



UNISCI Discussion Papers

SECURITY ISSUES IN CENTRAL ASIA AND FOREIGN SECURITY POLICIES OF KAZAKHSTAN AND UZBEKISTAN

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper will be to discuss and analyze the security structure in Central Asia in general, and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in particular; during the post-Cold War period. Following the official disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the creation of newly independent states in Central Asia, the security situation in the region was thrown into turmoil and uncertainty. With the Russian state increasingly concerned with its internal woes, from Chechnya (two wars in the 1990s) as well as pressing economic problems in the transition from communism to capitalism; Central Asia's security scenario was filled with potential problems from religious extremism of the Islamic variety to ultra-nationalist impulses, and from border conflicts to sensitive water and environmental concerns.

Moreover, unlike the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) security umbrella that gives a structure to North American and European security, Central Asia lacks any established internal security structure. Currently, there is a "regional security complex" developing that is a negative one around the Ferghana Valley where Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan meet and an active Islamist movement that transcends national borders challenges the secularist regimes of Central Asia². On the other hand, the Caspian Sea region stretching from Russia and Iran to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan, might provide Central Asia with "a potential security complex based on positive security interactions."³ However, the tragic events of September 11, 2001, have led to a re-evaluation of the security policies of Central Asian states in general and the largest states in the region in particular, namely, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Outside powers such as the United States, the world's sole remaining superpower - as well as Western and Japanese multinational corporations - are especially concerned about the region due to its geo-strategic value as well as its vast potential of oil reserves.⁴ Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey also have interests in the Central Asian region from political and cultural ties to investments and broader security concerns. While the role of the big powers in the region is of fundamental importance in terms of political and economic security, the Central Asian countries would like to believe that "the

¹ Las opiniones expresadas en estos artículos son propias de sus autores. Estos artículos no reflejan necesariamente la opinión de UNISCI. The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors. These articles do not necessarily reflect the views of UNISCI

² Allison, Roy and Johnson, Lena (eds.) (2001): *Central Asian Security*. Washington, Brookings. Pp.7

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Alaolmolki, Nozar (2001): *Life After the Soviet Union*. Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press. Pp.10



cornerstone of American foreign policy in Central Asia is securing the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states."⁵ Yet, given the increasing and bold securitization of U.S., Russian, and Chinese foreign policies in the new "war on terrorism," the words of Ambassador Sestanovich might ring hollow in a world in which Islamic militants easily cross national borders and have the potential to push Central Asia into new heights of instability and tension.

In order to counter the influence of foreign powers in the Central Asian region, the emergence of any regional security structure depends on the largest regional states, namely, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. These two regional powers in Central Asia must seek to mould a new security arrangement that leaves the region sovereign and independent. Yet this security arrangement has been hampered by the different security positions and challenges faced by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In short, this paper will seek to compare and contrast the foreign security policies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as the reasons for the differing security position of the two Central Asian states. The geopolitical situation in Central Asia will be reviewed, while the security threats posed for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan will be highlighted and analyzed. This will be followed by an examination of the emerging security structures in the region, which have been initiated internally by states within Central Asia and externally by the big powers operating within the region. The paper will conclude with an attempt to understand the new security situation in Central Asia and security policies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan after the events of September 11, 2001.

2. New Definitions of Security

In the post-Cold War era, definitions and paradigms surrounding what entails "security" are rapidly changing. Whereas military sophistication and strategic assets were once key to security and defense circles, now it is more likely that economic insecurity, poverty, AIDS, immigration, or the fight against drugs and organized crime might all be critical questions of "high security" to different nations or regions. It is under the context of the changed security context of the post-Cold War era where communism versus capitalism, East versus West, or liberal democracy versus totalitarianism, are no longer the key dividing lines between different parts of the globe. With respect to Central Asia, regional security might be heavily influenced by the competition of the big regional players such as Russia, Iran, and Turkey, but real, permanent security will entail an attention to more than merely political or military considerations.⁶

In the work entitled *Security* by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, the authors view securitization "as a more extreme version of politicization."⁷ In short, a public issue can be nonpoliticized in that the state is not involved, solved through normal political channels and the established rules of the game, or it can be securitized. If the latter occurs, the securitized public issue is presented as an extreme existential threat to the state, community, or its most cherished values. This "securitization" process will require emergency measures and state actions outside the typical public policy debates and resource allocation procedures. We now briefly discuss the most salient features of the "securitization" process.

