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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Case No.: 200701753

MAR 25 2010

I refer to your letter dated March 11, 2007 regarding the release of certain Department of State material under the Freedom of Information Act (Title 5 USC Section 552).

We searched for and reviewed the self study guides that you requested and have determined that all except one of them may be released. They are on the enclosed disc. One of the guides is being released with excisions.

An enclosure provides information on Freedom of Information Act exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made excisions, the applicable exemptions are marked on each document. With respect to material withheld by the Department of State, you have the right to appeal our determination within 60 days. A copy of the appeals procedures is enclosed.

We have now completed the processing of your case. If you have any questions, you may write to the Office of Information Programs and Services, SA-2, Department of State, Washington, DC 20522-8100, or telephone us at (202) 261-8484. Please be sure to refer to the case number shown above in all correspondence about this case.

We hope that the Department has been of service to you in this matter.

Sincerely,

for Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures:
As stated.

63934 Federal Register/Vol. 69, No. 212
Rules and Regulations

Subpart F – Appeal Procedures

§171.52 Appeal of denial of access to, declassification of, amendment of, accounting of disclosures of, or challenge to classification of records.

(a) *Right of administrative appeal.* Except for records that have been reviewed and withheld within the past two years or are the subject of litigation, any requester whose request for access to records, declassification of records, amendment of records, accounting of disclosure of records, or any authorized holder of classified information whose classification challenge has been denied, has a right to appeal the denial to the Department's Appeals Review Panel. This appeal right includes the right to appeal the determination by the Department that no records responsive to an access request exist in Department files. Privacy Act appeals may be made only by the individual to whom the records pertain.

(b) *Form of appeal.* There is no required form for an appeal. However, it is essential that the appeal contain a clear statement of the decision or determination by the Department being appealed. When possible, the appeal should include argumentation and documentation to support the appeal and to contest the bases for denial cited by the Department. The appeal should be sent to: Chairman, Appeals Review Panel, c/o Appeals Officer, A/GIS/IPS/PP/LC, U.S. Department of State, SA-2, Room 8100, Washington, DC 20522-8100.

(c) *Time limits.* The appeal should be received within 60 days of the date of receipt by the requester of the Department's denial. The time limit for response to an appeal begins to run on the day that the appeal is received. The time limit (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) for agency decision on an administrative appeal is 20 days under the FOIA (which may be extended for up to an additional 10 days in unusual circumstances) and 30 days under the Privacy Act (which the Panel may extend an additional 30 days for good cause shown). The Panel shall decide mandatory declassification review appeals as promptly as possible.

(d) *Notification to appellant.* The Chairman of the Appeals Review Panel shall notify the appellant in writing of the Panel's decision on the appeal. When the decision is to uphold the denial, the Chairman shall include in his notification the reasons therefore. The appellant shall be advised that the decision of the Panel represents the final decision of the Department and of the right to seek judicial review of the Panel's decision, when applicable. In mandatory declassification review appeals, the Panel shall advise the requester of the right to appeal the decision to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel under §3.5(d) of E.O. 12958.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

(b)(1) Withholding specifically authorized under an Executive Order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, and properly classified. E.O. 12958, as amended, includes the following classification categories:

- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
- 1.4(b) Foreign government information
- 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
- 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
- 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
- 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(h) Information on weapons of mass destruction

(b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency

(b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:

ARMEX	Arms Export Control Act, 22 USC 2778(e)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g)
EXPORT	Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 App. USC 2411(c)(1)
FSA	Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4003 & 4004
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f)
IRAN	Iran Claims Settlement Act, Sec 505, 50 USC 1701, note

(b)(4) Privileged/confidential trade secrets, commercial or financial information from a person

(b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product

(b)(6) Information that would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy

(b)(7) Information compiled for law enforcement purposes that would:

- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
- (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
- (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- (D) disclose confidential sources
- (E) disclose investigation techniques
- (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual

(b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions

(b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request, excised with the agreement of the requester

CENTRAL ASIA
SELF-STUDY GUIDE

GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER
School of Professional and Area Studies
Foreign Service Institute
U.S. Department of State

SELF-STUDY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ASIA

The **Self-Study Guide:** Central Asia is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Central Asia's history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The Guide should serve an introductory self-study resource.

The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced, using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service

Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this Guide was prepared by. Dr. Sergei Gretsky, Chair, Central Asian Studies, Area Studies Division, Foreign Service Institute.

The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessary reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Dr.Gretsky.

All sources used for graphics and extended quotes are from the public domain, from sites that explicitly say “can be used for non-profit or educational use,” or are from the author’s own materials.

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First Edition
August 2002

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All photos courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United States

CHRONOLOGY

5th century B.C.	Bactria and Sogd are major states in Central Asia. Bukhara and Maraqanda (Samarqand) emerge as important centers of trade on the Silk Road.
329 B.C.	Alexander the Great captures Maraqanda (Samarqand)
750 A.D.	Arabs complete conquest of Central Asia.
8th-9th centuries	Golden age of Central Asia. Bukhara becomes a cultural center of Muslim world.
1219-1225	Mongols conquer Central Asia, intensifying its Turkification and reducing Iranian influence.
1380-1405	Timur unifies Mongol holdings in Central Asia. Flowering of arts and sciences under the Timurids.
1501-1510	Uzbek nomadic tribes conquer Central Asia and establish Khanate (later Emirate) of Bukhara.
1511	Khan Qasym unites Kazakh tribes.
1700	Khanate of Quqon is established in the Ferghana Valley.
1726	Kazakh Khan Abul Khair seeks Russian protection from the Kalmyks, beginning Russian permanent presence in Central Asia.
1865-1868	Russian conquest of Central Asia and the establishment of the Turkestani Govenorship-General with the capital in Tashkent. Emirate of Bukhara and Khannate of Khiva become Russian protectorates.
1917	Bolshevik revolution
1918-1920	Bolsheviks establish Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within Soviet Russia. They capture Bukhara and Khiva and proclaim them People's Republics. Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic is established (included modern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan).
1920s-1930s	Basmachi opposition movement.
1924-1925	National and territorial delimitation of Central Asia: Soviet Socialist Republics of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are established. Tajikistan becomes an autonomous republic within Uzbekistan.
1929	Tajikistan becomes a Soviet Socialist Republic.
1936	Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan become Soviet Socialist Republics.
1985-1991	Policy of perestroika under Soviet leader Gorbachev brings out national and Islamic revival in Central Asia.
1991	The breakup of the Soviet Union. Central Asian republics become independent states.
1992-1997	Civil war in Tajikistan.
Late 1990s-present	Rise of authoritarian regimes and Islamic extremism in Central Asia.

GEOGRAPHY

Central Asia is a relatively recent geographical and political term. Historically, the region was known to the world as Russian (Western) Turkestan, Inner Asia, Mowarranahr, and Transoxania (Transoxus). After the national and territorial delimitation of 1924-25 it became known as Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Only since their independence in 1991 the five states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan became collectively known as Central Asia though a number of scholars argue that the geographical term should also include Afghanistan and Xinjiang province of the People's Republic of China (also known as Eastern Turkestan).

Central Asia borders on Russia, China, Afghanistan, Iran, and Azerbaijan (across the Caspian Sea). Its total area is 1,542,240 square miles, which is a little less than half of the area of the contiguous United States. Kazakhstan is by far the largest country in the region, its total area being 1,049,151 square miles (2,717,300 square kilometers). Next comes Turkmenistan (188,456 sq. mi. or 488,100 sq km), followed by Uzbekistan (172,741 sq. mi. or 447,400 sq km), Kyrgyzstan (76,641 sq. mi. or 198,500 sq km), and Tajikistan (55,251 sq. mi. or 143,100 sq km). All the five states are landlocked with Uzbekistan being a double-landlocked country.

The climate can be broadly described as continental with cold winters (temperatures range from - 42°F to -49° F) and hot summers (temperatures reach up to 104° F in the shade in the southernmost parts of the region). In the Ferghana Valley, shared by Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the climate is subtropical and in the Qaraqum desert it is subtropical desert. In the high Tien Shan Mountains of Kyrgyzstan and Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan it is polar.

The region is divided into four topographic zones – steppe, i.e., prairie, (northern Kazakhstan), semi-desert (roughly, the rest of Kazakhstan), desert (Turkmenistan, parts of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) and mountain (there are mountains in all the states, ranging from low in Turkmenistan to high in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). The vast majority of the surface area is desert lowland. The two great sand deserts are the ***Qaraqum*** (black sand) desert, south of the Aral Sea between the Caspian and the Amu Darya, and the ***Qyzylqum*** (red sand) desert, stretching from the Aral Sea to the Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan. Deserts make 80 percent of Turkmenistan's and Uzbekistan's territory while 93 percent of Tajikistan's territory is mountaneous where the Pamir-Alay mountain system dominates the landscape. The highest point of the system is ***Mount Ismail Somoni*** (formerly Communism Peak) which at 7, 496 meters is the highest elevation in the former Soviet Union. The mountain ranges are nearly barren, but contain significant enormous and accessible water reserves. In certain areas it is possible to grow cereal grains on the lower slopes of the mountains without irrigation though fruit and vegetables and commodity crops like cotton require it.

Mountain ranges of Central Asia

The two most important rivers of Central Asia are ***Amu Darya*** and ***Syr Darya***. The name of the region in ancient (Transoxania or Transoxus) and medieval (Mowarranahr), which both mean "the other side of the river" in Latin and Arabic correspondingly, derives from Amu Darya which in antiquity was called ***Oxus***. The total length of Amu Darya, which rises in the Pamir Mountains in Tajikistan and flows along the Tajik-Afghan border into Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is 2,540 kilometers (1,580 miles). The total length of Syr Darya (ancient ***Jaxartes***), which rises in Kyrgyzstan and flows into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, is 2,200 kilometers (1,370 miles). The three largest bodies of water in the region are the Aral Sea, the Caspian Sea, and Lake Ysyk Köl. Aral and Caspian are saltwater lakes, or inland seas. The Caspian Sea is the world's largest inland body of water with the territory of 371,000 square kilometers (143,000 square miles). The Aral Sea used to be the fourth largest but by 1993 had lost 60 percent of its 66,458 sq km (25,660 sq mi) territory in 1960 as the inflow from its two tributaries, Amu Darya and Syr Darya, stopped due to the increased irrigation and other reasons. It has subsequently broken into 3 unconnected segments and created huge environmental and health problems for the entire region. The water level in the Caspian Sea has been rising since the late 1970s, flooding lands in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Major oil and gas fields are located off its shores in the Kazakh and Turkmen sectors.

Lake Ysyk Köl is one of the world's largest mountain lakes located at altitude of 1,607

meters (5,273 ft) in the Tian Shan Mountains in northeastern Kyrgyzstan. It has an area of about 6,100 sq km (2,360 sq mi). Increased irrigation and other factors have caused a decline in the lake's level which has dropped about 10 meters (27 feet) since 1850. It is famous as a resort and a torpedo testing site in the Soviet era.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- What are the political and economic implications of the landlocked position of Central Asian states?
- In what extent has the desiccation of the Aral Sea affected lives of Central Asians?
- What are the prospects for further agricultural development in the region in light of the Aral Sea problem?

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POPULATION

Ethnic composition of Central Asia reflects its rich history of lying at the crossroads of various conquerors who passed through the region from all directions, starting with Alexander the Great and ending with the Russians. The original population of ancient Central Asia belonged to the East Iranian tribes. During the sixth century A.D. they were largely dislodged by the nomadic Turks who came from the northwest. Small numbers of Arabs and Persians date back to the eighth century when they brought Islam into the region. Yet Turkic expansion into Central Asia continued in a number of waves resulting, by the eleventh century, in their domination of the region. Sedentary Central Asian Iranians remained, primarily in the cities, including the most important such as Bukhara and Samarqand. In the eighth century, they coalesced into a

single group known as the Tajiks which makes them the longest established ethnicity in the region.

The conquest of the region by Genghiz Khan in the thirteenth century added the Mongolian element to the ethnogenesis of modern Central Asians. In the fifteenth century, a split in the confederation of Uzbek tribes led to the emergence of two distinct ethnic groups – the Kazakhs and the Uzbeks. Around the same time the Turkmen appear as a separate entity. The Kyrgyz are the oldest Turkic ethnic group in the region, dating its origin back to the twelfth century.

Though the number of tribes, making each of the Turkic nations, varied reaching ninety-two with the Uzbeks, some of them were shared by at least two ethnicities. This applied primarily to the Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz, and the Uzbeks which illustrates their common origins. Among the most important common tribes were ***Barlas, Karluk, Kipchak, Kungrat, Mangyt, Naiman,*** etc. The division of Central Asians into the current five major nationalities – Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Turkmen, and Uzbeks – is a relatively recent and arbitrary. It was a result of the Bolshevik nationalities policy and dates back to the national and territorial delimitation of the region in 1924-25. Prior to that self-identification was mostly related to tribal or regional affiliation as well as based on nomad versus sedentary status.

The influx of the Russians into the region began in the nineteenth century, though the first settlements of the Russian Cossaks in what is now Kazakhstan appeared in the eighteenth century. The Russian population increased during economic reforms of the beginning of the twentieth century with Russians settling mostly in the Kazakh and Kyrgyz lands. Mass immigration of Russians and other European nationalities began after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution and continued through the Soviet period. It peaked during the 1950s-1960s ***Virgin Lands*** campaign of agricultural development in Kazakhstan and industrial development of the region in the 1960s and 1970s associated with importation of the needed labor from outside region. In late perestroika and first years of independence, there was a large outflow of Russians and other Europeans from the region, especially in the wake of the Tajik civil war.

