

## Lecture 12:

### Avenues Out of Crisis: Global Imperatives for Eurasia Transition

Topics: -

1. *Making Sensible Statements About Eurasian Futures*
2. *International Problems Caused by Failures in Eurasian Globalisation*
3. *Eurasian Transitional Processes*
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#### 1. Making Sensible Statements About Eurasian Futures

When people make **meaningful statements about the future**, this can be based on a wide range of factors. In general, such statements, when they are not merely guessing, tend to be based on **one or more of the following patterns, which we can apply to aspects of the 'Eurasia process'** (see Dawisha & Parrott 1994) : -

- A. **A knowledge of the history of a nation, region or culture, and long term trends, which might impact upon change.** These factors are **important where culture and identity come into play**. For example, any analysis of Russian efforts to be a 'great European nation' since the 17th century will suggest that it will not abandon such a status readily in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and that it may seek to use 'eastern resources' to balance 'western power' (see lectures 1-2). Although history never repeats itself exactly, the analysis of certain events in the past does allow us to learn about some of the sociological factors which correlate with crucial changes in national development and international affairs. In general, this approach can be summarised as **drawing the bow**, i.e. the further back you draw the bow and the more you know more about the past (an idea developed by Buckminster Fuller), the longer the trends of transformation you might be able to pick up, e.g. climatic, cultural and civilisation trends. These insights were also developed through the French Annales School of history, which analyse a wide range of economic and social data to develop insight about **long-term cycles of development** (see for example Clayton 2004; McNeill 2001; Braudel 1986). For example, some would see the shift of economic power back to East Asia simply as a return to the status quo which was disturbed by unusual European technological, industrial and military growth during the 18th-19th centuries. It is this recognition that partly explains strong European engagement in the ASEM process (Asia-Europe Meetings of 1996-2006; see Dent 2001), i.e. the recognition that regardless of short-term crises, East Asian economies will continue to expand. Likewise, the creation of a **'New Silk Road'** linking all of Central Asia to East Asia could greatly improve the economic viability of the entire region and create a new shift of power if combined with European and East Asian collaborative initiatives. The key here is **engagement, even with potential**

**competitors**, to ensure that both political influence and a certain sharing of economic growth occurs. As we have seen, **Russia has sought to engage a strong Eurasian energy policy** in relation to supplying both western Europe and Turkey with gas on the one hand, as well as energy exports to Japan and China as well via new pipeline initiatives through 2004-2007 (see weeks 1-2). In March 2006 **major economic agreements were signed during President's Putin visit to China**, including two major energy deals: -

China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), the country's biggest energy firm, and Russian gas giant Gazprom signed a contract for the building of two gas pipelines reportedly costing up to US\$10 billion.

Gazprom Chief Executive Alexei Miller was quoted as saying that one of the pipelines would deliver gas from west Siberia and the other from Russia's Far East; and each of the pipelines would be capable of delivering 30 to 40 billion cubic metres of gas each year.

...  
Putin said Russia is looking forward to enhanced co-operation in transportation, banking, and space exploration; and increased exports of mechanical and electrical products.

He said the current trade momentum would make it easier to meet the goal of US\$60-80 billion in bilateral trade volume by 2010. (Qin 2006)

On this basis it has been suggested that **Russia has become more assertive in its foreign policy** through 2005-2007, based on its economic power, based on weaknesses or gaps in Western policy (e.g. in the Middle East), and via a renewed Eurasian presence (Nicoll 2006, p186).

**B. A detailed knowledge of current trends**, economic and resource factors, political leadership and its ideology, which gives you a sense of the conditions affecting a country or region, and the type of **decisions** that might affect it in the near future. This is the approach used by most political, international relations, and economic policy analysis. Here a wide range of indicators, including economic and institutional factors, can often be combined with some sort of **general model** to predict likely behaviour within a political or social system in the near future. This can be based both on **an analysis of political culture and patterns of decision-making**. For example, the trends within the Chinese Communist Party over the last decade has been for a certain inertia to carry over from the death (or stepping down) of one party leader to the next leadership. Here political continuity and stability are emphasised, largely in fear of the kind of convulsions which civil war, warlordism and the cultural revolution have imposed on China in the 20th Century. On this basis, one might observe that upon the death of Deng Xiaoping, the following leadership (Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji) soon developed their own core of political power, going beyond the theoretical restraints of collective leadership (Cavey 1997; Jiang 1997). Jiang Zemin then sought a peaceful transition to a new leadership through 2002-2003, based on the leadership Hu Jintao. Through 2004-2007 President Hu has taken a few steps that might indicate new opportunities: he has spoken of the need to **accelerate development in the regions with ethnic minorities within China**, though this may be tied to security concerns as well (*Xinhua* 2003a) This has led to improved economic conditions in the Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous regions, but both are subject to strong security regimes. **Engagement of Russia and Central Asia remains a crucial**

**part of China's targets for economic growth and stabilised western frontiers.** The PRC hopes this can be translated into more balanced development for several Western provinces and regions, and positions this as part of a wider 'peaceful development', as well as sustaining industrial development in the north and northwest regions. However, this has **already generated a fresh sense of threat from the PRC enhanced military capabilities**, as well as the fact that with the incorporation of purchasing power parity (PPP) measurements, its GDP accounts for around 13% of world output and is second to the US (Dellios 2005; *Economist* 2004a).

Likewise, it has been suggested that **a certain continuity in Russian political culture will shape the near future leadership**, drawing perhaps from nationalist sentiment to build a centre core: -

The real leadership contest takes place behind closed doors in the Kremlin, balancing the interests of different power groups. As in the transition from Boris Yeltsin to Putin, a candidate will eventually be nominated by Putin and put forward for approval in the general election, likely to take place in March 2008, perhaps combined with parliamentary elections. The Kremlin candidate is unlikely to face any significant challenge, either from liberal parties on the right or communist parties on the left, since the opposition remains weak and lacks popular support. (Nicoll 2006, p184)

C. Another approach involves a wide range of techniques developed in the social sciences and strategic think tanks to try to give a more **precise model of the future outcomes**, and a rationale for making new policies. These theories developed alongside the notion of **rational actors choosing outcomes to gain maximum benefits in a competitive international environment**. During the Cold War period, thinkers such as Herman Kahn developed this into a sophisticated, but at times overused, notion of **Game Theory**. Other techniques have been used to 'sample' the future. These included the Delphi technique, where a wide range of options are conceived of for the future, with experts giving probability ratings to each option. Another technique is called cross-impact analysis, where the influence of one trend or event is assessed against and across other trends (these techniques are addressed in detail in the *Prospects* subject). Other mathematical techniques include extrapolation from current trends, i.e. forecasting, or explicit model building to simulate behaviour (see Wagar 1991), both used in the economic area with varying success. But both these last methods depend on a hidden assumption - that is the assumption of **everything else being equal**. In other words, **the models can only relate to the variables coded into them**, and everything else is assumed as having roughly equal negative and positive effects on the outcome. To date, **these proto-scientific methods tend to be heuristic**: i.e. a sophisticated form of extrapolation on limited information that works better on statistical average or in assessing general trends rather than exact prediction of individual cases. Here one has to be careful of **technobabble**, i.e. the belief that the more number crunching you have and the bigger computers you have, the more you can predict the future. It is wise to be cautious of **futurehype**, i.e. the tendency to accept authoritative prophecy as a fact, and therefore make it self-fulfilling (see Dublin 1989). For any complex or interesting behaviour, this has not yet been either practically or theoretically demonstrated. Chaos theory (see Guastello 1995), in particular, suggests that such complex interactions may be inherently problematic to predict in individual cases. In this case, **the hopes of a smooth path towards modernisation, rising wealth and democratisation within**

**Central Asia**, hoped for in the early 1990s, have proved problematic even in oil-wealth states such as Kazakhstan (see lectures 3-4).

