

Analysis of Russian Interests in the Caucasus Region (Case Study: Karabakh Crisis)

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Abstract

Moscow's long-standing absence from international arena has led the United States to dominate many parts of Eastern Europe with the NATO tool and close itself to the Russian borders. With the further expansion of NATO and the European Union towards the borders of the Russian Federation, the conflict between Russia and the Western powers including US government has intensified. Meanwhile, the rise of Putin and his efforts to revive the country's position in international arena have increased the conflict between the West and Russia. Putin seeks to recover its lost position in the international system. From Kremlin's point of view, the emergence of Russia in the international system, formation of one of the poles of the international system around Russia and creating a strategic balance against the West require Russian influence in the near abroad and the creation of regional structures and arrangements under Russian leadership. Russia sees the presence of Western institutions in the republics separated from the former Soviet Union as a threat to its national security and interests. Kremlin considers near abroad as its backyard and exclusive sphere of influence. On the other hand, the Kremlin's threatening perceptions of the periphery Environment of the country have been influenced by the logic of the Russian historical insecurity. According to this logic, Russia is a vulnerable country and foreign threats or internal riots supported by hostile and foreign powers can threaten its political or territorial integrity. As a result, the Russians call their activities in the Eurasian region, and especially in near abroad as a defensive action. Therefore maintaining the regime and the territorial integrity of the country, exercising influence over the near abroad, emphasizing Russia's strategic position as a major power in the structure of the international system, adopting economic and political cooperation with major powers of the world as an equal partner and ultimately preventing interference from foreign actors in the internal affairs of Russia can be

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considered key principles that guide the foreign policy of the Kremlin after the end of the Cold War.

This paper aims to examine the policies of Russian foreign policy in the Caucasus and in relation to the crisis of Nagorno-Karabagh. The main research questions can be formulated as follow: What is Russia's foreign policy approach toward the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict and what are the reasons for adopting such approach? In response, it has been hypothesized that Russia for political, military and economic reasons, wants the status quo to continue. Based on the findings of the research, the unresolved territorial conflicts in the Eurasian region, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, are key tools in securing Russia's strategic interests in Eurasia. Russia believes in regional security, coalition between the countries of the region and the creation of collective security is better than NATO. The Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Union are Kremlin-led regional arrangements to keep foreign actors out of the region and are, in fact, a fundamental plan for reintegrating republics detached from the Soviet Union. The crisis in the Nagorno-Karabakh has strengthened the Russians in the South Caucasus region and removed the economic and military infrastructure of the West from the region. The parties involved in the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict know that Moscow's satisfaction is a prerequisite for any favorable political agreement. Therefore, they have to coordinate their macro policies with the interests of the Kremlin in the region, or at least their foreign policy approach should not be in conflict with the interests and goals of Russia in Eurasia. The fear of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia from the Russian game with the card of the political situation in Nagorno-Karabagh has caused the two countries to expand their cooperation with Russia and do not welcome Western institutions in the region. The Republic of Azerbaijan has also extended its economic, political and military cooperation with the Russian Federation. This country is today the most respected Russian economic partner in the South Caucasus region. On the other hand, cooperation between the two countries has been dramatically developed in military sector, so that Russia is the largest supplier of military equipment to the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan has repeatedly emphasized its unwillingness to join NATO.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia have been relatively stable. Nevertheless, the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict seems to be the source of political influence and the military presence of Russia in Armenia. Armenia is the only country in the Caucasus, which hosts Russian troops and bases in the region. Not only is this country an active member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, but also the only member of the treaty in the South Caucasus. Russia has a serious military presence in Armenia and it is undoubtedly the dominant power in Armenia's politics. The economic and political influence of Russia in the Republic of Armenia has increased

dramatically with its membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and the withdrawal of the signing of the EU- Armenia cooperation agreement. The continuation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be regarded as the root of Russian influence in this country. Russia's influence in Armenia is such that it should be regarded as a first-class concern of ensuring political independence and national sovereignty. The control of Armenia's national borders with Iran and Turkey by Russian forces and controlling Armenia's major economic infrastructure reflects the undermining of Armenia's sovereignty and political independence. In this article, the authors attempt to analyze Russian foreign policy in relation to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict using a geopolitical framework.

Keywords: Armenia, Caucasus, Nagorno–Karabagh Crisis, Russia, The Republic of Azerbaijan.

Effective Factors on Foreign Direct Investment in the Russian Federation

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Abstract

Economists consider capital as the engine of economic growth and development. In their view, attracting capital to support productive and infrastructural projects is one of the key factors in economic growth, especially in developing countries. Meanwhile, the role of foreign capital is highlighted for financing large-scale macroeconomic projects. According to the view of the economics experts, the increase in attraction of foreign direct investment in the host country is a function of two variables: The fundamental reforms in the upstream laws related to foreign investment, and the improvement of general economic indicators affecting the market and, consequently, affecting the capital market. Growth in GDP, lack of high volatility in inflation, low unemployment rate and business index are effective indicators for attracting foreign direct investment.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation faced a comprehensive economic crisis, in which all the major economic indicators were in a very unstable state. The positive economic effects of attracting foreign capital have persuaded the country's economic policymakers to pave the way for absorbing foreign capital by improving the fundamental rules and improving the indicators that affect foreign capital attraction. These reforms began in the late 1990s, and their economic effects appeared over the early years of the 21st century. These changes, in addition to improving the overall economic conditions of the country, also increased the attraction of foreign capital. The process of attracting foreign investment in the Russian Federation grew steadily since 2000, where the country with a capital investment of over \$ 170.2 billion in 2013, was able to take a major step towards financing its major macroeconomic projects.

The authors, with the hypothesis that “the model for attracting foreign investment in the Russian Federation was based on the correction of two factors of economic policy and economic structure,” carried out the present research, the results of which are reflected in this paper. This essay attempts

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to answer the main question: “What are the policies of decision makers in Russia that helped the crisis-hit economy to absorb the high volume of foreign investment after the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union?” Sub-queries of the research are as follow: What are the factors for attracting foreign capital in general? What was the process of attracting foreign capital in the Russian Federation? What was the economic reform of the Russian Federation to attract foreign capital?

The results of this study strengthened the hypothesis and illustrated the effect of two variables of “economic policy” and “macroeconomic indicators correction” on the dynamics of attracting foreign investment in the Russian Federation since the beginning of the 21st century.

In the field of policy, Russia has enacted the upstream legislation on attracting foreign investment during the 90s on the agenda. Among the results of the formulation and promotion of these rules are the following: Legal definition of the concepts related to investment in a transparent manner, the objectives and priorities of attracting foreign investment, the establishment of legal regimes in accordance with international standards and method of guaranteeing the principle of capital and profits. Also, all the indicators that affect the attraction of foreign capital began to improve at the end of the nineties. Moreover, in reviewing the main indicators of the economy, GDP growth has been increasing since the year 2000 in Russia, although inflation has been accompanied by fluctuations, but this has slowed down, unemployment has declined, and the index of business has grown steadily annually.

It should not be ignored that part of the foreign investment is of domestic origin, that is, the economic activists withdraw their capital from the country and re-enter it in the form of foreign investment in order to avoid tax and other laws, Benefiting from the facilities that governments provide for foreign investment and Russia is no exception in this regard. But the point is that even with the deduction of these funds, foreign investment in Russia is a significant number. Another important point is that European countries with significant investments are among the top investor countries in Russia. The presence of European investors at the top of the foreign direct investment sector can be an indication of the acceptable security and profitability of investment in the Russian Federation.

The authors have tried to answer the main question of the research in a descriptive-analytical way using Russian, Persian and English resources, and in particular, relying on the upstream documents and laws of the Russian Federation and official economic statistics. Investigating the Russian Federation's model of attracting foreign investment may help the Islamic Republic's decision-makers to better attract foreign investment, especially in the current economic climate.

Keywords: Economic Policymaking, Economic Reforms, Foreign Direct Investment, Macroeconomic, Russian Federation.

