

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

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SUBJECT:

Defining US interests in Central Asia

<DIST>SIT: VAX

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<SUBJ> DEFINING U.S. INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

<TEXT>

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 04 MOSCOW 006643
DEPT. FOR D, P, C/E, T, S/P, NEA, EUR/ISCA
NEA FOR A/S DJEREJIAN
E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PNAT, PINS, PGOV, PHUM, ECON, CIS
SUBJECT: DEFINING U.S. INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA
1. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

2. THE STATES OF CENTRAL ASIA ARE EMERGING ON THE WORLD SCENE AS MORE OR LESS INDEPENDENT ACTORS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE TAMERLANE. A VAST, RESOURCE-LADEN AREA WITH A LARGE BUT DIVERSE MUSLIM POPULATION AND A SIZEABLE SLAVIC MINORITY, CENTRAL ASIA WILL ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND MAINTAIN TIES TO RUSSIA -- REDEFINED BY THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS -- WHILE ALSO ESTABLISHING ITSELF WITHIN THE ISLAMIC WORLD.

3. SO FAR, MOST POLICY ANALYSIS HAS CONCENTRATED ON THE EFFECT OF THE MUSLIM WORLD ON CENTRAL ASIA. CENTRAL ASIA ALSO HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE THE

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BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE MUSLIM WORLD, FIRST AND FOREMOST BY CHANGING THE ETHNIC BALANCE BY ADDING TENS OF MILLIONS OF TURKIC- AND PERSIAN-SPEAKERS. DESPITE THEIR BACKWARDNESS BY SOVIET STANDARDS, CENTRAL ASIANS ARE ON THE WHOLE BETTER EDUCATED THAN MIDDLE EASTERNERS. DESPITE PRESENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, THE REGION HAS CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES AND ITS INDIGENOUS ECONOMIES HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO FLOURISH -- IF THEY CAN SOLVE FORMIDABLE ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM THEIR PAST COLONIAL DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIET CENTER.
END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.
DOES CENTRAL ASIA MATTER?

4. CENTRAL ASIA'S IMPORTANCE LIES IN ITS AMBIGUOUS POSITION BETWEEN RUSSIA -- CAUGHT IN THE THROES OF NATIONAL REBIRTH -- AND A MOSLEM WORLD UNDERGOING TREMENDOUS CHANGES, IN PART AS A RESULT OF IRAQ'S INVASION OF KUWAIT AND THE WEST'S RESPONSE. AS THESE TWO VAST TECTONIC PLATES SHIFT, CENTRAL ASIA LIES IN THE FAULT ZONE.

5. CENTRAL ASIAN STATES ARE NOT YET INDEPENDENT IN ANY REAL SENSE OF THE WORD. THEY DO NOT CONTROL THEIR BORDERS, THEIR MILITARY, THEIR ECONOMIES, THEIR CURRENCIES, OR THEIR POLICIES IN A HOST OF OTHER AREAS. AS THEY STRIVE TO DEVELOP STATEHOOD OVER THE COMING YEARS, THEIR CHIEF PROBLEM WILL BE TO DETERMINE THEIR POLITICAL IDENTITIES AND MODELS FOR DEVELOPMENT. HOW THEY DO SO WILL AFFECT U.S. INTERESTS IN BOTH RUSSIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST/ASIA, AND THEREIN LIES THE IMPORTANCE OF CENTRAL ASIA TO OUR POLICY.

NO CENTRAL ASIA WITHOUT TEARS

6. THE CURRENT RULERS OF THE FORMER SOVIET CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS FACE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF LEGITIMACY. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS (MOST NOTABLY ASKAR AKAYEV IN KYRGYZSTAN) CENTRAL ASIAN LEADERS ARE HOLDOVERS FROM THE COMMUNIST REGIMES OF THE FORMER USSR. OPPOSITION GROUPS HAVE SPRUNG UP THROUGH THE REGION ALONG ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS -- AND TO A CERTAIN EXTENT DEMOCRATIC -- LINES THAT CHALLENGE THE LEGITIMACY OF THE PRESENT RULERS. THE OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE STRONGEST IN AUTHORITARIAN TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN. HOWEVER, EVEN IN THOSE REPUBLICS WHERE THE OPPOSITION IS WEAKEST, SUCH AS KAZAKHSTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN, THE LEADERSHIP WILL FACE MAJOR CHALLENGES IF IT CANNOT DELIVER ECONOMIC RESULTS SOON.