D. **The system of belief and expectations is an important aspect of understanding change.** In fact certain ideas about the future, even if held with no valid justification, can be very important in **shaping the future**. This is particularly true if an idea takes hold in the mind of a leader, in the values of an elite, or the expectations of an ethnic group, a nation, or a people. Likewise, **a certain notion of fate or destiny can effect the way nations form**: America had a certain view of its fate or 'manifest destiny' to take over the West and form the current expanse of the United States. Russian political leaders, likewise, may have a certain sense of destiny for the future of Russia as a great power. **President Putin can be seen to following this path of using nationalism and the image of a strong Russia** to optimise his electoral support and bolster a strong Russian foreign policy. Beliefs, utopian visions and ideologies (like the dream of a world proletarian revolution, held by Lenin for a time), can shape the entire way nations plan for the future, develop resources, and force others to react in turn. For example, if Russia continues to stress its Eurasian 'future' this will continue to enhance its engagement of the region, even if this turn more towards an economic penetration of Eurasia as distinct from a military-interventionist role (*Eurasia Insight* 2001). Particular national, foreign and regional policies are often based on such assumptions, ideologies, or orientations. For example, most **Turkish political elites have developed a shared vision of Turkey as a modernising secular state that has a strong role to play in the future of Europe** as part of the EU, even if this vision is not shared by all Europeans (see lecture 9). A key **role for Turkey in the Eurasia and Central Asia is being developed as a secondary**, not primary focus of Turkey's foreign policy agenda (see Martin & Keridis 2004; Rubin & Krisci 2001). In turn, the vision of a 'rightful return' Islamic belief has been part of an **Islamic revival** across parts of the region, whether driven by Sufism or as a civil force, or as parts of revised political order as envisaged by the Hizb-ut-Tahrir, IMU, or the Taliban. The **echo the past** (great empires of the past), or great cultural system (the Islamic Silk Road) is sometime used as a basis for future aspirations.

This means that the **way we look at and predict the future** has already had a large impact on the options and planning open to us. In a sense, we have already begun to **colonise the future** by the way we look at it and think about our options (Giddens 1991). This means that **different theories or world-order models will radically affect regional planning, the allocation of resources, as well as national policies**. In this sense **Eurasia has been subject to different visions of order**, based on Russian, European, Islamic, European, US and East Asian visions of future development and integration.

## **2. International Problems Caused by Failures in Eurasian Globalisation**

As we have seen, since 1992 there has been some kind of **Eurasia process** (Dawisha & Parrott 1994) underway, **beginning to link this vast** area stretching from Europe through to North-east Asia. However, Eurasia is not yet an integrated region institutionally, with the failure to date of wider Eurasian Union projects, nor even a

super-region which is fully integrated into the global economy. This means, likewise, that any notion of a 'fourth region', linking the previously unstable areas of Eurasia and the Middle East is also very unlikely, in spite of the possible benefits of the creation of a such cooperation during the 21<sup>st</sup> century (see Hanna 1993).

Rather, Eurasia has begun to emerge as an ongoing **security complex**, whereby problems in one country to sub-region readily spill across national boundaries into adjacent regions (Buzan 1983). Buzan argues that 'a security complex is defined as a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another . . . Security complexes emphasise the interdependence of rivalry as well as that of shared interests' (Buzan in Ayoob 1999). This means that **transboundary effects**, e.g. refugees, legal and illegal migration, organised crime networks, smuggling of drugs and arms, money laundering, international terrorism, transnational ethnic and political affiliations, and regional environmental problems tend to be **shared problems that no one country can effectively manage**. Thus, Tajikistan reported a 45% increase of illegal drug shipments 'detected' from Afghanistan in 2006 (Langton 2007), in spite of continued effort to control this border. On this basis, these problems in the end might only be effectively dealt with by the emergence of a strong sense of regional cooperation, and in the long term perhaps by the emergence of a genuine 'regional society' (for this terminology, see Ayoob 1999). At present, the **limited scope of the regional groupings**, whether the CIS, the ECO, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO, with members Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan) or the SCO can act as the inclusive basis, or even the leading agency, for such regional cooperation. The **SCO has begun to take on something of this role in security roles, e.g. the anti-terrorism areas** (through the Regional Anti-Terrorist Centre), in part via joint training exercises among key partners in region, plus planned deepened cooperation with the Collective Security Treaty Cooperation in 2007 (Langton 2007).

On this basis, **'hot spots' of conflict** have had much wider implications at the regional level. **Tajikistan's civil war** through the mid-1990s was a fearful example for all of Central Asia, Muslim militants in **Uzbekistan** (the IMU) were able to threaten the stability of nearby states, with ongoing tensions in Uzbekistan through 2005-2006. Likewise, **ongoing problems in Afghanistan** have serious implications for Central Asia, Russia, and South Asia, and for NATO reconstruction efforts (see lectures 4 and 10). In effect, problems of governance and conflict in North-West Pakistan and Baluchistan make control of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border highly difficult to sustain, regardless of August agreements on coordinated patrols by the NATO forces and the Pakistan army (Langton 2007).