Explaining Russia's Intervention in the Syrian Crisis from a Geopolitical Perspective

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Abstract

Undoubtedly the Syrian crisis is one of the most important current issues in the international system. This has paved the way for the presence of regional and trans-regional powers in the territory of this country. One of these powers, Russia, has intervened in this crisis in the interest of the Syrian government. Russia's support in terms of political, economic and military-intelligence was carried out. Of course, the most important aspect of Russia's intervention in the Syrian crisis is direct military involvement in the crisis in the late summer of 2015. Under the influence of Russia's help and assistance, the positions of the Syrian army and its regional allies were strengthened and they were able to regain the control of a significant portion of the areas occupied by oppositions and extremists. In any case, Russia's actions in the Syrian crisis are of a special and unique nature. The question arisen here is "why Russia has intervened in the Syrian crisis, while it has not intervened in any of the Middle East crises so far?" The hypothesis is that "Geopolitical obligations have led Russia to intervene in the interests of the government in the Syrian crisis." The research was conducted in an exploratory and empirical way, and is thus loyal to the positivist tradition.

To measure the hypothesis, the research used a model of three concepts of "Geopolitical Feature", "Geopolitical Territorialization" and, finally, "Geopolitical transition". The geopolitical feature of the Middle East and Syria is so remarkable for Russia that Russia cannot be indifferent to their weight. Additionally, Syria was a part of Russia's influence in the Middle East since the 1970s. Therefore, Russia is interested in preserving this geopolitical condition as it faces the West and terrorism's geopolitical constraints.

From the geopolitical point of view, the Middle East has been in transition since the collapse of the Soviet Union. But the developments in this region have generally been against Russia's interests. The emergence of Arab revolutions in the countries of the region have led to the overthrow of authoritarian governments and the replacement of democratic regimes (pro-

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western) and sectarian ones (extremists). This situation has endangered the geopolitical interests of Russia in this region. In particular, the Middle East is located in the adjacent of the Central Asian and Caucasian lands and the instability caused by the Arab revolutions, as a result, could have caused a wave of instability in these areas as well. The aforementioned provisions required Russia to intervene in the Syrian crisis.

One of the most important requirements of Russia in the Syrian crisis was to compete with the United States and the West. The competition of two major powers is geostrategic so that in Eastern Europe the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Middle East, Afghanistan and the Far East are visible. Moscow has seen US policies in the Middle East diminishing its influence in the region. In line with this policy, the West has also intervened in the interest of the opposition in the Syrian crisis and for the benefit of extremist groups in secret. So, Syria became one of the geopolitical areas of competition for the two superpowers. Hence, Moscow did not have any choice except to intervene in the crisis of this country.

Confronting terrorism, extremism and separatism was also one of the most important requirements for Russia's intervention in the Syrian crisis. In documents of Russian foreign and security policy, terrorism has been described as one of the most important security problems of the Country. During the terrorist attacks, hundreds of Russian citizens died and more were injured. Terrorism, which grew up in the context of the Caucasus separatism, generally emerged in the form of an extremist ideology and evolved. Hence, the crisis of terrorism in Russia has coincided with extremism and separatism. Regarding the Russian government's serious policies, the terrorists were restrained and suppressed. But the atmosphere of insecurity from the civil war in Syria was a good environment for the growth of the terrorists. As a result, a significant number of citizens from Russia and Central Asia and the Caucasus regions participated in Syria. Getting power of the terrorists in this Country and their empowerment in their territory (in Russia, Central Asia and Caucasus) caused the emergence of a new wave of insecurity and assassination in the territory of the Soviet Union. This could re-ignite the controlled crisis of separatism in the Caucasus. Therefore, Russia's intervention in the Syrian crisis was necessary to confront them.

Syria has been a part of Russia's influence in the Middle East and the Mediterranean since the 1970s. This country, along with Iraq, ensured Russia's presence in the Middle East and therefore it has been important from the geopolitical point of view. In the context of competing with the United States, Russia developed its relations with Syria not only in terms of military and strategic dimensions, but also in economic terms in order to maintain its influence in this country. The Syrian government was a geopolitical asset for Russia; As it guarantees the access to the Russian military to strategic spots in the Middle East, North Africa, and eventually South and South-East Europe. So the overthrow of the Syrian government by

the opposition and extremists would have led to the loss of this geopolitical advantage.

Instability in the periphery of Russia was generally in line with the interests of the West and against the interests of Russia. The occupation of Iraq by the US-led coalition, colored revolutions in the Soviet Union, the implementation of the Great Middle East Plan, the NATO intervention in the Middle East security processes, and similar occurrences have made the atmosphere of turbulence and, hence, brought about changes that often put Russia's interests in jeopardy. Therefore, Russian leaders are worried about any instability in the areas. The most serious worries in the Middle East were the Arabian uprising or sectarian states prone to extremism. So, Russia's intervention in the Syrian crisis sought to control instability in the country and the Middle East. In particular, the Russian leaders were confident that due to the proximity of the land, these instabilities would be broadened to the Soviet area from the Middle East and they will endanger their country's interests in this area.

Keywords: Countering Terrorism, Geopolitical Feature, Geopolitical Obligation, Rivalry with America, Russia, Syria Civil War.

Explaining the Relationship between Ethnic Autonomy and Separatism in International Relations (Case Study: Georgia)

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Abstract

Generally in the literature of political science and international relations, autonomy has been viewed as an effective way to manage conflicts and tensions between ethnic minorities and the central government, and to regulate relations between them. Ethnic and territorial autonomy is not a new way of managing the relations of the center and ethnic minorities; but in recent years, with the importance of issues such as regional and international peace and stability, most of the countries that are faced with ethnic diversity within their borders are increasingly focusing on this way for managing the demands of their ethnic groups. This is common practice, especially in developed countries, where democracy and democratic principles and structures are the basis of behavior and political action. Hence, the autonomous regions around the world are many. Quebec, Basque, Catalonia, Tibet, and so on, are among the autonomous regions in the world. But the important issue about autonomy is the emergence of ethno-territorial separatism, which many thinkers in the international relations consider as one of the consequences of autonomy. Therefore, there can be a broad scholarly gap in the study of the relation between autonomy and separatism. Many researchers have argued that ethnic autonomy in most cases has been an appropriate option for answering the demands of ethnic groups and a desirable way for ethnic groups to benefit from freedom and rights of their distinctive identities and to create a calm relationship between these groups and the central government. In contrast, others believe that the autonomy leads to the radicalization of the demand of ethnic groups from the center and the intensification of the separatist tendencies of these groups and the incomplete territorial integrity of a country. Another group also believes that in examining the relationship between autonomy and the separatism, the central issue is the central government's action in abolishing the autonomy of

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the autonomous groups. This theory is known as the “lost autonomy theory”, and believes that the central government, by abolishing the autonomy of autonomous ethnic groups, intensifies the separation process of these groups. Therefore, among these theoretical debates and according to the third perspective, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the effect of the role of governments in the face of the autonomy and its relation to separatism, as well as the study of the relationship between separatism and autonomy.

On the other hand, one of the areas that is considered as a valuable field in studying the phenomenon of autonomy and separatism is the independent states of the Soviet Union. In general, autonomous regions have been very much in the Soviet Union. In fact, because the territory of the Soviet Union has historically been the home of many ethnic groups, autonomy was used by the Soviet centralized system to regulate the demands of these groups and manage their relations with the dominant ethnic groups. In the centralized and hierarchical system of the Soviet Union, entities such as the autonomous republics, autonomous regions, and autonomous oblasts were dominated by the union republics. In the final years of the Soviet Union, and with the intensification of the process of separatist tendencies among the ethnic groups, the autonomous regions, with regard to the status of autonomy, moved in the way of territorial separation. The actions of the governments of union republics with the autonomous groups also intensified the separatist tendencies of these groups. Indeed, autonomy has become a factor in the emergence and intensification of the separatist process in post-Soviet space. Meanwhile, one of the countries faced with the issue of autonomy in the last years of the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet era is the Republic of Georgia. During the Soviet Union, this country had two autonomous republics, Ajaria and Abkhazia, and an autonomous oblast, South Ossetia. These entities, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, moved toward territorial separation. Therefore, in this article, the relation between the autonomy and separatism and the status of the autonomous regions in the Republic of Georgia as well as the Post-Soviet separatism in this country have been analyzed.

