSR power apparatus, has to reformulate its policies towards its South, i.e. Central Asia. The old relationship is over de jure but it continues de facto. The conjuncture in which Russian foreign policy develops is now totally different; now there is the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and no USSR; the Russian Ruble is replaced by national currencies, Russian as the lingua franca is being replaced by the dialects of Turkic and Tajik, the Cyrillic alphabet is being replaced by Latin or Arabic, the atheist system is replaced by the revival of religion (both Islam and Christianity), Russian bureaucrats are replaced by natives, and closed economies are in the process of liberalization. Everything is changing but , what is still on the agenda is the special link between the Russians and Central Asians: it is the centuries' long affinity which still dominates their relationship.

Russia, with its geopolitical parameters reduced, is on the verge of defining its place in the new international order. The collapse of the Soviet Union does not mean the end of its influence: the transformation process involves both continuity and change. The biggest problem facing Russia today is how to handle its post-imperial mentality: being the strongest country of Central Asia whose ambition is to maintain the status-quo, it needs to learn how to lose an empire and assume a new role in the region and in international affairs.

Russia's struggle to set up a new foreign policy has intensified, following the dramatic changes in the domestic and international environment at the end of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> It now has to attune itself to the loss of the empire, together with the resultant economic chaos which inhibits its ability to address the problems it confronts in domestic and foreign policy. Given its unique geographical status, straddling two continents and surrounded by regimes in transition, Russia is destined to play a leading role in Central Asia.

Russian Foreign Policy since December 1991, has gone through several fluctuations. It has begun to retrench from a strong *Atlanticist approach* it used to adopt early from the beginning of 1991 to a Eurasianist one.<sup>3</sup> Russia wants to be recognized as a great power whose interests range beyond the former Soviet Union towards Central Europe. Emphasizing that it has a special relationship with its "*Near Abroad*", Russia is keen to establish a commonwealth. The Russian elite is insistent that internal stability in the Russian Federation is dependent on the stability of the *Near Abroad*. Therefore, guaranteeing their stability is a precondition, whether welcomed

or not. Being a great power, Russia started to exert influence over its *Near Abroad* for reasons of prestige, to ensure the access to raw materials, to prevent conflicts outside their borders from spilling over, and in some cases to defend their perceptions of cultural sovereignty. However, one need not take this an imperial intention to re-establish the former Soviet Union, since Russia undeniably needs a strong economic base, capable of sustaining massive military power over extended periods. Domestic political and economic crises is far from being resolved, which inhibits its outward move. Since December 1991, Russia has been struggling to reform its economy, dismantling the centralized Soviet economic structure and introduce free-market economics, and restructure its political apparatus by creating new institutions appropriate to a democratic political system.<sup>4</sup>

A referendum was held on the future of the Soviet Union in March 1991, where most voted for its continuation. After the fruitless coup and the declarations of independence by the Baltic Republics, the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, advocated a substitute for the USSR, in the form of a new political body; namely, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Yeltsin won the battle over Mikhail Gorbachev when the military supported the formation of CIS. The three-partite agreement which laid down the basis of the CIS was composed of the Russian Federation, Belarus and the Ukraine. Central Asian Republics which were subsidized by Russia were considered as a burden, and were excluded from the Union at first. The Russians wanted to consolidate their status in Europe through a homogenous Slavic composition.



It was late 1991 when 11 states joined the CIS, including the Central Asian States. However, in spite of Russian attempts to sustain the CIS, a contradictory pattern emerged soon. Ukraine set up its own army and customs, and ceased to work as part of the commonwealth.<sup>5</sup> By 1992, the hopes for establishing a combined military force were damaged, the ruble zone which was initiated in 1991, failed in 1993. The Russians moved towards Western-oriented policies and welcomed Western advice in economics and foreign policy in their transition period.

## **2.1 Groups in Russian Foreign Policy Making**

The environment and parameters of Russian Foreign Policy has changed due to certain factors: the disintegration of the USSR, economic and social crises and the vacuum in foreign policy leadership has emerged in Russia as well as changes in the international environment. The Russians lost outposts, colonies and a well established bureaucratic network through the nomenclature.<sup>6</sup> The geopolitical parameters have been reduced, and today Russia is facing a new strategic environment. A phenomenal decline in production, a high budget deficit, galloping inflation, growth of foreign debt, and a decline in gold reserves put Russia in a position of extreme dependence on the Group 7. But, despite this backdrop, it remains one of the world's great powers both because it is still a nuclear power and because, former patterns of political behavior die hard, if at all.

Currently groups which affect Russian Foreign Policy are, **Moderate Liberals (Headed by Former Soviet Ambassador to the US Vladimir Lukin)** The Moderate Liberals are distinguished by their rational attitude towards Russia and the world at large, emphasizing Russia's particular security priorities based on its geopolitical position and the transitional stage which places top priority on Russia's relations with the former USSR successor states. One of the major goals involves greater interaction with the West, but through hard bargaining and not through the automatic acceptance of all aspects of Western policies, they are against excessive reliance on Western aid and they are more realistic than the reformers, but they still look to the West. They are for hard bargaining for a Western model.

They emphasize that Russian foreign and security policy priorities must be based on the specifics of Russia's geopolitical and preferential position and in terms of its domestic transitional situation. This places the highest priority on Russia's relations with the former Soviet Republics.

The Moderate Liberals think that the Helsinki Principle of the inviolability of borders form the basis of the relationship between the republics and revision may only be possible as a result of peaceful negotiations. Ethnic separatism within the republics should be discouraged, moreover, military support by any state of ethnic separatists beyond its border should be prohibited. The only exception allowing border revision will be upon the initiative of an individual republic or in case where a republic is engaging in outright genocide against a national minority. <sup>7</sup> To protect the rights of minorities, various sanctions are admissible, including the use of force as a last resort. Still, approval by international organizations by the UN, CSCE, CIS

is obligatory. This applies fully to the 30 million Russians living outside the Federation. In some cases, vital Russian interests may come into confrontation with other republics in contradiction to the aim of maintaining good relations, because of protecting the rights of Russians living outside the Russian Federation. There exists a strong sense of independence upgrading economic, humanitarian, cultural, and security concerns among the former Soviet Republics. A concordant policy of respect, recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other republics, and fair and equal cooperation in various fields would be the best way to control the centrifugal forces affecting the territories of the former Soviet Union. They argue that Russia as in the case of Tajikistan, should be very cautious, not take sides, waste resources and lives in support of one faction against another. The principle Russian role should be of an impartial, creative broker, and mediator in settling conflicts.

**Centrists and Moderate Conservatives: (Headed by the former Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi )**

This group does not reconcile itself to the disintegration of the USSR, yet it does not favor resorting to force for re-integration. They want a Russia which is independent within its sphere of influence and one who has a say in world affairs. Further, they are against excessive reliance on Western economic assistance and political guidance. They advocate the diversification of Russia's partners towards China, Iran, Turkey and India, putting emphasis on the preservation of nuclear weapons and expansion of exports of nuclear technology. This approach is mostly supported by the military high command and industrialists. They advocate close relations with the West, yet emphasizing the increase of the role of Russia as the great power and independent within its sphere of influence. They suggest that Russia should

diversify its attitudes towards China, India, Iran and Turkey while the necessity to preserve the substantial military power is underlined. They call for the expansion of Russian foreign trade, and exports of nuclear technology and material as a way of gaining hard currency. They want better relations with the West, but not at the cost of reducing Russia's sphere of influence in the *Near Abroad*.

**Neo-Communists and Nationalists: ( Headed by Dimitri Vasilev, and Vladimir Zhirinovsky)**

This group, also called the 'red browns', are for the idea of the revival of the Russian empire on the basis of great-Russian nationalism. These hard-liners are in favor of a harsh military build-up and are against the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START - 2) and Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), or unilateral cuts and withdrawals in the Russian army. The opponents wanted to carry Russian foreign policy to a new level of relations and transcend the traditional framework of geopolitical and strategic balances. Devoted to the goal of revival of the Russian Empire on Great Russian nationalism, they support a fundamentalist version of the Russian Orthodox religion and a vigorously anti-Western crusade .

## 2.2- Schools in Russian Foreign Policy

### 2.2.1 The Atlanticist School

Starting from 1991 until mid-1992, the Atlanticists ascended to power and are characterized by the predominance of domestic considerations. Asserting that foreign policy is closely related to domestic policy they underline that, domestic considerations shape foreign policy making. The most important function of Russian foreign policy to them is to create an international environment that will enable Russia to become a democratic, market-oriented member of the international community.

The Atlanticist school also argues that,

First, Russia must join the G-7, CSCE, the Paris Charter, and harmonize with international institutions to achieve this end. Russia can only find its proper place in this system if it pursues the western model. The Helsinki Declarations, the CSCE, the Paris Charter are the institutional frameworks to which Russian foreign policy will adhere in formulating foreign policy. These will also constitute the only mechanism to protect Russian ethnic presence outside the Federation, living within the borders of the former Soviet Union. That is why the *7+1 Formula* which is the de facto inclusion of Russia into the decision-making of the G-7 group is accepted by the Russians.

Secondly, that Russia is and must remain as a "*normal power*", it can not have imperial ambitions of a Soviet scale and in the multipolar

environment of the international scale. Russia thus will have to continue to guard the Central Asian states by extending them defense guarantees, economic subsidies, and other sorts of privileges, but without an imperial logic.

That, being a Eurasian state, Russia is a bridge between the East and West and must function as a "*mechanism of transition*". The continuer state will shed its Asiatic image and transform the Central Asian parts of the former Soviet Union to the standards of the Western world.

Lastly, now for the first time in history without a viable enemy, Russia is considered to be secure, although other sources of dangers persist, such as nationalism and fundamentalism . The Russian security system is built upon partnership with the USA and EU by confidence building measures, where disarmament must be enhanced, and the CIS Collective Security system must be strengthened which constitutes the core of this system. 8 The Russian and American Partnership and Friendship Treaty of 17 July 1991 is an example of this tendency.

**2.2.1.a The Kozyrev Factor** :As the prime example of the Atlanticist school, the Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, favored the adoption of a Foreign Policy which would complement Yeltsin's program of economic revitalization, thus linking domestic and foreign policies. He wanted the Russian Federation to act as a normal, but responsible power which required some change in its policies towards other Soviet successor states. The main tenets of Kozyrev's foreign policy are as follows;

**1) full partnership:** Kozyrev wanted all successor states to view each other as independent but equal partners. This would also involve some rapprochement with the West and a *Full Partnership* with Western countries and the USA, NATO Partnership for Peace.

**2) stop the use of unilateral force:** Kozyrev necessitated reliance on international mediating mechanisms like the UN, CSCE, and NATO for conflict resolution. At various occasions, he said that he was against unilateral use of force in conflict resolution, and favored conflict resolution through peaceful means. For example, the will of Russia to have its soldiers and troops participate in the *Near Abroad* into Blue Helmets<sup>9</sup>, was shared by Tajikistan too. (On 6.3.1994 Tajikistan announced that they wanted the CIS forces in their Republic be put under the UN framework.) Russia will seek to push for a mandate from the UN or CSCE where it seeks to legitimize its presence and intervention in the *Near Abroad* even if this legitimization process involves the international community to exploit CFE standards. But the international community is still reluctant to change the CFE standards.

**3) distancing from Muslim Central Asia:** The Eurocentric approach advocated by Kozyrev and the Yeltsin administration also involved distancing from "Muslim" Central Asia. They thought that close cooperation at this stage would not only endanger the democratic and liberal-economic policies of transition in Russia, but would also put an extra burden on the Russian Federation which is on the verge of its own radical economic reform program. The rationale here may be that Russia might better concentrate its energy and resources on domestic problems and give up Central Asia for the time being which is underdeveloped and , unstable . It was because of this that the

trilateral Minsk Meeting of 1991 only involved the three Slavic Republican Presidents and the Muslim States of the former Soviet Union were excluded.

However, Kozyrev's policy was criticized at home especially by anti-reform defenders of Soviet power, and those who were unhappy about Soviet disintegration. These critics had a point in common: they all underlined that Kozyrev had undermined Russian national security interests, and had too much of an institutional approach to international relations. Although the Cold War antagonisms were over, The pro-Western stance was not a safe strategy because Russia had distinct national interests in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, which could at many instances come into conflict with the West. Therefore, foreign policy must never be oriented towards the West alone. He was also criticized for his excessive reliance on international mediating institutions due to the increasing number of ethnic conflicts in the periphery of Russia, where use of force sometimes became the immediate solution and in places where the UN, CSCE, were not inclined to get involved. These critics favored an activist, energetic and assertive diplomacy. Given its geographic, historical and economic ties with the successor states of the former Soviet Union, there is an unavoidable Russian interest in the periphery. Further, given the presence of 30 million ethnic Russians in the periphery, Russia has engaged interests in the region. Critics underlined the neglect of Russia's geostrategic and geopolitical interests in the new order of the international relations. While the most urgent goal is Russia's integration into the West, this approach is criticized on the basis that it underestimates Russia's state tradition and heritage in that it has been a mix of the Slavs and Turks , the Christian and the Muslim for centuries.



The critics on the Atlanticist approach to foreign policy underlined the *Diplomacy of Yes*. The foreign policy decision-making mechanism was irregular and lacked any substantial constituency. Kozyrev was accused as a traitor, he was criticized for giving up national interests easily and saying Yes to the foreigners, especially on matters of nuclear disarmament and peacekeeping. Another criticism was due to the *lack of foreign policy priorities*: This criticism focused on the lack of control over defense plans and programs, ill-concentrated initiatives about joining NATO, retargeting strategic missiles and participating in Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), mismanagement in dealing with nuclear weapons in other successor states, and failure to give priority to relations with successor states no matter how complex and chaotic they are.<sup>10</sup>

These concepts are the key not only to the protection of Russian military, economic, political and security interests abroad, but also to Moscow's relations with the USA and the European Union. A pro-Western foreign policy was being criticized as a humiliating course of unilateral concessions, exchanged for very trivial benefits, and thus, was perceived as undermining Russia's prestige, honor and security interests. These critiques are organized in a multiparty league called "The Russian Unity" and rely on the ideological support of Russophilic elites in the arts, academia, and mass-media. They are devoted to the idea of the Russian Empire and Russia's superpower role.

Moderate liberals advocate the inviolability of borders principle of the Helsinki Summit, with the exception that if a genocide is taking place against a national minority, and if this status is classified by international law as such then borders inviolability would not be taken into consideration.<sup>11</sup> In

pursuit of protecting ethnic minorities, various sanctions are permissible, including the use of force-still this requires multilateral approval and should be sanctioned by UN resolutions, CIS or CSCE. <sup>12</sup> This is a critical point since 30 million Russians living outside the Russian Federation. Russia has a deep and understandable interest in these 30 million extra- territorial Russians. Yet, given historical memory, this legitimate interest may be perceived as a an excuse to re-build imperialistic ambitions. Russia may be walking on a tight rope to prove otherwise, all the while maintaining and claiming its legitimate interests.

### **2.2.1.b Criticisms towards the Atlanticist Approach**

Serious criticism began to be spelled out by spring 1992, when the opponents of Yeltsin began to cite foreign-policy issues in their attacks against him. In time, the Foreign Ministry came under serious attack for ignoring the ethnic Russian Diaspora. Growing criticism forced the Atlanticists to address issues they had neglected in the early euphoria of independence, especially in their relations with the other successor republics of the Former Soviet Union. The opposition favored an energetic and assertive foreign policy which involved Russian military, economic and political engagement in the periphery of the former Soviet Union.

Unrealistic expectations about Western support led to frustrations. Western powers insisted on economic and political reform prior to extending financial assistance to bolster this process. The critics pointed that the national interests of Russia were not identified and protected clearly, and the *Near Abroad* was neglected.

Second, due to the belief that the security of Russia and its *Near Abroad* was inseparable and mutually interdependent, Russia's new military doctrine prepared in November 1993, reflected an evaluation of the Eurasian area as Russia's "*Near Abroad*", where Moscow's political and military involvement is legitimate. Due to their weak economic status, unstable political systems and dependent defense systems, the *Near Abroad* is likely to become subject to external pressure easily.

Third, the growing concern over the ethnic Russians in the *Near Abroad* was a major factor which led to a refocussing in Russian Foreign Policy. The fact that the foreign ministry did little to engage Russia's new neighbors on this issue was another part of this criticism.

Fourth, Kozyrev was criticized for being too pro-Western and about his policy of YES. His unquestionable acceptance of UN sanctions on arms reduction and his obstinacy about the fate of co-religionists and co-ethnics of the *Near Abroad* was criticized by his opponents most.

Fifth, the Central Asian states demanded and insisted on a substantive collective security system, with active Russian participation. Being dissatisfied with the nuclear umbrella of the CIS for their security, they demanded a comprehensive security system which included practical measures in dealing with the conventional defense of their security and their borders. Krygyz President, Askar Askaev, commenting on the pivotal role of Russia said: "The Eurasian entity hinged on Russia would collapse if Russia ceased to be a world

power with painful implications for Kyrgyzstan as well. That is why we must make our contribution to Russia's revival".<sup>13</sup>

Last but not least, the Islamic factor gained pace and started to raise serious concern in Russian foreign policy circles. The Russian policy-makers argued that, containing the external dimension of the "Islamic threat" would mean the protection of the exterior borders of the CIS. If Islam were to pervade the CIS, the main direction of its external route would be 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 also loaded with a clear political message of Russian sensitivity to all regional actors towards the issue.

The Russian Foreign Ministry, by all accounts, had already understood full well that the preservation of good relations and peace, within the CIS, is less costly than a war. Because of various deficiencies and critics as to the conduct of Russian foreign policy in terms of the Atlanticist school, the shift in foreign policy in late 1992 and early 1993 became an inevitable reality.

The position of the Foreign Ministry on the rights of Russian-speakers in the *Near Abroad* shifted dramatically by the beginning of 1993, as a result of domestic pressures. Kozyrev stressed the importance of respect for human rights, and called on Western nations to back Russia's position to apply international norms even-handedly. Kozyrev argued against the use of sanctions to rectify the issue of Russian minorities' rights outside Russia. He pointed out that the first people to suffer from sanctions would be ethnic

Russians themselves. However, asserting Russia's right to defend ethnic Russians does not incur with international law, which prohibits forcible intervention against other sovereign states.

Kozyrev argued however, that links with the West did not imply a pro-Western policy, but a means of Russia to return to its roots, while implying that Russia deserved a worthy position in the group of leading Western powers. However, the declarations of Kozyrev were not sufficient to prohibit critics on his policy.

According to the critics, the domestic constituency to support this foreign-policy and a political party was lacking to promote the agenda. Serious criticism began to be spelled out by Spring 1992 when the opponents of Yeltsin began to cite foreign policy issues in their attacks against him. The international political conjuncture giving priority in their estimation to the stability of Russia, and its continuing cooperation in the world affairs with the West, became factors contributing to the revival of Russian hegemony in Central Asia. The continuing importance of the former Soviet Union's economic order founded on a system of interdependence rendered it as a legitimate concern and a motivating factor for further economic-social political ties with the *Near Abroad*.

But the questions remained as to how to integrate the criticism on the *Near Abroad* with those regarding integration with the West. Here lies the paradox.

## 2.2.2 THE NEO-EURASIANIST FOREIGN POLICY

A foreign policy driven by "shared values" with the Western world began to shift towards a Eurasianist one by July 1992. The Russian foreign policy shift has been materialized by the reintegration of the Central Asian, Caucasian, Russian security within the institutional context of the CIS and the signing of bilateral agreements with the Central Asian Republics.

