

**POST-SOVIET EVOLUTION OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES**  
**EVOLUÇÃO PÓS-SOVIÉTICA DOS ESTADOS DA ÁSIA CENTRAL**

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on the dynamics of Post-Soviet transitions in Central Asian Republics, with transitology as an analytical tool. The central argument is that the five Central Asian Republics were subjected to long transition processes, marked by different rhythms and developments, since the collapse of the Soviet Union. These processes have resulted in economically, politically and socially different states, despite all having a relatively homogeneous (Soviet) legacy as a starting point.

**Keywords:** Central Asia. Transitology. Post-Soviet space. Central Asian Republics.

**Resumo:** Este artigo foca as dinâmicas das transições pós-soviéticas nas Repúblicas centro-asiáticas, servindo-se da transitologia como instrumento analítico. O argumento central é o de que as cinco Repúblicas centro-asiáticas foram alvo de um longo processo de transição, marcado por diferentes ritmos e desenvolvimentos, desde o colapso da União Soviética. Estes processos deram origem a diferentes Estados do ponto de vista econômico, político e social, não obstante terem como ponto de partida um legado (soviético) relativamente homogêneo.

**Palavras-chave:** Ásia Central. Transitologia. Espaço pós-soviético. Repúblicas centro-asiáticas.

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### **Introduction**

This article focuses on the dynamics of post-Soviet transitions in Central Asian Republics, resorting to transitology as an analytical tool. The central argument is that the five Central Asian Republics were subjected to long transition processes, marked by different rhythms and developments, since the collapse of the Soviet Union. These processes have resulted in economically, politically and socially different states, despite all having a (Soviet) legacy relatively homogeneous as a starting point. Transitology is not an ideal or objective tool for analysing post-socialist change, but rather born out of it (KORHONEN, 2012). The ideological nature of the fall of communism in Eurasia created a determined cultural space, which was - and still is - defined by historical and structural dialectical roots, and by the contingent situation between processes within the social sciences and the policy space of post-socialist countries.

In light of these observations, Korhonen concludes that transitology's "uniqueness lies not in the novelty of the fall of communism, [...] but in its specific dislodgement from the prevalent wider systems of thought, emulating an inner contradictory logic" (2012, p.75). A

vast amount of scientific articles and monographs have focused on the "multifaceted processes through which Communist regimes have evolved towards multiparty democracy (political transition)", and the "privatization of the economic sphere in order to dissolve the model of central planning and create a financial sector based on private ownership of resources (economic transition)" (PETSINIS, 2010, p.301).

Instead of using participant and non-participant observation, techniques which are difficult to apply to this object of study, we resorted to the semi structured interview. Regarding this kind of observation, "the interviewer knows all the topics on which he needs to get reactions from the respondent, but the order and how he will introduce them are left to his discretion" (GHIGLIONE, 2001, p.64). However, some interviewees in Central Asia requested anonymity or, in some cases, asked to be referred to as local experts. They will be named throughout this article as Expert I and Expert II. It should be said that the expert I carries out functions in the context of American diplomacy in Kazakhstan and the Expert II is connected to the Embassy of the United States in Kyrgyzstan.

## **1. The situation in the five Central Asian Republics**

### **1.1.Kazakhstan**

For Kurmanov (2011), "Kazakhstan is a model state, a regional 'leader'" that has been attracting foreign investment due to its "potential when it comes to energy and mineral resources", but also as the result of a "pragmatic foreign policy", whereby the country has sought to establish "a good partnership with other regional and external states to the region" (as with the United States). With experience in the field, Carter (2011), a former director of the largest investment bank in Kazakhstan (Visor Capital), states that "the business environment in the country is very positive" and probably "the best" environment to be found in this region (on which the expert also includes Russia).

After the independence in 1991, Kazakhstan was one of the earliest and most vigorous reformers among the republics of the former Soviet Union. Indeed, in the early years of transition, the state liberalised prices, reduced trade distortions, and facilitated the privatization of small and medium enterprises, creating enticing conditions for foreign investment in the mineral and petroleum sector. A factor that arouses the interest of several powers in Kazakhstan (in addition to energy and natural resources) is the climate of stability on the medium and long term offered by the country to investors (KURMANOV, 2011).

In the opinion of Pomfret, "oil played a key role in the economic and political development in Kazakhstan", although the regime has become "more autocratic" and the

system "more corrupt" (2010, p.9). Economic reform has stalled in the mid90s and in 1995 the transition rates of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) put Kazakhstan behind both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Although the Kazakh economy had contracted significantly in the years following independence, this setback did not dissuaded the attention of foreign investors, as even then the Government pursued one of the most forward economic policies of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In the years 1996-97, the economy began to grow, despite having been severely affected by the Russian crisis of 1998. Since 1999, the economic situation of the country has returned to normal.

Kazakhstan has recovered well from the economic recession that affected the country in the first half of 2009. During the crisis, the Kazakh GDP had registered a growth rate of only 1.2%, and the country plunged into recession due to the sharp drop in oil and raw materials prices. The Kazakh economy is among the 10 fastest growing world economies, according to the International Monetary Fund. According to Mogilevski (2012), in "Kazakhstan everything is extremely expensive" and "the quality of products and services is not always in accordance with their prices", but this Central Asian expert admits that this trend has been countered by the Kazakh government, as "the country has been very much affected by high prices".

According to Vilar (2011), "Kazakhstan is the country with the largest oil reserves in Central Asia". On the other hand, it is the Republic which holds "the largest mineral reserves", namely "rare minerals", and "because of its area - from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the Chinese border – Kazakhstan is a state with a relevant strategic position" (VILAR, 2011). Moreover, as the author stresses, to date, "there has been no record of religious conflict", contrary to what has been observed in other countries such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, or even Turkmenistan (VILAR, 2011). Kazakhstan has enjoyed considerable political stability, which may cease to exist given that the succession of President Nazarbayev remains a great mystery. Despite this political stability referred by Vilar, another author, Cohen, draws attention to the fact that since the mid-90s, Kazakhstan has been "criticized by the West", including that "the country's leadership would be responsible for reversing the democratic progress achieved in the early years of independence" (2008, p.38).

