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Central Asia: A Testing Ground for Nation-building and Multilateral Cooperation

Learning by Doing – the OSCE in Central Asia

The OSCE's Parliamentary Diplomacy in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in Comparative Perspective

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A Road to Central Asia through Luleå, Sweden

**THEME: Multilateral Cooperation in Central Asia**

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*“In Central Asia, the dissolution of the Soviet Union left in its wake five independent states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Unlike the Baltic countries and Georgia, where the local population had struggled to break free from the Soviet Union, these Central Asian states found themselves virtually kicked out. Russia had no wish to be stuck with the responsibility for the southernmost and poorest republics of the former USSR. Thus an entirely new arena for geopolitics, diplomacy and aid opened up at the crossroads of China, South-East Asia and Russia.”*

*Indra Øverland, Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, and guest editor for this issue of NIASnytt*

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# Towards the New NIAS

Since publication of the editorial in the previous issue of *NIASnytt* – ‘Innovating the Nordic Ownership and Mandate’ (*NIASnytt*, no. 1, 2004) – there have been encouraging developments in relation to NIAS’s future organisational structure.

The University of Copenhagen, the Copenhagen Business School (both in Denmark) and Lund University (in Sweden) have agreed to sign a binding agreement to maintain NIAS as an academically independent, Nordic institute. The three universities can be considered founding partners of **the new NIAS**. They have volunteered to take responsibility at a stage when our future was uncertain. We are extremely grateful for that and look forward to joining the new partnership on 1 January 2005!

The University of Copenhagen will be the host institution and carry the administrative and legal responsibilities for NIAS under the Danish University Act. This is stipulated in detail in a collaborative agreement to be signed by the three universities. The agreement entails a substantial financial contribution as well, which is shared among the three partners. The financial contribution matches an ongoing allocation from the Nordic Council of Ministers to ensure that NIAS will continue to play a role in developing Asian studies in the Nordic region.

A new NIAS strategy is being developed and the mission statement draft is as follows:

## **NIAS – Mission statement (draft)**

*NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies* is a Nordic research institute with an international mandate focusing on political, economic and social development in modern Asia in its historical and cultural contexts.

NIAS works closely with partner universities in the Øresund region to develop critical mass in, and add value to, research initiatives on modern Asia and to promote synergy and growth in Asian studies.

The anchorage in the Øresund region is the basis for support for development of Asian studies in the Nordic region, where NIAS contributes to their coordination, consolidation and expansion.

NIAS is the Nordic countries’ window for high-level, research-based knowledge and information on Asia, and the institute contributes to the international recognition and respect for Nordic Asia research.

### **NIAS’s activities and services comprise of:**

- Basic and applied research
- Research support – NIAS LINC
- Support for education
- Dissemination – NIAS Press
- Partnerships and networks

From being an organizationally independent, yet somewhat isolated Nordic institute, NIAS will become integrated into a larger institutional complex in the Øresund region in order to create a new platform for performing our role as a key player in relation to Asian studies in the Nordic region.

To achieve this, the three universities and the Nordic Council of Ministers have invited Nordic universities, research institutes and networks working with Asia to join the partnership. This is the next step in the efforts to innovate the Nordic ownership. A first meeting was held on 10 June, when 21 Nordic universities and research institutes gathered in Copenhagen to discuss NIAS’ future strategy and our proposal to set up a ‘Nordic NIAS Council’.

Based on experiences with the ‘Nordic Centre Fudan’ (in China) and the ‘Nordic Centre India’, the NIAS Council is intended to be a formal consortium (around NIAS) to maintain and develop NIAS’s role as a Nordic institute. The Council will bring NIAS closer to our partners and users in the academic communities in the Nordic Region. Among them are a number of smaller universities with few resources in Asian studies.



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**Indra Øverland** wrote his doctoral thesis at the University of Cambridge on aid to the Saami people in Russia. He has worked on a broad range of issues related to development aid and humanitarian operations in the former Soviet Union, focusing on Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Currently he is a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, where he is carrying out a three-year post-doctoral project on coordination between multilateral agencies in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

# Central Asia: A Testing Ground for Nation-building and Multilateral Cooperation

By Indra Øverland, Guest Editor

*In Central Asia, the dissolution of the Soviet Union left in its wake five independent states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Unlike the Baltic countries and Georgia, where the local population had struggled to break free from the Soviet Union, these Central Asian states found themselves virtually kicked out. Russia had no wish to be stuck with the responsibility for the southernmost and poorest republics of the former USSR. Thus an entirely new arena for geopolitics, diplomacy and aid opened up at the crossroads of China, South-East Asia and Russia.*

Multilateral cooperation in this arena is both challenging and necessary, for many reasons. The borders between the five states were created during Stalin's rule, and are widely considered to have been constructed as part of a strategy of divide and rule. It is thought that the borders were made as complicated as possible, the states as ethnically heterogeneous and their economies as interdependent as possible, all in order to ensure that they could not break away from each other or the rest of the Soviet Union.

There are significant Russian minorities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Uzbek minorities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as Tajik minorities in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In addition, several ethnic groups deported from other parts of the Soviet Union were settled in Central Asia, including Chechens, Meskhetian Turks and Koreans. There are also an estimated 400,000 Uighurs spread across Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and another eight million across the border in China.

In 2002, Arne Haugen completed a fascinating Ph.D. study at the University of Bergen in Norway, arguing that these complex borders and ethnic composition were not the result

of an intentionally obstructive policy on the part of Moscow, but rather reflected the complicated ethnic patchwork in the region. Whatever the true reasons may be, the newly independent states of this region have unusually complex interrelationships.

The situation is particularly complex in the Ferghana Valley (the area around the cities Namangan, Osh and Khujand on the map). Here the territories of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan curl around each other in a spiral formation. Much of the densely populated and intensively cultivated valley belongs to Uzbekistan. However, most of the surrounding mountains, which provide the water that irrigates the valley, belong to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These inaccessible mountains also provide shelter for the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which aims to overthrow Uzbekistan's authoritarian former communist regime, and has carried out several terrorist attacks. This inevitably complicates the relations among the three states as they engage in nation building and try to find their own footing and place in the world.

There also exist various enclaves in Central Asia, small

patches of land belonging to one state but surrounded by the territory of another. At least one of the Uzbekistani enclaves in the Kyrgyz mountains around the Ferghana Valley is populated by Tajiks, and is also an important source of water.

The water issue extends beyond the three states that share the Ferghana Valley. Like Uzbekistan, both Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan depend on water from the Kyrgyzstani and Tajikistani mountains for their crops. While Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan lack petroleum resources and are the two poorest countries in the region, the other three countries have such resources, in particular Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, the petroleum states have wanted to sell their oil and gas at prices closer to those on the world market. This has made electricity and fuel prohibitively expensive for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have turned to one of the few resources they have: hydroelectric power. The problem is that they need to let the water through the hydroelectric dams during the winter to provide electricity for heating, whereas the lowland

agriculture needs the water during the summer.

There are also problems with other infrastructures – roads, railways and telephone networks – which criss-cross the borders between the states. Landlocked Tajikistan's sole rail link to the outside world goes through Uzbekistan. Today's borderline between Uzbeks and Tajiks is part of the ancient dividing line between the Turkic and Persian civilisations, and still occasionally gives rise to tensions. The border and the railway have been shut several times since the two countries acquired independence.

Due to the complexity of the newly independent countries of Central Asia described above, the region provides a particularly challenging testing ground for the development of inter-state cooperation. Two main types of multilateral cooperation have been attempted in the region, both starting from scratch. Firstly, the five states, often in cooperation with neighbouring countries such as China, Russia or Iran, have established more than ten regional multilateral organisations. These have varying foci, including trade, the military, anti-terrorism and cultural cooperation. Among the most prominent are the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Economic Cooperation Organisation and the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation.

The second type of multilateral cooperation attempted in Central Asia over the past fifteen years involves global or Western-dominated organisations. These are usually engaged in some form of aid or support function for the newly independent states. The Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Mission in Tajikistan are involved in peace building, confidence-building measures

and post-conflict reconciliation. UN agencies such as the World Health Organisation, the United High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme provide development aid and humanitarian relief of various kinds.

The articles in this special issue examine five noteworthy cases of multilateral cooperation in the region.

The OSCE, covered by Anna Kreikemeyer in her article, is of particular interest because this is an organisation focused on Europe, and European attention to Central Asia has recently increased. This reflects the fact that Europe's foreign-policy rim has moved eastward with the expansion of the European Union into Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Robert Cutler's contribution concerns the Parliamentary Assembly, a special branch of the OSCE. This institution represents a form of international cooperation that is rapidly increasing in importance, and seems especially suited for dealing with issues that transcend borders. Cutler points out how the embryonic cooperation developing within the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly has the potential to develop into something more comprehensive in the future.

In his article, Svante Cornell shows that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is similarly shifting its focus eastwards. This is partly due to the same reasons as the OSCE's change of priorities, but is also related to the international operation in Afghanistan, geopolitical competition between Russia and the USA, and NATO-member Turkey's ambitions in the four Turkic countries of Central Asia.

Edil Baisalov argues that Western-dominated multilateral organisations tend to lump the region together, thereby

lowering democratic and human rights standards for a country such as Kyrgyzstan. He calls for an informed and country-specific approach to the region, one in which each country is held to the highest realistic standards of democracy and human rights.

Yuri Bossin examines the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, perhaps the most important of the new regional organisations covering Central Asia. It includes two of the main external actors in the region, China and Russia, which gives it considerable potential clout – though little of this potential has been realised to date.

Zharmukhamed Zardykhyan's article focuses on Kazakhstan's role in regional cooperation and relationship with Russia. With a surface area of 2.7 million square kilometres – roughly equivalent to Western Europe – Kazakhstan is by far the largest of the Central Asian states. At the same time, it is tightly intertwined with Russia, due to the large Russian and Russian-speaking population in Kazakhstan and because of the 6,800 km shared and mostly unmarked border.

