

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

Filozofická fakulta

Katedra Politologie a evropských studií

Nikol Ostianová

Changes in Russia's Approach Towards Central

Asia

Master Thesis

Thesis supervisor: Mgr. Markéta Židková, Ph.D., M.A.

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I hereby declare that this Thesis has been written by myself without any external unauthorised help. Any parts, words or ideas, of the thesis, however limited, and including tables, graphs, maps etc., which are quoted from or based on other sources, have been acknowledged as such without exception.

In Olomouc, 15 December 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Central Asian region had its importance already during the epoch of ancient and *Empires*. Iranian Achaemenid *Empire*; Macedonian *Empire* of Alexander the Great; Turks; Chinese and Mongols, they all ruled parts of Central Asia in different periods in history. The region served as a transport hub of the so called Silk Road which connected Western China with European continent.¹ From the 2nd century BCE, when Central Asia became part of this trade routes system, up to present day, Central Asia was a subject of strategic interest to outside powers.² Russia became relevant actor in Central Asia by the beginning of the 18th century and remains one of the relevant players in the region in the 21st century. During its presence in Central Asia, Russia's type of government changed from *Empire* to union of socialist republics and lastly to a republic that was forced by historical development to resign on large territory Discussion over Russia's involvement in Central Asia in all mentioned eras, i.e. Tsarist, Soviet and post-Soviet, is the focus of the following text.

This Thesis bears a presumption that in all three mentioned eras, Russia sought to be a pivotal player in the Central Asian region, which has been considered important for other powers, too. Approaches, which Russia employs to achieve its aim, have been evolving in the three period; they have had military, economic as well as political nature. *The main aim of the Thesis is to analyse changes in Russia's approach towards Central Asia in historical perspective.* The approaches have been changing depending on political, economic and military environment as well as on international situation. While in the 19th century, Russia had to compete with Great Britain; in the 20th century Central Asia was under the direct rule of the Soviet Union; the power constellation changed during the last twenty years. The Central Asian republics gained their independence from the Soviet *Empire* and are free to choose whom to engage with; whether they cooperate

¹ The topic of Silk Road is covered for example in WOOD, Frances: *The Silk Road: Two Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia*. Los Angeles, University of California Press 2002, 270 pp. And in LIU, Xinru: *The Silk Road in World History*. New York, Oxford University Press 2010, 168 pp.

² For concise history of Central Asia see BECKWITH, Christopher I.: *Empires of the Silk Road: a History of Central Asia*. New Jersey, Princeton University Press 2009, 504 pp. For history of Central Asia in Middle Ages see SOUCEK, Svat: *History of Inner Asia*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2000, 369 pp.

with the former ruler or/and the powerful neighbour China, the post-Cold War international superpower the US and other countries with interest in the region. The paper presents the involvement of the mentioned powers in the region; it discusses British, Chinese, as well as the American interests in Central Asia. *The secondary aim of this Thesis is to analyse the third period of Russia's involvement in the Central Asian region, i.e. provide an analysis of Russia's involvement and policy in Central Asia since the break-up of the USSR.* Other powers competing for influence in this period will be discussed, too. Nevertheless, the emphasis is put on Russia and its existing approaches and particular steps taken in order to preserve its dominance in the region today and in the future.

Theoretical approach and methodology

To understand Russia's policies towards Central Asia, it is necessary to embrace the topic into a theoretical framework. It was chosen to focus on a geopolitical approach to international relations; scholars on Central Asia frequently apply this approach because it helps to clarify the essence of developments in the region, which has always been of the major powers' interests. Therefore classical as well as contemporary geopolitical thinking is introduced in the first chapter. In addition to that concepts of the so called *the Great Game* and *the New Great Game* are presented. These terms label two power struggles in which Russia was involved together with Great Britain in the 19th century, and with China and the US today.

The eras of *the Great Games* signify not only the struggle of powers in the region. Most importantly for this Thesis, they represent a framework for analysis of Russian policies and approach towards Central Asia in the respective periods when the Russian state was constituted on very different bases. While the 19th century Russia was an *Empire* with all its assets and possibilities, expanding towards Central Asia as its colony, the 21st century Russia is a different entity; it is formally a federal state which does not include the territory of Central Asia within its borders anymore. Meanwhile, there used to exist one more Russian statehood for 70 years in the 20th century, the Soviet Union. During this time, Central Asia belonged to this state and the approach of the rulers was again modified. Policies of these three "Russias" are analyzed using the method of diachronic comparison. This method enables to study the subject in historical context. In order to achieve the second objective, i.e. analysis of Russia's

involvement in Central Asia in the last two decades, this Thesis uses analytical descriptive method.

Defining Central Asia

Central Asia is a vast region and a home to a diversity of biomes ranging from banks of the Caspian sea through deserts to China; from northern Kazakh steppes to mountains in the south. What constitutes Central Asia? Answers to what is included and what should already be placed out vary. Soviet definition included the four union republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; excluded Kazakhstan.³ Contrary to that, widely accepted and used definition includes Kazakhstan into the so called *Central Asia proper*. The concept of historical *Greater Central Asia* is probably used equally often and encompasses area of the five mentioned -stans, in addition to that also the Western China; southern Russia including southern Siberia; northern and north-western Afghanistan; and north-eastern Iran.⁴ This Thesis focuses on importance of the five former Soviet republics , i.e. concentrates on the five –stans importance in the current as well as the past Russian policy; at the same time it takes into consideration importance of neighbouring areas which have been influencing dynamics of the region in different periods in history such as Afghanistan. Prior to the Russian domination in Central Asia, the inner borders of the region looked differently. Kazakhstan was composed of Lesser, Middle and Upper Hordes. Turkistan encompassed Khanates of Khiva and Kokand and Emirate of Bukhara. These territories later became soviet republics and consequently independent republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Structure of the Thesis

In order to achieve the objectives of the Thesis, the text is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the theoretical background for the topic of Russia's approaches towards Central Asia. It further presents related

³ JONSON, Lena: *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*. London, I.B.Tauris 2004, p.17.

⁴CUTLER, Robert M.: *US-Russian Strategic Relations and the Structuration of Central Asia*. Perspectives on Global Development and Technology, 6, 2007, no. 2., p. 109.

terminology of the Thesis. Concepts of an *Empire*, informal *Empire* and *the Great Game* are discussed.

The second chapter includes two principal topics. Firstly, policies and approaches of the Tsarist Russia to Central Asia are described; they were influenced by Russia's conquest and subsequent efforts to integrate the Central Asian region into its territory. This subchapter lays a research question: How was Tsarist rule over Central Asia established? The text follows gradual expansion of Russia to the region and a British response to changes in the region. These are described using the cases of Anglo-Afghan *wars* as materialisation of the British fear from Russia's proximity to the Indian subcontinent. The second subchapter concentrates on Russia's policy towards Central Asia during the Soviet era and sets a question: To what extent were Tsarist and Soviet approaches to Central Asia different? Soviet era was characteristic by Russia's efforts to consolidate its rule over this territory. The common feature of the two eras was Russia's aim of holding the conquered region under the Russian rule. Tools for achieving this aim were evolving during the eras and included military, political, economic as well as cultural ones. The conclusion of the second chapter presents comparison of the two different eras of Russian involvement in Central Asia.

The third chapter deals with Russia's approaches towards Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. What has been a nature of Russia's involvement in the region and how it strives to influence the former Soviet republics in Central Asia? The question also is, how successful has Russia been in establishing its position in Central Asia? The first subchapter introduces general orientations of Russian foreign policy in the new post-Cold War environment. The following three subchapters include three principal Russian foreign policy approaches towards Central Asia: military/security, economic and energy. Furthermore, main developments connected with other relevant actors, China and the US, are included in order to present the complete picture of Russian main aim in the region, i.e. to retain its influence in the region.

Analysis of literature

A wide range of sources was used in order to provide an analysis of Russian approaches towards Central Asia. First of all, it was necessary to anchor the topic in a theoretical framework; this is based on classical geopolitical

concepts introduced by Halford Mackinder, Nicholas Spykman and Alfred Mahan. For the first time, Concept of the Great Game was introduced by Rudyard Kipling in his novel *Kim* and later was developed by Karl Meyer and Shareen Brysac in the book *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia*. The so called New Great Game concept is introduced and questioned by Lutz Kleveman, Charles Hill and others. Today, a controversial Russian scholar Aleksandr Dugin developed ideas based on classical geopolitical thoughts; however, it is questionable to what extent his work can be considered impartial because of his personal linkage to the present Russia's political leadership. Therefore, Dugin's works are more useful when one tries to understand Russia's vision of the Eurasian continent. Among Czech scholars, geopolitics is a domain of Michael Romancov, Vladimír Baar and others. Central Asia has been a long term area of interest for Slavomír Horák, the Charles University expert on internal as well as external policies of the CA states.

The Thesis worked with a range of primary sources. It analysed Presidential Annual Addresses to Parliament or documents which were important for international organisations which are active in Central Asia. These documents helped to provide the official view of the Russian state on international relations as well as on Russia's aims in the Central Asian region. Words of Russian politicians such as Yevgeni Primakov, presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitrii Medvedev are highlighted in relation with Russia's policies towards Central Asia. In addition, a number of official documents, statements and speeches were studied.

Because one of the main aims of the Thesis is to compare the Russian approach towards Central Asia in three different eras, works focusing on history as well as current events were employed. Dominic Leiven's *Empire. The Russian Empire and Its Rivals from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* is considered to be a core source on Russia's territorial expansion through centuries, including analysis of Russia's approach towards the Central Asian region in the 19th century. Leiven's work is accompanied by Richard Pierce and Richard Pipes. Other historians who do not focus on Russia's expansion to its south specifically, were studied, too. The 19th century struggle for an influence and rule in Central Asia is covered in details by British scholar Gregory Fremont-Barnes and Stephan Tanner. They concentrate on a subject of Anglo-Afghan wars; these are

considered to be a reaction to Russia's growing expansionism in the area. These and other topics such as Central Asia during the Soviet era are included in a publication by ROUX, Jean Paul, *Dějiny střední Asie*, which is cited throughout the Thesis.

The 1991-2011 era is covered by numerous scholars, Olivier Roy, Martha Olcott, Bertil Nygren or Anders Åslund are among the most famous ones. Apart from their texts, Internet sources were irreplaceable and invaluable part of the analysis. Internet provides analysis elaborated by numerous think-tanks (Jamestown foundation, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Carnegie Institute) and articles covering the situation in Russia and/or Central Asia and commenting on their mutual relations. A lot of scholars and analysts who publish their works online, include historical perspectives to their analyses of current topics. In particular, works by specialists on Russia and Russian foreign policy Dmitrii Trenin and Alexii Malashenko from the Carnegie Moscow Center are cited, or conclusions by Stephan Blank are presented. On-line versions of respected newspapers such as The New York Times International (former The International Herald Tribune) or The Guardian as well as numerous scholarly journals (Slavic and East European Review, International affairs) were used during research for this Thesis. Last but not least, Richard Sakwa, Jeffrey Mankoff and Lilia Shevtsova should be mentioned as valuable sources of information and inspiration.

Thesis time settings

Central Asia has a legacy of long and complicated history. The Thesis outlines the three most modern periods. The first one, includes time when Central Asia fell victim to Russia's third wave of imperial colonisation in the 19th century.⁵ Beginning with acquisition of Kazakh Lesser Horde in 1822; through conquest of Turkistan to depriving the Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate of last parts of sovereignty in the early 1920s. During the course of 19th century, Russia's growing *Empire* and strengthening dominance in Central Asia was reason why Great Britain, which occupied the Indian subcontinent, engaged

⁵ SHAW, Dennis J.B.: *The Post-Soviet Republics: A Systematic Geography*. Harlow, Longmann House, 1995, p. 5.

militarily in so called Anglo-Afghan *wars*, which began in 1839 and were ultimately concluded in 1919. After the First World War, lack of any interest from the side of former Entente powers; especially from Great Britain, which feared strengthening Germany, helped Russia to consolidate its position in the region. Therefore the second period includes Soviet Russia's dominance in Central Asia, which was not questioned until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.⁶ In the last part, the Thesis focuses on an ongoing era beginning with signing of Belavezha Accords on 8 December 1991 which formally dissolved the Soviet Union.

Characteristics of the region

To characterise Central Asian countries is a difficult task given its historically fragmented nature. The state entities, which could be found in the territory before the Russia's conquest, were called khanates or emirates, in Kazakh case hordes, and ruled by khans or emirs. These political entities could be compared to city states by their size and population. The fact that they were often in conflict with each other eased Russia's conquest of the area; furthermore majority of its population used to prefer nomadic lifestyle. Contrary to today's picture of poor and underdeveloped region, Central Asia in Middle Ages was home to scientists, artists, and philosophers who contributed to mount influence of Central Asia from Chinese coast and Indian subcontinent to Europe and the Middle East. Rich history of interaction; migration; and movement of the local populations with conquerors, contributed to lack of national identity. This has changed drastically when Russians took over control. Under Tsarist rule, and then incomparably more systematically during the Soviet Union, borders of soviet republics were drawn arbitrarily and national consciousness was deliberately shaped and fostered.⁷ As a result of that, regions with complicated ethnic structure were created, causing ethnic animosities and influencing intrastate relations up to present day (See Map 1). Another distinct characteristic, which unites the region, is shared predominantly Sunni Muslim religion⁸ and previous

⁶ HORÁK, Slavomír: *Rusko a Střední Asie po rozpadu SSSR*. Praha, Karolinum 2008, p. 19.

⁷ AKINER, Shirin: *Melting pot, salad bowl:- cauldron? Manipulation and mobilization of ethnic and religion identities in Central Asia*. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 20, 1997, no.2, p. 367.

⁸ For history of religion in Central Asia see THROWER, James: *The religion history of Central Asia from the earliest times to the present day*. New York, Edwin Mellen Press 2004, 308 pp.

political loyalties based on tribal identities which were replaced by central political elites installed by Moscow. Although indigenous in nature, these elites were used as proxies in the struggle for power in Central Asia. Current political figures are usually still the old communist comrades who ruled the countries during the last years of the Soviet Union. What has changed, is their self-confidence and highly developed self identities. These political elites also share reluctance and aversion towards intervention of external powers as a legacy of the Russian imperial domination.⁹

Economically, the region was typical for its agricultural, more precisely pastoral nature. Situation changed with the end of the 19th century, when the region began to serve as a provider of natural resources and raw materials and market for low-quality goods.¹⁰ Due to Soviet strategy of economies of scale and economies concentrated on one or few products industry, Central Asian countries suffered heavily from market changes during the post-Soviet years.

⁹ CLUTHERBERTSON, Ian: *The New Great Game*. World Policy Journal, 11, 1994, no. 4, p. 32.

¹⁰ BLANEY, John W.: *The Successor States of the USSR*. Washington, Congressional Quarterly Inc. 1995, p. 210.

1. Theoretical background

The theoretical chapter is devoted to the introduction of geopolitical theory in its historical context. This theory is popular among scholars who focus their research on Russia's approach to Central Asia; it provides understandable coherent framework for analysis. In addition to that, this text presents related terminology. In the first subchapter, the most influential scholars who studied geopolitical rules and relations in the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century are introduced and their concepts are presented. Many of these scholars brought up new controversial world views. At the turn of the 20th century, British geographer Halford Mackinder and likeminded scholars contributed to understanding and perceiving the world in a new context. By the end of the 19th century, the world map was complete and territories in the newly discovered regions were divided among individual states. The crucial question was which areas should be considered more important than others, i.e. where military should be present and for what reason and what significance this division of regions had for international politics. Struggle for particular areas, and more importantly for the so called Heartland, was a driving force of international relations. Therefore, the second subchapter shall present Mackinder's and later scholars' ideas in historical perspective and introduce the concept of *the Great Game* as a competition for *the Heartland*. In the third subchapter, the concept of the *New Great Game* and further terminology is presented, the usage of the term is discussed and voices claiming that notion of *the Great Game* is inappropriate for current struggle in the area of Central Asia are presented.

1.1. Origins of the geopolitical theory

There exist a number of approaches to understand international relations and foreign policies of states. Whereas 20th century international relations were mainly studied with the help of international relations theories such as realism or liberalism, the geopolitical approach has recently experienced a new wave of attention.¹¹ This latter approach stresses relations between geographical variables, such as location, size, population, natural resources and technological advancement.

A coherent approach towards political geography was first elaborated and presented by Mackinder's predecessor Friedrich Ratzel in 1897. He argued, that "the 'state' was often treated as if it were in the air, and had no connection with the land on which its people live, move and have their being."¹² In *The History of Mankind* the author drew a connection between a geographical environment and anthropological features.¹³ The notion of *Lebensraum* was coined in the book and was defined as the geographical surface area required necessary to support living species at its current population, size and mode of existence.¹⁴ Later, the Nazi regime skewed its content and ideas, thus making it probably one of the most misused concept in history.

Ratzel was not the only scholar whose work was later misused by National Socialists. Rudolf Kjellén's theory of *Geopolitik* was also abused by the Third Reich.¹⁵ *The State as a Living Form* published in 1916 defined geopolitics as follows: "Geopolitik is a science which conceives the state as a geographic organism or as a phenomenon in space." According to Kjellén, a state should be perceived as a living creature rather than a mechanical entity. The state has its needs, it can grow if it is sufficiently strong and its needs are satisfied. On the

¹¹ Among others, research centres of geopolitical studies are the French Institute of Geopolitics or International Centre for Geopolitical Studies in Geneva. *Rivista Italiana di Geopolitica* or *Eurasian Review of Geopolitics* are journals of contemporary geopolitics. And, for example, the Charles University offers Geopolitical studies Master's degree programme.

¹² *Review: Ratzel's Political Geography*. *The Geographical Journal*, 3, 1899, no. 2, pp. 171-173.

¹³ The book was first published in 1896 by McMillan and Co.

¹⁴ SMITH, Woodruff D.: *Friedrich Ratzel and the Origins of Lebensraum*. *German Studies Review*, 3, 1980, no. 1, p. 4.

¹⁵ POLLELE, Mark: *Raising Cartographic Consciousness*. Lanham, Lexington Books 1999, pp. 91-117.

other hand, if this is not the case, it will shrink.¹⁶ Karl Haushofer, a prominent German Nazi general and academic, selectively interpreted Kjellén's ideas and transformed them to what became known as the *Organic Theory of State*, which aims to justify expansionist German foreign policy.¹⁷ Fortunately, Ratzel and Kjellén's ideas also provided positive source of inspiration to other scholars.

1.2. Halford Mackinder's theory

To a great extent, the Nazi arguments were based on once startling world view of Sir Halford John Mackinder. Mackinder is considered to be an influential British geographer and one of the founding fathers of both geopolitics and geostrategy disciplines. His work *Geographical Pivot of History* and further attempts to analyse the geographical dimension of political relations helped to defend German invasions in the Second World War II. As American political scientist Charles Kruszewski points out: "Haushofer openly admits that he considers Mackinder's 'geographical pivot of history' the conception closest to his own – indeed, an outstanding school of geopolitics printed on few pages."¹⁸ However, reducing Mackinder's theory to an ideological input for German expansionism would not do justice to his work. In order to deliver comprehensive picture of Mackinder's theory, this subchapter concentrates on four issues. Firstly, it focuses on Mackinder's theoretical starting points, the most important predecessors are presented with their ideas. Secondly, the origins of Mackinder's Heartland theory and answer to question why, according to Mackinder, some regions in the world are more important than others are delivered. The last part is dedicated to Mackinder's contribution to development of international relations and his legacy in literature.

¹⁷ WALSH, Edmund S.J.: *Total Power: A Footnote to History*. New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949, pp. 4-5.

¹⁸ KRUSZEWSKI, Charles: *International Affairs: Germany's Lebensraum*. The American Political Science Review, 34, 1940, no. 5, p. 970. pp. 964-975.

1.2.1. Historical experience and origins of the theory

Mackinder never used the term geopolitics himself. In fact, up to the present day, there is a lack of consensus on a clear definition. As it has been mentioned above, in the course of the 20th century it acquired a negative connotation. As Mackinder's biographer Brian Blouet noted: "geopolitical policies seek to establish national or imperial control over space and the resources, route ways, industrial capacity and population the territory contains."¹⁹ Contrary to this definition, Mackinder pursued the goal of finding "a formula which shall express certain aspects, at any rate, of geographical causation in universal history."²⁰ Mackinder was a respected scientist therefore his research strived to define permanently valid theory not a pragmatic policy.

At the core of Mackinder's theory is the conviction that European nation states to a large extent developed thanks to the existence of external threat. Where did these alien forces come from? By analysing the European history with an emphasis on key conflicts²¹ the author concluded that the most important players intervening on the European territory were nomadic tribes from landlocked Asia: "Huns, Avars, Bulgarians, Magyars, Khazars, Patzinaks, Cumans, Mongols, Kalmuks... A large part of modern history might be written as a commentary upon changes directly or indirectly ensuing from these raids." ²² As one can see, for Mackinder it was not important who ruled the Central Asian territory in the course of history, what mattered were attributes of the territory itself. By the late 15th century, Russia replaced the Mongol *Empire* as a future hegemon of this area when it started its expansion from principality of Muscovy southwards to the direction of Caspian Sea.²³

¹⁹ BLOUET, Brian: *Geopolitics and Globalization in the Twentieth Century*. London, Reaktion Books 2001, p. 7.

²⁰ MACKINDER, Halford: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. The Geographical Journal, 23, 1904, no. 4, p. 422.

²¹ These include for example Barbarian invasion from cca 400 to 800 CE, Magyars entering Europe in the late 9th and in the 10th century, paralisation of Byzantine *Empire* by Seljuk Turks in 1071.

²² MACKINDER, Halford: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. The Geographical Journal, 23, 1904, no. 4, p. 426.

²³ Roots of Russia's expansion date back to battle less victory of Ivan III against Mongol dominion in Russia in 1480. It led to de facto liberation of Russia; consequently to dissolution of Golden Horde in 1502. The successor khanates of Crimea of Kazan, and of Astrakhan were from that time subjects to Russian invasions. GROUSET, René: *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*. New Jersey, Rutgers University Press 1970, 718 pp.

