

# **The Donald W. Treadgold Papers**

*In Russian, East European,  
and Central Asian Studies*

## **The Formation of Post-Soviet International Politics in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan**

**Rafis Abazov**

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**Rafis Abazov**

**The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies  
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## About this series

The *Donald W. Treadgold Papers* publication series was created to honor a great teacher and great scholar. Donald W. Treadgold was professor of history and international studies at the University of Washington from 1949 to 1993. During that time, he wrote seven books, one of which — *Twentieth Century Russia* — went into eight editions. He was twice editor of *Slavic Review*, the organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, and received the AAASS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Slavic Studies, as well as the AAASS Award for Distinguished Service. Professor Treadgold molded several generations of Russian historians and contributed enormously to the field of Russian history. He was, in other ways as well, an inspiration to all who knew him.

The *Treadgold Papers* series was created in 1993 on the occasion of Professor Treadgold's retirement, on the initiative of Professor Daniel Waugh. Professor Treadgold passed away in December 1994. The series is dedicated to the memory of a great man, publishing papers in those areas which were close to his heart.

Sabrina P. Ramet  
Editor

### **About the author of this issue**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1. Central Asian Republics: Geography, Culture, and People.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. Central Asian Republics: “Catapult to Independence” .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3. Determination of National Interests and Formulation of Security Agenda.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>4. Public Discourse on Developmental Issues in Central Asia.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5. Central Asian Experts’ Evaluation of the Security and Developmental Issues.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6. Integration Processes in Central Asia.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>7. Formation of Foreign Policy Institutions in Central Asia.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Notes.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Figures.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Tables.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>89</b>

On December 1991, Alma-Ata — the capital city of Kazakhstan — hosted a meeting of the eleven leaders of the Soviet republics. There, all signed a historic document. The so-called *Alma-Ata Declaration* formally ended the existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.<sup>1</sup> This event signified the beginning of independence for all the members of the Soviet Union including the five Central Asian republics. From that moment, the newly independent states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan started forming their own policies and sovereign state institutions and began to define their own foreign policy orientations. Establishing their foreign policy institutions, shaping foreign policy and searching for a suitable place in the contemporary system of international relations became top-priority tasks for the republics.

The successful formation of coherent, post-Soviet international politics, and sovereign political institutions such as Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) and coherent international politics appeared to be one of the most important challenges for the Central Asian elites. The Central Asian republics faced an uncertain future for a number of reasons, including the unexpected rapidity of the Soviet Union's collapse and the unpreparedness of the national elites to live in independent states. Immediately after the collapse, all the Central Asian republics confronted numerous challenging internal and external problems which needed to be resolved by their leaders.

**Internal factors.** For the Central Asian republics, one of the most immediate issues was the stabilization of the political environment, especially, the neutralization of extremist political groups, and the resolution of inter-ethnic tensions in the whole region. The bloody ethnic clashes of pre-independence years (1989-1991) had destabilized life in different parts of the region. The continuous escalation of inter-ethnic conflicts after independence threatened to slip out of control. Furthermore, the situation was worsened by the emergence of separatist tendencies that spread widely in these new multinational and multicultural republics. Meanwhile, the Central Asian republics' state institutions (which had been almost paralyzed by Gorbachev's inconsistent reforms, and by the power struggle between the Center and peripheral republics in the late 1980s), vitally needed reinforcement. Maintenance of stability in the rapidly changing political environment was impossible without a strong government policy. The status of the ruling elites, and the very

existence of entire political systems, were challenged by the rising strength of numerous opposition groups which embraced a wide spectrum of views - from extreme nationalism to Islamic radicalism. Last but not least, there was a desperate need for the creation of national economic systems and the transformation of the former Soviet administrative-command management mechanism into a balanced and stable system of sound market-driven institutions.

**External factors.** Gaining independence radically changed the positions of the Central Asian republics in the international arena. As independent entities they entered a difficult international environment. At that time, the Gulf War affected not only the Arab world but also the Muslim community of the former Soviet Union, and led to the rise of some anti-Western sentiments. The Civil war in Afghanistan not only destabilized the regional security environment but also undermined prospects of the Central Asian republics' economic co-operation with South Asia, by blocking almost all the trade routes to the south. Additionally, it was expected that the Islamic Republic of Iran would compete with Turkey, India, and Pakistan for influence in the formerly Soviet-controlled region, as a result of the destabilization of the regional security system, and the "power vacuum" created by Russia's military and political departure.<sup>2</sup>

The next crucial problem was a need for the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Central Asian republics. The existence of overlapping territorial claims criss-crossing the artificial boundaries of the Central Asian republics, and also, territorial disputes between the People's Republic of China and the bordering states of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan made this problem quite complicated.<sup>3</sup> Russia's post-independence foreign policy also proved to be extremely unsustainable, as it was greatly affected by personalities in the Kremlin's circle of power. It experienced several radical changes within the 1990s. Moreover, the Russian radical nationalists claimed a large part of Kazakhstan's northern territories (between 30 to 40 per cent of the republic's territory), mainly populated by the Russians.

Finally, the creation of cohesive foreign economic relations was a matter of survival for the countries which had previously been deeply integrated into the SMEA and had produced goods competitive only in the rapidly deteriorating Soviet market. The Central Asian republics had depended heavily on the external supply (mainly from the Russian Federation) of almost all goods including petroleum, grain, machinery, medicine, etc.

The profound uncertainty of the effects of both internal and

external factors on Central Asian development demanded an immediate reaction. What measures needed to be implemented in Central Asia to meet the internal and external challenges? What were the trends in the formation of the Central Asian republics' post-independence foreign policy? And last but not least, what are the future prospects for independent development on the part of the Central Asian republics?

In this study, I assess the formation of the Central Asian republics foreign policy in the post-Soviet era and the evaluation by foreign policy specialists of the Central Asian republics of the main factors which have contributed to the formation of the independent international politics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

The first section provides a brief introduction to the political history of the region in general and to the cultural heritage of the Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek people. Special attention is paid to some important features of the development in these countries. The second section assesses post-Soviet political development in the Central Asian republics. It also identifies the political background of the rising modern Central Asian elites and the consequences of the USSR's sudden disintegration for the post-Soviet development of the Central Asian republics. The third section focuses on determining factors which affect formulation of national interests and security agenda in Central Asian Republics. The fourth section briefly reviews the post-Soviet intellectual discourse on the position of the Central Asian republics in the international arena. It also briefly analyzes the public debate on possible "models of development", regional economic and political co-operation and collaboration with other countries. The fifth section discusses the perception of several crucial issues of foreign policy making and international development by the Central Asian republics' leading academics and policy makers. This includes the perception of the security balance in the region and the perception of external threats to regional security. The integration processes in the region are analyzed in the sixth section. Section seven focuses on the establishment of foreign policy institutions in the Central Asian republics and also deals with the important results of a survey conducted among experts from Central Asia in 1997. The last section summarizes the findings of the whole research, and discusses important internal factors in the formation of foreign policy in the Central Asian republics. The author also tries to follow up on some important shifts in the foreign policy priorities and the possible implications of these changes in the future of international relations within and outside the region.

The empirical part of this research is based on a survey conducted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in January-February 1997 (See the Questionnaire: Appendix 3)<sup>4</sup> and field studies of 1995-1997 which provided incredibly useful information and the opportunity to meet scholars and foreign policy specialists from Central Asia during formal and informal interviews. Although I shall focus mainly on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, I will extend the discussion to the political events in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and their implications for the region. The reason for the exclusion of these two republics from the focus of the research is explained in Appendix 1.

## 1. Central Asian Republics: Geography, Culture, and People

In the past, Central Asia served as a gateway between China and the Mediterranean, and between Eastern Europe and Persia. For almost fourteen centuries, the region had been a major staging post for the ancient *Silk Road*. The *Silk Road* brought prosperity to the city-states situated along the route and contributed greatly to the unique mixture of cultures, traditions, languages, tribes and nations. The importance of the *Silk Road* diminished significantly with the establishment of sea-routes from Europe to India. Moreover, the creation of the "iron curtain" during the Soviet era finally detached the region from the rest of Asia.

Within their present boundaries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan appeared on the political map of the world around sixty years ago. Nowadays, these countries are usually referred to as the former Soviet Muslim republics of Central Asia, although historically and culturally the term "Central Asian region" included Afghanistan and some parts of the Western provinces of China. Central Asia is a landlocked region with a total population of 52 million people (1995). Its territory, which is around 4 million square kilometers, shares borders with China, Afghanistan, Iran, and Russia. The biggest republic is Kazakhstan, which composes almost two thirds of Central Asia. The most populated and second biggest republic, Uzbekistan, is a dwelling place for almost 40 per cent of the entire population of the Central Asian republics. The region's main ethnic groups are the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Uzbeks who are culturally, religiously and linguistically close to each other. All together, Turkic speaking people comprise 60 per cent of the region's population, and so this part of the Russian Empire has often been

referred to as "Turkistan". The Persian speaking Tajiks, who are culturally and religiously, but not linguistically, close to these ethnic groups, live as a compact group in the mountainous southern part of Central Asia and represent no more than 8 per cent of the region's population. The Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians and others) constitute around 20 per cent of the region's population. Their distribution varies from country to country. The highest concentration of Slavs is in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the lowest is in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. In Uzbekistan, 1.6 million Russians comprise less than 8 per cent of the republic's population. It is important to note that this ethnic configuration has formed over the last fifty years and the proportion of Slavs (which increased in the 1940s-1960s) is steadily decreasing, especially since the 1980s. This trend is the result of recent emigration of Slavs to Russia and a high birth rate among some of the local ethnic groups.<sup>5</sup>

Several features of development make the Central Asian republics different from the Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union countries as well as from their immediate neighbours, such as Afghanistan and Iran. Thus, a brief excursion into the history and analysis of some important social and political milestones will assist in achieving better understanding of the Central Asian republics' modern political development.

**The legacy of nation-state formation.** During the first millennium C.E., the Great Steppe (the territory from Mongolia through Central Asia to the Caspian Sea and the Volga River) was an area where numerous tribes built up their huge, but amorphous empires, and people were moving predominantly from East to West. In the third to fifth centuries C.E. (possibly even earlier) Turkic tribes appeared in Central Asia. Gradually, they increased their presence and consolidated in the vast steppe-land near sedentary oases and the city-states of Maverannahr (presently, the territory of Uzbekistan): The Turks introduced their language, some features of their nomadic life and tribal relations. Several times, the Turkic tribes united in various military confederations, and established huge but unsteady empires. In the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, the region experienced devastating Mongol invasions, which almost ruined its economy and culture. Eventually, the Mongols were assimilated, however, and for many centuries onwards the descendants of the Ghengiz Khan dynasty (real and false) remained the ruling force in all states of the region. The Mongols also introduced some peculiarities of tribal democracy to the region's political tradition, a unique pattern

of kinship, patronage and intricate tribal structures of social relations, which still exist to a certain extent now.

In their primary form, the state (in the modern meaning), the administrative system, and the territorial borders of Central Asia began to be formed in the period from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> At that time, Kazakh *Zhuses* (*Zhus* is a unit comprising a tribal confederation) became consolidated as more or less permanent social and territorial entities, and such Khanates as Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand established their boundaries, borders which remained largely unchanged until Russia arrived. In the middle of the nineteenth century, during Russia's advance on the region, the Russian Empire constantly collided with the *Zhuses* and later with the Central Asian Khanates, and competed there with the advance of the British Empire into the region. The Great Powers' competition in the region came to be known as the "Great Game". After the annexation of a significant part of the region to Russia, the Tsarist government conducted its first territorial and administrative reform in Central Asia in 1867. A sizeable part of the newly annexed land became a part of the *Turkistan Governor-Generalship* which existed until 1917. Meanwhile, Khiva and Bukhara became vassals of the Russian Emperor and preserved a formal independence. The Turkistanese were granted some political rights in the late Russian Imperial era and even obtained seats in the Russian Parliament, i.e., III and IV State Dumas in 1907-1914.

The year 1917 marked the end of the Great Russian Empire. However, the full establishment of a Communist regime in the region became possible only several years later, after the end of the devastating Civil war in 1922. Stalin, by his directive, substantially redrew the map of Central Asia during the period from 1924 to 1926: the region was subdivided into the Union republics. The territorial borders were corrected slightly in 1929 and 1936, and the areas occupied by each of the five Central Asian republics remained unchanged until the disintegration of the USSR. This division of the region into nation-states was artificial to a significant degree. In fact, that division was built on the basis of the traditional system of tribal and communal relations. Consequently, the Central Asian republics did not have firm national political institutions or strong political organizations, which might have become a basis for independent development after the disintegration of the USSR.

**Islamic heritage.** Muslim Arabs first appeared in Maverranahr (the Arabic name for the southern part of Central Asia) in the middle

of the seventh century. However, only in the ninth century were they able to expel the Persian dynasties and to establish Islam as one of the major religions in the region. Despite gradual penetration by the pagan Turkic tribes in the ninth and tenth centuries, and the devastating Shamanist Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, Islam retained and strengthened its position in the region. Eventually the Turks and Mongols, who remained in Central Asia, absorbed some features of the Arabian and Persian culture, and embraced Islam. In the southern settled territories of the region, Islam has a deep historical tradition of more than a thousand years. However, the process of establishment of Islam among the nomadic tribes of the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Karakalpaks continued until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Sufi Sheikhs and Orders (*Tarikats*) played an important role in converting nomads to Islam. A remarkable feature of the activities of the Sufi Sheikhs was a tolerance to some animistic nomadic traditions and a flexible approach to dealing with the nomads in their everyday life. These factors helped to make the nomads quite heterogeneous in their system of belief.

The Muslim clergy (*Ulama*) played a significant role in the political affairs of Central Asian Khaganates along with the representatives of very influential Sufi orders (*Yasavya*, *Nakshbandya*, *Qudravya*, etc.) and their leaders (sheikhs). Both the clergy and the Sufis significantly contributed to the balance among competing groups within the ruling elite in Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand Khaganates. By the eighteenth century, the Central Asian clergy and some representatives of the *Sufi Tarikats* (orders) were incorporated into the state system and they became a part of the state bureaucratic establishment.

The situation changed with the advance of the Russian Empire into Central Asia and the annexation of most of the parts of the region to the Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. During the initial period of the Empire (1860-1890) the Imperial government faced multiple riots in the region. Changes in the ruling policy in the following period included the liberalization of relations with the religious and intellectual elite of Central Asia. This policy was the government's attempt to integrate the most liberal representatives of the Islamic clergy into the state administrative system of Russia through a system of special privileges.

The new Soviet regime did not have a consistent policy towards Islam and Islamic civilization throughout the Soviet era. After the Civil war of 1918 to 1922, the *Commissars*, who had to fight and suppress the *Basmachi* movement often led by the Muslim authorities,

considered integration of the Muslim clergy and the most influential part of a local group of liberal intellectual reformers (Jadidists) into the state political and administrative structures. However, during the "great leap" in 1928 and 1937 the political pendulum swung towards rejection of this policy. The Soviet government intensified the anti-religious campaign which now came to be accompanied by severe state terror. However, the next stage brought the reconstruction of the institute of official clergy in 1943 as SADUM (the abbreviation of the Russian name for the Central Asian Religious Board of Muslims). The prominent and authoritative Muslim Ulama, Sheikh Abdulmajid Babakhan (1861-1957), was appointed as the Mufti (a spiritual leader) symbolizing the legalization of the official clergy. So, finally, the Soviet government returned to the long lasting tradition of using the clergy as a part of the state bureaucratic establishment. Although the former Soviet leaders claimed that the USSR was an atheist state, they silently accepted the efforts of local Central Asian authorities to maintain their Islamic cultural heritage as a part of everyday life in Central Asia.

A new break-through happened after the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979. Officials in Moscow and the Central Asian republics expected, with obvious fear, that the Iranian type of Islamic resurgence was imminent in Central Asia. Thus, on the eve of independence, Islamic resurgence or Islamic fundamentalism, as some preferred to call it, became one of the important issues for the Central Asian policy-makers. Debates on this issue intensified in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan after the beginning of the civil war in Tajikistan, and again after the unprecedented success of the Taliban Islamic movement in Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup>

**The legacy of Soviet social engineering.** A significant gap between the traditionally settled and the traditionally nomadic people of Central Asia has prevailed throughout the history of their co-existence. Numerous Turkic speaking nomadic tribes repeatedly penetrated the oases of the region from the Eurasian steppe land and profoundly affected the social groupings of the settled people by bringing in their tribal social organization and a peculiar pattern of "patron-client relations". This is one of the reasons for the unique social stratification in modern Central Asia, which is characterized by a strong heterogeneity. Even powerful and authoritative Medieval Turkestanian Khans were always obliged to strike a delicate balance among the militant tribal leaders, rich mercantile families, and skillful administrators of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, who were masters of intrigue for generations.

The Soviet leaders believed that they could not implement their policy of development in the region unless the natives of the Central Asian republics were involved in the Soviet political administration. Therefore, the most important features of the Soviet social formation in this region were rapid urbanization, industrialization, the development of mass education, and the creation of a new westernized (Russified), secular national intelligentsia. One of the main Soviet achievements in the Central Asian republics was a very rapid positive change in the literacy rate, which rose to 96 per cent by the 1970s and 1980s. There was a well-developed network of universities and research institutions which existed under the umbrella of the National Academies of Science of the Republics, although these institutions could not always provide qualitative expertise in some fields such as international relations, market economy, law, finance, management, etc. Under the Soviet system of education, there was a special quota for "Central Asian natives" within the universities in the Central Asian republics and the USSR, which promoted training of highly professional westernized (Russified) nomenclature. In fact, by the 1980s, the Central Asian republics were in a better position with respect to Human Development Indicators (HDI), than countries such as India, Pakistan, and China. According to the UNDP, in 1991 the republics were in the thirty-first place in their HDI ranking, ahead of such countries as Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey, and just behind Malta (twenty-ninth place) and Hungary (thirtieth place).<sup>8</sup>

The Kremlin tried to undermine the power of the clan and tribal structures by intervening in *cadre* policy, and by regular injections of non-indigenous Party and state bureaucrats into the Central Asian state institutions. Nevertheless, the political configuration in the region largely remained an odd mixture of the consequences of Soviet social engineering and the traditional "clientele" network, even during the last years of Soviet rule.

However, it seems that the change in the identity of the ruling elite, especially as perceived by and with respect to the international arena, was one of the most important legacies of the Soviet era. The Central Asian ruling elite was well educated even according to Western standards, technocratically oriented in its approach to politics and economics, fluent in Russian (and also after independence, in English) and has shown little devotion to pan-nationalist or pan-Islamic ideological motions. Although the Central Asians have preserved their cultural (Islamic), ethnic and even tribal vs. "Soviet internationalist" identity, they have lost their "Asianness" in their self-identity in the international arena.

