

CHAPTER-1
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF
TURKMENISTAN-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Early History

The importance of Central Asia in understanding world history has been recognized by many scholars. As a geographical region connecting Asia with Europe, it played a vital role in the evolution of many civilizations in ancient times. Many of the contemporary languages trace their origins one way or the other to this region. During the mediaeval period, invasions that originated from Central Asia changed the course of history in many regions of Eurasia. The “centrality” of Central Asia as a connecting point for many trade routes that linked Asia with Europe, especially the Silk Route, continued up to the 16th century till technological developments and the industrial revolution shifted the gravity of power to the West. The changing configuration of the states in Central Asia and the division of the region between Russia, British colonial powers and China pushed the region into the background since the 18th century. Though the 70 years of the Soviet period radically changed the face of Central Asia, the region remained somewhat isolated from the rest of the world. (V. Nagendra Rao and Mohammad Monir Alam .ed, 2005, p.1).

Central Asia is an area of extraordinary ethnic complexity. Historically, a frontier between nomadic and sedentary civilization in the heart of Eurasian continent, the region has long been witness to massive population movement and a wide range of cultural influences. The demographic structure of Central Asia took shape over a period of many centuries as successive waves of nomadic-Turkic migrants from the East conquered and mingled with settled agricultural populations speaking Indo-European languages. The result was a rich mosaic of peoples, tribes, languages and cultures, all living intermingled within a diverse setting of deserts, mountains and oases. This diversity existed, according to Edgar, within the framework of a broad cultural unity, an Islamic Central Asian civilization that was a synthesis of Turkic and Persian elements. (Adrienne Lynn Edgar, 2004, p.18)

It is difficult to identify distinct, let alone cohesive, ethnic groups in Central Asia prior to the twentieth century. The labels that formed the basis for Soviet

“National Republics” – Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen, Kyrgyz and Kazakh – were not unknown, but the identities they referred to were neither exclusive nor a priority for Central Asians. Sub-ethnic and Super-ethnic loyalties were generally more important to people than these ethnic categories. Most of the 11th century central Asians across the world would have named their kin group neighbourhood or village; or the state in reference to their religion or the state in which they lived. Moreover, there was no historical relationship between ethnicity and statehood in the region, underlines Hisao. (Komastu Hisao, 2002, p.12)

In the 18th century, after centuries of poverty and isolation, the Turkmen began to rebuild their way of life. The poet Magtymguly created a literary language for the Turkmen and laid the foundations for their modern culture and traditions. Keimir-Ker, a Turkmen from the Tekke clan, led a rebellion of the Turkmen against the Persians, who were occupying most of Turkmenistan. Popular ballads and folk legends still recount the deeds of Keimir-Ker. Russian Czar, ‘Peter the Great’, sent the first Russian expeditions into Turkmenistan. Peter was seeking a route for Russian trade with southern Asia and the Middle East. In 1716, however, members of a Turkmen clan murdered the Czar's representatives near Khiva. Russia waited for more than a century before sending another mission into Turkmenistan. (“History of Turkmenistan”, (Online: Web), Accessed on 3rd April, 2007, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-history.htm>, p.2)

Nevertheless, trade between Turkmen merchants and Russians continued and was helped by the building of a port on the Caspian Sea at Krasnovodsk, (modern Turkmenbashi). In 1802, members of several Turkmen clans officially became Russian subjects. During the 19th century, the Turkmen also asked for Russia's help during their frequent rebellions against the Khans and against the Shahs of Persia. The Russians were seeking new markets for their goods, fertile land for the growing of cotton, and access to Turkmenistan's natural resources. As a first step in the conquest of the region, the Russians agreed to provide arms and food to the Turkmen rebels. (Ibid, p.3)

Russia began sending military expeditions into Turkmenistan in the second half of the 19th century. From 1863 through 1868, Russian armies defeated and annexed the Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva. The people of western Turkmenistan, who were seeking independence from the Khans, willingly joined the Russian Empire. But the Turkmen of eastern and southern Turkmenistan fiercely resisted Russian annexation. In 1879, at Geok-Tepe near Ashkhabad (modern Ashgabat) Turkmen warriors of the Tekke clan stopped a large Russian force. Two years later, the Russians besieged Geok-Tepe, eventually capturing it as well as Ashkhabad. (History of Turkmenistan”, (Online: Web), Accessed on 7th April, 2007, <http://www.turkmenistanembassy.org/turkmen/history/history.html>, p.5)

By 1885, all the Turkmen clans had submitted to Russian control. Russians annexed Mary (Merv) and pushed across Turkmenistan to the borders of Persia and Afghanistan. The building of the Transcaspian Railroad, which connected Krasnovodsk (modern Turkmenbashi), Mary (Merv), and trading centers to the east, opened up the region for economic development.

According to Wheeler, prior to the October Revolution, the situation in Turkmenistan and the steppe Region was conducive to the rapid success of the Bolshevik Red Army to overthrow the Tsarist Regime. The inconsistent policies of Russia towards Central Asia after the death of General Kaufman in 1882 and the enormous increase in Russian and Ukrainian settlements in Muslim lands since the turn of the century had engendered wide spread resentment against Russian rule which culminated in the 1916 revolt. (Geoffrey Wheeler, 1964, p.97.)

The 1916 uprising in Central Asia, then Turkestan, was against the Tsarist expanding colonization and ruthless exploitation. The revolt's epicenter was northern Kyrgystan (Pishpek) and Prezheval districts of the former Semirechye region of the Turkistan military province. Out of 540,000 settler colonizers in the whole of Turkestan, 110,000, i.e, 20% were living in Pishpek and Prezheval districts. In 1916,

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the Russian-Ukrainian colonizers of the Prezheval district controlled over 24% of cultivable land. A similar situation existed in the Pishpek district. Hence, it was precisely in this region that a more active reaction of the local people against colonial oppression unfolded in bloody clashes. (D. Dzhunushaliev, 1998, p.35.) According to historian Dzhunushaliev, the 1916 uprising was not simply against the Tsarist rule, but to defend honour, dignity, freedom and land. (Ibid, p. 38.)

Following the October Revolution in Russia, there followed a period of Civil War with anti-Bolshevik forces including the Russian white Army and local Islamic groups (Basmachi) fighting against the Bolshevik Red Army. Here, question may arise that how the people of Turkestan who had revolved against the Tsarist rule in the preceding years could extend their support to the White Army against the Bolshevik Red Army. The answer to this question lies in a careful examination of both the Soviet official accounts and the accounts of the Western historians which, according to Geoffrey Wheeler, differ in many respects. The main difference between the two accounts is that, whereas Soviet historians assert that apart from a relatively small minority acting either under the influence of religious or 'bourgeois nationalist elements' or at the instigation of the imperialist powers, the peoples of Central Asia welcomed the Revolution and gave it their whole hearted and active support. Most non-Soviet historians claim that the Muslim attitude towards the Revolution varied from indifference to violent opposition and that the new regime was only established by force in the absence of any co-coordinated resistance. (Geoffrey Wheeler, op.cit, p.98.)

Even before 1917, Lenin and other architects of Revolution had violently denounced Tsarist imperialism and the Tsarist treatment of subject peoples and the October Revolution was quickly followed by promises of entirely different treatment based on racial equality and national self-determination. The problem presented to the Soviet leaders by their sudden inheritance of the Tsarist empire was formidable. Firstly, although the whole concept of empire ran counter to communist theory, the inherited empire happened to contain natural resources vital to the continued existence of the Soviet State.

Secondly, renunciation of the empire, or at any rate of areas populated by Asian peoples would, according to Soviet reckoning, have laid Central Asia and Transcaucasia open to attacks by Britain and thus have jeopardized Russia's security.

