

Middle Eastern Studies

ISSN: 0026-3206 (Print) 1743-7881 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fmes20

Post-Soviet central Asia and post-colonial Francophone Africa: some associations

Moshe Gammer

To cite this article: Moshe Gammer (2000) Post-Soviet central Asia and post-colonial Francophone Africa: some associations, Middle Eastern Studies, 36:2, 124-149, DOI: 10.1080/00263200008701311

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200008701311

Published online: 06 Dec 2006.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 213

View related articles

Citing articles: 1 View citing articles

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=fmes20

Post-Soviet Central Asia and Post-Colonial Francophone Africa: Some Associations

MOSHE GAMMER

An established axiom among historians states that, to put it sharply, 'there are neither similarities, nor parallels in history'. Ergo: no comparisons between different phenomena are legitimate, since any similarities can only be general, vague and superficial. Nevertheless, a comparison between historical situations, as long as it is not simplistic and mechanical and if taken *cum grano salis*, might be an additional useful tool for a better grasp of a deeper insight into historical realities.

This article attempts to add such a tool to understanding the post-Soviet Central Asian states by comparing their relationship with the Russian Federation to that of the post-colonial states of Francophone Africa with France. It does not attempt to compare the states and societies of the two groups. The differences between, and indeed within each of the two groups are too numerous and obvious. Nor does it attempt to enter the argument on whether the case of Russia and the Soviet Union is at all one of 'Colonialism' and 'Imperialism' as defined with regard to the maritime, West European Powers. Finally, this article does not overlook the variances in time between the two phenomena, both those related to chronology – three decades separate between the two – and to the global environment.

One can think of several obvious differences: the geographical setting – the French colonies were overseas, Central Asia is adjacent to Russia; the fact that, in comparison to the great ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of Francophone Africa, Central Asia is relatively homogeneous; the specifics of the colonization, colonial administration and decolonization; and the great variation between the two Imperial Powers, their political and administrative cultures and style. Furthermore, in the case of Russia there are basic differences between the Imperial (Tsarist) and the Soviet periods. One may even say that one deals with two different Powers and claim, therefore, that Central Asia was colonized twice within several decades; to this one should add the widespread thesis, almost an axiom, in *all* parts of the ex-USSR, that regards the Soviet Union as the colonial Power and Russia – one of its colonies.

Middle Eastern Studies, Vol.36, No.2, April 2000, pp.124–149
PUBLISHED BY FRANK CASS, LONDON

None the less, many apparent similarities, or in a more cautious expression associations, justify such an attempt. Before however doing that, a clear definition is needed of the two groups of states to be dealt with in this article: The term 'Central Asia' covers the five Muslim ex-Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Muslim Azerbaijan and Christian Armenia and Georgia are not included here. It is true that as far as their relationship with Russia is concerned they fall within a similar category to the Central Asian states. Nevertheless significant differences in history, geography and culture set them apart. The term 'Francophone Africa' covers the 14 French ex-colonies in Western and Central Africa, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. It does not include states not adjacent to those mentioned above, like Madagascar.

The most striking likeness is the fact that both groups of states – or rather their leaders – did not on the whole ask for independence and tried to resist it. Having realized that separation was inevitable, they fought with their teeth to keep the strongest ties possible with the metropolitan Power and to institutionalize them in an organizational structure.

In Francophone Africa of the late 1950s and early 1960s, Felix Hophuet-Boigny, ex-cabinet Minister and *Assemblée Nationale* deputy in Paris and now (that is in the late 1950s and early 1960s) President of the Ivory Coast, 'rejected for Africans of French culture the political solution which Dr. Nkrumah had won for the Gold Coast (Ghana) [i.e. complete independence]', seeking instead 'a community of peoples, equal and fraternal'.[1] Leopold-Sedar Senghor, now (again, in the late 1950s and early 1960s) the President of Senegal, called for 'European-African co-operation' because it was 'in the interests of these countries, once their nominal independence is achieved, not to separate from their former mother [*sic*! –MG], but to achieve new ties, based on liberty, equality and co-operation'.[2]

More than 30 years later the leaders of the five Central Asian Republics – four of them ex-republican secretaries of the Communist party – tried to forestall by all possible means the dissolution of the USSR:

> Since the August [1991] coup attempt, the Central Asian leaders had backed Gorbachev in his demand for a strong centre. President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan was in the forefront of those arguing for a strong centre in order to keep the military, the nuclear arsenal, the currency and the economy under a single control. He was firmly backed by the other Central Asian leaders – except for the president of Kyrgyzstan ...[3]

Once the fate of the Soviet Union had been decided, however, on 8 December at the Bela Vezha summit of the leaders of the three Slavic republics of the (then still existing) USSR – Russia the Ukraine and Belarus – the leaders of the Central Asian republics applied enormous efforts to join the new structure, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) established at that summit. On 12 December they convened an urgent summit in Ashkhabad. On the following day they 'set down together at a press conference and declared ... that they were willing to join the CIS, but on the basis of equality. They demanded that they too be made founder members of the CIS ... A week later, on 21 December 1991 in Alma Ata, the Capital of Kazakhstan, the new CIS was formed.'[4]

Several reasons drove the leaders of both the Francophone states in Africa and the newly independent states of Central Asia to cling to their respective metropolitan power.

As in other parts of the 'Third World', most of the French colonies in Africa were created artificially by the colonial Power. They reflected, therefore, French interests and priorities (and the strategic balance between France and other colonial Powers), not local realities – geographical, ethnic, linguistic or other. In fact, each colony – later to become an independent state – encompassed different ethnic groups, while many ethnic groups were divided by the new borders between (or even among) different states and Empires.

Unexpectedly independent, the new states lacked almost completely the infrastructure needed for it. Furthermore, until then they were merely administrative divisions within a larger unit. To France they were not 'Colonies' but 'France Overseas'. The French thus 'adopted policies to integrate them into a single Greater France revolving about Paris'.[5] Besides, almost all French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa were clustered in two 'federations': French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa. As independence approached there was much talk of either retaining these federations or, after France had dissolved them, creating alternative ones. The advantages were clear: Senghor, for example, 'has argued very strongly that a federal union with France could have real meaning only if each of the partners to it was strong and autonomous. He therefore demanded the maintenance and strengthening of the two federations of African colonies ... as a prior condition of Franco-African community.'[6] These plans did not materialize because of many reasons – competition among states, antagonism among groups, personal rivalries and, most important, economic realities (for which see below) and French discouragement.[7]

Most, if not all, of the newly independent states lacked, therefore, many of the required bureaucratic tools and much of the needed political and administrative experience. Most important, most – if not all – of them

lacked a clearly defined identity of their own, not to say a common 'nationhood' that could rally their population around the new state. They were, in fact, territories not corresponding to polities. They had, therefore, to begin the extremely difficult and complex process of nation and state building – nation-states being the international norm in the twentieth century – almost from scratch. Furthermore, they had to do it within their existing territorial confines, since the sanctity of colonial borders has become an axiom in post-colonial international relations.

At first glance the newly independent states of Central Asia seem to be completely different from Francophone Africa, since each of them has evolved around a specific titular nation. However both the new nations and states were to a large extent artificial creations.

First, the five (or rather six, since the Karakalpaks were defined as a separate nationality and given an Autonomous republic of their own within Uzbekistan) did not exist before the 1924 Soviet *razmezhevanie* (demarcation) of Central Asia. Thus, separate new literary languages, national histories and past, national cultures and traditions were invented where 'there existed a steadily evolving consciousness' of 'belonging to a common culture and a more or less unified historical tradition based on Islam and a shared Irano-Turkic heritage'.[8]

Second, the boundaries between the newly created nations were artificial and blurred, not always unintentionally. Some nomadic tribes – for example the Mangyt, Kungrat, Kiyat, Ktay and Keneges – found themselves divided between two, or even among more 'nations'. Amid the settled population 'in some areas the lines separating Tajiks from Uzbeks are far more fluid than the mutually exclusive juridical categories of nationality would suggest'.[9]

Third, the creation of the new nations 'was designed to replace the sub-national loyalties and awareness (such as those relating to the clan and tribe)' and 'supra-national consciousness (religion, pan-Turkism)' with 'allegiances to modern Soviet nations'. However, this 'intended national consciousness was never intended to go beyond its role as a saboteur of other consciousnesses:' It 'was never intended, especially, to develop and evolve into anything approximating a modern national consciousness ...'[10] Thus, like everywhere else in the USSR the process of nation building was impeded by recurrent purges during the Stalinist period and by Soviet efforts to inculcate the populace with 'Soviet patriotism' and 'proletarian internationalism'.