⁵ U.S. Ambassador Stephen Sestanovich in Alaolmolki, Nozar (2001): *Life After the Soviet Union*. Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press. Pp.10

⁶ Peimani, Hooman (1998): *Regional Security and the Future of Central Asia*. London, Praeger. Pp.15

⁷ Buzan, Barry et al. (1998): *Security*. Boulder, Colorado. Westview Press. Pp.23



It is important to recognize that the “securitization” process will vary according to country, culture, issue, circumstances, and time considerations. So, for example, some countries like Uzbekistan accord a high degree of politicization to the question of religion, whereas other nations like the United States and France are secular régimes, which do not politicize religion. In many countries today, whether Western or non-Western countries, the issues of culture, nationalities, ethnic conflict, and immigration have become securitized. Many nations, regions, and cultures around the world seek to protect their sovereignty or autonomy against what they view as the homogenized steamroller of global capitalism and an Americanization of lifestyles and mentalities.

A nation might interpret its cultural values as non-negotiable, which could entail a use of physical, military force to preserve them against diametrically opposed Western values. In non-Western countries with a history of colonialism, certain values may be so powerfully embedded in the population that they become a security issue. An attack on one’s culture, language, or religion can be interpreted as a basic existential threat to individuals and a nation. In this scenario, the cultural threat becomes as politicized and securitized as the direct military threat of one country against another. This is important to keep in mind when considering the vital importance of religion in Uzbek politics and the corresponding importance of nationalism in Kazakh political life.

Another important dimension of the “securitization” process is that it is an issue, which takes absolute precedence in the foreign policy rationale of a nation. It is often considered an issue, which must be tackled in order to preserve the physical and spiritual survival of a nation. For each country, the exact definition and criteria of securitization will depend on the subjective evaluations of existential threat. For some countries like the United States, the economic threat will be the key motivating force of action, whereas for others like Native Indians it will be the defense of a culture and way of life. The issue will be fully securitized once the population accepts it. Otherwise, what exists is a "securitizing move" rather than complete securitization.⁸

A successful securitization will have three components: existential threats, emergency action, and effects on inter-unit relations by breaking rules.⁹ In addition, depending on the gravity of the case, securitization can be either institutionalized or ad hoc in nature. Finally, a securitizing process will involve a whole network of actors, units, and environmental factors beyond mere state units.

In a global and interdependent world, the question of security has acquired new meanings. It is no longer defined in the traditional military and state-centric approach. Economic, cultural, or environmental factors may all threaten the very survival of a nation. The “securitization” process and assessment will vary according to national-cultural considerations, circumstances, and across time. A fully securitized issue for one nation will not be viewed with the same lenses for another nation. While the security threat of a ruthless military aggressor is obvious, the securitization process has identified some new objective and subjective security threats for the next millennium. In countries of the former Third World, the fight against poverty, mass starvation zones, and huge areas of unemployment have become key security issues. However, many new states or former Third World military regimes continue to waste crucial resources in ethnic, nationalist, or resource-based wars. It follows from our discussion about new security paradigms that in order for Central Asian security to

⁸ *Ibid.* Pp.25

⁹ *Ibid.* Pp.26



be stable, effective, and just, it must undergo a process of re-evaluation that explores non-military paths towards a common regional security framework.

3.The Geopolitics of Central Asia

Central Asia has gained increasing geopolitical importance in the post-communist, post-Cold War period. Ahmed Rashid predicts that it will be Central Asia that will be the setting of the next "Great Game" for the world's biggest powers from the United States and Russia to China and Western Europe, especially since Kazakhstan has the region's largest oil reserves and Turkmenistan has its largest gas reserves.¹⁰ The confluence of past empires in the region, the current geopolitical competition in Central Asia, the spreading influence of Islam, and the continuing influence or intervention of old colonial master Russia creates daunting security considerations for the region at large.¹¹

In particular, the civil war in Tajikistan presented many worries for the other states in the region, especially in terms of ethnic conflicts within their own borders. The presence of millions of ethnic Russians in Central Asia, which Russian nationalists and chauvinists within Russia see as a national humiliation, could also create tensions between Russia and the other central Asian states. Yet, in Kazakhstan a delicate balance has hitherto been struck between the government's simultaneous appeal to Kazakh identity and attempt to assuage the concerns of their Russian populations as well as Russia too.¹² In Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states within the Ferghana Valley, a resurgent Islam has spread, capitalizing on both the authoritarian tendencies of the government and the increasing transnational nature of the pan-Islamic movement. These conflicts have encouraged the revival of titular variants of nationalism throughout Central Asia, which tend to exacerbate conflicts with Russian and other minorities.