Thirdly, there were in Turkestan and the steppe Region alone nearly two million Russian settlers who, whether they supported the Russian Revolution or not, considered this area to be an integral part of Russia which should not be lightly handed over to the backward indigenous population. (Ibid,p.99) While Wheeler criticized the Third Territorial Congress of Soviets, for having ignored the question of autonomy, Devendra Kaushik maintains that such a criticism is not valid. Kaushik explains that when the Congress met on November 15-22, 1917, only a very small portion of Turkestan territory was under Soviet control. It was confined, in addition to Tashkent, to only major parts in the Fergana and Samarkand regions. The Semirechye and most of the Trans - Caspian region were still in the hands of the provisional Government and bourgeois nationalist committees. Under such circumstances the victory of a socialist revolution and a revolutionary organization or power naturally preceded the question of autonomy on the agenda of the Congress, explains Kaushik. (Devendra Kaushik, 1970, p. 136.)

Prior to the Russian conquest in the late 19th century, the prevailing form of statehood in Central Asia was the Muslim dynastic state ruling over a multiethnic population. State legitimacy depended on dynastic claims and a pledge to uphold the Islamic faith. The notion that a state should exist for the benefit of a single ethnic group was unfamiliar. On the contrary, multiethnicity was part of the structure of Central Asian states. Rulers descending from Turkic nomads used Persian as their language of culture and the government maintained their power by promoting rivalry among the different population groups. (Adrienne Lynn Edgar, op.cit, p.19)

The declaration of the Bolsheviks and Maximalists' in the Third Congress of the Soviets has been sharply criticized for having excluded the Muslims. The

declaration excluded from organs of power not only Muslims but also other representatives of Tsarist colonial empire. It welcomed broad masses to participate in the Congress of Soviets with the local representatives not excluding Muslims to deliberate upon questions of economy and state structure.

The ignorance of Soviet Congress about Muslim cultural autonomy made frustrated Muslims join the Basmachi Movement. However, the Jadid (New School reform) modernizers largely sided with the Bolsheviks. As a result, the Red Army could defeat the white Army and the Basmachi movement and finally established its power in the region by 1919. In 1918, the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR) was established within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) or Russian Federation. (*The Europa World Year Book, 1998, p.2027.*) Later it was made a full republic.

History During Soviet Period

The 1920s and 1930s were crucial formative years for the Soviet national republics. In this period, the Bolsheviks were engaged in a serious effort of nation-building, equipping non-Russian regions with nearly everything they would need for a future existence as sovereign polities. The fundamental requirement that a state requires a territory with clearly defined borders was met by Moscow through demarcating the territorial boundaries of each ethnic group. The need for administrative structures was filled by republican government and Communist Party hierarchies that replicated at the lower levels those at the all-Union level. Most aspiring nation-states were striving for a single national language to replace a host of spoken local dialects. They supported linguistic standardization as well as publishing and education in native tongues. The Soviet state facilitated the consolidation of such languages. A nation-state needs an elite to govern and promote national culture. With its policy of recruiting local nationals for service in the party and government, the Soviet government helped create such elites (*Adrienne Lynn Edgar, 2007, p.3*)

The nation-making efforts of modern states do not, of course, focus solely on elites; they also seek to mobilize the masses. The Communist Party leadership used a variety of methods to penetrate local societies and mobilize the non-Russian masses in support of the Soviets. Communist authorities established village schools and native-language newspapers, and created mass organizations as venues for popular participation and state control. They sought to undermine the power of traditional elites and to ban barbaric practices rooted in religion and custom. Yet the Bolsheviks intended to create not just nations but *socialist* nations, and thus they had to part company with other modernizers. Soviet authorities campaigned against upper social classes, enlisted the support of the poor and dispossessed, and eradicated the existing systems of property ownership and land tenure. In the early 1930s, they sought to bring the entire countryside under state control through forcible collectivization of agriculture. They banned "bourgeois" and "feudal" forms of economic and social activities. (Ibid, p.5)

Soviet Nationality Policy

There has been no uniformity in Soviet policies towards the Central Asian States. Even there was no unanimous agreement among the various Marxist scholars on the question of national self-determination. While Marx himself supported anti-colonial movements to hasten the end of European colonialism and so weaken the European bourgeoisie, he never dealt with the question as to how a Marxist party would cope with nationalism once it had seized power. (Ahmed Rashid, 1999, p.28.)

So the approach towards nationality question differed from leaders to leaders in Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the right to national self-determination as one of the basic principles of foreign policy was proclaimed by the Soviet Union in one of its first decrees, the Decree on Peace. According to Lapidus, the central problem in Soviet nationality policy had been to maintain a delicate balance between the two conflicting interests, to enable the continued dominance of the Russian majority and

at the same time to reduce the alienation of non-Russian nationalities to guarantee equality between nationalities. In practice, Soviet policy fluctuated between these efforts to implement. (Gail W. Lapidus, 1987, p.77.)

However, one of the most eminent historians on Soviet Union, E.H. Carr, has somewhat different views. According to him, the region was commonly known before 1914 as Russian Turkestan. Except for the small Iranian group of Tajiks in the south East, the population of Turkestan was uniformly of Turkish origin and spoke Turkic dialects. The later division into Turkmen in the West, Uzbeks in the centre and Kyrgyz in the east was partly a matter of administrative conveniences, it was also because of local jealousies rather than being a consequence of racial or linguistic or historical differences' (Ibid,p.78)

Lenin's View on Nationality

In the early twentieth century, there was much controversy on the issues of nationalism, national self-determination etc. Lenin argued for the voluntary union of nationalities in the socialist state. The Austro-Marxist school devised a theory of cultural autonomy within the multi-national state to preserve the Hapsburg Empire. Its leading writers Karl Renner, Otto Bauer and Karl Kautsky, depoliticized the national question by promoting cultural and psychological factors. Bauer's definition of the nation as aggregate of people bound into community of character by a community of fate was vague and strongly attacked by Lenin. Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish Marxist, went to the other extreme suggesting that the proletariat should not get bogged down in sterile national struggles, a view that was also hotly contested by Lenin. She demanded the right of self-determination only for the proletariat, while Lenin demanded unequivocal self-determination for all nationalities. Trotsky also thought that the struggle for self-determination would undermine the revolution and that self determination must always remain subordinate to the proletariat revolution.

The basis of Marxist theory on the nationalities developed on Leninist version. The failure of the 1905 Revolution in Russia had convinced Lenin that only the right to self-determination as a major plank of the revolutionary programme could win over non-Russians in the Tsarist Empire. In Asia, the anti-colonial movement and the issue of self-determination were challenging French and British colonialism. The revolution in Persia in 1906, the Young Turks movement of 1908, the Chinese Revolution in 1911 and the First movement of Indian nationalism were providing new political zeal to Asian revolutionaries. Realizing these changes, Lenin went further than any Marxist of his times. He stated that only by giving smaller nationalities the freedom to secede could the larger nations make possible a free and voluntary union. "We want a voluntary union of nations, a union which precludes any coercion... so that the distrust of centuries has a chance to wear off", he said. (Ahmed, Rashid, *op cit*, p. 2)

The Turkestan Republic became a socialist state at its very inception in 1918. Village societies and people's courts composed of people of local nationalities who knew the native languages, customs and traditions were set up almost every where in the period from 1918 to 1924. Representatives of the local population constituted the majority in the administrative bodies. Soviet power became genuinely popular.

Lenin's principles of nationalities were based on the core idea of democratic centralism. Although he preferred state administration and management with the basic ideals of centralization of power at the centre, however his sole aim was to create a socialist state not forcibly but on the basis of voluntary and free consent. In this context Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was the first step towards the formation of national states in Central Asia. In contrast to the policy of nation-state propagated by the Tsarist regime, the Soviet government put forward a policy which aimed at building a number of republics with an adequate degree of internal autonomy. "Bolshevik nationality policy was a curious mixture of national in form and socialist in content." (R. Vaidyanath, 1967, p.264.)

Before his death, Lenin understood that the peculiar conditions of Central Asia needed a different liberal strategy to handle the multi-ethnic nomadic society. For that, Lenin, pointed out to the Europeanized and intellectual Bolsheviks about the peculiar conditions of Central Asia in 1917 in the following manner: "You are confronted with a task which would require applying the general theory to specific conditions such as does not exist in the European countries. You must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism". (V.I. Lenin, "Address to the Communists in the East", 1968, p.76.)

