

Central Asian Stability: Under Threat?

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The breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991 resulted in the creation of fifteen separate states, including five in Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. At the time, many people questioned the stability of an independent Central Asia. They wondered whether the newly independent states of Central Asia would succumb to intra- and inter-state conflicts, the influence of Islamic fundamentalism, or interference from neighboring states. Five years later, however, Central Asia appears surprisingly stable despite both initial doubts and Tajikistan's protracted civil war which up to now has been contained within that country.

Now, however, the stability Central Asia has enjoyed during the past five years is coming under increasing threat. One threat is Tajikistan's civil war, overshadowed in the Western press by the war in Chechnya. In 1996, the Moscow-backed Tajik government suffered a series of defeats. Moreover, the government must now contend with unfavorable developments in Afghanistan. Before its overthrow by the Taliban in September 1996 the Afghan government, under Burhanuddin Rabbani, had moved closer to Moscow and was cooperating in efforts to prevent the Tajik opposition forces from using Afghan **[End Page 31]** territory as a staging ground for incursions into Tajikistan. The Taliban is unlikely to continue this policy, thus complicating Russia's efforts to protect the Tajik government.

A greater threat to Central Asian stability, however, is Russia's economic policy toward the region; specifically, the Yeltsin administration's efforts to control Central Asian petroleum exports and limit the share of profits collected by both the Central Asian governments and Western oil companies. Although Russia's economic policy does not intentionally seek to undermine Central Asian stability, it may do just that, resulting in a Central Asia more vulnerable to problems the region has thus far managed to avoid.

This article will discuss the sources of stability that the Central Asian states--except Tajikistan--currently enjoy, how the civil war in Tajikistan and

Russian economic policy threaten that stability, and how the possible collapse of this stability might affect the region.

The Stable Four: Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

In 1991, many analysts predicted that the independent Central Asian states would encounter internal ethnic strife, territorial disputes, and the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism. Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, however, have experienced almost none of these. Certainly, the potential for ethnic conflict exists in all four states. Kazakstan contains almost as many Russians as Kazaks. The Russians are concentrated in the north of the country and constitute a majority there. Some Russians have sought to detach this area from Kazakstan and join it with neighboring Russia. - In Uzbekistan, tension exists between the Uzbek majority and the large Tajik minority living in the Samarkand region. ² In Kyrgyzstan, before independence, there was extensive inter-communal fighting between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the Fergana Valley. ³ Turkmenistan, by contrast, is ethnically [End Page 32] a relatively homogenous state that contains only small non-Turkmen communities. The Turkmen, however, are divided among tribes which have retained their identities--and rivalries--even after Sovietization. ⁴ Yet despite the potential for internal ethnic conflict, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have largely managed to avoid it.

These states have also managed to avoid internal political conflict. No significant opposition to the authoritarian regimes has developed in any of them. None was ever allowed to develop in Turkmenistan. ⁵ In Uzbekistan, the opposition Birlik and Erk movements, both of which were sizable at the time of independence, have been effectively crushed by the Uzbek regime. ⁶ The several opposition groups that exist in Kazakstan are all relatively small and weak. ⁷ In Kyrgyzstan, opposition to Akaev's increasingly authoritarian rule appears to be limited to a portion of the educated elite. ⁸

The spread of Islamic fundamentalism to the newly independent states of Central Asia was widely anticipated after the collapse of the USSR. Since independence, Central Asia has certainly experienced a revival of interest in the religious and cultural aspects of Islam, and large numbers of mosques have been built, often with financial support from Saudi Arabia. Even the ex-communist rulers now make a public display of their devotion to Islam. But after five years of independence, Islamic fundamentalism has demonstrated very little appeal as a political doctrine and very little strength as a force for rallying opposition against the governments in Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. ⁹

The manifest potential for territorial disputes has also had little effect on the stability of Central Asia since independence. During the Stalin era, the borders

among the Central Asian republics were drawn without regard to actual patterns of ethnic settlement, especially in the Fergana Valley region. — A straight line drawn between Dushanbe, the Tajik capital, and Bishkek, the Kyrgyz capital, would go from Tajikistan through Kyrgyzstan, back into Tajikistan, then into Uzbekistan, and **[End Page 33]** again into Kyrgyzstan. As a result, substantial Uzbek communities are found in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and a large Tajik community lives in Uzbekistan.