In Kazakhstan, "the regime is still autocratic and dissidents are severely punished", while President Nazarbayev and his entourage have been the target for "increasing pressure to be held accountable over their actions" (POMFRET, 2010, p.17). Corruption scandals undermine the government, especially the 'Kazakhgate' case concerning a hidden bank account in Switzerland where the President is believed to have deposited over a billion dollars

in profits from the oil industry. According to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "after several years of legal battles, deferred trials and efforts by President Nazarbayev to control its political implications, the billionaire corruption scandal, 'Kazakhgate' came to an end (August 2010)" (2010, §1°).

Makhmatova (2011), a Kazakh expert and director for the Public Policy Research Centre in Almaty, says that her institute conducted a study which concluded that "members of the civil society in Kazakhstan are, mostly, corrupt"; on the other hand, "95% of Kazakhs believe that civil society is corrupt". These results were a bad surprise to this author, due to the considerable dimension of this phenomenon. Profits from the petroleum resources, as well as its distribution explain why people are relatively satisfied with the *status quo* (ESENGUL, 2012). However, this can lead to problems since "a political monopoly tends to lead to an economic monopoly, in which certain groups control certain sectors of the economy", which is extremely harmful "to economic goals and to the creation of jobs" (KRAWCHENKO, 2012).

The opposition has been led by "powerful political figures" who "defected from the government" (often in response to the "centralization of power in the President's family") and "businessmen who profited from the privatizations in the 90s", and now intend "to strengthen 'rule of law' in order to protect their gains" (KUSAINOV, 2003, §15°). To this date, Nazarbayev has been able to balance the interests of the various factions vying for control of estate and industrial assets. The industry and business 'heavyweights' in the Kazakh domestic front began to show dissatisfaction with the decline of their influence, as the Nazarbayev government claimed a greater economic control, while welcoming foreign investment in the most important industries.

According to Cohen, "even with his authority enhanced, Nazarbayev did not destroy the country's political life, unlike what happened in some neighbouring countries, such as Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan" (2008, p.38). Moreover, Nazarbayev also did not allow internal conflicts to grow, unlike what happened in Tajikistan, "which was plagued by a Civil War (1992-1997), in which about 100 000 people lost their lives, and approximately one million people became refugees and displaced persons within the country" (TOSHMUHAMMADOV, 2004, pp.12-13).

One must also add that no revolution overthrew the Kazakh regime, contrary to what occurred in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. Nazarbayev has invested in a clear policy of autonomy regarding great powers interested in Kazakhstan, through which the President "seeks the greatest possible benefits from different actors" (CARTER, 2011). As such, Carter (2011)

describes Nazarbayev, from a geopolitical point of view, as being "one of the most impressive leaders of the last 30 years, in the way he seeks to achieve his goals". It is not unreasonable to state here that the factor 'personality' has played a leading role in the political, economic and social transition of Kazakhstan regarding other states in this region. Indeed, the way Nazarbayev has defined and redefined the interests of his country and forged the Kazakh identity is absolutely outstanding. Using the terminology of Hollis and Smith (1990), the personality of this leader has been more important than 'domestic bureaucracies' for the 'structure' of the 'state', but also for the imperatives of regional and/or 'international' surroundings. In other words, adopting a 'bottom-up' approach, i.e. from top to bottom, the variable 'person' acquires an extraordinary weight in conjunction with the remaining 'levels of analysis' of Hollis and Smith (1990), somewhat overruling the 'system' and, in a way, shaping it in accordance with the needs and interests of the construction of the state itself .

The Kazakh civil society has experienced a rapid development. During 1995-2005, the number of non-governmental organisations has increased from 400 to 5000. Although many of these are involved in cultural and community activities, some have been engaged in promoting rule of law and democratization initiatives, often aided by foreign funding and economically powerful Kazakh opposition personalities. Also during 1995-2005, there were profound changes in Kazakh media, with over 2000 media outlets publishing in the country, aided by various political forces, including the radical opposition.

After several years of instability and administrative reforms, Kazakhstan has gained governance and public peace. The government has achieved a series of reforms, reinvigorating business activity and reviving many economic sectors. On the other hand, regarding the human rights situation in Kazakhstan, Bradbury (2011) believes that the balance here is not as serious as in other countries in this region, while stressing "the lack of democracy and truth in the media". Nevertheless, it is easier to be a journalist in Kazakhstan than "in Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan" (CARTER, 2011).

## **1.2. Kyrgyzstan**

As referred by Soares (2011), "Kyrgyzstan - interestingly, the smallest country in Central Asia - is unique in that, despite the ups and downs and several twists it has suffered, it has undertaken a process of democratic transition". In October 1991, Akayev was elected the first President of the country. As a former member of the Soviet leadership, Akayev would be perceived as the new democratic leader of Central Asia. Akayev instituted multiparty

elections and made economic reforms, "promising to transform the country in the 'Switzerland' of Central Asia" (OLCOTT, 2005, p.41). As a matter of fact, the President has established a multiparty democracy and has sought the support of several intergovernmental organisations such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. As several observers have acknowledged, Kyrgyzstan would become the 'Switzerland' of Central Asia and "Akayev was hailed as an advocate for an open and liberal atmosphere" (BBC News 2005, § 3°).

However, the course of events would dictate a steady erosion of democratic standards. In the following years' elections, OSCE has noted several irregularities in terms of voting, from attempts to bribe voters, fraud in tabulating election results, biased state media, to imprisonment of opposition candidates. The presidential elections of July 2005 dictated the easy victory of Bakiyev, with over 88% of the votes. Although international observers noted considerable improvements in the electoral process, there were also several irregularities. Indeed, "despite high expectations with the new regime, Bakiyev not only postponed the path of liberalization as it has effectively engaged in the opposite direction" (LOPES, 2012, p.3).

Throughout the 90s, the development of a democratic society in Kyrgyzstan was carried out in relative harmony with the democratization of many countries in Central and Eastern Europe, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Unlike other Central Asian Republics which have experienced a 'post-totalitarian' period, according to the classification of regimes by Linz and Stepan (1996), the newly independent Kyrgyzstan was known as an "island of democracy" (LOPES, 2012, p.3). The country has proved to be "one of the former Soviet republics least prepared to become an independent state" (ENGVALL, 2011, p.18). On the other hand, for the Kyrgyz, the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in an independence nobody wanted. However, the fact that the newly independent Kyrgyzstan was from a theoretical point of view an autonomous political entity had little practical significance, since Moscow had controlled the political and economic structures of the Kyrgyz Republic for seven decades. Therefore, President Akayev had before him the difficult task of generating institutions and policies able to withstand independently.