In more recent times, the "war on terrorism" in Afghanistan waged by the United States is also secondarily about geopolitical concerns, the control of vast oil and other resources, and the attempt to subdue ethnic conflicts in the region for the interests of large multinational corporations. The new priorities in Central Asia in the wake of September 11, 2001, are fighting Islamic militancy and finding a common, comprehensive security framework for the area.

Central Asia was the last region that was subdued by imperial Russia in the 19th and 20th centuries due to the independence of the region, the nomadic and tribal traditions of its inhabitants, and the strong legacy of the Islamic faith in the region in contrast to Slavic, Russian Orthodoxy. Central Asians resisted Russian imperial advances during the "great game" period of conquest, but also during the Russian Revolution.¹³ Yet, the influx of large waves of Russian colonists would have serious repercussions on relations between the minority Russians and the new, titular majorities in Central Asia. This is a problem that continues to plague the region in the new millennium, particularly in Kazakhstan. While Islam was used as a banner of national identity by most of the new, independent states in Central Asia, the so-called "Islamic

¹⁰ In Rashid, Ahmed (2000): *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. New Haven, Yale University Press and Garnett, Sherman W. et al. (2000): *The New Central Asia in Search of Stability*. New York, The Trilateral Commission. Pp.13

¹¹Solomon in Olcott, Martha Brill (1996): *Central Asia's New States*. Washington, United States Institute of Peace Press. Pp.ix

¹² *Ibid.* Pp.x

¹³ Anderson, John (1997): *The International Politics of Central Asia*. Manchester, Manchester University Press. Pp.8-26



threat" was rather limited in terms of its popular appeal and national governments have sought to discourage extremism in all its manifestations, whether Islamic or secular nationalist in orientation.¹⁴ It was only in the Ferghana Valley and Uzbekistan in particular that a militant, pan-Islamic movement has been able to flourish and model itself on Osama bin-Laden's al-Qaeda organization (i.e., the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan – IMU)

In general, Central Asia in general and even the largest states in the region (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) have been moulded by a triple legacy of imperialism, dependence, and interdependence.¹⁵ The attempts of the two states to carve out their autonomous foreign security policies have been limited by the presence of Russia, Turkey, Iran, China, and especially the United States in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001. So, for example, U.S. State Department officials have listed the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in its category of outlawed terrorist groups, which could eventually mean that the "war on terrorism" spreads to Uzbekistan in order to oust Islamic militants from that country. Yet, since the Islamic militants operate in several countries within the fertile Ferghana Valley, a security cooperation arrangement will be needed by, at minimum, three of the Central Asian countries in the area. A second task for the Central Asian states is the legacy of the Soviet empire, which has left Central Asian states dependent on Moscow in a period in time where Russia's perception of dominance now supersedes its military muscle.¹⁶

Geopolitics in Central Asia is driven by a unique set of internal and external dynamics.¹⁷ Most significantly, the Soviet Union's former military forces, installations, and even nuclear weapons (i.e., Kazakhstan) were stationed in Central Asia, which tended to undermine the autonomy of the new Central Asian states. Russia was eager for bilateral security, military, and political ties with Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. Kazakhstan has a very large Russian minority, while its 6,000 km border with Russia is a concern to authorities on both sides of the long border.¹⁸

Yet, Russia's internal economic problems, the lack of personnel, and the absence of a co-ordinated security policy in Central Asia led to Russia's "involuntary disengagement" from Central Asia.¹⁹ While Russia remains highly influential in the region, it can no longer unilaterally define "the nature and extent of purported common interests with Central Asian states."²⁰ In particular, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the two largest regional players in Central Asia, as well as other Central Asian states such as Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan (yet not Tajikistan which was embroiled in a bloody civil war), sought to diversify their security ties and positions in the 1990s beyond Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or bilateral agreements with Russia.²¹ As a result, Turkey, Iran, and China were increasingly engaged in Central Asia in the 1990s, while Asian and Western investors and governments saw the region as vitally important in terms of new oil resources. The simmering Palestinian-Israeli or Arab-Israeli conflicts, which has been intensified by the *intifada* that began in 2000, as well as

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Pp.159

¹⁵ Dawisha in Dawisha, Adeed and Dawisha, Karen (1995): *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. London, M.E. Sharpe. Pp. 340-346

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Pp.345-346

¹⁷ Allison, Roy and Johnson, Lena (eds.) (2001): *Central Asian Security*. Washington, Brookings. Pp.12-18

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Pp.2

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Pp.3

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*



Western fear of the power of Arab oil and the oil weapon, have led Western and other countries such as Japan to look to Central Asia in search of new oil markets.

