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Contents

Analytical Articles

CHECHEN UNITS DEPLOYED IN EASTERN UKRAINE 3
Emil Souleimanov

**SHANGHAI SUMMIT MARKS DEEPENING
CHINA-KAZAKHSTAN ECONOMIC TIES** 7
Richard Weitz

CHINA LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN AGAINST UIGHUR MILITANCY 11
Jacob Zenn

REFORMING GEORGIA'S POLICE IN THE POST-SAAKASHVILI ERA 14
Erica Marat and Deborah Sutton

Field Reports

**RIOTS IN TAJIKISTAN'S GBAO RAISES FEARS
OF BROADER DESTABILIZATION** 18
Kirgizbek Kanunov

KYRGYZ GOVERNMENT APPROVES CUSTOMS UNION ROAD MAP 21
Arslan Sabyrbekov

ELECTION OBSERVERS SENTENCED IN AZERBAIJAN 23
Mina Muradova

SCO-CSTO MERGER RAISED AT DUSHANBE CONFERENCE 25
Oleg Salimov

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Submission Guidelines:

Analytical Articles require a three to four sentence Key Issue introduction to the article based on a news hook. Rather than a general, overarching analysis, the article must offer considered and careful judgment supported with concrete examples. The ideal length of analytical articles is between 1,100 and 1,500 words. The articles are structured as follows:

KEY ISSUE: A short 75-word statement of your conclusions about the issue or news event on which the article focuses.

BACKGROUND: 300-450 words of analysis about what has led up to the event or issue and why this issue is critical to the region. Include background information about the views and experiences of the local population.

IMPLICATIONS: 300-450 words of analysis of the ramifications of this event or issue, including where applicable, implications for the local people's future.

CONCLUSIONS: 100-200 words that strongly state your conclusions about the impact of the event or issue.

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Those interested in joining *The Analyst's* pool of authors to contribute articles, field reports, or contacts of potential writers, please send your CV to: <scornell@jhu.edu> and suggest some topics on which you would like to write.

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CHECHEN UNITS DEPLOYED IN EASTERN UKRAINE

Emil Souleimanov

News has recently spread of the involvement of Chechens in the Ukraine crisis. According to numerous eyewitnesses, members of Chechen elite units, commonly known as kadyrovtsy, were spotted in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk where they were reportedly deployed in combat against local Ukrainian troops. Soon, sources in Chechnya started informing of dozens of corpses of Chechens being transported from Ukraine back to this North Caucasian republic. The participation of the kadyrovtsy units in military operations outside the North Caucasus indicates a novel trend that could have broad security implications transcending the region's borders.

BACKGROUND: In fact, kadyrovtsy were deployed to Ukraine even before the fighting in the country's east started a few weeks ago. According to various sources, Chechen units were part of the Russian troops that took control of Crimea's strategic crossroads in March. Back then, kadyrovtsy were predominantly stationed in the eastern Crimean town of Feodosia, with some detachments being spotted in various other locations across the peninsula. Yet, owing to the non-violent occupation of Crimea, Chechen units saw no combat in March and the recent fighting in the Donetsk province was a milestone in this regard. Allegations that Chechens are involved in clashes in eastern Ukraine have recurred frequently, though they were never confirmed by independent sources. Yet the involvement of Chechens in the Donetsk province became obvious a few days ago. Firstly, Ukrainian authorities claimed to have destroyed a group comprising dozens of Chechens in fierce clashes around Donetsk International Airport on May 27. Soon, various sources in Chechnya

began informing that dozens of corpses of kadyrovtsy were being transported to the republic. According to the Caucasus Knot, only in the period of May 28-29, between 35 and 45 dead Chechens who reportedly participated in the fighting in Eastern Ukraine were brought to their native towns and villages and buried without much publicity.

Chechnya's President Ramzan Kadyrov's behavior deserves particular attention. He has on several occasions distanced himself from news that Chechens are involved in the Ukraine crisis, but has nevertheless repeatedly asserted that should the circumstances necessitate it and Putin give an explicit order, Chechens would readily volunteer to Ukraine to fight "fascists and banderovites." In a manner typical of him, Kadyrov has boasted that should the Chechens have been deployed in the Ukraine crisis, they would have "long conquered Kyiv."

Some sources suggest that Chechen authorities have exerted immense pressure on Chechen youngsters within Chechnya and in cities of Russia proper to volunteer to Ukraine. Chechen



authorities have allegedly gone so far as to open recruitment centers in Grozny, Achkhoy-Martyan, Znamenskoye, and Gudermes, while those resisting recruitment have been deemed “cowards.” Caucasian Knot also quotes a local source according to which, in order to encourage recruitment to the Ukraine battlefield, which is rather unpopular among Chechens, authorities promise around US\$350 a day to any Chechen volunteering to the Ukraine conflict. Still, upon the arrival of dozens of bodies of slain Chechens in the republic, Kadyrov has somewhat modified his rhetoric, mentioning on May 31 that 14 natives of Chechnya were deployed to Ukraine, of whom one was killed and four injured. Nonetheless, Kadyrov maintained that rumors of kadyrovtsy units being deployed to Ukraine are “absolutely untrue,” and that armed Chechens located in the republic are mere volunteers.

IMPLICATIONS: The deployment of Chechen units in the Eastern Ukraine clashes has engendered both discomfort and concern among Ukrainian authorities and troops. Understandably, this deployment is a strong indicator of Moscow’s direct involvement in Ukraine’s internal conflict. The assertions of some

commentators pointing to the “uncontrollability” of kadyrovtsy are naive at the best. In fact, the kadyrovtsy are strictly subordinated to the Chechen authorities in general and to Kadyrov in particular. Secondly, due to their reputation as fierce and ruthless warriors, the deployment of Chechen units is having a strong psychological impact on and beyond the battlefield, while their extensive experience of fighting small wars is in stark contrast to the hitherto unconvincing performance of the inexperienced Ukrainian troops. The kadyrovtsy constitute a significant force of around seven thousand and if deployed in eastern Ukrainian battlefields in large numbers, they could significantly influence the course and outcome of the ongoing conflict.