Yet the Central Asian republics have not allowed territorial issues to sour their relations with one another. Their example stands in stark contrast to other parts of the former USSR, where territorial disputes have led to actual conflict, such as the one between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus, or to the palpable tensions that exist between Russia and its neighbors, Estonia and Latvia. An important consequence of the absence of territorial disputes or any other form of serious rivalry within Central Asia is that little opportunity exists for extra-regional powers to exploit differences there. However, external powers, particularly Russia, do play an important role in Central Asia and have a significant effect on its stability.

The independence of Central Asia sparked considerable speculation that Iran and Turkey would compete for the role of dominant power in the region. Which country would win this competition for influence was unclear, but it was widely assumed that Russia's influence in the region would steadily wane.¹¹¹ Five years later, Russia remains the dominant external power in Central Asia. While Turkey and Iran each play a role in the region, neither is capable of challenging Russia's position at present. Moreover, neither appears to be trying. Each has shown more interest in maintaining good relations with Moscow than competing for influence with one another in Central Asia. —

In the politico-military sphere, Moscow has aimed to remain the predominant power in Central Asia and to prevent any external power from acquiring a significant role there. Moscow has also sought to promote stability in the region, mainly by supporting Central Asia's more or less authoritarian regimes. Moscow's support, of course, is very much in the interest of these regimes. Mutual security agreements and the presence of Russian troops in all five Central Asian republics assure the regimes of a ready defense against opponents of the status quo, as evidenced by Russian military intervention in Tajikistan. **[End Page 34]**

Russia's predominant politico-military role in Central Asia also benefits Western interests. As the West's economic interests in the region have grown with each major discovery of oil or natural gas, the West has become increasingly mindful of potential causes of instability, especially the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Because the West itself is unwilling to play a direct military role in defending the existing regimes in Central Asia, Russia's willingness to uphold stability protects Western interests and does so at little cost to the foreign investors.¹¹³

China also supports the existing regimes in Central Asia and is likewise content

to let Russia remain the predominant external power in the region. Beijing appreciates the present Moscow-backed regimes' reluctance to support Uighur nationalism in the neighboring Chinese province of Xinjiang. Independent, more nationalist Central Asian regimes, by contrast, might be sympathetic to their Turkic cousins across the border. —

The governments of Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan have not faced any serious internal threats since their independence. The continuation of their rule is bolstered by the presence of Russian troops in all four countries. The United States, Western Europe, China, Turkey, and Iran, either support the current state of affairs or do not oppose it. The forces in favor of maintaining the status quo in Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan appear to be very strong.

The governments in these four states, however, suffer from one important weakness: none is a democracy. If the history of the latter part of the twentieth century has revealed any trends, it is that dictatorial regimes are vulnerable to domestic discontent and are often overthrown. This does not necessarily mean that the current regimes in Central Asia are in imminent danger of being ousted. Many dictatorships, after all, survive for decades. It does, however, necessitate an examination of the factors that could make the regimes more vulnerable to domestic discontent. In Central Asia, there are two such factors: the war in Tajikistan and Russian economic policy toward the region. **[End Page 35]**