In December 1993, the Foreign Ministry published a draft foreign policy outline, which came close to satisfying the demands of its critics. Indeed by the mid 1993, a consensus appeared to have emerged on the basic outline of Russian foreign policy. From then on a more activist Foreign Policy has emerged vis a vis Central Asia, and other successor states of the former-USSR. The Eurasianist argument is based on Russia's position straddling the continents of Europe and Asia which gave it a character fundamentally different from other states of the former Soviet Union. Hence, it should not give in to pressure to adopt alien 'Western values, but must strive to preserve its unique nature through both foreign and domestic policy choices .<sup>14</sup>

Many of the arguments of this group were incorporated into the foreign-policy strategies of the official foreign policy by early 1993. The political in-fighting between the President and Parliament appeared to have forced Yeltsin's government to reconsider its foreign-policy strategies. The basic parameters of these strategies were namely,

a-Providing a conducive international environment to Russian transformation and reform which depends on the reassertion of Russian statehood and recovery of the lost ground resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union. Critics did not share with the Atlanticists that foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy, in that no matter how shaky a transition period they were in, they needed to be assertive outside the *Near Abroad*.

b-The West does not enjoy the priority in the ordering of international relations, and also unnecessary concessions to the West are considered to be damaging to the Russian state in transition. The underlying philosophy of International relations remained intact : struggle for political, economic supremacy is continuing, and geopolitics play pivotal role in Russian foreign policy.

c-Russia must play its role as a proper great power and its foreign policy context should remain global. Due to its unique geostrategic location and resources, it could not only remain as a normal power.

d-At a minimum, as a great power and the dominant state in the region, Russia deserves a "sphere of influence" in its *Near Abroad*, a sphere recognized and accepted by the Western powers. Kozyrev stated on *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* that "Russia on account of profound historical, political, cultural, and other relations with neighboring states, could not and did not have the moral right to remain indifferent to their requests for helping in securing peace .15.

e- The use of force was not unavoidable as a fact of international life against Kozyrev's insistence on promoting dialogue and negotiation. The Eurasianist perspective has been supported by a large segment of the intelligentsia since late 1992. <sup>16</sup>

At the beginning of 1991, Russia had to define its new geostrategic relationship with the Central Asian states. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, the Russian attitude towards the *Near Abroad* was also based on wishful thinking : since all of the new Soviet successor nations had been victimized by the communist regime as well as the Russians themselves, they would be able to work together harmoniously, taking each other's interest into account. But, it was the West, not the *Near Abroad* that enjoyed the status of the new Russia's foreign policy priority at first. Today, no doubt that Russia will continue to be the major power in the Eurasian area, while the evolution of the domestic political situation in Russia will determine this country's policies towards its neighbors.

"The Russians have always considered Central Asia significant to the continuation of their existence. Feodor Dostoyevski in 1881 said :

*What for? What future? What is needed of the seizure of Asia? What's our business there? This is necessary because Russia is not only in Europe, but also in Asia ; because Russia is not only a European but also an Asiatic country. Not only that: in our coming destiny, perhaps it is precisely Asia that represents our main way out....."In Europe we were hangers -on and slaves, whereas to Asia we shall go as masters. In Europe we were Asiatic,*



*whereas in Asia we, too, are Europeans. Our civilizing missions in Asia will bribe our spirit and drive us thither. It is only necessary that the one to Siberia, and then to Central Asia, and at you will see the consequences.* 17

Now Russia has the Southern borders which broadly reflects its position in the 18 th century. This does not mean, however, that Russia will exercise an improvident and overwhelming power over these states. The question is how Russia can with minimum cost leave its periphery while alone protecting its strategic interests. Russia, having a unique relationship with the Central Asian States due to ethnic, economic, political, military, security links in Central Asia willing to protect those historical politico-strategic interests. The Russian President Boris Yeltsin said "The Russian state has not taken its proper place in the World."<sup>18</sup> The Russian demand for recognition of its status as a global power before the signing of the Partnership for Peace Agreement with NATO is a sign of this tendency. Russia is continuously interfering on issues of oil and gas transfers from the successor states to the outside world to sustain its 70 years of material exploitation. Although in the beginning, some had foreseen that this region had fallen into a political and strategic vacuum, Russian presence is being felt everywhere in the former USSR. Russia's geoeconomic and geopolitical parameters have changed, but there is still a "*zone of Russian responsibility*". Russian role in Central Asia today consists of stabilizing itself and the contiguous states whose equal and intensive cooperation would restore to the continent the "critical mass" of stability <sup>19</sup>. Central Asia as a political economic and sociocultural entity was controlled, exploited and manipulated to the point that it has developed a collective objective and subjective dependency on the former Soviet Union and Russia respectively. The Russians used various methods for dominating the Central

Asians, and creating a mechanism of dependence through the absolute control of political and military power, large -scale economic extraction, systematic destruction of the traditional Muslim Central Asian society, culture, and religion. The objective was to create a Homosovieticus as one society, culture and religion. Russia is the strongest country of Central Asia whose ambition is to maintain the status-quo in the in the region. That is, it wants the maintenance of the divided and dependent situation of the Central Asian Republics, for it does not wish the formation of any alliances excluding the Russian factor .Russia will manipulate the ethnic Russian card to exert control over the *Near Abroad*. This is particularly significant for Kazakhstan where the Russians constitute %38 of the total population . 20

Even if the Soviet Union is dead and is not to be re-created for a very long time, if at all, Russia still needs to maintain some detailed understanding of the politics, economy, and society of the Central Asian republics. These states have become among the top priorities of the new foreign policy of Russia. With no clear precedent, Russia had to define its post-Soviet policy towards the Central Asian successor states as of the beginning of 1992. It displays a clear tendency to protect its interests: a tendency that survived the passage of time, and the collapse of the communist ideology. 21 Russian Foreign policy has become assertive and nationalistic and terms like *Near Abroad*, are often used by the policy-makers after 1992. Russia wants to ensure that the former Soviet Union be recognized a Russia's sphere of influence, thus it pursues policies to prevent the use of these areas as threats to Russia and ensure that these areas serve as bridges outwards in the direction of its interests. The primary objective of Russia's mission today is to

be the basic guarantor of Eurasian stability :where Eurasian land surface ends Russia is powerless, within the Eurasian region it is the shore of stability where it has the mission of a giant shock absorber. It is to the disadvantage of Russia that a strong unified front to its South is developed since it favors dealing with the republics one by one because its overall bargaining power will be enhanced only then, and it also wants to ensure that the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technology and uninterrupted oil and gas supplies are secured. Concentration of responsibility requires Russia to be the sole guardian of the Soviet nuclear power. Significant as the nuclear question issue may be there is yet another factor which involves Russia directly in the affairs of Central Asian Republics. There are approximately 30 million Russians living outside the borders of the Russian Federation who expect continued protection from Moscow. These human links are reinforced by economic, political and military ties which have been established since the 1600s and which are to be preserved in order to avoid further collapse of the newly established system.

Russia cannot pursue a policy of isolationism in the conflict perimeter of Eurasia. Instability along the perimeter of the borders of the former Union can break whatever remains of a stability in Eurasia, and leave Russia exposed to wars in its *Near Abroad*. Russia, as a second major military power, cannot escape being interdependent with the other leading military powers on the global spectrum. The maintenance of a balance of forces, ensuring at least relative stability on the one hand and the disarmament process, relieving all the parties concerned of some of the defense burden on the other, are considered to be imperative . With the official abandonment of imperialism and the development of democratic ideals and respect for its partners' interests and

equality, Russia is expected to be the major stabilizer state in the Central Asian region. In the perimeter of its borders, it does not have despotic and lawless responsibility for the lands of Central Asia. The delimitation of the zones of responsibility, however depends largely on the reaction of Russia's neighbors, and Russian success will depend on its capacity to exercise influence without resorting to armed force.

The assertive namely the Eurasianist Russian foreign policy by 1992-1993, is a policy of retrenchment ensuring that there is no further unraveling of the Russian state. Russia can not be discounted as a powerful actor because of its economic problems and because it is in a process of withdrawal from the area. Russia's interference and determination in Bosnia symbolized and signaled to the outside world that, Russia still matters, and it is rebuilding its influence at a wider context in the world. Russia tries to defend the ethnic Russians and act as the intermediary between the former-Soviet republics and other states. But, how can Russia emerge as the power to assert its influence while it has serious economic problems ? The answer partly lies in the fact that there is no other country to be able to cope with the problems of the new independent states. Russia bids for the role of a post-Cold War gendarme, but to sustain its troops, it demands financing by the UN, so that the peacekeeping operations would gain a legitimate international ground.

On the verge of defining its limits and capabilities vis a vis Central Asia, Russia is to exercise its responsibility as a great power for the maintenance of global and regional stability, the prevention of conflicts, the steady promotion of international relations on the principles of 'supremacy of law' , democracy and human rights, commitments to political and diplomatic

methods of negotiation, the admissibility of use of force in accordance with international law to insure national and international security and stability. Openness as to the promotion of mutually beneficial relations with all countries on the basis of equal rights and the strategic goal of forming a belt of neighborliness in the *Near Abroad* are underlined. The need to couple the shaping of new relations with other former Soviet republics with a build-up of multilateral forms of interaction are pointed out. The main lines of action in this context, will be settling or preventing conflicts in the Commonwealth area; defending the outer boundaries of the Commonwealth, continuing the formation of a treaty and legal basis, military political interaction, promoting mutually beneficial economic cooperation , guaranteeing the rights of ethnic minorities.<sup>22</sup>

### CHAPTER III- THE *NEAR ABROAD* CONCEPT

Russia, in the context of the Eurasianist school of foreign policy, places primary significance to the rights and interests of ethnic Russians living in the *Near Abroad*. The economic resources, the vital security infrastructure, and the ten million Russians living in the area, make the Central Asian region important to Moscow. As a result, Moscow has developed a greater determination to pursue policies aiming to protect the pro-Russian elites in the region, while Russian diplomats have become less inhibited in warning external powers such as Turkey or Iran that Central Asia remains in Russia's sphere of influence. <sup>1</sup> Russia has also paid much attention to economic and oil issues of the Central Asian region, seeking to ensure that oil and gas, as well as other raw materials from the region remain available for the Russian and CIS markets. Furthermore, there has been a greater awareness that the presence of large Russian communities in the Central Asian countries, many of whose members continue to hold important positions in the society, can influence developments in Russia's favor. All of these factors have strengthened the intention of the Russian government to see that these communities are integrated into their new countries and that their rights are protected. This also helps to minimize the possibility of forced emigrations or an Algerian-style war in Kazakhstan <sup>2</sup>, which would severely damage Russian-Central Asian relations and would probably provoke major domestic political unrest.

Russian involvement in Central Asia is a delicate issue which requires the careful balancing of interests with capabilities. Russia can not fully control the events in the *Near Abroad*. However there is sufficient ground in Russia and Central Asia for the former to continue to be the dominant external power in the region.<sup>3</sup> Russia would naturally not want to surrender its preferential position in Central Asia either to Iran or to Turkey. Thus, it would pursue a policy to deter these states from expanding their spheres of influence in its *Near Abroad*.

The growing awareness in Moscow in 1992 and 1993 of the implications of alienating Central Asia has been a major catalyst for Russia to define a more activist and energetic policy in the *Near Abroad*. In the context of the new foreign policy, Russia is expected to exercise its responsibility as a great power for the maintenance of global and regional stability, prevention of conflicts, steady promotion of human rights, supremacy of the law, and democracy. The vital security infrastructure, their huge economic resources, and the 10 million ethnic Russians residing in the area (the area here implies the five Central Asian republics) make the region vitally important to Russia. On 7 August 1993, Russian President Yeltsin convened a summit in Moscow which outlined the Russian - Central Asian relations, but a clear popular mandate was still missing which drove Russia towards sharing the financial and political burden of transition with some regional powers like Uzbekistan as it has been in the case of intervention in Tajikistan. Without a clear precedent, Russia had to define its post-imperial policy towards the Central Asian successor states at the beginning of 1992. By 1992, the Russian Federation became more assertive through an attempt to regain the initiative in promoting Russian security and economic interests in those countries. Its intervention into the

Tajik conflict reveals the dominance of this new tendency and the predominance of this new Eurasianist paradigm. Where do exactly the borders of the Russian Federation end is a significant question for observers of current Russian foreign policy.

Due to Russia's immense interdependence with the Central Asian Republics at many levels, growing instability and conflicts in Central Asia are very likely to threaten , Russia's economic-social reforms and territorial integrity at home. In this context, preserving a dominant role across the territory of the former USSR has become the principal goal of new Russian foreign policy. This is to be achieved by the manipulation of various factors: the economic interdependence of the republics, the presence of 30 million of ethnic Russians , the Russian armed forces on the territory of others, and also the former Soviet apparatus especially the KGB in the republics.

The Central Asian Republics are to remain within the sphere of influence in the way as the Caribbean countries remain under American hegemony. The *Monvrovski Doctrine* a variant of the American Monroe Doctrine , is set up on some basic parameters:

1. *Protection of Russian minorities* , towards recognizing Russia's right to protect Russian-speaking minorities in Central Asia, recognizing equal rights to all Russian-speaking inhabitants who resided in the Republics as of January 1, 1992 , accepting dual citizenship for all willing Russians settlers where today, it is only Turkmenistan that has accepted the principle of dual citizenship and providing equal position for the Russian language.



2. Preservation of the traditionally established economic links , and continuation of the large-scale subsidies to achieve desired political ends. Russian financial assistance to the Central Asian republics exceeds pre-1989 levels , <sup>4</sup> which contradicts the original Atlanticist goal to shed the financial burden of holding the old empire together.
3. Protect Russian interests in Central Asian oil and gas production through control of pipelines and transit roads as well as opposition to any establishment of alternative accesses.
4. Military interventions in interethnic and domestic conflicts under the guise of peace-keeping.

### **3.1/ Russians living in the *Near Abroad***

The Russian Federation has diverse human links with the Central Asian republics where cross-ethnic problems and human links dominate the post-Soviet agenda : prominent among the many ethnic minority problems that may threaten the stability of the international system are those involving the ten million ethnic Russians residing beyond the borders of the Russian Federation in the newly independent Central Asian republics. After 1917, a growing number of Russian immigrants tended to concentrate in growing urban and industrial centers in non-Russian regions, hence the post-Soviet Republics have inherited heavily Russified regions and cities within their borders. In large regions of Northern and Eastern Kazakhstan, adjacent to Russian territory, ethnic Russians constitute the overwhelming majority of the population. In North Kazakhstan, 66 percent of the population are ethnic Russians while only 27 percent are Kazaks. The vast majority of the 30 million ethnic Russians

residing in the non-Russian republics in 1989 were permanent residents. According to the 1989 census data, nearly 50 percent were born in the non-Russian republics. Today for example, Russians constitute an urban elite in Kazakhstan, occupying high-ranking posts in industry and science and their percentage in the rural population is very low.<sup>5</sup>

The 10 million Russians living outside the borders of the Russian Federation in Central Asia expect continued protection from Moscow. Both in the Tsarist and Soviet epochs, Russians residing in the predominantly non-Russian regions enjoyed the relative security that membership in the core imperial group confers.<sup>6</sup> In a broader sense, the entire Russian community served to transmit Russian cultural, economic, and political influence into the non-Russian regions. Until the authority of the Communist Party and central government in Moscow began to erode in the last half of the 1980s, the power of Moscow and its policies at the same time offered assurance to the Russians residing in the non-Russian republics and regions that their status would not be threatened by a reordering of ethnic relations.

With the disintegration of the USSR, suddenly 10 million Russians became foreigners in Central Asian states to whom Russia became a protective homeland in its *Near Abroad*. Russia granted citizenship to all citizens of the former successors of the Soviet Union who had not already adopted the citizenship of another state.<sup>7</sup> In search for signing dual-citizenship agreements with the countries of *Near Abroad*, Russia so far has only been able to sign an agreement with Turkmenistan. Other states have refrained from signing similar agreements due to the fear that Russia may use such as agreements as a pretext to interfere in the affairs of these states. After 1989,

significant political and economic incentives existed for the adoption of policies such as the return to native languages as official languages, and property laws that threatened the status of minority ethnic groups. <sup>8</sup> Since few Russians speak the local languages, they are bound to come upon enormous difficulties. They are also afraid that their children will face enormous difficulties when they return home if Russian is not used as the medium of education in schools. New language laws passed by the republics provided a spark for the growth of local nationalism in Central Asia . In Kazakhstan, for example, only 56,00 Russians out of a resident Russian population of 6.2 million claimed Kazak as a second language at the time of the 1989 census. <sup>9</sup> In many newly independent Central Asian Republics, the language of the native population is declared to be the official state language where serious problems are created. Because, Russian has been and will be the *lingua franca* in the lands of the former Soviet Union, this problem may produce confrontations in the long-run in that, the declaration of the usage of the titular languages as the official state language are seen as statements of nationalism. Newly issued language laws proclaim the native languages to be the state languages in the *Near Abroad*, where only a small percentage of the Russians are able to speak them.

Property laws too, produce difficulties for the Russians. These laws declare the land and its natural resources to be the property of the native people which inhibits the ambition of Russians of living in these countries as far as their future is concerned. The Central Asian Russians are also facing problems when they return to Russia, and suffer a culture shock. Having lived in a completely different culture, they can not easily adopt to their new life in Russia.

The new Russian definition of interests and sphere of influence in the former Soviet Union is accompanied in the statements of Kozyrev and officials of the Russian military . At a conference on January 1994 which was held in Moscow, an accord on policy towards the *Near Abroad* among the Russian military and Ministry of Foreign Affairs was attained. Kozyrev indicated that Russia must remain strong in the regions which have been in the sphere of Russian interests for centuries , and avoid the emergence of a security vacuum in the *Near Abroad*.<sup>10</sup>

In Central Asia, where economic disparities between ethnic groups are significant and where unemployment and under -employment in the titular populations is high, expressions of hostility towards Russians and other minorities has been on the rise. For example, in Dushanbe and Tashkent, approximately % 60 of the Russians surveyed in 1992 believed hostility toward them was increasing. <sup>11</sup> By 1991, a growing proportion of Russians in the non-Russian Republics felt sufficiently threatened by rising nationalism and intensifying inter-ethnic conflicts to consider emigration. According to a survey taken by the All-Russian Center of Public Opinion in 1991, the migratory mood was greatest among the Russian residents of , Uzbekistan ( 25% ), Tajikistan ( 25 % ), Kyrgyzstan ( 37 % ) (See Appendix - Table 1). However, in the interrepublican migration it was the Russians who had migrated from Kazakhstan in the greatest numbers to Russia , and then came Kyrgyzstan , followed by Uzbekistan. (See Appendix - Table 2)

The Russian government in 1993 concluded that the protection of the ethnics of the *Near Abroad* was one of Russia's *main strategic issues* and their treatment should determine the status of relations with the former Soviet states.

<sup>12</sup> One key point in the 1993 draft foreign policy doctrine included the definition of sources of military danger to Russia which was the mistreatment or violation of the rights and interests of the Russians living in the *Near Abroad*. ' Yeltsin stated this frankly in his New Year address to the state:

*I would like to address especially those people of Russia who are outside Russia's borders now. Dear compatriots! You are inseparable from us and we are inseparable from you. We are and will be together. On the basis of law and solidarity, we defend and will defend your and our common interest.* <sup>13</sup>

Russia granted itself the right to do so without agreement with the other Republics and imposes this right on them. The Foreign Ministry then drafted a document proposing linkages between economic aid and granting Russia the right to establish cultural centers, or to maintain specific trade relations with ethnic Russians in other states. By the beginning of 1993 , the Russian Federation became more assertive in its foreign policy which is rationalized by an attempt to regain the initiative in promoting Russian security and economic interests in its *Near Abroad*. As regards the human links reinforced by massive economic, political and military ties that have been established since the 1600s, they had to be preserved in order to avoid the further collapse of the system.