In lieu of an overview of Nordic research on Central Asia, Gunnar Thorenfeldt takes a look at the 'Central Asia and Caucasus Centre' in Umeå in northern Sweden. Set up and run by Murad Esenov from Turkmenistan, this centre publishes the *Central Asia and the Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies*, one of the world's main sources of information on the region. This journal, published bimonthly in both English and Russian, features articles by scholars from all over Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as other parts of the world.



From above:

The Zeravshan mountain range

Children in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Column in the historical city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Tajiks relaxing with traditional tea and bread

Photos: I. Overland



Dr **Anna Kreikemeyer** is a researcher at the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) in Hamburg. She is currently working on the research project 'Theoretical perspectives and comparative case studies on the goals, appropriateness, implementation and effectiveness of democratisation measures designed to increase security in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan'. She has undertaken research on the compatibility of Islam and security within the secular-Islamic dialogue in Tajikistan, and on Russian foreign and security policy in conflicts in the CIS area.

# Learning by Doing – the OSCE in Central Asia

By **Anna Kreikemeyer**

*As recently as in 1992, the five Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) acceded to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The reasons for this had more to do with their shared past experience within the former Soviet Union than with any notion of a common new future in Eurasia. While the Central Asian states mainly wanted to stay close to their former partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States, the other OSCE states were more interested in influencing security developments in this region. Since then, much has changed. Both the OSCE and the Central Asian states soon found themselves in a stalemate. The post-Soviet regimes were not particularly interested in what they mostly perceived as just another Western human rights organisation, and the OSCE became aware that it had serious problems with its overall strategy in the region. It was only between 2000 and 2003 that the crisis was overcome, and some challenges still remain.*

## Combining a regional and a national approach

From a Western point of view, Central Asia tends to be regarded as a single, homogeneous region. This picture is not only unpopular in the region itself, but is basically wrong. With the exception of the OSCE mission in Tajikistan, which was mandated for conflict management (1994), the OSCE's early field activities in Central Asia were based on a regional approach: a small Central Asia Liaison Office in Tashkent, established in 1995, was responsible for the whole region. It was only gradually that the OSCE dismissed the idea of treating Central Asia as a region and began devoting more attention to the specifics of each country.

From 1999 onward, OSCE Centres were opened in every Central Asian state. In 1997, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights began to negotiate annual Memoranda of Understanding with individual Central Asian governments. While similar projects are possible in the

various OSCE centres, the region's states are not yet willing to use the organisation as a forum for regional cooperation. Mistrust still prevails among the Central Asian neighbours, whether in the areas of water and energy management or in border control. Some responsibility, however, must be laid at the door of the OSCE, which – since its declaration of intent at the 1999 Istanbul Summit – has yet to develop a comprehensive strategy for Central Asia.

## Walking the fine line between confrontation and co-operation

Part of the OSCE's philosophy is to search for common solutions by entering into dialogue in a spirit of partnership. In Central Asia, however, this has not always been possible. Only in those cases where such an approach was embraced by the governments involved has the OSCE been able to contribute to the reform processes. The organisation has often been confronted with a difficult political environment, stemming mainly from authoritarian political institutions. The non-democratic governments of the

region have frequently flouted the commitments on which the organisation was built.

In certain specific areas, especially in what the OSCE refers to as 'the human dimension', an external actor has not always been welcome to join the search for solutions. Host governments have often viewed the OSCE with considerable suspicion. It was not only in the extreme case of Turkmenistan that a dialogue on human rights issues has been perceived as interference in internal affairs. There has been a general desire among the Central Asian states to avoid being singled out. Initially, there were even objections to the creation of the post of Personal Representative for Central Asia of the Chairman-in-Office.

The Central Asian hosts of OSCE Missions have also been reluctant to see resources committed to monitoring their behaviour in the sensitive areas mentioned above. On occasion, this has even resulted in signals being sent to the OSCE that it should not take for granted these countries' interest in the organisation. The OSCE has thus been confronted with a

constant need to keep the balance between retaining political links with autocratic regimes and upholding its normative standards. Especially in cases of human rights violations, this diplomatic balancing act demands sensitivity and an intelligent public-relations policy. Given the importance of leadership and authority in Central Asia, one should not underestimate the potentially positive diplomatic role that can be played by dedicated high-ranking Western personalities in this respect.

### **Balancing the dimensions of comprehensive security**

As early as 2000, following the first armed clashes between government forces and radical Islamists in Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE became aware that it would have to shift its attention toward security threats in the region. To make comprehensive security more fruitful for Central Asia, it was necessary to balance the emphasis previously placed on the human dimension. In response to this, the Austrian and Romanian OSCE Chairmanships organised two conferences on security policy, one in Tashkent (2000) and the other in Bishkek (2001). The need for a better balance became even more evident after the terrorist events of September 11. The OSCE has emphasised that instability is also related to economic problems, with poverty being one root cause of Islamist radicalisation. In 2003, additional funds were redirected from the Balkans to support military-political and economic and ecological projects in Central Asia.

The regimes in the region welcomed these visible signs of a truly comprehensive approach to security. For the OSCE, however, the need to balance the dimensions has remained a real challenge, as it soon became

clear that care must be taken to ensure that anti-terrorist activities be carried out in a manner compatible with human rights. Giving priority to security issues could otherwise lead to abuse and violations of human rights.

### **Coping with informal structures**

Alongside the need to balance the dimensions of comprehensive security, a main goal of the OSCE remains the promotion of human rights, democratisation and the rule of law. However, in the Central Asian states, the persistence of both traditional and post-Soviet informal structures in the state apparatus and society as a whole creates barriers to these activities. It is hardly possible to infer deep changes in political attitudes from the mere erection of democratic façades. The power of individual leaders, clientelism and clan-based relations is still greater than that of the rule of law in the region. Elites ruling in this way have remained so strong that new instruments such as elections can easily be integrated into informal governance strategies. It is imperative, therefore, for the organisation to rethink its approach and to devote more energy towards coping with the challenge of such powerful informal institutions.

### **Bridging the gap with traditional societies**

While the OSCE's values are meant to be universal, in a region like Central Asia the organisation cannot deny its Western slant. Here it is confronted with a traditional, patriarchal and – particularly in the cases of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – post-Soviet Islamic culture. Clear signs of resistance to and rejection of Western ways of political articulation and

organisation, as well as regressive tendencies towards traditional forms of political order, all undermine the organisation's efforts to support democratisation.

The OSCE finds itself caught between universalism and particularism. It still lacks a strategy for intercultural dialogue, and has failed to devote enough energy to integrating different norms and principles. A more participatory approach toward the local population and the integration of institutions of local self-government could be good starting points in this respect.

### **Finding one's place in the international community**

After the events of September 11, international political interest in Central Asia quickly grew. The United States was most active in this regard, but the European Union also took on additional foreign policy tasks, and even NATO adopted more of the 'soft' security issues that had been the OSCE's domain. In many ways, the OSCE, with its unique mandate and membership, is still much better placed than individual states or other international organisations to respond rapidly to certain types of security problems.

However, its inter-institutional cooperation will have to be improved. In areas where it does not have sufficient financial means of its own, the OSCE will need to link its activities to those of other institutions with greater resources. In the struggle against drug trafficking, organised crime and terrorism, it also lacks technical expertise and formal instruments. Closer coordination with donors and lenders, such as the international

**continued on p. 24**



**Dr. Robert M. Cutler** is Research Fellow at the Institute for European and Russian Studies at Carleton University, Canada. He was educated at MIT and the University of Michigan, where he earned a Ph.D. in Political Science. His work focuses on comparative architectures of European construction and Eurasian security, informed by the application of complexity science to questions of regional and global governance. Also known as an expert on European and Eurasian energy security, he is a member of the Executive Board of the Central Eurasian Studies Society. He has his own web site at [www.robertcutler.org](http://www.robertcutler.org).

# The OSCE's Parliamentary Diplomacy in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in a Comparative Perspective

By Robert M. Cutler

*In the newly networked context of world society, a form of diplomacy has proliferated that enables parliamentarians to tackle major problems that transcend national borders. It is called 'parliamentary diplomacy' and refers to institutional links of a traditional kind as well as those formed spontaneously and then institutionalised. Parliamentary diplomacy represents an important middle ground between the traditional level of interstate diplomacy and the new level of trans-national co-operation among grassroots non-governmental organisations. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA) belongs to a special category of parliamentary-diplomacy institutions called international parliamentary institutions.*

## The OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly

There are over two dozen international parliamentary institutions in the world today, but the OSCE PA is the only regionally based one that includes representatives from Europe, Asia and North America. Created pursuant to the November 1990 Charter of Paris and the April 1991 Madrid Declaration, it held its first formal session in Budapest in July 1992. (Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are not signatories of the Charter of Paris.) Of the OSCE PA's 317 deputies, six are allotted to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan each, and three each to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. OSCE PA deputies are selected by members of national parliaments from amongst their own numbers.

The OSCE PA's concerns in Central Asia and the South Caucasus fall mainly within the purview of its Standing Committee on Political Affairs and Security, and its Standing Committee on Democracy, Human Rights, and Humanitarian Questions. (Its

other Standing Committee is on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment.) The OSCE PA also maintains an Ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia; however, this committee has been unable to play a significant role due to the refusal of the Abkhazian side to enter into communication. Moreover, it has a Special Representative on the Nagorny-Karabakh Conflict, who works closely with the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-chairmanship, as well as with the Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representative on the Conflict Dealt With by the Minsk Group.

## Links in Central Asia and the Caucasus

The OSCE PA has institutionalised co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation, in which Georgia and Azerbaijan participate, and it works together with the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS, in which all eight Central Asian and South Caucasus countries participate, with the exception of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Meetings and

occasional seminars organised by the OSCE PA have included 'Electoral Legislation in Georgia' (Tbilisi, July 1995), 'Regional Security and Political, Economic, Social and Humanitarian Issues in Central Asia and the Caucasus' (Tashkent, September 1997) and 'Conflict Resolution and Democratic Development in the Caucasus' (Tbilisi, October 1998). The OSCE PA sends parliamentarians to OSCE field offices to support and observe the work carried out there by the OSCE staff. Since 2001, such field visits have been conducted to Uzbekistan (April 2002), Armenia (May 2002), Georgia (May 2003), Azerbaijan (November 2002) and Kyrgyzstan (December 2002).