Likewise, **Iran itself has come under increasing pressure on its nuclear fuel enrichment program** through 2005-2007, indicating another zone of diplomatic tension. Having said this, **Iran through early March 2006 was willing to turn to Turkey as a possible moderator** of ongoing regional and nuclear tensions: -

Iranian ambassador underlines importance of security agreement between the 2 countries signed in 2004 and says since then Turkey's security is also Iran's. Saying

that Iran paid in blood in struggle against PKK, Dowlatabadi adds that Iran and Turkey don't constitute threat to each other, on the contrary they provide mutual security

Dowlatabadi rules out competition between Turkey and Iran on Iraq and says both favor the unity, territorial integrity and stronger central govt in Iraq. Iranian ambassador accuses US, Israel of seeking a civil, sectarian war in Iraq

Iran has greater confidence in Turkey than Western actors and is ready to discuss carrying out some of its sensitive nuclear activity on Turkish soil, as part of a package aiming to create more confidence in the international community, Iranian Ambassador Firooz Dowlatabadi told The New Anatolian on Monday. (Simsek 2006)

This may have been simply one turn of diversionary diplomacy, however, even as UNSC sanctions were being discussed on Iran's nuclear program through 2006-2007, but indicates how Iran has turned both to traditional international partners (Russia), as well as a well-known peer competitor. **By March 2007 even Russia was concerned** about the way Iran had leveraged its relationship to creep forward with its nuclear research. In turn Russia recalled debt owned in relation to provision of support Iran nuclear power program. **The UNSC deliberations on this issue seem likely to continue pressure on Iran, with an increase of consensus through March 2007, in part driven by deepened tensions with the UK: -**

The unanimous March 24 vote by the United Nations Security Council to impose stricter sanctions on Iran is the latest step in the Bush administration's campaign to isolate the regime in Tehran and prepare the conditions for a possible military attack. The resolution came one day after Iranian Revolutionary Guard naval forces seized 15 British Navy personnel in the Persian Gulf, setting off a diplomatic confrontation between Iran and the UK.

The resolution, the second to impose sanctions in the past three months, imposes new financial penalties as punishment for Iran's refusal to suspend its uranium-enrichment programme. It targets 15 individuals and 13 organisations, including Iran's central bank. For the first time, it imposes sanctions on the elite Revolutionary Guard Corps and a subordinate military unit, the Quds Force, which have no relationship to the country's nuclear programmes.

The targeting of the Revolutionary Guard, whom the US and Britain accuse of arming Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Palestinian Authority and anti-occupation Shia militia in Iraq, combined with a ban on Iranian weapons exports, gives the United States a new legal pretext for subversion and military action against Iran.

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"Once again, Russia, China and the other members of the Security Council lined up behind Washington. China and Russia were opposed to tougher travel restrictions on Iranian officials and an embargo on the sale of conventional arms to Iran, but refused to challenge the essential thrust of US efforts. Russia has applied its own pressure on Iran by holding back fuel for Iran's nearly completed nuclear power reactor at Bushehr. (Marsden 2007)

On this basis, **Eurasia as a whole looks far from stable even in terms of traditional factors** of national resilience, regional containment of these flashpoints, and containment of the cross-impact of nuclear weapons proliferation and development. Eurasia remains if anything a **net 'exporter of insecurity' in global terms** (for similar terminology see Eralp 2004, pp75-76) These issues have an impact on all adjacent regions, and on global politics itself.

These immediate problems may rest on deeper economic, social, and development gaps, based on an incomplete and troubled interaction with the global system. Problems with this **incomplete and uneven globalisation** include: -

1. It leaves a large segment of the world in **relative poverty**, which might correlate with the growth of radical political or religious movements, with civil wars, drug and other forms of smuggling, and for local conflicts which could spill-over into adjacent regions. It now seems, for example, that about 55% of Armenians can be considered poor or impoverished (Khachatrian 2001), indicating worsening conditions in some areas, not improvements, since independence. Likewise, although absolute poverty has been somewhat reduced in Tajikistan through 1998-2004, the country remains highly dependent on international aid and has not been able to find employment for its youth population, with ongoing poverty also motivating continued engagement in the drug transit flows out of Afghanistan (see Gerstle 2004). Likewise, both Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan remain highly dependent states within the international system. Even within the growing Russian economy, the gap between rich and poor has approached a factor of fifteen whereby the top 10% have incomes almost fifteen times that of the bottom 10%, while the WTO suggests that a factor of 14.2 is enough to engender serious social unrest (Nicoll 2006, pp180-181).

There may well be a nexus between this relative poverty and a sense of political grievance or displacement, e.g. the recent trend for **militant organisations to try to become a region-wide movements**. It was in this context that the IMU gradually became a 'pan-Central Asian movement' whose organisation but not goals were disrupted in 2001 (Rashid 2001). Although there may be no direct connection between poverty and political violence, **combinations of poverty and political exclusion can create environments in which criminal organisation and extremists groups flourish**. Although the IMU has been partly suppressed by the actions of the Uzbek government and by the changing impact of the international intervention in Afghanistan, this has not solved the problem of political exclusion in Uzbekistan itself. Indeed, the government of Uzbekistan, in spite of parliamentary and presidential elections, has prohibited opposition groups from running and has reputedly engaged in severe human rights abuses through 2000-2007, **using the threat of radical Islam as a pretext for suppressing opposition groups** (see lecture 4 & 8). This includes Hizb-ut-Tahrir ('Party of Liberation'), which aimed at an Islamic state by peaceful means (Feif 2002; *Country Watch* 2003a), though it has been accused of being narrow and anti-Semitic in orientation. **Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT)** 'operates highly secretive decentralized cells in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan', but many of whose members were arrested in Uzbekistan (Rashid 2001). As part of this operation, up to 7,000 Muslim opponents have been imprisoned, with up to 30 dying during detention (Polat 2002). Russia has indicated that it was willing to help Uzbekistan continue its crack down on the Islamic group Hizb-ut-Tahrir (Blagov 2004), though it is not clear that this organisation was directly involved in political violence. Indeed, a Hizb-ut-Tahrir spokesperson in London, Imran Wahid, has denied that his group was involved in the bombings, indicating that the group does not support violence (Nazarov 2004). It is possible that elements from the **Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan** were involved, though this has not been confirmed (Nazarov

2004) and tensions continued through 2005-2006 in the year after the **Andijan riots** (Langton 2007). Government **claims of new groups such as Akromiya remain uncertain (see lecture 4)**, and that **human rights abuses in Uzbekistan remain of real international concern** (Saidazimova 2006a; 2006b). These trends intensified in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan through 2003-2006 (see lectures 3 & 4).

2. A sustained period of poverty and political turmoil can lead to **refugee and migration flows**, as well as greater flows of legal and illegal migrants into the first world. This has already been seen with sustained refugee and labour flows out of Tajikistan, and more recently out of Afghanistan, even to remote countries such as Indonesia and Australia, a trend deepened through late 2001 and early 2002. Though **refugees and exiles are began returning into Afghanistan through 2003-2007**, this would total a hoped for return of at least 1.8 million (Jalali 2003, p181). The return rate has been somewhat slower than these expectations:

. . .the Refugee Repatriation Affairs stated this and said at least 450,000 refugees from Pakistan and 70,000 from Iran returned to Afghanistan under UNHCR last year, a Radio Kabul report said.

The sources added that 200,000 families voluntarily returned home from Iran. They said at least 400,000 refugees from Pakistan and one hundred and fifty thousand additional Afghan nationals from Iran are expected to return home under the UNHCR this year.

Meanwhile, 15,000 refugee families were allotted residential plots in various provinces of Afghanistan.

Sources of Refugee Resettlement Ministry said 42 resettlement towns have so far been built to accommodate at least 300,000 refugee families in 24 provinces of the country. (Kasher World News 2006)

These flows indicate **one direct transnational cost of conflict and instability, only partly and slow managed by international agencies** such as the UNHCR.

