

THE REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY ISSUES AND THEIR EFFECT ON CENTRAL ASIA SECURITY

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Abstract

Central Asia surely is one of the most important areas that are part of the whole Turkic world. Its importance surely in the 21st. century, comes from many of its peculiar characteristics but the achievement of Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (CANWFZ) in 2006 has really demonstrated the weight of 5 states- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan- achieving a striking example of an excellent example of regional cooperation that surely had important repercussions on the global scale at the efforts of nuclear proliferation and disarmament. That is why, here in this brief paper a focus is preferred to be based on the examination of this success story because this CANWFZ Treaty of 2006 is realized despite to this region's lack of a history of cooperation on issues of international peace, security and environmental protection in the pursuit of common disarmament and nonproliferation goals.

Although Turkic World is covering a broad specter of regions, in this brief paper I chose to concentrate on Central Asia in terms of how NWFZ was formed in order to evaluate how regional cooperation and dialogue is important for the convergences between particularity and universality, between the security agendas of the region in particular and Turkic world in general and global security agendas that brought norms, mechanisms and new instruments.

Central Asia's vast territories during the times of the Cold War years under the rule of the Soviet Union, has been an important area for the production, extraction, and testing of the nuclear materials of all sorts. In the aftermath of the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1989, when the 5 Central Asian States-Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan-became independent simultaneously they countered facing the old/residual nuclear problems remnant from the Cold War era that now ended up having repercussions on their daily lives. Some of these security threats came about due to the radically changed conditions and the structure of international relations. Of course, there remains important turning points in this global structural change that their direct net effects have been felt directly on the regional level-for instance in this case of the end of Soviet Union and its residual nuclear weapons have created both local and national security problems for the states of this region.

In the aftermath of the dissolution of Soviet Union, from the perspective of the states of Central Asia the task of dealing with the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) legacy left by the Soviet industrial complex was a very challenging issue in many different ways. On the one hand, after all it was a complex job in terms of securing and maintaining minimum standards of nuclear safety from the perspective of these states' basic individual national security concerns.¹ Moreover, the existence of Soviet residual nuclear waste in the territory of the new independent states of Central Asia has in time as along with the hard security problems also brought many other side effects- including very serious environmental and ecological problems.²

In the face of both residual and new threats 5 Central Asian states have displayed at most courage in initiating regional cooperation in one of the most difficult areas of security-namely in the nuclear realm³. In this regard, they have displayed an excellent example of realizing both the merits of disarmament and non-proliferation by deciding to go non-nuclear despite to the matter of fact that they were both surrounded with nuclear neighbors as well as left as at the status of the nuclear power following the Moscow's dissolution in 1989⁴.

As we mentioned, during the Soviet era these 5 states of Central Asia since have been overwhelmingly used *as the major site* for USSR of production, enrichment, and testing for the materials related with WMD unavoidably after 1991 found themselves countering with the disastrous consequences of large quantities of uranium waste without outside help. At the beginning of 1990s, these states due to the collapse of the common system-of course this was due to the dissolution of Soviet Union-could not do much to better the conditions of the tailing store houses. Likewise, in the mean time natural disasters and like landslides, earthquakes, floods and an increase in the level of ground water caused to harm these tailings. Hence, at the beginning of the 1990s especially in Kyrgyzstan due to this deteriorated conditions of the majority of dumps and store houses and also in other parts of Central Asia important security risks and threats have erupted. Among these risks of course, the spread of

¹ Paula Humphrey and Margarita Sevcik, "Uranium Tailings in Central Asia: The Case of the Kyrgyz Republic", [http:// www.nti.org/index.php](http://www.nti.org/index.php), accessed in 23 September 2010.

² Jyldyz Sydygalieva, "Ecological Security: An Urgent Necessity for Central Asia", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 12 May 2001, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/>, accessed in 1 October 2010.

³ Scott Parish and William Potter, "Central Asian States Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Despite to U.S Opposition", Update: September: 2009, *James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies*, <http://cns.miis.edu/stories/060905.htm>, accessed in 28 September 2010.