Nevertheless, this experiment in nation-creating has proved more successful than the Soviet authorities had intended, and the new nations have become living entities 'notable for their growing attachment to the more exclusive and proprietary notions of modern nationalism'.[11] However, this new, modern nationalism has not replaced the older, traditional

identities. It has, probably, been more successful in the case of supra-national identities, but failed with the sub-national ones. Among the historically settled population 'region of residence' (*mahalla*) which 'has long been a principal axis of identity'[12] remained intact and has probably been even reinforced. It has played a major role in the internal politics of Uzbekistan,[13] and in Tajikistan it even proved stronger than the Soviet-created national identity.[14] Among the previously nomadic population – including nomadic Uzbeks – clan and tribe solidarity have remained strong and stay the basis for 'national' politics.[15]

Although in principle 'national' states, with their own political, administrative, economic and cultural institutions, the newly established Central Asian republics reflected the Soviet goal of impeding their nation building. First, the political/administrative borders of none equalled the confines of its titular nation. In fact the boundaries were delineated in such a way as to leave sizeable groups of each titular nation as minorities within the neighbouring states.[16] This naturally hampered national consolidation.[17]

Second, during most of the Soviet period, the massive immigration from other – mainly the European – parts of the USSR to these republics was encouraged and in some instances even forced. This resulted in the creation of a considerable 'Russophone population' (*russkoiazychnoe nasselenie*), the education in Russian being the only alternative to education in the titular language, in each. The end, quite successful in some cases, of both these was to prevent the titular nationality from forming a solid majority in its own republic.[18]

Furthermore, to the Soviet leaders all the republics of the USSR were merely administrative units. The Central Asian republics were, therefore, never meant to exist on their own nor designed to be viable units, but parts of a larger body. This is clearly reflected in their borders which do not correspond to geographical and economic (and ethnic as mentioned above) realities. Thus, for example, within the present borders, travel during winter between the northern and southern parts of Kyrgyzstan and of Tajikistan can be done either by air or via Uzbekistan only. Similarly, travel overland from the southern and central part of Uzbekistan to Khiva can be done solely through Turkmenistan.

Finally, like the Francophone states, the central Asian states unexpectedly given independence lacked the bureaucratic tools and political and administrative experience to run an independent state. It is true that all the republics had their own governments, parliaments, bureaucracies and national cadres and leadership. But these were no more then figureheads. The real power was vested in Moscow and exercised through the Communist party of the USSR, which was one and undivided. Many in the 'ruling' elites, who had never dealt with foreign relations, economic

planning, or generally been in positions of real responsibility, found themselves overnight compelled to rule.

Most ex-French colonies in Africa have remained economically tied to, and dependent on France. To start with,

> France's policies ... in her African colonies led to their complete dependence on her for their survival. The French parliament provided funds in colonial times to balance the budget of colonial territories and provide social services. France continued to play this role after independence, thus deepening their dependence on the former metropole for support and even survival.[19]

Even those states who could maintain themselves economically have been dependent on France as *the* trading partner and source of skilled manpower. The realities of world trade in the second half of the twentieth century have been such, that while 'First World' states overwhelmingly import from, and export to each other, the lion's share of 'Third World' countries' trade is with the 'First World'. Trapped in this situation, many Francophone, indeed 'Third World', states found it more convenient (if not compelling) to follow the trodden path of economic interaction with the previous colonial Power. This way, a market was assured without having to engage in too tough a competition, the economy was saved unnecessary upheavals, and the flow of financial and technical assistance was not interrupted.

No less important, the movement of manpower from France was not hindered either. The import of skilled manpower is a substantial need of all developing economies until national personnel is trained. Thus, the faster a 'Third World' economy grows, the greater the number of foreign nationals employed in it. Francophone states in Africa depended heavily on French skilled personnel and the stronger the economy – the more French citizens one could have found residing in that country.[20] All this meant that contrary to some Africans' hopes for 'une symbiose nouvelle'[21] with the metropolitan Power, French economic control continued and was cemented by the 'Frank zone' and the various bilateral agreements between the metropolitan Power and the ex-colonies. This dominance of France was not effected by the creation of the EEC[22] and seems to have begun to weaken only in recent years under the pressure of American competition.

These realities of world trade were also a major (though by far not the single) reason for the failure of the many efforts by Francophone states to establish viable regional structures of their own (that is, without the participation of the ex-colonial Power). 'Third World' economies do not complement, but rather compete with, each other. This inability to form regional blocs strengthened further the dependence of each of the ex-colonies on France. The failure to create a bloc of their own left the

Francophone states more dependent on France and exposed to its dominance.

It is true that the Soviet economy – in theory as well as in practice – is hardly comparable to Western ones and that the global economic environment of the early 1990s cannot be compared to that of the early 1960s. Nevertheless, one would not be at all wrong to state that the Central Asian states were integrated into and dependent on the economy of Russia more than their Francophone counterparts were integrated into and dependent on the economy of France. This was even more the case after the dissolution of the USSR and the following collapse of the Soviet economy.

Soviet economic planning referred to the entire USSR as a single economic entity and ignored the existence of different republics. Moreover, contrary to Marxist theory, in Soviet reality political needs overruled economic considerations. This meant, *inter alia*, that, even if this was 'uneconomic', the different parts of the USSR were tied down to each other by as many economic strings as possible, all passing via, and controlled by the Kremlin. Moscow was thus 'an economic and financial spiderweb' to which the Central Asian republics 'were tied ... by thousands of threads, from electricity grids to oil pipelines to telephone lines' and 'from which no leader ... could ever see himself disentangled'.[23]

Furthermore, this economic integration of the different parts of the USSR was done on such a scale as to prevent regional economic blocs. A factory in Uzbekistan, for example, would operate machinery produced in Estonia on electricity from Kyrgyzstan, in order to assemble parts imported from Siberia and Georgia. The produce would then be sold in the Ukraine. All these activities would be planned and supervised by Moscow. With new political borders cutting off long-established routes of supply and the need for cash in the so-called 'transformation to market economy' replacing what used to be largely a barter market, all post-Soviet economies have been in decline for several years. Under these conditions the dependence of Central Asian states on Russia has grown.[24]

In addition, the Central Asian republics were dependent on Russophone skilled manpower more than the Francophone states of Africa were on French technical and professional personnel. Both the numbers of non-local staff and the fields in which they were involved were by far more numerous than in Francophone Africa. In all five Central Asian republics Russophone managers, accountants, engineers, technicians and skilled workers were vital to the running of the economy, while Russophone professionals – doctors, nurses, teachers, and so on – for maintaining the services provided by the state. The need to keep them added weight in favour of tight ties with Russia. (See also below.)

The question whether Moscow economically exploited, or subsidized the Central Asian republics is now at the centre of debate between the two,

one that is clearly political. However, the economic realities of political independence – first and foremost the decline and the transformation to 'Market Economy' – impose on the Central Asian republics the need for foreign aid. Russia, in the midst of similar economic trouble is not a source of aid, at least not in the foreseeable future. However, that does not mean that the Central Asian states are not at all dependent on Moscow on this issue. Russian goodwill is needed since a great deal of aid has been channelled, especially at the beginning, via Moscow and many of the joint development and economic projects with Western partners involve Russian participation. Furthermore, the future of international economic involvement in, and aid to Central Asia depends on political stability and security in the area, both of which are to a large extent dependent on Russia's attitudes.

In view of these Soviet and post-Soviet economic realities and the balance of trade between the 'First' and 'Third' worlds – it is little wonder that no one took seriously the possibility of a Central Asian bloc, least of all the Central Asian leaders themselves. It is true that in the Ashkhabad summit (12 December 1991) they 'spoke bravely of how they would form a new Central Asian common market', but 'everyone knew that for the time being these were merely words. Their faces showed their real fears. Since 1917 Central Asia has become little more than an economic colony for Moscow ... When the powerhouse had seemed to be built on sand, Central Asia had nowhere else to turn.'[25] All they intended to do by raising the issue was only to add an extra device to pressure the three 'Slavic' presidents into letting the Central Asian republics into the newly formed CIS.

Meagre economic resources are a major reason for the modest size of the military forces of the Francophone states. The fact that no regional Power threatens these states has been an important factor in shaping the decision not to invest scarce resources in building large armed forces. After all, South Africa, Egypt and other African 'Superpowers' are far away geographically and have been engaged in other directions. Thus, apart from being a necessary symbol of sovereignty, the armed forces of the Francophone states are usually barely sufficient to provide internal security. They are too small and not properly equipped to counter foreign threats and in some cases – even serious internal ones.[26] To deal with such eventualities these states have to rely on the French umbrella.