3. Likewise, if the region is not properly integrated into regional and international political life and organisations, it could lead to local foci of power which are not always positive, e.g. the basis of the fears of undue Pakistani, Turkish, Iranian or Russian influence in the region. This might also correlate with **continued border and ethnic/national disturbances** in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Tibet and the Xinjiang region of China. Thus, **borders between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan** were still being mutually demarcated through 2006, with over 1,000 kilometres having been clarified but with almost 300 more to go, while **Uzbek minorities** remain a point of tension several regions of Kazakhstan (Langton 2007).
4. Central Asia and Siberia have **large 'planetary reserves' of oil, gas and strategic minerals**. In the future 10-50 years these will become even more significant, and in some scenarios could lead to **intensified competition or even resource wars of the future** (see Klare 2002). Failure to ensure an open political and economic environment could therefore impact on the world

economy, as well as exacerbate local conflicts over access to these resources. Here certain **basic infrastructure and diplomatic procedures have not yet matured**, e.g. there is no balanced vision of resource access oil pipelines out of Central Asia meeting regional needs, and only a slowly emerging agreement on the legal status and environmental management of the resources of the Caspian Sea (see Raczka 2000). In spite of some progress on this issue (mainly via bilateral agreements) among some of parties through 2002-2007 and a major conference held in late March 2006, this has not resulted in a firm Caspian Sea territorial pact (for Russian dual track diplomatic 'games', using both environmental and security issues, see Blagov 2006).

5. **Eurasia is indeed a heartland, as noted by classical geopolitical thinkers** (see Mahan 1965; Mackinder 1962). It is adjacent to East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Western & Central Europe. **Instability in this heartland, whether in Russia or Central Asia, would be of immediate and deep concern to any adjacent state**, and indeed to all the great powers of the world. Thus Japan, China, Germany, France, Great Britain, India, Pakistan, Turkey, and the U.S. are all keen to see a stable, cooperative Russian Federation, a developing Central Asia, and relative peace in Afghanistan. Some efforts at regional stabilisation have begun, e.g. via the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or SCO (see Mamadshoyev 2000), but this organisation has been unable to ensure regional leadership in the face of turmoil in Afghanistan and the increased strategic involvement of the U.S. and NATO forces in the region. Likewise, recent moves have begun to attempts to stabilise regime change Georgia and Ukraine, in part through enhanced cooperation with Europe and NATO. This **interconnectedness has been seen most clearly in Afghanistan**, where through 2001-2007 instability, war and reconstruction has drawn in much of the region in different ways, including all of Central Asia, Iran, Pakistan, Japan and Germany as key donors and diplomatic agents, Turkey, and NATO (Dymond 2002). Nonetheless, much will need to done to guarantee the reconstruction of Afghanistan so that it become a viable democratic state (see lecture 10). Successful outcomes for Afghanistan would have a demonstration effect on the region and provide one pole of relative stability, while failures might act as possible triggers for continued violence. Some progress has been made after the donor's conference in Berlin, early 2004, and again in London in early 2006 with over **\$14 billion over five years pledged for Afghanistan's reconstruction** (ABC 2006a; Entekhabi-Fard 2004). If continued, **this progress could be aided by a wider stabilisation of greater Central Asia**, a possibility suggested by one writer: -

What few U.S. policymakers have recognized is that recent progress in Afghanistan has created a remarkable opportunity - not only for Afghanistan but for the rest of Central Asia as well. The United States now has the chance to help transform Afghanistan and the entire region into a zone of secure sovereignties sharing viable market economies, enjoying secular and open systems of government, and maintaining positive relations with the United States. The means to achieve this goal will be the establishment of a Greater Central Asia Partnership for Cooperation and Development (GCAP), a regionwide forum for the planning, coordination, and implementation of an array of U.S. programs. (Starr 2005)

6. If Eurasian nations remain poor and weak, they will also continue to represent other kinds of **'low level' non-traditional security problems, most with a**

**transnational dimension.** Aside from **refugees and organised crime** issues, these include the inability to pay for environmentally clean industries, to clean up nuclear waste from the past (including the Sea of Japan, Russian industrial areas near Norway, as well as large sections of central Russia and Kazakhstan), limits in the ability to ensure the secure storage of nuclear material, the tendency to repair and then run old nuclear power stations, inability to sustain clean waters in the Aral, Caspian and Black Seas. In the worst case, the Eurasian heartland could be an **environmental and health time-bomb** that begins to seriously effect adjacent regions in Europe and Asia, and has already been seen in the health conditions of regions adjacent to the Aral Sea, with at least 38,000 square kilometres severely damaged (MSF 2000). It has also been suggested that northern river and ocean systems in the Arctic and in the polar weather front system are quite fragile, possibly having strong effects on world climate (see *Ascribe Higher Education News Service* 2003). There would also be flow-on health effects, effects that have already been serious enough for the engagement of World Health Organisation (WHO) and *Médecins sans Frontières* programs in the region of the Aral Sea since 1997, as well as sustained health care problems in Tajikistan (MSF 2000).

For all these reasons, **the future of Eurasia remains of pressing concern to many global and international actors.** However, the awareness of these regions remained minimal except for crisis coverage in many news media, and rather limited in popular imagination and concern until 2001. Through 2001-2007 public awareness was **largely channelled through dominant concerns over terrorism, energy resources, and power plays** among great powers in the international system. For example, long term engagement of Britain, Germany, Japan, the EU, and the US in the reconstruction of Afghanistan will in part be based on ongoing public awareness of Afghanistan and its importance to the wider region. In this, Afghanistan provides a major test case for ability of the international community not just to intervene, but actually help reconstruct a peaceful political agenda in Eurasia as a whole. This is not so much a question of building political systems in the image of the west, but of aiding locally-legitimised government to begin to build a relatively low-violent international 'order' in the core of the Eurasian system. Likewise, international agencies such as the OSCE, the IMF, the World Bank, UNESCO, the World Health Organisation, the UNDP and NATO have been involved in reducing the severity of particular problems. However, this is **far from a comprehensive program of stabilisation for the region as whole.** Nor has a solid model of functional differentiation among organisations, nor subsidiarity (levels of organisation and task management) among stabilisation programs been well established, e.g. possible conflicting roles across NATO, OSCE, and SCO agenda.