A key question is whether the geopolitical involvement of large powers in Central Asia can "contribute to peace and stability in the region," or whether contacts with the wider international community "can enhance opportunities for the Central Asian states to develop their economies, build more democratic societies and resolve conflicts."²² The authoritarian tendencies of the governments in the region, especially in Uzbekistan, have merely tended to exacerbate religious extremism.

4.Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan hold the geopolitical key for the collection of Central Asian states. These two central Asian states are the largest and most ambitious security players in the region. Martha Brill Olcott insists that Uzbekistan is Central Asia's "instinctive imperialist," while Kazakhstan must contend with its huge reliance on Russia for trade and security matters.²³ In short, while Uzbekistan has been able to somewhat distance itself from Moscow, it is almost unthinkable for Kazakhstan to pursue an anti-Russian foreign policy or derussianize its security policy since "Russians have for several hundred years looked upon Kazakhstan as their frontier" and about half of its Slavic population came to Kazakhstan in the years since World War Two.²⁴ In short, Kazakhstan's independent security and foreign policies are doomed its demographic proximity to Russia, while "good sense" means coming to terms with Russia, or even cultivating close ties with Russia as a part of a general strategic doctrine.²⁵

The situation in Uzbekistan is rather different from Kazakhstan on the foreign policy and security terrains. Uzbekistan had fears of spill over from the civil war in Tajikistan since over one million Uzbeks live in Tajikistan, while over 1.3 million Uzbeks have been fatally affected by the civil war in Afghanistan in the 1990s. Uzbek leaders have been constantly haunted by the prospects that their country would turn into a second yet larger Tajikistan with a bloody civil war of competing ethnic groups and secular-religious camps.²⁶ In Uzbekistan, a more recent problem is the rise of a extreme religious group with ties to the Taliban, bin-Laden, and international terrorism. It is for this reason that political expressions of Islam have been curtailed and suppressed by the Uzbek government.²⁷ Yet, the "iron rule" of leaders such as Islam Karimov, which has been obsessed with preventing a repeat of the civil war in Tajikistan,²⁸ might actually work to alienate some ethnic groups, halt much needed foreign investment, and encourage societal violence to counter the extreme violence of the Uzbek state. In Uzbekistan, the Communist Party was also the strongest in Central Asia, which further encouraged extra-legal challenges to the state such as Islamic movements.

Uzbekistan's security concerns, then, were controlling internal secular critics to Karimov's authoritarian rule, taming the rise of political and fundamentalist Islam, and preventing a Tajikistan-like civil war.²⁹ Uzbekistan also claims the right to intervene to help its fellow Uzbeks beyond its borders, which worries the other Central Asian states in the region.

²² *Ibid.* Pp.4

²³ Olcott, Martha Brill (1996): *Central Asia's New States*. Washington, United States Institute of Peace Press. Pp.57-59, 113

²⁴ *Ibid.* Pp.59

²⁵ *Ibid.* Pp.62-63

²⁶ *Ibid.* Pp.113

²⁷ *Ibid.* Pp.112-113

²⁸ *Ibid.* Pp.114

²⁹ *Ibid.* Pp.115-128



Uzbekistan is especially concerned about its neighbor Tajikistan. While stemming the rise of the Tajik civil war onto its own borders was a key concern for Uzbekistan, another important interest for the Uzbek government was to advance the interests of Tajikistan's Uzbeks. This situation has caused friction with Tajikistan with the latter accusing Uzbekistan of meddling in its own internal affairs.³⁰ Uzbek and Russian soldiers have been stationed in Tajikistan in order to monitor the civil war, while credible reports suggest that Uzbek air power has been used on Tajik rebels in Afghanistan.³¹ Uzbekistan's army is also the largest and most organized in Central Asia, thus feeding the leadership ambitions of President Karimov that it will be the key Central Asian security player in the new millennium. Only Kazakhstan can legitimately challenge Uzbekistan in the region for military hegemony, while states like Kyrgyzstan increasingly feel threatened, thereby desiring the Russian presence to balance Uzbekistan's ambition.