The status of ethnic Russians pose the most serious problem for the Central Asian successor states, in the process of gaining sovereignty and the re-definition of national self-identity, since the *Russian minority situation* lies at the crux of the involvement of Russian Federation in the affairs of Central Asian

successor states. With the painful breakdown of the extremely interdependent economies of the post-Soviet states, 10 million Russians in Central Asia suddenly became foreigners. The indigenous population is afraid that Russia will pursue its old imperialistic ambitions, and will seek to manipulate internal politics through its own interests. For example, Uzbek President Kerimov at a meeting in 1992, said that it was imperative that the new regimes not give Moscow any pretext to try to intervene in Uzbek affairs to protect and safeguard the lives of ethnic Russians. The Central Asians consider the problem from the point of sovereignty. They say that if they let Russia interfere in the name of ethnic Russians, this would harm their sovereignty. This would be the case if France intervened in Belgium to defend the French. Uzbek President Kerimov said: " When someone talks about the protection of Russians not in Russia but in Kazakhstan, I recall the times of Hitler, who started by protecting the Sudeten Germans ".<sup>14</sup>

The 30 million ethnic Russians living beyond the frontiers of the Russian Federation are under the *de facto protection* of the Russian Federation. The Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev underlines the *special responsibility* devolving on Russia in Central Asia and his government's intent "*to toughly uphold the interests of the ethnic Russians living in the Eurasian landscape*".<sup>15</sup> In a press conference, Russian Security Council Deputy Secretary Valerie Manilov stressed that the newly adopted doctrine is " characteristic of Russia as a great power occupying one-sixth of the world's land space and in whose territory lives a unique great Russian multinational people which has its own Russian interests ".<sup>16</sup>

The resettlement of millions of Central Asian Russians pose serious economic and social problems to the Russian state already in crisis. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, these colonialists suddenly became foreigners in someone else's territory. The fate of these people in the *Near-Abroad* matter much to the Russian state. The dilemma of the Russians in these Republics has evoked responses from political leaders in Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union that have ranged from moderate appeals for respect of human rights to calls for tough policies, aimed at coercing the non-Russian republics, and beyond this, to extreme demands for the re-establishment of the Union. Everyone in power in Russia thinks that they have the legitimate right to protect the interests and rights of the ethnic Russians in the *Near Abroad*. Russia considers this as a major strategic interest of the new state. Extreme nationalists like Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, call for re colonization while the moderate conservative, Alexander Rutskoi says, "These republics call themselves sovereign and independent who have never had their own statehood, never in their history. They are all parts of Russia, the great power. <sup>17</sup> Zatuliyev advocates the protection of ethnic Russians and the extension of assistance for these minorities wherever they are concentrated to win their autonomy. Russian policy makers think if the rights of these ethnic Russians are not protected, they will return to Russia. Moreover, it is not only the civilians who are back in Moscow, but the soldiers who are also on the way, are very likely to face problems of housing, employment and adaptation back home. Russian President Yeltsin and his reformist Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev have generally sought, however, to avoid serious confrontations with other newly independent republics regarding the rights of the Russians living in the *Near Abroad*. The incentives for a moderate policy are tangible: any confrontation between Russia and the *Near Abroad* would risk both the future of the CIS and

Russia 's search for aid from the West by raising specters of Russian hegemony.  
<sup>18</sup> Thus, a diplomacy through a combination of limited application of economic and political pressure was preferable . Russia has various interests in keeping the Russians in Central Asia where they reside and make use of several measures to ensure that they stay because of difficulties of employment , adaptation and economics in Russia. Being aware of these hardships, Russia has been adopting several measures to sustain the status-quo in Central Asia.

**Political Measures:** Granting *Dual Citizenship* to the Russians living outside Russia is a diplomatic measure which is intended to provide Russia with a mechanism to interfere on behalf of its citizens in the country where they have their other citizenship. This would guarantee ethnic Russians the right to defend their interests within the former Soviet republics if they so choose. Turkmenistan and Russia have signed an agreement in December 1993 on Dual citizenship where Turkmenistan was pressed hard on this to provide a model for the others. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have made no concessions, arguing that granting dual citizenship would be harmful to all. Uzbek President Kerimov and Russian President Yeltsin signed a pledge on 2 March 1994 in Moscow guaranteeing the rights of ethnic minorities. <sup>19</sup> They concluded to coordinate more closely in matters of taxation , economic policies, currencies and customs, as well as to move gradually towards free movement of goods, services, capital and labor between Uzbekistan and Russia. Kerimov then declared : " Russia should be the guarantor of peace and stability in Central Asia. There will always be two poles in the world, and we in Uzbekistan are keeping closer to Russia's pole. <sup>20</sup> So far, about 170.000 people residing outside Russia have taken up Russian citizenship, a minute fraction of those



who might be eligible if dual citizenship were extended throughout the former republics.<sup>21</sup>

**Cultural and Humanitarian Measures** : The funding of radio stations, TV broadcasts, Russian language universities is a means by which the ethnic Russian elements are protected in Central Asia. Publications aimed at unifying the Russian diaspora are common with the objective to form a sense of community among the Russians who are close in custom and behavior to the republics they live in than to Russia.

**Economic Measures** : Deliveries of fuel and raw materials to ex-Soviet republics are to be tied to the condition of proper and equal treatment of the ethnic Russians. All credits to the ex-Soviet Republics had a built-in clause stipulating that 20-30 % of the money should go to the needs of the Russian minority.<sup>22</sup> High-level government officials began to argue that Russia should give priority in its economic policies to those states willing to accept dual citizenship to grant Russia's rights. This echoed arguments made as early as 1992 that Russia should distinguish within the CIS between states supporting this organization and those interested only in splitting it up. One proponent of this view in 1993, was Alexander Shokonin, then Deputy Premier, who argued that Russia was 'naive' not to use its economic might to persuade its trade partners to accept its views on minority rights outside Russia.<sup>23</sup>

**Peacekeeping Measures** : The CIS has been given an observer status as an international organization by the UN. The UN Charter allows regional International Organizations to take action to maintain peace and security without any need to consult the UN or another group beforehand.

Russian leaders argue that the costs of maintaining peace and stability in Central Asia to keep the Slavic people where they live now is far greater than the expenses of their repatriation. Repatriation will absolutely pose a serious question to Russia. In the new order of things, there are many Russians in Central Asia who expect continued protection from Moscow. The integrated and unified structure of the Soviet system had buttressed the two groups by vast economic, social, and military ties. With disintegration, the Russian minority situation has become the soft-belly of the relations between Russia and its *Near Abroad*, where the former seeks to manipulate issues of aid, defense, and trade to attain the consequences it desires in its *Near Abroad*.

Most of the tensions in the Central Asia are likely to be the result of inter-ethnic conflicts, and most probably in Kazakhstan between ethnic Russians and the Kazaks where Russians constitute the largest minority.

### **3.1.2 KAZAKHSTAN : THE GREAT DIVIDE**

The Russian Federation is separated from the four Central Asian republics by Kazak territory which stands out among the other Central Asian Republics by virtue of the majority of its Russian minority and its proximity to Russia which poses potentially the greatest extremes of potential conflict between Kazak nationalists and Russian national interests. With its dual nationality, it is a country which is literally half Russian and half Kazak. For these reasons, Kazakhstan will be a *test case* for the ethnic minority situation in the former-USSR, where potential Kazak-Russian relations may have

disastrous effects and endanger Muslim and Russian relations in the post-Soviet era.

From late 1989 onwards, the degree of political separation between Alma Ata and Moscow rose constantly in direct proportion to the revival of the natural process of modernization and development that had been frozen in the glacier of communist ideology. Kazakhstan is potentially the most explosive republic in Central Asia with Kazaks being in minority in the demographic sense. (Of the 17 million population, only 7 million are Kazaks). (See Appendix -Table 3 )

The industrial, economic, commercial resources of the Republic are mostly in the hands of non-Kazaks mostly because having been nomadic people, Kazaks lack a mercantilist tradition. The Slavs in the region have had higher standards of living than that of the local population . These people most of the time occupied good posts in the society, but now it is painful for them to bear a sharp drop in their living standards due to the general economic patterns in the country .

Kazakhstan has introduced its national currency, *Tenge*, on November 1993 after the collapse of the Ruble Zone. The introduction of national currencies meant the loosening of the political ties and the coordination among the Central Asian countries and Russia. The collapse of the Ruble Zone has led Russia's being more insistent about the rights of its nationals in Kazakhstan, since it meant loosening of the Russian control over these Republics

As to Kazakhstan ,confrontation may occur on state language and privatization policies , democracy, and the representation of non-Kazak nationalities, land ownership, control of industry, natural resources and the territorial integrity of Northern Kazakhstan which is heavily populated by the Russians.

Rumors of discrimination among the Russians in Kazakhstan started by 1990, but the Russians have been migrating out of Kazakhstan since the 1970s as economic growth began to slow markedly since then. Since the collapse of Communist rule, those Russians who had been deported to Kazakhstan or the rest of Central Asia as a political punishment have also left.

In Kazakhstan, the *language* issue seems to be the primary vehicle and symbol of nationalist aspiration. A law, making Kazak the state's official language took effect in 1990, and a major concern for the Russians. A compromise reached in September 1990, stipulated that areas with an overwhelmingly Russian population may use Russian in administration until 1995, and switch to Kazak by the year 2000 where in Kazakhstan only % 1 of the Russians speak Kazak .<sup>24</sup> The Kazak nationalists, demanding the restoration of the damaged Kazak people and the perseverance of the Kazak culture started a process of Kazakhification where all Russian community organizations were prohibited on December 14, 1993. Most of the city names have and are being changed, in the education Russian language is being curtailed, Kazak is pushed to be the state language, and dual citizenship is being opposed. The necessity of restoring Islam in Kazakhstan, which is a part of the Kazak identity and culture, removal of the Communists from power, and

the passage of language laws are taken as imperative conditions for the Kazak nationalists.

Kazak nationalism may grow and confront the Slavic population due to the endowment of huge reserves of oil, which Kazaks will surely wish to use excessively for the benefit of their own population. Among the most mighty symbols of sovereignty is the struggle for the control of nuclear weapons in Kazakhstan and this tension has reached its peak at a time when Russia is playing for domination over the Kazak oil. Yeltsin is insistent on the oil pipeline passing from the Black Sea Port of Novorossisk through Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Russia has also declared that it was planning to charge a transit fee from the oil and gas revenues of its neighbors.

Kazaks now know that any rational foreign policy must incorporate the Russian element, being its next-door neighbor. They see the Russian threat as two-tiered; economic and territorial. The Kazaks want to escape the minority situation and construct their own demographic balances, but the ethnic Russians will voluntarily leave Kazakhstan, where they are well situated and occupy good positions. Still, because of the nationalistic environment in Kazakhstan, they may be forced to leave to Russia where the conditions are not any better. The situation in Kazakhstan frightens many when the probability that Russia may intervene in the name of the ethnic Russians exists, if discrimination increases and threatens the rights and interests of the Russians.

Kazakhstan is vitally important to Russia, not only because if Russia loses Northern Kazakhstan from its sphere of influence, Siberia and the Urals

will be threatened next, but because the huge natural and mineral resources are vital for the continuation of the interdependent economic system. Especially the presence of huge oil reserves in the Tengiz oil field, in the West of Kazakhstan make the Russians further concerned about the future of the country. Cooperation with Kazakhstan is aimed to promote the policy of diversifying its economy, equitable exchange and equal partnership in Russian trade. Some Russian leaders have been less sensitive to the ethnic situation in Kazakhstan. Deputy Premier Alexander Shokin refused to include Kazakhstan in the CIS Economic Union in July 1993, and established this Union with the membership of the Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. This exclusion could have encouraged the enforced separation of the two major communities of the country while the Russians were looking for protection to the Russian Federation. It must be considered that it is only a small band of land that separates Kazakhstan from the Russian Republics of Moslem Tataristan and Bashkortostan. Extremist Russian policies would endanger Russia's relations with its own "inner abroad" and the Muslim world at large, because there are 20 million Muslims living in the borders of the Russian Federation who might become hostile in case of perceiving imperialist policies on the part of Russia.

While Russia is a source of raw materials for the world economy, Kazakhstan is an additional provider of primary goods for the CIS, for Russia, the Ukraine and other republics. The Kazaks find the trade balance humiliating as the consumer sector and the manufacture of finished products account for only % 18 per cent of the Republics economy .<sup>25</sup>

The September 1994 Summit of the Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the American President Bill Clinton revealed Clinton's serious consideration of the Russian '*Near Abroad*' philosophy . Yeltsin made it clear that Russia has blood ties with the former Soviet Republics, and that it would react timely to any call issued by one of these to seek Russian protection. Clinton also agreed that, these countries are in Russia's sphere of influence. But, since its own vital interests are at stake (the American interest is towards the guarantee of the flow of oil from Central Asia and the control and non-proliferation of the nuclear weapons) , the USA does not want Russia to intervene on its own in the '*Near Abroad*' countries. USA is giving Russia the green light to intervene in the '*Near Abroad*' but, it stresses that, while they are doing this, they must respect the territorial sovereignty and independence of these states .

Across the territories of the former Soviet Union the coming years are likely to be much obscure. Relations between Kazakhstan and Russia will be the test-case for Russo-Central Asian relationship in the post-Cold War era.

### **3.2. Military dependence, Peacekeeping, and the Nuclear Question**

The new Russian military doctrine drafted in mid-1992 focuses on Russia's strategic interests abroad, and make them central to security policy and military reform inside the Russian Federation . The newly drafted Russian foreign policy concept asserts that military danger implies more than military aggression: the suppression of rights, freedoms, and lawful interests of Russian citizens in foreign states also constitute a source of threat to Russian security . Since there are 30 million Russians living outside the Russian Federation, and 10 million of them living in Central Asia, this is interpreted as a reference to the protection of ethnic Russians and its sphere of influence in the *Near Abroad*.

The disintegration of the USSR has raised major questions concerning the composition, location and the formation of the future of the military establishment in the former Soviet Union. The former Soviet army has become the army of the CIS without a state. The continuing Russian military presence in the *Near Abroad* was fortified by a decree, signed by Yeltsin in April 1994, authorizing the military to begin negotiations to establish rights to maintain up to 30 military bases and facilities outside Russia. <sup>26</sup> The Russian Federation considers Central Asia as the buffer zone along its Southern border and through guarding the CIS border in Central Asia, it plans to control the possible encroachment of China and Iran which are purported to have expansionist or fundamentalist policies.



Defense and security arrangements have been the fundamental areas where an immediate break from the Soviet inheritance cannot be granted at once. In the military sphere, the Soviet structures and institutions are so functional and deep-rooted that they could not be given-up, if total economic collapse and a dangerous security vacuum is to be avoided. The Russian foreign policy makers are devoted to preserve the former security-defense structure as much as possible in order to preserve the status-quo.

The disintegration of the USSR followed the formation of the new Russian Army in May 1992, which then, motivated the Central Asian Republics to follow the same path. However, the personnel in the Central Asian Armies were Russian dominated. For example, only %3 of the officers in the Kazak army were of Kazak nationality. Thus, it became inevitable for the Central Asian Republics to cooperate with Russia not only in strategic terms but also out of practicality, to secure their future.

Central Asian and Russian relations are reinforced by the signing of mutual treaties, in that they not only provide fundamental guarantees for the stability of insecure domestic regimes, but also have served the interests of the Central Asian Republics, which have not been able to accord progress in developing their own armies and independent military doctrines. As a result, they have concluded cooperation agreements with Russia in the belief that mutual security guarantees will reduce the defense burden and enhance further economic development, in the wake of shaky transition. In this respect, there is a harmony of interests between the Russian Federation and the states of Central Asia vis a vis military issues. Although all states have formed their own military units because of reasons of prestige, dependence on Russia is

reinforced by agreements on its peacekeeping role, the lack of trained military personnel of their own, reliance on the maintenance and repair contacts, and the constant need for modernization of the armies, not to mention the control of nuclear weapons.

### **3.2.a Peacekeeping arrangements**

Russia is increasingly trying to promote the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as a regional and international organization, and pushing it to be recognized as such by the UN, the CSCE, and other international bodies. This focus on the CIS is a clear example of the Eurasianist approach : i.e. reasserting influence in the former USSR .

Russia, in its attempts to consolidate the CIS, plans to make use of the powers and functions of regional and international organizations in its new commanding foreign policy towards its *Near Abroad*. Peacekeeping is considered as a major tool through which Russia will be able to exert control over its *Near Abroad*. Peacekeeping is a means of recapturing and preserving the Russian influence in the area, where it may be useful to oppose "aggressive nationalism"<sup>27</sup> and to protect the rights of ethnic Russians. Russia, by pushing hard for the acceptance of the CIS as an international organization, wanted to secure the *Near Abroad* as the exclusive area for Russian interests, thus "preventing" any other international or regional institution to come in and disturb its unique position there. And as far stretched as international institutions are, given their limited mandates and material capabilities, it was good timing on Russia's part to embark on such a policy.

Russian foreign policy makers have started to argue that the international community should sanction its actions, and that the rules for intervention in local conflicts should be changed to legitimize Russia's new role. The first signs of this policy can be seen where Yeltsin and Kozyrev stated that the international community should recognize the former Soviet Union as an area of Russia's vital interest, and that Russia deserved both UN and CSCE recognition of its peacekeeping efforts within the former Soviet Union. In September 1993, the Russian government suggested that the UN strategy of peacekeeping might need a revision. Kozyrev pointed out in a speech to the UN that in some instances, Russia was the only force capable of separating the fighting parties in the former Soviet Union. Recognizing that this interpretation did not coincide with standard UN peacekeeping practice, he argued that the UN needed to develop a general strategy of peace-making, and thus to accept the task of separating conflicting groups as well as simply preserving peace.<sup>28</sup> Kozyrev proposed that the UN should codify regional cooperation in peacekeeping by relying on regional organizations to overcome conflicts within their particular parts of the world. Accordingly, as well as delegating tasks to NATO and the Western European Union (WEU), Russia and the CIS should be given a UN mandate to confront both conflicts and threats to human rights on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Russian leaders suggested that the UN should not only endorse Russia's current activities in the former Soviet Union, but also finance them. In this context, Kozyrev proposed the creation of a voluntary fund to support Russia's activities, since the UN was clearly unlikely to send troops to the CIS. These proposals are aimed to grant Russia international legitimacy for any military action within the former Soviet Union.

These initiatives reveal that the Russian military leadership wants to preserve most of the territory of the former Soviet Union as a collective defense space, for several reasons;

*First*, the military is enthusiastic to maintain stability in Russia and in the *Near Abroad* taking the two as dependent issues. *Second*, they want to keep potential threats away from the Russian heartland and containing them on-site. *Third*, changing its old military bases and strategies may preempt too much effort and expense in the wake of shaky financial situation in Russia. *Fourth*, conservative forces in the military are unwilling to accept the break-up of the Soviet Union as a permanent case and by stationing troops abroad in their *Near Abroad*, they would be kept temporarily in good mood, perhaps preempting another coup.

A protocol governing the use of CIS multinational peacekeeping forces in 'zones of inter ethnic conflict' was signed at Tashkent on July 16 1992. The protocol permits the introduction of CIS peacekeeping forces upon the consensus of the CIS Council of Heads of State, at the request of one or more CIS member states, and with the consent of the parties engaged in the conflict. The UN Security Council and the CSCE will be notified if a peacekeeping operation is approved, and likely tasks could include establishing separation zones, demilitarized zones, and humanitarian corridors.<sup>29</sup> The permanent force, based on the UN Blue Helmets, would separate fighting elements, principally the numerous violent ethnic conflicts on Russia's periphery. Russian nationalists, including former Vice President Alexander Rutskoi, have pressured Boris Yeltsin to protect the 30 million strong Russian people living in the *Near Abroad*. This agreement enables Yeltsin to act

collectively to restore peace without raising the intent of intervention by Moscow alone.

After the disintegration of the USSR, Russia has become the only state that has a viable army, and the only one which can fulfill the peacekeeping role within the CIS. Russia is the leading military force in the CIS and is the sole post-Soviet nuclear power, de juro and de facto. Yet, Russia's ideas about peacekeeping efforts have also been described as neo-imperialism, and its efforts to give troops the status of CSCE blue helmets in zones of inter ethnic conflicts are interpreted as unconcealed attempts at new 'alterations' of the Eurasian continent. A London daily *Independent* even suggested that the offer of economic aid to Russia should be conditional upon Western restrictions on the intervention by Russian troops in the affairs of the Central Asian states. Russia's actions in neighboring countries are seen as "authoritarianism and chauvinism"<sup>30</sup> even though inter ethnic conflicts along the perimeter of Russia's borders could have a direct effect on Russia's security interests.