**If not truly 'anarchic', this system is not yet an emerging international community at either the regional or global level.** Modifying an argument developed for the Asia-Pacific region, it is possible to argue that the greater Central Asian sector:

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. . . . closely exemplifies Hedley Bull's "anarchical society", that is, states compete for power and influence in an international arena still relatively free of multilateral constraints. Trends in relations between the key major powers suggest that allowing security outcomes to be determined by the free play of the "security market-place" will

be a high-risk strategy. A stronger determination to boost multilateral security processes, to take charge collectively, should be seen as a key element of a strategy to improve the prevailing odds attached to the security outlook . . . (Huisken 2002)

### 3. Eurasian Transitional Processes

What has become clear is that major states in the region and adjacent to the region are trying to **manage ongoing political, economic and social crisis**. Most of the Central Asian states are trying to promote economic stability to avoid future political crises internally. Several transitions processes are running in Eurasia, and help is make rational assessments about possible outcomes: -

- The **type of globalisation processes** impacting on Eurasia as a whole. Are parts excluded? Is the process uneven (as in Russia between west, centre and eastern sectors)? Does it create new winners and losers in the international system? For example, though Uzbekistan may have key power 'advantages', development within the country has been very uneven, excluding agricultural sectors, and the state remains beset by high levels of unrest in the Fergana valley (see lecture 4). Likewise, excessive international support for Uzbekistan (whether from the U.S. 2001-2005 or Russia through 2006-2007) might also increase its role as a local hegemon, thereby destabilising nearby smaller states (see Luong & Weinthal 2002), even forcing Kazakhstan into strengthening its military forces (see lecture 3), and indirectly supporting human rights abuses and a sham democratic process (see above).
- What **type of nationalism** is developing in Eurasia? Is it narrow and ethnically-based, or does it create an independent tier of civil identity? Is this **nationalism a valid step towards genuine democratic participation, or will it support authoritarian state structures**? For example, can Kazakhstan construct a 'Kazakhstani' national identity that reaches past the divide of being an ethnic Kazakh verses and ethnic Russian living within the country (see lecture 3; see Tolipov 2001). Will Afghanistan find a shared national identity that can undermine the local, clan, ethnic and warlord affiliations that have helped undermined the country for decades (see Nojumi 2002)? Can Uighurs be both Uighur and Chinese in national terms?



Kyrgyzstan: Limited Leverage Among Powerful Players  
(map courtesy PCL map library)

- Undergoing both internal and external pressures, can the states of the region **develop stable democratic processes that lead to tolerant and functional societies**? Even when democratic transition does occur, this does not guarantee that the political process will be robust or crisis free. In the case of **Kyrgyzstan**, we can see a state which seemed to move quite smoothly into **democratic transition** through the early 1990s, but from the late 1990s began a pattern of **contested governance and disputes about political legitimacy**. In the face of strong international pressures from China and the SCO, this country had to strengthen its stand against terrorism, as well as open itself to both US and Russian airbases through 2001-2003, used rent from these as a source of stability as well as income. At the same time, former **President Akayev began to extend his options for continued political power from 1998, and from 2002 was subject to sustained criticism** by political opponents such as Azimbek Beknazarov, by human rights activists, and most recently by opposition groups in the Union for Fair Elections, who criticised the political system through 2005. By early 2005 numerous opposition figures were barred from running in following parliamentary elections, leading to **mass protests and a sustained political and social crisis through March-April 2005**. This included the setting up of 'people power councils' in provincial areas such as Jalal-Abad and Osh, sparking concerns in nearby Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, including the tightening of border controls (Alibekov 2005a). Uzbekistan, in particular, was concerned by such demonstrations of people power and has continue restricting NGO and civil society movements in their country (Alibekov 2005a), a trend followed to a lesser degree in Kazakhstan (see lectures 3 & 4). These mass protests lead to the **flight of President Askar Akayev**, resigning on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April after having apparently received assurances that he would not be prosecuted (Meyers 2005; Sustar 2005). A new government then established itself but was immediately embroiled in **controversy**: -

Akayev's reluctance to resign had stirred controversy about the legitimacy of the provisional government, headed by interim President Kurmanbek Bakiyev.

Bakiyev on April 4 sought to address other problems that have dogged the provisional government - including controversial political appointments – by establishing a special commission on stabilization. The commission, comprising representatives from parliament, political parties and non-governmental organizations, will prepare a comprehensive report on the events that drove the Kyrgyz revolution on March 24, and make recommendations on how to strengthen civil society in the country. (Eurasianet 2005a)

The intensity of this **process was fuelled by ongoing poverty (up to 50% of the population) and frustration with lack of real progress** in the country over the last decade, and probably went beyond the kind of transition planned by Western INGOs active in supporting the opposition and beyond that envisioned by the U.S. state department (Sustar 2005). In one view, these trends represent not so much a robust democracy or even people power, but rather a **sharing of power among former 'political outsiders'**: -

Felix Kulov, former mayor of Bishkek and head of the ex-KGB security forces, quickly emerged as a major player. Freed from prison by the protesters, he took control of the security services - and immediately threatened to arrest members of the outgoing parliament if they organized further demonstrations.

With tensions mounting, a deal was cut in which the old parliament was dismissed. . . . The post of prime minister and acting president went to Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who comes from the impoverished South. Another key player - and Washington's favorite - is Roza Otunbayeva, a former foreign minister and ambassador to the U.S. and Britain who has taken control of the foreign ministry.

The infighting reflects the clan and regional character of politics in the country, where the population is 60 percent Kyrgyz, a Turkic people, with large minorities of Russians, Uzbeks and Uighurs comprising most of the rest. (Sustar 2005)

Kulov was only security chief for one week in late March, and thereafter resigned, either because of a falling out with Bakiyev (BBC 2005b), or to prepare his credentials as a suitable Presidential candidate. On this basis, **Kulov (from the north) and Bakiyev (from the south) representing different groups** (Tynan 2005a) became major opponents and then shared power, with another split again in early 2007. Kulov is founder of the Ar-Namys party, which won no seats in parliamentary elections, where formally unaligned candidates (though still former Akayev supporters) dominated (Tynan 2005a), with some 70% of the parliament being independent candidates without strong party affiliations (Petric 2005, p323). Through mid-2005 Kurmanbek **Bakiev (People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan) won presidential elections, but went on to nominate Felix Kulov (Ar-Namys, Dignity Party) as premier**, suggesting **power-sharing among key political players**. Fears have been expressed that a political vacuum in Kyrgyzstan **could lead to a stronger role for regional and religious extremism, and the country is of strategic significance** to China, Russia, the US, and Uzbekistan (Tynan 2005a; Alibekov 2005a). However, such external pressures may support stability but do not guarantee a robust internal democratic process.

Indeed, several key tensions have emerged within the country that suggest a **fragile transition** including: -

- **Tensions between presidential and parliamentary power**, with the parliament becoming more assertive from the late 1990s and then again from 2005 with a future referendum possibly needed to define relative powers (Petric 2005, p323; BBC 2006b). In part the problem has been after the withdrawal of Soviet power, a number of individuals gained power either as business gaining from the period of privatisation or as administrative officials, but thereafter moved into parliamentary politics to enhance their power (Petric 2005, p323). Through **2006-2007 a tug of war continued between parliament over Bakiev's presidential powers**, leading to new tensions the call for fresh elections: -

Tensions came to a head in November 2006. After days of mass protests in the capital, the president signed a new draft constitution which curtailed his powers and gave more authority to parliament.