The one major difference between Uzbek and Kazakh security policies is that the former has been more confrontational with Moscow than the latter. While avoiding outright confrontation with Moscow, Uzbekistan still insists that "the future of Central Asia will be determined in Moscow."³² Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries seek positive economic relations with Russia, while Russia's authoritarian turn has only strengthened authoritarian tendencies in Uzbekistan. This gives Uzbekistan a free reign to stamp out internal critics in exchange for stability for the Russians. Yet, given Russia's military build-up in the region due to the Tajik war and the "war on terrorism," it might only be a matter of time before Uzbek hegemony is challenged by a larger Russian hegemony.

5.Security Complex in Central Asia

As mentioned earlier, both internal and external players have attempted to shape and mould Central Asia's security framework in the post-Cold War era. The largest internal players are Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, while the most prominent external actors are Russia, China, Turkey, and Iran. The United States, which remains the world's only remaining superpower, also has a significant impact on Central Asia, particularly after the war in Afghanistan as part of a larger "war on terrorism." The United States seeks to eliminate the violent, extremist Islamic militants in the region, especially in the Ferghana Valley region. Yet, Moscow has been especially wary of U.S. intervention in what is traditionally considered its sphere of influence in Central Asia. The recent NATO talks between Moscow and Washington, as well as the common anti-militant Islamic front of Russia and the United States in the "war on terrorism," means that security co-operation between the two powers will increasingly become a military necessity due to the weakened nature of Russia.³³ The security complex of the region might even include nuclear powers India and Pakistan.³⁴

In terms of the actors in the Central Asian region, the ambitions and rivalries between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as the intense security rivalry between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, might retard the ability of the United States to form co-operative security and peacekeeping efforts.³⁵ Washington has now encouraged three separate battalions for future security actions, which reflects the inability of the three Central Asian states to act jointly

³⁰ *Ibid.* Pp.128-129

³¹ *Ibid.* Pp.128

³² *Ibid.* Pp.136

³³ Garnett, Sherman W. et al. (2000): *The New Central Asia in Search of Stability*. New York, The Trilateral Commission. Pp.8

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.* Pp.28



within security concerns.³⁶ The remote nature of the Central Asian region has further Washington's ability to act in the region.

It should be further pointed out that internally and regionally Central Asia can be viewed as a "regional security complex," or what Buzan calls "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another."³⁷ Issues such as Islamic militancy, terrorism, the drug trade, appeasing Russia's minorities, and safeguarding the oil and gas resources of the region link many of the Central Asian states' security concerns, while the lack of democratization (authoritarianism) and human rights in the region serves to ultimately create schisms between civil society and the states in the region. In addition, there is a sort of cultural cohesion of shared interests in Central Asia since most of the titular cultural groups in the region are Sunni Muslims that speak Turkic languages, with the exception of Tajikistan.³⁸

The security complex might be extend beyond the given borders, particularly in relation to the new "war on terrorism" or the common cooperation around oil interests of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Russia.³⁹ Yet, in general, a "security complex" includes strategic interests, historical and cultural affinities, economic interests, and common security concerns such as the new war on terrorism and Islamic militancy.⁴⁰ However, the danger is the rivalries between and within the Central Asian states will create a new Balkans with "ethnic cleansing" and civil war as the prevailing norms. Another danger is that different regional states such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan will turn to competing powers, thus heightening tensions in the region.

It is rather interesting that as Russia's resources were stretched and as it dealt with more pressing woes such as Chechnya, military co-operation between Russia and the Central Asian states declined in the 1990s. Russia will still provide arms to the region in order to preserve internal "stability," continue anti-terrorist co-ordination in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, and continue to use the military contingent in Tajikistan in order to arrest the outbreak of a new civil war in that country. This means that the Central Asians will require greater security self-sufficiency. Yet the failure of the states in the region to undertake joint military co-operation fails to inspire confidence in Russia or the United States, although a joint peacekeeping battalion of Kazakh, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz forces has been created.⁴¹ The superior military force of Uzbekistan makes the other states in Central Asia fearful of security co-operation with a partner that might have regional, imperial designs.