Furthermore, the small national armies, based on the French *troupes coloniales*,[27] rely heavily, even exclusively on French financing, equipment, logistics, personnel and training. This dependence on France is greater by far when it comes to security and intelligence agencies. These are practically intertwined with the French services. The meaning of these facts is that the military and security organizations of the Francophone states are

connected directly to France by multiple links – personal, professional, economic, institutional, historical – bypassing their official chain of command. France has thus had the ability to influence – even manipulate and use – them directly above the heads of their own governments. In other words, France has been in the position of final arbiter able to either stage, support, encourage discourage, prevent and foil *coups d'état* or, as a last resort, to intervene directly.[28]

Like in the case of Francophone Africa, the armed forces of the Central Asian states are very small in size. They are barely sufficient for internal security and not at all corresponding to the external threats, existing or potential. Unlike Francophone Africa, Central Asia is surrounded by regional (and even global) 'Superpowers' who are perceived as threats by its governments (see below).[29] Their need for a Russian security umbrella is, therefore, by far more acute.

The Central Asian states inherited their national armed forces from their Soviet predecessors. Since, however, the Soviet armed forces remained in the main in the possession of Russia, the Central Asian states had to build their forces almost from scratch making use of whatever remnants they were left with from the Soviet armed forces. This has made them heavily dependent on Russian personnel, equipment and training and on operational co-operation with Russia's armed forces. One can assume that this dependence on Russia is greater by far when one moves to security and intelligence services. Since in both Russia and the Central Asian states these are successors of the KGB, one can only wonder how far could – and do – Central Asian leaders rely on the unconditional obedience and loyalty of their own security services.

France followed in its colonies a policy of assimilation. This policy was based on the assumption that 'Africans could be made to become French in all respects. Those Africans who became assimilated enjoyed the rights and privileges of French citizens [and ...] no avenue of advancement was closed to them ... Such persons usually were recognised by French society as French Citizens.'[30] Furthermore, French colonial administration 'aimed at creating a capable elite groomed and indoctrinated in French culture' and invested a great deal of effort and money to achieve this goal.[31] The result was that,

> the French African elite developed a special emotional tie with France and with everything French. Paris, the metropolitan Capital, became a second home to these assimilated gentlemen. They developed French manners and tastes ... While the African elite in British colonies was pressing for constitutional reforms which should grant them political concessions towards territorial self rule, the *évolués* in French Africa

> were demanding citizens' rights within the framework of Greater France to which they were culturally and intellectually attached.[32]

The independence offered by Charles de Gaulle was a tremendously shocking *volte-face*, which generated strong reactions and an intense debate in the French colonies.[33] Considering itself part of the metropolitan establishment, the elite of Francophone Africa felt betrayed and rejected by their 'mother' – to use Senghor's metaphor. On a more personal level, leaders like Senghor and Hophuet-Boigny suddenly discovered that – to paraphrase a Mishna'ic coin – they had been turned into 'heads of foxes' instead of remaining 'tails of lions'.[34] In other words, they considered themselves to be demoted from the heights of Parisian politics to head new, obscure states.

This shock, anger, disappointment and feeling of betrayal should suffice to supply psychological explanations to their vehement opposition to independence and their outstanding efforts to cement the strongest ties possible between the new independent states and France. But there were other, more 'down to earth' reasons: on the level of *realpolitik* these leaders realized very clearly all the enormous difficulties ahead of their new states and the necessity to be supported by a great Power. And if so, it was preferable to remain within the orbit of France. According to Senghor,

> an underdeveloped country which has achieved nominal independence cannot acquire real independence if it remains underdeveloped. It must obtain external aid. The solution can be found in its entry into a larger ensemble, in the form of a confederacy ... Long continued ties and economic relations, and a common language of an international character have created links which it would be catastrophic to break. Africa and Europe are genuinely complementary, in terms of politics, economics and culture.[35]

Furthermore, a wide social and cultural gap existed between the 'modernized', French educated and oriented elite, and the lower strata (the *sujets* of the colonial period) with their traditional culture, values and way of life. Perceiving itself as 'Africa's true representatives' the elite regarded its own culture, values and outlook as superior and as destined to replace eventually the traditional ones.[36] However, this was a hope for the distant future. At the moment, with France leaving, it felt weak and exposed to a very substantial threat to its very survival and staying in power. Thus the need for French backing.

Russia, like France, has had a strong sense of *mission civilisatrice*. Tsarist Russia was eager to spread Pravoslav, that is Russian Orthodox Christian civilization. The USSR was no less eager to proselytize Soviet, that is Russian Marxist(-Leninist) culture. In both cases the universal

ideology was wrapped in Russian colouring. This missionary urge led both to pursue policies of assimilation in their empires. Tsarist Russia made an effort, not always systematic, to co-optate and assimilate the elites of the annexed territories. Indeed, some elements of the Central Asian elite were Russified, at least partially. They received education in Russian schools, made Russian one of their main vehicles, and were influenced by Russian literature, thought and politics. The Soviet regime attempted at first to create a new, Soviet man and society. It tried, therefore, to reach and change each individual. Soon, however, Stalin gave up this task and concentrated on the Sovietization of the elite only.[37] In this task the Soviet success has been quite remarkable.

The present national elites of Central Asia have been fully integrated into Soviet society and culture. Like the *évolués*, these Sovietized comrades have developed a special emotional tie with the metropolitan national culture. They have adopted Russian manners and tastes and felt at home in Moscow and Leningrad more than in their places of birth. Those coming from a tradition of resistance to Russian conquest and rule have developed a distinction between an abstract 'Russia' they hate and Russian culture which they adore.

Educated in Russian-language schools – such an education opened more opportunities than learning in national-language institutions – members of this elite are in many cases fully proficient in Russian. Many of them can recite entire poems by Pushkin and Lermontov but are unable to utter a correct sentence in their own national language.[38] But even those with full mastery of their own language prefer, or find it easier on many occasions to use Russian.[39]

Politically and psychologically the Central Asian cadres of the *nomenklatura* formed an integral part of the Soviet state. The existence of their national republics was irrelevant in this context. The polity which they were part of was the Soviet Union. The top position to aim for was not the republican Secretary-General of the party, but membership in the Central Committee, or even the *politbiuro*. Positions in the national republics were power bases to be used as springboards for a career in Moscow. That was the focus of Nazarbayev's loyalties – not Kazakhstan of which he was then the Secretary-General of the party, and the future president. In 1991, before the coup, he published a book criticizing Gorbachev's priorities in his *perestroika*. Nazarbayev argued that Gorbachev's strategy was a prescription for disaster and that it should be implemented in the opposite order that is, economic reforms should precede political liberalization (in other words, that the USSR should follow the Chinese model).[40]

The aborted coup of August 1991 triggered a chain reaction which began with the banning of the Communist party and ended with the dissolution of

the Soviet Union. For Nazarbayev and the other Central Asian leaders these were traumatic events: 'These heirs of Gengiz Khan's warrior nomads and Stalin's communist party machine had suddenly been orphaned; everything they had known for the past seventy-four years was disappearing before their eyes.'[41] Especially shocking was Russia's attempt to shake off the other, mainly non-Slavic, republics. Understandably, their reaction was reminiscent of that of Francophone African leaders three decades earlier: They struggled with all their strength to cling to 'mother Russia'.

As in Francophone Africa at the time of independence, a deep cultural and social gap divides the Central Asian elites from the lower strata of their societies.[42] Yet there is one major difference, that magnifies the Central Asian elites' dependence on Russia: however threatened they felt, the elites of Francophone Africa of the 1960s (later changes are outside the scope of this article) were convinced that theirs was the only culture, and as such was destined to supersede the traditional one among all layers of society. The Central Asian elites of the 1990s are vestiges of a defeated culture and system challenged by alternatives – Western, Chinese and several Islamic. Each of these is a menace to the very existence of the Central Asian elites, not merely to their monopoly of power. The challenges emanating from the models of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan seem to these elites particularly dangerous because of the shared Islamic and Turco-Iranian heritage common to those and the Central Asian societies. Russia is, thus, the only guarantor to their very survival as has been clearly demonstrated in Tajikistan.[43]

If the parallels seem to draw more strongly the States of Central Asia to Russia than their Francophone counterparts to France, the differences seem to fortify this tendency.

Central Asia is thousands of kilometres removed from Moscow exactly as Francophone Africa is thousands of kilometres away from Paris. Yet while seas and lands separate between France and Francophone Africa, Central Asia is adjacent to Russia. Two of the newly independent states – Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – actually border on Russia and all the Central Asian capital cities are nearer than Moscow to that border. The consequences are fairly obvious. Territorial contiguity enables, *inter alia*, to flex one's muscles faster, on a more massive scale, with less expenses and sometimes more efficiently.[44] This is a fact no government in Central Asia can ignore.[45] Proximity also allows for much more massive contacts between the populations of the involved states. After all an overland journey is by far simpler and cheaper than sea or air travel. These massive contacts, in turn, not only augment the Central Asian states' dependence on Russia,

but provide Moscow with a lever – the threat to cut such contacts at will.

