

SECURITY DIMENSION IN POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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1997



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CERTIFICATE

This is certified that the dissertation "**SECURITY DIMENSION IN POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA**" submitted by **BIJAY KUMAR DAS** in partial fulfilment for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this a bonafide work.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

CHAPTER I

Introduction : The brief history of the Central Asian States and the theoretical and conceptual paramtres of national security. 1-26

CHAPTER II

Soviet Disintegration and emerging national Security concern in Central Asia. 27-44

CHAPTER III

Regional problems and efforts to creates a collective security system in Central Asia. 45-70

CHAPTER IV

External powers and national security in Central Asia. 71-84

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION 85-88

BIBLIOGRAPHY 89-93

*Dedicated to.....
my parents*

PREFACE

Geographically, culturally and demographically Central Asia may be considered as being central to Eurasia. Turkic cultural and ethnic pre-eminence, the presence of large Russian and lesser German populations and historical and culture ties with countries to its South and East, irrevocably connect this area with Europe, West Asia and Southern Asia. The region may therefore be more appropriately considered as a zone of convergence of the major geo-cultural region of Eurasia with its security interaction spanning both these continents.

The seven decades of Soviet rule gave Central Asia a strong feeling of security and stability as an integral part of a military super power. During this period it remained free from internecine conflicts and felt no threat to its Security from its neighbours.

The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent re-emergence of Central Asia on the scene of World politics is one that immediately become a topic of prime concern for the countries which have geographical proximity with the region. It is in this backdrop, the present dissertation has tried to analyse the security dimension of post-soviet Central Asia. The trends towards security dimension have been explained in five chapters.

In the first chapter the theoretical and conceptual parameters of national security and the brief history of the Central Asian States has been discussed.

The second chapter has examined Soviet disintegration and emerging national Security concern in Central Asia.

In the third chapter Regional problems and efforts to create a collective security system in Central Asia has been explained.

The fourth chapter has examined external powers and national security in Central Asia.

The last chapter has concluding observation. Many people offered me assistance while writing the dissertation and I am indebted to all of them.

First of all my deep acknowledgement goes first to Dr. Ajay Patnaik under which supervision I have been able to complete my dissertation. His deep insight on the subject and the sustained guidance throughout the course of research with his constructive and useful remarks enabled me to complete this work successfully. I am also thankful to all other teachers of Soviet and East European Studies for their valuable suggestions. I am also beholder to our Chairperson Nirmal Joshi for his encouragement and advice.

I am especially thankful to the staff and members of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Library, Institute for defence studies and Analysis. Indian council of Social Science research, who gave me their valuable cooperation which made my research pursuit a lot enjoyable.

I also extend my hearty felicitations to my friends, Bijay, Datu, Anup, Bhagban, Dujan K., Binod, Bansi, Papu, Sidharth, Jhuna, Chitta for giving me the moral courage and high esteem.

Lastly I am thankful to the Staff of "ARPAN PHOTOSTAT" without whose support this dissertation would not have attained the neat professional shape.

NEW DELHI
20 July, 1997

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Concept of National Security

The concept of National security is a post-war phenomenon. It means that in the formulation of foreign policy in relation to external world, neither the interest of sub-national groups nor the interest of a global society is taken into account but solely the interest of the entire nation. This simply means that when policy makers determine the foreign policy of their nation, they decide what is good for their nation in the external world. The development of nuclear weapons and balance of terror only helped to strengthen the idea of the concern for national security.

According to Michael H.H.Louw, "National security includes traditional defence policy and also the non-military actions of a state to ensure its total capacity to survive as a political entity in order to exert influence and to carry out its internal and international objectives".¹

According to Arnold Wofers, "National security in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked".²

According to Frank N. Trager and F.N. Simore, "National security is that part of government policy having as its objective the creation of national and

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1. Barry Buzan, *People, states, and fear, The national Security problem in inter national relations*, 1983, p.216.
 2. Michael Howard, "Military power and inter national order", *International Affairs*, Vol.40, No.3, 1964, p.403.

international political conditions favourable to the protection or extension of vital national values against existing and potential adversaries.

In a broad sense, foreign policy is the national security policy. When we say national security it means, first, every nation is determined to remain sovereign and independent. Second, the national independence faces threats from others, Third, the nation is to be prepared to use military force to preserve and protect national sovereignty and independence.

However using military forces to protect national security interest is an extreme end of national security policy. But if we take a broader view of national security policy, it embraces not only use of armed forces but normal diplomatic, economic and even domestic policy.³

The whole inquiry assumes that threat exists when insecurity is a problem. Security can be pursued either by taking action to reduce vulnerability, or by trying to eliminate the threat by addressing its causes at source. The first of these opinions, may be called national security strategy, because it is based largely within the threatened state. The second may be called international security strategy, because it depends on the adjustment of relations between states.⁴

If a national security strategy is adopted then security policy will tend to be focused on the state. Vulnerabilities can be reduced by increasing self reliance, and countervailing forces can be built up to deal with specific threats.

3. H. A. Simon, "On the stability of layered hierarchies" *Proceeding of American Philosophical Society*, Vol.8, No.3, 1976, p.106.

4. *Ibid.* 30, pp.216-20.

If the threats are militancy, then they can be met by strengthening ones own military forces, by seeking alliances, or by hardening the country against attack-Economic threats can be met by increasing self reliance, diversifying sources of supply, on learning to do without.⁵

The principal advantages of national security strategy are that the threat ✓ can be met specifically as they arise, and that the measures which provide security are largely, if not wholly, under the control of the state concerned. The state retains control over the sources of its own security, and it also deals with the firm realities of capabilities rather than with the uncertainties of other actors intentions. For this reason, a national security strategy enables its practitioner to avoid the burden of making difficult distinction about whether other actions are status quoist or revisionist, and whether the security problem reflect a power struggle or a security one. At its best, this approach would produce a security which was clearly founded, relatively straight forward in operation and ✓ indisputably in the hands of each actor in relation to itself.⁶

The disput about security questions concern not only the relations between the states and its international environment, but also relations within the state. Disputes and contradictions are thus the normal stuff of domestic politics. Individual security interests must clash to some extent with national security policy despite the necessary existence of some harmony between the two levels. More genereralised domestic contradiction exist every where, and where they

5. Barry Buzan, *People, State and Fear*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1979, p.238.

6. *Ibid.*, pp.270-272.

are severe, they create weak states. In weak states, the willingness to use force in pursuit of domestic political objectives lies close to the surface of political life, and sub-state actors becomes as important as the state itself as referent objects for security.

The internal political process of the state is not a continued, mechanistic, rational policy making device, but a dynamic, potentially unstable, and normally fractious system of relations among contending interest. Under the heading of security complexes, domestic disputes form the first basic level of inquiry in analyzing security problems. We must then, expect that the national security questions raised by relations between the state and its environment will feed into the pattern of domestic political alignments and disputes.

However, it is the domestic political system in each state which actually produces national security policy. Every where, in some form, the dynamic of competing interest intrudes into the security policy process, with the result that extraneous influences become significant determinants of the security policy which the state eventually adopts.

Domestic political factors will always impinge on national security policy, if only because the whole decision-making-apparatus of the state is largely set up in relation to domestic interest. Two obvious ways in which security policy can intrude into domestic society are through it's costs and through its risks. If domestic factors dominate policy-making in most states, then the International system becomes one in which feedback between the units is weak. Behaviour, in other words, is internally generated, and therefore relatively insensitive to the effects which it creates in this system. It is argued that states are not, and can

not be, cool, calculating and national actors in relation to the international dimension of the national security problem. To the extent that domestic factor dominates decision-making, their behaviour towards each other will tend to be myopic, insensitive and inconsistent. They will be attuned to others as threats and opportunities, and to themselves as possessors of rights as victim of uncontrollable circumstances.

The security problems of state can not be assessed without reference to the system, and the character and dynamic of the system can not be understood without reference to states. The national security problem turns out to be a systemic security problem in which individuals, state, and the system all play a part. The national security problem defines itself as much as in economic, political and social terms as in military ones. Domestic, as well as foreign factors loom large in the matter, and the military aspect of security is seen to be merely part of a bigger picture. Conversely, the simplistic view that weapons are the prime element in the national security problem is also revealed as deficient. Because security is much more than a problem of weapons, proposal to achieve peace through disarmament are as misguided and dangerous as those which point in the direction of warfare state.

Security can not be achieved by either individuals or states acting solely on their own behalf. Some collective measures are necessary among the members of the system of each is to achieve security. The more actors at every level retain some control over their security, the more stable the system will be, for a collapse at any point will not entail collapse of the whole security system. From this point of view, security might best be served at all levels by a

multi-layered approach. This could start with territorial defence strategies, which could ensure individual and local participation in national security.⁷

Brief History of Central Asia Under Soviet:

Central Asia remained a turbulent and conflict prone region of much for its history. The major foreign conquest and its own expedition to India has shaped its past and now influences its present.

First, there was the Arab conquest in the 7th century. From this time onwards Islam dominated its life and culture. Second was the Mongol invasion and their establishing a flourishing settlement at Samarkand. Military expeditions were launched from here into such sub-continent from the 11th century. The final wave of conquest witnessed a competition between two European powers, Great Britain and Russia, which came to be known as the great game. By the last quarter of the 19th century, Russia had annexed this region and consolidated its hold over it. But it was after the October Revolution of 1917 that a process of intensive cultural and economic integration of Central Asia into a single Soviet state system began under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Prior to the Russian conquest, there existed three Khanates on the territory of Central Asia. Bukhara in the basin of the Zeravshan river and Khiva on the lower Amu-Darya were older than Kokand which came into existence towards the close of 18th century. In the beginning of the 19th century the population of

7. Adam Roberts, *Nation in Arms*, (London, Chatto and Windus, 1976).

the three Khanates was 4 million, which increased to 5 million by the middle of the century. Among the Khanates, Bukahara was the most populous, about 3 million, Kokand had 1.5 million, and Khiva having only 0.5 million was the most sparsely populated.

All the three Khanates were economically backward feudal states, with many survival from slave - owing society. The main occupation of the people was cattle breeding and horticulture. Very little cotton was produced and even that was of an inferior quality. Towns were centres of handicraft production and trade. The territory was rich in natural resources, but the extraction of valuable minerals on a small scale was responsible for their higher cost as compared to that of the minerals imported from Russia. The system of taxation was heavy. Feudal oppression and exactions by money lenders held up the growth of handicraft and agriculture. Internal struggle of the various national groups impeded the economic development of the Khanates.⁸

Trade and diplomatic relations of the Khanates with Russia were more or less of a regular nature. In the 19th century the economic relations between Russian and Central Asia began to be traced in trade Journals and industrial circles. According to Chikhachov, a distinguished geographer and traveller, "the absence of Anglo-American competition was a point in favour of increasing Russian trade with this region."⁹

8. Devendra Kaushik, *Central Asia in Modern Times*, (Moscow, Progress Publisher, 1970) pp.25-27.

9. *Ibid.*, p.33.

British Design on Central Asia

British colonial circles were eager to widen their colonial possession for the sake of larger market for their manufactured goods and for easy procurement of raw materials. This task was facilitated by the backwardness of the Eastern countries. The expansionist aim of the British with regard to Central Asia was already manifest in 1812, when William Moorcroft, a senior official of the East India Company sent a group of specially trained agents into Central Asia. In the forties, the British began to dump their textile goods in Bukhara at a lower than the cost price. They were managing Russian trade from two sides, viz, from the Black Sea and from India.

In their struggle against Russia for domination of Central Asia, the British used Turkey as a close ally. The British designs to draw the Khanates into their orbit did not materialise because of the latter's close links with Russia. Moreover, Bukhara grew suspicious of the double role of the British who were at the same time encouraging the Afghans to attack the Khanates on the left bank of the Amu-Darya in south Turkestan. The aggressive British design in Central Asia aroused serious concern in Russian ruling circles.

Russian Conquest and Anglo-Russian Rivalry

It was in the sixteenth century that the Russia began expansion into Central Asia. The Muscovite Grand Onchy began its march on Asia as soon as it had overthrown the Mongolian yoke. The south ward movement from Siberia began in the eighteenth century, first into the steppe region and latter into Turkestan. The Russian advance towards the Khanates began chiefly in the first

half of the nineteenth century. In 1834, a military base was established at fort Novo-Alexandrovsk on the north-eastern coast of the Caspian Sea with the object of improving trade with Khiva.¹⁰

The defeat of the Tsarist Russia in the Crimean war resulted in the transfer of Russian interest from the Balkans and the Near East to the Far East and Central Asia. Instruction sent in 1858 by A. Gorchakov, foreign minister of the Russian empire, to the Russian ambassador in laid down, Buranovm reflected this policy. These instructions Lowdown "the strengthening of the influence of Russian industry, trade and culture in Asia" as the main object of Russian Policy.¹¹ Y.A. Gagemeister recommended the annexation of Central Asia for economic reasons.¹²

In June 1865, Cherneyev captured Tashkent, which according to Khalifin, "fully corresponded with the ideas both of the government and the military - feudal aristocracy of the Russian empire, and of commercial and industrial circles." At first the Ministry of Foreign Affairs denied the intention of incorporating Tashkent into the Russian empire. It wanted Tashkent to act as a buffer state between the Russian empire and Bukhara. For some time the civil government of Tashkent remained in the hands of Cherneayev, with the religious and judicial administration vested in the "Kazi Kalam", or Supreme Judge of

10. Ibid, p.38.

11. W.P. and Zelda K. Coates, *Soviet in Central Asia*, (London 1951), p.44.

12. Ibid., p.45.

canon law, subjected to confirmation by Cherneayev. Ultimately in August 1866, Tashkent was declared as part of Russia.¹³

In the spring of 1866 military operations were started against the Bakhara Emirate and by May 1866 Khodzhent, Dhizak, and other towns and districts were taken, which opened up direct road to Samarkand and Bakhara. In 1867 the newly acquired territory was formed into the Governor Generalship of Turkestan, with General K.P Kaufman at its helm. In March 1868 the Emir of Bukhara declared a holly war against the Russian troops, disturbance occurred in Tashkent and other conquered towns. Kaufman acted swiftly and in April 1868 he moved on Samarkand, defeated the troops of the Emir of Bukhara and entered the town on May 2, 1865. Thus during the years of 1864-68, the two most important Central Asian states - Kokand and Bukhara were totally defeated, but for external reasons, they were not formally annexed to the Tsarist empire. Instead "peace treaties" were concluded in 1868 with the Kokand Khanate and Bukhara Emirates, where by these states relinquished the land actually conquered by Russia, recognised themselves as vassals of the latter and gave the Russians extremely favourable trading terms.