Therefore, the main question of this paper is this: What is the relation between autonomy and separatism in international relations? And what is the effect of autonomy on the ethnic group separatism? In the findings section of this research, the article endeavors to examine the effect of abolishing the autonomy as an independent variable on separatism as an associated variable. In the following, hypothesis of this article is that giving autonomy to ethnic groups does not lead to radical tendencies and separatism; however, in general, increases the possibility of separatism; but the important issue is that the central government's action in abolishing the autonomy of ethnic groups increases the likelihood of violent separatism. In this paper, using the descriptive-analytical method, the authors have tried to study this hypothesis in association with the two autonomous regions of Abkhazia and South

Ossetia in the Republic of Georgia. Abkhazia and South Ossetia as two autonomous entities expressed their nationalist tendencies in the 1980s, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, these tendencies became more violent. Tbilisi's actions in relation to these tendencies and in particular the implementation of intense policies in relation to these groups, have led to an intensification of separatist tendencies in these areas and ultimately to their war with the central government in the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Keywords: Abkhazia, Autonomy, Ethnic Groups, Separatism, South Ossetia.

Patterning the Power Structure among ECO-Countries

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Abstract

Increasing the geopolitical power and dignity of countries have brought authority, impact and will provide more benefits and extend their authority in the economic, cultural, social, and political dimensions on regional, continental and global scales. Majority of countries are looking for extended plans to increase their power, and so the measurement of national power requires calculating and evaluating components and variables in different aspects. Evaluating these factors reveal the level of national power and the determination of the condition of countries in different facets of local, regional and trans-regional levels. One of the key factors in determining the national power level of countries is to calculate their geopolitical weight. If the countries in a geographical region define their activities in the form of a regional organization, their relations and their type of actions in the regional structure will be based on their geopolitical weight. Therefore, according to the influence of power on the process of interactions, investigation of power levels and its extended changes in different geographic regions, based on the indicators and components of national power, can determine the regional power structure and the role of each Members.

ECO is a regional economic organization which is established by three countries of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey in 1964. In 1993, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan joined ECO. According to its statute, ECO will work to improve the conditions for sustainable economic development of member countries to gradually remove barriers to trade in the region. ECO's main headquarter is in Tehran, Iran. close proximity and the common history and cultures of the members and their dispersion among the four geopolitical regions including the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean geopolitical region, finding the results for strategic design and expansion of geopolitical territory can be obtained which is a top priority for balancing forces in the world. The purpose of this study is to find the structure of power model among member of ECO. So the question of this research is that what is the pattern of power among the members of ECO? Accordingly, the hypothesis was designed thusly: The power pattern among the member states

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of the ECO organization is unipolar and multipolar by monotonous weight and dispersed structure.

To measure the pattern of power in the studied countries, a matrix estimation model has been used to determine geopolitical weight based on six indicators including political, cultural, social, economic, territorial, military and scientific. Then, according to the quarantine method, ECO member states are classified in different levels. Finally, by considering six fundamental parameters and a review of 127 variables, national power assessments have been conducted to determine the level of power of ECO countries and, accordingly, their geopolitical weight has been obtained. Data collection method is based on library studies (schematics, table, statistical data using) and it is also a combination of sources such as books, journals, quarterly newspapers, Internet resources, statistics, information on internal and foreign sites, and the like. All data and statistics are related to 2015 and 2016.

Based on the results, ECO member countries are generally identified at four levels of power as follows:

1. Power with regional range, including: Iran and Turkey;
2. Subordinate Regional powers, including: Kazakhstan and Pakistan;
3. Countries with national range power: Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan;
4. Weakened national powers that do not have full control over the national level: Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan;

According to the results for the countries in the power hierarchy, the power of the organization is as follows: The difference in Turkey's privileges with Iran is due to the fact that Turkey has gained more concessions in furthering its social-cultural factor. The two countries of Pakistan and Kazakhstan are on the same level as Pakistan's rivalry with India and Russia's needs for the Kazakhstan is of note. Third-ranking countries in power, such as Afghanistan have gained significant development in many indexes. The recession of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is because of being confined to land, and their products' similarity to each other and their neighbors.

Afghanistan, despite all its problems, has developed a lot more than the others, because of its strong political, economic, and international relations with Iran, the UN assistance and the adopted policies by the United States to stabilize the security of its bases and influence and domination which can be considered as a pressure on that country. At the end of the pyramid power, there are Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan which the main reason of their backwardness and weakness of their power is due to being surrounded by neighbors with major challenges and climatic conditions. After reviewing the position and countries geopolitical weight based on six factors, it was found that Iran scored 2,831 points in terms of national strength among the 10 member states of the eco-ranking organization which made it as a second

between 10 countries. Also, the impact of Iran on the investigated neighbors' countries is not evaluated in an acceptable level. However, these countries are considered to be traditional territories of Iran. In stark contrast, Turkey is linguistically common with some of these countries, but is still more influential in comparison with Iran, and this effect of Turkey and the lack of influence of Iran among the eco countries are due to their national strength and geopolitical weight.

Keywords: Economy, ECO Organization, Geopolitical Weight, Politics, Power Model.

Positive Thinking towards the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Central Asian Countries: with an Emphasis on the Nuclear Issue

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Abstract

Positive thinking is the result of a mental conception of the capabilities one country can play for another. So that any action taken by country A can have beneficial results for B. Finding positive aspects in comparison with the negative effects is some of dimensions of positive thinking. In fact, changing the attitude from negativity toward positivity is a long-term process which is, of course is due to a reciprocal and interactive relationship. Therefore, positive thinking, while somewhat rooted in objective facts, comes from the thinking of the person at first and the elite ruling of foreign policy as a device of that country in the second phase. For example, while most of Gulf States have a pessimistic look about Iran's nuclear program and implicitly advocated unilateral action by the United States and Israel against Iran (Saudi Arabia is notable in this case), Central Asian countries have looked more positive and cautious about Iran's nuclear program and rejected any unilateral attack on the country with the aim of destroying its nuclear facilities, and called for a peaceful solution to this issue. For example, Uzbekistan was silent about Iran's nuclear issue, indicating no support from the parties to the conflict; Turkmenistan supports Iran for its borders with Iran and high-level economic relations with the country. Tajikistan had a more positive attitude toward Iran's nuclear program than all of Central Asian countries. Meanwhile, Kyrgyzstan and its president strongly opposed any unilateral attack on Iran's nuclear facilities through the Kyrgyzstan manas base. (Although this site is not currently leased to Americans) and called for a peaceful solution to this issue. Kazakhstan also challenges the international community's stance on Iran's nuclear program. On the other hand, they want Iran to cooperate more in this regard with the international community, For example, in November of 2011, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in a media commentary, announced that current sanctions would suffice because the IAEA conclusions were ambiguous, and the IAEA inspectors should once more go to Iran's nuclear facilities for further investigation. He Asked