Contrary to the trend in other Central Asian republics, President Akayev could not make the Communist Party as the basis of his institutional support. Moreover, "although Presidents Islam Karimov and Saparmurat Niyazov had inherited intact traditional institutions of power, Akayev, like Boris Yeltsin, was faced with the need to build a new structure of political authority" (HUSKEY, 2002, p.75). Although at the beginning of governance, Akayev had appeared to have a sincere democratic vision for Kyrgyzstan, and had vigorously

promoted the country as a democratic alternative in Central Asia, the last years of the 90s were the beginning of the authoritarian slide. As regarded by Chinara Esengul (2012), "Akayev and Bakiyev prioritized their own interests, and had not made any effort to put an end to corruption".

While Akayev remained in power, it was somewhat difficult to estimate the extent to which the presidential family influenced the economy. However, the situation became relatively clear after the Tulip Revolution, when a committee put together a list, initially with 42 companies and, later with 178 companies allegedly owned or partly controlled by Akayev's family (KIMMAGE, 2005). The three largest sources of revenue - gold, hydroelectricity and external support - became the main bases of corruption under Akayev. In a context where political elites thought primarily of their own interests, Akayev was eventually unable to reverse this trend, until he finally surrendered as well to his personal and family goals. Domestic political factors eventually had the upper hand contributing to divert Akayev from the path of democratic reforms. Indeed, the strength of the clans and widespread corruption in Kyrgyzstan were the real causes that led Akayev to concentrate and consolidate power in the executive.

For Esengul (2012), "Kyrgyzstan today is not at all managed based on sound policies". Moreover, any issue is politicized, and one aspect of politicization is the division between North and South, which serves as an instrument to obtain power. However, the author believes that the Kyrgyz are "tired" of "political games" and "instability" generated by "this power hunger" from politicians, and, consequently, "the North - South divide can no longer being exploited", having lost its prominence in the last five or 10 years (ESENGUL, 2012). On the other hand, "political thought is currently stronger than for nearly a decade", which explains, according to this expert, that people are no longer "so easily persuaded and/or manipulated" (ESENGUL, 2012).

The Tulip Revolution was initially perceived as a genuine popular protest against the malpractices of the Akayev family. Despite Bakiyev being elected President in a resounding victory in July 2005, the first year after the revolution was marked by a situation where no group, much less an individual, was able to consolidate political power. Elites with experience in business, politics, or connected to criminal networks, formed various alliances. Nevertheless, there was little cooperation between them, and their inability to neutralize each other was actually a source of a certain balance of power. The impetus that led to the fall of the unpopular regime of Akayev in 2005 was, however, unable to lead to greater democratization. Indeed, democracy remains an alien concept to Kyrgyz domestic politics

culture. Despite currently having many democratic institutions in Kyrgyzstan, these do not necessarily result in a strengthening of liberal political values. The Tulip Revolution prompted a change "in the ruling", but "not in the development of the country" (JURAEV, 2010, p.5).

After two years (2005-2007) marked by a delicate balance, Bakiyev was able to annihilate the competition and establish himself as number one. Bakiyev imposed a rampant kleptocracy. He and his family took advantage of the mechanisms and the existing logic in the Akayev era, taking them even further. Bakiyev was more attached to the systematic bargaining of government positions than Akayev (ENGVALL, 2011). Indeed, although Akayev had begun to build such a system, Bakiyev made it operational.

Under Bakiyev leadership, Kyrgyzstan faced a rapid, uncertain and dangerous path, riddled with corruption, nepotism and even crime, which was strictly organized from the top. Political power was largely concentrated in the hands of their close relatives and, to a lesser extent, in the rest of his family. As Roza Otunbaeva had noticed before succeeding Bakiyev, "currently, there are five Bakiyevs working in the White House" in the upper echelons of power, [...] I do not even speak of the numerous relatives who occupied all the floors of the White House" (Cit. by ENGVALL, 2011, p.58).

Like the Tulip Revolution, the fall of the Bakiyev regime in April 2010 fuelled hopes of a break with the past and on a new path of progress and development. However, initial optimism was quickly replaced by despair after the serious disorder in June 2010, when, according to official statistics, various ethnic riots in southern Kyrgyzstan caused 470 deaths and displaced over a thousand people. After this tragedy, in June 27, 2010, a new constitution establishing a semi parliamentary political system was approved in a referendum. Subsequent parliamentary elections took place on October 10 2010, and, in practice, were the first elections in Central Asia to be considered 'free and fair' by international observers (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010).

Going back to Hollis and Smith terminology, it must be acknowledged that while the 'personality', i.e. the 'individual' variable overlapped the 'system' in the aforesaid case of Kazakhstan, this logic is reversed in the case of Kyrgyzstan. Akayev began by wanting to install democratic ideals in Kyrgyzstan, but he and his successor were overcome by the weight of the domestic bureaucracy and the system itself, prone to corruption and nepotism. It does not imply that democratic ideals do not exist in Kazakhstan but Nazarbayev did not put the bar so high initially, unlike Akayev, who was willing to establish a democratic culture in a country where the seeds - perhaps the result of a long authoritarian and considerably

bureaucratic history (*the homo sovieticus*) - would not find fertile ground for the germination of democracy. Unlike Kazakhstan, where the logic should be read 'bottom-up' (given that the individual overlapped the surrounding structures), in Kyrgyzstan the system won over the individual, in a process called 'top-down' (from top to bottom).

Current president Almazbek Atambayev has sought to fight the scourge of corruption. In this respect, "in mid-December 2011, President Atambayev decreed the creation of an anti-corruption unit", stating that this organization would be composed of "honest people, determined to combat high-level corruption in all spheres of government" (NICHOL, 2012, p.6). In turn, Esengul (2012) adds that "several former parliamentarians, as well as old and even new judges, have been arrested". Atambayev began a serious fight against corruption, so far with success, which means that the President is able to implement his policies, not only in the capital but also on the regional level. Gradually a stable power is being built. However, Esengul (2012) points out the importance of "differentiating between what is to restore power with the goal of making governance feasible", which is what Atambayev has sought to do, in the opinion of the author from "authoritarianism" whose nature is "different".