Five years later came the turn of Khiva. In the spring of 1873 a peace treaty was signed between general Kaufman and Syed Mohammed Rahim Khan, the ruler of Khiva. This treaty forced the Khan to acknowledge that he was "the humble servant of the emperor of all the Russian", and to renounce "all direct and friendly relations existing with reignbouring rulers and Khans."¹⁴

13. Ibid., p.46.

14. Devendra Kaushik, *Central Asia in Modern Times*, (Moscow Publisher, 1970) p.46.

The whole of Amu-Darya and the surrounding land belonging to Khiva were transferred to Russia, which also obtained free navigation on the Amu-Darya. The treaty with Khiva was a typical colonial treaty resembling to those of western power and China. On the whole this treaty assured Russia an economic hold over these three Khanates.

Next came the turn of Turkoman tribes who inhabited in Atrek Valley and the Sorkhs of the Merv Oasis. The Turkoman tribes of the Tekke suffered a shattering blow, when their main centre, Goek-Tepe, and also Ashkhabad were captured in 1881. In 1885, the Tedzhend oasis, which for a short time had been under Afgan rule, but which was inhabited by Turkomans, was annexed by Russia.

Thus bringing all the Turkman country under Russian Rule. By the end of 1885 the Russian conquest in Central Asia was rounded off.

The establishment of Russian Settlement :-

After the annexation of the three Khanates, the Tsarist Russia then settled its population in different Khanates. These Russians comprised of mainly military officials, skilled and unskilled workers for the construction of rail and road, traders and middlemen who exploited the native people in the cotton cultivation. Central Asia was converted into a raw material supplying base for the metropolitan industries in Russia. Tsarist administration paid greater attention to cotton cultivation and encouraged it at the expense of wheat and other agriculture products.

The administration of Turkestan was entrusted not to the Ministry of the Interior but to the War Ministry. The Governor-General appointed by the Tsar enjoyed wide powers in matters relating to Bukhara and Khiva as well. Although Tsarism purposely tried to keep Central Asia as its agricultural raw material base, its military and strategic interests obliged it to construct 3,377 kilometers of railway line.¹⁵ The introduction of railways marked the beginning of the end of economic seclusion of the different regions inside Central Asia and also the end of isolation of the whole of Central Asia. The Russian bourgeoisie also had to allow raw material processing industries to develop in the territory. Cotton, oil, soap, beer, brick manufacturing and wool clearing Industries began to be established in Central Asia. By 1914 there were 818 semi-handicraft enterprises working in Turkestan.¹⁶ Thus Central Asian economy before 'October revolution' was an economic dominated by feudal relations of production, of which the Russian bourgeoisie had the largest share.

Advent of the Bolshevik Revolution

The October Revolution was greeted with mixed emotions throughout Central Asia. The Bolsheviks were not very much welcome in the Kazakh steppe. The Ural, Orenburg and Semirechye, Cossacks took the government of these region into their own hands and the Kazakh steppe was for a time sealed off from the Bolsheviks. The third all-Kirgiz (Kazakh) congress was convened

15. Allwonth, Edward, Ed. Central Asia : A Century of Russian Rule, New York, Columbia University Press, 1967, p.252.

16. Ibid, p.73.

in Orenburg in December, 1917 and it proclaimed an autonomous Kazakh region. The declared purpose of this autonomy was not apparently to create a Kazakh state, but merely to prevent the spread of communism into the Kazakh Steppe.¹⁷

The first Bolshevik occupation was only temporary. Between January and March, 1918, they occupied the cities of Kustanay, Aktybinsk, Orenburg, Semipalatinsk and Vernyy but by the summer of the same year Cossacks changed side and the whole of Kazakh steppe was out of Bolshevik control. The situation, however, was far from stable and during the ensuing year a state of almost anarchy prevailed. Although the Red Army had been expelled, groups of pro-Bolshevik partisans continued to operate in the West and East. In November 1918, the anti-Bolshevik government in Omsk declared that it would no longer support Kazakh autonomy. Completely discouraged by this move, the Kazakh leaders began to join forces with the Bolsheviks. By March 1919, major actors of the civil war had already defected to Bolshevik side and both the Eastern and Western Alash Orda governments decided to recognise the new Bolshevik regime. By May 1919, the whites under-Admiral Kolchak had suffered final defeat in Siberia, and by March 1920, all resistance to the Bolshevik forces had faded away. On 26 August 1929, the all Russian Central Executive Committee (Vitsik) and the Soviet of Peoples Commissars (Sovnarkom) issued a decree declaring the formation of the Autonomous Kirghiz (Kazakh) Socialist Soviet Republic (AKSSR) within the Russian Soviet federated Socialist Republic

17. Steven Sabol, "The creation of Soviet Central Asia: The 1924 National delamination", *Central Asian Survey*, London, Vol.14, No.2, 1995, p.232.

(RSFSR).¹⁸ As in the steppe Region, in Turkestan also the main participants in the revolution and the civil war were Russians and other non-Asians from the Western parts of Russia rather than the local population. Though the Russian and Ukrainian settler population of Turkestan was much smaller compared to steppe region they played a dominant role there. The comparatively small European population was due to the two semi-independent Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva, where the Europeans were only engaged in railway sector. Nevertheless, after the February Revolution and creation of Turkestan committee, administrative power in the provisional government of Turkestan was exclusively in the hands of Russian and other non-Russians. During 1917, all political activity in Turkestan was concentrated in Tashkent. The Turkestan committee created by the provisional government was made up of former Tsarist officials and it was opposed by Soviet Workers and Peasants deputies, both bodies being entirely non-Muslim in composition. The Tashkent Soviet made an attempt to capture power in September 1917, but with a failure. The Muslim population was continuously ignored by both the fighting factions. As a result, very soon, national as distinct from tribal consciousness began to emerge for the first time and an extraordinary all Muslim conference was convened in Tashkent which demanded Muslim autonomy for Turkestan within a Russian federation. The conference and its demands were ignored by the Russians and at the end of October, the Tashkent Soviet refuted the Turkestian committee and made no attempt to ensure the Muslim support but concentrated on winning over the Russian military forces stationed in the district. At the third Congress of -----

18. Ibid.

Soviet's called in November 1917 with the object of laying the foundation of Soviet power in Turkestan, a special resolution was adopted which entirely excluded Muslims from all government posts. The congress rejected any native representation and claimed that the "inclusion of the Mussulmans in the organ of the higher regional revolutionary powers appear at the present moment unacceptable."¹⁹ The reference to the exclusion of Muslims and indecisiveness of their attitude towards Soviet power is certainly somewhat confusing. Toblin, leader of Bolshevik group in his speech in the Fourth Congress of Soviets stated that in the highest body consisting of 18 members, 3 places were left vacant to be filled by representative of Muslim workers.²⁰

In the early December, the Fourth Extraordinary Regional Muslim Congress met in the town of Kokand and declared the autonomy of Turkestan. At first the demand of the Kokand government under its leader Mustafa Chokayev were moderate and he appealed to central Soviet leadership about the unguineness of Tashkent Soviet but Lenin was powerless to intervene efficiently, and as far as known, he did not attempt to do so.²¹ The Tashkent Soviet, on the otherhand, quickly realised that the Kokand government was a serious challenge to its existence, as there was little doubt that it represented the will of Muslim masses. The Tashkent Bolsheviks immediately at the Fourth Regional Congress of Soviets held in Tashkent at the end of January 1919,

19. Ibid.

20. Devendra Kaushik, *Central Asia in Modern Times*, (Moscow, progress Publishers, 1970), p.40.

21. Geoffrey, Wheeler; *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p.105.

denounced the new Kokand government as counter-revolutionary and declared war. Most officials, including Chokaysen the President of the infant government, fled for their lives while the Bolsheviks plundered the city and Slaughtered at least 10,000 Residents²² Marie Broxup, estimates the toll to be approximately 50,000 in this massacre.²³ But this number seems to be exaggerated when compared with other sources. The most significant outcome of this atrocity was the Basmachi revolt, which persisted in some areas for at least a decade. The origins of the movement are still debated. In addition to the Kokand massacre, it was a culmination of years of hatred towards Tsarist and newly established Soviet atrocities, such as an attempt to crush the 1916 uprising in Central Asia. Shortly after the October Revolution, efforts in Moscow also were under taken to incorporate Turkestan into the Soviet federal Union. To the Bolsheviks in Moscow, Soviet federation represented a transition from the forced integration of the Tsar to a willing unification of the working masses, with the ultimate goal of being the "future Socialist."²⁴

After the Soviet consolidation of power in the region P.A. Kobozev was sent to Turkestan to resolve the situation and supervise the implementation of Moscow's directives. In April 1918, the First Congress of the Soviets was assembled on Kobozev's initiative, which adopted a status on autonomy of the

22. Steven Sobol, "The creation of Soviet Central Asia. The 1919 National delimitation", *Central Asian Survey*, London, Vol.14, No.2, 1995, p.231.

23. Marie Broxup; "The Basmachi", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.2, 1983, p.57.

24. Steven Sabol, "The Creation of Soviet Central Asia : The 1924 National delimitation", *Central Asian Survey*, London, Vol.14, No.2, 1995, p.231.

Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republic. Moscow immediately recognised the new republic named Turkestan Soviet Federal Republic (TSFR), but within no time they realised that Tashkent possessed a different concept of Soviet federalism from that held in Moscow. The Turkestan constitution granted to Republic many powers, opposed by Kremlin. Soviet autonomy did not mean political equality; It meant only recognition of local peculiarities and limited autonomy. By a decision of the TSIK (The Central executive committee) on 11th July 1918 the languages of the peoples of Central Asia were declared languages of administration at par with the Russian language. In October 1918, at the Sixth Regional Congress of Soviets, Trukestan was converted to Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR).²⁵

In the Khanates the situation was different on the period between 1920-22, the relationship that developed between soviet Russia and Bukhara and Khiva was quite unequal. It was based upon series of treaties signed separately between the three which reserved for soviet Russia "a myriad of privileges that concentrated all levels of control: military, public finance, transportation, communication and economic."²⁶

In April 1920, the soviet supported Young Khivans toppled the Khivan government and they took control of the new government. In mid-September 1920, over 600 Turkestan soldiers were arrested by the Young Khivan government and most of them were executed without any trial. This prompted

25. Devendra Kaushik, *Socialism in Central Asia*, (New Delhi, Allied publishers, 1976), p.79

26. Ibid. p.81.

the purge of Jadidist Young Khivans from the party and in March 1921 a Bolshevik sponsored mass demonstration forced many government leaders to flee the republic.

The Second People's Congress - Kurultai met in 1921 and ratified the formation of Khorezm People's soviet Republic, which was another move towards coming under the control of Moscow.

In Bukhara also, the situation was quite similar, except that the Young Bukharans were far better organised and possessed a reform programme. In September 1920 the Red Army along with the Young Bukharans launched a successful attack on Bukhara and the Emir fled to eastern Bukhara or what is now Tajikistan.

A "Young Bukharan" government was set up immediately, but they being closely associated with the Jadid movement and soon found itself at loggerheads with the Soviet authorities. By December 1921, the Bolsheviks had become restive with the pace of reform in Bukhara and purged most Young Bukharans from the party and the government. The new Republic was renamed as Bukharan People's Soviet Republic. Though the peoples's Soviet Republics of Bukhara and Khorezm were legally independent from the Bolshevik resume of Moscow, in practice they had little independence.²⁷

In 30 December, 1922, the Third Congress of the Soviets adopted the treaty of Union which formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and under which the republics would enjoy autonomous, but not sovereign status.

27. Geoffrey Wheeler, *The modern history of Soviet Central Asia*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964) p.109.

Legacies of Soviet development policies.

The soviet developmental goals in general and their objectives in Central Asia in particular were formulated during the early years after the Bolshevik Revolution. Some of the most critical components of Soviet policies in Muslim Central Asia consisted of the following closely linked elements.

- 1) absolute control of political and military power by Russian Bolsheviks.
- 2) large scale economic extraction, as well as creation and fostering of long term economic and technological dependency upon Russia and Russians.
- 3) systematic destruction of traditional Muslim in society and culture.
- 4) The creation and establishment of a new alternative Soviet society and culture to replace the old.

The fundamental project of the Bolshevik Revolution was to capture political power, and concentrate in the sole control of the communist party the state apparatus. In Turekestan, the establishment of the Bolshevik revolutionary government as the successor state to the Tsarist colonial empire was entirely a Russian empire. Soviet power in the region was consolidated with the help of large Russian settler communities, both urban and rural. By 1925 the people of central Asia had lost, all traces of political autonomy, and Central Asian politics and economics were managed from Moscow and by Russians. Centralised control of military policies, political and economic power in Muslim Central Asia by the Russian communist elite was complete and undeniable.²⁸

28. Nazif Shahrani, "Central Asia and the Challenge of Soviet Legacy", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.12, No.2, 1993, pp.125-127.

The second most important objective of Soviet policy in Central Asia has been economic extraction and creation and fostering of long term economic and technological dependency. Industrialization whether extra-active or productive has been another important means for the former Soviet Union to create and perpetuate Central Asia's dependency. All modern industrial development in Central Asia came from outside, that is, all equipment and machinery was brought to the area from Russia and run primarily by the Slavic operators and managers. The high degree of industrial, manufacturing and marketing dependency in Central Asia remained virtually unchanged after seven decades of Soviet rule.

The third most important objective of Soviet policy in Central Asia has been cultural and ideological control. Soviet policy makers consider the existing Muslim Central Asian cultural values, institutions and traditional identities (personal and collective) incompatible with the ideological goals and objectives of the revolutionary Soviet state which claimed that it intended to create a modern socialist society. Therefore it was considered essential by the Soviets to undermine and destroy all forms of traditional Islamic social and cultural identities, loyalties and institutions in Muslim Central Asia and to replace them with new Soviet ones. To realise these objectives, the Soviet policy-maker adopted and relentlessly carried out a three-pronged attack on Central Asia's traditional, social and cultural system.