The Unstable One: Tajikistan

Tajikistan is also ruled by an authoritarian ex-communist regime, but a very weak one. The communists in power in Tajikistan at the end of the Gorbachev era were particularly incompetent. For example, they publicly supported the ill-fated August 1991 attempted coup in Moscow. The unpopular communist regime in office in Dushanbe at independence was displaced by a coalition of democratic and Islamic anti-government elements in the spring of 1992. By the end of the year, however, Russian and Uzbek armed forces succeeded in reinstating the ex-communists, under a different leader, in Dushanbe.¹¹⁵ The two sides have been fighting ever since. Even though the ex-communist regime enjoys the support of the Russian armed forces, neither side has been able to prevail over the other. ^

Whether the Islamic-democratic coalition in Tajikistan--either during its brief period in power in 1992 or afterward in opposition--is more democratic or more Islamic has been a subject of much debate.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to characterize this as solely, or even mainly, an ideological conflict, especially one between Islamic and anti-Islamic forces. This conflict is inter-regional. On one side are the "communists," who are strong in Leninobod province, and their allies in Kulob. Leninobod wishes to retain the predominant position it enjoyed during the Soviet era. On the other side are the "Islamists," who are strong in those

provinces, particularly Gorno-Badakhshon and Gharm, that were victimized by Soviet rule and seek to alter the Soviet-era provincial pecking order. — Part of the problem facing the Tajik government is dissension between the two provinces that support it.¹⁹ There has actually been some internecine fighting between Kulob and Leninobod.²⁰

Tajik government forces have also not been effective in fighting the opposition. They have been unable to control some parts of the country at all and have only sporadically controlled other areas. Reports of defections from the government's forces **[End Page 36]** to the opposition are frequent, and Russian officers complain that Tajik government forces are unreliable.²¹ Indeed, the presence of Russian armed forces is arguably the only reason that the ex-communist Tajik government remains in office. As many observers have noted, the war in Tajikistan has come to resemble the quagmire that Moscow experienced in Afghanistan.²² Until recently, Tajikistan's instability was contained largely within its borders and hardly affected the other Central Asian republics. However, in mid-1996, three events occurred which, taken together, could have a seriously negative effect on the stability of the rest of Central Asia.

First, the Tajik opposition made significant advances against Russian-backed government forces. From its stronghold in the east, the opposition succeeded in capturing important territory in the central part of the country. The Tajik government even signed a cease-fire acknowledging the opposition's gains.²³ The increased fighting in Tajikistan has already had a negative effect on neighboring Kyrgyzstan. By early September 1996, some 15,000 refugees had fled to Kyrgyzstan, resulting in strained relations with the local population.²⁴

Second, also in September 1996, the Taliban took control of Kabul. In response to the increasing threat of the Taliban over the course of the previous two years, the Rabbani government had begun to cooperate with the Russian and Tajik governments. The Russians provided arms to Kabul in exchange for cooperation in preventing Tajik opposition forces based in Afghanistan from crossing the border into Tajikistan.²⁵ The fervently religious and manifestly anti-Russian Taliban have already indicated that they have no intention of continuing this sort of cooperation with Moscow and Dushanbe. Within days of the Taliban's capture of Kabul, the *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* reported that "a detachment of Tajik opposition fighters and an Afghan *mujaheddin* unit jointly fought their way into Tajikistan from Afghanistan against Russian border troops and are now operating behind Russian lines."²⁶ The victory of the Taliban has rattled the Tajik and Uzbek governments, as well as important **[End Page 37]** elements in the Russian government, which have expressed fear that the Taliban will seek to spread its Islamic revolution not only to Tajikistan but also to the rest of Central Asia.²⁷

Third, and most important, in August 1996, the Russian government and Chechen separatists signed a ceasefire agreement that called for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya and the effective transfer of power in the

autonomous republic to the Chechens. The Tajik opposition could only have been heartened by this agreement. If Moscow was unwilling to sustain a conflict against Muslim opposition forces in a region inside the Russian Federation, how long will it be willing to sustain one against similar forces outside the Federation?
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Nevertheless, even if Russia stopped supporting its proteges in Tajikistan and allowed opposition forces into power, the other Central Asian governments could potentially mitigate any negative effects by remaining internally strong and externally well-protected. There is reason to fear, however, that the rest of Central Asia is in fact being seriously threatened by Russia's economic policy towards the region.