A local expert (Expert I, 2012), explains that the Kyrgyz government has sought to swiftly, "solve the deficit problems" with the goal of maintaining a low public debt, "which enables the country to "continue receiving international funds". In this sense, "the Government resorts to donors: the International Monetary Fund, the Eurasian Bank" in order to get "as much assistance as possible" (Expert I, 2012).

Although Kyrgyzstan has officially applied for the Customs Union, (which includes Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus), authors like Esengul (2012) believe the country is better served by not belonging to this organisation. According to Kaiser (2012), "being outside the Customs Union means not being able any more to trade with Kazakhstan and Russia"; in turn, adhering to it "raises the problem of Chinese imports". In fact, not belonging to the Customs Union allows the Kyrgyz to continue to benefit largely of the so-called "underground economy" (which, in Kyrgyzstan's case "is 50%", through which "Chinese products enter the country, initially, being then re-exported to Russia, Kazakhstan, among others" (ESENGUL, 2012).

If Kyrgyzstan adheres to the Customs Union, there would be a customs control and therefore a tax on Chinese products, which would harm significantly the Kyrgyz traders that rely heavily on this trade with neighbouring China. Both choices are "undesirable" and the ideal option "to move on" is not possible, "because the customs union exists" and even gives "a certain power and leeway to Putin's Russia" regarding the states in this region (KAISER,

2012). Although the largest trading partner of Kyrgyzstan has since long been, Russia, in recent years China has proved to be the main trading partner of the Kyrgyz. Consequently, the position of the Kyrgyz Government has been to stay close to the political side of Russia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, although from the economic point of view has continually asked for their understanding of Kyrgyzstan's special relationship with China.

According to a local expert, who requested anonymity, Kyrgyzstan faces a "complex situation" because "it practically has nothing to export, unlike the Kazakhs, the Turkmen or the Uzbeks" (Expert II, 2012). On the other hand, the Kyrgyz cannot rely solely in one actor. In this sense, they turn to Russia, China, among others, depending, in effect, on the goodwill of foreigners to survive.

If there is any model that the Kyrgyz would like to follow, it is Kazakhstan's. Interestingly, there is "a greater respect for Nazarbayev in Kyrgyzstan than in Kazakhstan": the image of a strong man and the decisions he makes garner the sympathy of a significant number of Kyrgyz (Expert II, 2012). However, political leadership in Kyrgyzstan is rather weak and unstable, little or nothing comparable to that of Kazakhstan. Therefore, in order to manage the country, "the government must seek consensus", something "very difficult to achieve" in Kyrgyzstan (Expert II, 2012). And it is not only a matter of difficulty of consensus among the top five Kyrgyz political parties: within each party it is also necessary to count with several rival factions among themselves. One might add that often politicians privilege their individual goals rather than the interests of the parties they represent. In this sense, "the parties themselves become unmanageable", and in practice, it is "highly complex to predict how they will behave or evolve" (Expert II, 2012). All these reasons explain that any attempt to carry out a good job is considerably difficult.

### **1.3. Uzbekistan**

Although developments in Kyrgyzstan may have fuelled a great expectation of democratization in that country during the period that followed the independence of the Central Asian Republics, the same did not happen to Uzbekistan. The analysis of Uzbekistan's transition to a post-Soviet state focuses, by necessity and almost exclusively, on Islam Karimov, more specifically on the factors that led him to concentrate power in his hands. Unlike most of the former Soviet Republics, where governments have become "more 'democratic' and less able to control social opposition" despite authoritarianism, the political structure of Uzbekistan and its level of government control remain "virtually unchanged since the Soviet era".

Karimov, the first and only President of Uzbekistan since the collapse of the Soviet Union, is a communist technocrat chosen by Gorbachev to lead the Republic of Uzbekistan during the perestroika era (Gleason, 1997). Younger than Gorbachev, "Karimov was seen as his apparatchik in Uzbekistan" (PLATER-ZYBERK, 2003, p.3). When Gorbachev was appointed Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Karimov was appointed to a similar position in Uzbekistan. On the other hand, "when Gorbachev transferred the decision-making powers of the bodies of the Communist Party to state structures, Karimov, with the blessing of Moscow, did the same at the level of the Republic" (PLATER-ZYBERK, 2003, p.3). Karimov starts as a child from the 'structures' as Gorbachev *apparatchik*, and gradually begins to invert the top-down logic referred by Hollis and Smith (1990). Eventually, Karimov supervenes the 'structures' to reach the system and ends up supervening – or even being mistaken as – the system itself. In fact, both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (as discussed further on) are the two extreme cases in Central Asia, as the individual literally shapes structures on his 'image and likeness, governing virtually without any constrictions and even giving eccentricity contours to the system, as it happened with Niyazov in Turkmenistan (and to a lesser degree, with his successor Berdymuhammedov).

Following the referendum on independence (a mere formality, since the Soviet Union had collapsed), which brought Karimov to power in 1991, he repressed aggressively all political opposition. Karimov was elected president through an overwhelming majority. Once he had eliminated the reformist rivals within his own party in early 1992 and after the then-Vice President Shukrullo Mirsaidov had presented his resignation, Karimov forced the leaders of Birlík and Erk to exile (and their followers were muted), and effectively annihilated the parties. Since then, only the opposition parties 'pro-government' (strange as it may seem) have been allowed to participate in the elections.

Elections in Uzbekistan are carefully orchestrated events, providing very little in terms of genuine electoral choice. Since the country's independence in 1991, to date, no elections were deemed free and fair by the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Europe. For example, regarding the parliamentary election of 2009, the final report of the OSCE stated that the organisation "never conducted a real and full election observation mission in Uzbekistan, due to the lack of minimum conditions for the holding of democratic elections" (OSCE/ODIHR ELECTION ASSESSMENT MISSION FINAL REPORT, 2010, p.1).