The current ethnic composition and other vital population statistics are as follows for each country individually (as of July 2001 unless indicated otherwise):

Kazakhstan. *Population*: 16,731,303. *Ethnic groups*: Kazakh 53.4 percent, Russian 30

percent, Ukrainian 3.7 percent, Uzbek 2.5 percent, German 2.4 percent, Uighur percent, other 6.6 percent (1999 census). *Age structure*: *0-14 years:* 26.73 percent (male 2,271,866; female 2,200,078); *15-64 years:* 66.03 percent (male 5,358,535; female 5,688,550); *65 years and over:* 7.24 percent (male 412,761; female 799,513). *Population growth rate*: 0.03 percent. *Net migration rate*: -6.43 migrant(s)/1,000 population. *Life expectancy*: 63.29 years.

Kyrgyzstan. *Population*: 4,753,003. *Ethnic groups*: Kyrgyz 52.4 percent, Russian 18 percent, Uzbek 12.9 percent, Ukrainian 2.5 percent, German 2.4 percent, other 11.8 percent. *Age structure*: *0-14 years:* 35.03 percent (male 841,029; female 823,723); *15-64 years:* 58.83 percent (male 1,369,842; female 1,426,522); *65 years and over:* 6.14 percent (male 110,340; female 181,547. *Population growth rate*: 1.44 percent. *Net migration rate*: -2.66 migrant(s)/1,000 population. *Life expectancy*: 63.46 years.

Tajikistan. *Population*: 6,578,681. *Ethnic groups*: Tajik 64.9 percent, Uzbek 25 percent, Russian 3.5 percent, other 6.6 percent. *Age structure*: *0-14 years:* 41.18 percent (male 1,367,194; female 1,341,967); *15-64 years:* 54.22 percent (male 1,773,605; female 1,793,345); *65 years and over:* 4.6 percent (male 131,009; female 171,561). *Population growth rate*: 2.12 percent. *Net migration rate*: -3.49 migrant(s)/1,000 population. *Life expectancy*: 64.18 years.

Turkmenistan. *Population*: 4,603,244. *Ethnic groups*: Turkmen 77 percent, Uzbek 9.2 percent, Russian 6.7 percent, Kazakh 2 percent, other 5.1 percent (1995). *Age structure*: *0-14 years:* 37.88 percent (male 891,758; female 852,104); *15-64 years:* 58.09 percent (male 1,313,303; female 1,360,690); *65 years and over:* 4.03 percent (male 70,800; female 114,589). *Population growth rate*: 1.85 percent. *Net migration rate*: -1.04 migrant(s)/1,000 population. *Life expectancy*: 61 years.

Uzbekistan. *Population*: 25,155,064. *Ethnic groups*: Uzbek 80 percent, Russian 5.5 percent, Tajik 5 percent, Kazakh 3 percent, Karakalpak 2.5 percent, Tatar 1.5 percent, other 2.5 percent (1996). *Age structure*: *0-14 years:* 36.32 percent (male 4,646,341; female 4,489,265); *15-64 years:* 59.06 percent (male 7,351,908; female 7,504,626); *65 years and over:* 4.62 percent (male 466,029; female 696,895). *Population growth rate*: 1.6 percent. *Net migration rate*: -2.06 migrant(s)/1,000 population. *Life expectancy*: 63.81 years.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- What are the major ethnic elements that provided the foundation for modern Central Asian ethnic groups?
- How did Russian colonization and Soviet economic policy influence the ethnic composition of Central Asian states?

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HISTORY

History of the region can be divided into five periods: ancient (ending in 8th century AD), medieval and early modern (8th-18th centuries), Russian colonization (18th- early 20th centuries), Soviet rule (1921-1991), independent (1991 – to present).

Ancient period

Ancient history of the region was based on Iranian civilization and lasted from the rise of the first known oases to the Arab conquest in the 8th century AD. In this period, the fabled "Silk Road," linking China to the Mediterranean cultures, began to prosper. The most civilized part was centered in Sogd or Sogdiana, corresponding roughly to the area between the two most important rivers of the region – Amu Darya and Syr Darya. Later, the Arabs called this area Mawarranahr (the land beyond the river) which became the name for the entire region. Transoxania is Latin translation of the name. The people of Sogd belonged to Eastern Iranian ethnicity and their capital of Sogdiana was the city of Maraqanda which stood in the place where modern Samarqand does.

One of the highlights of the early Central Asian history was the arrival of Alexander the Great in 330-327 B.C. It generated a fierce resistance on the part of the Sogdians who nonetheless named a lake after the conqueror: Lake Iskanderkul is located in modern Tajikistan. Alexander, who tried to fuse Greek and Asian cultures in part by marrying his officers to Asian wives, himself married Roxana, a daughter of a local nobleman. Later, in 1st century AD, southern Central Asia became part of the Kushan Empire with the center in modern Peshawar (Pakistan). The borders of the Kushan Empire stretched from Amu Darya to Ganges. By the time of the invasion of Turkic tribes in 6th century, ancient civilizations fall into decay.

The Turkic empire was divided into two parts – eastern and western. Central Asia was part of the western Turkic empire centered in Semirechye (territory between Chu and Talas rivers). The only exception was the territory of modern Turkmenistan which was part of the Sassanian Empire. The region was organized into a number of small states, the most powerful with the capital in Samarqand. The dominant religions of ancient Central Asia were Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Zoroastrianism.

The head of Alexander the Great. 3rd century B.C.

One of the most important developments that happened at the time of the Kushan Empire was the emergence of the Silk Road. Through the centuries economies of Central Asia became closely connected with the ancient Greece and Rome as well as with China, India, and other parts of Asia. So, it was only natural that Central Asia became the crossroads of transcontinental caravan routes connecting China with the ports of the eastern Mediterranean, and, by way of branch roads, with India in the south and the Urals and the Black Sea ports in the north. Central Asians became the principal agents in this commercial exchange which gave a distinctive mercantile character to their civilization. The goods that were traded included silk, gold and silver coins, glass, carved gems, iron, fabrics, etc.

Medieval and early modern period

It is believed that the Arab conquest stopped the region from being colonized by the Chinese. The Arabs themselves looked on Central Asia as a province rested from the Chinese whose defeat in the battle at the Talas River in 751 put an effective end to their encroachments into the region.

The Arabs arrived in Central Asia in 704 and by 715 the region came under their rule. Despite the preservation of the existing dynasties as the vehicle of local administration the actual authority belonged to the ***wali***, an official appointed by the Arabs. Resistance to the Arab conquest was fierce and ended only with the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750. The Abbasids espoused the policy of racial equality of Muslims unlike their predecessors, the Umayyads, who treated non-Arabs as second-class Muslims despite the Quranic injunction of equality of all believers before God. It may due to such perception of non-Arabs that Islam was not spread by the sword. Conversion proceeded peacefully and mainly through Muslim traders who propagated Islam primarily as a way of life, not as a dogmatic faith.

The nobles. Mural in a Afrasiayb (Samarqand) palace. 7th-8th centuries.

The rise of the Abbasids led to the creation of the Samanid state with the capital in Bukhara. It was the last state headed by Central Asians of Iranian stock. In 999, the Samanid dynasty was overthrown by the Karakhanids, who were the first in a long line of various Turkic dynasties that with brief intervals ruled the region until the arrival of the Russians in the 18th century. One such interval was the Mongol conquest. Genghiz Khan's troops reached Central Asia in 1219 through the cleft between the Pamir proper and the Tian-Shan mountains at a height of over 13,000 feet.

Mausoleum of the Samanids. Bukhara. 9th-10th centuries.

Contrary to popular perceptions, the Mongols did not destroy everything on their way though they usually slaughtered four-fifth of the population, leaving a civilian, usually a Persian or an Uighur, to administer the remainder. Yet their conquest changed the balance of power between the nomad and settled regions in favor of the former. Genghiz Khan introduced Yasa, a codified law based on the combination of Mongol tribal customary practice and Muslim precepts, which is lost to history. The Turkicization of the Mongols began long before they adopted Islam. In an interesting twist of history the literary Turkic language that developed at the time in the region was named after Genghiz's second son, Chagatai, who inherited part of Central Asia at his father's death, despite his hostility toward Islam and its culture.

In 1395, Amir Timur (Timurlane, 1336-1405) defeats Toktamysh, khan of the Golden Horde, which marks the end of Mongol rule in Central Asia. Timur sought to combine the elements of the Turko-Mongol political and military system with the elements of Muslim, mainly Persian, culture. His son's rule is considered to be the golden age of Persian literature and art. Under his grandson, Ulugh Beg, who himself was a famous

astronomer, there was a genuine flourishing of the arts and sciences in Samarqand and Bukhara.

In the first two decades of the 15th century, two new confederations of nomadic Turkic tribes are formed in Central Asia: the Nogai Horde (a union of Kipchak tribes between the Ural and Volga rivers) and the Uzbek Khanate, also known as Dashti-Qipchaq, which controlled the steppe from the headwaters of the Syr Darya river basin to the Aral Sea and north to the Irtysh river. At the beginning of the 16th century, the Uzbeks, led by Shaibani Khan (1451- 1510), conquered the Timurid possessions and established the Uzbek Khannate (later Emirate) of Bukhara. Babur, the last Timurid ruler, was forced to flee to India where he founded the Mogul Empire in 1526. Shaibani Khan clashed with and ultimately was killed by Ismail Safavid, who changed Iranians denomination from Sunnism to Shiism. As a result, Central Asia became separated and effectively secluded from the Middle Eastern Muslim world until its independence in 1991. Another important reason was the decline of the Silk Road in wake of the development of maritime routes between the Far East and Europe.

Shaibani invasion and rivalry over succession within the Uzbek Khanate itself led to its disintegration into three groups – Siberian Uzbek, Uzbek -Shaibanid, Uzbek – Kazakh. Kazakhs went on to form their own state, Kazakh confederation under Khan Khaqq Nazar in the second half of the 16th century. The confederation proved to be short-lived and soon split into three hordes or ***zhuz*** (hundred) which were more temporary military alliances than based on the principle of consanguinity. The Great zhuz controlled the territory of Semirechye, the Middle was based in what today is central Kazakhstan, and the Lesser zhuz in western Kazakhstan. Khan Teuke is said to have reunited the zhuzes under his control in 1680-1718. The union lasted until the submission of the Lesser zhuz to Russian rule in 1731 when Khan Abul Khair, unable to stop the Kalmyk invasion, swore allegiance to the Russian crown to escape defeat.

Russian colonization

Modern history of Central Asia coincides by and large with the Russian conquest. Though the first encroachments into the Kazakh steppes began in the 16th century, the Russians did not develop plans of colonizing the region until the beginning of the 19th century. Peter the Great, who died in 1725, planned for having a defended line of communications rather than conquer the entire region.

Inclusion of the Lesser zhuz into the Empire did not stop the Russian Cossaks from advancing further into the Steppe which led to the Kazakhs' frequent raiding of Russian settlements. As a result, in the reign of Nicholas I (1825-55), the Kazakhs gradually found themselves enveloped in lines of Russian fortifications. Its advance across the Kazakh steppe brought Russia into direct contact with the Khannates of Khiva (established in the 16th century) and Qoqand (established in 1700 in the Ferghana valley). The two khanates as well as the Emirate of Bukhara by then were weak states with ill-defined borders until the rise of the three tribes turned dynasties at the end of the 18th century – Mangyt in Bukhara, Ming in Khiva, and Qungrad in Quqand – who revived and centralized them. The absence of recognized borders, which put the three states into constant conflicts with each other and their neighbors Afghanistan, China, and Persia, now became a problem Russia had to deal with as well.

Russian response – territorial conquest – was more a product of decision-making by the local military commanders and civilian officials then a policy formulated in St. Petersburg. In 1817 and 1839-40, the Russians attempted to conquer Khiva but were defeated. Another twenty-five years would pass before the Russian troops would capture Tashkent, an important commercial center and a convenient geographic location to launch further attacks deeper into the region. Armed resistance was negligible as local armies lacked experience and weaponry of modern warfare and unity to jointly fight the common enemy. The only significant battle the Russians fought in Central Asia was the battle of Geok Teppe in 1881 against the Tekke Turkmen who demonstrated fierce resistance.

In 1867, the Turkestani Governorship-General was established with the capital in Tashkent followed by the establishment of the Steppe Governorship-General with jurisdiction over the Kazakh territories. The distinct feature of the Turkestani Governoship-General was that unlike any other administrative unit of the Russian Empire it was administered by the Ministry of War, not Internal Affairs, which meant that administrators at all levels were the military. The Russians conquered Khannate of Qoqand by 1876 but stopped short of capturing Bukhara and Khiva, instead reducing them to protectorates.

St. Petersburg, lacking both personnel and the funds to governing its new possessions, largely delegated responsibility for local matters, such as, e.g., justice, taxation, irrigation, to native self-government. Central Asians were legally classified as ***inorodtsi***

(aborigines) and had neither the full rights nor the same obligations as the tsar's other subjects. They were exempt from conscription and there were no native auxiliary units, though a small number of the elites received Russian titles and military ranks.

At the same time, Russian rule brought a number of important social changes. In sedentary areas, the warrior elites disappeared which led to the growing importance of the ***ulama***, Muslim clergy and scholars, the formation of a new class of wealthy merchants, and monetized economy. The introduction of elections for administrative positions undermined traditional elites. In addition, the Statute of 1886 granted property rights in land to those who cultivated it which was a blow to the economic power of the tribal chiefs, though ***waqf*** (endowed) lands belonging to mosques were not touched. The Russians abolished slavery, the slave trade, torture, corporal and capital punishment.

Reception of Russian officers at the Bukhara Court. Late 19th century.