The Heartland is an area of pivotal importance because it lies at the centre of Euro-Asia, therefore Mackinder called it *the pivot area* of Euro-Asia (See Map 2). The Euro-Asian land mass is, in Mackinder's terminology called *the World island*. The main argument about the territorial decisiveness of *the Heartland* stems from the importance attributed to the geographical location and its features. The region is virtually inaccessible by waterways from the ocean: "In other words, we have in this immense area all the conditions for the maintenance of a sparse, but in the aggregate considerable, population of horse-riding and camel-riding nomads."²⁴ This movable power could utilise favourable geographical conditions which make Central Asia a safe haven in *the Heartland*. To the North Central Asia is protected by a sub-arctic forest and marsh; to the East a belt of forests leads as far as to Manchuria; to the West forest vegetation which was originally the dominant vegetation and finally the to the South a shelter in the form of the Tibetan Plateau which is surrounded by mountainous ranges.²⁵ *The Heartland* of Euro-Asia, encompasses more than 23 million square kilometres and covers more than twice the area of Europe.²⁶ In this theory, Europe constitutes one of four marginal regions of the world island; the other three smaller units include different Asian coastlines. Mackinder considered them to be less important also due to their low population numbers. In 2009, hundred years after Mackinder delivered his provoking theory; one of these apparently less important peripheral areas, China reached the total population of 1,345 billion in 2009.²⁷ Mackinder did not predict that China will become one of the major powers which, after the disintegration of the Soviet *Empire*, will strive for control of *the Heartland* after the disintegration of the Soviet *Empire* – this new power game is exactly what Central Asia has been experiencing since 1990s.

Although Mackinder acknowledged a significant potential to naval power, in his opinion, ships could not circumvent the natural barriers protecting

²⁴ MACKINDER, Halford: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. The Geographical Journal, 23, 1904, no. 4, p. 429.

²⁵ ABAZOV, Rafis: *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of Central Asia*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 76. 144 pp.

²⁶ MACKINDER, Halford: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. The Geographical Journal, 23, 1904, no. 4, p. 431.

²⁷ UNICEF *Statistics by country: China*,

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/china_statistics.html#73 (13.10.2011)

the Heartland. Quite to the contrary, Alfred Thayer Mahan²⁸ claimed a pivotal role for maritime power: “Sea traffic then went in peril of robbers, but was nevertheless safer and quicker than by land.”²⁹ Mackinder highlighted weakness of maritime power: “the scope of action was limited, for, broadly speaking, power was effective only in the neighbourhood of the water.”³⁰ Furthermore, railway networks which started developing in Central Asia in the 1880s positively influenced the ability of a state to control a territory. Mackinder writes: “True, that the Trans-Siberian railway is still a single and precarious line of communication, but the century will not be old before all Asia is covered with rails.”³¹³² On the other hand, Mackinder did not deny possibilities naval transport offers. The British Empire ruled over the Indian Subcontinent which was primarily reachable by sea and at the time had a strategic importance as gateway to Central Asia.

1.2.2. Position of countries in *the Heartland*

Where did Mackinder place Russia and what importance did he attribute to it? As Great Britain was a synonym for a naval nation; Russia was an equivalent for the terrestrial power. Mackinder identified Russia as a *pivot state* of *the Heartland* in the world island, comparable to the central strategic position which was held by Germany in Europe, for the latter he argued: “[Germany] can strike on all sides and be struck from all sides, save the north.”³³ In the same way,

²⁸ Mahan was an American navy officer and historian, Mackinder’s contemporary. His theory was based on supremacy of seaborne power and belief that countries which master the navy power will have greater impact on world politics. His concept was influential especially in Germany, Japan and the Great Britain. In the US he prompted naval build up; expansion overseas; and even construction of Panama Canal. See BRADFORD, James C.: *Quarterdeck and Bridge: Two Centuries of American Naval Leaders*. Annapolis, Naval Institute Press 1997, 455 pp.

²⁹ MAHAN, Alfred Thayer: *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*. Digital Antiquaria, 2004, p. 34.

³⁰ MACKINDER, Halford: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. The Geographical Journal, 23, 1904, no. 4, p. 428.

³¹ MACKINDER, Halford: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. The Geographical Journal, 23, 1904, no. 4, p. 434.

³² Central Asia experienced two waves of railway construction in 1884-1888 and 1899-1903, primary purpose of which was to open up undeveloped areas; to allow military measures against the local population; and later to integrate the region into Russian railway network in order to ease trade and industrial exchange. See: AMES, Edward: *A Century of Russian Railroad Construction: 1837-1936*. American Slavic and East European Review, 6, 1947, no. ¾, pp. 57-74.

³³ MACKINDER, Halford: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. The Geographical Journal, 23, 1904, no. 4, p. 436.

Russia could use its position of open access to Central Asia; it could raid in and rule over the Central Asian territory and make use of its human and natural resources. Such a connection of the pivot state with the heart of *the Heartland* would make Russia the most powerful terrestrial power on earth. In the late 19th century, Mackinder observed the increasingly more vulnerable position of British world *Empire*, partly as a result of Russia's territorial expansion to Central Asia and therefore Russia's territorial proximity to British India. He drew this conclusion from the past experience of the First Anglo-Afghan War, when Central Asia had already been a battlefield of major power struggle.³⁴ Mackinder therefore stressed a necessary shift in British foreign policy; he suggested its reformulation and ultimately the **abandonment of the policy of splendid isolation**.³⁵ In fact, the 1839 conflict was only the prelude to decades-long process of the so called *Great Game*, which came to an end only with the conclusion of the First World War. This struggle for supremacy over Central Asia is discussed in details in the following chapter.

Geographical thinking of the late 19th century helped Mackinder to see the world as a whole organism, therefore he divided other geographical areas according to their position on a world map. Outside the *pivot area* he placed Germany, Austria, Turkey, India and China in the *great inner crescent*, and Britain, South Africa, Australia, the United States, Canada and Japan in *outer crescent*. Despite the significance he attributed to geography, other factors played important roles. Mackinder argued that "the actual balance of political power at any given time is the product, on the one hand, of geographical conditions, both economic and strategic, and, on the other hand, of the relative number, virility, equipment, and organisation of the competing peoples."³⁶ This means that power constellations are not permanent and countries which have struggled for dominance in the world change. From further historical observation, Mackinder

³⁴ Britain had already indirectly measured its power with Russia in 1839 during the so called First Anglo-Afghan war. The conflict is part of the next chapter. See TANNER, Stephen: *Afghanistan*. New York, De Capo Press 2002, 351 pp.

³⁵ British foreign policy of the late 19th century pursued during Disraeli's and Salisbury's prime ministerial mandates of 1874-1880 and 1895-1902. Main goals of the policy were to maintain balance between European powers; to secure its colonial interests and over sea territories; and to concentrate on its maritime position and trade. See CHARMLEY, John: *Splendid Isolation? Britain, the Balance of Power and the Origins of the First World War*. London, Hodder and Stoughton 1999, 525 pp.

³⁶ MACKINDER, Halford: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. The Geographical Journal, 23, 1904, no. 4, p. 437.

concluded, that the only viable way how to create a world *Empire* would be an alliance of Russia and Germany. Russia would contribute with land power, Germany would contribute with its strategic position in Europe and the resources in a fleet building and thus combine land and navy powers together. The main geopolitical conclusions he derived were:

Who controls Eastern Europe rules the Heartland;

Who controls the Heartland rules the World Island; and

Who rules the World Island rules the World.

Fearing German-Russian cooperation, during the peace talks after the First World War, Mackinder urged the international community to prevent such an alliance.³⁷ Concerns about this possible alliance did not vanish from international politics and are vivid still nowadays. Construction of the Nord Stream pipeline may serve as an illustrative example. The new gas pipeline transports natural gas from Russia directly to Germany and bypasses old Russian pipelines running through Eastern and Central Europe.³⁸ The development gives Russia a possibility to play pipeline politics and at the same time raises suspicion among its former satellite states. Zbigniew Siemiatkowski, a former head of Poland's security service said: "Yesterday tanks, today gas."³⁹ Similarly to that, the struggle for Central Asia was re-launched in the 1990s with a partly modified combination of countries competing against each other. While Russia remains an important actor, position of Great Britain was taken over by the US and China. Russia's role of the previously sole actor that has faced challengers after 1990 shall be dealt with in the third chapter. on the *New Great Game*.

1.2.3. Mackinder's contribution to and in geopolitical thinking

Halford Mackinder contributed to the understanding of the world as an organism by perceiving world as a whole unit. When Mackinder was studying

³⁷ GILBERT, Edmund W. – PARKER, William. H.: *Mackinder's Democratic Ideals and Reality after Fifty Years*. The Geographical Journal, 135, 1969, no. 2, pp. 228-231.

³⁸ For Russo-German relations in the geopolitical theory context see CHIVVIS, Christopher S. – RID, Thomas: *The Roots of Germany's Russia Policy*. Survival, 51, 2009, no. 2, pp. 105-122.

³⁹ KRAMER, Andrew: *Russia Gas Pipeline Heightens East Europe's Fear*. International Herald Tribune, 12.10.2009. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/13/world/europe/13pipes.html>)

interstate relations, geography was not a matter of static boundaries and coastlines, but an ever-transforming element of a global world organism.⁴⁰ He also stressed that it is not only location but also topography, size of both territory and population, climate and distance between states are powerful determinants of individual countries' foreign policies. Unfortunately, Mackinder underestimated technical innovation, particularly in the aviation industry. Air transportation was poorly developed when *the Heartland* concept was formulated. Thus it was difficult to predict its impact. Professor Everett Dolman defended Mackinder's position as one, which does not dismiss the importance of air power: "Mackinder believed it had a long way to go before it was mature enough to compete head on with sea or land power which was a reasonable thought in Mackinder's historical perspective."⁴¹ Even today, decisiveness of air power is disputable and it does by no means guarantee victory in a major war.

Example of a land and sea great powers' competition, foreign policies and perceptions of each other were materialised in British and Russian struggle for Central Asia, the region which is key to ruling over *the Heartland*. Rudyard Kipling called this conflict *the Great Game* in the novel *Kim* from 1901.⁴² Known also as *the Tournament of Shadows*, in Russian, it refers to the strategic rivalry over Central Asia between the Tsarist Russia and the Imperial Britain in the 19th century. Both powers tried to stretch their *Empires* into this territory or/and they feared that the other would do so. The perceived threat was a stimulus for taking actions against the other player. The optics of *the Great Game* narrative serves as a framework for analysing the Russian imperial actions in Central Asia region and for response of the British Empire in the second chapter of this thesis.

Apart from the Nazi regime, which misused the geopolitical theory, Mackinder was an inspirational sources for, mainly, American authors. Contrary to Mackinder, they attributed higher importance to US geographical location and were able to fully assess growing US strength. Geostrategist and founder of

⁴⁰ BARTHOLOMEES, Boone J.: *US Army war college guide to national security policy and strategy*. Strategic Studies Institute, CreateSpace 2008, p. 74.

⁴¹ BLOUET, Brian: *Geopolitics and Globalization in the Twentieth Century*. London, Reaktion Books 2001, p. 144.

⁴² Then novel settings is India between the Second and the Third Anglo-Afghan war. It narrates a story of Kim, child of an Irish soldier, who becomes a British spy and thus finds himself to be directly involved in *the Great Game*. KIPLING, Rudyard: *Kim*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 2008, 352 pp.

realist school in the US foreign policy, Nicholas Spykman was inspired by Mackinder in his perception of world in its entirety and unity. Contrary to Mackinder, Spykman acknowledged importance of land, sea as well as air power. Because of the power complexity, he argued that the great inner crescent⁴³ can change world dynamics. In his 1942 book *America's Strategy in World Politics*, Spykman labelled this territory with power potential as the so called *Rimland*. Based on this, he concluded that the US is no longer safely insulated by surrounding oceans and must engage in maintaining power balance in Euro-Asia to prevent political and strategic encirclement by an alliance of Euro-Asian countries.⁴⁴ In case such a coalition would include *the Heartland* – Russia – which is rich in resources and man power, Spykman claimed that it “could develop an economy strong enough to support one of the Great war machines of the 20th century.”⁴⁵ Because of this possible danger, Spykman called for abandonment of US foreign policy based on *Monroe Doctrine*. This doctrine, which was introduced in 1823,⁴⁶ stated that the American continents is the United States' sphere of influence while at the same time refrained from interference in internal and imperial politics of the Old World powers. The policy stated that “it is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in hope that other powers will pursue the same course.”⁴⁷ Spykman strongly endorsed US engagement in European affairs in order to keep the world in balance. In this respect, both Mackinder and Spykman shared the conviction, that in order to prevent Euro-Asian supremacy in world affairs, continental European and Asian power had to be kept divided. Consequently, both of the authors recommended this advice to the world community after the Second World War.⁴⁸ And indeed, the US has been engaged in the Euro-Asian affairs since the end of

⁴³ Great inner crescent is Mackinder's definition and includes European coast; Arabian and Middle Eastern desert; and the Asiatic coast.

⁴⁴ SPYKMAN, Nicholas, 2007: *America's Strategy in World Politics*. New Jersey, Transaction Publishers 2007, p. 448.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁴⁶ See MAY, Ernest R.: *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1975, 306 pp. And SMITH, Gaddis: *The last Years of the Monroe Doctrine, 1945-1993*. New York, Hill and Wang 1994, 208 pp.

⁴⁷ *Monroe Doctrine, 2 December 1823. Speech delivered by President James Monroe during the 7th annual message to the Congress*. In: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/monroe.asp (1.12.2011)

⁴⁸ GRAY, Collin: *In defence of the Heartland: Sir Halford Mackinder and his critics a hundred years on*. In: BLOUET, Brian: *Global Geostrategy: Mackinder and the defence of the West*. Oxon, Taylor&Francis 2005, p. 25.

the Second World War and in the Central Asian affairs since the collapse of the Soviet Union. How the US has participated in the Central Asian environment is part of the third chapter.

Mackinder has been influential both during the Cold War and post Cold War time; he remains to be recalled father of geopolitical thinking. Geographer and the editor of Oxford World Atlas, Saul Cohen wrote in 1975, that most Western strategists continue to view the world as initially described by Mackinder.⁴⁹ Books of former United States National Security Advisor and political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski build on Mackinder's analysis of the world. Among other thoughts Brzezinski writes: "*How America manages Eurasia is critical. A power that dominates Eurasia would control two of the world's three most advanced and economically productive regions.*"⁵⁰ One year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, former Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Eugene Rostow noted that "Mackinder's map remains an indispensable tool of analysis of global politics."⁵¹ Moreover, he advocated that the Euro-Asian land mass has even increased importance given the modern technology development in transportation, communication and war.⁵² Together with Brzezinski, Henry Kissinger was one of the prominent personalities of the US administrations who analysed impacts of US foreign policies in a harsh geopolitical context. In the book *Diplomacy* Brzezinski pointed out that "Russia, regardless of who governs it, sits astride territory Halford Mackinder called the geopolitical *Heartland*."⁵³ American scientists and politicians were not the only ones to find inspiration in geopolitical thought. Russian ideologist Alexander Dugin is a sworn defender of Russia's position as a nucleus of multi-polar world and; and among others, the

⁴⁹ COHEN, Saul B.: *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*. New York, Oxford University Press 1975, p. 44.

⁵⁰ BRZEZINSKI, Zbigniew, 1996. *The Grand Chessboard*. New York, Basic Books 1998, p. 31. In Czech language: BRZEZINSKI, Zbigniew: *Velká šachovnice: K čemu Ameriku zavazuje její globální převaha*. Praha, Mladá fronta 1999, 229 s.

⁵¹ SEMPA, Francis P.: "*Mackinder's World*" In: American Diplomacy, 19 April 2003, http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/AD_Issues/amdipl_14/sempa_mac3.html (23.10.2011)

⁵² ROSTOW, Eugene V.: *A Breakfast for Bonaparte US National Security Interests from the Heights of Abraham to the Nuclear Age*. Washington, National Defense University Press 1993, 507 pp.

⁵³ KISSINGER, Henry: *Diplomacy*. New York, Simon and Schuster 1994, p. 814. 912 pp. In Czech language KISSINGER, Henry: *Umění diplomacie: Od Richelieua k pádu Berlínské zdi*. Praha, Prostor 1999, 952 pp.

founder of Eurasian movement which was established in 2001.⁵⁴ Since Putin's first mandate, Dugin got into touch with the Kremlin's elite; his ideas resonated in governmental rhetoric and he himself turned into apologist for Putin. In an interview following the conflict in Georgia in 2008 he proclaimed that "We consider that all of the post-Soviet space—except the Baltic states —we are dealing with Eurasian civilization... to try to get these spaces out of our control, or out of our dialogue, or out of our special relations with them, based on history — it was a kind of attack, a declaration of war."⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, Dugin is an advocate of Russia's new struggle for Central Asia. The development of Russia's approach and relations with Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union are subject of the second chapter and general orientations of Russian foreign policy after 1991 are discussed in the first subchapter of the second chapter.

As it can be concluded, even though Mackinder formulated his theory a century ago, his ideas are still attractive for international relations scholars. They are sound and debated in connections with the renewed struggle for ruling over Heartland's Central Asia. The following subchapter gives an overview of literature and terminology related to the term *New Great Game*.

1.3. Post-Cold War era: new power struggle

During the Cold War Central Asia accounted for five of the fifteen Soviet republics and the Soviet imperial power was the only supreme sovereign actor in the Central Asian countries. From the geopolitical point of view, the US was balancing the Soviet Union but Central Asia remained under the tight grip of the Kremlin until 1991.⁵⁶ After the Soviet Union collapsed the newly independent Central Asian countries were witnessing a new wave of power struggle. While Russia remains to be an important actor, Great Britain was replaced by stronger the US and China entered the scene, too. This new competition has been called

⁵⁴ For better understanding of Dugin's Eurasian vision and updated articles of this author visit the webpage of the International Eurasian Movement, <http://www.evrazia.info>.

⁵⁵ DUGIN, Aleksandr: *Pax Russica: For a Eurasian Alliance Against America*. New Perspectives Quarterly, 5, 2008, no. 4, p. 3. 56-60.

⁵⁶ Just to mention few: recovery programme Marshall plan provided financial means to war torn Europe; US has started to establish its military bases abroad; US contained the Soviet Union in the Korean War. See: GADDIS, John L.: *Strategies of Containment: a Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*. New York, Oxford University Press 2005, 484 pp.

the *New Great Game* by some authors. In order to analyse the debate over and applicability of the term *New Great Game* and at the same time applicability of the geopolitical theory, this subchapter is divided into six parts.

In the first place, authors recalling Mackinder's geopolitical theory and using the term *New Great Game* are presented. Not surprisingly, the application of the term *New Great Game* to current Central Asian environment has been criticised as inappropriate, therefore this criticism is included, too.

How to accept or deny the *New Great Game* as a legitimate term? Are there any similarities with *the Great Game* from the 19th century? Whereas it was the Russian and the British Empire struggling for power more than a century ago, Central Asia is currently experiencing struggle between Russia, China and the US. In order to draw a link between these two eras, it is necessary to define the term *Empire*. Therefore the second part deals with this concept.

The notion of *Empire* can have different classifications. The most important and frequently used one distinguishes between formal and informal *Empires*; it is based on strategies and approaches of states towards foreign territories. During the time of *the Great Game* in 19th century, Russia was using approaches of a classical or a formal *Empire*. The definition of a formal *Empire* corresponds with different definitions of the concept of an *Empire* presented in the Thesis. At the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century Russia employs approaches of an informal *Empire*. Therefore if one accepts that with these different approaches of exerting and preserving power it is possible to speak about efforts to establish *Empires* in the 21st century, application of the term *New Great Game* is logical. The last part of this subchapter is dedicated to this debate. Last but not least, the last part of this subchapter explains the adjectives post-imperial and neo-imperial, which are often used in connection with contemporary Russian foreign policies.

1.3.1. Revival of Mackinder's theory and the *New Great Game*

The concept of *the Great Game* received a new wave of popularity as a term describing geopolitical competition of major powers in Central Asia at the end of 20th century. One of the first ones to use the term was Ahmed Rashid in 1997. In his later book and New York Times bestseller *Taliban: Islam, oil and the new Great Game in Central Asia* from 2002. Rashid explains that the current

Great Game is even larger complex of competing interests.⁵⁷ Journalist Lutz Kleveman in *The New Great Game* writes: “Now, more than a hundred years later, great *Empires* once again position themselves to control the heart of the Eurasian landmass, left in a post-Soviet power vacuum.”⁵⁸ The current Great Game involves different actors, Britain was replaced by the USA and China is becoming more assertive, as Charles Hill, a former US diplomat and researcher at Hoover Institute, claims: “There are layers of complex factors in play here involving power politics, economic exploitation, ethnic rivalries and religion. A *new Great Game* is under way.”⁵⁹ The rivalry has been renewed but nature of rivalry and its actors have changed.

There are two sides to every coin; usage of the term the *New Great Game* has been popular but has witnessed rejection, too. There are more critical voices⁶⁰ but this paper presents one illustrative example, which echoes other critics. Scholar Robert Johnson from Oxford University, argues that “[they] failed to acknowledge that, in fact, the label was inappropriate. The issues bear almost no similarity to those of the nineteenth century, and the idea of American–Russian co-operation in counter-terrorism, the spectacular financial deals over oil resources, and the global reach of jihadists from heavily defended but remote bases in Afghanistan have no equivalent in the old struggle.”⁶¹

1.3.2. Concept of *Empire*

British historian Dominic Lieven, the author of *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals from the Sixteenth century to the Present*, gives a simple and broad definition of *Empire*: “[An *Empire*] is first and foremost a very great power--but a very great power of a certain sort. In other words, a power which rules over huge territories and a multitude of peoples and one which is not

⁵⁷ RASHID, Ahmed: *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*. London, I.B.Tauris 2002, p. 145.

⁵⁸ KLEVEMAN, Lutz: *The New Great Game*. New York, Grove Press 2003, p. 3.

⁵⁹ HILL, Charles: “*The New Great Game*”. Forbes, 16.7.2009. In: Forbes, <http://www.forbes.com/2009/07/15/uighurs-china-great-game-russia-al-qaeda-opinions-contributors-charles-hill.html> (3.11.2011)

⁶⁰ See also CUTHBERTSON, Ian: *The New “Great Game”*. World Policy Journal, 11, 1994, no. 4, pp. 31-43. And MAYERS, Jaffe A. – MANNING, Robert: *The Myth of the Caspian “Great Game”: The Real Geopolitics of Energy*. Survival, vol. 40, 1998, no. 4, pp. 112-129.