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the United States to enter directly with Iran to resolve the remaining issues. Given the above assumptions, the basic question is posed: What are the reasons for the Central Asian countries to look positively towards the Islamic Republic of Iran? Are economic, political-security-strategic considerations effective in creating such a view? In response to the above question, it can be argued that a set of political, economic, security and strategic considerations serves as a reason for the positive perception of Central Asian countries compared with the countries of the southern Gulf of Persian Gulf to the Islamic Republic of Iran. For example, while Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have good commercial and economic ties with Iran, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have political and strategic motives, worrying about the spread of political instability in the region and its spread within their borders and the activation of Islamist groups in their country. Kazakhstan, as an influential country in Central Asia, is concerned about the prevalence of instability and the possibility of Iran reacting to a military strike against them. The method used in this research is descriptive-analytic after event occurrence. In this regard, at first, the dependent variable, the positive look of Central Asian countries, was investigated in the form of an examination of the approach of the elites of these countries to Iran. For example, statements by presidents of some of countries regions, including NourSultan Nazarbayev, have been advocating remarks, indicating their support for the peaceful nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Authors studied geo-economic, geo-strategic and geo-cultural indicators to clarify their independent variables. In other words, in order to prove the research hypothesis, using existing information and statistics and library, the authors tried to prove a meaningful relationship between two variables, namely, the positive thinking of Central Asian countries relative to Iran, due to geo-economic, geo-strategic, and geo-cultural considerations. Therefore, the reasons for the Central Asian countries to look positively towards Iran, especially in the nuclear issue derive from geo-politics, geo-cultural and geo-economic dimensions. For example, all Central Asian countries have a degree of economic relations with Iran and Iran could be considered a key factor in the future for the access of these countries to free water. For example, nearly 70% of cotton exports are currently exported to the outside world through the Islamic Republic as the second largest export commodity in Uzbekistan. In terms of security-strategy, Central Asian countries are also concerned about weakening Iran and the powering of countries such as Turkey, Israel and Pakistan, That is the reason why a country like Kazakhstan explicitly declares that the West's approach to Iran's nuclear program is not transparent and they want to clarify the true nature nuclear programs of Israel and Pakistan because they don't regard Israel as having nuclear weapons, and put the Islamic Republic at the forefront. The third reason why Central Asian countries have a positive outlook for Iran is that they are worried about the spread of insecurity and instability resulting from

the attack and rehabilitation of Iran's rigid response. Finally, the cultural and soft powers of Iran in the region and the influence of Iran among the peoples of the countries of the region will make the decision making system of Central Asian countries, even in countries like Uzbekistan, to look at the Islamic Republic of Iran as an influential country in the Central Asian region. Therefore, the positive attitude of Central Asian countries towards the Islamic Republic of Iran is due to their beliefs about the functioning of Iran in the regional sub-system. As a result, the main motivations of Central Asian countries to support Iran's nuclear program are rooted in various political, security, economic and geostrategic considerations which could increase Iran's regional weight among these countries. Whether this pattern can be repeated in relation to the Persian Gulf countries that have a negative view of Iran, needs to be explored separately.

Keywords: Balancing, Central Asia, Cultural Relations, Decision Making, Iran.

The Legal-Economic Framework for Controlling the Water Crisis in Central Asia

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Abstract

Although two thirds of the Earth's surface is covered by water but the water crisis has been a vital issue for the inhabitants of the earth because only 0.26 percent of the water available on the ground is sweet and usable and also available water resources are not evenly distributed. For example, a community has more control over water resources than others. Therefore, shortage of water resources and also uneven distribution at the global level, caused increases the importance of water and if these sources be as international rivers, it can create conflicts on utilization. Therefore, it can be said, those water sources that are shared between two or more governments, can cause conflicts. Border and ideological differences and also differences in geopolitics and hydrogeopolitics of countries in a region increase the crises and conflicts in the region. The article will examine the relations between Central Asian countries on the issue of water. In this region the water issue is affected by political, economic, legal, technical, and ecological issues. Therefore, the water crisis is one of the most important issues in the region of Central Asia and Russia that a large part of it is influenced by decisions about the geographic and political divisions that have remained since the Soviet Union. Now also in addition to past issues part of the crisis has also been imposed on the region due to geographical conditions and the other part due to the performance of governments that has impact on the current and future crises of the region, especially in the development of agricultural and industrial activities in the countries. In general, when the water crisis discussed in Central Asia that Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have the origins of the two great rivers, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya and these countries are on the upstream rivers. They reduce the rights of other countries in the

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region with creation of a dam and water supply. In general, the motivation to create a dam in the Central Asian region is due to several reasons; A) Agriculture: The greatest economic advantage of Central Asian countries is the expansion of the agricultural sector. Thus, Central Asian countries have been developing their agriculture since the past, with the diversion of water through the excavating of the canal or the blockade of current waters by creating a dam. However, statistics show that Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, despite having the sources of Amudarya and Syr Darya rivers, did not make a significant difference between themselves and other countries in the Central Asian region. This depends on variables such as land extent. B) Avoid seasonal floods: The mountainous region and abundant atmospheric rainfall at high altitudes in the winter and spring cause seasonal floods and huge destruction. Therefore the creation of multiple dams can reduce the power of floods. In graphs displayed in text we concluded that the frequency of “high” earthquakes and the average occurrence of floods in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is far more than the other countries in the region that are in the downstream position. C) Hydroelectric power generation: The mountainous region of Central Asia and the severe winter cold, plus the shortage of hydrocarbon resources such as oil, gas or coal in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan has caused these upstream countries to create dams for the production of hydroelectric power to provide their energy in all seasons and in particular the cold seasons. Although the crisis in the Central Asian region has become more important after the Soviet collapse, but it seems there are factors and parameters in the region that prevent the crisis of relations between countries on the issue of using the waters of the border. Therefore, this research uses the descriptive-analytical method and the use of information gathering methods in the form of library and Internet, seeking to answer this question that in general, what factors control the water crisis in Central Asia and prevent regional conflicts among the countries of the region? The hypothesis of this article is that parameters in the framework of an economic-legal framework such as energy exchanges, institutional and inter-organizational links, and comprehensive water utilization plans have contributed to controlling the water crisis in Central Asia. By studying the data gathered in this study, we arrive at this conclusion that the water disagreements and the water crisis in Central Asia are deeply rooted and multilateral but it seems that by designing economic-legal frameworks in the region, it can reduce the incidence of conflicts among actors involved in this issue. In this research, these frameworks are divided as follow: A) Organizational and inter-organizational links: The overlapping of members in organizations working in the field of economy and energy in the Central Asian region creates some kind of convergence and entanglement. The energy economy and its agreements cover issues such as the rights of low-income countries and other relevant issues in international law, and subsequently reduce the tensions. In this regard, the authors referred to four organizations and institutions that in

these organizations, most Central Asian countries are members of these three organizations, including the Commonwealth Power Council, the ECO Organization, the Shanghai Organization and the Central Asian Economic Organization. B) Exchange of energy between countries of the region: Hydropower is produced in upstream countries, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which do not have much hydrocarbon resources. Other countries in the region, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have significant oil and gas resources. Therefore, the exchange of water and hydropower between oil and gas can create a kind of interdependence among the countries of the region, and this interdependence will reduce tensions between Central Asian countries. C) Comprehensive legal plans for water use: In this regard, we can refer to the 1992 Almaty Document, which is an intergovernmental agreement between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on “Cooperation in the area of joint management and protection of intergovernmental water resources reserves” and the 1996 Tashkent agreement on “The use of fuel and energy resources, construction and operation of gas pipelines in Central Asia” between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and finally to the document of March 17, 1998, as a new intergovernmental agreement on “the use of water resources in the Syr Darya river basin.”

Keywords: Central Asia, Conflict, Political-Legal Framework, Water, Water Crisis.

Studying the Status of the New Afghanistan among Regional Security Complexes: from Central Asia to South Asia

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Abstract

The article aims to study the place of Afghanistan among regional security complexes including South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. During the Cold War period, Afghanistan was located at the center of US-USSR competitions. Lastly, the dyadic tension led to invasion of the country by the USSR Red Army and its occupation. Thanks to presence of former Soviet Union in Afghanistan, an ‘overlay’ came into existence influencing the security processes of the state. So, the end of the war in the Afghanistan was a pivotal accident in the late of bipolar era.

The end of the cold war coincided with rising incidents and concepts such as multi-dimensional security, security regionalism, and new regionalism. In other words, regions and the status of different countries among them were playing an important role in security analysis. Regarding the process, Afghanistan’s status was subjected to change in security analysis. Afghanistan had lost its geostrategic importance after the cold war, but it was regained after the 11/9 terrorist operations. The operations obliged the United States to fight against terrorism and try for democratization of Islamic world under the frameworks like ‘the Great Middle East’ and ‘the Greater Middle East’ – all of them set Afghanistan on the Middle Eastern security complex. Transiting responsibilities to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and reducing American troops in Afghanistan, historical-cultural relations between Afghanistan and Central Asia was highlighted and pushed the Country to Central Asian security complex. Meanwhile, Indo-Pak conflict and its externalities for Afghanistan security tie the late state in South Asian security complex. So, the main question here is which security complex does include Afghanistan. Answering the question, there are three approaches as follow:

- a) The first approach sets a link between Afghanistan and the Middle Eastern security complex.