⁴ Scott Parish, "Central Asian States Establish Nuclear-Weapon- Free-Zone Despite U.S: Opposition" ,Update: September 8, 2006, *James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies*, <http://cns.miis.edu/stories/020930.htm>, accessed in 27 September 2010.

radioactive products was a very serious one of course this was due to the bad conditions of the burials-that have the capacity of leading to the radioactive contamination of huge areas in the region. So, the states of Central Asia at the beginning of the 1990s when faced with serious economic and political problems of their own afterwards right after the transformational reform period all tried to find solutions to stabilize their already deteriorated conditions. In this regard, during the same period, they also gave importance finding ways of countering the immediate ecological problems of their own that are especially related nuclear problems. Hence, with the initiation of Kyrgyzstan and together with the support of other states of Central Asia CANWFZ has been initiated as one of the best remedy for the erupting serious problems of nuclear security and safety that is been observed than at both regional and global scales. In fact, the realization of the CANWFZ was quite important because it has provided a *space for the prospects for the regional cooperation*⁵ in which, the states of this region could come together to discuss the ways of countering both the new and residual traditional threats (like proliferation issue of WMD, terrorism and like) as well as new non-traditional (environmental degradation, energy shortages and supply routes, illicit ways of trafficking of all sorts, natural disasters, and epidemic or pandemic disease) threats of security though in a cooperative way. It is true that, the evolution of the CAWFZ took some time to be accomplished. This of course had several reasons. For instance, the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 2001 was quite influential in changing dramatically the geopolitical balance in the region, due to the rapid US intervention and presence in/ into the Central Asia via deploying military forces at bases of certain Central Asian states. At first, Russia did not displayed confrontation to this new US bases as long as they are considered and perceived as part of Washington's combat against continuing anti-terrorist operations in Afghanistan. However, in time this US presence in the region has become to be evaluated as in a competitive manner by Moscow and because of this assessment the states of region found themselves in the midst of this challenging rivalry. Due to the competing actors' different agendas projected for the Central Asia region most of the times the individual states of the region have become obliged to re-set their positions accordingly in line with the current geopolitical balance. However, this adjustment process naturally has not always resulted in

⁵ The establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) is a regional approach to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidate international efforts towards peace and security. Article VII of the NPT states: ' Nothing in this Treaty affects the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories' see: 'Nuclear-Weapon-Free zones: Establishment of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones', UNADO (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, <http://www.un.org/disarmament>, accessed in 23 September 2010.

affecting them in positive way; rather they sometimes found themselves in troubled positions. Again directly related with this radical change in geopolitical balance in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks, terrorism in general has become to be perceived as one of the *common global transnational threat* not only by US also by other major great powers (like Russian Federation, China, EU and such) of our times. In the post-9/11 period, due to this prevalent common perception of new threat definitions among the great powers and USA, Central Asia because of its geographical proximity ever since has been considered and conceived as one of the main frontline in the common fight against spreading acts of terrorism. Since, it is believed that the meaning of territorial defense as against the new threats of all kinds- including terrorism and others- has become meaningless at our days, a great attention is now given searching for all available means of preventive measures that can be created and operationalize at the levels of national, regional, and global. In this regard, a great emphasis has been put on the issue of preventing the different means of any prospects/likely (of) smuggling and illicit trafficking related with nuclear materials going in and around the routes through Central Asia and beyond.⁶ The Silk route that is known as an alternative to Balkan route for illicit trafficking of all sorts comprises shipments ending up at the final destination of Caucasus where from here further move gets realized into other Black Sea countries for delivery, include not only Afghan heroin, or cannabis from the Chu valley (which straddles Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) but also such shipments that may compromise radioactive materials from various orphan tailing dumps that are left over in Central Asia- which between 1950s and the 1980s was the largest single source of uranium for the Soviet military industry. Today, some of the former uranium mines, uranium tailing dumps, waste byproducts of uranium mining, and other radioactive waste sources still stay abandoned and unguarded through the Central Asia. There are strong reasons to believe that some of the above orphan tailings may contain either cesium-137, or strontium-90, or even plutonium-238, which is suitable for the manufacture for the terrorists the so-called dirty bombs. In this regard, there are 3 important states of Central Asia that are still considered to be the real sources of these kinds of nuclear or other related materials security concerns both for the region and even beyond. For instance, Kyrgyzstan is known to be one of them. Kyrgyzstan republic alone has 70 radioactive waste sites and 36 uranium tailings with together 475 million tons of waste. The Kyrgyz authorities so far have stated frequently that many of the tailing dumps are in need of modernization. However, this was a real concern for the Kyrgyz government for some