In June 2003, the OSCE PA sponsored, in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme, a Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum (TAPF) held in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This forum was attended by delegations from about half of all OSCE members, including all from Central Asia except Turkmenistan, but only



Azerbaijan from the South Caucasus. Working with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE PA has regularly sent election monitoring teams throughout the region, most recently to Georgia. Perhaps most interestingly, the OSCE PA has partnered with the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in a 'Parliamentary Troika' for better coordination and strengthening of various international parliamentary projects. However, at present, none of the 'troika' projects concerns Central Asia or the South Caucasus.

The OSCE PA's experience in Central Asia and the South Caucasus illustrates how international parliamentary assemblies can introduce national elites from countries not yet fully democratised to ranges of views and perspectives, particularly from democratic oppositions in other regimes. International parliamentary institutions in general represent the confluence of two fundamental contemporary trends: democratisation and trans-nationalisation. These two trends come together in the phenomenon of trans-governmentalism, which is characterised by the existence of multiple channels of contact amongst governmental bureaucracies and other administrative units from different states. Today the phenomenon is so widespread as to form intensive networks that sometimes challenge the priorities established by national political executives. International parliamentary institutions such as the OSCE PA are developing into an important societal mechanism for overseeing traditional executive-based diplomacy. They also establish ongoing trans-national

relationships that restrain old power politics where civil society and NGOs are underdeveloped and politically constrained, thus preparing a middle ground for interstate co-operation.

### **The status of OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly**

In terms of institutional development of rights and responsibilities, the OSCE PA has reached approximately the stage achieved by the European Parliament within the European Union a third of a century ago. Indeed, given the Assembly's formalised high-level working

the PA Standing Committee (composed of Heads of National Delegations to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the three General Committees) on the draft budget and so gave the Assembly the chance to comment on it.

### **An island of its own**

Nevertheless, in the OSCE's own organigram, the Assembly is an island institution unconnected with any others in any degree of responsibility or even with respect to the provision of support – even



relationships with other OSCE institutions, it is perhaps slightly more advanced than the European Parliament was back then: with the important exception of budgetary prerogatives. Although the OSCE PA's own budget is generally independent of the organisation, and the Assembly may take unilateral and independent initiatives, it nevertheless gained a role in the consideration of the OSCE budget only in 2002. In that year, for the first time, the OSCE Secretary General briefed

though, as noted above, the OSCE PA works together with other OSCE institutions such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the administration of the Minsk Group. Despite high-level and regular working relations with other OSCE bodies, the Assembly appears to have no power of review over them; it has perhaps neither the budget nor the human resources to do any of that, but such activities are regular undertakings of national parliaments.

The Uzbekistani exclave Shakhmardan in Kyrgyzstan. *Photo by I. Overland*



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Svante Cornell was *NIASnytt* Guest Editor for "Central Asia One Year After" (3/2002).

# NATO after Enlargement: PFP Shifts Emphasis to Central Asia and the Caucasus

By Svante Cornell

*The enlargement of NATO in the spring 2004 and the new geopolitical reality are prompting the organisation to refocus its energies. The geographic focus of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme (PFP) is clearly shifting eastward as most countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where much of the programme activities were previously concentrated, have become NATO members. Following its notable success in fostering military reform and cooperation, PFP is now seen as an instrument with great potential for similar success also in areas where it has been involved either with lesser intensity or not at all. This means increasing assets are now available for programmes in the western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.*

## NATO into Soviet territory

The second expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe brought the organisation into the territory of the former Soviet Union, through the accession of the three Baltic states. Moreover, by extending into Bulgaria and Romania, NATO moved into the Black Sea area even more forcefully than Turkey's long-standing membership had already implied. This brought the organisation still closer to the South Caucasus. Enlargement also meant the inclusion of states with significantly greater interest in the security of the South Caucasus and Central Asia. As a result, NATO's emphasis has clearly begun shifting to these regions.

## NATO's mission in Central Asia

The shift in emphasis is also related to the Alliance responding to ever-greater security interests in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the wider Middle East. NATO member states are now deeply committed militarily in both Afghanistan and Iraq, generating

greater interest in the wider Middle Eastern area. They have also operated military bases in Central Asia crucial to the campaign in Afghanistan. As an organisation, NATO is in charge of the peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan. If Balkan operations in the mid-to-late 1990s were NATO's first out-of-area operations, Afghanistan stands out by its distance from NATO member countries. As Stephen Blank has noted, 'NATO is undergoing a profound transformation into an organization whose main missions are collective security and crisis management and whose main centre of activity is increasingly located in the Muslim world.' As such, plans exist to extend the Partnership for Peace to several countries in North Africa, possibly even Qatar.

Among NATO members, the United States defence analysis community was the first to identify several facts: firstly, that the South Caucasus and Central Asia form an intimate part of the arc of instability stretching from North Africa to Southeast Asia, which the USA has identified as

a most likely source of threats in the foreseeable future. These states, although fragile, are still stable and led by friendly governments. The six Muslim states of the region form the part of the Islamic world where anti-Americanism arguably has the weakest following. Secondly, on a more practical level, the South Caucasus and Central Asia have actually functioned as springboards for US and coalition military operations, and may continue to do so in future contingencies. Both the South Caucasus and Central Asia were crucial to the allied military campaign in Afghanistan. Central Asian states, especially Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and to a lesser extent Tajikistan, provided bases which proved crucial for the military campaign and the successful overthrow of the Taliban regime.

The South Caucasus, especially Azerbaijan and Georgia, provided a logistical corridor vital for coalition aircraft access to operational theatres further east. The importance of the South Caucasus has been further

boosted by the operation in Iraq, and by tensions with Iran.

In sum, immediate challenges such as the peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan, as well as more long-term strategic considerations of NATO member states, are making Central Asia and the South Caucasus increasingly important areas of concern for NATO.

### **The implications of NATO's new role**

What, then, does an increasing NATO role in this part of the world mean? First, it is important to note that this is unlikely to entail NATO membership. Some states may eventually qualify for membership, but all have a long road of political and military reform ahead of them before that goal can be accomplished. Only Azerbaijan and Georgia have voiced aspirations of joining the alliance, and both have submitted Individual Partnership Action Plans, as has Uzbekistan. For the South Caucasus, deeper reform and positive moves toward democratic development and civilian control over armed forces could bring the regional states that so desire to the stage of Membership Action Plans in the next few years, a status that Albania and Macedonia already have. Many primarily European NATO members are not interested in expansion into the South Caucasus, however. If the South Caucasus to many seems too distant, the prospect of Central Asian states gaining membership in NATO is surely more remote.

The crucial point of NATO is not an issue of membership or no membership. To the countries of the region, NATO programmes of a wide variety serve to transform, over time, the overall regional security

picture – with or without membership. PfP is building political and military bridges between member countries, between NATO members and non-members, but also among non-members. This in itself increases security in these regions. Moreover, it accelerates military reform, while simultaneously having a positive effect in general on political development and accountability. Most importantly, through training programmes and participation in peacekeeping missions and exercises, PfP is helping to foster a new generation of military officers whose thinking differs markedly from the Soviet military mentality of their predecessors.

NATO is evolving as its composition, its activities, and the interests of its member states are all in flux. From having been a defence pact, NATO has gradually turned into a security provider in Europe and its neighbourhood. Where political and economic bodies do not venture, NATO has shown a willingness and a capacity to engage countries and regions important to European security and make a difference in the regional security picture of these states. NATO's move into Central Asia and the South Caucasus is likely to further the security and stability of these regions – perhaps most obviously so in the South Caucasus, where a considerable security deficit has persisted.

### **Challenges to NATO**

Two main challenges to NATO's success in Central Asia and the South Caucasus are its relations with Russia, and the internal debates among member states. Russia's knee-jerk reactions to increasing NATO activities in its self-proclaimed 'Near Abroad' are zero-sum: to most Russian actors, NATO activities of any

type are simply against Russia's interests. This is clearly the case with Russian perceptions of NATO activities in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. NATO's mission in this context is to drive home the point that its activities are not directed against anyone; furthermore, that by increasing regional security in these regions, NATO's programmes actually increase rather than decrease Russia's security. With the dominance of power ministries over Russian foreign and security policy-making, this point is unlikely to be accepted easily in Moscow. Nevertheless, Moscow's opposition should not be taken as an obstacle to NATO's efforts to increase regional security.

Secondly, NATO member countries have differing views of the alliance's role, and specifically on its out-of-area ventures. The USA is clearly far more positive toward NATO expansion into the South Caucasus than are most European powers. Whether European states will gradually see the need for a greater engagement of the South Caucasus is uncertain; nevertheless, the US lead is likely to be followed by a number of NATO members, most obviously its new member states. Internal debates over NATO's role may for some time mitigate the alliance's effectiveness in these regions. More than anything else, it is the state of transatlantic relations that will determine the effectiveness of NATO, also in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

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# ‘Compare Us with Poland, not Turkmenistan’: the Regional Approach is Hindering Democratisation in Kyrgyzstan

By Edil Baisalov

*Since the mid-1990s, Kyrgyzstan has declined from an island of democracy in Central Asia to a country with a poor human rights record. Many factors have contributed to the continuing contraction of space for opposition, free journalism and human rights NGOs. The so-called ‘regional approach’ taken by such multilateral institutions as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the UN, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in their dealings with Central Asia exacerbates the situation. Despite a trail of unfair elections, massive violations of human rights, widespread corruption and its clearly authoritarian government, Kyrgyzstan continues to be perceived and praised as an island of democracy – because in the eyes of Western countries and international organisations, the Kyrgyz Republic is still ‘better’ than its neighbours.*

## Wrong benchmark

Comparing neighbours with each other (Turkmenistan, with its absurd personal cult of Turkmenbashi, seems to be the favourite) and not against the benchmarks set in international treaties is a key reason why the multilaterals are failing to promote democracy in Kyrgyzstan and elsewhere in the region.