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- b) The second attitude ties Afghanistan in Central Asian security complex.
- c) The third view argues that Afghanistan is an ‘insulator state’ which puts on borders of regional security complexes including Middle Eastern, central and south Asian ones.

But our hypothesis is that given the geographical proximity, security dependencies, economic interdependence, and patterns of amity and enmity, Afghanistan is located within South Asian security complex. Studying the hypothesis, regional security complex theory and bi-dimensional method including comparison and proof by contradiction has been used. Using this method, first, it is demonstrated that several factors take Afghanistan away from the Middle Eastern security and Central Asian one, notwithstanding the vast similarity among them. Then, regarding indices of security complexes, Afghanistan’s relations with South Asia especially India and Pakistan are examined.

It seems that regional security complex theory could be helpful here. Security complex theory was first sketched out by Barry Buzan. Security complexes address the level of region located between national units and international system. So, the theory focuses on the regions as objects of security analysis, and offers an analytical framework for dealing with them. The aim of this theory is to highlight the relative autonomy of regional security relations. In this regard, seven factors including geographical neighborhood, models of amity and enmity, existence of two influential actors, relative independence, security interdependence, cultural-civilizational relationships, and economic relations has been examined in many regions from the Middle East to south and east of Asia. Under the above-mentioned theory, it is possible to test our hypothesis in below sections:

a) Geographical neighborhood: Afghanistan and South Asian countries, especially India and Pakistan, have similarities in geographical policy. These similarities including: vicinity to China and East Asia, direct or indirect accessibility to Indian Ocean, being subject to historically common external threat especially by United Kingdom, and so forth.

b) Models of amity and enmity: in this section, problems such as borders disputes, ethnical concerns, historical relations and other similar issues are in mind. In this regard, Pashto-ethnicity concerns has casted a shadow on Afghanistan-Pakistan bilateral relations.

c) Existence of two influential regional actors: formation of regional security complex depends on the presence of at least two players. In this case, everyone accepts that India and Pakistan are two key actors in South Asia. Both of them are playing very important roles in the economic and political process at their surrounding environment.

d) Relative independence: next factor influencing the security complex is relative independence in security relations of one region regarding another

ones. It seems that security processes of South Asian security complex are independent of other security complexes.

e) Security interdependence: the fate of a security-complex members relate together negatively or positively. According this, the security of Afghanistan depends on South Asian security by whether common agreement or joint threats. For example, both Afghanistan and other countries of South Asia are subject to threats caused by nuclear proliferation or terrorism. Alongside, all of them are members of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which could facilitate their relations.

f) Cultural-civilizational relationships: Afghanistan and South Asian countries are the successors of the historical governments which have joint traditions. These traditions, today, constitute a basis for vast linkage between the nations. For example, Pakistan TVs shows Pashto films and many Afghans and Pakistanis welcome Bollywood films.

g) Economic relations: Afghanistan and South Asian countries, especially India and Pakistan are among the economic partners of each other experiencing a wide bilateral trade. For example, Afghanistan is the second great market of Pakistani commodities.

Lastly, findings show that different factors including above-mentioned ones as well as spilling Indian-Pakistani conflict over Afghanistan place the late country on the South Asian security complex.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Geographical Proximity, Patterns of Amity and Enmity, Regional Security Complex, Security Dependencies.

Iran's Foreign Policy in South Caucasus, Offensive or Defensive?

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Abstract

Iran and Caucasus have a common history. Cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic and geographical cohesion of Caucasus with Iran are obvious factors that engage Tehran in the issues of this region. This area has been part of the Iranian territory in different eras and at periods of times the Russians and Turks have ruled this region. Iran's foreign policy attitude in the region confirms that Geopolitical motives and pragmatist policies have been the basis of Tehran's orientation in the region. The main purpose of this article is assessing the foreign policy of Iran in the framework of Robert Jervis's theory on Perception and misperception. Therefore present article tries to address the questions, whether Iran's Foreign policy is offensive or defensive in Caucasia? How the Caucasian states' perception from the Iran's foreign policy has been formulated? The authors believe that Iran's behavior in South Caucasus is completely defensive. But the dominant conception on Iran's foreign policy is offensive towards the region by the interested players. So the rival actors in South Caucasus pursue cautious and sometimes negative approach towards Iran. The authors use the following factors to assess Iran's offensive or defensive behavior in the South Caucasus:

- Ideological or geopolitical behavior in the Caucasus
- Security strategies in the Caucasus
- The alliance and coalition policy in Caucasus
- Bilateral interactions in Caucasus

Ideological or geopolitical behavior in the Caucasus

By the time of the USSR collapse, the Islamic Revolution of Iran had a history of more than 10 years. Incumbent president Hashemi Rafsanjani had pursued a pragmatic foreign policy in order to rebuild the devastation of the Iran-Iraq war. Therefore, Iran pursued a less ideologically driven foreign policy, especially in regard to Central Asia and the Caucasus. Despite the strong influence of the Islamic ideology on Iranian foreign policy, the foundational relationship with the Caucasian countries was based on

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geopolitical and realistic motives. It is important to point out that ideological foreign policy is usually accompanied by offensive behaviors, While the geopolitical attitude is more consistent with reality-based as well as status qua decision-making. Therefore, Iran's foreign policy in the Caucasus has had a more defensive rather than an offensive nature.

Security strategies in the Caucasus

The worst security situation in any region is the “neither, nor war” status. This situation shows a frozen crisis. The unresolved Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazian and South Ossetia crises are undoubtedly the main pressing problems in the South Caucasus. According to the fragile security situation in the region, influential countries have special outlooks and strategies for the Caucasus. These outlooks show the offensive or defensive nature of countries’ behaviors in the region. Unlike the other competing countries, Iran has introduced the most comprehensive security model for the Caucasus. Iran's Security model (3+3) contains the participation of all neighboring countries and prevents the interference of trans-regional powers.

The alliance and coalition policy in Caucasus

The increased cooperation between Russia, Iran and Armenia has led to speculation regarding an emerging set of regional alignments. Iran's position in the de facto alliance system in South Caucasus is not based on Tehran's identical proactive motives. The impact of high level of approaching of Azerbaijan to Israel and also the rising influence of USA, Israel and Turkey in South Caucasus have caused to much closer relationships of Iran with Armenia in context of Russia-Armenia-Iran axis. In other words, coalition between Baku-Ankara-Tel Aviv has caused more cooperation between Iran with Russia as well as Armenia. Therefore, the orientation of Iran toward the north-south axis is a reactive action with a defensive function.

Bilateral interactions in Caucasus

Despite the fundamental contradiction between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the West, Tehran has tried to build constructive relationships with the Western-oriented countries in south Caucasus. Iran is the only neighbor of the region that has embassies in all three South Caucasus states, while Russia and Turkey have closed their embassies respectively in Georgia and Armenia.

Conclusion

The regional states’ perception of the Iran foreign policy in South Caucasus is not in direction with which Iran practically has followed in the region. They do not evaluate the Iranian behavior without considering the Iran orientations in the Middle East. Conception of the Iranian Foreign Policy in

South Caucasus has created in the light of dominant discourse of Iranian foreign policy in other regions and world politics. In system theory, different regions, especially neighboring regions, have an impact on each other. But these areas have not the same significance and effectiveness. Accordingly, the Middle Eastern developments have significant effects in the Caucasus. Tehran's behavior in the Middle East has caused the US denial of the Iran role in many issues of the Caucasus like as energy transmission pipelines, militarization of the Caspian Sea and the desire to join NATO by the neighboring states. In addition, USA by pursuing "everything without Iran in Caucasus" tries to eliminate Iran's role in different projects in the region. This strategy is not due to Iran's "geopolitical defensive approach" in the Caucasus, rather it is rooted in Iran's offensive foreign policy against Israel as a strategic ally of Washington in the Middle East. Iran's deprivation from regional interests by the US in the Caucasus shows that the Caucasian neighbors did not perceive Iranian pragmatist actions as positive behaviors. Iranian attitude in South Caucasus is less assertive than Turkey, Russia, Israel and USA, but the existing facts shows that Caucasian neighbor are cautious in expanding relations with Iran given to misperception of Tehran policy towards other regions.

