

New Great Game in Central Asia: America and NATO presence and Russia's reaction

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Abstract: Central Asia and the Caucasus after the independence have Political, social and economic problems; Therefore wanted The presence of trans-regional and regional powers to resolve some of the economic problems by Their cooperation and overcome security concerns with other military powers; On the other hand, would improve their economic infrastructure inherited from the Soviet era. In this Situation, the United States of America and Russia are rivals with each other and influenced most of the other major powers in the region As a result; they are located in a close competition against each other. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and declaration of independence of Central Asian countries, influence on Central Asia is one of the purposes and principles of the foreign policy of United States of America and NATO and It has been proposed after 2001 and America's presence in Afghanistan more than before; On the other hand, Russia knows Central Asia as its backyard , Therefore, have been always trying that this area has been influenced by itself; Thus Russia, controls carefully The presence of any such power, such as America and NATO and Adopts the necessary measures in their policies.

[Seyed Salman Moradi. **New Great Game in Central Asia: America and NATO presence and Russia's reaction.** *Academ Arena* 2014;6(8):10-14]. (ISSN 1553-992X). <http://www.sciencepub.net/academia>. 3

Key words: Regional powers, trans-regional, Russia, Central Asia, America, NATO

1. Introduction

The Central Asia and the Caucasus has always been considered Regional and trans-regional powers due to geostrategic location, security matters, crises and ethnic differences, the energy reserves and transit its to consumer markets. The weakness of Russia after the collapse and Yeltsin's pro-Western approach, Led to neglect to Central Asia and Caucasus that As a result, there was a power vacuum in the region.

The Central Asia after the Cold War was considered as the region with the potential economic and underground resources. Exposure among the three countries, China, India and Russia can give certain dynamism to the economic and security ties between the countries and central Asia which can play a major role in regional equations of Eurasia especially after September 11 that encountered security approaches in the international system with the wide changes and developments and according to America's military presence in Central Asia, which led to the emergence of new conditions in the region (Aydin, M., 1999).

The geopolitical importance of the region has combined with the Economic importance (energy resources). This was important so that the other great powers, was impossible to disregard domestic and the region developments in Central Asia and they believed that started The Great Game in the region and He took control the region and dominated its resources, will be the dominant power in the world; Hence, the importance of central Asia is not for the capitalist world as its globalization, interest to the region's economic growth and or help expedite the process of their development and progress; It has importance due to geographical location and exploitation of energy of

its rich resources. It has become important for various countries, especially the United States.

1.1. The new powers in the region and the formation of the Great Game

The Soviet collapse in 1991 and independence of the republics created profound changes in the geopolitics of Eurasia. Because on the one hand, has disappeared Soviet Union's historically border with neighbors of the southern and eastern; On the other hand, caused the weakening of Russia and provided appropriate region for influence regional and trans-regional powers.

This area is the Backyard of sphere Moscow's interests. Washington after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Using the created power vacuum sought to dominate the region, according to trying to create New World Order and undoubtedly one of its strategic goals in the region is preventing Russia's authority and simultaneously trying to control Moscow and Beijing; Thus, recognized the independent republics, provided the process of economic aid to the states, Supported the formation of GUAM and has paved the way for political and economic influence (especially in the energy) to accompany Central Asia and the Caucasus, with its foreign policy in international relations scene; meanwhile welcomed the entry of Europe and NATO in this area But it should not be oblivious of the fact that the expansion of activities of USA has followed crises such as the Velvet Revolution.

For Moscow, initially independent republics would have thought that removed commitment of him but was encouraged to return to these regions due to political, economic and security problems of this

nation after the separation And the possibility of transmission to Russia and it is fact that Moscow considers this region as the (Near Abroad). Since the U.S., especially after the events of September due to various considerations, has no plans to leave the sensitive and strategic areas of Central Asia and the crisis in the Caucasus region and their exit of control in Russia and the potential loss of the North Caucasus, has caused concern for Russia; Alliance with China, especially in Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a Russian tactics to pressure the United States to reduce its presence and eliminate the idea of NATO expansion to the East. Russia Also is afraid of Chinese power in its own region, China has a strong interest in Central Asia due to strong incentives to attend Central Asia Challenging the hegemonic policies of America and the idea of NATO expansion, the historical background of China's relations with Central Asia, the Caucasus (Silk Road), access to energy resources and large market area, the fear of the growing of Islamic fundamentalism and threat of Muslim provinces such as Xinjiang and advertising pan-Turkish Turkey and Azerbaijan; Overall, Washington, according to the knowledge of the preferences and privileges of Moscow and Beijing in the sensitive region of Eurasia, is following a policy mix of "pressure" and "invitation" in toward them; Generally the winner of this game will determine the future political and economic rule of the region (Bronson, R., 1998).