As stated above, the numbers of Russophones in the Central Asian republics are incomparable to those of the French residents of Francophone Africa. While the French inhabitants in African countries have never surpassed a couple of dozen thousands in any of them and totalled in all of the area no more than 100,000 out of about 90 million inhabitants (namely about 0.1%) the lowest number of Russophones in any Central Asian republic was above 400,000 and their total number in the region – almost 12.5 million out of a population of almost 50 million (that is c. 25%).[46] This is a clear case of quantity becoming quality. The sheer numbers of the Russophones make them irreplaceably crucial in running the economies, services and bureaucracies of the new states of Central Asia, at least in the foreseeable future.

Naturally these states are eager to reinsure the Russophones and entice them to stay. They have gone to great length to do so, but to secure any measure of success they need Russia's co-operation on this matter. Furthermore, if they want this large population to stay, they must enable it to maintain its vital cultural, social and other ties to the mother country. There is, however, another important reason for the need to keep close ties with Russia: in any possible conflict of interests between Moscow and the new independent states this population might react by emigration. Worse from the Central Asian states' perspective, it might be used by Russia against them. The way to forestall both possibilities is to maintain tight co-operation with Moscow.

In two Central Asian states the Russophone population is by far the largest. In Kazakhstan they are about half the population and in Kyrgyzstan well over a quarter.[47] In both a large part of the population is rural and occupies large continuums of territory. To both, therefore, this is a further, primary incentive for close co-operation with Russia. To Kyrgyzstan the large Russophone population is less of a problem than to Kazakhstan. It is less massive both in numbers and proportion, its relationship with the local population is relatively free of friction and, most important, to the Kyrgyz Russia is the historical ally and protector against the traditional enemies – China and Uzbekistan – a fact that influences the relationship between them and the 'Russians'.

To Kazakhstan this is a very important matter. Apart from being half of the population and their vital role in running the state and its economy, the Russophones form a solid majority in roughly the northern half of the country. Therefore, in case of dissatisfaction this population will not emigrate (emigration itself being bad enough) but rather secede, which is a sure prescription for civil war, (that is if Russia does not get dragged in). Assuring this large part of the population its proper share of the cake is

further complicated by the traditional antagonism between it and the Kazakhs, to whom Russia is an historical enemy and the 'Russians' – colonists who had grabbed Kazakh lands.[48] All this dictates tight co-ordination with Russia as a pre-condition to Kazakhstan's very survival.

Unlike the Francophone states of Africa, the Central Asian countries are neighbouring on, and surrounded by strong regional superpowers. In fact, the proper analogy should probably be to Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Arab states, not to Francophone Africa. Like the Gulf states, most of the Central Asian republics are rich in resources and poor in population. Like the Gulf states their more powerful neighbours, who are also historical and traditional enemies, would not object to add the much needed Central Asian resources to their economies and budgets.

Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have apprehensions with regard to China. Both ex-nomadic societies feel overshadowed by the giant to the east, who is also the historical enemy of all the nomads north and west of it. Many people in both states remember well the Chinese territorial claims against the USSR in the 1960s and 1970s, which cover about half the territory of Kyrgyzstan and great territorial chunks of Kazakhstan, including its former capital city Almaty.[49] Both states are aware that China has never officially renounced these claims even if it has not raised them in recent years. Therefore, recent immigration of Chinese has caused alarm in both.[50]

Uzbekistan also considers China as a menace. But the main threats in Tashkent's eyes are Iran and Pakistan, both traditional rivals of any Power centred on Transoxania. What makes both Powers particularly dangerous is the potential use by each of 'Islam' to extend their influence in Central Asia, as they have already done in Afghanistan.[51] This perception of 'Islam' in one form or another as a danger is shared by all other Central Asian states.[52] Finally, Turkmenistan feels particularly threatened by neighbouring Iran, the traditional sedentary, Shiite enemy of the nomad, Sunni Turkmen tribes.

Russia is one of these neighbouring Powers. With the exception of Kyrgyzstan, it is also one of their historical enemies. Nevertheless, all of them prefer to remain within Moscow's fold over any other alternative. One can put forward several reasons for this choice – the survival of the present elites, the continuation of the present state of independence and others. Yet the two main reasons are most probably the following:

1. The fear common to all of them of becoming the battleground of rival Powers. It is clear to everyone that the involvement of the immediately neighbouring Powers will invoke the intervention of others, whose interests will be affected. Remaining under the Russian umbrella is the only way to avoid it, since it is the only Power with both the legitimization and strength to keep the hands of others off.

2. As the saying goes, 'better the devil you know'. Attaching oneself to another Power entails a great deal of changes, adjustment to a different culture, and the need to learn a new language (in the broadest meaning of the word), modus operandi and way of thinking. To remain within Russia's fold, on the other hand, means to stay within a familiar environment in which the Central Asian elites feel at home and know which buttons to push. The choice of the Central Asian leadership is, therefore, obvious.

As mentioned above, personal and state rivalries in Francophone Africa enhanced indirectly dependence on France, by contributing to the inability to form regional blocs. In central Asia such personal and state/national antagonisms have been a major direct cause for the need to remain within Russia's fold, *inter alia* because behind them lie traditional rivalries with a long history. All of these rivalries focus on Uzbekistan. The strongest, most developed, having the largest population and apparently the most advanced in national consolidation, Uzbekistan regards itself the natural leader of a Central Asian bloc. But it is also among the poorest states in the region with regard to resources and finances badly needed for development. The advantages to Uzbekistan – economic, political and strategic, regional as well as international – of being the leader of such a bloc are self-evident.[53] However, Uzbekistan needs Russian backing to reach this goal. In no way can Tashkent accomplish it against Moscow's wishes. Nor can Uzbekistan under present conditions even consider to enlist the support of another Power.

But Uzbekistan's claim to regional leadership has created antagonism and revived old fears and feuds. A major traditional rivalry reborn now in a modern – national – form is that between settled and nomad societies. Uzbekistan covers the lion's share of the traditional territory of the ancient settled civilization in Central Asia, and is regarded by itself and others as its heir. The Kyrgyz, Kazakhs and Turkmen, although mostly settled now, are still considered by themselves and their neighbours as the heirs of the nomadic traditions and values. The memories of this old rivalry are still very much alive, though couched now in the new terminology. Thus, according to a young Kyrgyz scholar,

> they [the Uzbeks] used to be confined to their settlements while we were wandering all over the countryside. We used to come into their settlements to the markets, where they used to cheat us. But we used to get even if any of them dared to get out of their settlements into the open: We would then decapitate him.[54]

This old rivalry has been revived due to the upsurge of nationalism and the fears of the use made of Islam by some Uzbek nationalists, who contrast

'good' (the Uzbeks) – to 'bad' (the Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Turkmen) Muslims with all the implied meanings and consequences of this terminology.[55] The Kyrgyz and Turkmen feel particularly threatened, being the weakest of the Central Asian states but also among the richest in resources and in possession of facilities needed by Uzbekistan. To both Russia is the only power they can turn to for protection, their other neighbours – China and Iran respectively – posing a similar threat to their independence and even existence.

Kazakhstan feels less threatened by Uzbekistan, but has been competing with it over the leadership of a Central Asian bloc.[56] President Nursultan Nazarbayev has not concealed his ambitions to lead such a bloc and to be the chief middleman between Russia and the Central Asian states. On the personal level, having been probably the most eminent Muslim in Soviet hierarchy, he must have found the presidency of Kazakhstan severely restricting his talents, horizons and ambitions. As the leader of an independent Kazakhstan he has realized that such a leading role is not merely a bargaining chip or a matter of prestige to his country: It is vital to the very existence of Kazakhstan within its present borders, since if the Central Asian states and Russia pulled in different directions this would literally tear Kazakhstan – population and territory – into two. Ergo: the need to lead the Central Asian states and Russia to continued co-operation with each other. Thus the role played by Nazarbayev in the creation of the CIS.