Russia the Wrecker?

During the Soviet period, Central Asia was the poorest region in the USSR. It essentially provided raw materials to the rest of the country. To the extent that industrialization took place, it was usually in the interests of Soviet Russia which also supplied the bulk of the managers and labor force. When the USSR broke up, the Central Asian republics were still underdeveloped producers of raw materials highly dependent on Moscow. It was hardly surprising that their communist leaders were ambivalent about the prospect of independence and sought to retain their connection to Russia.²⁹

Independence, however, meant that Central Asia, as well as all other former Soviet regions, opened up to Western business interests. Introducing advanced methods of oil and gas exploration for the first time, Western energy firms have **[End Page 38]** discovered relatively substantial petroleum deposits in Kazakstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as Azerbaijan. Less sophisticated Soviet technology had either missed these deposits or was unable to exploit them effectively.³⁰ These discoveries offered Central Asia the prospect of alleviating its poverty and reducing its dependence on Russia's weak economy, thus creating an interest in exploiting these resources for export to the West.³¹ The West, of course, welcomed the prospect of a new source of oil which would enable it to reduce its dependence on the ever-volatile Middle East. In the economic sphere, Central Asian and Western interests are compatible.

Their interests, however, diverge with those of Russia or, more precisely, with the Yeltsin administration's narrowly nationalist interpretation of Russia's interests. Far from feeling any sense of shame or guilt over Russia's prolonged exploitation and mistreatment of Central Asia, the Yeltsin administration, and Russian nationalists in general, feel that because Russia was involved in Central Asia's oil and gas sector during the Soviet period, no matter how ineffectually, Russia is somehow entitled to a large share of Central Asia's oil revenues. The Russian government has sought to obtain what it considers its rightful due through insisting that Russian energy firms be granted a substantial share in Central

Asia's Western-sponsored petroleum ventures and that Central Asian petroleum be exported via Russia so that Moscow can profit from the transport fees and maximize its control over the process.³²

Central Asia's landlocked position makes it dependent upon neighboring countries for exporting its petroleum resources. Although other routes besides ones through Russia are possible, they pose serious geographic and political problems. Pipelines, for instance, could be built eastward through China. But since most of the petroleum reserves found so far are located in western Central Asia, pipelines running across the whole of Central Asia and China would be very costly to build. Pipelines could also run south but would have to pass through either Afghanistan or Iran. The route through Afghanistan has been, **[End Page 39]** and remains, impracticable because of the civil war there. Although the Taliban have captured Kabul, conflict between different groups within Afghanistan may continue indefinitely. Though Iran is relatively stable, a pipeline route through it is politically unacceptable to the US government, which could and would block Western financing for it. Whatever the merits of this position, it suits Russian interests perfectly.

There is also the possibility of pipelines across the Caspian Sea and the independent Caucasian states to the Black Sea. But Russia could block this route by vetoing the use of the Caspian Sea. Whether or not Russia can legally do so is debatable; however, the possibility that it might interfere with a project of which it disapproves may be sufficient to block financing for it. It could also seek to destabilize the two Caucasian states through which such a pipeline would pass. In Georgia, Russia has already demonstrated its ability to do this. Although long and plagued with problems of their own, pipeline routes through Russia may indeed provide the least difficult means of exporting oil and gas from Central Asia, especially western Kazakstan.³³

Nothing is particularly unusual about Russia's attempt to channel the export of Central Asian petroleum through its own territory and profit from the transit fees it would collect. The Russian government, however, has erected several obstacles to Western energy investment in Central Asia, including exorbitant fees and limited pipeline export volume. Its actions have sharply limited the extent to which not only Central Asian governments and Western energy firms can profit from Central Asia's petroleum resources, but also Russian energy firms and the Russian government itself.³⁴

The Russian government appears to be pursuing this policy out of fear that a wealthy Central Asia will be less dependent and will act to reduce, even eliminate, Russian influence in the region. By hindering the export of Central Asian petroleum, however, Moscow merely alienates the region's governments, encourages them to bypass Russia and seek alternative export routes, and generally thwarts its own efforts to keep Central Asia **[End Page 40]** subservient.