As the Central Asia States were largely composed of peasants, the NEP (New Economic Policy) had important implications for Soviet nationalities policy, which was introduced by Lenin in 1921 to placate the peasantry and to consolidate Soviet rule. The ethnic population would have to be wooed through the medium of their native languages and cultures. The more liberal approach in the economic sphere was translated into the area of nationality policy. Therefore, Lenin's principles of nationality policy constituted a standard shield for non-Russians. This nationality policy of Lenin demonstrated his determination to exploit and mobilize every possible source of minority discontent in order to undermine the power of the autocracy, while at the same time preserving the integrity of the party itself against the danger of disintegration into its nationality components. (Merle Fainsod, 1969, p.55.)

Stalin's Nationality policy

On the issue of nationality policy, Stalin's approach was totally in contrast to that of Lenin. Stalin defined nation as a historically constituted community, with a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make up manifested in a common culture. Stalin refused to consider any other factors and pushed the Bolshevik interpretation of nationalism into a stereotypical way that was to create major problems in the future. (Ahmed Rashid, *op.cit*, p.28.) His nationality policies were

to set one republic and one ethnic group against another, underlines Rashid Ahmed.

On 30 December 1922, the Third Congress of the Soviets adopted the Treaty of Union which formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and under which the republics would enjoy autonomous, but not sovereign status. By 1922, the Soviets had already realized that the Tsarist administrative districts based on military-strategic and political exigencies were unacceptable any more. Sultan Galiev, a Tatar Muslim Communist holding a high position in the commissariat on Nationality Affairs, demanded the creation of an independent Muslim Red Army to give attention to local problems. Later he was arrested on Stalin's instruction for treason, Muslim nationalism and collaboration with other Muslim nationalities. There were disturbances in Khorezm Republic between Uzbeks and the Turkmen. Due to these problems, Stalin wanted to delimit the whole of Central Asia in 1924 on the basis of nationalities. He also tried to cut off Central Asia from any contract with the rest of the Islamic world. Stalin believed that Islam or Muslim nationalism would be a greater challenge to the newly established Soviet power in the region. In Stalin's view nationalism was the chief ideological obstacle to the training of Marxist cadres and creation of a Marxist vanguard in the border regions and republics. (Ahmed Rashid, *op.cit*, p.31.)

In January 1924, the Turkestan SSR was broken up and over a short period five separate republics came into existence the Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazak, Kyrgyz and Tajik Soviet socialist republics. On May 10, 1924 the recommendations of national commissions were scrutinized by the Nationality Delimitation Commission. It favored the establishment of full-fledged Uzbek and Turkmen national republics and the Tajik and Kyrgyz autonomous oblasts. The Territorial Commission concluded its work in September 1924. The Kyrgyzs who had formed only 10.8% of the population of the Turkestan ASSR, constituted 66% of the population of the newly organized Kara-Kyrgyz ASSR in Central Asia that was later converted into Kyrgyz ASSR in 1926. (Devendra Kaushik, *op.cit*, p.212.)

There are diverse views among pro and anti-Soviet writers regarding the motive for national delimitation. The Bolshevik believed that it would facilitate organization and planning. Another motive was that Turkestan was to become a Soviet showcase for the peoples of the East. This double role was always borne in mind by Lenin and Stalin. In June, 1923 Stalin had already reinforced this view and added that the Soviets wanted to transform Turkestan into a model region, into an advanced post for revolutionizing the East. (Steven Sabol, 1995, p.236.)

Another reason was that social and economic differentiation between the various Central Asian peoples made it difficult for the successful implementation of uniform regional policies, like industrialization, education and so on, that required mass support. The Bolsheviks also hoped that the formation of national states would temporarily satisfy the demands, and desire for national recognition, quelling many inter-ethnic animosities. Geoffrey Wheeler states that the aim was not only the communist desire to eliminate attachments for the old states but primarily to prevent a Pan-Turkic movement. Whatever may be the causes of reorganization, mainly based on linguistic divisions, the republics were created at a critical juncture of time. (Geoffry Wheeler, op.cit, p.98.)

Turkmenistan's accession to the Soviet Union in 1924 proved to be the major boost to the country's economic development due to the following three factors;

1. Construction of Kara-Kum Canal
2. Evacuation of the industrial enterprises during the World War II.
3. Large-scale exploration of gas and oil deposits.

Turkmenistan's natural conditions are extremely adverse with the desert covering most of its territory creating lack of arable land. Turkmenistan's natural conditions, on the other hand, were uniquely favourable to raw cotton, in which the

Bolsheviks sought to achieve self- sufficiency. (Alexandre Rephine, op.cit, p.7)

Thus, the Soviet government started channeling all-Union funds into the construction of the Kara-Kum Canal. The Canal was designed to be about 800km long, carrying water from the Amu-Darya across Southern Turkmenistan to replenish the flow of the Tejen and Murghab rivers. The construction Kara-Kum Canal was started in the 1960 and lasted for 22 years. The canal increased the area of arable land from about 300,000 hectares in 1940 to over 1.1 million hectares in 1986 the year when the canal construction was finished. More than half of that land was used for raw cotton cultivation, reflecting the Soviet planners' vision of Turkmenistan as the major supplier of cotton for the Soviet Union. (Ibid, p.8.) Turkmenistan specialized in the strategically important thin cotton fiber that is used for producing the parachute tissue and is an important ingredient to some of the explosives production processes as well. That sort of cotton fiber was only grown in Turkmenistan due to the climatic conditions.

The construction of the Canal spurred the cultivation of other crops as well, mostly vegetables, grapes and grains. Cotton, however, reached 70% of Turkmenistan's crop production in 1985, remaining the major agricultural output of the country until the end of the Soviet period. (Martha Olcott, 2000,p.12)

As a follow up action to the advance of the German army in the western regions of the USSR in the early 1940s, the Soviet government decided to evacuate the most significant industrial enterprises to the Central Asia and Siberia. Turkmenistan, however, was not capable of accommodating the large industrial enterprises that to a significant extent consisted of the military plants, due to the lack of mineral and energy resources, as well as the qualified labour force in comparison to Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan. Thus, Turkmenistan accommodated about twenty enterprises of middle size, the most significant of which were two oil-processing facilities from Azerbaijan and a metal processing plant from the Southern Russia. Most of the other evacuated enterprises produced textiles and furs or were training

facilities for the workers. Thus, in contrast to the other Central Asian republics, Turkmenistan did not find itself endowed with any substantial industrial base or military-industrial enterprises. (Alexandre Repkine, 2002, p.72)

In the years after the World War II, the Soviet government put minimum priority on the development of industry in Turkmenistan, pursuing what was later called the regionalization policy that gained popularity under Khrushchev, but which in fact was the means of ensuring the maximum extent of integration with the Soviet economy. Thus, although Turkmenistan was the key supplier of raw cotton within the Soviet Union, it only processed about 3% of cotton in its textile plants. The rest of Turkmen cotton was transported for processing to Russia that traditionally had a well-developed textile industry. That policy appears to be the key reason why textile enterprises in Turkmenistan remained in general underdeveloped both in terms of their equipment and technologies. The only highly developed tertiary industry in Turkmenistan during Soviet period was chemicals industry. Turkmenistan is relatively well endowed with mineral resources. Because of the fairly large transportation costs of the mineral raw materials, most of the associated chemical processing facilities must be located close to the deposits themselves. As a result, Turkmenistan's chemical enterprises remained fairly modern by the end of the Soviet period producing mineral fertilizers, synthetic detergents, chloride salts and bromide iron. (Jahangir Amuzegar, 1998, p.19)

When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he was faced with economic deterioration, a corrupt and command-bureaucratic system, large-scale military-industrial complex etc. His first aim was to bring genuine economic liberalization, but it was impossible without bringing any change in political sphere. So he announced his twin policies of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost' roughly denoting to restructuring and openness respectively.