Creating a system of collective security that emphasizes peacemaking functions with a view of ensuring stability throughout the area of the former USSR, and developing effective mechanisms of prevention and settlement of military conflicts was framed by the Agreement on Groups of Military Observers and Collective Peacemaking Forces in the CIS, on 20 March, 1993. Protocols thereto as well as the Agreement on Collective Peacemaking Forces and Joint Measures for their Logistic Support followed on 24 September, 1993.<sup>31</sup> These agreements provide for CIS peacekeeping forces whose functions are similar to those of the UN, and are in conformity with the UN Charter.

The unstable situation in Central Asia has made the states ask for help first from Russia, seeing it as the unique power able to perform a real peacemaking role within the borders of the former USSR. Today, Russia is the only state to assume the task of conflict resolution in Central Asia. The risk of local and regional conflicts growing into large-scale ones are not seriously considered by the international community, so if Russia fails to deter these, it is inevitable that they will spread to neighborhood. The 20 March 1994 Agreement of Collective Security foresees that the member states should come to each other's assistance if attacked and promised what one source termed a 'tacit affirmation of the formation of separate armies by many states, including Russia and Ukraine'.<sup>32</sup> It would also legitimize the stationing of Russian troops in the other republics and ultimately provide a broader use for Russia's nuclear arms. Official statutes of the pact were later approved by the CIS.<sup>33</sup>

Articles 1 and 4 of the collective security statement are as follows:

*If one of the participating states is subject 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 will give it the necessary assistance, including military assistance, and will also give with the means at their disposal by way of exercising the right to collective defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.*<sup>34</sup>

The Treaty on Collective Security established a Collective Security Council composed of the heads of state of signatory countries and the commander-in-chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces. As a defensive alliance,

any real or perceived aggression against a member state is considered to be aggression against all, consistent with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The Treaty certified the signatories' commitment to refrain from the use of force or threaten to use force, and it promised to treat all conflicts among them and with other states peacefully. In a tacit affirmation that the treaty will have a broader application than to the six new states, Article 1 observed that, should a system of collective security embracing all of Europe and Asia transpire, for which the contracting parties will strive unswervingly,<sup>35</sup> the signatories will take immediate steps to modify the treaty to accommodate the broader agreement. Marshal Shaposhnikov declared in an article in the *Krasnaya Zvezda* " Now there is a desire to create a new union on the basis of the Islamic factor in the South, incorporating the Central Asian states in the CIS. This could result in a new line of global confrontation on a North-South axis ".<sup>36</sup> A system of collective security for the Commonwealth states could act a stabilizing counterweight, and a kind of balance to these and other systems. The Treaty has defined the Southern borders of the CIS and defense 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.<sup>37</sup> Geostrategic interests of the Central Asian states are so intertwined that they cannot be unfastened where the interest of one state is a part of the interest of the other. The 'Treaty on Collective Security signed by Armenia Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, is significant in that has it initiated the process of creating a mechanism of '*conflict settlement*' in the region.

The clearest example of peacekeeping by the Russian military since 1991 has been in *Tajikistan*. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the Russians

had stayed on with the new government's consent, both to patrol the Tajik - Afghan border and to help train forces. Russian leadership argued that Islamic fundamentalism might permeate further north if it were not stopped in Tajikistan and that they decided to intervene to stabilize the situation. Yet the peacemaking forces clearly backed one side in the crisis, leading to the victory of Islam Kerimov's forces over the opposition. Russia has left border troops along as many of the former Soviet frontiers as it can, and appears especially anxious to ensure that other states are denied access to its southern approaches through Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Besides the Russian peacekeeping role in Central Asia , the presence of nuclear arms had ramifications for the Russian-Central Asian security relationship as a whole. Kazak President Nursultan Nazarbaev has been trying to extract the maximum out of the presence of nuclear arms on his territory although the presence of the weapons do not constitute a real deterrent, because their use is dependent on the authorization of Moscow, and they can not be retargeted by the Kazak technicians alone. Thus we can say that the Kazaks want more political than strategic and military gains from the presence of these weapons in that their presence is used to extract benefits from political calculations. The Russians, still in control of the nuclear weapons, have agreed to extend continued defense to Kazakhstan against third party threats. Otherwise, Nazarbaev might have turned to the Americans, removed the missiles from territory and invested politically in fundamentalist Islam. He might have also projected the role of independent Muslim Kazakhstan with nuclear power at hand. However, Kazakhstan acceded to the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and accepted to eliminate strategic nuclear weapons on its



territory by 1997 as required by the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).<sup>38</sup>

The bilateral agreements with Russia have been regulating the status of the former Soviet forces deployed in Central Asia, and the relationship of these forces to new national military units. These treaties clarify the status of the 40 th Army in Kazakhstan, 52 nd Army in Turkmenistan, and all divisions still deployed in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Kazak leader Nursultan Nazarbaev took the lead in signing the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance on 25 May 1992 <sup>39</sup> The two agreed to form a united military and strategic zone and will jointly use this zone test sites and other military infrastructures. The treaty has been characterized by Yeltsin as a kind of political test site, verifying the philosophy of relations between newly independent states. <sup>40</sup> Yeltsin and Nazarbaev expressed their hope that the states of the *Near Abroad* take this Treaty as a model to be followed. The first experience in bilateral security within the CIS has also an additional significance, as it took place after the Ashkabad Summit in which Central Asian leaders as well as the leaders of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan contemplated an Asian bloc based on the geopolitics of the Southern Republics. The treaty with Kazakhstan was the beginning of Russia's Eurasian policies and regaining of some of the lost ground in the region.

The 25 May 1992 *Russo-Kazak Treaty* stipulates the joint use and control of their airspace, and of the military bases and defense facilities located in both states and commits the two states to build up their defenses within a single military strategic zone on the basis of agreed military doctrines. 10 104 SS-18 warhead silo-based ICBM's remain in Kazakhstan. Strategic nuclear

weapons and uranium mines and processing plants remain tightly under Russian control.

*Uzbekistan and Russia signed a Bilateral Treaty* on 30 May 1992, on the " Fundamentals of Interstate Relations, Friendship and Cooperation " stipulating the joint use and control of their airspace, military bases and defense facilities, on the use of strategic installations, joint mobilization and joint Uzbek-Russian maneuvers. <sup>41</sup> In February 1993, a Russian military delegation headed by Pavel Grachev, Minister of Defense, met with Islam Kerimov, the Head of the State of Uzbekistan, to discuss the integration of the two states' positions in the sphere of military-technical cooperation, joint-utilization of strategic facilities, and joint plans for combat mobilization, training, and military exercises of the Russian and Uzbek forces. This also points to the close military relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan and its possible development into one of the frameworks of security in Central Asia .

The *Tajik* case is somewhat different ; the Tajiks have rejected a Turkmen-style double or joint command of troops with Russia, but signed a Friendship and Defense Treaty with Russia in May 1992 to develop joint armed forces with Russia in a common '*defense space*'. The following April Treaty reaffirmed Russian role in providing military supplies and fixed the procedure for using Russian military installations on Tajik territory. Dependence on Russia is reinforced by the Russian peacekeeping role ,namely by the 201 st Motor - Rifle Division stationed in Tajikistan, which is to form the basis for a planned CIS collective peacekeeping force of 5,000 troops.

Turkmen concerns reverting to a traditional role are assisted by the Russian focus on the insulation of its *Southern borders* from fundamentalist agitation routed from Afghanistan and Iran. Turkmen-Russian Treaties signed in July 1992, have turned Turkmenistan into a Russian military protectorate because, Turkmenistan is dependent on financial and material maintenance of the former Turkistan Military Divisions. According to the Treaty, the Turkmen forces will be trained and formed under direct Russian control. The Agreement of August 1992 also provides for a unified command of Turkmen-Russian border forces to protect Turkmen borders, which has freed Turkmenistan from a financial burden and strengthened Russia's position in the South. The political significance of Russia was described by Colonel O. Falichev, military observer of *Krasnaya Zvezda* : "Turkmenistan is choosing Russia rather than any of its southern neighbors as guarantor of its security, its prosperity, and stability in the region".<sup>42</sup> Turkmenistan 's politico- military position will continue to reflect the two key realities and preoccupation of its post-Soviet times.

First concern is the continuous and direct dependency on Russia for security of the new state vis a vis neighbors. And, secondly, 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 wound its newly acquired independence, and could become a source of provocation and concern for its southern neighbors, especially Iran.

Russia must balance its interests in formulating foreign policy towards Central Asia. The domestic situation in Russia and other sensitivities will guide the direction of Russian foreign policy formulations. The parameters of Russian foreign policy will depend on its resources and willingness to assert

its position as a regional power with rights and interests reflecting its geographic proximity.

The Tashkent Collective Security Agreement and the bilateral agreements have created an *Asian-oriented security system* around Russia with Kazakhstan being its key ally. Russia has become a guarantor of stability and security in a vast region, marked by a series of conflict zones on its southern borders. Some talk about a *Monroviski doctrine* for Russia as to its military, economic and political policies in Central Asia. But, some circles opposing the Eurasianist in Moscow, criticize the superabundance of military and economic activism in the territories of former Soviet Union, and emphasize the need to differentiate between core and peripheral interests, and the impossibility of acting as guardian over every Russian minority presence in the *Near Abroad*.

To secure the continuing Russian military presence in the *Near Abroad*, Yeltsin on April 1994, sanctioned the military to begin negotiations to establish rights to maintain up to 30 military bases and facilities outside Russia. Accepting Russian minority assistance and cooperation with Russia on defense questions on the part of the Central Asians, is closely linked to the status of their economies. In the middle of a troublesome transition, they need to concentrate on economy more than military. Military agreements and arrangements between Central Asian Republics and Russia, will be a driving force of Russian involvement in Central Asia. But of course, more than anything, the economic situation and constraints on the part of Russia will be determining the limits of involvement.

### 3.3 Economic Interdependence

The first years of the political transformation experience in Central Asia has proved to be only the beginning of a long process during which the sustainability of economic reforms and the effectiveness and efficiency of Western cooperation policies have proved to be the determinant factors for a successful integration of the Eurasian area to the international community of democratic countries . The legacy of the Soviet political heritage and the linkage between the negative effects of economic reforms, and the resurgence of nationalist or religious forces are the basic characteristics of the post-Soviet era. The new successor states were all established on the wreckage of the former Soviet Union with whom they were intertwined in language, institutions, currency, and way of life for 70 years. Economic dependence has been the primary fact that needs to be considered about these new successor states, and the first step before gaining real independence is the breaking of the chains of this well-entrenched economic dependence which has its origins at the communist empire.

With the *Economic Union Agreement* signed on 18 October 1991, barriers have been produced in the long-run to the agreements and engagements with other states , which foresaw the formation of an "economic grouping", <sup>43</sup> and stipulated the use of Ruble as the only medium of exchange, reserve, store of value for some time. It abolished of all taxes on the movement of goods and services within the Republics, including manipulation of the transfer of foreign currencies of third parties transferred in a way not to harm the monetary interests of the Union. The Republics were free to set up their own quotas, licenses etc. in their own economic relations. The agreement

brings about all conditions of dependency vis a vis banking, currency, foreign "exchange, which may further threaten the economic conditions of the successors. The successor states have many problems before economic independence:

a- Physical infrastructure: They lack modern rail, highway, and maritime connections,

b Ineptitude of communication facilities: Post, telegram, telex facsimile facilities are limited and backward in technology,

c- Monetary infrastructure: The monetary infrastructure is backward, they lack qualified personnel, and modern system,

d- Social infrastructure: They lack educated, trained human resources to conduct foreign economic relations.

These inadequacies constitute the major barriers before real economic independence for the Central Asian Republics. As long as they can not solve these problems, real independence, will be a utopia for them in the coming years, and they will be open to Russian economic manipulations. Being part of a unified national economic complex of the former Soviet Union, Russia and Central Asia have been dependent on each other in many fundamental areas. This complex was formed as a system with elements that augment one another. Russia used the economic independence, of the former Soviet Union as a means to extend its influence throughout the CIS. The highly centralized nature of the Soviet economy meant that industries in different parts of the USSR depended on very distant sources of raw materials and parts often supplied by other republics. As the biggest republic and that with the most oil, gas and mineral deposits, Russia remains a crucial source of material for much of the

former Soviet Union. The Central Asian region on the other hand, is largely the source of a number of raw material resources that are either completely lacking in Russia or exist in ample quantities. The extremely large copper-prophyr, pyrite and stratiform deposits of Central Asia and Transcaucasia lay beyond the borders of Russia .<sup>44</sup> Russia does not have significant reserves of copper, manganese, chromites, strontium ores, germanium, potassium, or potassium salts. Russia is the main buyer of cotton from Central Asia ( for Russia 's demand for 1.175.700 tons, where Uzbekistan, alone provided 544,000 tons ). This list could easily be continued. Not only Russia depends on deliveries from the post-Soviet South, but other Central Asian countries are interested in them as well. Coal from the Kazakhstan Ekibastuz is intended for heating and electric power plants operating on the territory of Russia. The Karaganda Metallurgical Combine deliveries to Russia are about 2 million tons of rolled metal a year. The problem of selling these and other products will inevitably arise if exports to Russia are excluded. All these reveal that the formerly established links of the Soviet Union still hold on today. There are various forms of economic cooperation between Russia and post Soviet Central Asia within the framework of the CIS. An Economic Union of CIS States have been created, the Interstate Bank, Interstate Council on Questions of Industrial Policy have been instituted.

But, one gets the impression that the Central Asian states, while not destroying economic ties with Russia, are trying to find alternatives to them, working within other organizational frameworks with states of the world to their South. <sup>45</sup>

At the same time, Central Asians do not wish to remain inward looking in their foreign economic links, and have sought to participate in several initiatives like the Organization of Caspian States created in February 1992 by Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Russia, where Russia was represented by its Ambassador to Iran where others were represented by higher states officers. Another example is the organization of Economic Cooperation (ECO) initiated by Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan in 1992. The final example is the institution of the BSEC Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone initiated by Turkey in 1992, in which both Russia and a member of states interested in cooperation in the neighboring Central Asian region. <sup>46</sup> All roads previously passed through Moscow, but now the new states of the Region are looking for different roads, to reduce their dependence on Russia.

The plans to create new transportation communications (railroads, highways, and pipelines) are visible signs of future trends in economic cooperation. The building of communications routes tells us considerably more than serious agreements and widely announced declarations. Previously, all roads to the East passed through Moscow, but now the new states of the region are looking for different roads, which very frequently avoid Russia. The Commission of European Communities (CEC), which is oriented toward the creation of a combined transportation corridor from Europe, to Caucuses and Asia is very attractive to the Central Asian states. The main route would bypass Russia along the line of Almatı-Ashkabad-Turkmenbashi- Baku- Poti - Batumi. Each Central Asian state is trying hard to create its own transportation access to communication centers of global significance. Thus Kazakhstan, having established rail communication long the road of Almatı- Beijing, intends to



extend this route to the territories of Turkmenistan, Iran and Turkey in order to reach Western Europe. Turkmenistan is speeding up the construction of the railroad route of Tedzhen-Seraks- Maskhad, which will make it possible to link this Central Asian countries to Tehran, Ankara, and West Europe. Iranian territory, with renewed communications in the interests of Turkmenistan, will become for the latter a kind of bridge to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Through Kazakhstan, which is joined by railroad to China, it is also possible to gain access to the Far East - the Asia- Pacific region. <sup>47</sup>

*Intra-trade* constitutes the major section of the successor states trade division, where Russia has the greatest share that proves the aforesaid interdependent economic network. On economic terms, the richness of its natural resources is the most important characteristic of the Central Asian area. Especially when the energy oriented natural resources are considered, it seems that the Central Asian region will have an important role to play as a strategic energy supplier on the world stage. Despite some industrial development in the post-World War II era, these republics maintain a principally rural and agrarian economy. Agriculture represents %40 of the net material output linked to the agricultural sector. The high degree of specialization in the agricultural sector has rendered the economy heavily dependent on food exports. The economic activities have been dominated by the public sector which employed about three fourths of the labor force. These republics have all become members of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the primary financial institutions of the world. After independence, they seek harmonization with other states , blocks and organizations and demand credits for their restructuring.

For example, the decision to raise its oil and gas prices closer to world prices exacerbated supply problems in the former Soviet Union, and caused several republics to be in debt to Russia, since no alternative source of affordable fuel was available. This dependence may give Russia a vital leverage over both economic and political choices and decisions in the former Soviet Union. First of all, through the subsidies it has been giving since the times of the USSR it has been able to establish a control mechanism over the economic policies of the former Soviet Union states. Second, the ruble was used to preserve the economic ties with the former Soviet Union states. By late 1993, Russia appeared very willing to exploit its economic leverage to obtain political and economic concessions from the other former Soviet Union states. Russia's economic policy towards the CIS does not appear to be based on a pragmatic recognition of its own long-term interests. There is mutual economic dependence, though to a lesser degree on Russia's part. Russia has little to offer on the international market, save raw materials. To sustain its position, as a major power, it must pause, and then, reverse economic calamities in Kazakhstan or elsewhere in the CIS. <sup>48</sup> During the bitter currency dispute at the end of 1993, President Kerimov of Uzbekistan warned Russia that it risked losing the Uzbek market. If Central Asia can achieve economic success in the long-term, the threat may carry weight. But for the moment, the Republics need Russia more than Russia needs them. President Akaev of Kyrgyzstan said in June that the volume of Kyrgyz trade with Russia had not slipped below that of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The meager supply situation in Kyrgyzstan means that this is not a cause for celebration.<sup>49</sup> Akaev called for a Russian-Kyrgyz trading house to be set up with the aim of reversing the decline. In January 1994, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan agreed to create their own "Economic Area" with the agreement that stipulated the free circulation of goods, services, and

capital and establishment of co-ordinated policies for credit and finance, budget, tax, customs duties and currency from now until the year 2000. On February 1994, Kyrgyzstan joined the two in establishing a *tripartite economic union* with the aim of loosening ties with Russia .<sup>50</sup>

The Economic Union agreement involves the coordination of commercial, monetary and labor policies. It would create a region larger than Western Europe with a combined 48 millions of population, possessing as much oil and mineral wealth as the Gulf. The participating countries will abolish customs procedures and tariffs in order to revitalize the regional trade and to create a better economic environment for foreign investors. The Uzbek - Kazak-Kyrgyz agreement from the beginning of the year, lifting taxes on trade between the Republics, was reaffirmed by the Presidents during their summit at *Issik-Köl* in Kyrgyzstan on 30 April 1994. Prices for sugar and alcoholic drinks have also fallen. Increased rail services between Tashkent and *Cambul* have enabled more cross-border shopping trips. But, it remains to be seen whether the accord will significantly increase in overall trade between the Republics. <sup>51</sup> The *tripartite agreement* cannot solve Kazakhstan's problem with over-production of numerous commodities, which used to be dispatched to Russia, but which have now been replaced by Russian domestic production. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have started to integrate their economies into the international trade system while Tajikistan has not developed significant foreign trade capacities because of military conflicts in which it is involved and because of its meager natural resources.<sup>52</sup> *Kazakhstan* is and will be the major trading partner of Russia as the result of the economic interdependence system left over from the Soviet era and because of the large ethnic Russian presence in Kazakhstan and

geographical proximity. Although it has a more developed industry than the other Central Asian republics, it has been completely dependent on Moscow and other Central Asian republics for subsidies and imports. Kazakhstan's main foreign trade comes from the exports of both ferrous and non-ferrous metals. In the future, with its rich natural resources and rational progress towards a free market economy, Kazakhstan is likely to develop a competitive export market at both the regional and global levels.