1.2. New Great Game in Central Asia

By the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union as one of the two poles of the international system in 1991, created a new independent republics in four regions of Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Baltic and West Russia In between, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Central Eurasia) were considered as part of the new heartland, in the twenty-first century, that are associated with very Opportunities and challenges; Thus the region for various reasons, became important in the strategic calculation of powers like US, China and Russia and This is same factors that simultaneously Washington, Moscow and Beijing Leads to the creation and dominate the region; In fact, it has been argued the great new games in this area science the mid of 1990s. Currently the Republics have faced with competition and cooperation of the major powers USA, Russia and China in their region. The presence of enormous energy reserves in Central Asia is one of the major factors that have made the area a center of political conflict, military and economic; but in addition, reserves of natural wealth was not the only motivation but political motivations, security, strategic and geopolitical issues are also important. In fact, the geopolitical importance of the Caspian Sea is due to

several places connect to each other. The region is connected to one side of Europe, the Middle East, and Russia and on the other hand to China constitutes an emerging and powerful power; so almost all the world's major powers and regional powers have been considered the region in terms of own interests (Haté, Vibhuti. 2007). The Resources of Central Asia which has attracted the attention of the major powers to itself can be divided into several fields: 1) Exploitation of reserves and resources in the region. 2) The use of Energy and water 3) Transfers and Water and gas pipes 4) Industrial cooperation and the development of networks between government in the field of distribution of gas.

Countries of the region as well as other countries such as America, Israel and some European countries have worked with enthusiasm in these republics. Among the countries that have been present in the Middle East, including Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China, Egypt and India. Among the region's countries, Iran and Turkey have been more active; So that the presence of individuals, agencies and enterprises of the two countries is evident in the Central Asian republics. The two countries are trying to consolidate the foundations of his relationship with Central Asia and its own right; In addition, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan are the founder of economic organization of ECO have attempted to expand its cooperation with the Republic through of the organization activation. In this regard, the summit of the ECO in Tehran (February 1991) Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan Have been registered in the organization; Afghanistan and Kazakhstan joined into of the organization at next Senior Officials meeting. Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have tried which proposed as a model for communities of Central Asia while Egypt and India have followed the similar role but more passive. China is a great country with great economic potential which is bordered with three Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

This issue can be followed to the many benefits for republics. Considering these above issues, can be evaluated the future of various cooperation in the Central Asia in the context of regional blocks and now is named the various regional blocks Regarding the future of cooperation in the Central Asian.

1.3. The new powers in the region (USA and NATO)

After the collapse of Soviet Union, Influence in Central Asia was one of the most key foreign policy objectives of America.

This was discussed further after the events of September eleven, and America's presence in Afghanistan. America's policies in Central Asia are in

line with the general policy of this country in the globally level and counter with countries that influence in the region and its politics are not consistent with America's interests.

The Senator Sam Brownback summarizes the U.S of interests in Central Asia in the following four cases: **First:** These countries are a major force to prevent the spread of Iranian and anti-Western radicalism in the North; **Second:** they would be the agent of establishing of balance against Russia and China; **Third:** the Caspian Sea Basin have the proved oil and gas resources and is considered a potential alternative to Middle East Resources; **Fourth:** These countries would be the way of Influence of democracy in the region.

The U.S. as a major trans-regional actor uses from the regional processes, with the implementation of combined Strategy in order to economic and geostrategic purposes.

The strategy includes several elements as follows: 1) the preventing of strategic ties of China and Russia and to deal with regional plans: The U.S. objectives in Central Asia and the Caucasus include: The Separating of Russia from the Soviet republics, The reduction of Moscow's dominance on its traditional sphere of influence, marginalize of country in the regional the equations, Undermine China's ties with regional countries. This policy is conducted via increasing American funding to these countries. However, should say that the U.S. policy regarding Russia and China does not follow the characteristics of the Cold War era (Jones Luong, P., Weinthal, E., 2002).