Independence aggravated another by far more complicated rivalry – that between Uzbeks and Tajiks. Both nations are the outcome of Soviet demarcation. Until then they co-existed in a common bilingual culture. The separation created strong rivalry over territory, population, resources and most important – over their national definition and cultural heritage. In a way the two nations have been like Siamese twins unable to exist fully without each other and hating each other for this. The Uzbeks, having the advantage from the very beginning of Soviet rule, have made their best to dominate the Tajiks. Tajikistan was first created as an Autonomous republic (ASSR) within the Uzbek SSR and even after it had been raised to the status of a Union republic (SSR) the Uzbeks continued to have great influence in its running. With the dissolution of the USSR the meaningless administrative demarcation line between the two republics had suddenly become an international border

President Islam Karimov's role in enlisting Russian and CIS intervention in the civil war in Tajikistan was more than merely part of Uzbekistan's claim to leadership and an attempt to win points on the way to its realization. In view of the entanglement between the two nations and the interdependence between the states, giving up influence in Tajikistan – and

that is what the opposition's coming to power in Dushanbe meant – was for Uzbekistan more than a strategic loss or a matter of prestige.[57] To Kerimov it meant a real possibility of changing the balance between the two, of allowing a foreign Power (other than Russia) into the region and of a genuine threat to the existence of the regime and of Uzbekistan as it is now.[58] All these considerations necessitate a tight relationship with Russia.[59]

According to a popular proverb, 'it takes two to tango'. In both cases the dependence of the new independent states on, and their need to retain close ties with their respective metropolitan Power were more than matched by the interests of the latter.

France has considered its deep involvement with its ex-colonies as of vital interest. In decline since the end of the Napoleonic wars, though more explicitly since 1870, one of the avenues open to France to sustain its status as a major European and World Power was colonial expansion. This is clearly indicated by the fact that to France the territories acquired overseas were not 'Colonies' but 'France Overseas'. Their acquisition was presented in 'practical' terms as aimed at strengthening France by the addition of territory, population and resources.[60] Indeed, not only were colonial troops used on a massive scale to defend metropolitan France during the First World War, but in the Second World War the African territories of 'France Overseas' were perceived and used by de Gaulle as strategic depth to continue the struggle against Germany.[61]

De Gaulle attempted to restore, and his successors in the presidency of the 'Fifth Republic' to maintain, France's prestige and status as a major global Power. Having realized the impossibility of keeping its colonial empire in the age of 'de-Colonisation', de Gaulle aimed at retaining as much as possible of it as a French sphere of influence. This was not merely a question of prestige. It was one of the principal means to his primary goal – to reassert France's status. De Gaulle and his successors have, therefore, been willing to pay a high price – economic, political, diplomatic and military – and to use almost each and every means to retain French influence (and to block that of any other Power) in the newly independent Francophone states in Africa.[62]

Like post-Second World War France, post-Soviet Russia needs to reassert itself as a major Power. Unlike France, however, Russia cannot afford to pay for it an economic price at all. Furthermore, if to France the continued influence in her ex-empire has been an end to an aim, to Russia it has been a matter of crucial importance to her security and well being. Post-Soviet Russia has been in the throes of a grave crisis – political, economic, social and psychological. Not the least among these has been

Russia's crisis of identity. Stripped of its sense of purpose and deprived of the esteem – home and abroad – due to a Superpower, Russia has been undergoing a most painful process of re-determining itself and re-defining its interests.[63] Russia's impulse to keep the other parts of the ex-Soviet Union as its sphere of influence has partly been an old imperial reflex. But to a great extent it has also been an instinctive attempt to reassert Russia as *the* successor of the USSR the Superpower. But above all, Russia's drive to continue its presence in Central Asia – indeed in all the parts of the USSR – was due to strategic and economic considerations.

Russia's southern border with Central Asia is artificial in every conceivable respect – geographical, ethnic, strategic, economic. Strategically it is Russia's 'soft underbelly', to use a Churchillian phrase. A new defence line along it – one that Russia can hardly afford to build in the present and foreseeable future – will fall short of providing the minimal defence requirements. Holding on to Central Asia, therefore, provides Russia with an already existing defence line and a much needed buffer zone against neighbouring powers, almost all of whom possess nuclear weapons. More important, it prevents the grave threats to Russia's economy, internal security and even integrity potentially posed by Central Asia controlled by unfriendly forces, whether external powers or hostile regimes.[64] And of course, one should not forget, such a presence in Central Asia gives Russia a 'better hand' in the ongoing 'great game' against the other Powers.[65]

Furthermore, Central Asia possesses important strategic and economic resources. In the past cotton was a major incentive for Lenin's decision to re-conquer Central Asia for the Soviet Union. At present oil plays a major (though not a single) role in Russia's will to remain in the area.[66] Most of the huge reserves of oil and gas in the Caspian basin belong to two or three Central Asian states and to Azerbaijan across the sea.[67] None of these states has the financial and technical resources to develop these new fields into production. They need, therefore, foreign partnership and financial and technical assistance in this enterprise. Moscow has been eager to become a senior partner to any such venture, even though it is far from having the needed financial resources. Instead it has been flexing the carrot of passage routes via its own territory and the stick of potential disruption of alternative ones and of any such endeavour without Russian participation. In doing so it has several aims in mind.

First, unable to render economic assistance itself, Russia is lacking an important tool of influence. Worse, it lays Central Asia open to the influence of other Powers. Russia is, therefore, most interested in becoming the broker between Central Asia and the West. Such a position will supply Russia with leverage on both, which will enable it to (1) retain a measure of economic influence in Central Asia and keep the tap over the involvement

of other Powers there; (2) regulate at least part of the foreign assistance to, and investments in that part of the world by redirecting it via Moscow;[68] (3) enhance Russia's share and position in the world oil market and economy; and (4) get Russia more economic assistance at better conditions from the West. A share in the production and control of the export of oil might secure Moscow this role. Second, Russia, in the midst of the crisis generated by the transfer to a 'market economy', needs badly the large sums in hard currency her share in such enterprises might yield. Third, even if at the moment Russia does not need these oil and gas it might need them in the future.

Another factor to be reckoned with is the existence of a large Russian, or Russophone, population in the states of Central Asia. Even before the dissolution of the USSR there was a growing inclination of Russians to emigrate from Central Asia. This was the result of a general upsurge of nationalism in the Soviet Union, which drove minorities to 'repatriate' to their national homelands. Reaching a peak immediately following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, this process alarmed both Russia and the Central Asian states. The interests of the latter have been discussed above. Russia, in the grips of an intense economic crisis, has been unable to absorb the Russophones of Central Asia the way France absorbed the *pieds noirs*, even if their number had not been triple that of the *pieds noirs*.[69] But Moscow has had also a positive motivation to keep the Russophone population in the Central Asian states: this population is a living bridge between Russia and these states and supplies Moscow with yet another lever for its involvement. To ensure the security and welfare of the Russophones in their present places of residence is, therefore, a major Russian interest.

Thus, two significant differences between the position of the two powers in their respected areas of influence have been pointed out, which make Russia more prone to use armed force to retain her influence: (1) Central Asia is incomparably more vital to Russia than Francophone Africa has been to France, and (2) while affluent France, being a member of a prosperous alliance, has enjoyed the ability to assist economically its allies in Africa, Russia has, and will have in the foreseeable future, almost none. A third difference must be added that pushes Russia further in that direction: unlike France, who until recently has faced no serious challenge to its predominance in Francophone Africa, Russia must take into account the real possibility of having to contest other regional or global Powers over Central Asia.

France's decolonization took place in the midst of the 'Cold War'. Its drive to retain influence in its former colonies was, therefore, backed by the United States. America wanted to keep the USSR from gaining a foothold in that area but was unwilling to intervene there and be compromised as 'neo-Colonialist'. Washington preferred, therefore, to support French policy

in Francophone Africa politically, diplomatically, militarily – mainly logistically – and financially. Now, that the 'Cold War' is over there has been much talk of American–French competition and even confrontation in Africa.[70]

The dissolution of the USSR took place in the post-Vietnam War era, when the United States and other Powers have become very well aware of the political, military and economic limitations to their strength and (even more) of their ability to use it. This and the willingness to uphold Yeltsin's government led them to acknowledge the ex-USSR – with the exception of the Baltic republics and, perhaps the Ukraine – as Russia's sphere of influence. However, with growing Western (and perhaps other) interest and involvement in the Central Asian economies, first and foremost the oil industry, this attitude might change.[71] But even if the United States and other powers continue to acknowledge Russian pre-eminence in Central Asia, Russia can count on no support other than political and diplomatic to its involvement there and definitely no financing would be forthcoming. Within the relatively limited range of means left at Moscow's disposal the military ones have thus become of prime importance.