⁶ Scott Parish, “Illicit Nuclear Trafficking in the NIS”, http://www.nti.org/e_research/e3_8b.html, accessed in 22 September 2010.

time due to the reason of not having enough financial resources for initiating such a project. Even, though in 2005 some of this problem is solved with the assistance of both US and IAEA assistance, there still remains 500 more items to be secured. Moreover, according to the Kyrgyz authorities' proclamations some amount of unidentified radioactive material is still missing. Moreover, in another state in Central Asian region, in Tajikistan 14% of the world's uranium reserves still remains. However, here also, the inadequate security conditions of the uranium tailing sites has the capacity of posing a serious proliferation threat by of course creating incentive for the terrorist groups acquisition of these materials-of course depending upon the level of radioactivity in materials that have been abandoned in these places. Similar security problems have also observed at another Central Asian state in for example in Uzbekistan who ranks as being home to the world's 7th in uranium reserves.

All in all, in the aftermath of Cold War years the new kinds of threats-ranging from energy security to environmental degradation, from terrorism to illicit trafficking in drugs, human beings and the smuggling of weapons and materials of potential use for the construction of WMD or RDDs-facing the Turkic world in general and in particular the states of Central Asia still remains to be a problem and hence they needed to be address both at the regional/local-national and global levels-though in a cooperative way-so that the most needed conditions of stability can be attained and maintained. In this regard, there are several initiatives that are already launched at the global level⁷. What is important, the main objective behind these global and regional efforts always should based on focusing on providing and maintaining conditions of balancing between the 3 pillars of NPT regime, so that the most needed incentive for both disarmament and non-proliferation can be provided among the states of nuclear haves and the have nots. In this regard, the launching certain kinds of CBM initiatives would be very useful in providing the most needed conditions of transparency and verification among preparing the conditions for realizing regional and global disarmament agreements both within and among the states of the Central Asia which is part of Turkic world and beyond. Through facilitating help of these methods finally trust not only among the states of the certain region-here it's the Central Asia- and the external powers those involved in these regions would be attained. By this way, similar attempts could be created as in the case of CAWFZ the conditions of non-proliferation and disarmament finally-as in the 2006-were attained when the AIEA's safeguard conditions are introduced to the states of Central Asia. Moreover, the negative security assurance-which is of course guaranteed by the nuclear

⁷ The inventory of International Nonproliferation Organizations and Regimes could be found at http://www.nti.org/e_research/official_dopcs/inventory/index.html, accessed in 19 september 2010.

5s- that is also installed in CAWFZ, is of course played a very important incentive for those states that decided to relinquish their nuclear arms in general. In the efforts of creating conditions of building trust and common understanding among the states of the Central Asia as an example for much broader Turkic world the importance of 2nd track diplomacy is very important in which academics as well as experts and politicians and like took part and exchange their view points for attaining the conditions of regional cooperation. So, these kinds of efforts like today's important conference- that covers wide range of important issues within the Turkic world- should continued to be supported and benefited at most. In this regard, it is good to see Turkey taking responsibility of being part of such kind of an conference that comprises important and influential think tanks like TASAM and others as well as its both Turkish and foreign academics, and official bureaucrats.