The inter-trade traditionally takes up a large space of Uzbekistan's foreign trade transactions. Speaking in terms of 1991 figures % 87,4 of Uzbekistan's total exportation and % 81 of its total importation were engaged with the states of the former USSR. However, the disruptions that occurred in inter-republican trade in 1991, resulted in an elimination of Uzbekistan's inter-republican trade deficit and a shift toward foreign and barter trade. In 1989 and 1990, the annual deficits in inter-republican trade were recorded to be around 3.5 billion rubles (11.4% of the GDP ) In 1991, Uzbekistan's imports fell due to difficulties in supplies coming from other states, and exports surged in ruble terms from price adjustments, which resulted in a surplus in the inter-republican trade balance. Difficulties experienced in delivering products, especially foodstuff to Uzbekistan by other states of the CIS, forced the Uzbek government to increase imports from outside the former USSR. This transformation in inter-republican trade's character, with the new trend towards the use of international prices in the inter- republican trade led to a sharp increase in barter trade, such as cotton for food grains.<sup>53</sup> Compared with other former Soviet Republics, this republic has been even more dependent upon inter-republican, rather than foreign trade- links. Today it is struggling for economic independence, especially from Moscow.

Due to the considerable degree of sectoral specialization of output among the republics of the former USSR, and the relatively small size of the domestic economy, *Kyrgyzstan* has had high ratios of exports and imports to gross domestic product (GDP). In 1990, an estimated 98 % of total exports and 73% of total imports were engaged in inter-republican trade. To overcome this problem, Kyrgyz President Akaev has aimed to turn the agriculture based economy into a manufacturing one by focusing on light industries and microelectronics. Kyrgyzstan is heavily dependent on other CIS Republics for imports which are essential for its economic production structures. Its main inter-republican imports are oil and gas supplies, ferrous metals, chemicals pharmaceuticals, certain engineering products, wood and paper products, a variety of foodstuffs and most construction materials other than cement. Its foreign imports have been primarily consumer goods, such as foodstuffs, chemicals, clothing and engineering products. Kyrgyzstan's main exports to other CIS countries are non-ferrous metals, woolen products, agricultural and food products, electric power, electronic goods and selected engineering products. In 1992, Kyrgyzstan's exports to the CIS countries was 67.3 million rubles, where its exports outside the CIS was 3.3 million Rubles. Kyrgyzstan's exports to the CIS was 46.3 million Rubles where exports outside the CIS amounted to 6.5 million Rubles , which once again reveal the oft-cited dependence on Russia and the other CIS states.

*Turkmenistan* has been completely dependent on Moscow and other regions for subsidies and imports of food and textiles. The large degree of specialization in the agricultural sector has rendered the economy heavily dependent on food imports. For example, Turkmenistan exports 65% of its

grain consumption, 45% of its milk and dairy products, 70% of its potatoes and all its sugar. Turkmenistan exports more than 95% of the cotton and gas it produces, as well as 70% of its silk to other Soviet republics at artificially low prices although economic reforms have increased prices to some degree.

The end of the Soviet Union also meant the end of subsidies for Central Asia. <sup>54</sup> As can be seen in Table 4, the subsidies represent around 20% of the gross domestic product of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Despite the vast natural resources of the region, oil and gas in Turkmenistan, oil, aluminum and coal and chrome in Kazakhstan, gold in Uzbekistan, and uranium in Tajikistan, Central Asia has been the most impoverished region of the former Soviet Union. The Central Asians think the reason behind this is the over-centralized Soviet-economy, while the Russians put the blame on high birth rate. <sup>55</sup> Uneven industrial development in the 1960s and 1970s created an economic depression in most of Central Asia that was exacerbated by Gorbachev's economic reforms.

Economic links constitute the strongest link between the Central Asians and the Russian Federation. The Soviet economic policy in Central Asia had followed a classical imperialist logic. Central Asia was an integrated part of the overall Soviet system, primarily supplying raw materials for processing in the industrial centers of the European and Western Siberian parts of the Soviet Union. Russia today is trying to make use of this highly centralized nature of the former Soviet economy to extend its influence throughout the CIS. Increasing the prices of oil and gas prices closer to world prices, has made the Central Asia indebted to Russia, which in return, provided Russia with a

significant economic and political leverage over them. Russia was subsidizing all of Central Asia in the times of the USSR, and now too it is exerting pressure and influence over them.

The Central Asian Republics are better off than other former USSR republics thanks to the possession of raw materials which gives them greater potential to survive as independent states. However, due to the maldistribution of transportation network of the former Soviet Union, all the major oil pipelines and railway lines run through Russia and moreover, Russia objects to other alternative routes for the export of oil and gas. Another tool used by Moscow to exert control over Central Asia economies was the ruble. The institution of the Ruble Zone proceeded, but because there were some states which did not share the burden of economic reform, Russians issued new rubles in summer 1993. Policy differences caused further problems because of different strategies of reform which resulted in inflation throughout the CIS. By 1993 in attempt to prevent this, Russia issued new rubles in July and then tightened requirements for continued use of the ruble by other republics which forced Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to withdraw from the Ruble Zone and new currencies were introduced by late 1993. Kazakhstan issued "Tenge", Uzbekistan "Som", Turkmenistan "Manat", Kyrgyzstan "Som", Tajikistan "Somon". Expanding the ruble zone was not in Russian interests because they did not have control over money supply, subsidies, yet it was maintained to extend Russia's authority in the former republics, regardless of the economic costs involved.

It is unrealistic to expect that the Soviet economic dependence be reversed overnight. It is only possible in the medium term, building a trading

infrastructure with new countries and to produce competitive goods to world markets. Thus, to avoid the total collapse of the trading system between the Central Asian Republics and Russia, it is essential that the former trading links and networks be preserved for the time being. However, the Central Asian states are in a advantageous position due to the possession of some strategic raw materials. For example, large hydrocarbon deposits lie in a sedimentary line that extends from the North Caucuses to the Tajik-Afghan border. <sup>56</sup>

Turkmenistan has vast reserves of gas, while Kazakhstan has large undeveloped oil reserves around the Caspian Sea, and substantial coal and other metal and mineral deposits. Uzbekistan is not as lucky as the two above, but it has 60 tons of annual output capacity of gold. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are the poorest who are dependent on foreign sources for energy supply. Those Republics which are dependent on Russia for the supply of energy and other essential raw materials to develop their industry, will find it rather difficult to replace Russia as their major trading partner.

The economic interdependence among the Central Asian states and Russia is an undeniable fact of the general framework of relations between them. The new economic systems developed in the Central Asian States provide new alternatives other than Russia for them. New trade partners are on the stage, new national currencies have been issued, new transportation links are being developed and new industrial plants being built to reduce the formerly established centralized economic network of the former Soviet Union, yet it is unrealistic to expect that the economic dependence among them be reversed overnight. Due to the unique economic peculiarities between the Central Asian Republics and the Russian Federation, it is predestined that a



close and coordinated relationship is to continue at least for some two decades to come.

As the Soviet system had imposed on the Central Asian States a heavily-centralized and interdependent system, they have been closed to the outside with an "Iron Curtain". The primary action of Central Asian States in the field of economy should be to move from this Iron Curtain, to another system which will be determined by global market forces. Their trading pattern has been changing through involving increase in direct-investment , private loans and official assistance. They are also promulgating foreign investment laws to encourage joint-ventures while eager to maintain good relations with international organizations demanding stand-by agreements , rehabilitation loans and project -financing .

However, economic ties and strategic interests are not the only ties that the Russian Federation maintains towards Central Asia . Concerns with potential Islamic fundamentalism also shapes foreign policy.

## **2.4 ISLAM:** myth or reality in Central Asia ? : a strong parameter influencing Russian foreign policy -making in Central Asia

The disintegration of the USSR , not only turned the five Central Asian Republics into independent states, but also transformed Islam from a faith of the minority to one of the majority faith. The fact, that religion can serve as a strong component of political identity, like nationalism ,has led to its analysis as a salient feature of foreign policy in modern international relations.

The collapse of the USSR had raised fear among the international community and Russians that the strategic and political vacuum created by the collapse of the communist ideology and the disintegration of the of USSR will either be filled by Iran or Turkey no matter how speculative. The Russian Federation from the start declared Islamic fundamentalism as the major threat to its territorial integrity and stability. The fact that the Iranian move could expose Central Asia to Islamic fundamentalism mobilized Russia, and resulted in the Western support to back Turkey. Central Asia was projected as a battleground of a new "Great Game ", Turkey on the one hand represented by Kemalist secularism and Iran represented by Islamic fundamentalism on the other.

The 1990s have been the years when radical political Islam has gained pace in the international system. The end of the Cold War bipolarity has provided greater maneuverability for states and the message of reform and

renewal of Islam has attracted popular support, filling an ideological gap after the collapse of Communist ideology. Ever since the Muscovite dominance, Russia has tended to view the southern Muslim world as a threat to the security and integrity of the Russian state. After the disintegration of the USSR, Russian foreign policy makers wanted to formulate policies to bar the advent of Turkic nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism, so that these would not harm the integrity and stability of the Russian state.

Islam is increasingly becoming a defining force in evolving political agendas of the international system. How Islam has been and is being reshaped in the face of social, political, and economic change, and how religious identities cross-cut national identities remain to be fully understood especially in the case of Central Asian states where one can never talk about a homogeneous concept of Islam. The new burst of activism has reached such proportions that, with the demise of communism, more and more people are turning to Islam as an identity reference, and they have been holding religion as a source of transformation.<sup>57</sup> Islam has been and continues to be a source of identity among the Muslims of Central Asia. Many members of the major nationalities of that region do not differentiate between being a Muslim and belonging to their particular nationality. National customs are viewed as Islamic and Islamic traditions are viewed as national traditions. Even people who are not religious in a spritual sense are said to participate in Islamic rituals, because these are seen as expressions of membership in the nationality. The strength of the Islamic component of national identity in Central Asia does not always bring with it a strong sense of belonging to a broader, supranational Islamic Community, however, which is a hypothetical formation in any event. In Central Asia, traditional Islamic rituals such as circumcision, funerals, or the

observance of Ramadan have been important cultural expressions of Muslim identity distinguishing the Muslims from the *Slavs*. The oft-cited "*homoislamicus* - *homosovieticus*" distinction was a consequence of this process.

The new successor states in Central Asia are about to rediscover the roots of their identity where religion was considered as one of the strongest identity references. There is a fear among the Russians and the West that the brand of Islam involved would be of the extremist type, originating from Iranian activities. Nevertheless, this development can not be attributed to Iranian activities. It could have happened with or without an Islamic Iran especially when one considers the Shiite-Sunni gap : the Muslims of Central Asia are different from the Iranians in that, they are predominantly Sunni. In Shiism, the clergy are empowered to moderate between God and man, thus the mullahs and ayatollahs have important leadership roles in interpreting God's will to the faithful. Among the Sunni, man's relationship with God is direct and the clergy serve as advisors. Another point is that there has been no change in the bureaucratic structure of these states: they are still governed by the same elites of the former Soviet system and bureaucratic infrastructures have not changed. Moreover, on the one hand, there is a difference between desiring a society with Islam playing a more prominent role, and on the other hand, trying to establish a polity based on a militant and extremist interpretation of Islam. The leaders of these states make it clear that despite their desire for an Islamic type of polity, they have no wish to imitate Iran.<sup>58</sup> Second, clerical establishment in these states are neither so established nor are they supported by religious endowments and individual donations which constitute an inhibiting factor before the development of the radical brand of Islam. Third, even if these states were to rely on Islam as the conceptual and ideological

underpinning of their new societies and polities, it is unlikely that their Islam would be of the militant brand like it is in Iran. Finally, after 70 years of Soviet domination which inflicted severe damage on the heritage of an integrated religious system, it is difficult to expect Central Asia to fall into the integrative potential of Muslim world-religion which has never been homogeneous or ever will be .

Islam may play an important role in the dramatic changes effecting contemporary Central Asia in that it provides an underpinning for a culture that until the late 1920s regarded itself as wholly Muslim, There is a heritage created by the atheist USSR and the Islamic civilization, which may find a synthesis in secular Islam.

"Russia has grown up with the struggle against Islam", said the Hungarian Orientalist Vambery in 1875, and Russia is the one and only power which has inflicted considerable wounds upon Islam and which will remain Islam's dangerous opponent, untiring in the work which it has begun. <sup>59</sup>. State-organized atheism forced the people to get away from their religion. The Soviet struggle against Islam was very careful, the political target was well-defined: to bring all the Muslims under the rule of Russian Communism. They pursued policies-movements of Islamic content. To propagate Communist politics among the Muslims, "The Commissariat for Muslim Affairs" came into being, under the leadership of Molla Nur Vahidov. The Soviet government of Russia founded a "Militant Atheists Society" in Turkistan in 1926, under the leadership of Nasır Törekul. On April 1929, the Act concerning the religious communities, referring to the obligation to register themselves and setting out the rules for the practice of religious duties was passed. The radical struggle against Islam

forced the Muslims to keep their religious duties at the minimum possible personal level. The communists had made it a part of their strategy to encourage their Atheist Movement to slander Islam, and to reject Allah, the Prophets and the Koran. The mere fact that the Muslims have had no mosques, literature, no trained clergy, no freedom to express their faith, represent the success of the communists. During the Second World War, the Soviet Union was forced to consent to the establishment of administrative bodies for all the religions in the USSR. Certainly, Muslims tried in various ways to keep Islam alive, under the conditions of Communist rule. The Russians wanted to develop the sense of homosovieticus against homoislamicus seeing Islam dangerous to Slavic integrity in the Soviet Union. Some say that the repression of religion only pushed it underground where some believe that latent forces of Islam merely wait to burst out at first chance to dominate the thinking and life of the area once again. There has been atheist rule for a long time and they were dependent on the Slavic people who were afraid of a Muslim block. The Central Asian people yet, are neither in need of a communist nor an Islamic Revolution, because living independence after long years of domination is something very precious for them .

The challenge offered by Islamic parties to secular regimes has transnational potential because, Central Asia has a cultural unity that transcends national boundaries, ethnic groups and political organizations, and cuts across national boundaries where Islam is the only *common denominator*. The Islamic Revival Party for example, operates in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) which has been banned by all five Central Asian Republics calls for the overthrow of communism and the establishment of the republics as Islamic Republics, and it foresees religious

extremism. Uzbekistan has outlawed all religious parties and any attempt by the clergy to bid for ruling through the Parliament. The spokesman of IRF-Abdullah Yusuf said:

*When Western people talk about Islam, they talk about it being fanatic, and they use the term "fundamentalist", I'd like to emphasize one thing: we cannot draw a parallel with the Iranian society. There is a great difference between Shia and Sunni sects of Islam. The spiritual leader who will be a chief of state here should not only be a member of the clergy, he has to know secular sciences-Pakistan is a more suitable model for us, what we want is a democracy of our own-an Islamic democracy, although all the elements of democracy are in Islam, so we don't need to add the word. With our people, the notion of democracy means no restrictions,* <sup>59</sup>

Yusuf added that it would not be a one party state, the franchise would be universal, the rights of minorities and ethnic groups will be protected, and private property would be honored. But "Anti-Islamic" practices, for example, would be forbidden. <sup>60</sup>

Of all the Central Asian Republics, Tajikistan is the place where nationalist and religious forces have come together - an unofficial alliance that could shape any third attempt to end communist rule. Religious leader Quzi said: " There is a great deal of unity here, our people have believed in Islam for 130 years " <sup>61</sup>. And Islam is 90% of the Central Asian culture and tradition, so one can not separate something religious from something national. But, some people do not want an Islamic state because, they have lived a long time with atheism, they are interdependent with the Slavic republics and they do

not ever want Islamic states round them. Quzi continued, " We don't want the same thing to happen to the Islamic revolution that happened to the communist revolution.<sup>62</sup> " Since, Tajiks need economic assistance, outside help and the international institutions will resist such an idea of Islamic state, the West should never expect the repetition of the Iranian revolution in Tajikistan .

Though, Islam will play a strategic role in the shaping of the region's transition to post-Soviet balances.. Tajiks encourage the trend of having closer relations with Iran and Afghanistan with which they share a thousand years of history being against the idea of creating a new Turkistan, they do not want to be liberated from Russian domination only to be dictated by another group.

Russian policy-makers fear that the influence of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan is bound to grow somewhat on the Central Asian states : where fundamentalism is either a strong political force (Pakistan) or is the ruling ideology (Iran). With the extinction of the communist ideology, Islam or its fundamentalist variant may become a powerful political force to a lesser degree in Central Asia, but more so in Tajikistan. Popular discontent, instability and economic crisis may enhance the charm of militant and fundamentalist Islam. The Islamic Renaissance Party asserts that the present-day ruling parties are remains of the communist regime and they cannot represent the people. With the ideological vacuum, the Islamic opposition created especially in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan wings of the Islamic Revival Party, and religious figures like Qazi Akbar Törecanzade of Tajikistan, have been using the concepts of Islam to attack the regimes based in the central and eastern mountainous regions. In the Fergana Valley, traditionally a tower of Islam, which traverses Uzbekistan,



Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the connection between economic hardship and the strength of Islam is similarly clear. It is manifested by the incontestable popularity of ideas rooted in the vision of the society that incorporates Islamic values in its identity, politics and system of justice.<sup>57</sup>

Central Asians are inheritors of a glorious Islamic past, and today mosques are spreading everywhere as are religious schools after years of oppression of Islam . With the demise of Soviet institutions, ideology and the persistence of economic crises, Islam could become a powerful force in Central Asia where with independence, came an inevitable religious revival. Overnight Islam became a common denominator, a powerful vehicle for asserting identity. People instinctively felt that it was Islam which is not merely a set of religious beliefs, but a way of life and civilization that made them different from the Russians. Now overtly calling themselves Muslims, and asserting their Islamic identity, they have found at last what makes a community distinct from all others in former Soviet Republics (The oft-cited homoislamicus-homosovieticus distinction). The Islamic ideology embodies the ideas of nationalism and sovereignty in itself. <sup>58</sup> Thus, it is indisputable that , Islam is going to be an issue worth serious consideration in Central Asia for strategists after the Cold-War.

Today, Islam may emerge as a barrier against extended Russian role in Central Asia where Islam is becoming a defining item of the political agenda in that it helps the people distinguish themselves from the Slavs, and helps them unite within a system which it foresees as total way of life. In the Tajik case for example, the consolidation of a radical Islamist opposition during the crisis in 1992, revealed that Islamist groups had suppressed the

nationalist political groupings in the new political order . The Tajik case is a clear example of how Russia considers the *Near Abroad*, and how sensitive it is about the rising role of Islam albeit in that it would clearly have an Iranian dimension in this case in Central Asia. The danger of the crisis in Tajikistan raised fears in Russia that it may become the carbon copy of the Afghan War. Thus securing the southern borders became imperative. Russia calculated that if Tajikistan turned into an Islamic state, it would lead to the further penetration of Islamic fundamentalism into the North. Despite the bad memories of the Afghan War, the Russian involvement proves how serious they take the "Islamic factor " in the *Near Abroad* and especially in Tajikistan . The Russian devotion to the Tajik crisis also reveals the ascendance of the Eurasianists to power and the reintegration of the *Near Abroad* to the context foreign policy. The crisis in 1992 justifies Russian worries of external intrusion. Allen Hetmanek <sup>61</sup> argues in a case study recently made, that Islamic resurgence in Tajikistan originating in late 1970 was mobilized by the Iranian Revolution.

***The Atlanticists and Islam*** : They contemplate that ethno-religious conflicts may jeopardize the security of 30 million ethnic Russians living in the *Near Abroad* and may necessitate Russian intervention. The potential spread of Islamic radicalism in Central Asia is connected to political and security dynamics of the former southern flank, and thus its security and defense preoccupies a significant place in the Euro-Atlanticist view. Europeans and the Atlanticist have the same views about an Islamic threat, and thus, the Russians may form the front line against a perceived Islamic threat. However, it is not possible to talk about a homogeneous Islam in Central Asia and in the world at large. They argue that due to the congruence of interest, the West will delegate power to Russia to contain the Islamic threat on behalf of the Western world.

Russia will forget-disguise its Eastern image and lead Central Asia to the path of civilized world, towards a strong security relationship with the West .<sup>62</sup> Yet, in December 1994, Russia declared that it was not adhering to the Partnership for Peace negotiations which portrays Russian devotion to this end.