⁶¹ JOHNSON, Robert: *Oil, Islam and Conflict: Central Asia since 1945*. London, Reaktion Books 2007, p. 219.

legitimised by the formal consent of the people it governs.”⁶² Regarding the form of government he adds that an *Empire* is a type of rule which lacks the legitimisation of its nations.⁶³ Therefore, it excludes the possibility of democracy as a type of government. While Michael Doyle, the populariser of democratic peace theory, emphasises the relationship of political control exerted by an actor over a political sovereignty of the other actor, Niall Ferguson pinpoints that “the real imperial power... means a direct control over the organisation and use of military power. It carries on a direct control over respect to rule and its creation.”⁶⁴ Political scientist Ghita Ionescu tries to identify the characteristics of the Soviet *Empire* which he finds in strong political centre with historical mission of expansion, religious or ideological coercion and a sense of final purpose and its justification. He classifies assimilation as a distinctive feature of the Soviet imperialism.⁶⁵ As it can be seen, interpretations of what *Empire* actually means differ in time, space and ideological world view. In a historical perspective both, Tsarist and Soviet Russia, shared some parts of definitions; both periods were typical with direct military rule over extensive territory with a lack of legitimisation by its nations. This paper labels these two periods as existence of Russia’s formal *Empire* which follows from Lieven’s and Ionescu’s definitions.

1.3.3. Concept of informal *Empire*

Mackinder’s theory is over hundred years old and the author lived in a world of great *Empires* which desired to spread to new territories by using railway system as an advanced method of overcoming distances. From Mackinder’s times to the 21st century, world made significant qualitative leap in conducting imperial policies as well as in mastering technology. Such a change was described by Taylor and Flint in the book *Political Geography* from the year 2000. They argue that “in worlds-systems terms, what we have is a change of

⁶² *The Concept of Empire, interview with Dominic Lieven*. In: Fathom, Columbia University, 2002, <http://www.fathom.com/feature/122086/> (4.11.2011)

⁶³ LIEVEN, Dominic: *The Russian Empire and Its Rivals from the Sixteenth Century to the Present*. London, Pimlico 2003, p. xiv.

⁶⁴ FERGUSSON, Naill: *Colossus: The Price of America’s Empire*. London, Penguin Press 2004, p. 18.

⁶⁵ IONESCU, Ghita: *The Break-up of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe*. London, Penguin Books 1965, p. 8.

strategy by core states from formal to informal *Empires*.”⁶⁶ Barton and Bennett define the informal *Empire* as follows: “[...] a willing and successful attempt by commercial and political elites to control a foreign region, resource, or people. The means of control include the enforcement of extra-territorial privileges and the threat of economic and political sanctions, often coupled with the attempt to keep other would-be imperial powers at bay.”⁶⁷ This means that informal *Empires* do not have direct domination over territories at stake. Nevertheless, formal and informal *Empires* might differ in approaches they have towards their territories of interest but their impact on these territories can be similar or the same.

This paper uses the term *New Great Game* as a way to label the renewed competition of states in Central Asia in late 20th century. The main feature of Russia’s foreign policy towards Central Asia in this era can be described as Russia’s efforts to re-establish its position and influence in the Central Asian region; an informal *Empire* as it is described by Barton and Bennett. No longer are military methods or direct rule over territory are not a viable tools for establishing and maintaining Russia’s rule in its Central Asian Near Abroad. Russia therefore cannot set up a formal *Empire* in the same way it did during the 19th century in the course of the classical Great Game because of the nature of international environment; its checks and balances and an open eye which countries keep on each other. Now, together with other great powers such as China and US present, Russia tries to establish an informal *Empire*.

Among others, the most important strategies the countries use in order to shape Central Asian countries are: economic cooperation or competition; political pressure; and military presence in the region. The five Caspian littoral states have about 18.8 percent of the world’s total proven oil reserves and 45 percent of the world’s total proven gas reserves as of 2005;⁶⁸ the competition for these natural resources is high and constitutes the fourth pillar of gaining and maintaining influence in the region. Contrary to Lutz Kleveman or Makni,⁶⁹ who both

⁶⁶ FLINT, Colin – TAYLOR, Peter J.: *Political Geography: world-economy, nation states, and locality*. Harlow, Pearson Education 2000, p. 87.

⁶⁷ BARTON, Gregory, A. – BENNETT Brett M.: *Forestry as Foreign Policy: Anglo-Siamese Relations and the Origins of Britain's Informal Empire in the Teak Forests of Northern Siam, 1883–1925*. Itinerario, 34, 2010, no. 2, p. 71.

⁶⁸ XUETANG, Guo: *The Energy Security in Central Eurasia: the Geopolitical Implications to China's Energy Strategy*. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 4, 2006, no. 4, p. 3, pp. 117-137.

⁶⁹ MAKNI, Muhammad: *The New Great Game: Oil and Gas Politics in Central Eurasia*. New York, Raider Publishing International 2008, p. 312.

concentrate their *Great Game* research on natural resources and the Caspian energy dynamics, Rajan Menon focuses attention on the military strategy and aspect of terrorism. Different layers of countries' practices towards Central Asia exist. According to the definition, Russia has been using strategies leading to rebuilding and future preserving its influence in the region in the form of an informal *Empire*. This different kind of an *Empire* struggle is thereafter called the *New Great Game*.

1.3.4. Russia: post-imperial or neo-imperial state?

“Post” and “neo” are often used prefixes of the word “imperial” and are frequently used in the debate about Russia's foreign policy since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The terminology is not consistent as some authors prefer the first, some the later. The term post-imperial is generally used for the era beginning with the collapse of the Soviet Union till the beginning of Putin's first presidential mandate. The Yeltsin's period reflects Russia's lost position in international relations and consequences this geopolitical change brought to Russia. In his latest book *Post-Imperium*, Dmitrii Trenin delivers a different view and classifies the entire existence of the Russian Federation as post-imperial era. Trenin's interpretation carries recommendations for Russian foreign and domestic policy. “Rather than behaving like an *Empire* secretly trying to reinvent itself, Russia has an opportunity to become a regional leader.”⁷⁰ Russia can achieve its great power status by choosing different tools for achieving its place under the sun. Most importantly, the economic cooperation with the countries of post soviet block and an open Euro-Pacific policy will contribute to restructuring of Russia's relations with CIS countries. Furthermore soft power techniques will help Russia to build a positive and trustworthy image of an informal *Empire*.

Contrary to Trenin's arguments of Russia's lost position in the Central Asia Region, Edward Lucas's book *The New Cold War* argues the opposite. The interpretation of the neo-imperial tendencies implies growing power Russia has at its disposal. Korinman sees Putin's Russia as having neo-imperial tendencies with a prospect of a fifth *Empire* in future. According to this author Putin has the

⁷⁰ TRENIN, Dmitri: *Post-Imperium*. Washington, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2011, p. 123.

means to mobilise resources and is re-imperialising the country.⁷¹ In this sense, neo-imperial tendencies have negative connotation and imply fear of Russia's ultimate hard power domination in the region. On a general level, the term neo-imperial is used to describe new Russia under President Putin's rule. The politics is characteristic with diversion from the West, pursuing more CIS oriented rhetoric, efforts to bind the Central Asian countries as well as the European part of post-Soviet Russia closer or back to Moscow and establishing a new multi-polar world order where Russia represents one of the power centres.

2. Russia's approach towards Central Asia in the 19th and the 20th century. The Great Game era and beyond

This chapter concentrates on developments in Central Asia in the 19th and a major part of the 20th century, when Russia and Central Asia were parts of the Soviet Union. Moreover it tries to answer two questions, how was Russia's domination over Central Asia established and once established, how did the Tsarist rule differ from the Soviet one. The chapter is divided into three subchapters. The first subchapter discusses Russia's expansion to Central Asia and its imperial policies in the region in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. During that period Russia managed to include the major parts of Central Asia within its borders. The second part of the following text deals with causes of the Anglo-Afghan wars and impact of the conflicts on the Central Asian region. The wars symbolise the strategic significance of the region, which was later recognised by Mackinder as the "heart of *the Heartland*". The last subchapter concentrates on approaches of the Soviet centre towards the newly established Soviet Socialist republics in Central Asia. The very end of the second chapter provides a brief overview of developments in Russia's approaches towards Central Asia in the course of the Tsarist and Soviet history.

⁷¹ KORINMAN, Michel – LAUGHLAND, John (Edd.): *Russia. A New Cold War?* London, Valentine Mitchell, Edgware 2008, p. x.

2.1. Russia's expansion into the heart of the Heartland

The first half of the 19th century marked the beginning of Russian imperial expansion to Central Asia. Employment and evolution of the military, political, economic as well as cultural approaches contributed to Russia's success in achieving its aim; during the period of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century it was domination over Central Asia in the form of a formal *Empire* (See Map 3). The following part of the second chapter concentrates on main developments of the mentioned period.

Russia's aspirations were first materialised on the territory of today's Kazakhstan which was composed of Lesser, Middle and Upper Horde. Since 1723, Russia provided military protection to the Lesser horde against invading forces. Towards the end of the 18th century, Russia enforced its privilege to appoint rulers of the Lesser horde, the so called "khans"; the right was previously reserved for the tribal elite. By combining military and political influence, Russians usurped the Lesser horde's sovereignty in order to promote Russia's policy of colonising Central Asia.⁷² The Lesser Horde was ultimately abolished by a decree in 1822. Subsequently, the central part of Kazakhstan, the Upper Horde, was subordinated to the Russian army; and the Middle Horde followed suit two years later when Russia consequently appointed three sultans who divided and ruled over the previously unified territory.⁷³ Not later than 1847, the Russians finally succeeded in bringing the Upper, Middle and Lesser Kazakh hordes under full Russian control.⁷⁴

Conclusion of the Crimean war in 1856 prevented Russia from expansion to the west to challenge the Ottoman *Empire* and fulfilling its desire to gain access to the Mediterranean sea. While Great Britain continued to strengthen its position as commerce naval super power, Russian Tsar Alexander II used Russia's established position in Kazakh steppes as a basis for further expansion into the heart of Asia, to Turkestan, along the Sir-Darya river. Bukhara Khanate

⁷² COHEN, Ariel: *Russian Imperialism: Development and Crisis*. London, Praeger Publishing 1996, p. 52.

⁷³ GOMBÁR, Eduard: *Moderní dějiny islámských zemí*. Praha, Karolinum 1999, p. 193.

⁷⁴ HODGE, Cavanagh (ed.): *Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism*. London, Greenwood Press 2008, p. 287.

was the most important among all other Central Asian khanates.⁷⁵ In 1866, Russian army captured Chimkent and Tashkent. After the conquest of Samarkand in 1868, Tashkent was turned into a new basis for managing the southwards expansion and the Bukhara khanate became a Russian protectorate. In 1871, Khiva khanate followed Bukhara, largely owing to its military unpreparedness and political as well as administrative fragmentation of the khanate; similarly to Bukhara Khiva became Russia's protectorate.

Kokand khanate was a victim of the similar scenario three years later.⁷⁶ The local Emir was encountering a popular appraisal and sought Russian help for enforcing peace; Russia interpreted the invitation as a permission for annexing the territory. Consequently, Fergana valley was absorbed as the last piece of land.⁷⁷ The peak of Russian territorial expansion came in 1879. Central Asia became known as the so called *Russian Turkestan*. By the end of 1870s, Russia completed its military expansion endeavour to Central Asia. The Tsar managed to include Central Asia into the Russian *Empire*; local populations became politically subjugated to the Tsar. Turkestan was composed of five regions or so called *oblasts*: Fergana Oblast (part of Kokand Khanate), Semirechensk Oblast (major portion of Kazakh steppes), Syrdarya Oblast (around city of Tashkent), Samarkand Oblast and Transcaspiy Oblast. Bukhara and Khiva became Russia's protectorates; their last khans were in de iure power until 1920.^{78,79}

The military conquest was followed by political, cultural and economic oppression. Because the territorial distance from the European part of Russia as well as the indifference of the Russian population made it difficult to incorporate the newly acquired territories into the *Empire*, state administration of the vessel territories was entrusted into hands of general gubernator to carry out its policies. Expropriation of local nomadic population's land, was one of the first acts the central power ordered. Russian administrators granted the smallest possible

⁷⁵ d'ENCAUSSE, Carrère H.: *Islam and the Russian Empire. Reform and Revolution in Central Asia*. Berkley, I.B. Tauris 2009, p. 9.

⁷⁶ FREMONT-BARNES, Gregory: *The Anglo-Afghan wars 1839-1919*. Oxford, Osprey Publishing 2009, p. 50.

⁷⁷ ROUX, Jean Paul: *Dějiny Střední Asie*. Praha, NLN 2007, p. 321.

⁷⁸ PIERCE, Richard E.: *Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917*. Los Angeles, University of California Press 1960, p. 67. 359 pp.

⁷⁹ For a detailed history of Bukhara and Khiva protectorates see BECKER, Seymour: *Russia's protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865-1924*. London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. 416 pp.

surface area to locals, the rest was transferred to the so called state reserve fund. Consequently land property was cheaply sold up to Russian population.⁸⁰ Free land and timber were granted only to those Kazakhs who converted from Islam to Orthodox Christianity and integrated into agricultural community. Cultural oppression became a tool in hands of Russian colonisers because religious freedom was very limited; mosques were closed down and Muslims were not allowed to exercise Islam. At the same time, Russians actively backed conservative and backward Islam since they believed it would decrease its attractiveness for local populations.⁸¹

Turkestan was a place of major population resettlements from the central parts of Russia. In the 19th and the early 20th centuries 12-13 millions of migrant moved south, with another 4.5 million moving to southern Siberia and the steppes of Central Asia. The latter movement involved a wholesale dispossession and ejection of the Asian natives from their ancestral grazing lands.⁸² Newcomers were being privileged over the indigenous population; locals were losing their land in the favour of new population, as a result of which they often found themselves in a pitiful economic situation. Furthermore, Russia shaped production and industry in the region. The central power introduced systematic exploitation of rich natural resources and forced the locals to follow directive economic policies imposed on Central Asian territories.⁸³ Already in the beginning of the 20th century, Russia used Central Asia as a reservoir of important industrial commodities. Cotton trade is the example speaking for all others. Fergana valley was the centre of cotton production where more than one third of the irrigated land was used for cotton production.⁸⁴

Over all, the Russian occupation had a character of a formal *Empire*. After setting up a military domination, administrative and political control followed. Thus, Russia succeeded in incorporation of parts of Central Asia. Exploitation of natural resources, inferiority of local inhabitants and erosion of traditional

⁸⁰ ŠVANKMAJER, Milan: *Dějiny Ruska*. Praha, NLN 2004, p. 268.

⁸¹ ROUX, Jean Paul: *Dějiny Střední Asie*. Praha, NLN 2007, p. 321.

⁸² PIPES, Richard: *Rusia under the Old Regime*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1974. p. 15, pp. 360.

⁸³ ROUX, Jean Paul: *Dějiny Střední Asie*. Praha, NLN 2007, p. 322.

⁸⁴ ADLE, Chahryar: *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*. Paris, UNESCO Publishing 2005, p. 141.

lifestyle helped weaken Central Asia and at the same time tight it to the central power.

2.2. Anglo-Afghan wars as a response to Russia's presence in Central Asia

The focus of this subchapter is to present British involvement in *the Great Game* as a response to Russia's growing influence in Central Asia. Did Russian expansion to Central Asia pose a direct threat to British India? The thesis assumes the decisive role of geography. Kazakh territories subordinated to Russians could serve as a transit to Afghanistan North West of India and borders with Persia in the west. Hindu Kush, a natural barrier, was the only obstacle which protected the British sea power and India, "*the pearl of Empire*", from open military conflict. By passing through Bolan and Khyber Pass a way to India would have been open.

Historians differ in their opinion whether Russia was imminent threat in 1839 when Britain became involved militarily in the region. In the book *First Afghan War, 1838-1842* J.A. Norris endorses Palmerston's decision⁸⁵ to strike militarily while others such as Sir John Kaye view the threat of the "*Russian bear*" as exaggerated.⁸⁶⁸⁷ Undisputable is, that Russia was becoming stronger in Central Asia, which meant it could strike sooner or later. Britain realised strategic importance of that region and simply desired to prevent Russia to win *the Great Game*.

The trigger for British military involvement in Asia emerged, when Persia, British old enemy and Russian ally, made territorial claims for strategic Afghan city of Herat. In 1839, the suspicion against Persia and Russia led Britain to

⁸⁵ Lord Palmerston was a British politician, serving as a Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1839. By full name Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston symbolises the height of the British power in world and also British interventionist policies. For life and policies of Lord Palmerston during the period 1831-1845, see BULWER, Lytton: *The Life of Henry John Temple*. Viscount Palmerston: with Selection from his Diaries and Correspondence. Volume 3, Leipzig, Bernhard Tauchnitz 1870 (Elibron Classics Replica Edition), 367 pp.

⁸⁶ LAMBRICK, H.T.: Review of the *First Afghan war 1832-1842*. The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. 20, 1968, no.3/4, pp. 188-191.

⁸⁷ KAYE, John: *India: A History*. New York, Grove Press 2010, pp. 418-419.

embark on a military mission in order to install loyal emir to the Afghan throne.⁸⁸ Resistance and xenophobia of ethnic Afghans together with British military incompetence were main factors behind Britain's defeat; in 1842, Britain definitively failed to achieve its *casus belli*.⁸⁹

In order to avoid open confrontation, Russia and Britain agreed that the Amu Darya river would be the frontier between Afghanistan and Russia. This agreement from 1872 did not mention nature and extent of Russian influence in Afghanistan but basically stipulated that Afghanistan fell into British sphere of influence.⁹⁰ The British perceived political control over Afghanistan as a precondition for containing Russia in its current borders, i.e. in time when parts of Central Asia were already under Russian domination; keeping Russia out of Afghanistan secured British interests in India.⁹¹

The second Anglo-Afghan war was a result of mutual distrust and British presumed threat of Russia's further expansion into Afghanistan, the British sphere of influence. The conflict began as a diplomatic handling over loyalty of the Afghan emir when both, the Russians as well as the British, sent their diplomatic missions to the court of the Emir of Afghanistan. Aim of both expeditions was to reconnoissance a new political terrain after a new Emir ascended the throne. Afghanistan had rejected to fall into any power's sphere of influence; despite this fact and Emir's reluctance, the Russians were able to enter Kabul in July 1878. British diplomatic envoy was stopped at the Khyber Pass in September 1878. This incident was the trigger for Britain's invasion. But contrary to what Britain assumed, Russia would not be able to lead fully fledged conflict in Central Asia because at that time, it was in war with the Ottoman Empire. The British army took lessons from the first Anglo-afghan war in 1839 and improved their planning, military equipment and human resources capacities.⁹²

⁸⁸ HODGE, Cavanagh (ed.): *Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism*. London, Greenwood Press 2008, p. 288.

⁸⁹ NORRIS, Joel A.: *The First Afghan War 1838-1842*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 78.

⁹⁰ ADLE, Chahryar: *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*. Paris, UNESCO Publishing 2005, p. 108.

⁹¹ NORRIS, Joel A.: *The First Afghan War 1838-1842*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 442.

⁹² FREMONT-BARNES, Gregory: *The Anglo-Afghan wars 1839-1919*. Oxford, Osprey Publishing 2009, p. 58.

The war eventually ended in 1880, the British proxy was installed to the throne. He had to surrender the independence of the country by agreeing to hand over Afghan foreign policy to Britain in exchange for a guarantee of Afghan north-west border with Russia.⁹³ Such a move gave Britons opportunity to keep Afghanistan as a buffer zone and thus isolate India from Russian influence.

The process of defining Afghan borders by the United Kingdom and Russia, which can be translated as avoiding an open conflict, continued after the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Afghan war. In 1885, the Anglo-Russian Boundary Commission defined Afghanistan's north-west border.⁹⁴ After Russia tried to push further south, close to British Kashmir in 1895, the Pamir agreement gave Afghanistan a status of a watchdog over the Wakhan corridor.⁹⁵ This strategic territory is located in the Pamir range and served as a political insulation between Central Asian states controlled by Russia, British India and China. The agreement was valid until the end of the First World War, when Afghanistan was recognised as an independent state. By 1907, the struggle between Tsarist Russia and Britain was formally adjourned resulting in Anglo-Russian Convention because of the growing German threat in the European continent.⁹⁶

The period of *the Great Game* and British involvement in development of the Central Asian region clearly demonstrates strategic importance of the region in the dynamics of international relations. Russia's dominance of that region together with a possibility of its further march through Afghanistan to India, provoked British military intervention. Trying to predict retrospectively, would could have happened if Britain would not have stroke, is a pure fantasy. Yet, it is reasonable to assume, that sooner or later Russia might have decided to engage in Afghanistan in order to gain more influence over Heartland. One of the preconditions for such an intervention would have had to be favourable international environment, i.e. Russia not being involved in other fully fledged military operation. A precondition which was not fulfilled in the 19th century.

⁹³ BARFIELD, Thomas J.: *Afghanistan: a Cultural and Political History*. New Jersey, Princeton University Press 2010, p. 143.

⁹⁴ ADLE, Chahryar (ed.): *Towards the Contemporary Period: from the Mid-nineteenth to the end of the Twentieth Century*. Paris, UNESCO Publishing 2005. p. 445.

⁹⁵ ADLE, Chahryar (ed.): *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*. Paris, UNESCO Publishing 2005, p. 442.

⁹⁶ MEYER, Karl Ernest – BRYSAK, Shareen Blair: *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia*. Washington, Counterpoint 1999, p. xxi.

2.3. Russia's -Stans in the 20th century. Region under the Soviet rule

This subchapter explains how Russia's approach towards the Russian Turkestan developed in the new historical era, when Russia existed in a form of the Soviet Union. The continuation and consolidation of the Tsarist approaches as well as distinct methods of the Soviet rule are presented.

Inhabitants of subjugated Central Asian khanates joined neither the revolutionary forces during the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution nor the old regime. Between November 1917 and January 1918, Soviet councils were established in all new quarters of the towns of the Turkestan region. Lenin, being aware of the high percentage of Muslim population in Central Asia, established a Central Commissariat for Muslim Affairs in January 1918 and a socialist-communist Muslim party⁹⁷ in order to prevent popular uprising and to tight Muslim inhabitants to the Soviet power; these bodies were quickly dissolved and Soviet central power was imposed. In 1920 both lost their status; Khorezm and Bukharan People's Soviet Republics were created.