³⁵ Indeed, if Central Asia were forced to settle for exporting its petroleum on Moscow's terms, economic stagnation in the region might be unavoidable. This in

turn could delegitimize and destabilize the Central Asian governments. Thus, Moscow's economic policy towards Central Asia undermines Russia's politico-military policy of maintaining the status quo in the region.

Future Prospects

So far, the possibility of Russia undermining the economic stability and independence of Central Asia is more a potential threat than an actual one. Moscow's politico-military policy has been supporting the status quo in Central Asia more effectively than its economic policy has been weakening it. However, this could change. Continued actions by Russia to forestall rapid economic development in Central Asia could result in the growth of anti-Russian nationalism in the region and present the governments there with a serious dilemma. Attempts to suppress anti-Russian nationalism in Central Asia could result in their loss of internal legitimacy. Scorned by nationalists as mere puppets of Moscow, they could become dependent upon Russia for their survival, as has already occurred in Tajikistan. On the other hand, attempts to win popularity by aligning themselves with anti-Russian nationalist sentiment and distancing themselves from Moscow would cost Central Asian governments Russian support, while not necessarily securing domestic legitimacy. All the governments of Central Asia rely upon Moscow for their defense. But, as both the Russian withdrawal from Chechnya and the failure to reverse the advances made by the Tajik opposition demonstrate, there is reason to doubt Russia's ability to defend these states if their internal security situations seriously deteriorate.

It should also be noted that, up to now, Iran has not supported Islamic or other rebels in Central Asia as Russia's position there has remained relatively strong. Iran might, **[End Page 41]** however, support such forces if Russia's position weakened. Indeed, it could hardly be expected to forego the opportunity to expand its influence in Central Asia if Russian influence was clearly waning.

Under such circumstances, the West would be hard pressed to salvage Central Asia's stability. Therefore, the West should seek to uphold the present stability in Central Asia by persuading the Russian leadership to amend its short-sighted and ill-advised economic policy which hampers the region's economic development. Russia would suffer the most if Central Asia as a whole became unstable. Though the West might lose access to the region's petroleum temporarily, it would not face a long-term direct security threat. Russia, on the other hand, could face enormous problems. Attempts to restabilize Central Asia militarily could drain its resources and precipitate an agonizing political struggle within Russia over the human and material costs of intervention. Moscow's security problems would be compounded if anti-Russian forces in Central Asia support or inspire secessionist movements in the many small Muslim nations within the Russian Federation where there is increasing dissatisfaction with Moscow's rule-though to a lesser extent than in Chechnya.³⁶

Russian nationalists are probably correct in predicting that a rich, prosperous

Central Asia will become less dependent on, and subservient to, Moscow. They have yet to realize, however, how much worse for Russia a poor, and consequently unstable Central Asia could be. A more generous, enlightened Russian economic policy toward Central Asia would do much to ensure that Central Asia remains relatively stable. Should the whole region become as unstable as Tajikistan, however, a change in Russian economic policy alone is unlikely either to restabilize Central Asia or protect Russia from the resulting negative consequences.