The lack of political opportunities has created a feeling of apathy in Uzbek voters, although official Government figures often refer that electoral turnout is higher than 90%. The

executive branch dominates the legislative and judicial branches. Therefore, the Parliament does little more than act as a 'validation stamp' to the will of the President, and likewise, the judicial system works as a mechanism to suppress the President's opponents (PANNIER, 2012). Although Uzbekistan has the largest army in Central Asia, Uzbek authorities pay more attention and financial resources to internal security forces, as they consider domestic threats more serious for the maintenance of the system than those from the outside. The new geopolitical environment in Central Asia following September 11 2001 brought a renewed hope for several reforms in Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, despite increasing diplomatic efforts, the country has withstood a policy of openness towards the West.

The dictatorial feature of Karimov's government is mainly due to domestic factors, among which stands out the clans policy. Although Uzbekistan is one of the most homogeneous countries in Central Asia - 80 % of its population is composed of Uzbeks, while the remaining 20% include Russians (5.5%), Tajiks (5%), Kazakhs (3%), and others - like most states in the region, national identity is complicated due to the interaction of clans and ethnic groups (WORLD FACT BOOK, 2012). As Collins notes, "the system of patronage in Central Asia is largely linked to the tradition of clan politics (*klannovaya politika*)" (2002, p.16). This is indeed an important factor in the decisions of domestic politics for Uzbekistan. It should be added that the dispute of influence among the most important clans played a key role in Karimov's ascent to power, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Although Karimov is officially in control of the country, the reality is that the power is divided between several major clans. It is the competition between the Tashkent clan and the Samarkand clan (the two most powerful clans) that determines the political situation in Uzbekistan, and "it limits Karimov's ability to consolidate his authoritarian regime" (COLLINS, 2004, p.251). The relationship between the President and the various clans is symbiotic. On the one hand, if the clans depend on the patronage of the President in order to access resources and wealth, Karimov needs the clans' support to remain in power. President Karimov understood that, by opening the Parliament's doors to certain figures, he "could provide a counterweight to the continuing aspirations of clans, families, and magnates" (STARR, 2006, p.20). This actually helped to strengthen Parliament's power, although Karimov sees this enhancement as "a small price to pay if it contributes in practice to increase his leeway against the powerful clans and families who have put him in power" (STARR, 2006, p.20). However, the President has sought to weaken the influence of the clans, as shown by the testimony of former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan Craig Murray. According to the ambassador, "there are several people who used to belong to the oligarchy ... There were

hundreds of very wealthy families who really benefited from the system. This circle has become increasingly smaller as Karimov restricted it to his direct family" (RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY, 2006, p.6).

The influence of Islam in Uzbekistan's domestic policy is important, although it cannot be considered the cause of the repression of the political opposition to Karimov (OLIMOVA and Tolipov, 2011). Political parties of religious orientation were banned by Uzbekistan's Constitution in late 1991 (HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, 2010). However, experts like Alexey Malashenko believe that in the future "Tashkent will have to pay more attention to Islamist currents rising to power in various countries", as well as to the "increase of the overall impact of the Islamic factor in international politics" (2012, p.7). Therefore, the possibility that the Uzbek government coming to adopt a more "pragmatic" strategy against the Islamist opposition, while acknowledging the existence of a 'moderate wing' ", should not be excluded (MALASHENKO, 2012, p.7).

Regarding the economy, President Karimov has praised the economic success of Uzbekistan in order to enhance the image of the regime both internally and abroad. During an economic assessment mission in Uzbekistan in November 2011, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) emphasised a robust growth in the country, from the mid-2000s. The Uzbek government has published these and other similar statistics in the State controlled media in order to show the economic prosperity of the country compared to many other countries in the world and discredit dissatisfaction with the regime. Nevertheless, a local expert (Expert II, 2012) states that "although it had once been the richest trading post in Central Asia, a cultural source with the largest cluster of population [in the region], Uzbekistan is nowadays a 'failed state'. On the basis of this statement, this expert points out a few reasons. On the one hand, "the power and influence of Kazakhstan increased considerably" (Expert II, 2012). On the other hand, "Uzbeks have not used efficiently their resources", and since "each of its neighbours is an enemy of the past", Uzbekistan "has not developed a pipeline network in the most desirable and profitable way" (Expert II, 2012). Therefore, in all this there is "a mixture of nationalism and paranoia", as well as "quite isolated two states: Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan" (Expert II, 2012).

#### **1.4. Turkmenistan**

When Turkmenistan gained independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991, the former President and leader of the Turkmen Communist Party, Saparmurat Niyazov, remained in power (NICHOL, 2012, p.1). He would then be re-elected as President

in 1992 almost unanimously and a referendum in 1994 extended his mandate until 2002. In December 1999, "the *Khalk Maslakhaty* (supreme legislative body) amended the Constitution as to confer the status of President for life to Niyazov" (NORMAN, 2007, p.30). However, the Constitution of May 1992 had given overwhelming powers to Niyazov as Head of State and Government (BTI TURKMENISTAN COUNTRY REPORT, 2012).

The governance of Niyazov was one of the most authoritarian in the world and his regime was highly corrupt and responsible for serious violations of human rights. Not surprising, therefore, that the country has been rated as 'the worst of the worst' in the world in terms of political and civil liberties, between states such as Sudan, North Korea and Uzbekistan. Moreover, the regime strongly restricted its citizens from reaching out abroad. In this respect, "the uniqueness of *Turkmenbashi* and the political culture that he founded were based on an isolationism both domestically and externally", which is still true today (SLAVOMÍR, 2012, p.371). However, oil and gas exportation has effectively been the only sectors on which Turkmenistan will try for greater international involvement. As S Horák and Šír refer, "even in this area (energy) where Niyazov was willing to cooperate with foreign countries, Moscow held all the trump cards, controlling all natural gas routes coming from Turkmenistan" (2009, p.45).

Turkmenistan has been seen as one of the most peculiar regimes of the post-Soviet space and one of the closest of the totalitarian ideal, bringing together the features of an ubiquitous state ideology, of the highly repressive State apparatus, of the control of power by a single party, of the total dominance over the media and the economy, concentrated around the hegemonic figure of the President. Institutionally, former President Saparmurat Niyazov held all key skills in Turkmenistan and has also created a kind of 'kingdom' for himself. Indeed, Niyazov renamed the month of January in honour of himself and the month of April in honour of his mother; he banned ballet, the use of gold teeth, and recorded music; ordered the construction of a lake in the desert and of a ski resort on hills where it does not snow, on the border with Iran.