By and large, Central Asia had a very rich history before the arrival of Russia and a very complicated development during the 130 years of Moscow's domination. The Soviet program of nation-state building created formal national institutions, shaped the boundaries of the republics and created an altered national identity for the people. However, these institutions were not created to last as independent entities, since the collapse of the USSR was never anticipated or assumed. To a certain extent, the Central Asians succeeded in preserving their cultural heritage, but at the same time the turmoil of the twentieth century and Soviet modernization radically changed everyone's life in the region. It was a peculiar mix of traditionalism and modernity complicated by social and cultural polarization, in which the ruling elite became quite westernized (Russified), and a large portion of the society, (especially the rural people who amounted to almost 60 per cent of the population) has preserved its devotion to the traditional values.

## 2. Central Asian Republics: "Catapult to Independence"

The Soviet Central Asians were always taught about the failure of "capitalist modernization" in the Third World countries and they were quite proud to be a part of the so-called "second world," although they were aware of some shortcomings of the Soviet regime. This was one of the reasons why the Central Asian elite did not fight for independence as the Baltic republics and Ukraine had done. As a part of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian elites only to a certain and a very limited extent identified themselves with Asia, and even now they prefer to distinguish their identity from that of Asians. The leaders of the Central Asian states consider the region a link between the East and West, between the Asian Pacific region and Europe. They continually promote the concept of the *Eurasian Bridge* or the *Great Silk Road*. Presently this idea is the key element in the process of self-identification of the Central Asian region in the international arena. "Historically, Central Asia played a special role in the mutual relationships of the East and West, being a sort of link between them. All major trade roads went through Central Asia and were a source of interaction and the mutual spread of European and Asian culture," said the President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akaev.<sup>9</sup>

The circumstances of gaining independence also contributed to the unique way the Central Asian republics' post independent nation

states were formed. The republics became independent not because of a long lasting national liberation struggle or a mass political movement, as happened in the Baltic republics, but due to a political occurrence, a short lasting political struggle between the center and the republics, and the unexpected decision of the three Slavic states to dissolve the USSR.

Naturally, building up the Central Asian republics' post-Soviet relations with Russia was a matter of vital importance for the region's political leaders. However, since the Soviet disintegration the Russian Federation has had no steady, coherent policy towards the Central Asian republics.<sup>10</sup> A number of Russia's political players, from the military and corporate business, and from the federal government to regional authorities, declared, pushed, and implemented contradictory policies towards Central Asia.

So the region's relations with its major partner experienced a great fluctuation. The region's economic and financial ties with the Russian Federation underwent drastic changes, although 1992-1993 were years of political and economic uncertainty. However, after the Kremlin's decision to pull the Central Asian republics out of the ruble currency zone in 1993, Central Asian leaders decided to change their approach in dealing with the Russian Federation and began to implement more independent policies. They began to introduce their own currencies, national banks and financial institutions. Leaving behind the ruble zone also made a sizeable impact on the reorientation of the Central Asian republics' foreign trade, investment, and technological flows. In fact, economic needs have been one of the most important driving forces behind the Central Asian republics' active search for partners in the international arena. Russian leaders have repeatedly had to concern themselves with the Russian speaking population in the Central Asian republics.<sup>11</sup> Some of Moscow's foreign policy makers, especially the former Foreign Affairs Minister Andrei Kozyrev and some of the representatives of the military establishment, tried to focus on this issue in developing Russia's foreign policy in the region (the so-called Kozyrev-Grachev "Monroviski Doctrine").

### **Kazakhstan**

During the Soviet era, the Kazakh ruling elite was incorporated into the highest echelon of the Soviet hierarchy. In fact, the former Kazakh leader Dinmuhamed Kunayev was the only representative of the Central Asian republics who was a long serving full member of the *Politburo* (the Kremlin's inner political circle) and a close associate

of the former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. The relations between Almaty and Moscow worsened only during Gorbachev's campaign against corruption, the so-called "Kazakhstan Affairs". Nevertheless, Kazakhstan's leaders played a prominent role in Moscow's political life during the second stage of Gorbachev's rule and supported Gorbachev's attempt to preserve the integrity of the USSR.<sup>12</sup> They were caught by total surprise when three Slavic republics (Russia, Belorussia and the Ukraine) excluded them from a talk on the fate of the Soviet Union, not even consulting with them on the decision to unconditionally dissolve the USSR.

After gaining independence, the former Soviet *nomenklatura* of Kazakhstan played a crucial role in managing a stable political and economic transition, in which the president's personality played the central role. President Nazarbaev came to power in 1989 (he was the Prime Minister during 1984-1989) and represented the pragmatically oriented and moderately nationalistic Kazakh elite. His generation was a pure product of Soviet social engineering, which grew up in specific circumstances of Kazakhstan. The President and members of his team were mainly from the industrial managerial part of the Soviet *nomenklatura*. Unlike the professional Party bureaucrats, the President and his high ranking appointees have been well trained and experienced in managing the economy, albeit the Soviet command economy. Nazarbaev inherited from his predecessor reasonably good relations with the Russian conservative elite, and personally, with President Yeltsin. However, Kazakhstan's relationship with Russia's nationalist circle and young reformers has been extremely negative.

As Kazakhstan shares the longest part of its borders with Russia, the controversial relations with Moscow were in the center of intellectual discourse in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. On the one hand, the Kazakh ruling elite was debating about the opportunities of integration with Russia in the political and economic fields. President Nazarbaev was one of the most consistent supporters of post-Soviet re-integration and tried to play an active role in revitalizing the CIS throughout the 1990s.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the Kazakh elite was suspicious of Russian nationalists, whose extreme right wing called for seizing the northern, mainly Russian populated provinces of Kazakhstan. Therefore, the political and economic ambitions of Moscow's nationalistic ruling elite quite regularly provoked crises in relations between the two countries. Thus, it may be said that Kazakhstan has been facing a particularly difficult political and social situation due to the complicated political environment in the republic. The Kazakh government was especially concerned about inter-ethnic

relations. One of the main issues was the rise of separatist tendencies in the Kazakhstan's northern *oblasts*, where the ethnic Russians were in the majority. The problem was complicated by an intense public debate on the status of the Kazakh and Russian languages.

Apart from being an ethnically diverse country, Kazakhstan inherited an extremely complex economy which had been highly integrated into the All-Union market and had been plunging downwards since independence. During the first stage of independence, Kazakhstan experienced severe economic crisis and consequently the rise of social and political tensions, despite having the most diversified economy among the Central Asian republics and in spite of being one of the richest countries of the former USSR in terms of natural resources. The country tried to halt difficulties by joining the Custom Union with Russia and other CIS members. For some time, Kazakhstan was in the focus of political attention of the world's superpowers (mainly because of the republic's short-lived status as a nuclear power), but anticipated economic assistance and financial investments did not follow. In an attempt to resolve economic problems, Kazakhstan started to offer its natural resources, especially oil and gas in the international market (it pretends to be among the top ten oil-rich countries), and invited major TNCs (Chevron, Mobil, BP, etc) to invest in the development of the republic's oil extracting sector. The search for possible alternative transport routes has led to the emergence of numerous oil and gas pipeline projects. Throughout the 1990s, international actors, including Russia, China, the USA, and Japan have been heavily involved in competing over future routes of oil and gas outflow from the republic. The Russian monopoly on the transport infrastructure raised a concern in Kazakhstan, because of the political and economic chaos in the Russian transportation system, and some other factors. The Kazakhs frequently clashed with Russia's powerful economic barons over various economic deals; so the creation of alternative routes, (including oil and gas pipelines corridors) has become a priority for Kazakhstan leaders.

In his internal politics, President Nazarbaev pioneered the idea of "social stability first."<sup>14</sup> He managed to set up an inter-ethnic dialogue and a round-table with the political opposition, and to promote public discourse on the economic reforms to be undertaken. In his economic policy, the President articulated a "strategy of rapid development" based on the principles of "equal opportunity" and "progressive structural *Perestroika* of the economy."<sup>15</sup> In terms of international relations, he promoted the idea of Kazakhstan as a "Eurasian country which would play an important role in East-West and North-South co-operation."<sup>16</sup>

## Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is a small republic with a population of 4.5 million which consists of Kyrgyz (58 per cent), Russians (18 per cent), Uzbeks (14 per cent), and others. It shares borders with China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, but does not have common borders with the Russian Federation. The Kyrgyz economy depends heavily on its agricultural sector, where almost 64 per cent of the population is employed. The country's small industrial sector (agricultural machinery, mining, electrical power, etc) was traditionally oriented to the Russian and CIS market. The republic faced a severe crisis, when bloody conflicts between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities in Kyrgyzstan occurred in the summer of 1990 and caused a serious rise in inter-ethnic tensions.

In December of 1990, the conservative Communist leaders lost the elections and Askar Akaev was elected president, representing a new generation of Kyrgyzstan intellectuals. He challenged the power of the conservative Communist Party leaders, whose misconduct and incompetence led to the inter-ethnic strife in Kyrgyzstan in 1990. This is the only case in the former Soviet Union in which a former academic with no appreciable experience with the Party apparatus, came to power. He brought into the state apparatus his personal political style, which remains one of the most dynamic and open in the region. The members of his team were young reformers and intellectuals, including representatives of the political opposition. His alliance with the republic's experienced administrative bureaucrats created an energetic and extremely pragmatic ruling elite which was capable of carrying out a wide range of political, economic, and social changes. This helped maintain quite a stable political environment in which to begin democratic reforms. In fact, Akaev was the first among Central Asia's leaders to realize that democratic reforms were the only way to promote the republic's credibility in the international arena.<sup>17</sup>

During the first stage of independence, Kyrgyzstan experienced a serious economic crisis and the rise of social unrest. One of the most crucial issues was a need to halt the economic decline of this mountainous republic lacking significant reserves of natural resources. In his economic policy, the President steadily followed the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in reforming the country's economic system. Although Kyrgyzstan received the highest financial assistance per capita of any of the formerly Soviet republics<sup>18</sup>, it could not stop the tremendous decline in standard of living which climaxed in the period from 1992 to 1994, when wages

were falling around 30 per cent annually, ultimately dropping to a level as low as \$40 US per month).<sup>19</sup>

Kyrgyzstan has been very active at the international diplomatic frontier, especially in the CIS arena throughout the 1990s. The Kyrgyz ruling elite has been able to maintain positive relations with a new wave of young reformers as well as democratic circles in Moscow. The elite has been constantly trying to revive to some extent, economic and political integration with post-Soviet Russia, and has approached Moscow as one of the pillars of post-Soviet security system in the region. Later, the Kyrgyz diplomats joined with the Kazakh and Uzbek governments in an attempt to create the Central Asian economic confederation (the so-called "Central Asian Union"). These three countries also united their efforts when the political unrest and the civil war in neighboring Tajikistan went out of control during the period from 1992 to 1997 and threatened regional stability with the associated flow of thousands of refugees, weapons and drugs.

## Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is one of the most densely populated republics of the region. Its population is third largest among Soviet successor states, behind the Russian Federation and the Ukraine. The country is rich in various natural resources (oil, gas, gold, etc), but it is hampered by its large non-competitive agricultural sector, and the fact that it was narrowly oriented for such a long time towards the shrinking Russian market. Throughout the 1980s, Uzbek leaders had a very uneasy relationship with Kremlin politicians because of Moscow's massive intervention into its affairs and especially, its *cadre* politics. The notorious "Uzbek affairs" affected the entire administrative system of the country. In fact the 'mini-purge' of 1986 to 1989 sent almost one-third of Uzbekistan's officials to prison. These events strongly consolidated the republic's ruling elite and led to the rise of strong national feelings and a mistrust of Kremlin politicians. Therefore, since the late 1980s Uzbek leaders have been suspicious about any kind of interventions into the country's affairs by Moscow.

Islam Karimov became the leader of Uzbekistan in 1989 and President in 1990. He had been the Finance Minister from 1983 to 1986. President Karimov was the first among Central Asia's leaders to give wide application to the idea of "political stability at any cost" and represented the conservative technocratic elite.<sup>20</sup> He rejected any radical political or economic reforms and declared his "own way of

renovation and progress", targeted at the establishment of a "socially oriented market economy through gradual changes."<sup>21</sup> In terms of international relations, he promoted the idea of Uzbekistan as a strong regional power<sup>22</sup> and he promised that under his leadership the country would become a "new economic tiger." On the whole, Uzbekistan leaders were quite reluctant to be involved in any kind of re-integration with Moscow. They actively tried to diversify their international relations and establish special relations with Western countries, particularly with the USA. However, Uzbekistan welcomed the idea of Central Asian regional integration, and together with Kazakhstan has actively promoted the Central Asian Economic Union since the early 1990s.

Uzbekistan's leaders made great efforts to bring the political environment in the republic to a balance after intensive inter-ethnic clashes in Ferghana valley in the late 1980s. These clashes were believed to be the result of Gorbachev's poorly managed ethnic policy. The political opposition, which included democratic parties as well as radical Islamic groups, seriously challenged the position of the Uzbek ruling elite on the eve of independence. Moreover, political unrest in neighboring Tajikistan and Afghanistan were threatening the very base of Uzbekistan's stability and security throughout the 1990s.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, the ruling elite was very careful in implementing any political or economic changes. In the post-Soviet era, the only way for Karimov to get credibility was to halt the social unrest and to preserve the standard of living among the rapidly growing population. During the first stage of independence, Uzbekistan leaders focused their efforts on maintaining economic stability and slowing down economic decline, without implementing any radical economic or political transformation. They preferred to keep everything under control in accordance with the old order and to move very slowly, rather than to make radical reforms and to face unpredictable consequences. Their old fashioned conservative policy and the authoritarian style of "Party rule" evoked sharp criticism from democratically oriented local intellectuals, and especially from Russian democratic circles. However, even the critics gave credit to the Uzbek leadership for maintaining stability in this potentially explosive environment.

In general, the Central Asian republics confronted a complex of seemingly intractable environmental, ethnic, and political problems which appeared and intensified after their unexpected "catapult to independence."<sup>24</sup> But, after 1991, the Central Asian states did not perform equally in the regional arena. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and

Uzbekistan became the region's major actors, while Tajikistan and Turkmenistan acquired a lower profile for a number of reasons that stemmed from internal factors in these two republics. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have continuously thought about resolving their economic problems by establishing closer relations with Russia, and through deeper involvement in the CIS integrational processes, while Uzbekistan has been reluctant to do so, and has tried to pursue a more independent foreign policy. Although these republics obtained their independence in 1991, they still continued to be linked by thousands of threads with other CIS countries, and especially with the Russian Federation. The Central Asian ruling elite quite quickly consolidated its political power, but the creation of sustainable economic system proved to be a challenging task, which could not be resolved overnight.

### **3. Determination of National Interests and Formulation of Security Agenda**

The first steps of the Central Asian republics in the international arena comprised of numerous contradictory actions. On the one hand, the Central Asian republics consistently strengthened their relations with Russia and even expressed their readiness to reintegrate within the CIS. On the other hand, they indicated a readiness to integrate with other organizations, such as the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO) and the Central Asian Economic Union (CAEU). Also, they have become members of NATO's "Partnership for Peace" program. Additionally, the Central Asian republics expressed their interest in intensifying relations with leading western countries as well as with their neighbors, including China, Iran, and Turkey. This move weakened considerably Russian influence in the region. However, in spite of desire of the Central Asian republics to reinforce foreign relations with western countries, the Republics declined to include and follow some normative values, such as human rights and liberal democracy, as the foundations of their foreign policy principles.

This contradiction may be explained from the realist theoretical perspective. The realists consider nation-states to be the primary actors in international relations. The preservation of the national interests of these individual actors is the ultimate goal of their foreign policies. This includes the formulation of national interests and foreign policy objectives, which define the preservation of the sovereignty of nation-states. One of the important elements of their realist approach is their belief that every nation-state exists in a hostile environment

and that the neighboring states as well as other countries exercise their power and influence at the expense of others. Therefore, a vital objective of internal and external policies of a nation-state is to ensure the survival of the state as an independent entity. Within this framework, a state policy is not bound by any strict moral principles and a state can form and change allies without any moral obligations in order to promote its own national interests. According to the theory, the Central Asian republics were not willing to limit their sovereignty by any multilateral agreements. They used their participation in various regional and supra-regional organizations as an instrument to gain some advantages and benefits without incurring any obligations. They also often considered normative liberal values merely an instrument used by the world powers to limit the Central Asian republics' freedom of maneuvering in their domestic and international affairs.

### **Stages of Development of Security System**

After the disintegration of the USSR and the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan started formulating their own independent foreign policies. This included the conceptualization of a national security agenda, the development of an entire system of national institutions, and the search for a model of economic and political co-operation in the post-Soviet era. Assurance of a system of the regional and national security became the highest priority for the Central Asian republics.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the fact that the Central Asian republics have had quite a short history of independent development, they have experienced dramatic changes in their status in the international arena.

During the first stage of post-Soviet development (1991-1995) the international status of the Central Asian republics was mainly determined by two factors. The first was the security arrangements that were existing through the *CIS Treaty on Collective Security*. According to the Treaty, the *United CIS Command* has been controlling all strategic forces, including strategic missiles and the nuclear arsenal. These forces provided full military protection to all signatories of the Treaty. The Treaty also secured equal representation, at least formally, of these states in the CIS military and strategic decision making. In June 1993, however, the CIS members lost this privilege when Russia declared the establishment of its exclusive control over all the strategic

forces. The second factor was the presence of a nuclear arsenal in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan had the third largest nuclear arsenal in the CIS, after Russia and the Ukraine. It also was the sixth largest nuclear power in the world. Additionally, there were some suspicions about the nuclear potentials and capabilities of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, since these republics were involved in the Soviet chain of nuclear producing industry. However, after 1992, under the pressure of leading western countries, especially the USA, Kazakhstan agreed finally to dismantle its nuclear arsenal and to become a nuclear-free country.

The second stage of independent development started in 1995. The beginning of this stage was associated with the shipping of the entire nuclear arsenal out of Kazakhstan and the dismantling of all of the weapons associated with the military nuclear potentials of the republic (in May 1995 Kazakhstan's last nuclear warheads were destroyed at Semey). This action has increased the need of the Central Asian republics to rely on their remaining military arsenals in dealing with both internal and external problems, though Russia was still the main military and security partner to the Central Asian republics.

In general, after gaining independence, the Central Asian republics faced numerous problems. From the very beginning, Central Asian foreign policy makers and experts considered two groups of factors that defined the security environment of post-Soviet Central Asia (Table 1). One was a domestic (internal) group of factors, while the other was the international (external) group of factors.

### **Internal factors**

Internal factors have seriously affected the security of the Central Asian republics because the newly independent states of Central Asia inherited numerous political, economic, and social problems from the past. Inefficient governments and the absence of strong political and economic institutions have made the situation even more complicated. The escalation of political conflicts in Yugoslavia and Tajikistan demonstrated to the Central Asian republics that unresolved internal problems may threaten the very existence of the newly independent states.