These policies were adopted by the C.P.S.U and initiated in the 27th Party congress in February 1986. The programmes of 'Glasnost' took precedence over that

of 'perestroika'. But Glasnost was a means to the end, i.e., Perestroika or reconstruction of the system, especially modernization and democratization. The term Glasnost implies many things which are associated with freedom of speech and the press, the right to assemble and demonstrate, accessibility, opening up of laws and decisions to discussions, transparency of state bodies and openness of their activity, the right to information etc. (John Blaney and Mike Gfoeller.1993, p.487)

Glasnost spread like a fire in all areas of public life. A large measure of dissidence was already allowed and also the censorship of press, the obsessive secrecy at party meetings and deliberations were lifted. No restrictions on traveling were there. Direct dialing system, video cassette recorder and audio system, etc. greatly helped the hitherto closed people to have greater contact with the outside world. Yet, economic reforms did not succeed in solving the economic problems facing the country. Rather, in some sense, the problems were getting worse.

After the failure of perestroika, Gorbachev realized that economic reform should follow genuine political reform. Henceforth he changed his priorities by giving preference to political reform over economic reform. Fearing the opposition from within the Party, he started to bypass the party itself. Thus, instead of restructuring the Party first, he chose to concentrate on restructuring the state apparatus.

In 1985 Saparmurad Niyazov- a Gorbachev supporter - replaced the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan, M. Gapurov, who had been at the helm of the republic for 15 years. Niyazov was serving as first secretary of the Ashkhabad city party council when he was noticed by Moscow and invited to work at party headquarters in Moscow. He returned as the next leader of Turkmenistan. Niyazov was a good choice for many reasons - mostly because he did not have family ties in Turkmenistan. (Iraj Bashiri, 2001, p.59.) The new Turkmen leader supported perestroika and never questioned Gorbachev's actions. His stable position was in sharp contrast to the political chaos in neighbouring Central

Asian republics, which often changed leaders.

Based on national identity that survived during the decades of Soviet rule and by Gorbachev's policy of perestroika, Turkmenistan seemed to have found, as the first Central Asian republic, a clear position between nationalism and Islamism, the two major ideological currents in the whole of Central Asia. This unique way was closely connected with the person of the first President Saparmurat Niyazov who, as first among all party leaders in the Soviet republics understood to use the political vacuum under Gorbachev for establishing his own power. Saparmurat Niyazov originated from communist party apparatus. He was elected President of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic on 14 October 1990, and thus the first President of a Soviet Republic directly elected by his people. Already two months earlier, on 23 August 1990 the Parliament of Turkmenistan - also among the first Soviet Republics - had declared the Republic's sovereignty regarding legislation and natural resources. (Gregory Gleason, 1992, p.157.) Nevertheless Turkmenistan was far from being a protagonist in fighting for independence from the U.S.S.R. President Niyazov originally supported Gorbachev's idea of signing a new Union Treaty and underlined that Turkmenistan could not survive outside the Soviet Union.

Turkmen people voted in a referendum for independence, which was declared on 27 October 1991 by Parliament. On 16 December 1991 the former Communist Party was renamed Democratic Party of Turkmenistan and on 18 May 1992 a new constitution was passed in the parliament aimed at enlarging presidential power. On June 21, 1992 presidential elections took place and Saparmurat Niyazov was re-elected with 99.5 percent votes for a period of 10 years. As the last step within this first period of consolidation, parliamentary elections were held in autumn 1992. Within a short period of time, Niyazov successfully effected a new communist pattern of action almost without changing any representatives and started to build up, based on these old structures, a new independent republic' (Mert Bilgin, 2003, p.271)

Migration Trends

In 1989 about 45 percent of the population was classified as urban, a drop of 3 percent since 1979. Prior to the arrival of Russians in the late nineteenth century, Turkmenistan had very few urban areas, and many of the large towns and cities that exist today were developed after the 1930s. Ashgabad, the capital and largest city in Turkmenistan, has a population of about 420,000. The second largest city, Chardzhou on the Amu Darya, has about 165,000 people. Other major cities are Turkmenbashi on the Caspian Sea coast, Mary in the southeast, and Dashauz in the northeast. Because much of the Russian population only came to Turkmenistan in the Soviet period, separate Russian quarters or neighbourhoods did not develop in Turkmenistan's cities as they did elsewhere in Central Asia. This fact, combined with a relatively small Slavic population, has led to integration of Turkmen and Slavs in neighborhoods and housing projects. Apart from the outflow of small numbers of Russians immediately following Turkmenistan's independence, neither out-migration nor immigration, is a significant factor for Turkmenistan's population. (*Turkmenistan migration Trends*, (Online: Web), Accessed on 21st April, 2007, <http://www.1uptravel.com/countrv-guide-stu.../turkmeniata19.htm..6/7/2003>. p. 1.) In 1992 there were 199,035 emigrants from Turkmenistan to the Russian Federation In the table mentioned below the main ethnic groups of Turkmenistan are mentioned:

Table No.1 MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS OF TURKMENISTAN (2003)

Group	Population	Percent and trends	Linguistic group	Religions	Main area of settlement
Turkmen	3,615,000	78.5	Turkic	Muslim	North and east
Uzbek	453,000	9.8	Turkic	Muslim	North and east
Russian	240,000	5.2	Slavic	Russian Orthodox	Urban centers and west Balkan province
Kazakh	98,000	2.1	Turkic	Muslim	Northwest

Azeri	37,000	0.8	Turkic	Muslim	West Balkan province
Tatar	33,000	0.7	Turkic	Muslim	Urban centers
Baloch	30,000	0.77	Iranian	Muslim	Southeast Mary Province
Ukranian	26,000	0.6	Slavic	Orthodox Christina	Urban centers
Others	73,000	1.6			
Total	4,603,000	100.0			

Source: The World Fact book, <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

Russian Influence

Russian culture, which impacted Turkmen culture and identity during the Soviet era, is still influential. Those who are currently middle aged, especially the political elite, were educated in the Soviet period and were strongly influenced by Russian culture. Although Turkmen is developing as a vernacular language, the Russian language is still used in state bureaucracy, universities, courts and even daily life. Most members of the Russian minority and Russophones, who are ethnically Armenian, Azeri or Turkmen, do not know the Turkmen language. Since the declaration of independence, the share of Russian minority population decreased from 10 percent to 7 percent and that of Uzbeks remained as 9 percent. (Ahmet T. Kuru, 2002, p.81.) The members of the Russian minority, especially those who do not know the Turkmen language, have faced an alienation process since the declaration of independence and the introduction of the new Language Law.