First, fragmentation of Turkestan territorially, politically and ultimately culturally.

Second, cultural isolation of the people of Turkestan both from their historic past as well as other Muslim and Turko-persian speaking areas in the region; and

Third, defamation and destruction of religious beliefs and values, especially those of Islam and devastation of Islamic institutions.

THE SOVIET NATIONALITY POLICY

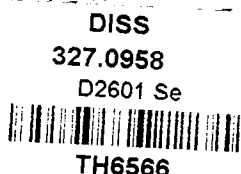
With few exceptions, there had been no uniformity in Russian policies towards her newly acquired colonies. The right to National Self-determination as one of the basic principles of foreign policy was proclaimed by the Soviet Union in one of its first decrees- the decree on peace. The central problem in Soviet nationality policy had been to maintain a delicate balance between the two conflicting interests: to assure the continued dominance of the Russian majority, at the same time to reduce the alienation of non-Russian nationalities, and to guarantee that they will be equal, valued and respected member of a Soviet multi-national community. In practice, Soviet policy fluctuated between these impulses.²⁹

TH-6566

LENIN VIEWS ON NATIONALISM

Lenin's principles of Nationalism is based on the core idea of democratic centralism. Although, he preferred state administration and management with the basic ideals of centralisation of power at the centre, but his sole aim was to

29. Gail W.Lapidus, "The Soviet Nationality Question", in Alexander Dallia dnc. Rice (eds.), *The Gorbachev Era*, (Standford, California, 1987), p.77.



create a socialist state not forcibly but by voluntary and free consent. In this context, turkestan autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was the first steep towards the formation of national states in Central Asia which was based on the principles of free consent. Contrast to the policy of nation state propagated by Tsarist regime, the Soviet government put forward a policy which aimed at building a number of republics with an adequate degree of internal autonomy. Bolshevik nationally policy was a curious mixture of national in form and socialist in content. In all important matters the Centralised principles prevailed. Thus, the nationality policy was the embodiment of the rival claims of nationalism and democratic socialism.³⁰

Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921 to placate the peasantry and consolidating soviet rule. As the Central Asian States were largely composed of peasant, the NEP had tremendous implication for soviet nationalities policy. The ethnic population would have to be wooed through the medium of their native languages and cultures. The more liberal approach in the economic sphere was therefore translated into the area of nationality policy. So Lenin's principles of nationality policy utilised a standard shield for non-Russians.

STALIN'S NATIONALITY POLICY

Stalins approach to the national question was opposite to that of Lenin. His policies were to pit one republic and one ethnic group against another.

30. R. Vaidyanth, *The formation of Soviet Central Asian Republics*, (A study in Soviet nationality policy) (1957-36), New Delhi, 1960, p.264.

Among the Generals appointed between 1940 to 1970, 91 percent were slaves: none were from Central Asia. The use of the Arabic script, which was the only means of common communication in Central Asia before 1917, was forcibly ended in favour of Latin in 1922, and then Cyrillic after 1935 to increase the pace of integration with Russia.³¹ His other repressive measures included destruction of local economic autonomy that has existed under NEP, arbitrary redrawing of boundaries, rewriting of histories to emphasize the progressive character of the Russian imperialism and end of criticism of Great Russian Chauvinism.³²

The national territorial delimitation of Central Asia which brought into existence several national republics in place of the former multi national political entities of Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm. The necessity for undertaking such an extensive territorial organization of Central Asia arose from the desire to remedy the complex national tangle which considerably hindered the development of a socialist order within the region. The various national groups which inhabited in Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm did not exist on the same level of political, economic, social and cultural development, and they also differed from one another in language, ways of life, customs and traditions.

Vareikis, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Turkestan Communist Party, asserted that 'National Delimitation was a progressive step

31. Steven Sabol, "The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: The National Delimitation", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.14, No.2, 1995, p.230.

32. Ahemd Rashid, *The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism*, (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1994) pp.32-33.

forward in the implementation of the Soviet nationalities policy in Central Asia, and that it was bound to weld together the mosaic of clans and tribes which were ethnically related to one another and consolidate them on a single socialist nation.³³

The main criticism of Soviet delimitation policy was that the Bolshevik motive for political reorganization were based on "Divide and Rule". The true meaning of "Divide and Rule" was only the communist desires to prevent a Turkish federation of the Central Asian people.³⁴

This is due to the fact that the intelligentsia of Central Asian states desired to reorganise the society on the line of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism. These ideals are against the core value of socialism. The main critic of the principles of "Divide and Rule" was Sulton Galiev, prominent nationalist leader of Central Asia.

NATIONALITY POLICY AFTER STALIN

The de-Stalinisation process started in 1953, and attack against Islam in Central Asia intensified. Islamic weddings and funerals were banned, and in 1959, the end of the era of the veil was officially announced, with the ceremonial burning of the last veil in Bukhara.

After the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev's nationality policy took a new course. He condemned some of Stalin's crimes and admitted that "under

33. R. Vaidyanath, *The formation of Soviet Central Asian Republics: A study in Soviet nationality policy, (1917-1936)*, New Delhi, 1967, p.169.

34. *Ibid.*, 23, p.236.

Stalin there had been "monstrous" and "gross" violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationalities policy of the Soviet state". At the Twenty-second Party Congress in 1961, a declaration was passed that the nationalities problem on the Soviet Union had been solved with complete fusion in between all ethnic groups and people.³⁵

After few month of Khrushchev's removal in 1964, Brezhnev came into power. He was more tactful in his references to nationality policy than Khrushchev. At the Twenty-fourth Party Congress in 1971, president Brezhnev said that fifty years of Soviet Rule had produced a new historical community of people-the soviet people had emerged; a people which was united.³⁶

In the 1978 constitution even less formal dependence and even fewer decision making power were given to these republics than before.

NATIONALITY POLICY UNDER GORBACHEV :-

Gorbachev's accession to leadership in March 1985 coincided with the end of the long-running tenures of the first secretaries of the five Central Asian Communist Parties. Initially he showed remarkable insensitivity to Central Asia and continued to treat the republics as colonies, which led to public resentment. The first resentment in Central Asia occurred in the most placid corner of the region, Alma Atta. In December 1986 Gorbachev removed the Kazakh Party Chief Din Mukhhamed Kunayev, who ruled the republic since 1964, and

35. A. Tahir, *Crescent in a Red Sky: The future of Islam in Soviet Union*, Hutchinson, London 1989, p.35.

36. Ibid, p.35.

replaced him by an ethnic Chuvash Russian, Gennady Kolbin. On 17 December 1986, a few days after Kolbin took over, anti-Russian riots against Kolbin started partly engineered by Kunayev's supporters. Ethnic tension spread to capital like Tashkent and Dushanbe where the growing feeling of ethnic nationalism were vivid.

Central Asia continued to boil. In May 1988, there were riots in Ashkaabad. In June 1989, dozens of peoples were killed and 1,000 were injured in the Ferghana Valley of Uzbekostan. In February 1990 dozens of people were killed in riots in Dushanbe. Gorbachev did not formulate any specific policy to deal with the nationalities. The growth of 'nationalism' in Central Asia was mirrored in Russia itself, where intellectuals first began to voice the need to dump the soviet empire if Russia was to make meaning full progress.

The Russian dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn argued in a prophetic essay published in 1991 that Russia would only be strong once it has shed the enormous burden of Central Asia. He called for the break-up of soviet union and rebuilding 'nationalism'. "We don't have the strength for the peripheries either economically or morally. Let this burden fall from our shoulders, it is crushing us, slapping our energy and hastening our demise", he said.³⁷

37. A. Solzhenitsyn; *Rebuilding Russia*, (Harvill, London, 1991).

Chapter II

SOVIET DISINTEGRATION AND EMERGING NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERN IN CENTRAL ASIA.

Just Sixty nine years after it was set up, on December 30, 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) today stands dissolved following a decision to that effect by leaders of eleven of the fifteen constituent Union Republics of Soviet multinational state. Meeting at Alma Ata the capital of the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, on December 21, 1991, these leaders also became the founder members of a new entity: the Commonwealth of Independent States emerging out of the debris of the Soviet Union. The event shook the world. Soviet Union had played a pivotal role in international politics. It had emerged, besides, as a formidable military power, matching the United States. Above all, it had sought to blaze a trail by its endeavour to translate an ideal into a reality. It presented distinctive model of socio-economic development other than capitalism. The disintegration of the Soviet Union was not, therefore, just the break-up of a huge state system or an empire, it was an ideal turning into a myth, a dream becoming a night mare.¹

The collapse of Soviet system in Central Asia has dramatically changed the balance of power in this region. With the power flowing from the center to the Central Asian republics and the wave of religious and nationalist resurgence sweeping this region, the situation in Central Asia has become politically volatile and socially fragile. Before going into details, it is necessary to deal with the factors that led to the disintegration of Soviet Union.

1. Zafar Imam, "How And Why the Soviet Union Disintegrated", *International Studies*, Vol.29, No.4, 1992, p.377.

WHY AND HOW SOVIET UNION DISINTEGRATED

There are various reasons responsible for the demise of Soviet Union and emergence of Central Asia as an independent entity.

The Soviet and Central Asian developments were the direct outcome of the steadily deepening crisis of what has been called an inflexible "command administrative system".² The Unprecedented popular upheavals were the cumulative expression of the several contributory factors, some of which are discussed below.

The first significant contributory factor had been the economic stagnation in socialist societies. The leadership in the Soviet Union were ultimately compelled by the gravity of situation to open their eyes to see what had long been so apparent to the intelligentsia and society at large i.e, the system they were presiding over had long lost its ability to compete economically with the capitalist countries of the West which continue to survive, develop, and even thrive after World War II.

However, it would be unfair to under-estimate the significant role played by centrally planned economies in laying material foundation of socialism in the early phases of its development. In the specific context of each of these societies, the economic advancement was really phenomenal since it lifted them to the industrial stage within a remarkable short span of time. Among the notable areas of development affecting the social life at an extensive scale were heavy industry, large scale agriculture and wide variety of social security

2. Gerhard Simon, "The end of the Soviet Union: Cause and Relational Context" *Aussen Politik*, Vol.47, 1996, p.10.

measures and services. However, it became quite obvious at a latter stage that these centrally planned economies, inspite of their remarkable success in extensive growth strategy, were rendered incapable of by the logic of their own inflexibility to promote intensive growth, i.e., to increase the productive capacity of the system interms of both quantity and quality.

It was precisely on these account that the Soviet and Central Asian system continued to lag behind, more specifically, it was the west that the centralised economies were unable to keep pace with. Consequently, these socialist countries with their economies almost stagnant, failed to satisfy the rising expectation of consumerist psychology on the one hand and keep up the development strategies at the requisite pace, on the other. "A poorly performing economic system became the natural target of popular discontent and eventually threatened the legitimacy of the leadership because it challenged the material basis and ideological justification for the party in power."³

Further, slow rate of economic growth in general and incompetent and inadequate number of consumer industries in particular in these socialist countries and all round development in capitalist countries of Europe and USA led to belief among the people of the former socialist countries of that capitalism is a better economic system than socialims. Moreover, the socialist economy was not consumer oriented economy and was not in position to meet the growing needs of the ordinary people. They wanted consumer goods in the first place in the changing environment. The socialist economy was not in a position to

3. Sumit Chakharavarty, "Soviet Union Historic Transformation", *World Focus*, September-October 1991, p.3.

reorganize and modernise its whole consumer goods industries in short span of time.

Glasnost and perestroika opened the way for a democratic way of life. After 1980s pluralism in socio-economic and political life slowly emerged in Soviet societies. Trade union and church became dominant forces in some countries and struggled for establishing a democratic society.

Secondly, the Soviet systematic crisis can be traced to its most powerful latent sources i.e., the political culture of so called "command administrative system." In such a system, as it was widely recognised, democracy was the first casualty. Society suffered by remaining at the receiving end and citizens found hardly any opportunity to participate in the affairs of the government and influence the decisions. The political institutions, inspite of much vaunted socialist legality were never allowed to perform their constitutionally intended role. Democratic processes such as competitive elections were unknown. Freedom of speech in any area of social life as well as independent activities of the masses were stifled. No doubt the political culture of command and obedience was closely connected with an identical command system in economic management. Both were influenced, shaped and strengthened by each other. The perpetuation of such a coercive rule was ensured by the existence of a single, dominant party having several satellites which enjoyed the monopoly of power. The organisational principles of "democratic centralism" was, for all practical purposes, an empty phase.

"In short, resentment of the people against the ruthless dictatorship, monopoly of power by communist party and privileges of party members had

grown over the years. The ruthless dictatorship did not care for grievances and aspirations of the people. Thus there was input failure in the system."⁴

Bureaucracy, which is the backbone of the government became corrupt. For example in quest for ever increasing amount of cotton from Uzbekistan, the centre turned over more and more power to local officials who could get the job done, ultimately this united completely the hands of the local bureaucracy.... enquiry teams, concerned in the 1980s with investigating breaches of legality in the Uzbek republic, even uncovered local jails, built by local boss on their own initiative for detaining malcontents and punishing the "workshy". More specifically, corruption, psycophancy and administrative irregularity and irresponsibility in the bureaucracy become the order of the day.⁵ Opportunism, laziness, sloganeering and deviousness become the character of bureaucracy which made the system ineffective.

Gorbachev assumed leadership in 1985. His initial approach was to modify the system through changes at different levels of economic and political mismanagement. He did not aim at abolishing socialism in the Soviet Union. He also did not think interms of abolishing one-party system. Gorbachev's perestroika infact, intended to be a process of change directed and controlled from above, and not the other way round leading to a revolution from below. Viewed in this sense there are reasons to believe that perestroika had to go

4. J. Grant, "Decolonization by default: Independence in Soviet Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.13, No.1, 1994, p.52.

5. Gregory Gleason, "The Federal Formula and the Collapse of the USSR", Vol.22, No.1, Winter 1992, Copyright 1992, CSF Associates Philadelphia Text.

wayward for which Gorbachev bears much of the responsibility. A few instances from economic and political life may illustrate the problems better.