The American policy is based on strategic friendship toward Russia. In other words, the United States in order to influence the development of political, economic exploitation of huge oil and gas resources, Continuation of authority of global system based on The American order and inclusive of American values has synchronized its presence in the Central Asian region with its policy of democratization in Russia and consistency to a strategic friendship with Moscow. In relation to China, simultaneously with economic development, spread the economic influence in Asia and the world. U.S.

considers China as a competitor in the twenty-first century which has ability to imperil the global supremacy of the U.S. and its strategy.

The United States according to the geographical position of Kyrgyzstan uses of the country to monitor military movement, missile control and nuclear power and political activities of china in the region.

2) The utilization of discourse of "combat terrorism" after the September 11, 2001 and provide the identical positions among regional countries and

development and consolidation of military presence in Central Asia and the Caucasus: After the events of September 11, 2001, the United States attempted on cooperation of Russia as a rival of power and including conflicting interests on regional and global levels in the framework of development of discourse of combating terrorism and also Could to attract favorable comment of Chinese due to separatism problems in the Uyghuristan In the framework of same discourse and utilize such geostrategic opportunities of Kyrgyzstan such as the Manas base near the Chinese border.

3) The Formation of direct presence, via economic, cultural and military organizations in the region which NATO is the most important institutions: The U.S. tried to increase its influence in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea by transferring its military bases from Incirlik of Turkey to **Absheron** of Azerbaijan and holding periodic joint military exercises with countries in the region Entitled "Partnership for Peace".

4) Replacing the Central Asian leaders with Democratic appearance and of course, dependent on the West: the leaders of the republics is one of America's problems in the Central Asian that have been developed in the communist system and could not to attract the complete confidence of the U.S. to itself; therefore This country was always looking for suitable alternatives with the appearance of democratic for leaders. In this regard the Color revolutions in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan are significant.

5) The expansion of economical and political activities of U.S. And its allies against Iran, China, and Russia that in the field, The United States of economic diplomacy has adjusted based on the following: First, The undermine the independence of Central Asian countries to Russia and China by providing economic and commercial facilities. Second, improving trade opportunities for U.S. companies, third, the control of Caspian energy resources to supply American hegemony on the world's energy resources; Fourth support for programs of the implementation of development projects That provides the context of the presence of America and West in the region further, Fifth: the gain of consumer market in the regional countries; Sixth: trying to economic integration of the republics with the economy of West.

In this regard, the energy maintains security of U.S. is more important than any other So that, Geoffrey Kemp has considered Persian Gulf and Caspian of energy to U.S. energy supply in the 21st century.

Control of the huge oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea and prevent the formation of any rival power in the sovereign of States On the sources and

routes energy transportation is very significant in this regard. That is why many individuals are summarized the new geopolitical game in Central Asia in two categories: Control over the oil and gas production and control over pipeline that would bring the region into the consumer market. So in the final analysis, we can say that the America's strategy in Central Asia has based on preventing the occurrence of strong rivals in the region. Implementation of this policy has led to the emergence of diverse challenges between Russia and America. Because Moscow has been conflict with Washington over determination of its sphere of influence and calling for the creation and consolidation of its hegemony in the surrounding areas.

1.4. The expansion of NATO and America to the East and Central Asia and Russian response

Russians after the British Empire in the 20th century that by leaving of the ruling emperors group wants to maintain their authority on the club's international power. After the collapse of the Socialist Soviet Union, although the international system, Moscow lost its power due to conflict in the economic problems somewhat but it was also the inheritor of the Soviet nuclear weapons. And the structural influence of Communist rule over the East Block and consequently have an impact on the international system. From Moscow's perspective, this is why Western governments, particularly the Americans are calling for that Russia be limited in its borders. So any the expansion of NATO to the East, Middle Asia and consequently to Russia, is prejudicial to the country; this issue has caused America to establish a new order and influence in Eastern Europe, has depended on NATO and NATO is the only institution that would legitimize America's involvement in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Kissinger calls it, the award victory in the Cold War. Thus, America has managed NATO transformation process to convert it into an effective tool in maintain their hegemony in the 90s.