Boundaries changed; in 1920, Red Army conquered Bukhara and Khiva protectorates and officially incorporated them into Russian territory. Two years later, the Soviet Union was officially established as a result of reorganisation of the old *Empire*. The Constitution of 1924 established Soviet Socialist republics of Kazakh, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek.⁹⁸ The official form of the Soviet Union was a product of Lenin's construction. "[He] suggested to leave out the word Russia from the name of the new *Empire*, [...] all the member states were put on the same level in the state hierarchy, in order to ensure their equality. Furthermore, a principals of voluntary accession and withdrawal from the Union were implemented."⁹⁹ The Soviet Union was officially a federal state; in reality the Soviet Union was one of the most centralised states in history. Czech historian Vladimír Baar pointed out that "everybody knows that the title Soviet Union was

⁹⁷ ROY, Olivier: *The New Central Asia: the Creation of Nations*. New York, NYU Press 2000, p. 50.

⁹⁸ Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic was established in 1936 by separation from Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic.

⁹⁹ VEBER, Václav: *Leninova vláda (Rusko 1917-1924)*. Praha, Triton 2003, s. 112.

just a covering pseudonym for Russian *Empire* being built for centuries of continuous Russian aggression to all directions.”¹⁰⁰

Apart from the official ideological doctrine of all Soviet identity, border delimitation of the union republics were responsible for construction of new national identities. The policy of the so called “*korenizatsiya*” was, among others, applied in order to reverse formerly pursued policy of promotion of Russian nationality and identity among subjugated nations; indigenous and minority culture was fostered in society, education, culture, medicine etc.¹⁰¹ The impact was inchoate at best, prevailing religious identities came to the surface with the collapse of the Soviet Union and are equally problematic up to the present day.¹⁰² The dissolution of the Soviet Union gave rise to numerous Islamic groups across the Central Asian republics such as is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

Russian dominance was apparent and illustrated in the policy of cultural assimilation. Together with purges among indigenous political elites in Central Asia and abandonment of *korenizatsiya*, *russification* of non-Russian population considerably intensified. Language and writing as carriers of exclusiveness of individual Central Asian cultures were discarded first. The Arabic alphabet was first changed to the Latin one, this in turn was replaced by the Cyrillic. By 1939, sixty nine new alphabets, based on the Latin alphabet, had been created.¹⁰³ Especially, this was a definite blow for the Muslims who lost their connection with the Koran because the holy book of Islam is written in Arabic. In 1938, the Russian language was introduced as a mandatory subject in all non-Russian schools from the first grade.¹⁰⁴ It was argued that Russian is a necessary tool for the consolidation of Russian nation and for sharing Russian civilization; unifying language was used in state administration and in any official interaction.

Russification aimed to further increase the percentage of native Russians in the ethnic mix of Russian republics in order to neutralise them politically. In

¹⁰⁰ BAAR, Vladimír: Decentralizační a dezintegrační procesy v Ruské federaci v 90. letech minulého století. Ostrava, Ostravská univerzita 2005, p. 16.

¹⁰¹ VIHAVAINEN, Timo: *Nationalism and Internationalism. How did the Bolsheviks Cope with National Sentiments?* In: CHULOS, Chris J. – PIIRAINEN, Timo (Edd.): *The Fall of an Empire, the Birth of a Nation*. Helsinki, Ashgate 2000, p. 80.

¹⁰² ZIEGLER, Charles E.: *The Russian Diaspora in Central Asia: Russian Compatriots and Moscow's Foreign Policy*. *Demokratizatsiya*, 14, 2006, no. 1, p. 108.

¹⁰³ ROUCEK, Joseph S.: *The Soviet Treatment of Minorities*. *Phylon*, 22, 1961, no. 1, pp. 15-23.

¹⁰⁴ GRENOBLE, Lenore A.: *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*. Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers 2003, p. xvi.

1926, only 30 % of European Russians lived in the vast lands of Kazakhstan. Due to the economic and industrial changes, the number rose to 57 % of Russians and Ukrainians in 1970. 5.6 % of European Russians lived in Uzbekistan in 1939 and the number increased by 15 % till 1947. Kyrgyz republic witnessed a high number of Russians already before the beginning of the Second World War.¹⁰⁵ Cities were more flooded by ethnic Russians than the country side and their socio-economic background was more favourable than the one of local citizens.

Soviet era was characteristic by collective ownership, central planning which was becoming increasingly ineffective. Kazakhstan was first of the -stans which was heavily industrialised partly due to discovery of new natural resources after the Second World War. Kazakh oil town Aktau was established in 1961 and became a basis for resources exploration. Later tin and uranium became Kazakh major commodities, too. Soviet leadership further started to exploit Uzbekistan for its oil, Turkmenistan for oil and natural gas and Tajikistan mainly for cement. Oil and natural gas had their own separate State Committees within the Soviet Union State Planning Committee. Oil and gas transport infrastructure was owned by the state and revenues from purchases to Europe were redistributed according to political objectives; power ministries were main beneficiaries of financial revenues and countries of resource origin were denied the financial share.¹⁰⁶

Findings

The aim of the second chapter was to show how Russia approached Central Asia in two distinct periods of its existence, i.e. tsarist Russia and Soviet Russia, and to show how the British Empire reacted to Russia's expansion in the region.

In the late 18th and in the 19th century, Russia was exploring the Heartland. It first had to use its military force in order to conquer new territories and establish itself as a new ruler. Britain reacted with great concern and campaigned to the heart of the continent. The main aim was to stop and contain Russia. Afghanistan proved to be a tough battle field but Anglo-Afghan wars turned out to be a

¹⁰⁵ ROUX, Jean Paul: *Dějiny Střední Asie*. Praha, NLN 2007, p. 331.

¹⁰⁶ *Soviet Legacy on Russian Petroleum Industry*. Center for Energy Economics, March 2006, p. 3, http://www.beg.utexas.edu/energyecon/new-era/case_studies/Soviet_Legacy_on_Russian_Petroleum_Industry.pdf (25.11.2011)

success for Britain. Throughout the course of the late 19th and beginning of the 20th Britain managed to protect its core interests, which were not to let Russia pass from the Heartland to British India and to get an access to sea.

Politically, tsarist Russia established a completely new territorial division, when in 1867 Russian Turkestan was created in order to administratively manage conquered territories. Later, Soviet Russia reorganised the territory and established completely new entities called soviet republics in 1920-1924, furthermore it formally incorporated Bukhara and Khiva protectorates into Russian territory. Federal Soviet Russia had profound hierarchy and was definitely more centralist than the tsarist Russia, which helped to keep an open eye on its regions. All consecutive changes were executed in order to consolidate Soviet power in the region.

Tsarist Russia used expropriation of land mainly as a means for subjugating indigenous peoples of the newly acquired territories. The expropriated land was granted to locals only on a conditional basis; ethnic Russians benefited from these measures. Soviet Russia, on the other hand, did not distinguish between the indigenous people and ethnic Russians when collectivisation became a Soviet policy.

In both eras, Central Asia served as Russia's reservoir of resources. Suppression of citizens was carried out by economic exploitation. With development of technology, oil and natural gas became one of the most important commodities. While Russia's elite became dependent on these resources in this peripheral regions, infrastructure and financial settlements continued to be managed in Moscow, away from local populations. All economic planning was planned centrally and largely in favour of the power ministries such as ministry of defence.

Russification was a policy which aimed at assimilating Central Asians into Russian empire in both eras. Apart from the early Soviet policy of *korenizatsiya*, distinctive cultures of Central Asia were suppressed. Compared to Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union employed a communist ideology in order to create one Soviet nation regardless of where its inhabitants came from; Russian became a language tool to enforce a common identity.

Furthermore, both eras were marked which considerable influx of Russian population from the central parts of Russia; native Central Asian population was forced to change their lifestyle and their living standards were worsened.

Central Asia was first incorporated by tsarist Russia into Russia's territory; it became part of its lifecycle. The Soviet rule later consolidated its power in the region; it managed the task for more than seventy years. One might have spotted that the term Russian Empire is sometimes used for both Tsarist and Soviet Russia. In the very essence they were more similar than distinct.

3. Approach of the Russian Federation towards Central Asia 1991-2011

Russia, the Soviet Union successor state, lost its superpower status with the end of the Cold War. Not only it had to adjust to the new global realities but crucial challenge came when it was trying to find its position within the territory of now former Soviet Union. What has been a nature of Russia's foreign policy what extent has it been successful? Russia's approach towards its former territories, now being titled the *near abroad*, in particular to Central Asia, is the focus of this chapter. In accordance with the second of the two major objectives of the Thesis, the following text analyses Russia's involvement and strategy in the region in a period of 1991-2011. The period is characteristic by disintegration of the Soviet Union; Russia lost its direct rule over the former Soviet republics and has been trying to retain, regain and increase its influence in the region. Firstly, general background to Russia's post Soviet foreign policy orientations and major milestones are presented; Russia's foreign policy towards Central Asia was not given straight forward from the beginning of their independent existence. In order to best assess Russia's approaches towards the region the following subchapters are structured according the individual sectors of its policy: security/military, economic and energy.

The international reality created a very diverse space of Central Asia, which can hardly be described as a compact region; since then Russia and every single Central Asian republic have had their own interests which they try to achieve. Professor at Moscow State Institute of International Relations Alexey

Malashenko says that “[interests] may overlap, but they may also be mutually exclusive. One Central Asian vector is directed at Russia, another at China, and there are also American and Muslim vectors.”¹⁰⁷ Given the large number of countries with different policies, the Thesis concentrates on developments in the following multilateral organisations; establishment of and integration via intergovernmental institutions became a typical tool of Russia’s foreign policy in the region (See Table 1). In the security/military sphere it is the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty (CST) and its successor organisation the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), Shanghai Cooperation Treaty (SCT). In the economic sphere it is multiple efforts to create customs union/common economic space/single economic zone, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC/EAEC), Common/Single Economic Space (CES/SES), Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO) and the Custom Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Since the Putin’s first presidential term, a tendency in favour of bilateral relations between Russia and the member states of the CIS is considerable. Stephen Blank adds, that Putin clearly indicated this preference rather than further integration of the CIS.¹⁰⁸ Therefore bilateral mode of cooperation is taken into consideration; typically the energy issues are dealt with on bilateral basis. Furthermore, acts of other super powers (China and USA) which seek to establish and increase their influence in the region is taken into consideration. Last but not least, Professor Bertil Nygren sees CIS’s, which can be translated as Russia’s, weakness in the number of splinter movements. Counter alliances are concluded within the organisation itself with different combination of member states.¹⁰⁹ Newly born organisations are created due to different motivations: to diminish Russia’s influence, to pursue own national foreign policies and to re-orientate towards different partners. Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development or simply GU(U)AM is the illustrious example which is included in the military/security section.

¹⁰⁷ MALASHENKO, Alexey: “*Central Asia in Stagnation.*” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 11 June 2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/06/21/central-asia-in-stagnation/3is> (2.11.2011)

¹⁰⁸ BLANK, Stephen: “*Is Russia forging a new CIS strategy?*” Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 23 July 2008, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4916> (11.9.2011)

¹⁰⁹ NYRGEN, Bertil: *Rebuilding of Greater Russia: Putin’s Foreign Policy Towards the CIS Countries.* Oxon, Routledge 2008, p. 26.

3.1. Russian foreign policy orientation after 1991

The end of the Cold War erased the ideological division between East and West, Russia lost Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 25 million Russians suddenly found themselves effectively abroad.¹¹⁰ The domestic policy was in turmoil and economic reforms were necessary. Future of Russia at home as well as abroad was concentrated around seemingly simple question: What is Russia now? Which path should it follow? The self image of Russian identity was in ruins. Sakwa argues that sovietisation was no less intense in Russia than in the other republics, but the largely Russian face to the Soviet regime masked the devastation that Russian culture and society suffered.¹¹¹ The first part of this subchapter concentrates on Russia's post-Cold War orientation, follows Yeltsin's presidential terms in a contrast to Putin's presidential mandates which were characteristic by Russia's power aspirations and asserting new interest in former Soviet Union republics.

Yeltsin's first presidential term, especially till late 1993, was overwhelmingly marked with Russia's economic orientation to the West. Andrei Kozyrev, a Minister of Foreign Affairs in a period 1990-1996, was the symbol of Russia's pro Western orientation. In 1991 the Russian government headed by Yeltsin proposed an alliance of the states of the northern hemisphere. Aim of the union would be a democratic zone of trust, cooperation and security.¹¹² It was Kozyrev, who, in December 1991, claimed that Russia "does not regard NATO as an aggressive military bloc but views it as one of the mechanisms for stability in Europe and in the world as a whole." Russia's orientation towards Europe and USA were demonstrated in Russia's eager willingness to involve actively in creating common secure space. "[Russia's] priority is developing a system of general and comprehensive security for Europe for a long perspective."¹¹³

¹¹⁰ LAITIN, David: *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. New York, Cornell University Press 2008, p. xiii.

¹¹¹ SAKWA, Richard: *Russian Politics and Society*. London, Routledge 2002, p. 255.

¹¹² LEGVOLD, Robert: *Foreign Policy*. In: COLTON, Timothy – LEGVOLD, Robert (Edd): *After the Soviet Union. From Empire to Nations*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company Inc., p. 156.

¹¹³ *Andrey Kozyrev Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Statement at the Acceptance of the Russian Partnership Programme, 31 May 1995*. In: NATO Speeches and

The honey moon period between Russia and the West reached its peak in 1993. From that time on, Russian liberals became increasingly contested by politically nationalist forces. Yeltsin's former adviser Galina Staravoirova, predicted that Russia's economic failure and wounded self-esteem were so profound and combustible that the rise of a charismatic authoritarian movement in Russia could not be ruled out.¹¹⁴ The dissatisfaction was deeply rooted within powerful interest groups who had a contradicting view on Russia's position in the world. Lilia Shevtsova identifies the Congress of People's Deputies, which is according to the Constitution the main power centre in Russia, as one of the focal opposing powers standing in the way of incomprehensive liberal forces.¹¹⁵ The military elite retained suspicious tone towards the NATO and alliance's prospective enlargement to the East.

Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's focus on the West strongly outweighed Russia's relations to the post Soviet countries united under the CIS headline. Apart from the interest of integrating into the Western prosperous community and economic liberal reforms carried out in the name of Anatoly Chubais' „shock therapy“¹¹⁶, Mark Webber argues that Russian seemingly indifferent approach towards the former Soviet union space was driven by a belief that the successor states would gravitate naturally towards Russia as a consequence of their shared military and economic interdependencies and common experience of post-communist transition.¹¹⁷ Despite Russian passive attitude towards the CIS countries, which might be described as a state close to indifference, the presumption that Russia has a right to interfere and oversee the post-Soviet space was always valid in minds of Russian policy makers.¹¹⁸ Richard Pipes summarises that Russia has „the legacy of continuous expansion which had created a patrimonial mentality embedded in the Russian psyche,

transcripts, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-65270DB8-C9804983/natolive/opinions_24784.htm (24.11.2011)

¹¹⁴ REMNICK, David: *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*. Portland, Vintage Books 2001, p. 534-535.

¹¹⁵ SHEVTSOVA, Lilia: „*What's the Matter with Russia?*“ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1 January 2010, http://carnegie.ru/publications/?fa=40353&solr_hilite= (4.11.2011)

¹¹⁶ SPIEGEL *interview with Anatoly Chubais*. Spiegel, 25.9.2007.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/0,1518,507834,00.html> (5.11.2011)

¹¹⁷ WEBBER, Mark: *Russian objectives towards the successor states*. In: BOWKER, Mike – ROSS, Cameron (Edd.): *Russia after the Cold War*. Edinburgh, Pearson Education Limited 2000, p. 242.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

which holds that anything inherited from the past is inalienable property.”¹¹⁹ Therefore even the new Russia would not let go Central Asia, a space of the strategic importance it once ruled; the territory still matters and military intervention was acceptable.

Dissatisfaction with Russia's unfavourable situation, both domestically and internationally, fuelled suspicion towards the NATO, USA and Europe. Michael Romancov aptly described Russia's position as: “[Russia] realized that it has nothing to offer. It lost attractiveness to keep its old ‘friends’ and has zero sex-appeal to win hearts of new ones.”¹²⁰ The divorce with the West was symbolised in replacement of liberals in the Russian government. Anatoly Chubais, architect of the economic reforms, followed chief of staff Sergei Filatov and Kozyrev.¹²¹ Yevgeny Primakov, who supported strong position of Russia in world politics, became a new Minister of Foreign Affairs. Thereafter, since 1993, Russia has started to stress the importance of the post-Soviet space, where the new Russia had to succeed in restoring its position and maintain its leading position within the countries of former Soviet bloc.¹²²

The situation went hand in hand with the gradual change in Russia's political inclination towards Asia and became gradually part of the official Russian political discourse and thinking. By the mid-1990s, Russia's position as the bridge between Europe and Asia was explained by its unique national character. As Alexander Dugin, the prominent post-Soviet geopolitician, wrote: „Recognising Russian exceptionalism will allow the state to defend its true national interests, to avoid humiliation on the international scene and to keep alive its potential as a great power.”¹²³ In 1996, Primakov presented a list of five priorities of Russia's foreign policy; one of which was resistance to international efforts aimed at thwarting CIS integration and gradual integration into the world

¹¹⁹ PIPES, Richard: *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1997, p. 93.

¹²⁰ ROMANCOV, Michael: Rusko a jeho pohled na mezinárodní systém: výzvy pro ČR a střední Evropu. *Acta Politologica*, 1, 2009, no. 2, p. 109.

¹²¹ *Last Key Reformer Leaves Yeltsin's Cabinet*. RFE/RL, 9 January 1996, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079903.html> (3.11.2011)

¹²² KUCHYŇKOVÁ, Petra-ŠMÍD (Edd.): *Rusko jako geopolitický aktér v postsovětském prostoru*. Brno, IIPS 2006, p. 26, pp. 200.

¹²³ DUGIN, Guerman G.: *The West and Russian society*. Moscow, Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences 2002, p. 9. 6-23.

economy as an equal member.¹²⁴ Primakov perceived Russia as one centre of the multi-polar world, a centre around which its neighbours revolve.¹²⁵ The inclination towards the Eurasian identity has served as a tool for justification and legitimisation of its pragmatic policy of involvement in the CIS.

In 1999, Putin emerged as Yeltsin's successor. The new president introduced new economic recovery plan, prices of oil and gas were climbing up, his popularity was high.¹²⁶ Putin continued established foreign policy line; he stressed importance of Russia's near abroad: "Our efforts to activate work within the CIS are dictated not only by our historic closeness but also by obvious practical considerations. Russia is the nucleus of integration processes in the CIS."¹²⁷ Since 2002, as Russia gained new confidence, work with CIS and its further integration has on top of the foreign policy priority list.¹²⁸ In world politics, Putin was trying to picture Russia as a great power, an equal partner with the West and as one of the centres of a mul-multipolar world. This went hand in hand with emphasis on the CIS and Euro-Asian cooperation. With Dmitri Medvedev in power, Russia's foreign policy line has not changed significantly. There were more downs than ups with the West, such as the US proposal for

3.2. Security and military cooperation

End of the Soviet Union came at surprisingly high speed which stunned everybody. In 2005, Putin said those memorable words which outraged foreign audience: „*The collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest geopolitical*

¹²⁴ Primakov outlines Russian Foreign Policy Priorities. The Jamestown foundation, Monitor, 19 March, 1996, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=13201&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=212 (3.11.2011)

¹²⁵ Interview with Yevgeni Primakov. The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, 1999, 8, no. 2, p. 4.

¹²⁶ Portuguese Press Quotes "ROMIR" Opinion Poll: President Putin's Popularity Maintained. Pravda.ru, 22 October 2010, <http://english.pravda.ru/news/russia/22-10-2000/37261-0/> (3.11.2011)

¹²⁷ Vladimir Putin, Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, 3 April 2001. In: President of Russia Archive, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2001/04/03/0000_type70029type82912_70660.shtml (4.10.2011)

¹²⁸ Vladimir Putin, Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, 18 April 2002. In: President of Russia Archive, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2002/04/18/0000_type70029type82912_70662.shtml (4.10.2011)

catastrophe of the century.“ And he added: „*For the Russian people, it became a real drama, ten sof millions of our citizens and countrymen found themselves outside Rusian territory. The epidemic of disintegration also spread to Russia itself.*“¹²⁹ Putin’s speech is not surprising, at least from a classical geopolitical point of view. As Dmitri Trenin wrote: „*1989 became a seminal turning point in the geopolitical dynamic of Eurasia. Five hundred years of heartland expansion ended. The Rimland, represented by NATO and the European Union in the west, Islamic forces in the south, and the power o f China in the east, started to spread its influence into the rapidly disintegrating „Continent Russia“.*“¹³⁰

All of these challenges became Russia’s nightmares. First, Russia had deal with its new territorial borders. Second, security and military cooperation continued with post-Soviet republics on a basis of shared security threats. Consequently Russia desired to be the security guarantor in Central Asia in order to enhance and preserve its own security and uphold its great power status of the region. As a result of that, security organisations and relations where Russia is involved; plays a supreme role; or is not a member at all, started to emerge.

3.2.1. Creation of the CIS and the Collective Security Treaty

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was created and the Soviet Union was dissolved on 8 December 1991 with Belarus, Russia and Ukraine signing the Belavezha Accords. The Central Asian states joined the CIS by signing the Alma Ata declaration on 21 December 1991.¹³¹ The organisation is intergovernmental and was established with little executive powers What was the purpose of creating this organisation at that time if Russia was interested in integration to the liberal West? Often repeated arguments follows, that general purpose for setting up of the CIS, by all former Soviet republics but the Baltic

¹²⁹ Vladimir Putin, *Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, 25 April 2005*. In: President of Russia Archive, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029type82912_87086.shtml (15.11.2011)

¹³⁰ TRENIN, Dmitri: *The End of Eurasia*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Moscow 2002, p. 88.

¹³¹ *The Alma Ata Declaration, 21 December 1991*. In: Library of the Congress. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/belarus/by_appnc.html (23.9.2011)

states, was to peacefully manage its previous common history, i.e. prime goal was not to re-establish a connection between Russia and new independent countries.

Establishment of the CIS was closely linked to Russia's and Central Asia's military and security legacy; new Central Asian republics did not possess any military forces. With the Belavezha accords the Soviet military became the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States. As the external physical threat to the Soviet Union ceased to exist and new republics were created establishing and safe guarding new national borders became a vital question. It was not a question of life importance for the new countries which created an imaginary belt around Russia, but Russia found itself unprotected in the new environment.