The legitimacy of the ruling elite of the Central Asian republics, and cohesiveness of Central Asian regimes were challenged by different groups within the societies. This included ethnic, religious and tribal (clan) groups. Different ethnic groups and minorities in

Central Asia went through shocking interethnic conflicts on the eve of independence. Therefore, in the post-Soviet era, they demanded guarantees of their security, representation at all levels of power and consideration of their cultural and language interests. It was an important factor in the internal politics of the Central Asian republics, and the region's governments could not ignore the demands of the ethnic minorities, because this issue could lead to the rise of separatist tendencies and interethnic tensions. Religious fundamentalists also challenged the legitimacy of the elites in these Muslim republics. They challenged both legitimacy of the former communist elite for their collaboration with Soviet regime, and present political systems of the Central Asian republics for not reflecting Islamic political tradition. Additionally, strong tribal and kinship relations and loyalties in Central Asian society, which have been an important part of the political system throughout the history of the region, continued to affect political life in the Central Asian republics. In fact, even powerful medieval Khans (kings) were obliged to satisfy various tribal and clan interests. Ignorance about these relations could lead to potentially disastrous conflicts of group and private interests, as happened in post-Soviet Tajikistan.

### **External factors**

External factors in the form of complex unsolved problems inherited from the past seriously affected the security regime in the Central Asian republics. These problems included territorial claims and border disputes both with neighboring countries and among the Central Asian republics. Moreover, regional conflicts, such as a civil war in Afghanistan and armed clashes between various political factions in Tajikistan, undermined security and stability in the whole Central Asian region as well. The complicated international political and economic environment, and difficulties of the transitional period have made the Central Asian states quite dependent on international economic, technical, and humanitarian assistance. This also made the Republics quite vulnerable to the influence of various international actors. Therefore, it was important for the Central Asian republics to maintain positive relations both with the leading world powers, such as the USA, Germany, England, Japan, and Russia, as well as with their neighboring countries.

The multitude of various interests in the region has formed a delicate balance of interests in the region by the middle of the 1990s.

Therefore, the withdrawal of any of the outside actors or the break of positive relations with any of these states could destabilize the fragile balance of power in the region.

Additionally, considerable reserves of natural resources in Central Asia provoked competition between various multinational companies and states which were interested in the exploitation of these resources. One of the examples of such clashes of interests was a conflict over directions of the oil and gas pipelines from the region. Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, China, and the USA had their own strategic interests and considerations on this issue.

Both internal and external factors have to be addressed by the Central Asian republics before national interests and security agenda of these republics can be formulated.

### **The Perception of National Interests and the Formulation of Security Agenda**

The identification of the priorities of national and regional security agenda appeared to be the most challenging task for the newly independent Central Asian republics. This factor was the main driving force behind their decision to join the CIS and to sign the *Alma-Ata Declaration* in December 1991. The Declaration highlighted five major principles: "assurance of the territorial integrity and inviolability of national boundaries; creation of a system of political security; creation of a military system of security, and the stabilization of inter-ethnic relations within the former USSR."<sup>26</sup>

Each of the Central Asian republics has its own national interests and security agenda, which reflect the peculiarities of the political development, foreign policy priorities in the region, and perception of national interests by the Central Asian elites. On the one hand, there is a tradition of highly elitist policy making. On the other hand, foreign policy making in the Central Asian republics has a highly bureaucratic nature. The weakness of political institutions of the society, the low level of public involvement in the political process, and the peculiarities of leadership qualities of the Central Asian elites have been contributing further to the exclusive nature of the foreign policy making process in these republics. In such an environment, the formulation of foreign policies in the Central Asian states increasingly relies on the local policy makers and experts, who provide necessary expertise for the foreign policy making process. It also relies on their perception of the internal and external factors that effect the national

interests and security agenda in these republics. Therefore, the perception of national interests and security agenda has been an important part of the process of determination of foreign policies in the Central Asian republics.

#### 4. Public Discourse on Developmental Issues in Central Asia

After the collapse of the "iron curtain", public debate on the directions and priorities of post-Soviet foreign policy was quite intense in the Central Asian republics as well as in the other parts of the former USSR. There were a number of issues to debate: ranging from priorities in the realm of bilateral and multilateral relations to issues of security created by the abundance of external and internal threats to stability and independence. However, the emergence of a new phenomenon in this public discourse, i.e., the idea of having a "model of development" added some important differences to the foreign policy debate there.

On the eve of independence, the Central Asian leaders suddenly discovered that the modern world is divided by multiple issues and arrangements, not just into two large competing camps of socialism and capitalism as they had come to believe. There were multiple choices of different approaches to reforms, political development, and economic transformation. The international community was also debating the economic development of East Asian and Southeast Asian countries, as well as other important issues of the late twentieth century. Almost seventy years of Soviet modernization had made Central Asia's leaders believe strongly in the positive prospects of social and political engineering. Their intellectual search was deeply interrelated with Russia's long-lasting debate between the Western oriented elite, who believed that Russia should have become part of the Western world at any cost, and *Russofils*, who emphasized the importance of traditional values for Russian society. The Central Asian intellectual heritage also included early nineteenth century debates between conservatives and reformers (Jadidists), who debated ways of transforming *Turkistan's* traditional society.

In this particular environment, the Central Asian leaders were often urged to respond to various speculations about their future prospects and come out with a simple and clear explanation of their visions of the future, both for foreign policy makers and for their society as a whole. On the eve of the crisis in the Soviet political system,

there were speculations among international experts and Russian intellectuals that either the "fundamentalist" Iranian or the "secular" Turkish "model" could be a viable choice for the post-Soviet development of the Central Asian republics.<sup>27</sup>

At the beginning of the 1990s, discussions on the prospects of development and foreign policy issues within the Central Asian republics were often shaped around possible "Models of Development" for these republics. These debates intensified in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan during the first stage of independence. There was no single opinion among public or state officials, and a number of opposing pairs of developmental models were debated, from the Turkish secular political model *vis-à-vis* the Iranian theocratic model, to the Chinese model of gradual economic reforms *vis-à-vis* Russia's *shock therapy* for political and economic liberalization. In every republic of the region, the discussion has had its own peculiarities and implications. In this respect, the Central Asian leaders' first fact-finding trips to East and South East Asia provided them with one of the anchors for the answer.

**Kazakhstan.** Kazakhstan leaders turned out to be admirers of the various East Asian Economic miracles, especially those of South Korea and Japan. President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan was one of the first Central Asian high ranking politicians to start talking about a "model of development." In fact, one of his first overseas trips was a visit to South Korea in 1990. An important outcome of this visit was the appearance of the Korean-American professor Chan Young Bang as the special adviser to the President and the vice-chairman of the National Committee of Economic Experts.<sup>28</sup> Nazarbaev was the only leader in the region who invited foreign experts such as Chang Young Bang and the former Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan You to be his personal advisers. It was widely believed in Kazakhstan that it was possible to replicate the Korean and South East Asian economic miracle in the republic. That is why "Models of Development" were intensively debated in this republic. Moreover, Nazarbaev mentioned Japan, South Korea, and Singapore as potential models, in one of the first comprehensive outlooks for Kazakhstan's post-independence "strategy of rapid development."<sup>29</sup> In 1997, a group of high ranking Kazakhstan administrators and experts spent several months in Malaysia studying the "Malaysian economic miracle" and trying to emulate the "Malaysian Model" in Kazakhstan. Finally, in October 1997, a long term strategic vision for Kazakhstan emerged: "Kazakhstan: 2030: Prosperity, Security and Welfare Improvements

for all Kazakhstanese."<sup>30</sup>

The survey study conducted in Kazakhstan in 1997<sup>31</sup> indicated that there was no uniform approach to the "model of development" question. The study found that the "Turkish model of development" was considered the most attractive model (see Figure 2): 34.8 per cent of those questioned in Kazakhstan chose it.<sup>32</sup> The next was the "Newly Industrialized Countries" model of development; based on countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, etc.: 28.3 per cent of the respondents marked this option. The "Russian model of development", according to the data received, was in the third place with 21.7 per cent of the respondents choosing it. The Russian model was followed in popularity by the "South Korean model of development" with a response of 15.2 per cent. The "Japanese model of development" was in the fifth place with 13.0 per cent. The "German model of development" was next: 10.9 per cent of the respondents marked this option. None of the Kazakhstan experts recognized the importance of the "Iranian model of development." And 13.0 per cent of the respondents pointed to their "own model of development."

**Kyrgyzstan.** President Akaev of Kyrgyzstan showed his strong devotion to political and economic reform from his first days in the president's office. International organizations such as the World Bank, IMF, EBRD, etc., supported this strong devotion to reform by providing broad financial and technical assistance. Kyrgyz officials who visited South Korea in 1990 were very impressed by what they named the "Korean model of economic development" and called for the exploration of opportunities for joint co-operation with Korean companies in developing Kyrgyzstan as another "economic tiger." Kyrgyzstan's leaders, who proclaimed their adherence to South Korean and Japanese economic models, finally came up with the idea of Kyrgyzstan as the "Switzerland of Asia." It took a form of President Akaev's vision of a small, peaceful mountainous country which would gradually become one of the world's tourist attractions as well as a financial and economic bridge between the East and West. It apparently became one of the most popular references to the country in the international media.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, members of the Kyrgyz elite often referred to the Turkish model in order to underline their strong devotion to secular development.

The survey study conducted in Kyrgyzstan in 1997 indicated that there was a wide spectrum of views as well. The study found that the "Newly Industrialized Countries" model of development was considered to be the most attractive model (see Figure 2): 48.6 per cent

of those questioned in Kyrgyzstan chose this model. The "Japanese model of development" was next: 30.6 per cent of the respondents marked this option. The "Turkish model of development", according to the received data, was in third place with 22.2 per cent. It was followed by the "Russian model of development" with 19.4 per cent. The "German model of development" was in fifth place with 11.1 per cent. The "South Korean model of development" was next: 9.7 per cent of the respondents marked this option. Only 2.8 per cent of the Kyrgyzstan experts recognized the importance of the "Iranian model of development", and 1.4 per cent of the respondents pointed to their "own model of development."

**Uzbekistan.** President Karimov of Uzbekistan frequently replied to his opponents that there was a need for "stability at any cost", and occasionally referred to the Chinese and other experiences of limited political freedom. After his well-publicized trips to South Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia in 1992, he called for a "study and apply" approach for a successful transition of his country to prosperity and strong development.<sup>34</sup> Uzbekistan's "own way of renovation and progress"<sup>35</sup> has always been supplemented by a call to learn from the Chinese experience of "gradual reforms,"<sup>36</sup> to study and apply the Indonesian model of "guided democracy"<sup>37</sup> in short, to pay attention to the experience of others. Researchers from Russia and other countries also intensively discussed models of development for Uzbekistan. Their debates centered on the discourse focusing on the evaluation of the Turkish secular model vs. the Iranian theological model, because of the strong position of Islam in Uzbekistan. Thus, one of the most important tasks for Uzbekistan foreign policy makers became an attempt to show the country's devotion to developing the modern and secular state through references to a "model of development". This discussion was not particularly intensive in the republic, but still the development model question was carefully considered. When President Karimov finally came up with the formula "Uzbekistan follows the Uzbek model,"<sup>38</sup> some discussions about the "model of development" for Uzbekistan still continued in the country.

In this instance too, the survey study conducted in Uzbekistan in 1997, indicated a wide spectrum of views. The study found that the "Newly Industrialized Countries" model of development was considered to be the most attractive model (see Figure 2): 37.5 per cent of those questioned in Uzbekistan chose this model. The "German model of development" was next: 36.7 per cent of the respondents marked this option. The "South Korean model of development",

according to the received data, was in third place with 28.3 per cent. It was followed by the "Japanese model of development" with 20.8 per cent. The "Turkish model of development" was in fifth place with 13.3 per cent. The "Russian model of development" was next: 5.8 per cent of the respondents marked this option. Only 0.8 per cent of the Uzbek experts also recognized the importance of the "Iranian model of development." A significantly large group of the respondents pointed to their "own model of development": 27.5 per cent.

By and large, the reference to the model of development became an important component of the Central Asian political lexicon, and dedication to one or another "model" became one of the attributes of belonging to a political grouping. But it is quite clear that the "model of development" debate was not simply demagoguery on the part of the Central Asian elites. It was a complex phenomenon. On the one hand, it was a simple, yet convincing manifestation of the technocratic and secular approach of this elite to the development, and a distancing from the "Iranian theocratic model". On the other hand, it was part of the search for an identity in the international arena. Apparently, all these discussions and calls for a "model of development" did not imply a direct copying of a "role model" in the domestic and foreign policies of the Central Asian republics; rather they constituted merely a convenient parlance in the ongoing public debate about the future of the republics. Still, the "model of development" debate has had some influence on current policies in the Central Asian states.

Within the region, the discussion focused mainly on the "model of development" with implications in the area of economic transformation, especially at the first stage of economic reform (1992-1994). In this period, the region's policy makers were under strong pressure to reform their economies in line with Russia's radical economic policy<sup>39</sup>, and they often justified their unpopular decisions by referring to the macroeconomic "model" of transformation.

Occasionally, the Central Asian leaders pointed out that in those "model" countries the economic reforms came first and the political changes happened later; therefore, in many Southeast and East Asian countries democracy was quite limited and the political process was often "guided" by the state.<sup>40</sup> References to the need for the limitation of democracy in accordance with the South Korean, South East Asian, Turkish models of development became one of the powerful arguments in the hands of the ruling elite in their dealings with the political opposition.

The "model of development" debate also became a useful tool

in changing the national identity of the Central Asians in the international arena and in preserving self-confidence in their painful dilemma of choosing between Asia and Europe (while within the Soviet Union they had perceived themselves as part of Europe). Probably the case of Turkey is the closest similar example, with its historical dilemma of living between Europe and Asia. One of the apparent manifestations of this dilemma is President Nazarbaev's call for the *Eurasian Union* that would define the Central Asian republics as the *bridge* between Europe and Asia. Here, the continuing paradox is that a significant part of the local political elite correlates itself with Europe and the CIS rather than with Asia, while repeated references to the so-called "Asian models of development" slowly narrow the gap between Asia and Europe in their self identification, and move toward recognition of their "Asianess."

## 5. Central Asian Experts' Evaluation of the Security and Developmental Issues

After Belorussia, Russia, and the Ukraine had signed the agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in December 1991, the challenge of establishing an adequate system of regional and national security became an important task for the Central Asian republics.<sup>41</sup> This factor was the main driving force in their decision to join the CIS and sign the *Alma Ata Declaration*. From that moment, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan started their search for a new security system in the region. This included the conceptualization of national security policies, the development of entire systems of national institutions, and the search for international partners for co-operation in these security issues.

For Central Asians, who have just started taking their very first steps in the international arena, the identification of priorities for the national and regional security agenda appeared to be the most important and challenging task. Therefore, the *Alma Ata Declaration* became the cornerstone of the post-Soviet security system. It highlighted five major principles: "assurance of the territorial integrity and inviolability of the national boundaries; creation of a political system of security; creation of a military system of security, and last but not least, stabilization of inter-ethnic relations within the former USSR."<sup>42</sup>

In general, local and international observers believed that the

security of the Central Asian republics was on very shaky ground. There were fears that the transformation from Soviet political practice to independent policy making would follow a line of growing conflicts and violence similar to the disastrous events which were occurring in the former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus. Indeed, various problems gathered momentum because of the complicated international environment, the deteriorating local economy, rising social tensions among the peoples of the former Soviet Union, and "cultural clashes" between various ethnic groups. Thus, Boris Rumer of the RAND Corporation predicted a terrible "storm" in the political arena of Central Asia and the inexorable explosion of bloody conflicts among different political factions of Central Asian society.<sup>43</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski spoke about an ethnic cleansing that might expel several millions people from the republics, and unstoppable border conflicts in the region.<sup>44</sup> Samuel Huntington extended his line of "the Clash of Civilizations" from Bosnia to Caucasus and Central Asia<sup>45</sup>, and pointed to the escalation of conflicts between Orthodox Russian Civilization and the Muslims of Central Asia.<sup>46</sup> Due to the numerous conflicts which have occurred in the region and the hazardous circumstances of the Soviet disintegration, such apocalyptic scenarios looked highly possible.

Historically, Central Asia has had a number of conflicting issues. Some of them had existed for centuries and were arbitrarily solved or temporarily suppressed by the Soviet presence, such as rivalry between different clans. Other issues were part of the legacy of the Soviet experiment, for example, the national boundaries, which divided a once culturally homogenous region into nation-states in 1924-1936 by Stalin's order. According to experts,<sup>47</sup> in the post-Soviet era, nineteen territorial problem-zones were upsetting the region. After the independence of 1991, old suspicions of such neighbors as China, Russia, Iran, and even of each other have re-rooted themselves in the minds of the leaders of the region. On top of that, it was widely expected that some countries would try to extend their influence or control into the Central Asian region.

The presence of an Islamic component in the political life of the post-Soviet Central Asian republics has been the most mystifying factor for many. In the early 1990s it had provoked a lot of fear and speculation both within and outside the region. The threat of the export of the Islamic revolution from Iran to Central Asia and the growing power of radical fundamentalist parties have been perceived quite seriously. Worse predictions seem to have been realized with the collapse of Tajikistan's secular government under the pressure of the

united opposition led by the Islamic Party of Resurgence during the Tajik Civil war of 1992-1997. The establishment of the Taliban government in neighboring Afghanistan has also made some of the Central Asian leaders nervous.

Another factor has been the region's economic development, particularly in the industrial sector. The entire state economic and financial system in some of the region's republics was virtually at the stage of collapse in 1993-1994. The introduction of local currencies in the Central Asian republics partially solved some issues, such as hyperinflation, which had previously run up to 1400 per cent a year in 1993 and to around 800 per cent in 1994, but the solution caused some other difficulties. Economic ties with other parts of the former USSR, which were well established, had functioned for many decades, and were vital for all sectors of the republics' economies, have practically ceased to exist. Further, mass unemployment had reached, according to some estimates, as high as 20 per cent in some parts of the region.

The existence of a large Russian minority as well as other ethnic groups raised fears that there would be an outbreak of uncontrollable, unstoppable ethnic conflicts within the republics, and that among the consequences might be Russian military intervention in order to protect the local Russian speaking population.

There was no uniform perception of the external and internal threats to the security of the republics. Some of the specialists believed that Central Asian states would be able to solve their political, social, and economic problems together with Russia if the Russian reforms were a success.<sup>48</sup> Others believed in reorientation towards a liberal-democratic model of the Western type.<sup>49</sup> There were also some ideas about reviving the pan-Turkic tradition and reorienting Central Asia towards Turkey. Uncertainty in both the internal and external aspects of Central Asian development demanded an immediate response, one which addressed itself to all the important challenges in the international environment. The security concerns of the Central Asian republics and the establishment of international co-operation in foreign policy became the key issues for the region's foreign policy makers.

It is important to assess how local experts evaluated these threats to the security of the Central Asian republics and to understand what alternatives for international co-operation existed for the respective republics. The survey conducted in 1997 had two questions which dealt with the perception of the threats to the security and stability of the region, and priorities in international co-operation with the world and the region's leading powers.<sup>50</sup> With regard to international co-

operation, the Central Asian experts had to choose from a list of countries the ones which would make the best allies. On the other side, a list of threats was offered to the respondents from which to choose the most serious threats to the security of their republics. The following is an analysis of the responses. The means for the first question (where 4 is the highest level of interest in co-operation and 1 is the lowest level) and the frequencies for the second question were calculated to get a clearer illustration of the situation.