First it is quite clear that Gorbachev leadership underestimated the magnitude and severity of the crisis. It seemed to be assured of the possibilities of solving the economic problem and rectifying the system like one applied by Yuri Andropor in his early tenure in early 1980s. This methodology prescribed the changes of economic priorities, imposition of greater discipline and by that the improvement of the planned economy. This analysis proved wrong in the light, of the economic reform launched in 1987 that mistakenly tried to combine the market in the areas of consumer goods production with planning in heavy industries which led to lot of disruptions. Likewise, the partially enlarged rights of the enterprises went to seriously disturb the financial stability.⁶

Secondly, Gorbachev failed to visualise the destructive potential of political reforms. The initial projection of Gorbachev was to make a combination of old aimed at using glassnost as a tool to fight against bureaucratic resistance against perestorika. But soon glassnost ceased to be an instrument of leadership alone and political reality itself. Subsequently, Glassnost provided the basis of a far reaching political upsurge - a phenomenon over which Gorbachev leadership could not keep control.⁷

The leadership showed a dismal failure in arriving at what may be called national consensus on economic and political policies in few crucial area.

6. Zafar Imam, "How and why the Soviet Union disintegrated", *International Studies*, Vol.29, No.4, 1992, p.382.

7. Ibid., p.383.

Firstly, the consensus might have been between the leadership of Gorbachev and population which could mean the recognition of Gorbachev as a reformer and his reform measures as truly in public interest. In spite of Gorbachev's tremendous personal prestige his image of a reformer became rather dim in the latter phase of perestroika. There was deep conflict between Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Yeltsin's group did not cooperate with Gorbachev to make his reform programmes successful.

The third level of consensus, which was crucial for the integrity of the country, was possible between central government and republics. Gorbachev made effort for this but he failed to evolve a realistic theory of the reorganization of Soviet federation in the wake of ever increasing demands for autonomy by republics, he could not succeed. Glasnost intermingled with separatism and the leadership failed to assert the state power. Ultimately the whole range of crisis resulted not only in the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union but even disintegration of the country itself.

National Security Concern in Central Asia

The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the demise of communism as a competing ideology have paved the way for national security concern in Central Asia. The understanding of development issues in Central Asia is impossible without attention to security concerns. The principal questions in this field relate to the sources and origin of insecurity. On this subject, there are three schools of thought. One school of thought primarily subscribed to by the American scholars, attributes insecurity to "foreign threat". The second school

of thought, better known as the systemic perspective, talk about mutual security and tend to see relations among countries in the global system as based on interdependence. Third school of thought which was introduced in the 1970s and 1980s, explains the origin of insecurity by identifying four main crises, that of identity, distribution of power, participation and legitimacy.⁸

A multidimensional approach based on a combination of these arguments can clarify the security situation of the Central Asian State.

First, the use of these theories suggests that these nations are exposed to foreign threats. Second, numerous commonalities create interdependent security concerns for them. Third, the security of each of these countries is clearly threatened by domestic structural problems.

Before going to analyse the current security position in Central Asia, it is necessary to deal with the positive role played by Russians in the development process of Central Asia. Firstly, it can be said that Central Asia is more developed than many of the other third world countries. Secondly, this development took place under the hegemonic power of Russia which was a security provider to these countries. Thirdly, development in the region was accompanied with a Russian imposed value system along with the establishment of a mutually dependent security and economic system within the entire ex-Soviet conglomerate. The collapse of this conglomerate created new chains of security relations. The central dominant power could no longer provide

8. Edward Azar and Chang - In Moon, "Third World National Security : Towards a new Conceptual Framework", *International Interactions*, Vol.11, No.2 (1984), pp.105-135.

adequate security and, hence, the main pre-requisite for development was undermined, unleashing a tumultuous and uncertain period.

At present, the Central Asian region is faced with various security problems due to the exit or weakness of the hegemonic power. These can be identified at the following levels : personal, national, regional and international.

At the personal level, two principal changes make security concerns important for every single individual in the region. The first change relates to the unstable economic and social condition. On the economic front, the fall of former Soviet Union has led to the demise of central planning along with its bureaucratic set up and the emergence of market economics with its relevance on the price mechanism and for the allocation of resources. Economic development is extremely uneven. In some areas the region is very advanced, in others it is on a par with the poor developing countries. Industrial complexes that exist in these countries were controlled by Moscow and contributed little to the local economy. Thus when the Soviet Union collapsed, the effects of that collapse were felt more harshly in this region. The effects of inflation, unemployment, food and fuel shortage have been felt more acutely here than elsewhere. Economic hardship in turn has aggravated social problems. This has been reflected in a steep rise in the crime rate and worsening ethnic relations.

The second change relates to the identification of an enemy. In the past, the enemy was defined as a foreign entity. Today, however, there is ambiguity concerning the ways in which the self should confront the enemy. In some republics, such a security identity is being formed as a result of existing

conflicts. But, even in these republics one can witness a security dilemma caused by a change in enemies.⁹

At the national level, all the republics more or less face similar security problems. In addition, each republic is struggling with particular problems of its own. Their greatest problem is being seriously vulnerable to security and political development in Russia, particularly given the presence of Russian minorities in all these republics and the emergence of radical nationalism. Russia is and will continue to be the most significant power in the former Soviet republics. It is a geographical and racial hegemonic power and its actions will undoubtedly influence other republics. All of the republics face both nation building and state building problems. In this process the role of the military which has been influential in defining identity of most nations has been ambiguous. In addition, there is disparity among the republics interms of armed force personnel. Kazakistan is the only Asian country, other than China, to have declared nuclear weapons on its territory. It has a total of 1340 strategic nuclear weapons and was said to have had 650 tactical nuclear weapons, till these were withdrawn into Russia in mid-1992. The strategic nuclear weapons in Kazakhstan's possession are for delivery from two launch sites and by heavy bombers.¹⁰ This makes it the fourth largest nuclear weapon power in the world. Kazakhstan signed the Lisbon protocol on May 22, 1992 and acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. It has also declared a "no first use" policy.

9. Graham Fuller, *Central Asia : The New Geopolitics*, Santa Monica : Rand, 1992, pp.3-6.

10. Martha Brill Otcott, a Central Asia's Post-empire Politics", *Orbis*, Spring 1992, pp.306.

There was considerable speculation as to what will happen to these weapons once the overall responsibility of the Soviet Union ceases. Initially president Nazarbayev had stated that it would keep its nuclear weapons for another 15 years.¹¹ At the same time Kazakhstan and Russia bound by their defence treaty will decide for themselves where to station these nuclear weapon in future. Efforts made by foreign powers to train the newly founded armed forces has only aggravated the security dilemma in these countries.¹²

Along with these security concern, the region is faced with other problems that directly threaten the security implications. These problems include the spread of narcotics, organised crime and environmental pollution especially in the light of the nuclear tests which have taken place in parts of Central Asia and the existence of uranium refining centres there.¹³

In this region, the primary repository of weapons is obviously Afghanistan which is assessed to have received upto 1992 combined "weapon aid" of up to \$8 billion. Recent research suggest that China, Egypt and the United States began covert aid to the Mujahideen totaling 65,000 tons annually at a peak period in the mid-1980, most of it in small weapon.¹⁴

11. *Fontign Report*, 29 April, 1993.

12. "Post-Soviet Armies", *RFERL Research Report*, Vol.2, No.25, (June 18, 1993).

13. *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol.49, No.3, (October 1993), pp.37-39.

14. Tara Kantha, "Light weapon proliferation and regional instability in Central Asia", *Strategic Analysis*, December 1996, p.1279.

The above are some of the general security problems that most of the new republic face at the national level. Additionally each republic faces its own particular problems. Civil war in Tajikistan has so far claimed 20,000 lives and created 350,000 refugees. Uzbekistan is indirectly involved in this war. Kazakhstan and Russia are faced with special security problems which include nuclear arms issues.¹⁵

The third level of security crises is regional. Regional crises can be categorised into two groups. The first group involves "collective security" system in Central Asia. Despite the efforts made thus far such as the signing of the Tashkent "collective security" pact, there is still no precise collective security structure in Central Asia and every country in the region has attempted to strike a bilateral security arrangement with Russia. The Second set of regional problem and crises, in addition to the indefiniteness of the collective security situation, is caused by the influence of various security moves in Central Asia.

The fourth level which involves international security crises involves the other international players in addition to other countries near the region and the former soviet republics. Here we must emphasis two points. The first point is the indeterminate future of international security following the end of the Cold War. A new International system has not yet taken shape and it is interesting to note that one of the reasons for this is the unclear future of power and security structure in the former Soviet republics. The second point is addition of new players in the security scene of Central Asia.

15. Moonis Ahmar, "Conflict Resolution and Confidence building in Central Asia", *Strategic Studies*. (Islamabad) Vol.XVI, No.3, spring 1994, p.84.

Security concern in Central Asia and Russia's strategic interests

The destabilizing feature of the five new states in Central Asia was that none of them could guarantee their own security. With no armed forces of their own, they were forced to depend on the military forces of their former colonial power. National security is an essential requirement of the foreign policy strategy of the Central Asian State. Does these state have the capability of providing external and internal security for their citizens? Having been protected by the Soviet army and strategic forces, infrastructures were alien to these states, even though they housed strategic forces and weapons. The first alarm for security concern of Central Asian states was raised in early 1992 when the ruling elites there warned Moscow that its Eurocentric policy could pave the way for the predatory design of West Asian Muslim fundamentalist forces in their lands. They spoke forcefully of the fear of loss of strategic installation in Central Asia and of the eruption of inter-ethnic conflicts like those witnessed in the Caucasus. Powerful economic lobbies also increasingly subscribed to the view that Russia's continues and even has enhanced strategic interests in Central Asia taking into account the need of protecting the Central Asian underbelly over which clouds of uncertainty had been gathering.¹⁶

On its part, Moscow also realised that support for the pro-Russian elites in Central Asia and acceptance of their assertion of political and economic independence was the most cost effective way of ensuring stability in this region.

16. Tabassum Firdous, "Security Stakes and Strategies", *World Affairs*, 1995, p.53.

Maintaining healthy bilateral relations with two key states of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were the "Critical linchpins" for the success of the strategy.¹⁷

The presence of Pakistani and Afghan guerillas in the Chechen conflict adds a new dimension to Central Asian internal Security. Pakistan has the hunch that Central Asian States will seek its military cooperation which would reduce their dependence on Russia or the West. Pakistan is frantically struggling for an overland link with Central Asia across the strife-torn Afghanistan, and its support to the Taliban extremist movement is primarily with this objective.¹⁸

Interms of security concern in Central Asia, after initial hiccups of the disintegrating Soviet state, Russia gradually realised that the Gulf countries were trying to capitalise on the security vacuum in Central Asia to promote their own influence and ideological preferences. Russia made it clear to Iran that the development of closer Russo-Iranian relations depended on the nature of Iran's Central Asian policy.¹⁹ The security policy of Russia towards Central Asia to maintain a buffer zone around the region and preserve there a balance of power. The strong motivation for the Central Asian State to ensure a framework for multilateral military relationship with Russia is the heavy concentration of the former Soviet defence production and research and development in the Russian federation.²⁰ Russia will give priority to develop its military relationship to

17. Ibid. p.54.

18. Tabassum, Firdous, "Central Asia: Security stakes and strategies", *World Affairs*, June 1995, p.55.

19. M. E. Ahrai, "The dynamics of new great game in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey*, 13(4), p.531.

20. Alvin Z., Rublstein, "Geopolitical Pull on Russia", *Orbis*, 1994, Vol.38, p.229.

build common military institutions with Central Asian states, which are central to its geo-political interests. Protection of Central Asian states from external threat and internal instabilities is the responsibility of the Russian federal government.

As far their armed forces and national security are concerned, most of the Central Asian states, as Uzbekistan puts it, see Russia as the "guarantor" of stability" in the region.²¹ It is likely that they see Russia as guarantor of their regimes as well. They also see Russia as balancing off Turkey and Iran. Keeping all these factors and circumstances, several bilateral agreement have been signed to strengthen the security of these states.

Turkmenistan is to have dual control of its borders, along with Russia. The Turkmen army is to have a joint command of Turkmen and Russian officers. Kyrgyzstan has strengthened its security ties with Russia and President Akayev has stated that they would " follow Russia's lead".²² It is evident that the CAS will use the principle of continuity and change in their foreign policy strategy. Despite the geostrategic rush into Central Asia being attempted by Turkey, Iran and others, the Central Asian states are aware of their dependence on Russia.

Russia and Central Asian states were alarmed by the possibility of Islamic forces going to acquire the upper hand in the current conflicts, which might pave the way for instability and threat to security. So on September 4, 1992, Russia,

21. Anuradha Chenoy, "Geostrategies and foreign polices", *World Focus*, 1993, p.33.

22. Ibid., p.35.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek Presidents expressed concern at isolation of Tajikistan's southern border with Afghanistan, decided to send reinforcement, and also signed an agreement at Moscow to set up allied peace keeping force along the Tajikistan border. If Islamic fundamentalism or any other form of extremism spreads to Central Asia it is certain to have a spillover effect on Russia. This perceived fear was brought out by George Kunadze, deputy minister of foreign affairs, in an interview to *Nezavisimaya Gezeta*. He candidly admitted these fears and said that Russia has a specific geo-political interest in central Asia, that is "to prevent the explosive change of Islamic extremism from penetrating into Russia."²³

Russian interest in Central Asia is further strengthened by the presence of large numbers of Russians and Russian-speaking people in the region. The military doctrine enunciated in 1993 clearly stated that any suppression of rights, freedom and lawful interests of Russians and Russian-speaking people could lead to tension.²⁴

The Central Asian response to this statement is that the leaders also realised that there are deep seated differences among them. Beside the lack of solidarity among themselves, two other factors must have weighed on the minds of Central Asian leaders in determining their attitude towards Russia. Firstly the geo-political compulsions impugned heavily in determining the response of

23. *Nezavisimaya Gezeta*, July 29, 1993, cited in *Current Digest of Post Soviet Press (CDPSP)*.

24. Mohadin Meshbhai, *Russian Foreign Policy and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Central Asian Survey*, Vol.12, No.2, 1993, P.192.