By employing the regional approach, the multilaterals have failed to take into account the unique characteristics of each of the five Central Asian countries. How meaningful is it to compare the small, mountainous republic of Kyrgyzstan, which has a population of less than five million, with its neighbours? Uzbekistan has a population of over 16 million, and several thousand political prisoners. As the most populous and geographically most central of the Central Asian republics, Uzbekistan has tried to assume a leadership role in the region, but it is also plagued by tensions between its authoritarian regime and a strong Islamist movement.

Tajikistan, which shares a 1,200-kilometre border with Afghanistan, was the poorest republic in the Soviet Union and remains the poorest post-Soviet republic today. From 1992 to 1997, it was ravaged by a brutal civil war between warlords who supported Islamists, former communists or democratic forces, and still has not yet fully recovered. Kazakhstan is the largest of the Central Asian states: with a surface area of 2.7 million square kilometres it corresponds roughly to the size of Western Europe. Thanks to its rich natural resources, Kazakhstan is also becoming an important player in the geopolitics of energy. Thus, each of these states has a different starting point and operates under different conditions.

## Akaev – better than his neighbours?

Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev has expressly pledged to respect human rights and build a modern society. From the outset, he has understood that the main

attraction that Kyrgyzstan can offer the outside world is its openness and readiness to cooperate. Kyrgyzstan is particularly sensitive to international criticism because it is heavily dependent on international loans and aid. Among other things, the small republic owes the World Bank USD 523 million and the Asian Development Bank USD 378 million.

Just like its neighbours, Kyrgyzstan can get away with holding elections and referenda that are neither free nor fair. Opposition leaders and dissidents continue to be jailed. Independent media outlets are frequently closed – perhaps not openly as in Uzbekistan, but through bogus judicial processes. Nevertheless, many multilateral organisations and some Western countries see Kyrgyzstan as a state that should actually be promoted as a role model for the whole region. Consequently, the leverage that the international community has in Kyrgyzstan is not being



One of the many Central Asian mountain rivers. *Photo by I. Øverland*

used effectively. Kyrgyzstan has realised that it must only be better than the rest of Central Asian states by just one inch – that will be enough to score a victory in this league. There is no talk about the country's potential, only its relative standing compared with the neighbours.

#### **Multilaterals must stand firm**

The OSCE and the United Nations Development Programme are increasingly perceived in the region with distrust and disappointment because they have fallen short of

their declared goals and become victims of manipulation by national host governments. For example, President Akaev succeeded in persuading the OSCE to open the so-called OSCE Academy in Bishkek in 2003. A few months later, at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, he called for a UNESCO University to be established in Kyrgyzstan. This sort of initiative, which never fails to find support in multilateral institutions, helps the Kyrgyz government to downplay such real issues as the need to respect freedom of speech.

The regional approach clearly manifested during the meetings of visiting missions with local civil society institutions increasingly causes frustration and resentment. Recently, the permanent representatives of Norway, Canada, Slovenia, Portugal and Belgium to the OSCE toured Central Asia. In Bishkek they spoke about how the situation in Kyrgyzstan is much better than in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In response they got angry questions from local journalists: 'why don't you compare us with Poland or Portugal?'

Multilaterals can and should take a more assertive, insistent and proactive position vis-à-vis Kyrgyzstan when it comes to democracy. The regional 'one-basket' approach of multilateral organisations is counterproductive. It must be replaced by a one-by-one approach informed by deeper analysis on the part of the multilaterals. While the influence of regional factors and their complexity should always be taken into account, there is a need for greater understanding of the unique characteristics of each country, the motivations of their elites and their comparative advantages for democratic development.

Thirteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, every state has built its own history and chosen a path to the future. The international community must learn to work with each individual state on specific terms.



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# The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: between Political Ambition and Economic Pragmatism

By Yuri Bossin

*The break-up of the Soviet Union spurred an avalanche of integration initiatives for maintaining vital economic ties and facilitating policy coordination among the former Soviet republics. These new states joined numerous multilateral organisations, but the differing political systems, rates and pace of economic reforms and resource potentials of the member states have prevented these arrangements from achieving the desired level of cooperation thus far. The Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, established in 2001, looked like an exception with many strategic advantages.*

The participation of China and Russia make the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) the world's largest regional organisation in terms of its surface area, which exceeds 30 million square kilometres, and its combined population of nearly 1.5 billion people – one fourth of the Earth's population – as well as considerable military strength. Rapid industrial growth in China coupled with Russia's rich mineral resource base has provided the alliance with great economic power. The sensitive geographic location of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan contributes to the SCO's ability to control the direction of Central Eurasia's development. The magnitude of these factors, however, brings about not only opportunities but perils as well, and it is still too early to predict the SCO's prospects. In order to achieve the transition from a 'mechanism of summits' to a 'mechanism of co-operation', the SCO will need to balance its strategic component with a feasible economic and humanitarian agenda.

## Slowing down political ambitions

It is no secret that the formation of the SCO was fuelled by

Russian and Chinese desires to generate an alternative to the accelerating global dominance of the USA. Russia and China, however, have essentially different motivations for competing with America. There is a significant emotional element in the way Russians regard the US expansion. The enlargement of NATO in Europe as well as Washington's decision to abandon the ABM Treaty gave rise to grievances in parts of the Russian establishment. The campaign in Afghanistan and appearance of US military bases in Central Asia further prodded Russia. The deafness of the USA to Russian concerns and open demonstrations of US force created the painful impression that Russia had been sidelined from the international arena and was no longer considered a world superpower.

The Chinese interest in containing the global American influence is less emotional. China was mainly seeking an independent (from the US) security structure in the region in order to provide a reliable guarantee against possible moves from Washington that might jeopardise the prospect of Chinese reunification with

Taiwan. US pressure on North Korea as well as the 'rogue nation' rhetoric raised Chinese concerns over this highly charged issue. A multilateral international organisation seemed the most convenient mechanism through which China could boost its diplomatic power and manoeuvring capabilities.

For Central Asians, US attention to the region after the events of September 11 generated more opportunities than worries. Hopes of reaping an economic and political harvest from the new anti-terrorism campaign prompted Central Asian leaders to welcome the arrival of US troops. Expectations that US presence would ensure political stability and foster economic progress in Central Asia overnight, however, proved unfounded. And thus the SCO became an increasingly promising option.

Open anti-Americanism is a shaky foundation for consolidating the SCO, not least since all member states want to remain on good terms with the world's largest economic and military power. Whatever the Russian

motivation for endorsing the SCO, it was hardly intended to ruin the US–Russian relations that still top the Russian priority list. US support has been critically important for Russia in such international issues as joining the WTO, managing Russian debt, lifting customs barriers for Russian exports and dealing with nuclear waste. After an acute controversy, Russia acquiesced in the deployment of US troops in Central Asia and reacted with relative tolerance to the invasion of Iraq.

Chinese–US relations have enjoyed an increasing dynamism as well. The collapse of the Soviet Union logically upgraded China's international profile. But China was cautious about entering into a strategic contest with the USA, unwilling to sacrifice its economic momentum, which is heavily dependent on Western investment, technology and markets.

Central Asians' loyalty to the USA is explained by their fear of a reassertion of Russian power in the region and, on the other hand, Chinese economic and demographic expansion. The tremendous economic and military disparities with Russia and China force the Central Asian states to manoeuvre between the giants: therefore, they are attracted by the concept of a third force that could keep Russia down and China out of the region.

The first years of the SCO's existence showed that its ambitions of building a 'multi-polar world' and curbing US supremacy in isolation from economic and humanitarian contexts failed to propel it into the group of multilateral heavyweights. This has compelled the organisation to shift its focus to economic co-operation and security.

### **Increasing economic and security co-operation**

Since 2000, powerful economic factors have accelerated the Russian–Chinese rapprochement. The unprecedented jump in international oil prices created lucrative export opportunities for Russia, while China, with an expected 100 million automobiles by 2014, is becoming the world's second largest oil importer. Most Russian petroleum exports used to go to Europe. With the disruption of the Soviet Union, the traditional energy transportation network lost its integrity. Transit fees in Ukraine and the Baltic states were subject to constant bargaining, making Russian oil revenues vulnerable. Energy exports to China thus became an increasingly attractive option. In 2003, China committed USD 150 million to the construction of a 2,400-km pipeline to deliver half a million barrels of Siberian oil a day to China. Russian oil companies pushed a deal that promised USD 150 billion during a 25-year period. Another project envisaged the construction of inter-state electric transmission lines to optimise logistics for Russian energy exports to China. The importance of these plans extends beyond the direct benefits of growing trade between the countries, also providing abundant employment opportunities, revitalising under-populated areas in Siberia and the Russian Far East, and developing the Western parts of China.

Energy-related projects form much of the Chinese–Kazakh agenda as well. Expected to double its oil imports to 120 million tonnes per year by 2010, China regards Kazakhstan as a useful source of oil. In 2003, Chinese and Kazakh leaders

made considerable progress discussing such enterprises as the China–Alashankou oil route, a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to China across Kazakh territory and Caspian shelf drilling.

Security co-operation is becoming another effective catalyst for the SCO. It aims to eradicate 'terrorism, extremism and separatism' as well as to cope with the threats emanating from Afghanistan. The SCO member states have pledged to fight international terrorism – by this, primarily implying they will tame their internal ethnic and religious radicals. Russia, China and the Central Asian states have suffered formidable militant rebellions (except Kazakhstan, where there have not yet been violent clashes). Recognising such issues as a common concern of the SCO states is important for winning international approval of their crackdown on local radicals.