Russia had to face reluctance from the CIS countries which did not want to give their new national sovereignty away; they did not want to rely on Russian Commander-in-Chief who was in charge of the common CIS military. Collective protection of the CIS borders was one of the goals of Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, yet and probably partly because, it was only partly successful and short lived. Out of the Central Asian countries only Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan granted Russia the privilege to deploy border troops along several sectors of the Union borders. Over evaluation of Russia's border mission is only partly successful. Securing the borders proved to be financially demanding and did not bring the desired result; countries still remain transit territories for influx of drugs to Russia.¹³² Russian border guards ended their mission in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan was left to guard its external border in 2005 but the US has been providing financial aid of USD 13 million as a part of its Afghanistan strategy.¹³³ As one can see Russia could not fulfil its aim and new actor entered the scene as well.

The Collective Security Treaty (CST) of 1992 was established as a tool for management the military legacy of the Soviet Union. It reflected Russia's

¹³² Drug trafficking is a severe problem for the Central Asian security. In addition to that, countries regularly blame each other for corruption and engagement of their respective border personnel in drug trade. See: *Tajik Border Guards Reject Uzbek Charges of Drug Trafficking*. RFE/RL, December 12 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/tajik_border_guards_reject_uzbek_charges_of_drug_trafficking/24392123.html (8.10.2011)

¹³³ McDERMOTT, Roger: "Russian Border Guards Begin Withdrawal From Tajikistan." Jamestown, Eurasia daily monitor, 21 April 2005, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=30285 (15.11.2011)

unwillingness to effectively re-integrate the CIS countries as well as differences in interests and inability of participating countries to identify common threats. All former Soviet republics except for Moldova, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and the Baltic states signed the document which could hardly stand its name. Cooperation was addressed in a very vague manner and according to the post-Soviet tradition, this multilateral agreement was supplemented by a number of bilateral agreements, mainly between Russia and other member states. The Russo-Kyrgyz agreement from 1992 on stationing 6 – 7000 troops on Kyrgyzstan's territory can serve as an example.¹³⁴ Not only the CIS but also the CST became a platform for negotiating bilateral contracts.

Russia of the beginning of 1990s did not desire re-integration with the CIS. Nevertheless, as it was mentioned it still considered itself to have legitimacy and right to interfere militarily in its near abroad. As Stephen Cohen sharply disagrees with common post-Soviet myth, promoted by Yeltsin's supporters, which has been that collapse of the Soviet Union, was "peaceful". In reality, ethnic civil wars broke out in Central Asia and Caucasus.¹³⁵ The threat of Islamic radicalism and its spill over to Russian territory pulled Russia into the Tajikistan's civil war in 1992. Tajik ruling party was composed of politicians coming from Leninabad region. The party allied with Kulob region in order to suppress and shatter the opposition. The opposition¹³⁶ allied with Mujahidin from Afghanistan, and received active support in a form of material, training and shelter.¹³⁷ Eventually, a CIS peacekeeping mission was deployed to Tajik-Afghan border to stop influx of fighters from Afghanistan was installed at the border. Professor Richard Sakwa describes, what later became widely assessed as a peacekeeping failure: *"Russia's 201st Motorised Rifle Division here acted rather more forcefully than would be expected of mere peacekeepers, patrolling the frontier with Afghanistan and in effect acting as the armed forces of the*

¹³⁴ HORÁK, Slavomír: *Rusko a Střední Asie po rozpadu SSSR*. Praha, Karolinum 2008, p. 105.

¹³⁵ COHEN, Stephen: *"The breakup of the Soviet Union ended Russia's march to democracy."* *The Guardian*, 13 December 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/dec/13/comment.russia> (13.10. 2011)

¹³⁶ Heterogeneous opposition rebel group comprised of democrats, reformists and Islamists who were denied participation in government and later partly fled to Afghanistan. MENON, Rajan: *In the Shadow of the Bear: Security in Post-Soviet Central Asia*. International Security, 20, 1995, no. 1, p. 155.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

regime.”¹³⁸ At the same time, previously minor actors from the Kulob region joined the old ruling nomenklatura. Eventually, such pro-Russian figures as Emomalii Rahmon¹³⁹ came to power. Moreover Nygren further adds that despite termination of the operation, Russian troops remain in Tajikistan as a part of a bilateral agreement between Moscow and Dushanbe. This suggests that peacekeeping mission under the auspices of the CIS consisted of Russian military unit, which proved to be ineffective and inappropriate tool for conflict resolution. Other examples suggesting this conclusion from Moldova, Nagorno Karabakh or Georgia demonstrate, that Russia is not capable of utilising peaceful means for settling conflicts, relies on hard power and very often negatively influences the conflict dynamics in order to pursue its own strategic interests.

Initial lack of interest from Russia’s side and pursuing of very narrow pragmatic and practical cooperation changed with Russia’s reorientation to its near abroad. In Yeltsin’s 1994 speech at the United Nations, the CIS was labelled as an area of Russia’s pivotal interests. The policy reorientation is has been known as the so called Yeltsin’s Doctrine. According to Smith, the shift was decisively influenced by “anxiety about the growing influence of some Far Abroad [...] besides the security of its Western borders in relation to NATO expansion, Russia fears the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism on its southern rim.”¹⁴⁰ As the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Primakov in 1996 explained, NATO enlargement was deemed negative both in traditionally conservative and among liberal politicians who were both represented in the Parliament.¹⁴¹ The rift to increasingly anti-Western sentiments can be thus noted in more liberal elites. Contrary to this rhetoric, Russia’s poor actions did not reflect its new dedication to cooperation with the CIS.

Since 2003, relations with the CIS countries have appeared on top of Russia’s foreign affairs priority list. Putin openly declared Russia’s pragmatic

¹³⁸ SAKWA, Richard: *Russian Politics and Society*. London, Routledge 2002, p. 389.

¹³⁹ Rahmon has been Tajik president since 1992. He has amended the Constitution to prolong his presidential mandates, has been widely criticised by opposition for electoral fraud, corruption and personal parasitism on Tajik state. See HARDING, Luke: “*Wikileaks cables paint bleak picture of Tajikistan, central Asia’s poorest country state.*” The Guardian, 12 December 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/12/wikileaks-bleak-picture-tajikistan> (1.12.2011)

¹⁴⁰ SMITH, Graham. *The Masks of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism*. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series, 24, 1990, no. 4, 1990, p. 489.

¹⁴¹ FRIEDMAN, Thomas: “*Foreign Affairs; Russia’s NATO Fax.*” The New York Times, 24 July 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/24/opinion/foreign-affairs-russia-s-nato-fax.html?ref=yevgenymprimakov> (18.10.2011)

organisation of national interests where security stability and economic progress of CIS are the Russia's national interests prerogative. The development of CIS has been viewed with certain degree of suspicion and fear too. During Putin's presidential mandates, voices calling Russia's foreign policies towards Central Asia as *neo-imperial*, occurred. Is the CIS Putin's tool for asserting Russia's influence on its neighbours or is it just an organisation with lower level of integration where failures prevail over achievements? President Medvedev, during the 20th anniversary of the CIS summit said: "The Commonwealth has sometimes come under criticism, described as amorphous and weak in the implementation of the adopted obligations. We have just heard Mr Nazarbayev express a similar view."¹⁴² Lilia Shevtsova in her book *Yeltsin's Russia* argues that "the CIS helped to manage a more or less civilised split-up but failed to fulfil its integration role [...] and became a club for presidents of former Soviet republics."¹⁴³ But during annual CIS summits, nobody would guess this organisation is half dead.

Besides all problem areas and empty speeches, a relatively successful exception of cooperation within the CST framework can be seen in the working of joint air defence system, which was approved in 1995 during the CIS summit in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. Russia was joined by all Central Asian Countries, Belarus and Georgia in an effort to create a air defence network. Technologically, air defence equipment of the involved countries is not very advanced and its military exercises are usually skipped by some of the network's members.¹⁴⁴ However, Turkmenistan terminated its membership in 1997; Uzbekistan which co-founded the CST in 1992, suspended its membership in the organisation and air defence by 1999 in an effort to appease the US and rejoined again.¹⁴⁵ Thus, the air network is active but probably not very effective; dedication of member states other than Russia is constantly changing.

¹⁴² *Medvedev Speech, 20th Anniversary of the CIS, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 3 September, 2011.* In: President of Russia, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/2778> (2.11.2011)

¹⁴³ SHEVTSOVA, Lilia: *Yeltsin's Russia*. Washington, Carnegie Endowment for international Peace, 1999, p. 13.

¹⁴⁴ *CIS air defence units hold joint exercises in Russia.* RIA Novosti, 8 September 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110908/166538827.html (12.9.2011)

¹⁴⁵ AFZAL, Amina: *Security Cooperation in Central Asia: The Changing Role of Multilateral Organisations.* The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, http://www.issi.org.pk/old-site/ss_Detail.php?dataId=408 (20.11.2011)

Russia attempts to deepen and intensify cooperation. In 2011, Medvedev was successful in establishing a new bilateral cooperation platform with the biggest regional integration promoter, Kazakhstan. Regional air defence shield will be set up; part of the deal is Russia's commitment to deliver cheaper military technology to Kazakhstan in order to diminish US influence. On the other hand, Astana ensured Western partners it does not plan any cutback in cooperation with NATO.¹⁴⁶ Kazakhstan behaviour to external powers is an illustrious example of multi-vector foreign policy. Central Asian countries use this strategy which, at the end of the day, is the least advantageous for Russia.

3.2.2. GU(U)AM: Uzbekistan temporary turns to the West

As a response to Russia's increasing assertiveness and interest in the post-Soviet space Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Moldova established Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM), when the presidents of the four countries declared their interest in cooperation with the EU and NATO. Joint communiqué from the summit of the OSCE in Strasbourg in 1997 declared 'need for combating aggressive nationalism, separatism, and international terrorism.'¹⁴⁷ Uzbekistan joined in 1999 during the NATO summit in Washington. The country's foreign policy was corresponding with stances of other member states, especially regarding its rejection of growing Russian influence in Central Asia and Uzbek President Karimov's unwillingness to sign extension of the Collective Security Treaty. Group changed its name to GUUAM and was granted an official US support and recognition of the United Nations.

Two years before 9/11, the Americans started military cooperation with the Uzbek dictator Karimov with two objectives: 'to help putting down the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), secure energy infrastructure and ensure that Central Asian leaders would turn to Washington rather than to Moscow or

¹⁴⁶MUZALEVSKY, Roman: "*Russia and Kazakhstan Agree to a Joint Air Defense Shield.*" Jamestown Foundation, 10 January 2011, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37338&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=2d82c0f334 (7.11.2011)

¹⁴⁷ *Joint Communiqué of the Meeting of the President of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, GUAM Organisation, 10 October 1997.* In: GUAM Organisation, <http://guam-organisation.org/en/node/440> (26.9.2011)

Beijing.¹⁴⁸ Yet, as an example of Central Asian leaders' pragmatism, in spring 2001 Russia and Uzbekistan negotiated a barter deal by which Russia started to supply Uzbekistan with guns to fight IMU in an exchange for commodities such as gas and cotton.¹⁴⁹ As Russia adopted pragmatic policy of building and maintaining its international relations, the Central Asian countries have behaved in the same manner.

Western minded project was viewed with a certain level of suspicion in the Kremlin. Russian political elite feared further divergence from Russia as a power centre in Central Asia and increased presence of the US in the region. Fortunately for Russia, those countries have not proceeded from talking to taking actions which would undermine Russia's position. Moreover, Uzbekistan suspended its membership in 2002 when its main foreign policy vector turned, again, to Russia. At the same time, Uzbekistan has been forging bilateral relations with the US and has been receiving financial aid for enhancing Central Asian security.¹⁵⁰ At the end, it is not only the big powers who have started to play a *New Great Game*; but the original objects of power politics, too.

3.2.3. The Collective Security Treaty Organisation: new threats and cooperation with the US

Beginning of the third millennium can easily be compared to an earthquake in security and military situation in Central Asia. One of the events which shook up the region was an intense terrorist threat. Islamic extremists from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan allied under the leadership of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). This new group set a goal to create an Islamic Caliphate which would stretch from Chechnya to Xinjiang in China.¹⁵¹¹⁵² Russia has

¹⁴⁸ LAFEBER, Walter: *America, Russia and the Cold War*. New York, McGraw-Hill 2006, p. 443.

¹⁴⁹ LELYVELD, Michael: "Uzbekistan: Gas For Russian Arms maybe a dangerous precedent." RFE/RL 9 May 2001, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1096386.html> (3.10.2011)

¹⁵⁰ KUZIO, Taras: „GUUAM Reverts to GUAM as Uzbekistan Suspends its Membership Prior to Yalta Summit.“ Eurasianet, 17 July 2002, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav071802.shtml> (15.9.2011)

¹⁵¹ GLEASON, Gregory – SHAIHUTDINOV, Marat: *Collective Security Treaty and Non-State Actors in Eurasia*. International Studies Perspective, 6, 2005, no. 2, p. 280.

¹⁵² Xinjiang is the largest autonomous province in Western China. Ethnic tensions are frequent in this region and nationalism of the majoritarian population of Uyghurs is high. Xinjiang has been causing problems to Chinese government. Muslim separatist militants are major source of

incorporated the terrorist threat into its official document the National Security Concept 2000. The document determined international terrorism and crime as the challenge for the 21st century where Russia seeks multinational cooperation to combat the security threat¹⁵³. The document is extraordinary with a type of language it uses. The Concept blames some other states and organisations of actively weakening Russia's position in international relations and questioning its role in multi-polar world order. Russia used the new security climate for enhancing cooperation within the framework of the CST.

As it was described, the CST itself proved to be an ineffective organisation. In order to award the organisation with a new boost, the CST was transformed. In 2003, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) was established but Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan declined to join. Despite the very declaratory tone of the CSTO Charter,¹⁵⁴ the Organisation helped to give Russia a necessary legitimacy for aspiring to be again a regional power and for its military presence in the region. Russia, on behalf of the CSTO, has been gradually upgrading facilities at Kant military base which was opened in 2003. Russia's move can be interpreted as a reaction to establishment of US military air base at Manas, Kyrgyzstan and Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan in 2001. Contrary to the US, Russia did not have to pay a rent for the base but has to fund its operation.¹⁵⁵

The new organisation was accompanied by launching of 1500 troops strong rapid deployment force and creation of an anti-terrorism centre. The centre location was Bishkek, the structure is under Russian supervisor and has mostly Russian staff. Russia contributes by 50 % to a common budget.¹⁵⁶ In 2009, the common forces transformed again into Collective Operational Reaction Forces (CORF). According to bold statement of Russian president Medvedev ' [new

terrorism in China. For detailed information see MILWARD, James: *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. New York, Columbia University Press 2007. 352 pp.

¹⁵³ *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation, 10 January 2000*. In: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/36aba64ac09f737fc32575d9002bbf31!OpenDocument> (17.10.2011)

¹⁵⁴ *Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, 7 October 2002*. In: UN Treaties, <http://untreaty.un.org> (2.10.2011)

¹⁵⁵ NYRGEN, Bertil: *Rebuilding of Greater Russia: Putin's Foreign Policy Towards the CIS Countries*. Oxon, Routledge 2008, p. 35.

¹⁵⁶ COHEN, Ariel: *Eurasia in Balance: the US and the Regional Power Shift*. London, Ashgate 2005, p. 87.

forces] reflect some fairly fundamental changes in how we see our collective forces' and characterised them as 'sufficiently large to face the most essential, most important, and most sophisticated threats, such as terrorism, crime, and other regional challenges and conflicts.'¹⁵⁷ Apart from being able to counter the shared threats, Russia claimed that the CORF would be no worse than NATO forces. Yet, operability of the project is highly questionable also due to the reluctance of some CSTO members, such as Uzbekistan, to participate in the developments and small size of the reaction forces units.

After the establishment of the CORF, the 2010 religious pogroms in Fergana Valley, Kyrgyzstan, were a test for the CSTO and for Russia. The CSTO failed to stand its name and promoted reputation of a regional security guarantor. While on paper the organisation could fulfil peacekeeping tasks, in reality the CSTO charter allows intervention only in a case of external aggression. Despite the fact, that Kyrgyz authorities asked for external intervention, Medvedev declared Russian peacekeepers were not needed and several members, including Uzbekistan and Belarus, would have been reluctant to support a deployment that could set a precedent for Russian intervention in their countries.¹⁵⁸ This particular situation showed, how diverse the CSTO bloc is and that a common CSTO Charter does not grant a consensus neither in peace nor in emergency situation.

Probably more notable than a transformation and progress within the old Russia-Central Asia dynamics itself, the US factor in the region was a novum. Putin was the first to call former US president Bush after 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US. He delivered Russia's sympathy and expressed a full support for a military operation in Afghanistan in order to fight terrorism. Russia did not object to new US military bases in Central Asia and promised intelligence and logistical support to the US while not committing itself to a physical presence in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁹ Russia and the US became allies in their common effort to combat terrorism. The move confirmed Putin's foreign policy strategy of

¹⁵⁷ *News Conference on CSTO Collective Security, Council Session Results, 14 June 2009.* In: President of Russia, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2009/06/14/2114_type82914type84779_217813.shtml (28. 10. 2010)

¹⁵⁸ *Report on the Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan.* Crisis Group Asia Report No. 193, 23 August 2010, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/kyrgyzstan/193-the-pogroms-in-kyrgyzstan.aspx> (23.9.2011)

¹⁵⁹ LAFEBER, Walter: *America, Russia and the Cold War.* New York, McGraw-Hill 2006, p. 437- 438.

pragmatism and short term strategic planning. The alliance with the US allowed Russia to advance in its strategic “reconquest” of Central Asia; and to justify Russia’s military presence in the region while, at the same time, pursuing its own security goals. Similarly, Central Asian presidents were willing to negotiate deals with Americans. They used the opportunity to break free from sole Russian military embrace and thus the 9/11 attacks contributed to balancing the Russian power in the region.

By 2004, ephemerality of the Russo-US alliance transformed into a rising competition for Central Asia. This change came along as Putin was gradually consolidating Russian Federation. In 2005, the US was exposed to a pressure from the Kyrgyz government. The Tulip revolution¹⁶⁰ forced Kyrgyz president Askar Akyev to flee from the country and to seek exile in Russia. Opposition leader Kurmanbek Bakiev, together with his Minister of Foreign affairs Roza Otunbayeva, reassured Moscow that they intended to continue tradition of close relationship with Russia.¹⁶¹ As a result of close relation with Moscow, Kyrgyz government placed demands on the US government. The US payments increased to USD 200 million, compared to USD 2 million before.¹⁶² This is accompanied by Russia’s pressure on Kyrgyzstan to close down the Manas base. Compared to the beginning of the US military campaign against terrorism in Central Asia, Russia has been using Central Asian loyal authoritative rulers in order to decrease the US presence and influence in the region.

Central Asian countries show a tendency to escalate their demands a try what they can afford. In 2009, the Kyrgyz government escalated its demands for higher financial compensation for the Manas air base. According to the then Kyrgyz president Bakiev, the US shown no understanding for the purely economic issue. And new president-elect of 2011 Almazbek Atambayev urges the USA to leave the airbase at Manas in 2014 when the lease contract expires

¹⁶⁰ Tulip Revolution was one of the more or less peaceful revolution which were taking place in the Former Soviet Union space after 2000. Demonstration of political dissatisfaction with a corrupt Kyrgyz government resulted into election of Kurmanbek Bakiev into a presidential seat. See RADNITZ, Scott: *What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?* Journal of Democracy, 17, 2006, no. 2, pp. 132-146.

¹⁶¹ OLCOTT, Martha: “*Kyrgyzstan’s Tulip Revolution.*” The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Moscow, 28 March 2005, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/2005/03/28/kyrgyzstan-s-tulip-revolution/597> (28.11.2011)

¹⁶² *Kyrgyzstan Seeks \$ 50 Million For US Use Of Air Base.* RFE/RL, 17 January 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1064774.html> (28.11.2011)

and USA plans to withdraw from Afghanistan.¹⁶³ Medvedev strongly endorsed Kyrgyz attitude to the US and promised Russia's financial help in areas such environmental revitalisation where the US military failed completely.¹⁶⁴ The environmental issue, is of course, just an excuse for Russia's involvement with Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, Russia's relation with the US shows, that Russia acts very pragmatically and is willing to allow US presence in the region only for a temporary period.

Situation with Russia's military bases in the region show mixed record as well. Tajikistan was no longer satisfied with a status of the 201st military base which is in operation since the 1992 Tajik civil war. In 2004, this previously CST basis became the first permanent Russian military base in Central Asia.¹⁶⁵ Five years later, Medvedev and Rahmon signed a deal by which the countries agreed to equal rights military cooperation. From that time on, Russia has to pay for its military base; and in return Russia sells military equipment to Tajikistan at market price and conducts military trainings for a fee.¹⁶⁶

Compared to US military bases in the region, Russia's bases are set up for an unlimited time. The second Russian military base at Kant, Kyrgyzstan is according to Stephen Blank of utmost importance "because it is the main basis for Russian power projection into Central Asia and for the attempt by Russia to organise the CSTO, which is Russia's attempt to create a military bloc in Central Asia."¹⁶⁷ With Russia's desire to oust US troops from Central Asia, the CSTO might see a leap forward.