Keywords: Alliance and Coalition, Caucasus, Defensive Policy, Iran, Offensive Policy, Robert Jervis.

The Change in the Role and Status of Sufism in Central Asia

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Abstract

This research surveys the role and status of Sufism as one of the most important movements and elements of Islam in Central Asia. In this context, the main focus is on identifying the role of Sufis and Sufi orders, since the emergence of Islam in Central Asia. Thus emphasis will be on the role and status of Sufism during the reign of the Mongols and the Tsarist Russian and especially the effect of policies communist leaders in the Soviet Union and then the independent republics toward Sufism. In this regard, reference is made to the reasons for the repression of Sufis in Soviet era and re-attention the leaders of the newly independent republics give to the Sufism. In this research, we have tried to study the subject using a descriptive-analytical method and using available scientific books and essays in this field. The compilations previously written in relation to Sufism in Central Asia focus more on the historical context and the cultural and Islamic role of Sufism and or its impact on the status of women in the region. Other works also according to their release date, despite the examination of the status and role of Sufism before the Soviet era or the period of the Soviet Union, It was not possible for them to study contemporary times and their adaptation to the past. But the works pointing to the current role of Sufism in Central Asia have had a single-dimensional look, especially their approaches to the use and benefits that Central Asian leaders have of Sufism and there is no mention of the interaction of these actions on the role and status of Sufism in this region and it is only limited to the potential and the possibility of re-emergence of this current in the political and social arenas. But the remarkable matter is that despite more than two decades of independence, the Central Asian republics and the decreasing role of Sufism in the region in comparison to the past, some of these compilations, without explicitly explaining how to reduce the role and place of Sufism in Central Asia, only point to the potential risk of this current and the worries that might make it in the future.

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Therefore, the main question of this research is “what developments have happened in the role and status of Sufism in Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet union?” This study tries to indicate and explain that the influential role and status of Sufism in Central Asian societies have declined as a result of the dual policies of the communist leaders towards Sufism. What we mean by “dual policies” is repressive and violent policies in the Soviet era and the flexible policies after independence of the Central Asian republics. In this regard, it is pointed out the reasons for the repression of the Sufis during the Soviet era and the renewed attention of the leaders of independent republics to the Sufism. Accordingly, this research considers the influence of factors such as the challenges of national identity and the emergence of Islamic extremism in the late-Soviet era, which has now become one of the concerns of the Central Asian statesmen. Finally, the paper surveys the impacts of the actions and policies of Soviet communist leaders and independent republics on the role and status of the current of Sufism in general and the Sufis in particular.

In fact, Central Asia, which was formerly known as a part of Transoxiana, was embracing Islam after the domination of the Arab troops in this region and then became one of the main centers of Islamic culture and civilization. Meanwhile, the emergence of Sufism played an important role in spreading Islam in Central Asia. Although most Sufi currents, emphasize the internal interpretations of Islam And they are opposed to apparent interpretations of Islam but the formation of Sufism in Central Asia and its continuity have been different from other Sufi currents. They at the same time responded to the theoretical questions, also presented plans for individual, social and political behavior. So that most Sufi movements either developed in protest to corrupt rulers or in opposition to religious literalism. During the 13th and 18th centuries, especially after the Mongols attacked Islamic lands, the Sufis became one of the main pillars of the Central Asian power structure. After the supremacy of Tsarist Russians in this region, efforts to fight the infidel administrations and establish Islamic sharia in society became part of the purposes of the Sufi orders.

After the 1917 Revolution, when the Bolsheviks came to power, different conditions prevailed over Islamist groups, especially the Sufi orders in the region. They were well aware of the power and influence of the Sufi Sheikhs and the ability of the Sufis to organize the popular uprisings in Tsarist times. Therefore, the most intense actions of the Soviet government against the endowments (Waqfs) were that the Sufis used these holy places and monasteries to finance their needs and attract the followers and train their disciples. During this period, were imposed severe suppression and conditions of repression against Muslims including Sufi currents and the Sufi orders only succeed to preserve the superficial and apparent Islamic in the region, which is referred to as “parallel Islam”. After the independence of the republics, new leaders having a lot of experiences about how the

Soviet regime collided with Sufism, changed their approach to Sufi currents. In the new conditions, from one side Islamic extremist groups were developed that their approaches were far more dangerous than the precedent of the Sufism. On the other side, not only didn't they deem it necessary to suppress the identity and historical symbols of Sufism but they should be used to create national identity, solidarity and integrity. Hence, Central Asian leaders affected a flexible policy and controller simultaneously. While they sometimes distort the works of the Sufis for their own benefit, they focus more on the reconstruction of holy places and Sufi symbols. However, the Sufi Sheikhs and their ceremonies are heavily under the control of the governments of the region and even sometimes they are banned from doing their rituals and training. Despite the Continuity of some anti-Islamic policies by the leaders of these republics, Sufi leaders have not reacted to these actions and even Central Asian leaders have directly and indirectly expressed their support for this current. Indeed, maybe it can be said that the role and status of Sufism in its historical process in Central Asia, from an efficient current has become a passive current.

Keywords: Central Asia, Islamic Extremism, National Identity, Soviet Union, Sufism.

Confronting Terrorism and the Transformation of China's Regional Foreign Policy in Central Asia (2002- 2016)

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Abstract

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, Central Asia, as a newly emerging region, became the scene of rivalry between regional and trans-regional actors, each of which was aiming to leave its own distinct and effective trail on the region. Under these circumstances, China, which has long been engaged in traditional links and close ties with the countries of the region, pursued a progressive regional foreign policy, and sought to provide appropriate multidimensional fields for promoting its national interests and national economic goals in Central Asia. In other words, China's growing economy and its innovative orientation towards becoming a regional and global power have forced this government to develop relations with the countries of the region. The scope of this kind of influence has gone so far that, according to some analysts, the security and prosperity of China in relation to the region has gained a specific identity. The above-mentioned conditions, which were mutually beneficial, faced transformations in the region following the 9/11 attacks and their subsequent developments. After Hu Jintao came to power in 2002, China's foreign policy focused on reducing tension with its neighbors and regional countries. His foreign policy in Central Asia was based on regional stability. Thus, while security and development were his most important issues in confronting Central Asia, he considered the power of economic development as the only solution to the reduction or even elimination of ethnic and political tensions. The foreign policy of Xi Jinping took a more active approach. In contrast to Hu, Xi has been less optimistic about the nature of world politics and his strategy to achieve foreign policy objectives has been more decisive and aggressive. The goals of China's foreign policy in this period in relation to Central Asia are summarized as follows:

Maintaining political stability in the secular states of Central Asia;
increasing China's influence and limiting the influence of other powers;

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promoting China's economic interests through the Belt and Road Initiative. Meanwhile, the phenomenon of terrorism and the spread of terrorist activities have changed some aspects of China's security policy toward the Central Asian region. The formation of new security ties with some countries, and designing and implementing new anti-terror laws and regulations are some examples. Based on the comparative-analytical research method, the present paper describes how the anti-terrorism approach influenced China's foreign policy toward Central Asia under Hu and Xi. The main question is: "How is China's regional foreign policy toward Central Asia was influential in terms of countering terrorism after September 11?" And the hypothesis is: China's foreign policy toward the Central Asian region has become more security-orientated under Xi Jinping compared to Hu Jintao, especially on the basis of the fight against terrorism.

Keywords: Central Asian Region, China's Regional Foreign Policy, China's Security Policy, Fight against Terrorism, Hu Jintao, Sing-Kiang Issue, Xi Jinping.