Migration of the Russian population into Central Asia began with the adoption of Resettlement act of 1889 which offered land allotments, tax exemptions, and interest-

free loans to peasant colonists though it still required a permission to migrate. Colonists settled mostly in the Steppe Governorship-General which led to the reduction of acreage reserved for the use of Kazakhs. The construction of the Transcaspian railroad (1880-1), extended in 1885 to Bukhara and Samarqand, and of the Orenburg-Tashkent railroad in 1906 led to the growth in cotton production for the Russian market. St. Petersburg stimulated that development, which would give Central Asian agriculture a distinctively monoculture character later in the twentieth century, by imposing in 1887 a protective tariff on foreign cotton. By 1911, Central Asian cotton was supplying half the total needs of Russia's textile industry. The growth of local industry was limited: The ginning and spinning of cotton fiber and extraction of oil from cotton seed accounted for 85% of Turkestan's total industrial production in 1914. Native population was employed primarily as un- or semi-skilled workers.

Russification of Central Asians was limited as Russian officials believed that superiority of the Russian culture will naturally lead Central Asians to abandon their believes and traditions. Earlier on St. Petersburg made a distinction between the nomad and sedentary population, favoring the former as less "fanatic" due to their superficial adherence to Islam and hence more prone to Russian influence. In line with this policy, Russian schools were the only supported by the state, a very limited number of these schools was opened, and in the Steppe Governorship-General they outnumbered the ones in Turkestan: By 1913, there were 157 Russian schools in the Steppe Governorship-General with the native population of 3.3 mln and 89 schools in Turkistan with the native population of 5.1 mln. ***Jadids***, Central Asian enlighteners cum modernizers of the end of the 19th-beginning of the 20th centuries, who sought to open modern secular schools and institute political and social reforms in the region, were equally persecuted and feared by the local elites and clergy and the Russians.

The end of the Russian colonial rule in Central Asia was marked by a chain of rebellions caused by the June 25, 1916 decree which ordered the mobilization of a half a million Central Asians for military service on the front lines of WWI. Tsarist authorities failed to explain the change in the draft policy. As a result of the unrest, many Russian civilians were killed and about 9,000 farmsteads were destroyed. Native losses far exceeded those of the Russians and large numbers of Central Asians were forced to flee Xinjiang, Persia, and Afghanistan. The new Governor-General of Turkestan proposed a host of measures: More administrators, greater responsibility for the welfare of the natives, greater protection for the land rights of nomads and peasants

who fell deeply into debt; subsidized grain imports but they were not implemented because of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.

Soviet period

The Bolshevik revolution did not bring independence to Central Asia, partly because there were no organized groups or movements which demanded it. A few that existed, e.g., Kazakh ***Alash Orda***, demanded – and sometimes proclaimed (Alash Orda, May 1917; Qoqand, December 1917) – autonomy within the Russian Federation. Other demands included the end to planting cotton, which was viewed as a colonial crop, redistribution of the confiscated lands, etc. Soviet power was proclaimed in Tashkent a week before the Bolshevik revolution. The government which was formed after the revolution, Turkestani Council of People's Commissars, practically excluded Central Asians and ignored their demands. It moved to suppress any display of independence by the locals, including the sacking of Qoqand in February 1918. In 1920, the Bolsheviks moved even further: In their quest for the world revolution, they sent the Red Army to abolish the Emirate of Bukhara and Khannate of Khiva, proclaiming both People's republics. The same year, Kyrgyz (Kazakh) autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Russian Federation was established. On April 11, 1921, Soviet Turkestan, by the decree of the All-Russian Central Exedcutive Committee, entered the RSFSR.

Excesses of Bolshevik rule and the "Red terror" tactics used to implement their policies led to the rise of an organized opposition known as the ***Basmachi*** movement. The movement was not coherent ideologically nor was it unified except for a brief period in 1921-1922 when Enver Pasha, son-in-law of the last Ottoman sultan, became its supreme commander. Yet it enjoyed popular support, especially among the peasantry who wanted a return to the old ways and thus were susceptible to the Islamist propaganda, eventually making dominant the conservative faction. Punitive raids against the Basmachis were not successful and only intensified the hostility toward the Bolsheviks. Only when Moscow changed its tactics and adopted conciliatory policies, which included restoration of Sharia courts, waqf property, inclusion of the natives in the government and the Red Army corps, etc., were the Bolsheviks able to achieve a turn around which was also helped by internal bickering within the Basmachi movement itself. Yet pockets of Basmachi resistance continued to exist into the 1930s.

After consolidating their power the Bolsheviks launched a campaign of modernization

and sweeping transformation known as industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, and cultural revolution. It began with the administrative reconfiguration of the region following the creation of the Soviet Union in 1922 and known as national and territorial delimitation of 1924-1925. As a result of delimitation, Turkestan Autonomous Republic and nominally independent republics of Bukhara and Khworezm (Khiva) were abolished. Instead, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) and Tajik Autonomous Republic within Uzbekistan were created. Kyrgyzstan became an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation. The status of Kazakhstan did not change. Tajikistan became a full SSR in 1929, followed by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1936. Delimitation and creation of new nations was done without too much regard for self-identification of the population, leaving substantial numbers of ethnic groups outside the borders of the newly created republics bearing their names.

Learning to read. 1920s.

Soviet policy toward Central Asia can best be described by Martin Spechler's term "welfare colonialism." In economic and social spheres, the aim was to achieve

equalization with the more developed European parts of the Soviet Union. This was achieved through capital transfers, return of the entire proceeds from the republics' turnover tax instead of the standard one-fourth, allowing more private initiative, especially in agriculture and housing), personnel appointments, affirmative action-style education policy when Central Asians had quotas in the best universities of the Soviet Union, etc. At the same time, economic development of the region remained skewed. Central Asian economy largely remained agricultural as well as a source of raw material for the Soviet economy. Cotton production was given even greater importance at the expense of grain and fruit, resulting in severe environmental (desiccation of the Aral Sea) and health problems. Before the Bolshevik revolution two-thirds of the sown irrigated area was given up to grain, the Soviets reduced it to about 10 %. About 90% of cotton was exported as raw fiber to the European part of the Soviet Union. The 1950s Virgin lands campaign in Kazakhstan to increase locally grown wheat through the increase of sown area was only partially successful as the yields were less than expected. Agricultural reforms of the 1920s-1930s, which abolished private property on land, had a dramatic effect on Central Asian nomads, primarily Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, who were forced to settle. As a result, a million of Kazakhs perished and thousands fled to Xinjiang. This was accompanied by a significant reduction of herds.

For a long time industrial development centered around cotton production and the main industries were cotton ginning, the production of cotton-picking machines, fertilizers, cottonseed oil, and textiles for local markets. Only when during WWII a large number of industrial enterprises were evacuated, primarily to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, did industrialization and urbanization of Central Asia began. Yet the evacuated enterprises came with the refugee manpower which had a number of important consequences: Central Asian cities became heavily Russified; skilled labor remained primarily European and the need for skilled labor was satisfied mainly through importation from outside the region; enterprises belonged to the Soviet military-industrial complex and fell into the "All-Union subordination" category which put them under Moscow's direct jurisdiction. Post-WWII industrial development also focused on natural resource extraction and their partial local processing, including oil, coal, gas, ores and others minerals (uranium for the first Soviet A-bomb came from Tajikistan), etc. Hydro-electric power production also became important.

Political structure of Soviet Central Asia reflected the structure of the communist party-state. Each of the republics had its own communist party, which was a branch of the

Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), its own parliament called the Supreme Soviet, and its government called the Council of Ministers. Despite nominal sovereignty of the constituent republics and the federal character of the Soviet state, all power belonged to Moscow and was concentrated in the hands of the Politburo of the CPSU. Yet Moscow always appointed natives into key local positions to give semblance of native rule. Before WWII, given the lack of educated native cadres the Bolsheviks had to rely on the Jadids and the members of Alash Orda, Young Bukharans and other pre-revolutionary political parties and groups. They were all purged by Joseph Stalin in the 1930s and replaced by the new elites who were the products of the Soviet system and CPSU training schools. That has not changed the level of trust in Moscow as it introduced the position of a second secretary of the local communist party, usually filled by a Russian or a fellow Slav, to watch over local leaders and the implementation of Moscow's policies. Heads of most important departments of central committees of local communist parties, legislatures, and governments were also usually non-local cadres. Throughout the Soviet period only two Central Asians were members of the Politburo. On their part, Central Asians viewed membership in the CPSU instrumentally, as an opportunity for social advancement.

Perestroika, reforms introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985-1991, affected Central Asia in a number of ways. Republics were encouraged to take more initiative in matters of economic development as capital transfers from Moscow decreased. Political reforms led to the emergence of alternative political parties and groups against the backdrop of national and religious revival. These changes coupled with the diminishing central control over local politics allowed Central Asian elites to pursue politics that reflected traditional character of Central Asian polities beneath the veneer of Soviet-era institutions.

It became apparent that despite official policies aimed at egalitarianism hierarchical character of the social structure of Central Asian societies has persevered. As in other traditional societies, it was sustained by the system of patron-client relationships which had entrapped the majority of the population into submission and dependence on a patron in resolving all sorts of issues faced through the course of a lifetime. It perpetuated the kin/local/regional segmentation of a society and prevented the emergence of clearly delineated criteria of citizenship. Russian and Soviet attempts to change traditional patterns of social organization of Central Asian societies and with it

to uproot traditional loyalties and patron-client relationships not only failed but exacerbated regional and tribal rivalries, laying the foundation for politics based on regional affiliations rather than ideological, interest, or any other divisions.

Independence was not sought by Central Asian elites and caught them by surprise. They were generally in favor of the August 1991 anti-Gorbachev coup as they saw in his reforms, especially political, a threat to their power. Though in the aftermath of the coup Central Asian republics proclaimed their independence (Kazakhstan – December 16; Kyrgyzstan – August 30; Tajikistan – September 9; Turkmenistan – October 27; Uzbekistan – August 31), decades of disenfranchisement and dependence on Moscow explained why they lobbied for the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) after Presidents Boris Yeltsin of Russia, Leonid Kravchuk of Ukraine, and Stanislav Shushkevich of Belarus dissolved the Soviet Union in December 1991.

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 accelerated the process of retraditionalization of Central Asian societies which started in perestroika. The process has been characterized by the partial replacement of Soviet-era institutions and mores with those Central Asians had prior to Sovietization and which they continued to practice despite official proscription. It was the process spawned from the top as much as from the bottom and was marked, in part, by validation of the primacy of kin-based relationships, legitimization of the patronage system, Islamic revival, and abandonment of affirmative action policy toward women as they were pressured to assume more traditional roles. Despite regularly held presidential and parliamentary elections there has been no turnover of political elites: The leaders that ruled the countries at independence are still in power. Only in Tajikistan there has been a limited change in 1992 when Imomali Rahmonov became president. Yet he has stayed in power since then. Faced with daunting tasks of state- and nation-building, Central Asian leaders opted for building authoritarian regimes and privatizing the gains of economic reforms into the hands of their families and close associates. Social dislocation and lack of prospects for a better future have resulted in the growth of political and religious extremism throughout the region.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- How does Central Asian history influence Central Asian political culture today?
- What are the major historic differences among Central Asians that affect their choice of developmental paths today?

- Can we speak about a history of statehood of the five eponymous Central Asian nations?
- In what ways have the Russian conquest and then the Communist regime transform Central Asia and its people?
- How did Central Asian republics and their elites respond to the breakup of the Soviet Union?

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ISLAM

Islam is the predominant religion among Central Asians and has become an integral part of the Central Asian way of life and culture. Yet it is not observed equally dutifully by all Central Asians with the Tajiks and Uzbeks being the most devout.

Islam was brought to Central Asia by the Arabs in the seventh century. Its religious doctrine, Sharia (canon law), adat (customary law), and Islamic culture were spread by merchants, who penetrated Central Asia after the conquest. The Tajiks and Uzbeks were the first to convert, followed by the Turkmen (12th-14th centuries), Kyrgyz (16th-17th centuries), and Kazakhs (18th-19th centuries, though southern Kazakhs became

Muslims in the 9th century). The Kazakh case is the most interesting since they were Islamized by the decision of Catherine II. The majority of Central Asians are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. There is also a number of Sufi (Muslim mysticism) orders and a few Shi'a groups, of whom the most notable are the Ismailis of Tajikistan.

One of the original copies of the Quran compiled under Caliph Uthman (644-656), now in Tashkent

The Hanafi school became dominant in Central Asia primarily for two reasons. First, its founder, Abu Hanifa (d.767), was a non-Arab of the Iranian origin which at the time was psychologically important for Central Asians who like other non-Arab Muslims fought for equal treatment. Second, unlike three other the Hanafi school was less literal in its doctrinal interpretation of the Quran and allowed for the incorporation of the pre-Islamic traditions. It has given Central Asian Islam a fairly tolerant and liberal character that excluded radicalism. Bukhara and Samarqand were traditional centers of Islamic learning. The former was the birthplace of a renowned Muslim scholar Ismail al-Bukhari (810-70) who compiled one of the two most authentic collections of the ***hadith*** (Prophet Muhammad's sayings).

Sufism in the region, which has similarly been liberal, is represented by the following orders: Naqshbandiya (Bukhara), Qadiriya (Ferghana), Yasawiya (southern Kazakhstan), and Qubraviya (Khorezm/Khiva). Naqshbandiya, the dominant order, was founded in Bukhara by Bahauddin Naqshband (1317-1389). Membership in the Sufi orders has been exclusive and secretive and the leadership has usually been maintained within one family. The Ismaili Shi'a in the GornoBadakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan trace their origins to the 11th century. Their spiritual leader is Prince Agha Khan who has been actively providing humanitarian aid to his followers during the Tajik civil war of 1992-1997.