Three world empires survived the First World War. Two of them – the British and the French – disintegrated after the Second World War. Both tried to continue and institutionalize special links between the metropolitan Power and the ex-colonies.[72] Only the latter, however, has proved successful, at least until the early 1990s.[73] The reasons for that are outside the scope of this article. The Russian empire underwent a fundamental transformation which enabled it to endure until after the 'Cold War'. Like the cases of the other two, both Russia and at least the new independent states of Central Asia have considered the continuation and institutionalization of their special links a vital interest. Several parameters make post-Soviet realities closer to French rather than British post-colonial ones. This does not mean necessarily that Russia's relationship with the countries of the CIS will develop along lines reminiscent of that of France with its ex-colonies. The future of the relationship between the states of Central Asia and Russia depends on many factors: Internal developments in the different states involved; the policies of neighbouring Powers; the attitude of what is called 'the international community' – especially the United States; and not least Russia's success in redefining itself and its interests. Post-Second World War France found in de Gaulle a leader who managed to adapt it to the 'new world order' of the 1950s and 1960s. This adaptation included France's relationship with its ex-colonial empire.[74] It remains to be seen whether Russia manages to do a parallel adaptation to the 'new world disorder' of the new millennium.

NOTES

This article is based on two papers read at the 35th Congress on Asian and North African Studies (ICANAS) in Budapest and at the 5th Conference of the European Society for Central Asian Studies (ESCAS) in Venice. I am grateful to all those who commented on the papers at these conferences. I am also grateful to Mrs Irit Back, Dr Ze'ev Khanin and Prof. Benjamin Neuberger, who read a different draft each and commented on it. Needles to say responsibility to everything stated in this article lies solely with me.

1. Felix Hophuet-Boigny, 'Black Africa and the French Union', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.35, No.6 (July 1957), p.597.
2. Leopold-Sedar Senghor, 'A Community of Free and Equal Peoples with the Mother Country', *Western World* (Brussels), No.18 (1958), pp.41–2.
3. Ahmed Rashid. *The Resurgence of Central Asia. Islam or Nationalism?* (Karachi and London, 1994), p.3. For the events leading to the independence of the Central Asian states, see Jonathan Grant, 'Decolonization by Default: Independence in Soviet Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey* (hereafter *CAS*), Vol.13, No.1 (1984), pp.51–8.
4. Rashid, op. cit., pp.2–3.
5. Charles O. Chikeka. *Britain, France and the New African States: A Study of Post Independence Relationships, 1960–1985* (Lewiston, NY, 1990), pp.13, 12 respectively.
6. Ibid., p.17.
7. For these rivalries, mainly between Hophuet-Boigny and Senghor, see Guy de Lousignan. *French Speaking Africa since Independence* (London, 1961), pp.59–75; Daniel Bech, 'Francophone Regionalism or Franco-African Regionalism?', in Anthony Kirk-Greene and Daniel Bech (eds.), *State and Society in Francophone Africa since Independence* (New York, 1995), pp.200–12.
8. Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush. *Muslims of the Soviet Empire. A Guide.* (London, 1985), pp.33–4; cf. William Fierman, *Language Planning and National Development* (Berlin, 1991); Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia* (Baltimore, 1970).
9. Barnett R. Rubin. 'The Fragmentation of Tajikistan' (unpublished manuscript), p.6 as quoted in Donald S. Carlisle, 'Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours', in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.). *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies* (London, 1995), p.83.
10. Bennigsen and Wimbush, op. cit., p.33.
11. Ibid., p.34. And cf. James Critchlow. *Nationalism in Uzbekistan. A Soviet Republic's Road to Independence* (Boulder, Co., 1992); Shahram Akbarzadeh, 'Nation-building in Uzbekistan', *CAS*, Vol.15, No.1 (March 1996), pp.23–32.
12. Rubin, p.6 as quoted by Carlisle, op. cit., p.83.
13. See for example, Donald S. Carlisle, 'Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks', *Problems of Communism* (September–October 1991), pp.23–44; Demian Vaisman, 'Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan', in Ro'i (ed.), op. cit., pp.105–22; cf. Karimov, pp.59–66.
14. According to Iurii Kubishchanov, 'Region zemletriasenii v tsentre mira: Etnicheskie problemy novykh nezavisimykh gosudarstv Srednei Azii', *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 30 August 1994, the major cause for the failure of Tajik nation building has been the fact that only the peripheral parts of the Tajik nation were included in Tajikistan, while its centre – Bukhara and Samarkand – became part of Uzbekistan. For the process of Soviet nation building in Tajikistan, see Rakowska-Harmstone, op.cit.; Guissou Jahangiri, 'The Premises of the Construction of a Tajik National Identity', in Mohammad-Reza Djalili, Frederic Grare and Shirin Akiner (eds.), *Tajikistan: The Trials of Independence* (London, 1998), pp.14–41. For the developments in that country since the dissolution of the USSR and the civil war there, see Stephane A. Dudoignon, 'Political Parties and Forces in Tajikistan, 1989–1993', in Djalili, Grare and Akiner (eds.), op. cit., pp.52–85; Bess A. Brown, 'The Civil War in Tajikistan, 1992–1993', in ibid., pp.86–96; Michael Orr, 'The Russian Army and the War in Tajikistan', in ibid., pp.151–60; Irina Zviagelskaya, 'The Tajik Conflict: Problems of Regulation', in ibid., pp.161–79; V.I. Bushkov and D.V. Mikul'skii, *Anatomiia grazhdanskoi voiny v Tadzhikistane. (Etno-sotsial'nye protsesy i politicheskaia bor'ba, 1992–1997)*, 2nd

ed. (Moscow, 1997), pp.44–52; Mehrad Haghayehgi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia* (New York, 1996), pp.142–51; Muriel Atkin, 'Tajiks and the Persian World', in Beatrice F. Manz (ed.), *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Boulder, CO, 1994), pp.127–43; Allen Hetmanek, 'Islamic Revolution and Jihad Come to the Former Soviet Central Asia: The Case of Tajikistan', *CAS*, Vol.12, No.3 (1993), pp.363–78; Sharbanou Tadjbakhsh, 'National Reconciliation: The Imperfect Whim', *CAS*, Vol.15, No.3–4 (December 1996), pp.325–48; Grigorii G. Kosach, 'Tajikistan: Political Parties in an Inchoate National Space', in Ro'i (ed.), op. cit., pp.123–42; Hafizullah Emadi, 'State, Ideology and Islamic Resurgence in Tajikistan', *CAS*, Vol.13, No.4 (1994), pp.565–74. For the UN involvement, see The UN, Department of Public Information. *The United Nations and the Situation in Tajikistan*, Reference Paper (New York, 1995); Olivier A.J. Brenninkmeijer, 'International Concerns for Tajikistan: UN and OSCE Efforts to Promote Peace-Building and Democratisation', in Djalili, Grare and Akiner (eds.), op. cit., pp.180–215.

15. See for example, N.P. Komarskaia and S.A. Panarin (eds.), *Etnosotsial'nye protsessy v Kyrgyzstane* (Moscow, 1994).
16. Thus by 1989 about 81% of all the Kazakhs living in the USSR were living in their titular republics, *c.* 89% of the Kyrgyz, *c.* 76% of the Tajiks, *c.* 94% of the Turkmens and *c.* 85 % of the Uzbeks. They formed the following part of the population in their republics respectively: Kazakhs–39.7%, Kyrgyz–52.4%, Tajiks–62.3%, Turkmens–72% and Uzbeks–71.4%.
17. Karimov, op. cit., pp.41–50; cf. Semen Gitlin. *Natsional'nye otnosheniia v Uzbekistane. Iliuzii i real'nost'* (Tel Aviv, 1998).
18. Thus, in 1989 the Russophones formed at lest 50.7% of the population in Kazakhstan, 26.8% in Kyrgyzstan, 9.5% in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan each and 10.2% in Uzbekistan. For national and ethnic problems see A.M. Khazanov, 'Underdevelopment and Ethnic Relations in Central Asia', in Manz (ed.), op. cit., pp.144–63; Edward Allworth, 'Commersants or Parasites? Russians, Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Others in Central Asia', in ibid., pp.185–201; Edan Naby, 'The Emergence of Central Asia: Ethnic and Religious Factions', in Mohiaddin Mesbahi (ed.), *Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union. Domestic and International Dimensions* (Gainsville, 1998), pp.34–55 (a previous version was published in *CAS*, Vol.12, No.2 (1993), pp.131–68); Leonid A. Fridman, 'Economic Crisis as a Factor of Building-Up Socio-Political and Ethnonational Tensions in the Countries of Central Asia and Transcaucasia', in Vitaly Naumkin (ed.), *Central Asia and Transcaucasia. Ethnicity and Conflict* (Westpoint, CT, 1994), pp.31–61; Yalman Onarcan, 'Economics and Nationalism: The Case of Muslim Central Asia', *CAS*, Vol.13, No.4 (1994), pp.491–506; Michael Paul Sacks, 'Roots of Diversity and Conflict: Ethnic and Gender Differences in the Work Force of the Former Republics of Soviet Central Asia', in Ro'i (ed.), op. cit., pp.269–87; Anatoly M. Khazanov, 'The Ethnic Problems of Contemporary Kazakhstan', *CAS*, Vol.14, No.2 (1995), pp.243–63; Jiger Ganabel, 'When National Ambition Conflicts with Reality: Studies on Kazakhstan's Ethnic Relations', *CAS*, Vol.15, No.1 (March 1996), pp.5–22; Bruno de Cordier, 'Conflits ethniques et dégradation écologique en Asie Centrale: Les vallées de Ferghana et le nord du Kazakhstan', *CAS*, Vol.15, No.3–4 (December 1996), pp.399–412; N. A. Omuralieva and A.B. Elebeeva. *Sovremennoe sostoianie mezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenii v Kyrgyzstane* (Bishkek, 1993).
19. Chikeka, op. cit., p.13.
20. Generally speaking, there is a relationship, though no full correlation, between the development of an economy as indicated by the GNP per capita on the one hand, and the percentage of native French speakers in that country and the number of French nationals employed there on a regular basis. And see tables in Anton Andereggen. *France's Relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa* (Westpoint, CT, 1994), pp.96, 107, 112.
21. The title of the third chapter of Pierre Mousa, *Les chances économiques de la communauté franco-africaine* (Paris, 1957).
22. See Charles O. Chikeka. *Africa and the European Economic Community, 1957–1992* (Leanston, NY, 1993), esp. pp.197–206. For economic developments see D.K. Fieldhouse, *Black Africa, 1945–1980. Economic Decolonization & Arrested Development* (London, 1986); Philippe Hugon, 'Models and Economic Performance', in Kirk-Greene and Bech