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Notes

1. Philip S. Gillette, "Ethnic Balance and Imbalance in Kazakhstan's Regions," *Central Asia Monitor*, no. 3 (1993), pp. 23.
2. Bess Brown, "Central Asia: The First Year of Unexpected Statehood," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1 January 1993, p. 32; and US Congress, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, January 1993, p. 212. See also Mark N. Katz, "On the Silk Road," *The National Interest*, no. 30 (Winter 1992/93), pp. 84-6.
3. There was also conflict in 1989 between Uzbeks and Meshketian Turks in the Uzbek portion of the Fergana Valley in 1989. Bess Brown, "Ethnic Unrest Claims More Lives in Fergana Valley," *Radio Liberty Report on the USSR*, 15 June 1990, pp. 16-18.
4. Kirill Nourzhanov, "Turkmenistan: Half-Way Through to the Golden Age?" *Central Asia Monitor*, no. 1 (1995), p. 11.
5. Christopher J. Panico, "Turkmenistan Unaffected by Winds of Democratic Change," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 22 January 1993, pp. 6-10.
6. Roger D. Kangas, "Uzbekistan: Evolving Authoritarianism," *Current History*, 93:582 (April 1994), pp. 178-82.
7. US Congress, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Report on the March 7, 1994 Parliamentary Election in Kazakhstan*, March 1994.
8. Natalia Ablova, "The Anti-Referendum Actions," *Central Asia Monitor*, no. 5 (1995), pp. 35-6.

9. Richard B. Dobson, "Islam in Central Asia: Findings from National Surveys," *Central Asia Monitor*, no. 2 (1994), pp. 17-22.

10. The arbitrariness of these borders may not have been an accident, but a deliberate effort by Stalin to increase tensions among non-Russian ethnic groups in order to increase the dependence of all of them on Moscow to protect them from their neighbors. Paul A. Goble, "Stalin Draws the Borders," *Central Asia Monitor*, no. 2 (1995), pp. 12-14.

11. See William Drozdiak, "Iran and Turkey Vie for Political, Economic Influence in Soviet Muslim States," *Washington Post*, 24 November 1991, p. A27.

12. Philip Robins, "Between Sentiment and Self-Interest: Turkey's Policy toward Azerbaijan and the Central Asian States," *Middle East Journal*, 47:4 (Autumn 1993), pp. 593-610; Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Regional and Global Powers and the International Relations of Central Asia," in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe 1995), pp. 217-27; and Mark N. Katz, "An Emerging Russian-Iranian Alliance?" *Caspian Crossroads*, no. 4 (Winter 1995-96), pp. 21-4.

13. Robert Cullen, "Central Asia and the West," in Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1994), pp. 130-46.

14. In September 1996, China reportedly agreed to provide military assistance to the embattled Tajik government "free of charge." In my view, this does not represent a Chinese effort to rival Russia for influence in Tajikistan but to bolster Russia's flagging efforts to support that regime instead. "Tajik Leaders Obtain Chinese Support," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 20 September 1996.

15. Sergei Gretskey, "Civil War in Tajikistan: Causes, Developments, and Prospects for Peace," in Roald Z. Sagdeev and Susan Eisenhower, eds., *Central Asia: Conflict, Resolution, and Change* (Chevy Chase, MD: CPSS Press, 1995), pp. 218-24.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 236-40.

17. Russian nationalists in particular have argued that the opposition in Tajikistan is motivated by Islamic fundamentalism. Sergei Gretskey, however, argues that even, "The Islamic wing of the opposition has repeatedly stated that it has no plans to build an Islamic state in Tajikistan. Notably, it has not found much support in the Muslim world." *Ibid.*, pp. 236, 240. See also "Primakov Justifies Russian Military Intervention," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 30 July 1996.

18. Davlat Khudonazar, "The Conflict in Tajikistan: Questions of Regionalism," in Sagdeev and Eisenhower, eds., *Central Asia* , pp. 249-63.

19. Gretsky, "Civil War in Tajikistan," p. 233; and "The Clan Factor," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* , [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 30 July 1996.

20. "News and Comments," *Central Asia Monitor*, no. 1 (1996), p. 10.

21. "Tajik Border Guards in Russian Service Deemed Unreliable," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 27 June 1996.