Before the 1917 Bolshevik revolution there were around 26,300 mosques, 6,000 ***maktabs*** (primary Islamic schools), and 300 ***madrassas*** (Islamic schools) in Central Asia. Soviet policy toward Islam as to any other religion was its suppression as inimical to Marxist ideology. There were periods of respite in militant atheism in the 1920s, when the Soviets needed to win over Central Asians and consolidate their power, and during WWII, when in 1943 Joseph Stalin allowed the establishment of the Muslim Spiritual Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan and reopening of some mosques to ensure Muslims' loyalty to the state amidst the uncertainty on the frontlines. Yet, by the time perestroika began in 1985, there were less than a hundred mosques in the entire region, one Islamic institute in Tashkent, and one madrassa in Bukhara.

Perestroika brought Islamic revival in Central Asia further backed by a liberal law on freedom of conscience passed on 1 October 1990. The most visible sign of the revival was the booming mosque construction: At independence, there were around 7,500 mosques in the region and 380 madrassas in Uzbekistan alone. Perestroika also allowed "parallel Islam," which existed alongside with the officially sanctioned Islamic institutions, to come into the open. It was a network of separate groups of young Central Asians influenced by the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Afghan ***mujaheddin*** (combatants against Soviet occupation) propaganda to work toward spiritual renewal and eventual establishment of an Islamic state in the region. In 1989, these young men came together to establish an All-Union Party of Islamic Renaissance whose Tajik and Uzbek branches were the most numerous and influential. In 1991, these branches became independent. Other Islamic groups included Islam Lashkari (Warriors of Islam) and Adalat (Justice). Islamists demanded greater role for Islam in political and social life of Central Asians, adoption of some aspects of Sharia

(especially those concerning family) into law, proclamation religious holidays official, making Friday a day-off, etc. Their eventual goal was the creation of an Islamic state in their respective republics.

There are communities of the followers of other religions, including Christianity, mostly Russian Orthodox Church, Judaism, Buddhism, etc.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- How has the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam shape the character of Central Asian Islam and Islamic practices?
- What role has Sufism play in the evolution of Central Asian Islam?
- What the causes of the growth of Islamic extremism in the region?

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CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Being at the crossroads of various civilizations since the early stages of their history, Central Asians have a very rich culture in part influenced by the way of life. Though all the five nations are Muslim and have predominantly rural population, there is a divide between the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen whose nomadic way of life continued until the late 1920s and the Tajiks and Uzbeks who became sedentary much earlier. At the same time all Central Asians who reside in cities, especially capitals, have closely interacted with large Russian populations and thus are likely to demonstrate a mix of

native and Russian cultural influences. Central Asians take great pride in providing hospitality for guests. In accordance with tradition guests are offered the best of everything irrespective of the economic situation of the host. Central Asians maintain close family ties. In countryside members of an extended family often live in one household.

The former group continues to identify themselves with their nomadic ancestry who, while herding their livestock, used to live in ***yurts***, portable felt-covered dwellings. This tradition continues among the shepherds of today. Also their traditional diet is distinctive from the Tajik and Uzbek as it includes ***qazy*** (horse meat), ***qumyz*** (fermented mare's milk), and ***shabat*** (fermented camel's milk). At the same time, all Central Asians share such dish as ***osh-palou***, pilaf of rice, meat, vegetables, and sometimes spices and (dried) fruit, which originated among Tajiks and Uzbeks. Among other cultural characteristics shared by all Central Asians are a spring festival, ***Nowruz*** (ancient Iranian New Year celebrated on the day of spring Equinox) and a game, ***buzkashi*** (also known as ***baiga***, ***qoqpar***, and ***ulaq***), in which players compete to drag a goat carcass into a goal and which dates back to the Genghis Khan period. In addition to osh-palou, other traditional Tajik and Uzbek dishes include ***laghmon*** (soup with long, thick noodles), ***kabob*** (barbecued kebabs), ***non*** (bread) of many varieties for different occasions, etc.

Nomadic way of life is associated primarily with folk arts, oral literary tradition, and vocal music. In Central Asia, all three are common throughout the region. Traditional folk arts include handmade textiles, silver jewelry, ceramics, wool and silk carpets, wood carving, wall painting, etc. The carpets were traditionally used to decorate the floors and walls of palaces, houses of nobility as well as yurts and were considered to be a sign of wealth.

Another ancient tradition is the performance of the epos (a partly historical and partly legendary series of poems) in the form of a song by an ***aqyn*** or ***hafiz***, Central Asian minstrel, on a variety of string instruments. Though common to all Central Asians, it is mostly associated with the formerly nomadic nations who acquired written languages much later than Tajiks and Uzbeks: Turkmen in the 18th century (associated with poet ***Magtumguli***), Kazakhs in the 1860s (associated with the name of poet ***Abay Ibrahim Kunanbayev***), and Kyrgyz in 1923. One of the most well-known is the Kyrgyz epos called ***Manas*** about a legendary hero who battle foreign invaders to create a homeland

for his people. All but disappeared during the Soviet period, interest in both epos and aqyn tradition was revived as Central Asians sought to restore their national heritage.

As for Tajiks and Uzbeks, their oral traditions were largely displaced with the spread of Islam which brought the art of writing and education as well as influenced the development of architectural and musical styles and genres. Traditional Tajik and Uzbek music is similar to that of the Middle East and is characterized by complicated rhythms and meters that evoke a richly melodic sound. One of the famous music genres is ***shashmaqom*** which is infused with Sufi themes.

Architectural designs, which reflect common Islamic tradition, are distinguished by turquoise-colored mosque domes and the glazed tilework, usually forming abstract geometrical patterns, also found on many religious buildings.

Guri Amir Mausoleum. Samarqand. 14th-15th centuries.

Tajiks share literary heritage with two other Persian-speaking nations of Iran and Afghanistan. Persian literature emerged from Bukhara under the Samanids during the

9th and 10th centuries. It is associated with the name of ***Abu Abdullohi Rudaki*** who is considered to be the father of Persian poetry. Another important Bukharan name for Persian-speaking literature as well as Muslim and world philosophy and science is ***Abu Ali ibn Sino*** (980-1037) better know in the west as Avicenna, the author of the "*Canon of Medicine*." In the late 19th-early 20th centuries, Bukhara was the center of Central Asian Jadidism whose leader, ***Abdurrauf Fitrat***, wrote poems and scholarly books on Islam and social and political reforms in both the Tajik and Uzbek languages. He and hundreds of other Central Asian intellectuals perished during Stalin's purges of the 1930s.

During the Soviet period new, European cultural forms and genres were introduced to the region, including novel, opera, ballet, symphony, etc. Their introduction and evolution were accompanied by the Communist party drive to create a new, proletarian culture which would have little connection to traditional culture deemed to be too Islamic for an atheistic society the communists aspired to create. Thus, the Arabic-based alphabets of Central Asian languages were first changed into Latin at the end of the 1920s and then, in the late 1930s, into Cyrillic. Possession of books with Arabic script became a criminal offense. Intellectually and linguistically Central Asians were subjected to Russification, albeit unofficial.

The contents of arts, literature, and music had to conform to the genre called ***socialist realism***, which was a form of communist propaganda, though Central Asians were allowed to express it in the officially approved traditional forms. Such arrangement for national cultures of different Soviet ethnic groups was known as ***"national in form, socialist in content."*** The Soviets were unable to completely eliminate traditional cultures and replace them with a new one. Late 1970s-early 1980s brought revival primarily associated with the name of Kyrgyz writer ***Chingiz Aitmatov*** who gained international renown for his novels such as *The Day Lasts More Than A Century* (English translation 1982) and collections of short stories such as *Tales of Mountains and Steppes* (English translation 1969).

One undisputed achievement of the Soviet period is the introduction of the modern education system which produced nearly 100 percent rate of literacy where it was virtually absent before. Free primary and secondary education became compulsory and largely remains the case in all five Central Asian states. At the same time the governments have been unable to maintain the Soviet-era levels of funding. There is

shortage of new textbooks and teachers who are poorly paid. The same problems face university-level education though a number of new private universities have been opened, including a number of joint Central Asian-American universities.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- In what ways have different lifestyles influence the development of different cultural forms among Central Asians?
- Can we talk about some common elements in the culture of Central Asians?
- How much has the Russian influence westernization of Central Asian cultures?

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KAZAKHSTAN

Government and politics. The Republic of Kazakhstan, a country slightly less than four times the size of Texas, proclaimed its independence on 16 December 1991. It is a presidential republic with separation of powers between three branches. Since independence two constitutions were adopted. The 1993 constitution proclaimed the country a unitary state and introduced strong, French-style presidency. The 1995 constitution increased presidential power and instituted bicameral parliament while substantially limiting its authority. President is elected for seven years and has unlimited powers: He appoints the Prime Minister and the entire Council of Ministers, governors of the fourteen provinces and the cities of Astana and Almaty as well as executives of all lower level administrative units, and all judges. He can initiate constitutional amendments, dissolve parliament, call referenda at his discretion, override the decisions of the executive branch officials, etc.

Legislative branch is represented by a bicameral parliament consists of the Senate (upper house) and the ***Mazhlis*** (lower house). The Senate has 39 members, 32 of whom are elected by indirect vote at a joint session of the deputies of ***maslihats*** (local assemblies) and 7 are appointed by the president. Senators serve six-year terms. The Mazhlis consists of 77 deputies, 67 of whom are elected in single-mandate districts and 10 are appointed from a party list based on proportional representation with a 7% threshold. Under the 1995 constitution, it does not have much power as the legislative initiative is primarily president's prerogative as is the appointment of and or control

over the executive branch.

Judicial branch of the government is represented by the Supreme Court (44 members) and the Constitutional Council (7 members). Judges of all levels are appointed by the president and serve for an unspecified term. Despite steps taken to increase professionalism and independence of the judiciary, including substantial raise in judge's salaries, the system continues to be heavily politicized.

Since independence Nursultan Nazarbayev has been the president of Kazakhstan. He was first elected on 1 December 1991, then had his term extended by a 1995 referendum, and reelected on 10 January 1999. In 2000, the parliament passed a law "On the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan" which guarantees his lifelong powers and privileges as well as immunity. Nazarbayev's rule has been characterized by concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the president himself, his family, and trusted kin in a clear manifestation of zhuz-based patronage politics despite a semblance of balance in key appointments. Notwithstanding his earlier commitment to democratic reform, Nazarbayev has progressively moved toward a regime of personalistic dictatorship by manipulating electoral process, intimidating opposition, and limiting political liberties of citizens. Twice, in 1993 and 1995, he dissolved parliament and ruled by presidential decree. Liberal laws adopted in early independence have been revised to institute tougher control on political and civil society activity in the country. In July 2002, the new law on political parties was passed requiring a party to have 50,000 registered members up from the previously required 3,000. The new law will mostly likely make it impossible for Nazarbayev's opponents to register political parties.

At present, major political parties represented in Mazhilis include Otan with 24 seats, Civic Party with 11 seats, Communist Party with 3 seats, Agrarian Party with 3 seats, People's Cooperative Party with 1 seat. With the exception of the Communists all other parties are pro-government, Otan is formally headed by the president himself. Major opposition parties are represented by the RNPK (Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan), headed by Akezhan Kazhegeldin, exiled former prime minister and Nazarbayev's chief opponent, Azamat, DVK (Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan), and Ak Zhol. Members of the opposition represent mostly former government officials, businessmen, and intellectuals dissatisfied with nepotism, growing authoritarianism, and slow pace of economic reforms.

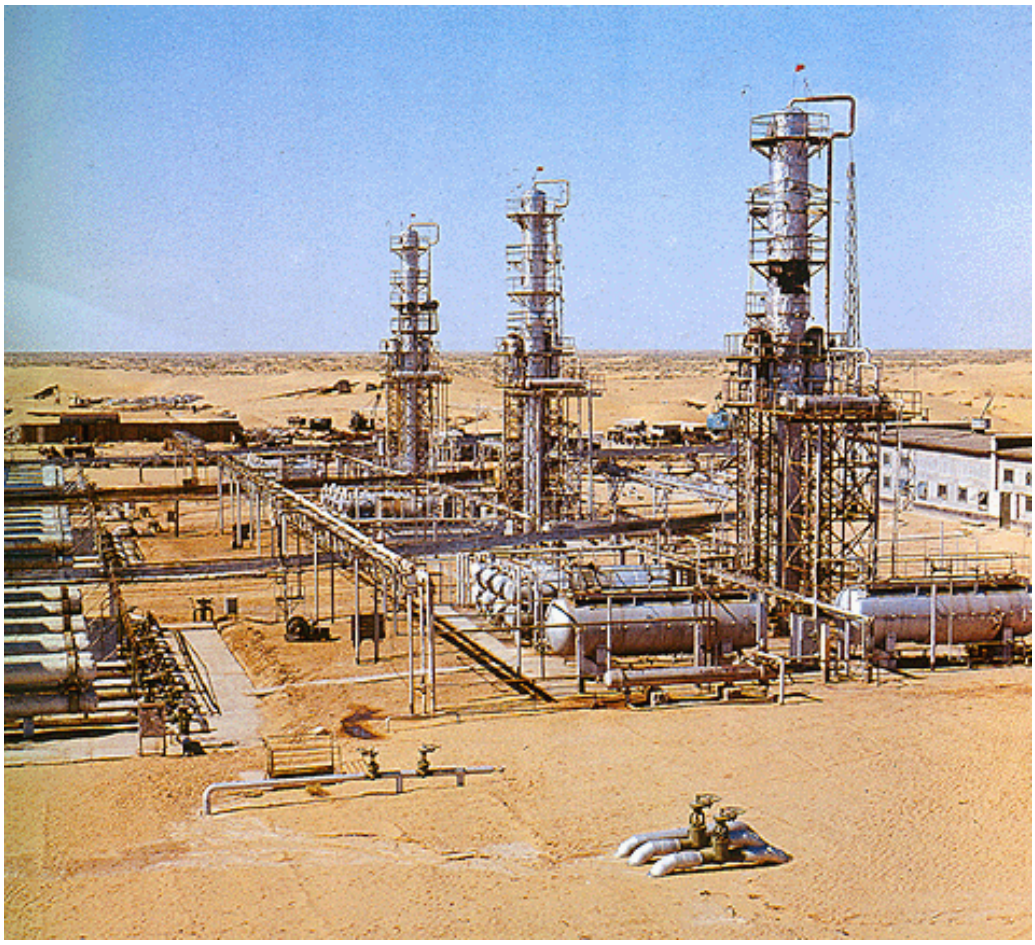
Civil society. In addition to political parties, there are above 3,050 NGOs registered with the Ministry of Justice as it is required by the Law on Public Associations passed in 1998. Participation in unregistered NGOs is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Creation of government-sponsored NGOs is widely practiced. Only a fraction of the registered NGOs is estimated to be fully functioning. The main obstacles to civil society development in Kazakhstan, as elsewhere in Central Asia, are patronage character of its institutions and lack of domestic financial support. Creation of government-sponsored NGOs is widely practiced.