A few weeks later, the government resigned and the president pushed through revisions to the November constitution, reinstating some of his powers.

In March 2007 the opposition stepped up its pressure on the president to resign and hold early elections. (BBC 2007b)

The likely result will be **more turmoil through April 2007**: -

Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Azim Isabekov on March 29, naming opposition member Almazbek Atambayev to replace him. The move is the latest in a series of attempts by Bakiyev to take the wind out of opposition sails, as he faces a fresh round of anti-government protests in April.

Isabekov's firing came a day after he proposed that several key members of the Bakiyev team be dismissed to make room for opposition leaders in a power-sharing cabinet. But Isabekov himself became a casualty of the president's newest political maneuver.

Bakiyev portrayed Atambayev's nomination as a bid for stability. "I hope that this step, along with other measures being taken by me and many political forces, including on the constitutional process, will bring good results and bring an end to the escalation of tension in society," the presidential press service quoted Bakiyev as saying.

The nomination of Atambayev, until recently a key figure in the For Reforms opposition coalition, appeared to only deepen a split between the radical and moderate wings of the anti-Bakiyev forces. Opposition unity had already been fractured by debate over how to react to Bakiyev's recent political moves, including a vow to revisit controversial constitutional changes and an agreement to transform state television and radio into a public service broadcaster.

The newly organized United Front for a Decent Future for Kyrgyzstan, led by former Prime Minister Feliks Kulov, remains adamant that protests calling for the president's resignation will go ahead as planned April 9. (Sershen 2007)

- **Relative ongoing poverty** within the country, which lacks oil or gas resources, with average GNI per capita of around \$400 through 2005 (Petric 2005; BBC 2006b - GNI, gross national income includes domestic wealth plus inputs from other countries). Main resources include **cotton, wool and meat, gold, mercury, uranium and electrical production, via hydro-electric power** (DFAT 2006). However, economic development remains slow and out of a population of 5.1 million some 350-500 thousand nationals regularly seek employment in Kazakhstan and Russia, with remittances to families back in Kyrgyzstan being around \$200 million in 2005 (*Eurasianet* 2006).
- **High levels of dependency on foreign aid**, often routed through NGOs and INGOs, with limited government abilities in areas such as water supply, services, sliding education spending (Toursunof 2006), and health care, as well as large scale intervention by the IMF to stabilise the local currency (*som*) and by the World Bank (Petric 2005, p323).
- The small country has try to try to **balance the influence of Russia, the US, and China**, both to assure its economic future but also to create some sense of strategic balance. On this basis, it has allowed the **continuance of both Russian (Kant base) and US (Manas) airbases** on its soil, with the country gaining a total of \$49.9 million in aid from the US in 2002 (Leech 2006, p87). Through early 2006 seemed to be **tilting towards a longer presence by the Russian base**, which had been established as part of CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) anti-terrorism efforts from 2003 (Panier 2006). However, this may be part of a bargaining over the returns for the lease of the US base. In October 2005, Kyrgyzstan recognised that coalition forces would need to use Manas airbase 'until the mission of fighting terrorism in Afghanistan is completed', but still wanted to discuss future payments on the base', with total some \$50 million in the 2005 period, though the official rent was around \$2 million, which the Kyrgyzstan might want to severely raise, perhaps to the order of \$207 million, though this may be a bargaining ploy (BBC 2006b; Pannier 2006). A December 2006 killing of a Kyrgyzstan citizen at a check has **renewed tensions**, with concerns over the immunity of U.S. soldiers to local prosecution (AP 2007).
- Some ongoing **ethnic and 'clan' tensions**, revolving around land, relative wealth, 'different solidarity networks', and diffuse political power among the dominant Kyrgyz (60-65% of population) with Uzbeks, especially in the south with 14 per cent of the population, and Russians at 13 per cent who were once the educated and political elite, with the government seeking to reduce their exodus after 2001 (DFAT 2006; Petric 2005, p324).
- Concerns continue that democracy remains relatively weak in the country, and that in large measure **civil society activity has been stimulated by external agencies** and by the desire to tap international funds (Petric 2005). On this basis, Kyrgyzstan may represent another form of

dependency, almost a '**globalized protectorate**' and some effort to export a democratic model from the West rather than a post-Soviet democratic success (Petric 2005). Thus groups such as the OSCE have helped support open elections, while USAID, the National Democratic Institute (NDI, which supported the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society which was strongly involved in events through 2004-2005), and the Initiative for Social Action and Renewals (IDAR) group, plus the Soros foundation have been active in supporting preferred transition paths in the country, but this may have more '**top down**' rather than '**bottom up**' (Petric 2005, pp325-326).

- The government claims to take a tough stand on **corruption**, but through 2005-2007 the **growth of organised crime, prison riots, and political killings** suggests that this remains a major challenge for government, and issue raised again in March 2006 by the OSCE in relations to the government's 'ongoing credibility' (*Eurasia Insight* 2006; DFAT 2006).

*Kyrgyzstan Selective Timeline 1998- March 2007 (after BBC 2007)*

1998 July - Constitutional Court decides Mr Akayev should be allowed to run for third term as president in 2000.

1999 August/September - Troops sent in after Islamic militants seize numerous hostages and several villages near Tajik border. Hostages eventually reported to have been released after fierce fighting.

2000 August - Government forces again engage Islamic fighters who cross border from Tajikistan and seize hostages.

2000 November - Askar Akayev re-elected president for a further five years. International observers report elections flawed.

2002 January - Leading opposition deputy Azimbek Beknazarov is detained on charges which supporters say are politically motivated and linked to his criticism of the government's planned transfer of disputed land to China and Kazakhstan.

2002 February - Prominent human rights activist Sherali Nazarkulov dies while on hunger strike to protest against Mr Beknazarov's detention.

2002 March - Five killed in clashes with police during a protest demanding the release of Mr Beknazarov in the southern, regional capital Jalal-Abad.

2002 May - Leading opposition politician Feliks Kulov is sentenced to 10 years in prison. He was arrested in March 2000 for alleged abuse of office while national security minister, acquitted in July 2000, but later re-arrested. Government of Kurmanbek Bakiev resigns after a state commission rules that senior officials were to blame for the death of five civilian protestors in March. Nikolay Tanayev appointed prime minister. Azimbek Beknazarov is freed after being given a one-year suspended sentence for abuse of office. Parliament ratifies border deal with China.

2002 November - Scores arrested as opposition protesters march on capital, demanding president's resignation. PM Tanayev accuses demonstrators of trying to destabilize the country and seize power, appeals for calm.

2002 December - Explosion at Bishkek market kills seven people. Investigation points to terrorist bomb.

2003 February - Referendum approves constitutional change which Mr Akayev says is intended to redistribute some of his powers to parliament. Some analysts see it as an attempt by the president to consolidate his hold on power. International observers and opposition report widespread voting irregularities.