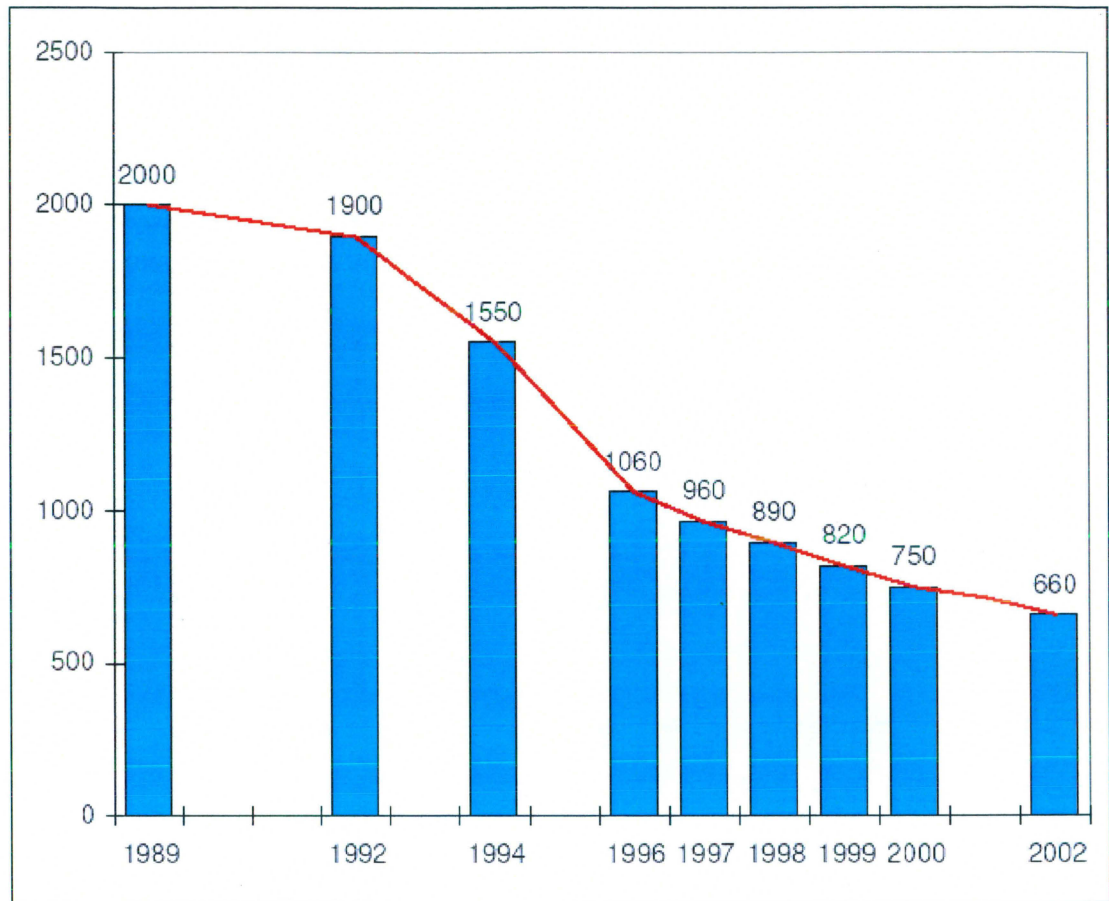
The main internal source of Russian cultural influence is the Turkmen schools which use Russian as the medium of instruction. Although their number (55 in 1998-

99) is fewer than other Turkmen schools, they are effective in providing education in important cities. Another significant means of Russian cultural influence in Turkmenistan is the TV Channel, ORT, which belongs to Russian Federation and also broadcasts on the Turkmen TV System. The Turkmen government imposed restrictions on this channel for financial and ethical reasons. Given the limitation and the unsatisfactory programmes of Turkmen TV channels (TMT 1-11) many Turkmen have bought satellite dishes. ORT and other Russian channels as well as the Turkish channels, are watched in Turkmenistan via satellite dishes. The Russian channels, however, have a greater advantage in this competition than the Turkish ones, because of the quality and the familiarity with the Russian language in Turkmen society.

Russia and Turkmenistan agreed on 20 December 1993, upon two treaties which would go a long way towards removing a number of obstacles of the development of closer and calmer relations between the two states. (Dianne L. Smith, 1996, p.27) The first treaty established the principle of 'dual nationality', a crucial factor in ensuring the protection and legal status of Russian citizens working or serving in Turkmenistan. Consequently, Turkmenistan is the first former Soviet republic within the CIS to recognize the principle of dual citizenship. President Boris Yeltsin became the first Russian citizen to be presented with a Turkmen passport. The second treaty provided a legal basis for the dispatch, if necessary, of Russian troops to defend Turkmenistan's border with Iran and Afghanistan. Former President Niyazov recognized that Turkmenistan cannot imagine its future without Russia. (Ibid,p..28)

Figure No. 1

Migration flows between CIS countries, 1989-2002 (in thousands)



Source: Migration Trends in Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2001-2002. Review 2002 International Organization for Migration

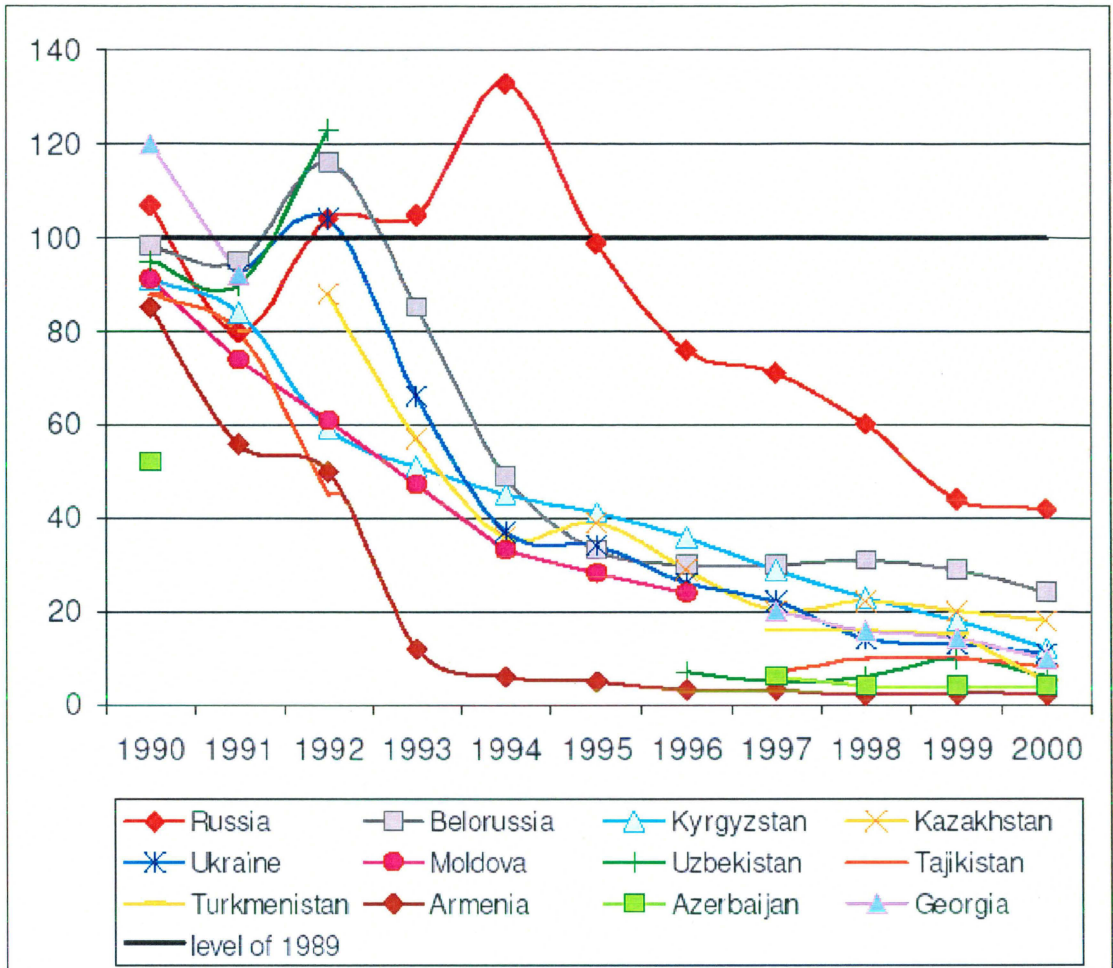
The break-up of the USSR had its effect because of the interruption in what were previously seen to be legitimate rights: a choice of residence and citizenship, the inheritance of property, and credit for past work and service towards a state pension. Such legal ambiguities have affected millions of people. Indifference towards former fellow citizens is being overcome only slowly, and it is further complicated by separatism, anti-immigrant hostility, and mercantilist policies in the new states. As more and more time passes since the break-up, the new country's legislations drift

further apart, and it becomes even more difficult for its former citizens to obtain the citizenship of their host country and affirm their labour and property rights. Authorities of many CIS countries don't understand the role that migration processes and mobile populations play in the development of a market economy. They instead establish stringent requirements to citizenship, erect barriers to migration between the CIS countries, and make appealing declarations that they don't put into practice. As a result, migrants remain one of the least legally protected population groups in post-Soviet countries.