Central Asia. The Central Asian states had to co-exist in the shadow of their powerful neighbour, which was also a nuclear power. Their geo-political interests demanded they could not afford to alienate Russia, at least not in the present stage of their development. They have to first consolidate their independence and build up their armed forces. The second limiting factor that affects the independence of Central Asian states is the fact that these countries are land locked. Their access to the outside is valued through Russia. President Karimov accepts the fact the Russian presence in the region is essential. In his words, "I favor having Russia present here as a guarantor of security, stability, ethnic concord and peace in this region". While acknowledging the salutary effect of the Russian presence in the region, President Karimov feels that Russia should not adopt a big brother attitude towards them.²⁵

Following the initial attempts to diminish their dependence on Russia, the Central Asian states felt compelled to again link their security with the most powerful successor state of the soviet union. Russia remains - also as a result of the continuing "Russian" character of leadership circles - the most important factor in the foreign and security policies of all Central Asian states and the priority partner in emergency situation. Russia wanted to again fill the power vacuum created in this region before other countries, such as Turkey or Iran, could gain too much influence in Central Asia. All politically relevant forces regarded this region as a major factor for Russians national security. The sheer

25. *Foreign Broadcasting Information Service* - 94-008, Aug.15, 1994, p.101.

realization is that the security of Russia and the Central Asian states are mutually dependent, as these young state with weak economies, instable political system and no independent defence capability have become vulnerable to external pressures and penetration. All the Central Asian states without exception, though with varying degrees of emphasis, preferred and in fact insisted on a substantive collective security system with active Russian participation. The Central Asian elites from kazakhstan to Turkmenisatan were not satisfied with the token gesture of the nuclear umbrella of the CIS for their security. They were demanding a more comprehensive, meaningfull security system which include practical measures in dealing with the conventional defence of their security and their borders.

Early optimism over the formation of an Asian-Turkic/Islamic bloc" was fading in the face of the realities of historical inter independence with Russia. Commenting on the pivotal role of Russia in the security of Central Asia. Askar Akayev, the president of Kyrgyzstan, argued, "The Eurasian entity hinged on Russia would collapse if it [Russia] ceased to be a world power, with painful implications for kyrgyzstan as well. That's why we must make our contribution to Russia revival.²⁶

The above developments indicate that the Central Asian state will continue to retain their geopolitical orientation with Russia, leaving only limited space for the Islamic states for manoeuvring. The national security concern in Central Asia is the prime concern for Russia.

26. Interfax 15 July 1992, *FBIS-SOV* 92-139, 17 July 1993, p.59.

CHAPTER - III

**REGIONAL PROBLEMS AND EFFORTS TO CREATES
A COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM
IN CENTRAL ASIA**

The collapse of Soviet Union and the emergence of independent states in Central Asia have potentially profound consequences for regional as well as global security. The post-independence period of these Central Asian states is however, marked by a number of challenges from political instability, heavy dependence on Russia for technical and industrial expertise, to resolving ethnic, linguistic, territorial and security conflicts. There is also a likelihood of confrontation among the Central Asian states on matter related to sharing of water resources, protection of environment and ecology of the region and dealing with external factors etc. However it has been pointed out by a Pakistani expert of Central Asian affairs, professor Ahmed Hasan Dani, that the West has a vested interest in propagating the so called conflicts between the Central Asian states.¹ The West is under the impression that "Islamic revivalism" in Central Asia will thwart their influence and encourage extremist forces in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia and is mindful of these realities and threats emanating from a combination of unresolved conflicts and the upsurge of religious elements in Central Asia. The civil war in Tajikistan is going on between pro-government forces supported by the CIS on the one hand, and radical Islamic forces backed by Afghanistan and some other muslim states on the other. Unrest in Uzbekistan on account of the members of "Islamic Renaissance Party", and delicate ethnic balance between Kazakhs and Russians in Kazakhstan, should be examined in the context of the dichotomy of weak

1. Ahmed Hasan Dani, "West Sowing Seeds of conflict in Central Asia", *The Muslim*, (Islamabad), April, 12, 1993.

power structures in the Central Asian states and their inability to assert their independence.

The re-emancipation of the Central Asian states is thus a crucial factor, not only at the regional level, but also relevant to the global political order. Given numerous unresolved ethnic and territorial conflicts among these states, there is also a possibility of further fragmentation and emergence of new states in that region.

In some cases, ethnic, linguistic and territorial contradictions are so strong that the assertion of religious forces may be counter-productive. In a situation when the Central Asian states are exposed to a conglomeration of problems and challenges, one viable option for stability and peace in that region is to seriously strive for conflict resolution and adopt confidence building measures in military and non-military areas. Such a process can be launched at bilateral and multilateral forums and would require the adoption of concerted efforts and seeking of support on the part of the regimes in power, of other influential groups and external factors.

Religious and Ethnic Problems

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism was one of the obvious scenarios commonly foreseen in Central Asia after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. The prospect of a rising Islamic bloc out of these newly independent states in alliances with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, as well as the possible incorporation of China's western muslim province of Xinjiang in it, is one kind of scenario which paves the way for growing tension and instability in this

region. The idea of pan-Turkish bloc to form "Turkestan" on the other hand, could endanger the territorial integrity of many countries ranging from the West Asia to China. It has every potential to exacerbate regional tensions, which could even lead to direct armed conflicts.

It is true that Islam is perhaps more fractious today than before. There are numerous sects and the shia-sunni divide is real and deep. There are Arabic and Persian influences and south east Asian muslims have a considerably different alignment. There is a good reason now to concur with Amos Perlmutter, when he said that, "Islamic fundamentalism of the Sunni or Shia variety - is not merely resistant to democracy but wholly contemptuous of and hostile to the entire democratic political culture... there is no spirit of reconciliation between Islamic fundamentalism and the modern world".²

However, Mushahid Hussein, a leading Pakistani political analyst, sees the Islamic reassertion as positive in atleast three dimensions, Politically, as challenging the existing status quo, culturally, as the assertion of an Islamic identity differentiating between modernisation and Westernisation (as aping the west) and in foreign affairs, as assertion of sovereignty over natural resources, struggle for liberation and matching military power.³

However, for some observers, the revival of Islam in the newly independent Central Asian states is conceived as a threat to democracy. The

2. D. Banerjee, "Recent development in Central Asia and their security implication", *Strategic Analysis*, September, 1992, p.499.

3. Musdhahid Hussein, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 July 1992, p.22.

reopening of mosques, the growing activities of the Islamic renaissance party and the role of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in this regard is viewed with suspicion and mistrust.

The known design of the Islamic fundamentalists along the Tajik-Afghan border made most of the Central Asian states follow the example of Russia in announcing the formation of armed forces on their territory.

The ethnic conflicts in Central Asia should be seen in two perspectives. First the presence of a strong Russian minority in nearly all Central Asian States, particularly in Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan. Any local attempt to under mine the privileged status of the Russian minority will be counter-productive. Second, ethnic tension among the Central Asian groups, conflict between the Uzbek minority in Tajikistan and Kyrghyzstan and the Tajik minority in Uzbekistan is a case in point. The rivalry among Central Asian states with regard to ethnic hegemony paves the way for other regional powers to develop a conflict scenario, in which peace and security can not be realised. Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Russia and China will eventually be involved in ethnic conflict if temperatures rise to uncontrolled limits.

Intra-ethnic confrontations are more likely to be more serious than the inter-ethnic, inter-regional rifts. This is the case in Tajikistan too, where inter and intra ethnic/tribal conflicts have become the major factor of instability.

Uzbek assertiveness has been the cause of many ethnic tensions and bloody fighting, particularly in the Ferghana valley. The growing Uzbek nationalism is a source of anxiety for the non-Uzbeks in and outside Uzbekistan. The civil war in Tajikistan is the most crucial issue in the region today. Here

two factors are important. The Russian factor is important because of its military presence. The Uzbek factor is important because of geography and ethnic proximity. All the Central Asian states are supporters of Russia's military intervention in Tajikistan to contain fundamentalists from the southern border.⁴

Russia will inevitably remain a dominant force in the region and the decision to maintain the collective armed forces of the CIS will be the most critical factor in ensuring stability in Central Asia. Radical ethnic nationalism are more likely in the politically backward republics. Anti-Uzbek feelings are more probably next only to anti-Russian sentiments in the republics.

Territorial and Water Disputes

Perhaps the important area of regional problems after ethnic disputes is the squabbling over the territorial boundaries and water resources. Kazakhstan has territorial disputes with China. China has claims on three tracts of land that were illegally annexed by the former Soviet Union. According to the statement published by the Chinese news agency 'Xinhua' "the two sides (China and Kazakhstan) affirmed an agreement reached in earlier sino-Soviet border talks and will continue to discuss the unsettled problem."⁵

Uzbekistan has territorial claims over most of its neighbours. It has a claim over the whole of Ferghana valley including part of Tajikistan, parts of

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4. Mohiaddin Mesbhai, "Russian foreign policy and security in Central Asia and the Caucasus", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.12, No.2, 1993, pp.181-183.
 5. Moonis Ahmar, "Conflict resolution and confidence building in Central Asia" *Strategic Studies*, Vol.XVI, Spring 1994, p.75.

southern Kazakhstan and eastern Turkmenistan. If the territorial disputes are not handled with prudence by the Central Asian states, the outcome may be similar to what is going on between Azerbaijan and Armenia and in former Yugoslavia. The Escalation of territorial disputes will plunge the entire region into armed conflicts and violence.

According to some sources, Uzbekistan is considered as an expansionist state, given its territorial claims over other states. It is the most powerful Central Asian state in terms of population, economic resources and military build-up.⁶ In this scenario, territorial conflict in the former Soviet Central Asian Republics are explosive in nature and have a potential for out break of hostilities. Such a situation may lead to further disintegration of Central Asia and the emergence of several new states on ethnic lines.

Another source of problem in Central Asia is related to water resources. Here, also, Moscow is blamed for playing havoc with the plight of local population. The water crisis can be managed by creating a new supra-national authority, backed by international financing, which can manage and allocate the scare waters of the Syrdaria and Amudaria in an efficient, equitable and environmentally sound manner.⁷

The confrontation over control of water is likely between states, especially between upstream (Kazakhstan and Tajikistan) and those downstream

6. Ibid., p.75.

7. Ibid., p.76.

(the rest).⁸ One can apprehend serious conflicts among the Central Asian states for existing water resources.

Regional Imbalance in Nuclear Weapons

Out of the massive nuclear arsenal of roughly 27,000 weapons that the former Soviet Union accumulated over the past thirty-five years Kazakhstan possessed 7 percent or 1,800 on its soil as of September 1991. In the aftermath of the Soviet collapse Kazakhstan was a party to the agreement signed by 11 CIS members which committed themselves to "preserve and support common military and strategic space under a united command, including unified control over nuclear armaments regulated by special agreement".⁹

President Nursultan Nazarbayev initially spoke of his desire to destroy the nuclear weapons based on their territory as rapidly as possible in the content of some form of international agreement. However, later on President Nazarbayev has been saying ambiguous things about Kazakhstan's nuclear status. During former US Secretary of State Baker's visit to Alma-Ata in December 1991, Nazarbayev changed his position asserting that Kazakhstan would not relinquish its nuclear arms as long as such weapons are maintained in Russia.¹⁰

Analysts have pointed out that this statement by Nazarbayev points firstly to his Islamic political manoeuvres to gain support from the Islamic World.

8. Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asian post empire politics", *Orbis*, Spring 1992, p.256.

9. P. Stobdon, "Central Asian Regional Security", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.15, No.5, August 1992, p.469.

10. *Ibid.*, p.470.

Secondly, by saying so, he managed to distinguish himself from other leaders. Thirdly, he could bargain for maximum help from the West. Nazarbayev's revised position on nuclear weapons gave an indication of Kazakhstan's willingness to hold on to the weapons on its soil as a means to ensure its participation in the collective decision-making arrangements under CIS. In this context, Nazarbayev pointed to article of the NPT which declare that "a state which manufactured and exploded nuclear weapons or system before 1967 is a nuclear state".

He emphasised that Kazakhstan has tested nuclear weapons since 1949 and has participated in one degree or another in the deployment and manufacture of nuclear weapons components (elements) long before 1967. Thus Kazakhstan can not be considered a nuclear free state".¹¹

Since Kazakstan is recognised as a participant to the treaty and will be involved in further negotiations in connection with setting of the collective security system among the seven CIS states, Kazakhstan has now relinquished its original intention to remain a nuclear state until all nuclear warheads are destroyed.

Meanwhile, the US administration started to press Nazarbayev to give up the strategic weapons, Kazakhstan deployed on its soil. However, Nazarbayev continued to resist US pressure demanding security guarantees and economic assistance for Kazakhstan in exchange for eliminating its nuclear weapons.

As per agreement reached in Washington, Kazakhstan would have a role in future arms control negotiations relating to deeper cuts in US and Russian

11. Ibid., p.470.

strategic arsenals, which was one of the key reason for Nazarbayev's decision to accept the START protocol and adhere to the non-proliferation regime.

Kazakhstan decided to sign NPT, as a nuclear free state, following the signing of a collective security pact at the CIS summit in Tashkent. The Tashkent treaty envisaged that the parties reaffirm their pledge to refrain from the use of force or a threat of force in inter-state relations as "an important legal instrument to ensure security and stability in a considerable part of Eurasia". Apart from the US agreement to consider Kazakhstan as a party to the START treaty, Kazakhstan was given a written assurance by the US secretary of state, Baker, that the US will make every effort to ensure that the international community defends Kazakhstan in the event of an external nuclear attack or threatened attack.¹²

The US administration has tactfully made Kazakhstan eliminate its nuclear weapon, without getting much in return. Except for signing the long-awaited agreement with Chevron corporation, the fourth largest US oil company, Nazarbayev has not been able to bargain, much in exchange for signing the NPT. The Kazakhs may have thought that once they hand over their nuclear weapons to Russia, they would hide themselves in the shade of the American Umbrella. But the US is going to fulfill no more than the condition of the 1968 treaty. At most, the US will only appeal to the UN security council on the event of a nuclear threat to Kazakhstan.

The initial unrealistic expectation that the Central Asian Republics will not maintain armed forces and depend entirely upon a common force under the

12. FBIS - SOV - 92 - 110, 8 June, 1992, p.64.

CIS was soon dispelled. Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan would definitely have their own armies. The desire to sever all links with the CIS is strong.