Niyazov died unexpectedly in December 2006 and was succeeded by Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov, who was elected President in early 2007. The 2007 presidential campaign and its result resembled a well written script, which highlighted the Turkmen political traditions and the standards set by *Turkmenbashi*. As noted by Lopes, "elections in Turkmenistan resemble more a pageant than a really significant political act [...]" (2011, p.9). They "are not perceived as a mechanism to capture the will of civil society", rather, "they are staged to strengthen the leadership already established through (almost) unanimous and

homogenized public acts" (LOPES, 2011, p.9). In his inauguration speech on 14 February 2007, Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov has pledged to continue to provide natural gas, electricity, salt, petrol, subsidized bread and housing to the population, and to support the foreign policy of the former Government. Indeed, the Turkmen enjoy "cheap electricity, as well as almost free petrol", and "if the economic environment continues to be favourable to them, this is likely to continue for a long time" (MOGILEVSKI, 2012).

According to Horák and Šír, "the new political regime in Turkmenistan needed only one year to be fully stable": during this short period of time, "President Berdymuhammedov has consolidated his position as supreme leader", having eliminated "all potential rivals" within "Turkmen elites" (2009, p.94). On the other hand, "if we compare the power base of the two Presidents", we find that "the new president relies more on individuals from his native region and in his family" (HORÁK and ŠÍR, 2009, p.94). These people had a number of governmental positions and functions, though not necessarily the most important, as well as within the vast state bureaucracy.

For experts like Alex Norman, there are some signs that "change can happen" (2007, p.35) with Berdymuhammedov. In this respect, Niyazov successor promised significant social reforms, by claiming to want to be President of a democratic state, where rich people live and work (AL JAZEERA NEWS, 2007). Going back to Norman, "this apparent change in social ideology represents a considerable evolution over the old regime, who was proud of isolationism and of suppressing difference and dissention" (2007, p.35).

Nevertheless, these possible signs of change are not convincing to Mogilevski (2012), for whom the current Turkmenistan remains "more of the same", although in "a softer way". As the expert explains, "Turkmen never compare themselves with countries that they do not know", and those who have "visited Europe or Russia" are few. Turkmen compare themselves "to how the Uzbeks live"; they "are aware that we [Kyrgyz] live in an environment of constant turmoil and are glad for not having to endure the same" (MOGILEVSKI, 2012). In a way, Turkmen benefit from stability. Regarding foreign policy, Chinara Esengul (2012) does not believe that Berdymuhammedov will operate substantial changes concerning the previous regime. However, one of the few differences lies in the essence of authority. I.e. Berdymuhammedov's regime lacks "a strong external sponsorship" (HORÁK and ŠÍR, 2009, p.16). Indeed, while Niyazov was established and then protected by Moscow, especially early in its governance, Berdymuhammedov relies mainly on domestic support.

According to Denison, Niyazov's governance was marked by "a frankly ridiculous personality cult" and by the "relentless promotion of a nation forged literally in his own image", which contributed to erode "the visible symbols of the Soviet legacy in Turkmenistan" (2003, p.59). However, following the death of Niyazov, President Berdymuhammedov has proved to be at the same time pragmatic and cautious, gradually dismantling old ideological concepts without causing major disruptions. In this sense, "key elements and institutions of the old regime are preserved, most likely to reinforce the ideology of the current regime" (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2009, §39°). What distinguishes mainly the Berdymuhammedov's governance from his predecessor lies in putting less emphasis on the personality cult. In fact, for now, Berdymuhammedov seems little interested in evoking the divine nature of the presidency or other extreme manifestations of the personality cult.

Berdymuhammedov "has eliminated the most eccentric practices related to the personality cult from the former Head of State" (OLCOTT, 2011, p.6), demolishing some of Niyazov's statues, even though the "spiritual guide" by the former leader, the *Rukhnama*, is still required reading in schools (BOHR, 2010, p.544). In order to gradually distance itself from the *Turkmenbashy* era, the current Government has sought to develop a new ideology. Indeed, Berdymuhammedov invented the concept of an "Era of Great Revival" (*Beyik Galkynys*) for Turkmenistan following the "Golden Age of the Turkmens", promoted by *Turkmenbashy* (U.S. Department of State, 2011: 12). The personality cult of President Berdymuhammedov has gradually become the foundation of the new Turkmen ideology (as it happened with its predecessor). The 'great reformer' has since been officially named 'Founding Father and Leader of the Era of the Great Revival'. After rising to power, Berdymuhammedov has adopted an honorary title - *Arkadag* - i.e. 'protector', which presumes a duty to preserve the Turkmen identity. Such a conception of politics, mixed with characteristics of religious idolatry and saviour mission, helps to understand why Turkmenistan has been seen as "the worst scenario of development in the post-Soviet [space]" (NORMAN, 2007, p.19).

Berdymuhammedov's cult is inevitable in the current atmosphere of subservience to the leader of the Republic and, in general, to the institution of leadership (*serdarçylyk*) in Turkmen society. Indeed, political culture in Turkmenistan favours the personality cult as a factor of validation and legitimacy of the ruling regime. The character of a leader enables the shaping of the political culture, especially when that leader is the 'Founding Father' of a newly independent country. It is "to be expected that the first leader successors behave in a similar

way to its predecessors", often "with only minor changes in style, due to the existence of differences in social context" (HORÁK, 2012, p.372). Therefore, the bizarre and eccentric contours left by the cult of *Turkmenbashy* are still important to Berdymuhammedov, given that, were they to be completely abolished, it could cause serious disruptions in society. Hence Horák and Šír estimate that "Berdymuhammedov will certainly not be as eccentric as his predecessor", but will, however, "remain reluctant to a serious reformation of the system, since he himself benefits from its main features" (2009, p.95). The question is to what extent the Turkmen President is willing to adopt more repressive measures to preserve the current climate of stability. What is clear, however, one cannot change, in the immediate, the mentality either of the elite, either of Turkmen society.