Some of the most serious causes for the decrease in mobility were the drop in economic production, reduction in the number of jobs, destruction of technical- and specialized secondary educational systems, and decreasing stipends. All of this has reduced opportunities for young people, who normally constitute the largest share of migrants. For example, among citizens of CIS countries coming to Russia, the share of young people in the most mobile age group, 14 to 29 years old, dropped from 70% (and sometimes more) of the total in the 1980's to 27% in 2002. Population mobility has also been strongly restrained by a slowly developing housing market, a lack of housing loans, and an inadequate mechanism of protecting owners' rights. (Valery Tishkov, Zhanna Zayinchkovskaya, Galina Vitkovskaya, 2005, p.2)

Figure No. 2

Immigration flows between CIS countries 1989-2000 (in per cent)

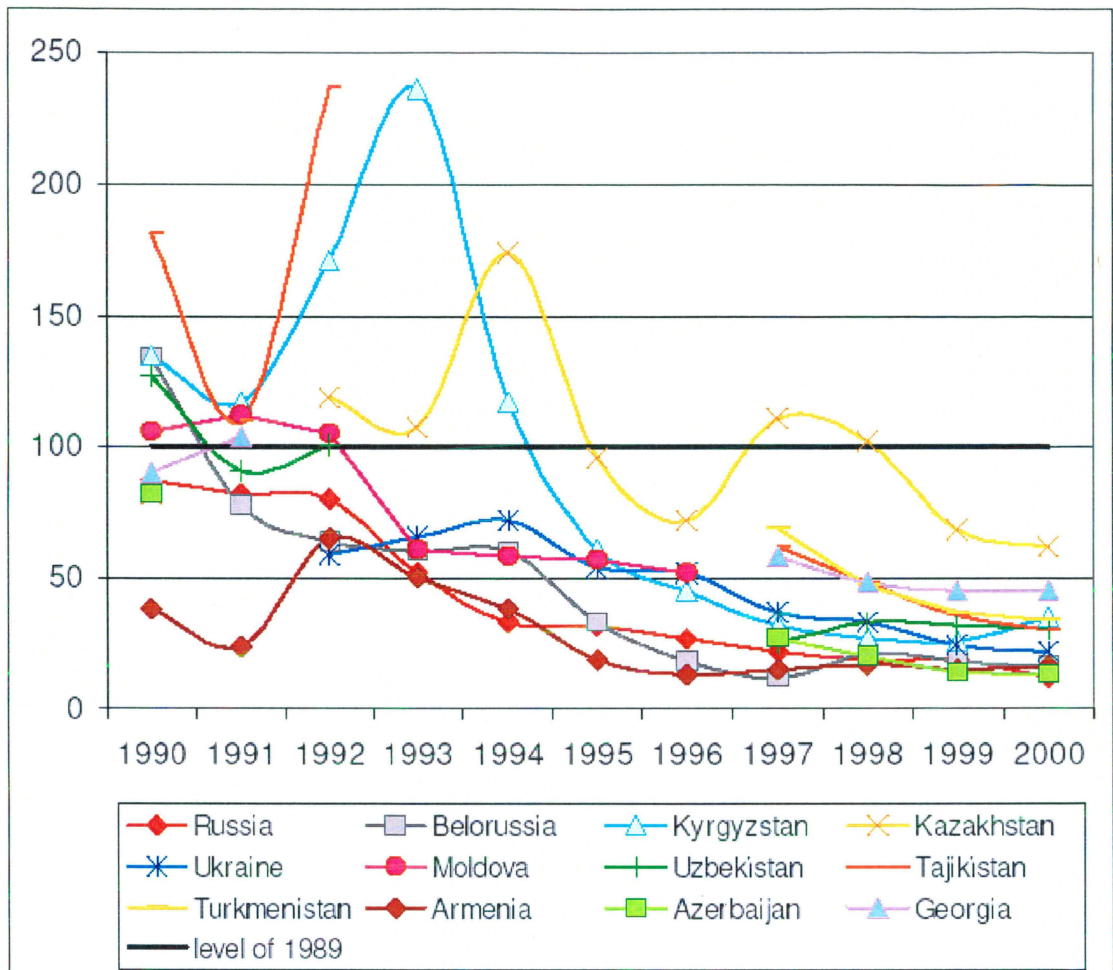


Source: CIS countries national statistics data, except Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan; information for the period 1997-2000 was obtained on the basis of statistics of correlative countries

Population movement affected all CIS countries' immigration and emigration. Immigration to all countries simultaneously decreased, and only in Russia was a short period of growth noted in 1994 (Fig. 2). Among CIS countries between 1989-2000 immigration decreased least of all in Russia, yet even here it has dropped by more than half. At the opposite extreme is Armenia, where immigration has been at a standstill since 1993. In Belarus, immigration has decreased by three-fourths, in Kazakhstan by four-fifths, in Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan by nine-tenths, and in the other countries it has stopped. (Ibid, p.4)

Figure No. 3

Emigration flows CIS countries 1989-2000 (as percentage of 1989)



Source: CIS countries national statistics data, except Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan; information for the period was obtained on the basis of statistics of correlative countries

Emigration, compared with immigration, has been more affected by the countries' circumstances, such as refugees fleeing armed conflicts or an increase in repatriation (Fig. 3). After an early increase, emigration decreased by the end of 1990s in Russia by nearly nine-tenths, and from Kazakhstan it decreased by 40%. A comparison of migration trends shows that the situations in the CIS countries are similar despite their political systems. The main vector of migration within the CIS countries has been directed towards Russia (Table 1), largely because of pulling cultural factors and because the country's better economic situation. (Ibid,p5)

Table No.2**Population Change in Central Asia by Ethnicity, 1989-1996**

	Percent		Thousands	
	1989	1996	1989	1996
Tajikistan				
Tajiks	62.1	68.1	3172	4006
Uzbeks	23.4	24.4	1198	1435
Russians	7.6	3.4	388	199
Others	6.9	4.1	350	244
Uzbekistan				
Uzbeks	71	76.6	14142	17614
Russians	8.3	5.6	1653	1280
Tatars	3.3	1.5	657	343
Jews	0.5	0.1	94	18
Germans	0.2	0.1	40	22
Others	16.7	16.3	3318	3730
Kazakhstan				
Kazaks	39.5	47.0	6535	7781
Russians	37.7	33.9	6228	5615
Germans	5.8	2.6	957	426
Others	17	16.4	2817	2721
Kyrgyzstan				
Kyrgyz	52.0	59.9	2230	2721
Russians	21.4	15.6	917	707
Uzbeks	12.8	14.1	550	640
Ukrainians	2.5	1.6	108	73
Germans	2.4	0.5	101	21
Jews	0.1	0.0	6	2
Others	8.9	8.3	379	381
Turkmenistan				

Turkmen	72.0	75.4	2536	3163
Russians	9.5	6.6	334	278
Others	18.5	18	653	757

Source: Tim Heleniak. The Changing Nationality Composition of the Central Asian and Transcaucasian States." *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 38, No. 6: 357-378.