Depending on the kadyrovtsy’s performance in the Ukraine conflict, the Kremlin may increasingly seek to deploy them in the most controversial operations both within and outside Chechnya and the North Caucasus. Moscow is apparently distancing itself from straightforward interventions outside Russia’s borders. Instead opting for “masked occupation” techniques, the deployment an experienced, reputed, devoted, yet presumably “informal” paramilitary-style force in the form of kadyrovtsy is well suited to the Kremlin’s strategy and rhetoric.

By using the kadyrovtsy, the Kremlin can claim it has nothing to do with their deployment, pointing to their “uncontrollable” volunteering to conflict zones. The Kremlin can assert that Kadyrov as a local strongman and

the head of a “subject of the Federation” has his own agenda for which it should not – and cannot – be held accountable. Accordingly, Moscow can downplay controversial operations in the conflict zones – including the intimidation and blackmail of the internal opposition, journalists, and international observers, practices in which the kadyrovtsy have rich experience – as the “autonomous” activities of Chechen volunteers.

Instead, Moscow can point to the “cultural peculiarities” of the “Chechen way of warfare,” an argument episodically utilized by pro-Moscow observers and officials to explain the massive use of violence by kadyrovtsy against the relatives of local insurgents. While Russian secret services have frequently used these intimidation-based strategies in both Crimea and eastern Ukraine to silence internal opposition to the Russian occupation, the fact that “Chechen butchers” are deployed in the fighting might render their psychological impact even stronger. Symptomatic in this regard is Slovyansk’s self-styled pro-Russian mayor Vyacheslav Ponomaryov’s recent assertion that the Chechens, “non-Slavic resistance fighters” who have “ignored [his order] not to go anywhere for a week,” are to be blamed for the recent disappearance of the OSCE monitors in the Luhansk province.

The deployment of kadyrovtsy units is also an important explanation for the significant autonomy that Putin has allowed Kadyrov in Chechnya and the North Caucasus; for Moscow’s

tolerance if not encouragement of Kadyrov’s often extravagant and ill-bred behavior; and for Kadyrov’s remaining in his Grozny office against all odds. Kadyrov can be considered as a paramilitary version of Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who figures as Putin’s evil alter ego in that he explicitly voices what many Kremlin hawks think but hesitate to say openly. In contrast to Zhirinovsky and his rhetoric, Kadyrov appears to be a “man of deeds.” The mere threat that the Kremlin might deploy Kadyrov and his armed associates in the service of their Moscow overlords can serve to intimidate potential opposition to Putin in the North Caucasus as well as in Russia proper and beyond.

CONCLUSIONS: It would be naive to think that Kadyrov pursues his own policy in Ukraine. After devastating counterinsurgency campaigns that have left thousands of fellow Chechens injured, humiliated, and dead, and their houses burned, Kadyrov has acquired scores of enemies in blood feud in Chechnya. While the insurgency movement has dwindled to dozens, in large part due to Kadyrov’s cruel yet effective policy of liquidating insurgents’ relatives and supporters, much larger numbers of ordinary Chechens have postponed retaliation for better times. Should Kadyrov be ousted – and lose the backing of both Moscow and his kadyrovtsy units – then his days, as well as those of his close relatives, would most likely be numbered.

After the liquidation of most of the Yamadayev brothers several years ago,

the disbanding of the Yamadayevs' Vostok battalion, which seems to form the cornerstone of the kadyrovtsy units now deployed in eastern Ukraine, showed the relative ease by which yamadayevoys incarnated into kadyrovtsy. This move demonstrated the troops' main desire to save their own lives as well as those of their family members.

Kadyrov, vitally, needs to show his unwavering support for Putin, advocating the deployment of kadyrovtsy in zones of ongoing and prospective conflicts as a sign of his loyalty and devotion. The Kremlin appears increasingly eager to take advantage of this support and defiance stemming from among Crimea's Tatar community presently appears to be the closest candidate for new deployments of kadyrovtsy.

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SHANGHAI SUMMIT MARKS DEEPENING CHINA- KAZAKHSTAN ECONOMIC TIES

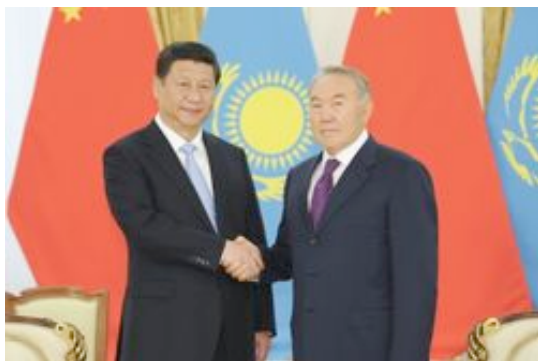
Richard Weitz

The recent signing of the Eurasian Union Treaty between Russia and several other former Soviet republics, combined with Russian actions in Ukraine and the massive Sino-Russian gas deal finalized during Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent visit to China, risks obscuring the continuing growth of Beijing's influence in Central Asia, especially with Kazakhstan. When President Nursultan Nazarbayev conducted a state visit to China from May 19 to 22, he met with President Xi Jinping for the seventh time in less than a year. Although grassroots ties remain weak, energy and other economic ties between the two countries are booming.

BACKGROUND: Bilateral trade between Kazakhstan and China continues to grow. According to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning, in 2013, bilateral trade reached US\$ 22.53 billion, with Kazakhstan exporting more than US\$ 14.334 billion while importing US\$ 8.193 billion. China's General Administration of Customs estimates bilateral trade at US\$ 28.5 billion, an 11.3 percent rise over 2012. The customs agency calculates Kazakhstan's exports to China at US\$ 16 billion, a 14 percent increase, and imports at US\$ 12.5 billion, a 9.3 percent rise from the previous year. Despite the different figures provided by the two governments, both agree that Kazakhstan runs a multi-billion dollar surplus due to China's purchasing large volumes of Kazakhstan's energy and other natural resources. In 2013, China imported a record high level of 11.85 million tons of crude oil through the

China-Kazakhstan Pipeline, over 14 percent more than the previous year. When in Shanghai, Nazarbayev said that if oil production at the massive Kashagan field reaches the planned 40 million tons each year, the two countries may need to build another oil pipeline to send the oil to China.