7. THIS PROCESS WILL PRESENT THE U.S. WITH A CONTINUING SERIES OF TOUGH CHOICES IN APPROACHING SOME OF THE NEW STATES. THESE CHOICES WILL, IN THEIR MOST EXTREME FORM, CHALLENGE US TO BALANCE OUR INTERESTS IN SHORT-TERM STABILITY (AS REPRESENTED BY UNDEMOCRATIC AND AUTHORITARIAN RULERS) VERSUS THE LONG-TERM

PROSPECTS FOR SECULAR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. THE
 AUTHORITARIAN LEADERS NOW IN CHARGE IN CENTRAL ASIA
~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ SECTION 02 OF 04 MOSCOW 006643
 DEPT. FOR D, P, C/E, T, S/P, NEA, EUR/ISCA
 NEA FOR A/S DJEREJIAN
 E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PREL, PNAT, PINS, PGOV, PHUM, ECON, CIS
 SUBJECT: DEFINING U.S. INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA
 ARGUE THAT TOO RAPID CHANGE COULD RESULT IN THEIR
 REPLACEMENT BY MUSL
 IM FUNDAMENTALISTS AND/OR RADICAL
 NATIONALISTS. TOO LITTLE CHANGE BY THE
 AUTHORITARIANS, HOWEVER, COULD RESULT IN A POLITICAL
 EXPLOSION WITH THE SAME RESULTS.
 THE MIDDLE EAST FRONTIER

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8. THE NEW STATES ARE ATTRACTING IRAN'S ATTENTION IN
 A BIG WAY. IRAN'S RULERS MAY NOT BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT
 THE CHANCES OF EXPORTING THEIR BRAND OF SHI'A
 REVOLUTION TO A SUNNI CENTRAL ASIA. THEY CAN,
 HOWEVER, USE CENTRAL ASIA TO MAKE THE WORLD A SAFER
 PLACE FOR THEOCRACY. IRAN IS A PARIAN IN MUCH OF THE
 WORLD; FRIENDLY STATES TO THE NORTH CAN HELP BREAK
 THAT ISOLATION. IRAN HAS CARROTS TO OFFER --
 ESPECIALLY TO TURKMENISTAN -- IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC
 DEVELOPMENT.
9. IRAN ALSO HAS SOME STICKS: IRANIAN FUNDING FOR
 ISLAMIST GROUPS CAN PROVE A LONG-TERM IRRITANT TO THE
 CENTRAL ASIAN GOVERNMENTS. A POTENTIAL RESPONSE BY
 THREATENED CENTRAL ASIAN LEADERS IS TO ATTEMPT TO
 DEFANG THEIR ISLAMIC OPPOSITION BY COOPTING SOME
 RADICAL PARTS OF ITS AGENDA. PRESIDENT KARIMOV OF
 UZBEKISTAN HAS ALREADY SIGNALLED A WILLINGNESS TO TAKE
 STEPS TO APPEASE THE ISLAMISTS IN NAMANGAN. A SECOND
 RESPONSE IS TO MAKE POLITICAL OR OTHER KINDS OF
 ACCOMMODATION TO IRAN'S POLICIES IN ORDER TO AVOID
 TENSIONS WITH THE REGIME IN TEHRAN. A THIRD RESPONSE
 -- THE "ALGERIAN SOLUTION" OF SUPPRESSING
 FUNDAMENTALISTS ONCE THEY WIN A PLACE IN THE POLITICAL
 PROCESS -- IS INHERENTLY DESTABILIZING. IT IS IN THE
 U.S. INTEREST TO HELP THE NEW CENTRAL ASIAN STATES
 AVOID HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN COOPTATION BY OR
 SUPPRESSION OF RADICAL ISLAMISTS. WE MAY ALSO FIND
 THAT CONTACTS WITH FORMER SOVIET CENTRAL ASIAN STATES
 OFFER US NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE STATES IN THE
 MIDDLE EAST.
10. TURKEY IS ANOTHER MAJOR REGIONAL PLAYER WITH
 TRADITIONAL TIES TO THE PEOPLES OF CENTRAL ASIA. IT
 HAS MUCH TO OFFER, AND IS MORE INTERESTED IN CENTRAL
 ASIA THAN ANY OTHER WESTERN STATE. IT IS IN THE U.S.
 INTEREST TO ENCOURAGE TURKSH TIES WITH CENTRAL ASIA
 AND TO PROMOTE TURKEY AS A MODEL OF THE SECULAR,
 DEMOCRATIC TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT CENTRAL ASIA CAN
 FOLLOW. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD

RECOGNIZE THAT MANY CENTRAL ASIAN STATES HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT TURKISH INFLUENCE, AND WE SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE U.S. WILL FOLLOW ITS OWN POLICY IN THE REGION. IN PRACTICAL TERMS, IT WOULD NOT HELP TURKEY TO BE PERCEIVED THERE AS A U.S. SURROGATE.

11. THE NEW STATES WILL BE WOODED BY BOTH SIDES IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. THE GROWTH OF MUSLIM AND FUNDAMENTALIST INFLUENCE WILL INCREASE PRESSURE ON THE CENTRAL ASIAN LEADERSHIPS TO TILT AGAINST ISRAEL. ISRAEL HAS AN INTEREST IN REDUCING THIS TENDENCY, AS WELL AS IN ENSURING THE WELFARE OF THE AREA'S SIZEABLE BUT DECLINING JEWISH COMMUNITY. ISRAEL, WHICH ALREADY HAS ECONOMIC COOPERATION TIES WITH AZERBAIJAN, IS OPENING AN EMBASSY IN UZBEKISTAN, AND HAS BEGUN TO EXPORT AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY TO THE REGION.

12. THE NEW STATES WILL LIKELY DEVELOP INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICIES ON AFGHANISTAN. TURKMENISTAN, UZBEKISTAN AND TAJIKISTAN BORDER AFGHANISTAN AND THEREFORE HAVE BASIC INTERESTS IN THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THERE. THE CURRENT LEADERSHIPS IN THOSE COUNTRIES COME OUT OF THE SAME COMMUNIST BACKGROUND AS NAJIBULLAH, AND HAVE INDICATED A PREFERENCE FOR DEALING WITH THE KABUL REGIME RATHER THAN WITH THE MUJAHIDIN (ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THE POPULACE SYMPATHIZES WITH THE LATTER). IT IS IN THE U.S. INTEREST TO ENSURE THE NEW STATES ADHERE TO THE U.S.-SOVIET AGREEMENT NOT TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE KABUL REGIME AND TO SUPPORT A UN-SPONSORED POLITICAL AGREEMENT.

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ SECTION 03 OF 04 MOSCOW 006643
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 THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER

13. CENTRAL ASIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA WILL REMAIN AMBIGUOUS, AND HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS INSIDE RUSSIA AND BEYOND. TO RUSSIAN POLITICIANS, CENTRAL ASIA REPRESENTS EITHER THE COLLAPSE OF IMPERIAL GLORY OR A RATHOLE DOWN WHICH RUSSIA'S RESOURCES WERE THROWN FOR SEVENTY-ODD YEARS. CENTRAL ASIANS ARE SUSPICIOUS OF RUSSIAN

CHAUVINISM,
 IMPERIALIST DESIGNS, AND DIVIDE-AND-RULE TACTICS.

14. AT THE SAME TIME, CENTRAL ASIA WILL REMAIN LINKED TO RUSSIA MILITARILY, ECONOMICALLY AND IN MANY OTHER WAYS. VARIOUS TYPES OF INSTABILITY IN CENTRAL ASIA -- FAILURE TO RESOLVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DISPOSITION AND PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS; ETHNIC TENSIONS BETWEEN LOCALS AND THE MILLIONS OF RESIDENT RUSSIANS; CHINESE, IRANIAN, PAKISTANI, OR EVEN TURKISH PENETRATION OF BORDER AREAS; OR THE "MUJAHIDINIZATION"

OF TAJIKISTAN -- COULD EMBROIL RUSSIA IN STRUGGLES TO DEFEND ITS NATIONAL SECURITY. MUSLIM UNREST IN THE FORMER USSR OUTSIDE RUSSIA'S BORDERS COULD ALSO HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSLIMS LIVING WITHIN RUSSIA (TEN PERCENT OF THE POPULATION) THAT THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT COULD NOT IGNORE. SUCH DEVELOPMENTS WOULD ALLOW HARD-LINE NATIONALISTS IN RUSSIA TO PLAY THE PATRIOTISM CARD AGAINST REFORMERS IN INTERNAL POLITICAL STRUGGLES. IT IS IN THE U.S. INTEREST THAT RUSSIA NOT BE THUS DISTRACTED, AND THAT IT GET ON WITH THE PROCESS OF BUILDING A WESTERN-STYLE FREE MARKET DEMOCRACY.