In the early 1990s, Kazakhstan enjoyed a vibrant and relatively free media. Its independence was severely restricted as a result of the adoption of two laws: The 1998 Media Law and the 1999 Law on Confidential State Affairs which made information about Nazarbayev and his family and their economic interests a state secret and its disclosure a criminal offense. Electronic and print media are dominated by the ***Khabar*** group, owned by Nazarbayev's eldest daughter.

Economy. Despite the initial drop in GDP to about half it was before independence, since 1995 Kazakhstan has been successfully restructuring its economy and introducing market institutions, maintaining macroeconomic stability over the last years. By 1998, Kazakhstan has completed privatization of small enterprises. In 1999, private sector share in GDP was 60 percent. The 1999 GDP structure of the economy is as follows: 30 percent industry, 10 percent agriculture, and 60 percent services. The country is rich with mineral resources such as oil, natural gas, coal, iron ore, manganese, chrome ore, nickel, cobalt, copper, molybdenum, lead, zinc, bauxite, gold, uranium. This makes their extraction and processing most important industrial sectors with oil and metallurgy accounting for over two-thirds of the country's exports. Another important industrial sector is machine-building sector specializing in agricultural and construction equipment as well as some defense items. The government is now working to implement industrial policy to diversify the economy and reduce its dependence on oil.

Kazakhstan's oil reserves are estimated to be 16.4 billion barrels, not including the recently discovered offshore deposits in the Caspian Sea (Kashagan field) which may, if proven, add another 40 billion barrels. The oils sector draws 84 percent of FDI (over $9 billion in 1993-1999). Lack of an agreement on the delimitation of the Caspian Sea has not halted Kazakhstan's offshore oil exploration projects or foreign investment. One of the major problems is transportation of oil out of the landlocked country. At present, there are only two pipelines, both going through Russia. Kazakhstan has been

tentative about participation in the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project which is designed to provide Caspian states with an alternative route.



Oil field

Kazakhstan has been successful in implementing reforms in the financial sector. Though the size of the banking sector is still relatively small, it has been moving toward operating in full compliance with the Basel principles. Kazakhstan was the first Asian country to introduced privatized pension system in 1997. Yet, the development of the stock market is being held due to the opposition of major business interests managing national “blue-chip” state enterprises. Decision to float ***tenge***, national currency, in 1999 was encouraging to the growth of domestic production in such sectors as agriculture, food processing, etc.

Kazakhstan continues to be a large agricultural producer, specializing in livestock and grain. Over 90 percent of agricultural enterprises have been privatized. 75 percent of agricultural land has been leased to private farms or individual farmers. The amended land law (2000) allows for privatization of the land adjacent to rural dwellings which is

expected to give additional boost to the development of the sector.

Social issues. Social problems arise for a number of reasons. Economic transition and rampant corruption (Transparency International ranks the country 86th of the 99 listed) have resulted in the growing social differentiation. Intra-ethnic tensions are rife: Kazakhstani Russians, especially Cossaks, who dominate northern and eastern regions and protest what they see as discrimination are silenced by charges of separatism, organizing "armed insurrection," or treason, resulting in long prison sentences. Living standards are declining: UNDP estimated that in 2000, 65 percent of the population lives beyond the poverty line. The quality and availability of health care and other social services have deteriorated since independence. A number of social problems are caused by environmental degradation as a result of the Aral Sea desiccation (water pollution, high rates of cancer and congenital deformations, etc.), the legacy of the Soviet nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk (now Semei), and soil pollution from overuse of agricultural chemicals.

Foreign policy. At independence, Kazakhstan unexpectedly became a nuclear power as it was a site of the Soviet ICBMs deployment. It immediately brought the country into the international spotlight: It became a signatory to the START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) and the Lisbon Protocol which obligated Kazakhstan to denuclearize (completed by May 1995). Kazakhstan became a member of the UN, OSCE, IMF, World Bank, and other international organizations. President Nazarbayev, promoting the country as a bridge between Asia and Europe, has pursued the policy of "multi-vector diplomacy," trying to develop close relations with countries beyond Kazakhstan's immediate neighborhood which includes Russia and China whose dominance he has been seeking to escape.

Relations with Russia though continue to be important for a number of reasons: a large Russian population in Kazakhstan; 6,846 km border the countries share; trade (Russia continues, despite continuing decline, to be the most important partner with 20 percent of Kazakhstani exports going to Russia and 37 percent imports coming from it); security. Russia continues to lease a number of military installations, including the Baikonur space center. Kazakhstan is a member of the 1992 CIS Collective Security Treaty; Customs Union with Russia which also includes Belarus and Kyrgyzstan. Dissatisfaction with the CIS made President Nazarbayev advance unsuccessfully an idea of a Eurasian Union (1994) and Eurasian Economic Community (1999) which

would have meant closer integration of Kazakhstan and other former Soviet republics with Russia. Nazarbayev continues to reiterate that Russia is Kazakhstan's closest ally by virtue of history and geography.

While trade with China, barter in particular, is booming, relations between the two states are complicated due to historic fears of Chinese domination; presence of Uighur diaspora in Kazakhstan who advocates Xinjiang's independence; continued Chinese nuclear tests at Lob Nor test site, located close to the border with Kazakhstan. Yet the two countries moved closer together with the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 1996 whose goal is to foster political, security, economic and other forms of cooperation between China and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Kazakhstan has attempted to build its relations with other Central Asian states within the framework of the Central Asian Economic Community established in 1994 together with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and joined by Tajikistan in 1998. The attempt failed due to difference in economic policies pursued by the member-states and personal rivalries between Central Asian presidents. As a result, an attempt to create a regional peace-keeping battalion, ***Centrazbat***, which was trained by the NATO through the Partnership for Peace program, has also failed.

Prior to independence, Kazakhstan, as other Central Asian states, did not have independent armed forces. It began to build its military in 1992 and currently has an army of 45,000 personnel, an air force of 19,000, and a navy of 100 (the Caspian Flotilla, based in Astrakhan (Russia), is under the joint command of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan). Additionally, there are three paramilitary units which include the Republican Guard, security troops of the Ministry of Interior, and border guards, whose total strength is 34,500 personnel.

From the beginning Kazakhstan has sought to develop close relations with the West, especially the United States, as a balance to its relations with Russia and China. Kazakhstan also needs western FDI and expertise to develop its oil industry and transform the economy. Tengiz Shevron Oil project is the single most important US-Kazakh joint venture which has attracted almost half of $1.5 billion American companies invested in Kazakhstan in 1993-1998. In the wake of 9/11, Kazakhstan has supported US campaign against international terrorism and granted emergency landing rights to US military aircraft engaged in the military campaign in Afghanistan. Yet the

crackdown on opposition and political repression which have intensified in 2001-2002 raise concern in Washington about the chances for a successful democratic transition in Kazakhstan. Also the Department of Justice is conducting investigation into whether signing bonuses American oil companies paid the Kazakh government were in fact kickbacks to Nazarbayev and his entourage.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- The importance of the energy sector for economic development of Kazakhstan.
- Economic reforms and corruption.
- Causes for reverse of political democratization in Kazakhstan.
- The significance of the Russian factor in Kazakhstan's domestic and foreign policy.

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KYRGYZSTAN

Government and politics. The Republic of Kyrgyzstan, a country slightly smaller in size than South Dakota, proclaimed its independence on 31 August 1991. It is a presidential republic with separation of powers between three branches. Constitution adopted on 5 May 1993 provided for a strong presidential power further enhanced by constitutional amendments passed in 1996 at the expense of the legislature. The president has the power to appoint the prime minister, the cabinet (on the recommendation of the prime minister), the chairmen of the Central Bank and the Central Election Committee. He can dissolve the legislature if it rejects his nominee for the prime minister three times. He can also bypass the legislature and rule by edict. The president appoints governors of the seven provinces and forty-three districts the country is administratively divided into.

Legislative branch is represented by a bicameral parliament, ***Jogorku Kenesh*** (Supreme Council), which is elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. It consists of the ***Myizam Chygaruu Jyiyny*** (Legislative Assembly), the upper chamber, and the ***El Okulder Jyiyny*** (People's Representative Assembly), the lower chamber. The upper chamber has 35 members who sit in permanent session. They adopt and interpret laws and ratify international treaties, and can also impeach the president. The lower chamber has 70 members who meet several times a year to approve presidential appointees and deal with budget and tax issues. Despite strengthening of the presidential powers the parliament has displayed greater independence in its actions than in any other Central Asian state, dismissing presidential appointees, overturning presidential vetoes, and initiating legislation.

Judicial branch is represented by the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, and the Higher Court of Arbitration. Supreme Court judges are appointed for 10-year terms by the Supreme Council on the recommendation of the president. Despite measures taken to increase professionalism through the qualification exams and raising salaries, judicial system continues to be politicized.

Since independence the country has been run by President ***Askar Akayev*** who has been president since October 1990. He was last re-elected on 29 October 2000 in elections which the OSCE described as failed to comply with commitments for democratic elections. It was a departure from the early post-independence period when Akayev, a physicist, was considered the most reform-minded and democratically-oriented of the Central Asian leaders. Despite initial steps taken toward political and economic liberalization in the early 1990s, Akayev began to demonstrate authoritarian tendencies in 1994 when he dissolved the first post-independence parliament when it moved to limit Akayev's powers. With years he came to rely increasingly on the members of his and his wife's clansmen from northern Kyrgyzstan appointed to the highest positions in the government and less tolerant of any opposition. Prior to the 2000 parliamentary elections three leading opposition parties (Ar Namys (Honor), El Bei Bechara (Party of Poor People), and the Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan) were barred from participation in the elections under various pretexts. As the 2000 presidential elections approached Feliks Kulov, Ar Namys leader and one-time ally of Akayev and his vice-president,

was arrested and later convicted of a number of abuse-of-powers charges as he was about to enter the presidential race.

Despite these negative developments Kyrgyzstan remains the most liberal country in Central Asia which has a vibrant civil society, an independent media, and a fairly independent legislature with the largest number of independent deputies, 73 out of 105. The parties represented in the Supreme Council include pro-government the Union of Democratic Forces with 12 seats, My Country with 4, Democratic Party of Women with 2, Party of Afghan War Veterans with 2, Agrarian Labor Party with 1; and opposition the Communists with 6, People's Party with 2, Ata Meken (Fatherland) with 2, and the Erkin (Free) Kyrgyzstan with 1.

Civil society. Kyrgyzstan has a vibrant civil society. Yet it is plagued by the same problems as in Kazakhstan and out of thousands registered NGOs only about 500 are functioning. There are few legal restrictions on the NGO activity as the country still maintains the liberal 1991 Law on Public Organizations. In 1999, a new Law on Noncommercial Organizations was passed which allows the government to restrict the activities of an NGO should it be deemed undermining the public order or promote racial intolerance. In fact, in July 2000, one of the leading human rights groups, the Kyrgyz Committee on Human Rights, was deregistered and its leaders charged with "destabilizing the social order," which is a criminal offense. The 170-member NGO Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society was prevented by the Central Election Committee from monitoring the 2000 presidential election. At the same time, NGOs which deal with less sensitive issues, such as women's rights, environment, etc., generally have access to the government officials and have some influence on policy-making. Presidential Coordinating Council on Sustainable Development includes several NGO leaders.

Media in Kyrgyzstan is still to a significant degree state-owned. There are about 50 private newspapers and magazines, 14 TV and 11 radio stations. Independent media experiences not only government pressure but is constricted by insufficiency of financial and technological resources. As elsewhere in the region, criticism of the president and his family is a criminal offense. In the most celebrated case, Zamira Sadykova, a journalist of Res Publika newspaper, was imprisoned for a year and a half after publishing an article in 1995 alleging that President Akayev owned property abroad. Usually the government launches tax audits and criminal investigations to harass the most independent media outlets. In 1998, Akayev established an extra-constitutional Morals Commission authorized to evaluate the contents of the media publications and take action against the media when needed. In a clear violation of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of press it, e.g., suspended three publications the same year which were allowed to reopen after they revised their line.

Economy. At independence Kyrgyzstan was one of the poorest republics of the former Soviet Union with an economy dominated by the agricultural sector. Its industrial development was limited to a number of enterprises which were part of the Soviet defense industry and which were closed down after 1991. Kyrgyzstan possesses a few mineral resources such as gold (one of the largest proven reserves in the world), mercury, lead, zinc, coal, etc. Its major energy resource is water.