During Nazarbayev's visit, he and Xi formally launched a US\$ 100 million project to construct a 21.6-hectare joint full-service logistics terminal project in Lianyungang City. Xi signed an agreement establishing this terminal during his September 2013 visit to Kazakhstan. Located in eastern China's Jiangsu Province, Lianyungang is one of the world's largest and busiest ports. Kazakhstan sees this terminal as a gateway for cargo trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The port has rail links with other large Chinese ports such as Qingdao, Tianjin, Dalian and Shanghai as well as maritime connections with Japan's port of Osaka



and South Korea's port of Busan. Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) is partnering with the city government of Lianyungang to construct the logistics terminal. In February 2014, KTZ and Lianyungang Port Company established a joint venture, the "Kazakhstan-China International Logistics Company of port Lianyungang," to manage the facility. During a March 2014 visit to China, KZT CEO Askar Mamin said that the company planned to increase its export and transit container transport through the port to 250,000 twenty-foot equivalent units by 2015 and double this capacity by 2020. During Nazarbayev's visit, Xi said that China would welcome Kazakhstan's participation in the Shanghai Free Trade Zone.

A number of major investment agreements worth some US\$ 10 billion were announced during Nazarbayev's visit. The KazMunayGas National Oil Company and the China National Petroleum Corporation signed an agreement to construct a US\$ 150 million plant to manufacture oil and gas pipes in the Almaty region. Kazakhstan's Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Welfare Fund and the China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) signed a memorandum of understanding to

develop relations in the oil and gas sector and the mining industry. Nazarbayev told the press that Chinese investors would also participate in projects to produce glyphosate in the town of Taraz, build a power plant in the Kostanay region near the Turgay coal deposits, and manufacture nitrogen fertilizers in the Aktobe and Mangystau regions. Thanks to the surge in Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Kazakhstan since 2008, the value of Chinese FDI in Kazakhstan now exceeds US\$ 17 billion, making it one of the top 20 sources of FDI in Kazakhstan. The government would like to see more Chinese FDI in sectors critical for Kazakhstan's future economic development, such as chemicals, electronics, mining, and mechanical engineering.

IMPLICATIONS: One reason for China's growing presence in Kazakhstan is the country's enormous financial resources. Chinese banks marked Nazarbayev's visit by announcing two large loans to Kazakhstan. The Export-Import Bank of China will give the Development Bank of Kazakhstan (DBK) (a subsidiary of the Baiterek holding company) a US\$ 1 billion loan to modernize the Shymkent oil refinery on preferential terms offered fellow members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The refinery intends to use the fund to increase its annual fuel production to 6 million tons. The China Development Bank also presented DBK with a US\$ 500 million credit line to finance joint projects outside the natural resource extraction sector. One candidate area might be

developing Kazakhstan's civil aviation industry. After meeting with Nazarbayev in Shanghai, the president of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) said that Nazarbayev wanted to sign a contract later this year with AVIC, which established a joint venture, Otan Avic, in April, to produce medium-sized aircraft in Kazakhstan using Chinese technologies. In February 2014, the China Development Bank gave KazTransGas a US\$ 700-million 15-year loan to complete Kazakhstan's Beyneu-Bozoi-Shymkent pipeline. With the construction of the 311-km Beyneu-Bozoi line and the Karaozek compressor station in the Kyzylorda region, the pipeline's capacity will rise to 10 billion cubic meters annually.

In September 2013, Xi made a state visit to Kazakhstan and delivered a speech at Nazarbayev University in which he proposed building a "New Silk Road [that] will serve as an economic belt of Eurasia ... connecting three billion people from the Pacific to the Baltic Sea with Kazakhstan as a key partner along the way." Kazakh officials have embraced Xi's proposals as harmonious with their "Kazakhstan - New Silk Road" program. In addition, Xi signed 23 documents whose value Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov later estimated at more than US\$ 30 billion. Idrissov has described deepening relations with China as an important element of Kazakhstan's new foreign policy concept for 2020 and its long-term Kazakhstan-2050 Development Strategy. The Chinese and Kazakhstani officials and media have noted similarities between these strategies

and President Xi's "Chinese Dream" and other development and reform programs.

A persistent challenge has been that societal links between their societies have been lagging behind their growing commercial ties. In 2011, Nazarbayev told visiting Chinese President Hu Jintao that both sides should expand their humanitarian ties. The following year, the Kazinform News Agency signed a cooperation agreement in the field of electronic information with the Chinese People's Daily newspaper, followed by similar agreements with the Xinhua and Tianshannet news agencies. In March 2014, Kazinform News Agency launched a Chinese language website to coincide with its existing offerings in the Kazakh, Russian, and English languages. CEO Dauren Diyarov said that the new website "would make a significant contribution to the development of political, economic, social and humanitarian ties between our two countries." The PRC Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Le Yucheng, agreed that "cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in various areas is inseparable from understanding and support of our people. To do this, the media of the two countries should create conditions for the improvement of public opinion in favor of deepening the strategic partnership between China and Kazakhstan." When Nazarbayev was in Shanghai, the Xinhua news agency conducted an online conversation between him and Chinese Internet users. Xinhua then published his responses to some of the more than 1,000 questions asked him.

Yet, popular contacts would increase if China would include Kazakhstan in the 45 countries whose tourists can visit Beijing, Shanghai Guangzhou, and other large Chinese cities for 72 hours without a visa. So far, only a few Chinese localities, notably the town of Tacheng in Xinjiang's northern Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, have established such a special visa regime. In 2013, more than 10,000 Kazakh tourists visited Tacheng through the 3-day visa-free regime. Tacheng authorities would like Kazakhstan to introduce a similar 72-hour visa-free regime for Chinese nationals who stay at the popular tourist attraction of Lake Alakol in East Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan has entered into visa-free agreements with several more countries in recent years, but not China.

CONCLUSIONS: While in China, Nazarbayev expressed interest in pursuing Xi's "Silk Road Economic Belt" initiative and reconfirmed the mutual goal of raising bilateral trade to US\$ 40 billion by 2016. Yet, additional progress is needed in developing the transportation infrastructure connecting the two countries, overcoming unsupportive visa policies, and in combatting illegal commercial practices. Kazakhstan's close economic ties with Russia have also disrupted China-Kazakhstan economic ties. For example, Moscow has tried to prevent the smuggling of cheap Chinese goods into Russia through the Russia-Kazakhstan-Belarus Customs Union by pressuring Astana to tighten controls at the border between Kazakhstan and China. The newly launched Eurasian Union could erect further economic and

perhaps other barriers between China and Kazakhstan.