The main security question affecting the world is the possession of nuclear weapon by Kazakhstan. President Nazarbayev announced his intention to signing the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state at Washington on 19th May 1992. It has on its soil 1,150 strategic nuclear warheads and 650 tactical weapons.¹³

At the same time, the destruction and dismantling of these warheads will be a long drawn out and a very expensive process. President Nazarbayev has said that Kazakhstan will keep these weapons for atleast 15 years.¹⁴

In this somewhat confused setting, what is clear is that Kazakhstan may presently be considered as the third largest nuclear weapon power, with more weapon than China. The reason for retaining these weapons are exactly the same as those given by the two major nuclear weapon powers all these years for their much larger arsenals. With the possibility of current strained relations with Russia getting worse and its own armed forces not ready as yet, Kazakhstan sees the nuclear weapon as a necessary deterrent in the interim period. It apparently sees no contradiction in this policy with signing the NPT. But it is sufficiently concerned about its own security to have called an international conference at Alma Ata from 7-12 October, 1992, to enlist the support of outside powers apparently to provide assurance to ensure its own security.¹⁵

13. *International Herald Tribune*, 6 July, 1992.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

Regional grouping as a factor for regional instability:

The central Asian states have been spawning political and economic associations with an aim to shape their regional identity. In February 1992, the newly independent Central Asian States were invited to become members of Economic Cooperation Council (ECO) founded 25 years ago by Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, then called the Regional Co-operation for Development (RCD). Except for Kazakhstan, which preferred to be an observer, the other four opted for full membership. RCD now called the Economic Co-operation Council (ECO). In the ECO summit, the emphasis was given to create a powerful Islamic major common market and elimination of all tariff and non-tariff barriers. It also talked about common faith, cultural affinities and shared experiences of history. Akhtar Adil Rizvi, a Pakistani analyst remarked that the bond of history and cultural affinity, combined with contemporary imperatives of security in a volatile political and strategic environment ought to enlarge the scope and capacity of their co-operation and collaboration. Even President Rafsanjani of Iran viewed the organisation as an Islamic political-economic organisation which could develop into a world power.¹⁶

With Bangladesh also having applied for membership in the ECO, the Islamic leaders hope to expand their organisation. Rizvi commented, "Ironically, it is this strength which is causing nightmares in some western capitals, raising scary scenario of the emerging coalition of states particularly Iran, Pakistan and

16. P. Stobdon, "Central Asian Regional Security", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.15, No.5, 10 August 1992, p.472.

Kazakhstan producing Islamic nuclear bombs and becoming a citadel of Islamic "fundamentalism".¹⁷

Admission of non-Islamic states such as Armenia to the ECO is also debated. Alongwith Turkey, Pakistan aims to keep the ECO as an economic entity and not an Islamic group. But President Rafsanjani of Iran views the ECO as an "Islamic political economic organisation which could develop into a world power. Indications are clear that in the name of economic cooperation, political and strategic motives are promoted to influence the course of events in Central Asia. At the moment there are divergent interests of each country, particularly Iran and Turkey have their own rival regional interest in forming economic institutions. For example, Teheran has spearheaded the Caspian Sea Cooperation Zone to include Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. Turkey, however, decided to launch the rival Black Sea Cooperation Council to include Turkey, Azerbaizan, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova and Russia.¹⁸

During and after the regional group meeting of the "Asian Group of Seven" at Ashkabad in May 1992, there were indications that Iran, Pakistan and Turkey were aspiring to assume political responsibility from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China, overlooking Russian presence in any form on the geographically vast cultural Islamic belt. Rossiskaya Gazetta commented that "on the one hand, Iran was trying to push Russia out of the region and on the other,

17. Ibid., p.472.

18. Ibid., p.473.

Pakistan was trying to set up an anti-India alliance with the help of the Central Asian Republics".¹⁹

Regional grouping and regional integration-problems and prospects:

The integration of Central Asia was first discussed in 1990, during a conference in Almaty. However, till now, this as well as other attempt to achieve regional integration in Central Asia met with very little success, due to lack of decisive action to implement these resolutions.

The ECO was established in 1965 by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan as part of the first wave of regional integration projects, but never achieved the hoped for impact. Following the collapse of USSR, the ECO was revived in 1992 with a conference in Teheran.

In February 1993, the five Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan participated in a follow up conference in Quetta (Pakistan), together with Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan and Azerbaizan.

The ECO has a very slow probability of success. Rather viewing the ECO as a bonafide forum for integration, its three most important members Iran, Pakistan and Turkey have been attempting to use this body to advance their own interests in the Central Asian successor states of the USSR. From the very beginning, Iran has emphasised the Islamic nature of the ECO and maintained that this organisation could represent the first step towards a common Islamic

19. Tabassum Firdous, "Central Asia: Security stakes and strategies", *World Affairs*, June 1995, p.55.

market. The differences between the participating countries are too great to make them good candidates for a regional integration project.²⁰ Successful regional integration can only be achieved if the countries involved possess a minimum of economic, cultural and political common ground. Simply referring to their common Islamic religion is not sufficient, particularly since the religious practices in the individual member countries of the ECO vary greatly.

Much more favourable are the conditions for integration within the framework of the inter-state council. Currently, all Central Asian Countries are experiencing serious transformation crises of varying degrees, resulting in the relatively low probability that any one country would gain an advantage over the remaining countries of this region due to a position of economic superiority. Therefore, it would be a mistake to wait until these transformation process have been completed at which time the countries may be faced with the difficult task of affecting cooperation between highly divergent economies.

Conversely, it must be noted that the relatively similar economic structure of the Central Asian countries also presents certain disadvantages. Integration projects frequently failed because of the economies of the countries involved are too similar and donot sufficiently complement to each other.

At the time of formation of CIS in December 1991, there had been a hope that it would guarantee a single economic space. However, as the intervening years have shown, the CIS has not been successful in maintaining a commonwealth of states, largely due to its decision-making processes. Instead, it

20. Herbert Dieter, "Regional integration in Central Asia: Current Economic Position and Prospects", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.3, December 1996, p.380.

is divided into three distinct sections; a nucleus (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan), a first ring (Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), and second, far more distant, ring (Azarbaijan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Ukraine). One project that may overshadow and jeopardise the success of integration efforts within Central Asia is the Eurasian Union (EAU) proposed by Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev in mid 1994. Nazarbayev was one of the strongest supporters of continued cooperation within the boundaries of the former Soviet Union and did not leave the rouble zone until the requirements imposed by Russian Federation on Kazakhstan for its continued participation were no longer acceptable. Undoubtedly, Kazakhstan's attempt to pursue the economic and political integration with Russia would make the integration within Central Asia more difficult.

Another issue to be addressed is the conformity of the Central Asian integration project with the GATT/WTO. Although the countries of Central Asia are not yet members of the WTO, all states of this region are expected to join in the near future. However, there are still a number of open questions pertaining to the implementation of the integration project in Central Asia, especially on the central issue of trade policy. Although there has been talk of establishing a single economic territory in Central Asia by the year 2000, its precise format has not yet been determined.

Europe will fulfil an important function during this process. Thus, the action taken by the European Union will be of utmost importance to Central Asia. Bilateral donors, specifically the Federal Republic of Germany, are not appropriate partners for promoting regional integration because such effort must

occur in conjunction with measures that facilitate access to the European single market. Since the EU commission has been vested with sovereign powers over foreign trade relations, it must also serve as the Chief negotiator during the process of developing a concept to support the regional integration of Central Asia.

To support the spirit of cooperation through a mutual willingness to effect coordination and co-operation would not only contribute to securing peace, but also significantly facilitate the transition process of the Central Asian countries.

Collective security:

The most significant dynamics within the CIS with far-reaching security implications was the treaty on collective security signed between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan, Tazikistan, Russia and Armenia at the Tashkent summit on May 15, 1992. There is one clause in the treaty which binds the signatories not to enter into military alliances or participate in any groupings of states, nor in action directed against another participating state of the treaty. On the eve of the Tashkent summit, President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan commented that "two months of confrontation in Tajikistan have opened the eyes of a lot of people: Realistically thinking, politicians must draw their conclusions".²¹

While the treaty was initially perceived as a mere rhetorical stand and another 'declaration of divorce' in commonwealth life, recent and subsequent events show the need for a more serious and perhaps an eventually enduring

21. Tabassum Firdous, "Central Asia: Security tasks and strategies", *World Affairs*, 1995, p.54.

security system. Article 4 and Article 1 of collective security prohibit the participating states from entering into any military alliances or taking part in any grouping of states or actions directed against another participating state. General Leonid Ivashov, head of the working group on defence issues, and one of the key participants in preparation of the documents for the Tashkent summit, argued that the Treaty 'confirms already established views, particularly within the military circles of the commonwealth governments, that the establishment of a system of collective security, or more accurately, its preservation, is a practical necessity and an objective requirement'.²²

General V.Samsanov, Chief of the CIS Joint armed forces General Staff, in an article published by *Krasnaya Zvezda*, pointed to the political significance of the treaty: 'The treaty on collective security is the basis for forming a defence alliance and 'the first and probably the most complex step towards creating an effective military and political structure capable of being a guarantee of security for the successful political and economic developments of the subjects that forms the CIS.'²³

The two meetings specifically addressed the twin and significant issues of the creation of a CIS 'blue helmet' force for rapid deployment of CIS forces in the area of regional conflict within the CIS and the issue of security of the southern boarder of the CIS (Tashkent Summit). The Moscow summit, among

22. Moscow Central Television, 4 May 1992, cited in *FBIS-SOV* 92-099, 21 May 1992, p.31.

23. Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Russian Foreign Policy and Security in Central Asia", *Central Asia Survey*, Vol.12, No.2, 1993, p.194.

others, witnessed discussion and reached agreements on missile attack early warning systems, operational principles of supreme command of the CIS Joint Armed forces, and the approval of the statute of the CIS state Border Security committee.

What was especially noteworthy was the active participation, and infact insistence of the Central Asian states in putting the two critical issues of "blue helmet" forces and the security of the southern borders of Central Asia on the agenda. Islam Karimov, president of Uzbekistan, had put the rest of the participants on the spot by his relentless pressure to put the issue of border security along the southern republics-especially those facing Iran and Afghanistan on the agendas of Moscow summit and Tashkent meeting.²⁴

The treaty on collective security has now defined the exterior border of the participant states as the border of the CIS and its defence within the Jurisdiction of CIS aimed forces...." We now have common external borders", declared General Leonid Ivanshov. Both Marshall shaposhnikov, the then commander in chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces, and General V. Samsanov, then CIS Chief of the General Staff, reaffirmed that the quick reaction to the threat posed against the "outside borders of the commonwealth" is one of the key tasks of the CIS collective security arrangement.²⁵ Uzbekistan's forceful presentation of the border and ethnic conflict issues in Moscow was reinforced by a critical report given by Rakhman Nabiyev, President of Tajikistan, on the serious border problem with Afghanistan. The Taskhent meeting of the foreign

24. Ibid., p.195.

25. Ibid., p.195.

and defence minister of the CIS in mid-July came to the general agreement on the mechanism of creation of the CIS peace keeping force (blue helmet) and more importantly, the necessity of reinforcing the security of the southern border, especially the border of Tajikistan with Afghanistan.

In January 1993 Russia along with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed an agreement where by it was accepted that the external border of the CIS is the border of Russia also. In December 1993, the five central Asian states and Russia signed a memorandum on co operation for protecting external state border in Ashkhabad.

For Moscow the Treaty on collective security had several advantages. First, it virtually guaranteed that the major Central Asian states would not look to an outside country for security assistance; second, by putting the high command of the CIS in charge of co-ordinating military security, it gave Russia effective control over military activities in these states. Third, its existence encouraged those growing numbers of politicians thinking in terms of some kind of reintegration of the former soviet republics; finally, because the signatories were all from the south, the treaty helped to redirect security policy towards that area.

Despite the efforts made thus far, such as the signing of the collective security pact, there is still no precise collective security structure in Central Asia, and every country in the region has attempted to strike a bilateral security arrangement with Russia.²⁶ Russia

26. Seyed Mohamad Kazem Sajjadpur, "Relationship between security and development in Central Asia and the Caucasus", *Iranian Journal of International Relations*, vol.6, 1994-95, p.5.

concluded a series of bilateral treaties with each of the Central Asian states on military assistance in 1992, which effectively supplemented the Tashkent collective security accord.

Russia and Central Asian Republics : Bilateral Security :

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

Kazakhstan : Among the Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan took the lead on 25 May 1992. Nursultan Nazarbayev arrived in Moscow to sign the treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. The two side agreed that the two countries will form a "United Military and Strategic Zone and will jointly use the military base, test sites and other military infrastructure."²⁷ Yeltsin and Nazarbagev expressed hope that

27. Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Russian Foreign Policy and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.12, No.2, 1993, p.196.

other CIS states will take the treaty as a model to be followed. The first experiment security within the CIS also had an additional regional significance, as it was taking place after the Ashkhabad summit in which Central Asian leaders as well as the leader of Iran also participated.

The high point of the treaty was the agreement to jointly use the military bases test sites, etc. In January 1995 Kazakhstan and Russia signed a comprehensive military agreement in Moscow. The agreement stipulates that the two countries plan to merge their armed forces in the future. In the words of president Nazarbayev, the agreement implies that the two countries are allies.

According to the Chief of General Staff and Deputy Defence Minister, A.Kasymov, "The Russian and Kazakh armed forces will be brought closer together along with the lines of the Warsaw Pact and the North Atlantic Alliances".²⁸ Kazakhstan has now signed the Nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear member state. Kazakhstan has also ratified START and is committed to denuclearization. Recently the two countries were able to reach an agreement on the contentious issues of leasing the Baikanour space station. Kazakhstan is cooperating with the Russian border troops, and the two countries are likely to sign an agreement which will allow Russia and Kazakhstan to jointly guard the kazakh-Chinese border. In a joint communique issued after talks held in Moscow in February 1993, between the Kazakh and Russian presidents, the two leaders called for the creation of single

28. SWB, February 3, 1995.

military space allowing both states to draw on the combined potential of their armed forces.²⁹

Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan was next to follow the model. On May, 1992, Russia and Uzbekistan signed the "Treaty on the fundamentals of inter state relations, friendship and cooperation." The two sides agreed that territory of Russia and Uzbekistan will form a common military strategic area.