***Islam and the Eurasianists:*** Russian foreign policy must secure both internal and external borders of the CIS and good ties with the Southern flank are a must. The stability of Central Asia preserves a pivotal role as their security conditions the overall security of Russia. Russia's interests will be undermined with overlapping ethno-territorial nationalism where conflicts may provoke the Russian minority population. A vulnerable South may invite Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, thus a strong integrated process in Central Asia and an activist Russian foreign policy is a primary necessity. First, they argue that Islam shall not be opposed totally and must not lead to the wholesale opposition and hostility. Islam and the Islamic world must be presented as a legitimate security concern. Proximity to the Muslim world is determining Russia's geopolitical position and diversifies its international relations. Secondly, Russia shall not cooperate with the West to contain Islam, the Russian Federation has its own Muslim minority population: its *inner abroad* and its geopolitical continuity with the Islamic world. Russia has always been afraid of being encircled by an Islamic -Turkic world, still the Russians look at their South as a potential friend necessary for their security and stability and also to counterbalance the Western world. Russia has the reconciling role in bridging together the Turkic and Muslim elements in that ,Russia has always been a mixture of Slavic Turkic components, of Orthodoxy and Islam. Russia seems to keep the persistence and influence of Islam within manageable limits and reduce it if possible . Russia, through the mass media, and other means, tried to deter

people from practicing Islam and direct the population towards atheism in the past. The Eurasianists think that a too vigorous anti-Islamic propaganda would be counterproductive. The philosophy of the Eurasianist School is the dominant approach towards Islam today in Central Asia.

### **3.4.3 The Tajik Case :**

The Tajik crisis is a useful example to portray how Russia considers its *Near Abroad* in the context of the Eurasianist school of foreign policy . The danger of escalation of the crisis in Tajikistan caused fears in Russia that it may become a carboncopy of the Afghan War, thus securing the Southern borders became imperative. Russia calculated that if Tajikistan turned into an Islamic state, it would lead to the further penetration of Islamic fundamentalism into the North.

The crisis in Tajikistan has dominated the political agenda of the newly independent states of Central Asia, but also has also done the most to energize Russia's strategic policy towards the region within the context of the Eurasianist school. At the beginning, until the escalation of the conflict in 1992, the Russian involvement was limited ; they considered it as a intra-clan conflict and there were no vital Russian interests in Tajikistan to justify any Russian involvement. Moreover, the memory of Afghanistan had reduced the desire to intervene. The 201 st motor rifle division which was left in Tajikistan after the disintegration of the USSR, was ordered to remain neutral. Russian foreign policy makers began to show greater concern about the Tajik conflict by late 1992. The vulnerability of the Tajik regime to Mujahideen influence and border penetration increasingly captured the attention of both Moscow and especially

the Central Asian states. The appeals from the Central Asian leaders and the warnings from the international community about the consequences of the refusal of fulfilling its obligations of maintaining stability has mobilized Russian policy makers. Islam Kerimov, President of Uzbekistan, for example said; "If Russia fails to understand her strategic interests in Central Asia, then her southern borders will face directly onto Islamic Countries".<sup>63</sup> Kerimov wanted to underline that unless Russia defended the Southern borders of the CIS, maintained pro-Russian elites in power in the region, and prevented encroachments of the Afghan Mujahideen and Iranian fundamentalists, then Central Asia would be engulfed by the Islamic fundamentalism and present Russia with a highly explosive strategic threat on its southern borders. Russian Defense Minister, Pavel Grachev, argued that if Tajikistan turned into an Islamic state, it would lead to the further penetration of Islamic fundamentalism into the North, -Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and further with potentially dangerous consequences for Russia.<sup>65</sup> In September 1992. The 201st division was strengthened, and plans were designed to send the CIS peacekeeping force to Tajikistan which consisted of units from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

The Uzbek-Russian mediators conferred legitimacy upon the new Tajik government elected in November 1992, which was dominated by the traditional power elites. In late December, the Russian 201 st division participated in the new Tajik government's ousting of the Democrat-Islamist opposition from Dushanbe into the Pamir mountains and Afghanistan. By the beginning of 1993, Russia had restored the old political order in Tajikistan, supporting one side in the conflict against the other. However, some circles in Russian public opinion feared that the defeat of the opposition by military means, could drag

Russia into an Afghan-style guerrilla war, and that Russia could only avoid this outcome by sponsoring a political dialogue between different factions and groups in Tajik society. These were confirmed by an attack on the Russian post at the Afghan - Tajik border on July 14 1993, which resulted in the deaths of more than 20 Russian soldiers, and forced the Russians to take a more discriminating approach towards the Tajik conflict.<sup>66</sup>

On 7 August 1993, Yeltsin convened a Russian-Central Asian Summit in Moscow where the outlines of the new Russian foreign policy were developed. First, Yeltsin made it clear that all Central Asian states would have to cooperate with Russia in resolving the Tajik problem, and that Russia was unwilling to shoulder the whole burden. Second, Yeltsin emphasized to the Tajik leadership that it could not expect continued Russian support unless it agreed to engage in a direct dialogue with all sections of the opposition. Third, the Foreign Ministers of all the countries signed a letter to the UN Secretary General, requesting UN observers to be sent to Tajikistan. The August Summit reflected a new approach on the part of the Russian foreign policy to the Tajik crisis. The dominance of the Eurasianist school was felt and, Moscow virtually admitted that its one sided support for the traditional elite and its reliance on military suppression of the opposition had been counter-productive. The Summit set out the framework for a more permanent political solution to the Tajik civil war. The majority of the Russian public opinion was against Russian withdrawal from Tajikistan. The absence of a clear mandate for Russian involvement in the affairs of Central Asia has led Russian policy-makers to attempt to fasten ties with regional powers, who might be able to share some of the responsibilities for maintaining regional stability. Uzbekistan has been

Russia's best partner in cooperation in Central Asia. On May 1993, an Agreement was signed between the Chairman of Supreme Council of Tajikistan, Imamali Rahmanov, and the President of Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Aid. In the meantime, a package of seven documents were signed providing for Tajik and Russian forces to cooperate militarily, economically, and in defense of state borders, which has critical strategic and political implications for both states and for the other states of Central Asia. The Agreement between the two states stipulates a joint policy on defense and military technology, including financing military programs and buying arms. If an act of aggression is committed against one of the parties to the Agreement, the other will offer assistance. The article points out that the Agreement provides for the keeping Russian armed forces on the territory of Tajikistan for a transitional period <sup>67</sup>, and it focuses on the border problems. The Agreement mentions a transitional period until Tajikistan has its own border troops, and it is delegating the right to ward its borders and those of Russia and the CIS, to Russian border troops. After the deaths of 60,000 and the mass departure of 250,000 people from the area of conflict, the signing of the Agreement provided a relief from the disaster. The damage inflicted over the Tajik economy and transport is about 350 million rubles. During the negotiations of the Agreement, Rahmanov said: "The presence of the 201 st Russian Division in Tajikistan is a guarantee of peace. If it had not been here, the number of people killed would not have been thousands but about a million. If it had not been Russia and Boris Yeltsin personally... Tajikistan would have ceased to exist". <sup>68</sup>

Russia by the Agreement of 25 May 1993, aimed at the prevention of two potential war zones ; Tajikistan and Afghanistan from joining into one zone

with the threat of a *domino effect*. The Agreement also strengthened Russia's political and military position along the Amudarya and Panj rivers, thus creating the conditions for preventing fighters and arms from being infiltrated from Afghan territory to Tajik territory.<sup>64</sup> The Russian newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* of May 27 1994 published an article entitled "Russia and Tajikistan are back together again" which gave an extremely positive assessment of the Agreement between the two sovereign states and emphasized that the Agreement stipulates a joint policy, on defense and military technology, including financing military programs, and buying arms.<sup>65</sup> During the signing ceremony, Yeltsin remarked that the borders of Tajikistan, which are simultaneously the borders of the CIS, must be guarded through their joint efforts.

At the Collective Security Agreement signed by the leaders of the CIS in Tashkent in May 1992, Russia has taken upon itself to defend the borders of the states of Central Asia and prevent terrorists, arms, and drugs from finding their way through the CIS, into the countries of Europe. All of this indicates that the *Agreement of 25 May 1993* increases Russia's authority in the CIS and particularly among the Central Asian states. The Agreement will also improve things for Russians in Tajikistan who have been subject to danger during the war when over 150.000 Russians were forced to leave the Republic. However, some circles in the Russia are afraid about the implications of the Agreement. On May 27, 1992 *Nezavisimaya Gazette* published an article, "*Is Russia being drawn into another unnecessary war?*".<sup>66</sup> The article asserted that the Agreement with Dushanbe could turn into a second Afghanistan. The article continued: "Russian military figures consider that the situation in Tajikistan risks becoming a carbon copy of Afghanistan,



with Russian troops in the valleys and partisans, some of whom are Afghans, in the mountains. Russia 's war with Afghanistan shows what would happen. Having signed a document for joint military action, Russia is being drawn more and more into another war that is totally alien to it ". Moreover, the 48 article concluded the signing of the Agreement would strengthen the position of the Tajik government, which would hardly improve the state of human rights in the Republic.<sup>67</sup>

The specter of fundamentalist Islam over Central Asia is undeniably present, helped by the ideological vacuum arising out of the demise of communism , but it has been exaggerated out of all proportion .<sup>68</sup> Islam in Central Asia is not and will not be homogeneous , and the future shape of Islam in Central Asia will surely depend more than anything else upon indigenous influences, and not on external alien ideologies. Russian foreign policy aims to ensure that political Islam does not grow to the proportion to endanger their interests and quake their *sphere of influence*. The impact of religion should be evaluated in context , alongside factors like the level of economic development, the performance of existing socio-political institutions, the influence of international actors, and the domino-effect of trends in other countries.

## CHAPTER IV. TURKISH AND IRANIAN ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL ASIA AS A FACTOR INFLUENCING RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY -MAKING AND RUSSIA

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the formation of a new state of affairs has introduced new states into the geography of Central Asia where there are many states playing for prominence in the economic, cultural and political arena. The intense structural change the Central Asian Republics have been experiencing requires urgent and organized outside help, where neighboring and related countries have a multifaceted interest in the Central Asian Republics. Though Russia remains to be the dominant external power in Central Asia, it perceives a challenge to its hegemony by other outside powers, namely Turkey and Iran. Russian foreign policy has come to take into consideration the Iranian and Turkish activities and policies in Central Asia as an external factor of its policy formulation .

Transition from the politico-economic paradigm of the Soviet period is the main theme in the Central Asian Republics, and interpreting and responding to this change is particularly important to bear up regional and international stability. Given that these states are trying to reconstruct a political and cultural history for themselves after years of communist domination, Turkey, Iran and Russia have a lot to contribute to their process of transition, and the *so-called rivalry* could help the Central Asian Republics in the supply of various services which they need urgently and desperately. Central Asia was projected to become the battleground for a new game between Iran and Turkey . The Islamic

fundamentalist front backed by Iran and the secularist front backed by Turkey are the players of the game .

#### **4.1. Turkey and Central Asian Republics:**

When the newly independent states had gained their sovereignty in a rather abrupt and unprecedented manner in 1991, they found themselves in need of a role model. The Soviet communist model was no longer there. The outside world looked at them to come up with rapid solutions to shoulder radical structural reforms, while undergoing gigantic transformation both economically and politically. The people had been torn between constant pressure to create the "Soviet man" and the folk culture which kept them Turkic and/or Muslim and different in the face of all Rusification attempts , including offers of better jobs to those who agreed to accept the Slavic manner. In the final analysis, however, they felt they had to turn to Turkey to acquire the know-how in order to adjust themselves to the outside world, the so-called "Western World" which had been closed to them. As Turkey was the only similar international entity able to boast of full integration into the world at large of course. Identities that were maintained in Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, were also similar to that of Anatolian Turks, linguistically, and culturally. They were introduced to internationally influential institutions, like the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) , the whole UN system. Powerful world groupings such as the Group of Seven (G-7) , the OECD, NATO, and the European Council and their members pointed Turkey as an acceptable model. <sup>1</sup>

The Soviet policy was geared towards creating a new Soviet man, which was to be homogeneous in language, religion, culture, education in order to be able to exert a full control over the communist system. The aim was to create a society composed of individuals of various origins, but centered around the common denominator of communism and the Russian language and culture. Turkey has unique assets at hand as to its relations with the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union in Central Asia. This is a land mass of 3 million square kilometers and a population of approximately 150 million. The diminishing resources of the world at an increasing speed, and the ever increasing competition for market share gives Turkey a further advantage of access to the untouched resources of the region. According to the Theory of Mackinder, the *Heartland* is now acquiring more and more significance, that the influence to be exerted in this region becomes very important. The vast natural and mineral resources, the great agricultural potential, and the ownership of strategic, nuclear and space technologies further the significance of the relations to be established between these states and Turkey.

The newly independent Turkic states have all decided to follow market economies, but it is a long and harsh way to stabilization. It is a very difficult process towards transition, because the former Soviet republics used to be very much interdependent to each other, so Turkey has to be very cautious towards policy formulation. Although there is a tendency of loosening the ties and seeking for alternatives, one of the most important issues that Turkish foreign policy making has to take into consideration, is the extremely interdependent situation of the Central Asian Republics.

The imposition of the Russian language has been a tragedy for the Turkic peoples in that many offsprings were not taught their native languages and Russian has been the lingua franca. It has been agreed at the Cooperation in Communication Conference held in 16-23 December, 1992 in Ankara that every measure will be taken to provide the union of terms among the dialects of Turkish. Today there are three alphabets under discussion to be used in the newly independent Turkish republics. The Orhun-Yenisey alphabet which represents the Turkish phonetics, the Arab alphabet which had been in use for 100 years which has deep roots in religious, linguistic, philosophical roots, the Latin, and the Cyrillic. The idea that two alphabets have been already used and that they can not stand a third because it leads to discongruity between generations prevailed. Therefore, the Cyrillic will still be in use. Because, the trend in the world is towards the use of Latin Alphabet, the Republic of Turkey promotes the use of that presently. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are the only two Republics where the Latin alphabet is in use.

The Western countries were happy about the disintegration of the USSR since the dismantling of the huge military block freed them from the threat of nuclear and military confrontation. Yet, the announcement of the "Turkish World stretching from the Adriatic to the Chinese barrier" has not been received positively by the international community as it is considered as another grouping dangerous to the West. Turkey being conscious of this fact, seeks a *role of bridge* between the Turkish republics and the international Community.

The 20th century has brought great changes to the Turkish World, It was only the Turkish Republic and the Turkish Northern Republic of Cyprus

which enjoyed the spirit of independence. <sup>2</sup> Now there are nine independent Turkish states in the international system. The disintegration of the USSR at the end of the 1991 has opened new frontiers to the Turkish Foreign Policy . Before 1989, Turkey's foreign policy was limited by constraints of the Cold War balance of power in the proximate region. Over a long period, starting from the post-Cold War I settlements of 1923, Turkey's international interests perceptibly extended beyond Asia Minor, and pre-imperial links with the Turkish peoples of Central Asia and the Black and Caspian Sea Regions. <sup>3</sup> The barriers due to the hegemony of Russia had inhibited Turkey from consolidating ethnic, cultural , and political links with those countries. Today the regions contiguous to Turkey are getting through new challenges and opportunities. Turkey, as it is often repeated, share a large degree of common culture, and language with the Central Asian Republics. Being a secular country, it has a further advantage in helping and bridging them into the international community. Last but not least, given its European connection, its participation in cooperative arrangements in the Central Asian Republics would link the former-Soviet Muslim states in a more organic way to Europe and to the international community. <sup>4</sup> It has tried to assist the access of the Republics to the international community and their membership to the UN and CSCE . There is a great opportunity for Turkey since a long time to play a leading, determining, guiding role in the region.

In this aftermath of the Soviet disintegration , Turks have become more conscious about their diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, characteristics, and the awareness is growing day by day. One can share the spirit and speak Turkish ,communicate easily everywhere in Central Asia. The suspended relations with the cousins are now to flourish, and finally take its natural context. The exaggerated fear of pan-Turkism is played by Iran and other regional rivals

who have become anxious about the new augmented role of Turkey and the reemergence of the new Turkish community.

#### **4.1.1 The Turkish Model**

The socialist model which governed all aspects of life during 70 years is now null and void, having left 250 million people without a proper model and backward by Western standards. All successors are prone to choose the liberal-democratic path for their future but changing a system totally requires huge costs, something that they can not afford alone. The need for a model came into the scene at this point. The West and especially the USA has articulated interest towards Turkey's playing a greater role in the area instead of Iran. All have an interest in backing a secular and democratic country guiding and modeling the newly independent, natural resource-rich countries. Central Asia's rulers are more drawn to Turkey because each of the republics' presidents is an advocate of a secular model of development. President of Uzbekistan Islam Kerimov said, for example, "The Turkish republic is the Venus Planet for all the Turkish peoples in the World, we have chosen our way; we are going to collaborate with Turkey shoulder to shoulder through our future and we will succeed."<sup>5</sup>

Turkey constitutes a model of attraction economically and politically, and with many Turks of external background, it has the potential to become the cultural, economic and economic magnet for these countries. The *Turkish model* implies a socio-economic and political system. The people of Central Asia are now more distant to opinions and ideologies of Russia which still carry traces of communism. On the other hand, they do not feel close to the Western

community and culture notwithstanding the fact that they are in need of modernization , development and prosperity while preserving their culture and society . Nor do they view the rule of the mollahs neither realistic, nor desirable. However, there is the Turkish alternative with which they share a common culture, linguistic background, religion, and race. This is not only why Turkey is attractive to the newly independent Central Asian republics. Turkey has the competitive edge in the latest technology in many fields. Western countries do not want to modernize old plants in Central Asia but prefer turn-key plants. Turkey can fill this gap and provide small and medium size entrepreneurship to Central Asia.

As a consequence of the disintegration of the USSR , Turkey's role has gained much attraction in the international fora. Several press articles have pointed out to the fundamentalist threat focusing on Western anxiety over Iran's influence war and underlined Turkey's mission as a moderator . However, Catherine Lalumiere ( The General Secretary of the Council of Europe) in her trip to Central Asia said that the Turkish Model was an appropriate model for the newly independent successor states . Claus Schuman from the European Council said that Turkey was a member of the European council since 1949 with Islam at the core of its culture and society. It is because of this, that the Central Asian leaders emphasize the Turkish Model, being an independent and democratic social order.<sup>6</sup> Technical and economic assistance by the Turkish Republic have been the major policy tools towards ensuring a balanced transition to liberal market economy and democratic government. In its search for pursuing an active and weighted foreign policy in the aftermath of the Cold War, Turkey has tried to institutionalize its efforts and *Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization* Black Sea Economic Cooperation was instituted,



which is the centerpiece of Ankara 's efforts to develop a more active foreign policy. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization which was established in June 1992 in Istanbul by Turkey, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, together with inclusion of the newly independent Republics, is the major Turkish initiative in an attempt for regional cooperation. *The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization* involves a gradual elimination of trade barriers among its members and the fostering of joint actions and cooperative approaches to common problems such as environmental degradation, communication, and transportation networks and the banking and finance sectors. <sup>7</sup> Reflecting a functionalist approach, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization as well as the cooperation between the Turkish states are the institutional instruments of promoting peaceful and promising Eurasian area. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) , already constituted by Turkey , Iran and Pakistan has been joined by the Central Asian Republics and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the second major Turkish initiative in the process of institutionalizing relations between Turkey and the Turkic World.

Turkey aims at diversifying the trade and economic links of the successors. Turkey's approach has been overtly approved by the USA and European Union, Japan, and various trilateral cooperation agreements have been accorded for the extension of assistance to the newly independent Central Asian countries.. Turkey with its democratic and secular order has been able to establish triangular cooperation with European Union's Technical Assistance to the CIS (TACIS) sectional programs, in an attempt to seek finance for the realization of its projects in Central Asia. The Turkish government has been

defending the view that the integration of the Central Asian countries to the world economy at large is both essential and inevitable.