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CHINA LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN AGAINST UIGHUR MILITANCY

Jacob Zenn

Recent terrorist attacks in China show that international jihadists have infiltrated or influenced the Uighur nationalist cause. The increasing frequency of car-bombings and suicide bombings in Xinjiang and cities in eastern China attest to the use of al-Qaeda's tactics, which militants in China may have learned from training with Central Asian jihadists in Pakistan, Afghanistan or Syria or seeing videos that militant groups disseminate on the Internet or through underground Islamist networks in China. In May 2014, China launched a one-year campaign to crack down on terrorism intended to uncover terrorist networks and extremist groups. However, the crackdown may also alienate Xinjiang's Uighur population and boost recruitment into militant groups if the new counter-terrorism measures are perceived as over-reaching or invasive.

BACKGROUND: Since the July 2009 riots in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, in which more than 200 ethnic Uighurs and Hans were killed, al-Qaeda and other militant groups, such as the Uighur-led Turkistan Islamic Party in Pakistan (TIP), have increasingly incorporated "East Turkistan" into their vision for an Islamic Caliphate. At the same, in China mistrust between Hans and Uighurs has increased as a result of the riots, even though Urumqi returned to stability and normalcy by mid-2010. Nonetheless, attacks in Xinjiang increased in 2011, with several mass-stabbings or car-rammings of Han Chinese pedestrians and clashes between Chinese security officers and Uighurs.

Since October 2013, the violence has escalated in several ways. First, on October 31, 2013 an Uighur family of three crashed a car into a gate in

Tiananmen Square, Beijing, killing themselves and several tourists in a subsequent explosion. Then, in March 2014, a group of Uighur militants stabbed to death 29 pedestrians in a train station in Kunming, Yunnan Province after the group was reportedly rejected from crossing Yunnan's border with Laos in order to reach Malaysia and possibly then to Turkey. In April 2014, two suicide bombers (or militants with explosives in their briefcases) detonated their explosives at the train station in Urumqi, killing themselves and injuring dozens of civilians. In a possible "copycat" of the Kunming attack, on May 6, 2014, a small group of Uighurs carried out another stabbing at a train station in Guangzhou, injuring several civilians. Finally, in the largest of all attacks, on May 28, several Uighur militants in cars drove down a market street in Urumqi, throwing explosives and detonating bombs,



killing themselves and more than 30 civilians.

IMPLICATIONS: This most recent attack in Urumqi prompted President Xi Jinping to announce a one-year counter-terrorism crackdown. There is already palpable evidence of the crackdown on the streets in Urumqi, with armed personnel carriers patrolling major intersections and groups of uniformed soldiers with machine guns visibly carrying out patrols. Moreover, schools now have several security personnel with non-lethal weapons, such as clubs, outside of the entrance and are carrying out anti-terrorism drills to prepare for the possibility of a terrorist attack. In other cities, such as Beijing, there are now 30-minute lines to enter the subway because of new stricter security checks, while in Yili, northwestern Xinjiang, the Chinese government held a mass trial in a stadium on May 28, in which 55 people were sentenced to prison, including three to the death penalty.

Outside of China, it also appears that Beijing has leveraged its influence on Pakistan for the country to crack down on the TIP and other Central Asian militants on its territory. On May 23, Pakistan began shelling villages near Miranshah in North Waziristan along the Afghan border where, according to

local intelligence officials, “foreign militants along with their families have taken refuge in recent years, including Chechens, Uzbeks, Chinese, Turkmen, Tajiks and Uighurs.” This likely included TIP camps, which have gained notoriety for featuring women and pre-teenage children in propaganda videos engaged in militant training with rocket launchers and AK-47s in the mountainous areas of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.

China’s new crackdown on terrorists is having a wide impact on various sectors of society from schoolchildren in Xinjiang to commuters in Beijing, but will likely have the most significant – but least visible – impact on Uighurs in small towns and cities throughout Xinjiang. This is where Chinese soldiers will be searching for bomb-making equipment and propaganda materials that encourage violence of extremism. In Xinjiang, China’s crackdown is likely to be “offensive,” which, according to Chinese reports, resulted in the discovery of 1.8 tons of explosives in Hotan, southern Xinjiang and the break-up of a “terrorist gang” planning attacks in Xinjiang.

During Xi Jinping’s visit to Xinjiang – which coincided with the attack on Urumqi’s train station and the separate beheading of three Chinese police officers in Korla – he emphasized in a conversation with ethnic Han schoolteachers that they should learn some Uighur language. Though some people interpreted this to mean that they should learn Uighur to better teach Uighur children Mandarin Chinese, it also likely represented Xi’s

recognition that communication is a key obstacle to stable relations between Hans and Uighurs in Xinjiang. The language barrier is one factor that leads to the existence of separate Uighur and Han Chinese neighborhoods in Xinjiang, which undermines China's mantra of a "harmonious society," and also makes it more difficult for Han Chinese security officers to gain knowledge about grassroots Islamist networks in Xinjiang when patrolling in local villages. Therefore, if the crackdown leads to a renewed effort at improving communication between the security forces and Uighurs, as well as more generally between Hans and Uighurs and other minorities, it could also improve the overall security environment in Xinjiang.

Outside of China, a key aspect of China's counterterrorism strategy is coordination with neighboring countries, such as Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, and regional institutions, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). CICA held its summit in Shanghai at the time of the May 28 multiple car-bombing attack in Urumqi, marking yet another terrorist attack in Xinjiang that undermined a major political event for Xi. The transnationalization of terrorist networks in Xinjiang necessitates that China improves intelligence-sharing and military preparedness with other countries. While Pakistan appears to be responsive to Chinese pressure, it is unclear whether Kyrgyzstan, which has seen Uighur militant networks on its

territory, has the capacity to counter such networks. This makes the SCO and CICA more important for coordinating regional security and training and will likely lead to a more prominent role for such institutions in the near future.

CONCLUSIONS: The increase in sophistication and likely also internationalization of Uighur militancy has led China to reassess its counter-terrorism strategy. The success or failure of this new strategy – judged in terms of whether attacks continue or decrease – will likely shape the legacy Xi Jinping's first term in office and force China to recalibrate its relations with neighboring countries in Central Asia and regional institutions, such as the SCO and CICA, to ensure their participation in the crackdown on militancy. The stakes will be high for China, as the country can ill afford more instability on its western front while relations with Vietnam, other South China Sea countries, Japan and the Koreas on the eastern front are also becoming more volatile.