(eds.), op. cit., pp.123–41; Jean Coussy, 'The Franc Zone: Original Logic, Subsequent Evolution and Present Crisis', in ibid., pp.160–80; Catherine Coque-Vidrovitch, 'The Transfer of Economic Power in French Speaking West Africa', in Prosser Gifford and W.M. Roger Louis (eds.), *Decolonization and African Independence. The Transfer of Power, 1960–1980* (New Haven and London, 1988), pp.105–34.

23. Rashid, op. cit., p.4.
24. For the economic background on, and developments in Central Asia, see Alastair McAuley, 'The Economies of Central Asia: The Socialist Legacy', in Ro'i (ed.), op. cit., pp.255–68; Bakhtior A. Islamov, 'Post Soviet Central Asia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: The Economic Background of Interdependence', in Manz (ed.), op. cit., pp.202–38; Fridman, op. cit., pp.31–68; Michael Kaser and Santosh Mehrotra. *The Central Asian Economies after Independence* (London, RIIA, 1992); Michael Kaser, *The Economies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan* (London, RIIA, 1997); *idem*, 'Economic Transition in Six Central Asian Economies', *CAS*, Vol.16, No.1 (March 1997), pp.5–26; Unal Cerikoz, 'A Brief Account of the Economic Situation in the Former Soviet Republics of Central Asia', *CAS*, Vol.13, No.1 (1994), pp.7–18; Heribert Dieter, 'Regional Integration in Central Asia: Current Economic Position and Prospects', *CAS*, Vol.15, No.3–4 (December 1996), pp.365–86.
25. Rashid, op. cit., p.4. For further details, see, Dieter, op.cit.
26. In order to see how inadequate they are for such purposes all one has to do is to compare the territory and population of the different Francophone states to the order of battle of their respective armies at any specific year since independence. Statistics of population and details of the sizes and order of battle of all the military forces in the world are published annually by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London in its *Military Balance*.
27. For the French colonial troops mobilized in Africa, see Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts. The* Tirailleurs Sénégalais *in French West Africa, 1857–1960* (Portsmouth, NH, and London, 1982); Anthony Clayton, *France, Soldiers and Africa* (London, 1985), pp.333–64.
28. For French intervention see, John Chipman, *French Military Policy and African Security*, IISS, Adelphi Paper No.221 (London, 1985); Alain Rouvez, *Disconsolate Empires: French, British and Belgian Involvement in Post-Colonial Sub-Saharan Africa* (London, 1994), pp.31–192; Michael Louis Martin, 'Armies and Politics: The "Life-Cycle" of a Military Rule in Sub-Saharan Francophone Africa', in Kirk-Greene and Bech (eds.), op. cit., pp.78–98; Robert Buijtenhuijs, 'French Military Intervention: The Case of Chad', in ibid., pp.213–27. A very interesting and informative source which has, however, to be studied critically, is (Jacque Foccart) *Foccart parle. Entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard* (Paris, 1995–97, 3 vols.).
29. For the order of battle of the Central Asian states as well as that of their neighbours, see IISS, *The Military Balance*. For a study of the crystallization of Central Asian defence policies, see Susan Clark, 'The Central Asian States: Defining Security Priorities and Developing Military Forces', in Michael Mandelbaum (ed.), *Central Asia and the World* (New York, 1994), pp.177–207.
30. Chikeka, op. cit., p.12.
31. Ibid., p.16. and cf. Papa Ibrahima Seck, *La stratégie culturel de la France en Afrique. L'enseignment colonial (1867–1960)* (Paris, 1993).
32. Chikeka, op. cit., p.16.
33. For these see Andereggen, op. cit., pp.23–59; de Lousignan, op. cit., pp.14–83; Yves Person, 'French West Africa Decolonization', in Prosser Gifford and W.M. Roger Louis (eds.), *Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization 1940–1960* (New Haven and London, 1982), pp.141–72; Henri Brunschweg, 'The Decolonization of French Black Africa', in ibid., pp.211–24; Juane Suret-Caule, 'From Colonization to Independence in French Tropical Africa', in ibid., pp.445–82.
34. The proverb is: 'Be a tail to the lions and not a head to the foxes'–Pirqey Avot, IV, 5.
35. Leopold-Sedar Senghor, 'A Community of Free and Equal Peoples with the Mother Country', *Western World* (Brussels), No.18 (1958), pp.41–2.
36. *Idem*, 'West Africa in Evolution', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.39 (1961), p.7.
37. Donald S. Carlisle, 'Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks', *Problems of Communism* (September–October 1991), pp.26–7.

38. In some of the non-Slavic post-Soviet states, for example, the laws proclaiming the national tongue an official language seem to be literal translations from Russian, including grammar, syntax, and idioms. And cf. William Fierman, 'Independence and the Declining Priority of Language Law Implementation in Uzbekistan', *in* Ro'i (ed.), *op. cit., pp.205–30.*
39. In many cases people, even when exclusively in the company of native speakers of their own language, prefer to speak in Russian among themselves.
40. Nursultan Nazarbayev, *Bez pravykh i levykh* (Moscow, 1991).
41. Rashid, op. cit., p.2.
42. For the traditional culture of the lower strata of society, see Sergei P. Poliakov, *Everyday Islam. Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia* (Armank, NY, 1992).
43. One might argue that the Russian intervention in Tajikistan was mainly (if not solely) because the ruling elite there had been toppled. See also Barnett R. Rubin, 'Tajikistan: From Soviet Republic to Russian-Uzbek Protectorate', in Mandelbaum (ed.), op. cit., pp.207–24; Catherine Poujol, 'Some Reflections on Russian Involvement in the Tajik Conflict, 1992–1993', in Djalili, Grare and Akiner (eds.), op. cit., pp.99–118.
44. How complicated, costly and lengthy a process the projection of military power overseas can be, has been demonstrated by the American build up of its forces in the Gulf following Saddam Husayn's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Only after six months were sufficient forces amassed to stage an offensive.
45. Karimov, op. cit., pp.29–40.
46. As stated above, in Kazakhstan the Russophones formed in 1989 at least 50.7% of the population (compared to 39.7% of the titular nationality), in Kyrgyzstan–26.8% (compared to52.4%), in Tajikistan 9.5% (62.3%), in Turkmenistan–11.9% (72.0%) and in Uzbekistan–10.2% (71.4%). For a review of their position, see Valery A. Tishkov, 'The Russians in Central Asia and Kazakhstan', in Ro'i (ed.), op. cit., pp.289–310.
47. V.G. Mitiaev and R.A. Shilova, 'Problemy russkoiazychnogo nasseleniia v Kazakhstane', in E.M. Kochin (ed.), *Novaia Evraziia. Otnosheniia Rossii so stranami blizhnego zarubezh'ia. Sbornik stat'ei*, No.5 (Moscow, 1996), pp.5–52; G. Iu. Sitiianskii, 'Tadzhikistan i Kirgiziia: Re-emigratsiia–real'nost' ili fantaziia?' in V. Tishkov (ed.), op. cit., pp.253–68; Omuralieva and Elebeeva, op.cit.
48. The only example from the French colonial empire slightly reminiscent of the cases of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was Algeria, where a massive Francophone population–the *pieds noirs*–lived. However, France and Algeria were not contingent. They were separated by a sea. More important, all the Francophone settlers 'repatriated' to France after Algeria gained its independence.
49. This may well be one of the undeclared reasons to moving the capital to Akmolla (renamed Astana).
50. For China's relations with and policies towards the Central Asian states, see Yasmin Melet, 'China's Political and Economic Relations with Kazakhstan', *CAS*, Vol.17, No.2 (June 1998), pp.229–52; James P Dorian, Brett Widgortz and Dru Gladney, 'Central Asia and Xinjang, China: Emerging Energy, Economic and Ethnic Relations', *CAS*, Vol.16, No.4 (December 1997), pp.461–86.
51. Karimov, op. cit., pp.19–28, 41–50.
52. See, for example, Haghayeghi, op. cit., pp.71–91, 157–61; Alexei V. Malashenko, 'Islam and Politics in the Southern Zone of the Former USSR', in Naumkin (ed.), op. cit., pp.109–26; Mehrad Haghayeghi, 'Islamic Revival in the Central Asian Republics', *CAS*, Vol.13, No.2 (1994), pp.249–66; Martha Brill Olcott, 'Islam and Fundamentalism in Idependent Central Asia', in Ro'i (ed.), op. cit., pp.21–39; Reef Altoma, 'The Influence of Islam in Post Soviet Kazakhstan', in Manz (ed.), op. cit., pp.164–81; Hafizullah Emadi, 'State, Ideology and Islamic Resurgence in Tajikistan', *CAS*, Vol.13, No.4 (1994), pp.565–74.
53. Karimov, op. cit., pp.137–8, 186, 187–94.
54. In a conversation in October 1994 in Bishkek.
55. According to Kyrgyz sources this is precisely what happened in the disturbances in Osh in 1990–Talant Razakov (ed.), *Osh koogalan~y. KGBnyn maalymattary boiuncha/ Oshskie sobytiia na materialakh KGB* (Bishkek, 1993). And cf. Omuralieva and Elebeeva, op. cit., pp.107–8. For the interrelationship between Islam and nationalism in general, see