Kyrgyzstan has been the leading former Soviet republic in restructuring its economy along the market principles. It was the first to introduce its national currency, ***som*** (May 1993) and to become a member of the WTO (November 1998). With the help of the IMF and the World Bank Kyrgyzstan has introduced a comprehensive package of macroeconomic and structural adjustment programs, which allowed to achieve production recovery and an increase in exports by 1996. Yet Kyrgyzstan has borrowed heavily from the IFIs and private lenders in the process of market transformations and despite all the success huge structural problems remain which makes the repayment of the debt virtually impossible and thus threaten turning the country into a permanent international client state. Agricultural sector continues to dominate the economy making 39 percent of the GDP with industry 22 and services 39 percent. Major industries include small machinery, textiles, food processing, cement, shoes, sawn logs, refrigerators, furniture, electric motors, gold, rare earth metals. As in Kazakhstan privatization has been successful in small and medium-sized businesses but stop short of privatizing large-scale, export-oriented enterprises. Private sector accounts for about 65 percent of GDP.

Private property on land in Kyrgyzstan was introduced by the 1998 referendum which approved corresponding constitutional amendments. Only 10 percent of the country's territory is considered fully arable. Yet in 2000 the parliament announced a five-year moratorium on the purchase and sale of land. Main agricultural products are tobacco, cotton, potatoes, vegetables, grapes, fruits and berries, sheep, goats, cattle, wool.

Kyrgyzstan's primary export commodities include cotton, wool, meat, tobacco, gold, mercury, uranium, hydropower, machinery, and shoes. It is still recovering from the 1998 Russia financial crisis which in has demonstrated country's dependence on foreign trade and energy imports and vulnerability to external shocks. The major persistent problems facing the government are excessive

external debt, double-digit inflation, inadequate revenue collection, and deteriorating infrastructure.

Social issues. Kyrgyzstan remains one of the poorest states of the former Soviet Union: Its per capita income is $300 and 63 percent of the population leaves below the poverty line. Life expectancy declined from 68.8 years in 1991 to 66.9 years in 1997. By 2000, enrollment for secondary schooling dropped to 33 percent from 37 percent in 1990. Corruption remains pervasive. Inter-ethnic relations, especially with the local Uzbeks, which had led to the killing of 320 Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in 1990, remain to be a source of tension. The other source of tension is clan rivalries among Kyrgyz themselves. It is especially true in the case of the northern Sarybagysh, which has provided most of the Kyrgyz leaders, President Akayev included, and southern clans as the former has monopolized political and economic power.

Drug trafficking through Kyrgyzstan has created enormous social problems and criminalized the economy. Until 1974, Kyrgyzstan continued to legally grow opium poppy and produced about 16 percent of the world's supply. Opium production has never been eradicated but is surpassed by cannabis. Drug use is on the rise and now Kyrgyzstan has a higher ratio of drug users (11 per 1,000) than the US (10.5 per 1,000). These problems have been aggravated since independence and the civil war in Tajikistan which opened a major drug trafficking route from Afghanistan via Tajikistan and the Osh province of Kyrgyzstan, and than via Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan into Russia and the rest of Europe. The city of Osh became the drug trafficking of Central Asia. It is estimated that about 64 drug-trafficking groups operate in the country. Kyrgyzstan has been actively engaged in regional and international efforts to fight drug-trafficking and production. UN Drug Control Program (UNDCP) ran the "Osh Knot" which had several aims, including fostering regional cooperation and training 60 officials. It was terminated in 1999 due to disagreements with the Kyrgyz and corruption.

Environmental issues add to the many problems Kyrgyz society has to address. As a result of faulty irrigation practices water pollution is a major health problem since many people get their water directly from contaminated streams and wells. This leads to increased soil salinity and water-borne diseases against the backdrop of the general deterioration of the quality and availability of public health services.

Foreign policy. After independence Kyrgyzstan has aggressively pursued relations with the outside world to seek both international recognition and outside assistance in instituting economic reforms. It got both and due to its pronounced commitment to building democracy and a market economy, Kyrgyzstan became known in Washington and the West as "an island of democracy" and President Askar Akayev as "Askar Jefferson." Kyrgyzstan quickly became a member of the UN, OSCE, IMF, World Bank, other international organizations and the largest per capita recipient of foreign aid among the newly independent states.

However relations with the United States have cooled as Akayev backtracked on democratic reforms and displayed more authoritarian tendencies. During her visit to Kyrgyzstan in April 2000, then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pressured Akayev to honor his country's commitments to the OSCE. After 9/11, Kyrgyzstan has joined US-led anti-terrorist campaign and leased its Manas airport to the US and NATO troops who conduct operations in Afghanistan. Germany is Kyrgyzstan's largest exports partner, accounting for about 33 percent of the country's exports in 1999.

Relations with Russia continue to be important. Russians make about 15 percent of the Kyrgyzstan's population and Russia continues to be the main imports partner, accounting for about 18 percent in 1999. Kyrgyzstan is a member of the CIS, Customs Union with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, and the Collective Security Treaty. In May 2000, Kyrgyzstan became the only CIS state to pass a law, making Russian the second official state language. Kyrgyzstan has the second smallest armed forces in the region – 9,000 troops – as it relies on Russia in addressing its national security concerns.

Relations with China are characterized by historic memories of Chinese domination and apprehension about its intensions today. To placate the Chinese, the government has refused to register resident Uighur organizations that advocate independence of Xinjiang. Kyrgyzstan is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Maintaining good relations with its Central Asian neighbors is essential for Kyrgyzstan's survival. Relations with Kazakhstan are very close sustained in part by the marriage of President Akayev's only son to President Nazarbayev's youngest daughter. Relations with Uzbekistan are more problematic as President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan has been critical of Akayev's policies, e.g., the introduction of the national currency, WTO membership, etc. To show his displeasure, Karimov has repeatedly cut off gas

and electricity to Kyrgyzstan. On its part, Kyrgyzstan, an upstream state, has threatened to cut water supply to Uzbekistan as well as Kazakhstan in an attempt to collect payment ostensibly for maintenance of the water supply infrastructure.

Yet the most immediate problem and national security threat to the country comes from Tajikistan. Relations between the two countries have been strained since 1989 when a border conflict over water and arable land erupted. It was settled in 1993 and Kyrgyzstan played an active role in UN-mediated Tajik peace talks. Recent problems have been caused by the armed groups of the Afghanistan-based Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) who repeatedly penetrated Kyrgyzstan from the Tajik territory in 1999 and 2000 en route to Uzbekistan. They have captured several villages, took hostages, including American tourists and Japanese geologists, causing major embarrassment for Akayev and further straining of Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations. IMU incursions stopped with the start of anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan in October 2001.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- What factors explain that Kyrgyzstan has gone the farthest in economic liberalization in Central Asia?
- How have the country's strategic weaknesses influence its domestic policy?

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TAJIKISTAN

Government and politics. The Republic of Tajikistan, a country slightly smaller in size than Wisconsin, proclaimed its independence on 9 September 1991. It is a presidential republic with separation of powers between three branches. The 1994 constitution established Tajikistan as a parliamentary democracy. Yet the power is concentrated in the hands of the president, especially after constitutional amendments in 1999 which introduced a single seven-year term for the president. The president appoints the prime minister and members of the Council of Ministers, subject to the approval by the parliament. He also appoints heads of provincial, district, and city governments who are simultaneously heads of local legislatures, subject to the approval by local legislatures, and has the right to dismiss local officials. Tajikistan is divided into 2 provinces, 1 autonomous province of Gorno-Badakhshan, and a number of districts in central part of the republic under direct central administration.

The unicameral parliament, ***Majlisi Oli***, was introduced by the 1994 constitution. The 1999 constitutional amendments provided for a bicameral Majlisi Oli, consisting of the ***Majlisi Namoyandegon***, Assembly of Representatives (lower chamber), and the ***Majlisi Milli***, National Assembly (upper chamber). Members of the 63-seat lower chamber are popularly elected for the term of 5 years while 33 members of the upper chamber are indirectly elected, 25 selected by provincial deputies and 8 appointed by the president also for the five-year term. As a result of the 2000 parliamentary elections, President Rahmonov's People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan received 65 percent of votes, followed by the Communist Party with 20 percent, and Islamic Rebirth Party with 7.5 percent.

Judicial branch is represented by the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Economic Court, and the Military Court. Judges are appointed by the president to five-year terms by the president who also has the power to dismiss them. As elsewhere in the region, the judiciary remains nominally independent.

The first six years of its independence were the most traumatic in Tajikistan's recent history. The civil war, which lasted from 1992 through 1997, resulted in about 100,000 dead and a deeply fragmented country. In its early stages, the war was waged between the Rahmonov government, a coalition of the Soviet-era elites from the two provinces of Kulob and Leninobod, and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), a coalition of secular and Islamist groups and parties. The Rahmonov government, supported by the Russians and initially by President Karimov, wanted to preserve the status quo and prevent the opposition, especially the Islamic Rebirth Party (IRP), from influencing country's post-independent development. The UTO was united around the idea of a fair re-distribution of political and economic resources which were concentrated in the hands of the Khujandi elite (Khujand is the capital of and a district in the Leninibod province), who dominated the post-WWII Tajikistan. After a split between the Kulobis and the Khujandis over power the civil war acquired a more regional character. In 1994, the UN-mediated peace talks on Tajikistan began and the UNMOT, UN observer mission to Tajikistan, was dispatched to monitor the implementation of the agreements reached between the government and the opposition. The war ended in 1997 and in accordance with the peace agreement the UTO was to receive 30 percent of jobs in the central, provincial, and local government; its military groups were to be integrated with the regular military and law enforcement units. Also, a Government of National Reconciliation and a National Reconciliation Commission

(NRC) to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement were to be established for the transitional period until the new parliamentary and presidential elections. Provisions of the peace agreement were only partially fulfilled, as, e.g., the UTO never received the stipulated percentage of government positions.

The 1999 presidential and 2000 parliamentary elections were won by Rahmonov and his People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan. Despite widespread voter irregularities, the UTO won seven percent of the seats in the new parliament and did not challenge the results of both elections. On his part, President Rahmonov included a number of opposition figures in his new government such as Akbar Turajonzoda, one of the prominent Muslim and UTO leaders, who was appointed first deputy prime minister. Following the elections the NRC was abolished and the UTO split up into its constituent groups and parties: the IRP, Rastokhez Popular Movement, Democratic Party, and La'li Badakhshon Society.

Rahmonov and his Kulobi faction continue to dominate Tajik politics, to a large extent due to the support of Moscow and the Russia military stationed in Tajikistan which he has relied upon since coming to power in November 1992. Yet the country remains fragmented and the central government does not exercise control over the entire territory: The once opposition's strongholds of central Tajikistan and Gorno-Badakhshan province as well as the Sogd (former Leninobod) province, which considers itself sidelined, maintain a significant degree of autonomy, exacerbated by the fact that a small number of opposition armed groups turned rogue, refusing to recognize the peace accord. Also, there is an apparent split within the Kulobi faction itself between President Rahmonov and Ubaidullo Khuvaidulloev, mayor of Dushanbe and a one-time Rahmonov's eminence grise. Political assassinations have been a part of Tajik politics even after the end of the civil war. Prominent figures of the former UTO and other independent politicians are usually the targets.

At the same time, Tajikistan has demonstrated a possibility of the inclusion of Islamists and secular opposition groups into politics without them undermining stability and behaving destructively despite discontent with the Kulobi dominance. In this sense, should the current multi-party politics continue, the country may serve as an example for the rest of the region.

Civil society. The civil war, fragmentation of the country, and lack of central control have contributed to the growth of NGOs and their fairly free functioning. Liberal attitude toward the NGOs in Tajikistan can also be explained that it is the only Central Asian country which, after the ban that existed during the civil war, allows the existence of religious political parties. There are about 300 registered NGOs in the country though it is estimated that the real number is about 1,000. Many NGOs, especially those funded from abroad, do not register to avoid taxation as the government increasingly sees them as a source of revenue. Half of the NGOs focus on environmental issues.

Improved relations with the government allowed NGOs to successfully lobby for the adoption of the new Law on Nongovernmental Organizations in 1999 which simplifies registration process, allows them to engage in commercial activity, etc. In 2000, President Rahmonov and the NGO community signed the Agreement of Social Harmony.

Media in Tajikistan has not enjoyed the same freedom as the NGO community, proving the point that Central Asian governments seek to maintain strict control over any activity connected with politics or sensitive subjects such as government officials involvement in drug trafficking. There are 14 broadcast and about 245 print media outlets in the country. The majority of newspapers are published weekly due to financial constraints. Opposition parties publish about 20 newspapers, the government owns 4.

Economy. Throughout the Soviet period Tajikistan had one of the poorest, agrarian-based economies. The economy was further weakened by five years of the civil war. Cotton has been the most important crop. Tajikistan possesses mineral resources which include silver, gold, uranium, and tungsten. It major energy resource is water.

The structure of the Tajik economy is as follows: 19.8 percent of GDP falls on agriculture, 18.1 percent on industry, and 62.1 percent on services. In terms of labor force employment, 50 percent work in agriculture, 20 in industry, and 30 in services.

Economic transformations in Tajikistan have lagged behind, which can only partially be explained by the civil war, and now the country faces the need of both acceleration of market-oriented and post-war reconstruction. Though about 83 percent of small state-owned businesses were privatized only a small number of medium- and large-scale enterprises was. In 2000, inflation was 33 percent. Tajikistan was the last Central Asian state to introduce its own national currency, ***somoni***, in April 2001.

Agriculture continues to be the dominant sector. Its products include cotton, grain, fruits, grapes, vegetables, cattle, sheep, goats, etc. Despite measures at privatization, agricultural sector is still dominated by state-owned farms. Those that are privatized usually end up in the hands of government and local officials as well as leaders of armed groups. Cotton, fruits, and vegetable oil constitute major export items. Cotton prices are effectively set by the government.