### **Kazakhstan**

The survey found that "internal social and political problems" were considered to be a major threat to regional security and stability (see Figure 3), with 87 per cent of those questioned in Kazakhstan pointing to this issue. The "economic crisis and economic problems" were next: 80.4 per cent of the respondents marked this problem. "Ecological crisis", according to the received data, was in third place with 26.1 per cent, and it was followed by "external military threat" with 13.0 per cent of the respondents. The Kazakhstan experts evaluated in a very reserved manner the threat of "religious fundamentalism": only 8.7 per cent of the respondents marked this option in the questionnaire.

The "possibility of complication of relations with Russia" as a threat to the regional security and stability was identified by 39.1 per cent of the questioned experts. This was followed by the "possibility of complication of relations with China" by 26.1 per cent of the respondents. The threat to regional security and stability as a result of the "complication of relations with Iran" was perceived at a very low level - only 4.3 per cent pointed to this factor; similarly to the case of the perception of the threat from "complication of relations with Afghanistan." None of the Kazakhstan experts recognized a threat to security and stability in the region as a result of complication of relations with the USA or Turkey.

In terms of international relations, for the Kazakhstan's specialists, co-operation with Russia was in the first place (mean 3.73 - see Table 1). Next was China (mean 3.14). The third was the USA (mean 3.09). This was followed by Germany (mean 2.93) and Turkey (mean 2.89). The next position was taken by Japan (mean 2.87). The importance of co-operation with Iran and India was perceived equally (mean 2.07), and Afghanistan was in last place (mean 1.81).

## Kyrgyzstan

The survey found that "economic crisis and economic problems" was in first place among threats to regional security and stability (see Figure 3). Of those questioned, 87.5 per cent in Kyrgyzstan pointed to this issue as the main threat. The "internal social and political problems" were next: 75.0 per cent of the respondents marked this problem. "Religious fundamentalism", according to the data analyzed here, was in third place - 34.7 per cent, which was followed by "external military threat" with 19.4 per cent. The Kyrgyz experts were reserved in their evaluation of the threat of "environmental issues": only 18.1 per cent of the respondents marked this option.

With regard to international security, the "possibility of complication of relations with China" as a threat to regional security and stability was considered important by 19.4 per cent of the questioned experts. This was followed by the "possibility of complication of relations with Russia" with 16.7 per cent. The threat to regional security and stability as a result of "complication of relations with Afghanistan" was perceived at a relatively low level, only 11.1 per cent indicated this factor, which was far ahead of the perception of the threat from "complication of relations with Iran." None of the Kyrgyz experts recognized a threat to the security and stability in the region as a result of complication of relations with the USA or Turkey.

In terms of international relations, for the Kyrgyz specialists co-operation with Russia was in first place (mean 3.68 - see Table 1). Next was the USA (mean 3.24). Japan was in third place (mean 3.10). It was followed by China (mean 2.94) and Germany (mean 2.84). The next positions were taken by Turkey (mean 2.72) and India (mean 2.11). The perception of the importance of co-operation with Pakistan and Iran was the same (mean 2.04), and Afghanistan was in last place (mean 1.65).

## Uzbekistan

The survey found that in the first place among threats to regional security and stability was "economic crisis and economic problems" (see Figure 3). Of the questioned experts in Uzbekistan, 54.2 per cent considered this issue important. "Internal social and political problems" was next: 49.2 per cent of the respondents marked this problem. "External military threat", according to the data, was in

third place, at 40.8 per cent. This was followed by "religious fundamentalism" with 30.8 per cent of the respondents. The Uzbekistan experts evaluated the threat of "environmental issues" quite seriously with 27.5 per cent of the respondents marking this option.

Regarding international security, the "possibility of complication of relations with Afghanistan" as a threat to regional security and stability was marked by 34.2 per cent of the questioned experts. This was followed by the "possibility of complication of relations with Russia" with 25.8 per cent. The threat to regional security and stability as a result of complication of the relations with the USA was perceived at a relatively low level - only 8.3 per cent of Uzbekistan respondents pointed to this factor. This was far ahead of the perception of the threat from "complication of relations with China" with 3.3 per cent or Iran with 0.8 per cent. None of the Uzbek experts recognized any threat to security and stability in the region as a result of "complications in relations with Turkey."

In terms of international relations for Uzbekistan's specialists, co-operation with Russia was in first place (mean 3.34 - see Table 1). Next was Germany (mean 3.30). The third was the USA (mean 3.29). This was followed by Japan (mean 3.06) and China (mean 2.68). The next position was taken by Turkey (mean 2.45). The perception of the importance of co-operation with India was next (mean 2.24), and Afghanistan was following that (mean 2.17). Pakistan was in last place among those countries listed (mean 2.06).

The survey results illustrated that the Central Asian experts evaluated the development of international co-operation and the threats to the country's security differently. Moreover, the three republics covered by the survey, which from the outset were committed to regional integration, were quite different in their foreign policy orientation. This indicates that there is a need to be very careful in considering the region as an entity without underlining the significant differences between the republics.<sup>51</sup>

Analysis of the experts' evaluations indicated that external threats to the security and stability of the region were perceived to be quite unlikely. The major threat to the stability and security in the region was seen as having domestic sources. The stable development of Central Asia very much depended, first, on the success of large-scale economic changes, and second, on success in maintaining the internal political balance between different political, social and ethnic

groups. Despite a view widely supported by Western and Russian scholars that the Central Asian republics have faced very similar problems, this survey found that there were significant differences. Kazakh experts considered the threat from the "internal social and political factors" to be the most important, while Kyrgyz and Uzbek experts emphasized the threat from "economic crisis and economic problems." It is important that foreign policy specialists realistically evaluate the Islamic factor in the international politics of Central Asia and do not consider it as a serious threat.

Also, despite many predictions about deeper involvement by the Central Asian south and south-west regional politics and groupings, the Central Asian leaders did not show any movement to emphasize this direction in their foreign policy. The survey analysis revealed that experts in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan considered co-operation with Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan an issue of secondary importance. The region's experts surprisingly did not show much interest in co-operation with Iran, despite the diplomatic and economic activity of the Iranian government and the fact that geographically Iran represents the natural and the shortest pathway to the world market.

It is noteworthy that cultural and linguistic proximity to Turkey did not outweigh pragmatic considerations of the region's experts. They placed much less stress on co-operation with Turkey than on co-operation with the major Western countries. Most probably, it reflected the disappointment of the region's elite with the economic potential of Turkey.

Finally, the co-operation with Russia in the field of maintaining the regional security and stability seemed to be still one of the highest priorities in the opinion of the regional experts. However, the respondents in all three republics differently approached even this issue (see Figure 3). This finding was particularly interesting because it precisely indicates the place of the Kremlin as a guarantor of the security and stability in evaluation of the Central Asian foreign policy experts. The importance of Kazakhstan's relations with China has started to counterweigh the importance of relations with Russia. Apparently, the Russian Federation did not occupy the exclusive position as an international partner for Uzbekistan and the importance of Germany, the USA and Japan counterweighed the importance of relations with Russia. In this sense, the relations with Russia were much more important for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan than for Uzbekistan.<sup>52</sup>

It is interesting to note that a new tendency could be observed

in the foreign policy priorities of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. These republics are becoming increasingly different in their foreign policy priorities although this tendency still remains at its early stage. However, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are apparently moving in quite a different way from Uzbekistan, but all together they are slowly leaving Moscow's orbit.

## 6. Integration Processes in Central Asia

Since 1991, the newly independent states of Central Asia have faced contradictory challenges.<sup>53</sup> On the one hand, they have been engaged in reshaping their national economic systems, and in nation-state formation. On the other hand, they have been increasingly involved in various regional and international co-operation programs, including projects for political and economic reintegration within the framework of the former Soviet Union and the region itself. There are a number of reasons for their growing international involvement in various organizations and co-operation with each other. These include a need to reduce the negative side-effects of their unexpected independence; a need to co-ordinate their economic transformation and to overcome the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet economic co-operation; and last but not least a need to join their efforts and resources to overcome common problems.

From the very first months after the collapse of the USSR, the Central Asian republics had different approaches to integration. Tajikistan's devastating civil war (1992-1997) rendered it unable to participate in the process. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were reluctant to take part in any regional or supra-regional political integration for fear it would undermine their sovereignty, or would force them to share their power with regional or supra-regional organizations.<sup>54</sup> Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan quite actively promoted inter-republic integration with a special focus on economic co-operation, and were persistently supporting regionalization and political and economic reintegration. It was Kazakhstan, which came with an idea of the *Eurasian Union* to reintegrate the former socialist countries.

Meanwhile, there is a need to distinguish two dominant components of the existing ideas on developing the regional organizations and integration, which are different from the economic issues, i.e. cultural and political. Historically, the Central Asians maintained strong relations with South Asia and the Middle East, for

centuries sharing common religious, cultural and intellectual traditions. However, since the middle of the nineteenth century, Central Asia has been increasingly integrating into political and macro-economic system of Russia and East Europe, while culturally it still belongs to the Middle Eastern civilization. Decades of Russian and Soviet dominance changed the Central Asian states' political and economic orientation and minimized cultural relations with their southern neighbors, but could not totally shift the cultural legacy of the civilizational ties with Islamic Asia. After the achievement of independence, the Central Asian elite began to highlight the existence of strong supranational ties with Turkey (historical origins, related languages, common culture, and religion). The strong emphasis on the ties with this country was a result of the elite's attempt to justify their Europe-centric orientation and "Eurasian" self-identity, since Turkey was a member of NATO and a potential member of the European Community. In the meantime, the Central Asian leaders recognized that their economic relations with Russia and other members of the CIS have still been important for their survival. They were particularly concerned with the states' uncertain economic political future and the security arrangements, because of the Kremlin's unexpected and quick withdrawal from the region (Russia's foreign policy makers almost totally excluded the Central Asian republics from their foreign policy priorities at the first stage). Therefore, within a short period after gaining independence, the Central Asian republics started joining various international and regional organizations. They have even become exotic members of the OSCE and NATO's "Partnership for Peace" program and called for establishing special multilateral security relations with the USA in order to get as many international players into the region as possible.

Eventually the Central Asian republics became involved in three major tiers of the regional and supra-regional integration: (a) the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); (b) the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO); and (c) the Central Asian Union (CAU).

**The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)** has been a temporary compromise between two major political camps: conservative Soviet politicians (who tried to preserve the Soviet integrity) and Russian radical democrats (who pressed for unconditional disintegration of the USSR). Neither side has managed to win this long-lasting struggle for power in the Kremlin, while the Russian government has been too weak economically to provide any leadership for the former Soviet republics. Therefore, Russia has never formed a definitive attitude towards the CIS, and the decision to expel

the Central Asian republics from Russia's ruble zone in 1993 ruined the economic basis of possible integration. The organization has remained largely a ceremonial compromise establishment, neither fulfilling the hopes of those members of the Central Asian elite who favored a closer economic integration, nor confirming the apprehensions of those who feared resurgence of the *Muscovite* dominance and the Russian imperial pressure. Nevertheless, the CIS has played an important role in assuring security and maintaining the status quo in Central Asia, at least during the first post-Soviet years. For several years the Commonwealth has been the most important supra-regional institution, which guaranteed fragile co-operation among the Soviet successor states, although the Kremlin's leaders frequently exercised supremacy and dominance strategies.<sup>55</sup> Under the CIS umbrella, the Central Asian republics and Russia also managed to co-operate on some military issues, such as joint border patrols, which were most notable along Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan.

The absence of strong leadership and clear goals has been a source of dissatisfaction and disappointment for many CIS leaders. In early 1997, even the most active advocates of integration within the CIS gave up. One of them, Kazakhstan's President Nazarbaev, noted that "the 'CIS countries' reorientation towards different geopolitical centres of gravity would continue unless Russia accepted a positive leadership and changed its foreign policy towards the former Soviet states."<sup>56</sup> During the CIS meeting in October 1997 President Yeltsin remarked that "lack of mutual trust still exists among us despite of everything."<sup>57</sup>

**The Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO)** invited the newly-independent Central Asian states and Azerbaijan to join it in 1992. Almost immediately the Central Asian states joined the four existing members of the ECO, i.e. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. Although this organization had been formed in 1964, it had rarely attracted international attention before the 1990s, but with the accession of the former Soviet states it has become quite a visible group on the world's political map. With member states having a population of about 300 million and a territory covering over 6 million square kilometers (twice that of India), the organization may become an important international player if the economic integration is successful.<sup>58</sup>

Initially, the Central Asian leaders perceived a membership in the organization with enthusiasm as another chance to diversify their relations with the outside world, to open a possible market for their industrial production and to obtain another source of additional

investments, credits and assistance. Another important consideration for the Central Asian republics was that the territories of the ECO partners could provide alternative routes to international market for their goods and commodities, shortest access to commercial sea-routes and possible routes for new gas and oil pipe-lines from the region.

Almost immediately after its membership grew to ten, the ECO declared that it was "directed against no country or group of countries."<sup>59</sup> In fact, the ambitious *Quetta Plan of Action*, which was announced in 1993, called for greater economic integration among the ten members of the organization and quietly tried to avoid political issues. Nevertheless, the Russian experts began to worry about political implications of this integration.<sup>60</sup> The Kremlin's foreign policy makers believed that it undermined the Russia's geopolitical interests in Central Asia.<sup>61</sup>

Russia has exerted some pressure on the Central Asian republics not to take any steps towards political integration with the other ECO countries. Probably this was the main reason that the ECO kept a relatively low political profile in the middle of 1990s, avoiding political issues.<sup>62</sup> Despite initial disappointments and disillusion, the Central Asian leaders have chosen to continue their participation in various ECO projects, especially those related to development of the regional infrastructure. The ECO members declared that further integration of its members was important and signed several agreements on economic development and promotion of a supra-regional transport infrastructure.<sup>63</sup>

**The Central Asian Union (CAU)** was created in 1990 as a consultative body for the Central Asian leaders, with the general objective to co-ordinate their political efforts, first within the USSR and later in the CIS political arena. There also was an idea of reintroducing political and economic integration among those people who shared cultural, historical and linguistic traditions.<sup>64</sup> The Union's starting point was an informal meeting of the Central Asian leaders in Alma Ata in June 1990, resulting in their decision to join their appeal for greater co-operation and co-ordination within the region. Very soon the civil war in Tajikistan showed that that country had practically abandoned the organization. Later Turkmenistan formally left it, after the government's decision to oppose any integration among the Soviet successor states. By 1994, the CAU was on the brink of collapse.<sup>65</sup> However, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and later Kyrgyzstan formalized some common principles of integration<sup>66</sup> and re-launched it as the Central Asian Economic Union (CAEU)<sup>67</sup> in April 1994. In early 1998, Tajikistan formally applied for membership in CAEU and

later the country was accepted as a full member of the organization.

The CAEU members founded several regional institutions, including the Central Asian Bank, various co-ordinative and consultative bodies, which targeted specifically co-operation in the economic and financial fields.<sup>68</sup> The important issue for all Central Asian republics in the post-Soviet era was first, the problem of the emerging customs war, which was blocking the free movement of people and goods between the republics; second, the ironing out the difference in their approach to economic reforms and legislative system; and third, the developing mutual co-operation and mutual supply of some commodities. Ideally, the Central Asian leaders thought to form a custom union within the CAEU and to establish common economic space to promote the free movement of goods and capital throughout the entire region. The institutionalization of the CAEU has often been perceived as an important part of the republics' attempt to stabilize the economic and political environment and security in the region.

In general, participation in the integration process has been a part of the international strategy of all Central Asian governments. Although they continued to hope for reintegration within the territory of the former USSR, they have never changed their policy of strengthening their states' integrity and institutions. Such a policy had some disadvantages and negative effects, especially on economic co-operation in Central Asia. Nevertheless, at this stage the nation-state was the only entity around which the political and economic institutions could have been shaped.

Certainly, the co-operation within the Central Asian republics and between the Central Asian republics and the CIS and ECO did not fulfill all the expectations and hopes of the Central Asian leaders. Nevertheless, despite all the shortcomings of the integration schemes, the Central Asian governments have also benefited from them. The benefits become more obvious with comparison of the impact of the disintegration on the former Yugoslavia. Central Asia has generally managed to keep the political and security status quo with all its neighbors, despite the artificial nature of some boundaries, the existing ethnic conflicts (and the civil war in Tajikistan), political vulnerability, and other complex problems.

The integration and co-operation perspectives of the Central Asian republics seemed to be one of the important questions for the researcher to assess. The respondents were asked "What do you think,

how important is regional integration of the Central Asian Republics?" The respondents had several options to choose (highly important; important; integration is possible but not so important; not important and others - see Table 2). The respondents were also asked: "In your opinion, co-operation with what international organizations mostly reflects interests of your republic?" The respondents had a list of choices (see Table 3).

### **Kazakhstan**

In Kazakhstan, 30.4 per cent of the respondents thought that integration within the Central Asian republics was "very important", and 52.2 per cent of the respondents believed that such integration was "important". Only 15.2 per cent of those questioned said that integration was "possible but not so important", and a tiny fraction of the respondents (1.7 per cent) marked that integration was "not important."

The survey found that 89.1 per cent of Kazakhstan experts believed that co-operation with the CIS mostly reflected interests of their republic. In the second position was the OSCE with 52.2 per cent of the respondents marking this organization. In third place was the CAU: 50.0 per cent of the respondents thought that co-operation with this organization best reflected the interests of their republic. This was followed by the ECO with 30.4 per cent of those questioned identifying this organization. The perception that co-operation with the "Turkic (People) Union" reflected interests of Kazakhstan was marked by 23.9 per cent of the questioned foreign policy specialists. The OIC was in last place with 10.9 per cent of the experts marking this organization.

### **Kyrgyzstan**

In Kyrgyzstan, 41.7 per cent of the respondents thought that integration within the Central Asian republics was "very important", and 50.0 per cent believed that such integration was "important." Only 5.5 per cent of those questioned said that integration was "possible but not so important" and a small group of the respondents (1.4 per cent) marked that integration was "not important."

The survey found that 87.5 per cent of the Kyrgyz experts

believed that co-operation with the CIS best reflected interests of their republic. In the second position was the CAU with 70.8 per cent of the respondents marking this organization. In third place was the OSCE: 52.8 per cent of the respondents thought that co-operation with this organization best reflected interests of their republic. This was followed by the ECO with 29.2 per cent of those questioned identifying this organization. The perception that co-operation with the "Turkic (People) Union" reflected interests of Kyrgyzstan was marked by 13.9 per cent of the questioned foreign policy specialists. Finally, the OIC was in last place with 9.7 per cent of the experts marking this organization.