Haghayeghi, op. cit., pp.162–201, especially p.192 onward; Nancy Lubin, 'Islam and Ethnic Identity in Central Asia: A View from Below', in Ro'i (ed.), op. cit., pp.53–70.

56. Martha Brill Olcott, 'Ceremony and Substance in Central Asia', in Mandelbaum (ed.), op. cit., pp.17–46; Donald S. Carlisle, 'Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbehistan and Its Neighbours', in Ro'i (ed.), op. cit., pp.71–103.
57. *Inter alia* the lion's share of Uzbekistan's water supply either originates or passes through Tajikistan. The rest originates in Kyrgyzstan.
58. For foreign intervention and interests in Tajikistan, see Mohammad-Reza Djalili and Frederic Grare, 'Regional Ambitions and Interests in Tajikistan: The Role of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran', in Djelili, Grare and Akiner (eds.), op. cit., pp.119–31.
59. Meryem Kirimli, 'Uzbekistan in the New World Order', *CAS*, Vol.16, No.1 (March 1997), pp.53–64.
60. Thus, the policy of assimilation – so deeply rooted in French ideology and self-perception – could be presented as having also a 'practical' aim.
61. See, for example, Charles de Gaulle. *Mémoires de Guerre*, Vol.I, *L'Appel* (Paris, 1954), *passim*. For the official history of the war effort of 'Free France' in Africa see Jean-Noel Vincent, *Les forces françaises dans la lutte contre l'aix en Afrique, 1940–1943* (Château de Vencennes, 1982). And cf. Andereggen, op. cit., pp.21–3; de Lousignan, op. cit., pp.3–12; Clayton, op. cit., pp.127–52;
62. For example, see François G. Constantin, 'The Foreign Policy of Francophone Africa: Clientalism and After', in Kirk-Greene and Bech (eds.), op. cit., pp.183–99; Keith Panter-Brick, 'Independence French Style', in Gifford and Louis (eds.), *Decolonization*, pp.73–106; Andereggen, op. cit., pp.61–97.
63. See, for example, Milan L. Hauner, 'The Disintegration of the Soviet Eurasian Empire. An Ongoing Debate', in Mesbahi (ed.), op. cit., pp.202–33; Arthur Sagadaev, 'Great Power Ideology and the Muslim Nations of the CIS', in ibid., pp.234–47 (a previous version was published in *CAS*, Vol.12, No.2 (1993), pp.169–80); Mohiaddin Mesbahi, 'Russian Foreign Policy and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus', *CAS*, Vol.12, No.2 (1993), pp.181–215.
64. At the moment the so-called 'fundamentalist Islam' seems to be high on this list of perceived threats.
65. For the new geopolitical and geostrategic importance of post-Soviet Central Asia, see Anthony Hyman, *Power and Politics in Central Asia's New Republics*. Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, Conflict Studies No.273 (August 1994); Irina D. Zviagelskaya, 'Central Asia and Transcaucasia: New Geopolitics', in Naumkin (ed.), op. cit., pp.127–56; Sergei A. Pamarin, 'Political Dynamics of the "New" East (1985–1993)', in ibid., pp.69–107; Graham F. Fuller, 'Russia and Central Asia: Federation or Fault?', in Mandelbaum (ed.), op. cit., pp.94–129; Barnett R. Rubin, in ibid., pp.207–24; Mohiaddin Mesbahi, 'Russia and the Geopolitics of the Muslim South', in Mesbahi (ed.), op. cit., pp.268–319; Mohammad-Reza Djelili, 'Caucase et Asie Centrale: entrée en scène et récomposition géostrategique de l'espace', *CAS*, Vol.13, No.1 (1994), pp.7–18; M. E. Ahrari, 'The Dynamics of the New Great Game in Muslim Central Asia', *CAS*, Vol.13, No.4 (1994), pp.491–506; Stephen Blank, 'Energy, Economics and the Security of Central Asia: Russia and its Rivals', *CAS*, Vol.14, No.3 (1995), pp.373–406.
66. Other strategically important minerals, such as uranium, are also to be found in Central Asia.
67. These are Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. There are signs that also Uzbekistan might have large oil reserves.
68. Moscow would thus simultaneously also enhance her economic influence there.
69. For these problems, see Tishkov (ed.), op.cit.
70. For French policies in Africa in the 1990s, see Chris Alden, 'From Policy Autonomy to Policy Integration: The Evaluation of France's Role in Africa', in Chris Alden and Jean Pascal Dalor (eds.), *Paris, Pretoria and the African Continent. The International Relations of States and Societies in Transition* (London and New York, 1996), pp.11–25; Jean-Francois Bayart, 'End Game South of the Sahara? France's African Policy', in ibid., pp.26–41.
71. For Russian perceptions of the Policies of other Powers in Central Asia, see for example L. M. Vorob'eva, 'Otnoshenie Zapada k politike Rossii v blizhnem zarubzh'e', in E.M.

Kozhokhin (ed.), *Novaia Evraziia: Otnosheniia Rossii so stranami blizhnego zarubezh'ia. Sbornik stat'ei*, Vol.4 (Moscow, 1995), pp.91–118; N. I. Komissina, 'politika Iaponii v otnoshenii tsentral'noaziiatskikh gosudarstv SNG', in E. M. Kozhokhin (ed.), *Novaia Evraziia: Otnosheniia Rossii so stranami blizhnego zarubezh'ia. Sbornik stat'ei*, Vol.6 (Moscow, 1997), pp.5–37.

72. For comparisons of French and British decolonization, see Tony Smith, 'Patterns of Transfer of Power: A Comparative Study of French and British Decolonization', in Gifford and Louis (eds.), *Transfer*, pp.87–116; John Hargraves, 'Decolonization French and British Styles', in Kirk-Greene and Bech (eds.), op. cit., pp.3–15.
73. Many Britons find it annoying that the majority among the members of the British Commonwealth side with India rather than with the United Kingdom whenever there is a difference between the two. This, however, should not come as a surprise. After all India, not Britain, was to all purposes the heart and centre of the Empire which was built around India. Here lies the big difference: in the French Empire France – or rather Paris – was the undisputed centre. Furthermore, unlike the UK, France abandoned very quickly its attempt at an organization of all its ex-colonies – the *Communauté Française* – in favour of bilateral agreements with each of them, which multiplied French dominance.
74. One might even suggest that under de Gaulle France has finally learned the secret of indirect rule: as Andereggen wrote, '*cooperation* was intended to provide more than just assistance or aid; its real aim was to maintain [France's] privileged links in spite of international sovereignty'. Thus, while officially acknowledging the sovereignty of its ex-colonies, France managed through a 'complex network' of about 50 bilateral agreements 'to institutionalize its political, economic and cultural pre-eminence over its former African dependencies' (pp.62–3).