Nevertheless, Uzbekistan proved to a trouble maker for Russia. It is the most unpredictable partner for Russia, the CSTO and for the West, too. After the period of shifting cooperation with both, Russia and the US, events of 2005 had decisive effect on future of Uzbekistan's orientation. In May 2005, Uzbek security forces violently suppressed opposition uprising in Andijan city. Despite

¹⁶³ *New Kyrgyz President calls for closure of US air base.* RIA Novosti, 1 November 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20111101/168311902.html (19.11.2011)

¹⁶⁴ NICHOL, Jim: *Kyrgyzstan and the Status of the US Manas airbase: Context and Implications.* CRS Report for Congress, 1 July 2009, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ *Tajikistan: The First Permanent Russian Military Base Opened.* RFE/RL, 17 October 2004, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1055375.html> (26.10.2011)

¹⁶⁶ MAJIDOV, Suhrob: "The Problematic Tajikistan-Russia Relationship." CACIA Analyst, 19 August 2009, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5162> (13.11.2011)

¹⁶⁷ PANNIER, Bruce: "Kyrgyzstan: Russian military bases on Opposite tracks." RFE/RL, 18 February, 2006. <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1065905.html> (23.9.2011)

the lack of clarity of what actually happened, the West sharply condemned Uzbek government reaction. After a break 1999-2006, Uzbekistan rejoined the CSTO. Both Uzbekistan and Russia found a common ground in despising “coloured revolutions”¹⁶⁸ and Western attempts to democratize the post-Soviet space.¹⁶⁹

While Uzbekistan is willing to cooperate with Russia and the CSTO in spheres where they face similar threats, i.e. terrorism and opposition movements, Uzbekistan has not yet ratified the agreement on the CORF because of its concerns about Russian dominant position within the CSTO. Furthermore, it is alarmed by Russian intention to establish a CSTO base in Osh. A city, which is close to Uzbek border with Kyrgyzstan.¹⁷⁰

Uzbekistan and Belarus repeatedly opposed Russian diplomacy. Not only that they were suspicious to possible involvement during the pogroms in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 but the whole bloc of countries does not want to grant Russia a green card in dealing with its near abroad. As Muzalevsky stresses correctly, “the CSTO was in crisis well before the instability in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, none of its member states besides Russia recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia following the Russia-Georgia war in August 2008.”¹⁷¹

Despite the ruptures in cooperation between the CSTO member states, relative progress made by the CSTO has been recognised by the UN. Russia had long longed for a recognition of the CSTO as a legitimate military bloc and it has repeatedly demonstrated that the CSTO is the organisation which ensures stability in the Central Asian region and helps to create a multi-polar world. United Nations recognised the CSTO as a regional security organisation in 2010. Confidence of the CSTO member states was echoed in words of the CSTO

¹⁶⁸ It was expected that the Andijan uprising could spill over to a „coloured revolution“. The term labels opposition movements in post-Soviet republics. Ukraine’s Orange revolution or Georgia’s Rose revolution. Both removed the old cadre elites from power. See BEACHÁIN, Ó Donnacha – POLESE, Abel (Edd.): *The Colour Revolutions in the Former Soviet Republics*. New York, Routledge 2010, 248 pp.

¹⁶⁹ BURNASHEV, Rustam – CHEMYKH, Irina: *Changes in Uzbekistan’s Military Policy after the Andijan Events*. China and Eurasian Forum Quarterly, 5, 2007, no. 1, p. 72.

¹⁷⁰ MCDERMOTT, Roger: “*CSTO Rapid Reaction Exercises Get Off To Discouraging Start*.” RFE/RL, 27 August 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/CSTO_Rapid_Reaction_Exercises_Get_Off_To_Discouraging_Start/1808735.html (5.10.2011)

¹⁷¹ MUZALEVSKY, Roman: “*CSTO: Half Dead, Half Alive*.” The Jamestown Foundation, 16 September 2010, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=36856&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=27&cHash=718d208d59](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=36856&tx_ttnews[backPid]=27&cHash=718d208d59) (3.12.2011)

Secretary General Bordyuzha. He complained that the US led NATO “evidently does not wish to support integration processes in the post-Soviet space.”¹⁷²

With divergent and pragmatic attitudes and policies of the CSTO countries, Russia might find it difficult to find support for its plans. The CSTO rejection of the NATO presence in region is not a sufficient precondition for accepting an umbrella of Russian influence. Over all, international recognition together with Russia’s interest in enhancing the military capabilities of the region, according to Blank, “demonstrate Russia’s resolve to support the existing status quo in these countries and their neighbours and to prevent re-connection” with the West, be it the EU or the USA.¹⁷³ In addition to that, especially since the economic crisis, Russia cannot afford to fund all its vested interests in the region. Malashenko believes that Russia should be more strict and consistent towards its Asian allies. “Russia has finally stopped lending large sums of money to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which is only natural because economic and political returns have been so negligible.”¹⁷⁴ As Russia’s efforts to be the power centre of the region continue, further proposals for common action will probably come.

3.2.4. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Cooperation between Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China dates to early 1990s, when China was only an emerging power in the region. An original purpose of the cooperation was a peaceful settlement of disputed national borders; therefore the main motive for the cooperation was to forestall any attempt by an increasingly nationalistic and economically powerful China to take advantage of the collapse of the Soviet Union and to press for territorial claims.¹⁷⁵ In 2000, this successful multilateral diplomacy format, so called Shanghai Five, was renamed to Shanghai Forum and Uzbekistan was invited join as an observer.

¹⁷² SOCOR, Vladimir: “*The UN Accepts SCTO as a Regional Organisation.*” Eurasia daily monitor, 19 March 2010,

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36177 (22.8.2011)

¹⁷³ BLANK, Stephen: “*Is Russia forging a new CIS strategy?*” CACI Analyst, 23 July 2008,

<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4916> (4.10.211)

¹⁷⁴ MALASHENKO, Alexey: “*Central Asia in Stagnation.*” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 21 June 2011, <http://carnegie.ru/publications/?fa=44789#> (14.11.2011)

¹⁷⁵ CHUNG, Chien-peng: *The Shanghai Co-operation Organisation: China’s Changing influence in Central Asia.* The China Quarterly, 180, 2004, no. 4, p. 992.

Cooperation was enhanced by events on international scene in a light of growing terrorist threats and strengthening Taliban in Afghanistan and the US more assertive position in international relations. Western analysts such as Parag Khanna had largely viewed the organisation as an anti-US alliance, an anti-NATO organisation and generally perceived the body as a group of authoritarian dictators: ‘What began as a forum or anti-American rhetoric is now considered by some to be either the NATO of the East or an energy club of oil-rich despots.’¹⁷⁶ For Russia it became a playground for managing its complex relations with China in the Central Asian framework.

Therefore, to upgrade the Shanghai Five, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was established in 2001 and Uzbekistan became a regular member.¹⁷⁷ The six nations joined in order to fight their common threats which were labelled as the three evils. Terrorism, extremism and separatism worry territory from Northern Caucasus to Western region of Xinjiang in China. In the same year, the organisation which was united by the same goal created small rapid reaction forces and anti terrorist centre in Bishkek.¹⁷⁸ Despite the fact, that China has viewed the centre as the core of security branch of the SCO, the centre proved itself to be largely dysfunctional body caused by reluctance of member states to exchange hard core intelligence material.¹⁷⁹ The criticism counts for all member states but the two biggest ones in particular. Yet, the organisation indicated its common will to cooperate and by signing of the Moscow Declaration in May 2003 it created the SCO secretariat. The new institution has its headquarters in Beijing and both, Chinese and Russian, became official languages. Moreover, the declaration symbolised a dedication of the SCO member states to create a regional security system.¹⁸⁰

Declared goal to create a common security space of Central Asia and China has been, up to present day, manifested in conducting a number of military exercises. Military sessions are characteristic by simulations which resemble

¹⁷⁶ KHANA, Parag: *The Second World*. London, Penguin Books 2009, p. 69.

¹⁷⁷ *Shanghai Summit Backs ABM Treaty*. BBC News, 15 June 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1389635.stm> (4.10.2011)

¹⁷⁸ BLANK, Stephen: “*Central Asia’s great base race*.” Asia Times, 19 December 2003, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/EL19Ag01.html, (13.9.2011)

¹⁷⁹ ALLISON, Roy: *Regionalism, regional structures and security management in Central Asia*. International Affairs, 80, 2004, no. 3, p. 471.

¹⁸⁰ COHEN, Ariel: *Eurasia in Balance: the US and the Regional Power Shift*. London, Ashgate 2005, p. 87.

conventional attack rather than fighting small groups of terrorists. Furthermore, not always all SCO member states participate. The first exercise was held in 2003, later on (2005, 2007, 2009, 2010) Russia and China carried out joined project called Peace Mission;¹⁸¹ The last exercise hosted by Kazakhstan was a site of the NATO's Steppe Eagle-2010 multilateral peacekeeping exercise just a month ago.¹⁸² Again, this demonstrates pragmatism of Central Asian countries towards managing their security/military ties.

For Russia, the military exercises, or parades, have been very important tool how to promote its image of military power. Russia has been engaged in arms sales with China and until 2007, Russia was in positive numbers in its arms trade balance with China. But most of the weaponry sold to Chinese was constructed in Soviet times. However, in 2007 China recorded surplus of 8.8 bln USD in trade with Russia for the first time in fifteen years.¹⁸³ Since that time, Chinese wanted to buy advanced military equipment which Russians refused. More over China did not want to consolidate its dependence on Russian imports and started to produce its own machinery which was, in some instances, copied from Russians. The Chinese industry, famous for its lack of understanding of copy rights, virtually stole Russian know-how, and introduced rival equipment.¹⁸⁴ Also for this reason, Russia's military cooperation and smooth relations with China are not granted.

Apart from the military cooperation at the SCO platform, the SCO has been a platform for fostering economic cooperation too. But benefits for participants are far from equal. The Framework Agreement in economics as well as number of other documents signed in 2003 and implemented in 2004 opened a way for increased economic exchange between the SCO members. The SCO summit in Tashkent in 2007 brought a 20-point declaration that stressed strengthening cooperation among SCO member states in the economic, science, educational and other fields. The most telling point was the seventh item, which stated "that the SCO member states should cooperate closely to map out a

¹⁸² BOLAND, Julie: "*Learning from the Shanghai Cooperation Treaty.*" The Brookings Institute, 29 October 2010, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/1029_asia_war_games_boland.aspx (2.9.2011)

¹⁸³ *Russia-China trade up 44 % to 48 bln in 2007.* RIA Novosti, 1 June 2007, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20080615/110549938.html> (27.10.2011)

¹⁸⁴ WEITZ, Richard: "*Why China Snubs Russia Arms.*" The Diplomat, 5 April 2010, <http://the-diplomat.com/2010/04/05/why-china-snubs-russian-arms/3/> (17.9.2011)

common position on energy issues."¹⁸⁵ Although the SCO will not establish a common energy market in a foreseeable future, the first part of the economic agreement among the SCO made Central Asia an easy market for Chinese products. The volume of trade between Central Asian states and China since establishment of the SCO has increased threefold; China invests a lot in building up its good image in Central Asia; it simply has the cash to offer. China represents a force Russia cannot compete with, especially after the economic crisis and its severe consequences. An example of Russia's strict no to Chinese money took place in 2005 when China offered interest free loans in a sum of 500 million USD. While Central Asian states gladly accepted financial funds, Russia refused believing it that conditions of the contract would harm its economy because they were linked to purchase of Chinese products.¹⁸⁶

The SCO is a mixture of military, security and economic interests. And is Russia the actor who has been setting the agenda? Although it has been a duo concert of the two regional powers which set agenda of the SCO, for Russia the organisation does not carry a vital importance for managing its former territories but it definitely is Russia's acknowledgement of China's position in Central Asia; acknowledgement that it cannot manage the space alone no longer. Bare truth is, that the SCO would not exist if China was not a member state. On the other hand, the SCTO has very similar agenda as the SCO. The SCTO serves Russian purposes and is a platform where bilateral relations are discussed, too. More over the SCTO still ensures continuous influence exerted on the SCTO member states from supreme Russia.

The added value the SCO provides for Russia is its regulatory nature in a region which is characteristic by an uneasy mix of cooperation, competition and a gradually shifting power balance that characterizes its current dealings with China.¹⁸⁷ An anti-Western sentiment should not be downplayed; Russia sought an alliance in order to counter the US expansion into Central Asia, yet this rationale represents only one layer of Russian interests behind setting up of the SCO. Similarly to that, China prefers economic cooperation and influence to military

¹⁸⁵ DALY, John: *Sino-Russian Split at regional summit*. Asia Times, 16 November 2007, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IK16Ad01.html> (11.9. 2011)

¹⁸⁶ JACKSON, Alexandra: "*China and Central Asia*." The Journal of Turkish Weekly, 19 May 2009, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/77297/china-and-central-asia.html> (8.10.2011)

¹⁸⁷ BAILES, Alyson: "*The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*." SIPRI, PolicyPaper No. 17, May 2007, p. 32, <http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRI17.pdf> (6.10.2011)

supremacy over Russia or the US. On the other hand, *raison d'être* of the Central Asian countries should be viewed as a balancing tactic. According to Roy Allison “Central Asian states are more interested in the existence of a balance between Russia and China in this body.”¹⁸⁸

Through decade long existence of the SCO, Central Asian countries sought to counter balance Russia within the framework of the organisation. Such actions are demonstrations of evolving relations between member states of the SCO. The first inconspicuous occasion were the Andijan events in May 2005 to which Uzbek president Karimov’s regime responded brutally. Contrary to criticism from the West, Uzbekistan received support from Russia and China, and the rest of the SCO. Uzbekistan expressed its discontent with presence of the foreign military units in Central Asia. The support culminated in the SCO annual joint declaration adopted in Astana in 2005 which called upon members of the antiterrorist coalition, to set a final timeline for their temporary use of military objects on territories of the SCO Member states.¹⁸⁹ In late 2005, Nikolai Sokov wrote: “The post-Andijan policy of Uzbekistan might be an early indication of problems Russia is likely to face in the region. While Karimov’s two trips to Russia are well known, he also made a trip to Beijing to sign new friendship and energy agreements.”¹⁹⁰

Next blow came in 2008 after Russia carried out its version of humanitarian intervention in separatist regions of Georgia. Neither Abkhazia nor South Ossetia was recognised as an independent country by a rest of the five SCO member states. Concerns, that Russia might use the conflict as a precedent for future intervention in Central Asia, existed.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, Russia *de facto* broke one of the SCO common policy goals – to fight separatism when it actively engaged in creating two separatist republics.

Medvedev learned lessons from Putin and did not commit the same mistake twice. In June 2010, ethnic Pogroms in Kyrgyz city Osh were not

¹⁸⁸ ALLISON, Roy: *Regionalism, regional structures and security management in Central Asia*. International Affairs, 80, 2004, no. 3, p. 468.

¹⁸⁹ *Declaration of Heads of States of Member States of SCO, 5 July 2005*. In: China Daily, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-06/12/content_614632.htm (14.11.2011)

¹⁹⁰ SOKOV, Nikolai: “*Not-So-Great Game*.” PONARS Policy Memo No. 403, December 2005, p. 225, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/pm_0403.pdf (6.9.2011)

¹⁹¹ MALASHENKO, Alexey: “*The Central Asian Strategies of Russia and the EU*.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 10 February 2009, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2009/02/10/central-asia-strategies-of-russia-and-eu/dfp> (16.9.2011)

pacified by an outer peacekeeping mission for which Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva asked the CSTO. Matthews Owen and Anna Nemtsova see Russia's cautious position to events as a signal that Russia has learned how to make use of its statesmanship rather its post-imperial desires.¹⁹² Others would analyse the incident as partly caused by the internal CSTO opposition and intra state relations within the SCO and the SCTO.¹⁹³ Because Uzbeks form the largest ethnic group in the city of Osh, Uzbekistan would be extremely reluctant to deploy any operation to Kyrgyzstan. The SCO summit in Tashkent was taking place just three days after violent events in Kyrgyzstan exploded. The presidential summit indicated split within the organisation. Blank wrote that signals which would imply Uzbek alliance with China against Russian led intervention existed.

Together with the Georgian conflict in 2008 and termination of Russian monopoly on Turkmen gas in 2009 it was the third time China indisputably blocked and thwarted Russia's intentions.¹⁹⁴ Thus, with China entering politics of Central Asian countries, a third way for directing their foreign relations opens up; long time awaited multi-polar world has reached Central Asia and Russia, too.

Russians do not publicly admit they see China as a threat to its position in Central Asia. However, Russian intelligence have closely observed Chinese military developments.¹⁹⁵ Russia tries to pursue a policy of engaging China. For example, Russia showed this when the CSO and the CSTO adopted a protocol on understanding which followed signing of the memorandum of understanding on cooperation in countering terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and organised crime between the SCO and UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).¹⁹⁶

Despite Russia's military paranoia, Chinese central strategy for Central Asia lies in trade and economy. As Jeffrey Mankoff notes "China made clear its

¹⁹² MATTHEWS, Owen: *How Kyrgyzstan Tamed Moscow*. The Newsweek, 15 June 2010, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2010/06/15/how-kyrgyzstan-tamed-moscow.html> (16.9.2011)

¹⁹³ BLANK, Stephen: "A Sino-Uzbek Axis in Central Axis" CACI Analyst, 9 January 2010, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5395> (26.10.2011)

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ WEITZ, Richard: "What Russia Fears in Asia." The Diplomat, 6 June 2011, <http://the-diplomat.com/2011/06/06/what-russia-fears-in-asia/> (12.10.2011)

¹⁹⁶ *SCO and UN agreed on cooperation in countering terrorism*. Tengri news, 14 June 2011, http://en.tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/2500/ (30.11.2011)

opposition¹⁹⁷ to transforming the SCO into a full fledged security organisation in a line with Beijing's commitment to a nonaligned foreign policy that seeks to avoid confrontation with the West."¹⁹⁸ Economically more powerful China desires peace and stability in the region and its strategy in achieving this lies in intensive economic cooperation. Despite unfulfilled prediction and caution from the SCO serving as the Asian NATO, course of the last years' events between Russia, China and Central Asia show, that Kremlin's rapprochement with the US is not a fantasy. Bobo Lo predicted that "Russians will react to China's rise by gravitating towards the West - in ten years or so, maybe earlier."¹⁹⁹ Even more probable is, as Mark Katz claims, Russia will try to emphasise importance of the international organisation in which China is not a member state, i.e. the SCTO, and downplay the SCO.²⁰⁰

President Obama has called China a world power.²⁰¹ Yet, Central Asia signals that it does not wish to be dominated by neither of the big three powers. Recent proposal by China to build a "Silk Road" railway linking the separatist region of Xinjiang with Uzbek Osh via Kyrgyzstan has encountered "averse to an increase in Chinese influence of any sort. Many Kyrgyz look distrustfully at China's rapid growth, fearing their giant neighbour could swallow the tiny country."²⁰² As the situation indicates, Central Asia will not become a playground for only one power.

¹⁹⁷ If there is place, where China would like to exercise its military ambitions then it would be South East Asia. In this area, Chinese maritime dominance has been causing worries of South Asian nations.

¹⁹⁸ MANKOFF, Jeffrey: *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield 2009, p. 218.

¹⁹⁹ BOBO, Lo: "Russia-China: Axis of Convenience." Open Democracy Russia, 20 May 2008. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/russia-china-axis-of-convenience> (5.9.2011)

²⁰⁰ KATZ, Mark N.: *Russia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Moscow's lonely road from Bishkek to Dushanbe*. Asian Perspective, 32, 2008, no. 3, p. 186.

²⁰¹ ROURKE, Alison – Watts, Jonathan: "China Uneasy over US troop deal in Australia." The Guardian, 16 November 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/16/china-us-troops-australia> (21.11.2011)

²⁰² RICKLETON, Chris: "Kyrgyzstan: China Seeks 'Silk Road' on Rails." Eurasianet, 3 November 2011, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/64438> (4.12.2011)

3.3. Economic cooperation

In the very beginning of independent existence of Central Asian states, economic cooperation was favoured by all member states but Russia. A majority of the newly born republics was advocating maintaining and preserving traditional economic and political ties, including the trade relations.²⁰³ Contrary to that, Russia was commanded by reformers and liberals who were oriented to the West and therefore lacked the impetus for activity on the platform of the CIS. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia was going through economic reforms, restructuring of its economy and was suffering from a fiscal crisis. Under these circumstances, Yeltsin shared the widely held liberal convictions that the republics were nothing but a burden on the Russian legs.²⁰⁴ Therefore, use of the old Soviet ruble as a common currency among the CIS members and the provision of affordable fuel supplies both proved to be unsustainable burdens for Russia's troubled economy.

First economic integration efforts date back to 1994 when CIS presidents agreed to establish a free trade zone within the CIS (CISFTA) between all the countries but Uzbekistan.²⁰⁵ In fact, the CISFTA agreement never came into force and Russia, in particular, was showing little interest in ratifying it for several years. In fact, Russia's parliament, has never ratified the agreement. Renewed efforts resurfaced in 1998 but never took off.²⁰⁶

An agreement originally signed in 1995 on a bilateral basis between Russia and Belarus provided for the establishment of a customs union. Kazakhstan joined in 1995, Kyrgyzstan, together with Tajikistan, entered in January 1999.²⁰⁷ However, the agreements left open space for signatories to opt for temporarily unlimited restrictive measures as a result of which the originally desired full-fledged Customs Union has not been realised till today.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ HORÁK, Slavomír: *Rusko a Střední Asie po rozpadu SSSR*. Karolinum, Praha 2008, p. 58.

²⁰⁴ TSYGANKOV, Andrei P.: *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2010, p. 157.

²⁰⁵ SUSHKO, Oleksandr: *The dark side of integration: Ambitions of domination in Russia's backyard*. The Washington Quarterly, 27, 2004, no. 2, p. 119.

²⁰⁶ NYGREN, Bertil: *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia: Putin's foreign policy towards the CIS countries*. Oxon, Routledge 2008, p. 25.

²⁰⁷ *Russia expects CIS countries to create free trade zone by yearend*. RIA Novosti, 17 June 2010, <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20100617/159463469.html> (13.11.2011)

²⁰⁸ HORÁK, Slavomír: *Rusko a Střední Asie po rozpadu SSSR*. Praha, Karolinum, p. 74.