The other security policies might include the guarantee of security by another powerful non-Central Asian state.⁴² The United States has shown some readiness to perform this task, while China with its Muslim separatist threat in Xinjiang might be eager to perform this role in order to stem the tide of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia.⁴³ Turkey is also training Central Asian officers, which might also give that country a role in future security arrangements.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Buzan in Allison, Roy and Johnson, Lena (eds.) (2001): *Central Asian Security*. Washington, Brookings. Pp.5

³⁸ Allison, Roy and Johnson, Lena (eds.) (2001): *Central Asian Security*. Washington, Brookings. Pp.6

³⁹ *Ibid.* Pp.7-8

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Pp.14-15

⁴¹ *Ibid.* Pp.19

⁴² *Ibid.* Pp.19-29

⁴³ *Ibid.* Pp.19



The most important multilateral security arrangement in the region was based on the CIS organization and was known as the Tashkent Treaty of Collective Security (1992). The organization excluded Turkmenistan, while it only met to discuss threats from Afghanistan.⁴⁴ Uzbekistan allowed its membership in the treaty to lapse in 1999, but it might increasingly be an appropriate security framework in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001. Kazakhstan has offered an Asian variant of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe--Conference on Interaction and Confidence building measures in Asia(CICA), while Uzbekistan strongly supported a Nuclear-free Central Asia.⁴⁵ Other regional efforts of co-operation include the Shanghai Form (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), which was established in 1996 and has worked towards military reductions, confidence building measures, and a regular mechanism for consultations.⁴⁶ In short, it is still uncertain which security framework best addresses the needs of Central Asia without unduly alienating big powers like Russia, China, and the United States.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has attempted to examine the security complex in Central Asia and the security policies of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in particular. The paper began with an examination of the geopolitical importance of Central Asia in the post-Cold War period, the new security threats, and the security orientation of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in particular. New definitions of security point out that military solutions alone will not provide long-term security for either Central Asian states or its population. While the security complex in the region is complex and highly interactive, it is also one that is still not fully defined. The hegemonic tendencies of Uzbekistan have failed to produce a regional security framework governed by Central Asians themselves.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan hold the geopolitical key for the collection of Central Asian states. That is why the emergence of any regional security structure depends on these two largest regional states. Yet, this security arrangement has been hampered by the different security positions and challenges faced by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan respectively. This is important to keep in mind when considering the vital importance of religion in Uzbek politics and the corresponding importance of nationalism in Kazakh political life. In other words, in Uzbekistan security concerns were controlling internal secular critics to Karimov's authoritarian rule, taming the rise of political and fundamentalist Islam, and preventing a Tajikistan-like civil war, while in Kazakhstan an effort towards a delicate balance has hitherto been struck between the government's simultaneous appeal to Kazakh identity and attempt to assuage the concerns of their Russian populations as well as Russia.

On the other hands, while Uzbekistan was seen as Central Asia's "instinctive imperialist," being somewhat able to distance itself from Moscow, it is almost impossible for Kazakhstan to pursue an anti-Russian foreign policy given to its closeness to Russia, historical experience it has had with Russia, and having half of its population being Slavic.

To fill the security void, the events of September 11, 2001 and the new "war on terrorism" have led the Bush administration to turn a blind eye to authoritarian tendencies amongst Central Asian states and led to further militarization of both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.⁴⁷ Both countries seek greater Western investment opportunities, while

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Pp.20

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Pp.21

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Kalpykova, Marjan: "US-Kazakh Relations Thaw," Institute for War and Peace Reporting. January 2, 2002.



multilateral and bilateral security arrangements have increased with Russia. The fear of a Tajik-like civil war has led the entire region to increase defense spending and military operations, while the events of September 11, 2001, and the rise of radical Islamic movements such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) have merely reinforced these statist tendencies.

Regional co-operation within Central Asia has been complicated by internal feuds between and within the various states, as well as the larger designs of a more independent Uzbek foreign and security framework. Border disputes between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan threaten to ignite the region into full-scale war. Outside powers from Russia and the United States and China to Iran and Turkey, as well as Western, Japanese, and other investors, have a major role to play in the future security stability of the region. Yet, a security arrangement that is created by Central Asians themselves will more clearly favor the long-term interests of the different Central Asian states.

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