They also granted each other the right to use military facilities situated on their territories in case of necessity on the basis of mutual agreement. In February 1993, a Russian military delegation headed by Pavel Grachev, then minister of defence, met with President Islam Karimov and discussed the integration of two states' position in the sphere of military-technical cooperation, joint utilization of strategic facilities such as anti aircraft, intelligence gathering and space monitoring facilities, and joint plans for combat, mobilization, training and military exercises of the Russian and Uzbek armed forces. This in addition to the continual presence of Russian officers who constitute more than 80% of the officer corps of Uzbekistan armed forces also point to the close military relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan and possible development into one of the pillars of security in Central Asia.

During President Islam Karimov's visit to Moscow in early 1994 the two countries agreed to develop and deepen comprehensive cooperation in the military field. It was stated that they could "strengthen coordination of their foreign political activity in consolidating peace and security while focusing on

29. Ibid.

interaction in settling regional conflict and other disputes which infringe the interests of both the states.³⁰

In march 1994 Russia and Uzbekistan signed a treaty strengthening their military cooperation. According to president Karimov, Russia is today a guarantor of stability in Central Asia.

Kyrgyzstan : Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan was the next Central Asian leader to go to Moscow for a similar treaty with Russia. The two countries signed the "friendship and mutual co operation treaty" on June 1992, a treaty that according to Yeltsin raised the bilateral relation to a new level putting the two states "on an absolutely equal footing" and thus, signifying the end of Russian "imperial ambitions".³¹ Russia's role as the guarantor of Kyrgyzstan's security was reaffirmed. Kyrgyzstan's economic difficulties and inability to handle the financial responsibility of taking part in supporting CIS formations in Kyrgyzstan made this bilateral arrangement with Russia more appealing and more of a necessity. In January 1993 Russia along with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikstan signed an agreement where by it was accepted that the external boarder of the CIS is the border of Russia also.

Turkmenistan: Russia's bilateral security treaties with Turkmenistan are most significant of all as they directly deal with the future security of the southern border of the CIS. The treaty with Turkmenistan was a unique one that

30. Nirmala Joshi, "Russia and Central Asia : Strategic dimension", *Strategic Analysis*, December 1995, p.1280.

31. Mohiddin Mesbahi, "Russian Foreign Policy and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus", *Central Asian Survey*, vol.12, No.2, 1993, p.197.

envisioned the formation of national army for Turkmenistan under Joint Command. This was an important geo-political agreement for both Russia and Turkmenistan. For Turkmenistan the financial burdens and the structural impediments of creating a national army seemed insurmountable. For Russia, the treaty strengthened Russia's 'Southern flank' by maintaining her defensive flank and strength of its armed force unchanged, and allowed Russia "not to build its defence line in the south of Urals". Turkmenistan is choosing Russia rather than any of its southern neighbour as guarantor of its security prosperity, and stability in the region.³²

On December 23, 1993 in Ashgabat, President Yeltsin and president Saparmurad Niazov of Turkmenistan signed agreements permitting dual citizenship and regulating migration.

Turkmenistan's politico-military posture will continue to reflect the two key realities and pre-occupations of its post-soviet positions. First, continuous and direct dependency on Russia for security of the new state vis-a-vis its neighbours. Second the political desires and commitment to remain as independent as possible from Moscow and to avoid meaningful commitment in any regional political military bloc (i.e. CIS) which could undermine its newly acquired independence and could become a sources of provocation and concerns fore its southern neighbours, especially Iran.

Tazakistan: The case of the Russian - Tajikistan security arrangement is more complex, although Tajikistan is a signatory of the CIS collective security

32. Vyacheslav Belokrenicstsky, "Russia and Greater Central Asia", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 12, December 1994, p. 1096.

Treaty. On the bilateral level, close relation with Moscow remained in the shadows of and at times hostage to the on going political struggle.

Tajikistan's security problem was raised again in the foreign and defence ministries meeting in Tashkent in mid - July 1992 and an important decision was made to immediately enhance the strength of the troops on the border with Afghanistan. The Commander in Chief of the CIS forces announced the dispatch of 1200 additional troops to the border of Afghanistan. The stage was set for a broader security agreement with Russia, whereby the Tajikistan delegated to Russia the right to defend its border with Afghanistan. Since then Russia has been maintaining a presence of nearly 24,000 troops on the Tajik-afghan border. Russian security relation with Tajikistan however, remained subject to complicated domestic pressures generated by opposition forces in Tajikistan. The ensuing civil war in Tajikistan, especially after the forced resignation of Nabiyeu in December 1992, highlighted the complicated Russian political security role in Tajikistan, and its essential role in defining both its internal political dynamic and its external security.

Russia was indeed responding to the call of the Central Asian leaders gathered in Alma-Ata to perform the "peace keeping role" envisioned in the collective security agreement. The need for Russian intervention was echoed with no negation or ambiguity by the leaders of the besieged government of Tajikistan. What is critical here is the discussion of two intertwined issues: (a) The presence of a general consensus for Russian political military intervention both at the regional, i.e. Central Asian, and Republican, i.e. Tajikistan level; and continuity of Russian willingness for political and military intervention in Tajikistan as in other republics.

The consensus for Russian involvement has been instrumental in neutralizing the chances of Russian imperialism. Moscow's reluctant posture to intervene undermines the effectiveness of nationalist charges of Russia's aggressive interventionist policy and further confirms the existence of a structural dependency between Tajikistan and, for that master, just of the central Asian republics, and Russia.

CHAPTER IV

EXTERNAL POWERS AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

The disintegration of the Soviet Union has profoundly affected the international configuration of power. The impact of such significant event would be inevitably a matter of concern for international peace and stability. The subsequent emergence of Central Asia on the scene of world politics is one that immediately became a subject of prime concern for countries which have geographical proximity with the region. The contradictory global interests of all powers will ultimately surface within the security scene of Central Asia. For instance, the rivalry between Iranian and Turkish models was put forth mainly by West (U.S.A.) in Central Asia to maximise western interests in Central Asia. New players have entered this scene directly or indirectly either as a result of close geographic proximity or their global hegemony. The near and distant powers includes China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Israel, while the European community and the U.S.A. are considered as global powers. In this backdrop it is necessary to examine Central Asian national security in the context of external powers.

THE US INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

After six years of following a relatively benign neglect policy, the United State has suddenly become active in exploring the possibilities of getting a political and economic foothold in the Central Asian region. In the recent years the US has spelled out a more clear goal in Central Asia. Apart from the geostrategic dimension of the region as the lynchpin and gateway to the West Asia, East Asia, South Asia and Russia, the vast natural and human resources are seen as being of the most strategic importance for America. Not only is

Washington trying hard to get the states of Central Asia oriented towards the Western democracies, but has also started to challenge Russia's domination in the "near Abroad".¹ Washington's main concern in that region is two fold: First, Kazakhstan's nuclear potential and second, the influence of Islamic fundamentalists. Notwithstanding the fact that Kazakhstan has assured the United States that it will keep its nuclear weapons under the control of CIS and will subscribe to Washington's policy of nuclear non-proliferation, American policy-makers are not hesitant to express their concern on the possible transfer of nuclear technology from that state to other states particularly these in West Asia and the middle East. The activities of Islamic groups in Central Asia against political status quo are also disturbing for the United States. Turkey is being encouraged to play an active role in Central Asia both to act as a bulwark against Islamic force and to promote a secular model of governance.²

The Central Asian region could be a source of attraction for the United States given the immense deposits of natural resources. On the other hand, technological expertise and hard currency are two important needs of the Central Asian states and given its economic and technological clout, the United States can be helpful to these states. The west can most realistically hope to influence the politics and attitudes of the Central Asian region through support for structural economic and institutional reforms and programmes. Visible support

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1. P.Stobdan, "The US interests in central Asia; new agenda for Pakistan", *Strategic Analysis*, August 1996, p.829.
 2. Moonis Ahmar, "Conflict resolution and conflict building in Central Asia", *Strategic Studies*, Vol.XVI, Spring 1994, p.79.

for economic reforms is even more vital since the western record in its policies towards Central Asian security can not be judged as a glittering success. The extension of the CSCE (Conference Security and Cooperation in Europe) and the North Atlantic cooperation council (NACC) to the Central Asian states did little to alleviate the security concern of these states. Its neighbours have already been preoccupied with bilateral and multilateral negotiations. One can not, however, ignore the security concerns of this region. The failure of united States to contemplate any substantial involvement in Tajik Civil War, despite requests from a number of Central Asian states, has similarly limited the influence of the West and the international community in the region. The problem with the United States and other western powers in Central Asia is that the region is far from reaching the stage of political stability. Given scores of conflicts at all levels and the fragile nature of the Central Asian regimes, policy makers in Washington feel it improper to take serious initiative to play a significant role.

Turkey and Iran have a Potential for Influencing Central Asian Security System

Turkey has been more successful in extending its influence in Central Asia not only because it has appealed to the Central Asian Turks but the west also preferred the Turkish model as a better option for the Central Asian nation-building process. However, here too, any approaches to a regional unity or a regional co-operation community on the basis of pan-Turkism concept will be confronted with the difficulty of regional complexities and the polyethnic population of Central Asia. Contrast to this, pan-Turkish or Turk-Islamic

synthesis has always been a force in the Turkish politics."³ Turkey is able to act as an intermediary in Central Asia's economic, political and military contacts with the west. Turkey also granted one billion dollars of aid and trade credits to various Central Asian states and sponsored their membership in the NACC and C.S.C.E (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe)."⁴ This approach of Turkey proves itself as ready reckoner for the Central Asian states.

Central Asian leaders are examining whether alliances with Turkey and the countries of Middle East could protect them against conflict around the region, or would these states have to rely on Russia for their security once again? At this Juncture NATO powers has encouraged Turkish nationalism and would attempt to use Turkey as an extension of NATO into the Central Asian states. It is with this in mind that they have attempted to strengthen Turkey's military strength by transferring almost 3000 tanks and armored personnel carriers in 1992 to Turkey under the plan termed "Cascading".⁵ Turkey has since 1989 improved its ties with the Central Asian states. Agreement on friendship and cooperation have been concluded between Turkey and the CAS. Followed by proposals and agreements on joint ventures and trade. President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan specifically stated that "Turkey was a centre of attraction of Turkic peoples". This however did not prevent the Kyrgyz from signing agreements with Iran the same month.⁶

3. R.S. Akhtar, "Turkey and Central Asian Republic", *The Frontier Post*, Peshawar, 5 March, 1992.

4. *The Economist*, 26 December-8 January, 1993. P.45.

5. Anuradha Chenoy, "Geo strategy and foreign policies", *World Focus*, Nov.-Dec. 1993, p.31.

6. *Ibid.*, p.35.

Iran was presented by the west, Russia and Arab world as the greatest threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Central Asian states.⁷ This sense of threat was further heightened by the perceived Iranian moral and material support given to the Islamic groups in Tajikistan, particularly during the escalation of crisis in 1992. Iran has a large continuous border with Central Asia and is unavoidable in its geostrategic presence in the region. Kazakhstan has also been promoting economic cooperation in the Caspian sea and has viewed Iran as a potential route through which oil from that region might be transported.⁸

In general Iran has been trying to push through this region with presumably four tools: a) Islam b) Petrodollars c) a common cultural and linguistic heritage with Tajikistan and d) extensively sharing border with Turkmenistan. However, having significant financial resources at its disposal, it has been trying to influence the Central Asia states. More so, for not to be identified itself totally with the Islamic card, Iran is willing to project itself as an important export route for oil pipelines. This pipeline option through Iran has again brought it in confrontation with Pakistan which itself wants to be an important oil pipeline route to the Arabian sea. And thus, these conflicting neighbours of Central Asian states might create a lot of troubles in future. Adding to it, the Russian apprehensions regarding increasing Iranian influence might also create civil strifes in the region. The best option left for the Central

7. Yadcov Roi, "Central Asian riot and disturbances", *Central Asian Survey*, vol.10, No.3, 1991, p.34.

8. *Middle East Economic Digest*, 4 December, 1994, p.32.

Asian states is to adopt a secular approach to the inter-state economic and political relations. Otherwise, this catalyst Islamisation might push the region into trouble.

Iran continued to maintain its regional policy in the framework of the new situation in three areas perceived to be specially vital for Iranian interest: the Persian gulf, the Near East and the Caucasian - Central Asian region.

The Caucasian - Central Asian region is of interest to Iran for three reasons: to build ties with the neighbouring states for political, economic and strategic reasons in order not to leave the area free for its rivals; to break its isolation in the gulf and the near eastern areas; and to become active in the region, by re-launching its foreign policy and by re-invigorating its regional diplomacy. To achieve these objectives, Iran has been intensely active at the multilateral and bilateral levels.

In multilateral levels, Iran had taken initiative in 1992 to propose the establishment of a regional framework for cooperation, reuniting the countries on the Caspian basin, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. This project has the ambition to counter the zone of economic cooperation of the black sea, launched by Turkey and to which Iran has not been invited.⁹ Iran and Turkey also have divergent perception on their role in Central Asia. Although the two countries are in ECO and claimed not have a clash of interests over Central Asia, the actual situation is quite different. Turkey has been accused by Iran for spreading its influences under the garb of "Pan-Turkism" whereas the

9. Mohammed-Reza Dhalili, "In search of New Friends : Iran and Central Asia", *World Affairs*, Jan.-March 1997. Vol.1, No.1, p.106.

activities of Iran are being viewed with suspicion by Turkey, particularly Teheran's linkage with radical Muslim groups. Turkey has formed the Black Sea Common Market and Iran has established the Caspian Sea Council with the single aim to promote their interest in Central Asia.¹⁰ Another source of conflict between Turkey and Iran in Central Asia is over a recently concluded agreement signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan over the construction of an oil pipeline. Of concern to the west is the effort by Iran to win over the Central Asian republics. Iran is strenuously attempting to develop a strategic and economic link with the Central Asian states.