Historically, president of Kazakhstan , Nursultan Nazarbayev, had been the main proponent of the economic integration. His efforts to continue economic integration were solidified in creation of the Central Asian Union (CAU) in 1994. The main areas of cooperation included a ‘common economic area’ for the free circulation of capital, goods and labour and establishing related common policies.²⁰⁹ This partnership of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan was enlarged by the accession of Tajikistan in 1998. Turkmenistan repeatedly declined invitations to join the CAU.²¹⁰ The organisation was renamed to Central Asian Economic Union (CAEU) in 2001 and subsequently to Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO) in 2004. Russia finally indicated interest and joined in October 2004. However, Russia’s primary aim was to cooperate in security sphere of CACO.²¹¹ The number of names for the same group of states unfortunately does not reflect their progress in cooperation and integration. The intensity of cooperation is distracted by unwillingness and animosities among the member states. Not only are countries unable and to a large extent unwilling to make concessions but also do disputes in other areas slow down the process of cooperation and possible integration. For example, water disputes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on one side and Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan on the other, border and trade disputes between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are processes which influence the countries' ability to cooperate on a common project. A low effectiveness of CACO was one of the main reasons why the organisation decided to continue its existence under Putin’s flagship initiative of the EurAsian Economic Community during the St. Petersburg summit in 2005.²¹²

On a basis of the 1994 intended CIS customs union, the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC/EurAsEC) was established in 2001 by Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This newly transformed international organisation was supposed to give a renewed impetus for the

²⁰⁹ BOHR, Annette: *Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order*. International Affairs, 80, 2004, no. 3, p. 3.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ *The conclusion of the meeting of the Council of heads of member countries of the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation in Dushanbe, a joint press conference was held by the Presidents of CACO member countries*. In: President of Russia Archive, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/news/2004/10/78211.shtm> (15.10.2011)

²¹² *Central Asian Cooperation Summit, 6-7 October 2005*. In: President of Russia Archive, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/events/chronicle/2005/10/95033.shtml> (23.9.2011)

creation of a free trade area and a common economic zone. A humanitarian as well as a social dimension of cooperation was included.²¹³ The members of the organisation, again, adopted number of documents which were designed to coordinate monetary, customs, employment and other policies on a region-wide basis. Without fulfilling goals set in the original EAEC documents, the EAEC members began to expand the overall mandate to the idea of forming a single energy area, a single transport area, a gas alliance, a single securities stock market and a new Ruble zone.²¹⁴

Russia set off to pursue a policy of multi-speed cooperation, when the Big Four, i.e. Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, formally agreed to create a single economic space in 2003 and ultimately this new economic alliance was supposed to replace the CIS.²¹⁵ Importance of the arrangement was highlighted in Putin's Annual Address to the Federal Assembly in 2004, it was said to be a precondition for regional and international stability.²¹⁶ The declaratory tone just repeated previous efforts which did not deliver promised outcomes. Contrary to agreed intentions, intrastate trade barriers and inconsistencies in national legislation continued to prevail. Analysts believe that another Russian attempt bring the CIS into a new era of cooperation is not based on solid grounds. The issue of economic integration is highly politicised and includes number of exceptions states claim. Furthermore, integration is beneficial for economically more developed Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan rather than for those who are economically left behind.²¹⁷

The 2005 St. Petersburg summit brought about substantive changes to the EAEC, at least on paper. First, membership was offered to Uzbekistan after president Karimov's dispute with the US. The West was highly critical to Uzbekistan for its use of violence during the Andijan events. Moscow had

²¹³ *Agreement on Foundation of Eurasian Economic Community*. Astana, 10 October 2000, <http://www.worldtradelaw.net/fta/agreements/eaecfta.pdf> (17.10.2011)

²¹⁴ GLEASON, Gregory: "Behind Uzbekistan's EAEC Suspension: The 6+3 Initiative." CACI Analyst, 26 November 2008, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4990> (16.11.2011)

²¹⁵ NYGREN, Bertil: *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia: Putin's foreign policy towards the CIS countries*. Oxon, Routledge 2008, p. 38.

²¹⁶ *Vladimir Putin, Annual Address to the Federal Assembly 26 May 2004*. In: President of Russia Archive, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2004/05/26/1309_type70029type82912_71650.shtml (25.10)

²¹⁷ YURSCHYN VASYL: "FTA within CIS is politicized and not economically significant." Razumkov Centre, 21 October 2011, http://www.uceps.org/eng/expert.php?news_id=3083 (13.11.2011)

quickly used this tension for its own purpose to attract Uzbekistan back to its orbit.²¹⁸ Second, an agreement on organisation of an integrated currency market within the EAEC was approved.²¹⁹ The Petersburg summit brought, again, so many great ideas for future cooperation that it is impossible for an outsider to orientate in them. Nevertheless, the organisation welcomed so far isolationist Turkmenistan as a member state.

On the same occasion, Russia tried to promote its bilateral relations with Central Asian countries. Looking at the then financial situation, in 2005 Russia was on more than favourable terms with its revenues from purchase of natural resources. Until the 2008 economic crisis, Russia thus could afford to financially promote better relations with the EAEC.²²⁰ This did not prevent Uzbekistan from withdrawal from the organisation in 2008. This decision followed the EU's decision to sanction Uzbekistan after Andijan events.²²¹ Equally, this development is an expression of Uzbekistan's long term dissatisfaction with the ineffectiveness of Central Asian organisations.

As it was already mentioned, Russia started to apply a selective approach towards economic cooperation because apparently, Russia was unwilling to bankroll cooperative mechanisms without receiving something substantive in exchange. The narrow focus on three countries is an outcome of Moscow's new pragmatic attitude to multilateralism and concentrates on the cooperation with the most willing and ready ones, i.e. Kazakhstan and Belarus.

The trilateral Customs Union between Belarus Kazakhstan and Russia has been in operation since January 2010. Ukraine announced it will reconsider its accession in a light of the EU's disapproval with politically motivated case with former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Whether this customs union will be a success and for whom, is not clear. For Russia, lifting of tariff

²¹⁸ MANKOFF, Jeffrey: *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield 2009

²¹⁹ *Uzbekistan's accession to the Eurasian Economic Community is the main outcome of the session of the Eurasian Economic Community Council in St Petersburg*. In: President of Russia Archive, 25 January 2006, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/themes/2006/01/252140_100682.shtml (10.11.2011)

²²⁰ ARIS Stephen: *Russia and international organisations*. Russian Analytical Digest, 9, 2010, 76, p. 3.

²²¹ *Uzbekistan To Quit Russian-Led Economic Bloc*. RFE/RL, 12 November 2008, http://www.rferl.org/content/Uzbekistan_To_Quit_ProRussian_Economic_Bloc_Reports_Say/1348234.html (1.10.2011)

and non-tariff barriers will definitely help it as to the largest economy of the bloc and boost its export industry. On the other hand, the benefits for a weak Kazakh's economy is questionable. Experts of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development argue that only those economies which are closest to developed economies, i.e. Russia and Belarus, will profit from the Union. Countries which might possibly enter the customs union, such as Kyrgyzstan which was offered accession in October 2011,²²² are likely to lose, too. Prices of number of essentials products will rise, local market will be flooded with more competitive products from Russia and Belarus. Therefore, Kyrgyz traders and craftsmen view potential membership in the Customs Union with reluctance.²²³ Despite unfavourable future, the country has not sent a signal of rejecting the membership.

After being suggested for the office of the president of the Russian Federation and before officially being elected for a third term as president, Putin made his foreign policy priorities public in a newspaper article titled: „New integration project for Eurasia: Future born today“ in Izvestia newspaper. In this article, he outlined the renewed integration efforts which should result in establish something similar to Asian “European Union”.²²⁴ At the same time, the CIS countries, except for Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, signalled yet one new free trade agreement in late October 2011. Hopefully it will not suffer the same fate as the original 1994 agreement. If Russia wants to preserve its position of a regional leader, establishing a Central Asian economic bloc is certainly the right decision. It follows a trend in global economy in which regional integration organisations are becoming ever more. The future of Putin's project should be assessed cautiously given the record of the last twenty years, divergent integration interests of the CIS countries and some rather poor economies.

²²² CIS Customs Union Says Kyrgystan Can Join. RFE/RL, 19 October 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/cis_customs_union_says_kyrgyzstan_can_join/24364544.html (13.11.2011)

²²³ OROZOBKOVA, Cholpon: “*Joining Russia's CUsToms Union Would Be A Distaster For Kyrgyzstan.*” Central Asian Free Market Institute, <http://freemarket.kg/en/analytcs/joining-russias-customs-union-would-be-disaster-kyrgyzstan> (13.11.2011)

²²⁴ CUTLER, Robert: “Putin Declares ‘Eurasian Union Goal of Russian Foreign Policy.’ CACI Analyst, 19 October 2011, <http://cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5647/print> (23.10.2011)

If a reader goes through this section on an economic cooperation, he or she has to be confused. The reason behind is, that integration and cooperation in the post-Soviet territory was as confusing as this chapter itself.

3.4. Energy

During the Soviet era, there was no question about dependence of Central Asian natural resources: oil and natural gas were operated and managed directly from Moscow. However, the situation changed dramatically after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since 1991, Russia has been trying to move vigorously to Central Asia in order to conserve and expand its dominance; and to limit other actors' ability to participate on Asian energy market. What exactly is at stake? West from the heart of Central Asia lies Caspian basin which is the region which has been a source of attention. The region includes giant field Kashagan (Kazakhstan) which is the largest oil field in the world. On the other hand, Turkmenistan has the biggest gas offshore oil field Yoloton. When it comes to estimated reserves and one compares them with reserves in Middle East or in Russia, they are relatively low. Nevertheless, they are highly demanded because actors involved in the region strive to diversify their energy suppliers. According to the BP Statistical Review from 2009, Kazakhstan lies on around 40 000 million barrel equivalent of oil and Russia own around double of this portion. Both, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, have negligible oil reserves which they compensate with high amount gas. In a gas sector, at least Turkmenistan can be an important actor because its natural gas reserves comes close one fifth, i.e. 8 trillion cubic metres, of Russia's reserves. All together the three Caspian states, excluding Russia and Iran, own 50 billion barrels oil, which constitutes approximately 3.5% of the world's proven reserves and around 12.5 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. That makes roughly 7 % of proven world gas reserves.²²⁵

Apart from the resources themselves, pipelines are a source of tension for involved actors in the region (See map). Lutz Kleveman aptly points out: "Pipelines, umbilical cords for the industrialised world, need to be constructed.

²²⁵ *BP Statistical review of World Energy, 2009.* In: BP, <http://www.bp.com/sectionbodycopy.do?categoryId=7500&contentId=7068481> (3.12.2011)

But which route should the pipelines take?”²²⁶ The next question, which might sound simple, almost not worth asking, is: whose oil and natural gas do pipelines carry? The second one is a legitimate query because, for example, Russia uses natural resources of the Central Asian countries to fulfil own obligations and supplies. This chapter explores how Russia and other main actors are involved in Central Asia and examines energy policy, in particular how Russia strived to ward off interests of the West and China and other players who also started exerting economic pressure on the region since the early 1990s. Furthermore it shows, how situation changed from the year 2009 when Johannes Regenbrecht of Carnegie Center argued that Russia is a major player in the region. In particular he argued so, because Russian companies held a monopoly in energy transport routes from Central Asia. However, by the end of 2011 new developments suggest different scenarios.²²⁷ Needless to say, in Russia’s disadvantage.

The deep fundamental problem of the region lies in disagreement of the five Caspian littoral states i.e. Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan, over the fundamental status of the Caspian Sea. This influences the countries’ rights to exploit its natural resources. In this dispute, Russia considers the Caspian Sea an inland waters since it is landlocked and not directly linked to sea. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has argued that all littoral states have equal rights to access it, obviously a very favourable principle for Russia considering its small share of the coastline. The argument is twenty years old but the summit of the “Caspian five” in Azerbaijan 2010 did not reach a conclusion on this issue.²²⁸ Because Turkmenistan has a „special position“ because of the signed contract on the EU backed Nabucco gas project. Also, Turkmenistan has declined to sign the Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents in 2011.²²⁹ While Russia has recently criticised Turkmenistan for its unilateral

²²⁶ KLEVEMAN, Lutz: *The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Eurasia*. New York, Grove Press, 2003, p. 8.

²²⁷ REGENBRECHT, Johannes – MALASHENKO, Alexey: “*The Central Asia Strategies of Russia and the EU*.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 10, 2009. http://carnegie.ru/events/?fa=1272&solr_hilite= (19.9.2011)

²²⁸ *Press Statement following the Caspian Summit, 18 November 2010*. In: President of Russia Archive, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/1333> (13.10.2011)

²²⁹ *The Caspian Sea: Extremely complex issue*. The Voice of Russia. 9 November 2011, <http://english.ruvr.ru/2011/11/09/60084572.html> (23.11.2011)

actions, together with Kazakhstan, it continues cooperation in energy exploration, development, and production at the northern shore of the Caspian Sea without any reference to the need of all countries to approve these actions.²³⁰ The Baku summit of 2010 brought a further development of the cooperation within the region when the five countries signed a binding agreement for deepening cooperation. Despite this consensus, the final status of the Caspian Sea remains open and continues to be an urgent issue. This disagreement among the littoral states has hindered creation of the Caspian Economic Cooperation Organisation (CECO) parallel to Central Asian organisations. Establishment of such a organisation was conceived by President Medvedev in 2009 and remains an open question. One of the reasons why Russia has been trying to engage others in the CECO, sometimes nicknamed as the Caspian OPEC, was its concerns about increased interest from outside powers. Engaging the Caspian countries in multilateral operation would create a platform for trumpeting Russia's position and consensus decision making required to develop the Caspian reserves while limiting access of the outside actors.

The Americans were interested in the region already by the mid-1990s. Walter LaFeber makes the US involvement around the Caspian Sea clear and links energy isme with terrorism: “The Clinton administration showed little concern about Taliban until 1994 when oil became an issue.”²³¹ At that time, major US companies, i.e. Chevron, Mobil, ExxonMobil, first arrived to Kazakhstan to start cooperation with local political elites, who proved to be extremely capitalist in nature. Yet, US faced a major blow to its plans when spread of Islamic terrorism started to endanger future construction plans as well as existing pipeline infrastructure. Thus, even though US started well and vigorously exploration of the energy rich region in the 1990s, its claim to avoid Russia and Iran for transport of natural resources is not a definite success. Now, the Americans have to contest with both, Russians and Chinese. Unfortunately, China has brighter perspective for cooperative partnership with Russia than US. Therefore policy analysts such as Martha Olcott are recommending revisiting of

²³⁰ CUTLER, Robert M.: “*Turkmenistan stands by Caspian pipeline.*” Asia Times, 4 November 2011, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/MK04Ag02.html (17.10.2011)

²³¹ LAFEBER, Walter: *America, Russia and the Cold War*. New York, McGraw-Hill 2006, p. 437.

the US pipeline and energy policy in Central Asia in order to remain a relevant actor.²³²

China began penetration of the Caspian region around 1997 when it first targeted Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and lastly Uzbekistan. The Chinese, with their vast and pragmatic investment funding became the major competitor of Russia, replacing the US and the EU interests. China was energetically self sufficient until 1993 when its petroleum consumption surpassed domestic production.²³³ In recent years, situation changed dramatically. The relations between China and Central Asian countries can be described, paradoxically in Putin's words, as "mutually beneficial". Jeffrey Mankoff wrote: „With its neighbouring location China has nearly insatiable appetite for foreign energy, China has emerged as the most important alternative pole of attraction for Central Asian states. Beijing has tended to see Central Asia' energy infrastructure as a strategic asset for acquisition of which, as is shown further, it is willing to pay a premium price.²³⁴

Kazakhstan

Energetically rich Central Asian countries are not strict in conducting foreign policies, their behaviour rather resembles never ending game with multiple venues for exporting resources. Kazakhstan managed to split its vector of interest wisely and successfully. The first American (and Western in general) company to enter Kazakh oil sector was Chevron in 1993 when it started to explore the world's deepest super-giant oil fields, the fields Tengiz and Karachaganak together with state KazMunay Gas; later ExxonMobil joined as well. Chevron itself claims to help to Kazakhstan to meet one of its goals: to diversify economy.²³⁵ Central Asian projects have an international pattern/dimension, Western companies have been entering into partnership together with local and Russian firms. Together with Russia and Oman, the project of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) was completed in

²³² OLCOTT, Martha Brill: "US Policy in Central Asia: Looking Ahead." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Martha_Brill_Olcott_-_Testimony_-_Final.pdf (4.11.2011)

²³³ *China's Worldwide Quest for Energy Security*. DoE/EIA, June 2003, p. 13, www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/china.html (7.11.2011)

²³⁴ MANKOFF, Jeffrey: *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield 2009, 279.

²³⁵ *Kazakhstan Fact Sheet*. Chevron, 2011, p. 4. <http://www.chevron.com/documents/pdf/kazakhstanfactsheet.pdf> (7.10.2011)

2001 and started to transport first Kazakh oil to Russian port of Novorossiysk. As an example of geopolitical game, the shareholder structure has been evolving. Russia snapped Oman's 7 % share in 2008 BP sold its 12.5 % share to Lukoil in 2009 making the Russian Federation and Russian companies the biggest shareholder of the project.²³⁶

The Chinese were the last to start exploring the region but with high intensity which can be expected to rise further. The Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline construction which had started already in 1997 delivered its first oil in 2005. Apart from the Kazakh oil, it transports Russian oil from the Western Siberia.²³⁷ The same year, China made the biggest foreign acquisition (ever) in Central Asian oil industry. The state-owned Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) purchased a controlling stake in the largest Kazakh oil company Petrokazakhstan for USD 4.18 billion. Keith Bradsher commented this transaction, which was well above the market price, on the day of its announcement: “[this] transaction shows that the great game, once a competition between imperial Russia and Britain for influence in Central Asia, lives on with new players, as China increasingly challenges Russia and the United States for access to the region's energy riches.”²³⁸

Kazakhstan has been successful in exploration, which even increased its market price. In 2000, was yet another turning point of the New Great Game saga for partitioning of resources. Geologists discovered the largest so far found oil field in Kazakhstan and the largest oil reservoir discovered on earth the so called Kashagan oil field. However, the profitability of this offshore field operated by Italian Agip on behalf of an operating consortium which consists of six Western and one Japanese company has been questioned. The development of the field itself has been a nightmare so far for different reasons varying from ice covering in winter to environmental issues.²³⁹ The second stage of development of the field is in its half; is already delayed, and prospect for export is still unclear. Who will

²³⁶ *Russia snaps up Oman CPC stake*. Upstream online, 6 November 2008, <http://www.upstreamonline.com/live/article166026.ece> (16.11.2011)

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ PALA, Christopher: *China Ups the Ante in Its Bid for Oil*. The New York Times, 23 August 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/23/business/worldbusiness/23oil.html> (28.11.2011)

²³⁹ *Kashagan Oil Project on Shaky Ground*. Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 12 October 2007, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/kashagan-oil-project-shaky-ground> (15.10.2011)

be granted with a portion of approximately 1 million barrels of oil per day?²⁴⁰ Russia has benefited from the good relations with Kazakhstan and a breakthrough deal was signed in January 2011, by which the amount of oil flowing through Caspian Pipeline to Russia will double. As mentioned previously, the Central Asian countries pursue a policy of multiple vectors, therefore it is short sighted to attribute this victory to a single actor. Despite Russia's major success, China and Kazakhstan are involved in talks on boosting oil delivery to energetically thirsty Chinese market. China's previously lower participation on Kazakh oil business is expected to rise as growing business activities indicate.²⁴¹

Similarly to China, Russia's own domestic energy demand has been increasing for years. According to the International Energy Agency the trend will continue also thanks to Russia's persistent reliance on fossil fuels and low portion of renewable sources in Russia's energy mix.²⁴² Therefore Turkmenistan, as the second largest natural gas producer in the region, has been long a focal point of interest in Russia's eyes. Successfully, Russia remained the single operator of gas pipelines and used Turkmen gas to supply its own economy. With increasing US, European and Chinese interests, the country pursued a strategy of liberating itself from Russian dominance. The first signal came in early 2008 when Moscow was forced to start paying „European prices“, i.e. World market prices, for Turkmen gas rather than the deeply discounted rate it had been receiving up to that point.²⁴³ The leverage Turkmenistan used to press Russia into financial confessions continued one year later when Russia lost its monopoly on gas pipelines leading out of Turkmenistan. The newly built Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline (Central Asia-China pipeline) is a major Chinese achievement. It now exports 3-4 billion cubic meters annually, but it is planned to increase the throughput to 40 billion cubic meter by 2014-2015 when the pipeline reaches full

²⁴⁰ Campaner, Nadia – YENIKEYEFF, Shamil: *The Gashagan field*. IFRI, October 2008, p. 5.

²⁴¹ WANG, Oli: Deal of the Day: Chinese seek Kazakh oil. Financial Times, 15 February 2011, <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2011/02/15/deal-of-the-day-chinas-oil-interest-in-kazakhstan/#axzz1eim8WhrI> (7.11.2011)

²⁴² *World Energy Outlook Factsheet*, 2011. In: International Energy Agency., <http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/docs/weo2011/factsheets.pdf> (2.12.2011)

²⁴³ MANKOFF, Jeffrey: *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield 2009, p. 278.

capacity.²⁴⁴ This will significantly increase amount of Central Asian resources in Chinese energy mix. This new piece of infrastructure broke Russian monopoly on transport of Turkmenistan's gas. As a consequence, when Russia in a light of the financial crisis tried to press Turkmenistan to reduce agreed gas prices by interrupting gas flows—a typical Russian strategy—, it failed because thanks to this “new Silk road” Turkmenistan is no longer dependent on Russia to export its gas. Since 2009, the dispute over gas prices prevail and gas deliveries have not been fully resumed yet,²⁴⁵ but Russia's bargaining power appears to be limited. Subsequently, Russia adopted new tactics of undermining Turkmenistan's international credibility by expressing scepticism over Turkmen natural gas reserves which provoked angry reaction from Turkmenistan.²⁴⁶

Turkmenistan has been looking westwards since the 1990s, but, partly caused by Russia's dominance in the region, with a mixed record of progress. The projected Trans-Caspian pipeline, backed by the USA and the EU, would allow Turkmenistan to export into Azerbaijan and bypass Russian infrastructure, thus diversifying its transport routes. Turkmen Plans linked to Nabucco have received criticism from Russia and Iran saying that construction of the pipeline would not be compatible with environmental standards required in the Caspian sea region. However, the EU, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are finally in process of signing a bilateral agreement between the two Caspian littoral states, as a result of which Russia will lose another leverage on Turkmen energy sector.²⁴⁷ This example demonstrates, again, that Russia is losing its political influence on former union states, who are more and more able to choose and decide freely with whom they trade.

However, the Chinese, the EU and the US projects are not the only ones. Ideas for the construction of trans-Afghan pipeline which would carry Turkmen gas southwards could be seen first in the beginning of the 1990s. The

²⁴⁴ *Background note on Turkmenistan*. US Department of State, 31 October 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35884.htm> (13.11.2011)

²⁴⁵ SOCOR, Vladimir: *Strategic Implications of the Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline*. The Jamestown Foundation, 18 December 2009, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35856 (21.10.2011)

²⁴⁶ *Turkmenistan Rejects Russian Doubts over gas reserves*. Reuters, 21 November 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/21/gas-turkmenistan-russi-idUSL5E7ML04Y20111121> (26.11.2011)

²⁴⁷ *Russia frets over EU plans to link up Caspian gas fields*. EUobserver, 14 September 2011, <http://euobserver.com/19/113608> (18.10.2011)

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI) received support of the US as a project which will further diversify energy transport routes in Central Asia and widen the portfolio of Turkmenistan's gas sales destinations. Russia, at least, will probably participate in the construction of the pipeline, as Russian Gazprom's interest in the project was welcomed with pleasure from the TAPI nations.²⁴⁸ As in other instances, Russia tries to secure its participation in order to be at least involved and heard. For Russia, this has significant implications: it might not be able to fulfil its domestic as well as its international obligations and it is de facto losing on both fronts. Turkmenistan has turned to the West and at the same time to Asia.