Change and Replacement of the Alphabet of the Ancestors (Farsi) in and after the Soviet Era in Tajikistan

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Abstract

One of the disastrous consequences of the seventy-year-old governance of the Soviet Union's communist regime in the historical region of Central Asian consisting of five republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan was a compulsory change in the writing systems of these countries to Cyrillic (Russian). This situation was of particular complexity in Tajikistan due to the linguistic differences with four other countries. In any case, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, with the independence of the Republic of Tajikistan, the alphabet of the ancestors (Farsi) was expected to replace the Cyrillic alphabet (Russian), as in the early years of the domination of the communist regime, the alphabet of Tajikistan changed from the alphabet of ancestors (Persian) to Cyrillic (Russian), but it did not happen. Therefore, in order to understand the cause of the subject, first the history of alphabetical change and in other words extinction of the Persian alphabet in Tajikistan during the Soviet era will be explained in the context of this article. Then the upsides and downsides of the change stream of the alphabet, in other words, the subject of the revival of the ancestors' alphabet in Tajikistan after the Soviet era in more than two decades will be described. Recognizing this history from two historical periods, understanding the cause and the reason why the alphabet of the ancestors (Persian) did not replace in the post-Soviet period in the Republic of Tajikistan is significantly valid in terms of providing the reasons for the opponents and the aforementioned superiors. Thus, in this paper the question, i.e. why the process of changing the Cyrillic alphabet (Russian) ancestors' alphabet (Persian) was not realized, will be answered while studying both periods. Therefore, it is assumed that not accepting the elitism has been an effective factor acknowledging of the importance of economic and political factors.

In this context, it is explained that the whispers of the first issue of the reformation of the Arabic alphabet and its replacement with the Latin

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alphabet in the stream of nationalism and the development of the Islamic countries were proposed by Malkam Khan and Mirza Fath Ali Akhundov and his counterpart in the second half of the nineteenth century, but his efforts had no tangible achievement.

Between 1927 and 1930, the alphabet of the five Central Asian republics changed to the Latin alphabet. Initially, changing Arabic alphabet to the Cyrillic alphabet instead of the Latin alphabet was suggested, but it was rejected. At that time, such a move was seen as the institutionalization of Russian superiority, which was strongly condemned by Lenin (Hiro, 2009: 46)

Although Central Asia was under the influence of Russia and the domination of communism during Soviet era, its encounter with new era was more or less like Iran, since in Iran there were whispers about alphabet change from some political and cultural elites at that time. In addition, Latinization relied on Iranian nationalism, because Latinization was a reflection of the Persian modernization and its ability to expand in line with time. In other words, Latinization was part of the movement for expressing the national existence.

The occurrence of the communist revolution of Russia and the founding of the Soviet Union and the political and social events which from it, made Tajiks face a great transformation in all its aspects, and the fate of the Persian language could not be kept free of these changes. By initiating the Soviet era, Persian language was placed in a new context in cultural terms. From this period on, two fundamental factors shaped the fate of Persian language.

In 1926, in the Turkology Congress of Baku, it was announced that the Latin alphabet would be used for all Soviet-Turkish languages. The prevalence of the Latin alphabet coincided with the elimination of illiteracy throughout the Soviet Union, including Tajikistan. The Qur'an and its interpretations, as well as the poems of Persian poets such as Ferdowsi, Saadi and Hafez were banned books.

The influence of the pan-Turkism movement on intellectuals or reformists had reached the point where many of those whose nationality was Tajik and their mother tongue was Persian, were influenced by it and denied the basis and place of their national language and culture. In a way that in the first years of the new Soviet government, Persian speakers were fined for speaking Persian in Bukhara. Even so, the Tajiks had to defend their originality and independence at the same time with alphabetical change in framework of controlling negative pan-Turkism waves.

Although the process of Russianization of the various nations of the Russian empire dates back to Alexander III in the second half of the nineteenth century, but this process was accompanied by ups and downs in the Soviet era. At first it was condemned based on the theory of Pokrovsky titled as the absolute evil of all colonial forms of English, French or Tsarist

Russian until mid-1930s. After a while, the leaders of Soviet Union supported a historical new theory called “Less Evil” during next decade between 1937 and the end of the 1940s.

Considering these developments, not only was there no sensitivity to the Tsarist Russia legacy, but also it was acknowledged and even praised. One of the reasons for promoting the Cyrillic alphabet instead of Latin and then compulsory language training in Central Asia, including Tajikistan, is understandable in this context.

However, the acceptance of the replacement of the alphabet of the ancestors (Persian) was high at the beginning of the independence of Tajikistan, but with the outbreak of civil war in Tajikistan, and the Cyrillic alphabet advocates exploiting this undesirable situation on the one hand and hastiness of the advocates of the revival of the ancestral alphabets on the other hand, the necessity of principle of transformation in order to achieve cultural independence was influenced and postponed for an unknown period of time. In other words, ruling situation in Tajikistan showed that law enforcement was far more difficult than its resolution.

By splitting the elite community of Tajikistan to two poles, opposites and advocates of changing alphabet, the opposition contexts of opponents of alphabetical changes were more significant than the its advocates’ reasons, as the following:

1. The opposition contexts of Alphabetical change:

A. Cultural Context: Disconnecting from Tajiks in Bukhara and Samarkand, stating technical problem in Persian alphabet, claiming that learning Cyrillic Alphabet is easy.

B. Political Contexts: a feeling of dependence on Iran, Islamophobia, clerics gaining power.

C. Economic contexts: High risk of work, recovery costs, the factor of Russia.

2. Reasons of alphabetical change advocates:

A. Cultural reasons: The relative difficulty of writing, benefits of returning to self, relationship among three countries with the same language.

B. Political reasons: Tajik religious interests, elimination of Islamophobia, fear of dependence having no ground.

C. Economic reasons: Having shared facilities, Risk reduction, and gradual replacement.

Given these explanations, it is clear that intellectual-elite cooperation and synergy in order to move toward realizing expectations in the framework of achieving progress is far more effective in the process of cultural transformation than any other transformation. Thus, in Tajikistan, the contexts of accepting alphabet change must be established within the framework of the strategy of continuity and solidarity. Acceptance, of course, only takes place when preparing the contexts of elite acceptance facilitates the public acceptance which its reflection can be found in the

framework of people yes votes in a referendum, as there was the acceptance of changing Persian Alphabet to Latin in Tajikistan in the early twentieth century.

Keywords: Alphabet of Ancestors, Cyrillic Alphabet, Elite Acceptance, Russianization, Tajikistan.

Oriental Studies and Geographical Discoveries in Favor of Colonial Strategy: The Case of Russian Colonial Policy in the Southern Caucasus

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Abstract

Tsarist Russia's dominance over the Caucasus in the 19th century was a turning point in the history of this region. It was a consequential change that determined the future destiny of the Caucasian people within the colonial strategy of the Russian empire. The birth of "Caucasus" as a modern phenomenon with its multidimensional and geopolitical connotations was the result of this process. This process most often viewed and surveyed from European or Russian perspective and the resulted studies naturally reflect a Russo-Orientalist/Euro-Centrist narrative. The present paper aims to propose a rather different perspective; keeping in mind the pre-colonial history of the so-called Caucasus region, it will trace the process during which Tsarist Russia's colonial strategy toward the Caucasus was developed and try to explain how this strategy led to creation of "Caucasus" as a colonial-geopolitical conceptual structure.

The central question of this study is that how Tsarist Russia discovered the Caucasus. As a time-tested rule, discovering and reconnoiter of any region is an essential requisite of its colonization. The region that the present study focuses on - namely the Caucasus - has not been a "terra incognita" with an uncivilized indigenous people. Its extensions were wide enough to be home to a great population with different and multicultural backgrounds who developed advanced civilizations and historical relations with their western and eastern neighbors. While the northern Caucasus was mostly home to tribal peoples with Turkic origins, parts of Southern Caucasus welcomed Christianity in an ancient time. The first appearance of Christianity could be traced back to the very earliest day of the religion and long before Russian themselves converted to it. Moreover, Armenian and Georgian people along with their Iranian and Turkic neighbors have their own culture and civilizations with a prosperous history.

From an Iranian point of view, there was not any historical region called as the Caucasus. The voluminous literature in Persian language dealing with the historical geography of the lands between Caspian and the black seas do not mention to this word. Authors of these works mostly have called the

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Caucasus Mountains as “Alborz Kūh” and treated the peripheral lands as provinces of Iran. Except for Arabic, this is the case of indigenous texts in other languages. In some Arabic texts, there are references to the word “Kabk” (كَبْك) whose origin is questionable. Yet, there are clear references to the word “Caucasus” in the Greek and Roman geographic and historical literature. This latter seems to be the main source of Western travelers to revive the denomination in the modern period. Hence, we can ask that did Russians themselves reproduce this toponym or European visitors intermediated it? This paper tries to prepare an answer for this question.