2003 May - Six arrested following explosion in southern city of Osh which leaves one dead.

2003 June - Lower house of parliament passes bill granting President Akayev and two former Soviet-era Communist Party leaders lifelong immunity from prosecution.

2003 October - President Putin opens Russian air base at Kant, near a base used by US forces.

2004 January - Opposition parties announce the formation of a coalition to challenge pro-government parties ahead of elections in 2005.

2005 February - Parliamentary elections spark wave of protests as numerous independent and opposition candidates are barred from standing.

2005 March - Protests escalate following second round of parliamentary elections. Demonstrators take over official buildings in south. Rallies call for President Akayev's resignation. Protests spread to Bishkek where demonstrators seize official buildings. President Akayev leaves for Russia. Supreme Court annuls results of recent elections although electoral commission says they were valid. Kurmanbek Bakiev says old parliament has appointed him acting president and prime minister. Opposition leader Feliks Kulov released from jail. Newly elected parliament recognizes Mr Bakiev as prime minister. He acknowledges it as legitimate. Old parliament agrees to dissolve. Askar Akayev, still in Moscow, resigns as president.

2005 April - Askar Akayev, still in Moscow, resigns as president.

2005 June - Key anti-Akayev opposition figure Azimbek Beknazarov appointed prosecutor-general. Vows to campaign against corruption. MP Jyrgalbek Surabaldiyev shot dead in Bishkek

2005 July - Kurmanbek Bakiev wins a landslide victory in presidential polls.

2005 August - President Bakiev inaugurated. Nominates Felix Kulov as premier.

2005 September - Azimbek Beknazarov sacked as prosecutor-general. MP, head of the national Olympic Committee and controversial businessman Bayaman Erkinbayev shot dead. Parliament rejects several members of proposed new government, including Roza Otunbayeva, one of the driving forces behind overthrow of former president Akayev.

2005 October - MP Tynychbek Akmatbayev and other officials shot dead during visit to prison near Bishkek following prison unrest over conditions. The unrest spreads to other jails and there are several more deaths when the authorities use force to suppress it.

2006 January - Wrestler Raatbek Sanatbayev, a candidate for the presidency of the Kyrgyz Olympic committee, shot dead. The post became vacant when the previous holder, Bayaman Erkinbayev, also died violently.

2006 February - parliament speaker Omurbek Tekebayev resigns after row with president Bakiev. Thousands of protesters demand that President Bakiyev act to fight crime and corruption or resign.

2006 May - Controversial public figure and former convict Ryspek Akmatbayev, brother of MP killed in prison unrest in 2005, shot dead. Several killed in gun battle following attack on border post in Batken region in Fergana valley. The gunmen are said to have broken through from Tajikistan. Mass protests demand constitutional reform and more action to combat crime and corruption.

2006 August - Thousands mourn Imam Rafik Kamalov, a popular preacher from the Ferghana valley near the Uzbek border who was killed in a crackdown on alleged Islamic rebels by special forces. International bodies condemn Kyrgyz decision to repatriate several Uzbek citizens who fled across the border after the 2005 bloodshed in neighbouring Andijan region.

2006 September - Opposition leader Omurbek Tekebayev is arrested at Warsaw airport when heroin is found in his luggage. He is released after he says the drug was planted.

2006 November - President signs a new constitution that limits his powers after thousands of protesters rally in Bishkek, accusing him of not delivering reforms and demanding his resignation.

2006 December - Government resigns, paving the way for early parliamentary elections. President Bakiyev pushes revisions to November constitution through

parliament. Some of his powers, particularly over government appointments, are reinstated.

2007 January - Azim Isabekov becomes prime minister after parliament twice rejects President Bakiyev's bid to reinstate Felix Kulov.

2007 February - Felix Kulov joins opposition calls for the president's resignation.

2007 March - Government resigns in the face of opposition plans to hold demonstrations in April.

- The **borders of the region in terms of international recognition have gradually stabilised but remain porous in key areas**. Thus the China-Russia border has been established after agreements made from 1996, with a last round of border delineation through 2004 (see lecture 5). Most of the border disputes with Russia were resolved by 1997, and by 1999 almost the entire log of conflicting claims, stretching over 4,300 kilometres and including 2,444 riverine islands, were resolved (Zhao 1999). The borders of Central Asian states were at least formally accepted in the Alma-Ata agreement, (Shevtsova 1992, p11), but further minor disputes were resolved through 2000-2001, with further demarcation of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border through 2006 (see Zardykhan 2002, p170; Lagnston 2007). Nonetheless, **local identity often slides across these neat border lines**, e.g. the complex mixing of Uzbek, Kazakh, Tajik and Kyrgyz groups throughout Central Asia, the presence of Uzbek, Tajik and other minorities in Afghanistan, and Russian groups found throughout the region of Central Asia but especially in northern Kazakhstan. Put another way, it may take a long time for these nationalities to stabilise internally, and then be able to accept minorities and others in **a more open and pluralist form of national identity** (see Fukuyama 1995). We can draw interesting parallels with parts of East Europe, e.g. in Western sections of Belarus, where Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian, Jewish, Polesian and other identities have failed to coalesce completely into a clear cut or non-contentious form of national identity (Applebaum 1994). Here, the lack of unequivocal history can sometimes be a benefit, it allows one to imagine different, new, and perhaps better futures, although conflicting visions can also fragment nations (Applebaum 1994; Pecora 2001). Such **aspirations may clash with the expectations of other groups**, or may not be coherent and sustainable (Anderson 1991).
- To what degree have **regional structures** developed in Eurasia? Which states can gain from membership in regional organisations? Do new organisations need to be created? As we have seen, no single organisation embraces the region, and the patchwork of existing and proposed organisations is only very loosely coordinated, e.g. the EAEU, the existing ECO, the SCO, and the CSTO and the looser frameworks of the CIS and the OSCE, as well as alternative frameworks such G15 (see lectures 1-3). If no stable balance of power exists within the region, can **institution-building** create organisations that help provide **security for the entire region**, whether by extending existing structures (SCO, OSCE, CIS, NATO etc), or by re-conceptualising the relations among states within Eurasia? If international management of regional problems cannot be developed in an ongoing and consistent way, is it enough to rely on

**different coalitions of interest** to govern this turbulent region? A **constructivist approach** would suggest that deeper engagement in regional and international organisations will tend to reduce the likelihood of new hot conflicts, and reduce international neglect of developmental failures. It would also allow a more proactive and ration response to issues such as human rights, political crises, and environmental destruction, rather than ad hoc coalitions of agencies operating after problems have emerged.