While Russian natural gas produced in West Siberia is exported to the European market, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan had provided strategic imports for Russia's domestic consumption. Turkmenistan had got rid of Russia's monopoly on its natural gas, Uzbekistan continues to be supplier of precious reserves. Although the amount of Uzbek natural gas exported to Russia is significantly lower and decreased since the collapse of the Soviet Union, cooperation is still vivid. On one hand, Russia was hegemon on Uzbek gas market until 2009, on the other hand, it had to pay increased prices as in other Central Asian states. For a long time a main stumbling block for Uzbekistan's turn to alternative export markets, had not been the lack of will from the side of country's leadership but rather a reluctance to pay a high price for diverging its foreign policies by improving its disastrous human rights reputation. Breaching and ignorance of human rights in Uzbekistan prevented the EU from dealing with the authoritarian president Karimov. China, on the other hand, is famous for its respect for national sovereignty and non interference in domestic politics of other countries, especially not of those with which China trades. On its conquest of Central Asia, China National Petroleum Corporation signed a deal with Uzbekneftegaz on delivery of natural gas through the existing Central Asia-China pipeline.²⁴⁹

Russia had, until recently, secured its dominant position in the region through long term contracts with its suppliers and by following its strategy

²⁴⁸ *Pakistan, Russia sign energy MOU*. Oil&Gas Journal, 26 May 2011, <http://www.ogj.com/articles/2011/05/pakistan--russia-sign.html> (28.10.2011)

²⁴⁹ WATINS, Eric: *China, Uzbekistan Sign Accords on gas, uranium*. Oil and Gas Journal, 16 June 2010, <http://www.ogj.com/articles/2010/06/china--uzbekistan.html> (2.9.2011)

document Energy Security to 2030.²⁵⁰ This government policy paper mentions Russia's outlook of steady development of imports from Central Asia based on long term contracts; becoming a regional leader in the sphere of Eurasian energy security; and positioning Russian pipeline infrastructure as a future integral part of the "power bridge" between Europe and Asia where Russia hopes to become the key centre of its management. Mankoff sees a manifestation of Russia's energy foreign policy interests also in Kyrgyzstan, in Tajikistan and to some extent, in Uzbekistan: "In states which are not major energy players; the Kremlin has moved to establish Russia as the major supplier and pipeline operation with an eye to promoting economic integration on its own terms."²⁵¹ Looking at the constellation of main players in the region until now, Russia's position is far from what it pictures it to be. China and Russia have de facto become competitors in the energy field while cooperating together at the same time. The US and the EU have not been able to exploit the Central Asian potential and the expectations they had in the region after it gained independence have not been fully materialised. Currently, Russia's advantages are of mid-term duration and will not necessarily guarantee Russia this supreme position in the long run. Because of Chinese heavy investment in regional energy market and Russia's inability to financially compete.

²⁵⁰ *Energy Strategy of Russia up to 2030*. In: Institute of Energy Strategy, 2010, [http://www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030_\(Eng\).pdf](http://www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030_(Eng).pdf) (17.10.2011)

²⁵¹ MANKOFF, Jeffrey: *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield 2009, p. 278.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this Thesis was to analyse changes in Russia's foreign policies towards Central Asia, i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Thesis operated on the presumption that Russia strived to play a pivotal role in Central Asia since the beginning of its expansion to this region in the end of the 18th century. Russia's involvement in Central Asia can be divided into three periods. The first phase encompasses the period from the late 18th century up to 1917. In this era, Tsarist Russia expanded into the Central Asian region. After 1917, Soviet Russia took over and formally incorporated all five Central Asian -stans into the Soviet Union. However, the main focus of the Thesis was the post-Cold War era, i.e. after 1991 up to the present day, after dissolution of the Soviet Union when the -stans gained independence and Russia lost direct rule over Central Asia. In all these three eras, Russia was contested by major powers of their times. Therefore, their influence is taken into account, too. In the first period it was the British Empire. Later, China and United States started to influence dynamics of the region.

Mackinder's legacy

The first chapter of the Thesis explained why Central Asia has been an important territory for great powers in the course of history. A theoretical approach coherently developed by Sir Halford Mackinder was applied. Mackinder's geopolitical theory sees indivisible link between Russia's location on the Euro-Asian landmass and Russia's desire to control the Central Asian region. Most importantly, the region is rich in natural resources and has a strategic location for ruling over the *Heartland*. According to Mackinder, at the same time, it could serve as a basis for Russia's advancement to gain a sea access. Indeed, during the 19th century Great Game, the British Empire perceived Russia's involvement in Central Asia as a threat to British India. This culminated in Anglo-Afghan wars which first erupted in 1839 and resulted in Russia being contained in Central Asia. Great Britain succeeded to maintain dominance over India.

Establishment and consolidation of Russian dominance in Tsarist and Soviet era

The aim of the second chapter was to analyse changes in Russia's approaches towards Central Asia during existence of Tsarist and Soviet Russia and to answer questions how was the Tsarist rule over Central Asia established and to what extent was Tsarist and Soviet approach toward Central Asia different? Broadly speaking, Tsarist Russia conquered and the Soviet Union consolidated Russia's position in Central Asia. Russia conquered the territory and by the end of the 1870s it had established *Russian Turkestan*, Bukhara and Khiva protectorates. Soviet Russia completed what the tsarist Russia started. It incorporated the protectorates into its formal Empire. In fact, this reorganisation of the territory by Soviet Russia led to tight control over the territory: Although the Soviet republics enjoyed autonomy on the paper, in reality, the Soviet state was highly centralised and hierarchical and dominated by the unitary and strictly hierarchical Communist Party.

In these two periods, Russia successfully managed to settle, subjugate and impoverish indigenous Central Asian populations. Central Asian natural resources, agriculture production and industry was concentrated in the hands of the central power and later subject to Moscow-controlled planned economy. Furthermore, Russian central power tried to culturally assimilate locals by forced conversion to Orthodox Christianity and mandatory Russian language education. Whilst Russian became *lingua franca* of the Soviet Union and partly supplanted local languages, at least for official purposes, the attempts to establish Orthodox Christianity in Central Asian were far less successful and were eventually discontinued in the officially antireligious Soviet Union. In fact, up to the present day, Islamic opposition in Central Asia continues to be an important factor. Later, Soviet Russia added an ideological component when it tried to construct a common Soviet identity. These efforts proved to be largely unsuccessful as ethnic identities tended to prevail. Despite the failure to create a common Soviet identity, the Soviet Empire survived more than 70 years. Therefore, the Soviet rule over Central Asia should be viewed as a continuation of the Tsarist Russia rather than a historical rupture.

New beginning and power vacuum

The secondary aim of this Thesis was to provide an analysis of Russia's foreign policy approaches towards Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The chapter had two inter connected research question. What has been a nature of Russia's involvement in the region and how it strives to influence the former Soviet republics in Central Asia? The question also is, how successful has Russia been in establishing its position in Central Asia? In 1991, Central Asian countries gained their independence; and Russia, on the one hand being concerned with the reorganization of its own society and economy and on the other hand, focussing its foreign policy on the relationship with the West, was unable and partly unwilling to exert significant power in Central Asia. This power vacuum attracted the attention of other powers and so the empty space was slowly but gradually filled with new actors within the region, such as the US and China, which started to interact with the independent countries and thus replaced the Great Britain in the New Great Game for influence in Central Asia.

Difficult multilateral cooperation between the CIS states

After 1991 Russia was predominant interest in Central Asia rested in the field of the common military and security legacy of a common army and shared borders whereas Russian economic policy orientated towards integration into and cooperation with Western economies.

The CIS as the original platform for managing relations with Central Asian states proved to be efficient in managing peaceful disintegration of the Soviet Union, despite regional conflicts, such as Tajik civil war. Further integration processes based on the CIS framework, such common border guards, however, were weak. Partly because the CIS functioned as a platform for producing declaratory promises but not real deeds, but partly also because the newly independent states were very reluctant to accept Russian leadership in such delicate areas.

The CIS daughter organisations, CST and CSTO, suffered from lack of unity under Russia's leadership. Both, Russia and the Central Asian countries acted very pragmatically in order to secure its own interests. Russia's policy can

be characterised as a desire to establish its own military presence in the region and serve as a security guard in Central Asia; in fact, Central Asia has been labelled as Russia's sphere of influence repeatedly since the early 1990s. This has, however, not been undisputed. Russia's attempts to establish dominance in the region are manifested in Russia's efforts to keep the US away from the region in recent years, after a short honey moon period which followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Furthermore, on the verge of the new millennium, Russia had to acknowledge rising power of China and engage it in an inevitable partnership. While Russia tries to engage China in multilateral cooperation with other Central Asian countries, although part of military and security agenda is preserved for the SCTO in order to avoid China.

Russia's new interest in Central Asia after the turn of the millennium

With Russia regaining its national confidence and, mostly due to rising world market prices, regained economic strength during during Putin's first presidential mandate, Russia has put its energy and financial means into gaining a leading position in the "New Great Game" over the Central Asian territory. Response from Central Asia to Russia's more assertive approach is as diverse as the group of five Central Asian countries itself: Turkmenistan pursues its isolationist policy, Uzbekistan changed its foreign security policy several times and other actors are loyal to their multi-vector orientations. This approach of Central Asian countries secures alternative ways of pursuing their own security goals; and allows them to cooperate with Russia when they can benefit from the situation. Thus, the military/security climate in the region has come closer to equal partnerships.

The end of the second millennium a trend towards economic regionalism can be observed and Russia together with Central Asian countries engaged as well. In the early 1990s, Russia showed little interest in integration and economic cooperation with its former vessel states. Two main factors can explain this:: Russia was undergoing a severe economic crisis and it hoped for closer economic cooperation with the West. Despite Russia's lack of interest, cooperation was proposed by countries such as Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, Central Asian efforts to establish free trade areas, custom unions or a single economic zones failed due to

different national interests and a lack of dedication. The 1990s were characteristic for unsuccessful repetitive efforts of the Central Asian countries to establish a free trade area or even a custom union, while Russia was participating in only some of these attempts. With beginning of Putin's first presidential mandate, Russia gave a new impetus to establishment of an economic cooperation organisation and eventually the Eurasian Economic Community was established in 2001 aiming at establishing a common economic zone and eventually the cooperation went as far as establishing a Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2010. Success is not clear, yet, because only two countries joined, and other countries view new integration with suspicion or their economies are not ready to join. Despite this relative success, Russian president/prime minister Putin has been strongly endorsing multilateral economic cooperation in recent years, and he has recently presented his ultimate goal of creating a new Eurasian Union which is inspired by the European Union.

Central Asian oil and gas attracts competitors

Yet, more than ever, Russia's contest with its great ally and competitor, China, at the same time might make Russia's visions more realistic because growing and energy thirsty China has been able to embark on cooperation in the energy sector with Central Asian states and China, because of its nearly unlimited funds, has been able to offer very favourable conditions to the Central Asian states. This Chinese attention is, to a certain extent, at Russia's expense.

Russia's energy policy and relations with Central Asia have been changing quite rapidly. After 1991, Russia benefited from its dominant position in the region because the whole oil and gas infrastructure was owned by Russian state owned company Transneft. Moreover, Russia negotiated long term agreements for purchase of Central Asian energy supplies. However, Russia's post-Cold War proposals, such as an idea to establish the Caspian Economic Cooperation Organisation or the SCO energy club, have not succeeded because Central Asian countries made efforts to diversify their energy partners portfolio, most notably by negotiating supply contracts with China.

Russia has been able to retain its monopoly of energy infrastructure until 2005, when China received its first oil from Kazakhstan through a newly opened pipeline. Yet, well before this milestone, the *raison d'être* of the US' and other regional actors' presence in Central Asia was energy. Thereafter, Russia had to make concessions in order to preserve its influence. Central Asian countries could negotiate over price of their natural resources, which has in majority of cases meant, that Russia had to agree to pay market prices. Moreover, new projects, such as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, were initiated without Russia's leadership. In these cases, Russia tried to be involved at least as a minority partner. Regardless of these developments, Russia still has an advantageous position in the Central Asian energy market but long term perspective seems to be rather bleak for Russia.

An open-ended New Great Game

The thesis used Halford Mackinder's vision of the world as a starting point. According to Mackinder, Russia's territory constitutes a part of the strategic pivotal area of the World Island and Central Asia lies in its heart, with Russia being in a very favourable position to control it. In accordance with Mackinder's theory, control over the heartland has been a strategic goal of Russia's policy in different eras. Therefore, Russia was involved in the two last Great Games for domination of Central Asia, in the original Great Game, Russia successfully established and subsequently consolidated a formal empire in Central Asia for more than one century. In the second one, smaller post-Soviet Russia, has been struggling with China and the US.

At the moment, nowhere else in the world can the interaction of three major powers, the old and new super power US, China as the up and coming super power of the 21st century and the world's most populous country, and the world's largest country by surface and successor of the Soviet Empire—Russia—be observed, oscillating between cooperation and competition in changing alliances among them and with the 5 Central Countries.. In the mid-term perspective it will be interesting to observe to which of the two powers Russia will incline. In case China will become more assertive in the region, it is not impossible that Russia will seek closer cooperation with the US. But so far,

Russia is neither an obvious winner nor loser. The future will show whether the New Great Game will have a clear winner(s) and/or loser(s).

Russia has strived to establish itself as a post-Cold War great power, as a centre of the multi-polar world of the 21st century. From Russia's policy record and ways how it has approached Central Asia, and the two other major actors' foreign policies towards the region, Russia might be assessed as a regional power with disputable prospect for establishing itself as an informal power centre around which Central Asian countries will gravitate. It is important to stress again that the reason why Russia is not *the* power centre is the free will of the Central Asian countries. They pursue own interests and policies which are not always compatible with those of Russia. Increasingly more often, Central Asian republics themselves play the Great Game with Russia.

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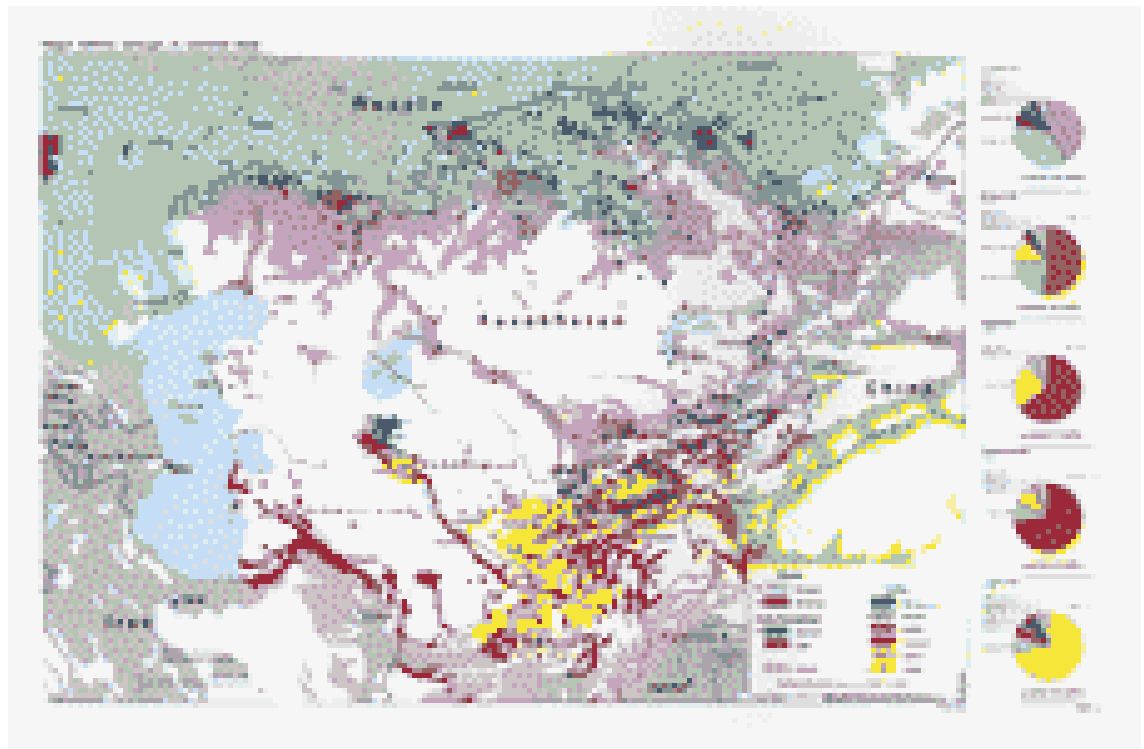
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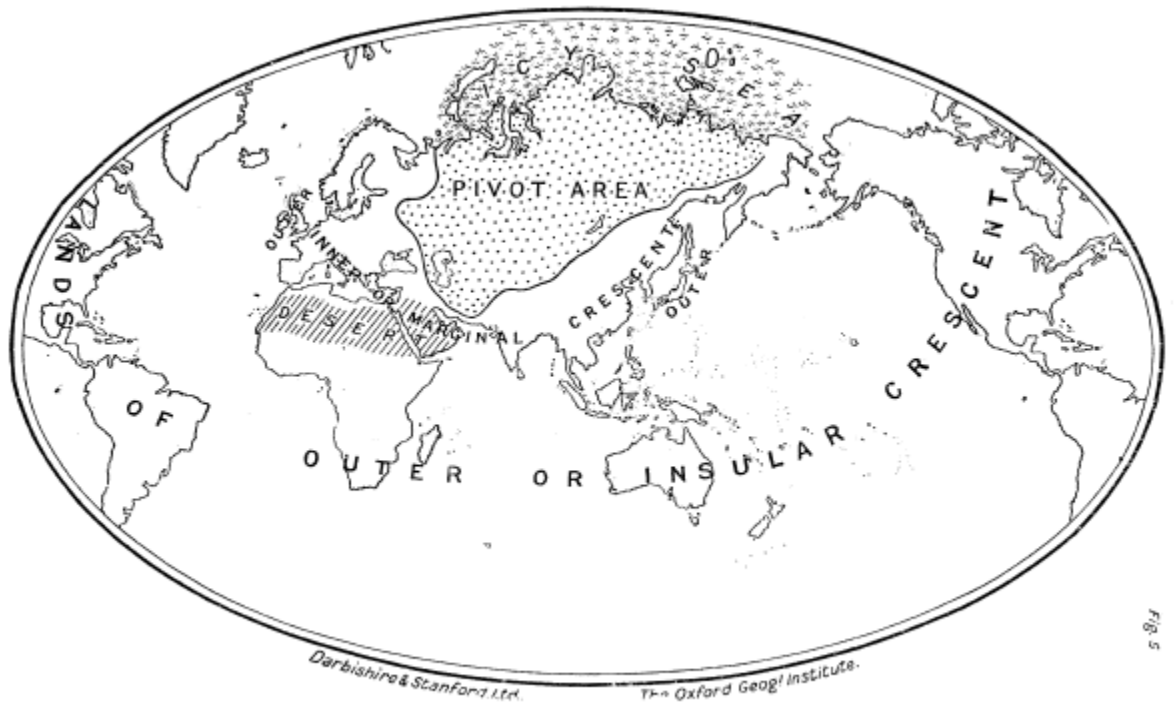
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ATTACHMENTS

Map 1: Contemporary Ethnic Composition of Central Asia



Map 2: Halford Mackinder's World view



THE NATURAL SEATS OF POWER.

Pivot area—wholly continental. Outer crescent—wholly oceanic. Inner crescent—partly continental, partly oceanic.

Fig. 5

Map 3: Russian Turkestan



Source: ADLE, Chahryar (ed.): *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*. Paris, UNESCO Publishing 2005, 1004 pp.

Map 4: Pipeline infrastructure in Central Asia



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Source: National Geographic

Table 1: Membership in regional organisations in Central Asia

Membership of Russian-Influenced Regional Organizations in the Post-Soviet Space

	CIS	CSTO	EurAsEC	SCO
Armenia	X	X	X	
Azerbaijan	X			
Belarus	X	X	X	
Georgia	(withdrew 2008)			
Kazakhstan	X	X	X	X
Kyrgyzstan	X	X	X	X
Moldova	X			
Russia	X	X	X	X
Tajikistan	X	X	X	X
Turkmenistan	(associate member)			
Ukraine	X			
Uzbekistan	X	X	X (have suspended their membership)	X
China				X

Source: Russian Analytical Digest, no. 76, 2010, <http://www.res.ethz.ch/analysis/rad/>

ABSTRAKT

OSTIANOVÁ, Nikol: *Changes in Russia's Approach Towards Central Asia*. Master Thesis. FF UP 2011,

Klíčová slova: Ruská zahraniční politika, Střední Asie, Velká hra, regionální organizace

Diplomová práce se soustředí na proměny ruského přístupu k státům Střední Asie. Téma je vymezeno obdobím začátku ruské expanze do této oblasti v 19. století a sleduje ruskou politiku až do současnosti. Text se zaměřuje na změny politiky, které probíhaly v závislosti na změnách režimu v Rusku. Toto časové rozdělení koresponduje s rozvržením kapitol diplomové práce. Nejdříve se práce zabývá Ruskou politikou ve střední Asii za existence carského Ruska, dále navazuje na éru Sovětského svazu a končí existencí Ruské federace. Specifickým cílem této diplomové práce je analýza ruské zahraniční politiky v posledním období vzájemných vztahů Ruské federace a států Střední Asie. Kromě analýzy ruské politiky, práce analyzuje zahraniční politiky ostatních mocností v daném regionu. V minulosti jí byla Velká Británie a dnes je to především Čína a Spojené státy americké.

ABSTRACT

OSTIANOVÁ, Nikol: *Changes in Russia's Approach Towards Central Asia*. Master Thesis. FF UP 2011, 106 pp.

Key words: Russian foreign policy, Central Asia, the Great Game, regional organisations

The Thesis focuses on changes in Russia's approach towards Central Asia. The settings of the topic is beginning of Russia's expansion to the region in the 19th century and follow Russian policies up to the present day. Text concentrates on changes in policies which were taking place parallel to changes of Russian statehood. This chronological division corresponds with the structure of the Thesis. First, the Thesis discusses Russian policy in Central Asia during the Tsarist Russia era, then it continues to present changes during existence of the Soviet Russia and concludes with analysis of changes in Russia's policies during the last period of Russian Federation. The specific aim of this Thesis is to analyse these changes in Russian foreign policy in the period of last twenty years. Apart from analysis of Russian policy, the text analyses foreign policies of other powers involved in the region. In the past, it was Great Britain and in current era it is mainly China and the United States of America.