### **Identifying pitfalls**

Although economic and security cooperation may be powerful engines for the SCO, the challenges are also substantial. The organisation has put great effort into forging an economic programme, but most of it is concentrated on the energy sector. Various factors are likely to foil this strategy. The oil price may drop critically. The Chinese economy may enter a recession, relieving its hunger for energy. Japan is a strong energy-seeking competitor to China, and seems to have thwarted the Russian–Chinese deal by offering more money for the pipeline construction and financing long-term oil-field development and exploration in Russia as well. The trans-Kazakhstan gas transportation project is also questionable, given Turkmenistan's isolation and unpredictability. Setbacks in

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# Post-Soviet integration in the light of Kazakhstani–Russian relations

By Zharmukhamed Zardykhan

*The initial treaty that concluded the Soviet era was signed in Minsk on 8 December 1991 by the Slavic troika of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Two weeks later, at a summit in Kazakhstan’s capital Almaty, it was expanded to a ‘greater’ Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Collective Security Treaty, a fundamental pillar of the CIS aiming at military and political integration between the member states, was signed in 1992 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, by Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Armenia. Along with military and political matters, the Commonwealth stipulated various treaties and regulations on economic issues, including accords on free trade and a customs union (March 1992) and on strengthened economic integration (October 1994).*

## A Eurasian Union?

Upon the de facto failure of the CIS, Kazakhstan’s President Nazarbayev’s yearning for integration was channelled into his 1994 proposal for the so-called ‘Eurasian Union’, with supranational organs to coordinate economic, defence and foreign policy, and even with common citizenship. Nevertheless, this proposal, regarded by some as an effort by Nazarbayev to regain his former prestige as well as to buy extra time to establish stability in the country, was not welcomed by most CIS states. There followed several other attempts at integration within the CIS, such as the Eurasian Economic Community and the Common Economic Space, as well as some outside the CIS, such as the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation.

The eastward expansion of NATO and the EU into former Soviet territory, the ongoing war in Iraq and the US-led anti-terrorist coalition buttressed by a military base in Uzbekistan, and the participation of Ukrainian, Georgian and Kazakh troops in operations in Iraq, certainly frustrate, if not discredit, any neo-imperialist and nostalgic aspirations on the part of Russia.

Faced by both its failure to halt the war in Iraq and widespread displeasure with its oppressive and ineffective policy in Chechnya, Russia still seems far from restoring its former international standing. The Ukraine’s interest in the EU and Western support for Georgia’s ‘Rose Revolution’ may be interpreted as threatening Russian President Vladimir Putin’s persistent attempts at reintegration in post-Soviet space. The Eurasian Economic Community (EEC), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and the Common Economic Space (CES) have been called the backbone of real reintegration, but have been joined by only a few post-Soviet states. At the moment they seem to have little prospect for a long-term impact on the economy or politics of the region.

The Russo–American rivalry opens up for hard bargaining on the part of the leaders of the post-Soviet states, where the opponents to the leadership often have anti-Russian inclinations. Hence, as Mikhail Margelov argues, the strength of Russia’s position is determined by the stability of existing local regimes.

Russia is discontented with Kazakhstan’s increasingly pro-

Western orientation, especially in military and energy sectors, as well as with Kazakh policy towards Russians in Kazakhstan. Some authors see this pro-Western gesture of the Kazakh President as a sign of his misgivings about possible US attempts to repeat the ‘Georgian way’ of the replacement of power, while the image of the Kazakh leadership in the West has become damaged because of the notorious ‘Kazakhgate’ corruption trial scheduled to begin in mid-May in New York. James Giffen, a former advisor of Nazarbayev and the leading character in the ‘United States vs. James H. Giffen’ trial, is being prosecuted for arranging bribes of millions of dollars for the top Kazakh leadership, ‘lobbying’ in favour of some US oil companies, including Mobil.

## Premises of Post-Soviet Integration

The formation of the CIS is widely regarded as resulting from Russia’s desire to regain influence among the newly independent countries of the former USSR (cf. Olcott 1996: 44). This idea, however, fails to explain the ardent endeavours of the Central Asian states, especially Kazakhstan and its



President Nazarbayev, first to preserve the Soviet Union, and then to integrate under the umbrella of the CIS, which goes far beyond Russia's integrative attempts.

The initial pro-integration policy of Kazakhstan within the CIS seems to stem not only from allegiance to Russia, as has often been claimed. Equally important have been certain advantages for the Kazakh leadership. Being, like most of the Central Asia's presidents, a Moscow appointee during the Soviet era, Nazarbayev logically might have supposed that the collapse of the whole system would weaken his own legitimacy.

### **Military Integration**

Military integration among the former Soviet states is far from effective. Despite relative success in organisational and administrative matters, actual military integration seems unable to keep pace with the rhetoric.

Since 1 January 2004, the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation have benefited from preferred military-technical cooperation that is intended to provide these countries with the opportunity to obtain Russian armament for reduced prices and in some cases free of charge, along with free training of officers in Russian military academies. This attempt of Moscow to win allies in competition with the USA and NATO places a heavy burden on Russian shoulders, with about 50 per cent of the organisation's expenses covered by Russia.

The rumoured attempt of Kazakhstan to modernise its air defence system with the help of some NATO countries has been regarded by Russian officials as a breach of the CIS United Air Defence System set up in 1995. Moreover, Kazakhstan's persistent refusal to participate

in joint air defence manoeuvres at the Russian training ground at Ashuluk preferring its own range at Sary-Shagan, is interpreted as an attempt to quit this United Air Defence System. In addition, increasing Kazakh-US military cooperation, involving US military supplies and technical assistance, makes such Russian apprehensions seem justified.

As the only member of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation to join the Coalition troops in Iraq, Kazakhstan has plans for using US military assistance in developing the Kazakh naval forces in the oil-rich Caspian Sea. Kazakhstan's attempts to establish its own fleet to protect its Caspian oilfields as well as its cooperation with NATO's Southern European Fleet have been cited among the obstructions to Russo-Kazakh bilateral relations. Russian military misgivings also concern regular manoeuvres conducted in Ukraine and Kazakhstan together with US and NATO forces. Meanwhile, Russia has held manoeuvres in Volgograd Oblast involving Cossacks, paramilitary pro-Russian groups associated with Russian imperial past and disliked in Kazakhstan (*Nezavisimaya gazeta* 22 July 2003; 12 January 2004).

### **Economic Integration**

The Common Economic Space, another idea for integration initiated by Kazakhstan to replace the ineffective EEC, comprising Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, was envisioned to become the most realistic step towards post-Soviet integration. Not intended as a league of four states, 'but an ultimate aim of a long process of unification of norms and rules that regulate economic activities in the countries united by the main idea of integration', as

Kazakh Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev stated, the CES stipulates the establishment of a supranational body and includes ambitious designs for a common currency (*Nezavisimaya gazeta* 24 November 2003).

However, given the complexity of the existing system of taxes, subsidies and tariffs, as well as certain competing sectors and economic elites, putting the exhilarating rhetoric into practice is a challenging task even from a purely economic point of view. True, the CES is made up of four countries with relatively viable economies and has better chances than the EEC. On the other hand, Ukraine, a major player within the CIS, has recently had serious clashes with Russia over the island of Tuzla, and this dims the prospects of success.

The increasing involvement of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in economic matters, its organisational development through the establishment of an Executive Secretariat, as well as its real 'pro-integrative' and 'Eurasian' nature, including non-EEC and non-CAS countries, might become for the former Soviet Central Asian states a real forum beyond Soviet nostalgia. A Shanghai Forum with expanded functions would in turn counterbalance and hamper other integration initiatives, such as the CES, while the presence of China would prevent it from turning into a league under the aegis of Russia. The construction of the pipelines between western Kazakhstan and western China, agreed during an official visit of the Kazakhstani President to China in May 2004, might release Kazakhstan from its dependence upon Russian oil pipelines, the sole existing export route to Europe.

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# A Road to Central Asia through Luleå, Sweden

By **Gunnar Thorenfeldt**

*From his office in Luleå, Dr Murad Esenov runs the largest research network in the Nordic countries on Central Asia and the Caucasus.*

*If you go to the website of the Central Asia and Caucasus Centre and click on the heading 'About the Centre', you will find a diagram of the centre's network. Central Asia, the Caucasus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, the USA, Germany, Israel, Iran, China and Great Britain all have their own boxes in the diagram, and they are connected to the middle of the picture with arrows. Here, Murad Esenov has placed the small Northern-Swedish town of Luleå, with a population of 42,000.*

'Here we have access to both the Internet and regular mail. Luleå is a central place', says Dr Esenov on the phone from Sweden.

The Central Asia and the Caucasus Centre has over 25 collaborators spread across 15 countries. It is best known for its scholarly journal, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, published six times a year in both English and Russian. The English edition has a circulation of 1,000, while the Russian version of each issue is printed in over 3,000 copies.

The journal is distributed for free at research institutions, NGOs and universities in all former Soviet republics.

'It is not only the West that knows too little about these countries. They also don't know enough about the West. That's why it is important that the research circles get the opportunity to communicate with each other. Several Western journals cover the same region and topics and maintain high academic standards but since they are published only in English, nobody has heard about the journals in the countries they cover', says Dr Esenov, who thinks that his centre is the only one in the world that has co-workers in all post-Soviet republics.

'This provides for unique contact with local people. If

something happens, for example in Yerevan, we always have a researcher on the spot who can open the window and be at the centre of events. In addition, these people have the possibility of keeping up-to-date on what is going on in local research, and reading local scholarly publications', he says.

Murad Esenov came to Sweden as a political refugee in 1994. The following year he was granted asylum and was settled in Luleå by the Swedish immigration authorities. Within five years he became a Swedish citizen. Today he still lives in Luleå with his family.

'I am integrated into Swedish society', says Dr Esenov in fluent Swedish. He originally came from Turkmenistan, and wrote a doctoral dissertation with the title *Political Problems of International Systems and Global Development* at the Diplomatic Academy of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation. When not working as an academic, he has been a journalist. Among other things, he was a commentator for Radio Liberty for several years.

'Actually I wasn't part of the opposition in Turkmenistan. I was just an independent journalist, but for the regime that made no difference', he explains.