### **Uzbekistan**

In Uzbekistan, 28.8 per cent of the respondents thought that integration within the Central Asian republics was "very important", and 50.0 per cent believed that such integration was "important." Only 18.6 per cent of those questioned said that integration was "possible but not so important", and a tiny group of the respondents (1.8 per cent) marked that integration was "not important."

The survey found that 80.0 per cent of the Uzbekistan experts believed that co-operation with the CIS mostly reflects interests of their republic. In second place was the OSCE with 71.7 per cent of the respondents marking this organization. The CAU was in third place: 54.2 per cent of the respondents thought that co-operation with this organization best reflected interests of their republic. This was followed by the ECO with 26.7 per cent of those questioned identifying this organization. The perception that co-operation with the "Turkic (People) Union" reflected interests of Uzbekistan was marked by 18.3 per cent of the questioned foreign policy specialists. In last place was the OIC with 11.7 per cent of the experts marking this organization.

Regionalization and integration is a complex issue for the Central Asian elite, which includes emotional, political, cultural, and a number of other components. It also is apparent that the attempts of integration with such different geopolitical and geoeconomic entities as the ECO and the CIS, create a contradiction between the legacy of the cultural traditions and the legacy of the economic development. During the decades of the Soviet policy of isolation, the Central Asian elite formed feelings of belonging to the second special world that is

somewhere between the West and the Third World. Presently, none of the five states of Central Asia believe that they belong to the Third World. "As an Eurasian state we should carry out such foreign politics that suits the geopolitical position of the Republic,"<sup>69</sup> asserted the president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev. That is why the Central Asian elite's perception of the *New World order* and international relations still remains uncertain and will take time to crystallize a balance between those conflicting legacies. Nevertheless, it seems that no integration is possible within the CIS in the near future. Instead, only a certain level of multilateral and bilateral co-operation will be possible in this political environment.

Nevertheless, because Central Asia's relations with the outside world have for a long time been undermined by the phenomenon of the *iron curtain* and because its consequences are still perceptible, there is large room for developing economic, cultural, and other relations with different regional and supra-regional organizations.

However, there is a very important dimension of the regionalization which is the development of the post-Cold war security system in the region. Although these three major organizations have played an important role in establishing international relations of the Central Asian states, and have assisted in promoting transparency in the Central Asian republics' foreign policy, none of them has provided a satisfactory security dialogue to the region.<sup>70</sup> The Central Asian states have become quite suspicious of their neighbors, including Russia (with its extravagant nationalists) and even of each other,<sup>71</sup> and have started to search for ways to reorganize the security system in the region with the maximum number of external participants. The area of their search includes European organizations such as NATO, OSCE, etc. Nevertheless, the military and economic presence of Russia is a reality and the leaders of the region simultaneously demand that the Kremlin become a guarantor of the security in Central Asia.<sup>72</sup> One clear indication of this is the Central Asian republics' appeal to join the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO's 'Partnership for Peace' program. The USA has also become increasingly involved in strengthening the security in the region. The CENTRASBAT-97 peacekeeping exercise involved servicemen from six countries, including the USA.<sup>73</sup>

## 7. Formation of Foreign Policy Institutions in Central Asia

Modern foreign policy institutions in the Central Asian republics were created quite recently and they are still at their formative stage. The development of the foreign policy institutions in the region has not only been influenced by internal determinations such as circumstances of the Soviet disintegration, the political orientation of the elites, and the power balance within the region. It has also been affected by some cultural and political traditions of the pre-Soviet and Soviet era.

Historically, the Central Asian states never had a diplomatic service in the modern meaning of the notion. While Western European countries entered their industrial stage of development, and international trade and international relations became an important feature of their development, Central Asia experienced economic, political, and cultural stagnation. The *Great Geographic Discoveries* introduced new sea trade routes between the West and East. This led to the death of the *Great Silk Road* which had crossed through Central Asia for centuries and had been an important source of enrichment for the local economies and cultures. Thus, since the seventeenth century the landlocked states of Central Asia, surrounded by the powerful Russian, Chinese, and Persian Empires, were able to maintain neither full-scale diplomatic services nor active foreign policies. Inclusion of the Central Asian region into the Russian Empire did not radically change this situation. According to the agreements between the Russian Empire and the nominally independent Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand Khaganates, the former obtained exclusive rights to conduct foreign policy on behalf of the latter. The ruling elite of these three states, who had kinship, clan, and other relations with many noble families in South Asia and the Middle East, continued to maintain some cultural, trade, and other relations with neighboring countries, mainly Afghanistan, Iran, and India. These relations were quite independent from Russia's political intervention.

During the first period after establishing the Soviet system in Central Asia, one of the major objectives of the new Soviet authorities was strengthening their political system. The Soviet leaders justified the imposition of the "iron curtain" and the blockage of almost all of the region's relations with the outside world by charging that the foreign missions (US, British, French, and Turkish) had offered substantial financial and other assistance to the anti-Soviet opposition. Thus, the foreign policy of the Central Asian states became fully

subordinated to Moscow. With the establishment of the USSR in 1924, the newly created Soviet republics of Central Asia received rights to participate in the formation of Soviet foreign policy through the system of *Postpredstva* (a Russian abbreviation for "Representative office") set up in Moscow.<sup>74</sup> However, these rights were quite nominal and were in practice never realized.

The situation changed only during and after World War Two. In 1944, *Narkomindels* (renamed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1946) was established in all Union republics. Although each of the new Foreign Ministries participated in various international events and hosted some foreign delegations, they never made significant contributions to the formation of the Soviet foreign policy, nor did they accumulate significant international experience.

However, the most radical changes happened after 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power and especially after Eduard Shevardnadze had been appointed Foreign Minister in 1987. He replaced the old fashioned Soviet diplomat Andrei Gromyko. These cadre changes coincided with the introduction of a new law in 1986 which substantially liberalized the USSR's foreign economic relations. The changes provoked a significant increase in the Central Asian republics' international contacts and boosted their diplomatic experience. Shevardnadze, following a new cadre policy, invited a number of the Central Asians to work in the central Foreign Ministry and in the Soviet missions abroad. Previously those positions had been reserved exclusively for ethnic Russians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians. Furthermore, the foreign ministries in the Central Asian republics received more freedom in establishing new and expanding existing international contacts.

Other significant changes in the Central Asian states' foreign political and economic relations occurred in 1990-1991 with some amendments in constitutional provision and with the introduction of deregulation of the foreign economic and political activities. The Union republics received rights of direct access to the international arena. For instance, in the early 1990s, the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan for the first time had independent official overseas visits and hosted foreign delegations. During these years, a kind of division of labor in the Central Asian republics' foreign policy was formed. The president's administration usually directly controlled official parts of these visits. The foreign ministries, being limited in their financial resources and staff members, were responsible for the technical part of the activity (protocol, public relations, etc). The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow controlled and co-ordinated

these actions in general. It is important to note that the experience of these years positively influenced the establishing and functioning of the independent foreign policy institutions of the Central Asian republics and accumulating the expertise.

Immediately after independence, the Central Asian republics did not have any clear picture in the way of organizing their foreign policy in the new international environment. The Central Asian states did not have enough financial resources and experience to establish their own independent diplomatic services around the world. According to the initial arrangements with Moscow, the Central Asian states should have inherited some part of the property of the Soviet foreign embassies in foreign countries. The diplomatic experience was supposed to be accumulated through the direct participation of the representatives of the Central Asian states in the Russian diplomatic and other missions overseas. However, neither of these arrangements worked. Very soon the Central Asian republics started to form their own diplomatic and other missions independently or with the assistance of international organizations.

All Central Asian Republics faced difficulties in obtaining expertise in formation of their foreign policies. Their government institutions did not have enough specialists in international affairs. The *cadre* problem has been solved in two principle ways. The first was the recruitment of those representatives of the Central Asian republics who had worked in the Russian foreign ministry and the Russian foreign missions. The second was recruitment of locals from various academic and research institutions.<sup>75</sup> The academic circle plays a very important role in the formation of the Central Asian republics' foreign policies by providing both important guidelines for foreign policy making and the professionals for the Central Asian government institutions. This practice is quite unique and different from the Soviet and Russian experience.<sup>76</sup> From the very beginning, the leaders of the region, who did not possess any experience in international relations, made extensive use of local academic expertise, although they sometimes recruited foreign experts as well.<sup>77</sup>

In 1991, the Central Asian republics started to develop their own foreign policy. In general, the republics formed their foreign policy institutional structures, which were similar to the Russian ones. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for the realization of foreign policy and it controlled the functioning of its foreign missions. The Central Asian presidents established their own foreign policy bodies within their own administrations (International Department of the President administration). Parliamentary Commissions on

International Affairs established parliamentary control of the republics' foreign policies. However, in practice these commissions played a minimal role in the foreign policy formation. Unlike Third World countries and Russia, the Central Asian republics did not have large and influential armies or private business sectors during the first stage of independence. Thus, those institutions never played any important role in the formation of the foreign policy of the Central Asian republics at that stage. From the beginning three major institutions have largely contributed to the formation of foreign policy in the region. One was the Republics' Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Another was the international department within the Presidents' administrations. These two, often competing with each other, were responsible for the formation of the national foreign policies in their respective republics. In fact, the presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan even encouraged this informal competition. Academic circles and universities collectively comprised the third institution which extensively provided its expertise for the other two institutions because at least at this stage foreign policy expertise could not have been generated within the foreign ministries themselves.

This movement of specialists and expertise created a relatively dynamic and democratic environment in the Central Asian republics' foreign policy making in the 1990s. The policy specialists moved in and out of the state institutions. There was quite an intensive exchange between the foreign policy experts from academic institutions and the government and the president's foreign policy making institutions. It became quite apparent that the specialists' assessments and perception of the foreign policy issues had a powerful impact on foreign policy-making in the Central Asian republics.

### **Perceptions of the Influence of Different Groups on the Foreign Policy**

In general, the Central Asian republics were able to mobilize all their human resources and existing expertise and create working foreign policy institutions within a short period of time. The formation of foreign policy is a complex process, which involves a number of political institutions and individual or group actors. One of the questions of the survey study intended to elucidate how the Central Asian experts evaluated inputs of the different institutions and actors in the foreign policy formation in their respective countries. The Central Asian experts were asked "In your opinion, which of the

following groups have the greatest influence on the formation of foreign policy in your republic?" There were several choices with marks ranging from one to four (1 = does not influence; 2 = influence insignificantly; 3 = influence significantly; and 4 = influence greatly).

### **Kazakhstan**

The survey found (see Table 4) that the experts in Kazakhstan believed that their president had the greatest influence on foreign policy formation (mean 3.39). The presidency was followed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mean 2.93). In third place was the parliament (mean 2.18). The next position was reserved for the mass media (mean 2.00). The academicians were in fifth place (mean 1.56). Public opinion was considered to be the least influential factor in foreign policy formation (mean 1.49).

### **Kyrgyzstan**

The survey found that the experts of Kyrgyzstan likewise believed that in their republic the president had the greatest influence on foreign policy formation (mean 3.29). As in Kazakhstan, he was followed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mean 3.04). In third place was, as before, the parliament (mean 2.40). The experts perceived that the mass media also had significant influence (mean 2.27). The academicians were in fifth place (mean 1.64). Public opinion was considered to have the same level of influence as academicians on foreign policy formation (mean 1.64).

### **Uzbekistan**

The survey found that the experts in Uzbekistan believed their president had the greatest influence on foreign policy formation (mean 3.70). As in the previous cases, he was followed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mean 3.33). In third place was once more the parliament (mean 2.63). The experts perceived that the mass media also had significant influence (mean 2.06). The academicians were in fifth place (mean 1.98). Public opinion was put, as ever, in last place (mean 1.83).

It is interesting to note that in all three republics the level of influence of the various institutions follows the same pattern. However, in Uzbekistan, the level of influence of the President of the republic on the formation of the foreign policy is much higher than in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Parliament and mass media also significantly influenced the formation of foreign policy. Such results were quite unexpected because initially there was an assumption that the president and to a lesser extent the Foreign Ministry in the given republic monopolized the foreign policy making process in each respective republic.

### **Perception of information influx about foreign policy in the Central Asian republics**

Information flow is important for the formation of foreign policy. However, during the Soviet era all sources of information had been tightly controlled by Moscow officials and the people of the Soviet Union remained behind the informational "iron curtain." Needless to say, the Soviet people were receiving quite a distorted picture of world affairs and international relations in general, and a wall of secrecy was effectively build up even around the activity of the Soviet state institutions and especially of Soviet foreign policy institutions. The situation started changing only during the last period of Gorbachev's reign with the introduction of freedom of expression and information inflow. The situation remained complicated in the post-Soviet era, because of Russia's domination in information dissemination and in the formation of public opinion in the Central Asian republics. Eventually, the Central Asian leaders recognized the need for changes and gradually reduced the presence of Russia's mass media in their republics by increasing their own activity, inviting foreign media, or simply limiting access of the Russian media to the Central Asian audience. For example, the monopoly of Russia's TV broadcasting was removed, and local channels significantly reduced the amount of time allocated for the Russian TV broadcasting.

The survey study had a question where the respondents were also asked "What are the main sources of information on the foreign policy formation of your republic and the Central Asian region in general?" Several options were offered and the respondents were asked to choose three of them. The received data was cross-tabulated with the place of living of the respondents (Figure 4).

The survey found that "Local Mass Media" was a source of

information for 80.4 per cent of respondents in Kazakhstan, 84.7 per cent of respondents in Kyrgyzstan, and 85.0 per cent of respondents in Uzbekistan.

"Foreign Mass Media" was a source of information on the republics' foreign policy formation for 69.8 per cent of respondents in Kazakhstan. 51.4 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, and 46.7 per cent in Uzbekistan.

"Presidential speeches" were a source of information for 58.7 per cent of respondents in Kazakhstan, 54.2 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, and 85.0 per cent in Uzbekistan.

"Speeches by the Minister of Foreign Affairs" were a source of information for 17.4 per cent of respondents in Kazakhstan, 33.3 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, and 8.8 per cent in Uzbekistan.

"Parliamentary hearings" were a source of information for 10.9 per cent of respondents in Kazakhstan, 12.5 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, and 17.5 per cent in Uzbekistan.

"Friends and colleagues" were a source of information for 26.1 per cent of respondents in Kazakhstan, 27.8 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, and 24.2 per cent in Uzbekistan.

The diversification of the sources of information on the outside world has been one of the important features in the formation of foreign policy in Central Asia. If during the Soviet era and the first years after the Soviet disintegration the Central Asian republics received the information exclusively from Moscow, later the picture has gradually changed. Another important thing is that, according to the respondents, the foreign policy makers have become one of the important sources of information.

### **Perception of Formation, Realization of Foreign Policy**

Evaluation by the Central Asian experts of their success in foreign policy implementation was considered a constituent part of assessment of the region's foreign policy. The experts were asked "What do you think, how successfully is foreign policy formed and realized in the following republics/regions?" There were several choices with marks ranging from one to four (1 = bad; 2 = moderate; 3 = good; and 4 = successful) and a list of the CIS countries to assess (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Central Asian Region and the CIS in general).

The survey found (see Table 5) that foreign policy formation and realization in Kazakhstan were considered "successful" only by 9.3

per cent of the respondents. Of those questioned, 46.4 per cent marked "good"; 37.2 per cent of the respondents believed that it was "moderately successful", and 4.2 per cent replied that it was "badly" implemented.

Foreign policy formation and realization in Kyrgyzstan were considered "successful" only by 6.7 per cent of the respondents. Of those questioned, 32.2 per cent marked "good"; 43.5 per cent of the respondents believed that it was "moderately successful", and 13.2 per cent replied that it was "badly" implemented.

Foreign policy formation and realization in Uzbekistan were considered "successful" by 31.0 per cent of the respondents. Of those questioned, 42.3 per cent marked "good"; 17.5 per cent of the respondents believed that it was "moderately successful", and 4.6 per cent replied that it was "badly" implemented.

The experts were also asked to evaluate success in foreign policy of the Russian Federation, of Central Asia as a region, and of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Table 5). Foreign policy formation and realization in Russia were considered "successful" by 18.0 per cent of the respondents. Of those questioned, 38.9 per cent marked "good"; 28.4 per cent of the respondents believed that it was "moderately successful", and 10.8 per cent replied that it was "badly" implemented. Foreign policy formation and realization in Central Asia was considered "successful" by only 2.9 per cent of the respondents. Of those questioned, 36.4 per cent marked "good"; 44.4 per cent of the respondents believed that it was "moderately successful", and 7.9 per cent replied that it was "badly" implemented. Foreign policy formation and realization in the CIS was considered "successful" by only 2.5 per cent of the respondents. Of those questioned, 25.1 per cent marked "good"; 43.1 per cent of the respondents believed that it was "moderately successful", and 22.2 per cent replied that it was "badly" implemented.

The above data revealed that Uzbekistan's foreign policy has been perceived as more successful than the foreign policies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The CIS' foreign policy was given the lowest rating overall.

It is remarkable that the former Soviet Central Asian states could establish workable foreign policy institutions within such a short period of time. All these republics have created quite a dynamic and democratic environment for foreign policy making and established a strong tradition of involving academic expertise in the policy-making process. Additionally, we can note that the region's foreign policy has been quite well balanced and has been free from impulsiveness and

unpredictable moves of the Russia's foreign policy. Certainly, personal characters of the Central Asian leaders have made an important impact and contribution to functioning of the foreign policy institutions and to their style of foreign policy making. In this sense, although the foreign policy making in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan has been described as bureaucratic and elitist, the respondents did not think that the foreign policy making was monopolized by one particular institution. The Central Asian experts considered that the hierarchy of influence of the foreign policy institutions was quite similar in every republic of the region.

## Conclusion

After the collapse of the USSR, only a few scholars strongly believed that the Central Asian republics would be capable of developing stable social and economic policies and of maintaining regional security without the intervention of the major world actors. However, the Central Asian leaders demonstrated their ability to meet the challenge of independence despite the difficult internal and external situations. Practically all of the Central Asian republics, with the exception of Tajikistan, stabilized the political situation and conducted a relatively steady transformation of their national institutions. Despite the peculiarities of the social and economic heritage, the Central Asian republics implemented a wide range of positive changes and maintained stable relations within the region and with the outside world.

Two factors largely contributed to the formation of stable post-Soviet foreign policy during the 1990s: the legacy of the Soviet era and circumstances of the Soviet disintegration. On the one hand, the Soviet system achieved a very high level of education among the population of the region and created a large highly qualified stratum of specialists in various fields of science, technology, etc. Also the former Soviet system could be credited for creating the viable system of state administration and the system of local institutions, that were not always perfect but could generate a wide range of expertise locally. On the other hand, the former Soviet system of administration and management was quite inefficient and unwieldy, economic systems of the Central Asian Republics were created for functioning within the former All-Union system and were practically unworkable as independent entities. The Central Asian leaders faced challenging problems after the unexpected disintegration of the USSR. They had

to find an acceptable formulation for peaceful and sustainable economic, political and social transition, create a new formula for their relations with the Russian Federation, the international community, and even among each other.