Cotton field

Industrial production consists mainly of aluminum, zinc, lead, chemicals and fertilizers, cement, metal-cutting machine tools, refrigerators and freezers. Tajikistan is a major world producer of hydroelectric power, being the third after the United States and Russia. The Nurek hydropower station produces over 11 billion kilowatt hours (KWH). The Rogun station, which is under construction, will have the capacity to produce 13 billion KWH. Despite few restrictions to foreign investment, only $126 million of FDI were invested in Tajikistan primarily because of concerns over stability. FDI has been largely invested in gold and soft drinks production as well as textile industry. The country remains dependent on foreign aid and trade relations with the CIS countries, especially Russia and Uzbekistan: 62 percent of Tajik exports and 78 percent of its imports fall on the CIS. Export commodities include aluminum, electricity, textiles. Import commodities include electricity, petroleum products, aluminum oxide, machinery and equipment, and foodstuffs.

Social issues. Social problems in the country, which resemble the situation in other Central Asian states, have been exacerbated by the devastation and dislocation caused by the civil war. Most of the population lives in abject poverty: Population below poverty line is 80percent. Pervasive corruption and drug trafficking are widespread: A number of high-ranking Tajik officials have been arrested in Russia, Kazakhstan, and other countries for their involvement in drug trafficking. The country simultaneously suffers from the shortage of skilled manpower (many fled during the war), and mass unemployment which is about 51 percent of the population. Only about 62 percent of the relevant age group children are enrolled in primary and secondary school: Parents often cannot afford clothing or are afraid for children's security. Infant mortality is on the rise as is maternal mortality rate (130 per 100,000 live births) which is the highest in the CIS.

Foreign policy. Since independence Tajikistan has oriented its foreign policy toward maintaining close relations with Moscow. The Russians have supported the Rahmonov government through the civil war period and continue to favor him and the Kulobis over other regional elites. Tajikistan is the only Central Asian country which has the Russian military stationed on its territory which includes the 201st motorized rifle division and about 15,000 border guards, the majority of whom are local recruits. In 1999, Moscow and Dushanbe signed a ten-year agreement which established a Russian military base. Reliance on Russia in matters of national security explains the fact that the country has the smallest armed forces in the region – 6,000 active and 1,200 paramilitary personnel – and was the last to join Partnership for Peace Program (2002). Dushanbe is a member of the Moscow-led CIS, 1992 Collective Security Treaty, and Customs Union. Despite close security relations with Russia, trade relations are on the decline: only 8percent of Tajikistani exports go to and 13.6percent of its imports come from Russia.

The civil war and pro-Moscow orientation have led to Tajikistan's relative external isolation. Relations with neighboring countries remain strain. Portions of Tajikistan's northern and western border with Uzbekistan and its eastern border with China have not been officially demarcated. Relations with Uzbekistan go through cycles of deterioration: Tashkent is weary of Rahmonov's Moscow-centric foreign and security; is unhappy with the exclusion of the Khujandis from power; accuses Dushanbe with giving safe haven to the fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). To make its point known, Tashkent has frequently cut gas supplies to Tajikistan, closed down the only rail link Tajikistan has with the outside world, and gave refuge to the renegade Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdyev, who twice raided northern Tajikistan and in 1997 and 1998 and retreated back to Uzbekistan. After the civil war ended Uzbeks who fought within the UTO armed units stayed in Afghanistan and formed the IMU. Tashkent has repeatedly accused the Rahmonov government and former UTO commanders that they do not do enough to stop IMU incursions into Uzbekistan or directly aid IMU fighters.

Tajikistan has become closely entangled in the Afghan politics. First, as a result of the civil war tens of thousands of Tajik refugees were stranded in northern Afghanistan. The UTO headquarters was located in the town of Taloqan (Tahor province) where President Barhanuddin Rabbani of Afghanistan and Ahmad Shah Massoud, his field commander, both ethnic Tajiks, relocated after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in 1996. Second, in the late 1990s, Tajikistan became an entrepot of Russian and Iranian military assistance to the Northern alliance. Rabbani and Massoud used a military base in southern Tajikistan.

Iran was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Tajikistan. Despite common cultural heritage relations remain complicated. It was especially the case through the civil war period when Iran was suspected in supporting the UTO whose leaders lived in Tehran. As an official observer at the UN-mediated intra-Tajik peace talks Iran generally played a positive role partly explained by its desire to maintain good relations with Russia, Iran's major arms trade partner. Iran's economic ties with Tajikistan remain negligible.

Tajikistan's relations with the west remain limited. The only period of active international involvement in the country was during the UN-mediated peace talks in Tajikistan (1994-1997) and the UNMOT presence (December 1994 – May 2000) in the country. The United States was an unofficial observer at the talks. Due to security concerns, US embassy has been relocated to Almaty, Kazakhstan. Tajikistan is the only CIS country which does not have its embassy in Washington. In the wake of 9/11, Tajikistan's international exposure has increased. Secretary of Defense Donald Rusmsfeld was the first high-ranking US official to visit Tajikistan since Secretary of State James Baker's visit in 1992.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- How has the civil war changed regional politics and the role of Russia in Central Asia?
- The impact of the civil was on the rise of extremism Islam in Central Asia.
- What does the political return of the IRP mean for the future of political Islam in the region?

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TURKMENISTAN

Government and politics. Turkmenistan, a country slightly larger than California in size, became independent on 27 October 1991. Administratively, it is divided into five provinces, ***welayatlar***, and the capital city of Ashgabat which is a separate administrative unit. In accordance with the 1992 constitution, it is a presidential republic with a separation of power between three branches. The constitution stipulated the president to be called ***Turkmenbashi***, i.e., the Leader of all the Turkmen. The president is elected for five year terms. He functions both as a head of state and Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, whom he appoints with the parliament's approval. The president also appoints and dismisses state prosecutors and judges, has the right to issue edicts having the force of law and to dissolve the parliament if it twice passes a no-confidence vote in the government.

Legislative branch consists of a unicameral ***Majlis***, National Assembly. The Assembly has 50 members who are popularly elected

to serve five-year terms but have to be pre-approved by the president.

The constitution also established two other representative bodies which are absent in other Central Asian states: ***Halq Maslahaty***, People's Council, and ***Jashulilar Maslakhati***, the Council of Elders. People's Council serves as the highest representative body of "popular power." It unites the three branches of power, the president, cabinet, Majlis deputies, supreme court and supreme economic court judges, 60 directly elected representatives from the regions, and representatives of scholarly and cultural organizations. The Council members serve for five years without compensation, meeting once a year to advise the president, establish broad domestic and foreign policy guidelines, consider constitutional amendments, ratify treaties, etc. It is considered to be the highest body in the country. The Council of Elders was introduce to reflect the tradition of reliance of the advice of the elders in matters of importance. In accordance with the constitution the president has to consult with the council before making domestic and foreign policy decisions. The council is also charged with the task of selecting presidential candidates. Both councils are chaired by the president.

Judicial branch is represented by the Supreme Court. Its 22 judges are appointed by the president. Their function is limited to issues related to the judicial codex, Supreme Law, and to review constitutionality of laws.

Turkmenistan' s politics has been dominated by Saparmurat Niyazov, former first secretary of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan, who was first elected to the office of the president in 1990. His term in office was extended by the 1994 referendum. In 1999, the People's Council proclaimed him president for life. Niyazov's official name (title) is "President Saparmurat Turkmenbashi Niyazov the Great." The title reflects the cult of personality of Niyazov which not only resembles, but exceeds that of Joseph Stalin. In the early post-independence period, the official rationale for Niyazov's cult of personality was the need to prevent the disintegration of the country by uniting the Turkmen tribes around a single leader. Niyazov's book, "Ruhnoma," published in 2000, is presented by the official propaganda as an equivalent, if not a substitute for, the Quran.

Despite constitutional provisions allowing formation of political parties and NGOs, Turkmenistan remains the only CIS country with one-party system. Only the former communist party, which changed its name to Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, is allowed to exist. All opposition activity is banned. The ease with which Niyazov installed an authoritarian regime can be explained by the fact that during perestroika no significant opposition parties or groups emerged in Turkmenistan. All decision-making is concentrated in the hands of Niayzov. At the same time, Turkmenbashi has approved his Ten Year Democratization Plan in accordance with which the country would gradually move toward a multiparty system by 2008 and 2009 at which point the Majlis would be given greater powers.

Until recently Niyazov has also been successful in preventing the rise of opposition in the ranks of the government elites who him reshuffles and imprisons regularly. A string of defections in the late 2001-early 2002 of a number of prominent politicians, most notably Boris Shikhmuradov, a former deputy prime minister and foreign minister, may signal that Niyazov's inner circle is getting increasingly weary of the autocrat's erratic rule.

Civil society. There is practically no civil society in Turkmenistan. The population is completely disenfranchised. Despite constitutional guarantees and legal framework, authorities discourage the formation of NGOs. Only a handful of NGOs which deal with environmental and women's issues are allowed to function, albeit without official registration. Niyazov abolished even the Soviet-era civil society organizations such as unions of journalists, film-makers, etc. He closed down the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan with its branch of research institutes as well as ballet, opera, theater, circus, and philharmonic as unnecessary and incompatible with the Turkmen traditions.

There is no freedom of press and no independent media in Turkmenistan. President Niyazov is listed as the founder of all newspapers published in the country. All media outlets promote Niyazov's cult of personality and refrain from reporting any social or political problems with the exception of Niyazov's criticism and dressing down the officials.

Economy. Turkmenistan is largely a desert country with intensive agriculture in irrigated oases and huge gas and oil resources estimated to be between 2.86 and 7 trillion cubic meters for gas and 6 billion barrels for oil. It has the fifth largest gas reserves in the world and is the world's tenth largest producer of cotton. Other natural resources include coal, sulfur, and salt. Because of the hydrocarbons the industrial sector is the leading in GDP composition with 43 percent, agriculture accounts for 25 percent, and services 32 percent although only 19 percent of the labor force is employed in industry, while 44 percent work in the agricultural

and 37 percent in the service sectors.

Turkmenistan introduced its national currency, ***manat***, in November 1993. Market economic reforms were to start in January 1994 after the adoption of the "Ten Years of Prosperity" program which in part envisaged the privatization of state owned enterprises as well as collective and state farms. In practice, little has been accomplished and the size of the private sector in Turkmenistan is only 25 percent. Evaluation of economic performance is further complicated by lack of reliable data: Even the state budget is not published. Whatever economic data is published gives a positive spin on the performance of the national economy.

There has been no privatization of land. Only 3 hectares can be leased to farmers subject to promises of good behavior. One-half of Turkmenistan's irrigated land is planted in cotton. Other agricultural products include grain and livestock.

Oil and gas industry also remain under state control. Contracts in those industries are awarded arbitrarily by Niyazov and the revenues go to the Presidential Fund, which for all practical purposes have replaced the country's treasury. Development of the energy sector is also hampered by the lack of export pipelines and an agreement on the Caspian Sea delimitation. The former has resulted in Turkmenistan's dependence on exporting its gas through Russia, which has restricted the market to Ukraine and South Caucasus states, often resulting in prolonged episodes of payment arrears. The latter led to disputes with Azerbaijan over a number of offshore oil fields and, as a consequence, lack of commitment to the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project. Both sectors remain in need restructuring and need FDI to do that. So far, Turkmenistan has attracted about $782 million in FDI. Despite legislative measures taken to encourage foreign investment, Turkmenistan is considered to have unfavorable investment climate.

Turkmenistan's economy is heavily dependent on the energy sector as about two-thirds of its GDP and its budget come from the gas industry and gas exports. Gas makes 33 percent of the country's export commodities, followed by oil (30 percent), cotton fiber (18 percent), and textiles (8 percent). Foreign trade partners include Ukraine, Iran, Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan.

Social problems. The country is plagued by the same set of social problems as the rest of the region. Tribal rivalries continue to be a factor despite Niyazov's attempts at nation-building. Corruption is widespread, but lack of any data has prevented Transparency International from ranking Turkmenistan. The country has the lowest life expectancy in the CIS which is 61 years. 58 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The country faces severe environmental problems related to desertification, Caspian Sea pollution, salination, and the contamination of soil and groundwater with agricultural chemicals and pesticides. Turkmenistan is used as a transshipment point for illicit drugs from Southwest Asia to Russia and Western Europe. In general, Turkmenistan remains the most closed country in Central Asia which obscures the true picture of the problems the population may face.

Foreign policy. After independence Turkmenistan became a member of international organizations, including the UN, CIS, OSCE, IMF, World Bank, etc. In December 1995, the UN recognized Turkmenistan as a country with the status of positive neutrality. This reflected President Niyazov's preference for the development of bilateral relations with all countries, above all former Soviet republics, and non-interference in external conflicts. Thus form the start of the civil war in Tajikistan, Ashgabat refused to join Russia and other Central Asian states in their peace-keeping operation in Tajikistan, though it hosted 3 rounds of UN-mediated intra-Tajik peace talks. In keeping with its neutrality status, it refused to join the CIS Collective Security Treaty, the Central Asian Economic Community, or any other multilateral regional organizations, including efforts to deal with the Aral Sea problem, which has often caused frustration on the part of Turkmenistan's neighbors.

Nonetheless, Ashgabat has sought to maintain friendly relations with all of its neighbors, including Iran and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It tried, but failed, to mediate between various Afghan factions. Turkmenistan continued with its policy of neutrality after the start of the US-led anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan in October 2001. In general, Niyazov's authoritarian policies and his growing cult of personality have led to the isolation of the country. Turkmenistani citizens are discouraged from traveling abroad as are foreigners from coming to Turkmenistan. In June 2000, Niyazov prohibited citizens from holding foreign accounts and established the Council for the Supervision of Foreigners.

Turkmenistan's armed forces consist of an army (14,500 troops) and an air force (3,000). Presently, its navy is part of the Caspian Sea Flotilla, which is based in Astrakhan (Russia) and is under the joint command of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. In accordance with the Turkmen-Russian-Turkish agreement, Turkmenistan's armed forces operate under joint Turkmen-Russian command with the participation of Turkish military advisors until they are developed.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- Why Turkmenistan is the only Central Asian state where political opposition is virtually nonexistent?
- What can explain the rise of President Niyazov's cult of personality?
- Has the policy of "positive neutrality" contributed to Turkmenistan's isolation?