As the documentary base of this study shows, European orientalist discourse played a crucial role in paving the way for the Russian dominance over Caucasus. From 16th century on, many Europeans as diplomats, tradesmen and adventurous travelers passed the Caucasus lands in order to develop relations with the Safavid Iran. A wealth of travelogue literature produced by these Europeans among whom there were scientists and artists who certainly contributed to the Russian discovery of the region. We can mention to a few names among the Russian tradesmen who also contributed to their countrymen's familiarity with the region and its people. Yet, the main work was fulfilled by a group of German scholars who were in service of Tsarist colonial policy. Peter Simon Pallas and his savant students, Y. G. G黦ldenstaadt and S. G. Gmelin were among the most influential figures who provided the Russians a wealth of scientific and experimental material in different fields of history, geography, ethnography, commerce, fauna and flora and the like about the region. No doubt this group of the Europeans played a central role in formation of Caucasus as a part of the Tsarist colonial empire.

A third group also played an essential role in formation of the orientalist-geopolitical concept of Caucasus within the Russian colonial strategy; Among this last group who came from the indigenous elite, Armenians have allocated an exclusive contribution to themselves. This unique role had been so important that led some scholars to introduce the Armenian people as the inviters of Russians into the region. Yet, as the results of this study show, they were not alone and their Georgian neighbors played an influential role as well. Among the Georgian elite who from late 16th century on, began to migrate into the Russian lands, Sulikhan Saba Orbeliani played an important role. As a famous figure who belonged to the Georgian landowning elite, Orbeliani provided the Russian government with important data on the geographic situation of the region, its ethnographic composition and political conditions. As Allen has shown, Orbeliani's geographical Atlas of Caucasus was an invaluable source to be used by the famous German geographers, G. Deslisle to produce his invaluable 1721 map of Caucasus by request of Peter the Great. Comparing with those of Armenians and Georgians, the contribution of Muslim elite was not so much to be accounted. Yet, there

were some indigenous figures with an Iranian cultural lineage, who also played an influential role in the process. A. Q. Bakikhanov was a typical figure among this group who appeared as the consultants of the colonial rule in the Caucasus.

This study is based on a volume of literary materials that are gleaned from first-hand sources in different languages including Persian, Arabic, Russian, French, English and German. With a critical and analytical approach, these materials were employed in order to prepare an answer for the main question of the study. Its results show that between 16th to 19th centuries, Tsarist Russia advanced an expansionist policy toward the Caucasus region. Parallel to this expansionist policy and as an essential part of it was a discovering strategy to acquire an experimental-scientific reconnoiter of the occupied region and its people. Here, the pre-modern European mentality which was a legacy of the classic period along with the scientific attempts of the German scientist who were in service of the Tsarist regime and worked within the discourse of European orientalism, played a crucial role. Figures among the indigenous elite came to help their European colleagues. Formation of the “Caucasus” as an orientalist/geopolitical concept with certain colonial connotations was the result of this process.

Keywords: Caucasus, geographical discovery, orientalism, Russia, Russian colonial policy.

Exploring the Roots of Continuity in the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation during Putin's Rule

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Abstract

Putin had a more modest foreign policy rhetoric and seemed to be far more pragmatic than Primakov during his first term of presidency. However, such conditions did not last long and Russian government chose a more assertive stance once political stability was ensured and economic growth showed signs of improvement. In the following article we have assumed that similar patterns of thinking and acting which have not been necessarily subject to considerable changes as a result of vibrant conditions can be found in Russian foreign policy. It seems as if guiding principles of foreign policy are deeply embedded in political culture of the country. Despite some tactical changes to compensate for country's backwardness and economic difficulties as a historical tradition, Russians have never retreated from claiming the status of a globally recognized great power and international rule maker. In this article using descriptive-analytical method we have examined the following: "Despite domestic and international ups and downs, how can continuity in the rhetoric and action of Russian foreign policy since 2004 be explained?" Our hypothetical answer to this question is that: "Russian foreign policy has very deep ideational roots influencing the nature and identity of the state, which have been shaped through centuries by natural-geographical characteristics of the land, and historical and intellectual developments."

In 21st century, Russia still recognizes itself by standards and norms which are different from Western ones. In addition, Russian official discourse perceives this country as a geopolitical pole and guarantor of conservative values. Therefore, it looks down on post-sovereignty stage and supranationalism of the European type and even welcomes schism in European Union and the rise of far right parties in European Union member states.

During long periods of history, economic modernization of Russia seemed to be only second to preserving security which has faced constant threats especially through Russian leaders' eyes. Russia's high profile as a

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great power, a nuclear power, a permanent member of United Nations Security Council and one of the pillars of international system besides Europe and United States is absolutely vital to Russian political elites. Russia's interaction with international system and its relations with adjacent regions take place in such a context.

Constructivist approach can help us explain reasons for continuity in Russia's foreign policy. Constructivists claim that foreign policy decisions are formed by culture, because shared ideas and meanings shape identities and interests of states. According to this approach, social identity of political actors is formed by normative and ideational structures. When we understand that identities are made by non-material structures, we can more easily comprehend and explain a wide range of political phenomena which do not necessarily seem rational at first sight.

Although Putin is not the first proponent of the idea of a Russia which is doomed to act as a great power, he has turned this idea into reality much more successfully in comparison with his predecessor. His success is partially beholden to external factors such as energy price and partially beholden to internal factors like drawing a clear perspective of Russia's future and mobilizing resources to realize that goal. Putin abides by a consensus among Russian elites on the international status of Russia. In other words, Russia's foreign policy roadmap cannot be described as a personal decision made by Putin. Instead it has been agreed upon by majority of political and the intellectual elite.

Various factors have contributed to the formation of a great power discourse which is now deeply embedded in the Russian elite's mindset. Over the centuries, several factors which will be discussed in this article have influenced Russian elite's perceptions and brought about continuity in foreign policy to a great extent. We have divided reasons for such continuity into three categories: Natural features of Russian territory, historical developments and intellectual developments represented by different schools of thought.

Unique geography of Russia has always affected the tools of ensuring security and threat-perceptions. Coping with limitations caused by geography and nature had been a big concern for foreign policymakers. Historical developments over more than a dozen centuries since the establishment of the first Russian state have paved the way for durability of Russian exceptionalism. As mentioned above, besides natural features and historical developments, we investigate intellectual developments and their impact on Russian foreign policy. Westernism, civilizationalism and statism represent major trends influencing Russian foreign policy over at least the last two centuries.

From all this, we conclude that historical and geopolitical context in which the identity of Russian state has been raised, have led to the creation of a persistent system of meanings and ideas that is still influencing long-

term foreign policy strategy of Russia. Russia is usually discussed and investigated as an exceptional country; an outsider among Western nations and a European among non-Western nations. Russia has been exempt from most of the historical changes and transformations of Europe or have experienced them partially and decades after other Europeans. Geography, climate and natural features have influenced historical events and shaped unique geopolitical traits of Russia. Political culture and identity formed by these factors always affect foreign policy choices of Russian policymakers. Consensus on the necessity of ensuring Russia's great power status and its privileged and determining role in former Soviet states is categorically shared by almost all Russian officials. Since 2004 such an idea has been expressed much more evidently and challenging it seems unlikely in the foreseeable future. Although Russian state is not inclined to be stuck in a full-fledged confrontation with other great powers, it does not give up on its plan to restore the balance of power system of the 19th century type. Russian foreign policy cannot be explained by a cost-benefit analysis and material calculations. Self-concept of Russian state as a great power determines possible choices and justifies material losses caused by some policies which are instigated by identity discourse. Political elite's interpretation of Russia's national interests is to a great extent shaped by the enumerated geographical, historical and intellectual factors and does not necessarily reflect immediate material and economic interests of the country.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Eurasianism, Geography, History, Russia, Statism, Westernism.