Horák and Šír estimate that "at least one or two generations will be needed for an eventual liberalization of the regime to take place" and that "Turkmenistan will go through a difficult period during which an authoritarian political system is capable to prevail (yet) for some time" (2009, p.95). This opinion is shared by the journalist Dubnov, one of the most renowned experts on Central Asia, which considers the Berdymuhammedov era will tend to persist for a long time yet (NEWEURASIA, 2012). Alexey Malashenko admits that "Dubnov analysis is the most appropriate, because Turkmen society is not yet ready for mass protests" (2012, p.10). However, an opposite view is shared, for example, by U.S. Crude Accountability, according to which, "sooner or later Berdymuhammedov's government will be confronted with the problems that led the regimes of Ben Ali, Mubarak and Gaddafi to collapse" (2010, p.36). The issue, according to Alexey Malashenko, is whether the events will take "the softer scenario - the Tunisian", or will tend to follow "the path of Libya" and "evolve into a civil war" (2012, p.10).

Turkmenistan has remained outside the global political and cultural processes for decades and a hypothetical revolution would not be likely to change the dominant values and political culture in the country, radically. Thus, "the 'sun of Berdymuhammedov', and the 'sun of dictatorship' will tend, in fact, shine for a considerable amount of time" (MALASHENKO, 2012, p.10). Therefore, "the evolution to a less severe form of autocracy is possible only in a long-term perspective", and "democratization does not seem a realistic option within the current staff whom will be reluctant to give up their power" (HORÁK and ŠÍR, 2009, p.95).

Another issue that must be noted is that of national identity, since this has served as a pretext and as also conferred legitimacy to the autocratic and isolationist policies of both Niyazov and Berdymuhammedov. Having Turkmen identity being essentially built under the Soviet leadership through an artificial formula, with a pro-Moscow orientation, one of the

first of Niyazov innovations was renewing the emphasis on primordial ties that bind ethnic Turkmen to mythical rulers well known in Turkmen history and folklore (DENISON, 2009). In practice, "the identity, or, to be precise, the lack of a consolidated identity profile in Turkmenistan, originated by the tribal disunity of the country, has been one of the most influential determinants to explain the centralized and repressive political system, as well as its extraordinary resistance" (MATVEEVA, 1999, p.32).

As Lopes explains, "the idolatry of the President, who resembles a living demigod, is perceived as the best mechanism to ensure loyalty, stability and conformity, rather than relying on volatile institutions such as elections, which are based on free will and the ability to depose leaders who possess a mythical link to the past and an important mission in the present" (2011, p.11). It is no surprise that "the maintenance of a semi-divine presidency" is based on a "double game" that "requires smart policies to homogenize the five clans of Turkmenistan, without, however, uniting them too much" (LOPES, 2011, p.11).

Let us consider now briefly the transition of Turkmen economy. To Mogilevski (2012), "Turkmenistan is [geographically] a big country with few inhabitants and vast natural resources". Although historically it was one of the poorest republics of the former USSR, Turkmenistan experienced a rapid growth in the late Soviet era, based on cotton and natural gas exportations. The construction of the Karakum Canal, which began in the 50s, contributed to a significant expansion of the cotton fields' area. In the 80s, the natural gas sector was modernized and its production increased rapidly. Transitioning from Soviet prices to global prices resulted in higher trading gains for Turkmenistan than for any other post-Soviet state. However, "the inherited infrastructure directed energy exports exclusively to the Community of Independent States and due to such a monopsony payment delays were fast to occur" (POMFRET, 2010, p.12). Turkmenistan still managed to cut the supply of natural gas to customers in debt between March 1997 and January 1999.

Turkmen economy remained essentially unreformed. The use of "repressive agricultural policies" together with poor management led the cotton sector productivity to fall much more than in neighbouring Uzbekistan and it also led to a sharp decrease in export earnings over the 90s" (POMFRET, 2008, p.1). In turn, Turkmen energy sector has been under tight presidential control and natural gas production has suffered a fairly significant reduction during the 90s. On the other hand, little or nothing has been done to exploit the potential of the country's offshore reserves.

Although economic data on Turkmenistan are the least reliable of any economy in transition, it is clear to any observer that the economic conditions of the country suffered a

considerable deterioration - far below even the other Central Asian Republics - after the independence, particularly outside the capital. Although R. Mogilevski (2012) acknowledges that Turkmenistan has the potential to have a pattern of life similar to that of Kazakhstan (touted as a regional model), in practice, "[Turkmen] live a poorer life", and "in the medium term" the author believes that "the situation tends to continue".

### **1.5. Tajikistan**

The two decades of independence of Tajikistan have been marked by violence, poverty, autocratic leadership, and strategic vulnerability. The winter of 1992 was characterized by a fierce Civil War, often seen as "an inter-regional competition for power and resources" (EWOH, NAZAROVA and HILL, 2012, p.2) between the government, dominated by *Kulyabi*, a traditional clan of Tajikistan, and by the *United Tajikistan Opposition*. The Civil War of 1992-1997 was "the deadliest conflict in the post-Soviet space, with the exception of Chechnya" (MATVEEVA, 2009, p.168). During the fights, roads, bridges and other infrastructures were destroyed and there is still much to repair. In 1994, the United Nations intervened, facilitating peace negotiations until 1998, when an agreement was signed by both parties.

From 1997 forward, government policies appeared to be quite liberal. The government courted international financial institutions, having followed its recommendations, although the implementation of these policies had been weak, particularly in the late '90s, when the central government did not yet controlled the entire national territory (POMFRET, 2010). Post-September 2001, President Rahmon became more assertive in the repression of internal opposition. Indeed, "since the end of the Civil War in 1997, the President has strengthened his authoritarian regime and has sidelined the opposition" (NICHOL, 2012, p.2).

In office since 1992, "President Emomali Rahmon, a former Communist from the Soviet era, who emphasizes secularism and a strong executive, remains popular among most of the population, except for Islamists, a youth minority and intellectuals" (FOROUGH, 2012, p.535). Popular support for President is based on "pragmatism", but also on the recognition that "despite the socio-economic problems of the country, nowadays Tajikistan enjoys a completely different level of security and peace (for the better, of course) from the time of the Civil War (FOROUGH, 2012, p.535). Given the mixed record of the Tajik post-war regime we must ask ourselves about the actual level of legitimacy this enjoys among the population. Matveeva begins by explaining that "in an environment marked by false elections, compromised media, and fear of the security apparatus, it is difficult to be sure of what the

population really thinks" (2009, p.167). Moreover, the fear of the Civil War is still very present in people's mind. The regime is "trustworthy" for "ending the war, providing stability and even a modest economic growth" (MATVEEVA, 2009, p.167). As such, despite widespread dissatisfaction with the President, his policy, government corruption and waste of money, it would be too narrow to conclude that the regime is illegitimate. Indeed, after five years of war, Tajiks are seriously committed to consolidating and stabilizing institutions.