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UZBEKISTAN

Government and politics. The Republic of Uzbekistan, a country slightly larger than California, proclaimed independence of 1 September 1991. In accordance with the constitution adopted in December 1992, it is a presidential republic with separation of powers. Administratively it is divided into 12 provinces, ***wiloyatlar***, 1 autonomous republic of Qaraqalpaqston, and capital city of Tashkent.

The president is elected to a five-year term and can serve two consecutive terms. He is given extensive powers, including the right to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and members of the cabinet (with the parliamentary approval), establish and dissolve ministries, appoint and dismiss judges of all levels, provincial governors and local administrators, initiate legislation and return laws passed by parliament for reconsideration, etc. The president enjoys personal immunity and at the end of his term he becomes a lifetime member of the Constitutional Court.

Legislative branch is represented by the unicameral ***Oliy Majlis***, Supreme Assembly. It has 250 members who are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms and meet two times a year unless there is a need for a special session. The assembly has the right to initiate and pass legislation as well as execute policies through committee work.

Though nominally separate, judicial branch is subordinate to the Ministry of Justice, i.e., to the executive branch. It consists of the Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, and High Economic Court. Judges and procurators of all levels are appointed and dismissed by the president. To observe impartiality they are prohibited from being members of a political party.

Since independence Uzbekistan has had only one president – Islam Karimov who was first elected in March 1990, reelected in 1992, had his power extended by a referendum in 1995, and reelected again in January 2000. In the early 1990s, the country briefly enjoyed a period of political liberalization and pluralism. Opposition political parties such as Birlik, Erk, and Islamic Rebirth Party were allowed to exist even though unregistered officially. In 1992, Muhammad Solykh, opposition's candidate, ran in presidential elections against Karimov and got about 14 percent of the votes amidst allegations that the elections were rigged.

Developments in neighboring Tajikistan, where the Tajik opposition, a coalition of secular and Islamist groups and parties, became a formidable force, and where the civil war broke out at the end of 1992, led Karimov to crack down on both secular and religious opposition in Uzbekistan. The president of Uzbekistan was afraid that the success of the UTO would serve as a stimulus for the Uzbek opposition and further embolden it in its actions. Also he was concerned about the possibility of irredentism on the part of the Tajik minority against the backdrop of the calls in Tajikistan to "return" Tajik-populated cities of Bukhara and Samarqand to

Tajikistan. All opposition activity and that of ethnic minorities was banned and only loyal political parties are allowed to exist. Currently, there are five registered political parties all of which have representation in the National Assembly elected in December 1999: People's Democratic Party (NDP, 48 seats), Fidokorlar (Self-Sacrificers) National Democratic Party (34 seats), Fatherland Progress Party (20 seats), Adolat (Justice) Social Democratic Party (11 seats), National Rebirth Party (MTP, 10 seats). Until 1996, Islam Karimov was a member of the NDP, former communists, when he withdrew claiming that the president represents the entire population of the country. Presidential and parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan are largely ceremonial rather than genuinely competitive. During the 2000 presidential elections even Karimov's "opponent," Abdulhafiz Jalolov of the NDP, publicly stated that he would vote the incumbent.

Karimov's strong-arm tactics have backfired as the opposition, especially Islamic, became more radical. In February 1999, bombs went of in different parts of Tashkent which the government variably attributed to the Islamists and secular opposition groups. The bombings which killed 16 and injured more than 100 people led to a further crackdown on the opposition and a number of death sentences and long prison sentences in absentia to prominent opposition. International human rights and lawyers groups estimate that there are at least 7,000 political prisoners in Uzbekistan.

In 1999, to tighten control over the polity, Islam Karimov initiated the institutionalization of the ***mahalla*** (neighborhood) committees as a part of his administrative structure. Mahallas, which historically formed around a mosque and provided social services to its members, were given the powers of self-government yet as part of the central government structure. Mahalla committee members receive state salaries.

Bombings in Tashkent coincided with the emergence, if were not were the first act, of the ***Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)***. It was first formed in 1995 under the name of the Islamic Revival Movement of Uzbekistan which apparently reflected the fact that many of its leaders and members were fighting within the ranks of the Islamic Revival Movement of Tajikistan. With the end of the Tajik civil war, they branched off into a separate group based in Afghanistan which advocated the overthrow of the existing regime in Tashkent by declaring jihad against it and establishing an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. In 1999 and 2000, it attempted and partially succeeded in penetrating Uzbekistan through Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, taking hostages, including foreigners, and engaging in skirmishes with the Kyrgyz and Uzbek army. In 2000, the State Department declared it a terrorist organization. The IMU was reported to have established ties with and enjoy support of Osama bin Laden. After the launch of the anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan in October 2001, the IMU was reported to have been dealt a severe blow and its leader, Juma Namangani, killed.

Another important Islamist group active in Uzbekistan is ***Hizbi Tahrir*** (HT, Party of Liberation) which is a branch of the party established in the Middle East in 1950s. Its goal is wider than that of the IMU: HT wants to establish the restoration of an Islamic Caliphate in Central Asia and beyond. The other difference is that HT hopes to achieve its goal through nonviolent means.

This may be increasingly impossible and unappealing to HT and other opposition groups as the Karimov government shows no signs of opening up political space in the country. Continued emphasis on repression and domination of politics by one man coupled with deteriorating living standards make political future of Uzbekistan -- as well as of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan where the situation is similar – inherently unstable.

Civil society. According to the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan, there are more than 2,300 registered NGOs in the country. There is practically no distinction between government-approved and government-organized NGOs. Only those public organizations that are deemed to have no political agenda are allowed to function. Those primarily include women's and environmental groups, WWII veterans, etc.

According to the Ministry of Justice, there are about 25 TV and 2 radio stations, 480 newspapers, and 140 journals Uzbekistan. All broadcast media are subject to annual re-registration. Though there is a number of independent electronic and print media outlets, in general media is under direct government control. Despite the exercise of self-censorship independent media outlets are often closed. In accordance with government regulations all TV and radio programming is taped. Criticism of President Islam Karimov is a criminal offense as is the distribution of newspapers published by opposition parties in exile.

Economy. At independence, Uzbekistan had a more diversified economy than other Central Asian states with the exception of Kazakhstan yet still predominantly agricultural. Today, agricultural sector accounts for 28 percent of GDP and 44 percent of the

labor force, industry 21 and 20 percent, and services 51 and 36 percent correspondingly. Uzbekistan is rich in natural resources which include natural gas, petroleum, coal, gold, uranium, silver, copper, lead and zinc, tungsten, molybdenum, etc. Uzbekistan is the third largest producer of cotton.

After independence, Uzbekistan continues to pursue statist economic policy, advocating a measured transition to market economy ostensibly to preserve social stability which, the government argues, will be upset by mass privatization and price deregulation. It thus maintains tight controls on production and prices and government subsidies on many items, including municipal utilities, and generally upholds Soviet-era welfare system. It refuses to introduce full convertibility of its national currency, ***sum*** (launched in June 1994), despite a number of agreements reached with the IMF which made the latter to withdraw from the country. Only in July 2002, the government took what is expected to be the first step toward full convertibility when it abolished multiple exchange rates. According to official statistics, the size of the private sector is 45 percent of GDP. Yet this and other economic figures are viewed by international financial institutions as unreliable. Besides, government regulations define as privatized even those enterprises and businesses which have been transformed into joint stock companies where the government is the only shareholder.

Tashkent Production Association named after V. Chkalov

Major industries include textiles, food processing, machine building, metallurgy, natural gas, and chemicals. Only 10 percent of its territory is suitable for cultivation. Agricultural sector is focused on producing cotton, vegetables, fruits, grain, and livestock breeding. Export commodities include cotton, gold, natural gas, mineral fertilizers, ferrous metals, textiles, food products, and automobiles. Uzbekistan's major export partners are Russia (13 percent), Switzerland, and UK (10 percent each). The country imports machinery and equipment, chemicals, metals, and foodstuffs. Major imports partners are Russia (14 percent), South Korea (14 percent), Germany (11 percent), and US (8 percent). A growing debt burden, persistent inflation, and a poor business climate led to stagnant growth in 2000, with little improvement predicted for 2001.

The official economic policy also stresses self-sufficiency which has limited country's integration into the world economy. In this sense, its response to the negative external conditions generated by the Asian and Russian financial crises was typical: Export and currency controls were further tightened. Steps taken toward introducing some elements and institutions of market economy have not prevented the country from running high inflation (50 percent in 2000). Despite the adoption of legislation favorable to foreign investment, the country failed to attract any significant FDI which in 2000 stood at $73 million and reflected a steady decline since 1997 when it peaked at $167 million. A growing debt burden, persistent inflation, ageing infrastructure, and a poor business

climate have led to stagnant growth in the recent years.

Social problems. Uzbekistan faces the same social problems as other countries of the region: Increase in drug trafficking, corruption (the country ranks 79 out of 90 states), crime, poverty (the government does not publish data on the percentage of the population below poverty line); declining life expectancy, quality of social and health services.

It also experiences severe environmental problems caused by the desiccation of the Aral Sea which has resulted in growing concentrations of chemical pesticides and natural salts which are blown from the increasingly exposed lake bed and contribute to desertification. Water pollution from industrial wastes and the heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides have caused severe health problems and a sharp drop in life expectancy, especially in the Aral Sea region.

Foreign policy. Since independence Uzbekistan has pursued a foreign policy aimed at protecting and strengthening its independence predicated in part on the perceived threat of the resurgent Russian neo-imperialism of the early 1990s. It sought to establish close relations with the west yet those relations have been strained due to Islam Karimov's authoritarian policies and human rights abuses except when the Uzbek president showed signs of change. Economic relations with the west have also not lived up to earlier expectations as the preservation of the essentially command economic system failed to attract FDI. Many of foreign entrepreneurs and businesses who came to Uzbekistan after 1991 subsequently left the country.

At the same time, Karimov succeeded in developing strong military relations with the United States following then-Secretary of Defense William Perry's visit in 1995 preceded by Uzbekistan's joining PfP in 1994. Uzbekistan has arguably the most capable armed forces in the region. At independence, Tashkent was the headquarters of the Soviet Turkestan Military District and hosted 3 Soviet army military schools. That plus the military infrastructure provided a good foundation for the building of the armed forces of independent Uzbekistan. At present, they consist of a 44,000-strong army and an air force of 15,000. In addition, there are paramilitary units of 18,000-20,000 personnel, including a 700-strong National Guard which protects the president.

US-Uzbek military relations proved very important in 2001 when Uzbekistan promptly made available its Khanabad base on the Uzbek-Afghan border for the US military engaged in anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan's relations with Russia have not been steady though Moscow continues to be the country's major trade partner. Concerns about neo-imperialist rhetoric on the part of Russian elites have encouraged Tashkent to pursue a more independent foreign policy and avoid any multilateral arrangements of political or security nature within the CIS. In 1995, Tashkent dramatically changed its policy toward Tajikistan, where it initially supported President Rahmonov government against the UTO, to favor, to the displeasure of Moscow, the return of the opposition and its inclusion in the Tajik government. For this reason Uzbekistan also withdrew from the CIS Collective Security Treaty in 1999. At the same time, Karimov signed a 2002 left the GUUAM (acronym for Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova), which has been considered by many in the west as a counterbalance to the Russia-dominated CIS. He has also joined the Russia- and China-led Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001 (check), which is acquiring a more pronounced political and security character.

Uzbekistan's relations with its Central Asian neighbors have been strained due to the perceived strife for regional domination shared by other Central Asians vis-a-vis the Uzbeks. As mentioned earlier, attempts at regional economic integration and security cooperation within the framework of Central Asian Economic Community failed. Relations with the neighbors further deteriorated after Uzbekistan mined its borders, following the IMU raids, which resulted in a number of civil casualties.

Relations with Turkey have been marred since the late 1990s when Tashkent accused Ankara that it harbors Uzbek opposition leaders, resulting in closure of Turkish colleges and the withdrawal of Uzbek students enrolled in Turkish universities. Relations with Iran have remained cool because of the suspicions that Teheran's agenda includes support for Uzbek Islamists. Instead, Tashkent opted for close relations with Israel seeing them as another element in developing close relations with the United States and the west.

Issues and questions for further exploration

- How does the government of Uzbekistan explain slow pace of economic and political reforms in the country?

- The impact of the Afghan and Tajik politics on Uzbekistan's policy toward Uzbek Islamists and the country's foreign policy.
- In what ways do history, geography, and demographic influence Uzbekistan's regional policy ?

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-
- z – online edition of *The Almaty Herald*, in English
- . – Russian site with English option
- – Library of Congress site
- – Harvard University
- – *The Times of Central Asia*
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- – Turkmenistan Embassy in U.S.
- – Uzbek Embassy in U.S.
- – Kyrgyz Embassy in U.S.
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- – Turkemenistan's presidential site

- – Kazakstan's presidential site
- – Site for Kyrgyz government, in Russian
- – Site for Uzbek government, in Russian

Many periodicals and scholarly journals focus on Central Asia:

- Ala Tau
- Archaeology and Anthropology of Eurasia
- Central and Inner Asian Studies
- Central Asia and the Caucasus
- Central Asia and the Caucasus in World Affairs
- Central Asia File
- Central Asian Monitor
- Central Asian Survey
- Current History
- Economist
- Far Eastern Economic Review
- Foreign Affairs
- Foreign Policy
- Inner Asia Report
- International Security
- Orbis
- Transition
- Post-Soviet Affairs
- Post-Soviet Geography
- Problems of Post-Communism
- Prism
- Slavic Review

- Slavonic and East European Review