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REFORMING GEORGIA'S POLICE IN THE POST-SAAKASHVILI ERA

Erica Marat and Deborah Sutton

The reform of Georgia's police, starting from 2004 under former President Mikheil Saakashvili, represents an unprecedented success in the post-Soviet region. Corruption among rank-and-file police personnel was largely defeated, and the police in general became more professional in responding to citizens' concerns. However, the reform proceeded without public oversight and participation of the parliament, leading to a politicization of the security sector. In the 2012 parliamentary elections, the Georgian Dream opposition coalition pledged to open the security sector for public input. After a brief period of openness to external oversight in 2013, the window of opportunity for public-police collaboration is again closing.

BACKGROUND: Georgia represents a unique example of Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) reform as a result of broader political change. After the 2003 Rose Revolution, President Saakashvili together with a small group of close confidants advanced a broad range of reforms that made Georgia one of the most Westernized post-communist states. Reforms focused on eradicating the influence of organized criminal groups in the capital, Tbilisi, and across the country. Police reform was only part of a broader agenda to transform public administration, fight corruption, and improve the rule of law.

Unfortunately, the MIA's reform efforts were imposed top-down by powerful state officials, without public accountability or debate. Under the constitution, the parliament is given formal authority over the MIA, but in reality police reform took the form of a private collaboration between the

interior minister and Saakashvili. The interior minister, who must by law be a civilian, took strategic and operational decisions without public input or parliamentary review. Post-reform, parliamentary oversight of the MIA's work remained weak, and the MIA arguably became the most powerful structure in the country.

Because reforms were conducted without public oversight, public suspicion about high-level corruption in the MIA mounted. Just two weeks before the October 2012 parliamentary election, videos appearing to document cases of torture and rape in the Gldani prison were leaked to the Internet, raising widespread concerns about human rights abuses in detention facilities. Georgian Dream's leader Bidzina Ivanishvili came to power in October 2012 promising to depoliticize the country's security apparatus by separating national security services from the MIA, opening up for public



input and oversight, and eradicating corruption at the top political level. In effect, the changes were to catch up on the democratic aspect of the police reform and reinforcing the independence of the judiciary, which remained largely unreformed during Saakashvili's reign.

The changes were indeed significant in the first year following the elections. Ucha Nanuashvili, a renowned human rights activist with years of experience, was appointed as the new Public Defender (Ombudsman). Furthermore, civil society activists and journalists were allowed access to prisons and police facilities. Two nongovernmental organizations, Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) and Transparency International (TI), led the efforts to draft the new law on the police. Although included in the lawmaking, GYLA and TI were given insufficient time to conduct a comprehensive review, thus the NGOs were only able to review 40 percent of the bill before it went onto the parliament floor. Nevertheless, the new police law was adopted in October 2013 as a result of the first successful NGO-MIA collaboration in Georgia's history of independence.

In November, the then-Prime Minister-designate, Irakli Garibashvili,

announced Alexander Tchikaidze as his replacement as interior minister. Widely unknown and very young at only 28, Tchikaidze became the head of the MIA only six years after joining it as a police officer in 2008. It seems that Garibashvili has been highly influential in all steps towards Tchikaidze's early rise to prominence and power. Together, Garibashvili and Tchikaidze have resurged efforts to prosecute previous government officials from the current main opposition party, including Tchikaidze's predecessors on the post, Vano Merabishvili and Bachana Akhalaia, on charges of abuse of power, torture, and fabrication of evidence during their terms. The chief prosecutor was forced to resign after a criminal history and proof of abuse during office were leaked.

IMPLICATIONS: Since his appointment, Tchikaidze has taken a proactive role in anti-corruption reforms of law enforcement agencies, the MIA, and the government as a whole. More severe laws against organized crime have been passed, especially targeting trafficking in drugs and humans, while crime-fighting coalitions have been built with other governments. Finally, a Tbilisi detention center was remodeled and expanded, showing the new minister's commitment to criminal prosecution.

Yet, critics of the new leadership argue that the government's openness to public input is temporary and is rapidly waning. According to one former member of the Saakashvili administration, "The government was open the first year because it lacked

confidence.” According to this view, the ministry is more interested in prosecuting its opponents than improving respect for human rights among police personnel and opening up to public oversight.

Furthermore, critics argue that the ministry relies on the success achieved by the previous leadership and has done little to introduce new innovations that would continue to transform the country’s police. Most changes in the post-October 2012 period were of a populist, not reformative, nature. Examples include the popular decision to decrease traffic fines and expand the academic curriculum at the Police Academy.

Finally, complaints from NGOs about the MIA’s transparency issues increased again in late 2013 and 2014, voicing dissatisfaction with the new government’s approach to depoliticizing the police. According to GYLA, measures to reduce the ability of incumbent political leaders to use the police against opponents are insufficient. The new police law continues to allow the deputy interior minister to belong to a political party, sending signals about his political loyalty further down the chain of command to regular police officers. Human Rights for Georgia also reported that the MIA continues to monitor 21,000 cell phones every day despite its claim to end massive surveillance methods exercised by the previous government.

In December 2013, the Public Defender released a report on human rights and freedoms in Georgia for the year 2013.

The report commends the MIA for its efforts to destroy unlawful recordings of citizens’ personal lives after the illegal surveillance project was leaked to the public earlier that year. However, the report also noted the state’s frequent failure to ensure the right to assembly and religion, its unlawful suspension of public servants, its unjust treatment of citizens by police authorities, its over-tolerance of violence against women and children, and its lack of healthcare and programs for the disabled. Likewise, NGOs have repeatedly raised concerns about cases of alleged ill-treatment of citizens in police custody and violence implemented by representatives of police and penitentiary institutions.

Furthermore, TI confirmed that the MIA has ministry officials positioned in both the Georgian Public Broadcaster and the Georgian National Communications Commission, in violation of Georgian law. Two directors of the television station Channel 25 reported that they were unlawfully detained, threatened, and pressured by ten members of the Chief Prosecutor’s Office to release false testimonies to officials in order for the Ministry to fabricate a criminal case against high level officials in the former government.