22. See, for example, Leon Aron, "Yeltsin's Vietnam," *Washington Post* , Outlook Section, 22 August 1993, p. C1; and Lee Hockstader, "Bloody Central Asian Border War Stirs Afghan Memories in Russia," *Washington Post* , 24 October 1994, p. A13.

23. "Tajik Truce Enshrines Opposition Gains," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 19 September 1996.

24. "Tajik Refugees in Kyrgyzstan Pose International Problem," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 5 September 1996.

25. "Russian, Afghan Commanders Sign Pacts Against Tajik Insurgents," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 20 September 1996; and "Enter the Taliban," *Economist* , 5 October 1996, p. 24.

26. "Defeat of Kabul Leaders Scuttles Pact with Moscow," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 1 October 1996.

27. "Regional Summit Examines Afghanistan Developments," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 4 October 1996; "Russian-Central Asian Summit on Afghanistan Inconclusive," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 7 October 1996; and "Moscow Divided on Response to Afghan Conflict," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 8 October 1996.

28. Recent survey data show that intervention in protracted insurgencies is unpopular with the Russian public. For surveys on Russian public opinion regarding the war in Chechnya, see US Information Agency Office of Research and Media Reaction, "Russians Oppose Chechen War," *Opinion Analysis* , M-39-95, 3 March 1995; idem., "Fighting in Chechnya Deepens Russians' Discontent," *Briefing Paper* , B-48-95, 14 June 1995; idem., "Russians and Belarusians Want End to War in Chechnya," *Opinion Analysis* , M-106-95, 14 July 1995; and idem., "Half the Russian Public Willing to Grant Independence to Chechnya," *Russia/NIS Opinion Alert* , L-14-96, 6 March 1996.

For surveys on Russian public opinion regarding the war in Tajikistan, see idem.,

"Russians Desire Cooperation with the West, Are Wary of Entanglements in the Near Abroad," *Opinion Research Memorandum* , M-176-94, 3 August 1994; and idem., "Environment and Nuclear Proliferation Are Among Russians' Top Concerns," *Russia/NIS Opinion Alert* , L-68-95, 13 November 1995.

29. Bess Brown, "Central Asia Emerges on the World Stage," *RFE/RL Research Report* , 3 January 1992, pp. 51-6.

30. Kazakstan may have 60 billion barrels in oil and gas resources while Turkmenistan may have as much as 46 billion barrels in natural gas reserves. Uzbekistan does not possess petroleum reserves on this scale, but does have 230 oil and gas fields. No major petroleum discoveries, however, have yet been made in Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan. Rosemarie Forsythe, *The Politics of Oil in the Caucasus and Central Asia* , Adelphi Paper, no. 300 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996), pp. 9-12.

31. Even Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with no substantial proven petroleum reserves, stand to benefit from large-scale oil and gas production in their more favorably endowed neighbors by being able to export workers to them who would send home remittances, just as Arab states with little or no oil have benefited from its abundant presence in other Arab states. It should be noted, however, that Kyrgyzstan does possess significant gold reserves, as do Kazakstan and Uzbekistan. Western mining companies have become involved in extracting these gold resources in all three countries. "Gold Mining Update," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 13 September 1996.

32. Forsythe, "The Politics of Oil," pp. 13-17.

33. For a discussion of the various pipeline route options, see *ibid.*, pp. 44-54.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 29-31, 37-9, 42-3.

35. The recently established railroad connection between Turkmenistan and Iran, for example, will allow several Central Asian countries to reduce their economic dependence on Russia. Kyle Pope, "Rail-Building Boom Begins to Open Doors to Central Asia Riches," *Wall Street Journal* , 11 July 1996, p. 1.

36. In oil rich Tatarstan, for example, there have been protests against the war in Chechnya and Tatarstan's "paper sovereignty" within the Russian Federation. "Protests in Tatarstan," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* , [jf-monitor@andrew.cais.com], 27 August 1996.