Turkey's technical and economic assistance to the region has nevertheless been conducted with an eye to Moscow's sensibilities over the Russian minorities in the region.<sup>8</sup> Turkey's linguistic and cultural proximity could also be considered as a tool in countering the Central Asian people's mobilization towards fundamentalist Islam. Turkey's initiatives of television broadcasting and expansion of telecommunications links to the Republics have been significant in promoting images that there is also the secular alternative to the religious approach of Iran. Turkey was the first country to recognize and accredit ambassadors to the newly independent successor states and has signed more than 250 agreements and protocols with the Central Asian Republics in economic, telecommunication, transportation, training, banking, education, technical assistance projects. Private investment is an area where potential to further the ties is the greatest. Some 6000 Turkish businessmen and big firms are operating in the area and their commercial activities are under the guarantee provided by bilateral agreements on avoidance of double taxation and on the protection of investments.

The shrinking resources in the world at a high speed, and the ever increasing competition for market share gives Turkey a further advantage of access to the unspoiled resources of the region. Turkey has the key to open these regions to the world markets. Also, the hydro-carbon reserves of the region constitute a major economic interest for Turkey, and has become a source of competition between Iran and Turkey while both states have

developed projects for the extraction of oil, and its transportation through pipelines laid under the territory of each state.

Turkey has had similar experience in fighting the problems of transition in the near past . The Turkish people are very aware of their responsibility of assisting their brothers with the comprehension that their problems unsolved, the global community shall stay on dynamite.

Nevertheless, Turkey must consider first of all, the inalienable and dominant role of Russia in Central Asia, even if not in the same manner in the times of the Soviet Union. Another hindrance is geographic discongruity; the problem of dependence on Iran for Turkey is accessibility may be used as a leverage over Turkey. The difficulties facing Turkish economy also may prohibit, interdict its possible further involvement in Central Asia.

#### **4.2 Iran and Central Asia**

Now that the diplomatic maneuver capability of Iran is free with the ending of the Iran- Iraq War, there is a new determinism to play the key role and the power to influence among the newly emerging Soviet Muslims. In this context, Central Asian Republics constitute a major target of Iranian foreign policy actions. Enjoying a favorable size and location, in the Middle East region, and together with the "*Oil Factor*", Iran *has a* reinforced potential to be a regional dominant actor. The feeling of encirclement Iran has been living with makes it try to utilize every forum to break the circle. In an attempt to stabilize Northwest Asia, it seeks to prevent a new Russian sphere in the geography, alleviate the upsurge of pan-Turkism and propagate Islamic solidarity. Iran

today searches for an identity by which it can assert itself nationally and internationally . Having had physical control over the Central Asian territory historically, the Persian culture has been dominant in Central Asia for centuries and has left a cultural imprint on the lives of the people in the given geography .<sup>9</sup>

Iran enjoys a further advantage; it has vast resources of oil and nowadays it is trying to extend its influence over the Caspian Sea by nuclear arms delivery. Persian language having been the cultural language for a long time is also comprehensible in a large area, if not as much as the Turkish language. Iran plays for becoming the cultural center of Central Asia, and being an oil producing and exporting country, it has the necessary expertise and technology to assist the Central Asian Republics in producing and exporting their oil. Iran could also be the gateway to the Indian Ocean for the landlocked Central Asian Republics. It wants to exert control over oil supply in the area.

The main objective of the latest five-year plan of Iran is to increase the non-oil exports ( wants to sell pharmaceuticals, farm machinery, cars and oil products to the ex-Soviet Republics) . It also wants to end its traditional isolation by gaining new friends from the Central Asian states fertile for the Iranian influence. <sup>10</sup> So, it is expected that Iran will concentrate on diversifying its trade link with the Central Asian Republics.

The Islamic ideology is becoming more and more a part of the modern international relations, while filling the vacuum of ideology after the withering away of communism. The Uzbek President, Kerimov said in his 18 June 1992 interview with *Nezavisimaya Gazete* said that he was worried by the growth of economic and ideological ties between Turkmenistan and Iran. The construction

of strategic highways between the two countries and the spawning of Iranian-backed mosques eventually pose a threat to Uzbek territory . Kerimov also claimed that the Iranians were increasingly influential in Tajikistan and two or three Iranian aircraft land in Dushanbe. <sup>11</sup> The nature of their cargo will be a matter for history to discuss. Portraits of Khomeini have been shown on the streets of Dushanbe, and Uzbekistan accused Iran of supporting the Islamist front in Tajikistan.

The language spoken in Tajikistan is a version of Persian and with the dissolution of the Soviet system, the rich Persian cultural heritage which for centuries bound together the ancient cities of Northern Iran with Buhara, Samakand, and Khiva can luxuriate again. Yet, this is culture of the pre-Revolutionary Iran, and it is hard for Iran to become the model for the newly independent Central Asian republics . There are overlapping nationalities on both side of the ex-Soviet Iranian border, where Iran has a particular interest in the Muslim Republics and regions of the ex-USSR that once lay under the cultural domination of Iran.

In recent years, Iran has funded the construction of many mosques, religious schools and complexes , and has been the major supplier of religious material not only in Tajikistan where it has a strong foothold because of linguistic and ethnic affinities, but also throughout Central Asia. Now Iranian leaders have announced that they must play a greater role in order to counter the influence of Turkey , which they claim is seeking influence in Central Asia in order to defeat the forces of Islamic revivalism .<sup>12</sup> Yet, there are fears related to Iran's revolutionary style that it may become the model for the political system in Central Asia which would pose threats to the new world order. The policies of

Iran could encourage the Muslim Republics to adopt radical policies, and consequently mobilize them to own nuclear weapons which could threaten Western interests. However, Iran has to face a sectarian split with the Central Asian countries that with the adoption of the Shiite creed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Iran became a barrier separating Central Asia from the other Islamic countries. Iranians are Shiite, a characteristic which they only share though partly with Azerbaijan. The West has always been irritated by the rise of militant Islam and Iran-backed fundamentalism. However, Iran's role in the region has become more pragmatic than ideological, with an emphasis on building commercial cooperation and cultural diplomacy with the Central Asian states, rather than exporting Islamic revolution. Iran, for example, has initiated the *majma-i farhangi*, a Persian speaking association linking Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the year 1992. Iran has also established the Caspian Sea Cooperation Council which includes Kazakhstan, Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan in 1991.<sup>13</sup> A center for the Study of Central Asia and the Caucasus CSCAC was instituted in 1991 in Tehran.

A major project underway is the rail link project between Iran and Turkmenistan. The link will be through Mahshad in Iran and Ashkabad in Turkmenistan. Iran may offer access to the Gulf ports, providing an alternative to the traditional Russian routes to Central Asia and particularly to Turkmenistan. Various projects announced may not be materialized, but this is a clear indication that Iran has a *pragmatic* approach towards Central Asia. All these may drive us through the conclusion that Iran will not manipulate the Islamic factor in ways feared by the West, because this would harm its interests in the international arena.

Iranian President Rafsanjani has no interest in exporting the Islamic Revolution to Central Asia, which has started to lose its euphoria in Iran. What he wants is to establish good relations with the West, and in the process of the *modus-vivendi*, no radical policies as to the export of Islamic revolution to Central Asia is expected. The new Iranian *modus-vivendi* will inhibit its radical moves as it is feared by the international community, so we can say that Iran will not be playing the fundamentalist card overtly and by using the means the feared by the Central Asian leaderships. The fact that Islam is a source of identity formation in Central Asia does not necessarily mean that, this will be of a militant and expansionist nature. Thus, it is also an unlikely prospect that in the near future the Iranian attempts will amount to political domination in Central Asia. We expect to see merchants, but not mullahs in charge of Iranian mission in Central Asia. However, Russia is very careful about Iranian moves in Central Asia to check its possible fundamentalist policies which are likely to endanger its position in the region.

### **4.3 The new Russian Stance**

The enormity of the needs of the Central Asian countries, and the inability of the other countries, but Russia to meet them has more and more put the Russian factor onto the scene. Russia will continue to be the dominant actor in Central Asia especially in terms of military and political issues. The Central Asian states are also pragmatically in favor of Russian military presence in their countries, though temporarily. This is not only for reasons of stability and security, but also to prevent economic collapse in the wake of systemic transition. Thus the new Central Asian-Russian relations must not be considered as one of dependence, but rather the natural

consequence of a once dependent relationship which cannot be overcome overnight as well as out of necessity. As the Central Asian countries gain their genuine national independence, Russia is expected to withdraw from the region.

Militarily, Russian foreign policy has been driven by the belief that it is imperative to link its security policy to that of the *Near Abroad*. Thus, the protection of Russia's historical geopolitical environment will remain fundamental to Russia's foreign and security policy. In the draft of Russian Foreign Policy, the protection of the outer borders of the CIS implies a Russian version of the *Monroviski Doctrine*, in that it considers this as an urgent and inalienable task to commit itself to the security and stability of its *Near Abroad*. Russian action in Tajikistan indicated its serious commitment to this task. The Soviet legacies in the lands of the former Soviet Union augments Russian dominance in the *Near Abroad* in economic terms. These states need Russia for their exports, but mostly, the post-communist economic problems push them towards the convergence of their economic modeling.

Russia is trying to reorient its foreign policy towards emphasizing Central Asia and incorporating them into its security and economic arrangements of the Russian Federation. Iran and Turkey must seriously consider and never underestimate Russia's dominance in Central Asia as an inalienable external power. After the disintegration of the USSR, many commentators had said that Russia would withdraw. It had first taken a pro-Atlanticist stance which was accompanied by a distancing from the Central Asia, but today it will be awkward to argue that Russia will relinquish its special status. Having just been freed from one form of political and economic dependency, however the Central



Asians have had enough of Big Brothers, so they obviously will not accept any hegemony no matter who and how it will be. On the other hand, Russia finds it very difficult to quit its interests and previous "sphere of influence's in its *Near Abroad*". And it is not anyway.

Another side of this story deserves analysis: Emilbek Kaptanbey, wrote an article in the *Asaba* paper in Krygyzstan on 14 October 1994 headed "Economic Union: ... Soviet Union ... Myth or Reality" in which he discusses the issue of rebuilding the Soviet Union. He criticizes the communists who are working on revitalizing the former Soviet Union and calls this a myth and concludes his article saying: "I agree with the authors of the Manifesto that, we should think of the future of children and grandchildren, but I am against the renewal of the USSR as a common state, because now we have to use a happy chance of being sovereign at last".<sup>14</sup>

After the collapse of the ruble zone, things began to change a little between Russia and the Central Asian Republics. The nationalist trends in Central Asia began to underline that decision-making within the CIS pertaining to monetary and budgetary issues, were settled in Moscow. The Central Asian leaders came to thinking that the Russian central bank manipulated issues of money emission, credit lines and debt redemption to exert moral and political pressure on Central Asian countries.<sup>15</sup> According to the Asian Research Center in Pusan, in South Korea, "Central Asian Republics and neighboring countries are well aware that Russia is losing its ability to pursue independent domestic and foreign economic policies."<sup>16</sup> The ousting of the ruble from Central Asia and the introduction of national currencies has brought further independence to the republics. Financial injections to Central Asia by Turkey,

China, the Arab countries, and Pakistan are growing day by day. Having a developed infrastructure for financial and economic cooperation, the Central Asian countries, have signed various governmental and private agreements where investments, credits and technologies are earmarked to production and affiliated economic sectors.

Russia has some inhibiting factors before building of a *sphere of influence*: *first* of all, most of the successor states have been insistent and determined about preserving and promoting their sovereignty and they are very sensitive to any engagement restricting it. *Secondly*, Russia, in need of external assistance and in this shaky period of transition, has to reflect the image of a reliable partner in the eyes of the other CIS members and at the world community at large. Therefore, it should not go after imperialist and interventionist policies. *Third*, the failure of the ruble zone project in November of 1993, and the Central Asian economic union initiative launched in February of 1994, pointed out the economic limits of Russia's eventual hegemonic aims. *Finally*, the Eurasian area is already at the crossroads of the economic interests of many regional and global powers such as Turkey, India, Iran, Pakistan, and China as well as the USA and European Union.

#### **4.4 Turco-Russian relations in the context of Central Asia**

In the context of this thesis, relations between Russia and Turkey centered around their interests in Central Asia need special consideration. The Turco-Russian relations is in a process of finding a new equilibrium. In the context of Turco-Russian relations, Turkey's policies towards the territory of the former Soviet Union may produce friction among them, although there is no

official dispute among Russia and Turkey as to sovereign rights. Since the end of the Second World War , the parameters of the Turkish foreign policy were set up against Russia.

Russia has declared its policy to prevent the emergence of new centers of power which may challenge Russian presence in its *Near Abroad*. Turkey's goal of forging closer relations with the states in the *Near Abroad* of Russia can constitute a direct challenge to its' interests in what is still seen very much a Russian sphere of influence. Turkey has until now formulated its policies with an eye to the Russian sensitivities, and tries to harmonize its relationship vis- a- vis Central Asia.

As the new thinking developed in the former USSR , Russian reactions to Turkish role were positive. Russia favored Turkey instead of Iran and Saudi Arabia which sought to strengthen their position in Central Asia through fundamentalist policies. The Turkish role in Central Asia is not that of a separatist and pan-Turkist one. It is not probable in the future that an extremist nationalist leadership come to power in Turkey to go after pan-Turkist ends. Yet, Russia is uncomfortable with the growing Turkish fervor to assume a new strategic role in its *Near Abroad* . Demirel's call for a possible Union of Turkish states or any kind of grouping among the Turkish states in the backyard of Russia with Turkey is considered to be a direct challenge to Russian interests.

In the Ankara Declaration issued after the Ankara Summit October 31, 1992 , the participating states agreed to respect each others equality and right of non-interference in each others internal affairs. According to the Declaration, principles of democracy, secularism, social equality and market economy will be

promoted. Working committees will be formed in areas of commerce and trade, and the Foreign ministers of six <sup>17</sup> states will meet at least once a year. Nevertheless, the fear of returning to a different version of a Soviet system led to the exclusion of some clauses from the Declaration such as, the transport of oil through Turkey to Europe, the establishment of a regional , Turkmen, and Azeri oil through Turkey to the Mediterranean and to Europe, and the harmonization of customs among the Six. The Second Summit was planned to take place in 1993 , but it has been canceled due to the crisis in Azerbaijan. The Second Summit then was made in Istanbul, between 7-9 October 1994, with the participation of the six Turkic states. The Summit was held with an eye to Russian sensibilities . Russia who has been anxious about the rising role of Turkey in its *Near Abroad*, was also irritated with the passing of tough decisions which could endanger its interests in the *Near Abroad* in that it may be perceiving Turkey as an enemy trying to steel the former Soviet Republics of Transcaucasia and Central Asia away from itself. Russia is determined to avoid the advent of pan-Turkish developments yet, the Six have tended in this Second Summit to be assertive in promoting cooperation among them. This new assertiveness has also been reflected in the speeches of the leaders of the Central Asian states. For example, Islam Karimov, the President of Uzbekistan, said that "Some speculations may be made, a third party may feel that there are contradictions in this document , yet this declaration is in conformity with the principles of UN and CSCE." <sup>18</sup> Askar Akaev, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic said that he considers this grouping as the vital means for promoting regional cooperation. And the Istanbul Declaration will enhance further regional cooperation among the Six.<sup>19</sup> Süleyman Demirel the President of Turkey underlined, that it was a grouping of states close to each other in culture, language, and religion , not in need of defending each other either individually

or collectively. "We do not need anyone to get worried" <sup>20</sup>, Nazarbaev , the President of Kazakhstan, adding that the "Six has become a new significant reality." <sup>21</sup> It was also declared that maximum cooperation will be made to enhance the transport of oil and gas in Central Asia through the optimum and shortest way to world markets.

Russian worries of Turkish role is also associated with fears of American involvement. They fear that USA is promoting Turkey in Central Asia as opposed to Iran, which is trying to fortify its position through fundamentalist policies. Turkey's image is good among mighty all the Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia. For example, Graham Fuller <sup>22</sup> argues that Turkey can not and will not reject a greater regional role forever. Turkey has all the factors but money to be able to play a leading role in Central Asia . What it needs to take into consideration is the sensitive Russian position in Central Asia where it calls the *Near Abroad*. Russia realistically will prefer the Turkish model for the Central Asian Republics who are in a period of shaky transition with plenty of problems which could easily alleviate and shake the balances in the region. The former socialist countries respect Turkey's fresh experience in its transition to market-economy .

It has been underlined several times that Russia takes the issue of stability of its *Near Abroad* as a sine qua non to its own security and stability which in return very much depends on economic development. The disintegration of the USSR had driven strategists to reformulate the concept of threats, and the new NATO strategy has come to integrate into its new concept the control of the sources and routes of raw materials , instead of the traditional concept centered around the issues of security and stability. Being on

the way to Central Asia, where vast resources lay , Turkey has added a new asset to its strategic importance. Turkey and Russia must cooperate to help the Central Asian countries escape the problems of transition and lead them to prosperous future.

Russia remains to be the main heir to the old USSR having inherited its great power status with all its attributes , ranging from its seat at the UN Security Council to the nuclear arsenal . Yet, the future seems less certain to Moscow. The Russian exodus from Central Asia, the growing role and influence of Turkey and Iran will surely increase, and means at the hands of the Russians to exert control over their *Near Abroad* will decrease.

## CHAPTER V -CONCLUSION

While the Cold-War has become history , Russia is undergoing serious reassessments of its new state borders , and national interests in the wake of the collapse of not only 70 years of communism, but also long years of colonial empire.

Three years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the foreign policy of the new Russian Federation has gained some certainty. The major aim of Russia's foreign policy today is to gain recognition as a great power in the world, which requires a sphere of influence . After resolving the political crisis at home, Russian foreign policy within the context of the Eurasianist school , has increasingly become assertive. The very special link between the Central Asian Republics and Russia has been conducive to the birth of a new concept : the *Near Abroad*. This is not an automatic consequence of the inherited ties but is more than that because , Russia pursues active security, economic, and military policies in its *Near Abroad* . The territory of the former USSR constitutes a zone of Russian influence in which Russia declared that it has the legitimate right to a say.

The presence of ten million ethnic Russians living in Central Asia make Russia more sensitive towards its relations with these states. One Russian Deputy Foreign Minister said:" Russia could not intervene militarily on the spur of the moment without incurring international isolation and possible sanctions, nor could it repatriate its nationals because Russia lacks adequate housing and employment for them."<sup>1</sup> Thus we may predict that the way to protect the ethnic Russians will be through economic means or by drawing attention to violations of

human rights and negotiating agreements with the governments concerned. The Russian Foreign Policy concept published on January 25, 1993, promoted an urgent and inevitable need to protect the external borders of the CIS <sup>2</sup>. The doctrine of the new Russian foreign policy was incorporated into its military doctrine in November 1993, which stressed its strategic interests in the *Near Abroad*. <sup>3</sup>

The Central Asian leadership want resident Russian military presence on their territory. The reaffirmation in all treaties of the existing borders between the republics and CIS is of considerable political significance, because it suggests that for the foreseeable future, Russia has no designs on the sovereign states of the Central Asian Republics.<sup>4</sup>

In the Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) which was held in December 1994 in Hungary, the Russian President Boris Yeltsin, wanted authorization from the CSCE to act as the peacekeeping force of the former USSR region. In that, he wanted to control 12 states of the former USSR. The intervention in Mountainous - Karabağ (an Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan), Tajikistan, Moldova, and its deployment of peacekeeping forces in the last two indicates Russian devotion for the *Near Abroad*.

Asked in a poll whether they supported the idea of unification with the Slav republics the cost of which would be the loss of lives and money, Russians overwhelmingly replied "No". <sup>5</sup> In the past, the *Near Abroad* was used to criticize the government in the Parliament. Yet, today it is only Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of Communist Party, who advocates reunion and restoration of the former Soviet Union.



Reformer Yegor Gaidar, however, advocates isolationism. He says Russia must concentrate on its own economic and social problems, rather than reforming with the former union states. Because of domestic economic and political shortcomings, Russian involvement in the *Near Abroad* plausibly will not be permanent as feared by the international community.