Finally, the parliament continues to be weak in its oversight of the MIA and the Prime Minister. The parliamentary committee on legal issues assigned to deal with the MIA reform is the strongest committee in the parliament, yet it has little leverage over the government. This is largely due to the

Georgian Dream favoritism seen in the appointment of government and parliamentary positions. Ivanishvili's closest allies occupy top government posts, including in the security sector, while the parliament is populated by the coalition's less influential members. In sum, after a brief period of openness to external oversight in 2013, the window of opportunity for public-police collaboration seems to be closing again.

CONCLUSIONS: Georgia's case of police reform demonstrates the difficulty of shedding post-Soviet legacy, as even democratically elected political incumbents will be tempted to rely on the police's loyalty rather than the law. Despite a strong civil society and political opposition, it is easy for political incumbents to expand the police's functions in order to intensify their political influence. Georgia has made some positive steps towards opening the MIA to public oversight. Yet, there is still a long way to go before police become accountable to the public rather than the political brass. The country's NGOs and MIA officials must continue to look for ways to establish venues for constructive collaboration. A successful public-police dialogue is indispensable for Georgia's democratic development.

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RIOTS IN TAJIKISTAN'S GBAO RAISES FEARS OF BROADER DESTABILIZATION

Kirgizbek Kanunov

On May 21, 2014, a shooting incident occurred in Khorog, the capital of Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), involving local residents and law enforcement personnel. As a result of the shooting, three people were killed, including a law enforcement officer, and several were wounded.

According to witnesses, the incident began when three residents of Khorog were shot at in their vehicle, presumably by officers of the Special Police Force (OMON). However, the official statement of the Tajik Interior Ministry claims that the police officers wanted to detain suspected criminals whom they believed were in the vehicle, and that the police officers had to use force because the driver and passengers resisted arrest. Concurrently, it was reported on May 20 that Taliban insurgents took over the county of Yamgan in the Afghan province of northern Badakhshan across the river from Khorog.

The developments in Khorog beg the question of whether they were the result of a localized confrontation between law enforcement and the public or part of a larger destabilization of GBAO, and perhaps of Tajikistan more broadly. It is important to note that even before the details of the incident were confirmed, the Russian media, including one influential Internet source presumably associated

with the Kremlin, hinted of Western involvement in the Khorog unrest.

Prior to the incident in Khorog, a message from an anonymous source, claiming to be a resident of Khorog by the name Shakarmamadov, was disseminated in social networks and media collaborating with the Tajik special services. The message mentioned a meeting between Muhammadbokir Muhammadbokirov, a local leader and former opposition warlord, and representatives of the Delegation of the EU, accusing them of destabilizing the situation in GBAO, in a fashion similar to what recently took place in the Ukraine. Simultaneously, the influential MP and former State Advisor of the President of Tajikistan Amirkul Azimov openly accused the EU and NATO of attempting to destabilize the situation in Khorog.

Yet despite open accusations of the EU and the U.S. being involved in the Khorog unrest, Tajik authorities officially demonstrate support for their policies in the region. For example, on June 3, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and daughter of Tajikistan's President, Emomali Rahmon Ozoda, who leads the annual review of political consultations between the Tajikistan and the U.S., emphasized the U.S.'s role in the international coalition against terrorism in Afghanistan and its impact on security in Central Asia as a whole. She also praised the work of

USAID in Tajikistan. It is notable that USAID, along with the Soros Foundation, is a frequent subject of criticism in Tajikistan's state media.

According to observers, individuals directly connected with the secret services created social media accounts, particularly on Facebook, prior to the incident in Khorog and initiated discussions aiming to discredit Tajik opposition leaders and former warlords in GBAO.

A full-scale military operation involving all Tajikistan's law enforcement agencies took place in Khorog on July 24, 2012, which resulted in numerous victims among the civilian population. Until now, according to Tajik human rights activists and local residents, the authorities have failed to carry out an objective investigation into the 2012 incident. Locals believe that the officials responsible for the deaths of civilians have not been punished. On the contrary, many civil society activists taking part in peaceful demonstrations during the 2012 incident have since faced continuous harassment and prosecution in spite of an agreement between security forces and civil society representatives in 2012 promising all protestors amnesty.

Observers argue that no major social issues have been resolved in GBAO in the last two decades. Since independence, the state has not created a single company in the region and the small number of industries established there during Soviet times have declined. In the context of the general unemployment rate, young people are forced to leave GBAO to work in

Russia, where they face arbitrary law enforcement and violence from nationalist groups such as skinheads.

In light of this bleak socio-economic situation in the region, the potential for public protest is growing. The same sentiment exists in other regions of Tajikistan and analysts claim that some radical forces in Tajikistan are even considering the possibility of cooperating with the Taliban.

Some analysts are pessimistic about the prospect for dialogue between the government and protesters in Khorog. According to Tajik journalist Marat Mamadshoev, Tajik authorities are not ready for dialogue with civil society as they consider any concessions as a sign of weakness. "Other regions of Tajikistan face similar problems. Tajik authorities are unwilling to set a precedent, by agreeing to the wishes of residents of Khorog, in fear of the so-called domino effect" says Mamadshoev.

Nevertheless, following talks between the government and protesters a joint commission was set up, including government and civil society representatives, to investigate the recent events, and an agreement between the government and protesters in Khorog was signed on May 31. The authorities recognized 7 out of 9 of the protesters' demands. However, the key points demanding the resignation of security officials and an amnesty for rioters still hovers in the air, and the possibility of a new escalation cannot be ruled out.

The decision of the Tajik authorities to make partial concessions to the

protesters could either mean that they are seriously concerned over stability in the country, or as another tactical maneuver in order to gain time and gradually neutralize the protest and opposition sentiment in the area.

The most recent incident in Khorog took place shortly ahead of the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan and Tajikistan's 2015 parliamentary elections, both of which heighten the risk of destabilization in Tajikistan.

KYRGYZ GOVERNMENT APPROVES CUSTOMS UNION ROAD MAP

Arslan Sabyrbekov

On May 12, after many rounds of negotiations, the Kyrgyz government has approved the road map to join the Russia-led Customs Union. According to Kyrgyzstan's Minister for Economy, Temir Sariyev, the document was submitted to the parliament to be thoroughly reviewed and debated by its committee on international affairs and fiscal policies. In the meantime, the Kyrgyz public is still engaged in heavy discussions with some approving the decision and others disapproving it.