15. OF THE PROBLEMS MENTIONED ABOVE, THE THORNIEST QUESTION IS THAT OF RUSSIAN MINORITIES IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES. THE LARGEST GROUP IS IN KAZAKHSTAN, WHERE RUSSIANS MAKE UP THIRTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF THE POPULATION AND WHERE MANY RUSSIANS LIVE IN TRADITIONALLY RUSSIAN AREAS GRANTED TO KAZAKHSTAN AS LATE AS THE 1950'S. THE PREDOMINATELY SLAVIC-INHABITED NORTH OF THE REPUBLIC HAS LESS IN COMMON WITH THE KAZAKH SOUTH THAN IT DOES WITH NEIGHBORING PARTS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION. A DETERIORATION IN INTER-ETHNIC TENSIONS IN KAZAKHSTAN COULD PROVOKE SECESSION BY THE RUSSIAN AREAS, AND THE START OF REDRAWING THE ARTIFICIAL SOVIET-ERA FRONTIERS IN THE REGION.

16. THE POSITION OF THE SEVEN MILLION RUSSIANS LIVING IN OTHER CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS IS MORE TENUOUS. MANY HAVE FEW PRACTICAL LINKS TO RUSSIA, AND WOULD HAVE TROUBLE LOCATING HOUSING AND WORK IF COMPELLED TO LEAVE. ON THE OTHER HAND, RECENT LANGUAGE LAWS DEMANDING THE USE OF THE LOCAL LANGUAGE FOR GOVERNMENT WORK (PASSED BY MOST CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS) ARE A PROBLEM FOR THE RUSSIANS, MOST OF WHOM NEVER LEARNED THE LOCAL LANGUAGE DESPITE GENERATIONS OF RESIDENCE. RUSSIANS ARE ALREADY LEAVING TAJIKISTAN AT A RAPID RATE, AND AT A SOMEWHAT SLOWER PACE IN SOME OTHER REPUBLICS. AS NATIONAL FEELING RISES AMONG CENTRAL ASIANS AND AS THE LEADERSHIPS CONTINUE TO PLACE THEIR ETHNIC COMPATRIOTS IN GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMIC POSITIONS, RUSSIANS WILL FACE GROWING PRESSURE TO LEAVE. THIS WILL BE A STEADY SOURCE OF IRRITATION IN THE RUSSIAN-CENTRAL ASIAN RELATIONSHIP. SHOULD THE SITUATION DETERIORATE, AND RUSSIANS IN CENTRAL ASIA BE EXPOSED TO SIGNIFICANT VIOLENCE OR SYSTEMATIC EFFORTS TO TURN THEM OUT OF THEIR JOBS, THE RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP WILL FACE STRONG DOMESTIC PRESSURE TO PROTECT RUSSIANS WORKING WITH OTHERS

 17. THE NEW STATES ARE JOINING THE CSCE AND THE UN. ALL BUT ONE HAVE JOINED THE ECO (TURKEY, IRAN AND PAKISTAN), AND SOME WILL BECOME FULL MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE. THERE IS ALSO TALK OF AFFILIATION WITH VARIOUS EUROPEAN AND FAR

EASTERN ECONOMIC, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT
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ORGANIZATIONS. THESE ARE ATTRACTIVE TO CENTRAL ASIANS
AS POTENTIAL SOURCES OF DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL.
INTERNATIONAL AID IS ALSO THE ONLY WAY CENTRAL ASIA
WILL BE ABLE TO COPE WITH ITS ECOLOGICAL DISASTERS.
CENTRAL ASIAN MEMBERSHIP IN RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL
MECHANISMS IS IN THE U.S. INTEREST AS SUCH TIES HELP
PUSH CENTRAL ASIA TOWARDS ADHERING TO INTERNATIONAL
NORMS OF BEHAVIOR.

18. MINIMIZES CONSIDERED.

STRAUSS

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