The elaboration and operationalisation of Iranian policy toward Central Asia are meeting with a number of obstacles. The first and foremost is ideological. The Iranian Islamic Republic's ideological options are neither looked upon favourably by the five Central Asian Republics nor by Russia who is their principal partner in the sector of security. Besides, the Central Asian republics are conscious of the fact that too close a rapprochement with Iran would be prejudicial to their relations with the West, especially the U.S.A., which has publicly aired its reservation of Iranian intentions. It is therefore, unlikely that Iranian-Central Asian relation will go beyond good neighbourly relations, exceeding the strict limit of reciprocal interests. Another problematic area is the development of economic relations. Admittedly, Iran has some financial means and some technical knowhow, but they are indeed very constricted and can hardly meet the urgent demands of the Central Asian

10. R. S. Akhtar, "Turkey and Central Asian Republics", *The Frontier Post*, Peshawar, 5, March, 1992, p.178.

economic system that are right in the middle of transition.¹¹ The major difficulty is Iran's own isolation from the international system.

Pakistan's expansionist policy and Central Asia's National Security

Pakistan is all set to export its own brand of Islamic fundamentalism in the region. The rhetoric that prevailed in Pakistan in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse concluded that Central Asia will provide Pakistan with increased diplomatic leverage, economic-political and strategic depth all at the same time. Pakistan's interests in Central Asia have been determined by its rivalry with India. It has strongly perceived that Islamisation of Central Asian states would strengthen and rationalise Pakistan's own existence as an Islamic state. Pakistan knew very well that Central Asian's have always been suspicious of, and have never appreciated, what Pakistan has been doing in Afghanistan.¹² Pakistan's involvement in Tajikistan civil war is also a matter of concern to Central Asian states.

The presence of Pakistani and Afghan guerrillas in Chechen conflict adds a new dimensions to central Asian internal security. Pakistan has the hope that Central Asian states will seek its military co-operation which could reduce their dependence on Russia. Numerous visit by its ministers and bureaucrats explored the possibility of expanding its ties with the region. Pakistan prime minister

11. "Iran to Help Central Asian Muslims", *Frontier Post*, Peshawar, February, 20, 1992, p.120.

12. P.Stobdon, "International aspect of the conflict situation in Central Asia and Indian Perspective", *Strategic Analysis*, May, 1994. p.168.

even said that the Ummah must embrace these new Islamic countries within its fold. He claims that they were looking up to the Muslim world and that "We must not fall them".¹³ The extension of the Islamic world order into this territory was also the plank of General Zia-Ul-Haq's Afghan policy. Lt. Gen Akhtar Abdur' Rehman, then ISI chief said "holy war against the communists would not be confined to Afghanistan alone, but will be pursued to Central Asia".¹⁴ Pakistan continues to remind the Central Asians of a hostile power that fomented trouble in Afghanistan.

For a number of reasons, Central Asia has become a key and crucial element in the formation of post cold-war foreign policy of Pakistan. These states have reemerged at a time, when the U.S.A had begun to abandon Pakistan as a strategic partner and ended military aid to it. It also came at a time when Pakistan was fully involved in supporting the Afghan Mujahideen in the on-going Afghan crisis.

The development also occurred when Pakistan was singled out by the international community for its involvement in a clandestine nuclear weapon programme, drug trafficking and fomenting international terrorism.¹⁵ Geopolitical factors compelled Pakistan's search for "strategic depth" vis-a-vis India. For this reason, Pakistan has been consistently stirring to annex

13. D. Banerjee, "Recent Development in Central Asia and their Security Implication", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.15, No.16, Sept. 1992, p.495.

14. D. Banerjee, "Recent Development in Central Asia and their Security Implication", *Strategic Analysis*, September, 1992, Vol.15, No.16, p.495.

15. "Central Asia: Current situation and future prospects", *Strategic Digest*, August, 1993, p.1250.

South-eastern Afghanistan. Pakistan's manipulation of Afghan resistance through its intelligence service agency, the ISI, is sufficient to explain Pakistan's ambition in the region.

Pakistan's military and strategic interest in Central Asia is determined by its rivalry with India. In any case the prospects for Pakistan's future rule in Central Asia has been reduced due to signing of the Treaty on "collective security" by CIS member states at Tashkent on May 15, 1992. However, Pakistanis are aiming to reach out to Central Asia by exporting manpower in technical, industrial as well as in the military fields. Pakistanis feel they have enough experiences in this respect in the Gulf countries. Pakistan also relies on the assumption that Central Asia will seek military co-operation with it and reject Western Military help. Unfortunately this idea has not materialised due to Russia's influential role in Central Asia. Central Asian states continue to look towards Russia for military support for preserving peace and security in Central Asia. On the other side, the Uzbek president Islam Karimov complained to the United nations about the threat to the Central Asian territorial integrity due to serious terrorist acts across the border from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.¹⁶

China in Central Asian Security System

China was hardly a player in the "Great game" in Central Asia during the 19th and 20th century. Now with Great Britain gone and Russia's influence waning, it is China whose influence may well be on the ascendancy. China has

16. "Central Asia: Current situation and future prospects", *Strategic Digest*, August, 1993, p.1252.

been perceived as a substantial power with its increased military modernisation programme to affect the whole security complex of Central Asia. Unlike Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan, China do not claim any ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious affinity. However the fear that independence of the Central Asian states might be just as much a threat as an opportunity is also felt in China. The interests of China, which has common border with three Central Asian states-Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are both political and economic. It has led to concern over the potential destabilizing effect of independence on China's Central Asian appendage in the Xinjiang autonomous region. China's Muslim Turkic minorities, who are mainly to be found in Xinjiang, includes around 7 million have been interment periodically, such as in April 1990 and early 1992, and the Chinese authorities resorted to force to repress these demonstrations.¹⁷

China given its size and nuclear status, its unreconstructed imperial retention and its traditional historical claims on the region, represents a threat far exceeding that of Iran. Earlier the size of threat had so enlarged that it led Nazarbayev to consider retaining Kazakhstan's nuclear arsenals. The series of earthquakes between 1992 to 1995 in Southern Kyrgyzstan due to Chinese nuclear tests in Lop Nor region has also been the issue of anxiety in the Central Asia. But in course of time, some strains in the relations have been removed since the mid-1995. In addition, China has also consented to CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) proposal at the Geneva conference in 1996.

17. J.Richard Walsh, "China and the New Geopolitics of Central Asia." *Asian Survey*, Vol.3, March 1993, p.274.

Still China remains the second military power in the region after Russia and off and on has been claiming parts of Central Asian territory.

However, China and the Central Asian republics are trying to overcome their mutual misunderstanding in view of the changing world order. Both are oriented to market economy. In fact, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan strongly appreciated and even thought of adopting the Chinese model of market economy. Compared to United States, the policy of china toward the Central Asian states is driven by immediate and very important national concerns. One of them is its strategic interest to preserve the stability of Russia and its help to prevent the final establishment of an unipolarity in international relations. This may be an important factor in the Chinese attitude towards Central Asia which Beijing wants to see as a stable region.

Moreover, any assessment of China's future role in Central Asia revolve round two things: (i) China's internal socio-political conditions and degree of conformity in political and economic liberalization, and (ii) the future relationship between Russia and China. If it were to deteriorate, the result of this power struggle will be unfortunate for the Central Asian region.

Nevertheless, according to one Western analyst, "Beijing fears the influence of militant Islam, inspired by Iran and Pakistan, but appears to be even more concerned over Turkish backing for the concept of a greater Turkestan".¹⁸ In this content, Central Asian republics have to be more firm in dealing with the wrong signals of Islamisation so as to avoid any bitterness in relationship with China. And, it has also been manifested well in the 1995 elections in the region.

18. Lillian Craig Harris, *China considers the Middle East* (I.B. Taurie, London, 1993) p.269.

Territorial disputes presently is the substantial issue that remains to be settled between the Central Asian states and China. Until the territorial disputes between China and Central Asia is resolved, the national security of Central Asia will be in potential danger from China.

Possible Role for Russia

As far as Russian role in Central Asia is concerned three important points are taken into account.

First, the newly independent states are still heavily dependent on Russian economic and military support. Russian troops deployed in Tajikistan showed support to the secular government of Dushanbe.

Second, the Russian speaking population has a sizeable influence on the Central Asian Politics. It is true that because of the rise in the activities of Islamic groups, the Russian population feels insecure and 509000 Russians have fled from the Central Asian states (excluding Kazakhstan). Despite such a situation there is little possibility of any rupture in Russian-Central Asian Relations. And the third point is that Russia is in no mood to lose its geo-strategically and economically important peripheral old friends to outside influences. However, "The protracted economic and ideological crisis in Russia is paralysing its Central Asian policy and creating a dangerous political vacuum there".¹⁹ But to counteract such a fear Yeltsin signed a decree on 14 September 1995 on: "The establishment of the strategic course of the Russian federation

19. Igor P. Lipovsky, "Central Asia: In search of a New Political identity." *Middle East Journal*, vol.50, spring 1996, p.135.

with member states of the Commonwealth of independent states (CIS)".²⁰ It is not coincidental that during internal needs and the external possibilities in 1995, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan rushed to embrace Russia by signing and immediately ratifying the relevant accords on double citizenship in their respective parliaments and other agreements vis-a-vis the need of Russian Security Russia began signing a series of bilateral security treaties with the individual Central Asian States.

Russia has been trying to strengthen its hold more and more in this region. As recently as on March 29, 1996, Russia signed a treaty on economic and cultural integration with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The primary Russian concern has been to ensure the security of its southern periphery and to safeguard its territorial integrity. At the outset, it must be said that no Central Asian state, individually or collectively, possesses the capability to threaten Russia. But after the break of Soviet Union, Russia found that its well defined centuries old border, defended at great cost, had disappeared.

Another manifestation of its security concern is the perceived fear in Russia of the spread of divisive forces, especially of Islamic fundamentalism, gaining a foot hold in Central Asia Russian interest in Central Asia is further strengthened by the presence of large numbers of Russian and Russian speaking people in the region.

A manifestation of the above mentioned interest is that Russia has been putting forth its claim to be recognised as a great power, Russia has been declaring that the near abroad, including Central Asia, is its zone of vital interest or its sphere of influence.

20. Rosemarie forsy, *The Adelphi Paper* (300), 1996, p.55.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The above mentioned study on the security dimension of Central Asia highlights that independence as well as instability have brought to the forefront national security issues in Central Asia. The frequency and degree of instability is due to the collapse of the ex-soviet conglomerate which was based on mutually dependent security and economic arrangements. The collapse of this conglomerate created new chains of security relations. The Central dominant power could no longer provides adequate security to the Central Asian republics due to its own weaknesses. In this context, the unstable economic and social conditions pave the way for new systems of security arrangements. The Central planning along with the bureaucratic set up were no longer there to provide effective measures for the preservation of economic and political stability. The emergence of market economy with its reliance on the price mechanism led to extremely uneven economic development. Economic hardship inturn has agravated social problems which have been reflected in a steep rise in the crime rate and worsening ethnic relations.

All the republics of Central Asia after being independent were struggling with particular problems of their own. All the republics face both nation-building and state-building problems. The major problems which effect the security dimensions are Russian presence in all these republics and emergency of radical nationalism based on Islamic fundamentalism. In addition to this, regional imbalances or disparity among the countries of Central Asia interms of armed forces personnel make the security arrangement complex in nature. Superiority or inferiority interms of armed forces leads to mutual distrust and suspicion which compels every state to make bilateral and

multilateral security arrangement. Kazakhstan is the only central Asian country to have declared nuclear weapons on its territory.

Inter-ethnic and Intra-ethnic conflicts tremendously effect the prospects of peace and stability in this region. First, the presence of a strong Russian minority in nearly all Central Asian states, particularly in Kazakhstan. Secondly, Ethnic tension among the Central Asian groups. Conflict between the Uzbek minority in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and the Tajik minority in Uzbekistan is endangering stability in this region.

Civil war in Tajikistan between pro-government forces supported by CIS on the one hand, and radical Islamic forces backed by Afghanistan and other muslim states on the other, paves the way for political instability in Tajikistan. Besides, territorial and water conflicts add to the problems in the path of sustainable development. Of concern is the inter-state conflict with the involvement external powers. Each state of Central Asia has territorial dispute with neighbours. Kazakhstan has territorial disputes with China. Uzbekistan has territorial claims over most of its neighbours. It has claims over the whole Ferghana valley including part of Tajikistan, part of southern Kazakstan and eastern Turkmenistan. All these may lead to the internalization of conflict situation in Central Asia, which ultimately affects external relations.

The involvement of great powers and regional powers in the internal and external affairs of Central Asian states and their conflicting interests compelled Central Asian states to create a security system in which they can preserve their territorial sovereignty and integrity with great success. In this context, the most significant within the CIS framework is the security treaty signed between

Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikstan, Russia and Armenia at the Tasnkent Summit on May 15,1992. The formation of a security alliance between Russia and Central Asian states is to persuade the later not to pursue a path of separate and independent military development but to fully depend upon Russians military support and active participation. Despite the efforts made thus far such as the signing of the collective security pact, there is still no precise collective security structure in Central Asia, and every country in the region has attempted to strike a bilateral security arrangement with Russia. Russia concluded series of bilateral treaties of friendship and co-operation with Central Asian states on military and economic grounds. In reality, bilateral agreements cannot substitute the need for collective security. Because bilateral agreements aim at preserving the interests of two countries which might go against the collective interests.

Russia's economic and military diplomacy with U.S.A. and China along with its inability to provide adequate economic and security measures to Central Asia invite other countries to play a leading role in the internal and external affairs of Central Asian states.

Our discussion about security dimensions in Post-soviet Central Asia highlights the following characteristics. Firstly, the weakening of the central power in the former Soviet Union has threatened security atmosphere of Central Asia. Secondly, this central power inspite of the inability to provide adequate security measure, continues to have a large impact on security relations within Central Asia.

Thirdly, players have become numerous and security issues extensive. The future dynamic of the new great game in Central Asia will be determined largely on the basis of what happens to the CIS itself. If the Commonwealth survives, the process of change in that region is likely to be gradual and manageable. Even if the CIS were to fall apart in the near future, the dynamics of this game are still likely to be determined by what happens to Russia, and by the related response of the West and the regional actors to the Russian course of action vis-a-vis the Central Asian republics.

However the best possible option to prevent the possibility of conflict escalation in the newly independent Central Asian states is to adopt confidence building measures at military and non-military levels. There is an urgent need to establish mutual trust among the Central Asian countries, particularly by people to people interaction and establishing close economic, trade, and social cultural ties.

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