President Rahmon has successfully known how to take advantage of nationalism and, to some extent, of religion as a way to win voters, maintain power and ensure stability. Described as 'a travesty' by the leader of the Communist Party of the opposition, the parliamentary elections of 2010 in Tajikistan have shown the lack of progress in the adoption of democratic norms, almost two decades after the independence (HAMRABAEVA and OLIMOVA, 2010). The European Parliament and the OSCE, which had sent 279 election observers to Tajikistan - although some argue that this was a waste of resources, with an estimated cost of 2 to 3 million dollars - reported later that the polls did not meet many of the established international standards for democratic elections (OSCE/ODIHR ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION FINAL REPORT, 2010). In 2011, the Tajik multiparty system proved largely superficial, a "democratic illusion" for the consumption of naive Westerners.

In recent years, the Tajik government has sought to neutralise its Islamist opponents (including those that operate legally), by creating laws in order to limit and control the activities of religious groups, and, above all, to "restrain the growth of radical Islam" (MUKHTOROVA, 2012, §1º). The intensification of Islamophobia in Tajikistan has been heavily criticized by the Muslim community, which believes that such reckless and antireligious measures will only generate revolt, as it happened, for example, in Tunisia or Egypt (IRAN ENGLISH RADIO, 2011). Among other reasons, the Government has designated 2009 as the year of *Imomi Azam* (the Great Imam), and in 2011 laid out plans to build the largest mosque in Central Asia, funded mainly by Qatar, with a cost of 100 million dollars and capacity up to 115 000 believers.

The war years and the expansion of drug trafficking hampered the development of civil society. In turn, economic performance in the 90s was disastrous. The lack of economic opportunities has led to a strong emigration tendency, especially to Russia. However, due to the fact that money transfers from Tajik migrants are essentially in cash and non-declared, "it is difficult to estimate how much they contribute to the revenues" of their country of origin (JUSTINO and SHEMYAKINA 2012, p.11).

Among other things, Tajikistan differs from its Central Asian neighbours for not having large natural gas and/or oil reserves, and must therefore rely on its own savings and assistance from others to survive. Despite the consistent annual economic growth since 1997, income inequality in Tajikistan continued to increase, tending to approach pre-Soviet levels. Although the annual GDP average growth from 2007 to 2011 was 6.5%, this is the result of economic growth without development and capitalism without democracy. The country's economic growth is due, not to macroeconomic policies recommended by the International Monetary Fund which were indeed followed, but mainly to the significant money transfers sent by Tajik workers ("mostly unskilled") residing abroad, who "help the nation to survive" (ABDRAKHMANOV, 2007, p.29). Moreover, an unidentified number of Tajik citizens live with the revenue from drug trafficking, which means that the Republic depends largely on the informal economy for its economic progress. However, one must stress that even during Soviet times, drug trafficking assumed considerable proportions in Tajikistan.

Tajikistan remains highly dependent on Russia - although in an erratic relationship - for virtually everything, from employment to fuel imports (about 90%), while Moscow, in turn, has authorization from the Tajik government to turn the country into a military base for its 5500 soldiers (FOROUGHFI, 2012).

In terms of foreign policy, Dushanbe pursues purely pragmatic goals, by inviting geopolitical players to participate in domestic economic projects. In fact, "even a weak country like Tajikistan, has a series of goals to achieve on an anarchic system" and "the general trend of its foreign policy speech is clearly realist" (NOURZHANOV, 2012, p.365). Overall, Tajikistan is a very interesting phenomenon, an example of pragmatic domestic politics and a foreign policy with a steady course, that should be paid more attention.

### **Final remarks**

It is drawn up a profile, albeit not too thoroughly, but with the purpose of facilitating how the social, political and economic realities are in each one of the states of this region. We can conclude that all these republics in this region share a relatively recent history (with almost two decades of independence) as autonomous states, although they have differed when it comes to the direction of its policies, authoritarianism, development, and how to deal with the challenges resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Although located in the same region, the various units - the states that comprise it - are far from forming a susceptible homogeneous whole from the outset, which is able to facilitate understanding the processes and the political, economic and cultural realities to anyone

studying this region. Instead, they tend to confuse a naive and unprepared mind that may wish to glimpse realities and similar worldviews in states that have followed different paths when the aggregating factor, i.e. the Soviet Union, collapsed. On the other hand, and in this order of ideas, we must stress that any general consideration on policy on Central Asia must take into account the nature of the regimes in power, as well as the specific interests of each of them. If, on the one hand, it is too obvious that the role of leadership is important, on the other hand, the personal relationship between each leader is also essential to bear in mind.

In a space where nothing is set and everything is a gamble, there remains a certain general nostalgia, more or less evident in the *Homo sovieticus* (a result of the same culture and endowed with a unique personality) compared to the golden times when he did not have to worry about anything, because the 'system' was in charge of everything. Contrary to the past, the 'emancipated' Central Asians of today are left to themselves, children of Central Asia, a sub-region devoid of ocean access, relying on the 'goodwill' of the cooperation of neighbouring states, including Russia and China, to have access to the rest of the world. And it is interesting to note how even Central Asians themselves are aware of their position of dependence on others' 'good will', as evidenced by the outpouring of Makhmatova (2011), a Kazakh researcher: "We are not major players, but part of the game". However, an important part, also capable of paradoxically thwarting the ambitions of foreign powers as a result of their functional power. Let us mention, for example, the uniqueness of Uzbek politics, sometimes pro-Russian, sometimes against, turning Karimov into an unpredictable partner, depending on the interests that best suit Uzbekistan.

In short, Central Asian Republics are marked today by different kinds of political, economic and social transformations, different rhythms, and different conceptions of the meaning of the historical process. They converge on the will to maximize the benefits resulting from the large and small regional games, but they show inability to establish common strategies and to cooperate for the solution of large and small regional problems.

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