Several hundreds of thousands of Central Asians have left their homes for other CIS countries in search of better work opportunities. Many leave their families behind and send remittances back home. Russia is the most popular destination country for such labor migrants. It is estimated that over 160,000 Tajik citizens work in Russia, primarily in the construction sector and open markets where unskilled labor is in demand. They tend to concentrate in Russia, St. Petersburg, Samara, Volgograd and major cities of Western Siberia. Overall, anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000 Tajik citizens are labor migrants in other Central Asian countries and the Russian Federation. Similarly, the Kyrgyz also migrate in large numbers to the Russian Federation for work. In addition, it is estimated that 6, 00,030 to 50, 00,031 Kyrgyz migrants are working in Kazakhstan. Many of them work on tobacco plantations, often living in miserable conditions and abused by the plantation owners. The United States is also a growing destination for emigration. Over 500 Kyrgyz citizens are estimated to be working in the New York area, as nannies, maids, care-givers to senior citizens and other low-level jobs. Typically, these migrants arrive in the United States on tourist visas and stay to work for a few years with the intention of saving their wages to take back home and support families in Kyrgyzstan. ("Overview of the Migration systems in the CIS countries", (Online: web), Accessed on 29th April, 2007, http://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPDWebsite/Budapest_Process/CIS/Overview_of_the_Migration_Systems_in_the_CIS_countries.pdf, p. 259)

Internal migration is also an acute problem in Central Asia. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the breakdown of industry, the collective farm system and the rural infrastructure of the region. Unemployment soared as land was privatized, and jobs that were traditionally available at collective farms disappeared. Salaries for teachers, doctors and others became irregular, and many schools and

hospitals were forced to close. Even those institutions that remain open, experience chronic short-ages of personnel. These circumstances forced rural residents to move to the cities in search of employment and educational opportunities.

Internal migration includes internally displaced persons, who have to move within the territory of their country. For example, over 100, 00035 persons were displaced during the 1980s and 1990s because of the environmental disaster in the Aral Sea region. In addition, over 161,000 persons were forced to leave the Semipalatinsk area, a nuclear testing site. In Kyrgyzstan, at least 17,000 people had to migrate between 1992 and 1997 because of landslides, mudflows, floods and earthquakes. Overall, according to the estimates of the United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at least 250,000 people have been forced to leave their homes in Central Asia because of ecological disasters. (Stanislav Chernyavsky, 2006, p.1)

Overall, it is likely that migration in Central Asia will continue as regional economies deteriorate. Since channels for legal labour migration are limited, irregular migration is likely to prevail. The consequences of this migration are serious for the countries concerned, as well as for labor migrants themselves. The most conspicuous form of irregular migration is human trafficking. The trafficking of human beings for the purposes of sexual exploitation, which is becoming a salient characteristic of migration dynamics in Central Asia, is the most onerous form of migration throughout the region. (Saltanat Sulaimanova, 1991, p.1)

Russia-Turkmenistan Relations Since Independence

Since 1991, the Russian federation has always considered Turkmenistan as an area of interest in terms of strategic and economic linkages reflected in the long cherished historic connections, closer location and the presence of a large Russian Diaspora. Russia has always reacted to the attempts at changing the status quo and security arrangements. Several regional experts and scholars share a view that a

combination of interests, power and accessibility will make Russia a natural choice for exercising influence and underwriting the regional security of Central Asia and Turkmenistan in particular. Even after loosing its superpower status, Russia still is an influential player at the regional and global level. However, the evolving pattern of regional diplomacy and allied security, the slowly intruding European Union and their allies and the growing influence of China in the region has got a very significant impact and Russia can not afford to be a bystander to the changing military and strategic balance of power in its backyard. (Arun Sahgal, 2004, p.1)

Since independence, Russia has considered the Central Asian region a buffer zone against any external threats whatsoever. Russia has gradually evolved a whole range of objectives and strategic interest in order to deal with these concerns:

1. Russia wants to transform the region into politically and economically viable states with very friendly policies towards itself.
2. Russia also wants to maintain and further strengthen its role in the system of intergovernmental political and economic relations.
3. It wants to extend its institutionalized integration pattern among the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States.
4. It wants to secure Russian economic interests in the region.
5. It wants to maintain its hold over regional energy resources, in addition to Caspian oil transportation routes that will be of advantage to Russia.
6. It wants to counter the threat of religious extremism while encouraging the prevention of drug trafficking and arms smuggling.
7. Ensuring Central Asian ecological security, especially concerning environmental disasters in the Aral and Caspian Sea region is also its top priority.
8. Protecting the rights and other issues related with the ethnic Russians in the near abroad has also been on the Russian agenda. (Ibid, p.2)

Coordination of competing energy suppliers is a key aspect of Russia's strategy to maintain and build upon its dominant position as an energy empire in

relation to Europe. No where is this more apparent than its hold on Central Asia's export routes for its vast energy supplies, which, if at once unleashed in free and fair competition with Russia, would reduce Russia's ability to deploy the energy weapon as a foreign policy tool, and would significantly increase energy security not only for Europe, but also for China. ("Russia's Capture on Central Asian Energy", (Online: Web), Accessed on May 1st, 2007, http://www.robertamsterdam.com/2007/05/russias_capture_of_central_asia.htm , p.2.)

Niyazov announced an agreement with Iran in 1994 to begin a Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey-Bulgaria gas pipeline. The pipeline was expected to extend 2500 miles (4000 kilometers) with an initial capacity of 15 billion cubic meters annually, later to be expanded to 28 billion cubic meters. The partners estimated the cost at \$8 billion, with Iran financing \$3.5 billion to start construction. The U.S. vigorously opposed the concept. In 1995, President Bill Clinton issued an executive order, which President George W. Bush extended in March 2004, prohibiting U.S. companies and their foreign subsidiaries from conducting business with Iran. Furthermore, the U.S. Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 imposed mandatory sanctions on foreign companies that invested more than \$20 million per year in Iranian oil and natural gas sectors. With Russian and U.S. opposition, the project which was scheduled to begin in 1998 has not materialized. (Kathleen J. Hancock, 2006, p.72)

The second rather modest proposal has been the only one to materialise. In 1997, Turkmenistan and Iran completed a short connecting export pipeline between their two states. The \$190 million Korpeje-Kord Kuly pipeline includes a 25 years contract under which Iran will purchase between 5 and 6 billion cubic meters annually. With this deal, Turkmenistan became the first Central Asian state to bypass Russia in exporting natural gas via a pipeline

The third pipeline was a revival of the first proposal. In 1998, Turkmenistan's Minister of oil and gas announced that the state was "determined to transfer its oil and gas trough Iran." The proposed pipeline would go south into Iran and then west to

Turkey where it could reach worldwide markets. Based on standing policy toward Iran, the U.S. immediately opposed this idea, as it had the 1994 proposal. As with the initial project, Turkmenistan and Iran have made no progress on the pipeline. (Ibid, p. 73)

At first glance it may seem as though Russia's dominion over Central Asia is beginning to crack. The Uzbek pipeline will definitely create some undesired competition between Russia and China, but Russia still views Asia as a secondary consumer to Europe. The proposal to expand the CPC, which is majority owned by Chevron and is the only majority privately owned pipeline passing through Russian territory, may seem at first glance like a setback, but indeed scholars have argued that Kazakhstan is pushing the CPC expansion in exchange for giving up on the Caspian route - which would be a huge blow to Western interests. ("Russia's Capture on Central Asian Energy", (Online: Web), Accessed on May 1st, 2007, http://www.robertamsterdam.com/2007/05/russias_capture_of_central_asia.htm, p, 1)

It follows from comments made by the Russian side that Russia is offering Kazakhstan the opposite choice – an increase in oil shipments to the EU through Russia. Putin made exactly the same proposal to Kazak President Nazarbaev concerning gas from the Prikaspiiskoe deposit. In April 2007 during his visit to Moscow, new President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov proposed that Russia participate in the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, an alternative to the Prikaspiisky. There is a principle difference between the two. The Prikaspiisky pipeline, which does not cross the Caspian Sea, would connect to Gazprom export pipelines, while the Trans-Caspian, which crosses the Caspian but not Russia, would connect to the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum line to Turkey. (Ibid, p.2)

All things considered, the compromise between Russia and Kazakhstan will be for Russia to give into oil issues and Kazakhstan in gas. But Turkmenistan has to be included in that formula. The Turkmen president may let his views be known about how and how much Russia should pay for Turkmenistan not to participate in projects that are unprofitable for Gazprom. The solution to that problem was to be

worked out at the summit of CIS and Eastern European leaders in Warsaw. An agreement among Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan on oil and gas is unprofitable for that group as a whole. (Ibid, p.3)