The region's relations with Russia have experienced steep shifts and unexpected twists, showing their vulnerability to objective factors (economic and others) and subjective causes (such as the power struggle in the Kremlin). Continuous economic crises and economic decline in Russia limited Moscow's influence in the region. However, the presence of almost 10 million ethnic Russians in Central Asia became one of the important factors which compelled Russia's politicians again and again to return to the issue of Russian-Central Asian relations. In this sense, different players and institutions made their often contradictory contributions to the dynamic of those relations: territorial claims and imperial ambitions (Zhirinovski); security arrangements and dialogue on border guarding issues; economic co-operation and competition in oil and gas exploitation, etc. The notorious approach associated with Kozyrev and Grachev postulated the implementation of the so-called "Monroviski Doctrine" which claimed the region as a zone of Russia's sphere of economic and political interests. This caused some tensions in the relations between the Central Asian republics and Russia and stimulated mistrust among the Central Asian elite of their northern neighbor. Nevertheless, in spite of the non-constructive intervention of Russian nationalists and some negative impacts of the "Kozyrev-Grachev" foreign policy line towards the region, Russia and Central Asia managed to maintain quite sustainable relations. There were no mass expulsions of ethnic Russians from the Central Asian republics or significant Russian military intervention into Central Asian affairs (with the exception of Tajikistan).

Changes in the international environment and especially shifts in the nature of relations with Russia affected the intensity of the public debate on the Central Asian states' foreign policy formation. In this sense, the debate on the "Model of development" appeared as one of the interesting phenomena. Indeed, the disintegration of the USSR – unexpected for the general public – raised challenging issues before Central Asia's ruling elites. One of the issues was the urgent need to search for a dynamic and technocratic identity of the region, which could challenge the opinion of the international community about the region as another place associated with Islamic fundamentalism and potential Balkan-like interethnic conflicts: In this sense, the declaration of the "Model of development" approach was one of the good findings

to create a positive image of the region before the international community as well as before the republics' multiethnic communities.

Reshaping the security system in Central Asia has become an important issue for the Central Asian republics. The vulnerability of the Kremlin's foreign policy and the rise of the extremes of the Russian nationalism (especially, the phenomenon of Zhirinovski) made it clear that the new security regime should have preferably relied not only on the security guarantees of the Russian Federation alone, but on neighboring and other countries as well. The Central Asian republics' search for the new security regime also reflects the growing shift in the region's security orientation, which is characterized by the diminishing economic and political role of the Russian Federation and the increasing economic and financial influence of the USA, France, Japan, Britain, Germany, China, and South Korea. By the mid 1990s, the Central Asian republics had developed the initial framework for a multilateral security system<sup>78</sup> which reflected the multilateral approach of Central Asia's co-operation with the OSCE, as well as within NATO's "Partnership for Peace" and with the USA. Military exercises in 1997 and 1998, involving military personnel from the USA, Russia, Turkey, and the Central Asian republics may be considered the first step towards creation of such a system, pointing out the way to the future development of security and military co-operation in Central Asia.

In this regard, a basis for the emerging dialogue has been formed within three integration concepts, namely the CIS, ECO, and CAU. The activities of these organizations provided the Central Asian leaders with excellent opportunities for the indirect test of all integration issues in the region, even though the organizations failed to fulfill their objectives. Thus, within these three levels of co-operation a control and balance mechanism has begun to emerge. The Central Asian elite showed itself to be extremely pragmatic in orientation. Its members developed their own "neo-pragmatic" approach to integrational and co-operation processes. In this sense, economic and political factors have been the main driving force for the Central Asian republics in the regional and supra-regional grouping, although the Central Asian states demonstrated different levels of interest in grouping within and outside the region. However, the realities of the post-Soviet development proved that there were no integrational processes at the regional and supra-regional level despite a number of talks and up to now the Central Asian republics have preferred to co-operate with, rather than integrate even with their close neighbors.

The formation of the foreign policy institutions in the Central

Asian republics after gaining the independence was an uneasy task for all countries in the region. Almost half a century of the existence of the republics' Ministries of Foreign Affairs did little to accumulate foreign policy expertise; yet it was a very important foundation for the creation of appropriate foreign policy institutions in the post-Soviet era. From the beginning all of the Central Asian republics introduced quite similar concepts of foreign policy decision making, which avoided monopolization of the foreign policy-making process by a few individuals or isolated groups of politicians. In fact, the process of the foreign policy-making included competition between at least two foreign policy institutions. Also it included the development of a dynamic and democratic environment in the decision making and relatively free circulation of the *cadres* and ideas between academic world and foreign policy institutions. Most probably, the wide use of the academic expertise was one of the most important features that made the Central Asian republics' foreign policies more sustainable and productive (unlike the Russian one). However, because of the shortage of *cadres*, expertise and diplomatic experience, the functioning of the foreign policy institutions still largely depends on personalities of their heads and on the personalities of the presidents, who often directly control the work of the Ministries of the Foreign affairs in their respective republics.

By and large, the foreign policies of the Central Asian republics were free from unexpected actions and twists in the international arena during the first transitional period of the independence era, but are still in a formative stage. The Soviet-trained elite continue to maintain a firm grip on power and their technocratic and pragmatic approach still overwhelmingly influences foreign policy formation. It is important to notice that the Central Asian foreign policy, at least at this stage, has been relatively free from internal political and economic turmoil and the power struggle within the ruling elite (unlike some other CIS countries). On the other hand, relations with the Russian Federation remain the cornerstone of the Central Asian republics' foreign policy. However, we could observe that the importance of Russia continues to decline steadily along with the decline of the economic and cultural relations and, at the same time, the role of other international actors is apparently growing. However, the prognosis that the cultural and other factors would dominate the Central Asian republics' foreign policy orientation was not realized and neither Turkey, Iran, nor Pakistan have become exclusive partners of the Central Asian states. In this sense, relations with China and with leading Western powers became a matter of priority for the Central

Asian elites<sup>79</sup>, although their expectation about the likely level of foreign economic and humanitarian assistance and foreign capital investments was far removed from the reality. In general, the Central Asian republics came up with foreign policies which accommodated both the role of Russia and the necessity for diversification in their international relations. However, because of the strong personal influence of the leaders on the formation of the Central Asian republics' foreign policy, these states have to undergo a further transformation and strengthen their foreign policy institutions in order to continue sustainable foreign policies in the future.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* (Alma Ata), 24 December 1991, p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup> See analysis and forecasting by Russian and Central Asian experts in 1992-1993, in *Tsentralno-aziatskii makroregion i Rossiia* (Moscow: IVRAN, 1993).
- <sup>3</sup> Martha Brill Olcott mentioned eleven disputed border cases between Kyrgyzstan and China. See her book, *Central Asia's New States: Independence, Foreign Policy and Regional Security* (Washington, DC: USIPP, 1996), pp.108-110.
- <sup>4</sup> The presentation of the results of the survey study do not necessarily follow the order in which the questions were organized in the questionnaire.
- <sup>5</sup> *Razvitiie mezhnatsionalnykh otnoshenii v novykh nezavisimykh gosudarstvakh Tsentralnoi Azii* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1995).
- <sup>6</sup> S. Asfandiiarov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana (s drevneishih vremen)* (Alma-Ata: Kazakh Universeti, 1993).
- <sup>7</sup> See *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 8 June 1998, p. 5.
- <sup>8</sup> *Human Development under Transition: Europe and CIS* (UNDP, May 1997), pp. 115-122.
- <sup>9</sup> A. A. Akayev, "Kyrgyzstan v Tsentralnoi Azii i SNG: problemy i perspektivy," in *God Planety, Vypusk 1994* (Moscow: Respublika, 1994), pp. 29-30.
- <sup>10</sup> See for evaluation Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "Russian Policies in Central Asia: Changes or Continuity," in *SAIS Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer-Fall 1994), pp. 15-28.
- <sup>11</sup> For examples see I. Zvigelskaia, *The Russian Policy Debate on Central Asia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995).
- <sup>12</sup> *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* (Alma Ata), 4 July 1991, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>13</sup> *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* (Alma Ata), 10 March 1992, p. 3.

- <sup>14</sup> *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* (Alma Ata), 16 May 1992, pp. 2-12.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
- <sup>17</sup> Akayev, "Kyrgyzstan v Tsentralnoi Azii i SNG," pp. 29-30.
- <sup>18</sup> *Los Angeles Times* (7 September 1997), p. 3.
- <sup>19</sup> *Human Development under Transition: Europe and CIS* (UNDP, May 1997), pp. 115-122.
- <sup>20</sup> I. A. Karimov, *Uzbekistan - svoi put obnooleniia i progressa* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1992).
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-57.
- <sup>22</sup> See *Tashkentskaia Pravda* (Tashkent), 9 July 1994, p. 1.
- <sup>23</sup> Uzbekistan shares almost 1,161 km. of common border with Tajikistan and 137 km. with Afghanistan, making the republic particularly vulnerable to any political disturbance in those countries.
- <sup>24</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia's Catapult to Independence," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Summer 1992), pp. 108-130.
- <sup>25</sup> Umirserik Kasenov, "Tsentralnaia Aziia: Natsionalnye i regionalnye aspekty bezopasnosti," *Kazakshtan i Mirovoe Soobshchestvo*, No. 1 (1996), pp. 21-35. See also Leonid Bakaev, "Voennoe Stroitelstvo v Kazakhstane," in *Kazakshtan i Mirovoe Soobshchestvo*, No. 1 (1994), pp. 105-117.
- <sup>26</sup> *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* (24 December 1991), p. 1.
- <sup>27</sup> See *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* (Moscow), 24 September 1991, p. 3; *Komsomolskaia Pravda* (Moscow), 14 August 1992, p. 3; and *Moscow News*, No. 22 (1992), p. 3.
- <sup>28</sup> Bess Brown, "Central Asia and the East Asian Model," in *Report on the USSR* Vol. 3, No. 6 (8 February 1991), pp. 18-19.

<sup>29</sup> *Kazhkhstanskaia Pravda* (16 May 1992), pp. 8-9.

<sup>30</sup> See some details in *Central Asian Post* (Bishkek), No. 39 (30 October 1997), pp. 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> The population of the study covered 1,669 staff members of different organizations and institutions whose work was related to the field of international relations. They were from three newly independent Central Asian countries: the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The stratified-random proportional sampling technique was used to generate random samples. A sample size of 19 per cent was selected with the help of a computer program capable of generating random samples. This percentage was taken from the *Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population* designed by Krejcie and Morgan. The organizations which participated in the study were a strata of the sample. In all, 317 individuals were selected randomly for the study.

The questionnaire consisted of twenty-two questions and was translated into Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek languages. A total of 223 questionnaires (70.35 per cent) were received back as of 12 February 1997 and twenty-eight were received through the mail later. All together 251 questionnaires were received back, 239 (75.4 per cent) of which were considered valid for analysis. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS for Windows for descriptive statistics like frequencies, means, and cross tabulations.

<sup>32</sup> These models of development were included in the questionnaire because there were frequent references to these particular "models" in the mass media and academic publications in the Central Asian republics. The basic difference between the NIS and the South Korean models is that the NIS ones were rich in natural resources and emphasized the wise use of it, while the South Korean ones, being poor in natural resources, emphasized developing technologies and export oriented high-tech sectors of economy. Regarding the Turkish model, see Paul Kubicek, "Nation, State, and Economy in Central Asia: Does Ataturk Provide a Model?," *The Donald W. Treadgold Papers*, No. 14 (Seattle: The Henry M. Jackson School of the University of Washington, August 1997).

<sup>33</sup> See *The Economist* (29 October 1994), pp. 38-40; and *Los Angeles Times* (7 September 1997), p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Cassandra Cavanaugh, "Uzbekistan Looks South and East for Role Model," in *RFE/RL Research report*, Vol. 1, No. 40 (9 October 1992), pp. 12-13.

<sup>35</sup> Karimov, *Uzbekistan - svoi put obnoveniia i progressa*.

<sup>36</sup> *Izvestiia* (Moscow), 13 September 1991, pp. 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> Cavanaugh, "Uzbekistan Looks South and East for Role Model," pp. 12-13.

<sup>38</sup> *The Central Asian Post*, No. 43 (27 November 1997), pp.1-2.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Pomfret, *The Economies of Central Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp.131-151.

<sup>40</sup> During the official visit to Indonesia in 1992, President of Uzbekistan Karimov was excited by the political experience of Indonesia and especially by Indonesia's concept of "guided democracy" and state ideology called "*panchasila*". Karimov then called to "study and apply" the experience of Indonesia. See Cassandra Cavanaugh, "Uzbekistan looks South and East for Role Model," in *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 40 (October 1992), pp. 12-13.

<sup>41</sup> Umirserik Kasenov, "Tsentralnaia Aziia: Natsionalnye i regionalnye aspekty bezopasnosti," in *Kazakhshtan i Mirovoe Soobshchestvo*, No. 1 (1996), pp. 21-35. See also Leonid Bakaev, "Voennoe Stroitelstvo v Kazakhstane," in *Kazakhshtan i Mirovoe Soobshchestvo*, No. 1 (1994), pp. 105-117.

<sup>42</sup> *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* (24 December 1991), p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Boris Rumer, "The Gathering Storm in Central Asia," in *Orbis*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Winter 1993), pp. 89-106.

<sup>44</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21 Century* (New York: Scribners, 1993), pp. 158-159.

<sup>45</sup> Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22-49.

<sup>46</sup> Samuel Huntington, "If not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 5 (November/

December 1993), pp. 186-194.

<sup>47</sup> *Moskovskie Novosti* (17 March 1991), p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> *Megapolis-Express* (Moscow), 24 November 1993, p.10.

<sup>49</sup> T. Koichuev and A. Brudnyi, *Nezavisimiy Kyrgyzstan: Tretii put* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1993), pp. 30-36.

<sup>50</sup> a) What do you think, which of the following problems may threaten the stability and security of your region? *Please check only 3 options:*

b) In your opinion, how important is collaboration with the following countries to the interests of your republic? *Please check each country according to the following scale: 1 - not important; 2 - moderately important; 3 - important; 4 - very important .*

<sup>51</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, "The Asian Interior: The Myth of 'Tsentral'naia Aziia,'" in *Orbis*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Fall 1994), pp. 549-566.

<sup>52</sup> Uzbekistan does not have geographical borders with Russia. However, the country borders Afghanistan. Kazakhstan does not have borders with Afghanistan and Iran, but the country shares the longest part of the border with the Russian Federation.

<sup>53</sup> Olcott, "Central Asia's Catapult to Independence," pp. 108-118.

<sup>54</sup> For the president of Turkmenistan's view on integration see his interview in *Izvestiia* (Moscow), 4 September 1992, pp. 1-2.

<sup>55</sup> See *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* (24 April 1997), pp. 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* (16 January 1997), pp. 1-2.

<sup>57</sup> Jan de Weydenthal, "Russia: CIS Countries Criticize Leadership," *RFE/RL* (24 October 1997) (available at <http://search.rferl.org>). See also *Turkestan Newsletter*, Vol. 97, pp. 1-76.

<sup>58</sup> Bruno De Cordier, "The Economic Co-operation Organization: Toward a New Silk Road on the Ruins of the Cold War?," in *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1996), pp. 47-58.

<sup>59</sup> Ali Abbas Rizvi, "ECO: From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics," in *Asian*

*Defence Journal*, No. 2 (1996), pp. 24.

<sup>60</sup> See N. V. Evsenkin, *Tsentralno-Aziatskii makroregion i Rossia* (Moscow: Ivran, 1993), pp. 82-92.

<sup>61</sup> Shireen Hunter, *Central Asia Since Independence* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), pp.148-149.

<sup>62</sup> See the article by Ahmad Shamshid, in: *Kazakhstan i Mirovooe Soobchestvo*, No. 2 (1996), pp. 91-94.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Historically, the peoples of Central Asia were brought together in the time of the Empire of Timur (in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). The idea of the "united Turkestan" was reborn at the beginning of the twentieth century, and received strong support from the local intellectual elite (see James Critchlow, "Will There Be a Turkestan?," in *RLE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 28 (10 July 1992), pp. 47-50). For a short time the entire territory of the region was incorporated into the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (1918-1924), but Stalin's delimitation of 1924 divided it into what became the five Central Asian republics. For almost a half a century the Soviet leaders strongly opposed any kind of political unity within the region. However, Soviet centralized economic planning revitalized the idea of economic integration in the form of the Central Asian Territorial and Industrial Complex, which included four out of the five republics. The idea of re-creating Turkestan returned to the political agenda only on the eve of the USSR's disintegration in the late 1980s.

<sup>65</sup> Olcott, "The Asian Interior," pp. 554-559.

<sup>66</sup> See: *Sbornik dokumentov i materialov po voprosam ekonomicheskoi integratsii respublik Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, i Uzbekistan* (Almaty, 1995).

<sup>67</sup> Bess Brown, "Three Central Asian States Form Economic Union," in *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 13 (1 April 1994), pp. 33-35.

<sup>68</sup> For details, see S. Primbetov, "Central Asia: Prospects for regional Integration," in *Economic Transition in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. by Bartlomiej Kaminski (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), pp. 159-170.

<sup>69</sup> *Aziia*, No. 51 (Alma Ata), December 1993, pp. 1-2.

<sup>70</sup> In 1992, there were unsuccessful attempts to develop "New Asian collective security agreement", which would include the Central Asian republics, Pakistan, Turkey, and Iran. See Martha Brill Olcott, *Central Asia's New States: Independence, Foreign Policy and Regional Security* (Washington, D.C.: USIPP, 1996), p. 73.

<sup>71</sup> Olcott, *Central Asia's New States*, pp. 161-179.

<sup>72</sup> Karimov, *Uzbekistan - svoi put obnovleniia i progressa*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>73</sup> For a Russian evaluation of the exercise see *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* (Moscow), 13 September 1997, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> For a detailed description, see James P. Nichol, *Diplomacy in the Former Soviet Republic* (Westport: Praeger, 1995), pp.11-20.

<sup>75</sup> There were three major sources of foreign policy professionals. First there was the former Soviet ministries of foreign affairs and other foreign policy institutions. The Central Asian leaders invited the natives who served in the former USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs to return to their republics. It became a relatively small, but very important source of foreign policy professionals. One of the most apparent examples of Kyrgyzstan's leading foreign policy experts is Roza Otunbaeva. She served in senior positions in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1989 until 1992, and had strong international experiences. She was the Kyrgyz Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1992 and in 1994-1997. In 1992-1994, she was the Kyrgyz ambassador to the USA and Canada.

The second source of foreign policy professionals has been local academic circles and foreign policy specialists from the local universities. In 1992-1995, representatives of this group were actively recruited by the ministries of foreign affairs and other foreign policy institutions. During this stage the foreign policy specialists from various academic institutions had been frequently invited to provide expertise for local foreign policy institutions or to join a team of foreign policy professionals in the government bodies and think tanks.

The third source of foreign policy specialists emerged in the middle of 1990s. They were representatives of a relatively young and numerous cohort of specialists, who were trained and retrained

in some foreign countries. While many of them studied diplomacy and other disciplines in the USA and Western Europe, some of them were trained in such countries such as Malaysia, Pakistan, and Turkey.