- What kind of **leverage do individual Eurasian states have on the international system**, e.g. through fora such as the UNSC, UN General Assembly, G8, the OSCE, or other organisations? In relative terms, there is a **clear division between superpower and greater powers** (the US, EU, Russia and China), and a host of **medium and small powers that will need to 'chain'** themselves in some way with 'great power agendas', or else risk being isolated or ignored. This leads to a **web of soft and hard alliances, with strategic partnerships** among some of these players, e.g. Russia and China, Russia and India. This leads to debates about different patterns of international order, e.g. a **great-power led multi-polarity verses formal regional organisations**. Thus, for example, recent terrorist attacks, government clamp-downs and growing human rights pressures (2004-2007) have **caused Uzbekistan to tilt back towards stronger engagement with Russia and reduction of US links**, which has generally been less critical of its human rights record and less concerned with pushing democratisation (Nazarov 2004; Blagov 2004). In turn, some players have **changed the type of power they project**, e.g. **Russia seems to focusing less on military power and is shaping itself as an 'energy superpower'**, perhaps at the expense of other areas of development (Nicoll 2006). Russia's energy exports outside of the CIS rose from 64% to 71.4% of total exports in 2005 (Nicoll 2006, p179). It should also be noted that Russia may need to invest as much as \$700 billion in its energy sector to sustain growth over the next 20 years (Nicoll 2006, p181).
- Is there a **balance among the key powers** in the region that can sustain a stable status-quo, or do key changes need to take place to create a stable and just Eurasian region? Until 2001, a clear **Russian-China strategic bilateral hegemony** of the region was being established, with secondary Japanese economic interests (see Arbatov 1999), but this was effectively **counterbalanced by European and U.S. influences through 2001-2007**. It is not yet clear how these changing balances will influence regional engagement strategies in the post-war period. It must be noted that any stable power balance must also be **based on stable perceptions of the capabilities, motivations, and viewpoints** of each of the major actors within the regional system, i.e. some shared norms and accepted roles for key players.

#### 4. Key Problems for the Eurasian Process

Therefore, it seems that there are **several key problems** that need to be addressed if the Eurasian process is to have, on balance, positive local and international outcomes. These key issues include: -

- **Lack of overlapping and stabilised governance** by states, regional groupings, and international agencies. At present, this lack of stable governance is also deepened by either institutional gaps, or competition as new regional groupings are formed and only invested in to a small degree, e.g. the Community of Democratic Choice (Ukraine and Georgia) and the GUUAM group, comprising Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova (see Torbakov 2001; Nicoll 2006).
- **Democratic deficit** by most nations within the region. In many cases democratic process is undermined by strong Presidential powers, and a tendency to prevent opposition parties from being truly competitive. Ironically, this lack of true democracy has bolstered underground opposition groups as well as groups willing to use political violence (e.g. in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). In the case of Russia, the March 2004 re-election of **President Putin was widely viewed as distorted** by allowing no viable contesting candidate, with claims of media control and coercion being used to ensure that no popular counter-candidate could run (see lecture 2). Some opposition groups urged voters to boycott the election rather than vote in sham contest, while OSCE and Council of Europe election observers noted that the process did not meet open democratic standards (UPI 2004a). Putin received 70% of the vote, while 'none of the other four contenders managed to garner even 5 percent of the vote.' (UPI 2004a). Problems in genuine democratic engagement remain high for Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and are of growing concern in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan through 2004-2007.
- **Incomplete transition**, whereby even after a decade of change, many of the countries **remain relatively poor, with privatisation and the market economy not yet providing the engines for sustainable development**. Countries such as Uzbekistan, for example, have unbalanced development that has allowed pockets of rural poverty to remain, while Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan remain highly dependent on overseas aid and loans. At the same time, though market forces have developed to some degree, several states (e.g. Russia) retain oligarchic interests and have a strong invisible economy partly controlled by organised crime. This incomplete transition also includes the environmental disasters that have been left by the Soviet system, but are now being compounded by the relatively limited resources of the states still undergoing economic transition.
- **The changing balance of power in the region**, where once Russia was the true hegemon, this led to a **'failing hegemon' scenario** with new forces at play through the mid-1990s, and some return of Russian diplomatic influence over the last 5 years, largely driven by energy politics. At present, Chinese and Russian engagements are partly balanced by EU and US interests, but no stable landscape of power has emerged. Here, **there is a need to ensure not only strong engagement strategies, but also smooth, slow**

**disengagement procedures, whereby external dependencies are slowly reduced.** This is where key institutions embracing the region need to be built to moderate a possible future clash of interests.

- In the absence of strong regional governance and a transparent balance of power, over the last decade **the region has been managed on the interventionist model: humanitarian, political and military intervention** is engaged in an ad hoc way to contain or utilise the latest 'hot spot' or problem. This leads to external interests being heavily engaged for short periods of time, but not necessarily in the context of wider regional or international support. In the worst case scenario, there is the risk that proxy conflicts could once again return to Eurasia, perhaps in conflict over resources, or patterns of political conflict used to build zones of influence, e.g. current tensions between Russia and Ukraine over its 'western tilt' (under the leadership of Viktor Yushchenko), and over Georgian reform (Mikhail Saakashvili) as a signal for 'people power' revolutions elsewhere in Eurasia (see for example Sustar 2005). At the same time, Russia has been able to assert strong pressure on Ukraine through 2006-2007, and has retained continued pressure on Georgia over the fate of separatist sub-national groupings in South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Nicoll 2006, p192). **It is clear, then, that there needs to be a serious cooperative return to nation and region building within Greater Central Asia and Eurasia as a whole.**

The question remains, however, **whether current intervention efforts will be part of long-term stabilisation of the Eurasian zone**, thereby ensuring a better life for Eurasian peoples, greater stability throughout Europe and Asia, as well as promoting higher levels of global prosperity (through access to new resources and deepened markets) and supporting better regional governance, or merely case by case interventions based upon limited alignments of interests (as in Afghanistan). If a wide stabilisation occurs, in the long run Eurasia will be a source of civilisational stability and an opportunity for heightened international cooperation. A failure in these Eurasian processes however, will set limits on Europe's eastern frontier as a peaceful zone (perhaps creating a new 'Cold Frontier'), and undermine East Asian efforts to boost prosperity in a zone stretching from Mongolia down to Tibet and Yunnan. **To build deep resilience in Eurasia, a concerted effort by the regional players and the international community will need to be made over the next two decades.** Widely-based planning for this has begun to some degree (e.g. in the case of Afghanistan) but need to be entrenched and extended over the next decade.

## 5. Bibliography in Further Reading

### Resources

The *Médecins sans Frontières* homepage provides a range of searchable data on human and medical crises across the globe at <http://www.msf.org/>

The *Central Eurasian Studies Review* (from Harvard University) can be accessed on line in pdf format at [http://cess.fas.harvard.edu/CESS\\_Review.html](http://cess.fas.harvard.edu/CESS_Review.html)

The Chinese (PRC) perspective on world and Eurasia affairs can be found via the *China Daily* newspaper, located on the web at <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/home/index.html>

A range of critical (and radical) commentary on international affairs will be found in the *Counterpunch* political newsletter, found at <http://www.counterpunch.com/>

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