*Why couldn't you continue your work in Moscow?*

'They arrested me in Moscow and wanted to send me back to Turkmenistan. That's why I had to escape. Now I can travel freely to all of the former Soviet republics except Turkmenistan. The journal has to be smuggled into that country. But who takes care of this I am, of course, unable to tell you.'

*Do you think there will be a change of regime in Turkmenistan?*

'If you had asked me a few years ago, I probably would have been quite pessimistic. Now there is a certain hope. One can see a new generation growing forth – and the old one will die out with time. Several hundred Turkmen youth are currently studying in the West. There they will see the advantages of democracy, and hopefully they will take these ideas with them back home.'

Dr Esenov thinks that the reason for the lack of Western interest in human rights violations in Turkmenistan is economic interests.

'Of course the big multinational companies are not interested in focusing on human rights. There is too much money to be made. For example Mercedes, which is

heavily involved economically, has helped Turkmenistan's President Saparmurat Niyazov to translate his book into German. At the same time I should underline that the lack of international engagement is not the only problem. Most countries recognise the right of the Turkmen to democracy. There needs to be sufficient local initiative as well.'

*It has been said many times that democratisation in Central Asia has stagnated. Do you agree?*

'After the Soviet Union collapsed, I think many researchers had an unrealistic view of how fast democratisation would happen. As a result, they were disappointed after three years and condemned the entire democracy project. Now one is beginning to understand that the road to democracy is long. I think it will take twenty years before one sees full democracies in the region, perhaps even fifty years.'

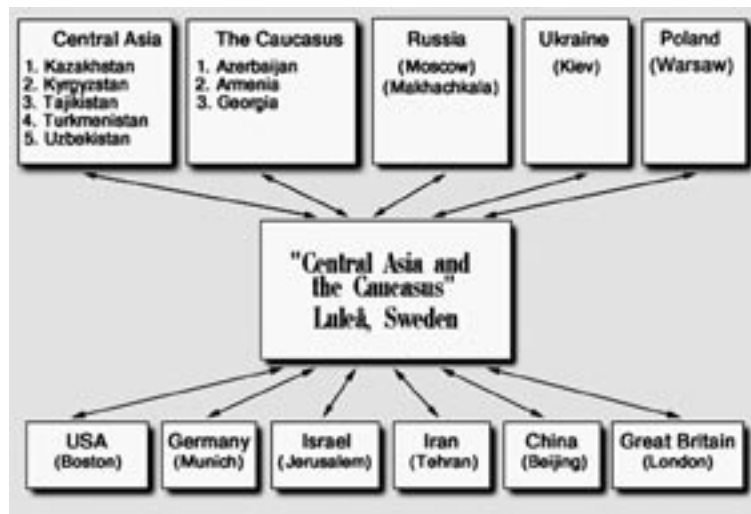
The Centre gets most of its support from the National Endowment for the Democracy and the MacArthur Foundation – both based in the USA.

'Without that support I would never have been able to do this', says Dr Esenov. He thinks the USA will play an important role in the region during the coming years.

'At the beginning of the 1990s, many thought that Turkey would play a dominant role but Turkey has neither the intellectual capacity nor the economic muscle to play such a role. The three main actors in the region will be the USA, the EU and Russia.'

*So Russia will maintain its influence?*

'Although they will lose some influence, I don't think



Central Asia and the Caucasus Centre in Luleå network diagram

they will lose all of it. Russia is too great a market for that to happen.'

*How will America's War on Terrorism affect the region?*

'That depends on the situation in the Arab countries and Afghanistan. The Taliban was very influential. After it fell, many extremist Islamist organisations vanished from the region. In this respect the War on Terrorism may have had a positive effect. At the same time, US policy has had some negative consequences. In particular, it has allowed local regimes to brand opposition parties as terrorists. But all in all I think the campaign against terrorism is positive', says Dr Esenov.

'We would like to improve our contact with Danish, Norwegian and Finnish researchers', he goes on to say. His centre has already arranged two conferences in cooperation with the Swedish Institute of International Affairs already. One conference was on the role of Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus; the other was about the development in Chechnya and the North Caucasus.

'My dream is to establish a joint Nordic centre, in order to work together better with Danish, Norwegian and Finnish researchers', he explains.

*Is that to be interpreted as an invitation?*

'Yes!'

The Central Asia and the Caucasus Centre for Social and Political Studies was registered in November 1998 in the Swedish town of Luleå. Dr. Murad Esenov is the founder and head of the centre, which continues the work of the IAC 'Central Asia', which existed until October 1998.

The centre primarily engages researchers from Central Asia and the Caucasus, but also from the states whose impact is most felt in the region. The Centre maintains direct contact with them through its offices in the respective countries.

The results of this research are presented in the *Central Asia and the Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies*, which is published by the Centre bimonthly (each issue contains about 170 pages) in parallel English and Russian versions.

Central Asia and the Caucasus has branches in all the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as the USA, the Russian Federation, Great Britain, Germany, China, Israel, Iran, Poland, Ukraine and Sweden. Its website is [www.ca-c.org](http://www.ca-c.org)

# NIAS's Contact Database for information and subscription services

In order to provide optimal services to our users and partners, NIAS maintains a Contact Database, which enables us to send you up-to-date and relevant information on contemporary Asia and the field of Asian studies. We now offer a number of services to our users and plan to expand our information services further with more area specific information. Present services include:

**NIAS Update:** NIAS's monthly electronic newsletter of Asian studies events in the Nordic countries and beyond. Subscribers to NIAS Update will also receive NIAS This Week, an occasional news bulletin about NIAS events.

The latest issue of NIAS Update is available online at <http://www.nias.ku.dk/activities/publications/update>

**NIASnytt - Asia Insights:** a quarterly with thematic articles on current Asia-related issues by both Nordic and international experts.

For more information on *NIASnytt*, and for access to issues available online, please visit: <http://www.nias.ku.dk/nytt>

**NIAS Press Book Catalogue:** biannual presentation of new and backlist titles published by NIAS Press

**NIAS Press Book Alerts:** electronic news on new and forthcoming books from NIAS Press

For more information on NIAS Press, please visit the NIAS Press website at <http://www.niaspress.dk>

**New Books** in the NIAS Library and Information Centre, NIAS LINC: electronic list of new acquisitions in the library, sorted by region and country and issued more than 50 times a year.

For more information on NIAS LINC's services please visit the website at <http://www.niaslinc.dk>

**NIAS SUPRA Database:** NIAS's Support Programme for Asian Studies is open to students residing in the Nordic countries, carrying out thesis work on an Asian topic within a MA or PhD university program. Services offered are: interlibrary loans, NIAS scholarships, information services, thesis advice, international research workshops-cum-training courses, publication of dissertations, discount on NIAS Press titles, NIASNytt, SUPRA News.

For more information on SUPRA, please contact Erik Skaaning at [erik@nias.ku.dk](mailto:erik@nias.ku.dk) or visit <http://www.nias.ku.dk/activities/supra>.

**NIAS Curriculum Vitae Database:** NIAS wants to develop an up-to-date database of Asia researchers within all academic disciplines in the Nordic countries. (Researchers from elsewhere will also be welcome.) The purpose of the database will be to maintain up-to-date information on researchers interested in working with NIAS in collaborative research projects and research-based consultancy projects.

For more information on the CV Database, please contact Carol Richards at [carol.richards@nias.ku.dk](mailto:carol.richards@nias.ku.dk).



Erik Skaaning



Carol Richards

**To subscribe to the services** above you need to first register in NIAS' Contact Database, which you can do online at <http://www.nias.ku.dk/contact/contactdb.htm>. When you register in the database you can also choose geographical and/or subject areas of interest to you. This information is optional, but as it is this information which will enable us to provide you with more area specific information, we would recommend that you indicate your preferences here. It is possible to choose max. 4 geographical areas and 4 subject areas.

As a subscriber of *NIASnytt* your basic address information has automatically been registered in the database. To view and update your details, subscribe to more services and/or provide us with details on your specific areas of interest, you will need your password and login. You can obtain these by sending an e-mail to Carol Richards at [carol.richards@nias.ku.dk](mailto:carol.richards@nias.ku.dk).

For more information on NIAS's Contact Database and related services, please visit <http://www.nias.ku.dk/contact/contactdb.htm>

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The participants in the meeting on June 10 discussed the new priorities of NIAS and a number of critical issues relating to purpose, activities, services, organization and financial commitment of the potential members. The meeting was positive and constructive in identifying key opportunities and challenges in the proposed new venture. It was also made clear that, among the many ideas for new activities, a PhD school in Asian studies, new services to be developed by the NIAS Library and Information Centre (NIAS LINC) and services to PhD and Master students have high priority. These are areas where Nordic collaboration makes a lot of sense.

Expanding NIAS's resources to undertake research would remain a precondition for these initiatives to succeed. It was also made clear during the meeting that those joining the Nordic NIAS Council will have special access to resources and services while non-members will have

limited access. *Members come first!*

The next meeting in the group preparing the Nordic NIAS Council will be held at NIAS in late August, and by early September, a formal proposal will be made to the potential members of the Council for signing up to join the new NIAS.

In the midst of all this planning for the future, NIAS has been busy here and now maintaining a programme of activities during the first six months of 2004. The activities have included several important international conferences, such as 'Forging Partnership', which is part of an ongoing research project that is a true Asian-Nordic venture (<http://nias.ku.dk/fp/default>).