Controlling Turkmenistan's energy flow is perhaps even more important for Russia than the Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan issues. Turkmenistan has gas reserves of 2.9 trillion cubic meters, according to the British Petroleum (BP) annual statistical review of world energy. Annual exports are about 60 billion cubic meters. Following the death of the former President Saparmurat Niyazov, in 2006, a brief opportunity was opened up for Europe to gain direct access to Turkmen gas. However, it seems that Russia is at present winning the battle, and will continue to purchase all of Turkmenistan's gas to ensure that Europe remains dependent on Gazprom. ("Russia's Capture on Central Asian Energy", (Online: Web), Accessed on May 1st, 2007, http://www.robertamsterdam.com/2007/05/russias_capture_of_central_asi.htm,^{p.2)}

Turkmenistan's recent commitment to expand energy cooperation with Russia could significantly strengthen Russia's position in the struggle for control over Central Asia's natural resources. Moreover, Russia hopes to negotiate construction of a new pipeline that would carry gas from Turkmenistan into Europe across Russian territory. Undoubtedly, such a deal would augment Russia's regional energy supply dominance and will deliver another blow to America's ongoing attempts to control it. (Sergei Blagov, 2006, p.1)

USA would like to see Turkmen gas delivered through a pipeline across the Caspian Sea to the West, tapping into the gas pipelines that cross the South Caucasus and bypass Russia. That would meet a US and European strategy of securing sources of crude and gas outside the Middle East, and drawing Caspian states away from Russia and closer to the West. (Ibid, p.2)

Russia is consistently able to outflank Europe and other consumer countries in redirecting Central Asia's energy flows. There are very clear security concerns given Central Asia's geographic position. Secondly, Russia is willing to throw in a lot of

reciprocal infrastructure investments, and also has the advantage of leveraging these countries by offering significant assistance in nuclear power development through state agencies Rosatom and Atomstroieexport. Some see that nuclear power assistance as just yet another arm of Russian energy imperialism.

But perhaps the most compelling motivation for Central Asian leaders to go with Russia, according to Robert Amsterdam, is tolerance for corruption. In terms of rational decision making, the long-term move for these countries would be to diversify their energy infrastructure, and send oil and gas to as many sources as possible. In fact there are reasons for which they want more customers for their energy resources. But most of these leaders are only concerned with the short term, and often look to exploit the resources for personal gains. They also fear that close collaboration with the West on energy could have some extra problems, requiring them to loosen their hold on power, respect human rights, and improve social policies. ("Russia's Capture on Central Asian Energy", (Online:Web), Accessed on May 1st, 2007, http://www.robertamsterdam.com/2007/05/russias_capture_of_central_asi.htm, p.3)

One of the major problems in assessing the Turkmen energy sector is the lack of reliable data. Turkmenistan has always been very secretive about the exact size of its oil and gas deposits, and there exists serious questions about the actual size of the country's reserves. Niyazov refused to allow outside and independent geological surveys, and a recent assessment was never released. Since Niyazov's death, it has often been repeated that Turkmenistan holds the fifth largest reserves of natural gas in the world. The authorities in Turkmenistan claim an even higher place, and assert that gas sales have fueled massive growth in recent years, with GDP allegedly growing at 15 to 20 percent per year. Most recognized assessments place Turkmenistan's proven natural gas reserves at about 2.9 trillion cubic meters. Hence, if the country is opened up for thorough exploration, major new areas of benefit are possible. While there are no independently confirmable production figures, Turkmenistan is understood to produce approximately 60 billion cubic meters (Bcm) of gas per year which is somewhat less than in the late Soviet era. (Christopher Boucek , 2007, p.1)

Turkmenistan's ability to exploit and export its natural gas is constrained by its geography and export options, primarily the routes and the capacity of those systems. There exist two export routes for Turkmen gas: northwards to Russia or to Iran to the south. Of these two routes, the majority of export infrastructure is focused towards Russia, a legacy of the Soviet Union's integrated pipeline network. Turkmenistan exports roughly 50 Bcm per year, mostly to Russia. A lesser quantity of the production is for Iran.

Turkmenistan's geo-strategic importance, bordering Afghanistan and Iran, is increased by its vast energy resources and the central role of energy exports in European energy security. The export of natural gas generates up to 85 percent of Turkmenistan's annual revenue. Turkmen gas is also essential for Russia; exports from Turkmenistan provide energy to major portions of southern Russia, thus allowing Russia to meet its income generating export demands in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, as the production decreases in Russia's main gas fields due to a combination of older infrastructure and a lack of investment, Turkmen gas allows Gazprom to meet mounting European energy demands. Russia is the source of nearly 50 percent of Europe's total gas imports, European demand is set to double in the next 30 years. Gazprom's ability to meet those demands is a result of continued access to Turkmen gas. (Ibid,p.2)

Under the terms of a negotiation, Russia agreed to raise the price it pays for Turkmen gas from \$65 to \$100 per 1000 cubic feet. Even at these rates, Turkmen gas is very reasonable as Gazprom in turn sells it on to consumers such as Ukraine at \$ 230. Gas being the prime income generating source, both the new Turkmen government and Russia are extremely dependent on the continued flow of gas exports. For the post-Niyazov authorities, access to export revenues will allow the patronage systems put in place by Niyazov to continue, thus maintaining the status quo among the various competing interests at work in the country. This provides a significant incentive for the centers of power within the security establishment, and

various bureaucratic mafias throughout the government to continue to see benefits in coming together and working to maintain the system.

For Russia and Gazprom, a compliant and likeminded government in Turkmenistan, which ensures that the gas keeps flowing, is the main priority. Moscow's increasingly linked foreign, economic, and energy policies rely on continued access to Central Asian hydrocarbons, particularly Turkmen gas. At the time of president Niyazov's death, Russia was at the best position to influence the unfolding events in Turkmenistan. The relationships between the Russian secret services (KGB) and their Turkmen counterparts were said to be close, and this could very well be the means by which Russia is able to lend support to the people supposed to control the transition process in Turkmenistan. Furthermore, prior to Niyazov's death, there had been allegations that Gazprom and elements of the Russian security services (KGB) were working together' (*Ibid*, p.5)

In the past, Niyazov had sought to decrease his country's reliance on Russia by entering into export discussions with the Chinese and others. Many analysts believe that Niyazov signed contracts to provide more gas than Turkmenistan could produce, stating that Turkmenistan simply does not have the current ability to increase its production and export capacity without major investments.

In April 2006, Niyazov and Chinese Premier Hu Jintao signed an agreement under which Turkmenistan would sell Beijing 30 bcm per year for 30 years. The primary agreement also called for the construction of a 2,000 km pipeline at a cost of \$10 billion that would cross the territory of two other countries before it reached western China. One of these, Uzbekistan, may or may not be inclined to facilitate transit. While the details of the Turkmen-China deal remained unclear, according to some scholars, it is uncertain if the fields proposed to supply the gas for this contract are able to perform this role. (*Martha Brill Olcott, 2004, p.12*)

One possibility, the Dauletabad field, has been discussed as a possible feed for

other pipeline projects, including the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, although doubts exist whether Turkmenistan would be ready to provide its one of the gas fields. Niyazov's negotiations with the Chinese may have been part of his attempts to pressure Gazprom to agree to a price hike. Along with the threat of a possible suspension of continued gas exports to Russia, Turkmenistan has secured a 54 percent rate increase. While in principle this shows the extent to which Russian gas exports are dependent upon continued access to Turkmen gas, it is believed that the contract amount existed only in the formal format as an excuse for Niyazov. According to some measure, the amount which Russia pays is actually lower than the usual. (Ibid, p.13)

Twelve years after independence, Turkmenistan has made little progress in maximizing the economic impact of its vast gas reserves. Having spent nearly ten years trying to reduce dependence on marketing gas through Russia, Niyazov signed a long- term agreement with Russia's Gazprom, which ensures Turkmen deliveries to the Russian pipeline system for the next three decades. Russia, thus, remains the single largest partner of Turkmenistan in the energy sector.

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