<sup>76</sup> For evaluation see Ivan Tiulin, "International Relations and the Lessons of Dependency from the Soviet Union to Russia," in *Theory and Practice in Foreign Policy Making: National Perspectives on Academics and Professionals in International Relations*, ed. by Michel Girard, Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Keith Webb (London: Pinter Publishers, 1994).

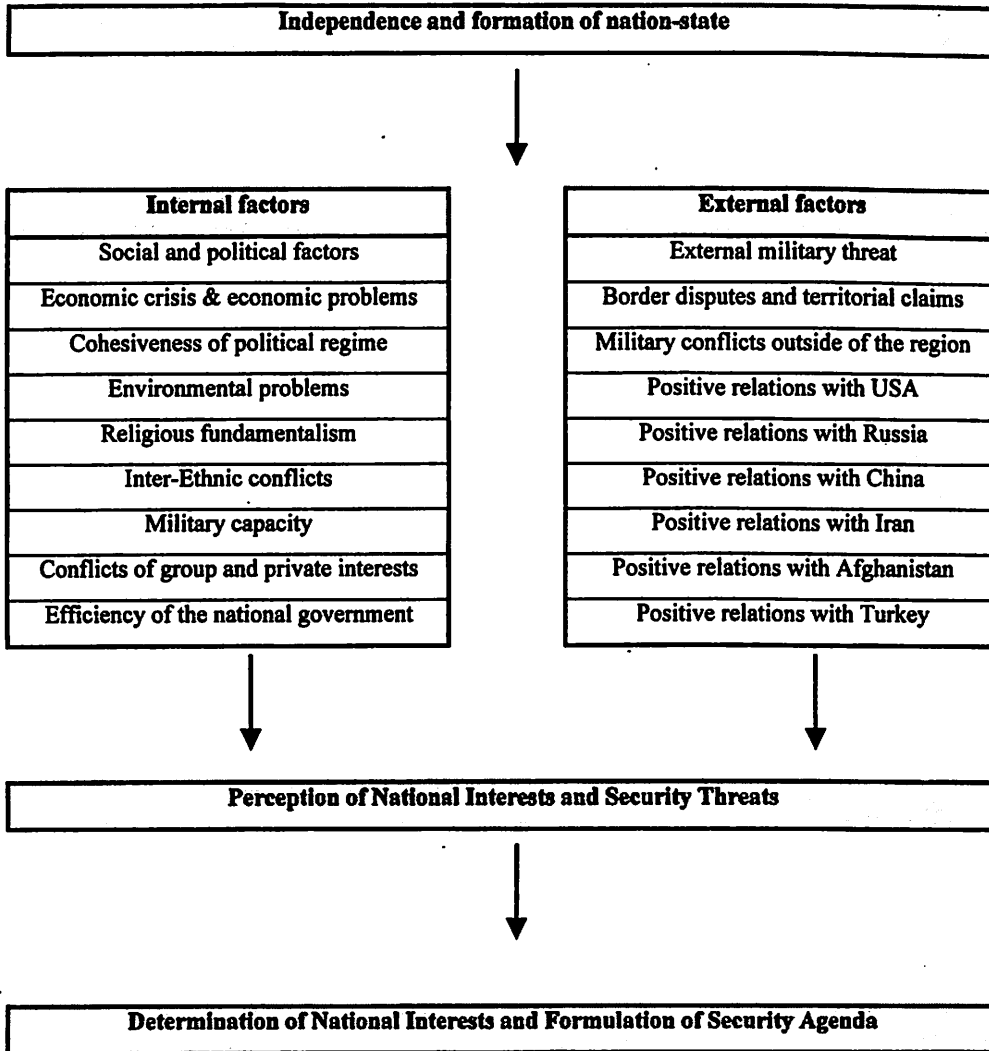
<sup>77</sup> Olcott, *Central Asia's New States*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>78</sup> Stuart Parrott, "Central Asia: the Future Requires a Multilateral Security System," *RFE/RL* (20 November 1997) available at <http://search.rferl.org>.

<sup>79</sup> For evaluation of the Chinese approach to relations with Central Asia, see Gungcheng Xing, "China and Central Asia: Towards New Relations," in *Ethnic Challenges Beyond Borders: Chinese and Russian Perspectives of the Central Asian Conundrum* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 32-49.

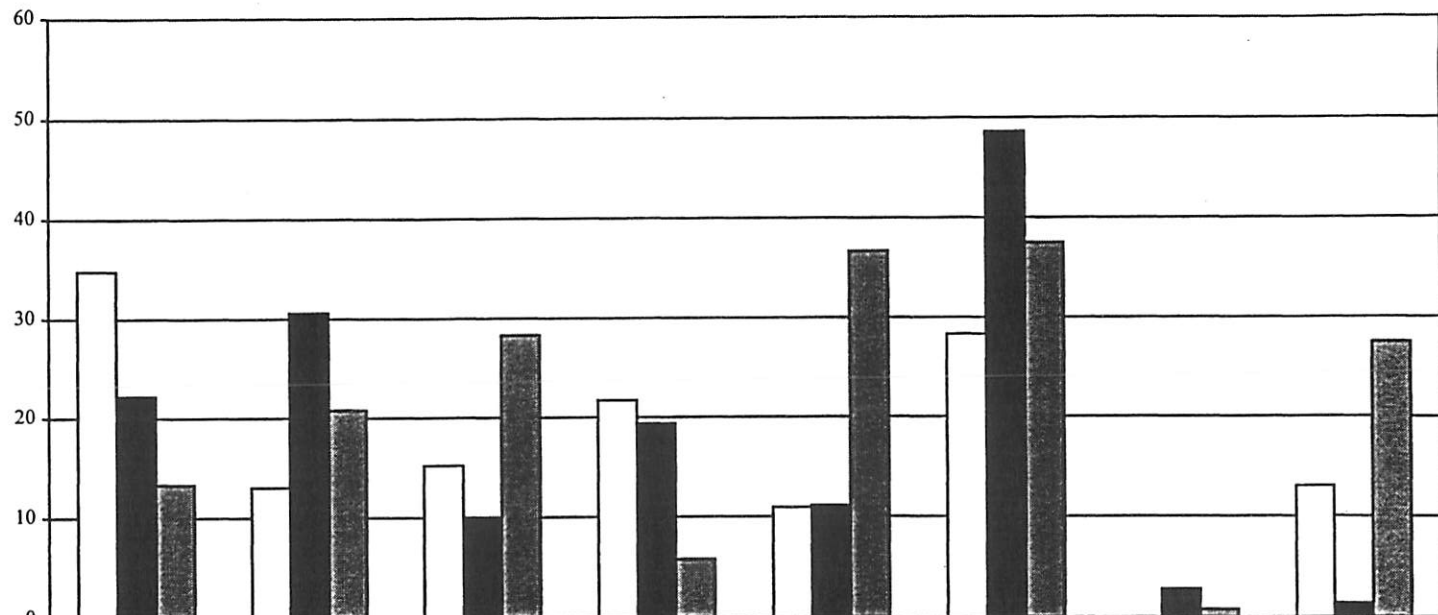
# Figures

**Figure 1**  
**Factors determining security in**  
**Post-Soviet Central Asia**



**Figure 2**  
**Models of Development (%)**

72



	Turkish	Japanese	S. Korean	Russian	German	NICs	Iranian	Own Model
□ Kazakhstan	34.8	13	15.2	21.7	10.9	28.3	0	13
■ Kyrgyzstan	22.2	30.6	9.7	19.4	11.1	48.6	2.8	1.4
▒ Uzbekistan	13.3	20.8	28.3	5.8	36.7	37.5	0.8	27.5

*Figure 3*  
*Threats to Stability and Security in the Region by the Republics (%)*

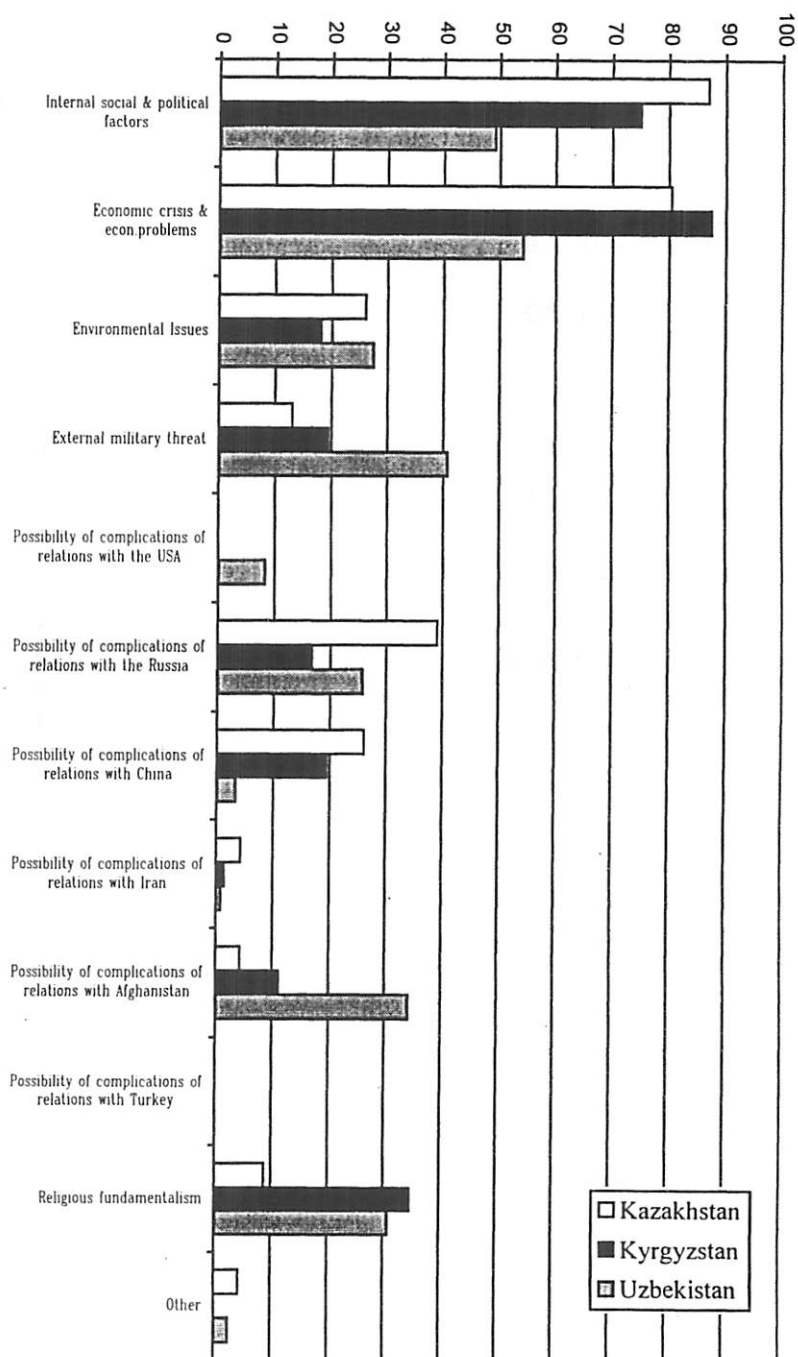
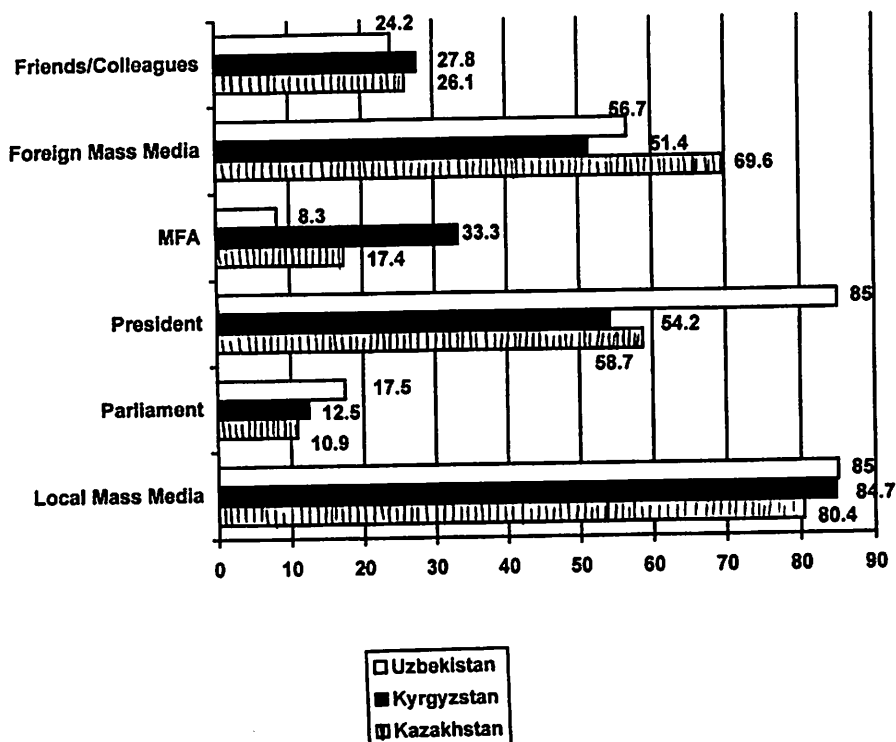


Figure 4

Crosstabulations of Sources of Information on Foreign Policy Formation



Importance	Entire Region	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan
Very important	32.2	30.4	41.7	28.8
Important	50.2	52.2	50.0	50.0
Not so important	13.8	15.2	5.5	18.6
No need	1.7	2.2	1.4	1.8
Other	2.1	0.0	1.4	0.8
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2  
 Frequency of Importance of Integration for Central Asian Republics (%)  
 (N = 239)

\* - The place of importance of co-operation with the particular countries for every republic is shown in brackets.  
 \*\* - 'Other' included the CIS, the neighbouring Central Asian republics, the Arab countries, Korea, UK, and "Tigers" of East and Southeast Asia.

Co-operation with	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan
Russia	3.73 (1)*	3.68 (1)	3.34 (1)
USA	3.09 (3)	3.24 (2)	3.29 (3)
China	3.14 (2)	2.94 (4)	2.68 (5)
Germany	2.93 (4)	2.84 (5)	3.30 (2)
Japan	2.87 (6)	3.10 (3)	3.06 (4)
Turkey	2.89 (5)	2.72 (6)	2.45 (6)
India	2.07 (7-8)	2.11 (7)	2.24 (7)
Iran	2.07 (7-8)	2.04 (8-9)	2.11 (9)
Pakistan	1.90 (9)	2.04 (8-9)	2.06 (10)
Afghanistan	1.81 (10)	1.65 (10)	2.17 (8)
Other**	--	--	--
	N = 46	N = 72	N = 120

Means of importance of co-operation with the following countries for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (N = 239)

Table 1  
 Tables

**Table 3****Crosstabulations of Necessity of International Co-operation for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (%)**

Co-operation with	Kazakhstan N = 46	Kyrgyzstan N = 72	Uzbekistan N = 120
CIS	89.1	87.5	80.0
OIC	10.9	9.7	11.7
OSCE	52.2	52.8	71.7
Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO)	30.4	29.2	26.7
Union of Turk People	23.9	13.9	18.3
Central Asian Union	50.0	70.8	54.2
Others	0.0	5.6	5.8

'Others' included the United Nations, WTO, the European Union, IMF, and Green Peace.

**Table 4****Means for Levels of Influence of Different Groups on the Foreign Policy Formation**

<i>Source of Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>		
	<i>Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	<i>Uzbekistan</i>
President	3.39	3.29	3.70
MFA	2.93	3.04	3.33
Parliament	2.18	2.40	2.63
Media	2.00	2.27	2.06
Academics	1.56	1.64	1.98
Public Opinion	1.49	1.64	1.83
Others	4.3	1.4	5

The respondents who marked option 'Others' indicated as sources of influence the President, the Tajik war, shadow economy, multiparty system and presence of international organisations in the republics.

**Table 5**  
**Frequency of the Respondents' Opinion on Success of**  
**Foreign Policy Realisation (%)**

<i>Country or Region</i>	<i>Badly</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Successfully</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Total</i>
Kazakhstan	4.2	37.2	46.4	9.3	2.9	100
Kyrgyzstan	13.0	43.5	32.2	6.7	4.6	100
Uzbekistan	4.6	17.5	42.3	31.0	4.6	100
Russia	10.9	28.4	38.9	18.0	3.8	100
Central Asia	7.9	44.4	36.4	2.9	8.4	100
CIS	22.2	43.1	25.1	2.5	7.1	100

The respondents' assessment of realisation of foreign policy in different parts of the CIS was also analysed through comparison of the means, where 1 is 'realised badly' and 4 is 'realisation is successful'.

Means for Assessment of Realisation of Foreign Policy in  
Different Parts of the CIS

<i>Country or Region</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Uzbekistan	3.05	0.84
Russia	2.67	0.91
Kazakhstan	2.63	0.71
Central Asia	2.38	0.69
Kyrgyzstan	2.34	0.80
CIS	2.09	0.78

## **APPENDIX 1:**

### **Description of the Research Project**

The catapult to independence brought five Central Asian Republics of the former USSR into the international arena. They faced numerous problems, from the shortage of professionals to the lack of experience in international issues. However, after several years of the Central Asian republics' independent travel in the world arena, the base of their own style and practice in foreign policy making has started to take shape. The latest studies (Anderson, 1997) illustrated that this practice may vary from country to country and was characterized as a complicated interaction of many factors. The formation of the Central Asian republics' foreign policy-making meets influences of the past, historical and cultural experience and the heritage of the former Soviet legacy along with present internal determinations such as the economic development, social and civilizational peculiarities, nationalism, differences in political behavior and perceptions, and traditional values.

This research was based on a survey study. The population of the study consisted of (1) academics, scientists, and researchers, (2) members of the parliament, political parties, and mass media, and (3) the personnel of the Central Asian Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Proportional random sampling was used to select a sample. The questionnaire was designed to investigate: (a) the opinion of local experts on developing the foreign policy making process in Central Asia; (b) the perception of the security issues and international development; (c) the opinion on the role of the Central Asian leaders in the formation of post Soviet foreign policy. Mostly structured questions, Likert, and semantic-differential scales were designed to collect the data.

### **Problem Statement**

Until 1991, the Central Asian republics were under Moscow's political and economic patronage. This arrangement included the delegation of foreign policy formation from the republics to the Kremlin's leaders. However, since the collapse of Moscow's political dominance in the region in 1991, the Central Asian leaders faced the challenge of difficulties in transforming their countries from the Soviet type of total dependency to sovereign nation-statehood. A number of researchers

have focused their efforts on studying the internal and external politics of post-Soviet Central Asia. Many individual researchers and think tanks analyzed different aspects of the Central Asian republics' current foreign policy. Although the facts about internal, domestic politics of the Central Asian republics were known, the systematic analysis of international aspects of the Central Asian politics was not done and some interpretations were even misleading. Considerably little attention was paid to the study of public policy making including the formation of the Central Asian republics' foreign policies. Therefore, the main research problem of this study was the formation of foreign policy decision-making processes in the Central Asian republics and the main factors that influenced the formation of these foreign policies in the post-Soviet era.