This is a significant change in the several matters: convert of NATO to the political organization, to contribute to peace and stability in the region, extending to the east; Therefore, NATO in order to expand to the East and reduced sensitivity of Russia has been used of the Policy of partnership for peace; The purpose of NATO from the this policy: 1) Engaging the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus in the affairs and security issues of Europe through their participation against the threat 2) Exchange of information and the development of military cooperation 3) Create backgrounds for the maintain peace operations in crisis situations 4) Regional stability in the interests and objectives of the

West. America after the collapse of the bipolar system, according to the military, economic power and in light of the new world order and the establishment of a unipolar system, has been in power. During the Cold War, provided the necessary time for internationally active participation of America and NATO is no exception from this rule as a strong security regime.

According to America's role in the formation and persistence of these security institutions can be concluded that one of the reasons for NATO's expansion is Hegemonic stability. Charles P. Kindleberger is one of the scholars most closely associated with Hegemonic stability theory, and is even regarded by some as the father of Hegemonic stability theory (Strachota, Krzysztof, 2002).

The stability of the International System requires a single dominant state to articulate and enforce the rules of interaction among the most important members of the system. To be a Hegemon, a state must have three attributes: 1) The Capability to enforce the rules of the system; 2) The Will to do so; 3) A Commitment to a system which is perceived as mutually beneficial to the major states; However the main reason for America's involvement in the international system is its interests, according to Jackson schools and Churchill doctrines. America's foreign policy of priorities in this area can be classified into the following: 1) Preventing of revival of Russian power; 2) *Curbing of Islamism*; 3) Containing Iran; 4) Economic benefits (raw materials and consumer markets in the region); 5) Objectives and military interests 6) Provide a model for Republic of region.

1.5. Precautionary measures of Russia against America and NATO of presence in Central Asia:

Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia's interests in Central Asia were mainly related to security concerns. These were two-fold: first, to integrate the Central Asian states in the CIS sphere and make them into close allies and second, to deny external powers strategic access to Central Asia. Beyond those concerns, the two organizations created by Russia (CIS and Shangai Forum) were also focusing on the following security issues: drug trafficking, regional conflicts and the region's role as a buffer to Islamic extremism. At the same time, they were intended to counterbalance the increasing ties being made by Central Asian states with western powers such as the U.S. and with NATO – ties which Russia felt undermined its preeminent position in the region. However, mistrusting Russian intentions and desiring to assert an independent identity, Central Asian states have not embraced these initiatives as wholeheartedly as Russia would have liked and continued to cement their ties with western powers, in

the form of schemes such as the NATO Partnership for Peace program.

The most prominent cooperative structure in the region, the CIS was created on Russia's initiative as a means to preserve linkages between the former Soviet states – as well as to maintain its dominant position in the region. It seems that the following two structures, which have emerged within the framework of the CIS, are more likely to involve the Central Asian states in multilateral cooperation with Russia in the future: 1 - presence in NATO, 2) diplomacy of Look East and cooperation with the West 3) Adopting an independent nuclear doctrine

2. Conclusion:

It is possible to ascertain that the actors, objectives and methods used by one and the other game are so disparate that they lead us to question the true validity and applicability of the concept of the *New Great Game*. In conclusion, despite the relative banality in which the term has plunged, it cannot be accepted as an absolute and 'untouchable' truth. Why insist on resorting to a concept that, in the end, has little or nothing to do with the *Great Game*? On the other hand, as this article sought to demonstrate, the *New Great Game* is anything but ... 'new'. It has nothing really new or unique that can possibly justify such a designation (Yazdani, Enayatollah, 2006).

In fact, competition for energy resources is not an 'exclusive' characteristic of Central Asia. Competition is, on the contrary, present in the various quarters of the world economy. And speaking of competition, it is important to remember that not even this concept is a point of convergence between the two games since, unlike the original Great Game, the second does not demonize cooperation, and instead it values it. Guided by the prudent analysis of geopolitics, historical evidence contributes to the deconstruction of the false image that has been established around the notion of the New Great Game. Strictly speaking, there is less in common between the two games than that which separates them (Weitz, Richard, 2006).

Acknowledgement:

Author is grateful to the persons for financial support to carry out this work.

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8/15/2014