This issue of *NIASnytt* is about multilateral approaches in the efforts to develop Central Asia, especially the former Soviet republics. As a region with a number of newly independent countries trying to find their feet

in the new global order, Central Asia is increasingly in the eye of the international public, not least in Asia. This is not only about the tribulations of war-torn areas like Afghanistan and Chechnya. It is also about the wish to development of adequate democracy, governance and political institutions, both at national and regional levels. Interest has also centered on the potential role of the Central Asian countries in both the regional and global economies, not least with regard to their internal economic development and potential international access to their natural resources, especially oil reserves. Indra Øverland, a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, is our guest editor for this issue. We would like to thank him for taking on the assignment. *Enjoy your reading!*

Jørgen Delman  
Director

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# Web-publication of Chinese Storytelling

*The website of Chinese storytelling, *shuoshu*, located on [www.shuoshu.org](http://www.shuoshu.org), has recently been much developed and expanded into a web-publication. Since February 2004 the site presents information in English, Chinese and Danish. The text is by the author, with photographs by the late Jette Ross (1936–2001), and site design by Jens-Christian Sørensen, who is also the webmaster and actively engaged in further development of a research database on Chinese storytelling. Yu Jing is translator of the Chinese section.*

Under the entry **Chinese Storytelling** the English section provides a step-by-step introduction into the field, complete with illustrations, photos, audio- and video-clippings from live performances. Special focus is on the rich tradition of Yangzhou storytelling as a local dialectal genre, *Yangzhou pinghua*. The following areas are treated in detail: 1) **Oral and written literature** (six steps); 2) **Professional storytelling** (seven steps); 3) **History and milieu** (fifteen steps); 4) **Masters and disciples** (sixteen steps); 5) **Elements of performance** (twelve steps); 6) **Sagas of storytelling** (four steps with sub-steps).

The website also brings information about projects on Chinese storytelling going on not only at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) but also elsewhere. In addition, the site offers a **Bibliography** of studies on Chinese performance arts, *shuochang*, including storytelling and other prosimetric genres involving chant and/or narration. Further information includes: **Publications** on Chinese storytelling and related topics by the initiators of the website, as well as information on **Conferences**, and announcements for the **Yangzhou Club** (a cross-disciplinary network initiated by Lucie Olivova, Charles University, Prague and the author).

At present the Chinese and Danish sections contain the same main entries as the English section, but the information available under the main entry of Chinese Storytelling (in Chinese and Danish) is of a more summary character. For a full display of video-clippings, illustrations, photos and textual explanations the reader is referred to the English section.

The Norwegian Research Council, Cultural Program 2004–2007, supports the ongoing elaboration of a research database on Chinese storytelling, which will in due time be accessible on [www.shuoshu.org](http://www.shuoshu.org). This is part of the research project: 'Traditional Oral Culture in the Modern Media World of Asia – The Case of Chinese Storytelling'.

Vibeke Børdahl

e-mail: [Vibeke@nias.ku.dk](mailto:Vibeke@nias.ku.dk)



The late Yangzhou storyteller **Dai Buzhang** (1925–2003), performing from *Journey to the West of the Dai School*, NIAS, Copenhagen, 21 August 1996.

From 2001 to 2003 he participated in the project 'Large-scale Registration of Chinese Storytelling', where storytellers from four representative schools of Yangzhou storytelling had their full-length repertoires video-filmed for research. The project is currently being published by NIAS Press in the monograph-with-catalogue *Four Masters of Chinese Storytelling*, a bilingual (English and Chinese) edition.

*Photo by Jette Ross.*

# NIAS Grants

## *Guest Researcher Scholarships for Nordic Scholars*

This type of scholarship is designed for senior researchers and doctoral candidates based in the Nordic countries. It offers researchers an opportunity to work at NIAS as an affiliated researcher for 2 or 4 weeks. A scholarship includes inexpensive travel to and from Copenhagen and accommodation with full board in a NIAS room at Nordisk Kollegium. The guest researcher enjoys full access to the Institute's library services and research tools, computer facilities, contact networks and scholarly environment. Stays are arranged subject to a time schedule administered by NIAS. The application form is available at <http://www.nias.ku.dk/activities/supra/NIASNordicGuestResearcherSch.doc>

## *Contact Scholarships for Nordic Graduate Students*

These scholarships are designed to make NIAS's library and other resources accessible to graduate students in the Nordic countries. A scholarship covers inexpensive travel to and from Copenhagen and accommodation with full board in a NIAS room at Nordisk Kollegium for a period of two weeks. Stays are arranged subject to a time schedule administered by NIAS. The application form is available at <http://www.nias.ku.dk/activities/supra/NIASContactScholarshipsAppli.doc>

## *Øresund Scholarships*

Researchers and students from Lund and Roskilde universities are invited to apply for NIAS's 'Øresund Scholarships'. The candidate will be seated in the library's reading room and will be offered the same extended library services as the regular holders of contact scholarships. Only transport costs are covered by the scholarship. Accommodation costs and incidental expenses are not covered. Stays are arranged subject to a time schedule administered by NIAS. Find the application form at <http://www.nias.ku.dk/activities/supra/NIASresundScholarshipAppliac.doc>

### **Application Deadline**

**Monday 13 September 2004 for scholarships during the periods October–December 2004 and January–March 2005.**

Further information on NIAS's scholarship programme on the web: <http://www.nias.ku.dk/activities/supra/scholarships.htm#students>.

### **continued from p. 7**

financial institutions, the EU and UN institutions like UNDCCP (UN Drug Control and Crime Prevention) could provide better leverage. The OSCE is involved with all these organisations and is in a good position to act as a political catalyst. Thanks to its concept of comprehensive security, it can help improve the reception given to organisations offering technical aid, and to other specialised agencies.

### **continued from p. 17**

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# Staff News

**Jan Kanne Petersen**, who recently completed his MA thesis on *Local Perceptions of Tradition and Modernity in Bali* at the University of Aarhus, will be working at NIAS until June 2005 as a Research Assistant in collaboration with Timo Kivimäki on the latter's Terrorism project. He will also assist NIAS LINC with setting up the 'grey literature' database.



**Camilla Tenna Sørensen**, who recently completed her MA-thesis on the Security Situation in Northeast Asia at the University of Aarhus, has been granted a 'studie-plads' at NIAS in order to prepare a PhD proposal; this will be a further elaboration of her MA-thesis with a focus on the developments in the security situation in the Taiwan Strait.



**Mads Holst Jensen**, who in 2003 completed his Ph.D.-thesis on 'Public Enemy or Vanguard of the Revolution? The Social Construction of the Chinese *Liurang* (Hooligan)', rejoined the NIAS Researcher group on 1 May. He will be carrying out a research project on the symbolic role of business people with regard to political, social and cultural changes in reform China. The three-year project is funded by The Carlsberg Foundation.

# Recent Visitors



On behalf of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs NIAS hosted a visit to Copenhagen of Mr. **Madhav Kumar Nepal**, General Secretary of the Nepalese Communist Party. An extensive program including several arrangements at NIAS, was arranged for Mr. Nepal, who stayed in Copenhagen on 27 February – 3 March. Mr. Nepal's visit is sponsored by "Demokratifonden". Also on the photo are Timo Kivimäki and Camilla Tenna Sørensen, NIAS



A public service sector study group from the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM) visited Denmark and Finland 22 May–3 June. CIEM is a research institute under the central Vietnamese Ministry of Planning and Investment. Since May 2001, CIEM has participated in a collaborative research project with NIAS. The CIEM–NIAS project is supported financially by the Danish Foreign Ministry (Danida). The study tour was part of the project, and the objectives were to study the experiences of Denmark and Finland in reforming the public service sector. An extensive program including meetings with ministries, research institutes and private companies, was arranged for the group.

*From the left:* **Mr Nguyen Thanh Hai**, the Vietnamese Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI); **Mrs Nguyen Thi Tue Anh**, researcher at CIEM, **Mr Nguyen Xuan Trinh**, vice-president of CIEM, **Mrs Vu Xuan Nguyet Hong**, head of the economic management science department at CIEM. *Behind:* Camilla Tenna Sørensen and Jørgen Delman, NIAS

# Asia–Europe Roundtable

*The Asia–Europe Roundtable under the ASEM Meeting held an expert meeting on June 7, 2004 in Singapore. The writer was invited in his personal capacity. The expert meeting was held to prepare the agenda for the next Asia–Europe Roundtable in May 2005 in Berlin.*

The main topic for the Berlin Roundtable will relate to problems of humanitarian intervention. Issues such as the conceptual and normative foundations of interventions will be looked at: what is a crisis,

Europe understanding on conflict prevention and interventions in humanitarian crises.

The Asia–Europe Roundtable is a forum of unofficial Asia–Europe dialogue on security

summit meetings every third year, and foreign minister level meetings, inter-bureaucracy meetings and meetings of civil society representatives with varying intervals. ASEM member states are members of the EU from Europe, and Brunei, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam from Asia.

All these countries have ASEM contact persons in their foreign ministries as well as other relevant ministries, and ASEF reports the Asia–Europe Roundtable discussions to these contact persons of the ASEM member countries. Furthermore, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA) both report the roundtable developments to their governments (Germany and Singapore).

Timo Kivimäki, Senior Researcher, NIAS



what kind of a crisis would warrant an intervention. Furthermore, mechanisms of crisis prevention, possible actors in interventions will be focused and especially the role of the civil society will be explored. The Berlin Roundtable will aim at developing a common Asia–

issues. Its initiators are the ASEF (Asia–Europe Foundation), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA). ASEF is a foundation established by ASEM, a high level cooperation forum for ASEAN and EU countries, which holds

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## continued from p. 15

Russia and Central Asia have made China turn to other resource-rich countries like Australia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Angola and Gabon.

The most evident shortcoming of the SCO's economic agenda is that it lacks non-energy items. Oil and gas-related plans mostly bypass Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, diminishing the value of the SCO's multilateralism. The all-Eurasian 'Silk Road' transportation route and the free

trade zone planned for 2020 are expected to intensify the trade among the SCO states, but the realisation of these projects has only been vaguely outlined.

Of the internal threats, the most critical is the potential for Sino–Russian dissent over territorial disputes, undocumented migrants and unregistered trade. Kazakh–Uzbek relations present another danger of friction, as both countries have been jockeying for leadership in post-Soviet

Central Asia.

The SCO should tread carefully in its bid to strengthen its security framework, avoiding crossing the delicate borderline between crushing terrorists and violating the rights of ethnic and religious minorities. Using the SCO mechanism to justify uprooting local dissident movements may leave the organisation tarnished and internationally ostracised.