Indeed, over the past couple of years, there has been a fierce debate on Kyrgyzstan joining the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, with which Kyrgyzstan conducts more than 40 percent of its external trade. The terms of the country's accession to the Union was negotiated at numerous occasions and none of the road maps presented earlier satisfied Bishkek's preferences. This time, the sides have managed to reach an agreement and the Kyrgyz government approved the presented terms of entry into the Union.

According to state officials, the approval of the road map does not mean that Kyrgyzstan is already a member of the Customs Union. The recently nominated Kyrgyz Prime Minister Djoomart Otorbaev stated that "the road map forms a legal basis for harmonizing the country's legislation in accordance with the terms of the

Customs Union. Within its framework, parliamentarians should adopt around 100 new legislative acts and only then a special treaty indicating concrete terms of entry with all the preferences will be developed." The Kyrgyz Prime Minister did not exclude the possibility of asking for extra time for preparations before assuming full membership in the Union. According to local analyst Azamat Akeleev, Moscow might support this request, "due to its heavy geopolitical interest in expanding the Customs Union but might not find full support among its other members." In one of his interviews, Kazakh Vice-Prime Minister Bakytjan Sagyntaev stated that Bishkek is asking for too many preferences, which according to him "are not in the competency of the Customs Union" and suggested that Kyrgyzstan should instead join the Eurasian Economic Union directly.

On May 29, upon the invitation of his Kazakh colleague, President Atambayev took part in the Astana meeting of the Eurasian Economic Council. The presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus have signed an agreement on forming the Eurasian Economic Union. The Russian side expressed its readiness to assist the Kyrgyz Republic in carrying out all the preparatory procedures necessary to join the Customs Union and later the EEU as well. For these purposes, the

presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Russia reached an agreement to form a joint “Development Fund,” with a capital of US\$ 1 billion. Additionally, Russia has promised to transfer US\$ 200 million on a grant basis. This money, according to Minister for Economy Sariev, will be used “to implement the recently approved road map.”

After the approval of the road map, heavy discussions started in the parliament, with its factions making varying remarks. The Social Democrats welcomed the government’s decision to approve the road map and prepare to join the Customs Union, which they consider to be in line with the country’s economic as well as geopolitical interests. According to them, Kyrgyzstan cannot abstain from integration processes taking place among its geopolitical and strategic partners. Yet opponents of the Customs Union, the independent MPs Ravshan Jeenbekov and Omurbek Abdrakhmanov have once again warned the government of the negative consequences of this decision, naming high inflation rates, price increases for many commodities, as well as the loss of sovereignty for Kyrgyzstan. The MPs described the government’s decision as “unconstitutional,” meaning that discussions in the country’s legislature is taking place only after the road map was approved, in conflict with the principles that “underlines the very core of the parliamentary republic.”

In the meantime, civil activists and prominent members of the Supervisory Councils under a number of ministries

have issued a joint statement criticizing the government’s failure to launch a wide public discussion on the matter. Activists called on the country’s authorities to adhere to democratic principles, carry out public dialogue, and to undertake a thorough analysis of the presented road map and its concrete impact on various sectors of Kyrgyzstan’s socio-economic life.

Indeed, the question of joining the Russia-led Customs Union has divided the Kyrgyz public. Lacking detailed information on the consequences of joining the Customs Union, people have come to perceive the matter as a question of being pro or anti-Russia. The Kyrgyz public TV channels tend to feature experts delivering one-sided pro-Customs Union views. Thus, at this stage, the call from civil society activists is justified and the government should do a better job at explaining to the public of what awaits them in the future.

ELECTION OBSERVERS SENTENCED IN AZERBAIJAN

Mina Muradova

On May 26, Azerbaijani authorities sentenced the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center (EMDSC) Chairman, Anar Mammadli, to five-and-a-half years in prison on highly questionable charges ranging from tax evasion and illegal entrepreneurship to abuse of office. The authorities also convicted the organization's executive director, Bashir Suleymanli, to three-and-a-half years and the head of a partner NGO called International Cooperation of Volunteers, Elnur Mammadov, who got a two-year suspended sentence. Addressing the judge, Mammadli expressed his opinion on the sentence by saying: "Just abuse Femida and let's get this over with."

Prior to the verdict, Mammadli delivered his closing speech and said: "Azerbaijan will chair Council of Europe's Council of Ministers for the next six months. Atletico Madrid carries an 'Azerbaijan Land of Fire' sign on their T-shirts. These could be good promotions for our country. However, unfortunately, our country is to be known not as a 'land of fire' but as a 'Land of political prisoners' instead."

Mammadli was accused of engaging in illegal entrepreneurship without creating a legal entity, while he stated that he was acting as an individual taxpayer. On May 14, 2008, the court annulled the registration of Mammadli's first organization - the Elections Monitoring Center. The

founders and members of the EMC then established a new organization - EMDS. Despite two appeals to the Ministry of Justice, the government "illegally and groundlessly" refused to recognize the union, Mammadli said.

Isabel Santos, the chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, expressed concern on May 28 that Mammadli's "only crime" may have been his work to defend the rights of his country's voters. "The Azerbaijani government's systematic targeting of civil society has reached a new low with the sentencing of Anar Mammadli," Santos said. "His conviction and sentencing represents an affront to OSCE values in the sphere of human rights and democratic commitments." The U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan termed the convictions "a major setback to Azerbaijan's democratic development."

Oktay Gulaliyev, head of the Public Alliance "Azerbaijan without political prisoners" noted that the recent repressions against journalists and civil society activists proves that the authorities have intensified the repression against alternative voices. Apart from three election observers, there were recent arrests of journalist and bloggers, youth activists and human rights defenders. In early May, the Baku Court of Grave Crimes sentenced eight young Azerbaijani

activists, most of whom were members of the NIDA civic movement promoting democracy, human rights, and rule of law, to between six and eight years of imprisonment. In 2013, they were involved in a series of peaceful protests against the deaths of young soldiers in non-combat situations.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, there are 10 cases of journalists in detention or prison on “politically motivated” charges in Azerbaijan. In addition, five bloggers are currently behind bars.