It was anticipated that the research would assess the following aspects of Central Asia's foreign policy making: (1) the evaluation of Central Asian foreign policy priorities by the local academic and foreign policy experts; (2) the role of the academic expertise in Central Asian foreign policy making; (3) the evaluation by the Central Asian experts of the internal and external factors in the formation of cohesive foreign policies.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions on Central Asia's foreign policy formation were answered through this study:

- 1) How was the process of the foreign policy formation in the Central Asian republics developed and what were the major influencing factors (both positive and negative) in each republic and the region as a whole?
- 2) What personal impact have the leaders of the republics had on the process of the foreign policy formation in their countries?
- 3) What were the perceptions of external and internal threats to the stability and security of the region and what was the perception of the need for co-operation within and outside the region?
- 4) What was the relationship between the academic experts (Central Asian scholars in international relations) and the practitioners in the formation of the Central Asian foreign policy making process?

## Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made:

- 1) Strong interrelations existed between the academic (research) institutions and the foreign policy institutions in the Central Asian republics.
- 2) There were two levels of academic expertise in the Central Asian republics: firstly, the foreign policy research institutions, and, secondly, universities and other academic institutions that provided training and retraining.
- 3) The perception of the foreign policy making process in the Central Asian republics by public and academic circles and their perception of the relations with other members of the international community influenced the formation of the foreign policy priorities and directions during the first years of independence.
- 4) The representatives of the academic circles (experts, scholars, etc.) were quite widely involved in the formation of the foreign policy priorities after the Central Asian republics achieved independence.

## Definitions

The following definitions were operationalized for the study:

**Academicians, scholars, scientists, and researchers** - people who work and teach in various research, teaching, and training organizations.

**Central Asian region** - the area occupied by five Central Asian republics, which are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

**Central Asian Republics** - the term refers to the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

**Central Asian Union** – organization established in 1991, which united three republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan

**Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)** – union of countries-successors of the USSR.

## Significance of the Study

The importance of the research on current changes and trends in the Central Asian republics' foreign policy originated in the need to evaluate their effects on the climate of the international relations and security balance within and outside the region. The strategic magnitude of the Central Asian region derives from several factors. The first, is its size and geographical location in the pivotal areas of the Eurasian continent (Mackinder, 1949); the second, geopolitical importance as a frontier line between Muslim, Confucian, and Christian worlds (Huntington, 1992); and the third, its huge reserves of natural resources, especially of oil and gas (Akiner, 1990; Zhoulamanov, 1995).

The results of this study are **significant** both in the theoretical and practical terms. Firstly, it was anticipated that the results would assist in the further understanding of the peculiarities of the foreign policy-making. Secondly, they would assess the perceptions of the perspective of international relations by local experts. Thirdly, they would provide the practical guidelines for developing cooperation between the Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan).

## Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to three newly independent Central Asian states: the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The selection of the three republics out of the five Central Asian countries was grounded on the following reasons:

- 1.1 these republics were integrated into Central Asian Union;
- 1.2 these republics promoted the most active foreign policy in the region;
- 1.3 these republics were the biggest countries of the region;

Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were excluded from the survey because of the following reasons:

- 1.4 Tajikistan was engaged in the civil war;
- 1.5 Turkmenistan's government pursued an isolationist policy.

2. The survey was also limited to the following organizations:
  - 2.1 State executive institutions (Ministries of Foreign Affairs, etc.);
  - 2.2 Universities (only the faculties of international relations, international economic relations, international law, etc.);
  - 2.3 Research institutes (the Institutes of Strategic Studies, etc.);
  - 2.4 State legislative institutions (Parliament);
  - 2.5 Mass media.

Although the research covers the majority of the most established institutions, not all research and training organizations were included in the list.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study was selected through three stages. At the first stage the researcher conducted a survey of the Central Asian mass media and he selected several institutions, which were the most important and influential in the Central Asian foreign policy formation. Also the researcher analyzed the current foreign policy debates in the region by assessing local mass media and academic publications and then he selected the most important issues for the Central Asian foreign policy making.

During the second stage, the researcher conducted qualitative interviews with Central Asian experts on foreign policy formation. During this stage the researcher clarified the structure and size of the analyzed institutions, obtained information on their research and other activities and clarified important issues in Central Asian foreign policy formation. Additionally at this stage, the questionnaire was pretested with a Center for Social research of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Science.

During the third stage the researcher selected Central Asian institutions for the survey study, improved the questionnaire and conducted the survey. The population of the study included 1669 staff members of different organizations and institutions whose work was related to the field of international relations. They were from three of

the newly independent Central Asian countries: the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The list was generated with the help of respective organizations who provided necessary information on their staff members.

## Sampling

The stratified-random proportional sampling technique was used to generate random samples. A sample size of 19 per cent was selected with the help of a computer program capable of generating random samples. This percentage was taken from the *Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population* designed by Krejcie and Morgan.<sup>1</sup> The organizations which participated in the study were the strata of sample (Tables 1.1-1.3). In total 317 individuals were selected randomly for the study (Table 1.4).

<sup>1</sup> Ronald R. Powell, *Basic Research Methodology for Librarians* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Pub., 1991), p. 75.

*Table 1.1  
Population of Kazakhstan*

Organization	Number
1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs	180
2) Kazakh National University (faculties of International Relations, International Economic Relations. etc.)	170
3) Kazakh National Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan	26
4) Institute for Development of Kazakhstan	40
5) Representatives of executive power	14
6) National High School of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan	14
7) Kainar University (faculties of International Relations & International Economic Relations)	60
8) Kazakh State University of Law (International Law)	70

\* . . . Numbering of strata is according to Tables 1-3.

\* . . . N here is a population of study

\*\* . . . n here is a sample of study

**Table 1.2**  
**Population of Kyrgyzstan**

Organization	Number
1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs	105
2) International University of Kyrgyzstan	80
3) Institute of Integration of International Programmes of Kyrgyz State National University	80
4) Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of Kyrgyzstan	23
5) Representatives of executive power	12
6) Bishkek Humanitarian University	80
7) Russian Kyrgyz (Slavonic) University (International Relations, International Scientific and Technological Centre)	60

**Table 1.3**  
**Population of Uzbekistan**

Organization	Number
1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs	190
2) Tashkent State Economy University (International Economic Relations, MBA, etc.)	85
3) University of World Economy and Diplomacy	100
4) Institute of Oriental Studies	80
5) Academy of Public and State Development under the President of Uzbekistan	90
6) Institute of Regional and Strategic Studies under the President of Uzbekistan	90
7) Parliament members	20

**Table 1.4**  
**Sample generation**

N=1669    n=317

r*	Kazakhstan		Kyrgyzstan		Uzbekistan	
	N**	n***	N	n	N	n
1)	180	35	105	20	190	36
2)	170	32	80	15	85	16
3)	26	5	80	15	100	19
4)	40	7	23	5	80	15
5)	14	3	12	3	90	17
6)	14	3	80	15	90	17
7)	60	11	60	11	20	4
8)	70	13	—	—	—	—
<b>Total:</b>	574	109	440	84	655	124

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire based survey method was chosen for the collection of data. The questionnaire was aimed at providing answers to all research questions, which were grouped as following:

- 1) developing a comparative analysis of the foreign policy making process in the Central Asian republics;
- 2) analyzing the personal input of the countries' leaders to the international politics of the respective republics (with a special focus on the decision making procedure in Central Asia);
- 3) evaluating the internal social and political perspective and consequences of the Central Asian republics' international politics;
- 4) finding out objections and difficulties in developing the democratic control mechanism of the Central Asian foreign policy-making process.

The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions. The first question was aimed at the personal input of the respondents into the formation of foreign policy of their respective countries. The next two questions sought information on the process of formation and realization of foreign policy and what groups have mostly influenced the process.

Two other questions were designed with a purpose to learn how well were the respondents informed about the process of foreign policy making in their countries and in the Central Asian region as a whole, and what were the main sources of such information. Two more questions were helpful in:

- 1) revealing the respondents' opinion about what qualities of the country's leader could have mostly affected the process of foreign policy formation;
- 2) determining the degree at which the foreign policy of the republic's depended on the leader.

Another question was on problems that could endanger the stability and security of the region. The next four questions were designed to obtain information on the possible ways of development: models of development, regional economic integration, and collaboration with other countries. Another question revealed the opinion of the respondents on measures that were needed in improvement of the foreign policy process of their countries. Two questions were

developed to learn how frequently the respondents were communicating with different professional groups in their professional activity and how they assessed these relations. The last segment of the questionnaire was devoted to the personal profile of the respondents when they were asked to indicate their age, race, gender, level of education, and profession/occupation.

The instrument mostly consisted of structured questions. The Likert and semantic-differential scales were used for most of the questions to get meaningful responses. (Appendix 3). The questionnaire was translated into Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek languages.

## Data Collection

The questionnaire, designed to collect data on the process of foreign policy formation in three Central Asian republics, was pre-tested in Kyrgyzstan in the National Academy of Science of the Kyrgyz Republic in December 1996 when five respondents filled in the questionnaire. Most of the responses collected during the pre-testing were according to expectation. Some good suggestions were received for improving the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed and collected personally by the researcher in the offices of the respondents and with the help of staff members of Center for Social Research in Kyrgyzstan. In Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan questionnaires were personally distributed by the researcher and staff members of the National Academy of Science of these republics.

A covering letter from the researcher, highlighting the significance of the study and instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire, accompanied it (Appendix 2). In Kyrgyzstan, the questionnaire was distributed during 20-29 January 1997 and 60 questionnaires were received back immediately. Twenty-five questionnaires were sent to the researcher by mail. In Kazakhstan, the questionnaires were distributed from 27 January until 2 February 1997 and forty of them were received back immediately. Twenty-six questionnaires were sent by mail. In Uzbekistan, the questionnaires were distributed between 3-9 February 1997 and 123 of them were received immediately. About 70 per cent, 223 questionnaires, were received back on 12 February 1997 and 28 came by the mail, which made a total of 251 questionnaires. Twelve of the received questionnaires were incomplete and, therefore, considered invalid so that finally 239 (75.4 per cent) questionnaires were prepared for analysis. The collected data was ana-

lyzed by using SPSS for Windows for descriptive statistics like frequencies, means, and cross tabulations.

## Respondent's Profiles

The population of the study covered three Central Asian Republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Forty-six valid questionnaires were received from Kazakhstan respondents, seventy-one from Kyrgyzstan, and one hundred twenty from Uzbekistan with two cases missing. This makes a total of 239 respondents. The republics were represented in the sample in the proportion shown in Figure 1.1. The sample of the study consisted of 156 male (66.1 per cent) and 78 female (33.1 per cent) respondents with three cases missing.

Figure 1.1  
*Respondents' Profile by Republics*  
N=239

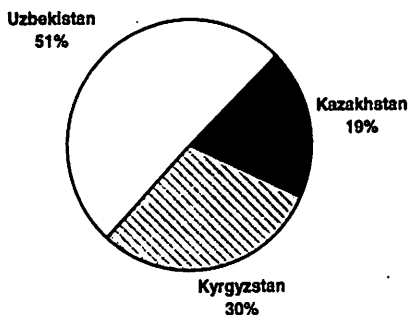


Table 1.5  
*Age Groups of the Respondents*  
N=239

Age Groups	Frequency	Percent
up to 20 years old	31	13.0
21-30 years old	85	35.7
31-40 years old	67	28.2
41-50 years old	37	15.5
above 51 years old	18	7.5
Missing	1	0.4
Total	239	100

Table 1.6  
*Ethnic Representation*  
 N=239

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Kazakhs	42	17.6
Kyrgyzs	53	22.3
Russians	25	10.5
Tajiks	6	2.5
Uzbeks	98	41.2
Missing	1	0.4
Other	14	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.7  
*Educational Level of the Respondents*  
 N=239

<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Not completed high education	60	25.1
Institute, university	65	27.2
Aspirantura	53	22.1
Doktorantura	24	10.1
High education in foreign relations	5	2.1
Continuing or professional courses	11	4.6
Continuing or professional courses	18	7.5
Missing	3	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.8  
*Occupation of the Respondents*  
 N=239

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Journalists	5	2.1
Staff of Ministry of Foreign Affairs	27	11.3
Scientist / Researcher	103	43.1
Member of the Parliament	12	5.0
Student	63	26.4
Other	28	11.7
Missing	1	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>100</b>

## APPENDIX 2

This questionnaire is administered as a part of a study conducted within the framework of a research on foreign policy formation in the Central Asia republics. The main purpose of the project is to analyze the problems of the foreign policy formation in three republics of Central Asia. The questionnaire is administered in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic. Respondents were selected randomly. Since the questionnaire is anonymous, there is no need to indicate your surname, name and patronymic. Results of the questionnaire will be analyzed with the help of a statistical computer program. The questions were translated into Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek languages. Please, select a language that most convenient for you.

We will appreciate if you answer all of the questions.

1. In your opinion, at what extent your abilities and professionalism are utilized in the formation of foreign policy of your republic?
  - highly
  - significantly
  - moderately
  - insignificantly
  - not utilized

2. What do you think, how successfully was foreign policy formed and realized in the following regions? Please check all the options according to the following scale:

*1 bad; 2 moderately; 3 good; 4 excellent*

Region	1	2	3	4
Kazakhstan				
Kyrgyzstan				
Uzbekistan				
Russia				
Central Asia				
CIS				

3. In your opinion, which of the following groups have the greatest influence on the formation of foreign policy in your republic? Please check each group according to the following scale:

*1 does not influence; 2 influences insignificantly; 3 influences significantly; 4 influences greatly*

Group	1	2	3	4
Mass media				
Presidential office				
Ministry of Foreign Affairs				
Parliament				
Academy of science, universities (scientists and researchers)				
Public opinion				
Other (Please indicate) .....				

4. Do you receive enough information on the foreign policy of your republic and Central Asian region as a whole?

Region	enough	moderately enough	not enough	do not know
in your republic				
in Central Asia				

5. What are the main sources of information on the foreign policy of your republic and Central Asian region as a whole? Please check only three options for each column.

Source	in your republic	in Central Asia
Mass media		
Parliament's hearings		
Presidential speeches		
Speeches by the Minister of Foreign Affairs		
Foreign mass media		
Friends/colleagues		
Other (please indicate) .....		

6. In your opinion, how do the following qualities of the leader of the republic affect the formation of foreign policy of your republic? Please check all the options according to the following scale:

1 does not affect; 2 affects insignificantly; 3 affects significantly; 4 affects greatly

Quality	1	2	3	4
Leadership abilities				
Theoretical knowledge of foreign relations				
Long experience in international relations				
Ability to synthesize theory and practice				
Ability to logically analyze a situation and find the only true solution				
Intuition				
Other (please indicate) .....				

7. In your opinion, to what degree does the formation of foreign policy depend on the republic's leader?

- depends completely on 100%
- depends on 75%
- depends on 50%
- depends on 25%
- does not depend
- other (please indicate) .....

8. Which of the following obstacles do you regard the most influential in the process of foreign policy formation? Please check only 3 options for each column:

Obstacle	in republic	in Central Asia
Lack of theoretical knowledge of international relations		
Too many theories and lack of practical deeds		
Lack of information on foreign policy		
Lack of coordination among the Central Asian republics		
Lack of professionals in the field of international relations		
Absence of experience in international arena		
Scientists and experts do not involved enough		
Other (Please indicate) .....		

9. What do you think, which of the following problems may threaten stability and security in your region?  
*Please check only 3 options:*

- internal social and political problems
- economic crisis and economic problems
- environmental issues
- threat of the war
- possibility of complications with the USA
- possibility of complications with Russia
- possibility of complications with China
- possibility of complications with Iran
- possibility of complications with Afghanistan
- possibility of complications with Turkey
- religious fundamentalism
- other (*please indicate*) .....

10. What models of development are most appropriate for your republic? *Please indicate only 2 options:*

- Turkish
- Japanese
- South Korean
- Russian
- German
- Newly Industrialized States (NIS) (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, etc.)
- Iranian
- Other (*please indicate*) .....

11. What do you think, how important is regional integration of the Central Asian republics? *Please check only 1 option.*

- highly important
- important
- integration is possible but not so important
- not important
- other (*please indicate*) .....

12. In your opinion, cooperation with which international organizations does mostly reflect the interests of your republics? *Please indicate only 3 options.*

- Commonwealth of Independent States
- Organization Islamic Conference
- European Security Organization
- Economic Cooperation Organization
- Union of Turkish Nations
- Central Asian Union
- Other (*please indicate*) .....

13. In your opinion, how important is collaboration with the following countries for the interests of your republic? Please check each country according to the following scale:

1 - not important; 2 - moderately important; 3 - important; 4 - very important

Country	1	2	3	4
Germany				
Russia				
The USA				
Japan				
Turkey				
China				
Iran				
Pakistan				
India				
Afghanistan				
Other (please indicate) .....				

14. In your opinion, what measures are needed for improvement of the process of the foreign policy formation in your republic? Please check only 3 options:

- improve education and training of personnel involved in the field of international relations
- intensify control from the Parliament
- increase *glasnost*
- involve more scientists and experts
- increase number of publications on international relations issues in mass media
- conduct more studies on foreign policy
- increase coordination between theorists and practitioners
- involve foreign consultants

15. How frequently do you communicate with the following groups during your professional activity? Please check all options according to the following scale:

1 - never; 2 - once in 6 -12 months; 3 - once in 3-5 months; 4 - once in 1-2 months; 5 - each week and more frequently

Groups	1	2	3	4	5
Mass media					
Ministry of Foreign Affairs					
International Department of the Presidential Office					
Scientists and researchers					
Parliament					
Public					
The Military and Security					
Other (please indicate) .....					

16. How do you assess your relations with the following groups during your professional activity? Please check only 3 options according to the following scale:

1 - unsatisfactory; 2 - satisfactory; 3 - good; 4 - excellent

Groups	1	2	3	4
Mass media				
Ministry of Foreign Affairs				
International Department of the Presidential Office				
Scientists and researchers				
Parliament				
Public				
The Military and Security				

Now please tell us about yourself:

17. Where do you live:

- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Uzbekistan

18. Gender:

- Male
- Female

19. Age:

- 20 and below
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51 and above

20. Your ethnic origin:

- Kazakh
- Kyrgyz
- Russian
- Tajik
- Uzbek
- Other (please indicate) .....

21. Your highest education:

- secondary / secondary special
- incomplete high
- undergraduate (institute/university)
- graduate (aspirantura)
- postgraduate (doktorantura)
- high special (in the field of international relations)
- high special (continuing education courses)
- high special (overseas continuing education courses)
- other (please indicate) .....

22. Your occupation/profession:

- journalist (mass media)
- personnel of the Foreign Affairs Ministry
- personnel of International department of the Presidential Office
- scientist/researcher
- member of the Parliament
- other (*please indicate*) .....

*Thank you for your help and cooperation.*

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