The project for the Finnish Foreign Ministry is lead by **Timo Kivimäki** (*right*) of NIAS. The other researchers of the project are Dr. **Hassan Gubara Said**, Ms. **Minna Saarnivaara** and Ms. **Heidi Huuhtanen**. Furthermore, the project has interviewers in Indonesia, Palestine, Israel, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Peru and the Philippines. The project produced a progress report in January, and a final report is due by the end of July 2004.

## NIAS Research on Terrorism

*NIAS research on Terrorism continues after the production of a report to the Danish Foreign Ministry in August 2003 (the report can be downloaded from [http://www.um.dk/upload/forside/development\\_cooperation\\_to\\_prevent\\_terrorism.pdf](http://www.um.dk/upload/forside/development_cooperation_to_prevent_terrorism.pdf)).*

In addition to a number of scholarly publications and lectures, in 2004 NIAS conducts a thematic assessment on “Socio-economic factors in the recruitment for terrorism”. In addition to Timo Kivimäki (Team Leader), Ruben Thorning and Anja Møller Rasmussen from NIAS, the project team includes Dr. Rohan Gunaratna (Nanyang Technological University), Dr. Andrew Tan (Nanyang Technological University), Dr. Peter Chalk (Rand

Corporation). The project is commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it is eventually meant to play into ongoing EU discussions.

Furthermore, Kivimäki continues, until 31.7. 2004, to lead the Finnish Foreign Ministry project on «Islam, terrorism and the North-South interaction in the post-911 World Order». The project has produced a progress report in January 2004, and will draft a policy background paper by the end of July 2004.

NIAS will also participate in a Finnish Foreign Ministry’s Policy Development Project: «New Security Threats and Development Challenges and Responses». In July 2004, Kivimäki will write in the project a chapter on terrorism, and together with the team leader of the project, Olli Ruohomäki, a chapter on small weapons. The Project Report will be published by the ministry late in 2004 or early 2005.

# Recent Visitors



At a lunch arrangement on 10 March, **H.E. Harsh Bhasin**, Ambassador of India to Denmark, gave a talk on 'Recent Developments in the Indian Sub-continent', focusing on ongoing developments in the relationship between India and Pakistan and the prospects for a lasting peace in a foreseeable future.



**Ville Juhani Vilen**, University of Turku, had a Contact Scholarship at the end of March. Ville's MA-thesis is on *Chinese Foreign Policy concerning Events in the South China Sea Region during the Period between 1988 and 2001*.



**Geir Sigurdsson**, University of Hawaii at Manoa, had a Guest Researcher Scholarship at the end of April. His Ph.D.-thesis is on *Learning and Li: The Confucian Process of Humanization through Ritual Propriety*.



**Johanna Lahdenperä**, University of Turku, holds a Contact Scholarship in April. She is writing an MA-thesis on *Green Beijing*.



*Four Indonesianists at NIAS. From right:*  
**Nyoman Sudira**, Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung, worked at NIAS through in April–July. He is carrying out a Ph.D. project on *Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanism. The Strengthening of Desa-Adat (Village Custom) in order to Accommodate the Conflict between Migrant and Indigenous People in Southern Bali*. He is collaborating with Timo Kivimäki in a project financed by EU's Asia-Link Programme.

**Rachid Boumashoul**, University of Tampere, held a Researcher Scholarship in March–April. He is carrying out a Ph.D.-project on *Religious Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Indonesia as a Case Study*.

**Gabriella Olofsson**, Uppsala University, had a Contact Scholarship in March–April. Her MA-thesis, successfully completed in June, is on *Societal Acceptance of International Terrorism in Indonesia*.

Also on the photo is **Budi Agostono** from the University of North Sumatra (see *NIASnytt* 1/2004, p. 28 for his project presentation).



Professor **Ronald S. Jenkins** from the Department of Theatre at Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, worked at NIAS on 26 April–28 May. Professor Jenkins recently returned from a month-long fieldwork trip to Bali, where he collected documentation of performances in Hindu temple ceremonies.



**Jessica Tea Diktonius**, University of Helsinki, held a Contact Scholarship in March. She is writing an MA-thesis on *Trade Relations between the European Union (EU) and Japan*.



**Andreas Gabriellsson**, Lund University, **Solveig Holmedal Ottesen**, University of Oslo, and **Siren Hope**, University of Tromsø, all visited NIAS in February March. Anders was Øresund stipendiat preparing his MA-thesis on *Us and Them: The Image of the Other and the Construction of Historical Memories in Filipino University Textbooks*. Solveig and Siren were Contact stipendiats. Solveig's MA thesis is on *Young Urban Women and Alcohol in Nepal*; Siren's MA thesis is on *Living a Real Life – Reality and Fiction in Tamil Social Life and Cinema*.



**Shantha Wanninayake** and **Shanti Wijesinghe**, both Göteborg University, held Contact Scholarships in the beginning of March. Shantha is carrying out a Ph.D. project on *Forced Migration and Internal Displacement in War Affected Areas in Sri Lanka*, and Shanti's Ph.D. project is on *Resettlement, Reconstruction and Health in North Eastern Province in Sri Lanka*. Also **Lars Eklund** Deputy Director of SASNET (Swedish South Asian Studies Network), Lund University was visiting NIAS.



**Reetta Koskenranta**, University of Tampere, **Cesilia Poppy Astrini**, Lund University, and **Kaisa Oksanen**, University of Jyväskylä visited NIAS in May. Reetta and Kaisa on a Contact Scholarship each, Cesilia on an Øresund Scholarship. Reetta's MA-thesis is on *Ownership in Quang Tri Rural Development Programme*, Cesilia's on *Comparative Study of Integration in EU and ASEAN* and Kaisa's on *Political Dialogue between the Government and the Civil Society in Hong Kong*.

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**Sachitra Kumari** and **Dhammika Herath**, both Göteborg University, held Guest Researcher Scholarships at the end of May. Dhammika Herath is carrying out a Ph.D.-project on 'The Impact of Civil Violence on Social Capital in a Conflict Ridden Society'. Sachitra Kumari is carrying out a Ph.D.-project on 'The Impact of Traumatic Environment on the Children of Conflict Affected Areas in Sri Lanka'.

# Analysing State Growth and Social Exclusion in Tibet

by Andrew Martin Fischer



**Andrew Martin Fischer** is a PhD candidate at the Development Studies Institute of the London School of Economics and does research and consultancy work on a contract basis for various individuals, NGOs, and institutes.

*For far too many years now the scholarly discourse on Tibet has been distorted by political considerations – for instance, that one is pro- or anti-Dalai Lama, etc. The visit to Copenhagen earlier this year by Andrew Fischer was thus something of a sensation in that – while critical of aspects of Beijing’s development strategy in its western provinces – what he said was framed in the language and methods of development economics. It is this approach that has allowed the LSE scholar to have fruitful discussions not only with western scholars but also those from China. And it was for these reasons, among others, that NIAS Press has agreed to publish Andrew Fischer’s small book, **State Growth and Social Exclusion in Tibet**, later this year. The author discusses some of the issues and thinking behind his book in this short article.*

The most pressing economic challenges facing the Tibetan areas of Western China relate to the marginalisation of the majority of Tibetans from rapid state-led growth. The spatial dimension – the urban-rural divide – plays an important role in this polarised dynamic. However, the urban-rural divide alone only partially explains differences with other Chinese regions, all of which generally exhibit strong spatial inequalities. This book therefore focuses on several further factors that determine the ethnically exclusionary character of current peripheral growth in the Tibetan areas. These include processes of urbanisation, immigration, employment and education as key factors underlying structural economic change. The study draws generally from the analytical framework of social exclusion and is based on extensive use of official Chinese statistics, focusing on the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Qinghai but with numerous comparisons to the other provinces of western China. A variety of qualitative insights are also taken from recent fieldwork and secondary sources. The macro focus of this investigation aims to complement the growing wealth of micro levels studies on Tibet produced from a variety of disciplines.

Much of the statistical analysis is based on using the TAR as a proxy for the other Tibetan

regions, given that this is the only provincial-level jurisdiction in China that is entirely made up of traditional Tibetan areas and where Tibetans are a large majority of the population. The experience of the TAR therefore exemplifies the dilemmas of polarisation and the undercurrents of exclusion within growth in the Tibetan areas of Western China.

In particular, policies in the TAR since the mid-1990s, and in particular since the advent of the *Western Development Strategy* in 2000, have stimulated some of the fastest GDP growth rates in Western China, entirely generated by large increases in external subsidies that dominate the local economy. In consequence, growth has been concentrated in administrative and related urban tertiary expansion or large-scale construction projects rather than locally integrated productive activities. This in turn tends to concentrate employment gains in high-skill and high-wage labour, thus biasing outside or educated labour over low-skill local labour. In absence of any significant industry, Han migrant labourers compete with the lower skilled Tibetan locals over residual opportunities in either construction or urban tertiary activities, creating a crowding out effect on limited urban economic opportunities precisely at a time when urbanisation is becoming an imperative for local Tibetans. The strategy of

subsidised rapid growth with open migration has therefore exacerbated urban-rural and intra-urban inequality to a degree not observed elsewhere in China, and generated increasingly higher hurdles for the rural and urban Tibetan poor to access and participate in the growing modern economy.

While many of these conclusions hold for the other Tibetan regions outside the TAR, the heightened misfit between state-led development strategies and the local productive economy appears to be fairly unique to the TAR, possibly relating to the dominance of military and security interests in the governance of this particular autonomous region. In contrast, Qinghai presents a much different model at the provincial level, one that is more rooted in the productive sectors and thus more likely to be able to sustain current growth rates. Nonetheless, most of these developments in Qinghai are spatially concentrated in the regions where the Han and Muslims predominate. Within the Tibetan regions of the province, as well as the Tibetan regions of Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan, it is likely that similar experiences of exclusionary growth mirror the patterns observed in the TAR, albeit with less intensive subsidisation, and inversely, more space for local policy innovation.



**State Growth and Social Exclusion in Tibet**  
*Challenges of Recent Economic Growth*  
by Andrew Martin Fischer  
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