“The number of political prisoners in Azerbaijan is so great that they have been sorted into groups: prisoners of ‘hijab’, prisoners of ‘Eurovision’, etc.” - Gulaliyev said during a June 4 conference on the problem of political prisoners in Azerbaijan. The number of prisoners with politically-motivated charges is assessed to between 150 and 170.

“Unfortunately, Mr. Mammadli's detention adds to the concerning human rights backdrop for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's annual session in Baku next month. I hope that our presence there will encourage the judicial system to take a hard look at its record on OSCE commitments and signal that these violations will not go unnoticed,” Santos said.

The 23rd Annual Session of the OSCE PA will take place in Azerbaijan's capital from June 28 to July 2, 2014. Mammadli was a key speaker at briefings for the OSCE PA's observation delegation in October 2013, on the eve of Azerbaijan's presidential

election. The Centre's statement on that election noted extensive violations of fundamental freedoms and a range of other shortcomings in the electoral process, many of which were also observed and reported by the OSCE.

Mubariz Gurbanli, a senior figure in the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party, could not see any connection between Mammadli's activities and his arrest soon afterwards. “This case should not be politicized. Elections in Azerbaijan were transparent, free and democratic ... This court case was pursued because the [EMDS] organization broke the law,” he told RFE/RL.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, commenting on the issue during a visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels last January, reiterated his position that no political prisoners exist in his country. He said that a resolution on the existence of political prisoners in Azerbaijan was voted down by a majority of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly last year and noted that neither the Council of Europe nor the European Parliament has yet agreed on the definition of a political prisoner.

SCO-CSTO MERGER RAISED AT DUSHANBE CONFERENCE

Oleg Salimov

This year, Tajikistan presides over the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The center of strategic research under the president of Tajikistan held a conference titled “SCO and the provision of regional security: problems and perspectives” in mid-May, 2014. The conference was devoted to expanding the SCO’s ability to provide regional security, and the merger of SCO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was a primary topic of discussion.

Aside from issues pertaining to trade and infrastructure, the conference focused on new threats and challenges to regional security and the implications of the U.S./NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. The SCO’s members presented a declaration containing provisions on increasing the organizations’ security potential, including integrated security measures for all states based on a common interpretation of current realities; a strategy for the SCO’s development and influence in the international arena; the development of regional infrastructure, industry, transportation, and trade; and the expansion of SCO; all aimed to increase the SCO’s political weight in the world.

The most notable statement at the conference was made by the host country’s representative, Khudoberdy Kholiknazarov, who called for a consolidation and merger of SCO and

the CSTO, which he presented as being of key importance to regional security and stability.

The statement was preceded by a meeting of the executive deputies of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the CSTO, and the SCO on April 24, 2014 in the CSTO Moscow headquarter. For the most part, the four organizations unify former Soviet republics and are commonly seen as alternatives to Western international organizations. The attendees of this meeting discussed means for improving coordination and interaction in conditions of growing international confrontation, with reference to the current Ukrainian crisis and regional and global security threats. The CSTO’s Secretary General, Nikolai Borduzha, announced that the CSTO has halted its contacts with NATO as a result of NATO’s position on the crisis in Ukraine, and will instead search for partners in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, the CSTO will seek closer ties with the SCO and its partners, particularly China and Iran. Hence, the recent SCO conference in Dushanbe became a platform for further probing into the possibility of merging the SCO and CSTO.

The calls for such a merger highlight the growing rift between the West and Russia. The members of these organizations have either expressed

their support of Russia's position on the crisis in Ukraine, like Kazakhstan and Armenia; made ambiguous statements, like China; or refrained from defining their position at all, like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Some long-term Central Asian leaders, who observed the toppling of Ukraine's former President Viktor Yanukovich, will welcome the extra security measures that can be employed in case of democratic upheavals after the proposed SCO – CSTO merger. Although the CSTO's main provision guarantees an embattled member military support from other members in case of external aggression, the 2010 additions to the agreement allow military assistance in cases of militant attacks, illegal armed forces, and other internal conflicts which can include democratic protests.

The expansion and improvement of transportation and communication infrastructure and logistic hubs discussed during the SCO conference are consistent with the needs of the CSTO, which focuses on creating effective military forces that can rapidly be deployed and moved around the region. One of the CSTO's main declared tasks is the creation of an integrated military system in Central Asia, which will include air defense, intelligence information gathering, railroad protection and supply.

The merger discussions follows on the statement by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow on May 1, 2014, that Russia is now considered less as a partner and more as an adversary, which in turn came after the

CSTO decided to stop its contacts with NATO.

Russia holds leading positions in the SCO and CSTO and could extract substantial economic and political benefits from the merger. Russian influence would be multiplied by the inclusion of China, as a member of SCO, into the CSTO with the imposition of certain obligations which extend beyond political or diplomatic support and require direct military assistance. The widely discussed natural gas deal recently concluded between Russia and China bear the characteristics of leverage in Russia's attempt to convince China on a SCO–CSTO merger. In part, it explains the rapid conclusion of a gas deal that took 10 years to negotiate.

Russian officials, particularly Gazprom's CEO Alexei Miller, are unwilling to reveal the conditions or pricing policy of the 30-year gas deal. Even if the effect of the U.S. and EU economic sanctions urged Russia to conclude the agreement, the actual reasoning behind the move was to secure China's support on the international arena. China has previously expressed support for Russia on Syria, and sought a middle ground between Russia and the West on Ukraine. An SCO-CSTO merger could form the next step in this relationship.

The obvious losers in this development are the people of the Central Asian SCO and CSTO members, whose interests will hardly be considered in the bargaining between Russia and China, and who will become even more dependent on their powerful neighbors.

The exit of the U.S. from the regional political arena after the withdrawal from Afghanistan leaves Central Asian countries no other option than to conform to the powers filling up the political vacuum. The SCO conference in Dushanbe potentially marks the start of this process.

While an SCO–CSTO merger could potentially give rise to an extremely powerful international organization and an outright rival of NATO and the EU in the Eastern hemisphere, Russia and China still have a number of conflicting interests that they need to work through, including territorial disputes, rivaling claims to dominance in Central Asia, and Russia’s effort to balance between China and Japan. The intensified appeals for an organizational merger would also require Russia to increase its dependence on China in an attempt to exclude the U.S. and EU from its historical zone of influence. Hence, it remains to be seen whether the SCO–CSTO will move beyond political rhetoric.