At the CSCE meeting held in Hungary in December 1994, for example, the decision was made to send a CSCE force to Mountainous-Karabakh as the first international peacekeeping force: This may be interpreted as a change of attitude by the West in that they did not trust the Russians to act alone. Probably leaving Russia all alone in the *Near Abroad*, frightened the Westerners of alienating a resource-rich region. Besides, Azerbaijan already publicly declared that they do not want an all-Russian peacekeeping force.

The goal of the new Russian policy towards Central Asia is the preservation of the interests of Russians living in the *Near Abroad* and subsequently their own interests. Securing strategic stability in the post-Soviet zone within the framework of accepted international standards and rules of behavior in the democratic world will be mostly welcome by the others who are reluctant to interfere in Central Asia, where Russia is the only great power to assume responsibility.

The result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 has brought many changes to Central Asia. The Central Asian Republics have declared their official independence but true independence, through economic and political foundations will take time. For nearly 200 years, the economic and

political futures of the Central Asian states have been shaped by events and decisions made by others. The transition period will take some time and in the end, a new post-Soviet generation will come to power. Only then will Central Asians be able to create their own unique system.

Independence came suddenly and unexpectedly to the Central Asians when they were dependent on Russia for security, defense, finance, expertise and trade. Russia still remains to be the dominant power in Central Asia with its economic leverage, political influence, and military power, throughout the region. The presence of 10 million ethnic Russians in the area, continued use of the Russian language, Russian military presence in Central Asia, high levels of intra-trade, the persistence of communist institutions and "Soviet men", as well as various agreements on many areas between Russia and the Central Asian states are the major factors contributing to the Russian influence in its *Near Abroad*.

Today, not much has changed except for the relative diversification in trade and economic patterns. All one witnesses is the beginning of a long-term process of settling down into relationships and patterns of activity that will differ sharply from the Soviet period and even the present transition period.

It is not easy for states, people and institutions to change in three years time. Although, significant cultural changes are in process such as the change of alphabets from Cyrillic to Latin, change of the names of cities, streets and boulevards, changing to education in local languages. Another sound change is in the process: the Central Asian states are diversifying their relations with other states, new economic partners from Western-Europe, the USA, Far East

and regional states like, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and China. They are trying different options, yet they can not suddenly replace Russia with any other state, be it the USA, Iran, Turkey or China. No matter how strongly they were joined within the framework of other union states in the USSR, the well-entrenched economic, political, ethnic, cultural and ideological ties with Russia will remain dominant.

The dilemma facing the Central Asian states is how to benefit from the continued military, financial and economic patronage from Russia without surrendering national interests, and control over their economies as well as their defense priorities.

Despite the fact that the new states have shown great effort to declare their independence, their economies are still very interdependent. Yeltsin is aware of this relationship as to the economic and financial matters. The flow of intra-republican trade reveals this relationship.<sup>6</sup>

The Iron Curtain that had divided Central Asian States from the rest of the world is now opening: the trading patterns are shifting, direct investment, private loans, official assistance and joint-ventures are becoming common features for them. Due to the unique economic peculiarities between the Central Asian Republics and the Russian Federation, it is predestined that a close and coordinated relationship is to continue at least for some two decades to come.

The religious revival may potentially influence the domestic political evolution of the Central Asian Republics. Islam in Central Asia, with its traditional power, synonymous with nationalism, may mobilize people,

augmented with economic shortcomings, to be a radical and driving force. Yet, the lack of institutionalization, homogeneity, and sectarian differences will reduce the probability of external intrusions. Islam in Central Asia is not likely to experience the same revolution as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The decision to join the CIS on the part of the Central Asian Republics was mainly due to security considerations. Lacking a military doctrine, a viable army, arsenal and personnel, economic shortcomings, having inherited only a small portion of the former Soviet military structure, the Central Asian States needed a security umbrella. The military guarantees provided to them through the conclusion of various Friendship and Cooperation Treaties with Russia, leaders of the Central Asian States started to issue declarations like the President of Kazakhstan "Kazakhstan recognizes the community of military-political and economic interests with Russia and other countries of the CIS".<sup>7</sup> It is only Kazakhstan to have established a small military unit. As to the nuclear question, the fact that Kazakhstan is the only state which has nuclear weapons and various testing and production facilities is not very significant because Kazakhstan is among the first signatories of START-1 and all the nuclear warheads were withdrawn to Russia. After receiving guarantees from Russia, Kazakhstan has granted the control of its nuclear weapons to them, though they are owned by the Kazaks themselves. Regardless of the nuclear issue, we may conclude that, the Central Asian dependence on Russia on matters of security and defense will continue to be a reality.

The process of withdrawal is a sensitive process, and it is important to do so without surrendering Russian strategic interests. The West has a direct interest in Russia's defining a clear-cut post-imperial policy. They must pursue a

policy of balancing Russian sense of prestige and Central Asia's independence. The West must accept that Russia has authentic interests in Central Asia.

Due to the uniqueness of the case, it is hard to foretell the larger outcomes of the special relationship between Russia and Central Asia. A great deal will depend on the Russian factor should an authoritarian rule be established like a ultra nationalist one in Russia, that will likely threaten the independence of the *Near Abroad* . And, this is a dilemma for the West, because on the one hand, the US for one, is helping to maintain the current power structures in Russia . On the other hand , this effort, at times clashes with Russian assertiveness in its *Near Abroad*. The outcome looks like a compromise and translates into giving a free hand to Russia . But in the long run , the cost-benefit ratio may be well founded.

The former Soviet republics of the Caucasus, and Central Asia have learned that that separation from Russia has not given them full political and economic independence. Thus Moscow has been retaining the means to affect the political stability the Central Asian republics and influence their economic development.

It takes time to adopt to a post- imperial mentality, and Russia has to learn how to lose an empire and adjust according to its capabilities. Thus, "imperial disengagement " becomes sensitive then ever, given its unstable domestic political and economic situation. The domestic political chaos in the Russian Federation may end up with unsound policies towards Central Asia, where politicians use conflicts for their own interests and own political ends. Yet, although Russia is preoccupied with its serious domestic problems, its

large size, power and to an extent its tradition of a superpower mentality, will not allow it to withdraw from conducting an active international policy. The policy, no matter how far the international, regional and domestic systems have changed, will help withhold the historical, cultural identity and its geopolitical position as a Eurasian power. The drama taking place in Central Asia and in Russia in the post-Cold War era will continue to offer a wealth of material to historians in the future.

APPENDIX I  
(TABLES)

TABLE :1

THE ATTITUDES AMONG THE RUSSIAN DISPORA ON THE MIGRATION QUESTION,  
(AUTUMN, 1990)

*"Would you like to migrate to Russia or would you prefer to stay in this Republic, forever ?"*

\*percentages of responses to survey questions

Response	Kazakhstan	Krygyzstan	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
<i>Migrate</i>	20	31	37	<b>38</b>
<i>Stay in the Republic</i>	63	42	38	36
<i>Difficult to say</i>	17	26	25	<b>26</b>



TABLE: 2

Interrepublican Migration To Russia From Countries of the NEAR ABROAD in 1992-1993.

Republics	Arrived in Russia in 1992		Arrived in Russia in 1993		Departed from Russia in 1992-93	
	Total	In percent	Total	In percent	Total	In percent
Uzbekistan	112.442	12.100	91.164	9.900	20.545	5.600
Kazakhstan	183.891	19.900	195.672	21.200	68.703	18.600
Kyrgyzstan	62.897	6.800	96.814	10.500	10.142	2.700
Tajikistan	72.558	7.800	68.761	7.500	5.898	1.600
Turkmenistan	19.035	2.100	12.990	1.400	6.165	1.700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>450.823</b>	<b>48.700</b>	<b>465.401</b>	<b>50.500</b>	<b>111.453</b>	<b>30.200</b>

\*Data provided by Russian Federal Migration Service

TABLE : 3

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

Population distribution, 1989	KAZAKHS	UZBEKS	KYRGYZ	TURKMEN	TAJIKS
<b>TOTAL</b>	16563	19905	4290	3534	5109
<b>KAZAKHS</b>	6535	808	37	88	11
<b>UZBEKS</b>	332	14142	550	317	1198
<b>KYRGYZ</b>	14	175	2230		64
<b>TURKMEN</b>	4	122	1	2537	20
<b>TAJIKS</b>	25	934	34	3	3172
<b>RUSSIANS</b>	6228	1653	917	334	388
<b>UKRANIANS</b>	896	153	108	36	41
<b>B.RUSSIANS</b>	183	29	9	9	7
<b>GERMANS</b>	958	40	101	4	33
<b>TATARS</b>	328	657	70	39	72
<b>KAR-KALPAKS</b>	-	412	-	-	-
<b>UIGHURS</b>	185	36	37	-	-
<b>KOREANS</b>	103	183	18	-	13

Source: Central Asia Today ( Moscow State University of African and Asian studies) no.3, 1993.

**TABLE :4**

**THE LIKELY RUSSIAN MASS MIGRATIONS OUT OF KAZAKISTAN**

***"How likely is it that there will be a mass migration of Russians out of this Republic in the near future?"***

**\*percentages of responses to survey questions**

Very likely	2	17	44	35
Fairly likely	22	54	35	45
Not very likely	49	11	14	7
Out of question	4	5	0	0
Difficult to say	23	13	7	13

**Source:Pal Losto, "New Russia Diapora" Journal of Peace Research , 30, May 1993 , 202.**

**TABLE : 5*****Union Subsidies in 1991***

	<i>Uzbekistan</i>	<i>Kazakistan</i>	<i>Turkmenistan</i>	<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	<i>Tajikistan</i>
<i>Rubles (bn)</i>	12	6	1.4	1.9	2.5
<i>% of GDP</i>	19.5	7.4	17.6	12.5	23.3

***IMF Report and Economic Intelligence Unit (1993)***

**TABLE :6**

***THE LIKELY RUSSIAN MASS MIGRATIONS OUT OF KAZAKISTAN***

***"How likely is it that there will be a mass migration of Russians out of this Republic in the near future?"***

**\*percentages of responses to survey questions**

Very likely	2	17	44	35
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Out of question	4	5	0	0
Difficult to say	23	13	7	13

**Source:Pal Losto, "New Russia Diapora" Journal of Peace Research , 30, May 1993 , 202.**

Major Industrial Goods and the situation of highways in the former Soviet Union

Order	Republics	Electric energy (billion kW/hr)	Steel (1.000 tones)	Paper (1.000 tones)	Cement (1.000 tones)	Material (million m <sup>2</sup> )	Shoes (Million Pairs)	Highways (1.000 km)
1	USSR	1.722	160.096	6.315	140.436	13.137	827	966.2
2	Russia	1.077	92.752	5.344	84.518	8.704	378	457.1
3	Ukraine	295	54.807	353	23.416	1.250	194	166.7
4	W. Russia	39	1.105	203	2.283	512	45	48.1
5	Uzbekistan	56	1.080	26	6.194	762	44	39.8
6	Kazakhstan	90	6.831	3	8.650	330	35	86.6
7	Georgia	16	1.429	28	1.530	123	17	21.7
8	Azerbaijan	23	820	-	1.058	170	17	26.2
9	Lithuania	29	7	117	3.410	218	12	20.9
10	Moldova	17	685	-	2.258	224	23	10.2
11	Latvia	6	555	138	776	125	10	20.5
12	Kyrgyzstan	15	3	-	1.408	15	12	19.1
13	Tajikistan	15	5	-	1.110	217	11	13.4
14	Armenia	12	3	11	1.639	63	18	7.7
15	Turkmenistan	15	2	-	1.057	54	5	13.4
16	Estonia	18	11	92	1.129	235	7	14.8

**TABLE 8***Natural Resources and Cotton (1992)*

	<i>Uzbekistan</i>	<i>Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Turkmenistan</i>	<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	<i>Tajikistan</i>
<b>Gas</b> <i>(bn m3)</i>	42.8	8.1	60.1	0.1	0.1
<b>Cotton</b> <i>(m tonnes)</i>	4.12	0.24	1.28	0.05	0.12
<b>Coal</b> <i>(m tonnes)</i>	4.7	127.0	-	2.2	0.2
<b>Oil</b> <i>(m tonnes)</i>	3.2	25.8	5.2	0.1	0.1

*Source: IMF and Economic Intelligence Unit (1993)*

**TABLE 9**

Energy Imported from Russia as a percentage of consumption

Country	Natural Gas	Crude Oil
Kazakhstan	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	0	*
Tajikistan	0	*
Turkmenistan	0	16
Uzbekistan	0	55

\*These Countries have no oil refineries and import refined oil products primarily from Russia



TABLE : 10

INDEBTNESS OF FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS TO RUSSIA THROUGH MID-1992

COUNTRY	AMOUNT
Kazakistan	46.7
Turkmenistan	18.1
Uzbekistan	13.9
Krygyzstan	4.5
Tajikistan	3.7

APPENDIX II  
(MAPS)



# THE NEW STATES of Central Asia

Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan  
Tajikistan Turkmenistan  
Uzbekistan



**Boundaries**

- International
- International, in dispute
- Other line of separation

**City population**

- Tashkent 0: Over one million
- Gor'kiy 0: 500,000 to 1,000,000
- Zhetysay 0: 100,000 to 499,999
- Kopetdag 0: Less than 100,000

Star symbol denotes capital city

0 100 200 Miles

Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative

**Agriculture**

- Wheat
- Cotton
- Other crops

**Elevation**

0 1000 2000 3000 Meters

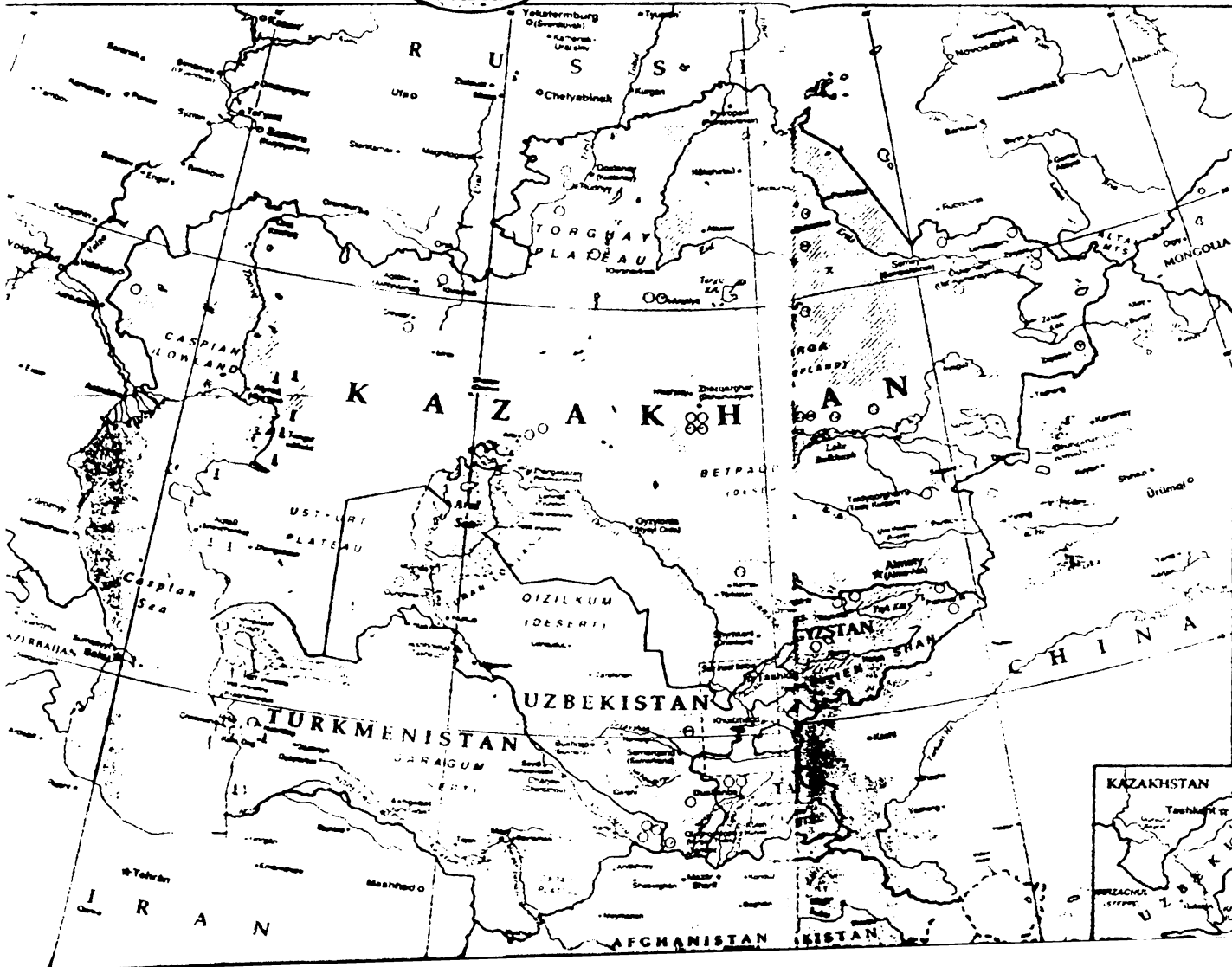
0 1000 2000 Feet

**Major energy resources**

- Natural gas
- Hydroelectric
- Coal
- Oil
- Geothermal

**Major mineral resources**

- Aluminum
- Fluorine
- Magnesium
- Sodium sulfate
- Antimony
- Gold
- Phosphoric acid
- Sulfur
- Mercury
- Iron ore
- Polymetallic ores
- Uranium
- Copper
- Manganese
- Potassium
- Tungsten
- Salt



Figures for population, population growth rate, and percent under age 15 are for 1983 estimates from the Bureau of the Census, Center for International Research

**Kazakhstan**

Size: 2,717,300 square kilometers (1,049,150 square miles)  
Boundaries: 13,326 km total. Russia 6,846 km, China 1,533 km, Kyrgyzstan 1,051 km, Uzbekistan 2,203 km, Turkmenistan 379 km.

Population: 17,037,000  
Population growth rate: 0.7%  
Percent under age 15: 31%

**Kyrgyzstan**

Size: 198,500 square kilometers (76,641 square miles)  
Boundaries: 3,278 km total. Kazakhstan 1,051 km, China 856 km, Tajikistan 870 km, Uzbekistan 1,000 km.

Population: 4,532,000  
Population growth rate: 1.5%  
Percent under age 15: 37%

**Tajikistan**

Size: 143,000 square kilometers (55,251 square miles)  
Boundaries: 3,551 km total. Uzbekistan 1,961 km, Kyrgyzstan 870 km, China 474 km, Afghanistan 1,206 km.

Population: 5,675,000  
Population growth rate: 2.8%  
Percent under age 15: 43%

**Turkmenistan**

Size: 488,100 square kilometers (188,455 square miles)  
Boundaries: 5,527 km total. Kazakhstan 379 km, Uzbekistan 1,821 km, Afghanistan 744 km, Iran 992 km.

Population: 3,333,000  
Population growth rate: 2.1%  
Percent under age 15: 40%

**Uzbekistan**

Size: 447,400 square kilometers (172,741 square miles)  
Boundaries: 5,221 km total. Kazakhstan 2,203 km, Kyrgyzstan 1,099 km, Tajikistan 1,161 km, Afghanistan 137 km, Turkmenistan 1,621 km.

Population: 21,536,000  
Population growth rate: 2.2%  
Percent under age 15: 40%





# Across Central Asia, a Turkish Crescent

In Soviet Central Asia, Turkic-speaking republics are demanding language rights—one sign of a surge of nationalism that is rekindling Turkish pride from the Balkans to Central Asia.



## NOTES

### NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. The term Central Asia refers to the area which was called in the Tsarist times as Turkestan encompassing Kazakhstan, Krygyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan .
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6. Ibid, p.159 .
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12. Look at Table 4 Appendix .



13. "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation , " dated 25 January 1993, submitted by the Russian Foreign Ministry to the Russian Supreme Soviet in March 1993, in FBIS-USR, (March 25, 1993), p.8
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